

LLOYD GEORGE

Once when breakfasting at Downing Street, during the War, I was painfully surprised by the casual way in which L.G. spoke of a certain British Force which, the day before, had been annihilated. Perhaps I ought to make allowance for a habit of talking without restraint, because I remember when I had invited him to meet someone at dinner in the Strangers' Room in the House of Commons, a note was brought to him during the dinner by a waiter. It proved to be a little scrawl from Sir John Simon, as he then was, who was dining at a neighbouring table. It was a freindly warning to L.G. that what he said was being overheard, and was too private for the ears of strangers.

BONAÉ LAW

One of the most amazing things that I have seen in my life was B.L. standing at the box and declaring his support of the Irish rebels. He, the representative of a party of law and order, asked to say explicitly whether he approved of the King's subjects arming themselves to resist decisions and the forces of the Crown, arrived at by constitutional process, replied emphatically that he did so. It gave the impression of madness and unreality, but it led to appalling results, and perhaps to the Great War.

It was entirely supported by the Conservative Party, and this is one of the cases which should make us look with doubt on the reputation of Conservatism for trustworthiness. During the long Conservative reign which followed the Four Years' War, the Tory Party claimed to be loyal to the League of Nations system, and, although it was foreign to their national tendency, to Nationalism, and Imperialism of the Party, I felt confidence in the professions of Baldwin: but after all, we were disappointed in the event. Nobody now believes that the professed enthusiasm for League was quite genuine.

Biography Notes.

re Controlling Children, or the Modern Theory

Mention Romans XII. and afterwards broken.

Peerage

The conflict of title taking with democratic principle might be compared with other cases where evil is outweighed by the supposed good. People talk of Jesuits doing evil that good may come. It reminds me of the principle on which, I understand, candidates for Anglican orders declare that they agree with the Thirty-Nine Articles, though, in fact, they do nothing of the sort.

POLITICS

Some people thought we bourgeois politicians made a sacrifice by joining the despised Socialists, but I don't claim this at all. In his book about Parliament, Jos Wedgewood gave two instances of what he called 'political sacrifices', and one of these referred to a certain loss of income on leaving business for politics, of which I had told him privately, but that, again, was no sacrifice as, like Ananias, I had retained plenty to live on.

A larger class of people seemed to think it creditable to do hard work when one had no necessity to do so. How strange that people should think it more agreeable to lead an inactive life than a busy one.

On the other hand I was not one of those who get pleasure from being a rebel, and it was painful to me to annoy and disappoint, e.g. my uncle E.N.B. (Edward North Buxton). He was very angry with Charlie and me during the Four Years' War. However, this gave rise to a bit of fun which was quite consoling. He was dictating his Recollections, and used these words: "My nephews, N. and C. seem to be no better than Communists". When the type was produced, the wording ran: are no better than ~~Comm~~ Communicants".

Biography Notes

Meals at A.J. Balfour's

Oliver Lodge and general conversation

135

Politics and Society

It is a famous feature of English political life that personal relations are not damaged by difference of political views. It is famous, but not necessarily admirable. Pure opinion ought not to divide people, because opinions should be distinct from feeling. But the difference between desire for decent housing and the desire to keep down the rates represents the difference between altruism and self-preservation, and that is properly a division of moral personality.

As to the effect of my own politics on social relations, it did happen that, after I became known as a Radical, I lost sight of nearly all the houses where I formerly stayed. But I think this was more from being regarded as too busy to pay visits. On the other hand, there is an interesting feature in the vehement hostility of many Conservative minds to those who support social change, because this hostility seems to be greater in those who know least, and care least about politics.

203

MARLY'S BIRTHDAY

Stern daughter of a sterner sire,
O Marly, if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a fire
To rouse the Warlies family and reprove;
Thou who art Victory and Law,
When empty terrors overawe,
From strong depressions dost set free
And calmest frenzied nights of foul anxiety.

I, cataleptic and half blind,
Asport of every random gust,
And, being to myself unkind,
Too little have reposed my trust;
And oft, when in mine ear I heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task of pickier walks to stray,
But now I fain would serve more stumly if I may.

By no disturbance of my soul
Or strong compunction in me wrought;
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the trembly ags of thought
Me this ragassing carcass tires,
I feel the weight of chance desires,
My corpse no more must change its name,
I long for livid bliss which ever is the same.

Stern lawgiver ! Yet thou dost wear
Our mother's most benignant grace;
Nor is there anything more fair
Than is the smile upon thy face.
Bozooks spring before thee in their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost redeem even ags from wrong,
And the most ancient picks by thee are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power,
I call thee; I myself commend
Into thy keeping from this hour;
O let my stumness have an end.
Give unto me more birthday teas,
And frenzied talk of old Warlies.
The spirit of our parents give
And in thy saintly flat thy Bozzoo let me live.

CH IX
Politics

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CHAPTER IX POLITICS

CHAPTER IX

POLITICS

Early Toryism

P. 85
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I am ashamed to think of the narrow views which, for several years after growing up, I held on social justice, although it may enable me to take a broader view of other people's opinions to-day. I somehow contrived to be strongly concerned for social betterment, in some ways, with rank class prejudice in others. I could make a case of Toryism even now, if it were not for the fact that English temperament is overwhelmingly Conservative, and the opposite view is more needed in practice. I am shocked to remember that in my shooting days I was blind to the criminality of closing a public footpath in order to keep land at Warlies quiet for game. I must wear a white sheet and confess that I made the keeper, Joe Lodge, keep certain stiles blocked up in the hope that people would disuse the path ^{which} ~~which~~ crosses the upper bridge across the brook, and induce them to be content with the other path which avoids going through the Brook Wood, and passing the edge of Scatterbushes. It is some consolation to think that many people whose action strikes me as anti-social, are quite unaware of their falling short of what no^w seems to me to be humane, reasonable and ideal.

me
 Barnett and Gore led to politics, but it was V. and C.R.B. who pushed me into standing for Parliament. The C.S.U. had not made me political in the parliamentary or Liberal sense, and I had a strong distaste for public appearance. *What political news I had were fendal, Upshire*
 in 1892 I had got up a meeting at ~~Copthall Green~~ *Upshire* in support Lockwood, the Tory candidate, and had had no connection with Liberals since I was at Harrow, *There,* having been brought up a Gladstonian until father joined the Unionists in 1886, I spoke *remember speaking in* in a House debate, denouncing Lord Salisbury's name as being a byword for prevarication."

Father had been practically Conservative, and my position in the Brewery was at variance with Liberal policy. It required the Boer war to give me much contact with the Liberal Party view, and even so, it was only with the Campbell-Bannerman section of the Liberals. My uncle E.M.B., who was chairman of Truman's, encouraged me to stand, and introduced me to Herbert Gladstone who was the Liberal Chief whip. The result was my selection as candidate at Ipswich, and the preliminaries were made easy.

when it came to public life and visits to leading supporters, I found the strain very severe, especially as I was all the time carrying on my work at Truman's, *my other job* etc. The election was alleviated by the presence of Masterman, C.R.B. and others, but it was a painful

P. 89
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P. 90
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Politics

time to me, and when it was over I felt very unlike standing again. However, I was very kindly treated by ~~new~~ ^{politicians} people, especially Lord Spencer, who had been in the Liberal cabinet, and was gratified by the support of my uncle Francis Buxton and many others. I was only beaten by about 200 votes.

Two years later I was asked to stand for the North West Division of Essex, which was a Liberal seat, but I was still deterred by previous experience. Then in 1904 I found my position at Truman's inconsistent with standing, and I resigned after many qualms about cutting adrift from a regular job. Greater freedom made me keen to stand, and in 1905 I offered to put up for the vacancy which occurred in the Whitby Division.

To everybody's surprise I won this seat, which had never been anything but Tory. *Campbell-Bannerman, then Liberal leader, spoke of "the crowning mercy of Whitby."*

I found the strain of Parliament very great. I was very young and I was still younger for my age. I got sustenance from recollections of the Liberator. More than once I remember going to the statue in the Abbey to remind myself of the inscription which I like so much:

"Endowed with a vigorous and capacious mind, Of undaunted courage and untiring energy, He was early led by the love of God To devote his talent to the good of man."

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back of page 77

p. 90
"Success"
(this album on p 39 29)

There were some thrilling things in that Parliament. It was an event to be in the House with Joe Chamberlain, and I heard him speak. But he was already failing and his end was not far off. Another notable figure was Lecky, whom I revered most of all the historians whom I ^{had} studied at Cambridge.

The Liberator ^{was} has always been a great inspirer, as ^{to me} he was ^{to a large public in former days} to very many of a former generation. People I have met in electioneering told me that their fathers had brought them up on the Memoir as if it was the Bible. I said what I thought about him in the preamble ^{to the trust deed of the trust which I formed for public purposes.} to my "Public Purposes Trust".

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It was jolly to be in the house with my father's old friend Sir John Kennaway, and I liked some of the Members very much. Jebb, the ^{famous} classic authority, I remember congratulating me on studying the rules of procedure. Sir Wilfred Lawson was also a delightful patron. He never lost a chance of some fun, and I remember sitting by him below the gangway when he began a sort of greeting to me by adapting Scott's poetry with the words: "Oh Macedonia, stern and wild, fit muse for a poetic child."

One of the features of that summer, when the Tory Government was dying, was the attempt to get them out by a snap division. The Chief Whip organized a secret

p. 91

gathering of Liberal members in a house in Dean's Yard, when there was an all-night sitting and the Government's men had slipped past their Whips. The Liberal Whips were to telephone when the moment came for us thirty or forty stalwarts to rush across for the division. It never came off, but the intense boredom of spending most of the night, dawdling sometimes in the open air until long after daylight, remained a painful memory.

I found the House an irksome strain. I was too little developed and found the Party very little associated with my G.S.U. outlook. However, Bryce was there, so that my Balkan Liberationism had good support, and I liked ^{my constituents,} the local Yorkshire Liberals, ^{very much.}

The keen Nonconformists, when roused to fury by ^{education} Balfour's policy, were an inspiring, vigorous Christian type. The North Yorkshire moors and Whitby ^{itself} were grand, ^{were a delightful background} and I felt confident of winning in the General Election which everyone knew would end the ten years domination of the Tories. I had won a seat which had never been previously anything but conservative, and gained something of a name for doing so, C.B. himself making a speech about the crowning mercy of Whitby.

However, the great landowners of that feudal district put out tremendous efforts to retrieve their power in the dales, ^{even} sending their gamekeepers round to

✓ p. 91
✓ 600
✓ 603
Page 92

(This comes on p 78)

the little farmers with the demand that they should promise their support to Beckett, the Tory candidate, in writing, and I was beaten by 70 votes. I had roused enthusiasm in Whitby, and on the announcement of defeat I was carried through the old streets like a triumphant victor; the old houses seemed to rock with the tumult and every house appeared to be hung with my colours. In London I was commiserated as one of the few who failed, especially by those whom I had ^{helped into} introduced to politics; Masterman was conspicuous among these, and he was to get Office within a few months.

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My chance of re-entry came through the fact that the North Norfolk member was soon to resign. ^{It began to look opportunistic} it was all ^{of speaking in Norfolk + this was made easy by the fact that} the more easy to frequent Cromer because I had become the occupant of Hunton Old Hall; ~~this~~ because, at my suggestion, Father had created small holdings out of the Hall farm, and the house, which I had long admired when partridge shooting on Spratts Hill, had become ^{being no longer needed as a farmhouse} free to let separately. I held it until it had housed one or two friends, including Rosslyn Bruce, who ^{through} by that ^{visit} means became married to Rachael Gurney, ^{But} I had no real use for it and ^{soon} persuaded Connie and Bertram to take it over. This was how it became a noted place because they made the most of its possibilities. ^{Later} I also became the occupant of Colne Cottage when Father

moved into Colne House, and I began to furnish it ^{aided by aunt Minnie of Colton, who took me to} and invited friends there. ^{the old furniture shops of Norwich.}

94
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When Sir W. Gurdon announced his retirement, there was keen contention among the Liberal Leaders of the Division, some of them thinking I was too radical because I had taken up the cause of the agricultural labourer. Finally it came to a competition of candidates, headquarters having disregarded my plea for preference, and having sent a young friend of Asquith's ^{Harold Baker,} at the request of the non-radical local leaders.

P-95
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The Farm Labourers' union then announced that they would back me whether ^{the} Liberals adopted me or not, and this roused intense indignation. The meeting of the Liberal Hundred at Melton was almost a battle. I was adopted by 36 votes to 24, and then those who resented the importance claimed by the labourers, refused ^{to} their support, though I was the official candidate. They came back ^{to me} by degrees, and I was elected by a good majority in the January election ^{of 1910.} ^{Charlie got in too.}

Any activities of mine in the succeeding years in Parliament which can be said to be of ^{public interest} any importance are described in Evans' book "Foreign Policy from a Back Bench", but I may tell of some aspects which ^{the} book is not concerned with.

Politics -83 ~~95~~
P83

It was an exciting time, and very thrilling that Charlie and I had got in together. We were both definitely Radicals, and keen supporters of the small group led by Sir Charles Dilke, which had a weekly meeting. We were all sympathetic with Ramsay Macdonald, who had just become Labour Leader, and we were naturally disapproved of by the mass of Liberal members, many of whom appeared to us little distinguishable from the Tories.

p. 96
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The Marconi incident was a feature of the times, and might have brought the Government down. Naturally we Radicals were displeased with leaders who gave rise to the charge of putting private interests before public rectitude, and this view was keen among the men who attended the weekly lunch of the writers of the "Nation". I was one of those, being a friend of Massingham, the famous editor. In the talk at lunch I made some drastic comments, and I remember my alarm when these appeared in the next number of the "Nation"; happily nobody *mercifully without* learned who was their author. *my name*

When As the papers kept announcing the formation of new groups formed to ginger the Government on one point or another, the names of us two Buxtons constantly appeared, and I remember Sydney, who had become *Buxton*

Politics

p. 96

Postmaster General, and was soon to get the Board of Trade, saying half playfully and half reproachfully that whenever he heard of a rebellion, he knew without looking that C. and I were in it.

It was very jolly to find oneself in the House with old friends in other causes, such as Arthur Ponsonby, and Percy Alden, and Masterman, and there were new friends who became close allies. One was Phillip Morrell, who loved a fight for its own sake, and who led the crusade against the Russian Government when it imprisoned a Polish girl, for her socialism. In this case we attacked the Government for lethargy, and I remember raising the question on the adjournment, and using the expression, "Oh for an hour of Palmerston!" The case would never have been heard of if the girl had not been a friend of Fanny Noel, owing to which Morrell got to hear of it, through us. Anyhow, the Russian Government gave way, so we got the girl out of gaol.

p. 97

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~~and who led the crusade~~ against the Russian Government when it imprisoned a Polish girl, for her socialism. In this case we attacked the Government for lethargy, and I remember raising the question on the adjournment, and using the expression, "Oh for an hour of Palmerston!" *I fear I was hardly ingenious that day.* The case would never have been heard of if the girl had not been a friend of Fanny Noel, owing to which Morrell got to hear of it, through us. Anyhow, the Russian Government gave way, so we got the girl out of gaol. *How often do great events depend on the activity of one person.*

My closest collaborator in those years was Howard Whitehouse. He had been secretary at Toynbee Hall, and had made his way by the aid of intense enthusiasm, a passion for reform, a sympathetic personality and a formidable wit.

We two bachelors were able to indulge our common

p. 97

Politics

by cooperating in the House & in the 85 County

tastes even by foreign travel. He was ready to help me, for instance, in promoting the cause of the inshore fishermen of the British coasts. This meant meetings at Cromer and at Sheringham. *+ led to motors being fitted to fishing boats.* It was proper that I should care for the fishermen of the Norfolk coast, but it also meant visits to Devon. We denounced the neglect of their interests in debate, and Whitehouse was a somewhat unexpected advocate of men so remote from urban life. It was reported that he had not quite realized the cause he was supporting, and had alluded to his clients in "Indoor ^{as} fishermen".

97
8000000 it was also new to him to work at foreign affairs, but he was extremely clever at taking up new subjects, and most friendly in following my tastes. So after the Agadir incident of 1911 he came with me to Berlin. We both of us spoke and wrote upon it, and came to see that the Anglo-German trouble must be regarded as our chief concern.

He was also my partner in running Colne Cottage and helping me to entertain there. He was very artistic and led me into the promotion of applied art. We decided to promote the handicraft movement in Cromer, and we discovered a man ^{help} *by establishing an expert* ~~to our taste who came to Cromer, started a workshop and forge,~~ *in metal work, complete with* ^{+ shop.} and made lovely ironwork, especially such as fire irons and lamp stands, and also made jewellery, and ran a shop in the Church Square. When I had nephews staying in the winter it was great fun to hammer poker, toasting forks, and table lamp holders

on the forge. It all went on happily until the war ^{came} & killed it. But the pokers we made are still the best that I possess.

p. 97.

p. 97.

p. 98

Whitehouse was a great authority on Ruskin, and I learnt a lot through him. He deplored as I did both ^{the} humbug and toadyism, which invaded even some parliamentary minds, and was amusing to the last degree when he took off these oddities. ^{he} He lost his seat in 1918, but he was not ^{a man to be} defeated by Fate, and he proceeded to create a very large boys' school which embodied highly original methods and studies.

An enterprise with Whitehouse which I still often think of with pleasure was his campaign for preventing the London parks being spoiled by a memorial to Edward VII. The official proposal was to make a great roadway and stone bridge across St. James's Park from St. James's Palace to Queen Anne's Gate. It would have been a deplorable injury to the park and the delightful lake, and the view along the water would also have been obscured.

raised the matter in debate

Whitehouse made speeches and got me to back him up, and the old Lord Carlisle, who was an artistic notable, wrote forcibly in the "Times".

The Government gave way and made another scheme for a triumphal road across Green Park, going so far as to erect the splendid gates at the high point in Piccadilly.

Politics

87

They are a which record the attempted scheme, as do the gates opposite St. James's Palace. This time the Prime Minister intervened, with a speech breathing haughty indignation, and said nothing would alter the determination of the Government.

P. 98

However, Whitehouse beat him, and the end was most satisfactory - Two parks of priceless value were saved, and the East End acquired a park (at Shadwell) which otherwise would never have existed. *My friend achieved in fact an exploit which really showed the greatest daring, certainly greater than I would have displayed if not led to battle by my diminutive leader.*

P. 99

Let me summarise of my eighteen years in the House of Commons, *four years* were occupied by the great war, and eight by the post-war period, which included *four* many elections, two Labour Governments, and the unsuccessful attempt to establish collective peace.

The first four were enlivened by the *great* crises of democracy represented by the Lloyd George budget, and the Parliament Act. *Secondly,* by the Irish Home Rule struggle, and *thirdly* by the *complicated women's* suffrage Campaign.

All this ended with the war which perhaps resulted from them, because it looked to the German war mongers as if England would be handicapped by internal division.

One now sees that *1910-1914* it was a period of a peculiar kind, in which Liberalism passed through its phase of decay. I will not attempt to describe *this* it because everyone should

Politics

read the brilliant book of Mr. Dangerfield on the sad tale of Liberalism." It describes those years with fascinating irony.

The travels of that time were definitely political. ~~deserve notice.~~

p. 99
Guide

~~the summer holidays of those years were interesting.~~

in 1910 we went, quite a family party, to the ^(p. 100) inter-parliamentary Conference at Brussels. Belgians were annoyed with England because of the Congo atrocities campaign, and when ^{the} time came to leave, the hotel refused to take a cheque. We then called a taxi, but found that our luggage had been locked up. Charlie nobly offered to stay behind ^{till the evening} and raise money from the Consul.

In 1911 came the Agadir crisis, and in August I went with Whitehouse to Berlin. We found that Lloyd George's reckless words had created despair even among the keenest Anglophiles, and Sir George Goschen, our Ambassador, said to me: "His speech has destroyed all my work".

In 1912 came the Balkan war, and I went out with Harold in October. The Premier, ^{General Savoff} Gudshoff, arranged for us to join the commander-in-Chief. I tell of this episode later on. + in my book "With the Bulgarian Staff"

p. 100
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Next year Harold and I felt we had neglected the chief sufferers from Turkish mis-rule, namely, the Armenians, and we went out across Russia, meeting the Bryces in St. Petersburg - as it then was - and Arthur Moore, correspondent of the "Times" who had been the

first secretary of the Balkan Committee.

P. 150

we pushed through the Caucasus into Persia, and then
 back through Turkey. The Russians were in occupation of
 Persia near Tabriz, and passed us on ~~to~~ the Kurdish chief
 Sinko, on the Turco-Persian frontier, who became famous
 for massacre and treachery during the ^{great} war. we were robbed
 by his retainers, and perhaps came nearer to being finished
 off than we realized at the time. ~~Again I may save the~~ ^{repain from}
~~trouble of enlarging here because we recorded our doings~~
 in a joint book: "Travel and Politics in Armenia".

P. 101
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at

P102

I am not specially interested in the science of Parliamentary Government, and I will only record a few impressions that I formed.

Let me here of Parliamentary life.

It is very easy to pick holes in the British Parliamentary machine. Stevenson expressed an obvious weakness when he said that legislating was the only profession for which no training at all was demanded. Obviously as social legislation becomes more and more constructive and complicated, it is absurd that membership of Parliament should be confined to men of large means, much leisure, and a gift of the gab.

Vast numbers of M.P.s. belong to no official committee, and make no speeches. Much of the expenditure of time and money might very well be regarded as only waste; there is far too much Party spirit, and too much satisfaction with a life which has little responsibility. I should like to see more politicians professional in a proper sense.

There are too few men who have been trained in social science. The few who have been so trained as secretaries of social settlements, like Toynbee Hall, are of the utmost value, and their number should be multiplied tenfold.

They would possess the right training in social needs.
This is now impossible because a seat means great expense.

[But the art of]
~~As to expert training, Ministers do of course furnish a supply of experts at least in getting bills through Parliament.~~
could not be learnt by previous training.
The element of expert science is furnished

P102

Politics

by the civil servant, and the quality of these is
 extraordinarily high. Yet the predominance of the
 minister, combined with frequent changes in Ministerial
 personnel, ^{makes it urgent that he should have had training.} hampers the influence of the expert.
^{at present candidates are chosen rather for their} the minister is also handicapped by being too busy ^{wealth except in}
 to devote enough time to planning, and he is too ephemeral ^{the Labour}
 to feel ^{long-term} full responsibility. ^{+ he is not} One of these handicaps is
 an institution on which we are accustomed to pride
 ourselves, namely, ^{the Parliamentary Question, i.e.} the power of the M.P. to get an answer
 from Ministers on questions of fact or of intention.
 in my opinion the great merit of this plan is largely
 balanced by the excessive amount of time occupied by
 the minister in getting up the answer to questions which ^{often}
 have no real importance, and often merely serve to help
 an M.P. in the eyes of his constituents. ^{[a thing which often struck me in the House} It is no doubt
 a good thing that a minister should be respected, but ^{was the undue prestige acquired by the holder of office]}
 in fact they are only the men who have asserted themselves
 just a fraction more than a vast number of their rivals
 for office. They are much more ^{fallible} human than the Public
 think, and I have often felt what a shock the Public
 would get if the occasional irresponsibilities of their
 remarks were known.

p. 103
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Politics

92

In those pre-war days neither Liberal nor Tory was in a hurry to reform things. Closure was regarded as a denial of the ideal of unlimited freedom of debate. Private motions took considerable share up to Easter, and when the Budget was finished in May, there was hardly more than time for one important bill ^{before the} for August. ^{recen.} Autumn sessions were regarded as abnormal, and it remained for the Labour Party to introduce the idea that things needed urgently to be set in better order. If we ever get a Labour Government in power as well as in Office, there will have to be free use of closure by time-table.

P.104

One thing that struck me, with my Quaker blood, was ^{indifference} the tendency to waste which parliamentary life revealed. I found it both an inconvenience and ^a distressing extravagance that the only note paper in the libraties, and other writing places, was the old fashioned double-folded sheet. It was actually owing to my request for single sheets that ~~this~~ revolutionary change was made in the House of Commons. It must have saved a good many thousands of pounds by this time.

When I had a Minister's room, I of course never dreamed of leaving the lights burning when I left it, and the fact that, on the contrary, some Ministers ~~commonly~~ never thought of turning the lights off shocked

before I go further let me mention some nonpolitical aspects of Parliamentary life. That is the Labour Party's indifference.

Politics

93

93

me considerably. (p104)

P.105

There is also a terrible waste of time. An M.P. who wants to really earn his living must feel that he is only half employed by actual parliamentary work, unless he is working hard to get Office. It is also a dull life unless he is extremely social and able to enjoy unlimited hours in the smoke room or Lobby or on the Terrace . I liked myself to regard the House as an office from which movements that one wanted to promote could be conveniently run. After questions there was always time to spare before 11 o'clock, even if one had meetings upstairs to attend up to dinner.

fill

time.

