



I.—A THANKSGIVING DINNER.

THANKSGIVING day had dawned clear and cold, an ideal day for the football game. Soon after breakfast the side streets had been made hideous by small bands of boys, strangely disguised as girls some of them, or as Indians and as negroes, with improvised costumes and with staring masks; they blew fish-horns, and besought coppers. A little later in the day groups of fantasticals paraded on horseback or in carriages; and straggling target companies—some of them in the uniforms worn during the campaign which had culminated in the election three weeks earlier—marched irregularly up the avenues under the elevated railroads, preceded by thin lines of pioneers, and by slim bands of music that played spasmodically before the many adjacent saloons, at the doors of which the companies came to a halt willingly.

The sun shone out and warmed one side of the street as people came from church; and the wind blew gently down the avenues, and fluttered the petals of the yellow chrysanthemums which expanded themselves in





AN IDEAL DAY FOR THE FOOTBALL GAME.

many button-holes. Little groups of young people passed, the girls with knots of blue at their throats or with mufflers of orange and black, the young men with college buttons or with protruding handkerchiefs of the college colors. The fashionable dealers in men's goods had arranged their windows with impartial regard for future custom—one with blue flannels and scarfs, shirts and socks, and the other all orange and black. Coaches began to go by, draped with one set of colors or the other, and filled with young men who split the air with explosive cheers, while waving blue pennants with white letters, or yellow pennants with black. The sun shone brightly, and the brisk breeze shivered the bare branches of the trees. It rippled the flags which projected from the vehicles gathering at Madison Square and streaming up the avenue in thick succession—coaches, private carriages, omnibuses, road-wagons of one kind or another.

Toward nightfall the tide turned and the coaches began to come back, the young men hoarse with incessant shouting of their staccato college cries. Some of them, wild with joy at the victory of their own team, had voice still for exulting yells. Others were saddened into silence by the defeat of their side. Most of those who had gone out to see the game belonged neither to the college of the blue nor to the college of the black and orange, but they were all stimulated by the struggle they had just seen—a struggle of strength and of skill, of gumption and of grit. The sun had gone down at last, and the bracing breeze of noon had now a touch of dampness which chilled the flesh. But the hearty young fellows paid no heed to it; they cheered and they sang and they cried aloud one to the other as though the season were spring, and they were alone on the sea-shore.

Robert White caught the fever like the rest, and as he walked down the avenue

to the College Club he was conscious of an excitement he had not felt for years. He was alone in the city for a week, as it happened, his wife having taken the children into the country for a long-promised visit; and he had been spending his evenings at the College Club. So it was that he had joined in chartering a coach, and for the first time in a dozen years he had seen the football game. He had been made happy by the success of his own college, and by meeting classmates whom he had not laid eyes on since their Commencement in the heat of the Centennial summer. One of them was now the young Governor of a new Western State, and another was likely to be a member of the new President's cabinet.

On the way out to the game White had sat beside a third classmate, now a professor in the old college, and they had talked over their four years and their fellow-students. They recalled the young men of promise who had failed to sustain the hopes of the class; the steady, hard-working fellows, who were steady and hard-working still; the quiet, shy man who had known little Latin and less Greek, but was fond of science, and who was now developing into one of the foremost novelists of the country; the best baseball player of the class, now the pastor of one of the leading churches of Chicago; and others who had done well for themselves in the different walks of life. They talked over the black sheep of the class—some dead, some worse than dead, some dropped out of sight.

"What has become of Johnny Carroll?" asked the professor.

"I have not seen him since class day. There was some wretched scandal before Commencement, you know, and I doubt if Johnny ever got his degree," White answered.

"I know he didn't," the professor returned. "He never dared to apply for it."

"They managed to keep the trouble very quiet, whatever it was," White went on. "I never knew just what the facts were."

"I didn't know then," responded the professor; "I have been told since. But there is no need to go into that now. The girl is dead long ago, and Johnny too, for all I have heard."

"Poor Johnny Carroll," White said; "I can remember how handsome he looked that last night, the night of class day.

But he was always handsome and always well dressed. He was not very clever or very anything, was he? Yet we all liked him."

"I remember that he tried to get on the Freshman crew," the professor remarked, after a pause, "but the temptations of high living were too much for him. He wouldn't train."

"Training was just what he needed most," White added; "moral and mental as well as physical. Fact is, he always had more money than was good for him. His father was in Wall Street then, and making money hand over fist."

"It wasn't till the year after we were graduated that old Carroll committed suicide, was it?" the professor inquired. "Blew out his brains in the bath-tub, didn't he?"

"And didn't leave enough money to pay for his funeral," White answered. "Johnny was in hard luck always: he had too much money at first, and none at all when he needed it most."

"His great misfortune," said the professor, "was that his father was 'one of the boys.'"

"Yes," White agreed, "that is pretty rough on a fellow. I wonder where Johnny is, if he is alive? Out West, perhaps, prospecting on a grub stake, or else stoker on an ocean steamer, or perhaps he's a member of the Broadway squad, earning a living by elbowing ladies over the crossing."

"I hope he has as good a berth as that," the professor answered; "but I don't believe that Johnny Carroll would stay on the force long, even if he got the appointment. Do you remember how well he sang 'The Son of a Gamboler'?"

It was this question of the professor's which Robert White remembered after he had got off the coach and was walking toward Madison Square. Three young fellows, mere boys two of them, were staggering on just in front of him. They were arm in arm, in hope of a triplicate stability quite unattainable without more ballast than they carried, and they were singing the song Johnny Carroll had made his own in college. The wind was still sharpening, and the wooden signs which projected across the sidewalk here and there swung heavily as they felt its force. There were knots of eager young men and boys going to and fro before the brilliantly lighted porticos of the hotels.



"WHITE WAS ABLE TO SECURE A SMALL TABLE NEAR THE CORNER."

As White stepped aside to get out of the way of one of these groups, rather more hilarious than the others, he knocked into a man who was standing up against the glaring window of a restaurant. The man was thin and pinched; his face was clean-shaven and blue; his clothes were threadbare; his attitude was as though he were pressing close to the glass in the hope of a reflected warmth.

"I beg your pardon," cried White.

The man turned stiffly. "It's of no con—" he began, then he saw White's face in the bright light which streamed across the sidewalk. He stopped, hesitated for a moment, and then turned away.

The moment had been enough for White to recognize him. "Johnny Carroll!" he called.

The man continued to move away.

White overtook him in two strides, and laid a hand on his shoulder. "Johnny!" he said again.

The man faced about and answered doubtfully, "Well, what do you want?"

"Is this really you, Johnny Carroll?" asked White, as he held out his hand.

"Oh yes," said the other, "it's Johnny Carroll—and you are Bob White."

White's hand was still extended. After a long pause his classmate took it. White was shocked at the chill of Carroll's fingers. "Why, man," he cried, "you are cold."

"Well," the other answered, simply, "why not? It isn't the first time." Then, after a swift glance at White's face, he turned his own away and said, "I'm hungry too, if you want to know."

"So am I," said White, cordially. "I was going to have my Thanksgiving dinner alone. Will you join me, Johnny?"

"Do you mean it?" asked the other.

"Why shouldn't we dine together?" White responded, setting off briskly and putting his arm through his classmate's. "Our team has won to-day, you know—eighteen to nothing; we'll celebrate the victory."

"Where are you taking me?" inquired Johnny, uneasily.

