

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

EX LIBRIS
ERNEST CARROLL MOORE

1363

Dup

From J. J. Sibley.
Cambridge.

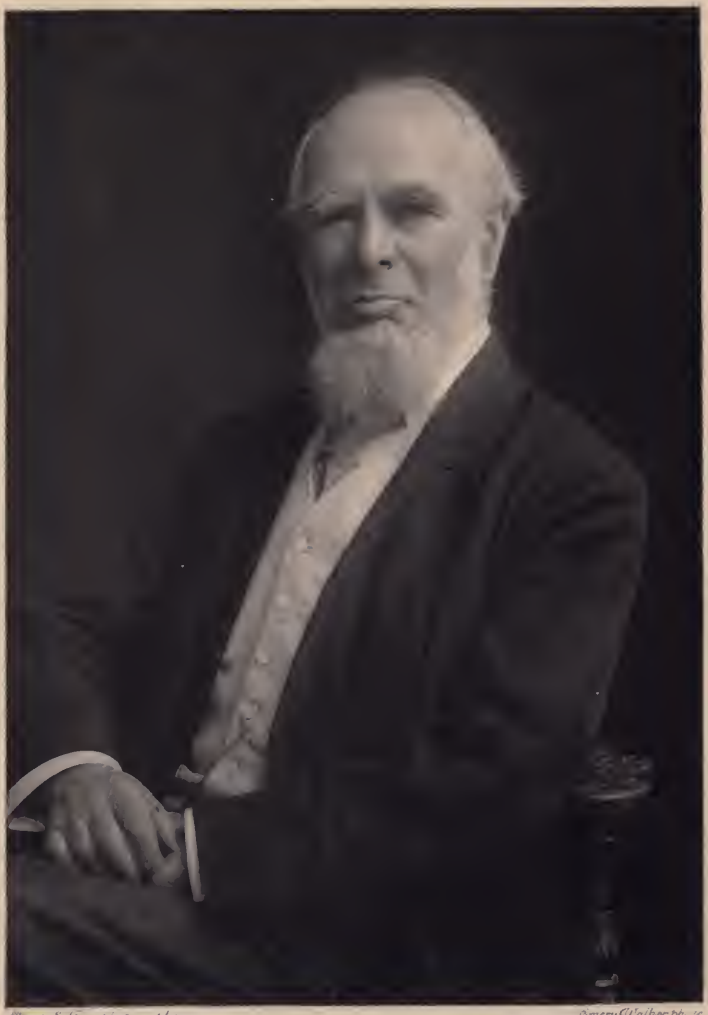
LIFE OF LORD COURTNEY



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA · MADRAS
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
DALLAS · SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO



Elliott & Fry, photographers

Emery Walker ph. sc.

Leonard Courtney

LIFE OF LORD COURTNEY

BY

G. P. GOOCH

AUTHOR OF
"HISTORY AND HISTORIANS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY,"
"GERMANY AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION," ETC.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1920

COPYRIGHT

DA
565
C83G59

PREFACE

SHORTLY after Lord Courtney's death I accepted Lady Courtney's request to write his life. While lightening my labour in every possible way and allowing me to make unrestricted use of her Journal, she has left me an absolutely free hand in the selection of material and the expression of opinion. To her, to Mrs. Oliver, Lord Courtney's sister, and to Professor George Unwin, for eight years his secretary, I am indebted for reading the book in proof and for valuable criticisms and suggestions.

Relations and friends have earned my gratitude by their ready response to appeals for assistance, and I regret that the exigencies of space have prevented the use of all the information and comment which have been supplied. His oldest surviving friend, Mr. William Stebbing, compiled a brief memoir of the highest value, from which I have made copious extracts. The Master of St. John's has kindly examined the College books for the details of his academic career, while Dr. Liveing, Dr. Bonney and Mrs. Bushell have supplied personal recollections of the young Cambridge student. Mr. William Latey has investigated his connection with the Hardwicke Society in its earliest days, and Sir Edward Clarke has given me his impressions of his share in its debates. The *Times* has generously permitted me to reveal Leonard Courtney's authorship of many of its leading articles, and Sir J. Thursfield and Dean Wace have answered questions relating to Printing House Square.

859654

Lord Fitzmaurice has described the activities of the Radical Club, of which Mill, Fawcett and Dilke were the leading spirits. The Rt. Hon. Thomas Burt and Lord Northbourne have recorded their recollections of the Disraeli Parliament, and Sir Algernon West and Lord Eversley of his work at the Treasury. In addition to pronouncing judgement on the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Arthur Elliot has recalled the more peaceful atmosphere of the Breakfast Club, which has also found an appreciative chronicler in Sir Courtenay Ilbert. The feasts of reason at the Political Economy Club have been celebrated by Sir John Macdonell, Sir Bernard Mallet and Mr. Henry Higgs. Mr. Humphreys has supplied information on the revival of the campaign for Proportional Representation in 1904, the Rt. Hon. J. W. Gulland on the candidature for West Edinburgh, and Lord Parmoor on the closing years in the House of Lords. If this biography succeeds in suggesting the personality of its subject it will be owing in large measure to the contributions of Mrs. Oliver and Miss Julyan, Mrs. Crump and Mr. Arthur Roby, Mr. Herbert Paul and Professor Alfred Marshall, Professor Unwin and Col. Amery, M.P., Mr. Basil Williams and Mrs. Fischer Williams, Miss Mary Meinertzhagen and Mrs. Robin Mayor.

For permission to publish their letters my best thanks are due to Viscount Morley, O.M., who has kindly allowed me to consult him on various points; Viscount Bryce, O.M.; Viscount Haldane, O.M.; Viscount Grey of Fallodon, the Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith, the Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell, Lord Fitzmaurice, Lord Channing, the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Clarke, the Rt. Hon. Gerald Balfour, General Smuts, the Rt. Hon. J. X. Merriman, the Hon. Arthur Elliot, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. William Stebbing, Mr. Herbert Paul, Professor Gilbert Murray, the Rev. Stephen Gladstone, Mr. Aneurin Williams, M.P., Mr. H. W. Massingham,

Mr. G. M. Trevelyan, Mrs. Fawcett, Lady Frances Balfour, Miss Emily Hobhouse and Mrs. J. R. Green. The representatives of Courtney's correspondents who have passed away have responded to my requests with equal generosity. Viscount Gladstone, the Marquess of Salisbury, the Rt. Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P., the Duke of Devonshire, Earl Grey, Earl Spencer, the Marquess of Ripon, Viscount Goschen, Sir George Welby, Judge Gwynne-James, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Leslie Scott, K.C., M.P., Mr. Leonard Huxley, the O'Conor Don, Mr. Arthur Roby, Mr. William Caine, Mrs. Perceval, Mrs. Selous, Mrs. Andrew Carnegie, Mrs. Rathbone, Mrs. Simeon, Mrs. Wilbraham Cooper, the Hon. Mrs. Mellor, Mrs. Skilbeck, Miss Mundella, Miss Estelle Stead, Mrs. Moberly Bell, and Mrs. T. B. Bolitho, have earned my gratitude by permitting me to use letters of their relatives over the publication of which they possess legal control. I am also indebted to Lord Pentland for allowing me to print some characteristic letters of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, to Mr. John Murray for permission to publish a note from Robert Browning, and to Herbert Spencer's Trustees.

G. P. G.

March 1920.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
1.	PENZANCE	1
2.	CAMBRIDGE	20
3.	LINCOLN'S INN	39
4.	POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND JOURNALISM	52
5.	PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE	69
6.	TRAVEL, STUDY AND FRIENDSHIPS	95
7.	THE HOUSE OF COMMONS	119
8.	THE TREASURY BENCH	149
9.	MARRIAGE	178
10.	RESIGNATION	193
11.	THE SUDAN	220
12.	HOME RULE	235
13.	CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES	262
14.	ABOVE THE BATTLE	295
15.	THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR	316
16.	THE SHADOW OF IMPERIALISM	329
17.	THE BURSTING OF THE STORM	362
18.	THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR	388
19.	THE LAST PHASE	415

CHAP. PAGE

20. CHEYNE WALK 438

21. TARIFF REFORM 478

22. THE HOUSE OF LORDS 509

23. ENTANGLING ALLIANCES 547

24. ARMAGEDDON 577

INDEX 621

ILLUSTRATIONS

A Portrait of Lord Courtney from a Photograph by Elliott & Fry . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Which is the "Sage of Chelsea"? . . . . *Face page* 310

CHAPTER I

PENZANCE

On February 20, 1901, Leonard Courtney dictated some recollections of his boyhood. Though already in his sixty-ninth year, his memory was singularly tenacious; and the biographer is fortunate in possessing a record at once so vivid and so detailed of the earliest stages of his career.[1]

"My father was born in Ilfracombe, as his father and grandfather and other forbears before him. Nearly forty years ago I examined the parish register and found that, with very little difficulty, the line could be traced back about two centuries. They were modest townfolk, frequently ship-masters and probably owning in part or altogether the craft they sailed. My great-grandfather was thus the captain of a small vessel. My grandfather was lame from his youth through one leg being shorter than the other, and he obtained an appointment as officer in the Excise. His wife was a Cotton, daughter of a family long settled in north and east Cornwall, producing from time to time a clergyman or doctor, but in the main farming from father to son. I think my grandfather and grandmother must have met at Stratton, where she had relations; but he took her to Ilfracombe, where, as I have said, my father was born. My grandfather was presently moved to Bristol, where other children were born. He was never to my knowledge intemperate; but he was a clubbable man after the type of the eighteenth century, strong and clear

[1] The narrative has been slightly abridged and broken up into paragraphs.

in his grasp of things, terse and vigorous in expression when he met his friends at the tavern and discussed the affairs of town and country. My grandmother, a quiet, home-keeping little woman, must soon have learnt the pressure of indebtedness; and before her eldest son was many years old, he shared her experiences and lightened them with sympathy if not otherwise. I think throughout life he carried with him the marks of this early education. He had a great horror of debt. As a married man he practically never went abroad; and there was a reserve, a silence, a caution in the expression of opinion which strongly contrasted with the bold and combative qualities of my grandfather's temperament. The family lived on in Bristol several years, and my father, taken away early from school, got employment as a clerk in a succession of merchants' offices. He did not, however, cease to educate himself. Nature had given him under all his reserves the sensibilities and tastes of an artist. He read whatever he could put his hands upon, and I have heard him tell how for three successive days he practically went without his dinner to read one of Scott's novels, just out, which he had a chance to devour at his dinner-time. As a lad in Bristol he began to play the violin, and music remained the solace of his life.

"The difficulties of the Bristol home did not grow less, and somewhere about 1823 it was broken up altogether. The appointment in the Excise was lost, and the whole family removed to Falmouth, where my grandfather set up a private school, my father for some time assisting him and obtaining supplementary employment as accountant or book-keeper to tradesmen and others wanting assistance. This led to his moving a few years later to Penzance. An adventurous linen-draper had come from one of the remote centres of English activity and started shops in two or three of the Cornish towns, with Penzance as his head-quarters; and my father joined him as accountant at Penzance, making business visits to the other places. It was there he met my mother. She was a native of Scilly, where her father was drowned, leaving a widow and three daughters, the oldest, my mother, barely four years old.

Her mother was a woman of parts, quick intelligence and self-reliance. She lived long enough to read the story of Adam Bede, taking great delight in Mrs. Poyser. The widow's resources were of the smallest; but she bravely faced the world by opening a small shop for groceries, by means of which she maintained herself and reared her children. It is an illustration of the simplicity and frugality of life in the Scilly Islands, about the time of the close of the Great War, that my mother has told me that she and other children were taught to write by tracing letters in sand. A submissive piety was the note of the household; and in the later years in which I knew it (the two daughters remaining at home) it was their custom to read the Bible through year by year at the rate of two or three chapters a day. My mother, the eldest, was sent to Penzance, where she grew up and became an assistant in the shop in which my father was accountant. Their marriage was most happy for both. My father's larger experience must doubtless have had an attraction, and his appearance was unlike other men. He had long black hair falling back from a very sloping forehead, an aquiline nose, and a sallow complexion. He was broad-chested and strong, but with limbs that seemed to move together (in which respect Mr. Goschen has sometimes reminded me of him); and a casual observer might be excused if, seeing him play the violin, he thought he might be a Jewish musician. My mother, on the other hand, had a rather bonny English face; whilst her nature, pious, dutiful and loving, yet with some sense of humour and a large measure of economic aptitude, made her the best of wives for her husband and a most beloved mother. In trying to realise the circumstances of the pair I feel that they had great faith when they set up their small household. My father had not, I think, wholly given up his work with the adventurous linen-draper; but before I was born he had set up a small day-school, for which, indeed, he was admirably qualified.

"I was born at Penzance on July 6, 1832, my parents' first child. An old friend, not long dead, who must have been a favourite pupil, has told me how he had a glass of

wine given him to drink my health on the occasion of my birth. I cannot remember anything connected with my father's school, partly because, when my eldest sister succeeded me, I was soon removed to my grandfather's at Falmouth, where I spent the greater part of some five years, and partly because, before that time had passed, my father had given up school-keeping and had become cashier in the Bolithos' Bank, where, with increasing responsibility, he remained all the active years of his life. I must have been between five and six when I was brought back to Penzance to remain permanently at home.[1] My uncle and godfather, Leonard, was a navigating officer on board the *Briseis*, one of the 10-gun brigs which in those days carried the mails from England to Halifax. My earliest recollections are associated with him. The brigs had an unhappy notoriety in that one of them disappeared almost every winter; and there was a continual anxiety over every prolonged voyage, hope gradually dying away and at last giving place to despair. The *Briseis* disappeared in this fashion, among the results being a complete change in my grandfather's household and my return to Penzance. It is an illustration of my absence from home that I remember being presented to my father on my return and looking upon him with curiosity as a complete stranger, not in the least like the men to whom I was accustomed.

"From this time forward I lived wholly at Penzance, never going farther than Falmouth, to which I paid frequent Christmas visits, until my nineteenth year, when I went to Cambridge. For seven years or more we lived in the Bank House. My father was a very home-keeping man, and his love of music was the only thing that drew him away from his fireside. He was a member of a small society which for several winters gave philharmonic concerts in the Assembly Rooms; and when this society was broken up the parish organist arranged concerts in subsequent winters to which my father gave his assistance. In

[1] As Margaret Courtney was born nearly two years after her brother, Leonard must either have spent three years at Falmouth or have returned to Penzance at the age of seven or eight.

later years a choral society was established and flourished; but at the time of which I speak the philharmonic concerts held their own though with some difficulty. My father used to take me to these concerts from about my ninth or tenth year. They were always arranged on the same plan: the programme contained two parts, each beginning with an overture from some opera of Mozart, Donizetti or Rossini, and more rarely Weber, or a symphony or sonata, when Haydn most frequently appeared, perhaps a violin solo and a couple of songs. I must confess that although I generally kept awake during the first part, I generally fell asleep during the overture which began the second. Except for this relaxation my father's home-keeping was complete, his hours out of the bank being occupied with books and the education of his children, to whom his sympathy was a constant stimulus.

"The only school to which I must refer is that to which I went from nine to thirteen and a half, when I left school. It was kept by a Mr. Barnes with a couple of ushers, and had something like a hundred boys, three-fourths or more being day scholars, and the rest sons of farmers and yeomen in west Cornwall. The parents of most of the boys were Wesleyans; but the divisions of sects were not in those days very sharply accentuated, and the religious education may be said to have been taken for granted. I remember no special instruction whatever; and as there were some three or four Jews among the rest who were never to my knowledge separated from their fellows, I suspect I am right in saying there was no religious teaching in the school, it being assumed that each day boy was properly instructed at home. About two-thirds of the boys received a plain English education; the remaining third were taught Latin and some little Greek, while French was an optional subject for which there was a special French master giving us part of his time at an extra fee. I was on the English side till I was about twelve, when I had practically got to the top of the English boys, being by that time well advanced in Euclid and taking up algebra, though with very little understanding of it. I must have begun French whilst

still on the English side ; but it would have been astonishing if much had been learnt, for no subject could be more negligently treated by pupils and master.

"I think I must have been just twelve when I began Latin and, of course, I was at first among much younger boys. But I advanced very rapidly and was soon among those at the top. The school was easy-going, but the tone was on the whole good and the boys honest children of the middle class. I had an abundance of multifarious reading at home, and one of my school-fellows and myself were energetic enough to undertake some work out of school. This was in the summer of 1844. Readers of Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* may remember a certain Polytechnic Society, established at Falmouth mainly through the influence of the Fox family, with a museum, lectures and an annual exhibition. This exhibition was in those days, as to some extent it still is, a great incentive to mental activity in Cornwall. Artists sent their work, engineers and inventors their miniature machines, women needlework and embroidery of all kinds, and schoolboys specimens of their progress in mapping and otherwise. My friend and myself conceived the idea of making out parallel chronological tables of the world's history, for which we had the good fortune to receive books, one of which, falling to my share, I still cherish. Encouraged by this, we undertook a larger enterprise in the following year—no less than a synthetic history of Cornwall, compiled from the various existing histories with scanty additions our own knowledge furnished. It was an audacious attempt. I attended the exhibition (1845) and passed through the grim experience of listening in the body of the hall to a severe criticism of our work by the judge of this branch on the platform.

"Another circumstance connected with my school life must be mentioned, as it practically shaped all the course of my later years. We had annual examinations at the school in which gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood were asked to come and test the work of the boys. I think it must have been in the summer of 1845 that Dr. Willan, a Cambridge graduate, residing but scarcely practising in the

town, came to an examination. He was attracted by my mastery of Euclid and perhaps something more, and showed a desire to assist me in going further. Some months later having, as I have hinted, but little practice, he began to take youths to read with him two or three evenings a week in classics and mathematics; and it was natural that I should be one of his first pupils. At Christmas 1845 I left school and entered the bank; but it was arranged by my father that I should do no evening work, which portion of the day I gave up alternately to reading with Dr. Willan and study at home. From Christmas 1845 to Midsummer 1851 my life was thus passed, with never a break exceeding a fortnight, I think I might say a week, working at the bank during the day, and for, or with, Dr. Willan in the evening.

"These five years and a half of outwardly uneventful life were of the greatest importance in my growth and upbringing. As we had lived in the Bank House and I had often watched my father's work, I started with a considerable acquaintance with the routine of banking, and soon became familiar with its details. I could turn my hand to anything, and if the old books could be inspected my handwriting would be detected up and down except in the posting of ledgers, to which I think I was never admitted. Somehow or other—it seems strange to me now—the correspondence of the place gradually fell upon me. Perhaps I may mention an illustration of my bank service which must have happened in the years 1849 and 1850, of which I still remain proud. The bank was understaffed, especially owing to the bad health of a partner who was supposed to give active personal assistance; and the consequence was that the proper balancing of the bank's accounts with its London agents, so as to explain the apparent discrepancy between the accounts as kept in the bank-books and the accounts as rendered by their agents, had fallen into arrear. This was a negligence that could go on for a long time without impairing the general good management of a bank, and I remember we had some evidence that a similar negligence must have occurred in the management of another bank then and now of high

repute in another county. It was, however, a bit of a private scandal, and I set myself to work to make out the formal reconciliation of the two sets of accounts—I may say of the four sets, because we had in fact two agents in London and the balances had not been properly adjusted in respect of either. I took one in hand and patiently went over the transactions half-year by half-year, making the balances again at the end of every six months, till I brought down the work to a triumphant close. It was an exercise of merely careful patience and assiduity, a painstaking monotony of work ; but it was undertaken with the simple desire to remove irregularities, and it proved useful in bringing to light one or two errors which had been overlooked. I had £5 given me for this performance, and, looking back upon it, I think the honorarium was well deserved. But the work was certainly not undertaken with the view of any such reward, which I received, indeed, as something unexpected. I have sometimes wondered what would have happened if I had continued as banker's clerk. I might perhaps have followed my father in Penzance, or, like my next brother, I might have been stirred to activity in some similar field and perhaps have drifted into bank management in the East, in the Colonies or even in London. My brother Mortimer has ended by becoming the permanent head of the Treasury at Ottawa. I might perhaps have attained to some well-paid post in the banking world ; but though I have ever retained the greatest respect for banking and bankers, I have never regretted the abandonment of the chance of acquiring a more lucrative position than has ever fallen to me.

" My bank work nominally absorbed the day from 9 to 4, but not unfrequently overflowed these hours. Three evenings a week I went to Dr. Willan for a couple of hours, and the other three I was supposed to be reading for him. We divided our time between classics and mathematics. I loved Euclid, and was so expert in geometry that I believe I solved every problem in deduction appended to Pott's Euclid. I naturally took kindly to geometrical conic sections and to trigonometry. With algebra I did not so

easily become familiar, but everything relating to numbers I got under command, and I was ever fascinated with the elements of the Theory of Probabilities. Into Analytical Geometry I may be said only to have looked. It was not till after I went to Cambridge, and there, as it seemed, by some sudden penetration into a new world, that I became in any way a master of the methods of this latter learning. I read also with Dr. Willan the elements of mechanics, and I even opened the pages of the more familiar books of Newton's *Principia*. It may be gathered that without any pretensions to real mathematical genius, to which I know I can make no claim, I was going to the full length of the lead which my beloved tutor could give me. In classical learning he would have led me much further than I really went, and I am afraid I must accuse myself of some want of assiduity on this side. We read, indeed, Latin together until I got a real satisfaction in some of its literature. I had read some Caesar at school, and with Dr. Willan I took up Sallust, some Livy and some Tacitus, the *Germania* and *Agricola* of the last exciting my strong admiration. We read Horace and Virgil among the poets, but for the latter I had then no liking. We went through also some half-dozen of Juvenal's *Satires*, the *Catiline Orations* of Cicero, and the *De Senectute* and *De Amicitia*. I may perhaps venture to say that I felt a real sympathy with the Roman character, which led me in later years to take up other books, including the *De Rerum Natura*, with its intermixture of noble and stately verse with the baldest prosaic argument. I never got any real facility in Greek, and, though we tried many authors, even attacking several plays, I did not get any real enjoyment except in Herodotus and Homer. The outcome of all the hours I gave to Greek then and later may be best understood by the confession that, knowing the Authorised Version well, I could pretty easily stumble along in the Greek Testament.

" I had the run of the Penzance Library, even then fairly stocked with the best English literature, and a friend of my father left under his charge his own books whilst in Brazil. Of these too I had free range. They included the

Waverley Novels and Lockhart's *Scott*; and I think any taste I may have for fine books may be traced to copies of Lane's *Arabian Nights* and Farrell's *British Birds and British Fishes*, which were in this collection. Much miscellaneous reading was thus accomplished, though looking back upon it I may perhaps regret that there was not more guidance directing my path. There was in those days also a Literary Institution in Penzance, at which during the winter months there were weekly lectures occupying about an hour, followed by discussions for about another hour. I used to go home after these lectures and give my father and mother a sufficiently animated report of what had happened. My father himself never went, although on at least one occasion he lectured himself, taking for his subject Carlyle's *Past and Present*. This Institution was greatly strengthened by the arrival in Penzance of William Willis, who presently joined the Society and lectured to our great advantage on several branches of Natural Science. This admirable man was by birth a member of the Society of Friends; but having married out of the Society he became, according to the rule then obtaining, excluded from it. He etched and published drawings of all the antiquities in the immediate neighbourhood of Penzance, and his knowledge and taste and simple gentle manners strongly attracted me. After a time he started a botanical class, in the spring and summer getting a few of us youths to rise early in the morning and accompany him before breakfast along the lanes, fields and furzy moors of the neighbourhood, while he discovered to us a flora till then unknown and perhaps unsuspected. He left Penzance about the same time that I did, and presented me with pretty nearly a complete set of his etchings, which I still preserve.

"I had naturally some friends and associates, but looking back on the time they seem to me to have been very few. I have said that my father went very little abroad, and we were as a family very home-keeping; so that my elder sister may perhaps be said to be more associated with my reading and education than any other person of the

same age. I recall, however, three lads who, during the latter part of my time, were in the habit of taking walks on Sunday afternoons, when some volume was brought and read in turns by us in some secluded corner in the neighbourhood of the town. They were all older than myself. One of them, Richard Oliver, emigrated to Melbourne in 1854, whence after a few years he moved to Dunedin, New Zealand, became very successful as a merchant, as a sheep farmer, and, indeed, in many forms of Colonial activity, becoming among other things a member of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, Postmaster-General and Minister of Public Works. Having married as his second wife my youngest sister in 1885, our intercourse, which was never broken, has again become extremely intimate, especially since he has returned to make England his home.[1]

"It is time to say something of our readings, which were almost exclusively of poetry. I had in early boyhood taken to Scott mainly for his spirited narrative. Thus I hastened through *Marmion* without reading the Introduction to the Cantos, which now gives me more delight than the Cantos themselves. My father had given me the collected edition of Byron in one volume when I was about fourteen, and I had read most of the book. Pocket volumes of Shakespeare I had also taken about with me in country walks, though to tell the truth the result was rather a *succès d'estime*. My father had also subscribed for Chambers' *Cyclopaedia of English Literature* when it was first published in monthly parts, and the book was a great favourite with me. Our Sunday afternoon readings were given to larger acquaintance with particular authors. We went through Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and no respect for his great name, nor appreciation of his high-strung verse could prevent us from scoffing at the wars of the angels and, indeed, at not a little of the theology of the book. I have never, indeed, become a great admirer of Milton, whom we English, as I think, habitually overrate. We read Cowper's *Task* and diversified his Poems with his Letters, to the merits of which

[1] The Hon. Richard Oliver died in 1910.

a neighbouring lecturer at the Literary Institution had called special attention. Wordsworth in the same way had his turn, but we unluckily gave too much attention to the *Excursion*. What is now scarcely credible, we read almost all Southey's long poems; and if this seems to imply a very imperfect taste I may perhaps plead that *Thalaba* seems to have been the poem Scott most frequently called for in his Sunday evenings in Castle Street. Certain it is that we did enjoy Southey, and *Madoc* not the least. I can recall the glorious summer day when, walking across a furze-covered moor, the story of Madoc in the West got mixed with the glory of colour and the perfume of the furze with which it is still associated. Tennyson's *Princess* was one of our latest readings in those Sunday walks; and I can claim for ourselves that the beauty of this poem was at once appreciated and, indeed, it got almost immediately re-read. One other book might perhaps be mentioned. I had purchased at a book-stall in Penzance market a copy of the first edition, in its original boards, of Keats' *Lamia, Isabella*, etc. This book, which I still possess, has become extremely rare; but we read it with pleasure, if not with enthusiasm, in happy unconsciousness that it could ever be regarded as a prize by a bibliophile.

"It will be seen that apart from bank work and work for Dr. Willan, the main interest of my early life lay in literature; and it may, indeed, appear remarkable how little influence the outer political world had upon one, the greater part of whose work in life has been occupied with politics. Penzance itself was outside the political current, and my family and friends were apparently in the stillest part of this still pool. As a small boy I had been at Falmouth during contested elections; but the experience reeked of bribery and of unintelligible personal disputes. Similar airs seemed to hang about what we heard of electioneering at St. Ives. In the County Division of West Cornwall there was no such thing as a contested election and a poll during the whole of its existence from 1832 to 1885, and our life was therefore never ruffled by the agitations of

a fight. The Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, just after I left school, was, however, an event that excited emotion in our still life, and I remember having to read to my father and mother the report of Sir Robert Peel's speech in making this great proposal. I should add that my father was one of those who, having passed through a period of speculative activity in early manhood, become sceptically conservative in later years; and his example did not stimulate me to feel any interest in political movements. Nevertheless, in less than two years after the Repeal of the Corn Laws my companions, whom I have already named, and myself were much excited by the French Revolution of 1848, heartily sympathising with the rising which drove Louis Philippe from France;[1] though from lack of knowledge perhaps more than lack of feeling we were less stirred by the movements in Italy, in Hungary and in Prussia. Not that we were left wholly without knowledge of the wider movements on the Continent. From my earliest memory Chambers' *Edinburgh Journal*, as it was then called, had been taken in month by month. To its eminently sober and instructive pages there was added in the years of Revolution the *People's Journal* and afterwards *Howitt's Journal*; and in these, especially in the latter, we were introduced to the Republican heroes of Europe. Indifference in respect of home politics was thus not incompatible with a keen sympathy for much of the Continental movement.

"The name Howitt in this last connection may fitly introduce another field of reminiscence. During my boyhood the Quakers were still sufficiently numerous, as they certainly were distinguished throughout Cornwall. The Foxes of Falmouth were centres of all the culture of the West. My father had somehow become friendly with one William Dymond at Penzance, who died young, leaving a

[1] Courtney recalled the events and emotions of 1848 in an article in the *Nation*, March 24, 1917: "The news from Russia makes me live again in days gone by. I recall a night, seventy years ago save one, when in a remote corner near the Land's End three lads met together to read the story of the Revolution which had burst forth in Paris. We had before us a weekly paper, the *News of the World*, and in it we read the magical, swift-moving story."

widow and three or four small children; and I suppose he had rendered the widow some small assistance in winding up her husband's affairs. I remember being taken by him to her house one evening just before she left the town, when she presented him as a parting gift with a copy of Jonathan Dymond's *Elements of Morality*, Jonathan being her husband's brother. About the same time my sister received as a present Mary Howitt's little story *Strive and Thrive*, and gradually the complete series of her Tales was added one by one to our possessions. I believe they might be read with almost equal delight by me at this moment, and together they constitute a real education in sympathy for honest, hard-working, simple, small people which can never get quite old-fashioned. A schoolboy possessed William Howitt's *Boys' Country Book*, with which I was so much pleased that my earliest savings (they were few and very slowly accumulated) were devoted to getting a copy for myself. I am telling this story to explain something of the origin of my liking for Quakers, which led me when about thirteen or fourteen to read through and to assimilate much of the aforesaid copy of Jonathan Dymond's *Elements of Morality*."

At this point the story comes to an end, and, though often pressed to continue his narrative, the old statesman was never again in the autobiographical mood. To this sketch of his early years there is little to be added. The temperament and opinions of his parents will appear in the correspondence which began when their eldest son left home at the age of nineteen. John Sampson Courtney, born in 1803, was a man of more than average ability, with a gift for economics and finance; but the cares of a large family, added to the warning example of his light-hearted father, rendered him unusually reserved, while the work of the bank claimed almost the whole of his time and strength. His only relaxation was music, and his favourite hobby was local history, a taste inherited by most of his children. He wrote several statistical papers in the *Transactions* of the Cornwall Polytechnic Society, and in 1845 he published a

substantial *Guide to Penzance*, "compiled," as the preface plaintively records, "at hours snatched from necessary rest." The pages on the history of the town were the fruit of a good deal of research; and the volume was enriched by expert contributions on the geology and the botany of the district. Many years later, when over seventy, John Courtney noted down some recollections of Penzance at the time of his arrival in the 'twenties; and, being prevented by ill-health from preparing them for publication, he entrusted them to his youngest daughter, who arranged the material and published it in 1878 as *Half a Century of Penzance*. In 1831 he married Sarah Mortimer, of St. Mary's, Scilly, and in the next nineteen years six sons and three daughters were born. Sarah Courtney, in the words of her eldest son already quoted, was "pious, dutiful and loving, yet with some sense of humour and a large measure of economic aptitude." It was fortunate that she was a good manager, for the young couple were hard put to it to make both ends meet. She had been bred in straitened circumstances, and her whole time and thought throughout life were given to her home and her children. For the wider interests of the world she had neither leisure nor inclination.

Fortunately for the young couple, living at Penzance in the 'twenties and 'thirties was simple and the necessities of life were cheap. "When first I came to the town in 1825 and for some years after," wrote John Courtney in old age,[1] "beef and mutton were sold at from 3d. to 4d. a pound; in 1839 they had risen to 6d., at which price they remained for a considerable time. Pork was 2½d. or 3d. a pound, and had risen in 1839 to 4½d. or 5½d. Fowls were never more than a shilling; eggs when plentiful were 4d. a dozen, and in the winter went up to 7d. Butter was 7d. and 8d. in summer and a shilling in winter. Large hakes were to be had for 6d., and other fish in proportion. Vegetables and fruit were equally cheap." The mackerels and pilchards of Mount's Bay were only sent to Plymouth and Bristol when the catch was too big to be absorbed by the town and district. Courtney was among the crowd which watched

[1] *Half a Century of Penzance.*

the first steamboat enter the harbour in 1825. At that time there was no gas in the town, which was lighted by a few oil lamps provided by public-spirited citizens. A letter from London cost a shilling, and took two days on the road. "So few letters came to the town that for many years after my arrival they were delivered by an old woman who carried them about in a basket." In this Celtic corner of England the belief in ghosts was almost universal among the lower classes. Several houses were believed to be haunted, and old folk were still alive who claimed to have heard a coach drawn by headless horses rumble through the town in the middle of the night.

The charms of the Cornish Riviera were not generally discovered before the advent of railways, and it was not till the middle of the century that its mild climate began to attract invalids in large numbers. The glories of St. Michael's Mount were known to adventurous travellers; but Penzance was cut off from the main currents of national life and thought, and only muffled echoes of great events were heard. In the chosen land of rotten boroughs it was useless to expect a vigorous political activity so soon after the drastic purge of the Reform Bill. But though the geographical situation of Cornwall was unfavourable to the growth and interchange of ideas, its very isolation stimulated a local patriotism unsurpassed and perhaps unapproached in any other county. This pride in his birthplace was fully shared by Leonard Courtney, who, though he left it in early life to seek his fortunes in a wider field, felt himself united by a special freemasonry with other Cornishmen, and retained an undying affection for its rocky coasts.

The lad was noted among the children of Penzance for his knowledge of the Bible, and he took full advantage of such slender educational facilities as were afforded by the sleepy old town; but it was the discovery of his mathematical bent by Dr. Willan which set his feet on the road which led to fame and fortune. The doctor, a Peterhouse man, proved the link which connected distant Penzance with the world of learning; and as the clever boy advanced

from strength to strength, the conviction ripened in his teacher's mind that at all costs he must find his way to the University. It was true that while other lads of his age were devoting their full time to their studies Leonard left school at thirteen and gave the best hours of the day to the ledgers of the Bank; yet he learned so quickly that the Doctor had no fear of competitors who enjoyed every advantage which money could provide, but lacked the gifts and the industry which marked him out for success. The intellectual interest of the teacher quickly warmed into personal affection, which was rewarded by the life-long gratitude of the disciple. Dr. Willan was to be a counsellor and friend through the anxieties and triumphs of his University career, and he survived to see his beloved pupil an honoured and influential figure in the public life of the country.

Courtney's boyhood was a time of hard work and short holidays, and it was something of an event when his friend and future brother-in-law Richard Oliver left Penzance for London in the summer of 1850, and described the wonders of the metropolis to the young bank clerk who had never been farther from home than the Scilly Isles. Though the replies are lost, Oliver's letters portray the thoughts and interests of the two friends. Despite such joys and privileges as an occasional visit to the Opera and hearing Brougham in the House of Lords, the young man felt lost and homesick in the great city.

From Richard Oliver

October 1850.—Oh! that I could accompany you to the Lizard! You have only to hitch the little blue bag round your neck and stuff a pasty in. The harvest moon, did you say? I do not know what the sight of a cornfield is. I do not know whether the moon is full or eclipsed. I am mad for the fields. Mad for a race. Mad for a chat. Mr. New (a Penzance Minister) preached yesterday in the Chapel. He came home and we talked of you. He informed me that you had not been so regular in attending evening service since my departure. He also said that, though he never talked with you much, he loved you. This, of course, is the slang of the ministry.

In reply to a request for a copy of Southey and Christopher North, Oliver dilates on their favourite author and his adventures in second-hand bookshops.

November 1850.—I have finished *The Doctor*. Southey was a splendid fellow, worthy of ten times the favour he gained. He had the boldness to say what he meant, and although I cannot subscribe to the whole of his sentiments, he has my esteem for piety, genius and learning, such as few possess. I met with one copy of his works as good as new, price 15s., published at one guinea ; but I would wait a little longer if I were you. They will be selling at 10s. very soon. After several inquiries I have not yet succeeded in finding a copy of Christopher North. But I am sure to pick up both soon.

In the spring of 1851 the joyful news reached Oliver that his friend would come to London to see the Great Exhibition.

June 18, 1851.—You will make your début into the great world, previous to a tranquil and learned retirement and with a glorious field in the distance for every noble ambition. The immediate object of the meeting I take to be in the first place seeing well the Exhibition. You will find that the amount of sight-seeing (of a lesser kind) which we can get through in a few days will astonish you.

The visit was a triumphant success, and the time passed far too quickly.

August 10, 1851.—Did you not feel a little used up when you got to the desk again ? It must be allowed that our time was very well spent, much better than a week in London generally is. We saw the choicest pictures and statues and visited the very best places. I never enjoyed myself better in any week in my life, and I have no doubt you can respond to this. Have you forgotten the glories of Vauxhall, or does your fancy roam occasionally through its avenues ?

Happy memories of this strenuous week remained with both the friends to the end of their lives. " One day in particular stood out above all the others," writes Mrs. Oliver, " when they had a walk in the then country lanes

and fields near Dulwich, lunched at the Greyhound Inn in the village and visited the Dulwich Picture Gallery. Throughout his life my brother was fond of expatiating on the charm of the Gallery at Dulwich ; and Richard Oliver, who, many years after, married his youngest sister, often told her of the day spent there in 1851."

CHAPTER II

CAMBRIDGE

SHORTLY before his visit to the Great Exhibition of 1851 Courtney had journeyed to Cambridge and won a sizarship at St. John's. He was officially admitted to the college on June 30, and commenced residence in the following October. St. John's was at this time pre-eminently the mathematical college. In 1846 the world had rung with the discovery of Neptune by John Couch Adams, one of its Fellows. Isaac Todhunter was elected to a Fellowship in 1849. The Master, Dr. Tatham, was a mathematician; and the most active figure in the life of the college during his rule was Dr. Hymers, whose numerous treatises familiarised Cambridge students with the methods and results of Continental mathematicians. He numbered among his pupils many men who afterwards rose to distinction, among them the seventh Duke of Devonshire, Bishop Colenso and the subject of this biography.[1]

The Master of St. John's has kindly drawn up a statement of the financial assistance which enabled Courtney to enter the University. "He was admitted a Sizar; for under the then existing (Elizabethan) Statutes the College could not elect Scholars before they had commenced residence. Thus Sizarships supplied the place of what are now called Entrance Scholarships. A Sizar received no direct emolument; but all fees, both College and University, were on a reduced scale. In addition the College paid a sum towards the cost of his dinners. There were also numerous Exhibitions or special foundations each with special limitations—to founders' kin, to lads coming from certain schools, counties

[1] See Mullinger, *St. John's*, chap. xi., and Rouse Ball, *History of Mathematics at Cambridge*.

or even parishes. When no candidate with the special qualifications presented himself the Exhibition was generally awarded to one of the Sizars. Thus it frequently happened that a Sizar was receiving more emolument (direct or indirect) than a Scholar. In respect of Exhibitions Courtney received £7 in 1852, £51 in 1853, £59 in 1854 and £46 : 10s. in 1855. He was elected a Scholar on November 7, 1854, that is to say, just before he took his degree. Not that he had been hitherto unsuccessful or ineligible, but that his combined emoluments as a Sizar made it unprofitable to change his status. Men who had been Scholars had, however, a preference in the election to Fellowships, and hence it was important to become a Scholar. The emoluments of Scholars were direct and indirect, and a certain proportion of the rents was set aside for them. This sum was divided into fifty-two equal parts, one for each week in the year, and each part was divided among the Scholars actually resident in each week. Thus the emolument depended on two factors—the length of residence and the number of Scholars resident in any week. Out of the amount due to a Scholar his dinners were paid and an allowance towards the rent of his rooms was made to him. The balance, which was handed over to him in cash, may be taken roughly as £20. But as Courtney was not elected Scholar till just before his degree, this hardly affected his circumstances during his undergraduate career."

Though the young Cornishman was used to frugal living his combined emoluments were insufficient for his keep; and his father had to borrow from the Bank to make up the difference, the debt being repaid by instalments by Leonard himself. In addition to the college dinner, to which he doubtless did justice, his food consisted at first of a brown loaf and tea for breakfast and supper, to which butter, marmalade and sausages were added as means increased. His principal correspondents were his father, his mother and Dr. Willan, each of whom deals mainly with a special aspect of his life,—the first with his financial position, the second with creature comforts and the care of his soul, the third with the progress of his studies.

From his Mother

October 18, 1851.—I was glad to hear you had not much trouble with getting your lodgings. I hope you are comfortable in them. Are there more young men in the house; do you take your meals by yourself or have you company? Does 10s. per week include washing? Be careful that your linen is quite dry before wearing them. I must say like father I would have given a shilling to have seen you selecting your chamber service and other things.

Cornwall was far too distant for a Christmas visit, and the first term's bills arrived in Penzance without oral explanations.

From his Father

January 14, 1852.—For a minute or two after the receipt of your bill I was a little surprised, but on looking it over found there was nothing beyond what I could expect, and your mother to my astonishment proclaimed it moderate. I have from the first anticipated that the commencing term would be expensive. Now I wish you most fully to understand that though I expect economy I do not wish you to be oppressed with a fear that you are running me too hard. Go on with your studies as coolly and quietly as possible, expend what is needed and let me find the means of keeping up the race. I shall leave it to your own discretion when to spend and when to spare; only let no one laugh you into an expense which a few minutes' consideration may point out as unnecessary. Do not be ashamed at saying you are poor. If any man wishes to bear you down by his riches and expenditure let him alone or crush him down by intellect. Go on with a quiet calm dignity and in a short time no one will ask whether your allowance be £50 or £500 per annum.

While his mother had no apprehensions of extravagance, her loving heart dwelt anxiously on the moral dangers with which she conceived her first-born to be surrounded in the uncharted world through which he was sailing; and, though he never gave her the slightest cause of distress, her fears rather increased than diminished throughout his academic career.

From his Mother

July 13, 1852.—I trust you will always do what is right and never be tempted in any way to do what would cause you grief and sorrow and you would be ashamed of after it was done. I always think and pray for you going to bed and before rising that you may be kept from the many snares you are exposed to.

January 21, 1853.—I received the present you sent me and am much pleased with it. Nothing you could have sent I should have liked so well, and we all think it an excellent likeness. It will be often looked at by us all. You must have enjoyed yourself very much in London. I am not sorry you are back to Cambridge quietly settled to work once more. I shall feel more comfortable than when you were in London. I know that I am very foolish, but I cannot help it. I am afraid of the journeys, and such a dreadful accident with one of the trains whilst you was in London. I hope you will take care of yourself and not study too much, but take a long walk whenever the weather is fit.

Sarah Courtney was naturally pleased to hear of her son's academic triumphs; but she was much more interested in the vicissitudes of his moral and spiritual life, and she scarcely ever despatched a letter to Cambridge without earnest exhortations to right living.

From his Mother

January 6, 1854.—I was much pleased to receive your very kind letter and *Pilgrim's Progress*. It gave me much pleasure to have such an affectionate letter. The book will be much prized.

July 4, 1854.—(A birthday letter, accompanied by "heavy cake.") I wish you many, very many happy returns of the day. It is not likely I shall ever spend a birthday with you or you with me; but I shall never forget to pray for you that you may be kept from the many vices, snares and temptations you are exposed to and ever do that which is right and just, and ever remember Sabbath-day and go regularly to Church or Chapel. I think in the observance of the Sabbath depends in great measure your future conduct through life. You are now a man. Father and Mother have no more control over

you; but still I feel more anxiety about you than ever I did. I cannot tell you what I have felt since you left. You are the first in my thoughts in the morning and the last at night. It is impossible to tell what anxiety parents have until you are a parent. If it is possible there is more affection for one than another it is for the first-born. You will most likely say I am foolish and particular. Perhaps I am and think more about you than is right. Should I hear anything wrong of you it would be the greatest trial I ever had and a terrible thing for your father.

Her anxieties were unfounded, for her son had neither time nor inclination for frivolities. He was well aware that his University career was regarded by his parents as an experiment which required to be justified by success, and he was resolved to earn as much and to work as hard as possible. In his third year he undertook new responsibilities which evoked a warning from home against overtaxing his strength.

From his Father

January 6, 1854.—What of your pupil? I think much may result from him should he succeed; but I would not encumber myself for the present, as I think you will have enough to do to attend to your own matters. Of course during the vacation employment is another thing.

From the first moment Courtney's eyes were set on the glittering prize of the Senior Wranglership. In those days it was the greatest distinction of University life, and the one event in the academic world the news of which spread far beyond University circles. It was obvious from the beginning that the young Johnian had a good chance, and his tutors were eager that the athlete should neglect no opportunity of preparing himself for the race. The college examinations were held in December and June, and the papers included both mathematical and classical subjects. At the end of his first term he was placed in the First Class, but the names were not arranged in order of merit.[1] In

[1] For the examination record I am indebted to the kindness of the Master of St. John's.

June 1852 Rees was placed at the top of the First Class, while Courtney and Savage were bracketed fifth. Both were elected "Proper Sizars," whose privilege it was to sit at a table by themselves.[1] The completion of each year brought Courtney a fresh "Exhibition" and a prize of books.

The Long Vacation was no holiday to an aspirant for high honours, and there were anxious discussions as to how it should be turned to the most profitable account. His tutor urged him to spend the summer in Cambridge and read with Parkinson, the well-known coach.

From Dr. Hymers

June 10, 1852.—You cannot do justice to yourself by solitary study at home. The first vacation is a very important portion of a student's time, and if wasted in any degree can hardly be retrieved. You are secure of your Goldsmith's Exhibition, and you will receive at least £10 from the College at midsummer. If you dream away this vacation in solitary study and in mere revision of former work, you will see reason to repent it before you take your degree.

Courtney had no intention of "dreaming away" the vacation, and on the same day he received a generous offer from his own coach.

From Mr. Wolstoneholme

June 10, 1852, CROYDON.—I was much gratified by your extremely frank and open letter. I should be especially sorry for you to leave me now. I hope you will consent to come with me to Barmouth and to accept the Long's tuition from me as a gift.

The arrangement was at once reported to Dr. Hymers, who replied that he would be perfectly satisfied if he were to read steadily for three months under the direction of an

[1] Mr. J. L. E. Hooppell sends me the following extract from his father's diary, October 20, 1854. "We nine Proper Sizars were photographed. We had to sit and stand over an hour, while fourteen or more daguerreotypes were made." The photo is still preserved.

efficient tutor. That the summer had not been wasted was proved by the December examination, in which the name of Rees again appears at the top of the First Class, with Courtney second and Savage third. His progress was watched with delight by his Penzance tutor, with whom he maintained a regular correspondence.

From Dr. Willan

December 20, 1852.—You have done nobly in the examination. There is one man that seems to dog your heels still, Savage. The rest you have distanced, I hope for ever. Is this man a formidable opponent? Has he a private tutor? I must not forget to wish you joy of your £20 Exhibition, which will no doubt be followed up at midsummer by a Wood's Exhibition. At the Bank to-day I saw Mr. Bolitho, who spoke in terms of your honourable position at St. John's that make me very proud of my first pupil.

The Doctor's letters reveal the delightful friendship that bound the older to the younger man. Has Leonard ever come across Monk's *Life of Bentley*, with its amusing account of the controversy of Ancients and Moderns? Would he look at the last edition of Bekker's *Gallus* and *Charicles* and the *New Cratylus*? How had their reading in Penzance fitted in with the Cambridge course of study? Was there any marked change in the manner of teaching Greek or Latin since he had left the University? Leonard would perhaps be interested by a circular on decimal coinage, which he enclosed. The pupil retaliated by sending him papers on science and describing his lectures, among them those of the great physicist Stokes.

The three men, Savage, Courtney and Rees, continued to occupy the three leading places in the First Class till the end. In May 1853 the list ran Savage, Rees, Courtney; in December, Rees, Courtney, Savage; in June 1854, Savage, Courtney, Rees. As the Tripos approached it was clear to every one that Savage and Courtney would run neck and neck for the laurel wreath, for Rees was more of a classic than a mathematician, and no other college could

boast of such candidates as St. John's. "Courtney is much annoyed at the expectation that prevails that he will be Senior Wrangler," wrote his friend Hooppell in his diary, December 4, 1854. "I hope he will be." The ordeal took place in January 1855, and the Honours List contained 139 names, headed by

Savage . . .	5571
Courtney . . .	5481.

Rees was ninth Wrangler and sixth Classic, the Senior Classic being Montagu Butler, the future Master of Trinity. The congratulations from home seem a little stinted after such a triumph, the magnitude of which, however, they could hardly appreciate.

From his Mother

February 8, 1855.—It has given me much pleasure and satisfaction to hear of your success, and I hope with feelings of gratitude to the Giver of all good. You must not feel proud or exalted in your present position, but remember where much is given much will be required.

From his Father

With your mother I am gratified at your success and I hope you will still go on and prosper, yet with all this I do not feel that elation some may imagine. I think of the responsibility you have incurred to maintain the position you have attained, and I feel your present is not the conclusion but the commencement of a career. You have hitherto done well; take care to keep in the same right path. I am satisfied with all you have done, and what is said before is more of exhortation to continue to do right than anything else. . . . Let me know in your next something with regard to money matters. It seems you must go on very parcimoniously for the next twelve months, but do not on any account go in debt. I would rather screw up closer at home. Remember the outset of life is the most trying to the judgment, and I dread a false step.

A more jubilant note was struck by his first teacher, who had followed every stage of the struggle with loving interest and was well aware of its arduous character.

From Dr. Willan

January 27, 1855.—Dear Leonard, Io triumphe! Io! Io! I shall complete my paean when I hear that you are first Smith's Prizeman, which I expect you will be. Let me hear all about yourself, what your plans are, whether you intend to put in for the Moral Sciences and whether you intend to enter yourself at one of the Inns of Court, and if so whether you will not take part in the debates of the Union. But by the way you should have some breathing time, not enough I suppose to run down here, where you will readily understand that the Cambridge Tripos is just now the talk of the town. I wish I could be in the Senate House on Monday and at your Bachelors' dinner, if such gatherings exist at this day as they did in mine. I have thoughtlessly assumed that your work is over; but the Smith and the Moral Sciences will keep the bow bent some time longer.

The next goal was not far distant. On the Monday following the granting of degrees the second race was run. Savage and Courtney were bracketed equal as Smith's Prizemen, a distinction less understood by the outside world than the Senior Wranglership, but generally accepted by mathematicians as perhaps a still more striking certificate of merit, since pace counted for less than in the tripos.

From Dr. Willan

February 5, 1855.—These second laurels are scarcely more than I expected after the first had been so nobly won. I never doubted the large capabilities of my distinguished pupil. I should like to know in what points your friend Savage was senior. Did that tiresome hot-pipe give you your cold and him his seniority? Mrs. Willan is I believe prouder of your having been my pupil than you are of your Smith's prize. Have you had enough of exams or do you intend to have a slap at the Moral Sciences?

His grandfather wrote cordially of his success, adding that he had never doubted his abilities. Once again the congratulations from home were mingled with reproaches and suspicions that were the harder to bear since they were wholly undeserved.

From his Mother

February 23, 1855.—I expected to have had a long letter from you yesterday and how I was disappointed when it was given to me. Your letters have been nothing more lately than little scraps. When you are really busy I am contented with a line or two. What is it you are so engaged about at present that you cannot spare one hour in the course of a week to write home? I am sadly afraid you are indulging in some measure of gaiety that is not right. If this be the case, give it up. If you knew how anxious your father and I am about you and what a night I passed last night grieving and thinking of you, I do not think you would act so. You know you have one of the best of fathers and you ought to treat him as such. Write him oftener and tell him what you are about and not leave him to hear from others what he should hear from you. I would rather be treated unkindly than he should be. Unkindness from my children,—how could I bear it? The very thought is dreadful. My dear, dear boy, I am feeling so agitated and distressed that I scarcely know what I am writing. Never neglect your parents that think so much about you. I have been too proud of you, and the Lord in mercy is making me to feel more humble. I never felt so sorrowful about you since you first left home.

A Second Wrangler and Smith's Prizeman might fairly hope for a Fellowship, and Courtney stayed on at Cambridge taking pupils and waiting for the crowning recognition of his merit. His mother was now beginning to realise that her son was a man of first-rate ability and that a distinguished career lay before him; but she could never surrender herself to the tranquil enjoyment of his fame, and every success seemed to her anxious mind to bring fresh dangers in its train.

From his Mother (*on his birthday*)

July 4, 1855.—I trust you will not live only to be a great man as far as this world is concerned but a good, ever doing what is right. I hope you will be successful with your pupils. Whatever you get, little or much, you must be careful.

February 22, 1856.—I hope you are not gay and too fond of company. The very position you have taken in society may be the very means of bringing you into gay and thoughtless company. I think more about you than all the others put together.

On March 11, 1856, Courtney was elected to a Fellowship at St. John's, for which the way had been smoothed by an unexpected occurrence. The career of the Senior Wrangler had already reached a speedy and tragic close. "He was a pale, rather sickly-looking man with darkish hair," writes Dr. Bonney, "rather narrow in the chest, and with sloping shoulders. One afternoon in the Lent Term, before the Fellowship election, he went out alone for a walk. He did not return from it, and the next day was found dead in a shallow ditch in the fields about a mile from the college. Death was due to hemorrhage on the brain. It was supposed that, as he took some interest in botany, he had leaned forward to gather a plant and this had sufficed to rupture a vessel."

"The value of the Fellowship was £160 a year, with commons in Hall and an allowance for the rent of rooms," writes the Master of St. John's. "Under the Elizabethan Statutes a Fellow had to be in Priest's orders within a certain number of years from his M.A. degree; but an exception was made in favour of two Fellows who pursued the study of medicine. By Royal Letters Patent of Charles I. this privilege was extended to two Fellows who pursued the study of law. These were called Law Fellows, and Courtney was the last of them, holding it until his marriage in 1883, when under the general rule then affecting Fellowships he vacated it. At the same time he returned the emoluments for the years 1881, 1882 and 1883, leaving the disposal of the moneys to the discretion of the college, by whom it was used from time to time to purchase books and apparatus. He was elected an Honorary Fellow in 1884 and remained one till his death." The Fellowship was supplemented by coaching; but warnings and exhortations continued to arrive from Penzance.

From his Father

October 25, 1856.—I had rather you had not so many pupils; but as the period is short you must try to arrange matters so as to make use of every spare minute for out of door exercise. I can see the Law can progress but little for some time; still, however trifling the advance, you must keep the onward course. At the time you name you ought at least to have saved enough to pay the fee, and your Fellowship and Tancred should then be sufficient to keep other matters afloat. It is useless to do things by halves. If you would succeed you must learn to put the constraint on inclination until you have fixed your foot firm in the ground. Your mother often observes whatever your gains they seem to be always swallowed up; and although I to her put on a good face, yet in my inmost heart I fear at times you have not been so prudent as you ought. My dear fellow, consider the uncertainty of the position of the family if anything should happen to me, and make the most of every opportunity. I do not mean to be a miserly niggard, but do not consider a thing necessary because some one richer than yourself has it. The great curse of the times is the desire of cutting a dash, being in appearance something you are not in reality, inquiring, when we are about to do a thing, what will Mr. So and So say, instead of saying, Do my circumstances justify my doing it? Be for the future independent of all such circumstances and be firm in doing only what is right. I have written this because I find myself unable to do what I could formerly accomplish with little difficulty, and having also a feeling of greater responsibility as to the younger ones. Mortimer is justly entitled to some exertion on my part to place him in a better position. The three little ones have also their claims. May I live to see them at least in a course to take care of themselves.

Despite the anxious pleas for strict economy addressed to him from home the young Fellow considered himself entitled to a trip abroad after five years of strenuous study; and in September he paid the first of many visits to Paris, returning home through Belgium. The tour was keenly enjoyed, and implanted the love of pictures which remained with him throughout life. A year later he spent his September holiday in England, and his adventures are described in the earliest of the chatty letters home which have been preserved.

To his Mother

September 8, 1857.—I did not think last week that I should be able to tell you to-day that I have since then visited Yarmouth, the home of the "bloater." I went down to Lowestoft on Saturday afternoon with Roby, walked over to Yarmouth on the Sunday and returned by the last train last night, calling on the way for two or three hours at Norwich. We left Cambridge at 1·20 and reached Lowestoft at about half-past six; the coast there is very unlike ours, there are no rocks and scarcely anything deserving the name of cliff. Yarmouth is a very quaint old place; it has a long quay running along the bank of the river and skirted by limes and poplars. 'Twas well filled with shipping, some of the houses old and picturesque; there is also a fine open fish market with the parish church, a very large fine building, on one side and close by it a hospital for decayed fishermen. But the most peculiar part of the town is the assemblage of *rows*. A row is a very narrow alley about six feet broad with tall houses grimly facing one another on each side of it. Yarmouth is not so much frequented by visitors as the more fashionable Lowestoft, nor is it so well suited for a family, but I would certainly rather go there of the two. On a green running between the river and the sea (the course of the former being for some time nearly parallel with the shore till it turns sharply round into the sea) is a handsome monument which the people of Norfolk have erected to Nelson, a native of the county. We left Yarmouth in the evening for Lowestoft. Yesterday afternoon we left Lowestoft and stopped on the way at Norwich; I was extremely pleased with this old city. In the middle of it rises a hill crowned with the keep of the old castle now converted into the county-prison, and from a walk around it a series of fine views of the city can be obtained. The cathedral is a very fine specimen of Norman architecture, but within it has been allowed to be disfigured and has as yet escaped the renovating spirit of the time. The cloisters are remarkably fine, second only to Gloucester. There are about thirty parishes in the city and some of the churches are fine buildings, also a Music Hall where the Festival takes place next week, a new and handsome Free Library and an extensive open market place with a statue in the centre of the great Duke of Wellington, whose son, the present Duke, I saw riding through one of the streets. I have come to the end of my journey and my paper: to-day I resumed work. By next week my pupils will have departed.

To his Mother

MANCHESTER, *September* 22.—I arrived here last evening having left Cambridge by the early train. This morning I went down to the Exhibition and kept steadily working at the pictures for about six hours and so saw about four hundred pictures; at this rate it will take two more days to go through the pictures of the Old Masters and I shall still have the thousand or more of Modern Artists, the engravings, etchings, statues, and all the elegancies of porcelain. It is clear I might easily spend a fortnight at it, but I do not expect that all the schools will deserve as much attention as that I have been over to-day, which was the Italian. I began with Cimabue and Giotto and thence passed through the works of Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi to Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Correggio, then the Venetians, Titian, Giorgione, Paul Veronese, Giulio Romano, and the later Caracci, Andrea del Sarto, Domenichino, Guido, Sassoferrato, Carlo Dolce. These are the names which we first became acquainted with through the Pictorial Bible and have since seen in their glory of colour in Academies and Museums. The arrangement is entirely chronological and so very instructive. To-morrow I shall begin with the Flemish artists and go down the Flemish and German history; the early specimens will I suppose remind me of the things I saw at Bruges and Ghent this time last year. I could go into ecstacies on the colouring of the Venetians that I have seen to-day. The portraits of Titian are wonderful; there is one of Ariosto which fills you with delight, such a jolly fine fellow, you see how keenly he felt all pleasure, his short brown curly beard, his honest open face and noble bearing inspire you with a sense how pleasant must have been his converse. Then there are two or three members of the Medici family, the first Cosimo and his son, fine noble looking men, another of Pope Julius the Second, two or three Cardinals, etc. Then there are two or three very fine pictures of Raphael, two Holy Families in especial, then some of John Bellini famous in design, character and colouring. I could run on about these things and, fetching the interleaved catalogue which I have bought, detail to you my notes, but what need of doing so?

The next letter describes the college life of the young Fellow during the last term of his University career.

To his Mother

November 3, 1857.—I can only afford time for two or three lines this week as I am and have been and shall be very busy for the next part of it. I am bound to own that dinner engagements have partly occupied me. Last Thursday was the audit dinner at Christ's College, and I suppose as a matter of course I was taken in by the Tutor. On Saturday the Master gave one of his dinner parties. These apparently occur once a week and will in the course of the term run through the list of Fellows. Monday was the day of our Scholarship Election and of course a dinner party in our hall. This afternoon a meeting of the Fellows to discuss some more propositions, when I submitted two which after considerable discussion were rejected by about two to one; they are on the conditions of tenure of Fellowships. At Christmas our functions as to initiating statutes terminate and we shall have to consider any that may be sent us. All this with my lecturing and pupils have occupied my time, indeed I am obliged to receive some of the latter three days a week in the evenings; but I am very well and intend to continue so. Tell Margaret I had already thought of buying Browning for myself, but she shall have its refusal if I get it. I have consented to be one of the six College Examiners at Christmas.

College reform, to which reference is thus casually made, was at this time exercising the mind of most of the younger and many of the older members of the University. In response to an influential memorial Lord John Russell had in 1850 appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the constitution of Oxford and Cambridge and to make proposals for reform. The Commission reported in 1852, and in 1856 an Executive Commission was created to carry out the suggested improvements. The colleges were permitted to frame new statutes before 1858, failing which the Commission might make proposals which could only be rejected by a two-thirds majority of the governing body. Many of the irksome restrictions of the Elizabethan code thus disappeared, though several others lingered on for another decade. Courtney's modest share in the discussion, which turned on such subjects as the tenure of fellowships, celibacy and college livings, is recalled in some notes

kindly supplied by Dr. Liveing, for many years Professor of Chemistry.

"Lord Courtney was five years my junior in the University, and though I was one of the College lecturers when he came up he never attended my lectures and I did not make his acquaintance until he became a Fellow in 1856. On the day of election of new Fellows, the two junior Fellows on the old list used to invite the other resident Fellows to supper and there introduce to them those newly elected. In the fifties the subject which most engaged our attention was that of University and College reform. A Commission under the Universities Act was busy with reforms, and those who wished for changes used often to meet in small parties, after the four o'clock dinner, in each other's rooms, to discuss their plans; but I cannot remember exactly what line Courtney took in these discussions. Certainly he was not prominent: indeed, as he was quite a junior, he probably thought it better to be only a listener. In 1857 the whole body of Fellows had to prepare new statutes for the College, and there were regular meetings for this purpose and much serious discussion. In this Courtney took part, but it was not a very prominent part: he was cool headed, formed his opinions deliberately and gave good reasons for his judgments. On many of the questions which arose he joined the reformers in private discussions, and his influence went generally to make the changes proposed very moderate, so much so that such of them as were rejected by the College as a whole at that time were afterwards adopted when the statutes were again revised in 1881. I look back on those days with much satisfaction because, notwithstanding much difference of opinion, the prosperity of the College as a whole was never forgotten, or the happy social relations between the Fellows ever shaken."

The young Fellow's personal appearance is described by Dr. Bonney, later Professor of Geology, the only other survivor of the academic circle of St. John's in the fifties. "Courtney was full middle height, rather squarely built, giving one the idea of considerable physical strength and

with rather regular features; but I remember that even then his eyes seemed a little weak. The appearance of some men alters greatly as they pass from youth to old age. I have known well several men as undergraduates who have been so transformed as to be unrecognisable when they had left sixty behind them. It was not so with Courtney, for the continuity in his aspect was maintained to the end. He gave one the impression of a hard-working, thoughtful and unexcitable man."

A more intimate picture of the young don in his leisure hours is given by Mrs. Bushell and her sister. "We were schoolroom children in those far-away days, ages twelve to fourteen more or less. We were almost too young perhaps and ignorant to diagnose the character of a man of such force and personality as he undoubtedly was even then. But I think we chiefly recollect him as a very kind friend who would come and talk and laugh with us and play games galore and every now and again bring us sweets and bonbons! My mother was a gifted woman and an excellent conversationalist, and, looking back, Mrs. Theobald and I think he used to like to talk to her and tell her about himself and his aims. She was very witty with a broad outlook on the world in general. I am inclined to think he found going out to Hows Close our home some mile or so out of Cambridge a relaxation from his strenuous University life, and, as I hope and believe, found his life's work and struggle of those days easier for an occasional interlude of fun and laughter with our family. Perhaps he was rather plain, but I don't remember that we ever thought about his physical aspect. He was just a kind friend who would come and see us from time to time. Always bright, always nice as we children called him, and we enjoyed his visits thoroughly. Of course we gradually lost sight of him, but we watched his career by means of newspapers with the greatest interest to the end of his long and distinguished life. I remember how interested he was in the visit of a certain Miss Beckett (I think that was her name), an elderly lady with glasses, who used to visit an uncle of mine living in Cambridge. She was a—perhaps the—

pioneer of the Women's Movement. She was older than he, I think, but I can remember how shocked he was when we young impertinencies laughed at her; we did not in the least understand the seriousness of her crusade, while he did thoroughly."

Courtney had never worn his heart on his sleeve, and he only unbosomed himself to chosen friends. "I asked him if he were not very reserved," wrote Hooppell in his diary, October 31, 1854, "which led to a long conversation. I was very glad that it had taken place, for now my mind is at ease,—Courtney is no more to me the reserved, inscrutable companion he used to be." There was, however, a certain austerity about him, corresponding to his gospel of the strenuous life. "Bishop Selwyn preached at the University Church," records the same diarist, November 26, 1854, "an exceedingly good sermon. Courtney afterwards said it was remarkably Carlylese on the point of the purifying influence of work." Carlyle had been the favourite teacher of his youth, and at the age of twelve he had written a critique of *Past and Present* in his diary; and although on coming to years of discretion he transferred his allegiance to Mill, he never forgot the virile counsels and fortifying maxims of *Sartor Resartus*.

Courtney's life at Cambridge had been one of unremitting labour, allowing no time for such distractions as the Union or for the cultivation of a wide circle of friends. Intercollegiate lectures were not yet invented. "An undergraduate belonged to his college exclusively," writes Leslie Stephen of Cambridge in the fifties.[1] "He knew of 'out college' men only through school friendships or meetings in the rooms of his private tutor. The University was for him a mere abstraction, except when it revealed itself as the board of examination for 'little go' and degree." The prosaic atmosphere of the University, untroubled by an "Oxford movement" or by philosophic doubt, was singularly conducive to tranquil study. Classics and mathematics reigned supreme. Teachers and students pursued concrete and limited aims, and liked to feel firm ground

[1] *Life of Fawcett*, chap. iii.

under their feet.[1] Courtney was always a strenuous worker; but at no time of his life did he toil so unremittingly and with so few relaxations as during his University career. He was happy enough at St. John's, and with his Fellowship and his pupils he could live in tolerable comfort; but as no College or University appointment was in sight, and as he was anxious to help his father with the education of the younger children he determined to seek his fortune in London. His resolve, however, was not the result of economic pressure alone. When the arduous struggle for academic honours was over he had time to think about public affairs, and his interest in politics developed rapidly. "I cannot imagine you passing a life of learned leisure secluded from the great world," wrote a friend in May 1857. The decision was quickly taken, and at the end of the autumn term Courtney left Cambridge for London and the law.

[1] Cp. Leslie Stephen, *Sketches from Cambridge*, chap. xii., 1865. "We leave theology to theologians and mind our classics and mathematics. Our prevailing tone is what I should venture to describe as quiet, good sense."

CHAPTER III

LINCOLN'S INN

COURTNEY left Cambridge for London a few days before Christmas 1857 and settled down to the study of law, residing first at Fig Tree Court, Temple. His chambers after his call to the Bar on June 17, 1858,[1] were at Lincoln's Inn.

The event moved his mother to a birthday letter in which her deep love for her first-born breaks through the crust of reserve.

From his Mother

July 21, 1858.—How much better you have done than could be expected, and we all should be very thankful you have done so well; but remember, my dear Leonard, where much is given much is required. There is more expected of those that have five talents than there is of those that have but one. Nothing in this life would give me greater pleasure than to spend a day with you. That cannot be, but I will not forget to pray for you. How rapidly the time has flown, twenty-six years. I can see you now a little baby in my arms, my first-born darling boy. Now you are a man and in a little time I shall be gone; but I hope we shall both live in this world so that whenever death may come we may be found ready for that happy state where there shall be no separation.

Leonard kept his mother well informed as to his movements and occupations; and her apprehensions of moral and spiritual dangers passed gradually away.

[1] Mr. Frederic Harrison was called on the same day.

To his Mother

May 22, 1858.—I shall begin to read with some conveyancer in the course of a week or so.

August 9.—You must not think it is because I do not value your last letter that I have left it unanswered up to this time. I did not get it till after my birthday. I was at Cambridge on that day. We began very oddly talking about birthdays and it then struck me for the first time that it was the sixth. I warrant you had thought of it often before on that day. I hope dear Mother we may live to spend the sixth of July together. You know if I cannot come to Cornwall it is possible for Mamma to come to London, and I live in hopes of that some day taking place. It seems most probable that my wanderings will be confined to Cambridge after all.

A better fate was reserved for him, and he enjoyed a holiday in the Lakes and Scotland. In the spring of 1859 Mrs. Courtney left West Cornwall for the first and last time, for the marriage of her second daughter at Clifton. Leonard came down for the festivities; and her great joy is reflected in her last birthday letter.

From his Mother

July 3, 1859.—How often I think of the few days we spent together in Clifton; the pleasure I felt in having you with me in the evenings was the best part of my journey. Shall I ever have such pleasure again? I have been very weak and poorly for a long time. Love, prayers and kisses.

To his Mother (in reply)

July 23.—I received your good letter on my birthday. I am going this afternoon to Hertford and next week I shall go on to Cambridge, where I think of remaining for at least a month. The weather here has been very hot and work is not very plentiful in chambers, so that I shall be glad to get away into the country. I should very much enjoy spending a few weeks at Scilly. It is fourteen years since I was there. I hope that the sea breezes and visit to Tresco have done you good. I could half quarrel with you for being unwell, and as to fretting and anxiety I am surprised at it and hope you will forget it as soon as possible.

August 2 (ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE).—On arriving here I found comparatively few Fellows in residence. The grounds are very beautiful, and it is very much cooler than it is in London. I am reading a little law, and if I can keep on at it I do not know when I shall go away.

"The Long" was enlivened by a visit from the friend who watched every step of his career with loving interest.

From Dr. Willan

August 20, 1859.—The few days I passed with you in our dear old Alma Mater will appear as a charming episode in the tale of *My Life* whenever I favour the world with that valuable piece of autobiography.

Among the friends of the young Fellow to whom the Doctor was introduced were the faithful Roby, and Ferrers, afterwards Master of Caius. In the autumn Mrs. Courtney's health, which had been failing for several years, grew rapidly worse; but since the happy meeting at Clifton she had wholly ceased to worry about her absent son.

From his Mother

November 4, 1859.—I can assure you I have not one anxious thought about you to retard my recovery; but you must not think to find me anything like well at Christmas. With such an illness one can't expect to be anything but an invalid all the winter.

Before the end of the year she was dead. Her life had been something of a struggle, and she had had less than her share of sunshine and light-hearted happiness; but her children retained a loving memory of her simple piety and self-sacrificing devotion. John Courtney and his eldest son possessed some common intellectual interests in which Sarah Courtney had been unable to share, among them a love of Cornish antiquities. When a new and cheaper edition of the *Guide to Penzance* was called for, the author forwarded the publisher's letter and asked his son for criticisms and additions.

From his Father

August 31, 1861.—What would you say of this? I will send up the MSS. for your alteration; or will you have my interleaved copy? I daily write something, I should say nightly, as it is all done after 10. I intend it to be about the size of the last book, but more exact. Can you give any hint about the hill castles in this neighbourhood and the fortified headlands? They puzzle me by the great number, for West Penwith could never contain many inhabitants to fight these battles some people seem mad about, neither was it so rich as to attract plunderers. Between us we must work out this problem.

Leonard, who had only too much leisure on his hands, took his duties as revising editor very seriously, and a mass of notes and marginal additions embody the fruits of his researches. The young barrister, once settled in London, proceeded to play the part of guide, philosopher and friend to his brothers and sisters, though his financial position was not very promising. Mortimer came to town early in 1859 and lived with Leonard till he started in 1860 for India, finally settling in Canada, where a distinguished career awaited him. William joined the bachelor ménage in the same year, going daily to the City of London School before entering the office of the Ecclesiastical Commission and winning his spurs as an antiquarian. A third brother, Acutt, entered the circle in 1861 and accompanied William to his school. An amusing letter from his sister Margaret informs Leonard that she heard from a friend that he had grown stouter " and rather more fashionable in appearance." A letter to his father describes the migration of the Courtney colony from Gray's Inn to Bloomsbury, which was to be his home for ten years.

To his Father

September 17, 1861.—We are still here, but this morning I took, subject to the references being all right, a set of rooms at No. 35 Great Ormond Street, next door to a house Margaret and I went into called Ormond Chambers, the fine staircase of

which she may remember. Our set is on the ground floor. The rent and all attendance is to be £50 per annum. I hope to get in by Saturday. Before taking this set I had perambulated many streets and seen many apartments and at last inserted an advertisement in last Friday's *Times*. "A gentleman and two brothers (16 and 14) require unfurnished apartments with attendance. Within two miles N. or N.W. of St. Paul's. Dine at home three times a week." I got nearly thirty answers at prices ranging from £30 to £70. The other low priced ones were either at too great a distance or in very bad neighbourhoods or small dismal rooms. The boys get on very well and promise to continue to do so.

The Bar proved even more disappointing to Courtney than to most youthful aspirants, and the Cambridge Fellowship had to be supplemented by examinerships and journalism. An occasional excursion to the provinces proved a welcome change to one who retained throughout life a passion for visiting old cities and churches.

To his sister Margaret

June 23, 1863, 4 Powis Place.—I said just now at tea-time that it was the 23rd of June, but Will could or would attach no significance to the announcement. I suppose by this time (nine o'clock) the tar barrels have been set out and lit, and lads are going up and down Market Jew Street waving their torches by way of prelude to the more furious fun of rockets: it is six years since I was home on Midsummer Eve nor does it seem likely that I shall be in Penzance again on that night for a long time, if ever. I came back last Thursday afternoon having enjoyed my excursion very much. Examining boys is hard enough work but it has many pleasures, especially when you are taken away to a nice old city like York and are entertained with due hospitality. Boys and girls of a still tenderer age are the finest things in existence; it is a great pity that they degenerate so. As Charles Lamb said of the Eton cricketers, Who would not regret their becoming mere magistrates and Members of Parliament? I left this place on Monday week by the 12 o'clock train, the weather was very pleasant. I had engaged to meet my fellow-examiner Stebbing at Peterborough. We took up our abode at Hawker's Hotel, a very comfortable house, one of the best in York. As our expenses are paid, the

hotel bill is sent in by Stebbing to the Chapter Clerk, who is also the school clerk, who reimburses it. On Thursday we dined at the Head Master's, the Rev. Canon Hey; he gave us a very good dinner, but somehow or other his wines were execrable. Even an undermaster afterwards confided to me his wonder at their quality. Next day we dined at Mr. Daniel's, the Head Master of Archbishop Holgate's school, a sort of middle class school which we examine by the way; the dinner there was very swell in all respects, and was honoured by the presence of no less than the Lord Mayor of York. I came south to Grantham where I stopped Tuesday, Wednesday, and part of Thursday; 'twas examination week there. We went on to Belvoir; it rained so we spent our time inside the castle which I had seen before in 1856 after an Easter walking tour in Derbyshire. However I was well pleased to see it again, and discovered many things which I had not noted or appreciated before; a lot of miniatures in the drawing-room detained me some time. Kinsinan sent me his catalogue some time since. Will thinks it would be desirable to secure the *History of Henry Earl of Moreland*, in verse 1s. 6d., and I have rather a hankering after *Madame D'Arblay's Diary and Letters*, 7 vols. 14s.

In 1865 Louise, the youngest member of the family, left home for London; but, though she resided in Bedford College, she looked up to her elder brother as her guardian and guide, and her reminiscences throw a vivid light on the occupations and interests of Leonard's early years in London.

"My earliest recollections of my brother are of a strong big man and an old one. My father naturally seemed of great age and my 'big brother Lilly,' as I called him, not much younger. No wonder that I thought him strong, since one of my first memories is being carried on his shoulder for an endless journey on a summer evening. A few years later I remember him reading aloud to my mother, and I played with my doll and listened at times. He was reading *Scenes from Clerical Life*, and 'Amos Barton' must have attracted my attention, as ever since those childish days I have had a vivid picture in my imagination of 'little Dicky Barton well wrapt up as to his chest but very red and bare as to his legs in Mrs. Hackitt's poultry yard.' I

think I must have been eight, and there are other impressions in my mind of readings to my mother or talks with her about books before she died a little more than a year later. Tennyson's *May Queen* was one reading, and I certainly heard about *Adam Bede* and *John Halifax, Gentleman*, and must have been listening when he read Browning's *Evelyn Hope*, as it haunted me; and I have a distinct recollection of being found a little later reading it and being told I was a morbid little girl.

"Concerning his life at Cambridge I have only vague ideas of hearing about his rooms and of dining in Hall. I used to look at the photographic group, the Senior Wrangler of 1855 Savage, and the next two Courtney and Elsee, which hung on our dining-room wall. The poems I had from my brother on Valentine's Day and Advent Sunday—The Feast Day at Penzance—were far more interesting. In after years I remember hearing of one incident which connected the time when the news of Leonard's place in the Mathematical Tripos reached Penzance with Charles Lamb's Schooldays. The C. V. Le G. of Lamb's essay, *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago*, lived in 1855 and for many years previously near Penzance, and on hearing the news of Leonard's success walked into the town to see my father and congratulate him, Mr. C. V. Le Grice being then eighty-two. From ten to fifteen I do not think I could have seen very much of my brother, but I remember talks about the reviews he wrote of Miss Yonge's *Christian Names* and other books for *The Times*. These reviews very much interested my father and the elder members of the family, and I recollect the enthusiasm with which Dr. Willan talked to me about them.

"Just after I was fifteen I went to Bedford College, and during the four years I was there I was much with my brothers. For the greater part of the time I had three in London and spent every Sunday with them. At that time Bedford College was in Bedford Square, and Leonard and a younger brother lived in Powis Place close to Queen's Square, Bloomsbury. Early in the morning Leonard came for me and we walked to St. Peter's, Vere Street, where he

had sittings. Frederick Denison Maurice was the clergyman there, and Leonard was his great admirer and follower. The service was long, slow and I thought very dull. But there was one part of the service to which I always looked forward, and that was when Mr. Maurice gave the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of the Communion Service. The beauty of the Prayer, with his reverent way of saying it, can never be forgotten. One other memory of the Church is the fervour with which my brother used to sing some of the hymns. After Church we sometimes met friends and had walks with them. Mr. Thornton (Thornton, *On Labour*) was one, and he and Leonard discussed questions of the day. I listened to their talk, and probably my interest in Political Economy began with these walks. Mr. Westlake and his wife were other friends who went to Vere Street Church. Every few weeks we walked across the Park to Mr. and Mrs. Roby's house in Pimlico, and lunched with them. The Robys were both ardent Liberals, both much interested in education, Mr. Roby being at that time with the Endowed School Commission, and Mrs. Roby working with some of the schemes for the advancement of the education of women. More political talk and Cambridge doings characterised these very friendly little luncheons. At an early hour, about 5.30 I think, the three brothers and I dined together. I remember at these dinners great arguments chiefly between Leonard and myself, in spite of the big difference in our ages. My leanings then were very much towards Toryism and High Church. The other brothers watched and listened with amusement, and one of them, who at 9.30 walked back with me to Bedford College, has told me how unconsciously I had acquired some of the expressions and gestures of my brother Leonard and produced them when arguing with him. He had great toleration of religious opinions, but in small matters of life I should say in my early girlhood and womanhood he was very critical.

"In those days at Bedford College from fifteen to nineteen my brother introduced me to many of his friends who were very kind to the shy girl and with whom friendship

ripened and has continued all through my life. For my seventeenth birthday treat he took me to a Saturday Popular Concert at St. James's Hall to listen to the delightful string quartette led by Joachim. Two of his friends Mr. William Stebbing and Mr. T. Bodley were with us and came back to my birthday dinner at Powis Place. The constant and intimate friendship between Mr. Stebbing and my brother is well known, and I am glad to have two special memories connected with it—my seventeenth birthday party and a little tea party in March last half a century later, when Mr. and Mrs. Stebbing, my brother and a few other old friends met at my house.

"Not only was Sunday spent with the brothers but not infrequently other afternoons, when sometimes we went for country walks in Epping Forest, Hampstead or Highgate, or visited Hampton Court or Kew. So many first doings are associated with these years. On my first day in London I was taken to Christie's, the National Gallery, the Academy; other picture exhibitions, 'Private Views' were all visited with Leonard. One surprising first experience I remember was when I was eighteen, and he told me he was going to give a dinner party and I was to be hostess. This was a much more formal affair than the little party on my seventeenth birthday, and I felt some dread about it; but Mr. Scott, afterwards Sir John, took me into dinner and was very kind and sympathetic, and my shyness soon went. The intercourse which began on that day went on increasing in friendship and intimacy until his death in 1904.

"In my studies at the College Leonard naturally took great interest. He was particularly convinced that a knowledge of mathematics was very essential for women. I remember, when at one time I wanted to give up mathematics, he wrote a long letter to me stating how desirable it was to go on with them to develop my reasoning faculties. The same motive I think made him some years later ask me to read Lucretius with him in a leisurely month which he, two other members of the family and I spent together in Holland. For several years after leaving Bedford College in 1869 there was much intercourse with him,—long visits

to London, continental travel, a visit with him to Canada, and every year Christmas at Penzance. In the first two winters after leaving Bedford College I read at Penzance with Dr. Willan, his old tutor, and had from him many reminiscences of his much loved pupil Leonard. These readings seemed to link me with Leonard's early days, and I remember in our country walks when he came at Christmas we used to discuss Horace and other authors we had both enjoyed with Dr. Willan."

The recollections of his oldest surviving friend, Mr. William Stebbing, throw further light on the personality and pursuits of the briefless barrister.

"My friendship with Leonard Courtney lasted from rather before we both were called to the Bar, he in June, and I in November, 1858. Never once was it broken. Friends of both will recognise that, as each liked his own way, this is a remarkable fact. It began from the accident of a vacant seat in a mess of four in Lincoln's Inn Hall. There, as in a multitude of similar cases, it might have ended. He from Cambridge had many University acquaintances. I had some from Oxford. As it happened a week or two later I paid a few days' visit to a future brother-in-law, Robert Batty, like Courtney a Second Wrangler, Tutor of Emanuel. Here at dinner I met Courtney from John's, of which he was a Fellow. The chance brought us a little closer. Never have I had much readiness in sociability; he was better gifted. He was deep in the councils of the University reformers, who, especially from the Inns of Court, bombarded the citadels of academical abuses. When such innovators were festively inclined, and founded in a court off Pall Mall a weekly Club, the Century, I had never heard of it till he took me to a meeting. Through his choice suddenly, by what degrees I know not, we were friends. I became even friend of his friends, such as John Rigby, though with somewhat less of warmth. His was not a nature to measure intimacy. My Chambers for business, where also I lived, were successively in Chancery Lane and Lincoln's Inn. His were on the staircase of Lincoln's Inn

Chapel. He used them for business only, sharing occupation with F. G. A. Williams, who lives in the affection of the few who survive. As a dwelling he had hired lodgings in Powis Place, Bloomsbury, for himself and two brothers. The position was recommended by its neighbourhood to Bedford College, where a young sister was a student. Tea in Powis Place and whist were the common termination of long Saturday suburban walks and talk. Work fully engrossed our days, and a majority of evenings. At first for him as well as for me it was on the lines our profession marked out. Nature had implanted in him a love of the certainty of mathematical conclusions following from the premisses. He had turned the inclination to ample account at Cambridge. Somehow Real Property Law, with its forms and precedents, has an affinity to mathematics. Having no ambition for an academical career, he chose the legal profession almost as of course. In Christie's famous Chambers he made himself an excellent conveyancer. Had solicitors found him out in time, he might have pioneered through briefs his path into politics, ending with the Bench.

"As it was, one bulky and dusty set of papers, with a Leader's and his own names upon it, for years reminded visitors to the Chambers of his vocation. He never lost his legal learning, though I doubt if he ever held a second brief. When a brave publisher started the *New Reports* with future Lord Chancellors, Attorneys General, Puisne Judges, and, I think, a Speaker, on the staff, his name was there too. I have the vanity to add mine. But he had ceased to reckon on law professionally. Neglect did not vex him. He never complained. Like myself he eked out a College Fellowship by literature and examining. We were colleagues on such expeditions to Grantham and York. At the former a boy, Collingwood, won a chief prize, and had to recite a poem. Courtney, in the good spirits of a holiday from London, composed verses for him in which, though kindred was modestly disclaimed, the deeds of Nelson's colleague were recalled."

In addition to William Stebbing, Courtney saw a great

deal at this time of an old and a new friend. The life-long comradeship with Roby, Senior Classic in 1851 and a Fellow of St. John's, began after taking his degree in 1855. Brief holidays were often spent together, and many were the visits to Dulwich College where Roby was a Master from 1861 to 1865. The friendship with Westlake began a little later, when both men were young students of law in London. "I do not remember the commencement of our acquaintance," wrote Lord Courtney in his chapter contributed to the *Memories of John Westlake.* "I must have come to know him soon after I took up residence in London, and in the early sixties acquaintance ripened into intimacy and friendship. A circumstance which doubtless helped their development was the fact that Westlake, like myself, was a zealous Cornishman. During his earlier married life I was a frequent guest at the very attractive gatherings in his hospitable house in Oxford Square." A second tie was the fact that Mrs. Westlake was the daughter of Thomas Hare, to whom Courtney already looked up as one of his political masters. "Westlake's acceptance of the principles of the great work of his father-in-law was strengthened if not originated by Mill; and it was in relation to Proportional Representation that my own political intimacy with him first deepened." Most of Courtney's early friendships were made for life; and though his name was still unknown to the public his friends were well aware of his exceptional powers, and shared his confidence that in the fulness of time he would come to his own.

While he was still at college Richard Oliver had written from Melbourne urging him to keep his eyes open for a Melbourne professorship; but a colonial career had no attractions for him, and when a pecuniarily advantageous offer was made in 1861 he declined it without much hesitation.

From his Father

April 2, 1861.—Mr. Bolitho asked me yesterday if I thought you would undertake the management of a bank at Sydney, salary about £1000. Whether desirable or not I leave you to determine.

From his Father

April 6.—I had your letter this morning. I have no wish that you should go abroad, and have told Mr. Bolitho you had declined the offer. Regarding your own affairs I have no doubt you will have much uphill work and will suffer many disappointments, but in the end will succeed if you take a stand upon industry and honour. Nothing is more conducive to our well-being than a striving against adverse or rather unfavourable circumstances. A too easy life is ruination.

From R. E. Hooppell

April 10, 1861.—It is, I can well imagine, a source of perplexity that the Sydney offer should be made just now and not a few years later. You have *not* given the legal profession a fair trial. I can offer no advice. I should see with great sorrow your departure, not on personal grounds but from a feeling that our country had lost one who has the ability and, I believe, the earnest will to benefit her largely, if only a channel co ul be opened up through which his ability and will might operate. At the same time I have ever thought it one of the greatest and most responsible positions a man can occupy to be among the genuine builders of a new country.

A thousand a year must have seemed affluence, and may well have appealed for a fleeting moment to the young barrister, who after three years in London had realised that success at the Bar was probably beyond his reach. Though a bachelor he was also head of a household, with a keen sense of responsibility for the welfare of its inmates. His heart was never in the law; for he possessed the qualities that go to the making of a judge rather than a barrister.[1] But other fields were open to him; and he had already dedicated himself to the task in which he was to find the occupation and the happiness of his life,—the formation of public opinion.

[1] His name remained in the Law List; but on his election to Parliament he declined in debate the addition to "honourable" of "learned."

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND JOURNALISM

COURTNEY'S main interest during his early years in London was in economic and financial questions, to which his mathematical studies afforded a valuable apprenticeship. In 1860 appeared the first of his innumerable contributions to the discussion of public questions, "*Direct Taxation; an Inquiry.* By Leonard H. Courtney, M.A., Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-Law. Dedicated to the Chancellor of the Exchequer." The purpose of the pamphlet was explained in the brief Preface. "As the House of Commons has during the present session committed itself (as far as a Parliament may) to increasing and making permanent the portion of the Revenue raised by direct taxation, the inquiries as to the principle upon which a direct tax should be assessed and the method available to carry the principle into practice seem fit for a renewed discussion; and the only excuse for one who enters on them is that he should really have something to say. So many, however, and so diverse have been the answers already given by men the most eminent, that a writer may well be diffident of the results at which he has arrived, and if in the few following pages I ever appear to have forgotten this, I pray the courteous reader to believe that it was not until after much hesitation and many reviewals that I have hazarded the offence of sending forth an erroneous or even unnecessary speculation."

With the light-hearted courage of youth the young economist attacked Mill and Babbage, and maintained that capitalisation is the only just and practicable method of

assessment for direct taxation. The pamphlet dealt with highly technical matters and is by no means easy reading, and it is hardly surprising that the work of an unknown barrister attracted but little attention. The author was none the less convinced of the importance of his labours, and he distributed numerous copies among his friends.

From R. E. Hooppell

February 20, 1861.—I am very desirous of knowing how your pamphlet on Direct Taxation has fared. I have read it with great interest; but my belief is it is too abstruse—too abstrusely treated—for it to win much favour. Scarcely one reviewer would read it patiently enough and think it over deeply enough to do it even slender justice. And as for the public I do not suppose they would buy a dozen. Your plan should be—or should have been—to give them away judiciously, to send copies to all the great names in political economics and finance, to all the Ex-Chancellors and expectant Chancellors of the Exchequer and all the M.P.'s who speak on such questions. Mr. Hubbard, I see in yesterday's *Times*, has carried his motion for a Select Committee on the Inequalities of the Income Tax. To him and to every member of the Committee you ought to send a copy, and, if possible, to get yourself examined by it.

Many months later came an encouraging letter from the oldest of his friends in far-off Melbourne.

From Richard Oliver

March 1862.—I got your pamphlet and entirely agree with your plan. I hope you did not feel much disappointed at not getting it extensively read.

The lack of public interest in his scheme in no way diminished his confidence in his own conclusions; and he fearlessly proceeded to break a lance with the greatest of living economists in a letter of immense length.

To J. S. Mill

Sept. 17, 1861.—I should be very glad if I could secure your attention to a few remarks which I send you on the subject of the Income and Property Tax. I have been reading in the last few days your evidence before Mr. Hubbard's Committee and I feel under the necessity of writing you upon it. Your opinion carries in truth so much weight with it, and I must frankly add it appears to me to be on this subject so insecure, that it is of great importance to examine it a little more closely. . . . These are only hints, but they may perhaps serve to induce you to reconsider the abstract question of the justice of capitalisation as the basis of a direct tax; they involve a consideration which I confess does not appear to me to have received proper attention. I have not touched on the question of practicability; but I may say the difficulty of this question is overrated. Could I know that I had shaken your opinion as to the justice of the capitalisation theory I would gladly explain to you how I believe it can be carried out. But even though it were utterly impracticable, it is surely most important to determine the true foundation of direct taxation. I find on reading over these remarks that they are characterised by a plainness and directness which I must ask you to pardon. I can assure you they are conceived in a feeling of great respect; nor should I venture to send them to you save for my trust in the singular candour your works exhibit.

Mill's response was a courteous but uncompromising rejection of the arguments of his youthful critic; and the controversy was terminated but not settled by a second letter from the author of *Direct Taxation.*

To J. S. Mill

Sept. 20, 1861.—I am very much obliged to you for your answer to my remarks. I know you must be much troubled with idle communications, nor should I have written to you but that I thought I was presenting to your notice some arguments with respect to which I could discover no trace that they had ever been considered by you. But though I feel grateful to you for writing to me, I must own that the perusal of your letter much saddened me, and that because, from the irrelevancy of your confutation, it appeared that I had failed

to make myself understood. You say that the actuaries argue that income of equal capitalised value should pay equal amounts to the tax. It is very possible that you will find this language used by some of them ; but it is not mine and indeed it is quite at variance with my view of the subject. I am bold therefore to beg of you once more to read my former letter. I do not ask you to write me again if on a second perusal you are satisfied that you had entirely mastered my position at the first. In that case I would beg of you to pardon my urgency.

Though the two men agreed to differ on the Income Tax their views on most questions of politics and economics were very similar ; and before long Courtney was to become the friend as well as the disciple of the leading English thinker of his generation.

In the summer of 1861 the Whately Professorship of Political Economy in Dublin, tenable for five years and worth £100 a year, fell vacant, and Courtney journeyed to the Irish capital for the examination which candidates were compelled to undergo. The prize fell to another ; but he convinced the most eminent of the examiners that he was the best qualified for the post. The incident is described in a letter written by Professor Cairnes in 1863 in support of an application for a post of greater importance.

From Professor Cairnes to Professor Pryme

March 29, 1863.—My acquaintance with Mr. Courtney occurred in this way. Some two years since, on the Professorship in Dublin University (the appointment to which takes place by competitive examination) becoming vacant, he presented himself as a candidate and I happened to be one of the examiners. This gave me an unusual opportunity of forming a judgment as to his ability and acquirements in economic science, and the result of the examination was to leave on my mind the conviction that both were of a very high order. I accordingly—notwithstanding that he was surpassed by another candidate on the numerical total of answering—urged his appointment on the Board of Trinity College in the strongest terms I could command. He was not appointed, the other examiners having concurred in recommending the candidate who was on my list also first in the numerical total. In recommending

his appointment as I did I may take credit to myself for some candour, his views on several questions in Political Economy, as well of principle as of practical application, being at variance with my own. Nevertheless, so impressed was I with the originality of his mind, his searching power of analysis, and the importance of bringing minds of this class into direct contact with the economic problems of the day, that I did not hesitate to urge his election. The same conviction, strengthened by the perusal of some essays on economic subjects from his pen which I have since seen, makes me anxious that his qualifications should be made known.

The disappointment was not very severe; for the prize was small and the expectation of success not very high. An old friend who had left Penzance to seek his fortune in Canada wrote from Prince Edward Island urging him to follow his example.

From Alfred Purchase

September 1861.—I do not feel sorry you did not get the Professorship in Dublin; it does not seem worth while to be tied there for five years at £100. If you would like to get on rapidly come to the provinces. The ladder, of course, is not so high, but it is much easier to get up without the wear and tear of rubbing against others.

Hooppell, sometimes a little inclined to play the part of the candid friend, told him bluntly that his opinions stood in the way of success.

From R. E. Hooppell

February 28, 1862.—I read Professor Cairnes's letter with the greatest interest and pleasure. The only thing that vexed me in it was that the other three examiners did not concur in his recommendation. Being Irishmen I hardly expected that they would. Moreover you *have* peculiar views on various political and economical questions, views, I must say, I do not always consider correct.

The rebuff at Dublin was not without its compensations; for it brought Courtney one of the most valued and fruitful friendships of his life. If the primacy among British

economists was by universal agreement accorded to Mill, no one in the 'sixties possessed a better claim to the second place than Cairnes. In such a field it is the testimony of experts that counts; and there were few men in the academic world of the third quarter of the century in regard to whom the verdict of scholars was so nearly unanimous. Winning the Whately Professorship of Political Economy at Dublin in 1856, he quickly attracted attention by the publication in 1857 of his brilliant lectures on *The Character and Logical Method of Political Economy*. As the Dublin Chair was only tenable for five years he exchanged it for that of Queen's College, Galway, in 1859. His work on *The Slave Power*, based on a course of lectures and published in 1862 by Mill's advice, was the most powerful defence of the cause of the Northern States produced on this side of the Atlantic. His methods, not less than his opinions, were of precisely the character which appealed most forcibly to a man trained like Courtney in mathematical principles. "The characteristic of his mind," wrote Bagehot after his death, "was a tenacious grasp of abstract principle. There is an Euclidian precision about his writings. Reading his works is like living on high ground; the 'thin air of abstract truth' which they give you braces the mind just as fine material air does the body." [1]

The distinguished Irish economist testified to the faith that was in him when his young friend stood for the chair of Political Economy at Cambridge in 1863. The subject had received academic recognition by the appointment of an ill-paid professor in 1828; but Pryme was not an expert, and when the old man resigned in 1863 the salary was raised to £300 a year, and responsible duties attached to it. When the approaching vacancy was announced Courtney asked Cairnes for his support, unless he proposed to stand himself; and Cairnes threw himself into the contest with whole-hearted resolution.

[1] *Biographical Studies.*

From Professor Cairnes

March 15.—I have not seen the advertisement, nor have I any idea of presenting myself as a candidate, and I have great satisfaction in giving you the testimonial you wish for. If it is wanting in strength or point permit me to assure you that this is owing entirely to my deficiency in power of expression and not at all to any difficulty about giving you the highest testimonial I could frame.

Courtney's next letter informed his Irish friend and champion that there was so little hope of success, since other and better known candidates had appeared, that he hardly cared to compete; but Cairnes urged him to go forward and was fertile in promises and encouragement.

From Professor Cairnes

March 19.—If you have an essay on an economic subject which you would have no objection to submit to Mill and would allow me to be the medium of conveying it, I think I might interest him in your behalf in such a way as to draw from him an expression of opinion that might be serviceable. Your remark on Fawcett's pretensions entirely coincides with the opinion I had formed of him; though perhaps I should have gone somewhat further in an unfavourable sense. His speculations on gold I thought exceedingly flimsy. Macleod I should be sorry to see appointed; but he struck me as a man of more power than his rival.

Mill was committed to Fawcett; but the postponement of the election till the late autumn appeared to Cairnes favourable to the chances of his candidate. An unsuccessful application for an examinership in political economy at London University called forth his ready sympathy.

From Professor Cairnes

May 3.—I am really exceedingly disappointed at this result, not that it is of much importance in itself but as a *point d'appui* with a view to the Professorship.

A fortnight later he is advocating an effort on the part of the candidate himself.

From Professor Cairnes

May 18.—On the whole I am inclined to take a much more hopeful view of your chance from all you tell me, and I trust this is also your disposition. You spoke some time ago of writing something on which you might obtain the opinion of competent judges. Might it not be well to do this at as early a point of time as possible so as to secure such of the constituency as are like to be influenced by considerations of this kind (I suppose a small fraction) before they have committed themselves to a side?

Meanwhile the other candidates were also bestirring themselves, and canvassing proceeded merrily throughout the summer.

From Professor Cairnes

May 23.—I have received a letter from Fawcett, asking me for a testimonial. I of course declined, excusing myself on the ground that I had already expressed an opinion in your favour. I am not a little astonished that he should have thought it worth while to apply to me.

May 26.—I confess I am surprised at Mill's testimonial to Fawcett. I can understand his testifying to his "sound knowledge," also to the value of some of his illustrations, but how he could credit him with "clear and precise exposition" passes my comprehension. I do not, any more than you, attach much importance to testimonials; still it would be as well if you get some name to go near balancing Mill's. Have any of your writings come under Lord Overstone's notice? You are most welcome to make any use you please of my letter of August 2, 1861. In the event, however, of your using it as a testimonial, as I have referred in it to "important points" on which your views differ from mine, it is perhaps right that I should add that, with one exception, these are points with reference to which, while differing from me in common with the English school of Political Economy, you are at one with Bastiat, Say and some of the most eminent economists of France. The one exception is the vexed question of the Bank Act of 1844, to the policy of which you subscribe while I dissent from it. I should also add

that having, since the date of my letter, read several essays from your pen on economic subjects, I have had my original opinion of your general ability as well as of special aptitude for economic speculation not merely confirmed but greatly strengthened, and that I shall regard your appointment to a Chair of Political Economy as a real gain to the science.

The election was fixed for November 27, and four candidates presented themselves.[1] The electors, who were chiefly resident Masters of Arts, were expected to prefer a resident. The favourite was Fawcett, a Fellow of Trinity Hall, and a popular figure in the University and beyond. His *Manual of Political Economy*, opportunely published at the beginning of the year, had found a ready welcome in the wide circles which desired to understand Mill's system without the effort of reading his book; and he produced an army of testimonials with which none of his rivals could compete. Mayor, the other resident candidate, a Fellow and Tutor of St. John's, had specialised in moral science; but he was loyally supported by the Master and most of the Fellows of his College. The third candidate, Macleod, was an expert; but his views aroused contemptuous and even angry antagonism. Courtney's abilities were known to his friends but unknown to the world, and his chances were generally considered as slender as those of Macleod. Thus the contest lay between Fawcett and Mayor; and by a curious coincidence Courtney's candidature proved an essential element in the success of the man who was one day to become his most intimate friend and associate. The situation is explained by Leslie Stephen, one of the most ardent of Fawcett's supporters. "One consideration turned out to be decisive. Members of St. John's College, unless they were belied, had a private decalogue, including the commandment, Thou shalt not vote against a Johnian. Fawcett had some very warm friends in St. John's, who sincerely thought him the best man, but who would not allow that opinion to divert them from the plain path of duty. Courtney, however, was a Johnian as well as Mayor;

[1] The story is told at length in Leslie Stephen's *Life of Fawcett*, chap. iii.

and though his chances were known to be infinitesimal, they could vote for him without inconsistency. Such votes would be taken from Mayor, though not transferred to Fawcett. Fawcett's chance thus came to depend on Courtney's continuing to stand, and thus to divide the solid Johnian phalanx. Courtney fortunately held that he was pledged to his supporters to go to the poll, and they held him to his pledge." The result was in accordance with expectation. Fawcett, 90; Mayor, 80; Courtney, 19; Macleod, 14. As Courtney had cherished no illusions, he was perhaps less disappointed than his principal champion.[1]

From Professor Cairnes

November 30.—I am heartily sorry at the result, as much on public as on personal grounds. Fawcett will, I daresay, fill the Chair respectably, but I have no expectation that the science will gain in his keeping, which I believe it would have done in yours. I earnestly hope you may before long find a position, if not in Cambridge in some other University, suited to your pretensions.

Courtney's career since he settled in London at the end of 1857 had been a series of disappointments. There were no prospects at the Bar, and Sir Edward Clarke has expressed the opinion that he was too rigid for success in that school of compromise and accommodation. His efforts to return to academic life had been fruitless. His pamphlet on *Direct Taxation* had attracted no attention. In one direction alone, that of journalism, could he point to any advance. Among weekly papers the *Saturday Review*, started on a new course by Douglas Cook in 1855, had won the first place in authority and popular favour; for no other journal could boast of an array of contributors such as Abraham Hayward and Lord Robert Cecil, Henry Maine and Fitzjames Stephen, John Morley and Vernon Harcourt. Next to the *Saturday* stood the *Spectator*, which, on the

[1] "Though I am vain enough to think I had perhaps the best grip of economic principles, I should not have been a good Professor and the fittest man was chosen," wrote Courtney to Roby in 1911, after reading the life of Alexander Macmillan.

death of its owner and editor, Rintoul, in 1858, had passed into the hands of Meredith Townsend, who was speedily joined by Richard Holt Hutton. The *Examiner*, founded by Leigh Hunt and edited for many years with rare ability by Albany Fonblanque, failed to maintain its position under John Forster, but still retained a certain influence. To secure the entrée into any of these organs was no easy task for an unknown writer, and Courtney's début was made in a far less exalted quarter. In 1860 the *London Review*, a threepenny weekly, was founded by Charles Mackay, a writer of well-known songs and for some years editor of the *Illustrated London News*. His ambition was to rival the *Saturday* by avoiding its censorious tone; and the opening number, published on July 7, defined "Our Principles and Politics." "To be honest in politics and generous and appreciative in criticism shall be the rule. It will not always be sitting in judgment, but will originate as well as criticise and will afford to young and rising genius an arena in which its first distinctions may be achieved. The unknown writer shall be as cordially received as a man who has made himself famous, provided that he has something good to say and knows how to say it."

The birth of the journal was celebrated at a sumptuous dinner at the Reform Club, the menu of which was reproduced many years later with naïve satisfaction in the host's autobiography. The high spirits of the company were somewhat damped by Monckton Milnes, who, in proposing the health of the host and prosperity to the new venture, expressed his doubts whether it could succeed unless more wit and fun were infused into it. Mackay tartly replied that it was not intended to compete with *Punch*, and that the one dull article that had so far appeared was from the pen of his candid critic. Despite its somewhat ponderous qualities the Review grew steadily in public favour, but too slowly for the partners who had found the money. "After six months of worry and discomfort," wrote Mackay long after in the bitterness of his heart, "I found I had made a mistake, and resigned my editorial

sceptre to an unliterary autocrat who ruled by right of his banking account, and was in a position to purchase anonymous opinion at the small market prices then current among the tyros of the press." [1] Mackay's departure made little difference in the character of the Review, which continued to supply articles of average merit. Lacking the brilliant audacity of the *Saturday*, it failed to secure a leading place in the world of journalism, and its career came to an end in 1869; but it provided a welcome training-ground for a good many young writers who had still to make their name.

During 1862 and 1863 Courtney frequently contributed articles and reviews, chiefly relating to the literature and problems of political economy. Among the tasks which gave their author the greatest pleasure was a long notice of Cairnes's masterly treatise on *The Slave Power*, in which he not only paid a generous tribute to his Irish friend, but gave expression to his ardent championship of the cause of the North. The common ignorance of America before the war, he begins, was astonishing, and even now the public was only beginning to wake up. Mill had explained the importance of the conflict, "and the present work, which may be said to appear under Mr. Mill's auspices, may serve to bring over those who remained uncertain." The significance of the volume lay in the fact that it provided the key to the great drama that was being unfolded beyond the Atlantic, which both in intrinsic importance and in mere size surpassed any event since the French Revolution. Earl Russell had declared that the North was fighting for empire, the South for independence; but this was to miss the real cause of the struggle. It was the merit of Cairnes to trace the conflict to its root in the essential opposition between the economic character of a Slave State and a Free State. The Southerners were out for much more than independence. "They wish to acquire new lands to be worked by their slaves, and by the creation of Slave States to preserve their power in the Senate. It seems impossible to regret the present war. Deplorable as are its

[1] Charles Mackay, *Through the Long Day*, ii. 201-12.

consequences it has already averted greater evils. In the interest of civilisation Englishmen cannot but wish the humbling of the Southern power, the character and design of which Professor Cairnes has so ably revealed to them."

From Professor Cairnes

June 20, 1862.—Thanks for your very friendly and flattering notice of my book in the *London Review*. You have put in a very forcible way some of the principal points of my argument; and your notice will prove very useful. The present is the first number I have seen. I had understood that it was supported by seceders from the *Saturday Review*. If it should succeed in taking its place in public estimation I, for one, should exceedingly rejoice, the influence of the latter organ having been for some time past purely mischievous. The standard of writing in the number you sent me strikes me as very high.

From this time forward the Galway Professor kept his eye on the *London Review*, and frequently wrote to express his admiration or dislike of its contents.

From Professor Cairnes

March 15, 1863.—I see the *London Review* pretty frequently, and had noticed the discordant elements to which you refer. In the number of yesterday I see there is an article on America of a strongly Southern cast—doubtless by Mr. Greg. Was it not your hand which was at work some months ago in some articles on rent?

April 7, 1863.—It was surely you who were at work on Macleod in the *London Review* of Saturday. I have not read anything for a long time in the way of criticism that has so thoroughly satisfied me. I have also read with great interest, and in the main concurrence, your articles on Économistes Modernes. I do think you greatly underrate Mill and overrate Bastiat as much. Your review, however, has had the effect of sending me to his works.

Though Courtney specialised rather in finance and political economy than in foreign politics, the tremendous

drama in America which opened in 1861 claimed his attention from the first. He never doubted for a moment that the cause of the North was the cause of righteousness, and he did his best to counterwork the Southern sympathies openly and often truculently expressed by the governing classes in England. His début as a political adviser to his fellow-countrymen revealed him in the rôle which he continued to play with increasing authority for nearly sixty years. The seizure of the Southern envoys on board the *Trent* threw Great Britain into a paroxysm of indignation, and, but for the intervention of the Queen and the Prince Consort, aided by the fact that London and Washington were unconnected by telegraph, would probably have hurled two countries into war. The young barrister's closely reasoned letter to the *Daily News* was the first of many appeals to his fellow-countrymen to keep their heads in a grave crisis.

The American Difficulty

To the Editor of the *Daily News*.

SIR,—Readers of the daily papers must confess that the public indignation is spent on a wrong issue. Speakers at the meetings throughout the country declaim, amidst vehement cheering, against the insult offered to our flag by searching a vessel that bears it, against the violation of the protection that flag warrants, by taking away persons from its shelter. Both speakers and cheerers would think the insult deepened and the violation more outrageous had Commodore Wilkes insisted on conducting the *Trent* and all on board into Boston Harbour. Yet it is the fact that had Commodore Wilkes done this we should have had no ground of complaint. It is indeed known that the remonstrance of our government is directed against the manner in which the seizure has been effected; but this is regarded by the public as a lawyer-like subtlety in taking one, and that a minor one, out of many grounds of complaint, because it is clear and definite, instead of being as it is, the taking of the one single and sole ground on which we can raise an objection. I cannot but think that if the true nature of the difference between us and the Federal government were known, the public excitement would very much abate, and what I think we must all desire, a peaceable solution of the difficulty, would be rendered

possible. I hope therefore you will find it convenient to insert a short argument to show that Commodore Wilkes would have been justified by international law in taking possession of the *Trent* and conducting her to a prize court of the Federal States.

(A long technical discussion follows.)

In any case it is our duty, quietly but determinedly, to wait till we learn whether the prize courts of the United States can enter upon and decide the question of the legality of the capture, and if they can we must await their decision. Until that is pronounced the Northern States are at liberty to assume the best possible case in their favour. It may appear that Messrs. Mason and Slidell were furnished with money or with letters of credit on speculative Liverpool merchants who have purchased the cotton locked up in the South, and that they also bore instructions to purchase warlike stores or even ships of war (there are American sailors enough in our ports) with which to harass the navy, mercantile or otherwise, of the North. My letter has grown to a formidable size, but I hope the importance of the subject will serve as an excuse.—I am, etc. L. H. C.

LINCOLN'S INN,
December 11, 1861.

In reprinting his weighty and temperate protest half a century later,[1] its author called attention to a letter from Palmerston to Delane confirming its argument. "Much to my regret," wrote the Prime Minister after a Cabinet Committee attended by the Law Officers, "it appeared that according to the principles of international law, laid down in our Courts by Lord Stowell and practised and enforced by us, a belligerent has a right to stop and search any neutral, not being a ship of war, and being found on the high seas, and being suspected of carrying the enemies' despatches, and that consequently this American cruiser might by our own principles of international law stop the West Indian packet, search her, and if the Southern men and their despatches and credentials were found on board, either take them out or seize the packet and take her back to New York for trial." [2] Though the law thus clearly set forth in November was strictly observed a week or two

[1] As an Appendix to *Peace or War*, 1910.
[2] Dasent, *Life of Delane*, ii. 36.

later in the stoppage of the *Trent*, Palmerston denounced the act in violent terms and was rapturously applauded by the *Times* and most of the other organs of public opinion.

At the same time that his work for the *London Review* was unconsciously fitting him for Printing House Square, Courtney was also preparing himself for the claims of public life. He had been much too busy at Cambridge to spare time for the Union debates, and his tastes in those years were rather literary and artistic than political; but on settling in London his interest in affairs had developed rapidly. On January 30, 1861, he was elected a member of the newly formed Hardwicke Society, a weekly debating circle which has supplied a training to generations of clever young lawyers.[1] On the same day Coleridge, afterwards Lord Chief Justice, Rigby, afterwards Lord Justice, and Gully, afterwards Speaker, were enrolled. He attended his first meeting in February, when a motion for the reduction of naval and military expenditure was lost. His maiden speech was delivered on March 13, when he unsuccessfully opposed the motion, "That no attempt should be made to readjust the income-tax with the view of lightening its pressure on terminable and precarious incomes." It was the subject which he had made his own in his pamphlet on *Direct Taxation*, and among the visitors was Hubbard, who had recently carried his motion for a Select Committee on the inequalities of the income-tax. The young orator was not altogether satisfied with his maiden effort.

From his Father

March 23, 1861.—I trust your next attempt at the Hardwicke will be more satisfactory than the first movement. Like everything else I believe there must be a course of training for public speaking, however collected you may be.

A week or two later he opposed compulsory elementary education, and on May 22 he for the first time opened a

[1] I am indebted for the following details to the kindness of Mr. William Latey, who is engaged on a history of the Hardwicke Society.

debate, condemning the remissions of taxation in the current Budget as excessive in amount and ill selected. In February 1862 he proposed the emancipation of the self-governing colonies, and in November he carried a motion against the recognition of the South in the American civil war. He was now one of the most frequent contributors to debate, both on legal and political topics. He defended the cession of the Ionian Isles to Greece, condemned the Government's loan of officers to China, opposed a motion by Frederic Harrison urging the Western Powers to prevent Russian aggression against Poland, and argued against the neglect of Parliamentary Reform. On joining the staff of the *Times* in 1864 he virtually ceased to attend ; but he was present at the annual dinner in 1865. His last appearance was in May 1866, when he introduced, but failed to carry a motion that the Government Reform scheme was unsatisfactory.

" It was the best debating society I have ever known," writes Sir Edward Clarke in his Autobiography.[1] " It used to meet in a back room at Dick's Coffee House, and the attendance was then only from fifteen to twenty. But among the regular attendants and frequent speakers were some notable men. Leonard Courtney, Frederic Harrison, Montague Cookson, and Vernon and Godfrey Lushington were very often there, and Giffard and Herschell and Charles Russell came occasionally. I was the Honorary Secretary 1865–68 and then President for three years ; and I have never ceased to try to persuade students and young barristers not to neglect the advantages which such a society offers." Sir Edward recollects Courtney as a " very magisterial " speaker, slow in delivery and without pretensions to brilliance, but extremely well informed and powerful in argument.[2]

[1] *Story of My Life*, p. 61.
[2] Conversation with the author, September 1918.

CHAPTER V

PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE

In the course of a letter written in September 1863 Courtney casually records that "Mr. G. W. Dasent of the *Times*" had left a card at his chambers while he was away. He had already offered a number of reviews, all of which had been returned; but his pertinacity was ultimately rewarded. On January 26, 1864, a long and discriminating review of *The Water-Babies* appeared, for which in due course he received a cheque for ten guineas.[1] He foretold that the story would outlive many generations of ordinary gift-books, and that Kingsley's babies would remain young to gambol with children yet unborn; but he was well aware of the author's faults. "There is in his mind a certain one-sidedness, we might almost call it narrowness, closely allied with his impetuous vigour. His keen sense of beauty and his hearty manhood have saved him from becoming a dangerous fanatic; but in *The Water-Babies* enough of the narrowness remains to prevent us from ranking him among the great humorists of literature. About Mr. Kingsley there linger some of the vehement partialities of youth." A week later followed a scholarly notice of *The Gladiators*, showing a wide acquaintance with historical novels. In March he contributed a leading article on the Sewing Machine, a four-column review of Isaac Taylor's *Words and Places*, filled with curious learning in the region of local history, and a technical discussion of the sugar duties

[1] I am greatly indebted to the *Times* for permitting me to refer to the authorship of Courtney's articles and to record the remuneration.

in the form of a letter from "A Freetrader." On April 19 he wrote his first political leader on a debate on the sugar duties. These unaccustomed triumphs were entered in an account-book which was to record the date, subject and remuneration of the 3000 articles contributed to the *Times* during the next sixteen years. After six years of struggle and disappointment in London the turning-point had come at last. Henceforth he occupied a position in the world not unworthy of his abilities, and earned a salary which enabled him to live in modest comfort, to indulge his passion for foreign travel, and to offer more substantial assistance towards the education of his brothers and sisters.

Professor Cairnes wrote to congratulate the critic on his "very clever but too indulgent" review of Kingsley; but the most welcome letter came as usual from Penzance.

From Dr. Willan

March 30, 1864.—I have just read your most charming review of *Words and Places*, and if I could be sure the work is as interesting as the review of it I should order it for our library. I should long ago have acknowledged your attention in sending me your article on *The Water-Babies*. Now I have to congratulate you on your first "Leader," and I know you will give me credit for feeling an honest pride in this and in all your successes. I saw your review of *The Gladiators* in our *Evening Mail*. The subject was more to my taste than that of *The Water-Babies*; but the review of both was exhaustive. It is a puzzle to me how you can say so much in so small a space.

When Courtney joined the staff of the *Times* the famous journal was at the zenith of its career.[1] Its circulation was about 60,000, and it had no serious competitor. The press was still superior to the platform, and the press was the *Times*. The author of its greatness was Barnes, who could be seen riding down Parliament Street with a duke walking on each side, and who was hailed by Lyndhurst in 1834 as "the most powerful man in the country." He had been

[1] See Sir Edward Cook, *Delane of the Times*.

ably seconded by Edward Sterling, the chief of his leader-writers, Carlyle's "Thunderer," and the father of Carlyle's gentle and gifted friend. When Delane succeeded Barnes in 1841 at the age of twenty-four it seemed impossible that the young man who had only recently left Oxford should maintain the paper at the giddy eminence to which it had been raised. But doubts quickly melted as the staff came to realise the firmness of purpose and the proud independence of their new master. Though well aware of his powers and rejoicing in his immense responsibility the young editor had the wisdom to take lessons from Lord Aberdeen, who became Peel's Foreign Minister in the same year. But Aberdeen was his only political mentor; for he quickly outgrew the need of tutelage, and Granville and Palmerston were comrades, not counsellors. Possessing friends in both the Whig and the Tory camp he heard of events, plans and decisions before they were known to other editors, and he often surprised the world by the publication of momentous news obtained as if by thought-reading or magic. His first great *coup* was the announcement of Peel's fateful decision to repeal the Corn Laws; but it was the Crimean War which made him an outstanding national figure and one of the acknowledged directors of the policy of the country. His decision to publish the despatches of William Howard Russell overthrew the Aberdeen Ministry, and it was his commanding voice that summoned Palmerston to the helm. It was at this moment that Lord John Russell, the only prominent statesman who refused to burn incense at his shrine, remarked to Granville, "Your friend Mr. Delane seems to be drunk with insolence and vanity." "What the Tsar is in Russia or the mob in America," wrote Anthony Trollope in 1855, "the Jupiter is in England."[1] Though by temperament a Palmerstonian Whig he was free from all political ties, and for a generation he admonished the Crown and its servants as a schoolmaster rebukes and encourages the members of his class. Honourable, courageous and patriotic, rarely looking ahead and blissfully ignorant of the needs and aspirations of the

[1] In *The Warden*.

working classes, he was as perfect a representative of mid-Victorian England as Palmerston himself. This conformity to type was the main source of his power ; and, in moments of national or party, crisis crowned heads, ministers and legislators waited with bated breath for the voice of the oracle.

A vivid picture of the daily life of Delane has been drawn by Dean Wace, one of the two survivors of his brilliant staff.[1] " He rarely left the office in Printing House Square before five o'clock in the morning, and walked to his small house in Serjeants' Inn, a little square off Fleet Street, about a quarter of a mile distant. When he rose he would spend three or four hours in arranging the work of the day, writing and answering letters ; and sometimes, especially in my years of apprenticeship, I would receive a letter from him about six o'clock, giving me my subject and my cue for the work of the evening. About the middle of the afternoon his horse was brought to him, and, followed by his groom, he rode slowly towards the West End. He said to me once that if he started to walk from Fleet Street along the Strand to Pall Mall or Westminster he would never get there, as so many people would buttonhole him. But on his horse, which he rode slowly, he could greet them and go on. When the Houses of Parliament were in session he would always ride down to them, stroll into the House of Commons or the House of Lords as he pleased, stand under the gallery, and acquaint himself with the parliamentary situation of the day. Peers or members who were concerned in the current business would speak to him, and thus he was always in touch with the prevalent feeling and tendency in both Houses. Thence he would ride on to the Athenæum or the Reform Club, and there he was sure to meet some one interested in the political or scientific or legal question of the hour ; or else he would ride on to Lady Palmerston's house in Piccadilly, or to Baroness Lionel de Rothschild's, or some other great leader of political or social life, and carry away at least as much suggestion or information as he brought. In the

[1] *John Thaddeus Delane*, 1908.

evening the days must have been rare when he was not, or could not have been, dining in some society which brought him once more into contact with the current interests and living thoughts of the hour."

Two more snapshots help us to visualise the unique position which the Editor of the *Times* occupied in the social and political life of London, the first by a man about town, the second by a young Tory aristocrat. "It was a rare experience," writes Alexander Shand, "to have his arm up St. James's Street in the session when the stream was setting of a summer afternoon towards the House, and to listen to his amusing commentary of anecdote and reminiscence, interspersed with incisive sketches of character and careers suggested by passing personalities." [1] "Delane's entrance into the lobby was a sight worth witnessing," records Lord George Hamilton. "No pope or autocrat could have shown a more lofty condescension to his subordinates than he exhibited to the habitués of the lobby, and what annoyed me was not so much his assumption of superiority but the grovelling sycophancy with which it was accepted. He contrived always to have a tame Cabinet Minister in his pocket, and he was terribly toadied by a certain section of society and particularly by the leading Whig ladies of the period." [2]

The omnipotent editor was ably supported by his staff. Fully trusted by John Walter, the proprietor, he was equally fortunate in the assistant editor, Dasent, his brother-in-law and attached friend, who from 1845 to 1870 assumed command when the chief was away. The three men worked in perfect harmony and offered an unbroken front to any attempt on the part of the staff to dictate the policy of the paper. Thus when in 1855 Henry Reeve refused to obey Dasent while the editor was enjoying his holiday abroad he was promptly dismissed by Walter, though he had been the most competent leader-writer on foreign policy for fifteen years. Delane's subordinates, however, were far too able to be merely echoes of their master's voice. Russell

[1] *Days of the Past*, p. 197.
[2] *Parliamentary Reminiscences*, pp. 24-28.

had joined the staff in 1842 and leapt into fame during the Crimean War. Robert Lowe wrote leaders from 1851 to 1868, without allowing his promotion to the Treasury Bench to interrupt the connection. Among other members of the editorial staff were Thomas Mozley, William Stebbing, George Brodrick and Antonio Gallenga.

In the year before Courtney crossed the threshold of Printing House Square there occurred the celebrated duel between Cobden and Delane, in which the great editor lashed out somewhat viciously at the mild radicalism of the Manchester school. Courtney's sympathies were with the latter; but he shared the general impression that neither of the antagonists had enhanced his reputation.

From Professor Cairnes

December 22, 1863.—I agree with you that Cobden had a good case and has played it with but indifferent skill; nor has his position been improved by his later strokes of play. At the same time I have no words to express my disgust at Delane's conduct throughout. Perhaps too it will be found that that other question of "dividing the lands of the rich among the poor"—as I would express it, of facilitating the acquisition of land by the cultivators—may survive the labouring of the *Times*.

It was a great satisfaction to Cairnes to discover a little later that his own somewhat advanced opinions were shared by Courtney.

From Professor Cairnes

April 6, 1866.—I am delighted to find that your opinions on the land question are "revolutionary" and "socialistic." Somehow I fancied that on this point you were rather strictly orthodox, and have even felt afraid sometimes to touch on the subject with you lest I should discover a gulf between us in a matter on which I am inclined to feel rather strongly. But I shall know better in future.

The Professor's bitter dislike of Delane's policy and methods tempered his satisfaction at his friend's appointment.

From Professor Cairnes

July 17, 1864.—I am sincerely glad to hear you are so active in the *Times*, though I could have wished that your pen had been enlisted on the other side.

November 28, 1864.—Mr. Delane, I fancy, would place the "golden age"—if the Union were only once split in two and reform aspirations stifled—somewhere in this present year of grace.

Mr. Stebbing, his friend and colleague, who succeeded Dasent as Assistant Editor in 1870, has kindly contributed a survey of Courtney's connection with Printing House Square :

"To be a leader-writer on the *Times* has always been esteemed a distinction from the days of Edward Sterling, the original Thunderer. In Courtney's time a mystery of no very dark kind encircled the occupation. A man scarcely could disappear more or less regularly from a party at a friend's house shortly before ten o'clock at night without remark. Everybody knew the cause, though it was the fashion not to give it a name. The fact could not be hidden from Courtney's circle, now wide, at Lincoln's Inn, and it spread—an open secret. Within Printing House Square, where there were seniors of his on the staff, he soon made his mark. Particular lines in the paper's policy, fighting lines, were reserved for him. An editor likes to believe any in his troop ready on occasion to condescend to trifles. Courtney could, when the humour was on him. Thus, I remember, he volunteered for a romantic defence of the Bargee people against the reduction of its Bedouins of inland waters within too strict educational discipline. It was very pleasant pleading. The editorial authority for its own part was too sagacious often to waste a man-at-arms of this extraordinary worth upon letting off fireworks.

"Delane among his many great editorial gifts had a wonderful instinct and experience in foreign politics. He expected writers on them to reflect with fair closeness his spirit. He would consider, but might or might not be

moved to accept, deviations. In domestic legislation, for which he cared less, he was far from being dictatorial. Courtney, he recognised, had studied and thought on such questions, and was to be edited not repressed. After as well as before I joined the inner circle of the paper, Courtney and I never discussed agreements or disagreements of the sort. I am certain he had no reason to be dissatisfied. Moralists may dilate with satisfaction on the short span of journalistic vitality. It would be well for budding statesmen if they took a good long course of Courtney's easily discovered leaders on any much-debated legislative reform. The trenchant, massive logic, the exposure of ignorance, the downright dealing with irrelevance! He did not affect or care to be a stylist. Style itself in its place he appreciated. When words were to be followed by acts he never paused for one to turn a sentence. Sound, sturdy English was enough for him. He might be dogmatic; he was never obscure, never professorial, never from beginning to end of an article lost sight of its object. Parliamentary advocates of a position attacked by him felt obliged to reply to an argument of his in the *Times*, as if it had been urged from the opposite side of the House. On one memorable question, that of the Minority Vote, it will scarcely be disputed that support by him in the *Times* was mainly answerable for its acceptance. He had a right to be satisfied; I never knew him to boast of the achievement. The single exception to the rule of which I am aware has been recorded by himself.

"Personally, a few weeks before his death, he recalled by a letter in the *Times* a leader of his which protested against the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. French and German diplomacy before the war had been alike guilty of shameless plotting against weaker innocent states. Great Britain had no cause to approve of either Government. She had the happiness through her streak of silver sea to be able to stand neutral and exercised the right. The *Times* had not from the first doubted as to the military result. Without the least partisanship it chronicled the stages. Consideration was required in reminding exultant victors

of the perilous consequences to their tranquillity of rapacity. I rejoice in Courtney's powerful warning in the name of the *Times* against a violence apparent even to Bismarck. Alas for the world, alas for Germany, that militarism was supreme and would not listen to friendly, even to native counsels of moderation !

" An ordinary leading article of the old-fashioned length means a night's hard brain-work and pen-work of some three hours. Trained intelligence in that time will yield good thought. Courtney after early days could anticipate his subject, and grudged no labour on preparation. If it were a Bill, he had dissected, pondered the text and any preliminary discussion. Frequently he managed to hear a debate from the Strangers' Gallery in the Commons, or in the ventilating vault beneath the House. Eventually he received from the Speaker the privilege of entry within the House at discretion. The act of courtesy was for himself a foretaste. Long since he had given up such slight care as he ever had for success at the Bar. He retained his share in Chambers for the convenience of their comparative neighbourhood to Printing House Square. His spring at eminence in journalism was nerved by the relationship to a career in politics. As a matter of course he had declined an offer by Mr. John Walter, the then principal proprietor and manager of the *Times*, of the City, Financial or Money Article editorship. He was not of a nature to intimate his ultimate ambition. None of his intimates can, however, have been surprised when, on a vacancy in 1876 for the Cornish borough of Liskeard, he declared himself a candidate and was elected."

Though the Cobdenite lamb could hardly be expected to lie down peacefully beside the Palmerstonian lion, the new recruit quickly established the friendliest relations with his chief ; and the two men often attended the debates together and dined in company. The end of the Civil War in America a year after his appointment removed the main bone of contention ; and during Gladstone's first Ministry the *Times* advanced from its cautious Whiggism to a standpoint of moderate Liberalism, supporting the disestablish-

ment of the Irish Church, the Irish Land Bill of 1870, the ballot, the abolition of purchase in the army, and even the principle of minority representation. Delane recognised to the full Courtney's range of information, independent judgment and powers of work, and, knowing the views of his several lieutenants, he entrusted to each such orders as he knew could be conscientiously and cheerfully obeyed.

The routine of a leader-writer's life has been vividly described by Dean Wace: "Delane generally came away from dinner in time to reach Printing House Square about ten P.M., or at least before eleven, and then he had to bring to bear upon the materials laid before him, whether of the telegraph, or of parliamentary reporters or correspondents' letters, the knowledge of the real position of affairs which he had been gaining during the day. There were generally two or three leader-writers in attendance, in separate rooms, and in a short time after his arrival he would send to each of them, unless they had been previously instructed, the subject he wished them to treat. If its treatment were obvious, he would leave them to themselves with no more than a verbal message. But if it were a matter of difficulty or doubt he would soon come into the writer's room, and in a few minutes' conversation indicate the line which it was desirable to take and the considerations which the writer should have in the background. He never gave these suggestions in such detail as to hamper original treatment on the writer's part. A few interesting and humorous observations would suffice to illustrate the true state of the question and to indicate the purpose to be kept in view, and then the more original the writer's treatment of the subject the better he was pleased. His influence in such conversations was due, not so much to his authority as editor, as to the impression he produced of mastery of the whole situation. To talk to him was like talking to the great political or social world itself, and one's mind seemed to move in a larger sphere after a short discussion with him. He always listened patiently to enquiries or hesitations, and was tolerant of everything but trivialities. He watched with the utmost care not merely the substance and

the general argument of an article, but every detail of expression. He could correct commas at 3.30 A.M., and would write one of his brilliant little notes at that hour to warn a writer against an incorrect expression. He was very considerate if one of his subordinates was in real difficulty, as from illness or domestic trouble, but in the ordinary course of work he would take no excuses. A man must do the work given him, and do it well, or else Delane had no place for him."

