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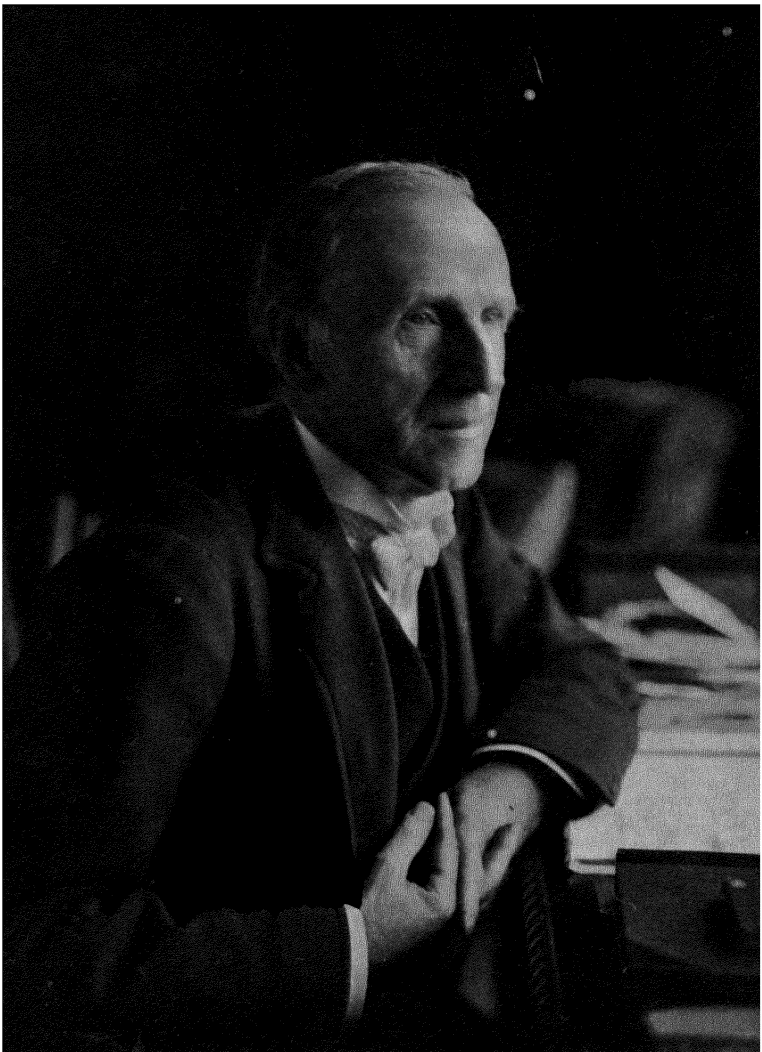
THE LIFE OF
LORD MORLEY



VISCOUNT MORLEY OF BLACKBURN, O.M.

THE LIFE OF

LORD MORLEY

VISCOUNT MORLEY OF BLACKBURN, O.M.,
ETC., ETC., SOMETIME H.M.'S SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR INDIA

BY

SYED SIRDAR ALI KHAN

POSTMASTER-GENERAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF
H.E.H. THE NIZAM OF HYDERABAD

AUTHOR OF
"LORD CURZON'S ADMINISTRATION OF INDIA"
ETC.

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PREFACE

A FEW words alone are necessary to explain my motive in attempting to supply an account of the public career of Viscount Morley of Blackburn in the fields of literature and politics.

In the first place, such an account was never published in his lifetime ; and I may say, with truth, that mine is the first attempt to deal with the subject in a comprehensive manner. To my inquiries from persons who might be supposed to know most of the matter, I received generally the emphatic reply that no biographical materials were available. A biography of Lord Morley was consequently wanted.

But that was not a reason why I, or any other Indian writer, should attempt to supply the omission.

My self-imposed task was taken up not merely through respect for the character of Lord Morley, but from a feeling of gratitude for what he had done for my country. That sense of gratitude is not confined to individuals in India. It is the common sentiment of the larger half of the community.

Lord Morley's reforms introduced a new era in India's life. They have widened the horizon before her peoples, and by disseminating a spirit of goodwill and confidence they contribute to the stability and security of the existing order of things. The psychological moment had arrived for the introduction of the needed Reforms, and Lord Morley's name will live in history as that of the statesman who seized the opportunity to introduce them.

SYED SIRDAR ALI KHAN

HYDERABAD, DECCAN,
INDIA.

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THE LIFE OF LORD MORLEY

CHAPTER I

FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE

THERE have been great politicians who were also great in the field of letters: Edmund Burke and George Canning are names that occur at once to the mind. Lord Rosebery is a later instance. There have been great men of letters who played some part at least in politics: Macaulay may be cited as an example. But as a rule the two pursuits lie apart, and the man who attempts both rarely achieves more than mediocrity in either.

Thereis not a more striking example to be found of a man who, having made his reputation in literature, added thereto a fresh réputation as a statesman than that of the late John Morley—Viscount Morley of Blackburn. His success was the more remarkable, because the period of his apprenticeship in the school of politics had not fully opened the

eyes even of his admirers to his great statesmanlike qualities, his thorough grasp of details, his capacity to weld broad principles and practical considerations into a harmoniously working human agreement, and his strength of will to force his views on others and to carry his ends into practice. The fact that Lord Morley established his reputation as a statesman in connection with Indian reforms makes it appropriate that the first attempt to describe his career at any length should be made by an Indian writer.

The Morley family came originally of that sturdy Northumbrian stock which had developed, in the course of centuries passed in guarding an ever-menaced borderland, the qualities of rugged determination and a certain hardness of character that have long been associated with the men of the North. For some generations, at least, Lord Morley's family was settled at Newcastle-on-Tyne. His father, Jonathan Morley, a medical man, married there Miss Priscilla Mary Donkin, and the two elder children of the marriage—a son and a daughter—were born at Newcastle-on-Tyne. For reasons which are now forgotten, Dr. Jonathan Morley, in 1836, moved from the Tyne to

Blackburn; and there, on 24th December, 1838, his younger son John was born. Not many years ago, Lord Morley took occasion to refer to his connection with Blackburn, where he stated he was born and had passed the first twenty years of his life.

Dr. Jonathan Morley was a highly successful doctor, and passed his practice on to his eldest son, Edward Sword Morley, who was one of the best known men in Blackburn of his day. Despite his having passed his early life in Blackburn, Lord Morley did not often visit the town after he left it in 1858, and when he attended his brother's funeral in 1901 it was almost as a stranger. It was remarked by the local gossips on this occasion that he seemed to take almost as much interest in endeavouring to trace the old parts of the town with which he had been acquainted in his youth, as the townspeople showed in the appearance and movements of the most distinguished of Blackburn's citizens.

Dr. Jonathan Morley, undeterred by the remarkable industrial development of Blackburn which was going on under his eyes, and by the prospect of their making a fortune if put into commerce, decided to place his two sons in the professions. His elder son, who

wanted to be a soldier, was induced to follow his own; while the younger, without any pronounced predilection, as far as the records say, was assigned to the Bar. At an early age, John, having been grounded in the rudiments at a local seminary, was sent to Cheltenham College. From Cheltenham he passed in his eighteenth year to Oxford, where, having matriculated on 5th November, 1856, he entered Lincoln College. He was only two years at the University when he took his B.A. degree early in the year 1859; and then at the age of twenty-one he came to London with the intention of earning his own living, making a career and perhaps a name for himself. As Mr. Morley himself expressed it in one of his letters home, he was "set upon taking his chance in the field of letters."

The original plan of reading for the Bar either had been allowed to drop, or had been temporarily superseded by another attraction, for, dependent on his own resources for a living, Mr. John Morley had turned to literature and journalism as furnishing the readiest and most congenial means of paying his way. Not that the plan of joining the Bar was wholly abandoned. His name

appears, in 1862, as a student at Lincoln's Inn, and he continued to read, somewhat desultorily, it is true, until, as late as 1873, when he had gained a certain amount of fame in literature, he allowed himself to be called to the Bar by that Society. As a matter of fact, he never practised, and at the time he was called his literary work was sufficiently heavy to leave him little or no leisure for any other activities.

There are but scanty materials of biographical interest with regard to these early days. From them, however, the information may be gleaned that John Morley was always a serious student and hard worker. He was ever searching into the accuracy of statements made to him or that came under his notice, and even in his youth he took nothing for granted. In this respect he was almost the exact opposite of his elder brother, who was as impetuous as his junior was calm. The reputation he gained at home and at Cheltenham accompanied him to the University, where he proved himself one of the most diligent students of his time, "scorning delights and living laborious days." No Scottish lad, with his own way to make in the world, and cultivating the Muses on a

little porridge, could have worked harder, with the result that when he left Oxford he took away with him the best that she could give him.

The mention of his brother justifies a few words here about their relations in later life, as there will be no opportunity of referring to them further on. They were excellent friends, and Dr. E. S. Morley was very proud of his younger brother's literary achievements, although he had some curious views about them. For instance, while the great majority of his readers would give the palm to *Compromise* or *Burke*, he thought *Diderot* his brother's masterpiece. There was another marked contrast between them. While John Morley was exclusively a student and a man of sedentary habits, his brother Edward was devoted to athletics, and became one of the principal leaders in bringing about a revival of football. For many years he never failed to be present at the Challenge Cup encounters. The following little story throws a side-light on their relations, and on Lord Morley's inveterate objection to be made in any way a party to what might be considered a piece of favouritism.

Shortly after John Morley had become a

member of the Gladstone Government, Dr. Morley wanted to get something done for a friend of his in Blackburn, and it was a case in which a little official intervention would, to say the least, have smoothed matters. What more natural than that he should apply in these circumstances to his brother for his assistance? He therefore wrote to him on the subject, receiving in a few days the following terse reply—

"DEAR EDWARD,—
"I never grant favours of this sort.
"Yours, etc.,
"JOHN."

The doctor said nothing, but waited for his chance to come. Some time later, Lord Morley wrote to him asking for some local information, whereupon the doctor indited the following brief billet—

"DEAR JOHN,—
"I never grant favours of this sort.
"Yours, etc.,
"EDWARD."

In addition to the two brothers, there was a sister, Grace Morley, who shared her brother John's interests. She lived for many years with her elder brother in Blackburn, taking charge of his house and family, and

becoming well known there for her charity and beneficence. The Rector of the parish, in speaking of Miss Morley, called her "the truest Christian in Blackburn."

While at the University, Mr. Morley had devoted a good deal of his attention to the study of philosophy and the philosophical French writers, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, whose writings prepared the way for the Revolution. He was to make more than a passing reputation by his efforts to explain and popularise their teaching for the English reader at a later period; but it is necessary to remember that one of the chief causes of what may be called his philosophical method of treating public questions was this early mental wrestling, as it were, with the teaching, idealistic preaching, and theoretical contentions of some of the men who have most largely influenced the thought and the intellectual progress of the modern world. His subsequent writings were to show, however, that he was far from being a mere blind admirer and servile imitator of the writers and thinkers whose works he expounded and extolled.

His studies of philosophy and political economy had led him to examine and master

the works of John Stuart Mill, who was at the height of his fame in the impressionable years of Mr. Morley's career. The influence of Mill was the first of any importance to which Mr. Morley was subjected, and it was strengthened, after he was brought into contact with the man who so happily combined the teachings of abstract philosophy with the sterner requirements of practical politics, by the personal charm of the great teacher. Indeed, it is impossible not to see a great resemblance between the careers of Mr. Mill and Lord Morley. The same opportunities, however, did not fall to Mill in the political sphere that afterwards came in his pupil's way. Mill was Secretary to the old East India Company, and composed a brilliant plea for its continued life, especially noteworthy, too, because it was rewarded with the largest fee ever paid for a piece of writing, viz., £10,000. He was also Member for Westminster; but he was never a Secretary of State, nor was his name ever appended to a Reform Act.

Writing of Mill, some years after his death, Lord Morley said—

"Time has done something to impair the philosophical reputation and political ability

of John Stuart Mill; but it cannot alter the affectionate memory in which some of us must always hold his wisdom and goodness, his rare union of moral ardour with a calm and settled mind."

Another influence to which Lord Morley succumbed in his College days was that of Wordsworth. His poetic ideals were formed in the school of the great Lake poet; from him he derived his love of Nature, that is, it need hardly be added, Nature in her gentler and more placid moods. Perhaps to his love of Wordsworth may in a sense be attributed the only form of amusement or athleticism in which he was ever known to indulge—country walks. In his younger years his week-ends or other leisure moments—for the regular week-end of modern life had not then come into fashion—were passed in taking long walks over the hills and downs of Surrey, generally alone, but sometimes accompanied by one of his few close friends. The late Mr. George Meredith was one of these. They were associated together in the editorial office of the *Morning Chronicle*, and the tie endured. Mr. W. T. Stead, who was assistant editor to Lord Morley on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, has written as follows on this point—

"He used to stay with Mr. Meredith in a remote country village, and in the evening Mr. Meredith would read over the work he had done in the day—the chapter or the poem. It was Mr. Meredith who woke in him the feeling for Nature, which has ever since remained as one of the great pleasures of his existence, as well as imparting to him a larger concern for the wisdom of life. For many years, the long walks across the Surrey Commons, where the south-west wind blows, and when Mr. Meredith's genius was at its best, were the delights of Mr. Morley's life. 'Much, and very much,' Mr. Morley once said to me, 'do I owe to the wise and stimulating friendship of George Meredith in the impressionable times.'"

George Meredith completed what the spell of Wordsworth had begun. One of the most prominent of the mourners at George Meredith's funeral in Dorking churchyard in May, 1909, was his old friend and comrade.

But in his College days, as through his later life, Lord Morley never took the smallest part in games or sports of any kind. Even his love of the country did not make him succumb to the attractions of golf. A highly imaginative American journalist once declared that Lord Morley was an enthusiastic entomologist, and that every Saturday afternoon

he might be seen chasing butterflies on Wimbledon Common. The story made very good copy in a New York evening paper, but there was not a word of truth in it. At the time when he was alleged to be hunting for insects, he would probably be seated in a shady spot in the back garden of his Wimbledon villa, reading a favourite author.

The third influence in forming not merely Lord Morley's character as a public man, but also his political views, was that of Edmund Burke, and this was the most potent of all. Burke became not merely his political ideal, but his hero. His own views and principles were largely formed on the model of those held by the most perfectly equipped politician in the theory of politics to be met with in English history. Edmund Burke, despite his moral and mental greatness, was not a practical statesman. His genius ranged through the realms of imagination, and almost scorned to touch the hard ground of matter of fact. For a long time after Lord Morley entered on a political career, it looked as if he, too, would be content to remain in the ranks of theoretical or doctrinaire politicians like his prototype. The consideration of his work on Edmund Burke must be left to the

next chapter, in which Lord Morley's literary labours will be passed lightly in review. Here it is necessary only to emphasize the fact that while Mill was his inspiring influence with regard to philosophy, and Wordsworth, amplified, perhaps, by association with Meredith, as to poetry and Nature, Burke was his great master and teacher in the art of politics. All of these, separately or combined, left their impression on his style. This point also falls more naturally within the scope of his literary work.

There were two striking traits about Lord Morley—his affection for animals and his love of music. The latter was, indeed, his favourite relaxation. During the exciting period in party politics covered by Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule campaign, he would find relief in attending a concert—more especially if it were a Hans Richter concert. It must be noted, however, that he frequented rather the concert room than the opera house. In this he resembled Mr. Balfour, whose scholarly cast of mind established an intellectual sympathy between the two statesmen who so often led the opposing forces in the House of Commons during the bitterest period of party politics in the memory of man.

Of his affection, or rather consideration, for dumb animals, many anecdotes have been told. Like many literary men before him, he had a special weakness for cats, but he was the friend and protector of all animals. The following story is, perhaps, as illustrative of this trait as any other. At one time he resided in the country, where his residence was a good distance from the station, so his horse was always sent to meet the train by which he travelled. But the first mile out of the station, on the way back, was up a steep hill, and Lord Morley could never find the heart to mount his horse and give it a burden to carry up the ascent. So he allowed the horse to walk up the hill, while he walked up behind or beside it, and he only got into the saddle on reaching level ground. An incident of this sort reveals more of human character than pages of description.

The salient features in the early career of the future Secretary of State were a capacity for work which never weakened or flagged; the ability to turn a University education to the best purposes for a successful career in literature and philosophy—politics in this stage not finding a place in his thoughts

or ambition—and the careful cultivation of a style sometimes massive and ponderous, but always clear, persuasive, and illuminating. It was hardly rash to predict for Mr. John Morley, when he quitted Oxford to enter the lists of the real battle of life in London, a more than ordinary amount of success in whatever he set his mind to.

But, besides his mental capacity, there were visible certain qualities which, if not essential to greatness, are still very often to be found in the character of successful men. Among these was an aloofness that prevented his mixing freely or fully with his contemporaries. In his early career, as in his later, he had few intimates. His work called for great concentration, and his only relaxation was the country walk, which he generally accomplished alone. He thus became accustomed to live and think by himself. The influences to which he was amenable were those of the past rather than of the living present. He studied books more than the minds of his contemporaries, and this trait continued to mark his character to the end of his life. Very few close friendships can be recorded as influencing Mr. Morley's life. George Meredith and

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain may certainly claim to have had at one time or other the near association essential for the exercise of influence. Perhaps Mr. William Stead for a period also possessed it. The association with Mr. Gladstone was epoch-making in the building up of his character as a politician. But these few marked exceptions establish really the contrary rule. Lord Morley was a striking illustration of the poet's saying: "The jackals herd together; the lion stalks alone."

But an attitude of isolation carries with it some penalties. It certainly leaves a wide opening for being misunderstood, and probably no man was more misunderstood than Mr. Morley before he came in front of the Parliamentary footlights. He was generally regarded as a thick-and-thin red republican, a would-be destroyer of thrones, and a Robespierre *in posse*. As a matter of fact, he was something quite different; but then, as no one knew him, how was it possible for any one to be well-informed? Mr. Morley's own description of himself, at a moment when he was regarded as the enemy of society, is of permanent interest: "I believe myself to be a cautious Whig by temperament,

a Liberal by education and training, and a Radical by observation and experience."

Mr. Morley's long career as a writer and as a journalist must now be described before the phases of his political career can be taken into consideration.

CHAPTER II

THE LITERARY PHASE

WHEN Lord Morley came to London in 1860 fresh from Oxford, whence he brought the usual academic honours, it was to journalism that he turned in the first place. The exact results of his efforts in this direction are not very easily traceable; and when he became editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in 1880, his earlier connection with London journalism seems to have been quite forgotten, for nobody made the least reference to it. Yet it was in journalism that he had served a hard apprenticeship. He was closely associated with, and, indeed, for a time edited the *Morning Chronicle*, a paper which had come into existence before *The Times* or the *Morning Post*, and which had at different periods stood at the head of the daily press of England. But in 1860, when John Morley became associated with it, its influence had waned, its prosperity had declined, and it was moribund.

None the less, he threw himself with youthful energy into the task of reviving its

prosperity; and, in a literary sense, the articles that appeared in the closing period of its life were not unworthy of its prime. Mr. Morley laid himself out to discover fresh talent. Among his first recruits was the late Mr. George Augustus Sala; and it was in the old office, in the Strand, of the *Morning Chronicle* that he first came into contact with George Meredith, a man some ten years older than himself and already possessing considerable journalistic experience.

At this time, old-fashioned journalism had reached its apogee. A journalist then was, by what seemed the inseparable rule of his profession, a Bohemian living outside the regular social sphere. There is no doubt that Mr. Morley contributed largely towards raising the tone of the profession and proving that a journalist need not be anything else but a gentleman. He also introduced a sedateness and sobriety into the newspaper office that were not in accordance with old Fleet Street conditions. It was unfortunate that the journal in whose interests these efforts were made had not more life in it. It was moribund when Mr. Morley took over its direction, and it died at the beginning of 1865. For some time, also, Mr. Morley wrote

articles for the *Morning Star* before its disappearance in 1869. The most notable of his articles were those defending the Northern side in the war of the American secession.

The disappearance of the *Morning Chronicle* proved a blessing in disguise, for it turned Mr. Morley's attention to the pursuit of more serious literature than the production of ephemeral and easily forgotten leading articles. Even while the *Morning Chronicle* was in existence, he was editor of the *Literary Gazette*, a critical weekly of some reputation, which, however, died rather earlier than its daily contemporary.

In George Meredith, Lord Morley had found a staunch friend and supporter. Meredith had become reader to Chapman & Hall, a publishing firm then at the height of its fame through its connection with Dickens and Carlyle. More important still, it owned the *Fortnightly Review*, a monthly magazine which George Henry Lewes, through his excessive zeal for German philosophy allied with German heaviness, had brought to the verge of ruin. The times called not indeed for "modern journalism," but for something lighter and more readable than the ponderous tomes in which, using words of a hundred

syllables, Professor Nichtkannsehen discussed the structure of a fly's leg. On Meredith's recommendation, Mr. John Morley was taken up by Messrs. Chapman & Hall for the purpose of presenting the chief monthly review of the day to the English reader in a less German dress.

The change was important in another sense. It enabled Mr. Morley to present his first serious work to the English reading public.

It was on the character and influence of Edmund Burke that Mr. Morley concentrated his first efforts. He disclaimed all intention of being his biographer, because Burke's biography had already been written with an amplitude of detail that left nothing to be told in the way of personal fact or matters of date and description. For this reason, Mr. Morley, while proclaiming his opinion that "biography is the very highest form of prose writing," defined his work as "not a biography in the strict sense, but a historical study."

In this little volume, which appeared during the year 1867 in several numbers of the *Fortnightly*, Mr. Morley made his debut in the world of letters in which he was destined later on to take a foremost place.

The book is especially interesting as furnishing a key to Mr. Morley's own character. What he applauded in Burke became, later on, the ideal in his own political imaginings. He declared, and he had no difficulty in proving the point, that the animating principle in Burke's political career was the absence of self-interest and the pre-eminence of public interest.

While Mr. Morley applauded Burke for his disinterestedness, he admired him almost as much for his independence during one of the most sordid periods in English politics. The eighteenth century was not the most glorious or creditable epoch in the annals of the House of Commons. Burke's genius and example shone like a solitary star in a dull and leaden firmament. Speaking of his famous oratorical duel with the Duke of Bedford, Mr. Morley declared that "Burke was not made for a minion or a tool of corrupt or dissolute patricians. He was still less made for a flatterer and cajoler of the populace!"

Students of Lord Morley's own career may differ on many points, but not one of them will pronounce him a sycophant or a time-server. At the same time, he was fully alive to the inevitable evolution in all policy.

For example—

"The conception of finality and equilibrium might seem to have vanished from the midst of every nation in Europe. English statesmen recognised more or less frankly the transitory character of the system which is, for the hour, admirable and to be upheld. Everywhere we discern the hand and hearken to the tread of the Revolution."

While Mr. Morley disclaimed in this volume all intention of writing Burke's biography, although he gave, perhaps, the best appreciation of his work, he could not let the subject pass out of his mind; and when he planned the "English Men of Letters" series he was induced to lead off with a volume on the life and career of his chosen political hero. This volume was not merely a historical study, but a regular biography which has completely superseded every other. The first edition was published in 1879. The author, critical not less of his own work than of others, revised and expanded it in the final edition of 1888, which constitutes his last word on the theme.

Long before the commencement of the "Men of Letters" series, Mr. Morley had established his reputation in the literary world by a succession of remarkable volumes

—partly biographical and partly of the nature of historical studies. They were works animated by one central motive—the desire to make plain the influences that had produced the great turn that had been given to human thought, political conditions, and material prosperity by the French Revolution. With this idea uppermost in his mind, it was not merely natural, but inevitable, that his first efforts in the elucidation of political evolution should be given to the task of demonstrating the enormous influence exercised by the greatest, in some respects, of all French writers, in arousing mankind to a full sense of its just rights.

Voltaire was never anything but a man of letters, and he never had any chance of using any other weapon than the pen. His eloquence never, like Burke's, stirred popular assemblies; he never, like his English interpreter, placed his name on a Statute book; but none the less he was one of the greatest moral forces Europe has ever known. It has been said of him that he upset thrones, undermined the foundations of privilege, and roused the proletariat for the first time to a sense of its rights.

In this work, Mr. Morley found a congenial

subject, and a fellow mind very akin to his own. There was an affinity, too, in their view of religious matters, but here the master far surpassed his pupil in scepticism. Voltaire was so exceedingly bitter against the Church of Rome—a bitterness due in many respects to personal and almost trivial matters—that he allowed his prejudice and passion to outrun not merely his judgment, but the limits of ordinary decency. Mr. Morley, while always asking for proofs of belief and for the submission of dogma to the tests of fact and reason, never lauded disbelief in itself to the skies or gloried in it as something to be proud of.

To the publication of *Voltaire* and his tribute to the influence of the saturnine Frenchman must be largely attributed the belief prevalent between 1870 and 1890 that Mr. Morley was an advanced Free Thinker and, in the colloquial phrase of Society, a dangerous man. Even among men who knew him, he was regarded rather as a Jacobin and Red Republican, and this belief was strengthened by the fact that in 1873 he followed up *Voltaire* with a volume on *Rousseau*. To complete the trilogy, *Diderot and the Encyclopaedists* appeared in 1878.

These three volumes, taken together, give a very full and comprehensive account of the events leading up to the French Revolution. They describe the state of Society in France during the greater part of the eighteenth century; the wave of independent thought that swept across France after the servile adulation that had been the chief trait even of the geniuses who ornamented the Court of Louis XIV; and, finally, the triumph of free expression in literature long before the Revolution levelled old social distinctions, and established freedom in politics and the courts of law. Of the three works, there is probably more study and scholarship shown in the volume on *Diderot* than in the others, which may perhaps explain what his brother had in his mind when he awarded it the palm of excellence.

These historical studies would not in themselves have sufficed to build up any great or durable literary reputation. They were a valuable contribution to the study of a period of history which must always attract the attention of serious students, but they did not reach the wide circle whose judgment really constitutes what is termed an established reputation among living contemporary

writers. For this, in Lord Morley's case, we must turn to another class of writing.

As editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. Morley had the opportunity of criticising not merely men and subjects, but the passing waves of thought which constituted public opinion. The *Fortnightly Review* was at this time not merely the most important, but the only political, monthly. Its contributors were a chosen and very limited band, and outside contributors were unknown. The births of the *Contemporary* and *Nineteenth Century* enlarged the field open to those writers who aspired to say something more permanently valuable on the questions of the day than could be produced by a daily leader-writer working at high pressure in the small hours of the morning.

But for the first four or five years of his direction of the *Fortnightly Review* Mr. Morley had a monopoly of the more serious criticism provided by a monthly survey of events in which no one interfered with him. The collection of his personal views on current events would contain much to surprise those who have always believed that Mr. Morley was an out-and-out follower of the Manchester School, and never troubled

himself about foreign politics or the affairs of the Empire. In those days, Mr. Morley was very indignant at the weakness and timidity of England which had allowed Prussia to smash up Austria, and which would, as he foretold, allow Prussia to overthrow France, and thus bring about the supremacy of Germany on the continent of Europe. He capped this remarkable prophecy with the epigrammatic statement: "England will never enjoy the fruits of a high-minded peace by a pitiful isolation." These quotations are taken from the monthly *causerie* for May, 1867.

It is a pity that some of these *causeries* were not included in the collection of *Critical Miscellanies*, the first series of which was published in 1871, while the second series was given to the public in 1877.

Mr. Morley's first departure in literature from the purely historical or philosophical was in 1873. His work, entitled *The Struggle for National Education*, gave the first inkling that he might become a politician. This was the period when England, which was half a century behind Germany in matters of education, first began to grapple seriously with the problem of national instruction.

It was in connection with this question that Mr. Morley first made the acquaintance of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster, with whom he was to be associated very closely in his later political career.

A still more important work, and, in some respects, the most important of all Mr. Morley's works, was published in 1874. This was the volume briefly entitled *On Compromise*. Here Mr. Morley, leaving the paths of historical research, began to formulate his own theories and to impress his own views on the reader. In other words, resigning the role of describer, he assumed that of teacher. The lesson he taught was one of moderation. Principles were to be firmly adhered to, but the application of principles was to be left to convenience and compromise. The moral was to be applied equally to religion and to politics. It is possible that at the time of its publication the volume attracted less attention than it has done since. The author was not sufficiently well known to make his views on life and thought of widespread interest. When he became a prominent personage in the political world, it was to the volume *On Compromise* that men chiefly turned to

discover what Mr. Gladstone's principal lieutenant, in the closing period of his career, was like, and what he thought.

The following passages will show the reader what the author's views on compromise were—

"The design of the following essay is to consider in a short and direct way some of the limits that are set by sound reason to the practice of the various arts of accommodation, economy, management, conformity, or compromise. The right of thinking, feeling, and acting independently, of using our minds without excessive awe of authority, and shaping our lives without unquestioning obedience to custom, is now a finally accepted principle in some sense or other with every school of thought that has the smallest chance of commanding the future.

. . . . .

"It is better to wait and to defer the realisation of our ideas until we can realise them fully, than to defraud the future by truncating them—if truncate them we must—in order to secure a partial triumph for them in the immediate present. It is better to have the burden of impracticableness than to stifle conviction, and to pare away principle until it becomes mere hollowness and triviality."

Except for the clearness and precision of his language, Mr. Morley might be regarded as a successor to Carlyle, without his curious form of hero-worship. He, like his predecessor, sought to get at the root of things, to strip off conventionalities and expose the kernel of men's thoughts, and thus to analyse the great human movement which we call progress. But the younger writer had no school in the sense that Carlyle had. He had to wait until public curiosity was aroused in the character and views of a politician who had made his way to the very front rank by sheer force of merit. Then people turned for instruction, concerning the man and his thoughts, to *Compromise.*

The rapid production of books of high merit, in addition to the influence acquired by editing the *Fortnightly,* had made Mr. Morley one of the most powerful leaders in the world of letters. The appearance of other monthly Reviews, less restricted in their range of interest, and aiming mainly at popularity and material success, had, however, somewhat diminished the influence and prosperity of the *Fortnightly.* After thirteen years in the post, Mr. Morley had begun to chafe a little at the incessant

routine. He had also established relations with the publishing-house of the Macmillans He had accepted the post of their reader, he founded with them the English Men of Letters Series, and he became the editor of their magazine named after themselves. In all these circumstances, he was not unwilling to lay down the heavy work entailed by editing the *Fortnightly*.

It was at this period, too, that he compiled, after an effort of several years, his first great biography—great in the sense of size and detail—the *Life of Richard Cobden*. This work was published in 1881, and its preparation probably had considerable influence on the author's mind, strengthening his own Free Trade convictions and making him more of the political partisan than he had yet appeared to be. The merit of the work in a literary sense was incontestable, and it gained a wide and well-deserved success.

In his Preface, Mr. Morley refers to "the disposition in men's minds to subject his (Cobden's) work and his principles to a more hostile criticism than they have hitherto encountered," going on to add that it was not his mission to provide "a completely furnished armoury for the champions of Free

Trade." This passage is especially interesting at the present time when Cobdenism not merely is openly challenged, but is considered by many to be doomed. An indication of the change that has taken place in public thought might be found in a comparison between the review of *Cobden*, which appeared in *The Times* of 22nd October and 1st November, 1881, and any of the leaders on fiscal reform that appear in the same journal to-day. The review reveals perfect faith in "Free Trade," and Mr. Morley's "rich and brilliant volumes" were pronounced to be of "first-rate interest;" but the leading articles have become chastened.

The quotation from the Preface shows clearly enough that, before he crossed the threshold of purely literary life to enter the political arena, Mr. Morley had realised that one of the future battles between the rival parties would be contested on the question whether Cobdenism was still as sound both in principle and policy in these days of keen commercial and industrial rivalry and competition as it was in the old days when it was triumphantly carried into practice.

Although *The Life of Cobden* was not the last of Mr. Morley's literary achievements

—in a sense it was to be matched and even surpassed by the later biographies of Cromwell and Gladstone—it may be regarded as the end of the purely literary phase in Mr. Morley's career. In the course of twelve years, Mr. Morley had gained a place in the front rank of the prose writers of his day. His exact position in English literature will have to be assigned by posterity; but by his contemporaries he was already rated as a clear thinker, a forcible writer, and a logician who would listen only to the evidence of facts.

It must be admitted that he had no enthusiastic followers who made it their mission in life to applaud their master to the skies as was the case with his friend George Meredith. His keen and somewhat caustic humour did not attract men. His attitude toward those who spoke of him in terms of praise was one almost of resentment. But still, none the less, he had gained a place in the esteem of thinking men, even when they did not agree with his conclusions or his views on religion and other matters. Everybody felt that he was confronted by a thinker who was grappling with truth, and who enunciated his own

views and judgments out of his inner consciousness. Perhaps his success was due largely to the clearness and perspicuity of his language. Speaking very many years later, he said on the subject of style—

"We can strive in our pursuit, in our cultivation of the great, the noble, and difficult art of writing, at all events at the two moderate virtues of simplicity and directness."

A still clearer light is thrown on Mr. Morley's literary views by the remarks that follow—

"By directness, I mean, of course, freedom from affectation, because affectation is the most odious of qualities in character and in manner, and I think it is even more odious still in literary style and in journalism. The foundation of style is a full knowledge of matter."

What Mr. Morley attached importance to then was knowledge, the mastery of the subject, the having something to say that was worth hearing, and, only after that, the telling of it in clear and appropriate language. It was the absence of this fundamental knowledge in so many cases that made him declare

"that many thousands of persons took to literature who had no pretensions whatever to be the makers of books." From this point of view, he very rightly pronounced literature to be "the most seductive, the most deceiving, and the most dangerous of all professions." Mr. Morley may be considered to have advanced the dignity of letters while he was connected with them, and to have laid all true lovers of literature under an obligation to him. Perhaps in the busier and more strenuous political life upon which he was at this time about to enter he may sometimes have regretted the calm of the purely literary sphere.

CHAPTER III

THE JOURNALISTIC PHASE

HAVING done so much brilliant work in letters, it was rather a curious and extraordinary circumstance for Mr. Morley to revert to the journalism in which he had begun his career. The causes of this return to polemical literature were somewhat unusual, but we shall not be far from the truth if we consider one of them to have been the desire to enter the political arena, as his candidature for Blackburn in 1869 and for Westminster in 1880, to which reference is made in the next chapter, suggests. The control of a daily paper afforded opportunities not to be found in any other pursuit or position of training for the great party fights at St. Stephen's, in which he had begun to feel a desire to participate, and this chance was suddenly and unexpectedly placed in his way.

The *Pall Mall Gazette*, an evening paper, which, under the direction of Mr. Frederick Greenwood, one of the ablest public writers of his day, exercised no inconsiderable influence on public opinion, had always been a

Whig and Imperialist organ. It used to be said of it that it was "a journal for gentlemen written by gentlemen." Every one believed that it was a fixed institution, and that it would change neither its colour nor its principles. Early in 1880 it became known that the proprietor of the *Pall Mall* had either sold or given it to his son-in-law, who was a strong Liberal and supporter of Mr. Gladstone. For a moment, it was thought that the change in proprietorship would not affect, at least immediately, the paper's politics, and that Mr. Greenwood would be left undisturbed to direct the *Pall Mall* as of old. But this view did not long prevail when it was declared that the *Pall Mall* was to become a Gladstonian organ. Mr. Greenwood resigned, and he and a faithful band of writers founded the *St. James's Gazette*. Our narrative lies, however, with the *Pall Mall*.

The new proprietor of the *Pall Mall* naturally desired to get the best editor he could for his paper, and his choice fell upon Mr. John Morley, who had just laid down the editorship of the *Fortnightly*. Mr. Morley undertook the task not merely because it provided congenial work, but still

more willingly because it brought him into touch with the leading men of the political party to which, by temperament and training, he naturally belonged. The full significance of the step was not appreciated at the time, but with our subsequent knowledge it may be affirmed that it signified Mr. Morley's entrance into the political arena. At the moment, people thought of Mr. Morley only as a thinker and writer, and not as a politician; and if there was any curiosity on the subject it was only felt as to how so severe a critic would succeed with the rough and hasty work of conducting a daily newspaper.

Mr. W. T. Stead, who was three years his assistant editor, and who eventually succeeded him as editor of the *Pall Mall*, has written one of his vivid descriptions of their collaboration in this work; and the following quotation from the article referred to (*Review of Reviews*, Nov., 1890) tells as much on the subject of their "common work" as is ever likely to be known.

