

EDMUND HOWARD

long catalogue of his virtues, that it is quite refreshing to come across an outspoken, though by no means unbalanced, opinion of him from one of his employés, who while giving him the fullest credit for the good qualities which he observed in him, makes it abundantly clear that, speaking from a sentimental point of view, it would have been an excellent thing for Chelsea if Sloane had never been born. For Sloane's interest in Chelsea was, until quite the last, a purely financial one, it being only in his old age that he condescended to take up his quarters in the palace of Henry VIII., after having exploited its garden as a building site.

That he was a most kind and generous man may be taken for granted; but in Howard's artless autobiography it is easy to discern another side of his character which, while in no way to his discredit, certainly helps to explain his success in accumulating riches, and how it was that the nation did not acquire his wonderful collection—the nucleus of the British Museum—without having to pay for it.

Twenty thousand pounds in those days was no mean addition to the portion of his two co-heiresses, rich as they were without it, and however its value may have increased with the times—just as his real estate in Chelsea has done—one cannot help feeling more gratitude to the many who have freely given, in