

W. H. SMITH M. P.

Sir Herbert Maxwell, Secy.



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

Sam Barston

~~XIII~~ a. ~~|||~~

~~XII~~

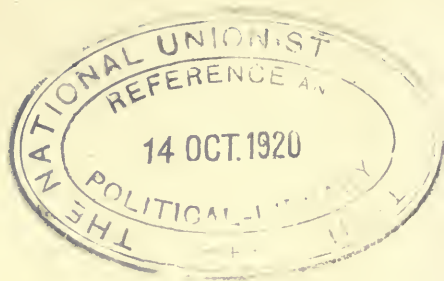
8

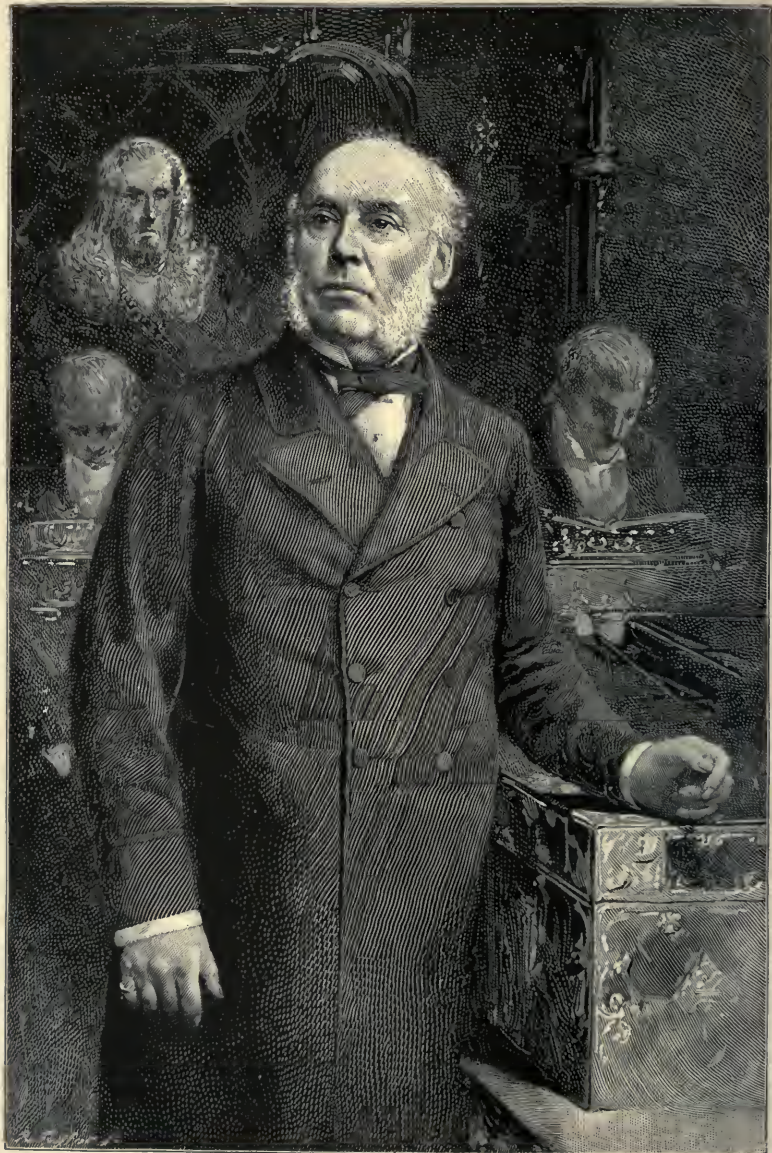
.5

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH, M.P.

*Civis talis, qualis et prudentissimus
et fortunâ optimâ esse debet.—CICERO.*





THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH.

LIFE

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH, M.P.

BY

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, BART., M.P.

WITH

A PORTRAIT AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

M D C C C X C V I

All Rights reserved.



AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.
LIBRARY

DA
565
S655M4
1896

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

IN preparing these Memoirs, there has been present to me the difficulty besetting every one who attempts to deal with political events during the lifetime of many who have borne a part in them. There is much that cannot be alluded to without reviving slumbering controversy, or reflecting on the actions of public men, until the charitable finger of Time shall have touched the harshness out of recent events, and brought them into right perspective with the history of the country.

Yet I am not without the courage to hope that in recording the chief incidents in the career of one with whom it was my privilege to be associated, and to follow as leader during some anxious and eventful years, I may have succeeded in avoiding obvious errors, and giving a true account of a life nobly led and purely ended. In whatever measure that hope may be realised, it is owing to the abundance of material placed at my disposal by the family and friends of Mr Smith, and to the assistance willingly given by many who had been associated with him in commercial, philanthropic, and political affairs. It

410499

is possible that in the attempt to give a true impression of the course steered by Mr Smith in politics, I have found it necessary to refer to the actions of those opposed to him in terms which their friends may consider unfavourable. They will, however, be slow to suspect me of any intention of serving the ends of party, or indeed of any motive other than that of giving a faithful narrative.

In requesting me to undertake the compilation of these volumes, Lady Hambleden has reposed a degree of confidence in me which I am not likely to undervalue. She has put at my disposal the private papers and correspondence of her husband, and her daughters have greatly lightened my labours by arranging these, and copying some which were least easy to decipher.

Among others who have given me valuable information have been the Duke of Rutland, the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Harrowby, the Earl of Iddesleigh, Lord Rowton, Lord Ashcombe, the Right Hon. Edward Stanhope, M.P., the Rev. Sir Emilius Laurie, Sir Edward Lawson, Sir Henry Acland, Mr Penrose Fitzgerald, M.P., the Rev. Canon Jacob, the Rev. Canon Ince, the Rev. Canon Pinder, the Rev. Canon J. M. Nisbet, Mr W. Lethbridge, Captain Blow of the Pandora, Mr White and Mr Monger of 186 Strand. To all these, as well as to others too numerous to mention, my hearty thanks are due.

MONREITH, *October* 1893.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

MANY indications having been received that the Memoirs of Mr W. H. Smith should be published in such a form as to be easily within the reach of general readers, the present edition has been prepared accordingly. Bulk has been reduced by cutting out much of what is not essential to consecutive narrative or the illustration of motives and character ; and of contemporary political history only so much has been retained as seems necessary to understanding the actions of one who bore a leading part in public life.

HERBERT MAXWELL.

LONDON, *June* 1894. -

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

1784-1846.

	PAGE
Introductory — The brothers Smith — Their parentage — The house in Duke Street — They set up a branch office in the Strand — The junior partner buys out his brother — Letter from Leigh Hunt — Birth of a son, William Henry — His boyhood — Goes to Tavistock grammar-school — His aversion to Methodism — Desires to enter Holy Orders — Defers to his father's wishes and enters the business — His indifference to games and his love of music — Correspondence with William Ince,	1

CHAPTER II.

1846-1854.

Disappointment in choice of a profession — Residence at Kilburn House — Young Smith enters the business, and on coming of age becomes his father's partner — His influence in the office — Beginning of the bookstall business — Acquires monopoly of the North-Western Railway stations — His dealings with <i>employés</i> — Expansion of the business — Work on the Committee of King's College Hospital,	25
--	----

CHAPTER III.

1854-1893.

Effect of the repeal of the newspaper stamp-duty—Growth of the business—Smith & Son become sole agents for the 'Times'—Failing health of the senior partner—Increasing work—Its effect upon young Smith—The firm become contractors for railway advertising—Extracts from letters and journal—The principles of private life carried into business affairs—The lending library set on foot—Publication of cheap novels—Its success and abandonment—Present aspect of the Strand office—Early morning work—Despatch of newspapers, 39

CHAPTER IV.

1855-1865.

Smith is elected to Metropolitan Board of Works—His marriage in 1858 to Mrs Leach—Old Mr Smith retires from business—Philanthropic work—The Bishop of London's fund—Friendship with Lord Sandon—Smith contemplates standing as a Liberal for Boston—And for Exeter—Is blackballed for Reform Club—Becomes Conservative candidate for Westminster—His address to the electors—The election—And its result, 62

CHAPTER V.

1865-1868.

Death of Lord Palmerston—And of the elder Smith—Earl Russell's Reform Bill—And Mr Disraeli's—Dissolution of Parliament—Smith is elected for Westminster, 80

CHAPTER VI.

1868-1869.

Petition against Mr Smith's return—The trial and verdict—Smith's maiden speech—Debate on pauperism—Smith's mistrust of charitable donations—Anecdotes illustrating his principles of giving—The Telegraph Bill—Debates on disestablishment of the Irish Church, 90

CHAPTER VII.

1870-1871.

Visit to Paris—State of parties in Parliament—The smoking-room of the House of Commons—Irish Land Bill—Elementary Education Bill—Smith's motion on the Thames Embankment—Defeat of the Government thereon—Smith elected to first London School Board—Religious difficulty arising there settled on his motion—Assists emigration to Canada—Debates on Army Bill, Budget, and Ballot Bill—Damaged position of the Government—Irish Home Rule—Mr Gladstone's speech at Aberdeen,	100
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

1872.

Meeting of Parliament—Unpopularity of Ministers—The Ballot Bill—The Thames Embankment Scheme again—Smith sails for America—Journal of travel,	114
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

1873-1874.

Increasing unpopularity of Ministers—Irish University Bill—Defeat and resignation of the Government—Disraeli declines to form a Cabinet—Mr Gladstone resumes office—Debate on Budget Resolutions—Dissensions in Cabinet—Dissolution of Parliament—General election—Conservative victory—The poll in Westminster—Disraeli forms a Cabinet—Mr Smith becomes Financial Secretary to the Treasury—Resigns Treasurership of S.P.C.K.,	125
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

1874-1876.

Retirement of Mr Gladstone from lead of Liberal party—Beginning of Smith's friendship with Northcote—He settles to work at the Treasury—Visits Bournemouth—Lord Hart-	
---	--

ington chosen leader of the Liberals—The session—Official visits to Edinburgh and Dublin—The Suez Canal shares—Consolidation of the Home Rule party—Visits to the dock-yards—Work, 140

CHAPTER XI.

1876-1878.

Difficulties of the Government—The Bulgarian atrocities—The “bag-and-baggage” policy—The Journal of a Discontented Man—Obstruction in the House of Commons—Death of Mr Ward Hunt—Smith appointed First Lord of the Admiralty—Misgivings as to his own ability—Congratulatory banquet in St James’s Hall—War between Russia and Turkey—Meeting of Parliament—The Fleet sent to Gallipoli—Resignation of Lords Carnarvon and Derby—Votes of censure—The Berlin Congress—“Peace with Honour,” 149

CHAPTER XII.

1878.

Journal of a tour to Cyprus, 181

CHAPTER XIII.

1878-1880.

War with Afghanistan—Motion of censure on Ministers—Depression of trade—The Zulu war—Meeting of Parliament—Fifth motion of censure within twelve months—Mr Butt resigns lead of Home Rule party—Is succeeded by Mr Parnell—Irish tactics in Parliament—Speech by Smith at Bury St Edmunds—He receives degree of D.C.L. at Oxford—The new Eddystone Lighthouse—Renewal of war with Afghanistan—Lord Hartington on Home Rule—Agrarian agitation in Ireland—By-elections at Liverpool and Southwark—Meeting of Parliament—Debate on Irish distress—Dissolution of Parliament—Lord Beaconsfield’s manifesto—Lord Derby joins the Liberals—Smith is re-elected for Westminster, 192

CHAPTER XIV.

1880-1881.

Causes of Conservative defeat—Mr Gladstone forms a Cabinet —Mr Bradlaugh and the Parliamentary oath—Irish measures —The Fourth Party—Close of the session—Agitation in Ireland—Rise of boycotting—Chairmanship of London and North-Western Railway offered to and declined by Smith —Meeting of Parliament — Peace Preservation (Ireland) Bill—Rules of Procedure—Expulsion of Irish members— Death of Lord Beaconsfield—Arrest of Irish members, and suppression of the Land League,	205
---	-----

CHAPTER XV.

1882-1884.

Election for Westminster—Smith visits Ireland and inquires into the Land Question—Resignation of Earl Cowper and Mr Forster—Assassination of Lord F. Cavendish and Mr Bourke—Arrears of Rent Bill—Watchfulness of the police— The Fourth Party—Illness of Mr Gladstone—Mr Forster attacks the Land League—Smith's speeches in the country— Meeting of Parliament—Mr Bradlaugh once more—House- hold Franchise Bill — Autumn session — Smith and the national defences,	219
--	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

1880-1885.

Purchase of the Pandora—Notes of cruises—The Mediterranean —Visit to the Sultan—Stormy passage to Alexandria— Reported loss of the Pandora—The Italian and Sicilian coasts — Greece — Norway — Denmark — Holland — Copen- hagen and Cronstadt—Captain Blow,	237
---	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

1871-1891.

Greenlands—Besieged in the civil war—Bought by Mr Smith in 1871—Effect of his residence on the neighbourhood—His	
---	--

method in charity—The church of St Mary's, Portsea—
Mistrust of the Salvation Army—Sanitary improvement of
Hambleton—Mr Smith builds a hospital near Henley—
Home life at Greenlands—The garden—Refusal to appear as
a "celebrity at home"—The library—The pictures—Pur-
chase of estates in Suffolk and Devonshire, 246

CHAPTER XVIII.

1885.

Dilemma of the Government—Fall of Khartoum—Northcote's
motion of censure—The "rapier and rosette" section of
Conservatives—Hostile attitude of Russia—Vote of credit
for £11,000,000—Mr Childers's last Budget—Defeat and
resignation of Ministers—Lord Salisbury forms a Cabinet
—Mr Smith becomes Secretary of State for War—The
general election—Attitude of the Irish party—Mr Glad-
stone accepts Home Rule, 265

CHAPTER XIX.

1886-1887.

Anomalous position of the Government—Resignation of the
Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and his Chief Secretary—Smith
is appointed Chief Secretary—Defeat and resignation of the
Government—Mr Gladstone's third Administration—Mr
Gladstone's Home Rule Bill—His defeat—Dissolution of
Parliament—Unionist victory at the polls—Lord Salisbury's
second Administration—Autumn session—Resignation of
Lord Randolph Churchill—The "Round-Table" Conference
—Smith becomes First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of
the House of Commons—Sudden death of Lord Iddesleigh, 278

CHAPTER XX.

1887.

Leadership of the House of Commons—The Round-Table Con-
ference—Resignation of Sir M. H. Beach—Mr Balfour be-
comes Irish Secretary—Obstruction in Parliament—Extracts
from private correspondence—"Old Morality"—Close of

session—Smith's success as Leader—Smith's method in administering patronage—Civil List pensions—His room at the House of Commons—Dinner "behind the Chair"—Daily routine,	292
---	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

1888.

Happiness in family affairs—Meeting of Parliament—Rules of Procedure again—Extracts from correspondence—Letter from Lord Stanley of Preston—"Parnellism and Crime"—Charges and Allegations Bill—Lord Randolph Churchill's remonstrance—Speech at Gloucester—The autumn session—Irish Land Purchase Bill—Prolonged proceedings—Prorogation on Christmas Eve—Smith goes to the South of Europe,	306
---	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

1889.

Smith offers to resign leadership—Modification of parties into groups—Debate on the Address—Difficulties of the Government—Address of confidence presented to Smith by Ministerialists—Is entertained at a banquet in the city—And at another given by his constituents—Is presented with the freedom of Kirkwall—Smith addresses meetings in Glasgow, Exeter, and Plymouth,	314
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

1890.

Gloomy prospects of the Government—Alleged resignation of Smith—Meeting of Parliament—Debate on the Parnell Commission—Report of the Commissioners—Debate thereupon in the House of Commons—Illness of Smith—He offers to resign—Mr Goschen's Budget—The licensing clauses—Agitation against them—Narrow escape of the Government—Withdrawal of the licensing clauses—Smith goes to La Bourboule—Financial crisis in the City—Smith's action thereon—The Parnell divorce case—Revelations by Mr Parnell—Rupture of the Irish party—The autumn session,	325
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

1891.

Letter to the Duke of Rutland—State of parties in Parliament—The Religious Disabilities Removal Bill—Rejection thereof moved by Smith—The last of the Bradlaugh difficulty—Vote of censure on Irish administration—Smith's opinion on Sunday opening of museums—His last letter to the Duke of Rutland—Is appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports—Spends Whitsuntide at Cadenabbia—Increasing illness—His last words in Parliament—Appears for the last time in public at Hatfield—Goes with his family to Walmer Castle, . . .	338
---	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

1891.

Mr Smith's last illness—His death on October 6—Message and letter from the Queen—The funeral—Memorial service in Westminster Abbey—The Queen bestows a peerage on Mrs Smith—Hon. W. F. Smith elected for the Strand—Review of Smith's character and life—His unselfishness and honesty—His religious feeling and common-sense—Smith as a party man—Conclusion,	353
--	-----

INDEX,	369
------------------	-----

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH,	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MESSRS W. H. SMITH AND SON'S PREMISES IN THE STRAND,	36
MESSRS W. H. SMITH AND SON'S STRAND PREMISES (IN- TERIOR),	54
KNOT USED IN TYING PARCELS OF NEWSPAPERS,	56
FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD,	157
FACSIMILE OF NOTE FROM THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY,	227
IN THE GROUNDS AT GREENLANDS,	250
LYCH GATE, HAMBLEDEN,	253
A FAVOURITE PEEP OF THE THAMES,	258
THE IDEAL.—FANCY GERMAN PORTRAIT OF GENERAL SIR SMITH, THE BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR [<i>from 'Punch'</i>],	272
THE REALITY.—W. H. SMITH, ESQ., WAR OFFICE [<i>from</i> <i>'Punch'</i>],	273
WALMER CASTLE,	346
W. H. SMITH IN HIS NEW CHARACTER AS WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS AND CONSTABLE OF DOVER CASTLE [<i>from 'Punch'</i>],	348
IN THE GARDENS, WALMER CASTLE,	351
DRAWING-ROOM, WALMER CASTLE,	354

LIFE OF THE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH.

CHAPTER I.

1784-1846.

214
NOT very long before the following pages began to be penned, Sir Charles Bowen commented with caustic good-humour on what he termed the growing tendency of the age to write ponderous biographies of Nobody.

It must always be a matter of opinion to what exact degree of eminence a man should rise above the mean level of character, or what store of achievement it should be possible to lay to his account, before the public are invited to the perusal of his biography.

There is an ominous sentence in one of Horace Walpole's letters: "One can never talk very long about folks that are merely excellent—I mean, unless they do not deserve it, and then their flatterers can hold forth upon their virtues by the hour." The affection of his family—the predilection of his friends—the gratitude of those whom he may have benefited—the admiration of humbler men from among whom he may have raised himself—the success with which Fortune, so partial in her favours, so indifferent to merit,

may have filled his sails,—all these have to be liberally discounted before the figure of a public man can be viewed in the just perspective essential to critical narrative.

But when such a man has brought his life out of a surrounding no more than commonplace, when he has conducted an ordinary commercial undertaking to a position beyond competition, and then, having accomplished what would satisfy most men as a life's work, has set himself to political enterprise, and, by sheer dint of the esteem awarded, not to audacity or surpassing powers of speech, but to unselfish integrity and faultless common-sense, has risen from one office of trust to another, till his party at a moment of extreme perplexity, by an involuntary and common impulse, turned towards him and laid upon him the hazardous duties of leader,—when a man has set his hand to so much and succeeded in every step of his career, in such a life there cannot fail to be much that is worthy of record, much that will be of service for the guidance and encouragement of others.

It is this feeling which has actuated the writer of the following Memoirs: there has been also the additional motive of warm personal regard towards the subject of them, and gratitude for unvarying kindness. It is difficult, in dealing with the actions and character of one lately departed, to avoid undue eulogy and to keep in right proportion incidents of private life which, however much their memory may be cherished by relatives and intimate friends, cannot be expected to occupy the interest of general readers. The object, therefore, has been ἀληθευεῖν ἐν ἀγάπῃ—affectionately to tell the truth; to state impartially the origin and incidents of a life which rose from circumstances of comparative obscurity to those of distinction and responsibility; to show the qualities and principles which secured for William Henry Smith the unbounded confidence of

those who were associated with him, and the ungrudging respect of those who, in public life, were opposed to him.

Somewhere within the first quarter of the present century, the brothers Henry Edward and William Henry Smith, sons of Henry Walton Smith, who had come to London from Devonshire towards the close of the eighteenth century, set up the business of "newsmen," as it was then termed, in an unpretending shop in Duke Street, Grosvenor Square. Probably there was nothing to distinguish it from dozens of other houses doing a similar business—nothing to mark it as the source of what has grown into an important tributary of the Pactolus of British trade. In those days penny and halfpenny dailies may, indeed, have been somebody's dream, but one not more likely to be realised than any other dream. Besides the paper-tax, there was the duty imposed on each copy of every newspaper: the sheets, before going through the press, had all to be sent to Somerset House to receive the official stamp. There was also the advertisement-tax, payable by the publisher.¹

But in spite of these restrictions, the business of Messrs Smith prospered and increased, so that it became desirable to secure premises near the offices of the principal newspapers. About the year 1820 the house 192 Strand was purchased, and formed into a branch office, the head office remaining in Duke Street.

Now the partners in this firm were of very different degrees of capacity, and the younger brother, William, soon found that, as the scope of their transactions ex-

¹ The practice of withholding information as to the price of books under review in magazines or journals originated in the intention of avoiding the tax on advertisements.

tended, so the necessity for organisation and punctuality increased. Henry, the elder, was old-fashioned, and, in truth, somewhat dilatory. Part of his duty was to prepare the addresses for country parcels at the Duke Street office; these were then sent off to the Strand, where William attended to their despatch by the mails. Many a time the neighbours used to see the younger brother running out in his shirt-sleeves into the Strand, watch in hand, looking impatiently for the lingering messenger, before whose arrival the day's papers could not be sent off, and exclaiming, "What *is* that lazy brother of mine about?"

At last the situation became intolerable. Punctuality was the very soul of the business, and punctuality was just what the senior partner could not contribute; so an arrangement was made by which William Henry became sole proprietor of the concern.¹ Sole proprietor and sole manager, also, in every sense of the word. He was no believer in delegated authority or subdivision of responsibility. He worked as hard as any apprentice in the daily, manual labour, being noted as the quickest packer in the establishment. He prided himself on this, and it was a standing rule that any lad who could pack up a greater number of newspapers than his master in the morning was entitled to a gratuity of a shilling. Indefatigable himself, he was intolerant of anything short of the utmost exactitude in others; he was relentless in reproof of negligence, and so stern in dealing with any shortcoming that, as is a common experience, his presence had an effect the reverse of inspiring on his staff. Nevertheless, to use the expressive phrase of one who knew him well, and still occupies a position of trust in the firm, he brought the business up to that point beyond which it could not be taken by a single individual.

¹ Henry Edward Smith died in 1846.

It was an arduous, unremitting life that was required in those early days of one who would succeed in the trade of newsman. Competition was keen and profits so small that success could only be attained by constant watchfulness to make use of every opportunity to extend the business. The trade of disseminating literature contains branches which are not all drudgery. A publisher's profession, for instance, implies plenty of hard work, and a keen sense of the public taste; but it also means something akin to leisure, enriched by literary occupation. But an active news-agent is bound to laborious routine: William Smith would suffer no one to share his authority in the house; every letter that came was opened by his own hands and the answer dictated, often it was written, by himself. Yet here and there in his correspondence, buried deep in piles of letters from irritated customers complaining of delay in the delivery of their papers, or from editors negotiating terms for a supply of their journals, there occurs a trace of more attractive material—something to hint that from this incessant daily routine there were filched occasional moments of that lettered loitering which so effectually beguiles the tedium and eases the fatigue of the journey through life. The following note, for instance, from the author of 'Ultra Crepidarius'—the prototype of Harold Skimpole—lies among letters received early in the forties; and if it be the case that Mr Smith had taken the book from the London Library for his own perusal, the suggestion is one of a wider and more sympathetic culture than might have been suspected:—

32 EDWARDES SQUARE, KENSINGTON.

A stranger is sorry to intrude this note on Mr Smith; but if Mr Smith, without any immediate inconvenience to himself, could oblige a fellow-subscriber to the London Library with Baldelli's life of Boccaccio for a few days, & if he could also be so kind as to take the trouble of directing it to this place by the parcel delivery company, it would be a great accommodation to his humble servant,

LEIGH HUNT.

William Henry Smith, senior, married Mary Anne Cooper, on June 24, 1817, at St George's, Hanover Square. For some years thereafter they continued to live over the office in Duke Street, and in that house their two eldest children, Mary Anne¹ and Caroline,² were born; but some time previous to 1825 the family removed to the house in the Strand, where, on the anniversary of their marriage in that year, a son was born, to be named after his father, William Henry, the subject of the present Memoir. There has been much misapprehension as to the station in life to which this child was born. It has been reported, and commonly believed, that his first employment was that of a poor newsboy. Had that been the case, there would have been no attempt on the part of his family—least of all on his own—to conceal his humble origin. But the facts of the case were otherwise, and the mistake has probably arisen from the circumstance that what we now call a “news-agent” was known sixty years ago as a “newsman,” and the son of a newsman might, by a strained interpretation, be described as a newsboy. Whatever may have been the descent of his grandfather, Henry Walton Smith, the late Mr W. H. Smith was born of parents occupying the position of respectable and prosperous tradespeople.

A less eventful boyhood than William Henry's, the younger, it could hardly be the lot of a biographer to describe. Until eight or nine years of age he remained in the schoolroom with his four elder sisters, under the teaching of their governess. Then the services of a tutor, the Rev. William Beal, of Trinity College, Cambridge, were secured for him; and, when twelve years old, he went with his mother and sisters to Paris, where they remained for some weeks. Meanwhile, Mr Beal had become

¹ Married in 1839 to Rev. William Beal.

² Married to Mr R. M. Reece.

engaged to the eldest Miss Smith, and on his receiving from the Duke of Bedford in 1838 the appointment of head-master to the newly revived grammar-school at Tavistock, their marriage took place. This led to William's only and brief acquaintance with a public school, or, indeed, with school of any sort. He was placed there as a boarder early in 1839, being then fourteen years old, and in June his name appears as second in the second form, William Lethbridge (of whom more hereafter) being first. The following note appears on the report of the midsummer examination for that year:—

The medal for Midsr. 1839 gained by, and awarded to, W. H. Smith of Kilburn, London.

W. BEAL.

But William Smith's name is not again found on the school-lists after that date.

There remains in one of the boy's letters, written from Tavistock to his father, evidence of thoughtfulness unusual at the age of fourteen, and of attention directed to a class of subject which, in after-years, was to occupy a great deal of his energy and thoughts.

Last Wednesday being a half-holiday, Mr Beal took a walk with me in the afternoon to the Union Workhouse in the neighbourhood of the town, which was quite a new sight to me. To all appearance the people looked extremely comfortable; in fact, much more so than many poor people in their own houses. I was rather surprised at seeing them so comfortable, for from the noise made about the new Poor Law I expected to find it rather a wretched place.

The influence which had prevailed so long to keep William from school, and to remove him from it after such a short experience, is not difficult to trace, neither was it without important bearing upon his after-life. His mother's family, the Coopers, were Wesleyans of the early and strict kind; and her mother, a widow, used to pay long visits at her son-in-law's house in Duke Street. This lady was not only extremely devout, but also painfully

apprehensive of the perils to which young people are exposed at public schools from bad companions and worldly influence. She it was who prevailed to persuade the Smiths to keep their only son so long at home, and probably to remove him from Tavistock after so short a trial, though he had made, as the prize-list shows, such a promising start there. Anxiety to withdraw the lad from sympathy with the Church of England, signs of which he showed even at this early age, and to keep him in touch with the Wesleyan body, had, no doubt, a good deal to do with the domestic policy.

There may be traced in the economy of this Methodist Christian home something resembling the stern Laedæmonian spirit, exacting from the son unquestioning submission to the father, but also putting him, while still very young, in authority over others. In the refusal of the Smiths to yield to their boy's intense desire to go to a university, there is some analogy to the edict forbidding the youth of Laedæmon to visit Athens; in spite of the learning and philosophy of that focus of culture, there was too much tittle-tattle and luxury to be reconciled with the strenuous home life. Whatever the effect of this early discipline may have been in forming the young man's character, it certainly was the cause of lasting disappointment to himself, and often, in later years, he used to deplore bitterly the circumstances which had debarred him from acquiring a wider culture.

After a couple of years at home, William was allowed to return to Tavistock school at the age of seventeen, not, apparently, as an ordinary pupil, for his name does not appear on the school-lists of those years, but rather as a private pupil of his brother-in-law, the head-master. His time seems to have been divided between the pursuit of learning here, and attention to business in the Strand,

until some time in 1844, after which date any learning he acquired was the fruit of voluntary application of his leisure.

As the lad grew in stature, his spirit struggled to emancipate itself from the narrow and rather sombre surroundings of his boyhood. At sixteen he had already expressed to his father his strong desire to go to a university and prepare for Holy Orders. Whether his mother-in-law's warning had given the elder Smith a genuine dread of the profligacy of universities as well as of public schools, or whether he merely looked upon university education as an unsuitable preparation for a business life, he would not listen to his son's pleading to be sent there; and as for the Church—he gave an emphatic discouragement to that idea. In fact, he gave his son to understand that if he persisted in his purpose of entering Holy Orders, he need not expect a shilling from his father; whereas, if he came into the business, he might count on being made a partner as soon as he should come of age.

The young man submitted his will to that of his father, and began work in the office; but he could not bring his spirit into sympathy with the Wesleyan community to which his parents were so closely attached.¹ To a youth brought up so constantly at home, it must have been a matter of much difficulty, and have required the support of strong conviction, to attempt separation from the congregation in which he had been reared. To support himself in the effort, and to overcome his parents' objections to his attending the services of the Church of England, William availed himself gladly of the help of his brother-in-law and old master, Mr Beal, who in 1842 wrote to him—

¹ It is believed that the elder Smith never actually joined the Wesleyan Society, though he constantly attended their services, and subscribed liberally to their funds. He was, however, married in St George's, Hanover Square, and all his children were baptised in the Church of England.

Would you like me to name to your Father the subject of *your*, & Augusta's and Emma's, going to church every Sacrament Sunday? I feel very confident indeed that both with your Father and Mamma I could gain it for you all. With this stipulation, however, that so long as you are under age, this shall be the *last* concession made to you in these matters—viz., that one Sunday in a month, and *that* the Sacrament Sunday, shall be at your own disposal, but that the other three, you all consent willingly and regularly to go wherever your Father thinks you get the most wholesome spiritual food.

It would have been in accordance with what very often happens, if early restraint of so strict a kind had brought about a reaction as the boy grew to manhood: the impulse to escape from the narrow field of duties precisely defined—weariness of warnings against all that allures a youth as the world opens before him—the flush of health and the free instinct of our race,—these are influences which have often in such cases brought about the violent rupture of parental control and started the prodigal down the slopes. The saving instrument in such cases is generally found in warm affection; and it implies the existence of more endearing qualities in the parents of this young man than a stranger is able to trace in the record of their habit of life, that, from first to last, their son never wavered in his love for them, and that home influence never lost its hold upon him. On the other hand, though almost the first use which the younger William made of the liberty of manhood was to carry out the wish he had for some years entertained, of separating himself from the Wesleyan body and joining the Church of England, the effect of early training never disappeared: throughout his life he remained serious, sometimes almost to despondency, deeply religious and attentive to regular worship, and accustomed, in intimate correspondence, to express himself with more freedom and fulness on spiritual subjects than is usually the habit of laymen in the older Churches. This may explain many passages in letters written in after-years to his wife and sisters, and

enable the reader to understand his constantly recurring request for their prayers on his behalf in whatever business he happened to be engaged on at the time. It must not be supposed, however, that Smith was ever in the habit of obtruding his religious feelings in general conversation or correspondence. Some of those who had most constant intercourse with him in public life, though they *felt* that they had to do with an earnest Christian, may never, in the course of many years, have once heard the name of the Almighty pass his lips, or remember a single sentence of religious doctrine—still less of controversy—escape from him.

Mr Beal's intervention seems to have been effectual, for in 1842 there came a letter from William to his sisters:—

Have you heard from Mr Beal on a particular subject? Did you expect anything of the kind? I was quite surprised when I heard from him about it, and Father's approbation too. You know of course that all things go on well day by day. Father says that there is a slight difference in the young generation, but you must wait till Sunday, when, if you'll go to Church in the morning, you shall hear it all in the afternoon, and then, by attending Methody or other Chapel in the evening, you will cover your double sin and go to bed a Xtian.

Not improbably the elder Smith, though himself remaining staunchly attached to the Wesleyan body, viewed without apprehension the tendency of his children towards the Church of England, and it is to the influence of his wife and her relations that such active resistance as he showed in preventing his son offering himself for confirmation may be attributed. Constantly and actively employed as he had been in business, and absent from home during daylight hours, he would, as is the habit of the husbands of good wives, willingly resign into Mrs Smith's hands the chief part of the spiritual direction of his household; yet there may also be traced, in his thus yielding to Mr Beal's proposal, some of that tolerant breadth which, as men approach the

half-hundred, generally mellows the view they take of religious controversy. Indeed, though the responsibility for the minor divisions which separate the Christian Church into so many parts lies at the door of the men, their maintenance must be placed to the account of women, who, being far more conservative in spiritual as well as in temporal affairs, resist all change and modification as dangerous innovation.

But however tolerant the elder Smith showed himself of the alteration of his children's views and their alienation from the Methodist connection, he remained inflexible in his resistance to William's inclination to enter the priesthood. In this he was evidently strengthened by the circumstances of his private affairs. He had, by diligence and active foresight, raised his business from a very modest scale to one of considerable importance and value. But as he advanced in years, incessant work began to tell upon his health. In 1845 his friend, Mr Sercombe (whose son Rupert afterwards married his daughter Louisa), wrote from Exeter:—

I feel persuaded that nothing but rest will do for you; will you therefore allow me to suggest to you what has passed through my mind and my dear wife's, which is this. If you could by advertisement or otherwise get a respectable business man, who understands your kind of business, and who would take your morning work, . . . this would save your health, and in all human probability prolong your valuable life.

No doubt Smith felt the soundness of this advice, and the result of it is shown in a letter from young Smith to his sister, Mrs Sercombe, written in the same year:—

We have at last made an alteration—a decided and, I hope, an effectual one. Father has long felt that his late attack of lameness resulted from overwork, and therefore has so far overcome his natural predilections as to determine on doing less—on giving up packing altogether—on playing the gentleman Tradesman. In order to carry out this idea he has resolved to dine *here* [at Kilburn House] regularly at 4 o'clock, excepting on Saturdays, and he has purchased me a

Horse—a very beautiful one indeed—on which I am to ride backwards and forwards—if necessary, to stay a short time after he has left, if not—to leave with him or when I choose.

The weight thus lifted from the father's shoulders was placed upon those of his willing son, who now entered upon the battle of life, the labours of which varied, it is true, in character as years brought him into different fields of labour, but were without intermission to its close. In this early begun and long-sustained work may be traced the source of that sense of weariness so often alluded to in the letters of his later years, and the strain so long endured seems to have tended to bring sooner to its close a life which might, under less trying conditions, have continued in vigour till at least the threescore and ten.

Slow as Mr Smith had been to show confidence in his son's judgment in religious matters, this rearrangement of his business was not the first proof he had given of reliance on William's capacity and common-sense. Mr Smith had shortly before this acquired some property in Cornish mines, and in 1844, while the youth was still a private pupil with Mr Beal at Tavistock, he wrote to him as follows:—

Can you tell me the cause of the Herod's foot shares being £7 each? have you any knowledge what has been paid for the *set*, because 256 at £7 each is about £1790—a goodly sum. Think about this, & let me know your opinion. I do not think anything is wrong, for otherwise Mr P. has my utmost confidence, but we are all apt to run too fast when we get excited. Coolly think over this matter, but do not think that I have any intention to withhold entering into this matter, but I wish to draw your attention to a full consideration of the matter and also to mining in general. I suppose you will go to the Green Valley.

I do not see anything in your letter respecting the state the Miners are in—has any provision been made for the welfare of the nobler part? It will not do for me to attend a Place of Public Worship myself, & yet put men in such a situation that they have not the means of religious instruction, and I am sure you will see the inconsistency of subscribing to Missionary Societies, & at the same time being the cause of making my fellow-countrymen heathens. I hold my hand at the present till my mind is set at rest on this subject.

Do not think that I am in any way displeased respecting Herod's

foot—far from it. I think as far as you have gone you have done perfectly correct, but the other part must not be neglected.

Nothing could illustrate more clearly than this passage the nature of the training which gave a lasting bent to the character of young Smith. His father, though a peculiarly shrewd man of business, with a quick eye to the main chance, and constantly on the look-out for good investments for his savings, was also scrupulously righteous, and conscientious as to the sources whence he should draw his profits.

It must not be supposed, however, that old Mr Smith was close-fisted or ungenerous. Persons still living testify to his liberality and consideration for others. On one occasion, when extensive additions were being made to the offices in the Strand, and were on the point of completion, he happened to meet on a Saturday the contractor for the work, who wore an air of depression and anxiety. Smith asked him why he was so downcast. "Perhaps you would be downcast, Mr Smith," was the reply, "if you had come to Saturday night, and had no money to pay your men. The architect is out of London, and I can't get a certificate for my work." "Oh, is that all?" replied Smith; "come into my office and I'll write you a cheque for £1000." He did so, and the contractor, then in a comparatively small way of business, now a partner in one of the most powerful firms in England, still speaks gratefully of this mark of confidence.

Neither at this time nor at any later period of his life did young Smith possess the gift of poignant expression in his letters. He wrote fluently, indeed, and, making allowance for the greater brevity which multiplied posts have brought about in later times, his early letters are certainly of more liberal measure than most modern sons and brothers address to their parents and sisters. Full of common-sense, they are not always free from a tendency to commonplace, and

the homely language is often an indifferent vehicle for really dignified thought.¹ It is not, for instance, every brother who, at the age of nineteen, takes the trouble to impart such true philosophy as is contained in the following sentence from a letter written by Smith in 1844 to his elder sister Augusta on her birthday :—

Although in a very humble and apparently confined sphere of action, who can tell the effect which our influence or that of our conduct may have upon others, and its reaction throughout future ages ?

Written by the heir to influence and possession, such words might have come to be remembered as pregnant with conscious meaning ; penned as they were by the son of a London tradesman, to whom the University training which he had craved for had been refused, they signify a thoughtful sense of responsibility beyond what might have been reasonably expected.

In the previous year, 1843, William had already, on the invitation of Mr Reece of Furnival's Inn, accepted the office of one of the secretaries of the Great Queen Street Branch of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, an institution of which the importance was certainly not underrated by its members, for Mr Reece, in making his proposal to William, modestly describes it as "the noblest and most deeply interesting enterprise that either the Church or the World—in this or any former age—ever witnessed !"

There was a time when the opposition to his strong desire for ordination seemed about to be removed. His father, weary of incessant work, contemplated the sale of his business and retiring upon the substantial means which he had gained in trade.

¹ In spite of the profusion of his correspondence at all times of his life, Smith possessed two virtues of a letter-writer—he wrote a distinct hand, almost ladylike in neatness, and he hardly ever, even at his busiest, used contractions.

I am most sincerely delighted [wrote Mrs Beal to her brother in 1844] at the encouraging prospect of affairs. You have now certainly far greater likelihood of realising your long-cherished hopes and wishes. All I can say is, may it please God to grant your desire, and that you may live to be the useful minister of a nice little parish of your own. . . . I am very, very thankful dear Father has determined to relieve himself, but shall not be able fully to believe he will sell the business he has so long cherished, until I hear of some very decided move in that direction. . . . Some occupation that will be interesting and not burdensome must be provided. I am quite sure he cannot live inactive after the life of work and bustle he has passed.

Mrs Beal's incredulity was justified by the result. Mr Smith overcame his sense of weariness, pushed his business with redoubled energy, and became more resolved than ever to make his son an active partner in the concern.

Don't be afraid [wrote young Smith to Mrs Beal in 1845] that I am becoming a Puseyite, a Newmanite, or Roman Catholic. If you think me really higher than I was, I have given you a wrong impression. I am only confirmed in my dislike for Wesleyanism as now carried out by preachers and people, and in my decided preference for the Church, and to a certain extent I judge of systems and principles by their results in the lives and ideas of those who hold them. I think the extremes of parties are decidedly wrong; and, besides, I should be careful how I held views which would give just occasion to certain parties to exclaim against what they would state was the inevitable result of a departure from Wesleyanism, for the sake of the Church itself. I am sometimes so much annoyed by these people that I should really say some unpleasant things to them, if I did not remember that they would be carefully treasured up and used at another time against the Church as an illustration of its principles, the aggravating cause being of course forgotten, or never mentioned.

Sisters are a little strong in their views now and then, and if I become a Roman Catholic they will go first; but there is no fear. We are all quiet enough and low enough to please even you, when we get amongst Church people, but now the very reverse is forced down our throats. . . . Nothing has transpired respecting the business or the change that appears to wait me. The increase of clerks promises a little ease, and, accordingly, Father does not say much of selling now. His idea was that after selling the business he would find sufficient employment for his time in attending to the business of the public companies with which he is connected, and in looking after his other property. . . . I don't think, however, that even if I go out of it he will really sell the business; he may probably do less—perhaps take some one in, as Cyrus, whom he could manage completely; but he would never give up the position of master in the concern, nor when the time for action came would he like to give up altogether the influence and income which the business gives.

I shall endeavour to be perfectly content whatever may be the result of all these things, for I feel I should not be justified in doing that which would seem to anticipate the ordering of events. The position which I desire to occupy is of far too responsible a character to be regarded merely as an occupation. I shall not therefore be satisfied unless a clear opening presents itself, and if it does, I hope I shall be enabled to fulfil conscientiously the duties to which I shall then feel I am called.¹

You need not fear I have any desire to tie² myself up for life. It is the opposite tendency that induces Father to suggest the subject so frequently, to *our* great amusement. He thinks that if I entertain such thoughts now, I shall then be settled to something like business for life. But whether I take orders or not, I shall certainly not think of anything like matrimony for some years to come. It would destroy all hope of mental improvement, and make me undoubtedly "soft."

How great was the sacrifice which young Smith was called on to make to his father's will, in resisting the strong vocation he felt for the Church, may be gathered from passages in a journal kept through part of these years. In 1846, the year he came of age, he wrote :—

August 6.—The past twelvemonth has been one of great importance to me, and as far as man may be permitted to judge, determined the particular course of life I shall lead, and the object to which my best energies shall be devoted.

The decision on these most serious matters was not, perhaps, in accordance with the hopes and desires I had long cherished.

Those who have a natural claim upon my respect and obedience so strongly opposed the schemes I entertained, and in such a feeling, as to render it impossible for me to carry them into effect.

It is true that many friends (whose opinions were freely and impartially given, and who, by their position, their knowledge of the world, and the soundness of their motives, were well qualified to give them) said that they thought I was fitted for, as I was inclined to, the high and exalted position of a Minister, and they judged my strong wishes in the matter to be an indication of the will of Providence. But it is not so, at least apparently, for he whose power is absolute

¹ This lofty tone of Christian fatalism remained with Smith throughout his life. It is the note on which Samuel Johnson continually dwelt. "To prefer," he wrote to Boswell in 1776, "one future mode of life to another, upon just reasons, requires faculties which it has not pleased our Creator to give us." Again, in 'Rasselas': "'Very few,' said the poet, 'live by choice: every man is placed in his present condition by causes which acted without his foresight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate.'"

² By marriage.

in the matter—under Providence itself—by the strong expression of his wishes and intentions obliged me to yield my own desires and views, and adopt his instead.

By this I do not mean that he acted otherwise than from the kindest wishes, as he no doubt considered the course of life he contemplated for me the best and most useful, and that, in fact, for which I am designed.

However it may be, I now, as a man, am called upon to fulfil obligations imposed upon all men to their Maker and to each other. I may not idly regret the disappointment of long-cherished hopes which, it may be, I have not been justified in entertaining, but it is my duty to acknowledge an overruling and directing Providence in all the very minutest things, by being, in whatsoever state I am, therewith content. . . .

My conclusion is, then, that I am at present pursuing the path of duty, however imperfectly ; wherever it may lead, or what it may become, I know not.

Bitterly as the young man felt the disappointment, he did not allow it to destroy the attraction which ecclesiastical matters possessed for him, and the tenor of his after-life was accurately forecast in one of Mrs Beal's letters expressing sympathy for him in the turn affairs had taken :—

In your present situation there is nothing to prevent your being very useful. I know more than I once did the difficulty ministers find to get willing, intelligent, and suitable persons to co-operate with them in carrying out many benevolent designs : in this you may render many important services. You know that you used to agree with me that if a man had but the inclination he might be as useful out of office as in it. I trust in future years you will find this to be your experience.

There is no trace in the letters or journals of this period of his abrupt severance from the sect in which William had been brought up. On the contrary, for some time after he had become a member of the Church of England, he continued to attend Wesleyan services, though with a growing distaste for that form of worship. Thus, during a tour which he took in the autumn of 1846, after he was of age, with his mother and four sisters, in the English Lake district, he wrote from Kendal :—

Sunday, 2nd August.—Attended St Thomas's Church in the morning,—Mr Latrobe, an excellent man, duly valued ; Trinity Church in

the afternoon—the old church, of immense size, having five aisles ; and the Methodist Chapel in the evening. To perpetuate my remembrance of *this* service would be unkind.

On January 29, 1847, he wrote to Mrs Beal :—

I am going on very comfortably with Father now, seldom or never going to Chapel, or asked to do so.

Another letter to the same, written a month later, gives the impression made on young Smith by a well-known individual :—

I have had an interview with the great George Hudson, the Railway King. The 'Times' wrote for a man to come up to town, on my representation, who knew something of the railways down in the North, and we went together to see this great man, and to remonstrate with him concerning some errors in the arrangement of the trains. We were with him about half an hour, and had a good opportunity of seeing his character, of which I have not formed a very favourable opinion. I think he is a cunning, clever man, but very deficient in everything that is noble and commanding respect ; very much of a bully in conversation if he thinks he can succeed ; if not, possessed of little courage, if any. At first he was disposed to treat me very slightly, and I felt rather angry, and in the course of conversation brought in the names of the conductors of the 'Times' and 'Chronicle,' which had such a magical effect upon the honourable gentleman that both my companion and myself could hardly refrain from laughing in his face.

It has been a matter of much consideration how far it is expedient to unveil the most secret and sacred thoughts of the man whose narrative fills these pages. One shrinks from putting on permanent record anything that might be but the fruit of a transient mood or merely evidence of a youthful phase of thought ; yet no estimate of William Smith's character and work would be faithful which did not show how, from very early days down to his latest years, he was constantly penetrated with deep religious feeling, and unremitting in the practice both of private prayer and public worship. There are those who believe that this is incompatible with the higher intellectual power ; that the bolder spirits are those which show themselves

somewhat impatient of church services and incredulous as to the efficacy of prayer: not the less would such as these have cause for complaint if the leading motive of all Smith's actions were kept in the background. It will be for each one to form his own judgment of the degree in which the man's usefulness, and the confidence he gained from his fellow-men, was affected by his undoubted piety.

Smith's early journals are full of religious meditation, expressions of deep regret for failings, and gratitude for deliverance from evil.¹ But there would be little profit in quoting extracts, differing not much from the sentences in which many a serious-minded youth must have committed to paper his perplexity and hope, his ardour and disappointment. Yet there has been preserved on a loose slip of paper something so characteristic of the writer, something that may give, once for all, so clear an insight into his ardent, yet withal methodical, devotion—not merely the sentiment of adolescence but the enduring practice of his life—that there seems no reason to withhold it. This document, written about the time Smith came of age, contains a list of the subjects for which he prayed daily. They are as follows:—

1. For repentance. 2. Faith. 3. Love. 4. Grace to help. 5. Gratitude. 6. Power to pray. 7. Constant direction in all things. 8. A right understanding of the Bible, and a thorough knowledge of it. 9. Deliverance from my easily besetting sin—watchfulness. 10. Grace that blessings and talents—God's gifts—may not be the means of withdrawing my heart's service from God

¹ Like all men of prayerful natures, Smith was subject to moods of deep despondency. One is reminded by the tenor of many notes in his handwriting of similar expressions made use of by Dr Johnson—his prayerful reflection, for instance, on his fifty-sixth birthday: "I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving, having, from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing. The need of doing, therefore is pressing, since the time of doing is short. O God! grant me to resolve aright, and to keep my resolutions, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

the Giver. 11. My wife—if it is God's will I should have one. 12. Like blessings for my Father and Sisters, according to their several necessities. 13. My friends. 14. This place. 15. Missionaries. 16. All for whom I ought. 17. Pardon for all ignorance and sin in all my prayers. Remember the 4th February, and pray that I yield not to temptation.

Never, surely, did the boyhood and youth of one whose parents were, if not in affluent, at least in easy circumstances, pass with so little provision for amusement as did those of William Smith. Games generally bulk largely in a schoolboy's letters, but in the few that have survived from the brief school-days of this boy, there is not even a passing reference to football or cricket. The only exercise which he seems to have been at liberty to enjoy—and that from very early years—was riding. Each year, however, after leaving Tavistock, he used to take an autumn holiday with his mother and sisters. In 1844 and 1846 they went to Rydal; in 1847 they made a tour in Scotland; and in 1848 and 1849 they travelled in Ireland.

The absence of active recreation does not seem to have been compensated for by a decided appetite for literature. True, he was at some pains—after his desire to go to a University had been sacrificed to his father's wish for him to enter the business—to carry on such studies as his limited opportunities allowed, and for a couple of years after he came of age he used to study with a private tutor; but he used books not so much from a love of literature, as from a desire for knowledge. His letters are not those of a bookish man; and long afterwards he remarked once to Mr White, who still holds an important, confidential appointment in the head office, "I don't read, I appropriate."

But he had one darling occupation—one, too, in the pursuit of which he had the good fortune to be encouraged by his father. He was passionately fond of music, and learned to play with some skill on the organ. This taste

was dominant with him throughout his life, and the last addition to his country seat at Greenlands in 1885 included the conversion of the kitchen into a large organ-room, in which was placed a fine instrument by Willis.

It is perhaps fruitless to speculate what his life might have been, and to what level he might have risen, had William Smith been allowed to follow his inclination in the choice of a profession. There are few parents who think it wise to thwart the decided prepossession of their sons for definite callings—few that do not rejoice when such prepossession for a worthy vocation is shown. Still, looking back over the circumstances surrounding Smith in boyhood and manhood, it is difficult to see matter for regret in the obstacles placed in the way of fulfilling his ambition. One cannot but see that his was a character requiring external pressure to develop it: had he become a clerk in Holy Orders, he might have filled a rural incumbency, with diligence indeed, and with profit for his own soul and the souls of his parishioners, but his light would not have shone before men, showing how pure and lofty principles can be successfully carried into the highest and most complex conditions of modern government. His private friends and parishioners might have gained something, but the public could not but have failed to lose much. In the last year of his life, in reply to a letter from his old friend, the Rev. H. H. D’Ombrain, vicar of Westwell, congratulating him on his appointment to the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports, an honorary post reserved for the highest in the service of the State, Smith wrote: “Our courses in life have been very different, but if I had had my choice at twenty-one, I should have been as you are.” There comes to mind a story told of old John Brown, the minister of Haddington, to whom a conceited young fellow, who thought himself too good for his calling, had expressed his ardent

desire to be a minister of the Gospel. "I wish," he said, "to preach and glorify God." "My young friend," replied the cool-headed old divine, "a man may glorify God making broom besoms; stick to your trade, and glorify God by your walk and conversation."

To some such conclusion Smith's own strong common-sense seems to have led him. Forty years later—in 1885—he was writing to his daughter Emily, now the Hon. Mrs W. Acland, from Balmoral, where he was Minister in attendance on the Queen:—

Your account of yourself reminds me of my own feeling when I was young. I thought my life was aimless, purposeless, and I wanted something else to do; but events compelled me to adhere to what promised to be a dull life and a useless one; the result has been that few men have had more interesting and useful work to do—whether it has been done ill or well—than I have had.

Man proposes and God disposes, and His dispositions yielded to and accepted turn out for our happiness.

One of Smith's most constant correspondents during his early years was William Ince (now Canon Ince, of Christ Church, Oxford). Interspersed with copious reflections on serious subjects, especially on the development of the Tractarian movement, there occur in his letters to Smith references to matters of the day which are not without interest at the present time:—

30th Jany. 1844.— . . . Pray, are you acquainted with Keble's 'Christian Year'? If not, I would advise you to get or borrow it of some one, as it contains some of the most melodious verses and beautiful sentiments that have been produced in modern times, and you may have it without much fear of being suspected of favouring the party to which its author belongs, as it is read and admired by all—even his bitterest opponents.

30th March 1846.— . . . As for political parties, they appear to me to be all alike. One when in power pursues the very same line of policy which it denounced when out. Great broad principles are abandoned, and mere expediency is the guide of conduct.

In writing to Ince about this time Smith observed:—

Your Bishop [Wilberforce] has come out in the House of Lords in good style—independently—like a man, and although he may have

made a mistake or two, they are nothing to the spirit which is in the man. He will do you in Oxford immense good—make men who never thought of thinking for themselves (or acting, rather) first admire his energetic character, and then copy it. . . . I am amused, even among people who are a little educated, to observe the easiness with which a man first starting a subject can induce all the rest to follow in his steps—taking the same view of it. I suppose it must be so, or the world would be in a terrible mess. For my part, however, I should be inclined to examine any conclusion, all the more because other men had arrived at it; and I do not think that even if I had thought, and expressed the thought, with them on a previous occasion, it would show either a dishonourable or a weak mind if, on further information and more consideration, I dissented from them and acted accordingly.

Here is another extract from Ince's letters :—

Dec. 8, 1848.—We had a grand treat here last week in Jenny Lind's concert; nobody has talked of anything else since; every anecdote of her stay and every word she uttered are most assiduously treasured up. Her singing was certainly most enchanting, and besides its own intrinsic merit was enhanced by the simplicity and artlessness of her manners, so utterly free from all affectation, and so indicative of goodness. She sang two or three songs to the servants at the Angel where she staid, sang some pieces from the Messiah in New College Chapel, and, when asked by the Bodleian Librarian to sign her name in the book provided for distinguished visitors, refused, saying, "No; Oxford is so great and I am so little."

The circumstances of Smith's boyhood and youth forbade the planting of many friendships at that season when the tender rootlets of affection creep silently and fasten themselves deeply into the fabric of a human life. With Ince his friendship was enduring; he was almost the only one of whom he could have exclaimed with Charles Lamb: "Oh! it is pleasant as it is rare to find the same arm linked in yours at forty, which at thirteen helped it to turn over the Cicero *De amicitia*, or some other tale of antique friendship, which the young heart even then was burning to anticipate."

CHAPTER II.

1846-1854.

Notwithstanding the agitation of alternate hopes and fears as to the realisation of his dream of becoming a clergyman, young William Smith had shown no want of willing application to the business of news-agency, upon which he entered at the age of sixteen. While it is impossible to doubt the reality of his religious conviction and the large place which it filled in all his schemes for the future, it is equally impossible not to admire the resolution with which he acted on Candide's maxim—*il faut cultiver notre jardin*.

There is an entry in his journal for August 1846, highly characteristic of his thoughtful and precise habit of mind :—

The last few weeks have been marked with very important and serious events. First came the decision affecting my future life, of the results of which no one can form any estimate. Then my coming of age on 24th June was a serious event, as, with the liberal means afforded me by my father, and the general though tacit concession of freedom of thought and action, . . . the acknowledgment that I am a man—all have opened up fresh responsibilities and duties, without removing any that previously existed. . . . On the 30th ulto., Mr Ford waited upon us by appointment to take our joint instructions as to the Partnership, which gives me £500 a-year clear, board and lodging, a comparative interest in the capital of £2000—for seven years, but liable to six months' notice on either side. These terms, with which was coupled an express declaration that they were only temporary, as a prelude to much greater concessions, are extremely liberal and considerate.

Some time before the year 1839 his father had bought Kilburn House, a pleasant suburban villa, then standing in ample private grounds, though it has now disappeared under the advancing tide of bricks and mortar. This became the home of the family, and every week-day morning at four o'clock, summer and winter, the brougham used to

come to the door to convey the father, or son, or both of them, to the Strand office, to attend to the despatch of the papers by the early mails.

You are correct [wrote young Smith to Mrs Beal in 1847] in supposing that I have been *prevented* from writing to you. I never remember such a period of excitement and hard work. I have been *in* town with Father, once at 3 o'clock in the morning, and every other day since the beginning of the season before 5, excepting Mondays and Thursdays; and we have already had 9 special express engines to Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, and they will run every day this week. All this I have *mainly* to arrange, and I can assure you it has worn me not a little. Constant excitement and anxiety during the days, and short and disturbed sleep at nights as the consequence, are gradually making me as low and nervous as I was a few months back.

But exclusive reliance was not placed on the mail-coaches for the transmission of news. Light carts with fast horses were employed when the newspapers were late of coming from the publishers, to overtake the mails; and in addition to these, when any event of unusual importance took place, or when something of interest happened too late for insertion in the papers of that day, Smith had his own mounted messengers, riding sometimes a couple of hours in front of the mails, distributing printed slips among his agents and customers in provincial towns.

Not seldom it would happen that, when the House of Commons sat late, the publication of the 'Times' was delayed until after the departure of the morning mails, by reason that it was the only journal which gave a full parliamentary report. Smith's men would be all ready to receive it and carry it into the country, thus enabling readers to get their paper on the day of publication, instead of waiting, as they would otherwise have had to do, till the arrival of the mail on the following morning. By this means, on the death of King William IV. in June 1837, Smith was enabled to carry the news into the country some hours in advance of the mails, and that not only into this country,

but into Ireland, for he chartered a special packet to convey the papers to Belfast on the same day. By this boldness and activity, by never grudging expense in a matter of business, and by the excellent organisation of his staff, he had secured the confidence and favour both of publishers and country customers. "First on the road" was his maxim, and it brought his house ultimately to the position of first in the trade, for it enabled him to take full advantage of the change of system and rapid development of newspaper traffic consequent on the creation of railways.

Some years after the exploit mentioned above, 1842, writing to his son, Mr Smith had exultingly said :—

I gave our Opposition a little taste on Saturday. I got the Mng. Papers into Liverpool about 2 Hours before the time of the 6 O'Clk. arriving. I had lost ground a little there, but this has brought me right again. If our friend K.¹ intends to continue the opposition he has begun, he must turn out a little of his money.

Entering upon his first duties at the Strand office in 1842, young William Smith received an allowance of £200 a-year from his father. When he came of age in 1846, he was taken into the business on the terms noted above. At that time the property was valued at £80,527, 8s. 6d., and the new firm was registered as Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, the title by which it is still known.

From the day that young Smith took the position of junior partner, new life made itself felt in the place. Old Mr Smith's temper had not improved with age. The early work now, as was natural, devolved on the junior partner; his father used to drive over from Kilburn later in the day, and woe betide the *employé* whom he found neglecting or mismanaging his task!

Things go on pretty smoothly [William writes to his sister Augusta in the first few months of his partnership]. Father is of course a little testy, but generally manageable. He came down on Monday

¹ Clayton, the largest news-agency of that day, and until 1854.

for half an hour, walked into the Counting-house, bowed to the people, then walked up-stairs, had his leg dressed, and then got into the carriage (which was waiting for him all the time), vowing "the place stunk—couldn't breathe"—and he "would not come down again for some time—it was wretched—such a noise too."

There is no doubt that the senior partner's rule, though just, had become increasingly harsh of late years, and one who remembers the events of these days in the Strand house speaks warmly of the milder influence which prevailed as soon as young Smith entered upon authority. Often, when some clerk or workman was smarting under a prolonged chiding, which might have been well deserved, but was made almost unbearable by the fiercely sarcastic tone in which it was delivered by the old man, the son would wait his opportunity to pass near the culprit, and, pausing with a kindly look in his good brown eyes, tell him in a low voice not to take too much to heart the injurious words addressed to him—that his father had a touch of gout on him—did not mean all he said,—and so on. The effect was wonderful in sweetening the daily toil; the men soon came to know that, with resolution and business capacity not inferior to his father, the son was of finer fibre and gentler disposition. His hand was not less firm on the reins, but it was more elastic.

But the new partner's presence was not long in making itself felt far outside the walls of the counting-house and workshops. The business began to spread far beyond its original scope. Hitherto it had been strictly confined to that of distributing newspapers, a trade in which Clayton's was still the largest and leading house: it was by extending their operations to another and a wider field, that Smith & Son were ultimately able to turn the flank of their powerful rivals.

As railways began to cover the land and travellers multiplied, bookstalls began to be a familiar feature of the prin-

cipal stations. Sometimes they had been started by the enterprise of local booksellers, who generally combined a display of refreshment for the body with that of food for the mind. Newspapers and novels were ranged in amicable jumble with beer-bottles, sandwiches, and jars of sweets. No regulations controlled the privilege of selling on railway platforms, and miscellaneous vendors pushed their humble trade at their own pleasure. Then the railway companies began to find bookstalls a convenient means of providing occupation for men disabled, or for the widows of men killed, in their service; and in the early days of railway travelling, when the longest stretch of rails was no more than thirty miles, and nobody wanted more than a newspaper to while away the journey, this answered all that was required. But, as journeys lengthened and travellers multiplied, more copious literature came in demand, and it is not surprising that complaints began to be heard that the people who were allowed the privilege of supplying it were often illiterate, and almost always untrained to the business.

Another objectionable feature soon became manifest: to supply the demand of travelling readers, dealers furnished their stalls with literature of indiscriminate character. Cheap French novels of the shadiest class, and mischievous trash of every description which no respectable bookseller would offer, found purchasers; indeed, it became notorious that some people sought for and found on railway stalls books that they would have been ashamed to inquire for from tradesmen with a character to lose. Attention was called to the disreputable nature of this traffic by letters to the newspapers, and the directors of the principal railways, recognising the necessity for its regulation, began to advertise for tenders for the rent of stalls on their stations.

In this hitherto unpromising soil young Smith was not slow to discern the prospect of a rich harvest ; but in opening negotiations with the railway companies for the right to erect bookstalls, he had to encounter his father's opposition, who was disinclined to go beyond what he looked on as the legitimate business of the firm—the circulation of newspapers—and sceptical as to the profits to be derived from bookselling, pointing to the ill success of private adventurers in that line. Howbeit, the young man ultimately got his own way, and the first decisive step in the course, which he had initiated by buying up the ventures of local men on liberal terms, was accomplished when he concluded a lease with the London and North-Western Railway Company, giving the firm exclusive rights for the sale of books and newspapers on their system.

The companies, naturally concerned more about the profits of their shareholders than about the morals or mental development of their passengers, paid more regard to the amount offered in the tenders than to the respectability of the tenderers ; consequently the quality of the wares offered by Smith & Son at the London and North-Western stations soon came into favourable contrast with that of the salesmen on other lines. An article which appeared in the 'Times' of 9th August 1851 brings this out so clearly, and throws so much light on the principles on which Messrs W. H. Smith & Son started and maintained their new business, and the vast advantage which it was the first to ensure to the travelling public, that it may be permitted to make somewhat lengthy extracts from it. After dwelling on the revolution effected by railways in social habits, the writer went on to say :—

Men cannot move their bodies and leave their minds behind them. . . . When disciples are restless, philosophers must needs be peripatetic. Are we turning this rushing and scampering over the land to real advantage ? Is the most made of the finest opportunity yet

offered to this generation for guiding awakened thought and instructing the eager and susceptible mind? . . . Could it be possible that the conductors of our railways, all powerful and responsible as they are, had either set themselves, or permitted others to establish on their ground, storehouses of positively injurious aliment for the hungry minds that sought refreshment on their feverish way? Did they sell poison in their literary refreshment-rooms, and stuff of which the deleterious effects twenty doctors would not be sufficient to eradicate? We resolved to ascertain at the earliest opportunity, and within a week visited every railway terminus in this metropolis. It was a painful and humiliating inspection. With few exceptions, unmitigated rubbish encumbered the book-shelves of almost every bookstall we visited, and indicated only too clearly that the hand of ignorance had been indiscriminately busy in piling up the worthless mass. The purchasers were not few or far between, but the greater the number, the more melancholy the scene. Were all the buyers daily travellers? Did they daily make these precious acquisitions? If so, it was a dismal speculation to think how many journeys it would take to destroy for ever a literary taste that might have been perfectly healthy when it paid for its first day ticket. . . .

As we progressed north, a wholesome change became visible in railway bookstalls. We had trudged in vain after the schoolmaster elsewhere, but we caught him by the button at Euston Square,¹ and and it is with the object of making him less partial in his walks that we now venture thus publicly to appeal to him. At the North-Western terminus we diligently inquired for that which required but little looking after in other places, but we poked in vain for the trash. If it had ever been there, the broom had been before us and swept it clean away. . . . When the present proprietor of the Euston Square book-shop acquired the sole right of selling books and newspapers on the London and North-Western Railway, he found at the various stations on the line a miscellaneous collection of publications of the lowest possible character, and vendors equally miscellaneous and irresponsible. . . . At one fell swoop the injurious heap was removed. At first the result was most discouraging. An evident check had been given to demand; but as the new proprietor was gradually able to obtain the assistance of young men who had been educated as booksellers, and as public attention was drawn to the improvement in the character of the books exposed for sale, the returns perceptibly improved, and have maintained a steady progressive increase greatly in excess of the proportion to be expected from the increase of travelling up to the present time. . . . Unexpected revelations came forth in the course of the inquiry. It has been remarked that persons who apparently would be ashamed to be found reading certain works at home, have asked for publications of the worst character at the railway bookstall, and, being unable to obtain them, have suddenly disappeared. . . . Cheap literature is a paying literature, if judiciously managed. A host of readers are

¹ The terminus of the London and North-Western line, where Messrs Smith & Son had erected bookstalls.

springing up along the lines of rail, and imitators of the North-Western missionary will not long be wanting at every terminus in the kingdom. Railway directors will find it their interest no less than their duty to secure the co-operation of intelligent men, and bookstalls will crave for wholesome food, which our chief purveyors must not be slow to furnish.

In this great work of purifying the sources of information and amusement, it must not be supposed that the "North-Western missionary" was acting solely upon principles of self-interest. There was plenty of demand for the kind of literature which he was determined to discourage. It is on record that already as much as £600 had been paid as the annual rent of a bookstall at a London terminus, and the profits accruing from the old traffic were jeopardised by a sudden change.

It cannot have been an easy matter to compile an *Index Expurgatorius*. From first to last, letters came in from correspondents indignantly complaining of the profligacy of some of the books sold. Thus in 1853 a gentleman wrote expressing surprise that Byron's 'Don Juan' was on sale at some of the stations, calling upon Smith to prevent "such a vile book as that to pollute his stalls," and indicating his intention to follow up this letter with another on the subject of Alexandre Dumas' novels. As late as 1888 Smith was reproached by another correspondent for allowing the 'Sporting Times' to be exposed for sale.

There was, besides, more than the custom of the trade and a depraved public taste to be overcome in setting the bookstall business going: young Smith had also, in this matter, an enemy of his own household, for this branch of the business never, from first to last, found favour in old Mr Smith's eyes. Often, so long as he continued to visit the Strand, when he saw a pile of books in the counting-house, he would gruffly order their removal, or

if he met a man carrying a parcel of them, he would ask him what he meant "by bringing such rubbish into my premises."

It is surprising how soon the son's quiet confidence succeeded in establishing the bookstall business. Besides acquiring the monopoly on the London and North-Western system, he continued to extend his operations on other lines of railway, and wherever he had an opportunity, bought up the local man, who was often glad to be let out on easy terms. The railway companies and the public soon became familiar with the bookstalls of W. H. Smith & Son, and the business became so extensive, that in 1849, only three years after its creator had entered the firm, it became necessary to appoint separate departmental managers.

From this humble beginning there took its rise what must now be looked upon as a great institution. At first, each bookstall clerk had to make a weekly return to the head office of every book sold of one shilling and upwards in value; it often happened that one such list was easily written on half a sheet of notepaper. But once started in the hands of a powerful firm, and concentrated under control of a competent manager, the enterprise, which had proved so disastrous to many isolated local traders, began to advance by leaps and bounds. One after another the great railway companies ceded to Smith & Son the exclusive right to erect bookstalls at their stations. It was not easy to meet the requirements of such sudden expansions as were caused by acquiring the whole of the London and South-Western system about 1852, that of the London and Brighton a few years later, and that of the Great Western in 1862. To man and supply with literature so many new stations involved taking on an immense number of new hands, as well as considerable capital expenditure. But the junior partner had a quick

eye for capabilities, and was constantly on the watch to secure the services of young men in the great wholesale houses, who, as the firm of Smith & Son rose in reputation, often came to ask for employment. He never let a promising young fellow pass him, but was always ready to engage him, even if, as would sometimes happen, there was no niche into which he could be fitted at the moment.¹

Sometimes a young man, "too big for his boots," would show an inclination to sniff at being put in charge of a railway bookstall. The trade had an indifferent reputation at first, and such an appointment was not looked upon as that of a legitimate bookseller.

"We'll raise it, Mr——," replied young Smith to one who had offered some such objection—"we'll raise it. I am not at all sure that it may not be made as respectable as Paternoster Row."

These young men were educated to gauge the literary taste of the various districts. Some curious information, showing how this varied according to locality, is given in the 'Times' article quoted from above.

Stations have their idiosyncracies. Yorkshire is not partial to poetry. It is difficult to sell a valuable book at any of the stations

¹ This faculty of detecting "form at a glance" (if it may be permitted to borrow from the phraseology of a system so foreign to Smith's habits and character as the turf) never left him. During his later years it happened that he attended a meeting of fifteen or twenty persons, held to promote a certain object, in the house of his colleague, the Right Hon. Edward Stanhope, M.P. One of the gentlemen present, at the request of Mr Stanhope, acted as secretary during the proceedings, which lasted about an hour. Twelve months later, Smith went to Mr Stanhope and asked the name of the gentleman who had acted as secretary on that occasion, for he said he had been so favourably impressed with his business-like qualities in the short time he had witnessed them that he wished to meet him again, in order, if a second interview confirmed his impressions, to offer him a high and lucrative post in the house in the Strand.

between Derby, Leeds, and Manchester. Religious books hardly find a purchaser at Liverpool, while at Manchester, at the other end of the line, they are in high demand.

One secret of young Smith's influence upon young men, and the ascendancy which he gained over them, was the patience he showed in waiting for development of character and powers. So long as he saw a man willing—so long as his shortcomings could be explained by inexperience and not by negligence—he was most slow to discourage him by rebuke: he used to say that he preferred, even at the risk of temporary loss of profits, to let a man find out his own mistakes rather than check him at once. No one knew better than Smith the truth of the adage, *ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius*; but no one bore more constantly in mind that to be carved into an effigy is not the only use to which timber may be put, and that, of the two, a gatepost is more often of service than a god.

It was remarkable how soon each new hand entering the employment seemed to imbibe the spirit pervading the concern,—to become jealous for its character and zealous in its interests. No doubt this may be accounted for in part by the system of allowing the clerks a liberal percentage on the sales at their stalls; but it is not possible to discourse with one of the staff who knew the business in its beginnings, without acquiring the conviction that, in large measure, this *esprit de corps* had its origin in the personal influence of the junior partner.

When the Milanese critic Lomazzo chose cognisances or emblems for the master-painters of the Italian Renaissance, symbolising their various genius, he assigned to Michael Angelo the dragon of contemplation, and to Mantegna the serpent of sagacity, but for Raphael he reserved the image of man—the type of intelligence and urbanity.¹ It may

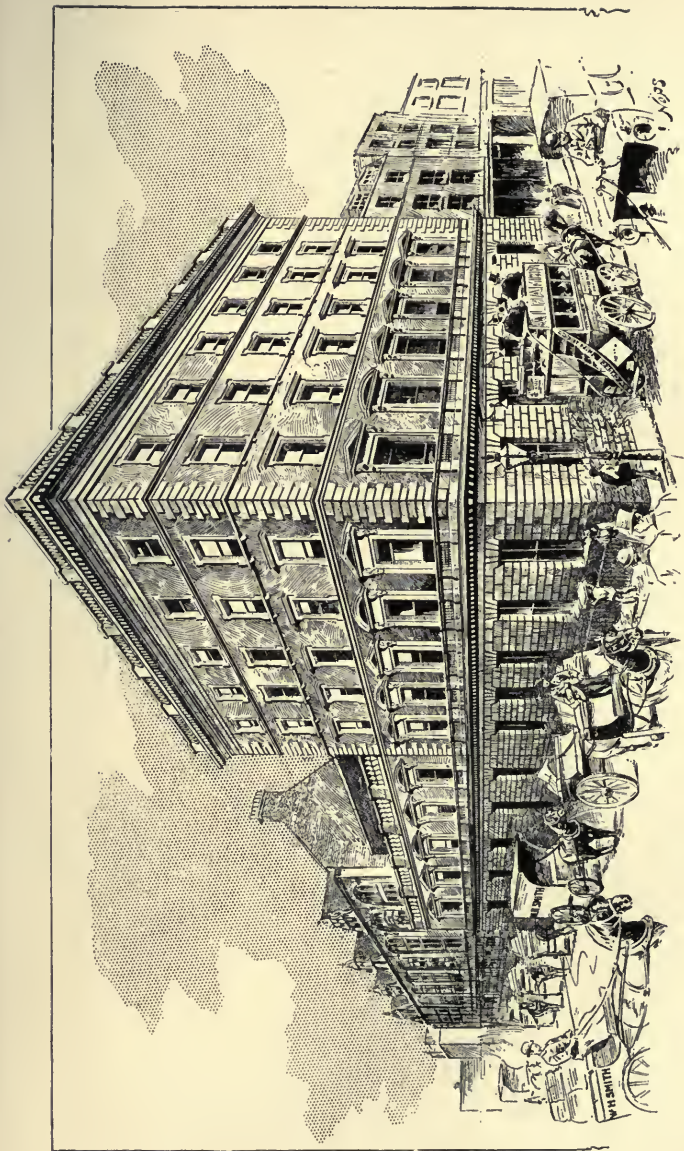
¹ Symonds, Italian Renaissance: The Fine Arts.

seem a strained analogy that suggests itself between the characters of two men whose life-work differed as widely in kind as their social environment, but, in truth, the biographer of each has to record traits and method of influence upon others closely similar. Vasari wrote of Raphael that his kindly nature prevailed, even more than his art, to endear him to men; he dwells on his gentleness, his modesty, his courtesy, his anxiety to help others—above all, his freedom from jealousy,—a sin besetting artists not more closely than statesmen.¹ These are precisely the qualities which distinguished Smith above his fellows, whether in the days when he was busy building up the great business in the Strand, or in after-days, when he was called on to undertake some of the highest offices in the State. Indeed, had he lived in an age when men were named according to their personal qualities, no more fitting appellation could have been devised for him than Smith—the Smoother.² Further, there was something in the concord prevailing among all classes in the employment of the Strand house, a concord established by the younger Smith, and enduring now that he has gone to his rest—something in the devotion to and confidence in their chief, felt and expressed by every one in that vast workshop, that calls to mind the spirit described by Vasari as animating the painters, sculptors, builders, decorators, engravers, and other handicraftsmen who worked under Raphael in his Roman *bottega*.

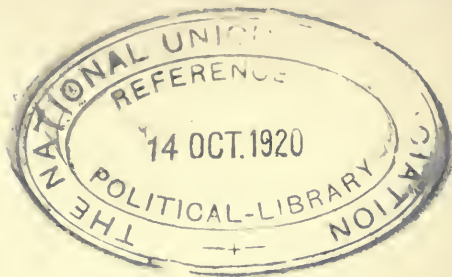
But it would be a mistake to suppose that Smith was indiscriminate in indulgence. His principle was, once he had chosen and appointed a man to his duty, to put complete

¹ Vasari, *Lives of the Painters*, vol. viii. pp. 6, 60.

² There is no reality in Archbishop Trench's specious derivation of "smith = one that smiteth"; the laws of comparative philology are against it, and point to the real affinity with "smooth." A smith is therefore not one who smites but one who smoothes—a polisher.



MESSRS W. H. SMITH AND SON'S PREMISES IN THE STRAND.



trust in him. That trust was seldom betrayed, and Smith was ever slow to be convinced that it had been forfeited; but in the rare instances when he was justly offended, he never gave a man an opportunity of deceiving him a second time. In visiting neglect of duty, he was as stern as his father, though not so unreserved in rebuke. Many years ago, when travelling on one of the southern lines, he observed that, as the train entered an important station, the bookstall clerk did not turn round and face it according to his instructions, but remained inattentive, and engaged in conversation with some acquaintance. The man was not only reprimanded, but his promotion was seriously retarded by the act of negligence which his employer had witnessed. He has since proved in a higher sphere that he was thoroughly capable of discharging more important duties.

A clerk in the counting-house, who had been dismissed for gross misconduct, appeared before Smith one morning to plead for forgiveness.

“Think of my mother, sir,” he said; “she has no one to depend on but me, and if you dismiss me without a character, I shall be unable to support her.”

“You should have thought of your mother before, sir,” was all the answer given by Smith.

If the inflexible justice with which he meted out punishment to wrong-doers sometimes approached severity, it was no more than the reflex of the perfect confidence he reposed in his men until they did something to forfeit it.

A notable feature in the history of this house has been the rareness of instances of men employed in it setting up in business for themselves. The liberality with which they have been treated—their confidence in the known practice of their employers to advance their interests as the prosperity of the business grew, have given them such a feeling of security as to deprive them of the belief they could do any

better on their own account. It is but fair to observe that the constant expansion of the trade has tended not a little towards this result. Promotion has been kept moving at a rate which would have been impossible in any business less constantly under the influence of the flowing tide. Neither in newspaper circulation nor in bookstall literature, nor in the other departments into which, as will presently be mentioned, the business came to be extended, has there ever been a check in the demand: the volume of transactions has ever been on the increase, there has been no embarrassing fluctuation in prices, and the cold shade of depression which has fallen from time to time on nearly every industry has never yet darkened the house in the Strand; consequently the relations of employer and employed have never been subjected to the heavy strain involved in a reduction of the rate of pay. It may occur to some employers, less favoured by the turn of events, that it is easy, under smiling circumstances such as these, to keep a large establishment in good-humour, and to retain the devotion of old servants. No doubt there is much practical reason in this: the influence of wise management, willing service, and prosperity mutually react on each other; but if any one of these conditions is interrupted, the fruits of the others are apt to be wasted.

Young Smith did not suffer close attention to business to prevent him taking an active part in philanthropic work. The services which he rendered to King's College Hospital extended over more than forty years, and are summarised in a resolution of condolence passed by the Committee of Management after his death in 1891, wherein they affirm that—

They are bound in gratitude to recall the long, varied, and important services which Mr Smith rendered to King's College Hospital. The munificent contributions made by him personally, and by the firm of Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, would alone ensure a grateful remem-

brance of his name. But the Committee are still more indebted to him for the personal guidance and support which he rendered to the Hospital, ever since he joined the Committee in 1849. . . . Since then, he served the offices of Auditor in 1862, and of Vice-Chairman from 1862-1864. For some time after his resignation of the latter office, he continued to attend the meetings of the Committee, and in February 1874 he was elected a Vice-President. After his public duties prevented him from taking any active part in the management of the Hospital, he was always ready to give his advice and assistance on any occasion of anxiety or difficulty. . . . For all these benefits his name can never cease to be remembered with gratitude by the Committee and the friends of the Hospital, and the memory of his connection with it will ever be cherished as one of its chief honours and encouragements.