"Between an editor and an assistant editor there is necessarily the closest intimacy. Every morning we used to discuss the world and all the things therein for

half-an-hour, the range being as wide as the universe, while the immediate objective point was narrowed down to the practical duty of bringing out the *Pall Mall Gazette*. We differed about everything, from the Providential government of the world to the best way of displaying the latest news in an 'extra special'; and the strenuous conflict of opinion with which the day began led Mr. Morley at one time to postpone our talk till the paper was out. 'It took more out of him, that half hour,' he said, 'than all the rest of the day's work.' But the postponement did not last, our morning palavers were soon resumed, and continued until the end. Nor was it only at the office that I had the best of opportunities for observation and study of Mr. Morley's personality. When I first came to London I enjoyed Mr. Morley's hospitality as host for several weeks; and after I settled at Wimbledon we were for several years near neighbours. I thus saw Mr. Morley every day, and sometimes all the day for three years."

Mr. Morley's editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was distinguished by moderation, calmness, and dignity. He did not stoop to the colloquial style of "journalism"; he did not aim at sensationalism. He was accustomed to say he liked the "drab men"

best, and the articles which either appeared from his pen or were written under his direction were marked by caution and the avoidance of excess of any kind. He was also opposed to too much space being given to politics. He wished literature and science to receive a larger proportion of space and attention than was given them at that time in any daily paper.

To return to Mr. Stead's reminiscences—

"Of Mr. Morley as editor, in his personal relations, I cannot speak too enthusiastically. He was no doubt very often a chilly frost on the exuberance of my more youthful enthusiasm. 'No dithyrambs, *s'il vous plait*,' he would remark drily, as he returned me my article with all the most telling passages struck out. He was a great stickler for severity of style, and restraint, and sobriety of expression. He was always down upon my besetting inclination to bawl when a word in an ordinary tone would suffice. But there was never any trouble in the office. He believed in authority, and I believed as implicitly in obedience. No one ever took liberties with Mr. Morley. Every one went more or less in awe of him. When the thundercloud gathered in his eyes, or the gout was prowling about his extremities, we all minded our p's and q's at the *Pall*

Mall Gazette. But we all liked him, and, for my part, I had never worked with anyone with whom comradeship was at once such a pleasure and such a stimulant."

The following extracts from the correspondence that passed during one of Mr. Morley's holidays between the sedate editor and his fiery assistant, whose journalistic work was characterized by a succession of pyrotechnic feats, are especially interesting, and throw a flood of light on Mr. Morley's views about journalism generally, and the duties of an editor in particular.

"The *Pall Mall* of Friday is just come. As an outside reader, I offer you this criticism, namely, that it is infinitely too stiff and crammed with politics. Excepting the Cromlech, there is nothing else. Only on the hardest compulsion should there be a word of politics after pages 5 or 6. Don't answer this. But I feel that there is exactly twice too much politics."

Again on a question of taste—

"By all my divinities, I beseech you not to let——, or anybody else, talk about 'their lordships.' If it is irony, it's very poor; if it's serious, it's very vulgar. And what's the fun about gilded chamber? No

fanaticism about vivisection, *s'il vous plait.* You must not take my little criticism too much to heart."

The following exhortations are pithy and suggestive—

"Don't pitch into Farmers' Alliance, don't scarify Harcourt and Cowen — but live generally in Christian amity and peace."

"Let me beseech you not merely in the interests of yourself, but of the *P. M.*, not to write two leaders a day. No man can do it well, and they will become words, and only words, if you persist. Take, therefore, the monition of a friend and an editor."

Finally—

"Your article to-night—rather takes my breath away. On the whole, I think I may as well take command to-morrow."

These extracts will suffice to show that Mr. Morley was a very careful editor, cautious in his treatment of public questions, and desirous of dealing with controversial matters in a considerate manner free from asperity. His main idea was to make the *Pall Mall* an instructive and readable paper rather than a party organ. At this period, too, although there was no doubt as to the shade

and character of his political convictions, he had not become an out-and-out partisan even of Mr. Gladstone. His views on the controversies of the day still hung in philosophical suspense. The one political alliance that he had formed was a close friendship and inter-communion of ideas with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.

The General Election of 1880, following upon what was known as Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian campaign, had been fought and decided on the question of the Afghan War. In the new House of Commons the Irish National Party was energetically clamouring for Home Rule, and, thanks to the genius and consummate generalship of Mr. C. S. Parnell, it had made itself a power in Parliament. But not a single English politician of any note had then been won over to the idea of separation between the sister islands. The Irish Secretary was Mr. Forster, who was called by the Nationalists "Buckshot Forster." Mr. Morley himself was also more or less a pronounced opponent of Home Rule. This question cropped up very often at the *Pall Mall* office during the years 1880–83. The following passage from a letter written in November, 1881, shows how very open

his mind was at that date on this burning question—

"It is of no use whatever to lecture John Bull on his duties to Ireland. He won't listen. The old half-and-half system will last longer than you think. . . .

"It may be that the proper solution of the Irish question would be separation or Home Rule, or it may lie in the opposite direction, in the abolition of representative government and the establishment of a Crown Colony. But, then, none of these solutions have yet been accepted by public opinion or by the Legislature. A Government must administer the system which it finds until opinion is ripe for some other. If Lord Salisbury were in power, he could not for the time rule Ireland as if she were a Crown Colony. If Mr. Parnell were Chief Secretary, he would not treat his country as if she were independent. It is inevitable that a great reform of the Irish system should be undertaken at no distant date. But, meanwhile, a Liberal Administration, like any other, must carry on under the present system and keep order for the day."

During the whole period of his editorship of the *Pall Mall* he was opposed to Home Rule, and on more than one occasion he protested against the idea of a Parliament

on College Green. He approved of Mr. Gladstone's proceedings when Mr. Parnell, with whom he had been brought into personal touch in 1880, was sent to prison by the Government in 1882. He was deeply affected by the Phoenix Park murders and the other Fenian outrages of the period, proclaiming loudly his indignation at brutal and senseless assassinations. The following passage is to the point—

"Everybody, even the Irish leaders themselves, agreed that special laws were necessary to meet the frightful disorder, the outrages, the cruel boycottings, and such terrible assassinations. I am not at all averse to stern and vigorous measures in dealing with disorder either in Ireland or anywhere else. I am, moreover, quite willing to admit that there might be circumstances in Ireland or anywhere else which required special legislation and special maxims of administration. I admit that I am ready to act upon it. I have always shown myself ready to act upon it."

Coupled with this general statement on what may be called the common obligations of all governments and administrations, in every clime and under all conditions of settled society, may be put the first open

and positive expression of his own views on Irish Home Rule at that particular moment (Feb., 1883)—

"Am I in favour of Home Rule for Ireland? If Home Rule meant any form of government for Ireland which was to give Ireland a Legislature independent of and co-equal with the Imperial Parliament sitting at Westminster, such a legislature as was not enjoyed by Scotland or Wales, then I am not in favour of Home Rule for Ireland. But if, on the other hand, Home Rule meant that the Irish were to have a greater share in what I had called the teachings and responsibilities of self-government, I am in favour of giving them the widest possible measure of that kind of Home Rule so long as it was not a separatist and independent Government."

Mr. Morley, who never made a boast of his absolute consistency, and whose opinions always advanced with the age, foresaw more clearly than others that trouble was coming for the Liberal party over the Irish question. He realised that the popular agitation in Ireland, the deadlock of business in the House of Commons (where the Irish party held, as it were, the balance, and where systematic obstruction had just been introduced

as an embellishment of party tactics), and a certain weariness in the resistance of the English people would entail some attempt at practical legislation in the direction of meeting Irish wishes and allaying Irish discontent. He also realised that this attempt would very likely dissolve old ties and lead to a new arrangement of political parties. He gave expression to these views in the last leader he wrote on "three years of Liberal administration" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*—

"With regard to Ireland, we are confronted by the discontent of the people and a clamorous demand for Home Rule. . . . That is what England and Scotland have to face. Given popular or Parliamentary government in the first place and government by rival parties in the other, how is a disaffected province to be managed? That is the question which even yet and even soon may be fatal to Liberal unity and to many a political reputation."

The three years during which Mr. Morley acted as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* may be described, then, as a kind of political novitiate—political being used in the sense

of party politics. Having been a philosopher, he was now mastering the rudiments of the rough and tumble, give and take, and wearisome contest or game fought partly on the platform, but chiefly at St. Stephen's. But while he learnt this new vocation by the route of the journalistic profession, he never became what is called a professional journalist. He was never anything more than a serious man of letters qualifying, whilst in charge of a daily paper, for the new career of a party politician.

No one could speak with greater knowledge as to what a journalist ought to be than Mr. Stead, and in the following passage he shows very clearly that Mr. Morley never became a journalist in the professional sense of the term—

"Mr. Morley's mental characteristic is solidity, not agility. This lack of nimbleness of mind was a drawback to Mr. Morley as editor of a daily paper. He was not a born journalist. He was deficient in the range of his sympathies. No power on earth could command Mr. Morley's interest in three-fourths of the matter that fills the papers. He is in intellect an aristocrat. He looks down with infinite contempt upon most of the trifles that interest the British

tomfool, as the general reader used sometimes to be playfully designated when considerations of management clashed with editorial aspirations. He had no eye for news, and he was totally devoid of the journalistic instinct. To him a newspaper was simply a pulpit from which he could preach; and as a preacher, like all of us who are absorbed in our own ideas, he was apt at times to be a little monotonous. During his stay at the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he did many things well; but the only subject on which he left his mark was Ireland."

I have now passed lightly in review Mr. Morley's work as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the second journalistic phase of his career, and I have ventured to call it an educational process for the wholly political phase that follows. During this period, Mr. Morley made the intimate acquaintance of the leaders of the Liberal Party. He gained the personal esteem of Mr. Gladstone long before he was associated with him in the Cabinet. Mr. Gladstone is reported to have said: "We all like Mr. Morley; he is so humble."

Mr. Stead very rightly explains this statement, for, in the ordinary sense of the word,

Mr. Morley was always too masterful a man to be humble. His manner to strangers or mere acquaintances was slightly deferential and inquiring, as if he wished to convey the impression that he considered his own views of no importance and theirs of all importance. But this deference very soon passed off, and, having taken the measure of the man with whom he had to deal, he made it his object to impress his own views on his auditor. No, humility or humbleness was never a trait in Lord Morley's character.

His relations with Mr. Bright, whose bad health had entailed a semi-retirement from the political arena, were friendly rather than intimate. His closest political alliance at this time was with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain; and there can be no doubt that it was Mr. Chamberlain's exhortations and encouragement that stiffened his resolution to enter Parliament, where no ordinary success was always predicted for him. As events were to destroy this friendship, it is unnecessary to dilate upon it; but while it lasted, as it did until the final adoption of Home Rule by Mr. Gladstone with the accompanying split up of the Liberal Party, it was one of

the closest ties ever formed between two leading men in public life.

In 1883 the Liberal Party was in office, and, as its majority was large, there seemed every reason for believing that a long tenure of political power awaited it. Mr. Morley had powerful friends on the front bench. Everyone recognised his ability. Before he contested the borough of Westminster, he had the assurance that he would not have to waste his time long in the unremunerated position of a private member. Mr. Morley had to think of mundane conditions. He possessed no private fortune; he made his livelihood by his work; and whether it was as editor of the *Fortnightly* or of the *Pall Mall*, or as literary adviser to leading publishers, some work bringing in a fixed income was essential for his comfort and contentment. Some assurance that the political career might at least pay for the loss of time it entailed, and for the impossibility of combining with it serious or heavy literary work, had to be provided in Mr. Morley's case, as in so many others where private fortune is lacking.

Enough has been said on these private and personal matters to enable the reader to

follow the future Lord Morly beeyond the political threshold which, after nearly twenty-five years of strenuous literary and journalistic work, he was in the year 1883 about to cross.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEWCASTLE ELECTION

MR. MORLEY'S first experience as a candidate for Parliament was in March, 1869, when he contested the Blackburn seat as a Liberal, with Mr. J. Gerald Potter, in support of Gladstone's Irish policy. He and Potter were beaten, the Conservatives—Messrs. E. K. Hornby and H. M. Feilden (sons of the unseated Members)—winning.

In November, 1868, General Election, two Conservatives were returned—Hornby and Feilden, seniors; but they were unseated on petition.

At the General Election of 1880, he put up for Westminster, but without success. Practically speaking, it is a forgotten incident in Mr. Morley's career. It confirms the view, however, that he had long had the idea of a Parliamentary career in his mind.

In February, 1883, a new and more favourable opening presented itself. A vacancy occurred at Newcastle-on-Tyne through the resignation of Mr. Ashton Dilke, brother of Sir Charles Dilke; and Mr. Morley was

selected as Liberal candidate for the by-election that followed. The conditions here were the exact opposite of those that had prevailed at Westminster. Newcastle was what was called a safe Liberal seat; instead, then, of entering upon what was known, as at Westminster, to be a hopeless battle before it began, Mr. Morley had every assurance of an easy victory. Besides, the conditions were for him more stimulating and favourable. In 1880 Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian campaign engrossed attention, and left none of his lieutenants, actual or prospective, a role. In 1883 the Liberal Party stood in need of recruits for the leading phalanx. Mr. Morley was one of the most conspicuous figures outside Parliament. Very considerable interest was, therefore, taken in the fight he was about to make at Newcastle, not merely for the result, but for the manner in which the result would be brought about.

From a personal point of view, too, Mr. Morley was better equipped for a political encounter in 1883 than he had been three years before. In 1880 he had not displayed any great interest in the controversies of the day; one of his principal addresses had been devoted to the question: "Ought Civil

Servants to be allowed to organise co-operative stores ?"—which must have bored him and his audience immensely. But in 1883 he was in very different training. Three years' control of a daily paper had made him conversant with all the controversies of the day, and no other public man of the period had so completely mastered the history of the Irish question as he had done. At that moment the Irish question was the question of the hour. To a large extent, the Newcastle election would turn upon it, although by the irony of fate "the Irish vote" was to be given there not to Mr. Morley, the sympathiser with Ireland, but to his Conservative opponent, because at that moment the Liberal Government was applying coercion in the sister Isle.

Unlike the earlier Westminster election, then, that at Newcastle was full of interest, and Mr. Morley's speeches attracted attention far beyond the limits of the city. The polling resulted in a large majority in his favour, and on 26th February Mr. Morley took his seat in the House of Commons for the first time. A popular preacher, the late Dr. Parker, who declared that he did not know Mr. Morley personally, went out of his way

to introduce into his sermon on the Sunday following the poll a welcome to Mr. Morley as "a man of transcendent ability and great political capacity and courage." Another welcome came from Ireland. Although the Irish electors had voted against him at Newcastle, Mr. Parnell's organ in Dublin hailed his return as that of "an old and well-proved friend of Ireland."

The following quotation from Mr. Stead's article gives a very fair idea of what was thought of Mr. Morley's political views at this time. While some set him down as a political doctrinaire, others pronounced him to be an out-and-out Jacobin.

"The other day I met a very eminent man who had known Mr. Morley personally for years. He astonished me by talking of him as if he were a Red Republican, a Jacobin, who wished to set up a guillotine in Trafalgar Square with which to execute the Royal Family! This is, indeed, an extraordinary delusion. Never was there any man less of a Jacobin than Mr. Morley. He is said to have remarked a short time ago that Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Parnell, and himself were the most Conservative members of the present House, and that is certainly much nearer the truth than the old idea of his doctrinaire Jacobinism. Mr. —— used

to write that kind of nonsense in the *Quarterly*, Mr. —— echoed it in the *St. James's Gazette*, and so I suppose the idea took root and sprang up, and it is now as difficult to extirpate as the Canadian thistle or the Australian rabbit. Mr. Morley once described himself in a speech at Clapton as 'a cautious Whig by temperament, a Liberal by education and training, and a Radical by observation and experience.' Temperament, in the long run, is stronger than anything else. What is bred in the bone comes out in politics as in other things, and Mr. Morley is pre-eminently the cautious man with strong Conservative instincts. There is in him a deep-rooted reverence for law, and even for tradition, that often must make him feel strangely out of place when sitting among some of his political associates. I have never been quite able to make up my mind whether his zeal for Home Rule is more prompted by a desire to clear out the Irish turbulents who obstruct business in the House of Commons, or a longing to see a strong Government established in Dublin that could answer for order in sterner fashion than is possible to any English partisan installed in Dublin Castle. No man is less of a Revolutionist than Mr. Morley. Although he has occasional purple patches in his oratory and in his writings, he is repelled rather than attracted by the men whose heroic or adventurous career

makes them stand out from the canvas. If he advocates a revolutionary change, it is for the sake of a Conservative end. He has a morbid horror of violence in any shape and form. It is a kind of physical repulsion which is excited equally by the excesses of revolutionary passion, or the more cruel, because more systematic, violence of constituted authority. He is a great legalist, although far from being a hide-bound pedant. He will, if it be clearly and conclusively proved to be necessary, trample even on your parchments and muniments, but he will do so with a sigh and an inner conviction in the soul of him that he is offending against the law of things."

At the moment when Mr. Morley first entered Parliament, the Irish problem had reached an acute stage. The Liberal Government had pinned the colours of law and order to the mast; and Mr. Forster, a strong man who had no sympathy with the Irish, was applying coercion with unswerving rigour. But mere severity neither tranquillised Ireland nor promoted the dispatch of business at Westminster. To outward seeming, the Government was in complete union with its Irish Secretary; but inside the Cabinet a feeling was growing up that something more than force was needed to pacify

the distressful country. At the same time, the waste of time at Westminster and the impossibility of transacting the business of the country had raised the idea of devolution —in other words, the conferring on Ireland of a large measure of local self-government. There is reason to believe that it was the latter object that mainly coloured Mr. Morley's policy towards Ireland. The removal of Irish questions from the consideration of the House of Commons would facilitate its own business, while the transfer of the responsibility for maintaining order from an English to an Irish Chamber would free it from the stigma of what was described in Parnellite circles as Saxon tyranny.

The advent of Mr. Morley into Parliamentary life strengthened the inner party in the Cabinet, which, believing that force is no remedy, wished to see some definite proposal brought forward for a settlement of Irish grievances. What that settlement was to be, no one had yet formed a definite conclusion about. Still less had any one realised the perils that the coming to a decision would carry in its train for the Liberal Party. None the less, at the very moment that coercion and special preventive laws seemed

to form part of the Irish policy of the Government, a reaction was visible within the inner ranks of the Front Bench, and Mr. Morley arrived at the psychological moment to give the impulse greater weight.

It is, indeed, declared and believed that it was Mr. Morley's influence that led Mr. Gladstone to take up Home Rule. That a private member without any Parliamentary experience should have been able to mould the views of the most experienced Parliamentary leader of his time in this way is an almost unsurpassed instance of personal influence. It is, perhaps, nearer the truth to suggest that Mr. Morley, who had been strongly urging some measure of Home Rule for Ireland during the last year of his control of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, happened to arrive in the House of Commons at the moment that politicians were beginning to express doubts as to the wisdom of persisting in the course that Mr. Gladstone's Government had up to that moment been pursuing. It was no secret, for instance, that Mr. Chamberlain was not a supporter of Mr. Forster and that consultations had been held with Mr. Parnell as to how a compromise on, if not an absolute solution of, the problem might be attained.

The Newcastle election of February, 1883, marked, then, a turning-point in the Irish question, as well as in Mr. Morley's career. For the first time, serious politicians began to talk of the possibility of granting to Ireland, if not the coveted Parliament on Stephen's Green, at least some measure of local self-government; and, discussion of the subject having once begun, it is not surprising that the proposal expanded until, in the course of a few years, it was seriously contemplated to grant Mr. Parnell the full measure of his desires. This development of the original proposal entailed in the end the disruption of the old Liberal Party and its exclusion from office for a long period.

Mr. Morley made his first speech in the House of Commons on 13th March, and he began by apologising for "his presumption in so soon addressing that distinguished assembly after his becoming one of its members for the first time." The subject upon which he first addressed the House related to foreign policy. At that moment the proceedings of the Transvaal Government towards some Native Chiefs were being criticised, and it was contended by some critics that the British Government ought

to protect the Chiefs. His speech was brief and pointed, and as a maiden essay made a good impression. The only other occasion on which Mr. Morley intervened in debate during the 1883 Session was on 9th August, when he spoke at some length on Egyptian affairs. Despite the recent appearance of the Mahdi, to whom he referred as "the false Prophet," he desired the occupation of Egypt to be abbreviated as much as possible. Some proof that Mr. Morley had gained the ear of the House is furnished by the complimentary remarks on this speech made by one of the Conservative leaders, who began by saying that "it is always very agreeable to listen to the honourable member for Newcastle, because he treated the subject with which he dealt in an extremely fair and candid manner."

The more important of Mr. Morley's speeches during the year 1883 were delivered out of the House. In May he made a tour in the North, visiting Newcastle and Liverpool. At the former place, he attended a public dinner given by his working men supporters. He strongly advocated legislation for social improvements, but at the same time that he advocated it he pointed

out the impossibility of getting it while the deadlock of business continued at Westminster through the unsettled Irish question. At Liverpool he was still more directly political, for, while recording his belief that he might yet regret "having quitted the calm retreat of literature to pursue the thorny path of practical politics," he went almost out of his way to put the Irish question in the forefront of the Liberal programme. He declared on 18th May, at Liverpool, that he "did not believe they would ever have a state of contentment or order in Ireland until they gave to Irish Members of Parliament and to Irishmen in their own counties and districts a greater voice in the management of their own affairs."

In concluding this chapter at a moment when the Bradlaugh controversy, and what was called the Affirmation Bill, were the most burning topics of the day, it will not be out of place to say something about Mr. Morley's views of religion and tolerance. He was always against intolerance and tyranny of all kinds. But he was not, as so many supposed, in any way irreligious. He upheld not irreligion, but the human dignity in religion, and this principle he

applied to all creeds. His philosophy finds happy expression in the following passage—

"Men at length ventured once more to look at one another with free and generous gaze. The veil of the temple was rent and the false mockeries of the shrine of the Hebrew divinity made plain to scornful eyes. People ceased to see one another as guilty victims cowering under a divine curse. They stood erect in consciousness of manhood. The palsied conception of man, with his large discourse of reason, looking before and after; his lofty and majestic patience in search for new forms of beauty and new secrets of truth; his sense of the manifold sweetness and glory and awe of the universe; above all, his infinite capacity of loyal pity and love for his comrades in the great struggle; and his high sorrow for his own wrongdoing—the palsied and crushing conception of this excellent and helpful being as a poor worm writhing under the vindication and meaningless anger of an omnipotent tyrant in the large heavens" stood revealed.

The same view is amplified in the following passage—

"The temperature of thought is slowly, but without an instant's recoil, rising to a

point when a mystery like this (of Deism), definite enough to be imposed as a faith, but too indefinite to be grasped by the understanding as a truth, melts away from the emotions of religion. Then those instincts of holiness, without which the world would be to so many of its highest spirits the most dreary of exiles, will perhaps come to associate themselves, not with unseen divinities, but with the long brotherhood of humanity, seen and unseen. Here we shall move with an assurance that no scepticism and no advance of science can ever shake, because the benefactions which we have received from the strenuousness of human effort can never be doubted, and each fresh acquisition in knowledge or goodness can only kindle new fervour. Those who have the religious imagination struck by the awful procession of man from the region of impenetrable night, by his incessant struggle with the hardness of the material world and his sublimer struggle with the hard world of his own egoistic passions, by the pain and sacrifice by which generation after generation has added some small piece to the temple of human freedom or some new fragment to the ever incomplete sum of human knowledge, or some fresh lines to the types of strong or beautiful character —those who have an eye for all this may, indeed, have no ecstasy and no terror, no heaven nor hell, in their religion; but they

will have abundant moods of reverence, deep-seated gratitude, and sovereign pitifulness.

"It is monstrous to suppose that, because a man does not accept your synthesis, he is therefore, a being without a positive creed or a coherent body of belief, capable of guiding and inspiring conduct. There are new solutions for him if the old are fallen dumb. If he no longer believes death to be a stroke from the sword of God's justice, but the leaden footfall of an inflexible law of matter, the humility of his awe is deepened, and the tenderness of his pity holier, that creatures who can love so much should have their days so shut round by a wall of darkness. The purifying anguish of remorse will be stronger, not weaker, when he has trained himself to look upon every wrong in thought, every duty omitted from act, each infringement of the inner spiritual law which humanity is constantly perfecting for his guidance and advantage, less as a breach of the decrees of an unseen tribunal than as an ungrateful infection, weakening and corrupting the future of his brothers; and he will be less effectually raised from inmost prostration of soul by a doubtful subjective reconciliation, so meanly comfortable to his own individuality, than by hearing full in the ear the sound of the cry of humanity craving sleepless succour from her children. That swelling consciousness of height and

freedom, with which the old legends of an omnipotent divine majesty fill the breast, may still remain, for how shall the universe ever cease to be a sovereign wonder of overwhelming power and superhuman fixedness of law? And a man will be already in no mean paradise if at the hour of sunset a good hope can fall upon him, like harmonies of music, that the earth shall still be fair, and the happiness of every feeling creature still receive a constant augmentation, and each good cause yet find worthy defenders, when the memory of his own poor name and personality has long been blotted out of the brief recollection of men for ever."

Mr. Morley's "Psalm of Life," or rather of human duty, was embodied in Goethe's poem, "Das Gottliche," of which Miss Grey made the following effective English translation—

THE DIVINE

Noble must man be,
And helpful and good
'Tis humanity only
That raises the humar
O'er all other beings,
All creatures we know.

All hail the unknown ones!
All hail the divine!
Whom we darkly grope after,
And fain would resemble.
In their good we believe,
Because good is in man.

For Nature is cold,
Unfeeling and blind;
There shineth the sun
Upon evil and good.
Moonlight and starlight
Gleam down in their beauty
On one and the other.

The flood and the tempest,
The thunder and hail
Rush blindly their way;
And, sweeping along,
They strike, all unheeding,
The one or the other.

So is it with Fortune;
She gropes in the crowd,
Lays her hand upon childhood's
Innocent ringlets
And then on the bald,
The guilt-laden head.

By laws that are iron,
Grand and eternal,
We all must accomplish
Our cycle of living.

And man alone doeth
What else doeth none;
'Tis his to distinguish,
To choose and to judge.
He can to the moment
Eternity lend.

And he alone dares
The good to reward,
The evil to smite,
To heal and to save;
The wandering and erring
For service to bind.

So, likewise, we honour
The mighty immortals
As if they were men,
And did on a grand scale
What good men on small scale
Do, or fain would.

'Tis the glory of man
To be helpful and good,
Unwearied procuring
The useful, the right:
A prototype so
Of the gods we grope after!

CHAPTER V

EARLY PARLIAMENTARY EXPERIENCES

MR. MORLEY's progress as a politician may be described as slow and sure. He did not thrust himself forward: he kept rather in the background; and was long more of a vigilant spectator than an active participator in the fray. None the less, Mr. Morley had already become a considerable figure in politics. Some one wrote of him at this time as "daily growing in influence and authority among the independent and more thoughtful Radicals." But during the year 1884 he spoke little in or out of the House, and he said not a word about Ireland. Egypt and its possible evacuation was the chief theme of his rare discourses. There was one exception, however, for, when addressing a great meeting at the St. James's Hall on 30th July, 1884, he made use of words with regard to the House of Lords which were rather quoted against him at the time of his accepting a peerage. They were the following—

"Be sure that no power on earth can separate henceforth the question of mending

the House of Commons from the question of mending or ending the House of Lords."

That is not quite the way in which the phrase has been handed down to posterity, and it will be noted that the exact words used were not quite so menacing to the Upper House as has been currently believed, for the quotation in general use ran that it must be "either mended or ended." But the sting was taken out of the prescription by the admission that "the House of Commons also needed mending." It is curious to recall the fact that, in the year following this speech, Mr. Gladstone begged Mr. Morley to accept a peerage, which he respectfully declined.

In June, 1885, Mr. Gladstone, on the defeat of his Budget, resigned; and Lord Salisbury undertook to form an administration on the understanding that a General Election should take place later in the year. It was during the ensuing months that the question of Irish Home Rule developed; but Mr. Morley, although most earnest in his advocacy of the redress of Irish wrongs, still held back from committing himself definitely to the granting in full of Irish demands, that is to say a separate

independent legislature such as existed before the Union. Constitutionally and by study he had a capacity for seeing both sides of a question. He saw the desirability and even the necessity of satisfying the Irish demand in some way or other; at the same time, he was fully alive to the drawbacks and disadvantages of Home Rule based on Separation. On one occasion he said—

"I still maintain that, while another system must be built up, separation, looked at dispassionately as a historian would look at it, would be a disaster to Ireland and a disgrace to England. I do not think separation would much weaken England, but it would dishonour her."

A few days later, he added—

"Though inclined to grant full self-government to Ireland, I would not retract my opinion that 'the independence of the island would be a disaster for herself and a dishonour for England.'"

In December, 1885, Mr. Morley was again returned for Newcastle, and in his principal speech he expounded his views on Irish policy at some length—

"Admitting, however, that both parties, through their leaders, were committed to

giving Ireland a large share of self-government, he expressed himself in favour of its extension, subject to the limits that are imposed by the safety, the integrity, and the honour of the sovereign ruler as a whole."

In view of the enormous majority obtained by Mr. Parnell in Ireland, he went on to declare that—

"It was impossible to shirk the Irish question. Two things had to be faced—a demoralised executive in Ireland and a demoralised legislature at Westminster. The following alternatives have been proposed for the management of Irish affairs: (1) By a grand Committee of the House of Commons composed exclusively of Irish Members; (2) the establishment in Ireland of Provincial Councils on a more or less public and elective basis, and the employment of the whole force of the Empire to secure the fulfilment of contracts; (3) to bring the representation of Ireland to an end and to send over a Governor-General with force enough to make the law respected; and (4) the concession to Ireland of some greatly extended Government of herself. I do not hide from myself the magnitude of this last task. It would rouse deep passion, it would perhaps destroy a great Party;

but, then, all who with himself had the integrity of the Empire and the interests of Parliament really at heart would not shrink from difficulties or be deterred by the dangers which beset their path."

That task most of the Liberal leaders thought at the moment impossible. There seemed to them no half-way house between Separation and Imperial control, backed up by force.

The result of the Election of December, 1885, was to give the Liberals a large majority in England and Scotland; but its most remarkable feature was that in Ireland Mr. Parnell swept the board, practically speaking, and led a solid phalanx of eighty-six Nationalists back to Westminster. At that time it was not considered safe to class the Nationalists with one party or the other, and, therefore, they held the balance of power. If they attached themselves to the Conservative Government, they gave it a bare majority. If, on the other hand, they joined the Liberals, Mr. Gladstone's majority became overwhelming. The exact composition of the House after the 1885 election was as follows: 331 Liberals, 86 Home Rulers, 249 Conservatives, and 4 Independents.

After this General Election, Mr. Morley came rapidly to the front as a party leader—a very remarkable circumstance, seeing that he had never filled any office. In January, 1886, he made a great speech at Chelmsford, repudiating the theory held by many Liberals and all Conservatives that his party had not received any mandate to deal with the Irish question. He declared—

"We all always have a mandate to use our minds and judgment to the best of our ability in meeting circumstances as they arise, applying the principles of Liberalism with all our sense, courage, and conscience. Liberalism would be all unworthy of its great traditions and muscular vigour in dealing with difficult questions, if it had nothing to say when a crisis such as this arose, requiring all the resources of constructive statesmanship to deal with it, and making such demands on our national fortitude and national enterprise. The country and circumstances will acquit or condemn. The beginning, no doubt, of any approach to a satisfactory settlement of Ireland must be some dealing with the land question. The late Government, to their great honour, passed an Act to prevent landlords confiscating the property of their tenants. I do not think we shall be able to deal

satisfactorily with Ireland until we have passed some legislation to prevent tenants confiscating the property of their landlords. Order in Ireland and power in the House of Commons at Westminster could only be obtained by the removal of the Irish members. It is my conviction and belief that no one in this great national crisis is competent to develop a scheme for the government of Ireland except Mr. Gladstone, who has devoted the best years of his life to the amelioration of the condition of that country."

This speech led to the recognition of the fact that the Irish question had become the order of the day. It also contributed to bring to an end the friendship that had subsisted between Mr. Morley and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain, either by his own pen, or by inspiring that of a well-known journalist of the day, under the pseudonym "A Radical," combated this view in the *Fortnightly*. The article is of permanent value, and exhausts the arguments that could be brought against Home Rule. On the other hand, the writer was strongly in favour of settling the land question on generous lines for the tenants. He also believed that the House of Commons

could devise rules for its own protection against the obstructiveness or attempt to dictate of any faction.

Evidence as to what was coming was afforded by Mr. Gladstone appointing Mr. Morley Irish Secretary, with a seat in the Cabinet—Mr. Morley thus taking a place on the Front Bench at one stride—when he formed his new ministry in February, 1886. The Press agreed that Mr. Morley's appointment—emphasized by the refusal of the late Duke of Devonshire and other old Gladstonians to join the Government—was the salient feature in the new Gladstone administration. *The Times* in its leading article said—

"It would be impossible to over-estimate the political significance of the selection of Mr. Morley, remarkable as it is in many aspects. The Irish policy of the new Cabinet is thus proclaimed to be a Home Rule policy in the largest sense, and Mr. Morley is chosen by the leader of the Liberal Party to undertake the task of carrying it through."

It is *à propos* to insert here a rather characteristic story told by Mr. Stead of Mr. Morley's

connection with Ireland before taking office. These are his exact words—

"In the early summer of 1885, Mr. Morley, then merely a private member, although the intimate confidant and adviser of Mr. Chamberlain, called at the Viceregal Lodge in Dublin to have a conversation with Lord Spencer. When he left the lodge, the first person whom he met in the Phoenix Park was Mr. Healy. 'What have you been doing in that den of iniquity?' said Tim. 'I never was there before in my life, and I do not believe,' said Mr. Morley, gloomily, 'that I shall ever set foot in it again.' Within less than eight months, Mr. Morley falsified his own prophecy by returning to Dublin as Chief Secretary to carry out a policy of which Mr. Healy was an enthusiastic supporter. No one could have foreseen that the great change would come so soon."

Although the papers agreed in accepting the new Government as a Home Rule one, it was assumed that Mr. Gladstone had given Mr. Chamberlain some positive assurance that he had no active intentions in that direction in order to induce him to accept a place in the administration. Besides, Mr. Morley, in his re-election speeches (on accepting

office), reiterated his declaration that he was against Separation. This meant at least that the Irish members would be left at Westminster and that the House of Commons would preserve Imperial control. No one knew at the time whether this would satisfy Nationalist opinion or not; but the announcement made by Mr. Parnell at the beginning of the session that his party would support Mr. Gladstone because he expected to get more from him than from the Conservatives, furnished a pretty good clue as to what was to follow.

A fortnight after Mr. Chamberlain's resignation, Mr. Gladstone brought in his Bill for the Better Government of Ireland, as his first Home Rule measure was called. Mr. Morley had had a large share in the preparation of this Bill, which gave Ireland everything short of absolute separation. What was too much for Mr. Chamberlain proved too much for the veterans of the Liberal Party, who opposed Mr. Gladstone's proposals tooth and nail, and upheld the Union in its strict integrity. The disruption of the Party, more than once predicted by Mr. Morley, had been brought to pass, but it had not carried in its train the success of the Irish measure. Mr.

Gladstone's attempt to endow Ireland with what he called a statutory Parliament failed, because he could not keep the Liberal Unionists on his side, and because English opinion was practically solid in opposing so dangerous an experiment as conferring on Ireland what amounted to her independence.

The debates of the Session of 1886 were among the most heated in the annals of the House of Commons. Party spirit and party rancour never ran higher, for the feud was not only between the historic party rivals, but also between men of the same party—men who had been friends and, quite recently, colleagues. Mr. Gladstone's eloquence had rarely risen to greater heights than when explaining that what he proposed in 1886, although the exact opposite of everything he had said in the preceding years, must be the acme of wisdom and common sense. A shrewd critic declared that the key-note to Mr. Gladstone's *volte face* was his disappointment at finding that his abolition of the Irish Church and his first Land Bill had failed to propitiate the gratitude of the Irish people, and to keep them quiet and contented for at least the remainder of his life. Having given them so much without result, he

decided to give them all they demanded by the mouth of Mr. Parnell, in the full expectation that their gratitude and his reputation as a statesman would thereby be permanently secured.

Mr. Morley's principal speech on the subject was delivered on 12th April, and it is especially interesting as containing his admission as to the part he had taken in the introduction of any Home Rule Bill at all. The following are the more interesting passages of this speech—

"The debate to-night has been, we must admit, in some respects a painful one. It would to me be very painful if I had thought, during the last autumn, when I took some modest part in the compaign which ended in the election of this Parliament, that, the first time when I should have to claim the indulgence of this House to hear me, it were to hear me vindicating my position against that of my oldest comrades in political arms. But the occasion has come. They admit, as I contend, that this is a crisis, and there are issues when private considerations must yield, and when, with whatever pain, we must each and all of us take the positions which our consciences commend to us. If we in this assembly were all united in a common desire and by

a common sense of public necessity, the problem of how to build up social order in Ireland is so complex and so entangled, that it would take the highest powers of the ablest men in all quarters of the House to ensure a solution of it. If you think of the economic difficulties, of the religious difficulties, of the curious perversities of the geographical mixture of religion and races in Ireland, and if you measure all of these gigantic obstacles, you will see how terrible the task is to weld all these elements into a corporate whole and stable society. But we are not united when we confront not one or two, but three, parties; and when our own party is divided and subdivided, and the party opposite will be very different from what it was at the end of the last Parliament, if it is not at least as much divided."

