

**THE LIVES OF EMINENT  
CONSERVATIVE  
STATESMEN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649637997

The Lives of Eminent Conservative Statesmen by Mark Rochester

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**MARK ROCHESTER**

**THE LIVES OF EMINENT  
CONSERVATIVE  
STATESMEN**



THE LIVES  
OF  
EMINENT  
CONSERVATIVE STATESMEN.

BY  
MARK ROCHESTER.



---

LONDON:  
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,  
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.  
1866.

210. g. 177.

## THE EARL OF DERBY.

---

Attaining power for a second time towards the close of February, 1858, Lord Derby, at the period of his re-accession to office as First Minister of the Crown, naturally assumed, by right of that position, the foremost place among his contemporaries. It happened, however, oddly enough, that about the same time the new Premier was otherwise brought rather conspicuously under the notice of his fellow-countrymen. It so chanced, of course, by the merest coincidence, by a purely accidental combination of circumstances—yet the incidents somehow occurring together so very opportunely, concentrated the public gaze for awhile in a most unusual manner upon this one prominent individuality.

As a statesman, his rank has been such for a considerable number of years past, that his sovereign has five times selected him—twice effectually—to be the chief of her constitutional government.

Early in 1858, however, Lord Derby—at the moment when power came anew within his grasp—found himself, in a manner, pre-eminently placed, socially as well as politically, among the national sports of the field, no less than among the imperial toils of the administration. His cabinet being constructed during the interval which elapsed between the death of Bertram Arthur, seventeenth earl of Shrewsbury, and the recognition of the validity of the title of Henry John Chetwynd, third Earl Talbot, claiming, as his collateral successor, to be eighteenth earl of Shrewsbury, the Premier of England was also (until those claims were allowed) Premier Earl of England, by simple right of the order of precedence. His hand, moreover, had scarcely closed once

more upon the reins of government, when he seemed to hold no less securely in his possession the guarantee of proving at length the winner of the highest prize in the Olympic games of Englishmen.

It was altogether a conjunction of events so curious and even whimsical of its kind, that sporting men, unknown to have ever fingered a page of *Hansard*, found themselves abruptly becoming politicians; while politicians, who never before had an eye for the turf, began to look askance day after day with lively interest at the varying quotation of the odds at Tattersall's. Lord Derby's name was not only audible continually at the Clubs, it resounded during many weeks together as a word of momentary utterance at the Corner. Nay, as the critical 19th of May approached, the First Lord of the Treasury became in a great measure subordinate to the owner of Toxophilite. And, what has of late years become sufficiently noteworthy to be particularized as by no means a mere matter of course, the favourite in this instance continued to be the favourite up to the last moment of starting,—up to the last frenzied babel of the ring,—till the breathless cry, "They're off!"—till even the tail of the ruck had passed Tattenham Corner, and Beadsman had shot ahead when within a few strides of the chair, amidst an universal buzz of astonishment. Lord Derby winning the Derby—the investiture of the true-blue Premier with "the blue ribbon of the turf"—was, up to that instant, matter of pretty general anticipation. It is doubtful even now whether the majority of the non-sporting and non-political world were not really somewhat chagrined by the unexpected eclipse of the glory of Toxophilite. Since that event, however, the noble earl has signalized in a somewhat unusual manner his own high estimate, at once of his political security and of his all-absorbing responsibilities as head of the new Government. The sale of his stud on Saturday, the 18th of September, intimated his total withdrawal from the turf, or, at any rate, temporary retirement.

Precisely the very man, therefore, who has the reputation

of most scorning the more vulgar evidences of popularity—the *digito monstrari*—was the very man towards whom every finger was pointed, at that period of anxious solicitude, when he was a fifth time invited, and a second time consented, to organize a new administration. Already, six years previously, Lord Derby had evidenced his ability to preside over the destinies of the British government. His capacities as a statesman he had signalized during twice six years, by guiding the councils and marshalling the ranks of his party, as its honoured and authoritative chief, both in office and opposition. His intellectual repute, combined with his great social *status*, had led, moreover, in another direction, to his being unanimously chosen to preside over the most ancient seat of learning in the land—his own *alma mater*, the University of Oxford: at the head of which venerable institution his name has been now during five years past enrolled as Chancellor.

As an orator, his reputation stands almost (in some particulars altogether) unrivalled among his contemporaries: far beyond which, however, it should be added that he has perhaps never in all the past had any superior among the most gifted debaters in parliament. In many of the subtler devices of oratory he has long been recognized as an exquisite proficient; while to an acquired but perfected mastery of that art of arts, he has brought those manifold natural endowments which are so essential to complete the influence, the charm, the glamour of the accomplished rhetorician. And what more admirable intellectually than qualities like these?—“*Quid subtilius, quam acutæ crebræque sententiæ? Quid admirabilius, quam res splendore illustrata verborum?*” \* Not that his diction is ever ornate, being at all times, indeed, superb in its graceful simplicity; but that in the very terseness and lucidity of his “silver style” there are witcheries of sound far beyond the reach of mere verbal adornment. His language, in truth, is always as devoid of ornament as it is replete with a nameless and irresistible fascination. It is to

\* Cicero, *De Oratore*, li. 34.



the manly purity and strength of his Saxon English that he owes much of his extraordinary power in discussion—the vital force of one surpassed by few as an orator, by none as a debater.