CHAPTER III.

1854-1893.

It is now time to trace some further steps in the development of the Strand business, and record circumstances which contributed to its success.

Besides the expansion of newspaper traffic resulting from the rapid increase of the population of the United Kingdom, and perhaps in a greater degree from the spread of education, the business of journalism, and its handmaid, news-agency, received a sudden and extraordinary impetus by the abolition of the newspaper stamp-duty by Mr Bright's Act of 1854. The immediate effect was a reduction in the price of newspapers, and an enormous increase in the demand for them.

The standing which the energy of the elder Smith had already secured for his business in the days when he worked it single-handed, the indefatigable pluck which he had shown in carrying out his principle of "first on the road," and the perseverance which the new firm had maintained

in deserving the confidence of the public as well as of publishers, enabled Smith & Son to reap the full advantage of the sudden expansion of the trade. On June 21, 1854, the most signal proof was given of their pre-eminence in this respect by a circular issued on that day from the 'Times' office, intimating that the proprietors of that powerful journal had determined that for the future "all papers required by Messrs Smith & Son for distribution in the country shall be delivered to them by the Publishers before any other Agent is supplied. 'The Country' is understood to include all railway stations, and to exclude London and the Metropolitan districts, as defined by the Post Office. Messrs Smith & Son will distribute for the London Agents, at a fair price, the Papers required by them for the service above defined."

The importance of this document, which really amounted to a charter of monopoly in agency for the principal journal in the world, can scarcely be overestimated, and the effect was practically to place the firm out of reach of the competition alike of Clayton's and all others which had exercised the elder Smith so sorely in bygone years. It did even more than this, for it obliged every wholesale agent to come to Smith's for his supply of the 'Times.'

The relief afforded to newspaper proprietors by Bright's Act of 1854 put them in a position to deal worthily with the Crimean War, which broke out in the autumn of that year. Telegraphic communication had been established since the last great European war, and the 'Times' was the earliest to take advantage of it by sending out the first of the class of war correspondents, Dr W. H. Russell, whose graphic despatches enabled people at home to follow day by day, not only the events of the war, but the fortunes of every regiment engaged in it. This gave an immense im-

petus to the circulation of this enterprising journal, and, of course, was to the advantage of the firm which had become their sole country agents.

The business had by this time grown to a scale far beyond the failing powers of old Mr Smith; the scheme and details of organisation devolved entirely upon his son, who from that day forward was practically the managing head of the firm. It is true that the old gentleman still continued to busy himself in the office as often and as long as his health permitted. He used to drive down in his brougham from Kilburn about nine in the morning, attended to correspondence, and pored over the ledgers, till, as sometimes happened, he fell down in a swoon. His presence, however, far from helping business, was a hindrance to it, for the breakdown of his health, while it left his will as imperious as ever, had told disastrously on his temper. Yet his son, however sorely he must have been tried sometimes, never failed in loyal support to his father's authority. One day a customer came into the office to complain that a bill which he had already paid had been sent in a second time. Old Smith vowed that such a thing was impossible, and maintained that the bill had not been paid. The customer was equally confident that it had been settled, lost his temper, and roundly abused his would-be creditor, upon which young Smith left his seat, and, saying quietly to the justly irate customer, "I can't allow any one to speak to my father like that, sir!" led him to the door, and assured him that strict inquiry should be made into the matter. The result was to prove that the account had been settled, as had been alleged.

On another occasion, after considerable transactions had taken place with the great printing house of M'Corquodale, old Mr Smith insisted upon going over the accounts himself. Although it had long been his custom to spend much

time examining the books and accounts of the firm, he had not the gift of following any but clear debtor and creditor statements of simple transactions; complicated details always threw him into a state of hopeless perplexity, and the irritation he felt at the consciousness of his want of capacity in this respect sometimes found vent in a momentary explosion of wrath against those who happened to be nearest. So, having landed himself in a maze of bewilderment over these accounts, he suddenly brought his fist down on the book with a bang, and exclaimed hotly that his son and M'Corquodale were in a conspiracy to ruin him. Young Smith rose and, laying his hand on his father's shoulder, said earnestly: "Father, you know that I would rather lose my right hand than see you robbed." The ebullition was over in a moment.

The labour thrown upon the willing shoulders of the junior partner soon became more than one man could transact. For several years it was his practice to rise each week-day at four in the morning, swallow a cup of coffee, and drive to the Strand office, by 5 A.M. People still in the business can remember how he was then the central figure in the paper-sorting office, with coat off, shirt-sleeves rolled back, and hands and arms deeply dyed with printers' ink off the wet sheets; and they speak warmly of his admirable method. The newspapers were often delivered so late from the printing-houses as to cause much anxiety, yet there was a complete absence of the fuss and hustling from which, under other management, the staff had sometimes had to suffer.

One of these early morning starts from Kilburn was marked by an unpleasant incident which might have had serious consequences. It was the duty of a servant to put some coffee ready overnight for his master, who, on rising, lighted the spirit-lamp, so that by the time he was dressed,

a hot cup was prepared for him. By a sleepy-headed blunder one night this servant put into the pot, not coffee, but cayenne pepper, either wholly or in part. Smith, not observing in the dim light any difference in the mixture, gulped down half a cupful before he discovered the mistake! He afterwards described the sensation as nothing short of excruciating.

But if he was ungrudging in the length and severity of his own labours, he soon gave practical proof of his consideration for the reasonable recreation of others. This was before the time when much had been heard of the early-closing movement, yet he was one of the earliest and most practical advocates of it, for he very soon brought about a shortening of the hours in the Strand office. Saturday half-holidays were almost unknown in the "fifties"; young Smith took a leading part in establishing what is now an almost universal and beneficial rule in good trading houses. He organised periodical excursions on the river for the whole staff in the Strand, and provided intellectual recreation for them for after-work hours. A monthly parliament was set up for the discussion of questions affecting the working classes, but it soon languished and died, for the *employés* of the firm found they had no grievances to discuss. How long, it may be asked, would interest in the debates at Westminster endure, if there were no grievances, no Supply, and no foreign policy?

Devoted and capable as he was, young Smith began, about the year 1854, to find the strain of constantly increasing work getting beyond his powers. In this year he renewed acquaintance with an old Tavistock schoolfellow, William Lethbridge, then an assistant master at Rossal school. Smith invited his old friend to pay him a visit; the result was that their early intimacy was renewed; Lethbridge became interested in the details of the newspaper

and bookstall business, and in the end was admitted into the firm as a partner.

- Previously to this, a totally new branch of business had been entered upon, which was beginning to reach proportions hardly inferior to those of the bookstall trade. Advertising may be said to have been in its infancy at the commencement of the railway movement, but the instincts of trades-people began to awake to the opportunity afforded by the blank walls of railway stations of making known to travellers the merits of their goods. It seemed to them expedient that as, in the latter days, men began to run to and fro, so should their knowledge (of the excellence of Heal's bedsteads and Brogden's watch-chains, &c.¹) be increased. The first stages of what has now become an enormous system were as modest and ill-regulated as those of the bookstalls: the course adopted was the same; the companies began to advertise for tenders for the use of their walls, and in almost every case Smith & Son were the successful tenderers.

But it was some time before the firm could feel satisfied of the prudence of their new undertaking. The initial outlay of capital was very heavy, and for a time the returns were insignificant. Old Mr Smith fidgeted and fumed at the rent paid to the railway companies, and at the cost of providing frames for advertisements, of printing, agents, and bill-posters. But young Smith's sagacious confidence enabled him to overcome all opposition, and in 1854 the balance-sheet of this branch showed a slight profit on the year's transactions, with prospects of indefinite improvement. The expenses during that year amounted to £9800 (including £7100 paid as rent to the railway companies),

¹ These two firms were almost the first to avail themselves of the great impetus to advertisement given by the Great Exhibition of 1851, and to start pictorial advertisement.

the receipts came to £9930, producing a net profit of £130. But the corner had been turned, the future was big with indefinite increase, and the anxiety caused by the absorption of so much capital was once and for all at an end.

The business in 1854 thus consisted of three great branches, each in process of swift and sometimes sudden expansion—the newspaper agency, under direct control of the younger Smith; the bookstall trade, managed by Mr Sandifer; and the railway advertisement department, under Messrs Moore and Small. A fourth branch, hardly less important than the others, was to be added in the course of a few years; but before alluding further to that, it may be instructive to examine into the effect all this incessant work, and the splendid success attending upon it, had upon the mind and habits of one whose early inclination had been for a very different sphere of action.

Had the press and strain of business, and the excitement of fortunate enterprise, driven from his thoughts those subjects upon which, as a youth, he had pondered so deeply and constantly? Had the flush of achievement and the seduction of increasing gains blotted out those higher views, or loosened the strict principles which guided him into manhood? By no means. It is only necessary to turn over some of the letters written by Smith at this period, and especially the private notes (they are not consecutive enough to amount to a journal), intended for no eye but his own, to be convinced that he was still deeply devout, and concerned far more about another and better world than he was about the affairs of this one.

To read his character aright—to learn that a tradesman may be sagacious, industrious, ambitious, and successful, and yet never lose sight of the object set before him by a simple unflinching faith—it is necessary to quote a few sentences showing the matters upon which his mind, as soon

as he was released from business, continually revolved. His sister Augusta was always a favourite correspondent, and the letters he addressed to her while he was at school were the first of a series which continued till the close of her life in 1889. Here is part of one written in pencil during a journey to Dublin.

3. 3. '53.

MY DEAR GUSSY,—I am flying along the London and North-Western by Express Train somewhere near Tring at this moment, probably near Rugby before I have done. . . . Father wishes me to stay in Dublin a fortnight, but I don't think I ought to be away from home more than three days at the outside, and I therefore think of leaving Dublin again on Friday, even if I have to return next week.¹ I have not told him so, because it is best to let him think he is having his way. Although in really good health, as far as I can see—and you know I have as nervous a disposition with regard to him as any one can have—he chafes more under the small annoyances of business, so as to become nervously irritated beyond anything I ever remember, giving three people notice to leave in one day, and suchlike things ; but he is most kind and considerate to me. Still all this occasions anxiety to me, and I am almost afraid of going away, not knowing what violent changes may take place in my absence, in his desire to get rid of the business. I find, too, that his excitement is much greater when I am away, and increases in proportion to the length of time, as everything comes before him. . . . I trust Providence, who makes a way for us in the greatest difficulties, will make our way straight before us. If it were not for the perfect confidence I feel that this *must* be so—cannot be otherwise—I should sometimes be very unhappy ; for with the positive certainty of great changes impending, I know not what may be the next step I ought to take.

I sometimes feel that Father's happiness in his later days, and the comfort of the family, depend on me, and then I feel and know I am absolutely blind, and can really do nothing whatever of my own judgment ; but I know also that if I, and we all, desire absolutely and without reservation to be guided aright, that guidance will be granted to us, and we need not and ought not to fear or doubt in the darkest night of uncertainty and human difficulty. I do sometimes tremble lest I should fail to do a man's part in the order of God's providence, for although He orders, guides, and directs, there is still the responsibility of action with us after all, and therefore I pray that my eyes may be opened to comprehend what He would have me to do, and I am assured that a way and means and strength will be given for any and every occasion. The confidence that all things are

¹ Messrs Smith & Son had at this time a branch office in Dublin.

absolutely right, however painful and difficult now, turns what would otherwise be troubles into sources of thankfulness—so I feel of all the unsettled circumstances of the past and present. They are necessary to some good and right end, if we (for I believe there is a power in Man to thwart Providence) will have it so.

I have gone on writing this without quite intending it, just as I would talk with you ; . . . but there is solid pleasure in the conviction that we are of one mind in these things : wherever we are, we can think of each other, and we can pray that we may each, individually and as one family, be directed in all things by a wisdom which can do no wrong, and whose purposes are, I entirely believe, both present and future happiness with regard to us. Do not think I am at all low or sad. With the exception of very transient occasions, I never felt greater reason for cheerfulness.

All this was written *currente stilo*—evidently without premeditation or reconsideration, for there is hardly a word altered from first to last. It is the genuine, spontaneous expression of the writer's meditation—unadulterated communion with a sister to whom he was accustomed to talk and write without reserve. There may be some readers, impatient of religious *épanchement*, disposed to smile at the simple faith so openly confessed ; but even to these, if they have any desire to understand the man, it is necessary to know what he thought of, and how he expressed it.

Journals are, as a rule, tainted with the suspicion of self-consciousness : one fancies that the diarist harbours, and does not shrink from the prospect of ultimate, though perhaps posthumous, publicity. Nevertheless, there is in Smith's journals something so apart from vainglory—so much in contrast with his daily arena of prosperous, bustling commerce—that a few extracts must be made from these time-stained pages.

Saturday, March 17, 1855.— . . . I know the Sin which most easily besets me, and have now solemnly vowed never again to give way to it, even by thought and by desire, and I register this my resolve, made, not in my own strength, but in humble dependence on one who is able to save all who trust in him, and who did not teach his disciples to say in vain, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Monday, March 19.— . . . The world has had the dominion in its

cares and anxieties. I have also been depressed and not sufficiently trustful for my future domestic life. It is very difficult for man to draw the line between the intelligent exercise of the personal duties and responsibilities devolving upon him—his own part in working out the designs of Providence and that anxious care which becomes Sin. Let me remember the word—"being careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the *peace* of God *shall* keep your hearts," &c.

Tuesday, April 10.—A day of many mercies and of one trial; but I will praise God for all his mercies, and pray to him for more, and I shall not be disappointed, for none ever asked in faith and was sent empty away. The Lord increase my faith and enable me to pray always. . . .

Thursday, April 12.—I have passed through a day of much care and anxiety and occupation. It has also been marked by a step which may affect my future life. Oh that I could more entirely trust in Him who has the disposing of events, who ordereth all things well; but I deplore for myself that depression as to things material and temporal wh. arises from a want of trust in Him who ruleth. May I trust in him with all my heart, and possess the Peace which passeth all understanding! . . .

Monday, April 16.—I am thankful that I have not been so desponding to-day as I have been on former days, but, on the other hand, I am aware of ideas and schemes within me which may not proceed so entirely from a desire to render glory to my God as they ought to do. I pray again that he may direct me in all my ways, for no earthly good can be less than evil—unless it be blessed by Him.

Enough! we have in these passages, taken at random from among much else of similar tenor, not the sentimental lucubrations of a self-conscious idler or the vague apprehensions of a morbid-minded youth (Smith at this time was thirty), but the key-note of a laborious useful life, which, though far from purposeless in material concerns or wanting in sympathy for fellow-men, was directed resolutely yet humbly towards a lofty and distant goal. The sceptic, even if he does not envy the confidence, cannot impugn the manliness of this simple faith, nor doubt its sincerity; while he who shares it, however imperfectly, must be encouraged by the proof given that there is nothing to prevent one who is an earnest and anxious Christian being also a good man of business and a citizen of the world.

But, after all, however pious, and even blameless, may

be the private life of an individual—however wisely he may moralise, and however constantly he may ponder on motives of conduct—however strict may be his observance of religious ordinances, he cannot but earn mistrust unless the effect of it all can be clearly traced in his worldly action. So it is natural that one should scrutinise closely the extent to which the principles, so clearly and constantly professed in the family and congregations, moulded the conduct of the Smiths in their business. It was marked very plainly, indeed ; and through all the years which have passed since the time described, the character and regulation of the house have been in consistency with the profession of its founder. Men in the employment speak enthusiastically of the justice, consideration, and liberality with which they have always been treated ; but these virtues are no monopoly of Christians, still less of strict Methodists, or members of the Church of England. The point on which more importance is laid by these bodies than by any other section of the Church, except, perhaps, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, is the observance of the Lord's Day. Men may hold what views they please about the best means of keeping it holy ; each one may hear the voice of his own conscience, if he listens for it, telling what it is right to do for that end, and what it is wrong not to refrain from doing. But all men would agree, and would be just in agreeing, in condemnation of those who, holding certain observances to be necessary or conducive to their own salvation, should call upon men for service incompatible with their respecting the same observances.

It has always been a rule in Smith & Son's that no work should be done on Sundays. To this rule there is on record only a single exception. This occurred in September 1855, shortly after the battle of Alma : the despatches containing the nominal list of killed and wounded

arrived late on Saturday night, and after consultation with his father, young Smith called upon the staff to sacrifice their Sunday rest in order that special supplements might be distributed in London and the provinces.

In contrast to this incident, and to show that this was done, not to enhance the reputation of the firm or to conciliate customers, but to put a speedy end to the doubts, fears, and—alas!—to the hopes of many distracted families, it is only necessary to mention another incident which happened some years later. Messrs Smith received a command to supply one of the Royal Family with newspapers. Among other journals on the list accompanying the command was the 'Observer,' published then, as now, on Sunday morning. The command was complied with, but it was explained that, as Sunday work was contrary to the rules of the firm, the 'Observer' could not be supplied. This was followed by a visit from an indignant official, who seemed at a loss to understand how a regulation of a firm of news-agents could stand in the way of a Royal command; but even the threat of withdrawal of the whole order did not avail to cause a departure from the rules of the house. To this day, though Sunday papers have in the meantime multiplied many times, and are, moreover, a peculiarly popular form of literature, those who desire them have to obtain them elsewhere than from Smith's agents.

The last branch of the business of Smith & Son which remains to be described took its rise, not unnaturally, out of the bookstall business, which, before 1862, had been established on wellnigh every important line of railway in England, and in the demand made by people living in remote rural districts for a supply of books on loan. This was some years after old Mr Smith had retired from the business, which he did about 1858, and the active

partners, consisting of his son and Mr Lethbridge, felt no inclination for an experiment which, while it called for a heavy capital expenditure, did not promise a very remunerative return. However, it was always a leading principle with the younger Smith¹ that when any section of the public expressed a desire for the kind of literature it was his business to supply, and it was in the power of the firm to comply with it without hazard of serious loss, it was their duty to make the endeavour, even should the prospect of gain be doubtful. Negotiations, accordingly, were set on foot with that firm which held the same pre-eminence in the circulating and lending library business as Smith & Son did in that of news-agency and bookstalls, with the view of acting as agents for Messrs Mudie in such provincial towns as were in want of a supply. But the negotiations came to nothing, and the result was the foundation of Smith & Son's circulating library.

Whatever may have been the misgivings in Smith's own mind about this new venture, once he had made up his mind to it, he did not allow them to interfere with the liberal investment of capital. To one long connected with the house, who expressed doubts as to the prudence of risking so much, Smith remarked: "God blesses all I touch. I think there must be some truth in the motto on my father's seal—*Deo non fortunâ fretus.*"²

The enterprise has proved successful, not, indeed, in the extraordinary degree attained by the other branches of the business, for it is still the least remunerative department; but Mr Faux, who presides over it, has charge of the circulation of more than 300,000 volumes.

¹ From this point, when the elder Smith disappears from active life, it will be unnecessary to use terms to distinguish between father and son. When "Smith" is spoken of in future, it will be the son who is indicated.

² "Relying not on fortune but on God."

It had always been one of Smith's rules not to have the smallest property in any publication. He held it important to be free to deal impartially with every publishing house, just as in the early days of bookstalls he had avoided bringing himself into competition with local tradesmen, but preferred to act in concurrence with them,—often, as has been shown, being in a position to relieve them of a business which they were carrying on at a loss. This was the origin of the establishment of the branches in Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester. But a time came when the supply of bookstall literature ran low; Murray's "Traveller's Library" was proving rather heavy for the tastes of those it was chiefly designed to attract; there was a dearth of harmless, yet lively publications; the quality of cheapness in novels had hitherto been inseparable from that of nastiness, or, at least, of worthlessness: the receipts from the bookstalls, so brilliant at first, began to show a decline; something had to be done to restore their popularity. A decided step was taken, which, for the first time, enabled people to buy the best romances at a trifling cost. The copyright of Lever's novels was acquired by Smith & Son; Mr Sandifer, the manager of the bookstall department, was commissioned to buy paper, contract for printing, receive designs for covers, and, in short, undertake all the necessary steps in setting out on a heavy publishing venture. But, inasmuch as the firm were only concerned to supply a want felt by a peculiar class of customers—the travelling public—and as they did not wish to engage in competition with established firms,—these books were issued by arrangement with Messrs Chapman & Hall, whose name, and not that of Smith & Son, appeared on the titles.

The success of the venture was immediate and unmistakable. A new vein had been struck; the copyrights of other authors were acquired, and Sandifer's enthusiasm

knew no bounds as the steam-presses flew and the well-known "yellow-backed novels" multiplied in the land. The profits were immense: the books sold off as fast as they could be printed at 2s. a-piece, and the cost of production was only 9d.

But Smith did not feel happy about all the consequences of this splendidly successful enterprise. The cheap novels had taken better than he had either expected or intended; they were driving other works off the stalls. It was the object, of course, of every clerk, seeing that he received commissions on sales, to give the most saleable books the preference, and one morning Smith stood on the platform at Rugby in mournful contemplation of the effects of a revolution which he himself had created. The bookstall at that station was a coruscation of yellow novels and white newspapers; volumes of essays, secular and religious, travels, science, poetry—all were thrust into odd corners or out of sight, for the public would have nothing but fiction. Smith sadly shook his head, but, true to his principles, would not discourage the clerk in charge by expressing any distrust of his discretion: the management of the stall had been committed to him, and he must not be interfered with.

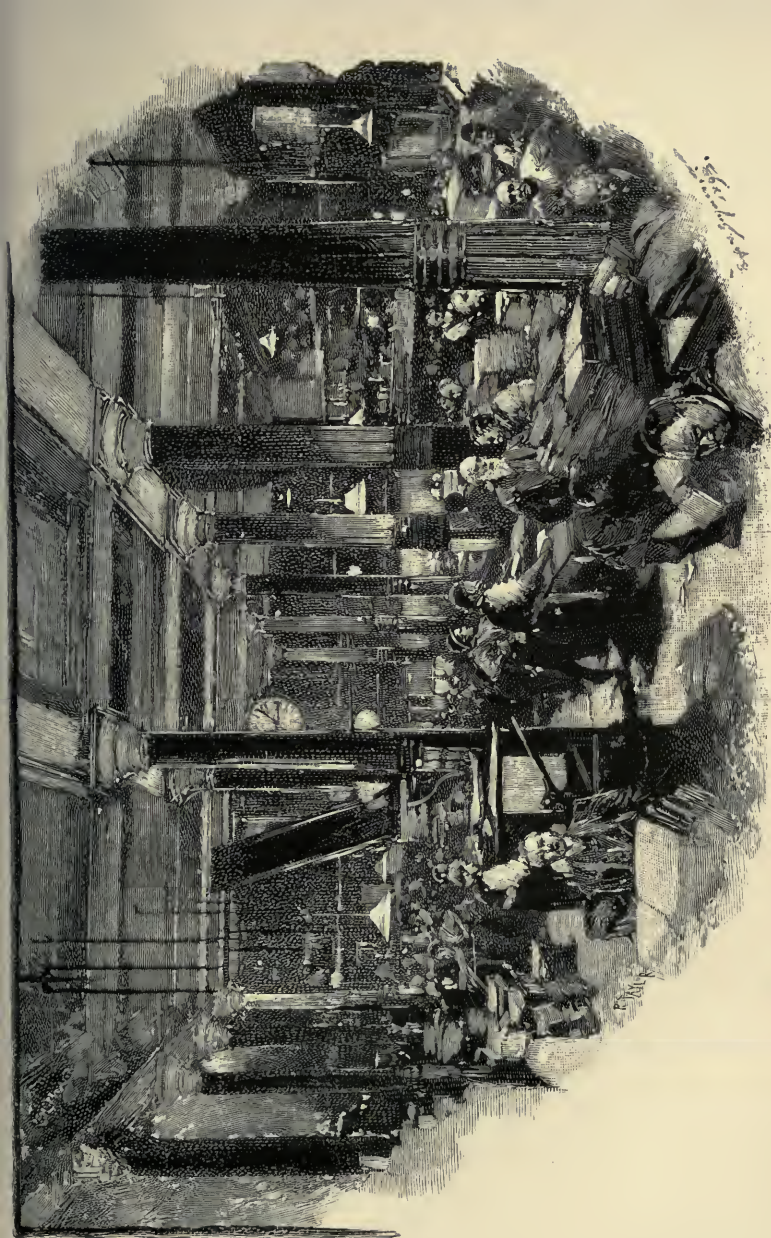
Messrs Ward & Lock were the next firm to come upon this field of enterprise, and as soon as they and others proved able to conduct the business successfully, Smith felt that his mission in that respect had been accomplished—namely, the stimulation of a supply of cheap and sound literature—and the issue of these works was stopped. The copyrights acquired by the firm were sold in 1883 for £10,000.

The scale to which the business of Messrs W. H. Smith & Son has grown at the present time has made it necessary to acquire much of the adjoining ground. The frontage

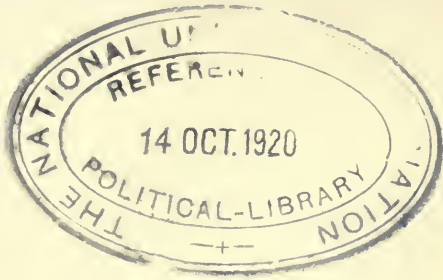
is still in the Strand, but the counting-house and offices are at the back in a splendid new range of buildings, having their entrance in Arundel Street. Although Mr W. H. Smith retired from active partnership in 1877, he continued to take a warm interest in the proceedings of the firm and the welfare of their *employés* down to the close of his life, but he was not permitted to see the completion of the new buildings. The book department keeps up the supply for the railway bookstalls, and may be seen at its busiest at the close of each month, when the magazines come out. The lending department contains, as has been said, upwards of 300,000 volumes in circulation. The workshops for making bookstalls and frames for railway-station advertisements are in Water Street. It is part of the system that all damaged or dilapidated bookstalls, even in remote parts of the country, are packed up and sent here for repair.

In Water Street also are the extensive stables, kept with the regularity and little short of the discipline of a cavalry barracks. Here stand between fifty and sixty horses for the service of the red newspaper carts, and the bloom on their coats speaks plainly to good condition and careful grooming. At the entrance to the yard hangs the drivers' roster, showing the date and hour when each man comes on duty. The printing-house, where the railway advertisements are prepared, is at some distance off, in Fetter Lane.

Of all the busy scenes in busy London, there is none more brisk and orderly than that which may be witnessed any morning, Sundays excepted, throughout the year in the packing department of 186 Strand. On the first four working days in the week, when there is not much except the dailies to deal with, work begins shortly after 3 A.M.; but on Fridays and Saturdays the pressure is increased by the weeklies, and then the start is made an hour earlier.



MESSRS W. H. SMITH AND SON'S STRAND PREMISES (INTERIOR).



Few of those who know the Strand and Fleet Street only in the hours when the side-pavements are hidden with swarms of busy men, and the thoroughfare is blocked with vehicles, can have formed any idea of their aspect at day-break in summer, or imagine the singular beauty of the view eastward from a point, say, opposite 160 Fleet Street. The perspective of varied house-fronts on either side converges on St Paul's Cathedral, a shapely, soft-toned mass against the pale sky; and looking westward from the Law Courts, the eye surveys a scene, not so impressive or harmoniously composed as the other, yet far redeemed from commonplace by the quaint churches of St Clement Danes and St Mary-le-Strand, and that block of houses, long threatened by the plans of the city improver, which shuts out Holywell Street from the Strand. Save a policeman or two, and here and there a belated wanderer creeping home, there is not a human being in sight, till, as the bells ring out half-past two, the first of Smith & Son's well-known scarlet carts comes clattering down the narrow thoroughfare laden with piles of the 'Illustrated,' the 'Queen,' or some other great weekly journal. This is followed by others, till, at three o'clock, the street is crowded with vehicles, each bringing its load of "raw papers" to be carried into the office and sorted into parcels for the country.

Inside matters present an appearance in which the casual visitor might, in default of a clue, despair of tracing either method or motive. The place is like an ant-hill; men are running about in every direction carrying bundles on their shoulders, as aimlessly to all appearance, and as ceaselessly, as ants do their white pupæ when something has disturbed them. Sometimes they pause to swallow a mug of excellent coffee, which, with bread and butter, is supplied for the workers. But the simplicity of the system is apparent once it is explained. A stream of bundle-bearers comes in

from the street, each tossing down his parcel on a large table on the right side of the hall; these are "raw papers"—papers, that is to say, as they come from the publishing office. Then each of the parcels for the country is passed round, checked by a list, and receives its proper contents, which are again checked before the parcel is sent forward to be packed. Watching the packers, one is impressed not only by their swiftness and dexterity—for an inexperienced hand would find it a very difficult matter to tie up securely in a single sheet of paper a parcel weighing 50 or 60 lb., composed of newspapers of various size, shape, and substance—but also by the amount of knocking about these apparently fragile parcels afterwards endure with impunity. One part of the secret is the excellence of the stout twine



Knot used in tying parcels of newspapers.

used, and the peculiar slip-knot employed, which enables the packer to draw the cord almost as tightly as if by machinery. The amount of this twine used is prodigious: in the twelve months of 1892 the consumption was 9,264,410 yards, or 5271 miles (at the rate, that is, of about 100 miles

a-week), weighing over 59 tons. The parcels, when finished, are carried or wheeled out to the street, packed into vans, and driven off to the different railway stations.

One very remarkable feature in this busy scene is the absence of noise. No loud or hasty accents of command are heard. Mr Monger, the head of this department, who has been connected with it for forty years, moves quietly through the throng; any instructions he has to give are made in a gentle, almost confidential tone; expostulation and altercation seem quite unknown; the contents of each parcel as it is brought in or sent out are announced by the bearer; good humour and goodwill seem to be in the atmosphere.

It is pleasant to stand and watch the work on a balmy summer morning, when the cool air flows in through the open doors, and the electric lights are quenched by the broadening day; but it is far otherwise on some mornings in winter. Rain, cold, and, above all, fog, turn this early work into a test of endurance, and the thickest clothes will not suffice to neutralise the discomfort of the piercing draughts.

There is an archaic survival in the packing-hall of one of the elder Smith's regulations: the clock is always kept five minutes fast; but many a householder can testify to the futility of this shallow device. Of course the effect upon punctuality is purely negative, and it is long practice and strict discipline which has given to Smith & Son's drivers the faculty of almost unerring precision in catching trains. At these early hours the streets are clear of traffic, and the men are able to calculate to a nicety the time required; so that, while it very rarely happens that a train is missed, neither is there any time lost at the stations.

At four o'clock Smith's vans begin to arrive at the Strand house from the various offices of the dailies, bearing mountains of 'Standard,' 'Daily News,' 'Daily Telegraph,' &c., which are treated in the same way as

the weeklies. The 'Times' is now, as of old, the latest to go to press and the latest in arrival.

The necessity for punctuality in the delivery of dailies is, of course, much more imperious than in that of weeklies. A slight hitch or accident in one of the huge printing-presses, which, with deafening roar, are vomiting forth folded sheets as fast as men can carry them away, might cause a failure in the supply or a glut at the Strand office or the railway stations, which would dislocate the whole morning's-work. Consequently Messrs Smith & Son have a man at each of the great newspaper offices, superintending the loading of carts and the despatch of papers to the different packing places. For only part of the work of packing dailies goes on at the Strand. Smith's carts carry the newspapers direct from the printing offices to the railway stations, at some of which, as at Paddington and King's Cross, the packing is done in rooms provided for the purpose, or, as at Waterloo Station, on the platform; while on other lines, such as the London and North-Western and Midland, the raw papers are loaded into railway vans, and the sorting and packing is accomplished by Smith's men during the journey.

Sometimes it seems to the bystander as if, say, the 5.15 A.M. newspaper train from Euston *must* be despatched without some of its load. The minute-hand of the clock is within a few seconds of the quarter past, and the 'Times' has not arrived. The signal to start will be given directly — Manchester, Liverpool, all the North, must do without their 'Times' till mid-day. Suddenly a cry is heard—"The 'Times'!" a passage is cleared on the platform, a rush of barrows comes round the corner, and the last bundle is flung into the van as the train moves off.

Compare this with the experience of an old *employé* of the firm, Mr Elliman, who died not many years ago.

In the early days of the business the daily papers were not published in time for the morning mails, but were despatched by the evening post. Old Mr Smith saw the inconvenience of this arrangement to his country customers, so it became Elliman's daily duty to take in hand the entire supply of the 'Times' for Manchester and Liverpool round to the starting-place in John Street, Adelphi. Owing to delay in publication, it would sometimes happen that he missed the coach, whereupon he had to hurry up to try and catch it at the Angel, Islington; if he missed it there, he had to saddle a horse and gallop after it to the change at Colney. His orders were to get the paper into the country at all hazards, and it even happened more than once that he had to pursue it as far as Birmingham. How could it pay the firm, it may be asked, to be at such expense in the delivery of a handful of newspapers? Well, it was by energy such as this that old Mr Smith secured the pre-eminence over all other newspaper agents.¹

To illustrate the prodigious development of the business started on so humble a scale by Mr Smith, senior, there may be given here the summary of business done in the newspaper trade in the Strand office of W. H. Smith & Son, during a single day of the present year, Tuesday, February 14, 1893. It was, it is true, an exceptionally heavy day, owing to the demand caused by Mr Gladstone having on the previous night introduced his Home Rule Bill.

Total number of papers despatched	374,218
Quires	14,393
Weight	44 tons 0 cwt. 2 qrs.

¹ During the present year (1893) an Austrian gentleman requested permission, which was readily granted him, to inspect the premises and proceedings of Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, as he desired to start a similar business in his own country. He seemed a little disheartened when he learned through what humble and unpromising ways the ascent to such a vast business had been made.

The average weight of newspapers despatched on a Tuesday morning is about 35 tons. The extra supply on account of the Home Rule Bill therefore amounted to

Copies of newspapers	75,140
Quires	2,890
Weight	9 tons 7 cwt. 1 qr.

The firm continued the endeavour to be "first on the road" long after the establishment of the railway system. The 'Newcastle Journal' for February 26, 1848, contains the following statement:—

A special newspaper train was run by Messrs W. H. Smith & Son from Euston to Glasgow *via* York and Newcastle on February 19. It made the journey of 472½ miles in 10 hours and 22 minutes: detentions amounted to 50 minutes, making the actual travelling 9 hours and 32 minutes, being at the rate of 50 miles an hour. It reached Glasgow two hours before the mails which left London the previous evening. It left Euston at 5.35 A.M., reached Edinburgh at 2.55 P.M., and Glasgow 3.59 P.M. Lord John Russell's financial statement was the exciting topic reported in the papers on the occasion.

One other department of this establishment—the postal—is also in full work during the small hours. The work seems small in bulk compared with the despatch of railway parcels; but many busy hands are at work—folding, pasting, wrapping—many thousands of newspapers are thus despatched, and the precision with which the addresses require to be kept involves an immense amount of patient attention. These addresses are all printed in Water Street, and preserved in proof-books, of which there are no less than fifty-six requiring to be gone through carefully every day. If a customer writes directing the discontinuance of a journal which he has been receiving, and the address is not at once removed from the proof-book, it may be that the newspaper will continue to go to him for years at the expense of the firm. One such instance was lately discovered, where the 'Field' had been sent to some one in

the country for more than twenty years after he had countermanded it.

It is well remembered by men still employed in the business how, when the younger Smith entered the firm, he excelled in this department, and had the reputation of being only second to his father in dexterity of folding papers for the post.

Surgit amari — there is a source of bitterness among the postal hands here. The embossed postage on the newspaper covers had, for many years, the name of Messrs W. H. Smith & Son tastefully woven round it in a wreath, and the staff were proud of this distinction, which was enjoyed only by a few large firms. When the late Mr Cecil Raikes became Postmaster-General, he laid his veto on the continuance of this custom, which had forthwith to be discontinued. Mr Smith, at that time First Lord of the Treasury, could of course offer no remonstrance against his colleague's scrupulousness. If it had been an enemy that had done this — but it was the act of a Conservative minister!

There is a scrap-book kept in the office containing some literary curiosities—flotsam and jetsam of the long history of the firm. One of these is an envelope, on which the London postmark shows the date 1864, and the only indication of its destination is contained in the cryptogram—

*thisel log,
near abscelengly.*

It almost implies that the Post-office officials were gifted with second-sight or thought-reading power, which enabled them to convey this missive to

*Cecil Lodge,
near Abbots Langley,*

where Mr Smith resided at that time.

Another envelope, dated 1888, is addressed to

*Mr W. H. Smith,
The Stationer,
Downing Street,
London.*

CHAPTER IV.

1855-1865.

Smith's first connection with public business seems to have been in 1855, when he was elected a member of the Metropolitan Board of Works. But before this date he had entered upon undertakings quite disconnected with his professional work in the Strand, and, among other duties, he performed those of a member of the managing committee of King's College Hospital from 1849 onwards. Except his autumn holidays, which were generally spent abroad, he allowed nothing to interfere with the routine of attendance in the Strand, and was always ready to devote such intervals of leisure as it afforded to useful or philanthropic schemes. His duties in connection with King's College Hospital brought him acquainted with Mr Robert Cheere, one of those most in the management of that institution, and it was that gentleman who introduced him to the family of Mr Danvers, who had been clerk to the council of the Duchy of Lancaster since the days of George IV. Mr Danvers had several daughters. Smith was received on friendly terms by the Danvers family; and a friend of his, Mr Auber Leach, who held an appointment in the old India House, used also to visit them in Lancaster Place, and, be-

coming engaged to Miss Emily Danvers, married her in 1854. Miss Emily Danvers and her younger sister were married on the same day in the Chapel of the Savoy. But the wedded life of the elder sister was tragically short, for Mr Leach died in January 1855. The young widow then returned to live with her parents in Lancaster Place, where her baby, a girl,¹ was born.

Smith continued on most friendly terms with the Danvers family, and, as time went on, it became evident that he was much more susceptible to the attractions of Mrs Leach than to those of her unmarried sisters. In short, it soon appeared, not only to himself but to others, that he was becoming deeply attached to the young widow.

Smith's life had hitherto been useful, dutiful, and successful; it had been warmed with the steady glow of domestic affection, but it had also been almost painfully laborious and lacking in that relief which can only be conferred by something more ardent than sisterly affection—something more inspiring than devotion to aged parents. It was now to receive the complement essential to happy human circumstance; and in winning the affection of Mrs Leach, Smith achieved the beginning of what proved an enduring and—if one may venture to pass judgment on such a sacred tie—a perfect union. Henceforward, in prosperity or anxiety, in health or sickness, in happiness or in sorrow, all his hopes were to be shared, his cares lightened, his projects aided, by the presence in his home of one to whom he never failed to turn for counsel. There are some things too deeply hallowed to be treated of on printed page, and of these are the letters which, during three-and-thirty years, passed between this husband and wife; but those who only knew him in business or in public affairs can form no true estimate of Smith's character unless they take account of the

¹ Now the Hon. Mrs Codrington, widow of Rear-Admiral Codrington.

love he bore his wife, which this correspondence shows to have been ever growing warmer and more impatient of separation till his time on earth was accomplished.

The happy conclusion of the courtship is told in a brief note to his sister :—

STRAND, Feb. 25, 1858.

DEAR GUSSY,—All right. It is done for ever. Come and help me to buy the ring. Ever your affectionate
WM.

Smith would have been untrue to his character had he concealed the serious strain that ran through all his happiness. On returning from a visit to his betrothed, then staying with some friends at Bedford, a few days after their engagement, he wrote to her :—

March 4, 1858.—On my way up in the train I could not help thinking over the change that has taken place in my prospects during the last few days, and then I came to think of myself and to fear that I had not been sufficiently ingenuous with you. There are some points in my character which I am not afraid to tell you of, because you love me enough to try to do me good, and even to love me through them all ; but you ought to know them, that your prayers may help me, and that your influence may be exerted to correct them. Very likely I do not perceive the worst myself, but I know this. I have not the strong determination to do always that which is right, by God's help, which I admired so much in Auber, and which I see in so many men around me. I am inclined to be easy with myself—just as a man who would postpone a duty because it is an unpleasant one, and the opportunity for performing it passes altogether, and I very often neglect to do a thing I ought to do because it is unpleasant and would pain one to do it.

In good truth, in some things I have really a *weak* character, and I want you to be the means of strengthening it, and will do so a great deal more, for although it is one of my failings to desire the good opinion of the world at large, I must be true and transparent to you, for my own soul's sake and for *our* happiness in this world as well as in the next.

The wedding took place in April of the same year. Before this event, old Mr Smith had finally retired from active business, and his son was practically head of the firm—very much, it must be admitted, to the comfort of all parties ; for it had grown to dimensions far beyond the capacity of its founder, whose health, moreover, had failed so far as to

make him a serious hindrance in the transaction of important details. Neither the happiness he had found in marriage nor the increased responsibility he had to undertake in the business prevailed to diminish the son's dutiful anxiety on his father's account. His letters are full of directions to his sisters about what is to be done for the old gentleman's comfort:—

I would gladly [he wrote to Miss Augusta Smith in December 1858] take upon my shoulders the house at Bournemouth, if he fancied the change; or he might come somewhere eastward, to Worthing or St Leonards, if he fancied the change, which are both warm. Don't talk to him about anything *you* consider impracticable, but think over what I have said, and then write to me. Only remember that expense on Father's account is no consideration with me, and if he disliked spending the money, I would willingly incur ANY cost or responsibility myself that you thought would add to his comfort or safety.

It was not only in concern for his father that Smith showed that the new source of happiness he had found was not to quench the warmth of domestic ties. To the same sister he wrote after his engagement:—

MY DEAREST GUSSY,—Not less dear that I have found one whom I can love with a different and—you won't grudge her—a stronger affection. Indeed I am sensible already of the fact that love begets love even for those who were much loved before. One's capacity is increased—but I must not go on, or the paper will be exhausted with that which may perhaps appear foolishness to some.

Life went smoothly, if uneventfully, with the Smiths for some years after their marriage. They lived in Hyde Park Street; he became more and more occupied in educational, ecclesiastical, and philanthropic work. At a meeting held at the Bishop of London's in 1861, Smith was first brought into acquaintance with Lord Sandon, at that time member for Liverpool—now Earl of Harrowby—who describes him as being then a man of very taking appearance, with very dark hair and bright eyes, and a calm and resolute look. At this meeting the Bishop of London's Fund was first set on foot; Lord Sandon moved, and Smith seconded, the

chief resolution. An inner working committee was formed, of which Lord Sandon was appointed chairman, and on which, among others, Smith had as colleagues Mr John Talbot,¹ the Rev. Canon Rowsell, Lord Radstock, Mr John Murray, the publisher, the Rev. W. D. Maclagan,² the Rev. J. W. Bardsley,³ the Rev. F. Blomfield, Mr J. A. Shaw Stewart, and Mr Redmayne of Bond Street. Mr G. H. Croad, who is now Secretary to the London School Board, joined this committee in 1866. Under this committee London was divided into districts—Smith having charge, as was fitting, over that of the Strand, in conjunction with the Rev. J. W. Bardsley. He as well as the other members of committee were oppressed with concern on account of the dreadful condition of the dwellings of London poor, which, though they may still be judged far short of what they ought to be, were at that time in a state calling far more urgently for reform.

This common work, in which they were associated for five years, brought about a close intimacy between Smith and Lord Sandon, which was to ripen into a lifelong friendship. Twenty years later, when, in 1882, Sandon left the House of Commons to take his seat in the House of Lords, he wrote to Smith, referring to this friendship as—

One of the charms of my public life, which has only strengthened under the strain of business and the advance of years, and must now become more and more precious to my heart as time goes on. An intercourse such as ours, of more than twenty years, with a constant similarity of aim, unbroken by a single disagreement, and of those who, while working together on the same public platform, have enjoyed the confidence of an unreserved private friendship, has certainly been one of the blessings of my life. I can only say—long may it continue! though, to my bitter regret, we cannot sit together any longer on the well-known benches.

While he lived in the parish of St John's, Paddington, Smith took an active part in the promotion of church and

¹ Now M.P. for Oxford University.

² Now Archbishop of York.

³ Now Bishop of Carlisle.

school matters. The Rev. Sir Emilius Laurie, at that time rector of St John's, has furnished the following notes of the benefit derived by the parish from Smith's eager liberality :—

In Mr Smith I found a model parishioner—wise in counsel, generous in all his impulses, hearty in his support of all good work. St John's parish, at the commencement of my incumbency, was hardly up to date. The church itself, though a modern one, needed reconstruction, if not rebuilding ; and the very insufficient school-buildings were held only under a yearly tenancy, liable to be put an end to at any time on the usual notice. In the somewhat serious work of providing new schools in a crowded district, Mr Smith's aid was simply invaluable. The £500 subscription was the least of the benefits conferred, though in raising £12,000 for site and building, without any external help, such assistance was not to be despised. What struck me most, however, was the readiness with which, amidst the engrossing calls of public life, Mr Smith gave his full attention to every question of detail, the tact with which he dealt with opposition, and the free hand with which he overcame difficulties which from time to time arose. An example of this occurred in the course of the rebuilding. The new schools obstructed some ancient lights in two adjoining houses. The owner objected, and threatened legal proceedings, but expressed his willingness to sell. The law was against us ; so, alas ! were the figures—for the price asked was high. Mr Smith stepped in and bought the houses, and would have bought half the parish, I believe, rather than leave a good work undone.

Mr Smith was prepared also to deal on a still larger scale with the church. Occupying, as he said, one of the finest sites in London, it was poor in architecture, inconvenient and ill-ordered in its internal arrangements. Mr Smith thought that a church in such a position should cost not less than £30,000, and towards this he offered to give £20,000. Plans were prepared by Sir F. Blomfield, but it was found that, although built upon the Bishop of London's estate, no room had been left for enlargement, and we had to content ourselves with a modest reconstruction, at a cost of £7000, leaving Mr Smith's benevolent donation free for parishes in which the need was greater than at St John's. . . . The Church of England owes, I believe, much to Mr Smith. How much he gave to it was known only to himself.

It is a common complaint that the House of Commons is not now, and has not been for at least a generation, what it used to be under a restricted franchise. To listen to the talk of some people might dispose one to the uncomfortable belief that political integrity evaporated with the abolition of pocket boroughs, that statesmanship languished when

sinecures began to be extinguished, and totally disappeared with the establishment of household suffrage, and that public spirit—all powerful when the majority of the public had no voice in the direction of public affairs—took flight on the appearance of bloated registers. The divine right of those who have never felt the pinch of hunger nor, save as the direct consequence of their own folly, the gnawing anguish of pecuniary care, to govern those who live by toil of hand or brain, was, in the belief of people yet living, the Palladium of our liberty. To persons of this creed it may be conceded that, with the extension of popular rights, the risk of social oppression has been exchanged for a greater national hazard. Bacon professed his distaste “for this word ‘people,’” and Carlyle wrote scathingly of the “collective wisdom of individual ignorances”; but neither they, nor any other thoughtful seer, thought that because power was passing out of the hands of a few into those of the many, there was any cause, for those who had time to spare from their private anxieties, to relax watchfulness over the destiny of the kingdom, or to refrain from manly effort to lead their fellow-countrymen in the paths of prosperity and peace. The method of statecraft has changed with the broadening of the constitution, but the object remains the same. As Mr Nicholl, writing of the Government of Queen Elizabeth, puts it with a degree of frankness, not brutal, but sternly masculine, “Much must be allowed to the fashion of a time when it was as customary to flatter monarchs as it now is to juggle mobs.”¹ *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*—the same qualities of patience, foresight, knowledge of men in the past and in the present, courage in yielding as well as in holding back, which, under the old order, had placed certain individuals in the front rank

¹ Life of Bacon, vol. i. p. 67.

of statesmen, must be looked for in those to whom the guidance of affairs should be intrusted in the future.

The perspective of years shuts out of view all but the most conspicuous characters; looking back from one end of a century to the other, one discerns only the loftiest personalities—the Pitts, the Foxes, the Burkes; the crowd of lesser men have sunk out of view, and with them has disappeared the memory of all that was narrow, timid, mean, and selfish in their careers. And so the impression has gained ground, that from being the arena of single-minded patriotism and the theatre of eloquence, the House of Commons has become but the coveted vantage-ground of self-seeking busybodies. We are disposed to compare our public men unfavourably with the great figures of the eighteenth century, but Dr Johnson himself, trained as he was to philosophical reflection, leaned to a similar disposition. “Politicks,” he said, “are now nothing more than means of rising in this world. With this sole view do men engage in politicks, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it. How different in that respect is the state of the nation now from what it was in the time of Charles the First, during the Usurpation, and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles the Second.” This feeling of disparagement has been intensified by the degree of familiarity with its proceedings which has of late been brought about by the activity of the press. It is difficult to preserve the august repute of Parliament when every unruly scene, as well as the foibles and blunders of every member of it, are minutely described and dwelt upon in the newspapers. It is not surprising if familiarity engenders its proverbial offspring in the minds of the many. Yet there be some, and these not the least intelligent in the community, who still recognise in the House of Commons not only the goal of respectable and useful ambition, but also a field in which well-directed

effort may, even at this day, produce valuable fruit. To such natures it is more congenial to be brought in direct contact with the masses for whom they legislate, than to study the moods and allay the apprehensions of exalted individuals: the modern Parliamentarian may have ruder experience to undergo than had the nominee of a great lord of old, but faithfulness to his task earns wider sympathy, and it is more grateful to honest pride to stoop to listen than to cringe to hear.

Any early indications which William Smith gave of political opinion were tinged with moderate Liberalism. He seems to have inclined naturally to that side of politics to which his father, as a Wesleyan, adhered. Thus, in 1854, he had written from Dresden to his father, after describing the beauty of the town and surrounding country:—

There is only one obvious drawback in all this—that the King and the Government appear to be and to do everything—all that is great, beautiful, and even useful appears to proceed from the Government, and the people are nothing—reversing the picture as it is in England.

The idea of entering Parliament seems first to have presented itself in a concrete form to William Smith at the age of thirty-one. In 1856 he received overtures from the Liberal party at Boston with the view of ascertaining if he were willing to stand in conjunction with Mr Ingram, who at that time represented the borough. He appears to have been ready to accept the invitation on certain conditions, clearly set out in a letter, of which a draft remains in his own handwriting:—

The most important question after all is whether or no the Party is strong enough to return a Second Member on the principles on which alone I can stand, and which are politically and religiously liberal.

His definition of Liberal principles which follows might

scarcely satisfy thorough-going Radicals of the present day, for although he was in favour of abolishing Church Rates he was opposed to Disestablishment; though advocating the promotion of popular education by fresh legislation, he would not have it made compulsory; though holding the opinion that naval and military expenditure should be reduced (the Crimean war had then just been brought to a close), it must not be brought below the point of complete efficiency; and he could not look with favour on the introduction of vote by ballot.

Then in the following year, 1857, overtures were made on Smith's behalf with the view of his becoming one of the Liberal candidates for Exeter; but the idea was abandoned for the same reason that prevailed in respect of Boston—namely, that the party was not strong enough to return two Liberals.

Nothing, therefore, came of either of these projects, and the next that is heard of Smith in connection with party politics is a little incident which occurred in 1864. A personal friend of his, Mr Lawson¹ of the 'Daily Telegraph,' happened to be calling one day at the House on Lord Palmerston, who was then Prime Minister, and remarked to him that there was "a young man in the Strand who would be heard of some day, and should be seen to, as he would make an excellent candidate."

"Ah," replied the Premier, "I wish you'd tell Brand² about him, will ye?"

Mr Lawson did so, but apparently nothing was done, for some time afterwards Smith came up to him in the street, and said—

"My dear Lawson, do you know what I have gone

¹ Created Sir Edward Levey Lawson, Bart., in 1892.

² Henry Brand, Esq., M.P., the chief Whip of the Liberal party, afterwards Speaker from 1872 to 1884, when he was created Viscount Hampden.

and done. I've accepted an invitation to stand for Westminster."

"Delighted to hear it," was the reply; "you're the very man of all others we should like to have. Rely upon me to do all in my power for you."

"Oh, but I am the Conservative candidate, you know."

"Whew! that alters matters rather," exclaimed Mr Lawson, for the 'Daily Telegraph' was then the leading Radical paper. "Then, rely upon it, I'll do all I fairly can to keep you out!"

And he was as good as his word, although it is pleasant to record that it made no difference in their friendship, which continued warm to the end.¹

Now, in speculating on the influence which, within eight years, had changed Smith from a moderate Liberal into a moderate Conservative, there is to be remembered something besides the fact that Lord Palmerston had in the interval gone to his place, and the restraint which he had so long exercised upon his followers had been

¹ Mr Lawson was the cause of Smith's only experiences as a betting man. When Mr Disraeli was forming his Government in 1874, Mr Lawson happening to meet Smith in the street, asked him what office was going to be offered to him. "None," replied Smith; "I neither deserve nor expect one." "All the same, you will have the refusal of one," said Lawson. "Not I," persisted Smith; "I assure you there is no such idea." "Well," exclaimed Mr Lawson, "I'll bet you twenty guineas that within three weeks you will be a member of the Government." "Done!" said Smith, and in less than three weeks he was Secretary to the Treasury, and paid his debt of honour.

Again, in 1877, Mr Ward Hunt, First Lord of the Admiralty, being seriously ill, Mr Lawson met Smith in the lobby of the House, and said, "Well, I suppose you will be going to the Admiralty soon." "Nonsense!" Smith answered; "what put that into your head?" "Nonsense or not," said Mr Lawson, "I am willing to have another bet about it: I'll lay you fifty pounds that within six weeks you will be in the Cabinet." Again Smith accepted the wager, and within the stipulated time Mr Lawson called at the Admiralty to congratulate the First Lord on his appointment, and receive payment of his bet. "It must seem funny enough," observed Smith, "to you, who remember me working in my shirt-sleeves, to see me installed here."

removed. While Smith may be credited with a large share of what the Stoics called *ἐποχή*, or suspension of judgment—a quality peculiarly distinguishing his character in later life—there is also to be taken into account the effect of a rebuff he had lately received, sharp enough to have discouraged a much less sensitive nature than his. Smith's name had been for some time on the candidate's book of the Reform Club; when he came up for election the haughty susceptibilities of the Whig members of the committee were set in arms against the admission of a tradesman, and he was blackballed. This apparently trivial act—lightly done and as lightly dismissed from thought—was perhaps to have a more lasting effect on the course of politics for a quarter of a century than anybody could have foreseen at the time.

To one trained like William Smith, himself a hard-working man, in constant and close intercourse with working men, the summons to enter Parliament came with no unwelcome sound. The part he had taken in social and religious schemes had already accustomed him to apply energy to objects beyond the confines of trade, and had brought him into intimacy with members of Parliament like Lord Sandon, Mr John Talbot, and the Hon. Wilbraham Egerton; while the standing his firm had attained made the choice that fell upon him no extraordinary one. On March 31, 1865, he wrote to his sister Augusta:—

I remember Father has very often talked of the famous election contest in Westminster when Sir Frances Burdett stood; and when the Troops were firing in St James Street, my Father, as a boy, had to run into courts and by backways to escape being shot.

Would it interest him to know that that little boy's Son—myself—has been seriously invited to stand for Westminster by a body headed by the Twinings, Stilwells, and Sambroke, and that the subject is being seriously considered—upon this understanding, that whether I decide to stand or no on private grounds, upon which I

am quite uncertain, I should not think of doing so at all, unless I am absolutely assured of success in a contest, if any takes place.

If I go to Parliament, it will be as an independent man.¹ . . . None but the Committee who have asked me and two or three intimate private friends² know anything at all about the affair, and it will remain undecided for some time, but I shall have to give some idea of my inclination on Monday.

I should like to know what Father thinks about it, if he is well enough to be spoken to on the subject. I can afford the expense, and my business will be well managed.

And again on April 4:—

I have taken no decisive step yet. . . . A contest would be expensive, but when a man once becomes member for Westminster, he may retain his seat pretty nearly for life if his personal or moral character is good, and he attends reasonably to his duties. I am anxious beyond everything to do what is really right, and if Father really disapproved of the step, which is much less mine than my neighbours', I would at once give up the idea altogether. But I confess I should like to be in Parliament.

In this new project Smith was to encounter no opposition from his father; on the contrary, the old gentleman, at this time in very precarious health, entered upon the project with great enthusiasm, and undertook to pay all expenses.

How thoroughly Mr Lawson succeeded in reconciling private friendship with Smith to public obligation to his party, and maintained the thorough-going Radicalism of his journal, may be seen by referring to the 'Daily Telegraph' of that time. There were three candidates for the two seats—Captain Grosvenor, the representative of hereditary Whiggism, the moderate Liberal; Mr John Stuart Mill, the advanced freethinker, and, as most people then thought, the extravagant and dangerous Radical; and Smith of the

¹ By how many inexperienced candidates has this declaration not been made in all sincerity—how few have found it possible to carry it out! To bring any perceptible influence to bear upon events, a man in Parliament must be content to act with others—to postpone or altogether forego favourite schemes, and to part with cherished illusions.

² Among these would certainly be Lord Sandon, the Hon. Robert Grimston, and Mr Lethbridge.

Strand, professing a Liberal-Conservative faith, known to the few as a practical philanthropist and steady churchman—to the many as the owner of the bookstalls.

Mr Lawson gave the support of his newspaper to Mill ; threw cold water upon Captain Grosvenor, and suggested that he should retire in order to avoid splitting the Liberal vote ; and attempted to treat Smith's candidature as a farce.

The metropolitan boroughs [runs the leading article on May 6, 1865] owe it to the country and to themselves . . . not to indulge ambitious nobodies who, despairing of any other distinction, want to say they were once "Metropolitan members." . . . In the category of political nobodies we must include Mr Smith. . . . The candidates are Captain Grosvenor, Mr Smith, and John Stuart Mill. Now we have already contrasted the claims of the kinsman of the Marquis of Westminster with those of the author of 'Liberty' and 'Representative Government.' And we should insult the intelligence of the public by dwelling on such a point.

Smith, advocating extension of the franchise and an amicable adjustment of the question of Church-rates, stood as a Liberal-Conservative—a title which not only earned for him the jealous suspicion of the old-fashioned Tories, but was resented by the Liberals as an unprincipled borrowing of their own peculiar plumes. Smith was in the position of Pope's moderate man—

"In moderation placing all my glory,
While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory."

The Liberal press taunted the Tories with having, for election purposes, stuck the label "Conservative" on one who was by rights a Liberal ; yet sternly as editors strove to sever the office of censor from that of friend in this contest, there is no doubt that the business relations between the firm of Smith & Son and the leading journals of the day served to impart a tone of kindly recognition even to the most hostile articles in other newspapers.

They might well afford to be magnanimous. Smith's

candidature could scarcely be looked on as otherwise than a forlorn hope, having regard to the state of parties in the Metropolis. There had not been for many years a single Conservative member either for a metropolitan constituency or for Middlesex, and the county of Surrey could only boast of two. Besides this discouraging state of affairs, Smith had other difficulties to encounter. Mr Cubitt, who in after-years became his intimate friend, and had at that time much influence in the party organisation of London, was dismayed at the Liberalism of Smith's address to the electors. He consulted Colonel Taylor, the Conservative Whip, as to the prudence of adopting a candidate of such milk-and-water views. "Take him," was Taylor's advice—"take him. I don't fancy his politics much myself, but you'll get nobody better."¹ In his address to the electors,

¹ Smith showed himself scrupulously anxious not to secure Conservative support by posing as a member of the Conservative party, and in order that his position should be perfectly clear, he wrote the following letter to Colonel Taylor, the Conservative Whip:—

April 26, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have been so heartily and so handsomely supported by the Conservative party that I am anxious there should be no misunderstanding as to the position I should occupy with reference to it if returned to Parliament for Westminster.

You are fully aware of the independence of party ties which I felt it necessary to stipulate for when it was proposed by the Committee that I should stand for Westminster, but I am not sure that your friends would gather as much from my address. It will be well, therefore, to repeat that I am not a member of the Conservative party as such—nor am I a member of the Liberal party, but I believe in Lord Palmerston, and look forward ultimately to a fusion of the moderate men following Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston into a strong Liberal-Conservative party, to which I should be glad to attach myself.

Such an expectation may be chimerical, but I cannot help indulging it, and I wish to stand by it.

In the meantime, I am pledged to oppose Baines's bill (for extension of the suffrage in boroughs), the Ballot, and the unconditional abolition of Church-rates and all similar radical measures.

May I ask you to make this matter clear to your friends who have so generously offered their support to me, as I would rather retire

dated from the Strand, April 1865, the "milk-and-water" candidate said he came forward to give the

more moderate or Conservative portion of the constituency an opportunity of marking their disapproval of the extreme political doctrines which have been avowed by the Candidates already in the field. . . . Unconnected with either of the great political parties, I should desire to enter Parliament as an independent Member, at liberty to vote for measures rather than for men. I should not be a party to any factious attempt to drive Lord Palmerston from power, as I feel that the country owes a debt of gratitude to him for having preserved peace, and for the resistance he has offered to reckless innovation in our domestic institutions.

While not opposed to carefully considered extension of the suffrage, he declared himself unable to support Mr Baines's bill, then before Parliament; and he was prepared to resist ballot-voting, because he thought that the voter who was afraid to act openly was "scarcely worthy of the trust which he is supposed to discharge for the benefit of the commonwealth." He laid special stress on his anxiety to legislate in the interests of education and popular thrift.

Looked at in the light of that time, there was little in this address to rouse fighting spirit in the ranks of the Opposition, and at first some difficulty was found in getting together a good election Committee. The aristocratic householders of Belgravia and Mayfair only knew Smith as a news vendor, and were disposed to lukewarmness in a contest wherein one of their own order could not engage with any hope of success; and, whether from jealousy or incredulity in a creditable result, many of the West End tradesmen showed little enthusiasm towards their fellow-citizen, and at first held aloof from his Committee. As time went on, however, these obstacles melted to small proportions, and a now than fairly lay myself open to the reproach of obtaining party support under false pretences.

To this Colonel Taylor replied:—

"I consider your letter an extremely fair one, and I shall advise the Westminster Conservatives to give you their unreserved support."

strong representative Committee, with Earl Percy¹ as chairman, having been constituted, everything pointed to a well-fought election. The Liberal party in Westminster were perplexed by the candidature of Mr Mill, which was unfavourably viewed by the party managers, and in the end Sir John Shelly, who had represented the borough for many years, retired in order to avoid splitting the Liberal vote.

The nomination took place, according to immemorial custom, on the hustings at Covent Garden, the scene of so many famous contests between parties and powerful houses. It was the last time when electors were to have the advantage of an unlimited supply of cabbage-stalks and rotten potatoes close at hand, for with the Reform Act of 1867 came provision for removing the hustings to a place with more elbow-room and fewer missiles.

By the time the polling-day dawned, the hopes of the Conservative party were high. Smith had made an excellent impression, and received promises of support to such an extent as, to one new to the infirmity of electoral human nature, seemed to put his success beyond question. He was soon to be undeceived. It will be remembered that, under the old practice of open voting, the state of the poll was known as the day wore on, and was published from time to time. The first note of warning was sent to his wife from his committee-rooms in Cockspur Street:—

11th July 1865.

I think you may have a disappointment. Men have broken their promises to a considerable extent, and we are dropping behind. Don't be discontented; it is all for the best. I will let you know later.

Another was sent to his sister Augusta:—

Things are looking a little badly for us—not very much so, but enough to render it possible that we may be beaten. You must prepare my Father for it.

¹ Now sixth Duke of Northumberland.

Then, finally, another to his sister, written from his house in Hyde Park Street, where he had gone to carry the news to Mrs Smith:—

The close of the Poll made

Grosvenor	4384
Mill	4379
Smith	3812

So I was 572 behind, and am left out in the cold ; but although disappointed, I am not at all cast down about it. I will come to you to-morrow morning. Let me know how my Father is.

Disraeli was an adept in the art of attaching his followers to himself by tactful and timely notice of them—a faculty by no means invariably possessed by parliamentary chiefs. The following little autograph note of sympathy was despatched on the day of the declaration of the poll in Westminster:—

GROSVENOR GATE, *July 12, 1865.*

DEAR SIR,—Before I leave town to-day for my own County, I must express to you my great regret at the termination of the Westminster contest, conducted by you with so much spirit, & evidently with such a just expectation of success.

I hope yet to see you in the House of Commons, &, in the meantime, I trust you may find some dignified consolation & some just pride in the conviction that you possess the respect & the confidence of a great party.—I have the honor to be, Dear Sir, your faithful servt.,

B. DISRAELI.

W. H. SMITH, Esq.

Smith's reply to this was as follows:—

1 HYDE PARK ST., *July 12, 1865.*

DEAR SIR,—I am grateful to you for the expression of your sympathy with me under my defeat. Seeing that I had not identified myself with the party, I confess I felt surprise at the warmth and earnestness with which the Westminster Conservatives supported me, and the ready response to our united efforts caused me to be sanguine as to the result.

But I am amply repaid for any labour or vexation through which I have passed by the confidence of the friends I have made in this contest, and the expression of your own kindly feeling.—I have the honor to be, Dear Sir, yours very faithfully,

WILLIAM H. SMITH.

Thus ended in decisive repulse the assault on the Liberal

stronghold of the Metropolis. But it was not to be long before the attack was renewed. The contest had revealed Conservative feeling in a London constituency to an extent which few could have suspected. No doubt it would have been even more manifest but for the confidence which the middle classes felt in Lord Palmerston. It is true that Smith repeatedly disclaimed any wish to see that statesman dislodged from office; but the Liberals had the advantage of claiming Palmerston as the head of their party, while Smith was a follower of Lord Derby, whose name, though in high repute with landed gentry and farmers, was not one with which to conjure in the towns.

CHAPTER V.

1865-1868.

Lord Palmerston died in the autumn of 1865. The night of his death—October 18—was marked by a phenomenon to which, in a pre-scientific or more superstitious age, there would undoubtedly have been attributed special significance, as accompanying the removal of one of great influence in the guidance of a great nation. Many persons, especially in the northern part of the island, as they watched the brilliant display of aurora borealis, called to mind the belief of the Scottish peasantry referred to by Aytoun in the stanza—

“All night long the northern streamers
Shot across the trembling sky:
Fearful lights that never beckon
Save when kings or heroes die.”

For indeed many kings and heroes have passed from the earthly scene of their works with less consequence to the course of affairs. With Lord Palmerston's firm will and

quaint, genial personality, there was lost that sense of security which made moderate men of both parties feel safer under a strong Liberal administration than under a weak Conservative one. Henceforward, step by step, in ever-accelerating descent, the Liberal party was to follow the path of reckless opportunism, till, as has come to pass at this day, it has parted with almost all the men who might draw to it the confidence of the educated and consciously responsible.

During this year also drew to a close the life of one who had exercised as powerful an influence on Smith's character and private life as Lord Palmerston had on his public career and political opinions. Old Mr Smith, whose unremitting devotion to business had often brought upon him the anxious warnings and remonstrances of friends in the "connection," who found it difficult to reconcile his worldly preoccupation with spiritual preparedness, had comparatively early in life paid the penalty of shattered health. Since his retirement from an active part in the firm, much of his time had been spent at Torquay and Bournemouth, and it was at the last-named place that he breathed his last in July 1865. A man of unbending integrity and ceaseless industry, he was a kind, if somewhat imperious, parent, and his children loved and respected him. In him the Wesleyan body lost a faithful adherent and generous benefactor: one of his latest acts was a gift of £2100 to the building fund of a chapel in London.

In the year following upon Smith's defeat in Westminster, his home in Hyde Park Street was darkened by the first sorrow that had fallen upon it since his marriage. His first-born son—a weakling from his birth—died in February 1866, and he records the loss in these words in a letter to Miss Giberne:—

We are in trouble. Our little boy has been taken from us—quite quietly, gently, slowly, and, happily, painlessly ; but he is gone like a breath or a shadow. A bad cold and no strength—no power—and that is all ; and the Doctors say now that he was not a livable child—that any illness must have knocked him down, and so he is taken away from the sorrows to come. . . . It is a sad blank in our nursery—a quiet little sorrow which will last with us for a long time to come. But as the sorrow was to come, it could not have fallen more gently and more mercifully.

Much more gently and mercifully, indeed, than if the parents had been called on to witness a life carried from ailment to ailment, flickering in a feeble frame, and prolonged with difficulty through painful adolescence into suffering manhood.

But in August of the following year the house was gladdened by a happier event, thus announced by Smith to his sister :—

You will be glad to hear . . . that Emily has got through her trouble safely, . . . and that we have a son again. This time the boy looks healthy and well, but I am hardly yet able to say that I am glad. I did not desire it, although we shall be very thankful if all goes well with him. I have always felt there is a greater risk with boys than with girls, and we have both been very well content with our girls. Emily, however, looks very happy indeed with him upon her arm, and if she goes on well, as I have no doubt she will, I shall begin to value the little fellow at his proper worth.

The first act of Earl Russell's Government was the preparation of a bill for extending the franchise. This was introduced on March 12, 1866, by Mr Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, in a speech memorable for the combined force and elegance of its peroration. "We cannot," he said at the conclusion of an elaborate explanation of the proposals of the Government—

We cannot consent to look on this addition—considerable though it be—of the working classes as if it were an addition fraught with nothing but danger ; we cannot look upon it as a Trojan horse approaching the walls of a sacred city, and filled with armed men bent

on ruin, plunder, and conflagration. We cannot describe it as *monstrum infelix*, or say—

“Scandit fatalis machina muros,
Foeta armis: . . . mediæque minans illabitur urbi.”

We believe that those persons whom we ask you to enfranchise ought rather to be welcomed as if they were recruits to your army. We ask you to give within what we consider a just limit of prudence and circumspection. Consider what you can safely and justly offer to do in admitting new subjects and citizens within the pale of the Parliamentary Constitution; and having so considered it, do it as if you were conferring a boon, which will be felt and reciprocated by a feeling of grateful attachment to the Constitution—attachment of the people to the Throne and laws under which we live, which is, after all, more than your gold and silver, and more than your fleets and armies,—at once the strength, the glory, and the safety of the land.

In spite of this powerful appeal, the bill was coldly received by those who sat behind Mr Gladstone. The moderate Liberals grouped themselves round such malcontents as Lord Grosvenor, Mr Lowe, Mr Horsman, Lord Elcho, and Mr Laing, and formed what soon came to be known as the Cave of Adullam, because, as was said, it contained “every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented.”¹ On April 12 an amendment was moved by Lord Grosvenor to the effect that no bill to extend the franchise could be accepted until the House was in possession of the proposals of the Government for redistribution of seats. This was seconded by Lord Stanley,² and the debate was wound up on the eight night with a speech of extraordinary warmth and eloquence by Mr Gladstone, who declared that the Government would stand or fall by the result. The division took place in a scene of the utmost excitement at three in the morning, the figures being—

Ayes .	. . . . .	318
Noes .	. . . . .	313
		5
Majority for the Government	. .	5

¹ 1 Samuel xxii. 2.

² Afterwards fifteenth Earl of Derby.

It was generally expected that Ministers would resign, but, on the contrary, they persevered in carrying the bill into Committee. Mr Gladstone, on being twitted with continuing in office after pledging himself to stand or fall by a bill which he had only carried by a majority of five, declared that as the bill still stood, so did the Government. The bill, however, after several exceedingly close divisions in Committee, was finally wrecked on an amendment moved by Lord Dunkellin, who proposed to substitute rating instead of renting as the basis of the franchise. On this question Ministers were in a minority of eleven. The consequence was the resignation of Earl Russell's Cabinet and the formation of a new one by the Earl of Derby, with Mr Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. It was the desire of Lord Derby to include some of the Adullamites in his Government, but his overtures were declined, and he had to meet Parliament early in July with a minority of Conservative members in the House of Commons, and a body of dissentient Liberals or Adullamites holding the balance of power.

In the following year—1867—the Queen opened Parliament in person for the first time since the Prince Consort's death in 1861, and in the Speech from the Throne chief prominence was given to a measure to “freely extend the elective franchise.” To carry out this purpose the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked the House of Commons to proceed in a somewhat novel way, by adopting thirteen Resolutions embodying the principles on which bills for the extension of the franchise and redistribution of seats should be framed by the Government. But objections to this course were pressed from all quarters of the House, and after some discussion the Resolutions were withdrawn, and the bill promised. But before it could be introduced,

the Cabinet had disagreed on its provisions, and three Ministers—Lord Carnarvon, Lord Cranborne, and General Peel—resigned office. Nothing but speedy destruction seemed to be imminent upon Lord Derby's Administration. Weakened as he was by the secession of three of his own colleagues, his policy was now bitterly attacked by the Adullamites—his quondam allies—who denounced Mr Disraeli's bill as more sweeping than that which, the previous year, had severed them from their proper leaders. Then was to be seen the strange spectacle of a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer moving a measure which, though condemned by many of his own party, and by the whole of the Adullamites, and sarcastically criticised by the Liberal Opposition, was yet allowed to pass second reading in the House of Commons without a division.

In the session of 1868 similar bills were passed for Scotland and Ireland, and Parliament was dissolved on November 11, to reassemble on December 10.

Smith's experience in the contest of 1865 had the usual result of practical contact with politics: it tended to accentuate his opinions on public questions, and to convince him that, if he would influence the course of events, a man must co-operate heartily with other men, and that independence of action, carried beyond somewhat narrow limits, must end ineffectively. Henceforward his lot was cast and his course was steered with the Conservative party, and he chose that line from deliberate conviction, not because it was to land him with fewest obstacles in the House of Commons. In 1867 an invitation came to him to stand for Middlesex on "unmistakable Liberal principles"; but he declined it because, if he stood at all, he could only do so as a Conservative. Thereupon came an invitation to contest the county as a Conservative, on which Smith

placed himself in the hands of the party managers, who advised him to decline. To another invitation to contest Bedford in the Conservative interest, he replied that "my Westminster friends have so strongly remonstrated against the proposal to commit myself to a candidature for another constituency at the general election, . . . that out of regard to personal considerations . . . I feel bound to refrain from severing myself from them."

Finally, a requisition, with 3000 signatures, inviting Smith to stand again for Westminster, was presented to him on behalf of the Conservative party in the borough, by a deputation headed by the Earl of Dalkeith, M.P.,¹ and this invitation he accepted. But Westminster was not now the same constituency he had courted in 1865. The effect of household suffrage on the political complexion of such a borough could only be darkly surmised. It was true that people had begun to get tired of Mr Mill: in those days the advocacy of woman suffrage was regarded as an eccentric novelty, and if there is one thing of which the English middle class is more suspicious than of novelty, it is eccentricity. Mill had also disgusted some of his supporters by relentless prosecution of the charges against Governor Eyre; and by espousing the cause of Charles Bradlaugh, the infidel and revolutionary lecturer, he had roused the alarm of members of all the Churches. Still, the new electors were an untried contingent, and nobody could predict what their action might be.

In his new address to the electors Smith still claimed to be a Liberal-Conservative, "unpledged to any particular party." But the tone was more decided than in the address of 1865. There was one passage to which the course of subsequent party tactics has imparted a melancholy significance.

¹ Now sixth Duke of Buccleuch and eighth Duke of Queensberry.

Foremost among the more prominent questions of the day is that of Ireland.

I have long been of opinion that the greatest misfortune which has befallen the people of Ireland, is that their condition has become the patrimony of political parties in this country, who, to obtain a fleeting popularity or a few votes, fan the flame of popular discontent by attributing to unjust or partial legislation the existence of evils, arising in great measure from causes within the control of the Irish people themselves.

All through the winter 1867-68 and the succeeding summer, Smith and his friends worked hard, holding meetings and canvassing the voters. Mr Disraeli's profession of belief in the existence of Conservative working men had been as much the subject of misgiving among members of his own party as of derision among his opponents. But as the canvass proceeded, clear evidence was forthcoming that there were working men of a more thoughtful stamp than the rioters who, in 1867, had pulled down the railings of Hyde Park and terrorised the West End.

The main question on which the general election was to turn was the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and those who were defending it against Mr Gladstone's attack were able, as has been the case in every one of that statesman's greater enterprises, to equip themselves with weapons from his own armoury of argument, which he had flung aside in successive changes of front. Smith was stoutly opposed to Disestablishment, because he could see in it no promise of lessened bitterness or increased good-neighbourhood in Ireland, and to Disendowment, because he recognised in it a principle which might easily be extended to every kind of property, public or private. Smith numbered among his most active supporters and advisers at this time the Hon. Robert Grimston, Mr Cubitt, and Lord Sandon.

The nomination took place on November 16, not, as by almost immemorial custom, in Covent Garden, but on hustings erected at the base of Nelson's Pillar. The candidates

were the same as in 1865—namely, Grosvenor, Mill, and Smith. Smith's supporters were very hopeful; but if they were confident, he himself did not share their feeling, as may be seen from the following passages in letters to his wife:—

Nov. 10.—I don't want people . . . to suppose I sulk if I lose the battle or am too much elated if I win.

Nov. 11.—I certainly hope to succeed, but the relief of rest will be so great that if I fail I shall be compensated by a return to home comforts.

Nov. 12.—If I go down home¹ on Tuesday evening beaten I shall not feel I am disgraced, and I intend to put a good and cheerful face upon it. It will all be for the best, and I shall be quite content to spend more time with my family and with you. . . . Everything is going well with me at present, but it is quite impossible to tell what the issue may be.

On the polling-day telegrams were despatched to Mrs Smith at intervals. Thus:—

Ten o'clock poll—Smith, 2457; Grosvenor, 1745; Mill, 1647; but don't be too sanguine.

In those days the poll was closed at four o'clock. The lead obtained in the morning by the Conservative candidate was maintained to the close. The result was beyond the expectation of the keenest Tory—even of "Bob" Grimston himself:—

Smith (C.)	.	.	.	.	7698
Grosvenor (L.)	.	.	..	.	6505
Mill (L.)	.	.	.	.	6185

—showing a majority for Smith of 1193 over Grosvenor, and of 1513 over Mill.

The great day was over, marking a turning-point in the political history of London; for besides the victory in Westminster, the Tories won one of the four seats in the

¹ His country residence was at this time Cecil Lodge, Abbots Langley. The pleasant old house at Kilburn had been so closely built round that it was given up when old Mr Smith retired from business in 1858. As his son once expressed it—"I can't even kiss my sister without being seen from a dozen windows."

City of London, thus breaking the solid phalanx of metropolitan Liberalism.

The general tone of the Liberal press was not unfriendly to the new member. Most newspapers on that side admitted that if a seat was to be lost, it could not be lost to a better man than Smith; but of course some bitter jibes were written, and one at least of these is amusing to read in the light of after-years:—

Westminster has shown herself incapable of keeping a great man when she has got one, and has raised a wealthy newsvendor to temporary prominence, and even to such kind of notoriety as attends those whose names get somehow embedded in the world-wide fame of an opponent.

But though the Conservative cause had triumphed in Westminster, and though the monopoly of metropolitan Liberalism had been further demolished by the return of Lord George Hamilton for Middlesex, and of Mr Bell for the City of London, it had fared ill with the authors of household suffrage in the country. It seemed as if the jeers which greeted Mr Disraeli's allusions to the existence of Conservative working men had been justified by the result of his "leap in the dark," for the state of parties in the new Parliament was:—

Liberals	387
Conservatives	272
	<hr/>
Liberal majority	115

Still, the beaten Prime Minister might point to South-West Lancashire—a genuine working-man constituency—where his chief opponent had sustained a striking reverse, the result of the poll in that division being:—

Cross (Conservative)	7729
Turner (Conservative)	7676
Gladstone (Liberal)	7415
Grenfell (Liberal)	6939

CHAPTER VI.