The leader-writers of the *Times* formed a band, the members of which were as a rule unknown to one another. It was said of Delane that he " kept his beasts in separate cages," and if they met in the passages or on the stairs it was not etiquette to speak. " You will no doubt be surprised to hear that I knew nothing of Lord Courtney in the old Delane days," writes Dean Wace. " To the best of my belief I never met him in Printing House Square during the seventeen years I worked there. I knew his name as a fellow leader-writer, and I was aware sometimes of his presence in an adjoining room; and a misdirected letter from Delane to him once came into my hands. But I believe I never once saw him until I met him and I think Lady Courtney one day at dinner at Mr. Stebbing's house." The dinner-party took place some years after all three had severed their connection with the *Times*.

The *Times* leaders were suggested and revised by the editor, who was not less critical of the form than of the substance. " However trivial or lofty the subject," writes George Brodrick, " he expected it to be treated in good simple English, without slang or technicality. But I never found him unduly censorious. He scarcely ever corrected what I had written, and never altered its sense, though he would occasionally strike out a sentence or even a paragraph which might commit the paper too far." [1] When, however, questions of high policy were involved the writer was sometimes little more than a shorthand clerk, so precise were his instructions and so drastic the revision. For instance, in the leaders which record the passing of Cobden, Lincoln and

[1] *Memories and Impressions*, chap. vii.

Palmerston in 1865, though the pen was held by Courtney, we hear the authentic accents of Delane. Here is the verdict of Printing House Square on the greatest of Free Traders. "That his political career was not faultless few would deny, and it would be idle in us, who have often had occasion to differ from him, to conceal it. Outside the range of economic doctrine he ran athwart the opinions of his countrymen. His remonstrances during the Russian war were so little effectual that he resolved to retire for a season from public life should such a crisis recur. The explanation of this anomaly may perhaps be found in the defects of his early training. Introduced when very young into a business life, his notion of the State was little more than that of a machinery to secure the punctual observance of commercial relations. Had he received the classical education which he often took occasion to contemn, he would probably have escaped from such limited views and have sympathised with wider aspirations." No less grudging was the tribute to Lincoln, whom the *Times* had combated until victory declared itself unmistakably on his side. While admitting that "in spite of drawbacks of manner and errors of taste he slowly won for himself the respect and confidence of all, and his perfect honesty speedily became apparent," Delane is unaware that he is dealing with one of the noblest figures of the modern world. When, however, we pass from Cobden and Lincoln to Palmerston, we exchange the cold grey sky for a pageant of Venetian colouring. "Among the statesmen who sleep in the Abbey there may be some whose intellectual power will be estimated by after generations above that of Lord Palmerston, but none of whom it can be said that he was more beloved by his contemporaries. His one thought was the honour and glory of England."

When Palmerston left the arena Delane sorrowfully admitted that Lord Russell, "the representative of the narrowest school of Whiggism," was for the moment inevitable. But behind the ageing Prime Minister stood Gladstone, to whom all eyes turned. The Whig Delane had no great love for either the Liberal Gladstone or the Tory Disraeli; but his attitude towards the new leader of

the House was certainly not more critical than that of his latest recruit. "If we were required to name the quality of Mr. Gladstone's mind which chiefly detracts from the great gifts he possesses and mars the influence he would otherwise wield," wrote Courtney in a four-column review of his Financial Statements, "we should point to his weak feeling of proportion. And every one must have noticed his remarkable fertility of belief impelling him to ardent and confident utterances on subjects which others approach with doubt and hesitation. He muses for a season over a particular subject, and its importance rapidly rises in his mind. The counter-checks and qualifications which are involved in its relations with other facts are overlooked or forgotten. His literary adventures are marked by the same precipitancy and want of balance. He sees too many objects to be constant to one, and he sees them too imperfectly to know that he ought to be constant to one. Thus a man of great gifts is doomed to occupy a lower rank than one of more restricted powers. Burke, with all his genius and breadth of philosophy, was as a practical statesman inferior to Pitt. Mr. Gladstone is an Anglican Burke, and the distrust with which ordinary Englishmen regarded his great original pursues him. Such men are reckoned troublesome opponents but dangerous allies. While associated with them we know not whither we may be led, nor what paradox we may be required to defend." These stinging sentences were penned in 1864; and though the writer was one day to learn something of the greatness of "the Anglican Burke," he might have quoted them in 1886 as a prophetic denunciation of the fiery champion of Home Rule.

Palmerston's longevity had postponed Parliamentary Reform; and the first task of the Russell Ministry was to deal with the franchise. But though the need of some advance was almost universally conceded, the widest differences existed as to the changes that were desirable. Four unsuccessful attempts had been made since 1832; but their authors had been half-hearted, and public opinion was indifferent till it was educated by Bright. Delane was

no democrat; but he knew that the moment had come, and he extended a steady though discriminating support to the efforts of the Reformers. His views as to the necessity and character of the advance, the need of redistribution and minority representation, were shared by Courtney, to whom it fell to write the leaders throughout the prolonged discussions. Possessing the confidence of his chief, an exhaustive acquaintance with the problem, and a clear idea of the route he desired to travel, he exerted a real influence on the changing course of events; and he might without presumption have claimed a place among the authors of the second of our four Reform Bills.

From the outset Courtney insisted that the Government should deal with the situation on comprehensive lines. "We are now told," he wrote on February 20, "that simultaneously with the Franchise Bill a second Bill will be introduced dealing with the question of redistribution. We are glad to hear it. A perfect House of Commons ought to be a representation in miniature of all the social forces of the nation. It ought not to be possible to name any interest which had not its peculiar defenders, to speak of any class which could not point to representatives identified with themselves. The actual House goes further than any representative body in the world to realise this picture, but it is still far behind what it might be made. The vulgar theories of universal suffrage, to which mere reductions of the franchise point, are of course absolutely incompatible with perfect representation. A mere Franchise Bill could not pass." The rumour was unfounded; and when the Franchise Bill was introduced on March 12 he gave vent to his angry disappointment. "It is impossible," he wrote, "to feel otherwise than languid and careless about a measure which would only unsettle the whole electoral system." The changes were limited to England and Wales, and there was no reference to redistribution, without which it would never pass. An amendment to the Second Reading declining to reduce the franchise till the Government produced a complete scheme for the representation of the people was only defeated by a majority of five. The Ministry took

fright and promised a Redistribution Bill. The new measure, introduced early in May, was welcomed as "fair and moderate," "so simple and practical that we ask why it was not introduced before." There was, however, no great enthusiasm for Reform, and the Whig recalcitrants, following Lowe into the Cave of Adullam, combined with the Tory opposition and defeated the Government in Committee on an amendment to substitute rating for rental.

Lord Russell was succeeded by Disraeli, who was quite ready to execute a *volte face*, despite the repugnance to Reform of Lord Cranborne and others of his colleagues. The popular demand, moreover, was growing, and the Hyde Park riots on July 25, which Courtney witnessed and described in an anonymous letter to the *Times*, frightened the waverers into action. At the beginning of 1867 he reviewed the situation in a hopeful spirit. Since the leaders were agreed on many points, the problem should be simple. Delay was dangerous, and genuine reformers should accept any practical suggestions from whatever quarter. "With a Conservative Ministry in power and a strong but friendly Opposition," he added on February 18, "it ought to be possible to carry a change neither half-hearted nor departing from the ancient lines of the constitution. We appeal to all parties to join in a sincere attempt." When, however, the Government scheme saw the light, it was even more soundly belaboured than that of Lord Russell. It was "the worst scheme ever introduced," and its fancy franchises were impossible. Mill's gallant attempt to secure woman suffrage was doomed to failure; and Courtney concentrated his attention on the need for minority representation. "The question of the hour," he wrote on March 13, "is, What is the best mode of preventing the benefits of representative government from being drowned in the enfranchisement of the most numerous classes of the nation? Plurality of votes is impossible; but cumulative voting for constituencies returning three members will secure diversity of counsel. How far it should be carried is a matter for discussion; but as to its policy there is really no question." When Mill put down a resolution

enabling electors in different parts of the country to combine for the election of a representative, the proposal was dismissed by the *Times* as unintelligible and impracticable. The true policy was the cumulative vote which would represent every party in proportion to its numbers. "The Representation of Minorities," wrote Courtney on June 3, "is an unfortunate phrase. It suggests the notion of weak, helpless persons crying for some unusual assistance in the attempt to keep their place in the struggle for life." The cumulative vote was fair to the majority no less than to the minority, for both would secure their rights and no more than their rights. "Never in the memory of the present generation has the House of Commons been so free from prejudices as at this moment. All propositions have a chance. The cumulative vote must be adopted if dispassionately examined. The Government, having passed the franchise, seem to have come to the end of their tether. The House is thus free to entertain suggestions from which it would have shrunk as visionary six months ago."

Courtney's labours were warmly appreciated by the friends of proportional representation.

From Professor Cairnes

June 7, 1867.—I am delighted to see the efforts you are making to arouse the country to the importance of redistribution and more especially to the unspeakable importance of liberating independent voters from the despotism of local majorities. I observed a few weeks ago that you were bold enough to propound the principle of Hare's scheme;[1] and I thought, Is it possible that the *Times* is about to be the apostle of a truth that is not commonplace? Alas, as I feared, the oracle knew not the precious things it was uttering. In the article on Mill's speech it has effectually vindicated its essential philistinism.

Cairnes was a little too severe on the *Times*, for Delane accepted the principle of minority representation; but

[1] "Hare's book," remarked Cairnes to Courtney on one occasion, "proves itself. As you read it you can no more resist the conclusions than you can resist a proposition in Euclid." See Courtney's obituary notice of Hare in *Athenæum*, May 16, 1891.

his support would have been lukewarm and ineffective without the apostolic fervour of his lieutenant. "I have told Courtney he may ride his cumulative hobby to-morrow," he wrote to Dasent before leaving town for the Ascot races, "and he proposes to quote the great authorities in its favour. Don't let him ride it too far." [1]

The Redistribution Bill was introduced on June 13; but it found little favour in Printing House Square. In Committee Lowe proposed the cumulative vote without success; but the Bill emerged in an improved form. "It is the monument of many minds," wrote Courtney on July 12. "It embodies the ideas of no Cabinet and no Minister. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has conducted it through the House, but he is not the author of the Bill. The work of the Ministry was valueless." On July 31 he raised his voice in thanksgiving for the acceptance of Lord Cairns's amendment providing for the representation of minorities in constituencies returning three members. Lord Malmesbury opposed the proposal on behalf of the Government, as Disraeli had opposed it in the House of Commons; but nearly every speaker joined in its praises. "Such a triumph of reason and truth may well startle us. The supposed crotchet of yesterday has become a fact. The voters who are now hopelessly outvoted will start into fresh vitality, enfranchised in deed, not only in word." Two days later a leader entitled "Victory" joyfully recorded the Commons' acceptance of the amendment, despite the antagonism of Gladstone and Bright. "Minority representation," he wrote in 1914, "became a living question in the debates of 1867, when Mr. Mill and Mr. Fawcett, supporters of the Bill, and Mr. Lowe and Lord Robert Cecil, strong opponents of it, pressed for the introduction of the principle into the measure, which introduction was ultimately carried despite the continued opposition of the three leading political personages of the time—Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Bright. The controversy was fierce to a degree now scarcely to be apprehended." [2] He

[1] *Delane's Life*, ii. 203.
[2] *Memories of John Westlake*, chap. iv.

does not add that the partial victory was largely due to the powerful advocacy of a certain leader-writer on the *Times*.

Three years after the passing of the Reform Bill it was Courtney's responsible duty to convey to the world Delane's opinions on the Franco-German War.[1] The views of the two men on the general merits of the struggle coincided. Both of them knew and loved France ; but neither of them admired the character or the policy of her ruler. Never had the oracle of Printing House Square spoken with more unfaltering accents than when Napoleon III. plunged madly into war. The conflict was denounced as a crime, the pretext as " disgracefully frivolous." " The war is for the Rhine, which has for centuries been the avowed object of French ambition. Every German has passed his life in pondering on this very struggle, which has come at last. The Emperor stakes his dynasty on success." The publication of Benedetti's draft treaty of 1867 in the issue of July 25 supplied a text for further denunciations of the Imperial mischief-maker ; and when the danger to Belgium thus revealed stirred the Government to threaten with war whichever belligerent violated its neutrality, the *Times* was emphatic in its approval.

Courtney's sentiments of grief and indignation were shared by the leaders of the historic parties. The Prime Minister described the war as the most melancholy event of the century, and Disraeli declared that it had been begun on pretexts that would have been considered disgraceful even in the eighteenth century. When the news of the early defeats came pouring in, wrath against the Emperor was mingled with sympathy for his suffering subjects. " Unhappy France, unhappy Emperor ! " wrote the *Times* on August 16. " What madness wantonly provoked this unequal contest ? " Yet France was far from innocent. When Thiers set forth after Sedan on his mission to the

[1] " Nothing shall ever persuade me except the event," wrote Delane to W. H. Russell, " that the Prussians will withstand the French, and I would lay my last shilling on Casquette against Pumpernickel " (Atkins, *Life of W. H. Russell*, ii. 165). Courtney disagreed and sent his chief a pencilled note, " Are you sure ? "

Courts of Europe in search of mediators, he was informed with almost brutal plainness that he had nothing to hope from England. "It is impossible to acquit the French nation of complicity in the unprovoked attack upon Germany. France cannot be encouraged in the hope of escaping scatheless from a war she wantonly undertook. The dethronement of the Emperor cannot free the nation from the penalties of sanctioning the Imperial policy. The war must go on till the French people are ready to acknowledge that they have been guilty of wrong towards their neighbours and to give sureties against a repetition of it." Moreover, Thiers was not the man for such a mission. "Above all others he helped to develop that hateful idea of French dictatorship in Europe which was at once the secret of the Emperor's power and the cause of his downfall."

Courtney, like Delane, desired Germany to win, and declared that the King of Prussia had "at every step given evidence of that spirit of simple piety which animates his breast." But he had no desire for a vindictive settlement. Germany was advised to seek securities against future aggression, but not to humiliate a proud nation. "We ask Germans to reconsider their demand for Alsace-Lorraine. The annexation would bring a legacy of difficulty to Germany and leave France with a constantly irritating sense of injury." The wiser course would be to neutralise the provinces by denuding them of fortresses and troops. No British statesman or journalist was a more ardent supporter of Germany than Delane; and Courtney's desire to restrain the conquerors in their hour of triumph caused him some annoyance. "I have asked Mozley to write a leader on mediation," he wrote to Dasent, September 30, "a subject on which C. is hopelessly wrong. I suspect he is inspired by Fawcett, and he would have us perpetually scolding at Bismarck and telling him he must not take Alsace and Lorraine, and offering to mediate for him without these conditions, on which, as I need not tell you, all Germany has set its heart. The Cabinet to-day unanimously decided against this fretful policy, and it is of no use snapping at

them about it. But if you give C. a chance, he will. He is, however, very good to write on any question connected with the war into which neither mediation nor the conditions of peace enter." [1]

At the outbreak of war the *Times* had suggested that Great Britain should cultivate friendly relations with Russia and Austria with a view to joint mediation at some future date; and on October 15 it declared that the time had come for the three chief neutrals to propose the dismantling of Alsace-Lorraine and to guarantee active support to either belligerent in future if attacked by the other without first submitting the dispute to their arbitration. Such a proposal would probably be rejected; but it was worth making, since the war was growing in ferocity. "It was several days before the 15th of October," wrote Lord Courtney, forty-seven years later, in reprinting the leader,[2] "that I first suggested to Mr. Delane the idea of my writing an article proposing mediation. He was not favourable to the proposal; and indeed he had known on the 30th of September that the Cabinet had rejected mediation. He and I, however, continued casual talks on the subject until he consented to my making the trial. I must admit that the result justified his hesitation." The suggestion of mediation surprised many readers of the *Times*; but Lord Morley has revealed the fact that the Prime Minister himself desired to co-operate with the other neutrals in a protest against the transfer of Alsace-Lorraine without reference to the wishes of their inhabitants, but failed to carry the Cabinet.

A few days later the British Government proposed an armistice for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, and urged Russia and Austria to join in the recommendation. The invitation was naturally refused, and on the surrender of Metz the *Times* exclaimed "Finis Galliae," and called on her to recognise her defeat. If the price of peace was indeed the surrender of Alsace and part of Lorraine, she must make up her mind to pay it. There was

[1] *Delane's Life*, ii. 270-71.
[2] *Alsace-Lorraine: A Memorial of 1870.*

now a good deal of friction between Courtney and Delane, who explained the situation to Dasent on November 9, on the eve of his autumn holiday. "The most important thing I have to tell you about things here is that C., whose zeal and assiduity cannot be too highly praised, has taken a wrong twist about the war, and especially about the negotiations, and wishes to be violently anti-Ministerial. I am no worshipper of Gladstone, and think he has shewn himself eminently 'parochial' all through the war; but Granville has, I believe, done all that could be done with any safety or indeed any advantage. I think it was we who principally egged him on into proposing the armistice, for which C. now would bitterly reproach him. I was obliged to-night to leave out his article on the speeches at the Guildhall. It was so violently adverse that I am sure it would have jarred upon the popular sentiment. I am very sorry for this, for C. has worked most manfully; indeed I have never known anybody take so much trouble to cram into his article the last scrap of intelligence." [1]

Courtney's opposition to the annexation of the Rhine Provinces roused the ire of an even greater man than Delane. On November 18 the *Times* published the celebrated letter from the veteran historian of Frederick the Great which was read with rapture and remembered with gratitude by Germans all over the world. "It is probably an amiable trait of human nature," began Carlyle, "this cheap pity and newspaper lamentation over fallen and afflicted France; but it seems to me a very idle, dangerous and misguided feeling as applied to the cession of Alsace and Lorraine, and argues a most profound ignorance of the conduct of France towards Germany for long centuries back." He proceeded to review the history of the borderland, and concluded that it would be folly for Germany not to raise up a boundary fence between herself and such a neighbour. The letter closed on a note of heartfelt thanksgiving. "That noble, patient, deep, pious and solid Germany should be at length welded into a nation and

[1] *Delane's Life*, ii. 270-71.

become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and oversensitive France, seems to me the hopefullest public fact that has occurred in my time."

The same issue of the *Times* which printed Carlyle's letter contained a dignified reply by Courtney in the form of a leading article. France, he admits, had attacked neighbours of whose union she was jealous, and had been beaten, and must suffer appropriate penalties. "If it were necessary for the future security of German peace that a portion of the French people should be torn from the body to which they cling, the claim to sever Alsatians and Lorrainers from their countrymen would be just. If it is unnecessary, much less if it threatens to be injurious, it must be condemned; for it overrides for no purpose the law of freedom that must prevail unless supreme considerations of safety put it aside. Mr. Carlyle gives no sign that he has balanced these considerations, but, treating provinces as chattels and their inhabitants as vermin that may incidentally swarm about them, pronounces it to be perfectly just, rational and wise that Germany should take Alsace and Lorraine. We do not wish to imitate this dogmatism. Is it necessary to the peace of Germany? That is the question. Are the other securities the French people are willing to give for their future behaviour sufficient? If they are, the demand of the conquerors, being unnecessary, is unjust, irrational and foolish."

While Europe was watching the collapse of France with breathless interest, Russia suddenly flung a new apple of discord into the diplomatic world. Gortschakoff's circular, denouncing the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of 1856, was received on November 15, and on November 16 the *Times* expressed "profound regret, not unmixed with indignation." It had believed Alexander II. to stand for peace; but it had been grievously disappointed. The circular had reopened the Eastern question at the wrong time and in the worst manner. It was impossible to admit for a moment the claim of Russia to free herself from the Treaty of Paris. If this was allowed, what trust could be

reposed in any treaty? Lord Granville had issued a grave protest, and we could not recede from our position. "The prospect of peace may at any moment vanish from our eyes," wrote the *Times* on November 19. "We have to face the possibility that before 1870 closes every one of the Great Powers may be in arms. It does not rest with us to maintain peace. It is impossible to allow the force of public law to be overthrown in this manner. If Russia proceeds to fortify the shores of the Black Sea and to launch vessels of war on its waters, our duty will be painful but unavoidable. We should never enforce a treaty at variance with the higher law; but this was innocent, if not laudable."

The menacing tone of the *Times* was challenged by Mill and Froude, who maintained that, though resentment was justifiable, not every breach of treaty should be followed by hostilities, and that England should not fight if Russia refused to withdraw.[1] When Gortschakoff's bomb burst in London Delane was on his way to Italy, and Dasent was in command at Printing House Square. The editor naturally resented Russia's high-handed action; but Courtney's polemics were a little too hot for his taste.

J. T. Delane to G. W. Dasent

NAPLES, *November* 24.—We found Saturday's paper on our arrival, and C.'s article on Gortschakoff, and Mill's and Froude's letters, I confess, rather frightened me. I most willingly accept firmness and plain speaking as a means of preventing war, and therefore approve of Granville's reply to Gortschakoff; but I by no means accept it as an engagement binding us to consider the infraction of the treaty as a *casus belli*. Every one of our allies is equally bound, and it is no part of our duty to perform the whole police of the world. I am all for protesting as vigorously as possible, but not for undertaking any obligation which our allies will not share.

There is a certain piquancy in the notion of the Philosophic Radical's bellicose ardour being held in check by his Palmerstonian chief. He was promptly switched off Russia, and the leader of November 30, the work of another

[1] A long private letter to Courtney is printed in Mill's *Letters*, ii. 281.

hand, breathes a more accommodating spirit. The treaty, it declared, must be maintained till it was modified by the same authority that made it. "But there is no immediate danger—if we are true to ourselves, no danger at all. Russia has challenged the parties to the Treaty in a document more offensive than any put forth in the present century. But a mere insult is not a sufficient cause of war." Let Prussia, who was doubtless as pained as Great Britain, arrange a conference of the signatories of the Treaty of 1856.

When Delane was back Courtney was allowed to write on Russia again. But the crisis was past, and the idea of a Conference proved generally acceptable. His leader of March 15, 1871, hailed with unqualified satisfaction the Treaty of London, which recognised the *fait accompli* but secured an acknowledgement that no Power could free itself from the obligations of a Treaty without the consent of its co-signatories. "Thus we are honourably free from the guarantee of a restriction to which our predecessors had pledged us, but which we could not but regard as impolitic if not unjust."

The second half of Courtney's service under Delane was far less eventful, both at home and abroad, than the first. While extending a general support to the Gladstone Ministry, the editor allowed his lieutenant to wage victorious war against the Irish University Bill of 1873; but that was the last political topic on which he took or desired to take a strong line. The first two years of Disraeli's rule were uneventful; and when the crisis in the Near East reached its height he was able to express his opinions in the House of Commons without editorial supervision.

Like other members of the staff of the *Times*, Courtney was frequently called upon to produce articles of a non-political character; and his wide acquaintance with literature and art, science and scholarship, fitted him for his exacting task. Among such contributions were obituary notices of celebrities like Faraday and Bulwer Lytton, Whewell and Boole, and leaders on such diverse themes as Tyndall's Belfast Address, the Rubens Tercentenary, the election of Leighton to the Presidency of the Royal Academy,

Whistler's law-suit against Ruskin, an exhibition of Old Masters, the novels of Ouida, and the death of Panizzi, the masterful librarian of the British Museum. His intimate knowledge of France lends peculiar interest to his character studies of such men as Enfantin, the second founder of St. Simonianism, and Prévost-Paradol, the most accomplished publicist of the Second Empire. It was a pleasure to the life-long student of Carlyle to be entrusted with the duty of pronouncing judgement on the Edinburgh Rectorial Address, in which he discovered " the old truths, the old platitudes and the old errors," but also a new and welcome mellowness. " No one would claim for Mr. Gladstone (his immediate predecessor in the office) the same intensity of power; but in his abundant energy, his wide sympathy with popular movement, and his real if vague faith in the activity and progress of modern life, he conveys lessons of trust in the present and hopefulness for the future which would be ill-exchanged for the patient and somewhat sad stoicism of Mr. Carlyle." The last of his leaders was a finely-phrased tribute to George Eliot.

Delane had worked night and day since 1841, and as early as 1875 rumours of his impaired health began to circulate; but he was naturally indignant at groundless reports of his intended retirement.

Delane to Dasent

June 15, 1875.—Please contradict the report in *Vanity Fair* that I have resigned and that Courtney is to succeed me. Neither is true.[1]

The great renunciation, however, could only be postponed for two years, and in 1877 he had convinced himself that he must say farewell to the journal in which he had found the happiness and the pride of his life. " There was much wild speculation as to Delane's successor," writes Alexander Shand. " More than one member of the staff was named as being in the running, and gossip insisted with

[1] *Delane's Life*, ii. 316.

great confidence that the mantle was to light on the shoulders of a distinguished Government official. The knowing ones were all wrong; no one named the winner, and the decision came as a surprise. One evening when dining with Mr. Stebbing—he had virtually edited the paper in Delane's decline—I made the acquaintance of Mr. Chenery, an eminent Orientalist, Professor of Arabic at Oxford, and one of Delane's most valued collaborators. As Chenery told me afterwards, 'That evening I had my commission in my pocket.' In many respects he was admirably equipped; but he had taken to the leadership too late in life and he could scarcely be called a popular editor." [1]

Before appointing Chenery the proprietor of the *Times* had naturally weighed the claims of other possible candidates for the post. Mr. Thursfield has kindly contributed his recollections of his first visit to Bearwood in the autumn of 1877.[2] "After telling me that Mr. Delane had resigned and that Mr. Chenery had been appointed in his place, an appointment which had been arranged some months previously—Mr. Walter added, "Some people seem to have thought that I should appoint Mr. Courtney to be editor, but I never entertained that idea myself. He is a very able man, and he has done very good work for the paper. But he is not the man to be Editor of the *Times*, and I am fortified in that opinion by what I have seen of him in Parliament.'" Courtney himself had no desire for the post, for his eyes were turned towards a Parliamentary career. "I remember once, long ago," wrote John Scott in 1884, "on one of our walks we talked of your being Editor of the *Times*. You said you would not have the place if it were offered. I often think of it when I see the *Times* floundering now. The ability is there, but the direction seems to have lost all insight. It would have been a great power in your hands."

[1] *Days of My Life*, p. 201.
[2] Letter to the author, July 4, 1918.

CHAPTER VI

TRAVEL, STUDY AND FRIENDSHIPS

THROUGHOUT life Courtney's favourite relaxation was foreign travel; and when the monthly cheques began to arrive from Printing House Square with amiable regularity he felt at liberty to indulge his taste on a more generous scale. In 1864, the first autumn of his affluence, he visited Brittany, a country of peculiar interest to a Cornishman, and sent home long accounts of "our Breton kinsmen." "I am much impressed with the similarity between the Cornish and Breton type of face," he told his father. "I have been struck with it again and again." He traversed the country from end to end, armed with Émile Souvestre and other guides, and ended with a brief visit to Paris. Two years later he crossed the Atlantic and visited the United States on the morrow of the Civil War. In 1867 his sisters Margaret and Louise joined him in a seven weeks' tour through France, Switzerland and Northern Italy. In 1868 he paid his first visit to Ireland. In 1869 he chose Greece and Constantinople for his goal, carrying with him diplomatic introductions supplied by Lord Clarendon at the instance of Delane, and voyaging down the Danube with Edward Dicey. In the year of the Franco-German War, for the first and last time, he scorned delights and lived laborious days. In 1871, accompanied by his sister Louise, he travelled by Trier, the Moselle, Coblenz, Nuremberg and Munich to Venice, Florence and Rome.

To his Father

ROME, *October* 15, 1871.—St. Peter's is disappointing. Some of the side aisles have been closed for the Council and have not been reopened. The exterior cannot compare in beauty with St. Paul's. The pictures in the Vatican are very good, but I never much admired the Transfiguration in engravings, and I have not been converted by seeing the original. I much prefer the Dresden Madonna. Domenichino's St. Jerome is exceedingly clever but tricky. Guido's Aurora is as beautiful as it may be conceived to be. Raphael's School of Athens and the Schools of Theology are also wonderfully fine. The Laocoon, the Dying Gladiator, the Antinous, etc. come up fully to expectation, and the Gladiator surpasses it. Christian Rome is far from being so high in merit as ancient Rome. Perhaps the most interesting thing we have seen is San Clemente.

The planning of summer journeys is a winter pastime; but occasionally the programme was only determined on the eve of a holiday.

To his sister Louise

August 2, 1872.—I am very much puzzled where to go. I had thought of Canada and also of the Pyrenees, and my range is rather restricted by the novel circumstance that I must be back some time before my lectures begin. My notion is to go by steamer to Lisbon, Gibraltar and Cadiz, and then by another steamer in the Mediterranean, making my way up through Spain.

The programme was faithfully carried out. Taking ship to Gibraltar *via* Lisbon and Cadiz, he entered Spain from the south and was soon revelling in the delights of Granada.

To his sister Margaret

September 1, 1872.—I sallied forth immediately to the Alhambra. The prospect was glorious. The hill of the Alhambra was behind, embowered in trees, poplars, figs, pomegranates, and then a ravine, on the other side of which is the Generalife with ancient cypresses and palms mingled with the

other trees, and behind these hills rose other hills finally ending in the Sierra Nevada. Turning in the other direction Granada with its huge cathedral lay at my feet, and opposite on a smaller hill, the Moorish suburb. Granada owes not only the Alhambra but all its prosperity to the Moors. They tapped the waters that continually flow from the upper snows and, diverting their course into hundreds of different channels, provided for the irrigation of the whole of the hill sides and the great plain at the base of the city. The Spaniards would never have taken the trouble to establish this elaborate system; but they have had the good sense to keep it up. The Court of Lions at the Crystal Palace is a faithful copy on a reduced scale of the original; but it is only a chamber of the whole, and no art could reproduce the surrounding charm. You walk from hall to hall, all glorious within, blue and gold and crimson, green, orange and purple, and covered over and over with delicate curves and tracery, with narrow windows and perforated arches, through which you get glimpses of burning blue skies and green leaves, which tell you how hot it is outside, and all the while you hear the murmur of falling waters. A place of vast contentment. *Deliciae deliciarum.*

In 1873 he sailed with his sister Louise for Canada, where his brother Mortimer had made his home, enjoyed some interesting conversations with the Governor General, Lord Dufferin, and paid a second visit to the United States. A year later he chose Germany for his autumn manœuvres, and spent three quiet weeks at Brunswick working at the language, followed by his first visit to the capital.

To his sister Margaret

BERLIN, *September* 28, 1874.—The city is full of big buildings, but there is not one which excites admiration. It is also full of monuments, to which additions are constantly made. The last is a glorification of the late war, and if a Frenchman saw it he would say, *Sédan est vengé*. The Berliners themselves admit its stupendous ugliness. Berlin and the Berliners continually remind me of New York and the Yankees. There is the same type of architecture and of people. I am sometimes surprised to hear people talk German instead of talking English through the nose.

The French elegance of Sans Souci appealed to him far more than the massive Teutonism of the capital. Extending his tour eastwards he visited Posen and Breslau, returning home through Dresden and Cassel.

The longest and most interesting journey of his life was made in the autumn of 1875. Travelling by Venice and Brindisi he landed at Alexandria, where he stayed with his old friend and correspondent John Scott, who had for some years practised in the Consular Court and had recently been appointed English Appeal Judge in the International Court. Accompanied by his host he spent a fortnight at Cairo, where he climbed the Great Pyramid and dined with Nubar Pasha. A letter from Calcutta records his movements and observations.

To J. H. Roby

CALCUTTA, *December* 28, 1875.—I landed at Bombay on November 4. I stopped rather more than a fortnight in Egypt, and enjoyed my stay immensely. The Prince of Wales arrived four or five days after our steamer, and I saw the earlier part of the festivities in his honour. Then I fled and came to Allahabad without a break. The railway carriages here are arranged for long journeys so that travelling is easy for those like myself who can sleep easily, and I have accordingly done a good deal of travelling at night. Agra (including Futtehpur Sikkree), Delhi, the frontier country from Jhelum to Peshawar, Amritzar and Benares were the most interesting in themselves ; but others had associations. The ruins of the pomp of the Moguls are very fine ; but they look as old as the ruins of Rome, which are five times, or those of Egypt which are ten times, their antiquity. It has been a slight drawback to find everywhere workmen busy scraping, changing, renovating and painting by way of preparation for the Prince. Fancy the first vision of the Taj being a gateway covered with a forest of bamboo scaffolding ! I am not sure that this visit will be in any way beneficial. The Europeans here (those at least who are not overburdened with the care and responsibility of being his hosts) are pleased with the entertainments that accompany the visit and flock in crowds to the balls and levées, and the Native Princes enjoy the opportunity of wearing their best clothes and making a show of importance, though there have been sad heart-burnings among

them in the way of precedence. The masses of the people believed at first that when the Prince came they would have nothing to do but to present petitions to him and he would at once cause all their miseries to cease ; they would throw themselves in his way as he rode in the streets and a word of his would set all things right. They are now better informed, and they turn out in large numbers to see fireworks and processions ; but the Prince is an accidental part of the show. The permanent result will apparently be nil.

The country is at once easy and difficult to govern. It is easy to govern because, with the exception of a few hill tribes, the habit of mind of the people is one of submissiveness and they are quite prepared to endure despotic command ; but on the other hand they are very ignorant, very prejudiced, very distrustful of change and very conservative, and if you try to improve things you find the task very difficult. Show a workman a better and more expeditious way of doing his work and he may follow it as long as you are looking on ; but turn your back and he goes back to his old ways. All this may of course be paralleled at home ; but the difficulty here is that the governing race does not belong to the same world as the governed, and there is no intermediate class to interpret and popularise the good intentions of the English. All our regulations and improvements—road-making, canal-making, sanitary laws—cost money, and this evil is keenly felt. It is a characteristic fact that in order to provide for local expenditure octrois have been established in all the towns, because the people prefer them to rates. They do not see how the octroi works and willingly agree to have it instituted, while they would shew a camel-like temper of complaint of the smallest direct tax. Yet they are docile, they can learn, and if a man once gets their confidence they take his teaching quickly and there is no occasion for despair. The trains are crowded with third-class passengers, though they are huddled together like sheep. Kerosene oil is burnt far and wide, and I saw a tailor using a sewing machine in Lahore. Who shall say the obstinacy of the native is insuperable ? The difficulties in the way of prejudice and suspicion are quite as much on our side as the other.

From this place I go by steamer to Madras and from Madras to Hyderabad and Poona. You would be delighted with the trees of the North-West—they grow to a great size and are almost always green and beautiful in shape. Of course I have had several new experiences. One was making the perambulation of a district or parish with a settlement officer. We were

mounted on an elephant and in this way marched about the fields attended by the village officials, the zemindar and stray peasants who were cross-examined on crops, produce and prices, while the map we carried with us was verified to see that every patch, every tree, and every wall was exactly delineated on it. Another experience was two or three days spent at Kupparthalla, the capital of a small native state of that name, with Lepel Griffin, who is administrating the principality—the Rajah himself being temporarily and perhaps permanently imbecile through drink; so we have stepped in to take care of his dominions. I thus saw how a Native State is ruled. Going through the streets of Benares, visiting its temples and its bazaars under the guidance of a Brahmin, may be added as a third experience. Has not Max Müller said it was the dream of his life to realise it? But the Ganges does not efface the Thames.

Though the autumn holiday was the great event of the year, the Whitsun trip to Paris was no less keenly enjoyed. He loved to visit the Salon, to revisit the Louvre, to appraise the new purchases at the Luxembourg, to hear the latest drama of Sardou or Dumas *fils*. Versailles and St. Germain, Fontainebleau and Chantilly, never lost their charm. There were debates to attend, statesmen new and old to interview, freetraders to strengthen in the faith. Last but not least, there was the incomparable Blowitz, the permanent ambassador of Printing House Square to the French Republic. On one occasion, when Courtney was accompanied by Mr. Stebbing and Chenery was also making holiday in Paris, Blowitz asked them all to *déjeuner* to meet Nubar, and greeted them with the words, "The *Times* is in Paris."

Courtney's growing prosperity meant not only longer holidays for himself but more of the sweets of life for the members of his family. Birthdays had always brought carefully chosen presents and affectionate letters, of which the following is a specimen.

To his sister Margaret

April 15, 1874.—MA CHÈRE BIEN AIMÉE—To-morrow is the great day, the birthday of birthdays, and we all hail it as becomes faithful brothers. I shall be in attendance at the House of Commons hearing the Budget and shall be probably

dining with Delane afterwards as usual; but the great circumstance of the day shall not be forgot. Yesterday I bought a little *cadeau*, but was uncertain whether I should send it down or keep it till your arrival: James recommends the latter so it is to be kept to greet you with next week. I suppose we shall still see you on Friday night. As to your journey, the following is the sketch of what I should suggest. Folkestone, Boulogne, Abbeville, Amiens, Rouen, Beauvais, Paris, Soissons, Rheims, Laon, Amiens. I was down at Blackheath last Saturday, when they were in good spirits; Mrs. Cairnes asking when you were coming up. Leslie Stephen had been invited, but had gone over to Paris for the Easter week. Delane spent his Easter in Paris and reported it looking charming. Au revoir, ma sœur chérie; nous vous désirons beaucoup. Que vous ayez beaucoup des amies and encore plus de bonheur. LÉONARD.

No sooner had his brothers and sister passed beyond the need of his quasi-parental care than the younger generation began to knock at the door. The recollections of his niece, Sarah Julyan, show that the services of the uncle were as ungrudgingly rendered as had been those of the elder brother.

"My earliest memories of Uncle Leonard are intimately connected with his Christmas visits to Penzance. Every member of the family looked forward eagerly to his arrival, perhaps Grandfather most of all; to me there was even something mysterious—in the earliest days—in an uncle who came down from London by the night train and appeared on the scenes before breakfast. Then there were always appropriate presents for all, usually something for Grandfather which appealed to his artistic or literary tastes, perhaps books for others, and for myself a brooch, a locket, a book and once a beautiful pale heliotrope silk dress. I do not remember that he ever gave me anything in the nature of a toy or game but always something more enduring. Sometimes during the Christmas season I had a party, and Uncle Leonard helped to make it a happy gathering of my friends by joining—and with much spirit—in the games. I pass on to the time I spent at school in London from 1876 to 1878. Uncle Leonard and Uncle William lived in Queen

Anne's Gate, and I spent an occasional Saturday with them and regularly passed my half-term holiday there, arriving before dinner on Friday and being taken back on the following Monday evening. These short stays were always looked forward to with pleasure and thoroughly enjoyed as they flew by. Two Saturday excursions stand out prominently, one to Epping Forest, the other across Epsom Downs to Leith Hill. After Uncle Leonard's late breakfast—he was engaged nightly at the *Times* office—and my early lunch, we set out, taking train to some convenient starting-point and then beginning a long tramp, which took us all the afternoon, and ended at some inn, where we had an early dinner and then came back by train."

Courtney's joyous personality and warmth of heart made him a favourite with children outside his family circle. His friendship with John Scott and his love of Boswell formed links with Birkbeck Hill, who kept a school at Tottenham, which was near enough for an afternoon visit. Mrs. Crump, the editor of her father's letters, has kindly contributed her recollections of the *Times* thunderer in holiday mood.

"I cannot date my early memories of Lord Courtney with any precision. The first clear picture in my mind must be placed early in the 'seventies. I see very clearly Bruce Castle set in stretches of smooth lawn and beds of brilliant geranium. The old house shows its brick through the climbing roses in full flower. Father and Mother are out on the lawn and we—perhaps all seven of us—are pervading all about, one a little boy, with black hair and solemn yet vivid brown eyes, long years ago dead. Along the drive come my Uncle John Scott, home from Egypt for the summer months, and with him his friend Courtney in brown suit and buff linen waistcoat. How clearly I can see him and the curiously bright eyes under the thick eyebrows, and the whimsical smile as we crowd round. 'Why, he's all brown,' says the little boy. 'He's brown-eyed Mr. Courtney.' It was obviously a link with himself in the child's mind, and from that day for a long time it was

'brown-eyed Mr. Courtney' with us children; a playmate we could romp with, maybe a bit outrageously on our part, but then he could play and he could *not* tease. That quality marked him out in my mind, a little girl with often more high spirits than manners and yet a keen sensitiveness when the moment of excitement passed.

"The second memory is rather of my ears than of my eyes, though I see too a scene in all its details. It is in the hall of Bruce Castle, a square hall with oak stair and wide banisters and in the hall at the foot of the stairs a Sheraton sideboard. Two boys are astride on the wide banister and I sit careless on the sideboard. The manservant and a maid pass to and fro and the three bad children make grabs at the dishes, though they are not bad enough to play pirate till after the guests in the dining-room beyond have eaten. Dinners I suppose were mainly matters of business in my father's schoolmaster life; anyway they were solemn and I know bored Father and Mother alike. But this time eager talk and quite child-like shouts of laughter reached us every time the door opened. Quite an original sort of dinner party obviously, and it was strange enough to live on in my memory. I do not know who the guests all were, but I know Mr. Courtney was one.

"The third memory is wholly and gloriously ridiculous, belonging to '79 or '80. My Uncle John Scott and Mr. Courtney came down to our new home in Berkshire, as glad I expect to escape from London in June for a night as my Father and Mother were to welcome old friends in what was something of a country wilderness to them. 'Now then, Courtney,' says my uncle, 'we're all going to do as we did in the train coming from Cairo to Alexandria. There was —— and —— there (I forget names but I think they were fellow judges in the International Court), and we thought we'd welcome the guard. It's a giant sneeze. Courtney you take tcha, I'm tche, Maurice, Norman, Lucy tchi! tcho! tchu! Now then, are you ready? Go!' Mother looks a scrap startled at the terrific burst. Brown-eyed Walter shares in with 'brown-eyed Mr. Courtney.' We all sneeze and shout with laughter.

"The last memory is the happiest of all. Mr. Courtney was I think quite lately married and he was to bring Mrs. Courtney to visit us. I don't think my parents had ever met her. Any way I know my mother was anxious that everything should be 'very nice,' and it was not so easy in our small and full house and with no great help in the way of service. So I recall a good deal of preparation and some little anxiety. Then they arrived. On Sunday afternoon we went a long ramble, and all the way we grew madder and madder. I think some of our joy arose from our usual mood when Mr. Courtney came among us, some I think was pure pleasure in finding that we could still prank though there was a Mrs. Courtney."

A third vignette is supplied by Mr. Arthur Roby. "Down to 1875, when we left London, there are constant entries in my father's diaries of Lord Courtney lunching and dining with my people and of walks and drives they took with him and of dinners he gave my father at the Reform Club or at the Statistical Society, or to both my parents at the Ship at Greenwich or elsewhere. Here are some instances. *April* 22, 1871.—'Dined with Courtney at the Reform Club. Present Fawcett, Westlake, Cairnes, Rigby, Jenkins and Ebel, Berlin Correspondent of the *Times*.' *July* 22-26, 1875.—'Courtney took Westlake and ourselves on the Thames.' 1876, *July* 21-5.—'At Courtney's invitation we rowed from Oxford to Teddington; the Westlakes with us.' Lord Courtney's laugh, which was always so hearty, was the passport to our affection for him as children. We were profoundly impressed with the fact that he had always an answer ready for all our questions, and awed by the number of topics he discussed with our parents. But, unlike many of my father's friends who were not nearly so able, we were never the least in awe of Mr. Courtney himself. If we were romping when he came, he romped too. We rejoiced to go walks and drives with him or to the Zoo, and we were allowed to and did treat him as a young uncle, and when he came to dinner parties we caught him on the stairs. He seemed to understand children,

and so was never solemn to them or afraid of losing caste by coming down to their level in fun and frolic. Times beyond number we used to go to his rooms in Queen Anne's Gate to get from him some tickets or other source of pleasure he had for us; and whenever he came to see my parents, a visit to our nursery or schoolroom was never forgotten. In later years it was to him I used to owe visits to the House with introductions to great men like Lord Morley, who might also be sitting in the Strangers' Gallery. No senior could be so kind to a junior as he was, his great ability and knowledge giving itself so lavishly and simply to the entertainment of those who had nothing they could give him in return except their gratitude and affection."

While journalism was his main occupation and the principal source of his livelihood, Courtney found time to continue the economic studies to which he had turned on leaving Cambridge. In 1864 he joined the Statistical Society, of which he was to be elected President thirty years later, and it was before this body that he read in 1868 a massive dissertation, "On the Finances of the United States, 1861–67," [1] which may still be consulted as a record of financial errors committed under the stress of a prolonged conflict. Courtney's competence as an economist was recognised by his election to the Political Economy Club in 1869, after having attended two of its meetings in 1866 as Fawcett's guest. Since its foundation in 1821 by Ricardo the Club had steadily grown in influence, enlisting not only every professional student of the dismal science but statesmen, publicists and men of letters. Among the sages who gathered round the dinner-table on Friday evenings Mill was *facile princeps*; but debates which were attended by Cairnes, Thornton and Newmarch, Cliffe Leslie and Thorold Rogers, Jevons and Fawcett, Bagehot and Greg, Sidgwick and Bramwell, Lowe, Dilke and Goschen, Lord Overstone and Sir John Lubbock, Frederic Harrison and John Morley, Farrer and Giffen, Villiers and Louis Mallet, naturally reached a high level of knowledge and argument. To join

[1] *Journal of the Statistical Society*, xxxi. 164-221.

such a circle was a liberal education for a young man, and for the half century which followed his election Courtney was one of the most regular attendants as well as one of the weightiest debaters. He was chosen Secretary in 1873, Giffen being appointed Joint Secretary in 1881. "Even then," writes Frederic Harrison of his own election in 1876, "Leonard Courtney was recognised as the heir of Mill's economic authority." [1] "It has been my high privilege for a good many years to be a member of the Political Economy Club," he declared in 1888. "We meet together once a month during the season. There are forty-five ordinary members, and we have some honorary members, for instance, members who become Cabinet Ministers—almost every Chancellor of the Exchequer has been a member of the Club—and holders of professorial chairs. We sit down on an average perhaps a score. We do not stand up. The man who introduces a subject explains it for some half an hour, and then it is carried from person to person. That is the quiet business-like way of proceeding. I would recommend you to avoid all publicity if you would pursue a serious discussion of any economic question." [2]

Courtney's wide range of knowledge was recognised by his appointment as examiner in literature and history for the Indian Civil Service in 1867–68, and in constitutional history in the University of London in 1872–75. He wrote the important article on "Banking" for the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and in 1872 he obtained the Chair of Political Economy in the University of London. The post was of less distinction than that which he had sought at Cambridge, but its duties could be combined with his work on the *Times*. He held the Chair for three years, resigning it when he started on his voyage to India. He was so well acquainted with the classics of his science that the preparation of his course made no very exacting demands on his time. The Historical School, which under the leadership of Roscher was beginning to dominate

[1] *Autobiographic Memoirs*, ii. 92-3.

[2] From an Address on the Occupation of Land to the Political Economy Circle of the National Liberal Club.

Germany, had not yet struck root in England, and the new Professor was content to expound the doctrines of Adam Smith and Ricardo, Mill and Cairnes. His subject for the first year was the Principles of Political Economy, for the second, Wages, and for the third, Taxation.[1]

To his sister Louise

November 13, 1874.—I was very busy about my evening lecture yesterday, so that I could not conveniently write. I have now delivered three, or a fourth of the course. The class is smaller than it was last year, and there are only two ladies attending, which is a great falling off. The number altogether is about the same as it was two years ago.

Following the example of his colleagues Croom Robertson and Carey Foster, the Professor of Political Economy invited women to attend his classes. " I still remember what great gratitude we all felt to such a pioneer on women's behalf," writes Mrs. Hancock. " There were only a few girls among a large class of men ; and many were the prophecies that we should meet with rudeness and discourtesy. But I found them very polite, and many were the offers to sharpen my pencil and lend me notes."

Courtney believed not only that political economy was a science, but that it afforded invaluable guidance in the conduct of public affairs. He scornfully repudiated the doctrine that the State could make men happy and prosperous, preferring to emphasise the danger to personal independence and responsibility from its well-meant attentions. He rebuked the facile optimism which forgot the limits within which men and nations are compelled by natural laws to work out their destiny. If his political teaching was the gospel of Independence, his economic message was the gospel of Self-Help. In both domains he raised the standard of a lofty and almost stoical individualism, and kept it proudly flying till the day of his death. Two lectures delivered to the Mechanics' Institute at Plymouth in the later 'seventies reveal his economic convictions and appre-

[1] Information kindly supplied by the Secretary of University College.

hensions at the time of his entry into political life. In the first, "The Migration of Centres of Industrial Energy,"[1] he discussed the perplexing problem whether the life of nations is subject to the same limitations as the life of men, in other words whether the stock of national vitality inevitably becomes exhausted. The rise and fall of empires seems to indicate some such biological law; but we pass beyond the region of hypothesis in tracing the cycles of industrial growth and decay. A rapid survey of the commercial fortunes of mediaeval Italy, Flanders, Holland and England exhibits industry passing from nation to nation, and proves that in each case supremacy rests upon transitory conditions. Within our own country the centre of industry shifts from district to district, and the tide of emigration prepares us for a large transfer of industrial energy from our own to other lands. If our coal deposits are as limited as Professor Jevons calculates, we must prepare ourselves for a shrinkage of industry and a sterner struggle for existence. "I trust," he concludes, "that the spirit of wisdom may lead this nation through the trials in store for it; and I say this the more fervently because I cannot disguise from myself the conviction that this century can scarcely pass away without some of them being experienced." "The facts are for the greater part well known," wrote Professor Marshall in 1918, "but it is a monumental array of warnings that a nation with but narrow natural resources must not rely in ease on the memories of the past."

The second address, entitled "A Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work,"[2] analyses the meaning of a fair-sounding but ambiguous phrase. "A fair day's wages" means a fair amount of what money will buy, and varies with prices and with customary wants. Chinese and English labourers, for instance, working in the same town and receiving different pay, may both obtain a fair wage. "A fair day's work" is a much simpler conception, merely involving that the work must be useful and conscientiously performed. Passing further afield the lecturer explodes the vulgar errors

[1] Published in the *Fortnightly Review*, December 1878.
[2] Published in the *Fortnightly Review*, March 1879.

that workmen benefit by "making" work, and suffer by imports from abroad. The real danger to British industry arises from much deeper causes. Resuming the thread of his previous discourse, he warns his hearers of the possible shrinkage of our natural resources, and bids them prepare for recurring depressions and growing emigration. The population that can be sustained at any given time is limited by a variety of causes, some of which are wholly or partially beyond our control. The address closes on a note of rebuke to the irresponsible complacency of his contemporaries. "Forty years ago people pursued their thought to its conclusion, however disagreeable it might be. You might as well hope to build a house in disregard of the law of gravitation as to secure social well-being in a community where the principle of population is treated as of no account. To preach personal or class responsibility is not a passport to favours, and a democratic franchise exposes public men to increasing temptation to suppress unpopular truths. Much yet remains to be done to improve the condition of the people by the reform of our laws, above all those relating to land; but if all that could be suggested were accomplished, it would still remain with the people themselves to determine their own condition." [1]

Courtney's connection with the *Times* never debarred him from active co-operation with men of more advanced views than Delane. When Fawcett entered Parliament in 1865 he founded a Radical group, of which Mill was the principal ornament.[2] The group developed into a Club in 1870, with Dilke, who had entered Parliament in 1868, as Secretary. Among the members were Mill, Hare, Fawcett, Cairnes, John Morley, Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Courtney, Leslie Stephen, Henry Sidgwick, Torrens and Frank Hill, the editor of the *Daily News*. From this platform Mill propounded in 1870 his views on land, and at the inaugural public meeting of the Land Tenure Association in 1870 Sir Charles for the first time promulgated the doctrine of the

[1] "Much has been learnt since he wrote," writes Professor Marshall; "but nearly every one may still profit by some shrewd observation."

[2] L. Stephen, *Life of Fawcett*, p. 286.

"unearned increment." Not long after its foundation, in Dilke's words, "it dropped very much into the hands of Fawcett, Fitzmaurice and myself."[1] In 1880 Dilke took office and was succeeded in the Secretaryship by his brother Ashton, with whose death in 1883 it came to an end. The Club exerted a considerable influence in the 'seventies owing to the conspicuous abilities of some of its members, and helped to prepare the transformation of a predominantly Whig party into an army of Liberals and Radicals. "I first met Mr. Courtney," writes Lord Fitzmaurice, "through Mr. Fawcett and other members of the Radical Club, which consisted of Members of Parliament and non-members in about equal proportions. The Club as a rule dined in London, and when we broke up I often used to walk with Courtney to Westminster Bridge. Thence, in those early days, he used to make his way to Blackfriars, to the *Times* office. I remember that what immediately struck me most about him was his immense strength, both mental and physical, which nothing seemed able to tire, and his great independence of judgment, in which he resembled Mr. Fawcett. All his friends were naturally very anxious to see him in Parliament, and expected great things of him."

Both in the Radical Club and the Political Economy Club Courtney was thrown into frequent contact with Fawcett, whose career, no less than opinions, had been in many respects similar to his own. The elder Fawcett, like the elder Courtney, would never have thought of sending his son to the University; but the boy's mathematical abilities were so marked that the Dean of Salisbury solemnly pronounced that he ought to go to Cambridge. Peterhouse was chosen as a college where Fellowships were tenable by laymen, and Fawcett entered in 1852, a year after Courtney, rising, like him, from a "pensioner" to a "scholar." He was seventh wrangler in 1856, and in the same year was elected Fellow of Trinity Hall, whither he had migrated when he found too many competitors at Peterhouse. Though he read diligently he knew that he had no chance of being Senior Wrangler, and therefore felt at liberty to give free

[1] Gwynn and Tuckwell, *Life of Sir Charles Dilke*, i. 160.

rein to his passion for politics. He spoke frequently at the Union, where he wrestled with such budding orators as Montagu Butler, John Gorst and Gully. Having resolved as a boy that he would one day enter Parliament he migrated to London after taking his degree, and read for the Bar, paying frequent visits to the House of Commons. Returning to Cambridge two years later after losing his sight, his unflagging activity soon made him a prominent figure in the University and beyond. His election to the Chair of Political Economy in 1863 was the reward of his Manual and of his friendship with Mill. Returned to Parliament as Member for Brighton in 1865 he rapidly won the ear of the House, and established his position as an Independent Radical.

Courtney and Fawcett had never met as undergraduates, and they were probably unknown to each other till they stood as rival candidates for the Professorship. It was not till the one was in Parliament and the other anchored in Printing House Square that their intimacy began ; but it quickly ripened into close and fruitful association. Both were disciples of Mill and friends of Cairnes. Both were ardent champions of minority representation. Both had been uncompromising supporters of the cause of the North in the American Civil War. Both were professional students of political economy, finance and statistics. Both were Philosophic Radicals, pledged to *laissez-faire*, free trade, religious liberty, and women's suffrage. Finally, both were of the Cambridge school, interpreting life in terms of prose, not poetry, loving precise statement and clear thinking, and caring nothing for theology and metaphysics. If Cairnes was Courtney's first intimate friend among the leaders of thought, Fawcett was his first ally among men of action ; and the three men formed a working alliance which was not without influence on English history.

Cairnes had left Galway on his appointment to the Chair of Political Economy at University College, London ; but an accident to his leg brought on a disease which slowly crippled him, compelled him to withdraw from academic work and finally killed him. He pitched his tent at Black-

heath, partly in order to be a neighbour of Mill, who would walk beside his bath-chair so long as he was well enough to go out. When he became a hopeless invalid, unable to stand or even to move, Fawcett and Courtney paid frequent visits to his house, where the triumvirate discussed not only problems of political economy, but every phase of public affairs. His mind was unaffected, and his authority steadily increased. After the death of Mill in 1873 few would have challenged Fawcett's tribute to Cairnes as "the leading economist of the day, second only in power, originality and clearness of expression to his friend and master." "In the midst of all engagements," writes Leslie Stephen, "Fawcett was constantly running down to his friend's house, cheering him by his conversation, doing all he could to spread his reputation, encouraging him to collect and republish his essays, bringing down any one whom he thought likely to be an amusing companion, and taking counsel with him on the political measures in which they were both interested. Cairnes's vigorous intellect made the congenial alliance profitable to both parties. During Fawcett's Parliamentary career Cairnes, so long as he lived, was one of his most intimate advisers, whilst Leonard Courtney made a third in their friendly union." [1]

The triple alliance co-operated most effectively in defeating the Irish University Bill of 1873. At Galway Cairnes had imbibed an undying hostility to the claim of the Roman Church to control education in Ireland, and, though in Fawcett's words "a thorough Liberal," he believed that the defeat of Gladstone would be a lesser evil than the surrender of higher education to an Ultramontane priesthood. In 1866, in an article on "The Irish University," he had stoutly defended mixed education, and expressed a wish for the retention of the Queen's Colleges even if it was determined to create a "mediæval University." When the attempt was renewed towards the close of Gladstone's first Ministry he returned to the charge in an article entitled "The Irish University Question." [2] The Bill was stoutly

[1] *Fawcett's Life*, pp. 200-201.
[2] Both reprinted in his *Political Essays*, 1873.

contested by Fawcett in Parliament, who launched the thunderbolts forged in the arsenal at Blackheath. The third member of the triumvirate, entrenched in Printing House Square, contributed his share to the defeat of the measure, and to the subsequent passage of Fawcett's Bill for the abolition of tests in Trinity College, Dublin.

Though they could scarcely desire his cruel sufferings to be prolonged, Cairnes's death was a blow to his friends, who paid warm tributes to his memory. "No man was better informed than he of the course of political events," wrote Fawcett in the *Fortnightly Review*,[1] "and no one was a safer guide as a practical politician. He possessed charm, vivacity and humour in conjunction that made all his friends look forward to their visits to him as one of their greatest pleasures. When any of his friends heard a good story probably the first thing they thought of was, 'How Cairnes will enjoy it!' It used to be proverbial among us that, laughing with him over some joke or hearing him tell some amusing story, we often lingered so long that we generally had to run to the station and not unfrequently missed the last train."

Courtney had enjoyed his visits as much as Fawcett, and marvelled at the contrast between the cheerful serenity and the physical sufferings of their host.

To his sister Louise

August 1872.—On Sunday I went down to see Cairnes, whom I had not seen for a fortnight. He was looking terribly ill. His eyes were sunk and his hands thinner than ever. I shall try to go down again next Sunday.

The fine obituary notice in the *Times* was from his pen.[2] "He was the most powerful and exact of our recent Political Economists. The columns of a daily journal are ill-fitted to receive the impressions of social intercourse; and the memorials of his admirable humour and of conversational gifts, at once charming and instructive, must be preserved for his family and friends. They will treasure the memory

[1] August 1875.

[2] July 9, 1875.

of a private life of rare elevation, and the few who have been privileged to resort to his suburban home will long miss the interchange of thought and feeling which made it so attractive." He praises his *Leading Principles* as good hard reading, to be studied not skimmed, and better understood after several readings than after one. "He was the unseen centre of the operations that exposed the character of the University Bill in 1873 and destroyed it, for he had seen the success of united education at Galway. Its strongest opponents in Parliament and the Press were inspired by his knowledge and counsel." [1]

On the eve of his entering Parliament in 1876 Courtney set forth his views on the manufacture, expression and authority of public opinion in an article entitled "Political Machinery and Political Life," published in the July number of the *Fortnightly Review*. The election of 1874, he begins, showed the electorate to be opposed to the retention of Gladstone, but gave little if any indication what measures it desired. In any case it cannot as a rule pronounce a verdict on more than one question at a time. Moreover, public opinion, or the voice of the majority, if we closely scrutinise the methods of its manufacture, ought to carry but little weight. Most voters take their opinions ready-made from their landlord, their church, or the leader of their party; and independent thinking is as rare among candidates as among constituents. "The first condition of success is that each candidate shall be clearly identified with the policy of the party he seeks to attract. He must support the Ministry unreservedly, or he must go with the Opposition. But the balance of victory constantly rests with those electors who are not enrolled under either banner. The hovering and doubtful voters are far from always being venal. They are cautious, lukewarm, cold-blooded creatures, sceptical of professions, and in some instances disdainful of political life. Whoever tries to win them must strive to take the colour out of his opinions. He soon perceives the advantages of practising an economy of revela-

[1] Courtney was Cairnes's executor, and was for years the friend and adviser of his widow.

tion ; but this is extremely difficult except where there is nothing to reveal. All the influences which prevail among us to repress the development of opinion are brought into strongest operation at the time of a general election. The best candidate is the man who is not troubled with thoughts of anything beyond the programme of his party. The conditions thus limiting the choice of candidates necessarily affect the character of the House of Commons, and tend to make it a chamber of mediocrity. There are persons who regard this result with satisfaction. They tell us that what is wanted in the Legislature is not a multiplication of Mr. Burke but of men who are content to say ditto to Mr. Burke. I am, however, prepared to uphold the paradox that the most important function of the House of Commons is not that of legislation but of discussion." Parliament should be the educator ; for the press tends to follow its lead, popularising the ideas that have found a foothold within its walls.

What is the remedy for this artificial stimulation of mediocrity, this systematic sterilisation of originality ? In answering the question the author reveals the purpose for which the article was written. " I look for something like a regeneration of political life through the gradual transformation of our electoral system according to the principles of Mr. Hare. Instead of compelling voters to bring themselves down to a common level in the hope of forming part of a majority, I would allow them to associate together freely according to their opinions in groups, obtaining representatives according to their numbers. The immediate adoption of Mr. Hare's system I neither expect nor desire ; but its introduction within the limited areas of our great towns and more populous counties may be anticipated without extravagance of thought in the lifetime of the new generation. Our present system operates to limit the quantity and worsen the quality of life in every division. Why should we not adopt the régime of liberty instead of the régime of constriction ? If a voter is to have the power to which he is entitled he must have freedom of choice ; and he can only have freedom of choice when the single-

member constituency disappears. If it is urged that the representation of minorities may cheat the majority of its rightful power, the answer is that with single-member constituencies a majority in the Legislature may be returned by a minority in the country. The majority may vote down minorities if they will first hear what they have to say. The demand for the extension of household suffrage to the counties will not long be resisted, and its concession must be accompanied by a redistribution of electoral power. Any one who examines the institutions about us by the light of the principles and thoughts that daily gain force among men must find little comfort or trust in their permanence. We are compassed about with so much that must pass away, we struggle to the injury of our freedom and health under the weight of so much that is dead and must be shuffled off; and yet the strain and the labour of their removal threaten to be so great that we are often tempted to think that without a revolution the changes that are inevitable cannot be accomplished. The transformation of our representative system appears to me to open up a way to the accomplishment of the changes we foresee without resort to passion and to violence. If we make the governing assembly a mirror of the life of the people, the leaven of change will work gradually in the one as in the other."

Courtney had often expressed these views in the *Times* or in the Radical Club; but they appeared for the first time above his signature in this article, which drew a warm commendation from the Editor.

From John Morley

June 22, 1876.—Your article interests me enormously—though my mind halts this side of your conclusion. The first dozen pages strike me as masterly. The silently directing power of Parliament over public opinion has never been so set forth—to the best of my knowledge. I will not trouble you with a manuscript discussion, because I hope to examine your position in print before many weeks are over. At this moment I am not quite sure where the point of divergence is exactly

to be found. You make the plan more persuasive than usual, partly because you write like a practical politician—which Mill and Hare do not. Chamberlain has been very unwell; he is now refreshing his brain at Llangollen in preparation for Tuesday's meeting. If Horsman would only be kind enough to vacate Liskeard, then things would happen that would make me think better of the House of Commons than I do now. However, all in good time, I suppose, and one at once.

The two men had come to London in the later 'fifties to seek their fortune, but it was not till several years later that they formed the friendship that lasted unbroken for nearly half a century. Their common veneration for Mill, their common friendship for Cairnes and Fawcett, Leslie Stephen and Frederic Harrison and many another standard-bearer in the army of progress, their individualism and their hatred of Imperialism drew them together. The younger man declined to enlist under the banner of Proportional Representation; but on other issues they were agreed, and Courtney was a welcome recruit to the band of advanced thinkers who, under the guidance of its brilliant editor, made the *Fortnightly* a cardinal factor in the political and intellectual education of the third quarter of the century. Modern radicalism as a Parliamentary force was born in the 'sixties and 'seventies when Fawcett and Dilke, Chamberlain and Morley, Trevelyan and Wilfrid Lawson declared war on the Whigs; and Courtney, though temperamentally somewhat more conservative, supported his friends in most of their enterprises and was regarded by them as a member of the General Staff. "At his first dinner with me in London," writes Lord Morley in recording his early friendship with Chamberlain, "I made him acquainted with three men of note, Fawcett, Courtney and Harrison." [1] The date is not given; but as the historic partnership began in 1873 it can hardly have been later than 1874. Chamberlain, however, never became an intimate friend like Fawcett and Morley; for the founder of the caucus was separated by a deep gulf from the sworn foe of machine politics. The two men were destined to enter Parliament in the same

[1] *Recollections*, i. 157.

year, to co-operate first in the triumph and then in the defeat of Gladstonian ideas, and finally to lead the opposing armies which wrestled for the soul of England at the close of the nineteenth century.

By the middle of the 'seventies Courtney had become a familiar figure not only in Liberal circles but in the political and social life of London; and his experiences were duly recorded in frequent letters to Penzance.

To his sister Margaret

July 20, 1876.—I dined yesterday at Lord Harrowby's; the dinner was very good, the people pleasant, and powdered footmen moved about the room in almost too great numbers. Old Lord Harrowby wore his star and ribbon of the Garter, and he reminded me after dinner that it was at a Cabinet dinner in the same house in his father's time that the Cato Street conspiracy proposed to blow up the Ministry; also that the Waterloo dispatches were brought by Lord Percy and read from the top of the stairs to people pouring into the hall. The Chiswick party went off very well. We passed through the hall of the cottage out to the garden on the other side where the Prince and Princess stood under a shady tree and the guests bowed on being presented and passed on. Among the people I saw and had talks with were Cardinal Manning, who introduced me to Archbishop Howard, Knollys, the Prince's secretary, Charley Beresford, Russell, Oliphant, Vernon Harcourt, Salar Jung, Lord Napier of Magdala, the Mallets, Lord Houghton and daughter, Woolner, Sir Bartle Frere, Birdwood of the Indian Museum, etc. The Morocco Ambassadors were there, making a very fine show.

It was generally expected that Courtney would enter Parliament as soon as opportunity arose; and it was universally agreed that he possessed unusual qualifications for public life. His wide knowledge and grasp of detail, his travels and his academic studies, his long apprenticeship under Delane, above all his powerful mind and independent character marked him out for a leading part on the stage which he had so often surveyed from the gallery with critical eye and tingling pulse.

CHAPTER VII

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

"When in 1874 Leonard first contested Liskeard," writes his sister Mrs. Oliver, "his effort to enter Parliament seemed a matter of course. It was not that I can recollect ever hearing him talk of his intention to become a member of the House of Commons; but one knew that his work, his study of political questions and institutions, his travels, his inclinations all tended in that direction. Devoted to his native county it was natural that he should desire to be one of its members."

The Gladstone Government had been tripped up in 1873 on its Irish University scheme, but had recovered its breath and still possessed a working majority. Though its energies were exhausted, and Disraeli was not without justification in describing the occupants of the Treasury Bench as a row of extinct volcanoes, the country was startled in the following year by the news that the Prime Minister had dissolved Parliament. The Cornish seats were already provided with Liberal champions; but at the last moment the candidate for Liskeard accepted an offer to contest Leicester, and left a vacancy that required to be promptly filled. How Courtney flung himself into the breach was related by him to his constituents several years later. "Though I was practically unknown in Liskeard, Liskeard was not unknown to me. From boyhood it had been to me full of interest. I could remember several of the contests in which Charles Buller was a candidate. Later on I heard of all that he had done in London and what hopes were buried with him

in his premature tomb. It was therefore with no ordinary feeling of emotion that the possibility of coming to Liskeard seemed to open up. It was in a small room in the office of the *Times*, about half-past one in the morning, when I was engaged in writing a leading article, that one of the boys who would come in from time to time bringing 'flimsy' containing new intelligence, brought in a message stating that Mr. McArthur had retired from Liskeard. I went on writing, and put the information aside till I had finished. Then I began to think, Shall I go down there? I left the office about 2.30 and walked along the Embankment to the Temple, and then I determined I would come down. I went back to my esteemed friend Mr. Delane and told him my decision. The following day, having opened up communication with Liskeard, I telegraphed, 'I will come down by mail train to-night.'"

In the rush of an unexpected General Election individuals are lost in the crowd; but the *Spectator*, in deploring the absence of able candidates, directed the attention of its readers to one marked exception. "Mr. Leonard Courtney has had the courage to beard Mr. Horsman in Liskeard. Though little known out of London he is known in it as a man who, if he can hit the temper of the House of Commons, will rise fast and far." There seemed, however, to be little more than a sporting chance, for he was unknown in the constituency, and he had only ten days allowed him to woo the electors. The sitting member elegantly described his antagonist as "the *Times* reporter," and complained that he had arrived in the borough like a thief in the night; but he was glad to be opposed by a new-comer, and the veteran campaigner looked forward to an easy victory.

Edward Horsman, a miniature Roebuck, was a prominent if eccentric Parliamentary figure for forty years.[1] He had held office as Chief Secretary for Ireland under Palmerston from 1855 to 1857, resigning it on the ground that there was "not enough work to be done," and preferring in future the career of a free lance. He joined Lowe in opposition to the Reform Bill of 1866, and indeed Bright ascribed

[1] See Sir Henry Lucy, *Men and Manner in Parliament*, pp. 123-7.

Lowe's hostility to his influence. He was depicted retiring "into what may be called his political Cave of Adullam, to which he invited every one who was in distress and every one who was discontented." Bright's phrase made its fortune, though nobody now remembers the name of the first Adullamite. He declared himself to be "in favour of steady but not precipitate progress"; but his notion of precipitancy may be judged by the fact that he opposed every extension of the franchise during his long membership of the House. He drifted ever further away from his party, and in 1869, when he stood for Liskeard, he was unsuccessfully opposed by an orthodox follower of Gladstone, to whom he was a thorn in the flesh throughout the Parliament of 1868. At the next election he was opposed by Courtney, but held the seat by 334 votes to 329. The disappointment was not very severe, as the pendulum swung to the Conservative side throughout the country; and the Liberal candidate was, in his own words, "unknown, unexpected, uninvited."

Courtney expected victory neither for himself nor for his party. Its leader had gone to the country without a programme, and offered no particular inducement to reformers to rally to his support. Under the circumstances the Liskeard figures were a moral triumph, and his friends shared his conviction that the next appeal would not be in vain.

From John Scott

ALEXANDRIA, *March* 4.—Need I say I was very sorry the Liskeard people just failed to do the country good service? It is sad to think that the addition of three men of sense would have made the difference. However your turn will come, and I shall still be able to drink to the health of my friend the member as I had intended to do a fortnight ago. I looked in vain for a report of the statesmanlike speeches. But I have a high opinion of the *Spectator's* insight since it put you forward as one of the men of intellect whom the country should delight to honour.

Horsman had a genius for quarrelling, and it was only natural that the irascible Scotsman should fall foul of his antagonist. Speaking in Liskeard soon after the election

he denounced him in unmeasured terms, concluding with the terrible indictment, "the truth is not in him." He was at once challenged to substantiate the charge. Mr. Courtney, he rejoined, had declared that he had come to Liskeard without invitation or communication; but he, the speaker, had seen a telegram in which he had announced himself. The reply was a mere quibble, for the telegram merely stated that he was about to present himself to the electors. The controversy was fought out in the *Times*, and for nearly a fortnight the Member for Liskeard gave demonstrations in the art of invective. "A collection of the phrases and epithets he has applied to me," wrote the defeated candidate, "from the first moment I ventured to appear as his opponent, would be a curiosity in the literature of vituperation." But Horsman's ways were well known, and it was no discredit to any man to be the object of his strident rebukes. Courtney found no lack of sympathy within the precincts of Printing House Square; for Delane himself had been truculently attacked in past years for his supposed servility to Palmerston. Even Lowe, his old bed-fellow in the Cave of Adullam, roundly condemned Horsman's conduct as "quite inexcusable."

The Liberal citizens of Liskeard shared Lowe's view of the controversy, and a week or two later Courtney received a requisition signed by a majority of the registered electors to visit the borough. Accordingly on March 31 he delivered an address. After the defeat of the previous year, he began, he believed that a few years in Opposition would be useful for the Liberal Party as a time of education, and that the Tories might perform some useful work; but he had been sadly disappointed. Gladstone had earned his repose, but he hoped and believed that he would resume the leadership. A reform of county government was urgently required, and Gladstone alone could grapple with it. Another important question which ought not to be shirked on account of its immense difficulties was the disestablishment and disendowment of the English Church. The franchise must be extended, and, what was of still greater importance, the single-member constituency must yield to a larger unit in the interests of

fair representation. These and other reforms should be adopted by the party; and he had no desire to see the Liberals back in office till they were prepared with a constructive programme. The speaker was forthwith adopted as prospective Liberal candidate at the next General Election; but the period of waiting was to be shorter than he had any right to expect. At the end of 1876 Horsman's stormy career came to an end, and Courtney offered himself for a second time to the electors of Liskeard, not unreasonably confident of success.

To his sister Margaret

LISKEARD, *December* 3.—I telegraphed to Will yesterday a message which you possibly received at dinner. This opponent is Lieut.-Colonel John Sterling, second or younger son of John Sterling and son-in-law of Sir John Trelawny, a fact he states in a little circular he has issued. Sir John has no influence here; he once stood for the place and was beaten, and so far this opposition does not seem dangerous, though it would be pleasanter to have a walk over. All my friends appear to be very staunch; at all events the leaders are, and I suppose when they are the rest will be.

On December 22 the Liberal candidate was elected by 388 to 281—the largest number of votes ever cast in Liskeard—and took his seat at the opening of the session of 1877.

To his sister Margaret

February 9, 1877.—You will have seen I took my seat yesterday—my introducers being Edmund Fitzmaurice and Mundella. There was a great crowd in the House of Lords to see Lord Beaconsfield; the ladies in the galleries laughed when he and his introducers sat down on the Earls' bench and put on their cocked hats and took them off again. I expect we shall be having a great debate in the House of Commons on the Eastern question in about a fortnight. There was a meeting of the Liberal chiefs on Wednesday and they resolved to show fight, the Duke of Argyll insisting upon it.

"When Courtney was elected," wrote Justin M'Carthy, "I remember having a talk with an experienced Member of

the House who set himself up as an authority on all political questions. 'Mark my words,' he said to me with an air of portentous wisdom, 'he will be a dead failure in the House of Commons.' I did mark his words, and Courtney was not a dead failure, but a very live success."[1] When the new member for Liskeard entered the House of Commons it had lost its leader; for Disraeli had crossed the lobby at the close of the previous session. The new leader of the House, Stafford Northcote, was notable for character rather than ability, and his lieutenants were capable but not brilliant. The Liberal Achilles had retired to his tent, whence he emerged at intervals; and the Opposition followed the unselfish but rather drowsy leadership of Lord Hartington. The most active section of the Liberal party was Radical, not Whig, and it was from such men as Fawcett and Dilke, Trevelyan and Wilfrid Lawson that the most effective criticism of the Government was heard. To this group, reinforced as it was by the recent arrival of Joseph Chamberlain, Courtney attached himself. His frequent attendance at debates had made him familiar with Parliamentary forms, and the stage fright which daunts the new member was entirely lacking. He was, moreover, trained by long years of journalism to clear statement and to all the arts of argument and analysis; and within a week of taking his seat he had delivered his maiden speech.

Courtney chose for his plunge the main political topic of the session, the Eastern Question, on which the Liberal party was not unanimous. While Hartington and Forster shared to some extent the Russophobia of the Government, Gladstone, deeply stirred by the Bulgarian atrocities, emerged from his retirement and proclaimed in ringing tones the policy of "bag and baggage." His pamphlet on *Bulgarian Horrors*, published in the autumn of 1876, sold by tens of thousands, and his oratorical campaign aroused extraordinary enthusiasm. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, dismissed the tales of Turkish devilry as coffee-

[1] *Reminiscences*, ii. p. 369. In his *History of Our Own Times, 1880–1897*, p. 154, the forecast is ascribed to a "writer in a very influential London Weekly."

house babble, and was far more interested in checkmating Russia than in emancipating the Balkan Christians. Lord Salisbury had been sent to take part in a Conference at Constantinople; but his mission was doomed to failure, since the Porte knew that his recommendations would never be enforced so long as Beaconsfield was at the helm. In the debate on the Address Gladstone raised the Turkish policy of the Government, taking as his text the reference in a recent despatch to "our treaty engagements with Turkey." His denial of the existence of such engagements to assist Turkey against Russia was emphatically reiterated by the member for Liskeard. We were under obligations to the Guaranteeing Powers, he maintained, but not to Turkey; nor did the Treaty of 1856 place Turkey under obligations to us. We agreed to respect her integrity and independence in order to ensure the peace of Europe, not to defend her against the consequences of her own misrule. The power of counsel and warning employed at the recent Conference of Constantinople was derived not from treaty but from the public law of Europe; for the community of States possessed an inherent right to prevent any of their number from becoming a danger to the peace of the world. We must have freedom to deal with the problems of the Near East as they arose, and neither friendship with Turkey nor fear of Russia ought to prevent us from alleviating the cruel lot of the Christian subjects of the Sultan.

It was a strong Gladstonian utterance, carefully prepared and delivered with obvious conviction. "I well remember Mr. Courtney's advent in the House of Commons," writes Mr. Burt, "two years after I had become a member. He was already well known to many members. To have won a great outside reputation does not always help a member to the esteem of the House. Indeed he is listened to more critically than would be an ordinary *débutant*. Moreover, the House has its own standard of measurement and makes its own estimates without regard to the antecedents of the new-comer. Of his maiden speech I have a clear recollection. I was sitting near to him at the time of its delivery. On such an occasion the House is always

indulgent to a new member. Even to a practised speaker his maiden speech is something of an ordeal. Mr. Courtney in truth needed no special indulgence. He was never, I should think, a timid man, never lacked self-confidence, and I distinctly remember that the speech was delivered with complete self-possession and with great effect. In substance, in arrangement, in phrasing and in delivery it could not have been bettered. A few months earlier I had been privileged to hear Mr. Chamberlain's maiden speech, which, needless to say, was a complete success. When he concluded, a member sitting beside me said, 'That speech is like a good leading article.' That remark was meant to be, and was really, a compliment, implying that it was more perfect in form and in phrasing than impromptu utterances are wont to be. On Mr. Courtney's maiden speech the same verdict might have been given."

Mr. Burt's description is confirmed by a report from the Press Gallery.[1] "The speech was made at an hour when the House was very thin, and it was therefore in a manner thrown away. Many members would have come eagerly in if they had known it was coming off just then. Is it a good or a bad omen for the future of a political debater when his first speech is made with perfect ease and self-possession? Mr. Courtney was as easy and self-possessed as if he had been addressing the House once or twice a night for the last twenty sessions. It was an excellent piece of argument, somewhat fine-drawn, delivered in a clear, strong voice, and was not without a certain dignity of effect. But it was a little too professorial for the general style of the House of Commons."

The speaker himself was fairly satisfied with his own performance.

To his sister Margaret

February 17.—You at home will like to hear something of my maiden speech last night. It was begun in a very thin House as Bob Montagu had sent everybody away, but a fair number came in from the Lobbies and some very good men were there. Northcote and Bourke on the Treasury Bench,

[1] The *Examiner*, February 24, 1878.

and on our side Gladstone, Hartington, Lowe, Forster, Goschen, Childers, Harcourt, besides the stragglers below the gangway. I spoke rather too quickly and with too much condensation, but I believe I made my meaning clear and commanded attention. The matter was substantial, though the art might have been better. I was a good deal congratulated at the close with a warmth of approval that showed I had accomplished something more than a *succès d'estime*. On the whole I am not dissatisfied with the beginning; the performance will give me some reputation as tolerably long-headed, and enthusiasm will come later on. The *Daily News* refers to the speech in its leader.

A few days later he met the real, if not the titular, leader of his party.

To his sister Margaret

March 1.—I dined last Friday in a very small, quiet, family sort of gathering at Sir Walter James's in Whitehall Gardens. His son, who is in the House (member for Gateshead), asked me in the afternoon to come if I was not engaged, saying that Gladstone was coming. It appears that Gladstone is accustomed to drop in there in a quiet way. We were in all ten or twelve; Sir Walter and Lady James, Walter James and his wife, Gladstone and Mrs. Gladstone and niece and two or three others; an oval table and conversation general and agreeable.

His opinions on the Eastern Question were expounded in greater detail in a long article which occupied the place of honour in the May number of the *Fortnightly Review*. The policy which has for its object the conservation of the Ottoman Empire, he begins, and discourages with the whole influence of England every suggestion tending towards its dissolution, is erroneous in its conception and mischievous in its consequences; and the policy which favours its gradual dismemberment and disintegration, and would approve and support the employment of the allied force of Europe in setting this process in motion, is wise and beneficial. In a word generosity and statesmanship concur in recommending the piecemeal dissolution of the Ottoman rule. A brief glance at the history of the Near East reveals the ebbing of the Turkish tide, and the further contraction of the Empire is inevitable. The Turks remain a conquering

tribe, lacking the faculty of incorporating the races it holds in subjection, and their numbers have thus diminished under the strain of war. If their dominion is thus destined to further disintegration, the only question is whether the next step should be taken at the present moment or deferred. To answer this question we must glance at the States which have been liberated from the yoke—Hungary, Greece, Roumania, Serbia. Though Greece has disappointed certain expectations, no one can travel from Constantinople to Athens without feeling that he has exchanged a decaying for a growing world. Compare again the condition of the peasantry on the Roumanian and the Bulgarian side of the Danube. Remember the continual revolts in Bosnia and Crete against intolerable conditions. Every step in the progress of dismemberment has been a step forward, and the Crimean War was a crazy attempt to arrest what ought to have been facilitated. At that time England was not alone in her mistaken policy; but, while other States have come to recognise the necessity of a further contraction, the British Government has stood alone in its dogged resolve to resist every limitation of independence and every invasion of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Our resistance has prevented the changes that are so urgently needed and that might have been peacefully secured by a united Europe. It is pitiable to read the Crimean prophecies of the approaching regeneration of Turkey, for her dissolution is a fore-ordained result of unalterable causes.

The real ground for the action of the British Government is not love of Turkey, but fear of Russia. The Government of Russia is corrupt, despotic and aggressive; but her record as an emancipator of the Christian subjects of the Turk is not without honour, and travellers report an outburst of sympathy among the masses unstained by territorial greed. Such a mood provides a precious lever for international co-operation in the task of humanity. Austria has neither a desire for change nor a desire to prevent it, and a bold appeal to Bismarck might have avoided the danger of isolated action by Russia, left Turkey without a friend in Europe, and compelled her to surrender at discretion. The

British Government, however, has committed every possible mistake. It has indirectly encouraged Turkey to refuse reform, rejected every proposal from Russia for international pressure, failed to keep the peace, and even rendered possible a European conflagration. Yet even now it is not too late to mend. If we proclaimed that we had abandoned the vain policy of maintaining the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and were bent on co-operating with the other Powers in raising under European tutelage a confederation of free States out of its ruins, we should at last be doing something to redeem the past.

It was a ringing challenge to Disraeli's Russophobe and Turcophil policy. Its wisdom was to be shown by Lord Salisbury's tragic admission twenty years later that we had put our money on the wrong horse, and forty years later by our union with Russia against the corrupt and effete Power that had been kept on its legs by the blunders of British statesmen. The Opposition, however, was too divided to take vigorous action against the Government, and shirked a debate which would reveal their weakness. After the Easter recess, however, Gladstone determined to intervene, and gave notice of four Resolutions, censuring the Bulgarian massacres; declaring Turkey to have lost the right to British assistance, moral or material; demanding local self-government in the disturbed territories; and urging Great Britain to join the Powers in extorting guarantees for humanity and justice. These Resolutions, mild as they were, proved too strong meat for the digestion of Hartington and Forster, and the third and fourth were reluctantly sacrificed to secure united Liberal support. The attack was launched on May 7 in a speech of lofty eloquence and appeal; but the avowed differences of the Opposition leaders took the heart out of the debate, and gave the Government an easy victory.

This exhibition of organised impotence was warmly resented by the Radical wing, led by Fawcett, Chamberlain and Courtney. Resuming the debate on the third day the member for Liskeard sharply denounced the action of the Government and the inaction of the Opposition. He had

heard "with consternation and bewilderment" that the third and fourth Resolutions had been dropped; for the first and second were so generally accepted that they were hardly worth a discussion. Who would deny that the House disapproved the Bulgarian massacres or that Turkey had thereby lost all claim to our material or moral support? It was said that the unanimity of the Liberal party has been secured by it. No one could be more deeply desirous for such unanimity; but though it might have a single voice, it was not a voice that expressed a mind or a will. "The present position of the party, resembling too faithfully the European Concert, is that of a Greek chorus which utters moral sentiments at intervals without affecting in any way the action of the play." The Home Secretary observed that no member had ventured to recommend coercion. "In the most unequivocal manner I am prepared to recommend the employment of force." One policy was that of maintaining the *status quo* of the Ottoman Empire. A wiser course was to assist in its gradual dismemberment. Such a course involved the possibility of war. But, as the Powers would act together, it would only be a nominal coercion, as when half a dozen policemen tell a rough that if he resists they will have to use their truncheons on him. Our true model was Canning. His convictions dated not from the Bulgarian atrocities, but from the Crimean War, and the experience of every subsequent year had only served to confirm them.

The speech was praised by Mr. Chaplin, an opponent, as a manly and straightforward avowal of policy, and was repeatedly mentioned during the remainder of the long debate. "Mr. Courtney's speech," wrote the London Correspondent of the *Western Morning News*, "will secure for him in the opinion of the House of Commons that high position as a speaker which those who knew him personally were persuaded he ought to occupy. Until this week circumstances have been rather against him, and he has scarcely had an opportunity to do himself justice; but yesterday's speech was worthy of his article in the *Fortnightly*, which was the best written contribution to the

literature of the Eastern Question since Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet. It was indeed almost the best that has been delivered on the Resolutions. There was no finer passage in all the present debate than the vindication of Russia to which the interruptions of his opponents spurred him."

In denouncing the Turkophil tendencies of the Prime Minister the member for Liskeard was following the lead of Gladstone, and was supported by influential members of his party; but in opposing the South African policy of the Government he stood almost alone. The annexation of the Transvaal in the spring of 1877 was regarded in most Liberal circles with dislike as a new illustration of Disraelian Imperialism; but its causes and probable consequences were studied by few. From the first Courtney raised his voice against an act which appeared to him unjustifiable in itself and fraught with menace to British interests. In speaking on Gladstone's Resolutions, he expressed his astonishment at the strange contrast between the timidity of Ministers in Turkey and their rashness in another quarter of the globe. "The Government has just annexed an independent Republic in South Africa. It may be said that it will involve no risk; but to that I reply, Wait till the end. That act, without any justification of policy or principle, exposes the country to greater peril of war than my suggestions for the coercion of Turkey."

The annexation of the Transvaal was only part of the policy of Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, who was anxious to see South Africa follow the Canadian model. On the second reading of the South African Federation Bill on July 9 the Under Secretary for the Colonies, Mr. Lowther, defended the annexation. The white population, he declared, was 40,000, who were confronted by a million blacks. When war broke out with the natives the Transvaal had been repeatedly warned by the British Government. The defeat of the Boer forces opened up the prospect of a general native revolt. Sir Theophilus Shepstone had been sent to Pretoria to explain the danger to the British colonists and to take measures for their security. Though the President and other members of the Government had pro-

tested against the proposed change, the Republic had been annexed, and the British Cabinet had approved the step. The country was healthy and rich in minerals, and once delivered from native dangers and financial difficulties he anticipated for it a happy future.

The rejection of the Bill was moved by Courtney in a speech of earnest warning. He pointed out that the Canadian Bill of 1867 was the work of the Canadians themselves, whereas the present plan of federation was the child of Downing Street. Its main object was to recover territories which we had deliberately resigned. The annexation of the Transvaal was defended on the plea of danger from the natives. But we had refrained from annexing the Orange Free State, which was conterminous with Natal and Cape Colony, despite its four years' war with the Basutos; and it was now peaceful and prosperous. If the Transvaal had been left in peace it too would have developed its resources, and in time would probably have entered into free union with the British Colonies. This happy prospect had been frustrated by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, "dressed in a little brief authority," and by Lord Carnarvon's envoy, Mr. Froude. The Colonial Secretary had urged confederation before informing himself whether it would be acceptable; and his precipitancy was resented in both the Dutch and British colonies. The fear of war spreading in South Africa was advanced as a reason for the Bill; but the danger was over before Shepstone arrived. He had been instructed to obtain the consent of the people and the concurrence of the Governors of the colonies before taking action; but he had done neither. "With or without support I shall fight the Bill; for I believe Confederation to be inapplicable to South Africa, and the Bill involves us in a deed which, if ratified, will bring disgrace and dishonour on the English people." The rejection was seconded by Sir Charles Dilke; but the second reading was carried by 81 to 19.

Courtney renewed his opposition when the House went into Committee on the Bill, and returned to the charge in the last week of the session, when he moved that "the annexation of the South African Republic is unjustifiable,

and calculated to be injurious to the interests of the United Kingdom and of its Colonies." The frequent suggestion that the natives might prove dangerous not only to the inhabitants of the Transvaal but to ourselves was not supported by Shepstone; and indeed the natives under Secocoeni had been worsted by the small Transvaal force before we annexed the country. It had been falsely denied that the annexation had been secured by force, and much had been made of the alleged consent of the Transvaal Republic. Shepstone had been welcomed with cordiality because the people believed he had come to negotiate an offensive and defensive alliance, and annexation was a complete surprise. He had been told to obtain the consent of the Governors-General before acting, but had disobeyed the order. Though we had in past time agreed to allow the Boers to trek into the interior, we had now undertaken the immense burden of administering the Transvaal. We should be compelled to take over its existing and prospective quarrels with the native chiefs, and it could be governed by despotic methods alone. To these familiar arguments Lowther returned the equally familiar rejoinder that Shepstone was a first-rate public servant, and that the policy of the Transvaal would inevitably have led to a native war endangering the security of its neighbours. The dispute was incapable of settlement, for nobody could know how the situation would have developed if the country had not been annexed. But when the Zulu War broke out two years later Courtney pointed to his prophecy that annexation would increase the danger to the British colonies.

Courtney had quickly found his feet in the House of Commons, and he lost no opportunity of championing the causes to which he was pledged. If afforded the disciple of Mill peculiar satisfaction to support a Woman's Suffrage Bill, a hardy annual sponsored by Jacob Bright. In reply to Mr. Arthur Balfour and Isaac Butt, the latter of whom argued that "by the ordinance of Providence woman was never intended for these things," he pointed out that the considerations now employed against the vote were formerly urged against her education. "Even if her emancipation

were accompanied by the risk of degradation which had been anticipated, I would face it in consideration of the advantages to be gained. There is no fear that courtesy from strong men to weak women will diminish."

The report in Hansard gravely records that the member for Liskeard "spoke amid continued interruption"; but we owe a less prosaic account of the incident to the lively pen of Sir Henry Lucy.[1] "Mr. Courtney was too good a citizen to leave the House of Commons long lacking the benefit of his counsel. I have no recollection of his maiden speech; but as early as the first week in June he suddenly achieved fame. It was a Wednesday afternoon, and the House was engaged on the second reading of the Woman's Suffrage Bill. That is one of several subjects on the flank of Imperial politics Mr. Courtney has made especially his own. He was anxious above all things that a division should be taken on the second reading. He succeeded in talking out the Bill. It was a quarter past five when he rose with a portentous sheaf of notes in his hand. At that time debate on Wednesdays might be continued till a quarter to six, when, if not otherwise concluded, it would automatically close. Mr. Courtney had something under half an hour at his disposal, and, had he been left undisturbed, might have used the opportunity to advantage. It happens that thus early in his career he had succeeded in alienating the House, a position long ago retrieved by fuller acquaintance with his sterling qualities and his high capacity. There are few things the House of Commons resents more hotly than haste on the part of a new member to assist it with his counsel. At this epoch Mr. Courtney had strong views on the Eastern question and was not diffident in setting them forth. When he now appeared on an off-day, plainly predisposed to deliver a lecture on women's rights, members, in any circumstances shamelessly predisposed to make fun of the topic, resolved to 'have a lark.' He had not proceeded far when there were cries for the division. This interruption he met with angry rebuke that fanned the flame. For twenty minutes he

[1] *Cornish Magazine*, 1888, pp. 162-3.

stood and faced the storm. Opposite and around him was a crowd of hilarious gentlemen shouting ' 'Vide ! 'vide ! 'vide ! ' When the roar of sound momentarily fell Mr. Courtney, raising his stentorian voice to thunderous heights, attempted to get in the fragment of a sentence. Then, as the winter storm surging through the forlorn trees, having apparently blown itself out, suddenly rises with angrier roar, so Mr. Courtney's voice was drowned in a fresh shout of ' 'Vide ! 'vide ! 'vide ! ' It was characteristic of his courage that, though still a new member, presumably in awe of the House, he for twenty minutes faced the music, the roar rising to a final yell of exultation when, as the hand of the clock pointed to a quarter to six, the Speaker rose with calls of ' Order ! order ! ' and Mr. Courtney sat down, having talked out the Bill he had risen to advocate."

By the end of his first session the House was aware that the member for Liskeard was an able and well-informed man with a mind of his own. He had taken his stand beside Fawcett and the other Radical leaders, and in the dominant issue of the day he had supported Gladstone against the titular leaders of the party. His speeches had justified and increased the reputation with which he had entered the House, and his fearless independence won him respect in all camps. At a dinner-party given by Sir Charles Dilke the guests discussed the nature of " moral force " ; and the host, after reviewing various distinguished names, decided that " Courtney and Fawcett both have moral force." [1] " The House soon became aware of the ability of its new recruit," writes Lord Northbourne, who entered the House in 1874. " His personality left a mark on a crowd of very commonplace and ordinary M.P.'s, of the rank and file of whom I was one. He had a splendid intellect. He seemed always ready to listen to his intellectual inferiors, though I should imagine their society and conversation must have bored him. Combined with his massive brain power he had an abrupt and distant manner, and probably acquired the reputation of the same kind as

[1] *Dilke's Life*, i. 219.

another member whose name need not be repeated. Talk five minutes to Mr.——, and you will find he is a clever fellow. Continue the conversation for another five minutes and you will discover he is very clever. Pursue it for fifteen minutes, and you will conclude he thinks you a fool. This was not intentional, I am sure, on Courtney's part; but it is not surprising that a mind of this stamp was not very popular. He was rough but very human. The best compliment I could pay him was to say he resembled Dr. Johnson, of whom some one remarked that there was nothing of the bear about him except his skin."

The Russo-Turkish conflict which Lord Beaconsfield had failed to prevent ran its course during 1877 and was finally settled in favour of Russia, largely by the aid of Roumanian arms. The Prime Minister made no secret of his sympathies, and at the Guildhall Banquet on November 9 he extolled the valour and patriotism of the Turkish troops. When the fall of Plevna and the capture of the Shipka Pass opened the way to Constantinople, a British Fleet was ordered to the Dardanelles. Lord Carnarvon and Lord Derby, who were opposed to a second Crimean War, resigned; but the Foreign Secretary withdrew his resignation. Parliament had been summoned to meet before the appointed time, and was promptly invited to pass a Vote of Credit. On behalf of the Opposition a hostile amendment was moved by Forster; but on the receipt of a false report that the Russians were advancing on Constantinople it was withdrawn. While the party leaders were vacillating Courtney, as usual, had a clear idea of what ought to be done, and explained his policy to the House. The Government, relying on the outburst of popular passion against Russia, maintained that the nation was unanimous; but this "unanimity," he declared, was imaginary. We must choose between Russia and Turkey. The Ministers said they were going to the Conference to act with Austria, to take their stand on the treaty of 1856, and to compel Russia to accept its conditions. These, he felt sure, were aims of which the people of England would not approve. It was quite impossible to doubt that the great majority looked back

to the Crimean War with abhorrence and had no wish to abide by its results; while many others would, if they could, reproduce that war. The coming Conference was full of the peril of war. Point after point might arise of a nature to incite the Government and the people of England. He hoped we should shake ourselves free from Turkish and Austrian influences and assist in obtaining the freedom of Bulgaria and the Greeks. There was only one interest we had to guard, and that was the keeping open or keeping shut of the Dardanelles. If we aimed at anything else, let it be to neutralise Austria and to uphold the settlement proposed by Russia of the question of the subject races of the Sultan.

"There was only one really eloquent speech," wrote the London correspondent of the *Western Morning News*, "and that was Mr. Courtney's. He was continually interrupted by the members who sat opposite. The outcries seemed to make him very nervous, but the nervousness gave a noteworthy touch to the eloquence, making him more animated and more picturesque. He needs only one quality to make him a favourite. He cannot joke. Last night he argued when he was howled at. He should sit for a while at the feet of his friend Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and then see what the House will think of him."

To his sister Margaret

February 9, 1878.—You will of course have seen that we have had very exciting times. The report in the *Times* was absurdly bad, being in fact in many parts unintelligible. For some reasons I was very well pleased with my performance. In the first place the House was in the most languid condition after the excitement before dinner, and speaker after speaker addressed most listless audiences. Well, I certainly gave the discussion a new start, and pulled the men together. Next, although I had notes lying on the bench I never took them up or referred to them from beginning to end, which was a useful experience. The "excited gesticulation" of the *Times* was no loss of temper or self-command as suggested: I had foreseen what would happen at that part of my argument, and was simply pursuing the course I had arranged in my own mind. The Speaker pulled me up for doing what Bright and some others

do in every considerable speech—but I cannot complain, as he was only recalling the rule which is so often broken. Altogether I was well satisfied. Our leaders (Hartington, Forster, etc.) put themselves in a very ridiculous position yesterday, and they were so attacked right and left and so ironically cheered in the end that I should not have been surprised to-day to hear that Hartington had resigned.

Throughout the spring England and Russia eyed each other like duellists waiting for the signal. When the Treaty of San Stefano, signed on March 3, terminated the war between Russia and Turkey, Lord Derby informed Gortschakoff that its terms must be laid before a European Congress. On the Chancellor's rejoinder that he could only accept a discussion of the clauses which affected European interests, the Cabinet decided to call out the reserves. Lord Derby promptly resigned, and war appeared imminent. The Opposition being stricken with paralysis, it was left to Sir Wilfrid Lawson to protest. He was strongly supported by Courtney, who denied the existence of an emergency. He was no more enamoured of the Treaty of San Stefano than was the Ministry, and it was a great blot that the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who had started the war of emancipation, were left uncared for. Much, however, might be achieved if the Treaty were considered in a Congress into which the Government would consent to enter in a fair and reasonable spirit. The real question was whether the Government intended to fight or whether its bellicose gestures were only swagger. In spite of Hartington's advice to withdraw the amendment, Sir Wilfrid, with Courtney's approval, insisted on a division and was beaten by 319 to 64.

To his sister Margaret

April 10, 1878.—You will have seen I spoke last night. The speech was not so well received as late speeches of mine have been, but I do not think the fault was mine. The hour was late and I represented a small minority, and the younger fellows on the other side were noisy. I was not dissatisfied with myself. Hartington who followed spoke very lamely, and was received

with dead silence below the gangway, and with very little cheering above the gangway. Every now and then Forster's voice was heard saying "Hear, hear," all by himself. The *World* of this week contains an article called "Mr. Courtney's last," throwing upon my obstinacy and wrongheadedness all the blame of the division. I had a good deal to do with it, but Lawson required no prompting or support from me. He was quite staunch, and had made up his mind to move an amendment without any consultation with me, although it is true that the amendment he proposed was drawn by me. Some thirty of us had formed ourselves into a Committee, and had met from time to time under Dillwyn's chairmanship, and there were great divisions among us; and last Friday we received a communication from Lord Hartington explaining his own position, and Gladstone's also. This was so discouraging that Chamberlain was for giving up the opposition; but I pointed out how guarded the language of the memorandum was in reference to Gladstone, and prophesied that if we persevered he would vote with us, as in fact both he and Bright did. The result is therefore a justification of my position, but, as I have said before, Lawson needed no prompting.

A week later, on the Easter adjournment, the fearless Sir Wilfrid returned to the charge. Lord Derby had described the Government policy as one not of drifting but of rushing into war. When a conflict might break out at any moment an Easter recess of three weeks was inexcusable. His protest was supported by Fawcett and by Courtney, who adjured the Government no longer to obstruct the peaceful resettlement of the Near East. The Leader of the House made a reassuring reply; but next day it was announced that Indian troops had been ordered to Malta. The dragging crisis was ended by the Congress of Berlin, from which the Prime Minister returned bringing "peace with honour." In the debate on the Treaty Courtney reiterated his disapproval of the policy of the Government since 1876, argued that the same result might have been attained without war had Great Britain joined Russia in her threat of coercion, and denounced the Convention of Cyprus as discreditable and impracticable. "Turkey is said to be, and probably is, stronger for defensive purposes than before the war; then why did not the Government

assent to coercion eighteen months ago and thereby attain the same result without shedding blood or wasting wealth?" The results might be considerable, but what a price had been paid for them! It was impossible to think Turkey would have been so insane as to have resisted the will of united Europe. Had she done so, the contest would have been short and sharp. He was not on the whole displeased with the Treaty of Berlin, though the neglect of Greek interests was regrettable; but he owed no thanks to the Government for it, for it was got in spite of them. They had made the cardinal mistake of supposing they could restrain Russia by upholding a feeble Turkey, instead of replacing Turkey by vigorous free states. The horror of war, which seized them last year when for the world they would not coerce Turkey, did not prevent them from bringing over the Indian troops, calling out the reserves, and sending the Fleet to the Marmora in order to re-establish the dominion of the Porte.

The session of 1878 was darkened and dominated by the cloud in the East; and Courtney was the only unofficial member who kept a close watch on South Africa.[1] When delegates from the Transvaal had protested against the annexation, they had been told that their fellow-countrymen were in favour of the change. On their return the assertion was tested, and a Memorial hostile to the annexation was signed by 6600 out of 8000 adult males. The correspondence between the delegates and the Colonial Secretary was circulated at the end of the session, and Courtney called attention to it on the closing day. It was natural that he should find confirmation in the plebiscite for his action in the previous year; but after reiterating his objection to the annexation he passed to the practical question what should be done. The delegates had come to England, and they ought not to return without a Parliamentary discussion of their grievances. The Colonial Secretary had told them to accept the situation, return home and keep quiet; but something more was needed. "I should not advise the

[1] Some years later Froude asked Mrs. Courtney how her husband came to know so much about South Africa, and to be so right.

Government to restore their independence ; but we should give them some message which they could take back which would remove the disaffection. If we could satisfy the aspirations for freedom and self-government I hope we shall see gradually disappear the idea of a forcible attempt to reassert their independence which is undoubtedly simmering. Let us station troops at two or three points to avoid danger with the natives, and let them have their own institutions." A great, empty country could not be governed like a populous British colony. The way to tranquillise South Africa was to grant local autonomy to the Transvaal. To this plea Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who had succeeded Lord Carnarvon as Colonial Secretary, replied that it was mischievous to excite hopes in the breasts of the delegates which could not be gratified. Lord Carnarvon had never promised a plebiscite, and the Government could not allow its policy to be influenced by Memorials. The official reply satisfied the House ; but Courtney's warning was to be recalled when the neglect of his advice produced the evils which he foresaw.

A third cause for which Courtney had pleaded in his first session was again championed by him in his second. Jacob Bright's Woman Suffrage Bill, for which he had spoken in 1877, was taken over by him in 1878 and introduced in June. At the opening of the sitting he presented a number of petitions, one of them exclusively signed by well-known women such as Florence Nightingale, Harriet Grote and Anna Swanwick. " I rise," he began, " in the well-assured belief that it will be accepted in the Parliamentary lifetime of many of the older members of this House." Woman suffrage was a necessary element in representative government. Moreover, it would create interest in public affairs and strengthen the sense of citizenship and solidarity. " By advancing woman you will advance man with her. It will develop a fuller, freer, nobler woman." [1] In answer to the charge that he adduced arguments from the nebular region of natural rights he

[1] He was, in the words of Miss Emily Davies, " a very early and valued friend " of Girton, and was a member of the Executive Committee from 1876 to 1896.

avowed himself a pure utilitarian. "I base the whole of my argument—and all the philosophy to which I can lay claim—on the doctrine of expediency." He and Gorst were the Tellers for the Bill, which secured the encouraging number of 140 Ayes to 220 Noes. To friends and foes alike the figures seem to confirm the sanguine forecast of the opener's speech.

During the same session he delivered the first of many speeches on a theme as near to his heart as that of woman suffrage. Quoting Mill's well-known statement that proportional representation was the greatest reform still to be made in the art of politics, and the dictum of Prévost-Paradol that it would prove as important as the invention of steam, he pointed out the narrowing influence of the single-member constituency. Mill, for instance, after losing his seat, could not have canvassed any constituency with hope of success, and George Odger, one of the most trusted of working-class leaders, could never secure election. Every class, every school of thought should have its fair share of power. The cumulative vote had been rejected in the Franchise Act of 1867, but accepted in 1870 for the election of school boards. He was now full of hope that when a Reform Bill again came before the House something in the shape of the representation of minorities would form part of it. The Birmingham Confederation condemned the plan, for they knew it would destroy their power. For his part he would greatly rejoice if it produced that result. He could not conceive how any person who had any knowledge of the caucus system in the United States could watch the growth of that Confederation without apprehension. Its object was to repress local feeling, local energy and independence, and it sent forth its orders over the land by means of a great machinery of the most alarming character. Chamberlain was not in his place to take up the challenge, and the debate was cut short on the discovery that less than forty members were present. No Minister thought it worth his while to rise, and the missionary of the new faith realised once again that indifference is often a more formidable foe than hostility.

The prestige of the Government, which had never stood higher than after the Congress of Berlin, began to wane in the autumn when Lord Lytton, supported by his Russophobe chief, plunged into an unprovoked war with Afghanistan. For once the Opposition was united and resolute, and when the new session was opened in December Hartington vied with Gladstone in denouncing a policy which drove the Amir into the arms of Russia, and demanded the immediate recall of the bellicose Viceroy. Courtney joined in the attack, and delivered an impressive warning against the Forward Policy on the Indian frontier. If the result of the present war, he argued, was a rectification of the frontier we should be driven, as soon as we had crossed the crests of the mountain ranges, to pour down to the valleys on the other side, as surely as water poured down a hill. Three years ago he had visited the country and taken the utmost pains to investigate the frontier question. He found a general concurrence among all authorities, civil and military, against advancing the boundary. He believed we might defy Russian intrigue in India so long as we governed the country justly and honestly.

To his sister Margaret

December 20, 1878.—My speech last week was delivered at a very good hour, except that I was obliged to compress it too much. I was not myself thoroughly satisfied with the effort, but a good many friends seem to have thought highly of it. Our side were in high spirits over the debate and the division, while the Government supporters appeared out of heart and cowed.

Though the Government majority remained at full strength, its strength was beginning to ebb ; and while the Afghan campaign was still in progress a new and even graver complication arose in South Africa. The growth of the Zulu power had for some time threatened both the Transvaal and Natal, and in the autumn of 1878 Cetewayo appeared to be in such a dangerous mood that the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, applied for reinforcements.

The Cabinet refused, urging prudence and compromise; but Frere, honestly convinced that Natal was in danger, took the bit in his teeth and launched an ultimatum, demanding the break-up of the military system of the Zulus and the reception of a British Resident. No reply was vouchsafed, and, after the expiry of the thirty days of grace, British troops entered Zululand. Lord Chelmsford ignorantly despised the enemy, but he was rudely awakened at Isandhlana. Though the battle was fought on January 22, the news only reached England on February 11, and Parliament, which had adjourned after a few days' work in December, met under the shadow of the disaster. Public opinion was bewildered by the suddenness and severity of the shock, and Courtney's repeated warnings that the annexation of the Transvaal would increase instead of diminishing the native menace were freely recalled.

To his Father

February 13, 1879.—The session may be said to have begun last night when there were divers dinners and two big receptions, one at the Admiralty and the other at Lady Granville's. Mrs. Smith sent me a card for the former and I went there first. Almost all there were Ministers or Ministerial supporters or permanent officials belonging to no party. I went in on the heels of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was very civil. I saw and shook hands with lots of people including Mrs. Smith, but Smith himself I could only nod to across a crowd. When I got to Lady Granville's the throng was immense. I found, somewhat to my amusement, that this frightful business in Zululand had made a great difference in my position. Mrs. Pennington, who is always very good-natured, said, "Mr. Courtney, you are the hero of the hour; I have been told so two or three times, and I have said, he deserves it." I met with some evidence of the state of the case when I got up in the saloons. Even Hartington was moved to open his mouth. "You must feel in the proud position of the man who has been right all along." Lord Granville I did not see till late; I was talking to Lord Dufferin, telling him, jokingly, that I should come to see him at St. Petersburg, when I felt my elbow twitched and turning round there was Lord Granville. We chatted about nothing in particular for some time, and then he said,

"Whenever you have a dull afternoon in the House there is always tea here, dress or not dress." I don't know what he meant exactly by the last words, as no one would dress for afternoon tea, but his general intention was plain.

The obvious duty of the Government was either to recall the High Commissioner or to support him; but after taking a month to reflect they chose a third course, combining a sharp censure of his action with a request to remain at his post. This illogical compromise positively invited attack, and the Opposition in both Houses moved a vote of censure on Sir Bartle Frere for making war, and on the Government for not recalling him. On the third night of the debate on Sir Charles Dilke's motion Courtney delivered what was described by the speaker who followed him as an impassioned harangue. Cetewayo, he declared, had not possessed the power, even if he had the will, to carry out the threats imputed to him; and had he been so terrible and treacherous he would have invaded Natal long ago when it was denuded of troops. This line of attack was common to many of the Opposition orators; but the member for Liskeard threw his net much wider. All our subsequent difficulties, he contended, were due to the annexation of the Transvaal, which increased our responsibilities and exposed our colonies to certain and immediate danger. We had taken over a country which, on account of its size and the hostility of its inhabitants, we could not control, and we had inherited its border quarrels. Now that the folly of our action had been demonstrated, we should release the Transvaal and thus erect a barrier between our colonies and the natives.

The war dragged on throughout the spring, and in May Lord Chelmsford was superseded by Sir Garnet Wolseley, who was also entrusted with supreme authority in the Transvaal and Natal. Before, however, the new commander reached his post, the Zulu army was defeated by Lord Chelmsford at Ulundi. The peril was over, and there was little left for Wolseley but to take Cetewayo captive. With the end of the war in sight the political side of the South African problem came up for consideration. At the close of the session, in discussion of Supply, Courtney once more

drew his accustomed moral from the tale. The war, he declared, had been inflicted on South Africa by Lord Carnarvon and Sir Bartle Frere. The struggle with the Zulus was only an episode—an illustration of the results of a policy which would raise other enemies not more easily subdued than Cetewayo. The Government's desire for Confederation meant a policy of active extension and the permanent retention of the Transvaal. When the colonies were told that if they involved themselves in war they must bear the consequences, there were twenty-five years of peace. Frere had decided that our neighbours must be subordinates; equals they could not be. When we had got rid of the Zulus or the Swazis, there would be some other race to deal with, and we should be landed at the Zambesi. As long as our colonists knew that in all their difficulties we should come to their assistance, so long would they go on calling upon us to do so. Retention of the Transvaal involved keeping a British soldier in the country for every Boer inhabitant. Such a policy would have to be dropped on account of its expense, if not of its immorality.

In the later years of Beaconsfield's rule the attention of Parliament was almost monopolised by war and rumours of war. The author of *Sybil* and *Coningsby* had lost his interest in the people and had learned to think in continents. Meanwhile the friends of social and political reform renewed their appeal in each succeeding session, not expecting to secure the assent of a Conservative Chamber, but determined to prepare public opinion for the melting of the snows. For the third time Courtney pleaded the cause of Woman Suffrage, preferring, for the sake of variety, a motion to a bill. On this occasion he was able to appeal to the conversion of the State of Wyoming; but the division was disappointing, for only 103 supporters followed him into the lobby.

To his sister Margaret

March 14, 1879.—You saw that my speech on Tuesday week was a success. The effect of it may be best gathered from *Punch*, especially if you remember how that great authority

spoke of Blennerhassett and myself last year, when we discussed the Representation of Minorities. On Wednesday I dined with Lord Hartington. At the door I met Lord Houghton who was overflowing; he had been going to write me a pretty little note, he said, and was almost sorry we had met. Hartington himself was very cordial and chatty, and I asked after his cold with affectionate interest. Friday's speech was not by any means so good; the audience was thin, and there was a creeping fog in the House which became thicker at a later hour, but Gladstone did me the compliment of listening most attentively, and some of the ladies upstairs began to hope for his conversion. The attack of Henry James at the end of the debate was rather a tribute of respect than damaging. The division was exceedingly unsatisfactory in respect of numbers—I hardly know why.

Though Courtney belonged to the Radical group of the party, he was not an undiscriminating supporter of every item in their programme. With admirable persistence George Trevelyan brought forward an annual Resolution for extending the franchise to the agricultural labourer. The Conservatives could not be expected to support it, and among the Whigs Lowe and Goschen were its declared opponents. In 1877, however, it was blessed by Hartington, and it was generally recognised that the next Liberal Government would complete the work of 1867. The member for Liskeard supported the demand, but refused to vote for it unless accompanied by minority representation. After the Resolution had been proposed and seconded by Trevelyan and Dilke on March 4, 1879, he explained why he could not support them in the lobby. The county franchise, he believed, was bound to come, but he could not desire it in the form presented by his friends. Trevelyan's speeches showed no perception of the great and growing evils which infested their electoral system. Almost the whole party had now been won over; but enfranchisement was not representation. He would be delighted to see Joseph Arch in the House, but would they get him by the proposed machinery? If they wished the newly enfranchised classes to obtain not only the vote, but representation, not only the shadow, but the substance, they must adopt a new plan. This distinction between enfranchisement and

representation seemed mere pedantry to his Radical friends. "Courtney declined to support the motion," wrote Sir Wilfrid Lawson, "as it did not deal with the representation of minorities. But three days later he moved a resolution in favour of enfranchising women, even without the minority matter being first attended to. How hard it is for even the most honest and able of men (and he is one of them) always to keep an even keel on political voyages!" [1]

The autumn and winter of 1879 brought no relief to the tension of public affairs. The Afghan campaign was followed with anxious interest. The failure of the Irish crops led to the foundation of the Land League by Michael Davitt, and British industry was in the trough of the sea. A month before Christmas Gladstone opened his Midlothian campaign against the Dictator who had kept the country in a fever of excitement with wars and rumours of war. When Parliament met on February 5, 1880, it was under the shadow of the impending election, and after a month of listless debates a dissolution was announced. The Prime Minister issued a Manifesto against Home Rule in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland which served as his Election Address; but Home Rule was not before the country, and the electorate voted on the record of the Government. The cold fit had followed the hot fit, and the prophet of Imperialism was hurled from power by the Liberal leader whose windows had been smashed in 1878 by the Jingo mob.

[1] Russell, *Life of Sir W. Lawson*, p. 142.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TREASURY BENCH

No soldier in the Liberal army detested the Beaconsfield policy more heartily, or threw himself into the fray with greater zeal or confidence, than Courtney. A preliminary skirmish took place in the *Fortnightly Review*, to which he contributed a fighting article entitled "Turkish Fallacies and British Facts."[1] It must now be confessed, he began, that those who had striven for the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire had been false guides. Great Britain should have followed Gladstone's advice and joined the Great Powers or even Russia alone in compelling the Porte to accept their joint counsels. Had war resulted, which was improbable, it would have been far shorter and less sanguinary than that which had occurred. "Men's lives are to be used and, when necessary, to be spent; and, if the cause is adequate, I am ready to join in Wordsworth's sentiment, 'Yea, Carnage is God's Daughter.'" All that Great Britain had achieved was to water down the Treaty of San Stefano, to the detriment of the Christian subjects of the Sultan. Our policy had been mainly shaped by our fear of an extension of Russian power, but her influence in the Near East was very much greater than it would have been had we co-operated with her in the risks and glories of emancipation. Moreover, our intervention after a struggle in which we had borne no part had merely deepened the resolution of Russia to pursue her southward march. Instead of assisting in the establishment of free States, we had resisted the beneficent change and endeavoured to

[1] March 1880.

cripple its efficiency. Russia took upon herself the whole duty of midwifery, and had won a corresponding degree of gratitude and influence. The freed States felt no respect for us, and the Sultan ostentatiously manifested disrespect. Such were the bitter fruits of the Beaconsfield dictatorship.

"Liskeard," writes Lord Fitzmaurice, "was a constituency peculiar in this, that to the last the majority of the electors seemed to prefer a Liberal who was of an independent character, the sort of candidate in fact whom the party wire-puller does not love. It was consequently much sought after by Liberals of rather detached opinions. In 1880 Courtney had to fight the Rt. Hon. E. P. Bouverie, like Horsman a severe and independent critic of Mr. Gladstone and in earlier days of Lord Russell, who had forced on him the sobriquet of the "candid friend." The contest between these two so very similar candidates provoked much amusement and some heart-burnings, and it was said at the time that there ought to have been two Liskeards, one for Mr. Courtney, the other for Mr. Bouverie." As there was unfortunately only one Liskeard, and as the country clamoured for Gladstone, there was never much doubt as to the result.

To his sister Margaret

March 4.—I suppose you are all more or less excited over Bouverie's candidature. If he persists we shall beat him well; but he may still prefer to try Salisbury.

March 23 (on reaching Liskeard).—Bouverie's defeat seems to me absolutely certain. I shall be disappointed if the majority against him is less than 80, and I don't think it will be so low.

The seat was held by a majority of 69. On his journey to London Courtney met W. H. Smith, "rejoicing that we had a good majority and not displeased to be relieved from hard work." A pile of congratulations awaited him, among them a warm letter from Lord Granville, who had shown him more attention than any other Liberal leader. Of greater interest was a communication from the new Prime Minister.

From W. E. Gladstone

April 29, 1880.—I have the pleasure of proposing to you that you should permit me to place your name before the Queen as Secretary to the Board of Trade under the Administration which I am engaged in forming. It will be a great advantage to us to have the aid of your ability and energy in our arduous work. I ought to add, as the office has heretofore been on a different footing, that the salary will be £1200 a year.

Should you do me the favour to accept, please to let the matter remain secret until I have had time to lay it before Her Majesty.

The reply was despatched within a few hours.

To W. E. Gladstone

I must thank you very heartily for the kind offer you have made me and for the very handsome terms in which it is couched. I find myself, however, compelled to ask you to excuse my accepting it, and I hope you will forgive me if I frankly explain my reason. It is simply that I foresee many questions must soon come before Parliament for settlement which I have very much at heart, and I think I shall best promote them as a friendly and sympathetic supporter of your administration. I am drawn most reluctantly to this conclusion, as I should have been glad to have proved myself capable of loyal co-operation in official life.

The desire for a free hand on certain outstanding questions, however, was neither the only nor the principal reason for refusing office.

To his Father

May Day 1880.—I have but a very little time to write as I have people to see immediately, but I have a bit of news I think you would like to know and ought to know. On Thursday evening Mr. Gladstone sent me a letter offering me the Secretaryship of the Board of Trade. I was a good deal puzzled what to do, but after the best consideration and such consultation as was possible I sent back a note yesterday morning declining the offer. The Secretaryship would be under Chamberlain as President, which did not recommend it, but I could and should have got over this had it been in another department. At the Board

of Trade there is not Parliamentary work for more than one man, and I should have been completely effaced for a couple of years or so without any advantage in the way of official experience. I hope this will not displease you. Since I came to the conclusion I have not seen reason to doubt the balance was struck on the right side, though I should have liked the other way.

John Courtney recorded his approval of the decision at the foot of the letter. "William and I, after hearing the pros and cons, think with Leonard it was wiser to decline; it would have tied his tongue in the House and reduced him to a nonentity. Pecuniarily he loses nothing."

A few details of the crowding events of the past month are added in a letter to his oldest friend, now a leading figure in the business and political life of New Zealand.

To Richard Oliver

May 4, 1880.—Telegrams and newspapers will, I hope, have explained my long silence. I have gone through a contested election and a Ministerial crisis. The first occupied me three weeks or more, just before and just after Easter. My opponent Bouverie is a man who has held a good position in the House of Commons in the past, but having no love for Gladstone he tormented him a good deal in the Parliament of 1868–74 and was rejected at the dissolution by the constituency for which he had sat for thirty years. Being out, he fell more and more behind in his opinions, and he opposed me as a moderate Liberal not disapproving of the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield. I was never anxious about the result, but I was forced to remain continually at Liskeard. The end of all was a victory for myself, and a great victory for the party—due, as I believe, to a general belief that Dizzy was adding trouble to trouble. The voters that swayed around did not object to the immorality of his policy, but that it did not work out smoothly. Gladstone offered me a place, that of Secretary to the Board of Trade, and I declined it. It was a difficult thing to decide, but I believe I came to the right conclusion. I should have been Secretary under Chamberlain as President, and he is not the man I should select as a superior; but this I could have got over had the work of the department been sufficient to occupy both of us. It is not, and the result would have been that I should have been completely silenced in the House on general topics (Parliamentary Reform, South Africa, Ireland, etc.) without the compensating

feeling that I was proving my capacity for departmental work. My own people fully back me up in my decision, and in the House of Commons it seems to have excited a certain kind of respect and admiration, although there are many who think that every man should take the first footing offered him. After I refused the berth it was offered to George Trevelyan, who declined, and it was then accepted by Evelyn Ashley.

Further light is thrown on the formation of the new Ministry by an entry in Sir Charles Dilke's Memoirs. "On May 1 I had John Morley to dinner to meet Chamberlain, who was still staying with me. We talked over the men who had been left out. Edmund Fitzmaurice was one, but Mr. Gladstone did not care about having brothers. At Chamberlain's wish Courtney had been offered the Secretaryship of the Board of Trade, which, however, he declined. He would have taken the place of Judge Advocate General, but it was not offered him." It was suggested at the same dinner that Courtney might succeed Sir Henry Drummond Wolff on the Commission for Reforms, appointed under Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin, for the European provinces of Turkey and Crete; but the place was eventually filled by Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice.[1]

Courtney congratulated himself on his liberty when he discovered from the Queen's speech that the new Government had resolved to retain the Transvaal; and on the second day of the debate on the Address he wrathfully challenged the *volte-face*. Had not the new members in their election campaign denounced the conduct of the late Government in South Africa? Yet they were asked to support in Parliament what they had condemned in the country. "The Boers will not be able to understand this change. They will ask why their wrongs, which were made so much of a few months ago, are not even recognised now." Moreover in the course of debate it was announced that Sir Bartle Frere was to remain at his post, though only a year ago Sir Charles Dilke had moved for his recall and every member of the new Cabinet had voted for it The Radicals had no intention of allowing the matter to rest. "On

[1] *Life of Dilke*, i. 316-17.

May 24," writes Sir Charles Dilke,[1] " I found that Courtney and my brother (Ashton Dilke), with Dr. Cameron and Jesse Collings, were getting up an attempt to coerce the Colonial Office and Mr. Gladstone by preparing a list of between one and two hundred members who would vote with Wilfrid Lawson for a censure on the Government for not recalling Frere. Childers had found that it would be easy to recall him, for Frere had said that he would only go out for two years, and the two years were over. No doubt Frere, while blameworthy for the Zulu war, was not responsible for the Transvaal business ; but with our people he received the whole discredit for all that went wrong in South Africa, and it was impossible to wonder at it when one recalled the language that he habitually used. Frere was protected by Mr. Gladstone, and allowed to remain, a mistake for which we very gravely suffered." The Memorial to the Prime Minister, set on foot by Courtney and Dillwyn and signed by about ninety Members of Parliament, was sent in on June 3. " We, the undersigned members of the Liberal party, respectfully submit that as there is a strong feeling throughout the country in favour of the recall of Sir Bartle Frere, it would greatly conduce to the unity of the party and relieve many members from the charge of breaking their pledges to their constituents if that step were taken." [2] The first three signatures were Dillwyn, Wilfrid Lawson and Courtney. The Cabinet deferred its decision on the ground that the Cape Parliament was shortly to discuss the problem of federation.

While Downing Street was waiting for Cape Town, the Boer leaders despatched an urgent memorandum to Courtney in support of his demand for the recall of Frere.

From Kruger and Joubert

CAPETOWN, June 26, 1880.—We beg leave again to send you some particulars relating to the state of affairs here. In the Friday sitting of the House of Assembly the Jingo-imperial policy received a deadly blow, to our great satisfaction because this result may lead to a better understanding at home how

[1] *Life of Dilke*, i. 319. [2] Martineau, *Life of Sir Bartle Frere*, ii. 391.

utterly wrong and how impossible, how full of evil consequences, that policy is. The Zulu war was a strong lesson, but although it poured down streams of blood, and with a very few exceptions was as dishonourable as it was disastrous, this lesson was not powerful enough to force the Home Government to enter into a new and better way. They maintained Sir Bartle Frere, they denied any rights to the Transvaal, believing that the great statesman would be able to prepare the panacea for all the evils in South Africa. This panacea was the Confederation of the colonies in South Africa. Sir Bartle Frere, although not the intellectual author of this scheme, certainly may be called its great advocate. He was and is continually arguing not only the advisability of this scheme but the practicability, moreover contending that it is universally desired and applauded.

We, taking it to be our duty, attempted all legal means in order to frustrate the scheme of a Conference. The only safety-valve for our country is the restoration of our independence. We are prepared—when right prevails again in the Transvaal—to consider all reasonable proposals for a closer union with the colonies. It is well known that the Republic repeatedly and in several resolutions has given expression to the same view. So did again the people in their mass-meeting of December last. But so long as the annexation is not rescinded we will do all we can to frustrate any scheme of the Imperial Government. England must come to the conviction that there is a great wrong here. The confidence in Sir Bartle Frere will by this time be utterly shaken. It cannot be longer denied that, so far as regards the Transvaal, Sir Bartle Frere is guilty of premeditated falsehood and mystification. Look at his despatch to the Colonial Secretary of the 18th of June 1879, reading as follows: "The great majority of the farmers whom I met with, even of those who had assisted at the large meetings of the Boers, did not wish the Republic back." Of all English officials honouring the Transvaal with their visits, no one raised such a deep and intense feeling of distrust, and no English statesman stirred up the hatred of our countrymen against English government more than Sir Bartle Frere. Really we are of opinion, if it was not for him, South African difficulties would not have been heard of. All over South Africa reigns a general feeling of harmony; we are ripe and adapted for a closer union; we are strong enough and (we beg most humbly pardon: Aborigines Society!) Christianlike enough to conduct the government of the natives in a strong and rightful way. But the system has sown the seeds of animosity and hatred between Englishmen and Africanders.

If, at the time of our difficulties, they had assisted us in a fair and generous way, the grateful people would have been ready for great sacrifices. Yes, even now, let a generous policy towards us be followed, and we assure you the people will be found inclined to meet you. We apologise, dear Sir, for having taken perhaps a valuable portion of your time, but we trust most sincerely that you will further aid and assist us.

A month after this letter was written the Dutch in Cape Colony made it clear that they would never support a policy detested by the Transvaal, which demanded the restoration of its independence. Federation being thus indefinitely postponed, the Cabinet finally resolved to recall Frere. To the end of his life Courtney looked back with satisfaction on his share in the recall of a man who, despite his high character and attractive personality, incarnated for him the spirit of aggressive Imperialism. After gaining his way on the minor issue he returned to the larger problem of the Transvaal; and at the close of the session he solemnly adjured the Government to undo the error of their predecessors. It would be more wise, dignified and honourable, he declared, to renounce the authority we had assumed. They all admitted the annexation to have been a mistake. (No! No!) Then it must be branded by a stronger name. At the Cape and Natal there was the same conviction, shared even by those who had been foremost in applauding the act and even by those who had vehemently urged it. There had been a revulsion of feeling in South Africa, for some new facts had emerged. President Burgers, for instance, had received a pension of £500. The repugnance of the Boers to foreign control was invincible. He would be told by the Colonial Office that the Boers were toning down and would recognise accomplished facts. They had heard such statements over and over again; but they had always been falsified. The Government had never dared to convene the Volksraad. He held in his hand a Memorial to the Prime Minister signed by 6000 Boers begging him to restore liberty to the Transvaal; but when the signatories heard that he had changed his mind, they refused to send it to him, and it had been forwarded to himself. "We cannot have a

federation with an unwilling State forming part. The spirit of interference with institutions which are not ours, because they do not come up to our standard of excellence, is folly. We are told that if we retire we shall leave confusion and anarchy; but did that consideration prevent our retirement from Afghanistan?" It was a slashing indictment, the effect of which was increased by the statement of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the late Colonial Secretary, that he was perfectly satisfied with the policy of his successor Lord Kimberley.