The Derby ministry sits nowadays, in 1858, as formerly in 1852, thirteen at the council-board: consisting, as it has done upon both occasions, of the very number not usually regarded as auspicious. It was agreeably observable, however, upon its first construction, six years ago, that out of those thirteen members of the cabinet, there were actually not two who could claim kindred with each other,—a wonderful consideration, remembering the snug Family Parties gathered together under the form of successive Whig administrations! Recollecting, for example, that out of the two latest specimens the nation has had of Whig cabinets, each extending to the full complement of fifteen,—ten under the Palmerston rule were distinctly related to one another, and eleven under Lord John Russell's peculiarly touching and affectionate organization of government. Bearing these melancholy truths in mind, it is really pleasant to revive the memory of that unusual fact—namely, that the first ministry of Lord Derby included within it no two members in any way connected one with another by the familiar bonds of relationship. As with the first, so with the second Derby cabinet—saving and excepting the one notable instance of the eldest son of the Prime Minister: an obviously exceptional instance in every particular, seeing that Lord Stanley has for a considerable time past been eagerly sought as a ministerial colleague, on all sides, and by all parties—the last of these preceding lures to office having been proffered to the gifted offspring of the now First Lord of the Treasury, by his immediate predecessor, the noble viscount at the head of the late administration. The nomination of Lord Stanley, therefore, to a seat in his father's cabinet is no evidence of the Prime Minister's even momentary toleration of Nepotism—it is rather the result of a happy Necessity. We may reiterate, indeed, in allusion to the second Derby cabinet,

what has been already remarked in respect to the first—that its members trace their origin to no common genealogy: their houses are neither related by blood, nor connected by marriage. Six out of these thirteen ministers of state are not members of the hereditary aristocracy; another, a seventh—giving the balance to an equal division of the cabinet between peers and commoners—entered the House of Lords only, as we have seen in the instance of the Chancellor, at the date of the original formation of the government.

The Right Honourable Edward Geoffrey Smith Stanley, fourteenth Earl of Derby, was born on the 29th of March, 1799, in the ancestral home of his family, at Knowsley Park, near Prescott, in the county palatine of Lancaster. His father, Edward, thirteenth Earl of Derby, K.G., popularly known during the greater portion of his lifetime as Lord Stanley, was (unlike his more distinguished son) in politics a thorough-going Whig, but (in this more like his filial successor) in personal habits a lover of manly sports and rural pastimes.

The heir to the ancient earldom of Derby, and future Prime Minister of England, was educated in the first instance at Eton College, and was thence removed to Christchurch, Oxford, where, as George Canning and the Marquess of Wellesley had done before him, he signalized his success in scholarship by the elegance of his Latin versification. Inasmuch so, that, at the Commemoration in 1819, while still a minor, he obtained the Chancellor's prize for Latin verse, reading his poem,\* according to custom, from the rostrum of the Sheldonian theatre, the very building which was to witness, thirty-four years afterwards, his own stately installation as Chancellor. The incident of his writing thus early this prize poem, the subject of which was Syracuse, we remember, indeed, to have been thus gracefully reverted to upon the latter occasion, in the Latin ode delivered before the noble earl, on Tuesday, the 7th

\*Syracuse: a Poem. By the Hon. E. G. S. Stanley. Oxford, 1819.

of June, 1853, as he sat there, in the old theatre, in his robes, as Chancellor of the University :—

Te fronde cinctum tempora Delphicâ,  
 Inter cæterus laude faventium,  
 Testes Syracusæ beatam  
 Carminis abripuisse palmam.

Eminently successful, and even distinguished, though his academical career had been otherwise, Lord Derby, then, of course, the Hon. Edward Stanley, nevertheless quitted the university, strange to tell, without taking his degree as B.A. It has been conjectured, in explanation of this circumstance, that, with a haughty reserve, in every way characteristic, he abstained altogether from entering his name for examination, because uncertain at the moment of eclipsing *all* competitors; the "first place," according to his ambitious view, being alone worth the toil of acquisition.

Immediately upon attaining his majority, namely, in 1821, Mr. Stanley entered the House of Commons as member for Stockbridge, an insignificant borough, since then judiciously disfranchised. His maiden speech, however, was not delivered until three years afterwards; when, upon Tuesday, the 30th of March, 1824, the Manchester Gas-light Bill came under the consideration of the popular branch of the legislature. In reference to the debate upon this question, it is recorded, upon the eleventh page of the eleventh volume of *Hansard*, that Mr. Stanley, addressing the House for the first time, opposed the motion of the hon. member for Sussex (Mr. Curteis) "in a maiden speech of much clearness and ability." The success achieved, indeed, was so far unmis-  
 takable that it elicited the instant yet elaborated encomium of a master of oratory, no less authoritative as a parliamentary critic than Sir James Mackintosh. Another and more studied display of his rhetorical powers the hon. member for Stockbridge gave not long afterwards during the same session; the subject under discussion being connected with the complex problem involved in the maintenance and organization of the