1868-1869.

The decree which banished Mill from public life and ushered Smith into it was not to pass unchallenged by the friends of the former. Before the twenty days allowed by statute for lodging petitions had elapsed, one had been filed against the Conservative member for Westminster. Under the law as it then stood candidates were much more in the hands of their agents than they are now, for there was no statutory limit to expenses, and the agent had to be supplied with money according to his discretion; and not the chief agent only, but a whole troop of assistant agents and active partisans besides.

Certainly there had been no niggardliness shown in the supply. While the published expenses of the Liberal candidates, Grosvenor and Mill, only amounted together to £2296, 2s. 7d., those of the Conservative, Smith, mounted up to the huge total of £8900, 17s. 7d. There had also been lamentable indiscretion on the part of one of Smith's warmest well-wishers, Mr Grimston, to whom, indeed, it was greatly owing that Smith had consented to come forward again for Westminster. Mr Grimston had brought up to London a tenant of his brother (the Earl of Verulam), one Edwards, in order that he might act as a sub-agent. This Edwards had already undergone eighteen months' imprisonment for his part in the malpractices which brought about the disfranchisement of the borough of St Albans. No doubt this worthy must have possessed some special qualities which caused his services to be in request, and no doubt Grimston believed he was doing his friend a good turn in securing him an indefatigable sub-agent, but in fact

his zeal very nearly brought about the loss of the seat. The petition was on the grounds of bribery, treating, and undue influence by the candidate and by other persons on his behalf.

As for Smith himself, he wrote to his wife on December 9 with a perfectly clear conscience as to his own actions:—

From what I hear, I think it likely the Petition will be presented, but it is not certain yet, and I do not think they have any matter which cannot be explained honourably and to all the world. I am very much less concerned about it than I was—indeed I cannot be said to be at all so.

Parliament assembled on December 10, and Smith duly took his seat for Westminster. The proceedings on the petition against his return did not begin till February 12, when the case was opened before Mr Baron Martin at the Sessions House, Westminster, but was afterwards removed, first to the Lords Justices' Court and then to the Court of Exchequer,—a change rendered necessary by the crowds of persons seeking admittance, and by the intense local excitement attending the proceedings. Mr Hawkins, Q.C., and Mr Serjeant Ballantine were counsel for Mr Smith, and Mr Fitzjames Stephen, with Messrs Murch and Littler as juniors, for the petitioners. The trial lasted for seven days, and the cross-examination of witnesses did not fail to produce instances of humour of the sort peculiar to two kinds of case—election petitions and actions for breach of promise of marriage. For example, one witness who had applied to Smith's agent for payment of certain alleged expenses and had been refused, said that he thereupon changed his politics and became a Liberal, because the Conservatives were "a nasty dirty lot."

Asked by Mr Hawkins—"Give us your notion of what a Conservative is"—a witness replied, "I think a Conservative is a rank humbug."

“Well, what is a Liberal?”—“A Liberal, if he acts as a man and a gentleman, is a Liberal.”

“But suppose a Conservative acts as a man and a gentleman, what do you think of him?”—“Well but, sir, you rarely come across such a one.”

It was stated in evidence that at a tea-meeting in the Hanover Square Rooms, a blessing was first asked on the buns and the toast, and afterwards there was a good deal of love-making.

“But do you consider love-making a corrupt practice?”—“Quite the contrary. I consider it highly laudable.”

And so on, after the time-honoured custom by which gentlemen in silk gowns are encouraged to spend their own time and their clients' money in extracting feeble jokes in protracted cross-examination.

Though the charge against the respondent broke down, and was abandoned by the petitioners' counsel, the suspense remained intense up to the very last. Not till the closing sentences of Mr Baron Martin's summing up did he give the slightest indication of the judgment he was about to deliver.

Having commented severely on the enormous expenditure incurred by Smith's agents, he exonerated the candidate from any dishonourable knowledge of what had been going on, and wound up by declaring Mr Smith duly elected, though he declined, after consultation with his brother judges, to make any order as to costs.

There can be little doubt that it was Smith's personal character for integrity which alone saved him from the consequences of the acts of his agents—and it was only by giving to a candidate above suspicion of corrupt intention the benefit of all doubts, that the judge was able to clear him of direct responsibility. As the ‘Times’ remarked in a leader on the case:—

A good character has, to Mr Smith at any rate, proved better than riches. It may be a question whether the latter won the seat for him, but there can be no question that the former has saved it.

In spite of the equanimity with which, as he had professed, he had contemplated the approach of the trial, Smith's health gave way under the anxiety of its protracted proceedings: his malady took the painful form of erysipelas, and he was unable to be in court during the summing up. It was his friend, Mr Cubitt, M.P. (now Lord Ashcombe), who had the pleasure of conveying to him the propitious news.

Once safely seated within the walls of St Stephen's, the new member for Westminster showed a disposition and capacity for practical business. Importance is sometimes attached to the maiden speech of a novice, as forecasting the field in which any influence he is to have on the Legislature is to be developed, and it is often matter of concern to his friends that he should not speak too soon, or, on the other hand, be too long in the House without "making his mark," as the phrase goes. Smith's outset was characteristic of the man. It was neither on a lofty theme of foreign policy nor some scheme of ardent philanthropy that he chose to make his essay. Choice, indeed, had little enough to do with the matter: it happened simply that the second reading of a bill dealing with the valuation of property in the metropolis was moved by Mr Goschen, then President of the Poor Law Board, at the first sitting after the Easter recess, April 1, 1869. It dealt with a subject concerning which Smith was thoroughly well informed; he had something to say, and he said it. It was to no crowded senate brimming with applause or lowering with ire, that he addressed himself, but to benches sparsely filled with listless legislators, reluctantly obeying the summons

of Government Whips, who are ever anxious to get some useful work through in the first few days after the holidays, before the Opposition shall have gathered in strength. Such was the modest opening of a distinguished parliamentary career.

During his first session in Parliament Smith subsequently spoke on two or three other subjects, which furnished him with that which Bishop Wilberforce declared makes the difference between a good speaker and a bad one—the former speaking because he has something to say; the latter because he has to say something. On May 10 Mr Gladstone gave facilities to Mr Corrance, to enable that gentlemen to call attention to the question of Pauperism and Vagrancy, and in the debate arising thereon speeches were made by Mr Peel, then Secretary to the Poor Law Board,¹ Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Mr Albert Pell, and others. Mr Smith called attention to the significant increase in the amount of outdoor relief since the commencement of the new Poor Law in 1851, showing that in London alone, while the population had in the interval risen by 34 per cent, the cost of relief had doubled. He advocated withholding all relief of able-bodied poor, except it were coupled with the obligation to work, otherwise the law might be interpreted as establishing the legal right of every man who did not, could not, or would not work, and possessed no property, to food, clothing, and shelter at the cost of those who would, could, and did work, and possessed property.

He was aware [he said] that he was touching on delicate ground, but he was not afraid of interfering with the labour market. He very much preferred the risk of such interference to the certain demoralisation which arose from giving relief as a matter of right to

¹ Became Speaker of the House of Commons in 1884.

the person claiming it, without value given or a sense of gratitude in return.

A thoughtful, wise observation this, founded on wide, practical experience of philanthropic work, yet one which, in however many minds it may win assent, finds too rare expression in these days, when so much is heard of schemes for the endowment by the State of pauperism and old age. Throughout his life this was the keynote of Smith's code of charity : a liberal giver when the need for gifts was clear to him, he always showed an alert distrust of doles, and never subscribed to any fund, or gave to any beggar, without satisfying himself, often by protracted inquiry, into the merits of each case. A very large part—wellnigh a half—of so much of his correspondence as has been preserved (other than that on political affairs) consists of letters asking for help and answers to inquiries about the applicants. Many years after this debate on pauperism, his friend, Sir Henry Acland of Oxford, happened to mention to Smith that he was about to part with a yacht which he had owned for some years and took great delight in. Smith dissuaded him from doing so, because it was so good for Sir Henry's health and such an amusement for his children.

“Well, but I have come to think it selfish to spend so much on yachting,” replied Sir Henry ; “my children are all married, it is chiefly for my own gratification that I keep the yacht, and I feel that the money she costs ought, in part at least, to be devoted to charity.”

“Charity !” exclaimed Smith, firing up in a way very unusual to him,—“how much mischief has been done in the name of charity ! Don't you see that so long as you keep your yacht, you employ Matthews, your captain, and the crew, who would, if you discharged them, lose, not only their employment, but the enjoyment of good clothes, recreation, music, and other means of culture which you pro-

vide for them? In a national sense, if you withdraw this fund from wages and give it in charity, I firmly believe you will by so much be doing harm instead of good. Charity is often most mischievous."

He spoke very earnestly, and Sir Henry had rarely heard him open out so much on any subject. Touching this matter of almsgiving, it may be noted here how many and various were the applications which flowed in upon Smith as his wealth increased and his name became better known. Sometimes the appeals were for thousands of pounds, at other times for a few shillings; both were treated alike, careful inquiry was made into the circumstances, and the reply depended—not on the amount asked for, but the grounds on which it was asked. Thus Miss Giberne, a constant and valued correspondent of Smith's, once wrote to him about a hawker who drove "the dearest little donkey you ever saw," but wanted to sell it and his cart on the plea of necessity. Probably the man saw in the kind-hearted lady who petted and fed his donkey the prospect of disposing of his live and rolling stock to good advantage; nor was he far out in his calculations, for Miss Giberne suggested that Smith should buy the equipage. But both had left out of account Smith's inflexible observance of principle in the smallest things, and this was his good-natured answer:—

Dec. 16, 1876.

Why should I buy a donkey and a cart—yet? I do not propose to start as a costermonger—yet, but I may come to it, and then I will try to take care of the donkey.

At the present moment there are two horses and one pony retired from work on the premises; one or two must be shot presently, to save them from the miseries consequent on inability to work or having no work to do. There are three other ponies of the past generation, their carts and one chaise, with little more than healthy work for one, and there is a very fat and heavy boy to attend to them. What place is there for the donkey?

There would be nothing for it but to put him to death—out of kindness lest he should be ill-treated—stuff him and place him and

his cart on the lawn under a canopy, with an inscription commemorating your sympathy and affection for animals, and my weakness in yielding to it.—Ever yours afftly.,

W. H. SMITH, *The Hard Man.*

There is no record of how Smith dealt with another claimant on his bounty who bore these credentials:—

The bearer of this is an earnest Christian young man. He is at present employed in a wine-cellar, an occupation altogether unsuited to his tastes now that he has become a new man in Christ Jesus.

And there must have been some conflict between benevolence and prudence in dealing with the following application:—

Sir i wish to know weither you are in want of a lad as i am in want of a Situation. yesterdai i see there was an advertisment in the times for two youths to write a good hand i wish to know sir weither my hand writing will suit you sir i have been used to the newspaper office for 3 years but has never leant Writeing the covers sir i think with a little improvement i should suit you.

Smith avoided falling into the error of speaking too often in the House. He spoke on one other occasion only during his first session—the debate on the bill enabling the Postmaster-General to acquire the whole of the telegraphs in the country. He had been for some years a director of an electric telegraph company, and supported the bill, though he showed that the terms on which these concerns were to be ceded to the Government were by no means so over-liberal as the opponents of the measure tried to prove.¹

Every minor question was overshadowed during the session of 1869 by the discussions on the bill to disestablish and disendow the Irish Church. This was moved by Mr Gladstone on March 1. Public interest was intensified to a degree beyond what even so radical a measure might have

¹ One of the arguments used by Mr Torrens against the proposed transaction was founded on what he considered Mr Scudamore's extravagance in estimating the number of telegrams to be dealt with by the General Post Office in the course of a year at 11,200,000. In 1892 they amounted to 69,685,480.

evoked, by the enormous wealth of the corporation which was the subject of attack, and by speculation as to the disposal of the spoil. The property of the Church was estimated at sixteen millions, of which the bill disposed of £8,650,000 by providing for vested interests, lay compensation, private endowments, commutation of the Maynooth Grant and *Regium Donum*, &c., the free surplus remaining being between seven and eight millions. Mr Gladstone's speech explaining the proposals of the Government occupied three hours in delivery, and, as has always been the case in the perorations of his most destructive orations, he brought his arguments to a close by introducing some metaphor of great force and elegance, and the expression of confidence that the greatest advantage would accrue to the object of his attack.

Disraeli, who rose immediately after him, bore willing tribute to the eloquence to which the House had been listening. The second reading was carried by a majority of 118, the motion for going into Committee by 126, and the third reading by 114. These crushing majorities enabled the Government to send the bill up to the House of Lords in much the same state as when it was first laid on the table of the Commons.

The interest which gathered round the debates on this measure in the House of Commons was transferred to those in the Upper Chamber after Whitsuntide. Would the Lords throw out the bill, as they had in the previous year thrown out Mr Gladstone's Suspensory Bill, or would they recognise in this juncture one of "those rare and great occasions on which the national will has fully declared itself," when, as the Marquis of Salisbury had laid down, it was the duty of the House of Lords to yield to the opinion of the country?

Lord Granville moved the second reading of the Irish Church Bill on June 14, and the debate which ensued was

chiefly remarkable for the speech delivered by the Bishop of Peterborough (Dr Magee) against it, which has since remained in the memory of those who heard it as one of the most impressive orations in modern times.¹ He concluded his resistance to the proposal for disendowment in the following memorable and profound sentences :—

You will always observe in history that corporate property is always the first to be attacked in all great democratic revolutions. Especially is this so in the case of ecclesiastical corporate property, because ecclesiastical corporations for the most part are very wealthy, and at the same time are very weak. . . . Revolutions commence with sacrilege, and they go on to communism; or to put it in the more gentle and euphemistic language of the day, revolutions begin with the Church and go on to the land.

The course of the speech was marked by outbursts of applause in the Strangers' Gallery, a breach of parliamentary decorum which, unusual in the highest degree in either Chamber, is peculiarly at variance with the staid and impassive atmosphere of the House of Lords. Lord Derby, in opposing the second reading, took up those weapons which the Bishop of Peterborough had flung aside, and took his stand on the Treaty of Union and the Coronation Oath; whereas the Marquis of Salisbury condemned such arguments as "involving the inexpressible absurdity that an oath taken in the days of Adam may have lasted to this time, binding the whole human race under circumstances absolutely different from those of the Paradisiacal period, and that the duties of mankind may have been settled for ever by the act of one single individual at that time, and we might never be able to escape from them."

¹ A certain well-known Scottish baronet, a Liberal, then in Parliament, noted rather for the force than for the length of his contributions to conversation, rode into the Park after listening to Bishop Magee's speech. A friend inquired if it had been a success, and what line of argument had been pursued. "Oh," said Sir Robert Anstruther, "it was the finest thing you ever heard. He said that Gladstone had appealed to them in the name of the Almighty to vote for the bill, but that for his part he would be d—d if he did so."

The division on the second reading was a remarkable one—

Contents	179
Non-Contents	146
	33
Majority for the Bill	

Many of those peers who thus supported the bill on second reading did so on the understanding that it would be largely altered in the Committee stage, and this, in effect, was done on such a scale that when their lordships' amendments came to be considered in the Commons, Mr Gladstone, confident in the force of a great majority, led the House to disagree with the Lords on all such amendments as could be regarded as at all important. Ultimately, after much fierce talk of the usual character about mending or ending the House of Peers, a compromise was effected, and the bill received the Royal assent on July 26.

CHAPTER VII.

1870-1871.

In the beginning of 1870, the year destined to see the fall of the French empire, Smith went to Paris, in order to prosecute inquiries into the management of the poor in France; and there remains in the letters he wrote home to his wife abundant evidence of the thorough way in which he set about his investigation.

He had entered Parliament at a time when the Conservative party was staggering under a crushing defeat at the polls. Disraeli's "leap in the dark" had landed in disaster,

from which, in the opinion of many, and especially of the country party, there was no prospect of recovery. Household suffrage seemed to have swamped the instructed classes, and the presence of Mr Bright in the Cabinet, representing the extreme, and, as they had hitherto been regarded, revolutionary Radicals, was full of boding for all interested in maintaining the old order of the Constitution and the security of property. The Opposition were dispirited and inactive; they fought the Irish Church Bill with resolution, but even on that question there was a want of energy on their front bench. Disraeli was absent from the House on account of ill-health throughout the Committee stage of that great measure; Northcote, who should have been his lieutenant, was much abroad on foreign missions; and Gathorne-Hardy¹ was accused of want of industry. Under such circumstances as these, there is sure to spring up among the younger members of the party a feeling of dissatisfaction at the laxity of resistance to the policy of the Government. It was so on this occasion, and Smith took his place among a small but determined band sitting below the gangway, a part of the House which at that time, before the broad lines of party had been confused by the creation of Home Rulers and Liberal Unionists, implied a degree of independence of strict party discipline. Conspicuous among these stalwarts were Mr Richard Assheton Cross² and Lord Sandon, with whom Smith soon fell into close co-operation, and these three, with some associates, soon came to be looked on as the practical leaders of Opposition. It was no uncommon thing, when matters were moving sluggishly among the Conservatives, for Disraeli to give a hint to this little group that the fire wanted stirring.

The proceedings which take place, with greater or

¹ Created Viscount Cranbrook in 1878, and Earl Cranbrook in 1892.

² Created Viscount Cross in 1886.

less decorum, among the occupants of the dingy green benches in the Chamber itself, are, in a large degree, the outcome of much that goes on elsewhere, and there is no corner of Westminster Palace where projects spring so quickly into being and are nursed into maturity than in the smoking-room of the House of Commons. When James I., with royal profusion of adjectives, penned his 'Counterblaste' against the "continuall vse of taking this vnsauorie smoake," he could not have foreseen what an important influence it was to have one day, not only on the revenue, but on the general direction of national policy. In 1870 there was but one smoking-room for the use of members of the House of Commons (there are now three), an ill-lit, draughty, cheerless apartment opening upon the terrace, and this was the favourite resort of the most active spirits in all the political sections. Here, more than elsewhere, was the realm of frankness: men of the most divergent views chatted together and discussed the course of events—past, present, and to come; on this neutral field Cross, Sandon, and Smith used to spend much of their time.

When Parliament reassembled in 1870, the condition of Ireland showed little to justify the expectation professed by the authors of the Irish Church Act as to the conciliatory effect it was to have on disaffected persons. On the contrary, the Fenian movement had become so formidable towards the close of 1869 that the Government had found it necessary to strengthen the force in Ireland by the addition of several battalions, agrarian crime increased at a frightful rate, and there seemed to be no limit to the violence of seditious language uttered in the National press. Nevertheless, undaunted by the ill return shown for their efforts at conciliation, the Cabinet resolved to persevere further in that direction, and thereby justify, within a shorter time

than could have been predicted, the forecast made by the Bishop of Peterborough, that, having despoiled the Church of her corporate property, they would direct their next attack against private property in land ; for whatever opinion may be held as to the manner in which Irish landlords had exercised their rights and the spirit in which their estates had been administered, it cannot be questioned that the effect of the Land Bill introduced by the Government was to diminish very seriously the value of landed property in Ireland. The appearance of this Land Bill was a direct fulfilment of the eloquent Prelate's forecast.

But the Conservative leaders could not be blind to the state of matters in Ireland : they could not fail to recognise that the rights and wrongs of private ownership in land had been confused by the tacit recognition in certain parts of Ireland of customs of tenure, utterly unknown in England and Scotland, and of the existence in the other provinces of precisely the same conditions which had led to the sanction of tenant-right in Ulster. They resolved, therefore, not to oppose the bill on second reading ; but, by attacking the details of it in Committee, to purge it of the novel and obnoxious principles it contained. A division, it is true, was taken against the second reading, but it revealed the grotesque proportions of 442 votes to 11, and in the minority were only found two Conservatives.

Although Smith took no active part in the debates on this important measure, it seems to have been at this time that his interest was drawn to the subject of it, and led to the exertions he devoted to it in after-years, and the share it will be shown that he had in the efforts made to relieve Irish landlords from the intolerable position in which they had been left, by equitably transferring property from the owner to the occupier.

To the consideration of another bill, introduced by Mr W. E. Forster two days after the Irish Land Bill,—a measure not so startling as the other in its innovation upon recognised principles, but not of interest less complex nor results less far-reaching—the Elementary Education Bill—Smith was able to bring ripe experience as well as sympathetic assistance. His friendship with Forster, at that time Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education (which is the cumbersome periphrasis prescribed by departmental etiquette as the title of our Minister of Education),¹ probably began in numerous confidential conferences at the time this bill was under consideration—a friendship which endured to the last, through many heated controversies in Parliament on other subjects about which the two men held more divergent views than about education.

It is a feature to be noted in Smith's public life that he never sowed any parliamentary wild oats. Most men who have risen to distinction in the House of Commons, at all events since the Reform Bill of 1832, have brought themselves into prominence either by persistent oratory, whether excellent or otherwise; by identifying themselves with some particular question, in which chance or choice has made them expert; or, lastly, by threatened or actual attacks upon the leaders of their party at critical junctures. None of these proceedings marked Smith's career at any time.

¹ Time, it is said, was made for slaves, and the subjects of Queen Victoria, being nothing if not a free people, show a lofty contempt for economy in that commodity, especially, as is well known, in the House of Commons. Otherwise it might be interesting to calculate how many minutes are lost in debate by observance of the rule prohibiting one member alluding to another except by mentioning his constituency or his office. The custom, no doubt, had its origin in a salutary avoidance of the risk of personal altercation and even collision, which must be held to justify the use of such circumlocutory phrases as "the honourable and learned member for the — division of — shire" to designate "Mr Jones," or "the Right Honourable gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland" to indicate the ruler of Ireland for the time being.

Though professing independence when he entered the House, he found that the only practical course was to abandon that idea, and he yielded unwavering loyalty to those who directed the party with whom he found himself most in harmony: he never suffered those subjects with which he was most conversant to assume the proportions of a "hobby" or the plumage of a "fad"; least of all could he pretend to gifts of eloquence, and showed no disposition to inflict himself on the attention of the House except when he was able to contribute something solid to its deliberations. Public education was one of those subjects on the discussion of which, alike by experience and inclination, he was fitted to take an intelligent part; he spoke, accordingly, several times during the passage of Mr Forster's measure, but invariably with a brevity, as the records of Hansard testify, almost inverse to the weight of matter contained in his speeches.

The most controversial point in the bill was that dealing with the future of religious instruction in schools, and upon this the Opposition in the House of Commons were divided. The young Conservatives, among whom were Smith, Cross, and Lord Sandon, were in favour of voluntary religious instruction, but Disraeli and Gathorne-Hardy stood out for the full Church of England teaching. There was, of course, a third party in the House, stoutly advocating the total prohibition of religious instruction under all circumstances in public schools; but the Government, supported by the advanced section of the Opposition, adopted a middle course, which, while it gave school boards power to forbid religious teaching altogether, also empowered them to permit schoolmasters to read and expound Scripture without the introduction of Creeds or Catechisms.

Another feature of novel interest may be noted in this bill — namely, the provision made for introducing ballot-

voting, up to that time unknown in this country, in the election of school boards; and in connection with this, Smith supported Lord Frederick Cavendish's amendment in favour of cumulative voting, which, devised as a safeguard to the reasonable representation of minorities, has since proved, as many people think, unduly favourable to them.

But the most important alteration in the bill which Lord Sandon and Mr Smith were chiefly instrumental in inducing Ministers to accept was the withdrawal of the clause constituting twenty-three school boards for the metropolis and substituting one, creating a single board for the whole of London. The experience of Sandon and Smith in the management of the Bishop of London's Fund had convinced them that it was important to secure the services of capable, independent, and responsible men to administer the Act in densely populous districts, and they saw clearly that there would be little to induce such persons to become candidates for seats on small local boards.

They urged with great perseverance upon Mr Forster how necessary it was, in the interests of education, to attract the best men to the work, and finally convinced him, not so much by arguments spoken across the floor of the House, as during repeated and prolonged private interviews in the Privy Council Office, that their view was just. The consequence was the withdrawal of the original clause, and the substitution of one establishing the London School Board as it now is. In his speech on the motion for going into Committee on the bill, Smith had urged that this principle should be observed in the formation of all school boards which should have areas coterminous with counties; but acting on the *ne sutor* maxim, as a metropolitan member he was satisfied with having secured its application to the metropolis.

The good understanding between Smith and Forster in their endeavours to settle this question is illustrated by a passage in a letter of the former to his wife on July 29 :—

I am very glad I was in the House last night, as Forster, with whom, as you know, I like to work, came to me and expressed a wish that I should hear his statement on Education, and then I had to say a word.

Before the House of Commons parted with the bill, Mr M'Cullagh Torrens, on behalf of the Radical supporters of the Government, pronounced a frank recognition of the part taken in promoting its success by the hon. member for Westminster, "whose services in connection with this bill he could not too strongly acknowledge."

On another matter which formed the subject of debates during this session, Smith made more than one speech. As long as we have the poor with us, so long the presence of persons ready with advice and proposals for their betterment may be reckoned on; but it is not always those who best understand the problems involved who are most ready to give advice and to put forward proposals. Smith had worked long and hard among the London poor: his speeches on the second reading of the Poor Relief (Metropolis) Bill (April 25), and on Dr Brewer's motion for the Better Regulation of Outdoor Relief (May 10), consisted of practical arguments temperately expressed, illustrated by examples of shamefully bad administration of the law which he himself had witnessed.

But the most direct success which the member for Westminster achieved was of a nature peculiarly exhilarating to a somewhat dispirited Opposition, bringing about, as it did, the defeat of the Government, and securing to the people of London a result for which they ought to feel grateful at this day. In the formation of the Thames Embankment below Westminster Bridge an extent of land valued at

£5000 a-year had been reclaimed from the river, which came as foreshore into the hands of the Office of Woods and Forests: on this land it was proposed by the Government to erect certain public offices, and Smith met this scheme with a motion that an address be presented to her Majesty, praying that the land, which had been reclaimed at the heavy expense of the ratepayers, should now be reserved for their advantage as a breathing-place and pleasure-ground. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Lowe) and Mr Gladstone both spoke vehemently against the motion, the former minimising the objections to the scheme of the Government as "sentimental or æsthetical arguments," the latter declaring that the address moved for would be "flatly contrary to the law of the land, which makes it the duty of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests to turn to the best profitable account the property of the Crown," and that to dispose prospectively of Crown land to the extent of £150,000 would be an invasion of the Prince of Wales's rights of entail. Mr Locke, in supporting the motion, moved the House to laughter by declaring that "wherever you build in this country you are sure to make an eyesore of it." In the division which followed, the Government were defeated by 158 votes to 108, and the question was hung up for the time.

After the prorogation, Smith directed his energies into another channel of usefulness, and wrote thus to Mr Ford:—

I am concerning myself about the election of the School Board for London, and if I hear favourable accounts from Armstrong,¹ to whom I have written, I shall stand, and Lord Sandon with me, as candidates for Westminster. It is a bold thing to do, but I have two great objects in view—to show my earnest interest in education, and to endeavour to prove that popular election may result in the creation of a Board in London as strong in position, character, and fitness for its

¹ Created Sir George Armstrong, Bart., in 1892.

work as the House of Commons itself. Forster very strongly pressed me to engage in the work, and I like him, and like to work with him.

The intention thus expressed Smith carried out successfully, being returned to the first school board for London—a body which fully justified by its composition the anticipation he had formed of the kind of men who would be attracted to it. With Lord Lawrence as chairman, the board possessed among its members such men of note as Mr Charles Reed, M.P., Professor Huxley, Mr Hepworth Dixon, Mr M'Cullagh Torrens, M.P., the Rev. Dr Angus (Baptist), the Rev. Dr Rigg (Wesleyan), Viscount Sandon, M.P., and Mr Samuel Morley, M.P.

The first act of the member for Westminster in the deliberations of this newly constituted body was characteristic of the man. The question of religious education in board schools, which had distracted earnest people from one end of the country to the other, and had, it was fondly hoped, been laid to rest by the compromise agreed to in Committee on the Education Bill, was revived in an acute form in the narrower limits of the London School Board. It was Smith—the Smoother, the quiet, unpretentious reconciler of conflicting opinions—who framed a resolution providing an easy escape from this formidable difficulty. The purport of this resolution was the adoption of a by-law ordering that the Bible should be read, and instruction in religious subjects given therefrom, in the board schools generally, while those interested in particular schools might show cause for exemption from the whole or part of this by-law; and in all schools it was to be understood that the spirit of the Act was to be observed, and no proselytism allowed. This proposal, though opposed by Professor Huxley and two other ardent secularists, was seconded by that distinguished Nonconformist, Mr Samuel Morley, and, being supported

by Roman Catholic, Baptist, and Wesleyan members, was carried by 38 votes to 3.

On May 5, on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, Smith called attention to the operation of the Poor Law within the metropolis, and moved for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the policy and administration of the law. Now, of the many members who rise "to call attention," only a small fraction succeed in obtaining it, but Smith was one of that number on this occasion. His well-known connection with practical philanthropy, combined with the alarming increase in the number of persons who were receiving relief from the rates, enabled him to make out a formidable case for inquiry, for he was able to show that, whereas in the preceding ten years of general prosperity the population of London had increased 16 per cent, pauperism had risen in the prodigious ratio of 64 per cent. But he was unable to persuade the House to adopt his resolution, which, after a long and interesting discussion, was withdrawn. Twenty-two years later, in 1893, the subject has been revived. A Royal Commission has been appointed to inquire into the administration of the Poor Law in England and Wales, and their labours have already brought to light how immensely the ratio of pauperism has been reduced by the consistency and discrimination in giving outdoor relief, the want of which formed the main burden of Smith's complaint of the state of matters in 1871.

Smith's work in the East End had convinced him that the lot of many of the poor who swarmed in the slums of London could only be relieved by removing them to new lands, and this led him to take an active part in the affairs of the East End Emigration Club, in connection with the British and Colonial Emigration

Society. On June 26, 1870, he went down to Gravesend to bid adieu to 1197 emigrants to Canada, passengers in the Ganges and the Tweed. The expenses of about 250 of these were defrayed by himself; but his interest in them was not allowed to drop with their departure, for in 1872 he visited Canada and devoted close inquiry to the resources of that country and the condition of the emigrants there.

The Parliamentary and Municipal Elections Bill, or, to use the better known title derived from its most important and debateable provision, the Ballot Bill, was brought in early in the session, but, owing to the prolonged proceedings on the Army Bill, it was not till late in June that progress could be made with it. Mr Gladstone, who for thirty-five years had stoutly resisted the principle of secret voting, now performed on this question a complete change of front, and declared that the bill must pass before the session should be brought to a close. Midsummer Day had gone by, there was still a heavy proportion of the Votes in Supply to be got through, and the Tory Opposition was obstinate. Moreover, there stood on the Notice Paper upwards of 200 proposed amendments to the bill, half of them in names of supporters of the Government. Under these discouraging circumstances Mr Gladstone resorted to the sagacious expedient of calling his party into council in Downing Street, persuaded them to withdraw their amendments, and to agree to a policy—his opponents of course called it a conspiracy—of silence. This proved successful; and although the Government suffered defeat at the hands of two of their own supporters, Mr Harcourt and Mr James, on the proposal to charge election expenses on the rates, they were able to send the bill up in time to be considered by the Lords. Here, however, it was

destined to be thrown out by a majority of nearly two to one.

This was the closing event of a session which had proved singularly damaging to ministers; and although it is a well-known maxim of old parliamentary hands not to argue too much from by-elections, the significance of the result of those which took place during the autumn in the immemorial Liberal strongholds of East Surrey and Plymouth could scarcely be overlooked.

The Fenian agitation had been overcome, but the chronic restlessness of Irish discontent began about this time to crystallise into a form all the more dangerous to the integrity of the empire because it assumed the guise of constitutional agitation. Home Rule for Ireland began for the first time to be a source of concern to politicians, and the constituencies of England and Scotland heard with relief the following plain bold words spoken by Mr Gladstone at Aberdeen on the occasion of his receiving the freedom of that town.

You would expect, when it is said that the Imperial Parliament is to be broken up, that at the very least a case should be made out showing there were great subjects of policy and great demands necessary for the welfare of Ireland which representatives of Ireland had united to ask, and which the representatives of England, Scotland, and Wales had united to refuse. There is no such grievance. There is nothing that Ireland has asked and which this country and England has refused. This country has done for Ireland what it would have scrupled to do for England and for Scotland. . . . What are the inequalities of England and Ireland? I declare that I know none, except that there are certain taxes still remaining which are levied over Englishmen and Scotchmen and which are not levied over Irishmen, and likewise that there are certain purposes for which public money is freely and largely given in Ireland and for which it is not given in Scotland. That seems to me to be a very feeble case, indeed, for the argument which has been made, by means of which, as we are told, the fabric of the united Parliament of this country is to be broken up. But if the doctrines of Home Rule are to be established in Ireland, I protest on your behalf that you will be just as well entitled to it in Scotland: and moreover I protest on behalf of Wales, in which I have lived a good deal, and where there are 800,000 people, who, to this day, such is their sentiment of nationality, speak hardly

anything but their own Celtic tongue—a larger number than speak the Celtic tongue, I apprehend, in Scotland, and a larger number than speak it, I apprehend, in Ireland—I protest on behalf of Wales that they are entitled to Home Rule there. Can any sensible man—can any rational man, suppose that at this time of day, in this condition of the world, we are going to disintegrate the great capital institutions of this country for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the sight of all mankind, and crippling any power we possess for bestowing benefits through legislation on the country to which we belong?

Such were the convincing phrases by which all suspicion of Mr Gladstone's indulgence to these proposals was allayed—such the proclamation of resolute purpose to maintain the integrity of Parliament and the realm, which it was the destiny of him who spoke them in later years to minimise, explain away, and retract.

Greatly as the pressure on Smith's time, thoughts, and bodily strength had been increased by the growing share he was taking in public affairs, there may be traced in his correspondence and private notes the same earnest anxiety about the spiritual life which always pervaded his thoughts and controlled his action. Thus, at the close of this year, on Advent Sunday, he wrote in his journal:—

A new Christian year—an attempt to look at my own daily life more narrowly, to try and examine motives as well as actions. Mr Robinson of St John's [Torquay], preaching of the story of Uzziah, referred to the dangers of prosperity, of selfishness. Uzziah prospered, although called to the throne when the kingdom of Judah was in utter defeat, because he trusted in God: and he became a leper because he defied his laws. A lesson for nations and for individuals, to be read in the history of the Jews, in the history of our own times, and borne out by my own self-knowledge.

O God, give me to think of them more, of Thy love to me, and of my *duty*; and help me to pray always with faith.

CHAPTER VIII.

1872

Ministers were able to lay before Parliament on February 6, 1872, a Queen's Speech which congratulated her faithful Commons on the relative freedom from crime in Ireland, and the remarkable prosperity of agriculture in that country. The Government was unpopular in the country, but had been protected from sinister consequences by the indifference to politics which invariably springs from extraordinary prosperity. The consequences of the financial disasters of 1866 had wellnigh passed away, the anxiety of the formidable troubles in France had been relieved, and the country had entered on that cycle of prosperity, the knell of which was not to be sounded till, six years later, the City of Glasgow Bank fell with dismal crash.

The Ballot Bill was once more introduced by Mr Forster, and probably there never was a bill secretly more detested by the House of Commons than this one. Contrary as it was to all national custom and parliamentary tradition, men felt ashamed of compelling their fellow-countrymen to accept the protection of secrecy in exercising a right which had always been used with the utmost openness. The measure had an un-British, almost cowardly complexion, and obviously the fair corollary to it—namely, secret voting by members of Parliament in the division lobbies—was one that could never be claimed. Nevertheless the Opposition seem to have been afraid to resist it lest the franchise might, in the general election which seemed not far distant, be used under cover of the ballot against the party which should seek to deny this protection to electors. Hence, in spite of the fact that such well-known Liberals as Mr

Walter and Mr Fawcett denounced the system of secret voting, the debate on the Second Reading was half-hearted, and the division, taken in a thin and listless House, showed in favour of the bill by 109 votes to 51. Smith, who, as has been shown by his declarations to the electors of Westminster, detested the ballot, did not vote. But when the bill, after a stormy passage through Committee, was put down for Third Reading, the Opposition plucked up heart and fought hard against it. The division showed a majority of 58 in favour of the bill, which was framed to expire in 1880, since which time it has been necessary to renew it annually by including it in the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill, which is passed at the end of every session.

One subject in connection with which Smith had taken an active part, that of the Thames Embankment, on the management of which he had beaten the Government in 1870, came up in an altered form this year. No action had been taken in consequence of the Resolution of the House when Parliament reassembled in 1871, so Smith gave notice that he intended to move that "it was desirable that the ground reclaimed from the Thames between Whitehall Gardens and Whitehall Place should be devoted to the purposes of public recreation and amusement." The experience of the previous session made the Government aware that they could not successfully oppose this resolution; a repetition of defeat was a foregone conclusion, so before the day for its discussion came on, the Prime Minister took the course of referring the question to the consideration of a Select Committee. That body reported in favour of the disposal of the ground in the manner advocated by Smith and indicated by the vote of the House, but still the winter of 1871-72 passed without any action being taken to carry the plan into effect. Indeed so tenaciously did the Treasury adhere to the principles which

should regulate the administration of Crown property, that a new Committee was appointed in 1872 at the instance of the Government, which reversed the decision of the former Committee, and recommended the appropriation of nearly all the space in dispute for the erection of public buildings. Thereupon the Chancellor of the Exchequer prepared and brought in a bill to give effect to this recommendation, but the only result was that Ministers suffered another defeat, this time on the motion of Mr Harcourt, who carried a resolution against them to the effect that it was not desirable to proceed further in the matter that year.¹

Having undertaken legislative responsibility, Smith was conscientiously anxious to fit himself for his duties by every means of acquiring knowledge of the effect of different forms of government and conditions of society. To this end it was natural that he should have early directed his thoughts to the great American Republic and the British American colonies. But the necessity for a separation from wife and children, even for a few months only, weighed heavily on his mind; his thoughts centred in his home, and the only reward he sought for his labours was to escape thither as often and for as long as might be. Circumstances made it inconvenient for Mrs Smith to accompany him, but he held it to be his duty to visit Canada and the United States, and he sailed in the 'Moravian' on August 15. During his

¹ The settlement of this matter did not come till 1873. Smith did not allow it to rest until the Commissioners of Woods and Forests agreed practically to his proposal, by offering to hand over to the Metropolitan Board of Works almost the whole of the ground for a payment of £3270, an arrangement which was confirmed by Parliament and carried out. In May 1875 the new ornamental grounds, thus redeemed from being built over, having been completed, were formally declared open by Mr Smith, who had by that time become Secretary to the Treasury; and it is undoubtedly to his exertions that Londoners owe the enjoyment of a pretty piece of public garden. The seats therein were the gift of Mr Smith, and it is only necessary to walk there on a summer evening to see how much they are appreciated.

absence his letters to his wife form a consecutive journal ; and although many of the details contained in them are far too minute to be of general interest in these days, when travelling is so easy and so frequent, some of the sketches in this simple narrative are worthy of preservation.

August 16.—What a change a few hours had made ! Last night—almost a calm ; this morning—flying scud, wet decks, and sad sounds below. We have been coasting Ireland since daybreak, and have just (9 A.M.) passed the Giant's Causeway, running for Moville, in Lough Foyle.

17th.—A dirty night for our first at sea. The Irish Channel was hardly worth the name of sea, and it blows hard this morning. We are well away from land, and out in the Atlantic. . . . Quiet prevails, with interjected sighs—almost groans. Food—dry toast and tea.

18th.—Very much the same. A serious tone prevails, and we speak respectfully of the Atlantic. Very few passengers visible. Food—still tea and toast. Have come to the belief that we are all in the habit of eating a great deal too much, and that so many meals on board ship are quite unnecessary. Night—roll, roll. . . . Children cry, and their mothers can't attend to them, and we have a lively night. An old lady in the cabin has a silver bell, which she is constantly ringing to assure the stewardess that she hears the water bubbling about the ship, and she is sure it is sinking. We are all grave, and most of us selfish. Captain read service in cabin ; could not venture down. . . .

20th.—Fine. Ship steady. Turn up at breakfast for the first time. A shoal of porpoises, which seem to race with the ship for some time. Music on deck at night. No sail in sight all day. Wind gets up towards evening. Rain comes with it. I turn in early, but no sleep in the ship to-night. Roll, roll, roll ; crash, smash, bang go china, plates, glasses, doors—everything that can move. The old lady's bell rings constantly, and the Captain keeps to the bridge on deck. In the morning our party is smaller at breakfast than usual, and we have to hold our cups in our hands and seesaw them as we drink.

Mrs MacNabb, who has crossed many times, and has been wrecked once, begins to tell her story over again, and wonders whether last night's Aurora forebode storms. No ship in sight to-day—no life but sea-birds.

21st.—Old lady very troublesome ; has heard there is iron in the ship as cargo, and is quite sure it is rolling about underneath her, and that the ship will go down. Fore-cabin passengers and emigrants very miserable ; all wet, and many sick. We went—*i.e.*, Mr and Mrs Gurney and I—after dinner to the middle deck with fruit for the poor children. . . .

25th.—Sunday morning, and as bright and beautiful as a Sunday should be. The breeze fresh ahead ; the ship moving a little, but

running well; every one thankful, and in good spirits. . . . Old Captain said that he liked the Old Hundredth psalm, because it always seemed to him that it went straight up to the masthead—a very simple description, but a very touching one, of his own honest but unaffected devotion; and many of us felt the mysterious sympathy which links together those who are using the same beautiful words and forms, however widely they may be separated from those they love. These words meet up higher, somewhere higher than the masthead—and they go straight up there.

26th.— . . . I have not heard the old lady's bell for three days, but there is a charming old maid and her canary, who are going together to California, who have been very amusing. They came to church together yesterday, and wherever she goes, he goes.

On the 27th they landed at Quebec, and, dining that night with the Governor-General, the Earl of Dufferin, Smith made the acquaintance of his host's private secretary, Mr Jacob Luard Pattisson, a gentleman who in after-years was to render him invaluable and devoted service.

Leaving Quebec on 30th, Smith went to Montreal, and here is one of his earliest experiences there:—

Sunday, Sept. 1.—I wanted a bath early, so I told the chamber-maid last night, and she promised to speak to the man. No women attend upon men in their bedrooms in Canada, but they look after their rooms when they are out of them. At 7 I rang: boy answered. "I want a bath." "Oh, do you? Very well," and went away: at 20 minutes past no bath. I rang again. An old man came this time. I said, "I ordered a bath a long time ago, and it has not come yet." "Did you? How long?" "More than half an hour." "Oh, I don't call half an hour a long time." "Don't you?" said I; "then we do in our country." "Ah, but it is Sunday morning, you know." "Well, never mind, bring the water and the towels." "You can't have any towels. The chamber-maid keeps them, and she has gone to breakfast."

Is not this a free country?

. . . I have spent a very quiet afternoon in my room, making use of the church-service so long used by my dear love. . . .

2nd.—I am learning a great deal, seeing very much that is interesting, and making the acquaintance of every man of note almost in Canada; but with all this qualified enjoyment and sense of acquisition, I am looking forward so gladly and so hopefully to the bright November day of my return. . . . At present my watch is five hours behind London time, so that writing now at 12 it is 5 P.M. with you, and I often imagine to myself your engagements at the actual moment I am looking at the time. . . .

4th.—I have never seen anything approaching these Falls for grandeur as well as for beauty, for every variety of light and shade, for

every effect which they give in colour upon water. At one moment there is a sense of awe, of fear. The flow is so irresistible and tremendous. It is too much to look at, as the gleams of light catch the edges of the water, and they sparkle like the diamonds in a fairy palace, and there at the bottom, eddying slowly away, lies the water, looking exhausted and almost dead after its mighty leap. It is worth the journey to America and back to see the Falls alone. . . .

5th.—*Niagara.* . . . After dinner we were taking another stroll on Goat Island, and we encountered the lady fellow-passenger of the Moravian, who had the canary-bird which had always gone with her wherever she went for 9 years, and which came to church in the cabin on the Sunday. She gave us the gratifying news that the bird was well so far. . . .

6th.— . . . As soon as I had finished my last letter, I started out for another look at the Falls, to which one is drawn by an irresistible fascination. It had rained heavily during the night, but the clouds cleared away by 10 A.M., with a still air, steamy and hot, and a very scorching sun, giving quite another effect to the Falls, all glistening in the heat and light, with the cloud of steam or spray like a golden veil suspended in front of them.

At mid-day off in the train to Hamilton city, *en route* for Toronto. . . .

7th.— . . . There I met a gentleman who reminded me he had sat next to me at Drapers' Hall two years ago, and told me what I had said to him. He took me up to Professor Goldwin Smith and introduced me to him, and we had a long talk about the politics of Canada and the United States. The Professor says Canada enjoys a perfect constitution, complete liberty, and there is only the drawback of corruption, which exists more or less everywhere. . . .

Sept. 9.—I think I am learning a great deal, and taking in much; but really it is harder work than any one would suppose to look about one with the intention of retaining recollection of things—to ask questions and to receive the amount of information which everybody is disposed and glad to give. I am really quite lazily disposed sometimes at the end of the day, especially as we are now having great heat again.

Wednesday, Sept. 11.—Another warm day. It was a golden mist in the morning, and was very thick over the lake. . . . Another luncheon was to be ate to-day in public! Champagne flowed freely. The M.P. for Algoma proposed the health of the M.P. for Westminster, and the M.P. for Westminster had to propose prosperity to Toronto, &c., &c. . . .

12th.—What I am seeing here impresses me with a sense of the great changes which are coming over society. Every man, woman, and child can earn here much more than is necessary for food, lodging, and clothing, if they have fair health. The commonest labourer will get 6 and 7 shillings a-day, and food is cheaper than it is in England. The country appears healthy, but in one little town I visited in the backwoods on Tuesday there were four doctors, all of whom appeared to be living very comfortably. . . . If it were not for the different kind of houses they have, the distances between them, the

very bad roads, some not paved or stoned at all, but simply the sand and carth which has existed since the flood—one would sometimes imagine oneself at home. The people are very “English,” live a family life, conduct their religious services exactly as we do, dress as we do, and with one or two additions to the course, they eat and drink as we do. I am sure you would like them.

Monday, Sept. 16.—Started at 7 A.M. by steamer for Montreal. The banks of the river are very prettily wooded, and there are plenty of wild-fowl about; but the most curious feature at this season on the Ottawa river is the rafts coming down from the interior. If they are fortunate it takes them $2\frac{1}{2}$ months from the time they start before they arrive at Quebec, and the distances traversed by mighty rivers in America can be realised when it is considered that these rafts go floating on night and day with the stream for all this long time. The people live on them in little wooden houses, and they have generally a flag hoisted. . . .

At St Ann’s encountered the famous rapids which gave birth to the Canadian boat-song. A fine morning changed into rain here, and I could only console myself by talking to backwoodsmen about their hard but healthy life

We noticed that at the point where the Ottawa flows into the St Lawrence the waters do not mix but flow on side by side, the Ottawa dark brown, the St Lawrence bright green. Arrived at Montreal at 6.30 P.M.

Thursday, Sept. 19.—Mr P., superintendent of schools, called for me at 8.30 to take me the round of the schools. I saw one opened at 9, of 700 boys, by simply reading a chapter and repeating the Lord’s Prayer. The boys were of all ranks—some gentlemen’s sons, some without shoes or stockings—and yet the discipline appeared to be most perfect. The head-master, one assistant, and sometimes two, are men. All the other teachers are women, and they appear to be really accomplished ladies, some of them quite young and good-looking. I visited two of the large schools. . . . I also visited numerous libraries, Athenæums, societies, and wound up with a careful look into the Boston system of giving relief to the poor.

I have been going about seeing everything I can in the shape of schools, charities, and public buildings, until my eyes ache, and both my ears and my tongue are tired. . . . There is much to learn, to see, to appreciate, and I may never have another chance, and so I want to absorb all I can.

Friday, Sept. 20.—Schools again, this time in very poor smelly quarters, but the children for the most part come regularly. To the High School for girls. It almost took my breath away to see girls from 15 to 19, some hundreds of them, studying at work which was beyond me. Some of them looked wan and dragged. None looked fresh, like healthy English girls, and as I was asked to say a few words, I told them English girls lived more in the open air than they did, and I hinted pretty broadly that I thought they would be the better for more fresh air and exercise, and a little less work. It was confessed that the effect of this high training was to overstock the market for teachers. . . .

The record of one day is very much like that of another: this was no mere pleasure trip, but hard work from morning to night—schools, colleges, prisons, workmen's dwellings, charities, churches, banks, commercial houses, interviews with public men and merchants, took up all the time.

From New York Smith went to Albany, thence returned to Toronto, Niagara, and started on September 27 for the Far West. He arrived at Chicago on Sunday 29th, and noted that it was

the place that has had the biggest fire that ever was known. It burnt an area covered with houses 5 miles long by 3 wide.

. . . The landlord of the hotel in which I stay had his house burnt, and while the fire still raged he calculated from the course it was taking that another large hotel would not be burnt. He went to the owner, and then and there bought it. No doubt he parted with it believing it would be burnt, but the fire stopped the next day on the other side of the street, where some houses had been blown up by gunpowder, and this is the house in which I am staying. When the fire was out the seller wanted to get off the bargain, but my landlord insisted on it, and gained the point. There are 16 huge hotels now building in the city, which will lodge 7000 people.

All wooden houses are to be moved beyond what are called the fire-limits of the city, and I saw one going down the street to-day on rollers to its new location.

It would be quite impossible in England, and would have been taken down to be rebuilt, but it is a business here to move houses as we move furniture. I visited the water-works, which were burnt, but at work again in a week. Fancy a city with the gas and water works all burnt in one night!

More corn and more pigs than in any other place I have ever seen; but I did not see one child at play, or one face without marks of care, anxiety, and excitement—the police only excepted, and they took life easily.

Wednesday, Oct. 2.—In the morning I found the hotel-car "Westminster" was attached to our train, and so I had the pleasure of breakfasting in Westminster before I crossed the Missouri on another fine iron bridge, which was only completed this year, to Omaha in the State of Nebraska. Here we changed into the Union Pacific Company carriages, in which we were to pass three days and two nights.

There was another Mr Smith in the train, going to New Zealand through San Francisco, and as the conductor was charged to be specially careful of Mr Smith, he wished to know which of us it was who could not take care of himself. I rejoiced in avowing my weakness! . . . Our pace from Omaha was not great, averaging less than 20 miles an hour, including stoppages.

Thursday, Oct. 3.—We woke up on the borders of the desert to a

most lovely sunrise. Every hue that can be imagined in the sky, and the earth in the dim light, as like the sea in a calm as can well be imagined.

Bc-o-wa-e (?), *Nevada*, Oct. 5.—We are passing through wonderful scenery—for the last two days it has been one prolonged pass, rivers on one side, mountains close on the other; oases here and there of great loveliness, but generally utter wild barrenness; and yet there are human beings who, with millions of fertile acres lying waste, seem to prefer this savage and grand solitude.

Plains again—more alkali, more dust, more sage-brush, but no grass. Still there are inhabitants, probably looking for silver and gold rather than wheat or cattle. The Indians now appeared, and they were not beautiful to look at. The men looked lazy, well fed and clothed, with very black eyes and hair, but one-half of their faces covered with vermilion; the women dirty and miserable to a degree hardly human.

Oct. 6.—Daylight broke upon us in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and here was magnificent scenery—mountains of granite raising their heads to the sky, with patches of snow here and there, and covered up to the snow with magnificent pine. The summit station is 7200 feet above the sea, and we had forty-three miles of snow-sheds to pass through before we reached the lower country. Unfortunately these snow-sheds shut out much of the view, which, when we caught it, was more like the Italian side of the Alps than anything I had seen in America.

San Francisco, Oct. 7.—How delightful to be still—to have been in bed—to have had a bath—not to hear the whir, whir, whir of the train, or to feel the tremendous motion under one's feet! . . . I presented my letters. The talk was of wheat, of diamonds, and of gold. Why won't you believe we are the richest people under the sun? I politely believe my friend, but he is angry because all my friends do not understand it. I looked on the water right away seaward towards China, Japan, and Australia, and the sea broke on those rocks with the same thud and spray as those waves nearer at home, of which I was reminded. But for the sands close at hand, I might have closed my eyes, dreamt, and opened them on Devonshire rocks. The trade-wind brought its mist with it at 5 o'clock, and we drove along the firm sand while the sun went down in the richest red glory I have seen for years. It seemed to mark the sea with blood—and it might have been, for we passed the wrecks of two old ships deeply bedded in the sand—of gallant ships which had been. It was dark when we got home. And after dinner I walked to the Chinese quarter of the town. There are 25,000 Chinese here, and they live almost as completely in a quarter by themselves as if they were in Canton. . . .

On October 9, Smith started with some American friends for the Yosemite Valley, a region so thoroughly well known from the accounts given by innumerable tourists, that quotation from his minute description of the scenery may be dispensed with. Returning on the 16th from Merced—

A seven hours' railway journey takes us back to San Francisco, and I stand on the platform of the train as we approach it, and open my mouth wide to draw in the fresh cool breeze the trade-wind sends off the sea. If you want to be grateful for fresh air, shut yourself up in a large oven for a week, and provide a constant supply of the most minute dust, which, after stopping up your nose, insists upon being taken into your lungs through the mouth, and into the stomach as well. The Yosemite is very lovely, very grand, but, as Mrs Cass said to me, I say, I won't advise any lady to go there until after I have forgotten the journey to it. . . .

October 20.—I part with my friends at Ogden, promising to meet in New York; they proceed east, I diverge a little south to Salt Lake City, the capital of Mormondom. I went to the Tabernacle to morning service—mid-day I should say. It is a very large, plain building, holding 6000 people, the roof supported without a pillar or buttress, of great span, resembling an inverted dish-cover. The organ is a very fine one, built on the spot. There is a sort of low Exeter Hall Orchestra raised step by step, one level behind the other.

There were three pulpits or stands, one on each step or stage, and the preacher, Orson Pratt, took his place at the middle one. His text was from the Word of God as revealed to Joseph Smith, page so-and-so, on the 27th December 1832, and he read it. He said the Latter-Day Saints believed the Bible which he had, the Revelations to Joseph Smith, and the Book of Mormon, each and all, one as much as the other, and he went on to a defence of polygamy on the grounds that under the Old Testament dispensation it was permitted, and also that as other Christians permitted widowers to marry again, and they might therefore have two or three wives in heaven, it was certainly right to have two or three on earth. Much more was said which I shall not repeat, but the congregation received it all.

While the singing and preaching proceeded, bread and water were partaken by the members as a sacrament. I never saw such women as in that place, so plain, so vacant-looking, or so superstitious. Poor creatures! The system is described by those who have courage as a hell upon earth; and although the ground bears fruit and the valley teems with produce, the human beings who have adopted the so-called religion look either half-crazed or entirely knavish.

A meeting of Gentiles against Mormonism was held last Thursday in the streets. It was the first open meeting. Threats had been uttered that it would be broken up, and the chairman announced that the first person disturbing the meeting would be shot. It was known there was a body of men armed, prepared to obey his orders, and so everything passed off peaceably.

I spent the evening quietly in my room. There was not much to choose between the countenances of the Gentile miners who are attracted to Salt Lake by the silver-mines near and those of the Mormons. A stranger unarmed is perfectly safe. If you want to incur danger show a six-shooter revolver, and instantly every man will produce and cock his weapon. By the way, highway robbers are called road-agents in these parts. Robbers is an offensive term. And so two road-agents relieved the stage last week of the trouble

of carrying some bullion from the mines near Virginia City to Rens. . . .

Tuesday, Oct. 22.—I have become quite intimate with my English and Canadian friends in the next car—the captain of H.M.S. Sparrowhawk, and Mr Fleming, the leader of the Canadian-Pacific Railway exploring expedition.

They rode across the continent to the Pacific in two months, averaging 40 miles a-day exclusive of Sundays, and this strong exercise kept up for so long a time has made Mr Fleming apprehensive lest a week on the railway should upset the health of his party, one following directly on the other. He therefore orders all out whenever the train stops, and every man runs for exercise in a manner which alarms and amazes the Americans, who never make any exertion which they can avoid. Captain Ross or Royds of the Sparrowhawk is a very heavy man, and he offered to carry the doctor of the expedition, also a heavy man, 50 yards on his back, while a young active fellow was running 100 yards, and to beat him. We had this race on the summit level of the Rocky Mountains at Sherman, 8200 feet up. I had arranged with the conductor to keep the train a few minutes longer for the purpose, and I was the starter. The fun was very great: the Captain came in first with his load quite easily, but running very fast. We then had another race of 100 yards between three young fellows; and after that the whole party played leap-frog one over the other, each man giving his back in turn.

I don't know whether I laughed more at the fun itself than at the surprise, the amazement, of the passengers in the train and the employees of the railway. They could hardly laugh. The exertion was so utterly unnecessary. When I returned to the cars I was amused at the reception I had—something between pity and "We really can't understand what sort of people you are." One man said to me, "You English always will be boys." I said, "Yes, to the very last."

I parted with my friends at Cheyenne, and took the train southwards to Denvir City, a new town at the foot of the mountains in Colorado, which is now a great mining district.

I discussed Indian troubles with an American officer on the road, and learnt that departments in America are as dilatory, as weak, and as obnoxious to those who serve under them in the New World as they are in the Old. . . .

Wednesday, Oct. 23.—Nothing but rolling prairie for miles and miles. Everybody is looking for the buffalo, and we saw many, alive and dead. They are certainly grand animals, and it seems cruel to shoot them simply for the pleasure of hunting, without using the meat.¹ We saw antelopes, prairie-hens, and wild turkeys in great

¹ This noble animal is now extinct, save for a small herd preserved in the Yosemite Park. Twenty years ago it existed in migratory herds of countless thousands; but the combined avarice and cruelty of man, aided by repeating-rifles, has prevailed to destroy the species off the face of the earth. The bisection of the buffalo prairies by the Canadian-Pacific Railway no doubt contributed to extermination, for it interfered with the annual migration of the herds. Buffaloes have

numbers ; but for the first 300 miles every station at which we stopped for water—there were no passengers—was protected by one or two soldiers, who had formed for themselves a sort of underground miniature fortress. The winds here are so tremendous, when they blow over the prairie, that men are glad to excavate, dig out the earth, and form a habitation which cannot be blown away. We looked into one of these underground huts, of which walls, roof, and everything were earth, and although it was very rough, it showed the occupier was well-to-do. There was a profusion of firearms, saddles, &c., and one or two large American trunks, holding clothes, &c.

Towards afternoon a tree or two became visible, and we approached a small stream of water. Then large herds of cattle, some three or four thousand in a herd, took the place of buffalo, and wooden shanties became almost frequent. At 10 P.M. I arrived at Junction City, where I had to leave the Pacific train in order to go south to Emporia. The names are great, and the laying out of streets implies great expectations ; but at present backwood cities do not come up to the Old World ideas of what constitutes cities. Here and there a brick-and-stone house, a clay-built one, thirty or forty wooden shanties, and a good many open spaces covered with weeds, and there is the city before you. But there is always a milliner or two to be found, several lawyers, a dry-goods store, and a schoolhouse.

CHAPTER IX.

1873-1874.

The first Administration of Mr Gladstone now entered upon its fifth year of existence with the shadow of unpopularity deepening on its course. So many apprehensions had been aroused, such powerful interests harassed, that it might have seemed to Ministers that their only chance of conducting affairs towards the natural term of the Parliament lay in avoiding sensational enterprise in legislation and in allaying rather than rousing opposition.

Aliter visum! In a fatal hour for the Government the been known to destroy themselves by charging a railway train in blind fury. At the present day the only traces left of them are piles of whitening bones and horns.

Prime Minister plunged once more into the troubled tide of Irish politics. Already he had prevailed to destroy the Irish Church and revolutionise the tenure of Irish landed property; there remained a third question, the settlement of which he had in his electioneering speeches of 1868 declared to be essential to the conciliation of Irish disaffection. Perhaps in doing so he had yielded to the temptation, irresistible to less experienced orators, of casting rhetoric in a triple mould: it is difficult to assign any other reason for his having discovered in the state of Irish University Education a grievance more crying than the irreconcilable variance of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches in temporal matters. Although he can hardly have calculated on the complexity and multiplicity of opposition which was to be called into existence by the mere mention of this question in the Queen's Speech, it has ever been a characteristic of this remarkable statesman never to be so happy as when dragging hesitating and even reluctant followers through the turmoil of parliamentary war to an issue which they would fain avoid.

Such was the task he undertook in tabling his Irish University Bill. The event proved that in essaying to satisfy the claims of the Irish Roman Catholic clergy without rousing alarm among his Protestant and Nonconformist supporters in all three kingdoms, he had put his hand to a work beyond his power to accomplish.

There is no need to dwell on what turned out to be an abortive plan: enough to say that though the design was so complete and elaborate as to command admiration for its author, long before the day fixed for the Second Reading it had become clear that Ministerialists were sharply divided on its policy. Professor Henry Fawcett¹ led the Opposition

¹ Postmaster-General in Mr Gladstone's second Administration, 1880-84.

against the bill, and was followed on the same side by Dr Lyon Playfair¹ and Mr Horsman. As the debate proceeded, the Government betrayed their weakness by offering to leave several important points as open questions to be settled in Committee, but that was a stage which this ill-starred measure was destined never to reach. It was thrown out on Second Reading by a majority of 3—287 votes to 284.

In consequence of this defeat the Government resigned, but as Disraeli declined attempting to form a Cabinet, the opinion went abroad that the only way out of the dilemma was an appeal to the constituencies. A singular feature of the situation was the promulgation by the rival leaders of the reasons inducing each to adopt the course he did, by means of letters addressed to the Sovereign. Mr Gladstone in his letter contended warmly that an Opposition which had overthrown a Government was bound to attempt the administration of affairs, a view which Mr Disraeli in his letter firmly repudiated. This correspondence formed the subject of debate in the House of Commons, in the course of which Mr Gladstone announced that the Government had resumed its functions, and Ministers had returned to their Departments.

Under these conditions matters settled down again, and there was little more excitement within the walls of Parliament during the rest of that session. Smith's name will be found in the annals of Hansard associated with various educational and metropolitan objects of discussion. He moved resolutions condemning the schemes promulgated for the management of the Greycoat School and Guy's Hospital, and called attention to some anomalies in the incidence of local taxation. But the most important action which he took

¹ Afterwards Postmaster-General in 1873-74, Chairman of Ways and Means, 1880-83, and Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education in 1886 ; created Baron Playfair in 1892.

was in regard to the Budget resolutions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had a surplus, but it had been in great part forestalled by the award of the Alabama Commissioners, under which this country had been adjudged to pay an indemnity of £3,200,000. Half of this sum was to be paid during the current year, the sugar-duties were to be remitted, and a penny was to be taken off the income-tax. Smith's amendment was to the effect that, before remitting indirect taxation by the remission of the sugar-duty, the House ought to be in possession of the views of the Government as to the adjustment of local and imperial taxation.

The Government have been urged to exempt altogether from Income-tax the first £150 of everybody's income, and I believe that that course will, if the Government are bent upon touching the Income-tax at all, be much better than the course which they have adopted. A justification might be found for that course, for there is a large class among the artisans and labourers in this country who are earning £150 a-year, and are not [only not paying Income-tax, but whom it will be impossible, or if possible, very undesirable, to *compel* to pay. I will venture to ask the House what the policy of the Budget really is. The policy of the Budget is to swallow up every farthing of surplus which can exist this year and next year. The policy of the Budget is to deprive the House of Commons of dealing with a question [Local and Imperial Taxation] which it has already decided to be of very grave and serious import to the taxpayers of the country. The policy of the Budget is, I venture to think, to embarrass the hands of any right honourable member who may next year or the year after stand in the position now occupied by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The general tenor of his complaint against the financial proposals of the Government was that, while giving relief where it was not wanted, they did nothing to remedy an admitted grievance. Mr Lowe with great warmth resisted the amendment, which he referred to as "a crowning insult"; but judging from comments on the debate in Ministerialist journals, he earned little gratitude outside the House for his exposition of the principles on which he had framed his Budget. The matter dropped, and the session moved uneventfully to its close.

But if Ministers succeeded in holding their own in Parliament, the omens in the country were sinister. Since 1869 nine seats, all vacated by various Ministers appointed to permanent places or removed to the House of Lords, had been captured by Conservatives; six more had fallen into the hands of the enemy during 1873; and against this category of calamity the Liberals could only reckon gains at Bath and Truro. There were known to be grievous dissensions among Ministers themselves: Mr Baxter resigned the Secretaryship of the Treasury because he could not agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Lowe); Mr Lowe was removed from the Treasury and appointed Home Secretary; and Lord Ripon and Mr Childers both resigned office.

All this, of course, was watched with satisfaction by the Conservatives, who were biding their time; but they too were not without chill tremors of apprehension, arising from the adverse effect on their prospects which secret voting might have in a general election. Those in possession of what are described, with somewhat grim humour, as the "sweets of office" were far from happy, while their opponents were weighed down by the prospect of worse things which might come to pass.

Perhaps it is to this sense of uneasiness that must be traced the beginning of that sharper acerbity and scunter courtesy to opponents which of late years has characterised party politics. There was plenty of hard fighting in the days when the House of Commons was spoken of as the best club in London; but a chivalrous understanding prevailed between the two parties; debates and divisions were arranged to suit mutual convenience; to snap a division on a great question in the dinner-hour would have been regarded as a positive breach of good-breeding. How greatly things are changed now many a weary member can sorrowfully testify.

Perhaps the discredit for the first disregard of these unwritten laws may be laid to the door of the Conservative party. It had been an immemorial custom with the Opposition of the day not to oppose Ministers seeking re-election on taking office. Elated by their success at many by-elections, and anxious to score another win, the organisers of the Tory party determined to oppose Sir Henry James at Taunton on his appointment as Solicitor-General. They failed to oust him, but a bad precedent had been set, which in subsequent years has been the reverse of satisfactory in its effects.

In the autumn of this year Disraeli chose to address a letter on public affairs to Lord Grey de Wilton, in which he spoke of the Government in terms which gave deep offence to many of his own party. Writing to his friend, Mr Ford, on October 11, Smith passed the following melancholy comment on the incident:—

Disraeli has ruined himself, and rendered reconstruction of parties—a new choice of leaders—almost inevitable. I was going to speak at a dinner at Hertford on Thursday next, but I have begged off. I have no heart for it now, and I don't want to talk.

In the autumn of 1873 Smith found himself, much against his will, committed to a second contest for re-election to the London School Board. He expressed a strong desire to retire, but his supporters would not hear of it. Indeed his partner, Mr Lethbridge, was waited on to induce him to persuade Smith to accept the Chairmanship of the new Board. "That," said Mr Lethbridge, "Mr Smith will not do, if I know anything of him at all." Writing to his wife on this subject on December 2, he says: "I said positively that nothing would induce me to take it [the Chairmanship] permanently, and my friends gave way, and I think I shall escape being nominated."

In spite of the general disfavour into which Ministers

had fallen, and the discouragement with which Mr Gladstone's Cabinet had to contend, the year 1874 opened upon a kingdom pervaded with general apathy in regard to political parties. There was no apparent reason why the Parliament should not run on to its full term, and no anxiety on the part of the Opposition to challenge a direct issue with a Government commanding a majority of 90 in the House of Commons. People were still finding it so profitable to attend to their own business, that they showed little concern about the course of public affairs. Parliament had been summoned to meet on February 5, but on January 24 there appeared a manifesto addressed by Mr Gladstone to his constituents in Greenwich, in which, after referring to the course of events in the previous session, he announced the desire of the Government "to pass from a state of things thus fitful and casual to one in which the nation will have full opportunity of expressing will and choice as between the political parties." He rested the claims of the Liberal party to a renewal of confidence partly on their past performances, and partly on their intention of totally abolishing the Income-Tax and relieving local taxation—the very points which Smith had urged in his speech on the last Budget. He further indicated an intention of assimilating the franchise in the counties to that in the boroughs.

The challenge, thus passionately and impulsively thrown down, was promptly accepted by the Tory champion. "Generally speaking," ran one sentence in Mr Disraeli's counterblast—

Generally speaking, I should say of the Administration of the last five years, that it would have been better for all of us if there had been a little more energy in our foreign policy, and a little less in our domestic legislation.

The state of parties in Westminster was considered to be more favourable to the Conservatives than it had been in

1868, and this impression was undoubtedly owing, in a very large degree, to the hold Smith had obtained on the confidence and respect of those whom he represented in Parliament. Still, no one could foretell the result of household franchise exercised under secrecy of the ballot. If, as was loudly claimed by the Liberal party managers, the effect of the Ballot Act was to be the release of the artisan and labouring classes from the alleged oppressive influence and constraint of their employers, who were mainly Conservative, there could not fail to be seen, in a constituency like Westminster, a heavy addition to the Liberal poll; and that this was the genuine faith and expectation of Mr Gladstone's colleagues had been abundantly shown by their extreme impatience to abolish the immemorial custom of open voting. Consequently, there was some hesitation on the part of the Westminster Conservatives to run more than one candidate for the two seats. Smith, standing alone, might be reckoned fairly secure of being returned; indeed, there came from the Liberals what was tantamount to an understanding that the representation should be divided by the unopposed return of Mr Smith for the Conservatives and Sir T. Fowell Buxton for the Liberals. But Smith himself could be brought to accept no such compromise, and it was in consequence of his strong and repeated persuasion that Sir Charles Russell agreed to come forward as his colleague.

It was a bold and, as many thought, a hazardous enterprise to jeopardise the certainty of keeping one seat in order to have the chance of winning both, for Westminster had been for generations part of the patrimony of the Whigs; but nobly did the ancient borough respond to the confidence of its young member.

In his address to the electors, this time Smith made no allusion to Liberal-Conservatism: half-a-dozen years of

active political life had not been without effect in accentuating his political views, and his common-sense had led him to realise how vain, if a man is to let his influence be felt, must be all profession of independence of parliamentary leadership. He now stood as an avowed member of the Conservative party.

In concert with my political friends [ran one paragraph] I have deprecated, and should continue to deprecate, great organic changes in submission to the clamour of professional agitators, who aim at destruction rather than reform. There is, in my judgment, ample work for the energies of Parliament, without embarking upon great constitutional changes which are not desired by the people.

The result of this, the first general election under the ballot, came as a welcome surprise to the Conservatives—as an unlooked-for discouragement to their opponents. A minority of 90 in the old Parliament was converted into a majority of 50 in the new House of Commons, and no part of the kingdom contributed to this result in a proportion equal to the metropolis. In the deceased Parliament Mr Disraeli had been able, out of the twenty metropolitan seats, to reckon but two as held by his followers; in the new one the representation was equally divided between Conservatives and Liberals. The verdict condemning the late Administration was given in Westminster with startling emphasis. The Whig ‘Spectator’ for February 7, 1874, admitted and explained the greatness of the victory.

The most tremendous of the Tory victories is that at Westminster, where the two Tory candidates, Mr W. H. Smith and Sir Charles Russell, have been returned, the former by a vote of close upon two to one, and that over a candidate supported by the whole strength of the Licensed Victuallers and of the religious philanthropists, as well as of the Liberal Party in general—Sir Fowell Buxton. The return is as follows:—

Mr W. H. Smith (C)	. . . . .	9371
Sir Charles Russell (C)	. . . . .	8681
Sir T. F. Buxton (L)	. . . . .	4749
General Codrington (L)	. . . . .	3435

Now on the last occasion Mr W. H. Smith polled only 7648 votes, which is much fewer than Sir Charles Russell has polled on this occasion, while Captain Grosvenor polled 6584 votes, nearly two thousand more than Sir Fowell Buxton polls now. This is Conservative reaction with a vengeance!

There was no getting over it. In 1868 Smith's success had been accounted for by his opponents as the result of his liberal expenditure of money—there was no whisper of that now. By the Ballot Act the working classes had been freed alike from the oppressive dictation of employers and the demoralising application of wealth, and here was the use they had made of their freedom on the very first opportunity. A handsome acknowledgment of the fairness of the conditions of battle came from one of the defeated candidates.

14 GROSVENOR CREST., *Feb. 6, 1874.*

DEAR MR SMITH,—I must thank you for the courteous message you sent me by Sir John Kennaway last night. I can assure you I look back upon the late election with satisfaction on this ground, that each side has appealed only to those higher issues, national and not local or personal, which I am sure you feel with me ought alone to guide the contests of parties.—I remain, yours truly,

T. FOWELL BUXTON.

W. H. SMITH, Esq., M.P.

On Monday, February 16, Mr Gladstone's Cabinet met to consider its defeat at the polls, and determine its final act. The following day the Prime Minister laid his resignation before the Queen at Windsor, who thereupon summoned Mr Disraeli and charged him with the duty of forming a Ministry. That statesman had been justly credited with the faculty of discerning capacity in new men: indeed, not long before the general election he had observed in public that he "piqued himself on recognising ability"; it was therefore a matter of common expectation that among the new Ministers there would be found more than one who had not previously filled

offices. But Disraeli's old chief, Lord Derby, had once remarked that when an appointment was vacant he was invariably urged to take in "new blood," and that, as often as he followed this advice, he heard complaints about "raw recruits." It must be the experience of every Prime Minister that it is far easier to find new men of capacity than to get rid of old colleagues; consequently, in Mr Disraeli's Cabinet of twelve, the only new name which appeared was that of Mr Richard Assheton Cross,¹ who was appointed Secretary of State for the Home Department. The reappearance in eleven out of twelve of the great parts of actors whose services had in former years been secured by the great *impresario*, set at rest a great deal of speculation and some apprehension. Disraeli, though he had convinced people of his ability for administration and dexterity as a parliamentary leader, and though he was admitted to be the only man in the House of Commons capable of confronting Mr Gladstone, had at the same time failed to secure the confidence of the entire Tory party. They had followed him since the death of Lord Derby, not because they trusted him, but because they feared Gladstone. The old country party had grave misgivings at some of the things that had been said and done; they had not forgotten the "leap in the dark" of 1867, nor forgiven the disasters in which it had landed them. The statesman of whose attitude at this time most uncertainty prevailed was the Marquis of Salisbury—"the terrible Marquis," as he was then called—who, as Viscount Cranborne, with the Earl of Carnarvon, had seceded seven years before from Mr Disraeli's first Cabinet, on the question of household suffrage in counties. Would Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon go back to their

¹ Created Viscount Cross, G.C.B., in 1886.

old posts at the India Office and Colonial Office, or would they remain outside the Government, a source of disquiet and latent menace to any Administration which the member for Buckinghamshire might collect together? That was the question on the solution of which depended the hopes and fears of the Conservative and Liberal parties. Was the Prime Minister to succeed in healing old schisms, and take up the reins of power with a firm hand and tolerably clear road before him, or was he merely to put certain men into the offices at his disposal and continue at the head of affairs till some fortuitous combination of political sects should drive him from place?

The question was not long of settlement. Mr Gladstone resigned on Tuesday, February 18; on Friday 21, the list, not only of the Cabinet, but of Ministers outside the Cabinet, was complete. Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon were back at their old posts. No one could suspect either of these two noblemen of having sunk conscientious scruples to grasp any advantage that might be gained from office: Lord Salisbury, especially, was well known to be devoted to scientific and literary occupation, and that he should have consented to destroy his own leisure in order to take over the administration of a department was accepted as a proof that an experienced statesman, absolutely independent of emolument and far above suspicion of selfish aims, recognised Disraeli as his political leader, and was prepared to yield him loyal support.

The result of the elections had been so decisive as to enable Disraeli to anticipate Mr Gladstone's resignation by preparing the way for this reconciliation of the wings of the Tory party, and thus to the public and the press there was afforded a period short almost beyond pre-

cedent for discussing the process of Cabinet-making and engendering the rumours which abound at such times. The London papers had from the first fixed upon Smith as one of the new men likely to be brought to the front; several of them were for placing him in the Cabinet at once as Vice-President of the Council or President of the Local Government Board, places suggested by the part he had taken in discussions on educational matters and the reform of the Poor Laws. But Disraeli knew him also as the head of a great and successful commercial concern, and had early recognised his fitness for another post. And here let it be said that Smith's rise has sometimes been attributed to the friendly notices of him which had, from his entry into public life, appeared in newspapers of every shade of politics, and the inference has been drawn that his position as the leading newspaper agent contributed in some measure to this display of favour by the press. A paragraph from an article in the 'Spectator,' a Liberal weekly journal of high standing, may tend to dispel this impression :—

We still hope earnestly for Mr Smith, the Member for Westminster, as Vice-President, and we believe that hope would be very loudly expressed indeed, but for a fact that it may be as well to deal with at once. Mr W. H. Smith, though certain to rise some day, if not now, into the Cabinet, has one extremely strong impediment in his way. He is the greatest news-agent in the world, and the public have a notion that he is always, and therefore, sure of newspaper support. There never was a greater delusion. What he is sure of is unnecessary neglect, a dead silence about his merits as a Member, lest those who praise him should be suspected of wanting his goodwill. He will find this a real obstacle in his career, a great impediment to becoming known, and the fact may as well be stated plainly and at once. The truth about him as a politician, however, is that he was made for the Ministry of Education in a Conservative Ministry: that he, and he only of the party, except poor Sir John Pakington,¹ possesses the needful knowledge, firmness, and moderation.

¹ Sir John Pakington had lost his seat at the general election. He was created Lord Hampton in 1874.

This hope was not destined to fulfilment. Viscount Sandon became Vice-President of the Council ; but there was another post in the Ministry, requiring not less knowledge, firmness, and moderation than that of Minister of Education, and, in addition, calling for business capacity in a degree which might be more safely dispensed with in the Privy Council Office. Into this post the Prime Minister, with quick discernment, had already fitted his man ; accordingly, forty-eight hours after Mr Gladstone had resigned the seals of office, the office of Secretary to the Treasury had been offered to and accepted by Smith. Probably there never was a more admirable appointment made. Upon the Financial Secretary of the Treasury devolves not only the duty of receiving the Estimates from the various Departments, whereby he is brought into constant communication and consultation with all the executive heads, and of bringing the Estimates into final form before presentation to the House, but he is intimately concerned with the financial policy of the Government, and responsible for advice in guiding the Chancellor of the Exchequer in framing the Budget. Besides this, there devolves upon him the arrangement of the Order-Book of the House of Commons, and the task of keeping members on both sides in good humour, the importance of which is not likely to be undervalued when it is remembered how many excellent and amiable schemes involving expense have to be met with a firm but conciliatory "No!" With the single exception, of late years, of the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, there is no Minister, whether in or out of the Cabinet, who has to get through such an amount of hard, prolonged work as the Financial Secretary.

Nevertheless, admirably as Smith was qualified, by training, temperament, and business capacity, for this onerous office, there were not wanting those who shrugged their

shoulders and looked askance on this latest instance of Disraeli's disposition to innovation. The author of 'Coningsby' had not yet "educated" his party to the point whence they could discern that the Tory party, if it was to have its share in guiding the destiny of the kingdom, would have to draw to it the confidence of other classes than that which was "acred up to its chin," and the squirearchy muttered unkind things about the Bookstall Man who was thus brought into greater prominence than distinguished class-men and persons of pedigree. On the whole, however, the announcement of this appointment was well received; it was hailed with special favour by the great middle class, and it is perhaps not generally recognised how great was the direct influence it had in bringing them over to support the Conservative party.