With regard to the exclusion of Irish members from the House of Commons, which made Mr. Gladstone's measure one of virtual separation (against which Mr. Morley had originally protested), Mr. Morley on this occasion, went on to say—

"They do not look at Imperial topics and interests from the same point of view as we do: they do not assist us in the manner in which it is essential that counsellors in this

Parliament should at least endeavour to do. If this adjustment is successful—if, after years of experiment, the result is what we desire and expect—it may be possible enough that our successors may invite Irish representatives back again. I am unable to understand the arguments of the noble lord (Hartington) and of the right honourable gentleman, the Member for Birmingham (Chamberlain), who made it such a point in their policy, that those whom they wish to refuse in their demands should remain here to be a source of mischief, and dissension, and inefficiency in this Parliament."

Notwithstanding the almost superhuman efforts of Mr. Gladstone, who was ably seconded by Mr. Morley, the Home Rule Bill was thrown out by a majority of thirty on the 9th June. There never was in Parliamentary history a more complete abandonment of a leader by his followers than occurred when ninety-three of the most prominent Liberals not merely refused to follow Mr. Gladstone into the voting room, but recorded their votes in favour of the rival party. Despite this knock-down blow, Mr. Gladstone did not lose hope of an ultimate victory. He dissolved Parliament and resolved to make a fresh appeal to the country. He

was persuaded that the country would rally to his views when he gave out what he deemed an effective battle or election cry in the words, "Justice to Ireland." In this opinion he was strongly upheld by Mr. Morley.

The situation had been rendered somewhat more unfavourable for him by the accumulation of evidence that, behind Mr. Parnell's Parliamentary party, there was a faction animated by nothing short of hatred of England, and that could only be satisfied if the granting of Home Rule were to be regarded as the precursor of complete independence, with the founding of an Irish republic. It was not at all clear at times that Mr. Parnell, although styled the Dictator, was anything more than the puppet of the men who pulled the strings and provided the sinews of war in New York. Distrust of the motives of the Irish faction was not the least active force against Home Rule at the Election of 1886. A Parliament on St. Stephen's Green was one thing, an independent Ireland with old scores to wipe out quite another. Consequently English opinion remained firmly solid against the Gladstonian policy, and turned a deaf ear to the new cry of justice to Ireland.

There is every reason to suppose—Mr. Morley in his biography of Gladstone corroborates the view—that Mr. Gladstone entered upon the election campaign of July, 1886, full of hope. He disregarded the odds brought against him, and he persuaded himself that his eloquence would carry everything before him as it had done in 1880. We do not know whether Mr. Morley shared this view, but at least he ably seconded his chief. He retained his seat at Newcastle by an increased majority. He did everything in his power to supply the place of the lost lieutenants. More than any other English politician had ever done before, he established personal relations with the Irish leaders, and in this way he sought to make sure of their good faith and loyalty. In these days, the epithet of Honest John came to be applied to Mr. Morley, and it showed the general belief in his political honesty and earnestness. What was said of Mr. Morley in 1886 was said of Lord Morley during the Indian debates in 1909.

The result of the General Election of July, 1886, although disappointing to Mr. Gladstone, was only in accordance with what might have been expected from a calm consideration

of all the circumstances of the day. It was the more striking, because it carried with it the break-up of the Liberal Party. Returned in triumph in December, 1885, it was reduced to a position of inferiority seven months later, from which it never really emerged until the election of 1905. The new House of Commons returned in July, 1886, was composed of 316 Conservatives and 78 Liberal Unionists, or 394 votes against Home Rule; while the Gladstonians were only 191 and the Nationalists 85, making together no more than 276 for the Gladstonian measure.

In the autumn session that followed, the Irish question was raised by a formal amendment to the address moved by Mr. Parnell, and Mr. Morley was on this occasion one of the chief speakers in support of the Irish leader. But the Unionist majority presented a solid front. There was no wavering on the part of either section of the Unionist Party in their opposition to the principle of a statutory parliament for Ireland, and in their maintenance of the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland.

While the Gladstonians were baffled and for the time reduced to helplessness, the Nationalists were embittered and resentful.

They drafted the "plan of campaign," and in Ireland the worst features of terrorism were revived. The Conservative Government was compelled to revert to exceptional measures to uphold the law and to baffle the designs of those who preached rebellion as the best means of obtaining separation. These measures were more successful than the Gladstonian theory had represented that they could by any possibility become; but the Nationalist phalanx in the House of Commons continued to form a body outside the general life of the Chamber, unamenable to any amicable influence, and absorbed in its own separate and semi-hostile ends. The Irish problem remained unsolved.

In September, 1886, Mr. Morley paid a visit to Scotland and made a political tour in the Lowlands, speaking, among other places, at Hawick and Edinburgh. His sole theme was Ireland; and his main contention was that, as the Parnellites represented practically the whole of Celtic Ireland, there could be no doubt as to the strength and unanimity of Irish opinion in favour of Home Rule. From this he deduced that there would be no possibility of transacting the business of the House of Commons if the

implacably dissatisfied Irish representatives remained there. In this anticipation it is only right to state that Mr. Morley took a too alarmist view. The Irish phalanx remained there for years, but the business of the nation was carried on. Obstruction and the closure became parts of the life and rules of the House, but the Nationalists very soon lost or resigned the exclusive right of practising the one or incurring the other.

As Mr. Morley was himself inconsistent in adopting Home Rule with the exclusion of the Irish members in April, 1886, when as late as December, 1885, he had declared himself against separation, it is interesting to quote the following remarks by Mr. Stead on what he called Mr. Morley's inconsistent consistency. It will serve as an appropriate termination to this account of the first Home Rule Bill—

"There is a curious contrast between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley. Mr. Gladstone is always demonstrating his own consistency, and no one believes that he has always been consistent. Mr. Morley never says a word about consistency—does not, indeed, regard consistency as a virtue; and yet everyone regards him as a model of consistency. As a matter of fact, Mr. Morley is not in the least consistent, and there has always been

about him a certain noble shamelessness in avowing that he has changed his mind. What, indeed, does a change of opinion show except a readiness to admit that you may be wiser or better informed to-day than you were yesterday? Mr. Morley has executed changes of front of the most complete kind on questions which have their roots deep down in the very foundations of society. When he asked me to come up to London and work with him, I diligently read up the old *Fortnightlies* to see whether or not we were likely to agree. I told him that I thought we agreed very well, with one important exception. 'You mean religion,' said he. 'No,' I replied; 'I think we should agree there, whenever the subject became practical. The subject on which we disagree is the Contagious Diseases Acts. You have written strongly in their favour; I am dead against them.' 'Oh,' said Mr. Morley, 'but I am also against them. That article you refer to was written many years ago. It was a mistake; I have changed my mind; I am entirely with you on that point.' That was the first time I came across that simple, good-humoured candour that owned up to a mistake and announced a change of convictions with a frank humility that disarms cynical reflections. He never was ashamed to admit that he had changed his mind or had abandoned an untenable position."

CHAPTER VI

SIX YEARS IN OPPOSITION

AFTER six months in office as the Cabinet Minister entrusted in a special manner with the conduct of Irish affairs, Mr. Morley was destined to spend the next six years on the Front Bench indeed, but only as a leader of the Opposition. During this period he came more to the front than ever, making a great reputation with his friends as a strenuous advocate of their views and with his opponents as an honourable antagonist. Even in the heat of the hottest debate, Mr. Balfour would pay a tribute to the reasonableness of Mr. Morley's views or his way of putting them as contrasted with the want of reason and partisanship displayed, for instance, by the late Sir William Harcourt. Indeed, it was during these six years that Mr. Morley made his reputation as a party man and possible future leader of the Liberal Party. He gained the confidence of the rank and file, and, in a sense that could be applied to no one else, he came to be regarded as Mr. Gladstone's right-hand man. Yet such was

the respect in which he was generally held, that in 1891 the Conservative Government offered him a peerage.

The records of the time—Hansard and the daily press—show that, despite their serious defeat at the hustings, the Gladstonians returned in a bellicose and aggressive spirit. They continued to express their unabated confidence in Home Rule as the true remedy for Irish grievances, and none expressed this conviction more positively or confidently than Mr. Morley. While Mr. Gladstone remained in reserve as a kind of Imperial Guard, Mr. Morley did all the fighting that in military operations is left to the light troops. He seconded Mr. Parnell's amendments, he introduced others on behalf of the Liberal Party, and outside the House he stumped the country. with a vigour and activity that the youngest hustler might well have envied.

This was especially the case after the commencement of the new session of 1887. The opening of Parliament was preceded by an important event in the life of the Liberal Party. One of the most striking features of the General Election was the manner in which suburban London had voted almost

solid for the Conservatives. To retrieve this reverse, a Liberal and Radical Union for London was founded, and Mr. John Morley was chosen to preside at the banquet held to inaugurate its existence. He delivered a very appropriate address; but the characteristic fairness of the man asserted itself, and he made some observations which were probably not quite to the taste of Mr. Schnadhorst and the other Party organisers who were present. Among them I will quote the following—

"The greater my experience in politics, the less suspicious I become. I am also quite convinced that the men who differ from me are as honest as myself."

His principal speech in 1887 was made in support of an amendment he moved to the Crimes Bill. The ground of his motion was his strong and unshakable objection to all exceptional legislation, and he repeated his old conviction that, as it had never been a remedy, coercion in any form would not prove one for the ills and wrongs of Ireland. At the same time his sense of fairness wrung from him the admission that the law must be upheld, and disorder and lawlessness put

down—only, he added, "put it off at least to the extreme minute of time." That had always been his view. Force and violence are to be relegated to the very last place in a political programme, if they cannot be left out of it altogether.

Speaking at Wolverhampton in April, 1887, Mr. Morley, departing from his usual calm, went so far as to call the Crimes Bill an infamous measure—infamous in his opinion because it meant the setting aside of the regular law, the setting up of special provisions, and the exaltation of force. A few days after this speech, *The Times* published what purported to be a facsimile of a letter from Mr. Parnell explaining to presumably an Irish-American ally why he had protested against the murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, although he had really sympathised all the time with their perpetrators. This was the famous Pigott forgery, but, of course, it was assumed at the moment that the facsimile must be genuine, because *The Times* had published it.

Immediately after the publication of the document, Mr. Parnell got up in the House and denied that he had ever written the letter, which he declared to be an impudent

forgery. It must be admitted that his denial was not implicitly believed. Mr. Morley was one of the few who took up the cudgels in defence of the Irish leader, declaring that Mr. Parnell having denied the authenticity of the letter on his word of honour, the *onus probandi* rested on the newspaper. It was well known that behind the Irish party were occult American influences which centred in the Clan na Gael, but Mr. Parnell was the one member of the Home Rule party who had kept studiously aloof from the Irish-Americans. The matter culminated in the Parnell Commission, and the suicide of the forger Pigott closed the episode. Mr. Parnell's reputation as the author of the false letter was cleared; but for other reasons he was a stricken man, and his public career, as will be seen, ended in gloom.

Mr. Morley's activity on the platform during this period was surprising. At Newcastle, in September, he slightly modified his Irish programme, declaring that he would "rather have Home Rule with the Irish members at Westminster than not have Home Rule at all." A few weeks later, speaking at Templecombe, in Somerset, he somewhat departed from his customary

attitude of impartial reserve and made what was tantamount to a personal attack on Mr. Chamberlain, attributing to him the blame for the failure of the Round Table Conference. Personalities of this kind form but a small part in the political record of Lord Morley's career, and can be passed over in silence.

The second session of Parliament after the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule measure —that of 1888—was inaugurated in a somewhat unusual manner so far as Mr. Morley was concerned. He and Lord Randolph Churchill figured as the protagonists in a Home Rule Debate before the Union at Oxford. Mr. Morley was received with much enthusiasm at the University, of which his literary achievements had made him one of the most distinguished members, and he delivered an admirable address; but the Union was as little enamoured of Home Rule as the House of Commons, and in a crowded assembly of 500 members his motion was rejected by a majority of 200.

The incidents of the session were not very important; and, although Mr. Morley himself moved a vote of censure on the Government in June, his efforts outside the House

to raise the drooping cause of Liberalism were more noteworthy than inside it. He spoke at many different places—twice at Norton Park, at Darwen, Morpeth, and Dumfries in the North; at Birmingham in the Midlands; and Ipswich in the Eastern counties. It almost seemed as if Mr. Morley had become a competitor to Mr. Gladstone in respect of activity, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that he began to relieve his leader by taking on his shoulders some of the routine work of the party.

Although the Gladstonians declared that their views on Home Rule remained unchanged, they could not be blind to the fact that their devotion to the Irish cause would never bring them back to office. It became clear that a new programme was wanted, and Mr. Morley undertook the task of defining what it should be. The pronouncement of the New Liberal Programme was made on 12th December at a great meeting in Clerkenwell. The watchwords given out were social reform and the ruin of feudalism. Mr. Morley declared: "Attack we must, and attack we will, privilege, caste ascendancy, selfish interest; we must smite them all hip and thigh." Among other

things, freeholds, ground rents, and leaseholds were to be subjected to sweeping reforms on what looked very much like the principle of confiscation. Mr. Morley did not stop with these matters. He dealt with the education question in its religious aspect in a way that gave immense satisfaction to the Roman Catholics. Unfortunately, it gave equal umbrage to the non-conforming Protestants, and in English party life the Nonconformists have the capacity of making themselves more disagreeable than any other faction. Mr. Morley had trodden on the corns of the "unco' guid," and they turned upon him like so many wasps.

Mr. Gladstone came to his lieutenant's aid three days later, and, in a speech that was appropriate from the author of "the Vatican letters," he allayed the tempest in the minds of the zealous followers of Spurgeon, Newman Hall, and Dr. Parker. But with the same breath he irritated the Roman Catholics, and experienced the pains and disappointment of the leader who seeks to heal and reconcile sectarian feuds and differences that resist all remedial measures.

The new programme, by relegating the Irish question to a secondary place, and by

bringing forward certain Socialistic projects, tended to revive the confidence of the Gladstonian party in itself and its future, and produced a greater impression on public opinion than was realised at the time. Indeed it would not be going too far to say that the development of Socialism in England in the last thirty years might be dated from Mr. Morley's speech at Clerkenwell in 1888. Probably if the truth were to be told, the disciples have since gone a good deal farther than the master ever intended.

In January and February, 1889, Mr. Morley resumed his now familiar work of stumping the country to rally the mass of the Liberals whose support could be secured independent of their views on the Irish problem. With this object in view, the order went forth that Ireland was to be mentioned as little as possible, while social reforms were to be placed in the forefront. Whatever other speakers might do, however, Mr. Morley could never wholly eliminate the subject of Ireland from his discourses. It was always cropping up in some form or other in the course of his speeches. At one moment, he censured the Irish executive for its harshness in matters like the Gweedore evictions; but

with a noble inconsistency, and from a sense of pure justice, he took up the cause of the Royal Irish Constabulary when their good conduct was aspersed, and championed them not less vigorously and effectively than Mr. Balfour. At another he called attention to what he termed the impotence of Parliament to perform its own work in consequence of the time lost through Irish obstructiveness. At one of these public meetings he declared, in an epigrammatic sentence: "The House of Commons scamps its legislative work because it is dazed with Ireland."

The idea that the removal of the Irish members, and certainly of all Irish legislative business, from Westminster was essential for the discharge of its proper business by the House of Commons may be termed Mr. Morley's own pet theory. It showed the practical side of a man whose critics used rather to deride him as a theorist and arm-chair philosopher. He had been often called the leader of the doctrinaires. But, if the course of business was slow and uncertain in the House of Commons in 1889, it became immeasurably slower afterwards, and for nearly twenty years the Irish question was not prominent in politics. As a matter of

fact, obstruction has grown into one of the recognised weapons of party warfare, and, carried to such undue lengths as it has been in recent years, it has begun to sap the position and lower the reputation of "the mother of Parliaments." The tyranny of a Parliamentary majority far exceeds anything told of autocratic despot or Imperial ruler, and savours too largely of mob law to impress men of intelligence who retain their respect for the principles of abstract justice. If it progresses at the same rate in the next twenty years as it has done in the last period of that length, Ichabod will soon have to be written over Parliamentary institutions, and the hour will have arrived for another Cromwell or a new conqueror.

At this stage in the question a sensational incident occurred which profoundly affected the relations of parties and even of individuals. The Liberal leaders — both Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley in particular—had had relations with Mr. Parnell; and, although their true history may never be known, it is not going beyond the probability of things to suggest that at one time they had offered "Ireland's uncrowned king," as he was

euphemistically called, a seat in the Cabinet. *The Times* letter had not greatly shaken Mr. Parnell's position, because his followers had displayed their invincible belief that it was not genuine. But a more severe and a more crushing blow was about to fall.

Towards the end of the year 1890 the political world was startled by the rumour that Captain O'Shea, a Nationalist Member, was seeking a divorce against his wife, and that Mr. Parnell was the co-respondent. This was a bomb-shell in the political dove-cots. It burst when the piquant details of the *cause célèbre* became public property. Respectable England was shocked, and the more easily because it grudged Mr. Parnell his escape from the Pigott forgery. For a moment it seemed that Home Rule would expire with the reputation of its leader. There was only one way out of the difficulty according to the traditions of political life in England, and that was for Mr. Parnell to resign the leadership of the Irish party. But "the uncrowned king" did not see things in the same light. He described this reasonable process as "throwing him to the English wolves," and then he began to tell tales, or rather to break confidences—an

unpardonable sin in social and political relations. As Mr. Gladstone put it a few weeks later, Mr. Parnell's divulgation of the negotiations in 1886 was "a breach of the seal of confidence which alone renders political co-operation possible."

The incident left Mr. Parnell at feud with his own party. Many of his old followers realised that if they retained him as their leader there was no possibility of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Morley continuing their campaign on behalf of Home Rule. On this point no intimation could have been clearer than Mr. Morley's language at Newcastle on 13th January, 1891, when he declared as "the plain and the palpable truth that a prosecution of the Home Rule campaign in Great Britain, unless there was a change of leadership, was a hopeless task." On the other hand, Mr. Parnell refused to be shelved. After long and acrimonious discussions, the Irish Nationalist party broke into two sections: Parnellites and anti-Parnellites. The schism continued until Mr. Parnell's death twelve months later relieved the situation. Mr. Morley may be said to have composed his best epitaph. Speaking at Manchester a few days after the death of the Irish leader,

he called him "a powerful and extraordinary personality, cold and long-sighted, who, in clearness and perception of facts, surpassed any of his contemporaries."

Not discouraged by the Parnell incident, Mr. Morley, who throughout the recess of 1890 had been the chief champion of Mr. Gladstone's policy, declared his conviction in a great speech at Scarborough that "the country was returning to Liberalism, with which Home Rule was identified," and that he was "looking forward to a General Election to scatter the Unionists like chaff before the wind." The same confidence was revealed in a speech made a few weeks later at Sheffield, when he said he was "convinced that the people of England had turned back on the decision they had hastily given in 1886. Even if the Opposition (that is to say, the Gladstonian party) were to lose the next Election, which he regarded as an impossibility," he went on to declare that "he would still rejoice over the results of the last five years, for it was a fine thing to have weakened, if not altogether to have wiped away, the bitter prejudice, and to have persuaded the neglected people of Ireland that they had as good friends on this side of the

Channel as they had on the other side of the Atlantic."

After this statement it was not surprising that he should continue to declare his full faith in Home Rule, "not merely as a pious opinion, but as a practicable and opportune proposition, and one certainly not to be dropped." This last assertion was intended as a reply to Mr. Chamberlain, who had just expressed his belief that "Home Rule was as dead as Queen Anne."

Mr. Morley's speeches at this period were not exclusively devoted to Home Rule. He was the author of the Newcastle programme, which had been first given to the public at Clerkenwell, and the Newcastle programme was the real bid of the Liberal Party for the support of the country. But the Newcastle programme seemed to many to bear a strong resemblance to Socialism, and Mr. Morley found it necessary to defend the Liberals against the charge of latent hostility to capital which was brought against them. He also laid down some general principles on the ethics of party politics, which are interesting from the personal point of view and not without their value as *obiter dicta*. Mr. Morley expressed the opinion that "a political

leap in the dark on such questions as the franchise or the distribution of seats might be made without much harm ; but when the vital organisations of national life in industry, trade, and commerce were touched, a leap in the dark might cause a catastrophe and ruin." On the naval question, which was just beginning to assume a more serious significance on account of German rivalry, he also went somewhat out of his way to emphasize the necessity of maintaining British supremacy, or at least marked superiority, at sea. This admission was the more remarkable in his case, as on matters of foreign policy he was always in favour of contraction and the curtailment of British responsibilities.

The year 1892, important in the sphere of politics as witnessing a change of government, was ushered in by a remarkable speech which Mr. Morley made at Newcastle on the occasion of his being initiated a member of the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds. This gave him the opportunity of repeating the terms of his Programme of two years earlier, with an additional plea on behalf of Old Age Pensions. Mr. Chamberlain had put forward a scheme for encouraging thrift by promising

a Government addition to the private savings of any individual on specified terms. This scheme did not meet with the approval of Mr. Morley, who declared himself in favour of State pensions, but wished their institution to be preceded by a careful inquiry into the working of the pension funds of beneficent and other societies. It may be conjectured that the Old Age Pensions Bill of 1907 was the offspring of Mr. Morley's speech of fifteen years earlier.

The session of 1892 commenced under the conviction bordering on certainty that a General Election could not be long averted. After nearly six years of office, the Conservative administration had lost much of its vigour, and the country, persuaded that Home Rule was practically dead, had grown apathetic. Mr. Gladstone's name was still a force in politics. Without going so far as Mr. Morley in his optimistic views that the Liberals would sweep the board, there was still enough ground for believing that a reaction was in progress throughout the country, and that the result of the 1886 election would be reversed.

In June, 1892, Parliament was dissolved, and the elections followed. Mr. Morley again

stood for Newcastle, and it was noticeable that his address was one of the few in which the first place was given to Home Rule. He also strongly advocated Free Trade and free labour. Mr. Morley was always, and remained to the end of his life, an opponent of the Eight Hours' Bill, and would have left labour and capital entirely free to arrange terms between themselves. This did not meet with the approval of his labour supporters on the Tyne, and it was only the respect felt for his great merit and services that prevented their voting against him. The result of the election at Newcastle in June was that a local Conservative was returned at the head of the poll, but Mr. Morley retained his seat. Six weeks later he had, on accepting office, to seek re-election and to fight a second contest. On this occasion he was more successful than at the General Election, for after a vigorous struggle he retained his seat by an increased majority. But it was becoming clear to him that there were hostile currents against him at Newcastle, that the retention of the seat would be difficult if he did not waive something of his principles on the labour question, and that so large a constituency demanded too

much of his time and imposed too severe a strain on his strength. The two election fights at Newcastle in the summer of 1892 warned him that it was time to begin to think of looking out for a safer and more comfortable seat.

CHAPTER VII

THREE YEARS OF OFFICE

ALTHOUGH the election of June, 1892, had not realised Mr. Morley's prediction that the Unionists would be scattered like chaff before the wind, still it had converted the voting balance of a division of the House of Commons from one of 66 against Home Rule to 40 in its favour. But to arrive at this result it was necessary to take into account the Irish members, and in 1886 Mr. Gladstone had proclaimed that the one thing he wished to avoid above everything else was to have a majority dependent on the Irish vote. The exact composition of the new House was 274 Liberals and 81 Nationalists, making a total of 355, and on the other side 269 Conservatives and 46 Liberal Unionists, or a total together of 315. It was the Liberal Unionists who had most suffered in the election fray, coming back to St. Stephen's with little more than half their original numbers.

The Conservative Government faced the new Chamber, and it was only after the passing of a vote of censure that Lord

Salisbury and Mr. Balfour resigned. Mr. Gladstone had some difficulty in forming his new Cabinet, but, on the whole, the fresh blood introduced added to its strength. Mr. Morley was again entrusted with the difficult and rather thankless post of Irish Secretary. In his *Life of Gladstone*, Mr. Morley thus describes what took place—

"Then he (Gladstone) began to talk about offices. After discussing more important people, he asked whether, after a recent conversation, I had thought more of my own office, and I told him that I fancied, like Regulus, I had better go back to the Irish Department. 'Yes,' he answered with a flash of his eye, 'I think so. The truth is that we're both chained to the oar. I am chained to the oar; you are chained.'"

Lord Rosebery, after receiving assurances that Egypt should not be evacuated, agreed to take charge of the Foreign Office. In a sense it may be said that these assurances were given against Mr. Morley himself, for he had always been a strenuous advocate of the abandonment of Egypt, and he ever gave a grudging and reluctant assent to a policy of colonial expansion, as, for instance, in Uganda.

The administration formed, Mr. Morley hastened over to Ireland, for his opponents rather twitted him with knowing very little about Ireland or the Irish people, despite his great enthusiasm for what was called "the cause". Mr. Samuel Hussey, in his amusing *Reminiscences of an Irish Land Agent,* tells the following story as rather a hit at Mr. Morley; but whether true or not, there is no evidence of the incident having made him swerve from his purpose. Here it is—

"There is a well-known story about him (Mr. Morley) so familiar to some of us, that it is possibly forgotten in England, wherefore I venture to relate it once more. He was on a car, and asked the driver—

"'Well, Pat, you'll be having great times when you get Home Rule.'

"'We will, your honour — for a week,' replied the man.

"'Why only a week?' inquired the politician.

"'Driving the quality to the steamers.'"

Mr. Morley's visit to Ireland was especially intended to provide him with information as to the working of the Crimes Act, as to what measures could be taken to relieve evicted tenants, and as to the drafting of a new Home

Rule Bill. For, although Home Rule had not figured very prominently in the Liberal addresses before the election—always excepting those of Mr. Morley himself—Mr. Gladstone was resolved to commit himself to a second venture in the way of solving the Irish problem, and Mr. Morley was equally resolute in his support of his chief's proposals. The only disquieting circumstance was that Wales began to clamour for the same rights as Ireland demanded, and Mr. Gladstone, somewhat irritated at the demand, replied briefly, if not testily: "Wales would do well to show patience."

Mr. Morley gave his constituents at Newcastle, in December, 1892, a forecast of what was coming in the approaching session. He expressed the hope that "a measure of Home Rule would be prepared which would make an adjustment between what Great Britain is willing to concede and Ireland is willing to accept. So far as we have gone—and we have gone a long way—I, for one, and I know what I am speaking about, see no reason to despair. I see every reason to hope that, when February comes, the Government will face the House of Commons with a scheme which Ireland ought to accept and

which Great Britain ought not to, and will not, refuse. A heavy responsibility will rest on those who, whether in Ireland or in England at this critical moment in the relations between the two nations, interpose for personal or for factious objects any obstacle to the consummation so devoutly to be wished by Irishmen and by Englishmen."

Notwithstanding Mr. Morley's persistency and consistency, the Home Rule programme did not raise any great enthusiasm among Mr. Gladstone's followers. Some of the party even declared openly against it, whilst the fervour of 1886 was plainly absent. It had been chilled by six years in the cold shade of opposition, and many of the extreme Radicals were convinced that their own particular desires were of far greater importance than the supposed wrongs of Ireland. Another section of Radicals, prominent among whom was Mr. Labouchere, clung to the principle of the first Home Rule Bill, which removed the Irish representatives from Westminster, and rumour had revealed that the new Bill would differ from its predecessor in the one essential point of leaving them there. Finally, the party majority of 1892 was not sufficiently large to justify one of those

sweeping measures which most suited Mr. Gladstone's genius and most accorded with his fame. The flowing tide had not set in with sufficient strength. Mr. Gladstone himself had counted on a majority of eighty or a hundred, whereas he had obtained only one of forty, and if he displeased the Irish members he was at once placed in a minority.

None the less for the inadequate majority, and the apathy of his followers, Mr. Gladstone took up in serious fashion the preparation of a new Home Rule Bill. By an euphemism this was to be called "a Bill for the Better Government of Ireland." It was drafted at Hawarden, as Mr. Morley tells us in "The Life," by a small committee of the Cabinet; and there is no doubt that, after Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Morley had the largest part in the matter. The old Premier, speaking of his different lieutenants at this time, wrote to some one: "John Morley was the best stay I had." The main difference between the new Home Rule and the old measure was that it left the Irish members, or rather eighty of them, at Westminster, besides giving Ireland her new statutory Parliament.

On 13th February, 1893, Mr. Gladstone

introduced his Irish measure in a speech occupying two hours and a half. Considering his age—eighty-four—it was a remarkable performance, but the reception given it by his followers was not marked by the old spontaneous and unanimous enthusiasm. That was only displayed during the progress of the measure through Committee, when by some subtle device or skilful manoeuvre in Parliamentary tactics he conciliated the adverse criticism of his friends, or baffled the attacks of his enemies. Never did Mr. Gladstone more thoroughly deserve the appellation bestowed upon him of "the old Parliamentary hand."

The debate on the Second Reading of the Bill covered a period of two months, and Mr. Morley did not make his speech until the day—18th April—when the vote was taken. He spoke in reply to Lord Randolph Churchill, who, on this occasion, made his last speech of any importance in the House. Mr. Morley's speech made a great impression on his audience, and was loudly applauded by the Irish Members. He seemed to anticipate, however, that the final stage of the question had not been reached and that it might have to be dealt with by a younger

generation of politicians. The following passage gives the more important part of his views and arguments—

"We have for years sent our best statesmen to Ireland, and they have all failed. Why? Because Irish Members still count. They will always count, and the question is whether you are going to have them on your side, aiding, co-operating, and associating with you in the work of government, or whether you are going to continue making your Government subject not only to that exclusion, but also—which makes it much worse—to the ebb and flow of party victories in Great Britain. You make Ireland, this unhappy country, the cockpit of your party fights. Everything done in Ireland is put under a microscope. Most unfair judgments are passed on small things and upon great, upon character, upon motive, upon act, upon what takes place from day to day—the whole thing is put under the most Pharisaic microscope that has ever been devised. And you not only do not have the Irish representatives with you, but the judiciary, the magistrates, those in small posts and in great are, for the most part, chosen from one side of political opinion and one side, I am afraid I must say, of religious belief. Because I tried the other day, in a most trivial matter, to

redress the balance, I was attacked as sapping and undermining the foundation of law and order. Let us go to the heart of the matter. You say, 'I know,' that the gentlemen below the gangway are not representative, that they know nothing of their constituents, and their constituents know nothing of them; that they are the mere mechanical creatures of political conventions —no more in touch with their constituencies than the man at the centre of the web at Dublin Castle. Be it so, if you please, but you prove too much. What are we to say of our system of government which makes these mechanical creatures of political conventions—the wires pulled from headquarters—the balancing force between the two great English parties as they were at the end of the Parliament of 1885, as they were at the beginning of 1886 and in 1892? . . . One thing only is certain. Never before have Irishmen had an English political party standing by their side in their national demand. We will not now desert them. We will never betray them. Irishmen all the world over are looking to us. Their trust shall not be deceived. Though we may lose this particular measure, the question cannot be put back. Whether younger men may have to take up the battle, I know not. But this I do know—the justice of the demand is established: it has sunk into the hearts of this generation. We shall yet

see our ideal realised and Irishmen of all sections united to govern their own country, which we have so lamentably misgoverned."

The Second Reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of 347 to 304, but on some of the divisions in Committee the majority fell to 27; and the Third Reading on the last day of August was carried by only 34. As has been frequently pointed out, these numbers proved conclusively that opinion in England and Scotland was still adverse to the granting of Home Rule, which only passed the House of Commons by the co-operation of the eighty-one Irish Members. This was the unanswerable justification of the subsequent action of the House of Lords.

The same evening that the Bill was finally passed in the House of Commons it was sent up to the House of Lords, which led one of the wags of the day to declare that it came "like a thief in the night." After a debate of four or five days, the Bill was rejected in a very full House by 419 to 41. The Liberals attempted to get up a popular movement against the House of Lords, and much was said about its right of veto. But there was one fact that could not be explained away and that protected the House

of Lords against its assailants. Its action was in agreement with the great majority of English and Scottish opinion. As a matter of fact, Mr. Gladstone committed a tactical blunder in attempting to introduce a second Home Rule Bill with an insignificant and half-hearted majority. On the other hand, if he had not introduced it, the Irish Members would have turned upon him, and his Government would not have lasted three months.

In November, 1893, the House, after having given up the greater part of its time to Irish politics, re-assembled for the performance of the necessary business of the country. Mr. Gladstone had wished to dissolve Parliament and appeal to the country on the subject of the Lords' veto; but his colleagues did not regard things in the same light as he did, and he was overruled. As a matter of fact, they saw that Mr. Gladstone's strength was failing, and they did not wish to subject him to the inevitable strain of leading the party through another heated General Election. In January, 1894, Mr. Gladstone was sent to Biarritz to recruit his health, and on his return, finding that his sight and hearing had not improved, he

came to the decision to resign and retire from political life. Mr. Morley, as described in the *Life of Gladstone*, received the intimation of his intention from his own lips in the evening of 27th February, and the Queen's formal acceptance of his resignation was dated 3rd March.

There was some uncertainty as to who should be Mr. Gladstone's successor, but the Queen with unerring judgment sent for Lord Rosebery. This step signified two things—the avoidance of a collision with the House of Lords and the hanging up of Home Rule. The Radicals were dissatisfied for the former reason and the Nationalists for the latter.

Lord Rosebery enunciated a new policy. He left it to be understood that he was still a Home Ruler; but he declared that Home Rule could not be considered practical politics until England, "the dominant partner," had been converted to it. Mr. Morley, after some hesitation, supported his new leader, stating in the House that he acquiesced in the programme of "temporarily suspending the prosecution of the measure." The Nationalists alone were furious, and one of their leaders went so far as to exclaim that

they would make "any government in Ireland impossible."

The threat was fortunately not put in force and remained in abeyance, but it suggested to some one that the Irish Members, for all their soft talk, were really wolves in sheeps' clothing. Mr. Morley was left in the position of being able truthfully to declare that "not a man had been tried in Ireland in his time under the Crimes Act." Lord Rosebery also made a point of the good results attending Mr. Morley's administration in Ireland. Mr. Morley himself gave fresh emphasis to this agreeable side of the question in his annual address to his constituents at Newcastle. After stating that all offences against the law in Ireland had sunk to a lower point in 1894 than in any year since 1837, he went on to declare—

"I think nobody is likely to deny that the extraordinary fact I have brought before your knowledge is partially explained at all events by the policy which has been pursued in Irish administration since 1892. Does it not show this, that, if Irishmen are governed by an administration whose spirit, policy, and intentions they have confidence in, they will behave like other citizens of

other countries, and that all the talk that Irishmen are so restless as to be unfit for self-government sinks into absurdity and a position of fallacy."

This optimistic view does not displace the simple historical fact that the fervour of the Liberal Party for the cause of Irish Home Rule had then run its course and become exhausted. Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1893 was the last attempt to give the idea practical form, until Mr. Asquith's Government took up the question again in 1911. The result of the General Election in that year closely resembled that of 1892, and once more the British Government was left dependent for its tenure of office on the Irish vote. It will be necessary to deal with this matter further on.

The end of the Liberal Government of 1892–95 was brought about by one of those trivial incidents in Parliamentary life that sometimes herald great crises. On 25th June, 1895, during the discussion of the Army Estimates, the Government were defeated on the Cordite question by 132 to 125, and after brief consideration Lord Rosebery decided to resign. As a matter of fact, the position of the Prime Minister was far from

comfortable, and a statesman of Lord Rosebery's great capacity could not be supposed to be content with holding his position on sufferance. In the House of Lords his party was an insignificant minority. In the House of Commons it was also in a minority, unless the Nationalists lent it their support; and the ostentatious practice of the Irish members was to leave all purely English business severely alone. Under these conditions, Lord Rosebery must have laid down the seals of office with more satisfaction than he had taken them up.

Lord Salisbury's acceptance of office was followed by the inevitable appeal to the country. The General Election of July, 1895, was remarkable from many points of view. It gave the Conservatives an immense majority; it ensured for them ten years of office; and, with regard to the special subject of this memoir, it put an end to Mr. Morley's connection with Newcastle. Mr. Morley, as was stated in the last chapter, was not unaware of the dangers that lurked for him in the situation at Newcastle, and had had some intention of seeking a safer and less exacting constituency. But the result of his re-election fight in August, 1892, had

somewhat blinded him to the peril, and had restored his old confidence in himself and in those who had first sent him to the House of Commons. Besides, the General Election of July, 1895, came about with unexpected suddenness, and there was no time to make any fresh arrangement. If duty had compelled Mr. Morley in 1892 to become Irish Secretary for the second time and to remain at the post for the whole life of the Liberal Government, it also seemed to prescribe that once more he must contest Newcastle.

