

SIR HENRY PONSONBY.

His Death Must Be a Hard Blow to Queen Victoria.

HE WAS HER TRUSTED ADVISER.

The Last But One of the Attendants Who Entered Her Service Before the Prince Consort Died.

Adapted From the New York Tribune.

It is only when old and gray-haired members of the royal household drop by the wayside, exhausted by age and toil, that one begins to realize how far advanced in years is Queen Victoria, and what an extent she is mistress, not only among the 200,000,000 people subject to her rule, but also to the monarchs of the world. Gen. Sir Henry Ponsonby, who was just died on the 16th of August, was a young officer of the guards when he became attached to the court in the capacity of equerry to the prince consort at the close of the fifties. Yet the queen was already a grandmother at the time and had wielded sovereign power over a fifth of the globe for more than two decades. One year ago, warned by the tragical sudden death at Osborne of his lifelong colleague, Gen. Sir John Cowell, like himself a victim to overwork, Sir Henry tendered his resignation to the queen, and, as a man of high character, she was not likely to be dissuaded from a similar fate. Just at the urgent request of her majesty, who pathetically pointed out to him that broken as she is by age and infirmity, the close of her reign, which would relieve him of his labors, cannot be far distant, he consented to remain in harness. He was the last, save Lord Bripport, of those old and trusted attendants who entered her majesty's service while her husband was still alive. It must be very sad for the venerable sovereign to see these, her contemporaries, thus vanishing one by one into the grave, and it is not difficult to appreciate the utter sense of loneliness and desolation which she must suffer by their disappearance.

Few people save those acquainted with the court and official life of Great Britain have any idea of the arduous work entailed by such a position as that which Sir Henry Ponsonby filled as private secretary to her majesty since 1850. In addition to the care of the queen's own vast private correspondence, the management of her estates and intimate affairs, there is scarcely a government office of importance which does not send every day to the palace at which her majesty may be residing, boxes of documents, orders, warrants and directions, requiring the royal signature and immediate attention; and just in the same way that copies of all important dispatches received at the foreign offices are at once forwarded to the queen, so, too, are all papers of any moment submitted in draft to her before being sent abroad by the secretary of state for foreign affairs. Indeed, it is thanks to this practice that war between Great Britain and the United States was avoided in 1861 in connection with the Trent affair. For, had the dispatch drawn up by the British cabinet been forwarded to Washington City in its original form, a conflict would have been inevitable. It was only the very radical and conciliatory changes effected by the queen and her husband in the draft that deprived the document of its offensive tenor and that rendered possible an amicable settlement of the trouble. All these papers pass through the hands of her majesty's private secretary, who is necessarily a member of the privy council, since it is indispensable that a minister who is sent out for his daily drive after lunch, Sir Henry would set hard to work in his office with a number of trained confidential clerks getting rid of the huge load of business piled up in the morning.

It is no secret that the members of the royal family, male and female, young and old, British and foreign, do not always get on well together. There are jealousies, dislikes and unpleasantness of every kind, trouble about money matters, intrigues and even downright scandals. It was Sir Henry's duty to know all about these, and to make the queen acquainted with them according to his discretion and himself to act on behalf of the queen in numerous instances as mediator between the queen and her ministers. Many a time when he had a hard day's work he would be summoned to the queen's private apartments after dinner to receive instructions which would keep him busy until long after midnight. Indeed, he had a sort of providence to the queen and her children, and it spoke well for his tact, discretion and discretion that he should have invariably been regarded as such by them.

Nor does this by any means constitute the sum total of the duties which were devolved upon Sir Henry Ponsonby. A portion of each day was invariably spent in seeing visitors, in communicating to them her majesty's wishes and intentions, and in pursuing from them the points of information on which she desired to be posted previous to receiving them in audience. And at every moment he would be interrupted by the entrance of one of the royal servants to summon him upstairs to her majesty's apartment in order to reply to some question which had suddenly occurred to her. Many is the time that I have sat in his little office downstairs at Windsor castle and have known him to be called away thus three or four times within the space of an hour, and I can still see the gallant, fine-looking old soldier, rising from his desk with a word of excuse and carrying his frock coat and top hat to the entrance of the summons of his sovereign.

triplets. In cases where the birth had been of a fourfold character, the number of guineas would be increased to four; but before transmitting the money, accompanied by a letter invariably in Sir Henry's own handwriting, it was incumbent upon him to assure himself of the fact that the triplets were not impostors, a task which sometimes involved a considerable amount of expenditure of time and trouble. Then, too, if some collier's wife in Wales or farmer's girl in Lancashire knitted a pair of stockings and sent them to the queen as a humble token of loyalty and affection, it was Sir Henry again who, not in a printed circular, but an autograph letter, conveyed to the donor the expression of her majesty's appreciation of the gift. It was he also who, as keeper of the privy purse, was in charge of all her numerous charities, and that her generosity has not been more frequently imposed upon by designing and unscrupulous persons is entirely due to the common sense and penetration of Sir Henry.

His disappearance from the scene can only be described as an altogether irreparable loss to her majesty, for it will be impossible to find any one else so accustomed to her ways, so cognizant of her ideas and possessed of such a wealth of experience concerning royal, courts, politics and society, English as well as continental, to fill his place. He may be said to have possessed almost every qualification to meet the requirements of his altogether exceptional position.

