shall be consonant with the legitimate and laudable aspirations of the Egyptian people; which shall be able to protect itself alike from internal tumult and from foreign intrigue; which, while it shall develop the undoubted resources of Egypt, shall faithfully discharge the equitable liabilities of its people; and which, as far as human governments can do, shall give promise of prosperity and happiness in the land of the Nile.

We are now in Egypt by the sufferance of Europe, but we must endeavor to be in Egypt by the mandate of Europe. Our Protectorate, to be effective, and authoritative, and secure, should be acquiesced in by a European Congress in which Turkey shall be adequately represented and the rights and powers of the Sultan loyally secured. Our Protectorate, if it is to be crowned with success, must not shrink from dealing comprehensively and boldly with the financial indebtedness of Egypt, even though such dealing should involve some pecuniary liability on ourselves.

The work, if you undertake it, will be a work of time,— perhaps a long time. It will be a work of difficulty, and perhaps a work of danger; but it would also be a work of duty and a work of honor; and from work of that kind Britain has never yet recoiled. It is a work which, if courageously persisted in, will bind more closely to us than heretofore the sympathies of the Mohammedan races, and will establish on deeper foundations our dominions in the East. Our aims are honor, peace, and freedom, and we should not shrink from prosecuting those aims, if need be, by force of arms. Conscious of their magnanimity, we would go boldly forward, knowing well that the results of our policy would surely be to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

UGUSTINE BIRRELL, K. C., M. P., LL. D., a brilliant English essayist, critic, and chancery lawyer, was born near Liverpool, Jan. 19, 1850. The son of the Rev. Charles Birrell, a Baptist clergyman, he received his education at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1872, was called to the Bar in 1875, and fourteen years later was elected Liberal member of Parliament for West Fifeshire. In 1896, he was appointed Quain professor of law at University College, London. Among his best-known publications are "Obiter Dicta" (1884 and 1887); "Life of Charlotte Brontë" (1885); "Res Judicatæ" (1892); "Men, Women, and Books" (1894); besides his professional "Lectures on the Duties and Liabilities of Trustees" (1896). He is also editor of an edition of Boswell's "Life of Johnson."

EDMUND BURKE

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE EDINBURGH PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

MR. JOHN MORLEY, who among other things has written two admirable books about Edmund Burke, is to be found in the Preface to the second of them apologizing for having introduced into the body of the work extracts from his former volume — conduct which he seeks to justify by quoting from the Greek (always a desirable thing to do when in a difficulty), to prove that, though you may say what you have to say well once, you cannot so say it twice.

A difficulty somewhat of the same kind cannot fail to be felt by every one who takes upon himself to write on Burke; for, however innocent a man's own past life may be of any public references to the subject, the very many good things other men have said about it must seriously interfere with true liberty of treatment.

Hardly any man, and certainly no politician, has been so

bepraised as Burke, whose very name, suggesting, as it does, splendor of diction, has tempted those who would praise him to do so in a highly decorated style, and it would have been easy work to have brought together a sufficient number of animated passages from the works of well-known writers all dedicated to the greater glory of Edmund Burke, and then to have tagged on half-a-dozen specimens of his own resplendent rhetoric, and so to have come to an apparently natural and long desired conclusion without exciting any more than the usual post-lectorial grumble.

This course, however, not recommending itself, some other method had to be discovered. Happily, it is out of the question within present limits to give any proper summary of Burke's public life. This great man was not, like some modern politicians, a specialist, confining his activities within the prospectus of an association; nor was he, like some others, a thing of shreds and patches, busily employed to-day picking up the facts with which he will overwhelm his opponents on the morrow; but was one ever ready to engage with all comers on all subjects from out the stores of his accumulated knowledge.

Even were we to confine ourselves to those questions only which engaged Burke's most powerful attention, enlisted his most active sympathy, elicited his most bewitching rhetoric, we should still find ourselves called upon to grapple with problems as vast and varied as Economic Reform, the Status of our Colonies, our Empire in India, our Relations with Ireland both in respect to her trade and her prevalent religion; and then, blurring the picture, as some may think—certainly rendering it titanesque and gloomy—we have the spectacle of Burke in his old age, like another Laocoön, writhing and wrestling with the French Revolution; and it may serve to

give us some dim notion of how great a man Burke was, of how affluent a mind, of how potent an imagination, of how resistless an energy, that even when his sole unassisted name is pitted against the outcome of centuries, and we say Burke and the French Revolution, we are not overwhelmed by any sense of obvious absurdity or incongruity.

What I propose to do is merely to consider a little Burke's life prior to his obtaining a seat in Parliament, and then to refer to any circumstances which may help us to account for the fact that this truly extraordinary man, whose intellectual resources beggar the imagination, and who devoted himself to politics with all the forces of his nature, never so much as attained to a seat in the Cabinet,—a feat one has known to be accomplished by persons of no proved intellectual agility. Having done this, I shall then, bearing in mind the aphorism of Lord Beaconsfield, that it is always better to be impudent than servile, essay an analysis of the essential elements of Burke's character.

