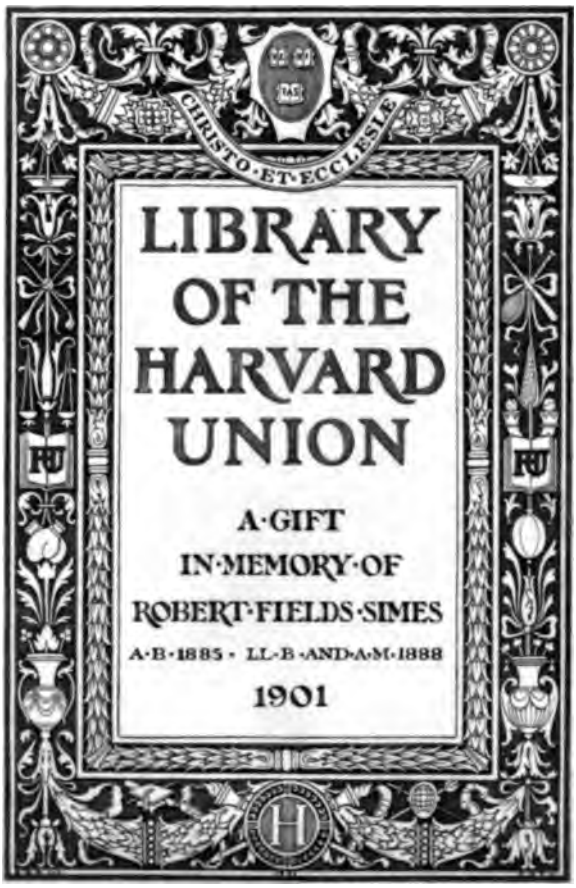

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

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BY

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NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE

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I

SHORTLY after Lord Randolph Churchill's death, his mother asked me to write something about him. I excused myself as it was then too near his time. It may be still too near, at least to arrive at a cool and impartial estimate; that in any case can scarcely be done by a personal friend. But now that his *Life* has appeared I may perhaps venture to acquit myself of what I feel to be in some sort a debt. In any

To no one could the task of narrating Lord Randolph's career be easy; to write it ten years after his death required no common courage. But to a son bound by all the ties and truth of filial devotion, yet who may be said not to have known his father, politically speaking, at all; who was determined to write as impartially as possible; who has himself taken the step from which his father shrank, and has exchanged Toryism for Liberalism; and who has therefore to face some hostility on both sides, Liberal antagonism to his father and Tory resentment towards himself, the work presented obstacles that might well have been insuperable. But Mr. Winston Churchill has overcome them all. Tactfulness has not perhaps been considered the strongest element in his Corinthian composition; but tact was the first requisite of

his enterprise, and it has not failed him. It was not easy to be fair, yet he has held the balance surely. He may have unwittingly trodden on some secret corns, but he was threading a living crowd. He has not probably been able to unveil every transaction; he has assuredly not been able to delineate nakedly every character on his scene. But he has been bold and candid, as bold and candid as it was possible to be. He has, moreover, not drowned his subject's personality in contemporary history; of that he tells enough and not too much. The story of those times has yet to be written in its entirety, but few will quarrel with Mr. Churchill's presentation of its dominant features. That the book would be brilliantly written, readers of Mr. Churchill's books and speeches would expect with confidence, and they have

not been disappointed. There is a pleasant flavor of irony, there are passages of high eloquence. As an example of the first quality, I would cite the description of the Aston riots;[1] and of the second, the metaphor of the old battlefield.[2] If there be a flaw, if there be a want unsatisfied, it is perhaps that we are not treated to more of Randolph's crisp, pointed, and delightful letters. The reason is, no doubt, that they are too crisp, pointed, and delightful for present publication. What a fascinating volume could be provided by his voluminous correspondence with Lord Salisbury, himself so skilful with his pen! But this for the present generation at any rate is, I presume, forbidden fruit.

[1] *Life*, I., 362. [In these references I propose, for brevity, to mention the biography as the *Life*, which, though not the actual title, is sufficiently descriptive.]

[2] *Life*, II., 49.

The intimate interchange of thought between high ministers of state should not be lightly or prematurely published. Here Mr. Churchill is wise, though we are the sufferers. Those who are young to-day may lick their intellectual chops in joyful anticipation; for their elders there is, very properly, no hope.

But we cannot help wishing for more letters of the earlier period, for he was an admirable writer even in his school days. How excellent is the description, given in the *Life*, which he wrote from Eton of the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales: one runs and shouts with him, and is left with him breathless and hatless in the road.[1] When he grew up, his letters to his friends were usually couched in a style of ironical or pungent banter, which would require marginal

[1] *Life*, I., 9.

notes of explanation. Mr. Churchill has had the sapient courage to narrate his father's matrimonial negotiations, and to this we owe some excellent letters. Occasionally, however, Randolph could mount the high epistolary horse and write with all the pomposity of the eighteenth century. Of this, a good example is given in the biography; a letter to Mr. Tabor, the eminent schoolmaster of Cheam, asking for "a holiday for those young gentlemen who are now deriving from you similar advantages to those which befell me." [1] It would seem that these paroxysms of solemnity usually seized him on his accession to office, for this letter was written when he went to the India Office, and I remember another written when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, which was

[1] *Life*, I., 426.

pitched even higher. The truth perhaps is, that the constant exercise of irony made sometimes a confusion as to whether he was writing seriously or not. I well remember a letter in his undergraduate days couched in terms of some severity which I believed to be ironical, but which I afterwards found to be seriously meant. As Randolph's disease grew upon him his letters grew longer and longer, and yet the tremulous writing betrays what an effort they must have cost him; but in substance and language they were still excellent, though the few I have left seem still too personal for publication.

There is, however, one letter published in the *Life* which is of supreme interest to Randolph's friends and admirers; a letter the pathos of which, to those who knew him, it is not possible

to exaggerate; it is almost an epitaph. "So Arthur Balfour is really leader," he writes to his wife from Mafeking in November, 1891, "and Tory Democracy, the genuine article, is at an end. Well, I have had quite enough of it all. I have waited with great patience for the tide to turn, but it has not turned, and will not now turn in time. In truth, I am now altogether *déconsidéré*. . . . No power will make me lift hand, or foot, or voice for the Tories, just as no power would make me join the other side. All confirms me in my decision to have done with politics, and try to make a little money for the boys and ourselves. . . . More than two-thirds in all probability of my life is over, and I will not spend the remainder of my years in beating my head against a stone-wall. I expect I have made great mistakes;

but there has been no consideration, no indulgence, no memory or gratitude—nothing but spite, malice, and abuse. I am quite tired and dead-sick of it all, and will not continue political life any longer. I have not Parnell's dogged, but at the same time sinister resolution; and have many things and many friends to make me happy without that horrid House of Commons' work and strife." [1] Surely a tragic letter, the revelation of a sore and stricken soul. He was sick of heart and body when he uttered this burst of melancholy candor. And yet, had he thought a moment when he confessed to the mortal conviction that the tide would not turn in time, he must have seen that he hardly gave the tide a chance when he refused all contact with either

[1] *Life*, II., 452.

party. In all that may be written about the tragedy of Randolph's life there will be nothing so sad as this letter of his. About the same time he copied out for himself that passage of Dryden which ends with

> "Not Heaven itself over the past hath power;
> But what has been has been, and I have had my hour." [1]

Strong lines, with a pang of solace.

On the other hand, while regretting the paucity of letters, a different regret may be expressed with regard to speeches. Two personal attacks are quoted at length which Randolph deliberately omitted from the revised collection. It is not a matter of great moment; it must be a subject of supreme indifference to the objects; but these extracts

[1] *Life*, II., 213.

are by no means the best instances of his humor and invective.

Under these circumstances the discretion of the orator himself might have been imitated with advantage. But this after all is a small blot, if blot it be; and, in fine, the author is to be congratulated on a consummate achievement. He has under great difficulties produced a fascinating book, one to be marked among the first dozen, perhaps the first half-dozen, biographies in our language.

II

SINCERE and honest as it is, Mr. Churchill's Memoir cannot be a complete disclosure. It is quite possible, for example, that it will not, as the biographer seems to desire, eradicate the impression that the relations between Randolph and the Irish party up to June, 1885, were in the nature of a close understanding little short of an alliance. For in the *Life* itself we find adequate evidence of an agreement amply sufficient for its purpose, although not drawn up on paper; as nobody, indeed, supposed that it was.

Mr. Churchill draws too large an

inference from the fact that no document "directly or indirectly referring to the subject has been preserved." A suspicious man of the world would perhaps draw from this very circumstance a directly opposite conclusion. Neither Parnell nor Randolph was likely to commit his negotiations to writing; political negotiations rarely or never are so recorded.

It is, however, "certain," says Mr. Churchill, "that he (Randolph) had more than one conversation with the Irish leader; that he stated to him his opinion of what a Conservative Government would do should it be formed; and that he declared that he considered himself precluded by public utterances from joining a Government which would at once renew the Crimes Act." [1]

[1] *Life*, I., 394.

Randolph's own statement was that "There was no compact or bargain of any kind; but I told Parnell when he sat on that sofa that if the Tories took office and I was a member of their Government, I could not consent to renew the Crimes Act. Parnell replied, 'In that case, you will have the Irish vote at the elections.'" [1]

Mr. Churchill's view of all this is that it was not in any sense a bargain, as it was not certain that his father would form part of the next Tory Government. This reasoning does not seem very conclusive, and it certainly did not weigh with Mr. Parnell. That shrewd politician knew well not only that Randolph must inevitably form part of any substantial Tory Government, but that within or without the Government he

[1] *Life*, I., 395.

was incomparably the most formidable Tory in the House of Commons, and probably in the country.

A promise by such a man was of inestimable value. Parnell did not hesitate a moment, and in return for the pledge given, at once promised the Irish vote at the General Election. "I will do so-and-so," said one party. "In that case I will do so-and-so," said the other. This may not be called a compact, but it is remarkably like one. To the principals, at any rate, this exchange of engagements was quite sufficient, and did not need the compromising accessories of parchment, paper, or seal.

It is the easier and pleasanter to believe in this compact, as both parties were perfectly honest and sincere. There was nothing in truth of which either party

as individuals need be ashamed. Randolph really believed that any form of what is technically known as "coercion" was at that time unnecessary, and Parnell naturally gave his support to a view which was entirely his own.

Randolph, moreover, from his official experience in Ireland, had imbibed a serious distrust and dislike of "coercion." "People sometimes talk too lightly of coercion," he said, in one of his earliest speeches;[1] "it means that hundreds of Irishmen who, if laws had been maintained unaltered, and had been firmly enforced, would now have been leading peaceful, industrious, and honest lives, will soon be torn off to prison without trial; that others will have to fly the country into hopeless exile; that others, driven to desperation through such cruel

[1] *Speeches*, I., 19.

alternatives, will perhaps shed their blood and sacrifice their lives in vain resistance to the forces of the Crown; that many Irish homes, which would have been happy if evil courses had been firmly checked at the outset, will soon be bereaved of their most promising ornaments and support, disgraced by a felon's cell and a convict's garb; and if you look back over the brief period which has been necessary to bring about such terrible results, the mind recoils in horror from the ghastly spectacle of murdered landlords, tenant-farmers tortured, mutilated dumb animals, which everywhere disfigures the green and fertile pastures of Ireland." [1] These, I doubt not, were his innermost and sincerest views. Has any orator even of Irish race protested more strong-

[1] *Speeches*, I., 18.

ly against exceptional administration for his people? That being so, Randolph can scarcely be blamed as an individual for his compact with Parnell.

Randolph's official account of all this gives to the renunciation of coercion a much more deliberate and concerted character. In a speech delivered at Sheffield in September, 1885, he stated that some weeks before the fall of Mr. Gladstone's Government in the previous June, Lord Salisbury and his immediate political friends took counsel together as to what they should do in the event of Mr. Gladstone's defeat. The gravest question, he said, that they then had to consider was "whether Ireland could or could not be governed by the ordinary law. That subject was considered with great deliberation. *We* had many facilities for gaining information."

These facilities, put briefly, were the advice of Lord Ashbourne and "many other sources of accurate information." And the result was that some weeks before Mr. Gladstone's defeat, "Lord Salisbury and his friends came to the conclusion that in the absence of official information — that was the important saving clause — there was nothing which would warrant a Government in applying to Parliament for exceptional laws for the administration of Ireland;" and he proceeded to say that when they did have access to official information there was none that warranted their departing from their previous view.[1]

The "we" that has been italicized seems to prove that Randolph formed part of this council. In a memorandum drawn up during later years, he says

[1] *Speeches*, I., 258.

that the "question had been more than once discussed in small *conciliabules* before the fall of Mr. Gladstone's Government, and a sort of decision arrived at. . . . But the former semi-decision did not help Lord Salisbury much when the actual crisis came. . . . Mr. Gibson in this difficulty was the real arbiter." [1] We must all regret that the minute is too confidential to be given in its entirety, for there is an alluring suspicion of withheld piquancy about the printed extracts.

It is easy to believe that he urged his view, but that he did not mention his momentous conversation with Parnell. As to the facts, it is only necessary to observe that the "official information," which made Lord Spencer, with his matchless experience and knowledge and

[1] *Life*, I., 409.

his liberal Irish views, insist on some coercion, did not produce the same effect on the new ministers. Whether they took any great pains to examine the "official information" is doubtful. Randolph certainly gave me to understand that the abandonment of coercion was one of the two conditions he made for his joining the Government.

There can be, I think, no question in any impartial mind that there was a valid, though unwritten, understanding with the Irish leader, of which many in high position among the Tories may have been unconscious, and of which Randolph was the medium and the channel.

The result was apparent in a memorable scene, when, in the House of Lords, the new Prime Minister, after setting forth his political programme, handed

over, against all precedent, to Lord Carnarvon, the new Viceroy, the task of announcing the Irish policy of the Government.

No one who was present on that occasion will ever forget it, or can have carried away the belief that this Irish policy was congenial to the head of the administration. Nor indeed did Lord Carnarvon perform his task with any peculiar relish. The two ministers seemed rather to resemble penitents in a public act of contrition than advisers of the Crown commencing with hope and confidence a new departure. The last may have been the truth, I can only record the impression.

It may perhaps be held, without doing him any injustice, that Randolph was prepared to concede almost all Irish demands, except that which is

popularly and sentimentally known as "Home Rule." But on that issue he was immovable. I never heard him use but one language with regard to it—that it was impossible. In 1891 he stated this with great emphasis in a public letter. "I have always been of opinion that however attractive Home Rule for Ireland might be in theory, it was an absolute impossibility to put Home Rule into a bill. You might as well try to square the circle." [1] He never varied in this opinion, and was insistent on this point from the beginning. "Now mind," he said in September, 1885, "none of us must have anything to do with Home Rule in any shape or form." [2]

Yet, strangely enough, and unknown to him, his own Viceroy had for two

[1] *Life*, II., 508. [2] *Ibid*, I., 461.

months past been handling the accursed thing with some familiarity. Before this Government of eight months had ended, Lord Carnarvon was indeed to intimate that unless the Government could move in the direction of Home Rule he could not continue to hold office.[1] The answer was the promise of a strict Coercion Bill.

