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Literature, Art, and Politics:*

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THE HOME OF LAFAYETTE

After General Lafayette's visit to the United States, in 1824, every American who went to France went with a firm conviction that he had a right to take as much as he chose of the old gentleman's time and hospitality, at his own estimate of their value. Fortunately, the number of travellers was not great in those days, although a week seldom passed without bringing two or three new faces to the Rue d'Anjou or La Grange. It was well both for the purse and the patience of the kind-hearted old man that ocean steamers were still a doubtful problem, and first-class packets rarely over five hundred tons.

It could hardly be expected that a boy of sixteen should have more discretion than his elders; and following the universal example of my countrymen, the first use that I made of a Parisian

cabriolet was to drive to No. 6, Rue d'Anjou. The *porte cochère* was open, and the porter in his lodge,—a brisk little Frenchman, somewhat past middle age, with just bows enough to prove his nationality, and very expressive gestures, which I understood much better than I did his words; for they said, or seemed to say,—"The General is out, and I will take charge of your letter and card." There was nothing else for me to do, and so, handing over my credentials, I gave the rest of the morning to sightseeing, and, being a novice at it and alone, soon got tired and returned to my hotel.

I don't know how that hotel would look to me now; but to my untrained eyes of that day it looked wonderfully fine. I liked the name,—the Petit Hôtel Montmorenci,—for I knew enough of French history to know that Montmorenci had always been a great name in France. Then it was the favorite resort of Americans; and although I was learning the phrases in Blagdon as fast as I could, I still found English by far the most agreeable means of communication for everything beyond an appeal to the waiter for more wood or a clean towel. Table d'Hôte, too, brought us all together, with an abundant, if not a rich, harvest of personal experiences gathered during the day from every quarter of the teeming city. Bradford was there with his handsome face and fine figure,—an old resident, as it then seemed to me; for he had been abroad two years, and could speak what sounded to my ears as French-like as any French I had ever heard. Poor fellow! scarce three years had passed when he laid him down to his

last sleep in a convent of Jerusalem, without a friend to smooth his pillow or listen to his last wishes. Of most of the others the names have escaped me; but I shall never forget how wide I opened my eyes, one evening, at the assertion of a new-comer, that he had done more for the enlightenment of France than any man living or dead. The incomparable gravity with which the assertion was made drew every eye to the speaker, who, after enjoying our astonishment for a while, told us that he had been the first to send out a whaler from Havre, and had secured almost a monopoly of the oil-trade. Some years afterwards I made a passage with his brother, and learned from him the history of this Yankee enterprise, which had filled two capacious purses, and substituted the harpoon for the pruning-knife, the whale-ship for the olive-orchard, in the very stronghold of the emblem of peace; and now the collier with his pickaxe has driven them both from the field. But the Petit Hotel Montmorenci did not wait for the change. Its broad court was never enlivened by gas. Its tables and mantels were decked to the last hour with the alabaster whiteness of those pure wax tapers which shed such a soft light upon your book, and grew up into such formidable items in your bills. A long passage—one of those luxuries of rainy, muddy Paris, lined with stores that you cannot help lingering over, if for nothing else, to wonder at the fertility of the human brain when it makes itself the willing minister of human caprice—covers the whole space which the hotel stood on, and unites the Neuve St. Marc with the once distant Boulevard.

As I passed the porter's lodge, he handed me a letter. The hand was one that I had never seen before; the address was in French; and the seal, red wax thinly spread, but something which had been put on it before it was cool had entirely effaced the impress: as I afterwards learned, it was the profile of Washington. I opened it, and judge my surprise and delight on reading the following words:—

"Paris, Thursday.

"I am very sorry not to have had the pleasure to see you when you have called this morning, my dear Sir. My stay in town will be short. But you will find me to-morrow from nine in the morning until twelve. I hope we shall see you soon at La Grange, which I beg of you to consider as your home, being that of your grandfather's most intimate friend and brother-in-arms.

"LAFAYETTE."

It was nearly eleven when I reached the Rue d'Anjou and began for the first time to mount the broad stairway of a Parisian palace. The General's apartments were on the entresol, with a separate staircase from the first landing of the principal one; for his lameness made it difficult for him to go up-stairs, and the entresol, a half-story between the ground floor and the first story, when, as was the case here, high enough in the ceiling, is one of the freest and pleasantest parts of a French house. His apartments comprised five rooms on a line,—an antechamber, a dining-room, two parlors, and a bed-room, with windows on the street,—and the same number of smaller rooms on a parallel line, with their windows on the court-yard, which served for his secretary and servants. The furniture throughout was neat and plain: the usual comfortable arm-chairs and sofas, the indispensable clock and mirror over the mantelpiece, and in each fireplace a cheerful wood-fire. There were two or three servants in the antechamber, well-dressed, but not in livery; and in the parlor, into which I was shown on handing my card, two or three persons waiting for an audience. Fortunately for me, they were there on business, and the business was soon despatched; and passing, in turn, into the reception parlor, I found myself in the presence of the friend of Washington and my grandfather.

He received me so cordially, with such kind inquiries into the

object and cause of my journey, such a fatherly interest in my plans and aims, such an earnest repetition of the invitation he had given me in his note to look upon La Grange as my home, that I felt at once that I was no longer without a guide and protector in a foreign land. It was some time before I could observe him closely enough to get a just idea of his appearance; for I had never before been consciously in the presence of a man who had filled so many pages of real history, and of the history which above all others I was most interested in. I felt as if a veil had been suddenly lifted, and the great men I had read of and dreamed of were passing before me. There were the features which, though changed, had so often called up a smile of welcome to the lips of Washington; there was the man who had shared with my grandfather the perils of the Brandywine and Monmouth, the long winter encampment, and the wearisome summer march; the man whom Napoleon had tried all the fascinations of his art upon, and failed to lure him from his devotion to the cause of freedom; whom Marat and Robespierre had marked out for destruction, and kings and emperors leagued against in hatred and fear. It was more like a dream than a reality, and for the first twenty minutes I was almost afraid to stir for fear I might wake up and find the vision gone. But when I began to look at him as a being of real flesh and blood, I found that Ary Scheffer's portrait had not deceived me. Features, expression, carriage, all were just as it had taught me to expect them, and it seemed to me as if I had always known him. The moment I felt this I began to feel at my ease; and though I

never entirely lost the feeling that I had a living chapter of history before me, I soon learned to look upon him as a father.

As I was rising to go, a lady entered the room, and, without waiting for an introduction, held out her hand so cordially that I knew it must be one of his daughters. It was Madame de Lasteyrie, who, like her mother and sister, had shared his dungeon at Olmütz. Her English, though perfectly intelligible, was not as fluent as her father's, but she had no difficulty in saying some pleasant things about family friendship which made me very happy. She lived in the same street, though not in the same house with the General, and that morning my good-fortune had brought the whole family together at No. 6.

The occasion was a singular one. One of those heartless speculators to whom our Government has too often given free scope among the Indian tribes of our borders had brought to France a party of Osages, on an embassy, as he gave them to understand, but in reality with the intention of exhibiting them, very much as Van Amburgh exhibits his wild beasts. General Lafayette was determined, if possible, to counteract this abominable scheme; but as, unfortunately, there was no one who could interpret for him but the speculator himself, he found it difficult to make the poor Indians understand their real position. He had already seen and talked with them, and was feeling very badly at not being able to do more. This morning he was to receive them at his house, and his own family, with one or two personal friends, had been invited to witness the interview.

Madame de Lasteyrie was soon followed by her daughters, and in a few moments I found myself shaking some very pretty hands, and smiled upon by some very pretty faces. It was something of a trial for one who had never been in a full drawing-room in his life, and whom Nature had predestined to *mauvaise honte* to the end of his days. Still I made the best of it, and as there is nothing so dreadful, after all, in a bright eye and rosy lip, and the General's invitation to look upon his house as my home was so evidently to be taken in its literal interpretation, I soon began to feel at my ease.

The rooms gradually filled. Madame de Maubourg came in soon after her sister, and, as I was talking to one of the young ladies, a gentleman with a countenance not altogether unlike the General's, though nearly bald, and with what was left of his hair perfectly gray, came up and introduced himself to me as George Lafayette. It was the last link in the chain. The last letter that my grandfather ever wrote to General Lafayette had been about a project which they had formed at the close of the war, to bring up their sons—"the two George Washingtons"—together; and as soon after General Greene's death as the necessary arrangement could be made, my poor uncle was sent to France and placed under the General's care. It was of him that General Washington had written to Colonel Wadsworth, "But should it turn out differently, and Mrs. Greene, yourself, and Mr. Rutledge" (General Greene's executors) "should think proper to intrust my namesake, G.W. Greene, to my care, I will give him as

good an education as this country (I mean North America) will afford, and will bring him up to either of the genteel professions that his friends may choose or his own inclination shall lead him to pursue, at my own cost and charge." "He is a lively boy," wrote General Knox to Washington, on returning from putting him on board the French packet, "and, with a good education, will probably be an honor to the name of his father and the pride of his friends."

I may be pardoned for dwelling a moment on the scanty memorials of one whose name is often mentioned in the letters of Washington, and whose early promise awakened the fondest expectations. He was a beautiful boy, if the exquisite little miniature before me may be trusted, blending sweetly the more characteristic traits of his father and mother in his face, in a way that must have made him very dear to both. With the officers and soldiers he was a great favorite, and it cost his father a hard effort to deny himself the gratification of having him always with him at camp during the winter. But the sense of paternal duty prevailed, and as soon as he was thought old enough to profit by it, he was put under the charge of Dr. Witherspoon at Princeton. "I cannot omit informing you," writes General Washington, in 1783, "that I let no opportunity slip to inquire after your son George at Princeton, and that it is with pleasure I hear he enjoys good health, and is a fine, promising boy." He remained in France till 1792, when his mother's anxiety for his safety overcame her desire for the completion of his studies,

and she wrote to Gouverneur Morris, who was then in France, to send him home. "Mr. Jefferson," reads the autograph before me, "presents his most respectful compliments to Mrs. Greene, and will with great pleasure write to Mr. Morris on the subject of her son's return, forwarding her letter at the same time. He thinks Mrs. Greene concluded that he should return by the way of London. If he is mistaken, she will be so good as to correct him, as his letter to Mr. Morris will otherwise be on that supposition." He returned a large, vigorous, athletic man, full of the scenes he had witnessed, and ready to engage in active life with the ardor of his age and the high hopes which his name authorized; for it was in the days of Washington and Hamilton and Knox, men who extended to the son the love they had borne to the father. But his first winter was to be given to his home, to his mother and sisters; and there, while pursuing too eagerly his favorite sport of duck-shooting from a canoe on the Savannah, his boat was upset, and, though his companion escaped by clinging to the canoe, he was borne down by the weight of his accoutrements and drowned. The next day the body was recovered, and the vault which but six years before had prematurely opened its doors to receive the remains of the father was opened again for the son. Not long after, his family removed to Cumberland Island and ceased to look upon Savannah as their burial-place; and when, for the first time, after the lapse of more than thirty years, and at the approach of Lafayette on his last memorable visit to the United States, a people awoke from their lethargy and asked where the

bones of the hero of the South had been laid, there was no one to point out their resting-place. Happy, if what the poet tells us be true, and "still in our ashes live their wonted fires," that they have long since mingled irrevocably with the soil of the land that he saved, and can never become associated with a movement that has been disgraced by the vile flag of Secession!