P.105 in good copy

The foreign system of official committees connected with each Ministry gives members of Parliament more responsibility and occupation than we have provided in our system. I realized this when I was invited in 1915 to address the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Chamber. But the system will be resisted by Governments in this country because it certainly would limit the freedom of the minister and take up much of his time.

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I still think, after eighteen years in Parliament, that great reformers made far better use of their time than if they had been in Office. Wilberforce, Shaftesbury and Buxton have been infinitely more important than 90% of the ministers of their day, and we could well do with

Politics

more men with the ability to play for office, who would devote themselves to promoting reform. At the same time I always felt that, if a minister would turn reformer, and contribute the prestige of his position to promoting a cause, that would be the ideal position for successful reform. Robert Cecil is a good example; I had a small degree of the same advantage.

P 107
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from p 91

The English Party system probably produced better results than any other parliamentary plan, but I must confess that Party spirit seemed to me far too ^{dominant} prevalent.

P 108
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If you regard yourself as an advocate avowedly taking one side in a law court, the position is sound; but it seemed to me improper where the business was legislation. It leads to the opposition fighting to prevent action which it may think highly desirable, on the general principle that the main business is to discredit the Government and turn it out. When I first got into the

P-108

Accordingly I felt strong sympathy with the few Liberal members who insisted on voting for tory Government proposals if they thought them good. I had the occasion for doing so myself all too early in my career. When I got in for Whitby in 1905 the tory Government was passing a measure enabling the Church of Scotland to govern itself, and determine its doctrines. The Liberals ^{were} opposing because the Nonconformists held that the Church which wrongly,

Politics

P. 108

accepted the help of the State ought to receive no favour until it shook off the State connection. I could not take that view myself and I persuaded one other Liberal member to rebel along with me. C.B. was very annoyed with me, and I was sorry for this because I was an enthusiastic supporter of his, but it could not be helped.

Campbell Bannerman (then Liberal leader)

*P. 109
28 Aug 1905*

Some years before, after I stood in 1900, the Liberal Imperialists were conspiring against "C.B.", and in their search for support they got Lord Rosebery, the leader of what was called the Liberal League, to meet candidates at dinner. I had not liked to refuse one of these very select invitations, and was curious to see what attractions were offered to us. To my surprise, when dinner was over, I was the first to be called to a separate chat with the great man, and we had a long talk.

did not like to refuse one of these very select invitations

radical

I did not conceal my ardour for some Liberal measures, but they did not meet with enthusiasm. The ex-Premier dwelt on efficiency as the key note of the policy which was to rival that of Campbell-Bannerman, and my loyalty to the latter was confirmed. I was all the more sorry to hurt the old man's feelings in 1905.

My maiden speech, which was made in 1905, was agreeably appropriate to the Christian Social Union propaganda. Scott-Holland's paper, the organ of the

P. 109

C.S.U. had been agitating about factory inspection, and I spoke on these lines on the Home Office vote; Scott-Holland subsequently eulogising ^{me} in his paper.

Having lost my seat in 1906 I accepted a request ^{from} of Herbert Samuel, who had become under-secretary to the Home Office, to serve on a departmental enquiry into the ^{evils} question of poisoning by lead, and injury by dust in potteries. We spent some time at Newcastle and in Staffordshire, and it was a very interesting insight into the scandalous conditions prevailing in some of the works. We recommended stiffer regulations, ^{and} which were ^{these} adopted and made a great reduction in the injury to workers.

p. 110
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These
to
opposite

After the ^{Party} great War the place of the old Liberal Opposition was virtually taken over by Labour; the Labour members, who before the Great War had been few and had been regarded as exotics, introduced an entirely new ^{factor} type. What struck me most was the extraordinary efficiency which most of them displayed - although they had received no more than an elementary school education. Ignorance of the derivation of words seemed to make no difference to their vocabulary, and the paucity of what is known as education ^{p. 111} seemed often to increase their quickness. Interjection thus became a much more marked feature of Parliamentary debate. ^{p. 111}

p. 111. good copy

(Top 93 x) Politics 93A-97 ^{inserted from} 97 E

A great many people complained of the unhealthiness of life in the house. Certainly it is terrible to be indoors without a break for about nine hours on end, and they blame the impurity of the air. But I found the life perfectly salubrious, and I think this is due to my always going for a walk before dinner. Usually I did the round of Lambeth Bridge, the delightful walk along St. Thomas's Hospital, viewing Parliament House across the river, and back by Westminster Bridge. If people suffer from being cooped up, it is their own fault because it was almost always easy to avoid

as there seldom any

Division in the hour before dinner, and get the whip to let one off. If people voluntarily shut themselves indoors from lunch until bedtime it is a marvel if they do not become C3. At the same time the average M.P. is amazingly hardy. I found all-night sittings terribly trying. Sometimes a man collapses late at night. Willie Graham, when in charge of a bill, suddenly fainted behind the Speaker's Chair, and an invaluable man was lost to the Government for several days.

But there is something about the atmosphere that keeps one going. I always found one could work or write letters after dinner for the whole evening until 11 p.m., while in any other place to write even

a couple of letters might have given me a bad night.

P. 105
(Good copy)

P. 106

P. 106

myself

with intensity

Page 97
gone in 0893A

Politics

a couple of letters might have given me a bad night.

(space)
when Lloyd George turned Asquith out, he needed badly to get keen supporters, in view of the violent disapproval of his action by loyal Liberals. It

P. 112
(Good Copy)

interested me that he thought I might be one of these, and I was intrigued by the fact that I and only three or four others were invited by one of L.G.'s. men to a select dinner party at the Ritz, about the end of December, 1916. I accepted, though nothing was further from my plan than to support a Government whose raison d'etre was its adherence to mere fire-eating views on our policy than those of its predecessor.

It was part of this policy to endorse the cause of the new small states to be created out of the Austro-hungarian Empire. The word "Czechoslovakia" had not been heard before, and L.G.'s. new Chief whip made great fun at this dinner of the invention of a new nationality.

It was a striking occasion when the new Government first met in the house, and one was curious to see what reception L.G. would get when he entered to take his seat in the Prime minister's place by the Box. Ministers who had been turned out were choosing places below the gangway. Mr. Birrell had secured a corner seat, and I sat next to him. He gazed with

P. 112

A 9/106.

I felt this more than ever when war came.
+ Liberals ~~showed~~ ^{displayed} ~~different~~ ^{different} principles
in regard to war aims, in any way
different to those of the Tories. I therefore
spoke for candidates pledged to what
seemed to me a policy of reason, + whip,
when one was reprimanded for doing so by the whip.
The Labour Party ^{on the other hand} ~~never~~ reprimanded +
deep concern for ^{the} prevention of war,
+ was itself part of an international
organisation: C.R.B. joined it forthwith.
To do so was ^{to me} an alarming plunge. It was, #
regarded by one's relations + friends as
a betrayal. I hesitated long. My nature
is compromising, admiring balance +
moderation. But I am ~~convinced~~ ^{convinced} by
inclination. But conviction outweighed
combining the plunge with ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~idea~~ ^{idea} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~moderation~~ ^{moderation}
~~as far as I could~~ ^{as far as I could} ~~get~~ ^{get} ~~myself~~ ^{myself} ~~to~~ ^{to}
~~agree with it.~~ ^{agree with it.} I joined Labour soon
not however before the election of 1918. I
afterwards was elected by a good majority in 1922, + again in
1924, when we took office.

P. 113

intensity at L.G. as he murmured: "He's just a Welsh poacher", ^{incerting} adding several epithets not fit for repetition. *Polish* *Welsh*

p-112 The decay of the Liberal Party dates perhaps from the old queen's selection of Rosebery in preference to

Harcourt, as Gladstone's successor in 1894. Rosebery's ^{consequent} prestige enabled him to make a split in the Party when Campbell-Bannerman's radicalism had given him an ^{commander the non-radical section of the Party} opportunity.

Asquith's succession to the leadership was the result of this Liberal imperialist ^{sained the upper hand} movement, and he represented an outlook which made ^{led to} possible the creation of the Labour Party. Some of these leaders

told me that they had fully considered the question of continuing to work with the Liberals and thus avoid a split in the progressive forces, which, in many ways, was bound to prove disastrous. If the split could have been avoided, we might never have seen the long Tory reign ^{which succeeded with hardly a break the 4 yrs was} in the twenties and again in the thirties, when it ^{was perhaps} may have been responsible for the renewal of war in 1939.

But nobody with keen reform ^{ing} ideals, let alone socialistic convictions, could possibly have felt that co-operation was possible with an Asquithian party. *p-113 in 500 of 77*

A
then back 2/10 I felt this more than ever when war came and Liberals displayed no principles in regard to war aims, in any way different to those of the Tories. I therefore spoke for candidates pledged to what seemed to me a policy of reason, and when one of these was a Labourite, I was reprimanded by the Whip Chief for doing so. The Labour Party on the other hand represented deep concern for the prevention of war, and was itself part of an international organisation. C.R.B. joined it forthwith. To do so was for me an alarming plunge. It was regarded by one's relations and friends as a betrayal, and I hesitated long. My nature is compromising, admiring balance and moderation. But conviction outweighed, not, however, before the election of 1918. I joined Labour ~~in~~ soon afterwards, and was elected by a good majority in 1922 and again in 1924, when we took office.

Conservative leaders. I was really indebted to Halifax, then Edward Wood, as much as to anyone for the fact that the Bill became law. I shall return to this later on.

If any fear of public appearance can be excused, it is when a new Minister has to answer Parliamentary questions. You are not only facing Parliament, but are reported to the world at large. The official answer to the many questions which are put to you can be prepared, but the questioner has often laboriously planned to involve you in trouble. The crux is the supplementary questions of which you have had no notice, while the questioner has often thought out his method of giving you a fall. It is a searching test of mental rapidity staged in conditions of the greatest possible publicity.

As to Cabinet meetings, what happens there is a State secret, but I may be allowed to say that I found the work sadly hampered by lack of fresh air. Luckily my seat was near a window, but if I left it open a certain Minister was sure to shut it. I defeated him, however, by leaving just a crack too small to call his attention to the fact that it was open at all, but enough for my purpose.

As to work on the Front Bench, I am ashamed to

say that in those tiring days I was plagued by attacks of sleepiness. On one occasion when waiting for my turn to answer questions I found myself waking up only just in time. The thought of what would have happened if when my question came I had, instead of rising to reply, been seen in slumber on the Front Bench still makes me shiver. My best expedient was to surreptitiously consume chocolates, while at Cabinet meetings I relied on the smoking of cigars. I also carried one of those powerful spring clips used for holding papers together, and created pain in my finger to keep me awake.

NORFOLK ELECTIONS.

I had seven election campaigns in North Norfolk, and Lucy afterwards had two. In the earlier elections a good deal of rowdyism still survived, much more so than in other parts of the country. It is curious that the feeling against Liberals in the early days was even hotter than against Labour in the period after the war. At Holt the toughs used to scatter pepper, which was an excellent way of destroying the dignity of the sneezing speaker. Once driving through Holt on a winter's night a sudden crash and fall of the broken window into the car witnessed the good shot made by a Tory youth with a brick.

After the victory in December 1910 when the car was dragged into Cromer by supporters, as we approached from Sheringham, the Tory mob, which was the largest element in Cromer, kept up a magnificent bombardment with stones and lumps of turf from the roadside. These were aimed at the car on the principle of a mortar gun, passing over the heads of supporters and falling on the open car. Rotten eggs were deftly dropped on to us in this manner, and Connie's fur coat remained yellow for a long period afterwards. I rather suspect that this bombardment was instigated by Lucy, as I heard that her brother was a ring-leader, she being

then a leader of a Movement called N.N.N.N., signifying "No Noels for North Norfolk".

Afterwards, in married days, Lucy and I had an exciting time in Holt moving from the car to the meeting when a menacing crowd surrounded us, in spite of two policemen in close escort, and showered us with gravel.

Perhaps the climax was reached after the declaration of the Poll when I was first elected for Labour. We had returned from Aylsham and were to go to some celebration meetings after a high tea. Gradually a curious noise penetrated from the front door, and Mrs. Kirby shortly entered with all the appearance of alarm, telling us that the crowd were breaking the windows. Sure enough the draught was blowing through the glass of the front door as we made for the car. We could not yield to the various entreaties not to emerge, and made a dash for the car which was all in darkness, the crowd being hidden behind it. As I seated myself the door of the far side was suddenly opened, and the hob-nailed boot of a political opponent struck me violently on the shin. We then felt the car being tipped up in the attempt to turn it over, and in the light of the head lamps we saw the faithful Mitchell rolling on the ground entwined with a tough from Chapel Street.

At last we got off amid showers of stones, and the

second car, containing the agent and others, was also attacked as we all charged through the crowd. The stone going through the back window was picked up by our well-known Mr. Gee and was subsequently produced in triumph by him. We expected more fun, but all was quiet on our return from Aylsham, and the Police came round to offer apologies for permitting these doings to occur.

Lucy's pungent speeches in later elections drew the fire of the enemy's fury from me to her, and we were followed from meeting to meeting by a well-known squire whose thirst for Lucy's blood led her to take the opportunity afforded by her having made a speech.

Perhaps it was my support of the labourers which made the feeling when I first stood more violent than in other divisions. I was the favourite of the labourers because I had from the first felt that the Norfolk wage of 12/- a week (and less when wet weather prevented work) could not be overlooked by public men, whether the Liberalism of the day liked it or not. This was the reason given by a certain landowner for his efforts to get me blackballed when I came up for election to the Norfolk Club; efforts which were successful.

LABOUR.

[Until the Great War it never crossed my mind that I might join the Labour Party.] For one thing there was no place in the Party for the non-manual worker, and we Liberals regarded Labour as only for the horny-handed.

2 [During the war two aspects changed my mind. On the one hand the Liberals who, under Asquith's leadership, tended to pursue respectability and drop the Radical idealism of Campbell-Bannerman, seemed to conform more and more to the Conservative outlook. The activities of wartime brought Parties together. For the first time Liberals found themselves free from hostility, and on war questions they displayed no difference of view. There were admirable exceptions.

Buckmaster in particular, who had been a Law Officer, held views like those of Lansdowne on the settlement which should be pursued. I urged him to give a lead in that direction, and he felt strongly drawn to this but said he could not break loose from Asquith to whom he owed so much. Indeed Asquith himself would have made a better peace than Lloyd George, but until his overthrow he showed no public sign of disapproving the purely "knock out" policy which L.G. definitely pursued, thereby winning public favour, and justifying his expulsion of Asquith.

The result of this attitude of the Liberals was to make us who took a special interest in war and peace questions feel keen to support candidates of our view, even if they were Labour.] I myself took the plunge by supporting the Labour candidate at a bye-election at Keighley. I was lectured by the Chief whip, and indeed it was an act of revolt.

At the election of 1918 I stood as Liberal-Labour, and a year later I joined the Labour Party. C.R.B. and Charlie Trevelyan gave a lead to malcontent Liberals like myself. Without Charlie's example I doubt if I should have brought myself to such extreme action, being a convinced compromiser and not by nature a whole-hogger.

I put off joining the Party in the hopes that I could carry my Liberal supporters with me if they were given time. Other Liberals moved to new Divisions, while I invited my old supporters to come over to a new tabernacle. The strain was too great for many of them, and the fury of some local leaders was bitter.

My Tory opponent was confident of success, and at the last moment a Liberal candidate was also run against me, but I got in easily in 1922, and still more easily at subsequent elections. In all I was elected for North Norfolk twice as a Liberal, and four times as a Labourite.

I do not think I should have joined the Party if I had

not seen that one should judge Parties more by their deeds more than by their words. Socialists are fond of talking in general abstract terms which, I think, has largely hampered their success. In practice when in office they are bound to promote measures which are not more startling than the best Radical measures of a Liberal Government. For instance, in the first Labour Government we did nothing of consequence except a Housing Bill and my own Wages Bill, both of which would have been normal to a Liberal regime.

3 [I was convinced that the Labour Party represented a far greater interest in the question of peace and war than did the Liberal Party. The question was so little spoken of by Liberal politicians that one could be attacked as I was for talking of foreign politics and denounced to the electors as the friend of every country but one's own.

It was the Labour Party which changed that, and it is essentially committed to international order because it is an international movement and organization. More than that, it was recognized by the best Christian leaders, e.g., Gore and Temple, as embodying Christian ideals.]

I feel that the Labour Party was the true successor of the Radical school of Liberals. It is a question of the degree of reforming energy. It is quite easy

to take the view that things have moved in recent times quicker than before, and that there is no need to hurry. I can sympathize with the Conservative outlook, but by conviction I think it is mistaken. The vast improvements we have seen in social schemes would never have come about without the work of those who pushed hard.

There was a wonderfully good illustration of the two schools when I stayed with the venerable Bishop Westcott at Bishop Auckland. His son was arguing that the workers were well satisfied with their life, and there was no need to encourage them to complain, because they were as happy as ourselves.

The reply of his famous father, expressed in his tiny low voice, was the simple question: "In one room?" It was a good answer because I think that the most complacent person would find his views upset if he visited, as I have done, homes which consisted of a very small room mostly filled by the two beds in which parents, boys and girls huddled at night, and in which also members of the family were born and died. All meals were cooked and eaten in this room, and all the family goods, including coal, were stored there.

THE FIRST LABOUR GOVERNMENT.

It was a historical event when the Labour Party, which had been dreaded by respectable people, actually took Office. Old ladies nearly died of funk. I had never seen myself as a possible Minister, and it gave me a shock when Lucy and I went out to lunch with the webbs and he broached the idea. I thought he might be speaking without his book. Soon afterwards Ramsay proposed himself to lunch at Rutland Gate, and asked me to take him by road to Oxfordshire to see his daughter. It looked as if he had something unusual to say. C.R.B. was at lunch, and when the car drove up to the door, he remarked "This is the car of destiny", and so it proved. The situation was thrilling but extremely alarming. I had always thought that Ministers represented first class brains. However I was fortified by the statement that strength is made perfect in weakness. Apart from the general alarm, I felt rather like a fish out of water in being regarded as an expert on agriculture, as I had long reserved myself for foreign questions.

We were duly marshalled at Buckingham Palace to be commissioned by the King, and to kneel in front of him to kiss his hand. Wheatly, the Minister of Health, who had always posed as a sort of crude saboteur, was

apparently unable to get up again from the cushion, and it looked as if he had been overcome with loyalty to the Throne.

We had no majority in the House without the Liberals, and ought to have worked closely with them to carry out what they would support, but R.M. hated them more than he hated the Tories, and we were never on good terms. In that situation we had chiefly an opportunity for propaganda. I might have used the unrivalled platform which we all had to make the country more acquainted with our policy for Agriculture, through State control of the land, but Ramsay gave no lead, and the practical job was to get through my bill on wage regulations by avoiding antagonizing people as much as possible.

The second Labour Government came after an interval of five years. Part of the time had been occupied by illness and convalescence, and afterwards I had felt that the job of Opposition was so insignificant that I had better give Parliament up. As I stayed on, however, I ought to have tried to qualify myself for some other office. We did not know whom Ramsay would put into office the second time, and in fact Olivier, Wedgwood and others were dropped. However, Ramsay wanted me when the time came, and insisted that I and Charlie Trevelyan must resume our old offices.

This second Labour Government was less happy than

the first. Ramsay for some reason was unfriendly, and, as Sydney Webb wrote in an article after the Government fell, he disliked his colleagues more and more. He would not let me introduce the Marketing Bill, which was the only measure that I saw a chance of passing, and then he insisted on my holding a series of conferences with leading landowners and farmers, who at the end naturally wished to see the P.M. He refused to see them. I was gagged in replying to the enquirers in the House about our policy, and I did not enjoy being described as an oyster. I also found myself, after a time, exhausted and began to show alarming symptoms, so that I could not face all-night sittings, and in June 1930 I resigned.

AGRICULTURAL WAGES BILL

This Bill was a heavy task, and my nose was only kept to the grindstone by the urgent plight of the farm labourer. His wage, which had been adequate for the first time during the War had rapidly fallen to the old scandalous level when L.G. recklessly repealed the Agriculture Act in 1921. The Ministry reported to me cases where labourers were only getting £1 a week.

We had not a majority in the 1924 Parliament for any measures which did not carry the support of the Liberal Party, and this limited the measures on which the Government could embark. Bills affecting the workers' interests were therefore generally speaking limited to two, namely, housing and farm wages. Wheatley's Housing Bill encountered great opposition and occupied much time. The other Bill fell to me and we knew that it was doubtful how far the Liberals would support us in it. I introduced the Bill with a provision for restoring the National Wages Board, and the chances of the Bill on Second Reading looked fairly good, but in Grand Committee we found the Liberals lukewarm and a National Wages Authority was defeated.

Finding this I adjourned the Committee, disregarding the advice of my officials, because I did not wish to be compromised without consulting the Prime Minister.

The next step was to discuss with him whether to go on, and we did this at lunch at Downing Street with Ramsay and Jimmy Thomas. We decided to proceed and called the Grand Committee again. Friction developed with the Liberals, and I despaired of passing any bill till one evening in the Lobby a Conservative country member let fall the remark that the Tories might not be opposed to a Bill which provided for separate authorities for each county. I wired to Edward Wood (afterwards Halifax) who was leading the Tories in the matter, asking him to meet me, because there was only just time for the necessary steps before the recess. He was willing to help a Bill on these lines provided that we did not insist on a minimum money wage figure. This the Liberals would not agree to, and when the Committee met we of the Labour Party were ourselves divided, because some of the Trade Union members insisted on voting for a minimum figure of 30/-. My old friend George Edwards was among these, as was natural, he being Secretary of the Farm Labourers' Union. The others I did not so easily forgive, because they endangered the negotiation with Wood, by which alone a bill could be passed. It was a novel and valuable procedure, and I had casually obtained Wood's promise to secure that the Bill should not be thrown out by the Lords.

Francis Acland, who led the Liberals, agreed with me, but some of his flock threw over my offer, so that I was thrown into a valuable alliance with the Tories. The Trade Union members on the Committee urged that the Bill should be dropped, and on strict principle their wishes should have prevailed on an industrial question, but I decided to do what I thought was best for the agricultural labourers and, rather than betray them, I asked for a special meeting of the whole Party. At this I made the strongest possible appeal not to lose what would benefit the poorest class of workers.

Meanwhile Wood and Fitzroy (afterwards Speaker), who was assisting Wood in Committee, had been alarmed at the fact that some Labour members voted against me in Committee on the minimum figure question. They asked me to declare in Committee that the Government would not propose or start a minimum figure. I was glad to do this though it annoyed the rebellious Labour men. It was the only way to get the Bill. When the Bill reached the Lords there was protest by some peers against the bargain which had been struck with me by the Tory leaders, taking away the freedom of their lordships to deal as they liked with the Bill, but Lord Salisbury stuck to the combat and the Bill was passed.

The Act was a great success, immediately raising farm

wages with general consent and soon bringing up the counties then paying 25/- to the 30/- which had been demanded. In spite of this the agricultural divisions voted Tory, with the single exception of my own Division, at the next election. But among my treasures is a present expressing the gratitude of the Farm Labourers' Union for the enormous benefit which the Act conferred, and I derive the greatest satisfaction from the knowledge that my departure from strict democracy inside the Labour Party was an example of sound principle.

GEORGE EDWARDS.

My great helper in securing the North Norfolk candidature was George Edwards, the agricultural labourers' leader. He had revived the Union started by Joseph Arch, which had died out. Edwards, as the world knows from his book, "Crows-scaring to Westminster", was a very remarkable man. He was bred in the hungry forties when his father - a farm labourer - went to jail for taking a turnip to feed his children; as a result of which he and his mother went to the workhouse.

He was almost a hunchback; though starved in his youth, he had indomitable courage. He was an agitator from early years and lost his job. My uncle, Louis Buxton of Bolwick, then got work for him, and ultimately he began to organize the Union from his tiny cottage at Gresham.

When I got to know him in 1907 he was doing all the business of the Union from a minute attic, reaching meetings all over the county on his bicycle. He was also a fervent Primitive Methodist and local preacher. When his Union meetings included a tea, he always opened with grace, and sometimes a hymn. He got into Parliament in 1923, and it was jolly to have him in the House when I was Minister in charge of the Farm Wages Bill.

My fondness for him was undiminished by his voting against me in the Grand Committee of the Bill.

Edwards was a real friend. He was a genuine gentleman, and it was a great pleasure to have him staying with us at Colne Cottage - a pleasure enhanced by his quaint tastes, such as an abhorrence of novels, and a habit of putting seven lumps of sugar in his tea.

THE LORDS.