A few weeks later, Smith, writing to his old schoolfellow and friend the Rev. William (now Canon) Ince of Christ Church, says:—

I am myself surprised at my position when I compare it with the time to which you refer when we were both young together, and yet I can say most confidently that I never set to work aiming at personal advancement in the slightest degree. One circumstance has led to another, and I have gradually found myself of more account in men's eyes, simply from doing the work of the day as it presented itself to me.

Smith found it necessary, on taking office, to give up a part of the active share he had taken in philanthropic schemes. Among others, he resigned his post as one of the Treasurers of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which he had held for seven years; but he remained Treasurer of the London Diocesan Council for the Welfare of Young Men from its foundation until his death.

CHAPTER X.

1874-1876.

If the result of the general election had come as a surprise, not less unexpected was its immediate effect upon the Minister who was responsible for having brought it about. Members of the Liberal Opposition were filled with dismay one morning—March 13, 1874—on taking up their newspapers at the purport of a letter addressed by Mr Gladstone, their leader in the House of Commons, to Lord Granville, their leader in the House of Lords, in which he indicated his approaching retirement from the leadership of his party.

Now Mr Gladstone was at that time but sixty-four, a period of life certainly not beyond the normal limits of parliamentary activity, his health was understood to be unimpaired, and the only construction to be placed upon this precipitate act was that he was suffering from chagrin, if not from pique, at the overthrow of his party. It cannot, indeed, have been pleasant for him to reflect that, in dealing with the Irish Church and in pressing the Ballot Act through the House of Commons, he had, in order to secure support for his party, thrown overboard principles which he had cherished through many years of public life, and that, after all this sacrifice, he had failed of his reward. Of course the gain to Ministerialists was proportionate to the confusion caused by this announcement in the ranks of their opponents. A leaderless Opposition is a transcendental state of parties which a Prime Minister may see in his dreams, but hardly ever hope to see realised. There was the more reason for gratitude for this unlooked-for dispensation, because Ministers could not but be conscious that they came on the boards without any very dazzling or seductive pro-

gramme. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had inherited a large surplus from his predecessors, and something might be expected in the way of Income-Tax reduction and relief of Local Taxation. But gratitude for relief from taxation is altogether out of proportion to the unpopularity incurred when it is necessary to increase it, and already the Opposition press was clamorous for a programme. Where are the measures of the new Government? they asked, and made reply themselves, that, like snakes in Ireland, there were none.

But indeed the country was only too glad to be spared fresh legislation of the heroic kind. Trade was active; prices were good; to the farmers, if some of them had already descried American competition in the offing, it seemed no bigger than a man's hand. Nobody wanted Ministers to devise an exciting programme of new laws. Disraeli's tact was equal to the occasion: the Opposition was downcast and perplexed, he was careful to give them no point on which they could rally. The word was passed along the Conservative benches that they were to treat their opponents with forbearance—no more taunts about "plundering and blundering," no more recriminations, no challenges to fruitless trials of strength.

Smith settled steadily into harness at the Treasury. Early training made those long office hours, which so severely try the endurance of men brought up to habits of country life and foreign travel, comparatively easy to him. He had, however, to encounter one piece of bad luck, which brought upon him a sharp rebuke from his leader. After a long morning at the Treasury and some hours' attendance in the House, the hard-worked Financial Secretary, seeing matters going smoothly in the House, and reckoning on the usual forbearance of the Opposition not to divide

during the dinner-hour, went quietly home for an hour or two in the evening. A snap division was taken, and the Government was beaten. Next morning Smith received the following reproof:—

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,
May 2, 1874.

Mr Disraeli presents his compliments to Mr W. H. Smith, and much regrets to observe that he was absent on the division which took place last evening at eight o'clk., on the motion of Mr Synan; on which occasion her Majesty's Government was, by reason of the absence of its members, placed in a minority; and he would beg leave to point out how difficult it must become to carry on a Government which cannot reckon on the attendance and support of its members.

To this the Secretary to the Treasury replied:—

I have only two words to say with reference to your note of Saturday, and which I own was both just and necessary. I was excessively annoyed at my absence from the Division, and I can fully enter into your feelings of vexation.

If I had supposed it possible that a division could be taken, I should have been in my place; but I shall take very good care to avoid the recurrence of such a mortification so long as I remain a member of the Government.

In his immediate chief, Sir Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Smith's lot was cast with one with whom it was easy for him to work on terms of perfect accord. Sir Stafford was not less distinguished by personal amiability than by capacity for financial business, and the combination of these two qualities was present in a remarkable degree in both these men. The lot which brought them together in the same department formed the foundation of an intimate friendship which lasted unimpaired till the death of Northcote in 1887.

Smith passed the last day of 1874 at Bournemouth, where Disraeli had summoned him to consult about the business of the approaching session. Thence he wrote to his wife:—

BATH HOTEL, BOURNEMOUTH, 31st Dec. 1874.

I have a good fire in my bedroom, and a good sitting-room, which I share with Mr Corry. Mr Disraeli came in to see me for a

few minutes, and to tell me there was another king in Europe—a King of Spain. He was very pleasant and cheerful. We are all to dine together to-night—Disraeli, the Lord Chancellor, and Northcote, who has not yet come, having missed his train, poor fellow. To-morrow I dine with Lord Cairns at his house. I have just called on Lord Sandon. . . .

Jan. 1, 1875.

We had a pleasant party at dinner—Lord Cairns, Northcote, Dizzy, and Corry—and I think the purpose for which I was asked to come will be attained. At 11, when we parted, Disraeli said, "Well, we have been holding a Cabinet Council, and we must meet again to-morrow morning." I am expecting Lord Cairns and Northcote about 11 to go into details, and in the evening we dine together at Lord Cairns's.

January is a busy month at the Treasury preparing for the work in Parliament, and the busiest man in that department is always the Financial Secretary.

TREASURY, *Jan. 12, 1875.*

I travelled up very comfortably, and guards and station-master were all very civil to Mr Smith, who seems to be too well-known. . . . At Bristol I found Northcote in the train. He was very cheery. To-day I have seen Disraeli and Hunt. D. looks well and happy. . . . I am going now at 5 (or 6) to see Cross, and I shall have another hour and a half before I leave. I am, I think, better—less stiff. Work agrees with me.

Jan. 13.

I have had a busy day, commencing at 9.30 with G. at Hyde Park St., and going on without cessation up to the present time, 6 P.M., and I shall have at least another hour of it; but much of the work is very interesting, and so are the men who come to me. To-day, Sir John Duffus Hardy, Dr Hooker, Mr Goulburn, Sir Geo. Elliot, Mr Few, and a heap besides.

Jan. 14.

All well, but dirty, dull, depressing, damp, dyspeptic weather. Everybody cross and grumpy except Cross. . . . The work accumulates, but I think I am driving through it, and I shall be glad to get down to you for a few days.

And now there came what seemed to be the fall of the curtain on a remarkable public career. Shortly before the meeting of Parliament for the session of 1875 a second letter addressed by Mr Gladstone to Lord Granville appeared in the newspapers, announcing that he could "see no public advantage in my continuing to act as the leader

of the Liberal party, and that at the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity. This retirement is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life." The question was urgent, Who was to follow Mr Gladstone as leader of the Liberal party? If the journals of that day are referred to, it will be seen that opinion was divided between Mr Forster, Mr Goschen, and Lord Hartington. A meeting to decide on a choice was held at the Reform Club on February 3, which resulted in the election of Lord Hartington to the leadership.

There was some heavy work to get through at the Treasury in these days. A deficit of £700,000 was the result of a scheme of a Sinking Fund for the gradual liquidation of the National Debt, with which Sir Stafford Northcote's name will for many years to come be associated. As Northcote expressed himself in explaining his proposal to the House—

"I think we have arrived at a time when we may fairly say that, having the means, we ought to devote some of our attention and some of our wealth to a continuous effort to reduce the National Debt."

Under this scheme the total charge to be provided annually for the interest and redemption of the debt was fixed at £28,000,000, whereby the Chancellor of the Exchequer calculated that in ten years £6,800,000 would be paid off; in thirty years, £213,000,000. That it has proved a sound and far-sighted proposal cannot now be disputed; at the same time it must be admitted that its weakness is the temptation it leaves to every succeeding Finance Minister to suspend the payment to the Sinking Fund in years of lean-ness. It is so much easier to stop paying off debt than to levy new taxes.

The Budget was introduced on 15th April, and in moving it Northcote paid a high compliment to the Financial Secretary, alluding to the energy and capacity for business he had shown in the examination of estimates submitted to the Treasury, and acknowledging the care and ability with which he had discharged his duties.

The best part of this session was taken up by lengthy and angry discussions on the Peace Preservation Bill, which the increasing disaffection and lawlessness of Ireland made it necessary to pass. Sir Stafford Northcote carried his Act for the regulation of Friendly Societies, the outcome of the Report of the Royal Commission; and the only other measure which calls for special notice as the work of Mr Disraeli's Cabinet is the Agricultural Holdings Act, for the purpose of giving the tenant better security for capital invested by him in the soil. It was but a permissive statute, but its acceptance by both Houses marked a new departure in land legislation, by reason that it indorsed a novel principle, the application of which has since been made compulsory.

In December the Secretary to the Treasury paid an official visit to Edinburgh and another to Dublin. As was his invariable custom, he kept Mrs Smith informed of the most minute details of his proceedings.

EDINBURGH, Dec. 2, 1875.

I have had a sort of *levée*. I dined last night with Sir James Elphinstone, and this morning he breakfasted with me. Then came the Lord Advocate and the Lord Clerk Register. At 11 I was carried off to the Registry House and prosed to by Antiquarian Record-keepers. After that the Lord Advocate carried me off to his offices, and then I went to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer. I have seen the manager of two Banks doing Government business, and now I am collecting myself by writing to you. I give a dinner to-night to five heads of departments, at which Saudon will be present.

DUBLIN, Dec. 5.

I telegraphed to you last night that we had reached Kingstown in

safety. . . . We found wet snow in Dublin and frost in the Phoenix Park. At the station Beach¹ met us. . . . To-day we have been very busy, and now, 5.30, I fairly confess I am tired. We called on the Lord Lieutenant and have visited half-a-dozen public buildings, where we were received by the several officials. Talking and standing for six hours consecutively has fairly tired us all. To-morrow I dine with the Lord Lieutenant, and on Thursday Beach has a dinner-party.

Dec. 8.

Another busy day, and we—Sandon, Beach, Donnelly, and I—are now at this moment consulting and settling the terms of transfer of some of the large Institutions of Government. . . . S., after dining with the Irish "King,"² will go down to Kingstown to sleep on board the steamer and go across to-morrow morning early. I wish I could go with him, but I have yet a great deal of work to do, and as much as I shall get through during the next two days.

The session of 1876, Disraeli's last session in the House of Commons, was opened by the Queen in person. The question which had occupied the most anxious thoughts of the Cabinet had been the proposed purchase by Great Britain of the Khedive of Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal, and Smith, though not in the Cabinet, was asked to give his opinion from the Treasury point of view. This he did in the form of a minute, expressing strong distrust of the proposal that England should join the other Powers in guarantee of the projected loan.

This was also the view taken by his chief, Sir Stafford Northcote; but other counsels prevailed, the transaction was completed, and has proved to be a brilliantly successful investment for the nation.³ The bill necessary to obtain the money—£4,080,000—was brought in by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and hotly opposed by two ex-Chancellors—Gladstone and Lowe. Northcote must have defended

¹ The Right Hon. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, at that time Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

² Mr King Harman.

³ On June 16, 1893, a question was put in the House of Commons to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir W. Harcourt) as to the present state of the account between this country and the vendors of the Suez Canal shares. The reply of the right hon. gentleman was an eloquent, though perhaps involuntary, tribute to the sagacity of

the policy of the bill with some misgiving and a good deal of secret sympathy with the "Treasury minds" of its opponents ; nevertheless, he did the work manfully, and when Gladstone declared that to spend the money of the nation in this way was "an unprecedented thing"—"So is the Canal," retorted Northcote.

More serious in its ultimate results was the organisation and activity of the Home Rule party under Mr Butt, with Messrs Parnell, Biggar, O'Donnell, and Callan as lieutenants. Both the great parties united in resisting the motion for Home Rule, and there was no difficulty in throwing it out by a majority of more than four to one ; but for the first time the Irish Nationalists showed a cohesion and power of debate, destined to make them the formidable factor in Imperial politics which they have since become. One of their number, Mr P. J. Smyth, enjoyed a gift of eloquence which national fire and classical elegance combined to distinguish beyond his colleagues ; and he used it to some purpose, for the Government were placed in a minority of 57 on his motion for closing Irish public-houses on Sunday.

Left in London to finish up the work of the session when his family went to Greenlands, Smith kept up the usual constant correspondence with his wife:—

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *August 7.*

One line, because it is pleasant to write to you, and to think a little of home in the hurry and bustle of work. . . . I am sitting at the Table of the House listening to Northcote defending the Suez Canal Bill. . . .

Lord Beaconsfield. It was made to the following effect:—

Price paid in 1875	£4,000,000.
Present value	17,750,000.
Amount of purchase-money now paid off	3,805,000.
Date at which we shall begin to draw dividend, July 1894.	
Dividends payable during last three years, 17, 21, and 18 per cent.	
Proportion of British tonnage to whole tonnage using Canal, 75 per cent.	

August 10.

Everything went on well yesterday at the Whitebait Dinner ; both Disraeli and the Lord Chancellor appeared and spoke. The evening was most lovely, and the lights very pretty on the river ; no doubt you are better off at Greenlands, but happily we can enjoy things as they pass.

Smith spent part of September and October visiting ships and dockyards with Mr Ward Hunt, First Lord of the Admiralty ; and the repose at Greenlands which he so earnestly longed for was further curtailed by work at the Treasury during the autumn sittings of the Cabinet.

TREASURY, *November 24.*

I was very sorry to be obliged to run away from you, . . . but I think it was my duty to come here, and the moment I arrived Northcote sent for me and kept me discussing business for an hour. The Cabinet then met, and they have adjourned without fixing any future meeting, so that if I had not been here I should have been wanting in some parts of my work.

November 28.

Another busy day, but each day's work now leaves less to be done, and there is great satisfaction in getting through work.

Northcote goes away on Saturday, so I shall have much less to do afterwards, as all talking with him will come to an end.

December 6.

I have had a busy day again, and have had several long interviews, which have left me short time to write. Such a mixture of Post Office, Revenue, Exchequer Bills, Foreign Affairs, Kew Gardens, S. Kensington, Royal Society ! My mind is very like the cross readings on a wall or a screen covered with scraps.

December 18.

I have been holding a *levée* to-day, or, as ladies would say, I have "received," until at last I am tired of talking. I hope things look peaceful, and at all events that we shall not be engaged in war. The Cabinet are cheerful.

December 19.

I have been prowling about looking for presents, but I have not satisfied myself yet. It really is difficult work. I am fearing I may not be able to get down to-morrow night. . . . I have had such a stream of people here one after another, and so many difficulties to smooth over, that I have not got on with my work as I hoped, and I do not want to have a quantity sent down to me.

I have been engaged incessantly up to this moment (6.40) by a succession of men and work, all wanting a last word or touch before Christmas. . . . I think I have bought everything excepting the cane, but I shall come down laden with parcels like a Father to-morrow.

CHAPTER XI.

1876-1878.

As the session of 1876 moved to a close, affairs began to wear an unprosperous aspect for the Administration. The Porte had been in difficulties with its subjects in Servia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria, and in the repression of insurrection in the last-named country Turkish officials had shown a ferocity which quickly awakened sympathy in this country for the sufferers. Party politicians are ever on the outlook for any occurrence, however remote, which may be turned to the disadvantage of their opponents, and in the Bulgarian atrocities Liberals were not slow to discern their opportunity. Conservative policy had ever favoured the strengthening of Turkey as a bulwark against the southward advance of Russia, therefore the Conservative Government must be called to account for the proceedings in Bulgaria. Mr Evelyn Ashley took the opportunity afforded, according to immemorial usage, by the Third Reading of the Appropriation Bill—always the closing act of the session—to call attention to this matter, and it was in reply to him that Mr Disraeli made his last speech in the House of Commons. Next morning it was announced that he had been summoned to the House of Lords with the title of Earl of Beaconsfield.¹ It had been known that his health had been

¹ The secret had been well kept, for Disraeli loved *coups de théâtre*. Mr Evelyn Ashley happened to meet one of Disraeli's private sec-

severely strained by the more arduous conditions under which the House of Commons had begun to conduct its proceedings, and no one was surprised that he had decided to bring to a close his service of forty-three years as a member of that House. His place as leader of the House of Commons was taken by Sir Stafford Northcote.

The anti-Turkish agitation continued with great vehemence during the autumn. Indignation meetings were held in St James's Hall and in the country, urging the Government to interpose on behalf of the oppressed nationalities.

On September 8, Smith wrote from Greenlands to the Prime Minister :—

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,—I cannot help saying I am very sorry to have to address you in this way, but yet I am satisfied the step you have taken was absolutely right and necessary, if we were to retain your guidance and direction, for I am sure you could not have borne the strain of another session in the House of Commons.

We shall, however, miss you very much, and the night will be dull and triste without you.

To say this, however, was not my intention in writing. I was asked to-day to go to a meeting at Slough to support Mr Fremantle, but I thought it better not to go, as in the present critical condition of affairs I could hardly have avoided reference to the East, and I do not feel I have either the information or authority to speak.

In the present excited state of the public mind, one might easily say too little to satisfy one's friends at home, and too much for the difficult work in which the Foreign Office is engaged.

It is very possible I may be asked again, but I shall refrain unless I have a hint from you.

If at any time you wish to see me, I can easily drive across the country on receiving a note or a telegram ; but I am at the Treasury, for the present, on Mondays and Thursdays.—Believe me, yours very truly,

W. H. SMITH.

The EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

Perhaps precipitate folly and sagacious forbearance could not be brought into sharper contrast than in the utterances

retaries, Mr J. Daly, on the morning after the debate, before the latter had seen the morning papers. "Well," said Mr Ashley, "you see I drew your chief for his last speech in the House of Commons, and he has had to take refuge in the Lords." It was the first intimation received by Mr Daly of the intention of Disraeli.

of two persons representing opposite views on this question. "Perish our English interests," shrieked Mr Freeman in St James's Hall, "and our dominion in India," rather than we should protect the abomination of Turkish rule. Baroness Burdett Coutts, on the other hand, than whom no individual has ever shown wiser capacity for administering to the wants of her fellow-creatures out of her opulence, wrote to excuse herself from attending a meeting at the Guildhall on September 18, and employed words which, by their dignity and thoughtfulness, deserve a high place in political literature.

If the voice of England be potential and can influence the world's destiny, such a consideration should make us very careful as to how far and for what definite results the voice of the people shall be raised. As one of them, I feel the responsibility which rests upon us very strongly. Naturally, as a woman, I must be timid as to the result of this great agitation. I earnestly pray that in the measures taken to alleviate distress we may be calmly led, and not increase, rather than diminish, the distress of nations by urging on the Government an amount of interference better calculated, perhaps, to light than to extinguish a firebrand—a firebrand which may pass far beyond Europe, or might even come near our own dear shores.

Mr Gladstone, who in taking part in the debates on Eastern affairs had maintained an attitude generally favourable to Lord Derby's Eastern policy, and had undertaken a defence of the policy which led to the Crimean War, suddenly dashed into the fray, unable, it would seem, to resist the opportunity of taking the Government at a disadvantage. He published an article in the 'Contemporary Review' advocating the expulsion of the "unspeakable Turk, bag and baggage," from Europe. The country was moved in such sort as to make intelligible the fervour which, in an age generally supposed to be less enlightened, made the crusades possible.

Retrospect upon these excited times must lead men to credit Lord Beaconsfield with a singular degree of courage in adhering to a line of policy which for the moment was widely unpopular. He believed, and he manfully declared,

that the interest and honour of this country were alike involved in refraining from embarrassing Turkey, and before very long the tide turned in favour of a temperate and forbearing policy. People who had been carried away by the heat of Mr Gladstone's invective began to reflect for themselves. Several Liberals of standing—among others the Duke of Somerset, Mr Forster, who had lately returned from the East, and Lord Fitzwilliam—pronounced firmly against the “bag-and-baggage” scheme; and it was announced by the Prime Minister that a Conference of the Powers was to be held at Constantinople, at which Great Britain would be represented by Lord Salisbury.

The popular understanding of the Bulgarian difficulties was not without its effect upon the majority of the Government in the House of Commons. By the time Parliament met for the session of 1877, five seats had been lost to the Conservatives at by-elections. But there the reaction was stayed; and although the Constantinople Conference had failed, and Lord Salisbury was on his way home before the Queen's Speech was delivered, the Government were able to enter upon the parliamentary campaign without serious apprehension. Mr Gladstone's motion of want of confidence in Ministers was rejected by a majority of 131 votes.

On April 5, the Financial Secretary wrote to the Prime Minister:—

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,—I hope you will be satisfied with our financial work.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer will have a surplus of £440,000 on the past year, and a safe estimate of the revenue for the coming year will give a small surplus over the expenditure without any increase of taxation. As this result is not expected out of doors, it will, I think, be the more satisfactory to our friends and to the country.—
Yours very truly,
W. H. SMITH.

The note from the Prime Minister in reply was one of those rewards which come to lighten a life of conscientious toil:—

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *April 7, '77.*

MY DEAR MR SMITH,—I thank you for your Budget Report, & heartily congratulate you & the country on the result. After forty years' experience of parliamentary life, I can sincerely say that I never knew the affairs of the Treasury conducted with more thorough sense & efficiency than while they have been under your management & control.—Yours sincerely,
BEACONSFIELD.

During all his foreign tours, it was Smith's practice to send to some correspondent at home letters forming a consecutive itinerary. As is usually the case in such literature, much of the interest is ephemeral; but a few passages may be quoted from his description of a visit to Normandy which he paid with Mrs Smith in the Whitsuntide recess of this year. In it he endeavoured, with but partial success, to pose as an unwilling victim, and the document is entitled—

THE JOURNAL OF A DISCONTENTED MAN.

May 18.—My wife insists on a little holiday, and I must go with her. Where will I go? What trouble! I do not care: just where you please: only decide. Well, then, we will go to Normandy. I ask for a deck cabin: they are all engaged. I go out to get some money, and my eyes and mouth are filled with dust and dirt. The high wind must make dirty weather in the Channel, and the boat is sure to be crowded. No deck cabin, no shelter; how miserable we shall be!

We started. A crowd in Regent Street. Bohren's cab with the luggage is passed—the man driving slowly. He is sure to be late. We arrived first at the station, and instantly fall on the R—s, who are also off to France for a holiday. It is impossible to be alone. We talked, and then—weary of each other—three out of the four fall asleep. I became more composed when I reflected on the miseries of friendship and of society.

On board the steamer came a crowd, all of whom were disagreeable to me, and some particularly so. I had deposited my wife on the sofa in the ladies' cabin and secured a sheltered seat for myself, when the steward came and intreated me to give it up for a lady. Of course I consented; what tyrannical power attaches to this fanatical subserviency to the sex-female. Why should not a man retain a comfortable seat when he had once got it? . . . Half-way across, the lady tottered up from her seat in some sort of trouble and made a rush for the cabin. Presently the gentlemen sitting on either side of me groaned and began to kneel on the seat with their heads doing homage to the sea. . . . We got into harbour nearly an hour late of course, and of course the water was low and we were landed near the end of the jetty. When is the water high at Calais? . . .

May 19.—The lumbering carts bringing in market people filled my

disturbed sleep with dreams, until I fairly woke under the influence of the horrible cries of a quiet street in Calais. If half-a-dozen old women were being squeezed to death, the screaming could hardly be worse. My wife however slept like an Angel, as I am sometimes inclined to think she is, so I smothered my resentment against the sea, breakfasted, and descended into the street for a cigar. There I instantly fell on another M.P., who would be a good fellow if he was a Tory. We introduced each other's wives and parted smiling, only to fall on another, the —, Bart., who inquires how Mrs Smith could leave her children, Lady — having left hers. I gave him an answer—we did not speak again.

Our seats had been taken in the train by Bohren, but a very fresh English husband and wife appropriated one of them, and although roundly abused by the French guard, the woman retained the seat; but I had the satisfaction of looking straight at the husband all the way to Amiens, and of making him feel uncomfortable. At all events I began to be happier.

We ought to have had 20 minutes for luncheon at Amiens, but the train was late, the Rouen train was waiting, and so we were hurried into it without any food. Was I not right to be angry? . . . And now it rained heavily, and the country looked dreary and very like England? Does it not rain in England? Was it necessary to leave the comforts of home to see Rain?

We reached Rouen—everything wet, every place cold and dreary. Our inn is, of course, Hôtel d'Angleterre by way of sarcasm. Our room is several inches lower at the door than at the window, and there is not room to swing a cat. . . . We descend to dinner, hungry and tired. Presently up trots a small French poodle, shaved up to its neck, with very dirty hair over its head, and red, bleary, weak-looking eyes. It looks at me, and exercising a sound discretion, prefers my wife, jumps up on a chair by her side and begins instantly to beg. This is intolerable!

Of course the fish, the chicken, the meat, are all offered in succession to this insufferable dog. I say severe things, but it is of no avail. How I hate most dogs, and all little ones! A big hound walks in. My wife offers it something and pats it. The little one—a tenth of its size—jumps down and barks furiously at the hound, which slips and flounders on the polished floor, turns round and goes out, chased by the little poodle, who returns triumphant to the chair by the side of my wife.

May 20.—More rain.

May 21.—No rain, but a sharp, cold north-east wind—as cold as England. Again I ask, Why should I travel to France to meet rain and east wind, which are to be had plentifully in England? Could not get a carriage to-day, because it is a holiday and everybody is out. These holidays are a nuisance. At last we are allowed by a driver to get into his carriage, and we proceed slowly to Bonsecours, a church on a high hill two miles from Rouen, overlooking the Seine, which is here about half as pretty as the Thames at Richmond. . . . Many holiday folk in the cemetery, which is a cheerful way of spending a happy day. . . .

May 22.—Once more rain, but we drove to the old clock in an archery over the street, the Palais de Justice, which contains the old Parliament chamber, and through other old places to the railway, whence we started to Caen. Rouen has a river, two quays, three old churches, fair wide streets, an infinite number of narrow lanes and old houses, and all round it are manufactories and tall chimneys. The climate is detestable, and the people rough as Englishmen. From Rouen to Caen—more chimneys, more rain. At Caen—still more rain, bitterly cold.

From the hotel in a close carriage almost dark to the Church of Ste Etienne, really a grand old Norman building, with grotesque capitals to the round pillars, supporting the roof of a wide nave. In the gloom before the high altar a plain slab marks the place where William the Conqueror was buried. I am not discontented with this church. It was worth coming to Caen to see; but I now understand why William came to England—his own climate drove him away in simple desperation. . . . We returned to a grand *salon* and poor bedrooms, lighted up, however, by fires, round which we crouched. Great enjoyment, which might possibly have been exceeded at home.

May 23.—More rain—more north-east wind. . . . Paid a heavy bill, and off to the railway. The country green, hilly, with a river running by the side of the line. Small fields, hodgerows, and cattle—like, but not so pretty as, Devonshire. It would be nice if the sun ever shone, but it has been raining for eight months. My wife takes refuge in sleep. I groan and grumble to myself. We arrived at the junction for Villedieu, a capital buffet, and seated ourselves in a dark room with three Frenchmen, a mother, a *bonne*, and a baby; all ate in a hurry; all, the baby included, wore a sad and pre-occupied air. . . .

May 25.—I think we have seen Avranches. It is a healthy town, sir, a clean town, sir; it has fine air, sir, it is so high, and there are many English living here. . . . Poor things! I pity them, and almost forget my discontent when I think of the perfect quiet of their lives. How the ladies must dislike each other, and how thoroughly they must know each other's faults and failings. . . . I am thankful, and so is my wife, that we are not obliged to live there. How dull—with no work, but to read and walk and talk—eat, drink, and sleep.

We found a carriage to take us on to Granville with difficulty. . . . The horses, poor things! The coachman a sturdy red-faced Norman. He did not know the way to — where the — live, . . . but Bohren piloted him. Their cottage is a pretty one. . . . Poor Mrs — is, she says, quite tired of apple-blossom, and there is nothing else. Her husband most anxious to hear of something to do—anywhere and of any kind. I never met a man so eager to get away from himself and his own society. I asked if his wife was coming to England. "I will bring her at once, if I can find anything in the shape of employment—India, Turkey, anywhere."

How much better it is to have too much to do than too little. Never give up present employment, however disagreeable it may be, until one has made sure of something else. Poverty with work is Paradise compared with either riches or poverty without work. . . .

Granville is a disappointment. There is a church—an old one—but not interesting. . . . There are several dull streets without *trottoirs*, many children crying in them, with women who appear to be scolding each other. . . . Our hotel—Hôtel du Nord—was comfortable enough. We were waited upon by a Jersey woman who spoke English, talking incessantly, and always of her own good qualities and the many merits of her family. . . . So I have done and go home, more content than I left home, and certainly the better of my absence.

Meanwhile the development of new methods of parliamentary warfare began to be painfully apparent at this time. Inordinate discussion upon votes in Supply, dilatory motions for adjournment, and questions to Ministers upon subjects of the most trivial parochial, and even personal, subjects, formed part of the plan of campaign adopted by Irish Nationalist members, in order, by bringing proceedings to a deadlock, to force attention to their demands. If the legitimacy of their ambition be granted, their strategy and the energy and patience with which it was pursued are deserving of admiration. This new reign of terror began in earnest on Tuesday, July 31. The House met that afternoon at 4 P.M., and the sitting continued till past six on Wednesday evening—more than twenty-six hours. Mr Butt, nominal leader of the Home Rulers, protested against the methods favoured by his colleagues, Messrs Parnell and Biggar, but to no purpose; and henceforward Parnell was *de facto* the director of the policy of his party. The state of matters was so serious as to bring about what has proved to be the first in a long series of successive alterations in the rules of Procedure, rendered more and more necessary as legislators departed further and further from the reasonable practice of a more decorous age.

After introducing the Navy Estimates, Mr Ward Hunt, First Lord of the Admiralty, fell into such a state of health as to oblige his going to Homburg, where he shortly after died.

There is every reason to believe that the letter referred to

FACSIMILE OF
LETTER FROM THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD
REFERRED TO AT PAGE 161.

confidential

2, Whitehall Gardens,

S.W.

My: 3 :77

Dear W. Smith,

I agree to
yourself, it is my
intention to submit
your name to the
Queen, to fill the

W. H. Smith by Breant
e. c.

vacant office of
Sud. S. of yr admiralty.

If you accept the
post, I doubt not
you will fulfil its
duties with the
same devotion &
ability, which
have

have distinguished
your transaction of
affairs in the all-important
Department to which
you are now attached.

Believe me,

faithfully yours,

Seavernsfield.

in the following one, written to Mrs Smith, who was at Homburg, came to Smith as a complete surprise:—

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *Aug. 3.*

This morning as I was driving down to the Treasury I met Lord Beaconsfield's messenger with this letter. I have accepted the office, if the Queen approves. . . . The responsibility is very great, and nothing would have induced me to seek it, but as I am told I am deemed fit for the work, I do not think I ought to refuse it. . . . It has not been offered to any one else. . . . Do not say one word to any one about the story, until you see it in the papers, or hear from me that you may talk.

The letter referred to is given in facsimile on the preceding pages.

Two days later he wrote from Greenlands to his wife, who was at Homburg:—

It is a lovely day—such rest and peace around—and yet I am not quite at rest, for I feel the weight of responsibility which I have incurred in accepting the Cabinet and the Admiralty. Until now, in graver matters, I only advised. Now I must act on my own judgment, and the sphere of that action concerns the country's honour and its strength. I shall want all your help—such help as you have ever given me since we were happily made one—in asking that I may have wisdom and strength according to my need. I think I shall, because we shall both ask.

There is a heavy drawback to this new duty. Beach tells me the Cabinet have been warned that none of them must go out of reach of a sudden summons to a meeting, so that while Foreign affairs are in the present critical state, I could not go further from London than this or the coast.

The ladder which brings a Minister from the Financial Secretaryship into the Cabinet has frequently proved to be a short one, but it has not often led to an office the holder of which, representing as he does the Lord High Admiral of old, had up to this time been nearly always occupied by some Peer of high rank, by a territorial magnate, or at least by the scion of a noble house. That a London tradesman should step into such an exalted sphere was an ascent almost as rapid and not less remarkable than Whittington's.

The first thing Smith did on receiving Lord Beaconsfield's

letter was to seek the advice of his old ally, Lord Sandon, who urged him warmly to accept the offer.

The announcement of Smith's appointment to the Admiralty was favourably received by the public. There was, of course, the usual degree of mild surprise at the working of a system which places at the head of the naval and military establishments individuals who by training, habit, and occupation are least likely to have any technical or practical acquaintance with the services; but the press generally indorsed the sagacity of the Prime Minister's choice.¹ Smith's own friends, of course, were enthusiastic in congratulation, and he possessed friends on both sides of politics. Sir William Harcourt wrote:—

I heard your writ moved to-day with great satisfaction, & greeted it with an approving cheer. No one has better earned & deserved the great post which you have reached in a comparatively short Parliamentary career. Your opponents, no less than your friends, sympathise in your well-merited success, and none more amongst them than

Yours sincerely, W. V. HARCOURT.

Mr Rathbone, another sturdy Liberal, gave his approval thus:—

I had no idea when speaking to you last night what a great dignity I was addressing. I congratulate you most heartily, though as an ex-Quaker I would rather your country had your services for the works of peace than of war. As you have no doubt heard, it has been received not only with pleasure but great approval on our side, as a very good appointment richly deserved.

The unflinching Radical, Joseph Cowen, member for Newcastle, was not behindhand:—

You carry with you to your new office the good wishes & the sympathy of the entire House of Commons. . . . I have never voted for

¹ The appointment is supposed to have suggested to the irreverent fancy of Mr W. S. Gilbert the character of Sir Joseph Porter in the opera "Pinafore," who, it will be remembered, "stuck to his desk and never went to sea," yet became the "Ruler of the Queen's Navee."

a Conservative in my life ; but if there should be a contest in Westminster (where I am an elector), you can safely calculate on at least one radical recording his vote for you.

The voice of the navy found expression in a characteristic note from Lord Charles Beresford :—

Let me congratulate you & the Navy also at your appointment. Don't think me rude if I say I was long enough Shipmates with you in the House to appreciate what a real good appointment the Prime Minister has made.

In a letter from Sir Stafford Northcote to Mrs Smith there is a mingled strain of regret at losing his Financial Secretary :—

I must ask leave to send you one line of Congratulation and sympathy, though, by the way, I can more easily sympathise with you than you can with me, for you will not have to contend with the mixed feelings which are distracting me. It is something like what I felt when my daughter chose to go and marry herself off. I am as troubled to know what to do without my right hand now as I was then. . . . Nobody could have succeeded as your husband has done in this office. He has had a very important, laborious, and delicate task to discharge, and I don't think he has made a slip in the whole three years. He carries with him the affection as well as the respect and good wishes of us all.

An old friend of the family wrote to Smith :—

When I first heard of your acceptance of the office of First Lord of the Admiralty, the text came into my mind, "His sons come to honour and he knoweth it not," as I thought of the high gratification the knowledge of this appointment would have afforded to those who have now passed away.

But Smith himself felt none of that confidence which those who knew him best were most ready to repose in him.

I am really almost sad [he wrote to Miss Giberne], for now I am one of the 12 men who are responsible for the Government of the country, and I am at the head of a great department in which it is more easy to fail than to succeed ; but I look for strength and wisdom, and I trust it may be given me. Don't you understand it is not matter for rejoicing with me, except as it might be with a soldier charged with a great work. He may fail and he may fall, but his country's welfare depends in a manner on his performance of duty.

Again, to his sister Augusta :—

I wish my father had been alive. He certainly did not expect that at 52 I should be a Cabinet Minister, and now I almost wish I had never entered public life, for it seems impossible to stop or to refuse work. . . . I hope I may have strength and judgment to do it well, and at the same time to preserve the love and affection of my family.

On August 13 he wrote to Mrs Smith :—

I wrote to you this evening under difficulties, as I was trying to listen to discussions in Cabinet and yet catch the post. I told you we went down by a special train to Portsmouth with ceremony and honour. Bishop Thorold was going down to do homage for his see, with Lord Wriothsley Russell as Clerk of the Closet. They, Mr Cross, Lord Coventry, Mr Sclater Booth, the Clerk of the Council, and I, went in one saloon. . . . At Portsmouth the train went into the dockyard, and drew up at the jetty, where we were received by the Admiral. The Fire Queen was waiting, and we all steamed off, taking the Duke of Richmond, who came from Goodwood, and Lord Hertford, the Lord Chamberlain, with us. On our way we met the Thunderer, which was going out for big gun practice, with the Prince of Wales and some ladies on board. The carriages were not at the pier when we landed, but they soon overtook us. . . . We had to wait some time at the house, which reminds me very much of Denbies. At last Lord Hertford called in Lord Coventry and myself. The Queen was standing before a table. We knelt down rather by her side. The oath of allegiance was read over to us. We kissed the book on our knees, and then kissed her hand and rose up. Then standing, the Privy Councillor's oath, which is a very long one, was read, and we again kissed the book, and then I shook hands with all the Privy Councillors present. The Queen then approved a number of Orders in Council, the titles of which were read over to her; the Privy Councillors, not being members of the Cabinet, withdrew, and then the Speech to be delivered to-morrow was approved. We then withdrew, bowing with our faces to her—the Queen smiling, but not saying a word. . . . A cab to Downing Street for the Cabinet at 5.45. I was most kindly welcomed by all, sitting between Northcote and Salisbury, opposite Lord Derby.

And on August 14 :—

So much kindness brings a sense of sadness with it, of weight and of fear lest failure should follow. My Patent has come to-day, and I have taken my seat at the Board, who address me as "Sir" in every sentence. It is strange, and makes me shy at first; and I have to do what I hardly like—to send for them, not to go to them; but I am told they expect me, as their chief, to require respect.

Mrs Smith went to Homburg during the autumn, and

her husband, detained in England by his official duties, wrote as frequently and tenderly as he was wont to do. Here is part of a letter written from Greenlands :—

If I cannot look at you and talk to you, I can write to you, and that is, I think, a very fit use to be made of half an hour on a Sunday afternoon. . . . The swallows, which are flying very low and in great numbers, just skimming the top of the grass, don't seem to miss you, but it is another thing with us.

Smith's re-election for Westminster on appointment to the Admiralty had not been contested, but his friends and constituents were not content to allow the distinction conferred upon him to pass without special marks of approval and congratulation. On November 29 he was entertained at a banquet in St James's Hall, where Lord Henry Scott, M.P., presided over a company of more than 500, assembled to do honour to the First Lord. Smith, as every one knows, was not an orator ; his speeches were never of a fiery order, but he never spoke unless he had something to say, and always succeeded in making that something intelligible, and in convincing his hearers of his perfect frankness. In a few simple sentences he conveyed on this occasion a clear impression of the circumstances which had brought him into a position of such dignity :—

When I look back upon the past—and it is only twelve years ago when I was invited by some friends whom I now see around me to offer myself as a candidate for the representation of Westminster—when I remember that I failed then (not disastrously and not disgracefully) to obtain the object which they rather more than I had on that occasion—when I remember that again in 1868 you were patient and kind enough to entertain the proposal that was made to you to return me as your member for Westminster—when I think of the period of liberty, of freedom, and of comparative absence from responsibility which I enjoyed as the representative of Westminster for the five years that succeeded the election,—I say that it appears like a dream ; and I can hardly understand how it is I am here to-day, not only wearing the blue ribbon of parliamentary representative of the city of Westminster, but also as a servant of the Crown and of the people. Frankly, I cannot tell you how it has come to pass, but it has happened, that your exceeding kindness, and the sympathy and

support of my friends, have pushed me forward into the position which I should not have been tempted to seek for myself. Never once did I entertain the idea of standing for Westminster until I was asked to do so, and I did not again entertain the idea of seeking election till I was pressed to do so. I did not seek office; it has come to me in a manner which, when I think of it, is surprising to myself, and I feel deeply the responsibility which has fallen upon me.

Next morning the 'Times,' in a leading article on the principal guest at this banquet, correctly defined the position which Smith had attained to in the esteem of his countrymen :—

Mr W. H. Smith is eminently representative of that special order of men whom it is the boast of our political institutions to possess. Neither an orator nor a man of genius, he has risen to the foremost rank among his fellow-citizens by the excellent way in which he did all the work before him, and by his sterling manly character.

Another critic remarked :—

One of the chief reasons of the popularity the Ministry still enjoys, and of the confidence it still commands, is that it numbers in its list so many men of the Liberal type, and of the special type to which Mr Smith belongs. Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr Cross, and Mr Smith are all men who, without conspicuous oratorical power, or any claim to originality, have raised themselves to the front rank by moderation, honesty, skill in business, conciliatory manners, and a broad and genial Liberalism. To Lord Beaconsfield much credit is due for having recognised the merits of men so totally unlike himself. . . . They import prudence and good sense into every Conservative gathering. They are always, as it were, brightening up the boots of the party, and making it look tidy and respectable when it appears before the public.

Even 'Punch,' Liberal by tradition and practice, had a kindly word for the new ruler of the Queen's Navy :—

Of Mr W. H. Smith all parties may say, as a great opponent said of Lord Palmerston, "We are all proud of him." . . . Never has man or Minister more fairly earned the addition of "Right Honourable."

Some sentences in Smith's speech expressing his horror of war and his earnest hope for the preservation of peace were received with much satisfaction in the country; for all eyes were turning anxiously towards the East, where there might happen any day that which might involve

Great Britain in the conflict which throughout the summer and autumn had been raging on the Danube and the Black Sea.

The refusal of the Porte to comply with the recommendations of the Constantinople Conference, and the consequent failure of all attempts to bring Turkey into concert with other European Powers, brought that country and Russia to the brink of war. On April 24, 1877, the Czar, who looked upon himself as the ordained champion of Slavonic nationality, had issued a declaration of war against the Sultan, without the customary formula of an ultimatum. Englishmen have never been chary of chivalrous sympathy for a weaker nation defending itself against invasion by a stronger; the old feeling of comradeship, handed down from Crimean days, began to revive in this country in favour of our ancient allies, and was fanned into something like fervour by the opening acts of the campaign. The gallantry and soldierly qualities displayed by the Turkish troops, their successes at Batoum on May 4, and at Sukhum Kalé on the 14th, their stout defence of Kars, and the raising of the siege of that oft-beleaguered city by Mukhtar Pasha, proved that far from being an effete, spiritless race, the Turks were as capable as ever they had been of splendid service in the field. The Bulgarian atrocities faded into insignificance before the brilliancy of the double victory gained by Osman Pasha over the Russians at Plevna in July, and the desperate obstinacy of the defence of the Shipka Pass. But the tide of victory turned in late autumn. The bravery of her devoted soldiers could not save the territory of a State so rotten as that of Turkey. Russian victories in Asia were followed by the fall of Kars and Erzeroum, not without suspicion of treason; blood-boltered Plevna was at last taken, and the Shipka Pass occupied in January 1878, and then the Porte sent a Circular Note to the Powers implor-

ing them to extricate it from the disasters into which its own obstinacy and indolence had plunged it.

On January 31 an armistice was signed at Adrianople, and the preliminaries of peace formulated.

Parliament was summoned to meet a full fortnight or three weeks earlier than usual—on January 17—amid a feeling of intense uneasiness and public excitement. The Queen's Speech contained nothing to allay these: on the contrary, the paragraphs referring to the Eastern situation were of ominous import. After reciting how, when all attempts to avert war had proved futile, her Majesty had resolved to preserve strict neutrality as between the belligerents, and the success of Russian arms compelled the Porte to bring hostilities to a close, the Speech went on to describe how the Sultan, having appealed to the neutral Powers for their good offices, and the majority of these Powers not having been in favour of interfering, had addressed a separate appeal to her Majesty's Government. Then followed sentences of which every one who had heard or read them felt the solemn significance.

Upon this subject communications have taken place between the Governments of Russia and Turkey, through my good offices, and I earnestly trust that they may lead to a peaceful solution of the points at issue, and to a termination of the war. No efforts on my part will be wanting to promote that result.

Hitherto, so far as the war has proceeded, neither of the belligerents has infringed the conditions on which my neutrality is founded, and I willingly believe that both parties are desirous to respect them, so far as it may be in their power. So long as these conditions are not infringed, my attitude will continue the same. But I cannot conceal from myself that, should hostilities be unfortunately prolonged, some unexpected occurrence may render it incumbent upon me to adopt measures of precaution. Such measures could not be adequately taken without adequate preparation, and I trust to the liberality of my Parliament to supply the means which may be required for that purpose.

Meanwhile the Russians were at the gates of Constantinople: the prize for which they had so long panted was

within their grasp ; would they relinquish it at the bidding of Great Britain ?

That the Cabinet intended to forbid the occupation of the Sultan's capital was made certain by the notice given in the House of Commons that a Vote of Credit for £6,000,000 was to be moved for immediately. Suddenly, on January 23, the startling news went abroad that the British fleet had been ordered to the Dardanelles. The Earl of Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, announced in the House of Lords that he had resigned office, and in explaining the reasons which compelled him to do so, stated that he had resisted the proposal, made to the Cabinet on January 12, that the fleet should be sent up the Dardanelles, that he had resigned on the 15th when this course had been decided on, but had consented to retain office when the decision was rescinded. Now, however, that the action to which he objected as dangerous and unnecessary had actually been taken, he had no course but to leave a Cabinet with whom he found himself at direct issue.

It was understood that the Earl of Derby had also resigned, but, as he appeared on the Government bench with his colleagues on this occasion, it was evident that he was still a member of the Cabinet.

Smith had a difficult task to perform on this very day. In the afternoon he and Sir Charles Adderley, President of the Board of Trade, received the freedom of the Ancient Company of Shipwrights, and were entertained at a public banquet in the evening. It must have been no light problem how to speak as a Cabinet Minister for the Cabinet, conscious as he was that the Cabinet was rent by dissension on a question so momentous and beset with peril. One sentence, and one only, he permitted himself to utter in reference to the subject uppermost in the minds of all, and it was one which Englishmen of all parties could receive

with ringing cheers: "No greater disaster than to be engaged in war could happen to the country, except the loss of honour."

The view which Smith took at this most critical juncture is expressed in two letters to Northcote, illustrating the strain of anxiety which lay upon Ministers:—

ADMIRALTY, *Jan. 12, 1878.*

DEAR NORTHCOTE,—I wish you would see Lord Derby. I quite understood yesterday that he agreed to the occupation of Gallipoli in the sense you suggested, and although I have satisfied myself that the Fleet can anchor there without serious risk, it would be a more sensible operation to take possession of the lines.

You will remember, however, that the most formidable forts are at the entrance to the Black Sea, above Constantinople. If a foreign Power holds the City, it holds also the key of the Black Sea.

If we cannot come to an agreement on our policy on Monday in certain events, it is a question whether it would not be more patriotic to break up and resign now. It will not do to be fighting in the House with the Opposition, and in the Cabinet with each other.—
Yours sincerely,
W. H. SMITH.

Then on 15th:—

I hope the telegram will not be sent to-night if Lord Derby objects to it. The delay of a few hours is important, but the loss of Lord Derby would be a greater evil.

Nevertheless, man of peace as he was by training and inclination, there is the testimony of more than one of his surviving colleagues in that Cabinet to prove that Smith showed much firmness in this crisis. Though slow in forming a judgment, he had the enviable gift, once it was formed, of adhering to it without anxiety.

It was not to be expected that the Vote of Credit would be granted without animated debate. The opposition to it took the form of a motion of censure on the Government, moved by Mr W. E. Forster. The debate is memorable for this, if for nothing else, that it gave birth to a term which has become the English equivalent of the French *chau-*

viniste.¹ Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who is nothing if not humorous, even when he is most in earnest, quoted a couplet from a popular music-hall ditty of the day, which he said exactly described the aggressive spirit of the Government's policy :—

“ We don't want to fight, but by Jingo ! if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too.”

Henceforward the war party in our country, or the party suspected of warlike sentiments, was to be distinguished by the name of Jingo.

It was Smith's duty in the debate to follow Mr Goschen, who had called on the Government to say exactly how much money they wanted and how they intended to spend it.

The right hon. gentleman opposite says he desires to strengthen the Government in the Conference in which we expect shortly to take part. He is willing to give the great support of his name in favour of the expression of our views in the Congress, but he thinks it right to say that he refuses, on the grounds of precedent and financial policy, to give the six millions. It appears that the right hon. gentleman refuses to give the Government a cheque for six millions, but he will give us a blank cheque, without money expressed, to be filled up by ourselves at the right time. Now if the Government are not to be trusted with the responsibility of spending so much as they think necessary in making preparations for guarding their interests, in strengthening themselves where they think strength is needed, then I say they ought not to be trusted in going into the Conference to speak for England and to commit her to the decision which will be arrived at. I have taken part in financial questions during the past few years, and I know no higher duties than to require the most exact accounts for the administration of public money. But I think the principles of high finance can be carried too far. It is the most earnest desire and hope of her Majesty's Government that the issue of war may be avoided, and none except those who have occupied positions as Ministers of the Crown can conceive the amount of responsibility which rests upon a Minister when he expresses an opinion on such a question. We believe that the course we are asking the House of Commons to adopt is one which will tend in the most com-

¹ Derived from Chauvin, a character in Scribe's 'Soldat Laboureur,' one of Napoleon Buonaparte's veterans, and expressive of boastful and aggressive patriotism.

plete and sure manner to save England from the horrors of war. We believe that the making of such preparations as we may deem to be necessary will be a security against war.

Despite these reassuring words, each day seemed to bring nearer to Great Britain the necessity of a rupture with Russia. At last, on February 7, there arrived a telegram from Mr Layard, our Ambassador at Constantinople, to the effect that the Russian army had occupied that city. The effect upon Parliament and the country was electric; the fighting spirit of the nation was afire; Mr Forster withdrew his amendment to the motion for the Vote of Credit, and although the extreme Radicals insisted upon going to a division, the Vote was carried that night by 295 to 96—a majority of 199 for the Government. It turned out that the telegram was untrue: Mr Layard had been deceived by the presence of a number of Russian officers and men on leave in the streets of Stamboul. Nevertheless, nothing could be more threatening or critical than the situation, and on February 8 part of the British fleet was moved up to Constantinople as a precautionary measure.

Next came a message from the Sovereign announcing that it had been deemed expedient to call out a portion of the Reserves, and the Address in reply to this formed the subject of another vote of no confidence in the policy of the Government. But this was easily disposed of: the Opposition, however deep and sincere might be their disapproval of the policy of Ministers, were resolved to adhere to honourable tradition, and to let it be known that in foreign policy there is one England and not two Englands. The Address was agreed to by 310 votes to 64.

By an extract from the diary of one of the First Lord of the Admiralty's daughters, a glimpse is afforded of the anxious and disturbed state of affairs at this time:—

Sunday, Feb. 10.—Very excited and peculiar Sunday owing to telegrams on Eastern Question. Papa roused between 5 & 6 A.M. to

decipher telegrams; not able to go to Ch. Going to see Sir S. Northcote, Ld. Salisbury, also Ld. Beaconsfield at 10.15 p.m. Ld. Tenterden¹ called at 5.30, & again a few minutes after 10. Capt. Codrington² to lunch and dinner. Six ironclads have been sent to the Straits to protect English life & property at Constantinople, but Turks would not open them passage.

Military preparations in this country went forward amain: arsenals and factories were working double time, and orders were issued from the Admiralty to fit out every available ship. All this time Mr Gladstone kept rather quiet within Parliament; but from time to time he addressed meetings in the country, denouncing the policy of "Jingoism." At length it appeared as if the promptness and vigour displayed by the British Government were beginning to take effect. The Czar, it was known, passionately longed for peace: he could not but be impressed by the prospect of entering upon war with a powerful enemy, wealthy, fresh, and determined, after the terrible losses which his armies had endured in the campaign of 1877. An agreement was come to that the Russians should not occupy Gallipoli, provided the English fleet withdrew from the immediate neighbourhood of Constantinople. Negotiations, however, which had been set on foot for a Congress of the Powers failed, owing to dissensions in the English Cabinet. The Earl of Derby resigned the seals of the Foreign Office, and was succeeded by the Marquis of Salisbury. One of the causes which led to the last-named occurrence, to avert which so many precautions had been taken, was the ordering of 7000 Indian troops to Malta, and this formed the subject of a second motion of censure on the Government in the House of Commons.

Some idea of the intense anxiety of the situation may be formed from the following despatches exchanged between the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Admiral command-

¹ Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office.

² Private Secretary to the First Lord of the Admiralty, who afterwards married Mr Smith's step-daughter, Miss Leach.

ing the Mediterranean Squadron. They afford an interesting illustration of the effect which the means of rapid communication have had in controlling and directing the actions of armies and navy at great distances, and it suggests some curious reflections that this duty should have been discharged by one so pacific in training and character as W. H. Smith.

The First Lord of the Admiralty to the Prime Minister.

Private.

ADMIRALTY, *Sunday Morning, Feb. 10, 1878.*

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,—We have had three messages from Admiral Hornby during the night. The two first are more or less unintelligible, and efforts are still being made to decipher them. The last, dated 9 P.M., shows, I think, that Mr Layard has not yet been able to communicate with him. Chanak is a very strong fort at the entrance of the Narrows, and it was there that the Admiral received the message on the 24th ordering him back to Besika Bay.—
Yours sincerely,
W. H. SMITH.

The Same to the Same.

ADMIRALTY, S.W., *Feb. 10, 1878, 7.40 P.M.*

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,—I have just received the telegram enclosed from Admiral Hornby, dated this morning from Besika Bay.

It is most singular that nothing has been heard from Mr Layard; . . . but I suppose we must wait for an answer to our telegram of to-day before we give Hornby instructions.

I shall be ready to come over to you at any time you may require this evening; but I am afraid we can do nothing.—Yours very truly,
W. H. SMITH.

Telegram from Vice-Admiral Hornby.

No. 10.

BESIKA, *Feb. 10, 9 A.M.*

Sent Salamis to Chanak yesterday, and weighed with ships ordered at 6 P.M. When inside Koumkaleh, Salamis returned. No telegraphic communication with Ambassador: no Firman, and Pacha protests against squadron entering. Anchored before Koumkaleh at night. At 1 A.M. Pacha received answer from Constantinople: no request made by British Ambassador to Porte: contrary to treaty for squadron to enter: Pacha to enforce the treaty. Have returned Besika Bay: no telegraphic communication yet from Ambassador.

Am I to proceed by night with ships named, or to force passage by

day with whole squadron? Squadron insufficient to begin the—
[unintelligible]—at once should be to pass the two lower forts and
silence Medjidch first, then return and silence the lower ones——
if passage is to be kept open. Request instructions.

The First Lord of the Admiralty to the Prime Minister.

Private.

ADMIRALTY, Feb. 13, 1878, 1.15 P.M.

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,—I have a telegram from Hornby, dated from the Alexandra at 1.30 this morning, stating his intention to sail at daybreak with six ironclads in pursuance of orders.—Yours sincerely,
W. H. SMITH.

The Same to the Same.

Feb. 14, 1878, 9 A.M.

We have a telegram from the Vice-Consul at the Dardanelles that “the six armoured ships passed through yesterday at 3 P.M. into the Sea of Marmora, the Turkish authorities protesting but not resisting.”

Telegram from Vice-Admiral Hornby.

No. 18.

GALLIPOLI, 2 P.M., Feb. 14, '78.

Capt. Fife informs me the Russians are in force near Karak, twelve miles from Bulair: they may have 50,000 men there to-morrow evening: are believed to have a feasible plan to cross the Gulf of Zeros and land in the rear of Bulair lines, while they attack in front. I recommend all ships at Besika Bay, except one, be moved to Zeros with me to oppose any attack arising on this peninsula, and that Rear-Admiral Commerell assist to defend Bulair lines, and if they are (in) considerable force to destroy heavy guns in evacuating fort of Dardanelles: also that I should return immediately (to) eastward end of Marmora. Rear-Admiral remains at Gallipoli with Agincourt and Swiftsure. I proceed immediately to Prince's Island.

Following sharply on this came an order from the First Lord of the Admiralty to Vice-Admiral Hornby, which seemed to shut out all hopes of the maintenance of peace with Russia.

No. 23.

February 15.

All ships but one are to go from Besika Bay to Gulf of Xeros, with orders to watch Russian troops, and if they observe preparations for embarkation with a view to landing on the peninsula of Gallipoli, they

are to warn Russian commander they have orders to prevent such landing, and they are to oppose it by force if persevered in. W. H. S.

Telegram from Rear-Admiral Commerell to the First Lord of the Admiralty.

GALLIPOLI, Feb, 15, 11.55 A.M.

I visited Gallipoli lines to-day with permission of Suleiman Pacha. Was not favourably impressed with state of defences. Advanced post of Russians at Kadikoi in sight of Bulair, from which place I am of opinion that determined attack in force would carry Turkish position. Am informed positively that large quantity of munitions are being collected at Kadikoi.

Telegram from Vice-Admiral Hornby to the First Lord of the Admiralty.

No. 24.

PRINCE'S ISLAND, Feb. 17, 8 P.M.

In reference to their lordship's telegraphic communication of yesterday, I beg to report our force at Gallipoli is insufficient to destroy heavy guns unless the Turks consent. If the Russians capture the peninsula, the Turks would probably make better terms by leaving it in their hands. I beg to urge upon their lordships that I consider the position of Gallipoli to be most critical, and it cannot be assured without a speedy understanding with the Turkish Government. . . . It seems certain that Suleiman Pacha cannot be replaced by a trustworthy general, and the positions held by the united forces of the expedition under English and Turkish, or English alone. I need hardly point out that the squadron would render very small service if Gallipoli peninsula were lost. Your telegraphic communication, No. 23 of 15th, received. Understand it to be answer to mine of 14th, No. 18, and have moved from Prince's Island to rendezvous, seven miles S.S.W. of it temporarily, according to Ambassador's wishes.

Please telegraph to Rear-Admiral Commerell at Gallipoli result of Professor Abel's experiments on bursting guns.

Letter from Sir Stafford Northcote to the Prime Minister.

12 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, Feb. 20, 1878.

DEAR LORD BEACONSFIELD,—Will you call a Cabinet at twelve to-morrow? Smith has news which requires immediate attention.—
Yours faithfully, S. H. N.

The news referred to is contained in the following telegrams :—

Telegram from Vice-Admiral Hornby to the First Lord of the Admiralty.

PERA, Feb. 20, 6 P.M. (from Dardanelles).

Ambassador has informed me that the Russians have demanded peremptorily Turkish fleet and to enter Constantinople with 30,000 men. Do my orders still hold not to interfere? I have sent this by sea to Dardanelles to avoid Russian telegraph station.

The Same to the Same.

TUZLA BAY, Feb. 20, 2.30 P.M.

Telegram number 28 of 19th received. No number 27 received. One telegram of 18th in the vocabulary cipher received, not numbered. Russians reported to be advancing to M. San Stephano, thus turning will get in rear of the last line of defence Moukhtar Pacha was preparing for Constantinople. The city and Bosphorus will be at their mercy.

From Captain of Raleigh to the Same.

KOUMKALEH, Feb. 20, 6.30 P.M.

Rear-Admiral reports wire to Constantinople cut both sides.

Vice-Admiral Hornby to the Same.

TUZLA BAY, Feb. 21, 5 A.M.

Rear-Admiral Commerell reports good progress in strengthening Bulair lines, but the assistance of ships to cover the flanks is indispensable. If he might co-operate he thinks Russia would not pass. This squadron might assist materially in preventing Russians entering Constantinople, as it could command the best road for guns on each flank. I think they could not enter if we assist Turks at once.

The Same to the Same.

ISMID, March 10, 4.10 P.M.

Secret.

. . . Bosphorus forts would probably not stop ironclads going into Black Sea, but would stop all supplies. If in Russian hands and strengthened by torpedoes, no squadron could pass without severe loss. If there is any idea of moving in that direction, no time should be lost in opening negotiations with the Turks. Without their help the Straits cannot be saved, and the Turks seem daily succumbing to Russian influence.

N.B.—The group (of cipher) standing for "Black Sea" is still doubtful.

The Same to the Same.

No. 64.

ISMID, March 23, 7.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 48 of 22d received. The Rear-Admiral will

decidedly require two powerful steam-vessels as long as he remains on his present duty at Gallipoli. Rear-Admiral has observed two merchant steam-vessels pass towards Dedeagatch under Russian merchant colours. He ordered our cruisers in the Gulf of Zeros, in the event of Russian troops embarking at Dedeagatch or elsewhere aboard any steam-vessel for the purpose of passing Dardanelles, to follow such vessel in an unobtrusive manner as far as Gallipoli; and if any attempt be made to land the troops, the cruiser is to act in pursuance of Admiralty instructions communicated to me in your telegram of Feb. 15. . . . Ambassador, Constantinople, acquaints me that the minister at Athens reports Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs has informed him, on the authority of Italian Vice-Consul at Volo, that Turks have pillaged and destroyed three villages near Mount Olympus; that they have murdered old men, women, and children, and that some families escaped to the mountains, where, unless rescued, they must perish. I have telegraphed to send Ruby to inquire, and if necessary remove fugitives; if not, she returns immediately.

The Same to the Same.

No. 71.

ISMID, March 31, 2.55 P.M.

Following telegraphic communication received last night from Ambassador—viz. :

“From British Consul I hear that from more than one source, but give the information under reserve, that Generals Scobelev and Gourko have received orders to prepare to make a dash on Gallipoli in the event of a war between England and Russia being imminent; and that a *corps d'armée* is to take possession at the same time of Kavak near entrance of the Bosphorus. A Greek merchant who has been a large contractor for provisions for the Russian army has received orders to keep them at Constantinople.”

In view of the gravity of the situation the Ambassador would like two small vessels stationed at Constantinople. With Russians collecting torpedoes at Rodosto, Rear-Admiral requires assistance, and Condor is going to Gallipoli to him to-day. This leaves only three small ships for this port and Constantinople, and to keep up communication between them.

I request instructions for guidance in the event of war being imminent, observing that the ships cannot remain with safety in the Bosphorus at night whilst the north shore is in possession of an enemy provided with Whitehead torpedoes.

The Same to the Same.

ISMID, March 31, 3.50 P.M.

Ambassador telegraphs following message, dated to-day, . . . from Captain Fife, dated Gallipoli to-day: “Large bodies of Russians expected at Keshan to-day on the way of Cadi Keni from Adrianople. Keshan ceased to reply by telegraph to-day.”

The Same to the Same.

ISMID, April 2, 2.30 P.M.

Affairs at Constantinople said to be very critical. Grand Duke obtaining great influence with several military Pachas. Appointment of Ministry favourable to Russia thought probable. General Dickson tells me he thinks Bulair lines could be held by troops now there if ordered to defend them, but recommends assistance of men and officers from the fleet in the event of attack to prove to the troops that we are in alliance with Turkey.

He fears orders would be given from Constantinople not to defend the lines. In that case he thinks we should defend the lines by taking General and troops into our pay. I concur with him, and submit that the Rear-Admiral should have authority to do so if the Russians prepare to attack.

Russians have lately been increasing their forces at Kadikoi.

Submit in future that treaty should be made with Turkish Government to join us if we are forced into war with Russia. Our fleet cannot stay in the Sea of Marmora or Black Sea for more than a very few days unless some ports are open to us. If alliance with Turkey could be formed, I submit that, if war is imminent, this squadron should be withdrawn to Gallipoli or Besika Bay.

I cannot believe Turkey would defend Gallipoli for us, unless we will do something for them as well as for ourselves. Time seems precious. . . . Have ordered about 1500 tons of Welsh coal from Malta. I think as precautionary measure equal quantity should follow shortly: submit, therefore, that another steam collier should be sent from England with agreement for delivery.

Telegram from Rear-Admiral Sir J. Commerell to the Same.

BESIKA, April 3, 12.5 P.M.

Secret and confidential.

I think First Pacha at Bulair would hail with delight an order from Constantinople to surrender lines. Second Pacha is different man altogether.

— ? soldiers would defend them if First Pacha were away.

Of course if lines were given up, Hussein at Dardanelles would not let me destroy guns on European side. The only way I can see to ensure safety of Gallipoli is to order — ? be given over: embark the Maltese garrison in the Channel Squadron and Indian troop-ships: cutting the wires and allowing no ships to touch there, and send the ships to *rendezvous* in Gulf Xeros. They need not land until Russians make movement: excuse suggestion.

By this time—the month of April—the war-clouds were beginning to break; Count Schouvaloff had arrived in England on a special mission from the Russian Court, the

Berlin Congress had been agreed on, and a second time the House of Commons ratified the policy of Ministers by a majority of 121—347 votes to 226.

Needless to do more than allude to the result of the Congress, the return of our Plenipotentiaries — Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury — an event marked in public memory by the speech made by the Prime Minister from a window of his house in Downing Street, in which he claimed, before an enthusiastic multitude, to have brought back “Peace with Honour.”¹ Relieved from the apprehension which had weighed so heavily on them

¹ Lord Beaconsfield, it is said, piqued himself on his fluency in French, but his idioms were rather intrepid than correct. He had command of a copious vocabulary, but his accent was courageously cis-pontine, a survival of that Anglo-Gallic which developed itself among English officers during the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns. Some consternation, therefore, arose among the English who accompanied him to Berlin, when they learnt that the British Prime Minister intended to deliver his opening speech at the Conference in French, and had already devoted much time to its preparation. It would have been a delicate matter to explain to his lordship that, while it was of the utmost importance that his speech should be understood by the other Plenipotentiaries, that object could not be attained unless he spoke in his native tongue. In this dilemma recourse was had to the good offices of Lord Odo Russell, British Minister at Berlin—could he diplomatically convey to Lord Beaconsfield how necessary it was that he should speak in English?

Lord Odo pondered for some moments, and then said—

“Yes, I think I see my way. Leave it to me.”

That afternoon he visited Lord Beaconsfield, and before taking his leave, remarked—

“By the by, I must tell you how much disappointment was felt by the other Plenipotentiaries when it became known that your lordship intended to address the Congress in French.”

“Why should they be disappointed?” asked the Prime Minister, putting up his eyeglass. “Is not French the language most generally understood on the Continent?”

“Undoubtedly, my dear lord; but they had been looking forward with the keenest anticipation to the pleasure of hearing English spoken by its greatest living master, and, if I might venture to intercede, I would beg you to give them this gratification. It is of some importance, you know, to predispose them favourably to the consideration of the questions which will arise.”

“I think there is a good deal in what you say,” observed Beaconsfield; and, in the end, he complied with Lord Odo’s suggestion.

for so many months, people were jubilant in their approval of the success gained by English diplomacy. Great Britain was rehabilitated in the eyes of Europe, and at the same time delivered from the imminence of war.

Nevertheless, for the third time this session, the Government had to defend themselves against a vote of censure, moved by the Marquis of Hartington, and supported by the impassioned oratory of Gladstone, Lowe, and Forster. It was a false move in tactics, as the division list proved, for the House acquitted the Administration of blame by 338 votes to 195—a crushing majority of 143.

CHAPTER XII.

1878.

One result of the Berlin Congress had been the cession of Cyprus to England, to be, as Lord Beaconsfield described it, a “place of arms” in the Eastern Mediterranean. The accounts of the capabilities, resources, condition, and popular feeling of this island were so conflicting that the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War (Colonel the Hon. F. R. Stanley, M.P.¹) set out in the autumn to inspect it for themselves.

The occasion was one not to be lost by that gentle satirist, Mr Bromley Davenport, M.P., who, *more suo*, celebrated the expedition in verse :—

“The Chief of the Army and Lord of the Fleet
Have gone out to visit both Cyprus and Crete ;
The natives, delighted to see such fine stars,
Christened one of them Neptune, the other one Mars ;

¹ Now sixteenth Earl of Derby.

They erected an altar to Stanley forthwith,
And put up a bookstall to W. H. Smith."

On the eve of his departure for the East, Smith received a letter from H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge referring to the Royal Marines in terms which, as expressing the confidential opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, cannot fail of being pleasant reading to the members of that distinguished branch of the service.

Private.

GLOUCESTER HOUSE, PARK LANE, W.,
Sunday, October 20, '78.

MY DEAR MR SMITH,—I returned late last night from a general tour of inspections, & hearing that you are to start to-night for Cyprus with Colonel Stanley, I write a line to say that I have had an opportunity of seeing the *four* Divisions of Royal Marines at their respective Stations, and cannot speak in too high terms of their state of efficiency & smartness. They are splendid fellows, in excellent military order, & fit for any work that may be required of them. I am anxious to bear testimony to their excellent condition, as I occasionally see rumours in the public prints that there is some idea of reducing their numbers, and some naval officers go even so far as to say that the Royal Marines are now become a *useless* body. I hope you will *never* be induced to listen to such views. All the old & valuable Officers of the Navy do *not* share their opinions, & I trust they will not find any encouragement on the part of the First Lord, who, after all, is the authority upon whom these matters depend. I am not a Naval Man and know little of Naval matters, but I have been a public servant of the Crown for many years, & have gained some experience in that position, & I feel satisfied that the Royal Marines are a valuable branch of our public services, & as such deserve every encouragement & support, & certainly *not* abolition, or even reduction.—I remain, dear Mr Smith, yours most sincerely,
GEORGE.

To this the First Lord made the following reply :—

H.M.S. HIMALAYA, *off* CYPRUS, Oct. 29, '78.

SIR,—I had the honour to receive your Royal Highness's letter on the subject of the Royal Marines on the day of my departure from London, and as it was only a few minutes before the train started, I was unable to reply.

I am really very much obliged to your Royal Highness for the information contained in the letter. It is most gratifying to us at the Admiralty to have the very high authority of your Royal Highness bearing testimony to the efficiency of the Marines. They have appeared to me, with my very limited knowledge of discipline and drill, to be in a satisfactory state, but I am perfectly assured now as to their condition by the statement of your Royal Highness.

So far as the present Board of Admiralty are concerned, there is certainly no foundation whatever for the rumours to which your Royal Highness has referred. We have no intention of effecting a permanent reduction in the numbers of the corps, still less of abolishing it. For my own part I regard them as a very valuable reserve, capable of being used at sea or on land, and until wars cease such a reserve certainly should be retained.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient humble servant,

W. H. SMITH.

As was always the case when duty obliged him to make a prolonged absence from home, Smith felt the pain of parting from wife and children in a degree which, to some people, might appear disproportionate to the length of the separation. But his was a warmly affectionate nature, and he was not ashamed to give expression to his feelings in the journal which he kept during his tour.

Monday, Oct. 21, 1878.—Started from Greenlands for the 10.10 train. Did not "light up" in the brougham as we had been accustomed to do. Neither of us cared for it. The two dear children had our last good-bye as we drove rapidly through the gate, and although we were not sad, we were, as once before, not talkative. The weather cleared up, and we cleared up too, and we began to say to each other, What a blessing it will be not to see a pouch¹ for perhaps a month! . . .

The order was given, "Half speed ahead," the paddles turned, and there was a good deal of dirty water, but no motion in the ship, and so it went on for half an hour. At last we got off fairly; the rain had ceased, and we had a good but a slow passage across. On the other side we found a carriage reserved for us, and we travelled comfortably to Paris, now and then saying a very few words to each other, and they were very few, of those we loved. Some thoughts are too precious to be given expression to. There is a sort of sacrilege in allowing the birds of the air to listen to them.

Paris had been *en fête*. There had been a great giving away of prizes in the day, and flags on the houses and illuminations in the streets; but the people were returning home, and the gas-lustres were out and the Chinese lanterns were going out, but still the place looked cheerful and the people happy, lingering to see the last of the show.

We drove to the Hôtel Bristol, and the Princee requested me to see him. He told me he was almost tired of the functions he had to go through. Prize-giving yesterday; deputation to-day; a *fête* at Versailles at night; it was too much. He said that his brother the Duke of Edinburgh had been staying two days with him, and only left the night before for Marseilles to join his ship, and he wished very much I could have seen him. We parted. I returned with Codrington to

¹ An official "pouch": the leather bags in which papers and despatches are sent from the public departments to Ministers.

the hotel to write letters, and at 5 in came Mr Lawson of the 'Daily Telegraph' to ask me what I thought of affairs.

Well, I did not think much; what did Mr Lawson think? He said his wife had not seen Venice, and he was going there to-morrow for three weeks. I was off that night to Cyprus. "Ah! then you don't think anything will happen just at present?"—"I hope not."—"You wouldn't go if you thought anything would happen?"—"Oh, certainly not! and it is just as well to show confidence." The 'Daily Telegraph' and the First Lord shook hands and parted, with professions of profound esteem and friendship; and then we finished our letters, and went out for a stroll, and to buy Tauchnitz for the journey. Up and down the Rue de la Paix, lingering at the jewellers' windows, admiring Sirandin's baskets, and the nattily dressed girls who presided over the sweetie-shop; wondering whether the electric light really was so wonderful; thinking in between of home, and of all that makes home lovely. . . .

So the real journey commenced, and we found ourselves a party of seven, with four servants and a courier, Sir George Elliot, Sir Henry Holland,¹ and Captain Fitzgeorge joining us at the station.

Thursday, 24th.— . . . In Italy on the Adriatic coast—a rich garden-like country, with olive and mulberry trees planted in rows in the fields. The sea is very Italian-like. Fishing-boats with the peculiar Mediterranean sails, half red, half orange-colour, sitting like large birds on the water.

. . . We passed Loretto, with its church built round the house in which Joseph lived, which flew from the Holy Land—first to Albania, and then, not being appreciated there, to the opposite shore, alighting on the hill now named Loretto.

On we go in heat, but, thanks to the late rain, not in dust.

At Foggia we left the sea and struck across a vast plain to Naples, a five-and-a-half-hours' fast run. To the westward was a range of very grand hills. There were some dark clouds about them, and as the sun passed through them they seemed to divide, giving golden fringes to their edges, and lighting up all below and around with a golden haze which could be felt but not described. The plain was mostly uncultivated, and houses few and far between. Troops of horses here, some hundreds together, being driven home apparently; cattle in the same way, and now and then sheep. Darkness settled upon us; the stars came out brightly. We were all very tired, and those who did not sleep thought again of home. . . .

It was very pleasant to find ourselves in the pinnace again, and steaming out, we were soon on board the Himalaya, where we were very heartily welcomed by our friends who had gone before. . . .

Friday, Oct. 25.—A bath—what luxury! On deck, and the whole Bay of Naples in sunshine before us; Vesuvius smoking, but clear to the top, the Observatory standing on a shoulder of the mountain, olive-groves and vineyards clambering up its sides, and white houses, surrounded by gardens, glistening. Description is out of the question; every variety of shape in rock, the sea deep blue, and the curves

¹ Created Baron Knutsford in 1888.

where land and sea meet moulded by Nature as man could not mould them. The Bay of Naples is very lovely, but, if I dare say it, it wants the bright green of an English landscape.

The party on board the *Himalaya*, besides Mr Smith and Colonel Stanley, consisted of Admiral George Wellesley, C.B., First Naval Lord; Sir Massey Lopes, Bart., M.P., a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty; Admiral Sir W. Houston Stewart, K.C.B., Controller of the Navy; the Hon. Algernon Egerton, M.P., Secretary to the Admiralty; Captain Codrington, R.N., private secretary to the First Lord; Mr R. Dalyell, private secretary to Colonel Stanley; Captain Fitzgeorge, of the Intelligence Department of the War Office; Lord Colville of Culross; Sir Henry Holland, M.P.; and Sir George Elliot, M.P.

. . . Steaming away from Castellamare, we passed slowly out of the Bay of Naples. We left Capri behind us, and gradually drew away from the land, but still near enough to see its beauty. Volcanoes and earthquakes have tossed up the rocks into every conceivable shape and form, but almost always peaked and rugged; and then tempests have scored out the softer particles of the rocks, and left the harder in bold relief. We had just a few clouds to produce shadows, light, and shade, and the deep blue of the sea formed a contrast and pictures impossible to describe. For a long way we could trace a road running terrace-like high up on the mountain-side, dipping from time to time into orange and olive woods and emerging again. . . . A gorgeous sunset followed, and now I can understand pictures which have hitherto appeared exaggerated and untrue.

We have now settled down to sea-life. I take my place at dinner, with Wellesley opposite to me and Stanley on my right, it being understood that others change about from day to day. Everything appears well arranged, and everybody quite certain we are going to have a very pleasant trip. Holland and Elliot do not appear the worse for their long journey, and we all agree there is not a bad fellow in the party.

At dinner I give H.M. the Queen, and our band strikes up, and we all stand while the first bars of "God save the Queen" are played. Before turning in I asked the captain to call me when we passed Stromboli, if there was any fire visible.

Saturday, Oct. 26.—Captain White, at 3 A.M., "Stromboli, sir, on the starboard beam." It was very hot, and I had not been sleeping very soundly, so I was quite glad to turn out, and for an hour I watched the mountain, being rewarded by one flare, like a lurid furnace at night in the Black Country.

In the morning we found ourselves close in to the shores of brigand

Calabria, the same high mountains, tossed about, seamed, rugged, convulsed, torn, and looking often bare, but, with a glass, vines and olives could be discovered, and many villages and even considerable towns perched up in commanding positions in the rocks. Sicily and Mount Etna had been in sight for some time, and we steered rapidly to the Straits of Messina, passing through Charybdis and close to the famous Scylla. Off Messina we signalled to the Telegraph Station to send word home that the Himalaya had passed.

Leaving Messina, our course was altered to the eastward, pointing to Cyprus, and we soon left Sicily behind, keeping, however, nearer to the end of Italy. Once I think I saw smoke issuing from Etna, and, if that was so, I had seen three volcanoes smoking within twenty-four hours.

Sunday, Oct. 27.—A lovely morning. I had previously suggested to Wellesley that the band should play hymn-tunes, and they appeared with the crew at church-parade at 11 o'clock. We had two hymns and a good sermon, in its way, from the clergyman, a Mr Kavanagh. . . . Sunset again lovely; a few clouds in the west to take the golden light: the sun drops through them; they seem to open to let him go, and with a light too dazzling to look upon, he is gone, and there remain a few light clouds which seem to have absorbed his light, and they seem for a few minutes only to float on the sea in the horizon like the bright burning embers of a furnace. Then succeeds rapidly every hue of which sky and water are capable. In the east what appears to be a cloud of darkness quickly rises; in the west gold melts into deep red, red into orange, orange into bluish green, and that into the colder blue of the zenith; that again disappearing before the darkness rising from the east;—and it is night in a few minutes from daylight.

At 10 P.M. we are off Crete, and at 11 pass Cape Sparta. . . .

Monday, Oct. 28.—I had sundry serious talks to-day with Stanley, Wellesley, and others as to our work at Cyprus; for it is, I hope, to be real work.