Well born and related to half the houses of the English aristocracy, possessed of private fortune, with a record of conspicuous gallantry displayed while serving with the Guards in the Crimean war, tall and very good looking, with manners marked by much Old World courtesy and graciousness, he may be said to have belonged to a by-gone generation, and one might look throughout the length and breadth of the British empire to find the equal of that prince of private secretaries, the Right Hon. Gen. Sir Henry Ponsonby.

EX-ATTACHE.

INGERSOLL ON THE BIBLE.

A New Lecture Attacking the Foundations of Faith.

Col. Robert D. Ingersoll delivered at the Star theater last night a lecture on "The Foundations of Faith." This lecture is new, and it held the attention of his audience. Col. Ingersoll began with a description of the Old Testament. "If that book," he said, "is not true, if its authors were uneducated men, if it contains blunders and falsehoods, then that story grumbles to the dust."

Col. Ingersoll said that geologists had established the fact that hundreds of thousands of years ago in the drift period man was on earth. "It is therefore certain," he said, "that many, many thousands of years before Adam lived, men, women and children inhabited the earth. It is certain that the account in the Bible of the creation of the first man is a mistake. It is certain that the inspired writers knew nothing about the origin of man."

"Let me give you another fact: The Egyptians were astronomers. A few years ago representations of the stars were found on the walls of an old temple, and it was discovered by calculating backward that the stars did occupy the exact positions as represented about 750 years before Christ. Afterward another representation of the stars was found, and by calculating in the same way it was found that the stars did occupy the exact positions represented about 3,800 years before Christ."

"According to the Bible the first man was created 4,000 years before Christ. If this is true, then Egypt was founded, its language formed, its arts cultivated, its astronomical discoveries made and recorded about 200 years after the creation of the first man. In other words, Adam was two or three hundred years old when the Egyptian astronomers made these representations. Nothing can be more absurd."

"Again I say that the writers of the Bible were mistaken. How do I know? According to that same Bible there was a flood some fifteen or sixteen hundred years after Adam was created that destroyed the entire human race with the exception of eight persons, and according to the Bible the Egyptians descended from one of the sons of Noah. How, then, did the Egyptians represent the stars in the position they occupied 1,200 years before the flood? No one pretends that Egypt existed as a nation before the flood. Yet the astronomical representations found must have been made more than 1,000 years before the world was drowned."

"There is another mistake in the Bible. According to that book the sun was made after the earth was created. Is this true? Did the earth exist before the sun? The men of science believe the exact opposite. They believe that the earth is a child of the sun—that the earth, as well as the other planets belonging to our constellation, came from the sun. The writers of the Bible were mistaken."

"Can we rely on the historical parts of the Bible? Seventy scribes went down into Egypt, and in 215 years increased to 15,000,000. They could not have doubled more than four times in a century. Say nine times in 215 years. This makes 2,540 instead of 2,000,000."



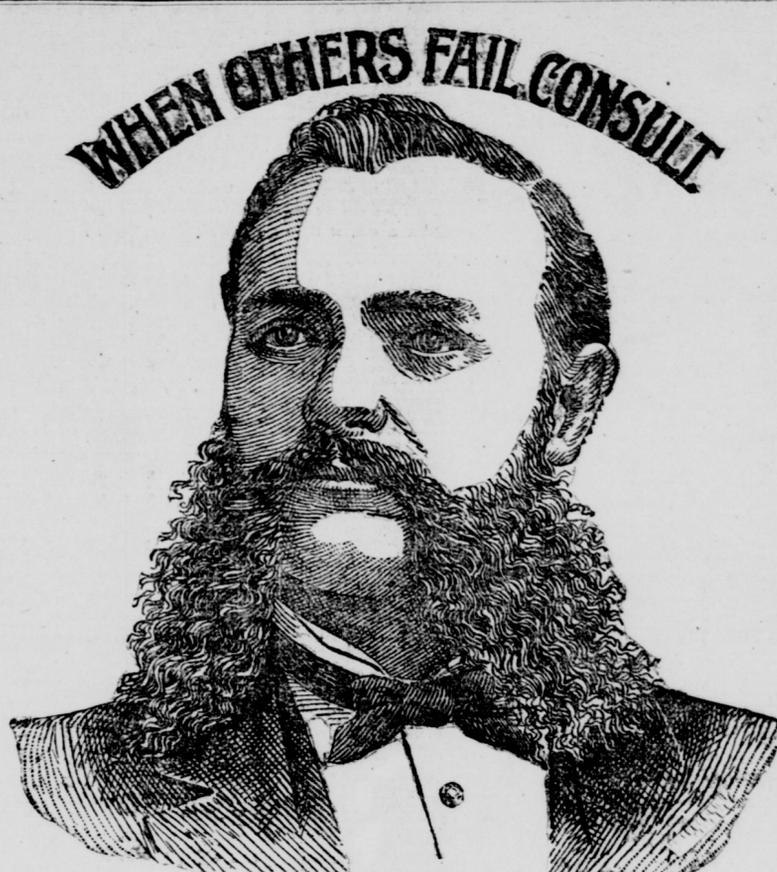
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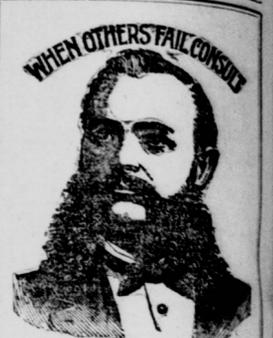
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