

## CHAPTER XVI

### RETIREMENT FROM THE MEDICAL COUNCIL—RESIGNATION OF THE PROFESSORSHIP—MEDICAL MISSIONS—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. GLADSTONE—LAST DAYS.

1887-1901

IN the May of 1887 Acland retired from the General Medical Council. His second term of office as President had expired in 1884, but he was again re-elected to assist in piloting the Medical Bill of 1886. This accomplished, he felt that he might claim his release from a post whose labours were beginning to press too heavily upon him. With the resignation of the Presidency his connexion with the Council ceased. He had been a member for thirty years, and president for seventeen; the details of administration were becoming increasingly onerous, and some of its functions as a disciplinary body could not fail to be distressing to him. But next to the Museum there was no part of his work which interested him more or on which he looked back with greater satisfaction.

His colleagues testified their sense of his 'dignity, courtesy, and impartiality' in an address signed by each of the twenty-three members, and a bust of him was presented to the Council Hall in Oxford Street, where it stands to-day in company with the portraits of his predecessors, Sir B. Brodie and J. H. Green, which he himself had given to the Council some years before. His immediate successor was Sir John Marshall. Some years later the chair was filled by Sir William

### RETIREMENT FROM MEDICAL COUNCIL 473

Turner, now Principal of Edinburgh University and for so long its distinguished Professor of Anatomy. During the later part of Acland's Presidency, and down to the close of his life, Sir William was among his most trusted and most intimate friends, and it was a source of unfeigned pleasure to him to know that one who saw eye to eye with him on so many of the questions which affected the profession, and on the whole range of medical education, should occupy the position to which he attached so much importance.

The retirement from the Medical Council, much as he missed the work and the interests, gave him an amount of leisure such as he had never known before, and, so long as his health permitted, he was enabled to make a more liberal use of the Vacations than at any previous period of his life. We have seen that in October, 1888, he had paid a flying visit to the United States, and in January of the following year he went with his daughter to Lucerne and Milan, and was entertained by Lord Carnarvon in his villa at Rapallo. In the summer he shared in the naval manœuvres on board his son's ship the *Volage*, and joined him again in a winter cruise to the Canaries, spending happy days at Vera Cruz and Orotava. It was a return to the old life of fifty years ago in the *Pembroke*, and the contrast between the old navy and the new was a source of never-failing wonder and delight to him.

In May, 1890, Her Majesty Queen Victoria created him a Baronet. So gracious a recognition of his services to Science at Oxford and to the Medical Profession at large was cordially acclaimed. Amidst the showers of congratulatory letters there was none perhaps to which Sir Henry Acland attached a higher value than the following note in which Alderman Robert Buckell spoke on behalf of the townsmen in whose midst his working life had been spent.

. . . I was indeed very glad of the opportunity of expressing what I knew to be in the hearts of many of my

friends in Oxford, our heartfelt appreciation of all that you had done for the city during the last fifty years, and our exceeding pleasure that such lifelong service had received the acknowledgement of our Queen in the honour which had recently been conferred upon you. The quick and hearty response in which the mention of it was received was but an indication of the feeling of the whole community, and I trust will convey to you the certain knowledge and satisfaction that your labours have not been in vain all these years, and that we as citizens are not ungrateful.

In the summer of that year he attended the International Medical Congress at Berlin, and though he took more than one trip to the Mediterranean as a guest on the *Volage* and the *Edgar*, this was destined to be his last expedition on the Continent. But he by no means lost sight of his continental friends. In 1891 Victor Carus sent Dr. Menge to him in answer to a request for a distinguished specialist to work at bacteriology in the laboratories of the Museum, and, the International Medical Congress meeting that year at Oxford, he was able to entertain foreign doctors, known and unknown, distinguished and undistinguished, to his heart's content. There is no professional freemasonry so strong as that of medicine, and Acland's name had long been a household word in quarters where English names and English customs are not ordinarily regarded with favour.

Killerton and Holnicote and Broad Clyst, where his brother Leopold was shortly to celebrate the fiftieth year of his incumbency, were still open to him as they had always been. The following letter from the Rector of Broad Clyst, written in September, 1886, will show the spirit in which the Aclands of that generation encountered the infirmities of old age:

Tom's energy is astonishing. He thinks his men-servants are too hard-worked and want play. So he has started cricket for them; and, taking Mary in her chair down the drive, left her to join them; was bowled to by a boy who put

his head in much danger by bad bowling, and then he threw off his coat and proceeded to bowl with such energy that he fell flat on his stomach! In the evening he has in all the men and the maids to lecture them on harmony, to the upsetting of the discipline of the house!

It reads almost like a scene out of Mr. Barrie's charming fantasy, *The Admirable Crichton*. But Sir Thomas had a dozen years of strenuous work before him, and his book published in 1896, entitled *Knowledge, Duty, and Faith*, would have been no mean achievement for an Oxford Don with his spurs yet to win.

His second son, Harry, was married and settled in Malvern, and here Sir Henry used to come almost every year for rest and change. Then there were visits to Leytonstone, where the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Cotton was still green, and where he assisted with his brothers-in-law in the erection of a memorial church to one who in his lifetime had 'spared neither gold nor gear' in filling the darkest quarters of London with houses dedicated to the worship of God. At Liphook he enjoyed the hospitality of Lord Justice Cotton. At Windsor and at Bovey Tracey he passed many happy hours with Canon Courtenay, the beloved friend of his early manhood.

In 1892 he paid a long visit to Ireland to his friends the Cooke Trenches, and stayed at Edinburgh with Sir William Turner for the meeting of the British Association. The spring of that year had found him busily employed in preparing for the inaugural Boyle lecture founded by the Oxford Junior Scientific Club. He delivered it in May. In the spring of 1893, when at Malta with the *Edgar*, he had a long and interesting conversation with Admiral Tryon, who a few weeks afterwards was to go down in the ill-fated *Victoria*—a tragedy of which Captain Acland was one of the spectators.