The session only lasted from the middle of May till the beginning of September. The first skirmishes were fought on the election of Bradlaugh, which puzzled men of conscience like the Prime Minister and gave scope to the sharp-shooters of the Fourth Party. Courtney, who was never in doubt as to his own course, looked on the conflict with disgust and indignation. He voted for permission to affirm, and, when this course was forbidden by the Court, he voted for permission to take the oath. When this was also forbidden, he demanded that the law must be altered to allow any member to make an affirmation, and told his constituents that he could not understand how any Liberal could take part in excluding a duly elected representative on account of his atheistical opinions. A far greater anxiety for the new Government was the distress and discontent of Ireland, which was intensified by the increase of evictions and by the Lords' rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. The Land League promptly retaliated by the invention of the boycott, and the Chief Secretary, Forster, spent the autumn in grappling with hunger, outrage and despair. Courtney had visited Ireland in 1868, but he now determined to devote his autumn holiday to a tour through the disturbed districts.

To his sister Margaret

September 8, 1880.—I have promised to go to Liverpool to open the Junior Reform Club next Thursday, and shall probably leave here the day before. Being asked in this way is a great compliment. Lord Northbrook had undertaken to open the Club, but the Session lasted so long that he is only now visiting the Dockyards. If the reports from Penzance continue good

I think I shall venture to run over to the west of Ireland for a fortnight, and I have written asking Roby whether he will go. The reports in the newspapers about appointments are all premature, and I think they may perhaps be traced to Fawcett, who conceived the arrangement more than a month ago. From what I hear my appointment as Secretary of the Treasury would be approved, but I doubt whether Gladstone would offer it to me. This is one of those offices which do not vacate a seat, so there would be no re-election. Last week and the week before I was dining in Ministerial circles—last Tuesday at Harcourt's, where everybody but myself was in the Ministry, and the previous Wednesday at Henry James', where all were Ministers except young Spencer and myself. The said young Spencer is Lord Spencer's half-brother and presumptive heir—one of the youngest Members of the House, who delights us all with his collars and boyishness.

Roby was not available for the Irish tour; but an excellent substitute was found in David Wedderburn. Courtney's observations and reflections were recorded in two articles written for an American Review, and were explained in speeches delivered during the autumn recess. He surveyed the work of the new Government in an address at Liverpool. He confessed that he had not been distinguished for unbroken submissiveness; but in voting against Ministers he had always been a sincere and helpful friend. No function could be more useful than that of encouraging them to their best efforts. No Government could be strong unless it was thus pressed, just as a Member of Parliament needed energetic, troublesome men among his constituents who would keep their representative in the right path. Despite occasional mistakes, moreover, the Ministry could show a very creditable record. "The late Government has brought us into trouble in every quarter of the world and left our domestic affairs in the greatest disorder. Whether we look to Europe, Asia, Africa, to trade at home or to the condition of Ireland, you find enough to reduce an incoming Ministry to something like despair." What then had the new Government done? In Asia they had had the magnificent courage to evacuate Afghanistan. Sir Bartle Frere was on his way back to England. In the Near East they had

reversed the policy of their predecessors and were about to obtain for Montenegro her rights under the Treaty of Berlin. The gravest problem which now confronted them was Ireland. To acquiesce in whatever she asked was to treat her as foolish mothers treat foolish children. Under no circumstances could Home Rule be accepted. Peasant proprietorship was sometimes proposed; but a far better plan would be the judicial fixing of rent, with free sale and security against eviction. Accompanied by a Local Government Bill it would remove the demand for Home Rule, and discontent would, he believed, disappear.

A week or two later, in an address to his constituents, he dealt more fully with the Irish question. He invited sympathy with the statesman who had done so much for Ireland in 1869 and 1870, and who now, on returning to office, found the country in a worse condition than ever. Drawing on his recent experiences in the west he described the uneconomic holdings, the misery, the filth, the boycotting. His prescription for the suffering patient was twofold. On the one hand the arm of the executive should be strengthened, Habeas Corpus should be suspended where necessary, and fire-arms should be prohibited; on the other land reform—fixity of tenure, fair rents and free sale—should be pushed on, local government should be developed, and the State should assist emigration to Canada. There was no need for despair and still less for Home Rule, which would reduce the country to its plight before the great famine. This address set forth the programme which the speaker was to advocate for the next twenty years.

It was an open secret that Courtney had been offered a post on the formation of the Government, and his transfer to the Treasury Bench was universally and in some quarters impatiently anticipated. "I am still unhappy at their meeting Parliament with Courtney out in the cold," wrote Lord Acton from Cannes to Mary Gladstone on December 14.[1] Ten days later he was offered the post of Under-Secretary for the Home Office; and this time the invitation was conditionally accepted.

[1] *Letters*, p. 40.

To W. E. Gladstone

PENZANCE, *December* 25.—Your letter was delivered to me yesterday evening just before I left London, and I must ask you to excuse me for not having replied to it on the spot. I am sincerely grateful to you for offering me a second time an opportunity of joining your Administration, and I have great pleasure in accepting the same, with many thanks for the kind consideration of your reference to Ireland. There is another subject to which I trust you will allow me to refer. The question of the Transvaal has in due course entered upon a new phase, now that the Boers are organised in opposition to our rule. My opinions on this subject remain as I expressed them near the end of last Session, when I urged a frank acknowledgment of the error of annexation, and an abandonment of the impossible task of coercing the Boers. Holding these views, I would ask to be allowed to absent myself from any division that may be raised on our policy in the Transvaal. I simply ask for the privilege of a silent abstention.

The permission was promptly and graciously accorded.

From W. E. Gladstone

December 27, 1880.—I have received your note with pleasure. Your request about the Transvaal is, I think, altogether reasonable; and, although a certain amount of inconvenience must always arise on both sides in such cases, I have no hesitation in at once acceding to it.

"I had borne my testimony and freed my conscience," explained Courtney to his constituents; "and it appeared to me that, having done so, there was no longer an obstacle to accepting office. If it were true, as the agents of the Government asserted, that the Boers were reconciled, then we should have peace. If, as I surmised, they were still irreconcileable, the future would declare itself." It was a source of keen satisfaction to the new Minister that his father was still alive to witness his success. A few weeks later John Courtney passed away at the age of seventy-seven. On his return from Penzance the new Minister settled down to work at the Home Office under his chief Sir William Harcourt.

To his sister Margaret

January 3, 1881.—Here is my first letter on official paper. I come over here about 1 P.M., that being the hour fixed by Harcourt, who was out of town yesterday. I have made myself free of the office, appointed a private secretary, had an interview with Sir Edward Ducane, going over the Prison Estimates with him and Harcourt, and otherwise transacted business. I found no end of letters of congratulation on Saturday evening, more at the Reform Club yesterday, and more at Queen Anne's Gate and here again to-day.

January 12.—I am now regularly at work and cannot say I find it very exhausting, while it is sufficiently interesting. I come somewhere between 11 and 12, and if the House is sitting I go at 4, otherwise between 5 and 6. Work is, however, slack just now, as all Parliamentary business is shut off through the pressure of Irish work, and I doubt whether the Home Office will pass any Bills this session. I dined at Gladstone's this day week. This was not done without difficulty as I had to get an official uniform, and, the time being so short, I was driven to hire one. I found, however, so many great personages had hired such things before—the Prime Minister himself going there one afternoon for a uniform of a Captain in the Navy to wear as Elder Brother at a Trinity House dinner—that I was greatly relieved; but I am vexed to say that I shall have to hire the suit again next Wednesday to dine with the Speaker—it being impossible to do the embroidery of a new coat under a fortnight. When I got to Gladstone's nearly all were assembled, and the door being then shut he read us the Queen's Speech; he stood up, as indeed we were all standing, with a candle in his right hand and the speech in his left, and he read it like the Funeral Service. The Speaker standing close by in his black velvet coat and with bent head seemed chief mourner. You saw O'Donnell's question on Monday. I really think he did me a service without intending it, for when I rose to reply there was cheering all about, and more hearty and prolonged on account of this question.[1] The congratulations I have received have been innumerable, and I think my appointment has given general satisfaction in the House.

[1] *Question.* "Whether the Under-Secretary intends this year to bring in a motion condemning the annexation of the Transvaal.

Answer. "I have done that so often that I think the House must be in full possession of my views, which I may now allow to be tested by the logic of events."

The storm which the new Minister had long foretold had broken out before he accepted office, though the news had not reached London. Gladstone's denunciations of the annexation of the Transvaal had naturally raised the hopes of the Boers that he would rescind it, and for several months they waited patiently for their fulfilment. The Prime Minister, however, reluctantly came to the conclusion that it was impossible to undo the past. The men on the spot assured him that the Boers were becoming reconciled to British rule; and there was a feeling in the Cabinet, not indeed logical but none the less powerful, that as they had resolved to withdraw from Kandahar, British prestige compelled them to retain Pretoria. It was a fatal mistake, as Gladstone realised when the Boers rose in revolt; and he promptly reverted to his earlier principle that it was neither right nor wise to rule over unwilling subjects. Though the soldiers naturally desired that the conflict should be fought to a finish, the Cabinet promised full self-government to the Transvaal if the Boers would accept the supremacy of the Queen, and refused to allow the defeat of Majuba Hill to interrupt negotiations.

Courtney, who had bargained for his freedom, refused to support the Government in the division lobby until it had determined to annul the annexation. Meanwhile the friends of the Boer cause in South Africa and Holland wrote to him in protest and appeal; but, as an Under-Secretary can neither determine nor criticise the policy of the Government, he could offer nothing but advice.

From G. J. Beeberts

THE HAGUE, *January* 22, 1881.—Our Dutch Committee is daily more urgently requested, partly from here but much more by letters from England, to intercede with the belligerent Boers. We are urged to persuade them that they might ask for peace, and especially that they might escort safely to Natal the beleaguered garrisons with women and children. Now our Committee has systematically abstained from corresponding with the Cape or with the Boers. We thought and think it our first duty to avoid anything which might endanger the cause we wish

to serve, or give any pretext to the annexation party. On the other side it would be very grievous for us afterwards to think that we had omitted a step which might have favoured our cause, and which we were advised to take by our English friends. In every respect it must be perfectly clear that we never shall try to induce the Boers to lay down their arms unless we are absolutely sure that—after due satisfaction made and pardon asked—*full independence* (no autonomy nor protectorate) shall be the result. In other letters we are asked to memorialise our Government in order that it may offer its good services for mediation or the like. We are very willing to do so; but, if there is no chance whatsoever that the offer will be accepted, it is not worth while trying. For these reasons, dear Sir, I venture to apply to you and beg you to indicate if we can serve our cause by acting in one of the above respects.

To G. J. Beeberts

January 26, 1881.—I find it extremely difficult to reply to your letter, and there is indeed one declaration in it which almost disposes of the possibility of a reply. You write "it must be perfectly clear that we shall never try to induce the Boers to lay down their arms unless we are absolutely sure that —after due satisfaction made and pardon asked—full independence shall be the result." It is at present impossible to give you this absolute surety, and if you make this an indispensable condition nothing can be done. I am, however, persuaded that every proof of self-control on the part of the Boers, every instance of regard to the rules of civilised war, every act of kindness to beleaguered garrisons or to women, would greatly tend to help their cause. I grieve to send you so scant a letter, but under the present circumstances I can do little but long that the great scandal of our contest with the Boers may soon pass away, nor can I suggest any steps for our own adoption.

The decision of the Liberal pilot to stick to his course in spite of Majuba roused his new colleague to rare enthusiasm. "I rejoice that the Government adhered to their proposals," he told his constituents. "I know no greater instance of Christian conduct on the part of any Government in declaring that the shedding of English blood should not be avenged. I stamp as heathenish and horrible the assertion that we have been humiliated because we did not insist on blood

for blood. I say on the contrary that we have been glorified among nations." The resolve of the Cabinet was defended in cooler language by the First Lord of the Admiralty, who refused to accept the common view that we " took a beating " and afterwards treated for peace. " Negotiations for an honourable settlement had been begun by the Boers," wrote Lord Northbrook, " and accepted by us. These negotiations were jeopardised by our General exceeding his instructions. The only right course for the Government, though naturally unpopular, was to recognise the error of their General and to continue the negotiations as if that error had not been committed." [1] On the other hand Courtney never ceased to blame the Liberal Cabinet for causing the revolt by refusing to undo the annexation directly they came into power. Had his advice been followed there would have been no rising, no bloodshed, no loss of prestige and no fermenting memories of martial triumph in the breast of the Boers.

Though Courtney had played no public part in the recent controversy his views and sympathies were generally known in South Africa, where they naturally found both support and antagonism. He was violently attacked by a British settler in the Transvaal named White ; and when in a letter to the *Times* he asked for proofs of the whirling charges, no reply was forthcoming. Among those who throughout approved his attitude in South African affairs was the distinguished mathematician and Hebrew scholar, like himself a Fellow of St. John's, who as Bishop of Natal had won the confidence and affection of the natives in a degree unapproached by any other white man of his time.

From Bishop Colenso

August 7, 1881.—We hear by telegraph from England that you are likely to succeed Mr. Grant Duff at the Colonial Office. Most sincerely shall I rejoice if this report should turn out to be true. But in any case I am sure that I may congratulate you on the settlement of the Transvaal difficulty without further bloodshed. The terms of the Convention seem to be upon the

[1] Mallet, *Earl Northbrook*, pp. 162-3.

whole as good for all parties—natives included—as could have been expected under the circumstances, though the Boers have control over Sikukuni's country and, I am sorry to say, have also been awarded a part of the Disputed Territory which was given to the Zulus by the Border Commission, but was taken away and annexed to the Transvaal by Sir Garnet Wolseley, which he would never have done, I believe, if he had not wished to please the Boers and get them to acquiesce in the English rule. However, we must be thankful that the wrong done by the annexation has been to so large an extent rectified, and the only real cause for regret is that the present Government were so misled by the information they received from high officials on the spot, that they lost the grand opportunity of carrying out from the first the retrocession of the Transvaal before the disastrous fighting took place.

The rumour which had reached the Bishop was correct; and when Mountstuart Grant Duff was appointed Governor of Madras in August 1881, Courtney succeeded to the vacant post. Now that the barometer in South Africa pointed to fair he had no longer any difference with the Cabinet, and he welcomed the change of office as affording him a wider opportunity of shaping large questions of policy. A further advantage was that his chief, Lord Kimberley, was in the Upper House. As the session was almost over, the Minister had time to familiarise himself with his new duties during the recess.

To his sister Margaret

November 5, 1881.—Everything is going on quietly here. I come to the office day after day, work till six or so, and a dinner at the Club with Morley's *Cobden* for evening reading finishes the day. On Wednesday I dined at the Club with the said Morley, Herbert Spencer and Tyndall, and the four of us then went to the St. James's Theatre.

At the end of his first session on the Treasury Bench the Minister paid his usual visit to Liskeard. Its main legislative achievement was the Irish Land Bill, creating machinery for the fixing of fair rents for a term of years. The intervention of the State between landlord and tenant horrified a certain school of opinion, and led Lord Lansdowne, himself

an Irish landlord, to resign his post in the Ministry. To Courtney, on the other hand, it appeared to open up a prospect of reconciliation. "It is not robbing men of their property," he told his constituents, "but giving men what is their own. It will operate as a message of peace." The process of improvement, however, would be slow, for nothing less than the conversion of the peasant into a sober and thrifty citizen was needed.

Friend and foe agreed that the House of Commons was dominated by the personality of the Prime Minister; and the Colonial Under-Secretary, who was far too independent to indulge in hero-worship, sounded a note of warning against leaning too heavily on the veteran commander. "No man deserves the confidence of the nation better than Gladstone," he declared at Liskeard; "but though we must rejoice in his strength and give thanks that such a man has been raised to lead us, we ought to be ashamed if in his absence Liberal principles would be in jeopardy. I am not quite sure that we are not too dependent on him. We must struggle against the tendency to weaken the strength of each man's will as the unit of the political body and to make us too dependent on the leader of the hour." It was a curious declaration for a Minister; but it expressed his life-long conviction that it was the duty of citizens of a self-governing community to think for themselves. In the spring of 1882 the representation of East Cornwall became vacant, and Courtney was strongly urged by his party to accept it. He stoutly refused to leave Liskeard, and held to his ground despite the combined onslaught of the Prime Minister and the Chief Whip. The contest of wills created a good deal of interest, and the harassing incident was narrated in a long letter to Penzance.

To his sister Margaret

March 17, 1882.—I suppose you have not been free from the excitement which has surrounded me for two days about East Cornwall. I have been able to maintain my resolution, to which I mean to adhere, not to leave Liskeard. When I was first asked on Wednesday I said no. I was against the proposal

because I did not feel sure of winning the county, while I believed Bouverie would slip in for the borough. I left the House to escape worry, but was pursued by a note from Gladstone urging me to accept the invitation, to which I replied, as before, we must wait for Hawke. Then Hawke [1] appeared alarmed at the notion of my leaving Liskeard, dead against it, and declaring that our best friends felt dismay at the prospect. Then an interview between Hawke and myself and Grosvenor, respecting which Hawke said to me on coming away, "that man is mad." Then an interview between myself and Gladstone, firm and courteous and even friendly, but intimating that in his opinion I had no choice as a member of the party and still more of the Government; and I demurring and declining. In the afternoon I had seen John Morley, before dinner I had a walk with Fawcett, and later a talk both with Chamberlain and Dilke, all of whom are stout in the opinion that my decision is right both as regards myself and the party. This morning telegrams and messages have been flying about from newspapers and from persons wanting to stand for Liskeard. I have seen Hawke again, who is greatly relieved and delighted. On the other hand Gladstone and Grosvenor are both sore, and may try to press me again, and it is possible—though not, I think, likely—that I may have to give up office, a result I should receive with great equanimity if not satisfaction.

The Prime Minister gave vent to his chagrin in a brief letter.

From W. E. Gladstone

March 16, 1882.—I have received your note, but I think I ought to say that I am grievously disappointed at its contents.

In May 1882, despite the controversy about East Cornwall, the Prime Minister appointed Courtney Secretary of the Treasury, a post vacated by the promotion of the ill-fated Lord Frederick Cavendish to the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland. Of the three Ministerial offices in which he served the latest and the last was that for which he was best fitted. His mathematical training and his studies in political economy and finance had already marked him out for Treasury work, and led observers to hail in him a future

[1] Chairman of the Liskeard Liberal Association. The retention of the seat by a Liberal justified Courtney's decision.

Chancellor of the Exchequer. One admirer compared him to Cornewall Lewis, "the model of a student-statesman." In that remote age the Treasury possessed considerable authority, and was staffed by men deeply imbued with Gladstone's conviction that its main task was to prevent waste and extravagance. With this spirit the new Minister was in full accord. The older type of official was flattered when the spending departments accused the Treasury of stinginess and obstruction, and Courtney bore the protests and rebukes of his Ministerial colleagues with serene complacency. It was a thankless task to hold the purse-strings, for the Treasury never receives any gratitude from the public; but its work was essential to the financial health of the State.

"When he became Secretary to the Treasury," writes Lord Eversley,[1] "I was at the head of the Office of Works, and we often came into conflict on questions of expenditure where I thought that he exercised too rigid a control." His economy was naturally more appreciated by his colleagues in the task of guarding the national purse. "I am sorry to say," writes Sir Algernon West,[2] "that I am the only one who was in high office now surviving of those who were brought into intimate official relations with him at that time. I was Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue and had many opportunities of personal intercourse with him and of learning the opinion of Lord Welby and others, and I am sure that I correctly interpret their opinion, which coincides with my own, that we were struck not only by his great ability but by the very remarkable power he displayed in his thorough mastery of all the questions coming before the Treasury. Sir Francis Mowatt, who was in the office at the time, entirely agrees with what I say. I very distinctly recollect our sincere regret at his resignation of the Secretaryship." The verdict is confirmed by the testimony of his old friend and colleague, Lord Fitzmaurice. "He soon obtained the reputation of being the sternest of the economists who had occupied the post, though in former

[1] Letter to the author, June 25, 1918.
[2] Letter to the author, August 1, 1918.

years it had been held by Mr. Baxter and by Mr. Ayrton, who were believed to have materially contributed to the fall of Mr. Gladstone's first administration. It became the joke to say that whereas formerly Members of Parliament appealed for gentler treatment from the Permanent Secretary, Sir Ralph Lingen, to the Parliamentary Secretary, now the appeal had to be from the Parliamentary Secretary to the tender mercies of Sir Ralph Lingen. But none the less I never heard any complaints made of these decisions being embittered by those graces of manner which had excited such furious bitterness at an earlier period."

Courtney enjoyed his work and appreciated the humorous side of some of its incidents, one of which is preserved in the Diary of Grant Duff.[1] At the meeting of the Breakfast Club on April 28, 1900, "Courtney told a story when we were talking about the scandalous way in which some municipal authorities waste the money of the ratepayers by quite unnecessary journeys to London. When he was Secretary to the Treasury a deputation from Sligo came to him to urge an entirely harmless change. Their wish was granted immediately, with many regrets that they should have taken the trouble to come so far about so trifling a concession, which a couple of letters would have settled. 'You seem to forget,' remarked somebody aside, 'that to-morrow is Derby Day.'"

The Minister never learned to suffer fools gladly, and he took public work too seriously to dissemble his contempt for Members who wasted the time or trifled with the duties of the House. Thus, while his competence was beyond dispute, he was not one of the most popular occupants of the Front Bench. "It is the opinion of some of his friends," wrote a London paper in a series of articles on "Coming Men," "that office has not altogether improved Mr. Courtney. If it is an exaggeration that he has become overpoweringly official, it is true that the official manner of the Secretary of the Treasury is not quite all that could be desired. It is not rude. It is scarcely curt. But it is irritating. It is not always soothing work to gratify the curiosity of the

[1] *Notes from a Diary, 1896–1901*, ii. 215.

noble army of bores, and such a man can have no sympathy for the small fry who think it is their duty to badger Ministers with interrogations on every possible topic. But he should seek to be personally popular."

During the early months of his work at the Treasury the Financial Secretary enjoyed an unusual degree of independence, as the Prime Minister himself discharged the functions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. When the double burden proved too heavy for advancing years Gladstone resigned the post, and offered Courtney the Chairmanship of Committees if the new arrangement was not to his taste.

From W. E. Gladstone

December 8, 1882.—It is now probable that Childers will almost immediately assume the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. I do not expect that this will surprise you, inasmuch as I think you clearly understood on taking your present office that a Minister of Finance proper would shortly be appointed. If, however, this change, which has a certain influence on your position (particularly under an active and skilled administrator), should incline you towards quitting it, I am able to say that I should be happy to propose you, if you should desire it, as successor to Playfair in his important and difficult office, which you have shewn an admirable capacity to fill.

Courtney preferred to remain a member of the Ministry. He was on excellent terms with his chief, who fully appreciated his accurate mind and powers of work.

To his sister Margaret

December 14, 1882.—On Tuesday I dined very pleasantly in a distinguished locality—St. James's Palace! Algernon West, the Chairman of the Inland Revenue Board, has some small post which gives him rooms there, which Mrs. West declares were originally the coachman's lodgings. The Prime Minister was in great force. I sat in the middle of one side between him and his wife, and the evening passed very gaily.

His friends would not have been surprised by further promotion at any moment; but they were confident that he had only to wait.

From John Scott

BOMBAY, *December* 25, 1882.—In all the recent shiftings of the Ministries I thought you might have had another translation. But you have had so many that I must not expect any more yet. No man is more certain of his future, so your friends cannot grumble.

In the spring of 1883 the Secretary to the Treasury received a proposal which proved that his financial abilities were recognised in the highest quarters.

From Lord Kimberley

May 9, 1883.—Can I induce you to accept the post of Financial Member of the Indian Government in succession to Major Baring, who is to succeed Sir E. Malet in Egypt? No one would, I feel sure, fill more competently than yourself the very important office of Finance Minister of our Indian Empire. If you should be disposed to entertain the offer, there are some political matters pending in India on which it would be necessary that we should have a clear understanding before the appointment is made, though I apprehend we should have no difficulty in agreeing about them. The salary is 76,800 rupees. Baring's appointment is at present a secret, and, whether you accept or not, I must request you to be good enough not to mention the subject till we are ready for a public announcement. I write with the full concurrence of Mr. Gladstone and Childers.

The salary was high, the task would have been congenial, and he was on friendly terms with the Viceroy, Lord Ripon. But he enjoyed his work at the Treasury, and it was generally agreed that his admission to the Cabinet, to which his office was the recognised stepping-stone, could not be long delayed. To leave England at such a time for five years was frankly impossible; and he declined the offer with thanks.

Members of a Ministry who are outside the charmed circle of the Cabinet, though not consulted in the determination of policy, are expected to support it not only in the division lobby but in the country; and if they are unable to do so, they are counselled to hold their tongue. No one ever accused the Secretary to the Treasury of disloyalty to

the Government; but on his autumn visits to his constituency he spoke his mind freely on public affairs. The Liberal party had returned to power in 1880 with high hopes of useful service and with enthusiastic confidence in its chief; but, to the chagrin of reformers, the attention of the Ministry was distracted by a ceaseless struggle with the forces of disorder in Ireland and by recurring crises in Egypt and the Sudan. In regard to the former Courtney had nothing but approval for the policy of the Government, both in its repressive and its remedial aspects. He watched the operation of the Land Act of 1881 with eager interest and was loud in praise of its results. "It is a monument of political genius," he declared in 1883. "The longer it is tried, the more it is appreciated. It is uprooting the cause of trouble." On his visits to his constituents, whatever other topic was dominant he never omitted to deal with the Irish problem. The reform of County Government already occupied a leading place in his programme, and he continued to urge its claims on both parties until it was carried out by Mr. Gerald Balfour. He lost no opportunity of reiterating his opposition to Home Rule. "We are as man and wife," he argued; "we are one, not two." Unfortunately Nationalist Ireland did not think so; and before very long he was to learn that "the cause of trouble" was much too deep to be eradicated by the fixing of judicial rents.

Courtney had strongly supported a policy of military coercion in the Near East with a view to emancipating the Balkan nationalities who, after obtaining their independence, were expected to look after themselves. But while thus approving intervention for a disinterested and strictly limited object, he looked with suspicion on any steps that might lead to the annexation of foreign territory or to the further increase of British responsibilities. If British subjects chose to lend their money at high interest to an extravagant oriental potentate, they must bear the consequences and not expect the British Empire to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. Turkey, he believed, ought to be broken up as quickly as possible, and its com-

ponent parts should then govern themselves. For this reason he had disapproved the deposition of the Khedive Ismail in 1879 by his suzerain at the instigation of England and France. They had recognised and thereby increased the power of the Sultan. Why could they not have left the Egyptians alone and allowed them to stew in their own juice? The deposition of Ismail, whether right or wrong, brought no more than temporary relief to the situation; for his son and successor Tewfik was too weak to cope with the rising nationalist discontent which found a leader in Arabi. France was no less interested in the peace and solvency of Egypt than Great Britain; but Gambetta, who was eager to co-operate in necessary measures of coercion, was succeeded by the less adventurous Freycinet, who desired to confine French action to a defence of the Suez Canal. Even this limited risk was not to the taste of the French Chamber, and in the summer of 1882 Great Britain intervened alone. The Prime Minister was no enthusiast for his own policy, and not a few of his followers in Parliament and in the Press were either lukewarm supporters or avowed opponents.

To Miss Potter

July 12, 1882.—I am much dissatisfied with Egypt, and not at all easy about my position. There was a short discussion this afternoon when Lawson spoke, but it came to nothing.

July 20.—The Prime Minister has announced his intention of asking for a vote of credit on Monday, in other words for money to support some kind of intervention in Egypt. This is not the worst that could have happened, as it would have been intolerable if the Sultan had been brought in to resume a direct authority. It is better that we should undertake the task than leave it to the Pashas from Constantinople; but the outlook is very dark. I am more and more drawn to the conclusion that we ought to have allowed the Khedive and Arabi to settle their relative power among themselves, simply taking care of the Canal as a great international highway. I do not say there are not excuses or even justification for what we have done; only I feel the wiser course is the one I have pointed out. Since I saw you Mr. Bright has left the Ministry, but you know his views are not mine. He objects to all war as wicked. I think

wars are sometimes just and necessary. His defection will set a few members talking who have hitherto been silent, but the criticism of the Government policy in the House of Commons is very feeble. I am told that all the newspapers which are specially read by artisans in London joined last week in condemning the bombardment of Alexandria. My friend Scott, like most of them from Egypt, inclines to the opinion that we ought to have taken action earlier.

July 22.—I have had a long talk with John Morley. He is of my opinion in condemning altogether the policy we have pursued and is very uncomfortable about it; but he thinks there is nothing to be done just now but to insist, as far as we can, against any schemes of occupation and annexation.

September 19, 1882, BERLIN.—It was in Moscow that I read the telegraphic announcement of the complete defeat of Arabi; and now I hear that the luckless man is a prisoner of war and that Wolseley is at Cairo. The Ministers in Cabinet Council may well have cheered at the result; and I hope now the struggle is over they will be wise enough not to accept the government of the country nor to bind themselves permanently to the Khedive. We shall have done all we are in honour bound to do if, after freeing him, we give him a fair chance. No doubt the issue of the expedition will render the Government stronger, at least for a time. Did you hear of that cynical *mot* of Sir William Harcourt? "At last we have done a popular thing; we have bombarded Alexandria."

On returning from Russia Courtney hurried down to Cornwall and delivered an address at Torpoint. The Government, he declared, were justified in suppressing Arabi, who was no true representative of Egyptian nationality and was endeavouring to establish a military tyranny. We should, however, be culpable if, after overthrowing this tyranny, we did not respect national feeling and allow Egypt to govern herself. Not government by Turkey, or Arabi, or the Powers, but Egypt for the Egyptians was the policy to pursue. The Prime Minister rightly desired to co-operate with Europe in placing the country under a European guarantee, supplying it with representative institutions and then leaving it to work out its own salvation. We should tell Tewfik that he must not expect to be rescued a second time from domestic opposition, for we

could never consent to uphold a ruler against the will of his people. We should look after the Canal, make a ring round Egypt so that no other Power should interfere in its domestic politics, and let the inhabitants of the Nile Valley stew in their own juice. To the surprise of the world we had withdrawn from Abyssinia after the war of 1868 without annexations. If we now withdrew from Egypt, after setting up a free Government, we should not have intervened in vain. Now was the time to show that England wished to promote the freedom of other countries and had no desire to annex a yard of territory. The proof of our disinterestedness would be completed if the cost of the war were to be met as far as possible by the bondholders instead of by the fellaheen.

The speech, with its clear-cut policy and its vigorous phrasing, was widely reported and eagerly discussed during the autumn recess. Chamberlain wrote to congratulate him on his frankness, Lord Salisbury referred to him as a distinguished man who stood on the threshold of the Cabinet, and Lord Granville echoed that he was undoubtedly a man of great knowledge and great ability. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who had offered uncompromising opposition to intervention, broke into the vigorous doggerel of which he was the acknowledged master.

OUR POLICY WAS TO MAKE A RING ROUND EGYPT

(*Vide* Courtney's Speech at Plymouth)

At last we hear from Courtney's lips
  The Governmental plan.
Mysterious are all thy ways,
  Thou wondrous Grand Old Man!

Let quidnuncs talk of what they please—
  This, that, and t'other thing—
The wisest course the statesman sees
  It is, to make a ring.

That ring must be composed of all
  The bravest and the best,
Bring Baker Pasha from the East
  And Wolseley from the West.

Bring Sepoys from the Indian plains,
  Bring Scots from moor and fell,
Bring Royal Dukes from Windsor towers
  And Guardsmen from Pall Mall.

We fought like heroes all men knew,
  Hurled death from all our triggers,
Retrieved the *status ante quo*
  And killed five thousand niggers.

That traitor Arabi we nailed—
  Loud every steeple clanged—
And though all evidence has failed
  We mean to have him hanged.

The whip's at work, the gaols are full,
  The bastinado too;
Thank God the coupons though are paid
  Whenever they fall due.

On his next visit to his constituents early in the following year the Minister reiterated his policy and replied to his critics. His phrase "stewing in their own juice" had been quoted and reprobated; but its author was Bismarck, and its meaning was that the Egyptians should govern themselves and that we should limit our commitments by setting up a power that could take care of itself. The advice he had tendered at Torpoint had been followed. There was no thought of restoring the power of the Sultan. The Canal was to be open to ships of war, but no military operations were to be allowed in its waters. Lord Dufferin had drawn up a scheme for the representation of the people which would serve very well as a first step. We had now done enough both for the Khedive and the bondholders and must resist further temptation. "I am told that England cannot tolerate anarchy in Egypt. Why not? We tolerate it in Mexico and other parts of the world. This notion that we must go anywhere to prevent anarchy must be fought against, for when we go to prevent anarchy we create it. The whole excuse of many of our conquests has been anarchy requiring intervention, and the excuse for maintaining them is that anarchy must follow our withdrawal. I hope there are still some few of us left in England who believe in the

old-fashioned doctrine of the Liberal party, the doctrine of non-intervention. We should not interfere unless a short and swift intervention would remove the cause of the disease, which being removed, the country would be left to take care of itself again. And that is the defence of our intervention in Egypt."

The views of the Secretary of the Treasury were shared by the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, who deplored the Egyptian entanglement and honestly desired to escape from its meshes. But though the bondholders had few friends among the British democracy, the Cabinet could not leave them to sink or swim ; and the promise to withdraw was contingent on the restoration of order and stable government. Sir Evelyn Baring's task proved to require more time than had been expected ; and long before it was accomplished a school of thought became dominant in Great Britain which repudiated the doctrine of non-intervention and evacuation, and plunged boldly into the game of *Weltpolitik* with its prizes and its risks.

CHAPTER IX

MARRIAGE

On March 15, 1883, Courtney was married to Miss Kate Potter. Though his work for the *Times* had brought him a good salary, there was no considerable surplus available after meeting the needs of his family; and by the time he crossed the threshold of middle age he had resigned himself to a bachelor existence. His life was filled with congenial occupation, and he possessed not only devoted brothers and sisters but a wide circle of friends. Under these circumstances it was natural that a considerable period should elapse between the first meeting with his future wife and the dawning conviction that his happiness was in her keeping.

From her childhood Miss Potter had enjoyed the privilege of mixing in the wide world of society and politics. Her father was a Manchester man, the son of the first Member for Wigan in the Reformed Parliament.[1] Turning in early life from law to business Richard Potter joined the leading firm of timber-merchants in Gloucester. When the news of the sufferings of the allied armies in the Crimea reached England he proposed that they should be provided with wooden huts, which he and his partner Price were ready to supply. The plan was approved not only by the British Government but by Napoleon III., who sent for him and gave him an order on the spot. The flourishing firm established branches in Grimsby and Barrow; but timber was only one depart-

[1] See Georgina Meinertzhagen, *From Ploughshare to Parliament*, chap. xv.

ment of Potter's business activities. He was at different times a Director and later Chairman of the Great Western Railway, a President of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, and a Director of the Hudson's Bay Company. While Price was a Liberal Member of Parliament, Potter, who began as a Liberal, had become a Peelite ; and though his support of Free Trade drove him for a time into the Liberal camp, he returned to the Conservative party when the danger of Protection was removed. He stood for Gloucester in 1862, but was beaten by 28. Though he distrusted Disraeli scarcely less than Gladstone he was an active worker and speaker for the Conservative cause in Gloucestershire till he was stricken with paralysis in 1885.

In 1844 Richard Potter married a Miss Heyworth of Liverpool, a clever girl with keen intellectual tastes. Their only son died in infancy, but nine daughters were born and grew to womanhood. At Standish House, near Stroud, and in London, where their hospitable parents often took a house for the season, the girls enjoyed unusual opportunities of meeting interesting people. Herbert Spencer, a friend of Richard Potter from boyhood, was a frequent guest, and men were glad to accept invitations to the lively house-parties. Thus all the daughters married, and several of them became the partners of men who achieved distinction in public life.

In the autumn of 1875 Kate, the second daughter, after the unprofitable excitements of a series of London seasons, resolved to help Octavia Hill in her self-imposed task of reformatory rent-collector in Whitechapel. "Miss Potter has been staying here," wrote Miss Hill to her friend Samuel Barnett, vicar of St. Jude's. "She is very bright and happy, extremely capable, and has been through a good deal in her life, though she is young. She seems to fit in among us very well." [1] In 1878 the vicar reported on her work : "The common lodgings and nightly lodging-houses which abound in this parish are filled with people of the lowest description, who, herded together, are beyond the reach of any influence. Fourteen of these houses have

[1] C. E. Maurice, *Life of Octavia Hill*, p. 339.

this year come into possession of a friend of Miss Octavia Hill. It was delightful to enter the places of which one had such sad memories, to order the removal of dirt, the renovation of the broken doors and plaster, the admission of light through new windows. It is more delightful to know that in these houses respectable people are now living, visited weekly by a lady who is not only the rent-collector but a friend to help by wise counsel in time of need, and with sympathy for them as creatures capable of the fullest life." "For eight years," adds Mrs. Barnett, "Miss Potter worked with us, bringing in her wake hosts of friends, as well as two sisters. Miss Potter's friends were not of the 'goody' sort, but were people holding the world's plums, of wealth, high social position, and posts of national responsibility; yet she brought them all to tender their meed of service to the poor, and compelled them to face conditions usually hidden from the comfortable." [1]

After pitching her tent in Great College Street, Westminster, in 1877, Miss Potter was at home to her friends on Tuesdays; and as her rooms were within a stone's throw of the Houses of Parliament Members often dropped in during the session. As a girl she had naturally imbibed the conservatism of her parents; but Whitechapel had convinced her that the ills of the body politic required a more drastic surgery, and her political friends were mainly chosen from the Liberal camp. Among them was Joseph Chamberlain, who could always find time to write chatty letters. Her Journal in 1879 records: "Mr. Leonard Courtney also one of my visitors in Great College Street." A note added in 1910 comments on the beginning of their friendship: "We met first some year or so before at dinner at the Crackanthorpes', and I was told he was an important man on the *Times*; but I don't remember much about that meeting. Then about 1878 came one of those interesting evening parties at the Tennants' in Richmond Terrace, famous for the two beautiful daughters, Dolly and Evelyn—subjects of Millais's famous pictures 'Yes or No' and 'Blue Beads,' and famous for a collection of great or at any rate known

[1] *Life of Canon Barnett*, i. 106.

men and women. Huxley was talking to me and denouncing a manifesto in the *Times* of that morning on Beaconsfield's Afghan policy or some such question—denouncing it with great vigour of language. When he had expended his eloquence, a voice at my elbow remarked quietly, 'That's a pity, for I wrote it,' and there was Leonard Courtney. I burst into irresistible and I fear rather noisy laughter, and Huxley said, 'A weak man would retreat, but I won't,' and the incident ended in good temper. But Leonard got introduced to me that evening. He said afterwards the honest laugh struck him, and soon after he called."

The stages of the friendship are marked by the entries which recur with growing frequency in the Journal.

Easter, 1880.—Return to London (from a winter in Egypt with the Barnetts and Herbert Spencer) to work and am pressed into taking a sort of superintendence of all the Whitechapel Houses. The Barnetts came back warmer friends than ever. Meet Leonard Courtney in Queen's Gate looking radiant after his election and the great Liberal victory. He dines with us and I like him better than ever.

Dance at Prince's Gardens. Henry Hobhouse comes at my invitation and is introduced to Maggie. Sudden fancy, and after a week or two they are engaged. We all like him. Picnic on the river, H. Hobhouse, Daveys and L. Courtney (a long happy day with him).

October.—I return to Great College Street and find to my dismay that the drains are suspected. A good-bye visit from L. Courtney.

Miss Potter moved to a larger house close by at 26 Grosvenor Road, which her father took for her, and continued her Tuesday gatherings.

January 1881.—Mr. Rathbone and L. C. came to tea, and I meet the latter soon after at dinner at the Tennants'.

An invitation to the new Minister to spend the short Easter recess at Standish marked a new milestone on the road to intimacy, and was accepted with pleasure.

To Miss Potter

15 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE,
April 4, 1881.

MY DEAR MISS POTTER—Your invitation is very enticing, so that I cannot say no to it all at once. Indeed if I can I will act yes. Will you tell me within what days you propose to be at Standish, so that I may arrange to join your party if it prove possible?—Yours very faithfully, LEONARD COURTNEY.

The visit was a great success and brought the friends nearer together.

Journal

Easter, 1881.—My party at Standish. Mr. Spencer, L. C. and others. What a happy week it was! One of the pleasantest bits of social enjoyment I have ever had and just tinged towards the end with something a little stronger than social feeling. I was a bit anxious as to how my friends would get on together, and whether one of them would not be bored by a whole week in the country. But all went charmingly. L. C. evidently enjoyed his visit to my great delight. What walks we had altogether through the woods; and one last one I had alone with L. C.

The visit gave no less pleasure to the guest.

To his sister Margaret

STANDISH HOUSE, STONEHOUSE, *April* 20, 1881.—Herbert Spencer came by the same train. There is plenty of room. The country is very beautiful. We are on the slope of a hill overlooking the valley of the Severn, the river itself looking like a bright cloud on the horizon. A great plain lies between us and the river, full of meadows and orchards. There are hills all about, which, however, are for the most part the edges of the higher table-land below which lie the Severn valley and its tributary valleys. Villages are numerous; the houses mostly stone built (Bath stone) and with many good architectural traditions, so that they are at once substantial and pleasant to look upon. We are enjoying ourselves very much. After breakfast I am allowed to retreat to the study to write, read newspapers or work, for I have a few papers with me. In the afternoon walks or drives. In the evening much talk. A little music now and then. Herbert Spencer is, as you know, one of the most opinionative and argumentative of men, but we have not had, and are not likely to have, any collisions.

A month later Miss Potter enjoyed a visit to the Private View of the Academy with Herbert Spencer and Leonard Courtney.

Journal

The Grosvener Gallery next day with L. C. and tea at the Albemarle afterwards. A *very happy* summer follows. Many meetings at little parties and picnics with L. C., and I get to count more and more on my friend, though without looking for any very definite result from my friendship. I am delighted to get an invitation to dine with him and his sisters at the Albemarle. I sit between him and Mr. John Morley, with whom I am much taken. Mr. Spencer's picnic at St. George's Hill,—the Huxleys, Hookers and others, and my friend in a white suit! The day before I leave London L. C. makes me very happy by coming to tell me of his approaching appointment to the Colonial Office. I cannot find many words to congratulate him, but there is some silent feeling as we part.

A visit to the Ladies' Gallery proved less delectable than had been expected, for the principal attraction was lacking.

To Miss Potter

July 27, 1881.

MY DEAR MISS POTTER—You need not have been disappointed on Monday. The debate was very good and there was no necessity for my speaking. *I* was disappointed last night. I dined at the Rathbones' and you were not there, which was very vexatious, especially as there was an empty chair on my left. I believe you dined there last Friday, when also I was invited but could not go. What cross purposes!—I am reluctant to say good-bye, LEONARD COURTNEY.

That such a friendship must either terminate or march forward to its appointed goal was now becoming obvious to both parties, and Courtney began to draw back.

Journal

November and December.—Rather sad and dreary time in London. My friend comes not to see me and even appears to avoid natural opportunities of doing so. I get more and more perplexed and troubled. At last I come to the conclusion that

something has interfered with his friendship for me, and I must give up thinking of it if my health and work are not to suffer. I go down to Standish resolved to get over it.

Christmas, STANDISH.—A very pleasant family party. How we teased Mr. Spencer into kissing Beatrice under a bit of mistletoe and put a fool's cap out of a cracker on his philosophical head! I forgot my own troubles for the time, and came back to London ready to face the world and work again. But this mood did not last long.

January 1882.—A talk with Mrs. Barnett about L. C. She asks me to meet him at dinner on January 30. I cannot resist. We talk together a little looking at a sketch of Israels', when we arrange to see his pictures together the next day. How I enjoy that morning with my friend over those pathetic pictures, and then we walk home together as far as Downing Street. I feel that he likes me, but feel also that there are difficulties in his own mind, and I recognise that my own feelings are so much engaged that the only thing to do is to wait patiently for the solution which time may bring, and meanwhile to enjoy his friendship.

So things went on till the opening of the Whitechapel Exhibition on April 4 (my birthday), where I heard him speak for the first time. It was a solemn speech for the opening of an art exhibition, and it impressed me much, with its earnest questions as to the aims and objects and future of man's life.

A few days later Miss Potter's mother died, and in the following month she asked her friend to visit her.

From Miss Potter

May 16, 1882.—If you could spare half an hour between this and next Saturday, when I go down to Standish for ten days, I should so like to see you. When one has gone through some great event which creates in one a whole world of new thoughts and feelings one seems to want one's friends more than ever to help one to solve the problems and put things in their right places and proportions. From those few words you said at the Whitechapel Exhibition you must have thought much about that great mystery of death which has now come so near to us. I wonder whether people ever do realise death in the least till it comes to them personally, and then leaves them gazing blankly into a great cloud of darkness; and then how astonishingly quickly life reasserts itself and one throws oneself into its interests. I

am thinking of other things already, and among them your recent change of position [1] has interested me much. I suppose I ought to congratulate you, but I am not sure! You will not now feel as if you were ruling the Empire; but perhaps that had gone on long enough and you were getting too "Imperial" in tendency.

To Miss Potter

May 17.

MY DEAR MISS POTTER—If you will be at home to-morrow evening at six I will come and see you. I was much distressed at the end of Easter week to read of the great blow that had fallen upon you. I could not help thinking of the same time last year when we had spent such happy days at Standish. We may and must forget the distress of separation, but we need not forget those that have left us. I hope that you are returning to your work again. When I heard of your loss my first, or nearly my first thought was a hope that you would not have to give up the work to which you have set yourself.—I remain, my dear Miss Potter, always yours faithfully,

LEONARD COURTNEY.

When the friends met on May 18 the reserve that for many a dreary month had set a seal on their lips melted away. The discovery was a joyful surprise to both, for neither had sounded the depth of the affection which filled the other's heart. "I learned long since that life is subject to severe conditions." wrote Leonard Courtney the same evening, "and I discovered that for me I must live and die alone. Friendship I could enjoy, and some dear friends I have had; but beyond this I could not hope." The new relationship had come so suddenly and indeed so unexpectedly that they resolved to keep it secret except from some of the sisters till they had time to reflect how soon they could afford to marry. A few days later Miss Potter left for Standish, and the Minister set off on his usual Whitsun jaunt to Paris.

[1] His appointment as Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

To Miss Potter

PARIS, *May* 30.

MY DEAR KATE—My visit here will be shorter than usual, and it has had a vein of thought running through it of a novel character. We crossed in lovely weather. Mr. Lionel Robinson, who knows nearly everybody, has taken me this evening to dine with M. Lockroy and M. Naquet, two of the advanced Radicals in the Chamber. These deputies talked more reasonably than I had expected, but I doubt whether France will soon be fairly settled. This wretched Egyptian business disturbs them, and in the worst form, for it excites their worst vices of covetousness and vanity. But you must not think I have been occupied with politics. I have not seen an English paper since Saturday, and my principal occupation has been seeing pictures. Now I must say good-bye, but not for long. I hope I shall find my friend very happy.

From Miss Potter

June 7.

DEAREST FRIEND—Sunday is such a long way off that I must write you a little line between; only you must not answer it if you are busy. I suppose being Wednesday you will be dining out and seeing lots of people. For one reason and only one I am sorry not to have been going out this summer, and that is that I should like to see whether you look the same to me as you used to do in society. I should not mind your talking to any one else as much as you liked, because I should know that *sometimes* I had nicer talks than they ever had.

An idea has been running through my head,—a very low idea, for it is connected with public-houses and beer. I believe that the blood-poisoning stuff that is put into it is responsible for the worst part of the drunkenness and violence in London. Why should not an act be passed against adulteration? And I wonder whether it would be possible to take a public-house in some low street and sell good beer and manage it efficiently. Some of these days I think I shall go to one of the great brewers who are so fond of subscribing to charities and ask them to put me into one of their public-houses and see if I can't make it pay. The teetotallers are too narrow to take the whole world in. I am not sure that better public-houses would not do something to allay the drink fiend. Would you mind seeing my name up over a beer shop in Whitechapel?—Your affectionate friend,

KATE POTTER

(Licensed to sell beer and spirits).

To Miss Potter

June 9.

DEAREST KATE—Your imagination amuses me, pursuing me to evening parties; but I was not at a party on Wednesday. I had an invitation to Mrs. Jacob Bright's; but I took my sisters to hear *Tannhäuser* at the German Opera. I am much in favour of the Gothenburg system of public-house licensing which would secure most, if not all, you aim at. When I was at Gothenburg three years ago I made many inquiries and thought it had done good and could here. Chamberlain, as you know, took up the plan before he came into the House and proposed it in his first session, but has dropped it—more's the pity. We shall hear of it again.

At the end of the session the engagement was made public, and Miss Potter's choice was ratified by her father and sisters.

From Mrs. Meinertzhagen

August 29.—I believe Kate has every prospect of happiness before her, and I need not say that we all think she deserves it. I cannot think how she has escaped matrimony so long. I hope very much that you will like your new relations as well as they are prepared to like you. You will find some crotchety old Tories amongst them whom you may influence a little towards the right way of thinking. You must be quite prepared to be taken possession of by our large family. Any new member is drawn into it with wonderful rapidity, and in your case we shall not be a little proud of our new connection.

The tidings were welcomed with equal pleasure by such members of the Courtney family as had not already heard of it and by the friends of both parties.

From Herbert Spencer

December 3, 1882.—The contents of your note gave me much satisfaction. I should think it but rarely happens that in such relations there is found greater community of thought and feeling and general aims than exists between you and Mr.

Courtney. I augur well, too, from the long-continued intimacy which has given each so good an opportunity of knowing the other. I wish you all the happiness you so well deserve, and see no reason to doubt that you will have it.

From John Morley

October 23.—I always think it half impertinent to offer happy people congratulations. But you know with what real pleasure and confident good wishes I heard of this great venture of a friend whom I have long held in such affectionate regard. It is *the* great venture after all, but you have both left little to chance, if the union of good and proved characters means certainty of happiness. This is rather solemn phrasing, but marriage is not altogether without solemnity after all. Anyhow I wish you all good things—both of you—and hope that you will admit his friends to a share of cordial friendship with his new companion.

From Joseph Chamberlain (to L. H. Courtney)

October 18.—Morley has just been here who told me of your engagement. Will you allow me most heartily and sincerely to congratulate you—first on the event and above all on your choice? My acquaintance with Miss Potter has only been a short one, but I like her so much that I hope I may know and like her more as your wife. When does the marriage come off?

A few days after the announcement of the engagement the Minister sailed from Hull to St. Petersburg, in pursuit of a long-cherished desire to see something of Russia.

To Miss Potter

St. Petersburg, *September* 3.—I arrived here yesterday and went to the Embassy for letters. I found one from the Prime Minister. It was very characteristic. It was meant to suggest (perhaps a reproof) that I had gone rather far away and should at least keep myself within range of post and telegraph. He adds in a postscript, "I do not write with the desire of moving anything from my shoulders to yours, but from a sense of the great value of your judgment and co-operation in affairs." I am going to write him to say that I always intended

to be back in England by the end of September and could return at any time in four days. The absurdity of the letter is that my judgment, however valuable, is never called into account in anything of pressing importance.

The great attraction of the capital was the Hermitage, where the traveller rejoiced in the Rembrandts and Vandykes; and he was interested to see the Tsar and Tsarina returning from the festival of St. Alexander Nevski, and to hear them loudly cheered in the streets.

To Miss Potter

BERLIN, *September* 19.—I was extremely interested in Moscow. The situation of the Kremlin is very fine and the buildings in it make a striking ensemble, yet they have individually no beauty. The most bizarre of all the churches was called by Napoleon a mosque. I was reminded in parts of the town of Lucknow, where the architecture which Akbar and the Persians brought to Delhi and Agra came into contact with the native architecture of India and produced a mongrel style without the merits of either. I went twice to the Exhibition, where several rooms were full of pictures by Russian artists of to-day. Verestchagin was not represented by any of his great pictures, and I understood he is out of favour because he shows the ugly side of war.

As the marriage was fixed for the following Easter, it was necessary to find a home. House-hunting proved less of a torment than usual, and a pretty, old red-brick mansion in Cheyne Walk, with a view across the river and a pleasant garden behind, exactly met their wishes in respect of size, rent and situation. "I think it was a November afternoon when we happened on it," wrote Lady Courtney thirty-six years later, "in one of our Saturday walks during our engagement—exploring walks, to see where we should live. I had thought we might have started in the bright little modern house in Grosvenor Road, with a river view of its own too—a house I had taken on a twenty-one year lease, thinking I should never marry. Two friends shared it with me as my tenants. But no! 'Very nice, but it was not for him.' His lodgings had always been in some old house.

So we turned to Chelsea and Cheyne Walk. We had indeed been over No. 26, with a very large garden, but we doubted about it. Then we saw the board up at No. 15, and the fine iron gate at once attracted him. When the door opened the good spacious staircase settled the question. 'This is our house,' he said. I suggested that rooms were important and must be carefully considered, as we could not live on the staircase. But he was sure that staircase implied the main qualities we wanted; and on the whole it did. To be sure the present pantry was a coal hole; the panelled rooms were all covered with canvas and paper and the floors sloped about unevenly. But there was an air about it, an air of dignity, of repose, of welcome. Leonard felt a house, was very sensitive to its atmosphere, and he loved this one. We took it and set about alterations, stripping the drawing-room of its canvas and paper and restoring the old panelling and putting up a beautiful overmantel. And then the furnishing began and all the planning where his beloved pictures, prints and blue china should go. How we enjoyed it! It was practically all his. My share was the useful commonplace things. Some years after we built out the dining-room and merged part of the old room into the small library, thus getting two large and beautiful rooms on the ground floor. Later still my husband planned and carried out one or two ideas he had for the front of the house which gave him great pleasure. First came a fountain in the little front garden which was and is a great joy to our small neighbours, rich and poor. We began with gold fish, but that was too great a temptation and we had to give them up. Then came the sundial —an old one fixed on the front of the house. The motto on it was his choice—'Lead, kindly light.' But his biggest venture was the two pairs of sculptured heads—Sir Thomas More and Erasmus on one panel, Carlyle and Mazzini on the other."

Most of the Ministers gave presents to their colleague, and 112 Members of the House of Commons, subscribing a guinea each, presented a grand piano, a pair of lamps and a tea-urn. Among the presents to the bride was an offering

from her East-end tenants. The marriage took place at St. Jude's, Whitechapel, and William Courtney supported his brother as best man. The address was delivered by Samuel Barnett.

Journal

March 15, 1883.—Our marriage. The church crowded with poor people, to most of whom I was known and many of whom I knew. Breakfast in St. Jude's Schools with a hundred of my poor people and about forty others—all my sisters and their husbands, Margaret, Louise and William Courtney, Mr. Spencer, the John Morleys, Mr. Roby, and of course the dear Barnetts.

" March 15," wrote the Vicar after the ceremony, " will be long remembered by the many who on that day followed their friend with kindly thoughts into her new life, and shared the first meal which she took with her husband. We shall not forget her, and she, I know, will not forget us." " No, indeed," adds Mrs. Barnett, " that wedding is not forgotten—the dignified happiness of the bridegroom, the beauty of the bride's gown, the palms and the flowers in the church, the Vicar's address, the height of the Buszard's cake, how Mr. Herbert Spencer behaved during the service, why Mr. John Morley looked so grave, the ladies' dresses, the number of carriages, the dainty breakfast served in the big schoolroom, all so carefully arranged that without fuss or patronage the coster sat side by side with the Member of Parliament, and the overworked mother enjoyed the food she had not cooked, while she talked and listened to the ' quality ' who had handed her to her seat. Was it bizarre, forced and fanciful ? No ! for all the guests, however far apart in mental and social degree, were united by their love and respect for the bride." [1]

The honeymoon, severely limited by the Easter recess, was spent at Longfords, the Gloucestershire home of a sister of the bride, and in Devon, and on their return the couple settled at 15 Cheyne Walk, where they were destined to spend thirty-five years together. Whitsuntide was spent in Paris, and in June Courtney took his wife to Cambridge

[1] *Life of Canon Barnett*, i. 107.

and showed her his old haunts in St. John's, including the Fellows' Garden, of which he always kept the key. It was a busy season for the bride. "Everybody asks us to dinner," she records in her Journal, "and I go to many large receptions and am introduced to more people than I can remember." After the rising of Parliament in August they had a quiet fortnight to themselves in London, where the Minister finished up his Treasury work, followed by visits to Standish, "bright, sunny and cheerful, Mr. Spencer and bowls," and Hadspen (the home of Henry Hobhouse) "where L. sees churches to his heart's content, including Wells and Glastonbury." Entering Cornwall from Bideford they journeyed south through Bude, Boscastle and Tintagel to Penzance and Liskeard. In the course of the autumn they paid short visits to George Trevelyan at the Chief Secretary's Lodge in Phœnix Park, and to Joseph Chamberlain at Highbury. Each of the partners was rich in friends, and their combined forces made a formidable host. Chelsea was within a walk of Westminster, and among the Members who most frequently came from the House to dinner was Henry Fawcett. "I get to know and like him," wrote the bride in her Journal. "His personality is soon impressed on one—strong clear views, thorough enjoyment of social life, very genial to all, and with loud, cheery voice." But from March 15, 1883, the story of Leonard Courtney's life is a record of common triumphs and common trials, sweetened by loving comradeship and fortified by perfect understanding.

CHAPTER X

RESIGNATION

THE principal measure of the session of 1884—and indeed of the Parliament of 1880—was the Franchise Bill. Its chief feature, the concession of the vote to the agricultural labourer, formed part of the Liberal programme at the General Election; but Courtney was more interested in the enfranchisement of women and the representation of minorities. On both issues he came into collision with the Cabinet, and on one of them the difference proved too profound for compromise.

The discussion which was to continue without interruption for over a year opened in the autumn of 1883. "Many meetings and speeches," wrote Mrs. Courtney in her Journal in describing her first visit to Liskeard. "L. devotes much of his time to Proportional Representation." In answer to Bright, who had spoken disdainfully of "fads," the Minister appealed to the authority of Mill and Cairnes, Dilke and Fawcett, and argued that his scheme alone secured the principle of "One vote, one value," which Liberals demanded. With equal warmth he pleaded that the opportunity should be seized of enfranchising women, thus obtaining a reflection of the mind of every section of the community. He added that as the Franchise Bill would be the crowning achievement of the Parliament and should be quickly followed by a General Election, it might well wait for another year. His speeches aroused a good deal of interest in the political world. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, which had recently passed from the hands of Mr. Morley into those of W. T. Stead,

published a leader entitled " Mr. Courtney *contra mundum.*" After confessing that there was no public man of equal standing who spoke less or said more than the Secretary to the Treasury, the *Pall Mall* proceeded to denounce Proportional Representation and to warn the Liberal party against postponement of the Bill. A frank and not wholly unexpected remonstrance followed from Birmingham.

From Joseph Chamberlain (to Mrs. Courtney)

October 31, 1883.—I shall be in London on the 8th and shall be delighted to dine with you that evening. I am sorry your husband was so outspoken the other day. Perhaps he is right in his opinions—in any case we shall not quarrel because we differ; but I should have been glad if he had reserved himself and not committed himself so far ahead. Public opinion (and I think also the decision of the Government) is going against him, and under these circumstances it would be good policy to keep perfect freedom of action, which is more or less hampered by strong expressions of personal predilection. Look at Goschen, for instance. His speech on County Franchise was really an unnecessary bravado and almost an affectation of courage. It has left him stranded on the political beach, and I doubt if, with all his ability, he will ever come to the front again. You know I do not err myself on the side of reticence, and I should not counsel a friend to hold his tongue merely to save his skin; but I admire so heartily your husband's powers and am so desirous of working loyally with him that I am anxious that he should not unnecessarily emphasise the differences which separate us. Here is what a mutual friend writes me—you will guess his name. " What a pity that Courtney should never see more of the great tide of democracy than can be got up into a table-spoon at Liskeard!" Pray thank him for his kind reference to myself. I know that neither you nor he will mind my frank remonstrance.

The protest was renewed ten days later by word of mouth.

Journal

November 8.—Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Morley dine with us and chaff L. about his criticism of the Government. Mr. C. evidently fears it will come to a split. He will *never consent* to P. R.

The astute Radical commander, who envisaged the forthcoming Bill as a pawn on the political chess-board, was already laying his plans for the General Election, and impatiently brushed aside any proposals which did not seem calculated to contribute to the victory. A month later Courtney and his wife spent a week-end at Highbury, where the host "shadowed out the agitation on the Franchise as the card to play which would give the Liberals a majority at the next election." Chamberlain's open antagonism convinced the friends of Proportional Representation that they must organise their forces. On January 16, 1884, the Proportional Representation Society was founded, and at the first General Meeting on March 5 Sir John Lubbock was elected President.[1] The members were drawn impartially from both parties, and Mr. Arthur Balfour's adhesion gave special satisfaction.

The Franchise Bill was introduced on February 28, and the issue of woman suffrage was raised at the outset. As a declared champion of the principle Courtney refused to vote against it simply because he was a Minister and because the Chief Whip feared a close division. His attitude, however, raised a wider issue than the casting of a single vote; and Sir Charles Dilke [2] wrote to the Prime Minister from the South of France explaining his position.

Sir C. Dilke to Mr. Gladstone

Easter Eve, 1884.—I should feel no difficulty in voting against the amendment on the ground of tactics which would be stated, provided that Fawcett and Courtney, who are the only thick-and-thin supporters of woman's suffrage in the Government, voted also; but I cannot vote if they abstain.

Gladstone replied that to add the novel and controversial issue of woman's suffrage to the agreed principles of an Agricultural Labourers' Franchise Bill was unwise, and would give the House of Lords an admirable pretext for postponing or rejecting the measure. Sir Charles, as the

[1] Hutchinson, *Life of Sir John Lubbock*, i. 201-10.
[2] *Dilke's Life*, ii. 6-9.

only convinced supporter in the Cabinet, was in a position of peculiar difficulty, but he determined to be in large measure guided by the decision of the two subordinate Ministers. "By May 22 I had made up my mind that I could not vote against the woman franchise amendment if Courtney and Fawcett went out on the matter. I could not speak to them about it because of the 'Cabinet Secret' doctrine. Childers had been directed by the Cabinet to sound Courtney, because he was Courtney's official superior in the Treasury. He was to offer him that if he would vote against the amendment he should be allowed to speak for woman franchise on the merits, and that none of its opponents in the Cabinet (that is, all except myself) should speak against it on the merits. I was unwilling to go out, but thought I could not do otherwise than make common cause with Courtney."

Courtney and Fawcett stoutly resisted all appeals to vote against the amendment, and when it was reached Dilke followed their example by walking out. Their insubordination caused a miniature storm in the Cabinet. "Hartington is very angry with me for not voting," wrote Sir Charles in his Diary on June 12, "and wants me turned out for it. He has to vote every day for things which he strongly disapproves. He says that my position was wholly different from that of Fawcett and Courtney, because I was a party to the decision of the Cabinet, and that custom binds the minority in the collective decision. This is undoubtedly the accepted theory." The matter came up for discussion at a Cabinet on June 14, which decided that the three mutineers should retain their posts.

From W. E. Gladstone

June 16, 1884.—The request which I have to make to you, in connection with the recent and important division, will perhaps be best introduced and explained by my sending you in confidence a copy of the enclosed Memorandum which has now received the authority of the Cabinet.

"It has probably come to the notice of my colleagues that, in a division early this morning, which was known to be vital to

the Franchise Bill and to the Government, three of its Members abstained from voting. Preliminary intimations had been given to this effect, and some effort had been made to bring about a different intention. This change of mind was hoped for, but no question of surprise can be raised. It is, however, an elementary rule, necessary for the cohesion and character of Administrations, that on certain questions, and notably on questions vital to their existence, their Members should vote together. In the event of their not doing so, their intention to quit the Government is presumed, and in all ordinary circumstances ought to take effect. At the present moment, however, besides the charge of a great legislative measure and an ever-increasing mass of other business, the Ministry is rapidly approaching a crisis on a question of Foreign affairs which involves principles of the deepest importance not only to the welfare of Egypt but to the character and honour of the country, and to the law, the concord, and possibly even the peace of Europe. It would be most unfortunate were the minds of men at such a juncture to be disturbed by the resignation of a Cabinet Minister, and of two other gentlemen holding offices of great importance, on a question which, important as it is, relates mainly to the internal discipline and management of the official corps. I therefore propose to my colleagues that I be authorised to request of the President of the Local Government Board, the Postmaster General, and the Secretary to the Treasury, that they will do us the favour to retain their respective offices.

W. E. GLADSTONE."

The Franchise Bill passed through the Commons with little opposition, and the Third Reading on June 26 was unchallenged; but on July 8 the Lords declined to proceed with it until it was supplemented by a scheme for Redistribution. The Prime Minister sharply rejoined that the Bill would be reintroduced in an autumn session, and his followers burst into a chorus of angry protest, Mr. Morley proclaiming that the House of Lords should be either "mended or ended." The indignation was a little too shrill for Courtney's taste, though he was no admirer of the Upper House as actually constituted.

To a Constituent

July 15, 1884.—The position of the House of Lords in reference to the Franchise Bill is deplorable; but we need not

contemplate its abolition. My experience of the present and the last House of Commons leads me to think a Second Chamber might have its uses in moderating the action of the First Chamber issuing directly from popular suffrages and representing in an exaggerated form the predominant feeling at the time of an election; but the House of Lords does not supply this use. It has two capital defects. It offers no check to the extravagances of a party majority calling itself Conservative, and its vote is (in appearance at least) absolute, not suspensory. Perhaps we may feel our way in time to a House that shall exhibit the attributes of a real Senate in maintaining its self-command in the midst of excitement and in subjecting to the criticism of common sense whatever comes before it from every quarter; but it will be necessary that it shall be reinforced by representatives of classes now practically unrepresented in it and that its power should be restricted to a suspensive veto.

During the autumn holiday Courtney found himself at Preston at the same moment as the Prime Minister.

Journal

September 26.—Mr. Gladstone at the station, and we just avoided coming in for the demonstration. All this speechifying and demonstrating against the House of Lords very empty and harmful in L.'s eyes, mere party speeches talked from one end of the country to the other. We go down to Putney and discuss it with Mr. Morley, who has gone in for it and apparently believes in it all heartily, and thinks that the Franchise Bill, which has been sleeping very comfortably for many years in the Liberal programme, has suddenly become so urgent that delay is almost a crime.

On his autumn visit to his constituents Courtney defended the right of the Lords to discuss the composition of the Lower House, and approved their demand that redistribution should accompany an extension of the franchise. While his political friends were busy picking holes in the Upper Chamber, he reminded his hearers of the defects of the Lower. "The present House of Commons falls very short of my ideal. I can conceive a much better assembly. It gives a wholly disproportionate importance to people of wealth and is too much consumed by the spirit of party.

As the Government of the day we do not get the assistance we ought to have from our own supporters. Which of them have led us to suspect that we were going wrong except Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who deserves all honour for his independence? I have complained to members, Why are you not more independent? The House of Commons is full of faults. So are the Lords. The Upper Chamber should be improved by the addition of Life Peers and the election of Scottish and Irish (and perhaps later of English) Peers by Proportional Representation. We may thus gradually secure a body which will keep our paths straight." "A calm speech, with no party appeal," wrote Mrs. Courtney in her Journal; "quite too moderate to please our ardent Cornishmen." It was indeed the utterance of an independent private Member rather than of a Minister of the Crown, and once more revealed his incorrigible tendency to think for himself. A report of the speech was sent to various friends, who gently resented its Olympian detachment.

From John Morley (to Mrs. Courtney)

October 14.—Many thanks for the newspaper. I don't think that the orator's friends have any reason to complain. But the situation is more heated than he supposes. The moment is not entirely seasonable for the confession of sins. All that ought to be done before the engagement begins.

The Minister's more conservative friends rejoiced at his challenge to insurgent democracy.

From John Scott

KANDY, *November* 10, 1884.—I like your speech very much. The *Times* reported it very well. I am very glad you stand by a Second Chamber. The whole tone was manly, independent, thoughtful and practical. You will some day find it difficult to run in the same team as Chamberlain and Morley.

Despite the battle-cries of the opposing armies the generals were not averse from compromise, and when it was known that a Committee of the Cabinet had drawn up a scheme for the redistribution of seats, peace was brought

within sight. When Parliament met on October 23 the Franchise Bill was re-introduced and quickly carried through the House ; and outside Parliament Lord Salisbury and Stafford Northcote met the Prime Minister and Dilke and settled the outlines of a Redistribution of Seats. Their fruitful labours were to secure the safe passage of the Franchise Bill and a non-party scheme of Redistribution ; but there was a tiny group of Liberal Members who waited with bated breath to see whether the representation of minorities formed part of the Downing Street compact.

On November 6 Courtney's closest personal and political friend in the Ministry passed away after a few days' illness.

Journal

Woke up as usual when L. came in from the House, and asking him some questions I could hear from the dressing-room that something was wrong. Then he came in and told me the dreadful news in a tone of voice I shall not easily forget.[1] It was a very deep grief and a great loss politically as well, as we felt when a few weeks later the Redistribution Bill came on and he left the Government, protesting with two or three against the Bill. How different his position would have been had Mr. Fawcett lived to go out with him, as he undoubtedly would have done. As Mr. Morley said, the resignation of those two would have been an event.

To Richard Potter

November 14.—The loss of Fawcett is a terrible blow. It is hard to believe that such abundant and joyous life has suddenly ceased, and that we shall not again rejoice in his free and courageous talk. I doubt whether he could have been taken from us at a time of greater political anxiety. The immediate future is most dark. My own fortunes are mixed up in the struggle ; but I hope you will be satisfied that whatever happens no step will be taken without the most anxious consideration. Kate will share counsels as she must share fortunes. She is brave enough for anything.[2]

[1] In a note of 1918 Lady Courtney adds, " I never saw him give way so completely to such an outburst of grief."

[2] Courtney told his wife that resignation would mean the end of his official life.

Fawcett's death created a vacancy in the Chair of Political Economy at Cambridge for which Courtney had been a candidate in 1863, and in view of his probable resignation his thoughts turned for a moment towards the post. Roby sounded a few of the electors, Henry Sidgwick amongst them, but reported against the plan. Stricter views as to the necessity of residence had begun to prevail, and it was generally agreed that the choice would fall on Alfred Marshall.

From H. J. Roby

November 18.—The important question is what residence you could give ; and I fear the amount demanded by the University would be too much to be properly compatible with Parliamentary work. Moreover, it is quite possible that if you go out of office you may not be long out ; and I do not think office and the Professorship are compatible, though there are the instances of Harcourt and Fawcett to the contrary. Both are somewhat special cases. I think on the whole the more dignified course would be not to be a candidate, though I say it with great reluctance. I should think you would have no difficulty in getting good newspaper employment.

Though on the threshold of the Cabinet the Financial Secretary was told nothing of the discussions of the Four. He had little hope that the principle would be adopted by the Government, for Gladstone had opposed it in 1867. He felt it his duty nevertheless to forward a lengthy Memorandum to the Prime Minister.[1]

To W. E. Gladstone

November 8, 1884.—The answer you gave last week to the enquiry of Sir John Lubbock was probably such as he himself expected ; but it must have left him and those who like myself agree with him anxious lest the principle of proportional representation should not receive due consideration at a time when consideration of it may be fruitful. The Redistribution Bill will follow the Franchise Bill, but the scheme of the Redistribution Bill must be formed while the Franchise Bill is still in

[1] Abridged.

process. When it is once laid upon the table the introduction of any new principle into it must be perilous if not impossible.

I venture to address you then on my own responsibility, and I would plead in justification the very large number of M.P.'s (190 or more) who have become members of the Proportional Representation Society, and have thus expressed their approval of its principle, and my own professed and now long-rooted sense of its national importance. My appreciation of the principle of Proportional Representation is more than thirty years old, and dates before the recognition of it in the Reform Bill of 1853 brought in by Lord (John) Russell when your colleague in the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen; although I must confess that at that time my apprehension of it was imperfect. I was, however, thus early strongly convinced of the injury done to our national life by the deleterious training more or less undergone by every one who is drawn into the political world, and by the loss of men who are shut out of it as refusing to submit to this training. There are men who cannot serve the State just as there are men who cannot serve the Church because they cannot subscribe, except in a non-natural sense, to all the articles imposed on those admitted to service. Many persons must have many ways of regarding the same subject; but the vice, which I have thus briefly indicated, seems to me the spring of the evils of our political system. We deny ourselves some of the richest elements of national life. Parliament is not a distillation of the best wisdom of the Commonwealth. It is derived I will not say from contaminated but from imperfect sources. I may remind you that you yourself have been witness to the decline in the standard of Parliamentary life during the last thirty years, and we must look to other communities of English origin, to our Colonies whether attached or detached from us, for the fuller outcome of what is yet in germ among ourselves. There you will find the public good become the spoil of professional politicians, against whose domination the better sort struggle again and again to set themselves free, but struggle is vain. It was, I suppose, under the influence of some such views as these of democratic development that Mr. Mill hailed with enthusiasm the revelation of the true principle of representation. It gave him, he said, a new hope.

I have not dwelt upon points which have perhaps more powerfully attracted the majority of minds to proportional representation, because I have thought it due to you to go at once to what I believe to be the centre of the argument. But

you will perhaps let me indicate some of these points. In the first place we can have no security that the result of an election conducted according to the habitual method, *i.e.* when the country is divided into districts in each of which the majority of its electors elect its representatives—corresponds to the division of parties among the mass of electors. I speak of two parties as the simplest case. The two parties may be evenly distributed among all the divisions of the country so that the dominant party monopolises all the representation, as is approximately done in Wales and Scotland. Or, without a practical monopoly, a slender majority on one side may produce a disproportionate majority in the representative assembly. Or a majority among the electors may fail to secure even a majority among the elected. Next to the uncertainty that must attach to the result of an election is the point of the enormous power the system throws into the hands of a small oscillating fraction. It is through this that the degradation of the character of candidates has been made most manifest to many. It is through this that the tendency arises, which you have noted, towards a gerontocracy or a plutocracy. I am bound, however, to add that there is some compensation here, for it is through this that an earnest minority compels attention to its views. Unable to attain its proper, direct representation in the legislature, it more or less tardily, and with more or less of sincerity in the result, converts to its views candidates who know that without its support their candidature must be unavailing. Closely connected with the last point is the evil of the great turnovers of political parties, which recently observed at home is a perpetually recurring phenomenon in our Colonies. I believe that there are no such violent changes in the national judgment as these election results would indicate.

I would wish not to trespass unduly on your time, but you may perhaps expect me to say a word or two on the plans for realising the principle of proportional representation, supposing the principle is admitted. The present limited vote is an imperfect device; but it cannot be contested that it secures a far better representation of the constituencies to which it is applied than the method it superseded or (I would add) any method of pure majority voting. The cumulative vote has been applied on a larger scale and with remarkable success, as far as attaining what was desired, in School Board stations. It has made the Act of 1870 workable, as it has secured the representation and, in most Boards, the co-operation of parties that under the older system have been fighting for exclusive

possession, and would be forced, when in possession, to make their first object the promotion of sectional interests. In the single transferable vote I would submit a method which would realise all the good the cumulative vote has secured, while emancipating the electors from the necessity of conforming to the directions of some political organisation which the cumulative vote undoubtedly requires. But there are many other plans, any one of which I should be ready to support, tending towards the end I seek. Any coat is better than none, and there is a choice of serviceable garments for those who wish to be clothed.

I cannot conclude without a few words on a subject I regard as of transcendent importance in connection with this reform. I mean Ireland. The future of Ireland is dark and threatens to become one of deepening gloom. If we contrast the Parliamentary representation of the Island with what it was twenty-five years ago, and then attempt to picture what it may be a few years hence we must be filled with anxiety. We may reduce the disorganisation within the House of Commons by the adoption of adequate rules; but no reformed rules can cope with the fact of a Parliamentary representation of Ireland irreconcilably opposed with few exceptions to the Parliamentary connection with Great Britain. If this threatened Parliamentary representation did truly correspond with the division of opinion in Ireland, the conscience of the nation would not endure to maintain the Union. Home Rule would be inevitable. Yet there must still remain within its confines a large residue of temperate opinion, in the best sense of the words both Liberal and Conservative, which is failing to secure Parliamentary expression and is in imminent danger of being soon entirely deprived of it. With its waning influence in the legislature its life must wane; and, unless my forebodings are all false, the prospect before us should compel the most anxious care to save loyal and rational Irishmen from exclusion from the Parliamentary arena. There is a strong case in Great Britain for large efforts to secure proportional representation; but in Ireland it is clamorous. In this interest I would most earnestly beseech a consideration of the whole subject before the day of consideration is past.

Ten days later the Prime Minister sent a non-committal acknowledgement of the Memorandum.

From W. E. Gladstone

November 20, 1884.—The full and able exposition of your views on proportional representation, with which you have favoured me, has been brought *in extenso* under the notice of my colleagues in the Cabinet, who are well aware of your title to have your views carefully weighed. I am sure you will feel that in the peculiar circumstances of the moment I am not able to go beyond this assurance.

The most sympathetic comment came from the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

From Lord Spencer

November 11, 1884.—This is to thank you extremely for sending me a copy of your letter to Mr. Gladstone on proportional representation. My inclinations and desires are still strongly with the sense of your letter, but I feel great difficulties as to the practical nature of any scheme which has been produced. I share your feelings in Fawcett's loss. He would have been of immense use just now. I have been and am so occupied with Irish work that I have not been able to work up the question as I could wish.

The difficulties of his position were set forth in a letter to Penzance.

To his sister Margaret

November 21. — People have no doubt been asking you whether I am going to resign. I have not resigned as yet, but all things seem leading that way. It is not an agreeable prospect, especially as my resignation will almost certainly be ineffectual for any immediate practical purpose, and I shall be condemned as a crotchety man unfit for business life if not as a disappointed, ill-tempered person. For us who believe that the character of the Legislature and through it of the nation depends on this issue there is nothing left but to bear witness to what we hold to be the truth, and so I look forward to going below the gangway to lift up my voice in the wilderness. Kate, as you may be sure, is very much occupied with this crisis. She has the greatest faith and courage equal to her faith; but it is rather hard on her, and she chafes a little at the incapacity to do any-

thing and would like to rouse Sir John Lubbock and others to more activity. Fawcett's death in this is a terrible loss as in other things. You asked about the Postmaster-Generalship. Childers spoke to me about it when it was vacant, saying he should urge my claims if I should like to move. I replied that as it seemed not impossible I should be out very soon I did not think it fair to lay myself out for a new appointment, about which I might not in any case greatly care.

The view taken by most of his friends was strongly against resignation.

From H. J. Roby

November 18, 1884.—If Don Quixote once mounts his steed, Heaven knows whither he will ride or how he will behave. I wish you could prevail on yourself not to mount him at all. The cause is not worthy of it. It is too *abstract*, and, if the distribution of seats is settled in a few months the cause, however valuable, must go to sleep for years.

From John Morley

November 22.—I hope you did not misunderstand an expression of mine last night. When I said that I wished you had come out eighteen months ago, that did *not* mean that I should like to see you come out now. On the contrary, I shall wholly regret that step. Eighteen months ago *I* was too inexperienced in the House of Commons to make any show against their Egyptian policy. If you had been below the gangway, you might have led an effective protest. All that is now too late—and some new start will have to be made. I hate your making a demonstration of this gravity on a question where you will find little sympathy—and, I may say, no sympathy at all among those large classes who would most earnestly respond to your views on foreign and colonial policy. It is in this field that I, at least, hope to see you exercising an all-important influence. We shall need it all.

A confidential interview with Childers was authorised by the Prime Minister; but the Secretary to the Treasury obtained little consolation from his official chief. It was an anxious week-end. Though nobody knew what the Prime Minister was going to say, the friends of minority representation were prepared for the worst.

Journal

November 29.—Opening of mosaic at St. Jude's, Whitechapel. Mr. Matthew Arnold, who was to give the address, to breakfast. We go down together. L. takes the chair. Impending political events so engross my mind that I hardly heard anything. Mr. F. Buxton speaks to me and I tell him that L. will probably resign on Monday. He is much upset and tries to dissuade him, and comes again on Sunday to do so. Mr. Arthur Elliot is also much concerned.

Protests were unavailing, for the Minister had resolved to resign unless the Prime Minister's statement proved satisfactory.

Journal

Monday, December 1.—Mr. Gladstone announces outline of Redistribution Bill to the party. Leonard sends in his resignation on hearing it. I go to the House, and for some time do not know whether he has resigned or not, as I cannot see him. Finally he is seen alone in the Gallery, and I know he has left the Treasury Bench for good. Was ever politician in such a minority as he seemed that night, with two or three forlorn and depressed allies? Notwithstanding I felt a strange triumph, and never thought my husband a bigger man than I did that evening. He was doing a momentous thing and doing it so simply and unobtrusively and without heroics!

After the announcement of the Cabinet plans the Secretary to the Treasury at once wrote to inform the Prime Minister of his irrevocable resolve.

To W. E. Gladstone

December 1.—I think our conversation will have so far prepared you that you will not be surprised to receive my resignation of the office I hold. I tender it with great regret, for I have naturally prized much the honour of serving under you; but with the judgment I have been constrained to form of the character and probable results of the Redistribution Bill I cannot hesitate. I would only ask you to believe that I do not take this step until after much and painful deliberation. I cannot conclude without thanking you very sincerely for the personal kindness I have received from you, a sense of which will always abide with me as a private Member.

From W. E. Gladstone

December 1.—If you unhappily quit the Government, the Queen and the country will lose a most able public servant, who has done in a short time much admirable work. To this connection I shall add great and sincere personal concern. Yet I feel we have no right to dun you in a matter which you have, I know, considered seriously and with much pain. I cannot help, however, pleading my grey hairs as an apology for stating to you that the step, even if at the last unavoidable, is, as I think, premature. It is in my opinion, and according to my experience, a fixed rule of English administration that an official Member of Parliament, not yet in the Cabinet, only becomes responsible for any proceeding of the Government outside his department when as a Member of Parliament he has to take his line in regard to it. This you will not do until the question of proportional representation shall be raised upon the Bill. It is most important on general grounds that this rule should not be further tightened. I hope, then, you will consider the decision as suspended. But I go a step further. I believe that judges of great weight deem our proposal of one-Member districts well adapted to the condition of Ireland, which, I also believe, has much to do with the resolution you announce. Would you not hear Lord Spencer on this subject? And if so allow me to arrange for your calling upon him. Pray do not deem this a worrying letter.

To W. E. Gladstone

December 1.—I am bound by every consideration of duty and of inclination to reply at once to your very kind letter. I would gladly consider my resignation suspended were that possible consistently with my estimate of the facts of the situation; but indeed that is not possible. The Redistribution Bill will probably pass without material change; but, as I am driven to the conclusion that it will have a painfully injurious effect on our political life, I am bound to bear my testimony, however unavailing, against it, and if I am to bear any testimony I must not delay the first witness of resignation. I am glad to understand Lord Spencer takes a favourable view of the operation of the Bill in Ireland, and should, of course, be delighted to see him personally as you suggest, but I am afraid I cannot anticipate any effect of an interview in modifying my conclusion. The great kindness of your letter would have constrained me could any argument have prevailed.

Letters of regret or congratulation poured in from Ministers, Treasury colleagues, and personal friends.

From Lord Spencer

December 2.—I am extremely sorry to hear that you have resigned. I do not write with any idea of influencing your action, or because any opinions of mine are worthy of your consideration, but merely to express my great regret that the Government has lost so able a member. Personally I shall miss you very much at the Treasury, as I have in not unfrequent communications had the greatest satisfaction in discussing Treasury matters with you. I may also say that as I sympathise warmly with your views on Minority Representation, I regret that you find yourself obliged to part with Mr. Gladstone upon the question.

From Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice
(Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs)

December 2.—I need hardly tell you with how much regret I have learnt we are to be no longer colleagues. I had always believed you would be the next person admitted into the Cabinet, and this feeling makes me admire your determination all the more. I regret very much the cutting up of our large towns into wards for the purposes of election. With the exception of W. E. Forster, I have heard nobody say a word in favour of it, and I believe it will be most unpopular in the towns themselves. But on this, as on the question of minority representation, the Tories, whom we have to thank for the arrangement, have not been able to look at anything except temporary political advantage ; and even as to that they are probably mistaken.

From Lord Bramwell

December 2.—I am very sorry to hear of your resignation. Is it necessary ? The Ministry will lose *their best man.* I say it and mean it.

From Mrs. Fawcett

December 2.—I am so glad of the news in this morning's paper ; and I wish to send you and Mrs. Courtney this line of congratulation. You know, I am sure, you would not have been alone in this action of yours if Harry had been here to join

you. He often spoke of this to me. It will be harder for you now to fight your battle single-handed; but you have plenty of strength and courage. Mrs. Courtney must be very proud and happy to see her husband fighting "where what he most doth value must be won."

From William Stebbing

December 2.—In one sense I am exceedingly sorry. Your rise to high official rank appeared so certain and easy. But in another and superior sense I admire you for the act, though it is only what I should have anticipated from you.

From H. J. Roby

December 2.—So you have done the deed and recovered your liberty to protest. Well, I dare say you feel mentally more comfortable, but I am sorry it has come to this, and if it was to come to this, wish you had a reason which commanded more of my sympathy. But conscience does make fanatics of some.

The resignation of a thrifty financier was lamented by his brother watch-dogs of the Treasury.

From Sir Reginald Welby

December 2.—I see with great regret that we are to lose you. There are of course convictions which admit of no compromise and I am the last man to wish that any one of note in public life should sacrifice such convictions. But at the same time both personally and in the public interest I sincerely regret your determination. The first and foremost duty of the Treasury is defence of the English tax-payer, and strange to say the English tax-payer appears to resent such care of his interest. But if the interest is neglected the State will suffer. The old generation of statesmen appreciated this consideration. The new one does not, and I should have been heartily glad to keep at the Treasury as a Chief almost the only one of the new generation to whom the old tradition of the Treasury recommended itself. I hope your separation from the Government will be but temporary.

The Minister's regret at leaving his post was as keen as that of his colleagues.

To Sir Algernon West [1]

December 8.—I am very sorry to sever my official connection with the Treasury; yet I think I may pledge myself to continue faithful to my interest in it. If a voice is wanted in the House I will not be silent. Assuredly my work was made lighter and easier by your co-operation.

On December 4 the late Minister seized the opportunity of the Second Reading of the Redistribution Bill to make the customary speech of explanation.

Journal

December 4.—I go to the Speaker's Gallery and sit in front of Mrs. Gladstone while Leonard makes his protest. A sincere and earnest speech, in parts eloquent but not at his best. Mrs. Gladstone rather characteristically says to me, "My dear, I had no idea your husband was such a clever man." The Prime Minister passes it by with a jesting answer, and half the House professes not to understand L.'s explanation of the single transferable vote,—followed and understood by large audiences of a lower class later on.

The speech opened with a friendly tribute to the Prime Minister. "He appealed to me to remain in tones of kindness which I shall ever remember. Nothing but the strength of my conscientious conviction would have upheld my resolve. Let me tender him my most hearty thanks for the kindness he has ever exhibited, and say that in parting from him I feel my attachment to him increased rather than diminished." Turning to the cause of his resignation he asked the question, Why do I so solemnly protest against the creation of these new single-Member constituencies? The answer was threefold. It was a departure from the old lines of the Constitution. It was not truly representative of opinion. It would lower the character of Members of Parliament. After the elucidation of technical details and the citation of American illustrations came the peroration, rendered poignant by a reference

[1] Sir Algernon West, *Recollections*, ii. 221.

to the death of Fawcett. "You would nowhere have people with their power thrown away. You would have a reflection of the national will and the national wisdom. There would be no single artisan or agricultural labourer or man of learning who would not be able to say, There is somebody in the House for whom I voted who represents me. No such promise of freedom can be secured by any other machinery. I cannot sufficiently deplore my own want of power to preach this gospel. If the proceedings of this night had occurred one short month ago I should not have been alone in deserting that bench or in advocating this cause. Those who shared his counsel, who knew his thoughts, who accompanied him so many years in his political life, cannot do him more honour than in being faithful to the doctrines he held. I for my part would pray to God to be faithful to this cause."

The Prime Minister at once rose to reply, and returned the compliments of his dissentient colleague. "In his departure from the service of the Crown and of the nation we have sustained a heavy loss. In that official career, though not very lengthened, he has made his mark upon the administrative business of the country; and to this acknowledgment of the past I desire to add an expression of a fervent hope for the future—that either with this or with some other Government congenial to him he may for many long years be united without the untoward occurrences or impediments such as have now deprived us of his valuable services." Passing to the subject at issue he conceded that any and every plan was open not only to plausible but to real objections, and that in much of his criticism the ex-Secretary to the Treasury had stood on solid ground. When, however, he had come to develop his own scheme, "which he worships as embodying something very near to political perfection," the sympathy of the House had begun to fail. His proposal, indeed, though certified as simple enough, was in truth a *pons asinorum* which very few Members would be able to cross. But whether the system were complicated or the reverse, he had exaggerated both its merits and the evils which it was

designed to cure. Why should such condemnation be poured on the single-Member constituency, which had returned many of the most eminent members of the House and was adopted all over the world? If the system was so disastrous, such universal approval and acquiescence would be inexplicable. The Government had been confronted by a choice of evils; and when the Bill reached Committee alterations could be freely discussed.

The speech was a dexterous effort in the Prime Minister's lighter vein. His task was facilitated by the fact that the motion before the House was for the second reading of a first-class measure, and that it was hardly the occasion for a detailed rejoinder to a technical disquisition on a single issue. Courtney, on the other hand, was justified in claiming that Gladstone had contested none of his facts. Except for a reasoned argument from Sir John Lubbock the debate paid little attention to Proportional Representation; and it was obvious to friends and foes alike that the House would never take the question seriously until the electorate had been wooed if not won. When the Bill reached Committee, Sir John Lubbock, supported by Courtney and Albert Grey, moved for the introduction of the principle; but only thirty-one Members found their way into the division lobby. A final protest came from the ex-Minister on the Third Reading.

Despite the friendly gestures of farewell, the resigning Minister felt no pang in parting from his chief. "Even apart from his rather rugged political independence," writes Lord Fitzmaurice, "few mental links existed between his general outlook and that of Mr. Gladstone. Indeed most of their mental characteristics were almost of an opposite character. Nobody ever misunderstood what Courtney meant, nor was his mind in a state of constant and frequently unexpected development like that of Mr. Gladstone. He held the pure and undiluted doctrine of the political economic school of Bentham and Mill, and never swerved from one jot or tittle of the law. Now this school was one with which Mr. Gladstone's mind had neither sympathy nor affinity at any time. Courtney's mind in fact, trained

not in the casuistries of Oxford theology but essentially conditioned by the hard if somewhat narrow school of Cambridge studies, was the exact opposite of the clerical mind. Therefore although affection for sound finance and economy, and a strong dislike for South African political adventures, brought Mr. Gladstone and him occasionally into line together at an early date in the Parliament which had lasted until 1880, mental sympathy there would be little or none between two natures so differently constituted." The analysis of temperamental difference is perfectly correct; but it was an ironical coincidence that on the occasion of their parting the illustrious casuist should be found guarding the broad highway and reminding his lieutenant of the limitations of the common man.

It is no part of the biographer's duty to deliver judgement on Courtney's resignation of office. He acted after mature deliberation and in spite of the protest of his friends. He had counted the cost, and he never complained of the price that he was called upon to pay. Whether he was justified in attaching such transcendent importance to a question of political machinery will be answered in different ways according to our estimate of the need and practical value of Proportional Representation. Still less is it possible to determine with general assent what issues are grave enough to compel a Minister, who is not a member of the Cabinet, to quit his post. The ethics of resignation are not an exact science, and there will always be marginal cases in which the only guidance is to be found in the individual conscience. Courtney's action in 1884 belongs to the same category as Gladstone's resignation on the Maynooth Grant in 1845; and in explaining his conduct to his constituents he quoted the poignant words of the chief from whom he had parted. "The choice before me was to support the measure or to retire into a position of complete isolation, and, what is more, subject to the grave and general imputation of political eccentricity. It is not profane if I say, With a great price obtained I this freedom. In giving up what I highly prized I felt myself open to the charge of being opinionated and wanting in deference to

great authorities ; and I could not but know that I should be regarded as fastidious or fanciful, and fitter for a dreamer than for public life in a busy and moving age." While the mass of men looked on with slightly contemptuous bewilderment, there were not a few who rejoiced to discover that a public servant of the front rank was willing to sacrifice his position and to jeopardise his political career in vindication of a life-long conviction.

Among the grounds of resignation was the probable effect of the Bill in wiping out the Liberal element in Ireland and handing over the country body and soul to Parnell. His views were shared by the O'Conor Don, who emphasised the danger in forcible terms.

From the O'Conor Don

December 7, 1884.—Allow me to express my great admiration for the practical proof you have given of the sincerity of your convictions by your resignation of office. Whatever this same Bill may do in Great Britain, its effects in Ireland will beyond all question be most disastrous. I cannot see how we can stop short I will not say merely of " Repeal " but of " Separation." The Franchise and Seats Bills taken together will absolutely extinguish all Liberal representation in Ireland outside the ranks of those who will be pledged to " separation." It may be that the Bill will leave a few Tory seats in the North of Ireland, but as to Liberal seats as distinguished from Nationalists there will be none, or so few that I may say none. If this represented the real feeling of Ireland it would be all right ; but it will not do so. A large minority in the three provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connaught will be wholly unrepresented, and a Liberal Government will have to face the *whole* Irish representative body as hostile—either extreme Tories or Nationalists.

Courtney forwarded the letter to the Prime Minister, who was so obsessed by the complexity of minority representation that no Irish or other arguments could shake him.

From W. E. Gladstone

December 19.—Thank you for your letter with its inclosures and the letter of the O'Conor Don. I believe my description

of the general merits of the House of Commons on the first hearing of your plan was true and that few were able to pay the toll upon the bridge. There is great advantage in studying it on paper, and the case of the capable citizen becomes more hopeful, without the smallest reproach to the deliverer of the oral explanation. Doubtless there are many other points to be considered besides intelligibility, but even on this last ground I still fear there would be many victims.

Though the Prime Minister had hardened his heart, Lord Acton was a convinced supporter, and told Mary Gladstone that a friend whom he had met at dinner " was a little shocked to find that I agree with Courtney." [1]

When Parliament adjourned for the Christmas holidays on December 6, Courtney started on a campaign in the country, in which his principal allies were his Parliamentary colleagues, Sir John Lubbock and Albert Grey, afterwards Earl Grey. The mission opened in Manchester, where his host, Mr. C. P. Scott, then and now Editor and Proprietor of the *Manchester Guardian*, was a zealous friend of the cause. The first gathering was held at the Reform Club with Mr. Scott in the chair. His proposal was presented [2] as " steeped in the essence of democracy " and " containing within itself the realisation of the widest conception of popular sovereignty." Mr. Gladstone, in his reply in the House of Commons, had never ventured to question his facts or refute his arguments, or to deny the assertion that a majority of Members had been returned by a minority of electors in England and the United States. For instance, the Conservative majority of 1874 was secured by a minority of voters. That was the first and fatal objection to the single-Member constituency,—that a Parliament sometimes represented the minority instead of the majority. The second was that it failed to secure the representation of the different modes of thinking and living. For instance, the working class had enjoyed the franchise since 1867, but were virtually without representatives. " The upper classes are as kindly natured as the lower ; but their experience

[1] *Letters to Mary Gladstone*, 157.
[2] The address was published as a pamphlet.

has not made them familiar with the trials of the poor, any more than the experience of the poor has made them familiar with the tasks of the rich. What we want in Parliament is the presence of both, instructing one another, raising one another, and making Parliament a reflex of the temper, the will, the intelligence and the knowledge of the kingdom. You would get such a revival of spirit and of life that when this ideal is secured a miracle would be wrought throughout the kingdom not inferior to the miracle of the Valley of Dry Bones. A town would be represented as a whole and not in fragments, and every class and school of thought would have its spokesman and champion."

Next evening a meeting was held in the Free Trade Hall.

To his Wife

December 18.—It was grand. We had not a full hall but still a large number, all keenly interested. Up to the time of voting I did not know whether we should carry our resolution. It was carried by about three to two.

On the following day he joined Albert Grey, who had already begun a campaign in the mining villages of Durham and was full of schemes for the furtherance of the gospel.

From Albert Grey

December 9.—If you can only succeed in winning the miners *as a class*, I have hopes that we may also succeed in winning the Tories as a party. I am holding my meetings in the pit districts as private meetings. They are unreported, and this enables me to make use freely of arguments which I would not dare to use if what I said was to be read by the Tory farmer. I am anxious, however, to secure the miners first and do not intend to approach the Tories until after Christmas. By that time my work in the pit districts will be done. If on the meeting of Parliament I could bring up from Northumberland a numerously and plentifully signed petition in favour of the county being made into one instead of four constituencies and its representative being elected by the Hare Principle, something at any rate would have been done to answer Gladstone's challenge that

we must first obtain an entry for our views into the minds of the people before we ask the House of Lords to listen to us. I believe if we had time we could carry every single county, but we have only the one short month of January.

The campaign inspired Sir Wilfrid Lawson to one of his whimsical outbursts.

I agree, Mr. Grey,
With near all you say
On the evils we suffer from now.
Then you point out a scheme
Which will cure them, you deem,
But I own that I don't quite see how.

We move by slow stages
And live in dark ages,
Slow cometh the dawning of day.
Things would go wrong, I guess,
With the papers, unless
They were counted by Courtney and Grey.

Still I'm struck by some twinkling,
And have a small inkling,
That your plan after all may be good.
So just work away,
Courtney, Lubbock and Grey,
Till you make yourselves right understood.

After the two missionaries had addressed some miners' meetings, Courtney went on to Newcastle to stay with Dr. Spence Watson, whence he reported himself "in very good spirits with the star tour in the provinces." Returning home for Christmas he was soon off again, and carried the fiery cross through the great cities as far north as Glasgow. Test elections were frequently held, and for the first time the theory and practice of Proportional Representation were expounded to large audiences with perfect clarity and apostolic fervour. "This rowdy platformery and fierce democratic agitation evidently suits you after all," wrote John Morley, good-humouredly turning the tables on the critic of his own campaign against the Lords. "F. reports you as in famous spirits. I know that I shall come upon you bawling out of a carriage window at Preston one

of these days." Two months later, when the struggle was over, Courtney surveyed the loss and gain in a letter to the Chairman of the American Committee for Proportional Representation, who had written to congratulate him on his unselfish devotion to the cause.

To Mr. Stern

March 13, 1885.—The newspapers will have told you of our Parliamentary failure. This was certain from the outset, but I confess I did not think we should have been so badly beaten. There are few who care to be found unnecessarily on the losing side, and many who were clamorous in the beginning in denunciation of the division of our big towns are now not merely silent but cheerfully accepting the situation. The private agreement between the heads of the two great parties was our death-blow. The remonstrants, whether Liberals against the Government or Conservatives against the Conservative chiefs, have dropped away as they perceived that if they would save their lives politically they must go with their chiefs. Thus the Parliamentary failure of our movement has been sad. We have had, however, eminent cause of satisfaction in the progress we have made in the country. We have had meetings open to all comers, when our principles and plans have been expounded with nearly unvarying success. Opponents have come, and have declared their adverse judgment and even attempted to persuade the audiences, but in vain. With two exceptions we have carried our meetings with considerable and sometimes overwhelming majorities. We have disseminated a large mass of literature. We have held test elections. Debating societies and political clubs have been furnished with ballot papers and instructions and have held elections of their own. In this way much seed has been sown and we are sanguine it will bear fruit. We shall now look forward to the coming General Election which will probably illustrate our arguments in the most forcible fashion. I cannot conclude without a word of thanks for your kind expressions relatively to myself. I do not anticipate any injury at least in the long run, and for the present I am relieved from much that was painful. Indeed I congratulate myself on having resigned at the time I did, as it would have been most hard and yet most necessary to have resigned subsequently on the new development of the Soudan policy of the Government.

CHAPTER XI

THE SUDAN

After the suppression of Arabi's rebellion in 1882 Egypt ceased for a short time to attract much public notice ; but the rise of the Mahdi and the disaster to Hicks Pasha in 1883 again turned all eyes to the valley of the Nile, and led the Khedive, on British advice, to abandon the Sudan. When Gordon was despatched in 1884 to withdraw the Europeans and the Mahdist flood rolled round Khartum, the country concentrated its gaze with passionate intensity on the fortunes of the beleaguered garrison. As summer passed into autumn and autumn into winter the progress of the relieving force was followed with hungry anxiety, and a great volume of popular anger accumulated, ready to descend on the head of the Government if help should come too late. The gathering tragedy impelled Courtney to reconsider his qualified acceptance of the policy of intervention in 1882. " I am a little disposed," he declared to his constituents in October, " to ask myself whether, if we could begin again, we should go to Egypt at all." Before long he was to reach the definite conclusion that it had been a mistake, and that Bright's resignation had been an act of wisdom as well as of courage.

Khartum fell on January 26, 1885 ; but the expected news of the hero's death only reached London on February 5. During the brief period of agonising suspense Courtney addressed his constituents on " the one pressing question of the hour," appealing over the heads of his little audience at Torpoint to the Prime Minister to stand firm against the

hurricane of passion that was sweeping through the land. Gordon, he declared, had disobeyed orders, and instead of withdrawing the European garrisons had determined to "smash the Mahdi." We had done our best to save him, but we had failed. "I ask those who say we must still go and attack the Mahdi, even though the man we wish to rescue is dead, to tell me on what ground of morality and policy you justify such an attack? It is said you must fight him sooner or later. Why? Because he has considerable power in the Sudan. But do you wish to destroy his power in the Sudan? Oh no, they say. But he will advance into Egypt. But had you not better wait and attack him as he advances? We know the difficulty of going into the Sudan and fighting him there. In Egypt we should be near our base; and we should be fighting in self-defence If I stood alone and every one else in England were on the other side, I would protest against the notion of waging war against the Mahdi simply for the purpose of showing our might. The crimes that have been committed on the plea that you must beat a man who is getting too powerful are unnumbered, and please God we will not add to them. If you crush the Mahdi, what will you put in his place? You will be confronted with a bigger problem than you have on your hands in Egypt. I should be the slowest of all to believe that an English Government with Mr. Gladstone at its head would give countenance to it."

It required no small courage to criticise the hero of the hour and to rebuke the fierce cry for revenge. But it was not his habit to wait for either leaders or comrades when there was work to be done. His reference to Gordon's neglect of instructions brought a protest from the "only begetter" of the mission that had ended in heroic tragedy.

From W. T. Stead

February 19.—When you spoke in the West you were evidently under a misconception as to the scope and extent of General Gordon's mission. Might I take the liberty of asking you to glance at the enclosed pamphlet, which your reflections upon his memory and others of like nature have driven me to

publish? If on reading this statement of facts you are convinced that you did Gordon an injustice, I am sure you will lose no time in saying so as publicly as you said what you did about his exceeding his instructions.

To W. T. Stead

February 21.—I am obliged to you for your letter and early copy of your extra. I hope I should be ready to correct publicly any misstatement I had made respecting General Gordon if convinced of the misstatement, but I cannot see that I have been guilty of this. I have said that "smashing the Mahdi was no part of his original instructions," and this statement appears to me true in letter and spirit. In my speech in Cornwall I was examining the question what it is incumbent on us to do now, having regard to the policy of the Government, and I pointed out that "smashing the Mahdi" had not been part of their policy. The instructions given the General at starting did not extend to this; his memorandum written on board shows that at the time he was conscious of a divergence of views between himself and the Government, but was ready to work out the more limited task, or at least to attempt it. Subsequently he insisted on the necessity of doing more; but I do not know that the Government ever admitted this necessity, nor can the permissive discretion given him be employed to fasten upon the Government an approval of his enlarged policy. Even if his policy was right it was not the Government policy; and though the Government now appear to be adopting it more or less consciously, you must allow me still to believe it a bad policy.

Journal

February 1885.—Great excitement throughout the country and clamour for a forward policy, the Press almost unanimously pushing the Government deeper into the Sudan. Leonard at Torpoint and Mr. Morley at Glasgow almost alone raise their voices against any further bloodshed.

Their protests seemed to be in vain; for on the day after the newspapers announced the fate of Gordon, the Cabinet instructed Lord Wolseley to overthrow the Mahdi's power at Khartum. Yet even in those weeks of tense excitement there was more opposition than was revealed in the press.

From Frederic Harrison

February 14.—I cannot doubt that after your most cogent speeches which have seriously stemmed the war fever, you will go on to organise opinion in that sense. If you and Morley stir yourselves and use all that is open to you, you may form a powerful party and ultimately modify the policy of the Ministry. I presume you are already working to get round you members who will support you. I see that L. Stanley, Hopwood, Thomasson have spoken distinctly, and I cannot doubt that you will have above thirty to forty English M.P.'s enabling you to be independent of W. Lawson, Labby and Irish. But what I want to press on you is not to despair of the opinion of the electors even in London, and to go straight to the country. No possible opposition can be constructed inside the House with this rotten end of a Parliament. If Gladstone could be got to go straight to the people, over the heads of the party and official world, he could do what he liked. Three speeches from him in Lancashire, Midlothian and the Midlands would even now destroy the war party altogether, though it might possibly break up his Cabinet. I congratulate you on your own splendid opportunity. Your good genius has come down *ex machina* just when you most needed it. I was sorry you left the Ministry, for you know what I think about P. R. But now that is dead and buried here comes as fine a chance as ever came to a public man in sore need at the nick of time. And if you and Morley now use your chances, and can shake yourselves free of that House of Commons fog which blinds Gladstone, you will soon be on even terms with Dilke and Chamberlain.

Another old comrade sent an encouraging message from the Riviera.

From Sir Wilfrid Lawson

February 15.—I cannot help sending you one line of encouragement in the splendid fight which you and John Morley —almost alone—are making against the madness of the British nation and its rulers. I read with the warmest admiration and approbation your speech which is reported in last Friday's *Times*. The most encouraging thing was that apparently the people agreed with your view of the matter. I suppose that three years of Liberal massacres are beginning to tell at last on the electorate, the same as Disraeli's five years of glory and gunpowder at last caused a reaction. You are luckier than I

was when I attempted to stump the country against Gladstone's invasion of Egypt in 1882, for not only was I then absolutely alone, but the Liberal jingoes generally continued to make a disturbance at the meetings and prevent a fair statement of the case.

When Parliament reassembled on February 19 the Conservatives naturally moved a vote of censure on the Government for their failure to relieve Gordon, and were supported by Goschen and Forster. The defence was lame enough, for all the world was aware that the delay was in part the result of divided counsels. Moreover, the Government spokesmen, deeming it unchivalrous to tell all they knew, and all that was to be revealed long afterwards by Lord Cromer, of Gordon's unfitness for his delicate task, offered an easy target for the shafts of the Opposition. The discomfort of Ministers was increased by the fact that while the Conservatives attacked them for having done too little, a body of their own Radical supporters blamed them for being about to do too much. An amendment to the Vote of Censure was moved by John Morley regretting "the decision of the Government to employ the forces of the Crown for the overthrow of the power of the Mahdi"; and on the fourth and final day of the great debate Courtney delivered an impassioned oration in its support. Reviewing the divergent explanations and confessions of Ministers he fixed on the avowal of Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, that he now regarded our first intervention as a mistake. A second decision had now to be made—should we smash the Mahdi at Khartum? The Government declared that we must; and yet not a single Minister desired to remain in, still less to annex, the Sudan. When the news of Gordon's death arrived the Cabinet determined to fight, thinking that no Government could live unless it did so. If, however, we succeeded in smashing the Mahdi, what should we do with the Sudan? Set up princelets who would need our constant support? We must either withdraw or undertake to govern the country. "The issue before the nation rests on the decision of one man. At a whisper from him, a change of tone, a single utterance, it would rise to condemn

that in which it now silently acquiesced. If this crowning responsibility is fully recognised, it may induce a half-reluctant Minister to do what only a great Minister can—retrace his steps and to undo the mischief which he has unwittingly carried forward." The peroration was heard in hushed silence, and all witnesses agree that Gladstone was visibly affected.

Journal

February 26.—I hear his speech, the most powerful I ever heard from him. It makes a marked impression on the House, and the Prime Minister listens with undisguised sympathy, and I think with some wincing at the close.

The verdict of the Ladies' Gallery is confirmed by an experienced observer on the Irish Benches. "As the evening advanced," wrote Mr. T. P. O'Connor,[1] "the face of the Prime Minister began to be overclouded, and he looked especially anxious while the speech of Mr. Courtney was being delivered. The speech was one that might well make him uncomfortable. It was far and away the most damaging attack that has yet been made upon the Government, and was the first real exposition of the views of the Peace party. To judge by their applause, although it was low and timorous, the greater number of the Liberals agreed with the destructive criticism which he passed upon the policy of the Government, and nobody doubted that when he sat down he had made it harder than ever for any Liberal to vote for the plans of the Government." With the Front Benches united on a forward policy, it was no small triumph for the Peace party that 74 British and 40 Irish Members followed the two dissentient Radicals into the Division Lobby.

There was a good deal of heart-burning in Cornwall over the new mutiny; and the editor of the Plymouth *Mercury* reinforced his public rebukes by private exhortations, to which Courtney sent a brief and characteristic reply.

[1] *Gladstone's House of Commons*, p. 499.

To Mr. Latimer

March 15.—I am well aware of the immense power of the Prime Minister and of the risks I run in even appearing to differ from him; but there are political issues so grave that they must be judged on their own merits, and our future must be full of danger if newspapers do not help men to think a little for themselves even in the presence of the greatest names. For myself I think I shall be found incurably addicted to the Protestant right of private judgment.

It was natural that resentment should be felt not only in Cornwall but in Downing Street.

Journal

Easter.—Large dinner at York House,[1] among others Mr. Chamberlain. He and L. pitch into each other very frankly, to the amusement of every one. Mr. C. warns L. that if he turns the Government out he will never get another seat for a Liberal constituency.

Threats only stiffened Courtney's resolution. His wisdom, moreover, was vindicated early in April by the Cabinet's decision to abandon the Sudan south of Wady Halfa; for Wolseley had pointed out the magnitude of the task of reconquest, and Sir Evelyn Baring advised against a further advance. A scarcely less important factor in the decision was the news which reached London on April 8 of a sudden and unprovoked Russian attack on Penjdeh, on the Afghan frontier. "Mr. Gladstone made a speech to-night," wrote Mr. T. P. O'Connor[2] on April 21, "which everybody is saying means war. In the first place he had to announce the abandonment of the expedition to Khartum, and the Radicals, like Mr. Morley and Mr. Courtney, who have so vigorously opposed that wild and imbecile scheme, at once burst into a cheer. Then came the ominous announcement that the meaning of this abandonment was to have the troops in the Sudan as well as all the other resources of

[1] Mr. Potter's house in Kensington.
[2] *Gladstone's House of Commons*, p. 525.

the Empire available for service wherever they may be required." But after obtaining a vote of credit from a unanimous House of Commons, Gladstone persuaded Russia to refer to the arbitration of the King of Denmark the incidents of the Penjdeh attack. Courtney had never lost confidence in the Prime Minister's good intentions, and attributed what he regarded as his errors to malign fortune. " Mr. Gladstone's ambition," he declared to his constituents, " is to live at peace with all the world, respecting the rights of every country, great or small, infringing on the territory of none, anxious to use the influence of England in bringing about liberty throughout the world, but never under the pretence of liberty carrying anywhere the flame of war. It is a grievous fact, lamented by none more than by Mr. Gladstone himself, that he has been obliged to devote so much time to foreign affairs ; but the difficulties have been inherited."

On June 8 the Liberal Government was defeated on the Beer duties, and Lord Salisbury took command with Lord Randolph Churchill as Chief of the Staff. Courtney shed no tears over the fall of a Ministry with which he had had such serious differences ; and his six months' wanderings in the wilderness had encouraged his natural tendency to independence. The new Premier was as pacific as his predecessor, and in the eyes of the Philosophic Radical Lord Randolph's Tory Democracy was as heretical as Chamberlain's Unauthorised Programme. During the few remaining weeks of the session the new Government did little but mark time ; but a Bill to remove electoral disqualification by medical relief aroused the ire of the few individualists left in the ranks of the great parties.

Journal

July 21.—A Medical Relief Bill is brought in, going far beyond what Mr. Jesse Collings himself would have ventured to propose. Leonard and a few—including our honest Conservative Mr. Pell—fought it tooth and nail, but found few to go with them, though the majority of the Liberal Government and the Conservatives had pledged themselves to the old principle

that all poor relief was to cut off the vote. But Mr. Chamberlain and his friends having raised it as an election cry, the two parties vie with each other as to who shall be most eager to meet the probable popular feeling. L. made a very fine speech.

Courtney's Spartan soul revolted at a proposal in which he detected a "thoughtless levity" now rapidly gaining ground in both political camps; and with sublime disregard of the approaching election he placed on the paper a resolution disapproving a measure "which removes an incentive to independence and fundamentally changes the principle under which pauperism has steadily diminished since 1834." The receiver of alms, he argued, he who cannot support himself, was unfree, and therefore should not vote. It was said that only 60,000 would be affected; but the number would grow. The gift would injuriously affect the character of the working-classes and would increase pauperism, as it had been increased by the Old Poor Law. "All efforts to raise their position will be valueless if they are not encouraged to be independent and prudent. Only by giving them prudence to look before and after can we ever cure the nation of the curse of pauperism. The people at large will be degraded by the Bill, which will arrest the beneficent tendencies that have been in operation for the last thirty years." At these words Jesse Collings cried out "Cruelty." "To make the people feel the consequences of their own acts," retorted the speaker, "to prevent them indulging in vice and pursuing improvidence, is not cruelty. If we would raise the people we must tell them that their position in the world depends on prudence." [1]

The austere gospel of self-help contained an element of fortifying truth; but it had been so often employed by selfish men to delay reforms and to palliate abuses that it was ultimately displaced by the rival theory of a minimum standard of life, to be attained by the active co-operation of the State. It was for the latter doctrine that Chamberlain

[1] "I do not care so much for Courtney's own disapproval," wrote Henry Sidgwick, who heard the speech, "as his political economy makes it inevitable; but I am afraid he is right in saying that practical philanthropists are against it." *Sidgwick's Life*, p. 418.

had resolved to capture the Liberal party; and his control of the machinery filled with apprehension the adherents of the older faith, who were denounced by the Birmingham captain as a set of political Rip Van Winkles.

Journal

July 22.—The day after L.'s speech on the Medical Relief Bill I had arranged a picnic to Burnham Beeches. Mr. Chamberlain talked a good deal and very frankly about politics; but his tone was detestable and made me feel that if he becomes as he threatens to be the dominant power in the Liberal party, we shall have no such thing as real freedom in political life. It will all become an organised petty tyranny. Every politician however honest who does not conform exactly to the will of the majority of the party (and that wire-pulled to an extent only known to a few) will be cut off and denounced. The day will come when such Liberals as Leonard must fight this régime. Meanwhile organisation is going on apace with the Birmingham party, while the free are doing nothing except keep their reputations undamaged by any intriguing or sacrifice of principle to election advantages. For some time I have thought that the independent and non-demagogic Liberals should also make themselves heard and insist on Lord Hartington coming more to the front.

Courtney's impenitent individualism found utterance about the same time in a four-column review in the *Times* of the Inaugural Lecture of his friend Professor Marshall at Cambridge. Fifty years ago, he begins, Political Economy was filled with self-confidence, while its enemies, like Southey, were sad and sometimes almost hopeless. To-day economists were not so sure of their footing, while their enemies displayed the insolence of victory. How far was this loss of authority the fault of its founders? In admitting their shortcomings the Professor had been too apologetic. It was contended that they lacked the faith of the moderns in the possibility of a vast improvement in the condition of the workers. It was true that they had not the philanthropic spirit of to-day; but they were essentially humane men. They believed in the possibility of a vast improvement, but thought it would come very slowly and only

through the raising of the popular standard of social morality. "In a generation of political enfranchisement it is inevitable that cries for a swifter reformation of social evils should arise." Malthus would have agreed with Louise Michel, *La Philanthropie, c'est un mensonge.* Henry George was not the first and would not be the last to believe that he had detected and could stanch the primary source of human misery. The older economists were not infallible; but the investigations of the latest thinkers left their great results untouched.

The summer of 1885 was a period of drift and unsettlement. Lord Salisbury was in office but not in power, and nobody could forecast the issues or foretell the result of the autumn election.

To John Scott

August 6.—As to politics we are very much at sixes and sevens. It seems doubtful whether Gladstone will ever come back to public life. Hartington is hanging back, doing nothing in a large measure because he waits upon Gladstone—a consideration which does not hamper Chamberlain, who goes about the country proclaiming the strongest programme. It is a question whether he will not cause such defection as to endanger the Liberal majority at the General Election. Then a dismal scandal has happened about Dilke. As to myself my position in the House is certainly not worse—perhaps better—at the end of the session; but I shall have trouble in fighting East Cornwall. I don't go far enough for some, especially the teetotallers, and I am suspected of not swallowing as gospel everything Gladstone says. My opposition to the Medical Relief Bill is also a rock of offence.

Before leaving London at the end of the session Courtney and his wife visited Mr. Morley and found him "leaning more to L. and less to Mr. Chamberlain than he did. But with whom he will eventually side when the fight comes, as I think it will, it is difficult to say." "The fight" was to come; but the struggle that had already begun between Birmingham Radicals and Hartingtonian Moderates was soon to be eclipsed in a fiercer struggle, in which Chamberlain, Hartington and Courtney were to find themselves

standing shoulder to shoulder against Gladstone and Morley. But these thunderclouds were still far away; and the member for Liskeard spent part of his holidays in a yachting cruise to the north of Scotland and Norway. He landed in Liverpool on September 16, his mind full of the coming General Election; and two days later he read Gladstone's manifesto in the papers.

Journal

Leonard relieved and more than satisfied. It expressed his views almost identically, including a confession of error in Egypt and the Sudan, and will undoubtedly help him in fighting S.E. Cornwall. It is rather against Free Education and Disestablishment for the present, though seeing that things are tending that way, and for freeing land and simplifying transfer before trying any experiments in Mr. Chamberlain's direction.

The merging of the borough of Liskeard in the constituency of East Cornwall necessitated the delivery of a large number of electioneering speeches. The candidate's principal themes were Imperialism, Socialism, Free Trade and Home Rule. In regard to the first he defended his opposition to further bloodshed in the Sudan after the death of Gordon; and his comrade in the fight, John Morley, came to Bodmin to claim a share in the merit. A campaign in Burma was now threatened; but there was no justification for any war to enforce the contracts of British traders. Scarcely less detestable than Imperialism was Socialism. "The Liberal party has no socialistic views. In Mr. Gladstone's programme you will find plenty of work, but never a trace of socialism." The greatest task awaiting the party was the establishment of county self-government which would "sweep away the last refuge of clan supremacy." Free Education, which was being proclaimed by Chamberlain, might weaken the sense of responsibility and self-sacrifice, and, like Gladstone, he could only promise to examine a proposal which he frankly disliked. This pronouncement provoked a rebuke which inflicted momentary pain.

From John Morley

November 6.—I have read your speech of last night with a feeling that I hardly expected to have stirred by any speech of yours. Surely you could have stated the objections to free schools without making a direct attack on Chamberlain, and the more especially as you admit that you have not yet made up your mind. The appeal to the old Birmingham League and to the Nonconformists is hardly worthy of you, considering that you have had no sort of sympathy with either. You will have as assuredly to go back from your present position about free schools as you have had to go back from your old position about county franchise. But you might have done this without making union and co-operation with your friends impossible. Excuse me for speaking frankly, but it comes to nothing less than that. If you had had a firm opinion it might have been different. I have tried pretty hard to make an eirenicon between you and the Radicals, but I must give it up as a bad job, and henceforth you and Jesse Collings may fight it out between you. You will be worsted.

To John Morley

November 8, 1885, PENZANCE.—Your note was but a sorry greeting to me yesterday when we came here for two days' rest. My view on Free Education is this. My judgment is entirely against it except on the ground of the cost and trouble of collecting fees. But the question is an open one; and when Harcourt, Mundella, Lefevre and others are rushing to Chamberlain's side it must be permissible to state the engagements on the other side. Twice only have I put the subject in my speeches. On each occasion I found a prepossession in favour of what Chamberlain had proposed, and on each occasion I influenced if I did not sway the judgment of the majority. Then are my arguments fair? You complain of the reference to the League; but it was necessary to bring out the point. Unless Chamberlain is to be above criticism utterances such as mine must be tolerated if the people are to be led to judge the issue. I am afraid he and Dilke have tried some of us very hard of late. It would be miserable if any feeling arose between us, and indeed this must not be. I foresee the possibility or probability that I shall be an outsider. If Goschen is to be taboo why may not I meet the same fate? But though your pains may thus appear to be thrown away, please forgive what may appear to be waywardness. Even a proselyte of the gate is not an enemy. Ever yours whatever comes.

A third danger against which the candidate raised a warning voice was Fair Trade, which he met by the doctrine that the welfare of the community must outweigh the interests of a locality or a trade.

Journal

The Conservative candidate had been at St. Cleer a few days previously and had told the miners that protective duties would restore their prosperity. Our local friends urged L. to counter this by promising at any rate the abolition of royalties. I can still see the slightly scornful smile with which he received this advice ; but he said nothing and we went into the meeting. He began at once, " You have been told that a heavy duty on Australian and foreign copper and tin would reopen your mines and give you all employment and enable the men who have gone abroad to return. (Breathless silence.) It is quite true. But it would do something else." And then he described how this country had a great industry in the manufacture of tin goods for the whole world, and added " the duty you have been offered would throw thousands out of work elsewhere while it would put hundreds into work here. Knowing that, I should be ashamed of my fellow-countrymen if they desired or would accept it." The whole place cheered wildly, and I felt very proud of my candidate and his poor constituents.

A still more threatening danger was the demand for Home Rule, which at least 85 Parnellites would probably be returned to support. " There is a deep conviction in my mind," he declared at Liskeard, " that Ireland will interfere with some of the plans of the next Parliament. Its first great business will be to answer the question, Shall the Union be maintained ? " The Government had dropped coercion and were toying with Home Rule. " I hope there are limits to the subserviency of the Conservative party to its master-spirits," ran his Election Address, " but the experience of recent months must have convinced all men that the only safeguard of the Union is the return to power of a Liberal Government strong enough to withstand all combinations, and no less resolutely bent on developing the local liberties of Ireland than on the maintenance of the Legislative Union."

The candidate spoke to sympathetic audiences on Imperialism, Free Trade and Home Rule; but his austere individualism was less to their taste, and his action on the Medical Relief Bill was widely resented.[1] He solaced himself with the newly published biography of Fawcett, as stout an individualist as himself.

To Leslie Stephen

December 18.—Your *Life of Fawcett* reached me in the midst of my campaign. It arrived at a most opportune hour. One of my difficulties was the opposition I had given to the Medical Relief Bill, and I was about to speak on this subject among others on the evening of the day when the book came. Naturally I turned to the book, and in the exposition of Fawcett's views and principles touching the redemption of the labouring poor from the servitude they suffer I found my best defence. Now we have lost the man there could not be a better work than that you have done so well of keeping fresh his character in the memory of those who knew him, and of making it familiar to other contemporaries and to those that shall come after. We are so infested with quacks, often sincere, that I am sometimes inclined to despair. I feel Fawcett's loss continually. If Cairnes and he were alive now!

To restore the balance a certificate of merit was obtained from Hawarden.

From W. E. Gladstone

I deeply regretted on more grounds than one Mr. Courtney's resignation of his important office in the late Government, in which his services were of high value to the country. But I was and am sure that he did not by his loyalty to his conscience intend any disloyalty to his party.

Despite his differences with Gladstone and Chamberlain, Courtney was returned for East Cornwall by the substantial majority of 1153.

[1] Jesse Collings had taken the unusual course of writing a denunciation of Courtney in the Cornish papers; but during the Election the warm-hearted man, seized with remorse, arrived uninvited at a village meeting to support his candidature.

CHAPTER XII

HOME RULE

THE result of the elections was no surprise to Courtney, who had anticipated an overwhelming victory for Home Rule candidates in Ireland. With his usual habit of looking behind the representatives to the electors, he pointed out that while only half of those entitled to vote and two-thirds of those who actually voted supported Nationalists, five-sixths of the Members returned were Nationalists. But the careless public saw nothing except the eighty-six Home Rulers, and spoke of the voice of five-sixths of the people. The Irish Liberals, Catholic and Protestant, were left without representation, and the island was delivered over to the Parnellites and the Orangemen. When the turmoil was over he wrote to thank Gladstone for his aid and added a warning against Home Rule, with which the Liberal leader was reported to be coquetting.

To W. E. Gladstone

December 7.—The last member for Cornwall has been elected, and the county returns seven Liberals to support you and no one to oppose. Now that our triumph is complete I hope you will forgive me if I send a word of thanks for the most valuable letter you wrote on my behalf on the eve of our poll. What it said must at all times have been most agreeable to me to read, and at that juncture it was most useful. I grieve that the majority throughout the kingdom has not been more decisive and that the peril of which you spoke in your first speech on arriving at Edinburgh cannot be said to be wholly removed. The Government will be bound to try and work on, but they can scarcely succeed, and some of their more sober spirits must

wish to be relieved of an impossible and ungrateful task. I shrink a little from speculating as to what may follow. The present temper of our friends in the South-West is one of bitter resentment at the malign action of the Irish party during the election; but apart from this, which may perhaps pass away, there would be great reluctance to any legislation that would expose the Unionists, whether landowners or not, to scarcely veiled spoliation. A hostile tariff would be more endurable, though that would excite great irritation. I have long feared that Ireland might have to go through the discipline of self-rule as the only way of arriving at better things; but the predominant ideas of the leaders of the Irish party are so unsound that reactionary legislation in respect of trade and pauperism would too probably reproduce much of the misery of the past. But this might be suffered if only the fear of injustice could be removed. It is not impossible that the Liberal party may find itself under the necessity of appealing to the country to support a larger measure of concession to Ireland than the country is for the time prepared to approve, and may so be placed for a season in a minority in Parliament. Pray excuse my writing thus freely to you at this moment. I will even venture to send you two articles which I wrote for an American review five years ago on Ireland which I am tolerably certain you have never seen. I cannot expect you to read them through, but there are parts that may interest you even now.

From W. E. Gladstone

December 18.—Your letter reached me in due course, and I am very glad to learn that mine was of use. I hope not only that in these capricious times you may keep your seat in Parliament but also that on a proper opportunity your practical abilities may again be enlisted in the service of the Crown and country. I have now read your able papers; but comparing them with your letter I am not sure that they accord with your present views. Indeed I am not very sure that I see what those views are; but I understand you may mean that the Liberal party may have to take up the advocacy of a large concession to Ireland in the matter of Government, and may have to suffer a little martyrdom for it. From neither of these propositions do I dissent. A great thing has to be done, the state of Ireland permitting. But my first and great desire is that it should be done by the present Government. Only a Government can do it; and a Tory Government, if endued with the requisite courage, can do it best. Of this I make no secret.

The day before this letter was written Herbert Gladstone informed Wemyss Reid, editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, that his father was prepared to resume office and to introduce a Home Rule Bill; and though a telegram from Hawarden denied the accuracy of the statement, its cautious wording left little doubt as to the substantial truth of the momentous communication. Two days later Courtney replied to his old chief; and, while making no reference to the "Hawarden Kite," he reiterated his opposition to Home Rule.

To W. E. Gladstone

December 19.—I am very much gratified with your letter and your confidences, and cannot too strongly express my thanks for them. As you intimate some uncertainty about my present views, perhaps you will allow me briefly to explain them. I still entertain to the full my belief of 1880 that Home Rule for Ireland would mean bad rule—probably unjust, certainly unwise and tending to material and social misery. But the situation has materially changed. The demand for self-government has developed in Ireland, and the representative machinery adopted has given it exaggerated strength in the House of Commons. Nevertheless, if I could have my own way and could rely on stability of support from others, I should still refuse Home Rule. I would begin by curbing the means of mischief of the Irish representatives at Westminster, which I look upon as a test of our national resolution in this matter. I would go on to establish free county government, I would feel my way to Provincial Conferences, and I would admit of Irish Grand Committees at Westminster; and simultaneously with these I would exert all the authority of the Empire to assure the dominion of law in Ireland. But this programme requires stability of purpose and steady maintenance to have any prospect of success, and I sorrowfully confess that reliance cannot be placed on this steadiness either inside or outside Parliament. Therefore I am drawn to the apprehension I expressed in my last letter that Ireland is doomed to go through the furnace of Home Rule, though I should be very loath to have anything to do with launching the experiment. I am very glad to read that you think the present Government should grapple with the question. It cannot be our burden till they have proved their incapacity, and they too may plead that Mr. Parnell shall distinctly formulate his own demands. Frankly I do not think any Government

could undertake and finish the work now. Not until after some violent oscillations and probably more than one dissolution is it likely to be performed. Nobody has had such a job since the time of Mr. Pitt, and it is sad to note the levity of those who talk and write as if it could be done with a stroke of the pen or a phrase of the tongue.

