

Wharfedale  
Burley-in-Wharfedale  
Leeds

Dec. 31/1891

Dear Mr Dixon

Your kind note  
has followed me here -

You do me more  
honour than I deserve  
in proposing to put my  
name in your new book.

It is not for me  
to dissent to your doing  
so, though were it not  
that any book of yours  
is sure to float however  
weighted, I should strongly

advise you not burdening  
it with the name of  
one so decried as I  
am & must be just  
now

However, spite  
of our temporary  
difficulties I believe  
both our causes of  
Free Voting & National  
Education will make  
real progress this year,  
& as regards both it  
will help us to know

what the Swiss have  
tried & done

Believe me to remain  
Yours very truly

W. E. Foster

10. Westworth Denon

**Forster, William Edward** (*b.* 1818, *d.* 1886), statesman, was born at Bradpole, Dorset, and was the son of a minister of the Society of Friends, and a nephew of Sir Fowell Buxton. He was educated at the Friends' school, Tottenham, and received an appointment in a woollen manufactory at Bradford. In 1850 he married Jane, eldest daughter of Dr. Arnold of Rugby. Elected for Bradford in 1861, he was under-secretary for the Colonies from November, 1865, to December, 1868. In 1868 he became vice-president of the Education Committee, and a member of the Cabinet in 1870. Of the great measures then carried into law, he had charge of the Education Bill and the Ballot Bill. He displayed great ability and industry in piloting them through the committee stages, but his insistence upon the twenty-fifth clause of the former measure gave offence to the Nonconformist supporters of the ministry. But for this he would probably have succeeded Mr. Gladstone in the leadership of the Liberal party in 1875. In November of that year he was elected Lord Rector of Aberdeen University. When the Liberals returned to power in 1880, Mr. Forster, who was held to be both a strong and a benevolent man, and who, during the famine, had visited Ireland as distributor of a relief fund raised by the Friends, accepted the most difficult post in the Government—that of Irish Secretary. His path proved to be even thornier than he had anticipated. The Compensation for Disturbance Bill was, to his great indignation, rejected by the House of Lords, and while Mr. Forster was pressing forward the great Land Bill of 1881, the social state of Ireland went from bad to worse. A drastic Coercion Bill was carried, the Land League was suppressed, and Mr. Parnell and many others of the Nationalist leaders were imprisoned. In April, 1882, the Government decided upon a more conciliatory policy, and released the "suspects," and, as Mr. Forster was not satisfied with the conditions exacted from Mr. Parnell, he, together with the Lord-lieutenant, Earl Cowper, resigned. As an independent member, he criticised the general policy of the Government with great severity, and became very popular with the Opposition. He strongly condemned the Government for the condition into which Bechuanaland had been allowed to lapse, and also joined in the censure upon their Egyptian policy after the death of General Gordon in January, 1885. At the general election in that year he was once more returned for Bradford by a large majority, although too ill to address the electors. He died in April of the following year. Among the subjects in which he specially interested himself after leaving office was that of Imperial Federation.