

A GREAT ENGLISH STATESMAN.*

SIR CHARLES STUART PARKER'S *Life and Letters of Sir James Graham* is a companion book to his *Life of Sir Robert Peel* and to Mr. Morley's *Life of Gladstone*; and it is no exaggeration to say that not since the *Life of Gladstone* appeared has there been a more valuable addition to English political biography. In the intervening four years there have been several noteworthy additions to this class of English political literature—including the lives of Earl Granville and of the first Earl of Durham, and more recently still the *Life of Lord Herbert of Lea*, all of whom were at one time or another colleagues of Sir James Graham. But in comprehensiveness, in general importance, and in so far as the rounding out of English political biography of the nineteenth century is concerned, none of these can be ranked so high as this biography of the great statesman who, next to Sir Robert Peel, was most responsible for the epoch-making fiscal and economic reforms which were effected by Parliament between 1842 and 1846—for the rearrangement of Great Britain's fiscal system, which went unchallenged and unthreatened until Mr. Chamberlain came out as a Protectionist in 1903.

As is so frequently the case in English political biography it is the letters and papers that give these new volumes their first-class importance. They are admirably marshalled by Sir Charles Parker, who, as editor of the Peel Papers, is unusually well versed in party conditions, and in the political questions which were at issue during the forty-three years—1818-1861—in which Sir James Graham was an influential personality in Parliamentary and official life. But as with the Peel Papers, Sir Charles Parker takes a circumscribed view of his duties as editor. He furnishes a good sketch of Sir James Graham's early years, of his home environment as a man of large landed possessions in Cumberland, and of his early Radical tendencies. But after 1818, when Sir James entered the House of Commons as Member for Hull, and was well launched in political life, Sir Charles Parker does little more than link the letters and diaries together. In what he writes he evinces no great enthusiasm for his work as editor; nor does any great thoroughness characterize this phase

* "*Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, Second Baronet of Netherby, P. C., G. C. B. 1792-1861.*" By Charles Stuart Parker. Two Vols. Pp. xvi., 447; ix. 483. London, John Murray.

of his work. In grouping the voluminous correspondence, he undoubtedly shows much editorial skill; but it cannot be said that care and skill, even as to this important matter, suffice to make the volumes as self-contained as they might have been made without inconvenient increase in their size.

Only to a small degree, however, does Sir Charles Parker's method of editing the Graham Letters detract from their real and permanent value. They throw so much new light on English politics from Peterloo to the eve of the second Reform Act, the adoption of the ballot in Parliamentary elections, and the incoming of the Radicals of the Bright School as a power in the House of Commons, that they will repay close study.

Apart from the intrinsic interest of the letters Sir James Graham's career is quite worth close study; for he was to a great extent a self-made man who, as regards influence on the course of English politics, reached the highest eminence, though he did not at any time in his forty years in Parliament hold any office more responsible than First Lord of the Admiralty or Secretary of State for the Home Department. He was self-made, not in the ordinary acceptance of the term. His father was a territorial proprietor; and Sir James, after he succeeded to the baronetcy, was in possession of an income from twenty-four thousand acres of land, which made him independent of the emoluments of office, and free to act according to his own convictions and judgment, even if so acting meant, as it did on two occasions, the sacrifice of Cabinet rank and of the pay of a Cabinet Minister.

Graham was of the House of Commons in its unreformed days; and many pocket or nomination boroughs, such as those Russell and Gladstone represented in their early years in Parliament, survived as long as Graham was in political life. But Graham never controlled a seat in the House of Commons. He was never able to nominate himself for a safe family borough; and although, when well on in his House of Commons career, he sat at times for two nomination boroughs—St. Ives and Ripon—he held these seats without any ties or political obligations to their patrons; and for the greater part of his career he represented large constituencies, such as the Eastern Division of the County of Cumberland and the City of Carlisle; and again and again he had to fight hard for his seat.

It was no accident of birth that gave Sir James Graham his

political opportunities. He made his opportunities; and from the time he was of the House of Commons his reputation as a debater and as a political speaker in the constituencies, as an administrator, and statesman, continued to grow, and underwent no diminution so long as he was actively in public life. He had a genius for public affairs scarcely less well marked than that of Gladstone. His life and ambitions all centred in the public service; and while, like most Englishmen of the landed class, he was at times careful of his order, and afraid of sweeping changes which might endanger too much the political position of the territorial aristocracy, he was much less mindful of his order than the Whig magnates with whom he was associated in Grey's Reform Bill Administration, and he showed no solicitude for the economic position of the landowners when he was working with Peel for the abolition of the Corn Laws. He was more Liberal than Russell and the Whigs; more Liberal than Gladstone was up to 1861, when Graham's career came to an end. But all through his life he dreaded the least interference with the Established Church in Ireland—which Gladstone disestablished in 1869—and to the end he was convinced that the ballot—which was adopted within a decade after his death, and which has since proved to be one of the most beneficent of English political reforms—would mean little less than revolution.