In later years Randolph drew up a memorandum in which he blamed himself for his compact with Parnell. "I believe," he says, almost innocently, "that the decision not to attempt to renew the Crimes Act, more than any other event, finally determined Mr. Gladstone no longer to resist Repeal."

This can scarcely be called a new light, for it is obvious that this decision was the starting-point of the new Lib-

[1] *Life*, II., 21.

eral departure. But it is not necessary here to enter into the polemics of that critical and stormy period. Randolph ends by saying that "looking back on those events after January, 1886, and after the resolution arrived at by Mr. Gladstone to introduce a measure for the Repeal of the Union, I came to the conclusion that in June, 1885, we had been most unfortunately inspired. I can trace a clear connection of cause and effect between Lord Salisbury's accession to office in 1885, and Mr. Gladstone's new departure in 1886." [1]

Two comments may be made on this somewhat belated discovery.

The first is that Lord Carnarvon was more clear-sighted than his colleagues, and perceived at once that if, rightly or wrongly, coercion was at that time

[1] *Life*, I., 409, 411.

to be discarded, the only alternative was to make concessions to the Irish demand for self-government. So immediately after the government was formed and the abandonment of coercion announced, he obtained an interview with the Irish leader. This was no doubt an imprudent step; but its purpose in itself was quite legitimate, and, though absolutely unknown to the cabinet, it was expressly sanctioned by Lord Salisbury. Lord Carnarvon sought to ascertain whether the essential demands of Mr. Parnell were impossible of concession. The result was reported to Lord Salisbury. Lord Salisbury remained hostile to home rule, and had to return to the other alternative of coercion. Lord Carnarvon remained averse to coercion, and proceeded onward towards home rule.

The second comment that may be

made is this: Had Randolph and his colleagues made, in June, 1885, the discovery that the abandonment of coercion would drive Mr. Gladstone to a home-rule policy, would that necessarily have changed their policy? From his memorandum you would think so, but I greatly doubt the fact. What is there in party warfare so exalted and so refined as to make party leaders recoil from driving their opponents to a course at once perilous and open to the most sensible of all reproaches?[1]

Such a proceeding is not in the least inconsistent with the tactics and devices which are inevitable under the conditions of British political life. Even had the Tory leaders foreseen that the home-rule policy would break up the Liberal party, and keep the legitimate remnant

[1] *Cf. Life*, II., 21, 28.

out of power for a score of years, would that painful prospect have deterred them? The question answers itself. The rules of warfare do not proscribe, they rather prescribe, the forcing an adversary to take up an exposed and untenable position.

And Randolph, when he wrote his penitent memorandum, must have forgotten that he had been in 1885 a fierce and zealous party chief; by no means careful to discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate methods of warfare. He fought with any weapon that came to hand, intent on the end rather than on the means of the contest.

It is difficult to believe that he did not realize to some extent that he was forcing Mr. Gladstone on to the horn of fresh concessions in the Irish dilemma. But it is quite within the bounds of

probability that in afterwards writing this minute, when his judgment had cooled, this fact was no longer present to his mind.

However that may be, his frank admission is a valuable document in the political vindication of the Liberal party.

III

NO such attempt to write a biography of a fiercely controversial politician soon after his death has been made since Disraeli published his *Life of Lord George Bentinck*. But there is an essential difference between the two cases. Disraeli had to justify the part that he himself had taken by the side of Lord George Bentinck in violent polemics, and had determined to do this without mentioning his own name or the personal pronoun with regard to himself. This he thought he could do without affectation, and, it may be said, he succeeded.

Moreover, the issue between the fol-

lowers of Peel and Bentinck was still burning at the time he wrote. The book, therefore, was something of a party pamphlet. Here there are no such bias and no such difficulty.

From another point of view, also, Mr. Churchill's task is easier. Lord George Bentinck was, from the political point of view, a difficult figure to drape with picturesque effect. No one was better aware of this than his biographer; so, to lighten the scene, he made his book a political treatise in which Lord George plays but a minor part, and introduces a glittering chapter on the Jewish faith to illuminate the whole.

Bentinck, indeed, when living, was a notable and almost dramatic figure, for he was a man of splendid presence, marvellous industry, and a tragic vindictiveness. Vindictiveness was his som-

bre motive power; he could neither forgive nor forget. For the man who once injured him or any whom he loved, there was no possibility of pardon or even of mitigation. The fierce impression upon him of a wrong remained as vivid to the last moment as it was at the first; and he could not rest until he had wreaked a remorseless revenge on the offender.

His bitter attacks on Sir Robert Peel were inspired not by any personal injury, but by the conviction that Peel had deserted Channing, his relative, near a score of years before.

As to the rest, he was the dreariest of speakers; a fact which troubled him little, if at all; for he only sought to lay before his audience the bare and bony appeal of statistics. But had he had tact, and some power of blandishment, or at least of reticence in rancour,

he would have been more valuable to his party than many orators. His stately person, his lineage, his application, his ability, his unstinted devotion to the cause in hand, even though that cause seemed to be personal animosity, would have made him a leader of the highest value to any party, more especially to the Tories. But, strangely enough for one who had spent his best years on the turf, he seems to have had no knowledge of men, no consideration for their feelings, no power of give and take. And so, after a few months of leadership, he disappeared in a huff.

On the other hand, Randolph's personality was one full of charm, both in public and private life. His demeanor, his unexpectedness, his fits of caressing humility, his impulsiveness, his tinge of violent eccentricity, his apparent dare-

devilry, made him a fascinating companion: while his wit, his sarcasm, his piercing personalities, his elaborate irony, and his effective delivery, gave astonishing popularity to his speeches.

Nor were his physical attributes without their attraction. His slim and boyish figure, his mustache which had an emotion of its own, his round protruding eye, gave a compound interest to his speeches and his conversation. His laugh, which has been described as "jaylike," was indeed not melodious, but in its very weirdness and discordance it was merriment itself.

All this comes back to a friend as he reads this book—the boyhood, the manhood, the mournful and gradual decay. He may be pardoned if he draws for a little on his memory with regard to this brilliant being.

IV

I FIRST saw Randolph Churchill at Eton—a small boy in an extremely disreputable hat. Now, the hat was at Eton in those days almost as notable a sign of condition as among the Spanish nobility. Moreover, his appearance was reckless—his companions seemed much the same; he was in a word, but a pregnant word at Eton, a scug. His elder brother had left Eton before I came, because, I think, of some difference with the authorities as to the use of a catapult. Randolph looked as if he too might differ with the authorities on any similar issue.

I was some two years senior to him, and I scarcely knew him till he went to Oxford, little, perhaps, beyond saying "good-night" at "lock-up"—the equivalent of an adult nod. I remember only one story of him; probably a myth founded on fact. He boarded at Frewer's, an obscure house, where, it was said, the inmates consisted of some sixteen lower boys. And it was rumored that as soon as Randolph got into fifth form, he, without waiting for the higher refinement of "fagging division," assumed the whole remaining fifteen as his personal fags.

At Oxford he was a member of Merton and I of Christ Church. There we saw a great deal of each other and became close friends; for, largely owing to the unifying quality of the Bullingdon Club, he lived much with the Christ Church

set, which at that time saw regrettably little of the rest of the university.

He was now quite unlike his Etonian self: he was spruce, polished, but full of fun. He was the idol of his parents and sisters, for he was the son that lived with them and loved his home better than any place on earth. Through him I came to be much at Blenheim, and to see him in his family as well as in his Oxford life.

At this time he did not read much in the regular way, though he took a degree in the then undivided school of Law and Modern History. He bought books, and read outside the course of recognized study. But his main literary passion was Gibbon. To Gibbon's immortal work he gave what leisure of reading he had to give, and this literary devotion lasted to the end.

One story I remember, and believe to be true. There was pending an election at Woodstock, then practically a close borough of the Dukes of Marlborough, and his Merton tutor took an active part in opposition to the Blenheim candidate. In the course of one of his speeches he told an anecdote which appeared to reflect severely on the Duke. After this Randolph ceased to attend his lectures, and this systematic neglect was laid before the warden.

Randolph's excuse was absolute and overwhelming. "How, Sir, could I attend the lectures of one who had called my father a scoundrel? How could I reconcile attendance at his teaching with my duty towards my parents?" Tradition said that he got the best of it.

It is perhaps enough to say that at Oxford he did not differ much in his

habits from those of other young men of his class, save in his affection for the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and, of course, in his frequent visits to Blenheim.

After we left Oxford we drifted in different directions; he, I suppose, much at home with his pack of harriers, when he directed that famous sarcasm against a master of hounds who had offended him, which still echoes in admiring chuckles among the sportsmen of Oxford and Berkshire. Then, still very young, he almost simultaneously entered Parliament and married his beautiful wife; two great events in his life, of which one, however, seemed then almost insignificant to him, for his happiness in his marriage completely eclipsed his election for Woodstock.

Not long afterwards he became in-

volved in a question of severe social stress, in which, so far as I remember, he took the part of a near relative with more zeal than justice or discretion.

This for a time almost isolated him. Friends fell off; acquaintances disappeared; he was left naked, but not ashamed. That he felt this ostracism deeply, cannot be doubted. And yet he seemed to me as gay and cheerful as ever when he met an old friend; sobered perhaps, and apt to be a little absent, but essentially unchanged.

This, however, was the turning-point of his life. The "sæva indignatio," excited in him by this social conflict, turned to politics. That was the vent for his suppressed wrath. Had it not been for this exacerbating crisis he might have subsided into a family trustee for

a family borough, or found employment for his energies elsewhere.

It was at this time, I suppose, that he was living much with his father, then Viceroy of Ireland, and studying that Irish question which afterwards had so great a fascination for him. Even at this early period he evoked a domestic storm by a speech about Ireland in "the quiet rural locality of Woodstock," for which the viceroy had to apologize to the chief secretary, by declaring that his Benjamin must have been mad or tipsy to make it.[1] I do not doubt that Randolph mischievously enjoyed the splash caused by his outbreak.

On foreign policy he was also at issue with his party. But the General Election of 1880 placed him in the more congenial attitude of opposition. It was

[1] *Life*, I., 92.

then that he sallied forth to attack the gigantic personality of Mr. Gladstone, and, as if that were not employment enough, to take his own leaders in flank. With these objects he formed, or co-operated in forming, that small group of politicians, popularly called the Fourth Party, which became so famous and so effective.

Public attention became instantly fixed on the attractive figure of the intrepid young assailant. He leaped into renown. He soon became the principal platform-speaker in the country.

It is no disparagement of others to assert that, in my judgment at any rate, Randolph would at his best have attracted a larger audience to a political meeting than any one, not excepting Mr. Gladstone himself. And in the House of Commons it is not too much to say

that his corner seat below the gangway divided attention with the centre seat on the government bench where throned the pale eager form of the great Liberal leader.

Then came the crisis, for which he had so effectively worked. The quarry which he had pursued with such ardor was hunted down at last, and Mr. Gladstone's government fell. As the result was announced, Randolph, waving his hat, almost gave the who-whoop of the fox-hunter at the death. But he soon found that he had only changed his battle-field, and that he was at once locked in a fierce and silent conflict with his own leaders.

To the victors fall the spoil; and the nominal victors were the front Opposition bench. But the most gleaming and popular personality in the party, the one

to whose tactics and vigor the victory was perhaps in the main due, did not sit on the seat of the chosen.

What part was he to play in this division of offices? His was no docile character, ready to receive passively whatever the gods might allot, and to subside satisfied into any great office of state. He was determined that the leadership which he had so mercilessly criticised should pass to more vigorous hands; and he stipulated as one condition of his joining the ministry that Sir Stafford Northcote should leave the House of Commons.

This demand, for obvious reasons, placed the new prime minister in a cruel position, and it was doubtful what he could or would do. Sir Stafford Northcote indeed had strong claims to the first post himself, and had, in default of

it, already undertaken the lead in the House of Commons with the chancellorship of the exchequer; so that Randolph at one time believed that his conditions would be refused.

It is the nature of tense spirits to be unduly elated and unduly depressed; and he came to me one night at the Turf Club in a mood very different from that in which he had shouted and waved his hat after the division.

His talk was both stirring and desponding. The main point was that he believed that Lord Salisbury would not concede his demands, and that he was almost disposed to leave the Tory party. As to this I advised him to take counsel with an older man.

There would have been no great change involved, for only Ireland and its issues, at that time not so prominent

as in the succeeding year, stood between Randolph and the Liberal party: though then he scarcely realized the fact.

But no such sacrifice was now needed. The prime minister yielded, and Sir Stafford Northcote was persuaded to retire to the House of Lords. This was an outward demonstration of Randolph's power, much more notable than his simultaneous appointment to the India Office.

The two leaders, however, were wise to make the concession, for it would have been impossible to form a real government without his participation or approval; and though Sir Stafford was reluctant to leave the House of Commons, it is more than doubtful if he was then physically fit for the leadership.

I did not see Randolph again, except

at dinners and the like, till the night in January, 1885, when the Conservative government was being turned out on the address. I was listening to the debate in the gallery, whither he ascended to ask me to come to his room. I readily consented, as the debate was neither real nor interesting; for it dealt nominally with small tenures in England, while in the midst of all there loomed the stark form of the Irish question, which had come to deal death to the Tory government and paralysis to the Liberal party. That was the issue on which every mind was silently fixed, while the audible talk was of the area necessary to support a cow.

Of this talk with Randolph I recollect scarcely anything. But, as we passed along the lobby, he said, I remember, "Well, it is over, but it has not been

bad fun. Just what Fleury said of the Second Empire."

One incident in that lobby, however, impressed me more than our subsequent conversation. He offered me a cigarette as we were walking to his room, and I stipulated for a cigar. He had not got one, he said, but would soon get me one. At this moment there appeared in the passage a portly baronet of great wealth. "Here's a man who will have a good cigar," said Randolph. "Oh, ——, I want a cigar to give my friend here; have you got your case?" I never shall forget the precipitate veneration with which the baronet produced his case and offered his best and choicest. It was an object-lesson in Randolph's position.

During the short Liberal government of 1886 he was predominant in his party; unweariedly active in combining

the strange and various elements of the Opposition, as this memoir sufficiently shows. And on the dissolution, he issued an address, which, his biographer truly says, as a specimen of political invective is not likely soon to be outdone. It was justly censured for violence and extravagance. But coming from Randolph, whose seasoning was always high, and issued at a moment of fierce and seething political excitement, it was, I thought, not ill-calculated for its purpose. At any rate, by that or some other means, its purpose was accomplished, and Mr. Gladstone's government was overthrown by a great majority.