The result of the first General Election following the retirement of Mr. Gladstone from public life was not left long in suspense. The Liberals lost seat after seat in the boroughs and the counties, and one of the first victims of the reaction was Mr. John Morley, who found himself rejected at Newcastle. Home Rule had gone out of fashion, and he who more than any other, after Mr. Gladstone, deserved the name of its standard-bearer was one of the first and chief victims of the change. The new House of Commons was comprised of 340 Conservatives and 71 Unionists, and of 177 Liberals and 82 Nationalists, which placed the responsible administration in a majority of 152 over

both Liberals and Irish members combined. It was the position which Mr. Gladstone always had aspired to attain and which, after Home Rule was broached, he never attained. Although rejected by Newcastle, Mr. Morley's absence from the House of Commons was to prove brief, for a safe seat was soon found for him in the Montrose Burghs.

CHAPTER VIII

MEMBER FOR THE MONTROSE BURGHS

MR. MORLEY, after ceasing to be Member for Newcastle, enjoyed a few months' well-deserved rest. He began to form plans for undertaking some serious literary work, and it was then perhaps that he first conceived the idea of a new life of Oliver Cromwell. The thought may even have occurred to him that politics, after all, are mere vanity and vexation as compared with the serene atmosphere in which the philosophic historian is supposed to pass his existence, and he may have contemplated the possibility and the advantage of final retirement from the stress and storm of active political life. For him, too, politics had become less interesting since the retirement of Mr. Gladstone.

Their ideals had not been attained, and for the moment seemed unattainable. Was it worth pursuing the road when a surer and more attractive path offered itself to his tread? Younger colleagues, less wed to high principles, more pushful in their efforts to reach the personal goal, than Mr. Morley had ever shown himself to be, jostled him on the

Front Bench and thrust themselves before him. The old stateliness and sobriety of Parliamentary debate and procedure had much declined, if it had not departed. New methods were coming into vogue which would leave those endowed with brazen lungs and brazen impudence the victors. Mr. Morley had no more sympathy with this debasement of the House of Commons than Mr. Gladstone had. Would it not be well, Mr. Morley must have asked himself after the rebuff at Newcastle, to seize the chance, let the book of political adventure and partisanship remain closed for ever, and return to those great literary performances of which he had already given abundant proof?

Perhaps, if Mr. Morley had been an entirely free agent, this is what he would have done, and the benches of St. Stephen's would have known him no more. But he had become a political leader, and he owed a duty to his party. At that time the Radicals were not so strong in leaders that they could dispense with the services of Mr. Morley. In a sense, when they lost Mr. Gladstone through age, Mr. Morley was indispensable to them; and the whole party agreed that he must not be

allowed to retire from the House, and that, in order to prevent his yielding to the seductiveness of his literary proclivities, a safe seat should be provided for him as quickly as possible, for, in such a frame of mind as his, delay was dangerous.

In November, 1895, Mr. J. Shiress Will, Q.C., announced that he intended to retire from the representation of the Montrose Burghs as soon as his party could find a suitable successor. Mr. Morley was induced to pledge himself to stand, provided he received from the local organisation a unanimous invitation to come forward. This was easily obtained, and Mr. Morley replied towards the end of the month named—

"I am very sensible of the great honour of your invitation and, though I should not have been sorry for some further extension of my leisure, I willingly comply with your request."

Mr. Morley referred to his leisure, but it was well known to his friends that he was meditating several literary enterprises that, once undertaken, would have left him little or no time for politics. Some public indication of this was given by the interest he

displayed in the Carlyle centenary memorial, which led him to deliver one of the finest critical appreciations of the so-called sage of Chelsea that were ever delivered. The following extract from his address on 4th December, 1895, must suffice—

"I think it cannot be denied, whatever we may think of certain individual opinions of his, that he was the foremost figure in English literature during a considerable portion of his life and the life of most of us here. He is called almost habitually by a name from which I dissent—'the sage of Chelsea.' I think that a sage is just what he was not. A poet, an artist, a prophet, a preacher if you will, but the very opposite of a sage. Carlyle was far too stormy and tempestuous a person for that. What was his claim to fame? He conferred on us the sense of internal freedom. You learn from him that you ought to shake yourself free from conventionalities and formalism, that you ought to judge matters for yourself and be yourself. That is commonplace now, but he made it so. He gave all these maxims, all this counsel, a fire and a spirit which has made him not only one of the foremost literary figures of his own time, which is a comparatively small thing, but one of the great moral forces of this country for all time."

The Times, in its leading article on Mr. Morley's delightful and well-balanced dissection of Mr. Carlyle's worth and work, asked very justly—

"What strange fever in the blood drives Mr. Morley to Anticyra, which in the Scottish tongue is Montrose, when he might dwell in provinces all his own and charm us by such speeches as that with which he yesterday graced the Carlyle Centenary meeting? No more generous yet discriminating tribute to the memory of a great man could be desired."

Notwithstanding the inducement to quit them, Mr. Morley, however, remained in politics; and in January, 1896, he proceeded to Montrose and its associated burghs for the purpose of canvassing his new constituency. The election was warmly contested, but at the poll, early in February, 1896, Mr. Morley was returned by a larger majority than any Liberal member had ever received. When he first rose to address the House in what he called "his revived Parliamentary career," which occurred on 26th February in a debate on the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill, he experienced a great reception; and Mr. Gerald Balfour, who had succeeded him at the Irish Office, and

who followed him in the debate, very happily gave expression to the general feeling of the whole assembly in the following passage—

"I am sure I am only expressing the general sentiment of the House when I say I rejoice to see the Right Honourable gentleman taking part once more in our debates."

This tribute was the more generous, because during the contest at Montrose Mr. Morley, fired with partisan zeal rather than philosophic calm, had said some bitter things about Lord Salisbury. Even when his opponents most disagreed with him, they recognised, however, that Mr. Morley was always sincere and honest, and this constitutes the political character that wins and retains respect.

Although Mr. Morley continued to be a watchful critic of the measures relating to Ireland proposed and carried by the Conservative Government—many of which were gladly accepted if not warmly welcomed by the Irish Members themselves—and never threw away the chance of offering some criticism or advice, based on his own experience or on his desire to see the most generous principles applied in Ireland, he could not

help becoming himself infected by the prevalent view among Radicals that Home Rule was not practical politics. With regard to his own personal views there was no change; and at Glasgow he publicly declared that he "was still a Home Ruler, but that he admitted that the Irish question must be adjourned till the next General Election."

Having got as far as this admission, it is not surprising that the bulk of Mr. Morley's speeches during the session of 1896 related to other subjects than the eternal one of Ireland.

Egypt, especially in regard to the Soudan, where the first moves were being made to recover what had been lost ten or eleven years before, offered a wide and an inviting field of discussion. In England many Governments have been turned out of office by the mere allegation without the smallest attempt at proof, that they were bent on foreign adventure. For the moment, foreign politics had gained the ascendancy in the field of debate. It was not in the Soudan alone that Lord Salisbury might be described as pursuing an Imperialist policy. In Chitral a forward movement had begun, which in the result extended the British-Indian frontier

to the Pamirs. In Armenia occurrences had taken place that seemed to call for action, at least to the emotional politician. Greece was preparing for a hopeless struggle. In South Africa the Jameson raid had raised an entirely new situation. Mr. Morley had a choice of subjects, but the vote of censure he moved on 20th March related exclusively to Egypt and the Soudan expedition. The following is a summary of the pith and purport of the speech in which Mr. Morley brought forward the question—

Mr. Morley's speech, in moving his vote of censure on the proposed expedition up the Nile, was one of the best in form and arrangement that he had ever delivered in the House of Commons. It was closely reasoned; it showed a painstaking effort to master the facts; it subjected to an incisive criticism all the weak points that could be discovered in the proceedings of the Government. It also deserved the praise of earnestness and consistency. He might, as he said, also claim to be impartial, for in 1885 he had moved a vote of censure on Mr. Gladstone's Government, condemning that Minister's intervention in the Soudan and their Egyptian policy. The main question

to be determined was whether the new policy was intended for the defence of the frontier against possible raids or whether it meant something more. If the selected telegrams which had been read by the Under-Secretary formed the foundation of the case of the Government, he did not think the House had been treated with proper frankness and confidence. He contended that no danger to the Egyptian frontier could be seriously alleged or inferred from the information contained in those telegrams which merely referred to flying rumours. So hazardous a proposal as that made by Her Majesty's Government had never before been justified by reasons so meagre, so irrelevant, and so hollow.

The hypothesis of the Government was that Mahdism would be stimulated by the defeat of the Italians at Adowa, and that this constituted a new danger to Egypt. If so, he submitted that the military plans of Her Majesty's Government were ludicrously and dangerously inadequate. He hoped some light would be shed on the political and financial considerations referred to by the Under-Secretary, for at present there had been only an ambiguous, equivocal,

vague, and incomprehensible declaration of policy. They got, indeed, misty glimpses of policy, but a definite statement of the views and objects with which the Government embarked on this course had not yet been given either by Mr. Balfour or by Mr. Curzon. It might, however, be gathered from the statements already made that the advance towards Dongola marked definitely a new departure of some kind, and they wanted to know what was the object of that new departure. From the language used by the leader of the House, it might be fairly inferred that the expedition was intended to extend Egyptian influence southwards, but it was certain that the Soudanese would resist with might and main the restoration of anything like Egyptian rule. The absolute fallacy of these views, honestly held, illustrates the need in England for a school in the science of foreign politics. From this point of view, Mr. Morley was as fundamentally ignorant as his followers. The Soudanese are the real strength of the existing Anglo-Egyptian administration.

The motion was rejected by 288 votes to 145; but in a great speech at Leeds, a few weeks later, Mr. Morley took occasion to

dilate more emphatically on the unwisdom of reconquering the Soudan even for the purpose of coming to the aid of the Italians, whose position had been shaken, and whose reputation had been diminished by the defeat they had just experienced at Adowa at the hands of the Abyssinians. While Mr. Morley was inclined to think that the Soudan question would supply the most popular cry on which the Government might be turned out of office, his colleagues rather inclined to the view that the Armenian atrocities furnished the best weapon; and the Radical Press made the most of the topic in absolute disregard, not merely of the feelings, but of the sovereign rights, of the Sultan.

The matter had an unexpected *dénouement*. Lord Rosebery, the titular leader of the Liberal Party after Mr. Gladstone's retirement, and a statesman of rare sagacity, had no sympathy with the amateurish and ignorant way of conducting the foreign policy of the British Empire that had begun to find advocacy and favour in the Liberal clubs and press. He saw that it would be futile to attempt to turn the extremists of the party from their course, and he adopted the only dignified procedure of resigning the

leadership and retiring from public life to the great loss of his country. Mr. Morley, whose views on foreign policy wavered between the two extremes, paid him the following tribute. He styled Lord Rosebery "that eminent man of so many brilliant gifts and talents, of such high and undoubted public spirit, of such vivid and sincere popular sympathies." These are weighty and telling words to be duly remembered whenever Lord Rosebery's position as a Liberal leader and English statesman is discussed.

Foreign politics continued to loom largely before the public during the whole of the year 1897, and Mr. Morley played a very considerable part as the advocate of "our friend the enemy." In this respect he might be compared to Charles James Fox, who earned unpopularity by his championing of French views during the great Napoleonic struggle. It may seem doubtful to those who have not been bred in the atmosphere of party politics how this form of polemics can add to the hold those who deal in it exercise on the public opinion of their fellow-countrymen; and more than one friendly narrator has gone out of his way to declare

that Mr. Morley knowingly courted unpopularity with the wish not merely of vindicating his own principles, but of giving a more pacific turn to British foreign policy. But, whatever his motive, there was this consequence: the Irish question no longer figured in the forefront of Mr. Morley's speeches. Indeed, it gradually dropped out of them altogether.

Greece, Turkey, and the Transvaal received most of his notice. He was one of the severest critics of the Jameson raid. He even criticised Mr. Rhodes, who he thought ought at least to have been removed from the Privy Council, "not because he believed that he used the political occurrences for the perpetration of gigantic operations on the Stock Exchange, but because he consorted habitually with men who did." But at the same time he was not wholly blind to the unreasonable character of President Kruger and the plotting of the Transvaal Government, for, speaking at Merthyr Tydvil on 7th May, 1897, he declared, after criticising Mr. Rhodes, that he "was all for standing up for all our legal rights, and for resisting unjustifiable interference from Europe and the outside in regard to the Transvaal Convention."

When foreign politics did not seem to offer

a sufficiently promising weapon for ousting the Conservative Government, or at least increasing the chances of the Liberal Party of coming back to power whenever the next General Election should come round, there remained the permanent standing dish, as it were, of the power of the House of Lords. The House of Lords had thrown out Mr. Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill, and there was no doubt it would veto all legislation tending to break up the Union. For this reason it incurred the bitter hatred of every Radical who, in the vaunting spirit of "Brutus, the slayer of Kings," ejaculated in season and out of season: "Down with the House of Lords."

Mr. Morley had no deceptions of this sort. He objected to the unqualified veto of the House of Lords, but he knew that the House of Lords was far too firmly planted to be overthrown in the easy way imagined by some of its would-be destroyers. Besides, he was perfectly convinced that it would not be upset at all so long as its action in vetoing Bills passed by the House of Commons was in harmony with the opinion of the majority of the English people, who, at least, constituted the dominant partner.

Speaking at Forfar on 4th October, during a tour in Scotland, he used the following remarkable words, which should not be forgotten—

"It is just worth observing that the present Upper House has only got a suspensory power. It is excluded from two of the most important arenas of Parliamentary power. First of all, the House of Lords cannot touch a tax bill or a money bill; and, secondly, it is absolutely unable to affect in any way the choice of the Executive Government. Therefore, in these two important parts of Parliamentary power, the House of Commons is absolute and uncontrolled."

The plain meaning of this representation of the situation, which need not be accepted as absolutely settling a most difficult point in constitutional history, is that Mr. Morley foresaw that the proposed abolition of the House of Lords (assuming for the sake of argument that one branch of the Legislature could be allowed to abolish another—which is a very large assumption indeed) would have results that the iconoclasts were very far from perceiving.

The new Senate or Second Chamber that

would replace it would have to possess a clearly defined power, and this would be of necessity greater than that possessed by the House of Lords. But the power of one Chamber could only be increased at the expense of the other. What the new Upper Chamber acquired would have to be lopped off from the role and privileges of the House of Commons.

A hard-working Senate would be a more exacting and difficult partner than the House of Lords. It would not spare its censure of the gross waste of time, paltry discussions, and crass ignorance of Imperial problems displayed by the great majority of the men who sit in the House of Commons. A vigorous body of the best brains in the country would, by its searching criticism and effective work, soon make the House of Commons appear ridiculous in the eyes of the British public. A reflecting mind like Mr. Morley's took all these points and contingencies into his view in 1897, and everything that has since happened must have strengthened his doubts and reservations. He confined himself, then, to one brief and practical proposal. He proposed to give peers the option of deciding before they took

their seat in the hereditary Chamber whether they would sit in the House of Lords or try to get elected to the House of Commons. Lord Curzon, when he was only the heir to a peerage and a M.P., held the same view.

Mr. Morley's views on the House of Lords, originally expressed at Merthyr Tydvil in October, 1897, were enlarged upon at Bristol two months later. This second expression of opinion is well worth bearing in mind whenever the long-deferred proposal to define the powers of the House of Lords, and to invest it with the authority of a Senate, may come before the country for settlement. "I hold," he said, "that a general attack on the House of Lords and its privileges would inevitably miscarry. Those who seek to curtail them must have an occasion. The House of Lords must resist the popular will upon some measure. That would be their opportunity. But even then I hold that the attempt to succeed must aim not at changing the composition and constitution of the Upper House, but at limiting its power." Clearly, Mr. Morley would prefer the old House of Lords shorn of its right of veto to a new Senate possessing real attributes

of power, and one which had not given any hostages to fortune. In other words, Mr. Morley desired the complete ascendancy and supremacy of the House of Commons. But he forgot that an uncontrolled House of Commons might play the tyrant as well as a Caesar or Romanoff.

During the years immediately following the 1895 General Election, Mr. Morley showed himself mainly conscious of two things: the exceptionally difficult position in which what remained of the old Liberal Party found itself, and the imperative necessity of trying to revive the confidence and courage of its followers and supporters in the country. In the House of Commons he continued to speak only on rare and important occasions, but in stumping the country he showed much of his old activity. He always paid his constituency a visit towards the end of the year, when he took occasion to survey affairs "from China to Peru." It was on these occasions that Mr. Morley most clearly revealed his statesmanlike capacity, and showed that he was not so blind to what was going on outside England as he was accused of being. In 1896 the final operations in the Soudan were under discussion,

the Armenian problem was very much to the fore, and the situation generally in the Near East wore a menacing aspect. In his annual address at Montrose on 10th November of the year named, he spoke in warning tones, which have more or less lasting significance.

"You are standing at a moment when great issues confront this country. You will have to decide them. You will listen to what I venture to say to you. You will listen to what is said on the other side. I have not to-night on foreign matters attacked the goal. Remark, that I have stated the case. I have said that I look without much hope on their (the Conservative Government) attitude, but I know well the difficulties of the position. I got into very great disgrace last December with our own party because I said that I thought Lord Salisbury was a cautious and a circumspect man. Therefore in nothing that I have said have I any desire to make one iota of party political capital. We are in a serious national position, unless I read the signs of the times all wrong, for several years to come. The state of Europe, being what it is, will need all the caution, and all the circumspection, and all the courage—which is very often the truest kind of circumspection—it will need them all to steer us

safely, soundly, and honourably through the difficulties which may confront us and overtake us. I have a profound and unquenchable faith in the good judgment and right information of the people of this island."

It was not merely with regard to matters of high politics that there was reason at the period referred to for apprehension. Keen international rivalry had invaded the sphere of commerce, and the successful progress of other countries had begun to create something of a scare in England. American competition had long seemed formidable, but at this juncture German rivalry began to loom deadliest and nearest on the horizon.

Various causes and explanations were offered for the greater success of the German trader and manufacturer, but most persons agreed that it was largely due to the superiority of the technical education and training given in Germany. Mr. Morley shared this view, whilst also thinking that far too much time and attention were given to sport and athletics—an opinion in which he anticipated Rudyard Kipling by about ten years—and he pleaded for greater business application.

Speaking on this subject at the Battersea

Polytechnic on 9th December, 1896, he said, among other things—

"He had accepted the invitation to be present that evening with pleasure, because, after all, an educational meeting was a calmer affair and, possibly, a more fruitful affair than those political gatherings which it was his fortune often to address. Education was, undoubtedly, one of the most important and interesting subjects in the world, but he was sorry to say from his experience that no speeches were so tiresome as speeches upon education. He had experience in making such speeches, and, still worse and more painful, in listening to them. The truth was that they never got lively, pungent, and animated speeches except upon subjects where men took different sides. . . . It seemed to him that our great manufacturers had received a rather useful little fright about German competition.

"Englishmen seemed to him never to enjoy themselves so much as when they were in a panic. On Englishmen a panic had not the effect of making them take to their heels and run away. When they were in a panic, when something was going wrong, they knew that they would put their backs to the wall—very often in military things unwisely and in a hurry. They knew that England was not going to be beaten. But a panic was always accompanied by the

coming out from their hiding places of all sorts of quackeries. Mr. Chamberlain used the exact formula which was proper for his subject when he said: 'There is every reason for watchfulness, there is no reason for despair.' He believed that one cause at least of the success of German competition was the existence in Germany of an organised and systematic plan for technical education — technical education connected with the other branches of education, and he hoped that we should speedily amend and reform our system."

The position of the nominal leaders of the Liberal Party during this period was anything but comfortable or happy. Lord Rosebery had found it insupportable, and retired. Sir William Harcourt, who succeeded him, was regarded with suspicion and dislike by the greater number of his followers. Intrigues against his authority were always going on, and he was accused of favouritism of which he was quite innocent, and of prejudice towards some of his lieutenants which he had really no opportunity of displaying. He held on longer than Lord Rosebery; but at last he, too, threw up the sponge and, disgusted with the new conditions of politics, retired into private life. He notified the

fact in a letter to Mr. Morley, who thus, in a sense, became his successor. Mr. Morley's reply is interesting as a political document—

"It is impossible for me to feel the smallest surprise at your having found it impossible to keep silence in a situation that might well have become intolerable to you. No opposition leader had ever faced a more discouraging or difficult task than that of leading the Liberal Party in the House of Commons after its great defeat in 1895. And there is, to my mind, something odious —I can find no other word—in telling a man who strenuously faced all this, who has stuck manfully to the ship instead of keeping snug in harbour, because the seas were rough and skies dark, that his position in his party is to be incessantly made matter for personal contest and personal challenge. I know well enough, as you say, that there have been whispers about your singling out this personage or that as men with whom you would not co-operate. I also know how baseless these stories are, how precisely the reverse of the truth they are; how certain it is to anybody in possession of the facts that it was not from you, at any rate, the attempts at proscription, as you call it, have proceeded. You and I have not always agreed in every point of tactics or of policy, since you have been the working leader of

the Liberal Party. For Government and Opposition alike, the times have been difficult and perplexing, and diversity of views on sudden issues was not on either side of the House unnatural. But I am confident that every colleague we have, who has shared our party councils since the disaster of 1895, will join me in recognising the patience, the persistency, and the skill with which you have laboured to reconcile such differences of opinion as arose and to promote unity of action among us. We are now to dismiss all this from our minds for no other reason that I know of than that you have not been able to work political miracles and to achieve party impossibilities. On the contrary, I for one feel bound to say how entirely I sympathise with the feelings that have drawn this letter from you."

Very shortly after this incident, Mr. Morley himself withdrew from the councils of his party, and took up an entirely independent position, and at this stage it will be most convenient to close this chapter.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRANSVAAL WAR

ALTHOUGH Mr. Gladstone had passed out of the political arena when he retired in 1894, his death none the less marks a clear dividing line between the old and the new in English politics at the end of the nineteenth century. His retirement was complete and unqualified. Politics ceased to trouble him, and even Mr. Morley saw him but rarely. In May, 1898, his illness became grave; the end was seen to be near; and on the 13th of the month, Lord Rosebery and Mr. Morley, the last of all his colleagues and friends to do so, were permitted to pay him a farewell visit. On the 19th of the month, Mr. Gladstone passed away.

At that moment the Transvaal question was just becoming acute, although war was far from being generally deemed inevitable. Mr. Kruger had profited by the odium which the failure of the Jameson raid had brought upon the Outlander cause to develop his oligarchic system, and at the same time to

accumulate the material for war on the largest scale.

But although the position of the British Government had been embarrassed by the illicit attempt to carry by force of arms the reforms which the British settlers demanded, its point of view was very much the same as that of the organisers of the raid, and it was determined not to waive its rights because some of its subjects had acted wrongly. Moreover, the information that reached it left no doubt that Mr. Kruger was preparing for war at home and straining every nerve to secure allies abroad. The Government could not blink the facts. If Mr. Morley's party had been in office it would have been obliged to act just as Mr. Chamberlain acted, only it would have been a little slower about it. Mr. Kruger was treating the Transvaal Convention as a dead letter, and that was precisely what Mr. Morley had said at Montrose could not be tolerated, for the Convention was Mr. Gladstone's own doing.

It is unnecessary to burden the narrative with the details of the negotiations that ensued in South Africa under the direction of Lord Milner; and all that need be

attempted here is a summary of the incidents and speeches in which Mr. Morley took a prominent part in the protracted South African controversy both in and outside Parliament. His attitude during the national crisis that followed, when he sometimes seemed to court unpopularity with great independence according to his friends, and some wilfulness in the opinion of his opponents, forms an interesting psychological study. But, while he was often accused of being both a pro-Boer and "a Little Englander," he always repudiated the charges and, indeed, he frequently declared that he was really an Imperialist, as his main object was to advance the true interests of the Empire.

His first views on the negotiations with the Transvaal authorities, which, after long and abortive discussions, were approaching a crisis at this date, were contained in the speech he made at Arbroath on 5th September, 1899. He dwelt on the importance of so shaping British policy as to carry with it the sympathy of the Dutch in South Africa generally. Even after a successful war, he argued, the Transvaal would have to be turned into a Crown Colony, which would be

Ireland over again—a little Ulster on the Rand, and the rest only held down by an army of occupation.

The first object of the Government's policy was to get the Outlanders the franchise, so that they could redress their grievances themselves. In principle, this had been already conceded, although in application the Boers had been slow. "I still hope," he said, "that the Boers will go into the Conference and that they will strip the franchise, which they are now willing to concede, of every ambiguous term and every dubious restriction. The true policy in South Africa was one of fusion."

These views were enlarged upon ten days later at Manchester (15th September) before a meeting which was, to some extent, composed of a hostile party who came to shout, but stayed to listen. The following passages are worth quoting—

"We are all agreed as to the necessity of reducing the grievances of the Outlanders, and that it is expedient and necessary to urge the South African Republic to give a liberal, substantial, immediate franchise. This was a very critical time, and they must be patient—not too patient. The

Government were insisting that the Outlanders should be allowed the franchise after five years' residence, and in his judgment the Transvaal could not withdraw from the five years' franchise. But the Transvaal was not the whole of South Africa. Cape Colony was a self-governing colony; at the recent election, a Dutch majority of twelve was returned, corresponding to a majority of eighty at home. That was no disloyal majority; it had voted £30,000 a year as a contribution to the Imperial Navy. When pressing these demands, it was common sense to go hand in hand with the majority in that great colony. People talked of a permanent settlement. Permanent settlements were not such an easy matter."

The important points deducible from these earlier speeches are that Mr. Morley saw and admitted that there was a case against the Transvaal as well as one for it. Under certain eventualities he was even willing to resort to the employment of force. The views expressed at Arbroath and Manchester were reiterated at Carnarvon on 6th October. Four days later, the Boer ultimatum reached London, and war became inevitable.

The war once begun, and more especially as it had commenced with British reverses,

Mr. Morley took up a fresh position. He did not criticise the war itself, which he recognised must continue, but he claimed full liberty to discuss and criticise the policy that had led up to the war. On the whole, he spoke very little during the critical year 1900, less, indeed, than at any time since he had entered political life. In a speech to his constituents at Forfar, he observed a cautious and restrained attitude, emphasizing the facts that he was no longer a leader in his party, and that he was only a vigilant observer and critic.

Incidentally, he contributed a happy thought to the ever-burning question of Imperial responsibility and expansion. He said—

"I confess I do not like the word 'empire,' which seems to convey the idea of rule over unwilling populations. I prefer to think rather of a confederacy of States, of which Great Britain would be the centre."

Federation and fusion represent Mr. Morley's ideal in the solution of difficulties between the different parts and races of the Empire. It cannot be called altogether the view of an idealist, seeing that it has now been put in practice in South Africa.

Mr. Morley's most important speech during the year 1900 was delivered neither on the platform nor in the House, but in the calm atmosphere of the Oxford Palmerston Club, of which he had been made the honorary President in succession to Mr. Gladstone. His theme was the Liberal Party, and he set himself to show how it was in danger of bearing out Lord Chatham's dictum that the disturbance of an effective party system resulted in national confusion. He disliked the catch-word "Liberal Imperialism," and could not see what distinguished it from Unionist Imperialism or Liberal Militarism. His reading, too, of the cause which led to the war in South Africa differed from that of his former colleagues; but he was careful not to say anything which might suggest that he was for an immediate stoppage of the war. The first act of the war was drawing to a close, and he would not pretend that he did not rejoice at the triumph of our arms. Before the outbreak of hostilities, he had warned the South African Republic that war must mean the extinction of their independence. He refused to indicate his views of settlement, because, as yet, they did not know enough.

He concluded with a rather remarkable reference to Socialism and his views thereupon. He said—

"I have, year after year, opposed the Socialists, not because I do not sympathise with them, but because I thought their measures would do mischief to the character of the individual, and would handicap us in the struggle—the vital struggle—for an industrial position. But if I am unfortunately compelled to choose between the Socialist and the militarist, I must say the Socialist's standards seem higher, and his aims are not any more wild."

In September, 1900, the Conservative Government decided to take advantage of the favourable turn in the campaign to appeal to the country and obtain what was virtually a fresh mandate to continue its work in South Africa. It dissolved Parliament, and what was called the Khaki Election ensued. The result vindicated its judgment as to what were the right tactics, for the Conservative-Unionist Party came back to power with 402 followers against 268 of the Opposition, or a majority of 134. Owing to ill-health, Mr. Morley was unable to take part in the election; but the electors of

Montrose refused to have any one else, and he was elected in his absence. The following letter, written on 19th September on receiving the news of the intention of his constituents to elect him, reveals his feelings of deep gratification.

"The truly generous language of the resolutions and the striking cordiality of the proceedings are a demonstration of which any Member of Parliament might be proud; and, without affectation, I will confess that so marked a testimony of public approval, and of extreme personal kindness and goodwill, is no small compensation to me for the disappointments of the hour. I have always openly, fully, and with sincere respect offered to the consideration of my constituents what I thought, from time to time, on the main political events as they arose in the course of the last five years. It is upon these events, especially in regard to external policy, that the judgment of the constituency will be taken."

He contributed one notable letter to the literature of the election of 1900. This was in the form of a postscript to his address, and was dated 4th October. It was considered a very finished composition at the time, and made a good impression even on

those who had classed Mr. Morley as a doctrinaire, and as one who decided questions on high principles without any regard for the practical needs and views of the world in which we all live. He said, among other things—

"It has been my hard lot, in the course of my Parliamentary existence, to fight no fewer than nine battles—most of them severe, and I have dealt with opponents of all sorts and sizes. My present one did, indeed, charge me with having encouraged the Boers to fight; and then being promptly and effectually dislodged from that preposterous position, he seems, so far as I can judge, to have let serious discussion drop with the curious remark that he did not mean 'encouraged' in a bad sense.

"There is not a man engaged in our national affairs who does not see and know that we are expanding our responsibilities beyond the limits of our resources; that the public burdens are growing perilously heavier; that giant rivals are slowly, but surely, springing up against us in all the markets of the world, while we are profligately squandering our resources and wealth. The merchant and the manufacturer are gradually finding out that the doctrine of trade following the flag is a bubble, and the taxpayer is finding out

that you do not expand your frontier in two continents for nothing. And let him realise that he is not ending, only beginning. Perhaps the day is not remote when we shall even regret Lord Salisbury. As for the war, I have not one word to withdraw of all that it has been my duty to say to you about it. I regard it as a baleful incident in the retrograde policy to which I have earnestly drawn your attention. I regard the incorporation of the two Boer States as the consummation of one of the most evil blunders in our history, and I look forward with much misgiving to a future settlement under the direction of the present Ministers. In many respects, this is the most hollow election since 1865. The issue has been clouded, the facts have been easy to misrepresent, party has been divided. We may be sure that a clearer division of parties will not be long in following, and in that process of sifting and trying men's comprehension of Liberal principles you know, I believe, where I shall be found."

Prevented from taking a personal part in the election of 1900, it was not surprising that Mr. Morley's active part in politics should continue to be small during the remainder of that year, and this retirement also extended over the greater part of the following session. In June, 1901, he paid

his first visit to the Montrose burghs after an absence of nearly two years. Speaking at Montrose itself on 4th June, in the year named, he referred to his election ten months earlier *in absentia* as the greatest honour of his life, and as exceeding in value in his eyes the grant of any honour or title. The more important part of the speech contained some personal confessions of much autobiographical interest, which, if carefully considered, will suffice to dispose of the theory that Mr. Morley was only a doctrinaire and not a statesman. I quote merely those passages which seem to have permanent, rather than only passing, value.

"At the meeting preceding the last election, you laughed at all that fantastic nonsense about my being a Little Englander, about my having nothing worth fighting for, about my dreaming that our world-wide dominion was to be preserved without having sentinels always on the watch-towers vigilantly scanning the horizon for peril in any quarter. You disbelieved all the nonsense that our complex system could be maintained without a statesmanship of what I will call an active kind and without military strength. I detest war, but so do you all. I recognise, and so do you, that there may

be occasions when the undertaking of war is a national duty which cannot with honour safely be refused. I have no natural gift, I am sorry to say, of turning my cheek to the smiter."

Then turning to the political situation in the House of Commons, he uttered some truths of permanent value.

"I, for one, do not regard a political isolation as splendid. The man who cannot work in the House of Commons with other people is a man who might just as well be out of the House as in it, and the day on which I am persuaded that I am not able to work with other Liberal comrades—the day when I realise such union is hopeless—I shall resign my trust into your hands. I have no admiration whatever for isolated persons, but at the same time I have still less admiration for a man who, for the sake of union, will sacrifice all that makes his creed and his position a reality to him."

He delivered two other addresses during the following days, principally noteworthy for his commentaries on questions that were not then quite so much the order of the day as they have since become. One of these was temperance, to which Lord Peel's report

had just drawn marked attention, at the same time suggesting the lines of remedial legislation.

"He wished to say a few words on the temperance question. He had always regarded that question as the most important in all the elements of social reform. It was one of the greatest questions in itself and in relation to social efforts, and it was a question that evoked the deepest and most fervent force for good in the public mind. This temperance movement had entered upon a new and important phase. Lord Peel's report had brought temperance reform into a more promising position than it had held for a long time. It was no use, however, attempting to get the public mind earnestly concentrated upon any question of social reform until they had got all this lurid powder smoke out of their eyes. There could be no retrenchment, no reduction of their taxes, no social reform, until there was in the determination of the minds of the people the spirit of peace."

The following conception of what constitutes practical statesmanship, according to Mr. Morley's ideal, is also full of interest—

"People said that it was very arrogant of him to put himself in opposition to the

judgment of the country, but there had been wars before this which he had seen come to be regarded as bad blunders. He had never denied that the Government had the support of the country. He thought the war had been a mistake; he thought, moreover, that this was being found out, if but slowly. Temperate statesmanship, surrendering no right, shrinking from no duty, would continue to carry the fame, the tongue, the free laws, and the moral and social ideas of this kingdom along the full tide of its destinies so benignant and so majestic."

The bitter controversies of the South African War reached their height in the recriminations that arose out of the burning of Boer farms; and in November, 1901, Mr. Morley had fathered in a letter to *The Times* the personal complaint from the wife of a Dutch farmer on the subject, which gave rise to somewhat angry rejoinders.

His last speech on the subject during the progress of the war was delivered at Manchester on 12th March, 1902, when he somewhat censured Lord Milner; but three months later peace came in earnest, and he was too well pleased with the main result to cavil much at the details. Speaking at

Edinburgh on 7th June, he took credit to himself that the terms of peace were very much on the lines he had always advocated, and were not the final exactions of a brutal conquest by superior force. They did not exclude, for instance, the realisation of his old panacea: the fusion of Boer and Briton in a South African nation. The following extracts from his peroration will suffice—

"Of course, we shall not wipe out in a moment the controversies that have arisen; the war and the controversies upon its policy have cut deeper into moral, political, national, Imperial issues, than any controversy that has arisen. We cannot, therefore, expect that the backwash of these controversies within our own party and with the other party will all at once disappear. I will not now—perhaps never at any time—discuss the terms of settlement. Those terms contain, as near as can be, the principles at all events which some of us for the last few months, and perhaps longer, very strenuously advocated."

In the following October he was able to speak a little more kindly on the subject, for Mr. Chamberlain had just announced his intention to visit South Africa and to see the condition of things on the spot—always

a wise course, and preferable to judging and deciding difficult questions from a distance. It gave Mr. Morley the opportunity of paying a tribute to the courage and character of Mr. Chamberlain, who had once been his colleague and friend, and whose policy in Ireland and South Africa he had often unsparingly criticised. *The Times*, in its leading article on this speech, thanked Mr. Morley for his handsome tribute as coming from an opponent, and pronounced it an auspicious send-off for Mr. Chamberlain.

The close of the South African War had another consequence than the termination of a bitter and long-protracted controversy. It revived the hope of the Liberal Party for their recovery of power; and Mr. Morley, though more guardedly than some of his friends, began to think that the satisfying and gradual allaying of the patriotic impulses in the country might lead to a revulsion from Conservatism to Liberalism. But in his first speech—that made at Edinburgh in June, 1902—he very frankly admitted that he did not see how the Government was to be turned out. For this reason, he counselled patience and vigilance. He added that, in his opinion, the

Liberals should not be in a hurry to define a programme. The need of the hour was to unite their forces; to attract back to the fold as many of the old Liberals as would come; and to raise the main battle cry of the Liberal cause, which had always been "peace, retrenchment, and reform."

