LIFE OF DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

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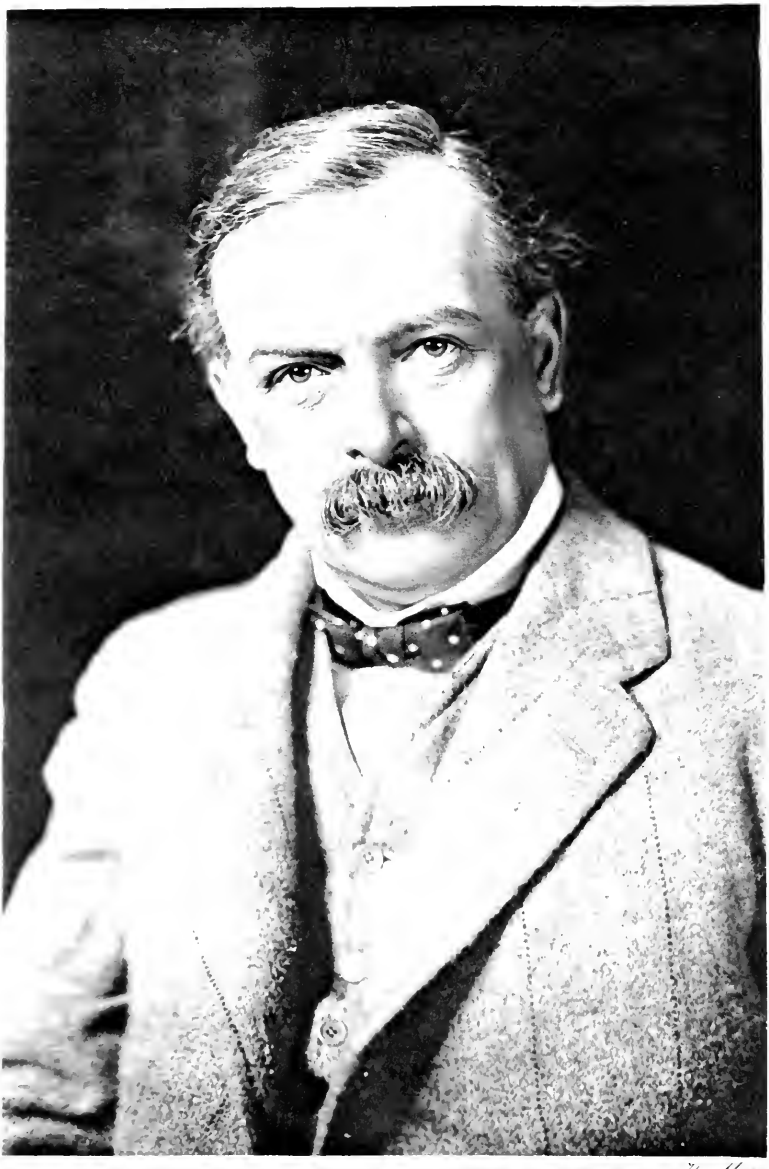
VOL. I



LIFE OF
DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

BY

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OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

VOLUME I

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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE FIRST VOLUME

MY information upon the period of Mr. Lloyd George's life covered by this volume is derived mainly from private sources. Except that I am alone responsible for the defects of this book, it would be right to describe it as the result of a collaboration with my wife, who has assisted me by collecting a great deal of material and in other ways.

I am also indebted to many friends of Mr. Lloyd George's youth, whose names appear in the course of the work, for much interesting information.

The newspapers of North Wales have long faithfully recorded the doings and speeches of the Member for the Carnarvon Boroughs. I am very grateful to the editors of "The Carnarvon Herald," "The North Wales Express," "The Herald Cymraeg," "The Cambrian News," and "The Genedl" for permission to quote from their columns. I also have to thank the editors of "The Manchester Guardian" and "The Westminster Gazette," Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, and the proprietors of "Hansard," for permission to reprint interviews and speeches from their respective journals and publications.

H. DU P.

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1864.

June 7.—Death of his father, William George.
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1868.

General Election: his first memory of politics.

1869.

Enters the village school of Llanystumdwy.

1877.

December 8.—Passes the Preliminary Examination of the Incorporated Law Society.

1878.

July.—Enters the office of Messrs. Breese, Jones & Casson, solicitors, Portmadoc.

1879.

January 28.—Articled to Mr. Casson.
October 6.—First appearance in Court: proves service of notice of objection at Revision Court.

1880.

March.—General Election.
May.—His family settles at Criccieth.
November 5.—Article on "The Marquess of Salisbury" published in "North Wales Express" under the pseudonym "Brutus."
By-election in Carnarvonshire.
November 17.—Attends Liberal meeting: Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., the principal speaker.
November 19.—Article by "Brutus" in "North Wales Express" on the by-election.
November 30.—Acts as Liberal Committeeman.

1881.

February 19.—Article by "Brutus" on "Irish Grievances" in "The North Wales Express."
November.—His first visit to London.
November 14.—He visits the Houses of Parliament.
November 28.—Joins the Portmadoc Debating Society.

1882.

January.—Speech on Irish Land Act, Portmadoc Debating Society.
March.—Speech on County Franchise, Portmadoc Debating Society.
June.—In Conway Camp as a Volunteer.
November 13.—Speech on Egyptian War, Portmadoc Debating Society.

1883.

June 2.—"Tit-bit of poetry" referring

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1884.

Passes Final Examination for Solicitor.
Attends Debate in the House of Commons and hears Mr. Gladstone and Lord Randolph Churchill.
Admitted a Solicitor.
Starts practice in Criccieth.
October 17.—Article on Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in "North Wales Express."
November 7.—Article on Lord Randolph Churchill in "North Wales Express."

1885.

January 1.—Opens an office at Portmadoc.
January 17.—Speech on Temperance, Blaenau Festiniog.
January 30.—First appearance as advocate in the Police Court.
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February 23.—Begins his first week in the County Court.
February 27.—Speech on Free Trade, Portmadoc Debating Society.
March 28.—Speech at Liberationist meeting, Criccieth.
April 26.—Speech on Local Option, Portmadoc.
June 1.—Speech at missionary meeting, Blaenau Festiniog.
November.—Addressing Liberal meetings (General Election Campaign).

1886.

Organises the Farmers' Union for Lleyn and Eifonydd.
February 12.—Speech at Mr. Michael Davitt's meeting, Blaenau Festiniog.

Becomes Secretary of the Anti-Tithe League for South Carnarvonshire.

1887.

June 27.—Debate on Tithe and Disestablishment with a curate at Sarn.

1888.

Llanfrothen Burial Case.
January 24.—Mr. Lloyd George marries Miss Owen of Mynydd Ednyfed.
July.—Liberal Associations of Nevin, Pwllheli, and Criccieth adopt Mr. Lloyd George as candidate for Parliament for Carnarvon Boroughs.
December 20.—Unanimously selected as Liberal candidate for Carnarvon Boroughs.

1889.

Elected Alderman of the Carnarvonshire County Council.
February 15.—Richard Lloyd George born.
October.—Meeting of Welsh National Council, addressed by Sir William Harcourt.

Mr. Lloyd George seconds resolution in favour of Disestablishment.

Speech on the proposed Welsh National League at North Wales Federation meeting.

1890.

February 4.—Speech on Home Rule for Wales at South Wales Liberal Federation meeting.
March.—Death of Mr. Swetenham, Q.C., M.P. for Carnarvon Boroughs.
April 10.—By-election (Lloyd George, 1963 : Nanney, 1945).
April 17.—Mr. Lloyd George, M.P., "takes the oath and his seat."
May 7.—Speech at the Metropolitan Tabernacle (Liberation Society meeting : Mr. Campbell-Bannerman chairman).
June.—On a Scotch Water Bill Committee.
June 4.—Speech at Free Trade Hall, Manchester.
June 13.—Maiden speech in the House : on Local Taxation Bill.
August 2.—Mair Eiluned George born.
August 13.—Speech on Supply (House of Commons).
September 29.—Speech at Mr. John Morley's meeting, St. Helens.

November.—Mr. Parnell deposed.
Speeches at Merthyr and Rotherham.

1891.

January and February.—Speeches in the House on the Tithe Rent-charge Recovery Bill.
March 18.—Speech on Second Reading Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill.
May 21.—At Penrhyn Hall, Bangor, on "Landlords and Monopolists."
June 23 *and* 24.—Speeches on Elementary Education Bill.
July 1, 7, 30.—Speeches on Elementary Education Bill.

1892.

April 3.—Olwen Elizabeth George born.
April 28.—Mr. Lloyd George moves amendment to Clergy Discipline Bill. Mr. Gladstone's reply.
June 26.—Dissolution.
July 8.—Election (Lloyd George, 2154; Puleston, 1958).
August 8.—Defeat of Conservative Government.
September.—Mr. Lloyd George meets Mr. Gladstone.

1893.

February 28, *April* 18, *June* 20.—Letters on Welsh Disestablishment, Home Rule, etc., in "The Genedl."

1894.

April.—Revolt of "The Four."
April 30.—Speech on Welsh Disestablishment Bill.
October.—Speeches at Cardiff and Aberystwyth on "Cymru Fydd."
December 4.—Gwilym George born.

1895.

March 26.—Speech on Second Reading Welsh Disestablishment Bill.
August 11.—Fall of Liberal Government.
Election (Lloyd George, 2265: Nanney, 2071).
November 14.—Lord Rosebery's letter on Home Rule for Wales.

1896.

January.—At annual meeting South Wales Liberal Federation.
Jan. 27–30.—Sunderland Election Petition.
March 22.—Meeting of Liberal M.P.s to discuss Home Rule All Round.
March 26.—Speeches on Pembroke Dock, etc.
April 30.—Speech on Second Reading Agricultural Rating Bill.
May 11.—Speech on Finance Bill.
May 22.—Suspension.
June 19.—Death of Mr. Lloyd George's mother.
July 1.—Speech on Third Reading Agricultural Rating Bill.
Sir William Harcourt's compliment.
August—October.—Holiday in South America.

1897.

February—April.—Speeches on Voluntary Schools Bill.
February 17.—Speech on Address (on Roman Catholic University for Ireland).
May 17.—Speech at Cardiff on Sunday Closing.

1898.

March 23.—Speech at National Liberal Federation meeting.
July.—Speeches on Irish Local Government Bill.
October 24.—At Haworth on Lord Salisbury.

1899.

May 19.—Welsh Parliamentary Party meeting: speech on proposed Independent Party.
June 22.—Speech on Second Reading Tithe Rent-charge (Rates) Bill.
September.—Visit to Canada.
October.—Speeches on Ritualism.

Photograph by Agnew

Miss Megan Lloyd George

LIFE OF
DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

INTRODUCTION

THAT no man's biography should be written until he is dead is one of the popular fallacies that escaped the attention of Charles Lamb. It is true, of course, that no prudent man will attempt to appraise a career which is in being, or to pass a final judgment upon views and policies which are working themselves out in action. As to that, *respice finem* must remain the motto of the historian. But that is no reason why a chronicler may not follow in the tracks of an heroic progress as yet incomplete, and glean upon the way for the admirers of its present triumphs such records as are extant of its past efforts and achievements.

Certainly, whatever popular aphorisms have to say, the popular taste is for biographies of the living. These are being written daily, in snippets in our newspapers, in "character sketches" in our magazines. Nor has it ever been thought amiss that autobiographies should be compiled, and yet it is an almost essential condition of an autobiography that its subject should still live. (Not quite essential, for one could mention autobiographies which owe little to the pen of their subject.) There must, indeed, be some absurdity in a notion which would always reserve a man's life-story for posterity and never allow it to be told to those of his own generation.

If the story of any living man's career may legitimately be sketched, there are few men of our time and nation whose lives present more tempting material for a biographer than that of David Lloyd George. His life and character attract first of all by their glitter, and next, on a closer view, by their qualities of solidity and substance. Popular notions of him have varied, but the most persistent view of him is that his power is based upon a phenomenal possession and mastery of certain brilliant qualities. There is a danger that these qualities, which he obviously possesses, may by their brilliancy obscure their solid

foundations. English people, who love the proverb that "still waters run deep," like to think also that where there is surge and splash there is never profundity, and so they are sometimes led to prefer in their hearts the silent fool to the brilliant orator. It is otherwise with the Celt, who can always talk himself, and thinks it folly to ascribe the possession of great ideas to dumb mouths.

A very small acquaintance with the career of the subject of this book is enough to show that the sturdy qualities which the Anglo-Saxon is apt to appropriate to himself may be found allied with the most meteoric brilliancy. According to Matthew Arnold the Celtic genius has "sentiment for its main basis, with love of beauty, charm and spirituality for its excellence, ineffectualness and self-will for its defect." The Celt is apt to lack that hardness of fibre which is essential if a man is to withstand and outlive the rough handling of public life. It is no secret that at the outset of Mr. Lloyd George's career his staying power was doubted by all but a few admirers. It was thought by many Welshmen that this young countryman of theirs had little but the gift of eloquence for his equipment. Some of those who might have helped him most found it hard to believe that he could ever be the peer of men of such abilities and such culture as the late T. E. Ellis or Mr. Ellis Griffith. Some of the older members of the party were inclined to cold-shoulder him, to inspire unfriendly articles in the Welsh Press, to give him the lowest place upon the programme at public meetings. They honestly believed that Parliament would soon prick the bubble of his local reputation. They might have realised, one would think, that industry and stamina and the humdrum qualities that success demands could not be altogether lacking in a man who had started as a poor boy in a remote Welsh village, had received such education as was available to the sons of villagers, and had at twenty-five become the accepted Liberal candidate for a constituency in North Wales where Liberalism was not so robust that advanced views or humble origin were likely to be strong points in his favour.

I have no desire to underrate his opportunities. I shall try to point out later that the education provided by the village school of Llanystumdwy gave no small opportunities to a boy willing to learn. Modern educationists may frown at the methods of the old schoolmaster, unfettered by too many codes and regulations. But he gave of his best, and he taught the love of books. When David Lloyd George was ten years old he was reading Macaulay's History greedily and with enjoyment. But it is not underestimating the teaching of the village school to say that if its pupil had ended his career as a prosperous country solicitor

he could not have been accused of neglecting his opportunities. In fact, he had no sooner gained such a foothold in his profession as ensured him a certain and progressive livelihood than he jeopardised all his prospects of material prosperity by entering the field as a Parliamentary candidate, and giving up his time and his abilities to the engrossing work of a Member of Parliament. It would be wrong to forget the devotion with which his brother worked unceasingly to keep together the practice which the senior partner was, for a large part of each year, compelled to neglect; just as one cannot ignore the fact that, but for his uncle Richard Lloyd, David Lloyd George might be a shoemaker to-day. He has indeed been fortunate above most men in this regard. His father, had he lived, could have done no more for him than the uncle to whom he was more than a son. He was always able to count on his younger brother's ungrudging help; and his wife, from the day she joined her fortunes to his, has thought nothing a sacrifice which smoothed his path to fame.

When all allowances are made, and when every due tribute has been paid, our conclusion still must be that in these early steps of his career he was bold to the verge of audacity and courageous to the verge of recklessness. Only a cool head and calculating judgment could save these qualities from passing into their extremes. It is safe to say that whether he has acted rightly or wrongly he has never acted rashly or impetuously. He has run risks, but he has almost always weighed the chances first. Sometimes, indeed, a great principle has been at stake, and then all other considerations have been as dust in the scales. The most striking case of this kind was his support of the policy of peace when the fever of the South African War was in men's minds. Then he risked his livelihood, his career, his life itself, not because he had calculated the chances and found the risk worth taking, but because honour pointed only one way.

Courage, then, I should be disposed to put first among his qualities. Let me not be misunderstood if I suggest that industry takes the next place. In 1883, when some chaffing references to his thirst for renown had appeared in print, the young man of twenty wrote in his diary,[1] "Perhaps it will be justified. I believe it depends entirely on what forces of pluck and *industry* I can muster." In one sense he is not and never was naturally industrious. As a boy he never plodded over his books, but he loved his books. He read much and read rapidly, and what he had once read he seemed never to forget. His old schoolfellows speak, with some of the old schoolboy envy in their tones, of the

[1] See p. 42, *infra*.

ease with which he learned. But he was never above being frankly bored by work. The first Committee on which he sat in the House of Commons caused him profound misery. From quite early days he loathed the labour of writing letters, and his correspondents complained that they were ignored, and were careful, if they knew him well enough, to urge attention upon him. He has never got the better of that aversion, and is, indeed, enthusiastic in his hatred of letter-writing. Nor has he any love for regular hours in the study or at the writing-table. He will put off to the last moment the evil hour of a troublesome task, and then, as in his school-days, finish the whole job in less time than it would take another to master preliminary difficulties. Those who work under him confess that they do not know how he gets through his work in the short time he leaves himself for it. What is certain is that it is done, and done thoroughly.

It is this unmethodical habit of mind which makes it easy to overlook the sheer hard work which has been an undoubted, and indeed a necessary, factor in his success. There is a limit to what can be done by the light of nature. A Welsh-speaking boy, brought up in a village where English is as much a foreign language as it is, let us say, in Boulogne, has become a finished English orator. As a young man in Parliament he attracted attention not less by his minute knowledge of its rules and his skill in the technique of a Parliamentarian than by his eloquence as a debater. As President of the Board of Trade he became the temporary idol of the Conservative Press by his business-like grasp of dry problems. It is surely plain that the "ineffectualness" which Matthew Arnold diagnosed as the defect of the Celtic genius has been supplanted in this case by a diligence and an assiduity which would have been more obvious in a man of slower wit and understanding.

The purpose of this book, however, is not to pass judgment, but to provide evidence. So far as the early days of his life are concerned, it will be possible here to add a great deal to what is now generally known, and it has seemed best to deal fully with that period. In dealing with more recent history it is necessary to practise reserve, but it is hoped that there may be some use in a book which sets out an accurate record of his Parliamentary career. The public memory is short, as journalists who find it unnecessary to hamper a flowing style by striving after consistency ought to be the first to acknowledge. People who have forgotten that Mr. Lloyd George advocated in the teeth of howling mobs during the war views which, whether right or wrong, were odious to the vast majority of all sections of the community, may perhaps be persuaded that he is essentially a demagogue, flattering and

cajoling the many-headed monster with such words as will tickle its ears. Those who have forgotten his patient labours at the Board of Trade may be willing to believe that his Insurance Scheme is the light-hearted attempt of a mere talker to solve a great problem. It is, however, certain that no one who has troubled to learn the facts of his life will find such cheap criticisms easy to adopt. That in itself might be reason enough for setting out those facts with as much accuracy as possible, even if the interest felt by the public in a life which is, on its public side, a national possession, did not suffice to justify this attempt to tell the true story of what is already a great career.

CHAPTER I

Ancestry and parentage—David and Mary George—William George, father of David Lloyd George—His friendship with Dr. Martineau—His career—Marries Elizabeth Lloyd—Friendship with John Daniel Morell—Birth of David Lloyd George at Manchester, January 17, 1863—The family move to Pembrokeshire—Death of William George—A niece's tribute.

GREAT men arise sometimes in quarters so unlikely that we are tempted to believe that a beneficent Providence is apt to hurry the slow wheels of evolution by an occasional miraculous intervention. David Lloyd George, while one may marvel at the perseverance and assiduity which have enabled him to conquer difficulties, could find no reason to complain of his descent or the environment of his early years. There are some who waste their time in vain regrets for the days when it was as difficult for a man of humble birth to enter the Cabinet as we know it to be for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Those days are gone for ever, and nobody need regret them who has grasped the fact that there are pedigrees outside Debrett, and that education is to be obtained elsewhere than at Eton. In the main, the ruling classes in the past have been aristocrats, and the aristocrat is almost always well educated. A confusion has thus arisen in vulgar minds, and some of the critics of democracy, and especially certain aristocrats upon whom education has failed to leave any marked imprint, have concluded that government by any but aristocrats has all the evils which government by the ignorant, the uneducated and the inexperienced might have. If an illustration is needed for the proposition that a man of humble birth may be brought up in cultured surroundings and born of a lineage at least as likely as that of any ducal family to produce genius, an attention to the facts of David Lloyd George's ancestry will supply it.

In the early part of the last century David George was a prosperous yeoman farmer in South Wales. He lived with his wife Mary at Trecoed, one of the principal farmhouses in the

Fishguard district, and there in 1820 was born their son William, father of David Lloyd George. William George was brought up in a deeply religious household. His parents were Baptists, and his mother was an active member of the Baptist church of Llangloffan. The itinerant preacher was always sure of a welcome at their home, and they united with strong religious convictions the love of theology and love of learning which are characteristic of the Welsh people. Their son William was a studious boy, and adopted the teaching profession. He left Wales early in life, and after teaching for some time in a school in London he was appointed a master in a Unitarian school at Liverpool.

During this period of his life William George formed a friendship with Dr. James Martineau, the great philosopher and divine, whose death in 1900 removed an ornament not only of the Unitarian Church, but of the world of letters and philosophy. A visible token of this friendship may still be seen in the shape of a portrait engraving of Martineau, autographed by himself, which was a treasured possession of William George, and is still preserved by his son. Although William George retained his Baptist faith, and was never called upon to teach the dogmas of Unitarianism, his friendship with Martineau cannot have failed to influence his mental attitude. The philosopher was fifteen years his senior, and, to use a trite phrase with complete truth, one may say that for a young man to know him was in itself an education. He has been well described as "a man happy in his ancestry."[1] "He inherited the dignity, the reserve, the keen and vivid intellect, and the picturesque imagination of the French Huguenot, though they came to him chastened and purified by generations of Puritan discipline exercised under the gravest ecclesiastical disabilities, and of culture maintained in the face of exclusion from academic privileges."

From Liverpool William George returned to his native country at the end of 1852, being then thirty-two years of age. The date is fixed by the inscription upon a case of books containing a large edition of Webster's Dictionary and sixteen volumes of the "Penny Cyclopædia," with which "the teachers and conductors of the children's service of Hope Street Church Sunday Schools" presented him at Christmas of that year, on the occasion of his leaving. The Sunday School is an institution of deep significance in Wales, and it is not surprising that William George's zeal as a teacher was not satisfied by his weekday duties.

For the next five years William George owned a private grammar school at Haverfordwest, and then in 1857 he was

[1] By the late Dr. Fairbairn in his article in the "Encyclopædia Britannica."

appointed head master of the Troed-yr-allt British School at Pwllheli. The discipline of the school had been at a very low ebb, but the new master, although, unlike most pedagogues of his day, he was averse from corporal punishment, had the indefinable gifts which make a disciplinarian, and he brought order out of chaos. Apart from reading, which always occupied much of his time, his chief recreation was music, and he is said to have been the first to introduce the system of tonic sol-fa into the district. On Sundays he taught a men's class in the Sunday School, and some of his pupils fortunately still live to testify to his qualities. They tell us that he was a man of strong convictions, and he is said to have been "invincible in argument and debate." He has been described by one who knew him as a man of middle height, broad-shouldered, and with a well-knit frame. His face was rather thin and pale. His forehead was broad and high, and his eyes piercing. All his movements, it is added, were quick but firm and determined.[1]

William George remained at Pwllheli for only about two years; and it was during that time that he met and married Elizabeth, daughter of David Lloyd of Llanystumdwy and Rebecca his wife. Elizabeth George was eight years younger than her husband. Like him she came of old Welsh stock. Her father was one of the Lloyds of Llwyndyrus in Lleyn, among whose ancestors are numbered the astronomer Richard Lloyd and Sir Gruffydd Lloyd. Her mother was the daughter of William Samuel of Pwllheli, and died on June 19, 1868, at the age of sixty-five. The little village of Llanystumdwy, where William George's wife was brought up, was in her father's day famous as the meeting-place of the literary society known as the Cymrodorion. Poets and writers and men of literary tastes from all the country round foregathered there, and among them David Lloyd, who, like his son Richard, of whom more must be written later, combined learning with shoemaking, found his friends. He died on October 24, 1839, at the early age of thirty-nine, when his daughter Elizabeth was only four years old.

Mrs. William George, as she now became, was a woman of medium height. Her complexion was fair, her hair very dark, her eyes brown, the expression of her thoughtful features one of great charm. The sound judgment and high principles with which her friends rightly credited her made her an ideal companion for the man she now married. Together they left Wales at the end of 1859 for Newchurch, Lancashire. It was there that their eldest child, Mary Ellen, was born, and there, unhappily, the young

[1] See an article by the Rev. Henry Rees in "Seren Cymru," January 1909.

husband's health began to give way. He found his work and surroundings uncongenial.

You may be sure [he wrote in a private letter] that we were both very glad to leave Newchurch. The place itself we could do with very well—though cold and rather damp, it is healthy—the air is much purer there than at Manchester, and neither of us could hold out long without pure air. It was the Newchurch *School* and the people connected with it that did not suit me, and I need not say that I did not suit them. Nearly all the "Directors" are rough working men who had not the means to act liberally even if disposed to do so—and besides, my temperament is such that I would rather be the master of workpeople than their servant.

Among his close friends at this time was John Daniel Morell, the well-known educationist, who, after beginning his career as a Congregational minister, had been appointed by Lord Lansdowne to be an inspector of schools. It is significant that two such men as Martineau and Morell should have been among the intimates of William George. For Morell, if not so great a thinker as Martineau, was still highly distinguished as a philosopher and metaphysician. He had studied philosophy under Fichte at Bonn, after taking his M.A. degree at Glasgow; and to a student like William George this acquaintanceship must have been an enlarging and enlightening experience. It was through Dr. Morell's persuasion that he accepted an appointment to take charge of a large school at Manchester for three months pending the appointment of a permanent teacher. This was his last post as a teacher, and it is through his acceptance of it that Mr. Lloyd George can claim Manchester as his birthplace. He was born there on January 17, 1863. But before he was a year old the family had moved to Wales. William George forsook the profession to which he had so far devoted his life for the ancestral pursuit of farming. He returned to South Wales and to Pembrokeshire, his native county. There he took a lease of a small farm known as Bwlford, about four miles from Haverfordwest, and this farm is the scene of David Lloyd George's earliest recollection. It is an unhappy one. After two successful years as a farmer, William George died suddenly of pneumonia on June 7, 1864, in the forty-fourth year of his age.

I am privileged to print the following notes upon the ancestry of David Lloyd George from the pen of "a devoted niece":—

William George's great-grandfather lived at Tresinwen, a farm on the North Pembrokeshire coast, on part of the land of which the new Strumble Head Lighthouse is built. Both he and his wife Anne were very highly

esteemed by all in the neighbourhood and the country round. They were Baptists, and used to ride on horseback every month to the old chapel of Rhydwilym, of which they were members, to the Communion Service. They had two sons, David and Timothy. David, after he was married, went to Trecoed to live on a large farm a few miles from Fishguard. Both he and his wife were well known for their good and virtuous lives, and their hospitality, especially to ministers of the gospel, was unbounded. They had two sons, William and John. The elder son, William (the Chancellor's father), although he liked the country and loved nature, yet greatly disliked the idea of being only a farmer. His ambition, above all things, was to become a scholar, and he tried to draw his brother John into his way of thinking, telling him what a poor thing life would be for him if he remained all his days "with his nose in the soil." His mother was very anxious that he should go in for the medical profession, and he became apprenticed (as was the custom in those days) to Dr. Miller of Haverfordwest; but the drudgery of the surgery did not suit his taste, especially as the doctor kept him too busy at work to admit of his having any leisure for study. The doctor also complained that he burned too much candle after he retired to his room for the night. William, therefore, sought a better chance of indulging his literary taste by entering a school in London as an articled pupil or pupil-teacher. He remained there some years, and from there went to Liverpool, where he remained for eight years as head master in charge of a school. While here he became acquainted with, and afterwards became a great friend of, Dr. Henry Martineau and his daughter Harriet.

He used to spend his holidays at his home at Trecoed, making a round of visits to his many relatives and friends around. He was well up in affairs of State and current events, and especially well versed in politics, and an excellent talker—in fact, a brilliant conversationalist, genial and humorous withal, and possessing a very engaging manner, so that he was much sought after by all, especially the well-educated families, throughout the whole of North Pembrokeshire.

He was very fortunate in his marriage, and although short, his married life was exceptionally happy. In a letter to his mother he said he had been lucky enough to win one of earth's best and fairest daughters, and one he felt sure his mother would be proud to welcome as a dear daughter. Alas! that joy was not realised. His good mother, to whom he was very much devoted, died within a year after his marriage. Through some neglect he did not receive the news of his mother's death until it was almost too late for him to arrive for the funeral. He arrived at Trecoed just as the funeral cortège was leaving the house, and, the nearest station being sixteen miles away, the poor fellow had to walk all the way to his old home, after a long tedious journey, because no conveyance had been sent to meet him, although there were plenty of horses on the farm, and a trap as well. As soon as he arrived, he joined the procession, which meant another mile to walk, as the mother's coffin was carried to the cemetery by the tenants and servants at their express wish, to pay her a last token of respect.

He (my uncle) never could have properly recovered from that tremendous strain upon his body and mind, because it was not long after this trouble

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S FATHER.

(From Photograph kindly lent by Mr. Wm. George.)

that he retired from school life. The prospect of a restful holiday at Trecoed had now been lost to him, together with the joy of personally introducing his dear wife to his mother. Consequently, he evidently bethought himself that a little farmhouse of his own would be the next best thing.

I had the pleasure of seeing them settled in their new home at Bwlford and of holding the infant David Lloyd George in my arms when he was three months old ; his little sister Mary was then toddling about the room, being about fourteen or fifteen months old.

William George's death was caused by a chill taken while out gardening on a damp day, and pneumonia set in and took him away in less than a week after he was taken ill.

CHAPTER II

(1864–1876)

I

Richard Lloyd, scholar, preacher and shoemaker—Llanystumdwy described—Early years of David Lloyd George—A preacher aged two—Enters the village school—The village schoolmaster—Schoolfellows—Becomes a rebel—Chapel and Sunday School—"The Disciples"—First appearance as a singer.

MRS. GEORGE had been left in straitened circumstances. She had a brother, Richard Lloyd, who, if not a rich man, felt, as the event proved, that he was not so poor but that he could succour the widow and orphan of his own kin. He had succeeded his father as the principal shoemaker (there was one other) of the village of Llanystumdwy. His sister sent him the news of her bereavement, and he hastened to her. He saw that it was impossible for the widow and her infant children to remain upon the farm, and it seemed to this good man natural and right that they should go back with him to share his home and his savings at Llanystumdwy. The possessions of the family were sold up, and this is Mr. Lloyd George's earliest recollection. The little boy and his sister Mary[1] saw the house they loved being broken up, and neighbours carrying off their purchases. The children tried, by putting pebbles against the gate, to keep out the invaders and save the household goods.

Recently[2] the Chancellor of the Exchequer went back to visit the old farm in South Wales. It must have made a vivid impression on him in his childhood, for he inquired after some folding gates he remembered, which, sure enough, had been there fifty years ago and had since been taken down.

With Richard Lloyd Mrs. George and her two children jour-

[1] Afterwards the wife of Captain Philip Davies. Mrs. Davies died in 1909.
[2] *I.e.* early in 1912.

COTTAGE AT LLANYSTUMDWY,

Where Mr. Lloyd George was brought up by his uncle.

neyed to Llanystumdwy, and from that day it became their home. In a few months a second son, William, was posthumously born. The story of their childhood is one of unselfish devotion on the part of their mother and their uncle, who was to be a father to them in a very real sense.

Nearly fifty years have passed since Richard Lloyd brought his widowed sister and her orphan children to the village in which he had been born and bred. In these years it has altered little in outward appearance. Nature has endowed it richly, and the hands of man have not been laid heavily upon it. Two miles away, at Criccieth, the sea rolls lazily in a great sheltered bay. Here at Llanystumdwy the river Dwyfor, rich in salmon and trout (jealously preserved and assiduously poached) rushes swiftly to meet it. The stream intersects the village, and is spanned by an old stone bridge from which the traveller may listen to the music of the stream as it splashes over the boulders that form its bed. The houses, plain workmen's cottages for the most part, are on the Criccieth side of the bridge. Across it, the road dips towards the church and the village school. On every side are woods and coverts guarded as carefully as the stream, and then as now not immune, in spite of the energy of the keepers, from occasional invasion of the sacred rights of landowners.

The house in which Richard Lloyd lived lies on the right-hand side of the village street as you approach it by the coast road from Criccieth. It is a small substantial stone house. In those days a sign hung over the entrance door, with boots, the symbols of its owner's trade, portrayed upon it, indicating in the Welsh language Richard Lloyd's willingness to make or repair the boots and shoes of the villagers.[1] On the left as you enter the house is the living room. It is a comfortable and homely room, much like the well-ordered kitchen of the Welsh farmhouse, but built upon a smaller and less pretentious scale. It has a stone floor, a wooden ceiling with thin wooden beams, and one of those large inviting hearths which are the glory of the old country cottage. On the other side of the small passage is a little parlour, once used as the shoemaker's "cutting room," but diverted to its present use long before Mr. Richard Lloyd had given up his house and business. A narrow wooden staircase leads aloft to the bedroom, and a pleasant garden lies behind the house. Adjoining it is the workshop in which the shoemaker worked. In the thick wall of his room there is, and was, a convenient hole in the wall near the bench at which the shoemaker sat at his work.

[1] The words "Richard Lloyd, Gwneuthurwr," surmounted a painting of a boot and a top-boot.

In this it was his habit to keep the books he was reading at the time, for every moment he could snatch from his work was given to reading. Sometimes, as an idea struck him or an author's sentiment appealed to him, he would take his pencil and add to the note he was preparing for next Sunday's sermon. He was a member of a religious body, of which more will be said presently, known as "The Disciples of Christ." This is a church without a paid ministry. The object of its members is to model their practice, so far as may be, upon the most primitive observances of the Christian Church. Richard Lloyd regularly preached to his fellow-disciples at their chapel at Criccieth, as he does to this day. Now, at the age of seventy-seven, he may still be heard addressing sermons, in which he rises sometimes to heights of real eloquence, to a congregation from whom no pastor and no bishop could command such attention and respect.

To the care and management of the house I have described, Mrs. George brought the qualities of a diligent and careful housewife. The house was a model of scrupulous neatness. It is a mistake to think that Mr. Lloyd George's childhood was spent in poverty. There was a wide gulf, it is true, between the homes of the "gentry" and that of the village shoemaker. But there was also a considerable difference between the shoemaker's home and those of the workmen who made up the majority of the inhabitants of the village. Richard Lloyd and his father before him had been master shoemakers, employing two or three workmen. He and his sister, no doubt, found it necessary to be thrifty, and there was little in the way of luxury in their lives; but none of the household felt that their lot held any of the bitterness of grinding poverty. Still at that time a Welsh village home, even a home which was accounted comfortable, was managed upon lines which would seem indicative of almost abject penury to an artisan in one of our cities to-day. "Our bread was home-made," Mr. Lloyd George said in 1898, "we scarcely ate fresh meat, and I remember that our greatest luxury was half an egg for each child on Sunday morning." [1]

There is, of necessity, not much to be recorded of the few years that passed before David Lloyd George, at the age of six, entered the village school. The first memory of him retained by a cousin, who was a playmate of his from the first, is of a small boy, not much more than two years old, standing upon the stairs and "preaching" to a congregation composed of the other children

[1] Quoted from an article in "M.A.P.," September 10, 1898. Some of the statements attributed to Mr. Lloyd George therein are quite inaccurate, but I believe the above correctly reports what he said.

of the family. While he preached, "he used to thump on the stairs with a stick," to hold the attention of his listeners and to drive home his points. It may be guessed that the precocious orator had already a forcible and cogent style.

It was in 1869 that he first entered the village school. By some mischance there is no record of his first entrance in the very careful "log-book" which was kept by the head master of that day. The first mention of him is in 1870, when the name of David Lloyd George is recorded among those of the other members of the second standard.

A visitor to the village school of Llanystumdwy, as it exists to-day, needs little imagination to reconstruct the scene of those school-days forty years ago. The school is on the same side of the bridge as the church, and the mind's eye must picture it as a plain oblong building, without the two tiny wings which have been added to it in later years. In those days the building was divided unequally into one large room and one small class-room. In the former stood the desk of Mr. David Evans, the head master, which is still extant, and there survives only one of the school-children's desks at which in his time the future Chancellor of the Exchequer must have sat. By the head master's desk was a plain table, at which those pupils who had passed through all the standards sat at the feet of David Evans to receive a sort of post-graduate instruction. They formed what he called his "private class," and as he was a man of quite uncommon learning, it was no small privilege to attain to a place at that table. We shall see later how David Lloyd George acquitted himself at this front bench.

The school was a "National" one, so that its management was in the hands of the Established Church, and the tenets of the Church were taught in it to children who came, with few exceptions, from Nonconformist families. Reading, writing, and arithmetic were the subjects which took up most of the younger boys' time, but a little geography and history was taught with them, and in the higher standards Euclid and algebra were also to be learned.

David Evans found in David Lloyd George an apt pupil. Two pupil teachers and a monitor formed the assistant staff, but as they were often unable to cope with the requirements of the school it was the head master's custom to enlist the services of some of the older and brighter boys, and for this duty he would often select David Lloyd George when he had become old enough to fulfil it. He showed so marked an ability as a teacher that the head master and the Rev. Mr. Edwards, the rector of the parish, were anxious to secure him for the regular staff of the

school. Four of his contemporaries who rivalled him in this field accepted posts in the school. Three of them are now in the orders of the Church; one has become rector of an Anglesea parish, another (Canon Camber Williams) is a residential canon of the diocese of St. David's, a third a curate. The reflection has been made that if in his youth Lloyd George had accepted the counsels of his head master he might by now have been a bishop. For the acceptance of the post of teacher led naturally through the Church door to the pulpit. That was reason enough why David Lloyd George's mother's son and the nephew of Richard Lloyd should not accept it. To him, brought up as he was, the teaching of the Church was a doctrine to be actively shunned. This fact not only prevented him from following the advice offered him by the head master as to his choice of a profession, but even brought him into conflict with the school authorities.