But to return to the Rue d'Anjou. A loud noise in the street announced the approach of the Indians, whose appearance in an open carriage had drawn together a dense crowd of sight-loving Parisians; and in a few moments they entered, decked out in characteristic finery, but without any of that natural grace and dignity which I had been taught to look for in the natives of the forest. The General received them with the dignified affability which was the distinctive characteristic of his manner under all circumstances; and although there was nothing in the occasion to justify it, I could not help recalling Madame de Staël's comment upon his appearance at Versailles, on the fearful fifth of October:—"M. de la Fayette was perfectly calm; nobody ever saw him otherwise." Withdrawing with them into an inner room, he did his best, as he afterwards told me, to prevail upon them to return home, though not without serious doubts of the honesty of their interpreter. It was while this private conference was going on that I got my first sight of Cooper,—completing my morning's experience by exchanging a few words with the man, of all others among my countrymen, whom I had most wished to know. Meanwhile the table in the dining-room was spread

with cakes and preserves, and before the company withdrew, they had a good opportunity of convincing themselves, that, if the American Indian had made but little progress in the other arts of civilization, he had attained to a full appreciation of the virtues of sweetmeats and pastry.

I cannot close this portion of my story without relating my second interview with my aboriginal countrymen, not quite so satisfactory as the first, but at least with its amusing, or rather its laughable side. I was living in Siena, a quiet old Tuscan town, with barely fifteen thousand inhabitants to occupy a circuit of wall that had once held fifty,—but with all the remains of its former greatness about it, noble palaces, a cathedral second in beauty to that of Milan alone, churches filled with fine pictures, an excellent public library, (God's blessing be upon it, for it was in one of its dreamy alcoves that I first read Dante,) a good opera in the summer, and good society all the year round. Month was gliding after month in happy succession. I had dropped readily into the tranquil round of the daily life, had formed many acquaintances and two or three intimate ones, and, though reminded from time to time of the General by a paternal letter, had altogether forgotten the specimens of the children of the forest whom I had seen under his roof. One evening—I do not remember the month, though I think it was late in the autumn—I had made up my mind to stay at home and study, and was just sitting down to my books, when a friend came in with the air of a man who had something very interesting to say.

"Quick, quick! shut your book, and come with me to the theatre."

"Impossible! I'm tired, and, moreover, have something to do which I must do to-night."

"To-morrow night will do just as well for that, but not for the theatre."

"Why?"

"Because there are some of your countrymen here who are going to be exhibited on the stage, and the Countess P— and all your friends want you to come and interpret for them."

"Infinitely obliged. And pray, what do you mean by saying that some of my countrymen are to be exhibited on the stage? Do you take Americans for mountebanks?"

"No, I don't mean that; but it is just as I tell you. Some Americans will appear on the stage to-night and make a speech in American, and you must come and explain it to us."

I must confess, that, at first, my dignity was a little hurt at the idea of an exhibition of Americans; but a moment's reflection convinced me that I had no grounds for offence, and all of a sudden it occurred to me that the "Americans" might be my friends of the Rue d'Anjou, whose "guide and interpreter," though hardly their "friend," had got them down as far as Siena on the general embassy. I was resolved to see, and accordingly exchanging my dressing-gown and slippers for a dress-box costume, I accompanied my friend to the theatre. My appearance at the pit-door was the signal for nods and beckonings

from a dozen boxes; but as no one could dispute the superior claims of the Countess P—, I soon found myself seated in the front of her Ladyship's box, and the chief object of attention till the curtain rose.

"And now, my dear G—, tell us all about these strange countrymen of yours,—how they live,—whether it is true that they eat one another,—what kind of houses they have,—how they treat their women,—and everything else that we ought to know."

Two or three years later, when Cooper began to be translated, they would have known better; but now nothing could convince them that I was not perfectly qualified to answer all their questions and stand interpreter between my countrymen and the audience. Fortunately, I had read Irving's beautiful paper in the "Sketch-Book," and knew "The Last of the Mohicans" by heart; and putting together, as well as I could, the ideas of Indian life I had gained from these sources, I accomplished my task to the entire satisfaction of my interrogators. At last the curtain rose, and, though reduced in number, and evidently much the worse for their protracted stay in the land of civilization and brandy, there they were, the very Osages I had seen at the good old General's. The interpreter came forward and told his story, making them chiefs of rank on a tour of pleasure. And a burly-looking fellow, walking up and down the stage with an air that gave the lie to every assertion of the interpreter, made a speech in deep gutturals to the great delight of the listeners. Fortunately

for me, the Italian love of sound kept my companions still till the speech was ended, and then, just as they were turning to me for a translation, the interpreter announced his intention of translating it for them himself. Nothing else, I verily believe, could have saved my reputation, and enabled me to retain my place as a native-born American. When the exhibition was over,—and even with the ludicrousness of my part of it, to me it was a sad one,—I went behind the scenes to take a nearer view of these poor victims of avarice. They were sitting round a warming-pan, looking jaded and worn, brutalized beyond even what I had first imagined. It was my last sight of them, and I was glad of it; how far they went, and how many of them found their way back to their native land, I never was able to learn.

Before I left the Rue d'Anjou, it was arranged, that, as soon as I had seen a little more of Paris, I should go to La Grange. "One of the young ladies will teach you French," said the General, "and you can make your plans for the winter at your leisure."

LA GRANGE

It was on a bright autumn morning that I started for the little village of Rosay,—some two leagues from Paris, and the nearest point by *diligence* to La Grange. A railroad passes almost equally near to it now, and the French *diligence*, like its English and American counterpart, the stage-coach, has long since been shorn of its honors. Yet it was a pleasant mode of travelling, taking you from place to place in a way to give you a good general idea of the country you were passing through, and bringing you into much closer relations with your fellow-travellers than you can form in a rail-car. There was the crowd at the door of the post-house where you stopped to change horses, and the little troop of wooden-shoed children that followed you up the hill, drawling out in unison, "*Un peu de charité, s'il vous plaît,*" gradually quickening their pace as the horses began to trot, and breaking all off together and tumbling in a heap as they scrambled for the *sous* that were thrown out to them.

For a light, airy people, the French have a wonderful facility in making clumsy-looking vehicles. To look at a *diligence*, you would say that it was impossible to guide it through a narrow street, or turn it into a gate. The only thing an American would think of likening it to would be three carriages of different shapes fastened together. First came the *Coupé*, in shape like an old-fashioned chariot, with a seat for three persons, and glass

windows in front and at the sides that gave you a full view of everything on the road. This was the post of honor, higher in price, and, on long journeys, always secured a day or two beforehand. Not the least of its advantages was the amusement it afforded you in watching the postilion and his horses,—a never-failing source of merriment; and what to those who know how important it is, in a set of hungry travellers, to secure a good seat at table, the important fact that the *coupé*-door was the first door opened, and the *coupé*-passengers received as the most distinguished personages of the party. The *Intérieur* came next: somewhat larger than our common coach, with seats for six, face to face, two good windows at the sides, and netting above for parcels of every kind and size: a comfortable place, less exposed to jolts than the *coupé* even, and much to be desired, if you could but make sure of a back-corner and an accommodating companion opposite to you. Last of all was the *Rotonde*, with its entrance from the rear, its seats length-wise, room for six, and compensating in part for its comparative inferiority in other respects by leaving you free to get in and out as you chose, without consulting the conductor. This, however, was but the first story, or the rooms of state of this castle on wheels. On a covered dicky, directly above the *coupé*, and thus on the very top of the whole machine, was another row of passengers, with the conductor in front, looking down through the dust upon the world beneath them, not very comfortable when the sun was hot, still less comfortable of a rainy day, but just in the place which of all

others a real traveller would wish to be in at morning or evening or of a moonlight night. The remainder of the top was reserved for the baggage, carefully packed and covered up securely from dust and rain.

I had taken the precaution to engage a seat in the *coupé* the day before I set out. Of my companions, I am sorry to say, I have not the slightest recollection. But the road was good,—bordered, as so many French roads are, with trees, and filled with a thousand objects full of interest to a young traveller. There was the *roulage*: an immense cart filled with goods of all descriptions, and drawn by four or five horses, ranged one before another, each decked with a merry string of bells, and generally rising in graduated proportions from the full-sized leader to the enormous thill horse, who bore the heat and burden of the day. Sometimes half a dozen of them would pass in a row, the drivers walking together and whiling away the time with stories and songs. Now and then a post-chaise would whirl by with a clattering of wheels and cracking of whip that were generally redoubled as it came nearer to the *diligence*, and sank again, when it was passed, into comparative moderation both of noise and speed. There were foot travellers, too, in abundance; and as I saw them walking along under the shade of the long line of trees that bordered the road, I could not help thinking that this thoughtful provision for the protection of the traveller was the most pleasing indication I had yet seen of a country long settled.

While I was thus looking and wondering, and drawing perhaps

the hasty comparisons of a novice, I saw a gentleman coming towards us with a firm, quick step, his blue surtout buttoned tight over his breast, a light walking-stick in his hand, and with the abstracted air of a man who saw something beyond the reach of the bodily eye. It was Cooper, just returning from a visit to the General, and dreaming perhaps of his forest-paths or the ocean. His carriage with his family was coming slowly on behind. A day earlier and I should have found them all at La Grange.

It was evident that the good people of Rosay were accustomed to the sight of travellers on their way to La Grange with a very small stock of French; for I had hardly named the place, when a brisk little fellow, announcing himself as the guide of all the *Messieurs Américains*, swung my portmanteau upon his back and set out before me at the regular jog-trot of a well-trained porter. The distance was but a mile, the country level, and we soon came in sight of the castle. Castle, indeed, it was, with its pointed Norman towers, its massive walls, and broad moat,—memorials of other days,—and already gray with age before the first roof-tree was laid in the land which its owner had helped to build up to a great nation. On a hill-side its appearance would have been grand. As it was, it was impressive, and particularly as first seen from the road. The portcullis was gone, but the arched gateway still remained, flanked by towers that looked sombre and stern, even amidst the deep green of the ivy which covered the left tower almost to the battlements. I was afterwards told that the ivy itself had a special significance,—having been

planted by Charles Fox, during a visit to La Grange not long before his death. And Fox, it will be remembered, had exerted all his eloquence to induce the English Government to demand the liberation of Lafayette from Olmütz,—an act which called down upon him at the time the bitterest invectives of party rhetoric, but which the historian of England now records as a bright page in the life of one of her greatest men. Ah, how different would our record be, if we could always follow our instinct of immortality, and in all our actions look thoughtfully forward to the judgment of the future!

