

the sad consequences of a statesman's life spent, like his, in the constant service of his country on arduous foreign missions, that in his own land, in his own circle, almost in his own home, his place is occupied by others, his very face is forgotten; he can maintain no permanent ties with those who rule the opinion, or obtain the mastery, of the day; he has established no claims on any existing party; he has made himself felt in none of those domestic and personal struggles which attract the attention, and fix the interest, of the common world which forms the bulk of the public opinion of England. For twenty years, the few intervals of his residence in these islands were to be counted, not by years, but by months, and the majority even of those who might be reckoned amongst his friends and acquaintances, remembered him chiefly as the eager student at Oxford, in the happy time when he was devoted, in his undergraduate days at Christ Church, to the pages of Plato, or listened, not without a deep philosophic interest, in the Fellows' Quadrangle at Merton, to the roll of the now extinct theological controversy, then beat by the war drum of the Tracts for the Times.

It is tragical to think of the curtain thus suddenly dropt over the future of his career in England. It is tragical, also, though in a narrower and more partial sense, to think of the more immediate overcasting of his career in India.

He undertook the Vice-royalty of India, not, it is said, without a dark presentiment that he should never return, but with a clear conviction that the magnitude of the field before him left no choice. Yet of the actual duty imposed on him, of the actual glory to be reaped, he always expressed himself with a modesty to which his own acts corresponded. "I succeed," he used to say, "to a great man and a great war, with a humble task to be humbly discharged." This feeling is well expressed in a letter, which gives at the same time an admirable description of the empire, at the moment when he undertook the government.

"India was at peace. At peace in a sense of the term more emphatic and comprehensive than it had ever before borne in India. The occurrences which had taken place during the period of Lord Dalhousie's government, had established the prestige of the British arms as against external foes. Lord Canning's Vice-royalty had taught the same lesson to domestic enemies. No military operations of magnitude were in progress to call for prompt and vigorous action on the part of the ruling authority, or to furnish matter for narrations of thrilling interest. On the contrary, a hearty acquiescence in the belief that no such opportunities existed, and that it was incumbent upon him, by all practicable means, to prevent their recurrence, was the first duty which the situation of affairs prescribed to a new Governor-General.

"But while such was the condition of things in respect to matters which have to be settled, if at all, by the arbitrament of the sword, questions of a different class, affecting very important interests, but demanding, nevertheless, a pacific solution, presented themselves for consideration, with a view to definitive action and practical adjustment, under circumstances of very great perplexity and embarrassment. . . . What intensified the evil in many of those cases, was the fact that the points in question bore closely upon those jealousies of race which are the sources of almost all our difficulties in India."

In the spirit thus indicated, he was desirous of postponing the final adjustment of such questions, as those to which he here alluded, until he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with the country and the people. That acquaintance he was gradually acquiring. That result of his labours he was rapidly approaching.

The gallant vessel was steering with her sails full set, right into the haven where she would be. The storm swept over her, from a quarter whence it was least expected. The ship went down within the very sight of the harbour, with all the treasure of experience and wisdom accumulated for the very moment of the arrival which was never to take place.

The sense of his approaching end throws over the retrospect of Lord Elgin's progress northwards from Calcutta through the provinces a melancholy shade, which almost forbids us to dwell upon it in detail. Yet it also imparts a pathetic interest to some of the leading features of his public addresses, and of his personal impressions, which may well find a place in this brief sketch. Such is the allusion to the two distinguished men who had preceded him in his office of Governor-General, in a speech at a dinner at Benares, celebrating the progress of the East Indian Railway:—