When his wife read his outspoken attack on the presumed policy of the Liberal leader, she exclaimed, "Bang goes the Chancellorship." His disapproval of the new departure was shared by not a few prominent Liberals who afterwards reluctantly accepted Home Rule, among them his old chief at the Home Office.

Journal

December 23.—Sir William Harcourt told Leonard at the Reform Club that he had been at a thanksgiving meeting at Derby and gone from there to spend the Sunday at Birmingham with Chamberlain. "You did not find him in a very thanksgiving state of mind, I imagine," said Leonard. "No, indeed," was the answer. "After the first greeting it was nothing but Damn! Damn! Damn! all day long." "What a pious Sunday you two must have spent," returned Leonard. Sir William is at present brave against Home Rule. How long this mood will last it would be difficult to say.

Unlike most of his contemporaries, Courtney was not in the least surprised by the sudden emergence of Home Rule as the dominant issue of British politics. He had foretold its coming, and he had long ago made up his mind to oppose it. He was the author of the uncompromising leader in the *Times* on July 1, 1874, on Isaac Butt's celebrated motion. "In manner and substance he was excellent; but the argument completely failed to convince. The advocacy of Home Rule is hopeless. His petition for an Irish Parliament flows from his cardinal error that the inhabitants of Ireland are a separate nation." In his first session he supported the second reading of Butt's Land Bill to improve the position of Irish tenants; but when a speaker described it as a measure of Home Rule, he rejoined that the more attention the proposal received the greater would be the injury inflicted on an agitation which, if successful, would bring an

immense amount of misery and wretchedness upon Ireland. He supported the Bill as the best method of avoiding Home Rule, since it would reveal a desire on the part of Parliament to meet requirements and remove objections.

His views were first explained in detail after a visit in 1880 in two singularly frank articles in an American Review.[1] "The government of Ireland," he begins, "has once again become a subject of perplexity to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It would seem that the unrest and dissatisfaction of the mass of the inhabitants are as great as ever. Throughout half or more than half of its area meetings are held week after week to demand the establishment of an independent legislative authority, so far at least as regards the domestic affairs of its people, and there are no gatherings to be set against them. Mr. Parnell, though a Protestant and a landowner, is now the most popular man in the country because he has been the most persistent and effective enemy of government by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. His eminence is a demonstration of a feeling of alienation from Great Britain. Large masses of Irishmen still look upon themselves as strangers, if not as enemies, to the English."

After thus recognising disagreeable facts in language which might have formed the exordium to an oration by Isaac Butt, he passes to a defence of present-day England. The passionate hatred of the past was only too easy to understand, for we were humiliated by the story of the cruelties and the injustice enforced or supported by our forefathers. But had we not repented of all this? Had we not done our best to make amends for the past? Surely there was a time when Nature might be allowed to cover the battlefields of history. Despite Glencoe, Scotchmen and Englishmen had long since agreed to dwell together in unity. Catholic Emancipation, Disestablishment, Reform of the Land Laws had followed in rapid succession. By slow degrees all inequalities had been removed in the government of Ireland. Yet it seemed that all this labour had been in vain. For Conservatives the situation was comparatively simple.

[1] The *International*.

If Irishmen were still irreconcilable, they must be overruled like unreasonable children. For Liberals such language was impossible, for they recognised the free vote of a nation as the supreme determinant of its destiny. And yet even if the demand for Home Rule were strong, steady and serious, the experiment of setting up a local legislature could not be entertained in view of the qualifications of the electors and of those who would probably be elected. "A legislature in Dublin would develop many virtues now existing in a merely rudimentary condition; and Home Rule never comes before my mind with such plausibility as when I think it might perhaps make Irish politicians grave, sober and cautious. A sense of responsibility would be awakened. Men would feel that they were being put on their mettle. And Mr. Parnell is intrinsically a reasonable person." Yet all evidence went to show that the most vicious projects of national improvement would command assent, and that the social condition of Ireland was not sufficiently healthy to bear the strain of such experiments. No real statesman had yielded to the cry, and no Member of Parliament except Joseph Cowen, a chartered libertine, had favoured it. "The language of Liberal leaders and Liberal followers has been unequivocal and peremptory. They have declared that under no circumstances would they consent; and this language undoubtedly corresponds to the will of the people of Great Britain. But underneath this firm exterior there must exist searchings of heart among some; and it cannot be surprising if Irishmen are found to hope that the vehement refusal they now encounter may hereafter be modified."

Why should not the Imperial Parliament establish a subordinate legislature in Dublin if the great majority of the inhabitants of Ireland seriously desire it? In answering this question we must first be sure that Home Rule is indeed seriously desired. Yet a very large proportion of elected Home Rulers were halting advocates of the policy, and the movement for Home Rule was much feebler than O'Connell's movement for Repeal, which collapsed with startling suddenness. The danger lay in the fact that the Irish people was ripe to receive and apply the wildest socialist dreams.

"I confess that I recoil from this prospect. Even though the demand for Home Rule were much more serious than I estimate it, I should fixedly resist a change threatening the gravest mischief to the immediate future of Ireland." All the more must the Imperial Parliament deal with Land reform, the one subject on which Irish complaints were serious.

The articles are of historical as well as of biographical interest as the confession of a thoughtful Liberal some years before Home Rule became a question of practical politics. The author has no fears for Ulster, for the Imperial connection or for the Protestant faith. His opposition arises solely from his belief that the Irish are unfit to manage their own affairs. His hostility was confirmed by the agrarian and other outrages of the following years; but in the debates and controversies which occupied and agitated the Parliament of 1880 he could take little part. He was neither a Cabinet Minister, entitled to a share in the shaping of policy, nor a private member at liberty to discuss it. He supported a simultaneous policy of coercion and reform; but he was bitterly disappointed that the judicial fixing of rents under the Land Act of 1881 was powerless to arrest the growth of discontent. He constantly referred to Irish affairs in speeches to his constituents, one of which brought a warm eulogy from the well-known historian of Tudor and Stuart Ireland.

From Richard Bagwell

CLONMEL, *February* 8, 1883.—I have read your speech at Liskeard, and it shows more real knowledge of Ireland than any public man has lately evinced. So-called nationalism is Janus Bifrons. With one mouth it demands separation, with the other assimilation to England. The party of disorder is now weak owing to the disclosures in Dublin. It is for this very reason that I wish to urge the necessity of dealing with Irish County Government. The Grand Jury system ought not to stand a year longer. There is a good deal of ability and honesty among Grand Jurors, but the system is past despair.

The suggested reform had to wait till 1898, and meanwhile the energies of the Government were monopolised

by the struggle with insurgent Nationalism. The critical nature of the situation was brought home to him by a visit to Dublin in 1883.

Journal

November 20, 1883.—Spent a week with the George Trevelyans at the Chief Secretary's Lodge in Phœnix Park. Both very kind and pleasant to us, but we found it rather oppressive living in such a state of siege—odious for them it must be. Soldiers and detectives guarding every step, even their small boy. Grand dinner at the Viceregal Lodge; quite a little bit of State ceremonial. Lord and Lady Spencer very friendly. I do think it is self-denying of them to be there.

Courtney would have resigned office in 1884 had there been no Ireland; but his detestation of single-Member constituencies was intensified by his conviction that it would bring Home Rule into the foreground of politics. "The condition of Ireland is such as to fill me with anxiety," he wrote in a prophetic article on Redistribution in the *Fortnightly Review* of January 1885. "It is quiet, thanks to the operation of a most stringent Crimes Act; but the temper of discontent, not to say alienation, breaks out irrepressibly in the greater part of the island wherever there is a chink for its manifestation. Into this country it is proposed to introduce a machinery of election that will represent to the kingdom and the world that nine-tenths of its inhabitants are passionately demanding autonomy, if not separation. The parcelling out of the island into one-membered districts will result in the election of some ninety Members claiming Home Rule, while ten or a dozen Orange Tories are found alone arrayed against them. We know that it will not truly represent the opinion of the country. The Liberals of Ireland, who cling to the unity of the Legislature, are not what they were; but they are still in the aggregate a large mass, although they might fail to get a single voice to speak for them in Parliament. What must be the effect upon popular opinion in Ireland of the apparent spectacle of three provinces and a large slice of the fourth unanimously demanding Home Rule? And what must

be the effect upon popular feeling in England also? We may say with truth that the appearance is a gross misrepresentation of the fact; but it will be a very hard struggle to keep this distinction alive in the minds of the English people, especially if the vote of a large cohort in Parliament may make it convenient for any party leader to pass it by. Ireland in Parliament will be Ireland manipulated and divided so as to exclude moderation of temper and judgment. We are going to swell the clamour to which it may hereafter be said that we must yield."

When Lord Salisbury dissolved Parliament in October 1885 Parnell, who had had a secret interview with Lord Carnarvon, the Lord Lieutenant, and entertained lively hopes of Lord Randolph Churchill, instructed Irish voters throughout Great Britain to support Conservative candidates. Throughout the contest Courtney's imagination was haunted by the vision of a Parnellite triumph, followed by the capitulation of one or other of the historic parties.

To Edward O'Brien (an Irish Liberal)

LOOE, *October* 18.—Your letter has followed me here, where I am electioneering. I am much preoccupied with Ireland, and indeed it is always more or less in the background of my thoughts. At present I am nearly given over to despair. The first thing to be done is to drive into the heads of the English and Scotch people the truth that though Parnell may get eighty-five per cent of Irish members he has not eighty-five per cent of the Irish people. If it is once accepted that there is such a proportion of separatists in Ireland, the doom of the Union would be certain. I should therefore rejoice very heartily if the opponents of separation could register themselves by voting even when there is no hope of returning a candidate; but I fear it will be practically impossible to stir up men to vote in the face of certain defeat. We ought as soon as Parliament meets to press for the adoption of rules that would secure the authority of the House over the Parnellites. They have won their position by their defiance of Parliament, and I would give them their first throw in a wrestle over this question. But even then more must be done. We cannot now stop where we have stood. The late Government had apparently agreed upon a National Council, which seems to

me open to most of the objections without some of the advantages of a National Parliament. Lord Salisbury looks almost wistfully at Federation, which he dismisses for the present. Mr. Childers surrenders the police to some kind of Home Rule organisation, and Lord Rosebery wants Home Rule though he scarcely dare say so. No wonder Parnell is assured he will win.

The result of the election confirmed Courtney's darkest anticipations. After Gladstone had vainly invited Lord Salisbury to deal with the new situation, promising him Liberal support for a generous measure of autonomy, he resolved to tackle it himself. He was deeply impressed by the sweeping triumph of the Home Rulers at the first appeal to the country on a democratic franchise, and he was sick of the futility of coercion. His colleagues and intimates who knew that his mind had been moving in the direction of Home Rule before the dissolution were prepared for the announcement of a conversion which to hostile observers appeared suspiciously sudden. The first impression in Liberal circles was one of bewilderment, which was increased by the discovery that the trusted leaders of the party were hopelessly divided. Amid the welter of controversy and suspicion Courtney had at any rate the satisfaction of knowing his own mind. His path might be painful; but it was perfectly clear.

To Miss Tod

December 30.—Those who have carefully watched Mr. Gladstone's utterances must have been aware that his mind has been occupied with the possibilities of Home Rule for some years. I am not surprised by what has happened recently, but I am not the less greatly disquieted. I do not think that Home Rule will be at once adopted. If Mr. Gladstone definitely puts it forward, it would seem probable that the Liberal party will lose such a section in Parliament and still more in the country as to be in opposition for some years. Should this come to pass we should have to fear that the party would be reconstructed with Home Rule as a leading item in its programme, and that sooner or later, and not very late, the thing would be conceded out of mere weariness and England would suffer, but Ireland would be nigh ruined. None of the checks that have been proposed seem to be of any use I will not say none can be

devised, but I have not seen any that could be trusted if Ireland had one Parliament. Property, education, trade, pauperism, the judicial bench, the police,—under each of these heads I see unchecked danger. I should therefore simply resist as long as I could, although in no sanguine mood. I would of course give County Government (reserving the police) and I would establish at Westminster Grand Committees for Irish business. Provincial assemblies might save you in Ulster, but would leave the Liberals of Leinster and the South at the mercy of the popular party.

The bitterness of the situation was enhanced for the Unionist champions of Proportional Representation by the total disappearance of Irish Liberalism which they had so clearly foretold. From one of these virtually disfranchised Irish Liberals came a cry of distress.

From the O'Conor Don

December 20.—I think in writing to you last year I estimated that the Irish representation would be about 85 Liberal Nationalists and the remainder almost exclusively Orange Tory. I know that some of my friends here at that time ridiculed my forecast, and I was told that the Liberals in the North would not only hold their own but increase their strength. Well, the result now is that there is not a single representative from all Ireland calling himself a Liberal, and the Tories in the North are of the most pronounced Orange class. This is the result of the single-seat constituencies without provision for minority representation. No one that knows anything about Ireland can maintain that this is a true representation of the feelings of the country. One necessary consequence of the present representation is that every Catholic who wishes to have any voice or influence in the Legislature or government of the country must join the Nationalists, and it seems to me that it will be next to impossible to govern Ireland constitutionally against the will of 86 per cent of the representatives.

To the O'Conor Don

January 2, 1886.—No doubt our worst anticipations have been realised in the General Election, and it is grievous that we should have piped to deaf ears; but the practical question now

is how to prevent the mischief going further. I am not disposed, whatever my fears, to give up the battle as wholly lost. We are now under the temptation Gladstone foresaw and deprecated in his first speech in Midlothian before re-election. If not absolutely in a minority we are not in a majority without the Irish vote, and the attraction of that vote is terrible. It is so easy too to give a pretty colour to abandonment. If the Liberal party is to maintain or the bulk of its members to assist in maintaining the fight for the Union against Separation, they will need the assistance the Liberals, especially the Catholic Liberals of Ireland, can give; and they can give much in speech and writing if not in votes. We want moral strength, and you can help us to be strong. I should like to see multiplied in every form evidences of the forces telling for Union which will not be represented in the House of Commons. You need to be instant about Grand Jury Reform. Would it be possible to add on to County Government any scheme of Provincial Assemblies?

The opening weeks of 1886 were filled with rumours, discussions and speculations. A few Liberal Members were known to approve Home Rule, while Hartington and Goschen were known to oppose it; but the majority of the party hesitated to commit themselves, unable or unwilling to make up their minds on a subject of infinite complexity to which they had devoted but little reflection. Courtney took no public action for the present, and contented himself with discussing plans for checkmating the enemy.

To Lord Hartington

January 15.—I have reason to believe that the Government has had under consideration the following of Lord Grey's precedent in 1833 in putting in the Speech from the Throne a declaration to maintain the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. O'Connell had told his followers that the Reformed Parliament would give back to Ireland its Parliament, and this was met by the King's declaration. O'Connell was very angry and moved an amendment which was supported by thirty-four Irish, five English and one Scotch. If the Government are ready to challenge Parnell they could scarcely do better than copy Lord Grey. They might fall immediately afterwards, but they would fall with dignity and they would at least embarrass

their opponents. I am more fully satisfied than ever that the key of the situation lies in Reform of Procedure. If the two sides of the House cannot lay aside party spirit enough to make such a reform as shall secure the passing of legislation desired by a great majority, the battle is already lost. We must overcome Separatists in the House if we are to overcome Separation in Ireland. Unless we are resolved on this, and can stick to our resolution whatever outrages follow, the prospect is hopeless.

The new session opened on January 21. The Queen's Speech contained no repudiation of Home Rule, and the debate on the Address failed to provide the desired clarification. Gladstone's speech was non-committal, Parnell cautious and reasonable ; and Hartington, having no overt challenge to meet, refused to make the outspoken declaration against Home Rule which his more ardent followers demanded. Mrs. Courtney, perhaps an even more ardent Unionist than her husband, watched the debate from the Ladies' Gallery, and heard nothing to her taste till on the second day Mr. Arthur Elliot rose from behind the Front Opposition Bench and entreated his leaders to lead. Hartington, however, contented himself with summoning Chamberlain and a few other friends to Devonshire House to discuss Procedure. Before the meeting the host confided to Courtney that his difficulty about opposing Home Rule was that he could not see how the House could go on with the Irish members in it, however stringent the new rules of Procedure might be.

Journal

January 25.—L. comes home to dinner and is evidently making up his mind to speak on the Irish question when it comes on again a few days hence. He gives me a sketch of what he would say,—rather leading men to consider the Home Rule question in all its bearings than attacking it, as he is very loath to put himself forward ostentatiously against Mr. Gladstone. He hesitates about going back to the House, but finally goes. Comes back at 1.15 with astounding news, Government nearly defeated on amendment proposing the three F's in farm tenures, Lord Hartington, Goschen, Sir Henry James, Leonard and seven other Liberals voting with them, while all the Opposi-

tion and the Irish support it. It is made known that Mr. Jesse Collings' amendment is to be supported by the whole strength of the Opposition. It is understood that Mr. Chamberlain and his party thus give their adherence to Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule policy in return for his support of their socialistic policy. If this comes about it is an iniquitous compact. The Government may be beaten, but Mr. Gladstone must be discredited with all honest politicians who are not blind worshippers. The real issue is Home Rule ; but the cunning old leader, not finding he can successfully raise it, is going to catch the votes of his followers on this and other matters and then, I suppose, squeeze them gradually into his Irish views. I wonder how many will stand out and lose their seats in consequence.

Courtney detested the Birmingham brand of " socialism " almost as heartily as Home Rule ; and he had no desire that a party pledged to the one and likely to swallow the other should return to power. When Jesse Collings' amendment to the Address was put to the vote he again supported the Government, in common with sixteen other Liberals, among them Lord Hartington, Goschen, Sir Henry James and Arthur Elliot. No such momentous division had taken place since the repeal of the Corn Laws ; for it inaugurated a working alliance between the bulk of the Liberal party and the Irish Nationalists on the one hand, and between the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists on the other. On that night the lines were marked out along which British politics were to travel till the outbreak of war in 1914.

Journal

January 27.—L. came home at 2.30 A.M. and told me all was up ; Government beaten by 79, including 74 Parnellites. He had voted with sixteen other Liberals against the amendment. Rather depressed at the situation. Chamberlain triumphant ! It is a great success for him to have so rapidly converted Mr. Gladstone to one point of the unauthorised programme. One curious incident was that after Chaplin and other Conservatives had attacked the Compulsory Allotment scheme, Mr. Balfour rose at the very end and said the Conservative Government had got the same scheme in their Local Government Bill. L. said to Lord Hartington and Sir Henry James, " Under these circum-

stances we might walk out" ; but Lord H. would not do this, and L. did not like at the last moment to desert him. It would have saved a good deal of trouble in Cornwall had he done so.

A few hours after the fatal division Courtney wrote to one of his constituents to explain his vote. The letter appeared not only in the press of the West of England but in the *Times*.

To a Constituent

January 27.—I daresay some of my Bodmin friends may be discussing my vote against Mr. Jesse Collings, and though I think they will see I could not have voted with him, I should certainly have conferred with them on the subject had time permitted. You will remember how again and again during the contest I said I should not support Mr. Collings' scheme. I was not prepared to give compulsory powers of taking lands to let again to local bodies until at least we had learnt by experience how freely land could be got when landowners were relieved from the fetters imposed upon them by the system of settlements. All this was notorious, and indeed when Mr. Collings came to Menheniot I took care to tell the meeting that though he and I were very good friends we had differed seriously, did differ and probably should differ in future. How then could I join in voting to turn out the Government for not putting into the Queen's Speech proposals I said I could not support myself? All those who had voted for me on the faith of my declaration would have justly accused me of deceiving them.

Letters poured in from East Cornwall, some of them commending his fidelity to principle, others bitterly complaining that on a vote of no confidence he had supported the Tory Government, and warning him that neither time nor events would erase the memory of his first votes in the new Parliament. The wrath of a section of Liberals was shared by the leader of the party.

Journal

January 30.—Tea with Dolly Tennant (later Lady Stanley). She had been dining in company with Gladstone. She said he was in great spirits and vigour, and among other things and people Leonard was discussed. He was regretting the absence of financial talent among the Liberals now. It used to be our

great distinction, he said, as compared with our opponents; but we have not an economist among us now. Dolly said, "Oh! but isn't there Mr. Courtney?" "Mr. Courtney," was the answer, "has the most remarkable financial head in the House. His talents at the Treasury were beyond praise. But," he added angrily, "the other night he deserted me. There was not the slightest necessity. Collings' amendment committed him to nothing. Courtney is one of the ablest men in the House; but he lacks the spirit of accommodation. He is full of crotchets. He left me last year on a fad about Proportional Representation."

The Member for East Cornwall was well aware that his vote on the Collings amendment had destroyed any chance of office,[1] and he learned of the formation of the new Government from his friends. On January 31 he dined with Chamberlain and sat next to Mr. Morley, who whispered to him that he had been offered and accepted (with many doubts as to his fitness) the Irish Secretaryship with a seat in the Cabinet. The appointment was symptomatic, for Mr. Morley was an avowed Home Ruler. He also learned that his host had refused the Admiralty and accepted the Local Government Board. Four days later the new Administration was complete, all the leading members of the previous Liberal Ministry finding a place except Lord Hartington and Sir Henry James. To the general surprise Lord Spencer and Mr. Trevelyan accepted office in what, despite the official formula that it was only pledged to inquiry, was universally regarded as a Home Rule Administration. Courtney's conception of the duty of Liberals was explained to a friend who came to ask whether he ought to accept a minor appointment in the new Government.

Journal

February 7.—L.'s view of the situation was that in all probability Home Rule was now inevitable, owing primarily to Mr. Gladstone and in a lesser degree to the statesmen who have joined his Government. He does not anticipate sufficient

[1] "The Government was defeated last night," wrote Lord Esher. "Hartington, Goschen, Derby, H. James and Courtney will have to remain outside a new Government" (*Journals*, 1880–1895, 144).

resistance in the House of Commons to prevent it passing. If it does pass, the House of Lords would of course reject it and there would be a dissolution. The country might reject the Gladstone Government, but Home Rule being incorporated into the programme of the party must pass within a few years; and those would be years of fierce agitation. To the question whether a Liberal who believed it would bring disaster on Ireland, but also believed it was now fated to come, could join the Government in a subordinate post L.'s answer was that he at any rate would feel more comfortable outside.

On the following day he discussed the situation in a letter to one of his oldest friends.

To H. J. Roby

February 8, 1886.—I have not been asked to be Chairman of Committees, but I think it possible I may be. I have not been asked, and did not expect to be asked to take any other post. Whether if asked I shall become Chairman I do not know. My present inclination is towards acceptance, the post not being ministerial. I should be prepared to go a long way on the Irish question if necessary; but, holding that Home Rule means increased social misery for many years with a most doubtful and hazardous chance of recovery after a generation or so, I was not prepared to give way without at least trying to rule the House of Commons. It looks as if there is to be a surrender to the eighty-six, and indeed the motive of action avowed by Morley at Chelmsford (and privately on many occasions) is the necessity of getting the Irish representation out of the House. This seems to me rather pitiable. However, Gladstone's action has probably made that inevitable which was not so, and if not in the present Parliament, then in the Parliament after the next, say in six years, Home Rule will be carried. Accepting this, my desire is that when carried it shall be in the form of a Colonial Constitution, not a Federation. A Federation would perpetuate friction, remonstrances, ill-will, as against which a hostile tariff would be a cheap alternative. I believe all Irishmen not Parnellites are in despair, and not a few Parnellites are scared at the prospect of getting what they said they wanted.

It was generally anticipated that Courtney would be offered the post of Chairman of Committees. His knowledge of constitutional history and precedent was profound,

and he possessed a complete acquaintance with the forms of the House. His resignation had made him available for occasional service at the table; and in the session of 1885 he often took the place of Sir Arthur Otway, when he was too unwell to attend. Never lacking in self-confidence, he employed the authority entrusted to him with the assurance of an old Parliamentary hand. "One Friday night," wrote his wife in her Journal, "he came home in great spirits, having called half the House to order, including the Grand Old Man. The Prime Minister took it very well, and afterwards expressed his admiration to Mr. Rathbone." Goschen, who shared the belief that the post would be offered to him, expressed a hope that he would not tie his hands in the coming struggle for the Union.

On February 16, Mr. Morley came to tell his friend that the Prime Minister would only be too glad if he would accept the Chairmanship of Committees. When the House met on February 18 without any communication from Downing Street, it looked as if he had changed his mind; but next morning the expected messenger arrived at Cheyne Walk at 12 o'clock.

From W. E. Gladstone

Bearing in mind the communications between us at the time when I failed to avert your resignation, you will not be surprised when I say how happy I should have been to number you among the members of the present Government. But an intimation which reached me impressed me with the belief (I had also read your printed essays on the Irish question) that you might find obstacles in your way, while at the same time you would not be disinclined to accept the important office of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees, for which you are (I think) universally considered to have unrivalled qualifications. I was doubtful yesterday whether we should be in a condition to set up Supply to-day, or I should have addressed this note to you before we met in Parliament. Its object is to request that you will permit me to propose to-day that you take the Chair, and I am sure that your assent will give just and lively satisfaction.

No time was allowed for consideration; but as the office was non-political and the Prime Minister's letter

conceded freedom from responsibility on the Irish question, the offer was accepted, and the messenger carried back the response.

To W. E. Gladstone

I am extremely grateful for the very kind and flattering words in which you invite me to be proposed to the House as Deputy Speaker this evening. Had time permitted I should like to have withheld my reply until I had an opportunity, which perhaps you would have afforded me, of a few minutes' conversation on the position of the Chairman and to have consulted one or two intimate friends; but any delay in decision must now cause embarrassment not to be justified without stronger hesitation than I feel. I therefore accept with sincere gratitude your offer, relying on your kindness in the future as it has been abundantly manifested in the past.

After despatching his reply Courtney called on Hartington, who approved, and Goschen, who acquiesced, and then hurried into his dress clothes. The acceptance of the post removed him from the fighting line. But though unable to raise his voice in public protest against Home Rule, his opinions were well known to his party, and his opposition was not without influence on the wavering throng. "In the early days of the short-lived Parliament of 1886," writes Mr. Arthur Elliot, "the hearty support given by Leonard Courtney to the cause of the Union was of no small importance. His previous career and known independence of character had made his personality and attitude of mind familiar to all who followed contemporary politics. Having, according to his usual fashion, made up his mind for himself, he took his line boldly. In the early days of Liberal Unionism he used occasionally to attend Committee meetings and was at all times much consulted by the leading and active members of that party. But having been elected Chairman of Committees, he held himself to a great extent aloof from the regular organisation and party work of Liberal Unionist Committees; and he rarely appeared at the office in Spring Gardens, the headquarters of combatant Liberal Unionism, or at Devonshire House, where from time to time Lord Hartington used to

call the whole body of Liberal Unionist M.P.'s together for consultation."

The opening weeks of the session were outwardly dull. Every one was waiting for the Prime Minister to define his Irish policy, and even Chamberlain held his hand till the situation became clearer. Home Rulers and Unionist Liberals, Birmingham Radicals and Individualist Whigs, continued to meet and to canvass the prospects of their respective parties.

From Joseph Chamberlain to Mrs. Courtney

March 2.—I hope to present myself at your house about 4.30 on Sunday. I shall be happy to meet Lady Trelawny and still more pleased to see you again, although you and your husband are heretics and do not belong to the true Radical fold. You ought to be guillotined both of you—but when the time comes I shall try and save you.

Journal

March 7.—Chamberlain in the afternoon. Makes himself very agreeable to Lady Trelawny. After she left he remained talking in his very fresh way of the situation. He said every one, including himself, was waiting for Mr. Gladstone's Irish scheme. When it comes, as to the Tories opposing it successfully, they must turn more than one hundred constituencies. "And public opinion on the Liberal side?" said I. "The caucus is public opinion," he said; "and if you ask me what public opinion will do, I tell you frankly that for once I don't know." He judged the new House to be a thoroughly good, businesslike one as well as immensely radical, and appealed to Leonard if the former was not so. L. replied, "Yes, they don't make long speeches, but I can't say it is a well-informed House. Most of the new Members seem quite unprepared with any other side of a question." Mr. C. answered, "They are as well informed as they need be. They have been sent to do certain things." Decidedly Mr. Chamberlain sees forces rather than principles in politics. He also said that he felt sure the English democracy would not be influenced in their judgment as to Home Rule by any care for the landlords or for the rights of the Protestant minority; but they might have the feeling the North had in the war for the maintenance of their Union.

Though declining to address his constituents before the production of the measure, Courtney explained his views on the Irish question in the April number of the *Contemporary Review*. He dismissed at the outset one of the popular arguments against Home Rule as a baseless fear, confessing that he anticipated no danger to Great Britain. Peril threatened Ireland alone. The rights of landowners might be safeguarded against direct confiscation; but in industry and commerce, education, the professions, the judicature, pauperism and public expenditure, bad legislation would be inevitable. A slow and by no means uninterrupted renovation was in progress; but that process had now been checked. Home Rule became practical politics on the day that the Redistribution Act received the Royal Assent. The return of eighty-six Nationalists was a formidable fact, and it was rendered the more formidable since the House failed to defend itself against them by a reform of Procedure. Both parties were to blame for the position. Mr. Gladstone had brooded for years over the possibilities of Home Rule; and the carelessness of the Conservative Government in the previous summer was inexplicable, except on the theory that its leading spirits had arrived at the conclusion that the victory of Home Rule was assured. At the moment of writing, Home Rule was not yet officially adopted as a plank in the Liberal platform; but no party could continue to have two opinions on such a subject, and, once adopted, it would survive a first disaster, remain the rallying-cry of the party and ultimately become the symbol of victory.

If Home Rule was perhaps inevitable, should its opponents abstain from active opposition, and, after registering their protest, take their share in framing the new constitution? There was something to be said for such a course. For instance, the simplest plan would be to concede a separate tariff—the privilege of every colony—and exclude the Irish members from Westminster. If Home Rule was to come, let it come in the form of colonial self-government. The right of maintaining Imperial garrisons would remain, and Ireland would be poor in everything save men. Should Protestant Ulster be cut off from

Nationalist Ireland? If so, the situation of Unionists in the rest of the island would be more desperate than ever. The sacrifice of minorities must be faced in any case, and the smallest number would be sacrificed if Ulster continued to be represented at Westminster. Some representation of minorities might be secured in the Irish Upper House, if not in the Lower. After an elaborate discussion of the machinery of Home Rule, the author ends, as he began, with a bitter lament. "Let the Irish party be ever so loyal; let it be scrupulous to protect the claims of those whom it has most in aversion; let no occasion of dispute arise over the terms of settlement with Great Britain; yet I conceive the change must operate to put back Ireland in the path of advancement. Surveying its future, I feel nothing but anguish at a retrogression, the recovery from which, once accomplished, must be long delayed, if, indeed, it should ever be realised." The article was sent to Lord Hartington, who warmly approved its arguments.

From Lord Hartington

March 20.—I would certainly recommend you to publish it. I do not see that its pessimist tone is any objection to publication. I entirely agree with the pessimism as to the results of Home Rule. Perhaps I do not go so far as you do in anticipating it as inevitable; but the best hope of averting it is to put before people clearly what Home Rule really means, which I think you have done far more completely than anybody.

The first sign of the coming cataclysm was the resignation of Chamberlain and Trevelyan, the latter of whom remarked to Mrs. Courtney that five-sixths of the Liberal party were ready to follow any strong man who would give a lead against Home Rule. "The defection of friends," wrote Lord Acton from Cannes to Mrs. Drew, "strengthens the enemy's argument; and that is already strong for any one who is not sound in the Liberal doctrine, a thing beyond Liberal policy. The concentration of everything in your father's hands is appalling, because one cannot see what the future is to be like. His old weakness—the want of an

heir—is very serious now. I did not think very well of the new Government, and I like it less now. I very seriously regret Trevelyan's resignation. Lefevre is a loss. So I think is Courtney." [1] The introduction of the Home Rule Bill on April 8 dispersed the cloud of speculation which had covered the political arena since the Hawarden kite was launched. The first act of the great drama has been described by a hundred pens; but we may once again survey the historic scene from the Ladies' Gallery through the spectacles of an ardent Liberal Unionist.

Journal

April 8.—I go to the House of Commons to hear Gladstone introduce his Home Rule Bill. Members were there at seven in the morning, engaging places, and chairs were placed all up the gangway. When Gladstone entered the House he had a great ovation from the Irish members and below the gangway. He at once rose and began a speech which lasted three hours and twenty-five minutes—a marvellous feat for a man of seventy-seven. It was a very dramatic scene, and at times his eloquence nearly carried me away, and made me think whether after all this Home Rule scheme would not make all Irishmen happy and contented and good citizens; but by this morning I have come back to a soberer judgment. One good thing is that the Bill is not whittled down, but stands out as a pretty complete measure of separation, which is far better than some half measure which neither frees England nor satisfies Irish aspirations.

April 9.—Chamberlain made a most damaging speech against the Bill, which, however, he weakened by giving a rather crude alternative scheme for Federation which was flouted by the Parnellites and fell rather flat. Lord Hartington was simple, honest, free from any personal bitterness, and very effective against the Bill. Mr. Morley answered in a speech which was nervously delivered, and conspicuous rather for its gloomy forecasts of what would happen if Home Rule were not granted than for any sanguine anticipation of its good results.

April 13.—Last day of debate. An amusing speech from Sir W. Harcourt, full of wit and personalities, but with no attempt to defend a single provision of the Bill. Goschen follows, arguments weighty, manner awkward, and voice rather croaky.

[1] *Letters to Mary Gladstone*, 175-76.

About midnight Gladstone rises and delivers the most eloquent speech I have heard from him. It made one feel that no one comes near him in oratory—voice magnificent and style very fine, but arguments often very dishonest to my mind.

Three days later the Prime Minister introduced the Land Bill, and his Irish policy was now fully before the country for acceptance or rejection. After a short but sharp conflict the National Liberal Federation rejected the appeal of its Birmingham founder, and by an overwhelming majority decided to obey the call of the veteran Prime Minister. The Liberal rank and file throughout the country followed its example. Courtney's reflections on the Bill and the situation were set forth in a letter written at the beginning of the Easter recess.

To H. J. Roby

April 20.—I look upon the future of Ireland, supposing Gladstone's Bills were to pass, as one of deepening misery. The economic distress which is the sting of the present situation would increase. John Morley dined quietly with my wife and myself on Sunday evening, and I did not find that his view of the future was appreciably different from my own. He holds more clearly that it is inevitable, and that the Irish must be got out of the House of Commons. I am not much more sanguine, but I would go on trying on the old lines, although it is very hard to entertain any confidence that the Conservatives under Randolph Churchill would not sell us. I think if we could know Hartington's inmost mind we might see that he was as little removed from me on one side as Morley is on the other. Then as to the Bills—will they pass? The Home Rule Bill may be read a second time by a small majority, but will apparently perish in Committee. Although Chamberlain is chagrined at his apparent want of power, there is no real rapprochement between him and the Government. He makes the retention of the Irish members at Westminster indispensable, and the Government have not the least intention of conceding that. Morley would go out and not alone even if the Old Man himself was willing, which I do not believe, to entertain the concession. And if the Bills fail, what is to happen? Difficulty in Ireland of course; perhaps violence in the House of Commons. But can one without a struggle abandon a third or a quarter of Ireland to the tender mercies of the other two-thirds or three-fourths?

After sectional meetings and an address to his followers by the Prime Minister at the Foreign Office, Chamberlain, Trevelyan and Bright resolved to vote against the Bill. The original Whig dissentients such as Hartington and Goschen would not have been strong enough to throw out the measure ; but the defection of the Radical group sealed its fate. Throughout these anxious weeks Courtney felt himself debarred by his official position from speaking ; but he rejoiced to discover that so influential a section of his party shared his dislike of Home Rule, and would assist him to defeat it. The second act of the Home Rule drama has been described as often as the first, but we may watch it once more from the Ladies' Gallery.

Journal

June 8.—At last the long deferred day for the second reading has come. How will it go ? Guesses range from a majority of six for to a majority of thirty against, the prevalent opinion being a very small majority against. Goschen began in a speech full of good argument, but Leonard thought it ineffective. He was followed by Parnell in a most able speech, full of tact and moderation and assurances to the Irish Protestants of the welcome they would get in the Irish Parliament, and with a distinct statement that in the autumn a Conservative Cabinet Minister had offered him a statutory Parliament in Dublin with power of protecting Irish industries. When he sat down I went to dinner with L. in his room, and we thought the evening's debate was telling against the Unionists. Mr. John Morley, whom we met in the lobby, said it was strange that even now no one knew how the division would go. After dinner Sir Michael Hicks-Beach delivered a rather plain, heavy speech, enlivened by a duel with Parnell about the alleged offer of Parliament and Protection by a Conservative Minister. Parnell got up and repeated his statement emphatically. There were loud cries of " Name," and to a challenge from Randolph and Hicks-Beach Parnell answered, " When his colleague gives me permission I shall be glad to do so." At last came the Old Man's speech, as vigorous as ever and in beautiful voice, but it was a losing speech. He chaffed Chamberlain about his alternative schemes. " The Right Honourable Gentleman might well say that a dissolution had no terror for him, for he has set his sail to catch a popular breeze from any

quarter." A very eloquent peroration, magnificent in general principles and prophesying victory in the future if not in the present. The question was put amid great excitement. We thought from the faces of the Treasury Bench when the Whips came in that victory was with the Opposition ; but to my surprise the numbers were 311 for, 342 against, with 93 Liberals in the majority. Then followed a scene. After the cheers of the Opposition had subsided, the Irish rose *en masse* and waved and cheered like madmen ; and some one calling out " Three Cheers for the Grand Old Man," they were given. They were followed by groans for Chamberlain, and the Irish stood up and hissed at him like wild cats, and then made the same fiendish noise at the Ulster members—a queer comment on Parnell's affectionate words to them. Mr. Gladstone got up and moved the adjournment till Thursday, when he would state the course the Government would pursue. Walked through a crowd of excited people with Leonard and Henry Hobhouse, and was rather glad L. was not recognised, as there were some Irish among them who were talking of lynching Chamberlain if they caught him. As Henry said, he was the hero of the hour. How the Irish hate him !

Parliament was immediately dissolved, and the Liberal Unionists hurried away to their constituencies, uncertain of the reception that awaited them, though well aware that it would be a stern fight. Mrs. Courtney was indefatigable on the platform,[1] Miss Tod presented the case for Irish Unionist Liberals at most of the meetings, and Mrs. Fawcett rendered valuable aid. Bodmin was unfriendly, but Liskeard, with longer personal associations, stood by its member. When the delegates of the Liberal party declared against the sitting member by 58 to 8, and appointed a Committee to select another candidate, the Conservative Association rallied to his support. His Election Address was wholly devoted to Ireland, for which he prescribed county self-government instead of Home Rule. In reply to the taunt that he had entered public life under Gladstone's auspices, and then turned against him, he referred to his frequent denunciations of Home Rule at a time when it was rarely mentioned by other politicians. That his meetings should often be disturbed was inevitable in that dark

[1] In 1886 and 1892 Courtney's duties in the Chair prevented him from taking his full share in the work of electioneering.

hour when Liberals turned their swords against one another ; but the candidate said nothing to inflame the passions of his hearers. "I hope that whenever the name of Mr. Gladstone is uttered," he declared at Saltash, "it will be received with honour. I do not know what was in his innermost mind, but Home Rule was certainly not in his programme." On the eve of the poll the candidate described the novel situation in which he found himself.

To Mrs. Fawcett

July 4.—You may have noted the vicissitudes of our opposition. There is a strange admixture of the ridiculous in the present situation ; but the working men are so thoroughly Gladstonian that the adverse poll will be fairly large. As a man said at the close of a village meeting last night, "Mr. Courtney is quite right. I agree with all he said. It would never do to have a separate Parliament in Ireland ; but Mr. Gladstone has been the friend of the working man and we must stand by him."

After a strenuous campaign Courtney was elected by an increased majority of 1653. The Parnellites maintained their numbers. Seventy-eight Liberal Unionists were returned to help Lord Salisbury to hold the fort against Home Rule ; but Scotland, Wales and the north of England stood by the Liberal leader.

CHAPTER XIII

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

When Lord Salisbury was returned to power at the General Election Courtney was reappointed Chairman of Committees. The attractions of the post outweighed its disadvantages. He was indeed debarred from the unfettered expression of his opinions on every topic ; but on the other hand it gave him a dignified position, and nobody questioned his capacity for the duties which he was appointed to perform. Under existing circumstances the post offered an additional attraction. Mr. Birrell has named the House which met in 1886 " the uncomfortable Parliament," since the Gladstonians and Liberal Unionists sat cheek by jowl on the front Opposition bench, while thundering against each other on the dominant issue of the time. Courtney was not the man to shirk the consequences of his vote on the Home Rule Bill ; but he was not sorry to find himself sitting at the table and in the Speaker's chair, " above the battle." [1] Opinions differed as to the merits of Courtney's political convictions and conduct ; but there is an almost unprecedented consensus as to his services to public business. The most experienced of observers pronounced him a born Chairman of Ways and Means ; and Gladstone's high opinion was confirmed by further experience.

From William Rathbone, M.P. (to Mrs. Courtney)

May 19, 1887.—I dined with Mr. Gladstone last night and I am sure you would be gratified if you had heard the way in

[1] When the Speaker was in the Chair Courtney sat on the Front Opposition Bench ; but he was an official of the House, not a party chief.

which he spoke, with the full assent of all present, of the way in which Mr. Courtney had done his work as Chairman of Committees. He said he had seen a great many Chairmen but never yet one who came up to Mr. Courtney; that the prompt way in which he seemed to strike at once what ought to be done, and the clearness with which he stated his points, was something wonderful. Harcourt and several other Members of Parliament were there, and all agreed with what he said; and I am sure that you, as a good wife, will like to hear when so much abuse is going about that somebody is found who can be praised.

Gladstone's verdict was shared by his followers. Lord Morley pronounces him "incomparable." "I have known several Chairmen of Committees," records Dr. Farquharson;[1] "but nothing could exceed Lord Courtney for prompt decision and absolute integrity and impartiality." "In spite of his strong political opinions," writes Mr. Herbert Paul, "he was the embodiment of absolute impartiality. He would not ever consent to any of those arrangements about the order of speakers in debate which Whips sometimes make with the Chair. The moment he took his seat at the table he seemed to forget that he belonged to any party, and he always recognised that the minority were entitled to the fullest consideration at his hands. The Chairman of Committees, though technically invested while he occupies the Chair with the same authority as the Speaker, does not enjoy the same commanding position and has in some measure to depend upon his own personal influence and weight. Lord Courtney's decisions always found acquiescence because they were at once perfectly lucid and obviously fair. The judicial turn of his mind may have sometimes diminished the interest of his speeches. It certainly increased the value of his rulings." "During these six trying years," echoes Mr. Burt, "Mr. Courtney acquitted himself admirably, and members often remarked that he would make an ideal Speaker. He had indeed all the qualifications requisite for that great position. A slight personal incident in connection with Mr. Courtney's Chairmanship may be mentioned. In one of my infrequent

[1] *The House of Commons from Within*, p. 124.

incursions into the debates a line of poetry came to my mind. I paused a moment, remarking that I did not know whether I durst venture to quote poetry 'with you, Mr. Courtney, in the Chair.' Casually meeting him a short time afterwards, he asked, I thought somewhat sternly, what I meant by saying that I was not sure that I dared quote poetry under his presidency? Taken aback a little I said that it certainly had never occurred to me that he would not appreciate poetry, but as we were discussing finance I thought he as Chairman might not consider poetry relevant, or regard Wordsworth as an authority on such a subject. His genial smile showed that my impertinence was forgiven and that all was well between us." The Irish wing of the Home Rule party regarded the Chairman with equal approval and confidence. "His action was sometimes very peremptory," records Justin M'Carthy, "but he was absolutely impartial and he won the respect of everybody." "Time has dulled my recollections of scenes and faces," wrote Mr. Thomas Sexton in 1911, "but I have still two vivid memory-pictures of Westminster—Mr. Gladstone at the table and Mr. Courtney in the Chair." Mr. Swift MacNeill[1] recalls how an Irish Nationalist, stung by the speaker who preceded him, paused in his speech and had actually begun a rush across the floor of the House to attack the maker of the provocative speech. "Calmly rising from the Chair Courtney asked the honourable member, out of regard for the Chair, to restrain his feelings. The effect of the appeal was magical, and was met by an apology to the House."

The chorus of eulogy is swelled by the voice of an ardent Liberal Unionist. "The Chairmanship of Committees," writes Mr. Arthur Elliot, "though less dignified than the Speakership, is not a more easy place to fill. The dignity and authority are less in men's eyes. Action has to be taken and important decisions given almost on the spur of the moment without that deliberation and taking counsel that are almost always possible to a Speaker. In Committee on a Bill, or on the Estimates, it is impossible that the same rigid formality should be observed as on a full dress debate

[1] *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 16, 1918.

or a second reading or a vote of confidence. Quickness of perception as to the effect and tendency of proposed amendments, firmness of decision, constant and closest attention, and the determination to give an equal hearing to all sides are the principal qualifications for a good Chairman ; and in all these respects Courtney excelled. Speaker Gully once said to me after several years' experience that he had never felt the very slightest inclination to turn towards his own political friends as such ; but that he *had* felt it necessary to guard himself against allowing his desire that the House should get on with business to induce him to restrict the liberty of the Opposition or of independent members. Generally speaking, as he said, the Government side of the House wants to get through business and the Opposition does not ; but the Chair is independent of the Ministry and has, whilst maintaining order, to protect the minority and individual members in the exercise of their rights of ample criticism and debate. Now Courtney was by nature the friend of the weak against the strong, the opponent of arbitrary power, the friend of individual independence ; so that whilst he occupied the Chair there was little danger that a tyrannical majority would be suffered to abuse its rights and trample on the freedom of criticism which is the privilege of all members alike.

" Courtney in the Chair was no respecter of persons, as he showed again and again. When it is remembered that during his Chairmanship the recasting and enforcement of new Rules of Procedure came into effect, that the Prevention of Crime Bill, the Parnell Commission Bill, and other measures and proceedings of the Government were made the subject of prolonged and embittered controversy, the House of Commons has reason to be thankful for the patient, tolerant and liberal spirit that distinguished the conduct of the Chair. In those days doubtless there were many who would have been better pleased if he had been less patient with ' Obstructionists,' and had made the Chair a more subservient instrument of the Ministry of the day. In granting or refusing the closure he would act wholly with regard to the judgement he had himself formed as to its

expediency in the interests of the House itself and of freedom of debate. Whether it was called for by a powerful Minister of the Crown or a member of little importance would affect his decision as little as the social standing of two litigants would affect the judgement of a Judge of the High Court of Justice. If he erred at all in the strictness with which he would enforce rules and call men to order, it would be out of leniency to those who perhaps knew no better, while to men who had no such excuse he would be more rigid. Now that the heats of those days have passed away there are probably few who do not recognise that his Chairmanship during the strenuous years 1886–1892 helped much to maintain at a high level the invaluable parliamentary tradition of Order and Free Debate." Against these testimonies must be set the complaint of some Conservative members that he allowed too much latitude to the Liberal Irish benches.[1]

No Speaker or Chairman of Committees is infallible; and if he were he would not escape criticism. Courtney's peremptoriness, which struck Justin McCarthy and some other observers, at times kindled sparks; and a rebuke to the Leader of the House on one occasion seemed to not a few observers sharper than the situation demanded.

Journal

May 1887.—I hear and read all sorts of flattering things of him and am beginning to think it is time to utter the warning cry, "Take heed when all men speak well of you!" He distinguished himself by refusing Mr. W. H. Smith the Closure. The House was sitting all night, and Mr. Smith proposed the Closure on a whole batch of amendments. L. singled out two which he thought deserved short discussion, thus making his own precedent. The Irish were so delighted that they dropped the others at once and allowed a division to be taken on the exempted ones after a very short discussion. The Conservatives were disappointed at first, but seeing the result was a quick despatch of business were more cordial than ever next evening. A few days later he distinguished himself by calling Gladstone to order in the middle of a wrangle between the two front benches and making him sit down.

[1] See Sir R. Temple, *Letters and Character Sketches from the House of Commons*, p. 169.

The refusal of the closure to the Leader of the House was an example of the right thing done in the wrong way. "I remember Courtney's abrupt shake of the head without words," writes Mr. Arthur Elliot, "and the flush that came over Old Morality's plain and honest face. It looked like a great snub to a most modest and unassuming man. I am sure it was not so intended; but it was clumsily done, and Smith's friends were very angry. A few words in refusing would have removed all offence. One or two little things of the sort told a little against his popularity as Chairman." On the death of the Leader of the House in 1891 Courtney gave his own version of these passages of arms. "I often found it my duty to decline the closure which he found it his duty to ask. Perhaps I was wrong. Perhaps he was wrong. I do not think, however disappointed he was at times at finding his motion rejected, he ever cherished any resentment. Never for one moment was the cordiality of our relations abated. He dreaded the abuse of the weapon he had to use. Perhaps he at times found consolation in the fact that the Chair was constrained to reject his motion, because he was urged all too frequently by his followers."

The Chairman also came into sharp conflict with the Home Rulers when, on February 28, 1890, he suspended Labouchere for persisting in accusing Lord Salisbury of telling lies. The Opposition at once threatened to challenge his ruling on the ground of undue restriction of debate, and two days later Mr. Morley called at Cheyne Walk to convey a friendly warning. Next day Gladstone gave notice of a motion that a Member of Parliament might contradict a Peer—a platitude for which the Chairman of Committees declared himself ready to vote. The Leader of the Opposition then asked for an interview with the Chairman, but no result was reached. Gladstone seemed to be waiting for Courtney to make some proposal which would enable him to withdraw his motion, while Courtney, secure in his conviction that he had acted rightly, waited for the enemy to open fire. "You are very intimate with Courtney, are you not?" remarked Gladstone to Mr. Morley after the

conversation; "don't you find him rather costive?" Courtney was equally dissatisfied with the meeting, and remarked that he had never had a really satisfactory interview with the Grand Old Man. The Chairman's unrepentant attitude was not without its effect, for the attack was abandoned.

Though Courtney enjoyed his dignified position, he often thirsted for his old liberty; and at the end of a year he explained to his constituents the self-denial involved in the discharge of its duties. "I am a non-combatant in our army; and sometimes the suspicion occurs to me that it may perhaps be an inglorious retreat in which I have ensconced myself. I have never greatly coveted the distinction, and I may now reveal the fact that I declined the post in 1882. Nor do I hold myself so wedded to it that I cannot contemplate the time when I should wish to resume more active political life. A Chairman of Committees is not absolutely disqualified from engaging in general debates; but any strong expression of opinion would diminish his authority, and on burning questions it would be indiscreet and almost impossible." In spite of strong temptation he set a guard on his lips; and his views on current politics were reserved for the electors of East Cornwall.

The short session of 1886, mainly devoted to Supply, kept the Chairman of Committees busy in London throughout August and September; but he was in good spirits, and some week-end visits provided welcome relief.

Journal

August 21.—Go down to Sir John Lubbock's at High Elms for Sunday. Mr. Chamberlain and his son Austen join us at Victoria. Hot fine Sunday. L. spends it reading all day on the lawn. Sir John very fond of his young trees which he discusses with Mr. Chamberlain very eagerly. He shows us his ants also, some of which he has had twelve years watching. His keen interest about so many things is truly wonderful, and I have no doubt it is a great relief when politics go wrong to leave the House of Commons and go down to High Elms and devote himself to

his ants and other creatures that always do right according to their appointed natures. Mr. Chamberlain is evidently much disgusted with politics at present and very bitter against Gladstone.

Before starting for a well-earned holiday Courtney despatched one of his periodical bulletins to his old friend in Bombay.

To John Scott

September 22, 1886.—At length we are on the eve of a holiday. We start for the Rhineland, resting at one or two less frequented cities such as Worms and Spires, as well as Cologne and Heidelberg, and then crossing Switzerland descend upon North Italy—a day or two at the Lakes, Milan, Verona, Venice. When this reaches Bombay we ought, I think, to be still at Venice. We have been there together, have we not? But to my wife, who has eclipsed us both in having visited California and the Second Cataract, Italy is a terra incognita. I will not go into detail after Venice, but Florence, Arezzo, Rome are points on which the mind rests. Fancy Arezzo to Rome—Caponsacchi and Pompilia flying through the night! At the end of two months we shall be back in London—I hope not immersed in the fogs of nature and the Currency Commission.

We have had a great experience since I wrote last, the experience of the General Election; but though that act is over the end is not yet, nor do I foresee the conclusion. Like Lord Falkland I ingeminate peace, but with little better prospect of a quick or good result. As long as the Old Man lives Home Rule will be the question of division, and the longer he lives the more is it likely to be confounded with the Liberal party. His personal influence has precipitated a struggle which, if successful, threatens Ireland with measureless misery, and which, unsettled, plunges the affairs of the whole Empire into confusion. There is great temptation to unavailing anger in contemplating the situation. The first battle got well over, the Conservatives having risen to the occasion and responded well to the Liberal Unionists; but it is almost too much to expect them to maintain the same attitude next time, and we may then see the Liberal Unionists squeezed out and no Liberal candidates left but Home Rulers to fight Conservatives. In this way Home Rule may come to be the one subject of division between the only two parties of the State. The Conservatives will ask themselves whether they are not strong enough to put in members who are thoroughly with

them ; and the Liberal Unionists themselves, having to put the Union before everything else, will on successive issues find themselves fighting side by side with the Conservatives and end by being nearly indistinguishable from them. Hartington is, of course, the most conspicuous example, and so it may come to pass that next time there is an election in Rossendale the Conservatives will elect a man of their own unless he by that time becomes one of their own. My own position is not wholly dissimilar, except that I cannot conceive myself under any circumstances falling into the Conservative ranks. Many Liberal voters, as well as Liberal members, will, however, become Conservative under the strain, and so the Conservatives may succeed in obtaining a pure majority. This is a sufficiently lugubrious anticipation, and what some suggest as an alternative, though it may offer an escape for the individual, is worse for the country. It is that Randolph Churchill will in a year or two get his party to concede Home Rule in some shape or other, after which there would be a resettlement of parties on some other question. You will see I am not hopeful.

You will understand that the Chairmanship of Committees affords a comparatively quiet resting-place. Its duties are necessary and useful, and I think I discharge them as well as most ; but it may be doubtful whether it is not a little inglorious to retire upon them. It would be more heroic to die fighting, and perhaps when the fighting comes I shall have to put aside my office and descend into the arena. Hartington has come unblemished through the business on the one hand as John Morley on the other. The Old Man in his last pamphlet may have concealed from himself, but scarcely from others, the impression of having by partial revealment and partial concealment adroitly led on his followers as he desired. Of the said followers some of the more democratic, carried on by catchwords of self-government, are honest Home Rulers, believing in Home Rule. Others, while not concealing from themselves the tremendous mischiefs that follow, think that they are now inevitable and silently support what they cannot prevent ; some catch up Home Rule as they would catch up anything Gladstone proposes and they think will win.

The Italian tour was prolonged by his wife's illness in Rome, and the travellers only reached home on December 10. At this moment the political world was thrown into confusion by the capricious resignation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Journal

December 23.—I was packing up to go down to Bournemouth to spend Christmas Day with Father when Leonard came running upstairs calling out "Kitty! Kitty!" in great excitement. "Well, what is it?" "Resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill." It came like a thunderclap on most people, and it was said even the Cabinet had no idea of it. We found Father very eager about it and full of hopes that Lord Hartington would join Lord Salisbury's Government, as it is said he has been invited to do. L. shakes his wise head over the affair, thinking that another blow has been given to the Union. There was a great storm ending in snow the day after Christmas Day, which broke all the telegraph wires between us and the Continent, so it was unknown for some days where Lord Hartington was, and as all eyes appear to have turned to him, there was great suspense in political circles. Then came Mr. Chamberlain's speech in Birmingham, offering the olive branch to the Gladstonians and suggesting Liberal reunion. Before leaving town we had dined with the Morleys, and Mr. Morley mentioned incidentally that he had had a very friendly letter from Chamberlain, the first for nearly a year. He added, "Mind, whatever you hear about other people, I shall stand firm to my guns," which we took to mean that he would not accept any modification of his Home Rule policy.

On returning to London after Christmas Courtney found a melancholy letter from Goschen, who was at the moment without a seat.

From G. J. Goschen

December 27, 1886.—How will the Unionists stand in the course of a week or two? and what will be the effect of Chamberlain's overtures, as I read them, to the Gladstonians? Churchill's resignation, followed by Chamberlain's speech, seems to me to deal a heavy blow at the Union which it will be extremely difficult to parry. I have no idea what Hartington's course will be.

Lord Hartington arrived from Rome on December 28, and two days later he summoned his friends to Devonshire House, where Courtney argued that if the Liberal Unionists joined the Government the remainder of the Liberal party would be irrevocably identified with Home Rule.

To Arthur Elliot

December 31, 1886.—I had a long talk with Hartington yesterday and saw him again this morning. He saw Lord Salisbury this afternoon, when the crisis will probably be settled as far as we are concerned. The Tory rank and file kick, and Akers-Douglas says he could not whip up the men for Hartington. This may be somewhat exaggerated, or it may be said in Randolph's influence; but it is enough to prevent a Coalition. I remain as in July against a Coalition. If the Government can possibly scramble on, they must, the Liberal Unionists giving them outside assistance. If they cannot—a thing to be proved—Hartington may be asked by the Queen to form a Government and he might then essay a combination, but not till the extremity has arrived. For I look upon this as our last line of defence. Whilst we are aloof we do keep the Liberal party from organising as a Home Rule party; but if the Liberal Unionists and the Conservatives join in a Government the Liberals throughout the country would shake themselves together. There would be only two parties, and the Liberals would some day return to power as unchecked Home Rulers. It is with this view that the Grand Old Man would (I have reason to know) like Hartington to form a Government so as to clear the lines of division and simplify the situation, and it is this view that I am against, as I think most of our friends are. I do not conceal from myself that the necessity for a Coalition may arise. Salisbury's cry to Hartington has made the Government weaker than it need have been, and the mind staggers at the prospect of W. H. Smith leading the House; but this dire necessity—the uttermost—is not yet.[1] Randolph may go back: he is convinced, I am told, he has made a great mistake; or without going back he may try not to be nasty. Hartington himself is perhaps (or was perhaps) less averse to Union than some others. The ways of our Joseph are dark.

The atmosphere was charged with electricity, and Courtney possessed the advantage of being in touch with both sections of the Liberal party.

Journal

December 31.—We dined with the Morleys, meeting Sir W. Harcourt, who was in great spirits and full of chaff. He

[1] Courtney afterwards learned to value the solid qualities and business capacity of the new Leader.

asked L. what office he had accepted from Lord Salisbury, adding that he could tell by the " about-to-save-his-country " expression of his countenance that he had joined.

The crisis was quickly solved by the appointment of Goschen as Chancellor of the Exchequer and of W. H. Smith as Leader of the House. But a feeling of insecurity remained, and the alliance between Conservatives and Unionists was too recent for either wing to feel complete confidence in the other.

To John Scott

January 3, 1887.—We got back on the 11th December. I saw Randolph Churchill about Procedure and some other matters he proposed to take up in the coming session, and he appeared to have settled down to hard work in harness. I was as much surprised as the rest of the world when he resigned. The true reading of this transaction seems to be that he has overreached himself; he offered resignation as the alternative to getting his terms, making sure that he would get them; and to his astonishment he did not. It is added he is much disgusted at being out. As to the motive of his disagreement with his colleagues he is trying to put the best face on it, and I fancy that on most of the questions of difference he has taken the right side, not so much because it was right as because he thought it would win—his game being always to win and to win quickly. If he has tried to keep in by following good counsels and by impressing good counsels on his colleagues, he got in by appealing to every vulgar prejudice and densest ignorance against good counsels. The effect of his going out may, however, be very serious.

January 5.—Goschen has joined the Government. This is the first effect of Randolph's resignation, and though he has joined as a Liberal Unionist it is almost inevitable that he should slip into being a Conservative. It is said he has joined under Hartington's pressure or command; perhaps it would be more correct to say with Hartington's concurrence. One dominant consideration was that it was almost impossible to find him a seat anywhere. Another effect that may, I think, be traced to Randolph's resignation is a very dubious attempt on Chamberlain's part to effect a compromise with the Gladstonians. This ought to fail because I do not believe Gladstone will budge an inch from his position, and reconciliation would therefore mean complete surrender on Joe's part, which would be so unlike him as to be almost incredible. But he may knock under rather than

be out in the cold indefinitely. I don't like this coquetting as I object to Hartington's joining the Conservatives, because I deprecate above all things our public men settling into two and only two parties, so that Liberalism shall mean Home Rule and Anti-Home Rule shall mean Conservatism. If that came to pass, Home Rule would soon be passed. I am not sanguine in any case about being able to prevent it permanently. Gladstone has made it terribly hard, and the strain upon public virtue is excessive. Not every man will go on fighting a battle he knows to be lost, and accepting defeat with a consciousness it means annihilation. You will be glad to know that Dicey is doing good work in the controversy. I see the contagion of Home Rule is extending to India as we knew it must. How you on the spot must groan over the premature encouragement to foolhardiness. I don't fancy this trouble will become serious in our time; but the working-man voter with his large generosity when he has no interest would think no more of giving up India than of giving up Ireland, not caring to inquire seriously what would be the fate of either when abandoned. You will like to know that amid all political vicissitudes John Morley and I remain as close friends as ever.

On the day that Churchill's resignation was announced Chamberlain had delivered a speech at Birmingham which led Harcourt to propose a friendly discussion between Liberal Unionists and Home Rulers. The five chiefs met at Harcourt's house, and for a time the discussions proceeded harmoniously; but the negotiations were broken off by Chamberlain, who was stung by outside attacks into an outburst against "disloyal" Irishmen. The only concrete result of the meetings was to shake the faith of Sir George Trevelyan.

Journal

Sir George is apparently seized with such a passion for Liberal Reunion that he talks about the differences that separate the Gladstonians and Liberal Unionists being purely imaginary. One would like to know how the situation has changed since he left Mr. Gladstone last year. The secrets of the Round Table must be well kept if there is so much change as all that in the views held by the guests. We are rather nervous about what he will say at Liskeard at our demonstration. Will he be a second Balaam?

Sir George's speech at Liskeard gave evidence of the coming change; but the balance was redressed by a full-blooded Unionist oration from W. S. Caine, who little suspected that he too was destined to re-enter the Gladstonian fold. The real hero of the occasion was the sitting Member, who dealt with the division within the Liberal party. "I do not expect reunion," he declared, "but I will do nothing to stop it. It is for the Home Rulers to return to us, for it is they who have gone astray." "It is a pleasure in this flabby generation," commented the *Spectator*, "to read such words. We have sometimes thought and occasionally said that Mr. Courtney was too confident in his own judgment; but there are times when that capacity for being certain is the necessary condition of resolution to do one's duty. It is manliness, not without its touch of stubborn defiance, that Unionists now require."

At the opening of the session of 1887 the Government announced the renewal of coercion; but before introducing the Crimes Bill, they proposed and carried a new Standing Order providing that debate might be closured with the approval of the Chair and the support of two hundred Members. As he had been in consultation with Ministers on the subject, Courtney stepped down from his pedestal and gave his blessing to the change. The new weapon was employed to carry the First Reading of the Bill. A day or two later the Speaker fell ill, and the Chairman took his place during the long and stormy debates on the Second Reading. The House sat late, and the Deputy-Speaker often arrived home at three, four or five in the morning. It was a period of great physical and mental strain; but Members were glad to feel a strong hand on the reins. He was on friendly terms alike with Conservatives, Liberal Unionists and Home Rulers, and men who fought each other at St. Stephen's fraternised in the mellowing atmosphere of Cheyne Walk.

Journal

We have a very interesting party consisting of Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Russell of the *Liverpool Post*

(afterwards Sir Edward Russell), Mrs. Fawcett, and Beatrice. They all stay till nearly twelve, and the talk is delightful. Mr. Balfour and Mr. Morley get on famously and agree about much, especially in their comic descriptions of their respective front benches. Mr. Morley is full of stories about the Grand Old Man, and describes how both he and Harcourt think the other speaks too often. Mr. Balfour seems to have quite a liking for some of the Irish, especially Dillon.

Before adjourning for the Whitsun recess the Chairman of Committees, accompanied by W. H. Smith, Gladstone and Hartington, followed the Speaker in procession from the Palace of Westminster to St. Margaret's, where Bishop Boyd Carpenter preached the Jubilee sermon. He again walked in procession with the Speaker to the Jubilee service in the Abbey on June 21, and sat between him and Gladstone close to the Sovereign ; and on the following day the distinguished guests of the nation assembled at the most brilliant reception the Foreign Office had ever witnessed. A week later the Queen gave a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

Journal

The Queen walked round through a long deep lane of her guests, leaning on a stick and bowing continually in answer to their salutations,—a sort of half bow half curtsey she makes in a very old-fashioned-looking style. When she came opposite us Lord Mount Edgecumbe pointed out Leonard as the Chairman of Committees, when, to our astonishment, she hobbled up and, very deliberately making a curtsey opposite him, said, " You work very hard, Mr. Courtney," which I thought very nice of her.

The review of the fleet closed the official ceremonies ; but people were in the mood for entertaining, and the Chairman spent week-ends with the Farrers at Abinger, the Lubbocks at High Elms and the Grant Duffs at Twickenham. While, however, the British Empire was junketing, Ireland was suffering and sulking, and Parliament was busily occupied with the Crimes Bill.

Journal

July.—Leonard has stormy times and long hours in the Chair ; but he keeps wonderfully well. He has become an extraordinary favourite with the Irish members, who treat his rulings with the utmost respect and show their liking for him in many ways,—one a very odd incident when they claimed on the Estimates that he should have a house provided at Westminster instead of " trudging home in the early morning to Chelsea." There are several shindies. Once Mr. Healy is suspended for offering to wring De Lisle's neck just behind the Chair ; but still he bears Leonard no malice. Another time he again behaves outrageously in threatening to throw slops in Mr. Balfour's face if he ever had to empty them in prison. Leonard also intervenes several times in debate to propose some way of getting through business in words of a moderating character.

The session dragged on throughout August and the first half of September, and ended with an explosion on the fracas at Michelstown, which supplied the text for innumerable Home Rule orations and perorations during the autumn recess. October was dedicated to his constituents, who were informed that their member fully approved both the Crimes Act and the closure by which it was carried. The Act, he explained, was merely a new machinery for punishing what was already punishable ; and since local juries were too timid to convict, there was no alternative to the Government plan. The outlook as a whole, however, was by no means promising. The results of judicial rents were disappointing, and he had no great belief in the newer policy of land purchase. The most urgent need of the time was the reform of county government, with the provision for the representation of minorities. Early in November, his duty done, Courtney left London for a tour in Sicily. Before starting, however, he sent an urgent warning and exhortation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, then deeply engaged on the Bill which was to be the principal measure of 1888.

To G. J. Goschen

November 4.—I am off for Sicily in the morning, but I am moved to send you before I go a word about Local Government,

especially in England. How do you mean to secure representation—a voice—the power of argument and remonstrance to minorities? This is more important than ever in Local Government. The right administration of the Poor Law never can be popular. Some guarantees that your local bodies shall contain representatives of all sections who shall not always be in peril of dismissal are essential. Single-membered seats will not secure this. Pray realise from the history of Gladstone's Home Rule campaign how inferior are the defences of single seats in securing the representation of independent judgment. Under a system of representation of minorities there would have been Home Rulers returned in Great Britain before Gladstone raised the cry; but he would not have been able to carry with him that great array of waverers, who, knowing all was lost unless they followed him, consented to adopt his policy though detesting it. Now I do pray that we do not in a happy-go-lucky blind way repeat this terrible error in new schemes of Local Government. All the best Conservative—in the best sense—elements of English society are here in peril; all the slowly won principles of Poor Law administration in jeopardy. You cannot rely on *ex officio* seats nor on plural voting. They are both in violent antagonism to the dominant ideas of the present Parliamentary electorate with whom the decision must be. A democratic system without the infusion of privilege is inevitable. But the representation of all minorities is a thoroughly democratic idea. Bradlaugh is as strongly in favour of it as Lord Salisbury can be. Of Mill and Fawcett I need not speak, but I can say that democratic audiences in all the big towns have accepted it. Try either the cumulative vote of the School Board or the Single Transferable vote, or any other plan you like.

The session of 1888 opened quietly, new rules of procedure, in the framing of which Courtney had been consulted, being carried without difficulty. Ritchie's Local Government Bill met with general approval and astonished Liberals by its far-reaching provisions. Nobody except its author was more interested in its character or fate than the Chairman of Committees,[1] who welcomed another opportunity of urging proportional representation and who joined Sir

[1] "One of his monumental achievements in the Chair," wrote Mr. Lucy (now Sir Henry), "was the smooth, business-like passage of the Local Government Bill. Except the Minister in charge he was probably the only man who thoroughly grasped the hourly changing aspect of this stupendous measure."—*Cornish Magazine, Sept.* 1898.

John Lubbock in arranging a test election in the House. He had advocated the reform of county administration for many years, and he delivered his first important speech in the Salisbury Parliament on the Second Reading.

Journal

April 16.—Go to House to hear L.'s speech. Most earnest and eloquent, one of the best he has ever made. A plea for Proportional Representation in county elections. He made an evident impression, uphill work as the subject is, for men's eyes seem blind. Mr. Chamberlain followed with a speech full of shallow sneers,—a great dramatic contrast which was also felt. Lord Hartington and W. H. Smith both speak to Leonard about his speech and express a wish that his system might be tried; but I fear they will hardly have the courage to do it without more pressure than the present state of public opinion will give.

Accepting the Bill as an excellent beginning, he prophesied that the County Councils would gradually assume further responsibilities, such as the control of education and the Poor Law. Their financial powers also seemed to him too circumscribed. But the great blot on the measure was the absence of proportional representation, which was essential in local no less than in national elections, and only less needed in England than in Ireland. The speech impressed every one who heard it and drew cheers from the Strangers' Gallery. "I have never heard a long debate," wrote Sir Richard Temple, "in which the speakers were so uniformly competent. Mr. Courtney criticised the electoral portions of the scheme, and urged with impassioned earnestness the principle of which he had been an enlightened advocate. As an oratorical effort this was the best of the many good speeches made in the debate." [1] Mrs. Courtney sent a copy of the speech to the American Ambassador, James Russell Lowell, who was not less interested in questions of political machinery than in literature, and who replied that he always read Mr. Courtney's speeches because they were addressed to the reason of his hearers.

[1] *Life in Parliament, 1886–1897*, pp. 192-3.

The Whitsun holiday of 1888 was spent in Holland and Belgium. At a stall at a fair in Dort the travellers picked up a Dutch version of *Aurora Leigh* in white vellum, and on their return presented it to Browning, who was unaware of the existence of the translation.

From Robert Browning (to Mrs. Courtney)

June 15.—Your most kind and greatly valued present was received with so much surprise as well as gratitude that I thought of examining it a little more leisurely than I have been able to do before reporting about it to the generous donors. That may come after, however, and I will say at once how thankful I am for your kindness. It happens curiously that the day which brought me your present brought also a French (MSS.) translation of the same poem.

Though the session of 1888 remains memorable for the creation of County Councils, far greater interest was aroused at the moment by the fierce battle between Parnell and the *Times*. The publication on April 18, 1887, of a letter virtually approving the Phœnix Park murders signed by the Irish leader had provoked an instant repudiation of the "villainous and barefaced forgery." The great journal refused to withdraw and in the following year produced some more letters of a similar character, which were in turn indignantly repudiated. Parnell desired that the question should be referred to a Committee of the House from which Irish members should be excluded. The Government, however, decided to appoint a special Commission of three Judges to investigate not only the authenticity of the letters but the charges and allegations against Parnell and his colleagues made by the *Times* in its articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime." In other words, a Unionist tribunal was nominated by the Government to pronounce judgement on a great political movement, and the Attorney-General appeared for the *Times*. The passing of the Act—with the aid of the closure—creating the Court led to repeated "scenes," which required all the tact of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees to keep within bounds. The

value of Courtney's services were generally recognised, and the faithful Gladstonian, Stuart Rendel, described his impartiality as the one bright feature of the session.

Journal

One of the most furious debates is over the Royal Commission to inquire into the charges in the *Times*. A special scene between Parnell and Chamberlain. In the midst of it all we have a small dinner, asked before the row, which gives us some anxiety. Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Buckle, a Gladstonian M.P.—Mr. Munro-Ferguson, and the Hobhouses. We get on very well. Mr. Chamberlain rather attacking Leonard as usual. "Courtney, I want to ask you a question. If I fired a revolver across the floor of the House, what would you do?" "My dear Chamberlain, it would not be *across* the floor of the House that you would fire," says Mr. Balfour. "No, the ball would glance," was the reply.

On his usual autumn visit to his constituents Courtney naturally devoted his main attention to Ireland. The Crimes Act of 1887, he declared, had worked well, and the country was more orderly; but policeman's work was never enough, and County Councils should be created as soon as possible on the new English model. The Parnell letters were discussed with a cool detachment rare among Unionist orators. The Irish leader should have gone to the Courts directly the letters appeared, and the creation of a Special Commission was equally a mistake. The Government should have left the matter to the ordinary processes of law, and not have taken sides. But Parliament had lost its head. "The scenes in the debates on the Bill were most painful and most prejudicial to the authority of the House." The importance of the letters had been enormously exaggerated. If the most celebrated letter was genuine he should not think much the worse of the writer. "A man might write such a letter without in the least being accused of complicity in or approbation of murder." If Parnell was proved to be its author, his character for veracity would be gone and he would be ruined; but the question, however it was answered, had no bearing on the merits or demerits of Home Rule.

The State Trial opened on October 22. A long array of witnesses told of riots, outrages and murder; but nothing was revealed that was not already known to students of the Irish problem. When the letters were reached in February the exposure of Pigott and the flight and suicide of the forger blunted the effect of less dramatic revelations. The Report of the Special Commission was ready on February 13, 1889. "There was a scene of wondrous excitement," relates Justin M'Carthy, "when the first bundles of the Report reached the House. Members were too impatient to wait for their distribution. The bundles were simply flung upon the floor in the inner lobby and were scrambled for by the Members." [1] The Judges found that the Irish Members were not collectively engaged in a conspiracy for independence, but that certain Nationalists inside and outside Parliament desired separation. None of the defendants had paid people to commit crime, but some of them had excited to intimidation. The letters attributed to Parnell were forgeries. The Report was a virtual acquittal, and when the Irish leader walked to his seat the House broke into loud acclamations. While zealous but unwary Unionists, headed by the Prime Minister, had greedily swallowed the charges against Parnell and had pressed them into the campaign against Home Rule, the Chairman of Committees had nothing to recant. But the discomfiture of the *Times* struck a damaging blow at the Unionist cause and filled Home Rulers with new hope. Courtney had never felt very confident of the ultimate victory of the Union, but the uncertainty made no difference in his action.

To Sir W. Trelawny
(Chairman of the L.U. Association in S.E. Cornwall)

No one will dissent from your opinion that the present position of Liberal Unionists is one we would not wish if we could help it. The only question is whether it is not an unpleasant necessity. At the same time it is not without some compensations. The Conservatives have been drawn and are daily being drawn to promote measures they do not naturally like, and we are able to

[1] *History of Our Own Times, 1880–1897*, p. 270.

strengthen all that is progressive amongst them and to neutralise all that is reactionary. So far there is a distinct public gain, and without any compromise of our own views and opinions. The time may come when we shall be unable to turn the balance and we may have to reconsider our situation, but that time is not yet. On the other hand I can see no sign of Mr. Gladstone retreating from the position which made us withdraw from him in 1886.

It was hardly to be expected that the Government's motion to thank the Commissioners for their labours would satisfy the House as a whole ; and the Leader of the Opposition moved an amendment asking the House to protest against the wrong, suffering and loss endured by the victims of calumny. A more explicit condemnation of the *Times* for publishing forged letters was placed on the paper by Louis Jennings, the faithful henchman of Randolph Churchill. For this amendment Courtney intended to speak and to vote. Indeed he had almost made up his mind to move such an amendment himself, hoping the Government might accept it from a friend, but he was dissuaded by Lord Derby. Before Jennings could speak Churchill took the wind out of his sails with a vigorous condemnation of the Government; and Jennings, though delivering his own speech of censure, refused to move his amendment in disgust at his leader's action. It was thereupon moved by Caine, and supported by Courtney alone of Liberal Unionists. Two Conservatives joined him in the Lobby, while several abstained, and the majority fell to forty. Lord Curzon later told Mrs. Courtney that half the Conservatives were in favour of some such amendment, and expressed his opinion that if the Chairman of Committees had moved it they would have voted with him. " My vote expressed the views of many who did not vote with me," declared Courtney to his constituents, " and I was strengthening the Unionist cause by helping to free it from the suspicion of partiality and injustice." But while repeating his condemnation of the reckless credulity of the *Times*, he added, "I know Mr. Walter well, and there is no man of more unimpeachable honour."

During the Easter recess the Chairman reviewed the opening weeks of the session with less reserve in a private letter.

To John Scott

April 3, 1890.—We have had a short time up to Easter and have really done as much in it as could fairly be expected. Supply is further on than usual and several bills have been read a second time. We have indeed abundance of work before us. Balfour's Land Bill will occupy a long time and the Tithe Bill is not a trifle; but the prospects are not bad. Even the India Council Bill may be put through in spite of having to wait upon matters which may be of less importance but in which the British public is more interested; that will depend very much upon Bradlaugh. If he wants to have it passed he can probably limit the talk over it so as to get this done, and I daresay he would be satisfied with it as an instalment. But his health and energy are not what they were. This may also be said of the present Parliament or at least of the opposition within it. The persistent fighting mood has disappeared. It is not dead but it is dormant. Business is pretty brisk up and down the country. Ireland itself is a little quieter. Except as regards bye-elections the storm of battle is adjourned. Many are ready to interpret this lull as the calm before an immediate dissolution, and I don't look upon a dissolution in July as an impossible contingency. No one can venture to predict what the result of a General Election would be. Bradlaugh was doubtless right when he told you the Liberal Unionists would be squeezed out. The sitting members who stand again may have good chances, but it is very hard for new-comers. To return to the temper of the House it is a curious illustration of it how little we have missed Hartington. His continued absence would be an enormous peril and I was anxious as to what might happen in these few weeks before Easter; but no occasion for his intervention has arisen. The only difficulty was during a very brief hour over the Commission Report, and that passed off as quickly as it came.

While Courtney's official position debarred him from an active share in party politics, it left him free to expound his views on social and economic problems in other quarters. His distrust of State socialism and of short cuts to prosperity increased with their vogue, for he was anchored to the principles of self-help in which he had been reared. At the annual meeting of the Charity Organisation Society he gave utterance to the "few sturdy words" for which Mr. Loch had asked. The people, he declared, should be taught that

the remedy for most of the evils from which they suffered was in their own hands; and he never lost an opportunity of preaching this unpopular gospel to the adherents of a softer faith.

To a Correspondent

February 10, 1887.—I am obliged to you for sending me a copy of "The Acres and the Hands." I am always disposed to demur to anything that may betray hasty readers to think that a permanent radical change in the condition of the people can be made by a change of laws without a change of character. You might abolish entail and settlement, leases and underleases, and admit of nought but estates in fee simple; and you would effect no real abiding elevation of our countrymen unless you brought about at the same time a conviction of personal and social obligations providing a self-control without which all legislative boons are transitory benefits. I would have this insisted upon in all popular teaching.

In his academic utterances no less than in his political speeches and private correspondence Courtney proclaimed the gospel of hard work and self-help. In an address to the Political Economy Circle of the National Liberal Club in April, 1888, on "The Occupation of Land," afterwards published in the *Nineteenth Century*, he argues that nothing but good use justifies possession of land, and that imperfect use justifies dispossession. If good use is secured it matters little whether the holder be an individual or the State. A good occupier deserves every protection and encouragement. The rigid lease gives both too much and too little. The three F's of the Irish tenant—fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale—should be extended to England. But even they do not guarantee good use of the land; and there should therefore be an impartial authority to supervise and where necessary alter the relations of occupier and owner. "My object is the liberation and encouragement of those who are working for themselves. I am not for helping the weak. I wish to remove impediments, to help those who are helping themselves."

An address on "The Swarming of Men," delivered at Leicester in January, 1888, repeated at Toynbee Hall, and

published in the *Nineteenth Century*, covered wider ground. "We may see myriads of men rush into being; thronging, pressing, spreading wherever a point seems vacant of life, and then again passing out of being whilst new myriads swarm upon their traces before they have well disappeared. How this cloud of being comes and goes; why this spot is darkened with the thickening mass, whilst that other is covered with a thinner veil; in what way the moving particles of the stream of humanity contribute to shape its course and volume—these are the speculations I would fain pursue. The great migrations which have swept over Asia and Europe are now at an end; but their modern equivalent, the industrial migrations, is only another variety of the struggle for existence which forms the main theme of human history." Beginning with his own country the lecturer recalls how the nine millions in England and Wales in 1801, the date of the first census, had grown to twenty-eight millions; how the greatest increase occurred in the first half of the century; how the proportion of town to country dwellers had advanced; how provincial cities had waxed even more rapidly than London; how trades enrich or desert a given centre; how immigration, emigration and facilities of locomotion affect the balance; how Scotland exhibits much the same result; how Ireland outgrew her resources in the first half of the century and saw her population drift overseas in the second. Extending his glance beyond the British Isles, he reveals Scandinavia and Germany throwing off swarms of emigrants to North America, and Italians thronging to South America. Within the United States we trace the same migrations from East to centre and from centre to West in search of wider opportunity.

On concluding his survey the lecturer summed up its lessons in a strain of philosophic eloquence. "The spectacle we have been pursuing is but a study with reference to man of that constant struggle for existence to which the great philosopher of our time has traced diversities of the forms of life; but the quantity of any species of brute life is maintained at any moment up to its fullest capacity of

existence. Can it be pretended that the cup of human existence must always thus be brimming over? We count the individual man at least master of himself. His sense of responsibility can be awakened, his conscience vivified and strengthened; and the over-conscience of the multitude is born of the consciences of separate men. If it becomes part of the universal conscience to look before and after; if the general training of men be directed towards making them more alert to seize upon new occasions of industry, and to recognise the changes of condition which require the abandonment of decaying occupations; if, instead of vain repinings and impotent struggles against change, there is a frank acceptance of the inevitable which is also beneficial; above all, if the relation of numbers to the means of existence is confessed, and men are taught to recognise practically and habitually their responsibility for their children's start in life, we may face the future without anxiety if not without concern. But I cannot honestly say that I believe these conditions of successful conduct in the future are at present realised. I must confess, not for the first time, to a suspicion that they are less generally apprehended than they were in a preceding generation. Our immediate predecessors seem to me to have been more loyal in admitting the rigour of the conditions of life, more courageous in rejecting indolent sentimentalities; they knew the severities of the rule of the universe, and the penalties of neglecting to conform to it. Many causes have conspired to corrupt this sound morality; but the circumstances of to-day seem to require that a strenuous effort should be made to restore and spread its authority before the remorseless pressure of fact comes to re-establish its sanction."

A third address, delivered at University College on February 11, 1891,[1] was devoted to Socialism, which he depicted as economically impracticable and morally undesirable. As a boy he had heard much talk of Robert Owen, and as a young man he had bought his clothes at one of the co-operative shops started by the "Christian Socialists," who were not Socialists at all. If small com-

[1] Reported verbatim in the *Times*.

munities had failed through bad management and human friction, what brain could control the operations of a vast machine involving the life of a whole nation? A socialist community, could it be formed, would be a sluggish river if not a stagnant pool; and the organisation of industry is too complex a task for a bureaucracy. The difficulties that beset the theory of collectivism are insuperable. But this negative result does not throw us back on an unimprovable anarchy. "Consider what might be accomplished through a growth in temperance, prudence and the exercise of sympathy. Poverty, as we understand it, would disappear. Strong men and free men, with personal independence unabated yet inbred with mutual respect, would associate, working out an elevation of the common life through individual advancement. The individualist has also his ideal. Life is richer than ever in variety and beauty; for while the toil needed to support existence is abated and the condition of all has been raised, character and independence, vivacity, self-reliance and courage—all the elements that constitute the personal genius of each citizen—have been strengthened."

The strongest Parliaments exhaust their strength, and in the session of 1890 Unionist stock began to fall rapidly. The withdrawal of the grant to local authorities for the purchase and extinction of licenses was a damaging blow to the Government, and revealed a weakness in the Higher Command.

Journal

July 2.—We have had a nasty fortnight for the Unionist cause. For some time business in the House has been going slowly and badly, the Government not managing well. Poor old W. H. Smith ill and not equal to the strain. The Opposition obstructing abominably, and Leonard feeling sometimes bound to refuse the closure, to the great disgust of the Tory rank and file. To complete the trouble Goschen and Ritchie insist on passing the Compensation Clauses of the Local Taxation Bill, ardently opposed by the fanatical teetotallers, disliked by financial people like Leonard, and not cared for by any one. Feeling higher at every stage, and Government majority lower

at every division. At last Government announce partial withdrawal and finally total withdrawal. Caine, who has led the Temperance opposition, throws up his seat in disgust and goes off to contest it as an Independent Liberal. Great consternation, and House so demoralised one night (July 24) that anything might have happened. Ministry all collapsed apparently. Considering they have a good majority and are not failing in their main policy of Irish Government, it seems absurd for the Unionist party to succumb like that to what is after all only comparatively a trifling blunder ; but the truth is there is no leader.

The return of a Gladstonian Liberal at the bye-election, defeating both the Conservative candidate and Caine himself, seemed a portent, and Liberal Unionists began to wear long faces.

To his Wife

July 9, 1890.—In going through the Lobby to-night I was intercepted. "Was it true that Randolph was coming back? People were saying that he was to be Home Secretary. Some said that he was to lead the House, but most said Beach." To which I could only say I had not heard a word of it.

The Government had lost its nerve and felt that it required a long rest.

To his Wife

July 11, 1890.—Everything contested is thrown over, and we meet again in November. It is very disgusting looking back upon Easter and thinking that nothing but mischief has been done since.

The autumn holiday was spent in Ireland, which he had not seen since 1883. Landing at Dublin he struck south, visiting Lord Monteagle and Henry Butcher, and then made his way up the west coast. Travelling through Donegal and Londonderry he reached Belfast, where he was shown over Harland and Wolff's by Mr. Pirrie, delivered a speech to local Unionists, and lectured on Proportional Representation to the Philosophical Society. The tour ended as it began in Dublin, where he discussed his impressions with T. W. Russell, the O'Conor Don, Richard Bagwell,

and Bishop O'Dwyer. The journey supplied him with ammunition for his autumn campaign. "I return a more convinced Unionist than ever." The difference between Ulster and the rest of Ireland was moral even more than material. The settlement of the land question would dispose of Home Rule. "It will not at once kill the demand, but it will abate it. And if a Home Rule Parliament were to be established, it would start with better prospects." Land purchase should be regarded as a safety-valve where the friction of the dual system is intolerable; but it should be neither universal nor compulsory.

While opinion in the constituencies seemed to be veering towards Gladstonian Liberalism, an unexpected stroke of fortune revived the spirits of Unionists and spread dismay in the Home Rule ranks. Parliament reassembled on November 23, and Courtney took the place of the Speaker, whose wife was dying of cancer. The Leader of the House desired to substitute a mere expression of thanks for the usual detailed reply to the Queen's Speech, in order to shorten the debate on the Address. Courtney anticipated opposition, and Gladstone at once rose to formulate objections. But the Address was voted the same evening, for Members could think of nothing but the O'Shea divorce case and of its political consequences. Though the Irish Members were ready to back their chief, Gladstone's letter demanding his retirement was followed by Parnell's desperate fight for existence. The savage quarrels of the Nationalists and the exposure of the Irish leader filled Englishmen with disgust, and postponed the conversion of "the predominant partner" to Home Rule. After the buffetings of 1889 and 1890 the Government recovered its breath in 1891, when it paid for the loyal support of Liberal Unionists by the abolition of school fees. Free Education had figured in the "Unauthorised Programme," and Chamberlain was not the man to drop a popular cry because he had changed his party. The Government Bill was a Chamberlain measure, and no member of the Cabinet was half so interested in its fortunes as the Member for West Birmingham. The Chairman of Committees cared as little

for Socialistic Radicalism in 1891 as in 1885, and declined to support it in the Division Lobby.

Journal

Easter.—Stay with Evelyn Ashley at Broadlands. Chamberlain there. He asked me if I had "any influence over Courtney." I said "Not much; no one has." "Well, whatever influence you have, use it to instil into his mind never to refuse the closure during these next months whatever the circumstances."

Courtney's dislike of Free Education, however, was shared by few, and the Bill had an easy passage through Parliament. Before starting for Germany and Tirol at the close of the session, he wrote to congratulate the Chief Secretary on his intention to include Minority Representation in the scheme of Irish Local Government which he was preparing.

To Arthur Balfour

August 29.—I am extremely glad that you delivered yourself at Plymouth as you did on Local Government in Ireland, and that you intimated that the representation of minorities would be aimed at in your scheme. It is remarkable that none of your critics has noticed this intimation, and I interpret their silence to indicate uncertainty how it should be met. Harcourt told me before the prorogation that you had told him as much and his instinct was naturally one of opposition; but I think Morley's inclination (if nothing more) would be the other way, and I believe it would be extremely difficult to marshal a united opposition against the provision. The remonstrances your formal announcement has provoked against dealing with Local Government at all in Ireland are no more than you must have expected and will not disquiet you. We return in October, and in the latter part of that month I shall be visiting my constituents and making a series of political speeches. I intend in these to deal with the expediency and necessity of a measure of Local Government in Ireland again and again, and I shall of course dwell on the representation of minorities as an essential part of the measure. I hope the tale won't appear too often told, but the persistent advocacy may gain in force what it loses in wearisomeness. At all events I shall do everything I can by way of preparation, and if when the time comes there is anything you would like specially

noted I shall be glad to hear from you. It is early to talk of next session. You showed in the Purchase Bill that you could fight single-handed, perhaps better than with assistance; but on the Local Government Bill you would have to face a somewhat different opposition, and the thought sometimes occurs to me whether I could now and then give assistance that might be useful. Raikes has passed away very suddenly. I had not suspected physical weakness. He was an excellent Chairman of Committees and I look upon myself as his pupil. I wish you could take his place as Member for the University. The ties of Manchester may be too strong, but if you could with honour leave those sheep in the wilderness all Cambridge men would hail you. I must not run into gossip. My wife joins me in kindest regards.

While the Chairman of Committees was enjoying himself on the Continent, the National Liberal Federation met at Newcastle and drew up what was known as the Newcastle Programme. Home Rule naturally occupied the foreground of the picture; but Local Veto and Disestablishment of the Church in Wales were formally adopted as fighting issues for the election of the following year. Each of the three planks had numerous and powerful enemies; but one of them, at least, had no terrors for Courtney. Disestablishment, he told his constituents on his autumn visit, was a matter of time, place and circumstance. Many Churches flourished though unconnected with the State. Essential reforms could not be obtained from Parliament; and, speaking as a Churchman, he would be glad to remove the fetters. Disestablishment in Wales was near at hand; and if it were to come later in England it would be in some degree owing to growth in the life and energy in the Church. His general attitude towards current issues, new and old, was set forth in a letter to a Bodmin correspondent.

To a Constituent

I deplore the dependence of the finances of India upon the opium trade. I would join in any step to prevent the increase of that dependence, such as forbidding the introduction of opium into countries it had not entered, and I should be glad to see measures taken to contract the trade; but I cannot join in any

vote for stopping it altogether—at all events until I see how the loss is to be made up. The net revenue is less than it was, but is still too large a sum to be abandoned at the risk of bankruptcy. As to Temperance legislation at home I have often declared in favour of Sunday closing; but I have always added it would be necessary to except London. London hours might perhaps be reduced. I should add that though prepared to vote for a bill for England I am still of opinion that it would be better for each county to make a bye-law for itself. As to Local Option I voted last session for a Welsh Local Option Bill of a very crude character, but I did so deliberately as expressing my conviction that some measure of local restraint or prohibition must be passed. I cannot, however, honestly say that I think this question is near settlement. I doubt whether any person on either of the two front benches has applied his mind to drawing a bill on it, perhaps I ought to say since Mr. Bruce's abortive bill of twenty years ago. I always thought very well of that measure myself as honest in intention, as one that would long ere this have been largely operative had it been adopted, and as one that might have been extended when time proved its utility. It is possible that when the hour of legislation comes Parliament will fall back upon its principles if not upon its provisions. The experiences of our Colonies, of our kinsmen in the United States and of Northern Europe show that the question is not easy and that many experiments will probably be tried in dealing with it.

While the armies were gathering for the coming battle, three familiar figures left the stage on which they had played an active part. On October 6 the Irish leader's stormy life came to an end, and on the same day the blameless Leader of the House passed away. But the removal of Parnell and W. H. Smith affected Courtney's fortunes less than the death of the seventh Duke of Devonshire, which terminated the long career in the House of Commons of Lord Hartington, whom he had followed with confidence and admiration since 1886, and substituted as the Liberal Unionist leader a man with whom he had nothing in common save a dislike of Home Rule.

From the Duke of Devonshire

December 30, 1891.—Of all the tributes to the memory of my father which I have received I value none more highly than yours

I hope that you over-estimate the effect of my removal from the House of Commons. During the last session or two I have felt that there was not much occasion for activity or exertion on my part in the House. If there is more active work to be done in the next session, I am sure that it will be as well or better done by my successor, and my only apprehension is as to a popular excess of zeal.

In the last session of the Salisbury Parliament Mr. Balfour, though no longer Chief Secretary, introduced his Local Government Bill for Ireland. The measure was hotly attacked by the Opposition and coldly welcomed on the Government Benches; but it included the promised cumulative voting and earned the blessing of the Chairman of Committees. Nobody, however, expected it to pass, for the General Election was in sight. Easter and Whitsun were spent in electioneering, and on June 26 Parliament was dissolved. Courtney's Liberal friends hoped that he would hold the seat, and Mundella effusively declared at a dinner-party in Cheyne Walk that he and John Morley would go down and help him if there was any real danger of losing it. The sitting Member, however, felt no tremors, and defended the six-year record with vigorous conviction. "Peace and friendship have been maintained," he declared; "we have had no wars nor rumours of wars. There is no real criticism of Lord Salisbury's administration of foreign affairs." Mr. Balfour's rule in Ireland had been thoroughly successful, and Home Rule was as needless and dangerous as ever. The establishment of County Councils was a peaceful and beneficent revolution. "Looking either at the foreign, colonial or domestic policy of the Government, it deserves Liberal support." Most Liberals, however, thought otherwise, and the seat was held by the greatly reduced majority of 231.

CHAPTER XIV

ABOVE THE BATTLE

THE Home Rulers emerged from the polls with a majority of forty, and it was generally expected that a new Chairman of Committees would be appointed from the ranks of the victors.

Journal

August 4.—The new Parliament meets and I go down, as I am to keep my old seat until the new Chairman is appointed, about which there is great discussion in the papers. The Gladstonian papers are taking it for granted that it is a party office and must go with the Government. There is no precedent either way, and L. has a strong opinion that one ought to be created making the Chairmanship a non-party post, seeing that he has so much to do with the closure now and that the office is almost a new one in that respect. I hope and believe he will refuse to go on as Chairman even if they ask him, for I want him to guide opinion on our side more than he can do in the Chair and take a more active part in the warfare. I wonder if I am wrong. Anyhow I am in agreement with his constituents.

The suspense was soon over, and it was announced that a lawyer of no special distinction or capacity was to rule in his place. Courtney's reflections on the changes in the political landscape were confided to a valued friend who had fallen on the field of battle.

To Arthur Elliot

August 16, 1892.—I moaned over your defeat; it was one of the worst incidents of the Election. I know none more disgusting; and the Election was fruitful in pretty bad things.

John Morley makes no secret of his vexation not only in his own case but at the final result for the party. A victory without power! A Government established but too weak to get through their first work. As to himself I have a feeling that he will be re-elected at Newcastle despite the 3000 majority at the General Election. I am writing at the Reform Club where not so much is known as you will know when this reaches you. The place is full of fussy expectants and I have retired to the Library where silence is imperative. I hear Labouchere is in the Smoking Room speaking his mind freely. Mr. G. is a superannuated old goose and Arnold Morley is too ridiculous. He, Labby, has received no communication whatever!!! X. is moving about anxiously doubting whether he may not be passed over. I tell him it is not too late. Another nervous shadow finds London detestable in August—wonders how anybody can endure it. I have seen this kind of thing go on two or three times before, and a real artist could make a great picture of it. These poor devils with desire gnawing at their hearts are a sight for the gods, but I don't feel as if we were a very jolly spectacle. One would have preferred to knock Home Rule on the head, or, barring that, to be knocked on the head ourselves; but neither being done we have a stormy, doubtful time ahead. If the Old Man has really treated Labouchere as nobody, he has provided a whip for himself at once. We may really have another General Election within twelve months, and what a servitude life will be for those who got in with narrow majorities! I have sworn I will not be a slave.

The Unionist Ministry faced the new Parliament, and after a short, sharp debate were defeated on an amendment to the Address moved by Mr. Asquith.

Journal

August 11.—My old seat I suppose for the last time. The speech of the evening was Chamberlain's—very clever, splendidly clever, very bitter. The Terrace was crowded, and, except the few prominent Opposition leaders who look dreadfully anxious, everybody is happy. The outgoing Government look cheery, Mr. Balfour beaming like a boy about to have a long-deferred holiday. The rank and file Unionists look forward to having their fling and more fun and less grind, while the rank and file Gladstonians are full of coming triumph and many hopeful of promotion. We Unionists don't think Home Rule can come

with the size and composition of the majority, and look forward to a certain wholesome clearing of the air with Mr. Gladstone in power again.

Courtney was of opinion that the new Ministry should have fair play. The country, he told his constituents, seemed to have determined to give the Old Man another chance. The temptation to join with discontented factions and eject the Government must be resisted. Continual changes were undesirable. The Gladstonians should have the opportunity of performing what they had promised, so that, if they failed, their failure should be clearly attributed to the fact that their promises were impossible of execution, not to factious opposition. It was asking a good deal of human nature ; but abstinence from " factious opposition " was no effort to the most independent Member of the House. Moreover the Chief Secretary was his intimate friend, and he was ready to co-operate with the Home Rulers in giving Ireland everything except Home Rule. Mr. Morley was no sooner reinstated in Phœnix Park than he sent a pressing invitation to his friend to pay him a visit. He had congratulated the Member for East Cornwall on his victory, " notwithstanding your bad politics," and had received in return good wishes for his victory in the troublesome bye-election, " as magnanimous as they were welcome."

From John Morley (to Mrs. Courtney)

November 20, 1892.—Where are you ? Where is your promise ? When do you come under this humble roof ? Why did you not congratulate me about Newcastle ? I hope you are both flourishing like green bay trees.

A visit to Dublin proved impossible ; but the autumn holiday included a brief sojourn at Whittingehame, where they found a family party. " A large, solid, comfortable house," wrote Mrs. Courtney in her Journal. " Very much loved at home is Prince Arthur, and it is pleasant to see him strolling about with a pruning stick clipping his trees and shrubs on the Sunday afternoon." On the way south the

Roman Wall and the coast castles of Northumberland were explored.

The first session of the fourth Gladstone Ministry opened on January 31, and the first business after the debate on the Address was the introduction of the second Home Rule Bill.

Journal

February 13.—The great day, the great declaration has come. It was a grand sight. The Old Man spoke strongly at first but with weakening voice towards the end of his two and a quarter hours. It was a wonderful effort for eighty-four years, and with one side of my mind I admired it all, while the other listened with indignation to this long-expected Bill.

The novelty of the measure was the retention of the Irish Members, who were, however, only to vote on Irish and Imperial matters. The Nationalists had acquired a new and doughty champion in Edward Blake, who had led the Liberal party in Canada, and whose maiden speech made a marked impression; while the Unionist case was supported by Randolph Churchill, who broke silence after a long interval but whose right hand had lost its cunning. Courtney had never spoken on Home Rule in the House; but he was now unmuzzled, and on the last day of the First Reading debate he followed Blake and Chamberlain. He reiterated his old conviction that a subordinate Parliament, though possible in theory, was impossible in practice. Ireland must be governed either from Dublin or from London. Any attempt to modify the course of the ship would be fiercely resented, and would have to be either weakly abandoned or peremptorily enforced. The future of Ireland would depend on the character of the Assembly, not on the clauses of the Act; and the new Parliament would be little more than the Irish Members sitting in Dublin. There was no provision in the Bill for the representation of minorities, and the Irish Unionists would be helpless in face of the Nationalist legions. Slow but steady progress had been made since the Union. Patience, courage and goodwill would in the long run produce a new Ireland.

Journal

It was a most trying time for him ; for members always rush out after two or three hours' excitement when the dinner-hour is nigh. He did not speak well, and we both went away rather sorrowful. Two days later Sir John Lubbock called and would not have it that L.'s speech was a failure, but only less well delivered than usual. He is a dear, kind man and cheered us by being more sanguine about defeating the Bill than I am. Horace Plunkett came afterwards and we liked this new Irish Unionist M.P. very much.

A dinner with Chamberlain, at which Lord and Lady Salisbury were among the guests, supplied further encouragement. Courtney was, however, as a rule more effective on the platform than in the House, and when Lord George Hamilton, who had sat in Parliament with him for fifteen years, heard him during the Easter recess at a great Unionist demonstration at Plymouth, he was surprised by the warmth and vigour of his oratory. While denouncing Home Rule as " an injustice before God and man " he worked hard to improve the Bill, taking an active part in the discussions on the Committee stage. The Chief Secretary told Margaret Courtney that her brother's speeches were the best and most useful on either side, and that he and Mr. Gladstone always listened with attention to them. Though as strong a Unionist as ever he was not invariably in agreement with the line taken by his leaders. He had always held that if a Home Rule Parliament was set up it should control the tariff, and he now advocated the concession of that power—a position which in a strong Free Trader surprised some of his critics. But the knowledge that the House of Lords would reject the Bill cast an air of unreality over the debates, and much of it was voted without discussion and with the aid of the closure.

At the invitation of his leaders Courtney moved the rejection of the Third Reading on August 3. Rising immediately after the Prime Minister he met the complaint of obstruction with the rejoinder that the Bill had been incompletely discussed. Passing to the graver counts in

the indictment he maintained that no change of such magnitude had ever been made with such a small backing. If an Irish majority was for it, an English majority was against it. The measure was constitutionally and financially unworkable, and the Lords would be doing their duty in throwing it out. "At the last election the people did not have the Bill before them. Next time they will, and they will reject it." It was a vigorous fighting speech, convincing enough to those who lacked the instinct and vision of nationality. A few days later the second Home Rule Bill was rejected by a ten to one majority in the Upper House. "We have had a weary time," he wrote to Arthur Elliot, "despite the interest of many of the constitutional discussions."

When the main Bill of the session was out of the way Courtney reminded his constituents that "except in opposition to Home Rule" he was a Liberal still. His friend Lord Hobhouse used to say that he was the only man who could rightfully call himself a Liberal Unionist. He blessed the Parish Councils Bill on its second reading, and in Committee pressed though in vain for the cumulative vote. "The Lords now have the Parish Councils Bill in hand," he wrote at the close of the long discussions; "but neither they nor we will have modified it in any really important degree. It will pass, and in view of its good results, which are considerable, we must take the risk of its evil." The prolonged session yielded little fruit; for the Employers' Liability Bill was withdrawn when the Upper House insisted on contracting out. The Government possessed as little strength in the country as in the House, and Gladstone's unexpected retirement in the spring of 1894 diminished the already slender capital of the firm. It was impossible to witness the close of his career, declared Courtney to his constituents at Easter, without strong sympathy and some emotion. The old Leader was an enthusiast; his successor was a cynic, calm, wary and self-possessed, wealthy and fond of racing. He had listened to his first speech as Premier in the House of Lords, and his confession that the predominant partner must be converted before Home Rule

could be passed was a vindication of its recent action. The Peers never opposed when the people's mind was made up, and they were often wiser in details than the Commons, as when they insisted on contracting out. But the Upper Chamber was far too big. Every three of the present Peers should elect one of themselves, and new blood should be introduced by the creation of Life Peers and by representatives of County Councils and County Boroughs.

Throughout the session of 1894 Courtney steadily supported the Government. Harcourt's death duties, which were utterly repugnant to the Conservative mind, appeared to him sound finance; and he had never concealed his conviction that the Church of the minority in Wales ought in justice to be disestablished. He had explained his views in a letter to a constituent shortly before the election of 1892.

To a Clergyman

November 16, 1891.—It is quite true I told my constituents (what I had often told them before) that Disestablishment would come, and the only novelty in my recent remarks lay in the suggestion that there might be a growing feeling within the Church that on the whole it had better come. Even this was not quite new. You speak as if the Church would be left quite penniless. There would be some deprivation of this world's goods, but much would be left, so much that under the economical administration of a responsible Church body there would be still a large nucleus of endowment for every want, and the loss would be scarcely felt. The Irish Church was doubtless especially fortunate in the time of the rearrangement of its funds, but allowing for this its history is most encouraging. Many Irish Churchmen would not go back, setting against the comparatively insignificant loss of endowment the gain in freedom and in the power of organising the developing resources. I do not for a moment believe there would be any check in the real work of the Church. You say the question is one for laymen as much as, even more than, the clergy. I have always so regarded it. In fact my own reluctance to contemplate Disestablishment has always been largely due to the apprehension that the Disestablished Church would be controlled almost exclusively by ecclesiastics; but a time must come when advantages and disadvantages have to be balanced against one another. Do

not, however, suppose that I think Disestablishment imminent. That is not my opinion. But permanent forces are working that way, and on the other hand that "moderate amount of legislation" you look for to remove disadvantages becomes yearly more hopeless and in truth will never be accomplished. I deprecate above all things the defence of the Church degenerating into a poor struggle to maintain more or less of silver and gold.

He naturally adhered to his opinion when the Government introduced their Bill in 1894, though he consented to abstain from supporting it in the Division Lobby.

To a Correspondent

May 7, 1894.—I am afraid my answer must be what you expect rather than what you desire. I cannot see my way to vote against the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, although I am prepared to defer so far to the wishes of many of my friends as not to vote in its favour. I know this attitude will displease many and may please none, and I am not unmindful of the consequences that may follow. In my judgment it is a grievous error to tie together in an inseparable bond the political organisation of the Church in Wales and that of the Church in England. You probably saw the letter of the Headmaster of Rugby (Dr. Perceval) in Friday's *Times*. It agrees so much with what I have thought and spoken that I might adopt it as my own; not with any desire to screen myself behind authority, but for the proof it offers that a man may be a faithful Churchman and yet think the Welsh Establishment ought to be undone.

Opposition to Home Rule appeared to Courtney to involve support of every remedial measure for Ireland; and the Chief Secretary had no more powerful ally in his earnest endeavour to reinstate the evicted tenants. He vigorously defended his vote for the Second Reading of the Bill in an Open Letter to a Constituent. He had advocated this policy at public meetings during and after the election. Mr. Balfour's Land Purchase Bill of 1891 accepted the principle of reinstatement as purchasers, subject to the landlord's consent. Mr. Morley's Bill allowed it if such consent was unreasonably withheld, in which case the landlord would be bought out. If the Unionists returned to

power, they would have to pursue the same course. "It is not in the public interest that a cloud of landless men should be hovering about the land they once held."

This statesmanlike view of Irish needs was not shared by the Conservatives, to whom the compulsion of landlords was an abomination. To the innumerable amendments placed upon the paper the Government replied by a closure resolution; for the session was far advanced and the intention to wreck the Bill was unconcealed. After two days of unprofitable wrangling in Committee Courtney delivered one of the most impressive speeches of his life. "I cannot help expressing my profound regret at the deplorable condition in which we are landed. It is a matter of Imperial policy. You may get half a dozen individuals—certainly not a majority of the landlords—unreasonably preventing what you say is a reasonable solution, and you will not allow the interference of the State for the removal of these plague spots. In the interest of Ireland I am profoundly moved by the spectacle before us of the certain failure of the Bill. Who is responsible for it? Is it the impetuosity of the Government with its closure resolution? Is it even now too late for a settlement? Perhaps what I say is like one crying in the wilderness and saying Peace, Peace, when there is no peace. Some solution ought to be possible which would redeem this House from this worse than degradation, the saving of a measure bringing peace and relief to that most distracted country." The phrases were simple and unadorned; but their effect was almost mesmeric.

Journal

July 31.—The House is in Committee with some hundreds of amendments to go through. Sir W. Harcourt had put down a notice of a guillotine resolution to include Committee and Report. Leonard has been trying privately to get the leaders on both sides to agree to some compromise. John Morley very willing, Harcourt seemed ditto, and L. wrote strong appeals to Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain. So I went to the House to see what the result would be. Sir William got up and moved the gag with few words. Arthur Balfour rose full of indignation,

and made a very clever and fighting party speech. John Morley followed with a fighting answer, Chamberlain ditto, and Labby scoffed. Then L. rose and made his appeal to both sides for a better spirit. I have heard equally fine speeches from him, but never one in Parliament which produced the same effect. His thoughts were from his heart, his words well chosen, and it was undoubtedly what they call the psychological moment. The crowded house was literally shaken by it, and for half a minute it seemed as if his appeal would succeed. But alas Harcourt had been collecting sharp arrows in reply to Balfour's and Chamberlain's and could not forego them; so, though making a kind of offer, he so covered it with attacks and sneers that the game was up. Goschen followed with a miserable screaming speech, and the guillotine was voted. I shall never forget the interest and excitement of that hour, my triumph at L.'s success or my grief at the miserable result. But one result has been quite a sensation in the papers, and letters and words of praise from various friends on both sides.

Mrs. Courtney's picture of the scene was in no way over-coloured. "It was perhaps the most dramatic debate of this generation," wrote the *St. James's Gazette*. "The effect of the speech was almost marvellous to those who know the profound cynicism of the assembly. But the secret was simple. It was its downright honesty, its obvious truthfulness that conquered the House and stirred the best impulses in every Member." "His practice as Chairman has given to his speeches a slightly didactic tone," commented the *Westminster Gazette*; "but last night he was moved from his equable professorial temper by a sort of strange, prophetic wrath at what seemed to him the sad and wicked scene that was being enacted. Depths were roused unknown to the House. It will endear him to the Irish Members, who suddenly realised that they had in this stern Unionist, so conscious of their Celtic sins, one who had made acquaintance with the depths of Irish suffering on that wild Atlantic seaboard." Irish gratitude was voiced by Mr. T. P. O'Connor in the *Sun*. "In language of a melodiousness, exaltation and now and then loftiest eloquence which were a startling revelation of the possibilities in this isolated, self-restrained, rather hard man, he

held the House in a grip tighter than I have seen any man exercise over it for many a day. It was one of those rare moments when the ties and obligations, the rancorous temper of political divisions disappear in the atmosphere of touching and exalted eloquence." "He awed the House," echoed the *Daily Chronicle*. "Like everybody else I fell under the spell and forgot to store his words in my memory, while I breathed the high and clear atmosphere to which he carried his hearers."

The appeal was fruitless, and the guillotine resolution was carried in an angry House. But the friends of the Bill implored him to continue his mediation, and T. P. O'Connor came to offer on behalf of the Nationalist party to give up the compulsory powers on condition that if the Bill failed a compulsory measure should be introduced next year. With this olive branch in his hand Courtney approached the rival leaders. The Chief Secretary, anxious to save part at any rate of his cargo, proved willing enough; and the next step was to urge the Liberal Unionist Peers to accept the Second Reading and then make the Bill voluntary.

From the Duke of Devonshire

August 5.—I think it is difficult to decide what should be done in the House of Lords till we see what takes place on the Report and Third Reading in the House of Commons. There seems to be a strong objection, not confined to the Conservatives nor Irish landlords, to giving a Second Reading to the Bill with compulsion in it. The uncompromising attitude of the Opposition appears to have produced a quite unexpected disposition to compromise on the part of the Government and Irish.

The Leader of the Opposition and Chamberlain, though they had no desire to carry the Bill, did not absolutely reject Courtney's advances. There was thus a ray of hope when the House met on August 7 for the Third Reading.

Journal

Mr. Brodrick moved the rejection in a landlord's speech, but still not completely shutting the door. If only L. had followed! But he was told the Irish were going to put up some

one to make a conciliatory speech, and it was Mr. O'Brien, the man most eager for a compromise. But after exhorting the Opposition to imitate L.'s noble spirit he went off into a fit of insane fury, threatening and insulting landlords and Opposition in fine old style. "All is over," was Mr. Morley's word to L., who sadly remained silent. One more little flicker, for those unaccountable Nationalists do want the Bill; and so, when only an hour was left, half for Mr. Balfour and half for Mr. Morley, up got Dillon and claimed to answer Chamberlain, who had intervened. Mr. Balfour refused to give way; but there was evidently an organised call for Dillon, who then asked the Government if they would adjourn the debate so that he might speak. Mr. Morley agreed, but something unforeseen by the Irish party occurred. Arthur Balfour waived his right to speak. Poor Dillon, who had evidently risen to gain another day in hope of saving the Bill, made a very flat speech. Mr. Morley followed, and the Third Reading was carried, Leonard voting for it.

A week later Mr. Balfour, dining at Cheyne Walk, admitted that his host's speech had made such an impression that, though he personally was against a compromise, he could not have resisted the pressure on his own side if it had not been for O'Brien's outrageous speech. The failure of the compromise negotiations sealed the fate of the measure in the Upper House.

From the Duke of Devonshire

August 8.—I imagine there is very little chance after last night's debate of any arrangement being come to in the House of Lords as to the Evicted Tenants Bill. Still it is possible that suggestions may be made to Liberal Unionist Peers to endeavour to get the Second Reading agreed to with the object of converting the Bill into a voluntary one. I doubt the possibility or expediency of this course under any circumstances, but I am quite sure that it is absolutely impossible unless the Government are prepared to take some step and open some communication with Lord Salisbury before the Second Reading. When the Peers have come up to vote against the Second Reading, it will be impossible to induce them to vote for it on the chance of the amendments they may be able to introduce in Committee and of their acceptance by the Government in the House of Commons. Nothing less than an undertaking by the Government that they

would themselves propose the amendments necessary to convert the Bill into a voluntary one, and to meet other objections, would have a chance of success, and I do not know that this would. I do not think that it would be fair to the Opposition that they should be asked to take the responsibility of converting a Bill, the principle of which they disapprove, into one which they could accept. To accept from the Government a totally different Bill would be another matter.

The time for compromise had passed, and the Bill went forward to its doom. In commending it to the Peers the Prime Minister paid a warm tribute to Courtney's attempted mediation ; but the House of Landlords had scant sympathy with evicted tenants and rejected the measure by an overwhelming majority.

The autumn holiday was spent in Scotland ; and a visit to Mr. Haldane at Cloanden was followed by a pilgrimage to a shrine which attracted few pilgrims.

Journal

September 26.—A beautiful and most interesting day. L. had long been wanting to go to Haddington, the old home and last resting-place of Mrs. Carlyle, of whom I may call him a sort of posthumous lover, for he delights in her letters and all the incidents of her brilliant existence amid more than common sorrow. A large house first attracted our attention. L. went up to inquire, half hoping it might be *the* house. It was a Bank ; but the manager told us that his family were old friends and that the funeral had been from the house. Following directions we soon came to a singularly pretty, half-defaced façade on to a narrow street, still a doctor's house ; and a long passage took us to the entrance. We were shewn into the drawing-room, a pretty room looking over the large back garden with Adam mantelpiece. We pictured the vivacious young girl and the many admirers who came into her life before " the young wild beast," as L. calls him, appeared. Then to the Cathedral, a much finer building than I had imagined. Her grave lies amid sun and shadow. The pigeons were cooing amid the ruins, and the whole scene was lovely and touching. Wandering back another way we saw in front of us a very old man. L. ran after him and asked him the way to the old school where Janey Welsh was taught. He turned out to be Dr. Howden, whose father was a partner of hers, and he gladly gave us a good deal

of information. We lunched at the George in the coffee-room where she spent a long evening alone on her last visit so graphically recorded a few years before her death. To our surprise, just as we had finished, our old gentleman, who was over eighty-five, came to seek us. "He ought to have shewn us over the place; was it too late?" We joyfully threw over our train and sallied out with him, again to the Cathedral, over the old bridge, to the school where Irving taught, hearing all the time about Mrs. Carlyle.

During the winter Courtney took a leading part in securing Carlyle's house in Cheyne Row for the public. He had met him in the later 'sixties, when on one occasion he espied the prophet walking alone in heavy rain without an umbrella. With some diffidence the younger man offered the shelter of his umbrella, which was accepted. Carlyle was full of the Reform Bill enfranchising householders, and of his pamphlet entitled *Shooting Niagara*. Courtney proved a good listener, and at the end of the walk he received an invitation to pay him a visit some day; but he hesitated to take advantage of a chance meeting and never crossed the threshold of Cheyne Row till years after the old man was dead, and an opportunity arose of rescuing it for the public. He asked the Chief Secretary to support the movement with a speech.

To John Morley

January 20, 1895.—When I asked the Hon. Secretary two days ago why your name was not on the enclosed list I was told that you were suspected of want of sympathy. I expressed utter disbelief. Carlyle is no more infallible than any other, and a poor Irish Secretary may feel nervous about testifying any respect for a biographer of Cromwell; but these are considerations for feeble men without any sense of proportion. I hear the movement is not going forward as rapidly as could be wished, and Leslie Stephen and his fellow-workers are organising an afternoon meeting at the Mansion House in about the third week in February, and they want you to come and make a speech. Ripon has promised, and I am ready to go if the Lord Mayor will allow me to enter his dwelling; but your presence would be of the greatest help. Don't let me labour it any longer.

An invitation to Huxley was declined on other grounds.

From T. H. Huxley

January 23, 1895.—I asked my doctor to-day if I might go and speak at your meeting and he said *No* with a big N and an expression not complimentary to my wisdom—shared I am sorry to say by "the woman that owns me." And very sorry I am that I cannot say a word for the grand old Diogenes-Socrates who dragged me out of the mud of British *Philisterei* half a century ago.

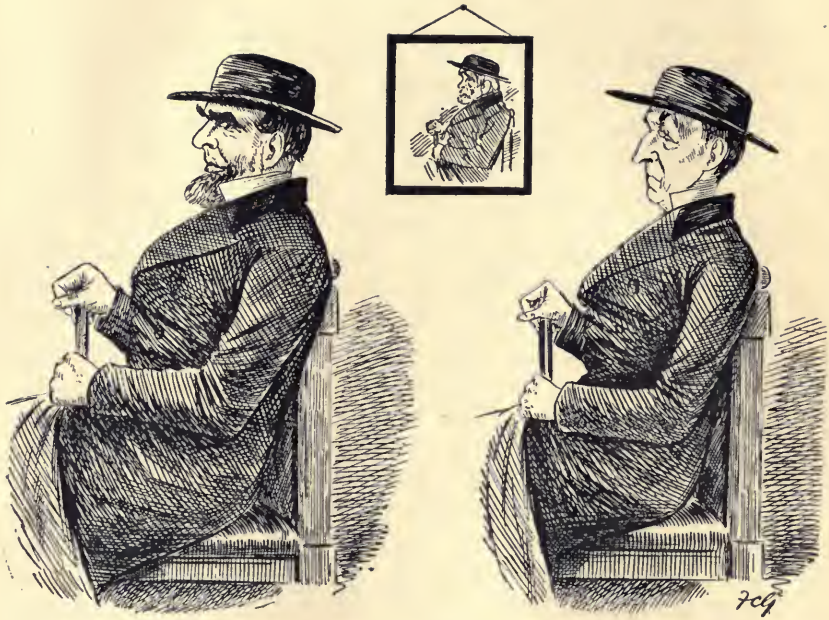
Courtney's speech at the Mansion House was described by one present as the most notable feature of the meeting, "felicitous in phrase, tender in feeling, discriminating in appreciation, and delivered with admirable ease and oratorical effect." Though sealed of the tribe of Mill and disagreeing both with Carlyle's opinions and methods of thought, he never ceased to admire the moral fervour, the piercing insight and the rugged independence of the old prophet. "Every man and woman experiences a time when the ordinary life seems to fail and a new life springs up within them, and they have their feet firmly planted in a large room and their vision and conception of the world's history undergoes a change. This is what some of us owed to him. I believe his readers increase year by year and the circle of his influence extends. Nearly forty years ago I made a pilgrimage to Craigenputtock, and more recently to Haddington. Grateful as I am to him, profoundly as I respect him, I was never his slave. In his want of sensibility to his wife and in her proud silences you see something more interesting than is to be found in any novel. Wherever manhood is respected, wherever courage and worth are honoured, wherever gratitude is felt towards one who, coming with a coal of fire to touch our lips, brings us again within the world of spirits, this movement has a claim."

On December 4, 1895, the centenary of Carlyle's birth, Courtney took part in the formal opening of the House as a museum. Mr. Morley, who was in the chair, declared

that the popular title of the Sage of Chelsea was singularly inapplicable to the old prophet and preacher; but that if he had to find a man who deserved it, he would not have far to look. The recipient of this generous tribute retained his interest in the house till his death, and was never tired of conducting friends and visitors through its rooms.

In addition to taking his share in the excursions and alarums of party politics Courtney's mind was occupied with other grave problems of national warfare. The recurrence of industrial and agricultural depression forced statesmen and economists to search for its causes and remedies; and some turned to Bimetallism as others to Protection. The contention that two metals would vary less than one was presented to the House of Commons at the beginning of the session of 1893; and the debate was rendered memorable by a brilliant rejoinder from the Prime Minister. The veteran financier argued that though gold varied, it varied less than silver, and that, though such variation affected fixed incomes and fixed charges, it concerned ordinary buying and selling in a very minor degree. His main theme, however, was the practical difficulty involved in the change. Bimetallism, he declared, would enable debtors to cheat their creditors by discharging their debts in a depreciated currency; and if such an alteration was threatened every creditor would at once insist on full repayment in gold.

The speech led Courtney to expound his views in an article entitled "Bimetallism Once More," which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* and attracted considerable attention. As a debating achievement, he began, Gladstone's performance was miraculous, and the youngest might have envied its vivacity. Its tone was rightly conservative, for changes should only be made if more injustice is involved in inaction. "I now for the first time venture to put forth some opinions of my own, not until after much hesitation, and only under the cogency of a belief that there is a serious argument worthy of being examined." He had indeed already examined it. "I was one of the six members of the



Which is the Sage of Chelsea?

To face page 310.

Gold and Silver Commission who could not recommend bimetallism, and who traced the recent fall in prices rather to causes touching the commodities than to the appreciation of gold. We added that we were far from denying that there might have been some appreciation, though we could not determine its extent. Let me make a confession. I hesitated a little about this paragraph. I thought there was perhaps more in the suggestion than my colleagues believed. I am now satisfied that the appreciation was greater than I then suspected." Turning to Gladstone's contention that gold had varied but little, he rejoins that incessant variations in its purchasing power were revealed in the index numbers. For instance between 1850 and 1864, during the gold discoveries, prices rose 30 per cent, and between 1873 and 1893 fell 30 per cent. Therefore gold, measured by its command of commodities, was not a stable standard. If the cause of variation lay in the conditions governing the production of commodities, why did the current flow so powerfully first in one direction and then in the other? In recent years we had been passing through a period of appreciation, and no one could tell how long it would last. Silver, on the other hand, had remained steady in relation to commodities, falling like them, but no faster. If gold was as unstable as silver and had hampered industry and commerce by its recent appreciation, men might well ask, Why not go back to the days before 1873 when the members of the Latin Union recognised both metals as legal tender? Accounts could then be paid in dollars or francs, pounds or rupees indifferently; for their ratio was fixed, and the variations of exchange were not beyond the narrow limits of the cost of transmitting bullion. The effects of the depreciation or appreciation of either metal were minimised, since they were diffused over the widest area. With the rupture of the bimetallic tie the ratio had changed enormously. "Five years ago I joined in deprecating any attempt to establish an international agreement for the free coinage of gold and silver. I have advanced with further experience and reflection to the belief that it is to be desired." If we adopted Bimetallism most

Powers would follow, though the fixing of the ratio might prove a difficult task.

The heretic returned to the charge at the end of the session, when Mr. Chaplin attacked the Government for sanctioning the closing of the Indian mints to the free coinage of silver. In reply Harcourt sheltered himself behind the Report of the Royal Commission of 1888, which pointed out the danger of Bimetallism in India. Courtney, who had been claimed by the opener as a recent convert, rose to correct Harcourt's statement that Lord Herschell and his colleagues had condemned Bimetallism. Ten of the twelve members were convinced of the possibility of maintaining an international ratio between gold and silver; but Bimetallism was not before them. They were simply asked whether there was any reason for rejecting the proposals of the Indian Government. As a matter of fact the Indian Government would have preferred Bimetallism, and only proposed to stop the free coinage of rupees as a *pis aller*, in order to limit the quantity and keep the ratio steady. Lord Herschell and his colleagues assented to this demand, and the fall of the rupee was arrested. Courtney's leaning to Bimetallism was shared by Mr. Balfour, and to some degree by Goschen; but most of the economists were against them, and there was little prospect of securing international co-operation. A change of such disturbing magnitude could only be made under the compulsion of bad times; and as the horizon brightened the cry died away.

A new and important task was undertaken in the spring of 1893 in accepting the invitation to preside over a Royal Commission on London Government. Among his colleagues was an old and valued friend who had sat with him on the Gold and Silver Commission.

To Lord Farrer

March 26, 1893.—I hope London will not prove as difficult as silver; but it cannot be very easy. The exact reference has not yet been given me; but I understand it is to devise a plan for bringing the City and the County Council into one, at least for larger purposes. I rejoice we are only five.

The work was congenial but laborious, for the road was encumbered by vested interests.

To Sir John Scott

February 2, 1894.—I have the London Unification Commission now in hand,—a troublesome job, the City being in temper and mind most difficult to handle, perhaps not so bad as a young Khedive. Though we, the Commissioners, may propound a fair solution, I doubt whether Parliament under any Government would soon take it up and carry it through.

The Report appeared in the early autumn of 1894 and was received with a chorus of approval. "Have you not been very proud and happy lately?" wrote Mrs. Barnett to Mrs. Courtney. "To do such a job, and to do it so wisely that all sorts say 'Well done,' is a triumph."

From Lord Farrer

October 3, 1894.—From what I heard at the L.C.C. I think you might be the first Lord Mayor of United London. I say this in spite of Bimetallism!

The Government which appointed the Commission fell before it could carry out its recommendations; and the Chairman had to wait till 1899 to reap some of the fruits of his labours. While busily engaged on the problem of London government Courtney continued his attendance at the Royal Commission on Labour, which had been appointed in 1890 under the Chairmanship of Lord Hartington and accumulated vast masses of miscellaneous information. He approached his task with a deep distrust of short cuts to reform, which was strengthened as witness after witness marched across the stage and paraded his panacea.

To Sir John Scott

February 2, 1894.—I am anxious about the future of the Poor Law. Many wild ideas are about. My attitude threatens now to give me trouble in my constituency, especially as a phrase of mine has been twisted into a charge against labourers that

their highest ambition is to get outdoor relief. This we may hope to survive; but a flabby socialism working through the machinery of the Poor Law may do infinite mischief to the nation. As to the Labour Commission, we shall have done much good work in collecting and arranging evidence, and the Report of the great majority will be full of good sense; but as it will be more negative than positive, exposing the futility of many suggestions and supporting few, it may be received with a feeling of disappointment.

The session of 1895 opened with dissolution in the air. Courtney dined with the leader of the Liberal Unionists at Devonshire House, and found some of his friends expecting the Government to be defeated on the Address. On the last day of the debate he informed the Ministers that they had exhausted their authority and should go to the country on Home Rule. If they preferred to remain in office, they should stick to humdrum legislation. The claim of the House of Commons, and especially of a feeble, uncertain majority, to represent the nation was unjustified; for the nation was represented by the two Houses jointly. If, however, the Prime Minister desired to fight on the issue of the Lords, his opponents would gladly take up the challenge. Despite this vigorous attack the support of Liberal measures in 1893 and 1894 rendered him an object of suspicion to some of his Conservative constituents. He had no complaint to make of such criticisms, to which his creed inevitably exposed its adherents; but he declined to purchase the retention of his seat by the sacrifice of a jot or tittle of independence, and made it clear that if his views were disapproved he must seek another constituency. Lord Mount Edgcumbe, though himself a critic, implored him to promise to remain, assuring him that if he would stick to the constituency his constituents would stand by him.

From Lord Mount Edgcumbe

April 18.—The arguments I should use in support of your candidature would be (1) that no one could uphold the interests of the constituency with greater ability or less self-seeking; (2) that you are as straight as a die, and make no professions

that you will not carry out; (3) that you are thoroughly staunch on Home Rule. The crossing of the stream cannot be far off, and a change of horses now would be a great misfortune, involving not only the uncertainty of finding another candidate, but probably also opening up the embittering question of whether the seat is to be regarded as Conservative or Liberal Unionist.