Now we arrive at the culminating point of Randolph's extraordinary career. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who had been the Tory leader in the House of Com-

mons since Sir Stafford Northcote's acceptance of a peerage, insisted on ceding the place to his younger colleague. Sir Michael's own great ability, the confidence of his party, and his past services, did not blind his penetration to the fact that the popular personality of the party was Randolph's, and he wisely decided that with the power should go the name.

Randolph devoted himself with his usual energy to his high task. Never was the House of Commons led more acceptably than in that short summer session. The secret of his success lay apparently in personal example, discipline, and courtesy; but he was, besides, a favorite of the House. I remember some one asking him how long his leadership would last. "Oh, about six months!" "And then?" "And then?

Why, Westminster Abbey." I can hear him saying it.

Nor were his triumphs parliamentary alone. The officials of his new department were delighted with him. He at once placed himself under their tutelage so as to master those financial problems which were new and strange to him, and delighted every one with his powers of will and work.

In the cabinet, too, he was at first not less successful. It is only necessary to quote one evidence of this. Northcote notes in his diary that Randolph was "certainly the shrewdest member of the cabinet," [1] testimony which may well be unsuspected, and is characteristically generous. The young chancellor of the exchequer seemed to tread on air; he had only to fear the perils

[1] Lang's *Sir S. Northcote*, II., 215.

that beset him of whom all men speak well.

Then, exuberant in his unbroken triumph, he began to try his hand at "Tory Democracy," and delivered a famous speech at Dartford. I may, perhaps, be forgiven for remembering that the day I read it I said to a friend, "Randolph will be out or the government broken up before Christmas." My friend gibed. But the following December, as I was dozing at midnight in a railway carriage on the North-West of India, he burst in with a newspaper. "By Jove, you're right after all." "What about?" "Randolph has resigned."

Before that event took place he had given a public proof of that eccentricity of judgment from which he was never wholly free, by going on a foreign tour under an assumed name with his friend,

Mr. Trafford. Randolph called himself, I think, "Mr. Spencer." By no conceivable method could he have attracted more attention to his incognito trip. No face was then better known. He had been seen by tens of thousands of his fellow-countrymen, his photograph was everywhere, he was in every caricature. When then the leader of the House of Commons went suddenly abroad, to Vienna and elsewhere, and was instantly recognized under this transparent disguise, English newspapers were perplexed, while the foreign press not unnaturally saw an international intrigue; which they endeavored to emphasize by saddling his companion with the historic title of Strafford.

Had Randolph gone in his own name he would have achieved his object of being undisturbed: as it was, his holi-

day consisted of a passage from one hornets' nest to another. But the incident illustrates a certain perversity of character, not unlike that popularity attributed to the ostrich. He was determined to be incognito, therefore he persuaded himself that he would be incognito.

V

HIS resignation was a striking catastrophe, and cannot be passed over in silence. It is largely to be explained by physical causes. Randolph's nervous system was always tense and highly strung; a condition which largely contributed to his oratorical success but which was the principal cause of his political undoing. He would descend from the highest summit to a bottomless pit and up again, at the shortest notice; that is the liability of the temperament of genius.

Several passages from his biography, and, what is more, several of his acts,

could be cited in support of this description. When he took office he worked unsparingly, which increased the strain on his nerves. He had, moreover, a morbid suspicion of intrigue, not unusual among those who are themselves not averse to a little wire-pulling. That suspicion would enhance the stress, for he would be watching others and tormenting himself.

Always impatient of opposition; surrounded by people who told him, sincerely and justifiably, that he was the one indispensable person, the one man who counted and mattered; convinced that he and they were in the right, he was irritated by the doubting and silent reluctance of his colleagues into an act of violence.

One exception must be made; Lord Salisbury's reluctance was neither doubt-

ing nor silent. Northcote suspected that the resignation arose "from a little temper on both sides."[1] "Temper" does not probably describe Lord Salisbury's mood, though there may have been the irritability of the over-driven.

It is, however, to my mind more than doubtful if Randolph intended his resignation to be definite. But even if it were accepted he felt certain that he would be soon restored to office and to greater power on the shoulders of the party. As it was, he lingered on at the treasury, in a fever of agitation. "I can't bear to leave this room," he writes thence to his mother, a week after his resignation, "where I can sit and think and hear everything quickly. *The matter is very critical, but by no means desperate.*"[2]

[1] Lang's *Sir S. Northcote, &c.*, II., 279.
[2] *Life*, II., 263.

The sentence which I have italicized supports the view that he hoped to be retained. It is strange, too, that he should have clung so closely to his official room, as if with a presentiment; for it is the spot least agreeable to a retiring minister.

I told him once, not long after the event, that after reading his letter to Lord Salisbury I had come to the conclusion that it was not intended as a resignation. He answered that I was right, and that he only meant it as the beginning of a correspondence, but that Lord Salisbury clinched it at once. Of course, he added, he intended eventually to send an ultimatum.

It is not necessary to take this as his deliberate view, for, off-hand, he might readily express the mood of the moment; but I think it represents the

truth, and is confirmed by his son. "Lord Randolph Churchill had so little expected to fail in his conflict with the cabinet that he had not clearly thought out how he would stand in that event." [1] And again: "Of course," says Mr. Churchill, "he hoped the others would give way — would at any rate make some considerable concession which would leave him proportionately strengthened." [1]

The real fact is, I think, that nervous, impulsive, overstrained, and impatient of opposition as he was, he discharged this menace of resignation at Lord Salisbury, as he had flung the same threat in the previous year, without calculation, as a warning rather than an act. The precipitate way of carrying it out, his inability to postpone the writing it

[1] *Life*, II., 261. [1] *Ibid*, II., 243.

out for a few hours until he had left the palace of the sovereign, all show this. By-the-by, he certainly told me that he wrote it on arriving at Windsor, not after dinner, as is stated in the *Life*. It is, however, quite possible that he wrote one draft on arriving and the other late at night.

No one who knew him would have expected him to have acted otherwise, for the patient task of persuasion, or, to use a modern cant phrase, of "peaceful penetration," was wholly alien to his nature. That nature required a relief for its high-strung irritability in some sort of violence, and resignation was the only form that that violence could take.

It cannot be seriously doubted that he expected to receive next day from Lord Salisbury a soothing letter like

those of August, 1885, and that at the next cabinet his alarmed colleagues would make considerable concessions. But Lord Salisbury evidently felt that his stock of patience and of sedatives was exhausted.

Had the Prime Minister been in the habit of personally seeing his colleagues, there might have been a blowing-off of steam, and the situation might for the moment have been saved. But that was not Lord Salisbury's way.

Mr. Churchill seems to feel some surprise that Lord Salisbury's reply did not suggest an interview. It would have been much more surprising if it had; as it is doubtful if Lord Salisbury ever suggested an interview in his life. But on this occasion words were popularly attributed to the Prime Minister which indicated that though he must have

felt some uneasiness at disconnecting himself with so popular a colleague, yet that a sensation of relief was predominant.

It is probable that he was not a jealous man; yet to his friends and surroundings, if not to himself, it must have been annoying to see the fierce light of public interest turned entirely on Randolph, while the Prime Minister, in reality a greater force, remained unobtrusive in the shade.

Lord Salisbury had realized the more poignant fact that he himself was a Tory, and that his young partner was a Radical, constantly urging Radical measures. The Prime Minister at every Cabinet Meeting was being pushed in directions that he detested. "Salisbury," wrote Lord George Hamilton on November 25th, "is getting to the position where he will be pressed

no more."[1] This from the peacemaker of the government was sufficiently ominous.

There were portents and warnings enough on the path which Randolph had marked out for himself, but he walked on heedless or blind. Inevitable jealousy, sincere misgiving, accumulated resentment and distrust were all around him; not Daniel himself was more uncomfortably encompassed. He alone, elated, overstrained, and perhaps already afflicted, saw it not; or, rather, while possibly observing signs of conflict never doubted that the victory would be his. He had triumphed over the opposing forces before, and felt sure of doing so again.

Yet all the time there was closing round him a pressure of circumstances that was to drive him from office. Af-

[1] *Life*, II., 228.

ter each cabinet, colleagues, we may be sure, exchanged their impressions of dismay, and asked each other, "How long?" or "What next?"

Of the communications between ministers to which Mr. Churchill alludes, nothing has been published, and the whole history of this dramatic transaction is, therefore, not in our possession. But their view is easily guessed. There had been frequent signals of alarm. "From the very outset," says Mr. Churchill, who, from the perusal of secret documents, probably knows more than it is discreet to disclose, "the new administration was uneasy. Discord stirred restlessly behind the curtains of cabinet secrecy. . . . The autumn councils were not harmonious, whether upon foreign or domestic affairs." [1]

[1] *Life*, II., 219.

Foreign affairs were no doubt one difficulty, for Randolph distrusted Lord Salisbury's policy. "A wise foreign policy," he wrote to his chief at the time of his resignation, "will extricate England from Continental struggles and keep her outside of German, Russian, French, or Austrian disputes. I have for some time observed a tendency in the government attitude to pursue a different line of action which I have not been able to modify or check." [1]

Smith, strangely enough, was also a critic. "Our diplomacy is no doubt very weak," he writes on October 24th, "but this does not entirely explain our powerlessness in Europe." [2]

Then there was the question of local government, there was the question of the closure, and there was an Allotment

[1] *Life*, II., 239. [2] *Ibid*, II., 26.

Bill. On all these points the orthodox ministers differed, no doubt, from Randolph. It was, moreover, rumored that he was a difficult colleague, with much of the temper of the spoiled child; and these stories were, I think, not unfounded.

The stress came apparently to a climax in the early part of December, when the budget was produced. When he expounded this measure to the cabinet they remained silent, "but," he said, "you should have seen their faces." [1]

It is strange that after so ominous a warning he should have staked his all on a resignation with any idea that it would not be cordially, but tremulously, accepted.

The significant silence of the cabinet was soon broken by not less significant

[1] *Life*, II., 212.

notes. Hamilton wrote for returns of the incidence of taxation. Smith wanted a printed memorandum. Salisbury had examined the figures for three counties, as they would stand under the new plan of local government, and found them far from reassuring. It is probable, then, that communications had been going on between the members of the cabinet for some three weeks before the resignation; and that Lord Salisbury, though he sent round to his colleagues copies (characteristically made in his own handwriting) of Randolph's letter of resignation, was well aware of what their feelings would be.

Smith, four days before, had intimated his intention of resigning if his estimates were cut down. The cabinet had then to choose between Churchill and Smith. It cannot be doubted that

they had long made their choice. Smith at least belonged to them, heart and soul. Rumor had it that his earlier tendencies had been Liberal, but all through his public life he had been a loyal and consistent Tory.

Randolph, on the other hand, though brought up in the bosom of Toryism, and a priceless ally in attack, in all positive policy had shown signs of the most detestable heresy. He seemed a political changeling. Smith they could understand and trust; with Smith they could live comfortably; Smith had about him no angles and no surprises; there was in Smith none of that brilliancy which is the object of so much instinctive distrust. Randolph, on the other hand, was restless, overbearing, and, as regards policy, capable of anything.

Why should this confident youth, for,

politically speaking, he was only a stripling, tell the graybeards of the party that they were out of date, and that the faith they had professed all their lives was superannuated and futile? The choice of the ministers was made, we may be sure, without hesitation, though not without misgiving.

That it was a deliberate and personal choice, not based on a question of public policy, is demonstrated by one simple fact: "Lord Randolph Churchill procured by his resignation almost every point of detail for which he had struggled in the cabinet." [1] Had the cabinet wished to keep him, it is obvious that they would have conceded his demands before and not after his resignation. If this view be correct it would seem that it was his personality, and not his policy,

[1] *Life*, II., 297.

which had alienated his colleagues. They did not feel confidence in him, they were weary of his restless predominance, they did not know whither he was going.

Lord Salisbury "had been," wrote Randolph, "for weeks prepared for it, and possibly courted the crash."[1] We may believe that Lord Salisbury was not unprepared — though he had obviously made no preparation to replace his Chancellor of the exchequer — but not that he courted the crash. Nevertheless, the crash was in all probability neither unexpected nor unwelcome to the main body of the cabinet.

On the other hand, his Radical friends congratulated him — (and the fact has its bearing on the nature of Tory Democracy)—not perhaps quite unselfishly, and not without the bitter herb of truth.

[1] *Life*, II., 262.

"The party tie," as one reminded him, "is the strongest sentiment in this country — stronger than patriotism or even self-interest." [1] "You ignore the power of the machine," wrote one who knew it well.[2] The "machine" crushed him as easily as a parched pea. Had he chosen to fight for his hand and raise the standard of revolt, it would not have been so easy to suppress him. But he behaved with perfect loyalty and decorum.

He had made another mistake, he sincerely believed in the necessity for rigid economy; so did Mr. Gladstone; so did no one else. It is the great disappointment in connection with our new or renewed democratic bodies, parliamentary and municipal, that economy has no friends. So his resignation based on this issue fell flat, and appealed

[1] *Life*, II., 252. [2] *Ibid*, II., 254.

to no one, except as regarded his own personality and power. So much for his political fall. He was never the same man again.

There was to be for him one more crisis — and only one. The facts of it are related with great impartiality in Mr. Churchill's book, and cannot be repeated here. It is enough to say that in 1889 Mr. Bright's death had caused a vacancy in the representation of Birmingham, where Randolph, owing to a previous contest, had a strong hold, and where a powerful body of supporters urged him to stand. This candidature was strongly resisted by Mr. Chamberlain on the ground of a previous agreement between the Tories and the Liberal-Unionists.

Strangely enough, under these circumstances, Randolph left the decision as

to whether he should stand or not to the two Liberal-Unionist leaders and a member of the government. The result, as Randolph must have known, was a foregone conclusion, and it was decided that he should not stand.

The Randolph of 1884 would not have hesitated, or left the decision to a committee. But the Randolph of 1889 had no longer the nerve of his prime. He submitted, but with the shadow of death on his face. With a ghastly expression he faced the wrath of his devoted followers at what seemed to them a betrayal. There was no betrayal, there was only the failure of nerve power due to his malady. But it was in effect a second resignation and a final abdication. He had missed the last opportunity, which neither forgives nor returns.

VI

AFTER this disaster he again went abroad; this time with another common friend, Harry Tyrwhitt. I was in India, but we met, on our return journey, in Rome. He had just escaped from Sicily, then under rigid quarantine, to the main-land in an open boat, at the imminent risk of bullets; a thoroughly congenial adventure.