"To the College Club, of course," answered White. "We'll—"

"I mustn't go there," said Johnny, stopping short. "I couldn't face them now. I—oh, I couldn't!"

"Very well, then," White agreed. "Where shall we go? What do you say to Delmonico's?"

Again Johnny asked: "Do you mean it? Honest?"

"Of course I mean it, Johnny," he replied.

"I haven't been in Delmonico's for ten years and more," said the other. "I'd like to have just another dinner there. But you can't take me there. Look at me!"

White looked at him. The thin coat was buttoned tight; it was very worn and yet it was not ragged; it was in better condition than the hat or the boots.

As the two men stood there facing each other on the corner of the street there was a foretaste of winter in the wind which smote them and ate into their marrow.

White linked his arm again in his classmate's. "I've seen you look sweller, Johnny, I confess," he said; "but I haven't dressed for dinner myself to-night."

"So it's Delmonico's?" Johnny asked.

"It's Delmonico's," White responded.

"Then take me into the café," said the other. "I can stand the men, I think, but I'm not in shape to go into the restaurant where the women are."

"Very well," agreed White. "We'll try the café."

When they entered the café it was crowded with young men. There was already a blue haze of smoke over the heads of the noisy throng. Boys drinking champagne at adjacent tables were calling across to each other with boisterous merriment.

White was able to secure a small table near the corner on the Broadway side. As he walked over to it he nodded to half a score of acquaintances, some of whom looked askant at his companion, and exchanged whispered comments after he had passed.

Apparently Johnny neither saw the looks nor heard the whispers. He followed White as if in a dream; and White had noticed that when they had entered the heated room, Carroll had drawn a long breath as though to warm himself.

"I don't need an overcoat in here," he said as he took the chair opposite White's with the little marble-topped table between them.

When the waiter had deftly laid the cloth, Johnny fingered its fair softness, as with a catlike enjoyment of its cleanliness.

"Now, what shall we have?" asked White, as the waiter handed him the bill of fare in its narrow frame. "What would you like?"

"I?" the guest responded; "oh, anything — whatever you want — some roast beef."

"Then your taste has changed since you left college," White declared. "I asked you what you would like."

"What I'd like?" echoed Johnny. "Do you mean it? Honest?"

White smiled as the old college phrase dropped again from the lips of his classmate.

"Of course I mean it," he said; "honest. There's the bill of fare. Order what you please. And remember that it is Thanksgiving, and that I'm hungry, and that I want a good dinner."

"Very well, then," said Johnny, as he took the bill of fare. He was already warmer, and now he seemed to expand a little with the unwonted luxury of the occasion.

He looked over the bill of fare carefully.

"Blue Points on the half-shell, of course," he began, adding to the waiter, "be sure that they are on the deep shell. Green turtle soup—the green turtle here used to be very good fifteen years ago. *Filet de sole, à la Mornay* — the sole is flounder, I suppose, but *à la Mornay* a man could eat a Hebrew manuscript. Then a canvas-back apiece—two canvas-back, you understand, real canvas-back, not red-head or mallard—with sump, of course, and a mayonnaise of celery. Then a bit of Cheddar cheese and a cup of coffee. How will that suit you, White?"

"That will suit me," White responded. "And now what wine?"

"Wine, too?" Johnny queried.

White smiled and nodded.

"Well, I'll go you," the guest went on. "I might as well see the thing through, if you are bound to do it in style." He turned over the bill of fare and scanned the wine list on the under side. "Yquem '74 with the oysters; and they tell me there is a Silver Seal Special '84 *brut* that is better than anything one has tasted before. Give us a quart of that with the duck. And let us have it as soon as you can."

He handed the bill of fare to the waiter, and then, for the first time, he ventured to glance about the room.

The oysters were brought very soon, and when Johnny had eaten them and part of a roll, and when he had drunk two glasses of the Yquem, White said to him: "Tell me something about yourself. What have you been doing all these years?"

Johnny's face fell a little. "I've done pretty nearly everything," he answered, "from driving a Fifth Avenue stage to keeping books for a Third Avenue pawnbroker. I've been a waiter at a Coney Island chowder saloon. Two summers ago I waited on the man who has just taken our order—I waited on him more than once. I've dealt faro, too."

The waiter brought the soup and served them.

When he left them alone again, White asked, "Can't some of your old friends help you out of this—give you a start and set you up again?"

"It's no good trying," Johnny replied. "You can't pull me up now. It's too late. I guess it was too late from the start."

"Why don't you drop this place?" White queried, "and go out West, and—"

"What's the use of talking about that?" Johnny interrupted. "I can't live away from New York. If I got out of sight of that tower over there I'd die."

"You will die here soon enough at this rate," White answered.

"That's so, too," admitted Johnny; "but it can't be helped now." He was eating steadily, sturdily, but not ravenously.

After the waiter had served the fish, White asked again, "What can we do for you?"

"Nothing," Johnny answered; "nothing at all. Yes, you can give me a five, if you like, or a ten; but don't give me your address, or the first time I'm down again I'd look you up and strike you for ten more."

A band of undergraduates, twenty of them or more, four abreast, arm in arm, went tramping down Broadway, yelling forth the chorus of a college song.

"You used to sing that song, Johnny," said White.

"I used to do lots of things," he answered, as the waiter opened the champagne.

"I never heard anybody get as much out of 'The Son of a Gamboler' as you did," White continued.

"I joined a negro minstrel troupe as second tenor twelve years ago, but we got stranded in Hartford, and I had to walk home. I've tried to do a song and dance in the Bowery dime museums since then, more than once. But it's no use."

When they had made an end of the canvas-backs and the *brut* '84, Johnny sat back in his chair and smiled, and said, "Well, this was worth while."

Then the coffee came, and White said, "You forgot to order the liqueur, Johnny."

"You see what it is to be out of practice," he replied. "I'd like some orange curaçoa."

"And I will take a little green mint," said White to the waiter. "And bring some cigars—Henry Clays."

"That's right," Johnny declared. "My father was always a Henry Clay man, and I suppose that's why I like those cigars."

After the cigars were lighted, White looked his companion square in the face. "Are you sure," he asked, "that we can do nothing for you?"

"Dead sure," was the answer.

"Nothing?"

"You have given me a good dinner,"

said Johnny. "That's enough. That's more than most of my old friends would give me. And there's nothing more to be done."

White held his peace for the moment.

Johnny took a long sip of his coffee, and drew three or four times at his cigar. "That's a first-rate cigar," he said. "I haven't smoked a Henry Clay for nearly two years, and then I picked up one a man had lighted, between the acts, outside of Daly's."

He puffed at it again with voluptuous appreciation, and then leaned across the table to White and remarked, confidentially, "Do you know, Bob, 'most everything I've cared for in this world has been immoral, or expensive, or indigestible."

"Yes," White admitted, "I suppose that's the cause of your bad luck."

"I've had lots of luck in my life," was the response, "good and bad—better than I deserved, most of it—this dinner, for example; I should remember it even without to-morrow's dyspepsia. But what's the use of anticipating evil? I'll let the next day take care of itself, and make the best of this one. There are several hours of it left—where shall we go now?"

The House of Commons,

its Structure, Rules, and Habits.

BY THOMAS POWER O'CONNOR.