Passing under the massive arch, I found myself in the castle court. Three sides of the edifice were still standing, darkened, indeed, and distained by the winds and rains of centuries, but with an air of modern comfort and neatness about the doors and windows that seemed more in keeping than the moat and towers with the habits of the present day. The other curtain had been thrown down years before,—how or why nobody could tell me, but not improbably in some of the domestic wars which fill and defile the annals of mediæval Europe. In those days the loss of it must have been a serious one; but for the modern occupant it was a real gain,—letting in the air and sunlight, and opening a pleasant view of green plantations from every window of the court.

A servant met me at the main entrance, a broad stairway directly opposite the gate, and, taking my card, led me up to a spacious hall, where he asked me to wait while he went to

announce my arrival to the General. The hall was a large oblong room, plainly, but neatly furnished, with a piano at one end, its tessellated oaken floor highly polished, and communicating by folding-doors with an inner room, in which I caught a glimpse of a bright wood-fire, and a portrait of Bailly over the mantel. On the wall, to the left of the folding-doors, was suspended an American flag with its blue field of stars and its red and white stripes looking down upon me in a way that made my American veins tingle.

But I had barely time to look around me before I heard a heavy step on the stairs, and the next moment the General entered. This time he gave me a French greeting, pressing me in his arms and kissing me on both cheeks. "We were expecting you," said he, "and you are in good season for dinner. Let me show you your room."

If I had had my choice of all the rooms in the castle, I should have chosen the very one that had been assigned me. It was on the first—not the ground—floor, at the end of a long vaulted gallery and in a tower. There was a deep alcove from the bed,—a window looking down upon the calm waters of the moat, and giving glimpses, through the trees, of fields and woods beyond,—a fireplace with a cheerful fire, which had evidently been kindled the moment my arrival was known,—the tessellated floor with its waxen gloss,—and the usual furniture of a French bed-room, a good table and comfortable chairs. A sugar-bowl filled with sparkling beet sugar, and a decanter of fresh water,

on the mantel-piece, would have shown me, if there had been nothing else to show it, that I was in France. The General looked round the room to make sure that all was comfortably arranged for me, and then renewing his welcome, and telling me that the castle-bell would ring for dinner in about half an hour, left me to take possession of my quarters and change my dress.

If I had not been afraid of getting belated, I should have sat down awhile to collect my thoughts and endeavor to realize where I was. But as it was, I could do little more than unpack my trunk, arrange my books and writing-materials on the table, and change my dusty clothes, before the bell rang. Oh, how that bell sounded through the long corridor from its watch-tower over the gateway! And how I shrank back when I found myself on the threshold of the hall and saw the inner room full! The General must have divined my feelings; for, the moment he saw me, he came forward to meet me, and, taking me by the arm, presented me to all the elders of the party in turn. He apparently supposed, that, with the start I had had in the Rue d'Anjou, I should make my way among the younger ones myself.

It was a family circle covering three generations: the General, his son and daughter-in-law and two daughters, and ten grandchildren,—among whom I was glad to see some of both sexes sufficiently near my own age to open a very pleasant prospect for me whenever I should have learnt French enough to feel at home among them. Nor was the domestic character of the group broken by the presence of a son of Casimir Périer,

who was soon to marry George Lafayette's eldest daughter, the Count de Ségur, the General's uncle, though but a month or two his elder, and the Count de Tracy, father of Madame George de Lafayette, and founder of the French school of Ideology, companions, both of them, of the General's youth, and, at this serene close of a life of strange vicissitudes and bitter trials, still his friends. Levasseur, his secretary, who had accompanied him in his visit to the United States, with his German wife, a young gentleman whose name I have forgotten, but who was the private tutor of young Jules de Lasteyrie, and Major Frye, an English half-pay officer, of whom I shall have a good deal more to say by-and-by, completed the circle. We formed a long procession to the dining-room, and I shall never forget how awkward I felt on finding myself walking, with the General's arm in mine, at the head of it. There was a certain air of high breeding, of respect for others founded on self-respect, and a perfect familiarity with all the forms of society, which relieved me from much of my embarrassment by making me feel instinctively that nobody would take unpleasant notice of it. Still, that first dinner was a trial to my nerves, though I do not remember that the trial interfered with my appetite. It was served, of course, in courses, beginning with soup and ending with fruit. Most of the dishes, as I afterwards learned, were the produce of the farm, and they certainly bore good witness to the farmer's judgment and skill. The General was a hearty eater, as most Frenchmen are; but he loved to season his food with conversation, and, much as he

relished his meals, he seemed to relish the pleasant talk between the courses still more. As I was unable to follow the conversation of the table, I came in for a large share of the General's attention, who would turn to me every now and then with something pleasant to say. He had had the consideration, too, to place one of the young ladies next to me, directly on my right, as I was on his; and her English, though not perfectly fluent, was fluent enough to enable us to keep up a lively interlude.

On returning to the drawing-room, the General led me up to a portrait of my grandfather, and indulged himself for a while in endeavoring to trace a resemblance between us. I say indulged; for he often, down to the last time that I ever saw him, came back to this subject, and seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in it. He had been warmly attached to General Greene, and the attachment which both of them bore to Washington served to strengthen their attachment to each other. This portrait, a copy from Peale, had been one of the fruits of his last visit to the United States, and hung, with those of some other personal friends,—great men all of them,—on the drawing-room wall. His Washington was a bronze from Houdon's bust, and stood opposite the mantel-piece on a marble pedestal. Conversation and music filled up the rest of the evening, and before I withdrew for the night it had been arranged that I should begin my French the next morning, with one of the young ladies for teacher. And thus ended my first day at La Grange.

EVERY-DAY LIFE AT LA GRANGE

The daily life at La Grange was necessarily systematic. The General's position compelled him to see a great deal of company and exposed him to constant interruptions. He kept a kind of open table, at which part of the faces seemed to be changing every day. Then there were his own children, with claims upon his attention which he was not disposed to deny, and a large family of grandchildren to educate, upon all of whose minds he wished to leave personal impressions of their intercourse with him which should make them feel how much he loved and cherished them all. Fortunately, the size of the castle made it easy to keep the family rooms distant from the rooms of the guests; and a judicious division of time enabled him to preserve a degree of freedom in the midst of constraint, which, though the rule in Europe, American hosts in town or country have very little conception of.

Every one rose at his own hour, and was master of his time till eleven. If he wanted an early breakfast, he could have a cup of coffee or chocolate or milk in his room for the asking. But the family breakfast-hour was at eleven, a true French breakfast, and attended with all the forms of dinner except in dress. The castle-bell was rung; the household collected in the parlor; and all descended in one order to the dining-room. It was pleasant to see this morning gathering. The General was almost always among

the first to come in and take his stand by the fireplace, with a cordial greeting for each guest in turn. As his grandchildren entered, they went up to offer their morning salutations to him first of all, and there was the paternal kiss on the forehead and a pleasant word for each. His son and daughters generally saw him in his own room before they came down.

Breakfast was a cheerful meal, served in courses like dinner, and seasoned with conversation, in which every one was free to take a part or listen, as he felt disposed. There was no hurry, no confusion about it; all sat down and rose at the same time; and as every one that worked at all had evidently done part of his day's work before he came to table, all came with good appetites. Then came the family walk, all starting out in a group, but always sure to break up into smaller groups as they went on: the natural law of affinities never failing to make itself felt, and they who found most pleasure in each other's society generally ending their walk together. Sometimes the General would come a little way with us, but soon turned off to the farm, or dropped behind and went back to his books and letters. An hour in the grounds passed quickly,—too quickly, I often used to think; and then, unless, as occasionally happened, there was an excursion on foot which all were to take part in, the members of the family withdrew to their own apartments, and the guests were left free to fill up the time till dinner as they chose. With books, papers, and visits from room to room, or strolls about the grounds, the hours never lagged; and much as one day seemed like another,

there was always something of its own to remember it by. Of course, this regularity was not the result of chance. Behind the visible curtain was the invisible spirit guiding and directing all. It was no easy task to provide abundantly, and yet judiciously, for a family always large, but which might at any moment be almost doubled without an hour's notice. The farm, as I have already said, furnished a full proportion of the daily supplies, and the General was the farmer. But the daily task of distribution and arrangement fell to the young ladies, each of whom took her week of housekeeping in turn. The very first morning I was admitted behind the scenes. "If you want anything before breakfast," said one of the young ladies, as the evening circle was breaking up, "come down into the butler's room and get it." And to the butler's room I went; and there, in a calico fitted as neatly as the rich silk of the evening before, with no papers in her hair, with nothing but a richer glow to distinguish the morning from the evening face, with laughing eyes and busy hands, issuing orders and inspecting dishes, stood the very girl with whom I was to begin at nine my initiation into the mysteries of French. There must have been something peculiar in the grass which the cows fed on at La Grange; for I used to go regularly every morning for my cup of milk, and it never disagreed with me.

MY FRENCH

Oh, that lesson of French! Two seats at the snug little writing-table, and only one witness of my blunders; for nobody ever thought of coming into the drawing-room before the breakfast-bell. Unfortunately for me, Ollendorff had not yet published his thefts from Manesca; and instead of that brisk little war of question and answer, which loosens the tongue so readily to strange sounds and forms the memory so promptly to the combinations of a new idiom, I had to struggle on through the scanty rules and multitudinous exceptions of grammar, and pick my way with the help of a dictionary through the harmonious sentences of "Télémaque." And never had sentences seemed so harmonious to my ears before; and never, I fear, before had my young friend's patience been so sorely tried, or her love of fun put under so unnatural a restraint. "*Calypso ne pouvait se consoler,*" over and over and over again, her rosy lips moving slowly in order to give distinctness to every articulation, and her blue eyes fairly dancing with repressed laughter at my awkward imitation. If my teacher's patience could have given me a good pronunciation, mine would have been perfect. Day after day she came back to her task, and ever as the clock told nine would meet me at the door with the same genial smile.

Nearly twenty years afterwards I found myself once more in Paris, and at a large party at the house of the American

Minister, the late Mr. King. As I was wandering through the rooms, looking at group after group of unknown faces, my eye fell upon one that I should have recognized at once as that of my first teacher of French, if it had not seemed to me impossible that twenty years could have passed over it so lightly.

"Who is that lady?" I asked of a gentleman near me, whom it was impossible not to set down at once for an American.

"Why, that is Madame de —, a grand-daughter of General Lafayette."

I can hardly account, at this quiet moment, for the sudden impulse that seized me; but resist it I could not; and walking directly up to her, I made my lowest bow, and, without giving her time to look me well in the face, repeated, with all the gravity I could command, "*Calypso ne pouvait se consoler du départ d'Ulysse.*"

"O! Monsieur Greene," said she, holding out both her hands, "it must be you!"