The consequences of the war, from the taxpayers' point of view, were a heavy debt and a largely increased burden of taxes. These alone were sufficient to make the Government of the day, whatever its party colour, unpopular. Mr. Morley took the lead in drawing attention to the bad financial condition of the country, and he was not backward in emphasizing the point that this was largely due to the prosecution of a war which he always described as "unnecessary and easily to be avoided." The lenient terms of the peace, coupled with the evidence that the policy of the Government was to conciliate the Boers, lent more force to this criticism, and especially to the point that the war might have been avoided, than was admitted at the moment.

Incidentally, too, Mr. Morley took advantage of the financial difficulties following the war to preach his old lesson: that what the

British Empire wanted most was consolidation and concentration, and not expansion. In one of his speeches at this time, he said—

"They talk lightly of the expansion of empire, but the territorial expansion of empire does not mean expansion of the contributory area from which taxation was to be received. The Colonies could not be led to provide any serious contribution to our national burdens."

The falseness of this view has been exposed by many incidents culminating in the help rendered by the Colonies and India during the great European War of 1914.

At the same time, Mr. Morley began to scent danger in the fiscal policy of Mr. Chamberlain. In October, 1903, he made a great Free Trade speech at Manchester, reiterating his unswerving belief in the permanent and indestructible truths of Cobdenism. He also pleaded for a generous policy towards those Liberal Unionists whose Free Trade sympathies were proved to be undoubted by their quitting the Conservative side in consequence of the adoption of the new panacea of Fiscal Reform. Many secessions of prominent and influential men on this ground from the Unionist Party had

just been announced. Mr. Morley's views of the industrial depression and of the growth of successful foreign competition were that the cause was partly England's own fault and partly the natural consequence of the development and progress of other nations. The remedy lay, he declared, in improved technical education; greater thoroughness in work and detail; and the abandonment to some extent of the pursuit of sport for more serious occupations. In other words, he pleaded that men should devote themselves to their business, whatever it might be, with greater concentration.

The belief that Free Trade, which had certainly given England cheap food and thus established a hold on the minds of the crowded urban population, was menaced by Fiscal Reform, which was a novelty and experiment that many regarded as dangerous, helped undoubtedly to intensify the growing reaction in favour of the Liberal Party. Another weapon was furnished by the proposal to employ Chinese labour in the Rand mines. This was commonly called "yellow slavery," and during the whole of the year 1904 the Liberal leaders were actively employed in denouncing it from one end of

the country to the other as a capitalists' plot. The country was asked to believe, and the result showed that it did so to a large extent, that the war and the importation of Chinese labour had both been taken up in the interests of the mine owners and the capitalists.

Although Mr. Morley, in his capacity of political partisan, made use of these arguments and charges, his main advice to the Liberal Party, in whose councils he had resumed the place of a leader, was to unite in forming a definite constructive policy; and it is very remarkable to find that in his great speech to the Liberal Federation in May, 1904, he predicted that, if it failed to do this, the Tariff Reform programme of Mr. Chamberlain would surely carry the day.

The advice was heeded, a definite constructive policy was drawn up, and the country accepted it, when in 1905 the Conservative Government dissolved Parliament and appealed to the country. The result of this General Election will be considered in a later chapter; but it may be stated, at this point, that Mr. Morley, who had always opposed Socialism as dangerous and scientifically unsound, was led by the

exigencies of party competition to commit himself, for the first time, to the support of Socialistic doctrines. 'It had come to that, he admitted, or the triumph of the doctrine of Mr. Chamberlain. The British electors decided to give Free Trade a further lease, but for how short or how long a period this would be, the next few years would reveal. At least, Mr. Morley foresaw that, if the new Socialistic programme did not produce the results promised, Tariff Reform would inevitably be adopted by the country.

CHAPTER X

THE SECOND LITERARY PHASE

AFTER the 1895 election, the defeat at Newcastle, and the seven months' absence from the House of Commons, Mr. Morley had reverted to his earlier tastes. For the time being, literature reasserted its claim to engross his best thoughts, and politics sank into a secondary place. He decided still to remain in the political arena for reasons already suggested, but the comparative leisure afforded by the fact that he was not in office enabled him to devote a certain amount of his thoughts and time to literary work.

He made his reappearance in the field of letters by a work with which the undiscriminating observer would have thought him the least competent to grapple, and certainly those who heard its name never dreamed that Mr. Morley would present a flattering picture of Machiavelli. It came about in this way. A Canadian scientist named George John Romanes, who was

educated at Cambridge, endowed an annual lecture which was to be delivered not at his own University, but at Oxford. Romanes, who died a year or so after the establishment of the lectures that bear his name, was a man of science; but fortunately he did not restrict the subjects of the lectures to science, for if he had we might never have known what Mr. Morley thought of the subtle intellect of the Italian arch-statesman, in whose school Frederick the Great of Prussia may be called the chief pupil of many historical celebrities.

At the end of the year 1895, while Mr. Morley was without a seat in Parliament, the trustees of the Romanes fund approached him and invited him to deliver the lecture for 1897. He complied, and selected the career, work and teaching of Machiavelli, the founder, as it were, of the modern school of statecraft. The selection was peculiar for many reasons, not least, perhaps, because Machiavelli was the originator of the system of armed nations, and Mr. Morley had always been anti-militarist to the last degree. But the apparent incongruity between the views of the subject and those of the author was probably the temptation that induced Mr.

Morley to undertake the task. It promised to provide an interesting intellectual problem with which to wrestle.

The lecture was delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre, at Oxford, before a large audience, on 2nd June, 1897. Mr. Morley began by showing how the reputation of the Florentine diplomatist and expounder of statecraft had overshadowed the actions of potentates and governments not merely during the Middle Ages, but in modern times as well, as something sinister, disquieting, and dangerous. Half the great political crimes committed since his death had been attributed to his insidious teaching. Nevertheless, Mr. Morley declared—

"Far from withering and fading, his repute and his writings seem to attract deeper consideration as time goes on, and they have never been objects of more copious attention all over Europe than in the half century that is now closing."

Nowhere was Machiavelli's teaching more carefully studied or more rigorously put in practice than in Prussia, and Bismarck's exposition of *Welt-Politik* might be regarded as a missing chapter from The Prince. Bacon

summed up Machiavelli's merit in one crisp sentence—

"We are much beholden to Machiavel, that wrote what men do and not what they ought to do."

Machiavelli stands, then, not for the theorician or the doctrinaire, but the practical politician; yet Mr. Morley was at this time classed with the former. There was something piquant, then, in seeing how he would treat him. Here is a passage full of praise—

"He possesses the truest of all forms of irony, which consists in literal statement, and of which you are not sure whether it is irony or *naïveté*. He disentangles his thought from the fact so skilfully and clearly that it looks almost obvious. No writer has ever surpassed him in the power of throwing pregnant vigour into a single concentrated word. Of some pages it has been well said that they are written with the point of a stiletto. He uses few of our loud, easy words of praise and blame; he is not often sorry or glad; he does not smile and he does not scold; he is seldom indignant and never surprised. He has not even the mastering human infirmity of trying to persuade. His business is that of the

clinical lecturer, explaining the nature of the malady, the proper treatment, and the chance of recovery. He strips away the flowing garments of convention and commonplace; closes his will against sympathy and feeling; ignores pity as an irrelevance, just as the operating surgeon does."

Machiavelli's view of human nature was low. Mankind, he held, was more prone to evil than to good. In his opinion, men are a little breed, to which view Tennyson gave poetic form in—

> Howe'er we brave it out,
> We men are a little breed.

Mr. Morley declared that Machiavelli's judgments cut deeper than the polished proverbs of the moralists of the *boudoir* like Molière. They are not the voice of the preacher calling sinners to repentance. They contain only "a rather grim record from inspection of the foundations on which the rulers of States must do their best to build."

Machiavelli did not hold much with the theory of human progress. He held that—

"The world neither grows better nor worse; in fact, it is always the same. Human fortunes are never still; they are every moment either going up or sinking

down. But, among all nations and States, the same desires, the same humours prevail, and are what they always were. Men are for travelling on the beaten track. Diligently study bygone things, and in every State you will be able to discuss the things to come. All the things that have been may be again. His guiding axiom was: 'This bad and this good shift from land to land, as we may see from ancient empires.' They rose and fell with the change of their usage, but the World remained as it was. The only difference was that it concentrated its power in Assyria, then in Media, then in Persia, until at last it came to Italy and Rome."

But while Mr. Morley put very clearly, and with that literary grace which he found it so easy to command, what Machiavelli saw and wished his readers and students to see, he was bound in support of his own views to suggest that Machiavelli saw only half the picture of life, and that there are other forces at work than those admitted by the Florentine. His peroration deals adequately with the point.

"Machiavelli has been supposed to put aside the question of right and wrong just as the political economist or the analytical

jurist used to do. It is true to say that Machiavelli represents certain living forces in our actual world; that Science, with its survival of the fittest, unconsciously lends him illegitimate aid; that he is not a vanishing type, but a constant and contemporary influence. This is because energy, force, will, violence, still keep alive in the world their resistance to the control of justice and conscience, humanity and right. In so far as he represents one side in that eternal struggle and suggests one set of considerations about it, he retains a place in the literature of modern political systems and of European morals."

After this brief study in the field of politics of the work and character of the Italian who was a master mind from the Cabinet, Mr. Morley turned to the consideration at greater length of one who was not less supreme in the field of action. Oliver Cromwell had found many students and expositors, and some even among Mr. Morley's own friends. It was, perhaps, Carlyle's blind worship of the hero-side of the great Puritan that first impelled Mr. Morley to take up the theme and show the world something different, or rather it might more accurately be said that he wished to

demonstrate that Cromwell was neither a hero in the sense of having a right to unqualified admiration, nor a safe guide for those who favour and contend for constitutional methods. Almost his opening words are those of warning—

"His rule was the rule of the sword. No man that ever lived was less of a pattern for working those constitutional charters that are the Government's guarantees of public rights in our country."

Mr. Morley's chief motive, then, in taking up a subject "still capable of an almost endless range of presentment and interpretation," was not to fill the cup of adulation, but to warn Liberals that Cromwell's methods fell very far short of this ideal. Cromwell, as one of the Parliamentary group opposing the King, is praised without stint; but Cromwell, the War Lord, the trainer of Ironsides, and "the smiter of the Amalekites hip and thigh," is held up to mild reprobation.

It was the military spirit that always roused Lord Morley's special aversion and condemnation. The following passage gives pointed expression to his constitutional anti-militarism—

"On the whole, the contest in England was stained by few of the barbarities that usually mark a civil war, especially war with a religious colour on it. But cruelty, barbarity, and squalor are the essence of all war, and here, too, there was much rough work and some atrocity. Prisoners were sometimes badly used, and the Parliamentary generals sent great batches of them—like gangs of slaves—to toil under the burning sun in the West Indies, or to compulsory service in Venice or an American colony. Men were killed in cold blood after quarter promised, and the shooting of Lucas and Lisle was a piece of savagery. The ruffianism of war could not be avoided."

Now, of "the ruffianism of war" there have been few more striking examples than Cromwell's proceedings in Ireland. The massacre of Drogheda is one of the least excusable atrocities in history. To this hour the name of Cromwell is especially hateful to the Irish people. But Mr. Morley's political reputation had been gained as the friend of Ireland. He was a staunch Home Ruler. It was natural that some curiosity should be felt as to how he would respect historical truth and at the same time avoid giving serious offence to the Irish people.

He evaded the difficulty by having recourse to brevity, by demonstrating that the massacre of Drogheda was as useless as it was brutal, and by a concluding passage showing how Cromwell had failed. He wrote—

"Of all these doings in Cromwell's Irish chapter, each of us may say what he will. Yet to every one it will at least be intelligible how his name has come to be hated in the tenacious heart of Ireland. What is called his settlement aggravated Irish misery to a degree that cannot be measured, and before the end of a single generation events at Limerick and the Boyne showed how hollow and ineffectual, as well as how mischievous, the Cromwellian settlement had been. Strafford, too, had aimed at the incorporation of Ireland with England, at plantation by English colonists, and at religious uniformity within a united realm! But Strafford had a grasp of the complications of social conditions in Ireland to which Cromwell could not pretend. A Puritan, armed with a musket and the Old Testament, attempting to reconstruct the foundations of a community mainly Catholic, was sure to end in clumsy failure, and to this clumsy failure no appreciation of Oliver's greatness should blind rational men."

Mr. Morley's judgment on Cromwell's Irish

policy, then, was that it was a "clumsy failure."

There was another point about Cromwell with which Mr. Morley could not be expected to put himself in agreement. Cromwell was all for a vigorous foreign policy; he believed in the necessity of an army which could take part in continental struggles. In a memorable speech, Cromwell said—

"You have accounted yourselves happy in being environed by a great ditch from all the world beside. Truly you will not be able to keep your ditch nor your shippings unless you turn your ships and shipping into troops of horse and companies of foot, and fight to defend yourselves on *terra firma*."

Of the merit of Mr. Morley's monograph on Oliver Cromwell as a piece of literature, it is impossible to speak too highly. It contains some passages of singular beauty as word-pictures, and his concluding judgment is expressed in the majestic language of a judge.

"Political ends miscarry and the revolutionary leader treads a path of fire. It is our true wisdom to learn how to combine sane and equitable historic verdicts on the event with a just value in one's study of

the actor for those eternal qualities of high endeavour on which, amid limitless change in fashion, formula, direction, standard, and ideal, in all times and places, the World's best hopes depend."

Both in Machiavelli and Oliver Cromwell, Mr. Morley, in a remarkably insinuating manner, succeeds in impressing the general reader—who has no special knowledge of the subject, and who reads for the purpose of being provided with an opinion ready-made—with the idea that these opponents of his own favourite theories were in the wrong, in so far as they might be cited as authorities against him. Some critic of the day rightly described both these works as being of a highly suggestive historical character.

The following incident, which intervened between the publication of *Oliver Cromwell* and *The Life of Gladstone*, calls for some special notice. The death of Lord Acton in 1902 led to the fear that his fine library would be either broken up and dispersed, or exported as a whole to America. No doubt, this fear would have been justified if Mr. Andrew Carnegie had not come to the rescue and purchased the library. Having done so, he presented the collection—30th August,

1902—to Mr. Morley, who was then actively engaged on his *Life of Gladstone*. The question then discussed in literary circles was what would Mr. Morley do with it, for no one seemed to entertain the idea that he would permanently retain himself this vast collection of books. Sooner or later, every one felt sure that he would pass it on to one of the great institutions of the country.

The interesting point was: Which was to receive the gift when the time came to make it? There were, practically speaking, only three serious choices: Oxford University, the British Museum, and Cambridge University. The chances of each were reckoned in their order as just given; and as Mr. Morley was an Oxford man and a trustee of the British Museum, those of Cambridge were esteemed very slight indeed. Yet it was to Cambridge that Mr. Morley made his offer.

Writing to the late Duke of Devonshire, the Chancellor of the University, on 20th October, 1902, Mr. Morley said—

"*20th October*, 1902.

"MY DEAR DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE,—

"You may have heard some months ago what I hope will be known as the Acton

Library passed, by the signal regard of a friend, into my hands.

"For some time I played with the fancy of retaining it for my own use and delectation. But I am not covetous of splendid possessions; life is very short, and such a collection is fitter for a public and undying institution than for any private individual. After due inquiry and deliberation, and with the possible reservation of an inconsiderable portion of quite secondary importance, I have decided respectfully to ask the University of Cambridge, in which you hold the high office of Chancellor, to do me the favour to accept this gift from me.

"The library has none of the treasures that are the glory of Chatsworth. Nor is it one of those noble and miscellaneous accumulations that have been gathered by the chances of time and taste in colleges and other places of old foundation. It was collected by Lord Acton to be the material for a history of Liberty, the emancipation of Conscience from Power, and the gradual substitution of Freedom for Force in the government of man. That guiding object gives to these sixty or seventy thousand volumes a unity that I would fain preserve by placing them where they can be kept intact and, in some degree, apart. I am led to believe that at Cambridge this desire of mine could be complied with. There is no other condition that I wish to impose.

"In this way, I believe Cambridge will have the most appropriate monument of a man whom, though she thrice refused him as a learner, she afterwards welcomed as a teacher—one of the most remarkable men of our time, extraordinary in his acquisitions, extraordinary in the depth and compass of his mind. The books will, in the opinion of scholars more competent to judge than I, be a valuable instrument of knowledge; but that is hardly all. The very sight of this vast and ordered array in all departments, tongues, and times of the history of civilised governments, the growth of faith and institutions, the fluctuating movements of human thought, all the struggles of churches and creeds, the diverse ideals of States—all this will be to the ardent scholar a powerful stimulus to thought. And it was Acton himself who said that the gifts of historical thinking are better than historical learning. His books are sure to comprise both, for—multitudinous though they be—they concentrate the cardinal problems of modern history.

"I need not say that it will be a lasting pride and privilege to me that my name should, even for a transitory moment, be associated in the mind of the University with the establishment of the Acton Library within the precincts of a home so famous.

"JOHN MORLEY."

The Times, discussing the matter in a leading article, called "the letter in which Mr. Morley announces his purpose worthy of the gift and of the giver."

In October, 1901, Manchester erected a fine statue to Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Morley performed the ceremony of unveiling it. He made a particularly eloquent speech, in which he passed the great statesman's career in review, and claimed for him a place in the very forefront of the great statesmen of all time. *The Times*, in its leading article the next day, considered the claim excessive; but it is more than probable that, sooner or later, Mr. Morley's estimate will be nearer what public opinion generally is disposed to admit than *The Times* thought twenty-two years ago, and perhaps it will be reserved for a future leader-writer in *The Times* to endorse the view. Some of Mr. Gladstone's measures were open to question: his Irish policy encroached upon controversies that had been acute for at least four centuries, and his programme seemed a menace to the established order of things. But history will not judge him by what preceded his public career, but by what followed; and in comparison with the

Socialism that has now taken a definite place in public life, Gladstonianism would be ranked as extreme moderation and even conservatism. Mr. Gladstone, when he spoke of liberty, meant real liberty, and not the advantage of one class at the expense of another. Many have asked what is liberty? The most pregnant reply ever made, I believe, by Stuart Mill, was to the following effect—

"The liberty of the individual is complete, and should only end where the liberty of another individual commences."

It is for these reasons, and for the high example of his character, which may come to be deemed by posterity to overshadow that not merely of his contemporaries but probably of any English statesman of other times as well, that Mr. Gladstone seems likely to attain that niche in the temple of fame which Mr. Morley predicted that he would occupy. At the moment that Mr. Morley uttered the words in which he attempted to assign the definite place that Gladstone would occupy in the light of history, he was far advanced with the heavy task with which he had been entrusted shortly after Mr. Gladstone's death.

Mr. Morley had been appointed—indeed, the choice was one of those that, as is termed, impose—shortly after the death of his great leader to prepare the official biography of Mr. Gladstone. The fulfilment of the task required a period of nearly five years, and the result was the production of three large volumes, which represented the greatest feat of conscientious labour in the field of biography that is to be found in English literature. On one occasion, Mr. Morley referred to it as the greatest task he had ever undertaken and performed, with the exception of the six years of storm and stress during which he had held the difficult, onerous, and thankless office of Irish Secretary. The result of his hard labour was the addition of a standard biography of the first rank to the library of English literature.

It may seem easy to the outsider to write the biography of a dead man. As a matter of fact, there is no literary task of greater difficulty. The difficulty is immeasurably increased when the dead man leaves living contemporaries who were mixed up in his affairs, and whose conduct, capacity, and opinions could not be excluded from the

meed of praise or blame if they were to be discussed at all. In the case of Mr. Gladstone, most of the documents were confidential, and could not for many years be divulged or utilised. Moreover, Mr. Morley, as a member of his Cabinet, as sharing with his chief the greatest political and party secrets of the time, had to place the closest curb on himself so as to prevent the commission of an indiscretion or a breach of faith. There are no indiscretions, no breaches of faith, from one end of the three long volumes to the other, by the admission of Mr. Morley's political opponents as well as his friends.

Having eliminated the sensational revelations that might have been made, having passed by unused the piquant details which a Greville would have revelled in giving to the world, the difficulty remained to make the book interesting. By the adoption of the form of simple narrative, Mr. Morley surmounted with equal skill and success the difficulties of his task. He relied on the historical importance and personal interest of Gladstone's long and varied career to carry the reader with him, and he did not rely in vain. Mr. Morley's *Life of Gladstone*

is, therefore, essentially an account of the man and his work in both public and private life. Although in almost every particular, highly eulogistic, Mr. Morley was not blind to some of the most characteristic faults of his former chief. He did not much like his sophism, or the nimbleness of mind which enabled him to praise and adopt the very measures which only a little before he had censured and declined. A simple, direct, and strong writer himself—saying what he had to say in words that no one could misunderstand—Mr. Morley had no love for Mr. Gladstone's clouds of words. Somewhere in the "Life" this view comes out in a passage, recording that his "explanations were over-skilful in form, and half a dozen blunt, sound sentences would have stood him in far better stead."

With the *Life of Gladstone*, the last, lengthiest, and perhaps the greatest of Lord Morley's literary efforts, this survey of the second phase in his career as a man of letters may be closed. It came as a pleasant interlude in his political experiences, filling up the interval passed in the cold shade of Opposition with work agreeable to himself, profitable to his readers, and contributing

to his fame as one of the leading English writers of his time. It had one indirect consequence. It strengthened the opinion in many quarters that Lord Morley was greater as a writer than as a politician, and that he had made a regrettable mistake in remaining at St. Stephen's. It was not till he went to the India Office that these critics began to recognise that he was a statesman.

CHAPTER XI

AT THE INDIA OFFICE

In one of his essays, Mr. Morley makes a passing reference to the curious malady that affects those who have been long in power when they have to pass a little time in Opposition. He saved himself from the complaint, as was shown in the last chapter, by turning to his favourite pursuit, but others had no similar solace. A sort of blight seemed to have fallen on the energies and intellect of the Liberal Party during the long period that followed its disruption on the morrow of the introduction of Home Rule. Fortunately for those in Opposition, the long possession of power breeds a complaint of its own. It is of a double character : sometimes it produces a sense of satiety and weariness of effort, and an inability to take bold decisions, which are also the fatal symptoms of senile decay ; and this was the case in 1905. In other instances, it produces the tyranny of office, an absolute disregard of the rights and feelings of the minority, a blind intolerance, a reckless appropriation of the perquisites of power,

which are called, in colloquial language, "the loaves and fishes of office."

The swing of the pendulum had at last moved in favour of Mr. Morley's party. If Home Rule was half dead in 1895 as the question on which a General Election would turn, it was wholly dead in 1905. There was also no burning patriotic topic before the public to incline it to vote for the Imperialist as against the Little Englander. Every one knew this before the election began, that the Liberals would have a majority was certain, but it was not at all certain what that majority would be, or whether the Irish party would come into the reckoning as holding the balance of power in the House of Commons.

On this very point, Mr. Morley made some remarks in his speech to his electors at Forfar on 10th January, 1906—

"This General Election is the most exciting within my experience, and probably for nearly sixty years, with the possible exception of that on Home Rule in 1886. There are three current predictions: (1) The Liberals, as in 1885, will be equal to the Tories and Nationalists combined; (2) the Unionists will number only 200; (3) the

Government will have a majority of thirty or forty over the joint forces of the Tories and Nationalists."

Mr. Morley went on to explain that he did not himself attach any importance to these hazardous predictions, but that none the less he felt confident that the tide had turned in favour of the Liberal Party.

This anticipation was more than confirmed by the pollings which began on 12th January, 1906, and ended a month later. The Liberals obtained the most extraordinary and decisive victory recorded in Parliamentary history. The total of ministerial Liberals showed a majority of 84 over all the other sections of the House combined; whilst, including their ordinary allies in the Labour and Nationalist factions, they counted 513 votes to the 157 Conservatives and Unionists together. After the result became known, the country showed some symptoms of being a little afraid of what it had done; and the power of the democracy, to say nothing of the theories of Socialism, began to loom rather formidably before the eyes of the British citizen and taxpayer.

Mr. Morley's influence was one of the moderating forces in the new Cabinet. He

was opposed to false theories in economics, and he had a particular objection to heresies against the teaching of science. He did not believe that the State was bound to provide work to the unemployed; he was not at all enamoured of free pensions; and he had no sympathy with the fads and fallacies of the Henry George School. At the same time, he fully recognised that the supreme power lay with the people, only he was persuaded that they would make good use of it.

Presiding at the banquet of the Eighty Club on the 27th April, 1906, to celebrate the result of the General Election, he urged his hearers "not to be afraid of the democracy, and not to run away from it."

Mr. Morley's share in what may be called purely party politics now became of minor importance in comparison with the responsible duties of the higher office to which he was appointed in the new Cabinet. Perhaps the most significant appointment in the composition of the Government formed by the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was the selection of Mr. Morley for the post of Secretary of State for India. There is no doubt that it raised some misgivings and even apprehension in the minds of those

who were opposed to all change in India. It was concluded, somewhat hastily beyond doubt, that Mr. Morley was set upon a radical change in the administrative system of India, and he was more than suspected of a desire to endow her with a modern Parliament. His critics pointed out that he knew nothing of India, and that intimate knowledge of her races and traditions was the first essential condition of any useful or fruitful measure of reform. It was also insisted upon that India was a more hazardous field for the trial of legislative experiments than Ireland.

Mr. Morley's part in criticising and opposing the Tibetan expedition; his general censure of all military expeditions; and, finally, his distrust of the man on the spot, and his dislike to leave him a free hand, were all cited as so many reasons for apprehension. In short, Mr. Morley's appointment inspired those who took the old official Anglo-Indian view of things with considerable alarm. This alarm was increased rather than diminished by the condition of things in India itself. Before this narrative closes I shall be able to show that this apprehension was unjustified.

For some time before the advent of the Liberal Government to power, it had been evident that disaffection existed in Bengal. The sentiment was vague in its scope, but it required only some incident to give it a definite object It came in 1905, when the Government of India decided to divide the great Province of Bengal into two parts. The so-called Partition of Bengal gave the agitator precisely what he had been seeking for—a popular cry which would place the Government in the light of a despot, excite the public mind, and rally to the cause the discontented and the disloyal who may be found in any large community.

The administrative change named was at once followed by the Swadeshi movement, which turned a thoroughly legitimate and praiseworthy endeavour into a blind and vindictive boycott. The Swadeshi movement was followed by the still more avowedly hostile and implacable Swaraj organisation, which signified nothing less than the overthrow or downfall of British rule. The unrest of the part of India called Bengal became visible to all, and a succession of outrages and crimes served to show that there were some desperate men behind the

movement, and that their talk and their threats, their denunciations of the present order of things, and their predictions of the good time to come had availed to bring them many volunteers and assistants.

Mr. Morley took up his office, then, at the moment when "India's unrest" had passed out of the field of surmise into that of visible fact, although it had not yet reached the worst stage of violent outrage. There was, however, a clamorous demand for the withdrawal of the Partition scheme, and the reversion to the *status quo*. It was not at all certain that Mr. Morley would not yield to that demand when he took up office; and it is quite possible that he might have gone to this length if the agitators had confined themselves to strictly constitutional weapons. But when they resorted to violence and crime, they destroyed Mr. Morley's sympathy with their complaints, and they rendered him resolute in his decision not to undo what had been done. Never, indeed, was there a more typical case of men defeating their own ends than when the leaders of the anti-Partition movement passed from constitutional methods to preaching sedition and promoting outrage.

The Bengalees had made one serious error in their calculations. They had assumed that they were the sole inhabitants of the province, and that their rule was to be imposed on all its people in the event of any change in the government. The Mahomedans were in a marked minority, if only numbers were to count, and because of that they were to accept meekly and without resistance the government which the Hindus condescended to confer on them. It had never occurred to the Hindus that the Mahomedans, who had ruled Bengal before the British, might infinitely prefer their supremacy to that of their former subjects. Superiority of numbers is not everything, or sheep and rabbits would be the noblest of animals.

For the purposes of popular agitation, numbers, however, have their value; and the larger the community, the greater must be the total of dupes and knaves. But minorities have their rights and are not to be ignored. The sixty million Mahomedans of India experience no diminution of influence and no quakings of apprehension because the Hindus outnumber them as three or four to one. The only significance

of that majority could lie in its being vested with the power of stifling Mahomedan opinion, and diminishing its due and effective representation and expression. To prevent that result in even a partial degree, the Mahomedan community relies on the spirit of British justice, as well as on its appreciation of the political requirements of the time.

While the fomentors of discontent among the Bengali Hindus were wholly opposed for their own ends to the partition of Bengal, the Mahomedans of the province regarded the question with different feelings and from their own point of view. They had no sympathy with the agitators, who declared that the administrative change was intended to break up "the great Bengalee nation" because they did not form part of it. In Bengal proper, they only formed, and could only hope to form, a minority; but in Eastern Bengal they were more on a level with their Hindu fellow subjects in numbers, and might anticipate an equal share in influence and authority, no matter what the form or composition of the supreme government of the country might become.

The city of Calcutta must of necessity

always be Hindu in its main features; but the city of Dacca, as the capital of Eastern Bengal, might be a centre of Mahomedan influence and prosperity for an indefinite time. The partition of Bengal, which the Hindus proclaimed to be a measure of absolute retrogression, was received by the Mahomedans not merely in a different spirit, but in the full persuasion that it might well form an advantageous system in itself. Out of this opposing view arose not merely a severance of interest between the two main divisions in the Indian community, but a pronounced opposition on the part of the Mahomedans to the Hindu agitation and programme.

Such were the main features in the Indian situation at the time of Mr. Morley's appearance as Secretary of State at the India Office. That there was unrest in Bengal no one could seriously doubt, although some prominent sympathisers with the illicit and extreme Swaraj movement in the House of Commons pretended not to see it. Some of this unrest was reasonable and deserved sympathetic consideration. British rule had taught the rights of man in India, and it was not surprising that a demand for the

right of local self-government should have grown up. The demand was not merely legitimate; but, provided that it was entrusted to the execution of really able and meritorious men, its satisfaction promised to be useful to the Government and beneficial to the community.

But if there was a healthy unrest that sprang from the desire for progress and the spirit of the age, the greater part of it was due to disloyal and unavowable sentiments. No concessions would have satisfied this faction; indeed, any act of concession was hailed as a proof of the weakness and fears of the ruling power. Before Mr. Morley entered upon his office, hostility to the British Raj confined itself to words, but very shortly afterwards it revealed itself in deeds. There could no longer be any doubt as to its scope, purpose, and virulence. Yet during the whole of this period of what may be termed half-revelation, Mr. Morley was being urged by the self-constituted champions of the Bengalee party to commit the indescribable folly of cancelling the partition of Bengal. He was denounced by the Socialists as a trimmer and even a Liberal renegade—Mr. Hyndman's words—because

he displayed a little common sense and refused to ignore the patent facts under his eyes.

There was one thing in Mr. Morley's treatment of the question that at once attracted attention and inspired confidence. He was deliberate. He showed that he was studying what he ought to do before he attempted to do it. His first public utterance was delivered on 19th June, 1906, at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society on the subject of Indian studies. He chose neutral ground, as it were, for his first utterance on the subject of India.

"Certainly before long the people of this country would interest themselves more constantly and more pressingly than they had hitherto done in India. Whether that would be an unmixed gain would depend upon a great many things, among others on the people of this island acquiring a real knowledge of the real condition of Indian society. He heard political friends of his own very often talk as if India and all its vast variety of population was exactly like this country, and could be dealt with in the same way, though it ought to be dealt with in the same spirit. There was nothing more important than that the people of this country should lead the mind of the country,

and should eventually decide the policy on which India should be governed. Nothing was more important than that they should recognise that in India we had an extremely complex, diversified, and perplexing subject. One might be talking one day to an Indian who spoke as good English as we spoke, who could talk with as much intelligence as ourselves of the literature, the philosophy, the politics of modern Europe. On the other hand, there were in Southern India small communities of people who were not much more advanced than the most backward savages of Central Africa. It was not reasonable, and it might be dangerous to forget this diversity of condition."

These remarks may be regarded as a sort of introduction to the annual statement it devolved upon him to make, in his official capacity, a few weeks later, in the House of Commons when passing in review the Indian Budget. The statement was one of especial interest for its references to the policy of the future, but it only foreshadowed, without attempting to define, what the proposed reforms would consist of. *The Times*, in its leading article on the subject, said with perfect truth.—

"Mr. Morley's statement in the Indian Budget will be read with general satisfaction,

not only because of its encouraging picture of the results of British rule, but because it breathes throughout the earnest inspiration and prescient tone of a statesman thoroughly in sympathy with the task he has in hand. All the evidence shows that the destinies of India have been committed to a statesman whose consecutive interest in his subject is untiring."

In the eyes of *The Times*, which had always appreciated Mr. Morley's literary excellence, he was no longer a mere doctrinaire or an arm-chair critic, but a statesman.

I permit myself to quote the most significant passages, as they strike me, from Mr. Morley's first annual statement in the House of Commons—

"I have heard a thousand times that India is an insoluble problem. Well, the man who runs away from problems called insoluble is not fit for politics. I have generally found that what is called an insoluble problem is a problem wrongly stated. I have only been in office a few months, but I have lost no opportunity of placing myself in contact with as many people as possible from India—people of every type, of every class, likely to take every different point of view. I have seen native rulers from India—'dusk faces in

white silken turbans wreathed '—and I sometimes think we make a mistake in not attaching the weight we ought to these powerful princes as standing forces in India. The man who dogmatises about India is a pure simpleton. I throw that out promiscuously. All tell us there is a new spirit abroad in India. How could it be otherwise? This year the Senior Wrangler is from India! And now I come to close quarters. It must not be taken for a moment to indicate that I dream you can transplant British institutions wholesale into India. That is a fantastic and ludicrous dream. You have to adapt your institutions to the conditions of the country where you are planting them. I hope there will be no hurry or precipitancy either on the part of the bureaucrat or of the agitator. If there is, it can only have the effect—the inevitable effect—of setting the clock back."

The changes foreshadowed in the plans of the Secretary of State were an increase of Indian representation on the Legislative Councils and local boards, the formation of the princes and leading personalities of the Peninsula into an advisory Council, and the association of a few 'choice intellects of the Indian community in the highest administrative work of the Government. But Mr.

Morley was still, as it were, only groping towards a solution. He reserved his definite scheme and its details for another year.

It was in October, 1906—not long after Mr. Morley's statement just quoted from—that the Mahomedan community of India came prominently forward and asserted its right to be taken into consideration on an equality with any other in the changes contemplated in the administration. An important deputation waited on the Viceroy at Simla and presented him with a memorial. In this were set forth, with great force and clearness, the claims and views of the Mahomedans. They referred to their loyalty to the British Government, and also to the fact that they had been the rulers of India before the British. They also wanted guarantees that their rights should be respected, and that they should not be swamped by the merely numerical superiority (which did not imply either influence or capacity) of the Hindu section of the population.

Lord Minto replied very sympathetically, and praised in particular the moderation and self-restraint displayed by the Mahomedans in Eastern Bengal and Assam. He

then dealt more particularly with the formal demands in the Memorial—

"The pith of your address, as I understand it, is a claim that in any system of representation—whether it affect a municipality, a district board, or a Legislative Council, in which it is proposed to introduce or to increase an electoral organisation — the Mahomedan community should be represented as a community. You point out that, in many cases, electoral bodies as now constituted cannot be expected to return a Mahomedan candidate, and that, if by chance they did so, it could only be at the sacrifice of such a candidate's views to those of the majority opposed to his own community, whom he would in no way represent, and you justly claim that your position should be estimated not merely on your numerical strength, but in respect to the political importance of your community and the service it has rendered to the Empire. I am entirely in accord with you.

"I make no attempt to indicate by what means representation of communities can be obtained, but I am as firmly convinced, as I believe you to be, that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement, regardless

of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this Continent.

"In the meantime, I can only say to you that the Mahomedan community may rest assured that their political rights and interests will be safeguarded in any administrative reorganisation with which I am concerned."

Although Lord Minto's statement concluded with a somewhat personal reference to his own opinion—his words were that he would be no assenting party to any different arrangement with the Mahomedan community—the qualification, if it might be termed one, could not affect the importance and binding character of the Viceroy's pronouncement. It is an old saying that the "Yea and nay" of a British Viceroy constitutes a solemn bond. We have no reason as yet to believe it possible that it can be broken or even deviated from in the spirit as well as the letter. The only reasonable conclusion was that the assurances made by the Viceroy to the Mahomedan delegation would be kept in their strict integrity.

