

## THE BRITISH GENERAL ELECTION.

Mr. Henry W. Lucy, the well-known "Toby, M. P.," of Panch, describes, for the readers of the October Forum, the *modus operandi* of a British general election. At the beginning of his article he points out certain general differences between our presidential election and the general election in Great Britain. One primary distinction lies in the fact that the former is largely a matter of personal preference, while the latter is a conflict of principles. It is true that while Disraeli and Gladstone were yet alive and confronted each other in the political arena, the fight raged as closely and distinctly around a name and a personality as is the custom at presidential elections. In 1874 and in 1880 the electors throughout the kingdom did not profess to vote either as Liberals or Tories. They voted for Gladstone or Disraeli.

## Contrasted With a Presidential Campaign.

"With the passing away of those colossal figures, the British general election has reverted to its former manner. Lord Salisbury is a statesman who, even beyond the limits of the party pale, is held in the highest esteem. But his is not a name to conjure with at the polls. On the other side, Mr. Gladstone has left no successor. Accordingly, the forthcoming general election will be fought, as far as Ministerialists can control it, on the question of the war in South Africa, while opposition candidates will endeavor to concentrate the attention and judgment of the electors on the shortcomings of the administration in respect to the conduct of the war, and on the sins of omission and commission committed by the government during their more than five years' term of office. Another fundamental difference between the two electoral campaigns appears in their inception and direction. A presidential election is a more or less well ordered battle, every movement being directed by the commander-in-chief on either side. A British general election is a series of independent skirmishes, taking place all over the country, each under local command, owing no supreme general, observing no common plan of battle. The British voter knows nothing of delegates, conventions, or party managers. He walks into the polling-booth and votes directly for the man of his choice. It is true that both the Conservative (now the Unionist) and the Liberal parties have a paid official who is supposed to undertake general supervision of party interests in the electorate throughout the kingdom. He is generally consulted by constituencies in the selection of a candidate. What he tenders in response is advice, not instruction."

## Money for Campaign Purposes.

"A great gulf, wide as the Atlantic,

separates the party manager of the presidential election campaign from the chief agent of the Liberal or the Unionist party in England. While one has almost an unlimited supply of money at his command, and is not too grievously hampered in disposing of it for campaign purposes, the other has but a meager subscription list, and is bound hand and foot by the corrupt practices act. It is that legislation which has crippled the political party agent in Great Britain. The election agent is bound by law, under heavy penalties, to keep strict account and make full disclosure of every penny spent."

## Duration of Parliaments.

Although the British House of Commons is elected for a period of seven years, it has never availed itself of its full opportunity of life, as a rule it accepts dissolution at its sixth session.

"The present parliament, which assembled for a short session on August 12, 1895, was a few days short of attaining its fifth year when it was prorogued. There is, therefore, no statutory reason why it should not sit through another session, the dissolution being postponed till January—perhaps, on the whole, the most widely convenient month of the year for a general election.

"Experience testifies to the sufficiency of a five-year term. Since Queen Victoria came to the throne she has summoned fourteen Parliaments. Of those, only six have exceeded the term of five years. One, memorable for its accomplished work, exceeded the date by the narrow margin of one month and sixteen days. This was the great parliament of 1868, in which Mr. Gladstone commenced his colossal labor of legislative reform. Meeting on December 10, 1868, it was dissolved on January 26, 1874. The second Parliament of the Queen's reign, summoned in 1841, lasted five years, eleven months and six days. In the century only three Parliaments have timidly entered upon their septennial year. The first Parliament of George IV trenched by one month and nine days upon its seventh year. The Parliament of 1859 lived for six years and two months. The Parliament of 1874, which first saw Disraeli in power, as well as in office, enjoyed for twenty days its septennial privilege.

"The duty of advising the sovereign as to the proper date for dismissing the sitting parliament is not, as is commonly assumed, a cabinet matter. It is a fact that when, early in 1874, Mr. Gladstone decided to dissolve parliament, some of his colleagues in the cabinet were first made acquainted with his decision on opening their morning papers. The sole arbiter in the case is the prime minister. In the time of the Georges the sovereign had a good deal to say in the business. In some royal moods the fact that the premier desired to bring about an immediate dissolution led the

king to conclude that he would keep Parliament sitting a little longer. In these times the will of the first minister of the Crown is not disputed. But it is the sovereign who summons 'my faithful commons' to repair to Westminster. Parliament dissolved, there is promulgated an order from the Queen in council, addressed to the Lords High Chancellors of Great Britain and Ireland, commanding them to cause writs to be issued for the election of knights, citizens and burgesses to serve in Parliament. At least thirty-five days must elapse between the date of this mandate and the meeting of the Parliament."

In 1900, the decision to dissolve Parliament was taken at a cabinet council held on September 17, when the Queen signed the necessary proclamation. On September 25 the writs were issued summoning the new Parliament for November 1. The entire campaign, therefore, occupied a period of only six weeks.—Review of Reviews.

## MAX MULLER'S BUSY LIFE ENDED.

The world's greatest philologist, Frederick K. Maximilian Muller, generally called Max Muller, who died at his home in Oxford, England, last Sunday, was regarded as one of the most illustrious scholars of the century. While the serious business of his life was teaching, he barely missed becoming a musician, and he had a remarkably wide range of experiences outside his work as an orientalist and as professor of comparative philology in Oxford university.

Few men outside of royalty have as many titles as had this brilliant oriental and classical scholar. Born in Dessau, the capital of the duchy Anhalt-Dessau, in 1823, his life spanned three-quarters of a century, and the pursuit of his vocation made him as much at home in England as in his native Germany. The extraordinary range of his experiences and his acquaintance with interesting persons was due partly to the fortunate circumstances of his birth, training and education, partly to his home-making ties in two countries, but mainly to the catholicity and warmth of his sympathies and to the variety of his requirements and accomplishments.

Only a year or so ago Max Muller published his reminiscences in a volume of some 300 pages, entitled "Auld Lang Syne." This book is divided into four parts, the first of which is devoted to musical recollections, the second to literary recollections, the third to recollections of royalties and the fourth by a humorous transition to "beggars." The breadth of these general divisions show the remarkable range of his experiences. He was not only a great scholar, familiar with the literatures of mediæval and modern Europe; he was a musician, a connoisseur in pictorial and classic art, and a man of the world, nay a courtier. That he was an extremely