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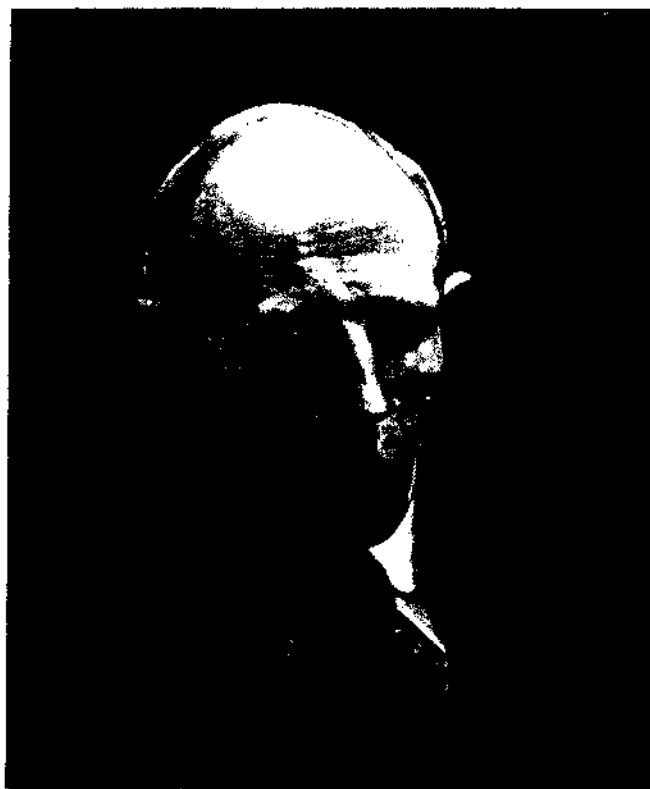
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LORD HALIFAX

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LORD HALIFAX

AN APPRECIATION

By
STUART HODGSON



LONDON
CHRISTOPHERS

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P R E F A C E

ON a Friday in April 1926 a new Viceroy landed in Bombay. Official India was standing by ready to take its part in the elaborate ceremonies of welcome and almost more than regal magnificence associated with the occasion. It is traditional that nothing that etiquette can contribute to its pomp or pageantry to its splendour should be omitted, and the glittering programme must be fulfilled to the letter. And fulfilled it was in 1926 with every customary observance—but with one difference. For that Friday happened to be Good Friday in Passion Week, and for that reason, having done what was absolutely required of him, the central figure in whose pro-consular honour all these obeisances and salutations and addresses had been prepared, himself silently slipped away to attend the Three-Hours' Service at the Anglican cathedral. The official world, taken by surprise, thus learnt two things on the day of Lord Halifax's arrival; first that India had a Governor-General who might indeed not know the East very well, but who certainly knew his own mind, and would not allow external circumstances to divert him from his purposes ;

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secondly that one of those purposes was the exercise of his religion.

The event did not pass quite without protest. A British newspaper rashly attacked Lord Halifax on the ground of an affront offered to Indian opinion. But it soon became clear that to the millions of unofficial India, grown accustomed to regard Christianity as little more than the cult of the ruling race, the event was not less than a revelation—that here was a Viceroy whose faith was not formal but sincere, and who would not suffer that anything should interfere with it. He was as earnest in his convictions as their own Mahatma was in his. Like their Mahatma the new ruler was, as Lord Lothian afterwards said, a " saint ".

It would be a mistake to say that his religion is the clue to Lord Halifax's character, which is more complex than that; but his frank piety, which is that of a devout practising Anglo-Catholic, is a factor—though only one conspicuous factor in the make-up of a born aristocrat, accepting his right to authority as a heavy responsibility—which must never be overlooked. It might easily have led him, had there been no countervailing influences, not least that of a wife fully conscious of the significant contribution such a man might make to mundane affairs, to prefer the ordered practices of devotion to the uncertainties of politics. As it is, its effect has been to add greatly to his prestige, making him in particular an international figure of the first importance when the second

PREFACE

World War broke out. "England was fortunate,"⁰ said Mr. Gram Swing, the well-known American commentator, "to have at the Foreign Office someone who ranked in character with Sir Edward Grey." This was a shrewd and sound judgment.

Another factor which must not be lost sight of in framing an estimate of Lord Halifax is his strong sense of loyalty, notorious among his friends, but publicly manifested in his devotion, not only to his Church, but to his University, and to his famous County. It is often difficult for foreigners to realise how warm is the local patriotism of Englishmen, although its expression is frequently apt to be more ostentatious or at any rate more articulate, except in times of crisis, than that of national sentiment. It runs all through English literature, from the Canterbury Pilgrims and the Forest of Arden to the Country of the Scholar Gipsy and the Shropshire Lad. Deep rooted as it is, it has been fostered in our own time by a continuous friendly rivalry in sport which pursues pre-eminence without a hint of antagonism, and is quite inconsistent with that ingrained mutual dislike, which is never long in coming to the surface between, say, Bavarian and Prussian. It finds its most obvious expression in dialect which passes without comment until some controversy over "accents" on the wireless brings it into notice. It is very persistent, and I well recall the surprise of a group of travelled Americans, to whom I lectured, at having noted more

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varieties of speech in a journey from Glasgow to London than they said they would have heard between New York and San Francisco. Most Englishmen would agree that, if this county feeling is generally active, by far its strongest exponents, and the most exacting in their claims, are Lancashire and Yorkshire. Of Lord Halifax it may be said that Yorkshire is in his bones. However exalted and however remote the scene is which he has to play his part, he is never entirely, or even very far, detached from the rolling wolds, and the rare blend of simplicity and sagacity which are characteristic of Yorkshire life.

It is mainly due to these two causes that a certain faint air of mystery still hangs about him which is absent from the careers of those for whom public life is the be-all and end-all of existence. After a generation given to affairs, he is still something of an enigma. On two occasions in his life—once after the Gandhi conversations in 1931 and once after the Oxford speech in 1940—he has stood out as an international figure of the first rank. His name has been on all men's lips. After the Oxford speech his succession to the Premiership was freely canvassed—perhaps not so much canvassed as assumed. On neither occasion has that particular eminence in the public mind endured. Beyond doubt, I think, the reason is that it was in no way sought by, nor had it even any special attraction for, Lord Halifax himself. It had come to him by reason of certain qualities which

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would not be denied, but it was not for him to struggle to maintain it. On the contrary, he returned from the scene of his great success in India in 1931, with every intention of retiring from politics and devoting himself to the work which his father had done before him as the lay leader of a religious movement, and only abandoned this plan in deference to the urgent solicitation of others and appeals to his sense of duty. But the qualities which have hitherto stood between him and the highest political honours are precisely those which have enabled him to perform services which no one else could have performed so efficiently, while his handling of Gandhi showed him not only patient, but adroit and independent of convention. His instincts are undeniably conservative. It must be admitted that his distrust of innovation as such, and his reluctance to acknowledge the necessity of change till the necessity is proved, do not commend him to an advanced left wing. But they are very English qualities, and a great mass of his fellow countrymen share them. Leaders so different as Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Churchill have acknowledged the value in the Cabinet of his "steadying" influence. It is beyond all doubt this quality which has made him admittedly indispensable to a succession of British Governments.

Now, as this book appears, Lord Halifax has gone forward on the second great adventure of his life.

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He is sent to America in 1941, as he was sent to India in 1926, to be the interpreter of the mind of his countrymen. The course of history, now as then, may depend on the success of his mission. Although some parts of this book were planned before that new mission was thought of, it may serve none the less as a prelude to the latest and certainly not the least important phase of a great career.

It is still much too early to attempt an estimate of the actual influence exercised by Lord Halifax on British policy in the fateful years through which the world is passing. But nothing that may happen in the future can alter the fact that it has been great, and at more than one critical moment decisive. The odd thing is that, this being so, his countrymen and the world know so little about him.

Outside his own county it is probable that not more than one Englishman in a hundred at the most knows Lord Halifax's family name. Outside the political world, the great majority had until recently forgotten his identity with the Lord Irwin who, ten years ago, was on all men's lips. This ignorance is surely very strange ; if it is founded on indifference, it is stranger still. My book is an attempt to describe the background of a reticent figure which has become almost unwillingly, yet inevitably, a force to be reckoned with in world politics.

STUART HODGSON

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S. H.

PART I

THE EARLY DAYS

CHAPTER I

A YORKSHIRE CHILDHOOD 1881-1893

Stands the church clock at ten to three ?
And is there honey still for tea ?

RUPERT BROOKE : *Grantchester*

HICKLETON HALL, near Doncaster, the seat of the Wood family, from whom Lord Halifax descends, is a great yellow stone country house, standing in its own park, built after the fashion of the Yorkshire countryside, with long rows of stables and kennels for the dogs which roam about it, with great rooms in which huge fires blaze in winter continually. It is rather cold and rather gloomy, and to a stranger's eye not particularly attractive. But the Woods have been in Yorkshire for a long time. They are a singularly united family, with a tendency to cluster : and to them Hickleton is home. It is the centre of their history, and of the history which they have helped to make. It has not changed essentially since Sir Francis Wood bought it in the eighteenth century. The room is still there in which Sir Charles Wood, his son, who made his reputation as Secretary for India and became the first Lord Halifax, planned his dispatches in the 'fifties. In this other room the second Lord Halifax received his long procession of famous visitors and

A YORKSHIRE CHILDHOOD

wrote his innumerable letters; and here that the old man sat listening to his son, who had made his name as Viceroy of India, describing to him the glories and pageantry of the East. To a much duller house than Hickleton such associations would give dignity and interest. To Edward Wood, naturally affectionate, and always of a most retentive memory, the vivid memories of childhood added their claim to attachment. As a child he knew the history of this farmer's dog and that tenant's favourite joke ; and the numberless servants who lived on for years at the Hall, often after their services had long become the merest sinecures, were his personal friends.

Yet it was Garrowby, the family's other house—not far off, as distances go in Yorkshire—and not Hickleton, that was the real home of Edward Wood's boyhood, and became that of his manhood. Garrowby, till his father rebuilt it, was little more than a hunting lodge. But it early won the first place in his affections. The children were sent to live there, while their father stayed on for the most part at Hickleton. " For me and for all my family," wrote Edward,

Garrowby has always had a place peculiarly its own. My father and mother had always loved it, and I remember the delight with which as children we used to be taken out riding by my father, and how a gallop on our ponies down the dales by Wareham, Braleholme and Thixendale, turning our heads for home through Brown Moor, seemed the height of human happiness.

HICKLETON AND GARROWBY

And then back to tea to eat delicious moor honey, which was provided by John Marshall of Buckthorpe in days when bee-keeping was a more prosperous industry than it has been of later years, to be followed between tea and bedtime by my father reading to us one of the novels of Walter Scott. . . . I recall now how, when my sisters or I were turned out of the school-room by our governess for doing our sums wrong, young Joseph Wordsworth, who was clever at sums, used to help us to get them right, while his mother the housekeeper, comforted us with Garrowby made ginger nuts and cowslip wine.¹

It was, however, neither at Hickleton nor at Garrowby, but far away at Powderham Castle in Devonshire, his mother's early home that Edward Frederick Lindley Wood was born on April 16th, 1881. His mother before her marriage had been Lady Agnes Elizabeth Courtenay, only daughter of the eleventh Earl of Devon, widely known in the west of England as " the good Earl ". On his father's side he had a definitely political descent, for the first Lord Halifax, his grandfather, had, as Mr. Charles Wood, been secretary to Earl Grey, the Prime Minister who carried the Reform Bill of 1832 ; and had married his daughter, Lady Mary Grey before he plunged into public affairs on his own account.

Edward's father, the second Lord Halifax, was one of the most remarkable characters of his day. While at Eton, he had been selected as a playmate for the young Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward VII) at Windsor. He was made Groom of the Bedchamber

¹ Preface to the *History of Kirby Under dale* by Shepherd.

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in 1862, and was all his life on intimate terms with the Royal family. After his death George V wrote to his son deploring the loss of a "valued friend". In his later years he was a rather active politician, a great admirer of Lord Milner and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and a much sterner partisan than his successor has ever been. "I could have strangled Winston," he remarked in one of his letters to his son with genial ferocity, Edward Wood, when he was Viceroy of India years later, must sometimes have felt secretly inclined to echo the aspiration.

But it was in quite other fields that the second Lord Halifax won his outstanding fame. At Oxford he had come under the influence of the later Tractarians, especially Canon Liddon: and from that time forward he flung himself with ardour into all the ecclesiastical controversies of the day. He spent a great deal of money on his crusades: and a long list of pamphlets and other writings still survives to attest his zeal and industry. The Divorce Law, the Disestablishment question, Prayer Book revision, the use of vestments and the recitation of the Athanasian creed, the defence of Church Schools and the Public Worship Acts alike inspired his eager interest. For years he was recognised by both friend and foe as the shield and buckler of the High Anglican party. On at least two occasions his activities attracted general attention—once in 1894 when he endeavoured, without success, to persuade Pope Leo XIII to recognise the validity of Anglican orders: and once, nearly thirty years later, when he was the life and soul

THE SECOND LORD HALIFAX

of what were known as " the Malines conversations " —an attempt on the part of certain French, Belgian and British divines to promote a reunion between the Roman and the Anglican churches. His resignation of the presidency of the English Church Union, which he had held for sixty-five years, paved the way for the amalgamation of the Union with the Anglo-Catholic Congress, which materially strengthened the movement to which he had devoted his life with such single-hearted loyalty.

But no mere summary of his activities gives any real idea of the character of one who was once described as " the Chevalier Bayard of the English Church ". His flaming enthusiasm, his transparent sincerity, his deep piety and his restless energy all justified the title. He was a great traveller and a tireless walker; an eager rider to hounds almost to the end of his long life ; a charming host and a whimsical companion. He had a great fondness for detective fiction. Mr. Lockhart, in his admirable biography, has recorded how the departing guest was never quite sure whether it was a thriller or a tract that was pressed into his hand to speed him on his way.

Lord Halifax must have been a highly original, if sometimes rather a terrifying father. He loved ghost stories and collected a whole literature on the subject. He compiled a " Ghost Book " himself, to which Edward Wood wrote a preface, describing how they all loved of an evening to sit round the fire listening to ghost stories. " Many is the time," adds

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the son, "that after such an evening we children would hurry upstairs feeling that the distance between the library and our nurseries, dimly lit by oil lamps and full of shadows, was a danger area where we would not willingly go alone and where it was not safe to dawdle."

Lady Halifax deprecated these ghost evenings. She was a rather delicate woman with no taste for ghosts herself, and she said her husband was "frightening" the children. Other people said so, too; but he maintained that it was good for their imaginations, and he held the imagination very high. In a way he took his ghosts very seriously. "Apart from the moralities," writes his son, "few charges in his eyes were more damaging to persons than that they should be judged void of imagination, and the actual framework of everyday life had value according as it corresponded to something more profound than itself, to be felt rather than seen, and to be apprehended only by some faculty more subtle than reason." But however they were to be apprehended, the children loved the ghost stories. They were frightened, of course, as their mother said; but they liked it.

Lord Halifax had other pleasant tastes. He loved "dressing up"—they were always "dressing up"—at Hickleton. When he was nearly eighty he once persuaded the villagers there to dress up as wild gypsies and rush into the house. (This was too much for the grandchildren, who were enjoying a Christmas Tree in the hall, and fled and shut themselves in

GHOSTS

their rooms.) When he was rebuilding Garrowby, his other Yorkshire house, he improved the occasion by inducing the architect to make him spy holes and secret passages and a priest's chamber and other delights. He loved animals—horses, naturally, for they were a great hunting family—and dogs—there were always lots of dogs at Garrowby ; while in later days he tried to introduce kangaroos and deer into the park, without very great success.

Edward Wood's early childhood was shadowed by the strange and sombre tragedies which successively struck the family. He was the youngest of six children, four boys and two girls. One after the other the three elder boys all died—Henry in 1886, Francis in 1889 and Charles, the eldest of them all, in 1890. Only Edward was left. He was a mere child at the time of his brothers' deaths. But he was quite old enough and sensitive enough to realise both the shock and the loss that they entailed. He felt both deeply, as imaginative children do. But the married life of his parents was so singularly happy that it did much no doubt to soften the blow.

As a small boy Edward Wood was both sensitive and intelligent. Mr. Lockhart records that when he was ten he was taken to Lincoln to see his sister Agnes confirmed by Bishop King. "How beautiful the Bishop looked," he said afterwards (Bishop King merited that tribute) and inquired whether, if he were good, he too might be confirmed like his sister. Not that they were at all mawkish. A French friend of his father's declared himself quite startled at the

A YORKSHIRE CHILDHOOD

noise "the children " made in the train on a visit to Brittany—the "children " being Edward Wood and two small daughters of Lord Beauchamp. Doubtless also, as in other childhoods, there were trials to be borne. There was a governess (was it the same who turned him out of the room for doing his sums wrong ?) who used to beat the young Edward on the arms with an ebony ruler. He held afterwards that this method of education had done him great good. But it is questionable whether he believed this at the time, although no doubt discipline was maintained, as a quaint story told of his father in his extreme old age suggests. His sort, lately Viceroy of India, was staying at Garrowby. A distinguished person called. " Now, my boy, run away," said the old man to the ex-ruler of millions ; " this gentleman and I have serious things to talk about." Lady Halifax superintended her family's religious training in person. She was a stern teacher who would tolerate no shirking in the learning of texts and collects. In some cases—Edmund Gosse is the classical instance—strict religious teaching of this kind has led subsequently to a violent reaction in the children. That nothing of the kind ever happened with any of the Wood children was due perhaps to the shining example of Lord Halifax. Before his flaming faith infidelity melted like snow before a summer sun.

It is curious to see how the tastes of Edward's childhood persisted. A hunting man, like his fathers before him, he was and remained. He once said that

METHODS OF EDUCATION

he would rather be Master of Foxhounds than Prime Minister. His love of dogs too went with him far from Yorkshire. Those that years afterwards sniffed at Gandhi in Government House in Delhi were the spiritual, if not the lineal, descendants of the dogs of Hickleton and Garrowby. So too with the charades into which Mr. Robert Bernays, when he stayed with the Viceroy, found himself impressed. They were just the "dressings-up" of Hickleton again. Perhaps the ghosts travelled to Delhi too. Perhaps in the hot Indian nights, memory would open her secret door; and one could slip away for a moment from the besetting anxieties and the consciousness of ever imminent danger and the weariness of official worries, and sit again with the others recalling memories of mysterious tales; while in the darkness behind, a shadow stirred.

CHAPTER II
ON THE THRESHOLD
1894-1902

" The spires of Oxford, unearthly in their beauty, set in the misty blue of early May."

LORD HALIFAX : *Address on T. E. Lawrence*

IN 1894, exchanging the freedom of the Yorkshire wolds for the moderate discipline of the famous playing fields, Edward, like his father before him, went to Eton. In this year Lord and Lady Halifax celebrated their silver wedding. Edward, who was thirteen, had to deputise for his father, who could not attend it, at the tenants' dance given in honour of the occasion. He did so most successfully, " dancing with almost everybody and departing next morning with tears " to school. His record there seems to have been creditable rather than distinguished. He was very popular, as always. He played football for his house (he was in Durnford's house): but he was not particularly athletic, although, to his father's great pleasure, he took to riding. " I really believe he will take to it in good earnest," Lord Halifax wrote about this time: adding " What a delightful companion he is ! So pleasant and comfortable to talk to, and always so bright and merry and good tempered." At Eton he does not seem to have

made any conspicuous mark. According to his own account he ranged himself in later years with the great multitude of distinguished prize-givers who aver that they have never gained one themselves. Either his memory or his modesty betrayed him, for strict history records the not too important exception that in his first year he won the Head Master's Lower Boy French Prize! Before he left he was in the First Hundred. But on the whole there does not appear to have been anything in his school career to forecast either future eminence or more immediate academic distinction. This is not especially remarkable. Although there is generally something to be noticed, the belief that the schooldays of eminent persons must perforce be full of presages and portents of their coming greatness has exhausted the industry of many biographers as well as the patience of their readers. But the idea has no basis in fact. It is not always possible to detect the budding bishop or the future Admiral in the delicate fiery-tempered little boy whom conscientious masters are so concerned to protect from bullying.

Eton afterwards delighted to honour him. But it is doubtful whether he was really very happy there. The English public school is not well constructed for boys like this. He was not physically built for triumph on the playing fields, and to such the cult of athletics which so largely dominates school life of the ordinary English public school ceases to be a tyranny only to become a bore. It may be doubted again whether, with rare exceptions, even a clever

ON THE THRESHOLD

schoolboy really enjoys the labours of the class-room. The able energetic middle class boy who rises to the top of his class does so in nine cases out of ten not from any innate passion for Greek syntax or French irregular verbs or from any particular desire to trace the course of the Gulf Stream or remember the names of the Plantagenet kings ; but either from mere combativeness and a desire to outstrip his fellows or in answer to urgent appeals from home to " get on ". But young Wood had no urgent necessity to get on. He was not naturally combative, and, except perhaps to please his father, had no particular desire to shine. He did respectably in the class room, but no more. Eton was important to him in the main as a necessary portal to quite another life.

He went up to Oxford, to his father's college, Christ Church. His grandfather had won a scholarship at Oriel and had gone up with a ready-made reputation as a " clever boy " from whom much was to be expected. Edward Wood went up as a commoner, and not a great deal was expected of him. His friends were rather surprised when he took to reading quite earnestly for the History School. The fact was that the Oxford History School suited him exactly. Cambridge, with its lust for dates and facts and statistics, would probably have repelled him. But the Oxford school prized imagination, as his father did, and positively encouraged the mild generalisations to which he was naturally prone. The shadow of the " philosophic doubt " of the Greats School being over it. Our studied " streams of tendency ".

"And what have you to say of Mr. Smith, Mr. Nettleship," inquired Jowett, the great Master of Balliol, of Mr. Smith's famous tutor, when the undergraduates came up for judgment at the end of term before the assembled dons. "Mr. Smith," replied Nettleship, "Ah, well, he has a tendency—he has a tendency—ah, well, he has a tendency ... " You hear what Mr. Nettleship says, Mr. Smith ? " squeaked the master in his shrill voice, " You have a tendency. I hope you will have a pleasant vacation. Good-bye." The spirit of Professor Nettleship had descended, as it happened, upon Wood's tutor. He was no Pharaoh, to bind men with burdens grievous to be borne or demand unreasonable tales of bricks. He merely told his class pupils what lectures they would do well to attend, and left them to it, with only casual inquiries as to how they were getting on.

With some young men this method might not have worked too well. But it suited Wood, who had too much conscience and too much common sense merely to fritter away the precious time. His reading might be and probably was, both desultory and discursive. But he had a system which, long afterwards, he explained. " It is no bad plan to read two types of books concurrently—one for pure pleasure : poetry, novels, memoirs—the other as discipline, as an astringent to the mind : philosophy, social science, theology, economics." His history reading taught him two things. It gave him a wide, if not necessarily a very deep, knowledge of most of the best authors : and it gave him the gift of expressing himself. This is what

the Oxford examiner desires above all things. " You know no history, of course," a very distinguished Oxford Professor of History had said a few years before to one of his students, " but the examiners will never find that out. You dress your shop window so well. Remember, that is what they want. Sling ink at them. They like it." Wood obeyed the injunction. He got his First Class in History.

Other sides of Oxford life pleased him not less. Compulsory games had never had much appeal for him. But he had been brought up to an out-of-door life, with a sportsman's interests and instincts. Oxford offered plenty of scope for the casual out-door exercise which suited him. There was tennis to be had in the summer, and he was a very passable tennis player. If Oxfordshire is a poor walking country—it is too flat and the mild air is too enervating—it is excellent for cycling, with its little villages tucked away up leafy lanes, with their inns (he was a great student of inn signs) and their often very beautiful churches. Above all, there was riding, and plenty of young men to ride with. He was a member of the Bullingdon Club and of the smaller and much more exclusive " Lodgers". He hunted regularly, and might fairly be said to have been not only a figure but a leader in these rather select sporting circles.

In the wider life of the University he took less interest. On his own showing the main concern with University affairs of the future Chancellor of Oxford was, like that of most undergraduates, to avoid the



HICKLETON HALL



GARROW BY

UNIVERSITY LIFE

Proctors, and to follow the results of the more important inter-Varsity contests. For politics he seems at this time to have cared little. There is no record of any speech of his at the Union, and he was never elected to the sort of office which has so often foreshadowed political eminence. He afterwards spoke of the debates there as "naive" and would probably have not understood the dilemma of the young man who doubted whether it was more important to get his First or to be President of the Union. Friendships which he made at Oxford, as well as the reputation for high ability which he won there, no doubt served him well afterwards. But few men who have risen so high have been more completely free from the charge of self-advertisement.

In April 1902 he celebrated his majority; and in July there were great doings among the Hickleton tenantry, who honoured the event with the customary festivities. All the time he was up he maintained a steady correspondence with his father, who followed his career with eager interest, and, window-dressing or not, he sat for and won an All Souls Fellowship, a quite decisive proof of exceptional abilities. He tells himself of an incident in this examination. He was asked a question about the history of the Italian Republics, his knowledge of which was severely limited. But he wrote a lively account of their quarrels and intrigues and counter plots, suitably embellished with details furnished by a lively imagination. "You seem to have made a quite special study of the Italian Republics, haven't you, Mr. Wood?" remarked one

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of the examiners to him afterwards, with characteristic Oxford irony.

He had been modestly diffident about the result, and his father and his family shared his hopes and his anxieties. Lord Halifax was out when the news came. He returned to find three jubilant telegrams. Lady Halifax came in shortly. "Is there a telegram?" "Yes, Edward has won it." It was his first great triumph. There is no other ever quite like it.

"Oxford," he told the undergraduates thirty years later "will mould you," and certainly she moulded him. No man of equal eminence in our day has been so perfectly subjected to her influence. He fell passionately in love with her beauty, "the unearthly beauty of her spires" as he called it in his address on Lawrence of Arabia, imputing to that brilliant genius a passion which he probably felt far more keenly himself. All his life he has never forgotten Oxford. "I have only to close my eyes," he said in his broadcast to Oxford men,

to see once again the sweep of the High Street from Magdalen Bridge to Carfax with St. Mary's Church and the great dome of the Radcliffe—or Tom Quad and Tom Tower in Christchurch standing up against the moonlight, and recapture something of the reverence and love that seemed to grow from looking on the work that Nature and the hand of man had wrought together.

He went up before the industrialising of Oxford had really begun, and contemplated this process later with

AN ENDURING INFLUENCE

a kind of rueful incredulity. He could not believe the people who told him that life in Oxford was "so different" now that one had to dodge for one's life in the streets. Oxford could never be "different". For it was not her mere outward seeming, beautiful as that was, that he worshipped. It was her spirit. "What a different world it would have been," he once exclaimed, "if Hitler and Goering had been to Oxford." He had no sympathy with the sentimentalism which spoke of her as "the home of lost causes". "The last thing I should wish," he said, "was to present Oxford under the romantic guise of an antique ruin set in a mist of antique chivalry." Oxford a ruin! She was the light of England, the glory of the world—

She neither forgot the lessons of old time, nor ignored the progress of the present, nor the signs of the future. She shone, and would shine for ever, a clear flame of knowledge, a light upon our paths.

In 1934 Oxford elected him as her Chancellor, in succession to Lord Grey. Lord Curzon, Lord Grey and Lord Halifax, all Foreign Secretaries in their day, form a brilliant line of Chancellors, each of them in his own way a typical product of Oxford. But none was quite so typical as Edward Wood. Probably of all the honours showered on him, none has given him purer pleasure than Oxford's recognition. Most of them he had the air of accepting rather reluctantly as a matter of duty: but not this. This was the seal of a life-long loyalty, the public acknowledgment

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of Oxford's belief in him. Not that there was ever any doubt of that belief. From his first entry into public life her loyalty has been unshakable. As Watchman has put it, " she has stood at the salute ever since ".

CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE

1903

" I read for pleasure, mark you. In general I like wedding bells at the end of novels. ' They married and lived happily ever after.' Why not ? It has been done."

EDWARD NEWTON : *A Great Victorian*

THE world which opened before him on leaving college was a pleasant world for a wealthy young aristocrat of brains and character. Manners were easy. The glum solemnity of mid-Victorian times was gone as completely as the gambling and drunkenness of an earlier generation. Political passions ran sometimes high. But in social life the prevailing note was a certain cool reasonableness. It was the reverse of a dressy age. A sensitive tailor, meeting the Duke of Norfolk, the senior peer of the realm, out walking would probably have burst into tears. The Cecils would have pleased him no better. Only the Court still stood rigidly for the niceties of ceremonial dress. Years later, when he came back from India and was made a Knight of the Garter, Edward Wood suggested that he might be allowed to wear one of the five ceremonial robes which he already possessed at the Coronation of King George VI. He was told sternly that it could not be permitted.

Life in London society in the first decade of the

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century was certainly pleasant: and when the Town wearied one, there was always the country. It was always possible to escape from the hot rooms and the idle chatter, from the dust and the hurry and the noise of the great city. And the country life, with its hills and moors, its dogs and horses, its hedge-rows where the birds sang and its rivers and brooks where the fish leapt in the sunlight, was still unaltered and unspoiled. There one could ride to hounds as one's father and grandfather had ridden. There too, if one were fortunate enough to be a Yorkshire landowner, one could ride or walk all day long, meditating undisturbed on "the true values of life"; while the wind whistled through the tops of the trees and, in the cloudy sky, the peewits called continually.

Young Wood had been reading really rather hard for his Fellowship, and on his father's advice he went travelling; he went round the world, joining the family in South Africa, whither his eager father in one of his fits of exuberant energy had dragged a reluctant Lady Halifax, who would far rather have remained at home. He was immensely impressed with Switzerland and told Canon Wylde as they stood together on the Stanzstad near Lucerne that the view of the snow-clad Alps from there was the loveliest sight he had seen in all his travels. Then he came back to Yorkshire, busying himself with the country pursuits which he loved, and a little later he burst into his father's room at two o'clock in the morning of a summer day in 1909 to tell him that he had

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become engaged at a dance to Lady Dorothy Onslow.

Lord Halifax, though he did not apparently know the bride elect, was very much pleased at the news. He was especially delighted when he heard that a fortune teller had assured her that Edward Wood would be closely associated with her life. There were in fact more solid grounds for satisfaction. The two were almost ideally suited to each other. Lady Dorothy had received a careful old-fashioned education, and was a good linguist by the standard of her day—as a girl she won a prize for French in a public examination against five thousand competitors. But her heart was in the countryside, and she shared her future husband's taste for country life and country things, with which has gone the priceless asset of a splendid constitution. Lady Halifax gave up hunting later, but she has remained a keen angler and an enthusiastic gardener. She has always been very fond of animals, and once confided to an audience that in New Zealand as a girl she kept no less than twenty "bush" cats. But her favourite was the elk hound, a dog of the Alsatian type but milder in temper. And she did something, as a patron of the Elk Hounds Club, to popularise the breed in England. Her favourite elk-hound, Musti, she took with her to India with some trepidation, fearing the climate. But Musti apparently liked hot weather, and flourished under the Eastern sun.

The Onslows were traditionally liberal-minded Conservatives with very much the same political

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outlook as the Woods, and there is no doubt that his wife was of great assistance to Edward Wood in his early political career. With a full share of ambition she worked hard for him in his Ripon constituency, and, south country woman as she was by birth, she even became a power in Yorkshire—in itself an achievement. She was President of the Yorkshire Ladies' Council of Education, and while her work for women's education at home was not comparable in importance to her similar work in India—where the All India Women's Educational League, largely her creation, is a landmark in the history of the country—it was still important and useful. Leeds University made her a Doctor of Laws in July 1939 (seventeen years after her husband had received a similar honour) in recognition of her active public service in this field.

Lady Halifax inherits from both parents a tradition of practical activity. Her father was not only one of the best of the London County Council's early Chairmen in a broad administrative sense, but was energetic in remedying abuses from which the ordinary citizen suffered at the hands of the great monopolies. His effective method of dealing with one such imposition was characteristic. It was the practice of the powerful omnibus company of his day in certain cases to announce a fare to a given point, but for its own convenience to stop and insist on passengers disembarking a few hundred feet short of it. One day a conductor was much embarrassed by a mild but determined gentleman who had paid his fare to Charing Cross and refused to stir till he got there. The conductor blust-

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ered, but when he found he was faced by the Chief of Municipal London, he gave in. The 'bus went on to Charing Cross, Lord Onslow dismounted, and that particular grievance disappeared once and for all.

The special activity of Lady Halifax's mother, Lady Onslow, was as a pioneer in child-welfare. She established, and really ran herself, a branch home for the Waifs and Strays at Clandon Regis. Following her example, Lady Irwin, when in India, made the children's health centres in Cawnpore and elsewhere one of her liveliest interests. During the Great War, when, as recorded elsewhere, she turned Temple Newsam into a hospital for soldiers—in itself a huge undertaking—she was not content with any merely perfunctory share in its conduct. She personally superintended as matron the working of the new hospital with an energy and efficiency which won the enthusiastic praise of Sir Michael Sadler, then Principal of Leeds University.

Hospital work always fascinated her. "When my husband and I were in India," she said in a speech at Hull a couple of years after their return,

I do not think I ever went to any place without visiting a hospital. Sometimes they were little bungalows, small mission hospitals, and sometimes beautiful hospitals as good as there are in London and nearly as good (with a touch of her husband's sly humour) as there are in Hull.

Incidentally she knows how to cook, and a recent book of war-recipes contains Lady Halifax's in-

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structions for preparing a savoury haddock with a minimum expenditure of time and labour !

In one respect she set a rather remarkable example. Most Englishwomen whose lot sends them to India come back more or less laden with curios and other memorials of their adventure to adorn their English homes. The impulse is natural and legitimate enough, and she was no stranger to it. There was an exhibition at Temple Newsam in 1933 of some of the costly trinkets which the Irwins brought back from India—Tibetan jugs with handles and spouts made of dragons, a minute ivory box with little kneeling elephants as feet, and a casket containing samples of the eighty different kinds of wood used in the construction of the Viceroy's house at Delhi. But the notable fact about Lady Irwin was that, high as the Indian climate tried her and full of never-ending anxieties as her life in India was, she loved her beautiful Indian home, and reversed the usual process by spending much of her time when on leave in England, buying electrical and other gadgets to perfect it. In his recently published Memoir * Mr. Bain, the bookseller describes how he had been asked rather vaguely to make a list of books to form a small library. He sent it to the address given on May 30th, 1928. "The list came back on June 7th," he writes "with the addition of several closely typed sheets of titles of books relating to India, both old and new, and a covering letter from Lady Irwin, wife of the then Viceroy of India, now Viscount Halifax, in which she

¹*A Bookseller Looks Back* (Macmillan).



LADY DOROTHY ONSLOW
Before her marrying to Lord Halifax

THE WEDDING

explained that she had been commissioned to buy these books for the library to be formed at the Viceregal Lodge, New Delhi."

Despite her simple tastes and broad sympathies, Lady Dorothy Wood was still of course by birth and upbringing a well enough known figure in Society and at Court. Her social experience was of immense value to her in India, where the stiff and formal state which surrounds the Governor General must be trying to anyone not already innured to forms and ceremonies. Coupled with her natural amiability, vivacity and good sense it made Lady Irwin an almost ideal hostess in perhaps the most difficult social position in the world. In a trying time her ready adaptability was a very important fact.

It was in the parish church of Clandon Regis that Edward Wood and his bride were married, a picturesque little country church, notable only for some curious wooden figures of its patron saints St. Peter and St. Paul with Thomas a Becket unexpectedly intervening between them, and a small bell in the Tower which bears the unusual inscription : " I to My Benefactors Praise ".