The correspondence was closed by a cordial letter from Cheyne Walk.

To Lord Mount Edgcumbe

April 29, 1895.—I am much obliged by your letter, which is very pleasant reading to me. I will not desert the constituency as long as, retaining the freedom I have exercised in the past, I am assured of the hearty support of your political friends. It was the uncertain or even unfriendly attitude of some of those that tempted me to consider other suggestions. I hope you will have no difficulty at your meeting. I tried to make it plain at Liskeard as well as at Plymouth and elsewhere that I claimed a continued allowance of freedom, and if the members of the Council, having my speech before them, are of your mind and spirit, there will be no thought on my part of leaving the division.

CHAPTER XV

THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR

BEFORE the session of 1895 was more than a month old an event occurred which closely concerned Courtney's fortunes, and which for a few crowded hours seemed likely to determine the remainder of his public career.

Journal

Saturday, March 9.—Leonard picks up the *Times* before going out to the Breakfast Club and reads out the startling news that the Speaker is to resign immediately, as soon as a successor can be agreed upon. Who will it be? Though it might and would be mortifying to be passed over, we do not want it. But of course there is no danger, as the *Times* leader says that some member of the Ministerial party will have that splendid post. The difficulty is that there is no obviously good name outside the Government. Inside Campbell-Bannerman is the favourite. Sir Robert Reid and Arnold Morley are also mentioned. The *Westminster Gazette* heads for Leonard, but fears the Government must have one of their own party. My feelings are very mixed, but I feel very sad at the possibility of giving up our present life. We are both ridiculously fond of our home and our freedom. "Rather like being dead and buried," said L. to Mr. Roby, who replied, "But with a splendid funeral."

The Speaker had always been chosen by the party in power from the ranks of its supporters, but in the present instance the Government had no candidate obviously qualified for the post, and the failure of Mr. Mellor, the

Chairman of Committees during the 1892 Parliament, threw into strong relief the vigorous reign of his predecessor. Moreover, though Courtney remained one of the most convinced and formidable enemies of Home Rule, he had rendered the Liberal Party valuable support with the rest of their programme. For this very reason, however, he was unacceptable to the Opposition, who confidently expected to be installed in office within a few months and naturally desired a Conservative to occupy the Chair. Under these circumstances the sudden resignation of Speaker Peel on the ground of health created a personal issue of the kind which enthrals the House of Commons and sets every tongue in the political world and in "society" wagging. The Liberal Press spoke out strongly for Courtney. "Whether chosen or not," wrote the *Daily Chronicle*, "there is only one opinion that he ought to be." The *Daily News* appealed to the undisputed fact that he had proved himself by far the best Chairman of Committees of his generation. The *Times*, on the other hand, while praising his ability, knowledge and inflexible fairness, argued that he was only a little younger than the retiring Speaker, that he could scarcely bear the burden for more than a few years, and that frequent changes in the occupancy of the Chair were undesirable. The situation developed rapidly, and there seemed every chance of a contested election for the first time since 1839.

Journal

Monday, March 11.—Lobbies and newspapers full of gossip. It soon becomes apparent that the opposition to him comes from the Conservatives, with a few Radicals. The Tory favourite is Sir Matthew White Ridley, a sensible, pleasant-tempered squire.

Tuesday.—Go to my W.L.U. Committee. I am an interesting person. All my ladies look sympathetic but say nothing. Lady Frances Balfour comes away with me. She feels sure that L. is the Ministerial choice, but warns me that there is mischief ahead among the Conservatives and that L. must not accept nomination without an understanding from the Conservative leaders that they will not oppose him in a future

Parliament. The situation is no doubt difficult, the Government with a very narrow majority, the Tory party not recognising L. as one of themselves. Mr. Chamberlain did not approve of L.'s refusal of closure and probably thinks he would be a wrong-headed Speaker.

Wednesday.—Come home from Lord Brassey's to find one word from John Morley to me. It murders sleep.

From John Morley

95 Elm Park Gardens,
March 13, '95.

Very secret.
Dear Mrs. Courtney,
Prepare.

Yours, J. M.

Thursday, March 14.—Telegram from Harcourt asking L. to come and see him in Downing Street. He says, "It may seem absurd, but I am in despair at leaving this house." Yet I see the opposition is making him tend to accept. After breakfast I go to see John Morley, who kindly told me a good deal. "The Cabinet had decided against one of their number, though C.-B. would like it." I asked if it would not be a relief to them for L. to refuse it. "No, it would put them in a great fix. They would not accept a Conservative candidate. Why should not L. take it? He was the best man, and we should get used to it and in a few months we should not mind the routine. What else will he do? Of course the Conservatives would ask him to join their next Cabinet; but would he feel comfortable among them?" I asked about the opposition to L. He said on their side it was small and would collapse directly the Government announced their decision formally. No arrangements had been come to with the Tories, but of course L. would see the Duke of Devonshire, and of course he and Chamberlain would insist on their allies behaving decently to one of their leading men.

Courtney's engagement with Harcourt was for 2 o'clock, and his first instinct was to consult his old leader. On reaching Devonshire House, however, he was informed that the Duke was closeted with Lord Salisbury and Mr. Chamberlain, and would see him later on at the House. Harcourt, as he expected, offered him the nomination and pressed for

an immediate decision, which was naturally refused. Meeting the Duke at the House he learned that the Tories would oppose now, and again in the next Parliament. "I suppose you are too impartial for them. They are getting very confident of a big majority when the election comes, and it may not be easy to form a Coalition Government. How would you like to find yourself a Viscount in three months?" The Duke was certainly not encouraging, and Chamberlain, the next friend to be consulted, merely remarked that the matter would be discussed at a meeting of the Liberal Unionist members. From Chamberlain Courtney passed to the room of the Leader of the Opposition, who did not mince matters. His candidature, declared Mr. Balfour, would be opposed by the Conservatives now, and the Opposition would probably be renewed in the next Parliament. He was shocked that he should think of such a post, when he was doing work of such value as an independent member; and he delicately hinted that he was too old for the post. After this douche of cold water he determined not to stand, and on the following morning he informed the Leader of the House of his decision.

To Sir William Harcourt

March 15.—I was getting over my first aversion in the thought that I might perhaps do some good in this office, but I find my six years' service in the subordinate Chair has not commanded general satisfaction and there would be strenuous opposition now and if necessary hereafter. In these circumstances my old feeling revives with invincible strength. I hope this will not give you much trouble; and in dismissing the subject I must again thank you for the very kind way you proposed it.

To his sister Margaret

March 16.—I told Harcourt yesterday that I could not accept his offer. There was every prospect, indeed a certainty of united Conservative opposition, and I was told also that the opposition, if unsuccessful now, would be renewed in a new Parliament. This threat might not be carried out, but one could not be sure. Accordingly I declined, and it is a great relief to us, to Kate

as much as myself, if not more—but we are both vexed at the way the relief has come. The Conservatives are very small creatures.

His decision was received with mixed feelings by his friends.

From William Rathbone (to Mrs. Courtney)

March 15.—I was very sorry to hear that Courtney had declined a contest for the Speaker's,—very sorry for the House; but for him there will be much to be said for not being buried alive in the prime of his intellect and energies which I trust may do great things for the country. Harcourt's opinion is that he was the best Chairman of the House he in his long experience had ever seen. I don't know if I told you that dining with Gladstone at Dollis Hill a few days after Courtney had called him very peremptorily to order he broke out into enthusiastic praise of his clear, quick, just judgment, firmness and impartiality; and Harcourt, whom Courtney had called to order oftener than most, entirely agreed with him. Indeed I think all our front bench agree and will be very much disappointed. A man may be too just and strong for mean men and must take the consequences which in this case will, I hope and believe, be for his happiness, usefulness and fame.

From Sir Henry James (to Mrs. Courtney)

March 20.—Your husband and I have been too long in close alliance for me not to recognise all his sterling good qualities, and his candidature would have had no sincerer supporter than myself.

From T. B. Bolitho (M.P. for West Cornwall) to Mrs. Courtney

March 20.—Thank you very much for your confidence. You must have had a trying ten days, but I can easily understand that the chief person concerned, having done that which he thought best for the interests of the House, remains calm, dignified and unsoured even by unexpected defections. Of all men in the House I know of no one so unlikely as your husband to resort to the pernicious system of lobbying. The attitude of the Conservatives is perhaps not unnatural, but if they don't

take care they will jeopardise the relations between themselves and the Liberal Unionists. I've been burning with indignation at the report that many—or even any—Liberal Unionists should be opposed to your husband. If any of our Leaders have been secretly undermining his chance, I for one am quite ready to denounce such action.

From Mrs. Meinertzhagen (to Mrs. Courtney)

I am so glad Leonard has refused to be in a *competition* for the Speakership. He ought to have it as a matter of course. That comes of helping those horrid, ungrateful Tories. You'll see they'll throw all the Liberal Unionists on one side, whenever they can stand on their legs without them. I hope the Liberals will stick to their man and not give the nomination over to the Tories. I hope they'll find Leonard less pleasant out of the Chair than he would have been in it.

From Lady Frances Balfour (to Mrs. Courtney)

I think, and have thought, and have said, that the Conservatives have made a mistake in this matter, a mistake they will pay for. Arthur could not but tell the facts to Mr. Courtney. There was opposition from all quarters of the House. I don't think he did think him the right man for the Chair, but apart from that, it was his business to find out, and I know long before the Government spoke to Mr. Courtney he was made aware that it would not be unopposed. Your husband has had his own theories as to a Chairman's duty, and it may be summed up roughly in this way, "the protection of the minority." Now we all know that when Chairman it was from this point of view he was steadily and persistently criticised. He knew it—it was matter of public comment how good-humouredly unmoved he was when made aware (say at a dinner party) of the strong feeling he had excited. He took that view of his post, and everyone respected his sticking to his views; but he never persuaded the people he was right; he only convinced them he had a strong individuality and was no respecter of persons. You must pay for individuality, and this opposition is the payment.

After receiving the condolences or congratulations of his friends for a week, Courtney once more found himself in the world's gaze. His refusal to stand had completely upset the plans of the Government, who naturally declined to

accept a Tory Speaker and had no suitable candidate of their own, since Campbell-Bannerman, who wished for the post, could not be spared. They therefore informally renewed the offer, after preparing the way by a visit from John Morley. The Chief Secretary pressed his old friend to accept, assuring him of an undivided Ministerial vote except for a handful of malcontents led by Labouchere, whose defection would be offset by Liberal Unionist support. Courtney thereupon marched off to Downing Street and promised Harcourt an answer in a day or two. His position now was that if the Liberal Unionists not only promised to vote for him if he stood but actually wished him to stand, he would accept the nomination.

To his sister Margaret

March 23.—Just a line to keep you in the running. The Government are pressing me in many ways to consent to be nominated, and so are some Liberal Unionists. The situation has moreover changed now Campbell-Bannerman is withdrawn, and the Government nevertheless will not accept White Ridley. So I wrote Chamberlain yesterday afternoon asking him to call our party together, and I would abide absolutely by their decision.

To Joseph Chamberlain

March 22.—I am much pressed to reconsider my refusal to be proposed for the Speakership. The offer is not attractive to me, though I am assured and may be inclined to believe that I could be of use in it; but the discussions and criticisms of the last ten days have produced a reaction so that I am not unwilling to accept what I am still far from coveting. I desire however to be guided by the judgment of our party. I would ask you therefore to call the Liberal Unionist members together and put the matter before them. Many things could be said and arguments used which could not perhaps be easily addressed to myself, and they (the Liberal Unionists members) would be able to determine without prejudice what is best. I am prepared to abide absolutely by their decision.

P.S.—It must not be supposed that the Government have asked me again to allow my name to be put forward, but I have reason to think that if I were ready to consent an invitation would be forthcoming.

To Joseph Chamberlain

March 24.—A complaint may be raised at the meeting of our friends to-morrow that I have thrown a great responsibility on them, without indicating upon what considerations I would have them base their decision. I hope they will decide upon public grounds alone. Any private interest or supposed private interest of mine is of the smallest importance compared with the public interests involved and must not be allowed to govern their decision. I am giving you a good deal of trouble.

The meeting of the Liberal Unionists was held on Monday, March 25; but as the notice was short the attendance was small. The meeting decided against the candidature, and in the course of the afternoon a brief telegram ("No! Leonard") announced the news to Cheyne Walk. Before walking home he despatched the news to Penzance.

To his sister Margaret

You will probably see the news in the W.M.N., but I must write a line before going home to Kate—I should be too late there. The Liberal Unionist members to-day decided unanimously against any Liberal Unionist standing in opposition to M. W. Ridley; and this ends the matter. It is a great relief to have it over.

The result of the meeting was formally communicated the same evening by its Chairman.

From Joseph Chamberlain

March 25.—A meeting of the Liberal Unionist members was held here this afternoon in accordance with your request, and your two letters were laid before them. The subject was fully discussed with sole reference to the great public interests involved, and the following resolution was unanimously passed:

That this meeting of the Liberal Unionist members of Parliament, being informed that Sir M. White Ridley will be nominated for the Speakership by their Conservative allies, is of opinion that the name of no Liberal Unionist candidate should be submitted in opposition.

In forwarding this Resolution, which was arrived at in response to your desire and is guided by the judgment of your

party, I am unanimously requested to express to you at the same time the high estimation in which you are held by all your colleagues and their sense of the patriotic spirit with which you have been ready to subordinate personal claims to wider considerations of public interest.

An unofficial account of the meeting was despatched to Chelsea the same evening.

From T. B. Bolitho (to Mrs. Courtney)

March 25.—You will have heard all about it. A small meeting, about twenty—everything said of your husband which could be desired. For the resolution all but four or five voted. Of course no good could have come of moving an amendment.

After the final decision letters of condolence and regret again poured in, from Home Rulers no less than Unionists.

From W. S. Caine (to Mrs. Courtney)

March 28.—I cannot trace the devious paths by which Mr. Courtney has been diverted from the Speakership for which he was designated by every member of the House who has the true interests of Parliament at heart; but I would like, if I may, to tell you how keenly and bitterly disappointed I am at the result, and how impossible it appears to me to find any worthy successor to Mr. Peel apart from Mr. Courtney. I believe, even in spite of the unhappy decision of the party leaders with whom he is associated, if your husband could have seen his way to accept nomination, all opposition would have faded away, and his would eventually have been the only name submitted to the House. Even if it had been otherwise, he would have been elected by a very large majority. Every member whose opinion is worth having among the Liberal party has been solidly for Mr. Courtney all along, and I wish I were able to convey to you the profound esteem and respect in which your husband is everywhere held in all quarters of the House. To me personally it will be a matter of lifelong regret that the House has lost a Speaker whose term of office would have been historic, and who I fear is the only man who could have piloted us with prosperity and dignity through the troubled waters through which we must sail in the early future. However I can only hope that Mr. Courtney is reserved for even higher service to the State.

A different view was expressed in a letter from the Manager of the *Times*, which had opposed his candidature throughout.

From C. Moberly Bell (to Mrs. Courtney)

April 3.—Rightly or wrongly I felt that your husband would be wasted as the Speaker. It is a very honourable position—of great influence in the House, but of no influence at all outside. Witness the fact that even to-day they can't decide whether Mr. Peel was a Liberal Unionist or a Gladstonian. All this is as it should be ; but people who *have* definite opinions, who do *not* vote aye or no solely according to party, are so unfortunately rare that it seems to me preposterous to choose one of those few and place him where it becomes his duty to suppress all his personal convictions.

After Courtney's second and final refusal of the nomination, the Government fell back on Mr. Gully, who, though a popular K.C. on the Northern Circuit, was said never to have spoken in the House or sat on any Committee. The final scene in the drama took place when the Commons met on April 10 to choose a new Speaker. "After Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Birrell had duly proposed and seconded Mr. Gully, and Sir John Mowbray and Mr. Wharton had done the same for Sir M. White Ridley," writes an eye-witness, Mr. Basil Williams, then a House of Commons' clerk, "the two candidates addressed the House. Mr. Gully made a fairly good speech, but Sir Matthew's was better in dignity and style. At this stage the House as a whole was evidently more in favour of Ridley ; he was much respected on all sides of the House, and on this occasion he and his proposer had made the better impression. The Liberals, too, knew so little of Gully that they could hardly be expected to feel much enthusiasm for him. At this point, however, the Liberals' backs were stiffened by an unfortunate speech of Mr. Balfour's, who attacked the Government for proposing so inexperienced a candidate, and threatened to turn him out in the next Parliament. Thereupon up leapt Sir William Harcourt in a towering passion to defend the Government's choice.

Why, in effect, he said to the Tories, have we had to make this choice? 'I will tell the House why. Mr. Gully was a second choice forced on us, because you rejected the man we had chosen'—turning round and looking to Courtney, where he sat on the third bench below the gangway—'the man who of all others is evidently fitted by his experience and his qualities for this post.'[1] This great tribute to Courtney, while it incidentally won the Government their case, made the debate end more as a triumph for the man who had refused to be put forward, since he was denied the unanimous assent of his own party, than a decision on the merits of the two actual candidates for the Chair. Courtney himself looked on grimly humorous, as was his wont, and left the House without voting."

When the battle was over the Ministerial Press gave free rein to its chagrin. The *Daily News* attributed the result to Courtney's refusal to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water for the Tory party In an article entitled "Exit Aristides," the *Westminster Gazette* explained the situation in fuller detail. "He was ruled out because the Tories opposed him and because the Liberal Unionists did not strongly support him. One heard frequent allusions to the Evicted Tenants Bill. Lord Salisbury gave us a foretaste some months ago when he ridiculed and abused him at the Queen's Hall and fell foul of his proposals for the unification of London. The fact is that he is the last of the Liberal Unionists—that is, the last of the Liberals, who, in defending the Union, have not found it necessary to throw over their Liberalism." The resentment felt by some of his Liberal friends, however, was before very long to be mitigated by the unexpected development of events. "Either Courtney or Campbell-Bannerman in my opinion would have done well," wrote Sir Wilfrid Lawson a few years later; "yet it was probably better that for one cause or another both fell through. Some years later Courtney became one of the

[1] Note by Mr. Basil Williams.—I find on referring to Hansard that Harcourt's words are not reported, on the ground that they were drowned in cheers. I was perhaps more fortunate than the reporters, as Harcourt was facing towards the part of the House where I was sitting and had his back to the reporters' gallery.

best and bravest of the Pro-Boers, whose courage in the cause of peace and justice ennobled our public life. Had either of them become Speaker we should probably have lost them from our fighting forces." [1]

Though the final result was a momentary disappointment. Aristides himself shed no tears over his fate. He was of course well aware that he was better fitted for the post by knowledge and experience than any of his competitors, and the attainment of one of the highest offices in the State would have been a new feather in the cap of the Penzance lad who owed nothing to birth or fortune. Yet he cared so little for the distinction that he twice declined the nomination which carried with it the certainty of election. The Leader of the House jocularly complained to Mr. Asquith that he was trying to get the cock to fight; but Courtney had too much respect for his own dignity to allow himself to be imposed on a dissentient minority. Though he shrewdly suspected that his cross-bench mind would continue to bar the way to Cabinet rank, he once more displayed an almost quixotic indifference to personal considerations, and he never regretted his choice

To a Correspondent

April 15.—As for the Speakership I rejoice in my freedom. I looked with something like dread at the possibility of being absorbed—swallowed up—extinguished in the duties of that office; and as I cannot doubt they will be well discharged by Mr. Gully I do not think I can reproach myself from shrinking from the submersion.

A few days later he surveyed the events of an exciting month in an address to his constituents in Liskeard. "I am better, you are better, we are all better, that the Speakership has not come to me. From the beginning I dreaded rather than desired the great post. It was not because I was afraid I should be defeated that I did not stand. I believe if I had been nominated I should have got a considerable majority. The Speaker is a great man, but in

[1] G. W. E. Russell, *Life of Sir W. Lawson*, p. 226.

regard to politics he is like the Great Llama. He stands aside. He must never discuss them. I have maintained my freedom, and at a great price. The thing I treasure above everything else is to maintain an independent seat in the House of Commons, strengthened by your affection." The lack of unanimity in the House and the preservation of his independence had been sufficient reasons for declining the glittering prize. The wisdom of his decision was questioned at the time by many of his friends, and again a few months later, when Gully was quietly reinstated in the Chair by the victorious Unionists ; but it was to be ratified in the following year by an event which it was equally impossible to forecast and to evade.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SHADOW OF IMPERIALISM

A FEW weeks after Gully was installed in the Speaker's Chair the Government was defeated on the vote for cordite. No one had expected it to live long, for the majority had steadily dwindled. Shortly before the fatal moment Harcourt had left the Chamber with the remark, " This is very flat " ; and, seeing Labouchere, he called out jocularly, " Can't you get up a crisis for us ? " So little importance was attached to the division that Courtney returned to the library after he had voted, not waiting for the announcement of the figures.[1] Lord Rosebery at once resigned a position which he bitterly described as responsibility without power, and Lord Salisbury formed a Coalition Government. It was generally expected that Courtney would be invited to join. The *Times* placed him as a matter of course in the Cabinet ; and a cartoon of F. C. G. represented a scene of musical chairs with the Prime Minister at the piano and the Member for East Cornwall amongst the few who had already found a seat. Lord Spencer and John Morley expressed their conviction that he would be offered an important post, and the latter seriously remonstrated against his anticipated reluctance to accept it. A rumour that he would receive the Post Office without Cabinet rank annoyed his family, but pleased him on the ground that no one would expect him to

[1] For the first and last time he voted without knowing what the division was about. He had been reading in the library, and, when the bell rang, asked Sir Henry James and other friends, who mischievously told him that it was nothing in particular and that he would agree with his party.

take it. He desired office even less than he had desired the Speakership; for he remained a Liberal and could hardly expect to find himself at home in a Cabinet controlled by Lord Salisbury and Joseph Chamberlain. All speculations, however, were soon set at rest by a letter from the Prime Minister.

From Lord Salisbury

June 30, 1895.—A Coalition Government is necessarily formed with some regard to the numerical proportions of the two sections on whose support it relies. Arithmetical considerations necessarily receive a weight, at least at first, which it is not pleasant to assign to them. But the four members of the Liberal Unionist party now in the Cabinet exceed the proportion which the Liberal Unionists bear to the party as a whole; and I could not at this moment go further still without running the risk of heart-burnings of perilous intensity. I have inflicted this exordium upon you in order to explain why I have been unable to offer you a place in the Cabinet, and of course it would have been idle to offer you any other. Do not understand me to be so arrogant as to assume that you would have accepted such an offer if it had been made. That would have been, and probably may be in the future, a question you will have to determine for yourself. But my own part in the matter requires thus much of defence. It seems very probable that after the General Election some revision of the arrangements now proposed may become necessary. I hope that intermediately you may not see cause to disapprove of the Government's action.

To Lord Salisbury

LISKEARD, *July* 3, 1895.—Your letter of the 30th reached me here this morning, and I write to thank you heartily for this very frank and friendly communication. Explanation was indeed scarcely necessary as I had pretty well understood how the case lay without it; but it is none the less agreeable because it confirms what I had thought. As to the future that must be allowed in great measure to take care of itself; but I think I may say with certainty that my own action will not in any degree be warped by any rankling feelings, which indeed would be wholly unjustifiable. I think you will understand me when I confess I draw some satisfaction from the fact that I have not had to consider any embarrassing proposal. I am naturally very busy here, though my friends are (I think with reason) very sanguine, and you must be busier still.

Once again Courtney fought the election on Home Rule. "The Bill," he declared in his address, "was laid aside, apparently to the complete contentment of the nation. Ireland itself has remained profoundly calm. I trust the coming elections will finally dissipate the demand for a separate Irish Legislature. It will be the duty of the Unionist Government to establish County Councils and to carry a liberally conceived Land Bill." Whatever might have been the merits of the Liberal Government it had been condemned by its congenital weakness to plough the sands, and it had succeeded in making formidable enemies. Lord Salisbury was confirmed in office by acclamation, and Courtney was re-elected by a majority of 543. To the faithful Roby, who had lost his seat, Courtney's position seemed "very inconvenient,—Liberal politics and Tory supporters, with Tory and pseudo-Liberal chiefs turning you the cold shoulder." Inconvenient though it was, compensations were not lacking, for he returned home with his declaration of independence countersigned by his constituents. The Conservatives had loyally rallied to his support, and in his speech after the poll he celebrated the triumph of non-party views over "the falsehood of extremes."

In the autumn Courtney and his wife started for a holiday in Egypt under the auspices of Sir John Scott, now Judicial Adviser to the Khedive, who had long urged his old friend to pay him a visit. He had spent a fortnight in Alexandria and Cairo on his way to India in 1875; but he now fulfilled his ambition to sail up the Nile and study the results of the British occupation in detail. The visitor paid his respects to Lord Cromer, who presented him to the young Khedive, renewed his acquaintance with Nubar, whom he had met in Paris, and heard from Slatin Pasha the story of his captivity in the Mahdi's camp and his romantic escape. After tasting the delights of Cairo he accompanied Sir John on his annual tour up the Nile to inspect the Courts of Justice and to give advice to the village magistrates. The journey embraced the rarely visited Fayum, and conversations with the village and district officials gave him an insight into the working of native institutions. Though he was now sixty-three years old, his

energy astonished his companions, and he was usually the latest to bed and the earliest to rise of the party. He met Flinders Petrie in the Tombs of the Kings, and on his return to the capital made the acquaintance of Tigrane Pasha and visited the Government's new Girls' School under the guidance of Artin Pasha, the Minister of Education. The closing days of the holiday were darkened by the ominous news of Cleveland's message and the Jameson Raid. The travellers reached home at the end of January 1896, after an absence of ten weeks.

The atmosphere of the new Parliament was tranquil enough, for the Opposition were depressed by their defeat and the Nationalists were disunited. But though the strength of the Government in the House and the country was beyond challenge, their prestige suffered a damaging blow in the first session. An ambitious Education Bill was introduced, instructing County Councils to appoint a Committee to supervise and supplement the School Board; but the proposed aid to Voluntary Schools aroused a hornet's nest. Courtney as usual sympathised with parts of the rival cases. "I am for undenominational education," he wrote in a letter to the *Times* on May 29, "but I am ready for a grant to voluntary schools." This could be done without time or trouble by a Treasury grant, and assistance from local resources could be provided by a separate Bill in the following year. If rate-aid were to be given, representatives of the community must be added to the management. At a party meeting at the Carlton Club Mr. Balfour proposed that Parliament should be adjourned in August and meet again early in January to conclude the Bill. "Only Leonard Courtney," writes an eye-witness, "lifted up his voice against what appeared to all of us an obviously absurd proposition directly we left the room."[1] Exactly a week later Mr. Balfour announced the abandonment of the Bill. The collapse was claimed as a triumph by the Opposition; but the *Daily Mail* declared that the Bill had been killed by the Unionist Member for East Cornwall.

During the Easter holidays Courtney despatched a

[1] A. Griffith-Boscawen, *Fourteen Years in Parliament*, pp. 104-5.

political bulletin to his late host in Cairo, surveying the opening work of the session and his own position in the House.

To Sir John Scott

April 15, 1896.—The Government have got their hands full in Parliament just now quite apart from foreign and colonial affairs. Their Education Bill is rather gratuitously big and provocative. I do not suppose they will be defeated on any serious detail or even humiliated ; but if the Bill is to be pushed in its entirety, it will occupy a great space of the session and yield numberless divisions. Many of its provisions are distinctly bad and unfair. Then Gerald Balfour brought in on Monday an Irish Land Bill which took him three hours to introduce, and the provisions of which are so complex and novel that even if it was submitted to a friendly Committee sitting round a table it might occupy some weeks. The character of this Bill is good, but where is the time for getting it through Parliament ? Add to these two Bills (and there are others) the Budget which comes on to-morrow night. It will probably contain a big bonus for landowners by way of alleviating rates, and if so will be hard fought. Altogether the work cut out for us between this and August is more than can be squeezed into the time ; and, though all Governments prepare more than they complete, this Government is unusually ambitious. They are perhaps relying on the broken and distracted state of the Opposition, which has hitherto been very noticeable. But the Education Bill will bind them together, although the Irish members may often support the Government. My own position in the House is not unhappy. I am indeed very much alone. I have no party nor do I try to make one ; but this perhaps adds to the attention paid to my utterances, which seem received with respect. Extreme partisans of the Government doubtless resent my criticisms, but with the members of the Government I remain on very friendly relations. Even Chamberlain, who is most apt to feel anger at any one crossing his path, has not manifested it this time ; and on Saturday I returned from my Cornish visit and speeches to dine with him. As it chanced I had to take Mrs. Chamberlain into dinner and she shewed no signs of being ruffled. She is indeed always a charming, amiable woman, and she was as simple, open, and friendly as ever ; and I should think could not have heard much the other way.

The session of 1896, and indeed the whole career of the Parliament elected in 1895, was overshadowed by foreign

affairs. In the debate on the Address, Courtney delivered the first of his many philippics against the Raid. "I heard of it with disgust, and when I learned of Dr. Jameson's defeat and surrender I gave unqualified thanks. If the Boers chose to raise their voices in singing the sixty-eighth Psalm, I should have joined with them heartily." The conduct of the Colonial Secretary received a warm testimonial. "He has saved us from a great peril, saved our character and our honour. He saw at once what was to be done and did not hesitate. His action enables me to resent the Kaiser's telegram." On his first visit to his constituents he denounced "this colossal blunder, this fatal inroad," and declared that the urgent duty of the Government was the restoration of confidence. He had been scarcely less amazed by Cleveland's message than by the raid; but Lord Salisbury had acted wisely in referring the Venezuela boundary to arbitration, and good had come out of evil.

When the first excitement over the Transvaal and Venezuela had cooled, the valley of the Nile began to claim attention. The publicly expressed desire of Gladstone and Granville to withdraw from Egypt as soon as possible had been shared by Lord Salisbury; but the Drummond Wolff Convention of 1887, providing for evacuation, was wrecked by France's objection to the clause conceding our claim to re-enter in case of need. Gladstone reiterated the demand for evacuation in 1891; but when, after the change of Government in 1892, France asked for a limit to be set to the occupation Lord Rosebery, the Foreign Secretary, refused to discuss the question. In 1895 Sir Edward Grey announced the decision of the Cabinet to regard any foreign settlement on the upper reaches of the Nile as "an unfriendly act"; and in 1896 the Coalition determined to advance the Egyptian frontier to Dongola.

When Gladstone had raised the question of evacuation in 1891 Courtney had backed up his demand. "I realise the possible danger to Egypt from quitting it prematurely," he told his constituents. "We are doing a great work there, and I should deeply regret if it was interrupted and destroyed. But if the price of the existing system is the poisoning of

the political atmosphere of Europe, we are bound to prefer the lesser to the greater evil, and let Egypt trust to herself. That, however, is not necessary. We could arrange with France for a body of international police. The peace of Europe is jeopardised by the soreness of France. Let us remove that soreness by evacuating Egypt, as Lord Salisbury attempted to do in 1887." The friction continued, and Egypt was only one of the irritants. Lord Rosebery's sentiments towards France, though by no means unfriendly, were not exactly cordial; and the change of Premiership in 1894 increased Courtney's ever-present fear of colonial complications. Desiring to reassure French opinion he appealed to Gladstone to issue a message of good-will.

From W. E. Gladstone

October 29, 1894.—I am absolutely in sympathy with the spirit of your letter; yet I feel much difficulty about the suggestion which it appears to favour. All the first years of my life were years in which a cordial understanding with France was the avowed aim of all our best and wisest statesmen, and the sentiment has not died out of my heart. I make no secret of it, and never should hesitate about expressing it, unless in the case, unhappily not an infrequent one, when any declaration, which can be made to appear gratuitous, is construed to be due to some secret and unavowed motive, and the most sinister considerations are attached to it. Naturally, after sixty-two years of public life, I have many opinions of my own on public affairs, but I find it necessary to be very reserved as to the expression of them. I fear that in such a case as this a volunteered expression on my part would be interpreted not as a contribution to national friendship and the peace of Europe but as an overture or bid towards resuming a political position. At a dinner which was given me in Paris some years ago I endeavoured to do justice to the Republic as not less qualified than any preceding Government for the discharge of international obligations. Of course I am not minutely conversant with the present state of things, but I have much confidence in Lord Kimberley's disposition and his discretion. From recollections extending over a great many years between 1863 and 1894 I have derived, of course, some diversity of impressions at one time and another, but no general mistrust or approximation to it, and on the contrary pleasing recollections of repeated indications of friendliness and fairness.

Holding such opinions Courtney naturally opposed the advance to Dongola, and he spoke and voted against the Government when Labouchere raised the question on March 16. If it meant an attempt to conquer the Sudan, he argued, it must be condemned immediately. Egypt possessed a very strong frontier at Wady Halfa. The Khalifa was weaker than the Mahdi; and nobody in Egypt was afraid of invasion. If it was to relieve the strain on Kassala and assist Italy, hundreds of miles away across the desert, that help could best be rendered through the Red Sea. "There is danger in Europe. Why lock up your forces in an absurd and fruitless attempt to recover that which is valueless? We are weakened by our position in Egypt; and to lock up our troops in the Sudan would increase our weakness." A fortnight later he returned to the question in an address to his constituents. The policy had been announced, but there was still time to prevent it going further. "When the country is once engaged, the voice of reason is hushed. If disaster occurs, it must be avenged; if success, it blots out all recollection of right and wrong. I do not desire to quit Egypt by the next mail, but to keep evacuation in view. I wish us to keep our word. Before we go we must have a European agreement on the terms of withdrawal and the organisation to be substituted. England might reserve the right of re-entry, as Lord Salisbury reserved it in 1887. I fear we have failed to bear in mind the necessity of training Egyptians to govern the country; for they are all, as it were, second-class clerks. As for the Sudan, it is a vast desert. Gordon declared it a useless possession; and it would be nothing but a burden for Egypt. If we stay in Egypt, we should get rid of the suzerainty of Turkey, educate the people, and keep the country isolated by the desert."

Courtney's voice carried further than that of most Ministers and ex-Ministers; and when Lord Rosebery criticised his opinions at the Colchester Oyster Feast in the autumn, he addressed a powerful letter to the *Times*. "Lord Rosebery is afflicted by the Armenian horrors. We have a right to interfere; but we are distrusted if not detested by

every European Power, and we are weak with our swollen Empire. The weary Titan has become a Falstaff, gorged beyond digestion, incapable of action. Why are we so distrusted and detested? What have we been doing the last twenty years? Snatching at continents, pegging out claims, interfering as missionaries of order and peace and then settling down in permanent possession; in short, making up those two and a half million square miles of undigested Empire which satisfy so powerfully the Imperialistic instinct and reduce us to abject impotence. Mr. Gladstone may talk of self-denying ordinances; but could those be trusted at Constantinople who have not been able to prove themselves trustworthy at Cairo? Is there no way of setting ourselves right with the rest of civilised Europe, of proving our sincerity by act as well as word? We might surrender Cyprus—not restoring it to Turkey but making it a ward of Europe under a prince. But the real key to the situation is Egypt. We must exchange our exclusive control for an international settlement. This transfer has been rendered infinitely more difficult by recent operations in the Sudan; but unless and until it is done we cannot claim the trust of other Powers, we cannot resent their sneers at our sincerity, we cannot hope for co-operation in any part of the East. If Lord Salisbury would intimate his readiness for a conference on the international settlement of Egypt, the difficulties in the way of enforcing order at Constantinople and stopping murder and outrage elsewhere would disappear. Never before has an ex-Prime Minister proclaimed our incapacity in the face of Europe. No Little Englander has ever humiliated his country like that. Such is the triumph of the Imperial spirit! Such is statesmanship!" When critics of the letter rejoined in the *Times* that the Powers did not want us to leave Egypt, he retorted that in that case Europe could make us its mandatory.

The summer of 1896 forms a dark landmark in Courtney's life.

Journal.

May 20.—Queen's Birthday. Leonard dined with Arthur Balfour and joined me afterwards at the Foreign Office. He

complained he could not see who people were ; had found reading a difficulty the day before. Thursday came home from the House and said it was no use his going back as he could do and say nothing, not being able to read the amendments.

May 21.—Leonard goes to Nettleship to get new glasses and came away much depressed. There is serious trouble in his right eye, the only one with which he could see near objects well. Nettleship would give no opinion at present as to recovery, but advised him to go away to the country, take some anti-gout medicine, and see what complete rest would do.

May 28.—L. again to Nettleship ; he would not let me go with him. Came back very gloomy. It was difficult to extract from him exactly what Nettleship had said ; but the impression was that substantial recovery of sight was unlikely. We were both very sad ; but these three days at home wholly alone, struggling with our fate, will always be a sacred and partly a sweet memory to me on account of his deep feeling and confidence in me.

References to eye trouble are found as early as the 'fifties. In her recollections of the young Don at Cambridge Mrs. Bushell recalls " a look of weakness in the eyes." " Let me inquire particularly about your eyes," wrote Dr. Willan in 1859. " I shall not post this till I have ascertained at your house that you are allowed to read and write again. Pray avoid all candle-light reading." The trouble, however, passed away, and he read and wrote as much as any man of his time. His health was magnificent ; and when the blow fell in 1896 it came as a thunderclap. Friends and relations hastened forward with comfort and counsel. Roby offered to accompany him to Wiesbaden. Mr. Stebbing declared that even if the worst happened his public career might gain more than it lost, since he would win in sympathy what he lost in the power of acquiring information. Mrs. Sidney Webb implored him to make any sacrifices necessary to recovery, since his great capacity for the " Higher Criticism " of politics could ill be spared. " I am so very, very sorry," wrote Sir John Scott to Mrs. Courtney. " I wonder if all the glare of Upper Egypt did harm. I used to be anxious sometimes, but he always seemed a colossus of strength. I trust that with immediate and complete rest it will all come

right again. But even a temporary privation of the use of his eyes must be a terrible blow. He does such excellent service in his independent position. Honour in foreign politics and good sense and moderation in home affairs have been his two aims."

Postponing his departure for Wiesbaden till the summer holidays, Courtney determined to continue his work as usual, and spoke once or twice in the House. His most important engagement was to preside at the Cobden Club dinner at Greenwich on the jubilee of the repeal of the Corn Laws. He dictated full notes to his wife, who was prevented from accompanying him; but his sister, Mrs. Oliver, sat by his side, ready to aid. His speech delighted the large number of foreign guests and was described by Sir Charles Dilke as magnificent.[1] It was a great encouragement to find that he could deliver an hour's address without notes and without prompting.

The withdrawal of the Education Bill brought the end of the session within sight, and early in July he left home to consult Pagenstecher. He was urged to enter the Klinik and undergo a course of treatment. The next two months were monotonous but not unpleasant. Friends came and went, including Sir William Harcourt and Sir John Scott, Mrs. Fawcett and Moberly Bell. His wife read him the *Times* in the morning and more nourishing fare at night. The patient dictated his address as President of the Economic Section of the British Association, in which he reiterated his emphatic conviction of the essential soundness of the doctrines and spirit of the classical economists, and once again proclaimed that society could only be reformed by a blend of individual self-reliance and voluntary association. Frequent bulletins were despatched to anxious friends who wrote to encourage and condole.

From Mrs. Fawcett (to Mrs. Courtney)

August 3, 1896.—I am feeling so much for you both in your disappointment about the effect of the Wiesbaden treatment. Actual misfortune, however severe, always seems to me less hard

[1] Published in the volume, *Cobden and the Jubilee of Free Trade*, 1896.

to bear than continued suspense and growing discouragement, because there is something in an actual misfortune which calls out the courage necessary to bear it. Therefore I feel that even if the worst which you fear should happen, the present is your saddest time, and Mr. Courtney's too. If he should lose his sight altogether, he will have the courage to make the most and the happiest of his life and years. Harry always told me his worst time was when there were hopes still held out to him that his sight might be restored.

From Sir John Scott (to Mrs. Courtney)

NAUHEIM.—I wanted to tell you how glad I am to have seen you and Leonard. I had thought of so much worse things and I am really relieved to a certain extent. Yet it is a wonderful pity, and I am pagan enough to wish the blow had fallen on less essentially useful persons. His force hitherto has lain in his great knowledge and principles supported by a marvellous grasp of detail. The latter will have to slide a little.

From A. J. Mundella

August 27, 1896.—I know it will be a trouble to you if ultimately you are unable "to tear the heart out of a book"; but, my dear friend, you know so much already that under any circumstances you will always know more than anybody else, Gladstone perhaps excepted. If you are content to give more of your own thoughts to others (as in your Education letter) at the expense of reading less of the thoughts of other men, the world will be the gainer and your own honour "moult no feather." You remember the night on the Treasury bench when I and Henry James ran away from Gladstone's interrogations. I referred him to you, telling him "Courtney is a walking encyclopedia; he knows everything," and so we left you together. The old man has left us and you are left alone the sole depository of all the knowledge that is worth knowing, and you have still another pair of eyes and hands lovingly, devotedly, at your service. May God long preserve them to you, and may you long be preserved to each other! I have an abiding conviction that your work in the future will be higher and better than all you have done in the past, and I am sure it will have greater weight and influence with your fellow-countrymen.

Throughout the summer hope alternated with disappointment. Pagenstecher declared that there was no danger of total blindness ; but he could hold out little hope of improvement or of ability to read. After two months' treatment a fortnight's rest was prescribed and was spent at Königstein in the Taunus. On his return the oculist announced that he could do no more. The inflammation was gone and the sight improved, but reading was still impossible. One of the last letters from Wiesbaden was written to the friend whose understanding sympathy had been a very present help in time of trouble.

To Mrs. Fawcett

October 8.—We are sending you back by post *The Oxford Reformers*. My wife has read it to me to our great pleasure. It presents a beautiful view of some detached characters moving about among the general vice and cruelty of Europe. The affectionate side of Erasmus is brought out much more than in Froude's edition of the Letters. I think we may have to go on to the *Cloister and the Hearth* if it is in Tauchnitz. My condition has been a little improved but not very much. I am perhaps more independent in general conduct, but for reading and writing have to depend completely upon Kate. Good-bye, dear Mrs. Fawcett. Our united love to you. It was most good of you to come here.

The travellers reached home in the middle of October after an exile of three months. Courtney was now aware that he would never read again ; but he determined that his terrible affliction should not interfere either with his public activities or his personal happiness. " Inability to read and write would have made a recluse and a misanthrope of many men with his gifts and likings," writes Mr. Stebbing ; " but it changed and seemed to affect none of his. Secretaries, whose aid to him was most zealously rendered, were hands and eyes. He needed and would accept no aid to guide his feet. He criticised with keen zest paintings and etchings. Remains of sight told him more than most men's sharpest vision. And withal the joy in the rays he kept ! Only let it not be thought that the privation marks

an abyss blocking a career, or even a start afresh. It was the same Leonard Courtney before and after—if not a little more heroically himself." A secretary to help with the morning's work was found in Leo Amery, a brilliant young Oxford scholar, in whom the old statesman discovered the quick intelligence and knowledge of current politics that he needed. With his aid he prepared an address on the American Presidential Election which was afterwards published in the *Nineteenth Century*.[1]

Courtney's treatment of Bryan's whirlwind campaign offers a good illustration of his intellectual characteristics. The unanimity and fervour with which the silver champion was denounced produced not conviction but reaction, and prompted him to independent study of the issues involved. "When we remember that the defeated minority were American citizens and amounted to a large minority, doubt arises whether they could have been so reckless, so anarchical, and so unrighteous as has been suggested." Dealing first with the popular notion that the fight was between bimetallist heretics and champions of the gold standard, he points out that the Republicans desired to reach bimetallism through co-operation with other nations, while the Democrats declined to wait. Both, therefore, were for the dual standard; and if the Republicans were insincere, at any rate they thought it necessary to pose. In the second place the Democrats were only asking for a return to the practice before 1873, when silver was freely coined into dollars and was recognised as legal tender. Silver dollars already in circulation had remained legal tender, and the proposal to revert to free coinage was no greater crime than to demand the reopening of the Indian mints. The argument that debts contracted in gold since 1873 would be payable in silver was deliberately misleading, since the Constitution nullified in advance legislation altering pre-existing contracts. A nation could not be forbidden to reverse a false step. Many friends of gold in England now admitted the mistake of demonetising silver in France, Germany and the United States; and Everett's Resolution of February 1895

[1] January 1897.

in the House of Commons, expressing increasing apprehension at the constant fluctuations and growing divergence in the relative value of gold and silver, and urging the summoning of an international conference, had been accepted by the Government. Free silver, moreover, though the chief plank in the Democratic programme, was far from being the only one. "The Republican platform was an appeal to some of the worst tendencies of American democracy and a defence of one of the most unequal and unjust systems of taxation. Protection and jingoism were rampant all along the line." The Democrats stood for Free Trade—tariff for revenue only—and for income tax, and against trusts and monopolies. The Republican victory was largely the result of the conservatism of ignorance, and gave no cause for rejoicing.

The session of 1897 began early in January in order to deal with the relief of Voluntary Schools before the close of the financial year. The Bill granting 5s. per head was met by an amendment, moved by Mr. Lloyd George, for the representation of local authorities or parents on the management of schools receiving the relief. Courtney supported both the grant and the amendment. Why should the Government, he asked, shrink from this principle? Did Mr. Balfour himself approve of it or did he not? When the Leader of the House refused to reply, remarking that its acceptance would make a new Bill and open the way to a flood of amendments, he rejoined that the matter could have been and could still be arranged by an understanding. It must and will come, he added; if not now, then in a subsequent measure. The prophecy was to be fulfilled some years later; and the Government preferred to meet their critics by promising another Bill to assist the poorer Board Schools.

The second important project of the session was the Workmen's Compensation Bill, introduced by the Home Secretary, Sir Matthew White Ridley, but in reality the work of Chamberlain, who seized the rudder on all critical occasions. The measure was disliked by large employers on both sides of the House; and it was obvious that agriculture

and other excepted trades would have to be included later. The Colonial Secretary did his best to minimise the effect of his proposals; and despite open revolt and secret discontent they passed through the Lower House with little alteration. Lord Londonderry and Lord Dudley, the spokesmen of the coal-owners, showed their teeth in the Upper House; but the Birmingham influence was too formidable to resist. Courtney was convinced that the measure would have had no chance if introduced by a Liberal Government; but it aroused no enthusiasm in his breast. "Its worst fault," he wrote, "is that it is an illustration of the general sentiment creating pecuniary responsibilities when no moral obligation is recognised, and thus, at least for a time, corrupting moral standards and developing predatory instincts. In the end the new burden will come to be calculated as a trade charge, and the judgement on the bill must depend on its effect on the moral character of workmen."

At the beginning of the session a debate on Woman's Suffrage excited more interest than it had done for many years; for the Second Reading of a Private Member's Bill was carried for the first time. A bulletin was promptly despatched to Mrs. Fawcett, who was far away in Athens.

Mrs. Courtney to Mrs. Fawcett

February 12, 1897.—The speaking was very bad except George Wyndham. Jebb was good, but somehow the House was tired and talked, and I was getting very sad that Leonard never came in from his Indian Committee, as he said he should leave the talk to the younger men. Then Harcourt got up and made one of his most pompous speeches; but it was so much better in style and voice that I feared it would have influence over the fluid-minded, of whom every one said there were so many. However, Leonard got in ten minutes and put on his most impressive manner, which I think was as good as Harcourt's. We feared the Closure Division would have defeated us and no one seemed to know how it would go. The Speaker told me he thought we should have lost. So you may imagine our joy and astonishment at the result. As to the future it is not likely to go much further.

The main interest of the session of 1897, as of 1896, was in foreign affairs. The Cretan revolt flamed into a Greco-Turkish war, in regard to which British opinion was divided. Though the Prime Minister frankly confessed that in the Crimean War we had put our money on the wrong horse, there was still a good deal of Turcophil sentiment in society and the clubs. Courtney's sympathies were naturally with Greece, and he believed that Lord Salisbury, who was no friend of the Turk, might have gained more than autonomy. Crete, he declared to his constituents in April, had a right to join Greece. Italy and perhaps France would have joined us in insisting on her severance from Turkey, even if Russia, Germany and Austria had stood aloof. The Concert was paralysed and Great Britain should act without it.

A more prolonged excitement was afforded by the Committee on the Jameson Raid. The Cape Parliament had already held an inquiry into the conduct of Rhodes, who, it reported, was thoroughly acquainted with the preparations but did not order or approve the Raid at that particular moment. Since Rhodes accepted the Cape Report the main duty of the Committee which met on January 16 was to institute a searching investigation into the relations of the Colonial Office with the Chartered Company and Johannesburg; but this was precisely what it omitted to do. Its proceedings were followed by Courtney, who had specialised in South African politics for twenty years, with strained attention. "On the first day Rhodes was a very bad witness, confused, uncertain, shifty," he wrote on the conclusion of the drama;[1] "but on the second he seemed to have recovered himself, to have measured his enemies, and to be rather the master of the Committee than their subject. Harcourt's style of examination was pompous and ineffective. Blake proved the most efficient member for purposes of examination. Labouchere did injury to the cause he desired to serve. On the other side Hicks-Beach was ready and direct in his questions, while Chamberlain astonished his friends by his imprudences.

[1] In the *Journal*.

George Wyndham shewed a singular personal devotion to Rhodes throughout. Jackson, the Chairman, was ill at the commencement, and never got a proper mastery of the work." The Committee completed the evidence by Whitsuntide; but after the recess it recalled Flora Shaw, whose interchange of telegrams with Rhodes and Rutherfoord Harris, the Secretary of the Chartered Company, appeared to connect the Colonial Secretary with the Raid. Suspicion was increased when it was announced that the Committee could neither secure the attendance of Rutherfoord Harris nor find out where he was, and that Mr. Hawksley, the solicitor to the Chartered Company, possessed some telegrams which he refused to produce. Edward Blake withdrew in disgust, while Labouchere drew up a Report declaring that inquiry was fruitless owing to the refusal of information, and regretting that the alleged complicity of the Colonial Office was not disproved by searching examination. The Majority Report sharply condemned Rhodes, but pronounced that neither the Colonial Secretary nor any of his subordinate officials had any knowledge of the Raid.

On the publication of the Report Sir Wilfrid Lawson at once asked for a day for its discussion, to which Mr. Balfour replied that no useful purpose would be served. Labouchere therefore attempted to raise the question of privilege. Since Mr. Hawksley had refused documents demanded by the Committee, was not any member entitled to move that he should be brought to the bar of the House? The Speaker replied that there was no precedent for such a course and that the Committee had not urged it. Courtney then asked whether there was any precedent for a Committee neglecting to make such a demand under such peculiar conditions, and whether the House had lost its privilege merely because the Committee had failed to do its duty. It looked as if there would be no debate; but Arnold-Forster rose to demand a full discussion, attacking Rhodes, "who has lighted a brand which will probably flame for another century," and condemning the Report. Mr. Balfour angrily rejoined that if a debate was desired why did not the Opposition demand it? Harcourt had now no choice but to ask for a day,

which was promptly granted, and Philip Stanhope gave notice of a resolution regretting the inconclusive action and report of the Select Committee and ordering Hawksley to attend the House and produce the telegrams.

The sensational feature of the debate on July 26 was Chamberlain's confession that in signing the Report he had gone further than he wished in order to secure unanimity, and that Rhodes had done nothing inconsistent with his personal honour. The cowardice of the Committee was fiercely denounced by Labouchere ; but by general consent the most impressive utterance was that of Leonard Courtney. After warmly acquitting Chamberlain of any complicity in the designs or actions of Jameson or Rhodes,[1] he denounced the Committee for its failure to make his innocence clear beyond cavil. Rhodes had deceived every one from first to last, and was indeed steeped in deceit. He was still open to a prosecution both in England and South Africa ; but there were also duties for the Government and the House to perform. " It is necessary that we should clear ourselves absolutely of the past. If you wish to establish the reputation of this country, if you wish to make unsullied the honour of our statesmen, you ought to shew that in the judgement of this House and of this nation it is not to be tolerated that his name should remain on the Privy Council." The second task was to summon Mr. Hawksley to the bar and compel the production of the missing telegrams. " We can then face the world with the consciousness that no ground of suspicion has remained unexplored and no attack has been made which has not met with exposure. I maintain my full conviction of the innocence of the Colonial Secretary ; but I am bound to say that his own acts and the action of the Committee were calculated to encourage the suspicion of those who have not the knowledge of his character that we possess. Surely a great error in judgement has been committed. It may be that this Resolution will be defeated by a large majority (Ministerial cheers). That will not affect the

[1] George Wyndham told Wilfrid Blunt that Chamberlain was " in with Jameson and Rhodes " in regard to the Raid.—Blunt, *Diaries*, i. 279.

judgement of posterity (Opposition cheers). Nor will it affect my judgement (ironical cheers). Nor will it affect the judgement of millions of your fellow-countrymen here (Opposition cheers). Nor will it affect the judgement of those foreigners abroad (Ministerial laughter) of whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaks with British contempt. If one has the pain of isolation, one may at least have something of its reward and freedom. I for my part shall have no hesitation, whatever the numbers against me, in going into the Lobby in support of the motion" (Opposition cheers and Ministerial ironical laughter). The motion was lost by 304 to 77 and Courtney's advice was rejected; but a bad day's work had been done for the fame of the British Empire and for the peace of South Africa.

Journal

I sat in Mrs. Gully's gallery, and a very exciting evening it was. She had labelled the seats so that wives whose husbands were making strong speeches against each other should not sit together. I was between Mrs. Asquith and Mrs. Labouchere. The former was loud in praise of L., and Lady Frances Balfour spoke of it as his greatest effort this session. Anyhow it simply infuriated Chamberlain, who made a very clever and biting speech, turning almost entirely to L. and hissing out his words at him almost like a snake. And yet I thought L. rather unnecessarily proclaimed his conviction of his entire innocence. I neither believe nor disbelieve.

The power and sincerity of the speech impressed even those who disagreed with his line of argument.

From Sir James Knowles

August 4.—I cannot be writing to you and not say what I have been saying everywhere. It was the first speech I have heard for many years in the House of Commons. It did me good to hear it, as shewing that real and passionate oratory is not after all extinct there as, since the great speeches of Gladstone, I had come to think. And what I felt others felt also, *e.g.* Austen Chamberlain. Neither he nor I shared your point of view; but that had nothing to do with our delighted admiration.

At the close of the session Courtney set off for a second sojourn in Pagenstecher's Klinik; and early in September he was informed that nothing more could be done for him. There was no danger of the sight growing worse, and with time it might possibly improve. He was rewarded for his internment at Wiesbaden by one of the most interesting holidays of his life. Travelling by Vienna, where he saw Goluchowski, the Foreign Minister, and Lavino, the celebrated correspondent of the *Times*, he took ship at Trieste for Patras, among his fellow-passengers being Count Burian, the newly-appointed Minister to Greece. At Athens he entrusted himself to the keeping of his friend Sir Edwin Egerton, the British Minister. His first visit was to the King, who was residing at his country home at Tatoi. The war was over, but the defeated country was still rocking on its foundations.

Journal (*dictated*)

He spoke fluently in good familiar English, wrong accents shewing that he was a foreigner but rarely at a loss for a word. "You have come at a very grave time," he began; and for some time he allowed no opportunity of interjecting an observation, so full was he of the situation. It was rather a monotonous complaint that the Greeks had no friends. Everybody else had had friends and protectors—Bulgarians, Serbians, Turks. Even in Crete nothing was done, though everything had been promised. During the thirty odd years of his reign there had been almost annually disturbances in Crete, and Greece always suffered. Now they were overwhelmed with Thessalian refugees. The burden was terrible. They had never been consulted about the negotiations, and he did not know whether the Assembly would accept the treaty. He shewed great feeling against Germany and said it was all very well giving way to her; but that might produce constantly increasing demands and a worse situation in the long run. I spoke soothingly of the popular feeling in England and expressed my belief that there was also much sympathy in France, though she had unhappily got lost in the alliance. He replied that Hanotaux had threatened that even Crete could not be free. I said that if the Powers went back in respect of Crete they would be dishonoured, and I told him that I had spoken myself on the duty of insisting on Cretan independence. He said he had told Dilke all his views in Paris last year, and expressed a high opinion

of his knowledge and experience. I said it was a loss that he could not be in a responsible position. The conversation then reverted to more ordinary matters, such as his vineyards. At last I said, Your Majesty is giving me a good deal of your time. Presently he rose. Passing a bookshelf in the corridor he put his hand upon a volume and said, "Here is Dilke's book." I ventured to ask whether he saw the *Nineteenth Century*. He said he had it regularly. I said the last number had an article of mine. "I shall read it with more interest after seeing you," he replied; and so with mutual thanks we parted.

A day or two later the traveller visited Skoloudis, the Foreign Minister, who remarked that they were all very grateful for what he had said and done on behalf of Greece. "I was a little surprised, and answered that I had said little and done less, to which he replied it had all been observed and welcomed. He thought the Balkan question could be settled if an honest broker intervened. If such an arbiter went to the different States and found out the pretensions of each he might make a distribution which would be accepted by all. Mr. Gladstone had once thrown out the idea of a Balkan Confederation, and he thought it might be accomplished. I replied that in my opinion the Cretan question should be severed absolutely from the Balkan, and that I was prepared as the price of liberating Crete to concur in action preventing for some time at least any movement in the Balkans. He assented, saying that the Balkan solution he was thinking of might be a matter of ten or twenty years." His next visit was to Ralli, who had taken office in order to make peace. The Prime Minister, who impressed him as a clear-sighted and energetic man, complained of the terrible treaty. "How Great Britain could have assented to and indeed suggested the Control was inexplicable. I observed that it might be a light or a heavy matter. If the required payments were punctually made, it would practically do nothing. He said, No! No! the Control has a right to participation in all excess values; consequently whether revenues can be increased or expenses cut down are matters for it, and the leading voice will come from Germany. One or two Powers have already intimated

a doubt whether they would send representatives. England is comparatively indifferent. Such constant and pervading interference will be worse than the occupation of Thessaly." On the following day the Chamber met to discuss the treaty, and the British Philhellene watched the proceedings from the Diplomatic tribune, with the Legation interpreter at his elbow. The Chamber was quiet and orderly, but after his departure Delyannis carried a vote of no confidence in his successors, and Zaimis was at once installed in office. He had formed a pleasant impression of the Greeks, and carried home a deeper knowledge of Greek politics than Lord Salisbury himself possessed.

On his return he delivered an address to his constituents, warmly defending the cause of Greece. " I found in Athens a sober people, grave, self-restrained, though discouraged and cured of any flightiness. I attended the National Assembly, which had to consider the terms of peace agreed upon by the Powers, and I never saw a more business-like or orderly body." It was said they deserved their fate. He, at any rate, should not condemn them, for they saw their brothers across a few miles of sea subject to the tyranny from which they had escaped. The Cretan question was but part of the great drama of the Near East. Though it might not be free to-morrow, the day of its liberation could not be delayed. Lord Salisbury ought to have plainly told the other Powers that the island was ripe for freedom and asked them to join in informing the Sultan of their decision. The invitation might have been rejected, and he did not blame the Prime Minister, who had secured complete autonomy, and had saved Greece from the loss of territory. The Greeks had been defeated by the Turkish armies, but they had won liberty for their brothers by their magnificent imprudence.

From Herbert Paul

October 29, 1897.—I cannot resist the pleasure of expressing my hearty admiration for your noble speech at Torpoint. Nothing has disgusted me more in the whole of this latest phase of the eternal Eastern Question than the new, and what used to be considered un-English, habit of kicking people when they are

down. Your splendid vindication of the Greeks will be read all over Europe, and will do something to redeem the honour of British statesmanship. I only wish the leaders of our own party had spoken out with equal wisdom and courage.

Courtney's independent speeches on Education and South Africa, Egypt and Greece, made his political position a theme of lively discussion in the Press. Unionists naturally resented the activities of the candid friend. "If he would only rejoin the Radicals," sneered Colonel Saunderson, "I should always be sure of meeting him in the Unionist lobby." The *Daily Mail*, in one of its Letters to Leaders, called him an umpire who always gave his own side out. The Liberal Press, not less naturally, was loud in his praises. "When Mr. Samuel Whitbread retired," wrote the *Echo* in a character sketch, "his place as the *vir pietate gravis* of the House was at once taken by Leonard Courtney. He has become its most useful member." The *Daily Chronicle*, then at the zenith of its influence under the guidance of Mr. Massingham, issued something like a formal invitation to rejoin his old comrades. "We gain more from him of solid reasoning, ample information and a certain large and luminous view than from any other public man. One might say of him what Gladstone said of Mill, that he is the conscience of the House of Commons. We know of no one who so adequately fills the position in public life formerly occupied by Mill. He is always determined to look all round every question, and he will not be put off by claptrap or rhetoric, by class or even national bias. If occasionally he conveys the impression of lecturing the House or being righteous overmuch, that is a pardonable attitude for a trained intellect and a resolute character. He cannot be altogether happy with his present associates. He is Liberal in every fibre of his moral being. We could not name any public man on the Liberal side, unless it be Mr. Morley, who is a better representative of all that Liberalism means and has meant to the world. Will he not join the Liberal party?" The growing severance from the Coalition was felt no less in Cheyne Walk than in Fleet Street. "Unless Gerald Balfour's forthcoming Irish Local Government Bill

pulls him into work with the Unionist party," wrote his wife in her Journal, "it seems to me he must get more separated. However, the only thing is to take every event as it comes."

The Irish Bill of 1898, which Courtney had demanded for nearly twenty years, contained no provision for proportional representation, but in all other respects it secured his approval and active support. An amendment to the Address demanding a Catholic University provided a fresh opportunity for displaying his sympathy with every Irish demand save Home Rule. He had hoped that Trinity College would be frequented by Catholics after Fawcett's Bill had thrown it completely open in 1873; but he had been disappointed. He regretted equally that the Queen's Colleges had been condemned by the Church. He was still a friend of undenominational education; but he was ready to support a University for Catholics in which non-Catholics were permitted to study, to win prizes or to sit on the governing body. Such a scheme, he believed, could be carried. It was sound advice; and in solving the problem more than twenty years later Mr. Birrell followed the course he had marked out. While, however, he recognised the justice of the claim to a University which Catholics could frequent with the full approval of the Church, he declined to accept the verdict of the Childers Commission that Ireland was overtaxed, bluntly remarking that the excessive consumption of spirits, to which the apparent injustice was due, was entirely her own choice.

While the legislative harvest of the session of 1898 secured his approval, Courtney was filled with apprehension by the thunder-clouds gathering in different parts of the world, and by the growth of an ugly temper in the British Isles. A storm of anger broke out when Russia seized Port Arthur, and Lord Salisbury was fiercely denounced in the Press for taking no steps to restrain Russian aggression. Though condemning the annexation of Wei-hai-Wei, Courtney as usual defended the Prime Minister against his mutinous pack; but he argued that the solution of the Far Eastern question was to be found not in land-grabbing,

but in an international compact for free trade and the open door—a policy of wisdom soon to be proclaimed from the housetops by Secretary Hay. What might have happened had Port Arthur been in the sphere of the Colonial Office was too terrible to contemplate. Though the danger of war with Russia was averted by the self-control of the Prime Minister, who was also Foreign Secretary, colonial expansion in Africa had led to continued friction with France, and in the spring of 1898 a crisis seemed to be at hand.

Journal

March.—Everywhere one hears talk of war. Mr. C. is a terrible man for Colonial Secretary just now. "Pushful Joe," as the *Westminster* calls him. Some weeks ago he sent the press and the public into excitement over the West African hinterland, reading some telegrams in theatrical style the last thing one evening in the House. And I fear he has captured a good section of the press. Lord Salisbury calmed us all down by a pretty straight denial of tension with France; but the general feeling does not stamp on this folly, and a good many of the Liberal papers and members carp at all concessions. Those who do see the other side of the picture are fearful of precipitating what they dread by words which may deceive France as to the feeling of the Government and perhaps the nation. John Morley came to consult L. before speaking at Leicester, which he did strongly and very wisely.

Courtney uttered a vigorous protest against the rising tide of jingoism in addressing his constituents during the Easter recess. "I believe there is no danger of war with Russia," he began; "but there has been real danger of war with France. Complaints have been made of late that she has been unfriendly in Siam, Tunis, Madagascar, Newfoundland, and elsewhere, and people complain that Lord Salisbury is too yielding to her. I have a very high opinion of him. He has a large spirit, equable temper and great experience, and nobody could replace him. Serious men in London have been occupied with the thought that we may find ourselves at war about the west coast of Africa. France and ourselves may without boasting say we are the

most prominent civilised nations of the world, though perhaps the United States shows greater promise for the future. Would it not be a terrible scandal if we should find ourselves at war unless there is some really substantial ground of complaint? Sierra Leone is a death-trap and the trade of West Africa is a trifle. As the result of the scramble for Africa the doctrine of Hinterland has arisen and the frontiers have got mixed up. A Commission has been sitting in Paris, and has made progress; but there is a danger lest some energetic agent on the spot should start a conflagration. If the Commission fails to agree, why not submit the disputed issue to arbitration?"

While British and French Hotspurs were spitting fire at each other, war broke out between Spain and the United States. When the *Maine* was destroyed in the harbour of Havana, Courtney was invited to state his views in the *Daily Chronicle*, and vainly attempted to pour oil on the raging waters. There was absolutely no reason for war, he pointed out; for Spain had changed her Ministry, and had promised autonomy to Cuba. He did not for a moment believe that the *Maine* had been blown up, and the cause of the occurrence should be impartially determined. Similar appeals to reason were made by eminent American citizens of the type of Charles Eliot Norton; but the fate of the *Maine* set the passions of the Republic ablaze. The conflict was soon over, and at the end of August he was pressed by an American journal (*The Independent*) to express his opinion on the result. In impressive tones he warns his trans-atlantic readers against the foundation of an overseas Empire and the allurements of Imperialism. "I recognise the sympathy which called for the use of force to end mis-government in Cuba. But if the United States are in no danger of attack and contemplate war only as the fulfilment of the obligation of the strong to succour the weak, nothing which has occurred during the last six months should provoke men to depart from the standing policy of the Republic. The conquest of the Philippines leads people to say that something must be kept for the sake of American commerce in the Pacific. The crusading spirit has vanished, and the

Imperialist has taken the place of the Liberator. There is no need of overseas territory for an overflowing population. 'The pity on't' is the final feeling of a friendly Englishman musing over the possible outcome of the Cuban War. But I do not yet abandon hope of a renunciation of the greed of conquest, making the Republic an example of self-restraint."

Among the crowding events of the summer of 1898 was the Tsar's Rescript on disarmament, issued while Courtney was holiday-making in the Tirol. His first speech to his constituents after his return was devoted to a warm welcome to the proposal which had arrested the attention of the world. "The secret if not the spoken question of many men is, Who can believe in the sincerity of the Tsar? Can anything good come out of Russia? I have no difficulty in accepting his action as sincere. Alexander I. conceived the idea of establishing among the monarchs of Europe the bonds of perpetual peace. Alexander II. emancipated the serfs. Alexander III. kept the peace unbroken. Any one who detects mere selfishness, a mere attempt to overreach other nations in the act of Nicholas II. is blind. Whether practicable or illusory, it is a noble and worthy proposal. But is it practicable? The answer depends mainly on ourselves. The conception lacks completeness; for it is impossible to build peace and disarmament on a *status quo* which involves so many injustices. A general agreement is unlikely; but agreement for the reduction of armaments and for recourse to arbitration between two, three or more States would be a useful beginning. The limitation of arbitrary action is the essence of the task to which the Tsar summons us. Let us not be content to meet it with a burst of admiration to-day and then to-morrow resort to arms instead of to law in the first quarrel in which we are involved." The speech was one of the first welcoming utterances in England; and when Stead showed it to the Tsar ten days later at Livadia, he was met with the reply, "I read it to my wife last night." Though joining in the solemn protest against Russian encroachments on the constitutional liberties of Finland, Courtney actively co-operated in the educational campaign, organised by the

indefatigable editor of the *Review of Reviews*. He took Mr. Morley's place as principal speaker at a great demonstration at Queen's Hall in the spring of 1899, and an article in the May number of the *Contemporary Review* offered some practical advice to the Conference. The limitation of armaments, he argued, was useless when imposed by force, as on Prussia after Jena and on Russia after the Crimean War, but of enduring value when freely accepted by both parties, as in the neutralisation of the frontier between Canada and the United States. He was more hopeful of the revival of Lord Clarendon's suggestion to the Powers assembled at Paris in 1856 that in the event of a dispute the other Powers should be invited to mediate before hostilities were begun. Such a covenant would almost certainly have prevented the Spanish-American War of 1898, if not the Franco-German War of 1870. "We cannot go to the Hague in a sanguine spirit; but we shall escape the responsibilities of failure if we work for its success in singleness of spirit."

A far more urgent issue was raised when Kitchener, fresh from his overwhelming victory at Omdurman, marched south and found the French flag flying at Fashoda. The West African crisis of the spring had been amicably settled; but the struggle for the valley of the Nile was of old standing and was embittered for France by the memory of lost opportunities and defeat. In despatching the Marchand mission from West Africa the French Government had taken a very grave step; for Sir Edward Grey's warning of 1895 had been more than once repeated by Lord Salisbury, and the advance to Dongola in 1896 suggested that there would be no halting till the whole of the Sudan was recovered. France had therefore no ground for surprise when the Major was politely but firmly requested by the British General to haul down his flag.

During the days of breathless suspense when the French Cabinet was deciding whether to submit or to fight, Courtney discussed the situation with his constituents at Bodmin. He began by reiterating his disapproval of the reconquest of the Sudan. To obtain and retain those "worthless and

worse than worthless provinces" was to the interest neither of Egypt nor of England. The enterprise had proved less difficult than he had expected; but the cheap price of military success had nothing to do with the wisdom or unwisdom of the policy. The issue of the moment, however, was not the reconquest of the Sudan but the danger of war with France. He was a lover of France; but in the last two years she had caused him a good deal of anxiety. Much had happened that inspired regret, and the Dreyfus case had shown that the military element was far too powerful. In the present controversy England was in the right, and we could fairly claim that Major Marchand should lower his flag and that Fashoda should not be French territory. We should, however, put ourselves in the wrong if we were to expel him by force without listening to argument. France maintained that the Sudan belonged to the Khedive, and that in claiming the whole valley of the Nile Great Britain was usurping his powers. Our action had been like that of a man who erects a board in a field with the notice, Trespassers will be prosecuted. But that is merely a claim to ownership, which, if disputed, must be settled in court. He hoped and believed that France would yield; but if she refused to evacuate Fashoda, every means of peaceful settlement must be exhausted before recourse was had to arms. "My last word is a protest against the assumption that there is no other method of settling the difference than by compelling her to give way by superior force." Fortunately Delcassé had recently been installed in the Quai d'Orsay, and the French Cabinet wisely decided to withdraw from the Nile Valley and to look for compensations elsewhere. Courtney's plea for sanity was read with profound gratitude by moderate men in France, among them a friend whose mastery of the English language no less than of English literature made him a natural mediator between the two countries in moments of excitement.

From J. Jusserand

November 8, 1898.—I found on coming home after a short and only too needed time of rest the paper you kindly sent me. I

read with the deepest sympathy the most sensible and true speech that was pronounced on that very sad question; a speech not the less manly because it was human. You said the absolute truth, and I think that if ever there was a question for discussion this was the one. It seems unbelievable that one of the two interested countries shows herself bent upon war and makes even now all preparations for it, when it is remembered that the territory in question belonged altogether for some ten years to Egypt, that it has been given up fifteen years ago, and that, when it was part of Egypt, that country was under an Anglo-French condominium. Is it not strange that the affair has been practically managed not at all as it seems by Government but by a "yellow press" which was supposed to exist only in other countries, and at a time when there are Cecils left? I hope your wise and just appreciation of the case will not soon be forgotten, and I, for one, will ever gratefully remember it. Best compliments to Mrs. Courtney from us both.

Neither the victory of Omdurman nor the pacific solution of the Fashoda crisis modified Courtney's view; and when Mr. Morley discussed the policy at the opening of the session of 1899 he was supported by his brother-in-arms. The conquest of the Sudan, he declared, was to be condemned in the interests both of England and of Egypt. Our arm would be weakened by locking up part of our forces and by the embitterment of the standing feud with France. It was quite untrue to declare that the control of the whole course of the Nile was necessary to our hold on Egypt; for Egypt and the Sudan had seldom belonged to the same ruler, and Egypt's southern frontier was defended by the desert. The critics were supported with voice and vote by Campbell-Bannerman, who succeeded Harcourt as the Liberal leader shortly before Christmas, and opposed with vote and voice by Sir Edward Grey. The division was prophetic of the struggle for the soul of the Liberal party which was to break out before the New Year had closed.

Courtney's deep conviction that tropical territories were more trouble than they were worth was illustrated in his Presidential Address to the Royal Statistical Society, delivered on December 13. "An Experiment on Commercial Expansion" dealt with the Belgian attempt to open up new

markets. Merely glancing at the inhumanities of the white men, the story of which was at that time not fully known, he reviews the situation from the neutral standpoint of an economist, and presents a balance-sheet of deficits and disappointment. "The result is sadly disproportionate to the anticipations of the enterprise. The value of the outlet for commerce is no more significant than the value of the outlet for men. A greater, more certain, more durable change would have been effected had missionaries, Catholic and Protestant, Belgian, English and American, been allowed to pursue their labours in peace. King Leopold would not be at the head of a region equal to Western Europe; but a score of Livingstones, if such a number could be obtained, would effect a more enduring triumph."

The session of 1899 opened quietly with the introduction of the London Government Bill by Mr. Balfour, creating boroughs with a Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors, and entrusting to them the duties performed by the Vestries and other minor boards. The Chairman of the Unification Committee naturally regretted that the City remained untouched; but he blessed the measure on its Second Reading as a valuable instalment. In Committee his main efforts were directed to championing the rights of women to share in the burdens and privileges of local administration. A motion excluding women from the position of Alderman and Mayor was carried by 155 to 124; but on Report he carried their claim to be Aldermen and Councillors by 196 to 161. Though Lord Salisbury for once supported the cause of progress, the Lords struck out the amendment. When the measure returned to the House of Commons Courtney proposed that women should be eligible as Councillors though not as Aldermen; but this compromise was opposed by the Government and defeated.

The most notable domestic debate of the session arose on the Budget, which partially suspended the Sinking Fund on the ground that Consols could only be redeemed at an extravagant price. A damaging attack came from Harcourt, who, though he had resigned the leadership of his party, spoke with the authority of an ex-Chancellor of the

Exchequer. But the most impressive feature of the discussion was Courtney's grave appeal to the House to regard the action of the Government in large perspective. A technical analysis of the Budget was followed by a philosophic survey of the industrial and political situation. We had narrowly escaped a great war in the previous year, and the world was full of rivalry and bitterness. Nothing but war could justify an arrest of the reduction of debt, and a steady diminution of our burden was the best financial preparation for a possible conflict. But even if perpetual peace were assured, he should oppose the raid on the Sinking Fund. Our commercial superiority was coming to an end, for the United States, with their unlimited supplies of raw materials and their teeming population, were passing us in the race. Jevons's forecast of the approaching exhaustion of our coal, which he had chosen for the theme of his Presidential Address to the Statistical Society in 1897, was being confirmed by experience; and his advice to prepare for the years of increasing strain by paying off debt was as sound in 1899 as in 1866. "If we entertain apprehensions in regard to the struggle for industrial supremacy, now is the time—when we are most prosperous and have abundant occupation for our people—to prepare for the future by removing the impediments which may hinder us in the struggle for life." The House, we are told, listened spellbound to the warning; but its receptive moods are always transient, and the suspension of the Sinking Fund was carried by the normal majority. A few weeks later the skies darkened rapidly, and the prophecies of Cassandra were recalled by some who had paid little heed to them on a bright afternoon in May.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BURSTING OF THE STORM

THROUGHOUT his Parliamentary career Courtney had been the most vigilant observer and the most effective critic of British policy in South Africa. He had protested against the annexation of the Transvaal without the consent of its inhabitants. He had urged Gladstone to restore its independence without waiting for a rebellion. He had adjured the Salisbury Government to record its disapproval of the Raid by excluding Rhodes from the Privy Council. He had demanded that the cloud of suspicion should be dispelled by the production of the Hawksley telegrams. In every case his advice was neglected, with disastrous cumulative results to the peace of the world. Careful steering was more than ever needed after the Raid; but the new pilot was ill-fitted by temperament for a situation that required not only firmness but patience and tact. Only a few weeks after he had given his testimonial to Rhodes as a man of honour, Chamberlain lighted another fuse by reviving the claim to suzerainty, which was deliberately omitted by Lord Derby in the Convention of 1884, and to which no appeal was made by British statesmen in the following thirteen years. In the light of these facts it was not surprising that the Transvaal and Orange Free State should form an alliance in 1897, that arms and ammunition should be ordered from Europe, and that Kruger should be re-elected in 1898 by an overwhelming majority, many Boers voting for him as the symbol of national independence who had voted for and almost succeeded in electing the progressive

Joubert in 1893. Krugerism was dying when the Raid gave it a new lease of life.

Since the discovery of gold in 1886 Transvaal politics had revolved in a vicious circle. An army of speculators and miners swarmed into the midst of a conservative farming community, and a great cosmopolitan city arose within forty miles of Pretoria. Fearing that the immigrants would swamp the hardly won national life of the Boers through sheer weight of numbers, the President excluded the newcomers, whom he regarded as mere birds of passage, from any share in the political control of the country. Had the Government been reasonably efficient, the anomaly might have been tolerated; but the régime was corrupt as well as reactionary. In 1894 Lord Loch, the High Commissioner, visited Pretoria and informed the President that he must make concessions. The warning was unheeded, and the Raid was the result. Kruger's suspicions of British designs on the independence of the Transvaal having in turn hardened into certainty, he was more determined than ever to keep the immigrants from setting foot within the citadel of power. Meanwhile the resentment of the Outlanders grew into hot anger, and in Sir Alfred Milner, who succeeded Lord Rosmead as High Commissioner in 1897, they found a far more powerful champion than Jameson or Rhodes. The "helots" drew up a monster petition to the British Government for the redress of their grievances, and the Cabinet, after full deliberation, resolved to adopt and press their claims. Sir Alfred Milner returned to his post early in 1899, empowered to demand a five years' franchise for the Outlanders; and Kruger accepted an invitation to discuss the situation with him at Bloemfontein. The plan was excellent in theory; but the two men belonged to different centuries, and each was deeply suspicious of the other's good faith. Kruger refused a five years' franchise, offering a seven years' franchise which was in turn declined by the High Commissioner. The Government was now urged by many of its supporters to take strong action, and on July 7 it announced that such preparations were being made. Offers of colonial help were promptly received,

though the Government of Cape Colony announced that in its opinion no ground existed for active intervention. Ten days later the Transvaal Raad passed a Seven Years' Franchise Bill.

It was at this moment that the Colonial Estimates provided the opportunity for a full-dress discussion of the South African problem. The debate was opened by Campbell-Bannerman in a highly pacific speech. Passions, he complained, were being worked up by the press both in South Africa and at home. "The writers almost induce me to believe that they regard reason and moderation as a crime, and look upon an appeal to force as something in itself desirable. But any appeal to them is, of course, in vain." The need of the moment was moderation in word and deed. He could sympathise with Boer reluctance to have their State turned upside down, and he could fully understand the suspicion with which they viewed the operations of the Uitlanders and their champions. "We have almost forgotten the deplorable Raid. We wish to forget it, and therefore we do forget it; but if I were a Boer, I should not forget it." Our minds were filled with the undoubted grievances of the Outlanders, theirs with apprehension as to the independence of their country. Threats would never overcome their reluctance to meet our demands. He could see nothing whatever which furnished a case for armed intervention, or even for a threat of war. The obvious line of advance was to employ the good offices of mediators like Hofmeyr and Schreiner, who had already secured concessions and would secure more. The Liberal leader was followed by the Colonial Secretary, who defended his policy in a powerful and moderate speech. The Outlanders, he reminded the House, formed a majority in the Transvaal and contributed nine-tenths of the taxation; but they had no political rights. A far larger question, however, was involved than the franchise. "It is not a matter of two years' difference in the qualification of the vote. It is the power and authority of the British Empire—our position as the predominant Power in South Africa. We have taken up the cause and are bound to see it through. I am, how-

ever, hopeful of a peaceful solution, for I think President Kruger has come to the conclusion that the Government are in earnest." In view of the subsequent cry that the Dutch of South Africa had long been engaged in a gigantic conspiracy to haul down the British flag, it is interesting to notice that the Colonial Secretary was unaware of any such movement, and that he expressly stated that there was no race antagonism in the Free State or the Cape.

The third important speech of the debate was that of Courtney, who began by expressing his satisfaction that Chamberlain had proposed an inquiry into the Seven Years' Franchise, and his hope that Kruger would accept it.[1] But an atmosphere of confidence was necessary. "I do not think he meant to use the language of threat, and indeed he disclaimed such an intention, but his words will be so interpreted. And when we read week after week of the demonstrations at the departure of troops for the Cape, when we receive almost day by day the announcements of offers of military aid from the colonies, when we hear that the Government of India could spare 10,000 troops for a campaign in the Transvaal—will not these things be viewed in South Africa as a menace?" The Minister argued that Kruger had made it his policy to put the British residents under the heel of a Dutch oligarchy; but he had not gone back far enough. In the Great Trek the Dutch farmers had moved out into the wilderness to enjoy freedom under their own flag; but when they reached Natal we landed troops at Durban and headed them off. Then after a precarious fight for existence we recognised the independence of the two Republics in 1852 and 1854. A quarter of a century later we annexed the Transvaal, and only partially restored their independence when they had defeated us. "One knows how many men there are in the army who long to wipe out Majuba Hill. Military men constantly speak about it, and you may see their faces light up at the

[1] He pressed the same advice on Montagu White, Consul-General of the Transvaal in London. See the latter's telegram of Aug. 4 in the *Times History of the War in S. Africa*, i. 310.

expectation. That was an old source of trouble; but a new one has been recently created. I must protest against the Colonial Secretary's constant use of the word suzerainty. Lord Derby expressly dropped the word because it was ambiguous, and the control of foreign relations, which was its most important feature, was specifically provided for. If I had any influence with President Kruger, which I have not, I should recommend him to refer the legal interpretation of the documents governing our relations to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council." The controversy, however, turned on broader issues than the interpretation of documents. We had the right to remonstrate and to enforce our remonstrance against unjust treatment of British subjects in the Transvaal or anywhere else. It was only a question of the validity of the grounds. The shooting of Edgar by a Boer policeman in Johannesburg was put forward by the Colonial Secretary as evidence of the failure of justice; but the case had been fairly tried and the policeman rightfully acquitted. The Government were quite right to demand the franchise, which was the key of the position; but the difference between seven and five years was not and could not be a sufficient ground for talking of war, much less a *casus belli*, as many Unionist members privately admitted. Such a pretext would be impossible to justify in the face of the world. "I am taking the same stand to-day that I took in 1877 when, as a new Member, I raised my voice against an unwise annexation of the Transvaal. Then as now I pleaded for forbearance and conciliation."

The whole world now watched with bated breath the last stages of the attempt to solve by discussion the relations between a cosmopolitan mining camp and a backward community of Dutch farmers. On August 18 the Transvaal, without refusing an inquiry into the Seven Years' law, offered a five years' franchise on condition that Great Britain promised to abstain from future interference in the internal affairs of the Republic, to drop the recently revived claim to suzerainty, and to refer all future disputes to arbitration. On August 28 Chamberlain answered that

Great Britain could not divest herself of her rights under the Conventions and declined to surrender the claim to suzerainty. His reply was generally understood both at home and in South Africa as a refusal; and this interpretation was confirmed by a speech delivered almost at the same moment to his constituents at a garden-party, in which he compared Kruger to a squeezed sponge and warned him that the sands were running out. The Highbury oration seemed to bring war within sight, and its menacing tones filled the friends of peace with something like despair.

Towards the end of August Mr. Amery was despatched by the *Times* to South Africa, and asked his old chief for introductions to Mr. Rose-Innes, Mr. Schreiner, "and perhaps also to Mr. Kruger himself."

To President Kruger

August 23, 1899.

DEAR PRESIDENT KRUGER—For the first time in my life I write to you and I fear my object must at first appear strange; but we met at dinner at Lord Derby's in 1884 and I know that you have since been now and then reminded of my name. On the strength of these memories I ask you to permit my present action. I wish to present to you Mr. Amery, who is going out to South Africa as a special commissioner of the *Times*. That newspaper has taken a line I most strongly condemn and you can scarcely pardon; but the fact that the conductors of it are sending out Mr. Amery is I think a sign that they wish to put themselves on better lines where they have been most grievously wrong. Mr. Amery came to me two years ago as private secretary, and he proved a most valuable assistant with an extent of knowledge rare in so young a man and most open-minded in his judgment. The *Times* sent him twelve months ago on a mission to South-East Europe which he well discharged, and they are now sending him out to South Africa where I hope he will do still more valuable work. If you will allow him to see you I think you may find through him means of influencing the judgment of the *Times*, which forms the judgment of so many others, towards a better understanding of the rights and wrongs of the South African Republic. I hope and pray that by the time this reaches you all danger will have passed away. You have had a terrible experience, but I can assure you that you

have had true and deep sympathy from many in England of whom I may claim to be one. I remain with the greatest respect and apologies for an intrusion which should not be made if I did not hope much good from it.

Courtney's poignant anxieties were shared to the full by his most intimate political friend.

From John Morley

August 30, 1899.—Most unwillingly do I break my silence, but I cannot stand the compulsion of my conscience any longer, and I have arranged to speak in my own constituency on Tuesday, if all be well. More important gatherings ought to follow. I only trouble you now to ask you to say if there is any special point which in your view ought to be pressed just now. It is not easy (nor is it very safe) to find an eirenicon which our own public might be induced to consider. General reproaches against the Government are not quite enough. The situation is so kaleidoscopic in its changes that a speaker has many perils to face.

To John Morley

September 1.—I am very glad you are going to speak. The situation is extremely bad and Chamberlain almost makes me despair. I fear I cannot help you much. Barnett (of Toynbee) wrote me from Bristol on Monday.[1] He had seen Lord Hobhouse and had asked him whether nothing could be done. He had nothing to say except some despairing talk about education for the future, but thought he might sign anything I could write, so I dictated a paper (copy enclosed). It is very bald and no more than a draft but it brings out the two points, viz. (1) that we have no claim to suzerainty beyond the check on foreign treaties, (2) that our moral claim, such as it is, to interfere is so far satisfied by what has been conceded that to fight for more is an atrocious crime. Chamberlain, as we know, does not conceal his disapproval of the Treaty of 1884, and I believe he would now privately condemn the Convention of 1881. He really wants to reduce the Transvaal to a British province and to incorporate it in the South African Dominion. This might come about in a generation through rational causes if men

[1] The letter is printed in *Barnett's Life*, ii 125.

would wait; but to attempt to bring it on by force is really to push it backwards. If conquest proved near, which I do not expect, the result would be a Crown colony held by force and disaffection elsewhere. It seems clear the Orange Free State would fight with the South African Republic if the latter were attacked, and Schreiner's talk about holding aloof reveals his opinion of the Cape Colony. Neutrality on the part of the Cape would of course be impossible. As for the Transvaal it might be possible to have a loyal Rand in a corner like a loyal Ulster; but remember that when the country was annexed in 1877 self-government was promised, yet nobody could venture to take any step in that direction in the three and a half years that followed. Forgive this long ineffective letter. My heart will be with you on Tuesday and I trust Scotland will respond to you.

From John Morley

September 2, 1899.—A thousand thanks for your trouble. I think you will find me close on your track. But things look a trifle less black to-day, don't they? From all I hear the feeling in the Liberal Party is about as unsatisfactory as can be, either horribly timorous or flat jingo.

Mr. Morley's speech was hailed with profound gratitude by the men and women of all parties who had watched the performances of the Colonial Secretary with anguish; and the new leader was promptly urged to raise his standard in the political capital of the North.

From John Morley

September 7, 1899.—The Manchester Transvaal Committee is a newly formed body, comprising, I am told, all sorts of men. They are hot for a great meeting, and have secured St. James's Hall September 15. They wish me to go. I reply (1) that I have shot my bolt; (2) that my physical resources are not up to a great meeting; (3) that, supposing a conference to come off, a demonstration would at the moment have no particular *raison d'être*. They reply: If Courtney will come to take the labouring oar, would you come to support Courtney? I decline to say yes positively and unconditionally, because my voice is really in bad order. Apart from persons, what is your view of the timeliness?

An urgent telegram was despatched the same day by Mr. C. P. Scott, a Lancashire Member and Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*; but Courtney needed no pressing, and on September 14 he started from Beachy Head, where he was spending the holidays. "No public meeting held in Manchester for many years," writes Lord Morley, "excited such interest. The war party had publicly advertised and encouraged attempts to smash it, and young men were earnestly exhorted in patriotic prints at least for one night to sacrifice their billiards and tobacco for the honour of their native land. The huge St. James's Hall was packed as it had never been packed before. The Chairman was Bright's eldest son, but not a word was he allowed to utter by an audience of between eight and ten thousand people. Then my turn came, and for ten minutes I had to face the same severe ordeal. At length they allowed me for an instant to launch the single indisputable truth in my whole budget, namely, that I was a Lancashire man. This talisman proved my salvation. After an hour of a judicious mixture of moderation, breadth, good-temper, with a slightly guarded Lancastrian undertone of defiance, I sat down amid universal enthusiasm. The grand potent monosyllable with which I wound up was not to be resisted. 'You may carry fire and sword into the midst of peace and industry: it will be wrong. A war of the strongest Government in the world with untold wealth and inexhaustible reserves against this little republic will bring you no glory: it will be wrong. It may add a new province to your Empire: it will still be wrong.' Courtney, who was only a Cornishman, came next, and made up for his sadly defective place of origin by a strong dish of sound arguments, spiced with the designation of Milner as 'a lost mind.'" [1]

Both speakers were at their best, receiving inspiration from their vast audience and combining sustained argument with high moral appeal. The situation, began Courtney, was critical. An incautious word, an outburst of some drunken Boer or some drunken Outlander might so inflame

[1] *Recollections*, ii. 85-6.

the already excited temper there and here that the crackle of musketry would follow. Now or never was the time to appeal to the good sense and good temper of our countrymen. Had the past taught the Boers to trust us? Kruger himself trekked from Cape Colony at the age of six. After twenty-five years of independence the Transvaal was annexed, and we dared not grant the self-government we promised because we knew that a representative body would at once demand the restoration of national liberties. The Convention that followed Majuba asserted our suzerainty, but that of 1884 dropped the word, while retaining the control of foreign relations. This control—and this alone—was recognised by Kruger. Let the dispute on suzerainty be submitted to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. It was nothing but a quarrel about words, and the heart of the trouble was the franchise. The last despatch of the Colonial Secretary was a rebuke to the fire-eaters of the Press, and most of all to a man "whom I know, whom I hold as a friend, whose name I scarcely dare to mention, such power has it still over me, but whom I must designate as a lost mind. I mean Sir Alfred Milner. I do not use that phrase without much hesitation. I do not wish to give pain to a man with whom I have lived in familiar converse, but there are things which are mightier than the susceptibilities of individuals." Kruger should be urged to accept Chamberlain's proposals, but we should try to realise the hesitation he would feel. "It is my best hope that the two races shall live side by side again as they did before 1877, and as they would again but for this infernal taint of the gold mines and the miserable inflammation excited by the Press. Could Kruger persuade his Boers to yield on suzerainty or the franchise unless they had some assurance of fair play? Let us cease our greed for lies, with which too many are trying to glut us. I have come here to ask you to cease from devouring this disgusting meal. In the Dreyfus case, loving France as I do, my pity, my horror have not been for the man who had suffered worse torture than death and had been treated like a wild beast—I grieve for France. I implore you that never shall

the occasion arise that anybody shall be able to say, I grieve for England."

"Neither of the speeches will ever be forgotten by those who heard them," wrote the *Manchester Guardian*. "Mr. Courtney did not mince matters. Lies! Lies! Lies! he thundered against the campaign of calumny pouring daily from the Yellow Press to poison the minds of the people against the Boers. The great meeting was a triumph." "A glorious success," wrote Mrs. Courtney in her Journal. "Mr. Morley and L. once more on the same platform." Courtney at once returned to the little wind-swept bungalow on Beachy Head, whither he was followed by a grateful letter from his Manchester host.

From C. P. Scott

I have been asked by the Transvaal Committee to express to you the strong sense of gratitude which they feel for your presence and speech on Friday night, and I am sure the feeling is shared by thousands of people in the city. We owe the holding of the meeting to you. We have sent an urgent telegram to Campbell-Bannerman to-day begging him to say some word at least to secure a breathing-space and prevent the country from being hurried into war. But will he? More and more one feels that foreign policy is the touchstone of all policy. I notice a curious feeling among quite ordinary people that last Friday's meeting was in a way historic, and I believe it is true.

Many were the letters received before and after the Manchester meeting from men who had been waiting for a lead.

From Herbert Spencer

September 13.—I rejoice that you and others are bent on shewing that there are some among us who think the national honour is not being enhanced by putting down the weak. Would that age and ill-health did not prevent me from aiding. No one can deny that at the time of the Jameson raid the aim of the Outlanders and the raiders was to usurp the Transvaal Government. He must be wilfully blind who does not see that what the Outlanders failed to do by bullets they hope presently to do by votes. And only those who, while jealous of their own

independence, regard but little the independence of people who stand in their way can fail to sympathise with the Boers in their resistance to political extinction. It is sad to see our Government backing those whose avowed policy is "expansion," which, less politely expressed, means aggression, for which there is a still less polite word, readily guessed. On behalf of these the big British Empire, weapon in hand, growls out to the little Boer Republic, "Do as I bid you." I have always thought that nobleness is shewn in treating tenderly those who are relatively feeble, and even sacrificing on their behalf something to which there is a just claim; but if current opinion is right I must have been wrong.

Having uttered a public protest against the rising storm of passion, Courtney carried his appeal straight to the highest court. The best if not the only chance of maintaining peace lay, he believed, in the temporary supersession of the High Commissioner, and in the presentation of the British demands by some distinguished public servant whose record and personality would arouse no antagonism in the bosom of the suspicious old President.

To Joseph Chamberlain

September 18, 1899.—The situation this morning is to my mind so grave that I am bold to write to you. The answer of the Boer Government to your last despatch is not what we hoped and desired. The Government may treat it as a final refusal. It is, however, intelligible. If the Transvaal had accepted your invitation to a Joint Commission this might have been a basis for settlement. I could not understand their reply offering instead a five years' franchise on condition suzerainty was dropped. It seemed to me you could not be expected to accept that condition, and the proposal was inexplicable. They now say it was made on a misunderstanding. They seem to have gathered from Greene that it would be acceptable. I cannot suppose he said this, yet as they put themselves from their own point of view in a wrong position by accepting even conditionally a five years' franchise, they must have believed it. The difficulty may be explained by his having said, "If you accept five years' franchise, other difficulties will disappear—you will hear nothing of them," which they understood to include suzerainty, whilst he was only thinking

of Dynamite, Monopoly, Cape Boys and the like. I do not know whether Greene speaks Dutch or communicates through an interpreter. Is there no way out but through war? I fear not, unless there can be a change of negotiators, and though I feel that Milner has failed, I cannot suppose you would supersede him. But what if a new offer came tending to agreement but requiring a change to carry it through? I think I could name two men whose temper and knowledge would give great promise of success if they could be put to the work. I mean Julian Pauncefote, with his diplomatic experience and temper, and Marshall Clarke, with his local knowledge and tact. I am writing this without the knowledge of anyone except my wife who is also my secretary, and I send it direct to you; but I confess I should be pleased if you did not dismiss it at once without letting Lord Salisbury know what I had written or that his opinion might also be brought to bear on the matter.

From Joseph Chamberlain

September 19, 1899.—I have, as you requested, shewn your letter to Lord Salisbury. You will readily see that I cannot discuss the subject in private correspondence, but I may say that your meaning is not clear to me. What do you intend by "a new offer tending to agreement but requiring a change to carry it through"? Do you mean an offer—presumably satisfactory—from the Transvaal Government but accompanied by a request for the dismissal of Greene and Milner? Or do you mean an offer from us to the Transvaal with a suggestion that they should get rid of Kruger, Leyds and Reitz? Either would be a rather startling development of the "new diplomacy," would they not? I ought to add that it is impossible that the Transvaal Government should have misunderstood Greene as they allege. In his account of the interview in the last Blue-book he says that he told them that we could not give up our claim to suzerainty under the preamble of 1881 Convention.

To Joseph Chamberlain

September 20, 1899.—Thanks for your letter. I will explain more fully what I meant by "a new offer tending to agreement but requiring a change to carry it through." It is evident that the Transvaal Government are terribly afraid they will be robbed of their independence. If they could be assured on this point they would risk many things. They might therefore be induced

to say, " We will consent to five years' franchise etc. if we have trustworthy guarantees of future freedom from interference. A special mission would be welcome with which we could carry this through." This would not necessarily mean withdrawing Milner or Greene or both, though the critical business would be put into other hands. I am sorry you think it is impossible that the Transvaal Government could have misunderstood Greene. No misunderstanding is to me impossible, especially when people look at things from such different sides. I cannot comprehend how the Transvaal Government could have taken the step they did, so certain to be quoted against them, unless they had misunderstood Greene. I prefer to leave to newspaper writers charges of deceit when a simpler explanation is easy.

From Joseph Chamberlain

September 21, 1899.—You appear to have forgotten that at the outset of our representations in favour of the Uitlanders, in 1896 we offered to guarantee the independence of the Transvaal against all attacks from British possessions or elsewhere—and were snubbed by President Kruger for our pains. Of course such a Mission as you propose would involve the instant resignation of Milner and Greene. They may be " lost minds," but they are gentlemen. Such a result would, I am convinced, be deplored and resented by the majority of Englishmen.

Courtney had repeatedly defended the foreign policy of Lord Salisbury when it was attacked by his own followers, and he regarded the Foreign Secretary as the strongest bulwark against the temper of aggressive Imperialism. After failing with the Colonial Secretary he turned as a last resource to his chief.

To Lord Salisbury

September 26, 1899.—I believe you saw a letter I wrote Chamberlain last week. I am now enclosing a copy of a letter I am sending to Buckle for insertion in the *Times*, and I hope you will not be too busy to read it. You have retrospectively condemned the Crimean war ; but we are both of us old enough to remember what a passion of prejudice was excited at the time, producing in the end an incapacity to see anything on the other side. We know too how Lord Aberdeen was drawn into that

war and that, before it broke out, an agreement was on the point of being established—had been in fact approved by Napoleon III., but Lord Palmerston would not allow it. Forgive me if I say that many minds now look to you to prevent the repetition of a similar national miscarriage although it may be on a smaller scale.

To the Editor of the "Times"

SIR—I am grateful to "Plain Speech," though I should have liked him better had he given us his name. Throwing aside all disguises of law and treaties, he proclaims that we fight in South Africa, if we do fight, to enforce our will in the two Republics as in Cape Colony, because the Dutch are bent on enforcing their will in the Cape Colony as in the two Republics. I have seen no evidence of this last design which would satisfy my sane judgment, but I have long known that what "Plain Speech" avows is the secret motive of many. It is the suspicion of it which makes the Transvaal burghers stubborn and determines the Orange Free State to stand side by side with its neighbour. The naked avowal of this policy must open the eyes of many who have suffered themselves to be deluded by appeals to the broken obligations of treaties.

From Lord Salisbury

October 2, 1899.—I ought to have thanked you sooner for your kindness in sending me a copy of your letter to the *Times*, when you were doubtful whether it would be published. I need not say that there are several statements which I should be disposed to question both in your public letter and in your note to me. But I could not enter upon them without opening the whole controversy, and such an operation, even if it were practicable, would involve speaking of several matters which I am not now in a position to discuss. The only observation—one that is purely historical—which I should wish to make on your note is that I did not condemn the Crimean war because our grounds for fighting were insufficient, but because it was not our interest to undertake the championship of a Power so clearly moribund as Turkey. My general view of the situation, taken broadly, is sufficiently expressed in a letter signed "Englishman" in to-day's *Times*.

The letter in the *Times* to which the Prime Minister referred argued that the one aim of the Boer leaders in all

the South African States was the establishment of a Republic in which they would be supreme. "When we read it," wrote Mrs. Courtney, "we were appalled, and saw no hope from that quarter." So long as the controversy turned mainly on the franchise, there might be some chance of accommodation; but if once the idea of a Pan-Afrikander conspiracy secured lodgement in a mind so little disposed to jingoism as that of Lord Salisbury the demand for a war to settle the question of racial supremacy would become irresistible.

To Lord Salisbury

October 4, 1899.—I must thank you for your letter of Monday, which has followed me back from Beachy Head. I could not expect nor could I desire that you should enter into controversy with me. Perhaps, however, you will permit me to make two observations. First with reference to the Crimean war. A war that is inexpedient seems to me almost as much a crime as a war waged without sufficient grounds. A war with the Transvaal would in my judgment be open to both condemnations, and throwing my mind into the future I am afraid the next generation will be of the same opinion. Secondly, as you said the letter of an "Englishman" in the *Times* sufficiently expressed your general view, I have read it over again and I must say I am overwhelmed. If you really think that the one aim of the Boer leaders in all the South African States is to establish a Republic in which they would be supreme, all is lost. But where is the evidence to support this belief? Does the conduct of Hofmeyr or of Schreiner or of Fischer or of Steyn or even of Kruger lend any countenance to it? I am tempted to add, to me it is a delirious dream, though I must beg you to excuse me for saying it. I am profoundly depressed.

From Lord Salisbury

October 5, 1899.—I am sorry to seem to you delirious, but my conviction is the result of much reflection. Of course I cannot produce evidence which would convict Kruger of conspiracy in a Court of Law. In political life you have to guess facts by the help of such indications as you can get. At first I accepted the favourable theory of the Dutch proceedings. But watching the course of negotiations I became convinced

that Kruger was using the oppression of the Outlanders as a lever to exact from England a renunciation of suzerainty; and the conduct of President Steyn and Mr. Schreiner, of the Afrikanders generally and of their sympathisers in Europe, has brought home to me the belief that there is an understanding among the leaders of Dutch opinion, and that their aspiration is the restoration of South Africa to the Dutch race. Such an aspiration has nothing strange in it. It is in harmony with the set of popular feeling in the present day; and our proceedings at the beginning of this century and in 1834 have left many resentments.

To Lord Salisbury

October 6, 1899.—I am cast down by your frank confession. Once get the fixed idea of a plan for the restoration of South Africa to the Dutch race, and a thousand innocent things will seem to fit in with this conspiracy. The most harmless suggestion becomes part of a plot. I confess I see no evidence of anything beyond a passionate desire to maintain the independence of the two Republics. Steyn and his people have worked hard to make peace, and their resolution to share the fate of their neighbours is tragic. Is it "preternatural suspicion" on their part to think that they are themselves threatened in view of the language held here? Each side is dreadfully afraid of the other and quite innocently distorts its opponent's position.

Every hour the hopes of peace grew less, and the only comfort that the waning days brought to Courtney was the knowledge that his views were shared by a good many of his friends. "Courtney's speeches have been admirable," wrote Canon Barnett to his brother.[1] Commander Bethell, who often held his notes for him in the House, wrote to express his "amazement at the aggressive policy" of his leaders. "The more I look into the matter," wrote Stead, "the more monstrously unthinkable is the proposal to go to war for that attenuated etymological ghost of suzerainty." Sir Wilfrid Lawson wrote bitterly that the nation was behaving as though it were mainly composed of criminal lunatics. A more measured protest came from a close friend in the Liberal Unionist camp.

[1] *Life*, ii. 127.

From Arthur Elliot

September 29.—I am so glad you liked my letter in the *Times*. I have some reproachful private letters from two important personages "on" that paper, written rather in sorrow than in anger at my line. Really the state of affairs is too deplorable, and I cannot get out of my head all the miseries that are in store for British and Boers alike—and all for what? I should have spoken in the House, and was ready to do so had any one made on our side a jingo speech; but, with the exception of Saunderson, no one did so. His speech produced the usual Irish row, and I did not think it was worth answering. I now wish all the same that I had spoken; but I did not wish to do so unless compelled at the time by the nature of the debate, for I felt that such speeches might induce the Boers to reject the terms Chamberlain was offering them, and which I hoped they would accept. The public, or the surface part of it, is in high fever just now, and men are goading on the Government to war. I am afraid now it is really inevitable. Even a five year franchise being accepted now would hardly do much good. The newcomers would come in as conquering enemies. About three weeks ago I wrote privately to the Duke of Devonshire saying what I thought; and he wrote back immediately after the first Cabinet saying that he thought the despatch they had just authorised Chamberlain to send would not go beyond what I should approve. Nor did it. The last despatches since *the Cabinet took the job up* have been moderate in tone. But we should have had some *suaviter in modo* throughout, and we might have escaped the present ugly position. It is not to my mind the *substance* of what Chamberlain and Milner have professed to ask that is wrong; but that their *diplomacy* (despatches, telegrams, speeches) has been of a rasping character, and that nothing has been said or done to soothe the feelings of our Dutch fellow-subjects. I suppose we shall be at war in less than a week, and that Parliament will meet next month. What then? In case of war I shall certainly not do anything to prevent its being brought to a triumphant close as quickly as possible; and I think it would be utterly wrong to resist a vote of credit. At the same time I think one ought to take up an independent position and aid at the first opportunity the cause of peace.

To Arthur Elliot

October 1, 1899.—I was very glad to get your letter, although the turn things have now taken depresses me much. Balfour's

speech at Dundee drives away hope; it is so unthinking, so careless, as to be painful. Perhaps Lord Salisbury may yet save us. He did save us on the West Coast of Africa, and if he had the conduct of this affair we should surely never have got into our present position. One word about the future. Don't make up your mind too soon as to what you will do. You now regret that you did not speak in July, and I think there are others who share that feeling. To me it seems at present that if war is declared by our Government and money asked for, those who think as we do should express our protest against the evil brought upon us if not by voice yet by vote. It may be justifiable and even wise to withdraw from a pertinacious opposition that must be ineffectual and might be injurious without, however, revoking any expression of opinion and remaining ready at any moment to intervene (if opportunity afford) with counsels of peace.

The greatest encouragement came from Sir Edward Clarke, who had displayed his wonted independence of judgement in a published letter to his constituents.

To Sir Edward Clarke

EASTBOURNE, *September* 24, 1899.—When I read your letter on Wednesday I was moved to write at once to express my gratitude and delight; but my delay has been so far of use that I can say that I feel as strongly now as I did then. I look forward with greatest interest to your speech on Thursday and hope it will be well reported. We are in the most wretched condition. People have slipped from point to point till they have lost the power of right judgment. I cannot understand how Webster and Finlay gave an opinion that suzerainty still existed by treaty; but indeed we do not know exactly what opinion they gave or the case put before them.

From Sir Edward Clarke

September 26.—Thanks for your letter. I have better hope of peace to-day, and I shall strive to the last to save the Government and the country from the folly and crime of war.

To Sir Edward Clarke

October 1, 1899.—I must write to thank you for your admirable speech at Plymouth. I have of course a personal and a selfish

interest in what is said with such authority on the borders of my own constituency ; but I think if it had been spoken at Newcastle-on-Tyne instead of by the Tamar I should be not the less grateful and glad. It must have immense effect throughout the country, and if the time before us were a little longer I should be hopeful. Balfour's speech at Dundee has, however, depressed me greatly. Pray God that Lord Salisbury takes a wider and more serious view. But the thread is very fine and slender and may already be snapped. I cannot believe that your Committee will take any step to lead to your resignation. Your absence from Parliament would be a loss to the country.

On October 7 Courtney received an invitation to speak at Edinburgh ; but now that war was daily expected he felt it his duty to address his constituents before going farther afield, and arranged by telegraph a meeting at Liskeard for October 12. On October 10 the evening papers contained the rumour of the expected ultimatum from the Boers, which Chamberlain, whom he chanced to meet, promptly confirmed. With a heavy heart he journeyed to Cornwall next day, well aware that a crisis had arrived in his own no less than in his country's fortunes.

Journal

What a moment to make a speech ! A perfect howl of indignation at Boer insolence. Snell (the agent) meets us at the station with other Liberal Unionists, who greet L. respectfully but opine to-day's news will alter his opinion and Sir E. Clarke's too. Poor Snell very low about meeting and an election. If it took place next week he does not see where our supporters would come from.

" Last year," began Courtney, " I spoke on the Tsar's rescript. Where are those suggestions on which we then agreed and on which the Powers at the Hague were unanimous ? Must we and the Boers fight without any interposition of a dispassionate authority ? Those who were so ready to hail the rescript as a message of peace now appear to have shut their ears to the counsels which they then embraced and to rush blindly into battle, careless of anything but the winning of the victory on which they are bent.

It is a dreadful contrast, a terrible humiliation. It is said South Africa is not a signatory of the Hague Convention and not a sovereign state. That is a mere technical plea. If the principle is right, we should have adopted it." Though the air was now filled with the sound of war, they should try to understand how the trouble presented itself to their enemies. No wonder they were suspicious. The Raid by itself was bad enough, but the Boers believed that the missing telegrams would have proved the complicity of the Colonial Secretary. Their suspicions had been deepened by the revival of the claim to suzerainty. Neither was the Transvaal free from blame. He never entertained such a ridiculous idea. Their Government was in many respects most faulty. But was it so faulty that we must have war to make it better? Did the miners who returned to Cornwall say it was necessary? They did not. The Outlanders were growing in numbers and wealth; in a few years they would have been predominant. Those who had the spirit of peace within them might well have waited. But certain people in England could not wait. It was now beginning to be maintained that the Dutch had resolved to drive us out of South Africa, and the action of the Orange Free State was taken as proof. That action was a proof of loyalty, not of conspiracy. Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for another. If we had brought to bear some dispassionate judgement, and sent out such a man as Lord Pauncefote, we could have settled the difficulty without war. The Boers had now taken a fatal step, but we told them that the time for negotiation was past, and that we should formulate our own conditions. Time passed and meanwhile troops were hurried out to the cry, Remember Majuba. "I regret the ultimatum. It would have been finer, nobler, greater if they stood waiting our assault, but that was almost too much for human nature. At last they said, Must we die like rats in a hole? We must fight for it. I lament the ultimatum, but I cannot honestly condemn it. Opposing forces were coming up, forming a ring round them. Were they to stand until they were overwhelmed? The Dutch population in the two Republics is only half that

of Cornwall. Every generous soldier must feel there is no glory to be gained in a war of such odds. We shall create in South Africa something like the divisions we all lament in Ireland. We must now wait and watch for any opportunity for more sober counsel."

Journal

L. speaks for an hour and a half without recourse to a note, full of argument, reason, passion and pathos. Impressed but did not turn his hearers, I think. He had refused to accept a simple vote of confidence, to be followed by a resolution in support of the war. The Resolution of confidence and regret at war was lost. L. made a touching little speech acknowledging the gravity of a vote against him in Liskeard, and the meeting broke up with no signs of exultation. Our nearest friends were much distressed ; but though mortified I have great thankfulness that he was able to stand up so grandly for right at this moment when others are throwing up the sponge. And I must admit to feeling relief that the Conservatives have broken from him. It has been embarrassing to have support which is so little understanding of his political position, though full of personal kindness.

Letters of congratulation and condolence poured in from Liberals.

From F. A. Channing, M.P.

You have behaved nobly and your own constituents will recognise it soon. Do not hastily—even if worse things befall—give up your seat. In these wishy-washy times, when every timid time-server has a sponge in hand to wipe off the truth if inconvenient, men of conscience and character who are in the House must stop there. No Liberal vote anyhow should ever be cast against a man like you.

From Stephen Gladstone

Please allow a stranger to say how deeply he honours you for your speech at Liskeard. You will receive so very many " kicks " for this that a stray " halfpenny " or two may not be unwelcome. I am sure your most manful, noble and Christian

speech must have cost immense effort and no little pain. I can almost realise how my father would have exclaimed, "God be thanked for such a speech," as was his wont, especially when he found it coming from another side.

From Mrs. Bright Clark

I value nothing in my own life more than my father's condemnation of the Crimean war. I remember how much he suffered because he loved his country, and therefore perhaps I especially sympathise with those who have courage to stand and plead for justice and honour before a misguided constituency. How dreadfully sad it all is—and I have seen it coming so long. I have had no illusions.

To Mrs. Bright Clark

I am very grateful to you for your friendly letter. The image and example of your father have often been in my mind in these later days. I remember well the torrent of feeling which swept men away during the Crimean war, and I fear nothing better can be expected to-day. Indeed when we recall the condition of the national temper in the years immediately before the Crimean war, how pacific it was and what force and influence were exercised by the leaders of the so-called Manchester School, and contrast it with the restless, aggressive imperialism of our own days, we ought to be prepared for a worse rout. I am glad, however, to know that there remain distributed throughout the country, though perhaps nowhere in a majority, a large company of quiet and resolute folk who can be trusted to support peaceful counsels. I have been astonished at the number of communications I have received since I spoke at Liskeard.

On returning to London, Courtney and Mr. Morley paid a visit to Harcourt, and found the old chief opposed to an amendment to the Address, though his condemnation of Chamberlain's diplomacy was as severe as their own. Campbell-Bannerman, though equally filled with sorrow and indignation, was the leader of a divided party, and was not a free agent. It therefore fell to unofficial members to lead the attack. When Parliament met on October 17 to vote supplies, John Dillon and Labouchere demanded

arbitration; and on the rejection of this impossible claim the real battle opened with Philip Stanhope's amendment expressing "strong disapproval of the conduct of the negotiations." The attack was supported by Campbell-Bannerman and Harcourt from the Opposition Bench, and by Arthur Elliot from the ranks of the Liberal Unionists; but it was on the following day, October 19, that one of the most dramatic scenes in modern Parliamentary history occurred. When the Colonial Secretary had told his story Sir Edward Clarke cross-examined the witness in his best forensic style, and elicited a startling confession. Chamberlain now declared that his despatch of August 28 accepted "at least nine-tenths" of the Boer offer, and he subsequently confessed that the remaining tenth was not worth a war. "Really," exclaimed Sir Edward, "this becomes more and more sad. It is dreadful to think of a country entering on a war, a crime against civilisation, when this sort of thing has been going on."

Journal

One of the most dramatic incidents I have seen in the House. The Conservative benches were silent. I do not think that Sir Edward himself was at all prepared for such a statement, and his tone was full of surprised and almost painful emotion. I said to Lady Harcourt, who was near us, Chamberlain is a beaten man, morally at any rate. No one will forget the scene that evening,—Clarke's pained earnestness, Chamberlain's hunted look, the dead silence on the Conservative side, and the repressed excitement of the Liberals.

The remaining speeches were coloured by what John Morley described as Chamberlain's "revelation"; and Courtney, who followed his friend and wound up the debate for the Opposition, denounced "the horrible failure of diplomacy" it denoted. "The amendment," he cried, "has been proved up to the hilt. It is a tragedy. The Colonial Secretary tells us that his reply was intended as a qualified acceptance, but it was not understood by the Boers as such, and yet he did not tell them that they had misunderstood him. Talleyrand said that language had

been given us to conceal our thoughts, but I had hoped that belonged to the old diplomacy." Moreover, two days before he had sent the "qualified acceptance" he had delivered an inflammatory harangue at Highbury. Finally he had said that he would formulate fresh proposals, but instead of doing so he had hurried out troops. "The ultimatum was violent, outrageous, a thing not to be endured. But how can you expect them to wait till you come up with all your forces and enforce instant fulfilment of your demands?" Mr. Haldane had argued that a conflict between the two races was inevitable; but they had lived in harmony in Cape Colony and the Free State, and they would have lived in harmony in the Transvaal but for the discovery of gold. There was much in the Government of the Republic which required and justified our remonstrances, but the abuses in the domain of taxation, education and justice were exaggerated and formed no justification for war.

Mr. Balfour replied for the Government, and the amendment was rejected by 362 to 135. In the fierce encounter Chamberlain's reputation as a diplomatist had been badly damaged, and the minority vote was a respectable total. But the division was none the less a triumph for the Ministry, for the unity of the Liberal party was shattered by the shock of war. Its leader abstained from voting, while privately declaring that the more of his followers who voted for the amendment the more pleased he would be. Sir Edward Grey, Sir Henry Fowler, and Mr. Haldane supported the Government, while Harcourt, John Morley and James Bryce joined Courtney and Sir Edward Clarke in voting for Philip Stanhope's amendment. The details of the franchise negotiations were quickly forgotten in the rush of events, and the voices of criticism were drowned in the outburst of patriotic emotion which every country displays in the opening days of war.

A week later the debate was renewed on the Second Reading of the Vote of Credit. In reply to Harcourt's attack on the Highgate speech as provocative, Chamberlain urged that it was at any rate plain. Courtney followed the

Colonial Secretary, and after reviewing his diplomacy asked how such a man could complain of the crookedness of Kruger. The Colonial Secretary divided his critics into Irish and men of peace at any price. "I utterly repudiate the notion that I belong to such a party. I have advocated war on more than one occasion. But I want on this and on all occasions to compare what you are aiming at with the cost you are going to pay." Some men looked on the Boers as schoolboys—give them a licking and they would be your best friends ever after. That had not been their history. We had a terrible lack of imagination of the type and character of these men and their passion for liberty and independence. It was now the fashion for members to start from the Ultimatum; but history, with a cooler mind and a wider vision, would ask whether our demands were of such importance and urgency as required to be enforced by war, and would return a negative answer

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

THE object for which Parliament had been summoned—the voting of credits — was quickly accomplished, and the country turned its undivided attention to the war. The majority of the Liberal leaders believed that the conflict might have been avoided; but most of them contented themselves with making their protest and disclaiming responsibility. In the early months of the conflict Campbell-Bannerman displayed a consideration for the feelings of the right wing of his followers which was not always reciprocated. Harcourt was too old and infirm for active campaigning. John Morley was in delicate health and immersed in the archives at Hawarden. James Bryce re-issued his *Impressions of South Africa*, with a new Preface which was quoted all over the world and exercised a decisive influence in the United States; but he was disinclined to launch a crusade. Veterans like Lord Ripon and Lord Spencer lacked the power of popular appeal, while doughty warriors of a younger generation, such as Sir Robert Reid and Mr. Lloyd George, were not yet national figures. Thus the leadership of the anti-war movement passed into the hands of the most independent of British statesmen. "That Mr. Courtney is at this moment the real leader of the Opposition," wrote the *Daily Chronicle*, "I do not suppose any one who has watched the recent debates would deny—certainly nobody on the Conservative side. How, you ask yourself, was this man ever brought into such company, as he rises grim and minatory? What earthly connection can there be between

this plain-spoken member, with his Puritan directness and simplicity, and the crowd around him, whose faces express disgust, impatience, rage, or mere polite indifference? No wonder he lies heavy on the souls of his own party; no wonder the great mass of men on the other side listen to him eagerly. Perhaps they catch an echo of another voice which used to be raised when injustice was abroad—the voice of the friend of the little peoples."

No problem in the ethics of citizenship is more difficult to resolve than the duty of men and women who disapprove of a conflict in which their country is engaged. The popular notion is that critics should hold their tongue when a dispute arises, in order that the other Power may not be encouraged by the spectacle of internal divisions, and that when war breaks out the sole task before the nation is to win it. Such doctrine is good enough for those who have no qualms as to the wisdom of their statesmen or the justice of their cause; but "My country, right or wrong," is no axiom for a sensitive conscience and an independent mind. Ministers who disapprove the action of their colleagues, like Lord Derby in 1878 and Bright in 1882, resign as a matter of course; and though private Members of Parliament have no direct share in deciding the course of the ship, they cannot divest themselves of responsibility towards their constituents and towards the wider constituency of public opinion at home and abroad. Yet even when the right or duty of protest is conceded, there will be much divergence as to how far it shall be carried. Shall the critic content himself with an initial warning and rebuke and then wait till the storm is over, or shall he strive with might and main to counter-work the agents and the tendencies which in his opinion have produced the catastrophe? The question must be answered by each individual for himself. Some men have greater confidence in their own judgement than others. In Courtney's case there was no hesitation as to the course he should pursue. He believed that the Boers had wanted nothing more than to be left alone; that the main cause of the conflict was to be found in the discovery of gold and in the subsequent errors of the British Government; and that

no lasting settlement could be achieved while the mind of the country was warped by passion and ignorance. Such men work for the future, knowing that the final verdict on their conduct will be pronounced long after they and their accusers have passed from the scene.

Courtney was well aware of the price of his revolt, and he was prepared to pay it. His Conservative supporters in East Cornwall met to condemn his action. The patriots who honour men of peace with anonymous communications bombarded him with abusive post-cards. "What a pity that a soft-nosed bullet cannot be lodged in the place where your brains are supposed to be," cried one. "It would be a good job for old England if you and Stead were hung up to a street lamp-post," shouted another. "To hell with you, you dirty little England dog." A third, addressed "To the Little Englander, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Knight of the White Feather, House of Commons," contained the words, "The Constable of the Tower will make room for you. A rope and short shrift for traitors." Such outbreaks were balanced by many expressions of admiration and goodwill. His fellow Cornishman, "Q," dedicated his new novel, *The Ship of Stars*, to the Minority Leader in the darkest days of October. "Among the names of living Englishmen the author could have chosen none fitter to be inscribed above a story which rests upon the two texts, 'Lord, make men as towers,' and 'All towers carry a light.' Although for you Heaven has seen fit to darken the light, it shines outwards over the waters, and is a help to men, a guiding light tended by brave hands. We pray, sir—we who sail in little boats—for long life to the tower and the unfaltering lamp."

Courtney was at all times grateful for first-hand information; and no letters were more welcome than those of Mr. Amery, who had reached South Africa in the middle of September. Though the veteran statesman and the brilliant young journalist were in fundamental disagreement, they confided their convictions to each other with perfect frankness and good temper.

From L. S. Amery

JOHANNESBURG, *September* 30, 1899.—By the time this reaches you war will, I fear, have already broken out, and it will be a very much more serious business than many people seem to have imagined. As usual we shall have walked into it without being properly prepared. My own belief is that if we had embarked a large force for South Africa, long before the negotiations reached so acute a stage, we could have kept a friendly tone throughout and secured a reasonable settlement without all the expense and bitter feeling of a war. For this war is to all intents and purposes a civil war. That it is so makes it from one point of view all the more necessary. South Africa is one country containing everywhere the same mixed population, and there can never be quiet so long as it is governed by different States having totally incompatible ambitions. If the Outlanders could have got in with a good grace on President Kruger's part there might have been some hope of this mischievous ideal of a purely Dutch Republican South Africa being dried up at the root in the course of a few years. As it is I can see only one solution of the whole question, and that is the annexation of both the Republics. I feel convinced myself, though I know you disagree, that there would never have been any serious trouble in South Africa if the insurgents had been suppressed in 1881. The task will be much harder now—yet there is nothing else to be done. But how many lives and how many millions of money it will cost I should not like to say. I have tried not to take a biassed view of affairs here, and have in fact confined myself mainly to hearing the views of those on the Afrikander side like Schreiner, Hofmeyr, Fischer, etc., or of very moderate and open-minded people like Innes, or Fraser of the Free State. The Cape Afrikanders, Hofmeyr, etc., have very little good to say of Kruger, whose obstinacy and narrow-mindedness and unwillingness to concede anything without reservation made the negotiations impossible. I had some conversation with him on Thursday morning which I cabled over—at least the political part of it. He inquired after you and expressed his regret that your sight had failed so seriously. Dr. Pierson was right in his description of Mr. Kruger's speech—a mixture of grunts and snorts difficult even for a fellow-countryman to follow. In appearance he is far uglier than any caricature that has ever been published. He impressed me as a man of vigour, tenacity and resource, but quite unfit to be the ruler of a state. The more progressive Boers in Pretoria lay all the blame for the present situation on his head and Leyds'. Between them

the two had instituted an almost absolute tyranny; the field cornets were appointed and paid to elect only the proper sort of members to the Raad, and the Raad was kept in proper subservience by similar methods. The restriction of the franchise, the secret negotiations with Germany, the importation of Hollanders, were all parts of a continuous and logically coherent anti-English policy. When that policy was getting intolerable even in the Transvaal, the miserable folly of the Jameson Raid business resuscitated Kruger once more.

To L. S. Amery

November 30, 1899.—I was very glad to get your letter, and if I have delayed replying you must not suppose I did not highly value it. From September 30 to now what has not happened? Popular expectation is already very much sobered. The most foolish have got to understand that we have a difficult job in hand; but there is not the least abatement of the conviction that it will be done and of the resolution to do it. Men are beginning to frame schemes of settlement for the future, to which your last public letter has been a contribution. I don't intend to worry you with a review of the points on which we differ. I will only say that you quite fail to convince me of the widespread conspiracy and consequent necessity of grappling with it. In my judgment we should have gradually won everything that we wanted without war—even if we had started with the seven years' franchise plus the qualifications attached to it. The Joint Commission could have examined these last and would have got rid of some of the most absurd. Within a moderate time we should have got everything we wanted, if what we wanted did not extend to the subjugation of the Republics; and I did not desire this subjugation. I take this to be really the crux of the divisions among men. Chamberlain did not want war, that is he would have preferred to get what he wanted without war; but he did mean to put the South African Republics under himself, and to tell the truth I have a great suspicion that you have approached the examination of the situation with this inmost desire. Against this I shall continue to wage, it may be in vain as far as I am concerned, invincible hostility; feeling persuaded that this engrossing arrogance which men call Imperialism will be the ruin of our country. Do not misunderstand. It is the spirit I fight against. It may be an inevitable consequence of what has happened that the end of this particular drama will be the absorption of the two Republics into a British Dominion; but this is one of the problems of the future.

A large volume of opinion hostile to the war existed, and Courtney at once set to work to organise it. On November 1 the South African Conciliation Committee was established at a meeting in the Westminster Palace Hotel, under the auspices of Selous, the mighty hunter. Courtney was pressed to be chairman, but thought it best to decline. On December 18, however, when the Committee met at Cheyne Walk, the host was elected President. The new body was publicly launched in a letter to the press on January 17, signed by Courtney, Selous and Frederic Mackarness, the Chairman of the Executive. The first public meeting was held in the small Queen's Hall on January 31, when Courtney presided at an address delivered by Frederic Harrison. The chairman argued that annexation of the two Republics would involve an interminable series of conflicts and difficulties. The statesmen who recognised their independence in the 'fifties had been justified by events; for the task they set themselves was in process of fulfilment till it was interrupted in 1877 by the spirit of Imperialism which was fastening like a cancer on our national life, and by the discoveries of diamonds and gold, which stimulated the worst passions of some of our people. Gatherings followed in different parts of the country; but the public temper was excited by the defeats and anxieties of the winter, and inflamed by the stories of white flag treachery and other evidences of the abnormal depravity of the enemy with which the press of every country feeds its readers in time of war. Meetings were broken up, and scenes of violence were witnessed in Edinburgh and Scarborough, when Mr. Cronwright Schreiner attempted to explain the attitude of the Afrikanders to the great struggle. Those who denied that the war was just and inevitable were branded as Little Englanders and Pro-Boers, as Bright and Cobden had been labelled pro-Russians in 1854. When Campbell-Bannerman, Harcourt and Sir Robert Reid complained of the organised rowdyism, Mr. Balfour replied that it was useless to ask of human nature more than it could give. Threatening letters began to arrive at Cheyne Walk, and filled Mrs. Courtney with apprehension that her husband might be assaulted in

the street. But every poisoned dart endeared him to the men and women of whom he was the dauntless spokesman.

The friendly sword-play with Mr. Amery continued briskly throughout the winter.

From L. S. Amery

CAPE TOWN, *December* 26, 1899.—An answer to one question of yours, that touching the existence of an Afrikander conspiracy against England, you will find in an article on the subject which I am writing for this mail. There has been nothing of the nature of an organised plot countenanced by the leaders of the Bond, nor do I think that Hofmeyr has played a part like that played by Rhodes before the Raid and not let his left hand know what his right was doing. But there has been much intriguing, preaching of disaffection, in some border districts secret arming; and the whole thing was growing apace, so that the possibility of a widespread rising at the summons of the Transvaal in a few years' time was by no means excluded. For that the Transvaal meant to turn us out of South Africa at some future date, and before it had lost its essentially Afrikander character by allowing the English Uitlander a share of power, I feel firmly convinced. The ambition was in a way both natural and intelligible. The Raid and our behaviour after the Raid of course quickened their determination and quickened anti-English feeling in Cape Colony and so brought the catastrophe nearer; but it would have come all the same, though in that case our conscience would have been clearer. My letter urging annexation was not written only as my own idea of the solution. Of course all the English will accept nothing less; even Rose-Innes, who felt very doubtful about it at first, has since told me he cannot conceive any other solution. Solomon, the Attorney General of the Schreiner ministry, says the same, and says that most of the responsible leaders of the Dutch here think so too, though they cannot openly say so. I feel that if we leave a real independence we shall have the old difficulty all over again, while if we determine to make it a sham the friction of interference will be infinitely greater on each occasion and the likelihood of a future rising increased, while the forces we could enlist on our side—Uitlanders, etc.—would be weakened and divided.

