

TWO UNDER-SECRETARIES.

TWO UNDER-SECRETARIES.

BY the death of Lord Hammond in the spring of last year a conspicuous figure has disappeared from the Foreign Office, though it is now seventeen years since he gave regular attendance in Downing Street. But it is more than a century since the name became first known there, and his father held the same post of Under-Secretary before him.

George Hammond the elder, father of the late Lord, was a younger son of William Hammond of Kirk Ella, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, one of the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House at Hull. Born in 1763, George matriculated at Merton at seventeen, and at twenty went to Paris as Secretary to Mr. Hartley during the Peace negotiations in 1783. Taking the degree of B.A. on his return from Paris, he was elected Fellow of his College in 1787, and the following year was appointed Chargé d'Affaires at Vienna during the absence of Sir Robert Keith. In a despatch to the Ambassador, Lord Carmarthen mentions the prudence and ability which Mr. Hammond had shown on Mr. Hartley's mission, and especially his knowledge of the French language, which he had acquired during his stay in Paris. After two years' service at Vienna he was made Secretary of Legation at Copenhagen, and was afterwards, in September 1790, moved to Madrid in a similar capacity. But in 1791 he was recalled by Lord Grenville, the then Foreign Minister, and sent out as Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States of America. He was the first British Minister accredited to that country, and his arrival was hailed by Mr. Jefferson, the American Secretary of State, as "a friendly movement made by the Court of London in sending a Minister to reside amongst us." During this period he married the daughter of Andrew Allen, a member of a Scotch Royalist family descended on the mother's side from William Penn, the founder of the State of Pennsylvania, and it was in contemplation of his marriage that he

resigned his Fellowship at Merton in 1793 and was allowed the usual year of grace.

The conflicting claims which he was engaged in settling with the American Government could hardly fail to lead to occasional collisions with Mr. Jefferson, though it must be borne in mind that while the English Plenipotentiary was only eight-and-twenty, his opponent was some twenty years his senior. Mr. Hammond referred to these differences many years afterwards when Lord Liverpool, in April 1814, was desirous of appointing him one of the negotiators to treat with the American Minister at Ghent, showing that "during his former residence in America he was necessarily so much engaged in hostile and irritating discussions with the Government, that should the ensuing negotiation fail, the failure would be ascribed to him and the Minister who appointed him." In 1795 Mr. Hammond was recalled from America to take the post of Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at home. Lord Grenville's letter on this occasion conveys to him "the most complete approbation of His Majesty's Government under very trying circumstances," and intimates that on his arrival in this country he would propose him for another situation "in which his talents and zeal might be exerted for the King's service." This was the beginning of a fast friendship between them. It is said they exchanged portraits, both of which came to Mr. Hammond as the survivor, and are still in possession of Lord Hammond's family. The following year Mr. Canning was appointed his colleague in the Foreign Office, at the age of twenty-six, Mr. Hammond being eight years his senior; and a lasting friendship grew up between them, which only terminated at the death of the younger man. The return of Lord Malmesbury from Lisle in 1797, and the substitution of war for diplomacy, marks the first appearance of the *Antijacobin*, a satirical paper set up in opposition to the *Rolliad*, the Whig organ. "An Epistle addressed to the Editors," by William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne, published in the *Morning Chronicle* of Jan. 17th, 1798, represents Canning and Hammond as joint-editors.

"Whoe'er yon are, all hail ! whether the skill
Of youthful Canning guides the rancorous quill,

* * * * *

Or Hammond, leaving his official toil,

O'er the great work consume the midnight oil," &c.

Canning's was undoubtedly the directing and inspiring mind

but the Editor was William Gifford, afterwards Editor of the *Quarterly Review*. Canning's chief associates in the *Antijacobin* were George Ellis, one of the members of Lord Malmesbury's staff at Lisle, and Hookham Frere. There were many other contributors or supposed contributors who met together with a great show of secrecy at the house of Wright the publisher, No. 189, Piccadilly, opposite Old Bond Street. The *Antijacobin* coming to an end in rather less than a year, the *Quarterly Review* was commenced in 1809, in opposition to the *Edinburgh*. Canning was the reputed father of the *Quarterly*. The story goes that it had its inception at a dinner at Mr. Hammond's in Spring Gardens, at which Gifford and John Murray, Hookham Frere and some of the old Antijacobins were present. Certain it is that Mr. Hammond regarded them all as his most attached friends down to the close of his life.