Although I felt I should have a break-down if I went on in the Commons, I hoped I might carry on in the Lords where Arthur Ponsonby had already gone. I told Ramsay this, but he wanted Addison, who had been my under-secretary, to be Minister. Whether to go to the Lords was very debatable indeed. I felt strongly that I did not wish to drop out of public life, and that I might use the position to help causes for which I could do nothing if I ceased to be a member of Parliament altogether. On the other hand, I see no merit in hereditary political power, and had thought it hardly consistent even with the principles I believed in as a Liberal. For a Labourman to accept the position needed a very strong reason. It was taking part in an institution of which he disapproved, in its present form, and if he had a son he was still more deeply involved. The position of a peer was artificial, and the social prestige connected with it was regrettable. I consulted several people, including C.R.B. and V., I thought that such good democrats would be for sticking to ideal democratic principles, but to my surprise I found them strongly in favour of accepting. If they had not, I should have refused. Now, after twelve years, I often wonder if I was right. Anyhow they thought I was, and at all events I made a great many speeches on subjects which I thought

important, and perhaps some of them at least had the utility which Lord Pentland told me was the value of a speech in the Lords, namely an article in a monthly review.

If only peerages could be for life, I should strongly approve of them, because a senate is an excellent institution, and speaking in the Upper House is far better than the Commons, the speakers being unaffected by thought of constituents, and most of them people of great experience. Lately a good deal of the false social snobbery has been diminished by the increasing practice of keeping to one's family name, instead of taking a territorial title. A false prestige is given by turning a Mr. Smith into a Lord Broadacres. A difficulty arose in sticking to the surname in my case, because Sydney Buxton strongly objected to there being another Lord Buxton. As there are many cases of such duplications, e.g. Greys, Howards, etc., I did not sympathize, but I did not like to hurt his feelings, especially as he had lost his son. I met the dilemma by changing my surname, which involved a double name. I hate double names, but there was no other way. It was a considerable sacrifice, and I told Rufus that I should strongly approve if he chose to revert to Buxton.

Has the pudding of peerage been proved by the eating ?
That depends on whether speeches for many good causes
have formed any contribution. Anyhow my position led
me to be invited to be president of various movements,
and if I had been out of Parliament, I should not have
been offered such interesting work.

Barnett and Gore led to politics, but it was V. and C.R.B. who pushed me into standing for Parliament. The C.S.U. had not made me political in the parliamentary or Liberal sense, and I had a strong distaste for public appearance.

In 1892 I had got up a meeting at Copthall Green in support Lockwood, the Tory candidate, and had had no connection with Liberals since I was at Harrow, having been brought up a Gladstonian until Father joined the Unionists in 1886, I spoke in a House debate denouncing Lord Salisbury's name as being a byword for prevarication.

Father had been practically Conservative, and my position in the Brewery was at variance with Liberal policy. It required the Boer war to give me much contact with the Liberal Party view, and even so, it was only with the Campbell-Bannerman section of the Liberals. My uncle E.M.B., who was chairman of Truman's, encouraged me to stand and introduced me to Herbert Gladstone who was the Liberal Chief whip. The result was my selection as candidate at Ipswich, and the preliminaries were made easy.

When it came to public life and visits to leading supporters, I found the strain very severe, especially as I was all the time carrying on my work at Truman's, etc. The election was alleviated by the presence of Masterman, C.R.B. and others, but it was a painful

time to me, and when it was over I felt very unlike standing again. However, I was very kindly treated by new people, especially Lord Spencer who had been in the Liberal Cabinet, and was gratified by the support of my uncle Francis Buxton and many others. I was only beaten by about 200 votes.

Two years later I was asked to stand for the North West Division of Essex, which was a Liberal seat, but I was still deterred by previous experience. Then in 1904 I found my position at Truman's inconsistent with standing, and I resigned after many qualms about cutting adrift from a regular job. Greater freedom made me keen to stand, and in 1905 I offered to put up for the vacancy which occurred in the Whitby Division. To everybody's surprise I won this seat, which had never been anything but Tory.

I found the strain of Parliament very great. I was very young and I was still younger for my age. I got sustenance from recollections of the Liberator. More than once I remember going to the statue in the Abbey to remind myself of the inscription which I like so much:

"Endowed with a vigorous and capacious mind,
Of undaunted courage and untiring energy,
He was early led by the love of God
To devote his talent to the good of man."

There were some thrilling things in that Parliament. It was an event to be in the House with Joe Chamberlain, and I heard him speak. But he was already failing and his end was not far off. Another notable figure was Lecky, whom I revered most of all the historians whom I studied at Cambridge.

The Liberator has always been a great inspirer, as he was to very many of a former generation. People I have met in electioneering told me that their fathers had brought them up on the Memoir as if it was the Bible. I said what I thought about him in the preamble to my "Public Purposes Trust".

It was jolly to be in the House with my father's old friend Sir John Kennaway, and I liked some of the Members very much. Jebb, the classic authority, I remember congratulating me on studying the rules of procedure. Sir Wilfred Lawson was also a delightful patron. He never lost a chance of some fun, and I remember sitting by him below the gangway when he began a sort of greeting to me by adapting Scott's poetry with the words: "Oh Macedonia, stern and wild, fit muse for a poetic child."

One of the features of that summer when the Tory Government was dying, was the attempt to get them out by a snap division. The Chief Whip organized a secret

gathering of Liberal members in a house in Dean's Yard, when there was an all-night sitting and the Government's men had slipped past their Whips. The Liberal Whips were to telephone when the moment came for us thirty or forty stalwarts to rush across for the division. It never came off, but the intense boredom of spending most of the night, dawdling sometimes in the open air until long after daylight, remained a painful memory.

I found the House an irksome strain. I was too little developed and found the Party very little associated with my C.S.U. outlook. However, Bryce was there, so that my Balkan Liberationism had good support, and I liked the local Yorkshire Liberals.

The keen Nonconformists, when roused to fury by Balfour's policy, were an inspiring, vigorous Christian type. The North Yorkshire moors and Whitby were grand, and I felt confident of winning in the General Election which everyone knew would end the ten years domination of the Tories. I had won a seat which had never been previously anything but Conservative, and gained something of a name for doing so, C.B. himself making a speech about the crowning mercy of Whitby.

However, the great landowners of that feudal district put out tremendous efforts to retrieve their power in the dales, sending their gamekeepers round to

the little farmers with the demand that they should promise their support to Beckett, the Tory candidate, in writing, and I was beaten by 70 votes. I had roused enthusiasm in Whitby, and on the announcement of defeat I was carried through the old streets like a triumphant victor; the old houses seemed to rock with the tumult and every house appeared to be hung with my colours. In London I was commiserated as one of the few who failed, especially by those whom I had introduced to politics; Masterman was conspicuous among these, and he was to get Office within a few months.

My chance of re-entry came through the fact that the North Norfolk member was soon to resign. It was all the more easy to frequent Cromer because I had become the occupant of Runton Old Hall: This because, at my suggestion, Father had created small holdings out of the Hall Farm, and the house, which I had long admired when partridge shooting on Spratts Hill, had become free to let separately. I held it until it had housed one or two friends, including Rosslyn Bruce, who by that means became married to Rachael Gurney, but I had no real use for it and persuaded Connie and Bertram to take it over. This was how it became a noted place because they made the most of its possibilities. I also became the occupant of Colne Cottage when Father

moved into Colne House, and I began to furnish it and invited friends there.

When Sir W. Gurdon announced his retirement, there was keen contention among the Liberal Leaders of the Division, some of them thinking I was too radical because I had taken up the cause of the agricultural labourer. Finally it came to a competition of candidates, Headquarters having disregarded my plea for preference, and having sent a young friend of Asquith's at the request of the non-radical local leaders.

The Farm Labourers' Union then announced that they would back me whether Liberals adopted me or not, and this roused intense indignation. The meeting of the Liberal Hundred at Melton was almost a battle. I was adopted by 36 votes to 24, and then those who resented the importance claimed by the labourers, refused their support, though I was the official candidate. They came back by degrees, and I was elected by a good majority in the January election in 1910.

Any activities of mine in the succeeding years in Parliament which can be said to be of any importance are described in Evans' book "Foreign Policy from a Back Bench", but I may tell of some aspects which the book is not concerned with.

[It was an exciting time, and very thrilling that Charlie and I had got in together. We were both definitely Radicals, and keen supporters of the small group led by Sir Charles Dilke which had a weekly meeting. We were all sympathetic with Ramsay Macdonald, who had just become Labour Leader, and we were naturally disapproved of by the mass of Liberal members, many of whom appeared to us little distinguishable from the Tories.]

The Marconi incident was a feature of the times, and might have brought the Government down. Naturally we Radicals were displeased with leaders who gave rise to the charge of putting private interests before public rectitude, and this view was keen among the men who attended the weekly lunch of the writers of the "Nation". I was one of those, being a friend of Massingham, the famous editor. In the talk at lunch I made some drastic comments, and I remember my alarm when these appeared in the next number of the "Nation"; happily nobody learned who was their author.

As the papers kept announcing the formation of new groups formed to ginger the Government on one point or another, the names of us two Buxtons constantly appeared, and I remember Sydney, who had become

Postmaster General, and was soon to get the Board of Trade, saying half playfully and half reproachfully that whenever he heard of a rebellion, he knew without looking that C. and I were in it.

It was very jolly to find oneself in the House with old friends in other causes, such as Arthur Ponsonby, and Percy Alden, and Masterman, and there were new friends who became close allies. One was [Phillip Morrell, who loved a fight for its own sake, and who led the crusade against the Russian Government when it imprisoned a Polish girl, for her socialism. In this case we attacked the Government for lethargy, and I remember raising the question on the adjournment, and using the expression, "Oh for an hour of Palmerston!"] The case would never have been heard of if the girl had not been a friend of Fanny Noel, owing to which Morrell got to hear of it through us. Anyhow, the Russian Government gave way, so we got the girl out of gaol.

My closest collaborator in those years was Howard Whitehouse. He had been secretary at Toynbee Hall, and had made his way by the aid of intense enthusiasm, a passion for reform, a sympathetic personality and a formidable wit.

We two bachelors were able to indulge our common

tastes even by foreign travel. He was ready to help me, for instance, in promoting the cause of the inshore fishermen of the British coasts. This meant meetings at Cromer and at Sheringham. It was proper that I should care for the fishermen of the Norfolk coast, but it also meant visits to Devon. We denounced the neglect of their interests in debate, and Whitehouse was a somewhat unexpected advocate of men so remote from urban life. It was reported that he had not quite realized the cause he was supporting, and had alluded to his clients as "Indoor Fishermen".

It was also new to him to work at foreign affairs, but he was extremely clever at taking up new subjects, and most friendly in following my tastes. So after the Agadir incident of 1911 he came with me to Berlin. We both of us spoke and wrote upon it, and came to see that the Anglo-German trouble must be regarded as our chief concern.

He was also my partner in running Colne Cottage and helping me to entertain there. He was very artistic and led me into the promotion of applied art. We decided to promote the handicraft movement in Cromer, and we discovered a man to our taste who came to Cromer, started a workshop and forge, and made lovely ironwork, especially such as fire irons and lamp stands, and also made jewellery, and ran a shop in the Church Square. When I had nephews staying in the winter it was great fun to hammer poker, toasting forks, and table lamp holders

on the forge. It all went on happily until the war killed it. But the pokers we made are still the best that I possess.

Whitehouse was a great authority on Ruskin, and I learnt a lot through him. He deplored as I did both humbug and toadyism, which invaded even some parliamentary minds, and was amusing to the last degree when he took off these oddities. He lost his seat in 1918, but he was not defeated by Fate, and he proceeded to create a very large boys' school which embodied highly original methods and studies.

An enterprise with Whitehouse which I still often think of with pleasure was his campaign for preventing the London parks being spoiled by a memorial to Edward VII. The official proposal was to make a great roadway and stone bridge across St. James's Park from St. James's Palace to Queen Anne's Gate. It would have been a deplorable injury to the park and the delightful lake, and the view along the water would also have been obscured.

Whitehouse made speeches and got me to back him up, and the old Lord Carlisle, who was an artistic notable, wrote forcibly in the "Times".

The Government gave way and made another scheme for a triumphal road across Green Park, going so far as to erect the splendid gates at the high point in Piccadilly

which record the attempted scheme as do the gates opposite St. James's Palace. This time the Prime Minister intervened, and said nothing would alter the determination of the Government.

However, Whitehouse beat him, and the end was most satisfactory - two parks of priceless value were saved, and the East End acquired a park (at Shadwell) which otherwise would never have existed. I shared in the exploit which really showed the greatest daring, certainly greater than I would have displayed if not led to battle by my diminutive leader.

Of my eighteen years in the House of Commons, four were occupied by the Great War, and eight by the post-war period which included many elections, two Labour Governments, and the unsuccessful attempt to establish collective peace. The first four were enlivened by the crises of democracy represented by the Lloyd George budget, and the Parliament Act. Secondly, by the Irish Home Rule struggle, and thirdly by the Suffrage Campaign.

All this ended with the war which perhaps resulted from them, because it looked to the German war mongers as if England would be handicapped by internal division. One now sees that it was a period of a peculiar kind, in which Liberalism passed through its phase of decay. I will not attempt to describe it because everyone should

read the brilliant book of Mr. Dangerfield on the sad tale of Liberalism. It describes those years with fascinating irony.

The summer holidays of those years were interesting. In 1910 we went, quite a family party, to the Inter-parliamentary Conference at Brussels. Belgians were annoyed with England because of the Congo atrocities campaign, and when time came to leave, the hotel refused to take a cheque. We then called a taxi, but found that our luggage had been locked up. Charlie nobly offered to stay behind and raise money from the Consul.

In 1911 came the Agadir crisis, and in August I went with Whitehouse to Berlin. We found that Lloyd George's reckless words had created despair even among the keenest Anglophils, and Sir George Goschen, our Ambassador, said to me: "His speech has destroyed all my work".

In 1912 came the Balkan war, and I went out with Harold in October. The Premier, Gudshoff, arranged for us to join the Commander-in-Chief. I tell of this episode later on.

Next year Harold and I felt we had neglected the chief sufferers from Turkish mis-rule, namely, the Armenians, and we went out across Russia, meeting the Bryces in St. Petersburg - as it then was - and Arthur Moore, correspondent of the "Times" who had been the

first secretary of the Balkan Committee.

We pushed through the Caucasus into Persia, and then back through Turkey. The Russians were in occupation of Persia near Tabriz, and passed us on to the Kurdish chief Simko, on the Turco-Persian frontier, who became famous for massacre and treachery during the war. We were robbed by his retainers, and perhaps came nearer to being finished off than we realized at the time. Again I may save the trouble of enlarging here because we recorded our doings in a joint book: "Travel and Politics in Armenia".

I am not specially interested in the science of Parliamentary Government, and I will only record a few impressions that I formed.

It is very easy to pick holes in the British Parliamentary machine. Stevenson expressed an obvious weakness when he said that legislating was the only profession for which no training at all was demanded. Obviously as social legislation becomes more and more constructive and complicated, it is absurd that membership of Parliament should be confined to men of large means, much leisure, and a gift of the gab.

Vast numbers of M.P.s. belong to no official committee, and make no speeches. Much of the expenditure of time and money might very well be regarded as only waste; there is far too much Party spirit, and too much satisfaction with a life which has little responsibility. I should like to see more politicians professional in a proper sense. There are too few men who have been trained in social science. The few who have been so trained as secretaries of social settlements, like Toynbee Hall, are of the utmost value, and their number should be multiplied tenfold. This is now impossible because a seat means great expense.

As to expert training, Ministers do of course furnish a supply of experts at least in getting bills through Parliament. The element of expert science is furnished

by the Civil Servant, and the quality of these is extraordinarily high. Yet the predominance of the minister, combined with frequent changes in Ministerial personnel, hampers the influence of the expert.

The Minister is also handicapped by being too busy to devote enough time to planning, and he is too ephemeral to feel full responsibility. One of these handicaps is an institution on which we are accustomed to pride ourselves, namely, the power of the M.P. to get an answer from Ministers on questions of fact or of intention. In my opinion the great merit of this plan is largely balanced by the excessive amount of time occupied by the Minister in getting up the answer to questions which have no real importance, and often merely serve to help an M.P. in the eyes of his constituents. It is no doubt a good thing that a Minister should be respected, but in fact they are only the men who have asserted themselves just a fraction more than a vast number of their rivals for Office. They are much more human than the Public think, and I have often felt what a shock the Public would get if the occasional irresponsibilities of their remarks were known.

In those pre-war days neither Liberal nor Tory was in a hurry to reform things. Closure was regarded as a denial of the ideal of unlimited freedom of debate. Private motions took considerable share up to Easter, and when the Budget was finished in May, there was hardly more than time for one important bill for August. Autumn sessions were regarded as abnormal, and it remained for the Labour Party to introduce the idea that things needed urgently to be set in better order. If we ever get a Labour Government in power as well as in Office, there will have to be free use of Closure by time-table.

One thing that struck me, with my Quaker blood, was the tendency to waste which parliamentary life revealed. I found it both an inconvenience and distressing extravagance that the only note paper in the libraries, and other writing places, was the old fashioned double-folded sheet. It was actually owing to my request for single sheets that this revolutionary change was made in the House of Commons. It must have saved a good many thousands of pounds by this time.

When I had a Minister's room, I of course never dreamed of leaving the lights burning when I left it, and the fact that, on the contrary, some ministers commonly never thought of turning the lights off shocked

me considerably.

There is also a terrible waste of time. An M.P. who wants to really earn his living must feel that he is only half employed by actual parliamentary work unless he is working hard to get Office. It is also a dull life unless he is extremely social and able to enjoy unlimited hours in the smoke room or Lobby or on the Terrace. I liked myself to regard the House as an office from which movements that one wanted to promote could be conveniently run. After questions there was always time to spare before 11 o'clock, even if one had meetings upstairs to attend up to dinner.

The foreign system of official committees connected with each Ministry gives members of Parliament more responsibility and occupation than we have provided in our system. I realized this when I was invited in 1915 to address the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Chamber. But the system will be resisted by Governments in this country because it certainly would limit the freedom of the Minister and take up much of his time.

I still think, after eighteen years in Parliament, that great reformers made far better use of their time than if they had been in Office. Wilberforce, Shaftesbury and Buxton have been infinitely more important than 90% of the Ministers of their day, and we could well do with

more men with the ability to play for Office who would devote themselves to promoting reform. At the same time I always felt that, if a Minister would turn reformer, and contribute the prestige of his position to promoting a cause, that would be the ideal position for successful reform. Robert Cecil is a good example; I had a small degree of the same advantage.

The English Party system probably produced better results than any other parliamentary plan, but I must confess that Party spirit seemed to me far too prevalent. If you regard yourself as an advocate avowedly taking one side in a law court, the position is sound; but it seemed to me improper where the business was legislation. It leads to the Opposition fighting to prevent action which it may think highly desirable, on the general principle that the main business is to discredit the Government and turn it out.

Accordingly I felt strong sympathy with the few Liberal members who insisted on voting for Tory Government proposals if they thought them good. I had the occasion for doing so myself all too early in my career. When I got in for Whitby in 1905 the Tory Government was passing a measure enabling the Church of Scotland to govern itself, and determine its doctrines. The Liberals opposing because the Nonconformists held that the Church which wrongly

accepted the help of the State ought to receive no favour until it shook off the State connection. I could not take that view myself and I persuaded one other Liberal member to rebel along with me. C.B. was very annoyed with me, and I was sorry for this because I was an enthusiastic supporter of his, but it could not be helped.

Some years before, after I stood in 1900, the Liberal Imperialists were conspiring against C.B., and in their search for support they got Lord Rosebery, the leader of what was called the Liberal League, to meet candidates at dinner. I had not liked to refuse one of these very select invitations, and was curious to see what attractions were offered to us. To my surprise, when dinner was over, I was the first to be called to a separate chat with the great man, and we had a long talk.

I did not conceal my ardour for some Liberal measures, but they did not meet with enthusiasm. The ex-Premier dwelt on efficiency as the key note of the policy which was to rival that of Campbell-Bannerman, and my loyalty to the latter was confirmed. I was all the more sorry to hurt the old man's feelings in 1905.

My maiden speech, which was made in 1905, was agreeably appropriate to the Christian Social Union propaganda. Scott-Holland's paper, the organ of the

C.S.U. had been agitating about factory inspection, and I spoke on these lines on the Home Office vote; Scott-Holland subsequently eulogising in his paper.

Having lost my seat in 1906 I accepted a request of Herbert Samuel, who had become under-Secretary to the Home Office, to serve on a departmental enquiry into the question of poisoning by lead, and injury by dust in potteries. We spent some time at Newcastle in Staffordshire, and it was a very interesting insight into the scandalous conditions prevailing in some of the works. We recommended stiffer regulations which were adopted and made a great reduction in the injury to workers.

After the Great War the place of the old Liberal Opposition was virtually taken over by Labour; the Labour members, who before the Great War had been few and had been regarded as exotics, introduced an entirely new type. What struck me most was the extraordinary efficiency which most of them displayed - although they had received no more than an elementary school education. Ignorance of the derivation of words seemed to make no difference to their vocabulary, and the paucity of what is known as education seemed often to increase their quickness. Interjection thus became a much more marked feature of Parliamentary Debate.

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p. 113
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C-17

If any fear of public appearance can be excused, it is when a new minister has to answer Parliamentary questions. You are not only facing Parliament, but are reported to the world at large. The official answer to the many questions which are put to you can be prepared, but the questioner has often laboriously planned to involve you in trouble. The crux is the supplementary questions of which you have had no notice, while the questioner has often thought out his method of giving you a fall. It is a searching test of mental rapidity staged in conditions of the greatest possible publicity.

As to Cabinet meetings, what happens there is a State secret, but I may be allowed to say that I found the work sadly hampered by lack of fresh air. Luckily my seat was near a window, but if I left it open a certain minister was sure to shut it. I defeated him, however, by leaving just a crack too small to call his attention to the fact that it was open at all, but enough for my purpose.

In the House it was a luxury to have a room of one's own.

As to work on the Front Bench, I am ashamed to

Poole

say that in those tiring days i was plagued by attacks of sleepiness. On one occasion when waiting for my turn to answer questions i found myself waking up only just in time. The thought of what would have happened if when my question came i had, instead of rising to reply, been seen in slumber on the front bench, still makes me shiver. my best expedient was to surreptitiously consume chocolates, while at cabinet meetings I relied on the smoking of cigars. I also carried one of those powerful spring clips used for holding papers together, and created pain in my finger to keep me awake.

P. 116
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C. 117

P. 114

was by pushing it on my finger
which kept

A the most important parliamentary job that i had was the piloting of the agricultural wages Bill in 1924. it was an exciting experience, involving the very unorthodox method of co-operation with the

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Conservative leaders. I was really indebted to Halifax, then Edward wood, as much as to anyone, for the fact that the Bill became law. (I shall return to this later on.)

P. 114

Politics

NORFOLK ELECTIONS.

P. 117
(old copy)

I ^{fought} had seven election campaigns in North Norfolk, and Lucy afterwards ^{fought} had two. In the earlier elections a good deal of rowdyism still survived, much more so than in other parts of the country. It is curious that the ^{in Norfolk} Tory feeling against Liberals in the early days was even hotter than against Labour ^{when Labour became the enemy} in the period after the war. At ^{at meetings} Holt the toughs used to scatter pepper, which was an excellent way of destroying the dignity of the sneezing speaker. Once driving through Holt on a winter's night a sudden crash and fall of the broken window into the car ^{testified to} witnessed the good shot made by a Tory youth with a brick.

After the victory in December 1910 when the car ^{Connie + I in an open car were} was dragged into Cromer by ^{my} supporters, as we approached from Sheringham, the Tory mob, which was the largest element in Cromer, kept up a magnificent bombardment with ~~stones~~ and lumps of turf from the roadside. ^{+ rotten eggs.} These were aimed at the car on the principle of a mortar, ^{being thrown up high, my protecting} gun, passing over the heads of supporters and falling ^{into the} on the open car. Rotten eggs were deftly dropped on to us in this manner, and Connie's fur coat remained yellow for a long period afterwards. ^{Lucy was a leading Tory} I rather suspect that this bombardment was instigated by Lucy, ^{at this period} as I ^{organised the attack.} heard that her brother was a ring-leader, she being

P. 117

had organised a *Politics*
 then a leader of a Movement called N.N.N.N., signifying
 "No Noels for North Norfolk".

p. 118
good copy
 Afterwards, in married days, Lucy and I had an
 exciting time in Holt moving from the car to the meeting,
 when ~~a~~ menacing crowd surrounded us, in spite of two
 policemen in close escort, and showered us with gravel.

Perhaps the climax was reached after the declaration
 of the Poll ^{in 1922} when I was first elected for Labour. We had
 returned from Aylsham and were to go to some celebration
 meetings after a high tea. Gradually a curious noise
 penetrated from the front door, and Mrs. Kirby shortly
 entered with ^{every} all the appearance of alarm, telling us
 that the crowd were breaking the windows. Sure enough
 the draught was blowing through the ^{broken} glass ^{over} of the front
 door as we made for the car. We could not yield to the
^{Mrs Kirby's} various entreaties not to emerge, and made a dash for
 the car, which was all in darkness, the crowd being
 hidden behind it. As I seated myself the door of the
 far side was suddenly opened, and the hob-nailed boot of
 a political opponent struck me violently on the shin.
 We then felt the car being tipped up in the attempt to
 turn it over, and in the light of the head lamps we saw
 the faithful ^(Chairman of the Cromer District Council) Mitchell rolling on the ground, entwined
 with a tough from Chapel Street.