From L. S. Amery

CAPE TOWN, *December* 29, 1899.—I am afraid my article on Afrikander disloyalty got written in rather a hurry, and as a

result did not bring out clearly enough my main point, namely, that while there was no organised conspiracy on a large scale there was a general disloyalty, sporadically even actual conspiracy, the whole kept alive by the Transvaal. I must confess I look on that disloyalty as perfectly natural and as a result of the Transvaal's existence as an independent national state. If the independence of the Transvaal had been merely nominal, *i.e.* if the so-called paramountcy had been real, if from the first we had told the Transvaal that we should consider the importation of a single big gun as a hostile act, while permanently keeping 20,000 or 30,000 men in South Africa ourselves, we might have allowed things to continue. As it was, time was on the side of the Transvaal, not on our side. Against a strong national ambition, organised and supported by ceaseless effort and by force of arms, the so-called natural factors of commerce, language, etc. cannot prevail. Hungary and Bohemia are instances of this. As to the settlement I have expressed myself fully in print. I am afraid you do not agree with my point of view, but I am very earnestly convinced that between annexation and complete evacuation of South Africa there can be no tolerable middle course. Half policies are useless.

To L. S. Amery

February 7, 1900.—Of course I read all your letters (to the *Times*) and rejoice in their sanity. They come like whiffs of good sense amid the delirium of most correspondents—a delirium which, as you know, has in my judgment reached the High Commissioner. But I am not persuaded as to the accuracy of your conclusions respecting the present or the future. As to the present you give up conspiracies and talk of aspirations. Have you ever reflected how many incipient aspirations may be developed by people who blunder into war ? Ever since Waterloo there have been recurrent declarations that war with France was inevitable. If you had gone to war over West Africa, let us say, or Fashoda, its inevitable character would have been insisted on. The inevitable has not come to pass, and, if the statesmen of the future on both sides of the Channel approximate to the wisdom of their predecessors, it will not come to pass. You may say the inevitable war between France and Germany did come off. Yes ! owing to Bismarck's falsification of a telegram. The quarrel had been settled to his disgust till he blew it into a flame again with his lie. Had it not been so, the probability is that Louis Napoleon's early death would have precipitated domestic difficulties in France occupying the whole attention of the French,

and Germany would have jogged on in the work of pacific unification. Once more if war should happen between the United States and ourselves the evidence of "aspirations" would be overwhelming. But I have said enough, though I fear not sufficient to shake you. As to the future, what is the provision of a United South African Commonwealth with conterminous provinces? You yourself give this up at least for an indefinite time, during which the Dutch must be governed by the power of England. In my speech last Monday, of which I fancy scarcely a word will reach Africa save in the files of the *Times* where no one will look at it, I uttered a warning against this threatened future of ruling South Africa by an English garrison. We are indeed rapidly making for such a depth, but I will still hope for some means of escape. It takes all my patience, however, when I think of what might have been in comparison with what is! And the agents of the transformation!! Enough, enough—write me again as often and as fully as you can, and preserve your sanity and your courage.

From L. S. Amery

March 12, 1900.—I am honestly convinced we are doing right in waging this war, and that we shall be guilty of a blunder of the most criminal sort if we stop short of the annexation of the Republics. Whatever the terms we impose on the Republics now nothing will convince the Dutch in South Africa that they have not got the best of the war, that we have not yielded in imminent fear of foreign intervention, and that the Republics have not accepted the terms only as an opportunity for re-arming. South Africa is much better without the Republics, and though, as long as we thought difficulties might be patched over peacefully we were ready to resign ourselves to their continuance, I should think it wrong to do so now. Besides, what is to happen to the English population not only of the Rand but of every town and village in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State who have been driven out?

On the eve of the new session Courtney visited his constituents for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities; and the chairman of the Liberal Unionists of South-East Cornwall left him in no doubt as to the reception that awaited him.

From the Earl of St. Germans

January 16, 1900.—The 23rd will suit me very well for the meeting of Delegates. Mr. Snell has, no doubt, kept you informed as to the state of feeling in the constituency. As far as my own feelings are concerned, although I entirely differ from you in regard to the war, it would give me sincere pleasure to see you again returned for South-East Cornwall; but I cannot disguise from myself that at present your chances are by no means satisfactory. Some two and a half months ago the Conservative section of the Unionist party intimated to me informally that, while the leaders of the section retained unabated their loyalty to the party and were not trying to go behind the compact, they considered that your attitude and vote on the foreign policy of the Government had alienated from you the confidence of the party, and that it would be impossible to secure for you the continued support of the rank and file at the next election. I take this to mean that while the Conservatives will not bring forward a candidate of their own to oppose you, they will give you little, if any, active support. In that case you would have to rely exclusively on the Liberal Unionist vote, and I much doubt if you would get the whole of that. Of course if the war is happily ended some time before the next election, feeling may calm down, and then your prospects would improve.

The speaker began by revealing the fact that he had declined office in 1880, as he feared that Gladstone would not undo the annexation against which he had protested. "The root of the mischief is the fact that he was unable with promptness and completeness to effect the restoration of the Transvaal. We have never been able to undo that mischief. What a different atmosphere would have prevailed!" And yet, but for the discovery of gold, we might have grown into the same friendship with the Transvaal as we enjoyed in the Free State. The Raid convinced the Boers that we wished to rob them of their independence. They were wrong as to the British nation, but they had too much ground for their suspicions. "I have always exonerated the Colonial Secretary; but it is his own fault if suspicion hangs heavy about him. How many have read the Hawksley letters which appeared in the *Indépendance Belge* a fortnight ago? (One hand is held up.) The Ministerial press has

concealed them. They are terrible reading. No one can approach with a clear and just mind the discussion of recent diplomacy unless he realises the temper of suspicion, anxiety and dread which filled the mind of the Transvaal Government." Yet Hofmeyr and the Free Staters pressed for concessions, and Kruger passed a seven years' franchise law, and made a conditional five years' offer which Chamberlain accepted as to nine-tenths, while the other tenth was not worth fighting about. He had, however, failed to make his meaning plain, delayed the formulation of new proposals, and hurried troops to the Cape and Natal. The war was now defended less on the ground of the grievances of the Outlanders than on that of a Dutch conspiracy to expel the British flag from South Africa. But that was an afterthought, and was unknown to the Government before the outbreak of hostilities. If guns were the proof, was not the Raid a warning that the Boers might have to defend themselves? "We must have mutual respect before we have enduring peace. We have grown to respect the Boers as fighters, and they will have to respect our men too. Some vindication of our strength will be absolutely necessary before peace can be established; but the first opportunity of a peaceful settlement should be seized. The Boers have an indestructible love of independence. Let them retain it, subject to the abolition of their armaments and the cession of the Rand." The audience listened quietly and with few expressions of dissent; but the meeting had opened with letters from some prominent Liberal Unionists withdrawing their support. Though no hostile action was taken or suggested, it was evident that the days of the speaker's representation of East Cornwall were numbered.

From Sir Wilfrid Lawson

January 25.—I was very glad to read your speech—sound and strong. I feel that we are guilty if we allow the smallest opportunity to escape either in season or out of season of protesting against the gigantic crime which is now being prosecuted.

The Liberal leaders, divided on the deeper issues of the war beyond hope of compromise, agreed to meet Parliament with an elastic formula which would permit each one of them to express his opinion without let or hindrance. An amendment to the Address was accordingly moved by Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, "deploring the want of knowledge, foresight and judgement displayed by Ministers in their conduct of South African affairs since 1895, and in the preparations for the war now proceeding." The discussion, which continued for a week, was less dramatic than the debates of October; for the views and arguments of the rival leaders were well known, and many stalwarts, Courtney among them, declined to vote. The opponents of the war, led by Campbell-Bannerman and Harcourt, Mr. Bryce, Sir Robert Reid and Mr. Lloyd George, denied the existence of the long-planned and gigantic conspiracy which the Government had only discovered since the outbreak of hostilities, and Sir Edward Clarke boldly demanded the resignation of the Colonial Secretary and the High Commissioner. The Liberal supporters of the war, on the other hand, confined themselves mainly to criticism of the military machine, which was brilliantly championed by George Wyndham, the Under-Secretary for War. The defence of Government policy naturally fell to Chamberlain, who denounced the Majuba settlement, of which he had been one of the principal authors. The conflict, he declared, had been brewing, not since the Raid, but since the mistaken magnanimity of 1881. From that time onwards the Boers had been endeavouring to escape from their obligations. The root cause of the war was the difference of the Boer and British character and civilisation, and of the Boer aspiration to get rid of British supremacy. There must be no second Majuba, and the Boers must never again be able to erect in South Africa a citadel of disaffection and race animosity, to endanger the paramountcy of Great Britain, or to treat an Englishman as if he belonged to an inferior race.

When Courtney rose shortly after Chamberlain he was greeted with loud cheers from the Liberal and Irish benches. "A good speech," wrote his wife in her Journal; "but I

have heard him more eloquent." Never had the Colonial Secretary, he began, displayed such energy or debating power; and no wonder, for he had to vindicate himself. "For glory or for condemnation this is his war. I ask members to consider candidly whether if any other member of the Cabinet had been at the Colonial Office there would have been a war. That the mass of the nation supports him may be a great comfort to him; but the statesman who is idolised by his generation may be regarded by subsequent generations as a man who has made a colossal mistake." Throughout the summer the Cape ministers, Steyn, Fischer, Hofmeyr, and even President Kruger himself, had done their best to maintain peace. The statement of the Colonial Secretary, that the majority of Liberal members regarded the conflict as unnecessary, was quite correct, and he gave no reason for his belief that it was inevitable. The Government never desired or expected war, and thought a mere show of force sufficient. The invader must first be expelled, and then methods to restore peace must be sought.

Sir Edward Clarke's speech on the Address was followed by a peremptory demand for his resignation from his Conservative constituents, and the fearless Tory lawyer passed for a time out of Parliamentary life. The example of Plymouth encouraged the Conservatives of East Cornwall to claim a similar sacrifice from their member; but Courtney had no mind to surrender at the first blast of the trumpet, and addressed an Open Letter to his agent.

To W. T. Snell

My view has always been that when a candidate is elected on particular pledges and subsequently arrives at the conviction that he cannot keep them, he should resign and seek re-election. When, however, a new question crops up, he is under no such obligation, and is most faithful to the constitution in using his power in an honest attempt to grapple with it as a member of the great House of Deliberation and to help to educate the people in view of the exercise of their power when a new election comes. With respect to my own position three things have to be remembered. First, that I stood as a Liberal opposed to Home Rule. Secondly, that I offered to withdraw if I was not allowed the same

liberty as in the previous Parliament. Thirdly, my judgment on the policy of dealing with the Dutch in South Africa has been known from my first session in Parliament.

His stand for independence was encouraged by a letter from a veteran champion of individualism.

From Herbert Spencer

February 24.—There has grown up the altogether unwarrantable assumption that a Member of Parliament represents that particular part of the constituency which has elected him, and when that part of the constituency or some Conservative or Liberal Association or what not, through whose instrumentality he was elected, disapproves of his course, it seems to be thought, both by them and by the public at large, that he is called upon to resign. But where is there any indication, either in the constitution or in the theory of representation, that a Member of Parliament represents any particular section of his constituency or any party? So far as I know, the idea of party is not recognised in the representative system at all. A Member of Parliament represents a constituency and the whole constituency, and not any particular section of it.

The supporters of the Government in East Cornwall did not allow the matter to rest; and the chairman of the Liberal Unionists gently informed the member that it would save much unpleasantness if he were to resign.

From Lord St. Germans

March 9, 1900.—I had yesterday to undertake a very unpleasant task, and to-day another equally so. You will have seen in the Western papers an account of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Liberal Unionist Association and its result. The latter was a surprise to me, as I anticipated considerable difference of opinion. Out of the nine present, besides myself, seven were entirely in favour of the Resolution which was carried, and the other two, although they abstained from actually voting for it, offered no opposition. Of course, as the Resolution only embodies a recommendation to the General Committee of the Association, it will have no force until it is adopted by the latter body; but the remarkable unanimity shown yesterday at

the smaller meeting gives strong reason to expect a similar decision at the larger meeting which is to be held on Wednesday next. The members of the Committee present were, as far as I could hear, most moderate in their language. No heat was shewn, and strong admiration was expressed for your great abilities and fearless honesty, and also much personal respect and goodwill towards you. But there was a strong and universal feeling that, by the attitude of hostility you have taken up towards the Government in regard to South Africa, you have alienated from yourself the support of the Liberal Unionists as well as that of the Conservatives, and that you can no longer be looked upon as representing the views of the constituency in the House of Commons.

To Lord St. Germans

March 10.—I am sure you must have had great pain in writing yesterday's letter ; and I am afraid my reply will be no relief to you, as I confess I wish I could have been spared writing it. I do not see my way to accept the suggestion that I should at once resign my seat. I do not wish to break up the Liberal Unionist party in South-East Cornwall ; but party has never been to me more than machinery adopted to help to bring about certain ends. Just as I dissented from the Liberal party on the subject of the Union, so I must dissent, if necessary, from the Liberal Unionist party on the subject of the war. Both subjects are to me of paramount importance, and, as the Union is not now in peril, my action in respect of the war is not hampered by any thought of endangering the Union. Now with respect to the immediate question. If the more popular gathering shows anything like the same unanimity as was shewn on Thursday, the Unionist party is safe whatever I may do. If there should appear to be a division and a serious division, would not this shew that on the subject of the war the Unionists were not united and the balance of the constituency cannot be taken as so certain as suggested ? A General Election whenever it came would make clear what it is, just as the General Election of 1886 made clear what was uncertain in the spring of that year. On the constitutional question I feel that I have not only a legal right but that I am under something of a moral duty to retain the seat. We used to deprecate the introduction of the American Caucus ; but Conservatives and Unionists seem now the first to resort to its force and to denounce those who do not yield to it. In my judgment public opinion is the result of many influences, among which the speeches and

action of Members in Parliament used to be as effective as articles in newspapers; and those who have the privilege of employing the power without conflict with any pledge, promise or expectation held out when they were candidates for election, ought in the interests of the nation to guard it most jealously. However disagreeable it may be to electors to think that their Member is supporting a policy from which they would themselves dissent and to a Member to find that his customary friends are no longer in agreement with him, these transitory annoyances should be endured in the interest of the nation at large.

A week later the Liberal Unionist delegates of South-East Cornwall met at Liskeard to consider the resolution of the Executive Committee. Lord St. Germans, who presided, pressed the demand for resignation; but after the member's letter to the chairman had been read, an amendment was passed to the effect that, while differing on South Africa, the meeting saw no reason for asking him to resign his seat.

When the war reached its turning-point with the surrender of Cronje, Courtney's main efforts were devoted to opposing the inevitable demand for annexation. "The most dangerous and hopeless of all solutions," he wrote in a review of Mr. Hobson's *War in South Africa* (the *Speaker*, March 10), "would be the subjugation of the Republics, and the Government has not committed itself to it. A frank recognition of the invincible passion for self-government once more demonstrated in this war will allow of the slow recovery of friendly sentiments. Without continued autonomy there can be no guarantee of peace and no friendship is possible." On March 12 the Conciliation Committee addressed a protest to Lord Salisbury against annexation. A request for Mr. Morley's support was fruitless.

From John Morley

March 8, 1900.—I have spent my evening as I said to you that I would. The result is that I do not feel any call upon me to commit myself at this stage to any view whatever as to future reconstruction. The country has flung itself into a course of brutality, hypocrisy, illusion and wrong. In my humble way I

did my best to warn the swine of the steep place down which they were rushing. Let them find out their own wickedness and folly —as they will. Why should I waste time in urging them to abstain from that consummation of their crime on which everybody knows that they were bent, and from which they will not at this time be diverted, though one rose from the dead? Any hour I may be moved by the spirit to go down to my constituents and liberate my soul to the full—but as to preventing the annexation, or prescribing the true policy under the existing and future circumstances, I should only be battering my head against a stone wall. That is no reason, however, why I should criticise others who take a different view of the practical course.

Courtney resolved to raise the problem of the settlement on the Easter adjournment, and urged his old comrade to join him; but he extracted nothing save a familiar and despairing quotation from Cobden.

From John Morley

April 5, 1900.—I cannot persuade myself that the moment requires parliamentary action, though I see nothing decisive to be said against it. The germs of misgiving about the whole vile policy are very visible. Every day of military suspense will tend to develope them. I believe time will soon be much more ripe for effective protest and useful discussion than now. I enclose you the passage of Cobden to which I referred on Tuesday: "You might as well reason with mad dogs as with men when they have begun to spill each other's blood. I was so convinced during the Crimean war of the utter uselessness of raising one's voice in opposition to war when it has once begun, that I made up my mind that, so long as I was in public life, should a war again break out between England and a Great Power, I would never open my mouth on the subject from the time the first gun was fired until peace was made."

Debate on the settlement was prevented by a blocking motion placed on the paper by a Conservative member who had gone off to the war. The trick was resented by Courtney all the more since the House had become the last refuge of free speech. The Press, he complained, was in great measure closed to the minority by the eviction of heretical editors, and meetings were terrorised if not prevented by organised

rowdyism. Under these circumstances he was only able to direct attention to the abuses of martial law and the censorship in Cape Colony and Natal. His complaints aroused the fury of the *Times*. "If he wants to live in an intellectual atmosphere according to his own tastes, he ought to go to Pretoria. There he will find freedom of speech to his heart's content so long as he abstains—as no doubt he could abstain—from saying anything in favour of England." Debarred from debate in the House, Courtney spoke in great cities wherever a hall could be procured. He was engaged to speak in Liverpool on May 18, the day when the news of the relief of Mafeking made England drunk with joy. It was "an unpropitious moment" for the delivery of his message; but he once again declared against annexation as bad in policy and worse in morality. There was now no easy escape from the coils; but the contrasted results of the Bismarck settlements of 1866 and 1871, to say nothing of the Irish plantations, were an eloquent warning. He was well aware that the plea was in vain; for the annexation of territory is the seal and symbol of victory. Ten days later the Orange Free State was proclaimed part of the British Empire with the title of the Orange River Colony, and on September 1 the Transvaal was annexed.

In March the Liberal Unionists had refused by a small majority to demand the resignation of their representative; but Lord St. Germans and his friends were stiffening in opposition. A new meeting was summoned at Liskeard in June, when a letter was read from the sitting member.

To Lord St. Germans

June 16.—I would ask my Liberal Unionist friends to measure my services in the past apart from the present war. I have doubtless said and done many things which have not been satisfactory to all my supporters; but I think I may claim that in none of them have I departed from the position of a Liberal Unionist, that is, a man who, opposed to Home Rule, remains firmly attached to the progressive Liberal faith which inspired the united party before Home Rule was adopted. My judgment

of the war has been founded on study of the facts of South Africa consistently maintained for more than twenty years, and I have opposed the war because I hold it injurious to the best interests of South Africa and our own country. Holding this view I must desire as strongly to exercise any influence I have as those who are opposed to me may desire to nullify that influence. It would be a great pain to me to find friends with whom I have been so long and so intimately associated resolved to espouse another candidate. It must be a still greater pain to contest their choice. But however painful the prospect of the future I cannot at once abandon any hope of continuing to represent South-East Cornwall. Should another candidate be chosen, I should not underrate the gravity of the step; but it would not of itself determine me to retreat from the constituency when an election comes.

Lord St. Germans argued that as the Conservatives had resolved not to vote for Courtney, the Liberal Unionists could not carry him to victory. The proposition was incontestable, and a resolution that the Liberal Unionists would be unable to support him at the next election was carried by 42 to 6. A second resolution, "that this meeting, though they feel it their painful duty to withdraw their support from Mr. Courtney, wish to assure him of the personal esteem in which they hold him and of their gratitude for the great services he has rendered to the Unionist cause," was carried unanimously.

From Lord St. Germans

June 17, 1900.—You will no doubt have heard from Snell the result of our meeting at Liskeard yesterday. He was much affected, poor fellow, and resigned at once. The meeting was very quiet and orderly, and, as far as I could hear, only friendly expressions were used about you personally; but it seemed to be the general feeling that, at this anxious crisis, the Division should be represented by a Member prepared to support the policy of the Government in South Africa. Of course I cannot pretend to regret the decision of the meeting, but I do very sincerely regret that circumstances should have arisen to call for such a decision.

Undeterred by rebuffs Courtney continued his campaign in the country. Speaking at Bradford he quoted Mr.

Balfour's admission that we had no quarrel with the Free State. "I ask any one if it is not true that if gold had not been discovered we should have had no quarrel with the Transvaal and no war. We shall have to keep at least 50,000 men permanently in South Africa to prevent the continual bursting out of that spirit of freedom which we can never stamp out." The Free State should be re-established. The Transvaal could be partitioned into two provinces, mining and agricultural, of a new State with large autonomy. These proposals, however, failed to secure the assent of all those who shared his detestation of the war.

From F. C. Selous

June 30, 1900.—My disinclination to take any further part in opposing the present scheme of our Government to annex the Transvaal and the Orange Free State arises, not from any change of views regarding South African affairs, but from a conviction that a racial enmity has been aroused by the present war of so intense a nature that the future will be full of the most appalling difficulties and dangers, no matter what settlements may ultimately be determined upon. I therefore shrink from taking part in any further protests against the policy of our Government, because to do so seems to me to carry with it the idea that the protester, if allowed a free hand, would be able to arrange a settlement in South Africa that would in time bring about peace and goodwill between the British and the Dutch Afrikanders. I have now personally no further hope that any form of settlement can bring about such a result. The annexation of the Republics I look upon as a gross piece of tyranny and injustice from an ethical point of view; but I am not sure that things have not now been brought to such a pass that British supremacy in South Africa can only be maintained by force. That it can be maintained for an indefinite period by such means against the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants of the country I do not believe; and, when the gold fields are exhausted, the government of the hinterland of South Africa must revert to the people who live there, who will be mainly, I believe, Dutch. You have always been consistent in your views regarding the policy which ought to have been pursued by Great Britain in South Africa, and as you are a Member of Parliament you have every right and indeed your position makes it incumbent upon you to give expression to your convictions; but, as I am only a private individual and

as my views are now most pessimistic concerning the future of South Africa, no matter what the settlement may be after the war, my inclination is to keep my thoughts to myself. In a letter which I wrote to the *Speaker* I pointed out some of the dangers which would arise from the annexation of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal; one of them being that such annexations would make all the Dutch Afrikanders in South Africa disloyal to the British connection. This result has, however, already been achieved by the vindictive policy now being pursued in the Cape Colony by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner, and whether the Republics are granted a limited independence or not I fear that the fact must be faced that the Dutch throughout South Africa have been made into one people, animated with a deep distrust of and aversion to the British Government, and a bitter resentment against Sir Alfred Milner, its chief representative in South Africa.

For six months the House of Commons was debarred from debating the deeper issues of the war and the settlement; but on July 25 the Colonial Office vote provided an opportunity for majority and minority to re-state their case. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, whose plume ever waved in the thickest of the fight, moved a reduction of salary and passionately denounced the "horrors" that were in progress. The scarcely less impetuous attack of Sir Robert Reid brought up the Colonial Secretary, who was followed by Mr. Lloyd George, Labouchere and Campbell-Bannerman. The Liberal leader dissociated himself from the unmeasured language of the mover, but added that he could not vote against the amendment, as he disapproved the policy of the Government. Mr. Balfour and Courtney then rose together, and the Leader of the House naturally took precedence.

Courtney's speech was a virtual farewell to the Chamber of which he had been a member for twenty-three years. "It is the last occasion of this session and perhaps of this Parliament on which issue can be taken on South African policy. Though most will return, it may not be given to every one of us, and those who have something to say had better take the opportunity, even at the risk of being silenced for ever after." The Liberal leader, he continued, commanded his sympathy, almost his commiseration; he

was a good man struggling with adversity. "I look upon the Colonial Secretary as responsible for the great error of the war and as mainly responsible for the great error of policy which is about to crown the war." He misunderstood the problem from the first, and he thought a Dutchman could not be loyal unless he approved his policy. "There are tens of thousands of loyal Dutch, and you are alienating them." The Government had announced that the Republics were to become Crown colonies after the period of military occupation; but Campbell-Bannerman was right in protesting against such a transitional stage. Military occupation was essentially provisional, while Crown colony government had a tendency to last. "I am asked what is the alternative to annexation? What prevents the reconstruction of these States with a greater or less degree of freedom, involving disarmament and a partial reorganisation of the Rand, but leaving a substantially free government to the Free State and at least to the pastoral portion of the Transvaal? I do not say it is certain to succeed, after this year of warfare. You will have need of the best head and the best heart you can send out, for it is mainly a question of temper. Some men who admit that annexation is wrong still say it is inevitable because the British people are determined on it. But it is a patriot's part, when he sees a policy being adopted which he believes to be wrong now and full of injury for the future, to say so and to try to alter the temper of his fellow-countrymen." Sir Edward Grey, who followed, paid a generous tribute to the speaker, "who never intervenes without raising the tone of the debate," and once again announced his support of the Government. All pretence of Liberal unity was now abandoned. Forty Liberals voted with the Government, thirty-one with Sir Wilfrid Lawson, while Campbell-Bannerman and thirty-five followers walked out. The result was a virtual invitation to the Government to spring a khaki election on the country at the earliest opportunity.

Courtney's speech was applauded by friends and fellow-members, many of whom guessed that it would be his last utterance in the House of Commons.

From Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman

MY DEAR COURTNEY,—One line of admiration and sympathy for your splendid speech yesterday.—Yours always,

H. C.-B.

From Frederic Harrison (to Mrs. Courtney)

July 27, 1900.—I congratulate you on the fine speech our leader made in the debate—one worthy of so momentous an occasion and of him. I fear that it is the last fully reported speech the great public will be able to read before what seems the inevitable collapse of the Republics and perhaps the extinction of the Liberal party. The prospect opened by the debate and division taken as a whole, and still more by the ominous article in the *Times* to-day, seems most depressing for any future good. For the immediate future, I would say. For, even if the cause of right is silenced for a time—and the prospects of an October dissolution are dark enough—I will never believe that this defeat is final. I am as certain of the return of good sense to Englishmen as I am of the ultimate independence of the Dutch Afrikanders. As Olive Schreiner is reported to have said, whilst five thousand Dutch women survive the race can never be crushed. It may indeed take a generation to restore the free life of the Dutch farmer; and perhaps few of us will live to see it. But the revulsion of British feeling against the Rhodesian conspiracy will take place I am confident within a year or two at most. And even if the next Parliament (destined to be very short and very disorganised) have a record of brute force to its account, I look forward confidently to see Mr. Courtney form a determined party either in or out of the House, and recognised, within at most a generation, as the leader of the true Liberals who will not see England turned into a Napoleonic empire.

After the Liskeard meeting of June, Sir Lewis Molesworth, grandson of the famous Colonial Secretary, was selected as the Unionist candidate; but a good many electors who had followed Courtney since 1886 were anxious to retain his services and suggested reunion with the Liberals for that purpose. A joint meeting was accordingly held at Liskeard, where a letter reiterating his Liberal faith was read from the sitting member.

To the Chairman

I have just seen a letter asking some friends to meet together on Saturday next which has surprised no less than gratified me. I have opposed Home Rule, but I claim never to have ceased to be a Liberal. Home Rule is not at present an issue before the nation; and Home Rule apart I have persistently endeavoured to establish unity of feeling between Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom, while I have withstood partial or class legislation at home, and have striven to maintain in relation to foreign nations that friendly and equitable temper which is indispensable to peace and domestic progress. It has been a matter of accusation against me that I have repeatedly opposed the present Government; but if the occasions of my opposition be examined, it will be found that I could not have acted otherwise without abandoning my deepest Liberal convictions. The situation, however, has been not infrequently irksome, and I should feel a great sense of relief if the separating line of Home Rule were forgotten and we were once more as we were before 1886. It would be idle to close this letter without reference to the present war. I have never questioned the imperfections of the Government of the Transvaal; but I have looked for their removal through peaceful means, and have strongly opposed an irritating and menacing diplomacy, bringing us to the brink of war. The first act of hostilities was indeed taken by the Boers, and it was necessary to repel it; but this has now been successfully accomplished. The policy of leaving no shred of independence to either Republic seems to me of the worst promise for the future. No choice is easy; but with a return of a sober and more peaceful temper I am persuaded that a settlement could be effected that might allow the memory of the evils of the last ten months to be forgotten.

The great majority of Liberals refused to vote for a Unionist, and on September 5 invited Alderman Snape of Liverpool, who had sat in Parliament from 1892 to 1895, to stand as "a bonâ fide Liberal." The decision was no surprise to Courtney, though it meant that he would not stand again for South-East Cornwall. The news reached him in Scotland, where he was spending the holidays.

To Mr. Dyer, of Liskeard

September 7.—I have just received the report of Wednesday's meeting. I am afraid you will have been disappointed by the scant attention paid to your appeal for Liberal unity. I am not sure that in the present destruction of parties a bold declaration that I should appeal to the electorate might not prove successful; and the step might be justified, apart from possible success, as a means of testing the true opinion of the division. But I cannot persuade myself to take this course; for the contest would be extremely painful to me personally. If I do not at once retire from South-East Cornwall, it is because the situation is not even yet formally defined. Mr. Snape has been invited by the Liberal Committee to contest the division, and has taken time to consider his decision. His grasp of the situation in South Africa is not mine; but he leans towards the right, and his judgment, like that of the nation, may grow clearer and stronger through further experience. On the subjects now thrown into the background he seems fitted to unite Liberal supporters of all kinds.

On September 18 Parliament was dissolved and Courtney issued a farewell message to his supporters and friends.

To his Constituents

A dissolution is officially announced, and it is surely not unbecoming that I should address you a few words of farewell. I must confess that the severance of ties so long subsisting is painful; but I cannot challenge the right of electors to withdraw their support from one whose opinion on the great question of the hour is not that approved by the majority. History will determine what is the right judgment to be passed on the South African conflict; but for the present I must admit that I am out-voted. I am conscious that my long experience as your member has been characterised by an independence, the tolerance of which on your part has been unprecedented and magnanimous; and for this forbearance and support I offer you my sincerest thanks. Through it alone have I been enabled to achieve such services as I have rendered. What I have written is due to all of you; but I cannot conclude without adding a word of thanks to that great company of friends whose private kindnesses have been as signal as the support they have publicly given me. I shall ever retain a most grateful memory of the friendship and goodwill I have so long enjoyed.

The election ran its expected course, and the electors were duly informed that every vote for a Liberal was a vote for the Boers.

Journal

September 24.—We are completely and entirely out of it. My great man is in splendid isolation. To Ripon to stay at Studley Royal. We were met by telegrams, and telegrams continued for the two days we were there, mostly from various hopeless constituencies, suggesting he should stand. Two requests for a speech from Exeter and Battersea, which we acceded to after some hesitation.

Courtney received an enthusiastic welcome at Battersea, where John Burns, who had fearlessly denounced the war in Sunday meetings in Battersea Park, increased his majority; and he rejoiced that despite a Unionist majority of 134 all the leading Liberal opponents of the war came safely through the fiery ordeal. His own fate had been so long determined in advance that he bore the blow without flinching.

To Sir John Scott

October 3.—I got your sympathetic letter from Bad Nauheim last week. I told you more than a year ago that I should lose my seat over this business, and I have really no reason to complain of what has happened. Our electoral system is absurd enough in not providing the House of Commons with the assistance of opinions however widely held which do not command local majorities; but as long as you simply ask the electors of a particular area what is the opinion of the majority within it, you cannot quarrel with them for giving a straightforward answer to the question.

To John Morley

October 26.—A congratulation on your election goes without saying. Your return without visiting your constituents was one of the best episodes of the struggle, and your two letters were perhaps of more use to the country at large than speeches would have been. The General Election has very emphatically enforced my old moral that our representative system does the nation great harm in excluding from the Great Council the voices of

minorities not feeble in numbers and strong in conviction, but yet failing to pick up a majority in any enclosed area. But in answer to suggestions that I might underline this truth I have felt that any such utterance on my part would be counted the squeal of a pig run over by a wheel. Indeed I think people are beginning to realise this truth, even you yourself, and may if left to themselves see that what they have disregarded as a mere alteration of machinery is a liberation of life.

Old Parliamentary comrades in the fight against Imperialism mourned his exclusion, and endeavoured to comfort themselves with the hope that his absence from St. Stephen's would be brief.

From James Bryce

Since the polling at Aberdeen I have been travelling about speaking for divers friends, and so have only now found a quiet time to thank you for your very kind letter. It gave great pleasure to both of us. Scotland has had the fever almost as acutely as England. Everywhere in the Eastern constituencies from eight to twelve per cent of our voters have gone over on the war. On the West side the percentage has been larger. The hopeful fact is that those who, like T. Shaw and R. T. Reid and Sinclair, have been opposed to war right through have fared quite as well as those who feared to speak or fell in with the popular clamour. The great mistake was made in October 1899. If all those who then saw that the war was a gratuitous and deplorable blunder had gone straight to their constituents and said so, giving them abundance of facts and arguments, we should never have had the subsequent débâcle. There might have been an open split in the Liberal party. But that would have been better than what has happened. Four-fifths of the party would have stood committed against the war; and its tone and sense of honour would have been far better. Nor is it clear that the risk of an open and permanent split is over. We may have another 25th of July if the reaction does not set in soon; and whatever the so-called Imperialist Liberals may desire, they practically strengthen Chamberlain. I can't tell you how grieved we are not to have you in the House of Commons, nor how great a misfortune we think it for the country. I do hope some means may be found for your soon returning.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LAST PHASE

COURTNEY'S compulsory withdrawal from Parliament made at first but little immediate difference in his life, for owing to blocking motions the opportunities of speaking at Westminster on South African affairs had been rare. Herbert Spencer wrote to suggest that he should devote a part of his leisure to writing a book entitled *How we came by our Possessions*; but he preferred to continue his frontal attacks. The ratification of Ministerial policy at the election, however, was not encouraging to active propaganda.

To Mr. Sturge

October 10, 1900.—It may be desirable that we should all maintain a kind of suspended vitality; for though there is nothing definite to be done at the moment there is much to be watched, and a situation requiring some declaration if nothing more might be very rapidly developed. On the whole I am inclined to think that this is the best attitude to assume; but an alternative is the union if possible of all the forces that have been working side by side against this war into an organisation against militarism, which might be briefly and eloquently described as an anti-jingo union. I am, however, disposed to feel with respect to this that it might be the creation of yet another society working in a cloud of generalities which would presently be shewn to cover every grade of activity or inactivity such as the Peace and Arbitration Societies and the Society of Friends include. What indeed could we hope from our Anti-Jingo Union when the Christian Church, which ought long since to have realised and always to have maintained this social

purpose, has been and is such as we know it? This last view you may perhaps regard as personal to myself, to whom most organisations appear as bodies founded for the painless extinction of the ideas of their founders.

His view of the task awaiting the opponents of the war was generally shared by his comrades in arms.

From James Bryce

October 22, 1900.—It is unluckily impossible for me to come to town on Wednesday for the Conciliation Committee meeting as I have engagements here. So far as I can judge there are only two things the Committee can now do. One is to continue to try to enlighten the public regarding the truth of the case in South Africa. It is astonishing how even intelligent people are still under delusions, such as the "great Dutch conspiracy," the arming of the Transvaal since 1881, etc. To remove these delusions so far as possible, if people will consent to listen to arguments on what they are coming to regard as *chose jugée*, would accelerate the reaction which may otherwise come too late. The other is to watch current events, and particularly the resettlement and the appointments made in the conquered States. I confess to seeing no present alternative to Crown Colony Government except a provisional military government. Military indeed any government must needs be for a time; and to establish one under a good military man with some sensible civil assistants from home, not South African English, seems to me better than the mockery of a quasi-representative government which a Crown Colony would mean.

During the second period of the war, which may be said to have begun with the annexation of the Republics, the stubborn resistance of the Boers, prolonged beyond all expectation, produced a growing exasperation of feeling and a resort to ever harsher measures, wrathfully described by the Leader of the Opposition as "methods of barbarism." A long communication was sent by the Conciliation Committee to the Prime Minister, entitled "A plain statement of the change that has come over the war in South Africa," containing details of the farm-burning and systematic devastation which were designed to starve the enemy into

surrender. The reply was to the effect that the British Commander-in-Chief had paid too much, not too little, attention to the call of humanity. In the political field Courtney saw no hope for South Africa so long as the High Commissioner was in control; and he suggested by tongue and pen that he should be appointed Governor-General of the new Commonwealth of Australia. The announcement that he was to add the Governorship of the Transvaal to his other duties filled him with despair. "It is incredible," he wrote in the *Speaker* (December 15), "that Mr. Chamberlain should hope for reconciliation under such auspices. He will not confess it, but he is far too clever not to know that Sir Alfred's handling of South African problems has been a ghastly failure." At this period, however, the Colonial Secretary's mind was bent not on reconciliation but on victory.

Journal

December 17.—Though L. is out of Parliament we hear almost more of its ins and outs than ever, M.P.'s calling and writing for advice. Channing on Sunday. Meets C.-B. at lunch at Buchanan's. So my old prophet is still wanted. Yet though they may talk bravely and he may answer wisely, it all comes to naught.

Christmas Eve.—We had a sudden invitation to dine with the Morleys. It was his birthday. He seemed his old self; well, if a little hoarse. He astonished us by saying he was going to stay with Chamberlain. His feeling is that nothing can be done at present and that wicked as the war has been—"the crime of this generation"—he can see no solution but subjugation of the Boers.

Though Courtney's political attitude during the war naturally brought him into contact with those who shared his detestation of the struggle, he was often in the company of men who, like his fellow-members of the Breakfast Club and his brothers-in-law, took the majority view. At the Old Masters' Exhibition an old constituent left the room in order to avoid shaking hands; but this example of intolerance was happily unique. Among the visitors to Cheyne Walk were prominent Ministers.

Journal

January 1901.—Gerald Balfour invites himself to lunch. Very friendly. He says he wishes there were more men like L. in the House.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach dines with us. He remarks he has been eighteen years in office and is sick and tired of it. I said, You feel like the Duke of Devonshire in the 1880 Government who, writing to Lord Spencer about a horse, put in a P.S.—When will this beastly Government go out? Sir Michael laughed and said, That is exactly how I feel.

At this moment, when the skies were filled with storm-clouds, the state of Courtney's heart began to cause discomfort to himself and acute anxiety to his wife. The first symptoms occurred while he was attending the meeting of the Privy Council at St. James's Palace to hear the new King take the oath, and to swear allegiance to him.

Journal

January 26, 1901.—Black day and sleepless night. He seemed so strong and full of vigour. Is this notice to quit or a gentle hint that at sixty-eight a man is mortal?

February 3.—Barlow came and made a very careful examination. L. has a serious affection of the heart, not dangerous, but necessitating a change of habits, no walking uphill, only once or twice a day upstairs, political meetings not at present if ever again, put up his legs as much as convenient. Barlow added that there was plenty of work in him yet. Still it is a great blow. It is hard to have to stand aside and watch our friends striving, with none of the leaders ready to lead.

Happily the disquieting symptoms of the heart proved to be due rather to blood pressure than to weakness, and medical treatment gradually enabled him to recover his walking powers. Though for some months he felt a certain "insecurity of tenure," he insisted on carrying out his engagements, among them the delivery of his Presidential Address to the Social and Political Education League on "The Making and Reading of Newspapers."[1] "Having

[1] Published in the *Contemporary Review*.

known something of both worlds," he began, " I say it is as easy and as common to be honest in Fleet Street as at Westminster." The difficulty was rather to be fair than to be honest. There was an irresistible temptation to writers to magnify the importance of the hour, and to overlook its relation to past and future, while readers were in danger of forgetting that a paper was no more than the voice of a single individual. He exhorted his hearers to read some paper opposed to their views, or, if that was asking too much, to study their own journal in a critical spirit. The moral of the address was contained in its closing reflections. " Nearly all the papers were wrong about the American Civil War. We are as fallible to-day as we were then. It is a thought to make every man cautious, and yet bold and patient. He may be wrong ; but though there are a thousand against him he may be right, and the odds he has to meet do not exactly increase with the number of his opponents."

Early in the new year the Conciliation Committee published as its sixty-fifth leaflet a letter by Lieutenant Morrison, a Canadian volunteer, describing the burning of farms and villages, and expressing pity and regret. The document had appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, which had copied it from the *New York Sun*. The letter had every appearance of being complete ; but it afterwards appeared that the original was twice as long, and that the unpublished passages justified the policy of devastation. The Ministerial Press naturally took full advantage of the slip, falling on the peccant Committee and its Chairman with exultant violence. One paper spoke of the leaflet as a gross libel. The only libel, however, was to have believed that the young officer had felt more repugnance to his handiwork than was the case ; for the facts were not challenged, and the Committee at once published the whole letter side by side with the first version. Leading members of the Committee were favoured with anonymous letters of abuse, among them Selous, who had already expressed a wish to resign his position as Vice-President on the ground that its efforts were unavailing.

From F. C. Selous

March 9.—Since last writing to you I have read the full account of the meeting of the S.A.C.C. at the Westminster Palace Hotel on February 28. Your speech was most admirable, and I only hope that your wise counsels will be supported by the leaders of the Liberal party in Parliament. Personally I fear that whatever the settlement may be after the war is over, the Boers will not forget nor forgive the destruction of their nationality and the unjust annexation of their countries, and I can see little hope of true peace and concord in South Africa. It is because I feel that all hope of reconciliation between the British and the Dutch in South Africa is now hopeless and must remain so for at least another generation that I wish to withdraw. It now lies with the Liberal party in Parliament to see that the Boers are treated with elementary justice after the war; but even just government by an alien and now detested people, and a greater amount of generosity than there is any reason to hope for, cannot bring about contentment and reconciliation for a long time to come. It seems to me that by remaining Vice-President of the S.A.C.C. I arrogate to myself the pretension of being able to formulate some scheme that would bring peace and contentment to South Africa. All such hope passed when terms of peace were refused after the occupation of Pretoria, and the Government and people of this country declared their resolve to do away with every shred of independence in either of the Boer Republics. I am now hopeless for the future and wish to retire into the "silence of despair." I will, however, defer my resignation till such time as suits your convenience.

Undeterred by the shrill anger of the Press, and the pessimism of his friends, Courtney continued to seek and to urge some other method than unconditional surrender for ending the war. "We agree in desiring to find some honourable way out of the present situation," he wrote to the *Times* on January 15. "Our hard-tried soldiers are weary of the war. As for the enemy, he is wearing out his numbers. Cannot we settle the dispute by better means than that of exhaustion? You say we want British supremacy throughout South Africa in a fashion to secure equal justice to all white inhabitants and to prevent a recurrence of the contest. These ends would apparently be secured if the control of foreign relations were vested

exclusively in the British Government, if disarmament were effected, and if it could be ensured that in no part should there be any discrimination in law or administration as against British or Boer. Whatever the settlement, a substantial British force must be maintained for some time in Africa. If the country could be divided into autonomous provinces, this force could prevent any abuse of autonomy which would invalidate the condition of equal rights. Suppose the Orange River territory were at once autonomous, what mischief could it do which could not be instantaneously checked? If the Transvaal were separated into two parts so as to keep the mining population of the Rand away from the pastoral burghers, the risk of discriminating legislation would be so diminished that the power of checking any action in that direction would be easy. Is this an impossible dream? In Canada a French province is autonomous, and it is hoped that by and by Boer provinces may be equally autonomous. What is the substantial risk in offering to try this experiment at once? The control of the customs duties of South Africa would be vested in the supreme power, the proceeds being apportioned among the ports. The gist of my suggestion is to let self-organised communities govern themselves at once, subject to certain conditions for securing peace and equality which can be enforced at once if disregarded. Risk must be run in any case. Would those we are fighting consent to such provincial freedom? I do not know. The question of practicability can be tested only by experiment. An armistice might be necessary. With fit men the problem could be solved. It is here that I touch the main difficulty of the situation and it is here I stop."

The "main difficulty" of the situation was irremovable; for the Colonial Secretary had received an emphatic vote of confidence at the General Election, and the High Commissioner enjoyed his ungrudging support. A mission to England from Cape Colony consisting of Mr. Merriman, the most brilliant politician in South Africa, and Mr. Sauer, a leading Dutch member of the Schreiner Ministry, failed to deflect Chamberlain's course by a hair's breadth.

From J. X. Merriman

February 19, 1901.—I had my interview with Chamberlain yesterday. It—I will not say disappointed, for I did not expect much—astonished me a great deal to find him with such a slight grip of the details of South African affairs and of Colonial history. He must be a robust Imperialist whose faith would survive an hour's discussion with him on the business of the Empire. We had an hour and a half and travelled over much ground. The impression left on my mind was that he was entirely saturated with the British loyalist view as conveyed by Milner, and that he regarded a Crown Colony as a panacea for the ruin he has brought on South Africa. Otherwise, though chilling, he was perfectly polite, as indeed it was his duty to be.

From J. W. Sauer (to Mrs. Courtney)

The interview with Mr. Chamberlain came off yesterday, and gave as I anticipated little hope for an amelioration of the state of things in my unhappy country. As I listened to Mr. Chamberlain it was clear that a continuance of the spirit displayed by him will lead to the severance of the ties between England and South Africa in time. He has no sympathy, and he entirely lacks the necessary imagination for a man at a distance to understand the Dutch. They will not submit one day longer than necessity compels to military or Downing Street rule, and they will sacrifice what is even more than their lives to live as free men.

The delegates made a prolonged stay, addressed a few meetings, and discussed the situation with all the leading opponents of the war.

Journal

February 12.—Men's dinner—Merriman, Herbert Paul, Lloyd George, Sir Alfred Lyall, Channing, Edmund Robertson, Belloc.

February 20.—Merriman and Sauer, Bryce, C. P. Scott, etc., dine. Mr. Sauer impresses us a good deal. He is so earnest, simple and direct. Speaks pathetically of his people and their character and yet with regretful affection of their and his feeling

about England and the Queen in the past. He told us Steyn was a noble fellow. An English friend had met him coming out of the Raad when the decision was taken to throw in the lot of the Free State with the Transvaal. Steyn said: "We have decided to abide by our treaty. This will be the last time we shall meet, but we *must* fight."

On June 12 a public dinner was given to the Afrikander statesmen, at which Edmund Robertson presided, and Courtney fervently denounced the High Commissioner's inability to understand his foes' passionate attachment to their national life. "To the records of Greece, Switzerland and Holland must be added, by those who desire their children to know what it is to fight and to suffer for the cause of manhood and liberty, the story of the Republics of South Africa." The next evening a reception was held at Cheyne Walk to meet Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer, and among the guests were Campbell-Bannerman and Lord and Lady Aberdeen. A week or two later Courtney's sixty-ninth birthday brought tributes of affection and admiration from old colleagues and friends.

From Lord Ripon

July 6.—The *Daily News* tells me that this is your birthday. I hasten to offer you my best wishes. You have set your countrymen such a noble example of courage and self-sacrifice that every lover of high principle in public life must heartily pray that your life may be preserved for many returns of this day.

Courtney's courage and disinterestedness were as fully recognised by Liberal Imperialists as by "Little Englanders," and his personal relations with their leaders remained friendly. He declared in a speech that while Sir Edward Grey's attitude on South Africa filled him with grief, he never thought of him without esteem and even affection. His sentiments were fully reciprocated by the most uncompromising Liberal champion of the High Commissioner and his policy.

From Sir Edward Grey

March 15, 1901.—I would very gladly have come to see you, but I am on my way in the opposite direction and shall not be in London before the 25th. I had hoped to come to see you after the session began, if only to express my very sincere regret that you are not still in the House. We were often on opposite sides, but I always liked listening to your speeches and felt the better for them and I shall miss them now. One mind may owe much to another without being able to pay its debt by accepting the other's opinion on a particular question, and that has been my case more than once. As regards the immediate future the practical difference of opinion seems likely to be the wisdom or otherwise of making Milner the administrator of the Transvaal and Orange State. The estimate of him must vary according to the view taken of the cause of the war. I have accepted Milner's view of the situation in South Africa before the war and should support his position now; you must hold a contrary opinion, but I should be very glad to talk about it.

Differences in the Liberal party in regard not only to concrete problems of policy but to the underlying philosophy of empire had been felt long before the war. Friction arose over Uganda during Lord Rosebery's tenure of office; and in his speech at Edinburgh in 1896 resigning the leadership of the party the ex-Premier singled out certain of his colleagues for praise, while others, unnamed but not unknown, were censured by implication. Two years later Sir William Harcourt, his disillusioned successor, followed his example, complaining bitterly of the cross-currents which rendered his position untenable. During the winter of 1898 Mr. Morley publicly lamented that the virus of Imperialism had infected some of his political friends; and the reconquest of the Sudan was simultaneously blessed and banned from the Front Opposition Bench. As the storm-clouds began to gather in South Africa in the spring of 1899 the cleavage deepened, and on the outbreak of war all pretence of united thought and action was cast aside. Followers of the Gladstonian tradition rallied round the banner of Campbell-Bannerman, and the Imperialists turned wistful glances towards Ajax in his tent. While the two sections thus

wrestled for its soul the Liberal party was for practical purposes out of action, and qualified and unqualified practitioners came forward with suggestions to heal its sickness. When the Liberal leader denounced the farm-burnings and other "methods of barbarism," and Mr. Morley asserted that he and his friends represented the main stream of Liberalism, Mr. Asquith vigorously protested against excommunication at a banquet to the Essex Liberals on June 20, 1901, and claimed a place for Liberal Imperialism in the counsels of the party. On July 2 Campbell-Bannerman, speaking at Southampton, confessed that the party was in a critical position. An attempt to throw a bridge across the gulf was made at a meeting held at the Reform Club on July 9, when the Imperialists expressed their desire to avoid a permanent split while claiming their right to the unfettered expression of opinion.

The Reform Club concordat merely plastered the gaping wound, and the bandages were roughly torn off a few days later by Lord Rosebery, who responded to a request from the City Liberal Club for his opinion by a letter published in the *Times* on July 17. "The Opposition has met and united or reunited on the double basis of a hearty and undisputed allegiance to its leader and a complete liberty of action with regard to the one vital question before the country. The Liberal party can only become a power when it has made up its mind on Imperial questions. The whole Empire has rallied to the war. What is the attitude of the Liberal party? Neutrality and an open mind. This is an impossible attitude and only spells Liberal impotence. Either the war is just or unjust, either the methods are uncivilised or legitimate. In the first case it should be stopped at any cost, in the second it is our duty to support it with all our might. These are supreme issues; none greater ever divided two hostile parties. How then can one party agree to differ on them? It is urged that this is a transient difference. I do not think so. Fox opposed the war with France, split his party and excluded it from power for forty years. Statesmen who dissociate themselves from the nation in a great national question dissociate themselves

for much longer than they think. That is a consideration which should not weigh one instant against conviction; but it should not be forgotten by politicians who do not desire to see the Government fall permanently into the hands of their opponents and the indefinite postponement of their own domestic policy. The severance is not simply on the war, but a sincere, fundamental and incurable antagonism of principle with regard to the Empire. One school, blind as I think to the developments of the world, is avowedly insular; the other places as the first article of its creed the responsibilities and maintenance of our free and beneficent Empire. This is not the fault of any leader. It could not perhaps have been avoided, and it cannot now be healed by a party meeting. One school or other must prevail if the Liberal party is once more to become a force."

Among the commentators on this manifesto was Courtney, who, though not a member of the party, was increasingly interested in its fortunes. "I agree in recognising the existence of two irreconcilable schools of opinion, but I should let the struggle work itself out. Lord Rosebery points to Fox as clinching his argument, since his opposition to the French war broke up his party for more than a generation. He does not ask whether he was right or wrong. Why does he not refer to Burke's action during the American war? What has he got to say about the conduct of Cobden and Bright during the Crimean war? The Prime Minister has avowed his belief that the Crimean war was a blunder. Lord Rosebery leaves us without a clue to discover what he would think of their action in trying to save their countrymen from such a blunder. I do not think I wrong him in saying that he has been fascinated by the glitter of Bismarck's principles, and looks to agglomerations of territory kept together by military force as the highest achievement of statesmanship. The Liberal Imperialist walks about in Bismarck's old clothes. He wants to spread the domination of his race over wider areas and to bind the whole in links of iron which, while keeping inferior races in subjection, must fetter the freedom of the dominant race itself. Against this the older faith must

challenge comparison. The dim masses of the nations do not seem to have thoroughly accepted the policies of Imperialism. Social democracy in Germany is a force that must be counted. In Belgium the King may develop his Congo estate, but the workmen over whom he rules are not attracted by it. The moving force in Italy is steady against expansion. It is confessed by many Republicans that if Bryanism had been divorced from silver at the last election it might have won. All the Parliamentary representatives of our own working men are anti-Imperialist. These things might make Lord Rosebery pause. History alone will settle which principle is the right one to inspire the Liberal party and to give guidance to the nation."

The ex-Premier, who had claimed and exercised the right of plain speaking, had no fault to find with the frankness of his critic; but he denied that his ideals of Empire were Bismarckian, and referred to his Rectorial Address at Glasgow in the previous year. As it chanced Courtney had read the address at the time of its publication, and had dictated a long open letter to its author. "Not the satisfaction of duty but the maintenance of power is the cry of your appeal. What moves you is the apprehension of attack. You remind me of the Priest of Nemi who keeps watch and ward over his temple, weapon in hand to confront the attacks of successive assailants, one of whom will some day kill him as he killed his predecessor, only to succeed to the same armed watchfulness and the same inevitable fate. Your true temper is shewn when you bend before the Romans of old and the Prussians of to-day. Referring to the victorious progress of Prussia in 1864 and the following years you ask 'Can there be a clearer instance of the building up of a Power by vigilant care?' That we may understand what this building up means you call attention to the fact how 'with the aid of trained, able servants not afraid to face heroic measures,' she emerged more puissant than before. What were the heroic measures of which her able servants were not afraid? I can discover no other meaning than that you admire the power which trampled upon Parliamentary independence, maintaining and developing

an army by a Minister supported by his King in defiance of the representatives of his people. There are some who will think that the unity of Germany, established for the moment in 1848, and certain to reappear, had a premature delivery at too heavy a price and in less promising guise under the arbitrary statecraft of Bismarck, which you tend to glorify. You forget that under the imposing appearance of Imperial strength there is an ever-growing popular discontent which has gained the mastery of all the chief cities of the Empire." The letter, though never published, was sent to Lord Rosebery, who took the criticism in good part, while pleading not guilty to some of the offences with which he was charged.

The war severed Courtney's official connection with the Unionist party and turned his bark towards the Liberal shore. He was still opposed to Home Rule; but the supreme issue before the country was no longer the defence of the Union but the restoration of peace in South Africa. Though Imperialism had made converts of some of the Liberal chiefs, the Leader of the Opposition and the majority of his colleagues stood firmly by the Gladstonian tradition, and it was they alone who could be expected in happier days to bind up the wounds of war. In responding to the toast of "The Liberal Cause" at the Oxford Palmerston Club on November 30, he pointed out that the Liberal cause was by no means the same thing as the Liberal party. "The Liberal cause cannot perish unless the aspirations of human nature cease." He proceeded to test the situation in South Africa by Liberal principles. "It becomes the duty of Liberals to ask themselves over and over again, Is this thing necessary? Is this position defensible? How have we got into it? Is there any way out of it? The national character becomes demoralised in the struggle. The burning of farms has aggravated resistance, the concentration camps have made the enemy more bitter than ever, and the public executions have developed in Cape Colony a spirit of antagonism which did not exist at the commencement of the war. The proclamation of August banishing the Boer leaders who did not lay down their arms

by September 15 is now seen to be folly. Annexation is regarded as irrevocable. But the effacement of two free peoples must be odious to every Liberal, and is an excessive punishment on any estimate of the guilt, and will bring on those who come after us endless trouble. The war should be ended by discussion, and the treaty of peace should include disarmament and a customs union."

The Liberals of South-East Cornwall had refused to invite Courtney to stand at the election of 1900 ; but their beating taught many of them to believe that he was more likely to win the seat than a stranger who was sound on Home Rule. In March 1901 he was informally sounded by the Liberal Association of West Cornwall, and sent a negative reply. In December an invitation from the Liberals of his old constituency to address them with a view to his adoption as Liberal candidate was likewise declined.

To the Liberal Agent

December 18, 1901.—I have received your letter with much gratification. It would be a singular honour to be connected once more with the division. I must, however, be excused from accepting the invitation. I observe that it is not unanimous and that it is limited to a desire to hear my political views with a view to being adopted as a candidate. I may perhaps be allowed to say that my political views in general and more especially in connection with the present war must be intimately known throughout the constituency. Apart, however, from these considerations, I should not be justified in accepting the burden of candidature which would probably last many years. Had I no other calls upon me, few would be surprised that I should shrink from such a prolonged strain on my strength and energies. But indeed applications come upon me almost daily from different parts of the country for speech and action, and I conclude, not without reluctance, that a rigid economy of my time and strength compels me to put aside your invitation.

During the winter of 1901 Courtney's health had so much improved that he was able to address public meetings without undue fatigue. His two main themes were the folly of

"short cuts to success" and the necessity of a negotiated peace. The majority still demanded unconditional surrender; but as the war dragged on a growing number of its supporters began to hope that it might be terminated by a formal or informal discussion of the terms of submission. The cleavage of opinion extended to the highest quarters, though unknown to the public; for the Colonial Secretary and the High Commissioner, who had always disliked the policy of devastation, stood out for unconditional surrender, while its author, Lord Kitchener, desired to shorten the struggle by the offer of tolerable conditions. "Not a few are beginning to ask if there is no possible escape from the dilemma in which we find ourselves," declared Courtney to the Conciliation Committee in November 1901. "An escape is to be found in conciliation alone. Look at the miserable expedients by which we are now pursuing the war—the devastation of the land, the ruined homesteads, the burnt crops, the wells destroyed. We have estranged the Dutch in Cape Colony, so that our hold on that colony is now most insecure. Whatever military progress has been made, politically we have gone backward, and the hope of reconciliation is less. Yet the path for reconciliation is open if the right men are appointed. If a settlement is to stand, it must be brought about by negotiation. I agree with Colonel Hanna that nothing can be done till Lord Milner is withdrawn. And the Government at home—is its place fixed for ever? It has already lost its authority. Go where you will, you will find discontent and dissatisfaction. A new Cabinet might be formed with the mandate, 'You must find your way out of it.' In that case some trusted unknown men would go here and there, would find out what people were thinking at the Hague and the temper of the leaders in the field, and we might wake up one morning to discover that an arrangement had been made. If conciliation permeated the nation the thing could be done. I will almost prophesy that the thing will be done—the alternative is the loss of South Africa."

The cause of moderation received an immense impetus from the eagerly awaited speech of Lord Rosebery at Chester-

field on December 16, in which he opposed the policy of unconditional surrender and hinted at the utility of conversations " in a wayside inn." The hint was not in vain ; for within a week or two the first steps towards peace, unknown to the public, were taken by a private citizen, Francis Fox, a respected member of the Society of Friends, who journeyed to the Hague and invited the Dutch Government to offer mediation.

The Chesterfield speech monopolised public attention throughout the Christmas holidays, and the advice to the Liberal party to " clean its slate " was as much canvassed as the references to the war. Lord Rosebery was the most popular man in the country, and some of his hearers and readers cherished the notion that he might return to lead it or at least to share in its counsels ; but the illusion was soon dispelled by the ex-Premier himself, who had ceased to hold what had been since 1886 the distinctive tenet of the Liberal faith.

From John Morley

December 28, 1901.—I am much beset by people about the condition of the Liberal party. You will infer from the public prints in a day or two that we may finally take it as settled that Lord Rosebery will have nothing to say to such a party. For my own part I never supposed anything else. But the definite announcement will make a new situation, and one, to begin with, of much embarrassment to the Liberal Imperialists. I suppose the end, for the time, will be that our side of the House will drag on in the old misery and humiliation. My present purpose is to hold aloof from the official council, though I am in close communication with Campbell-Bannerman. He is extremely firm.

To John Morley

December 31, 1901.—I was much interested in getting your letter yesterday, the main fact of which seems to have already reached the newspapers. The result is a great blow to those eager worshippers who were ready to turn to Rosebery as their deliverer and to forget Campbell-Bannerman. But they will surely be very angry with Rosebery, though they deceived

themselves more than he deceived them. Why should not the reaction strengthen Campbell-Bannerman by rallying round him those who were moving in his direction before Rosebery spoke and who now find that they have been momentarily betrayed away from the path they were following?

While Liberal ex-Ministers were divided on the war, the Women's Liberal Federation gave steady support to the policy of the Liberal leader. In June 1900 Mrs. Courtney, supported by Mrs. Bryce and Lady Ripon, presided over a crowded women's meeting at Queen's Hall, at which a stately poem written for the occasion by William Watson was recited. About the same time an organisation called the "Conciliation Workers" was instituted, which grew into the Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children. In December Miss Emily Hobhouse, the Honorary Secretary, started for South Africa with Mr. and Mrs. Rowntree, and obtained leave from the High Commissioner and Lord Kitchener to proceed to Bloemfontein with clothes and supplies for the concentration camps, where the women and children from the devastated districts had been collected. Returning in the early summer of 1901, she informed her Committee of the sensational infant mortality and presented her recommendations for reform to the War Minister. Mr. Brodrick announced that a Commission consisting of Mrs. Fawcett and five other ladies would visit the camps and report, but declined to allow Miss Hobhouse to resume her labours. When she sailed in the autumn she was forbidden to land at Cape Town. Her deportation raised difficult legal questions, which were anxiously considered after her return home by her uncle Lord Hobhouse, Frederic Harrison, Edmund Robertson, Frederic Mackarness and Courtney. Though they all desired to take proceedings in order to test the legality of martial law, the plan was abandoned on the ground that the judiciary would probably follow its usual practice in time of war by refusing to challenge the action of the executive. The incident was reported to the Liberal Leader, who like Courtney had followed her work from the beginning with sympathetic interest and encouragement.

From Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (to Mrs. Courtney)

November 28, 1901.—I am much obliged to you for giving me so exact an account of Miss Hobhouse's adventures. How much more will it take to rouse the ire of our people? Will anything rouse it? She has been well advised to keep silent and act with deliberation, but I hope the whole case will be well exposed. I only made a casual reference to her at Bath, and the whole audience (a "genteel" champagne-luncheon audience too) rose and cheered. But it is only a lawyer that can properly deal with such a case. What has become of our eminent K.C.'s Lawson Walton and Robson for instance, not to mention the philosophic Haldane? Have they nothing to say about this, and about the Marais case? Everywhere I have found enthusiasm, and anything however strong about the war is cheered. Even the nervous M.P.'s see it and make as if they rejoiced!

The essential correctness of her tragic story was proved by the official reports to the Government, by the death of 26,000 women and children, and by the welcome though belated decision of the Colonial Secretary in November 1901 to take the matter out of the hands of the Secretary for War and to introduce the necessary reforms.[1]

The extension of martial law throughout Cape Colony in the autumn of 1901 was the reply of the Government to the sporadic revolts of the Cape Dutch; but its severities seemed to many observers more calculated to fan than to extinguish the flame of rebellion. When the execution of Scheepers appeared to announce a policy of even greater harshness, Courtney appealed to the leader of the Liberal Imperialists to raise his powerful voice on behalf of clemency.

To Lord Rosebery

February 13, 1902.—I turn to you, not I hope in vain! You are speaking to-morrow at Liverpool and whatever else you say there is one point you might urge with power. There may be legal arguments to defend the execution of Scheepers. There were overwhelming legal arguments to defend the execution of

[1] The figure of 20,000 given by Miss Hobhouse in her book, *The Brunt of the War*, was admittedly incomplete. The Boer Government subsequently compiled a roll, now stored in the archives at Pretoria, showing a total of over 27,000. Of these some 1400 were old men.

Ney ; but it has been condemned by history, and we have been always proud to believe that the Duke tried to prevent it. Let not Kritzinger undergo the same fate as Scheepers ! The scheme of executing these enemies is surely too sophistical and too odious to beguile your judgment, and a word such as you can say might serve to relieve us from the condemnation of Kritzinger's murder. I hope this appeal will be justified by your action.

When Lord Rosebery replied that unrestricted authority must be given to the man on the spot, his correspondent reminded him that both Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener had confessedly erred in issuing proclamations and taking steps which had to be recalled. The operation of martial law in Cape Colony was attacked about the same time by Lord Spencer and Lord Coleridge in the Upper House, and defended by the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor. The debate was analysed in the *Speaker* by Courtney, who protested against the extension of military authority to questions of civil conduct, such as the prevention of a lady landing at Cape Town. " Given unrestrained authority, power and an atmosphere of preternatural suspicion, fantastic tricks are naturally played." The discontent of the Dutch in Cape Colony had been in large measure due to such abuses of martial law. When the debate was renewed the Lord Chief Justice intervened to justify the proclamation of martial law in Cape Colony. " What is the real necessity for martial law ? " he asked. " It is the presence of the King's enemies, public or secret." Only the man on the spot could decide when and where it was necessary to proclaim and apply it. The speech was criticised in a second article in the *Speaker*, in which Courtney protested against the doctrine that there was no limit to the power of the executive in time of war. On the principles of Lord Alverstone, he argued, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman could be sent to the Tower if the Government cared to assert that his speeches were encouraging the King's enemies. Such a negation of law was needless for victory and demoralising both to rulers and ruled. The Chief Justice responded by sending his critic a reprint of his speech, accompanied by a courteous argumentative letter.

From Lord Alverstone

May 31, 1902.—I have no complaint whatever to make of your criticism, even if I had the right to do so. There are one or two passages in your article on which I would venture to make an observation, not with any idea of involving you in a discussion, but because, valuing your opinion as I do very highly, I should like you to understand exactly my position. As regards the fact that I intervened in the debate at all I appreciate your criticism. I did not speak without having taken the advice of wiser men, whose opinions I was entitled to respect. Your article states that I said I spoke because it had been my duty for twelve years to advise the Government as Attorney-General. I do not think that anything I said could have been so understood. I only referred to the fact that I had occupied that position to make it clear that I had not studied the subject for the first time in connection with this war. You go on to say that it is an obvious reply that all my study and advice came from the point of view of the executive Government. Of course I do not know on what information you assume this, but I can assure you that nothing can be further from the fact. I first had to study the question carefully between 1886 and 1890 when I was called upon to advise in connection with the action of foreign governments towards British subjects in times of insurrection and war, when both my duty and my inclination would have led me to minimise the powers of the Executive under martial law.

A week or two later the statesmanlike policy of offering terms to the foe, which had won the support of Lord Salisbury and Lord Lansdowne, was rewarded by the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging. The terms of peace secured for the British Empire all that it had fought for, and allowed the Boers to retain their self-respect. The struggle in the forum ended with the struggle in the field, and Courtney looked back on his work and that of the Conciliation Committee without apologetic regrets. He had suffered the fate of Bright and Cobden during the Crimean War, and he was serenely confident that a subsequent generation would do him justice, as justice had already been done to them. "I do not say that every step taken, every word uttered, and every sentence written will be approved by the calm judge-

ment of posterity ; but I claim that no band of men has been animated by purer patriotism or a more passionate desire to keep the reputation of their country scathless. We are told we have assisted the enemies of our country, and that but for our words the Boers would have yielded. I do not believe that men who have fought so desperately have received encouragement from our poor words. Something greater, something more permanent, something more stimulating, has urged them in their unequal fight."

His attitude on the peace was embodied in an article contributed to the *North American Review*, which had in vain invited an expression of his views during the progress of the struggle. The temper of both sides on the conclusion of hostilities, he rejoiced to learn, was beyond praise. The words of the British Generals were right things well said, while the speeches of the Boer leaders showed us men crowned with honour while submitting to inevitable defeat. " Over and over again during the war the thought arose, What men these are to have as friends and allies instead of as foes ! The conduct of the surrendered burghers since the conclusion of peace must have begotten a stronger desire than ever to make them brothers, a resolution that nothing should be wanting on our part to weld them, if it be possible, into a common citizenship. The first and last thing to be said about the future of South Africa is that everything depends on the temper we bring towards its settlement. The largest generosity, not merely of money but of spirit, the strongest sympathy, an instant desire to go beyond the prudence of nicely calculated safeguards, are necessary. This is not the first time that the Transvaal has been annexed. Unless the most eager spirit of reconciliation be manifested from the top downwards and the strictest search be made for men of large and generous sympathies, the new experiment may end in a repetition of the miserable experience of the former time." Next to the temper of the conquerors must be considered the line of policy. The best hope of keeping South Africa at peace under British sovereignty lay in the full recognition of the spirit of local independence. The burghers wanted to be let alone. There was some vain talk

about the settlement of British immigrants in the newly annexed territories; but the most competent observers agreed in thinking experiments in this direction unpromising. As South Africa had been Dutch in the past, so it would be in the future. For two or three years the devastation of war would continue to derange the natural development of the continent; but nature and man soon recover themselves, and we might look forward to the fitting up of the country on the old lines. Finally the leaders of the conquered people must be invited to co-operate in the reconstruction of political society. If the Boer consent to abandon their independence was to be confirmed and made permanent, it must be met by the consent of the British to abandon racial predominance. A good start had been made by the Colonial Secretary's refusal of Lord Milner's demand for the suspension of the Cape Constitution. South Africa could not be permanently governed by a garrison, and at all costs the creation of a second Ireland must be avoided.

In after years, when the wounds of war were healing and the Boers had become honoured partners in the British firm, General Botha and General Smuts were to voice the gratitude of their race to Campbell-Bannerman, Leonard Courtney, John Morley, Lloyd George, Emily Hobhouse, and the host of lesser men and women who had sympathised with their passion for independence and striven to save the lives of their innocent children.

CHAPTER XX

CHEYNE WALK

For twenty years before Kruger's ultimatum Courtney had been a prominent actor on the political stage; but the South African war made him for the first time a national and international figure. A minority leader in the crisis of a great conflict is exposed to a searching test, and every element of strength and weakness that he may possess is unveiled before friend and foe. By general consent he passed through the fiery ordeal unscathed. Those who detested his principles and those who shared them agreed in the recognition of his massive abilities, his indomitable courage and his utter disinterestedness. It was a triumph of character and personality, the harvesting of a life of political independence and moral self-discipline. "I wish there was more Cornish granite like you in the world," remarked Earl Grey in 1902; and a younger friend tersely observed that he was a man for all weathers.

"One need only look at him to see that he is a strong man, mentally and morally," wrote William Clarke in 1900.[1] "There is a vast array of facts well stored in that massive head. I am reminded of what Macaulay said of Mackintosh. 'His mind was a vast magazine, admirably arranged. Everything was there and everything in its place.' If the powerful head assures to its possessor intellectual power, the slightest glance at the countenance is equally convincing as to character. You feel instantly that you can trust him.

[1] Character sketch in the *Young Man*. Reprinted in *William Clarke: A Collection of his Writings*.

There is nothing in that moral fabric which is squeezable, not to say saleable. A strong, sure, sturdy, self-contained individuality, standing four-square to all the winds that blow. Though some patriots, victims of a low insularity, may call him the friend of every country but his own, he is a thorough Englishman in aspect and character. One may say of him, as Gladstone said of Mill, that he is the conscience of the House of Commons. Every one, friend and foe alike, will admit that he has been the real moral leader of the Opposition."

The portrait drawn by Mr. A. G. Gardiner [1] in the years that followed the storm may aid us to visualise the old warrior who ploughed his lonely furrow with stout heart and unclouded mien. "To see him on some sunny afternoon walking along the Embankment to his home in Chelsea affects one like the smell of lavender in a drawer, that brings back with a sudden magic the memory of old days and forgotten faces. He is redolent of these fragrant suggestions. You may take him for a prosperous farmer who has come to town from the West Country: one seems to see him on the Corn Exchange taking handfuls of grain from a bag and letting it run with grave deliberation through his fingers. He may be an elder of some country church, for he preserves the old fashion of the bearded face and the shaven upper lip which bespeaks the elder. Or one might take him for a Quaker of other days if his garb were not a thought too illuminated for the ancient traditions of that body. But whatever the conclusion, your eye will pick him out from the throng of commonplaces and rest on him with a sense of repose and pleasure. For he has the distinction not merely of separateness, but of a certain primeval dignity and security that arrests the eye and the mind. Here, one feels, is something enduring in the midst of so much that is transitory, something that speaks of continuity in the midst of so much that is changing, something built on rock in a world of shifting sands." "The epithet 'sturdy,'" echoes Sir Edward Fry, "appears to me best to describe him. His walk was sturdy, his habitual attitude was sturdy."

While Courtney was inevitably a somewhat austere and

[1] In *Pillars of Society*.

solitary figure in public life, in his private capacity he was a man of warm affections and innumerable friends. If any one entertained the notion that here was a chilly and censorious moralist perpetually engaged in lecturing mankind on their follies, the delusion melted away on crossing the threshold of his happy and hospitable home, to which men and women of every creed and colour, every race and country, wended their way, and where sincerity and intelligence were assured of a hearty welcome. There were celebrities in plenty; but celebrity was never a test of admission. Cut off from the pleasures of reading, the host delighted in animated talk on the topics of the day; but even when surrounded by visitors young enough to be his children or his grandchildren he displayed no desire to lead, much less to monopolise the conversation, and he often had to be pressed before he would define his own attitude or summarise the play of argument. "In private life," writes Mr. Herbert Paul, "he had none of the mental rigidity which sometimes seemed to be characteristic of him in public affairs. He was a delightful and most genial companion, always expansive with his many friends, full of interest in passing events, and a great reader with an excellent memory for all that was best in his reading. He would at once challenge any statement with which he did not agree, and was keenly alive to the ludicrous aspect of things. But his criticism was thoroughly good-humoured, and he loved the exchange of banter, giving and taking a repartee with equal readiness and appreciation."

Courtney was fortunate in his secretaries, two of whom have kindly recorded their impressions of their chief. "I had just tried unsuccessfully for an All Souls Fellowship in November 1896," writes Mr. Amery, "and was wondering what I should do during the year ahead of me before I could try again, when my friend John Simon asked me if I would not act as private secretary to Mr. Leonard Courtney, whose sight had failed and who needed some one to read to him and help him with his Parliamentary work. A few days later I found myself at 15 Cheyne Walk, beginning, not without some trepidation, to read out the *Times*. I had not read

many sentences before I discovered the most salient feature of my new chief's character, his hatred of 'fluff' in all its forms—unnecessary verbiage, circumlocution, irrelevant moralising, or false sentiment—and his determination to have the facts and the gist of any argument in the fewest possible words. Happily I had not gone through the ordeal of reading essays to Dr. Jowett for nothing, and I was soon able to divine how much, or how little, of any article he wished to hear or could bear with any patience. This gave me confidence and made me feel that I could really be of service to one for whom my initial respect quickly deepened into affectionate admiration.

"Otherwise the position might not have been easy, for I very soon realised that I was in complete and fundamental disagreement with my chief over almost the whole field of politics. Lord Courtney represented, in its most clear-cut and uncompromising form, the Liberal Individualism of the mid-Victorian age, with its unquestioning faith in Free Trade, its dislike of all forms of state action, its disbelief in the British Empire, its whole-hearted pacifism. Compared with him Cobden, Bright or Morley were not infrequently backsliders, and Gladstone a mere trimmer. As for the great mass of Liberal politicians of his later years he stood out among them like some rugged mass of ancient granite thrust up through softer overlying strata. I represented, with all the fervour and, no doubt, a good deal of the intolerance of youth, the extreme advance guard of the very opposite creed. From early boyhood I had grown up to believe that the only object in politics that mattered was the closer political and economic union of the British Empire. Weakness on this issue seemed to me the one unforgivable offence in politics, and Mr. Gladstone's treatment of General Gordon and still more his surrender to the Boers after Majuba filled me with passionate resentment. At College I had studied the orthodox Free Trade and individualist economics of the day with no other result than a bewildered amazement that such doctrines could ever have been seriously held by intelligent people. And here I found myself trying to help one who not only held every view that I regarded as un-

patriotic or irrational, but was serenely convinced of the absurdity or wickedness of most of the things that seemed to me self-evident or worth striving after.

"And yet the problem solved itself, in practice, without the slightest difficulty. The personality of my new chief—his absolute intellectual sincerity, his hatred of sham and self-deception, his complete indifference to criticism or flattery, his love of justice, his wide range of experience, his keen interest in every conceivable subject, a personal tolerance as marked as the fixity of his political doctrines, an amazing patience and good humour under the affliction of his blindness—made working for him a pleasure and a constant inspiration. I even discovered incidental subjects, such as Woman Suffrage and Bimetallism, on which we agreed. As for the rest of the field of politics, though unconvinced, I learned at least to respect and appreciate the underlying moral worth of that Liberal individualist creed which, in its time, played so great a part in our political development, and which, however incomplete as a solution for the problems of our age, will stand out in history in significant contrast to its antithesis, that exaggeration of the chain of the state and of nationality which is summed up in the word Prussianism.

"My actual work with Lord Courtney only continued for some eight months. But it was the beginning of a lasting friendship with him and Lady Courtney to which I was privileged to be admitted. Their kindness to me as a young man beginning to make his way in life, their interest in all my doings, their help and advice, their hospitality, are among my happiest memories of that time. I am not sure that my most vivid recollections of Lord Courtney are not those in which he figures as the perfect host. He had a gift of embracing the whole company in his attention so that no one ever felt left out. There was no one whom he did not contrive to draw out and make the most of. There was no anecdote or quotation that he could not cap from his inexhaustible literary memory. His rich infectious laughter tuned us all to the spirit of the evening. Even his choice of a particular evening dress of his own helped to give a touch,

not only of that warmth of colour which he loved so much in all things, but also of intimacy and unconstraint to the gathering of friends. The only other recollection I would set against that is of a figure in a brown frock coat striding swiftly along the Embankment, resolute, fearless and erect to the last."

A more intimate portrait is presented in the recollections of Professor Unwin. " In the summer of 1899, through the friendly offices of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, I became Mr. Courtney's private secretary and remained with him till Christmas 1907. After nine years of University life at Cardiff, Oxford, Berlin and London I had found my vocation as an economic historian, but another nine years were to elapse before I could live by it. The secretarial work left me free half the day for research and occasional teaching, and the strong personal tie formed under the stress of the Boer war period between myself and my chief held us to-together for five years afterwards. The analyses of the Parliamentary papers on the South African crisis, which was the first work I did for him, led me to share his convictions on the issues involved and to recognise, as he did, behind them the menace of that larger catastrophe which has since overtaken the world.

" The services required by my chief appeared simple, and, after a little experience, became so. He dictated, with little or no constructive assistance, his letters, the notes for his speeches and the articles he contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* or the *Contemporary*. The task of reading aloud to him was at first more difficult, and even a little alarming. Accustomed as he had been to scan the printed page with a rapid and penetrating glance, he could not readily resign himself to the imperfect medium of another's eyes and mind, and his peremptory rejection of the banalities and insincerities of the daily press was disconcerting to a nervous beginner until the reader learned to forestall it by sympathetic selection and rapid summary. A few days sufficed to bring us into a happy relation of mutual understanding that was never afterwards broken but passed into one of ever deepening friendship.

"The *Times* supplied the starting-point and nucleus of the morning's work. Before breakfast was over we got through the summary and anatomised the leaders, and two further hours were generally spent in reaching Births, Deaths and Marriages. This was not the dull mechanical task it might seem. To learn to summarise the Parliamentary debates for an ex-Chairman of Committees, the Foreign intelligence for a veteran journalist, and the Law Report for a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn was a liberal education for a young historian. Courtney knew everybody in public life, and, though he was the last man to pronounce hasty or dogmatic judgments, the valuations emerging from forty years' experience could not but disclose themselves in brief comment or silent gesture. In such a crucible the dross of journalism yielded its grains of truth, and a hundred columns of the *Times* shrank to a page of Thucydides. Especially illuminating was the effect of this almost tacit criticism on the daily résumé of the Foreign Intelligence. The 'insubstantial pageant' of the diplomatic Olympus 'melted into thin air' as the reader learned to recognise behind the mask and cothurnus of France, Austria or America the accents of M. de Blowitz, Mr. Lavino, Mr. Smalley or other much respected but mortal representatives of Printing House Square. Politics, however, by no means monopolised our attention. The listener's interests were of the widest kind and he grudged the loss of any. Of an exhibition of favourite pictures, an auction at Christie's, an account of a new scientific or archaeological discovery, an important appeal case in the Lords, he would demand a report in full.

"When the *Times* and the Parliamentary papers and the day's correspondence were disposed of, and notes dictated for any impending speech, we had generally, except on the two days a week when a Director's duties called him at noon into the city, an hour or more for wider pursuits. It was mainly at that hour during the first six months of my connection with him that he dictated his book on the Constitution. Works of reference were of course within reach; but, except for an excursion or two into Erskine May for colonial precedents, I do not remember being required to

make much use of them. Even for such topics as Scottish law and the constitution of the Isle of Man, he relied chiefly upon his own resources, safeguarding himself by the later corrections of such friends as Sheriff Donald Crawford and Sir Spencer Walpole. Whilst engaged on this task I first realised how differently we approached constitutional problems—a difference not merely between the statesman of sixty-eight and the student of thirty, but also between the disciple of J. S. Mill and the disciple of T. H. Green. My criticisms at first timidly expressed these divergences of underlying theory, but later on learned to take them for granted, and to address themselves boldly to points of fact, style and arrangement. I soon found that my chief desired and valued the same candour on the part of his youngest adviser that he was reproached with bestowing on a reluctant party. He used to encourage me in this duty by humorous citations from the injunctions laid by the Archbishop of Granada upon his private secretary Gil Blas. 'Whenever it shall strike you that my pen begins to contract, as it were, the ossification of old age, whenever you see my genius in its climacteric, do not fail to give me a hint.' I never observed any tendency to ossification in my chief's mind; but other hints were freely offered without fear of the catastrophe that befel Gil Blas.

"Our labours might be interrupted; for callers seeking counsel at Cheyne Walk were many and various—editors and publicists, the exponents of struggling causes, distinguished foreign scholars, young investigators seeking facts to fit their theories, nationalists from Finland, Hungary or Ireland, internationalists from Norway, Switzerland or Holland, Indian and Egyptian reformers of all schools, native and English, and the representatives and friends of oppressed races—these and very many others, 'claimed kindred there and had their claims allowed.' The only exception to this wide hospitality that I can call to mind was when, soon after the outbreak of the South African war, a youthful representative of the *Daily Mail* called to inquire whether Mr. Courtney, in view of the unpopularity of his convictions, intended to resign his seat on the Privy Council. My old

chief arose and, with one of those forcible gestures which Harry Furniss has recorded in *Punch*, pointed to the door.

"When the book was finished, and Parliament had in 1900 been purged of its more independent members, our morning leisure, if there were no Royal Commission work to occupy us, and frequently an evening hour after dinner, were devoted to general literature. Contemporary biography had the first claim; but old favourites like Boswell or Lockhart were scarcely less alive to the listener who would add now and then an annotation of his own. A visit to his friend Roby at Grasmere in 1900, when we all climbed Helvellyn, and had selections of Wordsworth and Coleridge beautifully read to us by our host, led us to the biographies of the poets and to Mr. Lucas's *Lamb*, which he greatly enjoyed. The grim fascination of Iceland, transmitted in the *Journal* of William Morris, took us back to the Sagas, whose noble simplicity and tragic sincerity made a like appeal to the statesman and the poet. The only modern works of fiction I remember reading to him were the books of his friend and fellow-Cornishman, Q.; but we often recurred to the Waverley novels whilst visiting the scenes in which they were laid. In 1901 we made a pilgrimage from Bervie to Dunottar Castle and churchyard, and another to the country of *The Antiquary*. Monkbarns, whose foibles as a collector and an antiquarian he shared, was one of his special favourites. When past his eightieth year he would tramp a dozen miles across rough country on the uncertain quest of a Roman camp or British barrow, and great was his joy if he found it. He never willingly passed an old church without exploring its interior. Another hobby of the same kind, which is shared, I fancy, by many Cornishmen, was etymology. Murray's great *Dictionary*, and Sweet's *Dialect Dictionary*, to both of which he was a subscriber, he liked to have always within reach, and would often stop the reading to hunt down the pedigree of an interesting word. Less often he would be led by some chance association to indulge himself in the handling of his portfolios of engravings and etchings—his Meryons and Rembrandts—recovering his memory of them

by that pathetic sidelong scrutiny which still preserved to him some of his old joy in form and colour.

" Although catholic in his tastes, his leaning was decidedly towards the romantic in literature and art. Nature endowed him with the abundant vitality, the impulsive and generous temperament of his forebear, the Devonshire skipper. David's words in Browning's *Saul*—

> How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
> All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!

express the most fundamental aspect of his personality. His senses were keen, his emotions strong, his affections deep, his imagination ardent and responsive. He enjoyed life to the full, and entered with glad spontaneity into the enjoyment of his fellows. Such a nature was at the furthest possible remove from the cold puritanism, the hard and self-righteous pedantry commonly attributed to him by a world resentful of his unsparing criticism, and sometimes even by those who admired his power and his candour but did not know him personally. ' I thought he had been a man of ice,' said an old friend and teacher of mine to whom, as to many others, *The Diary of the Churchgoer* had revealed the humility of a self-questioning spirit.

" Like most popular errors this misconception was based on facts, though it ignored facts still more vital. The stoicism of his character was patent to all men ; the genial temperament which it counterbalanced and controlled could be known only to his intimates. But whilst a powerful mind and strenuous will were in full command of a nature intrinsically passionate, it was the stress of strong emotion

> Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot
> Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe,

that gave an unique power to not a few of his speeches ; just as it was the warmth and spontaneity of his nature that grappled the friends of his adoption to his soul with hooks of steel. Not only to such friends, but to the great majority of those with whom he had daily intercourse, or who sat under his chairmanship in the House, his mannerisms—the

abrupt voice and gesture, the pursed lips and the stern frown of his Cornish eyebrows—were recognised to be the involuntary escapements of a strong and sincere nature, well balanced between earnest feeling and clear judgment, and in whom tolerance and impartiality were not the fruit of indifference, but a constructive triumph of reason.

"The higher powers of his intellect found exercise in regions beyond my ken—with the sciences of pure mathematics, of economics and of law. Many will still remember a speech of his at the annual dinner of the London School of Economics in 1899, in which he spoke with convincing fervour of his enjoyment of his university studies in the higher mathematics, and celebrated the rapture of the adventurous mind, 'voyaging through strange seas of thought alone.' But in philosophy, whether metaphysical, synthetical or political, he showed little interest. His political thinking set out from the empiricism of Mill's *Liberty* and *Representative Government*, but drew upon a later and a fuller experience. No one had a stronger sense for the actualities of politics. If he was dubbed a doctrinaire it was mainly because he persisted in recognising the facts when the majority were drawing passionate conclusions from emotional premises, and partly because, although experience had rid him of illusions, he still held firmly to his ideals. These ideals we may still think of as specifically English. He was an individualist in that he saw in the individual soul a moral ultimate beyond the sanctions of the state, and believed in individual character as the final safeguard of liberty and progress. But he believed also, with Mill, in constitutional government as an instrument in promoting the moral progress of individuals. The great traditions of English law, and the English Parliament were, one might almost say, the very breath of his nostrils, and the preservation of these traditions by adaptation to the circumstances of an immensely larger, more complex and more democratic society was the strenuous preoccupation of his political life. The chief concern of the great individualist was to avert the perils, to elicit the virtues and to enlarge the potentialities of collective counsel and collective action. He had a great

vision of Parliament, purged of the violence of faction, clothed in the authority of a many-sided representation, and in its right mind of peaceful and constructive deliberation, reassuming its unique place in the history of free government. If in spite of dark omens this vision becomes a reality, he will have assisted more than any man of his time to make it so.

"That improvements of electoral machinery, however essential, would not of themselves effect this good result, he was well aware. Democracy cannot endure unless representative men are found who will hold the mirror up, not to the lowest, but to the highest in human nature. Such a man was Leonard Courtney. To have been an ideal representative was, I am inclined to think, the greatest of his many achievements; as the perfect disinterestedness and the high moral courage required for that achievement were the noblest of his many endowments. None ever doubted his courage, and none perhaps will now doubt his disinterestedness; but few can know how completely free from resentment and bitterness he remained under the severe test of unmerited public obloquy. He was not only the greatest man I have known, but also the most lovable."

A vivid impression of the friendly and stimulating atmosphere of the old red-brick house in Cheyne Walk is suggested by the recollections of Mr. Basil Williams. "Throughout his life, and especially in his later years, those who did not belong to the same political party as himself came to consult him and to listen to his views. During the South African War I had volunteered for military service, and on my return had been very anxious to go out under Lord Milner to take some small part in the reorganisation of the country. At the beginning of 1902 I obtained my wish. Before going I wrote saying that I knew my views were not the same as his, as I thought the war a just one and admired Lord Milner's policy, as I understood it, but that I was very anxious to have a talk with him, if he would allow it in these circumstances, in order to seek his advice as to the attitude to be adopted in any relations I might have with

the Boers. He at once agreed and asked me to breakfast. It was characteristic of him that he in no way tried to argue with me on my opinions ; his method was, when people came to him for advice, to let them put their views and ask their questions, interrupting rarely and indeed speaking little except to help them to clear their own minds as to what they really did believe and hold. From that occasion I have no recollection of any definite advice that he gave me ; but I felt the better and stronger for the talk, since I realised from the way he questioned me and from the few things he said that the chief thing to bear in mind in one's actions was a definite conception of what the facts, unclouded by prejudice, were and what, given those facts, the right course of action was. Anyhow I carried away from that talk a feeling that he and his wife were friends to whom I could write frankly, and that they would welcome sincere views, even if they did not agree with them. Above all, from that talk I date the beginning of a greater intimacy with the household I came to love. During the two years I was in South Africa I wrote freely to them, and, when I came back, felt always sure of a warm welcome whenever I chose to go round for a talk.

" His private influence is difficult to analyse. It came partly from his extraordinary knowledge. He had a wonderful memory for all he read or heard that was worth remembering, and he could always help people by his knowledge of facts. He never allowed his mind to rust by ignorance of what could be read in books or newspapers, and his house was a centre to which men of many shades of opinion not only in England but in the Dominions and abroad came to give information and seek advice. It partly came too from his accessibility to other people's views. He has been called censorious and critical. To some extent this may be true of his public utterances ; for in his intense passion for truth and right he seems to have regarded his chief mission as a public man to be that of exposing woolly-mindedness and ill-digested ideas, from which he believed most of the misery and evils of the world originated. But in private he was singularly tolerant. He was always anxious that anybody

should explain himself and give his views uninterrupted. I remember one Sunday afternoon I was stating a view on some point, and somebody interrupted before I had finished. 'Let the man explain himself,' he exploded, in his grim, half-humorous way. It was this accessibility, this habit of treating everybody who came to see him as an individual of importance as long as he had something sincere to say, that made him the repository of so much information and encouraged people to talk freely before him. Looking back on countless talks in his house one thinks with surprise of the very few definite views he himself enunciated on those occasions; and yet in some subtle way he helped forward the causes he believed in by giving strength and confidence to their upholders, and even encouraged those who held views with which he disagreed by his tolerance for all sincere opinions for the public good.

"Since our marriage we have felt that Lord and Lady Courtney had given us of their warmest friendship; and the impression was all the stronger that their kindness and affection to us was not of sudden growth like a fire of thorns, but a constant glow which began slowly and seemed to grow ever warmer with years. We know at any rate that among the great joys of our married life have been the constant welcome we had at that truly blessed house. They seemed indeed to have a special tenderness for young married couples. Very soon after any of their friends had married they were welcomed at Cheyne Walk, and if the young couple cared for it they never lost that welcome. At Cheyne Walk it is difficult to think of Lord Courtney without Lady Courtney or of Lady Courtney without him. I have hardly ever been to the house without finding them there together. And for busy people such as they both were, busy in matters of real public importance, it seems wonderful how they found time to see their friends to the extent they did. They seemed to be always entertaining, and entertaining in the most delightful way. They never, I believe, had more than at most about a dozen people to dinner at a time, and often just small parties of four or six. And they entertained people not from a sense of duty, but because they wanted to

talk to their guests or to give their guests a chance of talking to people they would like to meet. Some of us may have sometimes felt in our own minds that we were singularly lucky to find ourselves in the good company we met there, from the host and hostess downwards. We never could feel, as one does in some houses, that, because we were ourselves dull, we were asked to a dull dinner-party; on the contrary, the duller we were, the more we were encouraged to come out of our shell by the good talkers we met. Lord Courtney himself, always full of life and vigour, loved good cheer, as such men do, and he and Lady Courtney always saw that their friends had good cheer at their house. They no doubt knew that good talk, if not created by good cheer, is never hindered by it. Of Lord Courtney himself, at the head of his table with his famous buff waistcoat and blue coat with brass buttons, one was of course always conscious; but he never dominated the conversation; he listened, he drew it out, he came out with his good story as a contribution to the common stock, or his clear logical question, if some discussion was afoot, and he pursed his lips and looked grimly humorous if he disagreed with some remark, or laughed his hearty generous laugh at some good saying by an old friend. It was much the same at their Sunday afternoons. He and Lady Courtney were always at home on Sundays when they were in town, and you knew whether they were in town because, if so, you could see through the old wrought-iron gate the fountain playing in the little front garden which was generally gay with flowers of Lady Courtney's tending."

Courtney keenly enjoyed entertaining, and for thirty-five years there was no more hospitable house in London and no more accomplished host. A particularly festive character was given to the repasts by the evening dress, which caused a mild shock to newcomers but delighted old friends. "L.'s first appearance in his blue coat with brass buttons and buff waistcoat," wrote his wife in her Journal, December 5, 1888. "Everybody stared and many admired." "It was said long ago," writes Mr. Gardiner, "that Leonard Courtney had only two weaknesses. One

was to fancy that every one had the same intellectual advantages as himself, the other was to dress in the evening as if he were employed to advertise the *Edinburgh Review*. Now the latter is no weakness at all ; it is a very conspicuous virtue. There is courage in wearing a blue coat and a canary-coloured waistcoat in these days. To wear them naturally and unaffectedly is a triumph not of vanity but of character ; it is the sign not of a love of admiration but of an independent mind. He does not affect bright colours because he wishes, like the young Disraeli, to attract attention, but because he likes them. With his canary-coloured waistcoat and his low-crowned silk hat he comes down into these bustling times like a reminiscence of the days of our grandfathers. It is not because he loves new things, but because he loves old things that he looks so gay." " I have never known his superior in the instinct of hospitality," echoes his oldest friend, Mr. Stebbing. " According to his means he had indulged it at Powis Place and Queen Anne's Gate. It enlarged with the capabilities of a Pall Mall club. With marriage the hospitable habit experienced a wider development. There were kinsfolk on his side, the brother, living in the Reform Club Chambers, a learned bachelor ; two sisters, the younger with her husband Richard Oliver, the New Zealand statesman. On his wife's side there were sisters, each with an independent circle, meeting and intersecting. There were his ancient intimates of Bar, College, newspaper, not to be cast off. Fresh members were being constantly gathered in, of all varieties of political colour and intellectual interests. The host might differ with it mattered not how many of the guests, he was sure to be on the most amiable social terms with each. A list, if the hostess kept one of her company, would show a charming miscellany. Statesmanship would be there, science, letters, Members of both Houses, great Churchmen, age and always a fair element of youth, the whole entertained and entertaining."

We may glance at a typical party through the eyes of one who was not only an old friend of host and hostess, but a skilled observer of men and manners. " On Wednesday

we dined with the Courtneys," wrote Canon Barnett in 1893 to his brother. "He is a strong man, and they make a beautiful home together. Balfour, Morley, Asquith, the next Duke of Devonshire, and Hobhouse were there. It was very interesting. My wife fell in love with Balfour and I with Morley. Their talk was most free, and Mr. Gladstone came in for good-tempered criticism. Morley is a better parson than politician. He has the narrow sense of right, the stiff back and the somewhat sensitive organisation of a parson. Asquith is the better politician. Balfour is charming in manner, as easy as a giant, but his greatest faith seems to be in doubt. Here you have the basis of his conservatism, and he is saved from cynicism by his sweetness of nature." [1]

The host of Cheyne Walk was a familiar figure in the Reform Club and the Athenæum, and at the high table of Lincoln's Inn, where, to his great satisfaction, the Benchers elected him to their body in 1889. He kept in touch with his University, which conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. in 1898, when the Public Orator greeted him as the Cato of the House of Commons, and with St. John's by occasional attendance at the College Gaudy.[2] For twenty years he derived the keenest pleasure from the fortnightly meetings of the Breakfast Club, the creation of the versatile Grant Duff, who has recorded the attendances and preserved fragments of the conversation in his voluminous Diaries. Among its early members were Lord Lansdowne, Lord Dufferin, Erskine May, Stirling Maxwell, Lacaita.[3] When the founder was appointed Governor of Madras in 1881, Courtney succeeded him as Under-Secretary for the Colonies; and on his return from India they frequently met at the houses of Liberal Unionist friends such as Sir John Lubbock.

[1] *Barnett's Life*, i. 390.

[2] "When I arrived at St. John's in 1881," writes Professor Marshall, "I found his memory much alive. The bowling season was not quite over, and on my first appearance on the green I stood debating which of the bowls to choose. 'Take that pair,' said an expert, 'Courtney had them, and he taught them so thoroughly how to find their way that they cannot quickly forget it.'"

[3] See Escott, *Club Makers and Club Members*, pp. 169-170.

A few extracts from the Diaries suggest the nature and attractions of the select fraternity.

March 9, 1889.—Herschell, A. Russell, F. Leveson Gower, Trevelyan and Wolseley. Sir Robert Herbert and Mr. Leonard Courtney were elected.

June 18, 1892.—At York House. Aberdare, Lyall, Reay, Robert Herbert, Courtney, Gower. Guest, General Görgei, the Hungarian Commander of 1849.

April 29, 1893.—At Goschen's. Trevelyan, De Tabley, Courtney, Gower, Acton, Herbert. Courtney regretted that no one had ever published a really satisfactory novel describing the lower life of London. Dickens, he said, ran too much into caricature.

June 15, 1895.—Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace made his début in our little society. I praised the statue in Berkeley Square. Courtney said that Herbert Spencer declared it superior to the Venus of Milo.

February 27, 1897.—Charles Buller's name coming up I quoted Lord Houghton's epitaph on him in the Abbey. Courtney said, Houghton told me he rather doubted whether after all Buller would have gone much further in the House. His humour was too strong.

February 19, 1898.—Courtney mentioned that St. Évremond had lived at Chelsea, and that his house was still standing in Queen's Road.

June 30, 1900.—Charles Eliot Norton the guest. The pleasantest meeting this year.

Grant Duff's entries are supplemented by occasional references in the Journal.

March 1907.—L. at the B.C. at Sir Spencer Walpole's. Came back groaning in spirit over the views of that enlightened group of elderly gentlemen. Sir A. Lyall's confession, no one dissenting, that he had welcomed our treaty with Japan but was now anxious about it, and the talk about war being ultimately inevitable between Japan and U.S. saddened him.

Sir Courtenay Ilbert has kindly contributed a few reminiscences of these feasts of reason. "By most of the younger members of the present generation breakfast parties are probably regarded as Victorian or pre-Victorian

institutions. Famous were the breakfast parties of Rogers in the early years of the last century, and people still talk about Jowett's 'Sunday jumbles' and Lord Avebury's St. James' Square breakfasts in its later decades. In the 'sixties, it is said on February 21, 1866, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff organised some of his friends at a Breakfast Club, and the members contrived to meet until shortly before the beginning of the Great War. They met at each other's houses at 9.30 A.M. on Saturdays when Parliament was sitting. When they met, or before they departed, they inscribed their names in a book kept for the purpose. Courtney was a regular attendant. He truly enjoyed the opportunities of meeting old friends and of having good vigorous arguments with them. As the years of the present century ran on, the week-end habit threatened the existence of the Club. It had substituted Friday for Wednesday as the day for morning sittings in the House of Commons, and had thereby destroyed the old Parliamentary Wednesday dinners. And it had broken the practice of holding Cabinet meetings regularly on Saturdays. Members of the Club and other Londoners found themselves more and more tempted to spend their Saturdays out of town. Attendances became irregular, and vacancies became difficult to fill. Its memories survive, and among the brightest are those of Courtney's steady, uncompromising, friendly, stimulating talk."

A few additional facts and impressions are supplied by Mr. Arthur Elliot. "I was not an old member of the Club, not having known it in Grant Duff's days. I delighted in the breakfasts—simple affairs in each other's houses. Before my membership I imagine Lord Dufferin had been one of the most appreciated of the Breakfasters; of course, before and since, G. O. Trevelyan was a very valuable member. I attended most of the meetings in the years 1907–10. During these years Courtney was very constant in his attendance, always adding much by his freshness and vigour to the excellent talk that prevailed. In my time there were rarely more than eight present, and never fewer than four—generally I should say about half a dozen.

Sometimes we entertained a guest—some one interesting, and only temporarily in London. Thus on April 27, 1907, at Sir G. Trevelyan's house, Mr. Deakin, the Australian Premier, came to us, an interesting, cultivated and striking personality. The impression of a most abundant flow of bright and easy conversation, amongst intimate friends of old standing engaged in work of various sorts, remains a very pleasant one. As for details—of an earlier date—are they not written in the books of the Chronicle of our great Prophet Grant Duff? In my time I think that Sir A. Lyall, Courtney, Lord Reay, Lord Selby, the Dean of Westminster, Lord Collins, Mackenzie Wallace, Spencer Walpole, Sir G. Trevelyan, were our chief stand-by. On March 13, 1911, we were in rather low spirits, and the B.C. met for the last time. Lord Reay was our host, and there were also present Lyall, Courtney, Ilbert, Mackenzie Wallace and myself. The late Speaker and Henn Collins had just died, the Dean was leaving London and retiring from the Club and we were finding that the growing modern habit of going out of town for week-ends was likely to interfere with the attendance at the Saturday breakfasts of the future. Therefore Lyall (who himself died three weeks later) proposed not to fill up vacancies—in short to let the B.C. die. We sorrowfully concurred, and the Club never met again. It was characteristic of Courtney that, full of vigour and hope, he was in favour of going on and recruiting amongst younger men."

A more serious purpose was served by the Political Economy Club, which Courtney continued to attend till the end of his life.[1] "To dinner at the Club," wrote Henry Sidgwick in his Diary in March 1885. "Astonishing how little Political Economy these people know. Thorold Rogers knows a little. Courtney knows a good deal in his old-fashioned style, and must be confirmed in his economic orthodoxy by his justifiable consciousness of his superiority to almost every one else there."[2] He resigned the Secretaryship in 1891, and was elected to the Committee, of which he

[1] I am indebted to Mr. Henry Higgs and Sir Bernard Mallet for information on Courtney's connection with the Club.

[2] *Henry Sidgwick's Life*, p. 403.

remained a member till his death. He was one of the most regular attendants, and in the year before his death he was present at all the seven dinners. "He frequently took the Chair," writes Mr. Higgs, "and was an ideal Chairman, firmly enforcing the time limit on speakers, and repressing desultory interruption." The interest of the discussions was maintained by the addition of the leaders of new schools of thought and by the judicious blend of academic economists and men of affairs. In the opening years of the present century the circle was enriched by the election of politicians like Lord George Hamilton and Mr. Herbert Samuel, economists like Professor Pigou and Mr. Hewins, bankers and men of business like Sir Felix Schuster, Sir Hugh Bell and Sir George Gibb.

"Our monthly meetings," records Mr. Stebbing, "are preceded by dinner, when conversation never turns on political economy. Nowhere does one hear better talk. Courtney always took his full part. At the discussion which followed he rarely till very recently omitted to speak; generally late. As if merely conversing, though in his clear voice, he would assign its weight, or want of it, to every argument of the many speakers and carry his audience with him." "Lord Courtney did not bring forward any subject for discussion during the time I was Secretary (twenty years nearly)," writes Sir Bernard Mallet, "though I am sure he would have done so if I had ever asked him.[1] But he very often indeed joined in the discussion and was always impressive when he did. I never heard him speak in Parliament, but always had an idea he was at his best at the Club. The talk just suited his cross-bench mind. It never ended in a vote, and the question was always looked at from all sides. He was always considerate in these discussions to his opponent, though there was sometimes an effective touch of scorn in his comments. I remember this especially in the debates about tariff reform. Sometimes he let himself go in speculation as to the future in

[1] He brought forward a subject for the first time in 1871, for the seventh and last time in 1889. Among his themes were tenant right and bimetallism. In 1885 his theme was the differences in the positions assumed by and towards economists to-day and in the last generation.

connection, *e.g.*, with some topic of imperial expansion, and then, whether one agreed or not, one recognised that he had a gift of real eloquence as well as readiness and facility in debate. I think, however, that he was impressive mainly because one felt he had deep and genuine convictions, and on economic questions one always felt he was a trained thinker. I doubt if any one else could shew such a record of attendance. He certainly enjoyed the meetings. After Lord Avebury's death in 1913 he was the senior member; but long before that, as the senior member of the Standing Committee of the Club, he had been looked on as a sort of unofficial president. As Secretary I was often in communication with him about the election of new members and other matters, and he was always ready with opinions and helpful suggestions. It is sad that no account of our discussions is ever preserved. A great deal of eloquence, wit and learning is thus allowed to perish. Lord Courtney's contributions were always among the most notable."

Sir Bernard Mallet's testimony to his commanding position is confirmed by Sir John Macdonell. "I first came to know Lord Courtney as a member of the Political Economy Club. When I was elected it numbered men of rare ability and force of character, of whom I remember in particular Lord Bramwell, the incarnation of massive good sense, with his sledge-hammer logic and his dexterous use of the dilemma, a weapon with which he lassoed loose reasoners; Lord Sherbrooke, then past his prime, though still fitfully emitting brilliant flashes; Thorold Rogers, pouring forth floods of chaotic information, omniscient but inaccurate. There were the two Sidgwicks, each in his own way notable; the one, a doubter of doubters, preserving a noncommittal attitude towards the most obvious facts of life; the other, combative, logical to a fault, and over confident as to the errors and infirmities of others. There were also Jacob Waley (who first introduced me to the Club), cautious and acute, and 'Minority Hare,' impressively silent and exercising great influence by his few words; Lord Kimberley, courteous, weighty and dignified, with a fine, unclouded view of the universe. Mr. Balfour was a rare visitor, Sir Thomas

Farrer a constant attendant, his favourite theme being the virtues of Free Trade. Among these and others not less distinguished, Courtney stood out as unsurpassed in the lucidity of his reasoning and power of analysing economic facts. How often it fell to him to clear up or unravel a discussion which had become obscure or entangled in sophisms. That position—I am tempted to say position of predominance in the Club—he held for many years. It was his, not only because of the unfailing lucidity and orderly course of his reasoning ; it was also because of his readiness to admit the good points if any in the contention which he combated, and his evident desire to find a fit place for his adversary's facts. I doubt whether in Parliament or elsewhere he shewed to so much advantage, whether indeed he revealed so fully elsewhere his great powers of truth-finding, as in these informal discussions. There was on his part no asperity, no dogmatism, no eagerness for victory, though his opinions were generally sharply cut and firmly held. I have heard some of the chief forensic reasoners of my generation, and I doubt whether any of them was more persuasive than Lord Courtney in the discussions which I recall."

Courtney's circle of friendship was so wide that as years advanced he had often to mourn the passing of a valued comrade. When Birkbeck Hill lay dying, for many weary weeks in 1903 scarce a Saturday passed without a visit to Hampstead. Among the most treasured possessions of the great Johnsonian was a beautifully bound folio Italian translation of *Lucretius*, on the fly-leaf of which was written in Boswell's hand, " James Boswell, London, 1781, a present from General Paoli." Below these words the donor wrote :

This book, dedicated to Paoli,
and by him given to Boswell,
is now, after more than a century,
given again
to the most diligent and devoted of Editors
G. Birkbeck Hill
as a mark of friendship and affectionate sympathy
by Leonard Courtney.[1]

[1] *Letters of G. Birkbeck Hill*, p. 239.

When in the following year an old Cambridge friend, and a link with the circle of Cairnes and Fawcett, passed away with Leslie Stephen, he contributed an appreciation to the *Nation*, singling out for special praise his volumes on *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, and on the Utilitarians and his Life of his brother Fitzjames. Still later he contributed to the *Times* a delicate appreciation of Lady Roscoe, perhaps the most beloved of his women friends.

When Herbert Spencer died in December 1903 at the age of eighty-~~four~~ three Mr. Morley, who had promised to speak at the grave-side, was far away in Sicily, enjoying a well-earned holiday after the completion of the *Life of Gladstone*. The old philosopher had expressed a wish that if he could not fulfil his task Courtney should be invited to take his place. The latter was campaigning in Edinburgh, and promised to come if nobody else could be found. When Lord Avebury and Mr. Balfour declined, he travelled south, anxiously meditating on the address which he knew would be closely scrutinised by Spencer's disciples all over the world.[1]

Journal

December 15.—It was a brilliant winter day when Leonard, George Unwin and I started in the landau sent by the Executors for Golders Green. L. much concerned to say the thing that was right and true. The little chapel was full when the body was carried up to its resting-place, and L. stepped to the desk looking grave and very massive. His memory did not fail him, and the words he had carefully thought out during Sunday came clearly and impressively. All the arrangements were simple and reverent.

" I cannot claim," he began,[2] " to have been in any fit sense a student of his works or one of the great company of his disciples. But it is many years since I became acquainted with him and more than a score since our acquaintance became more intimate by my entering into a family of which he had been an habitual guest and honoured friend. Our

[1] The address is printed in Duncan, *Life of Herbert Spencer*, pp. 478-81.
[2] Abridged.

sympathy in respect to public affairs was never so animated and so helpful as in the years which have quite recently passed. Our first thought must be that of admiration for the vastness of the work he planned and of gratitude and even joy that in spite of indifferent health he lived to see his self-ordained task completed. All history, all science, all the varying forms of thought and belief, all the institutions of all the stages of man's progress were brought together, and out of this innumerable multitude of data emerged one coherent, luminous and vitalising conception of the evolution of the world. If in later years some sense of the limitation of the inquiry has supervened, if some feeling has arisen of the insufficiency of the explanation of some steps in the proof, some apprehension of gaps uncovered in the synthesis, there still remains the abiding conviction of a great gain realised, a new plane of thought surmounted, new footholds secured which will never be lost in the education of man and the development of society. It must never be forgotten that his one overmastering purpose was practical, social, human. When it seemed that he might not live to complete his design, he broke off the sociological analyses to reach forward to the right determination of the bases of individual and political ethics. He exalted the work of individual freedom, and contested with all his energy the interference of the rules of the many with the growth of the one. We may cling to the faith that this conception presents a true aspect of ultimate evolution ; though not many of us could accompany him in the thoroughness of his application of his principles to society as it is. Yet we may still believe in the ultimate realisation of a perfect order without coercion, and of the service that shall be perfect freedom.

" Standing here by these poor remains we are drawn on to accompany Spencer in his last brave effort to scrutinise the implacable facts of life. The last chapter of his last book grapples with ultimate questions. Can consciousness survive ? Is the personality indestructible ? Or must we acquiesce in its re-absorption in the Infinite, the ever-abiding, the ineffable energy of which it was a passing spark ? Our master knew not. The enigma defies our question. Some

fringes of the Unknowable may yet prove capable of being known, but the great central secret lies beyond our apprehension. Yet if the night cometh in which no man can work, we can work while it is day. We may devote our lives to the service of supreme goodness. Spencer thus worked, thus dedicated himself as truly and as bravely as any man enjoying the solace of a more definite creed. To this spirit, then, whose work survives, whose words yet speak, we may say in all the fulness of interpretation which the phrase can bear, Farewell."

The address was greeted with a chorus of approval. The *Times* praised its excellent taste, its depth of feeling and its transparent sincerity of conviction, and pronounced it a fitting homage to the achievements and qualities of the master. " In its freedom from dogma, to say nothing of the unseemly aggression upon the positive belief of others, it affords a pleasant contrast to the harangues too often heard at the ' secularist ' funerals of eminent thinkers in other lands."

From John Morley (to Mrs. Courtney)

CANNES, *December* 23.—Your account of the funeral ceremony interests me keenly. I am sorry to have been the means of imposing such a *corvée* on L. H. C. I read his address in the *Times* at Naples—and with cordial approval. It was just what the occasion needed; simple, unostentatious, grave, sincere, true. I liked it much. It was no hour for literary phrase-making.

From Mrs. J. R. Green (to Mrs. Courtney)

January 5, 1904.—It has so long been on my mind to tell you how beautiful I thought Mr. Courtney's address on Herbert Spencer. I cannot think of anything more difficult and trying. I do not know any one in England who could have brought the quality into it that Mr. Courtney did. It moved me deeply—the dignity, the gravity, the justice, the deep and very rare feeling.

Throughout life Courtney was an omnivorous reader; and though after 1896 he could no longer tear the heart out

of a volume, he continued to read books new and old through the eyes of his wife and his secretaries. He delighted in biography, enjoying the Lives of Huxley, Tennyson and William Morris, Scott's *Journals* and Stevenson's *Letters* no less than Parker's *Peel* and Trevelyan's *Garibaldi*, the Diary of Busch and the *Creevey Papers*. He appreciated the vigorous discussion of political principles in such works as Professor Hobhouse's *Democracy and Reaction* and Mr. Hobson's *Imperialism*, and derived fresh inspiration for his campaign for Proportional Representation from Ostrogorski's terrifying picture of the ravages of the caucus. He was interested above all in the biographies which threw new light on the scenes in which he had himself played a part. Dasent's *Life of Delane* vividly recalled the far-off days of his political apprenticeship, and Trevelyan's *Life of Bright* his early years in the House of Commons. But no work published during his later years was so eagerly awaited or so diligently studied as the *Life of Gladstone*. While ordinary mortals had to wait till October 1903, the biographer entrusted an advance copy of the first volume to Mrs. Courtney at the end of July.

To John Morley

KISSINGEN, *August* 23, 1903.—We have been reading the book (vol. i.) day by day. I find it a very interesting study, but I am not more drawn to the man. One or two episodes do indeed compel my sympathy, but on the whole he provokes me, and I sometimes feel drawn to some strong internal expressions of condemnation. Perhaps his greatest glory was that, starting with a load of false principles, he kept on shedding them almost to the last, while his great deficiency is that this shedding never compelled him to probe things to the bottom. Up to 1852 I think he must be regarded as a Churchman who had strayed into politics, and his action is overmastered by his relation to Church questions. The study of the Budget of 1853 is very good, and his best characteristics shine out conspicuously. But the business of the Crimean War is woeful reading. Poor old Aberdeen is the most to be liked of all of them. Gladstone himself not I think good in any way, neither in his relation to the war nor in his attitude during the Ministerial crisis.

Journal

October 1903.—We have come to the last days of the '80 Government. It has been a revelation to find that the question of Local Government for Ireland with a Central Board was discussed in the spring of 1885 by the Cabinet, Gladstone, Chamberlain and Dilke supporting it, Hartington opposing. So that we were unjust in believing that Mr. G.'s Home Rule was so sudden and in consequence of the election. What a pity he did not stick to his more modest proposal!

Courtney's youthful love of poetry remained with him throughout life. His memory was stored with the gems of English literature, and he would often break into quotation in congenial surroundings. In 1904 his wife wrote down a list of the nineteenth-century poems he knew by heart, from Wordsworth and Shelley to Kipling and William Watson. On a wet day in Scotland with Lord Shaw he recited the *Ode to the West Wind*, which the son of his host promptly capped with *Lycidas*. One of the bonds which united him and the third of his secretaries, George Unwin, in close affection was their love of English verse, and the old statesman and the young Oxford scholar would often quote poetry at one another.

Journal

Penzance, 1902.—Long walks. L. in high spirits to find that he could still stalk over his native heaths with pleasure. On his return he insisted on looking up a certain passage in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and then spouted on about Mary Queen of Scots, learned for a school recital in his boyhood. So dramatic was his action that Margaret was quite nervous lest the neighbours should think some madman was with her, and I a little nervous for other reasons.

He admired Swinburne at his best, though placing the later work below *Atalanta*. But it was natural that his joyous nature and abounding vitality should find its favourite expression in Browning.[1] On a visit to America in early

[1] Mr. Stebbing recalls a dinner at the Reform Club when Courtney invited him and another friend to meet the poet.

manhood he surprised Longfellow by telling him that certain Englishmen preferred Browning to Tennyson. He devoured the love letters on their appearance, and at the age of eighty-one reviewed Sir Frederick Treves's volume on the scenery of *The Ring and the Book* for the Literary Supplement of the *Times*.[1] He lived long enough to hail and to mourn Rupert Brooke. He occasionally wrote some verses to accompany a birthday gift or celebrate a festivity. His spirited version of Baudelaire's well-known apostrophe to Death was published in the *Times* during his lifetime, and may serve as a specimen of his powers.

O Mort, vieux Capitaine, il est temps, levons l'ancre.
Ce pays nous ennuie, O Mort, Appareillons!
Si le ciel et la mer sont noirs comme l'encre,
Nos cœurs que tu connais sont remplis de rayons.

Verse-nous ton poison pour qu'il nous reconforte.
Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,
Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe?
Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau.

Time's up, old shipmate Death: the anchor lift:
This country bores us: up, full canvas dight!
Though seas or clouds as black as ink may drift,
Our hearts, thou knowest well, are full of light.

Fill high thy poisoned cup, 'twill brace us well:
We would—such fires burn fierce within the brain—
Plunge down the gulfs, be Heaven our port or Hell,
Plunge down the unknown gulfs, new lives to gain.

The death of Lady Roscoe prompted him to a sonnet of deep feeling.

Grave and kind woman in whose measured speech
Low-voiced and quiet we were wont to hear
Mixed with ironic wisdom a most dear
Presentment of true friendship beyond reach
Of doubt, of friendship that could teach
Faith to the faithless, simple and sincere
As perfect love that casteth out all fear.

[1] On a visit to Florence he resolved to re-enact Browning's discovery of the book. Crossing the square he found old books for sale, selected a volume half bound in vellum, cried "stall," and cast down a lira. The book turned out to be Byron's *Don Juan*.

Did we not know, dear one, when thou with each
Heldest true converse there did with thee dwell
Memories deep cut that time could not erase?
So be it with us! Let those who know us tell
How in our few remaining broken days
Memories of thee still make our bosoms swell,
Memories enriched with thankfulness and praise.

"Uncle Leonard's love of poetry," writes his niece Mrs. Mayor, "always seemed to me to be part of his personality and not merely a literary enjoyment. That is why his reciting was so wonderful. The lines would come out as though he himself were freshly creating them, and every shade of feeling and thought would be rendered by his voice. Sometimes, when asked to recite, he would shake his head—he would perhaps not feel greatly in the mood. Then there would be a long pause. One could see by the expression of his face and features that some poem was coming into his mind. One only had to wait and he would begin, quite quietly at first, but very soon his whole face and figure, even the way he gripped the sides of his chair, expressing what he was saying. And the spontaneity of it all was what was so really moving about it. When he had finished he would be in the highest of spirits and could easily be persuaded to give another and another poem. I remember well one windy day some years ago walking along the edge of a wood with him. Suddenly, with a toss of his head, and a flinging up of his arm, he began Shelley's *West Wind*. As he proceeded he became carried away, wildly gesticulating, and shouting at the top of his voice, and looking, with his rugged features, like the very spirit of the wind. I am sure he felt like it too. What tremendous spirits he was in! And he must have been nearly eighty. His sense of rhythm was extraordinary. When music was played, especially exciting and strongly rhythmic music, it was impossible for him to sit quite still like most people. Even in a crowded drawing-room sudden gestures of his hands, in fact his whole attitude, would betray his feeling for the music. He used to look as though if only the world were different he might get up and dance."

It was not till Courtney had crossed the threshold of

old age that he found himself in the common acceptance of the term an author. In February 1899 he was invited by Mr. Dent to write "a little manual" on the English Constitution for the first volume of his new series of Temple Primers. The invitation was not accepted at the time owing to his doubt as to the feasibility of his writing a book that would be satisfactory to himself within the limits of form and style suitable to a primer. But the idea of producing some account of the working constitution of the United Kingdom without reference to these restrictions proved attractive, and the larger book which was begun in the summer of 1899 with the aid of Mr. George Unwin, who had succeeded Mr. Curtis as secretary, was completed by the end of the year, published in 1901, and reprinted in 1911. The plan of a Primer was not carried out till 1904, when the author commissioned Mr. Unwin to make the necessary omissions and additions. The smaller book appeared in 1905, and has enjoyed a very large sale.

If treatises on the Constitution may be roughly classified as descriptive or analytical, *The Working Constitution of the United Kingdom* belongs, like the classical survey of Sir William Anson, to the former category. Such books, dealing rather with statics than dynamics, cannot compete in living interest with the philosophic disquisitions of Bagehot, Dicey and Sidney Low. Their value consists rather in their accuracy and completeness, and in the technical competence of their authors. The book is by no means easy reading, and is sometimes voted dull; and most of its readers are tempted to regret that the author has been so sparing with his own experience and observations. Yet behind this impersonal façade it is possible to discover not a few of his governing ideals. Proportional Representation makes its expected appearance in the opening pages on the Paramountcy of the House of Commons, receives further commendation in a later chapter on General Elections, and is persuasively argued in several passages scattered through the volume. We are no less conscious of personal contact with the author in the chapter on the House of Lords, which is pronounced to need reform no less than the House of

Commons. The author does not mention the Home Rule Bill; but it was in his mind, and the recollection of that episode in constitutional history gave a conservative colouring to his argument. The concluding chapter, on "The Future Growth of the Constitution," traced the movement towards federation, pointed out the objections to a Zollverein and an Imperial Senate, and uttered a warning to go slow. "We may wait and watch, not altogether stumbling in darkness, but conscious that we can peer but a little forward on the path which we may hope will preserve in the future the continuity of the past."

Correspondents wrote to correct a few trifling errors; but the general verdict of students was expressed by one of the oldest friends of the author, himself a historian and publicist of authority.

From William Stebbing

April 16, 1901.—I have now read through your book. You might, I think, have mixed with it something of your own personal experiences, and thus have made it somewhat easier of digestion. But, as it is, there could not be a more admirable text-book. Anybody who has studied it with intelligence needs no larger provision of facts—and their meaning—to enable him to understand himself and his neighbours as English citizens. Considering that you do not personally go to a book-shelf, and verify figures and theories, I have really—as I went through the volume, of necessity, not glibly—felt oppressed with genuine pity for one single, if double-lobed, human brain, which is doomed to carry constantly about with it such a mass of mighty matter.

If *The Working Constitution* was the natural outcome of a life dedicated to public affairs, Courtney's second book revealed a very different and unsuspected side of his mind and is of far higher biographical interest. It was known to his friends that he attended Lincoln's Inn Chapel on Sunday mornings, where he sat at the feet of such scholarly preachers as Rashdall and Beeching; [1] and he would read and discuss

[1] "Dear old fellow," wrote Canon Barnett to his brother after a sermon, "his fine head loomed in the dim light of the chapel over the dark oak—the one Bencher present."—*Life*, ii. 186.

the Modernism of Loisy and the Liberal Judaism of Claude Montefiore. But he was extremely reticent on his own beliefs, and many of his friends only became aware of his deep interest in the problems of religion after his death, when the authorship of *The Diary of a Churchgoer* was revealed. The little book, described by the writer as the jottings of two years, was dictated to his wife on Sunday afternoons between 1902 and 1904, and published in the latter year. The modesty which inspired anonymity is accentuated in the preface. "Going as I do week after week to church, and not being overmuch jostled there by a throng of fellow-worshippers, my mind has abundant opportunities of moving freely among the subjects presented to it for thought. I am but a simple citizen, moving among the mass of my fellow-men as one of themselves, destitute of erudition or any other claim to their attention. I would, however, patiently plead that I am not therefore completely disqualified from thinking and believing."

The *Diary* opens almost colloquially with thoughts suggested by the story of the deception of Isaac in the First Lesson for the second Sunday in Lent. "As a mere study of archaic law and morality it is very interesting; but nine clergymen out of ten, if they speak at all about him, excuse Jacob, and will think Isaac had no choice after his blessing had once been given. If we read the story as we ought, a frank denunciation of the trickery of Rebecca and Jacob would accompany it; and it would be pointed out how the narrator of the story had no more outgrown than Isaac himself the primitive superstition of the eternal obligation of act apart from intention." The moral sense of the modern man, he complains on a later Sunday, is no less revolted by certain Psalms, and he pleads for an option when those appointed are obviously unsuitable. His demand springs from a loving admiration of the spirit and even the letter of the great majority of these glorious chants. "When I turned over Canon Cheyne's book and stumbled on his version of Psalm xc., 'Lord, Thou hast been unto us an asylum from age to age,' the shock was indescribable." The Decalogue is chosen as a further illustration of the

mischief of an unrevised service, possessing many features out of harmony with our real convictions ; and the Diarist pleads for the optional substitution of the Christian commandments in the Communion Service, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbour as thyself. On another occasion he is moved to sharp protest by the " pretentious pedantry " of the Athanasian creed.

Passing from these formal criticisms, which might be countersigned by a Broad Church minister, he proceeds to grapple with the central problem of the Christian faith, What think ye of Christ ? He defers his own reply till he has sought for the answer of the Gospels, of Paul, and of the disciples. He concludes that the story of the Virgin Birth, found only in Matthew and Luke, and apparently unknown to Mark, Paul and John, was the creation of piety ; that Paul clearly separated the Son of God in his mind from God Himself, and that the disciples regarded their Master as no more than a man greatly favoured by God. Finally, what did Christ think of himself ? " The question is not so easy as we once imagined. I would speak anything but dogmatically ; but as I grope my way along it becomes more and more clear that in the Synoptical Gospels Christ at no time spoke or thought of himself as God, and never claimed a position which he did not also claim as within the aspiration of all men. He was the Son of God, but there were other Sons of God." Thus equipped with the answer to his inquiries the Diarist confronts the solemn question, What do I think of Christ ? The limitations of his knowledge are admitted ; but was he morally perfect ? If we are to believe the story of the Gadarene swine and the cursing of the barren fig-tree, we must answer in the negative ; for we are dealing with a belief to which the most microscopical defect is fatal. If, however, we are not pledged in advance to this exacting doctrine, such occasional outbursts of petulance are lost in the surpassing beauty of his acts and words. When Christ is envisaged as the most divine of men, and yet no more than a man, he seems to emerge more full of life and reality.

Pressing forward to the even graver issues of the nature

of God, the efficacy of prayer and the hope of immortality, the author neither accepts nor rejects the formula of a Personal God; but he sees the world and the individual alike irradiated by some divine effulgence. "The choir to-day sang divinely the Benedictus. It surely expresses the essence of all religion. I am from time to time possessed with the belief that Evil is the shadow, and Good the substance, that there is a certain promise of a fulfilled order in the glory of which Death is vanquished. Let this be called faith. Each one of us seems bound to admit something of an Influence out of himself which he often resists, but in the leading of which is found the highest peace. Self-knowledge and history combine to support Matthew Arnold's phrase, 'Something not ourselves that makes for righteousness.' It is in the strength of this apprehension that I repeat as the central article of my creed, somewhat varied from the usual formula, I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who speaks by the prophets."

A sermon on prayer moves him to probe deeper into the unknowable. "We were almost casually told to-day that we cannot, of course, pray for any alteration in the ordered sequence of natural phenomena. If true, prayer in relation to health cannot be separated from prayer in relation to storms and earthquakes. If perfect knowledge discards many forms of prayer, it may yet reveal a worship of its own. There may be a gulf which cannot be bridged over between this vision of order and the recognition of a Will, a Soul of all things; but if no science can take us across this gulf, neither can science exclude the hope that aspires to, or the faith that believes in, what is beyond. If I know anything I know that time after time I have had a choice. I must also confess a sustaining spirit assisting my own will in overcoming the pressure of the impulse. Here if anywhere is revealed the encompassing God. Prayer finds its most absolute expression in the words of the Master, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Such an aspiration is more than an aspiration —it is a pledge of work. *Orare est laborare.*" A more positive note is struck in the discussion of immortality.

" This flitting across the scene may well be judged a bitter irony if it is a mere flash which dies out for ever. Our faculties and our aspirations point to a larger life hereafter in which alone can be found the fulfilment of the purpose of their being."

The book aroused widespread interest, and the first edition was exhausted within a year. With something like unanimity the reviewers acclaimed its reverence and candour, its freshness of treatment and delicacy of touch. Though copies were sent to a few old friends, the secret was well kept, and the little volume was judged on its merits, as the author desired it to be. " Its extraordinary candour," wrote Canon Beeching in the *Spectator*, " will make it of the greatest service to teachers, who are often helplessly ignorant of what is passing in the minds of their congregations." It was the voice of the pew, echoed the *Guardian*, and would prove even more valuable to the clergy than to the laity. " I have read the book with extreme interest and a large measure of agreement," reported Canon Hensley Henson to the publisher. " I think the writer has done good service to the Christian Church, and especially to the clergy." " The nearer one is to agreeing with the book," wrote Dr. Rashdall to the author, " the more one regrets the omissions or one-sidedness which one thinks likely to mar its usefulness ; but I cannot doubt that on the whole it will do good, both by the real Christianity it contains (which will appeal to those who would not be prepared for a more theological way of putting things), and by compelling clergymen to face questions which we are too much inclined to evade." " It is so frank, sincere and reverent," commented Dr. Edwin Abbott, " and so singularly combines candour with modesty, and a knowledge and love of truth with a knowledge of human nature, and a dislike to give pain, that I predict for it access to many homes, and a response from many hearts." The *Times* welcomed the services of a " candid friend," who combined beauty of thought with transparent honesty of purpose.