These promises were the more encouraging and solemn as coming from Lord Minto's

lips, because it was he, by the admission of every one, including Mr. Morley, who first set the ball of reform rolling. He had taken the step of drafting possible changes in the system of administration with the object of increased Indian co-operation, despite the fact that the disloyal agitation had extended from Bengal to parts of the Punjab and of Bombay. The spread of the seditious movement, accompanied, as it was, by murder and bomb-throwing, placed the reform scheme in some jeopardy. Many people asked whether the Government would not abandon its proposals, because it might be said that they were due to fear. There was another reason. The Government was compelled to resort to special repressive measures and exceptional legislation to uphold the law. Mr. Morley, speaking in the House of Commons on 13th May, 1907, rightly summed up the situation—

"There can be no secret that, if disorder spreads, there will be an end to all those projects, whether we like it or not, of reform, which the Viceroy and I—and I do not believe that any two servants of the Crown have understood one another better than the Viceroy and I—have hoped, and

still hope, to produce. Executive measures of this kind—and I think my Parliamentary record shows that no one dislikes them more than I do—must be judged and tested by the emergency and the risk. As to Eastern Bengal, the situation is strained, owing to the great bitterness that prevails between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, the cause of which is to be found in the attempts made by Hindu agitators to compel the Mahomedans, by open violence, to abstain from purchasing foreign goods in the markets and fairs. The consequent disorders have assumed a very serious aspect, and have created a feeling of great unrest."

Up to this point, although it was well known that Mr. Morley was seeking information in every quarter and studying the whole problem with the closest attention, he had said nothing definitely as to his intentions. The first sketch of his programme was set forth in his second speech on the Indian Budget—what is now called the annual statement of the Secretary of State—made in the House of Commons on 6th June, 1907—

"Last year I observed, as others have done before me, that it is one of the most difficult experiments that have ever been tried in human history—whether you can

carry on what I think, for myself, you will have to carry on in India, personal government along with free speech and free right of public meeting. That which last year was partially a speculative question, has this year become more or less actual.

"At the end of March last, the Viceroy informed his Legislative Council that he had sent home a dispatch to the Secretary of State proposing suggestions for a move in advance. It emanated entirely from the Government of India. After the riots broke out, what was the course to pursue? Some in the country lean to the view—and it is excusable—that the riots ought to suspend all suggestions and talk of reform. The Government held that such a withdrawal from a line of policy suggested by the Governor-General would, as a matter of course, have been construed as a triumph for the party of sedition. They held that to draw back on account of local and sporadic disturbances, however serious, anxious, and troublesome they might be, would have been a very great and grave humiliation. I warned one or two of my friends that in resisting the employment of powers to suppress disturbances, they were promoting the success of that disorder which would be entirely fatal to all the projects with which they sympathised.

"We have given approval to the establishment of a Council of Notables. The second

proposal is the acceptance of the general principle of an enlargement of the Legislative Councils, both the Governor-General's and the Provincial Legislative Councils. Lastly, the Secretary of State has the privilege of nominating members of the Council of India. I think the time has come to safely and justly nominate one, and it may be two Indian members. . . . We ought to face, and we do face, all these mischiefs and difficulties and dangers of which I have been speaking with a clear conscience. We know that we are doing it not for our own interest, but for the interest of the millions committed to us; and we ought to face it with a clear conscience, with sympathy, with kindness, with fairness, with a love of justice, and, whether the weather be fair or foul, in a valiant and hopeful spirit."

A further feature of the scheme was that more time and fuller opportunities were to be given for the discussion of the expenditure of the Government of India in the different departments, thus recognising that the co-operation of Indians might be most valuable in connection with financial matters and problems. Mr. Morley's scheme was very well received in the House and by the Press. The only dissentients were the few Members

who had got into touch with the leaders of the Bengalee movement. These were angry not so much with the scheme itself as with the repressive measures that had to be taken against those who were not merely unfriendly critics of the Government of India, but its implacable enemies. They accused Mr. Morley of playing the tyrant as it were, and of abandoning his old Liberal principles. He replied to these critics, of whom Mr. Keir Hardie was the most obtrusive, in a very dignified speech to his constituents at Arbroath on 21st October, 1907—

"In the policy I am endeavouring to follow in regard to India, I must repudiate the charge that I am abandoning Liberal principles. The first and commanding task of Britain in India is to keep order, quell violence, and sternly insist on impartial justice. Mr. Keir Hardie has said that what suited Canada would suit India. This was not merely untrue; it was the height of political folly. The Government of India would neither be hurried by impatient idealists nor driven into needless coercion by repressionists. The situation was not dangerous, but required serious and urgent attention. They wanted to rally

the moderates, if they could not satisfy the extremists; their line would remain the same. Young educated Indians had read Milton, Burke, Macaulay, and Stuart Mill, and were intoxicated, as we had been, with their great ideas; but, as Burke had said, many weary steps had to be taken by those who endeavoured to form out of a great mass a true political personality. The Government were appealing to the better mind of the people of India. The root of the unrest was racial, not political; and the appointment of Indian members on the Council of India was intended to do something to meet this racial dislike. I will not allow myself to be deterred from pursuing to the end a policy of firmness and slow reform."

At the close of the year 1907, Mr. Morley, who in July had been selected by the King-Emperor as one of the few chosen for his new Order of Merit, had broken ground in the direction of Indian reform, but the details of the scheme remained to be filled in; and among those details the most important was the composition of the electoral colleges for the different legislative and provincial Councils. The nomination of Indian gentlemen to seats on the India Council in Whitehall was very important,

because it meant breaking down a great barrier of prejudice and privilege. The nomination of two such members instead of one prevented any invidious distinction between Mahomedans and Hindus, and placed them on an absolute equality, as should be the case in all things. This innovation admitted of immediate execution, but the others required time.

The eve of the close of Mr. Morley's long career in the House of Commons is a convenient point at which to close this chapter, in which a brief sketch has been attempted of the first efforts at Indian reform. Mr. Morley had displayed throughout two sessions great patience and great firmness. He was patient to learn and master his subject, as well as towards his critics. He was firm in resisting the pressure brought to bear upon him from one side because he did not hesitate to punish and repress; and from the other, because he held that the work of progressive and remedial legislation must go on, despite unrest and even outrage. He was not in favour of endowing India with a Parliament, but he was not ill-disposed to the Congress. Defining his policy in a broad way, it might be said that he considered

that India had reached, in her evolution, a stage between the old strictly bureaucratic *régime* and the Government by representative and constitutional institutions, which is the ideal of England. The time had come to take a step forward. It was his mission to see that it should be planted on firm ground.

CHAPTER XII

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

DURING the winter of 1907–8 it was stated more than once that Mr. Morley's health was causing his friends some anxiety, and that he might be unequal to the task of combining his heavy and anxious work at the India Office during the day with the arduous and exhausting duties of a Member of the House of Commons far into the night. After the Session of 1908 had commenced, the report began to gain ground that Mr. Morley would receive a peerage, and thus obtain relief from the strain of close Parliamentary attendance. The truth of this rumour was confirmed on 13th April, 1908, when it was announced that the King had created Mr. John Morley Viscount Morley of Blackburn. The necessity of adding the designation of Blackburn (which Mr. Morley selected, as the place of his birth) is explained by the fact that another peer bore and bears the title of Earl of Morley.

There was some not ill-natured chaff at Mr. Morley entering the House of Lords,

which he had consigned to perdition in a memorable *mot*; although, as I have pointed out in an earlier chapter, his phrase as to "ending or mending the House of Lords" was more qualified than those in whose memory the catch phrase lingered represented it to have been. Besides, Mr. Morley had never claimed a blind and unyielding consistency as one of his political virtues. He moved with the times. His action was dictated by the needs of the day, and not by the words of the day before. Still, it may be safely assumed that Mr. Morley accepted the peerage not for the sake of the gilded coronet or the dignity of a seat in the House of Lords, but simply and solely because his doing so enabled him to remain in politics and to continue the work he had so well begun with regard to Indian reform.

Now, it was a little curious that when Lord Morley, after his transfer to the House of Lords, took up the theme of Indian reform, his first address of any marked importance should have been made not in the House, but to an outside and, in a sense, non-political, audience. On 11th June, 1908, he dined with the members of the Indian Civil Service, and made one of the most remarkable

speeches he had ever delivered on the subject. It is right to recall the exact circumstances of the hour. In consequence of bomb throwing and the murder of innocent people, special laws had been enacted. The Press Act and the Explosives Act had just been sanctioned by the Viceroy's Legislative Council and approved of by the Secretary of State.

Before citing what seem to be the passages of lasting value from Lord Morley's address, I would quote some of the comments made in *The Times* leading article on the occasion. They were called forth by the existence of an impression that the Indian Civil Service, as a body, was opposed to the new legislation gratifying some of the aspirations of India and, generally speaking, to the schemes of reform. *The Times* began by stating that—

"An attitude of reticence is occasionally quite wrongly mistaken for opposition. We do not doubt that when, in the fullness of time, those measures at which Lord Morley hinted are devised for modifying the present system, the Indian Civil Service will be found heartily co-operating in the task of adapting existing methods to changing needs."

The passages that I am now about to quote give a closer and more intimate insight into Lord Morley's personal views about India than are perhaps to be found anywhere else. He had just passed special measures of a repressive order, but the whole of his political career proved that nothing was more repugnant to his mind than special legislation of any kind and repression of all sorts. When he resorted to such measures it cannot be doubted that he held the need for them to be very great.

"Our first duty—the first duty of any Government—is to keep order. But first remember this. It would be idle to deny—and I am not sure that any of you gentlemen would deny—that there is at this moment, and there has been for some little time past, and very likely there will be for some time to come, a living movement in the minds of those people for whom you are responsible. A living movement, and a movement for what? A movement for objects which we ourselves have all and always taught them to think desirable objects. And, unless we somehow or other can reconcile order with satisfaction of those ideas and aspirations, gentlemen, the fault will not be theirs. It will be ours. It will mark the breakdown of what has never yet broken

down in any part of the world—the breakdown of British statesmanship. That is what it will do. Now, nobody, I think—I do not believe anybody either in this room or out of this room—believes that we can now enter upon an era of pure repression. You cannot enter, at this date, and with English public opinion, mind you, watching you, upon an era of pure repression, and I do not believe really that anybody desires any such thing. I do not believe so. Gentlemen, we have seen attempts—in the lifetime of some of us here to-night we have seen attempts—in Continental Europe to govern by pure repression, and, indeed, in days not altogether remote from our own we have seen attempts of that sort. They have all failed. There may be now and again a spurious semblance of success, but in truth they have all failed. Whether we, with our enormous power and resolution, should fail, I do not know. But I do not believe anybody in this room, representing so powerfully as it does dominant sentiments which are not always felt in England,—that in this room there is anybody who is for an era of pure repression."

Repression, then, was only adopted as a temporary expedient to enable the Government to discharge its first duty as a

Government, viz., the maintenance of public order. It was not to be a permanent remedy in the eyes of the Government.

I will now pass to the very pregnant remarks which Lord Morley made on the alleged curtailment of the freedom of the Press by the new Act. Lord Morley's main contention may be given in three words—Liberty, not licence.

"When I am told that an Act of this kind is a restriction on the freedom of the Press, I do not accept it for a moment. I do not believe that there is a man in England who is more jealous of the freedom of the Press than I am. But let us see what we mean. It is said: 'Oh, these incendiary articles'—for they are incendiary and murderous—'are mere froth.' Yes, they are froth; but they are froth stained with bloodshed. When you have men admitting that they deliberately write these articles and promote these newspapers with a view of furthering murderous action, to talk of the freedom of the Press in connection with that is wicked moonshine. We have now got a very Radical House of Commons. So much the better for you. If I were still a Member of the House of Commons, I should not mind for a moment going down to the House—and I am sure

that my colleagues will not mind—to say that when you find these articles, on the avowal of those concerned, expressly designed to promote murderous action, and when you find, as a fact, that murderous action has come about, it is moonshine to talk of the freedom of the Press. There is no good in indulging in heroics. They are not wanted. But an incendiary article is part and parcel of the murderous act. You may put picric acid in the ink and pen just as much as in any steel bomb. I have one or two extracts here with which I will not trouble you. But when I am told that we may recognise it as one of the chief aims of good government that there may be as much public discussion as possible, I read that sentence with great edification; and then I turn to what I had telegraphed for from India — extracts from *Jugantar*. To talk of public discussion in connection with things of that kind is really pushing things too far."

In his peroration to his remarkable discourse, Lord Morley made a strong appeal to the better sense of India, and his words have not fallen on deaf ears.

"I will not be in a hurry to believe that there is not a great body in India of reasonable people, not only among the quiet, humble, law-abiding people, but among the

educated classes. I will not believe that there is not a great body of reasonable people of that kind. I do not care what they call themselves or what organisation they may form themselves into. But I will not be in a hurry to believe that there are no such people, and that we cannot depend on them. When we believe that we have no body of organised, reasonable people on our side in India—when you, gentlemen who know the country say that—and, mind you, you must have that body of opinion among the educated classes as well as among the great masses, because it is the educated classes in all countries and in all times who make all the difference. I say that on the day that we believe that, we shall be confronted with as awkward, as embarrassing, and as hazardous a situation as has ever confronted the rulers of the most complex and gigantic State in human history. I am confident that, if the crisis comes, it will find us ready, but let us keep our minds clear now. There have been many dark and ugly moments—I see gentlemen around me who have gone through dark and ugly moments—in our relations with India before now. We have such a dark and ugly moment before us, and we shall get through it, but only with self-command and without any quackery or cant, whether it be the quackery and cant of order or the quackery and cant of sentiment."

There is every reason to believe and hope that the true remedy for all India's problems and difficulties will be found in the direction of co-operation between Englishmen and the best and most enlightened elements in India. They have a great task which they can share in common in the maintenance of the peace and contentment of the country, and in promoting the true interests and material prosperity of all its peoples.

The next occasion upon which Lord Morley expressed his views on Indian questions was a fortnight later, when Lord Curzon drew attention to the subject, and a debate of the highest interest and importance ensued. Besides Lord Curzon and Lord Morley, the House of Lords was the recipient of important statements made by Lords Cromer, Midleton, and Ampthill. In the course of this debate, light was thrown on the inception of the Partition of Bengal; and it is probable that the searcher after historical truth will find hidden in Lord Morley's statement the avowal that, if there had been no outrages and no bomb throwing, there might have been some reconsideration and a possible modification of the partition scheme itself. Before passing on, it deserves,

then, to be noted that the violent acts of the extremists really defeated their own ends.

Commenting on this debate, *The Times* said that—

"Its striking feature was the strong and universal support accorded from both sides of the House to the Secretary of State. Lord Morley of Blackburn had the gratifying and unusual experience of hearing his policy endorsed by every one of the distinguished speakers."

The following passage from the same leading article shows the growth of a feeling that, while the policy embodied in the reforms was not to be abandoned, there were good reasons for delaying their application a little until the worst phases of the unrest had shown some signs of abatement. The passage reads as follows—

"That Lord Morley should have affirmed afresh his determination not to be deterred by the outrageous excesses of the revolutionary party, from conceding such reforms to India as he deems just and right and safe, was only to be expected. His announcement will meet with the warm approbation, not only of those moderate Indians who view recent developments with horror and

aversion, but also of many experienced Indian administrators, who think the time is ripe for a restricted programme of administrative reform. At the same time, there is much force in the objection that such a change should not be unduly expedited. The morrow of a carnival of bomb-throwing is not a convenient occasion for proclaiming concessions. Their promulgation may well await a rather more appropriate season; but it is evident from Lord Morley's statement that some months will elapse before he is prepared to make public his new proposals. We hope that India will then be in a more suitable frame of mind to receive them."

Having quoted the comments of the leading paper on the speech, I propose now to give some excerpts from the speech itself as revealing for the general reader the main lines of Lord Morley's policy with regard to India. He began by vindicating himself from the charge that he had shown any hesitation or backwardness in sanctioning the measures necessary for maintaining order and authority, and he declared with some feeling that—

"Any one who is familiar with the history of Indian administration in the two and a

half years during which I have been responsible for it, will do me the justice to say that I have never allowed anything, either popularity in the House of Commons or popularity among my own friends outside the House, to turn me for one moment, by a hair's breadth, from any action or policy that I thought was required."

Lord Morley's views on the Partition of Bengal were conveyed in the following paragraph. He accepted it and he meant to stand by it, but his approbation of the scheme could not be termed enthusiastic. It is a passage that must be often cited and referred to. Here it is—

"The noble lord spoke of the Partition of Bengal. Now, I have never, for my own part, indulged in any of the accusations of which he has complained, and the refutation of which appears to have been his main object in bringing forward this not very fruitful discussion. The Partition of Bengal was a proceeding I thought mistaken in its methods, but no language has ever fallen from my lips that has in any way shaken the conclusion that the Partition of Bengal was a settled fact so far as I am concerned. (Opposition cheers.) I will say, without any danger of being misunderstood, that, when I consider all the circumstances under which

the Partition was made—it was a matter of adjusting boundaries and operations of that kind—I could never see why it should have been regarded as so sacrosanct. It may be, it is so, and for me it is so, because it has become a test, and by that test I am willing to abide so far as I am concerned."

The strongest passages of the speech were those reiterating the necessity and the wisdom of continuing in the path of reform, despite the provocation afforded by the outrages, which, in the opinion of some, supplied an excuse for giving up the idea of administrative changes altogether. They breathe the spirit of the highest statesmanship.

"The noble Lord (Curzon) went into a very elaborate, careful, acute, and thoroughly experienced analysis of the causes of unrest. I think I am able to accept and to follow him into almost the whole of those causes. I think his diagnosis about education, about the tremendous influence of Japanese victories, and the other elements which he mentioned is thoroughly sound; but he did not say a word, and I admit it was not his business to say a word, about the course which he would advise His Majesty's Government or the Government of India to pursue.

Of course, one policy is very simple. It can be expressed in the pithy formula which I heard the other day—if I may be forgiven for using a profane expression—'Martial Law and no damned nonsense.' Martial law and no nonsensical constitutional or other reform—that is not the noble Lord's policy, I am perfectly sure; but I observe that everything that falls from him leads to the assumption that we must know and decide for ourselves, without overmuch reference to Indian demands and expectations, what form of so-called concessions we think fit to give them. I think the Viceroy himself (Lord Minto) was better inspired. I cannot sufficiently admire the manful courage in India with which, without yielding to panic or exaggeration on one side or to disgust at their blind, reckless, aimless crimes on the other, the Viceroy is ever persisting in the path which he and we have marked out for ourselves.

"I think we can all realise the position of the Viceroy, surrounded as he is by influences of an alarmist kind. Lord Minto was appointed, not by my political friends, but by the Government of noble Lords opposite; and I can only say here, as I have said in another House, that between no two servants of the Crown is there a better understanding and a fuller confidence than there is between the present Viceroy and the

present Secretary of State. I admire the manful courage with which, in the very speech in which he was bringing in his Explosives Act and his Press Act, Lord Minto said: 'No anarchical crime will deter me from endeavouring to meet, as best I can, the political aspirations of honest reformers.' I think that is a very fine utterance—fine in itself and fine considering the occasion. We have no choice but to persevere in the path of reform. We cannot get out of our own history. We cannot leave the course marked out for us by the conscience of this country in dealing with what I am sorry to call alien races. In these days we cannot leave that out. I, for my part, accept the maxim of the French statesman who said: 'In politics you ought to take nothing tragically, everything seriously.' The House will not be surprised if I say that nobody in it views more seriously than I do the crisis—I do not believe that is too strong a word—by which we are now confronted. We can only surmount its dangers and difficulties by looking calmly and composedly, that is not to say without energy and force, at the problem which confronts us. We may postpone, but the longer you postpone, the greater will be the ulterior difficulties. I would be particularly glad if your lordships will take this from me, that it is not merely Congress-men, it is not merely moderates or extremists in Indian parties;

read some Anglo-Indian newspapers, and I find there, not as violent, certainly, but just as sincerely, the expectation and hope for improvements in government and administration as I find in the Press of a more angry complexion. I believe from all the evidence that reaches me—I do not work these things out in my own head—from the members of the Indian Civil Service whom I have the pleasure of seeing from time to time, that the Civil Service itself, the administrators great and small, will be as glad for an improvement, and are looking as anxiously for an improvement in administration as the ordinary politician. Therefore, if we were to take our hands from the plough now, —I do not say to adhere to every word in the scheme which the noble lord has criticised, because of bombs and operations of that species—we should be exposed not only to the fury, the blind fury if you please so to call it, of the extremists, not only to the lamentations of the moderates, but we should be disappointing a great mass of strong Anglo-Indian European opinion."

The concluding passage about India's "reasonable demands" was full of significance—

"Then there is the Indian party, or parties. They will make a great mistake

if they give up the hope which they have hitherto always professed in the justice and good faith of this Parliament. I have heard that a friend of mine gruffly said to one of those who were talking of their faith in Parliament still remaining, in spite of a Secretary of State who, as the noble lord said, has greatly disappointed them by his falling away from his earlier compositions: 'You are worshipping a blind and deaf divinity.' I do not agree. I do not believe that Parliament wishes either to be blind or deaf to any reasonable demands from India, provided those demands are made and pressed in a reasonable way, and are kept clear of madness and of wicked crimes; and if they are backed by the responsible Executive Government, I have no fear of those demands not being complied with. One or two matters I have left out, because I do not want to detain your lordships. There was a certain passage between the noble lord and Lord Midleton. In that passage I was *tertius gaudens*. I was sorry for it, because, if I may say so without impertinence, it is of great importance in the face of India that those leading public men who take part in Indian discussions should abstain, as far as they possibly can, whether in dispatches or otherwise, from anything calculated to make the people believe that we look for a moment to any personal considerations of one kind or

another in view of the tremendous issues by which we are confronted."

Up to this stage, all Lord Morley's speeches had been tentative and anticipatory. The definite scheme was under consideration, and in course of elaboration at the India Office and at Simla. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State had been in constant intercommunication by telegram and dispatch on the subject for nearly three years. The time had arrived for acquainting the world with the result. On 17th December, 1908—a date that must ever be memorable in the annals of Indian Government—Lord Morley unfolded his scheme in a speech remarkable for its lofty eloquence and for the breadth and statesmanlike quality of its views. I give the important parts of this address.

"Now a very important question arises, for which I would for a moment ask the close attention of your lordships, because I am sure that both here and elsewhere it will be argued that the necessity, and the facts that caused the necessity, of bringing forward strong repressive machinery should arrest our policy of reforms. That has been stated, and I dare say many people will agree with it. Well, the Government of

India and myself have from the very first beginning of this unsettled state of things never varied in our determination to persevere in the policy of reform. I put two plain questions to your lordships. I am sick of all the retrograde commonplaces about the weakness of concession to violence and so on. Persevering in our plan of reform is not a concession to violence. Reforms that we have publicly announced, adopted, and worked out for more than two years; it is no concession to violence to persist in these reforms. It is simply standing to your guns. A number of gentlemen of whom I wish to speak with all respect addressed a very courteous letter to me the other day that appeared in the papers, exhorting me to remember that Oriental countries inevitably and invariably interpret kindness as fear. I do not believe it. The founder of Christianity arose in an Oriental country; and when I am told that Orientals do not appreciate kindness and are only influenced by fear, I will say that I do not believe that any more than I believe the stranger saying of Carlyle that, after all, the ultimate question between any two human beings is: Can I kill thee or canst thou kill me? I do not agree that any organised society has ever subsisted upon either of those principles or that brutality is always present in the relations between human beings.

"My first question is this. There are alternative courses open to us. We can either withdraw our reforms or we can persevere with them. Which would be the more flagrant sign of weakness—to go steadily on with your policy of reform in spite of bombs, or to let yourself openly be forced by bombs and murder clubs to drop your policy? My second question is: Who would be best pleased if I were to announce to your lordships that the Government would drop the reforms? It is notorious that those who would be best pleased would be the extremists and irreconcilables, because they know very well that for us to do anything to soften estrangement and appease alienation between the European and native populations would be the very best way that could be adopted to deprive them of fuel for their sinister and dishonest designs."

Lord Morley then set forth the reforms themselves, grouped under seven heads.

"This is a list of the powers which we shall have to acquire from Parliament when we bring in a Bill. I may say that we do not propose to bring in the Bill this Session. It would be idle. I propose to bring in a Bill next year. This is the first power we shall come to Parliament for. At present, the *maximum* and *minimum* number of Legislative Councils are fixed by statute.

We shall come to Parliament to authorise an increase in the numbers of those Councils, both the Viceroy's Council and the Provincial Councils. Second: The members are now nominated by the head of the Government, either the Viceroy or the Lieutenant-Governor. No election takes place in the strict sense of the term. The nearest approach to it is the nomination by the Viceroy, upon the recommendation of the majority of voters of certain public bodies. We do not propose to ask Parliament to abolish nomination. We do propose to ask Parliament in a very definite way, to introduce election working alongside nomination, with a view to the aim admitted in all previous schemes, including that of the noble Marquis opposite—the due representation of the different classes of the community. Third: The Indian Councils Act of 1892 forbids—and this is no doubt a very important prohibition—either resolutions or divisions of the Council in Financial discussions. We shall ask Parliament to repeal this prohibition. Fourth: We shall propose to invest Legislative Councils with power to discuss matters of public and general importance, and to pass recommendations or resolutions to the Government. The Government will deal with them as carefully, or as carelessly, as they think fit—just as the Government do here. Fifth: To extend the power that at present exists to appoint

a member of the Council to preside. Sixth: Bombay and Madras have now Executive Councils numbering two. I propose to ask Parliament to double this number. Seventh: The Lieutenant-Governors have no Executive Councils. We shall ask Parliament to sanction the creation of such Councils, consisting of not more than two members, and to define the power of the Lieutenant-Governor to overrule his Council."

While Lord Morley was giving much, it is desirable to place on record what he would not give. His remarks on the impossibility of an Indian Parliament are very emphatic.

"If I were attempting to set up a Parliamentary system in India, or if it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it. I do not believe—it is not of very great consequence what I believe, because the fulfilment of my vaticinations will not come off very soon—in spite of the attempts in Oriental countries at this moment, interesting attempts to which we all wish well, to set up some sort of Parliamentary system in India, it is no ambition of mine, at all events, to have any share in beginning that operation. If my existence, either officially or corporeally, were prolonged twenty times

longer than either of them is likely to be a Parliamentary system in India is not the goal to which I, for one moment, would aspire."

A very important concession, which did not figure in the reforms because Legislative sanction was not necessary for it to be put in effect, consisted in the nomination of an Indian Member to the Viceroy's Executive Council. The following passage deals with the matter.

"One point more. It is the question of an Indian Member on the Viceroy's Executive Council. The absence of an Indian Member from the Viceroy's Executive Council can no longer, I think, be defended. There is no legal obstacle or statutory exclusion. The Secretary of State can, to-morrow, if he likes—if there be a vacancy on the Viceroy's Council—recommend His Majesty to appoint an Indian Member. All I want to say is, that, if, during my tenure of office, there should be a vacancy on the Viceroy's Executive Council, I should feel it my duty to tender to the King my advice that an Indian Member should be appointed. If it were on my own authority only, I might hesitate to take that step, because I am not very fond of innovations in dark and obscure ground, but here I have the absolute

and the zealous approval and concurrence of Lord Minto himself. It was at Lord Minto's special instigation that I began to think seriously of this step. I quite admit it is a very important step, but I think this concurrence points in the right direction. Anyhow, this is how it stands, that you have at this moment a Viceroy and a Secretary of State who both concur in a recommendation of this kind. I suppose, if I may be allowed to give a personal turn to these matters, that Lord Minto and I have had a very different experience of life and the world, and we belong, I dare say, to different schools of national politics, because Lord Minto was appointed by the party opposite. It is a rather remarkable thing that two men differing in this way in antecedents, and so on, should agree in this proposal—Lord Minto zealously concurring in it, even instigating it."

It now only remains to quote the brilliant peroration of this very remarkable speech which, in the opinion of those who heard it, was worthy in every respect of the great occasion which called it forth.

"I wish it had fallen that this chapter had been opened at a more fortunate moment; but, as I said when I rose, I repeat when I sit down—do not let us for a moment take

too gloomy a view. There is not the slightest occasion. None of those who are responsible takes a gloomy view. They know the difficulties: they are prepared to grapple with them and to keep down mutinous opposition; and they hope, and we hope, to attract the goodwill which must, after all, be the real foundation of our prosperity and strength in India. We believe that is so far unsapped, and we believe that this admission, desired by the Governor-General and desired by us, of the Indians to a larger and more direct share in the government of their country, and in all the affairs of their country, without for a moment taking from the central power its authority, will strengthen the foundations of our position. We require great steadiness, constant pursuit of the same objects, and the maintenance of our authority, which will be all the more effective if we have, along with our authority, the aid and assistance, in responsible circumstances, of the Indians themselves.

"Military strength, material strength, we have in abundance. What we still want to acquire is moral strength—moral strength in guiding and controlling the people of India in the course on which time is launching us. I should like to read a few lines from a great orator about India. It was a speech delivered by Mr. Bright in 1858, when the great Government of India Bill

was in another place. I would like to read this language, and I hope your lordships will like it. Mr. Bright, said: 'We do not know how to leave it, and, therefore, let us see if we know how to govern it. Let us abandon all that system of calumny against natives of India which has lately prevailed. Had that people not been docile, the most governable race in the world, how could you have maintained your power for one hundred years? Are they not industrious, are they not intelligent, are they not—upon the evidence of the most distinguished men the Indian Service ever produced — endowed with many qualities which make them respected by all Englishmen who mix with them? . . . I would not permit any man in my presence without rebuke to indulge in the calumnies and expressions of contempt which I have recently heard poured forth without measure upon the whole population of India.' . . . The people of India do not like us, but they scarcely know where to turn if we left them. They are sheep, literally without a shepherd. However that may be, we, at least at Westminster, here have no choice and no option. As an illustrious Member of this House wrote: 'We found a society in a state of decomposition, and we have undertaken the serious and stupendous process of re-constructing it.' Macaulay, for it was he, said: 'India now

is like Europe in the fifth century.' Yes, a stupendous process indeed. The process has gone on with marvellous success, and if we all, according to our various lights, are true to our colours, that process will go on. Whatever is said, I for one—though I am not what is commonly called an Imperialist—so far from denying, I most emphatically affirm that for us to preside over this transition from the fifth European century in some parts, in slow, uneven stages, up to the twentieth—so that you have before you all the centuries at once, as it were—for us to preside over that and to be the guide of people in that condition, is, if conducted with humanity and sympathy, with wisdom and political courage, not only a human duty and a great national honour, but what was called the other day one of the most glorious tasks ever confided to any country."

The Times, in its leading article the following day, voiced the opinion of the British public in the following passage—

"We welcome the general character of Lord Morley's reforms; we recognise the high and noble purpose with which all of them have been framed; we regard some of them such as those affecting the increase in the strength of the Legislative Councils with genuine approval."

The Bill which was to give effect to Lord Morley's scheme of reform was introduced in the House of Lords on 23rd February, and the debate on the Second Reading covered two days. It is not necessary to reproduce here, even in summary, the speech with which Lord Morley introduced the measure on this occasion. All the points, so far as they relate to the reforms, have already been dealt with. But the speech contained the first specific reference made by Lord Morley to the demands and expectations of the Mahomedan community; and I must give these passages in their integrity, for, to my co-religionists and fellow countrymen, they were of the highest importance and deepest interest.

"There is one very important chapter in these regulations which I think now on the Second Reading of the Bill, without waiting for Committee, I ought to say a few words to your lordships about—I mean the Mahomedans. That is a part of the Bill and scheme which has no doubt attracted a great deal of criticism and excited a great deal of feeling in that very important community. We suggested to the Government of India a certain plan. We did not prescribe it, we did not order it; but we suggested and

recommended this plan for their consideration—no more than that. It was the plan of a mixed or composite electoral college, in which Mahomedans and Hindus should pool their votes, so to say. The wording of the recommendation in my dispatch was, as I soon discovered, ambiguous—a grievous defect, of which I make bold to hope I am not very often in public business guilty. But to the best of my belief, under any construction, the plan of Hindus and Mahomedans voting together in a mixed and composite electorate would have secured to the Mahomedan electors, wherever they were so minded, the chance of returning their own representative in their due proportion. The political idea at the bottom of that recommendation which has found so little favour was that such composite action would bring the two great communities more closely together, and this idea of promoting harmony was held by men of very high Indian authority and experience who were among my advisers at the India Office. But the Mahomedans protested that the Hindus would elect a pro-Hindu upon it, just as I suppose in a mixed college of, say, seventy-five Catholics and twenty-five Protestants voting together, the Protestants might suspect that the Catholics voting for the Protestant would choose what is called a Romanising Protestant and as little of a Protestant as possible. With regard to

schemes of proportional representation, as Calvin said of another study: 'Excessive study either finds a man mad or makes him so.' At any rate, the Government of India doubted whether our plan would work, and we have abandoned it. I do not think it was a bad plan, but it is no use, if you are making an earnest attempt in good faith at a general pacification, out of parental fondness for a clause interrupting that good process by sitting too tight.

"The Mahomedans demand three things. I had the pleasure of receiving a deputation from them, and I know very well what is in their minds. They demand the election of their own representatives to these councils in all the stages, just as in Cyprus, where, I think, the Mahomedans vote by themselves. They have nine votes and the non-Mahomedans have three, or the other way about. So in Bohemia, where the Germans vote alone and have their own register. Therefore, we are not without a precedent and a parallel for the idea of a separate register. Secondly, they want a number of seats in excess of their numerical strength. Those two demands we are quite ready and intend to meet in full. There is a third demand that, if there is a Hindu on the Viceroy's Executive Council—a subject on which I will venture to say a little to your lordships before I sit down—there should be two Indian members on the Viceroy's Council,

and that one should be a Mahomedan. Well, as I told them, and as I now tell your lordships, I see no chance whatever of meeting their views in that way to any extent at all. To go back to the point of the registers, some may be shocked at the idea of a religious register at all, of a register framed on the principle of religious belief. We may wish, we do wish—certainly I do —that it were otherwise. We hope that time, with careful and impartial statesmanship, will make things otherwise. Only let us not forget that the difference between Mahomedanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith. It is a difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief that constitute a community. Do not let us forget what makes it interesting and even exciting. Do not let us forget that, in talking of Hindus and Mahomedans, we are dealing with and brought face to face with vast historic issues, dealing with some of the very mightiest forces that, through all the centuries and ages, have moulded the fortunes of great States and the destinies of countless millions of mankind. Thoughts of that kind are what give to Indian politics and to Indian work extraordinary fascination, and at the same time impose the weight of no ordinary burden."

It will be seen that Lord Morley thus

confirmed and ratified the pledges given by Lord Minto at the end of 1906 to the Mahomedan delegation. The one exception lay outside the main body of the reforms. It related to the demand for the appointment of a Mahomedan to the Viceroy's Executive Council should a Hindu be so appointed. This might have been regarded as a demand for the appointment of two Indian gentlemen to the Supreme Council, but the matter could be easily compromised by the adoption of the principle of alternate nominations between Hindus and Mahomedans.

The next turn in the question was reached when, in the Committee stage, the House of Lords rejected Clause 3 which empowered the Viceroy to create an Executive Council in any province under a Lieutenant-Governor. As Lord Morley would make no concession, it seemed for a time as if the whole Bill would be wrecked. It was suggested to Lord Morley that it was essentially a case for compromise, but for the moment he demanded the whole of his measure to be passed intact. While the question was in this dubious state, Lord Morley took the bold step of nominating, on his own authority, an Indian gentleman to the

Viceroy's Executive Council. The appointment of Mr. S. P. Sinha was published on 23rd March, 1909. In comparison with that act of the very deepest significance, the acceptance of Clause 3 became in the eyes even of its opponents a minor incident.

In the meantime, the Indian Councils Bill had been introduced in the House of Commons and carried in its integrity. An assurance was, however, given that Parliament should have effective control as regards the creation of executive councils in provinces other than Bengal. This compromise practically ensured the passing of the measure when it again reached the House of Lords.

On 4th May the Bill was again submitted to the House of Lords; and with regard to Clause 3, Lord Morley hoped—

"That the amendment to the old Clause 3, which he was now asking the House to agree with, was a reasonable compromise. The point of it was that Bengal was to have an Executive Council, and it was earnestly desired by the new Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. When the Government of India suggested the setting up of an Executive Council in a province beyond Bengal, he proposed that the Governor-General should draft a proclamation to be laid by the

Government on the table of both Houses for sixty days. If an address was moved by either House against the proclamation, it was thereby estopped; if no address was moved, it would become operative at the end of sixty days. At first, he thought that it ought to be an address of both Houses, but it had been represented to him that this would be to strip one House of its veto; and being sincerely anxious to meet the fair claim of every one concerned, he agreed that the proposal should take the form of an address from either House, this being sufficient to stay the proclamation."