At last we ^{started} got off, amid showers of stones, and the *p. 118*

Politics

P. 119
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second car, containing the agent and others, was also attacked as we all charged through the crowd. The stone ^{which went} going through the back window was picked up by our well-known Mr. Gee and was subsequently produced in triumph by him. We expected more fun, but all was quiet on our return from Aylsham, and the Police came round to offer apologies for permitting these doings to occur.

Lucy's pungent speeches in later elections drew the fire of the enemy's fury from me to her, and we were followed from meeting to meeting by a well-known squires whose thirst for Lucy's blood led her to take ^{every} the opportunity afforded by her ^{farm} having made a speech.

Perhaps it was my support of the labourers which made ^{Tory} the feeling, when I first stood, more violent than in other divisions. I was the favourite of the labourers because I had from the first felt that the Norfolk wage of 12/- a week (and less when wet weather prevented work) ^{should} could not be overlooked by public men, whether the Liberalism of the day liked it or not.

This was the reason given by a certain landowner for his efforts to get me blackballed when I came up for election to the Norfolk Club; efforts which were successful.

P. 118

The LABOUR. Party.

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119
said out

Until the Great War it never crossed my mind that I might join the Labour Party. For one thing there was *except the Socialist Societies* no place in the Party for the non-manual worker, and we Liberals regarded Labour as only for the horny-handed. During the war two aspects changed my mind. On the one hand the Liberals who, under Asquith's leadership, tended to pursue respectability and drop the Radical idealism of Campbell-Bannerman, seemed to conform more and more to the Conservative outlook. The activities of wartime brought Parties together. For the first time Liberals found themselves free from hostility, and on war questions they displayed no difference of view. *from the Tories* *views differing from the common class* There were admirable exceptions.

Buckmaster in particular, who had been a Law Officer, held views like those of Lansdowne on the settlement which should be pursued. I urged him to give a lead in that direction, and he felt strongly drawn to this but said he could not break loose from Asquith to whom he owed so much. Indeed Asquith himself would have made a better peace than Lloyd George, but until his overthrow he showed no public sign of disapproving the purely "knock out" policy which L.G. definitely pursued, thereby winning public favour, and justifying his expulsion of Asquith.

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Politics

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P. 121
(Sord copy)

The result of this attitude of the Liberals was to make us who took a special interest in war and peace questions feel keen to support candidates of our view, even if they were Labour. I myself took the plunge by supporting the Labour candidate at a bye-election at Keighley. I was lectured by the Chief whip, and indeed it was an act of revolt.

(94)
p 94
94 say
here "4
have already
described
my metamorphosis
from Liberal
Caterpillar to
Labour butterfly

At the election of 1918 I stood as Liberal-Labour, and a year later I joined the Labour Party. C.R.B. and Charlie Trevelyan gave a lead to malcontent Liberals like myself. Without Charlie's example I doubt if I should have brought myself to such extreme action, being a convinced compromiser and not by nature a whole-hogger.

Page
121
Sord copy

I put off joining the Party in the hopes that I could carry my Liberal supporters with me if they were given time. Other Liberals moved to new Divisions, while I invited my old supporters to come over to a new tabernacle. The strain was too great for many of them, and the fury of some local leaders was bitter. *But I succeeded in the main.*

My Tory opponent was confident of success, and at the last moment a Liberal candidate was also run against me, but I got in easily in 1922, and still more easily at subsequent elections. In all I was elected for North Norfolk twice as a Liberal, and four times as a Labourite.

P. 122
Sord copy

I do not think I should have joined the Party if I had

not seen that one should judge Parties more by their deeds more than by their words. Socialists are fond of talking in general abstract terms which, I think, has largely hampered their success. In practice when in office they are bound to promote measures which are not more startling than the best Radical measures of a Liberal Government. For instance, in the first Labour Government we did nothing of consequence except a Housing Bill and my own Wages Bill, both of which would have been normal to a Liberal regime, *if it was genuine.*

p. 121
Sword copy

Ant I was convinced that the Labour Party represented a far greater interest in the question of peace and war than *p. 122* did the Liberal Party. The question was so little spoken of by Liberal politicians *before 1914* that *if* one could be *one was an oddity* attacked as I was for talking of foreign politics and denounced to the electors as the friend of every country but one's own.

Sword copy

p. 122 It was the Labour Party which changed *all* that, and it is essentially committed to international order because it is an international movement and organization. More than that, it was recognized by the best Christian leaders, e.g., Gore and Temple, as embodying Christian ideals.

p. 122
Sword copy

I feel that the Labour Party was the true successor of the radical school of Liberals. It is a question of the degree of reforming energy. It is quite easy

P. 122
old

to take the view that things have moved in recent times quicker than before, and that there is no need to hurry. I can sympathize with the conservative outlook, but by conviction I think it is mistaken. The vast improvements we have seen in social ^{Security & welfare} schemes would never have come about without the work of those who pushed hard & made the pace.

There was a wonderfully good illustration of the two schools ^{of thought} when I stayed with the venerable Bishop Westcott at Bishop Auckland. His son was arguing that the workers were well satisfied with their life, and ^{that} there was no need to encourage them to complain, because they were as happy as ourselves.

The reply of his famous father, expressed in his tiny low voice, was the simple question: "in one room?" It was a good answer because ^{P. 123} I think that the most complacent person would find his views upset if he visited, as I have done, homes which consisted of a very small room ^{in which were} mostly filled by the two beds ^{one for} in which parents, ^{the other for} boys and girls, huddled at night, and in which also ^{in which also} members of the family were born and died. All meals were cooked and eaten in this room, and all the family goods, including coal, were stored there. ^{in died.}

P. 123

Good copy

End of section

THE FIRST LABOUR GOVERNMENT.

It was a historical event when the Labour Party, which had been dreaded by respectable people, actually took office. Old ladies nearly died of ^{year} funk. I had never seen myself as a possible minister, and it gave me a shock when Lucy and I went out to lunch with the webbs and he broached the idea. I thought he might be speaking without his book. ^{but} Soon afterwards Ramsay proposed himself to lunch at Rutland Gate, and asked me to take him by road to Oxfordshire to see his daughter. It looked as if he had something unusual to say. G.R.B. was at lunch, and when the car drove up to the door, he remarked "This is the car of destiny", and so it proved. The situation was thrilling but extremely alarming. I had always thought that Ministers represented first class brains. However I was fortified by the ^{belief assurance} statement that strength is made perfect in weakness. Apart from the general alarm, I felt rather like a fish out of water in being regarded as an expert on agriculture, as I had long reserved myself for foreign questions.

We were duly marshalled at Buckingham Palace to be commissioned by the king, and to ^{kneel one by one} kneel in front of him to kiss his hand. Wheatly, the Minister of Health, who had always posed as a sort of ^{republican} crude saboteur, was

P-124

apparently unable to get up again from the cushion, and ~~it~~ looked as if he had been overcome ^{by passionate} with loyalty to the Throne.

We had no majority in the House without the Liberals, and ought to have worked closely with them to carry out what they would support, but R.M. hated them ^{even} more than he hated the Tories, and we were never on good terms. In that situation we had ^{little more than} chiefly an opportunity for propaganda. I might have used the unrivalled platform which we all had ^{as the first Labour government,} to make the country more acquainted with our policy for agriculture, through State control of the land, but Ramsay gave no lead, and the practical job was to get through my bill on wage regulations by avoiding antagonizing people as much as possible.

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Insert X
pp 112-117
P115

AGRICULTURAL WAGES BILL

This Bill was a heavy task, ^{but} and my nose was only kept to the grindstone by the urgent plight of the farm labourer. His wage, which had been adequate for the first time during the War, had rapidly fallen to the old scandalous level, when L.G. recklessly repealed the Agriculture Act in 1921. The Ministry reported to me cases where labourers were only getting £1 a week.

P 112

We had not a majority in the 1924 parliament for any measures which did not carry the support of the Liberal Party, ^{and would also ~~not~~ be accepted by the Tories,} and this limited the measures on which the Government could embark. Bills affecting the workers' interests were therefore generally speaking limited to two, namely, housing and farm wages. Wheatley's Housing Bill encountered great opposition and occupied much time. The other Bill fell to me and we knew that it was doubtful how far the Liberals would support us in it. I introduced the Bill with a provision for restoring the National wages Board, and the chances of the Bill on Second Reading looked fairly good, but in Grand Committee we found the Liberals lukewarm and a National wages Authority was defeated.

Finding this I adjourned the Committee, disregarding the advice of my officials, because I did not wish to be compromised without consulting the Prime Minister.

the next step was to discuss with him whether to go on,
 and we did this at lunch at Downing Street, with ~~Ramsay~~ ^{him}
 and Jimmy Thomas. We decided to proceed and called the
 Grand Committee again. Friction developed with the
 Liberals, and I despaired of passing any bill ^{at all. But} till one
 evening in the Lobby a Conservative country member let
 fall the remark that the Tories might not be opposed to
 a Bill which provided for separate authorities for each
 county. I wired to Edward Wood (afterwards Halifax)
 who was leading the Tories in the matter, asking him to
 meet me, because there was only just time for the
 necessary steps before the recess. He was willing to
 help a Bill on these lines provided that we did not
 insist on a minimum money wage figure. This the Liberals
 would not agree to, and when the Committee met we of the
 Labour Party were ourselves divided, ^{on the point} because some of the
 Trade Union members insisted ^{ing} on voting for a minimum
 figure of 30/-. My old friend George Edwards was among
 these, as was natural, he being secretary of the Farm
 Labourers' Union. The others I did not so easily
 forgive, because they endangered the negotiation with
 Wood, by which alone a bill could be passed. ^{because only the Tories} It was a ^{could}
 novel and valuable procedure, and I had ^{cautiously} obtained
 Wood's promise to secure that the bill should not be
 thrown out by the Lords. ^{As for the trade union colleagues &}

Debate this Ramsay decided to do so

being with us.

at all. But

on the point

because only the Tories could

Do get the bill I had to inform the liberals.

Politics

114

112

Francis Acland, who led the Liberals, agreed with me, but some of his flock threw ^{him} over my offer, so that I was ~~forced~~ ^{forced} into a ^{novel} valuable alliance with the Tories. The trade Union members on the Committee urged that the bill should be dropped, and on strict principle their wishes should have prevailed, ^{as it was} on an industrial question, but I decided to do what I thought was best for the agricultural labourers and, rather than betray them, I asked for a special meeting of the whole Party. At this I made the strongest possible appeal not to lose what would benefit the poorest class of workers. * ^{The Party supported me.}

Meanwhile wood ^(afterwards Halifax) and Fitzroy (afterwards Speaker), who was assisting wood in Committee, had been alarmed at the fact that some Labour members voted against me in Committee on the minimum figure question. They asked me to declare in Committee that the Government would not ^{support} propose or start a minimum figure. I was glad to do this though it annoyed the rebellious Labour men. It was the only way to get the Bill. ^{I convinced the Trade Union leaders attached to a special meeting of the Party.} When the bill reached the Lords there was protest by some peers against the bargain which had been struck with me by the Tory ^{party} leaders, taking away the freedom of their lordships to deal as they liked with the bill, but ^{The Tory leader} Lord Salisbury stuck to the ^{compact} combat and the bill was passed.

The Act was a great success, immediately raising farm

wages with general consent and soon bringing up the counties then paying 25/- to the 30/- which had been demanded. In spite of this the agricultural divisions voted Tory, with the single exception of my own Division, at the next election. But among my treasures is a present expressing the gratitude of the Farm Labourers' Union for the enormous benefit which the Act conferred, and I derive the greatest satisfaction from the knowledge that my departure from strict democracy inside the Labour Party was an example of sound principle.

GEORGE EDWARDS.

I cannot pass on to the next period without a tribute to my great helper in securing the North Norfolk candidature
This was George Edwards, the agricultural

labourers' leader. He had revived the Union started by Joseph Arch, which had died out. Edwards, as the world knows from his book, "Crows-scaring to Westminster", was a very remarkable man. He was bred in the hungry forties when his father - a farm labourer - went to jail for taking a turnip to feed his children; as a result of which he and his mother went to the workhouse.

He was almost a hunchback; though starved in his youth, he had indomitable courage. He was an agitator from early years and lost his job. My uncle, Louis Buxton of Bolwick, then got work for him, and ultimately he began to organize the Union from his tiny cottage at Gresham.

When I got to know him in 1907 he was doing all the business of the Union from a minute attic *at Gresham*, reaching meetings all over the county on his bicycle. He was also a fervent Primitive Methodist and local preacher. When his Union meetings included a tea, he always opened with grace, and sometimes a hymn. He got into Parliament in 1923, and it was jolly to have him in the House when I was Minister in charge of the Farm wages Bill.

My fondness for him was undiminished by his voting against me in the Grand Committee of the Bill.

Politics

117

115

Edwards was a real friend. He was a genuine gentleman, and it was a great pleasure to have him staying with us at Colne Cottage - a pleasure enhanced by his quaint tastes, such as an abhorrence of novels, and a habit of putting seven lumps of sugar in his tea.

(back L p 110)

old
Page 110

Now p. 116

The second Labour Government came after an interval of five years. Part of the time had been occupied by illness and convalescence, and afterwards I had felt that the job of ^{mere} opposition was so ^{sometimes} insignificant that I had better give Parliament up. As I stayed on, however, I ought to have tried to qualify myself for some other office. We did not know whom Ramsay would put into office the second time, and in fact Olivier, Wedgwood and others were dropped. However, Ramsay wanted me when the time came, and insisted that I and Charlie Trevelyan must resume our old offices.

116
Ways Back
p.
132
Good copy

This second Labour Government was less happy than

the first. Ramsay for some reason was unfriendly, and, as Sydney Webb wrote in an article after the Government fell, he disliked his colleagues more and more. He would not let me introduce the Marketing Bill, which was the only measure that I saw a chance of passing, and then he ^{insisted} insisted on my holding a ~~series~~ of conferences with leading landowners and farmers, who at the end naturally wished to see ^{him} the P.M. He refused to see them. ^{This made my position very unpleasant indeed.} I was gagged in replying to the enquirers in the House about our policy, and I did not enjoy being described as an oyster. I also found myself, after a time, exhausted, and began to ^{feel} show alarming symptoms, so that I could not face all-night ^{I resorted to a doctor.} sittings, and in June 1930 I resigned.

132
Good copy

Pollock 118 117

THE LORDS.

P. 133 (sent copy)

Although I felt I should have a break-down if I went on in the Commons, I hoped I might carry on ^{as Minister} in the Lords where Arthur Ponsonby had already gone. I told Ramsay this, but he wanted Addison, who had been my under-secretary, to be ^{+ sent me to the Lords without office.} Minister. whether to go to the Lords was very debatable indeed. I felt strongly that I did not wish to drop out of public life, and that I might use the position to help causes for which I could do nothing if I ceased to be a member of Parliament altogether. On the other hand, I ^{deplore} see no merit in hereditary political power, and had thought it hardly consistent even with the principles I believed in as a Liberal. For ~~as~~ a Labour man to accept the position needed a very strong reason. It was taking part in an institution of which he disapproved, in its present form, and if he had a son he was still more deeply involved. The position of a peer was artificial, and the social prestige connected with it was regrettable. I consulted several people, including C.R.B. and V., I thought that such good democrats would be for sticking to ideal democratic principles, but to my surprise I found them strongly in favour of accepting. If they had not, ^{been in favour} I should have refused. Now, after twelve years, I often wonder if I was right. Anyhow they thought I was, and at all events I made a great many speeches on subjects which I thought

Good copy
p 134

Politics

119

118

important, and perhaps some of them at least had the
publicity utility which Lord Pentland ^{described} told me was the value of a
faking a peerage. He thought a ^{speech in the Lords, namely an article in a monthly}
review. had about the same value as

If only peerages could be for life, I should strongly
approve of them, because a senate is an excellent institution,
and ^{debate} speaking in the Upper house is far better than the
commons, the speakers being unaffected by thought of
constituents, and most of them people of great experience.
Lately a good deal of the false social snobbery has been
diminished by the increasing practice of keeping to one's
family name, instead of taking a territorial title. A
false prestige is given by turning a Mr. Smith into a
Lord Broadacres. ^{Bunt} a difficulty arose in sticking to the
surname in my case, because Sydney Buxton strongly
objected to there being another Lord Buxton. As there
are many cases of such duplications, e.g. Greys, Howards,
etc., I did not sympathize, but I did not like to hurt
his feelings, especially as he had lost his son. I met
the dilemma by changing my surname, which involved a
double name. I hate double names, but there was no other
way. It was a considerable sacrifice, and I told Rufus
that I should strongly approve if he chose to revert to
Buxton.

P 135
Board copy

Politics

120-119

Has the pudding of peerage been proved ⁱⁿ by the eating ?

That depends on whether speeches for many good causes
have formed any contribution. ^{of value.} Anyhow my position led
me to be invited to be president of various movements,
and if I had been out of Parliament, I should not have
been offered such interesting ^{jobs.} work.

On getting home I sought an interview with Halifax, and I took the first opportunity of raising the question in the Lords. On November 18th, in a debate on a Motion by Allen, I dealt with the Czech and the Colonial question, saying that the Czechs had not fulfilled the minority Treaty, and that the Germans might ask for a system on the Swiss model, and if they did, we could not oppose self-determination.

In March, the annexation of Austria increased the urgency of the Czech question. It aroused excitement among the Sudets, because Czecho was now almost surrounded by German land, embedded in Germany, and almost helpless. On March 16th I made a whole speech on the subject in the Lords, urging the danger of a disorder which would lead to German violence, and urging that this might be forestalled by testing the wishes of the people as to staying in Czecho or joining Germany. The Saar was a good model. Then the German excuse for violence would be removed. It would be a superb service to peace if England offered such a supervised test of opinion. If it was refused, German aggression would be clear.

On March 19th I wrote th "The Times" on the same lines.

At the same time I circulated a Memo. giving details of the plebiscite, and another showing how the figures of German population made it comparatively simple to draw a frontier between German and Czech.

At this time came Henlein's announcement of the Sudeten terms at Karlsbad. He did not ask for a plebiscite, so I said nothing about it after this. It was welcome if Germany was content with less. "The Times", however, advocated it even after Karlsbad, which I thought dangerous, as it might encourage Germany to ask for more.

On May 7th I wrote to "The Times" about the suitability of the frontiers. My secretary has made an admirable map based on the census and a Memo. explaining it, and these I circulated.

The critical week-end of May 21st was the next turning point. It was proclaimed that the Germans had planned invasion and refrained because England and France issued warnings. What really happened is still a mystery. I thought it a good thing that Germany had been warned and was not apparently willing to fight. It is important that they should not assume our unwillingness, and in subsequent letters I alluded to the fact that Germany knew we should oppose aggression.

It now seems that Hitler was furious at the Western Powers crowing over him after May 21st, and that he planned revenge. I think one reason why he determined to humiliate us in September was this motive of getting even with us.

My chance of re-entry came through the fact that the North Norfolk member was soon to resign. It was all the more easy to frequent Cromer because I had become the occupant of Runton Old Hall, ~~and of Colne Cottage~~. The former because at my suggestion Father had created small holdings out of the Hall Farm, and the house which I had long admired when partridge shooting on Spratts Hill had become free to let separately. I held it until it had housed one or two friends, including Rossllyn Bruce, who by that means became married to Rachael Gurney, but I had no real use for it and persuaded Connie and Bertram to take it over. This was how it became a noted place because they made the most of its possibilities. I also became the occupant of Colne Cottage when Father moved into Colne House, and I began to furnish it and invited friends there.

When Sir W. Gurdon announced his retirement, there was keen contention among the Liberal Leaders of the Division, some of them thinking I was too radical because I had taken up the cause of the agricultural labourer. Finally it came to a competition of candidates, Headquarters having disregarded my plea for preference, and ^{having} sent a young friend of Asquith's at the request of the non-radical local leaders.

The Farm labourers Union then announced that they would back me whether Liberals adopted me or not, and this roused intense indignation. The meeting of the Liberal Hundred at Melton was almost a battle.

the cause, but when it means countless other lives, the loss and gain should be coldly weighed.

On July 16th, wishing to impress my proposal on Halifax, I invited several peers who were sympathetic to join in going to see him. They strongly agreed with my opinions, but thought a deputation was unnecessary.

On July 25th I wrote to the "Manchester Guardian" answering the points of the other side, such as the Labour party and Cecil, in hopes of converting some. This letter provoked one from the Executive of the Labour party protesting against my propaganda, and a similar letter to the "Guardian" saying that my view was not held by the party. I was glad of this, because I had never wished to be thought to represent the party view. Nobody thought I did.

On July 26th we had a debate in the Lords following the appointment of Runciman as an adviser. I dwelt on the urgency of the matter and approved of Runciman rather than League action. My chief point was that, if we fought, the public would not understand our aim, and if we won, we should give autonomy, which was what the Germans wanted themselves.

I hoped that Runciman would get the Czechs to concede, and I wrote him urging that he should get the views of Henderson. I think he tried to move the Czechs by degrees,

but it was too slow. I always feared that if German lives were lost, Germany would move as soon as the harvest was in, and I think it was very fortunate that invasion did not, in fact, occur.

Hitler's speech at Nuremberg on September 12th reflected the impatience of delay and the fear that winter might come before the question was settled, after which Benes might avoid drastic reform altogether, because troop movements would be difficult after the autumn snow in the mountains.

I saw no reason to say anything until September 22nd, when Chamberlain had agreed to annexation at Berchtesgaden. There was opposition to his policy and fear that it might be reversed, so I wrote to "The Times" repeating the main arguments and saying that those who opposed the Franco-British solution were entitled to urge that humiliation to the Czechs and loss of prestige might have been avoided if a supervised plebiscite had been effected, but not entitled to oppose annexation unless they thought that a successful war would restore the Sudetenland to the Czechs.

Following Godesberg, it looked as if Hitler was determined on war, and on September 27th war seemed unavoidable. On the bare chance of getting to his notice, I wrote a letter to Halifax and took it to the F.O. I urged that the coolest calculation of losses and gains ought to be the deciding factor.

17 (2)

163

~~173~~

diplomats. Arthur Ponsonby (my nephew) was with me and we had an interesting time, Hoover, who was in control of American relief work, gave us lunch at a restaurant in the Elysée, and I remember the floods of cream which were in evidence. As Central Europe was then largely starving, and the German babies were without milk, the charms of the cream with which Paris abounded were lost on us. The space at the foot of the Elysée held a great pile of captured cannons, and everything was in harmony with the spirit of punitive triumph.

" One day ^{he writes,} the Bulgarian delegates were brought to Paris, and placed in a house like prisoners, not being allowed contact with anyone. Stamboliski, their Premier, had opposed the war, and risked his life in doing so, but he had been addressed by the French general who signed the Armistice with Bulgaria as "sale cochon". ^{With} _(his brother, Charles Roden Buxton) him as secretary was Miss Stancioff, whom Charlie and I had seen in Paris on the way back from the Balkans in 1915, when she was nursing the French wounded, and who became afterwards a great friend of ours in London, when her father was appointed Minister there. "

~~Arthur and I went to Vienna, and there visited~~ hospitals and saw the distress which prevailed. All the men seemed to be carrying knapsacks in which to place any food they might obtain by going out to farms in the country. As we entered Vienna in a luxury train, we were dining in

164 ~~174~~

the restaurant, and the starving Austrians relieved their feelings by spitting at the windows. It was not easy to enjoy our dinner, ^arelaxing their point of view.

