

DEATH OF LORD METCALFE.

From the London Times.

The intelligence of this melancholy event was not generally made known in town until Monday night, although it took place last Saturday. The noble lord just deceased had been, ever since his return from Canada, suffering under severe indisposition, and for some months past his medical advisers ceased to indulge any hope of his recovery.

There prevails a well-founded opinion that Parliamentary distinction is the high road to power and place. But an exception to this general rule may be found in the history of Lord Metcalfe. He never possessed a seat in the House of Commons, nor did he ever participate in the proceedings of the Lords. Neither was he a learned theologian, nor a gallant commander, a popular demagogue, or a successful lawyer; but he was an extremely well-informed, shrewd, adroit negotiator, and his administrative talents were of the highest order. The distant possessions of the English crown, and the diplomatic service of the State, frequently demand the exercise of qualities very distinct from those which win the favour of electoral bodies or "charm a listening senate." That Lord Metcalfe might have been wise in legislation as well as "cunning of fence" in the arts of debate, is one of those possibilities respecting which it would now be futile to speculate. There never arose an occasion upon which his qualifications for such undertakings could have been fairly tested; for the early and middle portions of his life were spent in the Oriental possessions of England, while his latter years were divided between Canada and the West Indies. Hence he acquired dignity and emolument by a less beaten path than that which official personages usually tread. A narrative of his life, however, will not on that account be less acceptable to the public.

So little is to be said respecting his ancestors that their history may in a few words be related before we enter upon a detail of his own personal career. Soon after the Revolution of 1688 an English gentleman, named Theophilus Metcalfe, settled in Ireland, and being a barrister, practised his profession in that country with some success. His son Thomas entered the army, and having married the daughter of the Rev. John Williams, had a son, also called Thomas. This gentleman served many years in India in a military capacity, became a director of the East India Company, and was created a baronet in the year 1802. He had married in 1782 Susannah Sophia, relict of Major Smith, and daughter of Mr. John Debonnaire; the second son of that marriage was the subject of the present memoir. Sir Thomas Metcalfe died in the year 1813, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Theophilus John; and he dying in 1822 without male issue, was in his turn succeeded by his brother Charles Theophilus, to an account of whose life and character these columns are assigned.

This eminent person was born on the 30th of January, 1785, and therefore at the time of his lamented death was in the 61st year of his age.—On the 13th of October, 1800, he received his appointment as a writer in the service of the East India Company, and quitted Europe at the early age of 15. He had received as much of what is called education as could be imparted to a boy of his years, and went to India with quite as large a stock of knowledge as in those days usually fell to the lot of youths destined for similar employments; it was, however, evident even in his boyhood that the strong common sense and natural talents which he possessed would to a great extent compensate for any of those deficiencies in mere literary attainments under which he might labour.—Not that his education had been by any means neglected; on the contrary, he was considering that he entered upon active life at so early an age—a man of sound and varied knowledge; but the extraordinary vigor of his intellect resulted less from the training of instructors than from the gifts of nature—less from the toils of the library than from a perusal of that book of life which large intercourse with the world opens to the view of the assiduous student. So early was his advancement that at the age of 16 he received the appointment of assistant to the Resident with Dowlat Row Scindiah. On the 4th of October, 1802, he became assistant in the Chief Secretary's office; in less than seven months from that time—namely, on the 4th of April, 1803—we find him an assistant in the Governor General's office; and early in the year 1806 he was transferred to the Office of the Com-

mander-in-Chief. On the 15th of August, in the same year, he became first assistant to the British Resident at Delhi; and on the 29th of Aug. 1808, he proceeded to Lahore. At that time the growing power and territorial encroachments of the late Runjeet Singh induced Lord Minto, then Governor-General of India, to send a mission to the Court of Lahore, the object of which was to secure the Sikh states between the Sutlej and Jumna rivers from the grasp of Runjeet. He selected the subject of this memoir, though then a very young man, only just 22, for that difficult undertaking, and Mr. Metcalfe was authorized to announce the unpardonable fact that those states were taken under British protection. He was, however, supported by the march towards the Sutlej of a body of British troops under the command of Col. (afterwards Gen. Ochterlony). The management of the negotiation was attended with considerable difficulty; but Mr. Metcalfe, by tact and firmness, completely succeeded; and a treaty, concluded in April, 1809, which recognized the independence of those states, was the result. During the stay of Mr. Metcalfe at the Court of Lahore a collision took place between a corps of British Sepoys and the Akalis, or religious soldiers of the Sikh army. Some of the Akalis amongst the escort celebrated the "maspurrum" there, which the Akalis resented as an insult to their religion, and they attacked the camp of the British army; but the Sepoys gallantly repulsed the assailants. The discipline, steadiness, and valour of this small band won the admiration of Runjeet Singh, who often referred to the occurrence, for it evidently made such an impression on his mind as rendered him extremely cautious ever afterwards in any attempt to encounter British troops. With this event it may be said that the more distinguished portion of Mr. Metcalfe's career commenced. Here we find a youth not older than the majority of undergraduates at Oxford or Cambridge measuring the moral strength of his character, the resources of his limited experience, and the force of his yet untried penetration, against the multiplied stratagems and deep deceptions of an Indian ruler and his advisers.