. . . When we reach Larnaca we shall be $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours in advance of English time. I have kept my watch to "home" hours; and it is very pleasant to turn to it and know perfectly well what is doing at home. I see the boy¹ running out for a rose, and I almost hear the gong, and I imagine the cold foggy mornings you have had, while we are inclined to be languid from heat. . . . We are now drawing close to Cyprus. Mount Olympus and the western range of hills have been in view for some hours. . . . I am afraid my journal may now be interrupted for a few days, as we shall be busy looking about the island, but I will try to pick up the threads.

Oct. 29.—We saw a good deal of the island as we passed up. There are many trees, and in some places forests; on the side nearest Limasol a gentle slope from the mountains, now looking brown where there are few trees, but evidently green enough in winter. We could make out Paphos, famous in ancient history, and we are coming on to Atium or Shittim, spoken of in Solomon's time, when the island was

¹ His son, Frederick.

far more prosperous than it is now. It was 7.30 P.M. before we dropped anchor at Larnaca last night. . . . At 10 P.M. Hornby, Wolseley, and Lord John Hay, with their belongings, came on board, and we had a friendly greeting. They looked well and cheery. We arranged to go ashore for a ride through the town to the salt lakes, to visit a mosque, and the camping-ground of the troops. At daylight this morning, and before the sun rose, Stanley and I started. We landed near Wolseley's place, and for the first time saw a Turkish house. Horses were brought, and we mounted. The horses seemed accustomed to the very broken ground, and to going up and down steps.

Imagine an Italian town—Orta or Lugano—exaggerated, and you have Larnaca, excepting that the houses are lower. Everybody is up and taking coffee, and everybody is very respectful. We ride along dusty paths, and reach the salt lakes, which are a great source of revenue, as the sun dries up the water in summer, and leaves a crust of salt, which is gathered like a harvest. . . .

Wednesday, Oct. 30.—Sir Garnet Wolseley, Stanley, and I, with attendants, started on ponies to make the round of the Government stores, offices, and hospitals. On our way we passed through Printing-house Square, and by the Beaconsfield Chambers, Anglo-Egyptian Street, and hosts of others newly named by the municipality. The Marina, from which we started, is a narrow ledge in front of the houses on the beach here, and it is being widened by a concrete wall built on the gravelly shingle between piles and a cofferdam, the ground inside being made good with stones. A motley group they were at work—Negroes, Arabs, Greeks, Turks. One was reminded of "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites," people of every nation and tongue. Every kind of costume was seen to almost none at all, for the men worked in the water with little more than a shirt and a waist-belt. It was curious to be saluted by Englishmen and recognised as one passed up and down, the pony threading its way over stones and through dust and dirt up and down steps.

The Commissioner, Colonel White, had always two zaptiehs, or mounted police, in front, who rode on to make way, ordering bullock-carts to stop and make way,—swarthy fellows, all dressed differently, wearing large boots, into which their baggy breeches of blue or brown cotton were thrust; then came a sash or belt, then perhaps a red and white shawl, pattern shirt or waistcoat, and over that a gay tunic of red, green, or yellow; but, always contrasting with other colours, a fez or turban covered the head. The commissariat stores were very numerous, and it was curious to see camels standing outside and mules picketed waiting for work.

. . . We went at a gallop through six inches of dust to old Larnaca, to visit the hospitals, which are in two really nice old houses, with a capital garden of oranges, citrons, and fig-trees attached. The people came out to look at us in great numbers. The Turkish women dressed entirely in white linen or muslin, covering their faces so that only their eyes could peep through, but they were quite as curious as the rest. . . .

Thursday, Oct. 31.—We were on shore at daylight to start by

the waggonette for Nicosia. The carriage was really a good one, holding eight comfortably inside. We started with two on the box, and one, young Lopes, on the roof. We had a team of three ponies harnessed abreast, and three mules in front of them. The air was quite cold before the sun was up, but by the time we reached Dewdrop Inn, a tent pitched by an Englishman at the first change of horses, it became very hot. The road was undulating and better than I expected, but the country had an arid look from the want of rain; and, as much of the rock is limestone and very white, there is a painful glare in the sun under the deep blue and absolutely unclouded sky. The desolate look too is increased by the fact that any houses or villages you see are built of mud brick baked in the sun, and of the same colour as the ground. The houses in the village are mostly of one storey, with flat roofs, and from a distance they look like an English stable or outhouse, but they are frequently comfortable, and have trees and gardens inside the enclosure. Away we sped from the Dewdrop Inn, rising to the watershed between Nicosia and Larnaca, about 800 feet up, from which we had a good view of the plain which lies to the south of the crater or northern range of mountains. Generally the ground was arid-looking, but there were patches of green in considerable numbers, and it was evident that wherever a stream ran there was great fertility and beauty. Wells were numerous, and they resembled the pictures one has seen of Jacob's well: a hole in the ground and stone basins into which the water is poured when it is raised, from which and the stone troughs around them the sheep and the cattle drink.

We arrived outside the walls of Nicosia at eleven, and were met by the Commissioner, Colonel Biddulph, who ordered the driver to go across some fields to the camp without entering the town, and we passed for nearly a mile outside the walls, which are still in good repair and very thick. At the camp I was put into a hut which was divided in three compartments, first occupied by Stanley, the next by Wellesley, and the last by me. The rest of the party were lodged in the same way, the servants being under canvas.

In the afternoon we were all mounted on ponies and mules, and went off, escorted by zaptiehs, to Nicosia. I rode on with Sir Garnet and Colonel Stanley, the rest following.

Our way lay through the gate, passing the place where camels and mules camped outside. On arriving inside the gate we were received by a bodyguard of mounted zaptiehs. Two led the way, and the rest followed us through the bazaar, or street of shops. There were quarters of bootmakers and leather-sellers—a great trade in Nicosia; green-grocers, butchers, silk-mercens, every trade keeping very much together. The streets are paved very badly, and the horses, shod with a round ring of iron, slid about. The people stared and gaped, frequently bowing and touching their foreheads and chests as we passed by. The mixture of colours and races,—Turkish women in white from head to foot; Greeks with black hair, large eyes, and olive face, always having contrasting colours to light them up; men with turbans and green jackets, some with a kind of long dressing-gown. All but ourselves in Eastern as compared with European dress.

The streets were much shaded from the sun by vines trained on lattices overhead or by matting with little openings overhead. . . .

Returning, we stopped for tea at Colonel Biddulph's house, where I met the Financial Officer of the island, Mr Kelner, and the legal adviser of Sir Garnet, Mr Cookson.

On our way back to camp we rode over a Turkish burial-ground, which is quite unprotected, and past the battle-ground where Richard Cœur-de-Lion fought and conquered just a few years ago, and as darkness came on we returned to camp.

Dinner under canvas with Sir Garnet Wolseley and my colleagues.

Friday, Nov. 1.—Very clear and very fine. Morning a little cold before the sun was fairly up; and we were all in the saddle by 6.30 for a 35-mile ride to visit Mattyani camp and the 71st regiment, and General Payn's camp at Dali. On our way we met many people going into market at Nicosia. The route lay for some miles over a rich plain, now burnt up except where there happened to be irrigation. We crossed several water-courses, some quite deep and all rough, but our horses seemed rather to like the climbing about. My pony was a capital one, but it was smaller than Brownie, and sometimes when we were cantering on broken ground I felt there was danger of my legs getting mixed up with his legs. The country towards Mattyani was very bare and rocky, and there was no shade. When we arrived at the camp we saw breakfast laid out for us under a tent, and notwithstanding heat, we set to work vigorously. Then we visited the tents and huts, especially the hospital, and were very glad to find the regiment healthy and in good spirits. We then started for General Payn's camp, and lunched there. It was a striking sight. The horses tethered under trees as their stables, and having no other shelter, the bed of the river below quite dry, and, at the back of the tents, cotton plantations and trees and wells. As we were lurching, a Bengal *syce*, used as a postman, passed in front, and, with his copper-coloured face, black hair, and white turban and dress, he looked, as he was, a striking evidence of the variety of form England can bring to bear to discharge her duties in the world. After lunch I mounted a fresh horse, and rode home in the cool of the evening, passing few human habitations, but many evidences of past prosperity. Dinner in tent again and to bed.

Saturday, Nov. 2.—We were waited upon in camp by the chief monk of the monastery, with attendant priests, to pay his respects to the "Ministers." Sir Garnet uses a portion of the building for his offices, and we are encamped on ground belonging to the monks. The chief was a handsome old man, with a long white beard. He and his friends appeared exceedingly anxious to express their delight at being under English rule. After breakfast we rode into Nicosia, and paid another visit to the bazaar. We made purchases of silk, and then proceeded to Colonel Biddulph's house, until it was time to start in the waggonette for Larnaca. We had to wait for a few minutes for some of our party, and during that time a respectful but a curious crowd gathered round. Away we went with our team of six, up the rugged street and out through the massive gate, on which the winged lion of St Mark still remains to mark Venetian rule. At the gate the mounted *zaptichs* formed as a guard of honour, and headed by their

captain, followed as an escort up to the top of the first hill, where they saluted, wheeled, and returned to Nicosia.

Our journey down was as the journey up. We took a cup of 4 o'clock tea at sixpence apiece all round at the Dewdrop Inn, and found the landlord cheery in his little bell-tent. An English friend of his, who had just come over from Syria to pay him a visit, told us the people there all thought themselves badly served that we had not taken the mainland instead of Cyprus. Heat and dust, and yet it is November 2d. . . .

Sunday, Nov. 3.—Under weigh early. Church as usual at 10.30, and this time the band played the usual chants for the psalms as well as the hymns. I think we most of us enjoyed the service thoroughly.

At 12 we were off Famagusta, where Admiral Hornby was already anchored in the Helicon. We went inside the reef which runs from the old harbour parallel with the land, so as to constitute a break-water almost as good as that at Plymouth, within which large ships can lie in perfect safety.

The town is surrounded by a very thick wall, and it is only approached from the sea by a water-gate. The ship's boat drew near the shore, and we saw a crowd of people on the shore waiting our arrival. On landing, we had to pass under the domed gateway some hundred feet thick. Inside there were ponies and mules awaiting to take us to see the ruins of the town. It was impossible to walk, for the sun was hotter than we had before felt it. Our first work was up to the top of the bastion commanding a view of the port. Such desolation I had never before witnessed. Everything is a ruin, and much of the ruin is as if it had been accomplished only a few months, or at most years, ago. There are, they say, remains of forty churches in the town, and not one perfect one remaining. The cathedral is turned into the one mosque in the town, disfigured and dirty, with tower and pinnacles gone, the pillars outside coated with whitewash and green paint where the stone capitals should be, but still in its mournful decay retaining externally in its doorways, windows, and flying buttresses the most delicate and beautiful tracery, no one window or pinnacle being like another.

We visited another splendid ruin, and on the walls of the roofless apse we could trace perfectly mural paintings of the Agony, Crucifixion, and other scenes in our Lord's Passion, the peculiarity being that the drawing was perfect and the colours strong and good. The place was the most mournful I have ever seen. It was literally a heap of ruins, and from the good preservation in which some parts are found, man and not decay must have created the havoc. We rode between the remains of palaces and churches, and there are now only a few hovels left, which are built out of the *débris* of past greatness. The Commissioner, Captain Inglis, took us to the Konah, and it seemed to give pleasure to the soldier-servants to see our faces. . . .

There are the remains of forty churches, and only 250 living men in the town. Mr Millard, our surveying officer, navigated the ship out of the harbour, and after a lovely sunset, we steamed slowly round the land towards Kyrenia, where we arrived by daylight on

Monday, Nov. 4.—Fancy a range of hills, extending quite to the height of Scottish hills, at the distance of from five to ten miles from the shore, sloping from the last half of the distance gradually towards the sea, with a somewhat thick wood as it appears from the sea ; but when we got ashore we found they were fine carob-trees, olives, and pines, thickly planted in fields which, although mostly barc now, are all under cultivation. We landed at Kyrenia, an old Venetian port with castle and walls still standing, and looking very picturesque from the sea as the Union-jack floated from the ramparts. Passing through the small town, we soon came to the camp of the 42d Highlanders, the Black Watch. The poor fellows were in a very depressed state, as they had had a good deal of fever and ague, which made them look washed out, and they had no games or amusements ; but if all is well they will soon be moved. There is one lady, a wife of an officer, but there is only one other officer to call on her, so her life cannot be very cheerful.

Some of our party went up to a monastery in the mountains, and brought down beautiful flowers and fruit—oranges, lemons. The country appears to produce everything. In the evening we said good-bye to Admiral Hornby, who returned to Constantinople, and we sailed to Paphos or Baffo.

Tuesday, Nov. 5.—Arrived at Baffo, and landed in a little harbour full of rocks. There was a tower or castle there, in which death was certain, it was so unhealthy. More zaptiehs and more receptions. Negroes and Nubians seem especially to prevail here.

On our way round from Kyrenia, and while we were lying there, we could see clearly the mountains of Asia Minor, and I shall therefore have seen all the quarters of the world by the time I get home.

Landing at Baffo was a serious business. Our boat bumped on rocks, and our poor coxswain trembled for the Enchantress pinnace. At one time it appeared likely we should want the aid of an Arab boat, but we got on shore safely.

Every description of steed met us—English ponies, Arab horses, mules, donkeys—with a corresponding variety of saddles. . . .

Our road lay through ruins, marble and granite columns many hundred years old lying by the wayside—remnants of two separate periods of civilisation, pagan and Christian. There were rock tombs—and one realises that Abraham was buried in a trough hewn out of the rock—and bits of arches and carvings of Christian churches.

So we proceeded, passing near where tradition says Venus arose out of the sea, and a temple to Aphrodite was raised on to the ground on which the camp of the 42d detachment stands.

The men were better and more in fettle than those at Kyrenia, but some were unwell. We returned in a blazing sun and embarked for Limasol, coasting along a rich country.

At Limasol we landed at a little pier covered with myrtle, and carpeted in honour of our arrival. There was a crowd and a deputation. The municipality wished to present an address, which was read to us with great emphasis by a gentleman in black and a top-hat. When he finished there was "Zeto!" or "Long live the Queen!" "Long live the Commissioner and the Ministers!" in good round

cheers, and these were followed by "God save the Queen" in Greek, sung by the schoolboys of the town. We hurried through the town, for time was precious, to the castle, the kahn, and the jail; and coming out of that, we were met by another crowd and another address in Greek, to which we listened gravely, not understanding a word, and all agreeing that Mr Gladstone ought to be there to translate it.

We went on board, transferred Sir Garnet Wolseley and Lord Gifford to the Humber, which was waiting, and started for Port Said. Poor Sir Garnet felt our parting, but he said our visit had been a real comfort to him. Fine weather again favoured us, and on Wednesday, November 6, we arrived at Port Said, the mouth of the Suez Canal. There were ceremonies to be gone through—a French admiral with his flag-ship, the Governor of Port Said, the Admiralty agent, were all come on board. We got through all this, and started for a short run up the canal. It is much to the credit of France that M. de Lesseps, persevering, accomplished the greatest work of the century in making a navigable canal through the sands of the desert. We returned to Port Said, and took a stroll in the town. There is an Arab lake (dwelling) village just outside on piles over the Lake Menzaleh, which might have been one of the Swiss lake villages of some hundred years ago, now being discovered or uncovered. The town of Port Said is most uninteresting, but it seems to embrace every kind of people and language under the sun. The Arab boys were troublesome in their attention to us, but a school we saw amused us much. All the children made as much noise as they could. They, master and all, sat as Arabs sit together, squatting on a mat, and as they said or learned their lessons their bodies swayed to and fro like seesaws, the master, in turban, using a bamboo stick for the heads of the most distant, if they failed to jabber and to sway. We went on board, and sailed at 5 P.M. for Alexandria.

CHAPTER XIII.

1878-1880.

When Smith's only son, Frederick, who had lately gone to school, was home for the Christmas holidays in 1878, he told a funny little story about his experience. The boys had asked him if his father was the man who had the book-stalls, to which he answered, "Yes." Then they asked him if he did anything else. "Oh yes," replied Frederick, "he's

First Lord of the Admiralty!"—a statement which was received with shouts of incredulous derision.

By the time that Smith returned to England from the East, war had been declared with Afghanistan, and Parliament was summoned to meet on 5th December. For the fourth time during 1878 the Government were to be arraigned on a motion of censure—this time moved by Mr Whitbread—and the House was to be called on to declare that it disapproved of the policy which had led to hostilities; for the fourth time the attack was to be repulsed: the Government obtained a majority of 101 in a House of 555 members.

Although the shadow of war no longer lay upon the land (for the affair in Afghanistan, though serious and deplorable enough, was very light compared with the mighty conflict into which Britain had so nearly been drawn in the year that was past), the gloom of commercial depression, which had set in with the crash of the City of Glasgow Bank in September, weighed heavily on all classes. Agriculture especially was in a languishing state: the pressure of competition in corn and meat had begun to be formidable about two years previously, and for the first time the effect of one-sided free trade was making itself felt upon our principal industry—in addition to which the harvest of 1878 had been a disastrous one. On the back of all this came news of another frontier war in which Great Britain had become involved, this time in South Africa, with Cetchwayo, King of the Zulus. Not much interest was taken in it by people in this country, absorbed as they were in their private anxieties, until, on February 11, arrived messages describing the terrible calamity at Isandhlwana, where the English column under Colonel Glyn had been cut to pieces.

It was under such circumstances as these that Ministers met Parliament on February 13. The glow of exultation

which had followed the return of our Plenipotentiaries from Berlin had given place to cold disapproval and anger at the humiliation of our arms by a tribe of savages. Notwithstanding all this, the House of Commons still, though with a diminished majority, ratified the conduct of the Government, and rejected a vote of censure (the fifth within twelve months), moved by Sir Charles Dilke, by a majority of 60.

The Home Rulers were not slow to turn the circumstances of the day to practical account. Agricultural distress, low prices, and the ruin of the crops were availed of to foment political discontent, and Parnell lent the full weight of his new authority to the anti-rent agitation.

For Parnell was now leader of the Home Rule party. In the previous session, a debate had taken place on the occasion of the murder of Lord Leitrim, during which the line taken by Messrs Parnell, Biggar, O'Donnell, and Callan, the accusations made and the language used by them, were made the subject of remonstrance and disclaimer by their nominal chief, Mr Butt, who, when he found that he had lost control over his followers, resigned the leadership. Henceforward the policy of Irish Nationalist representatives was to be that of sparing no charge, however odious and unfounded, of respecting no custom or tradition of Parliament, however venerable and honourable, with the intention of making their presence at Westminster intolerable to the House of Commons, and incompatible with its use as a legislative assembly.

During the Whitsuntide recess, it fell to the First Lord of the Admiralty to make an important speech at Bury St Edmunds—important, not because it marked an era in oratory or gave birth to any of those phrases with which it is the happy knack of some public men to tickle the fancy of the public, but important because of the reassuring effect it had upon the general anxiety which prevailed. The war

in Afghanistan had been brought to an end, and a treaty of peace entered into with the Ameer. Sir Garnet Wolseley had been sent out to South Africa, in order, as Smith expressed it—

To conduct the war wisely, with moderation, with a proper desire to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, and with the resolution to bring it to a speedy and safe conclusion. We should be wanting in our duty to our country and to Englishmen in other parts of the world if we failed to see that the peace which is to follow should be one which is not to be again disturbed.

Now these were simple expressions, verging, it might be thought, on commonplace: what was it that gave them so much weight? It was that people had learned already to rely on the sound sense, courage, and moderation of the speaker, and this is confirmed by many passages in the journals of the day.

A few days after his speech at Bury St Edmunds, Smith went to Oxford to receive the honorary degree of D.C.L., which the University is wont to confer on men who rise to distinction. Professor Bryce,¹ to whom, as Regius Professor of Civil Law, was assigned the duty of introducing the candidates in a Latin speech, described the First Lord of the Admiralty as one "whose fleets covered the sea and his newspapers the land; one to whom Britain had committed her trident, and one who had succeeded not only in maintaining the efficiency of the Navy, but in the more difficult task of pleasing the naval world in general." As Smith passed to his seat among the Doctors, the undergraduates struck up the Admiral's song from Gilbert and Sullivan's opera "Pinafore." Among the others upon whom the degree was conferred on the same day were the Crown Prince of Sweden, Earl Dufferin,² the Bishop of Durham (Dr Lightfoot), the Right Hon. W. E. Forster,

¹ Now the Right Hon. James Bryce, M.P., Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

² Created Marquis of Dufferin and Ava in 1888.

and Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy.

During the First Lord's usual annual tour of the dock-yards, he gives, in a letter to his eldest daughter, a good description of a memorable ceremony—the laying of the foundation-stone of the new Eddystone Lighthouse:—

DEVONPORT, *August 17, 1879.*

Rain, rain, and more rain! True Devonshire weather, say some, and Lord Mount Edgcumbe, by way of parenthesis, observes, apologetically, "but we do have some really fine weather sometimes; only whenever there is a function it is wet." The night was calm and dark, and we slept quietly. 8 bells struck, and the watch was relieved. No trouble appeared to be impending. Gradually the ship seemed to be waking up. At 6 bells of the 2d watch we were roused from our uneasy slumbers, and at 8 the word was given to get ready, and at 1 bell of the 3d watch the ship began to move. B.¹ would say to walk through the water like a thing of life. I say nothing so absurd. It was mizzly and thick, and the tops of the hills were covered; but as we passed out of the harbour under the stern of a German man-of-war training-ship, the officers appeared on deck, and the band played "God save the Queen." They answered, and we did the same until the German band ended its labours, and we had then passed away.

Outside it was dark but not rough. We speedily lost sight of the land, and when we saw it again near the Start a long roll or swell had set in, which interfered with the dignity of your mother's walk, and which consigned poor M. to a camp-stool just abaft the deck-house, where she remained absorbed in contemplation with her face covered with her hands. It rained, and then it lifted again, and then we arrived off the lighthouse, and saw a crowd of steamers, yachts, and small craft.

Presently the Galatea telegraphed first Lord and Sir C. Key to land and attend the laying of the stone. The first cutter was lowered, and in we jumped and pulled round to the rock on which the new lighthouse is being built. There were moments when the sea seemed to dispute our right to be there, and the water came right over and drenched the men standing on the wall or coffer-dam built round the foundations.

The two Princes landed and descended into the hole, and then the Duke of Edinburgh, as Master of the Trinity House, taking the trowel and mallet, went through the ceremony usual on such occasions. The Vicar of Plymouth read a short prayer, and at that moment the rain fell with peculiar violence, and washed all our heads. As soon as the work was concluded, we crossed over in a boat to the old lighthouse,

¹ His daughter Beatrice, now the Hon. Mrs A. Acland.

and climbed up the face of the rock by a ladder to get into it, and from the gallery outside at the top we surveyed the channel and the pleasure craft crowded with umbrellas and mackintoshes. Descending, I wrote my name in the lighthouse-book after the Prince of Wales, and before the Duke of Edinburgh, and I followed the Prince out of the lighthouse tower and down the ladder. The elements appeared especially desirous of showing that he could not control them, and the ladder swung about for a minute or two in a most delightful manner, until at last he was taken or pulled on board in the arms of a sailor.

I lunched with them, and returned in the *Galatea* to the harbour, the rain raining after the Devonshire fashion, and so our work ended ; but we three are to dine on board the *Osborne* this evening.

So far as concerned England, peace had been preserved in Europe, and restored in Asia and Africa, by the time the holidays were reached ; but the troubles were not at an end, for later in the autumn the call to arms came again. Sir Louis Cavagnari and his escort had been massacred at Cabul. The country was a second time involved in war with Afghanistan.

As is always the case in a Parliament drawing to the close of its natural life, great activity was shown by the Opposition during the recess on platforms throughout the country. The Government had held office for five years and a half ; it was not likely that another twelve months would pass without a dissolution. Among all the busy critics who went from town to town denouncing the "Jingoes," none was more active and merciless than the Marquis of Hartington. But if he was fearlessly outspoken in denouncing the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration, there was one subject on which he spoke equally plainly in unison with the Cabinet—namely, the resistance he was determined should be shown to Irish disaffection. His words on this matter were, indeed, not more forcible than those of other leaders of the Liberal party at the time ; but his first public utterance in this connection so clearly formulated the principles which one wing of the Liberal party has since adhered to through

good report and bad report, and another has cynically and shamelessly thrown aside, that the passage ought not to be forgotten.

Mr Parnell had, not long before, been glorying in a public meeting on the success of obstruction in Parliament, but added—"we have another way of bringing the Whigs to reason." Referring to these words, Lord Hartington said at Newcastle :—

If he means that we shall be ready to purchase his support, or the support of any section of Parliament, by concessions which we think fatal to the integrity of the empire, I can only repeat now—in the last year of this Parliament what I said in its first session—that I believe that those statesmen who should be so rash and foolish as to offer any concession of this description, would thereby condemn themselves to lasting exclusion from office.

But a more formidable champion of Liberalism than Lord Hartington took the field in November. Mr Gladstone, whose relation to his own party in the House of Commons since his overthrow in 1874 had been of a fitful if not a fretful kind, now renounced all intention of standing again for Greenwich, and undertook to carry the war against the doughtiest Tory in the north, by contesting the seat of the Earl of Dalkeith, eldest son of the Duke of Buccleuch. In that month he set out on the first of those electioneering exploits which have since been known as the Mid-Lothian campaigns.

Meanwhile Irish sedition was fermenting. The distress caused by failure of the harvest was extremely serious. The Registrar-General issued a report in which the deficiency of the crops was estimated at £10,000,000; the falling off in potatoes alone was set down at £6,000,000. It was a golden opportunity for the political agitator. Mr Parnell went to America to collect funds ostensibly for the relief of distress; but the true object of his mission—that of filling the coffers of the Land League—might easily be

discerned in his speeches. "If you want to help us," he said to his American audience, "help us to destroy the system which produces famine"—that is, landlordism, the strongest link that binds Ireland to England.

There was afforded to the Government at this time the opportunity of one of those tests of public feeling which reiterated experience has proved to be precarious and misleading. The death of one of the members for Liverpool on January 16 brought about a by-election in that important constituency. Two candidates were in the field without delay—Lord Ramsay, eldest son of the Earl of Dalhousie, championing the Liberal cause, and Mr Whitley, a local solicitor, standing as a Ministerialist. The contest was watched with the keenest interest throughout the country. Lord Ramsay is said to have damaged his own cause by pledging himself to vote for an inquiry into the expediency of Home Rule; but if he thereby alienated some of his own party, he obtained in return the united support of the Irish in Liverpool. The poll was the largest ever recorded in the United Kingdom, showing the prodigious total of 49,991 votes, of which 26,106 were cast for the Conservative, and 23,885 for the Liberal. Thus the Government scored the gain of a seat at the critical moment when Parliament was assembling.

Not less decided was the voice of Southwark, where an election followed immediately after Liverpool. It had been a Liberal seat for forty-eight years, ever since the Reform Act of 1832; and now, when Mr Clarke¹ was returned at the head of the poll by a majority of 835, it seemed indeed as if the flowing tide were with the Government. Sir Stafford Northcote spread his sails once more as leader of the House of Commons under smiling skies and with a favouring gale.

¹ Now Sir Edward Clarke, Q. C., M. P.

Nevertheless, the strain of anxiety was beginning to tell upon Smith. In times of warlike preparation the pressure, in a great maritime nation like England, falls with special force upon the department of which he was the chief.

I sometimes envy [he writes to a friend on January 31] your perfect independence, and I should do so very much more if I had myself forged the chains which bind me to the oar.

The chief subject discussed on the debate on the Address was the distress in Ireland, and the measure prepared by the Government for its relief. It was proposed thereby to advance money on easy terms out of the Irish Church temporalities, through the Irish Commissioners of Public Works, to Boards of Guardians, landowners, and other local authorities, to enable them to employ people suffering from the time of scarcity. This was vehemently opposed by the Home Rulers, who declared that, under colour of relieving distress, the Government were unduly favouring the class of landowners.

Smith spoke on the second night of the debate, and entered fully into the difficulties surrounding the problem with which the Government had to deal. He reiterated the view which he had so often expressed in regard to the evil effects of indiscriminate outdoor relief, whether in Ireland or elsewhere.

The Local Government Board was charged by her Majesty's Government to watch the progress of distress most narrowly; but we did not tell every Board of Guardians, or any Board of Guardians, to relax the operations of the poor law until we saw that a real necessity for it had arisen. . . . The Government have all along felt that any vast system of public works was open to great objection—that it carried with it the impossibility of due supervision and control. Our object has been that relief should be given in the least injurious form to the persons who received it. In the first instance, we desired to stimulate applications from landlords who wished to improve their own property, and who had a care for the people. In the next place, we offered loans to the sanitary authorities and to the presentment sessions, and insisted that the amounts should be returned within a certain period of time. . . . I do not think it

necessary or desirable that I should follow my right hon. friend [Mr W. E. Forster] in the remarks he made with reference to the events of last week [the election contest at Liverpool]. We are here in presence of a much more serious matter than anything which can happen to a political party, and I think we can appeal not only to gentlemen opposite, but to the country, to support the Government in the duty which they have to discharge at this time, and that is, to care for those poor people in the manner which will afford relief with the least demoralising effect to those distressed fellow-subjects.

Things were going smoothly enough to all appearance, when, on March 8, there fell a bolt from the blue. No whisper had leaked out of the surprise in store for both Houses on that day in the announcement which was made, that Parliament was to be dissolved forthwith. Simultaneously there appeared in the newspapers a manifesto by the Prime Minister, in the form of a letter to the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in which, as many thought, he laid exaggerated stress on the gravity of affairs in Ireland. After referring to the improved social condition of that country, the distress prevailing therein, and the measures taken to alleviate it, Lord Beaconsfield went on to say:—

Nevertheless, a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your Excellency's anxious attention, distracts that country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both.

It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this nation depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread dependencies. The first duty of an English Minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible a community, educated as our own in an equal love of liberty and law. And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the Imperial character of this realm. Having attempted, and failed, to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish, but precipitate their purpose.

The immediate dissolution of Parliament will afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which will materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny.

People were disposed to treat these paragraphs as a hysterical reference to the proceedings of a handful of disaffected Nationalists: events have not only justified their serious tone, but, in view of the subsequent course of party politics, have conferred on this letter the dignity of a State document of the first importance. No part of it was more indignantly resented than that which implied the possibility of complicity between the Liberal leaders and the Home Rulers, yet no part of it has proved more thoroughly the penetration of the writer into the motives and characters of Opportunist politicians. The honest incredulity which the Marquis of Hartington hastened to express in the candour of one who could make such a charge, has since been amply vindicated by the manly steadfastness which has guided his action in the Irish controversy, but it betrayed that, at the time, he was inferior to his opponent in foresight and knowledge of men.

No patriotic purpose [he said] is, in my opinion, gained by the use of exaggeration in describing the Irish agitation for Home Rule. I believe the demand so described to be impracticable. . . . The attempt to arouse national jealousies and reawaken national animosities by descriptions of dangers "worse than pestilence and famine," appears to me to be unnecessary and unwise.

On the eve of battle, while the opposing hosts were scanning each other's position, and Europe was calculating the strength of either army and the chances of victory, one who had been until lately a conspicuous figure in the Conservative camp, and was still, though holding somewhat aloof, reckoned among the Ministerialist forces, went over, with all the influence at his command, and drew up under the colours of the enemy. The Earl of Derby, whose prestige—whose character for deliberate judgment and never-failing caution—carried great weight even among electors under household suffrage, declared himself henceforward a foe to Lord Beaconsfield's Administration. In a letter to

the Earl of Sefton he explained the reasons which made him take this course:—

I have been long unwilling to separate from the political connection in which I was brought up, and with which, notwithstanding occasional differences on non-political questions, I have, in the main, acted for many years ; but the present situation of parties, and the avowed policy of the Conservative leader in reference to foreign relations, leave me no choice. I cannot support the present Government ; and as neutrality, however from personal feelings I might prefer it, is at a political crisis an evasion of public duty, I have no choice except to declare myself, however reluctantly, ranked among their opponents.

Such a man was far above suspicion of time-serving or self-serving : at an ordinary time the Conservatives would not have been seriously weakened by the secession of one of their leaders, who was unwilling to lead in the direction in which the genius of the party pointed ; but coming as it did at a critical moment such as this, it was undoubtedly a heavy blow, and materially affected the result of the elections. It was natural that deep resentment should be felt among Lord Derby's former colleagues at the selection of this particular moment for changing sides, and that it should find vigorous utterance among the ranks of his former followers ; but viewed dispassionately, as may be done at this distance of time, no exception can be taken to his action on the score of integrity or sense of duty. In separating himself, as his conscience and intelligence directed him, from the party with whom he had so long been associated, Lord Derby had the alternative of effacing himself and refraining from exerting any influence on public affairs, or else of uniting his influence to that of the men by whom, as he believed, the country might most safely be governed. Who is there that will not recognise the latter as the more manly and patriotic line of conduct, or hold that, having adopted it, Lord Derby did wrong to choose the moment when his action would have most effect.

This accession of strength sent Mr Gladstone upon his second Mid-Lothian campaign with abundant spirit. "I mean," he exclaimed, rather with the radiant insolence of a youth entering upon the battle of life than with the weary misgiving of the veteran who, six years before, had declared his resolve to spend his remaining years in rest and retirement—

I mean not only to secure the seat for Mid-Lothian, but my object goes so far as to sweep out of their seats a great many other men who now represent constituencies in Parliament, and to consign them to the retirement for which they are more fitted, and of which I hope they will make good use, and by reflection and study make themselves more fitted than they are at present to serve their country.

In his address to the electors of Westminster, Smith confined himself to little more than reciting the chief points in which he claimed the Government, of which he was a member, had earned the confidence of the people. His expressions with regard to their foreign policy brought him into the category of those who had been nicknamed "Jingoes."

One, and not the least important, of the issues submitted to the constituencies of the United Kingdom is whether that policy which has averted war in Europe is to be reversed, and England is to retire into a position of abstention and indifference as to European politics and affairs. I believe such a course would be an abnegation of duty, and disastrous to the political and commercial interests of the country.

Mr Smith and his colleague, Sir Charles Russell, were opposed by Sir Arthur Hobhouse and Mr John Morley.¹ The close of the poll showed Westminster, though staunch to Conservative principles, had felt the influence of the prevailing Liberal reaction, Smith's majority over the highest Liberal candidate having been reduced from 5522, at

¹ Now the Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

which it stood in 1874, to 2529. The return stood as follows :—

Right Hon. W. H. Smith (C.) . . .	9093
Sir Charles Russell (C.) . . .	8930
Mr John Morley (L.) . . .	6564
Sir A. Hobhouse (L.) . . .	6448

CHAPTER XIV.

1880-1881.

The success of the Conservative cause in Westminster and the rest of the metropolis awakened no sympathetic echo in the provinces. From the results of the first few days' polling it was evident that disaster had been lying in wait for the Government.

The state of affairs [wrote Northcote to Smith on April 4] is gloomy enough, and I don't feel at all sure that we have seen the worst even yet. . . . I don't feel cast down. We have been overwhelmed before, and have recovered from it, and there will be plenty of work for us in Opposition. But I am very sorry for the chief. There is much to mortify him in this personal triumph of Gladstone's at what he must feel to be the end of his own political career. He may count, I think, on a reaction in his favour, but he will hardly again take office.

It would be difficult to assign any dominant reason for the wave of Liberalism which swept away so many Conservative seats except the influence which sways vast electoral bodies alternately from one side to the other, and always tells with greater force against the party in power, who have to reckon with all the individuals whom it has been their fate to disappoint or offend, as well as with the neutral residuum with no political bias or principle, save a vague sense of equity instigating them to give "the fellows on the other side a chance," or of mischief prompting them to vote "agin' the Gov'ment."

But besides these ordinary considerations there were certain other factors in the situation, each of which contributed momentum to the descending grade of the Tories. The secession of the Earls of Derby and Carnarvon from the Cabinet, and the recent adhesion of the former to Mr Gladstone and Lord Hartington, no doubt carried great effect. Then the dissolution had come as a surprise, and people—Englishmen especially—dislike being surprised: they feel that, unless special circumstances justify sudden action, they have a right to be prepared beforehand—to be warned of what is expected of them. They resent being “rushed,” and are suspicious of anything which has the appearance of a practical joke.¹ Undoubtedly the by-elections of Liverpool and Southward had a good deal to do with Lord Beaconsfield’s choice of the moment to dissolve: they afforded but one more instance of the utter untrustworthiness of such indications of *popularis aura*.

¹ In the autumn of 1880 Lord Beaconsfield produced his last novel, and there occurs, in a letter to Smith from his frequent correspondent, Mr William Ford, a passage curiously illustrating the jealousy with which many of the middle class regarded such literary exploits:—

“Lord Beaconsfield has, I regret to say, published a novel! just at this time. Brilliant as it is in many respects, it will not increase his literary reputation, but it will vastly impair his political influence with the middle class. He shows too plainly how the wires are pulled by a few men and women. Sober-minded men don’t believe in novel-writing Premiers. As for the Dissenters and other religious sects of the Nonconformist character, they will distrust him more and more. The comparison of his literary labours with those of his great rival marks the distinction the two men hold in the public mind. As a novel, I have greatly enjoyed ‘Endymion’; a professional novelist could not have produced such a work. It bears the impress of the author’s unique experience of the select society of the chosen few, and his fantastic appreciation of them in general; but the reader cannot refrain from the disagreeable conclusion that the writer holds the world as a mere plaything for his special amusement and contempt by turns.”

There can be no doubt that this was but the expression of a very general feeling towards Lord Beaconsfield in the minds of a substantial portion of the community, and one that had found calamitous utterance at the polls.

Next there was the more tangible and measurable element of the Irish vote, which was cast solid against the Ministerialist candidates. The allusion made in his manifesto by Lord Beaconsfield to disaffection in Ireland, however necessary and sagacious, did not prove to be a tactical success. It was met by a counter-manifesto from the Home Rulers, in which Irishmen were called upon, "in presence of the atrocious and criminal manœuvre which has been attempted . . . [to] vote against Benjamin Disraeli as they should vote against the enemy of their country and their race."

Lastly, there was the extraordinary fervour aroused by Mr Gladstone's northern tours. If the Earl of Rosebery was not able literally to fulfil his vaunt of sending up all the Scottish Tory members in a single first-class compartment of a railway carriage (still less, as somebody suggested, with room to put their feet on the opposite seats), he had not been far amiss in his estimate, for only nine Conservatives were returned from the whole of Scotland. In Ireland the Nationalist party triumphed everywhere except in Ulster. The state of parties in the new House of Commons, as compared with that in the old one, was thus:—

	Election 1874.		Election 1880.
Conservatives	351	Conservatives	243
Liberals	250	Liberals	349
Home Rulers	51	Home Rulers	60
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Conservative majority over Liberals and Home Rulers } 50		Liberal majority over Con- servatives and Home Rulers } 46	

The elections are all going against us [Smith wrote to his wife on April 2], and it looks as if the Liberals would be as strong as they were in 1868. I hope Cross will keep his seat, but at present the wave—for it is just like a tidal wave—appears to be rising higher and sweeping everything before it.

We know, however, that there is a Ruler, and that the wills of men can be controlled by Him, and I am quite content.

Expressions such as these testify to the earnest view

taken by the writer of the principles at stake between the two great parties. No one who regarded a general election merely as a contest between two political sects could thus have alluded to the Divine control of events without being guilty of irreverence or hypocrisy, and these are the last faults of which Smith can ever have been suspected. With all his tolerance for the opinions of those who differed with him, he looked upon politics, not as a game, but as the exercise of the highest duty men can perform to their country.

On April 8 he wrote again to Mrs Smith :—

. . . I *am* thankful that Cross is in, but you see Egerton is out, and our losses are most severe. However we shall survive them, and find good work to do for the country ; and there is great consolation in the hope of seeing more of one's wife and children than has lately been possible. It is yet uncertain when we shall resign. The Queen does not return until Saturday the 17th, but we shall probably have a Cabinet on Tuesday.

During this year Mr J. L. Pattisson first came to Mr Smith as his private secretary. It will be remembered that the two gentlemen became acquainted when the latter was travelling in Canada in 1872, and the former was secretary to the Earl of Dufferin. On the first day Mr Pattisson was on duty, Smith introduced him to several of his friends in the lobby of the House of Commons, among others to Sir Thomas Bateson, M.P.,¹ who remarked aside to the new private secretary—"You are going to the truest gentleman I know." Those who remember Sir Thomas and the rigid meaning he attached to the term "gentleman," will appreciate this testimony to Smith's character. Mr Pattisson remained with Smith until his death, and no public man was ever better served by a confidential lieutenant.

As soon as the result of the polls was known, it became a matter of keen speculation who should succeed Lord

¹ Created Baron Deramore in 1885.

Beaconsfield as Prime Minister. The choice lay between Earl Granville, the Marquis of Hartington, and Mr Gladstone. On Lord Hartington had fallen the chief weight of opposition, though without Mr Gladstone's crusades the end might have come in a different way. On April 22 the Queen sent for Lord Hartington; next day he and Lord Granville had an interview with her Majesty, who thereupon put an end to all doubts by sending for Mr Gladstone. Lord Hartington became Secretary of State for War, and Lord Granville took the seals of the Foreign Office. Mr Forster was to go to the Irish Office as Chief Secretary, and one day, just before his appointment was announced, he happened to overtake Smith, who was walking with his daughter in Pall Mall. The ex-First Lord of the Admiralty offered his congratulations to the new Minister, and added: "I remember six years ago you told me you were very glad to leave office, and that after six years a man is ready and glad to go back again." "Yes," replied Forster, rather sadly, "that is quite true, and it was a true thing said by some one, that a man has two happy days in his official life,—the first when he takes office—the second, when he leaves it." "I hear you are going to Ireland," said Smith; "you will have a nice house in the Phoenix Park." But Forster made no answer except a shrug of his heavy shoulders, and passed on.

It was under the depressing conditions of staggering defeat that the Conservative party in both Houses of Parliament were summoned into council at Bridgewater House. The scene must remain impressed on the memory of many who were present on this occasion. Never was there a warmer feeling of devotion felt for a chief than thrilled the members of the party in this hour of overwhelming disaster, and never did he rise more effectively to a trying occasion. It so happened that as Lord Beaconsfield stood addressing

the meeting with his late Cabinet seated round him, he was placed immediately under a large picture by Murillo of the Madonna. The colouring both of painted effigy and living figure was of the same tone; the sallow flesh tints, black hair, and clothing were almost identical in both. One could almost imagine that the Virgin was spreading her hands in compassion over the fallen leader. Disaffected Tories laid aside their grievances and rallied to their old chief: the Earl of Carnarvon and Sir Robert Peel, erst recalcitrant, spoke heartily and well; only the Earl of Derby was absent, and he had joined hands with the adversary.

On the very threshold of their undertaking, Ministers were confronted with a problem of extreme delicacy and complexity, and one destined to give birth to prolonged and angry controversy. Mr Charles Bradlaugh, who had been returned as one of the members for Northampton, was well known (to use his own expression) as a "propagandist of atheism," an advocate of systematic Malthusianism, and the author of a work which the courts subsequently declared to be immoral and ordered its suppression. Once a soldier in the Dragoon Guards, Bradlaugh had, since leaving the service, supported himself by delivering infidel and Radical lectures and by a fluent pen. This was the individual who on April 29, when the new Parliament was being sworn in, presented himself at the table and claimed to be allowed to affirm, instead of taking the oath. Objection having been taken to this, a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the matter, and, by a majority of one vote, decided against Bradlaugh's claim. Upon this Bradlaugh declared that he was prepared to take the oath, and if, in order to discharge his duty to his constituents, he had to submit to a form less solemn in his eyes than affirmation, so much the worse for those who forced him to repeat words which, he declared, were for him mere sounds, conveying no clear and

definite meaning, and without any binding effect on his conscience.

By this admission, in which he was probably perfectly sincere, Bradlaugh delivered himself into the hands of his enemies, for, on his presenting himself a second time and claiming to take the oath, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff interposed, and argued that, inasmuch as Bradlaugh had declared that the terms of the oath were, in his opinion, an empty form, that declaration, which would be sufficient to prevent his sworn evidence being taken in any court of law, ought also to debar him from swearing in the Court of Parliament.

To get rid of the dilemma, the Prime Minister moved the appointment of a second Committee, who found that Bradlaugh could not legally take the oath, but ought to be allowed to affirm at his own risk. On the report of the Committee, Mr Labouchere, Bradlaugh's colleague in the representation of Northampton, moved that affirmation be permitted, to which Sir Hardinge Giffard moved an amendment that Bradlaugh be neither permitted to affirm nor to swear. The debate was heated and painful. Mr Bright, strongly advocating Bradlaugh's cause, declared that "the working people of this country cared as little for the dogmas of Christianity as the upper classes did for the practice of that religion." On a division Sir H. Giffard's amendment was carried by 275 votes to 230.

Thereupon ensued a scene of the wildest excitement. Bradlaugh, a man of commanding stature and majestic mien, strode to the table of the House and claimed to take the oath. Being ordered by the Speaker to withdraw, he said—

"With great respect, sir, I refuse to obey the orders of the House, which are against the law."

Then, on Sir Stafford Northcote's motion (for the leader

of the House declined all responsibility in the matter), Bradlaugh was taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms. He remained that night in confinement in the Clock Tower, but the following day was released by order of the House, on Sir Stafford Northcote's motion. The question was decided, for that session at all events, by a resolution passed on July 1, permitting all persons whom the law allowed to make affirmation instead of oath to do so on taking their seats, subject to any liability by statute.¹

The whole of July was taken up with discussions on the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, to prevent the eviction of Irish tenants without compensation, even when they had ceased to pay any rent. This measure was thrown out by the Lords by a majority of more than 5 to 1, and a similar course would have been taken in regard to the Ground Game Bill, had not Lord Beaconsfield implored the Peers not to court collision with the other House, except where vital principles or matters of first importance, such as the government of Ireland or reform of the land laws, were concerned.

We have [wrote Smith to Mr Ford], I think, persuaded the Lords to pass both the Employers and the Hares and Rabbits Bills. . . . I do not myself like the look of English politics. The transfer of rights

¹ A curious illustration of Bradlaugh's testimony to the value of an oath as binding the consciences of ordinary witnesses came under my own observation in 1888. I was chairman of a Select Committee in that year, of which Mr Bradlaugh was a member. During our first or second sitting some startling evidence was given, implying serious charges against certain persons in the discharge of fiduciary duties. Mr Bradlaugh interrupted the proceedings, saying: "Mr Chairman, I move that the room be cleared." This having been done, he moved that, having regard to the gravity of the evidence we had heard, all subsequent witnesses should be put upon oath: which was agreed to and carried into effect. Having had occasion above to refer to the painful circumstances of Mr Bradlaugh's entrance into Parliament, I take this opportunity of observing that, in spite of the detestation in which his opinions were held by the majority of the House of Commons, he lived to secure general esteem for his inflexible honesty, as well as for his industry and ability in business.

and property from a minority to a majority threatens to become popular, and there is danger that one set of politicians will endeavour to outbid the other in the effort to gain the popular voice.

The Conservative Opposition was generally in a limp and disorganised condition throughout this session ; but a small body of independent members below the gangway distinguished themselves by the intrepidity and persistency of their resistance to the Government, so as to earn for themselves the title of the Fourth Party. These, as is well known, consisted of Lord Randolph Churchill as leader, Mr Arthur Balfour, Sir John Gorst, and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. The apparent passivity of the occupants of the Tory front bench drew upon them—especially upon Northcote, Cross, and Smith—some stinging taunts from this knot of free-lances ; taunts which, so far as Smith was concerned, were not deserved, for if it be admitted that Northcote, habitually gentle and forbearing, was sometimes slow to take advantage of opportunity, it often fell to Smith to stimulate him to more vigorous action.

But very often during this session the Tories had to fight shoulder to shoulder with their historic foes against the Irish. For instance, on August 28, Smith wrote home :—

We have had a curious life to-day. It has been two days in one, or one day prolonged into another. I went home last night shortly after one, knowing that the Irish were going to keep it up all night ; and at half-past six they sent for me to say that the House was still sitting, and would I come down ? So I got up and had my breakfast, and went down and sat in the House until half-past eleven, when I went to a meeting at Seamore Place to see the Peers. They talked for two hours, and on my return to the House I found the Thursday sitting had been ended, and we had got into Friday. The poor Ministers look fearfully fagged, and they will have a bad night again, but it is very much their own fault, as they never lose an opportunity of truckling to the rebels.

When at last the session was brought wearily to a close on September 7, the seat of war was transferred to Ireland ; and it becomes necessary, in order to follow the course of

the politics of those days, to take note of the origin of a system for which a special term had to be devised. Parnell, speaking at Ennis, exclaimed, "What is to be done with a tenant bidding for a farm from which another tenant has been evicted?" "Shoot him!" cried somebody in the audience. "No," replied Parnell, "I do not say shoot him; there is a more Christian and charitable way of dealing with him: let him be shunned in the street, in the shop, in the market-place—even in the places of worship—as if he were a leper of old."

The first notable example of the execution of this cruel advice took place at Lough Mask, where Captain Boycott, the Earl of Erne's agent, had a large farm. He had earned the displeasure of the Land League, and they issued orders that he should be treated "as a leper of old." In consequence all his men left him just as the crops were ready for the sickle; tradesmen refused to supply goods; even the postman was warned not to carry his letters. But Captain Boycott was not the man to sit down under what many a poor tenant had had to suffer in silence. He appealed for succour, nor did he appeal in vain; funds were collected, and a hundred stout fellows set out from Ulster to do the necessary work of the farm. The Government were on the alert; no fewer than 7000 cavalry, infantry, and police, with two field-pieces, were employed to protect the Ulstermen in their operations, and Captain Boycott's crops were saved, under circumstances closely resembling civil war. The affair made such an impression that henceforth the English language was permanently enriched by the terms "boycotting" and "to boycott."

The murder of Lord Mountmorres on September 25 was another landmark in what was to prove a long and bloody era of crime. Murder, maiming of men and beasts, moonlighting, and boycotting were practised almost with im-

punity ; juries were afraid to convict, witnesses terrified into silence : as a contemporary rhymester rendered it—

“The difference ’twixt ‘moonlight’ and moonshine
The people now well understand :
The first is the law of the Land League,
The other—the law of the land.”

The Government, recognising the hopelessness of ruling Ireland under the ordinary law, resolved on the prosecution of the Land League, and the introduction of special legislation to restore order.

In January 1881, Smith received a proposal which testified to the esteem in which his business capacity was held by those best able to form a judgment thereon. The largest railway company in Great Britain, and therefore the largest in the world, invited him to become their chairman.

I had the offer of the chairmanship of the London and North-Western Railway made formally to me yesterday. It is the unanimous wish of the Board that I should come to preside over them, and they say they would do everything in their power to lighten my labours if I would consent. They begged me to take time and not to answer off-hand, and so I said I would give my answer on Monday.

He did so, in the negative, after consulting Lord Beaconsfield, who said to him : “Politics is a jealous mistress ; hitherto you have been singularly successful ; it falls to the lot of few men to be six years consecutively in office, and during half that time in such a high and important office as First Lord of the Admiralty.”

Parliament was summoned to meet earlier than usual this year, owing to the gravity of the situation in Ireland ; and in order to be at his post at the commencement of business, Smith had to hasten back through some extraordinarily heavy weather from Beyrout, where he was

cruising in the Pandora. The special business of Parliament was marked out in the Queen's Speech :—

The anticipation with which I last addressed you, of a great diminution of the distress in Ireland, owing to an abundant harvest, was realised ; but I grieve to state that the social condition of the country has assumed an alarming character. Agrarian crimes in general have multiplied far beyond the experience of recent years. Attempts upon life have not grown in the same proportion as other offences, but I must add that efforts have been made for personal protection, far beyond all former precedent, by the police, under the direction of the Executive.

The Speech went on to advert to the frustration of justice, owing to intimidation of witnesses and juries :—

An extended system of terror has been established in various parts of the country, which has paralysed almost alike the exercise of private rights and the performance of civil duties.

This formed the justification of a new Coercion Bill for Ireland, of which Mr Forster gave notice on the first night of the session—adequate, stringent, and lacking only one element of efficiency, that it was limited to four years' duration. Forster hated having to bring in such a measure : the probable necessity for it had been weighing on his mind when he spoke so gloomily to Smith at the beginning of the Administration ; and now that the attempt to govern Ireland without extraordinary powers had ended in bloody failure, he relished his task none the more because he could not evade it.

The scenes of disorder and rampant obstruction to which the discussion of Forster's bill gave rise were utterly beyond anything recorded in the proceedings of the House of Commons, and proved that the amended Rules of Procedure were as useless in controlling licence of speech as—to use a Scottish proverb—a boiled carrot would be to bar a door. A sitting of twenty-two hours' duration was followed by one of forty-one hours, and the latter was only brought to a close by the Speaker taking the extreme course, which noth-

ing but desperate circumstances could be held to warrant, of refusing to call upon any more members to speak.

A meeting of the Conservative party was held at Lord Beaconsfield's new house in Curzon Street, to consider the Prime Minister's proposals to put down obstruction. It was a scene very different from that of the last occasion when Beaconsfield had addressed his followers. Instead of the vast saloon at Bridgewater House, the sober colouring of the walls and the mellowed gilding of the picture frames, there was the newly upholstered drawing-room, tricked out with blue and gold, and gaudily carpeted. Beaconsfield stood upon a high stool placed at the angle between the front and back rooms—a lean, dark, feeble figure, against a tinselly background. It was thus that the rank and file of the Conservative party—in great measure his own creation—were to look upon Benjamin Disraeli for the last time. Few of those present ever saw him again.

On the very day when Mr Gladstone's motion on Procedure was down for discussion—February 3—a fresh object-lesson was forthcoming of how little modern men were to be restrained by ancient rules or traditions. The Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, in answer to a question, announced the arrest of Michael Davitt, a prominent Land Leaguer. Mr Gladstone rose to move his resolution, and at the same moment Mr John Dillon sprang to his feet. The Speaker calling on Mr Gladstone, Mr Dillon cried out, "I demand my privilege of speech."

There followed a scene of great confusion. Mr Dillon stood erect, with arms folded, pale and determined. "Name him! name him!" shouted members on both sides.

Then was solved a question which a former Speaker of the House once declared himself unable to answer. "What would happen," he was asked, "if a member persisted in disregarding the ruling of the Chair?" "It would be the

duty of the Speaker to name that member," was the reply. "And what would happen next?" "Heaven only knows!" was all the answer the Speaker could give.

What happened on this occasion was that the Speaker "named" Mr John Dillon. The Prime Minister then moved that Mr Dillon be suspended from the service of the House, which having been put and carried on a division, the offender was directed to withdraw. This he refused to do, whereupon the Speaker ordered the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove him. The Serjeant, Captain Gossett, walked to where Mr Dillon sat immovable, and touched him on the shoulder. Still Mr Dillon sat motionless; and the Serjeant, turning towards the door, beckoned to his assistants, five of whom obeyed his summons. It looked as if the House was to be scandalised by a scene of physical force; but just as this seemed inevitable, Mr Dillon rose, and, after bowing to the Chair, left the chamber in company with the Serjeant-at-Arms. But the end was not yet. Thirty-six Irish members proceeded, one after another, to defy the Speaker's authority, and each in turn had to be suspended on the motion of the Prime Minister. It was a painful and humiliating scene, showing, as it did, how defective the best considered devices of human government prove if there arises the determination of a minority to defeat them. After the ejection of the Irish members, the House agreed to the rule of Urgency of Debate proposed by its leader.

On April 19 the Earl of Beaconsfield breathed his last, and in him the Conservative party lost a sagacious leader at a time when they could ill afford to part with the only personage who could be matched with Mr Gladstone. Two days later Smith wrote to his wife:—

Lord Beaconsfield will be buried at Hughenden on Tuesday morning, and we shall all go down to his burial. I have seen him for the last time, and he looked better in death than in life, but there was a sort of evidence of struggle on his face which had ended. Northcote

had been obliged to go to Hatfield, but I think it is arranged that I shall not speak on Monday. I must, however, come up, as most of my friends will be in town, and consultation is necessary. Already men are asking who is to be the future Chief, and I am afraid that question will have to be settled.

The question was settled by the appointment of a duumvirate—Lord Salisbury becoming leader of the Peers, as Northcote already was of the Commons.

After the rising of Parliament, Mr Forster carried into vigorous effect the new powers with which he had been armed. Messrs Parnell, Sexton, Dillon, and O'Kelly, Members of Parliament, were, with other officials of the Land League, arrested and confined in Kilmainham Prison, and the League itself was proclaimed as an unlawful association.

CHAPTER XV.

1882-1884.

Smith's colleague in the representation of Westminster, Sir Charles Russell, was obliged to resign his seat at this time owing to ill health, and the Conservative party in the borough unanimously selected Lord Algernon Percy, second son of the Duke of Northumberland, as their candidate. The nomination took place on February 10, and, for the first time in its history, Westminster elected a Conservative without opposition—remarkable evidence of the powerful influence which Smith had established upon its political character. It was the general belief that the electors would have accepted any candidate whom their senior member had chosen to suggest.

Smith, who had spent ten days in the autumn of 1881 in cruising round the Irish coast, landing at various places, and

by personal observation satisfying himself as to the condition of the people, now returned to Ireland in order to push further an independent inquiry into the land question, having in view a plan of land purchase with money advanced to the tenants by the State.

MARINE HOTEL, KINGSTOWN, *April 6, 1882.*

I have had an interesting day, commencing from last evening, when Colonel Bruce, the deputy chief of the Constabulary, and Mr Lefanu, of the Office of Works, dined with us. They told me a great deal about the country, which was very interesting to me. This morning Herbert Murray came to breakfast at 9, and as I went into Dublin, Gibson¹ picked up four or five men with whom I had a hard talk for an hour and a half on land rent-charges, mortgages, conveyances, and other subjects of great interest to me, but I fear unintelligible to you. From them Gibson carried me off to Trinity College, and I inspected the library with the help of Dr Ingram, the librarian, and we then lunched with the Provost, Dr Jellett, who is a very interesting old man; and after that I was handed over to a Mr Atkinson, who came out with me to Kingstown in order to "talk." I am now writing my letters in this very pleasant club, of which I am made free for a fortnight; and presently I am to go to the hotel to dress for dinner, and go into Dublin to dine with Mr Holmes.² . . .

KINGSTOWN, *April 8.*

You would have thought of me to-day if you had known where I was. Mr Barlow Smythe, whose sister-in-law was killed the other day, is a friend of Mr Gibson's, and he wanted to see him; so we went down together to Mullingar by the 9 o'clock train, and drove out in an open car to Barbavilla, over the very road where the outrage occurred. I saw Mr Smythe, and was much interested with what he told us. It is hardly possible to imagine a more indulgent landlord, or a more religious man; but he is deeply moved by the ingratitude of his tenants, almost all of whom have shown utter indifference to the wicked murder, or to the fact that it was intended to kill him. The people are sullen, and during the entire drive out and back there was not a single salute of any kind—a smile or a salutation from any one of them. We were in no danger, as we were strangers; but we were offered an armed constable to go up with us if we had wished it. There is no doubt it was the act of Ribbonmen; but they have no evidence at present to fix any one with the crime, although many people must know who did it. . . .

¹ Created Baron Ashbourne, 1885.

² Afterwards Attorney-General for Ireland, and now one of the Judges of the Queen's Bench in Ireland.

ROYAL S. GEORGE'S YACHT CLUB,
KINGSTOWN, *April 9.*

Poor Forster ! I wrote to him saying I thought it better I should not call on him, as everything would be known and get into the papers, and be misrepresented. You see he agrees with me, but I thought it only right to tell him that I was not deficient in regard for the Chief Secretary. He has very serious and difficult work, and not of a kind to suit his temperament ; but I am very thankful I have no such responsibility. I have had a very quiet Sunday, and as pleasant a one as I could have away from you and from home. I could not help thinking of you all with great thankfulness. I almost tremble when I think of the blessings we enjoy, and my eyes filled this morning when I read the good accounts all round which F.'s¹ masters give of him.

April 11.

I am starting off at 6.30 A.M. for a run of 200 miles in the west to see poverty and wretchedness, and I shall not be back until 10.30 at night. I must therefore write now, or you will not hear from me before my arrival. . . . A week's separation is a long one, and especially at this season ; but I think it was right, and I have learned a great deal in a short time. The days have been very full, so full that it has been quite impossible to make notes of all I have heard and seen ; but it has done me good.

The impression left on Smith's mind as the result of this visit of inquiry was so strongly in favour of the establishment of a peasant proprietary in Ireland, as the only means of allaying chronic agrarian and consequent political disturbance, that he undoubtedly brought a strong influence to bear upon his colleagues in determining their future land legislation for Ireland, as contained in Lord Ashbourne's Land Purchase Act and subsequent measures. This impression was borne in upon him in spite of his aversion to interference with the ordinary laws of free contract and of supply and demand.

Immediately on his return to London he gave notice of a Resolution in favour of a large measure of land purchase by the State, but the terrible events which shortly after occurred in Ireland forced him to give up the idea for that session. Northcote refers to it on April 17 :—

¹ His son Frederick.

When can you and I and Gibson have a quiet talk over the Irish question, and especially over the details of your motion? It is very important that we should be prepared, and I confess to sad unpreparedness at present. . . . We must, of course, have a Shadow Cabinet before you actually come on; but I should like to have a general acquaintance with the case before we come to that.

The session had not endured three months before dissensions arose in the Cabinet as to the policy to be pursued in Ireland. The protracted incarceration of Parnell, Dillon, and O'Kelly, not on any proven charge, but as "suspects," was matter of great disquiet to the Government. Ministers who had come into power loudly denouncing the coercion employed by their predecessors, found themselves enforcing a law many degrees more stringent than that which had been allowed to lapse. The irony of the situation was intolerable, and the conciliatory measure dealing with arrears of rent did not promise to mend matters. Things came to a crisis on May 2, when the startling announcement was made that the Lord Lieutenant and his Chief Secretary had resigned, and that the members imprisoned in Kilmainham were to be released. Lord Cowper and Mr Forster made statements in their respective Houses, leaving no ambiguity about the cause of their resignation. Mr Forster's speech, delivered in his peculiar rugged, almost awkward, style, was impressive in the highest degree, not only from the matter of it, but on account of his reputation for honesty and courage. None who heard him could fail to mark the deep emotion under which he laboured, or realise the sharpness of the trial which he underwent before separating from his colleagues. He was known to be merciful and averse from severity; the very nickname which he had earned from the Irish—"Buckshot Forster"—arose out of an order which he had given that the Constabulary, when it was necessary to fire on disorderly mobs, should use buckshot instead of ball-cartridge. His explana-

tion was listened to with painful attention, and at some moments he seemed as if he were about to break down.

Complete surrender had now been made to the party of sedition and disorder. Henceforward the National League, which, *mutato nomine*, was no other than the suppressed Land League—led by the same men, following the same ends, and administering the same funds—was to dictate its own terms to her Majesty's Ministers. And the price paid down by Ministers was the loss of two trusted colleagues, to be recouped, as they vainly hoped, by the support of the Home Rule party in Parliament.

But the reckoning was not yet complete. The first step in this new policy of conciliation was marked by one of the most terrible acts in modern history.

Earl Cowper and Mr Forster had been succeeded in the Lord Lieutenancy and Chief Secretaryship by Earl Spencer and Lord Frederick Cavendish. The last-named gentleman, a brother of the Marquis of Hartington, after attending the installation of the new Lord Lieutenant, took a car to drive to the Viceregal Lodge. Overtaking Mr Burke, a permanent official at the Castle, he left the car, and the two gentlemen walked on together through the Phoenix Park. It was a beautiful evening, between seven and eight o'clock; the pair had approached within a short distance of the Phoenix Monument when they were set upon by assassins and stabbed to death, within sight of the windows of the Viceregal Lodge. It was still almost broad daylight; one man saw what he thought were some roughs at horseplay, he saw two persons fall, but took no heed to the circumstance; another witness saw four persons drive off on a car at full speed. This was the earliest reply made by the people of Ireland to the message of conciliation.

On May 6 Smith visited Coventry to speak on behalf of

his party. There is a characteristic passage in a letter to his wife describing the meeting:—

The people were very warm in their reception yesterday. I had to make two little and one considerable speech yesterday, and except that one always says something that one ought not to have said, and leaves something unsaid that ought to have been said, I am content, for, on the whole, I was able, I think, to speak out in a useful sort of way. It was my aim to bring people to think rather of what was right, as distinguished from that which might be at the present moment most conducive apparently to party interests. Of course I may be wrong, and many of my friends may be wrong in our views; but it would be a great thing in politics if we could get men to believe that running straight for what is in itself *true* and good is a better and a wiser course than compromise with evil.

. . . I am resting here to-day thoroughly—sunning myself and being quiet; . . . but with a sense that much responsibility may rest soon upon some of us. May God guide us and give us wisdom and strength!

Smith had returned from Ireland penetrated with a sense of the hopelessness of restoring free contract between owners and occupiers of the land, and convinced in a like degree of the impossibility of matters continuing as they were.

I never was in love [he wrote to Mr Penrose Fitzgerald¹] with peasant proprietorship as the most economical and the best mode of dealing with land. I should like to see free contract between owner and tenant alike independent, but that is impossible now, and the owner and tenant are brought into legal relations which must be unendurable. The only resource appears, and I say it with regret, to make the tenant the owner.

The surest evidence of the material prosperity and prospects of any country is afforded by the degree in which capitalists show themselves ready to place their money in it, and the inevitable effect of a mischievous policy is to scare away investors. Smith had, some years before, been on the point of buying a large estate in Connemara, part of the property of the Martins of Ross; and although that design had not been carried out, he had kept in view the

¹ Now M.P. for Cambridge.

intention of acquiring land in Ireland, and, by judicious and generous management, improving the condition of the tenantry. But what he had seen for himself of the course of affairs in that country, combined with the attitude of the Government on the agrarian question, convinced him of the hopelessness and imprudence of any such investment; and from this moment he once and for all gave up the idea, and turned his attention to the establishment of a peasant proprietary.

Smith, as a commercial man, could not but feel indignant at the dishonesty of the Government's Arrears of Rent Bill, which was being pushed through with all speed—a bill dictated by the Parnellite party, providing for the relief of debtors at the expense of their creditors. In the course of the debate on the second reading, he said that in his opinion—

A moderate measure of well-considered migration or emigration would afford the greatest possible relief to these poor tenants; and for those who remained at home there would be a much better chance of success and prosperity. I have seen with my own eyes that, under present circumstances, it is impossible for thousands of human beings to find a livelihood among the stones and bogs of districts like Connemara. I cannot see that the right hon. gentleman, the late Chief Secretary, was right in saying that in those districts this bill would afford relief.

Mr W. E. Forster. I said that nothing but emigration would relieve them.

Mr W. H. Smith. I understood that the right hon. gentleman meant that emigration is to be delayed until after the operation of the bill on the arrears.

Mr W. E. Forster. What I said was that if the emigration was to be the compulsory result of extensive evictions, it would not be emigration conducted with the best chance of success.

Mr W. H. Smith. I quite agree with my right hon. friend, whom I have misunderstood. . . . I said last year, and I repeat it, that a measure dealing with this question, in order to be successful, must be kept beyond the range of party politics. For my own part, I am certainly unwilling to vote for a bill which appears to me unsound in principle, likely to perpetuate most grave evils, and offering a distinct premium on dishonesty.

The bill passed through the Commons and went to the

Lords, who amended it in such sort that when it came back to the lower House the Ministerialists restored it to its original form, and returned it.

Lord Salisbury, conscious of the mischievous and inequitable nature of the measure, would fain have thrown it out, but was unable to persuade the Peers to take that line. But he placed on record his own detestation of such legislation, and some indication of the considerations which prevailed with the Peers against his judgment may be found in a letter from Smith to Northcote on August 7 :—

Rathbone came to me in great excitement just now, strongly urging that the Arrears Bill should pass with a compromise understood and arranged between high contracting parties. I said I was not aware of any proposals or suggestions for a compromise. Rathbone said, "Perhaps not, so far as you or Salisbury or Northcote are concerned, but I know that the Duke of Abercorn had communications with a member of the Government before he moved his amendment," and he implied that this was a transaction.

Have you or Salisbury had any hint of this? I think there is something in it.

I have had an interesting communication with Errington on the Arrears Bill, and I have asked him to put the substance of it in writing. It amounts to this : that the bill is bad, but the clergy (R.C.) will now go with the people, and there will be a fearful winter if it is not passed. When I said, "But some day we shall have to stand out against some bad bill which may be supported for similar reasons," he could only express the belief that no such occasion would arise !—at least he hoped not.

There reappeared about this time a phenomenon to which Englishmen had long been strangers. Secretaries of State and other public functionaries might be seen walking in the streets or through the parks followed at a convenient distance by a couple of armed detectives. Threatening letters had become so frequent, they had proved too often, when disregarded, the heralds of assassination, that special protection had to be afforded to Ministers in their offices and private houses. Nor was it only members of the Government who received warnings. There is a grimly comical little note from Lord Salisbury to Smith, enclosing a letter

Aug. 6. 81.
HATFIELD HOUSE,
HATFIELD,
HERTS.

My dear Smith

The enclosed may
interest you. I am afraid
I am, in point of superficialities
the biggest marks of the two.

Very truly
Sincerely

from the Chief Constable of Hertfordshire, who said he had "received another communication, evidently from the same source as that of last year, threatening to take your [Lord Salisbury's] life and that of Mr W. H. Smith on Monday." (See facsimile.)

The parliamentary history of 1883 may be passed over briefly in so far as Smith took an overt part therein. Doubtless his influence was not without its effect in the tactics of the Opposition, though his staunch loyalty to Sir Stafford Northcote involved him in responsibility for a policy which the more pugnacious members of the party complained of as Fabian. None the less is it certain that it was very often Smith's part to stimulate Northcote to the more belligerent duties of a leader of Opposition. Northcote, by nature gentle and contemplative, showed himself slow to adopt the stern practice of modern parliamentary warfare, and used to exasperate the ardent spirits of his followers by what they considered unnecessary deference to Mr Gladstone's prestige; and in spite of the friendly pressure put upon their leader by Smith, Sir Richard Cross, Mr Edward Gibson, and Sir Michael Hicks Beach to keep him up to the proper combative mark, Conservative members were becoming accustomed to turn for leading to that notable group of four which, sitting below the gangway, had marked itself out for distinction as the Fourth Party.

The session of 1883 became memorable, however, for the hardening of the lines accentuating the cleavage between the Radical party and what had hitherto been official Liberalism. The last impress of Lord Palmerston's rule was fast fading away; men began to foresee more clearly the inevitable fusion between moderate politicians in either camp; each year more of the ground was crumbling away from under the feet of the Whigs, and despite the warrant of their standing implied in the fact that the Marquis

of Hartington was still Mr Gladstone's lieutenant in the House of Commons, it was perfectly obvious that, should anything happen to cause the retirement of the Prime Minister, no other statesman could command the allegiance of the Ministerialist following as it was then constituted.

It looked as if the crisis would have to be faced. Preparations had been made for a third campaign in Mid-Lothian, and all the world was looking forward to a revelation of Ministerialist policy, when suddenly it was announced that Mr Gladstone's health had given way, and that he had been ordered to the south of Europe by his doctor. The Prime Minister was then over threescore years and ten: there was nothing surprising in the reason given for this sudden change of plan; but it was noted at the time that his indisposition relieved him from the necessity of visiting Mid-Lothian under circumstances of far greater difficulty than when, as an independent chief, he had come to pour the vials of his wrath on a Tory Administration. It is far easier to gain plaudits by attack than by defence; it had been a simple matter to raise a laugh against Lord Beaconsfield on account of his description of the state of Ireland to the Duke of Marlborough, or a groan against him because of the defence of the "unspeakable Turk"; but it would have been a far more serious task to explain the disastrous course events had taken in Ireland, and to justify the bombardment of Alexandria.

So the Prime Minister went abroad, and for some weeks after the opening of Parliament the Marquis of Hartington acted as leader of the House. Fortunate was the party in being able to command the services of such a lieutenant, for the Opposition, taking courage from the gain of a few seats on by-elections, mustered in better spirits than at any time since their overthrow in 1830. The debate on the Address was prolonged over eleven nights, the chief matters discussed

being the Egyptian and Irish policy of the Government. Perhaps the most interesting speech in the course of it was that of Mr Forster, who had so narrowly escaped assassination the year before. After entering more fully into the reasons for his resignation than he had done at the time it took place, he turned upon Mr Parnell with a vigour of gesture and invective which those who witnessed will not easily forget. He challenged Parnell to explain his knowledge of the criminal acts acquiesced in, if not instigated by, the Land League :—

No mere disclaimer of connection with outrage will be sufficient. We have had disclaimers before. Do not let the honourable member suppose that I charge him with complicity with murder : but this I do charge against the honourable member and his friends—that he has allowed himself to continue the leader and avowed chief of an organisation which not merely advocated and ostensibly and openly urged the ruin of those who oppose it by “boycotting” them, and making life almost more miserable than death, but which prompted or organised outrage and incited to murder. . . . The only ground on which he can escape responsibility is utter ignorance of their conduct. . . . I cannot believe in his absolute ignorance. . . . I will repeat again what the charge is I make against him. Probably a more serious charge was never made by any member of this House against another member. It is not that he himself directly planned or perpetrated outrages or murders, but that he either connived at them, or when warned—

“It is a lie!” shouted Mr Parnell and Mr O’Kelly, and the speech was interrupted by the Speaker “naming” the latter member, and his suspension, after a division, on the motion of Lord Hartington.

During 1883 a good deal of controversy arose in ecclesiastical circles over the Union of Benefices Amendment Bill, the object of which was, briefly, the consolidation or redistribution of parishes to suit the altered conditions of population. It was a question on which Smith held strong views, supported by the result of personal inspection of the various churches in London. He always advocated a few well-manned churches as preferable to a large number of

half-filled and ill-served ones. For instance, that church in which he took so much interest and contributed so largely to rebuild—St Mary's, Portsea—has a permanent staff of ten curates under Canon Jacob. On this occasion he had to defend himself from the censure of a gentleman claiming to represent the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's as well as the City churchwardens. Smith's reply was full of temperate good sense :—

Some years ago I made a round of the City churches on a Sunday morning, and there were many in which there was not even an approach to a congregation. The streets were silent, houses had been turned into warehouses, and the residential population was gone.

I thought, and still think, that it would be well if many—not all—of these churches could follow the people to their new homes.

Every institution is more or less on its trial, and it is, I think, certain that large endowments existing only as sinecures will be swept away, and taken by the strong hand from the uses to which they were devoted by our ancestors.

This is the meaning of the alliance which is offered to the opponents of the Bishop of London's Bill by the Liberationists. They are wise in their generation in cherishing what the general public will regard as an abuse ; and in preventing a reappropriation of Church funds, until they are strong enough to confiscate them for secular purposes, which with your help they soon will be.—Yours very sincerely,

W. H. SMITH.

Speaking at Exeter on January 18, 1884, Smith devoted himself to a criticism of the policy of the Government, in having first intervened to quell Arabi's rebellion against the Khedive, and then, having shown vacillation, involving risks of renewed disasters and massacre, in the management of affairs in that country. He poured ridicule on the proposal to confer by-and-by a representative constitution upon Egypt.

I value [he said] free institutions, and I desire to see institutions resting upon as hard a basis as possible ; . . . but to talk about a free representative system in Egypt is about as wise as to talk about a free representative system farther on in the middle of Africa. Ask the people who are under the rule of the Mahdi to elect a House of Commons and select a House of Lords, and you have a people quite as ready, quite as capable, and quite as educated for the purpose of constitutional liberty as you have in Egypt at the present time.

The Government had just taken a new step in their Egyptian policy. General Gordon—"Chinese" Gordon, as he was called in honour of his services in China—had been summoned from Brussels, where he had gone to prepare for a journey up the Congo, and despatched to Khartoum, which he was directed to hold against the advancing Mahdi.

The following week, January 25, Smith was the principal speaker at an immense meeting in Dublin, and having dealt with the Egyptian imbroglio in Devonshire, he proceeded to discuss the other question which was destined to share with Egypt almost the whole time of the approaching session. He stated courageously his objection to the extension of household suffrage to Irish counties :—

I find at present there are in Ireland 228,000 county electors, and it is now proposed that every inhabitant of a house shall be a voter. The census gives the number of good farmhouses at 422,241, out of which come the 228,000 electors ; but it also gives, I grieve from the bottom of my heart to say, 425,140 mud cabins, so that if the mud cabins are enfranchised, the mud cabins will be the majority of the electorate of Ireland. . . . And not only so, but in many counties the majority of the electors will be of that class which are perfectly illiterate. This is the proposal which is deliberately made with the view of assuaging popular discontent, and preventing those who are supposed to support Mr Parnell from having another victory.

Immediately after the meeting of Parliament early in February, though not before the House had to undergo that which had become an incident inseparable from the opening of the sessions of this House of Commons—namely, an unseemly wrangle with Mr Bradlaugh—the Government were put on their defence on a motion by Sir Stafford Northcote reflecting on their policy in Egypt, especially in regard to the events which had brought about the massacre of Hicks Pasha and his force. The majority in favour of Ministers was only 19, in a House of 578 members. In May a second vote of censure on the same subject was rejected by a majority of 28.

The debates on Foreign Affairs occupied much of the time which the Government ardently desired to devote to the realisation of the favourite scheme of Mr G. O. Trevelyan¹—the equalisation of the county and borough franchise. This bill, which Mr Gladstone introduced on February 29, was received by the Conservative party with half-hearted disapproval. Undoubtedly their secret opinion was that the franchise was already low enough and wide enough to ensure representation of every class and interest. Had they felt free to deal with the measure as their judgment dictated, it would have been met with a direct negative; but they were hampered by the consideration that such a course could not but end in defeat in the House of Commons, and incur the hostility of the masses whom it was proposed to enfranchise. Smith spoke on the second night of the debate, opposing the bill on the ground of the terrible danger involved in placing the balance of power in the hands of the ignorant denizens of Irish mud-cabins:—

It was avowed by hon. members from Ireland that they intended to hold the scales and to determine the course of the policy of the Government of this country. It would be unwise and foolish to give such a power, knowing perfectly well how it would be exercised. . . . The Prime Minister of England would have the satisfaction of having done his best, at the end of his great career, to make parliamentary government in England practically impossible.

Ultimately the Opposition took up their stand upon the objection to passing a Reform Bill without knowing the provisions of the ancillary measure for redistribution of seats. By June 26 the bill had passed through all its stages in the Commons, and in the House of Lords it was received by an amendment by Earl Cairns, framed in the complex and ponderous prose so dear to parliamentary tradition, to the effect “that this House, while

¹ Now the Right Hon. Sir George Trevelyan, Bart., M.P.

prepared to concur in a well-considered and complete scheme for the extension of the franchise, does not think it right to assent to the second reading of a bill having for its object a fundamental change in the electoral body, which is not accompanied by provisions which will ensure the full and free representation of the people, or by any adequate security that the bill shall not come into operation except on an entire scheme."

The position was an anxious one, and it required all the moral courage of the Peers to face it, for they were loudly threatened with serious consequences if they ventured to interfere. They rose to the occasion. They refused to entertain Lord Granville's pledge on behalf of his colleagues that a Redistribution Bill would be brought in next year. The Government might not survive till next year; or if they did, what guarantee was there that redistribution would be planned on satisfactory and equitable lines? They were not going to enfranchise two million new electors and trust to whatever "jerrymandering" the Liberal party agent might devise for the constituencies. Lord Salisbury declared picturesquely that he was not going to consent to the discussion of redistribution with a rope round his neck. So Lord Cairns's amendment was carried, which had the effect of hanging up the bill indefinitely. In the end, after many negotiations and endeavours to arrive at a compromise, Parliament was prorogued on August 14, on the understanding that it was to meet again in the autumn, when the Franchise Bill should be introduced again, coupled with a full scheme of redistribution of seats.

