

in 1868, supported them in the speech which ended with the words :—"Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"

Office came to him when the Liberals came in 1869, and no less an office than the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. His budget was a brilliant failure, the "match-tax" furnished material for the comic papers and burlesques, and Mr. Lowe found himself the best abused and most laughed at man in England.

The writer remembers the performance of a burlesque in the year 1870, when Mr. Gladstone's historical collars, Mr. Lowe's white eyebrows, and Mr. Ayrton's fascinating smile, were portrayed to the life in a '*pas de trois*.' The Lord Chamberlain put in his veto after all London had crowded to see the performance, Finally Mr. Gladstone took the Exchequer to himself, and Mr. Lowe went to the Home Office, a difficult position, where every statesman becomes unpopular, and where probably it was thought that the new occupant would find a congenial atmosphere.

After the fall of the Liberal ministry in 1874, Mr Lowe ceased to be a political force. Occasionally he spoke in the House of Commons, and always was listened to with attention, but it was felt that he, at least, merited Mr Disraeli's famous illustration of the "extinct volcanos," applied to his opponents in a speech at Manchester. And when once more the tables were turned in 1880, and the Midlothian campaign brought in Mr. Gladstone at the head of a large majority, only the least instructed of prophets expected to find Mr Lowe's name included in the new cabinet. He received a peerage, and after that only two events were recorded in his life, the publication of a volume of poems, chiefly translations and epigrams, dating from his university days, and a second marriage.

The writer of this notice remembers seeing him in the year 1886 on the occasion of a garden party given by Lady Dysart at the historic mansion of Ham House. It was the first time in the memory of man that the old house had been opened for any such hospitality, and all the notabilities of London were present.

It was a most interesting sight, to behold the celebrities of the day, politicians, artists, actors, society beauties. But when a voice was heard saying, "Look, there goes Sherbrooke," a vivid curiosity caused the group to turn their heads. Entirely blind, Robert Lowe was guided by his young wife. The marked features recalled Tenniel's frequent caricatures of the past, and indeed no face lent itself so easily to satiric delineation. The figure was still erect and vigorous, but somehow one seemed to be looking on a character of a past age. The political excitement of that moment (July 1886) was the fall of Mr. Gladstone's third ministry on the rejection of his Home rule measure. The match-tax and the reform bill agitation seemed as distant as Waterloo and the French Revolution. Concerning his personal qualities there were differing verdicts, but it must have been a very philosophical equanimity which caused him to quote with great amusement the following prophetic epitaph upon himself, written apparently during the crisis of 1866-7, and even to turn it into Latin.

AN EPITAPH.

Here lie the bones of Robert Lowe,
A shifty friend, a bitter foe ;
All Oxford (when he dwelt thereat)
Knew him an ardent Democrat ;
With others of the self-same kidney
He chose to emigrate to Sydney,
And there our Robert still we knew
A Radical of deepest hue.

Returning home to British ground
A seat in Parliament he found,
Where, with an ardour unabated,
'Gainst "musty parchment" he dilated ;
Attacked with zeal the Tory minions,
And still retained his old opinions.

A Kidderminster mob (how blind)
Both broke his head and changed his mind ;
No more he loved the unwashed masses
(Then first discovered to be asses)
But laying Democratic plans down,
Took service with the House of Lansdowne.

Yet still a Liberal he stayed,
And for high office powers displayed ;
In Palmerston's Administration
Did much for England's education,
And would have done still more, no doubt,
But bitter Cecil drove him out.

When Russell Minister became
High mid the rest stood Robert's claim,
But non-reforming zeal which stirred him
Quite from the Cabinet deterred him,
And (since such post he could not earn)
He vowed the coach to overturn :
Intent on his old friends' undoing
He constantly was mischief brewing :
Ran here and there by day and night
Assisting the Adullamite :
By specious truths and artful stories
Decoyed young Whigs to vote with Tories ;
Against extended suffrage spoke
Alike with argument and joke ;
Then victor in the final tussle,
Brought Derby in and ousted Russell.

Heaven rest his soul ! but where 'tis fled
Can't be imagined, much less said.
Should he the realms above us share,
No more will Peace and Love be there.
But, if he's gone to lower level,
Let's all commiserate the Devil !

Of the Latin version, only a fragment has been quoted.
It is as follows :

Robertus Humilis hic jacet,
Qui nobis (mortuus) valde placet.
Amicus minime fidelis,
Amarus hostis et crudelis.

Quænam conditio sit futura
Ambigitur, sed spero dura.
Si Cælum scandet ista pestis
Vale Concordia Cælestis !
'Si apud inferos jacebit
Diabolum ejus poenitebit
Et nos Diaboli miserebit."

He who could relish such pungent humour at his own expense must have had a very philosophical mind. His place