"In looking over the published report of these proceedings a few days ago, my attention was arrested by an incident which brought forcibly home to my mind one painful circumstance in which my position here to-day contrasts sadly with that which my predecessor then occupied. At a stage in the proceedings of the evening, corresponding to that at which we have now arrived, Lord Canning departed from the routine prescribed by the programme, and invited the company to join him in drinking the health of his noble predecessor, the Marquis of Dalhousie, who had, as he justly

observed, nursed the East Indian Railway in its infancy, and guided it through its first difficulties. It is not in my power to make any similar proposal to you now. A mysterious dispensation of Providence has removed from this world's stage, where they seemed still destined to play so noble and useful a part, both the proposer of this toast and its object; the names of both are written in brilliant characters on some of the most eventful pages of the history of India, and both were removed at a time when expectation as to the services which they might still render to India was at its height. I shall not now dwell on the great national loss which we have all sustained in this dispensation; but, perhaps, I may be permitted to say that to me the loss is not only a public one, but a private and personal calamity likewise. Both of these distinguished men were my contemporaries; both, I believe I may without presumption say, my intimate friends. It is a singular coincidence that three successive Governors-General of India should have stood towards each other in this relationship of age and intimacy. One consequence is that the burden of governing India has devolved upon us respectively at different periods of our lives. Lord Dalhousie, when named to the Government of India, was, I believe, the youngest man who had ever been appointed to a situation of such high responsibility and trust. Lord Canning was in the prime of life; and I, if I am not already on the decline, am at least nearer to the verge of it than either of my contemporaries who have preceded me. Indeed, when I was leaving England for India, Lord Ellenborough, who is now, alas! the only surviving ex-Governor-General of India, said to me, "You are not a very old man, but depend upon it, you will find yourself by far the oldest man in India."

He was present at the impressive ceremony of the consecration of the church by the Well of Cawnpore, where he met the excellent Bishop of Calcutta. He thence advanced to Agra, which he thus describes:

"The six days spent at Agra, I am disposed to reckon among the most interesting of my life. Perhaps eleven months of the monotony of a Calcutta existence may render the mind more sensitive to novelty and beauty. At any rate, the impressions experienced on revisiting Agra at this time have been singularly vivid and keen. The surpassing beauty of the buildings, among which the Taj stands preeminent; the vast concourse of chiefs and retainers, containing so many of the attributes of feudal and chivalrous times; with the picturesqueness in attire and gorgeousness in colouring, which only the East can supply; produced an effect of fairyland, of which it was difficult to divest one's-self in order to come down to the sterner realities of the present. These realities consisted mainly in receiving the chiefs at private and public Durbars; the great Durbar being attended by a larger number of chiefs than ever before assembled on a similar occasion."

The public journals of India describe for the last time, on the occasion of this Durbar (or gathering of the princes), his "appearance venerable" beyond his years; "the extremely benignant" aspect of his countenance; his voice, as he addressed the assembly, "clear and distinct, every word well weighed, as if he meant what he said." We give his address, as the best exposition of his own feeling under this and similar circumstances:—

"Princes and Chiefs—In inviting you to meet me here, it was my wish in the first place to become acquainted with you personally, and also to convey to you, in obedience to the gracious command which I received from Her Majesty the Queen, upon my departure from England, the assurance of the deep interest which Her Majesty takes in the welfare of the Chiefs of India. I have now to thank you for the alacrity with which, in compliance with my request, you have, many of you from considerable distances, assembled at this place.

Having received, during the course of the last few days, many of the principal personages among you in private durbar, where I have had the opportunity of communicating my views on matters of interest and importance, I need not detain you on this occasion by many words.

"Before taking leave of you, however, I desire to address to you collectively a few general remarks upon the present state of affairs in India, and upon the duties which that state of affairs imposes upon us all.

"Peace, I need hardly remind you of the fact, now happily prevails throughout the whole extent of this vast empire; domestic treason has been crushed; and foreign enemies have been taught to respect the power of the arms of England.

"The British Government is desirous to take advantage of this favourable opportunity, not to extend the bounds of its dominions, but to develop the resources and draw forth the natural wealth of India, and thus to promote the well-being and happiness both of rulers and of the people.

"With this view many measures of improvement and progress have already been introduced, and among them, I may name as