THE House of Commons is unique among the legislatures of the world in having no complete accommodation for its members. There are altogether 670 members of the House, and there are exactly 430 seats, of which only 306 are on the floor. The Speaker takes the chair at three o'clock, except on Wednesdays, and unless the House has agreed to what are called "morning sittings," which begin at two o'clock. Three o'clock is sufficiently late in the afternoon, judging by the example of other legislatures; but it is too early for the men of business, the practising lawyers, and the men of fashion, who still form so large a factor in the membership of Parliament. It is rarely, therefore, that there are more than a few members in attendance at that

hour. Another reason for this abstinence may be that this is the hour of devotion. Each sitting of the House is begun by the solemn reading of prayers by the Speaker's chaplain—at present the well-known Archdeacon Farrar. Those who attend prayers reap an immediate and earthly reward. On the large table that stands in front of the Speaker's chair there is a box which contains a number of cards with the word "Prayers" printed upon them.

The member who has attended prayers writes his name on this card, and thereafter places it in the small slot which is at the back of each seat in the House; and for that particular evening that seat is his. He may leave the seat for hours, but he is entitled to it whenever he returns, and can expel any person who may have taken it during his absence. There are only two classes of persons in the House who have any settled rights with regard to seats. The front bench on the right-hand side of the Speaker's chair is called the Treasury Bench, and on this sit the various members of the existing administration. The bench immediately opposite is called the Front Opposition Bench, and on this sit the members of the previous administration. A member of the House is occasionally made a Privy-Councillor although he has never held office, and he is entitled to occupy a seat on the front benches, and occasionally does so. I believe that the Lord Mayor of London, if a member of the House, is also entitled, on certain occasions, to occupy a seat on one of the front benches. Occasionally a minister resigns from an administration, and then the etiquette is for him to occupy a corner seat (usually on the second bench immediately behind the Treasury). For instance, Lord Randolph Churchill, who, as everybody knows, resigned from the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House in the last administration, used to sit on the corner seat behind the Treasury Bench, and from this point of vantage, with hand nervously clutching his mustache, and with face almost livid from nervousness and suppressed excitement, watched the arrival of the moment when he could strike at the friends who had become his enemies.

There are, it will be thus easily understood, two peculiarities under these circumstances about the attendance at

prayers. First, the gentlemen usually present are not always those most distinguished for their piety. The caustic editor of *Truth* has taken, in recent years, to laying the foundation-stones of non-conformist places of worship, but nobody would be less likely to set up a claim for special piety than Mr. Labouchere. Nevertheless, every night of the week Mr. Labouchere listens with pious

H. Labouchere Prayers.

attention to the ministrations of the chaplain. The secret reason is that the first seat on the front bench below the gangway—I will explain the term later on—is a place peculiarly well suited for the guerilla that is ever on the watch for the moment to make an onslaught on a wicked administration; and Mr. Labouchere, as the chief of the guerillas, is especially fond of this seat, and has occupied it for years. This incumbency, though sanctified by so many years of usage, has still to be won by regular attendance at every evening's prayers; the rule is inflexible—except in the cases already mentioned—that a seat can be held only for one night, and that then it shall be won by attendance at prayers. The second peculiarity is that the men who are most in want of the assistance of prayers, as having the heaviest responsibility upon their shoulders—the members of the administration and the leaders of parties—are always conspicuously absent. During prayer-time the front benches are always a yawning desert, unbroken by the form of a single member of the administration, great or small.

The late Mr. Bradlaugh was, it is well known, an avowed agnostic, but he was particularly attached to a certain seat on the benches below the gangway. He used to get over the difficulty by waiting outside the House until prayers were ended, and then hurrying in, he placed his card on the particular seat of which he was so fond. It was slightly irregular, but nobody cared to interfere. Just before prayers are begun, the procession of the Speaker to his place in the House takes

place. Enough of the old ceremonial still exists to make this a quaint and interesting spectacle. The Speaker still wears the large full-bottomed wig of state occasions, is dressed in a short-tail coat, covered by a sweeping robe, wears knee-breeches, and low shoes with large buckles. Behind and before him is a small cohort of attendants—the sergeant-at-arms bearing the mace, the chaplain with Prayer-book in hand, the train-bearer holding up the train, and two or three other attendants, the exact purpose of whom it is impossible to tell beyond the desire to make the procession more imposing in point of numbers. The sergeant-at-arms, like the Speaker, is arrayed in knee-breeches, with low shoes. He carries a sword by his side, but is allowed to dispense with the wig. The ceremonial is made more imposing by the policemen and attendants, who shout along the corridors which separate the Speaker's house from the House of Commons, "Speaker! Speaker!"—a shout which has a strange, indefinable effect, however often heard, and stirs the blood somewhat as the dreams of De Quincey were moved by the recollection of the Roman consul passing over the Appian Way. It sounds like a reminiscence and momentary embodiment of all the fierce struggle, oratorical triumphs, tragic and world-shaking events which are associated with the history of the august Parliament of Great Britain. When the Speaker reaches the lobby, the chief of the police force attached to the House repeats the cry, "Speaker!" with the additional words, "Hats off, strangers," and it is rarely that the lobby, however noisy and tumultuous before, does not fall into a certain timid silence as this black, solemn, and picturesque group sweeps by.

When the Speaker enters the House every member rises from his seat. The Speaker bows two or three times as he walks up the floor, and some of the country gentlemen and the more ceremonious members of the House bow at the same time.

The first thing that strikes the visitor to the House of Commons is that—here also it is exceptional among the legislatures of the world—the House of Commons permits its members to retain their hats during the sitting. Indeed, it is the rule to wear and the exception not to wear the hat. Mr. Gladstone never wears

his hat—there have been exceptions, to one of which I will allude presently; nor did Mr. Smith, the late respected leader in the House of Commons on the Conservative side; nor did Disraeli; nor does Mr. Balfour, nor Sir Charles Russell. A member, however, can keep his hat on only when he is in his seat. If he rises to speak, he of course takes off his hat; if he rises to leave his seat and go out of the House, he has to take off his hat; so long as he remains standing in any part of the House, he has to keep off his hat. There are some of the older members who, even when they lean over their seats to converse with a member on the bench in front of them, take off their hats. And it is usual, too, when a member interjects an observation across the floor to take it off. It was also the invariable custom when a member was referred to that he should raise his hat, but this rule is falling into desuetude.

Any one acquainted with the House of Commons would know without any previous knowledge which party was in power by seeing on which side of the Speaker's chair each party sat. The party in office is always seated on the right of the Speaker's chair; the party in opposition sits on the left. When you read in a Parliamentary report that cheers have come from the Opposition side of the House, you may know that the cheers have come from the left of the Speaker's chair; similar cheers from the Ministerial side mean cheers from the right. I have seen each side of the House occupied by the different parties in the course even of the same Parliament; indeed, in one case the change was made in one day. On June 8, 1885, the government of Mr. Gladstone was defeated, and a few days afterwards a Conservative government under Lord Salisbury came into office. The Liberals, after occupying the right of the Speaker's chair for five years, in one night suddenly left their camps and intrenched themselves on the left. There is one exception to the rule that the seats shall be changed with the change of administration. The Irish National party has, as the basis of its existence, the contention that Ireland ought to be governed by her own Parliament, seated in the old Parliament House at Dublin, and that the government of Ireland by a Parliament at Westminster is unjust. It is a corollary to this position that the party



THE TERRACE—A POETIC MEMBER.

is in permanent opposition to all and every form of administration that governs Ireland from Westminster; or, to put it more briefly, the Irish National party is always "agin the government." As a consequence, the Irish party never changes sides, but always remains on the left, or Opposition side, of the Speaker's chair.