The wedding, which took place on September 21st, 1909, was an uncommonly pretty spectacle. As the tall bridegroom with his bride in silver and white came down the grassy slope from the church to the house followed by the twelve bridesmaids in silver and white, it looked, said a guest, like a " Watteau picture ".

The marriage has been ideally happy. There

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were four children—Anne, who afterwards married Lord Feversham; Charles, born in 1912 ; Peter ; and Richard.

Twenty-seven years later there was another great wedding in the Wood family—not now in a little Surrey church, but in Wren's vast cathedral in London. The colours of this wedding were not silver and white but yellow: for the bride was Miss Ruth Primrose, Lord Rosebery's favourite grandchild, and all was primrose yellow in her honour. It was a wedding of the Roses : for Charles Wood, the bridegroom, the eldest son of Lord and Lady Halifax, was a Yorkshireman born and bred : and the bride was given away by her other grandfather Lord Derby (she was an orphan and had lived much with the Derbys since her mother's tragic death): and Lord Derby, needless to say, was Lancashire incarnate. This wedding was a tremendous affair. There were over two thousand guests, headed by royalty. The most famous names in Society were represented in the wedding procession. Yet a few at least who watched the great throng flooding out of the cathedral perhaps thought a little wistfully of that other procession which came down a green slope twenty-seven years ago in silver and white " like a Watteau picture " : and heard for a moment once more under the joyful thunder of the great bells the small voice of the little Clandon Regis bell singing still the praises of its long dead benefactors.

CHAPTER IV
POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP
1910-1921

" It were well, therefore, that men in their innovations would follow the example of Time itself, which indeed innovateth greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be perceived."

FRANCIS BACON : *Of Innovations*

IN January, 1910 Edward Wood was returned to Parliament as Conservative member for Ripon, the constituency for which his grandfather sat during his last years in the Commons, after he had been defeated at Halifax and before his elevation to the peerage. His majority was a comfortable 1244. In the following December, against Norman Rae, a much stronger opponent, it fell to 874. But these victories seem to have taken the heart out of his opponents, for no one ever stood against him again. He was returned unopposed in 1918, 1922, 1923 and 1924. His maiden speech was delivered impromptu by command of the Whips (who wanted to keep a House in the dinner hour) on a subject of which he knew nothing—Egypt, where a Prime Minister had just been assassinated. There were only six members present. It was scarcely an inspiring occasion. Yet his peroration, as a foreshadowing of things to come, has a more than ordinary interest to-day.

The time may come, and I hope it will come, when those races with whose government we are now

charged may be in a position to assume the control of their own fortunes and may be able to work out their own destiny.

Like most young members he was nervous and asked Lord Balfour's advice about his speaking. "Speak as often and as long as you can," was the reply, "and you will rapidly acquire that contempt for your audience every bore always has."

His heart, however, was still in the country. Whenever the opportunity offered he took the train to York: to ride again with the Middleton Hunt or stand, a white-coated figure, judging puppies, or tramp or ride for miles over the wolds. There could scarcely have been a more typical member for a Yorkshire agricultural constituency: though perhaps his brother-in-law, Colonel George Lane Fox (afterwards Lord Bingley), who sat for the neighbouring constituency of Barkston Ash, ran him close in this respect. Perhaps his rural constituents did not always follow precisely his political philosophy as he expounded it with a young man's earnestness in rather elaborate speeches: but they appreciated his sincerity and the compliment of being supposed to understand. Territorial influence still counted for much in those days, and the Woods had been a local family for centuries, like the Stanleys in Lancashire and the Cavendishes in Derbyshire. Like them, they had identified themselves with local interests, and like them, they had their reward. "What are you thinking about, Lord Derby?" a young lady asked the head of the Stanleys as they stood on board a yacht watching a tropical

THE CALL OF DUTY

sunset. "Liverpool," said Lord Derby. "I think we in our family always try to do our duty," remarked Mr. Victor Cavendish, then heir to the reigning Duke of Devonshire, addressing a Derbyshire audience in pouring rain, "however unpleasant it may be." With equal enthusiasm for the hopes and the interests of his own Yorkshire people, Edward Wood did his.

It was rather a perplexing time for a young Conservative of moderate views. The struggle with the Lords was speedily decided, but it left great bitterness behind. Even fiercer and more enduring were the passions aroused by Mr. Lloyd George's Budgets, Immediately afterwards followed the prolonged battle over the Insurance Bill, when the doctors combined to resist the new proposals, and great ladies joined with servant girls in a common resolution to refuse to "lick stamps". On top of all came the Irish struggle, and the frankly rebellious Ulster movement headed by Sir Edward Carson and "Galloper Smith"—Lord Birkenhead that was to be—with the undisguised support and countenance of Mr. Bonar Law. Feeling never ran higher in British politics than at this time. And there was no want of dramatic irony in the fact that the leaders in this masque of anarchy were also the leaders of that party which was pre-eminently devoted to the maintenance of law and order.

To the new member for Ripon such an atmosphere could only be extremely distasteful. He was a Conservative, but not, except on ecclesiastical matters like Welsh Disestablishment, at all a fanatical partisan. He was naturally cool-tempered and of great com-

monsense (a fact which people who are always calling him a mystic sometimes tend to slur or ignore). It is improbable that he can have felt much sympathy either with the embattled doctors or the non-stamp-licking ladies, and still more improbable that he was really enthusiastic for Galloper Smith and his Orangemen. His own policy is perhaps best defined in the words in which he described his educational ideals—"aiming at unity and resisting uniformity, welding tradition and progress, and resisting stagnation in the love of tradition". But it was difficult even to imagine the application of such a policy amid the furious animosities of the warfare then raging; and certainly a private member could do nothing for the time being to promote it. He could only wait and watch.

This quiet process was very nearly brought to a sudden end by an accident from which his escape seemed almost miraculous. One day in 1912 he was driving in a taxi at Sheffield when it was literally crushed to pieces between two trams. All the wheels were torn off, the back was smashed, nearly all the glass torn out and the engine and the chassis buckled as though they were tin. Yet the horrified crowd which rushed to rescue the occupants were startled to see Edward Wood and his companion, a Wakefield solicitor, scrambling quite unhurt out of the wreckage.

Then suddenly the catastrophe of 1914 swept all the old controversies into limbo, so that their very names soon seemed to be mere faded memories.

His own position was already determined for him. After leaving Oxford, he had taken a commission in the Yorkshire Dragoons, in which his father had been a Captain. He has described with dry humour his early experience as Orderly Officer in the Yeomanry:

My heart was in my mouth when some fellow went in front and whipped the table and said: "Any complaints?" If the men had said there were, I should not have had the faintest notion what to do about it. I suppose I should have done what other orderly officers used to do—go to the sergeant and ask what about it and say a lot. I used to go round with the orderly sergeant and again the whip would tap on the tent roof and something was said about lights being put out. One saw the umbrella being put over the candle. And if one was wise one would pass on and go back to the officers' mess.

With the outbreak of war, these pleasant careless days came to an end. Duty took a grimmer air altogether. He went over to France with his regiment, and there in due course got his majority. After the war he was given rank as Colonel, and permitted to retain it when he went to India. He was at the front for some time—an anxious time for his family, for though he was a fine rider and a good shot, he was not constitutionally strong, nor very well fitted physically to stand the hardships of active service.

Like most serving M.P.'s he came back from time to time to attend to his Parliamentary duties. In 1917 he was recalled finally to help in the Ministry

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of National Service ; and thereafter he sat steadily at Westminster as a Conservative supporter of the Coalition.

The situation now was as distracted as it had been seven years before when he first came to Westminster, though for very different reasons. It was the time when men talked of "Hanging the Kaiser" and "Making Germany Pay" ; and when the real consequences of the war were still hidden from the eyes of the triumphant victors. He himself, like most of his brother officers, was carried away with the mass enthusiasm of the time. Subsequent events were a grim commentary on its wisdom.

To be a back-bench member of the very mixed contingents which supported the Coalition was not in itself a passport to fame, but Edward Wood was the last person in the world to be disturbed by that. He was quite lacking in the quality which energetic business men call "push". One of the curiosities of his career is the way in which all the great offices which he has filled one after the other seem to have been thrust upon him almost against his will. This was not at all because he was reluctant to pull his full weight in the boat. No one was ever more ready to do a thing which he had once persuaded himself to be his duty, whatever it might cost. Nor was he at all afflicted with the diffidence and self-distrust which unman some second-rate sensitive minds when called to high office and its responsibilities. On the contrary, once convinced that he was right, nothing could shake his cool self-confidence. But the com-

"BLACK AND TANS"

monplace ambition which looks on office as a thing desirable in itself was not in his make-up. He never could have felt the exultation which led Mr. Disraeli, for instance, on first attaining office, to rub his hands and cry "At last we have a status." For office, except as a means to some other more important end, as an instrument of public service in fact, he had no particular use.

Even in these unpromising conditions he made himself felt. When the tall member for Ripon (he is actually six feet five) rose to speak, the House listened as if instinctively aware that it was worth while. He was without the ordinary orator's parlour tricks. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, an experienced and capable judge, had described emphatically his method of speech at this time. "He had," he said, "no great fluency. He never made a brilliant phrase nor attempted an epigram. Yet he was always listened to."

There was one speech of his about this time which attracted particular attention. It was an attack on the Irish policy of the Coalition in so far as it was expressed in the Black and Tan campaign. He lifted the subject up, as his general habit was, high above mere political, let alone mere partisan, issues. His matter lent itself of course admirably to such treatment, so that the speech was inevitably effective from its content. But it was also significant for another reason. It was the first attack on the Black and Tans from the Conservative benches, and it expressed a feeling on those benches which had long been

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with difficulty repressed, just as the Chatham House speech years after expressed and reflected the feelings of the nation. It was the beginning of the end of the Black and Tans. But it had no immediate effect on the fortunes of the speaker. It made his figure familiar in the House of Commons. But to the country at large his name remained entirely unknown outside his native county.

One of his interventions in the debates of the war years is very interesting to-day. He had convinced himself that a large Cabinet—"even if it were a Cabinet of archangels"—was "not an ideal body for administering a great war", in which prompt decisions were necessary, and in which it was important that there should be men "at liberty to think without being immersed in departmental work". He urged the Prime Minister so to reconstruct the machinery of government

that we may have a real small War Council, with supreme responsibility and supreme powers, who will not be fettered by departmental work, but who will be at liberty to think out the great problems, and to put the results of that thinking into execution.

This was the advice he tendered in 1916. Whether he would repeat it without considerable qualification to-day is another matter. Mr. Lloyd George duly formed his small Cabinet : but it was always showing a tendency to swell. It was rarely less than twenty : and Lord Rankeillour, once Deputy-Speaker of the House of Commons, has testified that on the two

END OF THE COALITION

occasions when he was summoned to the "small War Cabinet" he

found about 35 people in the room and had once to sit on a highly uncomfortable table in the corner : so many were the departments concerned in the agenda, so interlocked the questions, and so short the time.

In theory there is almost everything to be said for a small Cabinet in war time. Like some other theories, it is not nearly so easy of application as it looks to the outsider.

If the member for Ripon played any part in the intrigue which overthrew the Coalition, it was a silent one. But he took his stand at once and firmly by the side of the Conservative rebels. He did this, as he told his Ripon electors, not from any party motives, but because he believed the Coalition to be a spent force. If he had thought it capable of further national service, he would, he said, have supported it. But he was sure that its use was exhausted. This was a rather shrewder judgment than it looks now after the event. For till the very eve of its dissolution the Coalition continued to present quite an imposing facade to the outside world. It looked very strong—so strong that an Opposition weekly journal only a week or two before the crash published an article headed "Lloyd George for Ever and Ever." But it was really crumbling with the strain of its own internal factions and discontents. Mr. Wood was right in his estimate of its growing impotence as an administrative instrument. The

POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP

indomitable head of the Coalition himself would in private have agreed with him. The collapse in any case could only have been delayed a few months.

The Coalition fell in October, 1922. But eighteen months before Mr. Wood had already begun his long official career. In April, 1921 he became Under Secretary for the Colonies under Mr. Churchill.

He felt, he said at the time, like a new boy at school. He did not know his new chief at all well. He confessed privately that he had never seen anyone like him, and that he was not sure that they would get on very well together. The doubt was probably reciprocal. Certainly the two men were a most astonishing contrast. Churchill was only seven years the elder. But he had already behind him a career which would have made any man a world figure. He had fought in Cuba and in India, in Egypt and in South Africa. He had already been President of the Board of Trade, Home Secretary, First Lord of the Admiralty and Minister of Munitions. He was almost equally distinguished as a journalist, as a soldier and as an orator. In the ablest Government that ever ruled in England he was by general consent one of the ablest members. Against this dazzling record Wood had only to set his All Souls Fellowship, a certain amount of rather desultory foreign travel, and his short war service.

The contrast in their temperaments was as decisive as the contrast in their achievement. Churchill was so active naturally that he seemed to regard activity as a principle and an end in itself. Wood, though he

CHURCHILL AND HALIFAX

could be active enough on occasion, was, like most very tall men, no friend to unnecessary activity. Churchill was a born fighter, a superbly competent political gladiator. Wood, the gentlest of men, has never shown much interest in the dog-fights of the political parties as such. In one respect alone did the balance tip in favour of the younger man : but it was rather an important one. Wood had a conscience ; it was in permanent session and every case of importance came automatically before it. Mr. Churchill's conscience, like that of most ordinary English men of the world, appeared in public only on ceremonial occasions : and some people unkindly and almost certainly unjustly doubted its authority over its brilliant owner. With all his splendid gifts and versatile record, he never completely won the confidence of his countrymen till the crisis of 1940 ; while even those who least admired Wood and saw nothing else in him never dreamt of doubting his utter sincerity. Different as they were, however, it does not appear that there was any immediate clash between the two. The collision which did occur a few years later over India was not strictly a personal one at all, although it had its origin in their fundamentally different outlook and mentality.

The one event of importance in the few months he spent in this position was his visit to the West Indies in December, 1921. He was accompanied by Major Ormsby Gore and Mr. Wiseman of the Colonial Office, and Lady Dorothy also went with them. The West Indies are normally disposed to

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appreciate with every appearance of gratitude direct notice from the Home Government, and the visit was a great success. The report urged that such visits should be frequent as they stimulate " a feeling of unity and of common interest with the Mother country by removing that sense of isolation and even of neglect which has sometimes been apparent in the past ". He made the useful suggestion that

during the first few years of an officer's service in the Colonial Office he should be sent out to the colonies on a definite mission of instruction, so that, without attempting to fill any definite Colonial post, he might see what tropical conditions were like, and how the administration looks from the Colonial side.

It is inevitable that the Wood report should be compared with the great scheme so lately put forward by the West Indies Commission, to the disadvantage of the former. But the comparison is not fair, for the Commission of 1939 both could and did propose a vast expenditure of public money on the economic services of the Colonies, whereas the Under-Secretary in 1922 had evidently been warned beforehand that there was no money available. He spoke, in language which reads certainly rather strangely to-day of the " altogether fictitious idea of the ability of the Government to help financially", and admitted that the colonists were disappointed that there were no loans or grants in aid to be had. But they were not his to give, and he had to shape his proposals on the assumption that they were not available at all.

THE WEST INDIAN VISIT

With this exception—admittedly an important one, for it alters the whole situation—his main proposals may be said to have paved the way in a very workmanlike manner for the larger schemes of the future. Thus he recognised the expediency of treating the educational services of the very scattered colonies as one, and proposed the temporary employment of an Educational Administrator and Intelligence officer for the West Indies generally. It would thus be possible for the Colonies, he thought, to pool their experience, and methods successful in one colony could be transferred to others. How far apart the various colonies were even in 1922 was shown by the fact that a letter sent from the Commanding Officer in Jamaica to a subordinate in Trinidad received no answer for five and a half months.

Wood recognised of course that the medical and educational services badly needed money, and that it was hopeless to expect the Colonial Governments, mostly quite poor, to provide it. But he suggested shrewdly that the problem of the medical services, for instance, was at least in part a question of sanitation and education. "There is no use in providing a well and then finding that the persons using it are allowing it to become contaminated with se wage." He proposed the appointment of a financial expert in Jamaica, where money-matters were in a state of confusion exceptional even for that dependency. But the proposal which gave the most solid satisfaction to the colonists was one for the maintenance for ten years of a minimum preference of £3 15s. a ton on

POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP

sugar. He justified this recommendation on the ground, among others, of the important social aspect of the sugar industry, in giving employment to European overseers and foremen.

On the constitutional agitation, he laid down very much the lines which the Commission afterwards followed. "With an ignorant and uneducated population/" he said, "it is comparatively simple for good organisers to arrange effective mass meetings to advocate a cause to which not one person in twenty if cross-examined as to what it was all about would be able to give an intelligent reply." Nevertheless he held that it would be "an act of grave unwisdom" to refuse constitutional reform at all, or to "withhold concession till it has been robbed of most of its usefulness and of all its grace."

Like the Commission afterwards, he held direct responsible government impossible for various reasons. In a "mosaic of humanity", like Trinidad with East Indian and African, Chinese and French and Spanish all jostling together, it would be difficult to see how it could work. In some colonies where there was a tiny educated minority, living among a large illiterate native population, the result might be to "entrench a financial oligarchy". The Under-secretary roundly refused to endorse the demand for representative government in little islands like St. Kitts and Antigua. He thought the road to advance lay in the substitution of more elected for nominated members, and in greater freedom for nominated members, who were often mere "legislative dummies" existing only to

THE WOOD REPORT

ensure a Government majority whenever circumstances rendered it necessary, on their respective Councils.

The result of this practice was that in Jamaica at any rate it was becoming more and more difficult to find men of ability who would consent to make the role of dummy even appear respectable. To the criticism that the increase of elected members would jeopardise the Government's majority on vital questions in the Councils he replied that the real safeguard was the power to refer such questions ultimately to the Secretary of State in England.

A point of interest in this tour was the way in which some of the problems and especially some of the proposed solutions anticipated similar problems and similar suggested solutions which he had to consider afterwards in India. "Dyarchy"—a system of dual government by which some subjects are reserved to the exclusive control of the Governor and his advisers, while others are transferred to the control of a native Prime Minister and his colleagues—was one of these shadows thrown before. But while in India dyarchy worked somehow by rule of thumb, and could be defended as a method of educating Indians in the art of self-government, in the West Indies it would have been impossible to introduce it without risk of misunderstanding: for it would have meant withdrawing from elected members the right to discuss certain subjects which they had discussed unchecked for years. It would have been thought a step backwards, and might in fact have proved so.

POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP

" Communal electorates/" the bone of contention between Hindu and Moslem in India, had been suggested in the West Indies too. But Wood rejected this solution on the ground that to canalise thus narrowly the sentiments and political interests of large active minded communities like the East Indians in Trinidad would be a misfortune both for Government and the governed.

However desirable Federation might be, he held it, as did the Commission afterwards, to be an aspiration for the future. It is remarkable that federation in the West Indies presents difficulties which are either absent or not so great in India. The conditions and populations of the different islands are so various and the connection between them so slight that it is difficult at their present stage of development to imagine a scheme of federation which would not be either so loose as to be ineffective or so tight as to sacrifice the interests of some of the islands to others. Money was the magic word necessary to make development schemes really work. Even in British Guiana, which they did not visit, it was money that was wanted to cope with the climate and increase the transport facilities. But all the colonics wanted money and, loyal as they were, were disposed to blame their poverty on the Home Government. Mr. Wood had to explain to the native workers that the constantly recurring declines in their exiguous wages were due, not to any maleficent action on the part of the British Government but simply to the trade cycle. Whether the natives accepted this explanation and were

THE MAGIC OF MONEY

comforted by it, or whether they replied with Lord Elton—

Tell the professors of economy
That here, obedient to their word, we lie—

is not recorded. The report was admittedly a very able document, and the visit was a landmark in the history of the West Indies. Within the limits imposed, the recommendations were perfectly sound. They do not cease to be sound now that the limits have been boldly swept away.

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

1922-1925

" Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not."

HUXLEY : *Technical Education*

THE little book which Edward Wood published in 1918 in conjunction with Sir George Lloyd (afterwards Lord Lloyd) was born prematurely. It was written while the war of 1914 was still not quite ended. The smoke of the battlefield obscured the prospect, and the authors' eyes failed, naturally enough, to pierce it. *The Great Opportunity* was an earnest appeal to the nation to arouse itself to the necessity of a sound policy in dealing promptly and efficiently with the pressing problems of education and agriculture, housing and national defence and other subjects. It is vigorous, if sometimes a little vague : and pleasantly tinged with the faint optimism very characteristic of one at least of the authors. But neither of them was any economist and neither had much knowledge of industry. They did not apparently foresee the vital facts which actually governed and controlled the national life during the miserable post-war years, and made it rather a mockery to talk of them as offering any " opportunity ", great

AFTERMATH OF WAR

or small. They saw nothing, for instance, of the catastrophic collapse of the export trades, and the strangling of international trade by economic nationalism : nor of the over-production, in trades like steel and shipping and coal-mining, the result of the enormous development of their plant and output during the war, which was one prime cause of the ghastly post-war Unemployment: nor of the grim necessity for stern " rationalisation " and all that that entailed : nor of the weary war debts squabbles and the evils that followed in their train. The slump which followed has often been misrepresented. Some trades and some districts were desperately hard hit. But the distress was very local. Some old trades expanded and prospered exceedingly : so did a crop of new trades, like artificial silk manufacture. Wealth, far more widely spread than ever before in this country, increased by leaps and bounds as the savings bank returns show. But the Government, harrassed by the debts question and the exchange difficulties, was convinced that it had no money to spend on luxuries—like education, for instance. This was the fact that stared Edward Wood in the face when in 1922 he was appointed Minister for Education.

Fifteen years before, the appointment of an extreme High Churchman to this office of all others would have raised a storm indeed. Then Nonconformist and Anglican, Secularist and Roman Catholic had been drawn up in battle array on the great educational questions of the day. Hours and hours of Parliamentary time were devoted to the " right of

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entry " and the justice of a rate which compelled Nonconformists to pay for a religious teaching in which they did not believe, to the expediency of a State subsidy to Roman Catholic and Anglican schools which could no longer be maintained without such aid, and to the satisfaction or otherwise of " simple Bible teaching ". Denominationalist and undenominationalist raged, like the Psalmist's heathen, furiously. Mr. Birrell had tried his hand at a settlement and failed: Mr. Runciman had tried his and failed: and Mr. McKenna had tried his and had not really succeeded. In the Lobby Mr. McKenna had met Mr. Harold Cox, the member who agreed with nobody about anything, and Mr. Cox had congratulated him on his Bill. " You really like it ? " asked Mr. McKenna, startled. " I do indeed," said Mr. Cox enthusiastically. " Then I must look at it again," replied Mr. McKenna gloomily; " I am afraid there must be something wrong with it."

Mr. Wood's views on these burning questions were not in doubt. He was a quite impenitent High Anglican. " The State," he had said in *The Great Opportunity*,

must decide whether or not it intends to retain religious teaching as part of its educational requirements. If it does, it will have frankly to take its stand upon the only intelligible principle by which its wishes may be made practically effective, and give generous and unprejudiced support to whatever arrangement may be necessary to enable children to receive religious teaching in school hours according to their parents' creed at the hands of persons who believe in what they teach."

TEACHERS AND TAUGHT

Such words, any time before the first world war, would have roused a chorus of indignant cries. But the war had at least partly swept away the sectarian issues. The great public were weary of them. A considerable body of opinion, including many teachers, was shamefacedly conscious that the real interests of the children had been sacrificed in the strife. The business of education now was primarily a matter of efficient administration, requiring in its head chiefly industry, tact and sympathy. Mr. Wood was regarded by most people rather with curiosity than prejudice.

Except for his great height, he was not at this time a particularly remarkable figure. He looked what he was, a shy, courteous, mild-mannered, English gentleman. He was forty-three, but looked younger: of the type of the Cecils, but without the Cecilian oddities. There was no trace in his speeches of the sombre rhetoric which in Lord Hugh Cecil's speeches occasionally touches great oratory: nor any suggestion in his calm rather liberal minded Conservatism of the acid partisanship which distinguished Lord Robert Cecil, as he then was, in his younger days. His task was no doubt difficult and perhaps rather dull. But it was not impossible, as it would have been at an earlier date. His progress was watched with a not unfriendly attention.

And after all nothing very much happened. If he had had a clear-cut scheme of reforms, he would probably have found it impossible to carry them in the atmosphere of the time. For the old enthusiasm

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of the more intelligent working man for education as a thing desirable in itself had largely evaporated. Life was too difficult and too uncertain. There were too many distractions. The middle classes, wearied with the sectarian struggle, were sick of the name of education. The local authorities, harassed by housing problems and traffic problems and the never-ending difficulty of preventing the rates rising to impossible figures, were irritable and difficult. The teachers themselves were discontented and disheartened. They had many grievances, some very real. Some of the schools in the poorer urban areas and many in the rural districts were deplorably ill found. The classes were often far too large still, making rather a mockery of the mild exhortations of the well-meaning Minister. "Were we giving," he asked anxiously, "behind all our information the right sort of motive for life, the right scale of values, and right qualities that were going to carry the individual through a very rough busy life?" But the problem of the teacher confronted with a class of forty was not how to teach well, but how to teach at all.

In the Education Office itself, as in all his other posts without exception, he was personally very popular. But he was probably glad when Mr. Baldwin, with a flash of inspiration, transferred him to the Board of Agriculture. For this was an office for which he was ideally suited. He was a landowner and farmer and a very successful one, with a long tradition of successful farming ancestors behind him. The authors of *The Great Opportunity* might not know very much

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about industry. But they understood the problems of agriculture. They had made one or two rather original suggestions, such as the desirability of breaking down the social barriers between the farmer and the labourer, and the possibility of encouraging a system of agricultural education which would teach country children to realise "something of the infinite variety of interest by which their lives are constantly surrounded", and so cause the country to cease to be, as it is so often to-day, "a dull grey place in unpleasing contrast to the gas lamps and cinema shows of the towns". Wood himself knew and loved and understood the life of the country and country things. "The truth is," he said soon after his appointment "that agriculture and the things associated with it demand a greater measure of intelligence, enterprise and grip than the work done by the thousands of townsmen with their rule of thumb methods in many industries." The farmers welcomed with some enthusiasm a farmer Minister.

He began his task with high hopes and great energy. He had conceived an imposing scheme for the convention of a Grand Council of Agriculture at which every branch of the industry—landowners, farmers and labourers—were all to be represented. They were to discuss and produce an agricultural policy which, supported by the whole industry, would stem the tide of agricultural depression. There were difficulties from the beginning. First the Farmers' Union, never an easy body to handle, raised objections which were only after some time and trouble on the

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part of the Minister eventually overcome. Then one of the smaller Labour Unions refused its support to the scheme. Finally, the agricultural labourers as a body declined to come in, animated apparently by the incurable suspicion of a depressed class. Even the patient Minister had at last to acknowledge defeat. The Grand Council of Agriculture could not even be constituted.

Wood was bitterly disappointed. He told the farmers that they had "lost a great opportunity". Perhaps they had. But it is not certain, for agriculture, as the Minister himself knew well, is not one trade but a bundle of numerous unrelated industries in almost accidental association. Many of these trades have little to do with each other. The interests of some are positively opposed to those of others. It is very doubtful whether in these circumstances such a thing as an "agricultural policy", supported or endorsed by all agriculturalists alike, can be said to exist. Protection is the policy which has come nearest to securing the unanimous support of the country districts; and the unanimity is delusive, as Mr. Belloc's famous satire pointed out. For what the Kentish hop growers desired in this skit was not protection from foreign hops. It was not the foreign hops that the Kent hop growers wanted keeping out: it was the Sussex hops.

Meanwhile, Wood pressed on with his own policy, the objects of which he declared to be to maintain the acreage of arable land and to stimulate the economic production of food. Neither aim was easy of attainment in those dismal times. The best English corn

PROTECTION

land needs no protection. It is among the best in the world. But there is not very much of it, and it is doubtful whether the second-rate land can be cultivated economically in normal times in the teeth of foreign competition at prices which the towns will consent to pay. The new Minister had two fixed convictions. He believed in the value, if not the indispensability, of the landowner as a partner in a prosperous agriculture. And he thought that British agriculture had had a raw deal when the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846, and that on the whole agriculture stood to lose rather than gain by the intervention of the State.

There was, of course, something to be said for both of these theories. It is unquestionably true that the landowner in the past has played a very important part in the development of British agriculture, and that its present structure assumes that he is still doing so. It is true also that even a sternly doctrinaire Free Trader might now admit that the destruction in 1846 of its defences, which left British agriculture exposed to disastrous competition, with the subsequent development of the prairies, was not in the best interests of the nation. It is true that agriculture continued fairly prosperous till about 1879, when a series of shockingly bad seasons ruined the harvests. But the fact of the decline, and the further fact that no serious attempt was made to arrest it, cannot be denied. Cheaper food could have been assured by intelligent statesmanship without allowing agriculture to go to pieces as fast and as completely as it did.

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But what Mr. Wood was up against was the fact that the landowner can no longer perform, as a result of heavy taxation and some other causes, the function which he used to perform in the past. The water-logged fields, the broken gates and fences, the tumble-down cottages of the countryside were, and to some extent still are, everywhere witnesses of the fact. Mr. Wood himself had felt it wiser to part with Temple Newsam,¹ and for a landowner he was exceptionally well off. But if the landowner could no longer pay for the necessary repairs and drainage of his estate, who could, except the State ?

This dilemma weakened his hands in continual brushes with the Socialists and with Mr. Lloyd George. In one passage of arms with the latter, he flashed into one of his very rare epigrams. "Mr. Lloyd George's remedy for agriculture," he said, "was a lethal draught for the landowner and a straight waistcoat for the farmer." But the landowner was staggering under the effects of a lethal draught administered to him long before Mr. Lloyd George came on the scene. And strait waistcoats were coming for the farmers in any case in the shape of Pig Boards and Bacon Boards and Milk Marketing Boards and State restrictions of every kind. The tide of State interference could not be stemmed. It was no local phenomenon. It was just as pronounced in individualist America, where the Government had to meet the trek westward of thousands of bankrupt farmers

¹ See Appendix I I.

THE FARMER'S CLAIM

by settling them on farms with grants on long term credit, subject, as the taxpayers' interest demanded, to as rigorous a supervision of their cropping and marketing methods as Bolshevik Russia ever attempted.

Meanwhile by an odd irony the critic of State intervention was driven into the position of championing one of the most daring cases of State intervention in our times. The Sugar Beet industry in Great Britain exists only by the steady support of a huge subsidy. Mr. Wood's defence of it in the Commons was blandly naive. "What is the use of opposing the subsidy," he asked, "when the industry cannot be made to pay without it?" But the very reason the Opposition opposed the subsidy was that the industry could not be made to pay without it. His considered defence of it was as a bold experiment which might lead, if all parties to it did their duty, to the establishment of a valuable new industry. The danger of such experiments is that all the parties so rarely do their duty. The temptation to take the cash and do nothing in return is too great. The Minister himself was not unaware of this risk. He uttered a grave warning on the subject to the farmers. "The taxpayer, though grievously overburdened, is putting many millions of money into this courageous and, I believe, enlightened attempt," he said,

to establish in these islands a new industry which, if successful, will mean the home-production of a substantial part of our requirements of an essential commodity which otherwise comes wholly from abroad.

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He called upon the farmers to justify these sacrifices by taking a "national view" of the enterprise and not seeking to "exploit the years of plenty". But the fact that the warning was necessary was the most significant thing about it. Clearly he realised that some farmers at any rate were taking anything but a national view of an experiment which they treated simply as a grant in aid of a distressed industry. They made as much hay as they could while the artificial sunlight shone.

The weakness of his position, as against Mr. Lloyd George and his Socialist critics, was that he had no real remedy for the evils which they were united in deploring. Their remedies might be unsound. But he had none. His hope lay, he said, in the "cumulative effect of small reforms". But the situation in the countryside of Britain had got far beyond such homoeopathic treatment. Moreover, the lack of capital which was its immediate cause was making the small reforms themselves impossible. The Minister complained bitterly that postmen were occupying houses intended for agricultural labourers. But even a postman must live somewhere: and of what avail was it to turn the postman out of a house if the agricultural labourer could not afford to rent it?

The immense difficulty of the housing question in the country arose from much deeper and graver causes—such as the lack of building materials on the spot, the dearness of transport and labour, and above all the impossibility of building any house for which



MASTER OF HOUNDS

Lord Halifax then Lord Irwin at a Yorkshire Meet

SMALL REFORMS

the rural labourer with his small wage could afford to pay an economic rent. Clearly a sane and efficient social economy will provide adequate houses at rents which they can pay for both the postman and the labourer. But the way to such an economy over ground encumbered with the ruins of an old and broken system was not easy. In the disastrous slump of the post-war years there was probably for the time being no way. The Minister found time, short as his stay at the Board was, to make a pilgrimage with Lord Bledisloe to Denmark to study the small-holdings system there. He admired it as all who have seen it have done. But he seems to have come later to the conclusion that the model could not be transferred, and that the English farmer had not a great deal to learn directly from it.

Baulked in his desire for a Grand Council of Agriculture, Edward Wood fell back on another method. If the farmers would not take counsel among themselves, perhaps they would take counsel with him. He would "invite each section to confer with him". This method was more successful, and bore some fruit. It made him the most popular Minister of Agriculture of recent times in this country. He probably learned a good deal himself that was useful to him afterwards in other conferences with farmers in a very different land. The farmers on their part were encouraged by the interest shown in their affairs by the government. It did not give them the "security" and "confidence" which he had declared in his little book to be essential. But even

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encouragement is an asset in dark times. The invitation to become Viceroy of India, as great a surprise to him as it was to the general public, ended after only a twelvemonth Edward Wood's tenure of office at the Board of Agriculture. His arrival in 1924 had evoked only a moderately warm welcome from the farmers. His departure was bitterly regretted by them in 1925. Very few Ministers have so enhanced a reputation in so short a time.

One fact perhaps he realised rather more clearly as a result of this experience, namely the definite dependence of British agriculture upon the towns. To "marry the town and the country" was a favourite phrase of his. Nothing is more necessary if both are to thrive. But in emphasising the dependence of town on country most spokesmen of agriculture tend to ignore or at least to slur the dependence of the country on the town. In a speech in January, 1936, Lord Halifax, as he had then become, redressed the balance with as decisive an emphasis as any Free Trader could wish. "There was one thing he wanted his farming friends to remember," he said—

The best market for our farm produce was surely the home market: but unless we allowed foreign countries to sell to us a reasonable amount they could not afford to buy the manufactures that we wanted to sell them. And if they could not do that our industrial population would be unable to buy what the farmers wanted to sell.

The economics no doubt are not very abstruse. Lord Halifax has never professed himself an economist.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

But the passage is quite a good example of the simple clarity and honesty of thought which has so often made it possible for him to reach and influence minds which would be shut against more elaborate expositions.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRUE VALUES OF LIFE

"To know is nothing at all: to imagine is everything."

ANATOLE FRANCE : *The Daughter of Clementine*

IN the 'nineties and the first decade of the twentieth century there were two couples whom the House of Commons watched with benevolent satisfaction—Sir William Harcourt and his son Lewis, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and his son Austen. Austen Chamberlain's devotion to his father was the almost mystical adoration of a fanatical royalist for the person of his Sovereign. This king also could do no wrong. Years after Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was dead, his son was still earnestly supporting policies not, as somebody said, because he believed in them, but because his father had done so.