In Rome we saw a great deal of each other, and had long talks. But as I have in the main forgotten these, my recollections of that time would be little superior in interest to those of Captain Sumph. I recollect, though, that his

companion told me that Randolph would sit in silence for hours together, smoking cigarettes and pondering. But now he was in tearing spirits, perhaps at meeting old friends, and in his best vein; full of audacious paradox, irony, and candor.

He talked much of his resignation and his career, and declared that he would not live the last four years over again for a million a year. He had been successful enough, but he would not face them for all that. He reminded me, too, of our talk at the Turf Club. "Do you know, Lady ——, that but for Rosebery being not at home when I called I should have been a Liberal? I went to his house to settle it all with him. But he had gone out; and, as affairs could not wait, I remained where I was."

Of course this was banter, he did not

mean to be taken seriously. The fact was that he had gone to consult with some one—Lord Goschen, I think—and had come to tell me the result. But the determining factor was, it need scarcely be said, Lord Salisbury's concession. He declared that he had often mentioned that conversation, even to Lord Salisbury, who, he incidentally remarked, I remember, was "never happy out of that d——d laboratory at Hatfield."

I think that this was almost the last entirely cheerful view that I had of Randolph. He was well in health, not devoid of hope, and he had shaken off the strain of his resignation. He was in many respects the Randolph of old times.

He returned to England soon afterwards, made a few parliamentary speeches — not very successful, I think, per-

haps because of the difficulty of his ambiguous position—and went on the turf. This was a new passion with him; inferior, indeed, in excitement, as Lord Palmerston once remarked, to politics; but new and absorbing. He embraced it with his usual ardor, won the Oaks (though he was in Norway at the time), and had his fair measure of success.

He used to come to Durdans for the Epsom meetings until the end of his life; and was as gay and debonair as when he was an Oxford undergraduate. Racing remained a passion with him to the end. Almost every letter that I had from him in his last years of life was about that sport. Let not ambition mock these homely joys.

Then he went to South Africa. Already, I think, the cruel disease which was to paralyze and kill him had begun

to affect him. There were soon symptoms of an irritability which, so far as I know, was rare with him. In old days he was often petulant, had something of the spoiled child about him; but even his petulance was winning, and he was never really irritable, at least within my knowledge.

The beginning of the end was the end. The progress of the disease was slow at first, but its signs were obvious, and when it began his career was closed.

Why recall those last days, except to recall the pity of them?—his devoted mother hoping against hope for his future, his own feverish energy, the brilliant light fluttering out in the full glare of day. There was no curtain, no retirement, he died by inches in public.

The last time that I saw him I dined with him at his mother's house in Gros-

venor Square; his brother-in-law, Lord Tweedmouth, was the only other guest. The next day he gave a farewell dinner to his friends, and the next he set out with his wife on a voyage round the world in a desperate hunt for health. I cannot even now make up my mind whether I wish that I had dined or stayed away. It was all pain, and yet one would not like to have missed his good-bye. I still cannot think of it without distress.

I saw him off at the station, and he wrote me one immensely long letter from Japan, containing great plans of travel, never to be realized. That, so far as I was concerned, was the end. The letter was written in September, 1894. In January, 1895, he died.

VII

IT was a strange, fitful career, one of the most singular and interesting of that century, only less dramatic than that of Disraeli. He had all or almost all the qualities that go to make up success in politics. He was a born party leader, reminding one of Bolingbroke in the dashing days of Harry St. John. He was brilliant, courageous, resourceful, and unembarrassed by scruple; he had fascination, audacity, tact; great and solid ability welded with the priceless gift of concentration; marvellous readiness in debate, and an almost unrivalled skill and attraction on the plat-

form; for he united in an eminent degree both the parliamentary and the popular gifts, a combination which is rarer than is usually supposed.

He had also the vital main-spring of zest. To whatever he applied himself he gave for the time his whole eager heart. He was strenuous at politics, but he was also at times devoted to hunting, racing, and chess, and he took gastronomy as seriously as Macaulay. But whatever it might be, politics or pleasure, it possessed him entirely; he did it with gusto, with every nerve and every fibre.

He had, moreover, the fascination of manner — an invaluable endowment for a politician. Thus, when he chose, which was perhaps too rarely, he could deal successfully with men. He had also at his disposal the charm of conversation,

and this was as various as his moods. When he felt himself completely at ease, in congenial society, it was wholly delightful. He would then display his mastery of pleasant irony and banter; for with those playthings he was at his best. Nor would he hesitate to air his most intimate views of persons and characters; he did not shrink from admissions which were candid to the verge of cynicism; he revelled in paradox. A stranger or a prig happening upon him in such moods would be puzzled, and perhaps scandalized; for his lighter and more intimate conversation was not to be taken literally. He would hate this and that, embrace the most preposterous propositions, and defend any extravagance that might happen to enter his head; if he were opposed, he would carry it much further.

I remember once saying that a certain statesman had not shone at the Foreign Office; he at once declared that he deliberately regarded him as the greatest foreign secretary that had ever lived. This was not conviction, nor even opinion; it was only returning the ball over the net. When in this vein he produced table-talk which would have strained a Boswell to bursting; it was all gayety, the delightful whim of the moment.

He was, moreover, absolutely unaffected himself, and ruthlessly pricked the bubbles of affectation or cant in others. In graver discussion he had, when he chose, a subtle and engaging deference; his ideas were luminous and original. This deference must, however, not be taken to imply veneration; for from that bump his skull was singular-

ly free. The only person who inspired him with anything like awe or respect was the great statesman, when he came to know him, against whom his bitterest philippics had been directed.

Without veneration, if that be a charm, as to most of us it is when not excessive or misplaced, Randolph's conversation, whether light or serious, was all admirable of its kind. His son says truly that "he had a wonderful manner, courtly, frank, and merry, which he did not by any means always display." [1]

The saving clause is not less true than the description; for at all periods of his life he would at times—suddenly as it were — shut himself up and become morose.

He had a faithful and warm heart; from childhood he had been the best of

[1] *Life*, II., 77.

sons; and the whole soul of his mother was with him to the end. Nothing could exceed the pathos of her devotion to him in political adversity, or to his memory when he had passed away. While still a lad, he ruled his family with autocratic affection, and the affection was unstintedly returned.

His friendships were singularly stanch. There might be tiffs, but they would, as a rule, be passing. While they lasted, the horizon would be entirely black, and the human race engaged in a vast combination with the powers of evil against him. In these moods he sometimes tried his political friends severely, as both Gorst and Jennings could have testified; for storms would arise in a clear sky, and the unexpected would happen. His political friends might almost have addressed him in the words of Martial's epigram:

"Difficilis, facilis, jucundus, acerbus es idem:
Nec tecum possum vivere, nec sine te."

But if he seemed sometimes to enjoy a quarrel, he enjoyed a reconciliation still more; indeed, at times I thought that he half enjoyed the quarrel for the sake of the prospective reconciliation. He had few if any permanent animosities, and these mainly under the pressure of his strenuous politics; nor as a rule did he nourish them; his biography affords many proofs of an irritable but placable nature. At all times of his life he attracted warm and lasting friendship, and outside friendship he had the faculty of attracting devoted affection and service.

His private secretary, Mr. Moore, was conspicuous even in that remarkable collection of ministerial assistants that

the last half-century has witnessed: of men not unfrequently much more fit for high office than their temporary chiefs. Moore was Randolph's right-hand man, and Randolph's resignation literally broke Moore's heart, for he died within six weeks of the fatal announcement.

The officials of the Treasury and India Office, who openly dreaded Randolph's advent, became almost instantly his loyal and zealous vassals. But this is not wonderful, for he gave himself no airs of superiority, was frank about any ignorance ("those d——d dots," [1] for example), grateful for help, and ready to show his gratitude.

Nor had he what might have been expected in so ardent a nature — any jealousy of others; none, at least, that I could discover. This is a merit of the

[1] *Life*, I., 184.

rarest water—a real mark of superiority. The ambitious man who can watch without soreness the rise or success of a contemporary is much rarer than a black swan.

But Randolph's was a generous nature in the largest and strictest sense of the word: generous and profuse both with money and praise. His lack of jealousy and his personal charm arose from the same quality—that there was no perfection or claim of perfection about him. He was human, eminently human; full of faults, as he himself well knew, but not base or unpardonable faults; pugnacious, outrageous, fitful, petulant, but eminently lovable and winning.

VIII

AND here perhaps it is fitting to say something of his speeches. No one reads old speeches any more than old sermons. The industrious historian is compelled to explore them for the purposes of political history, but it is a dreary and reluctant pilgrimage. The more brilliant and telling they were at the time, the more dolorous the quest. The lights are extinguished; the flowers are faded; the voice seems cracked across the empty space of years, it sounds like a message from a remote telephone; one wonders if that can really be the scene that fascinated

and inspired. Was this the passage we thought so thrilling, this the epigram that seemed to tingle, this the peroration that provoked such a storm of cheers? It all seems as flat as decanted champagne.

Of course, in the case of speeches that are treatises, like those of Burke, treatises clothed in a literary form and carefully prepared for publication as pamphlets, the remark does not apply. But then these were not speeches at all, or at any rate not successful speeches. Their triumph was literary and philosophical, not that of the arena and the moment. Genuine political speeches that win the instant laurels of debate soon lose their savor. All the accompaniments have disappeared—the heat, the audience, the interruptions, and the applause; and what remains seems cold and flabby.

In turning over Randolph's republished speeches, one is chiefly struck by their audacity, and their extravagance, as if he deemed that anything were good enough for the voracious enthusiasm of mass-meetings. There is often the same profusion of diction as in Mr. Gladstone, but with how great a difference. Mr. Gladstone uses his words to guard carefully his every step of advance from possible attack on flank or in the rear; Randolph dashes forward like Prince Rupert, without heeding liability or peril or the cold criticism of fact.

Yet these dead speeches of his, though they now lack the vivid quality which made them, when delivered, so interesting and diverting, have a lingering charm of their own; if only from a delectable acidity which keeps them

cool and fresh. And after looking through them again, it seems impossible to refrain from some citations of his brilliant, audacious banter; so reckless in spirit, but so studied in form.

Take his repartee to Mr. W. H. Smith on the question of equal treatment of Ireland in the Reform Bill of 1884: "I have heard a great deal of the mud-cabin argument. For that we are indebted to the brilliant, ingenious, and fertile mind of the right honorable member for Westminster. I suppose that in the minds of the lords of suburban villas, of the owners of vineries and pineries, the mud cabin represents the climax of physical and social degradation. But the franchise in England has never been determined by Parliament with respect to the character of the dwellings. The difference between the cabin of the

Irish peasant and the cottage of the English agricultural laborer is not so great as that which exists between the abode of the right honorable member for Westminster and the humble roof which shelters from the storm the individual who now has the honor to address this Committee. . . .

"Non ebur neque aureum
Meâ renidet in domo lacunar,
Non trabes Hymettiæ
Premunt columnas ultimâ recisas Africâ."

I dare say that Mr. Smith laughed as much as any of the audience. But there is in the comical comparison something of the old hostility of the patrician to the monied and mercantile classes: the same feeling which found expression in the sneer against "Marshall and Snelgrove." I admit that this passage was

[1] *Life*, I., 345.

not reprinted in the collected speeches, and should not, perhaps, be recalled; the excuse must be that it is a gem, and an innocuous gem, of Randolph's humor.

But of course his principal shafts were reserved for the great chief of the opposite party. And impudent (there is no other word) and personal as were these attacks their humor and their very extravagance permit the most devoted admirer of Mr. Gladstone to chuckle for a moment.

Take this, for example, from the most brilliant of his platform speeches, that at Blackpool in January, 1884: "For the purpose of religious devotion the advertisements grow larger. The parish church at Hawarden is insufficient to contain the thronging multitudes of fly-catchers who flock to hear Mr. Glad-

stone read the lessons of the day; and the humble parishioners (of Hawarden) are banished to hospitable Non-conformist tabernacles in order that mankind may be present at the Prime Minister's rendering of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or the Book of Job." [1]

Then the famous tree-cutting scene: "For the purposes of recreation he has selected the felling of trees, and we may usefully remark that his amusements, like his politics, are constantly destructive. The forest laments in order that Mr. Gladstone may perspire. . . . The working-men were guided through the ornamental grounds into the wide-spreading park, strewn with the wreckage and the ruin of the Prime Minister's sport. All around them, we may suppose, lay the rotting trunks of once umbrageous

[1] *Speeches*, I., 112.

trees; all around them, tossed by the winds, were boughs and bark and withered shoots. . . . They come suddenly on the Prime Minister and Master Herbert in scanty attire and profuse perspiration, engaged in the destruction of a gigantic oak, just giving its dying groan. They are permitted to gaze and worship and adore, and having conducted themselves with exemplary propriety, are each of them presented with a few chips as a memorial of that memorable scene." [1]

This leads to a somewhat strained comparison of Mr. Gladstone's policy to chips.

Again: "Was it for this that Mr. Gladstone pranced down into Midlothian, blocked up all the railway stations in the North of England, and placed the lives

[1] *Speeches*, I., 113.

of countless thousands of passengers and tourists in the utmost possible peril?"[1] And on the same Midlothian theme, of which he seemed never to weary: "Well, the journey to Midlothian has taken place, and there have been all the usual concomitants. The old stage properties have been brought out at every station: all the old scenery, all the old decorations, the old troupe, they have all been brought forward in a sadly tarnished and bedraggled condition, and the usual amount of seed has been sown by the wayside, and I imagine that the fowls of the air have devoured it."[2] A possibly bedraggled member of the old troupe may perhaps be allowed a tribute to the rollicking fun of the touch about the fowls.

Again, "We remember . . . when Mr.

[1] *Speeches*, I., 191. [2] *Ibid*, I., 334.

Gladstone flying with impetuous haste from one corner of the country to another, was hurled down by your southern division. Down through electoral space he fell, nor was his fall arrested till he had reached the distant borough of Greenwich. Down, too, at that time fell Lord Hartington, his colleague, whom an obscure group of villages in Wales received and nourished." [1]

It is needless to multiply examples of this style, of which the last is perhaps the most striking example. The Miltonic ring of "Down through electoral space he fell," ending with the farcical idea of Lord Hartington's being nourished by Welsh villages, is grotesque humor of no ordinary kind.

If there be such a thing as good taste in political warfare, nothing could offend

[1] *Speeches*, I., 98.

more glaringly against its canons than some of these quotations. All, again, is strikingly picturesque, but it is a picture wholly unlike the original. And so, as men can smile at caricatures of themselves or those dear to them, the warmest admirers of Mr. Gladstone may be amused by these.

Randolph's humor may be fairly defined as burlesque conception, set off by an artificial pomp of style; a sort of bombastic irony, such as we occasionally taste with relish in an after-dinner speech. Sometimes it is what one could imagine that Gibbon might have uttered had he gone on the stump. Sometimes its exuberance overreaches itself, and it can scarcely have seemed other than a cynical experiment on the political digestion of his audience.