In the summer of the same year he paid, in company with Miss Acland, a visit to the Lakes, staying

at Derwentwater with Dr. (now Sir) Douglas and Mrs. Powell. Thence they proceeded to Brantwood, and it was on this occasion that Miss Acland took her striking and pathetic photograph of the two old men of whom, after more than fifty years' friendship, it might well be said that 'they were lovely and pleasant in their lives.' It was their last meeting; and the fact that Ruskin was able to enjoy his friend's society with much of the keen and affectionate eagerness of old placed it among the happiest memories of his declining years. As they parted Ruskin charged his friend with a farewell message: 'Say to my friends in the Oxford Museum from me—May God bless the reverent and earnest study of Nature and of Man, to His glory, to the better teaching of the future, to the benefit of our country and to the good of all mankind.'

In the autumn he broke his journey from Ireland, where he had been once more with the Cooke Trenches, to spend a night or two at Leeds with Mr. Pridgin Teale, ever a staunch supporter both at Oxford and on the Medical Council.

The scheme which had brought the masters of the various sciences under one and the same roof in the Oxford Museum was not without its drawbacks. There was an overlapping of departments, some personal friction, and a certain amount of jealousy lest one branch of learning should be favoured at the expense of another. The distinguished head of a distinguished college, who in past years had taken pleasure, as an amateur, in keeping up a connexion with the Museum and its Professors, wrote to Acland that he must resign his position on the delegacy: 'They (the scientific teachers) cannot agree among themselves; there seems to be no definite principle of action, no adjustment of rival claims, and one incessant craving for change.' From another Oxford man, himself in the forefront of scientific teaching, came the admission in a letter to Sir Henry that he had been wrong, and the latter 'on



the whole right,' in the contest about the more active promotion of medical studies by the University.

These dissensions were sufficiently distasteful in themselves to one of Acland's high-strung and gentle disposition, but behind them he saw the spectre of that specialization, that divorce of Science from 'Arts' which he had always dreaded and deplored. It seemed to him that Oxford was being 'asked to believe that general literary education, and broad philosophical biology, such as John Hunter revealed to England, was not the duty of the University towards medicine; that she must turn her new Physical Science Institute mainly into a purely Professional School, and so deprive our future students of medicine of an enlightened University training.'

As a final protest against impending change and as a record of the ideals in which he and his colleagues in the fight for the Museum had been nurtured, he made, in 1890, his last public deliverance in the shape of a letter on *Oxford and Modern Medicine*, to his valued friend Dr. James Andrew, Honorary Fellow of Wadham, who was then Senior Physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital and an Examiner in Medicine at Oxford. It was privately printed, and was obtainable by any of Sir Henry's friends, but he decided not to publish it on the ground that it was 'at once too detailed and too brief; too personal and too general.'

I can only regret that the letter was not more widely circulated. It is full of the most interesting retrospect, and has supplied material for these pages which was obtainable nowhere else. It is the nearest approach to autobiography which Sir Henry ever permitted himself.

'I have often been asked,' he said<sup>1</sup>, 'to write an account of the circumstances under which the Museum was built, the care of public health in Oxford developed, including the abolition of the local Acts, the steps gone through for

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford and Modern Medicine*, page 39.

obtaining our system of drainage, our water-supply, the reconstruction of the County Hospital and the disappearance of polypharmacy in the district. It would no doubt be a singular story. But it would be stirring mud when we are seeking the purer streams.'

I hope I may not, in the course of this memoir, have incurred such reproach or have used any words or passed any judgement from which its subject would have shrunk. Nothing is more striking in the whole course of the letter to Dr. Andrew than the tolerant and generous tone in which Acland speaks of all those, the living and the dead, who in their various stations and degrees had played a part in the development of Oxford, however acutely he may have differed from some of them.

Of this spirit he was shortly to give another proof. In September, 1893, the buildings of a new anatomical school were opened with pomp and ceremony at the Museum. For reasons into which it is unnecessary to enter, the affair had been productive of much annoyance to him, and he had been unable to greet it with any satisfaction. But when once the school was an accomplished fact he loyally accepted it and bade the visitors welcome to a tea-party in the Radcliffe Library; and then, relapsing into his old enthusiasm for anything that might forward the cause he loved, he wrote to Sir William Turner:

Thomson has got a very nice little place. I have given him the Fighting Gladiator (a splendid cast), Antinous, and Venus of Milo types of living human form—the first in action, the others quiet, erect—and Goodsir's cast of the dead body. And Charlie Robertson has made for him a considerable number of beautiful dissections; so you will see it is Goodsir over again and Edinburgh.

But though Sir Henry Acland never allowed differences of opinion or policy to affect his relations with his colleagues at the Museum, he was absolutely unbending when he conceived that the status and dignity of the medical profession was in danger of infringement. In

1892 he had seen with much pleasure the foundation, or rather the re-establishment, of a Medical Society in Oxford, and had gladly accepted the office of President. At the first meeting, in November, held in the University Museum, he occupied the chair, while Sir James Paget delivered the inaugural address. Much to his astonishment he found that smoking was included in the proceedings, and he further learnt that a resolution permitting the practice had been passed by the Founders of the Club. Such action on the part of the Committee without reference to their President was as unusual as the subsequent invitation to him 'to place his views on the matter' before a meeting of the Society. But questions of etiquette counted for little with him compared with the mischief which in his judgement must follow the toleration of these free-and-easy habits. He felt that what was permissible in private rooms amid informal discussion was worse than out of place at meetings in the University Museum, where bearers of the most eminent names in British medicine were invited to set the tone of earnest scientific work. He may have been old-fashioned, but he had the keenest sense of what was due to the dignity of the Art to which he had dedicated his life, and as the Society declined to alter their arrangements, he felt he had no alternative but to resign both the Presidency and membership. 'Believe me,' he wrote to the Secretary, 'this episode in my later years has cost no one, and could not, as much as it has me.'