Through the help of an English doctor who was due in Budapest, we got a chance of going on to Budapest in his special train consisting of one carriage. The city was in disorder, and when we got to the hotel (Hotel Hungaria) Arthur, who was to follow with the luggage, did not turn up. Roumanian troops were in occupation of the town, and nobody could answer for their conduct. I was intensely alarmed, knowing Balkan ways. I forced my way into the H.Q. of the Roumanian general and got him to concern himself with the matter, and in time Arthur reappeared. The hunger was even greater than at Vienna, and at the hospitals we saw the babies still covered with the newspapers which, for a long time, had been their only blankets. The Roumanians had stolen all the hospital supplies, including the milk. It was a fearful situation for the proud Hungarians to be under the thumb of Balkan upstarts. One day we were in a house facing the old bridge of the ancient capital which crosses the Danube, when a band music was heard, and we saw Roumanian troops marching on the bridge. No one had thought that the old city would be so degraded, and the Hungarians were deeply moved. However, they must have seen that they had

169
(extremely charming)
~~127~~

7

tradition. After seeing ~~Coebels~~, Rosenberg, von Papen and
^{and Goebbels, who} ~~inspired a~~ General Blomberg, we got an interview with Hitler, but it
 was a forlorn hope, as I had realised. He declared
 that everybody ^{too} loved him, that if he went into the Linden
 a hundred thousand people would crowd to acclaim him.
 He soon took to raving against the Communists, and
 violently asserted that every Communist was a criminal.
 He shouted ²³⁶ in this strain as if we were at a public meeting,
 and we broke off the talk. "

8

~~The Hitler period is familiar to all, because the
 danger became evident and was the chief feature of the
 time. To keep the peace was still more a failing hope
 than before, but the game was not wholly lost, at least in the
 eyes of our Ministers who did not prepare for war. Actual
 conflict might be avoided by good relations on the personal
 side, e.g. with the German representatives in London. My
 friends and I thought it worth while to make speeches in this
 direction in the Lords, and Lothian was a powerful advocate
 on this line. I thought it a good thing to keep in touch
 with German ambassadors. Hoesch in particular was a
 rational man and not a Nazi. He died suddenly without
 apparent cause, and ^{my} ~~may~~ thought that his amiable countrymen
 in the Nazi Party had poisoned him. von Dirksen had a good
 name as a professional diplomat, and when I lunched with
 him at the Embassy he expressed distress, which I think was~~

18

171

~~181~~

at Berlin. When he first took up his post he discussed with the Head of the Foreign Office the way to show friendliness at Berlin. Vansittart replied that on no account should we make any attempt at friendliness whatever. Imagine Ribbentrop's talks with Vansittart ! As the chief contact of a foreign diplomat is with the Head of the Foreign Office, one can see what stupendous consequences might result from this personal factor.

(18)

In these years our want of logic ^{rivalled} ~~revaled~~ that of the French. We headed for war without preparing for it. We sublimely offered guarantees to Poland and Roumania, and committed ourselves to the struggle as if we had boundless power in Eastern Europe, when in fact we had none. ²⁰⁰ If it is true that we did this as the result of French insistence, that is no excuse. In 1940 we were in danger of actually losing our independence, and that is the measure of our madness in defying German action in the East without due preparation. Baldwin and Chamberlain ^(Arthur Chamberlain) must be held responsible, because they had power; they knew the facts, and that they concealed them from the country. They were either blind, or reckless, or criminally ²⁷⁹ complacent. The latter seem to me to be the least defensible of the excuses. How men with ~~the~~ very good brains can act as if they were, at the best, ~~misguided~~ mystics is a thing which I can never understand.

(19)

After Hitler came to power I went several times to

Berlin and also to the de Bunsens near Cologne and the Bismarcks in Pomerania. In '38 I went to see Henderson, and on arriving in the evening found an invitation to dine at the Embassy at 8. I was tired enough with the journey and would gladly have got off, but of course answered that I would go. Having got there, and hoping to get away fairly early, I found it was a large party to meet Lord Londonderry, who was an apostle of friendship with Hitler. He was an hour late, and by 9.30 I was quite exhausted. However, I forgave Lord Londonderry in the end, because we had a long and useful talk after dinner.

The colonial question was then to the front, and it was rather an episode that the Agha Khan was seeing German Ministers on the same lines as myself. This famous winner of the Derby invited me to meet him at the Adlon, and proved quite attractive. He was a novel sort of ally for me to work with.

(19) In these years it seemed to me a mystery that our Government was content neither ^{willing} to keep overwhelming force, nor to attempt a modus vivendi. One could not be surprised at Hitler leaving the League of Nations when Sir John Simon, the Foreign Secretary, declared that the Allies were not bound to disarmament by the Versailles Treaty in the sense that everyone understood. We had many debates in the Lords, and I several times reminded noble Lords of the

20

173

~~#83~~

195

(9)

Allies' responsibility for bad relations, through the Blockade, the Ruhr Occupation and the French use of Negro troops on the Rhine. The ablest of the small group who took our rational view was Lord Lothian (afterwards ambassador to America) and I was thrilled one day by his ¹⁰⁰alluding to "the admirable speech of my noble friend Lord Noel-Buxton". He was very active and went to see Hitler, escorted and interpreted by my former secretary, Conwil Evans, as also did Lloyd George afterwards.

~~Insert article on Lothianism.~~

~~(write for C.R.B. Memoir)~~

~~(in office copies)~~

(9)

Perhaps peace was impossible after 1933, and it was generally felt that Hitler meant to fight. Many pacifists thought not, and I felt it probable that he and his colleagues, Goering and Goebbels, were the sort of men who would be attracted to a great gamble; and to gamble with the chance of bringing down the British Empire would be the greatest gamble in history.²⁰⁰ But I held that if you are dealing with a savage bull, you don't wave a red flag in front of him, but keep him quiet as long as you can, while risking nothing. Hitler proclaimed his hope of friendship with England, and he had joined the League. It would probably have made a great difference if the English Press had been restrained from continually jeering at him in a way that no other European press was doing.

(10)

²⁷⁹The attitude of the Labour Party seemed to me very illogical. They adopted the most provocative anti-German expressions, and at the same time they opposed preparation for war, while they reconciled their own minds by declaring that we should appeal to the League to take action, e.g. against Italy over the Abyssinian question. Yet they knew that the League could do nothing except with British forces. I could only excuse this on the ground that it had been a great effort to adopt the peace-loving Labour view to the use of force as part of the League programme. To shrink from ¹⁰⁰applying this ^{to} action by England, apart from the League, was natural, but it was unrealistic. Of course it was the-

Government

175
185
187

22

(10)

who were responsible for informing the country, and Baldwin was far more to blame; but it was natural that Conservatives defended Baldwin, on the grounds that the Labour Party had influenced public opinion, making it difficult for him to adopt war preparation. I myself felt that Hitler was probably ready to go to war, and I deplored the complacency which prevailed. I reported, for instance, what I saw in 1935 of the air base on the ²⁰⁰isle of Sylt, when I went there with Rufus ^(his own) to meet the Bismarcks.

The Foreign Office was violently anti-German, and the Government gave the impression of feeling sublimely superior to the growth of German force, which made our policy still more irritating. We drifted along, assuming that we were in no danger, and finally offered guarantees to Poland, Roumania and Greece, which helped to increase the punishment inflicted on them ²⁷³by Germans. If we did not mean that we would do anything for Poland, we should have left that question alone, and allowed the inevitable quarrel to develop between Germany and Russia. We humanitarians have often been reproved for wanting England to police Europe, and it amazed me when the Government pursued such a policy in an extreme form. \

1919 saw the supreme chance of establishing a sane

in his case genuine, at the persecution of the Jews. Ribbentrop was more important than any of them, and should have been humoured, though he was certainly a difficult and wooden-minded man. Some people handled him sensibly. Sidney Clive, who was Chamberlain of the Diplomatic Corps, ~~had~~ him to stay for a shoot. Others showed their dislike, and the Press made every possible occasion for offence. He was irritated in small ways. Here is an illustration. The German Embassy occupied two of the houses in Carlton House Terrace which have common rights to the terrace overlooking St. James's Park. Ribbentrop wanted to make the section of the terrace opposite his houses private, and, as they are the end houses, this was easy and perfectly proper. Instead of putting this through as we would have done for the Russians or the French, the Foreign Office told Ribbentrop that he must get the consent of the neighbouring householders. It is quite possible that a thing like this might turn the scale in the mind of a rather stupid man and lead him to decide that nothing could be done with these infernal, insular-minded British.

Perhaps it was too late when Chamberlain attempted appeasement and sent Neville Henderson to Berlin, but it raised hopes. I had known Henderson and stayed with him when he was Minister at Belgrade, and saw him more than once

Perhaps peace was impossible after 1933, and it was generally felt that Hitler meant to fight. Pacifists thought not, but I felt it probable that he and his colleagues, Goering and Goebbels, were the sort of men who would be attracted to a great gamble, and to gamble with the chance of bringing down the British Empire would be the greatest gamble in history. But I held that if you are dealing with a mad bull, you don't wave a red flag in front of him, but keep him quiet as long as you can. Hitler proclaimed his hope of friendship with England. He had joined the League at one time. It would probably have made a great difference if the English Press had been restrained from continually jeering at him in a way that no other European press was doing.

The attitude of the Labour Party seemed to me very illogical and also dangerous. They adopted the most violent and provocative anti-German expressions, and at the same time they opposed preparation for war, while they reconciled their own minds by declaring that we should appeal to the League to take action against Italy over the Abyssinian question. They knew that the League could do nothing except with British forces. I could only excuse this on the ground that it had been an effort to adopt the Labour view to the use of force as part of

the League programme. It was unrealistic, and I felt that Hitler was probably ready to go to war. As an illustration of my attitude, I reported to high authority what I saw in 1935 of the air base in the Isle of Sylt, when I went there with Rufus to meet the Bismarcks. Of course it was the Government who were responsible for informing the country, and Baldwin was far more to blame; but it was natural that Conservatives defended Baldwin, on the grounds that the Labour Party had influenced public opinion, making it difficult for him to adopt war preparation.

The Foreign Office was violently anti-German, and we gave the impression of being sublimely superior to the growth of German force, which made our policy seem still more irritating. We drifted along, assuming that we were in no danger, and finally offered guarantees, which helped to increase the punishment inflicted on Poland, Roumania and Greece. If we did not mean that we would do anything for Poland, we should have left that question alone, and allowed the inevitable quarrel to develop between Germany and Russia.

We humanitarians have often been reproved for wanting England to police Europe, and it amazed me when the Government pursued such a policy in an extreme form.

1919 saw the supreme chance of establishing a sane

WHITEHOUSE

An enterprise with Whitehouse which I still often think of with pleasure was his campaign for preventing the London parks being spoiled by a memorial to Edward VII. The official proposal was to make a great roadway and stone bridge across St. James's Park from St. James's Palace to Queen Anne's Gate. It would have been a deplorable injury to the park and the delightful lake, and the view along the water would also have been obstructed.

Whitehouse made speeches and got me to back him up, and the old Lord Carlisle who was an artistic notable wrote forcibly in the "Times".

The Government gave way and made another scheme for a triumphal road across Green Park, going so far as to erect the splendid gates at the high point in Piccadilly which record the attempted scheme as do the gates opposite St. James's Palace. This time the Prime Minister intervened, and said nothing would alter the determination of the Government.

However, Whitehouse beat him, and ~~I shared in the exploit which really showed the greatest daring, certainly greater than I would have displayed if not led to battle by my diminutive leader.~~ and The end was most satisfactory - two parks of priceless value were saved, and ^{the} East End acquired a park (at Shadwell) which otherwise would never have existed.

I shared in the exploit which really showed the greatest daring, certainly greater than I would have displayed if not led to battle by my diminutive leader.

5

On the problem of suffering, he preached in the Legation Chapel, in Sofia, in 1934 on "I Have Overcome the World" (St. John 16. 33.)

....." If Jesus had merely said that the creator of this world was a benevolent God, it would have been sufficiently difficult to accept. His statement was even more incredible, but such was the inspiration of His personality that His hearers believed, and accepted the mission to persuade others of their belief. They, in turn, inspired great numbers, and returned astonished, saying that even devils were subject to them. They felt that evil was actually overcome.

What is the application for to-day of this historical record? A belief in a God who overcomes evil seems contradicted by the sufferings of the world still persisting many centuries after this gospel was preached. We of to-day would be even more astonished than the first disciples if Christ came among us and repeated that He had overcome the world. We can only think of partial answers to the problem presented to us. The paradox has been a trial of faith in all ages, but especially so to-day. The difficulty of realising the first part of our Creed - I believe in God as a father, and almighty - is more difficult to-day because of the atmosphere of doubt in which we live. Everything is questioned. No dogma is accepted on trust, and the rising generation is shaken by the impossibility of understanding the place of suffering in the scheme of a benevolent God.

6

How are we to view the matter? We can see how pain may be valuable, when it falls on conscious human beings. But how are we to view the sufferings of the innocent, whether inflicted by man, or by natural catastrophe? Reason supplies no answer. As Tennyson says, "We cannot know, we have but faith". Christ himself taught that no man has seen God. The difficulty finds a partial solution in the teaching of Christ; sufficient not to offer a philosophy, but a mode of life.

Firstly, while it gives no explanation, it gives an assurance on Christ's authority that "it is not the will of the Father that any of these little ones should perish."

Secondly, it promises mental satisfaction through action. If any man will do His will, he shall know the doctrine. The purposes of this life are met by a mental satisfaction, sufficient for living happily.

We may well ask ourselves what it is that is being neglected in regard to this part of Our Lord's teaching. Firstly, a literal rendering of the command to rely on the power of the prayer of faith. The authority of Christ is often forgotten. We attach no meaning to the statement that when we believe we have the answers to prayer, that the kingdom can come, that the will of God can be shown here as in heaven. Whatever is meant by these words, a higher aspiration is indicated.

Secondly, we lack the spirit of personal trust, of trust unshaken by inability to understand the teaching of our Benefactor;

7

the spirit expressed in the saying, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him"; the spirit of optimistic joy; the spirit of the young man in the thrilling story of Shadrach, when he defied the emperor, saying that even if God gave no sign he and his friends would trust to the best that they knew, rather than obey man.

Thirdly, we neglect the practice of deliberate reflection. We are conscious of neglecting the teaching, but we cannot expect to apprehend it without making time for meditation. We know that to those who have not failed in this task there comes the conviction.

add. on further study?

Politics contd.

I was adopted by 36 votes to 24, and then those who resented the importance claimed by the labourers, refused their support, though I was the official candidate. They came back by degrees, and I was elected by a good majority in the January election in 1910.

Politics contd.

Any activities of mine in the succeeding years in Parliament which can be said to be of any importance are described in Evan's book "Foreign Policy from a Back Bench," but I may tell of some aspects which the book is not concerned with.

It was an exciting time, and very thrilling that Charlie and I had got in together. We were both definitely Radicals, and keen supporters of the small group led by Sir Charles Dilke which had a weekly meeting. We were all sympathetic with Ramsay Macdonald, who had just become Labour Leader, and we were naturally disapproved of by the mass of Liberal members, many of whom appeared to us little distinguishable from the Tories.

The Marconi incident was a feature of the times, and might have brought the Government down. Naturally we Radicals were displeased with ~~those~~^{leaders} who gave rise to the charge of putting private interests before public rectitude, and this view was keen among the men who attended the weekly lunch of the writers of the "Nation." I was one of those, being a friend of Massingham, the famous editor. In the talk at lunch I made some drastic comments, and I remember my alarm when these appeared in the next number of the "Nation;" happily nobody learnt who was their author.

As the papers kept announcing the formation of new groups formed to ginger the Government on one point or another, the names of us two Buxtons constantly appeared, and I remember Sydney, who had become

Politics contd.

Postmaster General, and was soon to get the Board of Trade, saying half-playfully and half reproachfully that whenever he heard of rebellions, he knew without looking that C. and I were in it.

It was very jolly to find oneself in the House with old friends in other causes such as Arthur Ponsonby, and Percy Alden, and Masterman, and there were new friends who became close allies. One was Phillip Morrell, who loved a fight for its own sake, and who led the crusade against the Russian Government when it imprisoned a Polish girl. ^{for her socialism} In this case we attacked the Government for lethargy, and I remember raising the question on the adjournment, and using the expression, "Oh for an hour of Palmerston!" The case would never have been heard of if the girl had not been a friend of Fanny Noel, owing to which Morrell got to hear of it through us. Anyhow, the Russian Government gave way, so we got the girl out of gaol.

My closest collaborator in those years was Howard Whitehouse. He had been secretary at Toynbee Hall, and had made his way by the aid of intense enthusiasm, a passion for reform, a sympathetic personality and a formidable wit.

We two bachelors were able to indulge our common tastes even by foreign travel. He was ready to help me, for instance, in promoting the cause of the inshore fishermen of the British coasts. This meant meetings at Cromer and at Sheringham. It was proper that I should care for the fishermen of the Norfolk coast, but it also meant visits to Devon. We denounced the neglect of their interests in

Politics contd.

debate, and Whitehouse was a somewhat unexpected advocate of men so remote from urban life. It was reported that he had not quite realised the cause he was supporting, and had alluded to his clients as "Indoor Fishermen."

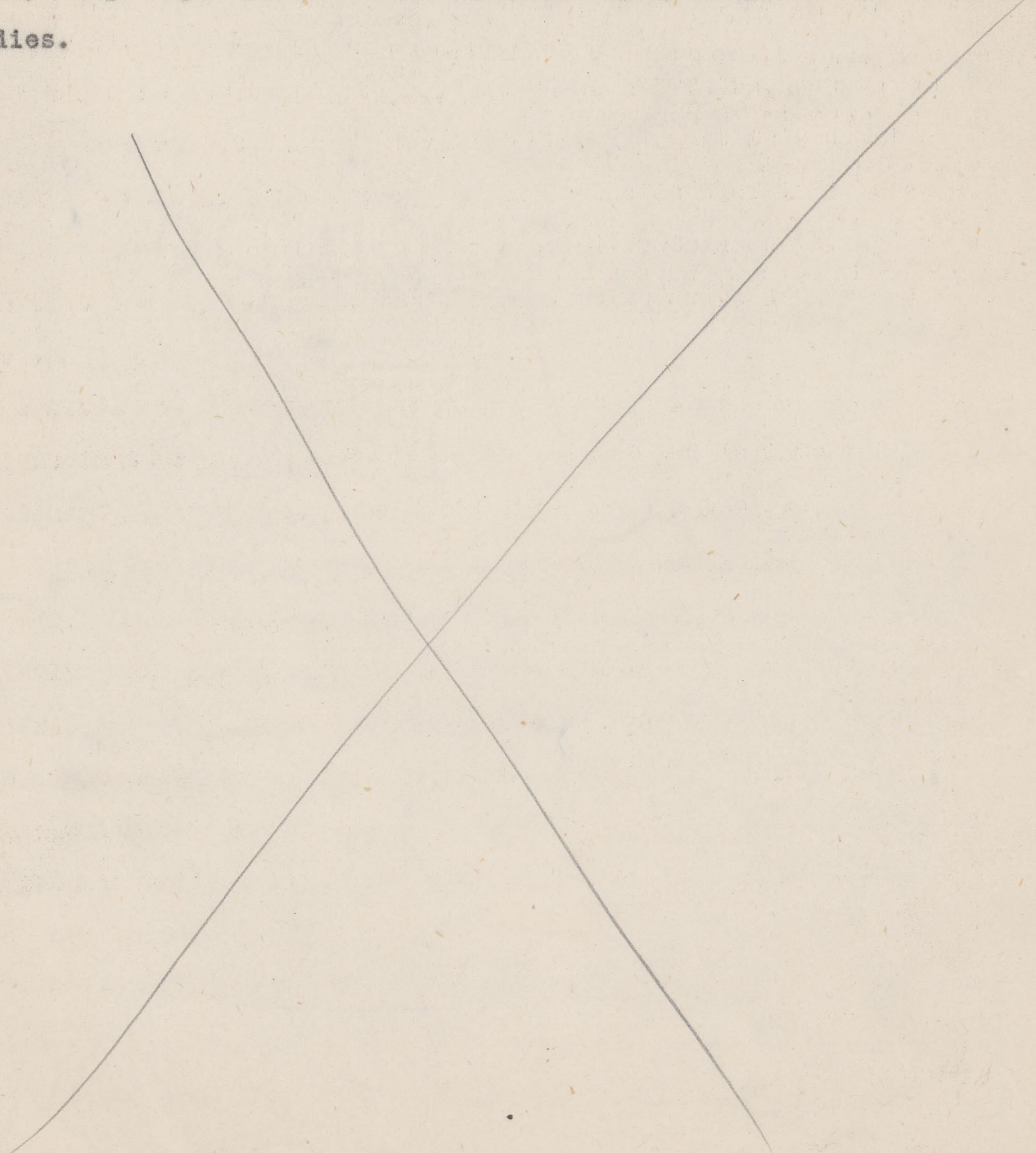
It was also new to him to work at foreign affairs, but he was extremely clever at taking up new subjects, and most friendly in following my tastes. So after the Agadir incident of 1911 he came with me to Berlin. We both of us spoke and wrote upon it, and came to see that the Anglo-German trouble must be regarded as our chief concern.

He was also my partner in running Colne Cottage and helping me to entertain there. He was very artistic and led me into the promotion of applied art. We decided to promote the handicraft movement in Cromer, and we discovered a man to our taste who came to Cromer, started a workshop and forge, and made lovely ironwork, especially such as fire irons and lamp stands, and also made jewellery, and ran a shop in the Church Square. When I had nephews staying in the winter it was great fun to hammer pokers, toasting forks, and table lamp holders on the forge. It all went on happily until the war killed it. But the pokers we made are still the best that I possess.

Whitehouse was a great authority on Ruskin, and I learnt a lot through him. He deplored as I did both humbug and toadyism which invaded even some parliamentary minds, and was amusing to the

Politics contd.

last degree when he took off these oddities. He lost his seat in 1918, but he was not defeated by fate, and he proceeded to create a very large boys' school which embodied highly original methods and studies.



Boys prizes. v Bryce &c.

Winners.

Stimulter boy.

3rd place.

Stimulus

Test 1

Others.

Not winners but
w^d be d^y done well.

Left top of Fifth.
Clear to ignore disapp^t.

Not 1 end: efficiency
wisdom & sympathy.

1 only dishonest work.
To fail is only fortune.

Luck - small factor is
not known.

Unlucky now may see it
was really luck.

Failure sh^d be a stimulus -
a chance of learning
(1 chief lesson.

3 Churchill

4 First Fifth

Bryce

Ho of C a sbl.

5 23.

150 yrs on.

2 Care advice.

NORFOLK ELECTIONS.

I had seven election campaigns in North Norfolk, and Lucy afterwards had two. In the earlier elections a good deal of rowdyism still survived, much more so than in other parts of the country. It is curious that the feeling against Liberals in the early days was even hotter than against Labour in the period after the war. At Holt the toughs used to scatter pepper, which was an excellent way of destroying the dignity of the sneezing speaker. Once driving through Holt on a winter's night a sudden crash and fall of the broken window into the car witnessed the good shot made by a Tory youth with a brick.

After the victory in December 1910 when the car was dragged into Cromer by supporters, as we approached from Sheringham, the Tory mob, which was the largest element in Cromer, kept up a magnificent bombardment with stones and lumps of turf from the roadside. These were aimed at the car on the principle of a mortar gun, passing over the heads of supporters and falling on the open car. Rotten eggs were deftly dropped on to us in this manner, and Connie's fur coat remained yellow for a long period afterwards. I rather suspect that this bombardment was instigated by Lucy, as I heard that her brother was a ring-leader, she being

214 233
5
well enough to shoot. Some paper had said that he used a twelve-bore hammer gun, now long out of fashion, and I told him that I had my father's gun of the same type still in use. He said that the papers were correct, but that his father used a sixteen bore since his illness.

9
At another agricultural function the Duke of York, now King George VI, was present; ~~not easy to talk to;~~ ^{and} but the Duchess, now the queen, was very agreeable ~~and we got on to Robert Ogilvy, they having been neighbours in Scotland.~~ In 1941, the Duke having become George VI, had me summoned to a Privy Council meeting, which means four or five Privy Councillors meeting the King at the Palace for confirming 'Orders in Council'. I was the senior, and therefore went into the room first. Knowing his reticence I was quite surprised when he greeted me very warmly with, 'It is a long time since I have seen you'.

The most interesting personal relation I can record was with Queen Mary. She and George V. proved to be interested in the connexion of my grandmother Gainsborough with his grandmother Queen Victoria. When I first became Minister, Queen Mary, at a Buckingham Palace garden party, as we spoke to her in the queue of hundreds who were brought to her, said that Lucy and I must go to Windsor to see my grannie's portraits, one of which the Prince Consort had had copied and given to Granny. We neglected to follow this up, and when I was again in office, five years later,

CHAPTER IX POLITICS

LADY ABERDEEN

mother valued friend was Lady Aberdeen, of whom he

One of the most interesting people whom I got to know was Lady Aberdeen. Although I did not see her very much, I was influenced by her personality. She was quite unique in her combination of qualities rarely found in one person.

I have felt myself in different cases in strong sympathy with keen political reformers. I have made still greater friends with whom I agreed as to religion. And again others, with whom one's contact arose from philanthropic interests. Perhaps my greatest friends have had none of these in common with me but only a turn for personal friendship.

One occasionally finds somebody possessing two of these sets of sympathies, but Lady Aberdeen struck me as possessing all four, and I do not remember any similar case. I have always felt a certain grievance in not possessing friends who shared my tastes in all four directions.