The attachment between the Harcourts was of a rather different quality. In public life Sir William Harcourt was a rather pompous and irritable person. But in private he was one of the wittiest of men, and one of the most charming of companions, and his son and secretary prized most naturally an intimacy which most intelligent men would have envied him. But the bond between Edward Wood and his father was much deeper than either of these loyalties. It transcended altogether the ordinary ties of filial

FATHER AND SON

affection or the admiring respect which an older man of distinction can command from a youth to whom he has been for years a friend and protector.

Whatever view might be held of the second Lord Halifax's ecclesiastical tenets, no one who knew anything about him ever doubted for a moment that he was a profoundly religious man. To him in simple truth the things which were seen were temporal; it was the things which were not seen that were eternal. He looked upon what most men call real life as a shadow show; the reality lay behind it. "The actual framework of everyday life," as his son had said, "had value according as it corresponded to something more profound than itself, to be felt rather than seen." Not that he thought meanly of the shadow show. On the contrary he rejoiced in it exceedingly, for he was a person of exuberant energy and vitality, and the word "delightful" was ever on his lips and pen. Nor did his conception of the world cut him off in any way from commerce with his fellows, except perhaps from the pure worldling or the downright profligate; for he was a cheerful outspoken person who delighted in hospitality. But it did perhaps spread between him and those who were in imperfect sympathy with his beliefs the kind of veil which parts, insensibly but decisively, men who live by definitely different standards and attach different importance to different things. In compensation, where this veil was withdrawn he could enjoy an intimacy of communion and fellowship impossible to men with no fixed standards of their

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own. With his son, there was no veil. His son shared eagerly and completely his spiritual outlook on the world of sense. The result was a union as close as it is rare.

The religion of a public man is not necessarily a matter of public concern. What Edward Wood called "the adventure of faith" is a personal matter on which it is generally futile, and always impertinent, for strangers to attempt to pry. But the philosophy behind a public man's faith is a legitimate public interest, because, if he is at all sincere, it must colour, if it does not absolutely direct, his policy and administration. Edward Wood was always, both in his writings and in his speeches, quite frank about the principles by which he guided himself. He held, like his father, that the "true values of life" lay beneath and beyond the surface and could not be really apprehended by the reason alone. He had a firm conviction of the limitations of the human intelligence, and an antipathy, perhaps based as much on taste as intellectual conviction, to the harder and more dogmatic forms of rationalism. Possibly the clearest published statement of his position is that which appears in a *Life of Keble* that he wrote at the request of the late George Russell in 1909. "The claim of reason to provide an exhaustive basis of thought and action," he there said, "and the refusal to acknowledge the existence of any philosophy outside her own, contain a wider and more threatening danger than any one specific heresy. For unlike the ordinary heresy, the rationalistic spirit has no preference for

THE CLAIMS OF REASON

one faith rather than another, but is impartially destructive of all faith alike. In the pure scheme of rationalism faith must perish. For the essence of faith consists in a bold venture into the unknown, which each must make for himself, bringing its own reward of certainty." This adventure, he says, is " unpalatable to reason " :—

Failing to find the requisite scientific demonstration, it shrinks back from the venture to which faith would summon it. And thus, when nothing may be accepted that does not stand on scientific conclusions, both the matter and the opportunity of faith are gone.

This attitude is much more comprehensible to-day than it was when he stated it thirty years ago. The belief of the nineteenth century rationalist, that the human reason is the master key to all the doors of knowledge, no longer enjoys the same credit as it did. Lord Kelvin's " engineer's universe " is gone, and most scientists would admit readily enough with Jeans that the ultimate facts even of the physical universe are probably outside the range of the human reason. The intelligence cannot grasp even how they work, let alone how they are constituted. On the other hand, theologians who are poles removed from Wood's tenets, would accept his idea that there are forms of knowledge other than the purely intellectual, not less valid and perhaps sometimes of higher import. Dr. Streeter, whose theology would have repelled Wood as emphatically as his winning personality would have attracted him, postulates an aesthetic

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knowledge independent of the pure reason, and another form of knowledge not readily distinguishable from Wood's own "adventure of faith". The crux of the position stated is the precise meaning of this "adventure of faith". The author himself would have said that it was impossible to define it because "each man must make it for himself". And this answer does not imply, as the scoffer would suggest, that there is no such thing. The fact that an experience is limited to certain people, or that certain others do not experience it, does not prove that no such experience exists. An intelligent blind man does not doubt the fact of the visible world, however little he may himself be able to conceive of it. Nor does an educated deaf man question the magic of the music he can never hear.

Wood's antipathy to rationalism was deep-seated and constantly expressed. "The deepest things in life," he said, "are all matters upon which reason unassisted cannot be allowed to say the last word." Again—

Love, laughter, sorrow, danger, courage, reverence, sympathy—all these, that are the elemental things of human life, are supra rational.

This passage seems surely to overstate the case. For there is a rational element in most of these things, and it is at least not certain that it is the inferior element. The irrational courage of the bull is not superior to the cold courage of the scientist who sacrifices deliberately his life in a hazardous experi-

TOLERATION

ment for the good of humanity. Reason has the last word in this case, and a very noble word it is. Maternal love, again, owes perhaps almost nothing to reason ; and the scientific imagination owes almost everything to it. Yet maternal love is not greater than the scientific imagination, nor vice versa. There is no comparison possible.

Edward Wood's bugbear drove him into another devious by-path. In the *Life of Keble* he has a characteristically gentle attack on the doctrine of toleration. It had been pushed, he thought, " too far ". " Those to whom their principles mean anything," he said,

can never act as if they were non-existent, while it is only those who possess principles themselves who are likely to comprehend the existence of the principles of other people.

It is admirably expressed, and it is easy to see the sort of " toleration " he was attacking—the weakness which fancies itself broad-minded because it condones wickedness and the feebleness which masquerades as charity because it dare not withstand folly. But the argument in itself seems what the late Lord Salisbury used to call a " slippery slope ". If a man may never act as if his principles did not exist, must not Torquemada continue to burn heretics and Hitler to rob and murder Jews, because they cannot stop without abandoning their principles ? It is no answer to say that the principles in these cases are bad. That is not the point. The point is not what principles

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a man should have, but how far he must continue to obey those he has whatever the results to himself and others.

By an odd irony, the critic of toleration was destined within twenty years to become its most impassioned advocate. The appeals which he addressed in vain to the furious fanatics who hacked each other to pieces in the streets of Delhi and Lahore were among his most eloquent utterances. But the contrast between them and the passage quoted is more apparent than real, for his own spirit was at all times loftily tolerant. No man could respect more profoundly principle in another, however alien to his own the creed which inspired it. His sympathies were wide. An example of this is the address which he delivered in St. Paul's Cathedral after Lawrence of Arabia's death. "I cannot doubt," he said in a telling passage,

that some deep religious impulse moved him; not, I suppose, that which for others is interpreted through systems of belief and practice, but rather some craving for the perfect synthesis of thought and action which alone could satisfy his test of ultimate truth and his conception of life's purpose.

It does not appear that he ever knew Lawrence well. Probably their sympathy would have been imperfect. Lawrence certainly was a mystic too; but of a harder, fiercer type altogether. He had lived long alone in the desert. He was a bitterly disappointed and frustrated man. The shadow show

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

—for such, like Wood himself, he held it—had tried him harshly, and he hated the shadows and the shows. Edward Wood's ordeal had been gentler, as his nature was. He might not have quite his father's gusto and delight in the small things of life. He did not hate it, as, in some of his moods at any rate, Lawrence did.

But he disliked the materialism of modern life as he disliked rationalism. In part his distaste for it was simply the born countryman's impatience of the town life to which he can never get quite used. In a less degree it was no doubt the aristocrat's aversion from the vulgarity of many phases of modern life. But essentially it was a moral objection. "We had only to look," he once said gravely to an audience of educationalists,

at the extent to which the external developments of the last twenty or thirty years had sharpened and extended the range of temptation to which human nature was subject to realise that they of themselves could not bring the solution of many of the things by which human nature was tormented.

But then what could ? He told the teachers, with his characteristic quiet simplicity, that "the secret of the only real happiness for men lay in the attempt to love God and to translate that love into the service of men". The thing to be desired he thought to be a certain balance and poise of mind. "Learning and knowledge and intelligence were not enough without certain qualities of mind and spirit

THE TRUE VALUES OF LIFE

—self-discipline, steadiness, consideration—in short, a balance and poise of mind that went to make up the perfect man."

His own balance and poise are evident. Most mystics who have intervened in the management of affairs have been ruined for lack of commonsense. They have despised the common world in their other-worldliness ; and the common world has revenged itself by ruining their schemes for its salvation. Aloofness of this kind was not in his philosophy. As his father said of him, " He neglected nothing." There is a certain triteness in his speeches occasionally which seems at first sight a weakness. It is not certain that it is. It is only the evidence of a mind which clings very closely and steadily to facts and refuses to see them otherwise than as plain men and women see them. That is not necessarily a weakness. There are times when it is a power.

If a philosophy is to be judged by its fruits, Lord Halifax's needs no apology. One of the best known episodes in his life is the scene when he came to consult his father after he had been invited to become Viceroy of India. The decision was very grave for both. His father was eighty-five. It was most improbable, if he accepted the offer, that they would ever see each other again. He would have to abandon the kind of life he liked, and the society of many he loved, to face enormous difficulties and some real dangers in a far distant country. He would have to leave his children behind in England. His father has described the sequel in

THE CARDINAL'S RING

a passage which is a classic of its kind. There is nothing to add to it:

I said "Never mind the consequences. If you really try to discover what you ought to do and then do it, you need never reproach yourself afterwards. What we must do is to say our prayers." So we both straightway went to church, and when we came out, I said to Edward "I think you really have to go," and he said, "I think so too. . . ." He did not neglect anything, but did all that seemed to him right and good, upheld the honour of an Englishman and the best reputation of a Yorkshireman.

There can never have been a closer bond between father and son. A rather moving story illustrates it once more. As he lay dying Cardinal Mercier drew off an amethyst ring which he always wore and offered it to old Lord Halifax. He refused it. "Yes, yes," said the Abbe Portal, standing by, "For Edward too." Then Lord Halifax took the ring. The amethyst is now in a chalice used in York Minster on the anniversary of his and Cardinal Mercier's deaths.

Cynics have sometimes hinted that Edward Wood's conscience was an invaluable political asset. It is true that the conviction that some rather rare men instinctively inspire in all who have to do with them that they are in the Biblical phrase "men who fear God, true and righteous in all their ways" is a great power. Faith is a force, as even people who have none involuntarily confess. The House of Commons is as worldly-minded an assembly as most: yet members

listened respectfully, startled and sobered, when Mr. Timothy Healy informed them in the Education Bill debates that if his son knew that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that Mary was His mother, he had learnt all that it really behoved him to know. The younger wits on the Conservative side of the House often baited George Lansbury unmercifully. Yet there were times when his utter sincerity struck his tormentors dumb, and the stark simplicity of his unwavering faith made the wisdom of the wise seem for the moment a kind of foolishness.

Doubtless something depends on circumstances and on the quality of the faith displayed. Post-war Germany curiously produced three statesmen of great moral elevation: and they all failed. Ebert, the Socialist President, a kind of German Lansbury, died, worn out by a task too great for him. The lachrymose piety of Dr. Marx, the Republican candidate who stood against Hindenburg, was a liability rather than an asset to himself and his party. Dr. Brüning, Hitler's predecessor as Chancellor, an able man and a high-minded Christian, fell among thieves. He was tomahawked by the savages of his own tribe.

The practical effect of Wood's constant preoccupation with spiritual things is seen in part probably in the air of detachment with which he has always moved in the political world. This detachment might have seemed a handicap. In some spheres—in literature, for example—it probably is. There it will readily take the form of dilettantism; and an impartial critic might hold that this charge is true in this case. He can turn

THREE FAILURES

a phrase finely. He has a most delicate sensitiveness to the beauty of words and the graces of style which he can display to perfection when the spirit moves him. Anyone who doubts this should look up the charming address on "reading" which he gave to the Convocation of Delhi University on March 21st, 1930. In its own way it is a gem. But the spirit is not always stirring, and, although he cares, even passionately, for beautiful literature, he does not care enough to sacrifice everything else for its achievement; which is probably necessary, if achievement on the highest scale there is to be.

But detachment in politics is another matter. There is a good deal to be said for it. The statesman who is absolutely immersed in the party game is very liable to turn into the professional politician whom American critics deplore and denounce. He need not be corrupt: but he will be a little tarnished from his constant meditation on division lists and hostile amendments, or the necessity of placating this section of public opinion and of silencing or winning over this or that dangerous critic. In his gentle but firm refusal to allow these things to represent for him the "true values of life", Lord Halifax has been well inspired.

PART II
INDIA—THE VICEROY

CHAPTER VII
POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE
1926-1928

" And pomp and feast and revelry
With mask and antique pageantry."—*L'Allegro*

LORD IRWIN'S appointment was received in England with mild astonishment, and in India without enthusiasm. The *Times*, while approving the choice, spoke of his "stay at home" tastes. European opinion in India feared he would not be "firm" enough. Indian opinion feared he would be too "firm" altogether. The Europeans would have preferred some figure better known in India, like Lord Ronaldshay. The Indian Press was cautious. But one Indian paper was ill advised enough to venture upon prophecy. "A Conservative in politics, an aristocrat with a slight leaven of military service/" it wrote, "he is just the type that can be expected to be ruthless in emergencies, with the ruthlessness of the bigot impervious to Radical influence." Few forecasts have been more dramatically disproved by the event.

There is nothing in the world quite like Indian pomp. After Hickleton and Garrowby, and the grey dignity of Oxford and Westminster, the blaze of its Oriental glory must have been a very surprising

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

experience. Even now there is a faint thrill to be had from merely reading the description of Lord and Lady Irwin's state entry into Delhi on April 7th, 1926.

Their Excellencies were accompanied all through the troop-lined streets by a Viceregal escort of cavalry and Royal Horse Artillery and the Viceroy's Body Guard. The cavalry made a gallant picture as, greeted by a fanfare from the Viceroy's trumpeters, it slowly trotted along the winding red paths into the grounds of the Viceregal Lodge.

New Delhi, with its cupolas and colonnades and avenues of trees watching their own reflections in the pools before them, a pageant in itself, was not then completed. It was not finished till 1929. But the New Delhi Parliament House, which combines under one roof the Chamber of Princes, the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly, was opened by Lord Irwin with the graceful ceremonial eloquence of which he is master. He spoke of the mystic significance of the Circle which "stands for something more than unity. From the earliest times it has been also an emblem of permanence and the poet has seen in the ring of light a true symbol of eternity."

Pageant followed pageant. There was the tour in Hyderabad, where the Nizam gave his sumptuous State banquet. There was the wonderful scene at Benares, the Holy City of the Hindus, where "worshippers and priests gathered to do honour to the Viceroy as he stood just outside a raised platform

THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

while a saffron-robed priest blessed Lord Irwin and his family." In Kashmir there was a State procession of four boats each rowed by sixty white-clad oarsmen. There were processions in Bombay and Bikaner and Lahore. Everywhere the crowds gathered in their thousands ; and the painted elephants trod slowly their solemn way through the thronged streets of one city after another.

No Viceroy has been more active, or travelled more assiduously through the vast country which it is his business to rule. His tour on the North West frontier—his first great tour in India—impressed him immensely. He visited the wild Waziristan country and saw for himself how roads and railways and political and military organisation are bringing peace and order into the savage border lands. He saw the marvel of the Punjab irrigation schemes and how every year " bit by bit we see the green line of cultivation pushing its way forward into the dusty brown of the desert"—a thing " as close akin to creation as it is given to man to do " he told the Bengal Club at Calcutta afterwards. In 1926 there was the great Durbar in Lahore, with tea in the wonderful Shalimar gardens where three tiers of smooth turf shaded by mango and cypress trees rise one above the other, while fountains and cascades cool the air and the gorgeous colours of the Mogul's artists still glow faintly on the walls. Next year they—for Lady Irwin was nearly always with him—were the guests of the Maharajah of Kashmir, who received them in a costume of rich blue wearing priceless

jewels. There was cavalry with postilions in blue and silver, and a magnificent tent embroidered with Kashmir work, with carpets of scarlet and gold; and elephants, of course, with gold trappings, and gaily caparisoned ponies. They were at Bikaner too this year, where huge crowds massed on the city wall to see them, and the Maharajah met them at the head of his cavalry and camel corps. And at Kapurthala the Viceroy stood in his sombre morning dress side by side with the ruling Prince who wore a huge crown of diamonds : and they watched rams battling, and a Turkishstrong man who allowed an elephant to tread upon his body without apparently suffering any inconvenience. In 1928 they were at Dholpur. There there was yet another wonderful procession, with saluting elephants with howdahs of gold and silver, with camels and hunting cheetahs and retainers in antique armour and guns drawn by bullocks. In 1929 came the great tour in the South. They visited Travancore, where there were " snake boats " with flying flags and banners and ornamental umbrellas : so crowded that some of them nearly sank. They saw the Maharajah of Mysore's wonderful palace, with its sixty thousand electric lights, shining like a gigantic diamond, outlining every dome and pillar about it. So they passed, at the very end of the year, to Hyderabad, the Nizam's capital, through streets line mile after mile with blue-clad cavalry and Arab troops from the Yemen and the Manchesters in their khaki. The Nizam gave Lady Irwin an enormous sum for her All India Education League :

TRANSPORT ANCIENT AND MODERN

and at the State banquet Lord Irwin improved the occasion, as he always did when speaking with Princes, by preaching the doctrine of united India.

The mere list of their methods of transit is an amusing evidence of the ubiquity of their travels. Ancient and modern jostled each other continually. Apart from the inevitable elephant and the silver State coach in which they rode in Kapurthala and the boats in Kashmir, aeroplane and motor car were pressed into service too. Lord Irwin was the first Viceroy to see Peshawar from the air. Starting from the Sutlej canal, he took his first journey on camel back. He motored with his wife up the Khyber Pass. The motor, where the Viceregal train was not requisitioned, seems to have been his most usual method of getting about. But he had always been, like his father, a great walker. He walked over one hundred miles through the magnificent scenery of the Simla hills with only four attendants to guide him through the secret jungle paths. Probably he enjoyed this experience much more than he did most of his ceremonial progresses.

For in his heart he was no lover of ceremony. He kept due state, and would suffer none to forget that he was the King's representative. The etiquette of Government House in his day was relaxed somewhat from the Oriental magnificence which Lord Reading, his predecessor, had affected. But it was still Court etiquette. Yet where forms and ceremonies stood in his way, he made very short work of them. He amazed official India by walking over to Church

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unattended and in mufti instead of driving there in state with outriders. His officials were worried by his occasional habit of wandering about incognito. The police were much frightened when he insisted on doing this in Calcutta slums. He heard that conditions there were exceptionally bad, and he went to see them for himself. He opened the session of the Legislative Assembly in the New Delhi Parliament House in ordinary morning dress, not in the ceremonial uniform which most Viceroys would have thought it necessary to assume ; and he refused to allow the Assembly to adjourn for the day after the Viceroy's Speech, as the solemn custom was. He bade them get on with their work. No Viceroy has ever been easier of access: but he maintained the dignity of his position. When he heard that Gandhi wished to see him, he let it be known that he would receive him if he asked for an interview. But he would under no circumstances make the first advance himself.

Behind the facade of official dignity which hedged Government House, moreover, the old simple life of Hickleton and Garrowby continued under the strangely alien skies. The dogs scampered over the Viceroy's Palace as they had done over the old Yorkshire manor houses. And in the evenings when work was done charades were organised among the Viceroy's house party. They "dressed up" as the children used to do at Hickleton in the old days. The skies were different indeed. But the spirit was the same.

A HOME FROM HOME

The Viceroy of India is committed by his office to a great deal of formal hospitality. Visitors with introductions from England—complete strangers or slight acquaintances—are continually appearing. A large part of most days is devoted to what Bacon called "ceremonies and respects". But behind this official facade the Irwins strove, not unsuccessfully, to build up a home life on the Yorkshire model. In the cold weather the Viceroy's House was full of English visitors—the sort of visitors who would have filled Hickleton or Garrowby. It was an English country house in India.

Lord Irwin was fascinated with India, as was Sir John Simon¹, and indeed all intelligent Englishmen who have been brought into close contact with the vivid life of the great mysterious country. He understood the Indian mind better probably than any Englishman of his day. He made more Indian friends, and more intimate ones, than any Viceroy of recent years. Lady Irwin shared his enthusiasms. But the Viceroy was always an Englishman in exile. He lived in India, as nearly as the circumstances permitted, the life of an English country gentleman. His leisure in Delhi was spent in the pursuits which he would have followed had he been in England. Almost every day he found time for a morning ride or a game of tennis in the cool of the evening. The young men who were his aides-de-camp in Delhi were fortunate indeed. He delighted greatly in their company. It is quite a mistake to regard him

¹ Now Lord

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as at any time a cold, detached ascetic. He had been himself a rather boisterous boyish young man, entering eagerly into the sports and " rags " of the Yorkshire Yeomanry. Now he listened with amused sympathy to the chatter of the young men about him, and their tales of last night's dance and yesterday's adventures while pig-sticking. Once, while he was engaged in a grave conversation on a vital aspect of the negotiations with Gandhi, a great uproar arose suddenly in the A.D.C's room. " We must go down and find out what is happening there," cried the Viceroy, and hurried off with his guest to discover.

CHAPTER VIII
THE DARK DAYS
1929-1930

" Excess of severity is not the path to order,
On the contrary, it is the path to the bomb."

MORLEY : *Recollections*

LORD CURZON used to complain that people were always talking of him when he was in India as if he never did anything but ride upon an elephant. " I have only ridden on an elephant thrice in my life," he said plaintively. But the world continued to believe that Lord Curzon was, spiritually speaking, never off an elephant. He remains for all time, whether viewed with reverence or with irony, an imposing figure, riding upon an elephant.

Lord Hardinge on the other hand left behind him a brilliant reputation as an administrator, a strong ruler at home and a jealous and vigilant guardian of the rights of Indians all the world over. It was said, and probably truly, that the loyalty of India in 1914 was due very largely to his firm and successful government.

Lord Irwin's administration could not possibly be charged with failing in anxiety to appreciate and to ameliorate Indian discontents. Unhappily it is impossible to pretend that it synchronised with anything but a disastrous period in the history

THE DARK DAYS

of British rule in India. That was not the Viceroy's fault, any more than it was the fault of the harassed officials who laboured to control the ever-rising tide of sedition and discontent, or the unfortunate police who had to face furious mobs out-numbering them as often as not by hundreds to one. The causes of these things lay far back in events and controversies which were already history when Lord Irwin entered upon office. The fact remains that the administration was powerless to control the disorders.

It was a dark and gloomy time. When he landed the hatred between Hindu and Mahomedan was raging more furiously than perhaps ever before. Political India, sullen, suspicious and discontented, was brooding angrily over its disappointed hopes and watching for fresh evidence that it had once again been tricked. Mr. Gandhi had introduced, with his civil disobedience movement, an agitation which it must in any case have been difficult for the Government to control, but which became far more so with the steadily recurring proof that he could not control it himself. On the fringe of the movement hovered small terrorist gangs, half-mad murderers like the fanatical Sikh who hacked Mrs. Curtis to death, or patriots to whose disordered minds assassination seemed the shortest road to independence. No political wisdom and no "firm" government could possibly have got these forces immediately and completely under control. It was a matter for time and statesmanship. And in the meantime the fire raged.



IN CALCUTTA

As Viceroy, driving on arrival with his predecessor, Lord Lytton

RIOT

The new Viceroy did his utmost. He made appeal after appeal to the warring sects. But they fell on deaf ears. In the April after his arrival there was fierce rioting in Calcutta. There were outrages in Bengal and in Delhi, in the North West Provinces, in the United Provinces and in the Punjab. The whole country was shaken by the murder of a prominent Hindu in the public streets by a Moslem fanatic. The next year saw savage rioting in Lahore. In 1929 the most serious of the attempts on the Viceroy's own life was made. In April, 1930 a peculiarly audacious raid was made on a police station at Chittagong. There was rioting at Peshawar and martial law had to be proclaimed at Sholapur. A bomb was thrown in the Legislative Assembly itself in 1928. This list could be indefinitely extended, but it is long enough to show the nature of the opposition which Lord Irwin had to face. It was not local, and it was not organised. It was the evil fruit of widespread discontent springing from many causes and manifesting itself in many ways. The difficulty of any general summary action against underground agitation of this kind is evident. Mr. Churchill's charge that Lord Irwin ignored difficulties while they were small and shrank from them when they were grown "monstrous" overlooks the nature of the difficulties. They never were small, and they became monstrous only in the sense that a suppressed agitation came momentarily to the surface.

The notion that Lord Irwin shrank from the use of force when he believed it necessary is singularly

THE DARK DAYS

baseless. He hated force, and had no belief in it as an ultimate solution. But he never scrupled to apply it when circumstances seemed to him to render it necessary. He was sometimes slow to use it. But he used it. When the Indian Press took to " inciting openly to violent and revolutionary action " he revived the Press Act and suppressed offending newspapers out of hand. When the situation in the North West Provinces became menacing, he enforced the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act. When the non-co-operators refused to pay their taxes, he sequestered their lands. When the Assembly impudently refused, on a legal quibble, to grant him powers to deport seditious alien agitators, he took the necessary powers by Ordinance. He was implacable in refusing to condone murder, however furiously the mob clamoured for clemency, and however expedient politically an unprincipled clemency might appear to be at the time. When all other means failed, he arrested the law-breaking non-co-operators. There were at one time nearly sixtyjhousea^

If force could have availed to solve the problem, it would surely have been solved. The actual evidence so far as it goes tends to show that exactly the contrary result flowed from the use of force to that which Lord Irwin's critics in England so confidently anticipated. The refusal to reprieve the Sholapur murderers led to a situation of the utmost gravity. The refusal to reprieve Baghat Singh led to violent rioting between the Hindus and the Moslems who had refused to join in the strike of protest against

DEADLOCK

his execution. The wholesale arrest of the non-co-operators led to a deadlock as embarrassing to the Government as to its opponents. To say this is not to suggest that the Government's action was wrong in the cases in question. What they show is that the Viceroy was absolutely right in the belief which he urged repeatedly that force by itself is no remedy. He did in the result end the deadlock created by the arrest of the non-co-operators. But not by force.

CHAPTER IX

"IRWIN THE MAN"

" His name is Standfast. He is certainly a right good pilgrim."

BUNYAN : *Pilgrim's Progress*

THE really astonishing fact is that through all the hatreds and suspicions of this gloomy time, the Viceroy's personal reputation shone out unchallenged, acknowledged in India by Indians and Europeans alike. Fanatical terrorists might attempt his life, and Congress extremists publicly flout him. But the mass of the people believed in the integrity of his purpose and the sincerity of his personal goodwill, even when they doubted or derided both the honesty and the goodwill of his Government. Gandhi, the most representative Indian of his time, held him the one Englishman who understood the Indian mind and spirit. The rabid Indian Press, bespattering daily with foul abuse the Indian Government and all its works, only on rare occasions ventured to assail the personal character of its head. Long before the famous interview with Gandhi, when he made his final attempt to establish " mutual trust " between the two nations, Lord Irwin's repute among Indians as a person who could himself be trusted had been fully established. If it had not been so the interview could never have taken place.

PERSONAL TRIUMPHS

This personal triumph is the more remarkable when it is considered that more than almost any other great office the Governor Generalship of India tends to overshadow and eclipse, by the very magnitude of its functions, the personality of its occupant. The great Viceroys have been men who have known how to handle firmly and well the great powers committed to them. They have been great because they have been Viceroys. With Lord Irwin the reverse was the case. His rare influence was derived not from the fact that he was Viceroy, but from the fact that he was Lord Irwin. " I want to see Irwin the man," cried Gandhi with a flash of his occasionally uncanny insight. He had realised the position.

A factor in what became the Viceroy's amazing personal popularity was beyond doubt the quiet assiduity with which he followed, in a strange land and through all the heavy pressure of his multifarious duties, the practices of his religion. His instructions that, when travelling, his train should be stopped at little wayside stations to enable the Viceroy to go to church soon became known. On the European community in India, not generally much noted for its piety, these things had a somewhat startling effect. On the Indian population it was far greater. They saw that here beyond question was a Christian who believed sincerely in Christianity : and they understood. The rumour that there was now a " holy man " in Government House could not be without its effect among the Indian races ; for the reputation of saints is higher in Delhi and Benares than it is

"IRWIN THE MAN

in Manchester and Glasgow, and the multiplicity of religions in India makes for a certain catholicity in judgment on the particular tenets of the saint. But if this had been all, Lord Irwin's reputation would never have become what it did.

For "Irwin the Man" sympathised, as very few ordinary Englishmen could, with the instinctive antagonism of Indian feeling to modern materialism and rationalism. But another secret of his influence undoubtedly lay in his singularly many-sidedness combined with indomitable energy. On his ceaseless tours he was constantly stopping his motor to chat with the men and women working in the fields. He talked familiarly with princes : but he talked too with the leather sellers, one of the lowest of Indian castes, and went into their homes. The farmers of the Central Provinces where India's three crops—wheat, rice, and cotton—meet, heard him gladly. They called him "the farmer Viceroy". The British soldiers on the North West Frontier welcomed in their Viceroy visitor a soldier like themselves. Trivial stories reveal the closeness and the ubiquity of his contacts, like the tale which he delighted to tell of the Hindu stationmaster who had "seen him off six times, and each time with greater pleasure" : and the other tale of the school at which he was giving prizes away. He announced a three days* holiday and was astonished to find the announcement received in stony silence. The smallest child came up to the Viceroy afterwards. "We wanted seven days," he said, looking up at him with round-eyed reproof.

LADY IRWIN'S SHARE

In a country in which sport is held in high honour, the Viceroy held his own without difficulty. Had he not shot panthers with "Ranji"? Was he not Master of the Delhi Hunt? In quite a different sphere he sympathised eagerly with the attempts to improve education in India. He was specially interested in the Indian Universities—in the Hindu University at Benares, the Moslem University at Aligarh and the Delhi University. It was in this field of education that Lady Irwin's help was so invaluable to him. She gave a new life and a new direction to the All India Women's Education League, founded in 1926 as a modest attempt to spread education among Indian women. Under her influence the League widened greatly and fruitfully the scope of its activities. It began to discuss such questions as factory and housing reform, compulsory part time education for women labourers, the traffic in women and children, the whole problem of polygamy and child marriage and similar matters. Lady Irwin made it a centre and focus for the able, high-minded women whose influence in the Indian nationalist movement, great already, is steadily growing.

In this she rendered an enduring service to India. Her life there was scarcely a happy one. She was in constant anxiety for her husband's health and safety. The climate tried him, and he suffered severely from malaria when he first landed. Her daughter too was very ill at one time, and she was torn asunder by divided loyalties, like most Englishwomen whose lot is cast in India—her duty to her husband in India and her duty to her three sons, still boys, at home.

She owned afterwards that no queen ever laid down her crown with greater relief than she did when they returned to England. But she did royal work in India and, like her husband's, it endures.

The same broad sympathies and quick comprehension which made it possible for the Viceroy to enter so readily into the diverse phases of Indian life were invaluable to him in his dealings with the political parties. He could understand Mr. Gandhi, if not completely, at any rate better than any other Englishman of his time. But he could understand too the Indian Liberals like Sir Taj Sapru, Mr. Sastri and Mr. Jayakar. This was of capital importance. They might have little or no following among their own countrymen. But they were many of them able and public-spirited men ; they worked hard under almost impossible conditions for a settlement of the British Indian quarrel: and they were successful in the sense that but for their untiring efforts it is most unlikely that any settlement would have been effected. But their efforts would have been in vain but for the sympathetic support of the Viceroy.

Even with the Congress Nationalists, sullen and intractable as they remained, Lord Irwin's relations were as friendly as they would permit them to be. He could be stern with mere impertinence, such as Mr. Patel occasionally displayed. But he never concealed his belief in the importance of the Nationalist party or the desirability of gaining its co-operation, if it were possible, in a sound policy for the good of India ; and his trust was not wholly without effect.

THE VAIN APPEAL

Only in one field he failed altogether. His appeal at the Chelmsford Club at Simla in July, 1926 is still good reading. He appealed to Moslem and Hindu alike "boldly to repudiate feelings of hatred and intolerance, actively to condemn and suppress acts of violence and aggression, earnestly to strive to exorcise suspicions and misapprehension and so to create a new atmosphere of trust." From the warring religious sects he appealed to religion itself:—

In all religion, I suppose, there must be present in the mind of the individual a sense of personal deficiency, a consciousness of failure to apprehend more than a fraction of life's mystery, which constantly impels him, with irresistible yearning, to reach out for higher and yet higher things. Whatever, indeed, be the creed that men profess, such a creed is the attempt men make to know the Forces that lie beyond human vision, and learn the secret of how human nature may be defined, and in so doing realise the ultimate purpose of their existence. Achievement is hard, and can only come through much patience and humility, which will in turn beget a wide tolerance of the deficiencies of others. But the reward is great, and there can surely be no greater tragedy than that religion, which thus should be the expression and the support of man's highest instincts, should be prostituted by an alliance with actions through which those instincts are distorted and disgraced.

But the wistful appeal was made in vain. The grim forces of communal hate were not so lightly to be checked.

Behind all Lord Irwin's activities, inspiring and

directing them, was a clear cut policy. Some Viceroy's have had no policy. They were mere echoes. Others, immersed in the technical business of their office, the quiet times presenting no challenge, have scarcely needed one. But in Lord Irwin's case the challenge was urgent and immediate. Amid such furious currents and cross currents, the captain of the ship must at least know where he wants to get. He did. He believed, first, in the necessity of maintaining the British connection. He believed this on grounds of mere commonsense. He had seen and admired the civilising action of British rule on the frontier. Moreover, if unity was desirable, why cut away one of the few unifying forces already existing—the link of the Crown ? " If it is necessary," he said in Calcutta in December, 1928, " if it is necessary, as clearly it is, for India to raise her national life on the foundation of true national unity, what greater disservice can persons render her than by bending all their energies to destroy that which is to-day the principal factor of unity throughout India ? "

On the other hand, he profoundly disbelieved in force as an ultimate solution of the constitutional problem in India. " Before the Civil Disobedience Movement started," he said in December, 1930, " I consulted two or three of the ablest men in India very intimately as to whether it would be possible, supposing support were obtained in England, to inaugurate a plan of such rigid repression as would create the desert which we should then call peace. They always come back to the same conclusion. Supposing it

THE FUTILITY OF FORCE

were done, where would you be at the end of one, two, three or five years as regards the problems to be solved ? "

Napoleon faced the same problem, and was driven to the same conclusion: "Nothing astonishes me more," he said, " than the utter impotence of unaided force to organise anything whatever." But in the face of the sort of opposition which Indian nationalism offers, the impotence of the remedy is more apparent than ever. The passive opposition of a whole nation cannot be crushed by force, for there is nothing overt to crush. It is like striking at a shadow with a sword.

Lord Irwin was rather sceptical of the capacity of the Government, alone and unaided, to solve the Indian problem at all. He was generally a little incredulous about the value of direct Government action in most spheres. In India he was more than usually distrustful of its efficacy. " No simple, complete, or permanent cure," he said roundly " has ever been found in strong action by the Government." Indian co-operation was essential in his view to success. But he did not despair of Indian co-operation, for he believed in the reality of the Indian national movement. " It is a profound mistake," he told the European Association " to underestimate the genuine and profound feeling of nationalism that is to-day animating much Indian thought." It was a courageous declaration, especially before the audience to which it was addressed, and it was a significant and hopeful fact that it was well received. For nothing is easier than to underestimate the reality of Indian

nationalism. Lord Irwin's experience had not been such as to encourage belief in it. He had seen the furious antagonism of the rival Indian sects boiling up again and again into desperate riots. He had seen Congress at its very worst—sullen, vindictive, impracticable and hysterical. A meaner tempered or a smaller minded man would have drawn an inference precisely opposite to the Viceroy's conclusion. There were plenty of facts which would have seemed to support the conclusion. The difference between the stolid beef-eating Moslem, so confirmed a monotheist that he will not tolerate a picture in his room, and the quick-witted vegetarian Hindu, so inveterate a polytheist that the very table he eats from and the bed upon which he lies are " gods", is certainly greater than that which separates any two European nationalities. It requires faith to suppose that they can ever form one nation.