Another matter which gave him much anxiety and entailed much correspondence and many journeys backwards and forwards arose out of differences of policy which had declared themselves among those interested in the organization of nursing the sick. It would be beyond the scope of this memoir to enter into details of the 'Registration' controversy. Nursing has always been a subject of supreme interest to the members of our Royal House, and more than one of the daughters

of Queen Victoria has possessed practical qualifications for taking the lead and expressing strong opinions in the successive movements by which nursing has attained its present position. Of Acland's services in this cause, dating from his earliest cholera experiences, I have already spoken, and in the disputes which threatened to curtail the usefulness and damage the prospects of a beneficent profession and of an invaluable band of workers, his advice and judgement were sought for in the highest quarters.

While, however, the troubles which gathered round the British Nursing Association formed a disagreeable reminder of the difficulties which sometimes beset the best intentions, the improvement in the nursing of the poor which has set in during the last twenty years caused him unmitigated gratification. In 1894 he was asked to present the certificates to the nurses at Mile End, a neighbourhood so familiar to him in the far-off days, when he used to ride up through an almost empty Whitechapel from Leytonstone to the Bank. He told his audience something of the arrangements for nursing the poor which had subsisted long after the beginning of his professional career, and how at Oxford he could remember when the foul cells in the workhouse infirmary were more offensive than a decent dog-kennel. He paid his tribute to the ladies who, from Miss Florence Nightingale down to Miss Louisa Twining, had worked and agitated until the wretched dens which sheltered the aged and the sick had been swept away from the workhouses throughout the land.

He himself had lent support and aid in every upward step. His constant association with Miss Nightingale had filled him with confidence in her judgement, and with admiration for her life devoted to the good of others. And they both possessed the same combination of enthusiasm for the relief of suffering with knowledge of practical detail. Not many months before his death she paid him a very beautiful compliment:

Do you know (she wrote), I hear from and of you almost every day? In this way: I can remember when Pyaemia was almost as common a thing *in* Hospitals as any case coming from without—I mean Pyaemia generated *in* Hospital. Now we shout so loud when there is a case that they can hear us all over London. This is an amazing change. And we owe it principally to you and what you have taught us.

One by one, the tale of his Oxford contemporaries was minishing. In October, 1893, Jowett died at the Hampshire home of Mr. Justice Wright. Acland had attended him through his dangerous illness in 1891. And in thanking him for a kindness which had shown itself in countless little ways outside the scope of professional duty, 'The Master' bade him 'be glad that there are thousands who have the same feeling towards you, both poor and rich.' By Jowett's sick-bed the two men had come to a fuller knowledge of each other. They had always been friends, and Acland had preserved among his letters the congratulations which Jowett had offered him on his engagement nearly half a century before. But the latter had scant sympathy with Acland's ideals. In sending him a copy of his translation of the *Politics* he had expressed a wish that he could 'persuade' him 'that many of us, although we differ from you, do not differ from you as you suppose, and that we are far from under-rating the great service which you have rendered to physical science in Oxford and in England.' But Jowett could hardly restrain a chuckle when the Oxford science teachers disagreed in Convocation<sup>1</sup>. And I cannot help fancying that he is included in the allusion made in *Oxford and Modern Medicine* to 'some of our charioteers who,' having given no help during the old museum conflicts, 'at the eleventh hour seize the reins.'

During these last two or three years they were drawn together, and Acland has put on record how much he had learnt from his patient<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> *Jowett's Letters*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Jowett's Life*, vol. ii, p. 217.

I then first felt that I knew the man. We seldom spoke, and in the many weeks never on anything that could be controversial. I would sit by him feeling that I sat by the side of a lover of God and a lover of man, whose life was not of this world, teeming as it was with its interests of every kind, and sympathetic with all good, wherever good could be found or made, and with a sense of humour which sparkled through in silence.

Jowett's favourite picture of the Madonna, which was given Acland by the executors after the former's death, was hung over his bed, side by side with his cherished relic of Dr. Pusey.

In 1894 Liddell resigned the Deanery of Christ Church, and left Oxford for a dignified retirement at Ascot. To Acland it was like the withdrawal of a prop. During all his struggles he had had 'his Dean' by his side to counsel, to chide, to encourage. To the end the old relation of tutor and pupil remained unbroken. 'I don't know what father will do when you are gone,' said Miss Acland; 'there will be no one to scold him.' 'I shall find plenty of occasion for doing that by letter,' replied the Dean grimly; and he was as good as his word. But the scolding takes up little room in the delightful and polished correspondence in which Liddell chatted to his absent friend of men and books and the topics of the day. Extracts from them have been published in Canon Thompson's *Life of the Dean*; and until the latter's death, Acland's visits to Ascot were a regular feature in his yearly programme.

But while the strands of the cord were severing one by one, Acland found himself drawn into closer connexion with Mr. Gladstone. I have quoted on another page his appeal to the veteran statesman to do something towards mitigating the asperities of party politics. Some years earlier he had relied sufficiently upon their old friendship to press upon him, on the eve of the formation of his 1880 Cabinet, the necessity of appointing a really first-class man to the Presidency of the

Local Government Board. Gladstone had perhaps invited the confidence by asking, in 1877, for Acland's opinion on the petition of certain resident graduates for the removal of the remaining restrictions on Clerical Fellowship, and by some rather delicate inquiries as to one of the signatories. He repaid it by employing him, on Stanley's death, to sound Liddell as to whether he would entertain the offer of the Deanery of Westminster.