THE GENERAL

General Lafayette had just entered his seventy-first year. In his childhood he had been troubled by a weakness of the chest which gave his friends some anxiety. But his constitution was naturally good, and air, exercise, and exposure gradually wore away every trace of his original debility. In person he was tall and strongly built, with broad shoulders, large limbs, and a general air of strength, which was rather increased than diminished by an evident tending towards corpulency. While still a young man, his right leg—the same, I believe, that had been wounded in rallying our broken troops at the Brandywine—was fractured by a fall on the ice, leaving him lame for the rest of his days. This did not prevent him, however, from walking about his farm, though it cut him off from the use of the saddle, and gave a halt to his gait, which but for his dignity of carriage would have approached to awkwardness. Indeed, he had more dignity of bearing than any man I ever saw. And it was not merely the dignity of self-possession, which early familiarity with society and early habits of command may give even to an ordinary man, but that elevation of manner which springs from an habitual elevation of thought, bearing witness to the purity of its source, as a clear eye and ruddy cheek bear witness to the purity of the air you daily breathe. In some respects he was the mercurial Frenchman to the last day of his life; yet his general bearing, that in which he comes

oftenest to my memory, was of calm earnestness, tempered and mellowed by quick sympathies.

His method of life was very regular,—the regularity of thirty years of comparative retirement, following close upon fifteen years of active public life, begun at twenty in the army of Washington, and ending in a Prussian and Austrian dungeon at thirty-five.

His private apartments consisted of two rooms on the second floor. The first was his bed-room, a cheerful, though not a large room, nearly square, with a comfortable fireplace, and a window looking out upon the lawn and woods behind the castle. Just outside of the bed-room, and the first object that struck your eye on approaching it from the gallery, was a picture by one of his daughters, representing the burly turnkey of Olmütz in the act of unlocking his dungeon-door. "It is a good likeness," said the General to me, the first time that he took me to his rooms,— "a very good likeness. I remember the features well." From the bed-room a door opened into a large turret-room, well lighted and airy, and which, taking its shape from the tower in which it stood, was almost a perfect circle. This was the General's library. The books were arranged in open cases, filling the walls from floor to ceiling, and with a neatness and order which revealed an artistic appreciation of their effect. It was lighted by two windows, one opening on the lawn, the other on the farm-yards, and both, from the thickness of the walls, looking like deep recesses. In the window that looked upon the farm-yards was the General's

writing-table and seat. A spy-glass lay within reach, enabling him to overlook the yard-work without rising from his chair; and on the table were his farm-books, with the record of crops and improvements entered in regular order with his own hand. Charles Sumner, who visited La Grange last summer, tells me that they lie there still.

The library was miscellaneous, many of the books being presentation-copies, and most of them neatly bound. Its predominant character, as nearly as I can recollect, was historical; the history in which he had borne so important a part naturally coming in for a full share. Though not a scholar from choice, General Lafayette loved books, and was well read. His Latin had stood him in stead at Olmütz for his brief communication with his surgeon; and I have a distinct impression, though I cannot vouch for the correctness of it, that he never dropped it altogether. His associations were too much among men of thought as well as men of action, and the responsibilities that weighed upon him were too grave, to permit so conscientious a man to neglect the aid of books. Of the historians of our Revolution, he preferred Ramsay, who had, as he said, put everything into his two volumes, and abridged as well as Eutropius. It was, perhaps, the presence of something of the same quality that led him to give the preference, among the numerous histories of the French Revolution, to Mignet, though, in putting him into my hands, he cautioned me against that dangerous spirit of fatalism, which, making man the

unconscious instrument of an irresistible necessity, leaves him no real responsibility for evil or for good.

It was in this room that he passed the greater part of the time that was not given to his farm or his guests. I never entered it without finding him at his desk, with his pen or a book in hand. His correspondence was so extensive that he was always obliged to keep a secretary, though a large portion of his letters were written with his own hand. He wrote rapidly in fact, though not rapidly to the eye; and you were surprised, in seeing his hand move over the paper, to find how soon it reached the bottom of the sheet, and how closely it filled it up. His handwriting was clear and distinct, neither decidedly French nor decidedly English,—like all his habits and opinions, formed early and never changed. I have letters of his to my grandfather, written during the Revolution, and letters of his to myself, written fifty years after it, in which it is almost impossible to trace the difference between the old man and the young one. English he seemed to write as readily as French, although a strong Gallicism would every now and then slip from his pen, as it slipped from his tongue. "I had to learn in a hurry," said he, giving me one day the history of his English studies. "I began on my passage out, as soon as I got over my sea-sickness, and picked up the rest in camp. I was compelled to write and talk, and so I learned to write and talk. The officers were very kind and never laughed at me. After the peace, Colonel Tarleton came over to Paris, and was presented to the King one day when I happened to be at Court.

The King asked him how I spoke English. 'I cannot say how he speaks it, Sire,' said the Colonel, 'but I occasionally had the good-luck to pick up some of his letters that were going the wrong way, and I can assure your Majesty that they were very well written.'

His valet was an old soldier, who had served through the Peninsular War, and who moved about with the orderly gait and quiet air of a man who had passed his heyday under the forming influences of camp discipline. He was a most respectable-looking man, as well as a most respectful servant; and it was impossible to see him busying himself about the General at his morning toilet, and watch his delicate handling of the lather-brush and razor, without feeling, that, however true the old proverb may have been in other cases, Bastien's master was a hero to him.

The General's dress was always simple, though studiously neat. His republicanism was of the school of Washington, and would have shrunk from a public display of a bare neck and shirt-sleeves. Blue was his usual winter color; a frock-coat in the morning, and a dress-coat for dinner, and both near enough to the prevailing fashion to escape remark. He had begun serious life too early to have ever been anything of a dandy, even if Nature had seen fit to contradict herself so far as to have intended him for one.

Jewelry I never saw him wear; but there was one little compartment in his library filled with what in a certain sense might be called jewelry, and of a kind that he had good reason

to be proud of. In one of the drawers was a sword made out of a key of the Bastile, and presented to him by the city of Paris. The other key he sent to Washington. When he was a young man the Bastile was a reality, and those keys still plied their dismal work at the bidding of a power as insensible to the suffering it caused as the steel of which they were made. Of the hundreds who with sinking hearts had heard them turn in their massive wards, how few had ever come back to tell the tale of their misery! Lafayette himself, but for the quick wit of a servant-maid, might have passed there some of the youthful days that he passed at the side of Washington, and gazed dimly, as at a dream, in the Bastile, at what he could look back upon as a proud reality in Olmütz. Another of his relics was a civic crown, oak-leaf wrought in gold, the gift of the city of Lyons; but this belonged to a later period, his last visit to Auvergne, the summer before the Revolution of July, and which called forth as enthusiastic a display of popular affection as that which had greeted his last visit to America. But the one which he seemed to prize most was a very plain pair of eye-glasses, in a simple horn case, if my memory does not deceive me, but which, in his estimation, neither gold nor jewels could have replaced, for they had once belonged to Washington. "He gave them to me," said the General, "on my last visit to Mount Vernon."

He was an early riser, and his work began the moment he left his pillow. First came his letters, always a heavy drain upon his time; for he had been so long a public man that everybody felt

free to consult him, and everybody that consulted him was sure of a polite answer. Then his personal friends had their claims, some of them running back to youth, some the gradual accession of later years, and all of them cherished with that genial and confiding expansiveness which was the great charm of his private life, and the chief source, when he did err, of his errors as a public man. Like all the men of Washington's school, he was systematically industrious; and by dint of system and industry his immense correspondence was seldom allowed to get the start of him. Important letters were answered as they came, and minutes or copies of the answers kept for reference. He seemed to love his pen, and to write without effort,—never aiming, it is true, at the higher graces of style, somewhat diffuse, too, both in French and in English, but easy, natural, idiomatic, and lucid, with the distinctness of clear conceptions rather than the precision of vigorous conceptions, and a warmth which in his public letters sometimes rose to eloquence, and in his private letters often made you feel as if you were listening instead of reading.

He was fond of anecdote, and told his stories with the fluency of a man accustomed to public speaking, and the animation and point of a man accustomed to the society of men of wit as well as of men of action. His recollections were wonderfully distinct, and it always gave me a peculiar thrill to hear him talk about the great men he had lived and acted with in both hemispheres, as familiarly as if he had parted from them only an hour before. It was bringing history very close to me, and peopling it with

living beings,—beings of flesh and blood, who ate and drank and slept and wore clothes as we do; for here was one of them, the friend and companion of the greatest among them all, whom I had known through books, as I knew them long before I knew him in actual life, and every one of whose words and gestures seemed to give me a clearer conception of what they, too, must have been.

Still he never appeared to live in the recollections of his youth, as most old men do. His life was too active a one for this, and the great principles he had consecrated it to were too far-reaching and comprehensive, too full of living, actual interest, too fresh and vigorous in their vitality, to allow a man of his sanguine and active temperament to forget himself in the past when there was so much to do in the present. This gave a peculiar charm to his conversation; for, no matter what the subject might be, he always talked like a man who believed what he said, and whose faith, a living principle of thought and action, was constantly kept in a genial glow by the quickness and depth of his sympathies. His smile told this; for it was full of sweetness and gentleness, though with a dash of earnestness about it, an under-current of serious thought, that made you feel as if you wanted to look behind it, and reminded you, at times, of a landscape at sunset, when there is just light enough to show you how many things there are in it that you would gladly dwell upon, if the day were only a little longer.

His intercourse with his children was affectionate and

confiding,—that with his daughters touchingly so. They had shared with him two years of his captivity at Olmütz, and he seemed never to look at them without remembering it. They had been his companions when he most needed companionship, and had learnt to enter into his feelings and study his happiness at an age when most girls are absorbed in themselves. The effect of this early discipline was never lost. They had found happiness where few seek it, in self-denial and self-control, a religious cultivation of domestic affections, and a thoughtful development of their minds as sources of strength and enjoyment. They were happy,—happy in what they had done and in what they were doing,—entering cheerfully upon the serene evening of lives consecrated to duty, with children around them to love them as they had loved their father and mother, and that father still with them to tell them that they had never deceived him.

A FIELD NIGHT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

To an intelligent American visiting London for the first time, few places of interest will present stronger attractions than the House of Commons during an animated debate. Commencing its existence with the first crude ideas of popular liberty in England, steadily advancing in influence and importance with the increasing wealth and intelligence of the middling class, until it came to hold the purse and successfully defend the rights of the people, illustrated for many generations by the eloquence and the statesmanship of the kingdom, and to-day wielding the power and directing the destinies of the foremost nation in the world, it is not strange that an American, speaking the same language, and proud of the same ancestry, should visit with the deepest interest the scene of so many and so important transactions. Especially will this be the case, if by experience or observation he has become familiar with the course of proceedings in our own legislative assemblies. For, although the English House of Commons is the parent of all similar deliberative bodies in the civilized world, yet its rules and regulations are in many respects essentially unique.

Assuming that many of my readers have never enjoyed the opportunity of "sitting out a debate" in Parliament, I have

ventured to hope that a description of some of the distinctive features which are peculiar to the House of Commons, and a sketch of some of its prominent members, might not be unwelcome.

In 1840 the corner-stone of the New Palace of Westminster was laid, and at the commencement of the session of 1852 the first official occupation of the House of Commons took place. The House of Peers was first used in 1847. It is not consistent with the object of this article to speak of the dimensions and general appearance of this magnificent structure. It is sufficient to say, that in its architectural design, in its interior decorations, and in its perfect adaptation to the purposes for which it was erected, it is alike creditable to the public spirit of the nation, and to the improved condition of the fine and useful arts in the present century.