And now I have to explain a phrase which puzzles the foreigner very much. In Parliamentary reports the word "gangway" is constantly appearing. There are "cheers from below the gangway"; or appeals "to honorable gentlemen above the gangway"; or murmurs "from gentlemen below the gangway on the Ministerial," or "from below the gangway on the Opposition side" of the House. This mysterious and constantly recurring word means simply the passage that runs between the series of benches on either side of the House. It is obvious that if the benches ran the whole length of the House, it would be very hard for any one ever to leave his seat. Accordingly the benches were cut in two, and a passage was made, which was easy of access, and down which the member

could pass who wanted to leave the House. The constant employment of the term in Parliamentary parlance is due to the circumlocution which the rules of the House impose upon speech. It is against the rule to mention any member by name; he must be called by the name of the constituency which he represents, or by his official or ex-official title. If a member wishes to allude to Mr. Gladstone, he has to speak of him either as "the right hon. gentleman the member for Midlothian," which would be the more official way, or he can be spoken of as "the right hon. gentleman the leader of the House," or "the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister," but never as Mr. Gladstone. The same rule, I believe, applies to the American Houses of Congress, with this little difference: a member is spoken of in America as the gentleman *from* New York; with us he is always described as the member *for* whatever constituency he represents.

The gangway represents to a certain extent a difference of political tendencies, even in the same party. Those who sit above the gangway, and immediately behind either of the front benches, are sup-

posed to be more moderate in their opinions, and more devoted to the interests of their leader, than those below the gangway. There is often considerable curiosity to know where a member will sit when he first enters the House of Commons, especially if he be a Liberal. Mr. John Morley was watched closely, for instance, when he took his seat for the first time. He had no hesitation in taking his place on the benches below the gangway, which meant that he ranked himself among the radical members of the Liberal party. The Irish members, as I have already said, sit on the Opposition side of the House, and below the gangway. The official method of speaking of them, then, is as "the hon. members who sit below the gangway on the Opposition side of the House."

A striking difference between the House of Commons and the legislatures of America is that the House of Commons has no desks for its members. They sit close beside each other, with nothing but the back of the next bench in front of them. There is a small receptacle in front where one can lay a few papers; but, as a rule, the ordinary member of the House of Commons has nowhere to hold his papers save in his hands—that is, while he is in the House. In one of the corridors outside there is a series of lockers, where some members stick their "blue books" and other official documents. I suppose some members do make use of these lockers; mine has remained unopened for some eight or nine years. But the official or ex-official members of the House have an advantage in this respect. On the table in front of the Speaker there are two boxes. Like the smallest pieces of furniture in remarkable and historic buildings, these boxes have become well known, and play an important part both in the economy of the House and in the description of it. Thus it is almost the invariable etiquette that the leader of the House sits opposite the box which is on the Ministerial side—that is to say, on the right of the Speaker—while the leader of the Opposition sits opposite the box on the left or Opposition side. I do not know whether the idea was that the leaders of the two parties were thus placed in a position where they best could watch each other's movements, but it certainly had the effect in Disraeli's time of bringing even into stronger relief the difference between

the figures, each picturesque in its way, of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli. The one was all fire and restlessness and eager attention; what he felt was written plainly on his mobile face; if anybody interested him, he leaned forward; if he were bored, he leaned back; if he were angered, his face told the tale. And thus it came to be written that a deaf man could almost tell what was going on in the House if he could only get a good view of Mr. Gladstone's face. Mr. Disraeli was the very reverse of all this. His principle throughout life was never to give, at least in public, the smallest indication of what his feelings were. He sat for hours in the House of Commons without moving a muscle, or even, apparently, without changing his attitude. His head was bent, his face perfectly impassive; he looked, in short, that Eastern Sphinx to which the picturesque writers of the period loved to compare him. It was the secular repose of the East in contrast with the never-resting energy of the West.

To return to the boxes. When the Ministerial speaker or an ex-Minister addresses the House, he is able to place his papers on this box before him; and as some of these speakers have to carefully prepare everything they are going to say, this is a very obvious advantage. The box is also used very much by the official speaker, apart altogether from his papers. On the top of each box is a brass handle, and the orator who is quite at ease is accustomed to take this handle in his hand and to play with it gracefully. I remember that on one long Saturday sitting—Saturday sittings are very unusual—years and years ago, when the Irish party had been obstructing all day long, a daring innovation was made. The late Mr. Forster was then Chief Secretary for Ireland, and he had been left almost alone with his Irish enemies to fight his bill through. The shades of night had fallen; already the Sabbath morning was at hand, when the late Joseph Biggar, who was the wicked elf of the House, calmly went down to the front Opposition bench, seated himself in the place usually reserved for the leaders of the Opposition, and when he rose to speak, placed his hands on the mysterious and sacred box, twirling his fingers round the brass handle with the air of a Minister of many years' standing. The more decorous members,

even of his own party, were shocked, while the more boisterous were delighted, and he was received with a round of applause mingled with a few horrified "Ohs."

The absence of the desk has important results on the character of the debates in

us there is no choice. Either you listen to a man or go out; unless, indeed, as very often happens, you find refuge in sleep. Or you may adopt the other alternative—you may join in the shouts by which the House is accustomed without the least scruple to howl down a speaker



AN UNINTERESTING SPEAKER.

the House of Commons—results more apparent to any one who has seen the legislatures of America, where a different system is at work. The first thing that struck me in the House of Representatives when I visited it was the much larger attendance there than in the House of Commons. Except at certain hours of the evening, when the business is rather exciting, the attendance in the House of Commons is very small, not usually as many as the quorum of forty; whereas in Washington the greater number of the members are usually present—at least throughout a good portion of the day. The second thing that struck me at Washington was the amount of noise. It seemed to me impossible that any man could speak amid the din by which he was surrounded. There is as much noise in the House of Representatives, whenever even a good speaker is addressing it, as there is in Westminster when every one is engaged in putting down a bore. This is largely due to the fact that the members in Washington are busy with their correspondence, and therefore can distract their attention from the speaker. With

who is not wanted. This is usually done by shouting, "Divide! divide!" or, as the word is generally pronounced, "'Vide! 'vide!" There have been occasions, too, when party passion was manifested by even more disconcerting shouts; and there are legends of the crowing of roosters, and other strange and zoological sounds, in the hope of inducing the prolix orator to resume his seat.

On the whole, I prefer our system; and so, I believe, do some of the leading men of the American Congress. I had a conversation with Mr. Reed while he was Speaker of the House of Representatives, and I understood him to say that he thought the abolition of the desk would lead to a reform in the methods of the House of Representatives. The absence of the desk certainly concentrates the attention of the House on the speaking, and in that way makes speaking more actual and debating more real. I was astonished to hear from Mr. Reed that the House of Representatives had abandoned the ancient and essential privilege of every assembly, that of coughing down any man whom it did not regard as likely

to add anything to the information of the House. Of course the shouting down of a member has its inconveniences, and may lead to abuse, especially in days when party spirit runs high. But it has this effect also, that it makes debate more real. Between the debates in the House of Representatives and those in the House of Commons the chief distinction—I am speaking perhaps from too short an acquaintance—seemed to me to be in the greater actuality of the English debates. I remember being present at a debate in Washington some eleven years ago, when the question under discussion was a bill for reforming the police force at Washington. There used to be, as I remember, a regulation which practically compelled the authorities of Washington to employ only men who had served in the war. It was proposed in the new measure that as younger and stronger men were required, and as those who had served in the war were rather stale, the regulation should be suspended. This point led to a long and extremely animated debate on the whole policy of the war, and especially on the part which the Republican and Democratic parties had played in it. Such a debate is impossible in the House of Commons. It is with scant toleration that allusion is allowed to the last general election. I think the absence of the desk has something to do with it.