This Church school was not conducted as a rule on unduly proselytising lines. The Catechism was taught, but the bulk of the religious education provided might fairly be described as what has come to be called "simple Bible teaching." David Evans knew how to teach, and he knew that vivid descriptions of the Old Testament held children's attention and profited them more than doctrinal disquisitions were ever likely to do. It was his custom to tell Bible stories to the children, and this he would do eloquently and dramatically, with no more interested listener than his pupil David Lloyd George. Of the teaching of secular subjects there was no complaint that could be made, though the influence of the teachers, so far as it went, was on the side of the Church, and though it certainly did nothing to foster loyalty to Wales as a nation. After all, the most conscientious Churchman must find it hard, in spite of all that can be said in educational controversies, to infuse the dogmas of the Thirty-nine Articles into the multiplication table or the Wars of the Roses.

During the early part of Lloyd George's school-days, however, it was the custom to march the children to the village church on Ash Wednesday. To a boy of his creed the village church must have held associations more sinister than a Roman Catholic service has for the most Protestant English boy. Attendance at an Anglican service had to be avoided at all costs, even by a breach of discipline. And so Lloyd George, with others of the Nonconformist majority of the schoolboys, would wait till the time came for the procession to form up, and then climb the walls of the playground and be off into the woods to play truant there for the rest of the morning. This revolutionary claim to the right of a conscience clause was at first visited by some kind of punish-

MR. LLOYD GEORGE AT THE AGE OF 2½ YEARS.

With his sister on the right.

ment the next day, but, as the spirit of opposition grew stronger and bolder, efforts at its suppression became more and more half-hearted. It came to be left to the children to decide whether they would go to church or not, and pressure ceased to be brought to bear upon them. Finally, as was inevitable from the fact that there were probably not more than half a dozen Anglican children in the school, the procession was discontinued altogether. In this movement Lloyd George had been one of many rebels. Later there came another religious revolt in which he played the principal part.

It was the catechism which incited Lloyd George to rebellion. He was generally successful in getting a prize at the annual Scripture examination, but on one occasion at least he failed to do so. His failure was the result of an organised rebellion against squire and Church. Once a year there was a great day in the life of every village schoolboy at Llanystumdwy. It was the day when Mr. Ellis Nanney, the village squire, and others of the "gentry," came with the vicar to hear how well the children could repeat the catechism and the creed. Lloyd George had heard his uncle condemn the practice of exhibiting before an audience a confession by Nonconformist children of an alien faith. His uncle's words filled him with a new enthusiasm, and he organised a revolt. There was to be a conspiracy of silence. He was able to talk over those among his schoolfellows who hesitated to take a course of such extreme boldness. And so, when the great day came, when squire and vicar, with benignant approval, had come to hear the recitation of the Apostles' Creed, there was a fearful anti-climax. It was in vain that the rector questioned the class. His examination was met with a solemn silence. This might have been put down to awe at the overwhelming presence of so many notabilities. An appeal was made to a worried head master. Still there was silence, only broken when the ringleader's younger brother, moved by pity for the popular master, who seemed likely to be put publicly to shame, at last gave the expected answers. That surrender was enough ; the rest of the class followed the example, and the young rebel found himself alone in his revolt.

But he had scored a victory none the less. Ever since the managers of that school have been careful to avoid the risk of offending in this way. It was Lloyd George's first triumph in the cause of liberty. Perhaps, when one remembers his age and all the circumstances, it was also his boldest effort in her cause.

This seems to be the most fitting place in which to tell in its authentic form a story which has frequently appeared in various

disguises. One of David Lloyd George's schoolfellows was William Williams—now a fine specimen of the class of yeoman farmer, a sturdy Liberal and a staunch Nonconformist. They went through the school together, were comrades in work and play, and often stood together in the shoemaker's shop listening to the teachings of Richard Lloyd. The time came when William Williams was of sufficiently mature years to be considered by the village parson as ripe for confirmation It is not an easy matter for the Anglican clergy to make a respectable show before their bishops of initiates into the Anglican Church. The village clergyman had made strenuous efforts to whip up a good muster, and Mr. and Mrs. Williams had yielded to his persuasion and given their consent to the confirmation of their son. The boy himself had other views, learned, as he now recalls, at the feet of Richard Lloyd in the shoemaker's shop. It was a wrong thing, his friend David's uncle taught him, that Nonconformist boys should go through what was to them a meaningless and empty rite. The teaching fell on fruitful ground. On the day of the confirmation David was sent to school with special instructions to back up his friend in his conscientious revolt. Till ten o'clock they stayed there; then, when the procession was about to start, William Williams and David Lloyd George, the former dressed in all his best for the ceremony, made off over the wall of the playground to the recesses of the woods. In vain the poor head master whistled and shouted after them. They returned no more that day, and there was a gap in the ranks of the recruits of the Church.

With this William Williams and another boy, Hughes by name (now a grocer at Bala), David Lloyd George arrived in time at the dignity of the "private class." When we think of him as the product of a little village school, it is necessary to remember that the education to be obtained in those days at Llanystumdwy had made its school and its master famous for many miles around among a people whose passion for education is one of their strongest characteristics. David Evans was no ordinary pedagogue. He was a man of sound learning and quite remarkable abilities in some directions. He could teach his pupils Latin and Greek, but it was as a mathematician that he excelled, and mental arithmetic, algebra, Euclid, and trigonometry were subjects which took up much of the time of the "private class." At these subjects the three boys were great rivals. Hughes was a particularly terrible competitor at mental arithmetic. Each boy was armed with a pencil and paper, the master would propound the problem, and the highest mark would go to the boy who first clapped down on the table the correct result. This was often made one of the

supreme tests at the end of the term, and there were terrific races in which Hughes was the chief dread of his competitors.

Mr. Williams, speaking of those days, says that what was most remarkable about David Lloyd George was the little effort which it seemed to cost him to learn. His rivals were clever and hard-working, but he outstripped their efforts without, as it seemed to them, devoting himself with anything like their own assiduity to the study of his books. Where they plodded two or three times through a page and committed it painfully to memory, he would read it once through and then be off to the woods. But he never forgot it. All his old friends say that they never saw a boy so quick to learn.

There is no influence so strong in the life of a Welsh village boy as that of his chapel and all that it stands for. It plays a greater part in his life even than the school. David Lloyd George was never a member of either of the village chapels—the place of worship of the Calvinistic Methodists, known as "Moriah," or that of the Congregationalists. Mr. Richard Lloyd and his sister had been brought up as members of the small community known as the "Churches of Christ," or the "Disciples"—"these, and similar New Testament names being deliberately adopted by our people as part of their plea for the restoration in all things of primitive Christianity." The community has no paid ministry: "each church is governed by elders or pastors of its own choosing, who serve the church by attending to all its administrations and exercising all necessary supervision over its members and preaching, all of which services are rendered voluntarily and gratuitously."[1] It is, however, provided by the law and custom of the community that any one who gives the whole of his time to the preaching of the gospel as an evangelist is maintained by the churches in co-operation with one another.

To the uninitiated the members of the "Churches of Christ" are simply "Baptists." They differ, however, from that much larger body in some important respects, besides the one already indicated. In their Church government the system of the "Disciples" is to allow perfect autonomy and independence to each separate church. It is their custom to "break bread" every Sunday instead of monthly only, as is usual in the Baptist community. There does not seem, to one who stands outside both bodies, to be any great difference in doctrine between them, but their views differ as to the purport and effect of baptism.

Mr. Richard Lloyd has been wont for many years to give his

[1] From Mr. William George's evidence, "Report of Welsh Church Commission, 1911," App. K, Vol. I., Pt. II.

services to his religious community, and it was to their chapel near Criccieth that David Lloyd George was regularly taken in his childhood. He was baptised by his uncle in the baptistry placed in the little brook which flowed in front of the chapel. After this he attended all the services of the chapel, and three times a day every Sunday he walked the two miles of country road which lay between his home and the chapel. Every Wednesday there was a week-night service, and this he also regularly attended. He has always had his full share of the musical tastes and gifts which seem to be instinctive in the Welshman, and he always looked forward to and enjoyed the "singing meeting." Those who were his companions in those early days remember how he knew by heart the hymns and their numbers, so that the conductor of the class would always turn to him for the number of the hymn or tune that was wanted.

On the way home from the chapel service on Sunday evenings he would almost invariably seek his uncle's company, and eagerly discuss with him the matter and the delivery of the day's sermons. His uncle encouraged him in this by entering earnestly into the discussion and drawing out the boy's comments. He was soon old enough to take part himself in the week-night service, at first by reading a chapter from the Bible, and later by speaking on some Bible subject, "which he soon did," it is said, "with point and effect." Later, when he had become an articled clerk, and lived at Portmadoc, he accompanied a friend, Mr. John Roberts, on two or three occasions to Penmachno, where together they conducted the Sunday services.

It is said that in his addresses on theological subjects he soon displayed a liberal outlook and breadth of vision far removed from the narrowness which, in England at least, is sometimes attributed to the "local preacher." He was strong in his faith, yet without bigotry, and in his addresses he showed an originality of mind unfettered by conventional modes of thought.

He was, as one of his most intimate friends expressed it to me, "emancipated." He did not fear to look at any aspect of a problem for any dread of spiritual dangers. For a time, indeed, in his young days, he had grave doubts about his religion, and, as he has expressed it, almost "cut the painter." It was Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" which helped him to set his doubts at rest. A man's religion is his own secret, but it may be said that to-day his creed, though less capable probably of dogmatic expression than in his early youth, is not less firmly founded in a faith which admits of wide and sympathetic toleration.

The following is a fragment of his notes for an address on

Sunday, January 28, 1883. It is rough and incomplete, but not perhaps any the less interesting for that. I print it as it has come into my hands.

HELPING EACH OTHER

God has meant us to do this. Taught us this in His arrangement of the universe—that even the greatest should afford some assistance to the smallest, and that the smallest in his turn may do something for the greatest. The great star which is multitudinously greater than our small planet, which cycles in its course through the Heavens, affording a home to some myriad inhabitants who people it, yet gives light to the poor mariner who sails the ocean of our paltry planet. And again this earth, however small, returns the service by assisting with the remainder of the heavenly constellations to illuminate the darkness of the mighty Jupiter. The one and the other furnish exhaustless treasure and resources to their tenants ; but still they must depend upon each other before they can complete their wants.

At the present day the " Disciples " of the neighbourhood have a new chapel at Criccieth, built in 1885, at which the traditions of Pen-y-maes are still carried on.

Although Pen-y-maes was the centre of the religious life of David Lloyd George's youth, the chapels of Llanystumdwy also played their part in his life at this time, as they did in that of every Nonconformist child of the village. At " Moriah " he attended a weekly " Band of Hope," where he was taught " Sol-fa," and learned to sing and recite. In this chapel, once a year or oftener, there was one of the literary competitions dear to the Welshman's heart, and at these the more advanced children of Llanystumdwy would compete with the children of other districts in singing and reciting. Here David Lloyd George made his first public appearance. He recalled it at Christmas 1910, when he spoke at an Eisteddfod held in the same chapel under his brother's presidency, and told his audience how on that occasion the piece he sang had been " Remember, child, to speak the truth " (" Cofia, blentyn, ddweyd y gwir ")—a piece of advice sometimes difficult to follow, he said, but one which all his life he had tried to observe.

II

Recreations—Early memories—" Always a fighter "—His ambition to travel—Early admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte.

In spite of the claim of school and chapel, there was plenty of recreation in his life. He was a healthy boy, living much in

the open air, and taking a leading part in the games of the village school.

He gained his pre-eminence partly by strength and courage, partly because he had read more and knew more stories than any boy in the village. One of his earliest books was the story in Welsh of Owen Glendower, and one of his schoolfellows speaks of another work, "Jack of Abyssinia," from which he was fond of quoting to enthralled audiences. I had at first supposed that this was an ephemeral "book for boys," dealing with some imaginary or forgotten hero, but my inquiries lead to the conclusion that the story of the fictitious Jack of Abyssinia was entirely the work of David Lloyd George. It seems to have been a wild romance, an epic which, like that of Homer, was recited and not written down.

One must picture him at this time as a sturdy, lively boy, wearing a "Glengarry" cap, and distinguished together with his brother by the fact that they were the only boys in the village who wore knickerbockers, that type of knickerbocker which is fastened by elastic at the knee. The other boys wore those garments, difficult of classification, which occupy the nebulous region of "long-shorts" and "short-longs" without falling definitely into either category. This small sartorial fact seemed of enough importance at the time to have stuck in the memory of one of his schoolfellows,[1] who also remembers that one of David Lloyd George's earliest amusements was to grind the coloured stones in the river-bed into a powder out of which he made paints, with which, as a small boy, he was fond of designing wonderful pictures.

In these days, for good or evil, there is a rigid uniformity in games. In Wales, as elsewhere, football is assiduously and regularly played. But forty years ago there was a greater variety in boys' sports. In the winter months bandy was the favourite game, and when the frost came there was plenty of fun to be got out of sliding on the ice. In the summer there were games of ball, and at all times, as the evening came on, "hide and seek" was the favourite amusement.

Sometimes the games became topical. The events of the day would inspire the imagination of the boys to mimicry of the deeds of heroes. When, in 1909, Mr. Lloyd George visited the school to receive from some of his old schoolfellows an address of congratulation, he spoke of such an occasion. He remembered, he said, the Franco-German War of 1870, and how the war was carried on in Llanystumdwy school. "The boys divided themselves into two parties—French and Prussians. The French

[1] Mr. Robert Jones, now of Cricklewood.

VILLAGE SCHOOL AT LLANYSTUMDWY,

Where Mr. Lloyd George was educated.

entrenched themselves in the porch of the school; and there," said the Chancellor, pointing to Mr. Harry Jones, of Pencorth, "is Napoleon."

Apart altogether from these games, which a town-bred boy might have enjoyed, the village boys of Llanystumdwy could roam at their will (so long as keepers were evaded) in the woods, and learn in that free playground the lore of the country. David Lloyd George was as fond as any boy of hunting after the hares and rabbits which then as now abounded in the neighbourhood, or climbing and bird-nesting. Those critics who are inclined to see in his exploits in the last direction a presage of his policy as Chancellor of the Exchequer, may be informed here that he was always punctilious in observing the rule that he must not rob nests—unless, indeed, they were crows' nests.

Sometimes he would go off upon a solitary journey of discovery. His family still have a rare and beautiful specimen of Royal Fern which is a trophy of one of these expeditions. He had seen it growing high up on a steep cliff two or three miles from home, and after a perilous climb had managed to secure it with a long stick and bring it home in triumph.

His old schoolfellows tell how once the young members of the village were eager with excitement at the prospect of a fight in which he was to be the champion of a weaker schoolfellow. He had interfered to stop the bullying of this small boy by several bigger ones. They resented his interference, and with characteristic boldness he offered to fight four of them in succession, provided an older boy who had left school were there to see fair play. Time and place were appointed, and the coming event was keenly canvassed and discussed. But the experienced head master saw that something was in the wind. Boys are bad at keeping secrets of this kind. The fight was effectually stopped; but his contemporaries say that bullying became decidedly less popuar after this incident.

He was, indeed, as one of his cousins puts it, "always a fighter." That may have helped his popularity, which was remarkable. He led the village boys in all their pursuits. In school he would join his comrade Williams in discussing Disestablishment or the question of Tithe with the pupil teachers, the representatives of Toryism and the Church. Outside it, he suffered at least one disadvantage as the price of being a leader among boys. "There was one old man in the village," says a contemporary, "who, whenever his fence was broken or any damage done to his garden, would always say, 'It's that David Lloyd has done it.'"

"David Lloyd," it must be explained, was the name by which

his schoolfellows knew their young leader. It is clear that he himself accepted the patronymic, which was no doubt given to him because he was known and regarded as of the clan of the uncle in whose home he lived, because on the bridge over the Dwyfor he carved in bold letters the initials "D. Ll." They may still be seen there, but the hand of an admirer has since added the missing "G.", and inscribed beneath the original inscription the letters M.P.

On a tree growing on the slope by the roadside near the river his initials are to be seen again, this time in full, boldly cut there on the day before his eighth birthday.

D. Ll. G.
January 16th, 1871.

It is interesting to notice that his ambitious soul was dissatisfied with a first attempt in smaller characters, which he discontinued, though its traces are still clearly to be seen above the finished inscription.

Mr. Williams, the schoolfellow to whom reference has already been made, was one of his most constant companions in and out of school. Both boys in those days showed one great ambition—the desire to travel and see the world. As a result of this, geography was one of David Lloyd George's favourite subjects, although he was especially renowned for his mathematical abilities; and, outside school, books of adventure were his favourite reading. Whatever story-books of this kind they could get hold of, these two boys eagerly shared and discussed. In those days, says Mr. Williams, he never talked of political ambitions; but it is clear that politics in the larger sense interested him, and he had read enough history to have made a hero of Napoleon Bonaparte, of whom he talked much and often.

William Williams confesses to one schoolboy crime in which they were accomplices. At this distance of time it can hardly be indiscreet to reveal the secret. There was a hiding-place in the woods to which the two boys sometimes resorted in order to enjoy secretly the delights of tobacco. David, who was anxious to keep the secret from his uncle, used to hide his pipe in a spot near the river; and William Williams, who seems to have had fewer obstacles to face, used to procure the tobacco for their joint use.

The son of the village tailor, Mr. Elias, was another of his frequent companions. He was a younger boy, but he was recommended as a companion of the chase by the fact that he owned

a terrier, "Whig" by name, and to this he owed the honour of the company of elder boys. He tells how David Lloyd George seemed the natural leader of all expeditions and adventures, and how everything seemed to go well under his leadership.

Sometimes, however, there were mishaps. Mr. Robert Jones, who was another of his schoolfellows, tells of some of these. He remembers playing with David Lloyd George upon forbidden ground—a house in course of construction near the village—when they were suddenly surprised by a custodian of the building. Robert Jones's notion was to surrender with such honour as the enemy might permit; David Lloyd George, with a fine sense of strategy, climbed inside the chimney and concealed himself there. It is sad to record that a pair of feet, insufficiently hidden, betrayed him, and it is unnecessary to dwell upon the sequel.

Robert Jones shared with young Elias in those days the eminence which the possession of a dog conferred. His was a black animal of unknown breed brought by a sailor from Hamburg, and it was promoted, as "Whig" had been, to the honourable position of the companion, not to say accomplice, of the boys led by David Lloyd George.

III

The village blacksmith—The first parliament—The shoemaker's shop—First memories of politics—The Election of 1868—A great Liberal awakening.

Apart from the chapels and the school, probably the most important institutions in the village were the smithy and the shoemaker's shop of Mr. Richard Lloyd. The smithy was situated at the lower end of the village, across the bridge. The smith, Hugh Jones, was an elderly man, good-looking and white-haired, clean-shaven save for his side-whiskers, and with a massive head which, it is recalled, he often cocked a little on one side, especially when he was arguing points of theology, as he constantly did, with some village disputants. Theology was his strong point; he seldom deigned to talk of such inferior stuff as politics. He was a strong Congregationalist, and a deacon at the little chapel of that sect, and though his denomination was in a minority in the village, he was always ready to hold his own against all comers, and to prove to the most unwilling ears that neither the Methodists on the one hand nor the Baptists on the other had the slightest warranty in Scripture for their tenets. His attitude towards the Church of England can only be paralleled by that of the Scotchman who said that he had once thought of giving

up religion altogether—and joining the Established Church. It was to him outside the pale of religion, the very embodiment of heresy.

Yonder smithy [said Mr. Lloyd George in his speech to his old schoolfellows in 1909] was my first Parliament, where night after night we discussed and decided all the abstruse questions relating to this world and the next, in politics, in theology, in philosophy and science. There was nothing too wide and comprehensive for us to discuss, and we settled all the problems among ourselves without the slightest misgiving.

He well remembered, he said, how during one of those discussions his finger got into a cog-wheel, and it still bore the marks of the injury.

As between David Lloyd George and the old smith the question of adult as against infant baptism was the principal topic of discussion. At first the old man dealt with the boy rather lightly, but he soon found it necessary to take him in hand more seriously, and a time came when he was fain to confess to Mr. Richard Lloyd that his nephew was quite a dangerous controversialist. "If I had not been very well grounded in my subject," said the smith, "the lad would certainly have succeeded in tripping me up."

The shoemaker's workshop was the other centre of debate in the village. Mr. Richard Lloyd was the Speaker of this Parliament, and its members were the most intelligent among the villagers. Mr. Lloyd took little part in the debates, save to guide and give a turn to the discussion; and when the discussion was over and the last visitor had left he would retire to the house and to his books, which he would often read until the early hours of the morning.

It was largely because he was a member of neither of the conflicting sects in Llanystumdwy that their members looked up to him as an impartial president. They looked up to him for other reasons also. For he was a studious and well-read man, and, judged by the standards of his time and his surroundings, a man of singular liberality of thought and breadth of vision. More than this, his integrity was well known, and his deep sympathy with all his neighbours caused many of them to rely upon his sage counsels. He did not, like so many self-educated men, devote his time to reading only one side of his subject. Friends in the village gave him opportunities of reading papers of very diverse religious and political complexion, and he read them all attentively. One of his closest friends was Mr. Hughes, then curate of the parish church, from whom he used to get the "Guardian"

every week.[1] Then an old lady in the neighbourhood, a strong Congregationalist, supplied him with a journal of her faith, called the "Cronicl," and afterwards "Cenad Hedd," and Hugh Jones, the smith, reinforced the teachings of this paper by regularly sending over to the shoemaker's shop his copy of another magazine called "Dysgedydd." Some Methodist friends brought him the "Drysorfa," and similarly he was supplied with Baptist and Wesleyan publications. Usually he also saw such of the leading Welsh and English newspapers as were then obtainable in Wales. The Welsh papers were brought in as a matter of course, and it is recorded that once the old parish sexton brought in with pride what he considered a great find—a copy of a certain weekly Conservative paper. Never, said the old sexton, had he seen so interesting a paper, for it was full of accounts of accidents and deaths and all sorts of catastrophes, with an execution or two thrown in. Then the "Christian World" came every week by post from a relation in London, and every evening one of the nephews, David or William, would run over to Criccieth to fetch the "Liverpool Mercury" from a friend there, who passed it on after he had finished with it himself. For a boy with ears to hear and eyes to read, there was no dearth of information in the home in which David Lloyd George was brought up.

When in 1894 an interviewer of the "Westminster Gazette" asked Mr. Lloyd George how he had come to interest himself in politics, the answer he got was that a Welshman takes to politics as a duck takes to water. He was brought up in a Liberal household, for although Mrs. George took little or no interest in politics her brother was a staunch Liberal, and almost the only avowed Liberal in a village where the influence of the Tory gentry was at that time very powerful. Mr. Lloyd George's first political memory is of 1868. That year marked an epoch in the history of Welsh Liberalism. Let its story be told in Mr. Lloyd George's own words:—

As some of you may know, I come from Wales. We used to have tenant-farmers, and their vote was part of the letting of the land. I ventured to say here before that it was what the lawyers call "a covenant that runs with the land." What of the conditions of tenancy? If a landlord was a Tory, well, the vote of course was Tory. If the landlord happened to be Liberal, then all his tenants of course voted Liberal. A time came when our tenant-farmers and labourers began to think that that was inconsistent with true manliness, and in 1868 we had really a great revolt against it.

[1] Mr. Hughes is now dead, but even after he had left the village he remained on terms of friendship with Mr. Lloyd, and continued to correspond with him to the end.

What happened? I will tell you the story of our county. Our members used to be chosen for us. I do not remember very much beyond 1868, but I am told that before that time our members used to be chosen for us by the country squires, who used to meet in an hotel at Carnarvon and say, "Which of us shall go up to Parliament?" Somebody said, "Will not you go?" He said "No." But at last a brilliant idea got into one man's head, and he said, "I propose that Lord Penrhyn's son go there." Somebody seconded. The thing was settled. There was no contest expected; they thought the man was as good as elected the moment the resolution was declared carried by the chairman. But something happened in 1868. The Liberals said, "Had we not better run a candidate?" The day came for nomination. A great landowner proposed Mr. Douglas Pennant, a land agent for the second greatest estate of the country. Then somebody got up and proposed a Liberal candidate, and to the amazement and consternation of the assembled landowners, up jumps a tenant-farmer, the chief tenant-farmer on the estate of that great land agent, and said, "I second the nomination."

He was not tenant of that farm long. A man of the highest attainments, an exceptionally cultured man, a brilliant writer, a great thinker, and a man of exceptionally high character. Not only that, but he was one of the pioneers of scientific farming in that part of the country. Not one of these qualities served him. Why? He, a tenant-farmer, dared to have an opinion in opposition to the great landowners of the county as to who should represent that county. Notice to quit. Ejectment. There was nothing else that could drown the memory of that insolence. But that was not the end of it. I remember—it is the first election I remember—and I will tell you one or two things about it, because they are strictly relevant to what we are considering. I was a boy at school then, and was in the blackest Tory parish in the land. I believe my old uncle, who brought me up, was the only Liberal in the village, so you may guess the sort of time I had. Let me tell you what happened. He was not the only Liberal in the parish. There were three or four others—and I will tell what happened to them in that election. One or two of them refused to vote for the Tory candidate, and two or three actually went further, and dared to record their votes for the Liberal. All of them received notice to quit. I remember that some lads who were at school with me in the same class in a year or two had to leave the neighbourhood. I was very young, but young lads do not forget things of that sort. I know the reason why they left: because the great squire of the parish had turned their father out of their house purely because he dared to vote for the Liberal candidate. That is the sort of thing that went on throughout the whole of Wales; and I will give you a letter that was written by the Trustees of the Willoughby de Eresby estate—not the present Willoughby de Eresby: "I feel it necessary to explain that Lord Willoughby de Eresby is a Conservative"—I should have thought that quite unnecessary—"and gives all his support to Mr. Pennant, and therefore"—this is the point—"does not consider it right that you should allow yourself to be led by others who vote against the interests of the estate on which you live, and against

the wishes of his Lordship." Those are the letters that were circulated. That was the attitude of Welsh landlordism up to that date.

After the election notices to quit were showered upon the tenants. What happened? They were turned out by the score on to the roadside because they dared to vote according to their consciences. But they woke the spirit of the mountains, the genius of freedom that fought the might of the Norman for two centuries. There was such a feeling aroused amongst the people that, ere it was done, the political power of landlordism in Wales was shattered as effectually as the power of the Druids. It is my first memory of politics, and that is why I am proud to be President of the Gladstone League. What happened afterwards? There were poor tenants who used to receive the dictation of the landlord as if it came from Heaven. Was it because they were Tory? Not at all. In that little village where I was brought up the Welsh newspapers which were read were all Liberal papers. I knew the men on whose lips they hung, whose counsel they took on all the deepest affairs of their lives. They were the great pioneers of Welsh Liberalism. Up to 1868 they all voted with the landlord; but the chains were broken, and they have been free men ever since. The landlords still meet in the back rooms of the county hotel. The same old county meetings are held to choose the candidate, and if you look at the result of the last General Election you will find that they have been "put down last," as we used to say in school, by anything between 3,000 and 11,000. They still go on. They cherish the old delusions. They still think that they rule the county. Why, in that little village where, when I was a boy, there were not half a dozen Liberals at the outside, there was a County Council Election a fortnight ago. The landlord nominated his nominee—a Tory. Then a relative of mine—my brother, who, as you may imagine, is not a particular favourite with landlords—stood as the Liberal candidate. He got in by something like two to one. That is the change that came over the spirit of the dream of rural Wales, and all I can say to rural England is, "Go thou and do likewise." [1]

A word may be added in amplification of the recollections of the 1868 election contained in this speech. It is, as Mr. Lloyd George said, his first memory of politics, and those who have heard him tell the story of it will know that the fact most impressed upon his mind about it is that, as a small boy of five, he carried a flag through Llanystumdwy as an enthusiastic supporter of the Liberal candidate. Thus early did he raise the standard of revolt.

[1] From Mr. Lloyd George's speech at the Queen's Hall, London, on March 23, 1910.

CHAPTER III

(1877–1884)

I

Decides to be a lawyer—Studies French and Latin—Passes the preliminary examination (age fourteen)—Becomes an articled clerk at Portmadoc (age fifteen)—His reading—his diary—Views on "Women's Rights" (age sixteen)—The election of 1880—Essays in journalism—"Brutus" on Lord Salisbury—A by-election—"Brutus's" views on politics.

HAD Mr. Richard Lloyd or Mrs. George belonged to the congregation of "Moriah," or to the Congregational chapel of Llanystumdwy, there cannot be much doubt about the career to which David Lloyd George would have been brought up. A boy who showed such remarkable ability as a speaker even in a land of speakers, and had such a taste for study as he showed, would have almost certainly entered the ministry of his Church. But, as we have seen, the "Churches of Christ," following the primitive plan, have no ministry in the common significance of the word. Such a career, therefore, was out of the question. From the time he began to think at all, however, he had an ambition to be a lawyer. For a boy in this little corner of Wales, where little was even heard of law and the lawyers, and where the forensic allurements which appeal strongly to some boys' minds cannot have been known, that was a strange ambition. It seems to have had its origin in the admiration the boy formed for Mr. Thomas Goffey, a solicitor at Liverpool, praise of whom was often upon Mrs. George's lips. Mr. Goffey had been a great friend of her husband's, and at his death had done much to help her to make the most of the small estate he had left behind him. He had become a hero to the children of the family, and it seemed to the boys that nothing could be finer than to follow in his footsteps. And so it came to be determined in family conclave that David Lloyd George should be trained for the profession of

a solicitor. It was a great undertaking, only made possible by unremitting labour on the part of the boy, and by his uncle's generous determination to let nothing stand in the way of his nephew's ambition. "My uncle never married," Mr. Lloyd George said in 1898, "and he set himself the task of educating the children of his sister as a sacred and supreme duty. To that duty he gave his time, his energy, and all his money." [1]

The first step was the Preliminary Law Examination. For this it was necessary to master the elements of French and Latin. This was a difficulty, for David Evans could teach no French, and in the ordinary course taught little Latin; and the difficulty was increased by the fact that the boy shrank from letting it be known that he had embarked upon so ambitious a career. Failure was at least possible, and he did not, as one may conjecture, want the village wiseacres to be in a position to say "I told you so." For this reason he did not care to trouble Mr. Evans, his old head master, too much, and though he got some assistance from him in his Latin, there were times when he came to a standstill over the pages of Sallust or in his French lessons. His uncle came to the rescue. He knew nothing of French or Latin, but much may be done with a grammar and a dictionary, and two heads are better than one. There is something noble in the picture of uncle and nephew plodding together through the unknown territory, spending long and laborious hours over difficult pieces of syntax or evasive idiom. Sometimes William and Mary George would join them in their work, and the four between them would pick their way through the French of an old copy of Æsop's Fables, translated into that language. It is surprising that their labour should have succeeded; but succeed it did. One wonders if a Public School would have given a better training.

At this time, it must be remembered, the boy was not yet fourteen years old. That was his age when, the work of preparation done, uncle and nephew journeyed together to Liverpool for the examination, the former to give his young fellow-learner encouragement in this first encounter with examiners since the simpler trials of Llanystumdwy. The examination lasted for about a week, and then an anxiously hopeful candidate returned to the village to wait. It was good news that came, and there was great elation in the small household. The first step had been taken. Some day David Lloyd George would be a busy solicitor.

The villagers of Llanystumdwy had been much puzzled at their favourite's unexplained absence during the time of the examination. There was much rejoicing when the result was

[1] From the article in "M.A.P.," September 10, 1898. See note on p. 14.

known, and the proud head master did not fail to make an entry in the log-book of his pupil's achievements :

> 1877. *December* 8
> D. Ll. George, 1st cl. pupil, successful in passing the preliminary examination of the Incorporated Law Society at Liverpool, and received the certificate.[1]

The next step was to find a place for this novice in the law with a firm of solicitors. The office chosen was that of Messrs. Breese, Jones & Casson, a firm of standing in Portmadoc. Mr. Breese, the senior partner, was clerk of the peace and clerk of the Lieutenancy for the County of Merioneth, and the firm were also clerks to the justices of two petty sessional divisions. It was in July 1878 that the boy, now in his sixteenth year, left his home at Llanystumdwy to live at Portmadoc. There he stayed with a kindly old couple whose children had all gone out into the world to seek their fortunes. He regularly returned, however, to spend Saturday and Sunday at home with his family.

At the beginning of the next year he was articled to Mr. Casson, the junior partner. On Saturday, January 28, 1879, one of the articled clerks of the firm rode over on horseback to Llanystumdwy to attest the signatures to the articles of Mrs. Elizabeth George and Mr. Richard Lloyd.

David Lloyd George found himself in a very congenial atmosphere in the solicitors' office. He liked the study of the law. He began to read law books almost as soon as he entered the office, and he went on with his reading carefully and systematically during the whole period of his articles. But he was not trained to be a mere "book-lawyer." With interests as wide as his, it was always clear that he could never develop into a pedant or be satisfied with the dry bones of the law. The everyday work of the office brought him closely into touch with all sorts and conditions of men. He used to sit as assistant to the justices' clerk in the police court, and necessarily saw a great deal of the work of Quarter Sessions and of county administration. The senior partner was the Liberal agent for Merioneth and part of Carnarvonshire, looked after the electoral registration in his party's interests, and took a very active part at election times. Quite early in his career the young articled clerk used to be sent to

[1] Immediately below this comes the entry :—
"Robert Williams, P.T., still absent from illness."
Robert Williams, the pupil teacher who was Mr. Lloyd George's contemporary, is now Canon Williams, Residential Canon at St. David's and a leading light of the Church Defence Association.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE

At the age of sixteen.

(*From Photograph kindly lent by Mr. Wm. Geo[illegible]*)

country districts to do some of the work of registration and canvassing. This was work he enjoyed greatly; his interest in and knowledge of politics was growing every day, and very soon found expression before the public.

Nobody can read his early speeches in the House of Commons without observing the close acquaintance he showed with the practical side of a solicitor's work, and it is clear that he gained much from this early training. As an articled clerk, for instance, he went far towards mastering—in the way in which such subjects can best be mastered, by the practical application of principles—the intricacies of the law of Rating. He took an active part in connection with a number of rating appeals which came into the firm's hands, and in obtaining the re-assessment of certain properties in the district. Many dull pages of Hansard, apt to be left out of account by those who think of Lloyd George as a mere flamboyant orator, show the good use to which this early experience was put.

All this time he was a great reader, for the law was not so hard a mistress as to take up all his time. The note-books in which he kept a sort of diary in those days show that he was reading books of constitutional history and giving a good deal of time to reading the plays of Shakespeare. He seems to have read few novels; but of these Disraeli's "Tancred" is one which he particularly mentions. He was learning and practising shorthand, and assiduously reading political books and pamphlets, starting in August 1879 with "Five Years of Tory Rule."

It will be seen that, in the matter of his reading, he had entered early into man's estate, and put away childish things. He was building up a philosophy of his own, and thinking things out for himself. Two extracts from his note-books in 1879 throw some light upon his views. In that year, commenting on the news he has received of the death of some acquaintance in the playing-field, he writes:

> He might as well have lost his life in the pursuit of some noble object as in the vain pursuit of pleasure.

Under the date August 1, 1879, he has a note on a speech by a lady in defence of "women's rights":

> Miss Becker speaks at the Town Hall, Portmadoc, on Women's Rights. Very few real arguments. She proved too much, which proved nothing. The earth would be a paradise were women to have their suffrage. She was rather sarcastic. Mr. Breese rose to oppose her, and made a half-hour speech. Very good. Spoke in rather low tone, and so I did not

understand half his speech. Miss Becker answered him, but did not touch on some of the arguments. As for myself, I do not see why single women and widows managing property should not have a voice in the adjustment, etc., of the taxes.

With 1880 came the excitements of the General Election held in March of that year. The young Liberal had eagerly followed the progress of Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian campaign. In Wales the tide which had turned in 1868 was still flowing. Portmadoc had long been a Liberal stronghold, and the excitement over the local election was great. The candidates were Mr. Watkin Williams (afterwards Mr. Justice Watkin Williams), who supported the Liberal interest, and Mr. Douglas Pennant. David Lloyd George was one of the crowd who waited on the day of the poll for the announcement of the result at Portmadoc Town Hall. For that day at least the law was forgotten. He joined in the easily-earned merriment that greeted the local jester's shout in the ear of a passing donkey, "Your brother has lost." "You needn't shake your head," the wit went on to the protesting quadruped—"it's quite true." There cannot be much doubt about the way in which the crowd interpreted this prophecy, and the prophet's words, however impolitely phrased, proved true enough. Carnarvonshire returned Mr. Watkin Williams by a large majority.

In May of the next year (1880) the family left Llanystumdwy and settled in Criccieth, at Morvin House, a little house under the shadow of the old castle.

In the same month David and his brother William set out for Beaumaris, where the latter was to sit for the Oxford Local Examination. The elder brother had given much help and encouragement to the younger, and the result was very satisfactory to them both.

Later in the year the note-books speak of an eventful time. The diligent reader had aspired to write, and, surprised at his own audacity, had sent a contribution to the "North Wales Express." He chose the pseudonym of "Brutus." The following extracts from his diary reveal the fearful joys, the eager anticipation and pride of realisation which accompany a first appearance in print :—

November 1, 1880.—. . . Do not relish the idea of that refusal which Editor overwhelmed with a redundance of such trash will have to accord to some of them.

November 5, 1880.—When I eagerly opened the "North Wales Express" this morning, I found my own contribution on same page as leading article. I had first of all looked up "Notices to Correspondents," expecting to find a refusal of my letter, but disappointed on the right side.

His contribution, the first attempt of this kind which he had made, was concerned with a speech made a short time before by the Marquess of Salisbury at Taunton. It is here reprinted exactly as it appeared.