On a change of Government in February 1806, Mr. Fox took the Foreign Office, and Mr. Hammond retired on a pension. While he was in office he was sent on several important missions to Berlin in 1796; to Vienna in 1799; and in 1805 he accompanied Lord Harrowby, the then Foreign Secretary, on his mission to Berlin. The dismissal of the Grenville Ministry, however, in March 1807, brought in the Duke of Portland and the Tories, with Canning at the Foreign Office and his former colleague as Under-Secretary. The failure at Walcheren led to Canning's duel with Lord Castlereagh on Putney Heath, and the resignation of the Ministry in September 1809. In October, Mr. Hammond, being then in indifferent health, also resigned, never to return to the Foreign Office. Residing temporarily at Donnington, Berks, the University of Oxford paid him the high compliment of an Hon. D.C.L. degree, his friend, Lord Grenville being then Chancellor of the University. In November 1815, Hammond was appointed by Lord Castlereagh one of the Committee of Arbitration for securing to British subjects indemnity for loss of property during the French Revolution, with David Morier for his colleague. One of the most persistent claimants under this arbitration was the Baron de Bode, whose grievances were at one time brought periodically before Parliament. This business, which lasted till 1828, necessitated Hammond's frequent residence in the French capital. Sir Stratford Canning, visiting Paris in his honeymoon, writes to his mother, August 20, 1816,—“ Yesterday was the King's *jour de feté*. To-night we propose concluding with a ball at Mr. Hammond's, where the Duke of Wellington has promised

to show himself." Mr. Hammond at this time occupied an *étage*, next door to the present Embassy in the Faubourg St. Honoré. After 1828 he retired into private life, residing in Portland Place till his death, which occurred on the 22nd of April, 1853, at the advanced age of ninety.

Edmund Hammond, the late Lord, youngest son of the above, was born in Spring Gardens in the year 1802, and sent to Eton at ten years of age. Leaving early on account of bad health, he went to Harrow in 1815. A highly laudatory letter from his tutor, William Drury, shows that he left Harrow in December 1819. Matriculating at University College, Oxford, he graduated in honours at Michaelmas 1823, and in 1826 was elected to a Fellowship, having previously been a scholar of his college. While still an undergraduate, he was gazetted to a clerkship in the Privy Council Office by the interest of Lord Harrowby, and a little later he was removed to the Foreign Office by Mr. Canning, when the latter became Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons. In February 1827, a stroke of paralysis led to the resignation of Lord Liverpool, and Canning became Prime Minister, but died almost immediately after. When his cousin Sir Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was sent on a special mission to Turkey in 1831, to fix the boundaries of the new Kingdom of Greece after their long struggle for independence—a cause which lay nearest to Byron's heart when his life was prematurely cut short at Missolonghi—and to settle the treaty in virtue of which Otho of Bavaria ascended the Greek throne, Hammond was attached to the mission by the Foreign Office, and though Sir Stratford's imperious nature could ill brook a rival, he mentions his colleague approvingly in despatches. The treaty was concluded in May 1832, and the following year Hammond was again attached to Sir Stratford on another mission to Madrid and Lisbon.

From 1830 to 1852, Lord Palmerston ruled the Foreign Office, with the exception of a short interval in 1835, when the Duke of Wellington held the Foreign portfolio, and another longer period between 1841 and 1846, when Lord Aberdeen was at the Foreign Office. The European horizon was so disturbed in 1830, that a great political authority declared that if an angel from heaven was at the Foreign Office he could not preserve peace for three months. Palmerston falsified the prediction, and for the first time on record England and France were found acting in concert. For