The lateness of the hour at which the House of Commons sits is a constant source of surprise to the foreigner. I have already explained why the existing composition of the House makes it convenient to the members. Undoubtedly, however, it has grave inconveniences. During the first six years I was in Parliament the times were very fierce. It was in the midst of the great struggle against coercion, when obstruction was supposed to have reached its height; and the hours of the House were terrible. We who were active in the Irish party rarely if ever got to bed before sunrise; and there was one famous sitting which went on for forty-one hours before it came to a conclusion. Of late years the rules of the House have been revised, and things go on much better, the usual hour for the close of a sitting being now half past twelve. But still there are grave inconveniences. Though there is ample accommodation for dining in the House of Commons, very few people avail

themselves of it. Most members like to get a breath of fresher air than that of the House of Commons. And then the diner-out is still a power in London. The only persons who stay to dinner are the small but faithful band who support the government, and who are kept by the whips, in order to form the Ministerial majority during such divisions as take place pending the dinner hour, and to keep up the quorum necessary for the transaction of business. A certain number of very earnest politicians—usually either English Radicals or Irish Nationalists—also remain in the House during the dinner hour. So far, however, as the general body of the House of Commons is concerned, the House of Commons might as well not be sitting between the hours of half past seven and half past ten. Even the members who are compelled to wait for divisions keep far away from the House itself. Some are in the dining-room taking dinner with the slow luxuriance of men who have to pass away a certain length of time; others, their dinner over, have retired to some one of the many smoking-rooms which a thoughtful country has provided for its legislators. In recent years it has become quite the *mode* to invite ladies to dine at the House, and a number of rooms are set apart for that purpose.

Others have retired to the library, and if they be lawyers, they read their briefs. There is one room in the library which is much affected by men with a love for the magazines. Usually, however, the somnolent influences of the place prove too much, and it is commoner to find a member sleeping than reading.

Meantime the stream of talk goes on upstairs. Sometimes useful work may be done; for the House may have gone into committee on a bill, and committee-work can often be better done with a small than with a large House. But if the House be in the throes of a big second-reading debate, the speeches, so far as the House is concerned, might as well not be delivered. I have known of cases where the orator had no audience beyond himself and the Speaker in the chair, and, of course, the reporters in the gallery and the strangers.

This explanation will make intelligible the allusions which are being constantly made in the accounts of Parliamentary proceedings to the "dinner hour." The



PROMINENT COMMONERS.

reader will constantly come across the expression, "As Mr. Gladstone was driven into the dinner hour," or, "As it was now the dinner hour, the hon. member had a very scanty audience," and so on. Lord Beaconsfield, in his biography of Lord



A DOORKEEPER.

George Bentinck, accused Sir Robert Peel of trying to escape debate on the first stage of his measure to establish free trade by speaking at such length as to drive every other speaker into the dinner hour, and so make it impossible for him to have an audience.

At half past ten the House is again lively, and if there be a great debate proceeding, and the division close at hand, there is an excited and often very noisy audience. The majority of the House are arrayed in the "clawhammer"; and though, to tell the truth, the House of Commons is a very sober assembly, there are not always wanting indications of the enjoyment of the evening meal and its accompaniments.

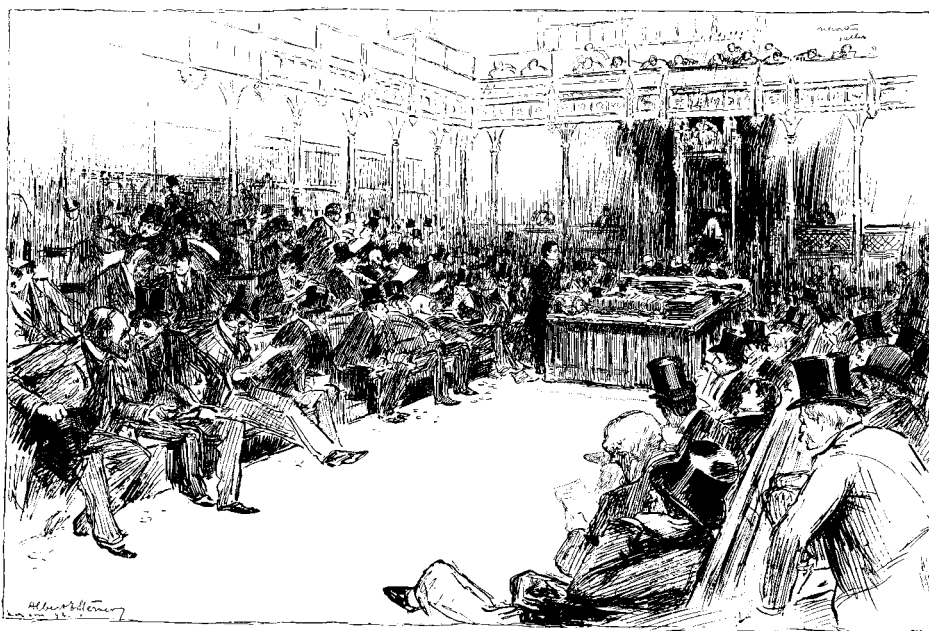
It is at this period that there are those scenes which occasionally brighten up the usually rather tame story of debate. When coercion was in full swing and Mr. Balfour was Chief Secretary, there was occasionally across the floor between the Irish and the Tory benches, in times of excitement, a hot interchange of compliments, of which usually the chair contrived to take no notice.

But there is an hour even more interesting than this, and that is at the beginning of the sitting. There is nothing in an American legislature to correspond to what is known as "question-time" in the House of Commons. In America the members of the Cabinet are excluded from both Houses of the legislature. With us the rule practically is that no one can be a member of a Cabinet who is not a member of either one or other of the Houses of Parliament. There have been instances where men have held office for a short time while excluded from Parliament, but the period has been short; and, undoubtedly, no one could permanently hold a Cabinet position who was unable to obtain admission to either House of Parliament. It is the right of every member of Parliament to interrogate any of the Ministers with reference to any matter whatsoever which comes under the control of his department. These questions are printed, and appear every day on the notice paper. When I entered the House first it was the custom to read the questions, though they were there in print before the eyes of every member, and I have heard a member compelled to read his questions by shouts of "Read! read!" from the House, which is jealous of any innovation. But under the stress of work the custom was gradually dropped, and a member now asks a question simply by reference to its number on the paper.