The vacation which intervened, of little more than two months, was one of little ease. Mr Gladstone harangued the electors of Mid-Lothian; many hard things were uttered against the House of Lords in other parts of the country by

his colleagues ; but when Parliament assembled on October 24, a *modus vivendi* had been arrived at. The Franchise Bill was introduced in the same form in which it left the House of Commons in summer, and a Redistribution Bill, based on a compromise arrived at between the Government and Opposition, and elaborated by consultations of the Cabinet at which Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote attended, was read a second time in the House of Commons. The Franchise Bill then passed through both Houses, and the discussion of the Redistribution Bill having been postponed till the following year, the House adjourned on December 5.

During these years of opposition, although Smith was no longer directly responsible for any part of the military or naval defences of the country, he was incessantly in communication, not only with officials in charge of our coast defences and naval arsenals, but with our admirals in foreign waters and with generals commanding British forces in Egypt. He took as much pains to ascertain the condition of our fortifications and the progress of work in the dockyards as if he had been an intelligence officer examining the armaments of an enemy. The correspondence on these subjects is exceedingly voluminous, and bearing as it does upon a state of things which alters every year, would not bear quotation now, except to show the extraordinary exertions which Smith, even while his party were in Opposition, made to assure himself that the public money was being profitably laid out. In acting thus, an ex-Minister might be suspected of a desire to obtain such information as might sustain an indictment of his adversary's administration ; but no trace of such a motive can be found in Smith's speeches during the debates on naval affairs from 1880 to 1885. His criticism was firm and sometimes severe, but he always showed

an anxiety to assist rather than to thwart the Admiralty of the day.

Sometimes the information supplied on the same subject from different sources was a little perplexing. Two letters written by separate officials at Portsmouth on March 11, 1885, were hard to reconcile with each other:—

DEAR MR SMITH,—Colossus is practically complete; the only work remaining to be done are the overhead runners for working the magazines. . . . It will only take us three or four weeks to fit them after delivery.

DEAR MR SMITH,—The answers to all your questions, I regret to say, are most unsatisfactory. Colossus is not ready for the pendant. Her loading gear is not finished. I don't think it is taken in hand yet by Elswick. If all the mechanism for the four guns was actually in the yard, it would take at least two months to get them fitted on board ready for sea, and that with much pressure. Her magazines and shell-rooms are not complete.

It was by this means that, while free from the cares of office, Smith kept himself in touch with the details of administration, and made himself ready to resume, should the occasion arise, the charge of one of the great departments of State.

Incessant work was, however, beginning to tell upon him. He gave himself no rest, and although not yet threescore, an age at which, in some men, the physical powers give little warning of diminution, Smith's letters contain frequent reference to his failing strength. In reply to a letter from his sister, Miss Augusta Smith, on his birthday, he wrote:—

June 24, 1884.

. . . It is very pleasant to know that I have the warm affection and that I am in the minds of my sisters. But I am getting older, and I am also getting tired; but I have wonderful health considering the small amount of sleep I get. I am at work, with very little rest, all day, and my day begins at 9 or 10, and goes on until $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2 or 3 in the morning.

Again on December 24, to the same :—

I wish to send you one word of Christmas greeting. As I get older, and I am sensible I *am* getting older, it is useful to take account of time, and compare season with season and year with year. I remember when we were children together, and how we talked in your bedroom over our projects and wishes. It seems a short time ago, but there have been great changes since then, and my children are now doing what we did together.

CHAPTER XVI.

1880-1885.

When Smith, having been re-elected in three successive Parliaments for Westminster, had been for twelve years its representative, and during six out of the twelve had been called on to discharge the functions of two laborious offices in addition to the ordinary work of a member, he found that each year had added to the weight of the task, and each year leisure to spend with his family had become less and less. He had, on going to the Treasury in 1874, resigned his seat on the London School Board, and on entering the Cabinet in 1877, he had retired from active partnership in the firm of W. H. Smith & Son, though still, and down to the close of his life, continuing to take a warm interest in all that concerned its welfare.

When in 1880 he found himself relieved alike from the strain of office and from constant attention to business, he turned for recreation to that pursuit in which so many men of English race find their delight—one, too, which his administration of naval affairs had made specially attractive to him. He bought the steam yacht Pandora, 500 tons, from Mr Penn, who had fitted her with powerful engines,

made under his own superintendence, and for four successive years she was commissioned for extended summer cruises.¹ Those who were privileged to take part in these excursions invariably speak of them as delightful memories: some say that none saw Mr Smith at his best except when—*procul negotiis*—he got beyond reach of mails, telegrams, and newspapers for days together.

In 1880 the cruise was in the Mediterranean. The Pandora was sent to Venice, where, on September 10, Mr Smith and his party joined her.

After visiting the ports of the Adriatic, hospitably entertained by officers of Austrian and Italian war-ships, and spending some time among the Ionian Islands, they arrived at the Piræus on October 13. Leaving on 18th, they steamed up the Saronic Gulf, spent a day at Corinth, after which they left for Nauplia. On 20th the yacht was headed north, and leaving Marathon on the left, passed up the enchanting channel between Eubœa and the mainland, through the straits of Chalcis, and dropped her anchor off Salonica on 23d. Arriving on the 27th at Chanak, in the Dardanelles, the authorities, misled by the white ensign of the Royal Yacht Squadron, took the Pandora for a man-of-war, an impression which was confirmed when they found out that the owner was no less a personage than the late First Lord of the Admiralty. Everything, however, having been explained, the yacht steamed up to Constantinople, where she lay till November 9.

The following extracts are from a memorandum which was kept by Smith of his interviews with the Sultan:—

16th November 1880.—We dined with the Sultan last evening, in compliance with an invitation which his Majesty gave to Mr Goschen and to myself personally at the interview which he gave us on Monday the 7th, when he inquired particularly how many we were in family,

¹ The Pandora had, previously to this, been well known as the Thistle, belonging to the Duke of Hamilton.

and insisted on my wife and Emily and Helen coming with me to the dinner. . . . Our dinner yesterday almost took the character of a State banquet. An A.D.C. came on board in the afternoon, begging me to come in uniform if I had brought one with me, but if not, in civil dress. The Ambassador, Mr Goschen, his private Secretary, and Mr Jervoise, the Secretary, were in uniform. Said, the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Minister, Musurus, and a number of other officials, were present. The Sultan was in uniform, as also were the two little Princes, and the party altogether must have numbered at least 30.

The Goschens, my wife and I, were received by the Sultan before dinner. The others assembled in a room, and went direct to their places at table, standing up to face the Sultan, when he walked in with Mrs Goschen on his arm. . . . The Sultan's son and cousin came on board next day, and we showed them the ship. An hour later I went up to the Kiosk, and was at once shown in. Munier Bey was waiting to receive me, and he began the conversation by saying that his Majesty wished to confer a decoration upon me as a mark of his favour and an expression of the pleasure our visit had given him. I told him that I should be glad if his Majesty would allow me to decline the honour, as although I was very sensible indeed of the kind and gracious feeling which suggested the proposal, his Majesty would see that it would be misunderstood in England, and that it would embarrass us in speaking as plainly as I should wish on my return of Turkish affairs. I added that I should be grateful to his Majesty if he would give me his photograph and his autograph, and that I desired nothing more.

Munier then began to speak of politics, and I said that my friends with whom I acted, and the Conservative party, were most desirous that Turkey should be maintained as a strong and well-governed country, and that public opinion in England would certainly come round to the side of Turkey if she carried out the engagements into which she had entered. . . . The Sultan received me standing and shook hands, and motioned me to a seat before him on the other side of a table, Munier sitting next to me. The conversation began by inquiries on his part after my wife and my daughters and the usual compliments. The Sultan then said it gave him great pleasure to receive me, not only on my own account, but also because I was a member of a Government and of a party which had always been the friends of Turkey. He had seen with great regret that the language and the policy of Mr Gladstone had made public opinion in England turn against Turkey, and he hoped that Mr Gladstone was now losing his influence in England, and that my friends would soon be in power again, for the good of England and of Turkey too. I said that . . . the Tory party desired, as an article of their faith, the maintenance of the ancient Empires of Europe, and they wished to see Turkey prosperous, well-governed, and at peace. I said in England great importance was attached to the performance of the obligations of the treaties by which Turkey was bound, and if those treaties were carried out, public opinion in England would come round in favour of Turkey, and it would not be possible for Mr Gladstone to resist it. I said it was possible there had been some change in our favour lately, but the

Parliament had been only just elected, and unless some grave events happened, it must be some years before a fresh election could occur and before it was possible for the Conservatives to return to power, and therefore I was afraid his Majesty must consider Mr Gladstone's Government as the Government of England for some time to come. . . . The Sultan replied at great length that he had worked incessantly to keep his promise. First, he had sent Izzet Pasha to Dulcigno, and he was an officer of great experience, and he hoped he would effect the cession. Then he sent Riaz Pasha, who was known in England to be a very good man ; and at last, as he had failed to come over the objections of the Albanians, he sent Dervish Pasha, who was very well known for the services he had rendered in the defence of Batoum. He could thoroughly depend upon him to carry it out as soon as possible, and he was a man who would obey not only the letter but the spirit of instructions given to him. The Sultan spoke with great animation, and apparently with great earnestness and sincerity. . . . He thanked me with some warmth for coming to Turkey, begging me to accept a small souvenir of my visit. . . . He handed this to me in a paper envelope, which I could not open in his presence. . . . Munier came with me into the room into which all visitors are shown, and on opening the envelope I found that it contained a flat Turkish watch with a guard chain. Munier assured me it was the watch his Majesty was in the habit of wearing. . . . When I got into the carriage, Musurus came to the side of it to wish me *bon voyage*, adding that he hoped soon to be back in England and to find the Tories returned to power. I told him there was no chance of that, but he said there was already a change, and Gladstone was losing power. He had been very hard to Turkey. I replied that his Government was the Government of England, and that he must reckon with it as with England. It was useless to entertain any other view. . . . I said, "Carry out your engagements, and the old feeling in favour of Turkey will return, and even Mr Gladstone will not be able to go against it." I said the Sultan's word was pledged. "Yes," he said, "to the Treaty of Berlin, but not to the Conference—to Dulcigno, but not to Greece." I admitted the difference as an important one. "We have not signed the [result of] the Conference," said he ; "we did sign the Treaty." "Well," I said, "Turkey wants peace." "Yes," he admitted, "to develop her great resources, her natural wealth, to make roads and railroads." "And," I added, "to give her attention to the means necessary to the security of life and property. While you are engaged in the questions of Dulcigno and Greece you are not at peace—you have no time to consider all these other matters, and pretexts remain for the interference of one or other or all the Powers in your affairs, which you ought to remove." He appeared to agree with me, and I drove off.

Other similar interviews took place with persons of less importance, including Midhat Pasha, at other points of the cruise, which was extended to Smyrna, Rhodes, Cyprus, and Beyrout ; whence the party had a very stormy passage

to Alexandria. Mr Dickson, H.M. consul at Beyrout, wrote to Mr Smith on December 16 :—

We were exceedingly anxious about you after you left, as the storm here was fearful, and our forebodings became still more gloomy when, on Monday, a report spread through the town that the yacht was seen to founder off Cyprus, and only one person was saved. . . . An Italian vessel had gone ashore somewhere on the coast, and she might have been confounded with the Pandora.

The yacht had indeed been in some peril, for a furious gale was beginning when she left Beyrout, and the reason that induced Smith to carry on was that Parliament had been summoned to meet in January instead of February, and he was anxious to be at his post in time.

The return voyage was by Malta and through the Straits of Messina to Nice, which was reached on January 3, 1881.

The cruise of 1881 was also in the Mediterranean. The party embarked at Nice on October 31, and in the voyage to Palermo by Corsica the sea-going powers of the Pandora were fully tested, for very heavy weather was encountered, and to navigate the Gulf of Lyons in a storm is no child's play. After lying at Palermo till November 6, they arrived at Malta on the 8th, at Syracuse on 12th, and at Naples on 13th—an earthly paradise which detained them till 23d. Of course they visited Pompeii and Baiaæ, and there is in one of Smith's letters to a friend at this time a wistful expression of his lifelong regret at having been debarred from a classical education. Referring to Pompeii he says :—

It is an odd sensation to be walking over pavement 2000 years old, with the marks of wheels and traffic fresh upon them, and to sit down in houses whose owners are only known by the inscriptions on the walls. One thing is clear, that in many respects our cultivation and taste for art has not improved since that time. We are less cruel in our amusements, but the elegance of their buildings greatly exceeded ours in many respects. While at Naples too we visited Baiaæ, rendered famous by Horæe, and saw evidences of past grandeur and luxury which contrast strongly with present poverty; but the Bay is lovely, and may well have been a place of luxurious repose for Emperors and Patricians in the palmy days of the Roman empire;

but I should weary you if I told you what we have seen. I sigh over the indistinctness of my recollections of the small amount of classical literature I read when I was young, and wish now I could people all these places with the gods and goddesses and the perhaps stronger men and women whose stories are told in our school-books.

But the right method of biography is not, to use Sir Walter Scott's phrase, to present extracts from an individual's conversation or correspondence with "a cocked hat and a dress cane." Smith was one—

"Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes,"¹

and was wont to find far more interest in the events of the present day, and in the condition and aspirations of living people, than in reverie over the past. His mind was of that practical kind which persons of the artistic temperament are in the habit of despising as "Philistine." A good illustration of this, however much it may cause Philhellenes to shudder, occurs in a letter written in 1880 from the Piræus to his step-daughter, Mrs Codrington:—

It is a great pity, but I am not a poet or poetically inclined as you are, and so I should not care to live in Greece or with Greeks. Greece is a land of paradoxes. It is very mountainous, very arid, and very hot, and yet in places where there are oliveyards and vineyards it is green and beautiful; but at this season all is brown and dusty, and the beauty of which poets rave is difficult to find. . . . Sight-seeing is a dreadful business. . . . We spent the day in museums and buying some half-dozen tinted figures dug up out of graves 3000 years old. . . . Dr Schliemann really thinks he has found Agamemnon's skull. I am not sure myself that Agamemnon ever existed, except in Homer's imagination; but don't tell Mr Gladstone that if you meet him, or he will certainly have me put to death. . . . We are all going to Mycenæ to visit the tomb of Agamemnon to-morrow, and there is great danger if we go on this way of the whole family becoming Pagan and believers in the new God—Gladstone.

But he drops this languid tone of dissatisfaction when he turns to the social and political prospects of Greece:—

Everybody is a soldier, and drilling and trumpeting is going on every day all round. M. Tricoupi, the Prime Minister, told me they

¹ "Manners and towns of various nations viewed."

would soon have 80,000 men enrolled, and said he, "Now we have got them we must do something with them. We must either have victory or defeat; it is impossible to send them back without fighting." And he spoke of defeat as lightly as of victory, apparently thinking one as good as the other, for they say, "If we are beaten, Europe must come to our help, and we are quite sure she will."

The homeward voyage in 1881 was by Civita Vecchia, where they left the yacht and spent a week in Rome; thence to Leghorn, whence excursions were made to Pisa; to Spezia, where there was much inspection of dockyards and of the new ironclads, Duilio and Dandolo; along the Riviera to Genoa, Mentone, and Marseilles, where the party left the yacht on December 13.

Six weeks of the late summer of 1882 were spent in other seas. Leaving Cowes on August 9, the yacht was headed eastward and then north up the coast to the Firth of Forth and Aberdeen, and thence to the coast of Norway. Smith well describes the scenery of the fjords in a letter to his sister Augusta:—

The Fjords, or salt-water lakes, run up many of them 150 miles into the mountains, . . . and it is frequently difficult to see how we can get out of the mountain-locked lake into which we have thrust ourselves.

There is every variety—great softness and beauty in some places, with verdure excelling Devonshire, and a few miles farther on bare, sheer, stern rocks rising out of the water in precipices of 3000 or 4000 feet. At one moment we have vast snow-fields and glaciers, from which the chilled wind comes down to us; a turn of the ship and of the Fjord, and we have the sweet-smelling hay and a timber-covered slope more lovely than the Lauterbrunnen Valley. It has done us all good.

They afterwards visited Copenhagen and Amsterdam—scenes strangely in contrast with the romantic landscapes they had left behind them. Here is Smith's impression of Holland, communicated in a letter to his step-daughter, Mrs Codrington:—

*Somewhere on the canal between NIEU DIEP
and AMSTERDAM, Sept. 15, 1882.*

Here we are in Dutchland, with a Dutchman to regulate our movements, and they *are* deliberate. We came in here by the Texel. Your

husband will tell you all about it, but the land is chiefly remarkable because it is usually covered with water. . . . We got into Nieu Diep about 5 P.M. Then came the ceremony of going through the docks, in which we were detained for half an hour while the captain was closeted with the harbour-master, who, I believe, required to be informed of the sex, age, and number of teeth of every person on board. I don't think he inquired after grandchildren. Then we moored for the night, and at 5 a great functionary, a King's Pilot, came on board to take charge of the ship. We started at "Slow," and his first remark was, "It is very fast; it is too fast." The captain wanted to go at half-speed, but he was shocked, and said, "You would wash away the country;" and then he complained "she was too quick with her helm." However, we got away, and my view from the bridge at 5.30 was mist, through which the sun slowly tried to rise. Everything was slow, flat, and quaint to the last degree. Over the watery and green expanse little peat stacks apparently arose, which, as the light became stronger, turned into houses, all exactly alike—tiled, and partially thatched over the tiles. . . . The water became less, and villages and towns appeared. We passed Alkmaar, which is an interesting place with many Churches, and some fine ones. Canals for streets, and the banks of Canals for roads. It is very picturesque, and very interesting to see *once*; but it is quite impossible not to pity people, from one's own point of view, who live below the level of the sea, however well-to-do they may be. And they are very well-to-do, for there are more black and white cattle in the fields than we have seen since we left England. Everything is in plenty except hills, and we passed the only range, and they are called the Camperdown Mountains, for they are quite 100 feet high in some parts. . . . Seven times have I been interrupted by "The ship aground, sir." The Canal turns always at the narrowest part, and our Pilot stops the engines, so that we have no steerage-way, and go helplessly bow on; but we get off again, and the only mischief done is to the camp-shedding on the banks.

Then follows a little bit of professional sarcasm on Lord Northbrook and Mr Campbell Bannerman, then First Lord and Secretary to the Admiralty, who, it seems, had not made the usual autumn tour of the dockyards:—

I don't understand Northbrook and Bannerman not going round. It is not politic, at least I think not, but these people are much cleverer than I am, and know intuitively things which I could not realise unless I saw them.

In December of that year the Pandora was lent to Sir Stafford Northcote for a three months' cruise.

In August 1883 Copenhagen was revisited, and the voyage was extended to Cronstadt. The Pandora could

not be taken up to St Petersburg, as there was at that time not more than nine feet of water over the bar, but most of the party went there. On 8th September they arrived at Kiel, thence to Rotterdam, and returned to Cowes Roads on 15th.

Thereafter the yacht was again lent to Sir Stafford Northcote.

It would be wearisome to record more about these pleasure cruises, to which Smith used to look ardently forward, in those broiling days when, by sheer exhaustion of legislators, the session of Parliament creeps slowly to a close. But it is not possible to write about the Pandora without mention of Captain Blow, who sailed in her during all the years from 1880 to 1891, and gained the esteem and confidence, not only of Mr Smith and his family, but of all who were guests on board. He tells how Mr Smith knew every man in the crew, even though he had not much personal intercourse with them, and how he liked to have the old hands re-engaged year by year. He speaks with special appreciation of the care which his master always showed that plenty of time should be allowed to get up steam—a point in which some yachtsmen show scant consideration when in a hurry to get under weigh—and of the precautions he took to make arrangements for the mails to meet the yacht at the various places where she touched, so that every man on board should get his letters as punctually as Smith did himself. These may seem trifling points, but it is in trifles that men most surely show consideration for those in their employment. Captain Blow, like many another good sailor, is not a man of many words, but there is a look in his eyes when he speaks of his old master that tells of the confidence they had in each other. Nor was Smith's confidence misplaced, for in all the years he commanded the Pandora, Captain Blow never encountered a serious mishap, though it is true

that in 1880, when Blow was serving as mate, the vessel took the ground at Ergastoli, owing to a confusion in the lights, in Cephalonia, and had to be lightened of 100 tons of coal before she floated again.

CHAPTER XVII.

1871-1891.

There is no landscape more profoundly tranquil—none more thoroughly English in character—than that which lies on either bank of the river below Henley-on-Thames. Between that town and the village of Hambleden—distant from each other some four miles, the Thames, flowing northwards first through the well-known Henley reach, bends sharply eastward and sweeps in a wide curve between level meadows, bordered and sheltered on the north by the beech-clad downs of Fawley and Hambleden. Southwards the view stretches away over Remenham, banded by heavy hedgerows, to the gently swelling uplands of Wargrave and Ashley. Just where the river-lawns are greenest and the stream spreads itself into its glassiest reach, stands, on the left bank, the modern house of Greenlands. A white building in the Italian style—surrounded by sleepy elms and solemn cedars casting broad swathes of shadow across the velvety turf, and gay with its environment of flower-beds led down to the very edge of the water—there is little in this place to commemorate the noisy conflict which once roared around it for months together. But there are still piled on the terrace some rusty round-shot, which from time to time have been found buried deep in the park and

garden, memorials of the long siege sustained in old Greenland House by brave Sir John Doyley, who stood for the King in 1644. Oxford and Wallingford remained staunchly Royalist, but nearer Henley was garrisoned by the Parliamentarians, when, about the New Year, Doyley began to fortify his premises; and the Lenten lilies had not blown before he was closely beleaguered by Major-General Skippen. The house, of which every vestige has long ago disappeared, must have been of considerable strength, for its garrison maintained an obstinate defence. General Skippen, riding round it one dewy May morning, had his horse shot under him; and Essex wrote to him repeatedly, insisting on the reduction of Greenland, as essential to the safety of his army. In June a message came from the House of Lords to the Commons, setting forth the necessity of the immediate despatch of a regiment or more on foot to join the forces then before Greenland, "and that they might batter it from the other side of the Thames."¹ Later, the Commons sent to London to arrange for more troops being forwarded to reduce Oxford and Greenland House, and the better securing of these counties for Parliament. In fact, on the King's return to Oxford, General Skippen thought it better to draw off his forces before Greenland, and retired to Henley. But in July arrived Major-General Brown, who, planting a battery on the south bank of the river, and sending to London for two siege-pieces and some petards, proceeded to bombard the manor-house. Whitlock notes that thereafter it was "almost beaten about the ears of the garrison."

In the same month of July the siege was again raised by a party from Oxford and Wallingford. General Brown once more retired to Henley, and the Royalist force went back to Oxford, taking with them twenty-nine women, who had been shut up in Greenland. But no sooner had the

¹ Whitlock's Memorials.

Cavaliers disappeared in the summer woodland than General Brown renewed the siege on Sir John Doyley's stronghold, then under command of Colonel Hawkins. This time Brown brought his whole brigade, and renewed the bombardment in such vigorous sort that the gallant Hawkins, standing on a pile of smoking ruins, was fain to sue for terms. He obtained them, and of such a kind as to prove both his own prowess and the value set by the Parliamentary leaders on the house of Greenland, for he and his brave garrison were allowed to march out with the honours of war, prisoners were exchanged, and the victors provided transport for the vanquished as far as Wallingford.

Standing on a summer evening beside the tranquil stream, watching the pleasure-boats floating past and listening to the distant roar of Hamble den lasher—it is difficult to realise that this is the same scene where once the civil conflict raged so fiercely, that the frequent round-shot hurtled where the swallows now skim, and yonder tuneful woodland echoed to hoarse battle-cries and clash of angry steel.

Old Greenland House was levelled with the sward: Sir John Doyley, his resources sadly drained by the expenses of the war, parted with the estate. After that, it changed hands pretty often, till, in 1871, it was bought by Mr Smith from Sir Dudley Marjoribanks.¹ This was the quiet retreat in which the weary man of affairs looked forward to spending the afternoon of life,—this the *angulus ille terrarum* which he set himself to beautify, and enrich with work on the garden, the farm, the woods, and, above all, on the workmen's cottages. He was not one to brook the existence of those terrible contrasts, which are only to be endured by habit, between the dwellings of the rich and poor: if his own house, as befitted his means, was to be beautiful and

¹ Created Baron Tyweedmouth in 1881.

even luxurious, so much the greater urgency for the cottages of his workmen to be bright and healthy and roomy enough for decorous living. Every human being—ay, and every quadruped too—that worked on his land, should be as comfortably housed and liberally dealt with as patient forethought could ensure. Of course this is something beyond practical farming: a hard-working tenant, with a rent to pay, has to see his way to get back whatever he puts into the pockets of his workmen or down the throats of his beasts; but it was the kindly anxiety of a prosperous man that everything on his ground should be comfortable and well-to-do. Smith took special delight in his flock of Sussex Down ewes, and used to listen sympathetically to his shepherd dilating with professional pride on their level backs, well-bred heads, and close ochrey fleeces.

It was not, however, often that Smith spoke familiarly with his servants. As a rule, he was reserved and silent towards them; never rude or hasty, but speaking no more than the occasion required. One day he said to his valet: “I don’t speak much to you; my mind is pretty full of other matters, but remember, it is never so full that I cannot listen to anything you want to say to me.”

The reposeful purpose of the new owner of Greenlands was, so far as concerned himself, destined to imperfect fulfilment. Public life in the nineteenth century is niggardly in opportunity of retirement for a Cincinnatus, and in addition to the time devoured by the ever-growing business in the Strand, in which Smith continued the leading active partner till 1874, he had, at the time of his settling at Greenlands, been for three years a metropolitan member, and few who have not tried it are able to realise what incessant attention that honourable position demands.

Still, he made it his country home; there his wife and children lived in the autumn and winter, and thither he

betook himself as often and for as long as his parliamentary, commercial, and other engagements would allow. He grew very fond of the place, took a moderately active part in the duties of a magistrate, of the Board of Guardians, and other



In the Grounds at Greenlands.

county business. To record all his kind and helpful acts during the score of years he lived at Greenlands would take a long time, and would, moreover, be the kind of catalogue which he, of all men, would most have disliked to see in

the hands of others. Never was there any one more concerned in deluding his left hand as to the doings of his right, of which no better illustration could be found than the part he took in the building of St Mary's Church at Portsea. The history of his connection with that enterprise affords a sample of his method of patient preliminary inquiry, his dislike of publicity, and his princely liberality when he had satisfied himself that there was good occasion for it.

Admiral Codrington, the husband of Mr Smith's step-daughter, held an appointment at Portsmouth in 1884. Smith heard from Mrs Codrington of the project formed by Canon Jacob, vicar of Portsea, to reconstruct or rebuild the parish church, and the description which she gave of the locality—a large parish of 26,000 inhabitants, mainly of the industrial order—at once enlisted his sympathy in the scheme. He made the acquaintance of Canon Jacob, and at once gave him a subscription of £500. In doing so, Smith expressed himself to Canon Jacob to the following effect: "I am ready to help you further, but I am anxious that in doing so I should not interfere with local effort nor diminish the local sources of supply. If I am satisfied that your own people are doing their utmost to provide for what is necessary in the parish, you may rely on me to help you to make it a fine church. Let me know whenever you are in want of funds, but do not let my name appear." After that understanding had been thoroughly established between them, Canon Jacob had no reason to complain of the conditions. He and Smith became warm friends, but their interviews were conducted under clandestine precautions. So anxious was Smith to preserve the mystery which shrouded the "friend" whose cheques were mentioned so frequently in the subscription-lists, that when he called on Canon Jacob he would not even ring the door-bell, but walked straight into the vicar's study. From first to last

his donations to the building fund amounted to £29,000, out of a total expenditure of £42,000.

The secret was well kept, and Canon Jacob and Mr Smith had many a laugh over incidents in connection with it. One evening Smith walked into the vicar's library shortly after he had sent him a cheque for £15,000. Said he—

“I saw Ryder¹ this morning, and he said to me, ‘I hear Jacob has received a promise of £15,000 for his building fund from some rich fellow. Now I don't want to discourage him, but I don't think it would be safe for him to act on it, unless good security is given him, and so I have told him.’ I told Ryder,” Smith went on, “that I had heard the same thing, and given Jacob exactly the same advice.”

Smith frequently visited the building during its progress, and derived much pleasure from the work. The church, which was designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield, is a fine example of the perpendicular style—a form of Gothic which, though it does not satisfy the sense of most architectural critics, has at least this distinction, that it is exclusively English, being the form through which ecclesiastical architecture descended in our country when, on the Continent and even in Scotland, it assumed the Flamboyant manner. When the building was finished, Canon Jacob went over it with Smith.

“I am simply delighted,” said the latter. “I don't know enough about architecture to criticise, but I am thoroughly pleased with what has been done.”

During the intercourse which this building brought about between them, Canon Jacob had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with Smith's view of charity in general, and the precautions he observed before contribut-

¹ Admiral Sir A. P. Ryder.

ing to any scheme. When he was satisfied as to the object aimed at and the means of attaining it, he used to give with



Lych Gate, Hambleden.

no sparing hand, and largely in directions which never were and never will be known.

With one philanthropic scheme which made much stir

during his later years—General Booth's—he would have nothing to do. The excitement and vehemence of the Salvation Army were foreign to all his religious instincts, and, as a business man, he would not be induced to contribute to a fund in the absence of good security that it should be rightly administered.

The accomplishment of some of the chief improvements in the neighbourhood of Greenlands was rendered possible by means of Smith's liberal assistance. In the secluded village of Hambleton, though it is not actually on the property that was his, his name will long be affectionately remembered. Nestling deep in a narrow green valley opening from the Thames, it is just one of those immemorial little communities where life slips uneventfully from generation to generation, not without its patient tragedy, yet undisturbed by noisy crime—with quiet enjoyment of such comforts as may be gathered in modest homes, but without much splendour of expectation on the narrow horizon which bounds it.

Happily the incumbent whom Smith found at Hambleton when he became a parishioner, the late Rev. W. H. Ridley, honorary canon of Christ Church, was not only an able and zealous pastor, but one with whom he was able to work hand in hand in intimate friendship; and by acting in concert with him and the lord of the manor, and, after Mr Ridley's death in 1882, with his successor the Rev. C. M. Wetherall, he was able to assist in many changes and improvements, both in the church and its surroundings. People cling passionately to the plot of ground where, as in Hambleton, they have been accustomed to lay their dead since the days of the Heptarchy, where—

“Beneath these rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.”

But it became necessary to close the old churchyard, and a new cemetery was enclosed outside the village, for which Mr Smith gave the ground. He cordially co-operated in a scheme whereby extensive repairs were carried out in the fabric of the parish church and the tower was rebuilt, in which were hung afresh the old peal of bells. Their melodious chimes, echoing among the hanging beechwoods, and overpowering

“The drowsy tinklings of the distant fold,”

call to mind a bygone state of society, for the tenor bell was won at cards by an eighteenth century incumbent of Hambleden from the rector of a neighbouring parish, who had previously staked and lost to him all that he possessed.

Even the fairest rural scenes are subject to visitations of fever and diphtheria, and to this the neighbourhood of Henley and Hambleden was no exception. The difficulty of isolating infectious cases was the subject of much concern to Mr Smith, till, in 1889, he resolved to build a hospital to supply the want. Mr Mackenzie of Fawley Court having granted a suitable and valuable site in the Fair Mile, near Henley, buildings were erected, with separate blocks, airy corridors, and ample offices, under the direction of Mr Keith Young. It was thoroughly furnished and equipped with every instrument of comfort and relief, including a large ambulance, and the whole must have cost the donor not less than £11,000, but he did not live to see it completed.

The part Smith had taken in educational legislation, and his experience on the London School Board, inclined him to take a practical interest in school matters in Henley and Hambleden. He became one of the governing body of Henley Royal Grammar-School, and exerted himself in pre-

paring and promoting a scheme to adapt that decaying institution to the wants of a rural neighbourhood, rather than bolster it up as a seat of classical learning. The Charity Commissioners stepped in, and taking the matter out of the hands of the governors, brought out a scheme almost exactly on the lines proposed by Mr Smith, whose last appearance among the new governing body was in 1891, when they met to inaugurate the reformed constitution.

While he attended in these and other respects to the wants of his poorer neighbours in the country, he by no means neglected the beauty and comfort of his own home. He added very largely to the original house at Greenlands, and delighted in finding his children and children's children assembled there with their friends when, at the end of a hard week in Parliament and a Saturday sitting of the Cabinet, he escaped to spend a quiet Sunday among the deep woods beside the gentle stream. How often he longed for such rest, how gratefully he enjoyed it when it came, finds frequent expression in his letters.

One Sunday in 1889, being detained in London, he writes to one of his daughters:—

At luncheon at the Admiralty yesterday we were discussing our several ideas of rest, and G. Hamilton and Goschen both declared in favour of being allowed to stay at home on Sunday mornings when their wives went to church. I said I almost enjoyed the quietness and rest in the midst of work of being alone in the house, when I was nearly tired out at the end of a session.

Those who visited at Greenlands remember how smoothly everything went.¹ Some may think that making life in a country house agreeable to guests is merely a question of expenditure, and that nothing is easier than for a rich man

¹ After a visit to Greenlands in 1885, where there had been a garden party, Dr (now Sir Henry) Acland wrote to Smith: "And now, what am I to say concerning the last three days? Well, to a quiet worn

with a good house to be a good host. But even the wealthiest are not always successful in the art of entertaining—especially those who have made wealth for themselves. The remarkable feature in the Greenlands *ménage* was the absence alike of fuss or ostentation: everything went as evenly as on board a man-of-war; and it is only fair to say that this was owing in large measure to the fact that Mr Smith's servants, like the officers of his yacht, remained many years in his employ. Both here and in Grosvenor Place people used to contrast the dinner-parties favourably with the interminable feasts which some well-disposed Amphitryons, especially of the political type, seem to think inseparable from right hospitality.¹ Everything of wine or food kind was the best that money could buy, but there was a sort of modesty and graceful measure in their use. Indeed the only respect in which his table approached extravagance was in the display of flowers. These were certainly supplied lavishly, but they were all home-grown, for their owner had spared no expense on his gardens. In the comparatively limited extent of the grounds at Greenlands—the flower-garden occupies but a narrow wedge of land between the highroad and the river—

creature of threescore years and ten such an occasion, in such a scene, is certainly a revelation of a new sense.

'Tears such as tender fathers shed,
For joy to think when they are dead
Their sons shall find the good their friend.'

Those words best express the state of mind I was in while wandering in all your splendid hospitalities, that veiled, but not concealed, the peace and family strength that reigned firm beneath them."

¹ Touching the political dinner-parties which Smith used to give in Grosvenor Place on Wednesday evenings during the session of Parliament, it must be well remembered by many who attended them how careful he was to arrange them so that the younger members of the Conservative party should be brought into easy acquaintance with their leaders. It requires but a slight familiarity with political affairs to know how greatly this contributes to the pleasure and harmony of parliamentary life.

a staff of thirty men were employed. There is a very large range of glass-houses, in the planning and management of which Mr Smith used to take much delight, and a constant supply of choicest flowers and fruit was the result. His



A Favourite Peep of the Thames.

favourite flower (it is the fashion to record the preference of statesmen for certain flowers—Disraeli's primrose, the third Napoleon's violet, Boulanger's carnation, are instances in point) was lily of the valley, and means were employed

to ensure a long succession of that plant, from the earliest forced blooms in January to the latest in July, artificially retarded by being grown on beds of ice.

Horticulturists may find some interest in the fact, that in the whole range of the vineries at Greenlands there is not a single specimen of the "Gros Colman" grape—a deserved favourite for its profuse yield, beautiful clusters of large raisins, and unsurpassed keeping qualities, which generally prevail to counterbalance its deficiency in flavour.

If there was one part of his possessions in regard to which Smith used to yield to that weakness of country gentlemen which Disraeli, in one of his novels, calls the "Sunday-afternoon-pride-of-proprietorship," it was his garden; for though he was without technical knowledge of the art of horticulture, he enjoyed the fragrance and beauty of flowers so thoroughly that he loved to bring his friends to do the same. His favourite place for a confidential after-dinner talk with a friend was the large conservatory opening off the drawing-room, and the love which he never lost for music used to be gratified at the same time by the strains from the organ, played by one of his daughters in an adjoining room.

It was a thoroughly peaceful home, and the only drawback to Smith's complete enjoyment of it was his frequent absence, caused by the incessant and ever-increasing calls of public duty. The perfect harmony which always endured among the members of this family was owing in large measure to the gentle nature of its head. Weary, harassed, suffering in body and anxious in mind as he often was (for he was very far from possessing the excellent constitution and easy temperament of his old idol Palmerston), neither wife, nor child, nor colleague, nor friend, nor servant ever heard him speak a hasty or angry word. Naturally reticent, he was yet always ready to receive the confidence

of others, and there was at no time between him and any of his children that freezing awe which sometimes hedges a father and makes him the last to whom his children turn in their sorrows or perplexities, small or great. And, in return, the warmth of his affection was never chilled by their neglect, nor his heart saddened by their faults or mistakes, so that a few weeks before his death he was able to write in all truth to Miss Giberne, "What cause for thankfulness have we not got! I am sixty-six, and have no sorrow with any one of my children." There was no difference in degree in the affection that bound him to each member of the family. Thus in 1882 he wrote on his birthday to his step-daughter, Mrs Codrington, "So long as I have the warm affection of wife and children, birthdays will be happy; but life is not worth living without love." Even in the closing weeks of a weary session, when his family had moved to Greenlands and he remained to struggle through the drowsy dog-days alone, he never failed to write each night to Mrs Smith from his place in the House. Love-letters have often been penned amid strange environment—from dungeons and garrets, from towering seas, from Arctic wastes and torrid African sands; but surely none were ever more tender or more true than those written by Smith to his wife from the Treasury Bench, amid the din of debate or the languor of obstructive talk. One is tempted to quote some of their simple, fervent language, if it were but to show that, in spite of many sorrowful instances to the contrary, public men may foster and enjoy the most delicate private affection, and the most devoted politician may remain perfect as a husband and father. Ugly stories about those in high places spread quickly among a public over-ready to believe evil of those in authority: it would be well to put in evidence some of

these words of pure and lasting devotion, but it is not possible to parade the innermost feelings of one who has so lately gone from among us. Nevertheless, a sentence or two from Smith's letters to his wife may be chosen, showing the spirit of all the rest. In 1887 :—

I have had a very nice letter from the Queen, which I will show you to-morrow evening if, as I hope, I am able to get down to you, and this must come to you as my first greeting on the Anniversary of that happy day when we became one. . . . God has blessed us, and and we do owe very much to Him, for all our trials have brought us closer to each other and to Him, and every day I realise more and more of the strength and guidance which you ask and help me to gain. . . . The debate is going on in a dull way, and Childers is now speaking, but our Irish Attorney-General, Mr Holmes, made a very good speech indeed in opening.

Again, in August of the following year :—

Here I am sitting listening to Arthur Balfour, who is answering Mr J. Morley, and I have ears for him and thoughts for you and my very dear ones at home. . . . I hope we shall get our votes all right to-night, and that I may get away to-morrow by the 6.20.

Another letter, written in the same week as the last, bears evidence that however ready Smith always was to welcome visitors to his home, he was exceedingly jealous of a betrayal of its privacy. Readers of "society" journals must be familiar with the series of "Celebrities at Home" which have been continued for many years in the 'World' newspaper. The editor wrote to Smith asking him to give him a sitting for one of these pen-portraits, and alluding to some half-dozen of his colleagues in the Cabinet who had already done so. The reply to this letter is characteristic :—

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,
9th Aug. 1888.

MY DEAR MR YATES,—I am very sensible of the valuable services you have rendered to the Party, and I would gladly do anything in my power to recognise them, but I have almost a superstitious horror of any publicity in matters concerning the private life of my Family.

Everybody is welcome to see everything I have got, to walk about

my place, and to enjoy it as much as I do when I can get away from my work, but I am most anxious to preserve the inviolability of my home.

Pray forgive me for this fancy.—Yours very truly,
W. H. SMITH.¹

In the general amusements of a country gentleman Smith took a moderate part. He was never what his namesake, Sydney Smith, termed a "pheasant-minded man," but his preserves were well stocked with game, and he liked to provide sport for his guests, and sometimes took a gun himself.² But the impression generally left on the minds of visitors was that their host was inclined rather to silence than to conversation; that although he was ready to listen sympathetically to what others had to say, his own mind was too fully occupied with his work to be curious about the concerns of others. He had no time for "fads" or amateur pursuits, and never showed any disposition to trespass on the province of science or literature. It is possible that early and close concentration upon business

¹ It is not often possible to turn the tables on an interviewer—least of all if he represents an American journal—but Smith once succeeded very well in doing so. The proprietor of one of the principal New York dailies being in London, wrote to request an interview with the First Lord of the Treasury. Smith had minuted the letter, "Express regret," when he changed his mind, and said to his secretary—"No, let him come; he can give me the information I want about the municipal institutions of New York." (The Local Government Bill was under consideration in the House of Commons at the time.) An appointment was made, the interview took place, and for a quarter of an hour the great journalist was kept busy answering Mr Smith's questions. Then the next appointment was announced, the visitor was bowed out, and it flashed on him that for once a Britisher had outwitted a Yankee. "I guess," he remarked to the private secretary as he picked up his hat,—"I guess that Mister Smith has interviewed *me*."

² In this respect he was more effective than his friend and colleague, Northcote, whose short sight prevented him from being even a fair shot. I once happened to be staying in a country house in Scotland where Sir Stafford was also visiting. After breakfast our host was arranging for our amusement, and turning to Northcote said, "Do you shoot, Sir Stafford?" "*Intransitively* I do," was the reply.

had robbed his faculties of some of that elasticity which generally causes men who are eminent in one department of activity to make excursions into the domain of others. On the other hand, his thoroughly practical nature may have convinced him that there is sound sense in the adage, "The cobbler to his last and the gunner to his linstock," and that no satisfaction is derived from handling too many irons.

Some evidence of a man's character and taste is sure to be found in his bookshelves, and thus Smith's busy life, his practical application to affairs, and his ample means, all found reflection in his library. A glance round the room is enough to show that here was no haunt of a book-lover or book-hunter: for the weaknesses of the first its owner enjoyed too little leisure; for those of the second he had drawn from his hurried and unsatisfactory education no consuming passion. Nevertheless there are books, several thousands of them, well cared for and well ordered: books of modern travel and useful information predominate, but fiction and poetry are liberally represented also; and the fastidious bibliophile can gratify his passion with the contents of a case, consisting of sumptuously bound classics, in folio and quarto, mainly purchased at the sale of the celebrated Syston Park collection.

But the luxury which Smith allowed himself most latitude in indulging was the purchase of good pictures. He made no claim to a discriminating knowledge of art; in making his purchases he relied very much on the judgment of Mr Woods, a partner in the well-known firm of Messrs Christie, Manson, & Woods. Under the guidance of that gentleman, he acquired some beautiful works of art—notably a ploughing scene, by Rosa Bonheur, which hangs on the staircase at 3 Grosvenor Place, and two exquisite portraits

by Romney, of the sisters Ramus (one of whom became Lady Day and the other Madame de Noailles), now at Greenlands.

He was also a good friend to living artists, and commissioned some of the most noted of them to paint the portraits of some of his colleagues in the Cabinet. In the dining-room at Grosvenor Place there hang likenesses of Lord Iddesleigh painted by Long, of Lord Cross by H. Herkomer, of Lord John Manners by Oules, of Mr Arthur Balfour by Alma Tadema, and of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury by Sir John Millais. Concerning the last-named, Millais wrote to Smith in 1882, while the picture was in progress: "I have found him more difficult than most of the portraits I have painted." In spite of this difficulty, the portrait is admitted to be one of the best that accomplished artist has ever achieved.

Besides these, there are hung in other rooms excellent examples of Turner, Copley Fielding, Cooke, David Cox, Stansfield, Landseer, and other masters; and Mr Smith's own portrait by Richmond is in the morning-room.

In addition to his Greenlands estate, Mr Smith invested upwards of £450,000 in the purchase of land in Suffolk and Devonshire. In the former county he bought about 6000 acres in various parcels between 1877 and 1891. The Rewe and Silverton estate near Exeter, extending to about 900 acres, was acquired at different dates between 1876 and 1889, and large sums were spent here in rebuilding cottages in the village of Rewe. Lastly, in 1890 and 1891, the Moreton-hampstead estate, a tract of rough pasture on the edge of Dartmoor, was bought from the Earl of Devon.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1885.

The tone of leading articles in the 'Times'—a journal which up to that date had uniformly given independent support to whatever Government happened to be in power—became ominous of the general displeasure entertained at the beginning of 1885 on account of the way the affairs of this country were being conducted. The outcome of five years' administration of foreign affairs by Lord Granville had been to leave Great Britain almost without a friend among the great Powers. Italy, it is true, had been conciliated by the conclusion of a treaty under which England agreed to favour that country in the formation of a colony at Massowah, in the Red Sea, and in the annexation of territory on the west coast of Africa, in return for which "Italy would assist England in her enterprises in Egypt, and would raise her voice on behalf of England in the European Council for the settling of the Egyptian question, on every occasion when England should appeal to her." But France was still malcontent with the continued occupation of Egypt by British troops. Russia had persisted in pushing forward her advance-posts towards the Afghan frontier in spite of Lord Granville's remonstrance, and in contemptuous disregard of treaties; and the steady concentration of troops and warlike material in the direction of Merv seemed intended as a direct menace to Great Britain. Lastly, a state of angry tension had developed itself between the Foreign Departments of Great Britain and Germany in regard to certain events connected with the development of Prince Bismarck's policy of Colonisation in Africa and New

Guinea, and the conclusion of a treaty between the German Emperor and the King of Samoa.¹

But a still deeper shade of gloom fell on the outlook of Ministers by the announcement, in a telegram from Sir Charles Wilson on February 5, that Khartoum, which General Gordon had been holding against the Mahdi for ten months, had fallen, and the Government had to endure the bitter shame of having delayed succour to a gallant officer till it was too late. The Prime Minister only deepened the disgrace of himself and his colleagues when, on the opening of Parliament on February 19, he tried to palliate it by declaring that "General Gordon contentedly forbore—indeed, more than contentedly, he determinedly forbore—to make use of the means of personal safety which were at all times open to him." The expression of displeasure with which these words were received by the House was so intense, that Mr Gladstone withdrew them; but the impression remained that an unmerited slight had been put upon Gordon's devoted service. On a vote of censure moved by Sir Stafford Northcote, in terms all too mild to satisfy the general feeling among Conservatives, the Government narrowly escaped overthrow by a majority of 14 votes—302 to 288.²

¹ Bismarck, addressing the German Parliament on March 2, gave blunt expression to the irritation engendered by Lord Granville's mode of conducting business. "We have received," he said, "since the summer of 1884, no less than 128 English despatches, containing altogether 700 or 800 pages. We did not receive so much from all the other foreign Governments together in the twenty-three years I have been Foreign Minister. Every Nation and Government has the right to do business in the manner it considers useful; but a foreign policy chiefly made up of printed and published notes, sometimes written in order favourably to influence your own Parliament, entails the danger of writing somewhat to impress Parliament and not exclusively the foreign Governments."

² Smith had written to Northcote on February 22, endeavouring to convey to him the dissatisfaction among the Tories at the terms of his resolution, and hinting at the necessity for more vigour in attack: "There is a feeling amongst our friends that very plain, strong speak-

The disheartening effect of disunion among the Ministerialists had a remarkable counterpart at this time among the ranks of the Opposition. Dissatisfaction towards Northcote's somewhat timid leadership was enhanced by comparison with the brilliant onslaughts led by Lord Randolph Churchill against the Government policy, not only in the House of Commons, but on platforms throughout the country. This feeling found pretty plain utterance at a meeting of the Conservative party held at the Carlton on February 24, and developed into something like open revolt on March 17, when, in discussing the Redistribution of Seats Bill, Sir Michael Hicks Beach stated that he was entirely unable to agree with the line his leader had taken in supporting the Government's proposal to increase the number of members of the House, and led the "rapier and rosette" party of the Conservatives into the lobby against him.

This, and much more like it, was plainly directed against Northcote's generalship. The peaceable, cultivated country gentleman was not one to inspire confidence when desperate fighting against heavy odds was to be done, and no one knew this better than Smith himself, who knew also what serious warnings his friend and colleague had received about the state of his health. Nevertheless, neither by word nor sign did he show the slightest wavering in his loyalty to Northcote; and though secretly stimulating him to more spirited action, Smith never shrank from sharing the obloquy which the impetuous Fourth Party poured on the bourgeois placemen who sat on the front Opposition bench.

Meanwhile negotiations with the Russian Government on

ing is necessary in this debate. They say our resolution is deficient in force, and that the country demands almost passionate action. I tell you this for what it is worth. I think I recoil from extremes instinctively; but the condition of affairs is so very serious that, come what may, I think it is the duty of men to speak out and to say what they think."

the Afghan frontier question had been laboriously progressing till, on April 8, came news which seemed to put the maintenance of peace out of the question. General Komaroff had attacked and routed a body of Afghan troops with heavy loss. Smith describes the prevalent anxiety in letters to his wife :—

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *April 9.*

The news this afternoon is very serious indeed—much more so than any I have heard for a long time. It looks very much as if Russia has played a deliberately treacherous part, and in a contemptuous, defiant manner. I am afraid we have embarked on a very serious war, which will task all the resources of the country.

10th April.

We are all in a state of deep concern. There is no excitement, no alarm, but just that gravity which men exhibit when they feel great events are occurring. There is no fresh news this morning, and I hardly expect to hear anything now before Monday ; but I am very glad we did not go away, for if we had I should have felt very uneasy and very selfish. . . . I am, as you may suppose, rather busy and rather anxious, but I trust all will go well with us this evening.

Mr Gladstone described to the House what had taken place in a tone and terms which made a deep impression on all who heard him :—

The House will not be surprised when I say, speaking with measured words in circumstances of great gravity, that to us, upon the statements I have recited, this attack bears the appearance of an unprovoked aggression.

Little did the House of Commons or the country understand what lay behind the Prime Minister's speech. Conveying, as it undoubtedly did, a firm determination to stand by our treaty engagements to the Afghans, and resist encroachment upon our Indian frontier, Mr Gladstone was cheered to the echo from every part of the House. It was not till several weeks later, after the Vote of Credit for £11,000,000 had been asked for and obtained, that it became known that at the very moment he had uttered these brave words, he had been conscious that the British Commissioner, Sir Peter Lumsden, had been recalled, and that

at the same time as the Russian Government, who knew how to encourage faithful service, were sending out a sword of honour to General Komaroff.

The Redistribution Bill having been read a second time in the House of Lords, it was generally understood that the remaining business was to be got through in time for an early dissolution of Parliament. But there was an unexpected fate awaiting Mr Gladstone's Administration. The Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Childers, provided for an increase in the duties on beer and spirits, a proposal to which Sir Michael Hicks Beach moved a hostile amendment. This was carried against the Government by a majority of 12 votes, and on June 12 the Prime Minister announced that the Ministry had tendered their resignation to the Queen. Next day her Majesty telegraphed from Balmoral accepting the resignation, and sent for the Marquis of Salisbury, who, returning on June 15, began the difficult task of forming a Cabinet. The difficulty he had to encounter was twofold, for not only would the remaining business of the session, including a new Budget, have to be transacted in face of a hostile majority, but the Tory revolt against Sir Stafford Northcote had to be dealt with. This last was accentuated by an incident which took place in the House of Commons on the very day of Lord Salisbury's return from Balmoral. Mr Gladstone that evening proposed that the House should take into consideration the Lords' amendments on the Redistribution of Seats Bill, and in doing so he received the support of Northcote and the "official" Opposition. But the Fourth Party resisted the consideration of contentious matter during the interregnum. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, to the surprise of many, threw his weight into the scale of Lord Randolph Churchill, and voted with him in the minority of 35 against 333. The significance of this numerically trifling secession from North-

cote's leading consisted in the fact that it contained the combative section of the Tory party, whom it had been sought to classify by the ridiculously paradoxical title of Tory Democrats, and the effect of it was manifest in the formation of the new Ministry by the translation of Northcote to the House of Lords, with the title of Earl of Iddesleigh and the office of First Lord of the Treasury, the appointment of Beach as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the admission, *per saltum*, of Lord Randolph to the Cabinet as Secretary of State for India.

Smith's services undoubtedly warranted the expectation that he would be offered high office, but the domestic condition of the Conservative party made him quite prepared to be left out in the cold. His letters to his daughter Emily at this time give an almost consecutive account of events:—

June 9.

I have been down to the House to hear Gladstone move the adjournment until Friday, "as the Cabinet had thought it their duty to submit a humble communication to the Queen, the nature of which he did not feel at liberty to disclose," but which meant the Government had resigned. It has come very quickly indeed; much more suddenly than I expected, but I fancy the Government themselves rather look for it as a relief from their troubles. . . . I suppose by the time you return a government may be in course of formation, and I may or may not be in it. I shall not put myself forward for it; but I shall take it if it comes and if I like the berth.

June 10.

I have no news and little gossip to tell you. . . . I have seen some of the Ministers walking and driving, and they all appear to be in roaring spirits at their escape from the intolerable position in which they found themselves.

June 11.

I have had a talk with two or three men to-day. At one time I did not think I should be in the new Conservative Cabinet if one is formed, as room must be found for two or three new men, and I am far from being a ready debater, but it does seem now more probable that I shall be included. I pity the man who has to form the new Government, but he must cast aside all personal feeling, and make the best piece of machinery that he can for the sake of the country, which really is in a bad way I fear. . . .

June 13.

Nothing settled yet, so far as I know, but rumours of all kinds are flying about, with the foundation of the inner consciousness of the rumour maker.

I have been hard pressed, however, this morning, for, as we were at the Queen's ball last night, I would not have breakfast until ten this morning, and from that time until now I have had a succession of visitors. . . .

. . . I ought to have gone to Mr Strutt's organ party at Brixton, but as I have to dine at the Trinity House on Tower Hill at seven, and to propose prosperity to the Corporation, and the health of H.R.H. the Master, I shall have a fair day's work.

June 14.

I was at the Trinity House grand dinner last night, with the Duke of Edinburgh in the chair, as Master. The Prince of Wales, Prince George of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge, and Prince Edward were there. The speakers were the two princes, the Duke of Cambridge, Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Northbrook, Harcourt, Lord Derby, and myself—so we were judiciously sandwiched. It was a very pleasant party, but droll from the singular relations in which we stood to each other side by side—one set out and the other set not in.

CARLTON CLUB, June 16.

I have come down here to get the news, for I heard nothing from anybody during the morning which *was* news. . . . — came in this morning, looking very much disturbed and anxious. He was surprised, I think, to find that I was taking things very coolly, and going out for a walk with the girls. . . . I am still very uncertain if I shall have office at all, although many people say I shall, but I shall not be at all sorry to be left out of any combination at present. A position of greater freedom and less responsibility will be very far from disagreeable to me. By 12 to-morrow, when we meet again at Arlington Street, I suppose I shall know something decisive; and as I know you will be curious to hear, I will telegraph to the Pandora at Falmouth.

How perfectly sincere Smith was in these expressions of indifference to personal advancement is proved by a letter which earlier in the same year, February 22, he had written to Northcote in view of the possibility of the Opposition being called to office. It referred to the imminence of that time when moderate and earnest men of all parties, actuated by a loftier principle than merely to

“Pursue the triumph and partake the gale,”

should draw together in the formation of a Constitutional party. This, ever since the death of Palmerston, had been Smith's chief hope for the future of his party, to realise which he was perfectly willing to sacrifice his own public career:—

I have not taken any step with regard to Goschen, and I shall not do so. It is for you and Salisbury to consider whether the circum-

THE IDEAL.



Fancy German Portrait of General Sir Smith, the British Secretary of State for War.

stances of the times require that an effort should be made to unite all strong men in the endeavour to save the country. . . . Goschen has weight in the country, if not in the House, and if one of the difficulties in approaching him was to make room in the Cabinet for him, and perhaps another, I am perfectly ready to stand aside alto-

gether, and to give you from the back benches all the help I can to bring things round. We have a very dark and stormy future before us, and no personal interest or personal ambition ought to stand in the way of doing the best that is possible.

But Smith's old colleagues knew too well his value to entertain this offer. He was appointed Secretary of State for War, his old post at the Admiralty being filled by Lord

THE REAL.



*The Reality—
W. H. Smith, Esq., War Office.*

George Hamilton. The contrast afforded by Smith's pacific personal appearance and staid demeanour to the formidable attributes of his new office proved irresistible to the pungent but not unfriendly satire of 'Punch.'¹

¹ Messrs Bradbury & Agnew, publishers of 'Punch,' have kindly

My office [he wrote to Miss Giberne] is nominally superior to the Admiralty, but I should have preferred the old post. I have taken, however, that which the Chief thought best for me and for the Government. We have great responsibilities before us, and I can only hope and trust that we may have wisdom and strength enough to do our work to the advantage of the country. If it were not that men and things are in the hands of a higher power, I should be inclined to despond as to the future; but with that sense of unseen strength, I hope that all will come well for our country.

The new Ministry met Parliament for the first time on July 6, and set their hand to the heavy work which had to be transacted before prorogation.

I have been sitting [writes Smith to his wife half an hour after midnight on July 27] on the bench since 4.15, without moving from it for more than twenty minutes to get some soup and some cold meat, but I have got all my votes, and got them well. However, I really could not write to you, as I had to speak or to watch what other men were saying all the time, and now I seize the first moment to send a line to you, but it will only be for the second post.

But Parliament showed how it can transact business when it is in the mood for it. The new Budget, the Indian Budget, and the whole of the Votes in Supply, were finished within six weeks; and on August 14 that House of Commons which Mr Bright had once declared to be "the best ever returned," sat for the last time to receive the Queen's message proroguing Parliament.

The autumn of 1885 is not one likely to be forgotten by those who were candidates at the general election. From the moment when the Gladstone Ministry resigned, the country rang with platform speeches from the Cassiterides to Ultima Thule—from the Naze to Cape Clear. The anxiety to secure support from the newly enfranchised rural labourers gave prominence to Mr Jesse Collings's formula of "three acres and a cow," which became the battle-cry of the Liberal party; while, on the other hand, the importance of the Irish vote in many English and Scottish borough consented to the reproduction of these caricatures, which were produced at the time by Mr Harry Furniss.

stituencies undoubtedly seduced some Conservative candidates into a dangerous dalliance with the Parnellite programme, and led some to hamper themselves with glib pledges about "equal law for England and Ireland," which subsequent events have made it difficult for them to redeem.

The key-note of Mr Gladstone's appeal to the country was sounded in his first speech delivered in Edinburgh to the Mid-Lothian electors. He passionately urged his party to hold together, in order that, above all things, they should return a Liberal majority so considerable as to make it independent of the Irish vote in the House of Commons. He expressed the hope "that from one end of the country to the other there will not be a single representative returned to Parliament who for one moment will listen to any proposition tending to impair the visible and sensible empire. Whatever demands may be made on the part of Ireland, if they are to be entertained they must be subject to the condition that the unity of the empire shall be preserved."

Mr Parnell was not slow or ambiguous in reply. On November 21, the eve of the elections, the Irish Nationalist Council issued a manifesto, calling on their fellow-countrymen in England and Scotland to vote everywhere against the Liberals, who had "coerced Ireland and deluged Egypt with blood." No doubt this had its effect in contributing to the unexpected success of the Conservatives in that part of the electoral field where, of old, they had been weakest, but it could not account for it all. There had manifestly taken place in urban constituencies a notable growth of that kind of moderate opinion of which Smith had been the foremost exponent, almost the pioneer, when he carried Westminster in 1868.

But the time had come for Smith to sever his connection with that historical borough. Redistribution, which had

left intact the City of London, abolished the double representation of Westminster, and divided the constituency into three single seats — Westminster, St George's, and the Strand. Leaving the first two to the care of Lord Algernon Percy and Mr Burdett-Coutts, Mr Smith carried his victorious colours into the Strand district, where he had little difficulty in routing his adversary, Mr Johnson, by a majority of 5645 against 2486.

The ground gained by the Conservatives in the boroughs was lost, and more than lost, in the English counties; whereupon Parnell, whose object it was to keep parties so evenly balanced as to leave any Government at the mercy of the Irish vote, became alarmed at the threatened preponderance of the Tories, and circulated fresh instructions that Irishmen were to vote Liberal.

Had that astute politician possessed absolute power of regulating the result of the elections exactly to suit the purposes of his party, he could not possibly have adjusted it with greater nicety, for the number of Liberals returned — 335 — was precisely the same as that of the Conservatives — 249 — and Home Rulers — 86 — added together. Mr Gladstone's entreaty for independence had been refused, and both the great parties were left at the mercy of the Irish vote in Parliament. It looked as if an *impasse* had been reached; but rumours, treated at first as incredible, got into circulation that the Liberal chief was about to perform a change of front transcending any feat of opportunism ever attempted by an English statesman. These rumours first took definite shape on December 16, when there appeared in some of the newspapers an outline of a scheme of Home Rule for Ireland attributed to Mr Gladstone. That gentleman immediately circulated a telegram to the following effect:—

The statement is not an accurate representation of my views, but

is, I presume, a speculation on them. It is not published with my knowledge or authority, nor is any other beyond my own public declarations.

It is not too much to say that nobody attached any importance to this Delphic utterance: people had learned by experience that its author never committed himself to a statement that was not open at both ends. Before the close of the year it came to be generally understood that Mr Gladstone, determined to regain office at any cost of political honour to himself, and at any hazard to the security of the kingdom, had purchased the Irish vote by undertaking to formulate a complete measure of Home Rule.

It was no holiday task to which Smith had set his hand at the War Office. War had been averted, it is true, but the storm was still rumbling in the East, and England could not afford to relax precautions. On November 15, Smith writes to his daughter Emily:—

I am anxious and low-spirited about Eastern affairs. It looks very much as if *the* great war was about to break out, and the troubles and calamities which may result from it. God only knows, and He only can deliver this country from great misfortunes.

On December 23 came a letter from H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief, urging the necessity, in view of the threatening aspect of affairs, of a large increase in the army, and enclosing a letter from Sir Frederick Stephenson, commanding in Egypt, giving a discouraging description of the outlook there. To this the Secretary for War replied as follows:—

I have read General Stephenson's interesting letter. It is not a cheerful one, but it has the great merit of discussing the situation with complete frankness.

I have taken the liberty of sending a copy of it to Lord Salisbury, as he is in the daily receipt of messages from Sir H. D. Wolff praying for a reoccupation of Dongola

We did not come to any final decision at our meeting yesterday; but my colleagues recognised the extreme difficulty of increasing the strength of the army by any sudden spurt. It appears to be clear that if the time-expired men are allowed to go, we cannot at the present rate of recruiting add more than 8000 men in each year to the total strength. I have therefore inclined to the conclusion that we must first of all fill up our existing cadres, and provide sufficiently strong depots to meet the case of Regiments with both battalions abroad. This will absorb, I think, the whole addition which we can hope to get in the course of the coming year, and I am doubtful whether it will be possible to do so much. I shall not be afraid to say on paper what I should wish to do if men could be got, but we must wait, I think, for the formation of the new cadres until at least some men are available for them.

CHAPTER XIX.

1886-1887.

It would be hard to say to which of the two great parties the events of 1886 were destined to prove the more lasting in their consequences, and the immediate position was almost equally perplexing to both. Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister, but as the Government could only reckon 249 supporters among the 670 members of the House of Commons, it was but a question of how many weeks or days after the meeting of Parliament should run before the inevitable downfall of the Administration. But no indication had been given by their adversaries of a definite policy on the dominant question of the day—the government of Ireland. The project attributed to Mr Gladstone, of conceding Home Rule in such measure as would secure to him the support of the Irish party at Westminster, remained as nebular and hypothetical as when it was first bruited in December.

The Earl of Carnarvon's resignation of the Viceroyalty of

Ireland was followed by that of his Chief Secretary, Sir William Hart Dyke. This office, which had of late years become the most onerous in the Government, could no longer be adequately filled by a Minister outside the Cabinet. But it was a post which possessed less attractions than any other. During the late Administration it had been filled by three successive Ministers in five years: of these the first had resigned because his colleagues would not suffer him to carry out his policy; the second had been assassinated; of the third, anxiety and worry had changed his comely black beard and hair to snowy white. To whom could Lord Salisbury turn at this most trying juncture but to the man who had never failed in any trial—to his War Minister, W. H. Smith?

Confidential.

HATFIELD HOUSE, Dec. 17, '85.

MY DEAR SMITH,—As you know, — has refused the Lord Lieutenancy. But now comes a new complication. Last night Dyke came to Beach, & afterwards to me, & explained that he did not want to go on as Irish Secretary. . . . Now it is possible to go on without a Viceroy by the help of Lords Justices, but it is not possible to go on without an Irish Secretary. Are you disposed to take it? supposing, of course, that we are not immediately turned out. I need not tell you how much confidence such an appointment would give to the party & the country. It is not a question whether the acceptance of this proposal would be an advantage to the country—of that there can be no doubt—but whether you will take it. It is the post of difficulty now, & therefore the post of honour. . . . The difficulties are formidable: I am afraid you are the only person who can avert them.—Ever yours very truly,

SALISBURY.

The offer made in these frank terms was accepted from a plain sense of duty. Everybody understood Smith's motives in doing so, none more clearly than his own colleagues.

One line [wrote Lord George Hamilton from the Admiralty] to say how I admire your patriotism, self-sacrifice, and courage for undertaking the Irish Secretaryship. It is an act as gallant & self-denying as any that has won the V.C. in action. . . . You have extricated the Government from a really serious embarrassment.

From the Board of Trade came a letter from the Right

Hon. E. Stanhope, who was soon to succeed him at the War Office :—

If the news I see be true, all I can say is that you are the most public-spirited man in England. But for our sake, & for the sake of the country, I most heartily rejoice.

Brief as Smith's authority was to be at the Irish Office, it lasted long enough to give indication of the policy on which he and his colleagues had resolved as necessary for the maintenance of order in Ireland. The Coercion Acts of Mr Gladstone's Government had lapsed with the close of 1885 ; it was supposed that the late Viceroy, Lord Carnarvon, had favoured an attempt to rule Ireland by the ordinary law. But Smith could see no security in such an experiment. On January 23 he went to Dublin to be sworn in ;¹ on the 26th the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice that on the Chief Secretary's return he would introduce a bill for the suppression of the National League and other dangerous associations, and for the better protection of life and property in Ireland.

In speaking to the motion for the Address, Mr Gladstone, without revealing the whole extent of his conversion to Home Rule, adroitly conveyed an intimation of his desire to confer with the Government on the solution of the dilemma, and endeavoured to throw upon them the responsibility of refusing co-operation.

And then, as if conscious of the futility of evading the curiosity as to his intentions which the December rumours had aroused, he pronounced a sentence memorable alike for

¹ A trifling mishap which occurred between the railway station and the Chief Secretary's lodge would assuredly have been accepted in an earlier age as an adverse omen. The Chief Secretary's sword, which with the rest of his luggage was being conveyed on a car, fell off, and getting between the wheel spokes, was snapped in two. And the fulfilment of this evil augury would as surely have been recognised when, on his return home on January 26, Smith received the news of the fall of the Government during his absence.

its unusual candour, and as the most cynical declaration of opportunism that ever fell from the lips of a British statesman in the first rank of politics :—

I do not intend . . . to have it determined for me by others at what time and in what manner I shall make any addition to the declaration I laid before the country in the month of September. I stand here as a member of this House, where there are many who have taken their seats for the first time on these benches, and where there may be some to whom possibly I may avail myself of the privilege of old age to offer a recommendation. I would tell them of my own intention to keep my counsel and reserve my own freedom, until I see the occasion when there may be a prospect of public benefit in endeavouring to make a movement forward, and I will venture to recommend them, *as an old parliamentary hand*, to do the same.

The basis upon which the Government were invited to confer with the leaders of the Opposition was not one upon which they could descend. It was only too manifest that the occasion had arisen when the sole hope of Parliament maintaining control over its own proceedings and authority in all parts of the realm lay in the coalition of Liberals and Conservatives. But to seek that coalition in discussing a scheme—the establishment of a separate Legislature in Ireland—which both parties had always uniformly held as beyond the limits of discussion, was a proposal which Lord Salisbury and his colleagues could not entertain. The coalition was to take place, but not by following Mr Gladstone in his abandonment of settled principles.

Smith's report from Dublin, and the notice ensuing upon it of a new Coercion Bill, at once decided the attitude of the Parnellite party in the House of Commons. The Government were henceforward at the mercy of the Opposition leaders, who could now reckon on the Home Rule vote. The period of suspense was not long. Mr Jesse Collings had on the paper an amendment to the Address, expressing regret that the Queen's Speech contained no proposal for the provision of allotments and small holdings for agricul-

tural labourers. This amendment was the celebrated "three acres and a cow" in dress clothes, and the Opposition leaders gladly availed themselves of a question upon which they could take issue with the Government, without explaining their own scheme for the settlement of Home Rule. There was, indeed, nothing in Mr Collings's amendment, which was very skilfully drawn, to which the Conservative party could offer resistance in principle; but it is well understood that no Government can suffer an addition to, or abatement from, the programme of legislation set forth in the Queen's Speech, hence every amendment involves a vote of no confidence in Ministers. The division, taken on January 25, showed 331 for the amendment and 252 against it, leaving the Government in a minority of 79.

The resignation of Lord Salisbury's Cabinet was immediately announced. Smith, in a letter to one of his sisters, written a few days later from Torquay, whither he had gone to get rid of a troublesome cough, alluded briefly and modestly to an interesting circumstance connected with his leaving office:—

The Queen was very gracious to me on Saturday when I gave up the Seals, but I am sure you will be glad to know I remain, by my own strong wish, plain Mr Smith.

The process of Cabinet-making upon which Mr Gladstone now entered was enveloped in more than the usual amount of uncertainty. If it were true, as was shrewdly surmised and confidently asserted, that the "old parliamentary hand" had purchased the support of Mr Parnell and his following by roundly promising to satisfy their aspiration for Home Rule, then, it was clear, he was not in a position to give the assurance demanded by Lord Hartington and Mr Goschen, or even the less complete assurance asked for by Mr Chamberlain and Mr Trevelyan. Moreover, it was difficult to

understand how either Sir William Harcourt (who only a few weeks previously had been taunting the Tories with "stewing in their Parnellite juice"), Mr Campbell Bannerman, and other former Ministers under Mr Gladstone, could so soon renounce the emphatic assurance they had given before their constituents, that they would resist the demands of Irish Nationalists. It turned out in the end that, while the Prime Minister had been able to allay the suspicions of the Radical Unionists—Mr Chamberlain and Mr Trevelyan—his former Whig colleagues—the Marquis of Hartington, the Earl of Derby, and Lord Selborne—had felt compelled to stand aloof. On the other hand, Sir William Harcourt and Mr Childers showed no scruples sufficiently strong to prevent them entering the Cabinet—the first as Chancellor of the Exchequer, the other as Home Secretary.

When Parliament met on February 18, the Prime Minister announced that before the end of March he hoped to be able to lay before the House his proposals for the future government of Ireland. The Conservatives showed no slackness in preparing the minds of the people for what was in store for them. There was, at this time, no one in the ranks of the Opposition approaching Lord Randolph Churchill in fire and vigour of oratory, or in the enthusiasm he was able to rouse among his numerous audiences. On March 3, in a speech delivered at Manchester, he made an eloquent appeal to Liberals to join with Conservatives in forming a new political party, which he named Unionist, to "combine all that is best of the Tory, the Whig, and the Liberal—combine them all, whether they be principles or whether they be men." He said that if among the Tories there were persons with whom the Whigs would find difficulty in serving, "those persons would cheerfully stand aside";

and he warned his hearers against the policy of the Separatists, "which would be equivalent to a restoration of the Heptarchy."

In the interval of suspense which preceded Mr Gladstone's declaration as to his Irish scheme, there was no ambiguity in the utterances of the Whig leaders, and he was made perfectly aware that, if his bill should be one to confer a practically independent Legislature on Ireland, he must prepare for opposition not only from them and the Tories, but also from Mr Chamberlain and Mr Trevelyan, his colleagues in the Cabinet. As time went on, rumours of a schism multiplied, till, on March 26, the resignation of the last-named gentlemen was announced, and there remained no room for doubt as to the sweeping changes involved in the coming measure.

At last, on April 8, Mr Gladstone moved for leave to bring in his bill. The present House of Commons, which, for some inscrutable reason, is only constructed to contain—it would be ludicrous to say accommodate—some 400 out of its 670 members, had on no former occasion been so crowded. Every one wanted to hear, and it was clear that everybody couldn't. Chairs were set on the floor of the House, by which means 70 or 80 additional seats were provided, but the rush for places was scarcely consistent with the decorum usually observed in the legislative Chamber.

Smith spent the Easter recess at Cadenabbia, whence he wrote the following letter to his yachting friend, Mr Penrose Fitzgerald, M.P. :—

April 27, 1886.

I have been studying the new Home Rule and the Land Purchase Bill in the quiet which is afforded by the Lake of Como, and if these bills pass I am very much inclined to clear out of the old country altogether, with such means as I can carry away with me, and find a home clear of the dishonour of English politics. But we are not beaten in the fight yet—only one's indignation grows.

It is not necessary to follow the initial stages of a controversy which is still pending;¹ it is enough to record that the division on the second reading took place on June 8, with the following result:—

For the Second Reading	.	.	.	313
Against	.	.	.	343
				<hr/>
Majority against Government	.	.	.	30

The tellers for the majority were both Liberals, the Hon. Henry Brand and Mr Caine—a combination of names which suggested to the Home Rulers sinister allusions to the “brand of Cain.”

Ninety-three Liberal members followed Lord Hartington into the “No” lobby; and thus, as in 1885, the second week in June saw the downfall of a Gladstone Administration.

Three days later the announcement was made in both Houses that the Queen had been advised to dissolve Parliament. All contentious business was withdrawn, the necessary supplies were voted, and the shortest Parliament of Queen Victoria’s reign was dissolved on June 25.

If the appeal to the constituencies was at short notice, the answer was not capable of being misinterpreted. The net result of the general election was to increase the majority of 30 by which Mr Gladstone’s bill had been thrown out of the old House of Commons, into one of 113 in the new House. Mr Smith had to encounter a farcical opposition in the Strand Division, where the result of the poll was—

Smith (C.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	5034
Skinner (L.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1508
								<hr/>
Majority for Smith	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3526

The Queen sent for Lord Salisbury, who approached Lord

¹ Parliament has, during the present year (1893), been engaged in the discussion of Mr Gladstone’s second Home Rule Bill.

Hartington with the view of forming a Coalition Government, to whom he expressed his willingness either to take office under him, or, he and his colleagues standing aside altogether, to give him loyal support as the head of a Liberal-Unionist Cabinet. This overture was declined, and a purely Conservative Ministry was formed, in which Smith held his old office of Secretary of State for War.

The leading part borne by Lord Randolph Churchill in the events which led to the overthrow of the Gladstonian Ministry—the enthusiasm with which he was regarded by Conservative electors throughout the country—above all, the devotion shown towards him by his party in the House of Commons—had prepared the public for his appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. It was a dazzling position for so young a statesman (he was then only thirty-seven); but the vast preponderance of opinion indorsed his promotion, and none of his elder colleagues gave more generous approval than Smith, who, in the Parliament of 1880, had sometimes had to endure sharp and scarce friendly criticism from the member for Woodstock. He wrote to Mrs Smith on August 20, the morning after the first sitting of the new Parliament for the despatch of business:—

Well, you see we passed through our first night pretty well, and all our friends seem to be satisfied. Randolph spoke very well, with great care, a great sense of responsibility, and some nervousness; but he was withal clear and strong, and the House generally was satisfied. The Irish threaten a long debate, but I am hopeful, as the tone after Randolph was low and poor. . . .

A week later he expressed himself not quite so cheerfully:—

August 26.

We have had a nasty night—not injurious to ourselves, but troublesome, and I have had to sit almost constantly in the House. The heat has had something to do with it, I think, and I am beginning to have less hope of getting down early in September; but we must

work on and do our best. The House is thoroughly factious—that is, the Opposition—and so we all get cross together, but I am keeping well.

And when the autumnal equinox arrived, and summer was bidding farewell to an imprisoned Parliament, his tone acquired a tinge of despair:—

Sept. 22.

It is simply beastly. Here I am at 6.45 writing to you instead of taking a quiet turn round the garden with you; and it has been talk, talk, and worry, worry all the afternoon, for no purpose whatever which can have any useful end; but as a member of the Government I have been obliged to stay with the other members, or our supporters would have had a right to complain and would have gone away. . . . Although I am very much disappointed at not being with you, perhaps it is as well that I don't make a rush down and a rush back again to-morrow morning, for I am very tired.

Parliament was prorogued on September 25, and the dominant feeling among Ministerialists was admiration for the skill with which Lord Randolph had discharged the delicate duties of leader. But proportionate to the warmth of this feeling was the shock caused by an event which occurred before the close of the year. A leading article in the 'Times' of December 23 announced the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill, who had disagreed with his colleagues on the question of Army and Navy expenditure.

Such an act on the part of the leader of the House of Commons, occurring within a few weeks of the beginning of a new session, must have been a severe strain on the stability of any Ministry; much more so to one which relied for its majority in the House on an alliance cemented in haste with a section of its hereditary foes, brought about by the pressure of extraordinary and possibly temporary conditions, and tested thus far by the experience of no more than a six weeks' session. Add to all this that France and Germany on the one hand, and Russia and Austria on the other, armed to the teeth, were watching each other jealously; that it seemed to require but a trifling occurrence to bring

about a mighty war ; and that nearer home the leader of the Opposition had championed the cause of Irish disaffection, —and it will be seen that this season of peace and goodwill was one of misgiving and apprehension to all who had at heart the welfare of England.

Lord Palmerston once expressed the opinion that the life of the strongest Parliamentary Government was never worth more than three months' purchase ; but when it became known that the negotiations which had been at once renewed with the view of inducing the Marquis of Hartington to take office had failed, and that he had resolutely refused to do so, few people would have been found so speculative as to reckon on the endurance of the Unionist Administration over a single month. That Lord Hartington, contrary to the opinion of those most strongly opposed to Mr Gladstone's policy, acted wisely on this occasion, will be realised when the action at that time of Mr Chamberlain and the Radical wing of the Liberal Unionists is considered. Mr Chamberlain asked, seeing that the Liberal Unionists were at one with Mr Gladstone on every question except the Irish one, and even on the Irish question agreed with him on three points out of four, why it should be impossible to agree upon a line of policy, and settle their differences sitting at a round table. Thereupon came the proposal for a conference, heartily indorsed by Mr Gladstone ; and when Mr Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan as Unionists, and Sir William Harcourt and Mr John Morley as Home Rulers, met on January 13, under the Chairmanship of Lord Herschell, at the celebrated Round-Table Conference, it seemed as if the "old parliamentary hand" was on the point of winning back the allegiance of half the Liberal Unionists.