In spite of Graham's innate conservatism as regards the Church and the ballot, he was essentially a reformer—administrative, financial, and constitutional; and there is no statesman of the first half of the nineteenth century to whom England of to-day owes more than it does to Graham. He was associated with the movement for peace, retrenchment, and reform, long before the Whigs committed themselves to this policy; and he was one of the first members of the House of Commons to assail the civil and the pension lists as they stood in the closing years of the reign of George IV. While an unofficial member of the House of Commons he worked zealously for the removal of civil disabilities from Free Churchmen and Roman Catholics; and after he attained Cabinet rank in 1830, and had become the First Lord of the Admiralty, he was of the committee of the Cabinet that drafted the Reform Bill. Russell, Durham and Duncannon were his colleagues; and he was as insistent as Durham in impressing on the cautious Grey the absolute necessity of receiving from

William IV sanction to the creation of peers to ensure the passage of the bill through the House of Lords.

In 1830 when Graham went to the Admiralty he found its methods of doing business those of the days of Queen Elizabeth. These he modernized; and it was largely owing to his efforts that similar much-needed reforms were made in the business methods of the other state departments; and that the House of Commons secured its present complete control over the spending of the appropriations which it makes each session. He was Peel's right hand in making the sweeping fiscal changes of 1842-46; in re-establishing the income tax; and in remodelling and liberalizing the navigation laws. He opposed the movement of the landed aristocracy to throw local rating charges on land on the Imperial revenue as an equivalent for the abolition of the Corn Laws; and it was Graham who drafted the resolution, proposed by Palmerston in 1852, which, when adopted by the House of Commons—468 votes to 63—ended the movement in and out of Parliament for a re-enactment of protective duties on grain.

Graham also had a foremost part in putting the English civil service on the basis on which it has stood for half a century. He was instrumental in the years that immediately followed the Mutiny in bringing India completely under the control of the British Government, and in throwing open several departments of the Indian service to public competition. For a while after these changes had been made, reform halted; but the extension of the Parliamentary franchise in 1867—the measure by which many nomination boroughs which had survived in 1832 were swept away, and votes were conferred on householders in the boroughs—followed the general lines that Graham had laid down in the debate on Disraeli's abortive bill of 1859. In the first sixty years of the nineteenth century no man who did not reach the Premiership had a greater influence on English legislation than Graham; and it has been unfortunate for his fame that it was deemed expedient to withhold so long from publication the letters and papers which show the great part he had in political life. As a statesman responsible for forward policies—for the making of modern England—he ranks with Peel, Russell and Gladstone; and it is alongside the memoirs of these three statesmen that the *Life of Sir James Graham* must be placed.

EDWARD PORRITT.

"FORTIFICATION."*

THIS book should be in the possession of every United States Senator and Representative, as well as of all persons interested in our national legislation. It is written by the greatest living authority on the subject, the Secretary of the Imperial Defence Committee, from whose views one may dissent only on grounds which will bear the most rigorous investigation.

The work presents the broad principles of fortification, touching but lightly on any of the engineering details. It asks what places should be fortified, why, and to what extent; it takes into account the military value of a fleet; it endeavors to secure adequate protection at the minimum cost; it displays no blind confidence in bricks and mortar, concrete and armor, but appraises them as valuable only when the men behind them are skilful and intelligent; and it reprobates the extravagance of providing at every point a maximum of defence and the uttermost complexity of devices. Some risks must be incurred, unless a nation is financially strong enough to make every harbor impregnable. Had the axioms laid down by this author been observed by our legislators during the past twenty years, we should have been spared the needless expenditure of vast sums of money, and the adoption of complicated machinery, involving the employment of skilled mechanics for their care and operation, in many places where simple mounts would have abundantly answered the purpose. In view of the noble fleet of battle-ships now bearing the American flag, over-elaboration of coast defence seems unnecessary.

The author's views and opinions have been accessible ever since the publication of the first edition of the work in 1890. They were not welcomed by military engineers—quite the contrary; but little by little, step by step, they have forced their way to practically universal acceptance, at least in theory.

The first twelve chapters, while exceedingly interesting and instructive, are not likely to receive much attention in this country, for they deal exclusively with land sieges, a branch of the art of warfare which has not concerned us since Appomattox. Nevertheless, they offer many fertile suggestions, such as:

"It seems clear that in the majority of cases the refinements of detail

* "Fortification." By Colonel Sir George Sydenham Clarke, R.E., G.C.M.G., F.R.S., etc., etc. London: John Murray.

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