There is nothing which gives a more perfect idea of the vast extent and the strangely heterogeneous composition of the British dominion and British government than the questions that stand daily on the order paper. They sometimes run up to nearly a hundred, and they occupy one or two hours in being asked and answered. The questions of course vary in importance. Some are about the policy of the Foreign Office in its relation with France or some other great country; some are about the taxes in India or a failure of justice in Hong-Kong. The

Scotch member wants to know why a rebellious crofter has been sent to jail; the Welshman is indignant that a Welsh-speaking rebel against the tithes has been tried in a language he does not understand; and of course there are numberless questions from the Irish benches—"or the gentlemen below the gangway on the Opposition side of the House"—in reference to the administration in Ireland. These are the questions which naturally lead to the greatest amount of excitement, and often the encounters between the late Chief Secretary and his opponents were very animated. Then there are questions about all sorts of trifles. One man wants to know why the trees in one of the parks are decaying. Another has a question on some alleged scandal in a poorhouse; a third rakes up the case of a policeman who is said to have exceeded his duty.

cial is put through a cross-examination as merciless as that to which the counsel for the defence subjects the chief witness for the prosecution. On the whole, I think there can be little doubt that this system of interpellation is wise, and to my mind a country cannot be said to be constitutionally governed which has not this opportunity of having its Ministers examined by the representatives of the people. But the system is liable to abuses. I have seen Mr. Gladstone subjected to the most relentless cross-examination at a period when every single word he uttered carried with it the possibilities of either peace or a terrible war. This was undoubtedly a gross and unpatriotic abuse of the privileges of question-time. The Minister, however, and especially if he be a Minister of Foreign Affairs, is always at liberty to decline information on public grounds,



A SKETCH IN THE HOUSE DURING QUESTION-TIME.

In short, nothing is too great, and nothing is too infinitely little, to form the subject of inquiry in the House of Commons.

It need scarcely be said that this is an hour which severely tries the nerve and resources of the Ministers. Often an offi-

cial, or, if a question be sprung upon him, he can, and usually does, demand that notice shall be given of it.

This description of what question-time is like will prepare the reader for the statement that it is a period of surprise, excitement, laughter, rage. There is no

other period of the sitting that has the least resemblance to it. All other times are tame and eventless in comparison. There is an idea among those unacquainted with the House of Commons, and acquainted with the general sombreness and reserve of the English character, that the House of Commons is an extremely quiet and decorous assembly. The very reverse is the case. It is boisterous, noisy, and as responsive as an Æolian harp to every passing mood. It is rarely if ever still, rarely if ever silent, except during that dread dinner hour already alluded to. A speaker is scarcely allowed to utter half a sentence without an interruption of some kind, either of assent or dissent. The American visitor to the House of Commons is very much amused the first time his ear is caught by the mysterious sound, "Hear, hear!" On the other hand, a speaker accustomed to address English audiences is very much astonished when he first begins to address American meetings by their comparative coldness. People have often asked me in America whether I ever addressed meetings so enthusiastic as some of those to which I have spoken in American cities. As these meetings consisted for the most part of citizens either of Irish birth or descent, and as people of the Celtic race are generally supposed to be more vehement in the expression of their feelings than people of other nationalities, the question seemed very natural. The reply I had always to give was that I was accustomed to address meetings in England and Scotland, consisting in the majority of Englishmen or Scotchmen, who were much more enthusiastic than these Irish-American audiences. Indeed, it is only after considerable experience that the speaker from Europe gets accustomed to the coldness of American audiences. At first it is most depressing and disheartening. There are many reasons for this feeling, but I believe one of the chief of them is the absence of that little word "Hear, hear!" In the House of Commons it carries a speaker along from point to point in a way that can be understood only by those who have been subjected to its influence.

"Hear, hear!" is the one form of expressing emotion which the House of Commons knows. Usually, of course, it means the intellectual assent to some proposition which is being stated by the speaker, and in that sense it is frigid and

quiet. But if the House of Commons wishes to signify not merely intellectual assent, but also depth of emotion, "Hear, hear!" is again the vehicle through which its emotion finds utterance. The "Hear, hear!" is, of course, louder, but it is still "Hear, hear!" Again, the House of Commons, or a portion of it, wishes to be ironical, and "Hear, hear!" is again the chosen form of doing so. Of course in this instance the "Hear, hear!" is uttered in as rasping a voice as its utterers can command. The words also get transformed in all kinds of ways, according to the idiosyncrasies, the accents, and the education of the persons who use them. The late Sir Robert Fowler, an ex-Lord Mayor, and a Tory of the old true-blue order, for instance, was famous as a shouter of "Hear, hear!" but it became in his mouth "Yah, yah!" Often "Hear, hear!" becomes transformed into "'Ear, 'ear!"

The reader of Parliamentary debates must understand in the light of these observations the reports in our newspapers. When they read that a certain sentence has been received with cheers, they must understand that a certain number of members have together called out "Hear, hear!" for, say, ten seconds. When the report announces "loud and prolonged cheers," it simply means that the "Hear, hear!" has been uttered in somewhat louder tones than usual, and for a period more prolonged—perhaps to thirty seconds. There is something ludicrous, and yet there can be something very expressive, in this strange method the House of Commons has of expressing its emotions.

I remember one occasion which made a great impression upon me. There was a contingent of Indian soldiers in England. A few of their officers—in uniform strange and picturesque—were brought into the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery. There was something very striking in this outward and visible presentation of the greatness, vastness, and, if the word be permissible, weirdness of an empire that is the ruler of countless millions, foreign in creed, race, and custom, separated by centuries and continents and oceans from the English people at home. The House, by a sudden and irresistible impulse, gave vent to the curiously profound emotion which such a scene was calculated to elicit. There immediately

rose from all parts a cheer that was loud, hearty, charged with emotion, and though it took no more eloquent form than "Hear, hear!" very loud and very prolonged, it had the same stimulating effect as the loud hurrah of a regiment charging at the double. The Indian soldiers certainly appreciated it, for they started to their feet, and standing with the professional straightness and stiffness of the soldier, they brought their hands in salute to their turbans.

It is now time to tell how a division in the House of Commons is taken. First it should be said that there is a very common but entirely unfounded illusion as to the way in which the Speaker puts the question. It is quite usual for the chairman of a meeting in England to declare

that, according to the usage in the House of Commons, he will put the amendment first. As a matter of fact, this is the very reverse of what is done in the House of Commons. The question is, for example,



FAIR VISITORS.

that a bill be read a second time. The ordinary amendment proposed to this motion is to "leave out all the words after the word 'read,' and to insert the words, 'this day six months.'" When the time comes for the Speaker to put the motion, the manner in which he puts it is, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question"—that is to say, he puts the original motion as the question to be divided on. The Speaker then calls for the "ayes" and "noes." There is a shout of "Aye," followed by a shout of "No." The Speaker then declares which side appears to him to have got the ascendancy. He says, "I think the ayes have it," or "I think the noes have it."

If a division be desired, now is the time to ask for it. If the Speaker has decided in favor of the ayes, the thing to do is to cry, "The noes have it," or *vice versa*. Sometimes there is doubt and hesitation. The House is weary; or it is thought that the question has been already sufficiently tested by previous divisions. But there may be an obstinate minority who are determined that their hostility shall be carried on to the bitter end; and it is, perhaps, one of the abuses of the House of Commons that two members can in most cases compel a division. When this is the state of the case the Speaker is almost like an auctioneer seeking for new bids. "I think the ayes have it," he says. The response is faint, but still somebody has said, "The noes have it," and there is still the chance of a division. "I think the ayes have it," the Speaker repeats, looking to the quarter whence the small opposition has made itself heard. The efforts of the Speaker to avert a division are often seconded by the House generally, and there is a cry of "Agreed, agreed!" And before this cry even very obstinate men sometimes have to yield. But if, in spite of this, the cry is still raised, "The noes have it," the Speaker calls out "Division," and the division has to take place. If, however, the cry be not repeated, the Speaker then drops the "I think," by which he has indicated that he has been expressing only his personal impression, and says, "The ayes have it." And then the question is decided, and entered on the journals as having been passed.