Lord Palmerston and his spirited policy Hammond always entertained the highest admiration, though his Lordship's administration of Foreign affairs has not always met the approval of public opinion in late years. Hammond was at this time Chief of the Oriental Department, which included both Persia and China. The Opium War with China broke out soon after the Queen's accession. The principle for which we contended was the right to force a peculiar trade on the Chinese against their will. The Chinese only wished to be let alone, and have no relations with other countries. Palmerston insisted the Chinese were not sincere in their objection, otherwise they might forbid the growth of the poppy in China. When at length the Chinese took measures to stop it, Captain Elliot, the Chief Superintendent, cut the knot by sending to India for ships of war. The first Afghan War was another interference with other nations, but due rather to Lord Aberdeen than Lord Palmerston. Captain, afterwards Sir Alexander Burnes, had been sent to Cabul in 1837, to enter into commercial relations with Dost Mahomed, the accepted ruler of Cabul. The Shah of Persia was at this time seeking a pretext for making war, but there was a strong impression in England and among the authorities of India that he was only a puppet in the hands of Russia, and Herat would be the first step into India. Mysterious agents of Russia also begun to show themselves, and though Burnes always insisted that Dost Mahomed was sincerely anxious to become an ally, the profoundest distrust of him prevailed in Downing Street and Simla. Either of these complications would be as tangled a web of diplomacy as any Government Department could have to unravel. During Lord Derby's short administration in 1852, Lord Malmesbury was Foreign Minister. He tells us in his diary: "Lord Palmerston kindly called upon me and gave me some advice on the main principles of our English policy, and a masterly sketch of the *status quo* in Europe, the pith of which was to keep well in with France," not forgetting his usual lecture on handwriting. He adds, he received the most cordial assistance from the permanent Under-Secretary, Mr. Addington. But "the chief of the clerks, Mr. Hammond, was a very strong partizan on the other side." During Lord Aberdeen's administration which followed, the Eastern Question again threatened a disturbance of the peace of Europe. The Emperor of Russia had made up his mind that the time had come to divide the property of the "sick man." Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, our

Minister at Constantinople, advised the Sultan with great ability, but the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope showed that war was inevitable. A few days before the Crimean War broke out Hammond was appointed Permanent Under-Secretary in the room of Addington; Lord Wodehouse, now Earl of Kimberley, being his Parliamentary associate, and the Earl of Clarendon Secretary of State. The appointment gave great satisfaction to the "office," and indeed to the whole Civil Service, being the only instance of a promotion "from the office," with the exception of that of Mr. Planta in 1827.

On a subsequent occasion, in a speech addressed to the House of Commons on Administrative Reform, June 18th, 1855, Lord Palmerston eulogised Lord Clarendon's appointment as that of "a most distinguished man, holding office in the Foreign Department, who had worked himself up by his talents, energy, perseverance and ability, and a man possessed of a great variety of attainments ;" but the appointment has usually been laid to the credit of Lord Palmerston himself.

On the 15th of February, 1855, Lord Palmerston came in as Prime Minister. Negotiations for peace had been begun at Vienna, and Lord John Russell was sent there to represent the interests of England. He took with him the new Permanent Under-Secretary, the present Marquis of Dufferin being one of his suite. Circumstances seemed favourable at first. After conferring with the Emperor of the French at Paris, and visiting Berlin to ascertain the views of the Prussian Government, they proceeded to Vienna, but the negotiations broke down, mainly on the proposal to limit the supremacy of Russia in the Black Sea. This failure involved Lord John in some discredit. He had been too readily taken with the proposals of Austria, and afterwards condemned them in the House of Commons. Lord John was forced to resign. Ten years later he made Hammond a Privy Councillor, offering him either that or a K.C.B.

Who directs the Foreign policy of England is a doubtful matter, but it is no exaggeration to say that the Permanent Under-Secretary has more to do with shaping its course than any other single person. The cleverest Minister who has been out of office for several years is necessarily obliged to rely on the highest official in his department. A permanent Under-Secretary who chose to do no more than his strict duty, might make his chief's an extremely unpleasant berth. The "office" is sure to support the Under-Secretary in a dispute, while he is wholly irresponsible

to the House of Commons, for the chief makes it a point of honour always to defend his subordinates. As an instance, many of our readers will recollect how readily the House of Lords accepted Lord Granville's assurance on the eve of the outbreak of the Franco-German War, that the peace of Europe was never more secure, "because Mr. Hammond said so."

Those who have blamed Hammond for his want of foresight will at least admit that though France and Prussia were armed to the teeth, as all the world knew, and, like two dogs at bay, had long been watching each other's movements—though neither was particularly anxious to fight, and one of them was manifestly unprepared—there was absolutely no reason why they should have flown at each other at that particular moment. It was a curious illustration of Lord Beaconsfield's saying, that "Nothing is so certain as the unexpected."