POLITICAL SHREDS

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY

He is a relic of what he has been ; the ruins of a character which, if not noble, at least seemed to be stable. Office proved to be too much for him. It has shattered his reputation. The prejudice and rancour of his unalloyed Toryism he still retains, but the consistency and integrity of character which whilom graced these propensities have departed. As witness his latest public ebullition—

A POST-PRANDIAL SPEECH AT TAUNTON

He offered some animadvertent and invidious remarks upon the "reticence" and "frugality of information" of the Government. Let us not doubt his sincerity. He may be congratulated upon his dismissal from office. It appears to have worked in him an incalculable change. He was unscrupulous, he is now squeamish. The practiser of mystery, he denounces reticence. Whereas conclusion of a secret convention (in a manner, be it noted, not altogether characterised by straightforwardness) was regarded as the height of statesmanship and no departure from political virtue, it appears now to his enlightened conscience that not divulging in the most uncompromising manner the minutest detail of the intentions and actions of Executive Government is a public grievance which ought to be resented. It is not for me to determine whether it be that the heinousness of his own offence has aroused him to such an extent to the iniquity of secrecy, or that he is subject to a common failing in humanity—the regarding as a virtue in ourselves what seems to be a vice in others. Anyway, the inconsistency is palpable. He further informed his audience that the Powers which had sent the

NAVAL DEMONSTRATION

to the coasts of Albania had met with "what amounts to a refusal" of their demands by the Porte. The premature and inconvenient discovery of secret conventions may be vamped by prevarication ; but by what quirk, quibble, or distortion of language can a mind, even though trained with the greatest shuffler of the age, make out the concession of a demand to be its instant refusal ? The Powers demanded Dulcigno for Montenegro, and the Porte has conceded its surrender. The proposed

PROSECUTION OF THE IRISH LEADERS

was declared to be of dubious wisdom. How then justify the futile prosecutions of the late Government ? Was it its tendency to "oppression" and its "impossibility" which recommended the course to Lord Salisbury

and his colleagues? It is not unlikely. Imperialism had a large share in their counsels, and it is patent, indeed admitted by the noble lord, that he has been a party to certain schemes and proposed transactions which he subsequently did not feel it his "bounden duty" to carry into execution, and he has sometimes scoffed at the possibility of "compelling their performance."

Toryism has not been barren of statesmen—real and not charlatan—statesmen who prized the honour of England above the interests of party—who really hated oppression and demonstrated their detestation of it, not by pleading immunity from condign punishment for the instigation of foul and atrocious crimes, but by the laudable assistance which they rendered in the name of England to weak nationalities in their desperate struggles for Liberty—for freedom from the yoke of inhuman despots—for very existence. By so much was the Canning of ancient Toryism superior, nobler than the Salisbury of modern Conservatism.

BRUTUS.

On the very day on which this first contribution was sent in, the news came that Mr. Watkin Williams had accepted a Judgeship of the High Court. This, of course, involved a by-election in Carnarvonshire. Mr. Rathbone was the Liberal candidate; Mr. Ellis Nanney, the "squire" of Llanystumdwy, represented the Conservative interest. "Brutus" threw himself eagerly into the fray. The following extracts speak for themselves:—

November 13, 1880.—Addresses of rival candidates published. Interests of both parties manifest *prima facie* in addresses. The address of the Conservative is short. His interest is concealment. Of the Liberal long. His interest is patefaction.

November 16, 1880.—Wrote a long letter on Mr. Nanney's address, and sent it to the "North Wales Express." Am afraid its length, and I suspect its virulence, will tend to its exclusion. However, it does not matter much. Pseudonyms do not blush. It contains a severe, but not too severe, attack upon Mr. Nanney.

November 17, 1880.—Attended Mr. Rathbone's meeting at Criccieth. Very enthusiastic, considering that it was regarded as the stronghold of Toryism. We had the intelligence of Criccieth to welcome Mr. Rathbone. A good meeting. There was one disturber, but his partisanship was venal. It counted for nothing; and Dr. John Thomas soon settled him by suggesting that he was one of those people attending meetings with more in his belly than in his head. Had a lift on top of Morfa Lodge carriage (Mr. Rathbone inside) to Portmadoc. Meeting at Portmadoc. Rathbone is a very poor orator, but a sensible speaker. Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P. for Scarboro', present. He is a very good speaker. My impression is that, so far as speaking is concerned, the Welsh are incomparably superior to the English. They dragged Rathbone's carriage (I was not in it) all the way from Tremadoc to Portmadoc. Torch-bearers preceded and surrounded

him. Altogether, the reception was most enthusiastic. Walked home to Criccieth, arriving about midnight.

November 19, 1880.—Most glad to see by the "North Wales Express" posters that there is an address to Mr. Ellis Nanney by "Brutus." That "gentleman" (?) was most honestly indignant that a truculent passage had been partially left out, and that the printer had made a few mistakes.

November 26, 1880.—Brutus's address to the electors appears in large characters on the "North Wales Express's" posters.

Mr. Nanney's meeting broke up in confusion.

November 29, 1880.—Reading English party leaders. Burke strikes me most. Cannot get myself to read any one's history besides Burke's with any delight.

November 30, 1880.—Starting 6.50 a.m. for Dolbenmaen, and acting as Liberal Committeeman. Committee met in a stinted bed-chamber, with scarcely enough light at times to strike off the right votes. Left in the evening as one of the Liberal custodians of the ballot-box to Carnarvon.

The result of the poll was announced on December 1, and it appeared that Mr. Rathbone had held the seat for Liberalism by a large plurality of votes. On the same day "Brutus" called at the newspaper offices of the "North Wales Express" at Carnarvon, where he was awaiting the declaration of the poll. He was introduced to the editor, who assured him that his contributions were most acceptable.

The article referred to in the note, under the date November 19, 1880, is here reprinted:

POLITICAL SHREDS

A CONTEST IN CARNARVONSHIRE

is what was but a few weeks, if not even a few days ago, a very improbable probability. Now we know that the Conservatives mean to contest the seat. They have selected their candidate, and he has issued his address. Perhaps I may be permitted to address to him these lines:

You must be very diffident of the spell the Conservative name has upon the Carnarvonshire electorate to exchange it for such an unusual term, and to so plausibly qualify your support—"And *independent* support to the *Constitutional* party."

You refer to an increase of taxation by the Liberal Government. When your ardour is tempered by the contempt of a great constituency you may then agree with me that it requires an unscrupulousness which is rare even among electioneering desperadoes to publish such a statement. Did not politicians of the "Constitutional Party" clamour for the abolition of the Malt Tax? Did not the very same politicians when in office betray their infatuated friends, or, more properly, supporters—the farmers—by failing to redeem their promises and to justify their clamours? Was it not the abolition of this long-standing and crying grievance that necessitated the

imposition of additional taxation? And, moreover, is it not merely temporary, and thus in felicitous contrast, in duration as well as in purpose, to the burdens imposed by the late Government?

You simulate indignation in your address, as elsewhere, at the support given by the Government to the admission into Parliament of a "professed opponent of the Christian religion." This care of the interests of the Christian religion is praiseworthy, and you will doubtless be thanked for it by its representatives. But do you remember anything about a Government whose conduct was infinitely more atrocious—whose policy made Afghan mothers husbandless, their children fatherless, and both homeless—saturated the Afghan snows with the blood of patriots, and drove hatred of our very name and presence at the point of the sword into the heart of the Afghan nation?—whose policy made Zululand mourn the loss of thousands of its brave sons, devastated its fertile plains, turned its happy kraals into sombre mortuaries, and sacrificed its nationality upon a pyre erected with the carcases of its defenders? You had better recant the defence of such a policy before you attack the present Government for acts which are infinitely less pernicious and more just. You revolt at tolerated scepticism —why not at perpetrated crime?

I think that your reference to the conduct of some members of the Liberal party with regard to Irish policy is hardly fair. You will admit that one member of a party cannot be held responsible for the extravagances of another member. But is it not the un-budging and too successful resistance the party you belong to—the Constitutional party—have accorded to every measure designed for the benefit of Ireland, together with the tyrannical oppression of Irish landlords,—are not these the true incentives of Irish outrages? Have not these goaded the people into crime? These outrages are not the dandlings of Liberal encouragement, as you would have it, but the prodigies of Tory oppression. A famishing nation are tired of catering for pampered landlords, and we have the sight of a few supercilious and exacting landlords starving a race, and a race in arms against these landlords.

You speak of the "so-called" Concert of Europe—why insert "so-called"? Is it not a generally recognised principle amongst "patriotic Welshmen" that things should be called just what they are? I can answer without presumption for the Liberal and unpatriotic (?) section of Welshmen that such is the case with them. It strikes me that the word is superfluous, if it was not meant to answer your purposes by making up in words what your address lacks in wisdom. How the conduct of the Government in relation to the concert of Europe imperils the peace of the Continent remains to me obscure. You certainly do not mean to suggest that the expulsion of that quarrel-generator, the Turk, from any part of Europe would imperil the general peace? If it would, then the sooner the better. And how do you make out that the conduct of the Government does not tend to the dignity of England? Did the demonstration which the late Government indulged in for a purpose far more unworthy of England, tend to any one's dignity? That demonstration which was sent to give England's veto to the enfranchising career of the liberator of enthralled

millions, which paraded England's power and registered it in the Bulgarian hearts as the mainstay of despotism and the stifler of aspiring liberty.

The complaint as to the undue taxation of the agricultural and mining interests comes with bad grace from you. When, during the unexampled depression of trade which we are now happily surviving, almost every landlord throughout the kingdom returned heavy percentages of their rent, did not you increase the rents of your tenants? If you feel that agricultural interests are too heavily burdened, return some of your own exacting tributes, and I have no doubt but that the tenants will feel that it is more an act of justice than generosity on your part; and as to the mining interests, it is loudly broached that they have not received that attention which they deserved at your hands. You vaunt your Welsh origin, and I find mural literature stating your patriotism to be the basis of your claim to the suffrages of the electors. Patriotism does not mean the sacrifice of national weal on the altar of national prejudice. The electors of Carnarvonshire will best show their patriotism by electing a man who has the capacity and the willingness to do some good for the country which they love. You profess great interest in the advancement of higher education in Wales. Mr. Rathbone has paid £10,000 towards the support of a college in Liverpool, and has given handsome donations to our Welsh University. How much have you paid for a claim to vaunt your interest in Intermediate Education in Wales? Is it true that you have not contributed a single mite towards the maintenance of the Welsh National University?

You promise to give a hearty support to all measures having for their object the promotion of the welfare of all classes in the country. Doth any good come out of Toryism? Are we to expect grapes from thorns, or figs of thistles? It is quite as preposterous an idea expecting beneficial measures from Conservatives.

You profess attention to local interests; but first of all, will you let me know whether the rumour is true that your interference in local matters was not to the liking of your own neighbours, as they rejected your candidature for municipal honours in favour of more unassuming politicians. If this be so, then, taking your past career to be any criterion of your future usefulness, your services may be safely declined until you have retrieved your parochial reputation. If my information be correct, you are just the man whom the electors of Carnarvonshire would delight to reject with contumely.

BRUTUS.

II

A first visit to London—"The region of his future domain"—Joins the Volunteers—and the Portmadoc Debating Society—A speech on Egyptian affairs—A "tit-bit of poetry."

In the year 1881, Mr. Breese, the solicitor in whose firm David Lloyd George worked, died in the prime of life. He makes the following note under the date March 4:

Mr. Breese died. He was a kind master, a thorough man. A man capacitated for great things, obstructed in their attainment by ill-health, and finally altogether cut off by death, and thus prematurely.

The same year saw his first visit to London, and gave him his first view of the House of Commons. His note dated November 12 is of great interest :

Went to Houses of Parliament. Very much disappointed with them. Grand buildings outside, but inside they are crabbed, small, and suffocating, especially the House of Commons. I will not say but that I eyed the assembly in a spirit similar to that in which William the Conqueror eyed England on his visit to Edward the Confessor, as the region of his future domain. Oh, vanity !

Called at the Law Courts. Q.C.s are not perfect. Very garrulous, but they have a despicable cant.

At Westminster Abbey contemplated the monuments of departed genius.

In the evening went with uncle [1] to Madame Tussaud's.

In June 1882 an entry in his diary tells us he was " in Conway Camp as a Volunteer." It is interesting, and a little surprising, that among so many activities he found time for the pursuit of arms. It is characteristic, however, of his versatility that he should have enlarged the scope of his activities to include an interest which seems, at first sight, rather out of harmony with his other pursuits at the time. I find no record that he rose above the honourable rank of Private.

In the same year he was part author with his brother of an essay on " the cash and credit systems," which won the first place in a competition at the Criccieth Eisteddfod. Their pseudonym on this occasion was " Juventus Mundi." The elder brother's chief contribution to the essay was a violent diatribe against the credit system.

The smithy at Llanystumdwy was his first Parliament ; but if we leave out of account those early encounters with the smith, and his discussions with the pupil teachers in the village school, it may be said truly that the nursery of his infancy as a debater was the Portmadoc Debating Society. Its records show that he was elected a member on November 28, 1881, and in January of the following year he took part in a debate on the motion " That Irish landlords should not be compensated in respect of any reduction of rents consequent on the Irish Land Act." In March 1882 he opened, on the affirmative side, a discussion on the question " Should the County Franchise be assimilated to the Borough

[1] A London uncle, not Mr. Richard Lloyd.

Franchise ?" On a division, ten voted for the affirmative, five for the negative. In November of the same year he took part in a debate on the Egyptian War, speaking in support of a negative reply to the question "Was the late war in Egypt justifiable ?" In the same month he seconded a keenly-contested motion on a matter of domestic policy, "That ladies be admitted members of this Society without payment of an annual subscription." It is regrettable to observe that this proposal, which must be allowed to have been chivalrous, however unsound in its financial aspect, was defeated by the casting vote of the chairman.

He was regular in his attendance at its debates for the next two years. The range of its discussions during this period was wide and catholic. "Fair Trade versus Free Trade" was the subject one week; "Has Portmadoc reached the Climax of its Prosperity ?" the next. Mr. Bradlaugh and the Channel Tunnel, Trade Unionism and Phonetic Spelling, were discussed with equal vigour and enthusiasm. Mr. William Williams, his old schoolfellow, tells how, driving along the road on a winter's evening, he saw ahead of him the figure of a youth vigorously gesticulating as he tramped towards Portmadoc. Overtaken, the young man turned out to be David Lloyd George, declaiming as he walked the speech that was to be delivered at that night's meeting.

Only one of his speeches at the meetings of this Society seems to have been reported in a newspaper. The following is an extract from the "North Wales Express" for November 24, 1882:

> Those persons who were in ignorance respecting the causes which led to the late war in Egypt would have done well to have visited the Portmadoc Debating Society on the 13th inst. . . . Some of the speeches delivered were excellent.

After dealing with the speeches of the proposer and opposer, the report goes on:

> The speeches which followed, especially the speech of Mr. Lloyd George, were very good. Mr. George, in a most eloquent harangue, full of clinching arguments, denounced the war as a wicked one. He showed that the Suez Canal was in no danger at the hands of Arabi, and that the Khedive, Tewfik Pasha, was as guilty of revolt as Arabi Pasha was, because the latter was not dismissed by him till he saw that the Army had gone over to Arabi. The foreign control was a great injustice to the Egyptians. The peasants of the country were being driven to the greatest poverty by the shameful taxation imposed by the rotten government of the country upon them. They were glad to get any man to come and

deliver them from their pitiful state. Arabi Pasha was a man that had risen from amongst them—a man who knew all about their wants, because he had felt their wants himself.

We read with regret that, in spite of Mr. Lloyd George's eloquence, there was a large majority in favour of the war, two members remaining neutral.

The "Carnarvon Herald" was at least equally flattering in its references to this speech:

> The speech delivered by Mr. George against the war was very good, and it would probably have gained praise had it been delivered in the House of Commons. The matter, the words, and the style, together with the freedom with which it was delivered, took everybody by surprise, and made a deep impression upon all present.

Extracts from the diary for 1883 will show that his interest in politics remained unabated, and his ambitions strong.

March 31.—Reading the Marquess of Salisbury's attacks on the Government. They are a splendid piece of criticism, fact-manipulation, and distortion.

April 7.—(Reading) Carlyle's "Hero Worship." Budget. Very clear and satisfactory. A thorough exposure of Conservative (or rather of Jingo) finance and a complete vindication of Liberal finance.

June 2.—Tit-bit poetry in "Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald," referring to my thirst for renown, etc. Perhaps (?) it will be gratified. I believe it depends entirely on what forces of pluck and *industry* I can muster.

The "tit-bit" of poetry which elicited this remarkable and suggestive piece of self-revelation was a quotation from Dr. Johnson which was printed in the "Carnarvon Herald" on June 2, 1883, among contributions for a "literary stall" at a "Fancy Fair" at Carnarvon. The object of these contributions had been to hit off various people well known in Portmadoc and the neighbourhood with suitable quotations. Mr. Lloyd George was among them, and the verse attached to his name was that which follows:

> When first the college rolls receive his name,
> The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame,
> Resistless burns the fever of renown,
> Caught from the strong contagion of the gown.

CHAPTER IV

(1884–1886)

Admitted a solicitor—Hears a debate in the House of Commons—Sets up in practice—Early cases and many meetings—Diary of a busy life—A client's experience—Organises the Farmers' Union.

IN 1884, at the age of twenty-one, Mr. Lloyd George went to London for his final examination before admission as a solicitor. During his stay in London he again visited the House of Commons. The member for his division had provided him with a ticket for the gallery, and for the first time in his life he heard a debate. It furnished good sport, for it was one of the many occasions on which Lord Randolph Churchill bearded Mr. Gladstone. "It was a clever piece of comedy," Mr. Lloyd George said in conversation years afterwards. "I thought Churchill an impudent puppy, as every Liberal was bound to do—but I thoroughly enjoyed his speech."

The news soon came that the dream of the family at Criccieth was fully realised, for the Final Examination was passed "with Honours." When he next visited London it was in order to be admitted formally to the roll of solicitors. The ceremony was a disappointment:

To-day [he wrote home] I went to Chancery Lane and got admitted in regular humdrum fashion. The ceremony disappointed me. The Master of the Rolls, so far from having anything to do with it, was actually listening to some Q.C. at the time, and some fellow of a clerk swore us to a lawyerly demeanour in our profession at the back of the Court, and off we shambled to the Petty Bag Office to sign the rolls.

Outside the door of the little house near the castle a brass plate now appeared with the name of David Lloyd George, Solicitor, upon it,[1] and the back parlour was given up to be used as his office.

[1] Subsequently, when Mr. William George had qualified as a solicitor, the name of the firm became Lloyd George and George.

It was not long before clients came to him. He was young, it is true, but it was commonly felt that there was an old head on his young shoulders. He was well read, and had gained a very full experience. He had made his first appearance in any court, if we leave out of account his work as assistant to the magistrates' clerk, on October 6, 1879, when he appeared at the Revision Court at Criccieth to prove the service of a notice of objection. He was now to learn the joys and disappointments of forensic contests. Notes in his diary of 1885 show how strong an appeal the practice of the law made to him and how successful he was in its pursuit. He soon extended his business to Portmadoc and Festiniog, and gained a reputation as an able and fearless advocate. But the law, hard mistress though she was, never for a moment excluded his devotion to politics. His notes speak for themselves :—

January 1, 1885.—Went over to Portmadoc, arranging matters with the old firm, and starting on my own account.

January 3.—Letter from Dr. Evans, Blaenau Festiniog, to open an office at Festiniog and to address meeting there next Saturday week.

January 9.—Attending Criccieth Debating Society as chairman.

January 17.—Attending temperance meeting at Blaenau Festiniog. Place crowded. Rough audience. Had good hearing. Spoke with much fire and impetuosity. Bench broke just at beginning of my speech. Only one cheer in the course of address.

January 30.—Short paragraph in "Herald Cymraeg" about my address. Refers to my intention to start business. Had letter from W. Jones (Festinfab) regretting his inability, owing to Vestry, to attend temperance meeting and stating that he had heard general praise of me amongst the workmen.

January 30.—Whilst getting dinner at Temperance, Price asked me to defend some one for assault. This was about 12.20. Saw parties; rushed down to police station by 12.30. Very much tempted at first to decline to go altogether, I felt so timorous. Got fellow off, to his immense joy.

At Debating Society. Disestablishment. Splendid exciting debate.

February 3.—Rev. A. J. Parry travelled with me to Festiniog, and told me my article on Temperance quoted in some of South Wales papers. Both at Dr. Hughes's. After tea, with A. J. P. and a minister to the meeting by 7 o'clock. O. Thomas, B.A., delivered an elaborate, able address, but it fell rather flat. So other speakers until A. J. P. got up. He galvanised the meeting by an assortment of well-told stories. It was not encouraging to get up after such a speech, especially as the audience marched away in troops during the proposer of my resolution's speech. However, I got up, and as A. J. Parry said afterwards, immediately I had delivered two or three sentences several who had started out sat down

and listened. In fact, so he said, I was better listened to than the majority of the speakers. Much cheered once or twice. Several congratulated me, especially A. J. P.[1] He assures me I will make an effective speaker. . . . A. J. P. pressed me for another leader (*i.e.* for the "North Wales Express").

February 23.—First week in the County Court.

February 24.—Won a boating case at Pwllheli after a long and sharp fight.

February 25.—Several cases at Portmadoc.

February 26.—At Bl. Festiniog County Court.

February 27.—At Portmadoc Debating Society in the evening. Debating Free Trade.

February 28.—To Festiniog by the 8 train. A worrying week. Feel fagged out completely. Have gained in confidence at least, considerably. Somehow feel I may make tolerable advocate.

March 13.—Defending poacher before magistrates at Portmadoc. He is convicted "notwithstanding the very able speech of Mr. George" (Mr. Osmond Williams, Chairman of the Bench).

Liberation meeting in the evening at Criccieth.

March 28.—Second Liberation meeting. Spoke between forty and forty-five minutes with much ease, and in the end with much fire; getting into the *hwyl*[2] without knowing it when declaiming about liberty.

April 26.—Local Option meeting at Portmadoc. Town Hall full. Mr. Whyte from Manchester there. I proposed second resolution. Got on fairly well, I think.

April 29.—Was told that my Local Option address was highly praised at Portmadoc.[3] Spoke in chapel to-night on "Faith without Works."

May 4.—Peace prospects assured. Very glad of it. War would put an end to Local Option, Disestablishment, and the like for another six years.

May 5.—Listening to Herber Evans, Carnarvon. Never heard anything more eloquent than this sermon. I was quite overwhelmed. Just like uncle when at his best. After dinner went there to hear him again. Still eloquent. He has a marvellous power of pathos. Undoubtedly the greatest pulpit orator in Wales of public men.

May 21.—Chairman at Grand Debating Society's soirée.

June 1.—Speaking at missionary meeting at Bl. Festiniog, and delivered my address from the pulpit. Audience listening with marked attention.

[1] The Rev. A. J. Parry's criticism of this speech at the time was that the young orator's delivery was good—very natural, and entirely free from affectation. He spoke "classical Welsh." "His features wore an expression of great earnestness, but withal there was a pleasant smile." Another critic, the Rev. Mr. Hughes, said "he had a kind of tremor in his voice—very effective in describing the evils of intemperance."

[2] This Welsh word may be translated (inadequately) into "swing" or "enthusiasm."

[3] The comment of the local paper was: "Mr. D. Lloyd George delivered a speech that was simply unanswerable, and no doubt succeeded in convincing many people of the necessity for local option."

June 2.—Listening to Matthews, Eweuni. Quite a treat ; most natural ; humorous ; eloquent at times, always striking.

June 5.—Reading Thomas Jones's [1] Sermons. A model of chaste and impassioned eloquence.

June 8.—Attending meeting of Liberal delegates for South Carnarvonshire. John Roberts,[2] Brynadda, elected by 71 votes to 23 given for Pughe Jones.

June 13.—Heard that Brynmor Jones [3] is appointed Judge of this circuit. Am extremely gratified at this announcement. Gwilym Williams much too blunt in his manner, and hasty in his judgments (or rather conclusions).

June 17.—Attending Sunday School Centenary. Delivered address.

June 20.—Up at 5.30. Breakfast 6.20. To post 6.50. After waiting twenty minutes for P.O. youngster to get up, got letter from Carnarvon enclosing garnishee order on W. J. Started 7.20 along railway there. He had gone to the village ; met him there and served him. Ran back ; perspiring to saturation. I caught 8.19 train to Festiniog. Down to Tanybwlch to serve ——. Then at Portmadoc. Home 8 train.

June 23.—Pwllheli County Court. Brynmor Jones, Judge. Very shrewd and clever. Knows great deal of law. Sees point of case. Very courteous to advocates. If he continues like this, he is just the sort of fellow I'd wish. He'll stimulate you to carefully prepare your case, especially as regards legal points. He delights in these. Got my applications all right. Home 6 train. Stroll with William [4] towards Llanystumdwy. Then engaged with clients until between 10 and 11.

June 24.—Up between 5 and 6.—Portmadoc County Court. Never had a more successful field day. Won all my cases. Pentrefelin trespass case very hard fought, but won on point of law. Also Festiniog pony case. Glad I won this. It will do a world of good to me. Plaintiff had consulted all Festiniog lawyers. I had over thirty cases on my list. Had all the fighting cases except two or three. Home 6.30. To chapel. After chapel with W. G.[4] to station for my letter press.

July 9.—Attending Penrhyn Sessions for first time, opposing transfer of licence of Victoria Inn. Got on, I think, remarkably well. Never felt more fluent, but Bench would not listen to anything. Would not enter into question of existence of licence. We discussed and debated together for three-quarters of an hour, but to no avail.

August 20.—At Festiniog. Asked to preside at Morgan Lloyd's meeting in the evening. After some consideration, consented to do so, not as supporter of M. L.'s candidature, but as supporter of protest made against mode of selecting candidate. With Morgan Lloyd for a mile. His views not half radical enough. To meeting. Workmen wishing to have their own chairman. I spoke there with considerable applause.

[1] Father of the Right Hon. Sir David Brynmor Jones, K.C., M.P.

[2] Better known as John Bryn Roberts.

[3] Sir David Brynmor Jones was County Court Judge from 1885 to 1892, when he resigned.

[4] His brother, William George.

August 27.—At Penrhyn Sessions again over Victoria Inn case. Bench very courteous to me—Greaves particularly so. Straight from Penrhyn to Pwllheli Sassiwn.[1] Principal Edwards preaching there. Splendid. He is a real orator.

September 8.—Revision Courts. I appeared for the Liberals at Portmadoc. Came off better than Liberals ever did. At Criccieth managed to pair objections; so my vote and uncle's stand.

September 9.—To Llanrug to temperance meeting.

September 10.—To Temperance Conference at Carnarvon.

October 17.—Attending Swetenham's meeting. Sat by J. T. Jones's side. S. not nearly so good a speaker as I anticipated. No enthusiasm. He kept pretty clear of invidious topics—*e.g.* Disestablishment. J. T. J. refused to allow me to question him. I was anxious to do so, too.

October 21.—Attending John (Bryn) Roberts's meeting at Fourcrosses.

October 24.—Attending Robertson's meeting at Festiniog. Majority voted for Morgan Lloyd.

October 28.—Attending John Roberts's meeting at Llanaelhaiarn.

October 29.—Mr. Lumley, Independent minister, praising my speech very much, predicting I would make another Chamberlain.

November 3.—Meeting at Criccieth. Heard that John Bryn Roberts was impressed with my speech at Llanaelhaiarn, and said that that young George would make "a very good speaker."

November 4.—A. J. P. told uncle that my analysis of Nanney's address was a masterpiece.

November 13.—To Cilgwyn meeting.

November 17.—Attending Nanney's meeting. Attack on Chamberlain by Conservative speaker.

November 18.—Reply meeting. Replying to the attacks on Chamberlain pointing out that every Tory mushroom thought he ought to attack Chamberlain. I then quoted Burns on the attack on Gavan Hamilton. I attacked "*Cynffynwyr*"[2] and appealed to people to vote with judgment and confidence. All this latter part from Chamberlain down was delivered in a very impassioned manner, and I was tremendously cheered on sitting down. I felt I had made another stroke at Criccieth.

November 19.—At Talysarn. Addressing meeting. Not very enthusiastic, but appreciative. Listening well and giving appreciative applause. I took twenty-five to thirty minutes. Not much fire in me. Took Leasehold and Fair Trade. Was asked at the end to explain the ballot papers. Did so in short speech; all extempore; but had some *hwyl* with it.

Long talk with Mr. Owen about starting a sort of Liberal club at Criccieth to educate and emancipate the people there. I fell in and promised to follow Mr. Owen. Was complimented on making a very dry and difficult subject (Free Trade) very clear, instructive, and entertaining in tonight's speech. Every one I have yet seen and all I have yet heard seems to point out that people are highly pleased with my last night's philippic. J. J. says it is the best speech I have yet made since my Disestablishment speech.

[1] Calvinistic Methodist Association Meeting.

[2] Sycophants.

November 23.—Portmadoc meeting. Osmond Williams in the chair. I spoke next. Felt nervous before I got up, but not a bit afterwards. Had a double cheer on rising to speak. Raised alternate roars of laughter and rounds of cheers. Most successful. Herber Evans after me. Not so good as usual. Pope[1] made a very good speech. Rev. J. J. Roberts in proposing a vote of thanks singled me out as a future M.P. The audience cheered. Walked home. About a dozen from Criccieth altogether.

November 24.—Very much congratulated from Portmadoc for my speech. Osmond Williams told R. H. that I made a very good speech, though I hit him rather hard about game, etc. "A fellow must stand these things at election times," he said. Attended Tory meeting. Excepting Swetenham, it was nothing but a prolonged attack upon me, comparing me to a mosquito. Did not feel much annoyed. Never felt less. In fact, felt somewhat gratified that I should be made the chief butt of attack at every Tory meeting we have had since I began speaking—as witness the Disestablishment meetings.

November 25.—News of Tory victories in boroughs. W—— screamed his elation at station. He is a big fool. He did it to annoy me, I have no doubt. I believe he dreads our retort, for he told me they were going to hold a counter meeting on Monday if we had one on Saturday; but I have outwitted him by securing the hall for Monday.

November 26.—Further Tory victories. This is rather disheartening, I confess. It must be these Parnellites; besides, there is no cry for the towns. Humdrum Liberalism won't win elections.

Portmadoc in the afternoon to fetch ballot-box. To Fourcrosses. There 10 p.m. Inspected booths and went to bed. Ll—— warned me that he had heard from the other side that they intended stoning J. O. and me on Saturday night. At Fourcrosses all day.

November 27.—To Carnarvon with box, 9 train. At Reform Club between 11 and 12.

November 28.—Got up at 6. News of Gladstone's overwhelming majority last night. Telegraphed home about 7. Waiting for results. In the meantime crowd kept in humour (and so was I) by singing, calling for and giving cheers and groans for prominent politicians. Immediately after result I made rush for Post Office to telegraph to uncle. Splendid majority. Scarcely anticipated it after all the prognostication of evil. Feel elated. Home 6 train. To our meeting at Town Hall. Rather late when I got there. Very much cheered on mounting platform. J. T. J. allowed to speak, but all next speakers howled down—D. J., Chilog, and E. J., Carnarvon, latter yelling at them, "*Hys gwn Nanna.*"[2] Never saw such confusion. Rather enjoyed it. I had no speech ready myself. After standing up a good while, E. J. utterly unable to speak, and the meeting broke up.

Took M. O.[3] and her cousin home. Was warned that the rioters threatened to kill me.

[1] The late Mr. Samuel Pope, Q.C.

[2] "At it, Nanney's dogs!"

[3] Miss Owen, now Mrs. Lloyd George.

November 30.—Some of our weak-kneed Liberals decided not to hold meeting this evening. I was awfully annoyed at this. There were about sixty coming over from Portmadoc to assist in maintaining order.

Off to Dolgelley per 11 train. Tried my utmost to arrange to give my vote to-morrow, but Under-Sheriff would allow me neither to withdraw nor to change my station. Felt very much disappointed at this. Knew very well that my abstaining from voting for sake of £4 4*s.* would be severely commented upon, and I felt, moreover, that there was a real danger of a Liberal defeat and I should feel ashamed of myself in that case had I not recorded my vote. Between conscience and all, I feel very miserable. Uncle cheering me up. W. G. and he vehemently denouncing my suggestion to drive over to-morrow. Notwithstanding, I determined to do so fixedly. To Port. 6 train.

December 1.—Drove home to record vote from Festiniog and back.

December 3.—Counting votes Dolgelley. I was one of the counters. Did not start on the counting until 11. Completed about 5.30. Found at once in checking the box that Robertson had a heavy majority. Morgan Lloyd appeared quite unable to bear it. Wynne much disappointed. Figures: Robertson, 3,764; Lloyd, 1,907; Wynne, 2,209. I felt much elated both that a Liberal was in, and that Lloyd had polled so well. It will teach wire-pullers a lesson. Jones Parry in with 65 majority. Glad he is in and that his majority is small. It will furnish good reason for attacking the Executive for inducing him to withdraw resignation. Home 8 train.

December 4.—Up 6.30. Feel weary, sleepy, and utterly done up to-day. Great Liberal victories in counties. Very glad of it. Am convinced that this is all due to Chamberlain's speeches. Gladstone had no programme that would draw at all. The people do not understand what entail, etc., mean. Rathbone in with 1,724 majority. Majority is a great disappointment to every one. We expected 2,500 at the least.

Mr. J. H. Davies, of Caertyddyn, gives an interesting account of an interview he had as a client with the young solicitor, and of the assistance he got from him in the formation of the "Farmers' Union" (Undeb Amaethwyr) for Lleyn and Eifonydd:—

In the year 1886 [he says] I had to take legal advice. After consulting many local solicitors on the case, I felt quite dissatisfied. In the meantime I happened to speak to my friend "Myrddin Vardd,"[1] and he said, "There is a young chap just at the point of starting as a lawyer at Criccieth. If I were you, I would go there to see him the next time you go there. His name is David Lloyd George, and the house is by the castle. He and his family have just shifted there from Llanystumdwy, and I think he is an old boy with something in him, too!"

[1] A bardic name. Its bearer will be remembered as the bard and antiquary, known as "the literary blacksmith," to whom in later years Mr. Balfour, while Prime Minister, made a grant of £300 from the Civil List in recognition of his services to Welsh literature.

So I went to Criccieth and in search of Myrddin's "old boy." I found the house with a brass plate by the side of the door, with "D. Lloyd George, Solicitor," engraved upon it. I knocked at the door and a young lady came to answer. She had a very pleasant expression, and turned out to be George's only sister. I asked her if Mr. George was in. "Yes," she said, "come in"; and she showed me into the front parlour, and said, "My brother will be here with you in a minute."

Then there came in a fine-looking young fellow, and asked me heartily how I was. I found something charming in the way he spoke to me, and we were great friends at once, as he inquired how the agitation among the farmers was getting on, and said that he was watching the movement with great interest, and would like very much to join us, though he was not a farmer. I said he would be very much welcomed, as he could give us guidance in many ways.

He asked when our next meeting was to be held. I answered, "On Wednesday, at Pwllheli Town Hall." "Well," he said, "I have taken a room at the 'Temperance,'[1] to try to catch a little business there on market days. If you will come there to fetch me I shall be very glad to come with you to your meeting, as I am too shy to come alone." I said, "All right, and you must give us a speech." "I don't know," he replied, "I have never spoken in a public meeting, though I have been speaking at a Debating Society with the boys at Portmadoc."

Then I entered on the consultation, and he held out a good hope for my case, and got it successfully through the County Court at Pwllheli. This was the first case he advocated in Court, and caused much surprise and talk all round the country, as the case was pretty well known, and considered rather a hard case. Thenceforth his fame as an advocate grew all over the country, and he soon became one of the most successful lawyers in North Wales.

After that consultation he went from the room and brought his uncle, his mother, his sister, and his brother (who had been upstairs studying for his final) there to shake hands with me. His mother said to me, "You must stop and have a cup of tea with us in the kitchen, as the house is rather small. We have but three small rooms on this floor—this one, and the back parlour as an office, and the back kitchen to live in." At tea we had a very interesting chat, and I wondered especially at Mrs. George —how well she knew the grievances of the farmers, and all the public questions of the day, and how keen a critic she was on all subjects. She must, I thought, be a marvellous woman.

The day came for the farmers' meeting at Pwllheli. I met Mr. William Jones, of Tyddyn Mawr, Llanaelhaiarn, one of the most eager supporters of the movement, and a big farmer, in the street, and said to him, "I have a lawyer to bring with me to the meeting to-day." "Don't say so," he replied: "is there any attorney who will take the farmer's side against the landlord?" "Well, we shall see," I answered, and went for Mr. Lloyd George and took him to the meeting, where a number of farmers had

[1] *I.e.* the local temperance hotel.

mustered. Soon I introduced him to the meeting, and asked him if he would speak, so he at once rose and gave us the most suitable and telling speech I ever heard him make. We all marvelled, and were ready to say, "No one ever spoke like this boy; here is a born orator to take up the poor farmer's grievances."

So we cheered up and formed ourselves into a formal society which spread through all the North of Wales. The aims of the society were better terms for holdings and abatements in rents. This led to Mr. Gladstone's Welsh Land Commission. Mr. Lloyd George's first public speech was at this meeting of farmers on market day in the Town Hall of Pwllheli.

CHAPTER V

(1881–1884)

His development as a writer of English—More of "Brutus'" writings—Early characteristics of his style—An article on Ireland—"Lights and shades"—On religion—On adult suffrage—Views on Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill.

THERE is one striking feature of Mr. Lloyd George's intellectual development which has been little noticed. Opinions may differ as to the place he deserves among modern masters of English. We have to judge him as a speaker rather than as a writer, and his speeches owe so much of their effect to charm of voice and manner that one is a little doubtful whether these graces do not lend them a distinction which they might not achieve by their literary merit alone. It is safe to say, however, that his speeches, even when they are read in the tame surroundings of the library, bear comparison with those of most speakers of acknowledged distinction of the present day. His periods have not the well-rounded smoothness that characterises one of Lord Rosebery's orations—*totus teres atque rotundus*—and he does not deal the short, sharp, smashing strokes which mark the eloquence of Mr. Asquith as they did that of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. But when the time comes to consider the oratory of his later years it will be found, as I venture to think, that he has forged out of the King's English a weapon at once of use and beauty. What is remarkable is that he has achieved these results with a language which is emphatically not his own.