The debate that followed had what I may call an important annex on the subject of Mahomedan electorates. Lord Morley said on this point—

He would be glad to have an opportunity of clearing up more than one ambiguity which had arisen in connection with this subject. He could not do better than read out to the House the text of a private telegram he had received yesterday from the Viceroy, but of which the Viceroy had given him permission to make any use he liked. The Viceroy said this: "Hobhouse's speech has been interpreted as meaning that major portion of representation accorded to Mahomedans is to be given through the mixed electorates, such as district boards

and municipalities, on which they will vote conjointly with other classes; and that the special electorates in which Mahomedans will vote separately are only intended to supplement general elections, and will carry only a small number of seats. I need hardly say that this is not at all what we contemplated. Our intention was that Mahomedans should have, by means of separate electorates, a number of seats closely approaching that to which their numerical proportion in the population would entitle them, and that over and above this they would obtain some seats in mixed electorates, such as district boards and municipalities, Universities, Presidency corporations, and as landholders. In Bombay, for example, under the scheme detailed in my telegram of 8th February, four seats are specially assigned to Mahomedans; and, in addition to these, two Mahomedans will be elected by landholders and district bodies of Sind, so that they will secure a certain *minimum* of 6, or 28 per cent., their ratio to the general population being only twenty. In the United Provinces, where they number only 14 per cent., they will have four special seats, or nearly 20 per cent. of the seats assigned for election. Of course, the same ratio cannot be applied in all provinces, and allowance must be made for the *status*, character, and educational attainments of Mahomedan population in each case. There

has also been misapprehension of our views regarding nomination, which are intended to be merely a temporary expedient to be resorted to until the community should be ripe for election. I do not understand any Mahomedan here to claim concession suggested—namely, that wherever elections are found possible they should be conducted on basis of separate representation of the Mahomedan community. If interpreted literally, that would involve having separate Mahomedan electorates within the various electorates proposed, such as Presidency corporations, district board and municipalities, Universities, landholders, and the commercial community. This is manifestly impracticable. It could only be effected by recasting the entire scheme and increasing *maximum* strength of all councils as fixed by Bill. On the whole case, my view is that present proposals as now explained do reasonably fulfil pledges given to Mahomedans. That was the view of the Government of India, and it was for the Government of India to work it out. When this scheme—completed and worked out—came to be examined, it would be found that the Government had carried out all the pledges they had given."

The Marquis of Lansdowne passed on this statement the following weighty comment—

"He trusted that the confidence the

Mahomedans had in the Government of India in respect of the arrangements to be made for their representation would not be misplaced. The pledges given to Mahomedans had been of the fullest and most emphatic character, and it would be a public disaster if anything worked out which would leave it open to Mahomedans to contend that the pledges of the Government had not been fulfilled to the utmost."

Thus, after long debate, the new measures for the improved administration of India and for giving her people a share in the government of their country passed into law, and took their place on the Statute Book. Two comments alone seem to me necessary. It was well that the Bill became law before the murder of Sir Curzon Wyllie had strengthened the forces of reaction, and it will be well if the principles of the measure with regard to the Mahomedan community can be put in practice by improvising a simple and effective machinery for the creation of the separate electoral colleges necessary to secure the admittedly just rights of the Mahomedans of India.

By passing the reforms that have been described, Lord Morley of Blackburn, working

in cordial co-operation, as he repeatedly proclaimed, with Lord Minto, placed his name in the first rank of British statesmen who have had to deal with Indian problems.

He will be permanently associated in the memory of the people of India with that larger fulfilment of the promises of Queen Victoria, at the time of the transfer of authority from the Company to the Crown, which the progress of education and thought had rendered necessary. Lord Morley gave India a generous measure of reform conceived in no niggardly spirit, and out of which, with the intelligent and cordial co-operation of Indians of all ranks and classes, much good must come. At the least, it may be said that the new administrative changes mark for India the commencement of a brighter and more productive era.

The reader of these pages has learnt that until Lord Morley went to the India Office many of his critics, friendly or otherwise, refused to recognise in him a practical statesman. They never ceased to represent him as a brilliant man of letters and theorist who was wasting his time by passing it in politics. He was pronounced a theorist, whose theories

were too elevated and noble for this work-aday world. In other words, he was deemed an idealist. As my sketch of Lord Morley's career and character developed, I suggested reasons for questioning the accuracy of this view and others for concluding that there was an unsuspected side to his character. He was certainly not an Imperialist in the loose significance of the term; yet he was not given, as he said, to turning his other cheek to the smiter. He was opposed to wars, yet he recognised that war might be necessary and honourable. He opposed the grant to Lord Kitchener for his Soudan campaign, but he supported Lord Kitchener's plans of Army re-organisation during three years of office. The verdict that Lord Morley was a Little Englander and Empire-hater must evidently be revised.

When he took up his work at the India Office, Lord Morley dealt with greater issues and appealed to a wider audience than in the earlier stages of his career. He felt the weight of his responsibilities, and he did his best to prove himself equal to them. Whether the reforms associated with his name bring in the rich harvest of his, and our hopes as well, there can never be any doubt that his

honesty of purpose and his unflagging energy in pushing forward what he believed, and we believe, to be a good work deserve the gratitude of those interested from any point of view in the true welfare of India.

CHAPTER XIII

THE INDIAN REFORM ACT

As the changes introduced into the administration of India by the "Indian Councils Act of 1909" represented Lord Morley's principal achievement as a practical statesman, it is appropriate to give here some brief account of what they were, and to show how they have modified the old system. Until they were introduced, the whole executive power was in the hands of the English; the legislative power was theirs also, only qualified by the existence from 1861 of three Legislative Councils for the Three Presidencies; and from 1892 of an increased number, through the admission of some of the Provincial Governments. The character of British rule, therefore, remained wholly foreign and alien in the minds of Indians. Yet Queen Victoria's Proclamation, on the assumption of authority by the Crown, had declared that "neither race nor religion" was to be a bar to employment in the State service.

It was inevitable that the time would

come when the general community would expect some similar privilege in regard to having a voice in the government of their country. It has been said, and with truth, that nine-tenths of the Indian peoples are silent and take no intelligent interest in the form or method of their government, so long as their natural needs are satisfied; but not for this reason could the sentiments of the other tenth be wholly disregarded.

These sentiments found expression in the Indian Press, and still more significantly in the annual National Congress, which came into existence over thirty years ago. Anyone who read the reports of its meetings could have no doubt that there was much dissatisfaction among educated Indians at the small share they held in the administration; and, while there was some exaggeration of facts as well as a general tendency to raise false issues, a real sense of grievance at the exclusiveness of the English system in India was manifest, and should have been taken into serious consideration by Lord Morley's and also by Lord Minto's predecessors. The frequenters of the National Congress in those days were too generally regarded as mere agitators, and their requests

were consequently ignored and contemned. As a matter of fact, they were giving expression, more or less accurately, to the convictions and aspirations of the educated Indian classes, and on that account their utterances possessed a significance not to be ignored by wise men and far-seeing statesmen. They were, indeed, one of the signs of the times.

The National Congress meetings having accomplished nothing in the direction of tangible results, political agitation in India took on another form; and this was especially marked in Bengal, where the educated classes found an insufficiency of suitable employment. In no other part of India were there so many unemployed among the students who had passed out of the schools and colleges. The usual rewards of successful collegians were not forthcoming, and thus a discontented class was created and received thousands of recruits each year. To the question, "Why have we no employment?" the answer seemed to them easy and direct. "It is because the English monopolise the high places," and still more "because they exclude Indians from all share in the government of their country." Thus were discontent and political agitation

fanned to a flame. "The thin, small voice" that found expression in the National Congresses of the 'eighties became loud and menacing in the mouths of Bengali students and journalists.

Thus was Indian discontent brought into the political arena. There are several recognised ways of dealing with political agitation. There is the old heroic remedy of crushing it, and no doubt some persons in authority in India would have resorted to that, but this particular method of dealing with political difficulties has gone out of fashion and is no longer in harmony with the spirit of the age. Moreover, a little consideration sufficed to show that coercion, to be successful, required a complete reversal of the educational policy that had been followed by the British authorities in India for over seventy years. It could only succeed by giving Indians a less instead of the greater share they demanded in the administration of their country. Only a moment's thought was needed to enforce the conclusion that the co-operation of English and Indians was and must always be essential to the maintenance of the whole fabric of Indian government. Coercion pure and simple, by the

employment of the armed force, then, was out of the question. To those who declared that British power in India was one of the sword reflection supplied the better answer that it was founded on justice.

The first manifestations of serious Indian discontent were free from violence. The Swadeshi movement was essentially no more than a boycott. Even its sequel—known as Swaraj—was, strictly speaking, only a demand for "local self-government," which is the literal meaning of the term. But they were soon accompanied by events of a sinister character. Murders took place in Bengal and Bombay; Poona became the centre of a conspiracy. Serious riots occurred in Bombay city. They were the more serious, because no one could assign a definite reason for their occurrence. There were rumours of a mysterious agency being at work, but no success was ever obtained in the task of unravelling what it was, or who were behind it. The situation created by these outrages was unfavourable for concessions. They imperilled the passing of the Reform Act. Even Lord Morley had to wait until the rising resentment of the Anglo-Indian world had subsided.

At the beginning of the year 1909 Lord Morley resumed his forward movement; and this was much to his credit, for the seditious outbreaks had greatly embarrassed him as well as helped his critics. He had determined, while presenting a firm front to the Extremists, to mould his policy on lines that would propitiate the Moderate section of the Indian community. In plain terms, he was prepared to grant a large share in the administration and legislation of their country to Indians, and that was the salient feature of the measure which may be called the Indian Reform Act.

As I wrote at the time in *The English Review* (Feb., 1909)—

"Circumstances may and do render it impracticable to carry out all the reforms, to give us all the remedial measures that can easily be brought within the four corners of a political programme. But the time has come at least for an instalment. Still more essential is it to say now, clearly and once for all, what will be given and what withheld. We will make the best of what is given for the good of India, and we will try and dispense with what is withheld. But for the peace of India let there be an end to ambiguity and uncertainty."

The text of the Indian Councils Act of 1909, modifying its predecessors of 1861 and 1892, does not read very revolutionary. Briefly put, it does no more than introduce the elective principle into the composition of the Legislative Councils.

Prior to the passing of that Act, the Indian members, few in number, and with no right to discuss matters of general interest, were the nominees of the Government. They were nominated respectively by the Governor-General, the Governors of the other Presidencies, and the Lieut.-Governors of the different Provinces; and, although not ticketed to that effect, it was well understood that the appointment required them to be agreeable to those who had selected them. Moreover, any criticism by them would have been ineffective, for it was never taken very seriously, and the administrative machine continued its uninterrupted and unswerving course.

The right conferred on the various Indian communities to elect members to the respective Legislative Councils, and one rendered still more valuable and significant by the fact that these should be on an absolute equality with the nominated members, was, therefore,

an immense concession from every point of view; but its real significance lay in the circumstance that it put an end to the purely official *régime* that had hitherto prevailed in India.

The presence of these new elected members was rendered more significant by the specific mention in the Act of the enlarged powers conferred on Legislative Councils. These included the right to discuss the annual financial statement, and also "any matter of great public interest." Finally, members had the right to ask questions. Each Legislative Council thus became a deliberative Assembly—a sort of miniature Parliament—in each of the great administrative divisions of India.

For perfect accuracy, it must be added that certain subjects, principally relating to the Army, Navy, and Police, are not to be considered as coming within the purview of the Legislative Councils. More specifically, no question is to be permitted "in regard to any matter affecting the relations of the Government with any Foreign State or any Native State in India, or any matter under adjudication by a Court of Law having jurisdiction in any part of His Majesty's dominions."

Under the Act modified by the change in Bengal in 1912, there were to be eight Legislative Councils, including that of the Governor-General; and the maximum number of members varies from sixty on this, the chief, Council to thirty on the Councils of Lieut.-Governor. The following are their names and composition—

Name of Council.	*Maximum No. of Members.*
Governor-General's	60
Bengal	50
Madras	50
Bombay	50
United Provinces	50
East Bengal and Assam	50
Punjab	30
Burma	30
Total	370

Any additional Council created to be limited to thirty; and this applies to the new Councils formed in 1912 for (1) Behar and Orissa, and for (2) Assam.

In each Council the principle of nomination is present, as well as that of election; but safeguards are taken to ensure that the official element alone shall, in no instance, be in a majority. The elected members of

the above-named Councils, read in the same order, are 25, 26, 19, 21, 20, 18, 5, and 1. In Burma, the solitary member represents the Chamber of Commerce. Omitting him, there are 134 elective members altogether.

To arrive at a correct comparison between the official and non-official elements, 54 nominated members, chosen outside the official classes, should be added to the 134 elected members, making a total of 188 out of 370, or a clear majority. This majority will seem all the greater when it is borne in mind that 64 members hold their seats by office as members of the executive.

The system of election deserves description, because it was devised with the idea of giving just representation to all sections of the community, and more especially to prevent the Mahomedans from being placed in a position of marked inferiority to the Hindus. It necessarily varies in its form in different parts of India, the arrangement in Burma, for instance, being quite unique. There, four of the nominated members have to be Burmans, one Indian, and one Chinese. But, as a general rule, at least three of the elected Members on each Council must be Mahomedans. On the Governor-General's Council

there are five; in Madras, three; in Bombay, five; in Bengal, four; in the United Provinces, four; and in Eastern Bengal, four. In the last-named case, the same proportion is preserved on the new Councils of Behar and Orissa, and of Assam. There are, consequently, 25 special Mahomedan representatives among the 134 elected members; and, of course, this does not include the Mahomedans, who may be elected by universities, commercial bodies, or groups of landowners. One of Lord Morley's great merits in the eyes of my co-religionists was that he kept faith with them in the matter of fair representation on the Indian Councils.

The Regulations passed then to give effect to the Councils Act were of a nature to satisfy Indian opinion, and to show that the reforms in the administration were to be carried out to the letter. The new Councils came into existence immediately on the passing of the parent Act. They were in operation within twelve months of its being passed by Parliament and receiving the Royal sanction. They covered the ground they were intended to cover; they realised the hopeful expectations that had

been raised in the breasts of the Indian peoples, that is to say among the educated and enlightened classes. The full fruition of the benefits that were expected to accrue could only be brought about by the flux of time. The new legislation was admittedly experimental; in another sense, it was also only a commencement; but, from both points of view, the necessary test as to how it worked in practice had to be applied.

Certain events which have happened since the passing into law of the Act of 1909 require to be taken into account before an opinion may be hazarded as to the effect produced in India on public opinion, and on the relations between the two peoples by the legislative and administrative changes that have been described. Among them were the Coronation of King George V as Emperor of India, the founding of a new capital at Delhi, and the alteration in the status of the newly-erected Province of Eastern Bengal.

While the Coronation Durbar was a matter of deep interest and significance to the whole of India, the restoration of Delhi to its natural position as the Imperial capital of the country was especially gratifying to

Mahomedans as being so closely identified with their Mogul dynasty. Sentiments of loyalty were aroused and intensified by an act of grace on the part of the Emperor which lay outside all political moves and calculations. When the new Delhi has been created and has become the residence for at least some portion of the year of the leading princes of India, the true significance of the change in the administrative capital will be made apparent. Perhaps in those days it will be held that only a Viceroy of the Royal Family can adequately represent the King-Emperor in the Imperial City.

The second change notified in the Delhi Imperial Proclamation was of a different character, and would have excited more criticism and controversy if it had not been for the fact that it was considered impossible to turn a decision of the Sovereign himself to Party account. After many repeated declarations in the silent spheres of Governmental Councils, and in public speeches and declarations, that no change in the policy of breaking up Bengal into two provinces—on this point Lord Minto's speech in the House of Lords on 22nd February, 1912, is conclusive — would be tolerated, it was

announced at Delhi that the famous Partition of Bengal was to be revoked. For the reasons given as prevailing with others, I do not propose to attempt to explain the motives behind this step; but, at least, the theory that it was a calculated move to propitiate the opinion of Bengal, lest it should prove unexpectedly hostile to the transfer of the seat of Government from Calcutta to Delhi, may be dismissed with silence and contempt. There was nothing calculated in the Proclamation at Delhi. It was the spontaneous utterance of a great and generous-hearted Sovereign seeking to discover the best way of revealing his complete sympathy with his subjects on a momentous occasion in their history.

For a time it was thought that this change could only be carried into effect by a fresh legislative measure modifying and correcting the Councils Act; and, had this been the case, there would have been long debates, much traversing of old ground, and possibly some bitter recrimination. The pundits of the law decided, however, that no fresh legislation would be necessary, and that a notification by order in the Government Gazette would suffice effectively to substitute

the Repartition of Bengal for the earlier Partition.

What was the change? The Partition of Bengal divided the Province into two parts: Bengal Proper, and Eastern Bengal, including Assam. The Repartition restored it in a large extent to its original form, the most notable change being the raising of the Commissionership of Behar and Orissa to the grade of a Lieut.-Governorship. Thus reconstituted, it consisted of three parts: (1) The Presidency of Bengal; (2) the Lieut.-Governorship of Behar and Orissa; and (3) the Chief Commissionership of Assam. Each of the three divisions was endowed with a Legislative Council, the two latter being on the minimum scale of thirty members.

Considering the enormous excitement created by the original Partition measure, the Repartition attracted little attention, and passed off more or less unnoticed. Other issues had arisen, other views prevailed; even to the fevered Bengali imagination Partition in reality was no longer the dreadful thing it had been painted in anticipation. At all events, the Bengalis, having got what they cried for, might have been expected to

show sufficient gratitude to induce them to abstain from the political outrages which had marred the alleged innocence of their propaganda. That this has not been the case, more than one subsequent incident has clearly revealed.

To come now to the main question: What may we reasonably claim as the result of Lord Morley's policy? The effect of the King-Emperor's visit to India, culminating in the Imperial Durbar at Delhi, must be clearly distinguished from it, for the two events had nothing in common. That event was one of entire and unqualified good. As the address from the Princes and Peoples of India, published on 5th February, 1912, stated—so may we all say—

"They are confident that this great and historic event marks the beginning of a new era, ensuring greater happiness, prosperity, and progress to the peoples of India under the aegis of the Crown."

With regard to the Indian Councils Act, which is the concrete embodiment of Lord Morley's policy, Lord Morley said himself in the House of Lords on 22nd February, 1912—

"The policy of the Indian Councils Bill has proved an extraordinary success, and

has more than realised the hopes of my noble friend (Lord Minto) and myself."

These words in the mouth of the author of the Bill may be said to reveal a slightly jarring note of self-praise, and certainly the interval of practical experience had been too brief to allow of so positive a verdict; but, at least, if gratitude counts as a force at all in human affairs, the originator of the project was entitled to assume that those who would benefit by it would not be lacking in contributing what they could to ensure its success. The attempted and almost accomplished assassination of Lord Hardinge a few months after the speech referred to, a series of police assassinations in Bengal during the winter of 1912–13 (recurring far into the summer of 1913), gave warning that all was not quite so cerulean as Lord Morley imagined; and that in certain quarters hostile fires still flickered, and might at any moment burst forth afresh. In plainer words, Legislation had not reached the irreconcilable and anarchical faction in Bengal. There race hatred flourished and excluded sweet reasonableness. No argument counted. Concession was regarded as weakness. Lord Morley had legislated all in vain.

These circles, coteries, or conspiracies—call them which you like—are really outside the thinking, educated community, endowed with a sense of mutual justice and a natural desire to appreciate those who are kind and considerate. It is this community with which statesmen have to deal—leaving the conspirators for the police—and in this sense there was much more foundation for Lord Morley's remark last quoted than many have assumed.

The policy of the Indian Councils Bill has, to a very great extent, been entirely successful. It has proved to all reasonable men in India that the British administration was alive to the necessity of giving them a voice in the government of their own country. It may be said that they do not possess the directing influence, but at least they have acquired an influence to which those who have the directing power must pay heed. If we compare this position of increased weight with what existed only a few years ago, the change in Anglo-Indian conditions amounts to nothing less than a revolution.

The fact that it has failed to pacify the ultra-extremists must not be exaggerated. In India, as elsewhere, there is a section or

nest of political agitators that nothing would satisfy. The same people wish no doubt to obscure the good points of the Councils Act, and to make it appear that nothing has been conceded. But this way of representing things cannot be maintained in opposition to facts. Serious-minded persons know what they have gained, and they also know that it represents but a first instalment, provided they show themselves qualified for the higher privileges that must follow.

The real problem before the Indian community itself is that of qualification. Socially and educationally, they have to equip themselves for the wider sphere that lies before them. It is said that one of the consequences of recent legislation has been to widen the gap between European and Indian. Many allege that, while on the surface there is more courtesy, there are below it far less confidence and cordiality. But perhaps this stiffness in the new relationship is only momentary; so good an authority as Sir Harcourt Butler says it is, and that it will wear off. It will pass all the more rapidly if it is realised that the Indian has something to do on his side to create in the mind of the European the feeling of respect, which

is the essential condition for the preservation of harmony in human relations. Legislation cannot solve such problems. They can only be simplified and rendered less acute by forbearance and goodwill on both sides.

Lord Morley's act gave India much that she needed and much that she had hoped for. It marked a clear step forward in that evolution of India which all thoughtful men had foreshadowed for more than a generation past. Lord Morley's great claim to fame is that he saw that the time had come to translate words into acts, and that he knew how to bring the essential concessions within the four corners of a simple Bill.

CHAPTER XIV

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

AFTER the heavy work in passing the India Councils Act into law, Lord Morley felt the need of a little repose, and a lighter post than that of Indian Secretary was found for him. On 4th November, 1910, it was announced that Lord Morley had resigned the Indian Secretaryship, and that he had been appointed Lord President of the Council, a high post carrying with it light office duties. He was succeeded at the India Office by the Earl, subsequently Marquis, of Crewe.

Before this change took place, Lord Morley had made one considerable speech during the Session of 1910, not on an Indian subject, but on Lord Rosebery's motion for the Reform of the House of Lords. As this was almost his last intrusion into what might be called a Party question, I give the salient passages of the speech Lord Morley made in the House of Lords on this subject on 14th March, 1910, in reply to Lord Rosebery, who moved the motion—

"The noble lord who has moved this motion has spoken, as he always does, of course, with eloquence, with passion, with feeling, and with knowledge. I could, if this were the suitable place, follow—I am afraid with dissent—some of his historical analogies. First of all, I distrust the application of experiences of other times and countries to our own political difficulties and perplexities. You can never be quite sure that you thoroughly understand all the conditions which produce such events, for example, as the night of the Fourth of August, or the Fall of the Bastille.

"The noble lord dwelt with great force on the case of our great Colonies, of Canada and Australia, and asked your lordships to consider with what scorn they would look on any action in this Parliament which abolished the two-Chamber system. He surely overlooked the fact that the Senate or Second Chamber in Canada and Australia is purely a nominated Chamber. I will not follow him in some of these details. I shall have a word to say about Cromwell by and by, as to whom we have often differed.

"But to-night we have got to consider not historical analogies nor eloquent appeals as to the making of great sacrifices; you have to consider the practical emergency by which you are confronted. I think I shall be able to show that Lord Rosebery's

proposal does not really come to the fringe of that emergency. He analysed with great skill and a good deal of justice the nature of the last Election and the majority which retains the present Government in power. The last time I addressed your Lordships, I ventured to wind up my remarks with this observation, that there was no such battle-ground for ferocious Party conflict as the revision of the Constitution. I pointed out that we were entering on a tremendous journey which would be long, fierce in antagonisms, and probably perilous. Whether the tremendous drama which was opened at the end of November last year is to be a five-act drama or only a three-act drama, I do not know. Lord Rosebery to-night has, at all events, opened the second act of the play. . . .

"An extraordinary transformation in the drama has taken place since November last year. At that time, when the object was to reject the Budget, we heard that this House was a model of impartiality, that it was perfectly fair and had all the virtues that a Legislative Chamber could possibly have—far removed from all the base arts of mechanical confederacy in ordinary political warfare. But to-day what is the foundation of the case pressing on the House? It is that this House is indefensible in its constitution, is in urgent need of reform, and ought to strip itself of its

rights and privileges, or some of them at all events, and that you must drop the principle of a hereditary Legislature; in fact, that it is as little a decent revising Chamber as could be possibly devised or imagined. . . You, first of all, commit homicide by slaying our Budget, and then proceed to commit suicide by denouncing yourselves as entirely unfit to have done the very thing that you did.

"The House will wish to know what is the view taken by the Government of this motion. . . . We think it inexpedient to discuss proposals for reforming this House until provision has been made for an effective method of settling differences that may arise between this House and the other House. But as our proposals will be, we hope, before you at no distance of time, we do not deem it necessary to move an amendment to that effect to-night. . . .

"The noble lord has said that the thinking part of the nation would prefer the House of Lords unreformed to no Second Chamber at all; and if I may speak of the people who do not think, I agree, and I should share their prepossession. But he has gone too rapidly in assuming that all Ministers or Members of Parliament who support the Resolutions that will come before you by and by are all single Chamber men. That is not the intention of those who will send up these Resolutions to your

House. There are many, both in the House of Commons and outside it, who would prefer a House of Lords unreformed—I mean unreformed in structure and in composition — to the most attractive single Chamber that the wit of man could devise, or the most aerial fabric which could be devised out of rainbows by political ingenuity. . . . As to the word Predominance, I do not defend it; but I should think that no single man has ever used language in this House which could be taken to dispute for an instant the predominance in legislation of the House of Commons. . . .

"The noble lord mentioned Cromwell. Whenever I pass the statue of Cromwell as I come to this House, I naturally think of him. We do not agree as to all the achievements and policy of that illustrious figure. But I once wrote something about Cromwell, and I would like to read a few sentences of what I wrote which are strictly germane to the question—

"'There is no branch of political industry that men approach with hearts so light, and yet that leaves them at the end so dubious and melancholy, as the concoction of a Second Chamber. Cromwell and his Parliament set foot on this *pons asinorum* of democracy without a suspicion of its dangers. To call out of empty spaces an artificial House without the hold on men's minds of history and ancient association, without

defined powers, without marked distinction of persons or interests, and then to try to make it into an effective screen against an Elected House—to whose assent it owed its being—was not to promote union, but directly to promote division and to intensify it. Cromwell never thought out the scheme. Like smaller reformers since, Cromwell had never decided, to begin with, whether to make his Lords strong or weak; strong enough to curb the Commons, yet weak enough for the Commons to curb them.'

"I then added that the riddle which perplexed Cromwell was still unanswered; and I do not believe that the noble lord's contribution will be an effective answer to that riddle."

It cannot be said that Lord Morley's own speech did much to solve the riddle, but it seems safe to conclude from it, at least, that he was not himself a one-Chamber man. It would, indeed, have been strange to find the author of *Compromise* holding a different opinion.

It was mentioned that one of the advantages of the post of Lord President of the Council was that it entailed very little office work. For this reason it has always been regarded as that of a relief Minister, which

means of one who could come to the aid of his overworked colleagues. Lord Morley, by his moderation, and still more by his experience of Imperial responsibilities at the India Office, was well qualified to represent the Government on those matters in which, so far as possible, the two political parties followed an identical policy. Thus he became, for the two sessions at least of 1911 and 1912, the recognised spokesman of the Foreign Office and of the Government on matters of high policy. This was more noticeably the case in the former of the two years, and he then made certainly one speech of exceptional importance on the situation in Persia. It was delivered in reply to a motion by Earl Curzon, and certainly revealed great interest in, and even a firm intention to contribute to, the maintenance of the independence of Persia. Nothing has happened since to diminish the effect of the language used, and it may even be said that in the interval the stability of Persia has materially improved. The following speech was delivered in the House of Lords on 22nd March, 1911—

"The noble Lord (Curzon of Kedleston) has taken us on to as important ground

as I think any Member of your Lordship's House could undertake. . . .

"With regard to the subject of trans-Persian railways, any ideas or designs on that subject are far too immature for any sensible or useful or instructive observations to be made upon them. I for one, personally, should feel very much inclined to follow him in his doubts, or more than doubts, as to the workableness of these particular designs. In all that he said as to the present Regent of Persia, we entirely concur. It is upon his character in truth that we lean, and upon which we rest our hopes. His recent exhortations on the Mejliss, his account of what ought to be the public duty of that important body, the line he has taken, his insistence upon their giving his Minister a stable majority—all these show a man of character to whose policy we can look for nothing but satisfactory results. The Minister whom he has chosen shares those moderate and practical views, and we may hope, and do hope, with such confidence as is possible in a country whose condition has been so confused, that from that there may emerge a sufficiently stable condition of affairs. With regard to the condition of the southern roads—to say that the state of things was little short of anarchy is certainly using a phrase far in excess of the facts. I am very glad that he has dissociated himself from those who

impute that the action we took in October last year was due to a sinister or nefarious design on the independence or integrity of Persia. . . . In October, the Persian Government were informed that, if they failed to restore something like order on these roads, His Majesty's Government would be compelled to insist on the organisation of a local force for the purpose, to be commanded by officers from the Indian Army, and the expense to be defrayed by a 10 per cent surcharge on certain dues. The Persian Government, in December, detailed the measures which they proposed to take. We most cheerfully and willingly, and with perfect confidence in their good faith, agreed to give them another opportunity of fulfilling the obligations which we had imposed upon them. It was impossible to say, in view of the social conditions that obtained there, that any immediate restoration to order was possible, but it is the fact that the position there is greatly improved; whether that is due, as some say, to the severity of the weather or other causes, we do not know; but we are watching with patience and with hope . . . His Majesty's Government cannot conceal from themselves that the question of railway construction in Persia may involve important strategical considerations to which they cannot remain indifferent; but provided that these and obvious commercial considerations can be

satisfied by an adequate British participation in any southern railway scheme which may be adopted by the Persian Government, then His Majesty's Government would not construe their preferential rights in any narrow or exclusive spirit. I turn to the Persian Gulf. We cannot realise our services in the Gulf too fully. Indeed, it is owing to British enterprise and the expenditure of British life and treasure, that the Persian Gulf at this moment is open to the navigation of the world, and to this cause alone it may be said that the sea-borne trade of Mesopotamia owes its very existence. We adhere to the position taken up by Lord Lansdowne in 1903."

The final touch, as it were, was given to this enunciation of policy and purpose in a second speech delivered later in the same year (7th Dec., 1911), also occasioned by another motion of Lord Curzon's. It is only necessary, however, to quote the following passage—

"We are all aware that there is no Member of this House who can speak upon Persia with such knowledge and experience of all that hangs upon the situation in Persia as the noble Earl (Curzon). He is quite right when he expects that I shall find little fault or, I may say, none with the spirit

or essence of what he said. All he has said about the reflex influence of any of our transactions in Persia, upon our Mahomedan subjects in India and elsewhere, is of the highest importance. His Majesty's Government is fully alive to that, and that is one of the guiding elements in their considerations. He was perfectly right, and he did us in the Government no more than justice, when he said that he believed that the good of the people of Persia, and the stability of the Government of Persia with which the good of the people was involved, are as much at heart with us as they are with himself. It would be a great wrong if we were to buy the stability of the Anglo-Russian Convention at the price of the unhappiness and the confusion and sterilisation of all reforms and progress in Persia. . . . If Russia and England do not part company, and the spirit of the Agreement is maintained, we have good reason for hoping and believing that before very long we shall see a solution of a situation which is at present full of difficulty, but which is not altogether hopeless or desperate."

Lord Morley also spoke more than once on the question of the relations between England and Germany at the time of the Morocco crisis. But there was nothing original or striking in the views he enunciated,

and it is not necessary to preserve them. He was simply put up on these occasions to talk a little while for the Government of which he was a Member. In the Session of 1912 he spoke less than in 1911, and in 1913 he spoke practically nothing at all. This was due to the gradual failure of vocal power. The acoustics of the House of Lords are admittedly bad, and Lord Morley never succeeded in attuning his voice to their requirements, and latterly he became simply inaudible.

It was outside the House that a flash of the old oratorical power occasionally revealed itself. It was in other spheres than that of controversial party politics that he displayed the true bent of his genius. Always a man of moderation, age had mellowed his judgment and strengthened his dislike for extremes. Something of patriotic feeling triumphing over purely Party sentiment was revealed in his speech at the Royal Academy dinner on 30th April, 1910, when he made a neat little speech on behalf of the Government—the principal sentence of which ran as follows—

"I wonder whether you will—I think you will—agree with me, that if His Majesty's

Opposition would follow the wholesome example now set by His Majesty's Government, and were to forswear for a good whole month all further appeal to the eloquence of the platform and Senate, whether the country at large would not be just as much refreshed and relieved as the orators and statesmen themselves. Even those who, like Friar Tuck in the great novel, delight in giving and receiving blows, will, I think, admit that you may have too much of a good thing, and that for many months past we have all of us—not those who cultivate the ideal and beautiful, but those who are engaged in the political fight—had enough of that particularly good thing. There is no doubt that the burden and responsibilities of great office are heavy. The cares of State are a heavy burden. But they have an exhilarating quality in them. All those who are concerned in saying 'Aye' or 'No' to great decisions of policy, feel there is something in that which makes them bigger and more elevated in character, whatever their views may be. My own definition of hard work is that it is deciding. Politicians, like painters, are subject to critics, and are perhaps tormented by them. . . .

"I was talking the other day to a very distinguished traveller, and he said to me: 'Well, the impression in the Colonies is that the Old Country is rather failing, that

there is a sort of atmosphere of decadence about it.' All I can say is, with a pretty good opportunity, I think, of judging, I do not believe a word of it. I see no sign whatever that the people of this kingdom are not just as sane, just as honest, just as brave, just as high-handed, as they ever were in the best periods of their history."

The only other incidents of the year 1910 that need be recalled were his reviewing of the first volume of Lord Beaconsfield's Life for *The Times* of 27th October, and his receiving the honorary degree of LL.D. from the University of Liverpool on 14th November of the same year. In connection with that event, he made a brief but suggestive speech at the luncheon given by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool as to what the Universities of the great cities ought to aim at in their teaching. The following extracts give the pith of his view—

"They wanted to get in all these Universities of the great cities, and among those who were the students in them, the habit of mind of trying to know the difference between a good argument and a bad one, between a simple question and a complex one, between what was evidence and what was not; and to distinguish between the probable, the

possible, and the certain. They were now approaching the time when all these habits of mind would be called into great request. They were approaching a time when not merely forms of government—though no wise man would underrate their importance—but it might be even that some of the foundations of the structures of society were going to be examined by the people of this country. He did not know that there ever was a time when the power, the firm thinking power, of the nation was going to be subjected to a more exacting and stringent test."

In 1910, Lord Morley was elected President for the next year of the English Association, a body specially formed for the promotion of literature and a high standard of literary merit. In this capacity he delivered a most interesting and brilliant survey of the English language and literature on the 27th January, 1911, at Burlington House. I select especially the passages having an autobiographical interest—

"Personally I cannot remember that I was ever taught English. At school, I once competed for an English prize poem without success, but not without an encouraging compliment from the head master that my heroic poem contained the promise of a

sound prose style. . . . I called English the most widespread of living tongues. Surely not the least stupendous fact in our British annals is the conquest of a boundless area of the habitable globe by our English language. There is no parallel. . . .

"This is what, among other things, is slowly coming to pass in India. Though to-day only a handful, a million or so of the population, use our language, yet English must inevitably spread from being an official tongue to a general unifying agent. An Englishman who adds to the glory of our language and letters will deserve Caesar's grand compliment to Cicero, declaring it a better claim to a laurel crown to have advanced the boundaries of Roman genius than the boundaries of Roman rule. . . .

"I find in Sir James Murray's Dictionary —a splendid triumph for any age — that I am responsible for having once called literature the most seductive, deceiving, and dangerous of professions. That text demands a longer sermon than your time allows. If any of you reject my warning, impatient as I confess myself of overdoing precepts about style, let me urge you, besides the fundamental commonplaces about being, above all things, simple and direct, lucid and terse, not using two words where one will do—about keeping the standard of proof high and so forth—let me commend two qualities for one of which I must, against

my will, use a French word—Sanity and *Justesse*. Sanity you know well, at least by name. *Justesse* is no synonym for justice; it is more like equity, balance, a fair mind, measure, reserve. Voltaire, who, whatever else we may think about him, knew how to write, said of some great lady: 'I am charmed with her just and delicate mind; without *justesse* of mind there is nothing.' You must curb your ambition of glory; of writing like Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin. You must take your chance of being called dry, flat, tame. But one advantage of these two qualities is that they are within reach, and grandeur for most of us is not. And with this temper it is easier to see the truth, what things really are, and how they actually come to pass. . . .

"There is, we must admit, to-day no monarch in any tongue upon the literary throne, no sovereign world-name in poetry or prose, in whom, as has happened before now not so many generations ago, in royal succession—to Scott, Byron, Goethe, Victor Hugo, Tolstoy—all the civilised world Teuton, Latin, Celt, Slav, Oriental, are interested, for whose new works it looks, or where it seeks the gospel of the day. *Nabochlish*, to use an Irish word that became a favourite with Sir Walter Scott; it does not matter. Do not let us nurse the humour of the despondent editor who mournfully told his readers: 'No new epic this month.' . . .

