MEMORIES OF A SCHOOL INSPECTOR; THIRTY-FIVE YEARS IN LANCASHIRE AND SUFFOLK

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IN LANCASHIRE AND SUFFOLK

BY

A. J. SWINBURNE
FORMERLY ONE OF H.M. INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

SCHOOL AND OXFORD DAYS

I COME of a very old Saxon stock.

> "The Lowthers and Swinburnes and Featherstonhaughs
> Against the Norman waged the wars"

runs an old ballad carefully preserved by the members of one branch of the family, by whom it was handed to me. "The eminent house of Swinburne," says Burke, in his *History of the Landed Gentry* (note, p. 71), "is amongst the most ancient in the kingdom, deriving from the flower of the nobility of Europe, and bearing no less than eighty-six quarterings on its shield. It enumerates as lineal progenitors the early Kings of France, many Emperors, Dukes of Normandy, the Plantagenets, Kings of England, the Percies (including Hotspur), the Nevilles, all the Greys, the Willoughby D'Eresbys, the Warrens, Howards, Cliffords, Vescies, Mortimers, FitzHughs, FitzAlans, FitzWalters, Radcliffes, the Bohuns, Vauxes, Dacres of the North, Widvilles, De Ross, De la Poles, Mowbrays, Beauchamps, etc., etc. It is worthy of note that eighteen out of the twenty-five barons who wrenched Magna Charta from King John were direct lineal ancestors of the Swinburnes." So great, independent, and impartial an authority as Burke—himself a baronet, and holding a high post in the Heralds' Office—is not to be despised; and in these days one comes across so many would-be descendants of royalty (Edward the First preferred) that it seems advisable to start with Burke's own note, a parallel of which it is not easy to find, even in pages addicted to laudation, as peerages, etc., are apt to be.