Again it is certain that the Congress Nationalist Party does not represent all India. It is a town party, drawing its strength from the town dwelling population; and India is an agricultural country. It is certain also that many of its proceedings by no means inspire confidence in its capacity to govern. But those who regard these facts as conclusive evidence of the unreality of Indian nationalism and the permanent incapacity of India to take her place among the self-governing Dominions forget that national spirit and the power of self-government are plants of slow growth which do not spring up anywhere overnight. There was a time, not, after all, so very long

DOMINION STATUS

ago, when the Scottish Highlander differed almost as completely in habits and customs from the south country Englishman as the Moslem differs from the Hindu in India to-day. Only very recently can it be said with truth that the British House of Commons has become really representative of the British nation. There are pages in its history which might be reports of debates in Congress so far as political inexperience and frothy rhetoric are concerned.

The nationalism to which Lord Irwin appealed was a far wider movement than that of the Congress politicians. But he expected it to become politically articulate to take shape and form and not to remain a mere vague aspiration. This is evident, for otherwise it could not fulfil the function he assigned to it. With regard to what that function was, he was always quite clear. "There can no longer be any doubt," he said in February, 1930, "that whatever the means whereby that policy is brought to fruition, Great Britain can never have any other purpose for India than to bring her to a place of equal partnership with the other self-governing Dominions." In another speech he exhorted Indians to "fix their gaze on the entrancing picture of an India spontaneously and gladly claiming its full share of Imperial responsibility and privileges as a co-partner in the common heritage of the British Commonwealth." He contrasted with this glowing picture the "precarious, powerless isolation" which was all that the advocates of independence had to offer. Probably he carried the reflective elements in Indian nationalism with him in this

"IRWIN THE MAN"

contrast. The clamour for independence which disturbed his government arose not so much from any zeal for a solution of which the blindest must have perceived the dangers, as from the angry belief that the promise of Dominion status was to be evaded or denounced. This fear the Viceroy laboured all through the latter years of his rule to dissipate. It was not his fault if he was not entirely successful.

His hope of success in the great task to which he had devoted himself lay in an appeal deeper than any political aspirations however lofty and "entrancing". He once defined the Empire as a "society that knew nothing of uniformity but passionately loved unity". To the scoffers who said that uniformity of any kind was so conspicuously absent in India that unity of any kind was a vain imagination, and that the profound difference between East and West made any really equal co-operation between them impossible, he had his answer. "In India more than elsewhere," he said,

there is a capacity to apprehend spiritual power by which things apparently impossible are brought to pass ; and I at least cannot doubt that could we but recapture the spirit of mutual trust between our two countries, we should in so doing liberate invisible forms of faith to remove those mountains which have lately hemmed us round.

This is, of course, the answer of a mystic. But it was an answer which India at any rate well understood. In making it, Lord Irwin put his finger on a

THE RESPONSIVENESS OF INDIA

fact about India which homekeeping Englishmen are apt to underestimate or even to disbelieve. The vast, stolid masses of its illiterate peoples, indifferent to all the ordinary appeals of a world in which they have so little part, are as accessible and as vibrantly responsive as a mediaeval crowd in Europe to an appeal to faith. This fact is clearly the secret of Gandhi's power. It is inexplicable on any other. Lord Irwin divined it too, and it is his clear vision of it and the use which he made of it, which give to his tenure of office a significance and an importance which distinguish it sharply from all others before and after.

CHAPTER X

THE REFORMS

1925-1929

" Often have we complained of the darkness of the day, when the grime was on our windows."

T. K. BEECHER (Lord Halifax's favourite quotation)

LORD IRWIN set out to India with no illusions about the gravity of his task. " The reforms ' were being launched," he told the Indian Section of the London Chamber of Commerce on March 12th, 1925,

"in an atmosphere which could hardly have been more unpropitious. Political unrest was finding malign and sinister expression in political crime. There was discouragement in the ranks of British recruits into the Indian Service. And the economic resources of India, dislocated by the general upheaval of the war, had been gravely strained by the niggardly fashion in which Nature had dispersed her gifts."

By the end of the year, when he and Lady Irwin arrived in India, things were a little better. The financial situation had improved. But politically the sky was still dark and lowering, and circumstances made it practically certain that it would become darker still in the immediate future. Lord Irwin went out knowing that he could not pursue the merely

THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY

waiting policy which was all that his predecessor, Lord Reading, had been called upon to enforce. There was no standing still in India now. The time was due for another instalment of "reform", with all the agitation and bitterness, the disappointed hopes and the disordered ambitions that that implied.

To understand his position it is necessary to summarise, however briefly, the earlier stages of the drama which opened twelve years before Lord Irwin came to India. The story begins with the famous statement made in the Commons on August 20th, 1917 by Mr. Montagu, the Secretary for India. The Government's policy, he said was "that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire". He added that progress could only be by stages, and that the British Government must be the judge of the "time and measure of each advance".

The language is no doubt somewhat stilted and official. Its meaning appears to admit of no question, and that it was in the result so very variously interpreted is an interesting example of how the same words may mean totally different things to different people. To eager Indian nationalists, Mr. Montagu appeared to have promised the gift of Home Rule or Dominion status or whatever the fashionable term for self-government might be at the moment, in the

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immediate future. The British Imperialist, on the other hand, held this promise which was ratified, after some wrangling, by Parliament to pledge the Government to nothing more than a pious approval of a vague ideal which the conditions of India made it entirely impossible should ever be realised in practice.

Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, meant in fact exactly what had been thus laboriously said. They proceeded to attempt to stimulate "the gradual development of self-governing institutions" in India by setting up what came to be known as Dyarchy in the provinces. It is a hideous term, and the thing signified is itself unattractive. What was meant by it in this case was that in every province a kind of dual government was set up, consisting on the one hand of the Governor and his advisers, to whom certain important subjects, like the police, were "reserved": and on the other of an Indian Prime Minister and his colleagues to whom a larger or smaller number of other administrative fields were "transferred". Clearly no one in his senses would claim that such a system was good in itself. It was a rather ingenious device to enable Indians, as yet without official experience, to train themselves for real self-government. They were to play at it for practice, so to speak. The disappointment and anger which this scheme provoked among educated Indians, especially after the exaggerated hopes they had entertained, are easily intelligible. It must be extremely galling to a proud race, conscious of a culture older by many centuries than

DYARCHY

our own, to be told that they are incapable without the instruction of strangers of managing their own affairs. That of course is hardly a fair statement of the facts. The working of democratic machinery is not an altogether easy art to acquire. It took us centuries to learn it. It is scarcely a slur on Indian intelligence and character to assume that it will take some training in India too.

Dyarchy in fact worked much better than its critics had been willing to believe that it could. Only two provinces refused to try it at all. In the others it worked, not indeed well, but still it worked. It might have achieved more but for the financial slump which followed the war and wrecked the Budgets of nearly all the Indian provinces: and if, most unwisely, a ten years' time limit had not been set to the operation of the new system. The Simon Commission long afterwards pointed out the inevitable result of this provision. "Instead of making the most of the existing constitution and learning to deal with practical problems under existing conditions/' the Report observed, "those who have to work a temporary constitution constantly endeavour to anticipate the future and to push forward the day for the next instalment of reforms."

In this tense atmosphere Mr. Gandhi in 1920 developed his doctrine of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. Where he got this doctrine from—whether direct from Tolstoi or, more probably, as a natural development of Hindu philosophy—matters relatively little. What did matter was that

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he had applied it with startling success in South Africa. After twenty years of agitation he had more or less compelled the South African Government to redress all the main grievances of the Indian community in South Africa. He probably did not himself realise how much of his success was due, not to the efficiency of his weapon as to certain underlying and not very usual conditions. The South African Indians were a small, helpless body, who could not in any circumstances think of resorting to violence to assert their rights against an immensely more powerful majority. The grievances under which they laboured, further, were simple and direct, and affected them all more or less equally. Finally, the South African Government, all powerful as it seemed against themselves, could not in fact afford, in dealing with them, to disregard utterly the opinion of India and of Great Britain.

None of these conditions was present in India. The motley host which rallied to Mr. Gandhi's "non-co-operation" standard was composed of a mass of kindreds, nations and languages more divided and more unlike each other than are the nations of Europe. And these mobs were far from helpless, and knew it. The temptation to resort to violence was there all the time. The grievances of the Indian non-co-operators again were not at all simple. They varied from sect to sect, and class to class. The Bombay merchant wanted Lancashire cotton excluded from the Indian market. The Bengali student wanted the immediate grant of Dominion status. The peasant

HINDU - MOSLEM PACT — 1919

wanted the abolition of the salt tax. They were all " non-co-operating " no doubt, but for quite different and unrelated purposes. Finally there was no great body of outside opinion on which Gandhi could rely to support and sympathise with his campaign, except possibly American opinion. And American support was fitful and uncertain.

Yet in one respect Gandhi was fortunate. At the time he arrived in India an uneasy pact had already been formed between the Moslems and the Hindus. The Moslems had been incensed against the Government by the report that the British intended to abolish the Khalifate. The Hindus, in addition to their political grievances, were thrown into violent agitation in 1919 by two bills against sedition which were the outcome of the investigations of Mr. Justice Rowlatt's inquiry into the subject. In their angry and suspicious temper Mr. Gandhi had much less difficulty than he would have had normally in persuading both Moslem and Hindu of their common fraternity. Mr. Gandhi's coming gave them both a leader and a plan of campaign. The Government was startled by the prospect of an opposition more powerful than had ever been seen before. Alarmed at the sullen and hostile temper of the populace, the Government, wisely or unwisely, forbade Mr. Gandhi to enter the Punjab. The result—whether it was the effect of this decision or no—was the Amritsar massacre. General Dyer, finding his small police force faced with an angry mob assembled in defiance of the law forbidding such public meetings

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ordered his men to fire upon them, with the result that over three hundred people were killed. What shocked British opinion at home was not that the order to fire upon a hostile crowd had been given—such an order may be inevitable—nor that a great number of people had been killed—the mortality on these occasions is always rather a matter of chance—but that on his own showing General Dyer had continued to fire long after all resistance had ceased, and the one desire of the unfortunate victims was simply to escape from the slaughter. Punitive action of this kind is not usually associated with the traditions of British justice. General Dyer's defence was that he thought there was another exit, and that the crowd was refusing to disperse. The incident hardened and embittered immeasurably the Indian opposition to the Government.

Then, as so often happens in India, just when the clouds looked blackest, they suddenly broke. The Hindu-Moslem alliance collapsed. The Turks themselves destroyed the Khalifate, and in so doing ended the Moslem quarrel with the Indian Government. The British Government could no longer be reasonably blamed for contemplating—if they did contemplate—an act which the Turks themselves had now committed. At the same time the Moplah revolt in Madras terrified the Hindus. The Moplahs, savage semi-Arab Mohammedans, fell upon their Hindu neighbours and harried their villages with fire and sword, slaying without mercy all who refused to become converts to Islam. The Hindus were unable

AMRITSAR AND AFTER

to detect in these proceedings the fraternity which Mr. Gandhi alleged to exist between the two races, and they sprang apart again in their old antagonism.

But the non-co-operative movement continued, becoming steadily more violent. Mr. Gandhi was quite unable to check the outrages which disgraced his campaign. In one place twenty unfortunate policemen were surrounded in their barracks and burnt alive by a howling mob of "non-co-operators". At last, in 1922, Lord Reading ordered the arrest of Gandhi. His speech in court was in the manner of Socrates. He demanded for himself "the highest penalty that can be inflicted for what in law is a deliberate crime, and what to me appears to be the highest duty of a citizen". The embarrassed magistrate sentenced him apologetically to six years' imprisonment. He served two only, for he fell gravely ill and had to be operated upon for appendicitis. When he recovered, the authorities, perhaps alarmed lest he should die on their hands, released him. Ingratitude is not the besetting sin of Indians, and the kindness with which he had been treated in prison profoundly affected the Hindu saint. He came out in a much chastened mood and in 1925 announced his retirement from the world for a year. The movement showed signs of collapsing; but the communal rioting continued almost as fiercely as ever. Lord Irwin's first important public speeches in India were earnest appeals for peace between the warring religious sects. But they met with very little response. The immediate situation was gloomy: and the shadow of an

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uncertain impending change, with all the hopes and fears that it excited, did not encourage hope for the future.

In view of the tense situation, the Government determined to expedite the reforms, and thus end one element of uncertainty in the position. With this intent a Parliamentary Commission of seven with Sir John Simon at its head was appointed in 1927 to examine the working of the reforms already carried out and to report on the best means of further advance. There were no Indians on the Commission, Lord Irwin had himself approved of this decision. He seems afterwards to have thought that he was wrong, but it is not certain that he was. There was no obvious case for the presence of Indians on a Parliamentary Commission otherwise consisting exclusively of members of Parliament. As the Viceroy pointed out in the Legislative Assembly, elaborate measures had been taken to ensure the co-operation of Indians with the work of the Commission at every stage. While it was engaged in its investigations, Select Committees of the Indian Central and Provincial Legislatures were to be associated with it. After it had disappeared from the stage, members of the Central Legislature were to be invited to sit on the Joint Select Committee of Parliament which was to discuss the result. But Indian opinion refused to be consoled. It persisted in exaggerating and distorting the real powers of the Commission, which had of course itself no executive authority whatever. It saw in it a device to clamp one more British-

THE SIMON COMMISSION

made constitution on India, in the making of which Indians would have had no voice. Lord Irwin laboured in vain to remove the impression that the omission of Indians from the Commission was a deliberate affront. Indian opinion steadily hardened, and when it was announced that the Commission was on its way to India, a boycott was organised against it.

The Commission arrived on February 3rd, 1928. The Viceroy had done his best to break the antagonism which had grown up against it. "It is clearly possible for people to stand aside/" he told the Legislative Assembly, "just as it will be possible for the Commission to prosecute its enquiry, and with the assistance at its disposal, reach conclusions, in spite of such abstentions. But at the least it would seem certain that such an attitude must interpose yet further obstacles to the discovery of that more excellent way of mutual understanding which the best friends of Britain will know to be requisite for her orderly evolution to nationhood. And meanwhile, in order to mobilise national resentment at an alleged deliberate affront, that has never been more than the fiction of men's imaginations, appeal will have been made, under guise of vindicating national self-respect, to all the lowest and worst elements of suspicion, bitterness and hostility."

Attempts were made in England afterwards to suggest that the boycott of the Commission was a sham conducted by paid agitators working on the prejudices of ignorant mobs. There were some venal and some ignorant elements in this opposition.

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In all demonstrations some of the demonstrators are interested and many are ill informed. But there was never any serious doubt of the reality and bitterness of the mass of Indian feelings towards the Simon Commission. Sir John himself, who was present in the Chamber when in the following year a bomb was thrown, can have had no illusions on the point. The Viceroy might say, as he did, that such "insensate and futile" acts would not turn the Government by a hair's breadth from its course. But the task of government, when terrorism reaches such a pitch of audacity, is obviously no easy one.

Lord Irwin's position was not made easier by the presence of the Commission in India. Sir John Simon had shown great courage in accepting the enormous task imposed upon him. He discharged it with astonishing energy and incomparable ability. But he was a lawyer, if a great one. He had a lawyer's outlook, inclining to believe that when he had proved a thing to be illegal, he had proved it to be wrong. He had shown this in 1926 when in two tremendous speeches he had thundered against the English strikers, declaring their action to be illegal and they themselves outlaws and outside the protection of the law. The strike leaders, respectable law-abiding Englishmen, were horrified at this denunciation and Sir John might fairly have claimed that his eloquence had broken the strike. But on Gandhi such an onslaught would have been quite ineffectual. He would have said—and did, in fact, say—that of course he was an outlaw; naturally he broke the law. He wanted

THE VICEROY'S PLEDGE

to substitute another and a better law for it. That was the sole justification for his campaign. Lord Irwin would not have endorsed that claim. But he would have understood it. It is doubtful if Sir John Simon would even have understood it.

There was another inevitable difference in the position of the two. Immersed in his great task, Sir John was naturally not particularly concerned with the effect of his activities on the actual situation in India. But the Viceroy could not possibly ignore this aspect of them. He knew that antagonism to the Commission and all its works was steadily embittering Indian feeling, and he could not be indifferent to the fact.

He still did what he could to clear the air. In January, 1929 he made the most decisive of all the many statements already made on Dominion Status in an effort to "disperse the black cloud of unwarranted distrust that has enshrouded so much of Indian political thought". "I tell this Assembly again and through them India," he said to the Legislative Assembly,

that the declaration of 1917 stands, and will stand for all time, as the solemn pledge of the British people to do all that can be done by one people to assist another to attain full national political stature, and that the pledge so given will never be dishonoured. As actions are commonly held more powerful than words, I will add that I should not be standing before you here to-day as Governor General if I believed that the British people had withdrawn their hands from that solemn covenant.

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But the salt had lost its savour. The old spell, perhaps because it had been so often repeated, would not work. The people remained sullen and hostile.

In July Lord Irwin went home, partly for a much-needed rest, but partly to consult on the situation with the Government in England. The Indian Secretary, Mr. Wedgwood Benn, was not exactly a tower of strength. But he meant well, and he agreed with Lord Irwin that a statement should be issued to clear the position up and put an end if possible to the suspicion and distrust which was poisoning it. This statement said three things. It reaffirmed that Dominion Status was the goal to which British policy in India was directed. It emphasised the fact that "a constructive attempt" had now to be made in advance of the Simon Report to face the problem of the Indian States. And it announced the Government's intention to convene a Round Table Conference before even drafting conclusions on the new reforms.

This statement was shown to the Commission, who disapproved of it. It was shown to Lord Reading and some others, who also disapproved of it. Only Mr. Baldwin gave it a hesitating benediction, and he said afterwards that he did so without knowing that the Commission had disapproved of it.

Despite these discouragements Lord Irwin felt it essential in view of the situation in India to proceed ; and on November 1st, 1929 the "statement" was duly made. It was well received in India. The promise of Dominion status excited indeed little attention. It had been made so often. But the

THE "STATEMENT" OF 1929

remarks on the Commission were approved, and the promise of a representative Round Table Conference was received with something approaching enthusiasm. At last Indians were to be allowed to have a real say in the construction of their own government. The sky cleared suddenly and apparently completely, as it is apt to do in Indian politics. It was a great opportunity for the sort of "union of hearts" for which the Viceroy was so unceasingly working.

Like the shield of Saul, the opportunity was vilely thrown away. For the reception of the Viceroy's statement in England was very different from its reception in India. Lord Reading in measured, Lord Birkenhead in unmeasured, language denounced it in the Lords, and in the Commons the attack was even fiercer. Mr. Baldwin, whose trumpet always gave a rather uncertain sound, wavered into opposition. Mr. Benn stuck to his guns, but he was hard pressed. Oddly enough the point selected for attack by the English critics was a point which had been taken as read in India, namely the promise of Dominion status. Lord Reading said that its repetition at this moment was "inopportune". But others went much further and hinted that Dominion status must now be deferred indefinitely. Among these was Mr. Churchill, who so lately as 1921 had declared that "we owed India a deep debt and he looked forward confidently to the days when the Indian government and people would have assumed completely their Dominion status". Others suggested that the new announcement would make Indians

THE REFORMS

expect an immediate grant of Dominion status. Why they should have cherished any such hope from the terms of the new announcement is not clear. What the statement said was this :—

In view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and in India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intention of the British Government in enacting the Statute of 1919 I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgment it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as then contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status.

The Viceroy was reasonably exasperated at the uproar in England. " What was the result in England ? " he asked in one of his farewell speeches. " Instead of saying ' Dominion Status ?—of *course* it is our intention to give India dominion status '—the general note of British criticism was that anyone who talked about Dominion status in connection with India must be mentally affected and that the idea was almost too fantastic to merit serious discussion. What wonder that Indian feeling was offended and that a real chance of approach was thrown away ! "

All that can be said for the agitation in England is that it did probably at the time represent a considerable volume of British opinion. Conscious of nothing but the best intentions towards the Indian people, Englishmen were a little wearied by the never-ending agitation in India, and the strident bitterness with which the Indian Press persistently attacked everything

BRITAIN AND GANDHI

British. They were vaguely proud—and not without reason—of the great work done by Englishmen in India, and they did not understand the inveterate grievances of the nationalists. Moreover, stories of some of the more hideous atrocities committed by the ruffianly element in the "non-co-operating" movement were beginning to trickle through to England, where they excited great indignation and horror. Finally a considerable number of Englishmen found themselves for the first time confronted with the apparition of Mr. Gandhi. They did not like the spectacle.

All the features in Mr. Gandhi's odd personality which secured him reverence in India—his nakedness and his fasting, his days of silence and his spinning wheel—excited feelings which were certainly not reverential in the breasts of average Englishmen. They looked upon him as a rough Cavalier squire may be supposed to have regarded Praise God Barebones. So long as he was impotent, they laughed at him goodnaturedly. When it dawned upon them that he was a power, and even possibly a danger, they were filled with mingled feelings of astonishment, distaste and alarm. When they asked, "What does this man want?" they were fobbed off either with pious aspirations after universal brotherhood or else with proposals which, little as they might know about India, they realised at once to be impracticable and absurd, such as the demand for the withdrawal of the British army in India or the immediate disbanding of the police. In such circumstances the5

THE REFORMS

English crowd were disposed to lend a ready ear to solemn platitudes about the impolicy of parleying with rebels and the need for caution in the necessarily slow work of reform in a politically immature country. Yet considering that the pledge which was under discussion had been given twelve years before, it could not fairly be said that the pace of constitutional reform in India had been lightning-like.

When the news of the English agitation reached India there was, after the first pause of astonishment, a great outcry. As has been said, not a great deal of attention had been paid in India to the promise of Dominion Status, which had grown stale by repetition. But when it was discovered that English statesmen of the highest rank were whittling away the meaning of the 1917 pledge and even denying its validity altogether, all the suspicions of an always suspicious race were aroused together. The British, they said, had never intended to give India Dominion status at all. Their pledges from the first had been mere trickery to quiet opposition and damp down discontent. They were never meant to be fulfilled. Now, after twelve years, India was told that the recognition of her right to govern herself must be "indefinitely postponed". What was the difference between a gift "indefinitely postponed" and a gift withheld altogether? It must be admitted that the distinction is a nice one. To Indian eyes it was imperceptible. The Viceroy struggled as best he could against the tempest that had so suddenly been aroused. He repeated his statement emphatically,

INDIAN DISAPPOINTMENT

saying that he should have considered that he was failing in his duty both to England and India if he had not made it. He quoted effectively the Instrument of Instructions given to him and other governors on taking office. Nothing could well be more definite :—

Above all things it is Our will and pleasure that the plans laid by Our Parliament for the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire may come to fruition to the end that British India may obtain its due place among our Dominions.

But the agitation in England had sapped Indian confidence at the root. Opinion outside Congress circles was still disposed to make the best of it. The Liberals worked strenuously against the tide. But there was no doubt which way the tide was running. Gandhi and the Congress Nationalists refused to have anything further to do with the Simon Round Table Conference. In vain Lord Irwin told them that " no more severe condemnation has ever been passed upon any person than that in which it was said of some that they entered not in themselves and them that were entering in they hindered ". His words went unheeded. The golden opportunity was past, and could not for the time being be reclaimed.

CHAPTER XI
THE DUEL WITH GANDHI
1929-1931

" If two walk together, shall they not be agreed ! "

AMOS

ON December 23rd, 1929 a bomb was exploded by a time fuse under the Viceroy's train as it approached Delhi from the south. The crowd waiting to receive him heard the report and saw the smoke. The restaurant carriage immediately in front of the coach in which Lord and Lady Irwin and their daughter Anne were travelling was wrecked, and an attendant injured. A portion of the line was blown away, but the Viceroy's coach leapt the gap. Lord Irwin faced the situation with his customary calmness. " This," he is reported to have said, " will make my interview this afternoon easier." He was going to an interview with Gandhi, Sapru the Liberal leader, Jinnah the Moslem and Patel, one of the most irreconcilable of the Congress leaders. He remarked coolly how fortunate it was that the skill of those who plan " these little affairs " is greater in design than in execution, and said that he and his party did not in fact realise very clearly what was happening.

The outrage shocked moderate Indian opinion almost as much as it startled and angered European opinion. It shocked Gandhi, who, whatever else he

THE LAHORE RESOLUTION

may have been, was certainly no Terrorist and abhorred bloodshed in every form. He used his great influence with the Congress then meeting at Lahore to carry a resolution condemning the attack. But it was only carried by a comparatively small majority and European opinion in India was much scandalised by what looked almost like a peculiarly callous endorsement of a peculiarly cowardly crime. But the Lahore Congress was in a mood to sympathise with any act which seemed calculated to embarrass and annoy the Government. It proceeded to reject a resolution drawn up the year before by the younger Nehru, demanding immediate Dominion status, and to carry another calling for immediate and complete independence.

This was of course flat rebellion, and the Viceroy was much blamed then and afterwards because he did not take immediate steps to crush it. His own defence of his inactivity, given before a Conservative audience after his return to England, was that Gandhi wanted to be imprisoned, and he was determined not to gratify him. The question was one of expediency, not principle. Doubtless rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. But the supposed necessity for suppressing it instantly arises not from the heinousness of the crime so much as its possible danger if it is not at once crushed. In this case there was no danger. Mr. Patel and his friends were not in fact a serious menace to the British Raj. On the contrary, violent action might quite possibly extend and deepen the seditious temper of which the Lahore resolution was the outward sign. The Viceroy's actual procedure

was quite astute. Leaving Gandhi himself alone, he arrested singly or in groups most of his lieutenants.

The result was twofold. On the one hand it became difficult to carry on the agitation with so many of the deputy leaders and spokesmen in prison. On the other hand, the abnormality of his position began to threaten Gandhi's own influence. A movement in which the disciples go to prison while the leader is left free and unscathed is open to obvious criticism.

The situation became eventually too much for Gandhi. After the Lahore resolution, the Viceroy had publicly announced his intention to maintain the law and punish any infractions of it. On March 4th Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy to say that he felt it would be a "sin" to observe the law any longer, and that he intended to make salt. Sir John Simon's opinion on the theory that law-abidingness was sinful would be interesting. The Viceroy merely replied that if Mr. Gandhi broke the law he would be punished. In private he said Mr. Gandhi was being "intolerably tiresome". On March 15th Mr. Gandhi did break the law. He headed a procession of pilgrims to Dandi beach to "make salt".

This "salt making" was one of those inexplicable proceedings by which the Hindu leader has more than once puzzled and exasperated British opinion. In form it was apparently a protest against the salt tax. The salt tax at one period in Indian history was no doubt a grievous burden on the tiny income of the Indian peasant. It is now so small—it amounts to half a day's labour in a year—that it can scarcely

THE DANDI MARCH

be said to be a real burden at all: and it is not an argument against a tax, as some of the agitators seemed to think, that everybody pays it.

On the other hand the amount of salt that can be extracted from sea water is very small, and the salt so extracted is almost uneatable. On these grounds the practice had in general been contemptuously tolerated by the authorities. But the real motive of the Dandi march was not to make salt, but to defy the law. That was shown clearly when some of the pilgrimages—for the fashion spread—were directed to places inland, where it was not possible to make salt at all. On May 5th accordingly the Viceroy arrested Gandhi.

But now a change began to come over opinion in England with regard to India, traceable in the first instance to the publication in June, 1930 of the Simon Report. The first volume of the Report sold by the thousand. A brilliant piece of work, it was as readable as a good novel, and it brought before the eyes of masses of English men and women who had never thought about the subject before the vivid picture of the great country, with its beauty and its riches and its dignity, its complicated problems and the difficulties and dangers inherent in them. Sir John Simon cried out exultantly that it was the first Blue Book that had ever been a best seller. He was right. The publication was a capital service to India at a critical time. It swept away for the moment the fog of ignorance and indifference through which most home-keeping Englishmen usually regard Indian affairs.

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It aroused just the right kind of interest and curiosity.

The second volume was inevitably less attractive in its appeal. It was concerned with the technical details of the constitutional changes which the Commission proposed. Very roughly, the proposals made amounted to a suggestion that full autonomy in place of dyarchy should now be accorded to the Indian provinces while an attempt should be made to introduce dyarchy in the central government. The Indian Government in a formal dispatch dissented from many of the recommendations and made proposals of its own. But both schemes alike were swept away by a dramatic surprise at the opening of the Round Table Conference in London.

The Conference, some seventy or eighty strong, had duly assembled in October. Indian opinion, apart from the Congress Nationalists (certainly an important exception) was unexpectedly well represented. Then, before the proceedings had well begun, the Harcourt Butler report made it clear that an All India Federation, including the Indian States, was at least within the realm of immediate practical discussion.

This was a consummation which the Simon Commission had envisaged as a probably distant possibility. Lord Irwin had frequently urged it upon the Princes without any immediate success.

In one way their sudden conversion raised of course a whole host of new difficulties and problems, some of them serious. But in another it simplified the main issue decisively. British India is not a

THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

geographical unit at all. It is merely an amalgamation of territories united by nothing but the accident that they all happen to be directly under British rule. But India, including the States, is as neat and complete a geographical unit as can be found.

Again, one difficulty in framing a constitution for British India alone had been the extremely Radical politics of the dominant party there, which left the Government permanently faced with a hostile Opposition commanding (when it chose to attend) a large permanent majority. But if the States were prepared to enter a Federal scheme, the Conservative counter balance would be there ready made. The only danger would be lest it should become too powerful.

The difficulties were in fact much greater than they seemed. But for the moment the result of the Princes' declaration was wholly good. A wave of enthusiasm for what looked like a splendid new feat of constitution-making swept through the Conference ; and English opinion, always goodhumouredly anxious for a happy ending to the Indian drama, was sensibly affected by it. The Conference—the Liberal members in particular—set to work on their great task with exemplary zeal and energy, and good progress was made.

A point was soon reached, however, when it was evident that no further progress could be made without the assent of the Congress nationalists. It was as if the House of Lords, the Central Conservative Association and the National Liberal Federation were engaged in drawing up a new constitution for this country to which the Trade Union Council with

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the solid support of Labour had indicated that they would in no case, accede. The Liberal leaders therefore—Mr. Sastri, Mr. Jayakar and Sir Tej Saprū—hurried back to India to try and come to terms with Congress. They were confronted with a preliminary difficulty. Congress was in prison.

In an effort to overcome it, Saprū and Jayakar requested leave of the Viceroy to interview Gandhi in prison. This was granted and protracted interviews followed. But the Congress merely put forward demands quite impossible of acceptance, and not made more acceptable by the characteristic suggestion that if the Viceroy would give certain private assurances better terms might be forthcoming. He replied bluntly that he would have nothing to do with any backstairs negotiations of this kind. "I think," he said, "that the constitutional future of India is a subject in which as far as possible the whole of India has a right to be consulted, and in regard to which it would be quite improper for His Majesty's Government or myself to enter into separate or secret engagements with a single political party, which, whatever its importance, is not and cannot claim to be, the whole of India." The deadlock appeared to be complete. The Viceroy was in a dilemma. He realised of course fully the great opportunity which the preliminary success of the Conference offered. "At the time of its convention," he said—

the atmosphere was clouded with misunderstandings on both sides. Opinion in Great Britain was ill-informed of the realities of thought in India : opinion

RELEASE OF GANDHI

in India, even in circles where so-called **moderate** views prevailed, was suspicious and sceptical of the purpose of Great Britain. If ignorance and suspicion still linger they represent the rearguard and no longer the main body of opinion in the two countries. Great Britain has realised something of the new forces that are animating the political thought of India, while India, feeling no longer that she is misunderstood, is better prepared to recognise that British statesmen have approached the problem with a single will to find means by which difficulties may be speedily and securely resolved.

It was quite true. But so long as Gandhi sat in prison it was impossible that they should be resolved at all. To let him out, on the other hand, was clearly to condone law breaking. It was certain that it would be interpreted by Lord Irwin's Conservative critics in England as a supreme example of his culpable "weakness". After a short hesitation the Viceroy took a bold decision. He released Gandhi unconditionally.

At first it seemed that the gesture had failed. Mr. Bernays, who saw Gandhi at Allahabad shortly after his release, found him talking the sort of nonsense with which he does at intervals delight his enemies and confound his friends. He was saying that the Afridis would never invade India because his own influence among them was so great, and that if they did they would be defeated by the non-co-operative movement. He suggested also that if only the police were removed there would be no more communal riots. But there was a ray of hope in his

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expressed willingness to see Lord Irwin, "stiff and formal" as he strangely found him. The Viceroy on his part had indicated that he would in no circumstances invite Mr. Gandhi to confer with him. But he had also let it be known that if Gandhi liked to ask for an interview he would see him. In the event, in one of the charming letters at which he is sometimes adept, Gandhi did ask for an interview, and went to Delhi for the purpose. Early in February the famous conversations began.

The mere news that they were about to take place excited extraordinary interest both in India and in England. Indians saw with delighted eyes their national leader debating on equal terms with the representative of the British Raj. English opinion was not altogether unfavourable. The British public had been pleased by the preliminary success of the Round Table Conference. They had got over their initial distaste for Mr. Gandhi, and they earnestly desired peace in India. But to the more vocal English critics of the Viceroy's policy, the interviews appeared simply the latest and the worst of a long series of surrenders to sedition. Mr. Churchill, who always says forcibly whatever he has to say, expressed their view in uncompromising language. He spoke of "the nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this one-time Inner Temple lawyer, now seditious fakir, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy's Palace, there to negotiate and to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor". This rhetorical explosion is important to-day only as

MR. CHURCHILL'S EXPLOSION

illustrating the dangers which Lord Irwin coolly faced in entering upon these negotiations at all. Had they failed, there is no doubt that British opinion would have swung violently over to the faction which denounced him so savagely while the issue was still open. There is equally little doubt that the results on Indian opinion would have been disastrous, and that he would have left to his successor a task far graver even than that which he himself had faced with unwavering patience during his five years' rule. He could have hoped for little help, had he failed, from the India Office and the Government at home. They gave him leave to try what he could do ; but that was the measure of their support. His own officials in India distrusted his policy. He himself had no strong confidence in its success. " Alone and unaided," as Mr. Neville Chamberlain said when he returned to England, " he carried through what, to people who knew the Indian situation, seems almost a miracle."

What interested the spectators of the drama was not so much the actual issue of the negotiations, which was rather cloudy and turned on points in themselves small, as the strong light in which the two chief actors stood suddenly revealed. It could be said without undue exaggeration that in their persons England and India met face to face. Certainly there were millions of Indians who were not in the least like Mr. Gandhi, as there were thousands of Englishmen who bore no sort of resemblance to Lord Irwin. But the two men were undoubtedly representatives

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of some of the best qualities of their respective races. The possibility at least of the " mutual trust " which was Lord Irwin's own solution of the Indian problem could be fairly tried out in this meeting.