When the division has been insisted upon, there is put in motion a good deal of what I may call the underground ma-

chinery, of which the visitor to the House sees and knows nothing. In the first place, one of the clerks at the table turns the sand-glass, which is set to three minutes, the period allowed to elapse between the call for a division and the actual division. At the same time the electric bells, which are placed all over the House, are set in motion, and the policemen, who stand at as many points of the House of Commons as if it were a Russian palace, shout out "Division, division!" at the top of their voices, and with a prolongation of the syllables. As I have said before, the members of the House are accustomed to be scattered over all parts of it.

Some are on the terrace, almost a quarter of a mile distant from the floor of the House of Commons. Even at this point, however, there is abundant notice that a division is about to take place. The ringing of the bells all over the House is pretty sure to be heard; and besides, there is the shout of the policemen, "Division, division!" or, as it is actually prolonged, "divis-i-o-n." The bells ring out three times in succession, with a short pause between each ring. Then there is seen a sight which is extremely amusing to the on-lookers. Some members may be in the midst of their dinners when this importunate demand for their presence is made. Then they will be seen rushing in with their teeth still working laboriously at the last piece of food they have got in their mouths. Others have been in the smoke-room, and their faces have still the tranquillity which the cigar brings. Others have only just arrived at the House, have heard the ringing of the bells as they were getting out of their cabs, and have just rushed up the intervening stairs, and arrive at the door of the House panting and breathless.

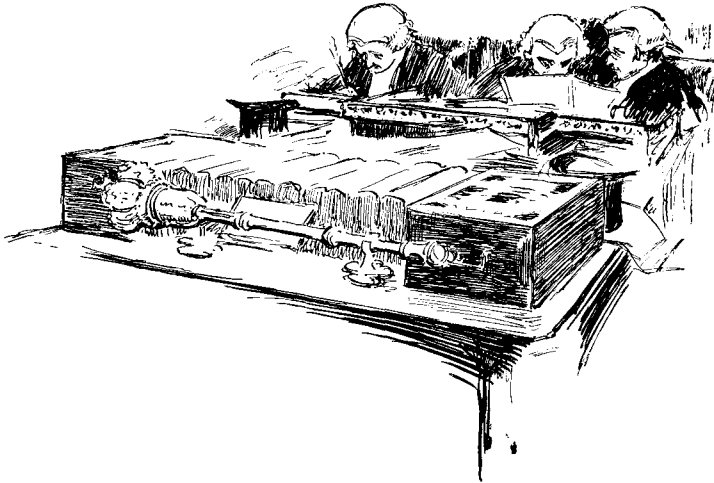
The sensation must be to the stranger something like that which is so often experienced by the ocean traveller. As the steamer approaches port, and as the weather gets a little smoother, it is common to see come on the deck a number of faces that have never been seen before; and the idea almost takes possession of the hardy traveller, who has been visible every day, that these mysterious strangers must have risen out of the deep itself, or been taken aboard from another vessel. So it is in the House of Commons. From the bowels of the earth there appear scores

of men of whose existence the House itself gives no indication; and suddenly, where but a few moments before there were but three or four or half a dozen men, there are now a couple of hundred.

But even yet it is not certain that a division is going to take place. Once again—and as if nothing whatever had occurred—the Speaker puts the question. After the answering shouts, “I think,” he

the noes shall go to the lobby on the left of the Speaker’s chair.

The ayes pass into the right lobby through the door at the back of the Speaker’s chair, the noes through the door at the entrance of the House, and each returns by the door through which the others have gone out. In each of these lobbies there is a turnstile with a passage each side just narrow enough to



THE CLERKS OF THE HOUSE.

says, “the ayes have it,” or *vice versa*; and then again, if there is to be a division, the opponents have to shout “The noes have it,” or *vice versa*. This is decisive; and the division has to take place. The Speaker then directs the members how they are to vote: “Ayes to the right; noes to the left.” And then he adds, “Tellers for the ayes,” and gives their names; then “Tellers for the noes,” and he gives their names. It is necessary to explain what these mystic words mean. On each side of the House of Commons is a corridor—or a lobby, as it is somewhat inaccurately called. The House is, so to speak, in an envelope of two lobbies. One of these lobbies is on the right of the Speaker; the other on the left. What the Speaker means, then, when he says “ayes to the right” is that the ayes shall go into the lobby which is on the right of the Speaker’s chair. And “noes to the left” means similarly that

admit of only one person passing through it at a time. On the right hand there is a placard with the letters A—H, meaning that members whose initials are included in the letters between these two shall pass through on that side. The other side is for the remaining letters of the alphabet. On a desk on the turnstile is a printed list of the names of all the members of the House, and two clerks stand, with pencil in hand, opposite this desk. As the member passes he mentions his name; the clerk ticks off this name on the division list. This list thus ticked off is then handed on to the clerks who keep the journals, and is printed in the records of the proceedings of the House. But the member has not yet got through. After he passes the turnstile he has still to pass through the door at the end of this lobby. Here again the passage is left so narrow that only one member can pass through it at a time.

When the member emerges he finds on either side of the door a teller—one representing one side, and the other representing the other. As he passes these two figures he hears himself numbered, and he raises his hat. When the lobby is emptied the tellers address each other: 150—or whatever the number may be—says one, and then the other assents, unless he has made a different calculation. Meantime the same scene has been enacted in the other lobby.

When there is a division on an important question, and there is just a chance that the Ministry may be defeated, there is, of course, an eager desire to know the result at the first moment; and there are many means by which the final announcement can be pretty well anticipated. The tellers, the moment they have finished their counting in the lobby, go to the table in front of the Speaker, and there they tell the numbers to one of the clerks, who enters it on a slip of paper. Now, if the teller of one lobby gets to the clerk before the other, it is pretty clear that he has had the smaller lobby, since the smaller lobby takes obviously less time to count. This is a sufficient indication as to which side has won. Often, when such a moment comes, each member, as he enters from the lobby which is still being counted, is eagerly asked what was his number—by this time, of course, the numbers from the emptied lobby have been ascertained. If the member is able to announce that he has reached a number higher than that of the other lobby, the excitement increases; and sometimes, if party passion runs very high, the cheering over the result begins, but not very loudly, for there may be some uncertainty still. Nevertheless, when the other tellers come in, there is no longer room for doubt. It is the invariable rule that the senior teller of the side that wins announces the numbers. When, therefore, the clerk hands the paper to the teller, it is known which side has won; and at once the pent-up excitement bursts forth, and there is cheer upon cheer. Sometimes I have seen even stronger manifestations. There was a great night, for instance, on June 8, 1885. Mr. Gladstone's Ministry had been in office for nearly five years, and during nearly all that period had been fiercely assailed by two oppositions; indeed, I might say by three: the regular Tory

opposition; the irregular and much more effective and damaging opposition of the fourth party, led by Lord Randolph Churchill; and the opposition, finally, quite as effective and infinitely more passionate, of the followers of Mr. Parnell. It had, besides, been sapped by divisions in its own ranks, there having come, over the Egyptian policy of Mr. Gladstone, that schism between the more moderate and more extreme sections of the Liberal party which is nearly always ready to break out. For two years the majorities of the administration had been getting smaller and smaller, and the time had come when a final disaster was in the air. It came, as these things so often do, somewhat unexpectedly, and on a side issue with reference to a budget proposal. But when the division was taken, it began to be understood that the government were in difficulties, and that the division might go against them. When it was seen that the Ministerial whip, then Lord Richard Grosvenor, had left his lobby first, hope began to change into a certainty; and when finally the Tory whip received the paper from the clerk, the shouts rang loud and long. Hats were taken off and waved wildly; and Lord Randolph Churchill got up on his seat and waved his hat like an Eton school-boy.