The entrance to the House of Commons is through Westminster Hall. What wealth of historical recollections is suggested by this name! As, however, we are dealing with the present, we dare not even touch upon so fruitful a theme, but must hasten through the grand old hall, remarking only in passing that it is supposed to have been originally built in 1097, and was rebuilt by Richard II. in 1398. With a single exception,—the Hall of Justice in Padua,—it is the largest apartment unsupported by pillars in the world. Reluctantly leaving this historical ground, we enter St. Stephen's Hall. This room, rich in architectural ornaments and most graceful in its proportions, is

still further adorned with statues of "men who rose to eminence by the eloquence and abilities they displayed in the House of Commons." Who will dispute their claims to this distinction? The names selected for such honorable immortality are Selden, Hampden, Falkland, Lord Clarendon, Lord Somers, Sir Robert Walpole, Lord Chatham, Lord Mansfield, Burke, Fox, Pitt, and Grattan.

We have now reached the Great Central Hall, out of which open two corridors, one of which leads to the lobby of the House of Lords. Passing through the other, we find ourselves in the lobby of the House of Commons. Here we must pause and look about us. We are in a large apartment brilliantly lighted and richly decorated. As we stand with our backs to the Great Central Hall, the passage-way to the right conducts to the library and refreshment rooms, that on the left is the private entrance of the members through the old cloisters, of Stephen's, that in front is the main entrance to the floor of the House. In the corner on our right is a small table, garnished with all the materials for a cold lunch for the use of those members who have no time for a more substantial meal in the dining-room. Stimulants of various kinds are not wanting; but the habits of Englishmen and the presence of vigilant policemen prevent any abuse of this privilege. The refreshments thus provided are open to all, and in this qualified sense I may say that I have lunched with Disraeli, Lord John Russell, and Lord Palmerston.

But the hour has nearly come for opening the debate; members

are rapidly arriving and taking their seats, and we shall do well to decide upon the best mode of gaining admission to the House. There are a few benches on the floor reserved, as of right, for peers and their sons, and, by courtesy, for gentlemen introduced by them. I may be pardoned for presuming that this high privilege is beyond our reach. Our only alternative, then, is the galleries. These are, the Speaker's Gallery, on the south side of the House, and directly opposite the Speaker's chair, affording room for between twenty and thirty, and the Strangers' Gallery, behind this, with seats for about sixty. Visitors have only these limited accommodations. The arrangement deprives members of all temptation to "speak to the galleries," and is consistent with the English theory, that all debates in the House should be strictly of a business character. And as to anything like applause on the part of the spectators, what punishment known to any criminal code among civilized nations would be too severe for such an offence?

The American Minister (and of course every representative of a foreign power) has the right to give two cards of admission, entitling the bearer of each to a seat in the Speaker's Gallery. But these cards admit only on a specified evening, and if not used then, are worthless. If you have called on our distinguished representative at the Court of St. James, you have probably discovered that his list is full for the next fortnight at least, and, although the Secretary of Legation politely asks your name, and promises you the earliest opportunity, you retire with a

natural feeling of disappointment. Many Americans, having only a few days to spend in London, leave the city without making any further effort to visit the House of Commons. It would certainly have been well to forward, in advance of your arrival in London, a written application to the Minister; but as this has not been done, what remains? Ask your banker for a note of introduction to some member of the House, and, armed with this epistle, make your appearance in the lobby. Give the note, with your card, to that grave, clerical-looking man in a little box on the left of the main entrance, and patiently await the approach of the "honorable gentleman." If the Speaker's Gallery is not full, he will have no difficulty in procuring for you the desired admission; and if at leisure, he will undoubtedly spend a few moments in pointing out the distinguished men who may chance to be in attendance. Be sure and carry an opera-glass. Without this precaution, you will not be able to study to your satisfaction the faces of the members, for the House is by no means brilliantly illuminated. If for any reason this last expedient does not succeed, must we despair for this evening? We are on the ground, and our engagements may not leave another so good opportunity. I have alluded to the presence of policemen in the lobby. Do I dream, or has it been whispered to me, that half a crown, opportunely and adroitly invested, may be of substantial advantage to the waiting stranger? But by all means insist on the Speaker's Gallery. The Strangers' Gallery is less desirable for many reasons, and, being open to everybody who has a member's

order, is almost invariably crowded. At all events, it should be reserved as a dernier resort. As an illustration of the kindly feeling towards Americans, I may mention, parenthetically, that I have known gentlemen admitted to the Speaker's Gallery on their simple statement to the door-keeper that they were from the United States. On one of these occasions, the official, a civil personage, but usually grave to the verge of solemnity,—the very last man you would have selected as capable of waggery,—assumed a comical counterfeit of terror, and said,—"Bless me! we must be obliging to Americans, or who knows what may come of it?"

It should be observed, however, that on a "field night" not one of the modes of admission which I have described will be of any service. Nothing will avail you then but a place on the Speaker's list, and even in that case you must be promptly at your post, for "First come first served" is the rule.

But we have lingered long enough in the Lobby. Let us take our places in the Speaker's Gallery,—for the essayist has hardly less power than, according to Sydney Smith, has the novelist, and a few strokes of the pen shall show you what many have in vain longed to see.

Once there, our attention is instantly attracted by observing that almost every member, who is not speaking, wears his hat. This, although customary, is not compulsory. Parliamentary etiquette only insists that a member while speaking, or moving from place to place, shall be uncovered. The gallery opposite

the one in which we are seated is for the use of the reporters. That ornamental brass trellis in the rear of the reporters, half concealing a party of ladies, is a curious compromise between what is due to traditional Parliamentary regulations and the courtesy to which the fair sex is entitled. This relaxation of the old rules dates only from the erection of the new building.

The perfect order which prevails among members is another marked feature during the debates. The bewigged and berobed Speaker, seated in his imposing high-backed chair, seems rather to be retained in his place out of due deference to time-honored custom than because a presiding officer is necessary to preserve proper decorum. To be sure, demonstrations of applause at a good bit, or of discontent with a prosy speaker, are common, but anything approaching disorder is of rare occurrence.

The adherence to forms and precedents is not a little amusing. Take, for example, a "division," which corresponds to a call for the Ayes and Noes with us. To select an instance at random,—there happens this evening to be a good deal of excitement about some documents which it is alleged the Ministry dare not produce; so the minority, who oppose the bill under debate, make a great show of demanding the papers, and, not being gratified, move to adjourn the debate, with the design of postponing the passage of the obnoxious measure.

"I move that the debate be adjourned."

"Who seconds?"

"I do."

"Those in the affirmative," etc., etc.

Feeble "Aye."

Most emphatic "No."

"The noes have it."

"No!" "No!"

"Aye!" "Aye!"

"Divide!" "Divide!" in a perfect Babel of orderly confusion.

(Speaker, very solemnly and decidedly,)—

"Strangers must withdraw!"

Is the gallery immediately cleared? Not a bit of it. Every man retains his place. Some even seem, to my fancy, to look a sort of grim defiance at the Speaker, as a bold Briton should. It is simply a form, which many years ago had some meaning, and, having once been used, cannot be discontinued without putting the Constitution in jeopardy. Five times this evening, the minority, intent on postponing the debate, call for a division,—and as many times are strangers gravely admonished to withdraw.

There are two modes of adjourning the House,—by vote of the members, and by want of a quorum. The method of procedure in the latter case is somewhat peculiar, and has, of course, the sanction of many generations. Suppose that a dull debate on an unimportant measure, numerous dinner-parties, a fashionable opera, and other causes, have combined to reduce the number of members in attendance to a dozen. It certainly is not difficult to decide at a glance that a quorum (forty) is not present, and I presume you are every instant expecting, in your

innocence, to hear, "Mr. Speaker, I move," etc. Pause a moment, my impatient friend, too long accustomed to the reckless haste of our Republican assemblies. Do not, even in thought, tamper with the Constitution. "The wisdom of our ancestors" has bequeathed another and undoubtedly a better mode of arriving at the same result. Some member quietly intimates to the Speaker that forty members are not present. That dignified official then rises, and, using his cocked hat as an index or pointer, deliberately counts the members. Discovering, as the apparent result of careful examination, that there really is no quorum, he declares the House adjourned and sits down; whereupon the Sergeant-at-Arms seizes the mace, shoulders it, and marches out, followed by the Speaker. Then, and not until then, is the ceremony complete and the House duly adjourned.

This respect for traditional usage admits of almost endless illustration. One more example must suffice. When the Speaker discovers symptoms of disorder in the House, he rises in his place and says with all suitable solemnity, "Unless Honorable Members preserve order, I shall name names!" and quiet is instantly restored. What mysterious and appalling consequences would result from persistent disobedience, nobody in or out of the House has ever known, or probably ever will know,—at any rate, no Speaker in Parliamentary annals has been compelled to adopt the dreaded alternative. Shall I be thought wanting in patriotism, if I venture to doubt whether so simple an expedient would reduce to submission an insubordinate House of Representatives

at Washington?

Like everything else thoroughly English, speaking in the House of Commons is eminently practical. "The bias of the nation," says Mr. Emerson, "is a passion for utility." Conceive of a company of gentlemen agreeing to devote, gratuitously, a certain portion of each year to the consideration of any questions which may concern the public welfare, and you have the theory and the practice of the House of Commons. Of course there are exceptions to this general statement. There are not wanting constituencies represented by unfit men; but such members are not allowed to consume the time which belongs of right to men of capacity and tried ability. The test is sternly, almost despotically applied. A fair trial is given to a new member. If he is "up to his work," his name goes on the list of men whom the House will hear. If, however, his maiden speech is a failure, "farewell, a long farewell" to all his political aspirations. Few men have risen from such a fall. Now and then, as in the well-known instances of Sheridan, Disraeli, and some less prominent names, real genius, aided by dogged determination, has forced its way upward in spite of early ill-success; but such cases are very rare. The rule may work occasional injustice, but is it after all so very unreasonable? "Talking," they contend, "must be done by those who have something to say."

Everything one sees in the House partakes of this practical tendency. There are no conveniences for writing. A member who should attempt to read a manuscript speech would never

get beyond the first sentence. Nor does anybody ever dream of writing out his address and committing it to memory. In fact, nothing can be more informal than their manner in debate. You see a member rising with his hat in one hand, and his gloves and cane in the other. It is as if he had just said to his neighbor, "I have taken a good deal of interest in the subject under discussion, and have been at some pains to understand it. I am inclined to tell the House what I think of it." So you find him on the floor, or "on his legs," in parliamentary phrase, carrying this intention into effect in a simple, business-like, straightforward way. But if our friend is very long, or threatens to be tedious, I fear that unequivocal and increasing indications of discontent will oblige him to resume his seat in undignified haste.

Perhaps no feature of the debates in the House of Commons deserves more honorable mention than the high-toned courtesy which regulates the intercourse of members.