Whole worlds away from each other as they were in education and culture and experience, the two were in many respects remarkably alike. Both were mystics, to whom the unseen world was much more than the world of the senses. Both were distrustful of the mechanical aspect of modern progress. Lord Irwin might laugh a little in private at Mr. Gandhi's spinning wheel. But in his heart he sympathised with the mood which the spinning wheel symbolised. Both, rather unexpectedly, liked outspokenness and could be very outspoken themselves. Lord Irwin might be a mystic : but he was also a Yorkshire squire. When Gandhi said that he preferred to call the " safeguards " insisted upon by the Government " assurances", the Viceroy told him roundly that he did not care what he called them so long as he accepted them. When he complained that the police, faced by a howling mob, had struck a great many innocent people, Lord Irwin is believed to have said that he had no doubt they had, and if he had been there he would have struck a great many more. Both had a patrician indifference to the details of their surroundings. Mr. Bernays records that Gandhi during the interviews sat not, as his custom was, upon the floor but on certain low chairs with which the room happened to be furnished. " I was very comfortable," he explained. " If I had not been

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW

comfortable, I should have sat upon the floor." Lord Irwin had the same insouciance. At a high ceremonial dinner once, someone upset a plate of soup over his dress coat. He took it off and sat composedly through the rest of the meal in his shirt sleeves.

Yet with all their likenesses, there was a difference. Mr. Churchill's reference to Gandhi's early legal experience was not a mere rhetorical flourish. The Hindu had the sort of legal mind which so rejoices in establishing a precedent or asserting a principle that it is willing for these things' sake to forego the solid material gain which may be at stake in the action. Lord Irwin was quite free from this sort of temper. His subtleties, so far as he had any, were theological, not legal. On the other hand, the Viceroy was an intensely English person. You would have known him immediately for an Englishman, T. P. O'Connor once said, if you had met him alone at the North Pole. He had the sort of plain commonsense sometimes looking like extreme astuteness which is very characteristic of a certain type of his countryman. Mystic he might be : but his feet were as firmly planted on the solid earth as any other Yorkshireman's. He would never sacrifice substance for shadow : though he might differ from some people as to which was which. He pointed out himself a weakness in Gandhi's character in an estimate of it a year or two later. Gandhi was, he said,

a blend of mystic and politician, but through his temperament he has repeatedly dismayed his friends by his failure to evolve any considered constructive policy.

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The idealism which was a stimulus to the Englishman was as often as not a stumbling block in the way of practical achievement to the Indian. Both were zealously sincere in their desire to build their new Jerusalem. But while Lord Irwin had sufficient of the statesman's instinct to be willing to use for the purpose any stone that looked suitable, Gandhi was quite capable of stopping building altogether because some one stone failed to fit ideally into the place designed for it.

The debate dragged on, day after day and often far into the night. The question of "safeguards" does not seem to have taken very long. Even Congress did not really desire to be left stripped of the protection both of the Army and the police. But on the demand for an inquiry into the conduct of the police the conference very nearly broke down. This was a very difficult question. It was not seriously disputed that in certain cases the police had exceeded what in normal circumstances would be considered their legitimate powers. The Labour Government in England was very sensitive on the subject of police tyranny, and held that it was just as heinous an offence in India as it was in England. Indians looked forward with triumph to the prospect of "the law-breakers putting the law-keepers in the dock", and the spectacle of some miserable policeman being bullied and badgered by a Hindu lawyer. The official world in India on the other hand was perfectly horrified at the mere idea of such a thing. They held that it would be the end of all discipline in the

THE "SAFEGUARDS"

police, and perhaps in the Army too, if it were thus publicly announced that they could not rely on Government protection in the execution of their duties.

The Viceroy took the official view. He refused, in spite of some pressure from England, even to consider a police inquiry. Gandhi was at first equally stubborn in his insistence that an inquiry was essential. But at last, on a personal appeal from the Viceroy, he gave way. If the principle were admitted, he would not press for the inquiry itself. His followers professed great disappointment. But it is not certain that they were quite as disappointed as they seemed. The inquiry would have been after all a boomerang. It would have been quite impossible to examine any alleged violence committed by the police without examining incidentally the conduct of the mob opposed to them. And the most violent policeman was an innocent lamb compared with the horrible ruffians who burnt twenty policemen to death in their barracks.

The salt making offered little difficulty. The Government was perfectly ready to undertake to wink at the making of salt by villagers who lived on the seashore. It always had been winked at, on the well-known principle that the law does not concern itself about trifles. But the question of the land taxes was far more serious, and at the eleventh hour once more nearly ended the negotiations. The Government was willing enough to quash prosecutions for non-payment of the land tax and return

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land which had been seized for non-payment, provided the taxes were paid. But parcels of this land had already been alienated to third parties and these, the Government held, could not be returned. The question was rendered acute by the fact that Patel had assured the original owners that the seizure was a farce and that their lands would certainly be returned. But Lord Irwin was unimpressed by the difficulty in which Mr. Patel had involved himself. He refused to give way: and in the end Gandhi contented himself with merely registering a personal protest against this clause in the settlement.

The chief remaining difficulty was the question of the boycott of English goods in the Indian market. Lord Lloyd, far away in England, had a simple remedy. "The first sign of a boycott should have been nipped in the bud," he said, "and not a single agitator should have been allowed to wipe his feet on the Union Jack." But it is not altogether easy for the most efficient tyranny to force people to buy goods which they are quite determined not to buy. Gandhi doubted his own power to do this, as it turned out, rightly. He promised to do his best to get the boycott removed. But he could do no more. Lancashire cried out that the situation was as bad after the negotiations as before. But nothing could mend it but time and patience.

For nearly a fortnight the discussions dragged on while anxious newspaper correspondents without weighed the chances of failure and success, now

IN THE BALANCE

holding a breakdown certain and now confident that all would be well—a confidence only to be dashed immediately by the next twinge of Mr. Gandhi's conscience, which suddenly forbade him to accept this or that condition or clause in the agreement. The negotiations seem to have been quite informal and ranged freely over all sorts of subjects from the nature of the Deity, the prospects of the Round Table Conference and the politics of Mr. Winston Churchill.

The chief obstacle, and the chief danger, to a settlement was always Mr. Gandhi's conscience. Its operations were quite incalculable, and must have been very wearying. Gandhi himself was immensely impressed with his host, as a letter written in despondency in January, 1932 rather touchingly testifies. "Pray believe me, I have tried my best and failed," he writes. "Nevertheless, I don't lose hope and, God willing, I shall retain the spirit which you believed actuated me during that sacred week in Delhi. I shall not belie your certainty." But he must at times have tried high the patient sympathy of the Viceroy. Irwin understood the conscientious scruples which drove the Indian saint to haggle interminably over very small points, and the anxiety which tormented him lest he should in any degree have offended against the rule of right. He would on such occasions urge his guest to break off their talk, and go out of the room and think it over by himself. Then the extraordinary spectacle was witnessed of the Indian striding up and down in the corridor wrestling with

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his conscience while the Viceroy sat within calmly waiting for the issue of the conflict.

But at other times the negotiations took a more awkward and difficult turn. Unbelievers always insisted that there were two Mr. Gandhis—the man of God, remote from mere mundane affairs, and the wily Oriental politician exploiting his moral reputation to promote his political ends. Men of very high principle are always exposed, justly or otherwise, to charges of this sort whenever they intervene at all actively in political affairs. Henry Labouchere once said that he did not mind Mr. Gladstone having the ace of trumps up his sleeve every time. What he objected to was his obstinate assertion that the Almighty put it there. The enormous reputation of General Smuts as a man of principle in Europe finds no credit or support from a very large minority of his South African countrymen. They insist that his lofty international principles invariably redound in practice to his own political advantage at home. They regard him as many Englishmen regard Lloyd George. He is simply "slim Jan Smuts".

Similarly to many observers it has sometimes seemed that Gandhi's holiness was little more than a cloak for his political aims. In this bald form, such a statement is certainly untrue. But it is true that behind the saint the party leader has always been liable to appear. It made the negotiations not less but much more difficult that the politician who then emerged was one of the most unpractical of

THE END OF THE DRAMA

men and for that reason, regarded as a party leader, grossly incompetent. Sir Tej Sapru and the Indian Liberals had been as confounded as ever Lord Irwin was by Gandhi's obstinate refusal even to recognise things as they are. The Viceroy sought to exorcise Gandhi the party leader by appealing to Gandhi the saint. On the whole he succeeded. But the politician was always bobbing up again, prolonging and confusing still more the tangled skein of the discussions. What alone made it possible and worth while to carry on was the Hindu's essential honesty. "Throughout my conversations with Gandhi," Lord Irwin said later, "I felt that I could implicitly trust his word, and I am confident that he will do everything in his power to give effect to the agreements."

At last, rather suddenly, the end came. On March 7th, 1931, the Delhi Pact was signed.

The end was as curiously shadowy as was the whole strange drama. A superficial observer might have held that it settled almost nothing. The demand for a police inquiry was abandoned, and the non-co-operative movement was called off, and so were the prosecutions for unpaid land tax. The making of salt was permitted only to villagers by the seashore, and the boycott was to be ended if possible. But all these points together seem scarcely to be worth the enormous interest which the negotiations excited, not in India only, but over half the world. But the real point at issue lay behind. "However mistaken any man may think him to be," said

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Lord Irwin in a speech to the Legislative Assembly while Gandhi was still in prison,

and however deplorable may appear the results of the policy associated with his name, no one can fail to recognise the spiritual force which impels Mr. Gandhi to count no sacrifice too great in the cause, as he believes, of the India he loves. And I fancy that though he, on his side too, thinks those who differ from him to be the victims of a false philosophy. Mr. Gandhi would not be unwilling to say that men of my race who are to-day responsible for Government in India were sincere in their attempt to serve her. It has been one of the tragedies of this time that, where ultimate purposes have perhaps differed little, if at all, the methods employed by some should have been, as I conceive, far more calculated to impede than to assist the accomplishment of that largely common end.

The immense achievement of the Delhi Pact, in which equal credit belongs to Lord Irwin and to Gandhi, is that it laid the foundations of a possible permanent and enduring peace between the two races who hold the fate of India in their hands. Had the Delhi Conference failed, Indians would have stared at their British rulers indefinitely across an unfathomable gulf of mutual hatred and miscomprehension. That catastrophe was averted at the very moment when it seemed inevitable. That is the great achievement of Lord Irwin's Viceroyalty.

It was instantly recognised. The Indian Liberals were of course delighted by an agreement which they had themselves laboured so hard to bring to pass.

THE DELHI PACT

So was a great body of articulate and semi-articulate Indian opinion which desired peace and welcomed accordingly a settlement which seemed to ensure it. The mass of Gandhi's adherents supported with more or less enthusiasm a policy which their own leader had endorsed. There was in fact a powerful minority against the Pact in the nationalist party. But it was not powerful enough to affect the issue.

In England the result was heard with immense relief and satisfaction. Lord Irwin's reputation rose suddenly to a point less indeed than that which Mr. Chamberlain's touched after Munich, but rather of the same order. He too was acclaimed a peace-maker, and accorded the unreserved popularity which befits the character.

But in India the Pact had scarcely been signed before it was threatened. The case of Bhagat Singh is interesting now mainly because of the strong light which it throws on one side of Lord Irwin's character. Bhagat Singh was a terrorist murderer of the type whom the extreme Indian nationalist delights to honour. There was no doubt at all about his guilt, nor about the character of his crime, which was a particularly cold-blooded murder. No Viceroy would have reprieved him. But there must have been a strong temptation, having regard to the furious demands for his reprieve from the Congress nationalists and to the fact that Congress had not yet passed the Pact, to delay the execution till after the Pact had been passed.

Lord Irwin refused to delay it. He let the law

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take its course and declined to postpone the execution. There was a grim sequel in a furious outbreak of communal rioting in Cawnpore because the Moslems refused to observe the day of mourning proclaimed by the Hindus for Bhagat Singh. But Lord Irwin's own authority and influence were unshaken, and the Karachi Conference ratified the Delhi Pact by an overwhelming majority.

The Delhi Pact was the latest, as it was by far the most important, of Lord Irwin's labours in India. Little more than a month after its signature, he and Lady Irwin left the country in which for five years they had been the leading figures. The occasion was signalised once again by a speech exhibiting the peculiar eloquence which attaches to the words of a man who says simply and precisely what he means, and means it very earnestly. Once more he warned his Bombay audience that the only way of attaining the " end which we all desire " is by

a synthesis of the best statesmanship of East and West, by the collaboration of two partners working side by side, not in any huckstering spirit as to who would get the best of a hard bargain, not with a view to this or that individual or this or that community gaining an advantage or victory over a rival, but with the sole purpose of creating and perpetuating a prosperous, strong, contented India embracing both British India and the States as an honoured member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Again he warned them that " the end of the task is not yet " and " the stiffest part of the hill is to

LOOKING BACKWARD

come ". He ended with an often quoted peroration his last words in India:—

In front of the Viceroy's House in New Delhi stands a column, presented by the late Maharaja of Jaipur, on which are inscribed the words—

" In Thought Faith
In Word Wisdom
In Deed Courage
In Life Service
So may India be great"

I can wish India nothing better, and so I would say to you and to all those in this country that I have tried to serve " In your thinking, in your speaking, and in your doing, God be with you ".

At Toronto, a year after he left India, Lord Irwin delivered a lecture on the Indian problem which is in many ways among the most considerable of his public utterances. It is a model of compressed thought, and may be commended to anyone who wishes to be presented with the cardinal facts about India as incomparably the best statement within its limits available. Here for instance is his picture of the land over which he had ruled :—

Ponder over all that makes what we call India—a fifth of God's creatures here on earth drawn from a number of races, which at their extremes are so far apart that ethnologists have questioned their descent from a single human stock: speaking a babel of dialects and languages which defy attempts to reduce them to the same branch of speech : some with civilisations far more ancient than ours, others

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sunk in an abyss of depression since before the memory of man : cleft by religion into unbridgeable divisions : subdivided again with mutually antagonistic groupings of castes and sub-castes: and representing in this mighty sub-continent nearly every division of thought and culture, colour and language that the world has known. Yet over this vast diversity we have induced a sense of national unity among her self-conscious inhabitants that India has never had before.

This fact—for the idea that there ever was a united India before the coming of the British is a myth—is really the first point in his political philosophy of India. We have created the spirit of Indian nationalism. We cannot then logically or justly quench it now. Many critics of course would deny the existence of any real national spirit in India to-day. The lecturer admitted the limitations of the new spirit:

That India's sense of nationality is still inchoate : that it descends only in very limited degree from the intellectuals to the masses : that even among the intellectuals it subsists alongside of racial and religious and caste feelings : all these things may be admitted with a host of others besides. But of the fact as I have defined it there is in my own mind no shadow of doubt.

But what course then is this national spirit to take ? An Indian autocracy or oligarchy, he pointed out, would be as antipathetic to Indian as to British sentiment. A benevolent British despotism, however benevolent, denies the fact of nationalism. He quoted

Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras more than a hundred years ago, on the sheer impossibility of this solution :

The improvement of the character of a people and the keeping of them at the same time in the lowest state of dependence on foreign rulers to which they can be reduced by conquest are matters quite incompatible with one another.

He claimed, then, that the solution which he and others like minded had sought to find for the Indian riddle was the only practical one, since it is only along the lines of self-government, however great the local difficulties, that nationalism can express itself. But he claimed further that it was well worth while : that the goal, distant as it may be, and long and costly as the effort to win it may prove, justifies all the effort and all the suffering that may be entailed in the pursuit of it. For it was not the good of India only nor of the British Commonwealth alone nor even of both together that he looked upon as the ultimate prize of the policy for which he laboured. A French paper after the Delhi Pact applauded him as " a good European". The eulogy may seem strange to those who think of the East and its problems as infinitely remote and for ever divided from the problems and the fortunes of the West. But this was not Lord Irwin's view. " There are other considerations," he said,

of even deeper and more eternal import to humanity. In the Indian problem we touch questions that are

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likely more and more to engross the attention of mankind. Will it be possible in India for East and West to evolve a true partnership in action, wherein men of different race and colour the world over will be ready and glad to work together in mutual respect and understanding to the greater good of the common fellowship of man? We cannot tell: but we cannot the less surely say that this is the biggest thing in all our history that we have tried to do, and that the penalty of failure would be exacted far beyond our own times and territories.

Others too, from a slightly different angle have dreamed the same dream. Lord Irwin was concerned primarily—and given his experiences, inevitably—with the success or failure of the constitutional experiment which it fell to his lot to superintend at a critical stage in its development. He held, and surely truly, that its success or failure would vitally affect the world far outside India and even outside the British Empire. In these later days it is easier than it was perhaps to recognise that freedom cannot perish in any land without the cause of freedom suffering in all. But there is a wider sense too in which the Delhi Pact is in its way a turning point in the history of mankind. By her position, by her history, perhaps also by the natural gifts of her more talented races, India is supremely qualified to be the interpreter between East and West. Herself of the East Eastern, she has yet had for centuries a contact with Western civilisation and thought that the other great Eastern nations have never had; and for the last century or so it has been a very close and intimate contact.

EAST AND WEST

It is not the least of Lord Irwin's achievements that he helped to make this contact sympathetic as well as close. He was, as Sir Tej Sapru declared, " the best friend India ever had ". No one individual has probably done so much to forward real understanding between England and India. It may be visionary to expect practical fruit from so apparently unsubstantial a tree. But to Lord Irwin spiritual sympathy did not seem a shadow. It is not certain that he was wrong. " There are only two great Powers in the world, the Sword and the Spirit," said Napoleon, " and in the long run the Spirit always wins."

PART III

THE FOREIGN OFFICE

CHAPTER XII

THE CURTAIN RISES

" We are not on such easy terms with Heaven :
But in Earth's hearing we can verily say
Our hands are pure : for peace, for peace we have striven
And not by Earth shall he be soon forgiven
Who lit the fire accurst that flames to-day."

WILLIAM WATSON ; *The Troubler of the World*

VICTORIA STATION was crowded on May 2nd, 1931, when Lord and Lady Irwin returned home. Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin were waiting for them on the red carpeted platform, and Lord Amulree, and the leaders of the rival political parties, and the Maharajah of Burdwan, and other Indian notabilities gorgeous in green and black, in gold and purple. All around crowds clambered on seats and trucks and barriers to catch a glimpse of the great Viceroy whose name for the past few months had been on everyone's lips. Lord Irwin admitted that he was happy to be home again : but he said also that he had left " a large part of his heart in India ".

He was warmly welcomed : but not a great deal was expected from him. The Socialists, who had praised his Indian rule, knew that they had no support to expect from him in their domestic policy. The Liberals had hailed his predecessor, Lord Reading, when he came home, as a powerful and welcome

ally. Exaggerate as they might Lord Irwin's liberalism, they too knew that they had little to hope from his support in home politics. As for the Conservatives, they merely trusted that his return would end the violent schism in their party which his Indian policy had created, with Mr. Baldwin leading one faction, and Mr. Churchill heading a powerful and noisy anti-Irwin minority.

This hope was justified. A few months after his return Lord Irwin faced his Conservative critics in a Committee room of the House of Commons. The meeting was crowded—there were well over one hundred members present. Nothing was allowed to be known officially of what happened at this meeting except that the proceedings were "calm", that Lord Irwin explained his policy, and that Mr. Churchill cross-examined him upon it and ultimately indicated his dissent from certain of his statements. The popular press added vague and palpably exaggerated rumours that Lord Irwin had said that the cinema and the behaviour of some European women had undermined our credit in India. It is possible to suspect the grain of truth out of which these rumours grew. A casual aside was probably distorted out of recognition. The important fact was that the "Save India" agitation was over. Mr. Churchill himself threw his hand in, and accepted the Governments' decision. An unnecessary controversy which never did anybody anywhere any good was thus belatedly ended.

There is good reason to believe that his own

TEACHERS IN REVOLT

intention at this time was to retire from party politics, in which his interest had never been whole-hearted, and devote himself, as his father had done, to the religious movement which was so deep a concern with them both. The Indian episode was closed. His lecture at Toronto is its epitome. There was nothing in the confused politics of the day to attract a man of his type. He would be far more at home as the lay reader of the Anglo-Catholic movement, as his father had been before him. Also he could live at Garrowby the country life which he has always preferred to the turmoil of London. But two strong influences worked together to change his resolution. Mr. Baldwin appealed to him urgently not to abandon his post in public life at a time when his services were badly needed. The bond between him and his old chief had been strong throughout their association in politics. They had very much the same outlook. They had been educated in the same school of thought, with the same reverence for the past and the same broad humanism and sense of duty. They were both countrymen, and had the same appreciation of the simpler pleasures of life and the same distaste for its pomps and vanities. It was with reluctance that Baldwin, who could better have spared another, had sent him to India as Viceroy. It was impossible to disregard a new appeal from the same quarter; and it was reinforced by Lady Halifax, who was jealous for her husband's fame and viewed the prospect of his practical retirement from political life with regret. His own strong sense of public duty doubtless decided

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the issue. He reappeared suddenly as Minister of Education for the second time.

This second term fairly bristled with difficulties. If money had been short in 1922, it was shorter still in 1932 the year after the great financial panic. The teachers were demanding that the "cuts" in their salaries should be abolished, and the full salaries paid again. They pointed out that the similar "cuts" in unemployment allowances had already been restored. He retorted that the case of the unemployed was quite exceptional, that rigid economy must be maintained and that teachers should regard their salaries as Christian missionaries regard theirs. When the teachers grew angry, he told them that they were "unnecessarily vituperative." The teachers had powerful friends, and the Education Minister was fiercely attacked. Professor Laski, the Socialist publicist, who had lauded him to the skies in India, now trounced his former idol soundly. He was "prim". He was "old maidish". He was unsympathetic with the teachers. And perhaps he really was. It is always the danger of the idealist that his ideal may fly away with him, balloon-like, so that he loses not merely contact with the earth, but the very vision of it. No doubt teachers should be missionaries, and surprisingly often they are ; but they are also not extravagantly paid Civil Servants, often required to teach crowded classes of backward and underfed children under conditions the reverse of ideal. In such an environment the trials and anxieties of respectable poverty are additionally harassing to the



LADY HALIFAX WITH

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

temper. They deserve more sympathy than those who have never known what poverty is are usually disposed to extend to them.

In the middle of his three years' term of office, Lord Irwin's father died at the ripe age of ninety-four, and he became the third Lord Halifax. Then in 1935 Mr. Baldwin persuaded him to take the War Office.

This appointment created still greater astonishment. The War Office was not at the time an important post. There was no immediate prospect of war, and in time of peace to neglect the Army is almost a principle of British government. It was said also that the new Minister had no qualifications for his duties. But he was at least a soldier who had seen service, which is more than can be said of the two greatest War Ministers this country has ever seen, Lord Haldane and Mr. Cardwell. None the less it seems clear that the appointment was never intended to be more than temporary. After a few months only, he left the War Office to become Lord Privy Seal, and emerge, in the character for which his experience and temper best fitted him, as an Elder Statesman.

Elder statesmen were badly needed. For now the curtain was rising on the second Act of the post-war tragedy. Throughout the long and dreary first Act the idea of "collective security" had dominated Europe. Nearly everywhere everybody, irrespective of party, creed, or nationality, paid it at least lip-service. The League of Nations might work slowly

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and clumsily, and certainly the failure of the Disarmament Conference was a sad revelation of its limitations, but it was still assumed that the war to end war had indeed ended war. It scarcely occurred to anyone that the old Power policy could be restated again so soon in its most naked form.

Then more or less suddenly it became evident that this was what was actually happening. In certain fields the League had succeeded brilliantly—in the regulation of international labour conditions for instance : in the codification of international law, and the steady promotion of the practice of arbitration : and in the improvement of international health services. Unfortunately, these vast activities attracted very little attention from the general public. What the general public suddenly realised was that as a barrier against war, the League was a broken reed.

It was helpless to prevent Japan attacking China—Lord Cecil could only plead that China was a very long way off. It was helpless either to prevent Italy seizing Abyssinia, or to punish her for doing so. It was helpless to end the grisly tragedy of the Spanish war, or to hinder Germany, Italy and Russia fishing as they would in the troubled waters. " Collective security " had collapsed. The supposed guarantee guaranteed nothing. The menace of war, which was alleged to have been ended, darkened the world again, not at first as an imminent danger, but as a clear ultimate risk, and even a probability. Europe was " drifting into war " not the less certainly because nobody really wanted war.

APPEASERS AND RESISTERS

The issue of war and peace is not in itself a political principle at all, and it cannot be converted into one. A political party designed to promote war—any war—would manifestly be a mere collection of homicidal maniacs. A political party which avowed that it existed for the solitary purpose of maintaining peace—any kind of peace—would appear in its purely barren and negative idealism to be only a degree or two saner than its rival. There is no historical justification for the assumption, which the accidental circumstances of our day has made plausible, that Right Wing politicians are inevitably bellicose and Left Wing inevitably pacifist. In Great Britain it was the Left and not the Right that supported Marlborough's wars. The British Right Wing of those days was as pacifist as Mr. Lansbury or Mr. Kellogg could have desired. The French Jacobins of the revolutionary period could hardly have been more definitely "Left": and a more bellicose party has seldom been seen.

What is true is that the issue of war and peace, once raised as a matter of urgent public importance, has a sort of electrical effect on parties and principles alike. It may sweep them away altogether for the time being, as it did in Britain in 1914. In 1936 it had a different effect. It left the parties in being, but it left them almost meaningless, like marionettes still dancing feverishly to a tune which the orchestra has ceased to play. Also it swept them in apparently arbitrarily selected companies into the two rival groups of "appeasers" and "resisters" and even

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between these the issue was not formally one of principle.

Each of the two great groups was a political mosaic—" here a piece of black stone and there a piece of white ". The main body of the " appeasers " was composed of the Conservative business men, of whom Chamberlain himself was the spokesman and representative, who saw peace as the first of all British interests. There was also a far larger body, who were simply terrified of war, and regarded it, with Lord Baldwin, as " the end of all things ". There was a small fascist element, who honestly admired the Totalitarianism which the " resisters " wished to crush, as well as a larger body of idealists, like the Astors, who thought that Germany had been unfairly treated at Versailles, and sympathised with the average German's demand that his country should be restored to its pre-war status. With them also were the little band of out-and-out pacifists, led by Mr. Maxton, who held all war to be merely a kind of murder : and a very few Imperialists who considered that the Empire would be endangered by war, and did not believe its interests to be seriously affected by the sudden rise of Germany.

The resisters were not any more united. Their vanguard consisted of the passionate adherents of the ideal of " collective security ", who believed it to be the sole possible corner stone on which the peace of the world could be built up, and were prepared to fight to establish it. Their main body was composed of the Labour Party and most of the Liberals,

ED EN'S POSITION

who so hated Hitler and all his works that they were prepared to fight him for any reason or for none. There was also quite a strong body of British Imperialists, of whom Mr. Churchill was the real spokesman, who thought the Empire in danger from the resurrection of Germany, and were eager to meet the challenge before it grew too formidable.

The lines between the two groups were not of course drawn in fact as sharply and as definitely as is here suggested. Opinion on each side shaded off into infinite variations. The milder resisters were almost appeasers : and the appeaser was always liable to turn suddenly into a resister. The position of Mr. Eden is a specially characteristic and interesting illustration of the extreme confusion of the situation.

It is not clear even now that Mr. Eden ever regarded himself as his more enthusiastic supporters regarded him, that is to say as a definite opponent of the Government's policy. Even after he eventually resigned, the position which he adopted towards the Government was never one of simple hostility. There were two points which were understood to be at issue between them. Eden was supposed to believe much more strongly than Chamberlain or Halifax in the necessity of arresting, if necessary by war, the repeated aggressions of the dictators. He was believed also to be far firmer than they were in his faith in "collective security". The first was really a matter of tactics : the latter was no doubt a question of principle. But it was rather less than fair to Chamberlain and Halifax that they should

be charged with betraying "collective security", when almost all their difficulties arose from the fact—of which they were fully convinced—that "collective security" had ceased to operate effectively as an international force. This was not their fault: nor is there evidence to show that if it had been possible to make the League an effective force in the existing situation, they would not gladly and thankfully have welcomed the opportunity. But the situation with which they were confronted was one never envisaged by the founders of the League.

The assumption behind the League from the beginning was that it would either immediately or very soon represent a force so formidable that no aggressor or probable combination of aggressors would be able hopefully to defy it. The defection of America was the first blow to this assumption. In the end, after the secessions of the three great Powers—Italy, Germany and Japan—the League could rely for the possible execution of its mandate on two Powers only, Great Britain and France—a burden which they could not possibly discharge. France never showed any enthusiasm for the attempt. The perplexed British government, supported by the British public, would perhaps have been willing to make the attempt had it been possible. But in fact it was not possible. Long before Mr. Bonar Law had announced that "we could not police the world". He was speaking only of the protection of Britain's world-wide trade routes. But now it was not her trade routes only that she was called upon to police, but an area from China

to Peru in which the authority of the League might be challenged. It could not be done. Policy ultimately must be limited by the forces available to make it effective.

Halifax was an idealist no less than Eden. His desire, repeatedly expressed, is for a world in which "collective security" will be a fact and not an aspiration. But he has a strong vein of matter-of-fact common sense, and he realised that the immediate realisation of the League's ideal, in the circumstances which had arisen, was no longer practical politics. It was necessary to rebuild the shattered structure, and not to pretend that the one wing left standing was the whole house.

To understand his position it is necessary to recognise that he did not believe in the imminence of war. "I do not believe that there is any danger at the present day, or for many years to come, of war," he said in November, 1933, adding—

But I do believe Europe to-day, and for many years to come, will be at the cross roads, in the sense that if Europe decides wrongly on matters that will not lead immediately to war to-day, she may very well unconsciously be sowing the teeth of the dragon that will, for another generation, turn into the harvest of war.

It is clear now, of course, that in his major assumption, Lord Halifax was wrong. But his error was shared by the overwhelming majority of his countrymen, and by the vast mass of opinion abroad. Very

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few people in 1933 imagined war to be near. Halifax was more of an optimist in this respect than most because, like so many very highminded men, he was slow to believe, until it was proved to demonstration, in the depravity of those with whom he had to deal. He continued to believe that peril of war could be averted, certainly till the rape of Austria in March, 1938, perhaps till the seizure of all that remained of Czecho-Slovakia a year later.

Granted this belief, the rest follows. If there was no danger of war, there was very little to be said for defiance. It would merely be a needless provocation. "Are you going on for months and years," Halifax asked,

refusing to face the facts, watching your relations steadily deteriorate until, perhaps, potential enemies become converted into real enemies, and something happens which launches the whole world into irretrievable disaster ?

It was a pertinent enough criticism, and it does not cease to be true because when the "resisters' " policy came eventually to be tried by Halifax himself the "irretrievable disaster" promptly followed.

But the best illustration of the qualities and temper which fitted Lord Halifax to be, as he proved himself, the almost indispensable right-hand man of Mr. Chamberlain in his "appeasement" policy, is furnished by his speech to the League Council on May 12th, 1938, urging the recognition of the Italian

ABYSSINIA

conquest of Abyssinia. He was well known at Geneva, for he had been one of the British delegates there in 1923, and had won the warm approval and admiration of the Assembly. But his task now was as difficult as any which could well be imposed on a man of his known character and reputation.

It is never very easy to accept defeat with dignity and to abandon positions occupied with a great show of firmness. But in this case the defeated army had gone into battle with loud protestations that they were fighting for the cause of righteousness and international justice against wicked lawlessness. All the priests blew with the trumpets. And now it had to be confessed that the cause of righteousness had been completely defeated, and that lawlessness had won a quite decisive victory.

It is not very hard to imagine how some others would have faced the task set to Lord Halifax. Neville Chamberlain would assuredly have said, with the gruff, rather harsh, outspokenness which so exasperated his opponents, that it was no good crying over spilt milk ; that things done could not be undone ; and that the part of wisdom and commonsense was to make the best of a bad bargain : adding, perhaps, in his less happy vein, that much might yet be saved, and that the Abyssinians would be well advised to agree as quickly as possible with their new masters. Lord Simon would have pointed out the danger of a state of affairs in which undoubted actual possession was refused, indefinitely and inexorably, legal recognition. He would have said that to accept ex-

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plicitly such a condition of things was to strike a blow at the very foundations of international order : and that however one might regret sentimentally the sacrifice necessary to end a deadlock of this kind, scarcely any sacrifice could in fact be deemed too great to avoid the threatened anarchy. Lord Baldwin would have burst into tears. He would have prayed once more for peace in his time. He would have deplored the iniquity of a crooked and perverse generation of which this wretched business was a sad example. And he would have concluded by saying that he saw no course open except to condone an act which he admitted to be wicked and indefensible.

All these three lines implied, it will be seen, surrender. None escaped the horrible dilemma on which the League found itself impaled—namely, either to confess that its original high professions were hypocritical nonsense, or else to avow openly that it was now deserting a cause which it had declared to be that of righteousness itself. Lord Halifax took another, and a characteristically high, line. He did not ask the League to unsay the hard things it had said about Italy. On the contrary, he said that these observations were perfectly just. But, he argued, there were two kinds of idealism. There was the idealism which took the form of an unflinching and unpractical devotion to some high purpose: and there was another idealism which sought even in the darkest hour and the most unpromising circumstances to win some victories for peace. That was the creed

THE LEAGUE'S DILEMMA

he commended to them. It is obviously open to criticism. But it is at least an attitude which a good man need not be ashamed to adopt, nor an intelligent man to state and defend. And that is more than can be said of some of the alternatives.

CHAPTER X I I I
LORD TALLY-HO

" A cry more tunable
Was never holla'd to nor cheer'd with horn."
Midsummer Night's Dream

TOWARDS the end of 1937 invitations were sent out to a number of well-known British sportsmen to attend a great hunting exhibition in Berlin. They were sent through the innocent agency of the editor of the *Field* and were perfectly genuine. There was a great exhibition of matters connected with the chase being held in Berlin, to which many countries (including Poland) were contributing. Among the invited was Lord Halifax. Believing strongly, as he did after his experience with Gandhi, in the value of personal contacts, he suggested to Mr. Chamberlain that he should accept the invitation and seize the opportunity of seeing Hitler and other German statesmen. Chamberlain, an even more fervent believer in the value of personal touch, warmly agreed. It was accordingly decided that Halifax should go to Germany in November. This is his own simple account of the genesis of this famous visit. There are others, which differ in some points from it, but are not inconsistent with it.

One point never perfectly explained was the

THE HUNTING EXHIBITION

attitude of Mr. Eden, then Foreign Secretary, to the proposed visit. He certainly knew of it. He almost certainly disapproved. He had some hand in the discussion of what should, or should not, be said. But he was himself setting off for a Conference in Brussels, and the final arrangements seem to have been made without his assistance and probably without his knowledge.

The storm which now arose had nothing directly to do with him. But indirectly it had a good deal, for his supporters among the resisters had long eyed with suspicion and anger Lord Halifax's unofficial association with him as a kind of deputy Foreign Minister. They knew Lord Halifax was an appeaser, and they suspected him, rightly or wrongly, of co-operating with the Prime Minister to torpedo the Foreign Minister's policy.

This impression was strongly confirmed by a statement in the *Manchester Guardian*, which purported with a decided air of authority to give the terms of a proposed deal with the Nazis. Britain was to recognise the Italian conquest of Abyssinia and the government of General Franco in Spain. Germany was to rejoin a revised edition of the League, with the Sanctions clauses modified: and to waive for six years her claim for the return of her colonies. Ominous clauses suggested further that Britain should withdraw all support from Austria, and consent to the remodelling of Czecho-Slovakia on a federal basis like that of Switzerland. The note of authenticity with which these proposals were given and the

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assurance with which, after the usual official denial, they were repeated, began to shake the confidence even of those who doubted the possibility of such a backstairs intrigue.