At this critical moment Mr Goschen decided to throw in his lot with Lord Salisbury, and accept the office vacated

by Lord Randolph Churchill. But, having failed in his candidature for an Edinburgh seat at the general election, he was without a seat in the House. However, a way out of the dilemma was provided by Lord Algernon Percy's retirement from the representation of St George's, Westminster, for which seat Mr Goschen was elected.

The difficulties of the situation, however, were far from being at an end here. The question had to be settled who was to lead the Unionist party in the House of Commons. Under ordinary circumstances, when the Prime Minister is in the House of Lords, the Chancellor of the Exchequer becomes leader of the House of Commons. But Mr Goschen was a Liberal,¹ and the great majority of Unionists were Conservatives. It was pretty plainly to be understood that they would not work cordially except under a man of their own party.

Under these peculiar circumstances all eyes turned upon W. H. Smith, who, despite the mediocrity of his oratorical power, was felt to be the one safe man to whom the lead could be assigned. Like every other advancement which befell him, he sought it not—it came to him, and, with much misgiving in his ability for the duty, he ceased to be Secretary of State for War, and became First Lord of the Treasury and leader of the House of Commons. A single sentence from a letter written at this time to the Rev. Canon Nisbet clearly expresses his own feelings about it:—

You are kind enough to speak of the honour attaching to my new position. I shrunk from it, as it involves the use of qualities which I have not a claim to possess; but it was presented to me as a duty, and I felt bound to endeavour to do what I could for my Colleagues and for the Country.

¹ He did not formally join the Conservative party and become a member of the Carlton Club till 1893.

To his constant correspondent, Miss Giberne, he wrote three days later :—

. . . My ground of hope and trust—not confidence—is that I believe I am doing my duty. I could not help it, unless I had shirked for fear of personal consequences to myself ; and it does not matter what happens to me or to my reputation if for the time being the work is going on.

So I trust that all my real friends, such as you are, will pray God to give me the wisdom, the strength, and the courage I need for the great work thrust upon me, and I comfort myself in the belief that I shall have all that is good for me.

This advance of Smith to the highest place in the House of Commons coincided with an event which gave him deep pain. The Earl of Iddesleigh, as Sir Stafford Northcote, had been the first departmental chief under whom he had served—a kind of political godfather to him : there had grown up between these men a warm personal friendship.

The course of events had now brought about Lord Iddesleigh's retirement from the Foreign Office, in order to facilitate the changes in the Cabinet consequent on Lord Randolph Churchill's retirement, and there was some talk of his leaving public life altogether. On January 9 Smith wrote to beg him not to do so :—

I see by the 'Western Morning News' that there is some doubt whether you will remain in the Cabinet. As an old friend, will you let me say what pain it would give me if you went from us ? I hold on, greatly against every personal feeling and inclination. I do not like the work I am called upon to do. I distrust my own powers to do it, and I remain and try, probably facing political death because I am told it is my duty. I do not attempt to use such language to you. I do not know, for Salisbury has not told me—having intentionally kept away while all these changes have been going on—what he has said to you, but I am quite sure of this, that it would be a real sorrow to us all if we were not to meet you again in Cabinet.

Three days later, on January 12, Lord Iddesleigh came to London to take leave of his subordinates at the Foreign Office. He called at the chambers of the First Lord of the Treasury in Downing Street, and, while his arrival was being announced to Lord Salisbury, was seized with an

affection of the heart, and died in the course of twenty minutes. The circumstances were such as deeply to move his friends, and indeed the whole country, for it could not but appear as if an old and faithful servant of the State and of his party had been gently shelved to make way for younger and bolder men.

You have heard the news [Smith wrote on the same day to one of his daughters]: it is very sad, and yet it is not an unhappy ending for the man. I hear that Lord Idedesleigh appeared at the Foreign Office to be in exceedingly good health and spirits, and he said good-bye to Sir James Fergusson very cheerfully, implying that it was only for a time, and that he was coming back again to the Government. He then left the Foreign Office, crossed Downing Street to No. 10, and walked up-stairs to the vestibule of Lord Salisbury's room, was seen by Henry Manners¹ to stagger, and was caught by him before he fell, and placed on a sofa, from which he never rose or spoke. He lived 20 minutes, and in the time three doctors were brought to him, but they could do nothing, and Dr Granville, his own attendant, said he was not at all surprised, for he knew, and the whole family knew, that the end might come at any time in this way.

Just before I heard of this I had a really touching letter from Salisbury on one I had sent him, enclosing a letter from Harry Northcote about his father and himself. It will be of historical value, as it will really prove conclusively how tenderly Salisbury wished to deal with his old friend and colleague. It is doubtful if we go down to Osborne under the circumstances. Salisbury was to have gone by the 3.40 train, but under the strain he postponed his departure, and telegraphed to the Queen. She was probably out driving at the time, as no answer had been returned half an hour ago; but I will write by the late post if I do not go down.

Smith was, as may be supposed, deeply affected by this event:—

It is very sad, is it not [he wrote on 13th to another correspondent]? and yet mainly for us, the survivors and spectators of the abrupt termination of an honourable, an useful life—useful to the end.

And again on 16th to Miss Giberne:—

I am writing to you in very low spirits, for here in this house died only four days ago one of my oldest political and personal friends. It was not an unhappy death for him, for he had shown only a few minutes before by his manner and his conversation that he was at peace with all men, and he had done his work with all his might up

¹ Now Marquis of Granby, M.P.

to the end. But still it was a great shock to us all, and although I have known for years that there must be a sudden close to his life, yet the termination of a protracted dread is a shock and blow.

CHAPTER XX.

1887.

It was under the discouragement of the events narrated in the last chapter that Smith had to enter upon his duties as leader of the House of Commons. Parliament assembled on January 27, and it immediately became evident that the Opposition had drawn encouragement from what had taken place since the autumn. Their spirits were further raised by the speech of Lord Randolph Churchill, who, taking an early opportunity to explain the causes of his resignation, dwelt not only on having been unable, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to become responsible for the Estimates presented to him by the heads of the Admiralty and War Office, but added that there were other important questions on which he was at variance with his colleagues.

When Lord Randolph Churchill had delivered his personal explanation and sat down, Smith rose to make his first speech as leader of the House, and prefaced his observations on Lord Randolph's statement by a few deprecatory words, almost homely in their simplicity:—

I have, sir, on rising, to make an appeal to the House. Placed in the position in which I am, I desire to appeal to hon. members for their indulgence and for that favourable interpretation of all my actions which are necessary to one who feels deeply his own deficiencies in following in the steps of the many great men who have held the important position which I now fill. I appeal to them in the hope that by the cordial support of my hon. friends on this side of the House, and by the generous interpretation of my acts by right hon. and hon. gentlemen opposite, I may be enabled, to the best of my ability, to maintain the order and decorum of the proceedings of this House, and the decencies of debate.

As it turned out, the hopes of the Separatists, alike in the future action of Lord Randolph Churehill and in the fruits of the Round-Table Conference, were destined to disappointment. In the meantime, however, they sufficed to inspire the Opposition with extraordinary activity, and the debate on the Address was prolonged till February 17, and even then it was only by application of the elosure that it was brought to an end.

There was yet another trial in store for Ministers. Sir Michael Hiex Beach, who oocupied the post of Irish Secretary, was compelled, by a serious malady of the eyes, to resign his office on Mareh 3; and the appointment of Mr Arthur Balfour to succeed him conveyed little confidence to the Unionists in general, to whom as yet he had only been known as one of the less forward members of the extinet Fourth Party. Those who knew him intimately had better hopes, because they were aware of the "grit" which lay under his languid demeanour; but even they must have felt some misgivings when they saw committed to him a task which had already within seven years severely taxed, and in some eases overtaxed, the endurance and moral courage of no fewer than eight statesmen of the first rank: and this all the more because the first piece of work for the new Chief Secretary was to be the odious one of introducing a new Crimes Bill; and the second—almost as onerous and almost more delieate—the passage of a bill dealing with the ulcerated question of land tenure in Ireland.

But Mr Balfour justified, and more than justified, the confidence reposed in him. The session of 1887 has become memorable as the most trying that has ever taken place, whether from the acrimony of the debates or the late hours to which the sittings were prolonged. In addition to work in the House, Ministers were called on to take part in a number of functions connected with the celebration of her

Majesty's Jubilee, and the labours of this summer left a lasting mark on the constitutions of more than one member of the Government. Smith's letters abound in references to the harassing experience he had to undergo :—

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *May 10.*

You seem to have plenty to do, and to find amusement in doing it. I have plenty to do, but the amusement—well, that is not much. . . . We had a rough night last night. I put the closure on two or three times, and only reported progress in Committee at $\frac{1}{4}$ past 4, getting into bed at about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5. To-night things have been quiet, but quite as obstructive as ever, and we shall have to do something more yet to get the Bill through. This morning I drove for an hour in the open carriage, for I was tired. We called at Arklow House, and poor Beresford Hope is, I fear, dying. . . . It is now just 11. I shall not stay up so late to-night.

May 11.

. . . We have had another dreary day— $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours in Committee, and we have hardly advanced as many words in the bill; but I used the closure again, and got majorities of 100. It is very sickening work, and if it were not duty I should throw it up; but the people behind me are very warm, and very good.

May 12.

We had asked Sir F. Stephenson and Sir F. Grenfell—both from Egypt—to come to a 9.45 breakfast, and they talked very pleasantly; and it was very pleasant to me to go back on my old War Office experiences. They left at 11, and my day began again. I came down to Downing Street about 1, and had more than my ordinary share of work. I lunched at the United Service Club, and there saw admirals and generals who seemed glad to recognise me; and then at our meeting here we read the Duke of Connaught's Leave Bill a second time by 318 votes against 45. The House is now going on droning over a quantity of motions which mean little or nothing, and about 2 I hope we shall get the Jubilee Vote.

May 13.

It is really very pleasant to know that you are enjoying your treatment.¹ I cannot say I very much enjoy mine, but it has to be borne, and the work must be done. To-night we are still on that weary first clause of the bill, and Mr Gladstone is staying and dining here to be ready to make a speech against us, but he will not inflict much, if any, harm. You see we finished the work we had cut out for ourselves last night. On Monday we take Supply again, and I hope then we shall get all that we want before the holidays begin; but I am still in a very anxious state as to the condition of public business. The obstruction of the two Oppositions now united in one is beyond anything that has been seen in this House, and unless it gives way under

¹ Written to his daughter, who was at Aix.

the pressure of public opinion, very drastic measures will have to be taken.

Here I am again droning on, while the Irish and their allies spit and splutter and obstruct. It is desperate work, unmitigated obstruction, utterly regardless of all consequences to Parliament or the country. We have now been 8 days over one clause, and we have not finished it yet. The country is getting very angry, and is beginning to say that the Government is "deplorably weak" in not insisting on faster procedure. I got to bed at 4 this morning, and had a fair night. To-day we three went to the wedding, at S. Margaret's, of Lord Cranborne. Literally everybody was there, and it went off very well indeed. I went from the church to Downing Street, where I found enough to do, and then came down here, when I moved that we all go to church next Sunday,¹ and Gladstone seconded me, and it was carried unanimously.

May 19.

I am writing again from my seat while Healy is speaking. It is not lively, but I have to bear it.² We have had a somewhat better evening. The famous Labouchere moved the adjournment at the meeting of the House, and I put on the closure at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 6. They were very angry, but it did them good. Since then we have had the Criminal Bill, and we have had 5 divisions, and have made some progress. Now they are obstructing at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 1 in the morning the Report of Supply, but I hope we shall get it in another hour.

May 20.

I really think I may get to bed by 2 o'clock this morning, and it seems so early as to be almost incredible; but I had to get out of Committee with the Crimes Bill shortly after 12 in order to take the Duke of Connaught's Bill before the half hour, and the Duke was not opposed when it was clear he could not be successfully, so that business was quickly got through. . . . I have been sleeping better. Thanks for your kind inquiries; but my nights have been short, and I am a little tired, but otherwise quite well.

May 22.

E. M. and I went to St Margaret's this morning. E. and F. I put into the Church on my way to the House, M. went with Mrs Peel, who had been kind enough to ask you or one of them to go to the Speaker's house to see the procession, and then by a short cut get into

¹ To attend the Jubilee Thanksgiving Service at St Margaret's.

² Mr Healy, if he was not lively, was at least forcible, and may be credited with having brought some novelties into parliamentary rhetoric. Alluding to the circumstances of Mr O'Brien's imprisonment, he introduced the following flower of oratory:—

"I declare before heaven that if I am put in jail, if I am treated as my hon. friend has been, if I am compelled to do the disgusting things which my hon. friend has been compelled to do, I shall save up a bucket of slops and carry it across the floor of this House and fling it into the face of the Irish Secretary as he sits upon that bench."

church before we arrived. The procession was headed by Mr Erskine in full court dress with the mace, then came the Speaker in his gold robe, then the Clerks of the House in wig and gown, and the first row of the members consisted of Hartington, Courtney, Gladstone, and myself; the other members of the Government and Privy Councillors following next. Ordinary members followed in fours. The ground was kept by the Westminster Volunteers and police, and there was a great crowd behind. The clergy and choristers met us in Westminster Hall, and walked before us across the road to the church. Within the altar rails were the two archbishops and the Abbey dignitaries. The service lasted $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, the sermon, which was most eloquent, $\frac{3}{4}$ an hour. The whole was most interesting but somewhat fatiguing.

May 22.

My last letter to you before I start for Aix. I am tired—very tired—but the thought of rest and of joining you refreshes me. I have been a little brutal to-night. The House does not want to meet to-morrow, but the Opposition wishes to advance business as little as possible, and I have put it to them gently: Pass the clause, and I will move the adjournment this evening; don't pass it, and I won't—and I think we shall get it, for we have made very fair progress, taking everything into account.

July 4.

I was tired this evening, and I had to sit on the bench without moving until 8.20, watching and waiting to bark and to bite; but in the end I got my motion by a large majority. There was, however, some very hard hitting all round, and we came off like a pack of schoolboys who had had a real row.

July 8.

I am all right to-day, and less tired. The House sat until $\frac{1}{2}$ past 4 this morning, but I went to bed at 3. We had our Cabinet at 12, and parted at 2.30, and since then I have been pretty busy, as I shall be, I think, until the end of the session approaches. We are to divide fairly early this evening, and then go to bed, for every one is tired, and the heat is very great indeed. It is knocking up some of our men, and one is wicked enough to hope it may have an equal effect on the other side.

August 22.

As I grow older I realise that I am getting nearer to the end myself; and while the close of life loses any terror it once had, the duty of being useful to all around me—of so using my powers and my life as to do every day the very best I can under the circumstances in which I find myself, comes home to me *every* day with greater strength. So I must not disable myself by fretting, or so entirely turn my thoughts in one direction as to find myself diverted from the daily work of life. . . . Help me, as you do, I know, in prayer, and be assured that for me and for others whom you love, you have the petitions which you make to Him who is all Wise as well as all Good. My love and my prayers go out to and for you. He will bless and keep all we love in all that is *really* good for them.

August 26.

The debate was a very good one for us last night, and Balfour and the Scotch Solicitor - General¹ spoke extremely well; and to-day Webster, the Attorney-General, did very well in answer to Trevelyan, whom he thoroughly exposed; but we had a very late night. It was 5 when I got into bed, and I am surprised I am not very tired indeed; but I am very well, I am thankful to say. Help me, . . . as I am helping you.

Sept. 1.

The Irish broke out again this evening, and have been as nasty as they could be. They are now talking wildly on a motion for adjournment, and are giving as much trouble as they can; but I do not lose all hope of finishing Supply early next week. I am not nearly so tired to-night, after my good sleep last night.

Sept. 2.

I, in my turn, have little to say to you this evening. We had a bad night, and excessive annoyance from the Irish. To-day things look a little better; but it is very galling to have to endure insult and provocation from these men, and to be quite unable to cast it back again, except at the cost of prolonging our suffering.

Sept. 8.

We are not making much progress yet this evening, but the members may become reasonable as the evening goes on; but prorogation before Friday is almost impossible.

In writing to older friends he permitted himself to betray deeper anxiety than he ever allowed to appear in letters to his children. In truth his temperament was the reverse of sanguine, and sometimes it seemed as if he must have given way under the pressure on him. Miss Giberne was one of those to whom he was wont to write most freely:—

March 20.

We have great anxieties and great responsibilities, but we can be carried through them all to the issue which shall be right for this people by God's help, and by His alone. Pray *now* that we may have the wisdom we need. I believe we shall succeed if we are aided in this way.

May 11.

I have been wonderfully supported hitherto, but every now and then I feel depressed at the prospect before me and the burden I have to bear; but I am going on looking for guidance and strength from day to day. You cannot tell, however, what doubts and anxi-

¹ Mr Robertson, now Lord Justice-General of Scotland.

eties overtake me from time to time, as to whether on this or on that question, to be decided suddenly, one is right. It is, however, a great comfort and a great support to feel that unseen help is coming to me; and I earnestly hope it may never be withdrawn. I must fail sometimes, and it may be good for me that I should do so; but I know I am greatly helped and sustained by the prayers of those who ask that right may be done.

This constant reliance on a higher Power, though it found no direct expression in Smith's speeches or general conversation, was undoubtedly perceptible in his bearing and actions, and he had not been very long the foremost man on the Treasury Bench before one of those happy expressions which take their rise no one knows where, but survive because everybody realises their fitness, attached itself to him. His sobriquet was "Old Morality"—conferred in no unkindly spirit, but in recognition of qualities respected by all.¹

Smith's colleagues in the Cabinet allude to one feature in his conduct of parliamentary business at this time, which distinguished him from former leaders of the House of Commons. He was always remarkably explicit in laying before the Saturday council a clear programme of work to be done in the following week.

The session was dragged to its close on September 16. Smith's leadership had proved successful beyond dispute. One afternoon, in the privacy of the smoking-room, a well-known member of the Opposition defined the source of this success. Addressing a supporter of the Government, he said wistfully, "You know you have an immense advantage over us, for your fellows *hate* the Grand Old Man; but, confound it! who can help *liking* Old Morality?"

The respect which was willingly paid to the leader of the House by all sections of the Opposition had its counterpart in a much warmer feeling among men on his own side.

¹ The genial fancy of Mr H. W. Lucy is the putative parent of this and many other "to-names" of public men.

There was in Smith a complete absence of that *hauteur* which men in high places often unconsciously suffer to chill their intercourse with subordinates in office, and he possessed the innate tact which preserved him from the opposite error of making elaborate efforts to be considerate or polite. His manner to all was perfectly natural and suave; access to him was surrounded by no difficulty and little ceremony; men learnt to consult him as a wise friend even on their private affairs; would that it were permissible to recount some of the innumerable instances of his generosity and liberality. Those whose duties brought them into official relations with him will not readily forget the kindly greeting with which he always received them, whether at the Treasury or in the First Lord's room behind the Speaker's chair. Even when he was most worried by the exasperating obstruction of business in the House, or in suspense about the result of a coming critical division, or, as was the mournful case during the last two years of his life, tormented by painful and irritating disease, the pleasant smile and cheering word were never looked for in vain.

His intercourse with the rank and file of his party was always easy and unaffected. It happened once that two members were discussing some point in the side lobby during a division, when Smith happened to walk by. "Here is the head-master," said one of them, "let us refer it to him." "Ah! don't call me that," rejoined the leader of the House, "I am only one of the big boys."

That was the secret of the power which, from the first day he undertook to lead it, Smith exercised over that sensitive, impatient, paradoxical assemblage, the House of Commons. Bold and ingenious policy, sustained by exciting oratory, will always ensure for a time the meed of popular applause; but the House of Commons loves government by common-sense and good humour, and prefers

honesty to ingenuity. There is no doubt that Lord Randolph Churchill, had he been so minded, might—as it had been expected he would by many—during this session have inflicted irreparable damage on the Unionist party: a rupture so sudden as that which had severed him from the Cabinet could not take place without leaving some soreness between old friends. But those who credited him with harbouring resentful malignity against his former colleagues forgot that English gentlemen are actuated by feelings and habits which it is difficult to explain to those who have embraced the methods of unblushing Opportunism—of all creeds the most cynical—the most at variance with all that is great in British statecraft—the most certain, even if it exacts deference, to forfeit respect.

If the expectation of the Gladstonian section of Liberals had been disappointed by the attitude maintained by Lord Randolph Churchill, they had been not less so by the outcome of the Round-Table Conference. The negotiations had ended in leaving both sections of the Liberal party in the positions they had occupied at the first meeting. Sir George Trevelyan, it is true, had seceded from the Liberal Unionist party, and carried with him three or four men of less note, but the result of the deliberations had been to accentuate the difference between the policies of Union and Separation, to close up the ranks of the followers of Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain, and to compact more firmly the alliance between them and Lord Salisbury's Government. Without doubt the position of the Unionist Administration rested on a far more solid foundation at the close of the year than it had done at its beginning.

Mr Balfour, by his resolution and tact in the government of Ireland, had restored confidence to the Loyalists in that country, and the two wings of the Unionist party in Parliament had learnt to depend on each other to a degree

which few people had thought it possible to bring about—to which the bitterness of reproach aimed by Gladstonian speakers against the Liberal Unionists largely contributed.

The departmental duties of First Lord of the Treasury are, of course, very much lighter than those of the heads of the spending departments, and, when not associated with the office of Prime Minister, their discharge may be made to occupy a very short time in each day. But Smith was of far too conscientious a nature to get through his work in a perfunctory way. In the matter alone of patronage (of which, though it amounts to far less than what it was before the establishment of the competitive system, a considerable share falls to be administered by the First Lord on behalf of the Crown) he was exceedingly scrupulous, and took a degree of pains by patient inquiry and correspondence which has very rarely been bestowed upon it.

His principles in the selection of clergymen to fill Crown livings were very different to those which had sometimes guided his predecessors in office. Appointments were made almost wholly independent of his own views on Church matters, which, though the reverse of indifferent or latitudinarian, were exceedingly tolerant. He was anxious above all things to secure internal peace in diocese and parish, and he always endeavoured to suit the Church views of the locality, and to appoint clergymen who should be in harmony with their bishops on the one hand and their people on the other. He once remarked to a friend that the administration of ecclesiastical patronage caused him more anxiety than any other part of his duty. He had numerous correspondents among the clergy, some of whom he relied on as understanding and sympathising with his object; but he did not rely on them alone: he would often send down one of his private secretaries to report on any parish in which a vacancy had occurred, to ascertain the

prevalent religious views and the social condition of the congregation. At other times he used to send his confidential shorthand writer to attend the services of clergymen who might be suitable for the vacancy, and bring him verbatim reports of the sermons, with confidential memoranda of their appearance, views, ability, and other details. It was only after carefully examining this information that he would proceed to make the appointment.¹

Smith was equally conscientious in awarding the Civil List Pensions, though his administration of this fund was at one time sharply criticised in the press. It had come to be assumed that these pensions had originally been intended for the reward of literary or artistic merit, and complaints were heard, not only that persons who were unable to claim on these grounds had been pensioned, but that the First Lord of the Treasury had shown a want of feeling in causing to be set forth in the published returns a statement of the reason existing for each award, as for instance, "Mrs —, in consideration of her inadequate means of support."

Now these complaints were founded on a complete misapprehension of the origin and intention of these pensions and the regulations affecting them, and were caused, in fact, by Smith's scrupulous care in observing and adhering to them.

He was able to prove when the question was raised in the House of Commons, the Act under which this bounty is administered, so far from limiting the award of pensions to

¹ Before Smith became First Lord of the Treasury, and had the disposal of ecclesiastical preferment, recourse was had to his judgment and known discretion in Church matters; but the affairs of the Church militant sometimes got mixed up with those of the War Office. Thus in 1885, when Smith was at the head of the latter department, Lord Salisbury (then First Lord of the Treasury and Foreign Minister) wrote to Smith:—

"I telegraphed to you to ask what were the qualifications of — for preferment. You reply to me that the Bashi-bazouks made difficulties, but they were overcome. I fear our cyphers don't match! Can you answer my question? I rather think of him for —."

persons connected with literature or art, declares that they shall be given "to such persons only as have just claims on the Royal beneficence, or who, by their personal services to the Crown, by the performance of duties to the public, or by their useful discoveries in science, or attainments in literature and the arts, have merited the gracious consideration of their Sovereign and the gratitude of their country."

Further, the Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed in 1838 to inquire into the administration of the Civil List, reported, *inter alia*,—"that in the case of all future Civil List Pensions, the warrant or other instrument of appointment should set forth distinctly the reason and motive of the grant."

It was precisely the pains which Smith took to carry out the spirit of the Act and the recommendations of the Select Committee which brought on him the ire of some of the quill-driving fraternity. The amount available for award in each year is £1200; and if the warrants issued during Smith's administration of this patronage be examined, it will be seen that he showed great tenderness to indigent authors and their families. In former years, instances have occurred wherein these pensions have been granted to persons already enjoying military or diplomatic pensions. In 1880, £500 a-year was given to the two daughters of a distinguished nobleman who had for many years drawn a salary of £8000 a-year, and thereafter retired on a handsome pension—emoluments which, it might be supposed, would have enabled him to provide for his surviving family. No such abuse, nor anything of similar nature, can be charged against Mr Smith's administration of the fund; but it is easy to lay a finger on instances to the contrary. In 1885 application was made to Mr Gladstone, when First Lord of the Treasury, for the grant of a pension to that favourite writer, Mr Richard Jefferies, and was refused. When Smith came

to the Treasury in 1887, Jefferies was beyond reach of a pension, but £100 a-year was awarded to his widow during her life.

The public is peculiarly jealous—and rightly so—of the manner in which this kind of patronage is administered: it is well, therefore, to put on record the principles uniformly observed by Smith in regard to it during his tenure of office.

The account of Smith's leadership of the House of Commons would not be complete without some description of the life in his room at the House of Commons. Opening upon the long corridor which runs outside the chamber behind the Speaker's chair are several private rooms. One of the largest of these is allotted to the Leader of the House, with a smaller one opening off it for his private secretary. The Leader of the Opposition occupies another room in the same passage, and the rest are assigned to various Ministers. It may be easily understood that although the room occupied by the Leader of the House is private, it is by no means a solitude. Its privacy is liable to incessant interruption by deputations from outside the House, or by consultation between the Leader's colleagues on emergencies, which so often arise suddenly in the course of a debate. The senior Government Whip is also a frequent visitor. It is his part not only to keep his chief in touch with all the phases of content and discontent among the members of the party generally, but also to warn him of dangers ahead. Sometimes a restive supporter of the Government is invited to an interview with his Leader, or an eager one is admitted at his own request. No one ever failed, while Smith occupied that room, to meet with a kindly reception, or to find his inquiry, "Can I have a word with you?" met with a reply less cordial than "Come in, my dear fellow; sit down; what is it?"

Then there took place in that room occasional amicable

conferences between the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition, and it used to be remarked by any one else who happened to witness the meeting how gracefully Mr Smith, as the younger man, showed deference to Mr Gladstone as the elder, and how courteously the latter seemed to appreciate the compliment.

All this probably has gone on much the same under former Leaders, but in one respect Smith made an innovation on the traditions of this room. The vehemence and persistence of debates, which have increased so much of late years, have rendered necessary the more constant attendance both of Ministers and unofficial members, and a far larger number dine in the House than was contemplated at the time of its construction. Smith, unwilling to be absent from his post even for an hour, began the custom of having dinner served in his private room, and continued to do so until his last session, so that he was ever at hand when wanted. The table was always laid for six, and the party was generally made up of one or more of his colleagues in the Cabinet, Mr Akers Douglas, one or more of his private secretaries, and any member specially connected with the business under discussion in the House. The room was a long way from the kitchen, which had a prejudicial effect on the viands, added to which was the risk of their being still more cooled down by the interruption of a division or a "count." But if the fare was no more than mediocre, the company was always and under all vicissitudes cheerful. Chaff abounded, and sometimes verged upon wit; and those little parties of hard-worked men remain in memory as bright interludes in a daily routine, inclining, in other respects, to painful monotony.

After dinner, if no debate of an urgent kind was going on, Smith would, for the first time since the morning, have a quiet hour to himself, and begin his daily despatch to the

Queen, to be sent off at midnight. Then came Mr Akers Douglas and Mr Jackson, the Secretaries to the Treasury, to settle the order of business for the following day.

CHAPTER XXI.

1888.

It too often happens that the exactions of public life prevail to sever a politician from the enjoyment of home and withdraw his thoughts from the guidance of his children, but no one ever succeeded more completely than Smith in maintaining the closest bonds of confidence with his family. It is pleasant to read of his happiness in this respect as expressed in his intimate correspondence.

To Miss Giberne, January 16, 1888.

Your letter of the 9th invited an answer, and as I have a few minutes before post this evening, I think it better to seize the opportunity, which may not recur again very soon, as we begin work for the year seriously to-morrow.

Frederick left us at Pau on Monday, and came straight home to Grosvenor Place, where he arrived on Tuesday evening, to Mabel and John's¹ delight, as they are keeping house there until their own house is ready for them. He had to look after some business here, which I am gradually throwing upon him as the "young master," and to get to Oxford for the beginning of term on Friday. The boy has grown tall and broad, two or three inches taller than his Father, and he is at present strong and well and manly, but I think he is gentle and good. . . . We got home [from the Continent] quite comfortably, and found John and Mabel waiting for us. This morning B. and Alfred² started for London and for work, and John and Mabel have done likewise; so here Emily and I are left with one child only (Helen) to keep house, but it is a great blessing to feel that the others are all, without exception, pursuing their way through life happily—not without trials, of course, as in Mary's case, but yet

¹ Mr and Mrs Ryder, his son-in-law and daughter.

² His daughter and son-in-law, Mr and Mrs A. Acland.

happily even in her sorrow, for she is comforting and being comforted. Now I have said a great deal more about ourselves than I had intended ; but I thought as I went on that it would please you to hear just how we have passed the last week.

When Parliament reassembled on February 9, Mr Balfour's firm yet considerate administration in Ireland had begun to have its effect upon that country, for he had already attained, in a great degree, to the ideal of statesmanship, by making the new powers with which he had been invested a terror to evil-doers and the praise of them who do well ; while abroad Lord Salisbury's influence had contributed to bring about a more pacific outlook than had been witnessed since the war between France and Germany in 1870. In the House of Commons the debate on the Address turned chiefly on an amendment moved by Mr Parnell, directed against the alleged harsh administration of the Crimes Act. Nine Irish members were at the time in prison for offences under the Act, and the same resentful feeling which had caused the by-name of "Buckshot" to be applied to Mr Forster, now conceived for the Chief Secretary the sobriquet—judiciously inappropriate to his character—of "Bloody Balfour." The division on this amendment was anticipated with interest, because it would show the extent to which Sir George Trevelyan's influence had prevailed to detach Liberal Unionists from support of the Government. The result was encouraging to Ministers : three only of Lord Hartington's party seceded to Home Rule, and one Conservative (Mr Evelyn), which left a majority of 88 for the Government.

For the seventh time the House then devoted itself to the consideration of new Rules of Procedure. The experience of the "Jubilee Session" was fresh in the memory of members. In vain had been all previous cobbling at the rules of debate : all that had been hitherto effected had served, in the words of Peter Pindar, only to—

“Set wheels on wheels in motion—such a clatter !
 To force up one poor nipperkin of matter ;
 Bid ocean labour with tremendous roar
 To heave a cockle-shell upon the shore.”

It was clear that if any except men gifted with constitutions of iron or india-rubber were to take a full share in legislation, some further modification was necessary, and the House, as a whole, thankfully agreed to a Standing Order bringing its sitting to a close at midnight. The relief afforded by the adoption of this rule was indescribable, but while it did not practically interfere with adequate discussion of measures and votes, it did undoubtedly add to the responsibility of the Chair by making necessary the more frequent application of the closure.

Meanwhile the Government had to wince under the loss of several seats at by-elections. At Southampton the Unionist majority of 342 had been turned into a Gladstonian one of 885 ; and now the Ayr Burghs followed suit by replacing a Unionist, whose majority at the general election had been 1175, by a Separatist, whom they preferred to the extent of 53 votes to the Hon. Evelyn Ashley.

From the Right Hon. W. H. Smith to Mrs Smith.

May 7, 1888.

. . . I have been *obliged* to accept an appointment on a Royal Commission on the Administration of the Army and the Navy, with Hartington in the chair. Salisbury thought there was no one else to do it from amongst us, and as I can only be at work all day, I may as well do one thing as another. And it is all work in the highest sense of the word, the discharge of duty, and that gives me strength.

June 25.

. . . I travelled up quite comfortably to-day, and arrived in time at Charing Cross, and then had a good day for work at Downing Street. Letters of course—but nothing very remarkable. Here the debate of censure began with a rather lame speech from J. Morley, which was answered by Goschen. Part of his speech was very effective, and I think the papers will speak very well of it in the morning, but there has been a good deal of warmth on both sides. On the

whole, however, I think we have had the best of it. . . . I hope you will get this note before you leave. I had intended to write for the first post, but I could not leave the bench, as the first two speeches occupied three hours.

July 7.

. . . I walked down with Helen, B., and Freddy to Downing Street, after having had visits from the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Harrowby, and Col. Gzowski, so that I had plenty of work, and the day has been full since. Now Harcourt is mouthing, declaiming, and denouncing us in violent language, and the Attorney-General in particular. Good night. God bless and keep you and my dear children! And pray for me every day, that I may have wisdom and strength to do what is right. It is a hard and difficult task.

To Miss Giberne.

There are also great anxieties in Government—great responsibilities, and who is able for these things? Help us, my dear friend, by prayer. I should be dismayed and faint if it were not that I believe my God is very near to guide and strengthen me, and to give me the wisdom I need, and to comfort and sustain those who are in sorrow and sickness and need. But two or three should ask. The work is heavy and the burden great, and you and others who are far off can ask and believe that you have the petitions which you make.

I am amazed when I look around me and realise some of the causes for thankfulness which exist, and I tremble for myself and for my wife and my children lest any of us should fail to live up to our duty, and to the right use of the talents intrusted to us. . . . All I say is, God help me to do my work, and take me out of it when I am no longer fit for it.

Lord Stanley of Preston,¹ who had been Smith's colleague ever since he entered the Government in 1874, was at this time appointed Governor-General of Canada. Circumstances prevented his meeting with Smith before sailing, so, without any suspicion, it may be believed, that this was to prove their last parting on earth, he wrote his farewell in terms which testify to the feeling between the two men:—

Let an old friend, and a very sincere one, rejoice in your success in & with the House, & in the praise justly given to the Leader whose patience & tact have done much to bring back the good old parliamentary ways of business. . . . Good-bye, my dear Smith—whatever happens one is glad to think that our long personal & political friendship has never been marred by a difference of any kind. I shall always look back to the times when we have worked hard together with

¹ Now sixteenth Earl of Derby.

something of a better feeling for the political world which gave me such a staunch & kind friend, & such a true & loyal colleague. . . . God bless you.

An action for libel brought by Mr O'Donnell, formerly a Home Rule member of Parliament, against the 'Times,' revived at this time the whole question of the "Parnellism and Crime" papers in their bearing upon the Irish party. On July 6 Mr Parnell rose to make a personal explanation, and repeated his repudiation of the facsimile letter, and repelled the other charges made by the 'Times' writer. Six days later he asked the First Lord of the Treasury if the Government would consent to the appointment of a Select Committee to go into the question of the authenticity of certain letters read by the Attorney-General at the trial of O'Donnell *v.* Walter. Smith replied that in the opinion of the Government a Select Committee appointed, as was the custom, with reference to party politics, and on the recommendation of the party Whips, was a most improper tribunal to try charges of such gravity; but that he was willing to introduce a bill appointing a Commission, with full power to inquire into the allegations made against certain members of Parliament in the late trial. This bill, he declared, was offered for the acceptance of Mr Parnell and his colleagues, and that the Government were not disposed to press it if it should not be acceptable to the Irish party.

But when introducing the bill on July 16, Smith announced a significant change in the attitude of the Government, who, he said, were now resolved to proceed with it at all hazards. This brought the Cabinet under suspicion of having resolved to make political capital out of the charges against their opponents. Smith was taxed with having received a visit from Mr Walter of the 'Times' while the question was under consideration of the Cabinet, and frankly admitted that he had done so "as an old friend." Upon

this Sir William Harcourt roundly charged the Government with having acted in collusion with the 'Times'—a charge that received poignancy in the fact that the Attorney-General, whose duty it was to give legal advice to the Government, had also been counsel for the 'Times' in the recent trial.

On the whole, the action of the Government in offering and then insisting upon the Commission had hearty approval from the Unionist party, and this feeling was strengthened when it was seen how anxiously the Irish Nationalist members strove to limit the scope of the inquiry. But there was at least one important exception to unanimity in the matter. Lord Randolph Churchill viewed intervention by the Government in the least favourable light, and conveyed to Smith his reasons in an ably drawn Memorandum, which he afterwards described as a "strong but friendly protest against the measure."

The Charges and Allegations Bill passed through both Houses, and the Commission met on October 17. "The proceedings," as a contemporary chronicler observes, "speedily assumed the appearance of a case in which the 'Times' appeared as plaintiff and the Irish members as defendants." But the presence of the Attorney-General as leading counsel for the 'Times,' and of Sir Charles Russell for the Irish members, gave the trial all the appearance of an impeachment or indictment of Mr Parnell and his colleagues by the Government. And unfortunately the popular impression prevailed that the existence of the Ministry depended on the charges being substantiated.

Parliament, which had been adjourned on August 13, was to meet again in November to finish up the work of the session. Speaking at the Mansion House on August 8, the Prime Minister alluded to this in that vein of irony in which he so much excels. "It is impossible," he said, "not

to feel that the wisdom of Parliament is great, and that the eloquence of Parliament is great; but the eloquence is getting in the way of the wisdom."

Smith joined his wife at Aix-les-Bains, where she had gone for the benefit of her health, and he wrote thence in good spirits on September 1 to his daughter, Mrs A. Acland, with suggestions for the names to be given to her baby.

Wilhelmina Henrietta Frederica—quite lovely—but lovelier still if you add Beatricia Alfrida—Skeggs. My dear, I am glad your spirits are good, and I hope they will be better when you have received this brilliant suggestion for the names of the granddaughter. I am going deliberately to set to work to spoil and make her quite an anxiety to her Parents. . . . There are all sorts of people here, but I am not much amused with them. Some of the Americans are astonishing. It is difficult to believe they are not large butterflies. Their colors are as brilliant, and some of the loose things they wear resemble wings, but they have feet and they have voices, which butterflies have not. Yesterday Lord Hartington came to see me, dressed as a seedy, shady sailor, but he sat down and talked politics for half an hour, and he said it was pleasant in a place like this to have some work to do.

On his return to England, Smith took a full share in those platform labours which the growing practice of these latter days has made more and more oppressive upon public men. In doing this he was acting against the advice of his doctors, and had also to overcome his own misgivings as to his oratorical power.

I have been sent [he writes to Mr Penrose Fitzgerald] by the Whips to Gloucester, and I am going for the same masters to Salford. This is all I can do before 6th Novr., and after that date I really do not know what I can do. My present impression is that I ought not to speak anywhere at all: old Jenner¹ is very strong against it. I cannot believe that a speech of mine would help any fellow, but I would rather give you a lift up than any other man in the House.

Among Mr Smith's papers there has been preserved a cutting from the 'Birmingham Daily Post' of October 10,

¹ Sir William Jenner, Bart., G.C.B., M.D.

1888, commenting upon a discrepancy between the report of his speech at Gloucester given in the 'Times,' and those reports which appeared in other papers. The writer observed that no doubt "Mr Smith, according to custom, gave the manuscript of his address to the 'Times' representative beforehand, and was so affected by his feelings of gratitude to the Liberal Unionists as he went on that he added the sentence to which attention has been drawn." The sentence referred to was one in which he expressed his willingness to retire in favour of a Liberal Unionist leader, if that would strengthen the Unionist party, and the journalist went on to point out that this was only another illustration of the danger incurred by a political leader, when he not only writes his speech but hands it to the reporters in advance. The moral, however, was wasted in this instance, for Smith has written the following comment in red ink in the margin—"Amusing. I never wrote out a speech in my life, and could not do it.—W. H. S."

It was hoped when Parliament reassembled on November 6 that the business remaining over would be quickly got through, but the introduction of a bill to extend the purchase powers of Lord Ashbourne's Irish Land Act roused the ire of the Opposition, who prolonged the debates on Supply, in order to thwart the benevolent intentions of the Government towards Ireland. By Lord Ashbourne's Act, passed in 1885, five millions had been advanced for the purchase of their holdings by tenants. It had been a complete success: of the £90,000 of instalments accruing for repayment on the sums advanced, only £1100 was in arrear. It was now proposed to increase the sum for buying out the Irish landlords from 5 to 10 millions. The fight over the bill was a hard one, and the prorogation was not achieved till Christmas Eve.

Smith's health had suffered so much from these pro-

longed proceedings that on December 15 he was obliged to leave for the South of Europe, where he remained till February 4, 1889.

CHAPTER XXII.

1889.

That which distinguished Smith more than anything else among the common run of politicians was the constancy with which he kept in view the interests of the country and of that party by which he believed the country might best be served, to the absolute exclusion of his own career. The following correspondence is an example of this.

Private.

MARSEILLES, Feb. 3, 1889.

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—You referred a few days ago to the violence and unscrupulousness of the Opposition, and to their readiness to avail themselves of any weapon which they may find ready to their hands, no matter what the consequences may be.

The extension of the suffrage has brought us face to face with the most grave possibilities. It has made the extreme Radicals masters of the Liberal party, and men support a policy now from which they would have shrunk with horror ten years ago. There is also this strange peculiarity in the English mind to be taken into account. Men who are strictly honest in their transactions with their neighbours have come to regard Parliament as an instrument by which a transfer of rights and property may equitably be made from the few to the many; and there is yet another feature of the present day which is disgusting, and that is, that familiarity with crimes against property, or a class which is not their class, gradually deprives these crimes of the nature of crime in the eyes of the multitude, and even seems to create a sympathy for them.

To deal with public affairs with such an Opposition and in such a state of the public mind, the Government requires the judgment, resource, and eloquence of the strongest men that can be found in the House of Commons and in the country.

I do not think it possible to exaggerate the gravity of the struggle in which we are engaged, and I have never disguised from you my view that in such a fight it is really the duty of the chief to put those men in the most prominent position who are best fitted to do the work. I am much stronger for my holiday, but I am not more ready

of speech than I was, nor am I likely to be ; and I am therefore most anxious you should thoroughly understand that, whether my health be good or bad, I am quite ready to give place to another leader, as a simple matter of duty for the good of the country, now or whenever it appears to you desirable to make a change.

I shall not refer again to the matter when we meet, unless you do so. I am with you where I am as long as you really think it best on all accounts that I should remain, and no longer.—Yours very sincerely,
W. H. SMITH.

This letter was forwarded to the Queen with the following note in Lord Salisbury's handwriting added to it in red ink :—

Lord Salisbury has written to Mr Smith to say that, in his judgment, it would cause the gravest prejudice to your Majesty's service if Mr Smith were to retire from the leadership of the House.

There was no ambiguity or hesitation in Lord Salisbury's rejoinder to Smith's offer :—

Private.

Feb. 5, 1889.

MY DEAR SMITH,—I am very sensible of the generous and considerate spirit in which your letter is written, & I thank you heartily for it. But if you had heard the general expression of consternation with which the apparent failure of your health was watched by the principal men of the party, you would have had no doubt that in their judgment your retirement from the lead in the House of Commons would be one of the heaviest blows that could befall it.

I agree in all you say as to the gravity of our present condition. We are in a state of bloodless civil war. No common principles, no respect for common institutions or traditions, unite the various groups of politicians who are struggling for power. To loot somebody or something is the common object, under a thick varnish of pious phrases. So that our lines are not cast in pleasant places.—Yours very truly,
SALISBURY.

Some rumour of Smith's readiness to retire may have reached his constituents : indeed paragraphs appeared in the newspapers announcing that he did not intend to seek re-election. Somebody wrote to ask if this was the case, and his reply through his secretary shows conclusively that, though willing to resign his leadership or his seat in the Cabinet, he had no intention of leaving the House of

Commons, either by accepting a Peerage, as the gossips had it, or by retiring into private life :—

Mr Smith wishes me to assure you that unless he actually breaks down in health, he has no intention of resigning his seat.

On the contrary, he hopes to offer himself again at the next general election.

He thinks it would be well if you would let his friends know this, if there is any doubt on the subject.

Smith was subject to great depression and gloomy foreboding about the future course of events in England. A friend with whom he was walking one day asked him if he intended to put his son Frederick into Parliament.

“No,” replied Smith, “I shall certainly not put him there. Let him get acquainted with business first, and then it is possible events may lead him into Parliament, but I shall not set it before him as an object. England,” he continued, in a tone of great gravity, “is going to be governed by three classes of men,—by roughs, by men of business, and by those aristocrats who have heads on their shoulders, and can use them. Freddy is not a rough, and he is not an aristocrat ; if he is to go into Parliament, let him become a good man of business first.”

When Smith returned to take command of the allied forces of Ministerialists, there were signs in Parliament of a change from the traditions of government by party. It seemed as if the hazardous system of government by groups, so prevalent in the democratic legislatures of other countries, was about to establish itself at Westminster. That the policy of the Conservative Cabinet had already been notably modified and broadened in deference to their Liberal-Unionist supporters, had been abundantly manifest in their Local Government Act, and was to be made still more apparent during the session of 1889 by the similar Act for Scotland, wherein it was provided that £246,000 a-year, derived from probate and licence duties, should be

applied to making education gratuitous in public elementary schools, thus carrying into effect a favourite cry of the Radical party. But if the Ministerialists were classified in two groups, each with its separate organisation and Whips, the Opposition, already made up of Gladstonians and Parnellites, was henceforward to have a third leader in the person of Mr Henry Labouchere, who placed himself at the head of the advance party of Radicals, named "Jacobins," after Mr Jacoby, one of their Whips. Hitherto it had been part of the recognised symbolism of the House of Commons that, while members in general wore their hats in the Chamber and precincts of the House, the Whips, whose duties lie for the most part in the lobbies, should perform their functions bareheaded. The multiplication of parties involved the multiplication of Whips; so the unfamiliar sight was now witnessed of a number of gentlemen—Conservatives, Liberal-Unionists, Gladstonians, Parnellites, and Jacobins—going about bareheaded; a trivial phenomenon, it may seem, yet significant of the change which the times had wrought in the old party discipline.

It was to be a "Scotch session"—so it was said; but in the treatment of Mr O'Brien, M.P., in prison, where, having refused to don the prison garb, he had been deprived, not without stratagem, of his normal habiliments, was found sufficient material for the Opposition to carry on a debate in both Houses upon the Address. As Lord Salisbury remarked in the Lords, it was really very difficult for any one to preserve a sufficiently tragic air over "Mr O'Brien struggling for his clothes, or Mr Harrington mourning over his moustache."

During the debate in the Commons remarkable evidence was given of the effusive confidence now established between ex-Ministers and the Irish Nationalists. When Mr Parnell rose to speak he was received with prolonged cheer-

ing—all the Opposition, including the front bench, standing up and waving their hats. The amendment under discussion, moved by Mr John Morley, was rejected by 339 to 260 votes, showing a majority of 79 for Ministers.

The Government had undoubtedly sustained a severe shock in the breakdown before the Parnell Commission of the most serious charges made against the Irish members. The celebrated fac-simile letter had been pronounced to be the copy of a forgery by the worthless Pigott, and, rightly or wrongly, the Government were held responsible for having entertained a belief in its genuineness. Their Attorney-General, in accepting a brief for the 'Times,' had acted according to professional precedent; nevertheless, he had thereby involved his colleagues in the Ministry in the appearance of partiality, and of giving undue facilities to one of the parties in the trial. Naturally, the most of this was made by Opposition speakers both in and out of Parliament, and the result on by-elections was distinctly unfavourable to Government. The attack in the House upon the Attorney-General was led by Mr W. Redmond, who moved to reduce his salary by £1000; but the motion was thrown out by a majority of 80 votes.

Smith felt the anxiety of all this very keenly, and his health began to give serious warning of the strain upon it. To Miss Giberne he wrote on February 24:—

I have just entered in a sense on my New Year of anxious work and responsibility. . . . I have never felt myself strong enough for the work I have to do, and I should not have dreamt of putting myself forward for it. It is a burden and an anxiety, a cross, but it is difficult sometimes to see for one's self the plain line of duty. Is one fit or unfit for the work? or is the burden of responsibility and care, which is heavy where there is no personal ambition to help a man to bear it, warping one's judgment and making one long to escape and be at rest? Perhaps it is; at all events I will wait patiently, and go on with my daily task until the change comes.

"In quietness and confidence shall be my strength;" but who can be strong enough in himself in these days for the work which falls to me?

I would say with Solomon, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge," so long as it pleaseth Thee to continue me as Thy servant in the work which Thou hast given me to do. But, my dear friend, how can I tell that my judgment or decision is the wisdom I long for and desire to apply for the good of the country? I cannot tell. All sorts of human frailties, prejudices, and passions are always passing like mists through a man's mind. But I can say, God help me; and "in quietness and confidence shall be my strength." He will take me out of my work when I am no longer required, and then will come rest. Meanwhile you, my friend, can help me.

On March 17 he wrote to Mrs W. Acland:—

We have trouble in politics, and I am very weary; but I must go on doing my daily work as best I can, looking for guidance and wisdom where alone it can be had, until my rest comes. I hope it is not wrong to long for it.

His friends began to take alarm lest he should break down altogether. Dr Acland¹ wrote from Oxford on April 29, in the double character of physician and friend:—

MY DEAR SMITH,—I cannot help breaking silence now your short rest is over to send you my expression of earnest desire, nay, prayer, that you may have strength for your work, or resolution to break from it. . . . Two things are believed by me—1st, that owing to the firm, steady, quiet determination of the Government, the country is becoming more calm, and less moved by exaggeration & misconduct; and 2d, that you might relinquish the "leadership," and otherwise remain the same. These are the opinions of a quiet John Bull, without, of course, any special knowledge or opportunity. Said John Bull is not an optimist, for in truth I think the problem of human affairs in general, and this nation in particular, becomes more *intricate* than ever. . . . Always gratefully yours,
HY. W. ACLAND.

On the other hand, encouragement to persevere was not wanting. Rumours of Smith's retirement from public life having been persistently circulated, his followers determined to express the warmth of feeling towards him which pervaded their ranks. Accordingly, on March 28, the Right Hon. Sir John Mowbray, Sir John Colomb, and Mr Robert Hanbury waited on him in his private room at the House of Commons and presented the following address, signed by 254 unofficial members of Parliament:—

¹ K.C.B. in 1884, and created a Baronet in 1890.

As members of the Conservative party, we desire to express to you our cordial appreciation of the manner in which, in the face of extraordinary difficulties, you have acted as leader of the House of Commons ; and recognising the great importance to the country and the party of your leadership, we trust that this assurance of full confidence and hearty support will in some measure assist you in the continued discharge of your high, but most arduous, duty.

Smith's reply was brief and simple : after expressing gratitude for the support and encouragement conveyed in the address, he assured his hearers that, as long as his health would permit, and so long as he retained the confidence of his friends, he would continue to fulfil the duties of his office.

In reply to Sir Rainald Knightley, who wrote to express regret at his absence when the address was presented, he wrote :—

It is very reassuring to know that, making no attempt at oratory and indeed avoiding anything of the kind, I meet the present necessities of the party in the House.

While they want me I am bound to stay and do the work to the best of my ability, but there are moments, as you can well imagine, when one would be glad to disappear altogether from the wild turmoil of faction, and find rest in obscurity for the remainder of one's life.

To Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, Smith replied :—

It has always been interesting to me to do work for the country, but every post which I have filled in succession, from my first appointment as Secretary to the Treasury in 1874 up to the present time, has been offered to or imposed upon me. I could not apply and have not applied for office at any time, but I have not felt myself at liberty to shrink from it when I have been called upon to undertake it.

My particular work now is far less congenial to me than the Administration of a great Department, and I have often felt faint and sick at the prospect before the country with the furious rage of faction in the House of Commons, and I have greatly doubted my own especial fitness for the part I have to play in the struggle ; but I am "on duty," and I must go on as long as I can and do my best. In due time I shall be relieved.

This ceremony was shortly followed by a more public manifestation of the esteem Smith had won from his fellow-countrymen. On April 10 he was entertained at a banquet

given in the Merchant Taylors' Hall by merchants, bankers, and business men connected with the City. In addressing the very numerous assembly, Smith approached more nearly to eloquence than he was often able to do.

My friend Mr Gibbs [the chairman] has spoken of the circumstances under which I was placed in the position I now occupy. He has told you that I stepped into the breach to discharge a duty which was imposed upon me. I simply responded to the call which was made upon me by my colleagues and friends, who told me that my services were required in that position. I claim no honour for doing that which was simply an Englishman's duty under the circumstances in which he found himself, and it is one of the mysteries of my life—one of those things which I have been unable to solve for myself—how it is that, having proceeded from among you, being one of you—a man of business—I have now come to be placed in a position of great responsibility, and perhaps of authority. God knows, I did not seek that position for myself. I have never sought office or honour, but I have never felt myself at liberty to decline to undertake a duty which has been imposed upon me. My lords and gentlemen, when I come to consider what it is that I am called upon to do I may well be conscious of inability to discharge fitly the task imposed upon me. I find myself placed in the position of leader of the first Legislative Assembly in the world, of that which has been, so to speak, the cradle of the liberties of this country. . . . I say most feelingly that if at times there has been weariness, if at times a sense of disgust at the difficulties with which one has to contend in the absence of that complete devotion to the country which one has a right to look for in the representatives of the people—if there has been that feeling at times, circumstances like these—the appreciation of one's fellow-citizens, the sense that they desire to do honour to one who had no expectation of receiving it, the sense that the verdict of his fellow-citizens is that he has deserved well of his country,—all this is a reward amply sufficient to cover all the sacrifices, all the sorrows, all the difficulties through which he has passed.

Lord Cranbrook, in speaking to one of the toasts, made a happy hit in political prophecy. His place at table was between Mr Smith and Mr Arthur Balfour, and he alluded to himself as "standing between the present and the future." He little knew how soon the younger man was to step into the place of the elder, as Leader of the House of Commons.

There was more to come: Smith's own constituents were determined not to be outdone by the Conservative party in the House of Commons and his friends in the City, so on

July 3 they also entertained him at a banquet in St James's Hall, and presented him with an address.

One more mark of special honour was to be shown to the First Lord of the Treasury during this year, in a most unlikely place and unexpected way. It is necessary, in order to mention it here, to pass over the events of the session of Parliament, which, indeed, offer little upon which it is important to dwell.¹ It took place in a scene very different from the clattering, crowded precincts of Westminster, or the thronged thoroughfares of the City. It was among the melancholy green islands of Orkney, whither the Pandora had carried her owner and his family over seas on which the silence of late summer still brooded, to seek solitude and repose. When the yacht arrived at Kirkwall, the worthy Provost, who kept the principal shop in the town, perceived the opportunity for his ancient burgh to do honour where he rightly believed honour was due. Hastily summoning his bailies together, they agreed unanimously to offer the freedom of their town to their distinguished visitor. Time pressed; Mr Smith and his party were persuaded by the Provost to make an excursion in the interior of the narrow domain: they were waylaid on their return and carried off to the Town Hall, where, in presence of the

¹ *From the Right Hon. W. H. Smith to Sir Henry Acland.*

August 23.

. . . I hope you have not followed our parliamentary work. It has been very dreary—a very poor kind of acting or making-believe. All this week we have had Ireland to the fore—indignant patriots declaiming in burning language of violent indignation at one moment, and the next laughing in their cheeks [*sic*] at the hollowness of the whole performance. And this is the working of the British constitution in 1889, and a scientific system of Government! but perhaps it is as good in its results as anything that could be devised—only it is impossible not to recognise an enormous waste of power and vital strength, which might conceivably be applied to better uses in the interests of the country. Forgive me: I am inclined to be despondent sometimes.

Town Council, Provost Peace handed the burgess's ticket to the First Lord. "Very amusing," runs Miss Helen Smith's note on the occasion, "and more or less alarming, for we were quite unprepared and very untidy!" Taken thus unawares, Smith was not without fitting words of acknowledgment:—

I came here with my family, seeking the rest and refreshment which are to be found in this northern region, after a period of toil and anxiety which I think justified the desire for rest. . . . When the Provost met me in the Cathedral, he found a stranger who admired, valued, and respected the memorials of the past, which you have preserved with such loving care and fidelity. . . . I thank you, because you have not made this distinction one which is attached to a particular party or creed, and because you have honoured one who has simply been the servant of the country and the servant of his Queen, in the discharge of the duty which has fallen upon him from day to day. Every one has duties to perform: every one of you has the sense of what is right and what is wrong: and it is the sense of what, humbly speaking, I believe to be right which has carried me through so many difficulties.

Before closing the record of Smith's work in the House of Commons during 1889, independent testimony to his success as a parliamentary leader may be quoted from the pen of a well-known parliamentary chronicler,¹ who, though a stout adherent of Mr Gladstone in all his labyrinthine courses, and for a time editor of the 'Daily News,' yet possesses the intellectual detachment essential to true criticism:—

After Lord Randolph Churchill came Mr W. H. Smith, a more striking transformation-scene even than the appearance of Sir Stafford Northcote in the seat of Mr Disraeli. It is no secret that Mr Smith was selected for the office, not because he was at the time the best man, but because he was the best possible man. . . . He has now held the post through three sessions, and has worked upon the House of Commons the same charm which operated to his advancement in the inner councils of the Conservative leaders. The House, it is true, sometimes laughs at him. But there is nothing malicious in the merriment, for it recognises in him an honest, kindly, able man, who, free from all pretension, unaided by personal prestige or family in-

¹ Mr H. W. Lucy, known to thousands of readers as 'Punch's' Dog Toby.

fluence, has conducted the business of the House of Commons with a success that will bear comparison with any equal period of time under more famous leaders.

On November 4 Smith paid a visit to Sir Archibald¹ and the Hon. Lady Campbell at Blythswood—a mansion of which the hospitality has been experienced by almost every one who has taken an active part in the politics of Lowland Scotland. Next day he attended a Conservative conference in Glasgow, and in the evening addressed an immense meeting in St Andrew's Hall. The Conservative party in Glasgow have hitherto made but indifferent headway against the enormous Irish vote in that city; nevertheless, it contains many of the leading citizens, and it had, before Smith's visit, received a strong reinforcement of Liberal-Unionists.² To the thoughtful, practical Conservatism of this great northern city Smith's reputation for business-like qualities and resolute common-sense made him peculiarly acceptable, and he was received with a degree of enthusiasm which a more powerful platform orator might have failed to excite. His speech was worthy of his reputation. It contained an earnest protest against the doctrine of opportunism:—

Allow me to draw your attention to a peculiarity in these days which attaches to politicians. They say: "It is not a question whether we think disestablishment is right, or nationalisation of land is right, or confiscation of houses is right, or the equal distribution of property is right; but the question is whether the majority of the people of the country wish it to be so; and if they do, of course it must come to pass, and we will offer no opposition—in other words, we will facilitate the progress of measures which in our consciences we believe to be destructive and injurious, of which we personally disapprove, but which nevertheless must pass, because the people will it." Now I am very far indeed from saying that the people through their representatives ought not to have expression given to their desires. But this is a new doctrine. A politician, a statesman,

¹ Created Baron Blythswood in 1892.

² At the general election of 1885 all the seven seats returned Liberal representatives; in 1886, and again in 1892, three out of the seven seats were captured by the Unionist party.

whose duty it is to lead, not to follow, whose duty it is to have a definite view on questions of the highest importance to the people at large, whose duty it is to instruct the people — I say it is a new doctrine, and a very evil one, that a politician being placed in the post of leader, abdicates that position, and follows where he ought to guide. I say that in old times in the House of Commons, . . . if a man could not stay a movement which he believed to be wrong, he did not place himself at the head of it and lead on to the attainment of the object of which he disapproved. He stepped on one side. He said: "I will have nothing whatever to do with it. I cannot interfere with you. I cannot prevent the attainment, of this, which I believe to be wrong, but I will at all events leave it to you or others to take that course which you think right." . . . A course of that kind would have an enormous influence over the masses of the people, who have right instincts, and who desire to be taught and led; who, instead of being led by statesmen, are led nowadays by demagogues, or by persons who, as I said just now, give away liberally the property of others without sacrificing their own.

On November 19 Smith was at the opposite end of the kingdom addressing a meeting at Exeter, and another at Truro on the 21st. On the 25th he spoke at Plymouth, after which he returned to Greenlands to get a few weeks of well-earned repose before facing the labours of another year.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1890.

The prospect before Ministers at the opening of 1890 was dark and lowering. The Parnell Commission had not yet reported; but inasmuch as their proceedings had, from the first, worn the appearance of a State trial, in which the Irish members were arraigned at the instance of the Government, the exposure of Pigott's villany, and the enforced abandonment of that part of the charge which depended on the genuineness of letters alleged to have been written by

Parnell, had told with tremendous effect against the Unionist party.

A statement went the round of the papers to the effect that, as a consequence of the collapse of the case of the forged letters, Smith intended to resign his office. To a correspondent who wrote to ask the truth about this story, he replied through his secretary that he would have no peace if he were to contradict all the silly statements about him.

Parliament having met on February 11, Sir William Harcourt, before the debate on the Queen's Speech was begun, raised the question of privilege, of which, he maintained, a breach had been committed against the House by the 'Times' in the matter of the charges against the Irish members, and the diminished majority by which his motion was rejected—58—testified to the loss of prestige incurred by the Government as a consequence of their supposed connection with the case.

The Report of the Parnell Commission was made on February 13, and their judgment, though exonerating the Irish members from some of the charges made against them in the 'Times,' certainly brought home to them others involving heinous complicity with guilt; yet it was hailed by the Irish press and by Gladstonian speakers in Great Britain as rapturously as if it had been a complete acquittal. It speaks well for the lofty reputation of the English Bench that amid the storm of angry controversy and recrimination which broke out immediately on the delivery of judgment, not a word was heard impugning the integrity of the Commission. Even the 'Daily News,' leading organ of the Opposition, frankly admitted that one result of the inquiry had been "to vindicate the absolute impartiality of the Special Commissioners."

On March 4, Smith, in conformity with a notice he had

given on the publication of the Report of the Commission, rose to move that "this House adopts the Report, and thanks the Commissioners for their just and impartial conduct in the matters referred to them, and orders that the said Report be entered on the journals of this House."

In support of this resolution he spoke at much greater length than it was his custom to do, and in a tone of gravity and studied moderation. Referring to an amendment of which Mr Gladstone had given notice, he said:—

Sir, I think few will deny that these are grave charges, and cannot permit a "clean bill" to be given to the respondents. The amendment of the right hon. gentleman would practically be a condonation of crime. . . . I have no doubt I shall be asked why the Government intend to proceed no further than the resolution I move to enter the judges' report on the journals of the House. My answer is, because it was no part of our intention at any time to constitute a Commission for the purpose of obtaining evidence to inflict punishment. The primary object was to obtain the truth whether the charges were true or false, and the bill specially provided that all who gave witness of the truth would receive indemnity for so doing. . . . I ask the House to adopt the report without colour, without adding a word by way of preface. I ask the House, in the second place, to give its thanks to the judges, who have so ably and laboriously discharged their duties.

The conclusion of Smith's speech was a forcible piece of invective:—

Are all the experiences of past generations to be set at naught? Is the mandate of an illegal association alone to determine whether legal obligations shall or shall not be discharged, which have not only been the result of contract, but have received the approval of the State itself?

Sir, this prospect, afforded by the alliance of a great party with doctrines which can only be regarded as anarchical, is one which must make a man pause and hesitate. If political necessities compel them to imperil the very existence of society, it may become a question whether even the maintenance of party government in this country, which has in the past done so much to advance and develop our parliamentary institutions, may not be regarded in these latter days as a curse rather than a blessing. If, only a few years ago, I or any of my hon. friends had ventured to prophesy that the Liberal party would be found ranging itself on the side of those whose language they denounced—whose acts they alleged to be, and believed to be,

criminal—no words of condemnation would have been too strong in the mouths of our political opponents in denouncing us for such anticipation. Alas! it has come to pass; and I can only hope and believe that the people of this country, and even the people of Ireland, will come to realise how dangerous to the best interests of the State are the temptations to which the right hon. gentleman and his friends have succumbed. . . . I hope the House will not be carried away by party passions. I entreat the House to consider the grave interests which are at stake, to vindicate the reputation of this House as supporting peace, prosperity, and good order in all parts of her Majesty's dominions, and to maintain those principles without which all our prosperity will certainly pass away.

On March 11 the debate, which had oscillated between passages of great warmth and periods of depressing languor, was fanned into conflagration by a speech from Lord Randolph Churchill, who bitterly inveighed against his former colleagues, and reproached them with what he held to be the abortive and ominous result of the Special Commission. All this, of course, won him loud plaudits from the Opposition. It was perfectly consistent with the opinion he had expressed all along, from the first moment the Commission had been proposed, and no one could question his right to state his view of the case, however unfavourable might be the effect on the prospects of his own party. But the immediate result of his speech had not been foreseen. Lord Randolph had no more faithful follower, through evil report and good report, in sunshine and in shower, than the late Mr Louis Jennings, then member for Stockport. He was one of a small knot of friends who, as was said, had followed the noble lord into the desert, and held an independent attitude in supporting the Government. This gentleman now rose to express the embarrassment in which he was placed by Lord Randolph's speech. "It is said that I derive my opinions from my noble friend; but occasionally and at intervals I am capable of forming opinions of my own, and such an interval has occurred now." He went on to dissociate himself from any attempt to "stab his

party in the back," and declared his loyalty to the Government in this most difficult question.

The majority of the Government in the division which followed was 62. Their position, both in Parliament and in the country, as by-elections continued to show, bore testimony to the damaging effect of the Special Commission upon their reputation.

Anxiety now began to tell its tale upon Smith's health. It was he who, as leader of the House, had to bear the brunt of defending the course taken by Government in appointing the Commission, and he felt acutely the imputations made as to the motives of that policy. He was suffering at the time from persistent attacks of eczema, and began to despair of being able to continue at his post. He spent the Whitsuntide holidays cruising along the south coast in his yacht, and on May 31 addressed the following letter to his chief:—

MY DEAR SALISBURY,—I am afraid I may not be fit for my work when I get home. The Doctor here does not give me much hope, but I have asked Sir William Jenner to see me on my way through Southampton on Monday, if he is in those parts. If I am not fit, I should not like to stay on while another man has all the labour and the responsibility. It would not be fair to him, to you, or to my other colleagues.

It may be only a matter of a few days, but taking one week with another, I have gone back steadily so far as the eczema is concerned, and the recent attacks have been so severe that they have deprived me of the power to do any work; but I shall see you on Tuesday at the Cabinet under any circumstances.—Yours very truly,

W. H. SMITH.

But he could not be spared yet, and had to struggle on. In vain his colleagues begged him to let them lighten his labours—to leave the House betimes in the evenings, and suffer a deputy to conduct the business. He would not consent—so long as he remained leader *de jure*—to be anything less than leader *de facto*. The torment of eczema, outward sign of deeper-seated evil, increased as the summer

went on, depriving him of sleep at night and allowing him no repose by day.

On June 8 Smith wrote to Miss Giberne :—

I am not very bad, but the irritation, like some other mental irritation to which I am subjected in my work, is a little trying, but it will all come right ; and when I look around me at the multitude of gifts and blessings which I enjoy, I at least have no right to complain.

My only difficulty is always to know what is best to be done. Emily would wish me to give up public work more than I feel I can do at present, and my doctors are exacting, and my difficulties in my work are great ; but all these things trouble me less than they did, as I have complete trust that a higher Power will give light and guidance from day to day. . . . God bless you, my dear old friend.

He wrote again to this lady on June 29 in much the same strain. His constant reliance on, and entreaty for, the prayers of others may seem almost monotonous in its repetition ; but it was of the man's very nature :—

Private.

GREENLANDS, HENLEY ON THAMES,
29th June 1890.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Emily wrote to thank you for your very kind note, and I only add one line to say I value very highly your remembrance of me.

I am loaded with blessings—more than I could ever have dreamt of ; but I have great responsibilities and heavy duties, which I can only discharge by God's help. Pray daily for me that I may have the true Wisdom to guide me. I think I have been led and guided in the past. I say it reverently ; but I am in great need now of guidance, and I believe He will lead me in the way I should go. But let us *all* ask, and believe that we have the petition—the answer—we desire.—
Yours very affectionately,
W. H. SMITH.

Meanwhile the difficulties of the Government showed no diminution. Formidable agitation was got up against the licensing proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Government, like many of their predecessors, had cause to lament the day when they attempted to deal with this thorny subject.

The second reading of the Local Taxation Bill was carried by a majority of 73 ; but the troubles of the Government were not yet at an end. The discussion occupied five more

days before the Whitsuntide adjournment, and was resumed after the holidays on June 16, when evidence was given of the pressure which had been brought to bear on members in the interval. The majorities in favour of the clause sank to below 40, and at length, on June 19, the Government came perilously near defeat. It was "Ascot Thursday," always a day of anguish to Conservative Whips, for the attractions of the race for the Cup generally prove stronger to many members than the calls of duty. Defeat seemed inevitable, and was only averted by the timely arrival of half-a-dozen Ministerialists from Ascot. But practically the majority of 4, which saved the Government, sounded the knell of the licensing clauses, which being withdrawn on June 26, left an unsightly scar on the reputation of the Cabinet.

It is interesting to read Smith's vindication of the policy of the Government on the liquor laws. On June 14 he wrote to a correspondent who had taken him severely to task :—

Nothing is more painful to me than to be obliged to persevere in a course which men like you view with apprehension. The Government have introduced the provisions into the Local Taxation Bill which are objected to in order to diminish the temptations to intemperance, and they believe they will have that effect.

Ought we with this conviction to yield to the opposition of Mr Caine and his friends, which proceeds from what I can only describe as an hallucination of which our irreconcilable opponents are only too glad to avail themselves ?

If nothing is gained to the cause of Temperance by decreasing the number of public-houses, then I admit I have made a mistake ; but I have always believed myself that to shut up one was to remove one source of temptation.—Yours very truly,
W. H. SMITH.

Smith's health was again giving discomfort to himself and anxiety to his friends. On July 10 he wrote to his doctor :—

You let drop the words yesterday, "Is the game worth the candle?" suggesting to me, as I thought at the moment, to consider whether I ought to go on with my present work in the Government ; and you

then went on to say that I had a very small reserve of power (or balance at my banker's, so to speak), which might be very easily over-drawn.

My position is that I am what I am in the House of Commons from no personal ambition. I fill a place in the machine of Government at the desire of my colleagues, and I am perfectly willing to drop out of it whenever in their judgment it is no longer necessary that I should remain; but a sense of loyalty to them and to the country keeps me with them so long as they want me to stay, and I am at all able to do the work.

Now it is for you to say if I am able. It would be folly and worse than folly if I cut short my life by staying on a few weeks or a few months longer as leader of the House; but if I have only to bear personal discomfort and wearisomeness, I should not be justified in withdrawing, at the cost of serious difficulty to the Government, at the present time.

The reply he received to this letter left Smith in no doubt as to the imminence of the risk incurred by perseverance, though it gave him hopes that, if timely precautions were taken, the trouble might yet be overcome, and he might be spared to many years of usefulness.¹ He was recommended to go to La Bourboule, near Royat, where Lord and Lady Salisbury already had gone; and this advice he followed, though, unhappily, not till more than a month had elapsed. He reached La Bourboule on August 14 with Mrs Smith and his daughter Helen, and remained till September 9. The waters did him a great deal of good, and he was able to join the Pandora at Venice, whence the party cruised down the Adriatic and up the coast of Italy, landing at Toulon on October 13. But Smith got a chill

¹ No one understood better than Smith the irreparable effects of overwork on a man's constitution. A few months before his last illness he happened to meet Mr Reginald Lucas, just returned from abroad, where he had been sent to recruit his health, which had suffered from his duties as private secretary to one of Smith's colleagues. After inquiring about the effect of his foreign trip, he warned Mr Lucas against working too hard in the future. Mr Lucas made the natural remark that Mr Smith's own practice was at strange variance with his precept.

"I am an old man now," replied Smith, "and can't last long in any case. You are a young man, and must take care of yourself: whatever you do, avoid overwork, and take plenty of holidays."

there ; by the time he reached Paris he was very poorly, and a month after arriving in England he was plunged into a sea of anxiety on behalf of other people by the affairs of Barings' Bank, and the consequent imminence of widespread disaster in the City. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Goschen, held a consultation at the Bank of England on November 10, and firmly declared that the only condition on which Government support could be permitted was that the Bank should satisfy themselves that Barings would prove solvent, were time allowed for realisation of assets. This was a momentous step to take on the part of the Treasury, and, having made his decision, Mr Goschen left London to fulfil some political engagements in the North. The Bank having reported satisfactorily on the question submitted to them, it fell to Smith, as First Lord, in the absence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to carry out the negotiations necessary to avert the threatened calamity. The following letter from Mr Lidderdale, at that time Governor of the Bank of England, was written after Mr Smith's death to Mr J. L. Pattison, his private secretary :—

8th October 1891.

I have not the honour of being acquainted with Mr Smith's family, & therefore I cannot express to them direct my deep personal regret at a loss the seriousness of which will, I feel sure, be felt hereafter more than it is even now when regrets are general. Until the day I came to Downing St. about the Baring crisis I had not met your chief, but my intercourse with him on that occasion & afterwards led to a feeling on my part towards him of high respect & personal regard, such as I have never experienced before on so limited an acquaintance, & such as I have *very* rarely entertained for a public man. Mr Smith impressed me with a strong sense of his soundness of judgment & steadfastness, & gave me, in addition, a marked illustration of his public spirit & generosity. When I was led by some remark of his to say, "I fear, sir, you do not appreciate the gravity of the position," he replied, "You are mistaken ; & to prove this I will myself send you a cheque for £100,000 to-morrow morning, if you tell me to do so."

This £100,000 was to be Mr Smith's contribution towards averting the danger with which our finance was threatened, & it was offered some hours before the Guarantee Fund was started.

A letter written by Smith to Mr Lidderdale, on November 21, 1890, shows on what conditions and in what expectation this offer was made:—

My motive in offering a guarantee of £100,000 was entirely a public one. I thought it would have been a national misfortune if Barings had gone down, and I was willing to incur a private risk to avert that disaster; but since I have been a member of the Government—since 1874—I have never asked for an allotment of shares in a company, or taken part in speculation, in order that as a Minister or ex-Minister it may be impossible for any one to impute interested motives to me in any transaction I may have with people out of doors on behalf of the Government.

Following this rule, I should not ask for any share in the New Barings, but I do regard it as of great public importance that the business of the House should be kept together and carried on on the old lines (not the recent ones), and if it was necessary to that end that I should subscribe, I am prepared to do so; but for the reasons I have given, I had rather not—as a matter of course and of policy.

Parliament was prorogued on August 12, on the understanding that it was to be summoned together again before Christmas, in order to take up the Irish Land Bill and the Tithes Bill, which it had been found necessary to abandon. Opposition speakers during the recess indulged their audiences with animated forecasts of the fate which lay in wait for a discredited Government in the autumn session, and Ministerialists themselves looked forward with little equanimity to what promised to be a time of difficulty and possible disaster. But all this was changed before the day of meeting. The divorce suit brought by Captain O'Shea, formerly a Parnellite member of Parliament, against his wife, and Mr Parnell as co-respondent, had been prejudged by Gladstonians and Parnellites as another vile conspiracy, similar to that of the forged letters, to destroy Parnell's character and wreck the cause of Home Rule; and this impression was strengthened, as it had been in the trial before the Special Commission, by the retention of the Unionist Solicitor-General, Sir Edward Clarke, as counsel for Captain O'Shea. But to the dismay and perplexity of

all his friends and political allies, no appearance was made on the part of Mr Parnell, who allowed judgment to be given against him without offering any defence.

This took place just a week before the meeting of Parliament on November 25. Its effect upon the standing of Parnell as a politician, and on the fortunes of the party which he led, was such as could have ensued on similar circumstances in no other country under the sun. Nowhere except in England is the public standing and influence of a statesman subject to irretrievable damage on account of his private irregularities. For sixteen years Parnell had maintained undisputed supremacy in the councils of the Irish party; he had led them in Parliament as they had never been led before; his ascendancy had quelled all minor rivalries—austere, sagacious, and resolute, he had brought Home Rule, once a wild impracticable dream, to the brink of accomplishment. The Irish members were themselves the first to prove their conviction that Parnell could not be spared: they held an enthusiastic meeting in Dublin on November 20, and vowed unabated confidence in their great leader.

But the English Nonconformists and Scottish Presbyterians had to be taken into account. Without their support Mr Gladstone would be helpless, and Home Rule would sink hopelessly out of sight. They made known their irrevocable determination not to work for Home Rule so long as Parnell remained at the head of the Irish party, and this was followed by an open letter from Mr Gladstone to Mr John Morley, in which he said:—

I thought it necessary, viewing the arrangements for the commencement of the session to-morrow, to acquaint Mr M'Carthy with the conclusion at which, after using all the means of observation and reflection in my power, I had arrived. It was, that notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be pro-

ductive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland.

It is not necessary to refer in this place to the stormy scenes which disturbed the consultations of the Nationalist members in Committee Room 15, further than as they ended in the violent rupture of the Irish party into two factions. The majority of them, forty-five in number, notwithstanding their recent renewal of fealty to Parnell in the Leinster Hall, appeared overawed by Mr Gladstone's disownment of Parnell as the future Irish leader, and, renouncing the authority of the latter, elected Mr Justin M'Carthy "Sessional Chairman" in his place; but twenty-six members remained firm in allegiance to their old and trusted chief. For all practical purpose, the Irish Opposition was wrecked for the time being.

But this was not all. Parnell was not the sort of man to lie down under punishment from Mr Gladstone. He had something in store for the leader of the Liberals, and he was not long in revealing his method of vengeance. He issued a manifesto to the Irish people, in which he declared that Mr Gladstone's interference for the purpose of influencing the Irish people in their choice of a leader, and the threat in his letter, "repeated so insolently on many English platforms and in numerous British newspapers," compelled him "to put before you information which until now, so far as my colleagues are concerned, has been solely in my possession, and which will enable you to understand the measure of the loss with which you are threatened, unless you consent to throw me to the English wolves now howling for my destruction."

Parnell then went on to describe certain transactions that took place during his visit to Mr Gladstone at Hawarden in November 1889. He said that there he had laid before him, in a conversation lasting two hours, "mainly mono-

polished by Mr Gladstone," a detailed scheme of Home Rule, to be put in effect as soon as the Liberal party returned to office; but that, pending the general election, absolute silence was to be preserved on the question of retaining the Irish members — all or any of them — at Westminster. Further, Mr Parnell described how Mr Morley expressed perplexity at the "avowed absence of any policy on the part of the Liberal leaders and party with regard to the land question," and how he (Parnell) was persuaded at length, though he thought it false strategy, to meet Mr Balfour's Land Bill with 'a direct negative.

Finally, he gave the details of an interview he had had with Mr Morley a few weeks previously, in which, he said, he had persuaded that gentleman to adopt the "oblique method of procedure" in opposing the Land Bill.

