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# MEMOIRS

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR ROBERT PEELE,

BART., M.P., &c.

PUBLISHED BY THE TRUSTEES OF HIS PAPERS,

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THE RIGHT HON. EDWARD CARDWELL, M.P.

PART I.,

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC QUESTION.

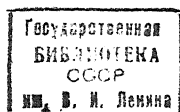
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## PREFACE.

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IN sending forth this volume to the public, the Editors think it proper in the first place to print the authority under which they act. It will be found appended to this Preface.

Among the numerous MSS. thus committed to their charge, those which engaged the earliest and most especial attention of the Editors were two Narratives or Memoirs drawn up by Sir Robert Peel, in his own handwriting, and placed together; the first on the Roman Catholic Question, the second on the Corn Laws. A short account of both has been given by Sir Robert himself at the beginning of the former, as contained in the present volume. But, besides these two, there is a third, to which Sir Robert does not there advert, and which in the order of time stands between them—a Memoir, drawn up probably at a much earlier period, and though of no great length, yet of high interest and value. It relates the circumstances that attended the formation of his first Ministry in 1834 and 1835, and comprises the letters that were despatched to him at Rome.

These three Memoirs it is the intention of the Editors

to publish. The first, as already stated, will be found in the present volume, and after a certain interval the other two will follow in their chronological series.

The Editors have not thought it requisite to add, in elucidation of this Memoir, any letters beyond those which it already comprised. Nor have they omitted anything from it beyond three or four names of no political importance, which, for reasons that will be obvious, they have left in blank ; and for similar reasons, more especially as applying to some persons now alive, a very few sentences or short passages which (as the Editors hereby pledge themselves) did not add in any degree to the arguments or main facts adduced on any side.

Considering the perfect order and arrangement in which these and nearly all the other MSS. were found, it would have been easy for the Editors to send them to press forthwith. That was not, however, their own opinion of their duty. Where the claims to an enduring renown are only few, or slight, it may be necessary to catch the popular favour as it flies. But, in the case of a truly great statesman, his fame has everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by well-considered delay in the publication of his papers. Such delay affords a proof that there are no party or personal motives to subserve ; it allows the party spirit in all other quarters to subside ; it both induces and enables every reader to contemplate every question in a calm, historic point of view.

According to the judgment of the present Editors, there are many things in the Peel Papers that ought not to be published as yet, and many things as affecting other persons that ought not to be published at all. In whatever they may send forth to the world, it will be their earnest desire to do full justice to the dead, without any injury to the welfare or offence to the feelings of those who still survive. Thus, as they hope, will they show themselves ever mindful of Sir Robert Peel's own and emphatic injunction, "so to exercise the discretion given to them that no honourable confidence shall be betrayed—no private feelings unnecessarily wounded—and no public interests injuriously affected."

S.

E. C.

LONDON, *April*, 1856.