The Chamberlain government was not particularly susceptible to Press criticism. It contented itself with announcing to the Dominions and to M. Delbos, the French Foreign Minister, the forthcoming visit of Lord Halifax to Germany. Both France and the Dominions received the news with polite acquiescence. French opinion, much better informed at this period on Nazi psychology than the British, regarded the visit as useless, and was rather puzzled to understand its supposed object. "The real reasons," Mme. Tabouis wrote, "are that Mr. Chamberlain feels that the English public are letting themselves get too pessimistic. So it is necessary to try something to restore the feeling that, always and everywhere, England is the mediator among the peoples of the world." Both Mr. Chamberlain and the English public must have been much surprised to hear this.

In the meanwhile the articles in the British Press had set the German Press alight. The free comments of British newspapers are always a sort of red light to the tied German Press. Herr Kurt von Stutterheim, one of the ablest and most understanding of the German correspondents in London, once went so far as to suggest in a very well-informed book that the liberty of the Press and the Englishman's inflexible attachment to it was the most probable cause

THE PRESS INTERVIEWS

of war between England and Germany. On this occasion the violence of the German papers was really remarkable. The *Manchester Guardian* articles were "a masterpiece of lying reporting", "a vile fraud and infamous attack on the Fiihrer's policy", and a discreditable example of "Kuh-handel" (backstairs intrigue).

It was a fire of straw, and burnt out quickly : but it illustrated vividly the trials and difficulties that beset the "appeaser's" path. At the very last moment, the visit nearly broke down owing to an incident in the miserable Spanish war which brought German and British interests into violent collision. The German Government suggested that Lord Halifax's journey should, under the circumstances, be deferred. But it was persuaded to reconsider this decision, and Lord Halifax duly arrived for the hunting exhibition.

For an hour and a half he sat with the Fuhrer in his lair at Berchtesgaden. He met Herr Goebbels at tea at the British Embassy, and Herr Goebbels apparently made himself very agreeable. He also met Goering, and talked sport with him. And Goering showed him his tame elks that would eat out of his hand and the other wonders of his great hunting park : and was generally jovial and good-humoured and sportsmanlike. Unlike Queen Victoria on a famous occasion, Lord Halifax was amused. He found his fellow hunting-man rather good company. Then the Berlin mob, mercurial as mobs are, suddenly forgot all about the "vile fraud" and the "masterpiece of

LORD TALLY-HO

lying " and took its tall guest to its heart. It flocked about him and stared at him round-eyed at the hunting exhibition: and it called him "Lord Tally-ho"—the German equivalent for the English hunting cry being "Hallali", which was near enough to Halifax for punning purposes. Lord Halifax went back to England well satisfied on the whole with his visit. His talks with Hitler had, he said, been "free, frank, informal and confidential" and he hoped they would lead to a better understanding.

The Prime Minister spoke in the same strain. The visit had been "confidential, but valuable, in furthering the desire for closer mutual understanding", and at a dinner given by the Anglo-German Fellowship Herr Ribbentrop was courtly to the point of fulsomeness. The guest of honour himself, after a laughing reference to the "greatest hunting exhibition ever known", dwelt on its use as a means of furthering international amity. "It cannot but be of great value," he urged, "to remind sportsmen—and most men are sportsmen in some degree—of all the things they had in common." To the outward eye, the expedition had been a conspicuous success.

It must be admitted, in the light of subsequent events, that these flattering appearances were entirely deceptive. The expedition is really an example of the strict limitations of the value of personal contacts. Whatever had been the result of the meeting of Eden and Mussolini, for instance, it had assuredly not been an improvement in Anglo-Italian relations. What Halifax said to the Fihrer was never revealed until he

PERSONAL CONTACTS

told American pressmen how Hitler, like Herr von Stutterheim, had declared that a good understanding between Germany and Britain was impossible so long as the British Parliament and press were free to criticise Germany. In that case, said Halifax briefly, they were wasting their time. He had once before so far lifted the veil as to disclose that he warned Hitler and his associates against a policy of violence. There is a certain solemn humour in the picture of the tall, grave Yorkshireman seriously warning against violence men whose whole careers had been a succession of acts of violence, and who owed their position at the time to the unscrupulous use of organised force. But it illumines as by a flash the yawning gulf of unfathomable miscomprehension which divided the parties.

Nothing is easier than to criticise after the event a policy which has failed. Once a thing has actually happened, it tends, with surprising swiftness, to assume a deceptive air of inevitability. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia is commonly regarded as the "inevitable" result of a disastrous war on a country rotten with long ages of tyranny, ignorance, poverty and superstition. In fact, in the form which it took, the Bolshevik revolution was a political miracle. No one—not Lenin himself—could possibly have foretold it. Any one of a hundred accidents might have diverted it to quite other courses.

So it is with the rise of Nazidom. To the confirmed resister, who has read his *Mein Kampf*, the march of German aggression, from the occupation

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of the Rhineland to the conquest of Poland, seems the simple realisation, according to plan, of a programme deliberately drawn up and executed by a single masterful, sinister brain. To those who so think the policy of Chamberlain and Halifax up to March, 1939, must seem, on the one hand simple to the point of folly, and on the other almost criminally ignorant—foolish because it ignored the self-acknowledged aims of the Nazi chiefs, and ignorant because it failed to nip in the bud, while it was still easy, a growth which it cost in the end a world war to check. The answer to this criticism is that, to men actually engaged in the negotiations which preceded the war, the rise of the Nazi power did not wear in fact this air of a concerted programme worked out according to a pre-ordained plan. It looked like an incoherent succession of isolated spasmodic adventures, undertaken sometimes with a good deal of misgiving and under pressure of circumstances not always manufactured. There were passages between these outbreaks during which it seemed at any rate possible that some temporary stabilisation might be effected—leading perhaps to the "long period of peace" which Hitler was prophesying so late as January, 1939. If a breathing space of that kind could have been won, war might have been indefinitely postponed.

It is most probable that this was what Mr. Chamberlain thought he had secured by the Munich talks. What the appeasers generally were playing for was time. They thought that if this could be won,

THE CLOUDS OF WAR

there was at least a reasonable hope that conditions would improve and a real peace become ultimately possible. They failed to win the time for which they strove, assuredly not because Hitler was working to a pre-arranged timetable, for it is unlikely that he either desired or expected the war which followed: but because both they themselves and the Fuhrer were swept away in the result by forces which the latter had unloosed. It may be said that their efforts at best had always but a slight chance of success. It is true, and most of the appeasers knew it. But so long as there was any chance at all, was not the risk worth while? Only those will answer in the negative who under-estimate the absolute ruin which war entails. "The lights are going out in Europe," said Lord Grey in 1914, in the passage which Lord Halifax quoted in the best of all his speeches; ^H"we shall not see them lit again in our day." But the supreme tragedy of war is that some of the lights which it extinguishes are quenched for ever. The loss is irreparable, and no future generation, however brilliant, can replace it.

To obviate this catastrophe was worth, so the appeasers thought, almost any concession. Their concessions proved in the result vain, and brought them nothing but obloquy and derision. But it is far from clear even now that they were wrong to make them.

In another sense it is clear that they were absolutely right. In April, 1940, Sir Edmund Ironside,¹ Chief

¹ Now Lord

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of the Imperial General Staff, stated in an interview that " our army had at last turned the corner ". He was sure of this, he said, " only a fortnight ago . . . We started with very little. The Germans gave us these months to build up a real fighting force. If they had launched a full attack at the very start when we were unprepared, they might possibly have got us."

But if, on this unquestionable authority, Great Britain was thus " unprepared " in March, 1940, it is certain that she was far less ready in 1938. It is beyond the possibility of dispute that she was quite unprepared to face a great war. On the sea, of course, her power was unchallengeable. But her air force was hopelessly inferior in numbers to the German air force. London and other large cities were still without adequate defence against enemy air attacks. According to Sir Neville Henderson she had at this time no Spitfires, one Hurricane and seven Anti-Aircraft guns for the defence of the capital. The position of the great bases like Gibraltar, Malta and Singapore was a matter of earnest concern to the military and naval authorities.

The responsibility for this state of things rested, not with the Chamberlain Government, but with the succession of Conservative and Labour Governments who, ever since the Treaty of Versailles, had made disarmament their watchword. This was a perfectly natural sequel to the Treaty and the Covenant, which undoubtedly contemplated general disarmament as the basis of future peace. But the result, when

POSTPONING THE CRISIS

Germany re-armed, was to leave Britain very ill-equipped to meet the new challenge. It is possible that in 1938 Russia might have maintained at least a benevolent neutrality. But the French Government, usually well informed on Russian policy, had no belief even in 1938 that any help could be expected from the Soviets for the protection of Czecho-Slovakia. And without such help, the Allies would have been faced with the same situation which confronted them a year later, but far less well prepared to meet it.

It was of the utmost importance to the British Government therefore, to do everything possible to defer a struggle, and if it proved impossible to avoid war, to employ the interval left for preparation to the best advantage. One of their greatest difficulties was that it was impossible to state the facts openly. To do that—to disclose publicly the country's unpreparedness for war—was clearly to invite attack. Chamberlain and Halifax therefore were bound to submit silently to much uninformed and unfair criticism and ridicule, both in Britain and America, from idealists who either did not understand, or refused to acknowledge, the real state of affairs. The verdict of history on the Munich agreement will probably be that it secured Britain just the breathing space she needed. Why Hitler granted it remains a little doubtful. Sir Neville Henderson and others have suggested that he was impressed by the evident unpopularity of the idea of war among the German people. Mussolini, who had nothing to gain and much to fear from a war the result of which might be to leave

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Germany the paramount power in Europe certainly worked for peace. Hitler must have had a fairly clear idea of the state of affairs. Probably at Berchtesgaden, certainly at Godesberg, he was trying to force the issue, and compel Britain to declare war. For whatever reason, he failed. Once again Chamberlain and Halifax secured a breathing space. It may now be boldly said that, by the admission of their bitterest opponents, they used it well. When the final crisis did come, Britain was no longer unprepared.

CHAPTER XIV

MUNICH AND AFTER 1938

" With Peace and Honour I am willing to spare anything
so as to keep all ends together."

PEPYS : *Diary*, 25 May, 1663

ON February 20th, 1938, Mr. Anthony Eden resigned. Lord Halifax, in his speech on the subject in the Lords, appeared to think that there was no real reason for his resignation. He held the point actually at issue to be trivial. He declared that he and most of his other colleagues had no notion that there was any friction other than on the Italian issue between the Prime Minister and his Foreign Secretary. Mr. Chamberlain supported this view. Such differences as had arisen between them, he said in his letter to Eden, " in no way concern ultimate ends or the fundamentals of our policy ".

This, of course, is true. But it was also true, as Eden has asserted, that their outlook on the international problems of the day was different, and their view of the methods by which they should be resolved incompatible. The actual point at issue might be, as Halifax urged, small. It was simply whether negotiation with Italy should, as Chamberlain desired, be begun out of hand, or whether Italy should, as Eden urged, be required first, in view of her very

black record, to give practical proof of her sincerity by withdrawing her troops from Spain.

But Halifax was evidently mistaken in supposing that there were no other points of quarrel. Eden was quite decisive on this question in his speech in the Commons. "I should not be frank with the House," he said, "if I were to pretend that it" (the opening of negotiations with Italy) "is an isolated issue between the Prime Minister and myself. It is not."

That there was, as Eden said, a "fundamental" difference in outlook is not really doubtful. It was intensified by Mr. Chamberlain's insistence on interfering personally, sometimes even without the Foreign Secretary's knowledge, with the conduct of foreign affairs.

But there was another grave side to the Foreign Secretary's resignation. It was received with shouts of triumph in Italy and Germany, where Eden was personally unpopular, and eagerly advertised as the defeat of the policy for which he stood. The resisters naturally drew attention to this aspect of the matter. It looked, as Lord Cranbourne, the Under Secretary, who resigned with Eden, said, like a "surrender to blackmail".

Eden's real position seems to have been that while he could see a case for the policy of conciliating Italy on which the Government was anxious to embark, he held that he was not the man to carry it out. He considered that he had been too recently and too prominently concerned in the policy of attempting

to coerce Italy to make it possible for him now without ruining his own reputation to turn round and advocate the opposite policy. This is clearly an honest and intelligible attitude. He was probably right: and holding these views, he was right to resign.

How then came Lord Halifax, a man notoriously of the most scrupulous honour, to consent to take up the task which Eden refused? He too had endorsed the policy of sanctions. He too had endorsed its continuance after the Hoare-Laval negotiations. He was not, no doubt, so completely identified with it as Eden. But there was no question that in accepting the Foreign Office after Eden's resignation he committed himself to the reversal of a policy which he had previously, and rather recently, defended and advocated. The answer lies in the actual history of the attempt to impose sanctions on Italy. The moral question of Italy's right to seize Abyssinia, or the League's right to take any steps it thought proper to defeat and punish an outrageous violation of international right, was no longer in dispute. What occupied inevitably the anxious attention of British statesmen was the practical result of the sanctions campaign. It became clear in the first instance that the effective application of sanctions meant, in the long run, war. War with Italy was not in itself perhaps a particularly formidable prospect, though the closing of the Mediterranean route which it would presumably entail was a more serious matter than most Englishmen realised. Still, it was not vital; and Italy on the other hand was very vulnerable.

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But a second fact that became clearer as time went on was that France, watching with lynx eyes the re-arming of Germany on her borders, had no intention whatever of going to war with Italy over Abyssinia. When M. Laval inveigled Sir Samuel Hoare into his plan for what seemed to be a backstairs peace with Italy at the expense of Abyssinia, indignant British public opinion proclaimed the whole business an underhand intrigue by irresponsible politicians: and the Baldwin Government, appalled by the storm, gave way and continued the policy of sanctions.

M. Laval has no doubt engaged in some very unscrupulous intrigues. But in that crisis he had his country behind him. Terrified at the growing menace of Germany, the French were eager to conciliate Italy. The British Government meanwhile, harassed by no such spectre, pushed on with the sanctions policy: with the result that Italy was thrown into the arms of Germany and the Berlin-Rome Axis came into being. Whatever may have been the long-range result, foreseen with misgiving by the wiser among Italian statesmen, the immediate consequence of the agreement between Italy and Germany was disastrous enough. It gave Herr Hitler the free hand in central Europe which he desired. Mussolini withdrew his protection from "independent" Austria: and the moment Italian protection was withdrawn, independent Austria became the prey of the Nazis. Incidentally, the position of Czechoslovakia, outflanked by the German occupation of Austria, became almost untenable.

FOREIGN SECRETARY

Reviewing these things, an honest man, deeply implicated as Eden was in the anti-Italian crusade, might still think, as he did apparently think, that he was not the man to reverse the policy he had so eagerly advocated. But an equally honest man, committed only a little less deeply, might also hold that the reversal of this policy was a matter of urgent public concern and that he was even bound, putting all personal prejudices aside, to do his utmost to promote this reversal. Mr. Chamberlain had persuaded himself that the Italian quarrel was the tap-root of all the bitterness and suspicions which were obviously poisoning the air of Europe. Looking at the facts as they stand now recorded in the cold light of past history, it is very difficult to say that he was wrong: or that if Halifax, as he evidently did, agreed with him, he could have refused to support him actively to the best of his ability. As it was, he had been acting as a sort of Deputy Foreign Secretary for some months before Eden resigned: and it was eminently characteristic that he slid into the vacant office with his usual air of being pushed rather reluctantly into undesired prominence.

One minor difficulty which confronted the new Foreign Minister was the question of his home. The huge house in which the Halifaxes lived in Eaton Square was admirably suited for the solemn dinner parties and other hospitalities to which a Foreign Secretary is committed. But it was a long way from Whitehall. The walk through Buckingham Palace Garden to which the King gave Lord Halifax a key

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for his own use, was pleasant on a sunny day. But the distance had its inconveniences in times of crisis. So in the Autumn of 1939 he took a suite in the Dorchester, where incidentally Mr. Sumner Welles, President Roosevelt's envoy, subsequently took neighbouring rooms for his short stay in England; and there he remained until, in 1940, at the express request of Mr. Churchill, who wished to have his Foreign Secretary near him, rooms at Downing Street were made ready for his occupation.

Meanwhile, the "appeasers" were now in the saddle. Had the policy of the aggressor states been the carefully preconceived plan which some people assumed, their obvious course now was to strengthen the hands of a British Government which was willing to come to terms with them by avoiding at least for the time provocative adventures. Italy was notoriously anxious to improve her relations with Great Britain. Hitler was scarcely less eager to avoid a breach until at least he had established his power over Central Europe.

But in fact the totalitarian states were just as much dependent upon circumstances as the most light-minded democracy. An "appeasing" expedition to Italy undertaken by Halifax and Chamberlain in person failed. Mussolini could not yet escape from his Spanish entanglements. And on March 11th the Nazis seized Austria.

This was a great blow to Halifax personally. It was certainly a deplorable result of the "frank and fair" discussions during the Hunting Exhibition. It was almost as direct an affront to him as the occupa-

THE RAPE OF AUSTRIA

tion of Prague a year later was to Chamberlain. An American journalist, Dorothy Thompson (Mrs. Sinclair Lewis) represents him as moaning " I never thought they would have done it," and crying " horrible, horrible," when told of the atrocities committed by the Nazis in Austria. Whether he ever actually said the words ascribed to him is not a matter of the first importance. Beyond doubt they represent fairly enough his actual attitude.

In the American critic, a sturdy " resister ", this attitude inspired nothing but contempt for his lack of foresight and his impotence. Neither criticism is justified, except with very grave reservations. Probably the union of Germany and Austria was ultimately inevitable. It would have been a good thing for Europe if it had been consummated earlier. But the Nazi rape of Austria, in the form which it actually took, was not inevitable, and could not have been predicted. It was due to a series of factors each one of which might have been different, such as the mistakes of the unfortunate Schuschnigg, the sudden withdrawal of Mussolini from the Austrian arena, and the brain storm which led the German Fuhrer to act at that particular moment in the way he did.

Beyond all question Halifax was impotent to stop the Nazi invasion. He would have been equally impotent however clearly he had foreseen it. Britain might have intervened with effect against the occupation of the Rhineland. She might have gone to war in 1938 to defend Czecho-Slovakia—though she could not in fact have saved it from the fate which

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overtook Poland. But she could not possibly have gone to war to save Austria from the Nazis, for the simple reason that a solid minority of the Austrian youth were themselves fanatical Nazis. A war to free Austria in which thousands of Austrians would have fought passionately against their liberators would have been an anomaly which could not be contemplated seriously even in the crazy nightmare which composed international politics in 1938.

The Austrian catastrophe was speedily obscured by the steadily growing menace of the Czecho-Slovak controversy. Halifax's part in this dreary business was unsensational. He worked hard to persuade disputants to agree, one at least of whom never intended to accept any compromise: but his labours for peace were as ineffectual as the psalmist's in similar circumstances. He does not appear to have attempted anything very drastic. The reported recall of the diplomats' families from Germany, which caused a good deal of excitement in both countries, was a mere *canard*. Sir Neville Henderson's vivid account in his *Failure of a Mission* of how the request that an extra coach might be reserved for some of the Embassy children was magnified into an international incident which brought the French Ambassador "to his doorstep", is an unusually illuminating illustration of the way in which at a time of tension a crisis may be developed from the most insignificant occurrences.

The figure that came eventually into the limelight in the crisis of September, 1938, was not Halifax,

A LOYAL COLLEAGUE

but Chamberlain. The Foreign Secretary appears only for a moment in the drama which centred about the discussions at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg and Munich. The telegram in which Hitler announced his willingness to meet Chamberlain again was received by Halifax, and he brought it down to the Commons himself in time for the Prime Minister to use it as his peroration in the famous scene on September 28th. The absurd story that Halifax and Chamberlain concocted this dramatic coincidence and arranged that the telegram should be delivered at that particular moment is interesting only as an illustration of how completely prejudice can warp the understanding and make the entirely incredible seem possible and even probable.

With the Munich agreement Halifax was in entire assent. He has always shown himself as a Colleague endowed with a more than ordinary measure of loyalty, sometimes of the "old school tie" pattern—the generosity which makes it impossible to an honourable man to fail to back his friend, especially if he is in difficulties. Of this his defence of Sir Samuel Hoare after the Laval negotiations was a typical example. But his belief in the Munich settlement was not dictated by loyalty to his colleagues. He stated his position quite clearly in the Lords on March 20th, 1939, when the catastrophe which ended the bright hopes founded on it had just occurred. "It is natural enough," he said in reply to Lord Snell,

that in the light of these events His Majesty's Government should be told, as the noble Lord told them this afternoon, that the policy of Munich was a tragic

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mistake. I cannot, of course, claim to correct the noble Lord upon an expression of opinion which he sincerely holds, but I can correct him, I think, on one limited observation that fell from him. He referred to the policy pursued by the Prime Minister as a personal policy. If by that he means that it was a policy to which the Prime Minister had given every ounce of energy, imagination and resolution that he possessed, I should not disagree with him ; but if he suggests that it was a policy that was pursued without the fullest co-operation of myself as Foreign Secretary and of every member of His Majesty's Government, then I must take leave to oppose to what he said the most emphatic contradiction.

He went on to define the aims of the Munich Settlement perhaps more clearly and simply than they ever had been defined. There were, he said, two purposes in it: " The first purpose was to effect a settlement as fair as might be in all the extremely difficult circumstances of that time of a problem which was a real one, and of which the treatment was an urgent necessity if the peace of Europe was to be preserved/" He had " no doubt whatever " that the Government in the light of the information available were right to take the course they did. The second purpose, to " build a Europe more secure upon the basis of freely accepted consultation as the means by which all future differences might be adjusted " had, he admitted, been " disastrously belied by events". They had " hoped" in Herr Hitler's assurance : and the hope had been miserably deceived. It was legitimate to hope : and " neither the Prime

THE MUNICH AGREEMENT

Minister, nor I myself, nor any Member of His Majesty's Government, has failed at any moment to be acutely conscious of the differences between beliefs and hopes."

But it seems to be true that he had always been less confident of the results of Munich than the Prime Minister. He had not Chamberlain's business man's belief in the virtue of the written word. His confidence had been badly shaken by the fate of Austria, and the confidence of a naturally very trusting man, once really shaken, is hard to restore. In another respect he looked on the Munich settlement with rather different eyes from his chief. Chamberlain claimed, and rightly, that he had saved Czecho-Slovakia from the horrors of invasion and military occupation. He did not deny that the price paid was heavy. This was clear in the accounts that poured in of the fate of the miserable army of refugees fleeing before the incoming Germans and of the ruthlessness with which the invaders conducted their occupation. But at the very worst it was a far less price than would have been exacted if the country had been conquered by force, and Chamberlain was a little impatient with the people who harped perpetually on the evils that had overtaken Czecho-Slovakia without so much as mentioning the far greater evils which would have befallen her if war had not been averted.

Halifax's naturally gentle temper could not dismiss thus summarily the sufferings of a vast body of innocent people: and his sensitive conscience forbade him to ride off on the technical excuse that we

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had no strictly legal responsibility for Czecho-Slovakia. For, morally, we were responsible for the results of a settlement to which we had ourselves agreed and which we had practically forced upon the Czechs. That these results were less bad than they might have been did not make them other than utterly lamentable.

The undisguised confession that the policy of the "appeasers" in these last months was based on "hopes" rather than "beliefs" has been strongly criticised and even ridiculed. A Government which allowed its policy in normal times to be so directed would be properly liable to both criticism and ridicule. But the times in question were not normal. War, which to many people besides Lord Baldwin seemed to threaten the complete destruction of civilisation, was evidently imminent. There was a slender hope of avoiding it. This lay not in any blind belief and trust in the word of Herr Hitler, but in the horror with which the whole world, including the Germans as well as the British people, regarded the prospect. Horror of war in September, 1938, was certainly the dominant feeling of English people. In Germany it was scarcely less strong. If this mood had persisted, and if the forces behind it could have been so marshalled as to control the forces making for war, war might have been averted. As it was, it was averted for a year.

The "hopes" on which Chamberlain and Halifax built their policy failed. It remains true that it was the only policy at the time which offered any hope at

all. For the "belief" of the "resisters" that the aggressor States were bluffing and would surrender to the first serious challenge, was without foundation. The challenge was made and was immediately accepted.

The mistake which Chamberlain certainly, and Halifax in a lesser degree, committed, was in exaggerating, or at any rate appearing to exaggerate, the actual achievement of the Munich settlement. Had they been content to say simply that they had made the best of a bad job and taken, in very difficult circumstances, the only course open to them, it would not have been very easy to criticise them. By suggesting that he had secured permanent peace between Britain and Germany, Mr. Chamberlain exposed himself needlessly, as his warmest admirers were bound to admit, to some obloquy and some ridicule, from which his reputation undoubtedly suffered. It was possible to represent him plausibly as having been duped by Hitler, and as having failed egregiously to foresee a future which lay only a few months ahead.

It is admittedly a defect in a statesman that he cannot foresee the future. But candour compels the admission that no statesman ever can. The charge only becomes serious when it can be shown that he has so completely failed to provide against a probable or even a reasonably possible contingency that the interests committed to his care suffer harm from his negligence. Out of this test the Chamberlain government comes in reality rather well. If they had known

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the course of the coming events to a certainty, what else could they have done ? Prudence dictated prompt rearmament. But they could scarcely have rearmed more swiftly or more energetically than they did. Defence measures against air attacks were obviously desirable: and they were taken with a thoroughness which probably accounts in a large measure for the immunity from attack which London and other great centres enjoyed in the first months of the war. Czecho-Slovakia could no more have been saved from its fate, whatever the British Government had done and however clearly they had foreseen the attack on her independence, than Poland could be saved afterwards from a similar fate. Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons at the time bewailed the loss of the "veteran legions of ancient Bohemia" which might have contained so many German divisions. But even Mr. Churchill never explained how, given the condition of the Allies' armaments at the time, they could possibly have been preserved. A year later a great part of the German army was resisted by the army of Poland, then the third largest in Europe. The Allies, far stronger than they were in 1938, were powerless to prevent the destruction of Poland. It is idle to contend that the far smaller Czech army could have succeeded where the Polish army failed so completely. There was no effective salvation for Czecho-Slovakia, as matters then stood, unless it were to be in the help of Russia. And to trust to that, as the events proved, was to lean on a broken reed indeed.

Meanwhile, as Lord Halifax said, it was not wrong

HITLER WANTS WAR

to hope. It was just possible to believe, before the seizure of Prague, that Hitler might for once in a way keep his word. He might be sincere in his assertions that he desired no further territory in Europe, and was not anxious to include discontented Czechs in his German Reich. But in any case, in their patient exploration of every possible path to peace, Chamberlain and Halifax were certainly right. The policy exposed them to a good deal of opprobrium and contempt. But when the storm finally passed over them, they had their reward. It was impossible even for the most mendacious propagandist to persuade anybody outside Germany that the war was of this country's making. The record to the contrary was clear and unmistakable : and this fact was of real importance in determining the trend of world opinion against Germany, and in uniting opinion in Britain itself as it never could have been united otherwise.

CHAPTER XV
THE AMBER LIGHT

1938-1939

"Halt! Major Road Ahead."—SAFETY SIGNAL

HITLER'S occupation of Prague in defiance of the Munich Agreement was a death blow to the policy of appeasement. The Fuhrer must have known that this would be its inevitable result. The implication is that he did not care. In the phrase which Lord Milner made celebrated he "damned the consequences."

The immediate consequence was that the British Government prepared for the worst. Rearmament had been going on for some time, and was continued uninterruptedly, to the sardonic amusement of scoffers, after the Munich agreement. Hitler, with whom humour is not a strong point, affected to regard this as a proof of no confidence (which indeed it was) and drew a contemptuous retort from Halifax :—

I should have thought that everybody everywhere must now realise that there is no party and no statesman in this country that would ever contemplate an aggressive war. . . . But it is also dangerous that some people in other countries occasionally fall into the opposite error and are tempted to interpret our will to peace as proof of our weakness and cowardice.

REARMAMENT

. . . The material and moral resources of this country are enormous, and the spirit of our people is in no way weakened.

This speech drew a great deal of attention abroad and in America. The warning was plain. The green light was changing.

Rearmament meanwhile went on apace, and by June Halifax could take a very high and confident line :—

We have an unchallengeable Navy. Our Air Force, still undergoing an expansion which has outstripped all expectations of a few months ago, has now nothing to fear from any other. I have little doubt that its personnel, in spirit and in skill, is superior to all others. Our army, once derided, but which survived to prove its worth by making a boast of that derision, is, no doubt, small in comparison with that of some other countries. But, as happened once before, we are creating here also a powerful weapon for the defence of our own liberty and that of other peoples.

But while rearming thus vigorously, the Government did not altogether abandon all hope of peace. It had been made a charge against Sir Edward Grey, in 1914, without much justification, that he had failed to give Germany adequate warning that, in certain eventualities, Britain would come into the war against her. He warned the Germans over and over again that they would have to reckon with British intervention. He explains in his memoirs that, though he felt himself precluded from giving promises to France, he felt himself at liberty to warn Germany. No warning would have convinced Germany in 1914 : and in 1939

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Hitler, blinded by his own passions and Ribbentrop's assurance that Britain would not or could not fight, was equally deaf to advice to the contrary. Halifax lost no opportunity of making this country's position quite clear. Even before the seizure of Prague, he had issued one quite uncompromising warning :—

There have been attempts in certain quarters to under-estimate or qualify the Prime Minister's assurance of our solidarity with France. Any such attempts as these I must greatly regret since it would be a profound error to suppose that any mental reservation of any kind accompanied the Prime Minister's words. The declaration was quite clear and unmistakable. Translated into homely language it was "Halt! Major road ahead." That was its purpose.

On June 8th he was saying that there was "no more disastrous error than to suppose that because Britain and France are tolerant, ready to discuss and to compromise, they are therefore less resolute, vigorous and resilient": and he added that "the day was gone by when the independence of European nations can be destroyed by unilateral action and any further attempt will meet with wide and resolute resistance". The most famous of all these declarations was that of the Chatham House speech on June 29th :—

What is now fully and unanimously accepted in this country is that in the event of further aggression we are resolved to use at once the whole of our strength

THE POLICY OF "GUARANTEES"

in fulfilment of our pledges to resist it. I can say at once that Great Britain is not prepared to yield either to calumnies or to force.

Clearly the green light had now changed unmistakably to amber.

But besides rearming, and besides warning Germany in the plainest possible terms, the Government took another step much more open to challenge. They entered into a number of new agreements. They "guaranteed" the integrity of Greece and Rumania. They made treaties of mutual assistance with Poland and Turkey. They began negotiations for a similar treaty with Soviet Russia. The results of these engagements are a matter of history. All that it is important to note here is the effect of this new development on British public opinion. The average Englishman is almost as determinedly averse from foreign entanglements as the average American. *John Bull's* poster on the very eve of the 1914 struggle, "To Hell with Serbia", undoubtedly represented the private feelings of a great mass of Englishmen. The "resister" in 1939 turned red with indignation when any of his countrymen told him that he would not "fight for Czecho-Slovakia" or "fight for Poland". But a great many Englishmen, however mistakenly, held this view of the threatened struggle. There was this much in it, that there was no doubt a real danger that some bellicose protege might drag us into war on an issue which really did not concern us. Halifax was evidently very conscious of this danger. Throughout the negotiations over Danzig

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between Germany and Poland he kept repeatedly urging on the Polish Government caution, moderation and circumspection. Correct as the Warsaw Government's attitude was, these warnings seem at first sight unnecessary and rather ungracious. But they certainly serve—as perhaps they were in part intended to serve—as a permanent memorial of the jealous zeal with which, in rather delicate circumstances, the Foreign Secretary guarded British interests.

No part of Halifax's foreign policy lends itself more obviously to criticism than the Polish agreement. The German criticisms of it are soon answered. The allegation, for instance, that the British Government interposed to prevent a friendly settlement between Germany and Poland, and to incite the Poles to refuse a satisfactory compromise, is simply untrue. This is proved by the fact that the Poles rejected the settlement proposed to them by Germany before the British offer of support was made. The charge that the alliance was part of a policy for the encirclement of Germany has not much more substance. It was a purely defensive alliance. The "encirclement", if [such it was, could do no possible harm to Germany unless she chose to invite it by attacking Poland. But the objections of some British critics who asked why their country was concerned to defend Poland at all, and why she should have committed herself to a task which it was obviously so difficult and perhaps impossible to fulfil, were more plausible. If the Polish agreement be considered in isolation they are difficult to answer.

P O L A N D

The whole case however for the alliance hangs on the fact that it was part of a considered policy. The result of the occupation of Prague had been to make it clear that no reliance whatever could be placed on the promises of the German Government: and to make it probable to the point of certainty that further German aggression was to be expected. At the moment the British Government could do nothing. It was quite impossible to rescue the unfortunate Czechs. Poland at this time was engaged with Hungary in the agreeable game of snatching what booty she could from the wreckage of Czecho-Slovakia. She was apparently hand in glove with Germany. What the British Government did was to lay down and announce the principle that this country would come to the aid of the next victim of Nazi aggression, whoever the victim might be. It happened to be Poland : but it might equally well have been Rumania or Norway. When it became clear that Hitler was employing against Poland exactly the same tactics as had been employed against Czecho-Slovakia, with the same stories of the oppression of a German minority, of frontier " incidents " and alleged outrages exaggerated or invented to order by the German Press, British aid was offered to Poland, as it would have been offered to any other country in like case.

The responsibility for the acceptance of the offer rested clearly not with the British but with the Polish Government. It was for them to decide whether the guarantee was worth while, just as it was for them to decide whether the German demands in the Danzig

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controversy constituted a threat to Polish independence. They decided both questions in the affirmative, rightly or wrongly, and that being so, no honourable course remained open to the Allies but to fulfil their promises to the best of their ability. In deciding that their independence was threatened, the Poles were almost certainly right. In their judgment of their ability to resist Germany, they undoubtedly underestimated the power of the German army, and overestimated that of their own. In addition to that they were completely surprised by the German method of using tanks and aeroplanes in combined attack. The Allies on the Western front profited by the lesson and took steps to defend themselves against this form of attack. But Poland paid for the lesson.

If it be admitted that the British Government were right in their decision to mobilise against Nazi aggression all the forces available for the purpose, the case of Poland presents no particular difficulty. For the same reason, the criticism of Lord Halifax for his willingness to enter into negotiations for the assistance of the Soviets ignores the facts of the situation. There may be real ground for criticism in the way in which in these negotiations the British and French Governments were apparently so completely deceived by the tortuous diplomacy of Moscow. The full story of these strange and dark transactions has never as yet been told. But so far as the negotiations themselves were concerned, it seems idle to blame the British Government, unless indeed its whole course of policy at this time is challenged. There was no more reason for refusing to

FAILURE AT MOSCOW

accept Soviet aid to check Nazi ambitions than there was for refusing to accept Tsarist aid in 1914 to make the world " safe for democracy ".

The Russian negotiations brought out forcibly the contrasted sides of Lord Halifax's character. He is an idealist: but he is no dreamer. There is no reason in the nature of things why an idealist should be an impracticable visionary, or a realist an unprincipled adventurer. But in Halifax's case the contrast is certainly unusually marked. No man ever stood more firmly by a point of principle once he had recognised it and accepted it as such. Almost any other administrator would have at least postponed, for instance, the execution of Bhaghat Singh, knowing, as he did, the fierce indignation which the execution would arouse and realising, as he must have done, that the death of this murderer just as Congress was being called upon to ratify the Delhi agreement might make ratification impossible and destroy the results for which he had laboured for weeks. Halifax refused to delay the execution a day. Satisfied that the man was a cold-blooded murderer, he would allow nothing to interfere with the course of justice.