While the tone and temper of the *Diary* received almost unreserved commendation, its argument was accepted,

challenged or rejected according to the standpoint of the reviewer. One critic pointed out that the author had neglected some vital passages in answering the question, What did Christ think of himself? Another complained that he had overlooked an indirect allusion of St. Paul to the Virgin Birth. A third argued that he underestimated the value of Christ's social teaching. The *Church Times* alone, an unbending champion of traditional orthodoxy, sharply belaboured the audacious iconoclast. "We can quite imagine a book like this seriously affecting the Upper House of Convocation," it wrote in bitter irony. "It is the profession of faith of the man in the street, who is now the measure of all things. And as the members of that House have already decided, as much as in them lies, to concede to him the Athanasian creed, a perusal of these pages must needs suggest to them a revision of the Psalter and Lectionary, and ultimately of the Apostles' Creed." Courtney was well aware that any attempt to fit Christianity into the natural history of mankind was an offence to many devout souls. "Your anxiety about undermining popular beliefs and sanctions," he wrote to Roby, "is only too intelligible. I acknowledge it, but I am persuaded we sacrifice too much to it." His message was addressed not to orthodox believers, but to "pious sceptics" like himself in the outermost courts of the Gentiles who hungered for the ancient pieties, while rejecting the framework of dogma in which they were enmeshed. Every compromise, whether of form or substance, is liable to attack from right and left, and his assailants in the rival camps of orthodoxy and rationalism may be left to answer one another. "It would be an evil day for the Church," writes Dean Gamble in his Preface to the reprinted *Diary*, "if it tried to exclude thinkers so earnest, reverent and sincere. Men of this type are more and more withdrawing from its services; but I hope this book may help to induce some to hesitate before they entirely cut themselves off from public worship." The author had no intention of allowing himself to be shouldered out of his patrimony, and he took part in conferences on Church Reform with Broad Churchmen of

the school of Dean Fremantle, Canon Barnett and Canon Lilley.[1]

Old age is commonly associated with increasing loneliness and declining powers, but Courtney never grew old, and he retained to the end a blitheness and buoyancy which few men carry into middle age and still fewer beyond it. His health was good[2] and he loved to surround himself with young life. His spirits on a continental tour were those of a schoolboy home for the holidays. At the age of sixty he danced with an old peasant woman at the fair at Chartres. At seventy-five, in driving through the Black Forest, he came upon a flowering oleander, rose in the carriage and took off his hat, exclaiming, "Hail to thee," much to the astonishment of the villagers. He was equally happy in town and country, in exploring an old city or in patrolling the Southern Downs. "Those days walking on down and moor," writes his niece Mary Meinertzhagen, "will stand with me ever as times telling vividly of Uncle Leonard's vigour and bigness of heart. He always lived and enjoyed the thing, whatever it was, at its core. No one could hear him say a line of poetry, or watch the feeling pass over his face as he listened to a delicate minuet, without realising this spontaneous and impulsive sympathy. He rejoiced where Browning rejoiced, and was deeply stirred when Handel spoke. I remember sometimes wondering whilst playing: Now will this carry Uncle Leonard off his feet? and it generally did! So responsive was he to what was being told him. No matter where we were, in town or country, on moor or by sea, he was in touch with the place and eager to enjoy its character. It was always something of an adventure—the planning and then the starting on a walk. I invariably felt excited, for I knew it would be a walk like no other—one rich in friendliness. It was as natural to be friends with the wind and rain as with humans. I can picture him now, an alert figure

[1] Barnett's *Life*, ii. 326, 330.

[2] In his later years he had some very serious illnesses, but he recovered rapidly and refused to be an invalid. "I shall never forget the tone in which he said, 'My dear, understand I will not live a guarded life; it is not worth it,' when I urged him not to cross to Dublin in a storm, as the doctor said it might bring on hemorrhage."

in his short swinging cloak upon a cliff against the sea. The very air as it touched seemed to give something of itself as he passed through it. It made one's heart leap to share in that splendid way of taking on the strength and humour of the elements, of tossing back the buffets of the wind and laughing at the rain as it battered on our cheeks. The lie of country, the discovery of a tumulus, or the tracing of a Roman road—all would be embraced with the same warmth and energy. I can remember standing upon the cross-roads of some down, the country stretching wide beneath, and he asking that the picture might be unfolded to him. Could the spire of a distant town be seen? or the hills of an adjoining county? As often happens, particular points are slow in appearing, but it was characteristic of him that no matter in what sphere his search lay he was never satisfied without a true and accurate representation. Though he was blind, and I could see, I always knew that it was I who had gone off on a tangent whilst he had kept a firm and secure grasp."

The holiday abroad was almost as keenly enjoyed in the years of achievement as in the years of struggle. There was always some cathedral or picture gallery in France, Germany or Italy to be visited or revisited, some valley in the Alps, the Jura or the Vosges to be explored. But his love of foreign travel never dulled his affection for his own land, and to the end he sought out with eager curiosity historic scenes and the haunts of eminent men.

Journal

October 2, 1904.—Ecclefechan. At last! often desired, once before arranged. Humble but rather well-proportioned house where Carlyle was born. Various relics shown with pride by the old caretaker, who finally put a big picturesque straw hat worn in the Chelsea garden on L.'s head, with "Try it on, sir,"—a joke he had often made before. Instead of going over his nose as the old man expected it fitted a bit tightly, and I thought of F. C. G.'s caricature of the Two Sages of Chelsea.

The old statesman remained faithful to the end; and on

reading Lord Redesdale's *Recollections* in the last year of his life he vigorously protested against the unflattering portrait of Jane Welsh Carlyle. No man was less of a hero-worshipper; but no one was more faithful to his friends.

CHAPTER XXI

TARIFF REFORM

SHORTLY after the Treaty of Vereeniging Generals Botha, Delarey and De Wet sailed for Europe. The bitter feelings excited by the long struggle passed quickly away with its close, and the visitors met with a comparatively friendly reception. Their main object was to seek assistance for the rebuilding of their country; but at their first interview with Chamberlain on September 5 they failed in their appeal.

From General Botha

September 6.—As it is probable that my confrères and myself may have to leave London by the middle of next week and we wish to consider a plan of operations in connection with raising funds in this country for widows, orphans and other persons needing help in our country, we would be glad if you could favour us, if possible by Monday midday, with a memorandum setting forth your views as to how we can best attain the object we have in view and which we know and are grateful to think you also take so deeply to heart. Our time will not allow of our discussing the various plans that might be suggested individually with our friends, hence our resolve to obtain their views in writing and after comparing the different plans suggested to adopt a scheme that will seem to us best likely to attain the desired results. We would also be glad to hear from you the names of any other influential friends that you consider we should do well or should not neglect to consult.

The letter was forwarded to Alsace, where Courtney was enjoying a holiday after his first cure at Kissingen.

To General Botha

MÜNSTER, *September* 12, 1902.—Your question as to the best method of raising money in the United Kingdom is most difficult to answer, and cannot be separated from a consideration of the method you may use on the Continent and in the United States. Whatever you may say and do out of England will be at once communicated to our people, not always too correctly, and must influence their reception of your efforts. If possible much the same plan should everywhere be adopted. The first method of procedure is to issue a public appeal, to which should be attached a certain number of first subscriptions, including the names of persons who have not been identified with what has been called Pro-Boer advocacy; but I cannot say that I think it likely to be very productive. A second plan is to institute a course of lectures and addresses throughout Great Britain. The reception you had in London might encourage you to be sanguine, and I have no doubt that at starting considerable audiences might be secured; but I have very little confidence in the stability of the feelings which animated the London crowds. The amount of money you would obtain after payment of expenses would be far from considerable; but it is the most popular method, and if good feeling were maintained it would be attended with many indirect advantages. I am afraid you will not consider this a very encouraging letter. I should have been very glad to have discussed the whole situation with you, and perhaps I may have the advantage of doing so when I return home.

Letters from friends who had seen the Generals told of the impression of power and moderation which they produced.

From John Morley

September 17, 1902.—Last week I had two hours with Botha, De Wet and Delarey. Botha is the only one who is at home in English, but Fischer, who was there, interpreted. They were excessively moderate in language and tone, though I fancy De Wet has a pretty hot fire in his belly—and quite right too. They went to Holland the same night. Money and amnesty seemed the main points. You will see them, so I need not say more.

On his and their return to London Courtney had several

conversations with the Generals, who on September 25 issued their appeal for help to the civilised world, opened a Boer Relief Fund for the widows and orphans, visited Paris and Berlin, but only succeeded in raising about £100,000.

Journal

October 26, 1902.—In they all came with their interpreter and Emily Hobhouse. Botha alone spoke English fluently, but he preferred carrying on the conversation in Dutch on account of his colleagues. He was also the most refined and cultivated looking and broke easily into a pleasant smile. De Wet looked a burly farmer, and sat silent and grim, now and then intervening with a fiery or shrewd sentence. He and Delarey, who is gentle and deliberate looking but with bright eyes, seemed sad and worse. The talk ran chiefly on their relations with Chamberlain, L. urging them to put themselves in his place and recognise what would impress him favourably, instancing that they might give assurances that they formally accepted incorporation and that they would use their influence to have the National Scouts well treated by the burghers, though they could not like them. The Generals complained that not equality but preference was being shewn to the Scouts, so that the three millions were going without the burghers being put back on the land. They said a hopeful spirit prevailed after the peace; but now, as weeks and months went on, the people were getting disheartened and thoroughly discontented. If Milner could be removed—that was the great difficulty. L. advised them to be silent on that point. Altogether it was a bitter cry of a ruined people they reported, but with heart and resolution to work back to well-being if a chance was given them.

Next day it was announced that Chamberlain would visit South Africa in the winter. In a second interview with the Generals the Colonial Secretary extended official charity to the widows and orphans, but informed Botha that since their campaign on the Continent he had changed his mind, and should not nominate him to the Legislative Council. Botha replied that while he would have accepted any position in which he could serve his people, it was a relief to him to have no part in the present direction of affairs.

Journal

December 12.—Botha and Delarey and their wives came yesterday to say good-bye. The Bishop of Hereford, Sir R. Reid and about a dozen other friends. Botha made a series of statements in Dutch, interpreted by Mr. Fischer, Secretary of the Free State. I will try to give the gist of the talk. Warm thanks to us and their English friends. They want to co-operate with England and mean to be good subjects. Both sides must keep their bargain. The great trouble is repatriation. He would devote his life to seeing his people did get back to their country. If Government would not help, he should get help somewhere and somehow. I asked him about emigration schemes to Madagascar, Argentina, etc., to which he rather warmly replied he should oppose them with all his might. The next trouble was Milner's attitude towards education. They would not submit to the suppression of their language. Then federation must not be forced on them before the new colonies had representation. He ended by saying they should never fight again with guns, and they asked for the help of English people to get justice and really equal rights in South Africa.

Courtney continued to watch South Africa with the closest attention, though without much hope of substantial improvement until a different Government should be installed at Westminster, and a new High Commissioner ruled at the Cape. The restoration of the devastated country and the repatriation of the prisoners was necessarily a slow process; and Chamberlain's visit, though undertaken in the sincere desire to heal the wounds of war, contributed little to the cause of reconciliation. Of greater practical utility were the unwearied efforts of Emily Hobhouse, supported by the encouragement of Courtney and his wife and many other friends, to foster home industries among the impoverished Boers of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. The situation was described in occasional bulletins from South Africa.

From J. W. Sauer

December 10, 1902.—Our session of Parliament, as you will have seen, is over, and all Lord Milner's and the *Times'* prophecies foretelling the evil consequences of our meeting have been

falsified. As always the conduct of the Dutch, or rather I should say the South African party, was irreproachable. Not that provocation was wanting. The meeting of our Parliament has been a complete justification for its existence, if such were needed. And much the same can be said of the country as of Parliament. In the Cape Colony the disturbed districts at once after peace resumed their normal condition—which is one of quiet obedience to law and absolute order. There is no country in the world I believe where there is so little crime and agitation as among the Dutch-speaking people of South Africa. If Mr. Chamberlain would realise that, he would reduce the extraordinary expenditure on Police, Constabulary, etc., adopt the peace terms in a large and liberal sense, and generously, justly rather I should say, assist to restart the Burgher populations of the late Republics, many of whom are in great misery, want and despair. I pray that you and others will continue to assist a little people who are deserving of right and honourable treatment.

The evil that wars do lives after them; and Courtney descried dark clouds on the horizon at home and in South Africa.

To Captain Bethell

New Year's Day, 1903.—The Boer war leaves us that heritage of swollen expenditure and bad taxation on which you comment, and I am afraid we shall have a good deal of trouble before things get into decent shape. I look also for a bad time industrially and commercially. If you are a little disgusted with your own party, I as a quondam Liberal may even more separate myself from the Unionist combination, and indeed must call myself Liberal again simply, although not seeing clearly the way out of the Irish difficulty. Have you been reading Kidd's contributions to the *Times* about South Africa? Unless great care is taken we shall have great servile troubles there in the future. All the capitalists are eager to get at the gold as quickly as possible, and for this purpose want to force more work out of the nation. Milner has shown his willingness to help them, not only in word but in act, by increasing the taxation of the natives, and this is just one of the things to which I fear Chamberlain would be naturally predisposed. On the other hand the natives have been earning very high wages during the war, and there is some evidence that they have rather got out of hand. If pressed unwisely we might have immense trouble, and Boer and Briton would be

found fighting together in a savage war when all the restraints nominally observed between civilised nations would go to the winds. I hope this horrible picture will not be realised, but there is sufficient haste and unwisdom about to make me uneasy.

There was soon to be new cause to lament the " haste and unwisdom " with which the affairs of South Africa were directed. The war had dislocated the industrial machinery of the Rand, and a Commission reported by a majority that it was impossible to secure enough natives for the mines. The mineowners' demand for Chinese labour was supported by Lord Milner ; but British opinion in the Transvaal was not unanimously in its favour, and the Dutch were solidly opposed to it. The scheme was never popular in Great Britain or the Colonies, where healthy sentiment was offended by the degrading circumstances under which the Chinese were condemned to work, and which the Government of India forbade its subjects to accept. At the Annual Meeting of the Aborigines Protection Society in 1904 Courtney moved a resolution condemning the introduction of Chinese labour under servile conditions. Associating himself with the language of Sir Charles Dilke, who spoke before him, he denounced the creation of a servile community and the treatment of the labourers as mere beasts of burden. It was no excuse for this sinister innovation that the mineowners were in a hurry for dividends. The gold would not run away. Mr. Creswell's experiment in the employment of white labour in the mines was promising, and a little delay in development would be better than introducing a new irritant into that distracted country and exposing us to a blot on our scutcheon. He implored the Colonial Secretary not to yield to greed or to the argument of temporary stagnation ; but the best hope lay in the fact that the experiment would prove too expensive to be profitable. The Government, however, conceded the demand, and the warnings of its opponents were fulfilled. When the ill-omened importation was stopped by the Liberal Government in 1905 and the last Chinaman left South Africa some years later, it was proved that Chinese miners working

under servile conditions were not essential to the prosperity of Johannesburg.

Courtney's conviction that the gold mines had been the curse of South Africa, and were of very little benefit to the world at large was set forth in academic form in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1904 entitled, " What is the use of Gold Discoveries ? " " Lord Bramwell once asked me that question, and we agreed that their utility was so doubtful as to justify some regret they should ever be made." The common notion that the more gold was extracted from the earth the better was a pure delusion ; for its inevitable result was to increase prices and diminish fixed incomes. Perhaps the one indirect advantage of gold discoveries was that they bustled people about the world and caused regions to be settled earlier than would otherwise have been the case. For instance gold had led swarms to California and Australia, which had developed into great exporters of food and raw material. To this contention some might reply that they had merely turned the more adventurous spirits on a wrong scent. But why waste words ? Mankind would continue to seek for gold even if it could be demonstrated that it was an illusory benefit when found, and that the cost of its finding was greater than its market value.

On the return of the Colonial Secretary from his visit to South Africa in 1903 he electrified the country by a speech to his constituents proclaiming the necessity of Colonial Preference. The shilling duty on corn imposed for revenue purposes in 1901 was removed on the restoration of peace ; for Ritchie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, successfully resisted his colleague's attempt to introduce Preference by continuing the duty on foreign corn and allowing colonial corn to enter free. Baulked in the Cabinet Chamberlain determined to appeal to public opinion ; and within a week of his speech at Birmingham the problem of Free Trade *versus* Protection emerged as the dominant issue of British politics. Free Trade had been so much taken for granted that the younger generation was in large measure unfamiliar with the rival arguments ; and the impetuous challenge by the most powerful man in the country forced

its veteran champions to snatch their weapons from the armoury and sally forth to the battlefield. Among the Elder Statesmen there was no more convinced or more competent Defender of the Faith than Courtney, the friend of Mill, Cairnes and Fawcett, and the only prominent politician who had held a Chair of Political Economy. Protection had raised its head for a brief space in 1885; and to conciliate the "Fair Traders" who were found in considerable numbers in the Conservative ranks Lord Salisbury, on taking office, appointed a Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade. Courtney was invited to become a member by the Chairman, Lord Iddesleigh, who assured him that he was "very anxious that it should not degenerate into a wrangle over Free Trade and Fair Trade." Believing, however, such an inquiry to be unnecessary and unsettling, the Member for Liskeard, like his friends Goschen and Forster, declined to serve. His survey of British Finance, 1837–87, contributed two years later to Humphrey Ward's Jubilee volumes, *The Reign of Queen Victoria*, was a paean to the success of Free Trade principles and direct taxation.

Though a good deal of brooding Protectionist sentiment lingered among the landowners and farmers, and mutterings were heard where Conservative Associations met together, Protection was not taken seriously by any prominent statesman till Chamberlain, approaching the subject rather from the political than from the economic side, unfurled his banner in 1903. Courtney had seen it coming, as he had foretold the Home Rule movement twenty years before. In supporting the candidature of Mr. John Burns at Battersea during the election of 1900 he had prophesied that among the reactions of the war would be a recrudescence of Protection under the guise of Colonial Preference. In October 1902, after the close of hostilities, he chose for the theme of his Inaugural Address to the Young Scots' Society at Edinburgh "The Competition of Nations," and affirmed the sufficiency of the old principles to meet the problems of the new age. He rejected Mill's theoretical concession of Protection for infant industries in view of the success of

unprotected growths in many parts of the world; but the main attack was delivered against the doctrine that a great State should be self-sufficing. "That is a vision which I find is attractive to many honest minds. I venture to say that it is not by living alone and making ourselves independent of our fellows, but by living with them and making us all dependent on one another that true progress will be realised. Even if it were desirable that the United Kingdom should aim at being self-subsistent, it is too late to think of it; for we should have to reduce our population from forty to twenty-five millions. We have to find our salvation as it was found by our fathers in peace and retrenchment, and if anybody wants to add efficiency I have no objection; to pay our debts instead of increasing them, and to free our industries from the taxes which oppress them. The projects of Zollverein, preferential duties and rejecting foreign capital—all these things will be brought before you again and again. Oppose to them, I exhort you, the sound thought that our own well-being, like the well-being of the world, is best found in freedom of intercourse."

This eloquent vindication of the Cobdenic faith was made at a time when Free Traders were blissfully ignorant of the coming storm; and when Chamberlain's declaration of war was delivered in the following spring Courtney sprang into the breach to repel the attack. His first declaration appeared in a two-column article in the *Manchester Guardian*. The plunge of the Colonial Secretary, he began, was a reckless challenge of fate. For more than fifty years we had prospered under Free Trade. Why should we change? That was the question which for the moment sufficed to defeat him. But it would never do to rest upon it. Protection was the natural prejudice of the uninstructed man. The last century had had its ups and downs, though the net result has been a striking growth in national wealth and well-being, and we must look forward to periods of difficulty and possibly of trial. We must be ready with facts and arguments which should prevail in dark days when quacks find their opportunity. "I for one am satisfied that the more the case is examined the clearer will be the conclusions of

reason against preferential dealing with the colonies. The widest possible extension of our export trade to the colonies would bring a gain quite inadequate to balance the loss suffered through the increased cost of our food supplies. When we turn to the effect on our foreign commerce the sense of its impolicy becomes overwhelming. The trade we should endanger is three times as great as the trade we should favour. Again, far from tightening the bonds of empire, we should exchange the affections of a family for the disputes of commerce. A system by which the toilers of the old country were made to pay more for their daily bread for the advantage of producers in far-off colonies would not make the bonds of empire more acceptable or more lasting." The peroration enshrined an argument to which he attached peculiar weight, derived as it was from the deepest springs of his political philosophy. "While I would cherish every tie of family affection I dare not do anything which would diminish our friendship with the other peoples of the world. The ideal of a self-subsistent British Empire, wholly independent of other nations, isolated and content with its isolation, is to me repugnant rather than attractive. Free Trade, it has long been recognised, tends, however slowly, to the establishment of a community of the world; and I repudiate Mr. Chamberlain's schemes because, instead of this vision, they point to an ideal of separated interests and antagonistic ambitions."

A few weeks later Courtney contributed the equivalent of a Second Reading speech to the August number of the *Contemporary Review*, under the title of "Mr. Chamberlain's Balloon." "Will the Colonial Secretary stick to strengthening the ties of Empire, or will he slip into the advocate of pure Protection?" he asked with prophetic apprehension. His message was the instant need of strengthening the ties of Empire—a political aim to be secured by economic means. "But what is the urgent necessity of doing anything at all? Has the thread become so thin that it is in danger of being broken? He does not tell us. So far as the nation knows the implied danger was never more unreal." The apprehension of commercial reciprocity between the

United States and Canada might perhaps have provoked his action. Whatever the cause, he was, like a celebrated predecessor, "a man in a hurry." He desired to crown the edifice of empire that he had reared as Colonial Secretary. From an Imperial standpoint, however, his scheme was premature and abortive; for he omitted the dependencies. He could not even secure Free Trade within the Empire, for the colonies clung tenaciously to their tariffs. To obtain support for Colonial Preference he would therefore be driven to adopt the popular catchword of protecting the home market from unfair foreign competition. Dumping, however, namely the capture of a market by underselling the home producer in order to exact hereafter an enhanced price, had never succeeded. Even in the case of sugar the cane had been worsted by the beet through cheaper production and lower freight, apart from the aid of bounties. To lament the decline of cane sugar was to bewail the disappearance of stage-coaches. "I do not say there is no peril in the revival of Protection, knowing how strongly articulate are the interests." Our leadership in the industry of the world was passing to America. There could be no greater madness than for a people in such a position to abandon Free Trade. Yet it was difficult for a nation that had been first not to believe it ought always to be first; and if it appeared to be dropping into the second place the opportunity arose of pressing every false remedy to prevent the catastrophe. "It must be Free Trade that is causing us to be outdone. Let us turn to Protection which has given other nations the power to beat us." Here was the sharpest arrow in the quiver of the Colonial Secretary.

Courtney's capacity for the academic discussion of economic issues was illustrated by an article in the May number of the *Nineteenth Century*, entitled, "What is the advantage of foreign trade?" He had been set thinking by Mr. Hobson's book on Imperialism, the main thesis of which seemed irrefutable, namely that the popular pursuit of the extension of empire as a means of securing economic gains to our people was a costly delusion. Our trade with independent countries had developed more than with those

we had brought under our flag ; and the trade of our possessions with other countries had grown more rapidly than with ourselves. When, however, Mr. Hobson argued that the national gain from foreign trade was relatively small, and that the labour and capital employed on exports could find occupation in supplying the home market, he fell into an extravagant reaction against the idolatry of commerce. His contention might be utilised by Protectionists, who would say, Why then should we not be independent of foreigners ? We had gradually found for our country its true place in the world's division of labour, and nothing should be done to restrict either foreign or domestic trade.

Throughout the summer every platform resounded with the din of battle ; and the conflict in the country ran parallel with a conflict in the Council Chamber. The Prime Minister accepted retaliation as a means of reducing tariffs ; but he refused to swallow the taxation of food, and decided that no changes should be made before a General Election. When the Cabinet met in September the storm burst. The Colonial Secretary resigned in order to conduct his campaign, and Ritchie, Lord George Hamilton and Lord Balfour, because they were unable to swallow Mr. Balfour's new programme. The concealment of Chamberlain's resignation till the Prime Minister had secured the resignation of his Free Trade colleagues appeared to Courtney, as well as to the victims, decidedly " tricky " ; and the belated withdrawal of the Duke of Devonshire a fortnight later, after Mr. Balfour's speech at Sheffield, filled him with satisfaction.

To Mrs. Henry Hobhouse

October 6.—The Duke's resignation must have put much comfort into you. It has been a great relief to me. I have been going about heavily the last fortnight. Balfour's scheme is quite unpractical. Chamberlain's proposals would embroil us with all the world, would add to the cost of living, and would reduce our efficiency in the competition of foreign markets ; but compared with Balfour's it is workable if suicidal. We have been doing well and shall continue to do well, but this last truth must be coupled with an acknowledgment that though we are

still absolutely going forward we are losing and must lose the first place. This is the only fact that really gives me anxiety. Our national vainglory will not easily acquiesce in being second ; and any quack who professes to have a remedy against this loss of supremacy will attract the support of a great many and it might be in a bad season of a majority of electors. It seems to me wise not to conceal the unpalatable truth but to try to bring our countrymen to realise it as a fact which tariffs cannot alter.

After the " September massacres " the Cabinet was reconstructed with lesser men and diminishing prestige. Chamberlain opened his campaign with a speech at Glasgow on October 1, and on October 13 Lord Aberdeen presided at a Free Trade demonstration of Glasgow Young Scots, at which Courtney replied to him. A letter was read from Campbell-Bannerman containing a warm tribute to his " old friend, one of the staunchest in his opinions, and most courageous in his patriotism of all public men." " Twelve months ago," began Courtney, " I spoke to the Young Scots in Edinburgh on the competition of nations, a subject then thought academic. Free Trade is now the topic of the hour, and it will come out of the contest stronger than ever. It will be a long battle, and I underrate neither the forces against it nor the vehemence of the battle." He had a fellow-feeling for a man going out into the wilderness to preach his gospel ; yet he could hardly understand how Chamberlain could ever have been a Free Trader, for he misrepresented Cobden in a way which showed that he never understood him. Cobden saw in Free Trade a means of abolishing needless exertion, and of providing with the least effort for the wants of humanity. " It means ameliorating the lot of men, and reconciling the animosities of nations. Do not be misled by this dream of empire. Not empire but liberty, a brotherhood of friendly people."

Courtney had always hoped that when the passions of the South African war had subsided, he might find some opportunity of re-entering Parliament. He had nothing in common with the Unionist party except dislike of Home Rule ; and if he was to have a political future it must be as

an Independent Liberal. At the end of April 1903, Hector Macpherson wrote to inform him that he would be asked to stand for West Edinburgh, and begged him not to decline. A day or two later a deputation arrived from the northern capital. "The first chapter," records Mr. Gulland, "was the suggestion of the then Scottish Whip, Captain Sinclair, that Leonard Courtney would probably accept the invitation of the West Edinburgh Liberal Association to be our candidate. I well remember the thrill that I experienced when one whom I so greatly admired was named as a possibility. Three of our number, Mr. James P. Gibson—afterwards Sir James Gibson, Lord Provost of Edinburgh and M.P. for East Edinburgh—Bailie Lang Todd and myself, came up to London, and lunched with Mr. and Mrs. Courtney. We fully discussed the matter, and practically settled it. Then our host and hostess took us over Carlyle's house. We had the idea that he would make a good candidate, because he had been a Unionist and might be supposed to be not unacceptable to Liberal Unionists." In the following month Courtney delivered his first political speech in Edinburgh; but the final step was not taken till after the summer holidays and after Chamberlain had inaugurated his crusade. The prospect of success was very doubtful, for there was a majority of 1500 to be wiped out, and the electorate consisted to a large extent of prosperous professional men whom it would be difficult if not impossible to wean from their instinctive conservatism. But no better chance appeared to offer, and acceptance would at least give him a platform. "I suppose L. will not be M.P. for West Edinburgh," wrote his wife in her Journal; "but we shall have some not disagreeable visits, and some useful speaking."

On October 19 Courtney delivered his first address to the constituency, which he was to woo for more than two years. His object was to prove by examination of their conduct and policy that the Government must go. He regretted the necessity of criticising the Prime Minister; "for I have known the man, enjoyed his conversation and appreciated his charm." The Government had led the country into a great war, the policy of which there was no

need to discuss. " I am content to let what appears to be a growing judgment mature until it shall become, as I believe, the judgment of the majority." It had entangled the British Empire in the quarrels and ambitions of Japan. Consols had fallen from 114 to 88½, while national expenditure had risen by 50 per cent. In the field of education it had backed denominational interests against the principle of equal rights, and had threatened to curtail the power of the Licensing Magistrates for daring to do their duty. The same sacrifice of the interests of the masses was involved in the proposal to restore Protection, " that issue which threatens to swallow up every other."

" One was forcibly reminded of the days of Gladstone," wrote Mr. Hector Macpherson, the scholarly Editor of the Edinburgh *Evening News* and a powerful ally in the fight against the Boer War, " the old enthusiasm, the old determination, the old eagerness to meet the foe. In oratorical power, intellectual force and elevation of tone his speech was quite a revelation even to those who have long since recognised his eminence in the sphere of economic thought. For eighty minutes he held his audience spellbound, and for once it was patent that political economy was no dismal science." On the conclusion of the speech he was formally invited to become Liberal candidate for West Edinburgh. The Address was published with a biographical Foreword by James Gibson, Chairman of the Liberal Association, who reminded the voters that a constituency rarely enjoyed such an opportunity of securing as a representative, " a man whose splendid powers had been given without stint to the common weal." Courtney's formal adoption by a Liberal Association in 1903 marks his definite severance from the Unionist party, though not from the Unionist faith. The peremptory challenge to Free Trade produced a similar effect on a large number of Liberal Unionists, who had disapproved of the Education Act of 1902, and the attack on the Licensing Justices. Among them was Courtney's old friend and colleague Lord Northbrook, who, in Lord Cromer's words, was " not sorry that the Protectionist policy adopted by the Conservative Government afforded him a valid

reason for crossing the floor of the House and voting with the Liberals." [1]

In addition to discharging his novel duties to Edinburgh Courtney occasionally found time to visit the constituencies of friends. In speaking for Mr. Channing at Kettering he prophesied that the demand for Protection would be followed before very long by a demand for conscription. But his main talk was to defend the threatened citadel of Free Trade. He celebrated Cobden's centenary on January 3, 1904, by an appreciation in the *Manchester Guardian*, repeated and enlarged in an Address at Edinburgh. He once more explained that though the great economist was too sanguine in anticipating that other Powers would follow our example, this expectation formed no part of the argument for our own adoption of Free Trade. His leading characteristic was temperate wisdom, and his message was the Christian maxim, Do unto others as you would they should do unto you. His political principles were no more out of date than his economic arguments. He was confident that if we abstained from aggressive antagonism and promoted goodwill, we should never be attacked. A careful reading of subsequent struggles, including that of 1870, supported his confidence that peace could be relied on by nations of goodwill without surrender of any national right, and that the real danger of war arose from abandoning that conciliatory temper which was a surer safeguard than an efficient army. "The best preservative of peace is to be found in that temper of equity and forbearing friendship which governed his life."

It was a satisfaction to Courtney to be fighting once more under the same flag as his old leader, whose resolute adherence to Free Trade was of greater national significance than his modesty allowed him to believe.

From the Duke of Devonshire

January 3, 1904.—I have a meeting at Liverpool on the 19th, and another in the City soon after the meeting of Parliament, and I do not think that I can undertake any more until I see

[1] B. Mallet, *Earl Northbrook*, p. 239-40.

how things are going. Our Free Traders are extraordinarily weak, and I think by that time I may be left almost alone and represent nobody but myself. Strongly as I feel on the subject I find a great difficulty in speaking about it. It is too big, and my political economy is not strong. What do you think is the best line for a man who does not profess to be a political economist? I am sure that more ought to be made than has been made of the Colonial and Imperial side of the question; but then I do not know much about the colonies either.

While pledged heart and soul to the Liberal creed in relation to the dominating issue of the moment, Courtney never concealed the fact that he was not a Home Ruler. His Unionism had been as vigorous and effective in the early years of the schism as that of any other Dissentient Liberal; but his action on the Evicted Tenants Bill in 1894 had softened the antagonism, and in 1898 Lord Acton described him to Mrs. Drew as "the least adverse of adversaries." [1] His feeling towards Ireland underwent a further modification during the long agony of the South African war. He had been cast out by the Unionists, and had worked in cordial comradeship with Liberal Home Rulers in the fight against Imperialism. The Parnellites and anti-Parnellites had made up their feud, and in the name of Irish nationalism had denounced the destruction of the nationality of the Boer Republics. No one could truthfully maintain that the union of hearts was nearer than in 1886, and the failure of the policy of "killing Home Rule by kindness" was proved afresh in the General Election of 1900. Thus when Lord Rosebery urged the Liberal party to clean its slate and announced his own conversion to Unionism, Courtney pointed out that Ireland could not thus be waved aside. In a published letter to the Young Scots of March 3, 1902, he explained that he had regarded Home Rule as a step to be taken only in the last resort, when all attempts at unification were recognised as failures. "The sixteen years since 1886 have not been so productive of good as I expected. We have indeed created local self-government, and I would wait and watch what may come of it."

[1] *Letters*, p. 200.

But though the antagonism was less acute conversion was still far away.

To H. N. Brailsford

February 16, 1903.—I think the time has come for the restatement of the case and I should be glad to hear that your pamphlet was having a wide circulation. I am not yet persuaded of the necessity for a radical change in the political organisation of the United Kingdom, but I always fought the Irish question on considerations of time and circumstance. It seems to me that upon the whole the balance of advantage is against setting up a separate Parliament for Scotland, though I do not think such an institution would result in injustice between the different classes in Scotland; and I will not despair of the possibility of Irish, like Scottish and English sub-nationalities, flourishing contentedly under one Parliament. This result cannot indeed be brought about without much the same kind of deference to Irish opinion being established at Westminster as exists in respect to Scottish opinion. If this cannot be realised Home Rule will have to be adopted as a policy of despair, and I am disposed to hold with Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill; but it is a most painful alternative.

He maintained his position on presenting himself to the Liberal electors of West Edinburgh. "I still think one Parliament is better than the creation of provincial Parliaments. I do not repent of my original sin—if it was a sin." Yet an atmospheric change was revealed when George Wyndham summoned the Home Ruler Sir Antony Macdonnell to his aid. Courtney watched the experiment with sympathy and its ruthless destruction by Sir Edward Carson with regret. With the fall of the brilliant and generous-minded Chief Secretary it was obvious that no further advance could be expected from a party dominated by its Orange tail. "We must not shrink even from the imputation of inconsistency," he declared at Edinburgh, "if we find that after all the only one way of solving the question is the one we had hoped to escape. I do not regret my opposition to Gladstone's scheme. He was too hasty. In his noble eagerness his attempt was premature, and he did nothing but split up his party. But the Ireland of

to-day is not the Ireland of 1886. We have given her local self-government and solved the land question." If Courtney's ship was not yet anchored in the Home Rule harbour, it was sailing steadily in that direction.

Journal

All listened with intense interest, I not the least. I don't quite know what I think and feel about what seems on the face of it a reversal of a line we both took with so much energy and feeling twenty years ago. I still cannot think of Home Rule as right or wise. But the intolerance of the ascendancy party drives us to feel some change must be made. Now he has broken the ice L. will no doubt develope his ideas of what can be done.

Courtney had grounds of quarrel with the Government in regard to its foreign no less than to its domestic policy. He championed Free Trade, as we have seen, not only because it supplied human needs with the least effort, but because it taught the sovereign truth of the interdependence of nations. In his eyes Imperialism and Protection grew from the same poisoned root, and it was no mere coincidence that the main author of the Boer War was also the revivalist preacher of commercial exclusiveness. A few months after the Treaty of Vereeniging an Anglo-German demonstration against Venezuela seemed to show that the Government still preferred the cutting of knots to untying them. The recourse to violent methods against a weak State filled Courtney with indignation, which he discharged in a speech delivered at the New Reform Club on December 13, 1902. "For some reason or other, nobody knows what, to enforce claims, nobody knows whose, we suddenly find ourselves in alliance with another Great Power entering a port in South America, seizing ships and burning them. I have read in some newspapers some canting phrases about corruption and indebtedness as being the necessary outcome of democratic institutions. Let us have done with all this cant. There is no doubt that Venezuela has things to amend, as have all countries. It may have been slow in paying its debts, but other people are also slow. Before

taking the process in hand we ought to have known, and we ought now to insist on knowing, all about it. We have got a quarrel, and we are going to be our Judge and Sheriff's officers to enforce our claims. Why is the dispute not submitted to the Hague tribunal? I see Venezuela is asking for arbitration. I do not express any opinion on the rights and wrongs of the quarrel. I only condemn the proceedings which have been taken, which are offensive to every modern sentiment."

The war in the deserts of Somaliland and the expedition to remote Lhassa were no more to his taste; and the latter appeared to him utterly unprovoked. "We are beginning a war," he declared in his Presidential Address to the National Peace Congress at Manchester, June 22, 1904, "with a country which has given no offence save that of desiring to be left alone. We are disregarding all the experiences and lessons of our predecessors. It is my hope that the policy will be reversed, as when Gladstone reversed the mad policy of going to Kandahar." It was a great satisfaction to him that the programme of Lord Curzon, the real author of the expedition, was drastically curtailed by the Home Government, and that the plan of establishing a representative of the Indian Government at the Tibetan capital was abandoned.

In his Manchester Address Courtney had to deal not only with the Tibetan expedition, but with the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. In his first official speech in West Edinburgh in October 1903, he had warned his hearers that if Russia and Japan went to war, as seemed only too probable, Great Britain might be involved. "We should come to the rescue of our ally without regard to the merits of the quarrel, and we may wake up some morning to find we are engaged in war with a couple of Powers. If that happens no doubt there will be a great deal of bellicose feeling. But look at it before it comes and realise how absurd and immoral the whole transaction is. I want to ask you whether it would not have been much wiser to have withheld your assent from the engagement, and, now that it has been made, to take the earliest opportunity of withdrawing from it. I have

no wish to say anything harsh of Japan, but she is a young nation and—if you will excuse the word—one of the cockiest. My view is the view of the old Liberalism—no entangling alliances; a friendly greeting to all men, but no pledged grip of the hand to take the sword under contingencies which you cannot measure beforehand." The peril implied in the Anglo-Japanese treaty of 1902 seemed now close at hand. The clash of competing Imperialisms was bad enough; but the commencement of hostilities was marked by a peculiarly ominous feature. "The great success of the unexpected attack by Japan on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur has strengthened the hand of those who argue that you must always be prepared with the utmost force, since you may be attacked without warning." The time was not favourable to the cause of peace. "The state of feeling among civilised countries is pregnant with danger of war. There has come over Europe and there is extending into America a temper of aggression, of annexation, of extension of influence, which threatens the peace of the world. Imperialism has entered into and threatens to permeate the life of the American people, and Mr. Roosevelt is infecting them with something very different from their old spirit. How many can be trusted under all circumstances to assert the right to fair treatment of those who are not of their own country and blood? We are often assured that with this or that change in society or the constitution, the overthrow of the aristocracy, the emancipation of labour or the enfranchisement of women, all will be well. But the temper of distrust and aggression is also to be found in democracies. The danger is to be averted not by any change in institutions but by a change in the mind and temper of men, by bringing home to individuals a sense of the iniquity of war, by creating in them something like a passion for the pacific settlement of disputes and a dwelling together in brotherhood of the nations of the world."

The Anglo-Japanese treaty of 1902, binding each of the signatories to aid the other if involved in war with two Powers, was concluded for five years; but in 1905, while the struggle was still in progress, a new treaty of wider scope

was substituted, and two new principles of the utmost importance were introduced. In the first place each was to assist the other if attacked by a single Power. In the second, the scope of the agreement was extended to embrace the defence of India. Courtney liked the new version as little as the old, and expressed his condemnation in a two-column letter to the *Times* on October 10, 1905. The Ministry, he began, knew that it would be beaten at the forthcoming election, and the conclusion of a treaty of such importance at the eleventh hour was sharp practice. He entertained, moreover, an old-fashioned prejudice against foreign entanglements. Alliances tended to bring us into scrapes, and freedom of negotiation was inevitably impeded. It was not every man with whom one would go tiger-hunting. We had run a very great risk of being engaged in a European war, with consequences out of all proportion to our interest in the struggle; and prudence suggested that we should be thankful for having passed through such a time unscathed rather than eager to renew the hazard. The great wrestling-match had revealed the Japanese to the world with their efficiency, their patriotism and their civilised methods of war. High military qualities, however, were rarely found dissociated from military ambition. Japan's attack on China in 1894 was indefensible, and her Parliamentary Government was not very stable. One of the greatest difficulties in treaties of alliance was that when an ally was called on to assist his friend he might honestly question whether the case fell within the terms of his covenant, and might run the danger of being branded as a sneak because he would not go beyond the obligation he recognised. Friction was also inevitable with Australia and British Columbia closing the door on Japanese immigration. "But we safeguard India! I cannot think of the possibility of this assistance without a feeling of shame. Is our strength so deficient that we cannot hold our own? A covenant securing Japanese help is a covenant of humiliation. It is the most frightful token of decadence."

President Roosevelt had ended the war. Why had that distinction fallen to him and not to us? Because we were

partisans and seconds in the duel. Was it too late to recover the position we might have filled? Looking out over the map of Europe with its seething jealousies and alarms, the thought arose that our influence ought to be dominant in its counsels through our disinterestedness. There had been intervals in the past when we held something of the position of arbitrators; and the secret was that we were jealous of none, and could therefore be friends of all. The policy of maintaining the Chinese Empire and the open door was one to which every European nation—and not Europe alone—might assent. This portion of the treaty might pass from being a contract between Great Britain and Japan into an international instrument. "There is probably no Power in the world more interested in the future of Eastern Asia than the United States. Were Germany's interests in the East less than they are, it would be wise not to overlook her susceptibilities in any discussion of the future of Asia. Signs are multiplying of a readiness to join in a mutual understanding respecting Eastern Asia. The adhesion of the Great Powers to the objective policy of the Anglo-Japanese treaty would remove much of the invidious character of that instrument, and would be a gain for the world. Is it not worth inquiring whether such a conference is possible?"

Courtney's massive argument was assailed in a leading article in the *Times* on the day of its publication. The Japanese alliance had been hailed with unwonted gratification by the whole of the British people. If that was all that could be brought against it by a very able critic, it stood on exceptionally strong ground. Mr. Courtney positively revelled in isolation. But isolation spelled weakness, and weakness in the case of a Power so wealthy as ourselves was an invitation to aggression. The contract was of the utmost benefit to both parties. We had insured ourselves in Asia, and Japan had not only won her war, but gathered in the fruits of victory. But for the treaty who could doubt that Russia would have found allies to help in despoiling her, as she found them in 1895?

The difference between the disputants was fundamental;

for the one was haunted by the risks of entanglement and the other by the perils of isolation. Speaking at Edinburgh the same evening Courtney replied to the *Times* and reiterated his warnings, though he was cautioned that the treaty was popular with his audience. Our relations with foreign Powers, he argued, should be the relations of friends, not of allies. An alliance involved discrimination against somebody else. The treaty had made us friends of Japan, and something like enemies or opponents of Russia. Japan was bellicose and bent on expansion, which rendered it hazardous for a peace-loving people to enter into obligations to her. It was of course a " defensive " alliance ; but was the late war defensive ? We had now tied ourselves to Japan for ten years, for better or worse. We were bound to aid her without regard to the merits of the quarrel, and we might wake up one morning to find ourselves at war. The true policy for England was the old Liberal doctrine—No entangling alliances. " Did you read Courtney on the treaty ? " wrote Canon Barnett to his brother. " Very wise, I thought it, and likely to sink into the people in the more intelligent mood which seems coming." [1] When, however, Mr. Herbert Paul, in an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, interpreted this condemnation of alliances to involve a frown on the Anglo-French treaty, he at once wrote a letter of correction which appeared in the *Times*.

To Herbert Paul

October 31.—My maxim of international conduct is to make friends of all and allies of none. My whole argument against the Anglo-Japanese Treaty is that it commits us to incalculable liabilities. The Entente with France is not an alliance. No one hailed the treaty which produced it with greater satisfaction than myself, though I did point out that even this treaty had occasioned regrettable misunderstandings in the minds of some who seem to think that friendship with one man implies unfriendship with another. I never expressed any sympathy with the attitude of " splendid isolation." I have never thought we could detach ourselves from sympathies with and duties towards all the rest of the world.

[1] Canon Barnett's *Life*, ii. 194.

Before the ten years had elapsed the Japanese treaty was once more revised, and, to Courtney's relief, a clause was inserted to remove the danger, implicit in the compact of 1905, of our being involved in a war between Japan and the United States.

The defeat of Russia by Japan revealed to the world the rottenness of the autocracy and led to the first Russian revolution of 1905. The October Manifesto lit up the dark sky for a moment, and British Liberals hastened to testify their sympathy with the struggles of the reformers. Courtney shared the sympathy, but believed that in such a delicate situation silence was perhaps better than speech.

To J. F. Green

November 2, 1905.—I fear I have a strong sentiment of distrust of the wisdom of such a meeting as you ask about. I watch the progress in Russia with keen sympathy and with great hope—I might almost say faith—that it is working for good. But I doubt whether any words uttered here would have any effect at all, and I am not sure if any effect is possible it would certainly be useful. If I could cry loud enough to be heard, I should cry Conciliation to both sides—not to exasperate demands or to stiffen resistance, and to be content with much good even though it be not the best good one would desire. The Tsar seems to be the most pitiable figure of the drama—another Louis XVI. —in a wish to do well and perhaps in incapacity to fulfil his wish. But, looking back on the French Revolution, the most potent factor in causing the evils which accompanied it was in my judgment the impatience of those who could not be content to help Louis on his stumbling way. I write with very little knowledge of the tremendous problems which are being acted out in Russia, and I feel it better to possess my soul in silence than to join in what I fear may degenerate into inflammatory denunciation of imperfect fellow-men.

During the dark days of the South African War, Courtney often used to remark that when the struggle was over he would revive the demand for Proportional Representation.[1] The Association founded in 1884 had never been formally

[1] I am indebted to Mr. John Humphreys, the indefatigable Secretary of the Proportional Representation Society, for the following information.

dissolved; and a meeting took place in 1894 at the house of Professor Westlake, at which Mr. Balfour was present, to meet Miss Catherine Spence, the founder of the Effective Voting League of South Australia. But there was no organised effort, and the Committee had not met since 1888. The revival of the movement was in large measure due to Mr. John Humphreys, a clerk in the Post Office, who in 1900 urged the old warrior to deliver an address to a Literary Society in Lewisham of which he was Secretary.

To John Humphreys

October 12, 1900.—I am as strong in my convictions about the urgency of adopting Proportional Representation as ever, and I have been already solicited to deliver some lectures upon the subject in London in connection with the General Election now closing. I do not see my way at present to accept this invitation or your own. My pleading might be tainted with a suspicion of a personal interest, and I should prefer that the subject be pressed by another advocate.

Two years later he was "seriously tempted," but was still unable to accede to a request for a lecture. These persistent applications had their reward when on December 4, 1904, he reopened his campaign for Proportional Representation. The lecture, entitled "Real Representation," was illustrated, as was his wont, with a test election. The building was crowded, the audience enthusiastic. The Lewisham meeting led to further correspondence, for there was talk of a Redistribution Bill, and it was necessary to prepare. The old Committee was convened, and Lord Avebury resumed his position as President. Professor Westlake, Mr. C. P. Scott, Sir Rowland Blennerhassett, The O'Conor Don, and other friends rejoined, and Courtney was elected Chairman. The veterans were reinforced by younger men, among them Mr. Aneurin Williams, Mr. Fischer Williams, who became Treasurer, and Mr. John Humphreys, who was appointed Secretary. Earl Grey, who was Treasurer of the movement in 1884-85, became on his return from Canada the Vice-President of the Society.

The first meeting of the Committee took place on March

28, 1905, and on May 4 a public meeting was held at Essex Hall with Lord Avebury in the Chair. Courtney's active zeal for the reform of political life had now been revived in full measure, and never flagged for an instant during the years which remained to him. He restated the familiar arguments in an article in the June number of the *Contemporary Review* on the Representation of Parliaments. All the world, he declared, ran after Parliaments; and yet there was almost universal disappointment at their comparative failure. It was not, however, the principle of representative government which had failed. Parliaments failed because they were not truly representative. Proportional Representation would emancipate both the elector and the elected from the tyranny of the party machine. "Some may confess the defects of our present experience, but will ask whether we should better ourselves by exchanging a debilitated House of Commons and a strong Executive for a strong House and an enfeebled Executive. The mechanical control now enforced by the Executive would be diminished; but the real power of the Government in promoting a policy coherently thought out would not suffer abatement and might even be strengthened. One of the privileges of freedom is to be reasonable, and reasonableness may confidently be looked for in a freed House. The disposition to compromise would be strengthened, and agreements would be more easily effected."

Those who desired real representation, he confessed, must work without the prospect of immediate success; but there were special reasons for renewing their ardour. The Government was pledged to redistribution at home, and the Colonial Secretary had drawn up a constitution for the Transvaal. "Probably Mr. Lyttelton himself does not expect the experiment to be long-lived. He hopes it will realise the principle of one man, one vote, one value, and that it will tend to soften the differences between the white inhabitants of the Transvaal. They are excellent aims, but his plan tends to the promotion of neither aim. The unification of feeling will be hindered rather than promoted by the establishment of thirty-five single-member constituencies.

Whenever there is a contest racial sentiment will be accentuated. Imagine the difference if the colony had been cut up into seven districts, each with five members. Neither party would hope nor try to win all five seats. The result would be the presence of Britons who were capitalists, of Britons standing apart from capitalists, and of Boers of all grades of temper towards their new associates, brought to live and work together in the same Assembly." The proposal was backed by Lord Milner, who, in replying to a communication from the Volksrust Council in January 1905, declared that " the best of all systems in my opinion is that of large districts with a minority vote." Hofmeyr, the oracle of the Afrikanders, was also favourable. But before the end of the year the Unionist Government resigned office, and the Lyttelton Constitution, which had few friends, was smothered in its ruins.

Since the eruption of the tariff volcano in 1903 the Prime Minister had defended himself with incomparable dexterity against a host of assailants within and without his party ; but in the late autumn of 1905 he could fight no longer, and after an open repudiation of his authority by Chamberlain he placed his resignation in the hands of the King. Scouting the craven counsel to refuse office till he had received a mandate from the country, Campbell-Bannerman promptly responded to the call and, after resisting Sir Edward Grey's attempt to banish him to the House of Lords, formed a Ministry representative of the two sections of the Liberal party. The generous recognition of the claims of the Liberal Imperialists appeared to Courtney regrettable but inevitable. " Edward Grey's absurd demand failed," he wrote in the Journal on the announcement of the new Ministry ; " but he and his friends have got a great deal, perhaps the command of the working machine. How has this come about ? Largely I think from a conviction on the part of C.-B. that the Grey section was supported in the country by men enough to cause the loss of a very appreciable number of seats if they were not in the Government in force. And this, I believe, is the truth. Among the professed Liberals up and down the country must be reckoned—more prominent

perhaps in their position than in their numbers—a good many with respect for names, traditions, entourage, class ascendancy, men who run after Rosebery while regretfully acknowledging he cannot come in and who put their confidence in his friends. This alliance is necessary for a big majority, though it may weaken its force."

The polling naturally waited for the new register; but December was filled with the din of battle, and the veteran of seventy-four threw himself eagerly into the fight for West Edinburgh, though without great hopes of victory. "When the election was drawing near," writes Mr. Gulland, "he prepared an address, of which he showed me the draft. I made several criticisms, the chief of which was that he did not state to what party he belonged. I told him this would be expected. It was characteristic of him that he seemed to think this quite unnecessary, and it was only due to my repeated entreaties that he defined himself as a close friend and follower of the Leader whom all Liberals must delight to honour." Except on the Irish question he was in full agreement with the new Prime Minister, whom he had known as a fellow-member of the Radical Club as far back as 1869, and whose sterling qualities he had learned to admire during the dark days of the South African war. His Election Address was as unambiguous as friend or foe could desire. "The Irish problem will not be solved until Irishmen at large co-operate in the Government of Ireland, and I shall sympathetically consider every proposal tending to this end; but the establishment of a separate Parliament, to which I am deeply adverse, is not practically before us. THE MAINTENANCE OF FREE TRADE IS THE PARAMOUNT ISSUE OF THIS ELECTION. The retiring Administration has left us many things to correct or abolish. The conditions of labour of the Chinese in South Africa should be amended, with the alternative of immediate repatriation. We must undo the legislation by which a system of denominational education has been riveted on the people. There is also an urgent call for the better organisation of education in all its branches." Freedom to deal with licenses should be restored and local veto allowed. Site values should be

separately rated, expenditure and taxation reduced. "I trust the Administration will give a lead to other nations in checking the mad competition of armaments."

On the eve of the poll, John Morley, now Secretary of State for India, came to speak for his old friend. "I do not agree with all his opinions," he declared. "On some matters on which he is hot I am rather cool. But I have never known a more tolerant or just man, a man with a more scrupulous or accurate love of truth, more wholly free from the taint of petty ambitions or personal selfishness." Despite the blessing of "the Bayard of the Liberal party," despite the swing of the pendulum throughout the country, despite his long campaign and the enthusiasm of his supporters, Courtney failed to wrest the seat from the sitting member, Sir Lewis McIver, though he reduced the majority from 1500 to 300.[1] The result was a far greater surprise and disappointment to his friends and supporters than to himself. The morning after the declaration of the poll the defeated candidate stole quietly away unannounced. "L. not a whit the worse for his fortnight's hard work," wrote his wife in her Journal, "and in the spirits of a schoolboy going home for his holidays. But for more than a month we have crowds of letters from all parts of the country, and all sorts of men. Some most ardent regrets from strangers. Every one most kind and almost overwhelming."

From John Morley

January 17, 1906.—You would both of you feel a pang of mortification, and I share it. The thing is truly disgusting. It shows the strength of base and contemptible and poverty-stricken habits of mind among people ludicrously vaunting themselves as cultivated. Enough, enough! 'Tis a blessing in disguise, be sure. And you will forget your own annoyance at waste of time, etc., in satisfaction at the slaughter of the great band of malefactors.

From Canon Barnett (to Mrs. Courtney)

January 18, 1906.—Many friends have been standing, a big issue has been at stake, but it is on your election our hopes rested.

[1] McIver, 3949; Courtney, 3643.

As Jetta said, "I would only let you (*i.e.* me) speak for Mr. Courtney." I have not spoken or written for anybody, but you can imagine how our thoughts followed you and how disappointed we have been.

To a Correspondent

January 20.—We were scarcely disappointed and certainly not depressed by our defeat. The new House will be very interesting but trying work. It will take all C.-B.'s tact to manage his great host, but the occasion will, I believe, bring out his best qualities. The forces working for us are strong and evident. The election is a severe lesson for the Conservatives, whilst the Liberal Leader must be conscious of the great embarrassments of the future, and the more adroit may be led later consequently to consider how they shall be met. If our present machinery remained unchanged and Chamberlain were a man of forty instead of seventy, he might look forward to gain his day within twenty years, through the internal divisions of an opposing majority. Though Manchester was magnificent, Birmingham is disquieting.

Courtney's defeat was, in Mr. Morley's words, a blessing in disguise. He would of course have been an outstanding figure in the new House of Commons; but there would have been something incongruous in a man of his age and celebrity sitting on the back benches amid the congested ranks of Campbell-Bannerman's supporters, and condemned to the multifarious labours which every constituency, however considerate, imposes upon its representative. Happily a better fate awaited him; and before many months he found himself restored to Parliamentary life with the acclamation of his fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER XXII

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Journal

December 1905.—Meet Mr. Morley outside the Athenæum. "Would you like to be a Peeress?" A startling query. "I have not thought about it," said I. "Well, it flashed on me the other day," said he.

December 16.—The Morleys lunched with us. He again alluded to his suggestion at the Athenæum, and said C.-B. thought it was a splendid idea. But all the same we will try and win West Edinburgh.

West Edinburgh resisted the voice of the charmer, and Courtney watched the opening moves of the new Parliament from Cheyne Walk. His only public utterance was delivered at the joint annual dinner of the Russell and Eighty Clubs at Oxford in March. The recent victory, he declared, however welcome, was much less satisfactory and much less hopeful than that of 1832; for in the one case it was the deliberate voice of an army of new voters, while in the other the voters of 1906 were also the voters of 1900 and 1895. "We have now to deal with forces that we cannot trust to be steadfast." The fickleness of the people must be counter-balanced by the steadiness and wisdom of their new rulers.

The first Honours List of the new Administration was anticipated with lively curiosity by the public; and no feature of it aroused keener interest or evoked warmer approbation than the elevation of Leonard Courtney to the House of Lords.

From Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman

10 Downing Street,
Whitehall, S.W.

Secret. *June* 22, '06.

My dear Courtney—Will you do me the great favour of letting me submit your name for a peerage? It will save you for active public life, and will so far maintain its standard. It will gratify men of right views throughout the country—and let me add, to be the instrument of your receiving this recognition and this opportunity will be a pride and delight to me.—Yours always, H. C.-B.

Secret, of course, until "pleasure taken."

To Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman

15 Cheyne Walk, S.W.
June 23, 1906.

Dear Campbell-Bannerman—I am off by an early train for Felixstowe but I must first answer your very kind letter. It is very pleasant reading as coming from an old friend, quite apart from the substance of its contents. It is really good of you to express yourself as you do, as I know what a trial all business must be to you in present circumstances. Would I could bring you some relief! As for the substance I accept the offer not with enthusiasm perhaps but with the staid temper of advancing years. Something as you suggest may yet be saved, and I hope your selection will not now or hereafter expose you to unfriendly criticism. My wife necessarily writes this note but no one beyond herself shall know anything about the matter. —Always your faithful friend Leonard Courtney.

The announcement was acclaimed by the press regardless of party. "His independent and vigorous personality," wrote the *Times*, "has long commanded respect in public life, not least among those—and they are not a few—who have disagreed with him on particular topics." "One name in the Honours List stands above all others," commented the *Daily News*. "If a Second Chamber is to remain, no more fitting personality could be chosen for its adornment, and the House of Lords has been ennobled by the addition.

Even his political enemies will rejoice at the change which will give him again the opportunity of voicing the moral ideals of old England, and add materially to what capacity and intelligence is still possessed by the Second Chamber." The newly founded *Tribune* seized the occasion to recommend a still higher promotion. "The present Cabinet would be none the worse for a little stiffening in essential Liberalism on some questions of Empire." The generous acclaim of the newspapers, however, welcome though it was, gave less pleasure to the new peer than the five hundred letters which descended in an avalanche on Cheyne Walk, and of which a few specimens will suffice.

From John Morley

June 30, 1906.—You know how glad I am at what has been done. The reception of it by newspapers and by the public has been famous, and must give you real pleasure. It was and is the right thing from every point of view.

From James Bryce (to Mrs. Courtney)

June 30, 1906.—No honour bestowed for many years past has given us so much pleasure as that now conferred on your husband. Not indeed that he needs any honour which public authorities have to give, his position has long been quite independent of all that. What pleases us is that he will have during (as I hope) many years to come the opportunity of helping good causes by speaking where his words will have weight and influence and become known to all. Perhaps the best thing that can be said for the House of Lords is that it furnishes a place whence men of eminent ability and experience can address their countrymen when either their health or their detachment from party makes it hard for them to sit in the House of Commons. Your husband has given on the whole the finest example of perfect, conscientious and unfailing courage that any politician of our time has; and it is a real benefit to our public life that this official recognition of the worth and dignity of his career should be accorded, and with universal approval.

From Lord Ripon

June 29, 1906.—I rejoice because it is a just recognition of great services; I rejoice because it will afford you opportunities

of taking part once more in Parliamentary work, and I rejoice because you will thus be enrolled amongst that small band of Liberals who are good enough to accept me as their leader in the House of Lords.

From Gerald Balfour

June 29.—Yours is by far the most interesting name in the Honours List, at least to me. I do not know whether you care for a peerage for yourself or not: but at all events it was well bestowed.

From Sir Edward Clarke

June 29.—The dignity and honour which have come to you you have never sought, but have simply deserved, and I am sure your greatest pleasure will be in the recollection that your public action has never deflected from the line which your intellectual and moral conscience laid down, and in the belief that you still have useful work to do and that a seat in the House of Lords will give you more power to do it. I was rejoiced on Wednesday evening to notice how strong and well you seemed; and I sincerely trust for the sake of our country and of the friends among whom I am proud to be numbered that you will long have health and strength to take your share in guiding the councils of the nation. At this hour of shattered parties and disordered politics your firm, clear judgment and unfailing courage are sorely needed.

From General Smuts (to Mrs. Courtney)

PRETORIA, *July* 22.—This honour has come to him in recognition of his great services to the English people and to the cause of humanity, and comes as a great satisfaction to all of us by whose side he stood in days of disaster and obloquy. To me personally, who have suffered many a grievous disillusion about English character and national policy since I spent my ardent young days at Cambridge, Mr. Courtney has seemed a survival out of the ideal past when honour and justice were powers which dwarfed everything petty or selfish or insincere. But in fact he belongs not to the past but to the future which his own heroic example has brought nearer. Since I have had the privilege to know him personally and to see the noble enthusiasm and spirit of social service which inspired him in his old age I have felt myself a better man. My heartiest congratulations to both of you and years of invigorating influence on the promising young England which is arising.

From the Bishop of Hereford (to Mrs. Courtney)

July 1.—I feel I must express the joy it gives me to think of your husband being again in Parliament, to say nothing of the recognition which was due for the noble example and the support he has been to us all through the weary years, and I hope his voice may often be heard for a good many years to come in support of all good causes.

From Andrew Carnegie

July 2.—It is not you I congratulate but the Liberal party and your country upon having you in the House of Lords at this juncture. It is truly patriotic in you to enter a hereditary Chamber, for I believe you can do most good there under existing conditions. One advantage of the Upper House is that it may be used to secure a continuance of the services of able and experienced men. I feel you have a great part to play and shall watch you with deep and sympathetic interest. The old House seems awake and about to adopt much of the democratic spirit, and it needs guidance.

From H. W. Massingham (to Mrs. Courtney)

June 29.—I hope you will let me add a word to the tumult of words you must be hearing to-day. It is indeed good to think that after all the false judgment and false feeling of the last few years Mr. Courtney's career should have been crowned with a national honour which every one feels to be marked out from all the other honours in to-day's list, and to be, as some of us Radicals cannot help thinking, almost too good for the House of Lords.

From G. M. Trevelyan

June 30.—I hasten to write to you for the last time under an honoured title which you cannot exchange for one more honourable. To my wife and to me, as to every one, it is delightful that you should be set upon a pinnacle, for a dark chamber is a good place for a light to shine in.

The new peer decided to retain his name, adding "of Penwith," the Hundred in which lies Penzance and the peninsula of the Land's End. His old friends, Lord Avebury and Lord Fitzmaurice, promised to introduce him.

Journal

July 19.—Lord Avebury being nowhere to be found and no one knowing that he was presiding at a Committee, and the Lord Chancellor waiting on the Woolsack, Lord Muskerry, an Irish Peer, is commandeered, put into Lord Avebury's robes, which are in waiting for him, and in the three file. I am in the Gallery in my place for the first time. A very funny business. With Garter in front marshalling the three with his wand, a sort of Peer drill, and Black Rod behind, they marched and bowed, and L. presented his roll on one knee to the Lord Chancellor. Then they retired to the furthest corner of the House and sat. Garter said, " Rise," and all rose as one man. " Take off your hats. Bow to the Lord Chancellor." And this performance they went through three times.

At the end of the year Courtney's elevation to the peerage was celebrated by a dinner at the Hotel Cecil, over which Lord Loreburn presided. " For courage and constancy," wrote the Prime Minister, " he has few equals in our public life." " No public man in our time has had a more entirely upright and honourable career," wrote Mr. Bryce. " May there never be wanting persons to follow his example of manly independence in defending unpopular causes." In replying to the toast of his health proposed by Mr. Shaw, the Lord Advocate, the guest of the evening spoke gravely of the constitutional and international problems of the time. The strength of the House of Lords was derived entirely from the imperfection of the House of Commons. Nothing could be worse than the existing situation, the one Chamber congested with legislative projects, the other an embodiment of all the prejudices of possession. An even graver problem than the conflict of the Houses was the spirit governing our foreign policy. " The question of vital importance to Europe and America is this—Shall our policy be one of Imperialism or Internationalism ? There is an Imperialism which deserves all honour and respect—an Imperialism of service in the discharge of great duties. But with too many it is the sense of domination and aggrandisement, the glorification of power. The price of

peace is eternal vigilance." "I wish you had been with us at the Courtney dinner at the Cecil last night," wrote Canon Barnett to his brother. "The hundred and fifty people looked like the righteous lot who might have saved London. As for his speech, it was a heart-lifter. He spoke magnificently magnificent words. My wife was well enough to go, and much enjoyed it. If, she said, you could only preach like that in Westminster Abbey!" [1]

When Disraeli took his seat in the Upper House he remarked to Lord Aberdare, who contrasted the bracing atmosphere of the Commons with the heavy air of the Lords, "Yes, I feel that I am dead—but in the Elysian fields." [2] Courtney, on the contrary, after six years in the wilderness, felt that he was recalled to life. In congratulating Sir John Lubbock on his peerage in 1900 he wrote, "My great quarrel with the House of Lords is that it does so little, and you must take away some of this reproach." [3] Lord Avebury, to whom politics was only one of many interests, rarely intervened in debate; but Courtney delivered his maiden speech within three weeks, and during the twelve years that remained to him he spoke on almost every important issue of domestic and foreign policy. Though he took his seat on the Liberal benches and gave a general support to the Liberal programme, he afterwards migrated to the cross benches. He remained a party of one, and was never afraid to warn, to challenge and, if necessary, to chasten his friends. "It would be an exaggeration to say that he was popular," writes Lord Parmoor; "but he was listened to as one who had been interested in many of the great questions of his time."

Appropriately enough, his first speech from the red benches was devoted to the sub-continent which had lost him a seat and gained him a peerage. On assuming office Campbell-Bannerman, with unerring intuition and with the hearty assent of Lord Elgin, his Colonial Secretary, brushed aside the grudging concessions of the Lyttelton

[1] *Life*, ii. 353.
[2] *Aberdare's Letters*, ii. 1.
[3] *Life of Sir John Lubbock*, ii. 123.

Constitution and announced the grant of responsible government to the annexed republics. Courtney's demand for Proportional Representation, put forward while the smaller project was under discussion, was renewed when full self-government was decreed; and before starting on his mission of inquiry to South Africa Sir West Ridgeway consulted the oracle of Cheyne Walk. A few fanatics attempted to discredit the proposal by suggesting that the old "pro-Boer" leader was merely concerned with the interests of his Dutch friends; but his argument, set forth in letters to the newspapers, that single-member constituencies would aggravate and perpetuate the race quarrel, carried general conviction. The *Times* accepted it in full for the Orange Colony, and in part for the Transvaal; but British and Dutch looked suspiciously on Minority Representation, and Sir West Ridgeway consequently excluded it from his recommendations. "In laying the foundation stone of this Constitution," declared Courtney on rising for the first time on August 7, "we ought to lose the distinction between Boer and Briton except as mere historical differences of origin, as we have lost it in Canada, where a Frenchman is Prime Minister. This scheme, with its sixty-nine single-member constituencies, will tend to maintain these differences. The Government rejects Proportional Representation because it finds little favour in the Transvaal. There is not a great desire, but it is growing. It cannot be forced on a colony which does not desire it. When this plan fails to realise the hopes of its framers, as it will, they may turn to mine." Defeated in the Transvaal, he trained his guns on the Orange River Colony.

To ex-President Steyn

August 10.—You will have heard details of the Transvaal Constitution and of the promise that the O.R.C. shall receive the same. What is your opinion of it? I cannot say that it has pleased me. I pressed my ideas upon the Government here and upon Sir West Ridgeway's Commission before it was sent out; and the Commission was instructed to inquire whether there was any desire for their adoption in the Transvaal. They

have reported that they found no section favourable to the adoption of P.R. and so they could make no recommendation on the subject. I believe there were some persons who wished for it and if they had been encouraged the number would have been increased, but I do not doubt that the Commission was justified in reporting as they did. Now what I particularly want is that there should be no such apathy in the Orange Colony. I am expressing my deepest conviction in saying that through the establishment of legislatures on the principles of P.R. lies the salvation of the Transvaal and O.R.C. and the peaceful settlement of the future of South Africa.

When Parliament re-assembled for the autumn session Lord Lovat initiated a debate on the settlement of colonists in the newly annexed territories. With Lord Milner defending his handiwork and Courtney attacking the policy of race domination, the leaders of the rival schools of thought stood at last face to face and the strident echoes of the war revived. " There is the strongest testimony," declared the new Peer, " that there is no wisdom in maintaining the land policy of which Lord Milner is the introducer if not the inspirer. I think he will find that in the judgment of a majority—a majority which increases day by day—his policy was absolutely erroneous, because it was based on the necessary division between Boer and British. And the policy he is now recommending is based on the same supposition that there is this racial hostility, and that we must continue the stream of settlers in order to counteract the preponderating influence of the Boers. It maintains and continues a source of irritation. You have in the two colonies an enormous preponderance of Boers. You cannot make them forget the war and live in peace together if you base your policy on the conception that there is an enemy to guard against instead of friends to conciliate. You cannot solve the South African question by a little infusion of settlers. The numbers have already fallen, owing to bad years, and South Africa is not a good country for agriculture. By long experience the Boers have learned to live where the British settler cannot. It is an experiment, I believe, foredoomed to failure. I am confident that,

though I may be expressing the opinion of a small minority in this House—and I am not much concerned whether that is so or not—I am representing the growing opinion of the majority of my countrymen in condemning the policy of the noble Viscount as absolutely fatal to the establishment of good feeling in South Africa."

From the Bishop of Hereford (to Lady Courtney)

November 15, 1906.—I wish you had been in the House of Lords last night to share the delight of some of us as we listened to Lord Courtney's speech and felt that at last the good cause in South Africa has a voice of new power in the House. I think the Opposition and especially Lord Milner must have been sorry that their well-intentioned young friend Lord Lovat had thus given the opportunity of letting some fresh light fall on that wretched Land Settlement scheme.

While the Colonial Office was busy with a constitution for the Transvaal, the Irish Office was elaborating a scheme of limited autonomy for Ireland. Home Rule was barred by the election pledges of certain members of the Cabinet, though not of the Prime Minister; but the Chief Secretary and his valued colleague Sir Antony Macdonnell believed that some modest advance was possible and desirable.

To James Bryce

October 18, 1906.—I am moved to write you a few words in connection with the bigger schemes you are pretty well pledged to produce next year. Whatever the intermediate Council—administrative or otherwise, directly or indirectly—elected it must needs aim at being representative and at containing within itself exponents of the most moderate and weighty opinion of all parties. Everybody admits that Ireland wants the best men of all conditions brought to consult and meet together, and we Liberals may at least privately regret the disappearance of the old Liberal members who have been practically squeezed out between Nationalists and Orangemen. You will have already gathered that I want to move you to consider whether in some form or another the idea of Proportional Representation should not be embodied in your coming plans.

You survey the world so well and so widely that I may assume you have watched the history of Belgium, when the old Liberals who directed the policy of the country for forty years after the establishment of the kingdom practically disappeared from the Chamber in the struggle between Socialists and Clericals, but have reappeared again under the operation of the system of Proportional Representation.

From James Bryce

October 22.—Thank you very much for your suggestions which I value highly. The possibility of introducing some scheme of Proportional Representation had occurred to me; but the conditions seemed unpropitious because in three-quarters of Ireland the majorities which one party has are so overwhelmingly large that no contrivance would be likely to give the minorities a chance. The only way would be to have very large constituencies, returning six or more members, and then one would lose the benefit of local knowledge of the merits of the candidates. However my reflections are not likely to have exhausted the possibilities of the situation, and, if you can give me the outlines of a workable plan, I shall be grateful for them and will reflect on them. It ought, however, to be added that opinion in England, and in Ireland too, is not, so far as I can judge, ripe for trying the experiment. Personally I should like to try it. Belgium encourages one; Swiss opinion seems moving in that direction. But England hangs back; it seems improbable that this House of Commons would accept any such scheme.

After further correspondence with the Chief Secretary, the Under-Secretary expressed a wish to explain the situation by word of mouth.

Journal

November 6, 1906.—Sir Antony Macdonnell called and had a good business talk about the possibility of introducing P.R. into their Devolution scheme. L. made an impression, but of course there are considerable difficulties. The Nationalists will object as clipping their overgrown majority; but will they dislike it more than some nominated members, which is the alternative plan?

The first session of the new Parliament had been mainly devoted to an attempt to remedy the injustices imposed on Nonconformists by the Education Act of 1902; and the refusal of the Commons to accept the Lords' drastic amendments left the political situation confused and angry. In the Christmas holidays Courtney dictated a brief survey of the autumn session, and endeavoured to look beyond the turmoil of the moment to the readjustment of the relations of the two Chambers.

Journal (*dictated*)

December 26, 1906.—The Education Bill in the Lords. I made a little speech in support of the Bishop of Hereford, but I felt that my inability to follow the clauses and amendments on paper kept me out of the discussion. I took the occasion of the Plural Voting Bill to drive home the lesson of P.R.; and the House of Lords certainly affords a good platform, as speeches are generally delivered early and get well reported. The shipwreck of the Education Bill will not greatly damage the House of Lords, but the experiences of these weeks are making men of all parties think about the shaping of the future. The Chief Justice for example asked me after dinner last week at Lincoln's Inn how I thought the Lords might be reformed. It is difficult to see how any change can be made except by revolution unless the Conservatives get a majority in the Commons again and are wise enough to seize the opportunity of adjusting the Second Chamber in some measure to modern notions. Lansdowne on the Trades Dispute Bill must have disgusted many Conservatives and may have set some thinking.

The session of 1907 was shorter and far less controversial than its predecessor, Mr. Haldane's scheme for a Territorial army and Mr. Harcourt's Bill for the establishment of Small Holdings finding their way to the Statute Book without undue difficulty. Courtney looked forward to the Irish Councils Bill, which Mr. Birrell had taken over from Mr. Bryce, with keen interest. "Is a Via Media possible?" he asked in an article in the *Nation*, suggested by Lord Dunraven's *Outlook in Ireland*. "Personally I greatly desire it. I am not a convert to Home Rule, but I confess

that I regard the proposal with more tolerance than heretofore. There may be some risk of mischief in Ireland; but the growth of militarism, the favouritism of classes and of interests, and the insurgence of Protection, involve mischiefs outweighing the Irish risk. Home Rule may become inevitable; but if there is a Via Media both sides may be content to venture upon, let us by all means try it." A proof of the article was sent to the Chief Secretary.

From Augustine Birrell

March 7, 1907.—It was very kind of you to send me your proposed review of Dunraven's book. I have no objection to it to offer. What is wanted is to make men think—not too deeply (of that there is happily no risk) but just a little. It is very difficult to bake half a loaf! A Council which is to do the controlling administrative work of half a dozen parishes is a clumsy body. I suppose the Chairmen will develop into Ministers. Finance presents problems. No sensible Irishman will touch the new Council unless he sees his way to grapple with the Primary Education question, and he cannot hope to begin to do that without plenty of money. Over all our deliberations hangs your Lordships' House. Would they pass anything? I think Not! A. J. B. killed the Education Bill, and he will kill the Irish Bill, and the Irish party won't mind one little bit. *I* quite agree as to three-cornered constituencies and am doing all I can.

The forecast was not quite accurate. The Bill was provisionally accepted by Redmond on the floor of the House; but a Convention summoned to consider its provisions in Dublin rejected it by acclamation, and it was withdrawn by the Government. As the Chief Secretary had remarked, "It is very difficult to bake half a loaf."

During the opening weeks of every session the House of Lords enjoys ample leisure to consider any topic that is brought before it; and on April 30 Courtney introduced a Bill permitting municipalities in England and Wales to elect their representatives by Proportional Representation. It was a small Bill, he declared, yet fraught with considerable consequences. Reform should proceed by experiment

and imitation. In Belgium Proportional Representation for elections to Parliament was adopted four years after it was accepted for Communal Councils, and had proved an extraordinary success. Municipal elections on the single-member system never resulted in a truly representative body, and at times, owing to the ravages of party feeling, the minority was left without a single spokesman. Though the Bill was designed to prepare the way for a larger scheme, its provisions might be welcomed by those who had no desire to apply the principle in national politics. His appeal that after a Second Reading the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee was granted. Lord Belper's Committee carefully examined the measure, took evidence and issued a favourable report. In the following year he reintroduced his measure, incorporating the recommendations of the Committee that a municipality should only adopt P.R. by a two-thirds majority and that the decision should be reviewed after three years. In this form the Bill passed the House of Lords without difficulty. The next step in the campaign was to urge the new Prime Minister to institute a public inquiry into the methods of representation.

To H. H. Asquith

June 3, 1908.—Your private allocution to the supporters of the Women's Suffrage Bill has, I think, been rightly interpreted as pledging the Government to a large measure of parliamentary reform before the end of the present Parliament. My object in writing to-day is to press upon you the necessity of promoting some preliminary inquiries before this measure is introduced or even debated in the Cabinet. I know your own mind has long been occupied with the subject, and, this being so, I am sure I need not press you with the truth that public opinion in general is very vague and indeterminate. The abolition of plural voting, the solution of the problem of the second ballot, redistribution, are all talked about as steps towards obtaining in Parliament a more accurate representation of the national mind; and yet, when they are talked about, whether separately or together, there is left a suspicion that all these reforms may fail to produce the result we desire. I do not wish you to engage in any pledge, but I do wish that some-

thing should be done—and that quickly—to set going a deliberate, careful and authoritative examination of the principles of representative reform that are in the air and of the experiments that have been made. If you wished it, a memorial might be got up either numerously signed or with a few weighty names in favour of my inquiry. Perhaps a deputation or an interview might be useful.

From H. H. Asquith

June 6.—I hasten to acknowledge your very interesting and weighty letter, and to assure you that its contents will receive the most careful consideration. For the moment I cannot say more.

To H. H. Asquith

August 27, 1908.—I wrote you a longish letter at Whitsuntide to which you replied from Nuneham that you would take time to consider it. Now that the autumn vacation is nearly half over I hope you are prepared with a satisfactory decision. An inquiry such as I suggested into several proposals that have been made in the direction of Proportional Representation, and especially into the working of the schemes that have been adopted on the continent and our Colonies, would be surely helpful to all of us. A Royal Commission would perhaps be the best instrument, but this is not the only plan of procedure possible. If you wanted it one could doubtless arrange for a Deputation or some other means of publicly pressing the suggestion, but this is perhaps unnecessary. You yourself know how men are groping about feeling after Second Ballots, Alternative Votes, Referenda, etc. and almost asking for guidance.

From H. H. Asquith

September 21, 1908.—I have been thinking over your proposal for an inquiry into the several proposals made and experiments tried in the direction of Proportional Representation. I agree with you as to the importance of the subject, and as to the necessity for information and education in regard to it. But I am not satisfied that a Royal Commission is the best instrument for the purpose. Perhaps it would not be a bad thing to start by having such a deputation as you suggest later in the autumn.

On returning home Courtney collected his forces, which he marshalled in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons on November 10.

Journal

The great day of our deputation. Extraordinarily well received by Mr. Asquith, who practically adopted the idea of an inquiry. Fischer Williams, Aneurin Williams, Humphreys and Olivers dine with us. C. P. Scott staying in the house. All in famous spirits.

The newspapers published full accounts of the deputation, accompanied as a rule by sympathetic comments. Two days later Courtney spoke on P.R. at an Eighty Club dinner, over which Lord Crewe presided. At the end of November an experimental election attracted wide attention, the leading papers printing the ballot paper in their issues and urging their readers to vote. The *Times* was particularly helpful, and devoted several columns to a description of the poll. While the first effort in 1906 had attracted 12,000 voters, the second secured 21,000. Well might the old campaigner speak of the election as " another triumph." The Royal Commission was appointed early in 1909, and consisted of Lord Richard Cavendish (Chairman), Lord Lochee (Mr. Edmund Robertson), Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Sir Francis Hopwood, Sir Charles Eliot, Mr. Edwin Montagu, Mr. J. W. Hills and Mr. Pember Reeves, none of whom were identified with support of or hostility to P.R. " The members struck me as all interested and none hostile," wrote Lady Courtney in the Journal, " but guarded against being rushed, and anxious to bring out the points against." Courtney's evidence filled two sittings. He cited the famous eulogy of Mill, adding that he had quoted it thirty years before in the House of Commons. " This great discovery, for it is no less, in the political art, inspired me, as I believe it has inspired all thoughtful persons who have adopted it, with new and more sanguine hopes respecting the prospects of human society, by freeing the form of political institutions towards which the whole civilised world is mani-

festly and irresistibly tending from the chief part of what seemed to qualify and render doubtful its ultimate benefits. Any one who throws it over as a mere theoretical subtlety or crotchet, tending to no valuable purpose and unworthy of the attention of practical men, may be pronounced an incompetent statesman, unequal to the politics of the future." Foreign witnesses, the most impressive of whom was Count Goblet d'Alviella, the Belgian senator and scholar, came to describe their experiences. After high hopes had been thus aroused it was a disappointment that the Report laid more stress on the difficulties than on the advantages of the scheme. It was a matter of keen regret at this moment that he felt compelled by age to decline President Murray Butler's invitation to deliver a course of lectures on the Rights of Minorities at Columbia University.[1]

On the eve of the fourth and final session of the Parliament of 1906 Courtney forwarded a political balance-sheet to the British Ambassador in Washington.

To James Bryce

January 4, 1909.—The outlook is not encouraging; we may escape the realisation of every anxiety, but we are going to have a bad time. Tariff Reform has got a great many more supporters and it is certainly possible that a Conservative majority may be returned at the next election, having Tariff Reform as the main article of its creed. We have, of course, secondary comforts. Tariff Reformers will find it very difficult to agree among themselves when it comes to legislation, and Balfour may avail himself of this so as to do next to nothing. An element favouring Tariff Reform is found in our frightful financial position. There must be a great deficit in April and we have rather a helter-skelter genius in our Chancellor of the Exchequer; he brought in a Hop Substitute Bill which appeared to be nothing but pure Protection, and his Patent Act was, to say the least, dubious. A few advanced politicians talk of taxing land values, but they hardly know what they mean and they are beginning to confess that there is very little money to be got that way, at least at

[1] Dr. Murray Butler has kindly sent me the correspondence. Courtney advised him to approach Count Goblet d'Alviella, Sir William Anson or Mr. Hobson.

present. The yawning deficit is primarily due to the pressure of Old Age Pensions. When it was in the Lords, I was engrossed, as you may remember, with the Peace Congress, and could not speak and did not vote. All the argument seemed to me against its principle, which is little more than an allowance of out-door relief cleared from the stigma of pauperism which attached to it. The Act has now come into operation and is working in such a way as to make the suggestion of its repeal an idle dream. The movement will be in the other direction, to reduce the age when the pension is due, to remove some of the limitations and perhaps to increase the amount.

I begin to feel that I have been lugubrious enough but there is still another cause of anxiety, though here I hope the danger is less real. The deficit in April may be augmented by an increased naval expenditure. One or two bright spots may, however, be mentioned,—South Africa foremost among them. Things are going there wonderfully well ; it looks as if the Colonies might agree upon unification, though personally I should have thought federation is as much as is now possible. Morley again has made a real advance in solving the Indian problem. I hesitate to mention a third bright spot, for I fear I shall not have your sympathy. The darkness of our outlook is aggravated by the feeling that we cannot rely on keeping to the fore the elements of thought, of experience and of courage which serve to withstand the overwhelming flood of current popular opinion. Free-trade might be saved if Conservative free-traders were not submerged and carried away in the Conservative tide. Well, there is a little hope that these exceptions to the popular floods may still be maintained. In a word, Proportional Representation is gaining ground ; it is within the range of practical politics. A Royal Commission has been appointed to inquire into it and to see whether it cannot be popularised.

While the cause of P.R. was making rapid headway at home, a new opportunity arose of securing its adoption in South Africa. A Legislative Assembly had been established in the Transvaal in February 1907, and Botha had become Prime Minister. But he and Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner, who quickly won each other's confidence, agreed that South Africa could never grow to its full stature with four small separate States, and began to work for Union. The General's splendid reception when he visited England for the Imperial Conference in 1907 completed the

healing process commenced in the previous year; for he was the hero of the hour and the nation took him to its heart. With such a man in command there could be no danger to the British community from a united South Africa. A Convention met at Durban in October 1908, moving later to Bloemfontein and Cape Town, and the result of its deliberations appeared in February 1909. To Courtney's delight the Convention unanimously recommended the adoption of P.R. He had sent literature to the leading men of all parties, and General Smuts and Sir Percy Fitzpatrick had embraced the faith.

To General Botha

February 12, 1909.—I must send a word to express my great joy at the success of the Conference. I have watched every step of your deliberations so far as they could be noted through the telegrams sent home by the Special Correspondent of the *Times*.[1] He has told us how the Transvaal delegation led the van, and how you figured as the generalissimo. President Steyn seems also to have greatly impressed Basil Williams, and I much rejoice at this as tending to make him more justly appreciated in this country. The whole history of this closer Union is a magnificent triumph for freedom and self-government in South Africa.

How formidable had been the difficulties was only revealed when they had been happily surmounted.

From General Smuts (to Lady Courtney)

February 14, 1909.—Many of the best minds at the Convention had latterly begun to despair of ever reaching an acceptable solution of several of the problems with which we were confronted. However some of us held on with grim determination to see the thing through. The result you will have before you by now. You and Lord Courtney will be specially pleased to see that the single transferable vote has triumphed in South Africa. I only hope that people in England will also take their courage in both hands and adopt Proportional Representation for Parliamentary elections. I think this and other provisions

[1] His friend Basil Williams.

of the draft constitution will materially contribute to the allaying of all racial feeling and the building up of a better South Africa. In Liberal circles our denial of the vote to the black population has been condemned; but the time is not ripe for a solution of the native question. A consolidated white South Africa will be a better instrument with which to attempt the comprehensive handling of the native question than the Convention could possibly be. I regret to see that the troubles of our Liberal friends are daily growing in volume. I only wish they could hold on till at any rate the Imperial Act for the South African Constitution has been passed, so that they can reap the full fruits of the magnificent policy of trusting South Africa for which their late leader was so largely responsible.

From J. X. Merriman (to Lady Courtney)

March 14, 1909.—We have had a trying time, three months close sitting and always with the gloves on, which is trying to an old gladiator. On the whole I think the result is fairly satisfactory. The weak point of the Constitution is the perpetuation of an extremely extravagant system and the continuance of so-called party government, which, without parties or any clear dividing lines, is apt to degenerate into a mere sordid struggle of the "ins" and the "outs." I wish most heartily that we had had the courage to adopt the Swiss system or a modification of it, as I am sure that it would be much better suited to colonial conditions. Without being inclined to gush over the "union of hearts" I must say that the Convention has done much to tread down race feeling. To me nothing was more gratifying than to see how that long-suffering man President Steyn came by his own and obtained the respect—I might say the affection—of every member. I am obliged to confess that personally I am not so enthusiastic as you are about that nostrum of proportional voting, but you must set that down to ignorance and to an incurable fondness for the traditions of the old Whigs. I only hope that it may work better than I think it possible. It will certainly add another difficulty to "party" government.

The draft convention required ratification by each of the four constituent States; and the assent of Cape Colony was only secured by the sacrifice of P.R. for the Assembly and Provincial Councils, while retaining it for the Senate and the Executive Committees of the Provincial Councils.

From General Smuts

May 14, 1909.—Last Sunday May 9 I sent you a cable announcing with great regret that owing to very considerable opposition in the Convention we were compelled to acquiesce in the withdrawal of Proportional Representation from the draft South Africa Act of Union which it is proposed to submit to the British Government for their approval. Its withdrawal will, I know, be a great blow to yourself and Lady Courtney, and you can depend upon it that its withdrawal was only consented to by the Transvaal delegates when it was seen that its retention meant seriously jeopardising the acceptance of the draft Act. The objections were raised principally by the delegates from the Cape Colony who pointed out that it meant the formation of immense electoral areas which in the sparsely populated portions of their Colony made its adoption almost a matter of impossibility. I am now seriously debating whether I shall not introduce Proportional Representation into the elections which are conducted triennially for the Johannesburg and Pretoria Municipalities, and also for the School Board elections in Pretoria and along the Witwatersrand. Its introduction would be an object lesson to the rest of South Africa, and the public would learn its principles from practical application; and I have every hope that when its success has been clearly and practically shown we shall eventually be able to congratulate ourselves on its adoption in the Union Parliament elections. As at present arranged I shall be one of the delegates who will proceed to England for the purpose of laying the draft Act before the British Government, and I shall take the earliest opportunity of renewing our acquaintance and telling you more of the difficulties which we were not able to overcome. The Convention were fully alive to the good services rendered by Mr. Humphreys, the Secretary to the Society, for his friendly advice, and passed a resolution placing on record their appreciation of his work.[1]

The Constitution, formally ratified by the four States, was at once brought to England by the men who had shaped it. All the world rejoiced at the achievement, and all the

[1] General Smuts was as good as his word, and carried a Bill applying P.R. to the municipal elections of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Mr. Humphreys was invited to South Africa to give expert counsel, and the first elections took place in 1910.

world recognised that it would be difficult if not impossible to alter its provisions. But the new Instrument of Government concerned not only white men but black, and it was very generally felt in Liberal and Labour circles that the Imperial Government was bound to defend their interests. Eminent Cape Colony negrophils like Mr. Sauer and Mr. Schreiner had pleaded in vain that the natives throughout the Union should receive the franchise; but the Transvaal, the Orange Colony and Natal were adamantine. It was finally agreed that they should retain the vote which they had long possessed in Cape Colony, but that in the other States they should be excluded from the voters' roll. The deliberate insertion of a colour bar in the new Constitution was vigorously denounced by Sir Charles Dilke and other life-long champions of native rights; but as it was well understood that the South African delegates were unalterably opposed to native franchise, a free vote was impossible. True to his maxim that justice should be done though the heavens fall, Courtney intervened when the Union Bill came up for second reading in the House of Lords. In 1877, he began, he had opposed confederation because it was not desired by South Africa. Now South Africa had spoken, and it was our duty to accept every portion of the scheme except the colour bar. We should not press our opinions on the delegates, but should invite their earnest consideration. It was not necessary to concede universal eligibility to sit in both Houses; it would be enough to maintain their theoretical right as representatives of their Cape Colony constituents, though no native had ever offered himself for election. They were told that native eligibility would break up the Union; but only the extreme form of the claim would produce such a disaster. Wherever a small community of Europeans governed a vastly greater number of natives it was of the utmost importance that the majority should have some constitutional method of expressing their opinions; and it was all the more necessary since P.R. had unfortunately been excluded from the final draft.

Journal

A valiant speech with a strong remonstrant note. I was unhappy at his being out of harmony with our S.A. friends; otherwise I should have enjoyed the striking scene very much. The House full of life and activity. The massive figure of Steyn, like a blind Samson on account of the droop of his eyelids, walking up (partly led) the lobbies of the House of Lords; and the three fine-looking men, Merriman, Botha and de Villiers, sitting on the steps of the throne. All the speeches except that of their special friend were full of praise and admiration. He was so intent on speaking the truth that was in him that he forgot that part of the business, much as he feels it.

Courtney's stand for principle merely enhanced the respect in which he was held by the statesmen of South Africa.

From Sir Henry de Villiers (to Lady Courtney)

July 28.—I enjoyed the debate, including Lord Courtney's speech, although he proved to be a "candid friend." No exception can possibly be taken to the tone of his remarks.

From General Smuts (to Lady Courtney)

July 29.—You need have no fear that we were displeased with Lord Courtney's speech. It was the best of the whole debate, and I have heard several South Africans say so. There was (if I may say so) profound wisdom in what he said on the native question. It is however a matter on which public opinion will have to grow a great deal before any action can be taken.

From J. X. Merriman

July 27, 1909.—I listened to your speech. You know how painful it is to me to differ from one whom I revere as I do yourself. But I cannot refrain from telling you that if your proposed amendment is carried Union is lost. I do not like the provision of European descent, which I think unnecessary and illiberal. Undoubtedly, regret it as we may, a majority of the European population feel most strongly on the matter, and it was with difficulty that we got them to accept the essential compromise of the existing franchise at the Cape.

To J. X. Merriman

July 28, 1909.—Do not be over anxious about my suggested amendments. There is no chance of the Proviso touching European descent being removed even if I pressed the question to a division, so that the fear of losing the Union is quite fanciful. I think, however, bringing out the point in clear relief must be useful, and I feel that the delegates must have been impressed by the fact that every speaker last night deplored the insertion in the Act of the words confining to people of European descent the possibility of entering the Union Parliament. I am afraid I knew when I was speaking that I was putting to risk the friendship of many friends, but I hope their friendship will survive the trial to which I have exposed it. I cannot afford to lose yours.

Courtney spent his holiday in Switzerland, whence he commented on the measure in a letter to Washington.

To James Bryce

August 26, 1909.—It is characteristic of what the Continentals call our hypocrisy that no one ventured to say that this Bill was establishing an Afrikander Union in which the Boers were taking the lead, and in which their policy of dealing with the natives is incorporated—pretty much in fact what might have been accomplished without war if we had waited for the passing of Kruger. Milner is said to feel this, and I was half tempted to make a mocking speech—" My Lords, the Boers have beaten you. We have established a self-governing Afrikander Union with a Governor who does not govern."

The same session that witnessed the creation of the Union of South Africa was rendered memorable by Lord Morley's scheme of Indian reform. Courtney had followed the fortunes of our Asiatic Empire with keen interest ever since his visit, and he had long been convinced that both the economic and the political situation required resolute handling. In 1901 he co-operated with Sir William Wedderburn, Lord Ripon, Lord Hobhouse, Sir M. Bhownaggree and other high authorities in founding the Indian Famine Union, the object of which was to investigate not the methods of

relief but the causes of famine. The Society was inaugurated at a meeting at the Westminster Palace Hotel at which Courtney presided; and a letter to the *Times* announcing its formation was signed by him as Chairman of the Provisional Committee. But the Government lent no assistance, and the programme of the Famine Union was never carried out. The appointment of Mr. Morley as Secretary of State in 1905 inaugurated a new era; and Courtney was in thorough agreement with the policy of associating Indians more closely, both at Simla and Whitehall, with the government of their country. While the attitude of the Unionist leaders, Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, towards the Indian Councils Bill was frigid if not openly hostile, he spoke strongly in support of the Second Reading. Brushing aside the promptings of timidity and inertia, he claimed something like general agreement that a step forward must be taken and the powers of the Legislative Councils be developed. It was needless and indeed impossible to determine how far we might ultimately be led. "By and by you will come more and more to government by the people. If it is done wisely and cautiously there is no need to trouble much about the ultimate goal."

A year later he presided at a dinner to Sir William Wedderburn on his departure to preside for the second time at the National Congress. Their guest went to India, declared the Chairman, as one would go to his home. He did not pose as a benefactor from above. No one could call him a mere winter visitor, though it was folly to imagine that nobody could criticise or suggest unless he had been there. Fawcett and Bright were never there, and yet rendered priceless services. The speech, commented Sir Charles Dilke, was absolutely perfect. "If ever I heard a speech which conveyed in the highest language of almost inspired statesmanship the dominant considerations, it was this." He maintained his interest to the end, and in 1911 strongly urged the Government to deal with the grave police scandals in certain provinces, to which his old friend and comrade Frederic Mackarness had recently called attention. Indians were always welcome at Cheyne Walk, and

no one had a greater admiration for Gokhale, whose grasp of principle and calmness of temper made him the ideal spokesman of the new India.

While the Government in large measure succeeded in applying Liberal principles in India and South Africa, the inevitable struggle between a radical House of Commons and the House of Lords had broken out in the first session, when the Peers wrecked the Education Bill and rejected the Plural Voting Bill. In 1907 the House of Commons carried a Resolution, based on a proposal of Bright in 1884, limiting the Veto of the Upper House ; but the Government made no attempt to embody their platonic Resolution in legislative form. In 1908 the rejection of the Licensing Bill, which had been the main task of the session and had necessitated an autumn session, made the veto of the Lords, in the emphatic words of the Prime Minister, the dominant issue in politics. A few of the more far-seeing Peers, led by Lord Rosebery, endeavoured while there was still time to set their house in order. The Government declined to be represented on a Select Committee in which they would be largely outnumbered ; but three independent Liberals, Lords Ribblesdale, Selby and Courtney, consented to serve. Courtney was favourably impressed with " its business-like spirit," and generally approved of its recommendations ; but the Report was ignored by the Government and received no support from the more conservative section of the Peers, and the incident merely illustrated the powerlessness of the House of Lords to reform itself.

The land clauses of the Budget of 1909 brought the crisis to a head, and Lord Lansdowne's announcement that he would move its rejection raised the excitement to fever pitch. The author of *The Working Constitution* was profoundly shocked by the determination of the Peers not only to interfere in finance but to force a dissolution on the Budget ; and by pen and tongue he strove to avert the catastrophe. In a letter of two and a half columns published in the *Times* on November 19 he raised the warning voice of " a somewhat detached politician." On Lord Lansdowne, he argued, rested the burden of justifying a

course which broke with every Parliamentary tradition. The merits or demerits of the Budget would be lost in the far larger question of the power of the Lords to interfere in finance. The collection of revenue would be impeded. The Budget, as a whole, presented no suggestion of an injustice which would justify his action. The only serious charge was "tacking" the valuation clauses; but if the valuation was needed for the collection, there was no foundation for the complaint.

From Arthur Elliot

November 21, 1909.—Your letter in yesterday's *Times* has given me some delightful Sunday reading. You have expressed so admirably exactly my own sentiments and thoughts about the position in which the Lansdowne notice has placed the country. I must say I think the House of Commons ought to resent the action of the Peers. Most of them probably don't know what they are doing.

From Canon Barnett (to Lady Courtney)

November 21.—It is good to know there is still a prophet among us. The height of the platform from which he spoke, the sorrow in which his words are dipped, the appeal to something in human nature which is more lasting than even its care for precedents and property, makes the pronouncement more valuable.

From Lord Rendel (to Lady Courtney)

November 20, 1909.—Your husband's letter in to-day's *Times* is really a great public service. I cannot remember anything he has written more characteristic of his special endowments. Now that both press and platform compete with each other only in shrillness and gesticulations, your husband's measured tones and profound feeling and dispassionate wisdom come like organ notes. Of course I hold your husband in special honour and am so far biassed; but I predict a wide and deep effect for his present most timely intervention in a great issue on which some of us longed for, and all of us needed, his judgment.

Courtney renewed his protest on the last day of the prolonged debate on the Second Reading, and rebuked the Peers in the grave tones of a father addressing his wayward children. "You are developing the revolutionary spirit. You are violating usage. In your departure from constitutional practice you are giving a lesson which may be improved upon. It is extremely unlikely that you will win. I desire to see our existing order change from old to new by slow evolution, without violence or passion. I do not exclude recourse to a referendum on measures of legislation; but you cannot ask the country to say Yes or No on the merits of the Budget. For the first time you are presuming to deal with taxation, and the country will give its verdict not on the Land Clauses but on your unprecedented claim." The rejection of the Budget automatically dissolved Parliament, and the country was plunged into the turmoil of a General Election. Conscious of the weakness of their appeal on the Budget, the Unionists naturally attempted to fight on Protection, Home Rule and other familiar cries. Courtney's views were expressed in an Open Letter to his friends Charles Mallet and Aneurin Williams, the Liberal candidates for Plymouth. "Gross delusions have been spread abroad to lead the people to believe that their condition can be bettered by preventing them from supplying their wants in the easiest way. The nation has to choose between Free Trade and Tariff Reform. In their desperation the party of Tariff Reform have provoked a constitutional conflict of the gravest character. The Lords are claiming a power to interfere with taxation denied to them by all constitutional authority and usage. They have surely overreached themselves. I find it impossible to believe that the nation will allow a limited body of irresponsible Peers to take upon themselves in any form the power of the purse."

The forecast was correct; for although the swollen majority of 1906 was decreased by a hundred, the verdict of the polls was sufficiently emphatic to condemn the claim of the Peers to interfere in finance and to render a repetition impossible. The new situation was analysed by

Courtney in an article on "The Political Prospect" in the February number of the *Contemporary Review*. How many Peers who voted against the Budget, he asked, tried to forecast the consequences? The constituencies had spoken. The exaggerated majority of 1906 had been reduced; but the verdict was more authoritative in that it was more real. The decree had gone forth that the old order must change. "We must all feel that the Lords' power to suspend a Finance Bill is gone." It was now agreed that the position of the Upper Chamber must be reviewed; but how far was it necessary to go? A Declaratory Act affirming the exclusive rights of the Commons over finance should be passed; but the Government could hardly demand guarantees in advance for any wider plan. If the Lords rejected their scheme, Peers could be created by an act of necessary violence. It would be simpler to withhold writs; but this course could only be adopted at the beginning of a Parliament. "If, however, the knot could be loosed instead of cut, few of us would be ill-pleased." The Government had boycotted the Rosebery Committee and ignored its Report. That document could not be seriously entertained as a final draft, but it contained some good principles—above all that a Peer need not be a Lord of Parliament, and should only be summoned if qualified by public service or elected by his fellow-Peers. If both Houses were made more representative the practical difficulty of co-ordinating their powers would largely disappear, and the plan of enforcing the passage of Bills in the life-time of a single Parliament might be accepted. Meanwhile the Referendum was at least deserving of careful study.

From Sir Edward Grey

February 3, 1910.—Many thanks for your letter and the article which I shall be glad to read. I have not seen much of what the papers on our side have been saying about the problem of the House of Lords. My own view is that it ought to be considered afresh, and with more clearness of thought than has yet been given to it. The first thing is to make up one's mind as to whether one is in favour of a Single Chamber

or of two Chambers. For everything except Finance, properly so called, I am opposed to a Single Chamber and in favour of having two Chambers. From this it seems to me to follow that the solution of the present difficulties is to be found in such a reform as will produce a Second Chamber of comparatively small size, of comparatively great merit, and based upon the elective principle, so that it may have a serious sense of responsibility. I have not much hope that the Conservative party will agree to anything which we would consider a real and substantial reform ; but, of course, it is for them to make their own position clear, when the Government has put forward its proposals, which I suppose it must do directly Parliament opens.

The first task of the Government was to reintroduce the suspended Budget of 1909, postponing the announcement of its policy for dealing with the Upper Chamber till it had time to consider the momentous problem in all its bearings. Meanwhile the Peers, with the sword of Damocles suspended over their heads, sought to forestall the coming blow ; and Courtney was indefatigable both in warning and practical suggestion. " Perhaps you will forgive me for expressing the impressions of one who came here after twenty-four years spent elsewhere," he declared on March 17. " One seems to come into the presence of a land-locked pool, a place which storms cannot reach, so bounded by breakwaters, natural and historical, that the ordinary tides of life scarcely break upon it. There are whole classes leading lives and enduring experiences that can scarcely be appreciated in this Assembly. No wonder that there should arise a sense of the immovability and inaccessibility of your Lordships' House." The Budget of 1909 passed rapidly through the House of Commons and was promptly accepted by the Peers, who recognised that the electors had cried " Hands off finance," and had expressed a desire for the reform of the Upper Chamber ; but were by no means prepared to swallow whatever dose the Government thought fit to administer to them. In the conflict on the Budget Courtney had been heart and soul with the Commons; but on the far more complex issue of the rights of the Peers over legislation he sympathised both with the reluctance of the Lower House to see its labours frustrated and with

the desire of the Upper to retain some effective power of revision. He continued to urge a smaller and more representative body partially elected by the House of Commons.

To Lord Rosebery

April 4, 1910.—I suppose you have been busy working out the details of the further resolutions you propose to submit to the House. It is evident that the final solution of the whole business will depend on the character of the alternative scheme for Reform of the Lords and for reduction of their power to be submitted to the nation at the coming General Election. Against the Government plan you must be able to set something definite and approximately complete, and this something must have in it an adequate popular element. It is on this last point, left very vaguely indicated in the recent debate, that I want to say a word. Your own scheme of getting a contingent of Lords of Parliament nominated by the big County Boroughs seems fairly easy; but I think it would be impossible to exclude further nominations by County Councils in general, and indeed Curzon in debate carried the proposal to this length. It seems to me also a strong objection to this plan that you would be calling upon the members of the County Councils to discharge duties quite foreign to their present work, the discharge of which would assuredly lead to a change in the conduct of the elections of such members. Will you let me press you to consider with an open mind the suggestion I threw out in debate, that of allowing the House of Commons to elect at the commencement of each Parliament a certain number of Lords to serve for two Parliaments, the election being of course according to some method which would secure the proportional representation of the different parties in the House of Commons? As I said in debate this is not my own proposal,[1] but the more I think of it the more it recommends itself as simple in working and as securing what we are aiming at.

While keeping in view the reform of the Upper House Courtney's mind moved steadily towards the referendum as a lightning conductor for constitutional electricity. "The Budget has passed," he wrote to the *Times* on April 29, "but there will soon be a new crisis. The Lords will now discuss Lord Rosebery's Resolutions and then the Resolu-

[1] It was suggested by Mr. Aneurin Williams.

tions of the Government, which they will reject. Then there will be an election, which few or none desire. Is there no escape from this useless turmoil? Let us have a referendum on the two Resolutions of the Government separately—the first on the control by the Commons of finance, and the second on their predominance in general legislation." While the hosts were gathering for battle King Edward suddenly died, and the party leaders endeavoured to reach agreement on the constitutional issue by prolonged discussions behind closed doors. When the failure of the Conference was announced in November, the House of Lords resumed the debates of the spring. An election might come at any moment, Courtney declared on November 23, and it was their duty to put forth something more definite than the Rosebery Resolutions. An appeal to the country, however, was unnecessary at this stage. "We ought to go on as if there had been no Conference. I deplore the election. Any man can legislate in the streets." A week later, when the dissolution had been announced, he renewed his protest, while adding that discussion might still be useful. The Franchise Act of 1867 emerged from a similar welter. He could not approve the Government plan by which a Bill was to become law after thrice passing the .House of Commons; for such a measure might be unsupported by the nation, like the Home Rule Bill of 1892 and the Education Bill of 1906. Nor was it right to leave the composition of the House of Lords unaltered. He wished he could know the maximum of one side and the minimum of the other in the abortive Conference. Both Houses must be changed. "You cannot solve the problem unless you alter the method of election and make the Commons an adequate reflection of the mind of the country." And finally we should be wise to adopt the Referendum.

The election was fought on the veto of the House of Lords, and the supporters of the Government returned to Westminster in sufficient and undiminished numbers. Fortified by their second victory the Ministry introduced the Parliament Bill, which abrogated the power of the

Peers to interfere in finance, enacted that a Bill should become law after passing the House of Commons in three successive sessions, and limited the life of Parliament to five years. The measure rested on the hypothesis that a newly elected House of Commons so faithfully represented the will of the people that its legislation possessed a moral right to force its way to the Statute-Book. But it was precisely this assumption that Courtney contested. In letters to the *Times* (April 29 and May 7) he argued that the lack of authority of Parliaments elected by single-member constituencies was coming to be recognised all over the world, and that a remedy was being increasingly sought in the Referendum. The House of Commons might at times tell us what the people think, but we could never be certain of it. While the Upper House was waiting for the Parliament Bill Lord Lansdowne introduced a Reform Bill, which Courtney welcomed as "a very bold scheme, considerably in advance of anything presented before." The Lord Chancellor's contention that to consider such a Bill would involve a surrender of the Government was met by the argument that some such measure was necessary whether the Parliament Bill passed or not. "If it passes, the first thing to be done will be to improve this House, so as to increase its authority in the nation." When the Government measure reached the Upper House at the end of June, Courtney reiterated his agreement with its declaration on finance and his dissatisfaction with its policy in regard to general legislation. While the Government thought of nothing but carrying their measures, the veteran constitutionalist desired the cautious advance that comes from discussion and compromise. "We should not reject any safeguard," he declared in advocating the Referendum, "however novel or strange, which might secure that legislation shall go soberly and steadily forward according to the ascertained mind of the nation."

Journal

I never heard L. speak better in the House of Lords. His argument very telling; but it also seemed to me terribly damag-

ing to the Government refusal to consider any form of Referendum, and his leader and friend's face seemed to say so as he turned back to hear well. The speech was continually cheered by the Opposition, though he is far from being with them in their arrogant pretensions to control a Liberal Government and only a Liberal Government. Lord Selborne ran up against me and said "splendid speech" with great enthusiasm, and Lord Haversham said almost as much.

The Veto Bill once safely on the Statute-Book, the Government proceeded to gather in its fruits, the chief of which was Home Rule. When the election of December 1910 was over Courtney defined his attitude towards the Irish problem in an Open Letter to James Sexton, published in the *Freeman's Journal* on January 14, 1911. Home Rule, he declared, was now very near. He was still in wish a Unionist, for the United Kingdom was not too big to be worked by a single Parliament if there was a real endeavour to make the machine effective. But it was necessary to recognise facts. We had not enough of the spirit of unity among us, and among Unionists, he must sadly confess, unity was too often lost in domination. We must therefore prepare for Home Rule and make the best of it. The central object for our attention was the construction of the legislative body. "Here, you will say, is the old story of P.R. Let us dismiss that phrase and try to keep to facts. We have to make our national assembly as representative as we can, and to get in it the best men of all kinds." In a sympathetic leader the *Freeman* urged friendly consideration of the plan of large constituencies; and a few weeks later Courtney crossed to Dublin, where he delivered an address on P.R., held a model election, and founded an Irish P.R. Society with Sir Horace Plunkett as President.[1]

The session of 1912 witnessed the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill, which was modelled on the measure

[1] He had nearly died of an attack of haemorrhage at Christmas, and the doctor had warned him to take no risks. Despite a storm he insisted on crossing from Holyhead to keep his engagement, meeting his wife's remonstrances with the words, "I will not live a sheltered life; it is not worth it."

of 1892. In a dissertation written for the July number of the *Contemporary Review* he referred to his article contributed in April 1886 to the same journal at the request of the Editor. "In the first draft I wrote of the ultimate success of Home Rule as inevitable, but withdrew the word before publication, partly because I did not wish to prejudge the result and partly because I still hoped that as Repeal had died out Home Rule might also disappear after a season. In 1912 I have to confess that my hopes of 1886 have not been realised. I believe the conviction that the Irish question must be settled is shared by not a few Conservatives of stronger minds, though they may be reluctant to confess it. The Bill excites neither enthusiasm nor passionate opposition. The Parliament Act in some measure contributes to this temper of calm or apathy, since no one expects it to become law this year. There remain a couple of years in which it may be modified before it must somehow become a statute." If the Bill went too far in the transfer of the Posts in some respects it did not go far enough. We should give up the Constabulary, instead of reserving it for six years. "If we cannot go this length, we had better defer Home Rule. Having accepted it in principle, I would ensure its orderly evolution by giving the Government power and the responsibility arising from power. In 1886 I said that denial of the tariff-power would be a vain and irritating prolongation of a struggle to which there was only one issue. My conviction remains unchanged that Fiscal autonomy should be the accompaniment of Home Rule. It would certainly operate in a reactionary direction; but it is desired and it had better be conceded." There was no solution of the Ulster problem in the Bill; but long before it passed into law a settlement would surely be found. "I think we are at the beginning of debates which may materially change the complexion of the Bill before the question is settled. Other constitutions, such as those of Canada and South Africa, were settled by long private conferences."

Leaving to other hands the attempt to improve the Bill in various directions, Courtney concentrated his efforts

on securing the adoption of P.R. A deputation to the Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary in July was assured that if Irish opinion demanded P.R. it should be granted. John Redmond required no conversion, and when the House resumed its debates in the autumn session P.R. for the Irish Senate was accepted without a division. All efforts, however, to secure its adoption for the Irish House of Commons proved fruitless. The progress of P.R. throughout the world was celebrated at a dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on December 4, 1913, attended by foreign delegates and presided over by Earl Grey. "As time passes," declared Courtney in proposing The Cause, "position after position is gained, and there are signs that the day is not far off when men will wonder that a reform so simple and so just should be so long delayed." The size and enthusiasm of the gathering inspired the speakers, and by common consent the old statesman had never spoken with greater force or eloquence.

Journal

My old warrior did well. The whole affair was a gigantic success. Not far from five hundred guests. Though the proceedings were horribly long, it never flagged.

From Earl Grey

December 4, 1913.—If I may I should like to say how much I admired your speech last night. You were a real Prophet standing on the slopes of Pisgah! The only regret I have is that your speech was not reported verbatim in the *Times*, so that those who could not enjoy the thrill conveyed by the sound of your voice could have had the satisfaction of reading the printed words.

The year 1914 seemed likely to prove as critical as 1911; for the time had come to reap the harvest of the Parliament Act. The Home Rule Bill would pass for the third and last time through the House of Commons; but the Unionists were as determined as ever in their hostility, and the Orangemen were covenanted to resist its application to Ulster by

force of arms. The prospect of civil war in Ireland filled moderate men with consternation, and on the eve of the session Courtney addressed himself to the Prime Minister.

To H. H. Asquith

January 24, 1914.—I want to write you a few words about Ireland. We are all concerned about it, and though prepared for evil times, would like to reduce the danger. Is there no way of abating it? The responsible leaders of the Opposition say they cannot assent to Home Rule because they do not believe that the judgment of the country is in its favour, and they call for a general election to settle this issue. You reply, and I agree, that elections have settled it as far as any election can; but need this be the last word? The Opposition say the country has not spoken in favour of Home Rule. We may then infer that if the country did speak they would bow to the result. They will still think Home Rule an evil thing, but they would yield to the national will. Starting from the point thus reached, might not this suggestion be made? Suppose it was agreed that the simple, naked issue of policy should be put before all the electors of the United Kingdom in such a question as the following: "Are you in favour of the establishment of a Parliament in Ireland for the management of Irish affairs, with an Executive Ministry responsible to it?" Suppose the judgment thus ascertained to be in the affirmative. The Opposition would be bound to allow the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, confining their action to amendments in detail which might be adopted as "suggestions" in the House of Commons, and embodied in the Lords, the Parliament Act being always at hand as a reserve force, and the settlement of the question would thus come into sight. Suppose on the other hand the answer was in the negative, the Government would have to confess that the country having decided against Home Rule they could not be justified in using the Parliament Act to force their Bill through.

The Prime Minister courteously replied that for the moment at any rate the proposal would not find acceptance in quarters where assent was necessary; and the crisis rapidly developed until the roar of the avalanche could be heard in the distance. The evil precedent of the Ulster army bore its inevitable fruit in the Nationalist Volunteers, and

the ugly incident at the Curragh excited the public mind to fever pitch. Before the Home Rule Bill came on for second reading in the House of Lords the Government made a far-reaching concession to the cause of peace by introducing in the Upper House an Amending Bill for the exclusion of Ulster. The plan found no favour with Courtney, who urged that Ulster should have Home Rule within Home Rule. With an Assembly at Belfast for local affairs, with Ulster representatives in the Dublin Parliament, and with P.R. for both Houses, the interests of the Unionist minority throughout Ireland would, he argued, be amply safeguarded. A few days later the King invited the party leaders to a conference at Buckingham Palace under the chairmanship of the Speaker to discuss the area of exclusion. Neither side, however, was in a yielding mood; and when the Unionists, in addition to the four counties in which alone they possessed a majority, claimed Fermanagh and Tyrone, the Conference broke up. But at this moment, when all eyes were turned to Ireland, the British Empire was swiftly plunged into the greatest conflict of history, which, however sudden in its shattering explosion, was merely the outcome of the international anarchy which had already more than once brought Europe within sight of war.

CHAPTER XXIII

ENTANGLING ALLIANCES

If Courtney tendered a general if discriminating support to the domestic policy of the Liberal Cabinet during the eight and a half years which elapsed between the resignation of Mr. Balfour and the outbreak of war, his dissatisfaction with their foreign policy increased from year to year and finally developed into something like open hostility. He felt perfect confidence in Campbell-Bannerman ; but he feared that the Prime Minister would be unable to exert a decisive influence, and that the effective conduct of national policy would be in the hands of the Liberal Imperialists. When Mr. Asquith succeeded to the premiership in 1908 his apprehensions increased ; and, though he retained his regard and indeed affection for Sir Edward Grey, he deplored the growing entanglement of Great Britain in the quarrels and rivalries of the Continent.

In his first public utterance after the election of 1906 Courtney chose foreign policy for the theme of his address to the young Oxford Liberals. In his Albert Hall speech the Prime Minister had expressed his hope that Great Britain would take the lead in establishing a League of Peace. This noble aspiration must be carried out. The reduction of armaments would be at once a symbol and a cause of more trustful and harmonious relations between the Great Powers. The pioneers must always take risks ; but if motives were unselfish, the risk would be small. " In the righteousness of our cause we have a greater defence than in enlarged armaments. I am tired of the constant

presentation of the nations of the world as so many predatory hordes. I do not believe that is the real temper of the civilised nations of Europe. They are all more or less in genuine alarm at one another; and the nation that can first show some confidence that the best way to prevent attack is not to invite it by distrust will be glorified as the real pioneer in the formation of a League of Peace. Should we be in great peril if we reverted to the expenditure of 1895?"

It was impossible to put the clock back ten years, for a more expensive type of ship had been invented, and the German navy was growing at a rapid pace. But Courtney's aspirations were shared by the Cabinet, which in the first session unconditionally reduced the Dreadnought programme adopted by the late Government. It was a *beau geste*; but it met with no response in the quarter to which it was addressed—for the Kaiser informed Sir Frank Lascelles that if the question of armaments was to be brought up at the Hague he must decline to be represented. In the spring of 1907 the Premier returned to the charge in an article in the *Nation*, announcing that the Government was prepared to make further reductions in the normal shipbuilding programme if the other Powers would follow suit. At the same time our desire that the reduction of armaments should be considered at the Hague was officially communicated to the seven chief naval Powers. Prince Bülow replied in the Reichstag that Germany could not take part in the discussion, which she regarded as unpractical if not dangerous. In face of this rebuff Sir Edward Fry was instructed to inform the Hague Conference that his Government was ready to exchange its naval estimates in advance with any other Power, in the hope that a reduction might thus be secured. No Power took advantage of the offer; and the Conference contented itself with an anaemic *vœu* exhorting the States to take the question into their earnest consideration. Armaments are the children of fear, and every Power was nervous of attack. But if the main responsibility for this sterile result rested on Germany, the refusal of Great Britain to consent to the abolition of the right of capture of private property at sea appeared to Courtney, who visited

the Hague and saw the delegates in session, a potent factor in preventing a fruitful discussion.

The scornful refusal of Germany in 1907 to discuss the problem of armaments increased the anger with which the country learned in the spring of 1908, at the moment when the Naval Estimates were being finally determined, that the Kaiser had written to the First Lord of the Admiralty.[1] The decision of the Government to withhold the letter from publication, on the ground that it was a private communication, gave free rein to the suspicions which the organs of the Opposition endeavoured to fan into a flame. Courtney at once appealed to his countrymen, through the leading journal, to keep cool. "The declarations of the *Times*," he began, "have often passed over Europe as determinations of national judgment, and the highest responsibility attaches to such utterances. Your Military Correspondent announces that 'the German Emperor has addressed a letter to Lord Tweedmouth on the subject of British and German naval policy'; and he adds 'it is affirmed' that this letter amounts to an attempt to influence, in German interests, the Minister responsible for our Navy Estimates. You proceed to accept what is affirmed as certain, and to declare that no one can be credulous enough to believe that the Emperor would have taken the trouble to write the letter for the sake of anything except German interests. You conclude with a demand for the publication of the letter, and assert that 'if there was any doubt before about the meaning of German naval expansion, none can remain after an attempt of this kind to influence the Minister responsible for our navy in a direction favourable to German interests; an attempt, in other words, to make it more easy for German preparations to overtake our own.' Surely this is a tremendous conclusion to be drawn from something which 'is affirmed' and not yet confirmed. Our public men of all parties have deplored the rival armaments of nations, and Lord Goschen, as First Lord of the Admiralty, invited other Governments to consider the possibility of a common arrest of naval expansion. If the German Emperor

[1] The story is told by Colonel Repington in his *Vestigia*, ch. xxi.

has written a letter, why may we not conclude that this action is the reply to our invitations? Why must we hurry to the belief that it is an attempt to make it more easy for German preparations to overtake our own? I am not aware of anything in the past action of the German Emperor to warrant a sinister interpretation of the contents of an unrevealed letter. It is doubtless now desirable that the letter and any reply should be published, and I trust they may entirely dispel the war cloud threatening to arise from the rumour of them. But should not the Kaiser see his way at once to communicate his letter to the world, no one would be entitled to take umbrage at his refusal or to put an evil construction on his reticence."

During the following summer the Universal Peace Congress, representing every race and creed, met in London under the chairmanship of Courtney, who delivered a series of speeches afterwards published in pamphlet form. On the first day a party of delegates presented an address to the King at Buckingham Palace.

Journal

The King and Queen received about twenty-five, half of them foreigners. All, especially the latter, were extremely pleased. I drove the Baroness von Suttner. H.M. shook hands with each delegate; then L. said a few words and presented the address. Then H.M. read the reply with great cordiality, as if he had written every word, and he really looked very jolly. As we trooped out Professor Stein, head of the Berne Bureau, was telling me what an ardent disciple he was of Herbert Spencer, and how his daughter had translated the Autobiography. I pointed to the victoria and told him it was his. His delight was unbounded, and I offered to drive him back to Caxton Hall. "The crown of a beautiful day," said he, and got in. L. coming up, I said, "You must get on the box, dear." Professor Stein expatiated on his delight in seeing and speaking with King Edward and now riding in the great philosopher's carriage, and ended with "We owe all this to the Lord." I muttered a sympathetic Yes, not expecting such evangelical piety. Then he repeated, "Yes, to the dear Lord on the box," and I nearly choked with trying not to laugh.

In his Presidential address Courtney referred to the King's address as vibrating with real sympathy for their movement. "There will be many who tell us we are dreamers, that the world has been, is, and ever will be governed by force. It is they who are misled. The force which really governs the world, which controls it from age to age, is the force of morality." Most wars, it was now admitted, could have been prevented. How could nations be induced to refer their disputes to law instead of to arms? The most obvious method was the development of international law. Some of them had hoped for more result from the Hague Conference last year. Yet its sittings were not wholly barren. It recognised the equality of large and small nations, and it consented to the establishment of an Appeal Prize Court. The next line of advance was the promotion of treaties of arbitration. In his chairman's address at a meeting at Queen's Hall, at which Mr. Lloyd George was the principal speaker, he developed his argument that no war had been inevitable. There would have been no Crimean war but for Stratford Canning; and Lord Salisbury had confessed forty years after the mischief had been done that we had put our money on the wrong horse. The Volunteers had sprung up to resist Napoleon III.; but there was no ground for believing that he ever intended to attack us. War with France had been near in 1898, and with the United States in 1861; but it had been prevented at the last moment by good sense. "I do not say that peoples cannot go mad. But keep your heads cool and your judgment clear, and we shall escape from the perils which are said to be inevitable."

The Congress was entertained at a Government banquet, which was honoured by the presence of the Prime Minister. In proposing the toast of the International Peace Movement Mr. Asquith expressed a hope that England would lead the attempt for the reduction of armaments. It was Courtney's task to propose a vote of thanks, and he utilised the occasion for plain speaking to the head of the Executive. "There is one nation whose relations with us are uppermost in our minds. We think of Germany, and Germany thinks of us.

Germany has a large and growing commercial fleet, and they plead that as their commercial marine grows, their navy must grow also; for otherwise their commerce would be swept from the sea in time of war. International law sanctions the capture of private property at sea, and the great justification of an increased German navy is the necessity of meeting that danger. Why should we not exempt it? The retention of the claim and the increase of our navy merely serve to stimulate the growth of armaments in other countries. We are told that we must not run any risk, and that our forces must be superior to any conceivable combination, else hostile nations will combine to attack us. I protest against this doctrine. Can no trust be placed in the honesty of any nation? If we want other nations to go along with us in promoting peace, we must not be afraid to show the way."

Journal

L., sitting between Asquith and Harcourt, pressed eloquently for a statesman who could make peace between English and German interests, and spoke warmly of the capture of private property at sea as the key to the position. It was almost an attack on the Government, and very audacious, but worded so that Mr. Asquith said afterwards, "It might have been worse." Dr. Quidde of Munich took up the text, and made a most impassioned appeal for friendship.

A week or two later King Edward visited his nephew, accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, who was commissioned by the Foreign Secretary to propose an exchange of the ideas on the navies between the two Governments; but the Kaiser, while expressing his goodwill towards England, firmly refused to tolerate any such discussion with a foreign Power.

The hopes expressed at the Peace Congress received a rude shock a few weeks later when Francis Joseph suddenly proclaimed the formal incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Hapsburg dominions, and Ferdinand of Bulgaria simultaneously threw off the overlordship of

Turkey. Both steps had been long in contemplation; but the royal conspirators chose their time when the Young Turk revolution had thrown the Ottoman dominions into temporary confusion. Though Izvolsky had been informed by Aehrenthal of his intention, and had stipulated for a *quid pro quo*, he had not expected the bomb to explode so soon; and both Russia and Serbia raised cries of passionate protest. The breach of public law was sharply denounced by Sir Edward Grey, and the two camps into which distracted Europe had been divided since the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907 hurled defiance at one another. But while Germany and Austria were ready to fight, Russia had not yet recovered from the Japanese war; and when the Kaiser despatched something like an ultimatum to the Tsar, the demand for a Conference was dropped and the *fait accompli* was tacitly recognised. A clash of arms had been avoided; but the prolonged crisis left Russia and Austria in a state of dangerous tension, and intensified the antagonism between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente.

When the danger was over Courtney despatched a long letter to the *Times* (January 23, 1909) on the crisis in the Near East and the speeches and policy of British Ministers. "We have had to listen to much declamation about the law of Europe and the sacredness of treaties. The unmeasured language sometimes used is incompatible with a knowledge of history or with any serious attempt to appreciate the character of treaty obligations. Are we to hold that a treaty once made is binding for ever on every party to it till all parties agree to its abrogation? Such an assumption is untenable even in municipal law, though here there is a tribunal for relief. We have as yet no International Court to which an appeal can be carried against the obligations of an existing treaty. It is of course true that no single Power can of its own mere will make an obligation obsolete. In 1870 Disraeli reminded Parliament that we had guaranteed the Saxon province of Prussia; but every one knew that this obligation had become obsolete. In 1856 Austria, France and England jointly and severally guaranteed the integrity of Turkey;

but nobody would now feel bound by that pact. The question whether a particular obligation is still valid is a question of international morality. There are international conventions of such high import in the maintenance and development of civilisation that to violate them would be the most grievous crime. There are others which in their inception were provisional and accepted as the least evil among many evils between which a choice had to be made, and the passing away of such may mark a step in the progress of humanity. The framers of the Treaty of Berlin were well aware that their handiwork was provisional. Its provisions were broken in 1885, when Bulgaria annexed eastern Roumelia, without a new Congress to challenge or confirm the change. Bulgaria was not a party to the Treaty of 1878; and now she has taken the expected and perfectly natural step of proclaiming her independence. In like manner, though the transfer of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria was defined as provisional, no one ever dreamed of their return to Turkey, just as nobody imagines that we shall evacuate Egypt. We should accept accomplished facts and not let ourselves be dragged into war."

In 1871, when Russia tore up the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris, Courtney had denounced the proceeding with such vigorous menaces that Delane had to intervene; but as the decades passed his hatred of war increased, and he was now convinced that the breach of a treaty, in cases where the obligation was either intrinsically unreasonable or obviously provisional, was not worth fighting about. Moreover, he could not fail to detect the different standards applied by British statesmen to the conduct of the Powers according as they were members of the Triple Alliance or the Triple Entente. While Austria was denounced for formally annexing provinces which had been transferred to her by Europe for administration and which she had ruled for thirty years, France was not only allowed but encouraged to push her claims in Morocco and to ride roughshod over the interests of other signatories of the Treaties of Madrid and Algeciras. Sir Charles Dilke had bluntly told the Foreign Secretary to his face in the House

of Commons that he was making too much fuss about the action of Austria and Bulgaria; and Courtney was emphatically of the same opinion. The letter produced the usual crop of congratulations and recriminations.

From Canon Barnett[1]

January 25.—Everyone has been reading your letter for the good of their souls. The work was worth the trouble and I am glad you did it. It takes a great deal of pushing to make this generation think.

