

THE PROMOTION OF LORD CAIRNS.

he was held up to execration as a perjurer. No explanation of the actual facts, however, has ever been given, for he treated the attack on him with contemptuous silence. In 1856 he was raised to the bench as second justice of the Court of Common Pleas. His judicial career was remarkable for his fearless independence and resolution to vindicate the majesty of the law. Irrespective altogether of parties or persons, he castigated all whom he believed to deserve it, no matter what position they occupied or what relation they held towards him or others. It was his lot to be engaged in some election petition and other trials in which religious and political questions were mixed up, and his judgment was one almost certain to give offence to one party in the action. He incurred the resentment of each at different times, but chiefly by his Galway judgment. The undying enmity of the Roman Catholic priesthood and populace pursued him with relentless fury to his death-bed. His judgments are marked by great ability and outspoken condemnation of improper practices. He unseated Sir Arthur Guinness and Mr. Plunkett, the Conservatives, with as inflexible a determination as he unseated Mr. Whitworth and Captain Nolan, the Liberals. He was a sincere and earnest Roman Catholic, and was intolerant of clerical dictation and coercion, and never hesitated to denounce it. In this respect, notwithstanding the calumnies uttered against him, he was always consistent. One of his earliest and most remarkable speeches at the bar was a scathing denunciation of a priest at Sligo, who was prosecuted for horse-whipping a woman. His political views were Liberal in the largest sense; and this, as well as his genial manners, made him a favourite with the educated classes. In private life he was universally esteemed as a warm and generous friend and a most agreeable companion. His conversational powers were of a rare quality, marked by unflagging animation and a ready flow of wit and humour, which showed a pleasant if not a brilliant array around the convivial circle. He had a strong frame, and, until the last circuit, seemed to be in the enjoyment of good health; but

the first symptoms of decay then showed themselves, and were noticed with concern, but no one apprehended a collapse so speedy and so sad.

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The public will learn with satisfaction a confirmation of the report that the Lord Chancellor was about to be advanced in the peerage. Lord Cairns enjoys the esteem alike of his colleagues and his party, of the public and of the profession of which he is the head. He has long been recognized as one of the most accomplished lawyers of his time, and he is universally trusted as a prudent, able, and conscientious statesman. Few even of his opponents, therefore, will grudge him his well-earned promotion to an Earldom. It seemed at one time, indeed, as if his health was likely to force him to relinquish an active share in politics. For a short period he occupied the position of leader of the Conservative party in the House of Lords when it was rendered vacant by the retirement of the late Earl of Derby; but, as he was compelled to resign this position on the ground of ill-health, it must have seemed more than doubtful whether he would be able to resume office on the return of his party to power. These apprehensions, happily, proved to be groundless. Lord Cairns became Lord Chancellor for the second time in 1874, and, to the satisfaction of all, his strength has been so far restored as to enable him to discharge without intermission the arduous duties of his high office, and to bear his share of responsibility in the prolonged and trying crisis through which the country has lately passed. That his powers, matured by time and experience, are still as great as they ever were, we have lately had abundant proof. Our readers will hardly have forgotten the great debate in the House of Lords last Session on the Constitutional question involved in the summons of troops from India. It was to Lord Cairns that the duty fell of explaining the acts and the policy of the