The comparative leisure which followed Gladstone's retirement from office in 1885 was seized upon by the ex-Premier for a controversy with Professor Huxley, and one day in December Acland received the following letter from his eldest brother, then a guest at Hawarden:

I am having a very interesting visit: no one here but Lord Wolverton. How little people understand W. E. G., or his idea about party or about the Church, or his sense of responsibility. . . . He is going to write again on Genesis. He says he has a little to complain of Professor Owen, to whom (for caution) he sent a proof. Owen wrote to him a long letter about the antiquity of man, &c., but never pointed out the errors as to the order of created things—which G. admits that Huxley has spotted (a small point). I advised him to send his next proof to you: I said you were a careful and kind critic, and have access to knowledge.

By the same post came a letter from Mr. Gladstone himself, and for the future Acland was constantly appealed to both for information and criticism, which he never failed to tender. He was at once fascinated and bewildered by the versatility of the septuagenarian who, in the midst of a most momentous crisis—these were the weeks when the Home Rule plunge was decided upon—could turn aside to vindicate the faith which was all in all to them both. 'Your deep and intense call to us,' he wrote, 'to cling to the teachings of the spiritual life and of those who have lived it, will



move men's hearts.' But a note of warning runs through his letters revealing the consciousness that Mr. Gladstone was in deep waters, and that his great intellectual gifts were not of the class to tell him how deep the waters were. And this appears even more clearly when, a few years later, Mr. Gladstone was preparing his papers on the *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. On March 17, 1890, he wrote from Oxford:

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

I have twice read the very interesting proof which you have most kindly sent to me. With the first five columns I quite agree. The whole tenor seems to be just and convincing. Afterwards I am equally charmed by the passage in which you draw the distinction of the three Interpreters—the Hebraist, the Scientist, and the Humanist. But I am not so sure that I like your plunging into all the details that follow. This may depend on the somewhat feeble way in which I can alone touch these great themes.

I know very little, and further, I think that many that suppose they know all are in no better case. I have talked over your question with regard 'to the two spherical bodies of the same high temperature and the same materials, one small, the other large, say as 1-1000, which will cool first,' with Prof. Clifton, a most accurate physicist. There is of course no question, either on the small scale or in the case to which you refer—the Earth and the Sun emerging from the condition of 'the Nebula,' or the universal and infinite Nebula. I wish you could have heard the tender, modest way in which he endeavoured to put us into the condition of observers of the group, and could have noticed how very little certain he was of very many things, and of the several stages that would have to be gone through, of all of which we can have, as they were under the old conditions, very little real knowledge. . . .

Keep out of the details. I have long ago said that *one* thing is certain in 'Science,' that the Science of to-day will not be the Science of to-morrow. I have no temptation therefore to make things square with its *details*. The subject is endless; don't fight over hyphens! (You know Keble

joined the Anglo-Catholic Library on the condition that Moberly acted Anglo and himself Catholic, and both should contend for the hyphen.) Be broadly sure the Light and Sun came; the Earth cooled, the vegetables began to come, and grew; the animals began, and evolved; and in the end the blessed boon of Faith and Prayer and Reason came to the latest product of the infinite, amazing group.

I write hurriedly at midnight, in the midst of very pressing duty of to-morrow and Wednesday, having to speak at Banbury on District Nurses—in my small sphere a stormy topic.

Prestwich, the dear, wise soul! is in London.

I am, my dear Mr. Gladstone,  
Always yours gratefully,  
HENRY W. ACLAND.

And, a day or two after, feeling, as his manner was, that he had not done sufficient justice to his subject, he returned to the charge:

OXFORD, March 20, 1890.

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

I sit down to write to you with greater diffidence than before. I feel that to completely pass judgement on your paper would require power which I do not possess, and precise knowledge which I should have partly to acquire, partly to refresh.

Now, why this preface? Last night, on my return from my address on Nursing, the first thing I did was to reconsider both your letters. I was well prepared in one way. I have just had to review the condition of the Poor from the time of the passing of the Poor Laws in 1834: and the wholly new conditions of policy in regard to public health enactments in this half-century: what had been done in England, i.e. in the English-speaking race in the United States, the Colonies, India, the world, in this particular—of making *corpus sanum* to help on *mens sana*. Then, as I came back by train, I asked myself, 'And how about other departments of Biology and Physics, and then Theology?' And so primed I got a volume of Professor Pritchard's in which I knew was

a paper I had never read on your present topic. Pritchard is a very clever, shrewd, devout-minded man—friend of the Herschels, of half the modern physicists, and a great mathematical tutor for many years. Will you read this paper, the last in the volume? He, you will see, gives up the whole case, as a scientific one. He considers the poem or poem irreconcilable with modern science (I wish the word could be abolished).

I read and re-read the account of the third and fourth days, trying to see how far one might accept *light* as one thing, and the making the sun a subsequent thing. But I could not, on any scientific conception I could form, do this. Be sure Pritchard, who has all the data at his fingers' ends, would do so if he could. So he *invents* an explanation, which in some form would occur to any *poet*, but would not satisfy any scientist, as a scientific explanation of the known facts.

You will feel how dangerous it is for either scientists or theologians precisely to lay down their real position while the geologist and biologist collect their data and draw their conclusions. The Hebraists like Canon Driver must draw theirs. The scientists are not agreed, nor are the theologians. I remember hearing you say, at the charming house at Cliveden many years ago, that much trouble had arisen since the revolution by an over-literal interpretation, or attempt at it, of the Scriptures. No one supposes that the present state of interpretation or of Natural Science is final.