As an infant he heard some English, but from the day he first set foot in Llanystumdwy Welsh was the language of his early life. At school he learned English as English boys learn a foreign language. He speaks Welsh to this day whenever his listener can understand it. The accent of that language clings closely to most of those whose allegiance it has once claimed, and years of residence in England, together with the habitual use of the English tongue, are seldom sufficient to shake it off. If any

accent is discernible in Mr. Lloyd George's speech, it is so slight as to be inconspicuous to the most sensitive critic. More than this, he has acquired for the purposes of his oratory a simple and easy English style. His early writings show that this end was not reached without constant and unremitting labours. In his youth he got much practice with his pen, and as a rule wrote in English. It will have been observed that in the articles already quoted, and even in his own diary, his tendency was to use words which strike an English ear as pedantic in their archaism or pretentious in their length and rarity. That defect of style, common in those who begin to handle any language, is most general where a writer is embarking upon the partially known regions of an alien tongue. My apology for quoting somewhat largely from his early writings is that much interest attaches to them, not only for their intrinsic worth or the light they throw upon the opinions he formed early in life, but also as illustrating the gradual growth of his mastery of style.

In this chapter I collect some further instances of his writings between the years 1881 and 1884. They consist partly, as will be indicated presently, of articles which appeared in the glory of print. For the rest, they are notes of speeches or addresses written roughly in pencil, with many interlineations and erasures, usually upon the backs of old voters' lists or any chance scrap of paper that lay at his hand. It may here be observed that it was his habit for some years to write out his more important speeches and learn them by heart, while for slighter efforts he depended upon fairly full notes, unless necessity called for an impromptu effort.

An article published in the "North Wales Express" for February 19, 1881,[1] on "Irish Grievances," over the usual pseudonym of "Brutus," shows a style of remarkable maturity (he was only eighteen when it was written), although it is no doubt possible to find in it matter for criticism of the nature suggested above. It recalls in places the turgid eloquence of his favourite statesman, Burke.

He begins with the postulate that "it is universally admitted that there is something abnormally wrong in the local mechanism of Ireland," and proceeds as follows :

> Although there is amongst statesmen a complete unanimity of opinion as to the existence of grievous evils in the present Irish land system, yet when you come to inquire how far the present deplorable condition of

[1] Mr. Lloyd George sent the same article to "Reynolds's Newspaper," but I cannot find that it was printed in that journal.

Ireland is attributable to these evils, you will find a considerable divergence of opinion, even amongst responsible statesmen. Some attribute it wholly to the discontent which seems (according to them) to be part and parcel of the Irish soul.

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I believe it to be a fact that history does not afford one example of a whole nation persistently complaining of an alleged grievance if there be no legitimate cause of complaint, that is, so far as dealings between man and man or nation and nation go. And yet this is what the Irish nation has been doing for scores of years, if not for centuries.

Mr. Gladstone, in his speech on the introduction of the Coercion Bill, attempted to prove that the Land League was responsible for the committal of these regrettable outrages in Ireland. This he did by demonstrating, from facts and figures, that "the steps of crime dogged the steps of the Land League," and he also used these words: "That which increases with the crime and the movements of which correspond with it with a wonderful exactness, there it is that the judicial inquirer will begin to believe he is near the true cause of crime." These remarks met with the approval of both sides of the House, and I believe were just. Well, what is the fact as regards these outrages? When a small modicum of the evil was removed by the Land Act of 1870, they palpably decreased, as was proved by Mr. Gladstone (from statistics) in that famous Midlothian speech of his which has of late been so frequently referred to. This decrease Mr. Gladstone then attributed to the effect which his Land Act had in removing grievances and discontent consequent on grievances. Moreover, in a speech which he recently delivered (I believe it was his first speech on the Address to the Throne), in accounting for the Act of 1870 not so completely succeeding as was designed by its promoters, he said that much of this partial failure was due to the too sanguine expectations which the Irish peasantry had formed of the effects of its operation, thus depending too much on a system which was rotten because [*sic.*, ? before] it was repaired. Does this signify discontent? The infallible concomitant of discontent is diffidence; discontent is lickerish—it smacks every food carefully before it tastes. Was such the conduct of the Irish? No! Poor dupes, they placed too implicit a confidence in their caterers, and devoured with eager voracity comestibles not absterged of the wild gourds which had contaminated the whole mess.

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At present the Irish nation's condition is like unto Job's. She lies prostrate on the ashes of her former magnificent nationality—for magnificent it has been—covered with the sores inflicted on her by the hand of Satanic landlordism; with a host of friends lecturing to her forbearance and urging to her consideration their well-meant panacea. She is not so patient under the affliction as Job. How can she be? She recognises no Redeemer that now liveth and will not stand in vain for her!

> "The country sinks beneath the yoke,
> It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
> Is added to her wounds."

He advocates a reform which shall be "liberal and comprehensive," and continues:

We are told that a certain amount of liberality and justice in such reform should be immolated to appease the just indignation of the god of property (the House of Lords) at having its protégé disturbed: that legislation on the subject should be such as to their Lordships' house will be condonable (not acceptable—for what measure which has in it a taint of progressive reform will receive the approval of this antiquated wisdom?); such of the crumbs of justice as, falling from their Lordships' tables, they, with incomparable generosity and self-denial, will vouchsafe permission to them, vile dogs—the poor peasants of Ireland—to pick up.

That the opinions of minorities should be taken into account I fully grant; but that in their consideration anything else should be included than the arguments advanced in support of those opinions, I think is a little preposterous, for if the opinions of the minority are to outweigh those of the majority, it is not only a subversion of an established rule of government that the majority is to sway, but also a subversion of all reason as substituting for it something else which must thereby be unreasonable. It is true that the House of Lords forms a component part of the State; it is quite as true that it is to be a servant of the State. Founded for the public interests, it is a traitor to the public if it diverts its power to the injury of those interests. Are we going to connive at an oligarchy here? And if we are, should we entrust our destinies to the hands of men whose judgments are like the institution which they constitute—a lumber-room of musty prejudice—an asylum of hereditary delusion? Not that Peers are a race of intellectual Hottentots, but more resembling the Red Indian, who in accordance with a custom of their race, by an aduncous process form—or rather deform—their skulls "into the same image." So these Peers, however noble their dispositions may be by nature (and I believe some of them are naturally noble), are bent by their education to take an artificial, fashionable, ignoble ply. Well, considering their education, their conduct may be an unenviable selfishness, but certainly it is not an insuperable difficulty. Statesmen should provide for the wants of a people before respecting the urbanity of a class; they should alleviate the misery of the poor before pandering to the vanity of the rich. It is something worse than ridiculous—it is criminal—to send a punt to save a ship's crew because the lifeboat is wanted for a pleasure trip. Keep your family from starving, and then you can apply what remains of your income to luxuries.

As Englishmen you must have all sympathised with the desperate devotion which inspired the Montenegrins to fight against overwhelming odds for their country—their dear fatherland. They were unquestionably brave. How they disputed with the invaders, inch by inch, the rule of their adored soil! They seemed determined to make Montenegro their cemetery rather than their prison, to fall with their independence rather than "wash its wounds with their tears," and to be buried with it rather than solemnise the obsequies with their moans. Perhaps it never

occurred to you that the struggle in which the Irish peasantry have been engaged with the "little tyrants of the fields" calls for far more commiseration. The Montenegrins fought for mountains they had never seen, and for villages they had never heard of. The interests at stake were not very vital, as the Turks would only have been too glad to come to any fairly favourable terms in order to concentrate their wasted and wasting powers against the advance of the victorious Russian arms: yet they fought desperately, nobly, patriotically; they were admired and applauded. But here in Ireland we have a simple peasant driven to fight for his home or quit it. That hovel where he—where his ancestors—were born and bred; where he disported his merry youth, supported his manhood, and purports nursing his old age; where he has lived, where he intends to die, where he has last seen his parents, and where he first saw his children. Those fields, every pasturage and tillage, croft and meadow, ascent and declivity, nook and corner of which he knows. If you were privileged to enter that record-office of his mind, his memory, you would find prominently hung up amongst the archives a detailed and correct map of his homestead; you would find there depicted various incidents connected with it—some in bright and "*riant*," some, maybe, in gloomy colours. This little domicile is the scene of the legends recited to him by his father, and of the quite as interesting and more real history of his own life. His existence seems to be intertwined with that of his little home—"the Irish peasant loves his home." Expatriation is the severance of these associations, and an embitterment of all reminiscences of them. What is the wretch evicted to do? What *will* he do? He is inflamed by such remorseless tyranny; every vestige of his (we will grant) unwilling loyalty —of his constrained submissiveness to the law—is burned by the recollection of burning wrongs. He vows revenge. He executes due vengeance. He associates with brethren in misfortune and with men who are his partners in nothing but his crime, and it will (probably) be but his condign punishment if the enraged butt of oppression dies on the traitor's scaffold —a traitor to the law which could not protect him from his calamities nor compensate him for his loss, to the country which despised him and ignored his miseries, and to the Queen who knew not him and recked not his misfortunes.

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What is to be done? Here is a serious state of things. We have a law which either drives men to be traitors or acts the assassin at the mandates of tyranny. Let the British Parliament hold no parley with tyranny, but do its duty without fear or favour, affection, or ill-will, and pass a measure which will proclaim with trumpet sounds the acclamations of the world—that tyranny shall be no more. Then there will be a swallowing up of grievances in the victory of justice, and a resurrection of life, prosperity, and happiness for Ireland.

BRUTUS.

In some notes headed "Lights and Shades," and dated November 29, 1883, he has some reflections upon the fact that

persons of wicked life often seem to dwell in a perpetual light, while the righteous walk in continuous darkness, and has scribbled down what was clearly intended to be expanded into a more elaborate simile :

A prairie on fire—the men who stood behind the fire were in an utter suffocating darkness caused by the smoke, etc., but they were in safety. It was the smoke of a past danger. The men before it walked in a glaring light, etc.

Another of the same date is as follows :

Alluding to the effect novels have in moulding the characters of their readers : we are in the habit of saying that fiction is founded upon fact, but it is quite the reverse—facts are far more founded upon fiction.

The last quoted words form a short note, complete in itself, which was apparently intended for subsequent use if a favourable opportunity occurred.

Notes for a speech upon the Tory Government of the day contain the following :

Whenever the Government adopted any decisive policy, there followed resignations of leading members, so that a Government without a policy threatened to become a policy without a Government.

On the back of some old voters' lists I find some short, hastily written notes for a speech dated December 2, 1883, which show that he was applying his newly-acquired knowledge of the law to the problems of politics. They deal with what he calls "the Statute of Limitations argument"—the argument that the effluxion of time has given validity to the claim of the Church to its endowments, whatever history may have to say as to their origin :—

1. A mere evasion of the question. Comes to this—Was this property originally the property of the Church ? If not, how came it into the Church's possession ? Only answer that it was granted by Parliament. Had Parliament such a power ? If you say "yes," then certainly they have now, when power of Parliament is much amplified. If you say "no," then the Church is to its own knowledge in the possession of others' property. What would you say of an individual who, having stolen an acre of land, had by dint of various practices managed to retain it in undisturbed possession for twenty years—would the Statute of Limitations morally justify that man ? Would the Statute of Limitations make him less of a thief ? Then no man is likely to be a thief on the day of Judgment.

If not the individual, then certainly a corporation which assumes to be an embodiment of Christian morality is not justified by long possession,

and a Church which raises such a plea is not worthy of being recognised for a moment amongst Christian institutions.

2. Time does not count when an action is brought. Nonconformists brought an action immediately after Reformation. They have prosecuted it ever since. Once they won their case, but lost it again on appeal, when their great advocate Oliver Cromwell died.

3. Time does not count on behalf of persons parties to a breach of trust. Case of St. Thomas's Hospital.

4. *Cy-près* doctrine. When an institution ceases to exist. If no *national* Church, then no object of the charity in existence; and if Court of Chancery has power in such cases to apply *cy-près*, has not the highest Court in the land—the Court of Parliament?

The following are manuscript notes, undated, but belonging, I believe, to the early eighties, the first set dealing with certain manifestations of Religion, the latter with the question of Adult Suffrage :—

I

It is not by squandering resources, which ought to be devoted to enriching and felicitating mankind, in high-sounding ritual, extravagantly ornamental churches or chapels, nor is it by yelling Hallelujah chanties, that man will be saved. There has already been a surfeit of such cant and frenzy enacted in the sacred name of Religion—and what is the result? We have millions of our population famishing and starving, reduced to the most abject misery, wretchedness and criminality. And side by side with them, in their midst, we have thousands rich and cosy, who wallow in the luxury of wealth whilst looking upon their fellow-men sinking into, and in, this misery and degradation without lending them a helping hand; and yet those are Christians, nominally. No man starves in a pagan country unless it be by some inexplicable collapse of Providence, such as the Indian famine. The benighted pagans are happy, these countries into which we pour hordes of missionaries annually to enlighten its heathen. Well, is heathenism then in reality superior to Christianity? Nothing of the kind. What we know as Christianity is but an impudent parody of the name of Christianity.

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Christ taught, and so did His apostles after Him, that it was one of the first requirements of the social system which He founded that man should be placed above physical want. Now this is reversed: it is nowadays the first requirement of religion that every man, be he rich or poor, should contribute towards the maintenance of a band of priests, who satiate their rapacity in the sacred name of Religion.

II

Is property the only interest a man has? You must remember that Government is instituted for the protection not of the property alone,

but of the lives and liberties of its subjects. There is not a nobleman—the wealthiest in England—who would not pay the whole extent of his property as a ransom for his own or for his family's protection. But the humblest collier prizes his life as much as the proudest aristocrat. He has as much of parental affection. That interest—that powerful interest—he has in common with the greatest proprietor.

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If you look at history you will find that there is another important consideration to which self-interest is but secondary, and that is Patriotism. When Louis XIV. invaded Holland the inhabitants opened the dykes and flooded the whole country rather than see their country fall into the hands of the invader. Both the wealthy merchant and the poorest peasant proprietor with a striking unanimity preferred to see their property ruined and their houses swamped—to risk their own lives. If mattered not to the Dutch whether a Frenchman ruled their country or not. On the contrary, their whole self-interest was in submitting to Louis. As it was, they were in a state of continuous hostility with France—they, a small state easily overrun, in a state of hostility with the overpowering superiority of the greatest military power in Europe—and when not in actual war, hostilities were always impending and threatened; and you know how such a perilous situation as this would affect trade. If they were to submit, then, being a part of Louis' dominions, they would enjoy his powerful protection. What is more, commercial intercourse would be freely opened to them with the remaining parts of his flourishing dominions. Well, here is an instance where patriotism prevailed apart from, in spite of, the strongest possible inducements.

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Then there is another objection—the lack of education. Does education alone, apart from other qualifications, make men good citizens? That is not so, for the Russian students are the most ill-behaved citizens in the whole Empire, and one of those atrocious attempts to murder the late Emperor, at which the whole civilised world was so much shocked, was made by a schoolmaster.

He goes on to cite the case of the barons, "so uneducated that they could not append their own names to Magna Charta, who yet bequeathed to posterity a model of wise statesmanship," and then refers to the civil war in America: "The South had the advantage in education and what is known as refinement, but it was the rough, unhewn North that spilled its blood to wring freedom for the oppressed African."

He draws a moral from ancient history:

Athens was educated, pedantic, and wealthy: Sparta despised and condemned mental education, and interdicted the accumulation of wealth. The government of Athens was revolutionary and unstable, and not always free, as you may guess from the fact that they put to death one of the

greatest champions of intellectual liberty who ever lived—Socrates—and that for a mere avowal of his opinions; but Sparta's pride was her freedom, and you all know how Athens' education gave it neither Sparta's courage nor its foresight in opposing Philip of Macedon's designs against the liberty of Greece. Take Rome as another instance. When Rome contemned wealth and lacked education, Rome was virtuous, Rome was free, Rome was victorious; but when Rome became opulent and pedantic, Rome became corrupt, Rome was enslaved, Rome fell.

I do not quote these instances as proving that education and opulence are at all detrimental to political efficiency, but as a proof that there is a more important element than this in the formation of a healthy electorate.

I close this chapter with two extracts from some notes he wrote under the heading "Nota Benes: by a J pen," in the "North Wales Observer and Express." The first, published on October 17, 1884, deals with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain; the second, published on November 7 in the same year, with Lord Randolph Churchill. This is the second indication in his early writings of his youthful enthusiasm for Mr. Chamberlain, who was destined, in circumstances which could not have been anticipated at this date, to play an important part in his young admirer's career:

Mr. Chamberlain is unquestionably the future leader of the people. Any one who reads his speeches will know the reason why. He does not argue closely, like Sir Charles Dilke, nor does he discourse with the polished eloquence of Mr. Trevelyan; and yet his speeches have far greater effect upon public opinion that those of either of the two. The explanation is ready. He understands the sympathies of his countrymen. It is therefore that he speaks intelligibly and straightforwardly, like a man who is proud of the opinions which he holds. He has no dread of Tory misconstruction. He does not hedge round his sentences, lest the viper sting them. He is a Radical, and doesn't care who knows it as long as the people do. He is convinced that the aristocracy stands in the way of the development of the rights of man, and he says so unflinchingly, though he be howled at as an ill-mannered demagogue by the whole kennelry of gorged aristocracy, and of their fawning minions.

One could imagine a zealous young Radical writing in exactly the same strain of Mr. Lloyd George to-day.

Lord Randolph Churchill. . . . The Red Indians decoy their enemies on to pursuit by simulating flight, and when by this ruse they have enticed their unwary pursuers into a position where retreat is impossible, they turn round and annihilate them. That is the illustration, I believe, most applicable to the catastrophe which last week befel Lord Randolph. He was lured on to hot pursuit by the spectacle of a retiring foe, and when retreat on his part had become impossible he was subjected, for his indiscretion, to the cruellest scalping within parliamentary recollection. The noble lord will henceforth appreciate more fully the value of the old adage that "Discretion is the better part of valour."

CHAPTER VI

(1884-1888)

His career as an advocate—A Nantlle fishing case—He empties the bench—The Llanfrothen burial case—An astute parson—Mr. Lloyd George cross-examines a rector—Verdict, judgment and an appeal—A triumph in the divisional court—Mr. Justice Grantham.

HIS work as an advocate was necessarily confined to petty sessions and to the County Courts. The local justices were not at that time renowned for their fairness or their judicial minds. They were landlords, who found it difficult to approach in a spirit of judicial calm questions where the rights of property were involved. It seemed to them to be trifling with sound principles to claim a presumption of innocence in favour of a villager accused of poaching. It is the boast of our Courts that wide liberty is allowed to the advocate in the exercise of his duty to his client, and, whatever the faults of the Bar may be, no one can accuse barristers of being a servile race. It is easy, however, to be courageous before Judges who almost invariably admire courage. It is easy also for a barrister to come down from London to a country town and use the language of firm remonstrance before a local Shallow whom possibly he may never see again. It is another story where the advocate is a solicitor, practising locally, and, to some extent at least, dependent upon the favour of the local tribunal for his living. It is small wonder, therefore, that the local solicitors had got into the habit of approaching the Bench of magistrates with bated breath and whispering humbleness. David Lloyd George, from the first day he appeared as an obscure young solicitor before the county magnates, determined to change all that. He set himself deliberately to break the tradition of docility in the face of a brow-beating Bench. In ordinary cases there was never a more pleasantly spoken or conciliatory advocate. But where he thought that prejudice on the Bench made his case hopeless it was his policy to castigate the Bench. "It was," he says, "essential to

show that a solicitor could beard the magistrates in their dens without being instantly led off to execution."

At this time the leading figure upon the county Bench was a Mr. B. T. Ellis, of Rhyllech. He was a man of real ability, and as he shared to the full his colleagues' desire to keep lawyers in their place and poachers in gaol, he was a formidable person for a young solicitor to tackle. This was reason enough why a young man who throughout his career has shown a taste for big game should face this redoubtable magistrate with an undaunted front and even incite him with provocative language. There were battles royal between " Mr. George, of Criccieth " and the great man.

An occasion is recorded upon which Mr. Ellis, outraged at some comments upon the Pwllheli Bench which had appeared in a local paper, brought the article solemnly into Court, and put it to all the solicitors present in turn—for all the world like a schoolmaster searching for a culprit—in order that they might confess or disclaim its authorship. One by one they renounced the wicked words with horror, until it was handed to Mr. Lloyd George, who smiled and said nothing. " Very well," said Mr. Ellis, with the air of a judge about to perform the unpleasant duty of passing sentence of death, " if the cap fits Mr. George, he must wear it." The awful fact remained that Mr. George wore the cap with apparent content. No thunderbolt fell from heaven, and the offender continued his unblushing career.

In May 1889 four quarrymen were charged before the Carnarvon County magistrates with unlawfully fishing with a net in the Nantlle lower lake. They retained Mr. Lloyd George for their defence, and his conduct of the case is a good example of his determined policy of resistance to a Bench he considered prejudiced. We depend upon a newspaper report for an account of a scene which, amusing enough in cold print, must have been extremely ludicrous in action.

There was no doubt that the accused had fished with a net: the question was whether the lake in which they had fished came within the definition of the term " river " in the Act of Parliament. The importance of the case was that for many years, as was alleged, the public had fished freely in the lake without their right to do so being questioned. In the course of the case the solicitor for the defence contended that the Bench had no jurisdiction.

The Chairman said that that would have to be proved in a higher Court.

Mr. George: Yes, sir, and in a perfectly just and unbiassed Court, too.
The Chairman: If that remark of Mr. George's is meant as a reflection

upon any magistrate sitting on this Bench, I hope that he will name him. A more insulting and ungentlemanly remark to the Bench I never heard during the course of my experience as a magistrate.

Mr. George: But a more true remark was never made in a Court of Justice.

The Chairman: Tell me to whom you are referring. I must insist upon you referring to any magistrate or magistrates sitting in this Court.

Mr. George: I refer to you in particular, sir.

The Chairman (rising): Then I retire from the Chair. Good-bye, gentlemen. This is the first time I have ever been insulted in a Court of Justice. (*He then left the Court.*)

Another Magistrate: In fairness to the Chairman and other magistrates I must say that Mr. George was not justified in making such remarks.

A third Magistrate: I decline to proceed with this case until Mr. George apologises.

Mr. George: I am glad to hear it.

A fourth magistrate said that he would not sit any longer to hear the case until Mr. George had withdrawn or apologised.

Mr. George took no notice of this remark, and the magistrate therefore vacated his seat.

One of the few remaining magistrates asked Mr. George to tender an apology to the Bench.

I say this [he answered]: that at least two or three magistrates at this Court are bent upon securing a conviction whether there is a fair case or not. I am sorry the Chairman has left the Court, because I am in a position to prove what I have said. I shall not withdraw anything, because every word I have spoken is true.

The result of this uncompromising declaration was the immediate emptying of the Bench. The sporting quarrymen must have begun to anticipate acquittal for want of a Bench to try them. Then came the anti-climax. Four magistrates came back, and the new chairman announced their unanimous opinion that Mr. Lloyd George's remarks were unjustifiable and should have been withdrawn, and that "under all the circumstances it was better that the case should proceed."

"Mr. George offered no remarks."

One almost pities the indignant magistrates, rising one by one from the seat of justice, to return with a tame admonition to the offender whom they could not quell. In at least two cases they followed up the incident with letters asking for an explana-

tion of the solicitor's remark, and retaining liberty for themselves " to read his reply in Court "—a terrible threat.

The letter one of them (now long since deceased) got in reply was to this effect :—

DEAR SIR,

You were not present at the adjourned hearing of the Court you allude to, but if you invite my opinion as to your demeanour at the previous Court I must honestly say that it was such as led me to believe that you were more intent on protecting the fish in the Nantlle lakes against the inroads of quarrymen than upon doing justice in that particular case according to the evidence. This was also the impression made upon less interested onlookers than myself.

It is notoriously a prevalent opinion amongst the masses that no fair play can be expected in poaching prosecutions at the hands of game and fish preserving magistrates. And I emphatically assert that unless justices tainted by game preservation demean themselves so as to remove this impression, the already waning confidence in this tribunal will completely disappear.

The reading of this letter in Court I leave to your discretion and responsibility entirely.

Yours truly,
D. LLOYD GEORGE.

Mr. Lloyd George had been a solicitor for only four years when he was called upon to advise in a case which, in the result, made his name known throughout the Principality. The case arose in the village of Llanfrothen, and it has played so important a part in the young lawyer's career and been narrated in so many versions that it will be well to deal here fully with the facts of it.

In 1864 the old churchyard of Llanfrothen had been enlarged by the gift to the rector and parishioners of an adjoining piece of land. The gift had not been by deed, but nobody had had any doubt about its validity. A minute in the vestry-book recorded the thanks of the parishioners to the donors, Mr. and Mrs. Owen, of Brynygwin, Dolgelley. In 1869 a wall was built enclosing the new part of the churchyard, and built at the cost of the parishioners. There was, in fact, abundant evidence that the ground ceded by Mr. and Mrs. Owen had become, and been treated as, a part of the parish graveyard. The fact would never have been disputed had it not been for the Osborne Morgan Burial Act of 1880. That Act of Parliament permitted Nonconformists, after giving formal notice to the clergyman, to bury their dead in the parish churchyard with the rites of their own denomination. It is a little difficult to comprehend the type of mind to which such

a concession can seem anything more than an act of the barest justice. The most extreme opponent of the Nonconformist position could, at the very worst, only complain that he was being coerced into exercising Christian charity. But the Rev. Richard Jones, Rector of Llanfrothen, saw in the Act, one must suppose, a direct attack upon the sanctity of the Establishment. In 1881, incensed because under the provisions of this hated piece of legislation a Dissenter's body had for the first time been laid to rest with the rites of a Dissenting religion in the piece of ground acquired from Mr. and Mrs. Owen, the Rector seems to have hit upon the brilliant contention that, because there had been no conveyance and no consecration of the new ground, Mrs. Owen (whose husband was by this time dead) had never lost her title to it. Mrs. Owen, a faithful daughter of the Church, was readily persuaded to convey the piece of land in solemn form to the Rev. Richard Jones, on trust to permit the parishioners of Llanfrothen to be buried there, but upon the condition that their burial should be to the accompaniment of the rites of the Church of England. This seemed to the Rector an ingenious solution of the difficulty. His position seemed to him legally impregnable. Whatever the parishioners had believed, the land had never been conveyed and never consecrated. Here was an opportunity by no means to be missed of fastening upon God's Acre a restrictive covenant, and protecting it from the unhallowed intrusion of Dissenting ministers.

One feels that in an English country parish the plan might have succeeded. But the Welsh people, although Mr. Gladstone once commented upon their submissiveness, are capable of spirited opposition to an attack upon their rights, particularly where their religion is concerned. In 1888 the issue was raised in a very acute and painful form. As an academic question it had already greatly exercised the parishioners. The parish had put forward its claims at vestry meetings, and the Rector had sternly rejected them.

In that year there died an old quarryman, one Robert Roberts, whose daughter lay buried in the land which was Mrs. Owen's gift to the parish. On his death-bed he had asked that his body might be laid beside hers. The request was made known to the Rector, who went with the old quarryman's brother to choose the spot for the grave. But when the grave had been partially dug, the Rector found himself served with a notice under the Osborne Morgan Burial Act. The relatives, in other words, were asserting their claim to introduce a Dissenting minister and Nonconformist rites upon the holy ground. Here was the Rector's opportunity

to assert what he believed to be the law and to relieve his conscience. Whatever else may be said of him, he was no sentimentalist. He pointed out a spot in the old churchyard as suitable for an interment with Nonconformist rites—"a spot," as Mr. Lloyd George has said in telling the story, "bleak and sinister, in which were buried the bodies of the unknown drowned that were washed up from the sea in this region of shipwrecks; or of suicides; or of the few Jews that died in the district." But on the main point he was firm. The conditions of his trust must be carried out; if the relations pressed their point, the partially-dug grave would be filled in—and filled in it was. The reverend gentleman may have been moved by a consideration of the maxim that "hard cases make bad law." However that may be, it is not very surprising that Mr. Justice Manisty, at a later stage of the case, confessed in mild terms of rebuke that to his mind "the incidents of the case were not pleasing to dwell on."

In these circumstances the relatives, thinking themselves aggrieved, consulted the young and rising solicitor, Mr. Lloyd George. After a full consideration of the facts and of the law, he gave uncompromising and courageous advice. He told his clients that they had right upon their side and that they should insist upon their rights. Acting upon his counsel, they entered the churchyard and reopened the closed grave beside the body of the old man's daughter. They had several interviews with the Rector. Unmoved by any arguments they could adduce, he continued to forbid them to bury their dead where they desired. July 27 was the day chosen for the funeral. On that day the relatives formally demanded the key of the churchyard from the Rector. It was refused. They broke open the churchyard gate and borrowed a bier from a neighbouring chapel. A Calvinistic minister spoke the burial service of his Church, and the old man was buried by his daughter's side.

The Rector had been defied. He appealed to the civil arm. A claim was filed in the Portmadoc County Court on his behalf and that of his fellow trustees. Morris Roberts and seven other defendants were sued for damages for "wrongfully entering the plaintiffs' land, digging a grave therein, burying a corpse and conducting a funeral service," contrary to the provisions of the trust deed. Mr. Lloyd George defended his clients. Very wisely, as the event proved, he asserted their right to a trial by jury. The plaintiffs' solicitor implored the jurymen to approach the case with unbiassed minds. There is nothing in the shorthand record of the case to suggest that they did not, and certainly the solicitor for the defence made no appeal to any prejudices they

may have possessed. The Rector was cross-examined, and the conclusion of the cross-examination is worth transcribing :

Mr. Lloyd George : Who suggested the clause in the deed giving the trustees absolute discretion to charge what fees they liked ? Mrs. Owen ?

The Rector : The Act gives us power : if you read it you will see.

The Judge : Who suggested that it should be introduced into the deed ?

The Rector : I cannot tell.

Mr. George : Who suggested that all unbaptised and excommunicated persons and suicides should not be buried in the new ground ?

The Rector : It is according to the Prayer Book. I suppose you don't know much about the Prayer Book.

The Judge : You had better teach us something here. He had better improve the occasion when he gets you here, Mr. George.

Mr. George : Yes, Your Honour. (*To the Rector*) Is this a part of the parish churchyard, or not ?

The Rector : I should say not.

Mr. George : Whose was it, then ?

The Rector : Mrs. Owen's.

Mr. George : It was Mrs. Owen's private property ?

The Rector : It was Mrs. Owen's private property, and she could do what she liked with it.

The Judge : I think we decided not to go to this gentleman for law. That is what I have to decide.

Mr. George : Why did you not take proceedings in 1881 ?

The Rector : Because I had no authority:

Mr. George : Who then ?

The Rector : Mrs. Owen.

Mr. George : And you left the working of the deed to Mrs. Owen's solicitor ?

The Rector : Yes.

The Judge : They asked your permission for that funeral ?

The Rector : Yes.

Mr. George : Then you did not consider at that moment that Mrs. Owen was the proper person to be asked ?

The Rector : I did.

Mr. George : Why, then, did you not tell them to go to her ?

The Rector : I did not think of it at the time. (Laughter.) But I did write a letter to Hugh Jones, Bryngwilym, the person who was to conduct the funeral, and told him that he could not bury in the new ground under the new Act, because the ground was the property of Mrs. Owen.

Mr. George : Have you a copy of that letter ?

The Rector : I have no copy of it.

From the reports at the time, Mr. Lloyd George's speech seems to have been devoid of any attempt at rhetoric. It was short, and was a succinct and clear statement of the facts which told

in favour of his contention. In answer to specific questions put to them by the Judge the jury found that there was a verbal gift of the new ground to the parish in 1864, that it was actually occupied by the parish from that date, and that in 1869 it was enclosed by a wall. This meant a verdict for the defendants, and a triumph for Mr. Lloyd George, unless the title of the parishioners was defective in law. After reserving judgment, the County Court Judge came to the conclusion that the plaintiffs were entitled to judgment. He paid that tribute to Mr. Lloyd George's "ingenuity" which is regarded by judges as a suitable recompense to the defeated advocate, but he refused to accept his argument.

Few things are certain in law, and it would be unfair to blame the County Court Judge for arriving at a wrong conclusion. Nor can he fairly be accused of bias, for in another burial case heard before him at about the same time he gave a decision which was acclaimed by Nonconformists as representing a triumph of justice. Few will agree, however, with his complete acquiescence in the position taken up by the Rector, and his condemnation of the defendants. It was to be deplored, he said, that the defendants should have taken such very strong, violent, and ill-judged modes of bringing such a question to an issue. And a question arose with regard to the Judge's note of the findings of the jury which afterwards exposed him to the criticism of the Lord Chief Justice. The foreman of the jury had read the verdict from a slip of paper. Although it was proved to demonstration by Mr. Lloyd George, who produced the slip of paper, that the Judge's note was wrong, he refused to alter it. The report shows that the young advocate was not afraid to stand up to the Judge.

Mr. George asked for leave to appeal, which his Honour granted, with leave to obtain a copy of his notes. Mr. George then asked that His Honour's note of the finding of the jury should be amended. According to the note it appeared as if possession commenced in 1869, whereas he (Mr. George) could prove that the finding of the jury was that possession commenced in 1864.

The Judge said that Mr. George could not go behind the notes.

Mr. George, however, thought the Judge's notes should be as correct as possible. They were what the appeal would go upon.

The Judge replied that he would not correct anything then of what had taken place at the last Court.

Mr. George said he had taken advantage of the first available time.

The Judge said he would not amend. Mr. George could go to the Higher Court if he liked.

Mr. George hoped His Honour would amend if he satisfied him that the note was not a proper one. If he could prove that the note was

incorrect he could not see what earthly reason the Judge had for refusing to alter it.

The Judge remaining obdurate, and declaring that he did not care if there were fifty shorthand notes, Mr. Lloyd George pointed out that the jury had taken the uncommon precaution of putting their verdict in writing, and, he added, "the sequel shows that they were quite right in doing so." This was not enough.

The Judge: You may go to the Court above.
Mr. George: No! I shall be heard in this Court upon it.
The Judge: Well, proceed.
Mr. George said that at the last Court the Judge sent his note of the finding of the jury to Mr. Vincent (*the solicitor on the other side*).
Mr. Vincent: Nothing of the sort. Well, good gracious! Do state facts.
The Judge: I think you are rather out of order in stating what you don't know.
Mr. Vincent: Both Your Honour and I know that it was not so.
The Judge: I have not the smallest recollection of what you mention having occurred. Certainly not what you mention. I might have done so.
Mr. George: You stated in open Court that you had sent the wording of the verdict to Mr. Vincent.
The Judge: I think you are right to this extent, that Mr. Vincent for the purpose of argument wanted to know what the finding of the jury was, and I sent him as far as I could a correct note of it.

This is interesting, as showing that it was always dangerous to be too eager to contradict Mr. Lloyd George. The Judge's open retreat from his first position has had its parallels on a good many occasions in Mr. Lloyd George's career.

An appeal lay to the Divisional Court, and it was prosecuted. The judges were Lord Coleridge, then Lord Chief Justice, and Mr. Justice Manisty. The counsel instructed by Mr. Lloyd George were Mr. Bompas, Q.C.,[1] and Mr. T. E. Scrutton, the latter now one of His Majesty's judges. On the other side Mr. Jeune, Q.C., afterwards Lord St. Helier, vainly endeavoured to support the County Court Judge's view of the law. In the end the appeal was allowed, the rights of the parishioners vindicated, and Mr. Lloyd George's advice to his clients abundantly justified. The Lord Chief Justice took a strong view of the conduct of the County Court Judge in refusing to amend his note of the jury's finding, and expressed his intention of bringing it to the attention of the

[1] Mr. Bompas, Q.C.; of the Western Circuit, a son of Serjeant Bompas, the original of Serjeant Buzfuz.

Lord Chancellor. It may be surmised that this was the first occasion on which Mr. Lloyd George's name came under the notice of Lord Halsbury, but the latter has had many better opportunities since then of impressing it upon his mind. Neither judge shared the opinion of the Court below with regard to the conduct of the defendants. On the contrary, Mr. Justice Manisty was not favourably impressed by the conduct of the reverend Rector :—

This piece of land had certainly been used since 1869 as part of the churchyard, in which I am happy to think Dissenters and Nonconformists would have a right to be buried if they were parishioners ; but an attempt was made in 1881 to vest it in three trustees for the purpose of excluding Nonconformists and Dissenters. That is not a pleasant kind of thing. It is the kind of thing a person passes by ; therefore, keeping to what we have to deal with, I will deal with the rights according to law and put the Rector out of the case.

After the first day's hearing of the appeal, Mr. Lloyd George wrote to his family at Criccieth an amusing description of what had taken place :

Well, the case came on to-day three quarters of an hour before the Court adjourned—so they could not very well go into much, and there was simply some preliminary skirmishing, but it was exceptionally sharp and severe.

Bompas got up immediately the case was called to state our arguments. Very weak, I thought. He neglected to put some of our most forcible points, and such points as he did put were set forth in a very perfunctory and flabby and insipid style. I had to prompt him several times when he seemed to be passing by a strong point. Once I was on the point of doing so when Coleridge (who was busy reading the Judge's notes) put it to Bompas himself. Manisty listened, and did his best to extract the facts out of Bompas by cross-examining him. Whilst this was going on Coleridge did not seem to listen much, as he was carefully reading the Judge's notes. At last, whilst Bompas was labouring the Statute of Limitations point, a squabble arose between him and Jeune as to the time. Jeune said it was not sufficient to make up the required twelve years. Suddenly Coleridge looked up and turned upon Jeune and insisted upon knowing something more about the contention which had arisen between Mr. George and the Judge as to what the verdict really was. I had fortunately insisted upon the Judge taking a note of my application to amend the verdict and of his refusal to do so. Coleridge suggested that it was a monstrous thing for the Judge to refuse if, "as Mr. George stated," he had the actual verdict of the jury in his possession. Then he added, "That paper is not in Court, I suppose ?" Immediately the affidavit prepared by our Will was handed in, with the identical scrap thereto attached. Coleridge was mad. I really could not tell you what he actually

said. I was too delighted. Then came Vincent, who told Jeune the paper was never produced in Court. Jeune repeated this. Bompas then put in the shorthand notes, *which but for this remark we never could have put in.* Coleridge read out slowly, with emphasis, the whole of the squabble between "the Judge and Mr. George." The whole Court laughed at my cheeky retorts upon His Honour and at His Honour's futile answers. Suddenly some one clapped my back and said, "Well done, *machgen*[1]!" It was E. J. Griffiths. Shepheard and Scrutton were overjoyed. After reading the report of this interesting altercation, and pointing out for Mr. Jeune's special edification the passages in it which contradicted Vincent's statement, he turned his head, with disgust imprinted upon his face, and said: "It is high time County Court judges should be taught that they have some one to look after them. I shall simply send this paper and these shorthand notes to the Lord Chancellor without any comment, and if he does not take some steps I shall be surprised. As to this paper, I shall ignore the Judge's note of the verdict and treat this as the genuine verdict!" Consternation of Jeune, Vincent and Vincent; delight of Lloyd George and George, Scrutton, Bompas, Shepheard, and the whole Court.