He showed a similar firmness in the question of the Indian police inquiry. Gandhi, with Congress hotly supporting him, was inclined to make the grant of this demand a condition of negotiating at all. The Labour Government at home urged the Viceroy to make concessions. Halifax would make none. Once convinced that the demand was one which could not rightly be granted, nothing would move him from his

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determination to refuse it, let the consequences be what they would.

That is one side of the picture. But there is another. From the sort of idealism which in the pursuit of an unattainable aim destroys the possibility of practical progress, his North-country English common sense always instinctively revolted. His objection to the Indian demand for independence was based on its evident impracticability. He believed it to be a dream, and a mischievous dream, from which nothing but unnecessary misery and impoverishment could follow. In the same spirit he opposed at Geneva the demand that Powers who had violated, however flagrantly, the League's principles should be treated thenceforth as international malefactors to be pursued indefinitely with threats of punishment that could not in fact be implemented. This seemed to him to be turning the League into an instrument, not for the promotion of peace, but for the creation of an indefinite number of unappeasable feuds.

The same contrast is visible in his foreign policy after 1938. Lord Halifax became a dominant force in the Cabinet from the time that he persuaded himself that the Germany of Adolf Hitler represented a thoroughly evil principle. When he definitely reached this conviction is not absolutely certain, but probably after Godesberg. It was a quite unpromising conviction. "We were fighting," he said at the Dorchester Hotel on April 10th, 1940,

a new, and to me a very hideous, philosophy which repudiates every principle that underlies what we

A HIDEOUS PHILOSOPHY

know as civilisation, and which has been imposed on a great people under the cloak of national renaissance by a gang of men completely devoid of scruple and imbued with the burning heat for power. To this end they have for years been engaged in turning the Germans into machines and eliminating all human qualities fostered by the family and by the Christian Church. This seems to me to be precisely the mentality of the great destroyers of history who emerged from the areas of Europe impervious to the civilising influence of Rome.

Clearly to this speaker the war is a crusade against a modern form of barbarism, a struggle in which there is no more room for compromise than there was in the ancient Roman world's resistance to the invasion of the Huns and the Vandals. This was the Foreign Secretary's conviction. But a logical moralist might have retorted that if this was the case against Germany, it was also the case against Russia. The Soviets were in the same condemnation. They also had tried to make the Russians "machines". They also were doing what in them lay to destroy family life and the Christian religion. They had shown themselves quite as perfidious as the Nazis and quite as cruel. Why then was it right for a statesman of Lord Halifax's moral sensibility to advocate at the same time war with Germany and co-operation with Russia? His answer was in effect that Germany and not Russia was the real menace :—

We do not consider this question only against the background of the Soviet Union's wanton attacks

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on Poland and Finland, but rather in the light of that which must in my judgment remain our principal objective—namely the defeat of Germany. It follows I think that the future of our relations with Russia must depend, and ought to depend, more than anything else upon the degree of effective help that she may, for whatever reason, wish to give to Germany.

This of course is pure opportunism. But it represents the sort of concession to facts which every statesman who aspires to influence the course of history must inevitably make. If he will not recognise the facts as they are, he must abandon hope of modifying them intelligently. The cardinal fact seemed to Lord Halifax in the world of 1940 to be the necessity of defeating Germany. To this fact he was ready for the time being to subordinate all others.

But if it was right to avoid complications with Russia after the conflict was joined with Germany, it can scarcely have been wrong to seek her aid earlier in an endeavour to prevent the conflict altogether. This was the aim of all the various alliances and understandings into which Chamberlain and Halifax entered in 1939. They had come to the conclusion that the only effective answer possible to the challenge with which they were clearly faced was to rally and unite as best they could all the forces in Europe which could be mobilised against the threatened aggression. Such a policy was difficult to carry out, and dangerous and full of pitfalls in execution. It involved the country in commitments which would certainly never have been even considered in ordinary

THE CHATHAM HOUSE SPEECH

times. But what was the alternative, short of supine surrender to mere force ? If any exist, it has never been stated.

The sudden rise of Lord Halifax in 1939 was due to the reactions produced in British politics by the seizure of Prague. The public were in a state of complete confusion. In September, 1938, they were set upon peace—peace, not perhaps at any price, but as Lord Acton used to say, at "almost any price". In September, 1939, convinced now that it was impossible to placate their implacable adversary, they made ready for war ; not, certainly, with any enthusiasm, but with determination. In the transition period—in June, 1939, for instance—they were merely bewildered. They had supposed that peace was assured, and suddenly it became clear that it was not. They had thought the danger of war averted, and here it was right upon their heads again. It was in this atmosphere of astonishment, perplexity and alarm that Lord Halifax made his Chatham House speech. To understand its enormous effect, it is necessary to recollect the background.

The great quality of this celebrated speech is its admirable clarity. It said exactly the right thing at exactly the right time. Lord Halifax's style is always plain and his words always as simple as the subject permits. But in some of his speeches the longer sentences tend to tail off, as though the speaker were tired of them and had left them to end themselves. Mr. Gladstone was maliciously alleged to have had a habit, when hopelessly entangled in one of his

labyrinthine sentences, of leaning over to the reporters and whispering " Finish that sentence for me, gentlemen." But there is nothing unfinished in the second Chatham House oration (he had made a previous, relatively unimportant speech, at Chatham House the year before). Every sentence is as direct as possible, like the two already quoted on our preparedness and on our determination to resist further aggression. " British policy rests on twin foundations of purpose ", he told his audience authoritatively; " One is determination to resist force. The other is our recognition of the world's desire to get on with the constructive work of building peace"

At the same time it is to be observed that this speech is no mere defiance of Germany. The light is amber, not yet red. He pointed out that we had no desire to isolate Germany. " The last thing we desire is to see the individual German man, woman, or child suffering privation." He dwelt on the fallacy of the demand for *lebensraum* in so far as it assumes that the political domination of territory is essential to a nation's economic prosperity. He dealt at some length with our colonial administration, and he put in a notable plea for European unity:—

European minds meet across political frontiers. With the same background of knowledge, with the same heritage of culture, they study the same problems : the word of the great masters of science and literature or art is the common property of all peoples : and thinkers in every land exchange knowledge on equal and friendly terms. Truly is a divided Europe a house divided against itself.

THE ORATOR

So far as Germany was concerned, the appeal fell quite flat. The *Deutsche Dienst* denounced it as "hypocrisy" and other papers declared that it filled them with "suspicion". The Italian Press also commented very bitterly; it was at this time much concerned with the maintenance of the Axis. But in England the effect of the speech was really remarkable. Appeasers and resisters alike accepted it as the clearest and most forcible expression of their common will. It made Lord Halifax's reputation as a national leader.

He is not, in the strict sense, a great orator. His speeches have nothing of Churchill's epigrammatic force, nor Lloyd George's wit, nor the fiery eloquence which distinguished Philip Snowden's utterances (while the beautiful voice was still audible) or Ramsay MacDonald's (until he became unintelligible). He is a very quiet speaker with no gestures or tricks—even such little ones as Haldane's seal-like flapping of his arms as he spoke, or Balfour's convulsive clutch of his coat lapels. This has its advantages, for these temperamental tricks tend sometimes to enslave their masters. Mr. Balfour was seriously embarrassed when he had to make a speech in the uniform of an Elder Brother of Trinity House, for the uniform of an Elder Brother has no lapels. But the quiet level voice and the total absence of gesture certainly make for dullness. On the other hand, it is an admirable broadcasting voice; and broadcasting is now very important.

Further, in the great garden of rhetoric Halifax has two little plots of his own which he works very effectively. One is a wistful homely sentimentality

often expressed in very musical prose. There are various examples of this scattered through his speeches and writings—in the address on T. E. Lawrence, in some of the Oxford speeches, and some of the minor and less formal Indian addresses, in the preface to the *Ghost Book*. He exploited the vein adroitly in the April of 1939 in a broadcast to America. It was rather a delicate business for a known "appeaser" to address American opinion at all: for this opinion was notoriously "resister" in sentiment—partly from temperament (most Americans regarding the appeasers as "sissies" and quitters) and partly owing to the activities of British "resister" missionaries who were more concerned to damage Mr. Chamberlain's reputation than to maintain that of their country. Halifax appealed effectively to American memories of England :—

Memories of green meadows and old trees, the wide sweep of moors and hills, grey cities, red-roofed villages clustered round their church and village green, noisy ship yards and smoking chimneys.

He spoke of "our resolution to preserve our ancient liberties and institutions and everything that goes to make up our way of life". In a mild way this broadcast was probably as just a revelation of the real personality of Lord Halifax to his American listeners as the Chatham House speech was to his own countrymen.

In quite another vein, deeper and certainly not less effective, was the notable broadcast of August 5th, 1939. The shadows were darkening about the austere, rather lonely figure now. He hated war, and all its



THE STAIRCASE AT TEMPLE NEWSAM

TURNING RED

works at least as much as Chamberlain did : and war was very near now, and his would be the responsibility of waging it. It is the tone, rather than the matter, which gives its singular air of dignity and authority to this striking utterance. " I would earnestly hope," he said,

that in face of all the consequences of a resort to force, and before any step is taken which cannot be retraced, reason may yet prevail. Many of you will have been moved, as I was, by the appeal for peace made by King Leopold after the meeting at Brussels. You will also have heard the solemn words addressed to the world by the Pope to-night. You will have read too the message sent to-day by President Roosevelt to the King of Italy suggesting that the Italian Government should formulate suggestions for the pacific solution of the present crisis. I pray earnestly that these appeals, in the words used by the Pope, may " find a response in the hearts of men ". In this moment of anxiety I feel sure that the ground on which His Majesty's Government have determined to take their stand will meet with the unanimous approval of our people.

He added that it was " not the British way to go back on our obligations, and we mean to fulfil the obligation which we have assumed ". The amber light is turning red now. This broadcast produced an unexpected admirer in the Spanish paper *Arriba*. " So noble and so measured," the Spanish paper declared. " He does not desire conflict, but he does not fear it." The *Arriba's* politics might be a trifle eccentric : but there was nothing the matter with its literary judgment. It knew a good thing when it saw it.

CHAPTER XVI
THE PILOT AND THE STORM
1939-1940

" You may either win your peace or buy it: buy it, by compromising with evil: win it by resistance to evil."

RUSKIN : *The Two Paths*

WITH the possible exception of Lord Haldane, no one has ever looked less like a War Lord than Lord Halifax. It is certain that, had the choice been left to him, it was the very last role which he himself would have desired to play: and his warmest admirers must have shaken their heads at the idea of the grave, gentle, almost priest-like figure leading a nation in the bloody tumult of " totalitarian " war. One qualification indeed he had eminently, like Sir Edward Grey in 1914. Raymond Gram Swing, the American publicist, drew vigorously the obvious parallel:—

He is a singular man in British affairs, a man who holds office not through political skill, not through mass appeal, not through any gift of looking like or sounding like a people's leader, but through character. Lord Halifax stands to some extent above the political battle. He is the one man in the Cabinet in London whose resignation, if it were offered over an issue of principle, could bring down the Government. . . . England had a fine Foreign Secretary at the outbreak of the World War, Sir Edward Grey.

THE TRIUMPH OF CHARACTER

He also was a man of unusual spiritual force. It is fortunate to have in the same post at this hour someone who ranks with Grey in character.

It is clear of course that it must be an enormous asset to a combatant nation to have as one of its foremost leaders in the struggle a man whose character and understanding malignity itself cannot plausibly belittle. But in itself this advantage, great as it may be, has its limitations. The most saintly character would not be of great avail unless it were animated by a single-hearted zeal for the struggle to which it was committed, and by a power of some sort to make its authority felt and its influence enthusiastically accepted.

It may seem strange that a determined appeaser like Halifax should, once the storm finally broke, have stood revealed as a quite implacable resister. The rejuvenescence of Mr. Chamberlain, so startling to his friends after the outbreak of the war which he had striven so desperately to avert, was due no doubt in part to the personal exasperation of the straight-dealing business man who feels he has been scandalously imposed upon by a rogue. In Lord Halifax's case every one of the qualities and attributes which had at first made him an appeaser worked, once the issue was fairly decided, in precisely the opposite direction. His natural gentleness and kindness made the idea of war hateful to him. But once it became clear that the alternative to war was to tolerate the indefinite continuance and extension of abominable cruelties, pity itself thrust the sword into his hand.

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War might be, and no doubt was a ghastly horror: but what was Nazi peace? Once again one must quote the Chatham House speech, in which he described it himself:—

Over a large part of the world the old standards of conduct and of ordinary human decency, which man had laboriously built up, are being set aside. Things are being done to-day which we can hardly read without amazement: so alien are they to our conception of how men should deal with their fellow men. Rules of conduct between nations are overridden with the same callous indifference as rules of conduct between man and man.

Such a peace, to Halifax's mind, it was worth a war to end: and in that solemn conviction he was prepared to wage war quite relentlessly.

So long as there was any doubt about the facts, again, his keen sense of justice led him to examine with the utmost care every argument that could be advanced in favour of the Nazi claims. But once he was persuaded that all the right was on one side, the same sense of justice made him as rigorous a judge as it had made him cautious as an advocate.

Finally, the "other worldliness", which seemed on the face of it to be a disqualification for leadership in mundane affairs (as it sometimes proved, in the case of Gandhi for instance), turned in this particular struggle into a formidable asset. It made him inaccessible before the battle to the prides and jealousies and fears which masquerade as patriotism and love of justice and zeal for national honour. But it also

A STRIKING CONTRAST

made him inaccessible, once the battle was joined, to suggestions of compromise which would have left the issue still open, and abandoned the causes for which the war was fought. He might win peace or he might lose it, but he would never buy it by truckling to evil. There is no more terrible opponent than a real man of principle. It has been illustrated in a contrast drawn once between Lenin and Trotsky by one who knew both. Trotsky, he said, was capable of using his power vindictively to inflict savage punishment on his personal enemies. But faced with a proposal to massacre for the good of his cause one hundred thousand people, the nervous imaginative Jew would have shrunk back aghast. Lenin would always have refused haughtily to use his power for any private end whatever. But he would have sanctioned the massacre on a point of principle without the slightest scruple or emotion.

The general policy of Halifax at the Foreign Office has been criticised on two contradictory grounds. It has been suggested on the one hand that the guarantees given to various "Allies" were ineffective, and involved commitments which Britain was quite unable to implement; and on the other that these commitments should have been promptly and energetically extended, and that the failure to do so was the real cause of the disaster which overtook Holland, Belgium and Norway. The short answer to the latter criticism is that the States concerned resolutely refused, until it was too late, the offers of protection made to them. The Norwegian campaign was a

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heavy blow to British prestige and brought down the Chamberlain Government. But the responsibility for the failure rested in only a very slight degree upon the Foreign Office. Had the Norwegian Government been willing to concert defence methods earlier, the result might have been very different. Nor is this untrue of the German attack upon Holland and Belgium; if help did not come in time, it was not for want of the offer of it.

A more decisive failure in diplomacy was the defeat of the efforts to form a Balkan bloc as a bulwark against German aggression in the East. But the project as the whole modern history of the Balkans illustrates was one of extraordinary difficulty, or even actually impossible. Rumania, in particular, caught between German and Russian pressure, collapsed. No one has indicated what England could have done effectively to prevent it.

On the other hand, in circumstances less unfavourable for a power strong by sea and air the guarantee policy could succeed even brilliantly was shown beyond expectation in the case of Greece. It is not impossible that, whatever may happen in Greece, her early victories over the Italians may prove the turning point in the war against aggression. And without the British guarantee, and the effective support of the R.A.F., it is incredible that Greece should have offered successful resistance to her assailant.

Three specific criticisms have been levelled against Halifax as Foreign Minister. It is said that his temperamental antagonism to the Soviets and all

their works made difficult if not impossible, the entry of Russia into the war on the side of the Allies. This charge is at the least exaggerated. Admitted that genuine sympathy and understanding must have been lacking between the British Foreign Minister and men like Molotoff, Stalin and Maisky, it is highly unlikely that such a detail would have been allowed to interfere for either good or evil with the cynically realistic policy which Moscow has followed since the war began. It is just possible that an opportunity was missed in the few months between the seizure of Prague by the Germans and the German invasion of Poland. But it is far from likely. Historians, reviewing the course of events with fuller knowledge than we possess now, will almost certainly conclude that the most sympathetic British Foreign Minister would have succeeded no better than Halifax in inducing Russia to act against Germany unless at a price which it would have been a betrayal of our own cause to pay. It is at least significant that Sir Stafford Cripps, whose sympathy with the Soviets is in no sort of doubt appears to have failed as completely as anyone else in securing their co-operation.

The second charge relates to the Foreign Office handling of Japan. A torrent of criticism has been directed against Lord Halifax as the author of the policy which led to the temporary closing of the Burma Road as a supply source of China. The aim of this policy, very unpopular on both sides of the Atlantic, was a forlorn hope of placating Japan and of inducing her to abandon her dream of an Empire

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of the East and make peace with Chian Kai Shek. It was a last effort in appeasement, and with Halifax's record in this field, it was natural to identify him with it. It must be said bluntly and on unchallengeable authority that this is a mere mistake. As a simple fact he was opposed to the closing of the Road, and the only complaint that can really be laid at his door in this matter is that he failed to impose his view on the Cabinet.

The third and the gravest criticism of his personal policy has arisen out of the French capitulation and the attitude of Marshal Petain and the Vichy Government. The complete and unexpected collapse of France shook the fabric of British foreign policy to its foundations. For the Entente Cordiale was and had been for years its corner stone. And the corner stone had crumbled into dust. Future Foreign Ministers will have to build as best they may a new foreign policy on the ruins. In the middle of a sheer struggle for existence there could be no question of attempting this. What was needed was to improvise a policy which would tide over the immediate emergency—a choice between alternatives positively bursting with difficulties. To declare war on the Vichy Government or even to force it to declare war on us was to play the enemy's game. Such a course would have given it a status which at the moment it did not possess. It would have turned the Vichy Government into "France" in the eyes of hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen who would otherwise have denied its claim to the title. On the other hand it was

DILEMMA

difficult to maintain any sort of friendly relations with a Government which was in fact under enemy control; and it might be dangerous.

Actually the British Government's policy was to execute a very difficult performance on the tight-rope, varying from cautious amity to downright hostility, as at Oran and to some extent at Dakar. There is no doubt that Halifax was much more sympathetic to Petain's Government than the majority of his countrymen saw any occasion to be. The ruling motive both of Petain and Weygand—as distinct from the tortuosities of Laval—was fear of Communism and a resolution to maintain bourgeois order at almost any cost. With this motive, Halifax did not disguise a sympathy which was much more active, it must be admitted, than the facts called for. But it is not certain that his cautious policy, however inspired, may not be justified by the event. It will be time to assess it when it becomes known whether German impatience ultimately drives the Vichy leaders into open antagonism to their conquerors. If it should, it will be due to the patient policy, which refused in the first few months after the armistice to drive them into open hostility to Britain.

The attack from the Left, vigorously led by such prophets as Mr. Wells and Mr. Priestley, took broader ground than any mere criticism of detail. There really was a fundamental difference of outlook between these critics and Halifax. No one can read his Oxford speech without realising that he regarded the war as an almost irreparable disaster; and that if he looked

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forward with hope at all to the new world which might arise from the ruins of the old, it was mainly because he trusted that much of the beauty and nobility which was being destroyed in the fire of war might yet be salvaged and restored, refined by the ordeal. To study some of the spokesmen of the new order one would almost suppose that the war was really a blessing in disguise and that the new Socialist Jerusalem would have no sort of continuity with the old capitalist nation State which in its turn was wholly evil and contained nothing worth preserving.

In this indictment two accusations were rather ingeniously combined. It was one thing to say that the Foreign Secretary stood merely for the restoration of the post-war world, and another to assert that he was a champion of capitalism. Halifax was probably quite as ready as any other reflective man to admit that the old order was irretrievably shattered and that no attempt to restore it in its old form could succeed. He might have been perfectly willing to consider the "offer" suggested in the *New Statesman*, one of his ablest critics—the offer to any people which threw off the Nazi yoke, not of the recognition of its exiled Government, but of the full and complete union with ourselves which was offered to France. He might have argued that such an offer underestimated the fiery nationalism of the small States or that the time for it was not yet. But he would scarcely have rejected it out of hand.

But those who denounced him as a champion of

THE REVOLUTIONARY APPEAL

capitalism mistook their man. He is a landowner, an aristocrat and a very rich man ; but he is as instinctively averse from the moneymaking and materialism of economic capitalism as Gandhi himself. It was when his critics went further and called upon him to appear as the Angel of the World Revolution defying Nazi reaction that the real breach between them became clear. It was a part quite impossible for Halifax to play. But is it certain that it was the part which it was desirable for the British Foreign Minister at that time to play ? The argument is that such an appeal would unite all the revolutionary anti-Nazi forces surging beneath the surface in the occupied countries and even in Germany itself. But they are united already, every day more firmly, by the tyranny of their conquerors ; and no amount of unity can make them a really effective force till this tyranny is at least shattered.

On the other hand, the German propagandists know very well what they are doing when they charge the British Government inconsistently with being both a gang of plutocrats and the archpatron of Communism. For while Mr. Wells and Mr. Priestley may view with benevolent calm the prospect of a Communist revolution, the average Frenchman, remembering the horrors of the Commune, is perfectly horrified at the suggestion. The fear of Communist anarchy is one of the taproots of German servility to authority. It is not certain that even the average Russian desires to plunge again into the bloodbath of the Bolshevik revolution. Whatever support the

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appearance of Britain as the patron of World Revolution might enlist on the continent would be out-balanced many times by the antagonism created in the minds of hundreds of thousands who would prefer even Hitler's New Order, little as they love it, to the triumph of Communism as they know it.

There remains the charge that Halifax is an aristocrat and a fervent practising High Churchman, and as such, "unrepresentative" of his fellow countrymen. If what is meant is that not many of them are like him, it is true. But it is quite another thing to say that he is therefore incapable of serving them in a representative capacity. America has taken a broader view of this matter. The two most successful spokesmen that Britain has sent to Washington of recent years have been Lord Balfour and Lord Lothian. Both were aristocrats. The religious opinions of each were certainly not those of the ordinary English man in the street. Both were accepted in America, and rightly, as voicing sincerely and accurately the feelings and the policy of the British people.

The unexpected course which the war took soon forced upon the Foreign Secretary tasks which required other qualities than unimpeachable integrity. Had the expected air attacks on London and other open cities developed, the position of the Government would have been relatively simple. There is no arguing with bombs. The bombs are the arguments. They either harden or break the resistance of the people against whom they are directed, and no oratory can much affect the result. But the period of relative

WAR AIMS

inaction with which the war opened, left the critics time to criticise and the people time to listen to them. The Opposition raised a cry for a statement of war aims which should rally opinion to the side of the Allies and clear the minds of those who—like the Americans of whom Mr. Kennedy, when Ambassador in London, spoke—"did not know what the war was about".

The suggested remedy had obvious dangers. If the new statement were a mere recital of principles, it would probably be futile. If it were a definite statement of practical aims, it would load the Allies beforehand with fixed commitments which they might be utterly unable to implement in an after-war world, of which nobody could possibly foresee the conditions. The mere statement of such hard and fast solutions of problems at the time completely fluid was quite as likely to provoke criticism as enthusiasm, and to divide instead of uniting the various forces behind the Allies. Halifax made the obvious retort. "If you are engaged in war," he said, "the primary aim is to win it: the first purpose we must have is to defeat those who have obliged us to take up arms." Not that he refused to contemplate the future. "We shall use all our influence when the time comes," he declared in a broadcast message in November, "in the building of the new world in which the nations will not permit insane armed rivalry to deny their hopes of fuller life. We shall enlist the co-operation of all peoples on the basis of equality, self-respect and mutual toleration." But he held the time not

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yet ripe for further definition of this ideal: and the fact that the German Press found even those remarks as "torpedoing peace", and calculated to "horrify every decent man and woman", is fairly clear evidence that definition at the moment was at least premature.

Side by side with this Opposition campaign there was another proceeding with which the regular Opposition had nothing to do, and which their leaders would certainly have refused to endorse. The Opposition demand emanated from fanatical resisters, who thought the war was being conducted with insufficient vigour. This other campaign was started by a rump of extreme appeasers, who desired an immediate compromise peace either because they thought that victory was unattainable and that an indefinite continuance of the struggle would merely end in the ruin of European civilisation, or because they sympathised, openly or secretly, with Fascism and Naziism. The body of opinion behind this campaign was exceedingly small. But it was curiously vocal in the House of Lords: it had a certain subterranean support from Sir Oswald Mosley and his British Fascists, who spent their time alternately in scrawling "End the War" on public walls and in being defeated by enormous majorities when they attempted to contest a by-election: and it lent itself readily to German propaganda as evidence of disunity in British opinion. Halifax fought this movement, which might quite easily have grown dangerous out of all proportion to its real importance, with dogged tenacity in speech

DEMAND FOR NEGOTIATION

after speech. " If and when we receive proposals," he said in the House of Lords on October 5th,

we shall examine them with care and measure them against the principles for which we have taken up arms. Our first duty is that of securing conditions under which the rule of violence no longer operates and under which the pledged word of Governments might again be held worthy of honourable trust. Anything less can only lead to an uneasy and uncertain period of armistice. This is the only way to bring back a peace that is worthy of the name.

But the agitators were not satisfied. On December 14th they staged a full dress debate in the House of Lords.

It is interesting to reflect on the fate which would certainly have overtaken in Germany opponents of the Government's " will to war " who had dared thus openly to flaunt their opinions. Lord Darnley, for instance, urging the Government to accept the offer of mediation from the Netherlands' sovereigns, said that Hitler was " misunderstood and ought to be pitied ", and that a just peace was far more likely to be achieved now than at the end of a bloody and exhausting struggle. Lord Arnold declared roundly that a " fight to a finish " was hopeless. To continue the struggle would only be to force Germany and Russia into alliance. The Bishop of Chichester was equally urgent for immediate negotiation on the basis of autonomy for the Czechs and independence for the Poles, which he was convinced that Hitler would now grant. Halifax replied that he did not doubt that Hitler was very anxious for peace on his own

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terms. He doubted very much whether he was prepared for a peace that would make peace in Europe safe for the next generation. "We were all misunderstood and all to be pitied," he remarked caustically, "but some of us were more to be pitied than others." The debate was a magnificent advertisement of the freedom of speech which even in wartime a democracy allows to its citizens, and a striking example of its fundamental justification: for this open discussion did more than any repression could possibly have done to crush the movement which was thus permitted to air itself. It also gave the Foreign Secretary an unrivalled opportunity to state firmly and temperately the Government's position. They were always "prepared to negotiate". They were not prepared to stultify the enormous effort made by the country or to betray the causes for which it had taken up arms by accepting a "patched up peace" which would only encourage future aggression. The time for appeasement was over. The Nazis had proved to demonstration that they had no real intention of accepting it honestly.

But the duty of the statesman whose task it is to lead a nation in a modern totalitarian war is not confined to expounding and defending the policy which his Government is pursuing. He must also display the necessary influence and authority to keep the home front solid in the struggle—to steady public opinion when it is excited, to encourage it when depressed and to nerve it anew when the strain begins to tell on its endurance. This was clearly the supreme

W A R T I M E S P E E C H E S

function performed by Clemenceau in France and Lloyd George in England in the war of 1914. How exactly this influence operates is not very easy to define. Public speaking is one, but not the sole and not generally the chief, means of making it felt. Kitchener, who never made a speech of any importance in his life, obviously exercised in his last years an almost unbounded authority over the imagination of his fellow-countrymen. Mr. Lloyd George made no speech during the war which has lived in the popular memory. Most of his speeches of this period were written and read from notes. The speeches that survive were orations made in the heat of victory which his friends would willingly forget. Wartime oratory in fact may easily do more harm than good. Even Mr. Churchill found it full of traps, when his invitation to neutrals to take advantage of the British convoy system aroused a sudden storm in all European neutral countries. Halifax uttered some mild criticism of this exhortation. By way of reply Churchill threw him a note across the table. "To make a speech in wartime," it said in effect, "is like asking a centipede to go for a walk with you without putting its foot in it."

Oratory none the less played a conspicuous and necessary part in the maintenance of the nation's morale in the first six months of the war. The chief burden of it fell on three Ministers. Neville Chamberlain's businesslike weekly reviews satisfied the people, inevitably suspicious and uneasy under the darkness of the censorship, that they were being told

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on the whole all that they could reasonably expect to be told. Mr. Churchill's rare and refreshing interventions roused the fighting spirit of the nation. And Lord Halifax's speeches, by setting out again and again, with grave inflexibility, the real issues at stake, confirmed its resolution. For Mr. Swing is only partly right in asserting that he has "no mass appeal". He is assuredly no demagogue: but on their own occasions his speeches carry greater weight with the great mass of his countrymen than those of almost any other contemporary. This had been shown dramatically in the Chatham House Speech. It was shown again in a speech at Leeds on January 21st, 1940, when speaking in his own county for the first time since the outbreak of war, he made his blunt declaration, greeted by a roar of cheering, "I had rather a hundred times be dead than alive in a world under Nazi domination." His argument was devoted partly to a cool judicial review of the causes of the war, and partly to a very able restatement of Britain's traditional policy in Europe, adroitly linking her resistance to the dominance of any one Power with the defence of the liberties of small nations. "No small nation," he pointed out, "had ever regarded our sea power as a menace to its legitimate and orderly development." On the other hand, the moment Germany regained her strength after the last war, "a kind of trembling began to run through the smaller States of Europe." The speech excited, as it deserved, general attention and admiration. The most remarkable tribute to it was that paid by

A NATIONAL SPOKESMAN

Mr. A. L. Rowse, a Fellow of All Souls', Oxford, himself a Labour candidate and a supporter of the Opposition. "No Foreign Secretary of late years," he said,

has so penetrated to the heart of historic British policy, or from the historian's point of view put it more soundly, or stated the justice of the case more judicially. It is clear that in this speech he has spoken for the whole nation, Opposition as well as Government, Labour no less than Conservative.

He felt, naturally, the strain of the war, though, like Chamberlain, he continued to appear outwardly well and alert. The work of a responsible minister in war-time is never done. The day's task is always liable to begin again in some new form after dinner and go on far into the night. Two things saved him—his businesslike habits and his capacity to sleep at any time. In a sort of way this aristocrat is a good business man, remote as commerce may seem from his ordinary habit of mind. He is the most punctilious of correspondents. "I suppose two of the busiest men in the world at the present time," said a friend of his, "are the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Foreign Secretary. And both of them answer letters always by return." More important was his capacity for sleep. Lloyd George, like Napoleon, imputed the success with which he bore the strain of war to his power of sleeping at any time, and the lack of it was a disaster to Ramsay Macdonald. Halifax has trained himself to fall asleep automatically whenever he gets into a motor

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or a train : so much so that in India he had often to apologise to potentates with whom he was going out driving for his entire inability to keep awake. But when the war came this weakness was an immense source of strength. Without it he could scarcely have remained, what in the most critical period of the great crisis he was, the strong man of the Cabinet.

CHAPTER XVII

ABOVE THE BATTLE

February, 1940

" Every one of these hundreds of millions of human beings is in some form seeking happiness. Not one is altogether noble nor altogether trustworthy : not one is altogether vile. Not a single one but has at some time wept."

H. G. WELLS : *Outline of History*

THERE is no ready-made formula for the making of a good Foreign Secretary, such as has sometimes been applied in the case of other high offices. The most surprising people have succeeded in it : and some very able men have failed surprisingly. The news that Mr. Arthur Henderson, in spite of his fiasco as Ambassador at Moscow, had been appointed to the Foreign Office filled even his admirers and well-wishers with apprehension. Yet Mr. Henderson was a brilliant success. It might have been supposed that the splendid abilities of Sir John Simon would have been an assurance at least against major disasters during his term of office. But his term of office was a succession of major disasters. Knowledge of languages is the least of the equipment determining success or failure. Sir Edward Grey spoke no language but his own. Sir Austen Chamberlain's laboriously acquired French was a doubtful advantage to him. He was apt to use it as the bravo in *Romeo and Juliet* used his sword " when indeed there was no need ",

ABOVE THE BATTLE

and to insist on talking it to people whose English was far better than his French. Lord Halifax, with no German to speak of, can talk French, and does not hesitate to quote it at length (as he did with singular courage in his Oxford speech). But he uses it only when the occasion really demands it.

There are still two broadly distinct types of Foreign Minister. There are those who, like Lord Salisbury and Lord Curzon, treat foreign policy as a kind of black art and are wholly absorbed in their official duties and the concoction of their own particular magic and spells. And there are those who, like Sir Edward Grey and Lord Halifax, treat the actual business of diplomacy as only one and perhaps not the most important of the wider interests with which they are concerned. It is the distinction between the professional's point of view and that of the gifted amateur. In Lord Halifax's case every circumstance combined to determine his outlook. He came to the office with his vivid Indian experience already behind him, and consequently with much broader interests than most Foreign Secretaries have. Almost immediately he was forced out of the pure detail work of his department to become the spokesman of a nation fighting for its life. But it is also true that, like Lord Grey, he had a natural aloofness, and this capacity to rise above the battle and see it in perspective without in any way relaxing the essential effort required proved in the event a great source of strength.

The supreme example of it in Lord Halifax's case is the speech which he delivered at Oxford in February,

THE OXFORD SPEECH

1940—by **far** the best speech he has ever made. There are beautiful passages in others and in all the sort of dignity which comes from complete sincerity. **But** there is no other to be compared with this in the sustained beauty of its English or the finish and energy with which its argument is developed. He was speaking in a double capacity as Foreign Secretary and as Chancellor of the University. The spirit of the speech is grave and the temper in a sense low. Any other would have jarred with the tragic times and the inevitable mood of his particular audience. For he was speaking now as an elder statesman to that younger generation doomed to face a world once again in flames, in which too many of them might see the hopes of their manhood dashed for ever, in the irreparable ruin of war.

Lord Halifax's theme could not but be melancholy ; and yet the note of this speech is a certain sad confidence, like sunlight stealing through the darkened windows of an old grey cathedral. He did not prophesy smooth things. Even the world of our desire will not necessarily, he told them, be a very comfortable world. " I do not know whether it will be an easier world," he said, " but what matters is that we should desire not an easier but a better world, and equip ourselves in mind, body and spirit to create it." This high ascetic note is the key of the whole. It is not of course new. But it has rarely been more simply or more beautifully expressed.

This is one of the very rare speeches which have made a solid practical contribution to the thought of

ABOVE THE BATTLE

the day. One of the misfortunes of the post-war period, perhaps an inevitable result of its conditions, was the tendency of post-war youth to emulate the example of Job and curse the day of its birth. Comparing the miserable anarchy to which it was condemned to the seeming security of Victorian times—a little securer in retrospect than they ever really were—the post-war generations satisfied themselves that they were the innocent victims of an unkind destiny. The attitude is intelligible enough. But self-pity is an evil counsellor and the protest of youth assumed forms which were sometimes exaggerated and untrue and sometimes simply fantastic. Neither for the catastrophe of 1914 nor for the disasters which followed the peace can the youth of the period escape responsibility. "No generation," as Halifax put it, "has the right to lay the cause of all its ills upon the shoulders of its predecessor, for no one age group of men has the monopoly of vision." And if this complaint was exaggerated, others were grotesque. If the young men and women who complained that they "had not asked to be born" had a grievance at all, it was a grievance shared by every generation of men that preceded them. None has been given any choice in the matter. But Lord Halifax swept this rather dreary controversy away altogether. He stated starkly the real facts of the situation to-day. "The real conflict to-day," he said, "is not between age and youth, but between youth and youth":—

What has, for example, been the driving force behind the Nazi movement in Germany? It has been German

THE REAL CONFLICT

youth. Deliberately deprived as they have been of the elements of true judgment, it is they who made the movement and who still sustain it. Their point of view stands in stark opposition to yours. They do not understand your way of thinking. Your ideals mean nothing to them. They have their own ideals which to our minds are distorted and deformed but for which hundreds of thousands of them are prepared without a moment's hesitation to sacrifice their lives. There is what seems an impenetrable barrier dividing you from them, which somehow will have to be broken down if the youth of Europe is to avoid living always in this waste land and if the European temple of civilisation is to deserve and win a rekindling of the lamps.