I fear that all this will be useless to you, and only seem to be as milk or milk and water, not strong meat. But I would say to any friend, Don't argue with Huxley or people of that kind at all. You may be quite sure they have much to learn. The continent of America is to give lessons of many kinds, geological as well as biological, ethnographical and social. With your deep religious feelings and all your theological learning as well, you have in the Bible boundless stores far more important to man than any of these questions of material discoveries.

But I am ashamed to write so. I return your kind and judicious note. I shall read again to-night your proof and return it to-morrow. But you will see I do not like to touch the details, they are dangerous and inconclusive. I wish you

would go and see Professor Prestwich—gentlest, wisest, calmest of men.

Always yours gratefully,  
HENRY W. ACLAND<sup>1</sup>.

The soundness of Acland's advice was echoed by Professor Prestwich:

You are quite right about Mr. Gladstone's writings: the first pages are grandly and beautifully written; but when he comes to deal with scientific facts one misses the scientific method. It is, as you say, delightful to see a man like Gladstone give his mind and attention to these great, though to him foreign questions; delightful also to see the novel and fine way in which he treats them; but it is not our way. How rarely the two are united!

In 1891, almost on the eve of his last electoral campaign, Mr. Gladstone threw the world of Oxford into a flutter by coming into residence at All Souls for a week. The full dramatic effect of this relapse into monasticism was marred by Mrs. Gladstone, who, merely telegraphing to Miss Acland that she was coming, flung herself into the ever-hospitable home in Broad Street. During that 'amazing visit' Mr. Gladstone was in and out of the house, as the spirit moved him; and Acland was glad to avail himself of his privilege as a *quondam* to join the party which sat nightly at Mr. Gladstone's feet at All Souls. The following summer saw the latter established for the last time in Downing Street. Amongst his many perplexities was the question of the Laureateship, left unfilled by Lord Salisbury. It is no longer a secret that in his endeavour to 'keep it on the high moral plane where Wordsworth and Tennyson placed it,' his thoughts strayed to Ruskin, and Acland was applied to by him as to whether

<sup>1</sup> It is characteristic of Acland that he was not even then satisfied, but the next day penned a third letter explanatory of the two that had gone before.

Ruskin's health would permit of the offer being made, but Acland could give him no encouragement, and the project fell stillborn.

In 1894 the infirmities of age, and notably his deafness, were increasing, and it was becoming clear to himself and to those about him that the time had come when he must resign the Regius Professorship<sup>1</sup>. His intention, however, was not made public until the end of the year, and before that date he was able to gratify an old-standing ambition with regard to the Museum. Among the niches for the statues in the area a place had been left, between John Hunter and Harvey, for Thomas Sydenham, 'the representative Medical Practitioner,' who had held an All Souls Fellowship during the troublous days of the Commonwealth and the Restoration. It had long been Acland's hope to see the void supplied by the members of Sydenham's old college, and his eldest brother and the Warden<sup>2</sup> agreed to unite with him in commissioning Mr. Hope Pinker to execute a figure worthy to stand beside the delicate statuary of Alexander Munro. The British Association was to meet in the August of that year in Oxford, for the fourth time, under the Presidency of the Chancellor of the University, himself an old All Souls man, and Acland wrote to ask him to unveil the statue. On a former occasion, Lord Salisbury had, from his retreat at Hatfield, protested with mock seriousness that 'politicians ought not to be asked to preach charity sermons,' but he gave a willing assent 'to uncover Sydenham and listen to your exposition.' And on the 9th of August, the day after his Presidential address, the ceremony took place in the court of the Museum.

It was short and simple, and after the Regius Professor had formally presented the statue in a speech which was practically his valedictory address, the

<sup>1</sup> He had resigned the Clinical Chair in 1880, from which date it was altered into two clinical lectureships, of medicine and surgery.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Anson, now M.P. for the University.

Marquess accepted it in the name of the University. In a few stately sentences he congratulated the assembly on the completion of the figures of the ancestors of Medical Science at a time 'when we are able to see how great has been the growth and the cultivation and revival of the study of nature of which this splendid Museum has been the outcome. Perhaps,' he added, 'at an earlier time we should not have appreciated how much has been done in this respect, and perhaps we should not have felt as we feel now how thoroughly appropriate it is that the great masters and heroes of medical science should be conspicuous ornaments of this Museum. For this Museum marks the growth of the new study.' And then Lord Salisbury turned to his old physician, and in tones that spoke of long years of affectionate intimacy, addressed him personally: 'and it has arisen chiefly by the efforts and under the authority of yourself, the great representative of Medical Science at this University; and in honouring Sydenham as we do to-day, we are honouring his great successor to whom more than any other man the renewal of the study of nature in this University is due, and to whose efforts and to whose memory this splendid building and the more splendid incorporeal instruction for which it is built will be a lasting and brilliant testimony<sup>1</sup>.'

In the closing days of 1894 Acland resigned formally into the hands of Lord Rosebery the office which he had received from Lord Palmerston in 1857. The Prime Minister, in forwarding the official reply, enclosed in his own hand a line of private regret: 'There

<sup>1</sup> At the conclusion of the meeting, Lord Salisbury requested that he might be allowed to join with the three donors of the statue; and writing to Acland a few months later, he said: 'I wish I had told the audience at the Museum last August that, when I was elected to All Souls in 1853, the first thing you said to me on congratulating me was a request that I would join in urging on All Souls the duty of erecting a statue to Sydenham. In presence of the completed Statue it would have been a fitting tribute to your tenacity of purpose.'

comes a time to all when we must resign our offices and ourselves; but the announcement of your intention comes with a pang, and, I am sure, will be received in Oxford with dismay.'