Englishmen have never been charged with a want of spirit; on the contrary, they are proverbially "plucky," and yet the House is never disgraced by those shameful brawls which have given to our legislative assemblies, state and national, so unenviable a reputation throughout the civilized world. How does this happen? To Englishmen it does not seem a very difficult matter to manage. If one member charges another with ungentlemanly or criminal conduct, he must follow up his charge and prove it,—in which case the culprit is no longer recognized as a gentleman; or if he fails to make good his accusation, and neglects to atone for

his offence by ample and satisfactory apologies, he is promptly "sent to Coventry" as a convicted calumniator. No matter how high his social position may have been, whether nobleman or commoner, he shall not escape the disgrace he has deserved. And to forfeit one's standing among English gentlemen is a punishment hardly less severe than to lose caste in India. In such a community, what need of duels to vindicate wounded honor or establish a reputation for courage?

The members of the present House of Commons were elected in the spring of 1859. Among their number are several men who, in point of capacity, eloquence, and political experience, will compare not unfavorably with the ablest statesmen whom England has known for generations. I have thought that some description of their appearance and mental characteristics might not be unacceptable to American readers. As the best mode of accomplishing this object, I shall select an occasion, which, from the importance of the question under discussion, the deep interest which it awakened, and the ability with which it was treated, certainly presented as favorable an opportunity as could ever occur to form a correct opinion of the best speaking talent in the kingdom. The debate to which I allude took place early in the month of July, 1860.

My name being fortunately on the first list for the Speaker's Gallery, I had no difficulty in taking my place the moment the door was open. It will be readily believed that every seat was soon filled. In front of the Speaker's Gallery is a single row of

seats designed for foreign ambassadors and peers. The first man to enter it was Mr. Dallas, and he was presently followed by other members of the diplomatic corps, and several distinguished noblemen.

It was very interesting to an American that almost the first business of the evening concerned his own country. Some member of the House asked Lord John Russell, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, if he had received any recent despatches from the United States relating to the San Juan difficulty. It will be remembered, or would be, but for the rapid march of more momentous events, that only a short time before, news had reached England that General Harney, violating the explicit instructions of General Scott, so wisely and opportunely issued, had claimed for the United States exclusive jurisdiction over the island of San Juan. Lord John replied by stating what had been the highly honorable and judicious policy of General Scott, and the unwarrantable steps subsequently taken by General Harney,—that Lord Lyons had communicated information of the conduct of General Harney to President Buchanan, who had recalled that officer, and had forwarded instructions to his successor to continue in the course marked out by General Scott. This gratifying announcement was greeted in the House with hearty cheers,—a spontaneous demonstration of delight, which proved not only that the position of affairs on this question was thought to be serious, but also the genuine desire of Englishmen to remain in amicable relations with the United States.

To this brief business succeeded the great debate of the session. Let me endeavor, at the risk of being tedious, to explain the exact question before the House. Mr. Gladstone, in his speech on the Budget, had pledged the Ministry to a considerable reduction of the taxes for the coming year. In fulfilment of this pledge, it had been decided to remit the duty on paper, thereby abandoning about £1,500,000 of revenue. A bill to carry this plan into effect passed to its second reading by a majority of fifty-three. To defeat the measure the Opposition devoted all its energies, and with such success that the bill passed to its third reading by the greatly reduced majority of nine. Emboldened by this almost victory, the Conservatives determined to give the measure its *coup de grâce* in the House of Lords. The Opposition leaders, Lord Derby, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Ellenborough, and others, attacked the bill, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, its acknowledged author, with as much bitterness and severity as are ever considered compatible with the dignified decorum of that aristocratic body; all the Conservative forces were rallied, and, what with the votes actually given and the proxies, the Opposition majority was immense.

Now all this was very easily and very quickly done. The Conservatives were exultant, and even seemed sanguine enough to believe that the Ministry had received a fatal blow. But they forgot, in the first flush of victory, that they were treading on dangerous ground,—that they were meddling with what had been regarded for centuries as the exclusive privilege of the

House of Commons. English Parliamentary history teaches no clearer lesson than that the right to pass "Money Bills," without interference from the House of Lords, has been claimed and exercised by the House of Commons for several generations. The public was not slow to take the alarm. To be sure, several causes conspired to lessen somewhat the popular indignation. Among these were the inevitable expenses of the Chinese War, the certainty of an increased income tax, if the bill became a law, and the very small majority which the measure finally received in the House of Commons.

Nevertheless, the public mind was deeply moved. The perils of such a precedent were evident enough to any thinking man. Although the unwearied exertions of Bright, Roebuck, and other leading Radicals, could not arouse the people to that state of unreasoning excitement in which these demagogues delight, yet the tone of the press and the spirit of the public meetings gave proof that the importance of the crisis was not wholly underrated. These meetings were frequent and largely attended; inflammatory speeches were made, strong resolutions passed, and many petitions numerously signed, protesting against the recent conduct of the Lords, were presented to the popular branch of Parliament.

In the House of Commons the action was prompt and decided. A committee was immediately appointed to search for precedents, and ascertain if such a proceeding was justified by Parliamentary history. The result of this investigation was

anxiously awaited both by the Commons and the nation. To the disappointment of everybody, the committee, after patient and protracted research, submitted a report, giving no opinion whatever on the question, but merely reciting all the precedents that bore on the subject.

It must be confessed that the condition of affairs was not a little critical. Both the strength of the Ministry and the dignity of the House of Commons were involved in the final decision. But, unfortunately, the Ministerial party was far from being a unit on the question. Bright and the "Manchester School" demanded an uncompromising and defiant attitude towards the Lords. Lord Palmerston was for asserting the rights and privileges of the Commons, but for avoiding a collision. Where Mr. Gladstone would be found could not be precisely predicted; but he was understood to be deeply chagrined at the defeat of his favorite measure, and to look upon the action of the Peers as almost a personal insult. Lord John Russell was supposed to occupy a position somewhere between the Premier and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If the leaders were thus divided in opinion, there was no less diversity of views among their followers. Some did not at all appreciate the nature or magnitude of the question, a few sympathized with the Conservatives, and very many were satisfied that a mistake had been made in sacrificing so large a source of revenue at a time when the immediate prospect of war with China and the condition of the national defences rendered it important to increase, rather than diminish the available funds

in the treasury. The Opposition, of course, were ready to take advantage of any weak points in the position of their adversaries, and were even hoping that the Ministerial dissensions might lead to a Ministerial defeat.

It was under these circumstances that Lord Palmerston rose to define the position of the Ministry, to vindicate the honor and dignity of the Commons, to avert a collision with the House of Lords, and, in general, to extricate the councils of the nation from an embarrassing and dangerous dilemma.

A word about the *personnel* of the Premier, and a glance at some of his political antecedents. His Lordship has been for so many years in public life, and a marked man among English statesmen, that, either by engraving, photograph, or personal observation, his face is familiar to many Americans. And, certainly, there is nothing in his features or in the expression of his countenance to indicate genius or even ability. He is simply a burly Englishman, of middling height, with an air of constant good-humor and a very pleasant understanding with himself. Perhaps the first thing about him which impresses an American, accustomed at home to dyspeptic politicians and statesmen prematurely old, is his physical activity. Fancy a man of seventy-six, who has been in most incessant political life for more than fifty years, sitting out a debate of ten hours without flinching, and then walking to his house in Piccadilly, not less than two miles. And his body is not more active than his mind. He does something more than sit out a debate. Not a word escapes

him when a prominent man is on his legs. Do not be deceived by his lazy attitude, or his sleepy expression. Not a man in the House has his wits more thoroughly about him. Ever ready to extricate his colleagues from an awkward difficulty, to evade a dangerous question,—making, with an air of transparent candor, a reply in which nothing is answered,—to disarm an angry opponent with a few conciliatory or complimentary words, or to demolish him with a little good-humored raillery which sets the House in a roar; equally skilful in attack and retreat: such, in a word, is the bearing of this gay and gallant veteran, from the beginning to the end of each debate, during the entire session of Parliament. He seems absolutely insensible to fatigue. "I happened," said a member of the House, writing to a friend, last summer, "to follow Lord Palmerston, as he left the cloak-room, the other morning, after a late sitting, and, as I was going his way, I thought I might as well see how he got over the ground. At first he seemed a little stiff in the legs; but when he warmed to his work he began to pull out, and before he got a third of the way he bowled along splendidly, so that he put me to it to keep him in view. Perhaps in a few hours after that long sitting and that walk home, and the brief sleep that followed, the Premier might have been seen standing bolt upright at one end of a great table in Cambridge House, receiving a deputation from the country, listening with patient and courteous attention to some tedious spokesman, or astonishing his hearers by his knowledge of their affairs and his intimacy with their trade or business." On a previous night, I had seen Lord Palmerston

in his seat in the House from 4 P.M. until about 2 A.M., during a dull debate, and was considerably amused when he rose at that late or early hour, and "begged to suggest to honorable gentlemen," that, although he was perfectly willing to sit there until daylight, yet he thought something was due to the Speaker, (a hale, hearty man, sixteen years his junior,) and as there was to be a session at noon of that day, he hoped the debate would be adjourned. The same suggestion had been fruitlessly made half a dozen times before; but the Premier's manner was irresistible, and amid great laughter the motion prevailed. The Speaker, with a grateful smile to the member for Tiverton, immediately and gladly retired, but the indefatigable leader remained at his post an hour longer, while the House was sitting in Committee on Supplies.

But his Parliamentary duties by no means fill up the measure of his public labors. Deputations representing all sorts of interests wait on him almost daily, his presence is indispensable at all Cabinet consultations, and as Prime Minister he gives tone and direction to the domestic and foreign policy of the English government. How much is implied in these duties and responsibilities must be apparent to all who speak the English language.

Now what is the secret of this vigorous old age, after a life spent in such arduous avocations? Simply this, that a constitution robust by nature has been preserved in its strength by regular habits and out-door exercise. If I were to repeat the stories I

have heard, and seen stated in English newspapers, of the feats, pedestrian and equestrian, performed by Lord Palmerston from early manhood down to the present writing, I fear I should be suspected by some of my readers of offering an insult to their understanding. I must therefore content myself with saying that very few young men of our day and country could follow him in the field or keep up with him on the road.

A word about Lord Palmerston's political antecedents. Beginning as Junior Lord of the Admiralty in the Duke of Portland's Ministry, in 1808, he has since been once Secretary of War, five times Prime Minister, and once Secretary of State. From 1811 to 1831 he represented Cambridge University. Since 1835 he has represented Tiverton. It may be safely asserted that no man now living in England has been so long or so prominently in public office, and probably no man presents a more correct type of the Liberal, although not Radical, sentiment of England.

It may be well to state that on this evening there was an unusually large attendance of members. Not only were all the benches on the floor of the House filled, but the rare spectacle was presented of members occupying seats in the east and west galleries. These unfortunates belonged to that class who are seldom seen in their places, but who are sometimes whipped in by zealous partisans, when important questions are under consideration, and a close vote may be expected. Their listless faces and sprawling attitudes proved clearly enough that they were reluctant and bored spectators of the scene. It deserves to be

mentioned, also, that, although there are six hundred and fifty-six actual members of the House, the final vote on the question showed, that, even on that eventful night, only four hundred and sixty-two were present. The average attendance is about three hundred.