At this interesting juncture Court adjourned until Monday. . . . To-day's proceedings do not of course advance us so far as the merits of the legal argument are concerned, but we are at least placed on a more satisfactory footing to proceed with the argument. But, candidly, for the moment I do not care a button about the result. So far as the County Court Judge is concerned, I have triumphed. . . .

Here we may leave the Llanfrothen Burial case. But before we pass from Judge Bishop of the County Court we may tell one story, familiar to Mr. Lloyd George's friends, of an encounter between himself and the Judge. In a case tried before him the solicitor brought into Court a huge law book—Daniel's "Chancery Precedents," or some such portentous tome. "Surely," said the Judge, "you are not going to read all that book?" "If I did," replied Mr. Lloyd George gravely, "Your Honour would know *some* law when I had done."

Before we leave these early days of his legal career, let me again quote the recollections with which Mr. John H. Davies has favoured me. In the summer of 1887 Mr. Davies was a witness in a case which had gone for trial to the Birmingham Assizes.

George went to London, and when he came back we were eagerly inquiring how he thinks the case may turn. "Confound it," he said. "I couldn't get any of those counsel to take the same view as myself of the case, and Jelf[2] is against me. But I got one at last—only he is rather young, but I will come through all right now." So he did, for

[1] "My boy!"

[2] Sir Arthur Jelf, formerly Mr. Justice Jelf, and at the date referred to Mr. Jelf, Q.C.

we had not been an hour in Court before he won the case, to the surprise of all.[1]

Mr. Lloyd George's first big case was tried before the late Mr. Justice Grantham. Justice was on his side, but the strict law of the case involved some difficult and doubtful questions, so that he was fortunate in coming before a judge who always cared more about the "common-sense" view of a case than the law of it. The Judge got him a verdict, and afterwards, when Liberal feeling ran high against that amiable and shrewd, but sometimes indiscreet Judge, Mr. Lloyd George used smilingly to declare that, with that recollection present before him, he could never join in his Party's attacks.

[1] I believe the counsel here referred to was Mr. A. T. Lawrence, now Mr. Justice Lawrence.

CHAPTER VII

(1886–1890)

I

The Anti-tithe War—Thomas Gee—John Parry of Llanarmon—The Curate of Sarn.

IN the hall of 11, Downing Street, there has hung, since Mr. Lloyd George has been at the Exchequer, the portrait of the great Welshman, Thomas Gee. If this work were being written only for Welsh readers, it would be unnecessary to offer any explanation why that picture should find a place in the home of a Welsh patriot. For the benefit of a possibly wider public it is advisable to explain briefly the commanding position occupied by Thomas Gee in Welsh politics for fifty years, for in the early days with which we are now concerned David Lloyd George first made his acquaintance and came under his influence.

Thomas Gee was born in 1815. His father was an Englishman who had settled in Wales in order to manage, on behalf of the Welsh Nonconformist leader, Thomas Jones of Denbigh, a printing press which had been established for the purpose of publishing Welsh religious literature in the language of the country. He had himself learned the Welsh language, married a Welshwoman, and founded a great publishing firm of his own, to which his son Thomas succeeded. In spite of the admixture of English blood, Thomas Gee was an ardent Welshman. "He had all the sensitiveness and imagination of the Celt; and this, combined with a Teutonic gift of deliberate judgment, gave him the first essential quality of leadership—the capacity for a true, broad and swift apprehension of the inner meaning of a grave situation." [1]

[1] From an article on Thomas Gee, by the Rev. Richard Roberts, in Dr. Morgan's "Welsh Political and Educational Leaders of the Victorian Era."

Thomas Gee became famous as the editor of the "Baner ac Amserau Cymru" ("Banner and Times of Wales"), which grew to a position of unique power and influence among the newspapers of Wales. Probably no individual man contributed more than he did to the Liberal and national awakening of 1868. Before the abolition of Church Rates in 1869 he had taken a strong stand against them, and allowed distraint to be levied upon his goods rather than willingly pay for the upkeep of the Church. In the years with which we are now dealing he was actively championing the cause of the farmer. His fight was against bad landlords and the exactions of the Anglican Church. His policy was twofold—first, to give security of tenure to the farmer, with fair rent and compensation for improvements, secondly, to nationalise the tithe. He was not in favour of its abolition, objecting not to its collection, but to its appropriation to sectarian purposes.

It must be remembered that, at the time of which I write, the tithe was paid not by the owner, but by the occupier of the land. In Wales, the tenant farmer was almost invariably a Nonconformist, subscribing cheerfully to the maintenance of his chapel. It was too much to expect that he should contribute with a good grace to the support of a Church he disliked and whose ministrations he did not seek.

In the mid-eighties Thomas Gee was actively engaged in working up this grievance into an organised scheme of resistance, in which his name became associated with that of John Parry of Llanarmon. The latter, though no lawyer, was particularly noted for his minute knowledge of the law relating to Tithe, which he had been at pains to acquire in order where possible to drive the proverbial coach-and-four through it. It is said, indeed, that even that distinguished lawyer Osborne Morgan used to refer to John Parry constituents who sought advice from him upon this branch of the law.

These two leaders organised an Anti-Tithe League, which rapidly grew in numbers and power. The Tithe war began in Flintshire, and by 1886 had spread through Merionethshire to Carnarvonshire. Mr. Lloyd George threw himself eagerly into the struggle, and acted for a time as Secretary of the League for South Carnarvonshire. With him office has never been a sinecure. He addressed meetings throughout the district, but the speeches he made are unfortunately unrecorded except in the memories of those who heard them.[1] The first he made on the subject, delivered at Llangybi Board School, is said to have

[1] Here I am again indebted to Mr. J. H. Davies of Caertyddyn.

produced a tremendous impression. He made many short tours through the district of Lleyn with his friends of the Farmers' Union. On such occasions he was often driven in a governess car, behind "a wonderful black pony of a zebra type," by Mr. Thomas Owen of Hendre-penprys.

If his meeting was in the open, as was often the case, he habitually chose to hold it in the neighbourhood of the parish church or vicarage. He thus occasionally provoked the parson to attend, and sometimes, if the parson had a considerable following, the proceedings were apt to become turbulent. Once at Nevin, when the meeting was held in a hall, Mr. Lloyd George's companion "fled for his life through the back of the building," and he was left, as my informant picturesquely phrased it, "charging the parson and his people like a lion."

There was another great encounter at the village fair of Sarn Mellteyrn in (I think) the year 1886; when a heroic combat took place between Mr. Lloyd George and the curate of the village. It must have been a bad day for business at the fair, the other attractions of which paled before such a display. There are some who still remember how the anti-tithe orator, coatless in shirt-sleeves, riddled the arguments of the curate (a man of more courage than dialectical skill), to the vast delight of the crowd that gathered.

So famous did the hero of these encounters become, that when Thomas Gee and John Parry themselves visited Pwllheli to speak against the Tithe and in support of Disestablishment, the audience, not content with hearing the lions of the evening, refused to leave the hall without a speech from Lloyd George.

As the reader will later be reminded, the Conservative Government succeeded in checking the agitation by transferring the burden of the tithe from the tenant farmer's shoulders to those of the landowner, a transference which, though economically it made little difference, nevertheless had a soothing effect. The Welsh "tithe war," with its methods of "passive resistance" and the mild rioting[1] that attended the tithe sales, was the direct cause of this legislation. It will be seen later that Mr. Lloyd George was sent to Parliament in time to take an active part in discussing the measure.

[1] Occasionally the military were called out, but sometimes at least this seems to have been quite an unnecessary precaution. See Mr. Lloyd George's speech in the House of Commons, August 1, 1891 [Hansard].

II

First Thoughts of Parliament—Michael Davitt—Thomas Edward Ellis—Sectarianism in Welsh Politics.

For a young solicitor, just building up a practice in a rural district of Wales, with a train journey of eight hours or more between himself and London, the ambition of a parliamentary career must have seemed remote enough. It first entered his head at all at a public meeting held at Blaenau Festiniog on February 12, 1886. The speaker of the evening was Michael Davitt, the subject Home Rule for Ireland. At that time self-government for Ireland was not a plank in the Liberal platform, and so the more correct of the official Liberals of the neighbourhood kept away from the meeting. For some reason nobody had been selected to move the accustomed vote of thanks to the speaker of the evening. The chairman was Michael Jones, of Bala, a famous leader of the agrarian movement in Wales, and at the last moment he asked Mr. Lloyd George to undertake the duty. A record of the speech made under these trying conditions is preserved in the columns of the "Cambrian News," and I reprint it as it appeared.

Mr. D. Lloyd George, solicitor, said that when he saw the two Michaels on the platform, it reminded him of the fight that the Archangel Michael had with Satan. (Laughter.) Though that Michael, being single-handed, was unable to dispose of Old Nick, he trusted that the two Michaels would be able to bring the cause of the farmers and the working man to a successful issue. (Cheers.) Mr. Michael Davitt was a man who had not only done much for humanity, but had also suffered much for humanity, and therefore they all honoured him. (Applause.) To oppose a man because he did not belong to their nation was most narrow-minded and contrary to the principles of their religion. They remembered the parable of the man who fell among thieves. His neighbour was not the man who belonged to his own nation, but a stranger from Samaria—not the priest and the Levite. (Laughter.) The farmers of Wales had fallen among thieves, but the Welsh priests were a great deal worse than the priest referred to in the parable. The priest in the parable merely passed by without taking notice of the man, but the Welsh priests had joined the robbers. (Loud laughter and cheers.) Mr. Michael Davitt was the stranger from Samaria —an Irishman—who had come there to bind up their wounds. (Cheers.) Let them respect him on that account. (Applause.) The people who spoke against bringing Michael Davitt into Wales were those who on bended knees begged princes who were no better than German half-breeds to come into Wales to preside over eisteddfodau. (Laughter and cheers.) Why, then, object to the introduction of a true philanthropist, a man who had done much for his fellow men? (Cheers.) There was a need for that

movement. There was the greatest misery existing in the country. Working men were starving. The aristocracy were squandering the money earned by the sweat of the working man's brow. Whilst working men were starving the aristocracy were feeding their game with food that ought to go to the people—"the bread of the children is given to the dogs." (Loud applause.) The people only wanted union. They had now the power; but it was astonishing how in an election they would vote against their own interest. They would even vote for a landlord who would go to Parliament to betray their interests. (Loud applause, and a voice, "Morgan Lloyd.") They would even vote for Tories without the slightest hesitation—not that they believed in Toryism or liked their own slavery. A philosopher had said that the way to make a man happy was by whipping him until he felt he was happy. (Laughter.) The Tory working men did not exactly believe in that, but they voted for the Tories because they wanted something from the Tories—to rent a piece of land which the Tories possessed—or were afraid of being turned out of their homes, which were the property of the Tories. (Cheers.) Let working men unite, and then all the forces of the enemy could not overcome the stern sons of Eryri. (Applause.) If they made a wall of sand it was one of the strongest means of resisting attack. What was the reason? A handful of sand could be blown away by a puff of wind; but particles of sand combined in an earthwork formed one of the best means of resisting attack. Working men acting separately were only as particles of sand to resist the power of the landlord; but let workmen combine, firmly express their opinion, and then no opposition, however powerful, would be able to stand before them. (Applause.) When a land league was started for Wales, he hoped they would all join it. (Prolonged applause.)

It is evident from the "laughter" and "applause" with which the faithful reporter has interspersed this record, that the speech suited the fancy of the audience. It also clearly impressed Michael Davitt, for at the close of the meeting he advised the speaker to turn his thoughts to a Parliamentary career; and it quite won the heart of the other Michael, who from that day forth kept a friendly eye upon the young man, and, when the time came, urged his claims to adoption as a candidate.

It has been stated erroneously that the late T. E. Ellis was present at this meeting at Blaenau Festiniog, and a picturesque account has been published of the speech he made there. The fact is, however, that it was not till some months later that Lloyd George and "Tom" Ellis made each other's acquaintance, although it is true that it was at Blaenau Festiniog that they met. The occasion was a Welsh National conference, and an acquaintance began then which soon ripened into friendship.

Ellis was Lloyd George's senior by only four years. They shared the highest ideals of Welsh nationalism. Both were sons of

the people. Ellis was one of the finest products of Welsh higher education. He had been educated at Bala Theological College, whither he had been sent to be trained for the ministry, and afterwards, when he had given up all intention of following that career, at Aberystwyth University College, and at New College, Oxford. The friendship formed between these young men was, politically and intrinsically, of the highest moment and value. It lasted unbroken until, in 1899, the older man's noble career was cut short when it seemed most full of promise.

In 1886 Tom Ellis was elected as Member of Parliament for Merionethshire. Lloyd George was one of his most enthusiastic supporters on and off the platform. Their friendship grew rapidly, and if ever their views diverged they were always able to speak and write to one another in the frankest terms. In Wales, where the Established Church is a factor only upon one side in politics, and that the side of a small and anti-national minority, there is, or at any rate was, a rivalry, not always healthy, between the denominations that made up the progressive forces. Ellis was sometimes put forward by Calvinists as their champion, while "young Independia," as the phrase went, pressed the claims of the young Baptist, Lloyd George. To both men such false divisions were abhorrent. Each cherished his own religion, but each desired eagerly the day when the unifying faith that came from a belief in the undying soul of Wales and her future greatness, a belief whose intensity raised it in their own minds into something far higher than a political shibboleth, should inspire men of many creeds with a common purpose. "No strong *national* movement can ever be formed," Ellis wrote to his friend in 1887, "no *national* victories can be won so long as we allow a man's religious denomination to become almost a dominant factor in choosing candidates." Those words of wisdom echoed and approved sentiments which Mr. Lloyd George had already expressed.

I print here a letter which shows how early the two friends were allies in a vigorous and progressive policy.

CYNLAS,
LLANDDERFEL,
CORWEN,
December 24, 1886.

[1] ANWYL GYFAILL!

I see that you are choosing a candidate, and trust that you will make a wise selection. How will it go? I have advised Ellis Griffith not to pledge himself to come forward unless the vigorous party is united or

[1] Dear Friend.

practically united. Send me a word of your candid opinion on the situation.

It seems as if Randolph's resignation will immensely precipitate events.[1]

Nadolig hawen i chwi a llawer o honynt.[2]

Cofion cynes,[3]

THOMAS E. ELLIS.

III

Marriage—Selected as Parliamentary Candidate—Speech at Bangor—County Council Election (1889)—"The Boy Alderman"—Welsh Home Rule.

In 1888 the Liberals of the Carnarvon Boroughs selected as their candidate the man who was to represent them with such distinction in the House of Commons and the Cabinet. But before that another event happened in the life of David Lloyd George, which was fraught with even deeper and happier consequence to him. This was his marriage with Miss Maggie Owen, the only daughter of Mr. Richard Owen of Mynydd Ednyfed Fawr, Criccieth. In his diary for 1885, under the date May 21, there is a note that, after taking the chair at the Debating Society's soirée, he "took Maggie Owen home," and the courtship which began about that time came to this happy conclusion.

Mr. Davies, whose reminiscences as to the formation of the Farmers' Union have been related above, tells an interesting story in this connection. When, as has been related, Mr. Davies found himself spending a fortnight in enforced idleness at Birmingham, summoned as a witness in a case which was set down for trial at the Assizes, one of his fellow witnesses was the Mr. Jones of whom he has already spoken—the farmer who had questioned whether any friend of the farmers could be found in the ranks of the attorneys. The two farmers, chafing at the law's delays, had nothing to do but stroll about the city as the days passed by without their case being reached. During one of their walks Mr. Jones turned to Mr. Davies and asked, "What do you think of this Lloyd George?"

"Well," I answered (says Mr. Davies), "he will be a member of Parliament some day, and not an ordinary one, remember!"

"Do you know what?" he said, "he is after Maggie Mynydd Ednyfed,[4] and the old people are against him. As you know, we farmers are rather clannish in our way, and don't like our

[1] Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation was announced on December 23, 1886.
[2] A merry Christmas to you and many of them.
[3] Warm regards.
[4] It is customary in Wales to use the name of the family abode as a surname.

daughters to marry men in the professions and craftsmen—and that is all nonsense. I will give Dick and Mary a good talking to on the matter as soon as I go home."

"Mr. Jones was a brother to Mrs. Owen of Mynydd Ednyfed, and had become very fond of Lloyd George while he had been at Birmingham."

Whether it was the advocacy of Mr. Jones which overbore his brother-in-law's antipathy to his daughter's union with a solicitor, or the solicitor pleaded his own cause with such address as to break down parental opposition, we need not inquire. A marriage destined to be happy and helpful in the highest degree was celebrated in the little chapel of Pencaenwydd on January 24, 1888. Mr. Davies remembers how, that morning, the bridegroom came by train from Criccieth to Chwilog with his uncle, Mr. Richard Lloyd, and breakfasted there with "Myrddin Vardd." Thence they walked three miles to the chapel at Pencaenwydd, where in the presence of a few friends, Mr. Owen, whose misgivings had long since been removed, gave his daughter in marriage to the young lawyer. The uncle who had watched each step in his nephew's progress so lovingly, helped to perform the simple ceremony. A paragraph in the "Carnarvon Herald" shows that the union met with much popular favour:

MARRIAGE OF MR. D. LLOYD GEORGE, CRICCIETH

The marriage of Mr. D. Lloyd George, solicitor, Criccieth, with Miss Maggie Owen, only daughter of Mr. Richard Owen, Mynydd Ednyfed Fawr, Criccieth, was solemnised at Pencaenwydd Chapel, on the 24th inst., the officiating ministers being the Rev. R. Lloyd, uncle of the bridegroom, and the Rev. John Owen. Mr. George, who is well known in this part of the country, is very popular, and the families of both the young people are held in high esteem. Early in the day flags were to be seen in all directions, and there was a considerable display of bunting. After luncheon the newly-wedded couple left by the midday train for London on their honeymoon. The town was illuminated at night and fireworks were let off.

It is possible to supplement this printed information with a letter written to the bridegroom by the Rev. John Owen, M.A., Criccieth, by whom the ceremony had been performed:

January 27, 1888.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your letter and enclosed P. order last night. Kindly allow me to return you the order. I never accept anything for marrying and burying people, nor for christening children, and I certainly would not break the rule with a couple of friends. Should either of you feel

desirous of being properly buried I shall stick to my rule, or should any christenings be unavoidable in your family the terms will be the same.

I hope you enjoyed your journey. The weather deserved a severe scolding, but I was glad to read in the paper the next day that Londoners had enjoyed several days of fine weather. . . . The drizzling fog spoiled the bonfire and fireworks on Tuesday evening, and the promoters would not postpone them until your return, lest the weather then should also be unobliging. Several handsome presents have already been bought at the Eivion for you, and I should think from all I hear that you will require a special room for them all.

Wishing you both long life and real happiness, and with my kindest regards to Mrs. George and yourself,

I remain
Yours faithfully,
JOHN OWEN.

It is a tribute to Mrs. Lloyd George's influence upon her husband's life that his career, far from suffering any check from the new responsibilities he had undertaken, grew and developed with his marriage. This was no coincidence. A woman of smaller ideals might easily, and with the best intentions, have set a limit to the great ambitions which would have seemed to some vain and almost reckless. The wife he had won took her place at her husband's side with a strong determination to spur those ambitions by her encouragement, and to aid their fulfilment by her self-sacrifice. Mrs. Lloyd George has not, except perhaps of late years, lived much in the public eye, but her power has not been the less strong because it has been concealed.

A minor undertaking of this period deserves to be put on record, if only because it gives an opportunity of mentioning his long and lasting friendship with Mr. D. R. Daniel, "one of the most interesting thinkers and politicians of the Young Wales party." In later years Mr. Daniel became "a labour leader in one of the greatest industrial conflicts of our time" (the Penrhyn disputes), and, as the author I quote truly adds, "he remains an idealist."[1] In January 1888 the two friends started at Pwllheli a paper called the "Udgorn Rhyddid" ("Trumpet of Freedom") which has had a long career.

A few months after his marriage the name of David Lloyd George was one of those put forward as that of a possible candidate for the Carnarvon Boroughs. Of course there were critics. He was young, enthusiastic, extreme in some of his views. There were those who doubted whether he was a "safe" man. Mr.

[1] The quotation is from Mr. J. Arthur Price's article on T. E. Ellis ("Welsh Political Leaders," edited by Dr. Morgan).

Samuel Evans, M.P. (now Sir Samuel Evans, President of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division), spoke sagacious words to some of those who hesitated to support him at this stage of his career. "You complain," he said, "that he is too 'advanced.' But remember that, if you elect him, he will lose fifty per cent. of his Radicalism in the House of Commons." Perhaps that gentle cynicism has not been justified as a prophecy, but it may have encouraged the waverers.

In the summer of 1888 the Liberal associations of Nevin, Pwllheli, and Criccieth adopted the young hero of the Anti-Tithe war as Liberal candidate. The Rev. Herber Evans, whose eloquence, it will be remembered, had so inspired one at least of his congregation in 1885, declined an invitation to come forward which would probably have resulted in his unanimous election.

No Welsh constituency [said a writer in the "Liverpool Mercury" on July 13] seems to have a greater difficulty in finding a suitable candidate than the Carnarvon Boroughs; and I know of no constituency so apathetic in the face of difficulty. I see that the Liberal associations of Pwllheli, Nevin and Criccieth have at last been aroused to the desirability of choosing somebody, and have fixed upon Mr. D. Lloyd George, solicitor, of Criccieth, as their man. I have no personal knowledge of Mr. George's qualifications, but I hear he is a sound politician and an able speaker, and is very popular in South Carnarvonshire. Whether he is the man for the Boroughs as a whole, I should hesitate to say.

Others were more enthusiastic. A correspondent of the "Carnarvon Herald" expressed his hope that the Carnarvon, Bangor and Conway associations would join in the selection, "as Mr. George will make a very strong candidate, being a dissenter, a Welshman, a good speaker, and one of the thoroughgoing 'Young Wales' party. He is," he added, "very plucky, and quite at home on any platform." That writer (he signed himself "Radical," so that it is impossible to identify, as one would wish, so prescient a politician) anticipated the verdict of the associations. A private letter Mr. Lloyd George received at this time from a friend, a solicitor at Bangor, struck a rather less hopeful note.

And so an appreciative and enlightened constituency calls for your service! Well, I am glad and I am sorry—I can't exactly say how I feel. I am glad because you would come nearer my ideal of a member for the Carnarvon Boroughs and I should do my level best on your behalf. Indeed, for my part I would rather lose the seat with an advanced Nationalist than win it with a milk-and-water importation. I hope I may be wrong, but I feel at the same time that your chances in Bangor, and I think even

MRS. LLOYD GEORGE.

(*Photograph by Ernest Mills.*)

more so in Carnarvon, would be bad. We have such a lot of nondescripts whom you would not fail to offend, and who would no doubt rather see a gentleman like Mr. Swetenham represent the constituency than an advanced Nationalist.

However, my boy, I don't mind telling you in confidence that, so far as I and many others down here are concerned, you are the only man who has yet been mentioned that we would feel disposed to do anything for besides voting, and I really do hope that I may be taking too gloomy a view of the matter, and that things may work all right.

The other candidates for nomination were Mr. Clement Higgins, Q.C., Professor Johnson, of Trinity College, Dublin, and the Rev. Lloyd Jones of Rhyl. In November the first-named retired from the contest.

The others had little chance against one who had already become a local hero. His fame spread as he extended his conquests to wider territory. In August he had been splendidly received at a crowded meeting at Bangor, where he made a speech in Welsh which roused his audience to great enthusiasm. Inspired perhaps by his early introduction to Michael Davitt, he paid a tribute in that speech to the Irish members. "They have," he said, "taken the 'starch' out of the House of Commons, which used to be a kind of club-house."

As it turned out, Bangor rallied to his cause. Writing to his family at Criccieth from Glasgow, where, with his wife, he was visiting the Exhibition, on August 24, 1888, Mr. Lloyd George says :

Received a telegram from Morgan Richards this morning that I had been unanimously selected at Bangor last night, He also wrote me that my speech had made a very favourable impression. I could quite see for myself at the Monday evening meeting that I was the popular candidate. Despite all the machinations of my enemies I will succeed. I am now sailing before the wind and they against it.

On December 20, 1888, "Mr. Lloyd George, Solicitor, Portmadoc," as the newspapers described him, was chosen as Gladstonian candidate for the Carnarvon Boroughs. In the next year he took another step in public life. The passing of the Local Government Act had brought the County Councils into existence. Mr. Lloyd George was offered four different seats on the Council, and refused them in order that he might be free to fight for others. He was, however, chosen, when the elections were over, as one of the Aldermen of the Carnarvon County Council, and to that office he has been regularly re-elected.

The result of the County Council elections in Wales was a triumph for the progressive cause. I transcribe a note written in his hand from which he delivered a speech at Liverpool on February 12, 1889:

MR. CHAIRMAN, etc.

It affords me much pleasure to move the first resolution in the evening's programme (*Read*).

I assume that the vast majority of those who compose this great audience are Welshmen, and that the whole are Liberals. Now, whether we regard the results of the County Council elections in Wales as Welshmen or as Liberals, they must constitute to one and all of us a source of intense gratification. Those results are a splendid demonstration of the hold the principles of Liberalism have obtained upon the heart of our little country. Those elections afforded the best possible test of the growth in Wales of the national movement, which, after all, is but a phase of the great Liberal movement. The population of Wales, as you well know, rely more than that of any portion of the United Kingdom for their subsistence upon the resources wielded by the aristocracy. Wales subsists on the resources—mineral and agricultural—of its soil. That soil is vested in the Tory aristocracy.

Now that is the great difficulty Welshmen have experienced in supporting the Liberal party at Parliamentary elections. Were it not for that fact Tories would be as scarce in Wales as they are in this meeting to-night. I know that the preponderating majority of those who vote for Tory candidates loathe and repudiate Tory principles. In Wales the Tory party is pre-eminently the party of the loaves and the fishes or—to add a new feature of Christian charity developed by the Primrose League—it is also the party of the Christmas doles. Now this is what I point out to you. All these immense pollutive influences were focussed and intensified at the County Council elections. Each squire fought not only for Toryism, but also for his own promotion, and the consequence was that throughout the Principality the squirearchy exerted its influence more desperately than ever. What was the result? Wales defied these polluting influences. Wales, despite every terrorism or intimidation, clung with grand devotion to the principles of freedom. Gallant little Wales!

"The Boy Alderman," as Mr. Raikes, M.P., called him in his first election campaign, was not inactive upon the County Council, although his eyes were already on a higher place. Soon after he became an alderman he was elected a conservator on the joint committee for the rivers Dyfi, Glaslyn and Mawddach. In May 1889 he carried a resolution which insisted that tenders should be invited for the supply of clothing and other necessaries for the police force, on the ground that those who paid rates should have an opportunity of benefiting by the expenditure; and proposed that a committee should be appointed to collect evidence for

the Royal Commission which the Home Secretary had promised should consider and report upon the working of the Sunday Closing Act in Wales.

The enthusiasm for Temperance Reform which showed itself in this proposal on the County Council was further manifested at Manchester in December 1889, when he was so successful in urging the policy of the "Direct Veto" upon the National Liberal Federation that it was adopted, owing chiefly to his efforts, as part of the official programme of the party.

His main interest at this time, however, was his Parliamentary candidature. At the election of 1886, which saw the triumph of "Tom" Ellis in Merionethshire, the Carnarvon Boroughs had returned a Conservative, Mr. Swetenham, Q.C. As has been seen already, Liberalism had triumphed in the preceding elections of Mr. Lloyd George's lifetime. The failure of 1886 seems to have been due to carelessness and over-confidence. Mr. Swetenham was a kindly gentleman with bitter Tory prejudices. He stood for all the institutions which his new opponent most strongly attacked, and sincerely distrusted the spirit of Nationalism which, from the first, animated that opponent's policy and speeches.

Early in 1890 Mr. Swetenham died suddenly. By this time the Liberal candidate had gained a strong position in the constituency. He had thrown in his lot with the "Cymru Fydd," the Welsh National movement, which chiefly owed its inception to "Tom" Ellis, and had become recognised as one of the leaders, or at any rate the trusted lieutenants of the young Welsh party. In October 1889 he had been chosen to second a resolution in favour of Disestablishment at a great meeting of the Welsh National Council, addressed by Sir William Harcourt. He had ranged himself definitely on the side of those who thought that even the policy of Disestablishment was only part of a greater policy. The way to right religious inequality and all the wrongs of a people was by the grant of self-government. Now that Home Rule for Ireland had become an accepted article of the Liberal creed, it began to be asked why what was good for Ireland should not be good for Wales. This was no new idea. It was recalled, for instance, that Lord Hartington (afterwards the Duke of Devonshire) speaking on Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, had said:

> I do not desire to express any opinion as to, or to attempt to limit, what may be the ultimate result of reform of local self-government in any part of the three kingdoms. It is quite possible that when the task is

taken in hand it may be found that the desire which is felt by the people of these three kingdoms, and the necessities of the case are not limited merely to the creation of county boards or municipal councils, but that some larger provincial, perhaps even national organisation and co-ordination by local authorities may be required in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

The ideal of federation, of which so much has lately been heard, began to be urged as a means of the realisation of Welsh aspirations, and received the blessing of Mr. Gladstone.

On February 4, 1890, Mr. David Randell, M.P., moved the following resolution at a conference of the South Wales Liberal Federation, a body which marched in advance of the North Wales Federation :

That this Federation declares that the people of Wales should be entrusted with the management of the purely domestic affairs of the Principality, and recognises in the movement to secure self-government for Wales, which received Mr. Gladstone's support at Manchester, the solution of the grave difficulties under which the Principality suffers, by reason of neglect of succeeding Governments to meet the legislative requirements of its people. It further confirms the action of the executive in arranging for a conference of Scotch and Welsh Home Rulers to consider what joint action shall be taken to further the cause of Home Rule for Scotland and Wales"

That resolution was seconded by the Liberal candidate for the Carnarvon Boroughs in a speech in which, "as a North Wales Liberal," he confessed his political faith :—

It appears to me [he said] that every man who advocates special legislation to meet the requirements of Wales must, in order to be consistent, believe in the desirability of creating a special legislature to satisfy those requirements. When we consider what time is consumed in enlightening the political intelligence of average Englishmen, and the slow rate of Parliamentary progress with reforms, even when endorsed by the electorate, we cannot avoid the conclusion that one, if not two, generations would have passed away before the Imperial Government could have redressed the Welsh national grievances of to-day. Welsh Home Rule alone can bring within the reach of this generation the fruits of its political labours. Now it surpasses my imagination to conceive how persons who are ardent advocates of Irish Home Rule can discover any plausible reason for objecting to Welsh Home Rule. In reading the debate on Mr. Gladstone's Irish Bills two things struck me very forcibly. One circumstance was that all the main arguments in favour of self-government are equally applicable to the case of Wales. The other, and to my mind the more startling feature of the comparison, was that not one of the stock objections raised

by the Unionists to the conferring of autonomy upon Ireland would in the slightest degree be applicable to the proposal of a similar concession to Wales.

I shall simply enumerate some of the leading arguments used on either side. Taking the arguments in favour of Irish Home Rule, the first is the contention that the Imperial Parliament is so overweighted with the concerns of a large empire that it cannot possibly devote the time and trouble necessary to legislate for the peculiar and domestic requirements of each and every separate province. Is not that argument equally forcible when applied to the demand of Wales for Home Rule?

The next great argument in favour of Irish Home Rule is this: that the Imperial Parliament is not possessed of the same local knowledge as a provincial parliament would possess, and cannot therefore legislate as efficiently for provincial needs. Is not this contention equally applicable to the demand for a provincial Welsh assembly? Surely a Scotchman from John o'Groat's or an Englishman from the Isle of Wight cannot be possessed of the same experience and knowledge of Welsh requirements as a Welshman from Cardiff or Carnarvon would be endowed with.

Then there is the great argument of Irish nationality. A separate nationality means distinct sympathies, aims, capabilities, and conditions, and therefore ought to be accompanied by a separate and distinct legislature. But if this argument holds good in the case of Ireland, then doubly will it do so in the case of Wales. Ireland has lost one of the title deeds of her nationality—its ancient language. But Wales has preserved her charter in its integrity.

It was moreover urged on behalf of Ireland that the British Parliament had neglected to legislate for its demands. But in this particular also the Welsh case is stronger. Legislative boons have been conferred upon Ireland that would have made the future of little Wales. Mr. Gladstone, in referring to the great measure of agrarian reforms passed by successive parliaments for the benefit of Ireland, said: "We have not failed, but we have not finished." Quite so; but in the case of Wales they have not even begun. Not a single measure of primary importance has been passed by the Imperial Parliament to satisfy the special wants of Wales.

Now, these are the principal grounds upon which the argument in favour of Home Rule for Ireland was based by the Home Rule leaders, and you will, I am sure, have been convinced, on a mere glance at the catalogue, that every one of them would be equally if not more appropriate if applied to base an argument in favour of Home Rule for Wales.

But such circumstances as these are not conditions in themselves. They are simply evidence of the existence of certain conditions. Our phenomenal patience under injustice and wrong alone has prevented the creation for us of such evidence. We have never quarrelled with tyranny as the Irish have done. We have rather turned the other cheek to the smiter. But the contrast between the case of the two countries is a much more powerful argument in favour of Welsh Home Rule than the analogy. This is what struck me most forcibly in perusing the Unionist speeches—that the most damaging obstacles raised against conferring self-government upon

Ireland would be totally inappropriate as far as Welsh autonomy is concerned.

What are the current Unionist objections to Irish Home Rule? First, if not foremost, comes the religious one—the fear, affected by some, but sincerely felt by numbers, that Irish Home Rule would import the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism as the national religion of Ireland and the persecution and ill-treatment of our Protestant fellow-religionists. This is a prejudice which swayed the choice of thousands of good Liberals in the 1886 election. But it would be entirely absent in the case of Wales. Wales has a religion that would satisfy the fastidiousness of the most rabid Orangeman in the thoroughness of its Protestantism. Then there is the Ulster difficulty. Wales has no Ulster. There are, moreover, the two points continually harped upon by the astutest of the Unionists, Mr. Chamberlain. One is the proof which Irish Nationalist speeches afford that the ulterior object of the Irish party is separation and that a Home Rule Government would be utilised as an instrument to attain this aim. This would not obtain in the Welsh instance. Who can point out in the speech of the wildest Welsh Nationalist a single passage that would indicate a desire for separation? The remaining objection is the one which does duty in terrifying the timid: that the grant of Home Rule to Ireland would mean the handing over of the loyal and law-abiding in that island, bound hand and foot, to the cruel mercies of moonlighters, outrage-mongers, and assassins of the worst type. That is the real purpose of the stir about "Parnellism and Crime." But who can impute crime to "Hen Wlad y Menyg Gwynion" (the land of white gloves)? There is no blood-stain on its whole political record. Thus the arguments in favour of the concession of self-government to Ireland are equally applicable to the demand of a similar measure for Wales, whilst the stock objections of the opponents of Irish Home Rule would be utterly irrelevant in the case of Wales. We are told by certain of our Tory members that Wales will serve her own interests best by identifying herself closely with England, and losing her individuality in an amalgamation with that great nation. But there is another way of looking at it. We must recollect that England is a great commercial nation—one of whose cities alone is of vastly greater political and mercantile importance than the whole of Wales. How can this immensely busy country find the time to regard the local and special interests of such an insignificant portion of its dominions, even if it had the disposition to do so? But has it displayed any such kindly inclination towards our country? On the contrary, it has treated with contempt the sacrifice of loyalty rendered by little Wales—it has accorded to her grievances nothing but cold neglect—it has lavished upon her pet institutions unmitigated derision; and yet that is the nation in whose keeping we are told our country's interests would be safer than were they placed unreservedly in the hands of her own sons.

For my own part I cannot help believing that the prospects of Wales would be brighter and more promising were her destinies controlled by a people whose forefathers proved their devotion to her interests on a thousand battlefields with their hearts' blood, and a people who, despite the

persecutions of centuries, have even to this very hour preserved her institutions and her tongue, and retained the same invincible love for her hills.

This conference is now drawing to a close, and it has been an eventful one. This resolution is a fitting climax to its proceedings. You have pledged yourselves to a great programme—Disestablishment, Land Reform, Local Option, and other great reforms. But, however drastic and broad they may appear to be, they after all simply touch the fringes of that vast social question which must be dealt with in the near future. There is a momentous time coming. The dark continent of wrong is being explored, and there is a missionary spirit abroad for its reclamation to the realm of right. A holy war has been proclaimed against "man's inhumanity to man," and the people of Europe are thronging to the crusade. The great question for us to determine is this: whether in this mighty Armageddon Wales shall simply be the standard-bearer of another nation, or shall the "Ddraiggoch" [1] once more lead forth a nation to do battle for the right, as of old? As a Welshman, I feel confident that, once it is afforded the opportunity, my country will act its part honourably in the conflict. The ennobling influences of Christianity have not played upon her heart for a whole century in vain. They have elevated and guided her impulses, they have awakened the fervour of her national enthusiasm. That is why I feel so sanguine that were self-government conceded to Wales she would be a model to the nationalities of the earth of a people who have driven oppression from their hillsides, and initiated the glorious reign of freedom, justice, and truth.

At another meeting on the same day we find him regretting that the North Wales Federation lagged behind that of the South, although "the heart of the North Wales masses was in full sympathy" with the Liberals of South Wales. A passage in this speech, which was delivered in Welsh, is worth quoting by way of showing how the humour which has always enlivened his speeches showed itself in these early days:—

There is [he said] one parish in the district in which I live with an exceptionally large tithe. The rector who preceded the present rector happened to be a married man, and his wife was the only member of the congregation. I am told, but cannot guarantee the absolute truth of the statement, that he used to take advantage of the sermon to retaliate upon the congregation for the curtain lectures which the congregation used to inflict on him during the week. The present rector is a bachelor, and he has no congregation at all. He considers that the blessings of single life for six days in the week compensate him for having no congregation.