But Acland was not the man to forget that as Regius Professor his position was derived from the Crown, and he wrote to advise Queen Victoria of his pending resignation, 'from failing health, of the post to which Your Majesty graciously appointed me thirty-six years ago.' He strove to express something of the debt which he had owed to the never-failing kindness shown by the Queen, the Prince Consort, and their children: he alluded to the 'invaluable countenance and help given by Your Majesty' through the Royal gift of the five statues; and he referred to the teaching and example of the Prince Consort and the advice which the Prince had given him long ago about the Oxford Museum. 'The only return I have made has been—with a deep sense of gratitude to try to do my duty at a period when the strongest might fail.'

'God bless you, my dear Acland,' wrote Lord Salisbury, 'you have done a great work in the Chair you are now quitting. Few have done so much to raise the intellectual tone of the University for the best purposes in the best direction . . . I am very glad to hear that Sanderson succeeds you.'

Indeed, the personality of his successor had been not the least of Acland's anxieties during the last years of his professorship. With his strong views as to the position which the occupant of the chair should hold both in Oxford and the greater world outside it would have been more than a mortification to him if the choice had fallen unworthily. In Sir John Burdon-Sanderson he recognized the union of personal distinction with the highest scientific reputation, which augured well for the continuance of the traditions which he had striven to found.

In recognition of Sir Henry Acland's long services

to the University the sum of £5,000 was raised by public subscription. His bust in marble was placed in the central area of the Museum, and the residue of the fund was devoted to the endowment of the Sarah Acland Nursing Home.

I shall pass briefly over the last years, a pathetic picture of growing weakness, of patience under suffering, of indomitable resolution to work on to the last. 'Better to wear out than rust out,' had been Acland's advice to one of his nieces, whom over-anxious friends sought to restrain in her round of daily activities. And what he preached he practised. The energies of his later days, until he was at last compelled to give in, were concentrated on Medical Missions. Some years previously he had spoken at a crowded meeting on behalf of Lady Dufferin's Fund for the medical aid of the women of India, and now he turned to a wider field.

'Our Sierra Leone friend will visit us about the beginning of October. In your inherited love for black men I hope you will be at Oxford to meet him.' So Liddell had written long ago, and the allusion to his father's zeal for negro emancipation, and his friendship with Wilberforce and Clarkson opens up a side of Acland's character on which I have not hitherto touched. From earliest years, in his own home and in that of the Cottons, he had always been in close sympathy with the missionary world. He had known Bishop Selwyn well, and Dr. Livingstone had been a guest at his house. The Universities Mission to Central Africa had found in him a strong supporter, and of late years the Oxford Delhi Mission and the Indian branches of the Cowley Fathers had affected him in a very remarkable degree. Anything to do with India had always interested him, and latterly one of his favourite drives was to Sir William Hunter's house at Oaken Holt to talk over his various projects with that most accomplished of Anglo-Indians.

The munificent offer of Mr. J. N. Tata, an eminent merchant of Bombay, for the endowment of an institute in India for scientific research had filled his mind with the thoughts of what Oxford might do in the mission field in directions outside the beaten track. The ravages of the plague and the researches of Mr. Haffkine had emphasized the lack of touch between European and Oriental ways of regarding matters of health. In bringing to England and to Oxford young medical men from India, and in aiding the establishment in India itself of such an institute of modern preventive and therapeutic medicine as Mr. Tata had outlined, he saw a prospect of breaking down Native prejudice against Western science and of diffusing sounder ideas of hygiene and sanitation, not only in British territory, but among the more enlightened of the Native Princes. Underlying the anticipated progress was the hope of thus indirectly sapping the barriers which seemed to present insurmountable obstacles to the progress of Christianity.

With characteristic thoroughness he devoted himself to getting up his subject, to correspondence with all sorts and conditions of men who could give him information, and to writing countless letters to people of standing who might be interested in the cause. Taking up at random the bundles which contain the answers he received, I find the names of Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Lord George Hamilton, Archbishop Temple, Sir William Markby, Lord Reay, Sir William Hunter, Sir William Church, Sir M. Bhowaggee, M.P., Sir Charles Lyall, Mr. Basil Thomson, Sir George Birdwood, and Lady Dufferin. He even addressed a private letter to the Editor of the *Times*, appealing to him as a former fellow of All Souls. He could scarcely have displayed greater vigour in the old Museum days half a century back.

The opportunity for utilizing in a tangible form the anxious thoughts and inquiries that had occupied him

since his retirement came in 1899, when Sir Grainger Stewart suggested to him the possibility of a certain number of Oxford Medical Students connecting themselves with the Medical Missionary Society of Edinburgh. With this text he delivered himself on the whole subject in an address before the Oxford Junior Scientific Club, an address which was subsequently reprinted together with a good deal of additional matter accumulated by the author. In all Sir Henry Acland's arduous life there are few more striking episodes than this advocacy in his eighty-fourth year of a cause on behalf of which few voices had as yet been raised on British soil.

It was his last public effort; and the previous summer had witnessed his last public appearance as a representative of the University, when he was invited to form one of the Deputation which waited on the Queen at Windsor to present a congratulatory address on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee. He still retained the Radcliffe Librarianship, and found plenty of occupation there until the labour necessitated by the arrangements for its removal to the new buildings proved too severe a tax on his failing strength. Of the spirit and the thoroughness with which he discharged his duties the following correspondence affords an example.

OXFORD, *November 3, '96.*

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

Do not be angry with me. No one can help me as you can, in what follows. I will write shortly.

The large work by Mr. — which I send, having been favourably noticed in one or two reviews, I had on approval for the Radcliffe Library, which owes you so much. From the preface I gathered it was intended to be a *fair history* of a great subject affecting human thought, always, everywhere. So I cut the pages, to see generally if it was really a *History* of this past philosophic controversy. But I hesitate to put it in the Library, where all the young men may read it. For the Professor of Anthropology and older men it seems to me a record of progress and fact, which they

ought to have for reference. But for the young the practical effect would probably be to prejudice them against all Religions and Faith, and make them over-value Physical Science. Yet whatever explanations may be offered and accepted, there is in the picture *truth* even down to our own times, and I should do mischief by even seeming to suppress fact.