Take for example this passage on the

Whig party: "I can see the viscous slimy trail of that political reptile which calls itself the Whig Party gleaming and glistening on every line of it. I see that most malignant monster endeavoring, as it did in 1832, to coil itself round the constituencies of England and to suppress the free action and to smother the natural voice of the English people." [1]

Poor old Whig Party! Already moribund, if not dead; never, at its best or worst, malignant or monstrous, though no doubt a little hungry, a little selfish, and a trifle narrow. It might possibly have been compared by a flatterer to a slow-worm; but an analogy to a crushing, insidious, overpowering serpent was beyond the bounds of a jest.

Not long afterwards he was to get in

[1] *Speeches*, I., 194.

closer quarters, and compare the statesman who was then considered the representative Whig to a boa-constrictor—with this difference: that the boa-constrictor enjoyed his food, while the Whig loathed and sickened upon it.

Later again, in a mood of grace, he was to expunge this passage from his collected speeches; and, indeed, the care is notable with which he omitted from those volumes many passages which might cause personal annoyance, or which did not seem to stand the test of time and reflection.

Take, again, this description of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party: "The Prime Minister, his colleagues and his party—these children of revolution, these robbers of churches, these plunderers of classes, these destroyers of property, these friends of the lawless, these foes of

the loyal."[1] It seems strange that this sort of thing did not overreach itself, but I think it went down very well.

There are, of course, many passages quite as wild; notably those in which, under the guidance, apparently, of an eminent Arabist, he described the Khedive Tewfik in terms not inadequate to the greatest villain in history or fiction, "the conspirator against his father, the robber of his family, the banisher of his brother, the dealer in human flesh and blood, the betrayer of his allies, of his ministers, and of his country; the man of magic and of sorcery,"[2] this was the condensation of charges set forth at length and leisure. Of course his popular audiences delighted in the pungent flavor and aroma of these personal at-

[1] *Speeches*, I., 46. [2] *Ibid.*, 79.

tacks without troubling their heads as to accuracy or appropriateness.

But even at this period of irresponsible invective he could rise to higher and graver levels. Note, for example, his solemn rebuke to those who would govern Ireland as a Crown Colony: "There are some foolish people who talk about disfranchising Ireland, and treating it as a Crown Colony. Do not listen to them. They are as bad in their way as the Radicals and Parnellites. The world would not tolerate such a spectacle; the genius of nations would not suffer it." [1]

And in the same speech there is an analogy drawn between the contention of the Southern States in the American Civil War and the promotion of Irish Home Rule, which, however misleading

[1] *Speeches*, I., 93.

it may be deemed, is a nervous and powerful specimen of political eloquence.[1]

Can there, again, be anything finer in its way than the description of British government in India? "Our rule in India is, as it were, a sheet of oil spread out over a surface of, and keeping calm and quiet and unruffled by storms, an immense and profound ocean of humanity."[2] The diction is by no means perfect, but the idea is little less than sublime.

After his accession to office his oratorical style perceptibly and decorously changed: it became more sober and more responsible. There were still excursions and alarms, notably a denunciation of Lord Ripon; but this, though unmeasured and unjust, was not undignified in tone. There are also the utter-

[1] *Speeches*, I., 91. [2] *Ibid*, I., 212.

ances about Ulster; strong meat to be dealt out by a minister. Then in 1886, when he is out of office, there is his extravagant election address.

When he is in office again, he resumes a style adequate to his responsibility. His speech at Dartford was indeed a remarkable declaration of broad and enlightened policy couched in adequate language. It stands as by far his greatest effort in his serious vein.

Then came his separation from the ministry, and with that his speeches declined. He was now speaking not as the spokesman of a great party or as the daring leader of attack on a political stronghold, but as a lonely individual conscious of isolation and of an irreparable mistake, regarded with suspicion by his own side and some remnant of smarting animosity on the other.

Then again the shadows began to darken around him: it was obvious that he was stricken by some mysterious and disabling malady. In 1890, for example, he delivered a speech on the Parnell Commission, in which he employed a shocking and loathsome metaphor which, although it had been already used by Burke[1] in his undiscriminating greed for simile, would never have been handled by Randolph when in health.

Then there was a long silence, in which his malady steadily increased. At last, in 1893, he reappeared to deliver a speech on the home rule bill. He was a prey to a nervousness that he could neither repress nor disguise, but the House of Commons, which had always had a lurking tenderness for its once spoiled child, listened with pathetic at-

[1] *Posthumous Memoirs of Wraxall*, I., 72.

tention to this "bald and bearded man with shaking hands, and a white face drawn with pain and deeply marked with the lines of care and illness, and with a voice whose tremulous tones already betrayed the fatal difficulty of articulation," as his biographer describes him.

Mr. Churchill goes on to say that "the quality of his speech showed no signs of intellectual failing."[1] Each must speak for himself. It may have been so, but I am sure the audience did not realize the fact. To them and to the orator it was one long pain—pain of watching and listening, pain of thick and almost unintelligible delivery, pain of memory and contrast, pain for the visible imminence of death. What the speech may have been none who heard

[1] *Life*, I., 465.

it knew; for it was a waking nightmare.

He went on making speeches; addressing audiences in the country with restless courage; and returned to London declaring that he had never held such meetings. This was the hallucination of disease. Great audiences came indeed to hear him once more, but they could no longer catch his half-articulated words, and soon went away in sorrow and astonishment. But this, happily, he did not realize.

He had, I think, modelled his oratory on Disraeli's: perhaps unconsciously, for in private life he did not abound in admiration for that remarkable man. This attitude arose, it may be, from a dislike to being supposed to have imitated Lord Beaconsfield; and, indeed, at other times he may have taken a

different view, for his conversational opinions varied from day to day, and were often the outcome of a passing whim. But when, for example, he described the Church of England as "an institution which elevates the life of the nation and consecrates the acts of the State" [1] he not merely said an eloquent thing, but said it in the words that Lord Beaconsfield would have used.

If, however, Disraeli was his model, he certainly in some respects exceeded the original. It is not too much to say that, with the exception of the famous philippics of 1846, Disraeli did not always hold his audience very closely, and that his speeches were better to read than to hear. Moreover, he did not test his powers on the platform, so that comparison is not very easy. For

[1] *Speeches*, I., 138.

Randolph was, I suppose, at his best on the platform before a great audience. I infer this from the vast popularity that his platform speeches obtained for him, from their immense vogue, and the extraordinary anxiety to hear him. In liveliness, in vigor, in sureness of touch, in the power of holding an audience, he transcended, I suspect, not merely Disraeli, but every one in living memory except Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Chamberlain. His secret would have been worth knowing; but I never had the good fortune to hear him on the platform.

In these days when the front rows at a public meeting are bought by impartial spectators, who come to enjoy the principal speech as they would an Adelphi drama, it might have been possible for a political opponent to hear him.

But then it was not so, and a political opponent at a meeting would not have been appreciated or welcome.

My own surmise would be that the attraction of Randolph's speaking was due as much to the speaker as to the speech. The speech in itself was always excellent of its kind, sometimes fantastic, ofter exaggerated, with passages of admirable humor, irony, and rhetorical power. But had these speeches been delivered by any middle-aged gentleman on the front bench, they would have been much less successful.

It was Randolph's personality that was so winning; his audacity, his extravagance, his reckless party spirit; his physical qualities, his slight form, his modulated but penetrating voice, even his perpetually twisted mustache; and above all, perhaps, the fact that this

stripling had come to stir the dry bones of party and to divert the jaded attention of the audience from actors, however eminent, of whom they were rather tired, to a fresh young character. He was in a word supremely interesting.

What makes his faculty the more surprising is that for a long time—indeed, I believe always—he wrote out his speeches before delivering them. When he had read the manuscript twice over he had learned it by heart. Armed with copious notes, without which, he once told me, he could not approach a platform, he was then ready for his audience. With great dramatic art of delivery he repeated the speech in a way that made it seem absolutely fresh and spontaneous. The manuscript was, I believe, sent to the press. Indeed, when he delivered his three speeches in Edinburgh—what

he sportively called his trilogy—he left the manuscripts of all three speeches, with the dates on which they were to be delivered, in charge of a London editor. He consequently enjoyed another triple sequence—of sleepless nights, in agony lest the wrong speech should be published on the wrong day. This painful experience made him determine to abandon the practice; but I am not sure that he did.

In another point, I suspect, he resembled Mirabeau, whose speeches were also written, not always by himself; in the faculty, I mean, for utilizing the brains of others.[1] I do not doubt that the Fourth Party and other friends often co-operated in the production of his more elaborate speeches.

This does not in any way detract

[1] *Life*, II., 355; Gorst's *Fourth Party*, 245.

from their merits. The faculty of borrowing intellectually from others is a subtle one: it is an art in itself, that few can employ successfully. Sheridan would take the arm of a friend down to the House of Commons in friendly chat, and presently the friend would hear with admiring surprise his own ideas translated by Sheridan into a glowing and eloquent speech. The friend could not have done it, Sheridan could; had it not been for Sheridan the friend's ideas would have been altogether lost; so that all parties gained by the process.

It may then be taken for granted that Randolph's friends perceived with satisfaction their ideas appearing in Randolph's popular and ingenious language amid the rattling applause of his teeming audiences.

And after all, no speeches are wholly

original. No one can tell what unconscious forces of reading, conversation, and memory go to produce a great speech. An original speech — one in which all the arguments and illustrations were absolutely novel and wholly beyond previous conception, would in all probability be a failure. Its originality would be fatal to it; it would be regarded as an eccentric intellectual trick and nothing more. There are of course in most great speeches novel arguments and still more novel illustrations, but a speech of which all the arguments and illustrations are new has yet to be heard.

Randolph's method of preparation was, I think, to shut himself up absolutely for two days before the speech had to be delivered. During those forty-eight hours he was unapproachable, and then

he issued forth with the speech red-hot. From his biography I infer that he sometimes took less time, but the former statement comes from himself.

What, then, is the last word to be said about his speeches? Firstly, it is necessary in reading them and in trying to appreciate their effect, to picture the dramatic delivery, the face and figure and youth of the orator. Secondly, it must be remembered that these speeches are not essays, not speeches to be read rather than heard, like Burke's and Disraeli's. Neither are they masterpieces of sustained and restrained oratory like those of Mr. Bright. Neither are they rolling rivers of majestic diction, the outlet of intellectual resources long-accumulated and constantly refreshed, as in the case of Mr. Gladstone.

But for the modern purposes of Parlia-

ment and the platform they were perhaps as available as any that have been mentioned. They did not as a rule raise the audience to a higher level, as was often the case with the others; but they tickled the popular palate and gave it a constant wish for more. In this way he was able to bring home serious argument to the people, who took it enveloped in rhetorical jam.

His earlier speeches, except those on Irish affairs, had scarcely the adequate weight of knowledge and experience, for his political education had only begun with his political career. So he had to pick up knowledge as he went along, enough for the purposes of attack, but not sufficient for the purposes of policy and office.

This is apparent even in the carefully edited collection of his speeches. For

example, he dallied for a moment with what was called Fair Trade, but dropped and repudiated it without compromise as soon as he had studied the question.

When he became connected with a great department, he readily assimilated the facts presented to him by the officials, so readily that had his official career been prolonged it is not to be doubted that his speeches would have become the instructive and responsible utterances of a great statesman. As it is, we have little more than the Dartford deliverance to show what he might have done had he remained a minister, and lived.

So, oratorically speaking, he will live principally by the wit and humor and sarcasm of his youthful philippics. These will perhaps never be rivalled or indeed imitated. Their success consisted, I

think, apart from their raciness and insolence, in the striking combination of the picturesque and the burlesque. People, as has been said, never read old speeches. But without reading or studying, there may be many for a generation yet to come who will turn over the pages of these startling discourses to pick out the plums, and they will not be without their reward.

IX

WHAT, with such splendid qualities, and his illustrious name, might he not have accomplished? Why, with all these dazzling attributes to his credit, did he not achieve a complete success? And then he was so young!

His career was not a complete success, and yet it was far from a failure. While it lasted it eclipsed the fame of almost all who were then engaged in politics. Many, no doubt, severely censured his methods and the violence of his attacks. A Whig statesman, for example, ordinarily urbane, refused after Randolph's letter about Lord Granville to meet him in conference.

And the antipathy was almost as great as the enthusiasm which he excited. Not a few good men thought him absolutely wicked, and beyond the pale of political salvation. But, while he was a figure, he enlisted public interest and public admiration as no one did but Mr. Gladstone: his popularity, indeed, was at one time almost unbounded. It was made up of various elements, for on his head rested the hopes and affections, as well as the indignant censures, of many different sections of the community. There was something of the adoration with which famous pugilists were regarded in the palmy days of the Ring: the people loved to see the young David hurling his stones—far from smooth though they were—at the giant whom they also loved. They delighted in the shrewd

epigrams and the reckless but telling personalities of his speeches.

To others he was welcome as seeming to diminish and impair the over-powering domination of Mr. Gladstone. But above all, the nation is always on the look-out for a man, a seer, a guide; and such an one many thought they had discovered in this youthful combatant, or at least a leader with new ideas who would regild or rejuvenate the somewhat negative doctrines of orthodox Toryism.

He had, at any rate, let some fresh air into the party system, so much indeed that it sometimes seemed a hurricane. Randolph appeared a very son of the morning. Nevertheless, because of this very splendor of promise, his achievement came infinitely short of anticipation. He was in office but a

few months, and then, like the son of the morning, he fell, not to rise again.

Such a career, politically speaking, cannot be considered full or triumphant. Why was it not something more?

The answer is twofold. In the first place it is to be found in the word "wayward," which is always associated with him in my mind. But it is also necessary to remark that we do not know when his fatal illness first began to affect him. I have been told that it was influencing him so far back as 1885; I cannot of course vouch for the fact, but I confess I think it probable.

It is not that his intellect deteriorated, but that the malady would from time to time quicken certain tendencies into extreme violence. Take, for example, his attack on Mr. Gladstone as a second Reschid Pasha, and on Lord Granville,

who had answered this attack; caricatures wholly unworthy of him, neither wise, nor witty, nor effective, produced within two days of each other, and denoting a mind unbalanced and almost unhinged.

His waywardness, however, is not altogether to be attributed to disease. He was always so from boyhood, but amiably and controllably so. From the first moment that I can remember him there was a tinge in him of the eccentric, the petulant, and the unexpected. The stealthy poison of his illness probably accentuated this defect, in combination with the natural exhilaration of prodigious triumph.