At half-past four, the Premier rose to address the House. He had already given due notice that he should introduce three resolutions, which, considering the importance of the subject, I make no apology for giving in full.

"1. That the right of granting aids and supplies to the Crown is in the Commons alone as an essential part of their Constitution, and the limitation of all such grants, as to the matter, manner, measure, and time, is only in them.

"2. That, although the Lords have exercised the power of rejecting bills of several descriptions relating to taxation by negating the whole, yet the exercise of that power by them has not been frequent, and is justly regarded by this House with peculiar jealousy, as affecting the right of the Commons to grant the supplies and to provide the ways and means for the service of the year.

"3. That, to guard for the future against an undue exercise of that power by the Lords, and to secure to the Commons their rightful control over taxation and supply, this House has in its own hands the power so to impose and remit taxes, and to frame Bills of Supply, that the right of the Commons as to the matter, manner, measure, and time may be maintained inviolate."

The burden of the speech by which the Premier supported these resolutions was this. The assent of both Houses is necessary to a bill, and each branch possesses the power of rejection. But in regard to certain bills, to wit, Money Bills, the House claims, as its peculiar and exclusive privilege, the right of originating, altering, or amending them. As the Lords have, however, the right and power of assenting, they have also the right and power of rejecting. He admitted that they had frequently exercised this right of rejection. Yet it must be observed, that, when they had done so, it had been in the case of bills involving taxes of small amount, or connected with questions of commercial protection. No case had ever occurred precisely like this, where a bill providing for the repeal of a tax of large amount, and on the face of it unmixed with any other question, had been rejected by the Lords.

"But, in point of fact," he continued, "was there not another question involved? Was it not clear, that, the bill having passed by a majority greatly reduced since its second reading, the Lords may have thought that it would be well to give the Commons further time to reflect? Indeed, was there not abundant reason to believe that the Lords were not really initiating a new and dangerous policy, that of claiming to be partners with the House in originating and disposing of Money Bills? Therefore, would it not be sufficient for the House firmly to assert its rights, and to intimate the jealous care with which it intended to guard against their infringement?"

Of course, this brief and imperfect abstract of an hour's speech can do no sort of justice to its merits. It is much easier to describe its effect upon the House. From the moment when the Premier uttered his opening sentence, "I rise upon an occasion which will undoubtedly rank as one of the first in importance among those which have occurred in regard to our Parliamentary proceedings," he commanded the closest attention of the House. And yet he was neither eloquent, impressive, nor even earnest. There was not the slightest attempt at declamation. His voice rarely rose above a conversational tone, and his gestures were not so numerous or so decided as are usual in animated dialogue. His air and manner were rather those of a plain, well-informed man of business, not unaccustomed to public speaking, who had some views on the subject under discussion which he desired to present, and asked the ear of the House for a short hour while he defined his position.

No one who did not appreciate the man and the occasion would have dreamed that he was confronting a crisis which might lead to a change in the Ministry, and might array the two Houses of Parliament in angry hostility against each other. But here lay the consummate skill of the Premier. He was playing a most difficult role, and he played it to perfection. He could not rely on the support of the Radicals. He must therefore make amends for their possible defection by drawing largely on the Conservative strength. The great danger was, that, while conciliating the Conservatives by a show of concession, he should alienate his

own party by seeming to concede too much. Now, that the effect which he aimed to produce excluded all declamation, all attempt at eloquence, anything like flights of oratory or striking figures of rhetoric, nobody understood better than Lord Palmerston.

In view of all these circumstances, the adroitness, the ability, the sagacity, and the success of his speech were most wonderful. Gladstone was more philosophical, statesmanlike, and eloquent; Whiteside more impassioned and vehement; Disraeli more witty, sarcastic, and telling; but Lord Palmerston displayed more of those qualities without which no one can be a successful leader of the House of Commons. The result was, that two of the resolutions passed without a division, and the third was carried by an immense majority. The Prime Minister had understood the temper of the House, and had shaped his course accordingly. As we have seen, he succeeded to a marvel. But was it such a triumph as a great and far-reaching statesman would have desired? And this brings us to the other side of the picture.

Dexterous, facile, adroit, politic, versatile,—as Lord Palmerston certainly is,—fertile in resources, prompt to seize and use to the utmost every advantage, endowed with unusual popular gifts, and blessed with imperturbable good-humor, it cannot be denied that in many of the best and noblest attributes of a statesman he is sadly deficient. His fondness for political power and his anxiety to achieve immediate success inevitably lead him to resort to temporary and often unworthy expedients. A manly reliance on general principles, and a firm faith in the

ultimate triumph of right and justice, constitute no part of his character. He lives only in the present. That he is making history seems never to occur to him. He does not aspire to direct, but only aims to follow, or at best to keep pace with public opinion. What course he will pursue on a given question can never be safely predicted, until you ascertain, as correctly as he can, what is the prevailing temper of the House or the nation. That he will try to "make things pleasant," to conciliate the Opposition without weakening the strength of his own party, you may be sure; but for, any further clue to his policy you must consult the press, study the spirit of Parliament, and hear the voice of the people. I know no better illustration to prove the justice of this view of the Premier's political failing than his bearing in the debate which I am attempting to describe. Here was a grave constitutional question. The issue was a simple and clear one. Had the Lords the right to reject a Money Bill which had passed the House? If historical precedents settled the question clearly, then there was no difficulty in determining the matter at once, and almost without discussion. If, however, there were no precedents bearing precisely on this case, then it was all the more important that this should be made the occasion of a settlement of the question so unequivocal and positive as effectually to guard against future complication and embarrassment. Now how did the Premier deal with this issue? He disregarded the homely wisdom contained in the pithy bull of Sir Boyle Roche, that "the best way to avoid a dilemma is to meet it plump." He dodged

the dilemma. His resolutions, worded with ingenious obscurity, skilfully evaded the important aspect of the controversy, and two of them, the second and third, gave equal consolation to the Liberals and the Conservatives. So that, in fact, it is reserved for some future Parliament, in which it cannot be doubted that the Radical element will be more numerous and more powerful, to determine what should have been decided on this very evening. It was cleverly done, certainly, and extorted from all parties and members of every shade of political opinion that admiration which the successful performance of a difficult and critical task must always elicit. But was it statesmanlike, or in any high sense patriotic or manly?

The Premier was followed by R.P. Collier, representing Plymouth. He had been on the committee to search for precedents, and he devoted an hour to showing that there was not, in all Parliamentary history, a single precedent justifying the action of the Lords. His argument was clear and convincing, and the result of it was, that no bill simply imposing or remitting a tax had ever in a single instance been rejected by the Upper House. In all the thirty-six cases relied on by the Opposition there was always some other principle involved, which furnished plausible justification for the course adopted by the Lords.

To this speech I observed that Mr. Gladstone paid strict attention, occasionally indicating his assent by an approving nod, or by an encouraging "Hear! Hear!" It is rare, indeed, that any speaker in the House secures the marked attention or catches the

eye of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

To Collier succeeded Coningham, member for Brighton. Now as this honorable member was prosy and commonplace, not to say stupid, I should not detain my readers with any allusion to his speech, but as illustrating a prominent and very creditable feature of the debates in the House. That time is of some value, and that no remarks can be tolerated, unless they are intelligent and pertinent, are cardinal doctrines of debate, and are quite rigidly enforced. At the same time mere dulness is often overlooked, as soon as it appears that the speaker has something to say which deserves to be heard. But there is one species of oratory which is never tolerated for a moment, and that is the sort of declamation which is designed merely or mainly for home-consumption,—speaking for Buncombe, as we call it. The instant, therefore, that it was evident that Mr. Coningham was addressing, not the House of Commons, but his constituents at Brighton, he was interrupted by derisive cheers and contemptuous groans. Again and again did the indignant orator attempt to make his voice heard above the confusion, but in vain; and when, losing all presence of mind, he made the fatal admission,—"I can tell Honorable Gentlemen that I have just returned from visiting my constituents, and I can assure the House that more intelligent"—the tumult became so great, that the remainder of the sentence was entirely lost. Seeing his mistake, Mr. Coningham changed his ground. "I appeal to the courtesy of Honorable Members; I do not often trespass upon the House; I implore them to give me a patient and candid

hearing." This appeal to the love of "fair play," so characteristic of Englishmen, produced immediately the desired effect, and the member concluded without further interruption.

Mr. Edwin James was the next prominent speaker. He has won a wide reputation as a barrister, chiefly in the management of desperate criminal cases, culminating in his defence of Dr. Barnard, charged with being accessory to the attempted assassination of Louis Napoleon. The idol of the populace, he was elected by a large majority in May, 1859, as an extreme Liberal or Radical, to represent Marylebone in the present Parliament. His warmest admirers will hardly contend that since his election he has done anything to distinguish himself, or even to sustain the reputation which his success as an advocate had earned for him. The expensive vices to which he has long been addicted have left him bankrupt in character and fortune. His large professional income has been for some years received by trustees, who have made him a liberal allowance for his personal expenses, and have applied the remainder toward the payment of his debts. His recent disgraceful flight from England, and the prompt action of his legal brethren in view of his conduct, render it highly improbable that he will ever return to the scene of his former triumphs and excesses. Besides its brevity, which was commendable, his speech this evening presented no point worthy of comment.

Since the opening remarks of Lord Palmerston, five Radicals had addressed the House. Without exception they had denounced

the action of the Lords, and more than one had savagely attacked the Opposition for supporting the proceedings of the Upper House. They had contended that the Commons were becoming contemptible in the eyes of the nation by their failure to take a manly position in defence of their rights. To a man, they had assailed the resolutions of the Premier as falling far short of the dignity of the occasion and the importance of the crisis, or, at best, as intentionally ambiguous. Thus far then the Radicals. The Opposition had listened to them in unbroken and often contemptuous silence, enjoying the difference of opinion in the Ministerial party, but reserving themselves for some foeman worthy of their steel. Nor was there, beyond a vague rumor, any clue to the real position of the Cabinet on the whole question. Only one member had spoken for the Government, and it was more than suspected that he did not quite correctly represent the views of the Ministry.

If any one of my readers had been in the Speaker's Gallery on that evening, his attention would have been arrested by a member on the Ministerial benches, a little to the right of Lord Palmerston. His face is the most striking in the House,—grave, thoughtful, almost stern, but lighting up with wonderful beauty when he smiles. Usually, his air is rather abstracted,—not, indeed, the manner of one whose thoughts are wandering from the business under debate, but rather of one who is thinking deeply upon what is passing around him. His attitude is not graceful: lolling at full length, his head resting on the back of the

seat, and his legs stretched out before him. He is always neatly, but never carefully dressed, and his bearing is unmistakably that of a scholar. Once or twice since we have been watching him, he has scratched a few hasty memoranda on the back of an envelope, and now, amid the silence of general expectation, the full, clear tones of his voice are heard. He has not spoken five minutes before members who have taken advantage of the dulness of recent debaters to dine, or to fortify themselves in a less formal way for the night's work before them, begin to flock to their seats. Not an eye wanders from the speaker, and the attention which he commands is of the kind paid in the House only to merit and ability of the highest order. And, certainly, the orator is not unworthy of this silent, but most respectful tribute to his talents. His manner is earnest and animated, his enunciation is beautifully clear and distinct, the tones of his voice are singularly pleasing and persuasive, stealing their way into the hearts of men, and charming them into assent to his propositions. One can easily understand why he is called the "golden-tongued."