You have thought so much about this in your own great way, with so much power, and for so long, that I shall be very grateful for your advice. Of course I now must keep the book anyway, for myself.

Shall I put it in the Library, perhaps apart for the Professors?

I am sure you can find an amanuensis to send me your advice.

I am, my dear Mr. Gladstone,  
Your grateful and affectionate  
HENRY W. ACLAND.

HAWARDEN, *November 16, '96.*

MY DEAR ACLAND,

I have so often had experience of your liberality that I am in no way surprised at your offer for the shelves of St. Deiniol, nor have I any scruple in accepting it with thanks<sup>1</sup>.

I have made a little further progress with the book. I do not think the author's intentions bad, but he does not inspire me with a high idea of his solidity or wisdom. I ought to mention that I find he has described me as the most zealous defender of orthodoxy but as deficient in knowledge, so that I am almost disqualified from entering the lists against him. He is extremely defective in the important business of *references*. He quotes (without any doubt) Venice as an example of progress from a most rude and miserable condition of the first founders of the great historical development. At one time I gave a little attention to this curious subject. There I found great reason to believe that the marine submersions of Venice were produced on the northern corner of the Adriatic, to make pleasant summer residences

<sup>1</sup> Acland appears in a letter which is not preserved to have offered a duplicate copy of the book for Mr. Gladstone's own library.

for the rich men of the towns, and then that by degrees there was a movement outwards to get deeper water.

I have not found much that is original or striking, but it is one of the works that seem to have the tide in their favour, and that ought to be found in any library which goes back to the great question of *origines*.

We have lately returned from Penmaenmawr, and I can give an excellent account of my wife. Let me recommend the Blachford Letters; on the other hand the *padding* in Selborne's is something fearful, it will get down to 2s. a volume.

Yours truly,  
W. E. GLADSTONE.

This was almost the end of his correspondence with Mr. Gladstone. During the previous year the veteran statesman, now finally removed from party strife, had been absorbed in the preparation of his *Studies on Butler*. The genesis of them perhaps is to be found in a letter written by him to Acland early in March, 1895.

CAP MARTIN.

MY DEAR ACLAND,

You have known Oxford intimately through a long and honoured life. There are three questions which I am about to put, once more presuming on your often experienced kindness.

1. Whom would you point out among living and accessible Oxford men as the man or men most conversant (*a*) with the works of Butler, (*b*) with their relation to the philosophies which were in possession of the field when he wrote his *Analogy*?

2. Paley, after considering the pain and suffering of the animal creation, gives a confident judgement that it is small relatively to the amount of enjoyment. Tennyson, on the other hand, says that Nature is red with ravin, tooth, and claw: and Romanes in his earlier work seems to adopt and expand this doctrine of Tennyson. What do the naturalists proper say upon it? Who is the best authority to consult?

What is your opinion? I should like to have known that of Owen.

3. I desire also to know whether this prevailed in the pre-human world? I do not call the *mere* devouring or absorbing of one creature by another ravin, for this *may* be no more than a very simple form of death: but I refer to severe or prolonged pain. On this I might perhaps ask Mr. Prestwich, with whom I have had a little correspondence, but I do not know whether when impertinently troubled he would be able to endorse it, nor have I his address at hand.

These troublesome questions mean more than they contain. The truth is that I have long meditated a new edition of Butler, intended (1) to facilitate and extend, or perhaps I might say a little to raise the study, and (2) to illustrate the principles, not by presuming to write essays of my own with (*sic*) the great Bishop, but in a separate, appended, and also drier volume. It is only within the last few days that I have found there is a recent edition of Butler published by the late Bishop Fitzgerald, a man of great ability. I have sent to Quaritch, the most effective man so far as I know, for it. It *may* put me off this present quest altogether, though I have already spent a good deal of labour.

I cannot press you for a very early answer, if you are good enough to answer at all. In about a fortnight I expect to be back at Hawarden for good. We are all thriving, thank God, on the Riviera climate (not yet fully clear of winter): Cannes did me great good, and dismissed the last remnant of an influenza which had kept its hold on me for eleven months. I hope you may be able to send a good account of your own and also of your brother's health.

Believe me, most sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

During the whole incubation of the work the two friends were in constant communication, and Acland was the means of submitting not a few points, where Mr. Gladstone felt in doubt, to the judgement of those Oxford men who were best qualified to resolve them. 'Death closeth all,' and the Ascension Day of 1898

marked the termination of one of the most deeply prized of Acland's friendships.

His old companions were falling fast. In 1894 Canon Courtenay had passed away. In January, 1898, Dean Liddell died, and Ruskin's end came on January 20, 1900. In Acland's own family circle the gaps were becoming more frequent. His sister, Mrs. Mills, had died in 1895; she was followed in 1899 by his brother Leopold, and on May 20, 1898, Sir Thomas, in his ninetieth year, was gathered to his fathers. Loss of friends is one of the appointed trials of old age, but the stroke is tempered by the thought that the separation cannot be for long. The most affectionate of brothers, the most loyal and staunch of comrades, he scarcely missed them, as one by one they obeyed the silent summons which he himself was awaiting. 'In the old man,' writes Froude, 'nature has fulfilled her work: she loads him with her blessings; she fills him with the fruits of a well-spent life; and, surrounded by his children and his children's children, she rocks him softly away to a grave, to which he is followed with blessings.'