Burst mentions how her religion often
I can think of a few, but very few, others whose religion reached the level of missionary zeal. There seems now to be nobody who would set out to attract the West End to religion by organising meetings in a form which would appeal to them, as was done in my youth by Sir Arthur Blackwood and Lord Radstock. She organised such meetings in the ballroom of the old Grosvenor House, with Professor Drummond as the

burst

attractive speaker. ~~Certainly there were few, if any, who would energise in this direction and~~ ^{how,} ~~at the same time, give a~~ ^{she gave} ~~lead in political and radical reform in a definite Party~~ ^{the Liberal} ~~organisation.~~

As to philanthropy, there was her well-known campaign against tuberculosis in Ireland and her leadership in the Parents' National Educational Union. ^{Regarding} As to personal relations, I might not have known so much if she had not, when I stayed at Haddo, made time for a long talk ⁱⁿ to her room, reading me letters from interesting people, among which I remember a long one from Lord Rosebery on the futility of self-blame if one had done one's reasonable best.

much

Another thing that made a deep impression on me was what seemed to be an overflowing energy such that, on the top of multitudinous interests, she could enjoy organising a London dance, or even a London garden party. And, when I stayed at the Viceregal Lodge she was occupied with dog breeding to the extent of having over fifty dogs.

Perhaps most of all I was impressed by the fact of her appearing to have plenty of time for social conversations of no serious importance, which seemed to show up one's own inclination to think oneself too busy for small things."

Social Activities of the Victorian Days.

About his ^{early} social activities at this time

Noel Buxton wrote at a later period:

AUNT EMILY

When I came to London on leaving Cambridge "No. 7", as we called Aunt Eva's house in Grosvenor Crescent, was a factor in my life.

Aunt Emily and Chenda were extremely kind in bringing me out, chiefly through dinners at No. 7, and at week-end visits to Foxwarren.

May Rutson and Sybil Barnes were equally charming in asking me for week-ends, and at these houses I met interesting people of a world that was different to ours at Warlies. These family houses, and other family houses too - both in Norfolk and Essex - represented to me in a marked degree a combination of public spirit with a right determination not to claim any more of it than other people, and I formed a strong preference for the kind of enthusiasm which goes with extreme reserve, and the kind of affection which is not too demonstrative. Those members of the family whom I heard make speeches seemed to me to be unlikely to move an audience, however susceptible, but to my mind they displayed a quality far more remarkable than oratorical eloquence.

I was susceptible to the inspiration of the style of Cyrano de Bergerac, which I saw in Paris on the eve of my first Parliamentary campaign, and which served to help

me through it; but I felt a keener admiration for the Scarlet Pimpernel doing his dangerous works of liberation by stealth. I think that the latter kind of mind is more given to enterprise in a serious form.

I can never be grateful enough to Edie for her well-known inculcation of enterprise, and I deeply regret the times when I have ignored it.

The Sydney Webbs were also extremely kind to me, and I met lots of interesting people at dinner in their house in Grosvenor Road. Mrs. Webb never seemed to realize the intellectual gulf which separated one from her, and she never represented the school which has been described as preferring ^{brilliant stupidity to} clever dullness, to ~~do~~ stupidity.

Speech
at Synanon. ~~Prizegiving~~
July '30

N-B. said that when he was asked to address 60 boys the occasion led him to try and recall what it felt like when he was in the position of the 60 Dragons just going to a Public School. As it was fifty years ago it interested him very much to review what had happened to boys who went with him to Harrow and to see how the prize winners (^{a class which} whom they were specially met to honour at the Dragon School that day) turned out in comparison with the non-prize winners. The thing one remembered best among the new features that one encountered on going to a public school was the greatness and distinction of the leading boys with their enviable privileges, such as wearing special hats, turning up their trousers and rolling up their umbrellas. In his time these great gods were eminent both at work and at play, but in after life though they did very well they did not turn out so influential as other boys of the same time who were not among the great lights of the School.

There was one boy at that time who, though he worked very well, was not known to any but his friends, and yet had proved to be a person of great importance; that was Stanley Baldwin.

A few years later when one used to visit the School, one was ~~taken~~ to "call-over" ~~to~~ see a strange sight. A son of one of the cleverest men, Lord Randolph Churchill, walking at the very tail of the 500 boys who filed past the master in the School Yard; that was Winston Churchill, and whatever we might think of his politics, the fact might be an encouragement to those who had not won prizes that day because Churchill had afterwards become a very hard worker

working winners

and his position showed that there was a chance for ~~all~~ if they cared to work.

Another interesting case of that time, was worth recording. A friend of his had the fearful bad luck of being left top of the First-Fifth Form when he would have got into the 6th Form if it had not been the custom to use a crib in the Form, and if he had not been brought up to know that using a crib was wrong. That boy grew up to be thankful for that cruel experience because it had taught him to put up with disappointments, and he owed more to it than he owed to prizes.

Another boy who was at School at that time had left school at thirteen to work in the fields, and had no more education except what he got from Cassell's Encyclopædia. That was Ramsey Macdonald.

When they were talking about prizes, he recalled one more politician who gave an opinion on prizes, namely Lord Rosebery. Writing to a friend of his who regretted his non-success, Rosebery said the only real prize was to have done your best. That was a prize that everyone could win, and he would like to congratulate every boy in the School who was going home for the holidays feeling that he had won that prize.

Duplicated extra

CHAPTER XII

THE GERMAN DANGER

13 200

WAR TIME IN LONDON

In the hope that my grandchildren and their children will never see for themselves international war, we who have known it ought to record what to them may, please God, be an incredible nightmare.

For two long periods of my life the human race ^{has been} devoting the greatest efforts in its history to material destruction, This madness came, moreover, just when productive capacity increased so quickly that there was no longer any need for one nation to grab the land of another in order to insure against poverty. Whether the strife arose from defective social machinery (capitalistic abuses) or from the moral influence of unsocial character in general, it looks to us of these days like a disease whose bacillus has not yet been immunised because it is not identified.

Of the fighting itself there will be plenty of records. I say nothing of it because I was above military age in both war periods. But I make a note of one experience of the time, because we saw more of it than many of our friends. This was the sustained bombing of the London area by the piloted aircraft, by the flying bomb and by rockets.

All through the summer of 1944 these flying bombs brought death and destruction day and night. Many times

201

in the night you were woken by the hum of the engine;
when the hum stopped you knew the bomb was falling, and
the great explosions would follow. Whom would it strike?
Sometimes over four hundred houses were injured by one
bomb. We stayed in London because Lydia had to be there
for work. Lucy preferred being on the spot for her work
for the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association.
The sangfroid of Londoners was amazing. Risk of sudden
death seemed to leave people entirely unaffected. The aged
Lords, debating endlessly in a room at the Church House,
the details of the Education Bill, paid no attention. The
men from the fronts said they found London life far more
nerve-shaking than the actual fighting.

My limerick sums up my own conclusion:

"Robots meant to break our nerve
quite a different purpose serve,
Serve our purpose of the past
To live each day as if our last."

After "I have seen you".

Omission. (George VI.) It is a stroke of public luck to have such a seriously-minded King, and very special luck, from the Christian point of view, to have a King and Queen who are keenly religious.

GEORGE EDWARDS

I cannot pass on to the next period without a tribute to my greatest helper in securing the North Norfolk seat. This was George Edwards, the agricultural labourers' leader. He had revived the Union started by Joseph Arch, which had died out. Edwards, as the world knows from his book, "Crow-saring to Westminster", was a very remarkable man. He was bred in the hungry forties when his father, - a farm labourer - went to jail for taking a turnip to feed his children; as a result of which he and his mother went to the workhouse.

He was almost a hunchback; though starved in his youth he had indomitable courage. He was an agitator from early years and lost his job. My uncle, Louis Buxton of Bolwick, then got work for him, and ultimately he began to organise the Union from his tiny cottage at Gresham.

When I got to know him in 1907 he was doing all the business of the Union from a minute attic, reaching meetings all over the county on his bicycle. He was also a fervent Primitive Methodist local preacher. When his Union meetings included a tea, he always opened with grace and sometimes a hymn. He got into Parliament in 1923, and it was jolly to have him in the house when I was Minister in charge of the Farm Wages Bill.

My fondness for him was undiminished by his voting against me in the Grand Committee of the Bill.

Edwards was a real friend. He was a genuine gentleman, and it was a great pleasure to have him staying with us at ^lCone Cottage - a pleasure enhanced by his quaint tastes, such as an abhorrence of novels, and a habit of putting seven lumps of sugar in his tea.

Note for Biography

Sir W. Lawson. Prophets of Baal.

Sir W. Lawson was a delightful friend. He loved to tell me how he hoped to see the brewers destroyed. He wanted it done by the method applied by the prophet Elijah. He hoped to see them all, including myself, on an altar, and consumed by fire from above.

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The German Danger.

Papen. Extremely charming.

Goebbels, who suggested a professor at the School of
Economics.

June 1916

Page 265

Note by House from his Diary saying what he told Noel Buxton about the difficulty of working with the Allies. Wilson made the offer to mediate, and fight Germany if she rejected Wilson's terms. Grey would not follow this up.

"When Noel-Buxton was here" (the Colonel wrote, June 29, 1916) "I told him how impossible it was to staisfy the Allies. It is always something more. I thought if we went to war, the Allies, after welcoming us warmly and praising us beyond our deserts, would later, when they found we were not furnishing as many men (or any men, for that matter, for we have none), would begin to chide us just as the French did the English, and say we were not spilling our blood, that we were shirkers, etc., etc., etc.. Nothing which it would be possible to do within a year after we entered the war could please them.

"It was tiresome, I told Buxton, to hear the English declare they were fighting for Belgium and they entered the war for that purpose. I asked if in his opinion Great Britain would have gone into the war on the side of the Allies even if France had violated Belgium, or indeed whether Great Britain would not have gone into the war on the side

of the Allies even if France had violated Belgium. In my opinion, the purpose of Great Britain's entrance into the war was quite different from that. The stress of the situation compelled her to side with France and Russia and against the Central Powers. Primarily it was because Germany insisted upon having a dominant army and a dominant navy, something Great Britain could not tolerate in safety to herself."

Principles

Life is especially difficult for anyone who has not a regular job regulated by some authority, and leaving no freedom to stay away from it when inclined. It then ought to become a guiding principle to work at least as much as would justify the cost of one's life in regard to national resources. That is difficult to estimate, and the safest rule is to aim at contributing as much work as you can.

Sundries

Social Progress

I have been lucky in seeing enormous advance in the standard of life and comfort of the poorer classes, and especially fortunate in the privilege of taking part in the legislation concerned. When I began work in 1890 there seemed hardly a possibility of altering the appalling slum condition, the high death rate, the drunkenness, total want of provision for treatment of sickness, or removal of the dismal prospect of the workhouse for the years when people are past earning their living. Reform was brought about by the rise of trade unionism and the sagacious altruism of pioneers led by Canon Barnett, who influenced the difficult leaders. I think it was due as much to the idea of social settlements as of anything else which led the country out of the abyss. The idea of knowing the facts and people by living among them ~~which~~ had much greater weight than the rather patronizing theory of the public spirit led by Shaftesbury. Such a thing as the Old Age Pension seemed so remote that even Barnett himself was opposed to it. But by the time I myself voted for it, he had adopted the more optimistic view of its value. Beveridge, who now leads opinion so far further, was Barnett's pupil at Toynbee, and I remember going round the East End

with him when he was a young Civil servant who wanted to enquire into the possibility of Employment Exchanges. The Labour Party is quite right to want more progress, but we ought not to forget what we owe to Liberalism in its best days, and I am glad that Attlee expresses our indebtedness.

Mussolini

He sent me a message through Villari that he would welcome a visit from me. I felt it wrong to accept his hospitality without speaking for my fellow Socialists who were his victims. But I might have seen him and brought this in. I dreaded, however, that my seeing him would damage me in the eyes of the Labour Party, as Sidney Webb had been blamed for a similar visit. I think I ought to have been more enterprising.

13.10.47.

Biography Note.

Gerrard Noel about Turks.

Why he liberated ^ded Crete though a pro-Turk.

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Thankfulness versus Grouching

Debt of leisured people to do work, as they have their share of keep and produce of labour as much as those who earn, and more. People ask: " Why do you work when you need not ?".

Germany

I remember Ribbentrop letting himself go in conversation with me about his envy of British Imperial good fortune. He was quite eloquent about the feelings aroused in him when he attended the Lord Mayor's Banquet, and realised the various possessions which underlay British wealth and power. The German outlook was natural, and is much better described in Churchill's account of Kaiser William.

The German Danger.

About 1937 I thought of a new approach to Hitler in regard to Concentration Camps. Public action had proved quite useless, so I asked Doctor Temple, then Archbishop of York, to join in a personal appeal to Hitler, using the argument that we were desirous of seeing good-will towards Germany in this country. I sent a letter on these lines to Ribbentrop, and he responded by sending over an important messenger in the shape of a certain Count Dohna, a well-known Junker. He announced himself through Evans when we were at Cromer for the August holidays, and he was so determined to see me that he came to stay with us. We talked far into the night, and he explained that Ribbentrop wanted to convey the Nazi point of view better than could be done by letters. He drove home the point that Nazism represented a complete rejection of ideas hitherto accepted as fundamental; not only what was liberal, also what was humane had no use for the Nazis, and therefore we must understand that our arguments about atrocities and camps made no appeal at all.

FUN

I was criticised by my sisters for being so fond of joking that I gave no impression ~~of being~~ (to strangers) of holding serious views. Perhaps this defect arose from being in my own opinion extremely dull and from wishing to be less so. To redeem myself I sometimes indulged in the humble art of parody. Here is a sample, which serves also to record the verbiage of early life at Warlies. I am also pleased with some of my Limericks, and submit the following:

Biography Notes

Gerrard Noel about Turks. Why he liberated Crete though a pro-Turk.

Biography Notes

Meals at A.J. Balfour's.

Oliver Lodge and general conversation.

Biography Notes

Webb and Balfour

Oliver Lodge.

Notes for Biography

re Controlling Children, or the modern theory.

Mention Romans XII. and afterwards broken.

Politics and Society

It is a famous feature of English political life that personal relations are not damaged by difference of political views. It is famous, but not necessarily admirable. Pure opinion ought not to divide people, because opinions should be distinct from feeling. But the difference between desire for decent housing and the desire to keep down the rates represents the difference between altruism and self-preservation, and that is properly a division of moral personality.

As to the effect of my own politics on social relations, it did happen that, after I became known as a Radical, I lost sight of nearly all the houses where I had formerly stayed. But I think this was more from being regarded as too busy to pay visits. On the other hand, there is an interesting feature in the vehement hostility of many Conservative minds to those who support social change, because this hostility seems to be greater in those who know least, and care least about politics.

Lloyd George

Once when breakfasting at Downing Street during the war I was painfully surprised by the casual way in which L.G. spoke of a certain British Force which, the day before, he had learnt was being annihilated. Perhaps I ought to make allowance for a habit of talking without restraint, because I remember when I had invited him to meet someone at dinner in the Strangers' Room in the House of Commons, a note was brought to him during the dinner by the waiter. It proved to be a little scrawl from Sir John Simon, as he then was, who was dining at a neighbouring table. It was a friendly warning to L.G. that what he said was being overheard, and was too private for the ears of strangers.

139

Bonar Law.

One of the most amazing things that I have seen in my life was B.L. standing at the box and declaring his support of the Irish rebels. He, the representative of a party of law and order, asked to say explicitly whether he approved of the King's subjects arming themselves to resist the decisions and the forces of the Crown, arrived at by constitutional process, replied emphatically that he did so. It gave me the impression of madness and unreality, but it led to appalling results, and perhaps to the Great War.

It was entirely supported by the Conservative Party, and this is one of the cases which should make us look with doubt on the reputation of Conservatism for trustworthiness.

During the long Conservative reign which followed the Four Years' War the Tory Party claimed to be loyal to the League of Nations system, and, although it was foreign to their national tendency, to Nationalism, and imperialism of the Party, I felt confidence in the professions of Baldwin; but after all we were disappointed in the event. Nobody now believes that the professed enthusiasms for the League was quite genuine.

Limericks

Robots meant to break our nerve
Quite a different purpose serve,
Serve our purpose of the past
To live each day as if our last.

N.B.

From sport and brewing of porter
He turned to dissuade Turks from slaughter;
But political life he passed on to his wife,
So now he's a fish out of water.

Aunt Mary (Francis) Buxton

"Fowell's boys are a joke," said Aunt Mary,
"Idealists ! Sloppy ! Long-hairy !"
But when they alone, of the whole tribe of Colne,
Reached a bishop's high throne,
She wished she had been more wary.

V. de B.

She was marked in the pattern divine,
A leader of men superfine,
A Beatrice Webb, or at least a D. Jebb,
But she chose just to serve Eglantine.

Lydia (1946)

From convention she loves far to stray,
And of Pa's lousy plans to make hay.
At working or playing
She's proof of the saying,
That where there's a will there's a way.

Limericks (continued)

V. de B.

Intellectuals love her and hug her,
But she likes to befriend the quite gaga;
Though her place is the forum
She asks but a quorum,
And her audience couldn't be snigger.

C.V.H.

Her charm might be thought merely clever,
But in fact it lacks sympathy never.
Now in tenement small
She gives Wilfrid the hall,
And remains just as charming as ever.

I don't remember anything else about royalties, until the Labour Government came into power. Then each minister had an interview at the Palace with George V. He was very friendly on the Norfolk neighbour lines. Dick Buxton had been shooting with him. He got onto the Farm Labourers' Union, and George Edwards, the farm labourers' leader, whom he had met. He spoke against legislating on farm wages, which was most unconstitutional, on his part, and rather awkward, as it was my job to do this very thing. But after I had committed the offence by getting the bill through the House, the subject happily did not arise again when we next met. I think that this was when he was at the shire horse show, at the Agricultural Hall, and it was my business to attend him. We talked together in the middle of the arena, while some trial was going on, and had a leisurely chat. I was concerned about wholemeal flour, and thought of bringing it to the public attention, by sending a loaf to the King and Queen. I found that he was quite keen about it, except that it did not make good toast. Then we talked about humane killing and he was enthusiastic about it. He said that the opponents of humane killing were absurd to use the argument of the danger of flying bullets, which were said to have once killed a boy. He broke out in his vehement way with the exclamation "only one boy!" The tone of voice was as if it had been one rat. The King was in good form at the competition of moving a heavily loaded van from a stationary position. He was to have a private demonstration, I forget how many tons it was. We watched the tremendous efforts made by the horse for perhaps twenty seconds. Then the King's humane instincts got the better of him, and he hastily ordered "stop it".

I had two very nice talks with Edward VIII. One was at the Agricultural Hall when we lunched together, and the other was on Armis-

tice Day, when the Cabinet were asked by Queen Mary to meet her in the room which she occupied to watch the service just below. After I had talked to her, Edward chatted about his father who was ill, and I expressed the hope that he would soon be well enough to shoot. Some paper had said that he used a twelve bore hammer gun, now long out of fashion, and I told him that I had my father's gun of the same type, still in use. He said that the papers were correct, but that his father used a sixteen bore since his illness.

At another agricultural function, the Duke of York was present ; not easy to talk to , but the Duchess, now Queen, was very agreeable, and we got onto Herbert Ogilvie, I remember, they having been neighbours in Scotland. In 1941, the Duke having become George V, had me summoned to a Privy Council meeting, which means four or five Privy Councillors: I was the senior, and therefore went into the room first. Knowing his reticence, I was quite surprised when he greeted me very warmly, with, "It is a long time since I have seen you ! But certainly the most interesting personal relation that I can record, was with Q. Mary. She and George V proved to be interested in the connection of my grandmother with Q. Victoria. When I first became a minister, Q. Mary, at a Buckingham Palace garden party, as we spoke to her in the queue of hundreds who were brought to her , said that Lucy and I must go to Windsor to see my granny's portraits, one of which the Prince Consort had had copied and given to her. We neglected to follow this up, and when I was again in office five years later, Q. Mary said at once, when we met, that we ought to have been. She really had an extraordinary power of memory. It seemed a miracle that she should connect people whom she saw at long intervals with particular associations. We went to Windsor, and found that there were several of the pictures, notably in a group showing Q. Victoria

meeting K.Louis Philipe, but oddly enough there was a larger scale portrait of my grannie alone in the King's private study. I could not think why. The Queen sent me a photograph of this picture.

Sundry cont.

Achievements

Accomplishments. C.R.B. and I once discussed the question

whether one could hope to have done any good. I said I liked to credit myself with two definite things; one was the Agricultural Wages Bill of 1924, and the other was the preservation of Peacocks. He said that he would think rather of having stirred other people to new force and interest, and certainly he could credit himself with a great deal in that way, if he had cared to think of his own credit at all. As to me, he thought I could add to my list the preservation of many lives of Balkan inhabitants. I will indulge my vanity by confessing that I think of other things which would not have been equally done by anyone else. I ~~am~~ quite proud of the garden planting, especially the miniature landscape-making ~~at the~~ ~~the~~ which I have done at the Fightle, Colne Cottage ^{and landscape gardening at the Bury.} ~~and the Bury.~~ Also the planting in Wareles Park which my father did at my suggestion. Much more important than this I count the republication of the Liberator's Life Memoir, and if I am lucky I shall be able to add the new memoir which I now hope to bring about.

Sundry cont.

FOREBEARS,.....I think that we ought to pay tribute to forebears, who made it easier for us to do something with our lives. Pride of ancestry is usually snobbish, but in our case pride goes with gratitude for congenital health of body and mind.

We are all familiar with the boon which we have from being descended from Thomas Fowell Buxton, the Liberator. I ought to add the Garneys, who produced Elizabeth Fry and T.F.B.'s wife, Hannah. My grandmother was another notable Gurney. Also on my father's side, I feel indebted to the long line of puritanical Buxtons who lived at Coggeshall in the 17th. and 18th centuries.

Several other ancestors have done us a good turn, showing great spirit, and what some would vulgarly call guts. My mother's grandfather, Lord Roden, was head of the Orangemen, and got into trouble for his faith. Her great-grandfather Sir Charles Middleton, who became Lord Barham, was made Minister for the Navy by Pitt, when already over eighty years old. He had been Head of the Admiralty and as Minister he planned the Battle of Trafalgar. Another ancestor of hers was Sir Baptist Hicks, the prosperous Cotswold clothmaker, who built the great house at Campden, and shortly afterwards, when Cromwell's troops were approaching, burnt it down to prevent it becoming their headquarters.

Enterprise

On the title page of the Liberator's life is one of his sayings exhorting to energy. I wish I had followed his advice, especially in regard to enterprise. I have no excuse because Edie was always reminding us to be enterprising. I regret now that I did not think more of enterprise as opposed to reason and caution, in regard to many things - e.g. travelling with Ramsey Macdonald, who invited me several times; travelling with Bryce in Macedonia, and with Sir John Harris in Africa; going as Chairman to the Pacific Countries Institute when it met in China; and perhaps most, declining the Governorship of New Zealand. This occurred six months after the formation of the Labour government in 1929. It seemed at the time more important to remain in the Cabinet, but difficulties there proved very great, and I soon afterwards accepted the Governorship of Australia. But in the end the Labour Government then decided to appoint the Chief Justice, so nobody was sent out, and Ramsey expressed his regret that his offer had come to nothing.

In all these cases I was deterred, I suppose, by love of order & routine, and by a certain amount of laziness, but I think that some unreasoning enterprise would have been better. Let my descendants be warned by my mistake.

NOTABLES

It is interesting if one is connected with people who have met historic figures, so I may as well mention some of the notable people I have met.

Naturally I had contact with several prime Ministers. I never saw Disraeli, but I saw Gladstone and heard him speak. He was very old and sat speaking with a low voice, but very impressive. It was a Meeting for a memorial to a famous doctor who had attended him. Salisbury I shook hands with several times when we went to Parties at the Foreign Office. Balfour was the Premier I knew best, because I stayed at his house, being a friend of his relations who spent their holidays with him I won't repeat what the books say about him, but I should like to praise him as a host. He was charming and good-natured, and quite free and easy at a picnic. Campbell Bannerman was a dear old fellow.

Owing to my friendship with Balfour relations, I once did a very unusual thing. There were always great official evening parties on the eve of the session. Having attended the Liberal party to meet C.B., in Belgrave Square, I went on to the Tory party at Downing Street to meet Balfour.

Taking prime ministers I have known in their order, Salisbury was the first, but he hardly counts because I only shook hands with him at Foreign Office parties, to which I was invited as the son of a Unionist. Rosebery I met later. I need not say more than appears in a former chapter except

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E.C. is in pink folder

in the Office.

that my view of him was confirmed during the Great War when I had been seeing L.G. at Downing Street on Balkan policy. As I came out I passed a deputation waiting to see L.G. next, and noticed Lord Rosebery. I asked the door-keeper what the deputation was about, and was sorry to learn that its object was to ask permission for more horse racing. Campbell Bannerman is the next, and I am glad that I admired him as already described, because I seem too apt to criticise when I come on to Asquith. I had better say no more because he had great merits, but it was rather characteristic when a friend of mine went to him about pushing the Home Rule Bill, and Asquith replied "the gas is gone out of that balloon."

Lloyd George, whom I have told you about, was at one time my hero, but fell from his pedestal after the Versailles Conference.