It has been said that Lord Hammond ruled the Foreign Office and the whole Diplomatic Body in London. He was a man of great strength of will, great industry, and very considerable talent; but, besides all this, his vast knowledge of precedents and traditions gave him enormous influence with successive Foreign Ministers, and made him, so to speak, the living embodiment of the continuous foreign policy of this country. Experience must always be one of the most important qualities a civil servant can possess, but it is a plant of slow growth which the present system of the superannuation of all alike at fifty years of age bids fair to exterminate. Had it been in force in Hammond's time, he could never have been Under-Secretary, for he was already past that age.

An admirable sketch in the *Glasgow Herald* by one who knew him well recalls "the shaggy eyebrows, the set stern face, the keen eyes and the kindly and gracious manner of the Foreign Office Jove. He was a splendid type of the British official. He gloried in his work, and he worked like a horse. Nothing in this wide world was to him half as important as the dignity and good name of the Foreign Office." In reference to his strong devotion to duty, a grim story has been often repeated of a visitor to the Foreign Office who was informed by the porter that Mr. Hammond was out—"He had gone to a funeral"—the porter adding apologetically that it was "the first day's pleasuring he had allowed himself for many years." Whether the story is true or not, he enjoyed his holidays as much as any one. Probably a year never passed in his younger days without a walking tour in

Switzerland or Germany, as the present writer has good reason to recollect, having been his companion on some of these occasions. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to “fight his battles o’er again” even to the last year of his life. He was a man of powerful *physique*, and always carried his own knapsack at a time when knapsacks were not the little flimsy things they are now.

Having completed a service of fifty years, he retired on a full pension of £2500 in October 1873. It may have been the highest Civil Service pension of modern times, but it was by no means “evidence of public gratitude for his good service,” as has been said. It was no more than he was strictly entitled to under the 4 & 5 Will. IV., c. 24., having entered the service before the 4th of August, 1829, the date of the Treasury minute which reduced the scale of pensions for those who came in afterwards. Civil servants of Lord Hammond’s standing were entitled to their full salary after a service of fifty years. The salary of an Under-Secretary is £2000. The remaining £6500 was an allowance for managing and distributing the Secret Service Fund, as fixed by a minute of Mr. Canning’s about the year 1824, and payable out of the fund. The nature of this fund is sufficiently obvious from its name. Mr. Gladstone stated in the House on one occasion that in 1871, shortly after the accession to office of the then Government, Mr. Hammond had voluntarily tendered to Lord Clarendon his readiness to have it reduced to £300 a year; but, “having reference to the nature of Mr. Hammond’s services and the really unmeasured labour he gave to the public benefit,” he, Mr. Gladstone, could not advise that his offer should be accepted. Whenever a change occurred, the amount should be reduced to £300 a year. Had it continued to be paid out of the fund, it would have conferred no right to a pension; but solely by the action of the late zealous reformer, Mr. Peter Rylands, who hated anything secret, the payment was ordered to be put on the annual estimates by a vote of the House of Commons, and to be paid by the Treasury like any other salary. Thus it afterwards helped to swell Lord Hammond’s pension.

On the 22nd of February, 1874, he had a peerage conferred upon him by Her Majesty on the recommendation of Mr. Gladstone’s Ministry. An absurd story which got abroad at the time, that he was only offered a baronetcy, is sufficiently disproved by the fact that Lords Cottesloe, Lingen, and Thring were all created peers from the Civil Service by Mr. Gladstone’s Govern-

ment. The intimation was conveyed to him by Mr. Gladstone himself in a very flattering letter, and there is evidence that Mr. Gladstone had it in contemplation several months before. Lord Hammond frequently took part in the debates in the House of Lords, usually speaking on subjects connected with his former department, on which his authority was unrivalled. Lord Derby especially spoke of him as "the member of that House, who of all who sit here has the longest and largest experience of the foreign affairs of this country," and was his own "earliest instructor in matters of foreign policy."

From 1886 to 1890 his winters were passed at Mentone, the lovely little Franco-Italian town whose varying fortunes and nationality had come before him in earlier years at the Foreign Office, and of whose beauties he was an unwearied admirer. His mind was clear and vigorous to the last, and it was only last winter that it was recorded in the local paper: "Lord Hammond and his daughters are at the Villa Charles as usual. No one seeing the hale old man taking walks of no short distance would credit him with eighty-seven years."

H. E. CHETWYND STAPYLTON.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.