Another post-war controversy was met by this speech in its proper perspective. The idea that modern war will necessarily entail the end of European civilisation was entertained fairly widely, it is true, before the post-war period. In 1914 there were newspapers which prophesied that if the war lasted more than a few months our people would be starving, and grass would be growing in our streets. Terrified financiers endorsed these gloomy predictions. They were widely held. But the vogue of the "end of civilisation" idea in the after-war period really dates from the eloquent jeremiads of Lord Baldwin.

To Halifax the real danger appeared characteristically to be neither the material loss nor the possible social ruin which may follow in the train of war, but the moral disaster with which this war threatened

ABOVE THE BATTLE

future generations—the "wilderness of the soul" in which they may be condemned to wander indefinitely. None the less he did not expect the wounds to civilisation to be mortal. "Hope is the oldest and wisest counsellor of mankind." Far off a new world of infinite possibility still sparkled, dimly visible even now in the dust and smoke of the old world's ruin. "How far it is to Carcassonne, Sir," said the peasant in his story, "that I do not know. But that this is the road to Carcassonne, of that I am sure: for those who return say always that at the end lies Carcassonne." And to Carcassonne, the world of our desire, distant perhaps, to be reached possibly only through much tribulation, he bade his hearers lift up their eyes.

The austere figure, marching with a kind of melancholy confidence forward still to Carcassonne, is a ready target for the scoffer. "How much more profitable it is to be virtuous than to be brilliant," railed Lord Birkenhead, when Edward Wood was made Viceroy of India. The sarcasm loses nothing from the generally accepted belief that the suggestion originated with the genial cynic himself. There is in the pilgrim to Carcassonne a slight suggestion of Christian in *Vanity Fair*, with Lord Hategood mouthing upon him on one side and Mr. Cruelty and Mr. Implacable sneering on the other. What is this figure doing among the crazy fanatics, the degraded neurotics, the dirty little blackmailers and swindlers and the plain straightforward murderers—to whom a sinister fate has handed over the control of the destinies of half Europe?

THE ROAD TO CARCASSONNE

What is the devout son of the Church doing truckling for the support of the Union of the Godless ? The important thing, he had told his Chatham House audience, was that we should not suffer our own standards of conduct to be lowered to those of the enemy. Three months later he was announcing in the House of Lords that if the enemy violated international law we should reserve full liberty to take any reprisals we thought fit. No man has asserted more vigorously the futility of government by force : yet he did not hesitate in India to use force when it was necessary. " Do you believe in guns or God ? " a woman shouted at him in Southampton. He replied calmly that he saw no difference between intervening by force to stop a bully in a back street knocking a child about, and intervening by force to stop a nation in Europe knocking a small nation about. Lord Halifax does not in fact feel very acutely about the logical holes that can be picked in his policy and conduct. He is too English to care very much about this type of argument.

CHAPTER XVIII

SIDELIGHTS

" I honour a gentleman that is a gentleman indeed."

—*Oliver Cromwell*

THE secret of Lord Halifax's fascination does not lie, like his father's, upon the surface. Old Lord Halifax simply exuded charm. His vitality and vivaciousness, his inexhaustible energy, his whimsical originality, made it an experience to meet him. He had the defects of his qualities. He could never be brought to believe that other people were not as exuberantly energetic as himself. When Edward was at college, reading hard and riding hard, his friends became rather anxious for his health which was at the time none too good. Two of them, greatly daring, ventured to call on the old nobleman, who was up in Oxford at the time, and to mention their anxieties. He flared up at once. " Stuff and nonsense," he said; " I never heard such rubbish. Edward is perfectly well." The deputation retired disconcerted, but not resentful, for before his really overwhelming charm of manner and his delightful smile, only partially inherited by his son, even legitimate exasperation could not endure.

He had the mind of a fanatic. In causes in which he was interested—and they were many—he could

A POOR HATER

see one side, and one side only. His geese were all swans : but his black sheep were completely black. He would not admit the existence on their coats of a single white hair. On people he loved, on the other hand, he leaned heavily. He felt their loss very bitterly when, like his sister, Mrs. Meynell-Ingram, and Cardinal Mercier, they disappeared.

In all these respects, Edward Wood is almost the exact antithesis of his father. He is a very poor hater. He finds it hard to believe that anyone is really very evil—it took him long to realise that Hitler is just a gangster and that Gandhi may be, as he has been occasionally, a public danger. On the other hand his " radiant friendliness " extends to all kinds and conditions of men. His friends at Oxford accused him on this account, not quite without reason, of debasing the currency of friendship, because he treated all his acquaintances, including some who seemed unworthy of it, with the same unflinching kindness. Yet he leans on no one and, although his wife is a tower of strength to him, on the whole he walks alone.

His father seemed at times to care too much for the causes into which he flung himself with such ardour. Edward Wood, in his early days especially, appeared to care too little. Only a sense of duty kept him at Westminster. He admitted quite frankly that he thought his proper place was in Yorkshire. He was an active Minister of Education, but he has not really been vitally interested in the other offices which he has held, except perhaps the Ministry of Agriculture,

SIDE LIGHTS

until he came to the Foreign Office. Even the Foreign Office he regarded with characteristically cool diffidence. Years before, when Sir John Simon was being severely criticised as Foreign Minister, some of his friends urged upon Lord Halifax that he was the right man for the post and should be ready to accept it if the offer was made. It was just the sort of case in which he would put public duty before everything, but his judgment remained balanced. "You want me," he said, "to take this on, when Simon is being attacked for being too 'astute' Suppose I did, and in three weeks something went wrong. What would be said then? It wouldn't be that I was too astute. It would be: "Had for a mug."

His habit of systematically asking other peoples' opinions led even his intimates in early days to doubt whether he really had a will of his own. This, as the event showed, was a complete delusion. An incident which occurred soon after his arrival in India proved this dramatically. He came out quite untried and unknown to an officialdom at first disposed to treat him a little condescendingly as an ignorant amateur. He was presented with a duly prepared scheme, ready drawn up: only his signature was required. "But I know nothing about this," he said: "I must have time to consider it." After due consideration, a few weeks later, he returned the papers. "I do not understand," he observed, "why you propose to do this by this method instead of by that." Officialdom, with cold deference, explained: "I see," said the Viceroy; "I must consider it again." He did, and once more

DISCIPLINE

returned the scheme to his advisers. " I have now considered what you say," he answered: "but I still think the method I propose is the better " ; and he gave his reasons. " That then is the method which is to be followed." An astonished Department swallowed hard ; but there was nothing to be done. The Viceroy's method was followed and proved the right one.

That he lacks his father's exuberant vitality is no doubt due in part to purely physical reasons. He was born with a physical disability which would have cut many men off altogether from active life. That he surmounted it so completely as he has done is a moral triumph comparable in kind if not in degree to the miracle which converted Franklin Roosevelt, struck down in middle life by an incurable disease, from a rather ordinary American politician to one of the master spirits of the age. Friends and strangers alike were astounded in Halifax's case to see a man with only one effective hand not merely holding his own coolly in the ordinary commerce of life, but riding and hunting, playing tennis and cycling with the best. In some small degree his father's iron discipline may have contributed to this triumph over an obstacle which would have disheartened a less firm character. The old Ironside would never hear of coddling his children. He was violently angry in his extreme old age when his daughter-in-law insisted on appropriating one of the sunniest rooms in Garrowby as a nursery for her children. But no discipline could have achieved the result actually attained, except indeed

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the self-discipline which is another name for indomitable perseverance, iron resolution and inexhaustible patience. These have been the qualities of his work all his life long, valuable in India, quite invaluable in a minister in war time. Mr. Lloyd George, who speaks from unrivalled experience and is not exactly credited with an undue reverence for order, has borne decisive testimony on this point. " If you do not plot out your time carefully," he once said (speaking of his war time work) " if you once get behind hand and let the job get on top of you, you are lost." But Halifax would never let any job get on top of him. A certain orderliness and careful, conscientious method, more even than his industry, great as that is, is the hall-mark of all he does.

So far, wherever he has been, whether at Oxford, in India or Yorkshire or Whitehall, he has always been extraordinarily popular. Very few politicians of equal eminence have ever been less exposed to personal attacks. Even when the policy which he happened to be supporting has been unpopular he himself has been excepted from the condemnation passed on it. " You know, of course, that your Prime Minister's name is mud ? " a candid friend asked him when the reaction against Mr. Chamberlain's Munich policy was at its height. " And I suppose, then, mine is too ? " said Halifax. " Oh, no, yours is all right," said the candid friend, truly enough. He has been attacked often enough, and sometimes bitterly, by Professor Laski, for his lack of sympathy with the teachers and more lately with Stalin

STANDING REPUTATIONS

and the Soviets : by critics of his Indian policy, for his supposed surrender of Imperial interests to sedition mongers : by Mr. Wells for his " sermonising " and " religious vapouring " : and by other Socialist intellectuals who dubbed him " Lord Dullard " because he did not share their vision of a new heaven and a new earth to be created ready-made out of the blood-stained chaos of the world war. But in general these attacks have not much harmed him. His popular reputation as a fundamentally good man has made him invulnerable against criticism which would have been very damaging to public men less well protected.

Once established, these reputations are very difficult to destroy. They are as fixed as the standing epithets of the heroes in Homer. Odysseus is always ' wily ,' however naively he may act: and Achilles always " fleet-footed ", though he must occasionally have gone lame. So Lord Baldwin remained in his countrymen's imagination the type of the simple honest Englishman, despite exhibitions of arts and crafts which occasionally astonished even the closest observers of his career : and Lord Curzon was never able to shake off the reputation of pomposity—if he had danced a hornpipe in the Strand, it would have been held that he had done so for some ceremonial purpose. Lord Halifax's reputation for virtue rests primarily on personal contacts. No one who has ever met him has failed to be impressed by his goodness. He has about him that singularly winning attractiveness which attaches to some (though unfortunately

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not to all) very conscientious, utterly sincere men and women.

The most remarkable illustration of this occurred in his early days in India. He was called upon to deal with the case of a very popular and influential official who had drifted, as does sometimes happen, into a post for which his qualities were not well suited. Lord Reading's attention had been drawn to the circumstances, but he had done nothing about it. Now Lord Irwin, as he then was, was urged to deal with it. For a few weeks he too merely watched. Then he summoned the official, and they were closeted together for an hour and a half. At the end of it, the visitor came out crestfallen. "Well, I'm sacked," he said ruefully, "but, by God, he's the best man there is in the world."

His very limitations have tended, oddly, to increase his popularity. He has had a foot from the first in two utterly different worlds, belonging completely to neither and yet at home in a manner in each. A learned man is apt to be an incubus when he sits in the room of the unlearned. They do not understand him, nor he them: and forlorn attempts at mutual comprehension are apt as often as not to widen the breach. A clever man usually excites quite as much alarm as admiration among the less clever. "It is rather like talking to a knife," said someone after an interview with Mr. Philip Guedalla; "it is amazing to see it cutting up reputations so sharply and neatly. But you have an instinctive feeling that it may not be very long before your turn may come." On the other

A GOOD MIXER

hand, the sportsman whose interests are confined almost exclusively to hunting and shooting and fishing is rarely very happy in the company of people who care for none of these things. And the stranger is at least equally lost in their company.

But Halifax is at home in both these worlds. A scholar, in the technical sense, he is not: and if a clever man means one skilled in the art of handing out epigrams and paradoxes impromptu, he is not a clever man. But he enjoys the society of learned and clever men; and they hold him, as his father did, "a delightful companion", perhaps not the less so (for the learned too have their foibles) because there is no question of any competition between them. With sportsmen of all kindreds and nations on the other hand—with the "whip crackers" of the hunting set at Christ Church, with Indian big-game shots and Yorkshire yeomen he is entirely at his ease, sharing a common enthusiasm. On this ground alone, because he saw in him the ideal of a jovial sportsman, he formed far too high an opinion of Goering. Perhaps his sporting companions may sometimes realise vaguely that there is another Lord Halifax, with whom they would not find it so easy to talk: but if a man be a good rider and an excellent shot, as well as an expert judge of horse and hound, why ask more about him?

Lord Halifax is all these things. He has been brought up to an outdoor life from his childhood. The Germans who hailed him as "Lord Tally ho" were not so far wrong, except that they selected one of the least of his titles to fame. Both his father and

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his grandfather hunted after they were eighty and he has himself been Master of Hounds both in Delhi and in Yorkshire. Without being an absolute Nimrod, he is a very good rider indeed, and thoroughly at home with horses. One form of riding he may almost be said to have invented. This is what he calls "horse-hiking". Long before riding-parties across country, which before the war were just becoming very popular in England, had been so much as thought of, it was his pet enjoyment to set off on horseback with a very few close friends, riding day after day over the wolds, and sleeping in some convenient country inn, the journey ending, as likely as not, in a shoot. He likes the keen air and exercise, the plain country fare and the amusing roadside life. His county is ideally suited to expeditions of this kind, and in "horse-hiking" some of his happiest hours have certainly been spent.

Like most out-of-door men, he does not take indoor pastimes very seriously. He plays bridge, but without great enthusiasm. He would join quite as cheerfully in a round game, or even better a charade; and more cheerfully still be left to the desultory reading by the fire of which he acquired the habit at Oxford. As a young man, he liked dancing: and he is an occasional theatre-goer. But he would never become, like Lord Simon, an inveterate "first nighter" much less, like Lord Oxford, an expert dramatic critic. In the darkest hour of Mr. Asquith's political fortunes he found solace in chuckling over Joxer, the famous parasite in Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*.

THE UNSTRUNG BOW

This kind of enthusiasm Lord Halifax would probably not understand. Like Mr. Lloyd George, who has no taste for being made artificially miserable, he prefers his plays to have a happy ending, and is probably no more exacting in his choice of entertainment. Mr. Lloyd George once asked Dr. Marx, the German Republican leader, to go with him to a music hall to see some special show or other. Dr. Marx, a melancholy very devout Roman Catholic, given to private austerities, was scandalized when he discovered where he was being taken: it was rather like inviting the Pope to a night club. Lord Halifax would not be scandalized by such an invitation. He would go quite cheerfully to a music hall if he felt inclined. He might even enjoy it and take quite a boyish pleasure in knock-about farce and good slapstick stuff. In quite another vein he likes plays with a supernatural interest—no doubt a hereditary touch—Grand Guignol, with its mere horrors, would repel him. But the introduction of the supernatural element in drama definitely pleases him, just as it definitely repels and irritates minds of another type.

Halifax has never been the idol of his constituents, as Joseph Chamberlain was of Birmingham. Garrowby, his home, stands on an escarpment of the wold. From nearby it is possible to see the whole constituency spread out before one. But it looks very far off. There is something symbolical in this distant view. His old electors like and admire him, but they do not know him intimately, and they were secretly rather startled when he rose to political eminence.

SIDE SLIGHTS

But they accepted the new homage proudly and with satisfaction as one more well-deserved compliment to Yorkshire. He is a good landlord and gets on with his tenants. His father, always embarrassed by the great sums he spent on his religious campaigns and on his building, was apt to find their demands for necessary repairs a trial. "Gallop, Edward," he would say, "that looks like a tenant." His successor has been too good a business man to be reduced to expedients of this sort. He is careful of his money, and has the reputation in his own country of being a hard bargainer. It is a reputation which does a man no harm at all in Yorkshire.

No one has ever doubted the fervour of Lord Halifax's local patriotism. "Yorkshire had discovered," he said once, "one of the secrets at the root of life—that life was always the product of a series of concentric loyalties finding its ultimate expression in wider service to the State and humanity." Elsewhere he developed this theory of "loyalties". "Each and every one of these loyalties depends all the time for its vitality upon constantly making efforts to reach out far, to be and to do something bigger. . . . A nation that only thinks about itself, that has no room in its picture for the greater service of man, becomes no help to its fellow members or to humanity." Whether his Yorkshire audiences quite understood or appreciated this sublimation of their local patriotism, or whether, if they failed to do so, they were inexcusable, may well be open to argument. Local feeling is a matter of the blood and the heart usually, rather than of the head.



A FAMILY GROUP AT GARROWBY

Lord and Lady Habint with Charles and Peter Wood

Doubtless it may be rationalised, as love and indigestion can be rationalised. But it remains, as Lord Halifax himself would have been eager to admit in another connection, essentially non-rational—either above or below reason, as the case may be.

The typical Yorkshireman's dogged tenacity and power of work, matter-of-fact commonsense and resentment at attempts to impose upon him are all characteristic of Lord Halifax. Beneath the smiling, carefully cultivated landscape is solid granite. People who have rashly supposed that the barrage of the Christian gentleman concealed nothing but an amiable weakling have occasionally been roughly undeceived. Admirers who have been accustomed to regard him as simply a saint—and have in consequence expected him to act as an unpractical visionary—have sometimes been shocked to discover the saint very careful of his money, punctual as a bank clerk in his reckonings, and as ready as the most hardened sinner to call bad and ugly things—once he clearly recognised them for what they were—by their right names. Not to recognise this hard core in his character is to miss the significance of his career. It has been illustrated again and again. He admired enormously Gandhi's mysticism. But he had no patience at all with the merely ceremonial mystifications in which the Indian saint delights. When Gandhi made his famous march with his salt-making pilgrims to Dandi beach and the official world was clamouring for his prosecution, the Viceroy said that if he could have his way he would simply collect sufficient wagons and cart

SIDE LIGHTS

the pilgrims back where they came from. There is no more sincere believer in the League of Nations and all that it stands for, as his early speeches show. But he was quite frankly impatient with the idealism which was ready to sacrifice all hope of real peace in the vain effort to enforce upon the world an ideal which had become impracticable.

In particular he was never unaware of the danger of Mr. Chamberlain's exaggerated claims for the Munich settlement. "I don't think we can do much more than show ourselves to these people/" he said to Chamberlain when they were in Italy together. "Oh, I think we might do a little more than that," replied the Prime Minister; "we might get a document. . . ." "No, no," said Halifax hastily, "no more documents." Even as a young man the House of Commons failed altogether to overawe or even much to impress him. Members, he thought, were for the most part of two orders—the whisperers who were always holding private confabulations while speeches were going on, and the bores who made heavier still the leaden hours with long speeches on the diseases of gooseberry bushes and similar topics. He is never exactly witty: but he has a dry humour which is the more effective because he so rarely exercises it. Some people, he once said, seemed to think that the first step to real reformation was to begin by hanging the Prime Minister: and there were occasions—such as the imminent advent of a Labour Ministry to power—when he himself was conscious of some approval of this course.

THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD

Whether his earnest piety and his habit of trying every large issue by the standard of Christian ethics has been an asset to the Governments of which he has been a member has been a matter warmly debated in many quarters. Undoubtedly the British cause gained greatly at the outset of the second great struggle with Germany by the fact that its spokesman was a man of stainless honour and unimpeachable probity. The secularists are almost certainly wrong also in assuming that what they call his "sermons" have no weight with the ordinary Englishman, or that people who do not go to church are therefore indifferent about the teaching of organised religion; witness the debates on the new Prayer Book, and the hubbub they raised in British circles which were anything but ecclesiastical. Halifax's appeal is not more definitely religious than Gladstone's often was, or Mr. Lansbury's—at bottom—always: certainly not more than the famous speech by Mr. Healy, to which reference has already been made in an earlier chapter.

In listening with respect, as it always has done, to these and similar appeals the House of Commons has merely reflected the feeling of the country. In England on the whole, and perhaps even more in America Lord Halifax's "sermons" have been heard gladly. But it is far otherwise on the Continent, where, except in odd nooks and corners, the Puritan Tradition has never taken root. When President Wilson at Versailles in 1918 delivered his long allocutions with citations from the Sermon on the Mount, M. Clemenceau folded his hands on his stomach and

SI DELIGHTS

went to sleep. He thought it was all hypocritical stuff and nonsense. Clemenceau was an atheist. But in this attitude he reflected the mind of most Frenchmen, Germans and Italians who are not.

Great numbers of Germans and Italians, who have no love for their tyrannical governments and would listen fairly impartially to a cool statement of the Allies' case, would repudiate warmly the assertion that they are enemies of Christianity. Without stretching language rather severely, it is not true : for great numbers of them are practising Catholics. What they do hold, difficult as it may be for the Anglo-Saxon mind to grasp the fact, is that Christian ethics are not concerned with international policy, any more than with mathematics or geography. The validity or otherwise of this view is not the point. The point is that, right or wrong, it is sincerely held by thousands of professing Christians : and it is this view rather than the supersession of Christianity by Ludendorff's Neo-paganism which is the real issue, as well as one of the main causes, of the Second World War. To Lord Halifax, as to many high-minded champions of the Allied cause, the struggle may present itself as a crusade against Antichrist. But the diagnosis is not in fact either complete or exact. To insist on it, in the teeth of the evidence, is to darken counsel and to make treatment at least more difficult.

" You," said a high dignitary of the Roman Church to his father, " have the mind of a Latin." " And Edward, too ?" asked the old man. " No, no, Edward's mind is not Latin. He is pure Anglo-

THE BEST CHAIR

Saxon." It was a most shrewd judgment, for Edward is pure Anglo-Saxon—"mere English" like Queen Elizabeth. He is English in his good-natured hatred of cruelty, and his instinctive revolt against injustice in any form; in the cool, rather stolid courage with which he faces danger, and in the dogged patience and perseverance with which he pursues his aims through apparently insuperable difficulties. He is English also in his distrust of the intellect, in his secret belief that sound emotions are more important than sound reasoning, and in his cautious reluctance to accept a course of conduct simply because it is logical. He is English again in his matter-of-fact satisfaction in the small pleasures and comforts of life. In this Don Quixote also there is just a pleasant touch of Sancho Panza. Certainly for a matter of principle the ascetic will go to his death calmly and resolutely. But in the interval before his execution he will make himself as comfortable as circumstances permit. And why not? "Whenever I come into a room/" said a friend, "I always find Edward filling the most comfortable chair in it—and the odd thing is that every one is glad to see him there."

This "gladness" is significant. His Englishry may not seem on a casual glance a very important fact in his make-up: nor perhaps in a sense is it very important. But in his career it has been of very great importance, for it is probably the essential point of contact which has made possible his influence with the masses of his countrymen. Without it, they would have stared with round-eyed admiration

SIDE LIGHTS

indeed, but with rather cold, embarrassed admiration, at a figure which would have seemed to them to be a visitant from another world, like a Sir Galahad or a Sir Perceval revealed suddenly against a background of science and jazz and dirt tracks and football pools. They would have found the spectacle impressive possibly, but on the whole rather disconcerting, and even a little grotesque. But a Sir Galahad who likes honey for tea, who is an excellent judge of a horse or a hound, who when he chooses, which is rarely enough, can play a good hand at bridge, who can break into broad Yorkshire when he has a mind, who can take a heavy toss in the hunting field and say to his fellows "Go on, don't mind me": and who of an evening enjoys like another the armchair by his own fireside—this is no plaster saint. This is no figure from a stained glass window projected miraculously into a world in which it does not belong. This is one of the authentic breed. This, we make bold to think, despite Mr. Wells, is a characteristic Englishman of the twentieth century; not the less characteristic because there is in British public life no figure quite like him.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE FIRST LORD HALIFAX

THE Woods of Monk Bretton, near Barnsley, were a well-known Yorkshire family in Tudor days. But no member of it rose to real eminence till Charles Wood, the son of the reigning baronet, Sir Francis, took a double first at Oxford, and as one of the most promising of the younger Whigs was chosen by Lord Grey, the famous Minister whose passion for Parliamentary Reform was almost a monomania, as his Secretary. The position was no sinecure. Charles Greville found himself in negotiation with the young secretary when the crisis of the Reform Bill was reaching its climax. Greville was acting for Lord Harrowby, the diehard leader, who had avowed that "Hell itself should not make him vote for the disfranchisement of fifty-six boroughs, though he would swallow any other number, greater or smaller, if that were proposed by the Government." It was a delicate business, but it is evident that the opinion formed by the astute diarist was a favourable one, for they continued on the closest terms.

Charles Wood's work must have been very strenuous. But it left him time to come to an understanding with Lady Mary Grey, Lord Grey's fifth daughter (he had fifteen children). She was very attractive as a girl, and remained so : "very pleasant and pleasing", Lord Granville records, "if those two words mean, as I believe, two different things". She took a proper interest in her husband's politics and also in other people's, for she spoke to Greville about John Russell and lamented that he was so careless and indifferent in his relations to the Court (in contrast with Sir Robert Peel's

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assiduity). She thought this "impolitic as well as wrong", and the diarist agrees. Lady Mary was a little plaintive at being required to live in patriarchal fashion in Hickleton Hall with her husband's family. She would have liked an establishment of her own. But she never got one till quite late in life. She died, just before her husband, in 1884.

In one respect neither Greville nor anyone else was under any illusion about Sir Charles Wood. There is an impressive unanimity among his contemporaries that the grandfather of the Chancellor, whose noble address to Oxford is only one of a series of famous speeches, was not at his best on his feet. Even so kindly an observer as Justin MacCarthy contrasted his delivery unfavourably with that of Sir George Lewis, which was otherwise "the worst he had ever heard". Sir Charles, he says, could not have been called an orator "if he had had the voice and delivery of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright", while the Speaker said of the five hour speech on the great India Bill, which was the achievement of Wood's political life, that it was the very worst he had ever heard since he had sat in the Chair.

Yet Charles Wood could be articulate enough upon occasion. He is recorded once to have dismissed a deputation which was trying to begin a discussion all over again with the remark, ¹¹ "Well, may God have mercy on your intellects." "Did you hear Pussy scratch?"—his comment on one of Lord Granville's speeches—is not the remark of a dull man. And we could certainly write. To his despatch after the Mutiny on July 26th, 1860, there is nothing to add even to-day :—

It is not by the extension of our Empire that its permanence is to be secured, but by the character of British rule in the territories already committed to our care: and by practically demonstrating that we are as willing to respect the rights of others as we are capable of maintaining our own.

Herr Hitler might do worse than pin this passage above his desk. But there never was any doubt that Wood was a very

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able man. "He has worked the India Bills through the Commons like a brick," cried Canning exultantly: and Dalhousie was lyrical in his praise of him as "a very honest worker, sincerely interested in his duties."

None the less his debut in official life had been singularly unpromising. He was Lord John Russell's Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1846. To be Lord John Russell's colleague in any capacity was scarcely a matter for congratulation. To be Chancellor of the Exchequer in the days of the Irish famine was a fate which a vindictive man might have wished for a much-hated enemy.

For Ireland was starving. Three-fourths of the potato crop and one-fourth of the oats crop had failed. The already wretched population were deprived of the staples on which, even in normal times desperately poor, they were dependent for bare existence. No Government could have done very much in the face of so sudden and appalling a visitation. Lord John Russell's Government did what it could—rather more perhaps than its critics were ready to admit. But it did not do enough, and it did not do it very well, and Sir Charles Wood, educated in the stiff Whig theory of economy, was certainly not the man for that job.

Nor as Chancellor was he much more successful in other directions. M. Clemenceau once explained his appointment of a certain Jewish Finance Minister on the ground that he was the only Jew who knew nothing about money. It would not be true to say of Sir Charles Wood that he knew nothing about finance. But it does appear that he was entirely without that sort of imagination which is the soul of really good finance. His budgets—he produced no less than three in 1848—were bundles of little expedients of which their author himself seemed to have no very high opinion, for he was always willing to drop them or change them at the first breath of criticism. He once coolly dropped a proposal to increase the income tax, which his own chief only a few months before had declared to be "indispensable". The House of Commons

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fell on these Budgets like a puppy on a rag doll. Sir Charles merely picked up the remnants sorrowfully, and patched them together as best he could. His one achievement at the Treasury was the abolition of the tax on windows, a bad relic of the French wars—meritorious, but scarcely sufficient in itself to justify a reputation as a financier. Sir Charles left the Treasury unlamented.

Few front-bench careers have begun less auspiciously. Still fewer have been more brilliantly retrieved. Sir Charles Wood might not know very much about finance. But it so happened that he knew a great deal about India and, most fortunately, Lord Aberdeen was aware of the fact. In 1852 he made the discredited Chancellor President of the Board of Control (or Secretary for India, as he would now be called.) It is on the work of the fourteen years which followed this appointment that the fame of the first Lord Halifax rests. His India Act of 1853 and his famous Education Dispatch in the following year are permanent landmarks in the history of British rule in India. His whole Indian administration is a heartening example of what a splendid instrument for the good of humanity a high administrative office can be made in the hands of an earnest, able man who understands and loves his job.

The mere enumeration of the chief changes effected is impressive. The Rules of Business freed Indian Ministers from wading through endless irrelevant documents and gave them time and opportunity to attend to the work of their own departments. The obsolete practice which maintained in existence two rival independent systems of jurisdiction was abolished, and Indians were given the right to sit as judges in the High Court. They were also granted the right to sit on the already existing Legislative Councils. It is an extraordinary thing that a statesman who had joined with John Bright in a vehement effort to defeat the proposed reduction of hours of labour for women and children should yet have had the vision to see that India could only be

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governed by consent, and that if that consent was to be real they must be persuaded to co-operate themselves in the administration. The Army was reformed. Patronage was abolished in the Civil Service and competition established in its place. Wilson put the finances in order, and introduced an income tax. When Sir Charles Trevelyan, the governor of Madras, criticised his reforms publicly, Sir Charles Wood promptly recalled him.

The establishment of the Indian Universities was his own special contribution to the reform schemes. It is not strictly true that he began the Westernisation of Indian education, for it had been initiated some twenty years before. But he established foundations on which all future builders worked.

A bad accident in the hunting field ended Sir Charles Wood's career at the India Office. It was after this that he became the first Lord Halifax of his line (he had represented Halifax in the Commons for thirty-three years). He lived for many years longer, the usual rather spectral life of an elder statesman in the House of Lords. In his lifetime he never seems to have received the recognition from the country generally which was on the whole his due. To Queen Victoria indeed he became "that dear Lord Halifax". His old colleagues continued to value his experience and knowledge. But the general public, which never quite forgot his misfortunes at the Treasury, knew little of his solid achievements in India; it only knew that they had cost a great deal of money and that it had been necessary to borrow heavily to finance them.

Indian opinion was perhaps less unconscious of the merit of the Secretary's achievement. Lord Lawrence, in a letter to the old man, told him how a Hindu astrologer had prophesied that an unborn grandson of the new Lord Halifax would be Viceroy of India. If the astrologer was guessing, as he presumably was, it was a very shrewd guess. In the fulness of time the grandson was born.

APPENDIX II

TEMPLE NEWSAM

THE Wood family generally lived at Hickleton Hall, for Garrowby, till the second Lord Halifax largely rebuilt it, was quite a small place. But there was a third house, much more magnificent than either, at which they were constant visitors, and which was intimately associated with the fortunes of the family. This was Temple Newsam, near Leeds.

As its name suggests, it was originally a seat of the Knights Templar, and there is still existing an interesting account of life at Temple Newsam as it presented itself to the eyes of a young novice in the Order in Henry II's time. "My master, Sir Adam de Everingham," runs the record, "is a Knight Templar and with him came I riding on our horses yesterweek to this place of Newsam. The House is timbered and stands about a court; it is built like a manor and is very frugal in all its furnishings. All around it grow crops for the granaries. The Preceptory is a place apart and is guarded by a moat. The house place is full of Knights like my Master, who have repaired here to receive the severe training of their Order. Daily do they take their military exercises, and many times each day do they say their prayers."

Temple Newsam was at one time the property of the Lennoxes. They sold it eventually to a wealthy London linen-draper named Ingram. The linen-draper became richer and richer. His grandson was a financial magnate in early Stuart days; and the magnate's grandson again was raised to the peerage after the Restoration as Viscount Irvine, a Scottish

title. " Irwin "—the English form of the Scottish Irvine—was the title taken by Edward Wood when he was himself raised to the peerage before going as Viceroy to India. His territorial title of " Kirby Underdale " he took from the village of that name near Garrowby.

Nine generations of ennobled Ingrams reigned in Temple Newsam. Charles, the ninth Viscount, married a Canadian heiress. But here his good luck ended, for he died without male heir, leaving five beautiful daughters. The third of these married Hugo Meynell of Hoars Cross : and their son, Hugo Frances Meynell-Ingram married the second Lord Halifax's sister, Edward's aunt. To this lady, widely known as Mrs. Meynell-Ingram, Temple Newsam, eventually descended.

Mrs. Meynell-Ingram enjoyed a long and almost unique reputation as a Victorian hostess on the grand scale, imperious and eccentric, and a great hater of modern innovations. Royal guests were common. Others of lower degree, embraced people of distinction as various as Madame Albani and Joseph Chamberlain. The Judges stayed there when on circuit at Leeds. But their surroundings must have been more magnificent than comfortable. For years Mrs. Meynell-Ingram would not allow gas to be installed, and the whole vast house had to be lighted by candles and oil lamps. To the last she resisted central heating. The warmth of the huge fires all escaped up the enormous chimneys, and the smoke came down them. Lady Mary Meynell, who lived for a long time at Temple Newsam, declared that she had often seen " the carpets rising in billows from the draughts of the wind howling round the walls." The Woods, who had the run of the house, nicknamed the coldest of the draughty corridors " The North West Passage ".

And yet it was a gorgeous old place. The picture gallery, with its beautiful ceiling, won it not undeservedly the title of " The Hampton Court of the North ". There were portraits by Reynolds and by Titian, by Van Dyck and Claude

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and Rembrandt. The furniture was marvellous. The whole house was full of costly tapestries and splendid Indian carpets. There were curiously worked cabinets and chairs. The candelabra were in the form of golden flowers. There was much costly china—Sevres vases and elegant figures of flowers and of birds. It was a museum of treasures. But it was also to the second Lord Halifax's great delight, haunted.

When Mrs. Meynell-Ingram died, she left the house by her will to Edward Wood. It was something of a white elephant. The cost of upkeep was very great. It was certainly not an ideal family residence. Leeds was coming nearer and nearer, darkening the old walls with its smoke, and in 1922 its owner parted with it to the city, which was in need of just such a "lung"; and most of the contents went with it.

The ceremony of transfer began with a service in the little chapel on which Mrs. Meynell-Ingram had lavished such care, conducted by Canon Wylde of Leeds, drawn up by him with the help of Edward Wood, who often collaborated with him in the arrangement of special services.

In his speech Edward Wood said that the decision to surrender Temple Newsam had not been reached "light-heartedly or without extreme reluctance", but the burden of taxation had become so severe that it was extremely difficult for him to maintain it as it deserved to be maintained, and as it had been maintained. It was morally certain, he added, that the taxation on his death would make the task impossible for his successors. "It was still within the power of Temple Newsam," he concluded, "to continue to make its own particular contribution to the human lives that fell within its influence."

Thus Temple Newsam passed for ever from the hands of its former masters. The decision, sad in many ways as it was, was unquestionably right. The house was quite unsuited to modern family needs, while Leeds is justly proud

of a " show place " which has no rival anywhere in the North of England. Still, the old days are gone. Strangers wander wondering through the rooms where Mrs. Meynell-Ingram kept her state: and Leeds school children scamper down the North West passage. The ghosts are laid. Henceforth the bye-laws of the Corporation regulate their haunts.

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