But, in addition, he made me a remarkable proposal, referring to the probable approaching victory of the Liberal party at the polls. He suggested some considerations as to the future of the Irish party. He asked me whether I would be willing to assume the office of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, or to allow another member of my party to take the position. He also put before me the desirability of filling one of the law offices of the Crown in Ireland by a legal member of my party.

There was enough in this startling document to withdraw the attention of the Liberal party from the proceedings of the Government, and to put them on their defence before the people whom they aspired to rule. Its publication was immediately followed by letters from Mr Gladstone and Mr Morley, denying the accuracy of Mr Parnell's version of the Hawarden negotiations.

While this tempest was raging, business in the House of Commons had begun with unusual tranquillity. Smith wrote to Mr Gladstone on November 25, informing him that it was his intention, as soon as the Address had been voted, to ask the House to give the Government the whole of its time up to Christmas for the consideration of the

Tithes and Land Purchase Bills. In reply Mr Gladstone observed, "You will not require to be told that I view it with regret." It was expected that Mr Smith's proposal would be hotly contested, but there was no spirit left, for the time being, in the Opposition, and it was carried without difficulty. The Tithes Bill and the Land Bill were read a second time, the latter giving the first opportunity of accentuating the split in the Irish party,—for while the anti-Parnellites went with Mr Gladstone into the lobby against it, Parnell and his faithful followers voted with the Government. Both bills were afterwards allowed to pass into the Committee stage, to be resumed after the Christmas holidays, and Parliament was adjourned on December 9 until January 22—the autumn session, which had been approached with so much trepidation by Ministers and eager anticipation of victory by the Opposition, having lasted less than a fortnight. The Government was saved from the consequences of unskilful administration, as a Scotsman might say, "mair by luck than gude guidin'."

CHAPTER XXIV.

1891.

Always a frequent and profuse letter-writer, Smith maintained a constant correspondence throughout the ill-health which constantly oppressed him during 1891. Here is a letter to the Duke of Rutland, who was prevented by gout from attending the January Cabinets :—

3 GROSVENOR PLACE, S.W., 19th Jan. 1891.

MY DEAR DUKE,—It was very good of you to write to me at such length. I waited to reply until we had had our first Cabinet after

Salisbury's return, and although you may possibly hear from others of our colleagues, I will tell you shortly what we did—if Cabinets ever do anything. We considered somewhat alarmist telegrams from the Cape. The Boers are supposed to be about to *trek* into Mashonaland and set up a republic, with the connivance of the Transvaal Government. . . . We agreed a telegram should go warning the Transvaal Government that the threatened incursion would be unfriendly, hostile, and a breach of the Swazi Convention. . . . The Budget was of course considered, and your views as to the Income-tax were debated, but it was felt that, having included Assisted Education in the Queen's Speech, provision must be made for it, and a reduction of Income-tax postponed. Both cannot be done this year. It is, I think, certain that if we proposed to postpone the former to the latter, we should be met by an amendment which would unite all the men on the Liberal benches with some of our own men against us. Every member now has his eye on the General Election, and every vote is given from an Opportunist point of view. The payers of school fees are more powerful from a voting point of view than the payers of Income-tax!

The vote on Opium shows the demoralisation of the House. Men could not be induced to vote against Pease. They were terrorised by the cry of immorality raised by the Sentimental and Dissenting Agitators. . . .

On resuming work in Parliament on January 22, Ministers found themselves confronted by a disorganised and perplexed Opposition. The question of the Irish leadership was still under discussion at Boulogne, between Mr Parnell on the one hand, and, on the other, Mr Dillon and Mr O'Brien, the latter having been summoned from America to act as peacemaker between the two sections. In these negotiations Parnell held a position of great power, inasmuch as a large proportion of the funds of the National League were locked up in his name, and could only be released on his order.

Meanwhile the conflict between Parnellites and anti-Parnellites had assumed the character of one between the ecclesiastical and the purely revolutionary forces in Ireland. It was not until the majority of the Irish parliamentary party had declared against Parnell, that the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church pronounced against the recognition of his leadership, or, as Lord Salisbury expressed it in the

House of Lords, "gently descended on the right side of the fence."

In some respects this Boulogne conference offered a parallel to the Round-Table Conference of 1887: similar hopes were entertained of reconciliation between the ruptured sections of a once united party: the chances seemed in each case to be favourable to reunion: in each case the negotiations broke down, and left the breach wider and more accentuated than before.

On February 4 Mr Gladstone moved the second reading of a bill which he had introduced to remove the disability which prevents Roman Catholics holding the appointments of Lord Chancellor and Viceroy of Ireland, but severing from the first-named office the right of administering the ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown. It appeared to some persons that the right hon. gentleman's motive in moving in this matter at that particular time was mainly a personal one—namely, to enable him, in the event of a return of his party to office, to appoint two of his most prominent supporters, who happened to be Roman Catholics, one to the woolsack, the other to the Lord Lieutenancy. Be that as it might, it was open to Smith, upon whom devolved the duty of moving the rejection of the bill, to argue that although Mr Gladstone was now so much impressed with the importance of the question, and so convinced of the existence of a grievance, that he had been impelled to take the course, most unusual in an ex-Premier, of personally introducing a bill, yet it had never occurred to him to take action in the matter at a time when, being in office and responsible for the policy of the Cabinet, he might have done so to some effect.

I do not wish [said Smith] to enter at any length upon the details of the measure; but I want to point out this one thing—either the measure is necessary, or it is not necessary. If it is not necessary, it

is open to the objection which the right hon. gentleman himself indicated—that it does impose a new disability. And the point I wish to draw the attention of the House to is, that while it disqualifies the Lord Chancellor from exercising ecclesiastical patronage, and from discharging any trust of any corporation or institution which may attach to the Church of England, it leaves him open to declare the law and policy affecting such trusts, so that the Lord Chancellor is to be rendered incapable of discharging an executive duty within the plain direction of the trust; . . . but he is not debarred from discharging the duties affecting the policy and the legal interpretation of such trusts. I can hardly regard that as either wise or satisfactory. It is, I can only repeat, the setting up of a new scheme of disability, declaring at one moment that a Roman Catholic lawyer is to be fully capable of discharging the duties of Lord Chancellor, and the next moment cutting off from him a very large proportion of the most important duties which devolve upon him.

I am not, I believe, straining a point at all in saying that the right hon. gentleman must have contemplated all these consequences with reference to the future government of Ireland by the light of the book which he has written¹ and the opinions he has expressed therein. I regard this bill as most unfortunate and inopportune. I do not know why it is proposed, unless it be in connection with the scheme of Home Rule with which the right hon. gentleman is identified. We have fellow-subjects of the Roman Catholic faith in all parts of the world. We trust them; we rely upon them to discharge their several duties; and there is no disability of any kind upon them other than those to which reference has been made in this bill. It seems to me that those who stir questions of this kind incur a grave responsibility. The revival of religious controversy is a matter that ought to be avoided by all who have any regard for the peace and wellbeing of the country. We are in peace, and I earnestly hope that the House and country will allow us to remain so, and that this bill may not pass into law.

In effect the bill was rejected by a majority of 47, 27 Conservatives voting in the minority against the Government.

The Catholic Union of Great Britain took umbrage at the action of the Government in resisting Mr Gladstone's measure, and forwarded through their President, the Duke of Norfolk, to Mr Smith a copy of a resolution expressing "deep pain at the recent rejection by the House of Commons of the Religious Disabilities Removal Bill," and protesting "against the slur thereby cast upon the loyalty and

¹ The Vatican Decrees.

patriotism of the Catholics of this country." In reply, Smith wrote the following letter to the Duke:—

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, *Feb.* 26, 1891.

MY DEAR DUKE OF NORFOLK,—Pray accept my apologies for delay in acknowledging your letter of the 19th inst., enclosing the resolution passed at the recent meeting of the Catholic Union of Great Britain; but I have been overwhelmed with work during the last week.

I am very sorry that the meeting should have considered the action of the House of Commons, in regard to the Religious Disabilities Removal Bill, as in any way a slur upon the loyalty and patriotism of her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects. Not only did I take pains in my speech to emphasise the fact that no one who knows English society could doubt the perfect loyalty of the Roman Catholics, but I pointed out that the constitution of her Majesty's Government at the present time was in itself a complete answer to such a suggestion.—Believe me, my dear Lord Duke, yours very truly,
W. H. SMITH.

There were, however, some members of the Catholic Union who by no means approved of the action taken by that body on this occasion, as is proved by the following extract from a letter written to Mr Smith by a member of a distinguished Roman Catholic family:—

Feb. 23, '91.

DEAR MR SMITH,—In common with other Catholics who are supporters of Tory principles, I am extremely grieved to hear that a resolution has been sent to you from the Catholic Union, which proves that certain influential gentlemen have fallen into the trap so cleverly laid for them by Mr Gladstone. It is well you should know that there were only about fifty present at the meeting. . . . I know several equally influential men who are as opposed to this resolution as I am; and tho' no doubt the rank & file in Lancashire have been taken in & use will be made of it by Gladstonians, I am quite sure such a resolution would not have been carried as it was if the meeting had been more representative. I never received notice of it.

Early in the session, on January 27, the House of Commons entered for the last time upon the consideration of the law of the Parliamentary Oath as it affected Mr Charles Bradlaugh, the member for Northampton. That member had put upon the paper a notice calling upon the House to

expunge from its Journals the resolution of June 22, 1880, whereby he was debarred from taking the oath or making affirmation, such resolution "being subversive of the rights of the whole body of electors of this kingdom." But when the day appointed for the discussion arrived, Mr Bradlaugh was lying on what proved to be his death-bed, and Dr Hunter moved the resolution in his place.

The relations of Mr Bradlaugh with the House, and the feeling towards him among members of all parties, had greatly altered since the exciting scenes attendant upon his first appearance in Parliament, and Smith made handsome allusion to this in declaring the line which the Government intended to pursue in dealing with the motion:—

I must express for myself, and, I am sure, for all my hon. friends on this side of the House, the great regret we feel at the illness of the hon. member for Northampton. He is undoubtedly a warm partisan. He takes a strong view on all points on which he thinks it right to give expression to views in this House; but he has been undoubtedly a valuable addition to this House, not only from the freedom and independence with which he has expressed his views, but from the manner in which he has conducted himself here. . . . I have considered very carefully the suggestion which has been made by the hon. and learned member for Aberdeen. We remain of the opinion expressed in the resolution of 1880. We believe that the House at that time did its duty. . . . But, sir, the circumstances are entirely changed. There is no longer any necessity for maintaining on the Journals of the House this resolution; and in all the circumstances in which we find ourselves, and bearing in mind that Mr Bradlaugh has been a useful member of this House for six or seven years, I shall not resist the motion, upon the understanding [which had been advocated by Mr Gladstone] that the last words, impugning the authority and control of this House, are struck out. I could not under any circumstances consent to say that the House in 1880 exceeded its duty—that it did anything contrary to the law of Parliament, or anything in derogation of the rights and privileges of the people. But if it is merely the desire that the resolution of 1880 should be erased from the records, I shall offer no opposition.

This was agreed to, and thus the House of Commons performed a gracious act towards one of its members, without in any degree reflecting upon the motives or wisdom of

those who had been compelled to deal with very difficult circumstances.

On February 16 Mr John Morley moved a vote of censure on the Government in regard to the administration of the law in Ireland. To this Mr T. W. Russell moved an amendment, to the effect that the Tipperary prosecutions and other proceedings "had been rendered imperative by the existence and activity of an illegal conspiracy against the rights of the people, who had been cruelly persecuted, and that the House rejoiced in the successful vindication of the law." The omission of the words of Mr Morley's resolution, in order to insert Mr Russell's amendment, was carried by 75 votes, and the debate was resumed. At one o'clock in the morning Smith rose to reply to Sir William Harcourt, who had seconded Mr Healy's motion for the adjournment of the debate. He rallied Sir William on the attempt he had joined in to evade the meaning of the decision at which the House had just arrived, and at half-past one the debate was adjourned, never more to be resumed.

This was the last direct attack upon the Government in which Smith was ever to take part as one of the defending party.

The most important provision in Mr Goschen's Budget was one to redeem the reference in the Queen's Speech to the alleviation of "the burden which compulsory education has in recent years imposed on the poorer portions of the people." "I have," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "two millions at my disposal, in one sense; but there sits on the Treasury Bench another despoiler of the public purse—my right hon. friend the Vice-President of the Council." To make elementary education free in England, Ireland, and Wales, as had already been done in Scotland,

would swallow up the whole surplus ; but the Government had made up their minds, and the thing was done.

On the vexed question of the Sunday opening of museums, Smith made the following reply to one who had addressed inquiry to him :—

March 20, 1891.

I know there is difference of opinion between men who all earnestly desire to promote the happiness of their fellow-creatures, as to the opening of picture-galleries and museums on Sundays. I do not presume to find fault with those who differ from me, but I remain of opinion that on the whole it would be harmful to the interests of the working classes, as it would involve the compulsory employment by the State of many of these servants on Sundays, and set an example to private employers of labour in the direction of amusements.

I am of opinion that a Sunday rest is invaluable to the working man, and I am anxious to protect it for him as much as I can.—Yours very sincerely,

W. H. SMITH.

Stoutly as Smith had opposed, time after time, the policy of Mr Gladstone on many subjects, and plainly as he sometimes expressed his disapproval at the inconsistency of that statesman's course with the principles which, as Smith held, should lie at the base of all government, it is pleasant to record an instance of the personal regard which endured to the end between these political opponents. On March 28 Smith wrote to the Right Hon. Akers Douglas, M.P., the Patronage Secretary :—

Harcourt asks me to dinner on April 15 to meet Gladstone, and I am very much inclined to go. Would it frighten our friends ?

Three months later, on June 28, he observed in a letter to Sir Henry Acland :—

Gladstone is more kindly in his personal relations than I have ever known him, but he is physically much weaker, and the least exertion knocks him over.

Smith had thoughts for gentler subjects than political strife, as is shown by the following letter, written on April 4, to the Duke of Rutland :—

This is the last of my so-called holidays; but every day has brought its three or four hours' work. It is however a most restful change to write my letters in full view of trees and hills, which to-day are refreshed by their first April shower. . . . I have long wanted to ask you to do me a kindness while there is yet time. I have a great desire to put the proper names to Disraeli's characters in his political novels. . . . Would you mind doing it for me? I would put it by as a literary treasure in my library: not to be opened for any number of years that you might stipulate, if you thought it desirable to do so. Baillie-Cochrane is gone, and there is no one I know of who can supply the information but yourself. . . . Cranbrook writes to me to-day to say that he has seen it stated in the papers that Michael Davitt has been placed on the Royal Commission on Labour. I wrote at once to say there was no truth in the story. Justin M'Carthy, who has been at Cannes, wrote and telegraphed asking that he (Davitt) might be put upon it to represent the late Parnell party, but I telegraphed in reply that it was impossible. . . . Lord Granville's death is a real loss, although he had got very old lately. The bench opposite to you in the House of Lords will not be at all the same without him.

One more distinction and mark of his sovereign's favour was to be bestowed on Smith, and one which probably gave him more gratification than any of the honours he had already received. On May 1, 1891, after Lord Granville's death, Lord Salisbury wrote to him to say that he had submitted his name to the Queen for the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports:—

It is a semi-naval position, & you have been since 1878 always exceedingly popular with naval people: & I think the Dover people would feel complimented at the Leader of the House of Commons taking it. I enclose the Queen's answer.

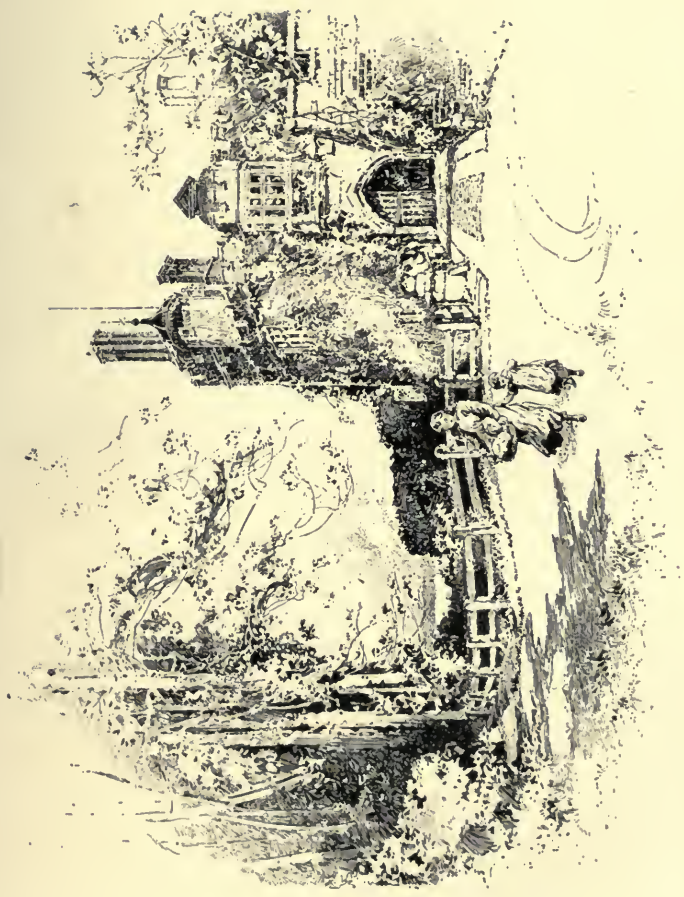
Will you take it?

The Queen to the Marquis of Salisbury.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *May 1, 1891.*

The Queen highly approves of Mr Smith's being offered the office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. No one deserves it more than he does.

Some foolish comments were made at the time on Smith's acceptance of this office. It was murmured that it was a post which should have been reserved for some Minister in circumstances other than affluent, who had not, like Smith, a country residence of his own. How little these critics



WALMER CASTLE.



understood the motives which had led to the offer being made and accepted! So far from the Wardenship being an office of profit, Lord Salisbury wrote about it: "I made a mistake in thinking it should be reserved as an assistance to a poor man. It is a white elephant of the whitest kind." In former days it was indeed a lucrative post, and the Lord Warden used to derive £3000 or £4000 a-year from the proceeds of wreckage; but latterly there has been no income of any sort, but on the contrary a heavy expenditure in upkeep and household charges.

The usual letters of congratulation poured in, but there was a touch of pathos in them, arising from the precarious state of the new Lord Warden's health.

May you and yours [wrote Sir Henry Aeland] long enjoy the peaceful retreat, looking from the Great Duke's window over the Downs and imbibing the lovely sea-breeze that ever moves along the shore.

Among the many letters of congratulation which Smith received was one from a naval officer of high rank, containing an amusing anecdote:—

In 1870 I was lying in the Downs with two other ships. Mr Gladstone, then Prime Minister, was stopping at Walmer Castle with your predecessor, and they intimated their intention of visiting the senior officer, who at once turned to the Regulations to see what honours a Prime Minister was entitled to on visiting a man-of-war, and nothing could be found. Here was a dilemma! but fortunately it was found that the Ld. Warden is entitled to 19 guns in his own jurisdiction, so yards were manned & the salute fired, and Mr Gladstone stood up and graciously bowed, & took to himself what was really meant for the Lord Warden.

According to the archaic rule which compels all members accepting office under the Crown to vacate their seats and offer themselves for re-election, Smith had to go through the form of an appeal to the Strand electors. He was not opposed, and the manner of his reception by the House on taking his seat is best shown by an extract from the parliamentary report of an evening paper, the 'Pall Mall Gazette,'

at that time strongly Radical in politics, and surely not pre-disposed in favour of the Tory leader :—

“Members desiring to take their seats will now come to the table,” shouts the Speaker in stentorian tones, and behold! there marches



*W. H. Smith in his new character as Warden of the Cinque Ports
and Constable of Dover Castle.¹*

up to the table a member whom we seem to have seen before. He blushes, but he is not in the first bloom of his manhood: he smiles nervously in response to the ringing cheers that greet him from all parts of the House, but he goes through the ceremonies of introduc-

¹ Reproduced from ‘Punch’ by permission of the proprietors.

tion—not with the awkwardness of a new member, but with all the grace and ease of one who has known them from his childhood up. And the curious thing is this, though he is obviously a Tory member, the whole House joins in his welcome, and grins from ear to ear with satisfaction, as at the coming of some very dear old friend. Curious? it is not at all curious; for who should this member be but the most popular man that has led the House of Commons for the last twenty years—Mr W. H. Smith.

This was on May 12: on the 14th Smith went to spend the short Whitsuntide recess at Cadenabbia, whence he returned on May 27. A month later he was laid low by an attack of gout. Though unable to be in his place in the House of Commons, he managed with great difficulty to attend a meeting of the Cabinet on June 20.

Gout has seized on my right ankle [he wrote to Miss Giberne on his birthday, the 24th], but I am told it is good for me, which I believe, and that I shall be better in a day or two. Meanwhile I cannot go to the House or to Windsor, where I am summoned to-day, and so I have rest to a certain extent.

Every one is very kind and very good to me, and I think I am as careful as I can be if I go on with my work, which I don't see my way, as a matter of conscience, yet to throw up. . . .

The last words spoken by Smith in the House of Commons were on July 10, in reply to a question by the Hon. Philip Stanhope, who asked him if her Majesty's Government would convey to the French Government an invitation to the President of the French Republic to visit England. Mr Smith replied that it was not in accordance with usage for her Majesty's Ministers to convey invitations of this kind; but the head of the French Republic or of any other friendly nation would always receive a cordial welcome in this country.

On July 11 he was well enough to go to Hatfield to meet the German Emperor, but many who spoke to him there were shocked with his wasted, worn look. This was, indeed, his last appearance in public, and though the symptoms of his malady became much more serious, he made light of them in writing to Mrs Smith. In the letter which

he addressed to her from Hatfield, there was brought to a close the long and sympathetic correspondence which had endured throughout their wedded life :—

HATFIELD HOUSE, 12th July 1891. 7 P.M.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—Everything has gone off wonderfully well to-day. The weather has been perfect for Hatfield. The place is looking beautiful, and everybody says so, which must be very satisfactory to the Salisburys.

They have been very kind to me, and, observing I looked tired last night, Lady Salisbury urged me to go to bed early, which I did, and to-day I have rested a great deal in my room. The house is so crowded that many of the guests are sleeping out in the town, and amongst them George Hamilton and Stanhope, but I am lodged comfortably in a quiet corner of the house.

I am still uncomfortable, and am clearly not yet fit for the iron, which I shall not take again until I have seen Powell.

I hope it has not been an unhappy day for you. It would have been happier for me if I had been with you, but I think it was right to come under the circumstances.—Your loving husband,

W. H. SMITH.

Mr Balfour, observing how ill he looked, urged Smith to send for a doctor, but he, well knowing that he would have been ordered to lay up at once, would not consent to do so. He returned to London on the 13th exceedingly ill, and for a day or two his condition was very grave. Needless to say that he lacked nothing that medical skill or loving care could provide, and the more acute symptoms were allayed, but it was nearly six weeks before he could be moved from his house in Grosvenor Place. This severe illness was not suffered to interfere with an annual *fête* which Smith used to provide for the police attending at the House of Commons, and for the messengers, doorkeepers, and others employed there. He directed arrangements to be made as usual, and the excursion to Greenlands took place towards the end of July, just as if the owner of that beautiful place had been strong and well.

Mr Gladstone called personally to make a last inquiry before leaving London for the recess, and sent a kindly

message up-stairs to the rival leader of the Commons; but Smith was too ill at the time to see any except members of



In the Gardens, Walmer Castle.

his own family. Just before leave was given by the doctors to attempt the move to Walmer, Lord Salisbury and one or

two intimate colleagues were admitted to take a short farewell.

On August 20 Mr Smith travelled to Walmer with his wife.

Much was hoped from the change, but it was still some time before much benefit was apparent. Smith remained quite unable to walk, and could only take the air in short drives in a carriage or bath-chair. His one wish was to get afloat. The Pandora lay at anchor off the castle, and to get him on board was a risky undertaking, for the beach at Walmer is still as bad to embark from as Nelson found it when he visited Pitt. Deal Pier, besides being at some distance, was not much better, for there were the slippery steps down which the invalid would have to be carried; and Dover Harbour was too far away. At last, however, so strong was the desire of the patient, that on September 11 he was conveyed on board in a litter, and several hours were spent cruising in the Channel. Thereafter, whenever the weather was favourable, these excursions were repeated, and his strength seemed to be slowly returning. He became able to take short turns on deck, leaning on a friendly arm; but his chief pleasure was to sit or lie, with wife or daughter beside him, watching the shipping of all nationalities passing up and down the Channel; and he would have the yacht steered close to any vessel of remarkable beauty or interest, such as a four-masted clipper under full sail. One day, to his great delight, he was accompanied in his cruise by Mr Jackson¹ and Mr Akers Douglas, the two Secretaries to the Treasury, who were deeply moved with sympathy for the condition of their beloved chief.

All this time, in spite of his weakness, Smith found

¹ The Right Hon. W. L. Jackson, M.P., succeeded Mr Balfour as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the latter became First Lord of the Treasury on Mr Smith's death.

resolution to transact with his secretary, Mr Pattisson, such business as came by post. Faithful to old habits, he wrote many letters to his friends, and settled several questions of patronage and other matters belonging to the office of First Lord of the Treasury.

On Thursday, October 1, he felt so much better that, at his special desire, those members of his family who had visiting engagements prepared to carry them out. Accordingly Mr Smith was left alone with his wife and Mrs Codrington, and by the doctor's advice a house was taken in Torquay for the winter months.

On Friday, October 2, there was a rough sea on, but he was carried down over the beach, and with some difficulty placed in the gig. "Ah! this is like life itself," he observed to Captain Blow, as he felt the motion of the boat; "your treatment is doing me good. I feel some hopes now." It was the last time he was on board his beloved yacht. The casket of Pandora did not fail to yield him hope, but it was a hope to be realised in another world: he had done with the hopes, loves, cares, and anxieties of this one.

CHAPTER XXV.

1891.

On Monday, October 5, Smith was up and dressed in the drawing-room overlooking the Downs. He asked Mr Pattisson if there was anything in his letters requiring attention, who replied that there was one from Lord George Hamilton on a rather difficult question, and suggested deferring it to another day. Smith, however, desired that it

should be read to him, and dictated a sentence bearing on the point raised ; but, feeling unequal to the exertion, he



Drawing-room, Walmer Castle.

gave it up, saying, "No : tell George I am not well enough to deal with it."

He then gave instructions to prepare submissions to the Queen in regard to two vacant Crown livings, and, lastly,

to get ready for his signature two cheques on his private account to pay his doctors' fees. Mr Pattisson, noticing that he was in great pain, suggested that they should be paid out of his (Mr Pattisson's) account, so as to save his chief the exertion of signing them. But he, smiling, said, "No; it is a little compliment to them if I sign my own cheques, and I should like to do so." The cheques were accordingly drawn on his own account, and thus the last occasion he ever put pen to paper was characteristic of his whole life, for it arose out of a desire to show consideration for others.

On the following morning, Tuesday, October 6, an alarming change took place. Dr Wethered, who had been called in between 6 and 7 A.M., found that the heart's action was failing. Telegrams were sent to the absent members of the family, but they were too distant to be recalled in time to see their father alive.

Shortly after one o'clock Dr Douglas Powell and Mr Tom Smith (the well-known surgeon) arrived from London, but they could only confirm Dr Wethered's melancholy diagnosis.

Mr Smith's mind, even now, remained quite clear, and once more a kindly thought for another made him send a business instruction to Mr Pattisson. The doctors had withdrawn but a few minutes, leaving Mrs Smith alone with her husband, save for the presence of the nurse and a faithful valet, when they were called back.

Mr Smith passed away at ten minutes to three.

Newspapers of every section and shade of politics gave testimony next morning to the respect borne to the personal character of Mr Smith, and the admiration which his sterling qualities had secured from all classes of his fellow-countrymen.

From the Queen came a gracious telegram to Mrs Smith:—

I cannot find words to express my sorrow at the unexpected news of the loss of your beloved husband. The country and his Sovereign lose in him one of the wisest and best statesmen and kindest and best of men. To you the blow must be terrible and the loss irreparable.

V. R. I.

This was followed by a letter which conveyed more fully her Majesty's sympathy with her bereaved subject:—

BALMORAL CASTLE, Oct. 7, 1891.

DEAR MRS SMITH,—As I telegraphed, it is quite impossible for me to express how deeply grieved and shocked I was at the unexpected news of dear Mr Smith's suddenly increased illness, to be followed so soon by the very sad news that he had passed away. I feel most deeply for you, and fear that his unceasing devotion to his country and Sovereign has shortened his most valuable life! I cannot sufficiently express my sense of gratitude to him for his invaluable services, or how deeply I mourn his loss, which is so great to the country. He has left behind him a bright example, and will be deeply mourned and regretted by *all*.

But to you, dear Mrs Smith, the loss is the greatest and the blow is the heaviest, and I pray God to support you and enable you to submit to His dispensation; but it is very difficult to say, "Thy will be done."

Asking you to convey to your children the expression of my sympathy, pray believe me always,—Yours most sincerely,

VICTORIA R. I.

Other letters of condolence streamed in, and among the scores of telegrams there was one of extreme simplicity, in form and significance equally classical and Christian, consisting of three words only:—

Beatus ille. GEORGE.

The funeral was extremely simple. The body was conveyed from Walmer Castle to Henley on the morning of Saturday, October 10, and thence by the Marlow road to Hambleton Church. Among other offerings of affection and respect there was a wreath sent by the Queen, bearing, in her Majesty's autograph, the inscription—

A mark of sincere regard and gratitude for devoted services to his
Sovereign and country—from VICTORIA R. I.

It was a day of mournful rain, yet many followed the bier of their friend and benefactor to the new cemetery at Hambleden. There they laid him in the grave, and before it closed over him the clear voices of the choir raised a strain of confident hope in the hymn: "The saints of God, their conflict past."

More stately, though not more impressive, was the Memorial Service in Westminster Abbey, by which the nation did honour to the memory of its departed servant: of the vast number assembled there that day, none can have forgotten the hymn which closed the service—"Now the labourer's task is o'er."

On October 12 the Queen wrote once more:—

DEAR MRS SMITH,—I am most desirous, as you will easily believe, to give a public mark of my deep sense of the services your beloved Husband rendered to me and to his country—services which I fear shortened his valuable life.

I wish therefore to offer to you, his devoted wife, a Peerage—a Viscounty—which I hope you will feel inclined to accept for his sake. Truly thankful am I to hear that you are able to bear up under your overwhelming affliction, and trust that the universal mourning for your dear Husband's loss, and the equally universal appreciation of his services and character, will be soothing to you.—
Believe me always, yours most sincerely, VICTORIA R. I.

Had Mrs Smith consulted her own inclinations, she would have preferred to continue to bear that name which was associated so closely with the happiness and pride of her life; but the Queen's offer, couched in language so gracious and warmly appreciative of the services of the departed, was one that could hardly be declined, and Mrs Smith, taking her title from the village and parish where her husband had been so well known and loved and where his mortal part had been laid, became Viscountess Hambleden.

Mr Smith's old constituents in the Strand also exerted

themselves to do honour to his memory by selecting his son, the Hon. W. F. D. Smith, to represent them in Parliament, and elected him by a majority of 3006 votes over his Gladstonian opponent, Dr Gutteridge.¹

In estimating the standing of William Henry Smith among British statesmen, one is tempted to alter the judgment passed by Sydney Smith upon Joseph Hume, "He was an extraordinarily ordinary man," into one of very different significance, though almost identical form, "He was an extraordinary ordinary man."

A life of almost unchecked prosperity and integrity, as steadfast in the transaction of public affairs as it was constant in commercial concerns and domestic relations, does not in itself suffice to account for the universal regret felt and expressed among all degrees of people, and all groups of politicians, at the news of Smith's death. Men felt, as they laid his body in the quiet little wayside cemetery at Hambleden, among the dripping autumn woods, that they were parting with one of the truest servants that ever undertook a trust, one of the staunchest friends that ever clasped a hand. More puissant statesmen have been taken from their places, and left a sense of lighter loss. When Sir Robert Peel's horse fell with him on Constitution Hill, when the reins of government slipped from the firm adroit hand of Lord Palmerston, when the bold and earnest hoarseness of John Bright's voice was hushed for ever—there was national mourning, deepened by that which never fails to add poignancy to regret, that all of these died at their posts; but scarcely (if memory is to be trusted after many years) was the acclaim "Well done!" pronounced for

¹ Mr Frederick Smith's nomination at the general election of 1892 was unopposed.

them in such full accord as for the modest-minded Englishman, whom these had far outshone in brilliancy and legislative achievement.

Smith was so far from coveting advancement, that Mr George Curzon once said of him at a public meeting that he was the only modern leader who was a leader because his followers sought him out and insisted on following him.

Wherein, then, is to be found that quality which—distinguishing Smith above other public men of whose gifts we are proud, whose careers we cherish as part of the grandeur of our history, who have endeared themselves by personal qualities or ennobled themselves by high achievement—secured for him the approval of those whom he resisted, as well as those with whom he worked? To learn the secret one must ponder over the definition which Plato, with astounding fore-reach and penetration, laid down of the chief essential to perfect government, and made the keynote of his ideal state—his Perfect City—*Καλλίπολις*. The faculty of just rule lies in the magnanimity and lofty altruism which move a man, so far from seeking public office as a reward, to accept it as a duty, even at the sacrifice of the inclinations he cherishes most closely.

Whom then will you compel to proceed to the guardianship of the city save those who, being wisest of all in regard to the conditions of her highest welfare, are themselves possessed of privileges of another order, and a life better than the politicians? . . . For in that city alone will those be rulers who are in very deed rich. But if poor men, hungering after their private good, proceed to public offices, it is not possible; for the ruler's office becoming an object of contention, the sort of battle which results, being at home and internal, destroys them along with the community.¹

¹ Plato's 'Republic,' 520. The whole passage deserves reading again and again, for it shows how the great philosopher mistrusted that sordid logic which seems to be driving us at this time towards payment of members of Parliament, and ultimately, by the same reasoning, to that of every one who undertakes duty for the State, the county, or the parish.

If ever there was a temper in man fitted for Plato's ideal Philadelphia, that temper was found in William Henry Smith. He possessed, as has been amply shown, "privileges of another order and a life better than the politician's." He was an instance of a wealthy man rising above his material environment into loftier levels of thought upon which those who have riches shall hardly enter. With ample and ever-increasing means, and none of that habit of parsimony which so often forbids self-made men to enjoy their money—with a home circle undisturbed by the faintest echo of discord and unshadowed by the lightest cloud of distrust—with a constant longing for the society of his wife and children—there could be no suspicion of self-seeking in Smith's advance from one public office to another. Undoubtedly there are men, even in these days of opportunism, who, penetrated with the true public spirit, take a manful part in the struggle ; just as there are others who, despairing of serving usefully, refrain from the scramble of politics and efface themselves : but both of these may fail to impress the public with a sense of their disinterestedness.

"Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter,"

—it is of no avail to be conscious of high principles unless you can convince others you are carrying them into effect.

Smith commanded confidence and gratitude because it was understood that he was serving no private end in accepting office. Latterly it was also well known that he remained at his post at the risk of his life, and that he was suffering, not from the vengeance of a constitution overtaken in the indulgence of material pleasure or vitiated by descent from a plethoric ancestry, but because he could not bring himself to heed repeated warnings that his task was beyond his powers.

The House of Commons, with all its faults and absurdity,

remains, probably, the justest tribunal in the world in the matter of estimating character. A man must have ill luck far beyond his fellows if he falls into unmerited disgrace or distrust in that assembly, for the opinion of the House of Commons is the epitome of public opinion, and if the State is healthy, error of public instinct is rarely more than temporary. But it may seem strange that unselfishness or disinterestedness should be the foundation of repute in Parliament, where, the more one sees of its inner working, the deeper grows the conviction that ninety-nine hundredths of party men are directly actuated by self-interest. "If you don't look after yourself no one else will trouble himself about you," is the all but universal maxim, as any Patronage Secretary could state from his daily experience. Why then should unselfishness obtain ascendancy and command approval among persons notoriously—almost confessedly—self-seeking? For the same reason, it may be believed, that in the transpontine drama virtue is always made to triumph more signally than in theatres where the audience is drawn from levels of greater refinement; because it is found from experience that those whose environment makes them most familiar with actual violence and overt lawlessness are most readily pleased by the discomfiture of villany. It may seem cynical to suggest it, but perhaps the reason why politicians paid involuntary homage to Smith for his altruism was that they were conscious how rare a quality it was among themselves.

Not less conspicuous than Smith's unselfishness and want of personal ambition was his honesty. Nobody in the House of Commons ever suspected him of insincerity. "There is no art to find the mind's construction in the face," yet such a countenance as his could hardly have shaped itself into the mask of treachery or double meaning. "Duty" was the word that came most familiarly to his lips; and men learned

to know that with him it was no conventional term, but the index of the thought ever uppermost in his mind. "It is my duty in the interests of the public service"—"it is our duty to the country and to this House"—these phrases occurred so often in his speeches from the Treasury Bench as to raise, in the early days of his leadership, a good-humoured titter among the Opposition, and were even the cause of occasional impatience among followers accustomed to the brilliant oratory and formidable sallies of his immediate predecessor. But it was not very long before men of all sections came to recognise in these words the expression of an inflexible principle on which all his action was moulded. The word Duty sounds coldly, even harshly, in some ears: it is a guide which takes a man along rough roads, often to lodging of little ease—a *numen* which has exacted many a martyrdom. The sacrifice is sometimes made in dramatic circumstance: the soldier on the blood-soaked field—the seaman on the sinking ship—the fireman on the crumbling wall—ay, even the familiar policeman on his beat—may present a spectacle to touch us more shrewdly than this elderly English gentleman, homely in features and simple in speech, sitting hour after hour, night after night, encouraging his party by his presence to endure the endless repetition of frivolous verbosity, and violent, at times vulgar, invective. Not the less was Smith spending his health and, as it turned out, his life, in the cause of duty. He had put his hand to a task which was none of his own seeking, because he conceived it to be his duty, and he would not risk its failure by sparing himself, even at the repeated entreaty of his colleagues. In vain they used to beg him to go home at times when, long after midnight, no urgent or critical business remained to be discussed; and those who can recall to mind his appearance that night in July when he sat on the Treasury Bench for the last time, his legs

wrapped in a black rug, suffering acutely, yet patiently attentive to an interminable discussion in Committee of Supply, possess a recollection of self-sacrifice which, though it might easily be more picturesque, could not be more pathetic or inspiring.

Lastly, there were two qualities which helped almost as much as those already described to ensure to Smith the confidence of his party in the House and outside it, and the respect of his opponents. One of these was that he was known to be deeply and earnestly religious, and there is still enough of Puritan heredity among our people to incline them to trust their affairs to the keeping of a sincere Christian. Even the most active enemies of faith feel that from one who embraces and endeavours to carry into effect the pure morality of Jesus Christ, without concerning himself about doctrinal controversy, they are sure to receive the best he has to give. An instance of the mutual respect borne by honest men for each other occurred during the autumn of 1886. Smith was then Secretary of State for War. Mr Fleetwood Wilson, his private secretary at the War Office, happened to be travelling down to Greenlands to shoot. In the same compartment sat Mr Charles Bradlaugh, who was going to fish in the Thames. They entered into conversation, and when Bradlaugh heard what was Mr Wilson's destination, he said, in his usual energetic way, "Ah, you're going to stay with Mr Smith; well, I don't suppose there is a man in the House of Commons or in England with whom I am more widely at variance on many subjects, yet there is none for whom I have a more profound respect." After dinner, Mr Wilson happened to mention to his host that Bradlaugh had been his fellow-traveller from London. "Indeed," replied Smith: "well, it's a strange thing,—I don't believe there is a man whose opinions I hold in greater abhorrence than Bradlaugh, but

I cannot help feeling that there is not an honester man in Parliament."

The other quality alluded to as contributing to Smith's influence as a party leader was his strong common-sense. It may have been that people turned to him for guidance all the readier because they were bewildered by the meteoric rise and sudden eclipse of Lord Randolph Churchill. Tired of surprises, they looked about for one on whom they might rely for plain, plodding discharge of necessary work. And they gratefully placed that reliance on Smith.

The House of Commons and the people of England were content to dispense with eloquence and other brilliant qualities which contribute to the fame of a statesman, and accepted in lieu the unselfishness, uprightness, sincerity, and excellent business qualities—the common-sense—which distinguished Smith among many others who have shone with far more dazzling light in the offices held by him.

Smith was a good party man, and such solidarity as the modern Conservative party can boast of is owing almost as much to his unostentatious influence as to the more patent guidance of Beaconsfield or the dashing polemics of Lord Randolph Churchill. But this quiet, thoughtful statesman cherished a higher ideal of politics than the mere predominance of one party over another. He looked upon that merely as the rude means to a good end, but he yearned for a more rational and business-like system. During his first term of office in the Cabinet, he was walking home with Dr (now Sir Henry) Acland of Oxford. They had been dining at Grillons—a quaint old club of a few members, of which Dr Acland's father had been one of the founders in 1810. The conversation turned on the state of parties, and Smith expressed regret that all the best efforts were made on behalf of party instead of for the country, according to the conclusions of the best men.

“How much better it would be,” suggested Acland, “if an administrative committee could be agreed on, including the best men on each side in Parliament.”

Smith cordially agreed in this idea, and immediately named six men, of whom W. E. Forster and Northcote were two.

Some years later a correspondent made grateful acknowledgment for some remarks which had fallen from Smith:—

I cannot conclude without expressing my gratitude that you should have said frankly this morning that there is something higher and better than party—viz., country—and that the country’s interests and the country’s welfare must be, and ought to be, the first consideration in this and all things. I so entirely share your views on this point, I so abominate what is called “opportunism”—hateful word—and I have found so few politicians who have the courage to utter these sentiments, that I cannot adequately express to you my feeling of pleasure and satisfaction at what fell from yourself this morning.

If any success has attended the writer’s attempt to explain the straightforward, unaffected character of this man, it must have been apparent how far it was from his nature to disguise from himself his connection with the commercial middle class, or attempt to make other people forget it. Even when the duties of the public offices which he successively filled had brought him into frequent and sometimes intimate intercourse with persons of most exalted rank, he found time to keep up the associations of his early life and original calling. Thus in 1887 he had the honour of receiving at Greenlands a distinguished party of guests, including the Kings of Denmark and Greece, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and other royal personages. Not long after it fell to him to preside, as one of their number, at the annual dinner of the Prince of Wales’s tradesmen. Though he had raised his life to a higher level than can be attained by more than very few individuals, he never suffered himself to neglect or ignore his early associates.

Every one who has filled political office under the Crown must have been penetrated in greater or less degree by a sense of the devoted service rendered by the permanent officials in the various public departments. Ministers come and go, as the popular breath wafts this or that party in or out of power; but the permanent secretaries and clerks continue at their posts, and are expected, and, it may truly be said, never fail, to yield patient and laborious aid to those men, necessarily inexpert, whom the turn of events places in brief authority over them. They may have ambition, yet their duty lies within fixed bounds which they may not transgress. A Chancellor of the Exchequer reaps renown when he produces a brilliant Budget, but no popular applause reaches those upon whom has fallen the labour of working out the complicated details, and, it may be, of constructing the financial scheme. They may have keen political sympathies, yet these must be rigidly kept in abeyance; and often it has happened that they are called on to construct the framework of a measure odious to their private judgment. The Civil Service of Great Britain—modest, incorruptible, indefatigable—is one of the most perfect systems that has ever existed on the face of the earth. It can boast no Trafalgar or Waterloo, but in duty manfully done it is excelled by neither of the militant services of the Crown.

No one ever recognised this more heartily than Smith, no one was more watchful in endeavouring to lighten and assist their toil, and no Minister ever received in return a fuller measure of their confidence. Not even the humblest member of the Civil Service escaped his attention, as the following instance may tend to prove. When Smith was at the War Office, his private secretary, Mr Fleetwood Wilson, noticed that at the end of a week's work, when his chief was preparing to leave for Greenlands on Saturday after-

noon, he used to pack a despatch-box with the papers he required to take with him, and carry it himself on his journey. Mr Wilson remarked that Mr Smith would save himself much trouble if he did as was the practice of other Ministers—leave the papers to be put in an office “pouch” and sent by post. Mr Smith looked rather ashamed for a moment, and then, looking up at his secretary, said—“Well, my dear Wilson, the fact is this: our postman who brings the letters from Henley has plenty to carry. I watched him one morning coming up the approach with my heavy pouch in addition to his usual load, and I determined to save him as much as I could.”

It has sometimes been said that Smith was deficient in imagination, but the power of perceiving small opportunities such as this to lighten the work of one’s fellow-men depends primarily on a sensitive imagination.

The narrative of this life is no history of a sovereign intellect, wrestling with tyrannical power or formidable opponents, maimed in action and thwarted in council by the timidity or treachery of colleagues, and tormented by the allurements which too often prevail to bring frail humanity to ruin: it is but the plain tale of wise conduct, fulfilled duty, and warm affection, continued till the vital powers gave way under the stress of labour imposed upon them.

Surely never was a life more blamelessly led or more happily ended—ended too soon, as many believed, for the good of his country and his party, yet ended before the scope of usefulness had begun to contract, or the tide of affection to slacken. He was spared the mortifying pang which often embitters the closing years of public men, arising either from conscious failure of the powers which have led their possessor to high station, or from some turn of events which has diverted the stream of popular confidence. There is a pathetic saying of Robert Lowe in his declining

years, treasured up by one of his surviving friends, who once asked him about the state of his health. He shook his white head sadly, and replied, "There is just this difference between me and ——" (naming a former colleague who has since died); "I am going mad—and I know it: he is going mad—and he doesn't know it."

William Henry Smith died at the age of sixty-six. He approached his end in full consciousness: the mind up to the last hour never lost its calm, resolute purpose to persevere; though its companion, the body, drooped wearily and moaned for rest, the higher and immortal part remained as steadfast as in the summertide of life. Of physical suffering he had endured large measure—the vengeance of a constitution sorely overtaxed. The silver cord was deeply frayed ere it parted, but the lamp of love and intelligence beamed clearly to the end, and of him it may more surely be written than of many who have held high place:—

TU VERO FELIX
NON VITÆ TANTUM CLARITATE,
SED ETIAM
OPPORTUNITATE MORTIS.¹

¹ Yet wert thou happy, not only by the radiance of thy life, but also by the circumstance of thy death.

I N D E X.

- Abbots Langley, residence of W. H. Smith at Cecil Lodge, near, 88 *note*.
- Acland, Dr, afterwards Sir Henry Wentworth Acland, letter to W. H. Smith by, on life at Greenlands, 256 *note*—letters to W. H. Smith from, 319, 347—letters of W. H. Smith to, 322 *note*, 331, 345.
- Acland, Hon. Mrs A., *née* Beatrice Smith, letter of W. H. Smith to, 312.
- Acland, Hon. Mrs W., *née* Emily Smith, letters of W. H. Smith to, 23, 196, 319.
- Address, presentation of, to W. H. Smith, from unofficial members of Parliament, 320.
- Admiralty, appointment of W. H. Smith as First Lord of the, 161.
- Afghanistan, outbreak of war with, 193, 197—Russian operations in, 268—recall of British Commissioner from, *ib.*
- Alabama award, the, 128.
- America, political visit of Mr Parnell to, 198.
- American journal of W. H. Smith, the, 119-125.
- Arrears of Rent Bill, the, 225—debate upon, on second reading, *ib.*—action of House of Lords regarding, 226—Lord Salisbury on, *ib.*
- Attorney-General, the, as counsel for the 'Times' in trial before the Parnell Commission, 311, 318—attack by Mr Redmoud upon, 318.
- Balfour, Arthur, appointment of, as Irish Secretary, 293—success of Government of, 300—*sobriquet* of "Bloody Balfour" applied to, 307—disclosures of Parnell regarding opposition of Irish party to the Land Bill of, 337.
- Ballot, proposed provision for voting by, in Education Act, 105—bill for parliamentary voting by, 111, 114—first parliamentary election under, 133.
- Barings' Bank, the affairs of, 333—W. H. Smith's efforts regarding, *ib.*
- Beach, Sir Michael Hicks, appointment of, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 270—resignation of Irish Secretaryship by, 293.
- Beaconsfield, Earl of. *See* Disraeli, Mr.
- Beal, Mrs, letters of, to W. H. Smith, 16, 18—letters to, by W. H. Smith, 16, 19, 26.
- Beal, Rev. William, tutor to W. H. Smith, 6—marriage of, to Miss Smith, 7—appointed headmaster of Tavistock grammar-school, *ib.*—W. H. Smith pupil

- with, *ib.* 8—letter from, to W. H. Smith, on attending Church of England services, 10.
- Beresford, Lord Charles, letter of, on appointment of W. H. Smith to Admiralty, 163.
- Berlin Conference, the, result of, 180—*anecdote of Lord Beaconsfield at, ib. note.*
- Bishop of London's Fund, institution of, 65—W. H. Smith on committee of, 66.
- Bismarck, Prince, strictures of, on Lord Granville's mode of conducting business, 266 *note.*
- Blow, Captain, recollections of the Pandora by, 245.
- Blythswood, visit of W. H. Smith to Sir Archibald and Lady Campbell at, 324.
- Boulogne Conference, the, as to leadership of Irish party, 339.
- "Boycotting," origin of the term, 214.
- Bradlaugh, Charles, refusal to take the oath by, on his return for Northampton, 210—altered feelings towards, in the House of Commons, 343—*anecdote of W. H. Smith and, 363.*
- Bridgewater House, memorable meeting of Conservative party with Lord Beaconsfield at, 209.
- British fleet, movements of the, in war between Turkey and Russia, 169, 174-179, *passim.*
- Bryce, Professor, afterwards Right Hon. James Bryce, introduction of W. H. Smith by, at Oxford University, to receive degree of D.C.L., 195.
- "Buckshot Forster," origin of the name, 222.
- Burke, Mr, assassination of, in Phoenix Park, 223.
- Butt, Mr, organisation of Home Rule party under, 147—protest against Nationalist methods in Parliament by, 156—leadership of Nationalist party resigned by, 194.
- Buxton, Sir T. Fowell, defeat of, for Westminster, 133—letter from, to W. H. Smith, 134.
- Cadenabbia, visit of W. H. Smith to, 284, 349.
- Cambridge, Duke of, letter to W. H. Smith from, 182—letter of W. H. Smith to, 277.
- Canada, visit of W. H. Smith to, 118 *et seq.*
- Carnarvon, Lord, secession of, from Cabinet, 169—resignation of Viceroyalty of Ireland by, 278.
- Catholic Union of Great Britain, attitude of the, towards the Religious Disabilities Removal Bill, 341.
- "Cave of Adullam," the, formation of, 83—attack on Disraeli's Reform Bill by members of, 85.
- Cavendish, Lord Frederick, assassination of, in Phoenix Park, 223.
- Chamberlain, Mr, proposals of, for a "round-table" Conference, 288.
- Chapman & Hall, Messrs, railway novels of Messrs W. H. Smith & Son published by, 52.
- Charges and Allegations Bill, the, offer of, to Parnellite party, 310—change in attitude of Government towards, *ib.*—passing of, 311—report of Commission appointed by, 325.
- Chinese quarter, the, in San Francisco, description of, 122.
- Church Patronage, administration of, by W. H. Smith, as First Lord of the Treasury, 301.
- Churchill, Lord Randolph, leadership of Fourth Party assumed by, 213—becomes Secretary of State for India, 270—appointment of, as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, 286—resignation of, 287, 292—speech by, in House of Commons, on report of Parnell Commission, 328.
- Cinque Ports, W. H. Smith appointed Lord Warden of the, 346.
- Circulating library, Messrs W. H. Smith & Son's foundation of the, 50 *et seq.*
- Civil List Pensions, awarding of, by W. H. Smith, as First Lord of the Treasury, 302.
- Codrington, Captain, afterwards Rear-Admiral Codrington, notices of, 173 and note, 183 *et seq. passim.*

- Codrington, Mrs, *née* Miss Leach, letters of W. H. Smith to, 242, 243.
- Coercion Bill for Ireland, a new, 216—scenes in House of Commons on introduction of, *ib.*
- Commerell, Rear-Admiral, despatches to First Lord of Admiralty by, during Russo-Turkish war, 176-179.
- Constantinople Conference, the, 152.
- Cooper, Mary Anne, marriage of W. H. Smith, sen., to, 6—children of, *ib.*
- Connts, Baroness Burdett, on anti-Turkish agitation, 151.
- Cowen, Joseph, letter of, on appointment of W. H. Smith to Admiralty, 162.
- Cowper, Lord, resignation of, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 222.
- Crimes Bill for Ireland, introduction of a new, 293—charges against administration of, 307.
- Cumulative voting, introduction of, in school-board elections, 105.
- Cyprus, W. H. Smith's journal of a tour in, 181-192.
- Danvers family, notices of the, 62.
- Derby, Lord, Administration of, 84—secession of, from Conservative party, 202.
- Disestablishment of Irish Church, debates in Parliament on, 97 *et seq.*
- Disraeli, Mr, Reform Bill of, 85—Cabinet of, 134 *et seq.*—elevation of, to peerage, as Earl of Beaconsfield, 149 and note—letters of W. H. Smith to, 150-152—publication of last novel by, 206 note—last meeting of Conservative party with, 217—death of, 218.
- Eldystone Lighthouse, W. H. Smith's description of laying foundation-stone of, 196.
- Edinburgh, official visit of W. H. Smith to, 145—speech in, by Mr Gladstone, to Mid-Lothian electors, 275.
- Elementary Education Bill, the, in House of Commons, 104 *et seq.*—proposed provision for voting by ballot in, 105.
- Falls of Niagara, W. H. Smith's description of the, 118.
- Financial Secretary of Treasury, W. H. Smith's appointment as, 138.
- First Lord of the Admiralty, appointment of W. H. Smith as, 161—banquet in his honour on appointment as, 165.
- First Lord of the Treasury, appointment of W. H. Smith as, 165.
- Fitzgerald, Penrose, letters of W. H. Smith to, 224, 284, 312.
- Ford, William, letters from W. H. Smith to, 108, 130—letter from, to W. H. Smith, on Lord Beaconsfield as a novel-writer, 206 note—letter of W. H. Smith to, on outlook of English politics, 212.
- Forster, W. E., Elementary Education Bill introduced by, 104—Ballot Bill introduced by, 111, 114—appointment of, as Irish Chief Secretary, 209—new Coercion Bill for Ireland introduced by, 216—officials of Land League sent to Kilmainham prison by, 219—resignation of, on release of "suspects," 222.
- Fourth Party, the, rise of, 213—growing importance of, 228.
- Franchise Bill, Mr Gladstone's, introduction of, 233—passing of, through both Houses, 235.
- German Emperor, reception of the, at Hatfield House, 349.
- Giberne, Miss, letters of W. H. Smith to, 82, 96, 163, 274 *et seq. passim.*
- Gladstone, Mr, speech by, on introduction of Earl Russell's Reform Bill, 82—Disestablishment of Irish Church moved by, 97—early sentiments of, regarding Home Rule for Ireland, 112—retirement of, from leadership of Liberal party, 140, 143—Mid-Lothian campaigns of, 198, 204, 275—purchase of Irish vote by,

- 277—formation of Cabinet by, 282—downfall of Administration of, 285—letter to Mr Morley by, on Mr Parnell's continued leadership of the Irish party, 335—retaliation of Mr Parnell on, 336 *et seq.*—personal regard between W. H. Smith and, 345—anecdote regarding, 347.
- Gordon, General, despatch of, to Khartoum, 232—Mr Gladstone's announcement to Parliament of the fate of, 266.
- Goschen, Mr, reception of, by the Sultan of Turkey, 238—acceptance of office of Chancellor of the Exchequer by, 288—provision in Budget of, for free education in Ireland, England, and Wales, 344.
- Granville, Lord, appointment of, to Foreign Office, 209—administration of foreign affairs by, 265—strictures on, by Prince Bismarck, 266 *note.*
- Greenlands, situation of, 246—purchase of estate of, by W. H. Smith, 248—life at, 256—the gardens at, 257—the books and pictures at, 263.
- Grey de Wilton, Lord, letter from Mr Disraeli to, 130.
- Grosvenor, Captain, Liberal candidate for Westminster, 74—seat won by, 79—again contests Westminster, 88—defeat of, *ib.*
- Ground Game Bill, passing of the, 212.
- Hambleton, part taken by W. H. Smith in effecting improvements on the village of, 254 *et seq.*—building of hospital at, 255—W. H. Smith buried in new cemetery at, 357—Mrs Smith takes her title from, *ib.*
- Hambleton, Viscountess. *See* Smith, Mrs W. H.
- Hamilton, Lord George, appointment of, to Admiralty, 273—letter to W. H. Smith from, 279.
- Harcourt, Sir William, letter of, to W. H. Smith, on appointment to Admiralty, 162—question of breach of privilege raised by, against 'Times,' 326.
- Hartington, Marquis of, attitude of, towards Irish disaffection, 198, 202—becomes Secretary of State for War, 209—leadership of House of Commons by, 229—refusal of, to take office in Coalition Government, 286, 288.
- Hatfield House, W. H. Smith's meeting with the German Emperor at, 349.
- Henley Royal Grammar-School, W. H. Smith on governing body of, 255.
- Holland, W. H. Smith's impressions of, 243 *et seq.*
- Home Rule for Ireland, beginning of agitation regarding, 112—organisation of parliamentary party in favour of, 147—Mr Gladstone's change of front on question of, 276—introduction of Mr Gladstone's first bill to give, 284.
- Hornby, Admiral, despatches between, and First Lord of the Admiralty, during Russo-Turkish War, 174-179, *passim.*
- Hunt, Leigh, letter of, to W. H. Smith, sen., 5.
- Hunt, Ward, death of, 156.
- Iddesleigh, Lord. *See* Northcote, Sir Stafford.
- Ince, William, afterwards Canon Ince, letters of, to W. H. Smith, 23—letters of W. H. Smith to, 23, 139.
- Ireland, beginning of agitation regarding Home Rule for, 112—debate in House of Commons on distress in, 200—boycotting and moonlighting in, 214—new Coercion Bill for, 216—semi-official visit of W. H. Smith to, 219 *et seq.*
- Irish Church, opposition of W. H. Smith to Disestablishment of, 87—debates on Disestablishment of, 97 *et seq.*—division on bill to disestablish, in House of Lords, 100.
- Irish Land Act, Lord Ashbourne's, success of, 313.
- Irish Land Purchase Bill, the, 103, 234—vote of Irish party on, 338.
- Irish members, ejection of, from House of Commons, 218.
- Irish Nationalist party, the, grow-

- ing power of, 147—parliamentary tactics of, 156, 194—leadership of, assumed by Mr Parnell, 194—success of, in election of 1880, 207—purchase of vote of, by Mr Gladstone, 277—reception given to Mr Parnell in House of Commons by, 317—effect of judgment in O'Shea divorce case on, 335 *et seq.*—Conference at Boulogne as to leadership of, 340.
- Irish Secretary, Mr Forster becomes, 209—fate of Lord Frederick Cavendish as, 223—appointment of W. H. Smith as, 279—appointment of Arthur Balfour as, 293.
- Irish University Bill, the, 126.
- Jacob, Rev. Canon, co-operation of W. H. Smith with, in reconstruction of St Mary's Church, Portsea, 251 *et seq.*
- "Jacobins," rise of the, in Parliament, 317.
- Jingoes, origin of the name of, 171—W. H. Smith brought into the category of, 204.
- "Jubilee" session, the, exhausting character of, 293—letters of W. H. Smith on, 294 *et seq.*
- Jubilee thanksgiving service, the, in St Margaret's Church, 295.
- Kilburn House, residence of W. H. Smith, sen., at, 25—removal of Smith family from, 88 note.
- Kilmainham Prison, officials of Land League sent to, 219—release of "suspects" from, 222.
- King's College Hospital, W. H. Smith's services to, 38, 62.
- Kirkwall, presentation of freedom of, to W. H. Smith, 323—speech of W. H. Smith at, *ib.*
- Knightley, Sir Rainald, afterwards Baron Knightley, letter to W. H. Smith from, 320.
- Komaroff, General, attack on Afghan troops by, 268—honour paid to, by Russian Government, 269.
- La Bourboule, W. H. Smith's stay at, 332.
- Labouchere, Mr, leadership of "Jacobins" assumed by, 317.
- Land League, prosecution of, by Government, 215—officials of, sent to Kilmainham Prison, 219—complicity of, in Phoenix Park murder, 230.
- Laurie, Rev. Sir Emilius, notes by, on benefits conferred on St John's parish, Paddington, by W. H. Smith, 67.
- Lawson, Mr, afterwards Sir Edward Levey Lawson, conversation between Lord Palmerston and, regarding W. H. Smith's candidature for Parliament, 71—W. H. Smith's bets with, 72 note—attitude of, as editor of 'Daily Telegraph,' in W. H. Smith's first contest for Westminster, 74—W. H. Smith interviewed by, in Paris, 184.
- Leach, Auber, marriage of Miss Emily Danvers to, 63—death of, *ib.*
- Leach, Mrs. *See* Mrs W. H. Smith.
- Leader of the House of Commons, appointment of W. H. Smith as, 289—first speech of W. H. Smith as, 292—his manner as, 299—life in his official room as, 304—his offer of resignation as, 314—address from unofficial Members of Parliament on his conduct as, 319—testimony of Mr H. W. Lucy to his success as, 323.
- Lethbridge, William, at Tavistock grammar-school, 7—admitted partner into firm of Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, 43.
- Lever's novels, copyright of, acquired by Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, 52.
- Lidderdale, Mr, Governor of Bank of England, letter of, regarding W. H. Smith's active interest in affair of Barings' Bank, 333—letter of W. H. Smith to, 334.
- Liverpool, poll of 1880 at, the largest on record, 199.
- Local Government Bill, the Scottish, 316.
- Local Taxation Bill, the, introduction of, 330—abandonment of licensing clauses in, 331—W. H.

- Smith's support of licensing clauses in, *ib.*
- Loudon poor, W. H. Smith's work amongst the, 107, 110—Poor Law administration amongst the, 110.
- London School Board, the, institution of, 106—return of W. H. Smith to first, 109—question of religious education solved in, *ib.*—second election of W. H. Smith to, 130—resignation by W. H. Smith of his seat on, 237.
- Lowe, Robert, debate on Budget of, 128—pathetic saying of, 368.
- Lucy, H. W., *sobriquet* of "Old Morality" conferred on W. H. Smith by, 298 and note—testimony of, as to success of W. H. Smith as a parliamentary leader, 323.
- Magee, Dr, speech on Irish Church Bill by, 99 and note.
- Marlborough, Lord, letter of Lord Beaconsfield to, on Irish Nationalist tactics, 201.
- M'Carthy, Justin, election of, by Irish party, as "Sessional Chairman" in room of Mr Parnell, 336.
- Merchant Taylors' Hall, the, banquet in, to W. H. Smith, 321—speech of W. H. Smith at, *ib.*
- Metropolitan Board of Works, W. H. Smith elected to, 62.
- Mid-Lothian Campaign, Mr Gladstone's first, 198—his second, 204—postponement of third, 229—his third, 234—his fourth, 275.
- Mill, John Stuart, Radical candidate for Westminster, 74—defeat of, for Westminster, 79—second defeat of, 88—Liberal press on conduct of, 89.
- Milne, Admiral Sir Alexander, letter of W. H. Smith to, 320.
- Montreal, visit of W. H. Smith to, 118, 120.
- Morley, John, letter of Mr Gladstone to, on Mr Parnell's continued leadership of the Irish party, 335—disclosures regarding, by Mr Parnell, 337—vote of censure on Government by, 344.
- National Debt, Sir Stafford Northcote's scheme for liquidation of the, 144.
- Newspapers, early taxes on, 3—effect of repeal of stamp-duty on, 39—daily despatch of, by Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, 54 *et seq.*—former difficulties of firm in despatch of, 59—summary of business done in, by Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, during a single day, *ib.*
- Norfolk, Duke of, letter of W. H. Smith to, 342.
- Normandy, visit of W. H. Smith to, 153 *et seq.*
- Northcote, Sir Stafford, friendship between, and W. H. Smith, 142, 290—scheme of, for reduction of National Debt, 144—Friendly Societies Act of, 145—Bill for purchase of Suez Canal shares introduced by, 146—leadership of House of Commons assumed by, 150—conduct of leadership of Opposition by, 228—vote of censure moved by, on fall of Khartoum, 266 and note—dissatisfaction with leadership of, 267, 269—translation of, to House of Lords, as Earl of Iddesleigh, 270—letter of W. H. Smith to, on formation of Cabinet, 272—retirement of, from Foreign Office, 290—sudden death of, 291.
- Norway, cruise of W. H. Smith in, 243.
- O'Donnell, Mr, prosecution of the 'Times' by, 310.
- O'Shea, Captain, the divorce suit of, 334—political results of judgment in, 335 *et seq.*
- Oxford University, honorary degree of D.C.L. conferred on W. H. Smith by, 195.
- Palmerston, Lord, physical phenomenon at death of, 80.
- Pandora, the, purchase of, by W. H. Smith, 237—cruises of, in the Mediterranean, 238 *et seq.*—visits in, to Norway, Holland, &c., 243 *et seq.*—Captain Blow's recollections of, 243—cruise of, to Orkney, 322—last cruises of W. H. Smith in, 352 *et seq.*

- Parliamentary and Municipal Elections Bill. *See* Ballot.
- Parnell Commission, the, appointment of, 310—report of, 326 *et seq.*—speech by W. H. Smith on debate in House of Commons on report of, 327—effect of labours in connection with, on health of W. H. Smith, 329.
- Parnell, Mr, leadership of Nationalist party assumed by, 156, 194—political visit to America of, 198—“boycotting” advice of, 214—challenge of, by Mr Forster, regarding Phoenix Park murders, 230—repudiation by, of charges in ‘Times,’ 310—reception of, by the Irish Nationalists, in the House of Commons, 317—finding of Parnell Commission regarding, 326—divorce suit of Captain O’Shea against, as co-respondent, 334—effect of judgment in divorce suit on standing of, as a politician, 335 *et seq.*—deposition of, as leader of the Irish party, 339.
- Pattison, J. L., first meeting of W. H. Smith with, 118—becomes private secretary to W. H. Smith, 208—letter of Governor of the Bank of England to, regarding W. H. Smith’s interposition in the affair of Barings’ Bank, 333—last business transactions of W. H. Smith with, 353 *et seq. passim.*
- Peace Preservation Bill, the, 145.
- Peasant proprietorship, W. H. Smith’s views on establishment of, in Ireland, 221, 224.
- Phoenix Park murders, the, 223.
- Police protection, special, for members of Parliament, 226.
- Political dinner-parties, the, of W. H. Smith, at Grosvenor Place, 257 note.
- Pompeii, visit of W. H. Smith to, 241.
- Postal department, the, of Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, 60.
- ‘Punch,’ congratulations of, on W. H. Smith’s appointment to the Admiralty, 166.
- Queen, the, proffered honour to W. H. Smith by, 282—letter to the Marquis of Salisbury from, on offer of Wardenship of the Cinque Ports to W. H. Smith, 346—telegram to Mrs Smith from, on death of W. H. Smith, 356—letter to Mrs Smith from, *ib.*—peerage conferred on Mrs Smith by, 357.
- Railway advertising, first stages of, 44—tenders for, secured by Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, *ib.*
- Railway bookstalls, early condition of, 29—efforts of W. H. Smith to improve, 30—article in ‘Times’ on, quoted, *ib.*, 34—extension of, by Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, 33 *et seq.*
- Railway novels, production of, by Messrs W. H. Smith & Son, 52—success of enterprise in, *ib.*—issue of, stopped, 53.
- Rathbone, Mr, letter of, on appointment of W. H. Smith to Admiralty, 162.
- Reform Bill, Earl Russell’s, 82—defeat of Earl Russell’s, 84—Mr Disraeli’s, introduction of, *ib.*—passing of Mr Disraeli’s, 85.
- Religious Disabilities Removal Bill, Mr Gladstone’s, 340—speech of W. H. Smith on, *ib.*—rejection of, 341—Roman Catholic opinion on, *ib. et seq.*
- Ridley, Rev. W. H., co-operation of, with W. H. Smith in effecting improvements at Hambleton, 254.
- Round-Table Conference, the, 288, 293—parallel between Boulogne Conference and, 340.
- Royal Marines, the, letter of Duke of Cambridge regarding, 182—reply of First Lord of Admiralty on subject of, *ib.*
- Rules of Proceedure, commencement of alterations in, 156—Standing Order regarding, 308.
- Russell, Dr W. H., appointment of, as first war correspondent, 40.
- Russell, Earl, Reform Bill of, 82—defeat of, 84.
- Russell, Lord Odo, anecdote of Lord Beaconsfield and, at Berlin Conference, 180 note.
- Russell, Sir Charles, return of, for Westminster, 133—resignation of seat by, 219.

- Russia, threatened war between, and Turkey, 167—expected rupture between Great Britain and, 168—hostilities in Afghanistan with, 268.
- Rutland, Duke of, letter of W. H. Smith to, 346.
- Salisbury, Marquis of, joins Disraeli's Cabinet, 136—return of, from Berlin Conference, 180—attitude of, to Arrears of Rent Bill, 226—offer of Irish Secretaryship to W. H. Smith by, 279—letter of W. H. Smith to, regarding resignation of leadership, 314—reply of, 315—second letter to, on resignation of leadership, 329—W. H. Smith appointed to Wardenship of Cinque Ports by, 346—letter of the Queen to, regarding appointment, *ib.*—last farewell of W. H. Smith taken by, 351.
- Salt Lake City, visit of W. H. Smith to, 123.
- San Francisco, visit of W. H. Smith to, 122.
- Sandifer, Mr, charge of the production of a new series of railway novels taken by, 52.
- Sandon, Lord, afterwards Earl of Harrowby, on Committee of Bishop of London's Fund, 65—friendship between, and W. H. Smith, 66—letter from, to W. H. Smith, *ib.*
- Secretary of State for War, appointment of W. H. Smith as, 273—his reappointment as, 286.
- Sefton, Earl of, letter of Lord Derby to, on his secession from the Conservative party, 203.
- Sercombe, Mrs, *née* Louisa Smith, letter of W. H. Smith to, 12.
- Smith & Son, Messrs W. H., founding of business of, under the name of Messrs Smith, 3—first partners of, *ib.*—W. H. Smith, jun., becomes junior partner in firm of, 25, 27—railway bookstalls taken up by, 30 *et seq.*—growth of bookstall business of, 33—effect of abolition of newspaper stamp-duty on business of, 39—advertising at railway stations taken up by, 44—circulating library founded by, 50—copyrights of standard novels acquired by, 52—new buildings of, 53—postal department of, 60—retirement of W. H. Smith from firm of, 237.
- Smith, Augusta, letters of W. H. Smith to, 15, 27, 46, 65 *et seq. passim.*
- Smith, Caroline, parentage of, 6—marriage of, *ib.* note.
- Smith, Emily, letters of W. H. Smith to, 270, 271, 277.
- Smith, Frederick, birth of, 82—anecdote of, 192—choice of a profession for, 316—return of, for the Strand, 358 and note.
- Smith, Henry Edward, sen., partner in business of Messrs Smith, 3—retirement of, from the business, 4—death of, *ib.* note.
- Smith, Henry Walton, sons of, set up business of "newsmen." 3.
- Smith, Mary Anne, parentage of. 6—marriage of, 7.
- Smith, Mrs W. H., *née* Emily Dauvers, marriage of, to Mr Auber Leach, 63—early widowhood of, *ib.*—marriage of W. H. Smith to, 64—letters of her husband to, 78, 88, 107, 117 *et seq. passim*—telegram from the Queen to, on the death of her husband, 356—letter from the Queen to, *ib.*—peerage conferred by the Queen on, 357.
- Smith, surname of, origin of, 36 note.
- Smith, William Henry, birth of, 6—early years of, *ib.*—desires to prepare for Holy Orders, 9—accedes to his father's wish to go into business, *ib.*—joins the Church of England, 10—his deep religious feeling, 19—becomes junior partner at the Strand, 27—extracts from private journals of, 47—elected to Metropolitan Board of Works, 62—his marriage, 64—invited to stand for Westminster, 73—his defeat, 79—death of his eldest son, 82—birth of his second son, *ib.*—again contests Westminster, 86

- gains the seat, 88—petition against his return, 90—declared duly elected, 92—his maiden speech, 93—elected to first London School Board, 109—visit of, to Canada and the United States, 116 *et seq.*—returned for Westminster at first general election under Ballot Act, 133—appointed secretary to the Treasury, 138—appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, 161—sets out for an official tour in Cyprus, 183 *et seq.*—degree of D.C.L. conferred by Oxford University on, 195—re-election of, for Westminster, 205—visit of, to Ireland, to inquire into the land question, 220—purchase of Pandora by, 237—purchase of Greenlands by, 248—improvements at Hambleden made by, 254—appointed Secretary of State for War, 273—elected for the Strand, 276—appointed Irish Secretary, 279—declines proffered honour by the Queen, 282—re-election of, to the Strand Division, 285—again becomes Secretary of State for War, 286—appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons, 289—life in room of, at House of Commons, as Leader, 304—address to, from unofficial members of Parliament, 320—appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, 346—last words of, in the House of Commons, 349—moves to Walmer Castle, 352—his death, 355—funeral of, 356—estimate of his character, 358 *et seq.*
- Smith, William Henry, sen., junior partner in business of Messrs Smith, 3—marriage of, 6—his character, 14—his rule in the Strand house, 28, 41—his retirement from business, 64—his death, 81.
- 'Spectator,' the, on alleged newspaper support of W. H. Smith, 137.
- St John's parish, Paddington, benefits conferred by W. H. Smith on, 66.
- St Mary's Church, Portsea, aid given by W. H. Smith in rebuilding of, 251 *et seq.*
- Stanley, Col., now Earl of Derby, letter to W. H. Smith from, 309.
- Strand Division, the, W. H. Smith elected for, 276—his re-election for, 285—unopposed election of W. H. Smith for, on appointment as Warden of the Cinque Ports, 347—Hon. W. F. D. Smith returned for, 358.
- Sultan of Turkey, interview of W. H. Smith with, 238 *et seq.*
- Tavistock grammar-school, W. H. Smith at, 7, 8.
- Taylor, Col., the Conservative Whip, letter of W. H. Smith to, 76 note.
- Thames Embankment, the, W. H. Smith's efforts to secure, for the people, 107, 115—settlement of question regarding, 116 note.
- 'Times,' the, article in, on railway bookstalls, quoted, 30, 34—Messrs W. H. Smith & Son become special agents for, 40—first war correspondent sent out by, *ib.*—leading article in, on W. H. Smith's appointment to the Admiralty, 166—action for libel by Mr O'Donnell against, 310—case of parliamentary Commission regarding Parnellite articles in, 311, 326.
- Tory Democrats, use of name, as a political designation, 270.
- Trevelyan, G. O., afterwards the Right Hon. Sir George Trevelyan, new franchise bill of, 233—resignation of, from Mr Gladstone's Cabinet, 284—secession of, from Liberal Unionist party, 300.
- Unionist party, formation of the, 283.
- United States, visit of W. H. Smith to, 120 *et seq.*
- Walmer Castle, removal of W. H. Smith to, 352—his death at, 355.
- Ward & Lock, Messrs, issue of railway novels by, 53.
- Wardeuship of the Cinque Ports,

- W. H. Smith appointed to the, 346.
- Wesleyan body, the, Smith family members of, 7—W. H. Smith, jun., leaves, 10—loss of W. H. Smith, sen., to, 81.
- Westminster Abbey, memorial service in, in honour of W. H. Smith, 357.
- Westminster, first candidature of W. H. Smith as Conservative member for, 73 *et seq.*—defeat of W. H. Smith for, 79—his second contest for, 86—becomes member for, 88—petition against Mr Smith's return for, 90 *et seq.*—his re-election for, 133—again returned for, 205—election of Lord Algernon Percy for, 219—division of constituency in, 276.
- Wolseley, Sir Garnet, troops at Cyprus under command of, 187 *et seq. passim*—mission of, in Zulu war, 195.

BY SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, BART., M.P.

MERIDIANA : NOONTIDE ESSAYS. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d.

"They are full of bright and genial reflection on life and its humours, on manners and their variety, on nature and its multitudinous charms."—*Times*.

"We have not read such a wholly delightful book as Sir Herbert Maxwell's for a considerable time.....We have read it from cover to cover, and could refer to many special passages, and have our favourite among the essays."—*Speaker*.

"One might easily fill columns with eutertaining extracts from these essays on homely topics of universal interest.....Just the questions we all know something about, and all take interest in, are treated by a man of quick observation."—*St James's Gazette*.

POST MERIDIANA : AFTERNOON ESSAYS. Post 8vo, 6s.

"Sir Herbert Maxwell is nothing if not versatile.....The essays are extremely pleasant and readable, and in reading them one is enjoying agreeable converse with a well-read man who knows what he talks about."—*Times*.

"On each subject he has something sensible and frequently something amusing to say, and he always says it in an admirably fresh and incisive manner. It would be difficult to couceive a more pleasant companion than his book over the afternoon tea and toast at the club."—*Athenæum*.

"Always readable, and often entertaining. Sir Herbert knows men as well as books, and his interests in life are so numerous and varied that he runs no risk of ever being a bore."—*Academy*.

A DUKE OF BRITAIN : A ROMANCE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY. Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo, 6s.

"A historical novel of unusual interest."—*Times*.

"Will be warmly appreciated and (in no sentimental sense) cherished as the most scholarly of Scottish historical romances."—*Academy*.

"We find here a new world of fancy.....invariably glowing with the rich colours in which romance must be painted.....The uarrative marches steadily, always fascinating, frequently engrossing.....Over all is the glamour of fine scholarship and unquestionable imagination. This is high praise, but no other words could be applied justly to 'A Duke of Britain.'"—*Daily Chronicle*.

POPULAR BIOGRAPHIES.

JOHN STUART BLACKIE. A BIOGRAPHY. By ANNA M. STODDART. Cheap Edition. With an Etching after Sir GEORGE REID's Portrait of the Professor. Crown 8vo, 6s.

LIFE, LETTERS, AND DIARIES OF SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, FIRST EARL OF IDDESLEIGH. By ANDREW LANG. Cheap Edition, with Portrait and View of Pynes. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d.

MEMOIR OF THE LIFE OF LAURENCE OLIPHANT, AND OF ALICE OLIPHANT, HIS WIFE. By Mrs M. O. W. OLIPHANT. Cheap Edition, with a New Preface. Post 8vo, with Portraits, 7s. 6d.

THE STORY OF MY LIFE. By the late Colonel MEADOWS TAYLOR, Author of 'The Confessions of a Thug,' &c. Edited by his DAUGHTER. New and Cheaper Edition, being the Fourth. Crown 8vo, 6s.

MEMOIR OF PRINCIPAL TULLOCH, D.D., LL.D. By Mrs M. O. W. OLIPHANT. Third and Cheaper Edition. 8vo, with Portrait, 7s. 6d.

GEORGE ELIOT'S LIFE, RELATED IN HER LETTERS AND JOURNALS. Arranged and Edited by her Husband, J. W. CROSS. With Portrait and other Illustrations. New Edition in one Volume. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

AT

LOS ANGELES

LIBRARY

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 953 538 6

DA
565
S655M4
1896