As late as 1899, though growing feebler year by year, Acland paid his accustomed visits to Killerton and to other West Country haunts, and to his son at Malvern. In the summer of that year he took a house on Boar's Hill, a mile or two from Oxford, where he could enjoy the view of the distant spires and towers, and could sit out in the garden among the birds, and, as the 'glimmering landscape' faded on the sight, drink in the sweet night air and watch the glow-worms. But the longing for home grew quickly on him, and after a few weeks he was moved back to Broad Street for the last time. He could still enjoy his daily drive, and often he would be wheeled in a wicker bath-chair by his old coachman into one of the College gardens or into the Parks where the sight of the Museum was a never-failing pleasure. He loved to watch the children at their play, and was never happier than when some

of his own grandchildren were gathered round him. Sometimes he would be wheeled down to the Cathedral when service was going on, and if he did not feel equal to taking his usual seat in the stalls, Francis, the Dean's verger, would place him in the vergers' seats. He would still make an occasional call on Professor Max Müller or the venerable Warden of New College. His intimacy with Miss Felicia Skene, dating from the cholera days of 1854, remained uninterrupted; and he delighted in seeing all and any of his old friends when they could find their way to Broad Street.

I shall not forget (writes Mrs. Holman Hunt), nor I hope will the memory grow dim of the last visits we paid him in Oxford, when, though enfeebled, his courteous kindness and strenuous interest in all things beautiful and of good report was as marked as it could have been in a man in the prime of life; his was a gracious spirit irradiating courtesy.

But though his intellectual interests remained keen, and his burning desire 'to be of use' was undimmed, his thoughts were concentrating more and more on that great change which every day was bringing nearer to him, and on that future which was soon to surrender all its mysteries. Acland was never a man who obtruded his religion on others, save by the example of a pious and godly life, and if I have dwelt but little on it in these pages, it is because I know that nothing would have been more distasteful to him than to drag into the light of day the inner workings of a devout and a contrite heart. It is not too much to say that from early boyhood every thought and action of his life was guided by religion; and to a chosen few, both in his letters and in conversation, he was wont to reveal the depths of spiritual feeling and a touching humility of faith. Two sayings of men whom he had loved and revered were often on his lips. Once in early days he had talked with Faraday on the probable employments of a future life, and the older man had broken an

interval of silence with the triumphant outburst: 'That which I know best and anticipate most is that I shall go to be with Christ.' At a later date, when William Donkin, the gentle and learned Professor of Astronomy, was slowly sinking under consumption, he had said to Acland, who was seated by his side: 'Were it not for Christianity I should not have cared to live.' The words of Faraday were written on the flyleaf of Acland's Bible; those of Donkin were quoted by him in one of the last of his published writings.

At one time or another Acland had been brought into contact with many types of religious thought, and with many men to whom creeds and formularies were sounds of little meaning. He had come under the spell of Newman, he had been the friend of Pusey and Liddon, of Stanley, and of Maurice; he had known and honoured James Martineau; he was on cordial terms with Huxley and Tyndall. But the faith which consoled and strengthened him in his last years was the same simple belief which he had learned under his father's roof. Regular attendance at public worship and participation in the Holy Communion were to him not merely a sacred duty, they were a necessity of his existence. Broad-minded and tolerant to all, he was essentially a son of the Church of England: her prayers, her ordinances, her spirit were the very fibre of his being. Let the sentences with which he closed his will stand as his last earthly confession:

And now with a deep sense of the mercy and goodness of God to me and mine through parents, children and friends, and by the saintly life of my dear wife gone before, I commit my soul to my Heavenly Father in the faith and love of Christ, and hope for forgiveness of my shortcomings in my holy profession; and I pray that the faithful study of all nature may in Oxford and elsewhere lead men to the knowledge and love of God, to faith and to charity, and to the further prevention and relief of the bodily and mental sufferings of all races of mankind.



The end was not far off. During the winter of 1899-1900 he was gradually 'wearing out.' Miss Acland, who for years had watched over him with a tenderness and a care such as only a devoted daughter can give, was now scarcely ever out of his sight; and, weak and enfeebled as he had become, he never failed to show that grateful appreciation of all that was done for him, which is so touching at the moment, so inexpressibly comforting in memory when the loved object has passed beyond the reach of earthly care.

The disasters that marked the early stages of the South African War affected him terribly. The only alleviation to his depression was the interest which he took in the agencies for providing for the widows and orphans, and for sending clothes and comforts to the troops. It brought back to his mind that Crimean winter when he and his wife had organized working parties and had appealed to the undergraduates for the gift of their flannels and boating-jerseys.

In September, 1900, it became an increasing fatigue to go upstairs, and a bed was made for him in the dining-room where he could lie looking out into his little garden. All the pictures and busts and curios were in their usual places, and he liked to have his favourite cast of Behnes' bust of Queen Victoria set close by him. During these last days the only wish that he ever expressed was that he might see 'his Queen' once more.

And when death came, it seemed to come robbed of all its terrors, ἀβληχρὸς μάλα τοῖος, 'ever so gently.' On October 16, there was a sudden failure; his doctor, Mr. Steedman, thought the end was at hand, and Admiral Acland, who was in London, and himself suffering from the effects of a serious accident, was telegraphed for. Sir Henry rallied a little, and was just able to recognize his dearly loved eldest son. But he never spoke again. Dean Paget pronounced the words of Committal from the Prayer Book, and Miss Acland could tell that her

father was just conscious; then in a few moments all was over, and he had passed away without a pang.

On the 19th he was carried to his last resting-place by his wife's side in Holywell Cemetery, through streets lined by a hushed and sorrowing crowd. 'There was not a child in Oxford but knew him,' said one of the spectators. It was a beautiful autumn day, and the Oxford of which he was so proud had never looked fairer. One of Acland's favourite readings had been the Story of the Robins in Mrs. Gatty's *Parables from Nature*; and as the bier was borne to the graveside a little robin sang brightly its song of hope.