A word or two with regard to the whips. To Americans, with whom interest in politics is largely circumscribed, nothing can be much more astonishing than the class of men who are willing to perform certain political duties in England. Of all occupations, one would suppose that of whip would be the very last which would be coveted by any man in the possession of his senses, and not driven to the acceptance of a hard lot by the eternal want of pence. For here are some of the duties of senior whip: He has to read all the newspapers every morning, and give an idea of their contents to the leader of the House of Commons. This means that he must rise pretty early. He has then to see the wire-pullers, and have a consultation about the selection of a candidate for a constituency. It may be that he has to settle one of those nasty little disputes which arise even in the best-regulated parties. He has, lastly, to attend to the demand of his party for speakers to assist at some open-air or indoor demonstration which is intended to strike ter-

ror into the heart of the enemy, but which will be a fiasco and a scandal and a weakness if the whip do not insist on the presence of half a dozen popular platform orators. All this has to be done before he gets down to the House of Commons. Mr. Blaine, I have heard, once said that the most galling thing to him about the Speakership of the House of Representatives was that he had to be there at a certain hour every day during the session. The unfortunate senior whip of the party in power with us has a much more serious demand upon him. He has not only to be present when the House meets; he has also to remain there until the very last division has been taken, and finally he has to move that the House adjourn.

Pausing for a moment on this last duty, it is a curious fact that, except with regard to sittings which are timed to end at a certain hour, the Speaker has no right to leave the chair without a motion for adjournment. On one occasion, it is said, the person whose duty it was to make this motion left the House, and the Speaker of the time—I believe it was Lord Eversley, who was somewhat of a stickler for forms—remained in the chair, and did not leave it until the officer was brought back and made the motion for adjournment. The senior whip has to tell not only in the first and the last, but also in every division that takes place throughout the evening. From the time he enters the House he may not leave the building until all the proceedings are over. It is he who is held responsible if there be not enough members present at all hours of the evening to provide that majority by which every proposal of the government must be carried. And this, it will be understood, is not always a very easy task. The members of the House of Commons for the most part belong to the wealthy and the leisure classes. Unless a man have a certain competence he is usually very foolish to enter the House of Commons at all; and, as a rule, men who have had to work rarely do attempt to become members of Parliament until they have made their pile, and are pretty well advanced in life. On the Tory side there are always plenty of young men, but they are young men born to wealth and idleness and self-indulgence; and the House of Commons, unless to those that take a prominent part in its proceedings, is not usually a particularly

interesting place. It is no small difficulty, then, to keep men hanging round the House of Commons throughout all the hours of the evening when the dance, the dinner, and the theatre invite, and it is a great strain on the tact and temper of the whip to keep men in their places with these and other temptations all around them. Indeed, so strongly is the necessity of keeping a sharp eye on members felt by the whips that they do not allow any to leave the House without giving an account of themselves. Things are so managed that there is practically but one door by which a member can leave the building. This door is guarded by not one but sometimes three or four Cerberuses. They stand between the departing member and the portal of liberty with a note-book in their hands, and the member has to solemnly assure them that he has paired with a member of the opposite side, and that he will return by ten o'clock, when once more the tide of battle may rage fiercely, and the necessity for a big majority again comes. Of course the party in power has always an easier task in keeping its men together than the party in opposition. It is impossible, except on big occasions, to get men in opposition to attend regularly, while if men have pay and place to give away, they can always induce the attendance of their friends.

I have given this sketch of the duties of a whip to lead up to the statement that this office, with all its anxieties, is eagerly sought by all kinds of people. The official title of the chief Ministerial whip is Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, and that title may suggest some of the reasons why the position is so eagerly sought for. The times are changed in England, but there was a day when the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury meant much. In those days there was no entrance to the civil service except by nomination, and the Patronage Secretary was the only person who had the gift of nomination. Accordingly it meant something to the constituency that the party of its member was in power, for in this way there was certain to be a plentiful supply of those nominations to the civil service which gave the growing young men of the place an excellent opening to a situation, where the pay was pretty good, the duties light, and the tenure life-long. However, some years ago, as is



Albert C. Steiner
London 48.

THE LOBBY.

known, the majority of the offices in the civil service were thrown open to competition, and the nomination system was abolished. Still, the Patronage Secretary has some patronage left. If a man be an aspirant for Parliamentary honors, it is undoubtedly much to his advantage that he should have the good word of the whip. Then the party funds are largely under the control of the whip. Every party has its able but poor men, who require assistance from the party, and the whip is the man who has largely to decide this question. All this means, of course, that the whip is a man of authority and influence beyond what the subordinate character of his office might suggest.

It will now, perhaps, be understood why it is that, with all its repulsiveness and laboriousness of duty, the office of whip is assumed by people who have apparently everything in the world to tempt them to a life of ease. When I entered Parliament for the first time, the chief Ministerial whip was Lord Richard Grosvenor. Lord Richard is the son of the late Duke of Westminster and the brother of the present Duke, and the Duke of Westminster, it is supposed, is the wealthiest peer in England. He owns the ground covered by Belgravia, the most fashionable and wealthiest part of London. Lord Richard is besides a man of very considerable wealth himself, and since his party went out of office has been made a peer, and is now Lord Stalbridge. Yet for the five

years that Mr. Gladstone was in office between 1880 and 1885, Lord Richard Grosvenor did all the drudgery of the senior whip; bad as is the drudgery now, it is as nothing to what it was in those days. Between 1880 and 1885, it will be remembered, there were some of the fiercest struggles between the Irish party and the Ministry. The hours of the House had not been reformed, and the House could sit till about three or four o'clock in the morning, and, as a matter of fact, rarely did cease to sit till about three. Up to the latest division, Lord Richard Grosvenor was in his place, telling in every division, and always cheery, good-tempered, and tranquil. The man who undertook this work was one, besides, who had travelled all over the world, was fond of out-door exercise and country life—yet he was ready to sacrifice all these, with sleep and ease and freedom, for this seemingly subordinate office. I don't think I could give a better illustration of the difference between the way in which the rich in England and in America look upon political life and political office. In the present Parliament the office of senior Ministerial whip is held by Mr. Marjoribanks, one of the ablest and most popular men who ever occupied the office. He is the eldest son and heir of a very wealthy peer, is married to the daughter of a duke, and has ample means, but he goes through the drudgery of his office with a good-humor that never fails.

AFTER WATTEAU.

BY AUSTIN DOBSON.

"Embarquons-nous pour la belle Cythère."—TH. DE BANVILLE.

EMBARQUONS-NOUS!" I seem to go
Against my will. 'Neath alleys low
I bend and hear across the air,
Across the stream, faint music rare,—
Whose *cornemuse*? whose *chalambeau*?

Hark! Is not that a laugh I know?
Who was it, hurrying, turned to show
The galley, swinging by the stair?—
"Embarquons-nous!"

The silk sail flaps, fresh breezes blow,
Frail laces flutter, satins flow;—
You, with the love-knot in your hair,
Allons, embarquons pour Cythère!
You will not? . . . Press her, then, Pierrot!—
"Embarquons-nous!"