These speeches, and the manner of their delivery, made a great impression in South Wales, where an orator of advanced views could feel at home.

[1] Red dragon.

A word is due also [said the "South Wales Daily News"][1] to Mr. Lloyd George of Criccieth, the candidate for the Carnarvon Boroughs. We hope no stone will be left unturned to ensure his return, because we believe that he belongs to that class of young and rising Welshmen who will in a future, and no distant future, period, be the pride of the Welsh people.

The subject of these prophetic words himself recognised that he had scored a success.

As to the meetings [he wrote home], they were a complete success. I think I have made a good impression. There is a very complimentary reference to me in the "South Wales Daily News" leader to-day. I got a splendid reception last night at the great demonstration. I only meant to speak for two or three minutes, as Prof. Bryce had kept them late, but the audience insisted on my proceeding. They would not allow me to speak in English, shouting "Cymraeg." There was quite an uproar.

It had become obvious that Conservatism would find a formidable opponent in the young Liberal candidate for the Boroughs.

IV

Welsh Liberal federations—Thomas Gee—Speech on a proposed Welsh National League.

It is impossible to trace here in detail the course of the domestic history of the Liberal party in Wales at this time. But it is necessary to digress a little in order to explain the complaints in the speeches just quoted of the slow-going methods of North Wales. South Wales is, and was then, the home of the most advanced Liberalism and Nationalism. Its quarrymen and miners look for strong meat on the political board. The aim of advanced Radicals in the North was to impregnate the whole of Welsh Liberalism with the spirit of the South by fusing the existing organisations—the Federations of North and South Wales and the so-called Welsh National Council—into one active and aggressive body. In October 1889 the North Wales Liberal Federation and the Welsh National Council were to meet at Carnarvon. Mr. R. A. Griffiths[2] gave notice of a motion pledging the delegates of the Council to the opinion that "the Welsh National Council and the Welsh Liberal Federations should be converted into an active and operative organisation to be called the Welsh National League, of which branches should be established in all convenient localities throughout the Principality

[1] February 5, 1890.
[2] Then a solicitor, now a barrister of the North Wales Circuit.

and elsewhere," and directing the Executives of the Federation to form a Committee to carry out this object.

At this time Thomas Gee was one of the recognised leaders of Welsh political thought. He was now a man of seventy-four years of age, and a hale veteran. Though advanced in years, he was still fresh enough in his faith to adjudge the creed of the "boy Alderman" healthy and sound.[1] He had not agreed with all the Gladstonian proposals for Home Rule in 1886, but he sympathised with the aspirations of the Welsh Nationalists. It was too much, perhaps, to hope that in the question of organisation which now became prominent he would throw his weight on the side of the root-and-branch reformers. They did, however, seek his aid. In a letter to Mr. Griffiths a week before the meeting, Thomas Gee suggested that the words "should be converted" in the resolution were inadvisable.

Also [he wrote] let me ask you whether it is advisable to change the name now of the organisation? If you propose a resolution on the subject, please excuse my asking you whether it would not be better to express your satisfaction that there are symptoms that it is now becoming an active and operative organisation, etc.

You'll find that he is too compromising [said Mr. Griffiths, in sending on Mr. Gee's letter to Mr. Lloyd George]. It would in my opinion be absurd to stick to the name Council if we are going in for a League. Then to add to the motion a clause rejoicing at the signs of activity, etc., shown by the W.N. Council would be self-stultifying and would put us completely in the hands of our enemies. Our great argument is the hopelessness of the W.N. Council as now constituted. I wrote Gee at great length and entreated him to second the motion.

At the meeting it became clear that Gee had been unmoved, or insufficiently moved, by the arguments addressed to him. His speech was a plea for unity. He appreciated the arguments of the supporters of the motion, agreed that the federations ought to do more work, but hoped that the resolution would be withdrawn. The candidate for the Carnarvon Boroughs was the next speaker. He has never been among the Laodiceans, and he was uncompromising in his support:—

In supporting Mr. Griffiths' proposal [he said] I am anxious to remove any possible misconception. I would not have our opponents believe that a motion of this character indicates any difference of opinion in the Liberal camp on matters of principle. The object of the suggested League would be identical with those of the present organisations.

[1] See p. 97 *infra*.

It is simply a question of the means to be adopted in order to ensure the attainment of such objects . . .

The proposal contains two distinct suggestions—the welding of the two federations into one central and national body and the establishment of branches of that league in every locality. As to the consolidation of the North and South Wales Federation into one national council I cannot help thinking that this would effect a vast improvement on the present system.

One of the great historical blunders of our forefathers, which conduced to the loss of our national independence, was the division of Wales into the two provinces of North and South. And what is the practical outcome of the institution of two independent federations? The South Wales Federation meets one day and passes sweeping resolutions imbued with the national sentiment. Shortly afterwards the North Wales Federation meets at Chester or some other English town and passes resolutions of an entirely antagonistic character. . . . Instead of unity and co-operation we find perpetual bickering and dissensions—the two Federations wasting their energies in attacking each other instead of concentrating their activity in an attack upon the enemy. A kind of Punch and Judy exhibition is made of Welsh Liberalism, and we become the butt of the foe's ridicule and not the object of his terror.

Wales is already plentifully supplied with religious and political schisms without creating another. It would be an advantage to fuse the two organisations, were it only to impregnate the timid, genteel Liberalism of the Northern committee with the robust, plucky Liberalism of the South. At present attending the North committee is very like undergoing the application of a Turkish bath. Your enthusiasm is subjected to showers of cold water and then sent to sleep. The only difference is that whereas you leave a Turkish bath with a reinvigorated constitution you feel disposed to give up the ghost after a North executive meeting. It would be desirable from every point of view to consolidate our power.

As to the second suggestion contained in the proposal, I consider its adoption sooner or later essential to the triumph of Liberal principles. . . . If this council is to be useful as a medium for the expression of the political requirements of Wales it must represent in fact as well as in theory the masses of our countrymen. We purport here to-day to represent the Liberals of Wales, but if we investigate the state of things with candour, is there any real foundation for our pretensions? How are the delegates selected? Less than a dozen active Liberals generally meet in a certain town or village and select out of their number five or six, more or less, to represent a locality which perhaps contains an electorate of one thousand voters. . . . But if this resolution is passed and carried into operation the whole mass of Welsh Liberals will be organised into one great council; branches of that council will be established in every district, and the annual meeting in future might well claim to speak in the name of Wales and not merely on behalf of an infinitesimal section of its inhabitants. Another important object which will be gained by the enrolling of the masses of Welsh Liberals into one National Federation will be that the

financial burden of Welsh political effort will be borne by a greater number than at present. As we all know, the pecuniary support of Liberalism in this country devolves now upon the faithful few, and it frequently starves for want of funds. . . .

But there is another reason why an attempt should be made to organise all the available force of Liberalism in the Principality. The battle is becoming more and more intense, as the disgraceful record of Tory intimidation which occurred during the last by-elections will amply prove. Any one who scans the objects of the Welsh National Council must foresee, without much prophetic vision, that the fight for the attainment of those objects will be a life-and-death struggle. What are those objects? Emancipation of the land and its tillers, the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church, local option, and an extensive measure of local government for Wales. There is not one of these objects but affects the governing classes in their most vital interests. Do you think that they will tamely surrender profits, interests, and privileges which they hold as dear as life without utilising every available weapon in the arsenals of tyranny? And what are those weapons? They are practically the whole resources of our soil; the very daily bread of our working men is at their disposal, and they are not slow to show even now in numerous instances that they will stop the supplies if that step will conduce to the success of their political objects. I might refer to several cases of men having been dismissed from their employment owing to their fidelity to political convictions. . . .

And how do we propose to protect working men who have been deprived of their means of sustenance because of their adhesion to our programme? At present our Liberal organisation can barely eke out a miserable and half-starved subsistence. Now, unless we can protect the victim of our opponents' intimidating tactics from destitution, such terror will be struck into the hearts of the timid and less eager spirits that Liberalism will become an impossibility in our country. But supposing each and every working man who happens to be subjected to the persecution of a Tory employer of labour or his minions were to realise the fact that there was a league, numbering amongst its members 200,000 of the sturdiest of his countrymen, ready to rescue him from the consequences of his devotion to principle, then the worst terrors of the Primrose League might be defied with impunity. Liberalism could then be the ruling force in our country, and I cannot help harbouring an earnest conviction that thousands who now temporise in order to save themselves and their families from being turned out upon a world whose resources are distributed by monopolists, would welcome the opportunity that such a league would afford them of emancipating themselves from the grip of a tyranny which they must heartily detest.

The motion was lost in the voting, and the interest of the incident lies not in its immediate results, but in the light it throws upon the organisation of Welsh Liberalism and, what is more to the present purpose, on the point of view from which the rising Welsh leader saw the problem.

CHAPTER VIII

(JANUARY—SEPTEMBER 1890)

I

First election contest—The Squire of Llanystumdwy as Tory candidate—Mr. Lloyd George's Election Address—Sir John Puleston on Mr. George—Thomas Gee's catechism—Letters from Tom Ellis—Mr. Gladstone's message—To Westminster via Conway.

THERE had been those among the elder Liberals of the constituency who had shaken their heads over the candidature of the young solicitor. But he had steadily gained ground. He had enlarged his circle of acquaintances, and few who had known him, or even listened to him, from the beginning of his career on, have escaped the spell of his charm of manner. The doubters had for the most part come into his camp, and the battle that now had to be fought found the party united. On the other side the election began badly. Of those whose names were suggested as Conservative candidates, the favourite was Mr. Ellis Nanney, squire of Llanystumdwy, a popular local celebrity who had already fought two elections unsuccessfully. But reasons of health persuaded him to refuse to stand. Three other gentlemen, who would have been acceptable candidates, also declined the honour of nomination. Hard pressed, the party were driven to select Mr. Marchant Williams,[1] a Liberal who had left his party on Home Rule, as the Conservative and Unionist candidate. Mr. Williams was hardly known in the constituency, and his political record was not likely to endear him to the Tory heart. His nomination was so unpopular that a desperate effort was made, and made successfully, to induce Mr. Nanney to stand. He allowed himself to be persuaded, and the hopes of his party ran high once more.

[1] Afterwards Stipendiary Magistrate, Merthyr.

On March 24, 1890, the Liberal candidate issued the following address to the electors :—

TO THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF THE CARNARVONSHIRE DISTRICT BOROUGHS

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

Owing to the sad and unexpected circumstance of the death of our late Member, Mr. Edmund Swetenham, Q.C., you are suddenly called upon to elect another representative to Parliament.

You now have the opportunity of blotting out the stain which has for the last three years tarnished your Parliamentary record, and of restoring the wonted allegiance of these ancient Boroughs to the great principles of Liberalism.

Recent By-Elections prove that the country is sick and tired of Mr. Balfour's baton-and-bayonet rule in Ireland, and of his desperate attempts to repress by martial law legitimate aspirations of a generous nation. I come before you as a firm believer in and admirer of Mr. Gladstone's noble alternative of Justice to Ireland.

Whilst fully recognising that the wrongs of Ireland must of necessity have the first claim upon the attention of the Liberal party, I am deeply impressed with the fact that Wales has wants and aspirations of her own which have too long been ignored, but which must no longer be neglected. First and foremost amongst these stands the cause of Religious Liberty and Equality in Wales. If returned to Parliament by you, it shall be my earnest endeavour to labour for the triumph of this great cause. Wales has for many a year yearned in her heart for the attainment of that religious equality and freedom which is impossible whilst the English Church as by law established is imposed upon us as the National Religion of Wales, and is maintained by Welsh national endowments, and whilst clerical bigotry dominates over our Churchyards.

The Liberal party has recently placed the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the English Church in Wales in the forefront of its platform, and I earnestly trust that you, the electors of a Nonconformist constituency, will not openly reject this proffered boon by returning a Tory representative.

I believe that our land and labour laws work inequality and injustice, and I am in favour of measures for simplifying and cheapening the Transfer of Land; for the Taxation of Ground-rents; the Enfranchisement of Leaseholds; and for improving the condition of the Tenant Farmer and Labourer.

I have always been a consistent advocate of Temperance, and had the privilege of being largely instrumental in bringing about the adoption of the "Direct Veto" by the party at the recent Liberal Conference in Manchester. If returned to Parliament, I shall do all in my power to support measures which have for their object the removal from our midst of the disastrous temptations of strong drink.

I take a keen interest in our river and sea fisheries, and had the honour of being the first member of the Carnarvonshire County Council to propose

the application of the Sea Fisheries Regulation Act to the sea-board of this county. I should like to see the powers of that Act amplified and made more practicable.

I believe in a liberal extension of the principle of Decentralisation. There are also such questions as "One Man One Vote," Graduated Taxation, "A Free Breakfast Table," and many another much-needed Reform; but what availeth it even to enumerate them while there is a Tory Government in power?

The contest will in the ordinary course of things be over in a fortnight or three weeks' time, and I fear I cannot therefore hope to have the pleasure of making the personal acquaintance of each of you; but I venture to think, nevertheless, that you will, at this important juncture in the history of our country, neither "from fear, favour, affection, nor hope of reward," set aside her supreme claim upon your consideration.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

March 24, 1890.

The stock epithets of electoral controversy vary little. The Liberal candidate stood for Home Rule for Ireland as for Wales: his opponents called him a "Separatist," and thought, no doubt, that they had settled the question. He was a solicitor, and though it did not at that date occur to any opponent to call him a "little Welsh attorney," it was urged as a point against him that he was a "lawyer." And for the first, but not the last time, he was attacked from a Tory platform as the supporter of a policy which would "frighten capital out of the country." Unfortunately, perhaps, for their reputations for political prescience, some of the Conservative speakers used the language of sarcasm. Their words read a little amusingly now. "The intelligence, the magnificent intellect of Mr. George," said Sir John Puleston, Member for Devonport, "did not confine him within the narrow limit of the small Principality of which they were so proud: his ideas were as boundless as the Empire itself."

In Imperial politics the burning question was the problem of Ireland. Mr. Balfour's rule as Irish Secretary had earned the detestation of liberal thinkers. Mr. Parnell had been vindicated, and had got his verdict for £5000 against "The Times." The cloud which later in the year burst over his head had not yet gathered. Ulstermen flocked to Carnarvonshire to support the cause of Unionism and to justify the "loyalists." Liberals answered them with scathing references to "Balfour and bayonets." But the constituency was more interested in Wales even than in Ireland. Then, as now, Disestablishment took a foremost part in every Welsh election. Then, as now, Liberal statesmen were

MR. LLOYD GEORGE

When he entered Parliament.

(*By permission of "Western Mail," Cardiff.*)

called upon to give it a foremost place in their programmes. Mr. Lloyd George's first heckling may be cited as an illustration of this. At the first meeting of delegates after he had become a candidate a reverend gentleman from Carnarvon asked if Mr. George would make it a condition of his supporting Mr. Gladstone in his Home Rule scheme that a measure of disestablishment for Wales should be passed concurrently with it. The heckler was with difficulty beaten off, although his attitude obtained no sympathy.

Among the ardent supporters of the Liberal candidate were Mr. John Parry and Mr. Thomas Gee, the two heroes of the Tithe-war. The latter wound up one of his speeches by a catechism of the candidate. Was he in favour of making the rivers free?

"The last thing I tried to do on the County Council was to set the rivers of South Carnarvonshire free," was the answer.

"Are you in favour of the reform of the land laws."

Mr. George: "I am very strong on that point."

We need not pursue the catechism. The answers were all satisfactory, and Mr. Gee declared the young man to be "thoroughly healthy in the faith."

The speeches of a hurried and hustled candidate at excited meetings are not those by which his oratory should be judged. The newspaper reports show that those of Mr. Lloyd George in this first struggle were pointed and original. No one will doubt that they were eloquently delivered. Some passages in them are of peculiar interest in the light of his subsequent career.

The Tories forgot [he said] that they were not now living in the seventeenth century. He had once heard a man wildly declaiming against Mr. Tom Ellis as a Parliamentary representative. According to that man, Mr. Ellis's disqualification consisted mainly in the fact that he had been brought up in "a cottage." The Tories had not yet realised that the day of the cottage-bred men had at last dawned.

Those words no doubt seemed empty verbiage to his opponents, as they seemed inspired rhetoric to his friends. To us they sound like a challenge and a prophecy. The "cottage-bred man" has seen his day dawn with a vengeance, and the Tories have learned some of their lesson. One may imagine with what enthusiasm Tom Ellis would have supported his friend in this first fight.

I was delighted to find [he had written from Northwich on January 8, 1889] that your choice was so unanimous. *Now the register is the great mine to work.* Do not be satisfied till all the Boroughs realise its importance.

I much, very much, wish I could go to Garn and other places in Carnarvonshire, but it is impossible. My hands are too full here.

I should especially like to speak at Garn, were it only to urge every Nonconformist to be true to the Liberal candidate, to crush the sectarian spirit, and to elect a sound Welsh nationalist.

Unfortunately the health of the member for Merionethshire had given way. He was journeying abroad, seeking rest and relief in a sunnier land, when the news of Mr. Swetenham's death reached him. A letter which he wrote for the encouragement of the Liberal candidate and his supporters set out clearly the issues in dispute :—

Dear Friend,

The first news that I received on reaching Cairo was the lamented death of Mr. Swetenham. He used to say strong and bitter things of me, but I never cherished any ill-feeling towards him. I wondered, however, a thousand times, as I looked across the floor of the House of Commons on his kind face, how in the world he had been elected to represent my countrymen in the Carnarvon Boroughs. For it was one of the chief principles of his policy that Wales ought not to expect to obtain any special legislation, and that to merge herself and her national identity in the life of England and Anglicanism was her duty and her only salvation. You take a very different view of the future of Wales as regards politics and national life, and so, I believe, do the great majority of my countrymen. You believe, as I also do, that Wales may and should live her own life—freely, boldly, honestly, and without cringing to anybody—for the reason that this is the surest way of gaining respect and a high character for her commercial men and her working people, and that such is the portion appointed to her by Providence. By respecting her own history and life, Wales will gain the respect of her neighbours. You believe, too, that the most effectual means of enabling Wales to win her proper position in political life is to form a Welsh party in the Imperial Parliament, and that it is one of the privileges of young Welshmen to do what lies in their power to strengthen the arm and facilitate the attainment of the aims of the Welsh party.

Already the Welsh party has won for the name, language, education, rights and hopes of Welshmen honourable place in the politics of the realm. But the difficulties before us are great and numerous. In 1887 and 1888 the Tory and Unionist party prevented Mr. Dillwyn taking advantage of the right which he had fairly won by balloting to debate the great question of disestablishment and religious equality in Wales; and when in 1889 Mr. Dillwyn got a chance to plead the cause of Wales, the Tories and Unionists mustered in serried ranks to drown Cambria's cry. When Mr. Rathbone sought in 1887 to secure the appointment of a Grand Committee for Wales Mr. Raikes was set up to refuse that request, and he did so by venting splenetic contempt upon the language and literature of Wales.

The year when Mr. Alfred Thomas[1] moved for the appointment of a minister and a department of state to watch over the interests and to do the work of Wales, Mr. Matthews was put up by the Tory party to refuse this request as the previous request had been refused. When Wales asked in 1888 for a measure to secure fixity of tenure and fair rents for Welsh farmers the eternal Mr. Raikes was once more put to refuse the request. When in last May we urged the right of the quarrymen and shopkeepers of Wales to acquire on fair terms the houses which their own money and energies have built, Mr. Matthews was put up to say that the Tory Government would not listen to such a request. When Wales asks for an opportunity to strengthen the Sunday Closing Act, the objection comes from the party to which Mr. Ellis Nanney belongs. Both this year and last the Tory Government has done all it can to pass a Coercion Act for the farmers and crofters of Wales. Instead of granting the request of Wales to devote the tithes to the first charge on the land and labour of Wales, to the purpose of freeing the schools and perfecting the educational system of Wales, the Tories make it their chief object to devise plans for the more secure binding of the burden of the tithe on the shoulders of Welsh agriculturists, and Mr. Ellis Nanney has the impudence to ask to be allowed by the Carnarvon Boroughs to assist the Tories in this preposterously absurd work.

I cherish a strong hope that the electors of the Carnarvon Boroughs will show plainly that the rights and privileges and hopes of Wales, and not the continuance of a luxurious Toryism, constitute the mark and aim of their political life. Were I enjoying my usual health, I would be with you night after night appealing to my countrymen to win a further battle for Welsh nationalism. As it is, I can only send you these few lines to wish you a complete and honourable victory.

Yours in the bond of patriotism,

THOMAS E. ELLIS.

The contest drew nearer among the usual incidents of a campaign. Some one wrote to Mr. Gladstone, drawing his attention to the Liberal candidate's election address, and received a reply in which he was told that his "sanguine anticipations" did not surprise the great leader. His surprise would be occasioned "if a Welsh constituency were to return a gentleman who, whether Tory or Dissentient, would vote against the claims which Wales is now justly making, that her interests and feelings should at length be recognised in concerns properly her own. Even if he reserved or promised you his individual vote, by supporting the party opposed to you and keeping it in power, he would make that vote perfectly nugatory."

Sir Wilfrid Lawson, proud to support so promising an adherent of Temperance Reform, went down to reinforce the local orator, and the names of Mr. Acland, M.P., and Mr. Ellis Griffith stand

[1] Lord Pontypridd.

out among those of the speakers at the Liberal meetings. Irish Nationalists came to North Wales to answer their fellow-countrymen from Ulster. It was recognised that the fight was to have a close finish. The adverse majority was 136, and the Conservatives took comfort in the fact that a candidate so advanced was unlikely to win waverers or reconcile old-fashioned members of the party of Reform. "The Times" took an interest in the struggle, and reassured its readers with the news that the Hon. Frederick Wynn, the "squire of Glynliifon," about whose views doubts had been expressed, had thrown his whole weight into the Unionist scale. This, it was announced, had come as "a serious and discouraging blow to Gladstonians." It would, however, be difficult for Mr. Lloyd George's sternest critic to believe that he at any rate can ever have been unduly depressed by the loss of the squire's support.

The candidates were nominated on April 2. On the 10th the election was held, and on the 11th the result was declared:

Lloyd George	1,963
Ellis Nanney	1,945

"The Times," next morning, made the best of a bad job in a leading article, but admitted that it was annoying to think that ten votes differently cast would have made all the difference. The excitement in Carnarvon was tremendous. The beloved "boy Alderman" was now "the boy M.P.," and so his triumphant followers hailed him when they dragged his carriage through the town, as he had seen Mr. Rathbone's dragged in days when no thought of Parliament had entered into his reckoning.

A week later, on his way to London, he was met at Conway by an extraordinary ovation. Hundreds met him at the station, and drew his carriage to the Market Hall, where he spoke to an enthusiastic meeting in Welsh and afterwards in English. The town was illuminated, and when he left in the evening tumultuous cheering sped him on his way to Westminster.

II

Mr. Lloyd George, M.P.—His first Session—A speech at the Metropolitan Tabernacle—Mr. Campbell-Bannerman—At the Free Trade Hall, Manchester—Goes to Birmingham—Maiden speech in the House—Votes against his party—A bold speech on Supply—His first Committee—Mr. W. S. Caine—Mr. John Morley—Mr. Samuel Smith—The Recess—A meeting at St. Helens—Mr. Morley on Mr. Lloyd George.

On Thursday, April 17, 1890, the new member for the Carnarvon Boroughs, introduced by Mr. Stuart Rendel[1] and Mr.

[1] Afterwards Lord Rendel, and one of Mr. Lloyd George's staunchest friends.

Thursday Evening

My dear W.

After a very enthusiastic reception by the Liberal Members of the House on my introduction by Acland & Stuart Rendel (Chairman in the House) I am off to dine with my friend

Sir John Puleston!!

Goschen has just sat down I believe after delivering a very long speech in introducing his Budget he has taken 2d off Tea — thats one good thing.

I shall write you more fully

Letter on — Wire to me early

tomorrow morning to 35 [illegible]

Terrace. Clifton's address so that I

may have a general talk with him,

[illegible] [illegible] friend Yours

[illegible]

My friend

J

Acland, "took the oath and his seat" amidst the loud cheers of the Opposition. A short note which he wrote on that evening illustrates afresh the amenities of political warfare in this country:

> After a very enthusiastic reception by the Liberal members of the House on my introduction by Acland and Stuart Rendel (Mabon was not in the House) I am off to dine with my friend Sir John Puleston!

(Sir John Puleston had been, it will be remembered, one of the platform speakers on the Conservative side in the Carnarvon election, and none had dealt, or received, harder blows than he.)

The letter goes on:

> Goschen has just sat down, I believe, after delivering a very long speech in introducing his Budget. He has taken *2d.* off tea—that's one good thing.

A later letter records his first division:

> My first division last night. I voted against Bi-metallism, but I couldn't tell you why.

Whilst we are upon this early Parliamentary record it is as well to note that on April 24, just a week after his entrance into the House, he put his first question to a Minister—interrogating the leader of the House, Mr. W. H. Smith, as to the intentions of the Government with regard to the recommendations of the Town Holdings Committee.

Only six years had passed since, as a young visitor to London, he had looked down from the gallery and heard Lord Randolph baiting the Grand Old Man. Mr. Gladstone, though in opposition, was still the greatest figure in the House. Next to him, and prominent above all men at this time in the public eye, was Parnell. The Irish leader was at the zenith of his career. The Parnell Commission had sat and reported, and early in 1890 he had obtained his verdict against "The Times." For ten years the chief occupation of the House of Commons had been the affairs of Ireland, and they were destined to fill the minds of statesmen and politicians for many years to come.

The title of "the Welsh Parnell" used to be given variously by their respective admirers to Mr. Lloyd George and the late Mr. Tom Ellis. Nothing is more dangerous than a misleading analogy, but it is safe to say at any rate that the party of advanced Welsh Radicals which Mr. Lloyd George now joined in the House wished for nothing more than to see Wales urging her national claims through a nationalist party. The Member for Carnarvon went to Westminster with far other intentions and desires than

those which animate the average party nominee. He might vote against Bi-metallism without being prepared (as who is ?) to give a clear exposition of his views upon it, but he had no intention of blindly voting at the bidding of the Whips. He went to Parliament as a Welsh Nationalist and Nonconformist rather than as a member of the Liberal party, and not without a little suspicion of all English politicians, whether they were Liberal or Tory.

He did not yield to any temptation he may have felt to throw himself too early into the battle.

I shan't speak in the House this side Whitsuntide holidays [he wrote to his uncle on May 16]. Better not appear too eager. Get a good opportunity and make the best of it—that's the point. Let the cry against compensation increase in force and intensity : then is the time to speak. I can do better myself then—the steam is hardly up yet. That was evident in the debate, which was rather an unreal one, no fervour or earnestness characterising it. The House does not seem at all to realise or to be impressed with the gigantic evils of drunkenness. Later on there will be more of that spirit as the country gets aroused.

In the same letter there is a reference to a speech he had made on May 7 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle :

Birrell complimented me last night on my Tabernacle address. The " Western Mail " and the Bishop of St. Asaph appear to be enraged. The latter functionary attacked me at some Church meeting here.

This " Tabernacle address " was a speech delivered at a public meeting of the Liberation Society. It is clear that he had regarded the occasion as an important one. He had given much time and attention to the preparation of his speech : " I must devote my whole mind," he wrote on April 21, " to preparing for the Tabernacle meeting." Mrs. Lloyd George, writing from Acton, where she and her husband were spending a " week-end " with friends, makes a reference to his preparations :

I went with him (*i.e.* D. Ll. G.) for a walk to listen to the speech he has prepared for the Tabernacle, and I think it really good on " Disestablishment."

He, too, gave me some dry arguments about the Tithe that will be a part of his speech in the House, but he expects that it won't come on till after Whitsun, so that will give him some time to prepare it. At first I couldn't follow him in these arguments, but I got on better before the end.

A few days later the notes of the speech are sent to Criccieth, in order that his brother William and his uncle—the " esgob " (bishop), as he affectionately calls him—may offer suggestions and criticisms.

I enclose the notes of the speech I intend delivering on the Welsh Church at the Tabernacle. Read it and send me your candid opinion as to its merits or demerits. It is simply a rough outline, mind you. Will it do if duly elaborated? Let me have your opinion per return. Show it to the "esgob." He can send it on to me on Friday. If you or he have any good story or joke in support send it on.

I have been asked [he writes in another letter] to attend a labour demonstration at Bristol on Saturday next, but can't. On the 7th I have been asked to address an important Liberal soirée at Reading in support of the Liberal candidate, Ld. Edmond Fitzmaurice, but the Tabernacle engagement precludes my doing so. Innumerable tea, mission and temperance meetings plague me, but I say to one and all "Non possumus."

He was naturally a little resentful when the evening of the meeting came to find that he had been given the lowest place on the programme of speakers. This was a heavy handicap, and he felt that for a speaker whose reputation in London was still to make, it was an unfair one.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman (as he then was), who heard for the first time a public speech by the young Welshman he was to have in later years as a member of his Cabinet. This speech was one of Mr. Lloyd George's first great successes on a London platform—

"under most incalculable difficulties." Stuck at the very end [he wrote], after three or four weary and dreary speakers and a collection had depleted the building of a considerable part of its audience and of all but one or two of the reporters. Not a man moved whilst I spoke. They were all attention. The cheering and laughter which greeted my remarks drove me on from point to point, until, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and my fixed determination not to speak for more than five or ten minutes, I must have occupied at least twenty-five minutes. And what was strange was that when I sat down the audience seemed surprised. They evidently thought I ought to have gone on. . . .

I saw T. E. M. to-day. Old Tom frankly told me that he never thought there was so much in me. He was disappointed on the right side, "although," he said, "I had a very good opinion of your abilities."

The reports of the meeting show that the member for the Carnarvon Boroughs, introduced by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman as "a young brave with the scalp of a Tory member somewhere about him," told his audience that his constituents had sent him to protest against a great wrong. He believed in Disestablishment all round, but the case of Wales was a special one, because the experience of centuries had proved that the Establishment was

incompatible with the idiosyncrasies of the Welsh people. It was high time that the proselytism of the Church of England in Wales should be exposed. There was, unfortunately, rather a numerous class of miserable people who were ready to give up their religious traditions for the sake of the wretched charities that were offered to them. There was another class of proselytes—those who were excommunicated from the Nonconformist churches—and the receiving of such persons into the Established Church was not conversion, not even proselytism, but a species of religious sheep-stealing.

So much may be gleaned from the short reports of this speech made after "all but one or two of the reporters" had left, and it is obvious enough that the faithful few who remained have left us only the dry bones of his address.

He scored another success on June 4 at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, where, in company with Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., he attacked the "compensation clauses" of the Local Taxation Bill. There he was faced by an immense audience, and he roused them to a fury of enthusiasm. The burden of his speech was that compensation should not be accorded to a trade which, as he urged, had earned no favours from the State. He reminded his audience that he was a native of their city, and told them that he was proud of the honour of addressing so great a meeting in that historic hall. Using an idea which served him again a little later in the House, he suggested "a coercion bill with every recent appliance" for the publicans. Let them rigorously forfeit every licence the provisions of which were infringed, let them punish every publican who infringed the law with as little compunction as was displayed towards a refractory Irish member. Let them enforce the law first, and buy the publican out afterwards. He guaranteed that if the law were strictly and rigidly enforced precious few publicans would survive. He would not object, for his part, to compensate the remnant: "I rather fancy," he added, "that the sum of money that would be required would be so small that Mr. Caine would not object to it." The publican claimed equity. "Very well, by the rule of equity let his case be judged. There is a grand old maxim in Equity that I wish to see applied to that claim: 'He who comes to Equity must come with clean hands.' Let the liquor traffic display the hand with which it means to grab compensation. It reeks with human misery, vice and squalor, destitution, crime, and death. By that foul hand and with equity let the claim be judged." It was not compensation the publican deserved, but retribution.

The audience cheered him twice over at every step he took.

While he delivered his peroration there was a profound silence, and when it was broken by an enthusiast who could no longer contain his feelings, there was a subdued chorus of "hush" throughout the building. When he sat down the whole audience rose in a body and frantically waved hats and handkerchiefs for several minutes. He himself realised that his speech had been the finest of his rhetorical efforts up to that point: "As regards voice and gesture," he wrote, "I never spoke half so well. I had absolute command over myself and my audience from the very start. Caine said, 'You have made your reputation in England by that speech.'"

His fame as a platform orator, already widespread in Wales, was rapidly spreading in England. A member of Parliament who can hold and inspire large audiences is likely to be much in demand, and the calls on his time grew heavy. He was soon "booked" for speeches in Liverpool and Birmingham.

The invitation to Birmingham was immediately accepted. It attracted him greatly: "I am going to a big meeting at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, next Saturday," he writes—"there's a glorious opportunity." In another letter he explains the reason why the invitation is so welcome. He has accepted it rather than another for the same date. "I thought it the more important of the two," he writes to his uncle on his way to the meeting, "because of the representation of the town." He had started, it will be observed, upon his determined and harassing pursuit of Mr. Chamberlain—his lost leader. But he wisely remained a diligent follower of the debates in the House, although he was in no hurry, as has been seen, to speak himself. His letters at the time contain constant references to the incidents of Parliamentary life.

We hope to get a good debate to-night [he writes on May 1, 1890]. Balfour, Sexton, Morley, O'Brien, Hartington, probably also Healy, will speak. I am most carefully perusing the Tithe Bill with a view to drafting amendments. Will move half a dozen at the least purely with a view to obstruction. Other fellows have gleaned the field so clean before me that I fear I can't get hold of anything good.

On June 13, 1890, he saw his opportunity, and took it. Referring to the Local Taxation Bill and its Compensation clauses in a private letter written a few days before that date, he had said: "It won't do to omit Wales out of the Bill: that would mean a loss of our proportion of the subvention. Acland has moved its application to educational purposes. That's the thing." It was on Mr. Acland's amendment that he made his maiden speech.

The amendment moved by Mr. Acland was the insertion of a clause that "the sum of £350,000 shall be applied in England for the purposes of agricultural, commercial and technical instruction as defined in sec. 8 of the Technical Instruction Act, 1889, and in Wales either for the said purposes or for the purposes defined in sec. 17 of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, 1889. In other words the proposal was to divert that sum from the purpose of "pensioning the publicans" and establishing a vested interest in a license into channels of public utility. Mr. Lloyd George rose after a long speech from Mr. W. S. Caine, a follower of the Government who was in course of breaking away from them. In the speech for which the new member now claimed the indulgence of the House, he expressed his confidence that were there to be an election in Wales at that moment a clean sweep would be made of all the members who had voted in favour of that Bill. The Bill established a new principle in the licensing laws. If they meant to compensate the publicans, they should compensate them on the basis of profits on legitimate trade. Every case of drunkenness represented a breach of the law committed by the publican, and an increase in the profits of the publican.

They heard a great deal, he said, about law and order in Ireland. He thought there ought to be a Coercion Act for publicans, armed with all the modern appliances, such as Star Chamber inquiries, informers, "shadows," and removable magistrates. In his belief very few publicans would survive such an inquisition.

> Never [he said] has there been so puny an attempt to grapple with a great evil since the days when the Liliputian king drew his hanger to attack Gulliver.

Then came a reference to Lord Randolph Churchill:

> The temperance ardour of the noble lord has evaporated. As in the case of many another temperance convert, a holiday seems to have affected his temperance principles, which amounted at most to a kind of mushroom teetotalism.[1]

There followed the forerunner of the long series of attacks he was to make across the floor of the House upon "the right hon. member for West Birmingham."

[1] Lord Randolph Churchill had introduced his Licensing Bill on April 29, 1890, "in the last great speech which he made in the House of Commons." "While it affirmed the justice of compensation, it asserted for the first time in Parliament the principle of popular control over the issue of licenses." (See Mr. Winston Churchill's "Life of Lord Randolph Churchill," vol. ii., p. 430.)

House of Commons
Friday [illegible]

My dear W.G.

I have just spoken for the first time in the House & by I am to judge by the cheers I got during the progress of my speech & immediately after I sat down & also the congratulations I received I must have succeeded with a success equal — if not beyond — my very highest expectations.

T. W. Russell got up immediately after me & congratulated me upon my maiden speech "with which I had charmed the House." The House cheered again at this. There was a very good audience & although at first they appeared to be indifferent as they generally are when insignificant members speak, they soon — both sides listened intently.

[illegible] Lloyd

The right hon. gentleman recently entertained a company of brewers, and so strong apparently was the right hon. gentleman's view in favour of compensation that he expressed great surprise that it should have been thought necessary to approach him on the subject. In Wales we cannot understand the conduct of the noble lord the member for Paddington and the right hon. gentleman. Not so very long ago the latter promulgated the doctrine of "ransom," which is the exact reverse of compensation. The fact is that the noble lord and the right hon. gentleman are political contortionists, who can perform the great trick of planting their feet in one direction and setting their faces in another.

The reception accorded by the House to this maiden speech is described in a letter home :

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A member who had sat near Mr. Gladstone was able to tell Mr. Lloyd George that "the old man was exceedingly delighted." It was obvious the next day that a good impression had been made in the Press Gallery. "The new member for Carnarvon," said the "Pall Mall Gazette," "made a capital maiden speech, full of promise for his future career." There was hardly a Liberal paper in London or the provinces which had not something complimentary to say of it, and some of the Tory and Unionist papers joined, more or less grudgingly, in the chorus of praise. Thus the "Daily Graphic" admitted that it was a "rather clever speech." "The Times" gave it the honour of a mention in its leading article, but mentioned it only to reprove :

Mr. Lloyd George declares that if there were an election in Wales at the present moment, there would be a clean sweep made of every member who voted in favour of the Bill. This may be so ; but as there is no chance of a general election just now the threat is the less terrible.

In another letter to one of his family (written, as his letters often are, partly in Welsh) he again mentions his maiden speech :

What did you think of my simile of the "political contortionists"? I heard last night in the lobby that Sir William Harcourt has been praising my speech, and thinks very highly of it. It has already made a great difference in the reception I get among the members of the House.

He describes an interesting incident which followed on his speech :

When I sat down Acland turned to Tom Ellis and said angrily, "Now what *would* —— [1] have said if he had heard that speech? To suppose he might have sent Nanney in instead of one who could have made a speech like that!"