The first great fact to remember is, that the Edmund Burke we are all agreed in regarding as one of the proudest memories of the House of Commons was an Irishman. When we are in our next fit of political depression about that island, and are about piously to wish, as the poet Spenser tells us men were wishing even in his time, that it were not adjacent, let us do a little national stocktaking, and calculate profits as well as losses.

Burke was not only an Irishman, but a typical one—of the very kind many Englishmen, and even possibly some Scotchmen, make a point of disliking. I do not say he was an aboriginal Irishman, but his ancestors are said to have settled in the county of Galway, under Strongbow, in King Henry the Second's time, when Ireland was first conquered

and our troubles began. This, at all events, is a better Irish pedigree than Mr. Parnell's.

Skipping six centuries, we find Burke's father an attorney in Dublin—which somehow sounds a very Irish thing to be—who in 1725 married a Miss Nagle and had fifteen children. The marriage of Burke's parents was of the kind called mixed—a term which doubtless admits of wide application, but when employed technically signifies that the religious faith of the spouses was different; one, the father, being a Protestant, and the lady an adherent to what used to be pleasantly called the "old religion." The severer spirit now dominating Catholic councils has condemned these marriages on the score of their bad theology and their lax morality; but the practical politician, who is not usually much of a theologian—though Lord Melbourne and Mr. Gladstone are distinguished exceptions—and whose moral conscience is apt to be robust (and here I believe there are no exceptions), cannot but regret that so good an opportunity of lubricating religious differences with the sweet oil of the domestic affections should be lost to us in these days of bitterness and dissension.

Burke was brought up in the Protestant faith of his father, and was never in any real danger of deviating from it; but I cannot doubt that his regard for his Catholic fellow subjects, his fierce repudiation of the infamies of the penal code—whose horrors he did something to mitigate—his respect for antiquity, and his historic sense, were all quickened by the fact that a tenderly loved and loving mother belonged through life and in death to an ancient and an outraged faith.

The great majority of Burke's brothers and sisters, like those of Laurence Sterne, were "not made to live;" and out of the fifteen but three, beside himself, attained maturity.

These were his eldest brother, Garrett, on whose death Edmund succeeded to the patrimonial Irish estate, which he sold; his younger brother, Richard, a highly speculative gentleman, who always lost; and his sister, Juliana, who married a Mr. French, and was, as became her mother's daughter, a rigid Roman Catholic—who, so we read, was accustomed every Christmas Day to invite to the Hall the maimed, the aged, and distressed of her vicinity to a plentiful repast, during which she waited upon them as a servant. A sister like this never did any man any serious harm.

Edmund Burke was born in 1729, in Dublin, and was taught his rudiments in the country—first by a Mr. O'Halloran, and afterwards by a Mr. FitzGerald, village pedagogues both, who at all events succeeded in giving their charge a brogue which death alone could silence.

Burke passed from their hands to an academy at Ballitore, kept by a Quaker, from whence he proceeded to Trinity College, Dublin. He was thus not only Irish born, but Irish bred.

His intellectual habit of mind exhibited itself early. He belonged to the happy family of omnivorous readers, and, in the language of his latest schoolmaster, he went to college with a larger miscellaneous stock of reading than was usual with one of his years; which, being interpreted out of pedagogic into plain English, means that "our good Edmund" was an enormous devourer of poetry and novels, and so he remained to the end of his days.

That he always preferred Fielding to Richardson is satisfactory, since it pairs him off nicely with Dr. Johnson, whose preference was the other way, and so helps to keep an interesting question wide open. His passion for the poetry of Virgil is significant. His early devotion to Edward Young,

the grandiose author of the "Night Thoughts," is not to be wondered at; though the inspiration of the youthful Burke, either as poet or critic, may be questioned when we find him rapturously scribbling in the margin of his copy:

"Jove claimed the verse old Homer sung,
But God himself inspired Dr. Young."

But a boy's enthusiasm for a favorite poet is a thing to rejoice over. The years that bring the philosophic mind will not bring—they must find—enthusiasm.

In 1750, Burke (being then twenty-one) came for the first time to London, to do what so many of his lively young countrymen are still doing—though they are beginning to make a grievance even of that—eat his dinners at the Middle Temple, and so qualify himself for the Bar. Certainly that student was in luck who found himself in the same mess with Burke; and yet so stupid are men—so prone to rest with their full weight on the immaterial and slide over the essential—that had that good fortune been ours we should probably have been more taken up with Burke's brogue than with his brains.