Nothing, for example, could be more extravagant than his first resignation in 1885, as told in his biography. He might conceivably and even justly have protested against the communications

carried on by the Sovereign through Lord Salisbury with India without his being a party to them, though Lord Salisbury informed him of them. But his resignation, and the terms of the correspondence in which it was conveyed, are almost childish when it is remembered that they came from a young minister who had just achieved a great position in his party and in the country by unsparing effort, who had forced himself into office over the bodies of his leaders, but who now, on a point scarcely, if at all, more substantial than one of etiquette, suddenly discovered that he "had always had great doubts as to whether his being in the Government would be of any advantage to the Government or to the party." "All doubts," he adds, "on the point are now removed from my mind." And so he insists on his resignation.

Then the fit wears off, and he consents to remain in office, appealing finally to the cool sagacity of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. "Please forgive me," replies Sir Michael, "for saying that I think you looked at this matter rather too seriously last Friday. I think I should have been more inclined to laugh at the story of the telegram than to treat it as a proof of want of confidence on the part of the Queen and Prime Minister. If you had not been ill you would never have said of yourself in your letter to me that 'I have no longer any energy or ideas, and am no more good except to make disturbance.'" [1]

The delicacy and importance of the point involved are not to be underrated. There need be no discussion here of

[1] *Life*, I., 516.

these. But it is abundantly clear that the issue could easily have been settled satisfactorily by explanation, as indeed it was. But no! that was not Randolph's way at that time of semi-supremacy. The matter must be settled by a resignation, portentously offered and portentously withdrawn. It was burning the house down in order to roast the pig. The method in one so rational almost indicates the early shadows of the final malady, and it is to be noted that he admits that he was ill at the time.

I have already indicated more than once the second reason why his career was not a complete success—he was in the wrong party. He was, it is true, eminently patrician both by instinct and birth. This he never concealed, nor could he have concealed it if he

would. But his opinions, his instincts, his aims, were all not merely Liberal, but Radical.

Nor was he in the least Imperialist. This his son sets forth in terms: "Lord Randolph Churchill was never what is nowadays called an Imperialist."[1] This was no secret to his friends. His sympathies were not with the growth and development of empire, though he was proud of his part in the annexation of Burmah; his views on foreign policy were not merely not those of Lord Salisbury, but were in truth rather those of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. He might be described without exaggeration as a thorough and convinced Radical of the old type. He had studied the Irish question on the spot, and always maintained that Home Rule was impracti-

[1] *Life*, II., 117.

table. But otherwise his views were those of advanced Liberals.

This normally in a Tory leader must eventually have precipitated the party system, but when the impetuosity of his nature is taken into account it was sure to precipitate a crisis and to make his position in the party impossible. Had his character been different he might have trained himself in the orthodox pace. Disraeli, who had begun with views not wholly dissimilar, had done so, with excellent results. But this for Randolph's temperament was at that time impossible.

Moreover, he was intoxicated with a success and popularity which Disraeli, as a young or middle-aged man, had never achieved. He thought then that he could take the party with him. Here lay his fatal mistake. His party was

delighted to follow, so long as he gave popularity to the name of Tory and to the policy—say, of Lord Salisbury. But when he began to launch a daring programme of his own, the party shuddered; when he began to insist, it rebelled.

Randolph stated this with unpleasant candor in 1888:—"Though honorable members do not in the least object to my winning applause at great mass-meetings in the country, there seems to be a considerable difference of opinion when I attempt to carry these opinions to a practical conclusion." [1]

Besides these individual and not unnatural prejudices of his party, he had to combat something more impalpable and more formidable—the party "machine." That he had once captured but had now lost; and that organization,

[1] *Speeches*, II., 336.

however futile in other directions, is now so developed that no individual, however gifted, can fight against it. Peel twice and Disraeli once did, no doubt, when the party "machine" was comparatively feeble, pass measures against the will or conscience of their party. But Peel fell, as his Bill passed; and Disraeli was too wary to repeat his own experiment.

It is more than doubtful if either Peel or Disraeli ever attained the personal popularity of Randolph in 1885. But that popularity was not a sufficient base for a revolution in policy, or for marching the Tory party over to Liberalism. Had Randolph returned to office he would, I think, have learned his lesson and fallen into line. Mr. Disraeli once boasted that he had educated his party. But did not his party in truth educate Mr. Disraeli?

X

STRANGE is the fate that has bound the Tory party to leaders of uncongenial faith or suspicious antecedents: but so it has been from the end of the Liverpool dynasty till the epoch of Lord Salisbury.

The short Canning ministry, of whatever complexion Canning may be deemed, was repudiated by the Tory party.

The Duke of Wellington, though undoubtedly a Tory himself, was so dominated by his favorite doctrine that the King's government must be carried on at any cost, and by his view of his relation as a paid servant to the Crown,

that he was willing to pass any measure of any character that might be considered necessary in the public interest, without reference to his own opinions. He emancipated Roman Catholics in the teeth of his former professions; he was accessory to the repeal of the Corn-Laws, a repeal to which he was extremely averse; he was ready to pass a Reform Bill which he regarded as the ruin of the country. He cannot, therefore, it would seem, be reckoned as a party politician at all.

Then comes Peel, who will live by the two great Liberal measures that he passed; who was, indeed, a staid and thoughtful Liberal, the bulwark of the Liberal Government till he died, and who was excommunicated by his party.

Then there succeeds Derby, who was a leading member of the Grey Govern-

ment, and who harangued from the table of Brooks' on behalf of the Reform Bill.

He is followed by Disraeli, the Radical candidate for Wycombe, who, in an imagination of Oriental glow, blended his Radical recollections with the professions required of a Tory, and so produced "Young England," or, as some think, Tory Democracy. What the old Tories, like the King of Hanover and his crony the Duke of Rutland, thought of the future leader may be read in the lamentations they poured forth over "the influence which Mr. Disraeli has acquired over several of the young British Senators."[1] They knew his past, they did not foresee his future.

Then there is the figure of Randolph, a convinced Radical: him, too, the Tory

[1] *Lives of the Lords Strangford*, 224.

party cast forth. There was for the party no absolute confidence, no unquestioning loyalty from the time of Lord Liverpool's paralytic attack till it found itself in the comforting embrace of Lord Salisbury.

But let not the dwellers in glass-houses throw stones: the Liberal party has undergone much the same fate. Grey was a lifelong Liberal, but he had shaken himself almost free from party ties before he became the Liberal Prime-Minister. Melbourne was a languid and unconvinced Whig; still, he cannot be counted as having ever been anything else, though he served for a time under Wellington.

Russell was the golden exception, for he was a Whig from the cradle to the grave. But when we come to Palmerston we perceive one who was a minister

during the entire period of the Liverpool administration, and who never shook off the traces of that connection.

Then comes Gladstone, "the hope" of "stern and unbending Tories," who led the Liberal party with so much renown, but who was proud to own to the Conservative temperament to the end of his life.

At first sight it must appear remarkable that parties and leaders should be so ill-mated, but on reflection there seems no reason for surprise. When it is considered how hereditary is the transmission of politics in this country, it seems rather wonderful that, after reading, travel, and thought, the family dogmas are not more often questioned.

Men are netted early into political clubs; or fall, when callow, under the influence of some statesman; or stand

as youths for some constituency before they have considered the problem of life. Many never consider them at all; but those who do must often find themselves in disagreement with the politics which they have prematurely professed.

Some, too, must find that, while they remain stanch to what seem the fundamental tenets, the party itself, under erratic guidance, or lured by the prospect of momentary advantage, is wandering far from its fold; and so, while they themselves remain orthodox, they are isolated by the unorthodoxy of their friends. Add to which the politician sees the seamy side or comfortless interior of his own party alone; he is not admitted to the drawbacks of the opposite faction; so that the one in some respects seems more alluring than the other.

If all these things be considered, it will seem marvellous that there are not more political conversions or perversions than there are.

XI

LET us go a little more into detail. Had Randolph's party no reason to shudder? What is Toryism and what is Tory Democracy? The Toryism associated with the names of Eldon and Sidmouth has long been dead. The Toryism of Lord Derby died under him in 1867 like an overtaxed horse; and it then became recognized by the most stern and unbending partisans that the old Tory *non possumus* was impracticable. Since then Toryism has become more flexible; it has indeed under the occasional pressure of men or of public opinion been a singularly adaptable creed.

This is not said by way of reproach, for politics are the sport of circumstance, and principle the slave of opportunity.

The Tory creed, so far as it implies maintenance of historical continuity and calculated, practical, well-meditated reform without unnecessary risk to precious institutions, is a respectable and healthy faith. But there have been startling variations. Disraeli had long thrown out hints about Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Shelburne, and a Venetian constitution. What it all meant no one quite knew; and the world at large, especially the Tories, treated it with unseemly and unjust ridicule.

No one who lived and mixed with politicians before 1874, or who has read the memoirs of that time, can forget the despair and distrust with which Disraeli inspired his followers. Might

not salvation be found by shelving or discarding him? by such a combination for example as making the Duke of Somerset Prime Minister, and relegating Disraeli to the serene duties of Chancellor of the Duchy, or even to complete repose?[1] This was the project of Cairns, Disraeli's closest political ally, who nevertheless seems at that time to have had an imperfect conception of the character and aims of his friend..

To such straits was the party driven. Anything, they declared, but Disraeli; under him victory was impossible. What a mere adventurer he was! What a fantastic alien! What nonsense he wrote! But what if the nonsense should mean a majority? That, of course, would be a different thing. This majority came in 1874; and as at the sound of the sack-

[1] Lang's *Life of Lord Iddesleigh*, I., 246.

but, psaltery, and dulcimer, the whole party fell down and worshipped. It seemed now clear that the gospel of Toryism was to be found in some spirited novels. As it turned out, the Toryism of 1874 had no trace of "Young Englandism," and not the least savor of the popular sympathies of *Sybil*. Still less was it even remotely tainted with the Radical "education" of 1867. That was well enough for a season of dexterous impotence: power involved or required more, as, for example, a spirited foreign policy. But, to the last, sages who had studied the romances of the young Hebrew would wag their heads in corners and predict that the edifice would be crowned by something with regard to Palestine which was to be found, if anywhere, in *Tancred*.

Then came Mr. Gladstone and the

travels of political triumph associated with Midlothian, and all faded into mist. Disraeli died; and the Tadpoles and the Tapers were left wondering what Toryism was next to be. The prophet had vanished and had left not a shred of his mantle behind. With Lord Salisbury, a real Tory, who was something of a cynic and a pessimist as well, the policy assumed a new, or perhaps resumed an old, shape. It defended the Church and property, or property and the Church; and was, if absolutely necessary, prepared to make some little advance under severe pressure. There was to be nothing spontaneous; the watchword was to be "needs must when the devil drives." The pressure came with more or less severity, firstly, from Randolph Churchill, and secondly, from Mr. Chamberlain.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

Lord Randolph Churchill was half aristocrat and half Bohemian; the aristocratic part was in his blood; his Bohemianism came from the fact that he was, inexplicably enough, if his home and early associations be considered, born and bred a rebel, as much as any Bohemian a rebel against the accepted and conventional standards of life. He loved as much as any Bohemian to shock and even outrage the commonplace. He respected as little as any Bohemian the ties of circumstance and tradition. It was this Bohemianism that found its vent and field in the Fourth Party; it was this which seems to have enlisted the secret sympathy of Lord Beaconsfield.

"I fully appreciate your feelings," said Lord Beaconsfield, in 1880, to Sir Henry Wolff, "and those of your friends,

[illegible] veil [illegible] same.

[illegible] more [illegible] The [illegible] made him [illegible] middle class: his [illegible] Radi- [illegible] that he had [illegible] question. [illegible] were those [illegible] which kept him [illegible]

[illegible]

As to his respectable leaders in the Commons, they made him gnash his teeth, both as an aristocrat and a Bohemian. His advent indeed seemed for a time to paralyze the Tory chiefs, as his popularity was unbounded, casting their figures completely into the shade. Moreover, while his wit, his irony, and his invective delighted his audiences, scarcely less did these enjoy his hints of a popular policy which should strike at the root of the matter and eviscerate the obsolete formulas of authoritative Liberalism.

Intoxicated, not unnaturally, with his position, he treated his colleagues as negligible quantities, gave the rein to his advanced views on Ireland and domestic questions, and went "full steam ahead," forgetting, or not perceiving, or not caring, that he had left the party

and its organization a long way behind him. So that when, to clear the air and make his position apparent, he staked his all on a petulant resignation, petulant in method if not in spirit, he found himself almost alone. The Tory priests and pharisees shunned him, and there was scarce a political Samaritan in sight.

In the historic biography of Lord George Bentinck, to which reference has already been made, there is a dramatic passage which Randolph might well have considered: "When Prince Metternich was informed at Dresden, with great ostentation, that the Emperor had arrived—'Yes, but without his army,' was the reply." Disraeli goes on to describe the division which, in 1846, wrecked Sir Robert Peel's Government, and the announcement of the

hostile majority whispered to the minister. "Sir Robert did not reply, or even turn his head. He looked very grave, and extended his chin, as was his habit when he was annoyed, and cared not to speak. He began to comprehend his position, and that the Emperor was without his army."

Randolph, in 1886, had arrived; he was a conspicuous and brilliant figure; but he had no parliamentary army behind him, and his supporters in the country were silenced by the action of the party in the House of Commons, and of the party Caucus.

Were the Tories to be blamed for this desertion of their young paladin? This cannot, I think, be seriously contended. They had long been out of breath in trying to follow him, and, when he was stripped of the glamour of office and

leadership. they saw him as he was, not a Tory but a Radical; indifferent about the Church and heedless of property. Had he remained in office long enough to produce his famous budget, the scales would have fallen even more completely from their eyes. for they would have seen that he was prepared to tax the very cartridges with which they killed or missed their game.

This then was Tory Democracy; it was the wolf of Radicalism in the sheep-skin of Toryism. When Randolph, after his resignation, became more and more emancipated from Tory tradition, and more hopeless of reunion with his party, he scarcely cared to conceal the fact.

In November, 1885, he had sent to Lord Salisbury a proposed sketch of policy, which included local government on a purely popular basis, with a large

devolution of powers, the enfranchisement of future leaseholds (whatever that may mean), similarity of treatment between England and Ireland in respect of local government, and concession to the Roman Catholic hierarchy on Educational questions.

At Dartford, when leader of the House of Commons, he set forth a programme of large legislation on land, local government, temperance, elementary education, and rating: and though the language was vague, it was none the less alarming to the patriarchs and pontiffs of Toryism. Finally he set forth to the Cabinet, and prepared for immediate production a democratic budget, containing graduated death duties and local option as regards the drink traffic.

This, as we have seen, was the final ground of his resignation. That event

is noteworthy in connection with Tory Democracy, because, though it put that phrase out of fashion, and deprived it of all prospect of ministerial countenance, it also removed all drag or control from its unofficial development.