This is Mr. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, by right of eloquence, statesmanship, and scholarly attainments, the foremost man in England. I cannot hope to give a satisfactory description of his speech, nor of its effect upon the House. His eloquence is of that quality to which no sketch, however accurate, can do justice. Read any one of his speeches, as reported with astonishing correctness in the London "Times," and you will appreciate the clear, philosophical statement of

political truth,—the dignified, elevated, statesmanlike tone,—the rare felicity of expression,—the rhetorical beauty of style, never usurping the place of argument, though often concealing the sharp angles of his relentless logic,—the marvellous ease with which he makes the dry details of finance not only instructive, but positively fascinating,—his adroitness in retrieving a mistake, or his sagacity in abandoning, in season, an indefensible position,—the lofty and indignant scorn with which he sometimes condescends to annihilate an insolent adversary, or the royal courtesy of his occasional compliments. But who shall be able to describe those attributes of his eloquence which address themselves only to the ear and eye: that clear, resonant voice, never sinking into an inaudible whisper, and never rising into an ear-piercing scream, its tones always exactly adapted to the spirit of the words,—that spare form, wasted by the severe study of many years, which but a moment before was stretched in languid ease on the Treasury benches, now dilated with emotion,—that careworn countenance inspired with great thoughts: what pen or pencil can do justice to these?

If any one of that waiting audience has been impatiently expectant of some words equal to this crisis, some fearless and manly statement of the real question at issue, his wish shall be soon and most fully gratified. Listen to his opening sentence, which contains the key-note to his whole speech:—"It appears to be the determination of one moiety of this House that there shall be no debate upon the constitutional principles which are

involved in this question; and I must say, that, considering that gentlemen opposite are upon this occasion the partisans of a gigantic innovation,—the most gigantic and the most dangerous that has been attempted in modern times,—I may compliment them upon the prudence they show in resolving to be its silent partisans." After this emphatic exordium, which electrified the House, and was followed by such a tempest of applause as for some time to drown the voice of the speaker, he proceeded at once to demonstrate the utter folly and error of contending that the action of the Lords was supported or justified by any precedent. Of course, as a member of the Cabinet, he gave his adhesion to the resolutions before the House, and indorsed the speech of the Premier. But, from first to last, he treated the question as its importance demanded, as critical and emergent, not to be passed by in silence, nor yet to be encountered with plausible and conciliatory expedients. He reserved to himself "entire freedom to adopt any mode which might have the slightest hope of success, for vindicating by action the rights of the House."

In fact, he alone of all the speakers of the evening rose to "the height of the great argument." He alone seemed to feel that the temporary success of this or that party or faction was as nothing compared with the duty of settling definitely and for all posterity this conflict of rights between the two Houses. Surveying the question from this high vantage-ground, what wonder that in dignity and grandeur he towered above his

fellows? Here was a great mind grappling with a great subject,—a mind above temporary expedients for present success, superior to the fear of possible defeat. To denounce the Conservatives for not attacking the Ministerial resolutions may have been indiscreet. He may have been guilty of an apparent breach of Parliamentary etiquette, when he practically condemned the passive policy of the Cabinet, of which he was himself a leading member. But may we not pardon the natural irritation produced by the defeat of his favorite measure, in view of the noble and patriotic sentiments of his closing sentences?

"I regard the whole rights of the House of Commons, as they have been handed down to us, as constituting a sacred inheritance, upon which I, for my part, will never voluntarily permit any intrusion or plunder to be made. I think that the very first of our duties, anterior to the duty of dealing with any legislative measure, and higher and more sacred than any such duties, high and sacred though they may be, is to maintain intact that precious deposit."

The effect of this speech was indescribable. The applause with which he was frequently interrupted, and which greeted him as he took his seat, was such as I have never heard in a deliberative assembly. And not the least striking feature of this display of enthusiasm was that it mainly proceeded from the extreme Liberal wing of the Ministerial party, with which Mr. Gladstone, representing that most conservative of all English constituencies, Oxford University, had hitherto been by no means

popular. For several days the rumor was rife that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would resign his place in the Cabinet, and be the leader of the Radicals! But Mr. Gladstone had other views of his duty, and probably he was never more firmly intrenched in the confidence of the nation, and more influential in the councils of the Government, than he is at this moment.

Mr. Gladstone had hardly taken his seat, when the long and significant silence of the Opposition was broken by Mr. Whiteside. This gentleman represents Dublin University, has been Attorney-General and Solicitor-General for Ireland, and was one of the most able and eloquent defenders of O'Connell and his friends in 1842. He is said to be the only Irishman in public life who holds the traditions of the great Irish orators,—the Grattans, the Currans, and the Sheridans. I will not detain my readers with even a brief sketch of his speech. It was very severe upon Mr. Gladstone, very funny at the expense of the Radicals, and very complimentary to Lord Palmerston. As a whole, it was an admirable specimen of Irish oratory. In the *élan* with which the speaker leaped to his feet and dashed at once into his subject, full of spirit and eager for the fray, in his fierce and vehement invective and the occasional ferocity of his attacks, in the fluency and fitness of his language and the rapidity of his utterance, in the unstudied grace and sustained energy of his manner, it was easy to recognize the elements of that irresistible eloquence by which so many of his gifted countrymen have achieved such brilliant triumphs at the forum and in the halls of the debate.

It might perhaps heighten the effect of the picture, if I were to describe the appearance of Mr. Gladstone during the delivery of this fierce Philippic,—the contracted brow, the compressed lip, the uneasy motion from side to side, and all the other customary manifestations of anger, mortification, and conscious defeat. But if my sketch be dull, it shall at least have the homely merit of being truthful. In point of fact, the whole harangue was lost upon Mr. Gladstone; for he left the House immediately after making his own speech, and did not return until some time after Mr. Whiteside had finished. In all probability he did not know how unmercifully he had been handled until he read his "Times" the next morning.

Six more speeches on the Liberal side, loud in praise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, bitter in denunciation of the Conservatives, and by no means sparing the policy of the Prime Minister, followed in quick succession. They were all brief, pertinent, and spirited; with which comprehensive criticism I must dismiss them. Their delivery occupied about two hours, and many members availed themselves of this opportunity to leave the House for a while. Some sauntered on the broad stone terrace which lines the Thames. Not a few regaled themselves with the popular Parliamentary beverage,—sherry and soda-water; and others, who had resolutely kept their seats since the opening of the debate, rewarded their devotion to the interests of the public by a more elaborate repast. Now and then a member in full evening dress would lounge into the House, with that air of

perfect self-satisfaction which tells of a good dinner by no means conducted on total-abstinence principles.

It was midnight when Mr. Disraeli rose to address the House. For years the pencil of "Punch" has seemed to take particular delight in sketching for the public amusement the features of this well-known novelist, orator, and statesman. After making due allowance for the conceded license of caricature, we must admit that the likeness is in the main correct, and any one familiar with the pages of "Punch" would recognize him at a glance. The impression which he leaves on one who studies his features and watches his bearing is not agreeable. Tall, thin, and quite erect, always dressed with scrupulous care, distant and reserved in manner, his eye dull, his lips wearing habitually a half-scornful, half-contemptuous expression, one can readily believe him to be a man addicted to bitter enmities, but incapable of warm friendships.

He had been sitting, as his manner is, very quietly during the evening, never moving a muscle of his face, save when he smiled coldly once or twice at the sharp sallies of Whiteside, or spoke, as he did very rarely, to some member near him. A stranger to his manner would have supposed him utterly indifferent to what was going on about him. Yet it is probable that no member of the House was more thoroughly absorbed in the debate or watched its progress with deeper interest. Excepting his political ambition, Mr. Disraeli is actuated by no stronger passion than hatred of Mr. Gladstone. To have been a warm admirer and *protégé*

of Sir Robert Peel would have laid a sufficient foundation for intense personal dislike. But Mr. Disraeli has other and greater grievances to complain of. This is not the place to enter at large into the history of the political rivalry between these eminent men. Enough to say, that in the spring of 1852 Mr. Disraeli realized the dream of his lifelong ambition by being appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the Ministry of Lord Derby. Late in the same year he brought forward his Budget, which he defended at great length and with all his ability. This Budget, and the arguments by which it was supported, Mr. Gladstone—who had already refused to take the place in the Derby Cabinet—attacked in a speech of extraordinary power, demolishing one by one the positions of his opponent, rebuking with dignified severity the license of his language, and calling upon the House to condemn the man and his measures. Such was the effect of this speech that the Government was defeated by a decided majority. Thus dethroned, Mr. Disraeli had the additional mortification of seeing his victorious opponent seated in his vacant chair. For, in the Ministry of Lord Aberdeen, which immediately succeeded, Mr. Gladstone accepted the appointment of Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Budget brought forward by the new Minister took by surprise even those who had already formed the highest estimate of his capacity; and the speech in which he defended and enforced it received the approval of Lord John Russell, in the well-known and well-merited compliment, that "it contained the ablest expositions of the true principles of finance ever delivered

by an English statesman." Since that memorable defeat, Disraeli has lost no opportunity of attacking the member for Oxford University. To weaken his wonderful ascendancy over the House has seemed to be the wish nearest his heart, and the signal failure which has thus far attended all his efforts only gives a keener edge to his sarcasm and increases the bitterness of his spirit. That persistent and inflexible determination which, from a fashionable novelist, has raised him to the dignity of leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, that unsparing and cold-blooded malignity which poisoned the last days of Sir Robert Peel, and those powers of wit and ridicule which make him so formidable an adversary, have all been impressed into this service.

His speech this evening was only a further illustration of his controlling desire to enjoy an ample and adequate revenge for past defeats; and, undoubtedly, Mr. Disraeli displayed a great deal of a certain kind of power. He was witty, pungent, caustic, full of telling hits which repeatedly convulsed the House with laughter, and he showed singular dexterity in discovering and assailing the weak points in his adversary's argument. Still, it was a painful exhibition, bad in temper, tone, and manner. It was too plainly the attempt of an unscrupulous partisan to damage a personal enemy, rather than the effort of a statesman to enlighten and convince the House and the nation. It was unfair, uncandid, and logically weak. Its only possible effect was to irritate the Liberals, without materially strengthening

the position of the Conservatives. When "Dizzy" had finished, the floor was claimed by Lord John Russell and Mr. Bright. It was sufficiently evident that members, without distinction of party, desired to hear the last-named gentleman, for cries of "Bright," "Bright," came from all parts of the House. The member for Birmingham is stout, bluff, and hearty, looking very much like a prosperous, well-dressed English yeoman. He is acknowledged to be the best declaimer in the House. Piquant, racy, and entertaining, he is always listened to with interest and pleasure; but somehow he labors under the prevalent suspicion of being insincere, and beyond a small circle of devoted admirers has no influence whatever in Parliament.

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