Burke came to London with a cultivated curiosity, and in no spirit of desperate determination to make his fortune. That the study of the law interested him cannot be doubted, for everything interested him, particularly the stage. Like the sensible Irishman he was, he lost his heart to Peg Woffington on the first opportunity. He was fond of roaming about the country, during, it is to be hoped, vacation-time only, and is to be found writing the most cheerful letters to his friends in Ireland (all of whom are persuaded that he is going some day to be somebody, though sorely puzzled to surmise what thing or when, so pleasantly does he take life), from all sorts of out-of-the-way country places, where he

lodges with quaint old landladies who wonder maternally why he never gets drunk, and generally mistake him for an author until he pays his bill.

When in town he frequented debating societies in Fleet Street and Covent Garden, and made his first speeches; for which purpose he would, unlike some debaters, devote studious hours to getting up the subjects to be discussed. There is good reason to believe that it was in this manner his attention was first directed to India. He was at all times a great talker, and, Dr. Johnson's dictum notwithstanding, a good listener. He was endlessly interested in everything—in the state of the crops, in the last play, in the details of all trades, the rhythm of all poems, the plots of all novels, and indeed in the course of every manufacture. And so for six years he went up and down, to and fro, gathering information, imparting knowledge, and preparing himself, though he knew not for what.

The attorney in Dublin grew anxious, and searched for precedents of a son behaving like his, and rising to eminence. Had his son got the legal mind?—which, according to a keen observer, chiefly displays itself by illustrating the obvious, explaining the evident, and expatiating on the commonplace.

Edmund's powers of illustration, explanation, and expatiation could not indeed be questioned; but then the subjects selected for the exhibition of those powers were very far indeed from being obvious, evident, or commonplace; and the attorney's heart grew heavy within him. The paternal displeasure was signified in the usual manner—the supplies were cut off. Edmund Burke, however, was no ordinary prodigal, and his reply to his father's expostulations took the unexpected and unprecedented shape of a copy of a second and enlarged edition of his treatise on the "Sublime and

Beautiful," which he had published in 1756 at the price of three shillings. Burke's father promptly sent the author a bank-bill for £100,—conduct on his part which, considering he had sent his son to London and maintained him there for six years to study law, was, in my judgment, both sublime and beautiful.

In the same year Burke published another pamphlet—a one-and-sixpenny affair—written ironically, in the style of Lord Bolingbroke, and called "A Vindication of Natural Society; or, a View of the Miseries and Evils Arising to Mankind from Every Species of Civil Society." Irony is a dangerous weapon for a public man to have ever employed, and in after-life Burke had frequently to explain that he was not serious.

On these two pamphlets' airy pinions Burke floated into the harbor of literary fame. No less a man than the great David Hume referred to him, in a letter to the hardly less great Adam Smith, as an Irish gentleman who had written a "very pretty treatise on the Sublime." After these efforts, Burke, as became an established wit, went to Bath to recruit, and there, fitly enough, fell in love. The lady was Miss Jane Mary Nugent, the daughter of a celebrated Bath physician; and it is pleasant to be able to say of the marriage that was shortly solemnized between the young couple, that it was a happy one, and then to go on our way, leaving them—where man and wife ought to be left—alone.

Oddly enough, Burke's wife was also the offspring of a "mixed marriage"—only in her case it was the father who was the Catholic; consequently both Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Burke were of the same way of thinking, but each had a parent of the other way. Although getting married is no part of the curriculum of a law-student, Burke's father seems to

have come to the conclusion that after all it was a greater distinction for an attorney in Dublin to have a son living amongst the wits in London, and discoursing familiarly on the "Sublime and Beautiful," than one prosecuting some poor countryman, with a brogue as rich as his own, for stealing a pair of breeches; for we find him generously allowing the young couple £200 a year, which no doubt went some way toward maintaining them. Burke, who was now in his twenty-eighth year, seems to have given up all notion of the law. In 1758 he wrote for Dodsley the first volume of the "Annual Register," a melancholy series which continues to this day. For doing this he got £100.

Burke was by this time a well-known figure in London literary society, and was busy making for himself a huge private reputation. The Christmas Day of 1758 witnessed a singular scene at the dinner-table of David Garrick. Dr. Johnson, then in the full vigor of his mind, and with the all-dreaded weapons of his dialectics kept burnished by daily use, was flatly contradicted by a fellow guest some twenty years his junior, and, what is more, submitted to it without a murmur. One of the diners, Arthur Murphy, was so struck by this occurrence, unique in his long experience of the Doctor, that on returning home he recorded the fact in his journal, but ventured no explanation of it.

It can only be accounted for—so at least I venture to think—by the combined effect of four wholly independent circumstances: First, the day was Christmas Day, a day of peace and good will, and our beloved Doctor was amongst the sincerest, though most argumentative of Christians, and a great observer of days. Second, the house was David Garrick's, and consequently we may be certain that the dinner had been a superlatively good one; and has not Boswell