Bonar Law was a strange, dry personality. On the Irish question he seemed quite inhuman, but when he dined with me at the Balkan dinner I thought him simple and straightforward. Also he gave me a perfectly magnificent cigar. About Macdonald I have said enough, and then we come to Baldwin. He was so attractive to me, with his air of philosophy combined with his unintellectualness, that I cannot believe that he was not as honest and keen on the League of Nations as he professed, but I don't know how to excuse his taking the country in about preparation for war. Neville Chamberlain was a dry personality. I hardly knew him, but after Munich I told him of a letter received from a German about him, and he wrote me saying that he thought Hitler meant well. I

liked him better when I sat by him at a lunch, and he told me about his father's orchids, which he said were all known by pet names. I have never cultivated Churchill and I have only one personal contact to report. He said to me, when we were talking in the House of Commons waiting room, that he was the only candidate who had ever induced a Buxton to vote Conservative.

A more famous figure than some prime ministers was Chamberlain's father, Joe. I was in the House with him, and heard him speak, but he was past his prime. This may interest you, just as it interests me to know that my father was in the House with Lord Palmerston.

Other great figures you may read of, and whom I may mention, included Archbishops Benson, Davidson, Lang and Temple, Sir Oliver Lodge, the poet Henry Newbolt, and, perhaps greatest of all these great men, Robert Browning. It was at a party of Dr. Butler's at the Master's Lodge, but I was not old enough to appreciate the great man fully, but I have a very nice impression of him as a short, rather fat, bearded, comfortable man, very kind to a speechless undergraduate.

CHAPTER XII SUNDRY

Peacocks

Regrets

Health

Strokes of Luck

Animals

Family

Sport

Money

Notables

Achievements

Enterprise

Pohls

Edwards was a real friend. He was a genuine gentleman, and it was a great pleasure to have him staying with us at Cone Cottage - a pleasure enhanced by his quaint tastes, such as an abhorrence of novels, and a habit of putting seven lumps of sugar in his tea.

~~easier and leisure more attainable for the great mass of the people. Then there is the machinery of modern war, which while in itself deplorable and some day to be superseded must be regarded as a necessary instrument in the present disordered and barbarous state of the world.~~

~~But none of these things are the essentials of civilisation.~~ "As the great Dante says, "Ye were not created to live the life of beasts, but to pursue virtue and knowledge." A truly civilised State may be briefly described as one in which all the citizens are inspired in a greater or less degree with a love of humanity, of truth and of beauty. And the highest energies of the nations are devoted to working out these ideas with ever increasing thoroughness and ardour.

This, they claim, is true of Bulgaria.

in the villages, and where the flowing robe of the Mohammedan Mullah and the long hair of the orthodox priest will excite his interest in the streets.

the days before the war the liberated fractions
~~In 1805 westernism had scarcely crept in. But its~~
~~of the Balkan races, and~~
~~first contacts were not without humorous lights.~~

~~Those nations - Bulgaria, Servia, and Roumania - once~~
~~in front of civilisation, long enslaved and ^{but already partly} set free,~~
 played with their new constitutions like children with a toy, and with a similar result - the toy got broken. On my first visit to Belgrade I made the acquaintance of two members of the Ministry; on my next visit I was hoping to meet them, but I was laughed at for my simplicity; they had gone where ministers naturally go - one was in prison; the other in exile.

~~But~~ the vagaries of politics were only the froth on the surface; there was a deep current of happiness and prosperity, following on the release from bondage. The ancient monasteries, always the symbol of national hopes, but often robbed and ruined in the days of the captivity, were now the scene of such festive happiness as the West knows no longer. At Studenitsa 10,000 people gathered to celebrate the Virgin's birthday. At Rilo 7000 pilgrims slept in the galleries and the five hundred rooms of the monastery itself. They were all the guests of the monastery, the monastic cook, with his wooden spoon, six feet long, serving out dinners from the

copper samapan large enough to contain the milk of two oxen together. [Religion and life were intertwined, but secular life too had its better.

copper saucepan large enough to contain ^{the meat of} two oxen together. Religious festivals, as formerly in the West were the occasion of commercial fairs; the fair, again, attracted the whole race of mirth providers; dancing occupied the evening, and there might still be seen the blind minstrels of Homeric ^{type} tradition, singing of national glories, long passed, to the strains of the one-stringed guitar. Neither was religion forgotten; at 5 a.m. the monks began to say Mass, and at daybreak ^{you} hardly found standing-room in the chapel. Round its colonnade were pictures showing the sufferings of the wicked in another world; those of brigands seemed to attract most attention, and the abbot would tell you that these need ^{ed} no apology - it was the only way to teach the illiterate peasant. Life seemed here so far from the Western world that when one learned that in this chapel was held a memorial service at Mr Gladstone's death, one

~~felt surprised that they had ever heard of him.~~ Round the villages there ^{is} was often a large common, covered in autumn with broad sheets of the purple crocus; here grazed the village herd of dun-coloured cattle, each beast finding its own way in the evening to its master's house in the village street. In this meadow on Sunday afternoon the village gathered for the hora, or national dance. A circle of dancers formed round the fiddler ~~(or, if it be in Bulgaria, the piper)~~, and whether the number in the circle ~~was~~

was six or a hundred no Western party could compete ^{was} with it for vigour and mirth."

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CHAPTER IX

POLITICS

CHAPTER IX

POLITICS

Early Toryism

76 A.
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I am ashamed to think of the narrow views which, for several years after growing up, I held on social justice, although it may enable me to take a broader view of other people's opinions to-day. I somehow contrived to be strongly concerned for social betterment, in some ways, with rank class prejudice in others. I could make a case of Toryism even now, if it were not for the fact that English temperament is overwhelmingly Conservative, and the opposite view is more needed in practice. I am shocked to remember that in my shooting days I was blind to the criminality of closing a public footpath in order to keep land at Warlies quiet for game. I must wear a white sheet and confess that I made the keeper, Joe Lodge, keep certain stiles blocked up in the hope that people would disuse the path which crosses the upper bridge across the brook, and induce them to be content with the other path which avoids going through the Brook Wood, and passing the edge of Scatterbushes. It is some consolation to think that many people whose action strikes me as anti-social, are quite unaware of their falling short of what now seems to me to be humane, reasonable and ideal.

CHAPTER III

POLITICS

P. 77
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Barnett and Gore led me to politics, but it was V. and C.R.B. who pushed me into standing for Parliament. The C.S.U. had not made me political in the parliamentary or Liberal sense, and I had a strong distaste for public appearance. What political views I had were feudal.

In 1892 I had got up a meeting at Upshire to support Lockwood, the Tory candidate, and had had no connection with Liberals since I was at Harrow. There, having been brought up a Gladstonian until Father joined the Unionists in 1886, I remember speaking in a House debate, denouncing Lord Salisbury's name as " a byword for prevarication".

Father had been practically Conservative, and my position in the Brewery was at variance with Liberal policy. It required the Boer War to give me much contact with the Liberal Party view, and even so, it was only with the Campbell-Bannerman section of the Liberals. My uncle, E.N.B., who was chairman of Truman's, encouraged me to stand, and introduced me to Herbert Gladstone, who was the Liberal Chief Whip. The result was my selection as candidate at Ipswich, and the preliminaries were made easy.

When it came to public life and visits to leading supporters, I found the strain very severe, especially as

I was all the time carrying on my work at Truman's and my other jobs. The election was alleviated by the presence of Masterman, C.R.B. and others, but it was a painful time for me. And when it was over I felt very unlike standing again.

I did not agree with the "pro-Boers" nor with the Tories. I condemned Chamberlain and Milner for a policy which would have been adjudged aggressive by a League of Nations enquiry, but I did not want the Boers to win because of their treatment of the blacks. Yet the war was the main topic, so for me the campaign was hardly fun. However I was very kindly treated by politicians, especially by Lord Spencer, who had been in the Liberal Cabinet, and I was gratified by the support of my uncle Francis Buxton and others. I was only beaten by about two hundred votes.

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page 78
(old copy)*

Two years later I was asked to stand for the North-West Division of Essex, which was a Liberal seat, but I was still deterred by previous experience. Then in 1904 I found my position at Truman's inconsistent with standing, and I resigned after many qualms about cutting adrift from a regular job. Greater freedom made me keen to stand, and in 1905 I offered to put up for the vacancy which occurred in the Whitby Division. To everybody's surprise I won this seat, which had never been anything but Tory. Campbell-Bannerman, then Liberal leader, spoke of the "crowning mercy of Whitby".

I found the strain of Parliament very great. I was young and I was still younger for my age. I got sustenance from recollections of the Liberator. More than once I remember going to the statue in the Abbey to remind myself of the inscription which I like so much. (This appears on page 29.)

There were some thrilling things in that Parliament. It was an event to be in the House with Joe Chamberlain, and I heard him speak. But he was already failing, and his end was not far off. Another notable figure was Lecky, whom I revered most of all the historians whom I had studied at Cambridge. ✓

P. 79
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It was jolly to be in the House with my father's old friend Sir John Kennaway, and I liked some of the Members very much. Jebb, the famous classic, I remember congratulating me on studying the rules of procedure. Sir Wilfred Lawson was also a delightful patron. He never lost a chance of fun, and I remember sitting by him below the gangway when he began a sort of greeting to me by adapting Scott's poetry with the words, "Oh Macedonia, stern and wild, fit muse for a poetic child".

P. 79
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One of the features of that summer, when the Tory Government was dying, was the attempt to get them out by a snap division. The Chief Whip organized a secret gathering of Liberal members in a house in Dean's Yard, when there was an all-night sitting and the Government's men had slipped past their Whips. The Liberal Whips were to telephone when the moment came for us thirty or forty stalwarts to rush across for the division. It never came off, but the intense boredom of spending most of the night, dawdling sometimes in the open air until long after midnight, remained a painful memory.

(page 80
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I found the House an irksome strain. I was too little developed and found the Party very little associated with my C.S.U. outlook. However, Bryce was there, so that my Balkan Liberationism had good support.

I liked my constituents, the local Yorkshire Liberals, very much. The keen Nonconformists, when roused to fury by Balfour's education policy, were an inspiring, vigorous Christian type. The North Yorkshire moors and Whitby itself were a delightful background, and I felt confident of winning in the General Election which everyone knew would end the ten years domination of the Tories.

However, the great landowners of that feudal district put out tremendous efforts to retrieve their power in the dales, even sending their gamekeepers round to the little farmers with the demand that they should promise their support to Beckett, the Tory candidate, in writing, and I was beaten by 70 votes. I had roused enthusiasm in Whitby, and on the announcement of defeat I was carried through the old streets like a triumphant victor; the old houses seemed to rock with the tumult and every house appeared to be hung with my colours. In London I was commiserated as one of the few who failed, especially by those whom I had helped into politics; Masterman was conspicuous among these. He was to get Office within a few months.

(Page 817. in old copy)

p. 80
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p. 81

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My chance of re-entry came through the fact that the North Norfolk member, Sir William Gurdon, was soon to resign. I took opportunities of speaking in Norfolk and this was made easy by the fact that I had become the occupant of Runton Old Hall. At my suggestion, Father had created small holdings out of the Hall Farm, and the house, which I had long admired when partridge shooting on Spratt's Hill, had become free, being no longer needed as a farm house. I held it until it had housed one or two friends, including Rosslyn Bruce, who through that visit became married to Rachael Gurney. But I had no real use for it and soon persuaded Connie and Bertram to take it over. This was how it became a noted place because they made the most of its possibilities. Later I became the occupant of Colne Cottage, when Father moved into Colne House, and I began to furnish it, aided by Aunt Minna of Catton, who took me to the old furniture shops of Norwich.

P. 82
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When Sir. W. Gurdon announced his retirement there was keen contention among the Liberal leaders of the Division, some of them thinking I was too radical because I had taken up the cause of the agricultural labourer. Finally it came to a competition of candidates, Headquarters having disregarded my plea for preference, and having sent a young friend of Asquith's, Harold Baker, at the request of the non-radical local leaders.

915

The Farm Labourers' Union then announced that they would back me whether the Liberals adopted me or not, and this aroused intense indignation. The meeting of the Liberal Hundred at Melton was almost a battle. I was adopted by 36 votes to 24, and then those who resented the importance claimed by the labourers, refused to support me, though I was the official candidate. They came back to me by degrees, and I was elected by a good majority in the January election of 1910. Charlie got in too.

p-82

Any activities of mine in the succeeding years in Parliament which can be said to be of public interest are described in ~~Evan's~~ book "Foreign Policy from a Back Bench", but I may tell of some aspects which that book is not concerned with.

p.83

It was an exciting time, and very thrilling that Charlie and I had got in together. We were both definitely Radical, and keen supporters of the small group led by Sir Charles Dilke, which had a weekly meeting. We were all sympathetic with Ramsay Macdonald, who had just become Labour Leader, and we were naturally disapproved of by the mass of Liberal members, many of whom appeared to us little distinguishable from the Tories.

The Marconi incident was a feature of the times, and might have brought the Government down. Naturally we Radicals were displeased with leaders who gave rise to the charge of putting private interests before public rectitude, and this view was keen among the men who attended the weekly lunch of the writers of "The Nation". I was one of those, being a friend of Massingham, the famous editor. In the talk at ^{luch} I made some drastic comments, and I remember my alarm when these appeared in the next number of "The Nation," mercifully without my name.

p. 83
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When the papers kept announcing the formation of new groups formed to ginger the Government on one point or another, the names of us two Buxtons constantly appeared, and I remember Sydney Buxton, who had become Postmaster General, and was soon to get the Board of Trade, saying half playfully and half reproachfully that whenever he heard of a rebellion, he knew without looking that C. and I were in it.

p. 84

It was very jolly to find oneself in the House with old friends in other causes, such as Arthur Ponsonby, and Percy Alden and Masterman, and there were new friends who became close allies. One was Phillip Morrell, who loved a fight for its own sake.

97 ~~26~~

For instance he led a crusade against the Russian Government when it imprisoned a Polish girl for her socialism. In this case we attacked the Government for lethargy, and I remember raising the question on the adjournment, and using the expression "Oh for an hour of Palmerston!" I fear I was hardly ingenuous that day.

The case would never have been heard of if the girl had not been a friend of Fanny Noel, owing to whom Morrell got to hear of it. Anyhow, the Russian Government gave way, so we got the girl out of goal. How often do great events depend on the activity of one person.

My closest collaborator in those years was Howard Whitehouse. He had been secretary at Toynbee Hall, and had made his way by the aid of intense enthusiasm, a passion for reform, a sympathetic personality and a formidable wit.

p. 84
dupl)

We two bachelors were able to indulge our common tastes by co-operating in the House and in the country and even by foreign travel. He was ready to help me, for instance, in promoting the cause of the inshore fishermen of the British coasts. This meant meetings at Cromer and at Sheringham, and led to motors being fitted to fishing boats. It was proper that I should care for the fishermen of the Norfolk coast, but it also meant visits to Devon. We denounced the neglect of the fishermen's interests in debate, and Whitehouse was

97

a somewhat unexpected advocate of men so remote from urban life. It was reported that he had not quite realized the cause he was supporting, and had alluded to his clients as "indoor fishermen".

p. 85

It was also new to him to work at foreign affairs, but he was extremely clever at taking up new subjects, and most friendly in following my tastes. So after the Agadir incident of 1911 he came with me to Berlin. We both of us spoke and wrote upon it, and came to see that the Anglo-German trouble must be regarded as our chief concern.

He was also my partner in running Colne Cottage and helping me to entertain there. He was very ^{art} ~~art~~istic and led me into the promotion of applied arts. We decided to help the handicraft movement by establishing in Cromer an expert in metal work, complete with workshop, forge and shop. He made lovely ironwork, especially fire irons and lamp stands, and also jewellery. When I had nephews staying in the winter it was great fun to hammer pokers, toasting forks, and table lamp-holders ^{p. 86} on the forge. It all went happily until the war came and killed it. But the pokers we made are still the best that I possess.

p. 86

Whitehouse was a great authority on Ruskin, and I learnt a lot through him. He deplored, as I did, both the humbug and toadyism which invaded even some parliamentary

p. 86

minds, and he was amusing to the last degree when he took off these oddities. He lost his seat in 1918 but he was not a man to be defeated by fate, and he proceeded to create a very large boys' school which embodied highly original methods and studies.

p. 86

An enterprise with Whitehouse which I still often think of with pleasure was his campaign for preventing the London parks being spoiled by a memorial to Edward VII. The official proposal was to make a great roadway and stone bridge across St. James's Park from St. James's Palace to Queen Anne's Gate. It would have been a deplorable injury to the park and the delightful lake, and the view along the water would have been obscured. Whitehouse raised the matter in debate and got me to back him up, and the old Lord Carlisle, who was an artistic notable, wrote forcibly in "The Times". The Government gave way and made another scheme for a triumphal road across Green Park, going so far as to erect the splendid gates at the high point in Piccadilly. They are a record of the attempted scheme, as are the gates opposite the Palace. This time the Prime Minister intervened, with a speech breathing haughty indignation, and said nothing would alter the determination of the Government.

p. 87

However, Whitehouse beat him, and the end was most

satisfactory. Two parks of priceless value were saved, and the East End acquired a park (at Shadwell) which otherwise would never have existed. My friend achieved, in fact, an exploit which really showed the greatest daring, certainly greater than I would have displayed if I had not been roused to battle by my diminutive leader.

p. 87

Let me summarise my eighteen years in the House of Commons. The first four were enlivened by great crises of democracy, firstly by the Lloyd George budget, and the Parliament Act. Secondly by the Irish Home Rule struggle, which was complicated by the Women's Suffrage campaign. Four years were then occupied by the Great War, and eight (1922 -1930) by the post-war period. This included four elections, two Labour Governments, and the unsuccessful attempt to establish collective peace. One now sees that 1910-1914 was a period of a peculiar kind, in which Liberalism passed through its phase of decay. I will not attempt to describe this because everyone should read the brilliant book of Mr. Dangerfield on "The sad tale of Liberalism". It describes those years with fascinating irony.

p. 88

The travels of that time were definitely political. In 1910 we went, quite a family party, to the

100

Inter-Parliamentary Conference at Brussels. Belgians were annoyed with England because of the Congo atrocities campaign, and when the time came to leave, the hotel refused to take a cheque. We then called a taxi, but found that our luggage had been locked up. Charlie nobly offered to stay behind till the evening and raise money from the Consul.

In 1911 came the Agadir crisis, and in August I went with Whitehouse to Berlin. We found that Lloyd George's reckless words had created despair even among the keenest Anglophils, and Sir George Goschen, our Ambassador, said to me: "His speech has destroyed all my work".

In 1912 came the Balkan war, and I went out with Harold in October. The Premier, Gubshoff, arranged for us to join the Commander-in-Chief, General Savoff. I tell of this episode later on and in my book "With the Bulgarian Staff".

12.88

Next year Harold and I felt we had neglected the chief sufferers from Turkish misrule, namely, the Armenians, and we went out across Russia, meeting the Bryces in St. Petersburg - as it then was - and Arthur Moore, correspondent of "The Times" who had been the first secretary of the Balkan Committee.

(page 89)
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We pushed through the Caucasus into Persia, and then

101

back through Turkey. The Russians were in occupation of Persia near Tabriz, and passed us on to the Kurdish chief Simko, on the Turco-Persian frontier, who became famous for massacre and treachery during the Great War. We were robbed by his retainers, and perhaps came nearer to being finished off than we realised at the time. I refrain from enlarging here because we recorded our doings in a joint book: "Travel and Politics in Armenia".

p. 89

Let me here record a few impressions that I formed of Parliamentary life.

It is very easy to pick holes in the British Parliamentary machine. Stevenson expressed an obvious weakness when he said that legislating was the only profession for which no training at all was demanded. Obviously as social legislation becomes more and more constructive and complicated, it is absurd that membership of Parliament should be confined to men of large means, much leisure, or else a gift of the gab.

Vast numbers of M.P.'s belong to no official committee, and make no speeches. Much of the expenditure of time and money might very well be regarded as waste; there is far too much Party spirit, and too much satisfaction with a life which has little responsibility. I should like to see more politicians professional in a proper sense. There are too few men who have been trained in social science. The few who have been trained as secretaries of social settlements, like Toynbee Hall, are of the utmost value, and their number should be multiplied tenfold. They would possess the right training in social needs. But the art of getting bills through Parliament could not be learnt by previous training. The element of expert science is furnished by the Civil servant, and the quality

P. 90
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page
90

of these is extraordinarily high. Yet the predominance of the Minister, combined with frequent changes in Ministerial personnel, makes it urgent that he should have had training. At present, candidates are chosen rather for their wealth, except in the Labour Party.

P. 91

The Minister is too ephemeral to feel long-term responsibility, and he is handicapped by being too busy to devote enough time to planning. One of these handicaps is an institution on which we are accustomed to pride ourselves, namely, the Parliamentary Question, i.e. the power of the M.P. to get an answer from Ministers on questions of fact or of intention. In my opinion the great merit of this plan is largely balanced by the excessive amount of time occupied by the Minister in getting up the answer to questions which often have no real importance, and merely serve to help an M.P. in the eyes of his constituents. A thing which often struck me in the House was the undue prestige acquired by the holder of office. It is no doubt a good thing that Ministers should be respected, but in fact they are only the men who have asserted themselves just a fraction more than their rivals for Office. They are much more fallible than the Public thinks, and I have often felt what a shock the Public would get if the irresponsibility of their remarks were known.

P. 91

P. 92

In those pre-war days neither Liberal nor Tory was in a hurry to reform things. Closure was regarded as a denial of the ideal of unlimited freedom of debate. Private motions took considerable share up to Easter, and when the Budget was finished in May, there was hardly more than time for one important bill before the August recess. Autumn sessions were regarded as abnormal, and it remained for the Labour Party to introduce the idea that things needed urgently to be set in better order. If we ever get a Labour Government in power as well as in Office, there will have to ^{be} free use of Closure by time-table.

Before I go further let me mention some non-political aspects of Parliamentary life. One thing that struck me, with my Quaker blood, was the indifference to waste which parliamentary life revealed. I found it both an inconvenience and a distressing extravagance that the only note paper in the libraries, and other writing places, was the old-fashioned double-folded sheet. It was actually owing to my request for single sheets that this revolutionary change was made in the House of Commons. It must have saved a good many thousands of pounds by this time.

When I had a Minister's room, I of course never dreamed of leaving the lights burning when I left it, and the fact that, on the contrary, some Ministers never thought of turning the lights off shocked me considerably.

P. 93

p. 93

There is also a terrible waste of time. An M.P. who wants really to earn his living must feel that he is only half employed by actual Parliamentary work, unless he is working hard to get Office. It is also a dull life unless he is extremely social and able to enjoy unlimited hours in the smoke room or Lobby or on the Terrace. I myself liked to regard the House as an office from which movements that one wanted to promote could be conveniently run. After questions there was always time to spare before 11 o'clock, even if one had meetings upstairs to attend up till dinner time. p. 93.

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p. 97

A great many people complained of the unhealthiness of life in the House. Certainly it is terrible to be indoors without a break for about nine hours on end, and they blame the impurity of the air. But I found the life perfectly salubrious, and I think this is due to my always going for a walk before dinner. Usually I did the round of Lambeth Bridge, the delightful walk along St. Thomas's Hospital, viewing Parliament House across the river, and back by Westminster Bridge. If people suffer from being cooped up, it is their own fault because it was almost always easy to get the Whip to let one off as there seldom were any Divisions in the hour before dinner. If people voluntarily shut themselves indoors from lunch until bedtime it is a

marvel if they do not become C3. At the same time the average M.P. is amazingly hardy. I myself found all-night sittings terribly trying. Sometimes a man collapses late at night. Willie Graham, when in charge of a bill, suddenly fainted behind the Speaker's chair, and an invaluable man was lost to the Government for several days.

p. 94
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But there is something about the atmosphere that keeps one going. I always found one could work with impunity or write letters after dinner for the whole evening until 11.p.m., while in any other place to write even a couple of letters might have given me a bad night.

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P. 93
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The foreign system of official committees connected with each Ministry gives members of Parliament more responsibility and occupation than we have provided in our system. I realised this when I was invited in 1915 to address the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Chamber. But the system will be resisted by Governments in this country because it certainly would limit the freedom of the Minister and take up much of his time.

I still think, after eighteen years in Parliament, that great reformers made far better use of their time than if they had been in Office. Wilberforce, Shaftesbury and Buxton have been infinitely more important than 90% of the Ministers of their day, and we could well do with more men with the ability to play for Office, who would devote themselves to promoting reform. At the same time I always felt that, if a Minister would turn reformer, and contribute the prestige of his position to promoting a cause, that would be the ideal position for successful reform. Robert Cecil is a good example; I had a small degree of the same advantage.

