so much scope elsewhere, and was the motive power of much of
his political action, particularly towards the end of his time i.
Parliament. After his retirement indeed, when politics had
literally become nothing but a game to him, he would watch the
cards as they fell with complete detachment from party views :
' I wish I was entering politics now as a young Tory blood,'
was a frequent comment on public events during his last years.

Of course, he had his own way of putting things, which
was not that of other people, and this brings me to the part
in life as to which both friends and foes are agreed that he
achieved complete success. Whatever else he was or was not,
everybody is agreed that he was the greatest English wit since
Sheridan. His gently modulated voice had a good deal to do
with his conversational success, and the bland quiet manner
with which the most startling remarks would be accompanied
gave them weight, if not point. Still, even in cold print many of
his sayings and appreciations will live as long as men laugh
from intellectual motives. ' I do not mind Mr. Gladstone
always having an ace up his sleeve, but I do object to his always
saying that Providence put it there' : is a dictum which
will not soon be forgotten. That observation, gently drawled
out one evening in the lobby of the House of Commons, is a
specimen of hundreds. I am persuaded that originally he had
no intention of being witty, but supposed his quips and
paradoxes to represent the bare facts expressed with the
greatest economy of language. It is certain that no one was
more surprised than he at the entertainment people found
in the *Letters of a Besieged Resident*. He soon discovered
his reputation for wit and deliberately made use of it,
both as a shield and as a weapon of offence. It also served
another purpose. There was a strong tendency to indolence
in him, that was gratified by his success in turning off awkward
or puzzling questions with some witty or irrelevant remark.
If this analysis is correct, it throws light on the nature of his