"Nobody can tell how the wonders of language are performed nor how a book comes into the world. Genius is genius. The lamp that to-day some may think burns low will be replenished. New orbs will bring light. Literature may be trusted to take care of itself, for it is the transcript of the drama of life, with all its actors, moods, and strange flashing fortunes. The curiosity that it meets is perpetual and insatiable, and the impulses that inspire it can never be extinguished."

The year 1912 was marked by two public appearances of exceptional importance. Among other high offices, Lord Morley held that of Chancellor of the Victoria University at Manchester, and he took a very great interest in its work. On 28th June, 1912, he delivered the inaugural Sessional address, choosing as his subject Democracy in special reference to Rousseau. Of his lively sketch of Rousseau and the importance of the *Contrat Social* I say nothing, preferring again to give those extracts that are indirectly of a personal character — in other words, autobiographical.

"When I had the pleasure of coming among you a few months ago, I offered some remarks upon the obvious truth that

democracy in the discussions of the day meant Government working through public opinion, and upon the equally urgent importance of a body like this University making it a part of its duties to help in forming those habits of mind upon which the soundness of opinion depends. To-night I propose to harp upon the same string and to say something about politics and history. I intend a double subject with a single object. I need your indulgence, for of history I know too little; and of politics, some of you may think I know too much, and know it wrong.

"Any reflective observer, if he likes, can sketch some of the signs of the times in rather formidable outline. Political power is described as lying in the hands of a vast and mobile electorate, with scanty regard for tradition or history. Democracy they say is going to write its own programme. The structure of executive organs and machinery is undergoing half-hidden but serious alterations. Men discover a change of attitude towards law as law, a decline of reverence for institutions as institutions, and this change is not peculiar to England. Time and mutation of political atmosphere are incessantly attaching a different significance to the same ideas and the same words; yet we are apt to go on with our manful battles as if the flags and banners and vehement catch-words all stood for old causes.

While intent and with good reason on the topics of the time—on strikes, on aeroplanes, the gold reserve, the price of Consols, China, Persia, Mesopotamia, railways—is it possible that we are somnambulists, only half awake to strong currents racing in full blast over our heads and under the ground at our feet, and sweeping through the world of white men, black men, brown men, yellow men?

"May I, without peril, add another element in the political landscape? I will borrow the language of a French critic. In 1789, Sièyes published one of the most effective pamphlets ever written. Its title was this: 'What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been in politics until now? Nothing. What does it ask? To become something.' One critic of to-day warns us that behind the third estate, behind the fourth estate, a fifth estate has risen with which we have to count. 'Women who were nothing, and who rather claim to be everything, are going to be something.'

"Nothing is easier than to make a crisis out of this signal conjuncture of interesting, perplexing, and exciting circumstances. Still, the long experience of our national history shows it safest, wisest, soundest in respect of all English-speaking communities to be in no hurry to believe that in John Bunyan's pithy phrase, 'Passion will have all things now.' Contemporary history alone might

teach us to take deep-reaching change more patiently. We should all remember the passage from Spinoza: 'When I applied my mind to politics, so that I might examine what belongs to politics with all the same precision of mind as we use for mathematics, I have taken my best pains not to laugh at the actions of mankind, not to groan over them, not to be angry with them, but to understand them.' By understanding them, he says, he means looking at all the motives of human feeling—love, hatred, envy, ambition, pity—not as vices of human nature, but as properties belonging to it, just as heat, cold, storm, thunder belong to earth and sky. . . .

"A very interesting writer of our own times emphasizes the non-rational element in politics; impulses, instinct, reaction. As a man who has spent most of his days in politics, you will not wonder that I read with a rueful eye Mr. Graham Wallas's rather cynical dictum that the empirical art of politics consists largely in the creation of opinion by the deliberate exploitation of sub-conscious, non-rational inference. . . .

"Political science suffers from the same defect as political economy in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. . . If I had the privilege of adding a new Chair, it should be a Chair of Politics. Politics in the sense that I am suggesting is different from law, because law tends to stereotype thought

by forcing it into fixed categories; but political science, rightly handled, is for ever re-opening these categories to re-examine how they answer to contemporary facts. Political science is wider than law, because its work may be said to begin where law ends. . . . Is there a central thread to guide us along a main course in the movements of the world? Are the movements onward? History, in the great conception of it, has often been compared to a mountain chain seen far off in a clear sky, where the peaks seem linked to one another, towards the higher crest of the group. An ingenious and learned writer the other day amplified this famous image by speaking of a set of volcanic islands heaving themselves out of the sea at such angles and distances that only to the eye of a bird, and not to a sailor cruising among them, would they appear as the heights of one and the same submerged range. The sailor, I take it, is the politician. The historian, without prejudice to monographic exploration in intervening valleys and ascending slopes, will covet the vision of the bird. . . .

"The star of strength and greatness rises or sinks in a State according to the proportion in its numbers of men and women with courage, energy, will, and open, supple, teachable intelligence; and then, besides, on their power of making their qualities effectively felt. If we are, in Carlyle's

genial phrase, so many millions of fools, and if those who are not fools are but as dumb dogs, then the case is desperate. But before losing heart let us be sure that our political arithmetic and algebra are right."

Of all these ceremonies and addresses outside Westminster, the one that came nearest to his heart, and that aroused the most interesting memories in his own breast as well as among his audience, was his visit to his native town of Blackburn.

In July, 1912, the Borough decided to include him in its limited and jealously-guarded list of freemen, and Lord Morley received the intimation with unconcealed pleasure. At Blackburn, the Morley House Literary Society exists for the express purpose of spreading the Morley cult, and some days before the principal ceremony it had placed a bronze tablet outside the house (5 Heaton Street) where he was born. The inscription on it reads as follows:-

JOHN MORLEY (VISCOUNT MORLEY OF BLACKBURN),
ESSAYIST, BIOGRAPHER, STATESMAN,
WAS BORN HERE DECEMBER 24TH, 1838.

The presentation of the Freedom of the Borough took place on 25th July, 1913, and

the event was styled in the local paper as "Blackburn's Red Letter Day." It provided Lord Morley with the occasion for delivering two speeches, both in his happiest style. The former, made on receiving the casket enclosing his enrolment as a freeman, was the longer, and read as follows—it might be called a defence of literary men, by showing their fitness for public life—

[1] "Lord Morley, in acknowledging, said since he first learnt his letters at the Old Grammar School, near St. Peter's Church, Blackburn, he must have listened to many thousands of speeches, and he was afraid he must have made several hundred; but he confessed he had never been placed in a more embarrassing position than he was at that moment, because there was no topic which a sensible man would less desire to handle before a large public audience than himself. He could only say that he almost blushed as he listened to the language used by his Worship. It was far beyond any moderate merits of his, either literary or political, but he had—if they did not think it impertinence of him to say so—a kind of domestic feeling there that day. He was not going to make them an address as if he were seeking their votes; but he did

[1] This report is taken textually from the *Blackburn Times*.

beg them to believe that it was with most heartfelt gratitude he accepted the freedom which had been given to him by their Council, and he should always prize this shining mark of their goodwill.

"There was, as in all human things, a touch of irony on an occasion like the present. It was impossible on such an occasion to forget those who had gone, to whose willing and helpful self-sacrifice in his youthful days it was owing that he had a start. Then there could not but be, even on that cordial occasion, an awakening of some memories of mistaken public action, of some indiscreet public word, of an occasional mistaking a pebble for a pearl. All that was inevitable, but the past must take care of itself. He had lived, in the words of a great man, long and variously. But he thought it was no mean reward for a strenuous life to be received, when the course was coming near its close, with such a welcome as they had been good enough to extend to him. They or their forefathers once did him a great service, for in the year 1869 there was an election in Blackburn, and the returning officer, on Blakey Moor, had the painful duty of stating that he (the speaker) was at the bottom of the poll. Though at the time he felt a pang, a Lancashire man was never discouraged, and was not going to be finally foiled because he lost the first bout. In the fourteen years

that elapsed between that happy non-election and his gaining a seat in the House of Commons, he betook himself to the profession of letters. He wanted to ask them to banish from their imagination the idea that because a man knew and wrote books —he knew a few, and he was afraid had written too many—therefore he could not know men, that he could not have the habits of public business, and could not render useful service, in deliberations in Parliament, in Cabinets, in great Departments of State. That was a ridiculous idea that he hoped they did not allow to linger in their minds for a moment. In passing, he would like to note that of our last seven Prime Ministers, five, he thought he might say six, perhaps he might even say seven, had made a mark in the realm of books; and, if they had been drawn by the necessities of life into journalism, he, in his editorial days, would have granted any one of the five a very excellent salary. Nobody adored literature more than he did, but still, action was the work of men—and perhaps of women. Public life was a noble sphere, whether it was municipal or national. It was fit for anybody. He did not care how much they might have of ease and repose, it was fit for anybody who had a decent brain, a stout heart, a persistent temperament, and a good mixture—which he thought they had in Lancashire—of the intrepid with

the sedate, the bold with the sensible. Public life, in spite of the strain of it, in spite of the fact that they must pass some time in the kitchen, or the back-kitchen should he say, of politics, in order to get the political meal prepared—in spite of all that, it was a most splendid and incomparable training, whether it was municipal or national. It strengthened and deepened the sense of public duty and public responsibility. It awakened, it opened the mind to wider points of view. Whether they were Tory points of view or Whig points of view, it made either the Tory or the Whig wider in his points of view. Then, what he placed first of all, it taught a man the habit of co-operation, of working with other people, of throwing his mind into the joint stock for some great common purpose. They might say what they would about party—there was plenty of mischief about party, but there would be more mischief without it. In public life, let them take good care they made themselves able to work with other people. In that region he thought that what he took to be Lancashire qualities were useful — pluck, a certain delightful and winning frankness of speech, independence of mind, and a thorough hatred of affectation in all its forms. He would like to say a word or two about their Town Council — their local parliament— because its record made the gift of the

freedom of the borough of real value. The history of their sub-Parliament — their Council—was a very good story. He had taken a little trouble to obtain some figures, and he had them verified since he came to Blackburn. During the last twenty years the death-rate in the County Borough of Blackburn had been reduced from 21 per 1,000 to 14·2 per 1,000. There had been set aside for sinking fund £750,000. Net surplus assets had been increased by £820,000. They had spent on capital account and on income account £10,000,000, a yearly half a million. During the last six years—this was a most salutary fact—the net debt had been reduced by £140,000. He called that a very good story. There was another point. These local sub-parliaments not only did business, but also preserved a living and constant element in encouraging public spirit, of great industry, self-denial for public objects, and nourishing generally the social temper and the intelligence of good citizens. If they would allow him to philosophise for a moment, there were two schools of thought, and, if they were obliged to choose between the two, he hoped they would hold on to popular self-government as being as much to the point as good government, as being, in fact, the very essence of good government. Some people did not agree with that, but that at all events was his view, and the history of the Blackburn

Council verified all he had said. He did not want them to think that, because he spoke in this way of municipal councils, he was one of those who talked about the decline of the House of Commons. What was called the decline of the House of Commons meant simply this—that the majority, whether a Liberal or a Conservative majority, had not the confidence of the Conservative or the Liberal minority. It meant no more than that. Although he was a strong upholder of the dignity of the House of Commons—an essential point in the national life of the country—there were many aspects in which a member of a municipal council was more important than a Member of Parliament, and the councillors had the aid of municipal officers—trained experts who were as indispensable as were the permanent heads of Government departments. He would not detain them longer, except to say that no speech could be made nowadays without something being said about democracy. For that there were good reasons. He was struck by the remark made the other day by the Archbishop of York, who was too wise a man to say anything ill-tempered about democracy. The Archbishop said: 'Do remember that democracy has no divine right.' That was to say, it had not an inherited title, it had no divine right, but must show to the world by experience that it was a good and effective

form of government. What did it depend on? It depended upon the sense of public duty, the sense of responsibility, and the capability of the average citizen. Next, it depended upon there being a sufficient number of men in a great community, like Blackburn, for example, with enough brains, enough time to spare, leisure to devote to great objects, and with special aptitude and handiness for popular government. Still, to return to a text he was never tired of repeating, it all depended upon people taking proper pains to form opinions rightly. That might sound very simple, but it was easier said than done. Discussion was the secret —candid and fair discussion—and, within reasonable bounds, passionate and intrepid discussion. That came of education. In the same speech to which he had referred, the Archbishop of York gave a definition of education to the effect that an educated man was a man who knew the difference between knowing and not knowing; and he quoted another prelate, who said an educated man was the man who had got a clear view of some purpose running through human affairs, with which he identified himself and tried to co-operate. He was of opinion that the difference between an educated and an uneducated man, among other qualifications, was that an educated man knew what was evidence and what was not evidence, and when an assertion was proved

and when it was not proved. That was his notion for practical purposes, political and social; and he would add that an educated man should have an ardent care for the well-being of his species and his own countrymen to begin with. That was the object of all public life. 'I am deeply moved' (concluded his lordship) 'by the language of the Mayor and by the reception you have given me, and I offer you my most cordial thanks.'".

The second speech, delivered at the luncheon following the ceremony, was largely autobiographical—

"Lord Morley, responding to the toast, said it was in no conventional way that he offered them his warm and cordial thanks for his reception. He was interested in one point in the Mayor's speech, as to what exact advantage it was for a man to have the Freedom of any city or county borough. He (the Mayor) played with the subject. He quoted clauses from sections of statutes, but he (Lord Morley) waited in vain for anything substantial. He had already two Freedoms—one from his most faithful constituents of the Montrose Burghs, men who stood by him in the dark days and kept him in the House of Commons. He was also, he believed, the only Englishman who held the Freedom of the City of Dublin.

But in none of those three or four cases had he derived any appreciable benefit. The Mayor said something or other about rates and taxes. If he could get such a reform or alteration in the statutes that would enable a Freeman of Blackburn to come and live in Blackburn perfectly exempt from any rates and taxes, he declared to them he should be seriously tempted to return. In those artificial places to which he had migrated, like London, rates and taxes were somewhat formidable drawbacks to the pleasure of existence; therefore, he would ask the Mayor to see what he could do. Might he say with what a peculiarly warm and heartfelt pleasure he found himself associated with his old friends, Sir William Coddington, Alderman Harrison, and others whom he had remembered since he could remember anything, and whom he should remember so long as memory lasted. It was an enormous pleasure to find himself back again in this great hive of industry, amongst old boy friends, Parliamentary friends—and opponents. Something was said by Alderman Harrison about things he had written. Two things he believed he had written would be found useful for the guidance of that rather unfortunate person, the historian of the future. They were biographies of Lancashire men, or, rather, one was a Lancashire man; the other, Mr. Cobden, was not, he believed,

a Lancashire man, but a Sussex man. But Mr. Cobden began—they were not now going to argue about the Manchester School—at the print-works at Sabden, which, if he remembered aright, was only half-a-dozen miles distant. By the way, when he was in the House of Commons, Mr. Cobden said, in one of his angry moments—which were not common—that he did not believe there was anybody there who knew the difference between a cotton mill and a print-works. If he (Lord Morley) had been in the House of Commons in those days, he should have known the difference. Mr. Cobden was almost a Lancashire man. His great operations affecting public opinion centred in Lancashire, and they found their response in Lancashire. The other man, whose name would be received with respect, was Mr. Gladstone. He felt that he had rather a title to the goodwill of Lancashire in having done his best to commemorate two men; one a son of Lancashire and the other connected by all the powerful associations of life with Lancashire — Mr. Cobden. So much for literary fame. As for other matters, Government, as they all knew—Members of the House of Commons knew—was a very laborious piece of business. If they played any part in public affairs, if they were responsible to anybody—to a constituency, or to colleagues—they had got to be vigilant, careful, scrupulous—

as scrupulous as they could be. He had gone through more election campaigns than many people. He had, he thought, six severely-contested elections during the dozen years he sat for Newcastle. Then — he found confidence elsewhere. Really, the excitement and the strife and the elation of victory which happened to him pretty often, made a man a student. In conclusion, Lord Morley said: 'I thank you, Mr. Mayor, for the great kindness you have shown to me in this ceremony to-day, and for the kind things that you have said; and I wish to add how happy I am, when the curtain is perhaps creaking down, to have been once more among old friends and amid old scenes.'"

Lord Morley left Blackburn the same evening in order to preside on the following day (26th July) at the banquet to Sir Edward T. Cook, a distinguished journalist and writer, who had just received the honour of knighthood. Sir Edward Cook had been Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and also of the *Daily News*, the latter of which posts he had resigned on a question of principle. The occasion gave Lord Morley the opportunity for making some pertinent remarks on the profession of journalism and the influence of the Press.

"We all rejoice that our guest this evening has received the honour bestowed upon him, for, in the course of his journalistic career which I have known from the beginning, he has dignified public discussion and brought into coarse affairs—if I may say so without disrespect to Parliament and Cabinet—the spirit of cultivation and refinement. He has got the gift of sincere argument and, while he argues sincerely and firmly from his point of view, he does perfect justice to the arguments of other people. He has shown untiring industry, and he has shown what men in public careers, whether Parliamentary or journalistic, do not always show —perfect modesty. He is a shrewd judge of 'copy' and is also blessed with a sense of humour. We all know that our guest has made sacrifices of material interests, which, after all, are something, so that those interests might not overpower his sense of duty, his sense of responsibility, for advocating courses which, in his view, were for the advantage and for the common good of the nation to which he belonged. I am glad to think, for the honour of English journalism, that Sir Edward Cook is not the only man in that room who had made sacrifices of the kind. The worst of journalism, if I may say so as an old member of the profession, is that it is so precarious and insecure. Journalists are so subject to the caprices of time and

fortune, to give general names to these things. Journalism is a great profession —in many ways, excepting the profession of the Cabinet Minister, the greatest. But the chances of great journalism do not come every day in the week. King Edward at the beginning of his reign founded a new Order—containing, at all events, one not particularly worthy member—and on the front of the badge are the magic words, 'For Merit.' If we were all in the Palace of Truth, and I had to amend the badge, I would put on the obverse: '. . . and for luck.'" . . .

"In my view, the Press has distinctly and definitely improved in all the marks by which the wholesomeness of it is to be measured. There are journalists of all types. There are the men who have a natural pleasure in wrath, and there are also the trim swordsmen. . . . Personally, I do not mind who writes the leading article, if they give me full control of black type and the headlines. We are living in times of tremendous difficulty. One cause of the difficulties was said in every Chancellery of Europe to arise from the conflagrations of opinion kindled or extended by the Press. The prime duty of the Press all over Europe was to seize every opportunity to abate, to assuage, and to minimise and, so far as possible, to remove international suspicion and susceptibility, instead of warming these things into their hateful life."

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST PHASE

In the year 1913, which may be regarded as the last in which Lord Morley displayed any great mental activity, he made two public appearances deserving of notice. His remarks on these occasions, although not equal even to the average of his prime, revealed here and there glimpses of his old skill in the handling of words. Perhaps the sophistry rather than the substance of his logic was the more apparent, and in more than one passage his words seemed to run far beyond his ideas. I prefer to bring out the merits rather than to dwell on the defects.

In April, 1913, the teachers of Law and History in the University of Oxford entertained the Historical Congress at a banquet, for historians must dine, and sometimes in semi-public. A glance at the names of the persons present does not discover any transcendent genius, and Lord Morley, who was selected to make the speech of the evening, was then but a shadow of his former self and only half audible. He made the best atonement he could for his physical defects by

being brief, and his views on the shortcomings of historical research suggested to the leader-writer of the *Manchester Guardian* that "Lord Morley has the gift of touching upon a topic —whatever it may be—in such a way as to set those who hear him thinking about it more wisely and humbly than they ever did before." In the case under consideration, Lord Morley seemed to insinuate by the introduction of the Bismarck anecdote that historians were very often quite mistaken in their conclusions, and more especially in their judgments on human beings. No doubt this was the allusion that suggested the idea of humility to the leader-writer. The following passages are the best extracts from his address—

"Oxford had not such a shining list of the Immortals as Cambridge, with her Bacon, Newton, Darwin, Cromwell, Milton, Byron and Macaulay. Yet in that field of generous emulation Oxford might boast great names of men who turned deep currents into new channels—Gibbon, Adam Smith, John Locke, John Wesley. University power in different forms was not likely to dwindle in the new bodies with which England was now being studded. Universities, besides imparting special knowledge, were meant for reason's

refuge and its fortress. The standing enemies of reason, in spite of new arms, altered symbols, changing masks, were what they had always been everywhere. . . . To-day, historical science has turned taste and fashion away from the imposing tapestries of the literary historian to the drab serge of research among diplomatic archives, parish registers, private manuscripts, and anything else, provided it is not in print. As Acton puts it, the great historian now takes his meals in the kitchen. . . . Prince Bismarck, reading a book of superior calibre, once came upon a portrait of an eminent personage whom he had known well. 'Such a man as is described here,' he cried, 'never existed,' and he went on in graphic strokes to paint the sitter as he had actually found him. It is not in diplomatic material, but in their life of every day that you come to know men. I am of all men the very last to deny the supremacy of rational methods as tests of human things. In politics, rationalism needs correction and enrichment from history. The plain, busy man often asks what is old history to me. One answer is that in Europe he is born 2,000 years old. It is history that matters more than logic, forces, incident, and the long tale of consummating circumstances."

Four months later, Lord Morley addressed a very different audience when on 5th

August, 1913, he welcomed the members of the Congress of Medicine in the name of the Government at the Albert Hall. At All Souls' he addressed a mere handful of men in a room of moderate dimensions; at the Albert Hall he spoke to a body numbering over five thousand in a place which tasks the strength of the young and vigorous speaker. The perfunctory part of the address was composed of the official welcome to a Congress which had last met in London a quarter of a century before. In that period, the scientific treatment of disease had made great progress, but there was a tendency to exalt the new discoveries of germ-origin at the expense of the pathological treatment. There is no infallibility in the treatment of disease either by new or by old methods, and the most skilful physician is the most modest. Lord Morley's appeal for broadness of view was not ill-timed or out of place. The establishment of a medical tyranny, even under the banner of Science, would be a danger to the community at large, and must not be derided as a purely imaginary peril.

In the same speech Lord Morley referred to the painful subject of the Contagious

Diseases Act. In an earlier part[1] of this volume a conversation between him and Mr. Stead on this subject was quoted. It showed that he had changed his first opinions on the subject, but now, in face of facts that could not be denied, which brought home the terrible danger to the community, he reverted to his original view, so far, at least, as to admit that a very careful and authoritative inquiry was necessary. His speech may be regarded as foreshadowing the formation of the Commission of Inquiry presided over by Lord Sydenham. The following extract from the speech in question will suffice—

"In the achievements of the last generation new truths and new expedients in medicine, the advance in pathological theory and surgical practice may perhaps be counted the most striking marvel of them all. . . . There are narrow specialists, and broad. We must hope that all yours will prove of the broad sort—that is, men who, while doing priceless and indispensable work in particular organs, parts and regions, maladies and lesions, yet keep well in touch with organisation and function as a whole. . . . Another painful subject catches the eye in

[1] See ante, p. 90.

your agenda. I mean the horrible dangers of a certain disease transmitted in the dark through generation after generation of a community, and the further question of Government control and responsibility in connection with it. Here, again, ethical considerations hold, and rightly hold, a leading place in our public opinion. What we may call the surgeon's reason of State, important as it must be held, cannot stand as the single decisive factor. That is certain. At the same time there would be sheer moral cowardice in shrinking from a large and serious inquiry into the extent, the causes, the palliatives of this hideous scourge, just as we analyse the ravages of tubercle or cancer. In thinking of all the great things that science could do for government if it only had the chance, I do not forget what the Russian Empress said to the French philosopher, 'You only work on paper, I work on the human skin, which is irritable and ticklish to a very different degree."

Reference has been made to the fact that Lord Morley was occasionally put forward to represent the Government views on foreign affairs in the House of Lords. This was done not merely because the Government had no scientific conception of what foreign policy means, but also because Lord Morley was

the most prominent advocate of palliative measures. His idea was that the Press made international quarrels; he ignored the forces, to use a phrase he favoured, that drive Governments and nations to strive for "a larger place in the sun," and to crush their rivals and competitors. In the thick of the Near East crisis during the spring and summer of 1913, when the Concert of the Powers was the panacea for international strife, he was delegated to reply for the Ministry at the annual Royal Academy banquet on 3rd May in that year.

People were a little anxious at the moment, for the defeat of Turkey had been followed by a fresh war between the Balkan Allies, and the Powers were supposed to be employed on a single-minded mission of averting "a great disastrous ruinous European conflict." We have grown wiser since, and there can be no difference of opinion now that some at least of those Powers were making their calculations for a very different purpose. Lord Morley no doubt believed everything he said, and he found a congenial task in assuaging the apprehensions of the public by covering up the fissures that separated the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance.

He had nothing but praise for the action of the Ambassadors, for the colossal deception termed "the European Concert," and he gave his audience the agreeable week-end consolation that, "on Monday we shall be nearer in sight of a solution which may be unanimously agreed to."

Lord Morley, who never posed as a great authority on foreign politics, is not to be censured because he did not see more clearly than the majority of his contemporaries the drift of German policy. Yet he had read Treitschke, and seems to have set him down as a madman. At least, that is the conclusion I form from the following extract from his lecture on Democracy at Manchester, on 28th June, 1912, already quoted from. This passage reads—

"With Treitschke reaction went far. He delivered lectures for several years on what he named Politik, now accessible in a couple of volumes twice as long as Machiavelli's *Prince*, and twenty times as little tending to edification. No Professor in this University could keep a class for a month upon Politik of that stamp."

Speaking with perfect respect of the speaker, it may be questioned whether a

more typical instance of insularity of view could be found elsewhere. At the very moment that Lord Morley was declaring amid the general assent of a Manchester audience that the students of their University would not listen to Treitschke's lectures for a month, the whole German people had succumbed to his teaching and were resolutely bent on giving it practical application. As a matter of fact, if Treitschke's *Politik* had been closely studied and carefully expounded in our Schools and Universities, there could have been no doubt in England as to the drift and purpose of Germany's policy. Lord Morley did not believe a whole nation could be as wicked as the individual, Treitschke in this case, but he forgot Machiavelli's dogma that "mankind is more prone to evil than to good." He forgot also his own prediction in the *Fortnightly* in 1867[1] that, "through the weakness and timidity of England," the time would come when "the supremacy of Germany on the Continent of Europe" would be an accomplished fact.

Having lived for half a century in an atmosphere of self-deception with regard to the position of affairs in Europe, the British

[1] See ante, p. 28.

peoples were suddenly aroused from their pleasant dreams by the German invasion of Luxemburg and Belgium at the commencement of August, 1914. Lord Morley would not believe in the theories of Treitschke. He lived to see them put in practice with a brutality that surpassed the teaching; but he retired from the scene of public affairs before the first action. It is known that there were certain members of the British Government who advocated looking on, and remaining outside the conflict, when Germany violated the neutrality of Belgium, for which England had stood as guarantor, and that some of them, allowing themselves to be over-persuaded, remained in office, while others resigned. Among the latter was Lord Morley, and it would be agreeable to think that he took this step, not because he regretted to see England meet her bond, but because he felt too old and too feeble to deal with so grave a crisis. In any case, the resignation of the Presidency of the Privy Council on 4th August, 1914, rang down the curtain on the public career of John, Lord Morley of Blackburn.

Lord Morley lived for over nine years after his resignation from office, passing his time

among his books and papers in his pleasant house at Wimbledon, where he received many visitors and among them no inconsiderable number of distinguished Indians. He had refused to take part in the conduct of the Great War, but there is reason to believe that he was sometimes consulted about schemes, more or less fanciful, for promoting an early Peace. Be that as it may have been, his only return to active participation in politics was when he was induced, as the surviving champion of the Gladstone policy, to move the Address in the House of Lords on the Irish Agreement in 1921. He was listened to with respect, but the effect was not as intended, for he was almost inaudible. Shortly after this incident he showed that he knew the end could not be far off by presenting a considerable portion of his library to the Manchester University. He described these books as "his genial, instructive, fortifying comrades," and it is appropriate to mention here that the great founder of libraries, the late Mr. Andrew Carnegie, bequeathed him an annuity of two thousand pounds. His career closed peacefully on Sunday, 23rd September, 1923, and so passed, in Mr. Asquith's phrase, "the last survivor of the heroic age."

It is not easy on the morrow of a man's farewell to the stage of life to attempt to fix the place he will occupy in the memory of posterity. For only a very small minority can permanent fame be confidently predicted, and with all his excellent merit admitted, John Morley did not come within this limited and exclusive band. He figured prominently in two separate spheres, as man of letters and as politician, and his work may be conveniently considered under each, for he did not allow one avocation to interfere with the other. Indeed, one of his chief claims on the respect of his contemporaries was that he never permitted the passion of politics materially to bias or colour the views expressed in his serious writings. He seemed conscious in them that he was addressing an audience better qualified to form a competent judgment than an election meeting or even the House of Commons. His power of detachment was well revealed in his lecture on Machiavelli during the heat of the Home Rule movement, and his Manchester address on Democracy while the campaign against the House of Lords was at its height. Many persons have expressed regret that he ever entered politics, and their belief that he

would have risen to higher rank as a writer if he had never quitted the field of literature. If to have one's name handed down in history constitutes the true test of fame, we do not share this view, because we believe that Lord Morley's name as an Indian reformer will be remembered long after his writings have passed into semi-obscurity.

Although Lord Morley wrote a great deal of an admirable excellence, it would need great boldness to declare that his work contains anything likely to become a classic. Certainly if there is such an exception it will be found among his shorter works, and the balance of chance seems to rest in favour of *Compromise*. But this essay, for it is little more, related to a period in English life when "doctrinaire" views were in the ascendant, and the atmosphere of political life and opinion was purely artificial. Practical affairs, international competition, the proof that human society has sterner work to attend to than the platitudes of the platform and the lecture room, have destroyed that "milieu" of assumed perfection, and it must be long before anything of the kind can again come into being. Morley was a typical creation of this period, when words appealing

to the sense of self-complacency swayed the public conscience and carried the day.

If we turn to his larger volumes, the Lives of Gladstone and Cromwell, we find that the considerable success he achieved in both cases was rather of a passing than a permanent character. Neither subject was perfectly congenial to him. With regard to Gladstone, he was undoubtedly hampered by the risk of breaking confidences, and by the fact that he had been too closely associated with him to be under any delusion as to the limitations of his genius. They happened to agree on the subject of Irish policy, but there was little real affinity in their views and way of looking at things. Morley thought Gladstone too verbose, and too nimble in the working of his mind. To Gladstone, Morley was always too cold and too slow, although an excellent lieutenant. Moreover, Gladstone's Irish policy had resulted in unqualified failure, and there did not seem any likelihood of smaller men reviving it with a different ending. Great biographies are the rarest of books; and for absolute success the biographer must regard his subject as in a sense his hero. Gladstone was, probably, a greater genius than Morley

perceived him to be, but certainly his *Life* is only an excellent piece of transitive work, and not the inspired biography that lives for ever, like Boswell's *Johnson*.

In its way, and in a different sense, the *Life of Cromwell* was more successful. As a *tour de force* by a man who had no sympathy with Cromwell's acts, and no special qualification for describing his military achievements it might even be termed a remarkable performance. But an attempt to soften the brutal deeds of the great Parliamentary general and the upsetter of Parliaments for the edification of a peace-at-any-price school of politicians was really a farce unworthy of the author's talent. Cromwell was a man of action in a ruthless age, and not less a believer in the advantages of absolute power than Strafford. The only difference was that he preferred to exercise it himself instead of through a King. Everything that Cromwell did must have been repulsive to Lord Morley, and he could only have essayed the task of taking his portrait with the deliberate purpose of changing or concealing the true features. With regard to the third of his larger works, which, in point of time, came first, the *Life of Richard Cobden*, he

was probably in closer sympathy with his subject than in the other two. As a mere biography it is probably in accordance with the general opinion to rank it first of the three.

It is when we come to his shorter volumes that we discover Lord Morley's best work in literature. His force comes out most conspicuously in the monograph. His own view of his talent must have been much the same, for in speaking of his own *Burke*, he called it "not a biography in the strict sense, but a historical study." Yet his final modification of his work on *Burke* was far nearer the true biography than any of its successors. The trilogy of books on the precursors of the French Revolution were monographs of the best stamp. Taken together, they give a striking survey of the men and "forces," to use one of Lord Morley's favourite terms, that brought about the cataclysm towards the end of the eighteenth century. The style and treatment are crisp and clear, and show the author at his best. This kind of work culminated in the volume *On Compromise*, which may be regarded as a sort of political confession.

Among other productions of his pen that

will live in the memory of his contemporaries must be named his lecture on Machiavelli; his letter on the gift of the Acton Library, and his address on Democracy at Manchester in 1912. Each might be described as a literary gem of its own particular kind, and it may be doubted whether the execution in the case of any of them could have been improved. But by themselves they would not be sufficient to ensure lasting literary fame. Taken in conjunction with the more serious works mentioned, they undoubtedly contribute to strengthen Lord Morley's claim to a place in the first rank of English writers during what, for want of a better term, has been called the Victorian Era. It is not out of place to recall that he raised the standard of journalism, and that he always advocated clearness of language as the first essential for young writers to aim at. He practised what he preached, at least, during the years of full mental vigour.

In politics Lord Morley was a different character, but here also his natural coldness prevented his being a zealot. He was a Home Ruler, but in all probability his principal motive was his desire to see business run smoothly in the House of Commons by

the elimination of the Irish members. He was a great Liberal reformer and he drew up, or fathered, more than one programme for his Party, yet he was a champion of the right of contract, and looked askance at the unsound theories of the Socialist. He was an opponent of the House of Lords and assented in the attack on its veto, yet he was not a Single Chamber man and believed in the need of a Senate. If he had doubts, they were lest the controlling body should acquire greater influence than the popular assembly. It was not a subject he could talk about, but his admiration of the House of Commons was always very qualified, and with experience it rapidly diminished.

He entered political life at a curious turning-point in the history of the rival Parties. It was well known that Gladstone was turning towards Home Rule; it was also no secret that his most experienced and influential supporters would desert him. In these circumstances, he was on the look out for new lieutenants, and Morley naturally seemed to him one likely to prove of superior calibre. Although he was not very eloquent, nor very dexterous, he at once took a prominent place in the House, and he kept it

chiefly by gaining a reputation for integrity and the sobriquet of Honest John. But ten years' experience disillusioned him as to Parliamentary life, and if he could have had his own way he would have turned his back on politics. But he could not be spared. He was as necessary to his Party in the days of Harcourt and Lord Rosebery as under Gladstone; and he remained in Liberalism, to become one of the band called its Old Guard.

When new Liberalism came into evidence as part of the reaction following the South African War, it was more than doubtful how far Lord Morley would sympathise with it, or what part in the active administration could be assigned to him. A happy solution of the difficulty was found in giving him a special place lying outside the regular routine of politics as Secretary for India, with a special mission to discharge towards the peoples of that country. The appointment aroused some apprehension in the breasts of those who associated Morley with Home Rule, and he was warned that India was not a place where risky experiments could be tried. Somehow or other, a rumour had got about that the new Secretary of State was keenly

in favour of an Indian Parliament, and that he had a ready-made programme to that effect in his pocket.

As a matter of fact, he had no programme with regard to India, and at the most he had only a perception that the time had come for a forward movement in that country. There is now no difference of opinion that he was right and his critics wrong in their views about the modification or retention of old privileges that had had their day. The time had come to broaden the basis on which British rule rested in India, and to open the doors of office and authority wider to Indian candidates. The manner in which he effected the change has been described. His reforms were characterised by moderation, and he refused to adopt all extreme measures. But his moral courage was shown in persevering in his course, despite the occurrence of outrages committed by extreme and designing persons in India, which men of an inferior type would have seized upon as an excuse for laying aside their plans and abandoning their programme. In these matters, it must never be forgotten that the late Earl of Minto, as Viceroy, took an equal part, and is entitled to an equal share in the credit;

but we are dealing with Lord Morley. Besides, the Indian reforms became law by the vote of the two Houses of Parliament, and not by a mere order of the Governor-General in Council. For that reason, if for no other, Lord Morley's name will be the most closely associated with the reforms introduced into the administrative system of India in 1909-10.

And this will furnish his chief claim to a niche in the temple of fame. Long after his writings have ceased to attract the reader, when his name as a man of letters shall convey little meaning except to the gleaner in old libraries, Lord Morley will be identified and remembered by his work on behalf of Indian progress. He has put his name on the Statute Book in connection with a great act of justice, and for this he will be associated in the memory of the peoples of India with Lord William Bentinck and Lord Macaulay. That is a fame of which his earlier career gave no likelihood or promise, and it may well satisfy the most exacting of his personal admirers.

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