In the course of the next 10 years he was advanced through several offices. On the 15th of July, 1809, he received the appointment of Deputy Secretary to the Governor during his Lordship's absence from the presidency. In the month of May, 1810, he became acting Resident at the Court of Dowlat Row Scindiah, and in February 1811, Resident at Delhi. It was on the 29th of January, 1819, that he received the appointment of secretary in the Secret and Political Department, and that also of Private Secretary to the Governor-General. Mr. Metcalfe succeeded Mr. Russell as British Resident at Hyderabad, the Court of the Nizam. This appointment took place on the 26th of December, 1820; and his departure from Calcutta not only occasioned much regret, but so popular was he that it was proposed to invite him to a public banquet at the Town-hall in order to mark the high sense which the inhabitants of that city entertained of his public services and his private worth, the extreme modesty of Mr. Metcalfe alone prevented the accomplishment of this intention, and the proposed entertainment was converted into a private dinner. He proceeded without delay to the Court of the Nizam; owing, however, to the state of his health, he was compelled to leave Hyderabad about the close of 1823. In the preceding year (1822) his elder brother died, and he succeeded to the baronetcy. After the lapse of 13 months from the time of his quitting Hyderabad—namely, in June, 1825—his conduct there became the subjects of an advertisement, in the Court of Proprietors at the East India-house, in consequence of charges of neglect made by Chundoo Lall; but the motion of implied censure was eventually withdrawn, and it is understood that the charges were groundless. His health after a short absence from Hyderabad having been considerably restored, he accepted on the 26th of August, 1826, a fresh appointment—that of Resident and Civil Commissioner in the Delhi territories, and agent to the Governor-General for the affairs of Rajpootana. It was not, however, till the 24th of August, 1827, that he became a member of the Supreme Council. The Presidency of the Board of Revenue was conferred on him in July 1828, and on the 11th of November 1829, he was constituted Vice-President and Deputy-Governor of Fort William. The discharge of his duties in that position was so successful, and gave so much satisfaction to the King's Government,

as well as to the Court of Directors, that he was intrusted with the Presidency of Agra. The appointment to that high office was made here on the 16th of June, 1834, but it was not until the following November that he took charge of the Government. On the 28th of that month an entertainment was given at Calcutta upon the occasion of Sir Charles Metcalfe's departure for Agra; and at that banquet Lord William Bentinck, in proposing his health, said that whether in public or in private life he never met with any individual whose integrity, liberality of sentiment, and delicacy of mind excused in a greater degree his respect and admiration. His Lordship further stated that he never had a more able and upright councillor, nor any Governor-General a more valuable and independent assistant and friend. In the succeeding year still higher trusts were reposed in the subject of this memoir. On the 3rd of February, 1835, Lord William Bentinck gave in his resignation, and Sir Charles Metcalfe was provisionally appointed Governor-General, which office he held till the 28th March, 1836, being the interval between the departure of Lord William Bentinck and the arrival of Lord Auckland. During that short period Sir Charles originated, as well as adopted, several important measures—namely, the issue of a uniform money for all the presidencies, the abolition of chowkies in Bengal, and a still more important step—the liberation of the press from all restrictions. This last measure (the anniversary of which, the 15th of September, is still celebrated by a "press dinner") was the theme of universal eulogy in India, and rendered him pre-eminently popular amongst natives as well as Europeans. It, however, gave great umbrage to the Court of Directors, and was the eventual cause of his resignation and return to Europe, though he had always declared his intention of spending his life in India. The post of Governor of Madras about this time became vacant, and the friends of Sir Charles concluded that it would be given to him; but the Court of Directors thought proper to mark their opinion of his conduct by bestowing it upon another. In the month of September, 1837, he signified his intention of withdrawing from the public service. The distinction of a Civil Knight Grand Cross of the Bath had been conferred upon him in the course of the preceding year, and his retirement from Agra was marked by every token of the public sympathy and affection, including dinners, balls, addresses, and the presentation of a magnificent piece of plate: never was man more heartily beloved and esteemed by the inhabitants of British India than the subject of this memoir. By public subscription a statue was erected to his honour, and an address presented by the community of Agra, which styled him the "brightest ornament of the civil service"—which celebrated his magnificent benefactions and his private generosity. In reply to this address Sir Charles, with his characteristic candour, avowed the cause of his resignation. He reminded his friends that reports had prevailed in the preceding year to the effect that he was in disgrace with the home authorities on account of the liberty of the press; and he added that that was a position in which he "could not remain with comfort;" he therefore, sought information on the subject at the fountain head; the reply which he received was by no means explicit, but its uncondemned tone satisfied him that the reports which prevailed were not untrue; and therefore on the 21st of February, 1838, he withdrew from the service of the East India Company; but, as subsequent events very clearly showed—the responsible advisers of the Crown more justly appreciated his high talents than did the Board of Directors in Leadenhall-street.

Soon after his arrival in England a public dinner was given to him in London by friends who had known him in India, with whom were associated on that occasion several other gentlemen interested in the affairs of the East, and to whom the high character and great public services of Sir Charles Metcalfe were well known. Doubtless the banquet thus given in honour of Sir Charles Metcalfe originated in sentiments of personal esteem and affection; but it must not be forgotten that precisely at that time he had been appointed to the Government of Jamaica, and, according to a common practice amongst a certain class of minor politicians, there were some gentlemen who attended the dinner more for the purpose of extracting from Sir Charles a disclosure of his intended policy in the West Indies than with any view of celebrating his former administration in