"Lord Courtney deals with the Near Eastern Question," wrote the *Times* in a leader, "in a spirit of austere censoriousness which no practical experience of foreign affairs has tempered. The solemn treaty of 1878 was a very different affair from our declarations concerning Egypt. His general views on treaty obligations will cause most surprise and perhaps most amusement to the vulgar. He is a high priest of the school who never weary of exhorting the unregenerate to put not their trust in armies and fleets but in international law and arbitration tribunals. As these bulwarks depend exclusively on the faithful observance of treaties, it might have been supposed he would have ranged himself with the most unflinching champions of treaty rights." Courtney was used to the admonitions of the *Times*; but the letter also provoked a lengthy rebuke from his old and valued friend Sir Edward Fry. Lord Courtney, complained the judge, would tear up the Declaration of the London Conference of 1871 that no Power could liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty without the consent of the contracting Powers. "I feel regret that Francis Joseph has committed a gross outrage on the public law of Europe, and that Lord Courtney has sought to defend the act by arguments fraught with danger." Courtney's rejoinder to the argument of the eminent jurist appeared in the *Times* on the following day. "It is a question of morality, not of law. I know that to make it a question of morality is delicate and even

[1] *Life*, ii. 329.

dangerous ; but danger also lurks in extending the inflexible bonds of law beyond their proper purpose. They will break in the process, and you do not honour and strengthen an imperfect law by insisting upon it. It is within the power of any nation to declare itself free, though whether the conduct of the nation is right cannot be determined by any public authority." The controversy closed with a letter from Professor Westlake, defending Courtney's thesis that a State might under certain circumstances relieve itself of a treaty obligation, since no tribunal is available for the purpose ; but, before taking such individual action, it was bound to exhaust all diplomatic means of obtaining its desire by consent.

In the Bosnian crisis the main current of the national wish had been directed against Austria ; but the opening months of 1909 witnessed a far fiercer outburst against the ally who had stood by her "in shining armour." In February King Edward paid his first official visit to Berlin, and it seemed for a moment as if warmer airs were about to blow ; but dark whispers had already begun to circulate that unprecedented demands would be made by the Admiralty in order to meet the nefarious designs of our chief competitor.

To James Bryce

January 4, 1909.—There is a great struggle going on—the Admiralty clamouring for more ; but necessity may compel a negative to every demand. Asquith, as you know, added to the difficulty of the situation by what, on the face of it, looked a deliberate but is said to have been in fact an unrealised answer to questions in the House of Commons. He said we must always keep ahead of the two greatest naval Powers, those being at this moment the United States and Germany. This is, of course, an impossible policy. I have been told the declaration has excited great attention on your side, and I suppose nothing could more powerfully support Roosevelt's demand for an increased navy than such a statement from our Prime Minister ; the ordinary citizen of the United States, however friendly to the Old Country, would stiffen his back at this challenge, which is insane in conception as well as impossible in execution. We were told Asquith was to explain it away, but this has not yet come about ; mean-

while it is reported that Germany, which is more in the thoughts of the average Englishman, is accelerating its rate of naval construction, and we must proceed faster if only to keep up with her. Yet I confess to be more hopeful about this German danger than about the other parts of my horoscope. There are too many uncertainties in it, too much bad temper in divers quarters, too much precipitancy in Kaiser Wilhelm, to be perfectly at ease; but still one feels that the predominant sense of Germany and the predominant sense of Great Britain alike make for peace.

When the estimates were introduced in March the concerted speeches of the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition threw the country into a panic. Germany, it was announced, had prepared new slips and had secretly accelerated her published programme of construction. The answer to such an attempt to steal a march upon us was to lay down no less than eight Dreadnoughts in the current financial year. It was afterwards explained by the German Government that, though one capital ship had been commenced before the usual time in order to occupy unemployed workmen, it would not be completed before the advertised date; but the impression of imminent danger to our maritime supremacy had entered too deeply into the national consciousness to be eradicated by verbal assurances from Berlin, even when they were accepted by the Government. To obviate the repetition of such a shock Sir Edward Grey proposed that the naval attachés of the two Powers should be allowed to see the actual stage of construction of the capital ships; but the proposal was declined by Germany. From this time onward the chances of a war began to be freely canvassed not only in naval and military clubs but in the lobbies and the market-place.

As the German menace waxed, the Cabinet proceeded to draw closer to France and Russia. King Edward had paid a visit to the Tsar in Reval in 1908, and the visit was returned in 1909. The brief period of hope in 1905 had been terminated by the forcible dissolution of the first Duma in the summer of 1906; and under the iron hand of Stolypin reaction had triumphed. Stories of wholesale executions

and even tortures floated over to England; and a booklet on the *Terror in Russia*, compiled by Prince Kropotkin, aroused indignation in Liberal and labour circles. It was argued that so long as the Russian despot was at open war with a large section of his subjects, the relations between the two Governments should be strictly official. To obtain and circulate accurate information about the internal condition of the country a Russian Committee was formed of which Courtney accepted the chairmanship. His standpoint was defined in letters to friends who advocated more vigorous action than he was prepared to take.

To G. H. Perris

April 10, 1909.—I was approached about a couple of months ago by G. M. Trevelyan, whose brother Charles had a large share in the first constitution of the Committee, to know whether I would consent to become its President. I gathered that the most active promoters of the Committee looked to Mr. Bernard Pares as the most authoritative and dispassionate observer of Russian political life, and relied upon his co-operation in obtaining trustworthy information as to what was going on. I said my attitude was one of great moderation. I sympathised with Russian growth and appreciated very keenly the difficulties attendant upon any change, and I felt pity rather than passion in respect to the action of the governing powers of Russia; in fact I was moved by goodwill towards all Russians who are really animated by the desire to improve the condition of their country, and I did not rule the Tsar out of this circle. It is upon this kind of basis that the Committee has been reconstructed and I have become its President. Now if I have understood the line of action of the Friends of Russian Freedom correctly, and I confess I have not followed it very closely, they are more committed to the promotion and even to the stimulation of definite proposals of change. I would not say they were revolutionary; but they are much more prompt in judgment and in condemnation and much more eager in assisting the overthrow rather than the development of existing institutions than the members of the Committee. The Committee would scarcely satisfy the Friends, while the Friends step forward with an audacity from which the Committee would shrink. May there not be room for both associations?

Though unwilling to oppose the Tsar's visit to Cowes, Courtney consented to sign a letter from the Russian Committee reminding the public of the internal conditions in Russia and expressing a hope that the Foreign Secretary would take the opportunity of uttering a friendly warning to the Tsar as to the evil effects of his policy on British opinion. It was a commission which nobody but Palmerston would have dared to execute; and Nicholas came and went without learning the strength of the resentment aroused in a friendly but freedom-loving people. At the end of the same year the Russian Committee published a pamphlet on Finland, after slight modifications to meet the scruples of the chairman; but the differences of opinion not only regarding the aims of Russia's rulers but also as to the proper work of the Committee made fruitful co-operation impossible, and after a year of considerable activity the members ceased to meet.

The European situation filled Courtney with growing apprehension; and in the autumn he swept the horizon with his telescope. Two articles, entitled Peace and War, were published in the *Contemporary Review* in November and December, and were reissued as a pamphlet early in 1910. The first deals with France and the United States, and opens with a discussion of the causes of the war of 1870. "The relations of France and Germany before the war reveal to us great forces acclaimed as irresistible in their action, others producing results which may be described as inevitable; while a minuter examination of details suggests particular moments of curving flexure when the inevitable was arrested or precipitated by the guiding wills of particular persons. No war, however powerful may be the forces moving towards its precipitation, can be pronounced inevitable till it has actually come to pass." War between England and France seemed on more than one occasion during the nineteenth century equally "inevitable"; yet it never came to pass, for reason and self-control arrested the avalanche. The same lesson emerges from the story of our relations with the United States. In the Trent crisis the supreme duty of curbing

national passion and mitigating occasions of irritation was forgotten; but the Queen and the Prince Consort softened the angry despatch. In the Venezuela crisis we had refused arbitration; but when America showed her teeth we agreed to arbitration and won. After Cleveland's Presidential term was over he published a vindication which revealed him as a simple, honest man, more or less unconscious of the offence he was exciting and of the imprudence he was committing. "It is from bad international tempers that outbreaks arise. It is upon fitful, intermittent, but repeated manifestations of such temper that predictions of inevitable conflicts are based. It is the everlasting duty of the wise to correct and prevent the temper thus threatening mischief."

The second article proceeded to apply the lessons of the first. Was there anything, he asked, to prevent an equally successful co-operation with German rulers and leaders of opinion in cherishing and deepening the feelings of personal friendship between the inhabitants? "Since the death of Campbell-Bannerman our Liberal Ministry has inclined to the Imperialist side; though its younger members give a promise of a return to a more international conception of foreign relations. So, though we are obliged to admit a change, we may believe that we have not travelled far in the wrong direction and we have hopes of recovery. Across the North Sea, on the other hand, the appearance of change is immense. Germany since 1870 is something quite different from before that great year. The ideas which are now predominant gradually obtained their ascendancy; but even now they have no universal or exclusive power. They keep their place not without a struggle; as they have waxed, so they may wane in authority. The change is the resultant not only of political but of industrial and commercial development. A certain slow satisfaction and sufficiency in the possession of strength is the characteristic of the German mind; not always qualified by the remembrance of what the rest of the world looks for in neighbourly conduct. The nation remains a spectacle of organised power. The Kaiser's most interesting personality works for peace; and if we, who watch his rapid evolutions with

sympathy and admiration, confess that he is in this fashion a peace-keeper, we must also recognise that, under changes of conditions apparently insufficient to justify the result, he might become the most effective voice of a nation in arms. Our attitude towards Germany is a curiously mixed expression of respect, jealousy and fear. We respect her strength; we are somewhat jealous of her overweening sufficiency; and we are a little afraid of the challenge this sufficiency might provoke. I do not believe anything of hostility exists towards us in the German mind. Not even a tendency of irritability, only a quiet resolution to have its own way in all lawful and honourable lines of action—I mean, of course, lawful in the German judgment. That is a feeling which can be kept friendly by friendly conduct. If we are careful not to give offence and not over-eager to take offence, we may rely on the maintenance of good temper inspiring the bulk of the German people. The Kaiser himself is animated by something much stronger than the quiet good nature I have attributed to his people. The materialism which got such a hold over German thought and culture seems losing a little of its paramountcy. The social democrats are the largest section of the voters, and Prince Bülow has ceased to be Chancellor because the Reichstag rejected his financial policy."

How could we be more friendly than we had shown ourselves? We could do much by more thorough-going acceptance of that doctrine of the open door which we all professed. The policy of Canadian preferences seemed ill-advised from the first. Our manufacturers and traders had gained very little, and they were not worth the pecuniary cost of the grudge which the differential treatment excited in Germany. We could not quarrel with the great development of her mercantile marine, and ships of war were apt to come into existence in support of ships of peace. The immunity of private property from capture at sea would weaken the reasoning which led the mercantile classes to support the continuous increase of the navy. A German could not but consent, whatever the cost, to go on building dreadnoughts to protect his mercantile marine when he

was told that, as the law now stood, it would be destroyed as soon as war began. Our continual talk about the two-Power standard provoked even more the building of ships of war. "Is it surprising that such a claim should provoke an answering resolution to build up a force sufficient to hold this threatening Power in check? We may be perfectly satisfied that we mean no harm to anybody by this claim, so pacific is our temper; but a foreigner may be excused if he does not feel an equal assurance of security. If we would save ourselves, if we would save civilisation, we must escape from this belief that no one can be trusted. We must go farther and ask ourselves seriously whether Germany is to be trusted. I myself do not believe in any German designs to act as a thief in the night. I am pretty confident that no man on a front bench in either House of Parliament entertains such an apprehension. A severe and even cold examination of our relation serves to show that there is no danger which a frank, honest, good-natured diplomacy, based on a ready acceptance of inevitable facts, could not remove. The root of the evil on our side is an obscure jealousy, which makes us anxious, nervous, fearful; and this jealousy simply strengthens the dogged determination of the Germans to go their own way. The jealousy of the Bagdad railway is as absurd as Palmerston's jealousy of the Suez Canal. The time is ripe for a statesman of power who should be able to meet the Kaiser on a platform of mutual confidence and establish relations of lasting peace. What is the secret of the incessant agitation that besets us for universal service, for Imperial defence, for a war-union of all our dominions, but a creeping sense that forces are growing about us with which we are doomed to come into passionate collision, and that we are already walking in darkness and in the shadow of death? From this gloomy outlook we may escape if we are content to advance abreast of others in the march of civilisation, without straining to maintain an overtopping superiority in physical resources which Nature and Time must deny us."

The thesis that neither the Kaiser nor his people were really hostile to England, and that the relations of the two

countries might be rendered friendly if not cordial by a change in the spirit of our policy, will seem to some readers, blinded by the glare of the subsequent conflagration, optimistic to the verge of folly. In the light of events it may be conceded that Courtney underestimated both the dangerous ferment of important sections of German opinion and the Pan-German arrogance which interpreted friendly advances as evidence of weakness. But was he not right in his conviction that there was still time for the forces of sanity and accommodation in both countries to avert a catastrophe? His belief was at any rate shared by the Cabinet, which, unknown to the public, reopened the discussion on armaments with better hope when the pacific Bethmann-Hollweg succeeded the slippery Bülow in the summer of 1909. The Chancellor stated that though the navy law determining the number of ships to be completed by 1918 could not be altered, the capital ships might be reduced in the earlier years and proportionately increased in the later. In return for their offer he asked for a signed agreement that neither country would attack the other, and that in the event of an attack on either signatory by a third Power or group of Powers, the other should remain neutral. The British Cabinet, however, declined to bind itself to neutrality, being apprehensive of the effect of such a pledge on the other members of the Triple Entente.

Courtney was always ready to welcome visitors from Germany or any other country; deeply convinced as he was of the value of personal intercourse for international harmony.

Journal

September 1909.—Professor Sieper of Munich to tea to discuss Anglo-German relations. A most attractive man, full of zeal for peace, but very practical and suggestive. He told us that in Germany the Peace Societies were ineffective. He said they are making great way with the commercial classes in seaports especially; but they had been frightened off by the accounts of the ruin which the right of capture of private property at sea would bring on them, and so supported the demands for the navy. He had lunched with Mr. Haldane and Sir E. Grey and talked to the roots of things.

About the same time a Kiel student called at Cheyne Walk to arrange for a visit of German undergraduates to England. The scheme received hearty support, and in the summer holidays of the following year a large party arrived in London. Courtney remained in town to welcome them at Cheyne Walk, and to preside at a lecture by Professor Sieper at University College on the relations of British and German culture. After some busy days in London the students visited Oxford and Cambridge and extended their journey to the great cities of the north. The visit left happy memories on both sides, which persisted till they were washed away in a sea of blood. Professor Sieper paid another visit to England in the following spring, and spoke to a distinguished audience at the Church House, at which the Lord Chancellor presided and Courtney reiterated his familiar plea that we must be prepared to take risks in order to secure the prize of confidence. The Professor continued to labour indefatigably at his task of reconciliation, and a year or two later had the pleasure of sending to his friends in Chelsea the first four volumes of a series on *The Culture of Modern England*, which was designed by the Editor to interpret British life and thought to his fellow-countrymen.

The confidential discussions on armaments between the British and German Governments were reopened in 1910, but were rudely interrupted in 1911. The Treaty of Algeciras, which reaffirmed the independence of Morocco, appeared to the uninitiated to settle one of the thorniest problems of diplomacy. But the world was not aware that in addition to a published agreement of 1904 secret treaties were signed by Great Britain, France and Spain, which were to come into operation "if the *status quo* can no longer be maintained," and provided that Morocco should be partitioned between France and Spain. With this compact in her pocket France felt strong enough to disregard the limitations of Algeciras. She was compelled by disturbances to occupy Udja on the Algerian frontier and Casablanca on the Atlantic coast, and it was soon obvious that her troops had come to stay. In 1908 a dangerous quarrel, arising out of the arrest of German deserters at Casablanca

was settled by the Hague tribunal. In 1909 France and Germany signed a joint Declaration professing themselves " firmly attached to the maintenance of the independence and integrity of the Shereefian Empire," Germany recognising the special political interests of France, while France undertook not to obstruct German commercial and industrial interests. This economic partnership, however, led to perpetual friction ; and in the spring of 1911 a French expedition to Fez, on the ground that the Sultan was unable to defend himself or the European residents against insurgent tribes, was notified to the Powers. The news of the expedition caused indignation in Berlin, where the danger to Europeans was dismissed as a diplomatic fiction. " I advise you to be cautious," remarked the Chancellor to the French Ambassador. " If you are once in Fez," echoed the Foreign Secretary, " you will be unable to leave. If the power of the Sultan needs French bayonets to support it, we shall consider that the Act of Algeciras is broken, and we shall resume our liberty of action." The threats were unheeded, and the troops entered Fez, to which Germany promptly responded by despatching a gunboat to Agadir.

Sir Edward Grey, who had publicly expressed his approval of the expedition to the Moorish capital, was indignant at the German riposte, and told the German Ambassador that he took so serious a view of the matter that it must be discussed by the Cabinet. Next day, July 4, after the meeting, he explained to Wolff-Metternich that a new situation had been created, and that Great Britain could not recognise any fresh arrangements that might be concluded without us. A similar declaration was made by the Prime Minister in Parliament. Though the public knew nothing of the details of the controversy, the air was filled with electricity. The main outlines of the situation stood out in clear relief. France and Germany were at loggerheads, and Great Britain had taken her stand at the side of her friend for better or worse. Courtney watched the gathering storm with grave anxiety, and on July 18 he asked for copies of any treaties embodying " our treaty obligations to

France in connection with Morocco." "I am told that the Return would be difficult to make; but others tell me that I can do it for myself. In any case the nation ought to know where it stood and to what it was committed." The Government replied that our obligations to France were recorded in the treaty of 1904 and the treaty of Algeciras. The secret treaty, needless to say, did not figure in the list. Three days later the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered a speech at the Mansion House threatening Germany with war if she treated Britain "as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations." The momentous declaration, which had been drawn up by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer without submitting it to the Cabinet, aroused the same passionate resentment in Germany as the Kaiser's Tangier oration of 1905 had provoked in France and England. It was regarded as a wanton interference in a matter which concerned France and Germany alone, and as convincing evidence that Great Britain was as eager to thwart the colonial and commercial ambitions of the one as she was to encourage those of the other. Courtney was stirred to anger by the Mansion House menace, and made no effort to conceal his disapproval of its author.

Journal

July 28.—Garden party at the Asquiths'. Before L. joined me I had run across Mr. Lloyd George, who greeted me warmly and said "I never see you and Lord Courtney now; you never ask me." I naturally at once invited him, and he accepted for himself and his wife to dine with us the following Friday. At that moment L. came up and I told him Mr. Lloyd George was going to dine with us on Friday. He scowled most fiercely and, exclaiming "I am very angry," tucked me under his arm and walked me off and away. To my question what possessed him to behave so, he said, "You don't know what that man has been saying and what the result may be. I am greatly troubled." I was not surprised when a note came from L. G. saying he found he had an engagement that Friday.[1]

[1] Three years later, on a visit to Cheyne Walk, he said laughingly, "I dared not have come after the way Lord Courtney looked at me."

The negotiations between Kiderlen-Wächter and Jules Cambon at Berlin dragged on through the summer, one crisis following another, while the press of the three countries played its usual part in fanning every spark into a flame. Courtney watched the agitating drama from the north of Scotland, whence he despatched a warning appeal to the Foreign Secretary.

To Sir Edward Grey

September 5, 1911.—Two or three days ago my wife had a letter from Fischer Williams giving an account of the present German feeling towards us which, after some hesitation, I have thought you ought to see. I daresay you know the writer. He stood for Oxford City at the last Election and is a very level-headed fellow. Taken in conjunction with the most reasonable letter of Bernstein's in last Saturday's *Nation* it is too clear that the development of the national temper in Germany makes it almost certain that patriotism would get the better of all peace principles in the event of a conflict between us. Ramsay Macdonald's speech in the House gives the same warning on our side, so that the situation is highly dangerous. I don't think war is likely, but we are playing with it too much and I would beseech you to think whether in the near future some occasion might not be found for saying or doing something on our side to remove the bad estimate of our policy which is spreading throughout Germany. I cannot in a short letter go into details and I do not wish to trouble your holiday unnecessarily; but you may perhaps let me say that the root of danger outside the Foreign Office (if not within it) lies in a jealousy of German expansion, which must be got rid of, since it is a jealousy of an inevitable fact. We have got rid of it in reference to the United States, though American pretensions are not always inoffensive in form; and we must get rid of it in reference to Germany. That Germany desires to acquire and is bound to acquire coaling stations here and there is one of the phases of the inevitable. It depends upon the manifestation of our temper in respect of such acquisitions whether they would remain merely mercantile stations or would be converted into naval bases.

From Sir Edward Grey

September 8, 1911.—I return the enclosures in your letter. When there is time and opportunity I hope something of what

you desire may be realised; but Morocco is the worst ground that the Germans could choose, for it bristles with difficulty. I cannot well say more at this moment except that I hope a settlement will be reached between Germany and France that will make things easier. I hoped it had been so in 1909; after this second settlement, if one be reached, I hope there will be no more misunderstandings.

The signature of a treaty between France and Germany on November 4 ceding a slice of the French Congo and surrendering the right of pre-emption of the Belgian Congo in return for the renunciation of German claims in Morocco ended the acute stage of the crisis. The agitating events of the summer were reviewed in a full-dress debate in the House of Commons on November 27, when Sir Edward Grey defended his policy. On the following day, in moving for papers in the House of Lords, Courtney, who had listened to the speech of the Foreign Secretary, delivered the most important pronouncement of his later years, challenging the policy of entangling alliances and continental commitments against which he had raised his voice ever since the conclusion of the Japanese treaty.

The Anglo-French treaty of 1904, he began, had been welcomed by every one except Lord Rosebery, who only objected on the score of danger to Gibraltar. "We hailed it with satisfaction, for it was not to stand alone." We proceeded in like manner to clear up our relations with Russia, and to a large extent with the United States. Why should not the same happy result have been achieved with Germany? Our treaty with France could not affect the right of any other Power in Morocco, and the Treaty of Algeciras expressly stated that any earlier arrangements which conflicted with it were superseded. That Act ought to have been regarded as the dominant charter, and any attempted change in Morocco ought to have been pursued with a single eye to that treaty. Unfortunately the conduct of our Foreign Office led to the view that the Act of Algeciras was much less regarded than our obligation under the Treaty of 1904. Directly our friends in France took any action leading to an interference with the integrity and independence

of Morocco, we should have pointed out that such action would bring questions from other signatories, and provoke complaints we could not withstand. But we allowed the matter to drift and only woke up when the *Panther* was sent to Agadir. Since our treaty obligations were to maintain the integrity of Morocco, we ought to have been co-partners with Germany in protesting against an alteration in the status of Morocco to which the other Powers were not parties. Our interests pointed in the same direction as our treaty obligations; for our interest was to insist on the open door.

After these introductory criticisms the speaker passed in review the recent negotiations. Sir Edward Grey's statement on July 4 that the Cabinet regarded the despatch of the *Panther* as a new departure invited some response and some explanation, which unhappily was not forthcoming; and it was greatly to be regretted that Germany did not at once clearly state the real intention of the act. But the language of the Foreign Secretary to the German Ambassador on July 21, when he complained that Germany's demands were unacceptable, was also regrettable. "I was not surprised at such language. It was the language of France, not ours. How could we say what was unacceptable? We could only do so by looking through French spectacles and making ourselves partisans of France. The Ambassador reported to his Government and received a reply; but before it arrived the Chancellor of the Exchequer raised a shrill outcry of slighted self-importance. He should have said that as Morocco was an international question, any agreement between France and Germany must come before the Concert. Owing to the Mansion House speech the German declaration that she contemplated no acquisition in Morocco had to be treated as confidential, and for the first time we were in real peril of something like a warlike feeling springing up between the two nations. I never shared the extreme anxiety of those who thought we might be at war next day; but we were in a very bad situation because we had forgotten our proper position, and instead of being, with the other Powers, protectors of Morocco under the Act of Algeciras, we had become partisans of France. Now the

thing is over, and the German Chancellor says there is a clean slate. But we have not secured the clean slate. The Foreign Secretary has made our friendship with France exclusive, and seems to hold that it is impossible to establish a cordial friendship with Germany. Why does he not make the offer? His conception is a divided Europe. He seems to regard as impossible the notion of a unity of Christendom, a family of nations, a concert of Europe."

The lesson of the last few months is that our foreign policy should no longer be inspired by that notion of the balance of power which has been the bane of successive generations. We want a new conception of international duty, a foreign policy based on the federation of the Powers in one body, not in two camps. The main principle of Lord Salisbury's foreign policy was the maintenance of the Concert. We sometimes fretted that it moved slowly. It always will move slowly. But the Concert of Europe is a guarantee of peace compared with which your calculations of the relative strength of this or that combination are idle and frivolous. It is to a European concert, and to that alone, that we can look for a restoration of right feeling in European politics. It is a matter of pain and grief that the Foreign Secretary, with all his charm of personality and all his gifts, should be apparently dead to this conception. What was his attitude last night? It was cold, deadly, correct. I am sorry I have to speak so firmly, but I think the occasion requires very plain speaking. The greater our respect for his character, the more are we bound to express our dissent from the policy which we trace not only in his words but in every deed of his official career, and we are bound to express a hope that that false conception of foreign policy may disappear from the councils of the nation."

These sledge-hammer blows roused the Leader of the House to a vigorous defence of his colleague. "I listened to the speech with the most profound regret. I deplore it. I wish it could be forgotten." But in repudiating the accuracy of his description of Sir Edward Grey's policy, Lord Morley failed to rebut the argument that loyal observance of the Act of Algeciras forbade us to support French

claims and actions which conflicted both with its letter and its spirit. Courtney's speech impressed its hearers as the greatest of his utterances in the House of Lords. Sketch-writers in the Liberal press were surprised at the language of Lord Morley, whose general agreement with his friend's outlook was well known; and it was believed in many quarters that loyalty to his colleague led him further in defence of the Foreign Office than subsequent reflection would approve. The passage at arms in no way interfered with a friendship which was equally prized on both sides, and a few days later the gladiators met as usual in cordial converse. Neither of them could foresee the tragic hour when the Minister's resignation was to give expression to his disapproval of the entanglements which Courtney had so vigorously denounced.

The speech brought a sheaf of grateful letters. "You seem to have been the only one of our politicians," wrote Mr. G. M. Trevelyan, "who thought fit to say what I believe half or more than half the nation thinks at heart." The Editor of *Le Petit Journal* asked him to summarise his position in a letter for publication in the columns of the most widely circulated of French newspapers.

To the Editor of "Le Petit Journal"

December 4, 1911.—I am very much flattered by your desire to receive a brief statement of the argument I submitted to the House of Lords last week. I criticised the action of our Foreign Secretary in allowing the Treaty of 1904 between Great Britain and France to be perverted from an act of pure friendship into one of exclusive regard becoming or tending to become an alliance against others. I was one of those who hailed the Treaty with the greatest delight as removing occasions of difference between this country and your own, and I made it all the more welcome because I thought it might serve as a pattern for similar treaties with other nations. It was in fact followed by a Treaty with Russia removing differences between that country and this. The action of our Government in the recent negotiations between France and Germany on the subject of Morocco converted the Treaty of 1904 into an obligation to support France against Germany, and the Treaty instead of promoting the unity of

nations became an occasion of division and of opposition. This was all the more regrettable because the Act of Algeciras, which was agreed upon two years after the Treaty of 1904, was a declaration on the part of all the nations of Europe that the independence and integrity of Morocco were matters of common concern, and the limited agreement of 1904 between France and Great Britain was so far superseded by this international compact. Our Foreign Secretary seemed to have forgotten how we had bound ourselves with the other Powers of Europe to treat the status of Morocco as a matter of common interest, whilst he amplified the pledge of diplomatic assistance given in 1904 into something very near a guarantee of material help. I remain and shall always remain a firm friend of France and of the French people, but my paramount desire is to bring the French nation into the family of nations, to maintain and strengthen the European Concert, to foster and develop among the Governments of the Continent a moral authority rooted in mutual respect and powerful enough to be a restraining influence on the jealousies and divisions that are too easily excited. Our Foreign Secretary said in his speech in the House of Commons that our friendship with France had gained force since 1904 through the spirit of tolerance and good will which it had made habitual between us. The lesson of experience thus afforded us might surely induce him to adopt a new conception of foreign policy. In all our relations tolerance and good will might take the place of jealousy and distrust. Instead of a delusive pursuit of a balance of power, mocking us with the instability of its uncertain combinations, we might turn to the larger purpose of bringing all the nations together into a league of friendship. I do not believe this aim to be fanciful and quixotic. It was in fact for many years the main principle of the foreign policy of our most respected statesmen, and I only ask the men of to-day to revert to the wisdom of a former generation.

Shortly after the Morocco speech Courtney accepted the Presidency of a short-lived "Foreign Policy Committee," founded by Professor Hobhouse and other Liberals who agreed with the general trend of his argument. The statement of the objects for which it stood offers a concise summary of the views of its President.

1. To oppose the conversion of friendly understandings with foreign countries into working alliances, as illustrated by our recent relations with France and Russia, and thereby to vindicate

for this country a free hand in dealing with international questions in accordance with its own interests and sympathies.

2. To reassert the traditional sympathy of this country with the causes of national freedom and constitutional government abroad; and to advocate the free use of the resources of diplomacy in support of such causes.

3. To advocate such a friendly approach to the German Government as may serve to discover a basis of practical agreement.

4. To advocate greater publicity as to foreign affairs, and fuller Parliamentary control of the main lines of policy and of all important agreements concluded with other Governments.

After the outburst of fury in Germany at the spectacle of Great Britain standing in shining armour at the side of France, it was obvious that the situation must be boldly handled if the guns were not to go off by themselves. The Cabinet was no less anxious to avoid war than Courtney, and at the suggestion of the Kaiser Lord Haldane was despatched to Berlin at the opening of 1912 for a frank and friendly discussion of the suspicions which poisoned the relations of the two countries. Lord Haldane reported to the Cabinet that the Chancellor was earnestly working for peace, that the influence of Tirpitz was dangerously powerful, and that the Kaiser was torn between his two counsellors. His advice was to strengthen the moderates by a generous recognition of Germany's commercial ambitions, while preparing the army and navy for battle in the event of the firebrands gaining the upper hand. When the House of Lords met for the King's speech Lord Haldane came up to Courtney and told him that he was well satisfied with the result of his mission. Spade-work was now needed if the good seed was to ripen to harvest.

From Lord Haldane (to Lady Courtney)

February 12.—Thank you for a very kind letter. All that can be said is that the air appears to be clear now, and our business is to keep it so and try to make the plants grow in the sunshine. I think your movement has now a really increased chance. What has to be done is to produce such a current of public opinion in both countries as will make the work of the two Governments

easy. This result has yet to be accomplished. I am not sure that the task of the German Government is not greater than ours. But Bethmann-Hollweg is a very large-minded and good man, and I have faith in his capacity. A great deal of ground has now to be traversed, but he understands our difficulties as we do his. The more expressions of friendliness come from this side the less burdensome will be his task.

With the Haldane mission and the socialist triumph at the General Election in Germany the threatening cloud seemed at last to have lifted; and Courtney threw himself eagerly into the work of the Anglo-German Friendship Society, of which Lord Avebury was President and Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador to Berlin from 1896 to 1909, were the leading spirits. A similar organisation was established at the same time in Germany by Professor Sieper. "The events of last summer," he declared at a meeting at Rugby while Lord Haldane was in Berlin, "made too many Germans feel that England would not permit the natural growth of a great nation, and that war in the future was inevitable. We wish to dispel that feeling, and to show that this country is not bent on thwarting her and hampering her development. We promised diplomatic support to France in pursuance of a peaceful policy of police supervision on the borders of Morocco, and in the development of its material resources subject to the demand of equal facilities for other parties. This was our pledge, not armed assistance." A few days later he expressed his satisfaction at the result of the Haldane mission. The nation must now step out and assert its friendliness. We complained of the press, but the press was what we made it. We must rid ourselves of distrust and feel that the strength of Germany was not necessarily a peril to us. It was a natural and legitimate development of Germany's carrying trade that she should want coal depots in different parts of the world. "Begin with good will in your own heart, and you will develop good will elsewhere. If we reveal our friendship with them, we shall find they will reciprocate, and this terrible cloud will pass away." After prolonged discussion conducted, as the Prime Minister informed Parlia-

ment, " in a spirit of perfect frankness and friendship," the Governments once again failed to agree on a formula of British neutrality; and the failure to some extent revived the feeling of hopelessness which had prevailed in the autumn of 1911. Courtney, however, continued to preach his gospel of individual effort and responsibility.

To Professor Stein

May 1.—I readily join in a greeting of peace from England to the " Nord und Sud," regretting only that we cannot compel peace. The painful puzzle of the international position between Germany and Britain is that both sides desire peace and yet both are full of alarms of war. Where does the fault lie? We blame the newspapers, but newspapers are what their readers make them. We blame governments, but governments are as people choose them. It would seem to follow that if newspapers and governments go wrong, we of the people are to blame for their faults. Anyhow I think that this is our safest moral that peace rests upon us and upon each of us. Let us be incessant in vigilance and in activity to clear ourselves of the jealousies which support misunderstandings and breed wars.

When it was finally found impossible to agree on a formula of neutrality, Sir Edward Grey defined the obligations of Great Britain to France in a confidential letter to the French Ambassador on November 22. At the same time the Cabinet turned to a discussion with Germany of the concrete territorial and commercial issues which had proved so effective in recent years in removing the hostility of France and Russia. The construction and control of the Bagdad railway and the delimitation of spheres of interest in the Portuguese colonies were amicably discussed, and an agreement was initialled in the summer of 1914. The relations between the two countries were further improved by their co-operation in limiting the area of conflict during the Balkan wars. But meanwhile the feud between the Teuton and the Slav grew fiercer. The increase of the German army after the defeat of Turkey, the capital levy of fifty millions for military purposes in Germany, the return of France to Three Years' service, the conclusion of a Franco-

Russian naval Convention, and the despatch of General Liman von Sanders to Constantinople, were so many portents in the darkening sky. An official visit to Paris in April 1914 by the King and Queen, accompanied by the Foreign Secretary, confirmed France in her conviction that the two countries were for practical purposes allies, and that in the event of a conflict with Germany the whole strength of the British Empire would be thrown on her side.

Courtney, like other men, rejoiced at the Anglo-German *détente*; and in the middle of July a leading member of the Cabinet, lunching at Cheyne Walk, reported that the relations of the two countries were better than they had been for years. Even in France the outlook seemed a little clearer. When a leader in the *Times* in the middle of June deplored Ribot's defeat in the Chamber as weakening the confidence of Europe in the determination of France to maintain the place that belonged to her among the Great Powers, he replied (June 13) that the vote meant nothing of the kind. The Chamber had been recently chosen at a general election, and the incident showed that the country recoiled from the ambitious plans which the Three Years' Law was intended to support. The question of the lost provinces was not forgotten, but the French people had realised that its solution had to be approached by different methods. This conversion was an escape from the nightmare under which Western Europe had been labouring. France had no desire to fight, and there would be no war between Russia and Germany. It was an optimistic reading of a situation which contained more explosive elements than the writer imagined. A fortnight later the Serajevo murders applied the match to the European powder magazine, and provided Austria with the pretext which she had lacked in 1913 for settling old scores with Serbia at whatever cost to herself and the world.

CHAPTER XXIV

ARMAGEDDON

DURING the breathless week which followed the despatch of the ultimatum to Serbia, Courtney sorrowfully watched the world rushing to its doom, and devoted his energies to working for British neutrality in the approaching struggle. Liberal and Labour opinion was strongly against intervention ; and the Ministerial press, while condemning the brutal action of Austria, scouted the notion of allowing the British Empire to be dragged into war at the chariot wheels of the Tsar. But the Cabinet was divided as it had been divided in 1911 ; and the strident voice of the *Times*, proclaiming the gospel of the Balance of Power, reverberated through Europe, strengthening the determination of Russia to take up the challenge which the Teutonic Empires had rashly hurled at Belgrade and St. Petersburg.

Courtney spent a week-end with his brother-in-law at Parmoor ; and the Bank Holiday newspaper, with its fateful tidings, arrived too late for him to reach Westminster in time for the historic pronouncement of the Foreign Secretary. When the House of Lords met later in the afternoon Lord Crewe merely referred his hearers to the official declaration in the House of Commons ; and Courtney's brief protest against being committed to a policy which he had not heard explained was received with cries of impatience. The speech of Sir Edward Grey, with its startling revelations of our obligations of honour to France and its hint that Belgium might be attacked at any moment, convinced its hearers that a declaration of war against Germany was only a matter of

hours. Acting, however, on the principle that no conflict is inevitable till it has begun, the quickly-formed Neutrality Committee sent one of its members to Cheyne Walk on the Tuesday morning to ask for advice ; and Courtney promptly dictated a letter to be signed by a few influential names and sent to the Foreign Secretary and the press. " Sir Edward Grey's speech marks a new departure in the international situation ; but we would urge that it should make us all more strenuous to preserve the British neutrality which is not yet lost. Sir Edward Grey dwelt on two points—first the necessity of defending the north-east coast of France, which has been left unprotected by the French fleet, and next our obligations of interest and of duty to maintain the neutrality of Belgium. On both these questions the German Government has made advances which the Foreign Secretary puts aside as insufficient, but which may not have been made as the last word. The neutrality of Belgium has up to this moment of writing not been infringed ; the French coast has not been attacked. We cannot but hope that the Government and the Foreign Secretary have not exhausted the resources of diplomacy, and that an effort may still be made further to examine and secure modifications of the propositions of Germany, so that an agreement may be reached on these two points and British neutrality preserved."

While the manifesto was being drafted the Cabinet, having heard that German troops had crossed the Belgian frontier, despatched an ultimatum to Berlin ; and the belated appeal appeared in certain Liberal papers on Wednesday morning, signed by Lords Bryce, Courtney, Loreburn, Shuttleworth and Farrer, in the same columns as the news that the British Empire was involved in the greatest struggle in its history.

To L. T. Hobhouse

August 5, 1914.—The difference between to-day and yesterday is infinite. There is nothing now to be done. You need not fret over the thought that you ought to be back in London. And it would be in vain for us to try to stop the sending of an expedi-

tionary force, if it has been entertained, as I fear it has. It is an illustration of the overwhelming madness of the hour. Our last touch yesterday was a letter which appears in the *Manchester Guardian* this morning, which was telegraphed down to Lord Loreburn at Deal and secured his signature. It was sent to the *Times* and returned this morning as having come too late since the Prime Minister had spoken.

During the week of agony the Cabinet had been almost equally divided between interventionists and neutralists; but the unprovoked violation of Belgian neutrality rallied the great majority of Ministers, as it rallied the great majority of the nation, behind the policy of instant and vigorous action. Lord Morley and John Burns detested the attack on a small neutral state as unreservedly as their colleagues; but they were dissatisfied with the diplomacy of the Foreign Secretary, and their resignations were announced in the newspapers on the same day as the ultimatum to Germany.

From Lord Morley

August 6.—I knew that you and I would once more be together, and this is far worse than anything that has gone before. You are right that my withdrawal has brought me no "solid comfort." The scene is too hateful, and the crash of all common sense too ruinous. As for personal incidents, they make a sorry tale, and the strain of the last two days of it all was at some moments really lacerating. But my nerve was good and did not shake, which is a blessing. I now feel a trifle dilapidated, and long for silence. So we shall try to steer for northern Scotland as soon as we can—perhaps Saturday. I have no inclination to throw stones at certain colleagues who remain, for I hold to my old rule borrowed from some Frenchman—"if you would love mankind, you must not expect too much from them." I don't mention names, but one at least is a sore disappointment. I wonder where you two are going. Hell is ablaze in every quarter.

Few public men were found to maintain that after the wanton attack on Belgium it was possible for England to stand aloof, and Courtney was not among them. His complaint against the Government was that by drifting into a secret and unwritten but morally binding engagement

with France—herself tied hand and foot to Russia—it had sacrificed its liberty of action and lost the power of effective mediation when the hurricane arose. Nowhere was the *White Book*, which told the story of Sir Edward Grey's desperate efforts to preserve peace, studied with more anxious care than in Cheyne Walk. But, whereas most readers rose from its perusal with the conviction that the Foreign Secretary had done everything in human power to avert war, Courtney was dismayed to find that an eleventh-hour offer had not received the consideration to which he deemed it entitled. Here is the despatch:

Sir Edward Grey to Sir Edward Goschen

August 1.—He (the German Ambassador) asked me whether, if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality, we would engage to remain neutral. I (Sir Edward Grey) replied that I could not say that; our hands were still free and we were considering what our attitude should be. All I could say was that our attitude would be determined largely by public opinion here, and that the neutrality of Belgium would appeal very strongly to public opinion here. I did not think we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone. The Ambassador pressed me as to whether I could not formulate conditions upon which we would remain neutral. He even suggested that the integrity of France and her colonies might be guaranteed. I said that I felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar terms, and I could only say that we must keep our hands free.

To C. P. Scott

August 8, 1914.—Has your attention been called to Despatch No. 123? Edward Grey did not allude to it in his speech, nor did Asquith, nor did Crewe. Yet it shews that on this day week Lichnowsky made advances, almost offers, to Grey to respect the neutrality of Belgium and the integrity of France and her colonies, in fact to give up all that lay in dispute, and even asked what were our conditions if we would only formulate them. This despatch is a terrible document; if you try to realise how its substance will be viewed by German public men to-day and by the sober judgment of all men ten or twenty years hence, one feels overwhelmed. It is painful to break silence, it is painful

to keep silence. I think something may be said on the matter on the notice for the adjournment in the Commons on Monday. Anyhow it is well that you should realise the document and its bearings. You and the *Guardian* have been doing splendidly.

From C. P. Scott

August 9, 1914.—I had indeed noticed the despatch of which you write and was shocked by it. I trust attention will, as you anticipate, be called to it to-morrow on the motion for adjournment. Ponsonby would do it best. Some explanation seems absolutely needed. And what are we to think of Asquith's "infamous proposal" when it was not the final proposal but only the first suggestion leading up to an incomparably larger one which he ignores? If you are writing a letter to the *Times* will you kindly send it also to us?

From C. P. Scott

August 13.—Would it not be possible to get a personal explanation from Grey, so as to be sure that at least you know his case? I don't think he could refuse to speak with you on the matter. I don't even believe he would refuse me. It is a case of honour and fair-dealing. On the face of it it looks as though there had been deliberate suppression by him and Mr. Asquith in their speeches of a vitally important fact. Grey is an honourable man. He can't sit down under this imputation which is becoming wide-spread. He must explain. No doubt the truth is we were committed to France, Belgium or no Belgium; but that would not justify the suppression or falsification of vital facts in relation to Belgium whose case was made the ostensible ground of war.

Courtney replied that he had drifted too far apart from the Foreign Secretary to approach him with any prospect of success; but he had just heard that the Foreign Office defence was that Lichnowsky's offer was personal, not official.[1] The real meaning of the despatch, he continued to believe, was that Great Britain had long been virtually

[1] In November 1916 Bethmann-Hollweg declared that Lichnowsky's offer was authorised. If Sir Edward Grey was in doubt, he ought to have asked the Ambassador at the time.

committed to active support of France in a conflict with Germany into which she might be drawn by her obligations to Russia.

A few days after the outbreak of hostilities the Union of Democratic Control was founded by a group of men who traced the development of the catastrophe in large measure to the old traditions of secret and class diplomacy in their own and other countries.

To E. D. Morel

August 25.—Your letter was forwarded to me in the New Forest where I was staying for a week-end with Lord Welby. I have no great faith in any machinery for strengthening Parliamentary control and through Parliament the national control of our foreign policy. I see no real means of reaching this except through the development of knowledge and of independence of judgment and of action on the part of the people and of members, though I have always thought that through proportional representation we should give members a stronger foothold and so protect them from the inevitable weakness in which they are swept away at times of crisis. I have never seen my way to any considerable or indeed to any appreciable result from the establishment of a Foreign Affairs Committee, like that which exists in the Senate of the United States. The exclusion of the executive government of America from Congress makes an essential difference between the institutions of the two countries, and a Foreign Office Committee here would have no functions parallel to those of the Committee of the Senate. I have always looked with the greatest distrust on the establishment of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Taking it as it has existed apart from the possibility of the effective introduction of colonial representatives, I have seen in its operation a weakening of Cabinet power in the face of expert and professional authority.

The past was irrevocable, and no one was more deeply convinced than Courtney that a German victory would enthrone militarism for generations. After a brief holiday of three weeks in Scotland he returned home during the breathing space between the glad tidings of the Marne and the long-drawn agony of the first battle of Ypres. His old " Pro-Boer " comrades were divided.

Journal

November 19.—Last night we dined with the Bryces. Lord Morley the only other guest. The latter entirely opposed to the war and to the immediate steps which led to it. Lord Bryce confessed to the change in his attitude. He had been up to August 3 dead against war; but Belgium and the subsequent conduct of Germany there and what he had got to know about Germany's aims had made him feel war was inevitable.

The moral shock of the war was felt no less poignantly by Germans who had laboured long and steadfastly for peace and goodwill than by their English comrades.

From Professor Sieper

November 15.—You can well believe me, dear Lady Courtney, how deeply England's declaration of war has affected me. I was many days as if stunned, and it took some time until I was able to come back to my self-possession. Since years I have done all in my power to have England and Germany understand each other, and with one blow I saw all my work destroyed. You remember that I was in London this spring. At that time I had an opportunity thoroughly to discuss politics with Lord Haldane and other leading men of the Government, and from all I could gather I considered it impossible that a war could ever break out between Germany and England. You can imagine how I and all men in Germany who have worked to help the two countries to keep on good terms, are blamed now as unfortunate fools. We may be thankful if we are not directly branded as traitors. Our words remain unheard in the roaring storm, and the bitterness, particularly against the English Government, who are blamed for falling upon us at a time when we were in such a difficult position, is so strong that even the newspapers that always published our articles now hesitate, if not refuse, to do so. Still we must not give up all hopes. You know the saying of your great Chelsea neighbour: "Work and despair not." I cannot live without believing that finally a time will come when the international difficulties will be able to be solved through other means than brutal force. I should not like to finish this letter without thanking you again for all your kindness and friendship which you have shewn towards me in the last years. The news about your Emergency Committee were a great comfort to me and I had them published in a German paper.

To Professor Sieper (from Lady Courtney)

December 6, 1914.—Your letter gave me great pleasure for it brought memories of the kindly past and helps me to believe that "love is not dead" between our country and yours and may revive in the future. Already there are signs in the Societies formed here and in Berlin to help Germans and English in distress. As for the terrible present it is more like a Greek tragedy than anything else, a huge blindness and misunderstanding for which no one nation or person is quite responsible. It seems to me that the great majority of your countrymen, as of mine, earnestly believe that they are fighting for their national existence and freedom to live their own lives. Surely they could secure this if they stopped killing each other and set their wisest men to negotiating for a just settlement.

Nearly two years later Courtney received a message from Professor Förster, the bravest of German Intellectuals. "Please tell Lord Courtney that I am a friend of Professor Sieper. The conflict of the nations, whose peaceful co-operation was the aim of all his efforts, struck his heart to death. Please tell him this, and say that I took up Sieper's mission in Germany." A less distinguished but no less earnest worker for peace gave Courtney an opportunity of uprooting one of the poisonous weeds which grow in the rank soil of war.

From Pastor Umfrid

November 16, 1914.—I do not know if you remember me. In 1908 I was your guest at the banquet which you gave to the Congress of Peace. Perhaps you will know me as one of the leaders of the German Peace Movement who, in better times, have done a good deal towards International Understanding. We in Germany hear again and again of the barbarous treatment to which the German civil and war prisoners are said to be submitted in England. I am confident that the better part of your people are not only innocent of the way of making the prisoners suffer for what they have not caused, but that they would strongly protest against it if they had the necessary insight into facts. May I now not hope that, considering the great influence you have, you will call forth a movement in favour of a better treatment of prisoners in your country? The letter of a non-commissioned

officer of the reserve which has reached Germany and was published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* gives proof of the misery of the German war-prisoners. (A harrowing story of prison life at Richmond follows.) I can give you the assurance that those Englishmen who are in German confinement are treated with humanity, and that we Germans are far from being guilty of brutal acts towards your countrymen.

To Pastor Otto Umfrid

November 26.—I am glad you believe that the better part of our people would protest against any bad treatment of our prisoners, if they knew what it really was. I am continually checking my acquaintances for repeating stories of the atrocities committed by your soldiers, which stories, I hear from visitors in your country, are repeated almost in the same words, and with the same confidence in their truth, as illustrations of the atrocities committed by English soldiers. I would most earnestly pray that all of us might receive some of the spirit of St. Paul's great chapter in his First Epistle to the Corinthians and put aside the greediness to believe all things evil of our enemies. Turning to the letter which appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, I find on inquiry that no such camp exists or has ever existed at Richmond. I would not pretend that there have not been many hardships endured by prisoners in this country. We had not barracks or camps or buildings ready for the reception of the numbers that were interned, especially when a great and, in my judgment, most unnecessary addition was made to the number of prisoners through the extensive incarceration of civilian enemies dwelling among us. A Committee was early formed, largely under the influence of the Society of Friends, to look after German and Austrian aliens stranded in this country, and a deputation from this Committee has recently visited all or nearly all the camps in Great Britain and the Isle of Man. I have the report before me, but it is too voluminous to send. You will perhaps accept from me the statement that whilst the camps are found to be unequal in their fitness and arrangements and in some cases are overcrowded, the Commandants are without exception described as considerate, careful and kindly in their treatment of those under their charge, doing much spontaneously to improve the condition of the camps and readily listening to all practicable suggestions for their amendment. Further improvements may be confidently expected. I hope you will be able to agree with me that there is a living desire here to prevent any aggravation of the unavoid-

able penalties of imprisonment and that we ought not to be condemned as we have been by the public opinion of Germany. I do what I can to prevent unjust judgments here, and I am sure you will have done and be doing the same in your country.

From Pastor Umfrid

December 7.—I am very happy to have got your kind letter, and shall take care to spread the comforting explanations which it contains. Also I am happy to feel the correspondence of feelings and am proud of the friendship of such a noble man.[1]

At the opening of 1915, during the lull between the first and second battles of Ypres, the British and German Governments took steps which infused fresh exasperation into the conflict. As it became evident that the war would be prolonged, each country determined to supplement its military operations by starving the inhabitants of its antagonist, regardless of the rights and interests of neutrals. Declaring that we could not be strangled in a network of juridical niceties, the Prime Minister repudiated the traditional distinction between food destined for a military base and for the civilian population, and proclaimed that food for any part of Germany would be treated as absolute contraband. Germany, on her side, announced the blockade of all our coasts. Both measures were frankly dictated by "necessity," the exacting goddess to whose shrine all belligerents with greater or less compunction wend their way. In a long letter, written before the final decision of the Government, which was refused by the *Times* and published in the *Manchester Guardian* on February 26, Courtney protested against "the sacrifice of our own past and of the future to the pressure of a violent passing temptation." His legal scruples were confirmed by what appeared to him the failure of the policy; and in June he asked for reconsideration in a second letter, which the *Times* likewise declined to publish. The stoppage of food imports on neutral vessels, he pointed out, was claimed by the German

[1] When Pastor Umfrid's son was soon after taken prisoner Lady Courtney visited him at his father's request.

Government as necessitating and justifying unlimited submarine warfare, had seriously damaged our relations with the United States and other neutrals, and had produced no practical result. The argument was summarised in a letter to the Prime Minister.

To H. H. Asquith

June 11, 1915.—The food blockade of Germany has failed of practical effect. The evidence is cumulative and overwhelming, but see notably the recent letters of " A Neutral " in the *Times*. There is no scarcity of food, and the threat has bound Germany more tightly together. On the other hand, it was a reactionary step on our part, reversing a policy steadily pursued and culminating in the Declaration of London. It has embarrassed our relations with neutrals, especially with the United States. Is it too late to retrace our steps? The new Government has through Balfour abandoned the policy of special treatment of submarine prisoners. The Admiralty has apparently silently dropped the advice to the merchant shipping to run up false colours. The steps thus retraced are practically admitted (you must forgive the word) to have been blunders. Was not the food blockade something of the same kind? Had you not divided counsels about it? Did not the case of the Wilhelmina betray uncertain handling? Lastly, might not the withdrawal of this blockade become through the United States a means of securing a change in the scope at least of German action, whilst it would serve also to keep the said States in the position most agreeable to themselves, and most useful to us, to wit, that of friendly neutrals and not of allies?

The Prime Minister replied that the letter should be laid before his colleagues; but the writer had no expectation that the policy would be reconsidered. Moreover, the Government was being simultaneously assailed from an opposite quarter for their tenderness to neutral interests. Courtney could foresee as little as any one else that the war was to last for years; and he lived to realise that the blockade, whatever might be thought of its humanity, was a weapon of incomparable potency in slowly wearing down the strength of our terrible antagonist.

After the ebb and flow of the early months of the war

Courtney reached the conviction that the conflict would terminate without decisive victory for either side; and, with the fatal results of the Treaty of Frankfurt before his eyes, he believed that a negotiated settlement would be better for the world than a dictated peace. An overwhelming victory was as dangerous for a State as unfettered power for an individual. A leader in the *Nation* on the first anniversary of the declaration of war moved him to a letter to a valued friend whom he erroneously believed to be its author.

To Professor Hobhouse

May 2, 1915.—You say "the conflict can only be useless and irrational if it results in the victory of militant Teutonism. It cannot really end in a draw, for there is no stale-mate in ideas." Here I would appeal to you. Are not hasty readers likely to confuse two conflicts—the one between the armed forces of the organised belligerents, the other between the spiritual forces which are at work through both sets of belligerents? The armed conflict may be suspended, may be renewed and again suspended, shewing in advance a dreary future of one military Power succeeding another in mastery. The spiritual conflict has its vicissitudes; but here, as you say, there can be no stale-mate, for the force momentarily checked never ceases to act and is in perpetual movement towards the great end of bringing all into one fold. Keeping these two conflicts in vision, may it not seem possible that the spiritual conflict would be most aided by a stale-mate in the armed conflict which is now in progress? I agree with you that a success for the idea of the irresponsible and all-absorbing domination of a military state would be the worst possible conclusion of the present struggle. It would tend to check and to mortify all the elements of better life in the victorious people. They would be united under the necessity of keeping what they had earned and of preventing the revival of the struggle by the beaten enemy. The defeated would also be united by the desire to recover what had been lost and would be constantly exhorted to copy the successful methods of their conquerors. But would not a signal defeat of the Germans in the present military struggle be followed by a future almost as fatally repressive of the growth of the spiritual elements in the peoples of both belligerents? We should have the same passion for recovery, the same grip of retention, the same exhortation to maintain and develop what

had been proved to be the machinery of success. These thoughts led me to say soon after the commencement of the war that the unqualified victory of either side would be a world calamity. It does not look as if there will be an unqualified victory. I have now long thought that the best hope is for a military draw—or stale-mate—not to be admitted, it may be owned, till after mutual exhaustion; but having through this exhaustion a period in which spiritual forces may raise themselves again, perhaps sufficiently to secure the maintenance of peace, if not of reconciliation, in a world of freedom.

So I come to your conclusion. I say with you "do not abandon our British idealism." But do not let us deceive ourselves by thinking that the only hope for idealism is through material victory. The extracts with which you begin your article shew that there is at heart a leaven of idealism among German fighters, and we dare not say that all the British, French, Russian and Italian boys are "soldiers of humanity" and not too often "mere Nationals." We have too often before us the vision of

> . . . a darkling plain
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

One word more. Must a "draw" be only a pause before the renewal of a similar struggle, or may it not be the point of a new departure? The Germans whom we would fain bring over to a better idea may surely be left with a feeling that against their enemies they are unconquered and unconquerable. All the boys whom we would make soldiers of humanity may cherish the same belief on this side. We find a common ground for self-respect and mutual respect, and we may pass on to a new "moral world" with shattered, broken and depleted military resources, but with a higher courage and nobler fortitude.

When Parliament reassembled after the summer holiday Courtney determined to give public utterance to the convictions which had been ripening in his mind, despite the advice of Lord Morley, who held that the conflict would have to be settled by the iron dice of war.

From Lord Morley

November 7, 1915.—I have carefully pondered what you said yesterday. As the result I cannot persuade myself that the lines you sketched would be advantageous to good causes at this

moment. Nay, I think it would be distinctly prejudicial. Public anxieties and confusion of mind are poignant, practical, positive. People are on the eve of being ready to rally to light in any direction. What you offer to them is *extreme*: a frontal attack on strongly entrenched passions and convictions, which only yield to the change of military, diplomatic and financial circumstances. The case for Peace must be strengthened by the finance discussions opening next week. It cannot be wise to present an extreme view, mainly based on feeling, at the moment when the same object is going to be reinforced by positive considerations based on irresistible facts going to the roots of our material strength. You will speak with real authority when finance comes into light. I fear that authority must be impaired by your "ingemination of Peace" beforehand. Then again I still hold, as I have always held, that any sketch of terms of peace is idle, until we know more of the ultimate (or ulterior) predominance in arms. And have you thought that your declarations and proposals will provoke disclaimers and repudiation from men like Milner, whose support is well worth having? *Our* position is excellent so far; it will be a pity to endanger its progress. It is hardly possible that affairs in the East should not further that progress. Forgive my length, but I have been much exercised.

To Lord Morley

November 7.—I am truly grateful for your most sincere and intimate letter, sent moreover by special messenger. I went to Lincoln's Inn this morning and heard Gamble preach. The gist of his sermon was that Nationalism was insufficient and International temper must be evoked. He owned frankly that the Churches had failed, but naturally enough saw no hope save in some rapprochement of the Churches. He quoted Bryce pretty fully on the underlying idea of the Holy Roman Empire, to which he seemed to look back with regret. All this encouraged me and indeed appeared to shew a desire for something like what I had intended to say. I came home and found your letter which was, of course, a sad set-back. I think I must persevere. You overrate, probably through my own fault, "my peroration," when you describe my speech as "mainly based upon feeling." I mean the greater part to be a grave appreciation of fact; and if I am not naturally led to my peroration I shall drop it. It was only intended to clinch a serious argument. Again I should disclaim all notion of propounding "terms of peace." Moreover I would expressly recognise the impossibility of the Govern-

ment saying anything. I would deprecate their doing so and would submit my own observations only *ad avisandum*. My only fear is that if Curzon were to follow me he might run wild and the result would be mischievous. Not so Lansdowne. As to the *Times*, the *Morning Post* and *Jingoes* in either House I do not think they are worth counting. I grieve that I cannot go forward with the thought that I have your benison. Nevertheless, as Joffre is reported to have said at a high moment, "*Embrassons-nous.*"

The debate was opened by Lord Loreburn, whose grave accents attuned the minds of his hearers to the more elaborate appeal that was to follow. For the first time Courtney spoke from the Front Opposition Bench. "It was not addressed to a sympathetic audience," writes Lord Parmoor, "but it was listened to attentively. I heard sincere commendation even from those who disliked its tone and policy. It was spoken with great fervour, but with a feeling of isolation."

"My Lords, the noble Viscount who preceded me has spoken of persons who, if they do certain things in these days, do so with a rope round their necks. I, too, have not been unaccustomed to be more or less alone, and I am indifferent to the species of attack for which the noble Viscount expressed his disdain. Yet I feel very strongly that I was never so much alone as now, for I believe what I have to say has not been expressed by any one here before, and I am not sure that it will obtain the open approbation of anybody. I trust, however, that it will be free from anything that can be called an attack upon or even a disparagement of the Government, and it will be my endeavour not to put any question, not to submit any criticism, not to invite any declaration which might be to them embarrassing. The position in the West, if we frankly recognise it, is that we have not conquered and have not been conquered. Two great lines of military array have been drawn up against one another, of each of which it may probably be said that it is unconquered and unconquerable. As I view it, the situation in the Dardanelles is that of an impossible adventure, which you must face and realise. The

naval situation is different, but it presents the same fact in the end—namely, that for some time past there has been no change and apparently no suggestion of a probability of change in the situation. We have the command of the open seas, but we cannot get the German Fleet into action.

"It is not merely the military and naval review which, I suggest to your Lordships, demands your attention now. When Sir Edward Grey some years since was too sadly forecasting the possibility of the future, he spoke of the battle of Armageddon that might prove something which would destroy the civilisation of Europe. That prophecy has almost been realised. Whether we look at home or abroad, our old civilisation, which we built up through long generations with much effort, is not merely in danger but is undermined and almost destroyed. Freedom of speech, freedom of writing, almost freedom of thought, have been struck at. Instead of the ancient trial by jury which we boasted was the privilege of every man, the gravest charges are examined and the weightiest punishments inflicted by single magistrates sitting in secret, without the advantage of publicity and without its being known what is the character of the offence charged. Our municipal private law has suffered these terrible inroads; and in the domain of public law, international law, so slowly built up in days gone by, we have witnessed retrogression. The Declaration of London had not been ratified, and we were free to put it aside. At the same time in doing so we are departing from the line on which we had been prepared to advance. The Declaration of Paris has been 'scrapped.'

"I do not speak of what the war has involved in the way of sacrifice of our young men. I say nothing of the demands it has made on our finances. I only wish to draw you to this conclusion, that the war has resulted in something like a deadlock of force and has operated to diminish the standard of our civilisation, to take away the guarantees of liberty, to diminish the trustworthiness of law, and to endanger the situation amongst neutrals. If that is so, surely it is not surprising that one should begin to ask, Is

any escape possible from this rake's progress? Must we go on to witness a continually extending panorama of war? Is there no alternative? Some say there is none. Can we, it may be said, slacken a single effort as long as the peril is upon us of being brought under the authority of another Power? If that were really the only alternative I should not dare to speak this evening. We must be free or die. I believe that as much as any member of your Lordships' House. To me the organisation of this country being under the authority of any other Power is unthinkable and intolerable to contemplate. Therefore if there were no alternative I would say, Let us go on. It may be that we must wear ourselves out; it may be that there is nothing before us but the sweeping away from Europe of its manhood and its strength.

"The question is whether there is not an alternative to this unceasing strife. I believe there is. The passion of national independence is glorious and well worthy of any sacrifice. I recognise all its claims. But the passion of national independence must in some way be reconciled, if civilisation is to continue, with the possibility of international friendship; and unless you can see out of this war something which will lead to international friendship coming into alliance with and being supported by national independence you have nothing before you but a continued series of wars, hate after hate, extermination after extermination, from which indeed you may well recoil. Is it not possible that this reconciliation should be effected; that there should be, so to speak, dovetailed into one another the fact of national independence and the fact of international friendship? The consummation of the tragedy is that precisely what we believe and say is believed and said in Germany, with the same sincerity and the same conviction as here; inexcusably you will say, and I admit that to us it is very difficult to see sufficient reason on their part for that conviction and that belief. Some Germans find it extraordinarily difficult to realise that we believe in the possibility of the terror against which we are fighting. Well, if that is a common error on both sides, I am led

again to the conclusion that there surely must be some way out of the impasse in which we are landed, and we ought at least to show ourselves ready to accept any suggestion that can be offered of relieving us from such an anxiety.

"It would be madness in me to lay down terms of reconciliation. I put no question. I ask for no declaration on the part of any one. I will, however, throw out two or three suggestions which appear to me to be vital to the possibility of an ultimate settlement. It may very well be that I shall be stigmatised—it does not matter much—as a pro-German in more than one newspaper to-morrow. But the one thing I would say with force is that an indispensable element of the settlement is the liberation of Belgium and of Northern France. Apart from that, we must fight and fight on. There is another thing which I think I might be permitted to say without danger. There is in Germany a widespread and deep-seated notion that the cost of the war to the German Empire is to be recovered by an indemnity levied on this country. It is well that it should be stated that there is not, as I should say, a single Englishman who dreams of, or would ever consent to, an indemnity of any kind being levied upon this country. Those are two points which may well be cleared up. There is another thing which I think may well be suggested to your Lordships. We have heard a good deal from the beginning of this war about 'the freedom of the seas,' a phrase often used but not always perfectly understood. Sir Edward Grey said not long ago, in a written document of great seriousness and well-considered purpose, that this was a subject which might well be discussed when peace was re-established.

"I have been leading you up, my Lords, to the realisation that great and glorious as national independence is, there is something more which has to be reconciled with it. I vouch, in support of that appeal, a witness to whom you will listen with respect. We have been much moved of late by the history of a woman who has added another to the great roll of Englishwomen—I mean Edith Cavell, whose life was occupied in service and sacrifice. A law-breaker,

she came under the penalty of the law, and a barbarous and besotted German Governor insisted upon exacting the full penalty. And what was Miss Cavell's attitude when she met that penalty? She had been some time in prison. In her solitude and silence is it remarkable that great thoughts should take shape in her mind? Her minutes were numbered, and they were few. These were her words: 'Standing before God and Eternity, I realise this—patriotism is not enough; I must be free from hate and bitterness.' These words are the true testament of Edith Cavell. I, for my part, would like to accept them and make them my own. I beseech your Lordships to entertain them with all the feeling, with all the fulness and simplicity, of her own mind. 'Standing before God and Eternity, I realise that patriotism is not enough; I must have no bitterness, no hate.'"

Journal

November 9.—"Astounding speech by a Peace Crank" fills the whole placard of the *Express*—and indeed it was the first bold plea for openings of peace uttered in either House. There had been many criticisms about suppression of news, etc., but L. got to the fundamental issue. I was nervous lest he should not put his thoughts quite in the best way; but he did. He spoke with a good deal of feeling; and his emotion at the end of his speech over Edith Cavell's last words struck a deep note. I am sure he impressed the House. But we shall have attacks and many friends will disappear.

November 14.—Much less expressed disapproval than I expected. Great numbers of letters of warm thanks and approval, and the press on the whole has not been hostile. The comments are beginning in the German press. If L. could only be the means of helping to encourage peace feeling there! Mr. Hoover emphatic on the immense value of the speech for making towards peace, and feels as we do about the utter folly of all these fierce threats to punish and to crush.

The debate aroused wider interest than any speeches delivered since the outbreak of war. "Widely as Lords Courtney, Loreburn and Milner differed," commented the *Daily News*, "there was in all a tone of pessimism. Lord Courtney went so far as to suggest negotiations through

neutral countries. Aged and almost blind, he stood like some Hebrew prophet, and in passionate sentences pronounced the doom of European civilisation unless the war be arrested." "He was heard with close attention," echoed the *Daily Mail.* "He was deeply moved. His voice throbbed and fell. He sounded like a venerable preacher and prophet. He disarmed expressions of dissent by his obvious sincerity. He put no questions. He asked for no declarations." Other Conservative organs were less courteous in their comments. "Lord Courtney made the first pro-German speech in Parliament," wrote the *Daily Express. John Bull* characteristically denounced it as "cowardly, snuffling, weak-kneed." "A new note was struck," remarked the *Morning Post,* "the possibility of peace. It was struck very guardedly by Lord Loreburn, who implored Ministers to grasp at any honourable opportunity to stop the war. But that eccentric politician, Lord Courtney, had the hardihood even to discuss possible conditions of peace." The speeches naturally aroused keen interest in Germany. "They ventured to speak of the end of the war," wrote *Vorwärts,* "and dared to refer to the future of humanity. Speeches in the House of Lords denote no decisive action, but they are a beginning, a symptom." "Lord Courtney is one of the most honourable personalities in England," wrote Dr. Fried at Bern in his diary. "It was the voice of reason, the voice of the humanitarian. If this war is fought out to the end, there will be no more Europe. The price of victory will be the destruction of European culture." The commendation of the Austrian Pacifist was balanced by the scorn of the rabid Pan-German Reventlow, who declared that the speeches amounted to a confession that the war was bad business for England, and that peace was desirable—"Germany, of course, to pay." The truest note was struck in the official *North German Gazette.* "So long as the British believe they can conquer Germany, speeches like these will remain voices crying in the wilderness."

In the following month Courtney spoke at length on the Second Reading of the Budget imposing the Excess Profits

Tax, earnestly pleading against indefinite commitments and unlimited debt. "There is a limit to the army we can maintain. We must have more taxation and less loans. My only motive for speaking here to-day is a desire, if possible, to infuse a little more boldness into the Chancellor when he next takes up the duty, as he very soon must, for providing for the cost of the war. Financial schemes are entirely independent of our opinions about the war; yet as it may be thought that what I have said is coloured by my own views, I do not wish in the least to disguise them. In my judgment it is a most hideous blunder, precipitated by the governing personages of all Europe, our own not excluded."

The continuance of the struggle naturally involved conscription, which in turn raised the question of the conscientious objector. Courtney never shared the Quaker attitude, but his love of mental and moral independence enabled him to understand it. "I fear you will recognise that the difficulties have been underrated," he declared in the House of Lords on January 26 on the Military Service Bill. "Lord Willoughby de Broke said that he could not understand what was meant by a Conscientious Objector; but they are no new phenomenon. The Dutch recognised the claims of the Mennonites in their struggle against Spain, and exemptions were granted by Pitt, Catherine the Great and Napoleon. In view of all this I think your Lordships will feel that you are not dealing with persons who can be neglected or despised, and that the attempt to override their opposition by force must fail. I earnestly beg you to consider the difficulties you provoke if you insist on the attempt to make men combatant against their will. I have put down an amendment to extend the ground of exemption to any service in support of the war." Lord Selborne, in his reply for the Government, spoke of his "very earnest and eloquent exhortation"; but the rejection of the amendment led to the incarceration of the "absolutists," with all the mental and physical misery that it involved.

Courtney returned to the charge on May 4, when the Bishops of Oxford and Winchester raised the question of the

treatment of the Conscientious Objectors. "Punish if you will the shirker—nay punish if you will the sincere Conscientious Objector; but do not let the punishment take the form of making the man a soldier against his will. I speak as one who does not hold the view that all war is an unholy thing. On the contrary I believe in and recognise the necessity of war as an instrument of international society in the case of necessity, and I recognise also the duty of the citizen to take part in sustaining that war. But I have had some means of seeing and knowing such men, and I beg you to realise their intense feeling. Your machinery must be directed simply to the question of sincerity—a very difficult thing no doubt to determine. Once you have found he is sincere, you had better conclude to have nothing more to do with him. Mr. Long's circulars have been very welcome; but more clearness is wanted, for he confesses there have been very grave irregularities." A year later he was still preaching on the same text. Following Lord Parmoor in debate on May 24, 1917, he confessed to a feeling approaching despair. "The Secretary for War (Lord Derby) fails to understand the action taken by these men. If you had gone to the root of the matter, as I ventured to suggest when the Act was under consideration, you should have placed them in the same position as the ministers of religion. 'They refuse work of national importance.' No. I speak for nine out of ten at least. Their whole lives were devoted to work of national importance. Leave them alone and they would resume it. Do not speak of them as cowards or men who have no sense of national duty. They are penetrated with it. We have nothing before us but an unending series of Courts Martial." If Lord Derby moved him to protest, a speech by Lord Charnwood in the autumn provoked him to indignant rebuke (November 28). "John Bright once quoted George Wither, the Puritan,

> There is on earth a yet auguster thing,
> Veiled though it be, than Parliament or King.

That was the conscience of man. They spoke of Parliament

and King in those days as you speak of the State now, as supreme in every action and thought of the citizen. I thank God there are citizens who refuse that kind of servitude. It is now universally acknowledged that the State has no right whatever to control the religious opinions of individuals. I am not of the creed of the Conscientious Objector. But I do at least apprehend the position of these martyrs, for they are no less, who go on extending the liberty of the human soul, leading up to a higher development and a higher civilisation of which we petty wanderers on the plain never think."

The desperate struggle to which the Empire was committed engulfed one Liberal tradition after another; and Protection trod on the heels of Conscription. When it was announced that the Allies were to meet at Paris and discuss economic policy, the most independent member of the House of Lords raised the question on April 11, 1916, and moved for copies of the invitations to the British Government, its replies and its instructions to its representatives. He began by quoting the Prime Minister's ideal at Dublin—" the substitution for groupings and alliances and a precarious equipoise of a real European partnership, based on the recognition of equal rights and established and enforced by a common will." This fine utterance, he declared, should be kept before the nation as a living principle which should govern our thoughts and direct our conduct. But the approaching Conference was full of peril to the realisation of this principle, and Mr. Runciman had delivered a menacing speech. " I am entitled, I think, to ask for an explanation of this apparent discrepancy." What could more rally wavering opinion in Germany than such threats of commercial war? It was ominous news that Mr. Hughes was to be one of the representatives. The policy of crushing German industry must fail, because even among our Allies and the friendly neutrals there would be some who would not adopt it; and it would also impoverish ourselves. Free Trade had enabled us to support our own burdens and those of our Allies, and to Free Trade we must look for restoration when the conflict was over. The veteran

champion of Free Trade both in its economic and political aspects was vigorously supported by Lord Bryce, and his protest was welcomed by a large number of Liberals who detested the policy of commercial boycott.

The summer of 1916 was filled with varying emotions. When Joffre despaired of holding Verdun the British attack on the Somme relieved the pressure; but the advance was slow and costly, and the adhesion of Roumania to the ranks of the Allies was quickly followed by Mackensen's triumphant entry into Bucharest. As the fortunes of war swayed to and fro, Courtney's longing for a way out of the impasse grew into a consuming passion. He listened with eager interest to Emily Hobhouse's description of her interview with Jagow, the German Foreign Minister, and persuaded her to publish her report in the *Nation*, after affording Sir Edward Grey an opportunity of vetoing the publication if he desired. And when she was in consequence attacked in Parliament for her visit to Germany on her way home from Italy, he vindicated her motives in the House of Lords. In the late autumn three political events of importance—the Presidential election, the fall of the Asquith Government and the Kaiser's "peace offer"—provided material for endless discussion and speculation.

To Emily Hobhouse

November 11, 1916.—The re-election of Wilson I hail with great satisfaction. The speech of Bethmann-Hollweg marks a step forward. He was clumsy enough and has more than a fair share of the inability that besets us all to understand how other people are thinking; but the speech is an advance and is moving the minds of some persons of more or less importance towards peace through negotiation. The re-elected President may be emboldened to make a more definite offer of good offices.

If the American news was hopeful, the torpedoing of the Cabinet by Mr. Lloyd George, fresh from the "knock-out blow" interview, opened up vistas of an unending struggle. But though the new Government was more uncompromising than the old Courtney for a second time delivered his

message on the war on December 9. " What I shall have to say will not, I fear, commend itself to the mass of your Lordships. I can only repeat what I said here a year ago. The struggle shews that each of the belligerents is unconquered and unconquerable. Yet you want peace. The German Chancellor wants peace. The prospect is one of two athletes locked in deadly embrace, each bleeding and losing his strength, and the only question is which of the two will fall exhausted before his scarcely less exhausted enemy. Surely it is worth while to inquire whether there is no hope of anything better. The German Chancellor said that though Germany had won he desired only security. In what way has Germany been threatened that it should desire security? We find it difficult to say. But the German people have not found that difficulty. They believe the war is a war of defence, and they want security against the animosity of the encircling Powers. Who can measure the folly of national beliefs? They do believe it. Would it not be better for us to say, ' We believe there is no real foundation for this feeling; but, if there is any security you can suggest, name it. We, too, want security. We have found in your country a disposition not to accept a place among the family of nations but to assert an overlordship among the nations. It was in the manifestations of that overbearing policy, in these evidences and proofs of arbitrary and irresponsible power that we took up arms, and it is for a destruction of this that we have gone to war, and until it is abated there can be no real peace.' Can this end only be reached by a triumph in arms? A triumph in arms may give you a little rest for a time, but it can never give you the true security of peace. The peace and security which both sides want must be found by other means. How can Germany satisfy us? By the consent to come in as a real brother in this union of the nations of Christendom. Is there a sign of that? We know there has been a sign. The Chancellor has confessed himself ready to come in. We should surely grasp these admissions and say that we want the abandonment of the pretensions of Germany; and we could say that an evidence would be the immediate evacua-

tion of Belgium and Serbia, and the restoration of the countries Germany has invaded, and her consent to enter into a congress of nations as one among equals. I hope the answer to the German Government will not absolutely shut the door against any further explanations."

The Kaiser's invitation to his enemies to discuss peace was accompanied by provocative and ill-founded boasts of victory which destroyed in advance all chance of acceptance. But early in the new year an invitation from President Wilson to the belligerents to outline their terms appeared to open up a fairer prospect of success. While the more bellicose organs of the press rated the President like a naughty schoolboy, Courtney defended not only his aims but his phrases in a letter to the *Times* (February 1). "Wilson longs for a just permanent peace; and so say Mr. Bonar Law and Bethmann-Hollweg. Since both declare that they do not wish to crush each other, the President draws the conclusion that there must be peace without victory. Here the belligerents part company from him. Yet what is victory but getting what you are fighting for? If a campaign ends in a drawn battle, the Power that enforced the struggle is beaten. If a war is waged in which each accuses the other of having originated it, each might accept a draw as a victory, since each would say that the enemy had been defeated. If it is found possible to import into the settlement at the end of the contest guarantees that were wanting when it began, a peace might be realised just, permanent and secure, though the warfare may have seemed to us inconclusive. Mr. Wilson's speech was an advertisement to Europe of the only kind of peace the United States could underwrite. What are we prepared to concede to his call? The most obvious demand that he makes upon ourselves concerns the freedom of the seas, and we cannot refuse to look carefully at it."

The President's well-meant invitation to the belligerents to state their terms produced a reply from the Allies which, in addition to the familiar demand for restoration, reparation and guarantees, foreshadowed the dissolution of the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires. Such expanded aims

could only be achieved by overwhelming victory; and, though peace-feelers were secretly put forth by the young Emperor Karl, who had succeeded Francis Joseph in the autumn of 1916, the timely entry of the United States into the war stiffened the backs of the Allies, while the Russian Revolution enabled Germany to transfer her whole strength to the Western front. Though peace never appeared more distant than in the summer of 1917, Courtney continued to seek out and to welcome any sign of mutual approach. An invitation to contribute to the Russian Supplement issued by the *Manchester Guardian* in July provided an opportunity for a fresh exploration of the ground. "It is admitted that, necessary as peace may be to revolutionised Russia, there is an entanglement of war from which Russia cannot escape without pre-arrangement. An essential preliminary to an early close of the war through an honourable peace is the existence of a general will to peace. It exists in the Russian Government; but can we find it elsewhere? At present the appearances are unfriendly. What can be said of the Western Allies as long as the conclusions of the Paris Conference remain unmodified? The acts and declarations of the Emperor Charles afford a starting-point from which the Russian Government may press their allies for a revision of their January letter to President Wilson. A reply from Great Britain and France to such an appeal would certainly include the restoration of Belgium and the evacuation of France, and probably the full return of Alsace and Lorraine. Whatever the new declaration of aims it must be of a nature to press, if not to compel, the German Government to make that statement of their conditions of peace which has for months past been ready for publication but never published. The military deadlock continues. Mr. Hoover does not expect a speedy termination of the war through the intervention of his country. The thoughts thus arising may be allowed to penetrate the minds of the governing men of the world. They can scarcely fail to add to the conviction that the occasion offered by a revolutionised Russia should be taken as it has arisen."

The reception of the Pope's Peace Note of August showed

that neither side desired or dared to make public advances to the other; but a declaration by the German Foreign Minister in the autumn that Alsace-Lorraine was the only real obstacle to a negotiated peace inspired Courtney to write an "Open Letter to Baron von Kuhlmann," extracts from which were published in the *Manchester Guardian* on November 1.[1] "You know that with us the complete restoration of Belgium is the first and indispensable condition. I infer you are ready to assent at once to the principle, but I wish you had said it. I think I hear you replying, 'The abandonment of commercial war is with us an indispensable condition, and you hesitate to agree to it.' I understand the retort, and I reply that one reticence does not excuse another. I continue our conversation from the position that when peace comes Belgium and commercial intercourse will be re-established as they were before August 1914. If Austria becomes transformed into a federation of free constituent factors, talk of its dismemberment would be out of place. I pass to the obstacle of obstacles. You say that Germany can never yield an inch of Alsace-Lorraine. It is a many-sided question, and it can scarcely be said historically that every part of the two Provinces is in the same sense a national inheritance. Let us remember, too, that your great Empire-maker said he had not wanted Lorraine. I can understand the German feeling about Alsace, and I should not hesitate to press upon any French friend the verification of Alsatian wishes. The conclusion I desire to impress upon Germans and Frenchmen alike is that Alsace-Lorraine has been a difficulty to each in the past, and will remain a difficulty to both and to Europe unless some agreement can be reached; and I press upon you the prudence of reconsidering that declaration of yours in the Reichstag."

From General Smuts (to Lady Courtney)

November 3, 1917.—Thank you very much for sending me the M.G. extract from Lord Courtney's Open Letter. I had

[1] It was published in full in the *Cambridge Magazine*, January 12, 1918.

decided to come and have a talk with you over these matters when I was very suddenly called away (to Italy—confidential). When I return I shall look you up. The horizon is very dark indeed. But our high faith, which has already seen us through so much in our lives, should not now falter by the way. I have the fear that you and Lord Courtney are not sufficiently cautious in regard to so dangerous an enemy as the German Government. And the causes we stand for should not be jeopardised by our over-trustfulness or infirmity of purpose. But I admit the whole matter is very difficult, and no honest mind can be free from doubts in so perplexing a world.

With his mind full of "the only obstacle to peace," Courtney reprinted in pamphlet form his leading article in the *Times* of October 15, 1870, suggesting the dismantlement of the fortresses in Alsace-Lorraine and protesting against their annexation; Carlyle's celebrated letter of November 18 supporting the German claim to the provinces; and his leader of the same date controverting the arguments and conclusions of the historian. In sending forth *Alsace-Lorraine, A Memorial of 1870*, he informed his readers that, though he had continued to condemn the annexation of the Provinces, he had always been resolutely opposed to all projects of reconquest. "And I now dissent from the policy of making a complete and absolute transfer of them, without consultation with their inhabitants, an indispensable condition of peace." The distribution of the pamphlet produced a number of grateful letters.

From Lord Grey of Fallodon

December 31, 1917.—I have been long in thanking you for your letter and its enclosure. I read the reprint of your articles and Carlyle's letter with much interest. They are very fresh and good reading. You say that in retirement I doubtless ruminate over many things. I do, but they are mostly connected with private life and things about which I had no time to think or feel during the eleven years of office life.

From H. H. Asquith

December 6, 1917.—Best thanks for your brochure. I have read it with much interest; it takes me back to my Oxford days.

From Augustine Birrell

November 30, 1917.—I have just read your reprint of forty-seven years ago with great interest. You bear the ravages of that greedy monster Time far better than old Thomas, although I still dote on his abominable style; this great darkness is illuminated by the search-lights genius is seldom left altogether without. At the present moment my favourite author is Swift! What do you think of Lord Lansdowne's letter? His brew is thin, and a little cold on the stomach, but sanity in these days is a refreshing draught.

From Gilbert Murray

November 29, 1917.—I have read your Alsace-Lorraine pamphlet; many thanks for sending it. It is full of both pathetic and ironical interest. Carlyle's letter is so absolutely like in tone to the average Jingo effusion of the present day with the name of the enemy changed. And as for your own two articles they were entirely right then and *mutatis mutandis* would be entirely right now. I shall carry it about with me to shew the people who need it.

While keeping his eyes open for any sign of mutual approach between the belligerents, Courtney watched with increasing dismay the encroachments of the executive on British liberty. Though not a member of the Union of Democratic Control, he entertained sincere respect for its Secretary, perhaps the best abused man in the country.

To Mrs. Morel

September 6.—I am indignant at the character of the proceedings against your husband, and the severity of the sentence pronounced upon him. It is true he broke the law—an arbitrary law—applied to an act outside any justifiable extension of it. Edith Cavell also broke the law, and from a German point of view her offence was very serious, since she passed on recruits to fight against the German army. Yet we justly condemn the brutal General who insisted upon executing the sentence, and the Prussian organisation and character which supported all the procedure. It is shameful to us that we have so much of the

seeds of Prussianism amongst us. Your husband was guilty [1] of arranging for the transmission of some book to a distinguished Frenchman who happened to be living in Switzerland. The regulation he broke would not have applied had Romain Rolland been in France, and the book itself contained no military information, no revelation of any fact that could be of military use to the enemy; it was simply an argumentative expression of opinion which it was perfectly open to him, or to any one else, to engage in at home, and, as it would seem, to communicate to an ally. But being sent to a neutral country there was an added danger, so it was felt, that the enemy might learn what is not and could not be concealed, that we are not all of the same mind at home. The motive of the trial was the suppression of opinion, and it became evident that the prosecution not only wanted to suppress opinion but to lock up in silence any one who could form an opinion they would like to suppress. Even those who differ from him in his opinions, and I have not, as you know, been always at one with him, must respect, must honour his sincerity; nor is the time distant when his patriotism will be as generally confessed.

If the war brought in its train a temporary limitation of constitutional liberties, the devoted services of all classes and both sexes to the national cause were destined to be rewarded by a generous extension of the franchise. When the Government announced in June 1916 that a comprehensive measure of electoral reform was in contemplation, the Proportional Representation Society addressed a memorandum to the Prime Minister, urging him to include P.R. in his scheme. Two months later, when Mr. Asquith expressed the hope that an agreed scheme might be threshed out under an impartial Chairman, Courtney wrote to the *Times* (August 23) from Bude, where he was spending a long holiday necessitated by ill-health. If, as the Prime Minister declared, Parliament must possess moral authority, the extension of the franchise must be accompanied by redistribution, and redistribution by Proportional Representation. "It is true that a small tentative Commission investigated the subject seven years ago, and did not see its way to recommending its adoption in Parliamentary elections

[1] This is incorrect. Mr. Morel was not aware that Romain Rolland was in neutral territory.

'here and now'; but we have gone a long way since then. I speak not of foreign countries and Australasian developments. The Home Rule Act provided for P.R. in the Irish Senate and in constituencies of the Irish House of Commons returning more than two members; and in Committee on the Amending Bill the House of Lords unanimously declared in favour of the extension of multiple constituencies and P.R. to the whole of Ireland. I am knocking at an open door, since it must go without saying that it must be an essential part of the work of the proposed conference. My excuse for writing is that I have been unable for some weeks to attend my place in Parliament."

To Aneurin Williams

August 30.—I doubt whether we can expect the adoption of P.R. throughout the United Kingdom. Personally I should be content if it were installed in areas with a given density of population, so as to include London, all the big towns, and the industrial counties or sections of counties, such as Lancashire, Yorkshire, Durham, Staffordshire, etc.

The terms of reference to the Speaker's Conference, which met for the first time on October 12, included "methods of election"; and the Conference unanimously recommended that P.R. should be applied to London, boroughs returning three or more members, contiguous boroughs which, if formed into a single constituency, would return not less than three nor more than five members, and, finally, London University and the new English Universities grouped into a constituency returning three members, and the four Scottish Universities likewise grouped into a single three-member constituency.

To Aneurin Williams

January 29, 1917.—The completion of your work is admirable. You had most of the burden thrown on you, and it required all your discretion to carry it safely to the end. We must now hope that Parliament will accept and ratify your conclusions. They must, I think, put in some concession of woman franchise. If the Commons will do it, the Lords cannot prove an insuperable

obstacle. So it is in reasonable calculation that we may see the next General Election conducted on the basis of P.R. and Woman Franchise. The very statement of the hope, however, makes me draw my breath. It is almost too much, and we unwillingly remember the slips between the cup and the lip.

His apprehensions were only too quickly justified. The party machines declared against a change that seemed likely to diminish their power; and on March 28, on Mr. Asquith's motion to embody the recommendations of the Conference in a Bill, the Government declared its view that P.R. was not an essential part of the scheme, the Prime Minister adding that he had no opinion on the subject. Vigorous protests appeared in the *Times* from Courtney and Earl Grey; and on May 14, on the eve of the introduction of the Government Bill, he argued in the *Times* that P.R. was as essential a part of the agreed scheme as any other recommendation. His arguments were repeated and developed in interviews in the *Observer* and *Common Sense*; but on June 12 the first of several votes in the House resulted in the defeat of P.R. by 148 to 141. On the following day Courtney wrote to the *Times* declaring that the fight might still be won. "The compromise of the Conference has been broken, and no one could complain if action followed breaking the Bill into pieces. Radicals may attack it from one side and Conservatives from the other, until the conviction arises that the only hope of getting the Bill passed lies in the restoration of the compromise in its complete form as recommended by the Conference. The House of Lords could effect such a restoration. In 1867 Lord Cairns introduced into the Reform Bill the principle of Minority Representation which had been rejected by the House of Commons, and the House of Commons acquiesced in the introduction. Such a thing might be repeated to-day."

It was a poignant grief to the veteran leader that his closest associate in the long struggle should be away before he could reap the fruits of his labour. In the middle of August Lady Grey wrote that her husband was on his death-bed, and the old friends exchanged farewell letters a fortnight before the end.

From Earl Grey (dictated) *August* 14.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND and CHIEF—A thousand thanks for your most welcome letter of P.R., also for all the kind inquiries you have made. Alas, I have come home from my Leeds operation not with a new lease of young life, as I had hoped, but a doomed man. I fear I shall never see you again. I hope I may be able to dictate a short message to my fellow-Peers which may be of use—I cannot be certain. My devoted affection to yourself and your wife.

To Earl Grey

BUDE, *August* 17.—I stretch out both hands from the other end of England to greet you in the far north, and would indeed be glad if I could grasp yours in return. It seems it is not to be. We have worked together now for a generation. My memory has been travelling with you from town to town, and from city to city. I had hoped that you at least would come out victorious at the end of this warfare. Be sure that, in any case, you will be pressing the victory home, and your spirit, if not your voice, will be effective in securing it. I feel that we are all of us, like those smooth-sliding waters you watch above Niagara, in the certainty of the movement to the end ; and yet something must and will remain as a testimony to what has been. Be of good cheer, nay, be of much cheer, for your labour has not been in vain. Again I salute my dear affectionate fellow-worker. May I not add we will continue to love one another ?

After P.R. had been again defeated in November on the report stage, the Bill passed to the House of Lords. " Its fault," declared Courtney on the Second Reading, " is that it does not contain all the recommendations of the Conference ; but the deficiency can easily be made good. I put my trust in no class. ' Put not your trust in princes ' are old words of wisdom. But to put your trust in the proletariat would be equally vain. Our confidence must be in the nation as a whole. And to secure a Legislature in which we can put confidence it should be an expression of the whole mind of the nation." The speech concluded with a warm tribute to Earl Grey, " the Paladin of his generation," and an exhortation to follow the precedent of Lord Cairns in 1867. Great was his joy when on January 22,

1918, the House of Lords restored P.R. to the Bill by the overwhelming majority of 131 to 42. But though the Government accepted an amendment, appointing a Commission to frame, after local inquiries, a scheme of a hundred constituencies, the House of Commons rejected it by 166 to 110 on May 13, the day on which Courtney's death was announced in the newspapers.

On March 21, 1918, after a lull of several months, the German armies struck their long-awaited blow on the Western front, sharply recalling public attention from the Reform Bill and other domestic controversies to the dread realities of the European conflict. While the first assault was at its height Courtney left home to spend a short Easter holiday at the village inn at Ivinghoe, near Tring. In recent years he had one alarming attack after another; but his wonderful vitality reasserted itself in the intervals. He had visited his relatives in Penzance in February, and his last holiday found him in his eighty-sixth year as vigorous as ever in mind and body.

> Languor was not in his heart,
> Weakness was not in his word,
> Weariness not on his brow.

"We walked over from Berkhamsted on Easter Eve," writes Mrs. Fischer Williams. "It had poured with rain the whole way, and they had not expected us to keep tryst; so our welcome was specially warm when we leant dripping wet heads and shoulders in at the broad lattice window of their parlour, opening on the village street. I specially remember the warm, strong grasp of Lord Courtney's hand and his welcoming kiss—and how amazingly young and cheerful he seemed that wet afternoon in spite of the black gloom of the terrible news from the Western front and the fears and anxieties that beset us all. Indeed he—the elder of us—was by far the most youthful that grey afternoon—or so it seemed to me. He talked with the freedom and sympathy that made him a contemporary of every living generation. After the bustle of our arrival we all sat down round the parlour fire in a close circle and the talk flowed

easily on various subjects—the little, peaceful village and the walks round—great neighbouring houses and their owners—the Chief Justice's mission in America, other Easter holidays, and a little—but very little—of the war. After tea we started back to Tring, and as the rain had cleared off they all came with us to set us on our way. Lord Courtney stood out on the wet road looking up at the sky in his old green coat and his country hat, and tapping the ground with his stick, and I thought again how splendid he was—vigorous—cheerful—impatient to be off, younger than the rest of us in spite of his years. We walked the three miles of flat, winding road to Tring station at a good sharp trot, led by Lord Courtney. We walked together and talked of rooks and motor tractors and P.R. and the Houses of Lords and Commons and women's work on the land. Lady Courtney turned back half way. She said the pace was too fast for her, and indeed by the time we had reached Tring, where we parted company, I was feeling I had almost had enough. As we stood a few moments before parting Lord Courtney chaffed me for being weakly, and when I expostulated that I had walked about ten miles in drenching rain before we reached them, he nodded his head and patted my hand. 'Ah yes! don't let's forget it. Well, it's been a very pleasant meeting. Goodbye, goodbye.' And he turned round and started off at his quick pace, his head a little bent forward against the gusty wind."

On the first Sunday after his return home Courtney was struck down. He had walked to Lincoln's Inn Chapel and back in the morning, and received the usual flock of visitors at tea. The haemorrhage was less violent than it had been on one previous occasion, and after a fortnight he was able to come downstairs for a few hours. "Though Leonard gets slowly better," wrote his wife in her Journal on May 2, "it is with some weariness of body and spirit. Still he does improve, and yesterday repeated 'Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha' without a pause. Basil Williams, who heard that wonderful recitation, was so struck that he wrote asking his exact age and saying he was entering the incident in his Browning."

Though the weakness increased, his mind was undimmed and his eager interest in public affairs unabated. On Monday, May 6, he dictated his last public utterance, which, after being refused by the *Times*, appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* on May 8. " I shall not be able to attend the House of Lords on Wednesday, when Lord Denbigh promises to initiate an interesting discussion, and I venture to ask you to publish some remarks I might otherwise have spoken on the vexed question of how to deal with peace overtures. I start from the Prime Minister's communication to press representatives. He has been to the front and he returns with the message : ' Be of good cheer ; we are all right.' Private advices confirm this profoundly welcome statement. Once again we have proof of an unshakeable resistance and of an unconquerable front. Neither side can be overwhelmed. We cannot be defeated. May not the Germans claim they have proved the same thing of themselves ? May we not admit what we all separately feel that neither want in Germany nor the increase of aid from America will cumulatively result in the driving back of the Germans to the Rhine ? Taking our stand on the fundamental facts of the hour, the question is irresistible, To what purpose must we go on sacrificing the youth and manhood of Europe—nay, its civilisation and Christianity ? If there is any opening offered for reconciliation or even for cessation and the reflection that must arise after the stoppage of the struggle, must we reject it peremptorily ? Can we refuse to probe it to its depths ? Must we begin by branding every approach as insincere, every offer as a treacherous trap ? I make no condemnation of opportunities thought to have been missed. They were apparently known to half a dozen men, and perhaps rejected at the will of a triumvirate. I do not question the honesty, I do not condemn the assumption of power, tremendous as was their responsibility, of those who enforced an everlasting negative. One may be allowed to question their wisdom. Do we not feel that in place of an unqualified rebuff the answer might have been, ' The approaches are partial and separate ; we also do not desire aimless slaughter ; but we have allies, and a real

peace must run along the whole line ' ? The approach must have been either widened or abandoned. Bit by bit we might have learnt how far it was real and not a sham. Without going farther over the past, may we not ask, should another occasion arise, and all feel it is probably near, whether we should not be better instructed in shewing that we too are ready to hail a really just and reconciling peace ? ' Oh,' but it would be said, ' does not the history of the last six months prove the insincerity of the rejected advance ? ' Before answering this question let us cross-examine ourselves a little. Is it not true that the war, the struggle of battle, has dominated us all ? When we were preparing for a great push, when we were making advances, the suggestion of peace was silenced because victory was glittering before us. When we were thrust back or stayed, the suggestion of peace was silenced because it would be accepted as a confession of defeat. So in Germany. The majority of the Reichstag, even the Social Democrats, suspended, if they did not set aside, the Resolution of July, when the military promised or seemed to promise peace through victory in arms. The Resolution was never nullified ; it gradually resumes its power as this victory in arms appears to be a failure. We are so like one another. It is time for the wise, the chosen, the men of intellect, and of conscience of all classes to arise and lead us out of unavailing slaughter in the present and of undying war in the hearts of men in the future."

" Asquith seems making up his mind to a serious vote on the Maurice document," he wrote in a covering letter to Mr. C. P. Scott. " I am clear he is right in rejecting the two judges. A small Select Committee is the best tribunal we have for getting out the truth. I feel, however, that the installation of Asquith and his immediate confederates in power would be very little use,—worth something as part of a process, but not worth much as an end. We want to move in deeper waters and on a more daring voyage." When he wrote that neither side could be overwhelmed, he was expressing a view that was far more widely held in high circles than the public knew. The Allies soon afterwards secured as crushing a victory over their enemies as Germany

had inflicted on France in 1871. Had he, however, survived to admit the falsification of his forecast, the anarchy and starvation of half Europe and the Treaties of 1919 would have confirmed his conviction, expressed early in the war, that the complete triumph of either side would be a disaster to civilisation.

Among his last preoccupations was the case of Mr. Morel. " The last time I saw him," writes Emily Hobhouse, " he entrusted me with a message to General Smuts that it would be a public scandal if Mr. Morel's sanity were impaired by a further term of imprisonment, as would be the case if he were not exempted from military service. I shall always regret that I did not write to tell him of the good-will and acquiescence with which it was received, as I expected to bear the tidings in person." To make assurance doubly sure, Lord Morley, at his request, saw Lord Milner, who promised that special attention should be given to the case. On Thursday, May 9, he enjoyed a long talk with his oldest and closest political comrade, and on the Friday morning he dictated letters to Lord Curzon about P.R. and to Lord Rosebery in reference to the Carlyle House trust. At midday there was a sudden relapse.

Journal

After that I felt he must go, and I am sure he did too, for he whispered several times " poor Kitty " ; and when I said something about a happy life he added " and such a wife." Alfred (Lord Parmoor) came in the afternoon, but, of course, could not see him. When I told him A. was here he said promptly " did you shew him Curzon's letter ? " (promising to do what he could for P.R.). Of course I had not thought of it, and took it. Then before A. had time to leave the house—" did you tell him Fischer Williams was dining with Herbert Fisher to-night to talk to him about the P.R. schedule ? " Again no ; so off I went to call that downstairs. At night another hæmorrhage came on, and some morphia was given. The Doctor said there was a faint hope if the bleeding could be arrested ; but I was sure not. On Saturday I had a most sweet letter from Flowermead, saying he and Lady Morley would like him to be moved there in an ambulance where he could see the spring. He was much pleased,

but already past moving. In the afternoon it was clear he was going. Louise (his sister) came and kissed him, and he said "another." About 4.30 he asked me to read him "Locksley Hall." I dreaded I should break down, but I did not. He seemed to have dozed off; but when I stopped he said "go on." He wanted "Sixty Years After," but I could not find it in our editions of Tennyson. After that there was little more except a few whispered words which I could not always catch. Then an hour's restless discomfort, then unconscious discomfort, then the end at 8 o'clock.

"I came away on Thursday," wrote Lord Morley, "with a haunting feeling that I had taken his hand for the last time. He fought his battle to the very last pulse of life and thought within him." "He was one of the great figures of our time," wrote Lord Bryce, "in his absolute independence of mind, and his absolute courage in thought and action. No one could know him without admiring his public spirit, his constancy to his principles, his loyal attachment to his friends and to the good causes he had espoused,—never thinking of himself but only of the duty he owed to truth and the interests of humanity." "One of the bravest and finest figures of our time," echoed Lord Haldane; "such a combination of heart and brain is rare at all times." "His intellect, his independence, his courage, his character," declared the Prime Minister, "were a national asset." "In common with every decent citizen," wrote Mr. Herbert Fisher, "I held him in deep and enduring veneration for his glorious courage and absolute disinterestedness." "Have heard with deep regret of the death of my good friend Lord Courtney," cabled General Botha, "a man to whom South Africa owes an unredeemable debt of gratitude." At the first meeting of the House of Lords after the news of his death, Lord Curzon paid a tribute to him as "a man of great intellectual powers, of intense moral conviction, and of a passionate and almost unbending independence."

The funeral service in Old Chelsea Church on May 15 was conducted by Canon Gamble, and among the congregation which filled the building Lord Morley and Mr. Asquith were conspicuous figures. A year later a memorial tablet,

the work of Mr. A. G. Walker, a Chelsea neighbour and friend, was placed on the south wall of the church, close to the road and overlooking the river. It consists of an oblong slab of Portland stone divided into three panels. On the left is a bas-relief of the Cornish cliff or headland near the Land's End called Tol-Pedn-Penwith ; on the right is a likeness in relief, while in the centre panel is the following inscription :

In memory of Leonard Henry, Lord Courtney of Penwith,
Born Penzance July 6, 1832. Died 15, Cheyne Walk, May 11, 1918.
Cornwall reared him,
Cambridge trained him world-wide in human interests,
London found him his life's work,
Chelsea gave him a much-loved home.

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed though right were worsted wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

The will, after making provision for certain legacies, left the residue to his wife for life, then to his niece Sarah Courtney Julyan for life, and the ultimate residue in equal shares between St. John's College and Girton College, with unfettered discretion as to its employment. He also directed that " some memorial which may testify to the happiness I have enjoyed in their friendship should be given to John Morley, Henry John Roby,[1] William Stebbing, and to Dora Roscoe in memory of her mother." His interest in *The Working Constitution* and the Primer founded thereon was bequeathed to Professor Unwin.

Though Courtney never held high office, he was a supreme example of the type of " good citizen " on whom in the last resort the welfare of the State depends. For sixty years he devoted the whole strength of his masculine intellect to the study of public affairs ; and the value of his advice, though differently assessed, was contested by none who realised the rarity of political counsel wholly free from the refracting influence of party feeling and personal considerations. He

[1] Roby died before him.

might have defined himself, like Bagehot, as " between sizes in politics " ; but his incorruptible independence, though fatal to his official career, was an asset to the nation. " He was always careful and cautious," writes Professor Marshall, " but also strong, resolute, and intrepid. He cared not for blame, when he was sure he was right ; and the habit became him well, for it was almost always justified by events. I have ever thought that one reason for this has been the absolute detachment of his judgment, his sayings, and his actions from any reference to his own concerns. He sought for truth and cared for the interests of his country and of mankind with such single-minded devotion that one profited by him when disagreeing, and was cheered and strengthened when one found support in his authority."

" Of party spirit," testifies Mr. Herbert Paul, " he was incapable. He held fixed principles, by which he tested everything. It might be said of him, as was said of the Marquess of Halifax, that the party he liked the least was the one with which he was for the time connected, because it was the party of which he saw the most. This kind of mental disinterestedness is very rare. He appeared to be dogmatic because he argued from general propositions. He had indeed a Socratic love of argument for its own sake, a disinterested pleasure in the pursuit of truth, which led him to offend many prejudices but at the same time secured him the confidence of candid inquirers, to whatever school they might belong. No one could fairly accuse him of ignoring any strong point in the case he had to meet. He never troubled about verbal disputes. He made solid contributions to controversy because he concerned himself with what people meant rather than with what they said. No man was ever more thoroughly open to conviction. He had a naturally receptive mind. His mathematical training made him intolerant of fallacies, and at the same time opened his intellect to every kind of argument which deserved serious recognition."

Courtney's creed was as simple as it was unchanging. He accepted democracy, not grudgingly like Tocqueville, but, like Mill, with full conviction ; and his life-long champion-

ship of Woman Suffrage and Proportional Representation was rooted in his determination that Parliament should express nothing less than the whole mind of the country. His ideal was a world of pacific, self-governing communities, closely linked to one another by a network of material interests, and by the consciousness of a common spiritual inheritance. Though a prophet and a moralist, his feet never left the solid earth. His appeal was to the mind and conscience of his fellow-men, not to their imagination or emotions. He deprecated excursions into Utopia, and he knew too much history to expect a new world from military victories or a League of Nations. He was equally immune from the rival temptations to despise and to exalt the common man, whose soul he endeavoured to defend against the corroding poison of a flashy Imperialism and the subtler temptations of an enervating socialism. The individual, he taught, must think for himself and decide for himself. He agreed with Robert Lowe that "we must educate our masters," not flatter or pamper them. He was too much of a mid-Victorian to profess ardent enthusiasm for what is loosely described as social reform. In Mr. Massingham's words, he saw the perils more clearly than the opportunities of the modern State.

In his later years Courtney's patriarchal age and lucid intelligence, his wide knowledge and his detachment from party ties, made him a national figure and a national possession. "He illustrates, as perhaps no other man in our public life," wrote the *Manchester Guardian* on his eightieth birthday, "the splendour and the inestimable worth of personality." Reflective men liked to know what he thought of the problems of the day; and, though comparatively few followed his lead in every adventure, students of politics found it well to give due weight to his opinions in the formation of their own. The cross-bench mind, with its unspoken claim to superiority and its tacit rebuke of party shibboleths, annoys the multitude in time of peace and infuriates it in time of war. Yet men who thus stand for reflection, for second thoughts, for self-criticism, are of infinite value in a community governed by opinion. Every one agreed that

he would be an ideal member of an ideal Second Chamber. His self-imposed task was to challenge prejudice, to test tradition, to ventilate ideas, and above all to hold aloft the moral ideal in moments of national passion and national temptation. It was an onerous and a lofty mission; and it is the measure of his greatness that it was not unworthily fulfilled.

INDEX

Acton, Lord, 159, 256, 494
Africa, South, Annexation of Transvaal, 131-3, 140-41
Zulu War, 143-6
Recall of Frere, 153-6
Majuba, 162-5
The Raid, 334
The Committee, 345-8
The Boer War, Chs. XVII.-XIX.
Chinese labour, 483-4
The Lyttelton Constitution, 504-5
Self-Government, 515-18
Union, 526-32
Alsace-Lorraine, 87-90, 604-6
Alverstone, Lord, 434
Amery, L., 342, 367, 390-96, 440-43
Asquith, H. H., 296, 425, 454, Chs. XXII.-XXIV.
Avebury, Lord. *See* Lubbock

Balfour, A. J., 133, 195, 275-7, 281, 294, 296-7, 302-4, 312, 319-21, Chs. XVI.-XIX., XXI.
Balfour, Lady Frances, 317, 348
Balfour, G. W., 352, 418
Barnett, Canon and Mrs., 179-81, 184, 191, 313, 368, 378, 454, 501, 515
Beeching, H. C., 473
Bimetallism, 310-12, 342-3
Birrell, A., 262, 353, 520-21
Blowitz, 100
Botha, General, 478-81, 526-7, 616
Bradlaugh, C., 157, 284
Breakfast Club, 454-7
Bright, J., 137, 139, 173, 193
Browning, R., 280, 465-6
Bryce, J., 386, 388, 422, 518-19, 578, 583, 616
Burns, J., 413, 579
Burt, T., 125-6, 263-4
Butt, Isaac, 133, 238

Caine, W. S., 275, 289
Cairnes, Professor, 55-64, 70, 74-5, 84, 234
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H., 316-322, 359, Chs. XVII.-XIX., XXI.-XXII.
Carlyle, T., 37, 89-90, 93, 307-10, 605-6
Carnarvon, Lord, 131-2, 136
Chamberlain, J., 117, 124, 126, 129, Chs. VIII.-XIX., XXI.
Channing, Lord, 417, 422, 493
Childers, H., 170-71, 206, 244
Churchill, R., 227, 243, 271-4, 283
Clarke, Sir E., 61, 68, 380-81, 385-6, 399-400
Colenso, Bishop, 164
Collings, Jesse, 154, 227-8, 234, 248-250
Courtney, Leonard, born at Penzance, July 6, 1832, 3; studies under Dr. Willan, 6-9; Bolitho's bank, 7-8; visits the Great Exhibition in 1851, 18-19; enters St. John's College, Cambridge, 1851, 20; Second Wrangler and Smith's Prizeman, 1855, 27-8; Fellow of St. John's, 1856, 30; called to the Bar, 1858, 39; publishes pamphlet on Direct Taxation, 1860, 52; unsuccessful candidate for Whately Professorship, 1861, 55; unsuccessful candidate for Chair of Political Economy at Cambridge, 1863, 57-61; contributes to the *London Review*, 62-4; letter to the *Daily News* on the *Trent* crisis, 65-7; Hardwicke Society, 67-8; leader writer on the

Courtney, Leonard (*contd.*)—
Times, 1864, 69-70; the Franchise Bill of 1867, 81-6; Franco-German War, 86-90; Gortschakoff's Circular, 90-92; visits to America, Egypt, and India, 95-100; elected to the Political Economy Club, 1869, 105-6; Professor of Political Economy in the University of London, 1872–5, 106-7; the Radical Club, 109-40; political co-operation with Fawcett and Cairnes, 110-14; writes on Proportional Representation in *Fortnightly Review*, 1876, 114-116; stands for Liskeard against Horsman, 1874, 119-122; elected for Liskeard, 1876, 123; speeches on the Eastern Question, 124-31; annexation of the Transvaal, 131-3; Woman Suffrage, 133-135; the Eastern Question, 136-40; South Africa, 140-41; Woman Suffrage, 141-2; P.R., 142; Zulu War, 143-6; Woman Suffrage, 146-7; declines Secretaryship of the Board of Trade, 151-3; urges recall of Sir Bartle Frere, 153-6; Under-Secretary to the Home Office, December 1880, 159-61; Under-Secretary for the Colonies, August 1881, 165-166; Secretary to the Treasury, May 1882, 167-70; marriage to Miss Potter, 178-92; resignation, 207-16; campaign for P.R., 216-19; Gordon and the Sudan, 220-27; Socialism and Protection, 227-34; views on Ireland, 1880–85, 235-47; supports the Conservatives against Jesse Collings' Amendment to the Address, 247-51; appointed Chairman of Committees, 251-3; elected as a Liberal Unionist, 261; Randolph Churchill's resignation, 271-4; Ritchie's Local Government Act, 278-80; Parnell Commission, 280-83; Addresses on "The Swarming of Men," and Socialism, 285-8; the Second

Courtney, Leonard (*contd.*)—
Home Rule Bill, 298-300; supports Parish Councils, Death Duties, and the Evicted Tenants Bill, 300-307; Carlyle's house, 307-10; converted to Bimetallism, 310-12; Chairman of Commission on London Government, and member of Labour Commission, 312-14; the offer of the Speakership, 316-328; visit to Egypt, 331-2; Voluntary Schools, 332-3; the Jameson Raid, 334; the advance to Dongola, 334-7; failure of eyesight, 337-42; the Raid Committee, 345-8; visit to Greece, 349-52; the Spanish-American War, 355-356; Tsar's Rescript, 356-7; Fashoda, 357-9; the London Government Bill of 1899, 360; speech on the Transvaal crisis, 365-6; speech at Manchester, 370-73; appeals to Chamberlain and Salisbury, 373-8; speech to his constituents, Oct. 12, 381-4; speeches in the House, 385-7; the South Africa Conciliation Committee, 393; trouble in the constituency, 397-406; last speech in the House, 408-10; crisis in the Liberal party, 424-8; martial law in South Africa, 432-5; the Treaty of Vereeniging, 435-7; William Clarke, A. G. Gardiner, L. G. Amery, G. Unwin, and Basil Williams on Courtney as a man, 438-52; Breakfast Club, 454-7; Political Economy Club, 457-60; address on Herbert Spencer, 461-463; *The Working Constitution*, 467-9; *Diary of a Churchgoer*, 469-75; visit of the Boer Generals, 478-81; Chinese labour, 483-4; revival of Protection, 484-90; candidate for West Edinburgh, 490-94; opposes the Japanese alliance, 497-502; revival of P.R., 502-505; defeated in West Edinburgh, 506-8; accepts peerage, 509-15; urges P.R. for South

Courtney, Leonard (*contd.*)—
Africa, Ireland, and England, 515-25; protests against the colour bar in South Africa, 524-32; Indian reform, 532-534; the Budget of 1909 and the Lords, 534-42; Home Rule, 542-6; the Kaiser's letter to Lord Tweedmouth, 549-50; the Peace Congress of 1908, 550-52; annexation of Bosnia, 552-6; England and Russia, 557-9; Agadir and Lord Haldane's mission to Berlin, 559-76; outbreak of war in 1914, 577-86; advocates a negotiated peace, November 1915, 589-96; Conscription and Protection, 597-600; renews demand for negotiations, 600-605; Franchise Bill, 607-11; illness and death, 612-17
Crewe, Lord, 524, 577, 580
Cromer, Lord, 177, 224, 226, 331
Curzon, Lord, 283, 497, 591, 615, 616

Delane, J. T., 71-94, 101, 120
Devonshire, Duke of. *See* Hartington
Dilke, Sir C., 109-10, 132, 135, 145, 147, 153-4, 167, 195-6, 200, 230, 339, 483, 530, 533
Dillon, J., 384
Disestablishment, 292, 301-2
Disraeli, 83-6, Ch. VII.
Duff, Grant, 164-5, 169, 276, 454-7

Egypt, Arabi's revolt, 172-7
Gordon, Ch. XI.
Visit in 1895, 331-2
Advance to Dongola, 334-7
Omdurman, 357-9
Elliot, Arthur, 207, 247-8, 253-4, 264-7, 456-7
Eversley, Lord, 168

Farrer, Lord, 276, 312-13
Fawcett, H., 58-61, 85, 87, 105, 109-13, 117, 129, 135, 139, 167, 192, 195-6, 200-201, 205-6, 209, 212, 234
Fawcett, Mrs., 260, 276, 339, 432
Fisher, Herbert, 615-16
Fitzmaurice, Lord, 109-10, 150, 168-9, 213-14, 513
Förster, Professor, 584
Forster, W. E., 124, 129, 136, 138-9
Frere, Sir B., 143-6, 153-6
Froude, J. A., 91, 132
Fry, Sir E., 439, 548, 555

Gamble, Dean, 474, 590, 616
Gardiner, A. G., 439, 452-3
George, Lloyd, 343, 388, 408, 422, 551, 566, 600
Gladstone, W. E., 80-81, 85, 88-9, 93, 112, Chs. VII.-XIV.
Gordon, General, 220-25
Goschen, Lord, 147, 194, 246-8, 253, 257, 259, 271, 273, 288, 304, 312
Granville, Lord, 144-5, 150
Greece, visit to, 349-52
Grey, Earl, 213, 216-18, 438, 503, 544, 609-10
Grey, Sir E., 334, 359, 423, 505, Chs. XXIII., XXIV.
Gully, W. C., 265, 325-8

Haldane, Lord, 307, 386, 573-4, 583, 616
Hamilton, Lord G., 73, 299, 489
Harcourt, Sir W., 158, 160-61, 174, 238, 257, Chs. XIII.-XVII.
Hardwicke Society, 67-8
Hare, T., 84, 109, 115, 459
Harrison, Frederic, 39, 68, 106, 117, 393, 432
Hartington, Lord, Chs. VII.-XVII., 489-90, 493
Healy, T., 277
Henson, Hensley, 473
Hicks-Beach, Sir M., 141, 157, 259, 345, 418
Hill, G. Birkbeck, 102-4, 460-61
Hobhouse, Emily, 432-3, 480-81, 600, 615
Hobhouse, Lord, 300, 368, 432, 532
Hobhouse, Professor, 464, 572
Hobson, J. A., 403, 464, 488-9
Home Rule. *See* Ireland
Hoover, H., 595, 603
Horsman, E., 120-23
Humphreys, J. H., 503-4, 524, 529

Ilbert, Sir C., 455-6
India, visit to, 98-100
Offered post of Finance Minister, 171
Lord Morley's reforms, 532-4

Ireland, University Bill of 1873, 112-13
Visit in 1880, 157-9
Land Bill of 1881, 165-6, 172
Home Rule, Ch. XII.
Parnell Commission, 280-82
Visit in 1890, 289-90
Second Home Rule Bill, 298-300
Evicted Tenants Bill, 302-7
Devolution, 518-19
Home Rule, 542-6

James, Sir H., 147, 158, 247-8

Kimberley, Lord, 105, 171, 335, 459
Kitchener, Lord, 357, 430, 432

Labouchere, H., 267, 296, 304, 322, 329, 336, 345, 347, 384, 408
Lansdowne, Lord, 435, Ch. XXII., 591, 606
Lascelles, Sir F., 548, 574
Lawson, Sir W., 137-9, 148, 154, 175-6, 199, 218, 326, 346, 378, 408-9
Letters from—
Alverstone, Lord, 435
Amery, L., 391-2, 394-6
Asquith, H. H., 523, 605
Bagwell, R., 241
Balfour, Lady Frances, 321
Balfour, G. W., 512
Barnett, Canon, 535, 555
Bell, C. Moberly, 325
Birrell, A., 521, 606
Bolitho, T. B., 320, 324
Botha, General, 478
Bramwell, Lord, 209
Browning, Robert, 280
Bryce, James, 414, 416, 511, 519
Caine, W. S., 324
Cairnes, Professor, 55, 58-61, 64, 74-5, 84
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H., 410, 510
Carnegie, A., 513
Chamberlain, J., 188, 194, 254, 323, 374-5
Channing, F. A., 383
Clark, Mrs. Bright, 384
Clarke, Sir E., 380, 512
Colenso, Bishop, 164
Devonshire, Duke of. *See* Hartington
Don, the O'Conor, 215, 245
Letters from (*contd.*)—
Elliot, A., 379, 535
Farrer, Lord, 313
Fawcett, Mrs., 209, 339
Fitzmaurice, Lord, 209
Gladstone, Stephen, 383
Gladstone, W. E., 151, 160, 167, 176, 196, 208, 215, 234, 236, 252, 335
Goschen, G. J., 271
Green, Mrs. J. R., 463
Grey, Earl, 217, 544, 610
Grey, Sir Edward, 424, 537, 567, 605
Haldane, Lord, 573
Harrison, Frederic, 223, 410
Hartington, Lord, 256, 293, 305-307, 493
Hooppell, R., 51, 53, 56
Huxley, T. H., 309
James, Sir H., 320
Jusserand, J., 358
Kimberley, Lord, 171
Knowles, Sir J., 348
Kruger, President, 154
Lawson, Sir W., 223, 398
Massingham, H. W., 513
Meinertzhagen, Mrs., 187, 321
Merriman, J. X., 422, 528, 531
Morley, John, 116, 188, 199, 206, 232, 297, 318, 368-9, 403-4, 431, 463, 479, 507, 511, 579, 589
Mount Edgcumbe, Lord, 314
Mundella, A. J., 340
Murray, Gilbert, 606
Oliver, Richard, 17-18, 53
Paul, Herbert, 351
Perceval, Bishop, 513, 518
Potter, Kate, 184, 186, 289
Rathbone, W., 262, 320
Rendel, Lord, 535
Ripon, Lord, 423, 511
Roby, J. H., 201, 206, 210
Salisbury, Lord, 330, 376-8
Sauer, J., 422, 481
Scott, C. P., 372, 581
Scott, Sir John, 121, 171, 199, 340
Selous, F. C., 407-8, 420
Sieper, Professor, 583
Smuts, General, 512, 527, 529, 531, 604
Spencer, Earl, 205, 209
Spencer, Herbert, 187, 372, 401
Stead, W. T., 221

Letters from (*contd.*)—
Stebbing, W., 210, 469
St. Germans, Lord, 397, 401, 406
Trevelyan, G. M., 513
Umfrid, Pastor, 584-6
Villiers, Sir H. de, 531
Welby, Lord, 210
Willan, Dr., 26, 28, 41, 70
Letters to—
Amery, L., 392, 395-6
Asquith, 522-3, 545, 587
Balfour, A. J., 291
Barnett, Canon, 507
Bethell, Captain, 483
Botha, General, 479, 527
Brailsford, H. N., 495
Bryce, James, 518, 525, 532, 556
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H., 510
Chamberlain, J., 322-3, 373-5
Clark, Mrs. Bright, 384
Clarke, Sir E., 380-81
Courtney, John, 42, 96, 144, 151
Courtney, Louise, 96, 107, 113
Courtney, Margaret, 43, 96-7, 100-101, 118, 123, 126-7, 137-9, 143, 146, 150, 157, 161, 165-7, 176, 182, 205, 319, 322-3
Courtney, Sarah, 32-4, 40
Don, the O'Conor, 245
Elliot, Arthur, 272, 295, 379
Farrer, Lord, 312
Fawcett, Mrs., 261, 341, 344
Gladstone, W. E., 151, 160, 201-204, 207-8, 235-8, 253
Goschen, G. J., 277
Green, J. F., 502
Grey, Earl, 544
Grey, Sir Edward, 567
Harcourt, Sir W., 319
Hartington, Lord, 246
Hobhouse, Emily, 600
Hobhouse, Mrs. Henry, 489
Hobhouse, L. T., 578, 588
Humphreys, J. H., 503
Kruger, President, 367
Merriman, J. X., 532
Mill, J. S., 54-5
Morel, E. D., 582
Morel, Mrs., 606
Morley, John, 232, 308, 368, 413, 431, 464, 590
Mount Edgcumbe, Lord, 315
Oliver, R., 151
Paul, Herbert, 501
Perris, G. H., 508
Letters to (*contd.*)—
Potter, Kate, 173, 182-3, 185-9, 217
Roby, H. J., 98-100, 251, 258
Rosebery, Lord, 433, 539
Salisbury, Lord, 330, 375-8
Scott, C. P., 580
Scott, Sir John, 230, 269, 273, 284, 313, 333, 413
Sieper, Professor, 584
Stead, W. T., 222
Stephen, Leslie, 234
Steyn, President, 516
St. Germans, Lord, 402, 405-6
Umfrid, Pastor, 584
West, Sir A., 211
Williams, Aneurin, 608-9
Loreburn, Lord. *See* Reid
Lowe, R., 120-22, 147
Lowell, J. R., 279
Lubbock, Sir J., 195, 201, 206, 213, 216, 268, 276, 279, 454-6, 503-4, 513-14, 515, 574
Lucy, Sir H., 134-5, 278
Lyttelton, A., 505

Macdonell, Sir J., 459-60
Macdonnell, Sir A., 495, 518-19
Mackarness, F., 393, 432, 533
Mallet, Sir B., 458-9
Marshall, Professor, 108, 229, 618
Massingham, H. W., 352, 619
M'Carthy, Justin, 123-4, 264, 282
Merriman, J. X., 421-3
Mill, J. S., 52-60, 83, 85, 91, 105, 109, 111-12, 142
Milner, Lord, Chs. XVII.-XIX., 480-83, 505, 517-18, 595, 615
Morel, E. D., 607, 615
Morley, John, 105, 109, 116-17, Chs. VIII.-XXIV.
Morocco, 564-72
Mundella, A. J., 294

Northbourne, Lord, 135-6
Northbrook, Lord, 157, 164, 492
Northcote, Sir S., 124, 200

O'Brien, W., 306
O'Connor, T. P., 225-6, 304-5
Oliver, Richard, 11, 17-19, 53, 453

Palmerston, Lord, 66-7, 71, 80-82
Parmoor, Lord, 515, 577, 591, 598, 615

Parnell, C. S., 240, 243, 259, 280-82, 290
Paul, Herbert, 263, 422, 440, 501, 618
Pauncefote, Lord, 382
Perceval, Bishop, 481, 520
Political Economy Club, 105-6, 457-460
Potter, Kate, Ch. IX.
Proportional Representation, 82-6, 111, 114-17, 142, Ch. X., 245, 278, 291-2, 502-4, 516-30, 607-11

Radical Club, 109-10
Rashdall, Dean, 473
Redmond, J., 544
Reid, Sir R., 316, 388, 408, 414, 481, 514, 564, 578, 591-6
Rhodes, Cecil, 345-8
Ridgeway, Sir West, 516
Ridley, Sir M. W., 317-25, 343
Ripon, Lord, 171, 388, 532
Ritchie, Lord, 278, 288, 484, 489
Roby, H. J., 32, 41, 46, 50, 104-6, 201, 338
Roscoe, Lady, 466-7
Rosebery, Lord, 244, 334-7, 425-8, 430-34, 534, 539-40, 568, 615
Russell, Earl, 71, 80-83

Salisbury, Lord, 125, 200, 227, Chs. XII.-XIX.
Sauer, J. W., 421-3
Scott, C. P., 216, 370, 422, 503, 614
Scott, Sir John, 47, 98, 102-3, 174, 331-2, 338-9
Selous, F. C., 393
Shaw, Lord, 414, 465, 514
Sieper, Professor, 563-4, 583-4
Smith, W. H., 150, 266-7, 272-3, 279, 288
Smuts, General 527-9, 615
Spencer, Earl, 242, 250, 329 388, 434
Spencer, Herbert, 165, 181-4, 191-192, 415, 461-3, 550
Stanhope, Philip (Lord Weardale), 347, 385-6
Stead, W. T., 193, 221-2, 356
Stebbing, W., 43-4, 47-9, 75-7, 338, 341-2, 453, 458, 617
Stephen, Leslie, 60, 101, 112, 461
Suttner, Baroness von, 550
Swift MacNeill, J. G., 264

Temple, Sir R., 279
Trevelyan, C. P., 558
Trevelyan, Sir G., 147, 192, 242, 250, 256-7, 274-5, 454-7
Trevelyan, G. M., 558, 571
Tweedmouth, Lord, 549

Unwin, George, 443-9, 468, 617

Wace, Dean, 72-3, 78-9
Watson, Spence, 218
Webb, Mrs. Sidney, 184, 338, 443
Wedderburn, Sir W., 532-3
West, Sir A., 168, 170
Westlake, J., 46, 50, 503, 556
Williams, Aneurin, 503, 524, 536
Williams, Basil, 325-6, 449-52, 612
Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Fischer, 503, 524, 527, 611-12
Woman Suffrage, 37, 83, 111, 133-135, 141-2, 146-7, 344, 608-9
Wyndham, G., 346-7, 399, 495

THE END

Printed by R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, *Edinburgh.*

By LORD COURTNEY OF PENWITH

Crown 8vo. **5s.** *net.*

THE DIARY OF A CHURCH-GOER

THIRD IMPRESSION

WITH PREFACE BY THE DEAN OF EXETER

SOME PRESS OPINIONS

Christian Commonwealth.—"A modest, sincere, and at times striking commentary on the questions raised in the mind of an intelligent layman who has ceased to believe in orthodox Anglicanism, but does not want to give up church-going, and remains at heart a Christian. . . . Specially a book to be read by all preachers who would understand their congregations."

A Man of Kent in the British Weekly.—"I have re-read the volume with interest. Lord Courtney was essentially pious, though he claimed great liberty of thought. He was a regular and patient church-goer, and his views are well worth attention."

Westminster Gazette.—"The diary is unconventional, but it will offend nobody; and it makes excellent reading."

Methodist Times.—"Lord Courtney's book remains one to be read by such as are perplexed in faith. . . . To many thoughtful, troubled souls this book has already approved itself. It should have a message still, now that its greatly respected author is no more."

LONDON: MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.

A SELECTION OF NEW AND RECENT BOOKS

LIFE OF LORD KITCHENER. By Sir GEORGE ARTHUR, Bt., M.V.O., Private Secretary to Lord Kitchener, 1914–16. With Prefaces by the MARQUIS OF SALISBURY and EARL HAIG. 3 vols. With Portraits and Plans. 8vo. 52s. 6d. net.

LIFE OF WILLIAM BOOTH, THE FOUNDER OF THE SALVATION ARMY. By HAROLD BEGBIE. With Photogravure Portraits and other Illustrations. 2 vols. 8vo. 42s. net.

THE LETTERS OF HENRY JAMES. Selected and Edited by PERCY LUBBOCK. With two Portraits and Facsimile. 2 vols. 8vo. 36s. net.

SAMUEL BUTLER. Author of "Erewhon" (1835–1902). A Memoir. By HENRY FESTING JONES. With 20 Illustrations, including Two Facsimile Letters. 2 vols. 8vo. 42s. net.

MISS EDEN'S LETTERS. Edited by her Great-Niece, VIOLET DICKINSON. With four Photogravures. 8vo. 18s. net.

DEMOCRACY. By the Right Hon. VISCOUNT BRYCE, O.M., P.C., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S. 8vo.

LETTERS OF TRAVEL (1892–1913). By RUDYARD KIPLING. Edition de Luxe. 8vo. 10s. 6d. net. Uniform Edition. Crown 8vo. 7s. 6d. net. Pocket Edition. Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 6s. net. Leather, 7s. 6d. net.

THE GRENADIER GUARDS IN THE GREAT WAR OF 1914–1918. By Lieutenant-Colonel the Right Hon. Sir FREDERICK PONSONBY (late Grenadier Guards). With Photogravure Portraits and Plans. 3 vols. 8vo.

PICCADILLY IN THREE CENTURIES. With an account of Berkeley Square and The Haymarket. By ARTHUR IRWIN DASENT, Author of "The History of St. James's Square." With Illustrations. 8vo.

LONDON: MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 953 575 8