I think I told you yesterday about the unknown member who came to me to congratulate me. I found afterwards he was a Tory M.P.—De Cobain.

Sir Wilfrid was exceedingly well pleased.

One of his first votes in the House was in opposition to his party. Mr. F. S. Stevenson, a Liberal member, had moved an "instruction" to the Committee of the House upon the Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill in favour of revision and readjustment of tithe throughout England and Wales. The instruction had the official support of the Liberal Party. The member for the Carnarvon Boroughs voted against it, and Mr. D. A. Thomas, then member for Merthyr, went into the same lobby with him. This early act of revolt provoked hostile comment from some of the Welsh papers. It was described as a "Tory vote," and a stricter adherence to the discipline of party was enjoined upon him.

I quite agree with you [he wrote to his uncle] that our vote on the Tithe has, owing to the manner in which we have been attacked by —— and Co., done us more good than harm. In the long run it must do us good. Whatever irritation it may have temporarily occasioned, that will readily wear away, whilst an impression will remain that we are men with a backbone and a conscience, and that we are capable of thinking for ourselves, and are not willing to allow F. S. Stevenson or any one else—not even —— to do it for us.

I am all right [he says in another letter]. I followed the dictates of conscience, and the sequel will prove I was right. I am dead against revision : so were many of the fellows who voted for it. They simply desired to damage the Government.

Mr. John Parry, the distinguished anti-Tithe leader, came to his assistance with a letter which was communicated to the press, supporting the attitude he and Mr. Thomas had adopted. Mr. William George also took occasion to write a clever letter to the "Genedl" in his brother's defence. It is probable that the stand he had taken did, as he had supposed, more to benefit than to harm him. But the "Carnarvon Herald" urged the young member, as a condition of the success he desired, "to turn a

[1] The name omitted here is that of a Liberal in the Carnarvon constituency who had refused to support Mr. Lloyd George.

deaf ear to such will-o'-the-wisps as the senior member for Merthyr." Much has happened since the day when Mr. Lloyd George was suspected of being too attentive to the behests of Mr. D. A. Thomas.

His second speech, delivered on August 13, 1890, was a courageous criticism of some items of decorative expenditure. It was not, as he quite well recognised, a speech likely to make him popular in the House, but it represented his feelings, and though he weighed consequences, he was never one to fear them.

I cannot gain much in this House by my speech [he wrote the day before he delivered it], on the contrary I may lose much influence—these M.P.s are so frightfully decorous and respectable. My audience is the country.

I take the following report of the speech from Hansard for August 13, 1890 :—

. . . With regard to the first payment, namely £439 3*s.* 4*d.*, fees paid on the Installation of H.R.H. Prince Henry of Prussia as a Knight of the Garter, I wish to point out that that dignity is, as a general rule, granted for some signal service rendered to the country ; but what service has Prince Henry of Prussia ever rendered to this country ? He has not yet rendered any service to his own country, to say nothing of service to Great Britain. When this honour is conferred upon people here, they have to pay their own installation fees, but that is not so in the case of a foreign prince. Although it may be argued that diplomatic considerations should weigh in these cases, I hold that that argument should only be valid in cases where these honours are bestowed upon persons of distinction. But when they are conferred upon people who have never done anything to deserve attention, these interchanges of courtesies become empty expressions of diplomacy without any real meaning in them.

With regard to the second item, £2,769 4*s.* 8*d.* Equipage money on appointment of the Earl of Zetland Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, I think it is generally admitted that this office is a sinecure. (No, no.) Well, there is nothing which the Lord Lieutenant is supposed to do which is not better done already by his subordinates. We have been frequently reminded by the Chief Secretary that he is the real governor of Ireland. The Lord Lieutenant is simply a man in buttons, who wears silk stockings and has a coat of arms on his carriage. (Cries of "Order!")

The Chairman : Order, order ! The salary of the Lord Lieutenant is placed upon the Consolidated Fund, in order that he may not be criticised in this style. The only question into which the hon. gentleman can enter is that of the adequacy of this expenditure.

Mr. Lloyd George : I only wish to point out to this House that this sum of £3,000 is thrown away upon a sinecure. I find that a sum of about £3,000 appears in the estimates under the head of Dublin Metropolitan

Police, a force which is as necessary to the present system of government as the Lord Lieutenant is unnecessary.

Well, then comes a sum of £180 in respect of the funeral of the Duchess of Cambridge. Such items are not calculated to produce sentiments of loyalty; on the contrary, they cause irritation and provoke an amount of criticism and inquiry which otherwise would be absent. The result of the inquiry promoted by this item is to show that the family of the Duke of Cambridge has from first to last received something like £3,000,000 out of the Exchequer. I think it positively monstrous that we should be paying these sums for what is absolutely worthless to this country, when there is so much suffering, so much absolute penury and want among our working classes.

Shortly before this Supplementary Estimate was issued the report of the Sweating Committee appeared, and what a ghastly comment are the main features of that report upon this expenditure! The report shows that thousands of hard-working, thrifty men are living a life of hopeless, ceaseless toil, and yet we are asked to spend hundreds in decorating a foreign prince and thousands in adorning a mere supernumerary. These items represent principles of expenditure which do a vast amount of harm in this country. Others are induced by this extravagance to spend a vast amount of money on what is perfectly superfluous, and the result is this monstrous sweating system that is a blot on our civilisation. I do not believe that this gorgeousness, and this ostentation of wealth, is necessary in order to maintain the Constitution. On the contrary, I think it does far more to repress than to promote sentiments of loyalty.

With this speech before him, the reader may be interested to see the final note, written in lead pencil upon a sheet of House of Commons note-paper, from which it was delivered. In an earlier chapter I have said that it used to be Mr. Lloyd George's custom to write out his speeches and commit them to memory. This, and many of his early House of Commons speeches, were first written out in full, then "boiled down" into a form of which the note I now transcribe is typical, and finally delivered in almost, though not quite, the identical phrases of the first draft.

The following is the note:

Services done.
What services?
None for his *own* country.
Better treated than distinguished countrymen.
His fees paid.
Perfect farce.
Diplomatic consons.
Conventional phrases.
Great national issues.

Peculiar relations.
Sinecure.
Subordinates.
Chief Secretary Governor.
Man in buttons.
Dublin Police Equipments.
Duchess of Cambridge.
Petty and irritating.
Raises inquiry.
£3,000,000.
Legacy Duty.
Sweating.

In the middle of August 1890 his first session in Parliament came to an end. He had been indefatigable in attendance. He had made an excellent and successful maiden speech, and that he had looked after the interests of his constituents is shown by his many questions as to the working of the Gwylwyr Sett stone quarry. He had had the experience—one he did not enjoy—of sitting upon a committee to consider a Scottish Bill. "I am now sitting," he wrote on June 20, "on a Committee judging some confounded Scotch Water Bill. Good practice and experience to acquire." Later references show a growing dislike for the uncongenial work. But they also show that in spite of the tiresome nature of his task he threw himself into it with vigour, made up his own mind on the Bill and talked over the Committee to his own view of the matter.

June 25, 1890.—This Scotch Bill takes up all my time and I fear health now. I am confined to a crowded room without moving for five hours. No more committees for me.

June 26.—Goodness knows that ten hours in an office would be preferable to the five I spend over this dry Scotch Bill. I am writing this instead of listening to the evidence of the antagonists to the Bill. I had made up my mind on the evidence of the promoters themselves against the Bill, so I don't think it necessary to listen to any more arguments or evidence against it.

Later. On the Scotch Bill Committee the remaining members are coming round to the opinion I held from the start. They at first were inclined to "pooh pooh" it, but now they see there is something in it.

He had had even more than his fair share of the demands upon his time which a member has to face.

I have quite as much as I can do [he writes on May 16] to acknowledge letters *re* anti-compensation. Petitions and resolutions continue to pour in. I fancy Merioneth sends all its petitions to me now, poor Ellis being ill. Even Rathbone's constituents send some to me.

I have just seen Ellis [the letter adds]. His vigour and verve is gone. Poor lad! Even he is inclined now to be downhearted.

Politically the Session had been a barren one. The Government, whose supporters had become so listless that on the Ascot Cup day the Liberal Opposition had almost snatched a majority on a division, had wasted much time over the "compensation clauses" of the Local Taxation Bill, styled by Mr. Gladstone, in a phrase which caught the popular fancy, "the Publicans' Endowment Bill." These clauses, which, as has been seen, Mr. Lloyd George had vehemently attacked in his maiden speech and in the country, were unpopular even on the Ministerial side. Mr. Lloyd George's old friend, the late Mr. W. S. Caine, then Unionist member for Barrow, disliked them so much that he contemplated crossing the floor of the House.

I met Caine this morning at the Alliance office. He was on his way to see Hartington. He told me that unless he got a satisfactory answer he would quit the Party. I did my best to induce him to come over.[1]

Mr. Caine, as the event proved, was not satisfied with the answer he got. He decided to throw up his seat and fight an election. The result was a three-cornered contest, in which, to the chagrin of Conservatives and Unionists, the Gladstonian candidate was elected.

The compensation clauses had to be abandoned. The Government found that they had undertaken an impossible task. Mr. W. H. Smith, the leader of the House of Commons, announced that the Government were prepared to withdraw the obnoxious clauses and to allow the money to accumulate in order to be dealt with by subsequent legislation. The Speaker ruled, however, that the money must be appropriated in the current year, and upon this the clauses were dropped altogether.

I transcribe from Mr. Lloyd George's letters references to these events.

June 25.—Caine wants me to go to Barrow to speak for him. I am in somewhat of a difficulty. The local Gladstonians, who are very exasperated with Caine, insist upon fighting him. The Liberal whips, although not sympathising with the opposition to Caine, still are against my going down. What say you? It is a very foolish thing on the part of the Liberals to oppose Caine. He is crossing over.

COMPENSATION

The rumours flying about this are that it is dead—as a door-nail. Who killed Cock Robin? Tim Healy. By one of the smartest tricks ever practised in the House.

[1] From a letter dated "Saturday"—(?) June 21, 1890.

Latest. Goschen says the Bill won't be taken to-morrow. What does that mean? Nobody knows. The Conservatives are intensely angry with the Government; so am I, as I had a very good speech to deliver —better than the first even.

June 26.—Well, at last the Compensation clauses have been unreservedly withdrawn, amidst the mocking laughter of the Opposition. Never was there a more discredited Government—beaten all along the line. There will be some heckling by and by. . . .

Caine begs me to go to Barrow. I've left the decision to John Morley.

From letters to his family at this period the following further passages may be quoted :—

Yesterday (Sunday).—Dr. Clifford morning. Capital from a purely intellectual point of view. . . . This is Clifford's style: "You cannot propagate character. Brain, disposition, bias is hereditary, but you must build up your own character.

Last night I dined with Samuel Smith, and he said regarding a speech made the previous evening, that the greatest mistake a man can commit is to speak too frequently. The House instinctively dislikes such a man. Poor old Sam! His great failing is that he never acts upon that precept. He is always talking upon all sorts of topics, at all sorts of times. In fact, he bores the House. . . . I had an invitation this afternoon to a party at Gladstone's residence at Dollis Hill.

This morning[1] I tried to put together another speech on the Compensation question, but after the maiden speech it is very difficult to catch the Speaker's eye, so that I may not be able to deliver it for weeks—maybe not at all. It doesn't matter: it is like wine, it will improve with the keep.

August 8.—I have two motions on *to-day's* paper, not one of which will be disposed of to-night, but which may come on to-morrow. I wouldn't lose the opportunity of bringing the Gwylwyr Quarry before the House—or for the matter of that the money spent on a garter of Prince Henry—not for anything. We go on to-night till 2 or 3 on Saturday morning.

It is evident that the new member for the Carnarvon Boroughs had no reason to complain of his first session. In spite of his independent attitude, or possibly because of it, he had made a mark in the House, and what was of more immediate importance, had satisfied his constituents. The "Carnarvon Herald" applauded his efforts, and described him as "a watchful critic of the administration." There is a gentle irony in that important local paper's comment on his attempt "to extinguish the emoluments of certain costly sinecurists." "To see a lawyer engaged in cutting down fees," it said, "is a charming and edifying sight."

[1] June 18.

Of those who later became his colleagues, Mr. Birrell, as will have been noticed, was one of the first to congratulate him on his platform successes. Another whose good opinion he highly valued was Mr. John Morley (now Lord Morley, and though ennobled not less a democrat). Mr. Morley hastened to make the better acquaintance of the young Welshman after the latter's maiden speech. "I have just had an invitation from Morley to dine with him on July 16," he writes in a letter of June 24: "good, isn't it?" It will have been noticed that the friendship thus begun advanced so speedily that a few days later Mr. John Morley was made the arbiter of the troublesome problem provided by Mr. Caine.

During the recess Mr. Morley had another opportunity of appraising his young colleague. The occasion is of enough significance to deserve recording. It was a public meeting held at St. Helens on September 29, when Mr. Morley was the lion of the evening, and the other speakers were Mr. Kennedy, Q.C. (now Lord Justice Kennedy), and Mr. Lloyd George. Ireland almost monopolised the attention of the speakers, as was usual and inevitable in the circumstances of the time. Mr. Lloyd George's speech is notable for his references to the chief speaker of the evening, and for his amusing attacks upon Mr. A. J. Balfour. Of Mr. Morley he said that no man was held in greater admiration by the people of Wales, and he contrasted him with those "opportunists who were always modifying the opinions of others because they had none of their own." He declared that Welshmen, regarding Mr. Balfour from the heights of Snowdon, were quite unable to detect the courage and consistency which were always attributed to him by his supporters. Shortly before, Mr. Dillon and Mr. William O'Brien, the Nationalist Members of Parliament, had been arrested for speeches they had delivered at Tipperary. Mr. Lloyd George gave his audience their choice of three reasons, which, as he suggested, might have persuaded Mr. Balfour to order these arrests. First, Parliament was not sitting, so that indignant comment was avoided, and the storm would have blown over by the time the members reassembled. Secondly, the arrested members had been on the eve of starting for America, to collect funds, and Mr. Balfour thought it desirable to prevent that. Thirdly, it was believed that the United Irish League was breaking up. "When the League was powerful the brave Balfour would not touch it, but when it went down he began to kick it." He went on to quote a saying of Napoleon Bonaparte, "that incidents should never govern policy, but policy incidents."

"That," he said, "is Napoleon's opinion of Balfourism, the opinion of the master of coercion upon its quack."

A more playful passage follows, which, in view of meetings upon the golf links which have since taken place, to the mutual pleasure and advantage of the two political antagonists, is not without a certain piquancy:

It is said that Mr. Balfour likes golf. Well, he is always golfing; if not upon the floor of Parliament, in Ireland. He is always on the look-out for giving a smart hit, and for the honour of leading in the next match. Men are nothing to him but golf-balls, and countries nothing but playing grounds. He does not consider for a moment that upon the issue of a game depend the destinies of a nation of five million people.

In a much more serious vein he denounced Mr. Balfour as "the fiendish spirit of aristocracy incarnate," and in a peroration of which, to borrow a phrase of his, one may say that there was plenty of *hwyl* with it, he pointed a moral for Wales from the example of Ireland.

In Wales also we have a miserable minority, who because they are of a certain class and of a certain religion think they have a right to monopolise the resources of the soil, to monopolise the educational advantages of the country, and, more than that, to set their lords and baronets to defame and revile my country in the ears of Royalty. And why? It is because Welshmen prefer to worship at the simple altars of their fathers rather than to bow down in the house of Rimmon. That is the secret of it. And in the fight Irishmen are making against religious inequality, I would say, "Heaven help them."

The words with which Mr. Morley congratulated the speaker must, coming from a source not prone to flattery, have encouraged and fortified him.

You were, I think, rewarded for the patience with which you listened to my speech by the very brilliant address of my young colleague. Gentlemen, it does one's heart good to see, to feel, to know that when we of an older generation are gone there are those ready and capable of taking the lamp of progress into their hands.

CHAPTER IX

(1890–1892)

I

The tragedy of Parnell—Mr. Lloyd George's letters—Committee Room 15—The comedy of Mr. Atkinson.

WITH the end of 1890 came the fall of Parnell.[1] The only interest which that great and moving tragedy has for our present purpose is that Mr. Lloyd George's contemporary comments upon it are preserved. No history, however laborious and complete, would convey more to us of the swift drama of Parnell's last stand at bay in Committee Room 15 than do the almost daily bulletins contained in the confidential letters of the Welsh nationalist. I am able to make the following extracts:

November 25, 1890.—Parnell has made up his mind that he won't go, and we are all correspondingly depressed. Anger and despondency reign supreme on the Liberal benches. A gloom has overcast our late jubilance. The Tories, on the other hand, can hardly restrain their joyousness. Confound it all.

Stuart Rendel tells me the Old Man is very downhearted about the business. It appears that it was Parnell himself said he would not go. He marched into the House defiantly and even fiercely. He is a terrible man.[2]

November 26, 1890.—The G.O.M.'s letter has occasioned a tremendous

[1] The decree nisi in the case of *O'Shea* v. *O'Shea & Parnell* was pronounced on November 15, 1890.

[2] Soon after the thunderbolt of the divorce proceedings had fallen, one of Mr. Lloyd George's most intimate friends was present with him at a tithe sale in Wales. They fell to discussing this, the news of the hour, and the friend asked how Parnell had behaved under the blow. "Why," said Mr. Lloyd George, "he used to be a quiet, retiring man, hurrying through the lobbies as if he wanted to avoid notice. Now he throws back his shoulders and stalks through the lobbies, with clouds of smoke trailing from his cigar, as if he challenged and defied the world."

commotion.[1] The letter, it appears, had been shown to McCarthy before yesterday's meeting, and the Irishmen are furious that they were not apprised of its existence. To-day they met at 2, and I believe that there is a powerful revolt against Parnell's authority. He came there and stated that he would not resign, but this time he was not received with the same unanimity as yesterday. Sexton and others spoke strongly in favour of Parnell's retirement. Parnell, so Sexton told Labouchere, looked so calmly that if a stranger had come in he would certainly have thought that they had all committed adultery with Parnell's wife. The meeting was adjourned until 5, and is still going on. Probably it will be again adjourned in order to obtain a full attendance of the party.

November 27, 1890.—Parnell absolutely refuses to give way. I don't know whether his party will force him to do so. He is an exceedingly cunning chap. You see him to-day talking to fellows in his own camp whom he would almost have disdained to look at a few weeks ago. He now chats freely with them. He means to get a favourable vote Monday next.[2] He walks about the lobby and sits in the House as collectedly as ever.

Monday evening.[3]—Parnell is playing a very bold game. He and his party are obstructing the meeting upstairs by motions for adjournment, and as Parnell has the indelicacy to sit in the chair when his own case is being discussed he may allow the motions to go on *ad infinitum*. He is an utter desperado.

8 *p.m.*—Late post is closing. Parnellites still sitting. They have been at it since 2.

December 3, 1890.—The Irishmen are endeavouring to effect a compromise, with what result I cannot tell. Parnell's fight is simply sublime. It shows what a leader he is and the stuff he is made of. It is a grand fight.

Thursday evening.[4]—I fear Parnell has been one too many for the whole lot of us this time. He has succeeded in utterly confusing the issue. It is now and will hence be in Ireland a question not of Parnell's leadership, but of whether Gladstone's Home Rule scheme is satisfactory. At the same time all may come right. The G.O.M. can make a strategic move or two as well as Parnell.

December 5, 1890.—He has completely sold them all. Very clever. There is a rumour current in the lobby that the G.O.M. refuses to parley.

Late.—I am told now that there is every chance of a settlement. The first rumour was wrong altogether. The Old Man has met the delegates and given them satisfactory assurances. The Irish party meet at 9 to discuss them. Until then nothing is certain with an Irish party. Things look up now.

Saturday night.[5]—I have waited till the last moment to write, so as

[1] On the 25th Mr. Gladstone wrote his famous letter to Mr. Morley, declaring that Parnell's "continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland."

[2] *i.e.* December 1, to which day the meeting had been adjourned.

[3] Presumably December 1.

[4] ? December 4.

[5] Obviously December 6.

to give you the latest news of the Parnellite crisis. The Old Man absolutely refused to treat with them at all on the basis that Parnell's leadership had anything in the world to do with the future Home Rule Bill. The Irishmen had therefore to meet to-day to consider the situation, and Sexton said in the course of the discussion that unless some definite decision was come to by 6 this evening, he and his friends would secede from the party and elect a leader of their own. Now, I have just met Micha Davitt, who was walking from the House with a gang of Irish members. He says that Justin McCarthy at 6 proposed some resolution, the import of which I have yet to gather—probably relating to Parnell's leadership, whereupon Parnell lost his temper, snatched it out of poor innocent old Mac's hands, and tore it into shreds and flung it away. Result—forty-five men got up and marched out of the room and forthwith proceeded to depose Parnell out of the leadership. That's the immediate result. I have had no time to consider what the ulterior issue may be except that Parnell won't give way. . . . .

You will let M. know what has happened *re* Parnell if she cares a button except that she rejoices in the affair, as it has shortened the sitting.

In a letter to the "Genedl Gymreig" written on January 3 1891, at a moment when, as he said, "the world of politics was very calm," Mr. Lloyd George pronounced an epilogue to this tragedy. The last months of 1890 (this was the burden of his letter) had been marked by three notable instances of rebellion against the autocracy of a single man. One was the case of Parnell, the two others to which he referred were the strong criticisms which had been levelled in the Press and elsewhere against the explorer Stanley and the Salvationist leader "General" Booth.

This much [he said] we may safely prophesy, that the cause of African exploration will not be damned because of defects in one of its heroes, and the great cause of Social Reform would not be lost even if every one of the charges now being made against "General" Booth by his enemies were substantiated. The good sense of the nation will differentiate between principles and the instruments thorough which it is sought to bring them before the world. Why is not the same rule observed in Parnell's case, and a distinction drawn between the man himself and the cause of Home Rule?

Later in the same letter he writes:

Time is quickly effacing the unfortunate impression caused by Parnell's betrayal, and the country, having had time for reflection, is beginning to realise that the misconduct of a gentleman, who happened at the time to lead the Irish nation, is not a reason for withholding privileges from his followers.

From the same source—his Welsh Parliamentary letters to the "Genedl"—I quote (in English dress) an amusing account (dated August 12, 1891) of another figure on the political stage. This is Mr. Atkinson, then M.P. for Boston, and if Parnell be taken as a type of tragedy, Mr. Atkinson may be ranked among the broadly comic characters.

At the time referred to Mr. Atkinson was one of the favourite jokes of the House of Commons, but the best joke may go too far, and towards the end of the Session he had been suspended for a fierce and unprovoked attack on the Speaker and the officials of the House.

Mr. Atkinson is an eccentric old man. Nobody would think, at ordinary times, that he had "a bee in his bonnet," so dignified is his appearance. He is tall, and stands erect, and his snow-white hair is as long as that of any bard that ever footed the logan stone. But when the old Druid of Boston is upset, he is transfigured. His eyes flash with as much fury, he cries out as loudly and speaks as bitterly as any chief bard cursing the enemies of the Muse on an Eisteddfod platform.

The article goes on to relate how Mr. Atkinson had been roused to indignation by the conduct of a fellow Wesleyan, Mr. Henry Fowler (afterwards Lord Wolverhampton), who had given notice of amendments to a Bill concerning the marriage of Nonconformists which the "Druid of Boston" had introduced.

Mr. Atkinson accused his more broad-minded friends of treachery and malice. That was the beginning of his troubles this year. Henceforth his conduct took a more threatening turn. He would rush into the House in the middle of the hot weather wearing a heavy winter overcoat. He carried in his arms huge bundles of papers and letters. He hurried here, there, and everywhere, like a man who was anxious to impress everybody with the fact that he was overwhelmed with work. He seemed to be under the delusion that the whole responsibility for the proper government of the country was on his shoulders. He had a suggestion as to the best way out of every difficulty. He would ask questions and make proposals on every subject. Sometimes his words were sensible and wise, often they were mere nonsense. So he went from bad to worse, until at last he began a struggle with the officials of the House. First he attacked the staff and messengers in the rooms and offices of the House. These dared not remonstrate with him; and so, as he could not raise a quarrel with them, he proceeded to deride the clerks of the House of Commons. As this did not bring the desired balm to his soul, he attacked and insulted the Speaker himself. Here he overleaped himself, and he had a rather nasty fall. The Speaker reported the whole episode to his fellow members in severe terms. The Speaker is a very severe person, but he is the embodiment of dignity and politeness. He cries "Order, order"

in such authoritative tones that order is immediately restored. If, on occasions, there is disorder, he has an awful voice. I well remember seeing one member who had risen to speak being frightened so much at hearing the Speaker calling out his name, that he sat down in terror. It is easy to believe that his censures must be irksome to the ears and hearts of those under his lash. But even he did not succeed in taming Atkinson, and it became necessary to banish him for a full week from the precincts of the House.

Grunting and groaning, he gathered his papers into a bundle, and rushed wildly out of the chamber; but almost instantaneously his spectacles were seen flashing at us from behind the Speaker's Chair, and he stopped there listening till the end of the debate. The sentence was reduced from a fortnight to one week, and as a result of that mercy extended to him the culprit returned on Monday in parliamentary order.

It may not be quite irrelevant, while writing of Mr. Atkinson, to recall that on the occasion of the vote of £180 for the expenses of the funeral of the Duchess of Cambridge[1] that worthy man offered, as he himself stated in debate, to defray the sum with a cheque on his own bank rather than see a request made for public money for such a purpose. Mr. Healy seems to have been tickled by this magnanimous offer. He was reminded, he told the House, of a noble lord now dead who, when asked for a contribution towards the burial of a lawyer, offered a cheque for a guinea, saying: "Here, go and bury twenty-one of them."

I append some further extracts from the private letters of these years:

May 14, 1891.—Influenza microbes teeming in the House. But a fellow must stick here, not funk. Member died yesterday, also one of the most powerful messengers in the House. . . . All-night sitting to-night . . . . I can't take part in the Irish Land Bill in Committee, as it requires expert knowledge of finance and Irish land. This is not the place you can talk of things you know nothing about—at least not with impunity. You must know more than the average before the average will listen to you.

June 16, 1891.—I am getting up facts from the Blue Books upon the Free Education Debate. . . . So far I have only got the material together. I have not unearthed any diamonds in doing so—but cold steel in plenty. . . . I've just heard a most remarkable speech from Sir John Gorst, the Under Secretary for India, in defence of the Indian Government's conduct in the Manipur affair. The most remarkable speech I've heard since I am in this House. Worth reading if you get a verbatim report anywhere.

June 19, 1891.—We defeated the Government last night. The scene was one of considerable excitement, and it was followed by all sorts of

[1] See p. 109 above.

rumours about resignation. Nothing has however happened, and we are to-day pursuing the even tenor of our way. . . .

June 22, 1891.—(Free Education.) On this question the Liberal leaders are showing funk. They don't want to fight. Great mistake, of course. But probably there will be a debate of two nights' duration. If that is so I shall have my chance.

June 24, 1891.—I have delivered my soul. . . . Made the other side very angry and my own very pleased. Have no time to write you a full report, as I am off immediately to fetch Maggie to Caine's party, to which we have both been invited.

June 30, 1891.—Just disposed of my amendment with regard to teachers in denominational schools. Good debate. Closure moved by Government for first time. Of course we were sadly beaten. No matter. Harcourt spoke twice, Trevelyan once, for; Chamberlain against.

II

The Tithe Recovery Bill—Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Samuel Evans—A successful partnership—Local Veto and Sunday Closing—Views on Temperance and Education.

The Parliament of 1886 was dissolved in June 1892. Mr. Lloyd George was a frequent speaker in the debates of its dying years. The measures which chiefly engaged his attention were the Tithe Rent Charge Recovery Bill and the Clergy Discipline Bill. The former, a reference to which has already been made,[1] was an attempt to checkmate the agitation against the payment of tithes. The objection of Nonconformist farmers to the tithe was, as has been seen, especially strong and widespread in Wales. The Bill, which was carried into law, shifted the incidence of the tithe from the occupier to the owner, and enacted that it should be collected by distraint. It thus became impossible for the Nonconformist tenant farmer to fight the parson without at the same time fighting his own landlord. This device was ingenious, and for the time being successful. But no measure which recognised the claims of the Anglican Church in Wales to tithes could be expected to escape the criticism of Mr. Lloyd George and his friends. "We as Welsh representatives," to quote his words, "laid claim to the tithe as endowments belonging to the whole people, and not to a mere section."[2] The comment of the "Times" at the close of the session in August 1891, shows the Conservative attitude towards Mr. Lloyd George and his friends: "The discussion of the clauses in Committee drifted into the hands of a section of the members for Wales, Mr.

[1] See p. 75.

[2] At Bangor, May 21, 1891.

Samuel Evans[1] and Mr. Lloyd George being the most conspicuous, who endeavoured to whittle away the effect of the Bill by amendments on points of detail that were all defeated by large majorities." Though the "Times" dismissed the efforts of the young Welshman thus loftily, it was generally acknowledged that Mr. Lloyd George had shown in the struggle a remarkable acumen and mastery of Parliamentary forms. When, on February 5, 1891, he moved an amendment by which he sought to give defendants in actions to be brought under the provisions of the Bill a right to a trial by jury, Sir Richard Webster, then Attorney-General (and later, as it is hardly necessary to add, the Lord Chief Justice of England), paid a sincere tribute to "the great acuteness" which the member for the Carnarvon Boroughs had shown with regard to the Bill; and the pages of Hansard show that the compliment was well deserved.

Mr. Lloyd George was not anxious to see the Tithes Bill wrecked. From one point of view he thought it an admirable measure. His attitude upon it may be judged from what he said on Dec. 3, 1890, in a private letter:

> It [the Bill] adds 25 per cent. to the value of tithe, and that is no mean thing by the time it is nationalised. We should take care not to fight it except as a protest against the idea of its being a settlement of our grievance.

That grievance he, and his partner Mr. Evans kept steadily and unremittingly before the eyes of the House in 1891. It was still no part of his policy to kill the Bill:

> It will be an invaluable measure for us when we once get Disestablishment [he writes][2] and a measure which no Liberal Ministry would be allowed to pass. I have, however, some amendments on Thursday designed to prevent any reduction in its value, and I shall fight strenuously upon those.

Further extracts from his letters to his brother upon this subject will be found of interest:

January 31, 1891.—My amendments come on on Monday. Two at least of them must. They are designed to protect the national property in tithe. I also move to omit "Wales" out of the Bill. But this is only in order to hitch on a speech on Disestablishment.

February 2, 1891.—I have spoken already four times. . . . My first amendment practically accepted by the Government, and the second defeated after a good debate by only thirty—smallest majority yet recorded by the Government. The G.O.M. voted for my amendment.

[1] Afterwards Sir Samuel Evans, President of the Divorce Court.

[2] Jan. 27, 1891.

February 3, 1891.—I accepted your very sensible advice, and, just to show them that I could do it, spoke seven times last night. Highly complimented. The "Star" to-day says some fine things about S. T. Evans and myself, coupling us together.[1] . . . Harcourt came to me in a very nice way last night and said, "Well, I hear that you have been doing very good work in the country. I have heard great things about your speeches and their success." Good, isn't it?

February 11, 1891.—We had a stunning good debate last night on Tithe. I spoke several times. I spoke once at some length—in fact, the longest speech yet delivered in Committee, and they all tell me the best. Cremer, a London M.P., came to me to congratulate me upon it to-day, and said it was "the best speech he had heard delivered in the House for a very long time," and that it was not he only who said so, but that several whom he had met were of the same opinion. There is no doubt whatever but that Evans and I have taken a decided step forward in the estimation of the House. We receive congratulations on all sides. And indeed we have fought hard. We have stuck to our seats day by day from 3 until 12 every night this Tithe Bill has been on. . . . By sheer persistence we managed to insert a most important provision in the Bill at the very last—viz., that unless a defendant gives notice that he intends to defend, there are to be no solicitor's costs whatever to be given to the plaintiff—the fees have been reduced already to a mere bagatelle. The tithe owner will thus be worse off by this County Court procedure, as he will have to employ a solicitor to carry the thing through for him. I had two or three unimportant amendments on the paper, and at 1 a.m. I told the Government that if they consented to that provision I should withdraw my amendments and press Healy to withdraw his motion for adjournment. They consented, and the trick was done. They accepted two of my amendments last night. The Bill passes its third reading to-morrow—then for business. What do they say down there of our fight?

On March 18, 1891, a debate took place which deserves mention because it represented a somewhat remarkable triumph for a cause which Mr. Lloyd George had favoured from the very beginning of his political career. This was the principle which has come to be known by the name of "Local Option." The Bill under discussion was the Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, introduced by Mr. Bowen Rowlands; and the Government, painfully conscious that among its Unionist supporters were many who held the views generally accepted by strong temperance reformers, had consented to the request of the United Kingdom Alliance for "a fair field and no favour," and taken off the

[1] "Mr. Lloyd George . . . made a rattling speech in support of his proposal. . . . The subsequent debate was conspicuous for the delivery of several very able speeches, the two young Welsh members, Mr. Evans and Mr. Lloyd George, showing themselves not only to be effective debaters but to be possessed of keen dialectical skill." —"The Star."

Government whips. The measure was not one to which a modern Conservative Government would be likely to accord such generous treatment, but those were the days when Toryism had been freshly inoculated with the serum of "dissident Liberalism." The "Times" described the measure as "one of the harshest and crudest ever proposed by headlong fanaticism." It passed its second reading, however, by a majority of six, although, as it is perhaps unnecessary to add, it has not found its way to the Statute Book. Mr. Lloyd George spoke in the debate, and contrasted the attitude of the Tory party towards the two questions of tithe and the drink traffic. Of the former they said that legislation was necessary because of the scenes of disorder which arose in Wales out of the collection of the tithe; but that disorder was nothing to the disorder caused by public-houses. Plebiscites taken in Wales, he said, had shown in many places that two-thirds of the population were against a renewal of licences, and yet the magistrates had granted renewals. He implored the House to give the Welsh people an opportunity of dealing with the evils of the drink traffic.

The effect of this speech, delivered in a crowded House, may be judged from a letter he wrote immediately after the debate:

> Wonderful [he wrote]: we have carried the Bill by a majority of six, although only half a dozen Irish M.P.s present in House. Stuart Rendel tells me that the Speaker volunteered a statement to him that I had spoken admirably. Sir Frederick Mappin came to me and told me my speech and Morley's had changed his vote. Lord Compton and several others heartily congratulated me.

In one of the letters which Mr. Lloyd George contributed at this time to the "Genedl," there is a reference to the further fate of this Bill. The following is a translation of part of his weekly letter, dated June 3, 1891:

> On Tuesday the Tories were guilty of a blunder as grave as any they have committed. The Welsh Local Option Bill was to be discussed in Committee on Wednesday. The Derby happened to be fixed for the same day, and Lord Elcho, an English Tory member, proposed that the House should be adjourned in order that members might be able to see the races. Sir Wilfred Lawson strongly opposed, on the ground that there was a Temperance measure to be considered. He condemned the Derby as an evil institution, which fostered gambling, drunkenness, and other vices. Mr. Bowen Rowlands protested on behalf of Wales, and as the member in charge of the Bill. Sir William Harcourt made a strong stand against the adjournment on behalf of the Liberal party. The motion was carried, however, though I am glad to say only one or two Liberal members voted

for it. The Tories alone are responsible, and this is the party to whose especial care is confided the honour of Church and State.

To understand his attitude upon temperance questions one must remember that total abstinence was as much a part of the creed on which he had been brought up as the love of peace or religious equality. Once,[1] in a spirit of raillery, which at the time was misunderstood (for Mr. Lloyd George shares the fate of all witty speakers in a world where the sense of humour is not general), he said that in Wales there were "no ranting, humbugging moderate drinkers." The Welsh people were "either teetotallers or right-down jolly tipplers." We must not make the mistake of his critics and treat that as an exact dichotomy, but it has much more truth in it than some of the platitudes of the sententious.

The average Englishman is very impatient of the bigoted teetotaller, and many sound Liberals have looked with distrust upon proposals for Local Veto. It is easy to be broad-minded when one is indifferent. For a man fostered in a faith which regarded strong drink as part of the armament of the powers of evil it may well be difficult to see two arguable sides to such a question. The true bigot, however, refuses to listen or inquire. Mr. Lloyd George, at the outset of his career, fresh from temperance meetings and the dogmatic teaching of the chapel, was always ready to hear the other side. In 1895, when the "Western Mail," edited by a strong opponent of Sunday Closing (Mr. Lascelles Carr), was saying that in Cardiff the Sunday trade of the publicans had been replaced by a worse evil in the so-called political clubs which had sprung up, Mr. Lloyd George determined to see for himself. He made a round of the clubs, and at one, where he was refused admittance, he paid a subscription and became a member. One Sunday evening he was invited to address his fellow members. He told them that he was a teetotaller himself, and urged them, if they drank at all, to drink moderately. "If your wives had drinking clubs too," he said, "there would be precious little money left at the end of the week." "It was noticed," said the "Western Mail" reporter, "that although smoking went on, glasses were not replenished while Mr. Lloyd George was speaking."

Another strong card played by the opponents of Sunday

[1] At a temperance meeting in London, May 1891. The "Liverpool Mercury" declared very solemnly that "it was extraordinary that any one, even a member of Parliament, with any sense of responsibility, should give utterance to so rash and reckless a statement."

closing was the case of Rumney. Rumney is a village just across the border in Monmouthshire, and as it was outside the ambit of the closing order it became on each successive Sunday a centre of debauchery. Mr. Lloyd George visited Rumney to see it for himself. "He looked at the matter," said a political opponent in the Press,[1] "as a sincere friend of temperance, rather than as one who was prepared to swear in favour of Sunday closing whether it was increasing drunkenness or not." The sights he saw sickened him. "Every public-house," he said, "was packed like a sardine-box with 'boosers,' and there was a large amount of that heavy, solid, sodden drunkenness that is produced by beer." Rumney on a Sunday was a "hell on earth." This was his description of the place after a visit in 1895. Two years later, when he was about to speak on Sunday closing at Cardiff, the "Evening Express" and "Western Mail" published what was probably the first cartoon in which Mr. Lloyd George ever figured.[2] It depicts him pointing with a worried expression at a picture of a drunken crowd at Rumney, and beneath the drawing are the words: "About two years ago I called that picture a 'hell on earth.' To-night I must tell a different tale. How is it to be done?"

