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THE LIFE
OF
HENRY JOHN TEMPLE,
VISCOUNT PALMERSTON:
1846-1865.

WITH SELECTIONS FROM
His Speeches and Correspondence.

BY
THE HON. EVELYN ASHLEY, M.P.

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WOODS BURYTYPE

LORD PALMERSTON.
From a photograph by Mr Samuel A. Walker,
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LIFE OF HENRY JOHN TEMPLE,

THIRD VISCOUNT PALMERSTON, K.G. G.C.B.

CHAPTER I.

Goes to the Home Office in the Aberdeen Administration—Work at Home Office—Temporary Resignation.

LORD ABERDEEN was charged with the formation of a new Government. He at once sought the co-operation of Lord Palmerston, who, at first, withheld it, being unwilling to share the responsibility of a Cabinet whose foreign policy, he anticipated, would be of a character to merit his disapproval. But he was indispensable. A general though undefined feeling among the public had already marked him out as the coming man. Lord Lansdowne therefore renewed Lord Aberdeen's solicitations, and induced Lord Palmerston to reconsider his decision. He selected the Home Office as his department, and gives to his brother the following account of his feelings and motives :—

“ C. G., December 22, 1852.

“ MY DEAR WILLIAM,

“ I have accepted the Home Office in the new

Government. When first Lansdowne and Aberdeen asked me to join the new Government I declined, giving as my reason that Aberdeen and I had differed so widely for twenty-five years on all questions of foreign policy that my joining an administration of which he was to be the head would be liable to misconstruction both at home and abroad. But the next day Lansdowne came again and urged me strongly, and I found that the Foreign Office, which I had determined not myself in any case to take, would be held either by Clarendon or John Russell, whose well-established reputations for liberality would give a security in regard to our foreign relations.

“Lansdowne’s representations of the great importance, in the present state of things at home and abroad, that the new Government should be as strong in its fabric as the materials available for the purpose can make it, determined me to yield to his advice and to accept the Home Office; and the more I have thought the matter over, the better satisfied I have felt that I have acted right. The Foreign Office will be taken by John Russell, but if he finds the business too much for him, in addition to his employment as leader in the House of Commons, he will then give it up to Clarendon. The Home Office was my own choice; I had long settled in my own mind that I would not go back to the Foreign Office, and that if I ever took any office it should be the Home. It does not do for a man to pass his whole life in one department,

and the Home Office deals with the concerns of the country internally, and brings one in contact with one’s fellow-countrymen, besides which it gives one more influence in regard to the militia and the defences of the country.

“This Government will combine almost all the men of talent and experience in the House of Commons except Disraeli; but the Opposition will be numerically strong, as they reckon about three hundred and ten. A good many of these, however, will probably be disposed to give the new Government a fair trial.

“Yours affectionately,

“PALMERSTON.”

And to Mr. Sullivan, his brother-in-law, he writes:—

“Carlton Gardens, December 24, 1852.

“On Tuesday I positively declined joining the new Government, first to Lansdowne, who, was nearly an hour talking to me, and afterwards to Aberdeen, who came and offered me *carte blanche* as to departments; but on Wednesday morning Clarendon came to tell me he had had the Foreign Office offered him, and that he was disposed to accept it. That removed much of the objection which I had felt. When he left me, Lansdowne came again earnestly to press me to take office; and I at last consented to take the Home Office, the department which I had