

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' FRIENDSHIP.

I have been asked, I presume, to take part, and the most prominent part, in this morning's ceremony, because of my intimate acquaintance and intimate personal relationship with Mr. Cobden—which lasted unbroken and undisturbed by a single jar during the long period of twenty-five years.

## MR. COBDEN'S BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

You know, probably, that Mr. Cobden was not what in the world's language is called highborn—that he did not enter on life with what we call good connections, that he was not surrounded by appliances of wealth, that it could not be said of him that fortune came smiling to his youth and wooed it—for he was born, if not in a humble, at least in a very moderate farm house, of a respectable, quiet and honorable family, in the county of Sussex. Of his school days I shall say only this, that I suppose he had no better opportunity of education in the school to which he went than have almost all the boys now of similar age throughout the whole of Great Britain. He had no opportunity of attending the ancient universities, and of availing himself of the advantages, and I am afraid I may say in some degree of suffering from some of the disadvantages from which those universities are not free.

## MR. COBDEN'S FIRST SPEECH AT ROCHDALE.

The first great public question to which he turned his mind, as far as I am able to gather, was the question of public and national education.—and I know that the first time I became acquainted with him was in connection with that question. I went over to Manchester to call upon him and ask him if he would be kind enough to come over to Rochdale and speak at an education meeting which was about to be held in the school-room of the Baptist Chapel in West Street, of that town. I found him in his office in Morley Street, and introduced myself to him, and told him what I wanted. His countenance lit up with pleasure to find that there were others that were working in this question, and without hesitation he agreed to come. He came and he spoke, and though he was then so young as a speaker, yet the qualities of his speech were such as remained with him so long as he was able to speak at all. Clearness, logic, a conversational eloquence, a persuasiveness which, when conjoined with the absolute truth that there was in his eye and in his countenance, it was impossible to resist.