The English Party system probably produce better results than any other parliamentary plan, but I must confess that Party spirit seemed to me far too dominant. If you regard yourself as an advocate avowedly taking one side in a law court, the position is sound; but it seemed to me improper where the business was legislation. It leads to the Opposition fighting to prevent action which it may think highly desirable, on the general principle that the main business is to discredit the Government and turn it out. When I first got into the House, a Liberal member showed me proudly the reduced size of the Statute Books for recent years, showing his success in obstruction.

back to
page 93
(old copy)

p. 94. Accordingly I felt strong sympathy with the few Liberal members who insisted on voting for Tory Government proposals if they thought them good. I had the occasion for doing so myself all too early in my career. When I got in for Whitby in 1905 the Tory Government was passing a measure enabling the Church of Scotland to govern itself, and determine its doctrines. The Liberals were opposing because the Nonconformists held that the Church which wrongly accepted the help of the State ought to receive no favour until it shook off the State connection. I could not take that view myself and I persuaded one other Liberal member to rebel along with me. Campbell-Bannerman,

p. 95

(then Liberal leader) was very annoyed with me, and I was sorry for this because I was an enthusiastic supporter of his, but it could not be helped.

Some years before, after I stood in 1900, the Liberal Imperialists were conspiring against "C.B.", and in their search for support they got Lord Rosebery, the leader of what was called the Liberal League, to meet candidates at dinner. I did not like to refuse this select invitation, and ^{was} curious to see what attractive political proposals were offered to us. To my surprise, when dinner was over, I was the first to be called to a separate chat with the great man, and we had a long talk. I did not conceal my ardour for some radical measures, but they did not meet with enthusiasm. The ex-Premier dwelt on "efficiency" as the key note of the policy which was to rival that of Campbell-Bannerman, and my loyalty to the latter was confirmed. I was all the more sorry to hurt the old man's feelings in 1905.

My maiden speech, which was made in 1905, was agreeably appropriate to the Christian Social Union propaganda. Scott-Holland's paper, the organ of the C.S.U.^{ab} had been agitating about factory inspection, and I spoke on these lines on the Home Office vote, Scott-Holland subsequently eulogising me in his paper.

Having lost my seat in 1906 I accepted a request from Herbert Samuel, who had become Under-Secretary to the Home Office, to serve on a ~~departmental~~ enquiry into the evils of poisoning by lead and injury by dust, in potteries. We spent some time at Newcastle and in Staffordshire, and it was a very interesting insight into the scandalous conditions prevailing in some of the works. We recommended stiffer regulations, and these made a great reduction in the injury to workers.

back 2
p. 95
(old copy)

I tell elsewhere how I got back into the House in 1910. That Parliament secured the Lloyd George budget and old age pension. It required a second election (December 1910) to get a mandate for Home Rule, to become law through the Parliament Act. War came four years later, so there was no election till 1918.

After the Great War the place of the old Liberal Party was virtually taken over by Labour; the Labour members, who before the Great War had been few and had been regarded as exotics, introduced an entirely new factor. What **struck me most** was the **extraordinary** efficiency which most of them displayed - although they had received no more than an elementary school education. Ignorance of the derivation of words seemed to make no difference to their vocabulary, and the paucity of what is known as education

p. 96 seemed often to increase their quickness. Interjection thus became a much more marked feature of Parliamentary debate.

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p. 98
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When Lloyd George turned Asquith out, he needed badly to get keen supporters, in view of the violent disapproval of his action by loyal Liberals, and I was intrigued by the fact that I and only three or four others were invited by one of L.G.'s men to ^a select dinner party at the Ritz in December, 1916. It interested me that he thought I might be one of the henchmen. I accepted, though nothing was further from my plan than to support a Government whose raison d'etre was its adhesion to more fire-eating views on war policy than those of its predecessor. It was part of this policy to endorse the cause of the new small states to be created out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The word "Czechoslovakia" had not been heard before, and at this dinner L.G.'s new Chief Whip made great fun of the invention of a new nationality.

It was a striking occasion when the new Government first met in the House, and one was curious to see what reception L.G. would get when he entered to take his seat in the Prime Minister's place by the Box. Ministers who had been turned out were choosing places below the gangway. Mr. Birrell had secured a corner seat, and I sat next to him. He gazed with ^{p. 99 select} intensity at L.G. and said to me, "He's just a Welsh poacher", inserting several epithets not fit for repetition.

p. 98
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p. 100
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If any fear of public appearance can be excused, it is when a new Minister has to answer Parliamentary questions. You are not only facing Parliament, but are reported to the world at large. The official answer to the many questions which are put to you can be prepared, but the questioner has often laboriously planned to involve you in trouble. The crux is the supplementary questions of which you have had no notice, while the questioner has often thought out his method of giving you a fall. It is a searching test of mental rapidity staged in conditions of the greatest possible publicity.

As to Cabinet meetings, what happens there is a State secret, but I may be allowed to say that I found the work sadly hampered by lack of fresh air. Luckily my seat was near a window, but if I left it open a certain Minister was sure to shut it. I defeated him, however, by leaving just a crack too small to call his attention to the fact that it was open at all, but enough for my purpose. In the House it was a luxury to have a room of one's own.

p. 100
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p. 101
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As to work on the Front Bench, I am ~~ashamed to~~ say that in those tiring days I was plagued by attacks of sleepiness. On one occasion I found myself waking up only just in time. The thought of what would have happened if, when my question came, I had, instead of

p. 101

P. 101. ed. 1929 115
rising to reply, been seen in slumber on the Front Bench, still makes me shiver. My best expedient was to consume chocolates surreptitiously, while at Cabinet meetings I relied on the smoking of cigars. I also carried one of those powerful spring clips for holding papers together, and ~~exercised~~ by putting it on my finger, created pain in my finger which kept me awake.

The most important parliamentary job that I had was the piloting of the Agricultural Wages Bill in 1924. It was an exciting experience, involving the very unorthodox method of cooperation with the Conservative leaders. I was really indebted to Halifax, then Edward Wood, as much as to anyone, for the fact that the Bill became law. (I shall return to this later on.)

116

NORFOLK ELECTIONS

P. 102
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I fought seven election campaigns in North Norfolk, and Lucy afterwards fought two. In the earlier elections a good deal of rowdyism still survived in Norfolk, more so than in other parts of the country. It is curious that the Tory feelings against Liberals in the early days was even hotter than against Labour when Labour became the enemy. At Holt the toughs used to scatter pepper at meetings, which was an excellent way of destroying the dignity of the sneezing speaker. Once driving through Holt on a winter's night a sudden crash and fall of the broken window into the car testified to the good shot made by a Tory youth with a brick.

After the victory in December 1910 Connie and I, in an open car, ^{were} dragged into Cromer by my supporters, as we approached from Sheringham. The Tory mob, which was the largest element in Cromer, kept up a magnificent bombardment with lumps of turf from the roadside, and rotten eggs. These were aimed at the car on the principle of a mortar, being thrown up high, ^{passing} over the heads of my protecting supporters and falling on to us in the car. Eggs were deftly dropped on to us in this manner, and Connie's fur coat remained yellow for a long period afterwards. Lucy was a leading Tory at this period and I heard that her brother organised the attack. She ^{had} organised a Movement called

P 103

P 103
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117

N.N.N.N., signifying "No Noels for North Norfolk".

Afterwards, in married days, Lucy and I had an exciting time in Holt moving from the car to the meeting. A menacing crowd surrounded us, and in spite of two policemen in close escort, showered us with gravel.

Perhaps the climax was reached after the declaration of the Poll in 1922 when I was first elected for Labour. We had returned from Aylsham and were to go to some celebration meetings after a high tea. Gradually a curious noise penetrated from the front door, and Mrs. Kirby entered with every appearance of alarm, telling us that the crowd were breaking the windows. Sure enough the draught was blowing through broken glass over the front door as we made for the car. We could not yield to Mrs. Kirby's entreaties not to emerge, and made a dash for the car, which was all in darkness, the crowd being hidden behind it. As I seated myself the door of the ~~far~~ side was suddenly opened, and the hob-nailed boot of a political opponent struck me violently on the shin. We then felt the car being tipped up in the attempt to turn it over, and in the light of the head lamps we saw the faithful Mitchell (of the Cromer District Council) rolling on the ground, entwined with a tough from Chapel Street. At last we started off, amid showers of stones, and the second car, containing the agent and others, was also attacked as we all charged through the crowd. A stone which went through

p 104

p. 104
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the second car, containing the agent and others, was also attacked as we all charged through the crowd. A stone which went through the back window was picked up by our well-known Mr. Gee and was subsequently produced in triumph by him. We expected more fun on our return from Aylsham, but all was quiet and the Police came round to offer apologies for permitting these doings to occur.

Lucy's pungent speeches in later elections drew the fire of the enemy's fury from me to her, and we were followed from meeting to meeting by a well-known squireess whose thirst for Lucy's blood led her to take every opportunity afforded by her having made a speech.

Perhaps it was my support of the farm labourers which made Tory feeling, when I first stood, more violent than in other divisions. I was the favourite of the labourers because I had from the first felt that the Norfolk wage of 12/- a week (and less when wet weather prevented work) should not be overlooked by public men, whether the Liberalism of the day liked it or not. This was the reason given by a certain landowner for his efforts to get me blackballed when I came up for election to the Norfolk Club; efforts which were successful.

p 104

THE LABOUR PARTY

p. 106
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Until the Great War it never crossed my mind that I might join the Labour Party. For one thing, there was no place in the Party for the non-manual worker except through Socialist Societies, and we Liberals regarded Labour as only for the horny-handed. During the ^{war} two aspects changed my mind. On the one hand the Liberals who, under Asquith's leadership, tended to pursue respectability and drop the Radical idealism of Campbell-Bannermen, seemed to conform more and more to the Conservative outlook. The activities of wartime brought Parties together. For the first time Liberals found themselves free from Tory hostility, and on war questions they displayed no views different from the commonplace.

There were admirable exceptions. Buckmaster in particular, who had been a Law Officer, held views like those of Lansdowne on the settlement which should be pursued. I urged him to give a lead in that direction, and he felt strongly drawn to this, but said he could not break loose from Asquith to whom he owed so much. Indeed Asquith himself would have made a better peace than Lloyd George, but until his overthrow he showed no public sign of disapproving the purely "knock-out" policy which L.G. definitely pursued, thereby winning public favour, and justifying his expulsion of Asquith.

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p. 106
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I have already described my metamorphosis from Liberal caterpillar to Labour butterfly. I felt this more than ever when war came and Liberals displayed no principles in regard to war aims, in anyway different to those of the Tories. I therefore spoke for candidates pledged to what seemed to me a policy of reason, and when one of these was a Labourite I was reprimanded for doing so by the Chief Whip. The Labour Party, on the other hand, represented deep concern for the prevention of war, and was itself part of an intensified organisation. C.B.R. joined it forthwith. To do so was to me an alarming plunge. It was regarded by one's relations and friends as a betrayal, and I hesitated long. My nature is compromising, admiring balance and moderation. But conviction outweighed, not, however, before the election of 1918. I joined Labour soon afterwards and was elected by a good majority in 1922, and again in 1924, when we took office.

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P. 106 (middle page)
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I put off joining the Party in the hopes that I could carry my Liberal supporters with me if they were given time. Other Liberals moved to new Divisions, while I invited my old supporters to come over to a new Tabernacle. The strain was too great for many of them, and the fury of some local leaders was bitter. But I succeeded in the main.

P. 107
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My Tory opponent was confident of success, and at the last moment a Liberal candidate was also run against me, but I got in easily in 1922, and still more easily at subsequent elections. In all I was elected for North Norfolk twice as a Liberal, and four times as a Labourite.

P. 107
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I do not think I should have joined the Party if I had not seen that one should judge Parties by their deeds more than by their words. Socialists are fond of talking in general abstract terms which, I think, has largely hampered their success. Why say you want to socialise all the means of production, distribution and exchange, when you don't ! In practice when in office they are bound to promote measures which are not more startling than the best Radical measures of a Liberal Government. For instance, in the first Labour Government we did nothing of consequence except a Housing Bill and my own Wages Bill, both of which would have been normal to a Liberal régime, if it was genuine.

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107
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But I was convinced that the Labour Party represented a far greater interest in the question of peace and war than

(P. 107)
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did the Liberal Party. The question was so little spoken of by Liberal politicians before 1914 that if one talked of foreign politics one was an oddity, and was denounced as "the friend of every country but one's own".

p. 107
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It was the Labour Party which changed all that. It is essentially committed to international order because it is an international movement and organisation. More than that, it was recognised by the best Christian leaders, e.g. Gore and Temple, as embodying Christian ideals.

p. 107
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I feel that the Labour Party was the true successor of the Radical school of Liberals. It is a question of the degree of reforming energy. It is quite easy ^{p. 108} to take the view that things have moved in recent times quicker than before, and that there is no need to hurry. I can sympathise with the Conservative outlook, but by conviction I think it is mistaken. The vast improvements we have seen in social security and welfare would never have come about without the work of those who pushed hard and made the pace.

p. 109
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There was ^a wonderfully good illustration of the two schools of thought when I stayed with the venerable Bishop Westcott at Bishop Auckland. His son was arguing that the workers were well satisfied with their life, and that there was no need to encourage them to complain, because they were as happy as ourselves. The reply of his famous father, expressed in his tiny low voice, was the simple question "in one room?". It was a good answer because

123

I think that the most complacent person would find his views upset if he visited, as I have done, homes which consisted of a very small room in which were two beds, ^{one for} for parents, the other for boys and girls; in which meals were cooked and eaten and the family goods, including coal, were stored, and in which also members of the family were born and died.

p. 108
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p.109
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THE FIRST LABOUR GOVERNMENT

It was an historic event when the Labour Party, which had been dreaded by respectable people, actually took office. Old ladies nearly died of fear. I had never seen myself as a possible Minister, and it gave me a shock when Lucy and I went out to lunch with the Webbs and he broached the idea. I thought he might be speaking without his book, but soon afterwards Ramsay proposed himself to lunch at Rutland Gate, and asked me to take him by road to Oxfordshire to see his daughter. It looked as if he had something unusual to say. C.R.B. was at lunch, and when the car drove up to the door, he remarked "This is the car of destiny", and so it proved. The situation was thrilling but extremely alarming. I had always thought that Ministers represented first class brains. However, I was fortified by the assurance that strength is made perfect in weakness. Apart from the general alarm, I felt rather like a fish out of water in being regarded as an expert on agriculture, as I had long reserved myself for foreign questions.

We were duly marshalled at Buckingham Palace to be commissioned by the King, and knelt one by one in front of him to kiss his hand. Wheatly, the Minister of Health, had who always posed as a sort of republican, was ^{p.110} apparently unable to get up again from the cushion, and looked as if

125

P. 116
he had been overcome by passionate loyalty to the Throne.

We had no majority in the House without the Liberals and ought to have worked closely with them to carry out what they would support, but R.M. hated them even more than he hated the Tories, and we were never on good terms. In that situation we had little more than an opportunity for propaganda. I might have used the unrivalled platform which we had, as the first Labour Government, to make the country more acquainted with our policy for agriculture, through State control of the land, but the practical job was to get through my bill on wage regulation, and therefore to avoid antagonizing people as much as possible.

126

AGRICULTURAL WAGES BILL

This Bill was a heavy task, but my nose was kept to the grindstone by the urgent plight of the farm labourer. E

His wage, which had been adequate for the first time during the War, had rapidly fallen to the old scandalous level, when L.G. recklessly repealed the Agriculture Act in 1921. The Ministry reported to me cases where labourers were only getting £1 a week.

We had not a majority in the 1924 Parliament for any measures which did not carry the support of the Liberal Party, and would also be accepted by the Lords, and this limited the measures on which the Government could embark. Bills affecting the workers' interests were therefore limited to two, namely, housing and farm wages. Wheatley's Housing Bill encountered great opposition and occupied much time. The other Bill fell to me and we knew that it was doubtful how far the Liberals would support us in it. I introduced the Bill with a provision for restoring the National Wages Board, and the chances of the Bill on Second Reading looked fairly good, but in Grand Committee we found the Liberals lukewarm and a National Wages Authority was defeated.

Finding this I adjourned the Committee, disregarding the advice of my officials, because I did not wish to be compromised without consulting the Prime Minister. The

next step was to discuss with him whether to go on, and we debated this at lunch at Downing Street, Jimmy Thomas being with us. We decided to proceed and called the Grand Committee again. Friction developed with the Liberals, and I despaired of passing any bill at all. But one evening in the Lobby a Conservative country member let fall the remark that the Tories might not be opposed to a Bill which provided for separate authorities for each county. I wired Edward Wood, (afterwards Halifax) who was leading the Tories in the matter, asking him to meet me, because there was only just time for the necessary steps before the recess. He was willing to help a Bill on these lines provided that we did not insist on a minimum money wage figure. This the Liberals would not agree to, and when the Committee met we of the Labour Party were ourselves divided on the point, some of the Trade Union members insisting on voting for a minimum figure of 30/-. My old friend George Edwards was among these, as was natural, he being Secretary of the Farm Labourers' Union. The others did not so easily forgive, because they endangered the negotiation with Wood, by which alone a bill could be passed. Only the Tories could secure that the Bill should not be thrown out by the Lords. I had cautiously obtained Wood's promise to do this. To get the bill I had to oppose my Trade Union colleagues and to infuriate the Liberals.

Francis Acland, who led the Liberals, agreed with me, but some of his flock threw him over, so that I was forced into a novel alliance with the Tories. The Trade Union members on the Committee urged that the Bill should be dropped, and on strict principle their wishes should have prevailed, as it was an industrial question, but I decided to do what I thought was best for the agricultural labourers and, rather than betray them, I asked for a special meeting of the whole Party. At this I made the strongest possible appeal not to lose what would benefit the poorest class of workers, and the Party supported me.

Meanwhile Wood (afterwards Halifax) and Fitzroy (afterwards Speaker), who was assisting Wood in Committee, had been alarmed at the fact that some Labour members voted against me in Committee on the minimum figure question. They asked me in Committee that the Government would not propose or support a minimum figure. I was glad to do this though it annoyed the rebellious Labour men. It was the only way to get the Bill. When the Bill reached the Lords there was protest by some peers against the bargain which had been struck with me by the Tory Party, taking away the freedom of their lordships to deal as they liked with the Bill, but the Tory leader (Salisbury) stuck to the compact and the Bill was passed.

The Act was a great success, immediately raising farm

wages with general consent and soon bringing up the counties then paying 25/- to the 30/- which had been demanded. In spite of this the agricultural divisions voted Tory, with the single exception of my own Division, at the next election. But among my treasures is a present expressing the gratitude of the Farm Labourers' Union for the enormous benefit which the Act conferred, and I derive the greatest satisfaction from the knowledge that my departure from strict democracy inside the Labour Party was an example of sound principle.

GEORGE EDWARDS

I cannot pass on to the next period without a tribute to my greatest helper in securing the North Norfolk seat. This was George Edwards, the agricultural labourers' leader. He had revived the Union started by Joseph Arch, which had died out. Edwards, as the world knows from his book, "Crow-scaring to Westminster", was a very remarkable man. He was bred in the hungry forties when his father, - a farm labourer - went to jail for taking a turnip to feed his children; as a result of which he and his mother went to the workhouse.

He was almost a hunchback; though starved in his youth he had indomitable courage. He was an agitator from early years and lost his job. My uncle, Louis Buxton of Bolwick, then got work for him, and ultimately he began to organise the Union from his tiny cottage at Gresham.

When I got to know him in 1907 he was doing all the business of the Union from a minute attic, reaching meetings all over the county on his bicycle. He was also a fervent Primitive Methodist local preacher. When his Union meetings included a tea, he always opened with grace and sometimes a hymn. He got into Parliament in 1923, and it was jolly to have him in the house when I was Minister in charge of the Farm Wages Bill.

My fondness for him was undiminished by his voting against me in the Grand Committee of the Bill.

131

Edwards was a real friend. He was a genuine gentleman, and it was a great pleasure to have him staying with us at Cone Cottage - a pleasure enhanced by his quaint tastes, such as an abhorrence of novels, and a habit of putting seven lumps of sugar in his tea.

P. 116 is old copy

The second Labour Government came after an interval of five years. Part of the time had been occupied by illness and convalescence, and afterwards I sometimes felt that the job of mere opposition was so unattractive that I had better give Parliament up. We did not know whom Ramsay would put into office the second time, and in fact Olivier, Wedgwood and others were dropped. However, Ramsay wanted me when the time came, and insisted that I and Charlie Trevelyan must resume our old offices.

This second Labour Government was less happy than the first. Ramsay for some reason was unfriendly, and, as Sydney Webb wrote in an article after the Government fell, he disliked his colleagues more and more. He would not let me introduce the Marketing Bill, which was the only measure that I saw a chance of passing, Then having insisted on my holding a conference of leading landowners and farmers, who at the end naturally wished to see him, he refused to see them. This made my position very unpleasant indeed. I was gagged in replying to the enquirers in the House about our policy, and I did not enjoy being described as an oyster. I also found myself, after a time, exhausted, and began to feel alarming symptoms, so that I could not face all-night sittings. I resorted to a doctor, and in June 1930 I resigned.

P. 116

P. 117
old copy

THE LORDS

Although I felt I should have a break-down if I went on in the Commons, I hoped I might carry on as Minister in the Lords where Arthur Ponsonby had already gone. I told Ramsay this, but he wanted Addison, who had been my under-secretary, to be Minister, and sent me to the Lords without office. Whether to go to the Lords was very debatable indeed. I felt strongly that I did not wish to drop out of public life, and that I might use the position to help causes for which I could do nothing if I ceased to be a member of Parliament altogether. On the other hand, I deplore hereditary political power, and had thought it hardly consistent even with the principles I believed in as a Liberal. For a Labour man to accept the position needed a very strong reason. It was taking part in an institution of which, in its present form, he disapproved, and if he had a son he was still more deeply involved. The position of a peer was artificial, and the social prestige connected with it was regrettable. I consulted several people, including C.R.B. and V. I thought such good democrats would be for sticking to ideal democratic principles, but to my surprise I found them strongly in favour of accepting. If they had not been in favour I should have refused. Now, after twelve years, I often wonder if I was right. Anyhow they thought I was, and at all events I made a great many speeches on subjects

P. 118. 134
which I thought important, and perhaps some of them at least had the publicity which Lord Pentland described when I consulted him about taking a peerage. He thought a speech in the Lords had about the same value as an article in a monthly review.

If only peerages could be for life, I should strongly approve of them, because a senate is an excellent institution, and debate in the Upper House is far better than in the Commons, the speakers being unaffected by thought of constituents, and most of them people of great experience. Lately a good deal of the false social snobbery has been diminished by the increasing practice of keeping to one's family name, instead of taking a territorial title. A false prestige is given by turning a Mr. Smith into a Lord Broadacres. But a difficulty arose in sticking to the surname in my case, because Sydney Buxton strongly objected to there being another Lord Buxton. As there are many cases of such duplications, e.g. Greys, Howards, etc. I did not sympathise, but I did not like to hurt his feelings, especially as he had lost his son. I met the dilemma by changing my surname, which involved a double name. I hate double names, but there was no other way. It was a considerable sacrifice, and I told Rufus I should strongly approve if he chose to revert to Buxton.

P. 119
(old copy)

Has the pudding of peerage been proved in the eating ? That depends on whether speeches for many good causes have formed any contribution of value. Anyhow my position led me to be invited to be president of various movements, and if I had been out of Parliament, I should not have been offered such interesting jobs.

P. 99
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The decay of the Liberal Party dates perhaps from the old Queen's selection of Rosebery in preference to Harcourt, as Gladstone's successor in 1894. Rosebery's consequent prestige enabled him to commandeer the non-radical section of the Party when Campbell-Bannerman's radicalism and so-called pro-Boerism had given an opportunity. His Liberal Imperialist movement gained the upper hand, and Asquith's succession to the leadership was the result. He represented an outlook which led to the creation of the Labour Party. Some of its leaders told me that they had fully considered the question of continuing to work with the Liberals and thus avoid a split in the progressive forces, which, in many ways, was bound to prove disastrous. If the split could have been avoided, we might never have seen the long Tory reign which succeeded the Four Years War with hardly a break, and was perhaps responsible for the renewal of war in 1939. But nobody with keen reforming ideals, let alone socialistic convictions, could possibly have felt that co-operation was

Inserted from
back of
page 98

I felt this more than ever when war came and Liberals displayed no principles in regard to war aims, in any way different to those of the Tories. I therefore spoke for candidates pledged to what seemed to me a policy of reason, and when one of these was a Labourite, I was reprimanded by the Whip Chief for doing so. The Labour Party on the other hand represented deep concern for the prevention of war, and was itself part of an international organisation. C.R.B. joined it forthwith. To do so was for me an alarming plunge. It was regarded by one's relations and friends as a betrayal, and I hesitated long. My nature is compromising, admiring balance and moderation. But conviction outweighed, not, however, before the election of 1918. I joined Labour ~~ix~~ soon afterwards, and was elected by a good majority in 1922 and again in 1924, when we took office.