So, three years afterwards he was making speeches in the Midlands, urging drastic temperance reform, Irish local government, and Irish land purchase, in terms so elastic that his audience "gasped," and a Tory member, who had besought him to come and speak, now besought him to stay away.[1]

All this, indeed, was well enough; but it was not Toryism or anything like Toryism. Mr. Chamberlain at once sounded a note of menace and alarm, with that trumpet which has given forth so many notes of menace or alarm.

[1] *Life*, II., 402.

Lord Randolph Churchill, he said, had "borrowed from the cast-off policy of all the extreme men of all the different sections. He took his Socialism from Mr. Burns and Mr. Hyndman; he took his local option from Sir Wilfrid Lawson; he took his Egyptian policy from Mr. Illingworth; he took his metropolitan reform from Mr. Stuart; and he took his Irish policy from Mr. John Morley. Is this Toryism?" he asked.

There could be no doubt as to the reply. And, indeed, Tory Democracy, in the person of Randolph, had by no means reached the limits of its tether. "In these later years," says his son, "Lord Randolph Churchill was drawn increasingly towards a Collectivist view of domestic politics . . . and he favored or accepted doctrines and tendencies before which Liberals recoiled, and even

the most stalwart Radicals paused embarrassed."[1] When Tory Democracy is stated in terms as Tory Collectivism, there is no further need to expatiate on the anomaly involved.

And so Randolph Churchill moved onward, on broadening lines it may be said, but further and further from Toryism. In his letter from Mafeking of November, 1891, we have seen that he considered the end of Tory Democracy to have come with the accession of Mr. Balfour to the leadership. "So Arthur Balfour is really leader, and Tory Democracy, the genuine article, is at an end."[2]

It is not easy to trace the subtle connection between the leadership of Mr. Balfour and the disappearance of the genuine article. But in the following

[1] *Life*, II., 428. [2] *Life*, II., 452.

year Randolph again emphasized his policy in a striking letter to Mr. Arnold White, gave his blessing to the Labor party and their aims, so far as he understood them, and urged in vague but eloquent terms their assimilation by the Tory party. "It is our business," he wrote, "as Tory politicians to uphold the constitution. If under the constitution, as it now exists and as we wish to see it preserved, the Labor interest finds that it can obtain its objects and secure its own advantage, then that interest will be reconciled to the constitution, will find faith in it, and will maintain it."[1] If not—so much the worse for the constitution and the Tory party. His "ifs," it will be seen, were capacious.

In the same year he urged on Mr.

[1] *Life*, II., 459.

Balfour the Miners' Eight-Hours Bill, trusted that "Gorst might have a little labor fling," and declared that he himself would abandon dear delights to vote for the measure, adding, half seriously, "I do not think that I would do this for the Monarchy, the Church, the House of Lords, or the Union." [1]

All this might be Democracy, but it certainly was not Tory. In fine, Tory Democracy was a good catch-word for reconciling Toryism and Democracy, if that were possible. But Toryism means something which Democracy cannot recognize, and Democracy means something which Toryism cannot supply. Toryism could not of its own free will be reconciled, for then it would have ceased to be Toryism, and party divisions would have become a greater

[1] *Life*, II., 461.

illusion than, in the opinion of some, they are already. In the womb of the future there may no doubt be embryos of this description, but then it is clear that the opposing faction will have also to change its character.

All that is beyond our compass to-day. What is certain is that Tory Democracy was an imposture, an honest and unconscious imposture no doubt, but none the less an imposture. It was in reality a useful denomination or resource for any one who found himself with Radical opinions inside the Tory party, and who did not wish to leave it. And so the Fourth Party, half at least of which was in this position, and which was wholly a band of rebels, found itself in sole possession of the sacred mystery.

XII

THE history of the Fourth Party has been written by Mr. Harold Gorst with the unwinking gravity of an augur, and with a natural desire to point out that it was not entirely composed of Randolph.

As a matter of fact, it consisted of Sir H. Wolff, who supplied diplomacy and experience; Sir John Gorst, who represented organization, law, and experience; and Randolph, who furnished the audacity, the voice, and the magnetism; all three brimful of ideas, and endowed with abilities of no common order. Mr. Balfour was the outrigger

of this frail but daring craft; he was of it for at time, but not in it.

It was indeed originally an escapade, carried on with high spirits and with the tongue often in the cheek. As it prospered, it became formidable and therefore serious; yet it embodied nothing but a negative. Its aim was to oppose, hinder, thwart, and wreck the work of the Government in every possible way. This object, which from the parliamentary point of view is regarded as legitimate, and even laudable, was carried on with zeal and ingenuity.

Nothing was sacred for them any more than for the traditional French sapper. Randolph, for instance, had he not been absent, would have taken pride in marring the effect, so potent and beneficial both at home and abroad, of the unanimous vote of credit on April 27,

1885. In a vehement letter to Lord Salisbury he indignantly censured the silent acquiescence of the Opposition on this occasion. "The effect in the House of Commons," he writes, "has been deplorable." [1]

Lord Salisbury shared his regret. "I hope the papers will attribute the collapse to our patriotism; at least, that is the only hope with which one can console oneself," [2] wrote the experienced statesman; and the desired consolation was happily forthcoming.

Had any object but injury to the government been in view, neither could have ignored the European importance of the vote; as it was, neither seemed able to perceive the interests of Britain when the interests of the Ministry were involved.

[1] *Life*, II., 382. [2] *Ibid*, II., 383.

This confusion also complicated the attitude of the Fourth Party towards the Reform Bill of 1884. "Tory Democracy," we are told by Mr. Churchill, "wanted to pass the bill, yet wanted to destroy the government";[1] a strange rendering of the old cry, "Measures not men." "We want the measures without their authors," was apparently the view of this political group.

Again, the Fourth Party convinced itself that the hapless Khedive Tewfik, who was so sorely bestead, was a scoundrel of the deepest dye. As to Mr. Bradlaugh, he was the punchball round which the giddy factions played. Any issue, indeed, was welcome to and utilized by the little party. All was fish that came into their net. As a parliamentary exhibition it was superb. It

[1] *Life*, I., 327.

amused the House, it interested the nation, it harassed the government. But this last was its sole object, for it had no positive policy, except an occasional mystic allusion to Tory Democracy.

And so we are told that if we can find the elusive secret of Tory Democracy it will be in the custody of the Fourth Party. Sir John Gorst evidently believes in it, but he does not disguise his doubts as to any authoritative connection between his political views and those of official and orthodox Toryism. "From that epoch" (1886), he mournfully remarks in a prefatory note to his son's history of the Fourth Party, "Tory Democracy, which was the ideal on which Mr. Disraeli's domestic policy was based, has been by the party leaders discredited and abandoned. The few members of the party who still cling to

the principles of Mr. Disraeli are suspected of being Radicals and Socialists." [1]

Why is it, may be asked in passing, that this suspicion never rested on Mr. Disraeli during his leadership of the party? It appears to stigmatize those who believe that they have adopted his principles and ideals, but never to touch himself.

The reason is twofold. In the first place, it has to be demonstrated that Mr. Disraeli ever became seriously responsible for any form of Tory Democracy. He may have blown bubbles; he certainly wrote political romances. But a romance is not a programme, and novels can never be manifestoes. Strange were the recesses of that interesting and complicated character; but it may be permitted to surmise that no one was

[1] Gorst's *Fourth Party*, v.

so much amused at the solemnity with which the fanciful rodomontade of *Coningsby* was treated as Disraeli himself.

In the second place, whatever may have been his views on Tory or "Young English" Democracy, he was not prepared to be a martyr to them. He never carried them into practical effect, for the obvious reason that he would have shattered his party had he done so. From 1874 to 1880 he enjoyed supreme authority, but without lifting a finger for Tory Democracy.

It is by his acts not his words that a minister who enjoys real power is judged, and by this test Disraeli's affection for Tory Democracy, if he ever felt any, must be held to have been extinguished by his majority, while those who suffer for clinging to what they deem his principles must be held to be gratuitous

martyrs. But this is no disparagement to the memory of that extraordinary man. A statesman, however much he may be animated by the ideal, has to deal with the real, with facts and circumstances as they are. A much less astute politician than he would realize, on attaining power, that the reconciliation of "the two nations," as they are called on the title-page of *Sybil*, could not be achieved by the leader of a Conservative party as then constituted, or likely to be constituted.

We must, therefore, seek for something more definite in Tory Democracy than the policy of Mr. Disraeli. Randolph was fortunate enough to find it in one of his epigrams, "Some of Lord Beaconsfield's phrases," he says, in his article on "Elijah's Mantle," "will bear any amount of microscopic examina-

tion. Speaking in Manchester, in 1871, by the alteration of a letter in a quotation from the Vulgate, he revealed the policy which ought to guide Tory leaders at the present time: *Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas.*

Such was the quotation in which a careful mind will discover a scheme of sound progress and reform, of dimensions so large and widespreading that many volumes would not suffice to explain its details."

Happy the statesman whose epigrams are interpreted in so liberal a spirit by a careful mind. That *Sanitas sanitatum* was by no means an original phrase, but had been employed some two centuries before Disraeli uttered it, would not impair its merit were it really such a fruitful germ of policy as Randolph seemed to imagine. The many volumes

required were, however, never written; and so, even if Tory Democracy be embodied in this naked formula, we are not carried much further.

We are, therefore, still left face to face with the question as to whether Tory Democracy was in any sense a boon or a legacy of Disraeli's? Has Disraeli, indeed, any responsibility for it? What were the principles to which Sir John Gorst alludes which have entailed ostracism on those who cherish them? They are, at any rate, not those of "Young England"; whatever else it was, Tory Democracy was not identical with, and bore no resemblance to the doctrines of "Young England" as preached in *Coningsby*. "Young England" was something feudal and ecclesiastical, though benignantly popular. It endeavored to saddle the narrower Toryism on

the Whigs, while reserving the realm of imagination for itself.

"A High Tory," said a leading son of "Young England," ". . . meant a high Whig of the Eldonite school."[1] This was a complication, for if Eldon were not a Tory, where was Toryism to be found? "Young England," at any rate, itself perceived that it was something which Eldon could neither have blessed nor understood, and prudently anticipated criticism by dubbing him a Whig.

The positive doctrines were, for the nineteenth century, scarcely less original; the aristocracy was to assert its ancient rights and exert a patriarchal influence; the Established Church, paramount and supreme, was to train and inspire the nation; the large bounty of the monas-

[1] *Angela Pisani*, by George Smythe, Viscount Strangford, III., 210.

teries was, in some vague but Anglican way, to be revived; while a grateful peasantry received copious ale and beef, as formerly, at some ecclesiastical gate, and enjoyed on the festivals of the Church the diversions set forth in the *Book of Sports*.

This, at least, was the impression produced by the writings of the new school. But there was nothing of this in Tory Democracy; that was rather Radical and rather Socialist, without any peculiar tenderness for the Church or the aristocracy. The fortuitous discovery of *Sanitas sanitatum* does not bridge the gulf between "Young England" and the later creed. "Young England" was a poetical ideal of Toryism; Tory Democracy had nothing Tory but the name.

There was, however, this point of resemblance between the two groups, that

in both cases the leaders were carried far away from the original idea. Just as Randolph found himself on the verge of collectivism, so George Smythe, the original of *Coningsby* and the embodiment of Young England, travelled nearly as far from his political base and involved himself in much the same contradictions. He had been won to the new departure "by the mediæval halo cast over politics as well as religion."[1] Like his friend, John Duke of Rutland, who has just left us amid manifestations of universal esteem and regret, "he dreamed of an almsgiving Church protecting and cultivating the affections of a dependent peasantry."[2] And how did he end? By claiming "the sanction of Tory principle for free trade, secular

[1] *Angela Pisani* (Prefatory Memoir), Vol. I., xiv.
[2] *Ibid*, xv.

education for the masses, extension of the franchise, the abolition of all religious disabilities, concessions to Dissenters, and the disendowment of all Church establishments, considering that the less the minister of heaven has to do with the affairs of the earth the better." [1]

No wonder the old King of Hanover, the last of the antediluvians, on reading this speech, wrote that it was, "though beautiful in language, diabolical in substance. I am glad if you can see conservative principles, or any principles, but such as are dictated by the accursed apostate and traitor Peel." And he ends by speaking of "the address, so well given and well colored, but still you see the figure of Satan behind it." That, in lurid form, is the real feeling of real Tories (if there be any left) towards

[1] *Lives of the Lords Strangford*, 243.

these new departures. What is the use of opposing Liberalism, they seem to say, if doctrines such as these are proposed by Tories?

The truth is that there are and always have been men who believe that so long as they call themselves Tories, they may blamelessly and harmlessly preach what doctrines they please: just as in some religious circles a man who believes himself to be numbered with the elect holds that his sanctity justifies his acts, and that he may do pretty much what he pleases.

This is the explanation of pious but fraudulent men of business, who are sometimes inaccurately denounced as hypocrites. But the acts of the unregenerate are, in the judgment of the elect, to be differently appraised and weighed in different scales. A Liberal

measure from Liberals is something to be thwarted and denounced: a Radical measure from Tories has a halo about it.

But is there not a more general explanation? Is it not true that men often pursue their own thoughts, heedless of the party bond, and that they wake from their absorption to find that they have strayed far from the party camp? And when they realize this, when they find that they are no longer orthodox in the party sense, they are apt to ask themselves if it be necessary, or even possible, to join any other section; their own faith has disappeared, can they embrace a new one? In any other they find much to repel, enough at any rate to make the exchange not worth making. So they remain content with the old label, careless if it be chal-

lenged, and become a sort of political freethinkers.

Does not the same thing happen in religion? Those who ponder for themselves the grave problems of life and eternity not unfrequently become dissatisfied with their own church without being attracted by any other, so they remain nominally what they were, or pass silently into agnosticism. The analogy is not remote, for the ideal political party in point of belief, aspiration, and devotion should be little less than a political church.

But to return to Tory Democracy, the best specimen of a Tory democratic speech that occurs to me is one that Randolph delivered at Birmingham in April, 1884; it was almost his first expression of the idea. It began with a benediction of the Caucus, which was

then an institution most repugnant to his party. It went on with a defence of the House of Lords, "that bulwark of popular liberty and civil order" which "should be preserved solely on the ground of its utility to the people," and of the Established Church; and it concluded with urging social as against organic reform.[1]

But as regards social reform, since both parties profess the same aims, it must be in their methods that they differ; so that the mere allusion to the object does not elucidate the position. The mixture, however, of high Toryism of the old school with the approval of the Caucus, and the democratic ending, seem a good illustration both of the features and of the difficulties of Tory Democracy.

[1] *Speeches*, I., 131–140.

In later years Randolph gave a definition which is both candid and probable. "What is Tory Democracy?" he asked. "Tory Democracy is a democracy which supports the Tory Party." That seems simple enough. He goes on to say that this support must be given not from caprice or disgust, but from conviction of the excellence of Tory principles. "But Tory Democracy involves, also, another idea of equal importance. It involves the idea of a government who, in all branches of their policy and in all features of their administration, are animated by lofty and by *liberal ideas*. That is Tory Democracy." [1]

It is a strange, vague, wordy passage until the outburst of frankness at the end. Tory Democracy involves a government imbued with liberal ideas. It

[1] *Life*, II., 330.

is no doubt true that he used the adjective as an epithet and not in the party sense. Here the capital letter assumes importance. The biographer gives it, the editor of the speeches withholds it. I have no doubt myself that it should be "liberal" and not "Liberal." But as it is a question of ideas, the spirit of the passage confirms the contention that Tory Democracy was simply Liberalism under another name.

Nor, indeed, did Randolph in confidential intercourse make any secret of the fact. "The work is practically done," he wrote to Lord Justice Fitz-Gibbon in December, 1886, before ever his successor had been appointed; "the Tory party will be turned into a Liberal party."[1] Did he really believe this? The conversion, at any rate, never took

[1] *Life*, II., 264.

place. But the sentence sufficiently reveals the inner purpose of Tory Democracy. It was employed to enable Liberals by conviction to remain Tories by profession.

Randolph was much too acute not to know this. His difficulty must have lain, not in that consciousness, but in the obvious fact that every one else was fully aware of it. He had to a large extent convinced others of the tenets of Toryism; what he could not convince was himself. It is, of course, both easy and true to say that social questions are not the property of the Liberal party; that they are not the sacred game of the Liberal preserve. It is also true, I think, that Liberals, when they have had the power to deal effectively with them, have not always used it.

But neither does this make those

problems the property of the Tory party, for they are not mere flotsam and jetsam. No party in power can afford to ignore them, for they are permanent, inevitable, and sometimes menacing. They present themselves to all statesmen; and, as has just been said, the difference between the two parties is rather one of method than of aim. If Toryism means anything, it means a cautious and limited spirit in dealing with such questions. If Liberalism, on the other hand, means anything, it means that it has to deal with them in a large spirit, unfettered by class, or interest, or privilege. If there be no such difference, the parties are practically one except in name. That there is such a difference, and must from the very constitution of the two parties be such a difference, is proved by the atti-

tude of the real and stanch Tories to Disraeli in 1867, and by their repudiation of Randolph in 1886, when both approached domestic questions, not in a cautious and limited, but in a large and liberal spirit.

XIII

RANDOLPH was indeed the fruit and blossom of our parliamentary system. No more complete and extreme product of that historical arrangement has ever been seen. That system requires for its working two sets of protagonists. One does the administrative and legislative work of the country and defends what is done. The other is anxious to do the administrative and legislative work of the country, and, in the mean time, condemns what is done. To the one side all is light, all is white; to the other all is shade, all is black: there is no twilight, and no gray.

The outcome of this sometimes illogical but continuous conflict is the government and guidance of the British Empire. In the same way, justice, pure justice, is the result of the contest between two sets of advocates on two different sides. The only difference is that the politicians professedly speak from conviction, while the lawyers professedly speak from their briefs.

In effect, however, the result is much the same. The advocates of the government happen to find everything done by the government right, and the advocates of the Opposition happen to find everything done by the government wrong. It is a strange and perpetual but not fortuitous coincidence.

That state of things was not invented by Randolph, it is of immemorial tradition. He took things as they were, and

plunged into the fray with the keen enjoyment of an undergraduate on the fifth of November, giving and receiving hard knocks with almost equal pleasure. He fought his fight in the recognized way, according to the workings of our constitution. He attacked savagely when out; he did his work and defended it as well as he knew when he was in.

What was considered blameworthy in him by onlookers as well as by the party opposed to him was the violence of his diatribes. Was this censure justified? Extreme as these were, they were certainly milder than those directed by Fox against North, or those of the Opposition leaders against Walpole.

On reading Randolph's speeches in cold blood, and looking back on the circumstances through the mitigating

lens of time, and the juster proportion afforded by a score of years, it would seem that his real offence lay not so much in the method as in the object of attack. He was denouncing not a minister of ordinary virtues and vices, but an austere and lofty statesman whose character and ability, while no doubt exciting great antagonism, at that time evoked, apart from politics, something like general veneration.

Gladstone was neither a North nor a Walpole. His was a figure of supreme moral dignity; to his followers he was little less than sublime; to his opponents he was an object of respect; to the people at large, to the silent judgment of those who deal little in party politics, he was a national asset. Directed against him, Randolph's attacks were considered as attempts to hold up to

ridicule and contempt a statesman who should have been secure from that particular form of assault by a stripling who might have been his grandson.

There was, therefore, something repellent to the taste of serious people in his pugnacity; but then this pugnacity, it must be remembered, for the very same reason, tickled the imagination of multitudes who do not discriminate, but love a fight as a fight without heeding the cause, and delight in seeing an audacious light-weight sparring up to a recognized champion.

Northcote also understood this consecrated warfare of parties, and played the game well, though under stricter and more limited rules than his young critic. He was too old and too sagacious to move on headlong and careless, as Randolph lightly did. He could not, and

queaths a memory, still more of the fang which leaves a wound.

Let exception here be made, however, of his exquisite adaptation of the ballad of "Sir Patrick Spens," one of the happiest rhetorical allusions to be found in the whole range of English oratory.

But when Northcote warmed there was, or seemed to be, a note of apology in his voice; there was also what is known as the academic twang, an inflection which cannot be defined, but which is not agreeable to the House of Commons. He lay, moreover, under unjust suspicion from having been Gladstone's private secretary; for he was held not to have sufficiently shaken off the awe with which he had regarded his former chief.

This was neither fair nor true. He stoutly and victoriously maintained his

first budget against the criticisms of the great financier who had preceded him in office, and ever afterwards combated him with spirit; the misfortune was that it was in a tone which, physically considered, seemed almost deprecatory. In truth, his gentle yet chivalrous nature was not aggressive, and thus he furnished another example of the axiom that the party man who is willing to go half-lengths will be distanced by the party man who readily goes all.

So it was for a while with him. Around him there gathered abundantly affection, loyalty, and gratitude, all just and deserved. But they availed him nothing; it was Randolph who, without these precious attributes, won. And by a strange fate they vanished together, for Randolph's resignation was simultaneous with Northcote's tragic but happy death;

it was, in a way, the indirect and innocent cause of it.

But to return from this contrast to Randolph and his methods. While he battled on party lines he was a party idol. It was not till he began to go counter to party ideas that every one fell foul of him. Then he remained a party man in form, but in substance and spirit he was far away. That he should have allowed his principles to conflict with his party is a proof of high sincerity, for no man was ever in a sense more a party man; more devoted, that is to say, to the name and tradition of party.

This at least is certain, that he had the true political instinct for a constitutional country; he was a born parliamentarian. He could feel with singular judgment the pulse of both Parliament

and people, when he allowed himself time to do so or while he remained cool. When he lost that touch, at the time of his fall, he was absorbed in his own work and intoxicated with a popularity which would have turned almost any head.

To many of us it also appears that he had the instinct of a statesman, as apart from a partisan, and that had he kept his health and controlled his froward fits he would have sobered down into a great minister. That surmise, for it cannot be more, rests on his serious and responsible speeches, which must be strictly distinguished from his Opposition raids.

What is his place in history? Only History can say. That Muse has a sieve of her own; much that was reputed corn is found to be chaff, and unexpected treasures of grain are found in it.

Private members of Parliament, like Francis Horner, survive the highest officers of state. Men like Newcastle wield the power of the country for half a century, and are only remembered as objects of scorn. Intellectual princes like Fox and Canning enjoy their political supremacy but for a few months, while to the honest mediocrity of Liverpool after a long tenure of high office there comes a fifteen years' tenure of the Prime Ministership; it all seems a chance, though there is nothing perhaps less accidental.

The nearest parallel to Randolph may possibly be found in Charles Townshend —like him a young politician; like him, for a space, the darling of the House of Commons; like him Chancellor of the Exchequer for a tenure to be counted by months — Randolph five and Town-

shend twelve: both sparkling, wayward, and incalculable. Both luminaries were, for their hour, to employ Burke's famous sentence, lords of the ascendant. Both had to acknowledge one mightier figure —Townshend in Chatham, and Randolph in Gladstone. Both ended young. Townshend died Chancellor of the Exchequer at forty-two; Randolph's official life terminated at thirty-seven.

It is scarcely worth while to pursue the analogy, for such resemblances are seldom more than vague and general. In the main point it conspicuously fails. Randolph had the makings of a statesman, Townshend had not. To live politically from day to day, to allow vanity to be tickled or temper irritated into any course however perilous or even ruinous, to be as fitful as a summer's breeze; that was Townshend.

Randolph in the blind heat of Opposition might be all this, but when invested with power he took grave and large views. Nothing, for instance, could have tempted him to the incredible fatuity of being taunted on the spur of the moment into a pledge to tax the Colonies a few months after he had repealed the act for that purpose.

Everything we read of Charles Townshend tends to the conviction that he was a poor creature with a brilliant brain. Randolph had a brilliant brain, but no critic will ever call him a poor creature. Townshend left a sinister memory in the loss of the American Colonies. Randolph, on the contrary, was the instrument of adding Burmah to the Empire.

But putting Townshend aside, is it possible to conjecture Randolph's histor-

ical position? In one sense he cannot fill a large page, for he left behind him no great measure. Nor did he found a school or inaugurate a policy; for Tory Democracy is seldom mentioned in these days, save in the mournful accents of some bereaved devotee. But he will long be cited as a political prodigy, he will encourage those who wish to play a great figure in youth, he will be studied for the methods of his extraordinary success. Such studies and encouragements may well be fallacious, for imitations do not answer; but they will keep his name alive. And who knows but that in the reorganization of a new Conservative party the phrase Tory Democracy may once more be heard, and utilized with all the enthusiasm which its capacious denomination is calculated to inspire.

Of Parliamentary reputation Randolph is sure. Short careers in Parliament by no means imply oblivion. The name of Hamilton survives almost tediously by a single speech. Charles Townshend lives by another. Archbishop Magee, though he delivered others that were notable, maintains his renown by his famous oration on the disestablishment of the Irish Church. Hawkins was long remembered for one striking effort on the Reform Bill. The single session of 1866 was at once the occasion and the term of Lowe's oratorical splendor.

Randolph's real Parliamentary life lasted six years — from 1880 till his resignation. His son indeed says that his speeches from 1887 to 1890 "were the best in manner and command he ever made." [1] What this exactly means

[1] *Life*, II., 380.

I do not know, but it does not affect the view here taken of his career. Whatever else these speeches may have been, they cannot be called successful, whereas the speeches from 1880 to 1886 were an almost unbroken triumph. After his resignation he lost his self-confidence.

Grattan once observed that no one had heard Fox to advantage who had not heard him before the Coalition; or Pitt, who had not heard him before his resignation in 1801; for though they both afterwards spoke with surprising ability, "each felt that he had done something which required defence:—the talent remained, the mouth still spoke great things, but the swell of soul was no more." This subtle and extravagant distinction—for after all the oratorical masterpieces of both Pitt and Fox were delivered in two May evenings in

1803, twenty years after the Coalition and two years after the resignation —was, in a sense, true of Randolph. After his resignation he spoke without confidence or authority or satisfaction to himself. He told his friends that the reason he spoke in the country was that he could no longer speak in the House of Commons. There he had no followers and few friends, and was treated with unkindness and mistrust.

There is a sad instance of this given by Mr. Churchill, when he asked for a glass of water in the middle of a speech and could find none to fetch it.[1] Again, there is the painful and public separation from Jennings, almost his last Parliamentary associate and confidant, with the pathetic notes which are printed in the biography.[2]

[1] *Life*, II., 415. [2] *Ibid*, II., 420.

In any case, his definite career may be said to have lasted six years. During that time he gained signal victories in Parliament, in the country, in the councils of his party. During that period he destroyed one ministry, and overthrew his leader, and gained the ear and attention of the nation.

But, curiously, all these victories were fruitless and barren. After his victory [illegible] he, in the [illegible] and others, suddenly surrendered to the defeated faction. When he had overthrown his leader he could occupy but not retain the place. The ear and the attention of the nation seem to have avoided him just at the time when he needed them most. He was a Chancellor of the Exchequer without a Budget, a leader of the House of Commons but for a single session, a

victor without the spoils,"[1] says his son.

All this is true, but it is not the whole truth. The fairy godmother had perhaps denied him one necessary gift, but she had given him all, or almost all, the others. Many have risen to the highest place with far less of endowment. And even with his unfilled promise he must be remembered as one of the most meteoric of Parliamentary figures, as the shooting-star of politics, and as one who, when in office, strove for a broad and enlightened policy to which he pledged his faith and his career.

He will be pathetically memorable, too, for the dark cloud which gradually enveloped him, and in which he passed away. He was the chief mourner at his own protracted funeral, a public pageant

[1] *Life*, II., x.

of gloomy years. Will he not be remembered as much for the anguish as for the fleeting triumphs of his life? It is a black moment when the heralds proclaim the passing of the dead, and the great officers break their staves. But it is a sadder still when it is the victim's own voice that announces his decadence, when it is the victim's own hands that break the staff in public. I wonder if generations to come will understand the pity of it, will comprehend the full tragedy of Randolph's marred life.

There is, of course, as has been said, a different view to all this, a view that must constantly be kept in mind in considering Randolph's position. To many excellent persons, both Tory and Liberal, Randolph was little less than an incarnation of evil, a reckless and insolent iconoclast; a conspirator against

the fathers of his own political creed, while outraging and insulting the venerable chiefs of the other. He was, in their judgment, unscrupulous, violent, unprincipled; an intriguing schemer, a ruthless plotter; one who, to serve the personal ambition which was his sole motive, would stick at nothing.

His son has wisely not shrunk from setting down some of the abuse of which he was the object,[1] and it all now seems trivial enough. But much of all this obloquy only proved that Randolph's shafts had produced wounds that rankled. There were at least grains of truth in the lampoons, but only with regard to his course as an unregenerate free-lance, before he had assumed responsibility and office, and entered on the graver, larger life of administration and policy.

[1] *Life*, I., 275.

This may, of course, be a wholly mistaken estimate of Randolph's character. Misgivings may well beset the pen that traces it, for it is written by one who feels for him all the affection of a long friendship, but who was always his political opponent. I see, as all the public saw, many faults; but I remember what the public could not know, the generous, lovable nature of the man. I cannot forget the pathos of the story; I mourn, as all must mourn, to whatever party they belong, that he had not time to retrieve himself, not time to display his highest nature; I grieve, as all must grieve, that that daring and gifted spirit should have been extinguished at an age when its work should only have just begun.

THE END