No different tale was told, however. Mr. Lloyd George said at the meeting that he did not retract a syllable of what he had said previously about Rumney. It was a perfect pandemonium and a blot on civilisation. Where Mr. Lascelles Carr and he did not agree was in this: "Mr. Carr says it is a pandemonium, and says, Let us set up another pandemonium in Cardiff like it. I say, Let us get rid of the one you have got at Rumney."

The greatest measure which stands to the credit of the Parliament of 1886 was the Free Education Act, a piece of legislation which owed its existence to the Radicalism of Mr. Chamberlain, and was part of the price Toryism paid for his support.

"The Tories pocketed their principles and promised us 'assisted' education—they refuse to call it 'free.' This word is a very difficult one for a Tory to utter without choking."[3]

The Bill was introduced in 1891, and Mr. Lloyd George took part in many of the debates upon it. One instance of his intervention in these discussions will suffice. On June 24, 1891, Mr. Bartley introduced an amendment designed to protect the interests of voluntary and denominational schools, which their admirers supposed to be threatened, though without any obvious grounds for their alarm.

[1] "Halifax Guardian," July 3, 1897. [2] May 17 and 18, 1897.
[3] Translated from Mr. Lloyd George's letter to the "Genedl," June 3, 1891.

Mr. Lloyd George made a powerful plea for school board teaching in the speech which "made the other side very angry and his own very pleased."[1] The House had been told that voluntary schools were more popular than board schools. He cited the case of his own constituency, and showed that in Carnarvonshire the average attendance at Church schools was 9 per cent. of the population, at Board schools 18 per cent. Voluntary schools depended on "a precarious income dependent upon the pleasure of the squire of the parish." The parson, who generally managed the voluntary school, believed that by making a child a good Churchman he made him a good citizen. The first requirement upon which he insisted in a teacher, therefore, was that he should be a good Churchman. He gave instances of cases where the parson and his wife made use of the school teacher as a general factotum, and expected him to play many parts in the work of the parish. "Hon. gentlemen opposite," he said, "want a million of money in order to provide Church organists in every little rural parish." Mr. Bartley's amendment found only ten supporters. It was left for a more full-blooded Tory Government to introduce legislation displaying a solicitude for denominationalism which would have satisfied the most zealous of the ten.

III

The Clergy Discipline Bill—Mr. Gladstone's anger—A fierce eye on Mr. George—A speech on "landlords and monopolists"—Views on the rating of site values—The land and the people—The General Election—T. E. Ellis a Minister.

For our present purpose one of the most interesting episodes of these years in Parliament was the organised rebellion of a few Welsh members against the entire House which was prompted by the Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill. This was a measure innocent and even praiseworthy in its intentions. It enacted simplified methods of punishing those of the clergy who are known to the law as "criminous clerks," and was in part designed to relieve Bishops of the heavy costs to which they were personally subject if they were enterprising in putting down cases of immorality among the clergy under their control. There had seemed to be no reason to doubt that the Bill would be non-contentious. But four young Welsh members, spoiling for a fight, found in it a great opportunity to call public attention to some of the inconveniences and anomalies incident to the Establishment, and to harass a Government which they thought too clerical in spirit. Of the four Mr. Lloyd George was perhaps the most

[1] See p. 121.

adroit and indefatigable. His colleagues were Mr. Samuel Evans, Mr. D. A. Thomas, and Mr. Tom Ellis, though the last-named was not so whole-hearted as the others in his love for this guerilla warfare. A Welshman then representing a Scottish constituency (Mr. Wynford Phillips) joined the band, and Mr. Dalziel, another Scotch member, was an occasional fighter with them. In the House itself and in the Grand Committee on Law, presided over by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, they practised endless expedients for delaying the measure. It would be idle to pretend that they made themselves popular with the House of Commons. It angered the Ministerialists that a measure presumed to be uncontroversial should embroil them in engagements so troublesome and incessant, and the Opposition, led by Mr. Gladstone, who as a Churchman cordially supported the Bill, looked with no favour upon what seemed to them a waste of good time.

On April 28, 1892, Mr. Lloyd George moved an amendment in the House embodying the principle that it was "no part of the functions of the State to attend to matters of spiritual discipline." In his speech, which was long and ingenious, he objected to the Bill principally on the ground of its Erastianism, and took his stand by "an eminent ecclesiastical lawyer and Churchman, Sir Walter Phillimore," who had said that the State "ought not to interfere in a matter of spiritual discipline." When Mr. Lloyd George sat down, Mr. Gladstone rose, and made a speech at least as long as his follower's, in which he did him the honour of dealing faithfully, one by one, with each of his arguments. "I have listened with great care," said Mr. Gladstone as he began, "to the elaborate speech of my hon. friend, and with anxiety to take the just measure, so far as I could, of the arguments he has used against the Bill, I confess I was disappointed on an examination of his arguments." He proceeded most completely to pulverise what he considered the specious pleas of one who "did not wish broadly to rest his case on the proposition that, being a friend of Disestablishment, he wishes to make Establishment so uncomfortable that he will bring those who are supporters of Establishment to his way of thinking in favour of Disestablishment." A little later Mr. Birrell supplied a characteristic comment. "It was amusing," he said, "to hear the Nonconformists of Wales becoming the mouthpiece of the 'highflyers' of the Church of England. He would have preferred to hear the argument from a member for Oxford University, or some other place long associated with orthodoxy and port wine."

It may be doubted whether a Liberal member of barely two years' standing, who saw his own elaborate speech being elaborately

torn into small pieces by his leader, that leader being perhaps the greatest master of annihilating oratory that the House of Commons has seen, was not undergoing an unique experience. One of Mr. Lloyd George's colleagues in the Cabinet from 1906 onwards tells how he was sitting immediately in front of the young Welsh member while Mr. Gladstone was speaking, and looked round, half in amusement and half in sympathy, to see to what degree of dejection the victim was reduced. Mr. Lloyd George was leaning forward, his eyes sparkling with the delight of an amateur who listens to a splendidly artistic performance, and with immense enthusiasm he said (so the story goes): "He's a grand debater, this old man!"

Not content with this onslaught in the House, Mr. Gladstone went the length of getting himself specially put on the Committee of Law, of which he was not a member, in order to subdue the rebels, for indeed it was in committee that they excelled. Three sittings were spent over a few lines of the first clause of the Bill, and when the third sitting ended the clause had not yet been passed. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman protested against the voluminous amendments and the unending discussions for which, together with his friends, Mr. Lloyd George was responsible, but the latter was far too adroit to give many loopholes to the Chair. A hostile critic in the Press doubted if Mr. Healy and Mr. Sexton "were quite 'in it' with these new practitioners of the malignant art of destruction."

These Welsh doctrinaires of licensed abuse of debate move with so much initial adroitness that when they are upset on a given point—are outvoted on one amendment—they promptly fashion another so like the first as to be only just on the right side of "order." The celerity with which they argue questions is quite admirable as an example of casuistry. New amendments rise out of old and rejected ones with a freedom that Mr. Healy, with all his familiarity with the "black art," cannot even hope to improve or exceed.[1]

Mr. Gladstone, it will be seen, was not without excuse in pursuing the light skirmishers to the Committee-room. There he fought them hard and persistently—until he realised that he was playing their game for them and helping them to obstruct. "After that," said Mr. Lloyd George, "he would just sit and shake his head at us when we moved an amendment, and glare at us with his fierce eye—ah! how fierce when you were fighting him!"[2]

[1] Quoted in the "Review of Reviews" for October 1904. I am unable to find the original source of the quotation.

[2] Quoted in the "Daily Chronicle," May 19, 1898.

The demand for his services on the platform did not grow any less urgent. Mr. D. A. Thomas took him to Merthyr in November 1890, and there he aroused tremendous enthusiasm by a Welsh speech in which he put forward his ideal for Wales—"a free religion and a free people in a free land." He was attending the meetings of the National Liberal Federation in the same month, and had to stop on the way there to speak for his old supporter Mr. Acland at Rotherham. In that year and the next he made speeches in all parts of the country on political questions, and especially on Disestablishment and on his Nationalist ideals.

A speech which he delivered at Bangor on May 21, 1891, at a meeting at the Penrhyn Hall, addressed by Tom Ellis and himself, may be taken as a specimen of his oratory at this time. Some of it is extremely interesting in the light of future events, and the speech as a whole justifies the observation that he has not failed, when given the opportunity, to practise the principles of the brave days of his youth, or lost in office any of the ardour of twenty years ago. These were his views of the classes who, to adopt another statesman's quotation, "toil not neither do they spin":

What are the components of the Tory party in this country? It contains practically the whole of the members of the privileged classes. Their numbers, and far more their wealth and their influence, constitute the chief ingredients of its power. They must therefore wield its policy. Now, what are the privileged classes? They are all those who squander the resources of a community without helping to produce them. Landlords consume millions of the wealth of the land of this country without turning a sod to create it. There are monopolists who spend untold millions of the products of our mines and manufactures without blasting a rock, handling a machine, or even wielding a pen to build up that wealth. These are the governing forces of the Tory party.

Let me tell you something more about them, so that you may still better appreciate the situation in which this so-called Labour party[1] is placed. These classes receive their quota of the national wealth in return for services which they are supposed to render, but do not perform. The land of this country was distributed amongst its owners, the predecessors of its present holders, for the express purpose of enabling them to organise and maintain a military system in the country for the defence of its coasts, and even for aggressive purposes when necessary. The land was also to maintain royalty, and to bear the expense of dispensing justice and preserving law and order. Now, what has happened? The land is still in the possession of a privileged few, but what has become of the

[1] The allusion is to the plea of the Tories that they were the true friends of Labour.

burden of maintaining the army, law, order, and royalty? It has been shifted upon the shoulders of the toilers of this country.

Let us take another instance. The tithes of England and Wales were given to the Church upon condition that it should maintain the poor, repair the highways, and educate the people, and I am bound as a Protestant to admit that as long as the property remained in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church it faithfully discharged its trust. But from the moment the property was appropriated by the present Anglican Church, her clergy have monopolised its benefits for their own selfish enjoyment. And what has become of the poor, the highways, and education? Heavy rates have been imposed upon capital and labour for the purpose of discharging functions which belonged to the clergy, and for performing which they are still paid, so that, as you will observe with regard to the landlords and the clergy, these mainstays of the Tory party, burdens have been cast upon the wealth-producers of the land which ought to have been borne by the wealth-consumers. Now it has been the constant effort of the Liberal party to relieve labour by replacing the burden upon the right shoulders. I leave you to judge, as men of common sense, whether the Liberal party, which, in this as in every other constituency, has practically the whole of the great landowners and of the clergy marshalled against it, is not more likely to help labour to disemburden itself than the Tory party, which leans so exclusively upon the support of those classes. Why, the whole weight of an unproductive class like the landlords must necessarily fall upon those who work. You cannot spare large incomes to men who will not work, without lowering the wages, lengthening the hours, and impoverishing and oppressing those who toil for their daily bread. If you mean to get better hours, better wages, better conditions of life, you can only do so by trenching upon the enormous rent-rolls and revenues of landlords and monopolists of all descriptions. What an absurd folly to suggest that the landlord party is pre-eminently the one to bring about that state of things. Were I a Tory I do not think I should have the hardihood to insult the good sense of the working-men of this constituency with such a proposition. Now, there is one point upon which I particularly desire to give working-men a word of warning. Don't you credit these silly stories about the interest of wealthy monopolist landlords being identical with that of those who work for their support. The most startling fact about our country is this—that you have men who have accumulated untold wealth living in gorgeous splendour in one street, and a horde of miserable, poverty-stricken human beings huddled together in the most abject penury and squalor in the adjoining courts. Incalculable wealth and indescribable poverty dwell side by side. Why, in this very Bangor union, where you have noblemen and squires enjoying riches which they are at their wits' end to know how to squander and commanding such amplitude of resources that they are absolutely running to waste for want of use, I was startled to observe in the last return of pauperism that on January 1 last, 1 out of every 20 of the population was in receipt of parish relief. In London, with all its deplorable poverty, the paupers constituted but 1 out of every 39

of the population. And it is not that the country around Bangor is barren and desolate. On the contrary, it is rich in agricultural and mineral wealth. But these riches, intended by Providence for the people, are intercepted ere they reach them. It is a matter which is notorious to all of you that there is not one of the horses of these high-born gentlemen that is not better fed, better housed, and less worked than thousands of working-men in this very union. Things must be equalised. This deplorable state of things cannot go on for ever. But let no working-man make a mistake: the party which is dominated by these plutocrats and millionaires is not the one which is likely to assist them in attaining such a desirable consummation.

One may well wonder whether the most enthusiastic supporter in his audience would have believed that the young man addressing them would himself in a few years be making a trial of the policy of "trenching upon the enormous rent-rolls of landlords and monopolists." Later in the speech he put his views in more concrete form.

As the law stands at present a landlord may let his land for building purposes, charge a ground-rent of ten times the agricultural value of that land, and at the end of sixty years take possession of land, buildings, and all. And yet, although the local rates are being spent to improve his property by drainage, gas, street improvements, and in other ways, he does not contribute a penny towards that expenditure. The whole of the local expenditure, so far as the land is concerned, falls upon the poor householder, who, after paying heavy rates and extortionate ground-rents, has to surrender the whole fruits of his labour to this landlord, who does nothing. Now, when the Liberal party, during the present Session of Parliament, proposed that the landlord should at least bear his share of the local rates, the Tories in a body voted against it.

On June 26, 1892, came the dissolution, and with it Mr. Lloyd George's second election. This is not the place to tell the story of the heroic efforts of Mr. Gladstone, then eighty-two years of age, in the cause of Ireland, which he had determined at all costs to champion, save in so far as they reacted upon the Carnarvon Boroughs. There the Conservative candidate was our friend Sir John Puleston—"pleasant Puleston," as he was called locally—and no man could have been a more formidable opponent. Outside politics, he professed and felt a keen interest in and sympathy with the national spirit and aspirations of Wales. He was by no means a strait-laced Tory, and T. E. Ellis had thought it well a year before the election to warn the electors against his insidious charm. He referred at Bangor[1] to "the new Tory policy in Wales started in the Carnarvon Boroughs."

[1] May 21, 1891.

In Scotland Liberalism is so strong that the Tory party put up mild Conservative or Conservative-Liberal candidates, who make semi-Liberal professions on the hustings, but if elected vote the straight Tory ticket at Westminster. This is the new Tory policy in Wales. Do not be fooled by it. Do not walk into this trap. Stand true to Mr. Lloyd George, who has already done such admirable service to Wales—in Wales, on English platforms, and in Parliament.

To the intrinsic merits of Sir John Puleston as a candidate a far-sighted Government had added one that was adventitious. This was his appointment (in July 1890, soon after his adoption as candidate for the Boroughs) as Constable of Carnarvon Castle. On the death of Lord Carnarvon the people of Carnarvon had petitioned the Government to appoint the Mayor for the time being to the office of Constable. But the Government had found Sir John Puleston to possess paramount claims. He was at the time member for Devonport, but he was also candidate for Carnarvon, and as Constable would have great opportunities of ingratiating himself with the townsmen, to whom he could lend the Castle for various purposes. Unkind Liberal critics suspected the motives of the appointment: it was, according to the "Daily News," a "rank political job."

It is clear that Mr. Lloyd George's friends regarded the struggle against this champion as a formidable one. A story of his old friend, Dr. John Thomas, the distinguished Congregationalist divine and of the eloquent preacher of the same faith, Dr. Herber Evans, is on record to prove this. Dr. Thomas was living at the time at Colwyn. His health was poor, and he could not join in the fray. Herber Evans called to see him on his way to the Welsh Congregational meetings at Ferndale, and told the old man his destination. "With his keen glance he said: 'You go back, my laddie, and put Lloyd George in Parliament: there will be plenty without you at Ferndale.' And after a moment he added: 'There is a new Wales in sight, you go home and do your part again in bringing it in.'"[1] And back to the fighting line Herber Evans went.

The election in the Carnarvon Boroughs took place on Saturday, July 8. On the following Monday the votes were counted and the result announced at Carnarvon:

Lloyd George	2154
Puleston	1958
Majority	196

[1] See the "Life of Dr. Herber Evans" by the Rev. Howell E. Lewis.

When it was found that the Liberal vote had increased by 191, and that the majority was more than ten times as great as it had been in 1890, the wildest enthusiasm prevailed, and the scenes of excitement far exceeded those of the first election.

Mr. Lloyd George went by train from Carnarvon to Portmadoc in order to record his vote for Mr. Bryn Robert. When the train stopped at Criccieth, his sister, Miss George, afterwards Mrs. Davies, brought his son Richard (born in 1889) to meet him, and the waiting crowd was moved to transports of delight. At Portmadoc men drew his carriage through the streets to the polling-booth. He had another ovation in the evening at Pwllheli, where there was a torchlight procession and a choir of young men sang election songs in his honour. Late as it was, he finished the day in his own village of Llanystumdwy, and it was already morning when admiring crowds drew his carriage back to Brynawel, the home in which he was then living at Criccieth, and when the last bonfire had died and the last firework been spent.

The result of the General Election was to place the supporters of Home Rule in a majority of 40 over Conservatives and Unionists combined. The Conservatives had lost 57 seats, the Liberal-Unionists 23. The Unionist Coalition, if reckoned as an homogeneous whole, constituted the largest party in the House, and Lord Salisbury decided not to tender his resignation to the Sovereign, but to "await the inevitable hour" of defeat by the combined Home Rule forces. On August 8, 1892, Mr. Asquith moved a vote of want of confidence, and after two nights' debate it was carried by a majority of exactly 40. Lord Salisbury immediately resigned. The Queen sent for Mr. Gladstone, and a Liberal Cabinet came into being with, as it turned out, a short life before it.

The formation of the Cabinet which was found to contain no Welsh member gave little satisfaction in Wales. Outside the Cabinet itself the outstanding feature of the near appointments for Welshmen was the choice of "Tom" Ellis to be a Junior Lord of the Treasury, and incidentally of course, a Liberal Whip. Some of his firm friends thought it regrettable that the "Cymru Fydd" leader, who had consistently urged the need of a national party and a national programme for Wales, should accept an office which gave him responsibility without authority, bound him to allegiance, and yet gave him no voice in the Council Chamber. It is well known that Ellis himself had qualms about accepting the position offered him. Accept it he did, however, for reasons that seemed to him good and sufficient and there

were many sincere Welsh Liberals who agreed with a course which gave Wales a "friend at Court." His decision was of no slight importance to Mr. Lloyd George, who found himself by reason of it brought into a prominence still greater than he had previously enjoyed. Ellis being silenced effectively, his younger friend had an unchallenged supremacy as the moving spirit of "Cymru Fydd."

CHAPTER X

(1891—1896)

I

Welsh Home Rule—Cymru Fydd—Mr. D. A. Thomas's secession—Speeches on Welsh Nationalism—Mr. Lloyd George as a poet—A national hymn.

NO member of Parliament who is wise forgets that his own constituency has claims upon him which the largest problem, Imperial or otherwise, must not be permitted to elbow aside. Mr. Lloyd George was active in watching the interests of Carnarvonshire and of the whole of Wales. It is of no great interest now to recall how he harassed the law officers over the letting of the quarries and mines of the Crown in Wales, or how he complained that census papers had not been issued in Welsh, and that some County Court judges and other officials in his native country were unable to speak or understand the language of the people. After one Welsh field-day in the House he wrote in the "Genedl":[1]

The most pitiful feature of the debate was the way in which the various Welsh questions were discussed. There were only a few English Tories present in the House during the whole debate. But when the division bells rang they rushed in from all directions to record their votes on a subject they knew absolutely nothing about; and as they are in a majority in Parliament, they swamped the votes of those who had taken the trouble to listen to the arguments on one side and the other. Well does the "Star" —the most popular evening newspaper in London—remark that the behaviour of the English members on this occasion was really a strong argument for granting Home Rule, not to Ireland only, but to Wales as well. This is how they always behave when dealing with business that concerns Ireland, Scotland, and Wales alone. These nationalities will soon learn a lesson from this.

[1] "Genedl" for July 22, 1891.

This lesson Mr. Lloyd George was at pains to enforce at every available opportunity, and at Barry nearly a year later[1] he was urging the demand "that in matters pertaining exclusively to Wales Welshmen should not only have a voice, but the dominating voice." One of his powerful statements of the case for Welsh Home Rule has already been quoted.[2] In this one he dealt very skilfully with the argument that great towns like Cardiff and Barry would lose in prestige and commercial prosperity if the control of Welsh affairs were taken out of the hands of the Imperial Parliament.

In the first place [he said], it was not proposed in the national self-government scheme to deal with trade. The second answer was this: Did it not stand to reason that if the conferring upon Wales of national self-government would affect commerce at all, it would simply affect it in this way—that men could naturally place more confidence in a people who were considered fit to govern themselves than in a people who did not consider themselves fit for such functions. They had heard that long word "cosmopolitan," which was often used in regard to a town like Cardiff. It was cosmopolitan. They had men of all nationalities—they had men of most diverse interests, and interests of very wide and great importance; but, after all, New York was much more cosmopolitan, and New York had a separate Legislature of her own. In New York they had power with which Welshmen would be perfectly satisfied, and he had never heard that the Legislature in New York had interfered with the prosperity of that great city. Let them examine the question more closely in order to discover what preposterous objections these were to the granting of autonomy to Wales. They had power in that district to look after their own streets. He did not know whether they had similar power in regard to the gas supply. ("No.") Did the powers they already possessed interfere with their trade? Had they ever heard of a foreign vessel which refused to turn into Barry because the people were allowed to look after the management of their own streets? Of course not. Then, suppose they had the audacity to ask for the power of controlling their own gas supply and tramways, would that scare away commerce? Certainly not. They had simply to examine the question to see that there was nothing in the proposal of Welsh Home Rule which would for a moment, or in the slightest degree, damage the trade of great towns like Barry and Cardiff.

This is not the place to tell the history of the internecine strife which in the early nineties threatened the unity of Welsh Liberalism. It has been seen already that an attempt made in 1889 to nationalise the party machinery had failed to break down the solid wall of vested interests which opposed it. By this

[1] In April 1892.

[2] See pp. 86 *et sqq.*

time the dissatisfaction with the North Wales Federation, which had long smouldered, had grown in intensity and force. Meanwhile the ideal of "Cymru Fydd" had hardened into a practical and formidable scheme, and associations had been started, first in Manchester and afterwards up and down England and Wales, in which young Welshmen were banded together with the aim of educating their fellow-countrymen in national ideals. Mr. R. A. Griffith, who with Mr. Lloyd George as his advocate had fought for the dissolution of the North Wales Federation in 1889, saw in the wave of enthusiasm, stirred by the cry of "Cymru Fydd" ("Wales of the Future!"), an opportunity for launching his scheme successfully.

It would be a long story to set out the plots and counter-plots that filled Welsh politics during these years, and it must be cut very short here. Briefly, the North Wales Liberal Federation and its "old gang" of worthy politicians who talked a good deal and did very little fell at a second onslaught. Then the battle-ground was transferred to the South.

In 1889 the South Wales Liberal Federation had been the pattern held up to the North by the reformers. Now, however, with the object of making the Welsh National Council, which had come into existence an effective organisation for the whole of Wales, they were compelled to ask the Federation of the South to end its political existence. Political Associations seldom die peacefully, and this body was no exception to the general rule. The South was ready to lead the advanced wing of the Radical army, but it was not prepared to answer with any unanimity a call to arms on behalf of Welsh Nationalism. "From Swansea to Newport," said a Cardiff representative to his colleagues of the South Wales Federation, "you will find a cosmopolitan population which, to use a phrase made use of by Mr. Lloyd George, will not submit to the 'domination of Welsh ideas.'" This was in January 1896, when the annual meeting, held at Newport, resolved itself into a pitched battle between "Cymru Fydd" and the upholders of the two Federations. At this meeting Mr. Lloyd George (to adapt a line of Milton) "spoke once, to speak no more." His speech was one of the many instances of the supreme gift of advocacy which enables him to achieve the most hopeless task in the world, that of convincing men against their own will. It was concerned with what seemed a minor point, the question whether the secretary of the National Council should be paid or unpaid. The importance of the question was this, that the supporters of the *status quo* wished the National Council to be an ineffective body meeting once or twice a year only. Mr. Lloyd George and his

followers hoped to make it the germ of a league similar in extent and influence to the United Irish League.

The opponents of such a league were in a large majority, but in spite of themselves Mr. Lloyd George talked them round. When they had given him the vote he asked for they seem to have come to themselves, and they promptly decided that he "should not be heard" upon the main question. No such compliment has been paid to any speaker's powers of fascination since the day when the adder stopped his ears to the voice of the charmer.

The immediate result of the "Cymru Fydd" agitation was to create, or at least to hasten, dissensions in the Welsh party. In 1897 Mr. D. A. Thomas, refusing, as he said, to be a party to "insidious attempts" to destroy the South Wales Federation, of which he had then not long ceased to be President, formally withdrew from the Welsh Parliamentary party. To one looking back, and endeavouring to take a just view, the true importance of the movement seems to have lain beneath the surface ruffled by these temporary breezes and cross-currents. Even its ultimate success in establishing the National Council as the party machine was in itself a small thing—a by-product of a greater movement. The soul of that movement is still marching on. It gave a new impetus and a new purpose to the national ideals of Wales.[1] It made it more difficult for politicians sincerely to maintain, as did a prelate, the then Bishop of St. David's, in 1886, that "Wales is at present nothing more than the Highlands of England, without a Highland line: it is a 'geographical expression.'"

It has been necessary to say something of matters, which in themselves are beside the present purpose, in order to make clear the purport and the importance of the speeches from which I am about to quote. I make no apology for offering the reader extracts from these speeches upon the subject of Welsh Nationalism, which appealed strongly to Mr. Lloyd George's imaginative vision, and called forth some of his finest efforts. The theme is a great one: it inspired much of his thought and speech at this period of his life, and it is better that he should speak for himself

[1] See, for a study of Welsh nationalism in the widest sense, Mr. Thomas Darlington's book "Welsh Nationality and its Critics," published in 1897 by Hughes & Son, Wrexham. The author regarded the revival of Welsh nationalism as one of "the effects of the awakening of national self-consciousness which has been felt in every country in Europe." "The central article of the creed of Nationalism is that national differences are no hindrances to the advance of civilisation, but, on the contrary, the very condition of universal progress, and that therefore it is the prime duty of every nation to foster and develop those distinctive gifts with which it has been endowed."

upon it to the reader of this history of his career than that the biographer should moralise upon the theme.

His most complete statement of the aims of Young Wales is contained in a speech delivered at the inaugural meeting of the Cardiff branch of the Cymru Fydd League, in October 1894. He began by referring to the enormous programme to be got through before the emancipation of Wales was complete. The Church, the evils of landlordism, the liquor traffic, the problem of education, the question of local self-government, were all items in it.

Surely we are not fatuous enough to believe that we can defeat such a combination without putting forth all our strength. No individual has ever surmounted great obstacles in effecting an object he has had in view without directing the whole of his energies systematically and persistently to his purpose. Neither can nations.

What are we doing? Let us get at the facts of the case accurately, and get at them at whatever expense to our own sense of pride and self-satisfaction. . . . No one can fairly lay cowardice to the charge of any Celtic race. Their bravery has stood the severest test to which courage can be put. They have been beaten, baffled, discomfited, disappointed, times innumerable. They know more of the "hope deferred that maketh the heart sick" than almost any branch of the human race. They have been trodden on and despised for centuries in their own land, but their indomitable spirit is still unbroken. There is one thing, however, that their fortitude does not seem to be equal to. You cannot get the Celt to face a disagreeable fact. His fiery nature always shies at an unpleasant truth. There is but one way of curing him of his fault, and that is by adopting a method used by trainers when a spirited horse starts at an object on the roadway—turn his head towards it and compel him, whether he will or not, to stare at it. . . . Let us pursue the same strategy with the Welsh spirit. Get it to look steadily at the disturbing facts along the path of its national progress. It will get on its journey very much more surely and speedily for the experience. . . .

During the last twenty-six years Wales has returned a preponderating majority of Liberal members to Parliament. For an aggregate period of fourteen years out of the twenty-six Liberal Ministries have been in power, and for the greater part of their term of office they have been dependent for their very existence upon the loyalty of their Welsh supporters. But, in spite of all this, Wales has not during the whole of that time had a single measure of reform from any Liberal Government dealing with any of the special topics in which she is more immediately interested. I would say more than that—she has not had in the aggregate one week out of the whole of those fourteen years for the discussion of her special concerns. The result is surely not a promising one, and it does not lead us to the conclusion that the mere fact of returning an overwhelming proportion of members to support any particular party of Administration is in itself sufficient to enable a small nationality like ours to obtain the reforms

she desires. Of course we may be told that this sterility of results is attributable entirely to Tory obstruction. . . . I do not object to abuse of the Tories; I will sit up as late as you like if that is the job in hand, but let me point out that there is a danger in overdoing it. . . . A reference to the events of recent political history will demonstrate clearly that the opposition of Tories does not prove an adequate explanation for the delay in attending to Welsh demands. . . . In spite of Tory obstruction England has always had her wants attended to without delay. . . . Every student of recent politics must have observed, that immediately it is made manifest by by-elections, mass meetings, or otherwise, that England has made up her mind definitely that she wants anything, it matters not what party is in power, the demands of the predominant partner are attended to as soon as they are clearly made known. The main factor in British legislation is therefore not so much which Ministry is in office as what is required by England at the hands of the Ministry. If any one suffers from the obstruction of the reactionary forces represented in the House of Commons, it is the Celtic nationalities of this kingdom. The orders of England are promptly attended to.

But observe this further particular. There is one out of these three Celtic nationalities that has, during the last fourteen years, not only kept abreast but even shot ahead of England in the number of drastic and comprehensive measures which it has succeeded in forcing from the Imperial Parliament, and if the Bills which it has succeeded in getting from the House of Commons alone be also taken into account it leaves far behind every other competitor in the legislative race. And this brings me up to another striking fact in the political situation—a fact which is full of instruction for us at the present moment—that the successful nationality is the only one out of the three which has organised or drilled the whole of her progressive forces in city and hamlet into one compact league, inspired and propelled by the spirit of patriotism. What makes the result all the more significant is the prejudice, racial and religious, which the Irish had to overcome. . . . They had to beat down an antipathy which was positively savage in its intensity. . . . This proves that it is altogether a matter of the quantity of pressure which can be brought to bear upon Parliament and Ministries; that England is all-powerful owing to the number of members she returns; that if the Celtic nationalities rely exclusively upon the mere return to the House of Commons of men pledged to support certain measures they are doomed to disappointment; that they must also exercise pressure, and that pressure, in order to be effective, must inevitably be brought to bear upon Parliament by the concentration of the whole available forces of a nation into one organisation; that the one Celtic nationality which has adopted this plan has in the course of fourteen years, in the teeth of a seething mass of prejudice and passion which we have never experienced, still succeeded in wrenching out of the House of Commons a series of the most sweeping measures of social and organic reform ever passed by it. All this represents on the part of Irishmen an amount of self-sacrifice spread over the whole nation, which I am sorry to say we are not yet accustomed to—a sacrifice of time,

of energy, of money, and sometimes of liberty, of health, and of life itself. . . .

Now what are we doing? We hear our poor M.P.s often blamed for their inertness and their apparent lack of single-minded devotion to the cause of their country. Well, members of Parliament have never represented the high-water mark of self-sacrifice in any nation—except possibly in the throes of revolution. . . . I know the ardour with which Welshmen desire the emancipation of their country from injustice, ignorance, wrong, from everything that tends to keep her down. How many of them are there who devote one hour in the whole month, or even in the whole year, for the matter of that, to assist in the accomplishment of that object? How many of them are members of any organisation founded to help that purpose along? How many have subscribed as much as a shilling in the whole year to aid in the attainment of it? A few, just a small number, have subscribed faithfully to the cause of political education and organisation; that is all. Why, nations have spent blood freely to effect a tenth part of the reforms we have so lightly placed on our programme. . . . When is business going to begin? . . . It is clear that the quantum of hydraulic pressure brought to bear by us upon the Legislature is too insignificant to achieve any tangible results. We must increase it. We must gather together all the forces which make for progress in Wales and converge them towards that one point. The services of every one in Wales who believes in our national programme and is anxious to see it attained, should be utilised in some form or another. Let us bring them all into one general organisation which shall cover the land. In order to achieve this end you must have a motive power which will appeal to all hearts upon all subjects; and where will you find that except in the unifying and inspiring claim of a common patriotism? There has been no national movement in Europe during the present century which has accomplished great things for its various races, which has not had its origin in patriotism, and derived its impulse from the same source —whether it be the emancipation of Germany from the Napoleonic yoke by her young men in 1813, or the liberation of Italy from Austrian tyranny; whether it be the elevation of Prussia or the wonderful recuperation of France from her humiliation in 1870; whether it be the remarkable struggle of Irishmen for freedom in the West, or the still more striking resurrection of the oppressed nationalities in the East. . . . The spirit of patriotism has been like the genie of Arabian fable. It has burst asunder the prison doors and given freedom to them that were oppressed. It has transformed the wilderness into a garden and the hovel into a home. It has helped to drive away poverty and squalor, and brought riches and happiness in its train. It has raised the destitute into potentates and bent monarchs to its will. Now this is the mighty spirit which has wandered homeless and aimlessly amongst our hills. Let us requisition the powerful aid of a force which has done so much for our fellow-men in other countries. This is why we are endeavouring to make this movement a patriotic one instead of a party one. . . .

Let all, therefore, who love Wales join the combined effort to make

her free, not in the spirit of endeavouring to get the maximum of result out of the minimum of sacrifice. . . . Let us not forget that as far as the main items in our programme are concerned they have maintained a prominent part in the national hopes for the last fifty years. The great fathers of Welsh Liberalism all fought for these identical ideals. In reading their speeches and writings there is nothing so pathetic as the imminence with which they regarded the realisation of their dreams. But two generations have passed away not having received the promise. Now, we are young men on the threshold of manhood, in full possession of the faculties and energies with which Providence has endowed us, and we are entitled to ask whether our time must also be frittered away in a policy of vain expectation for the good that is coming to our country, whether we should not rather at once bend our whole vigour and strength to the task of freeing her from all her oppressions, so that when the time comes for us to be gathered unto our fathers we shall carry into the tomb, not a wreath of faded hopes, but trophies of real victories which we have helped to win for the freedom, the honour, and the true greatness of the land we all cherish.

A speech delivered in the same month and on the same topic at Aberystwyth contained an amusing passage in criticism of members of Parliament :

We [*i.e.* members of Parliament] are exactly what you make us. As long as you pass random votes of confidence, whatever we do, or whether we do anything at all or not, you cannot, taking average human nature into account—and ours is, after all, very average—expect us to put ourselves to unnecessary trouble. What the people of Wales ought really to do is this. First of all show that they are fully prepared to make sacrifices of time, energy, money, comfort, and even more if called upon to do so, for the sake of the national cause, and then call upon us, your members of Parliament, to do likewise. We have had members of Parliament in the past—and I will leave you to judge whether there are any of the tribe still remaining—who calmly called upon the people to make sacrifices they never dreamed of emulating themselves. They asked tradesmen to surrender custom which was probably essential to the success of their business ; they demanded that farmers should run the risk of being turned out of house and home ; they appealed to workmen to throw over good employment and face penury, all for the sake of principle—which, being interpreted, generally meant their return to the House of Commons—and there were hundreds, if not thousands, of Welshmen who responded nobly to that appeal. I am now in a country where scores of brave peasants chose to be evicted from homes rendered dear to them by every tie of memory and association, and to be turned adrift on to the roadside, rather than flinch in the cause of freedom. But how about the representatives who profited by all this patriotism ? How did they requite it ? I am told that the way the Chinese generals lead an army in battle is by lying

in sedan-chairs in the rear and sending directions to the army in front how to face the foe. The officers get the cushions, the ease, and the glory; the rank and file get nothing but the bullets, the sword-cuts, and the hardships. What marvel is it that such generalship has resulted in nothing but disaster?[1]

Another speech delivered at Aberystwyth[2] two years later (December 1896) deals finely with the same subject.

The formation of such a society as this is an earnest of your desire and intention to labour for Wales. The exuberance and sanguine temperament of youth is inclined to chafe against any limits placed upon the range of its usefulness. Youth is just the season when one is apt to imagine that it would be an easy task to turn the world upside down, and afterwards have energy and power enough to spare for the accomplishment of a few necessary reforms in the other planets, but as we grow older—at any rate this is my experience—we find that to effect anything at all you must confine your energies to the bringing about of much less drastic changes in a comparatively small area of the world's superficies. The men who have attained the most lasting and world-wide reputations as benefactors of the human race have all laboured in spheres more limited than even Wales—the intellectual giants of Greece and Judea—yea, the greatest of them all. So to my mind it is a compliment to your sound sense and appreciation of the difficulties obstructing the path of every great onward movement that you should not despise the task of improving the political and social condition of your native country because it is small. And Wales is not so small after all. I have travelled Wales for years, north, south, east, and west—perhaps as much as any politician of late years—to preach what I conceived to be the gospel of national unity and national hope. I have addressed hundreds of audiences in all parts of the country, but I have not yet met a hundredth part of my countrymen. Wales is much too large for my compass, at any rate. But there are some men who disdain its insignificance. It is too microscopical to engage their concern. Their eye sweeps over empires and continents, and Wales is but a speck in their mental landscape. Their lofty souls decline to be cribbed within the confines of its narrow valleys. Their ideas soar high above its mountains, and sail far beyond its seas. Such colossal intellects would be lost upon so modest a programme as that of your society, and Heaven preserve you from such superior persons.

[1] The notes prepared for this speech by Mr. Lloyd George, in his own handwriting, have been preserved, and are before me as I write. They are on five slips of paper, each the size of a square postcard. The notes amplified in the above extract are as follows:

No apologist of Welsh M.P.s.
We are what you make us.
Sacrifice, Tradesmen, etc.
Cardiganshire.
Chinese generals.

[2] Inaugural address to the members of the Aberystwyth Students' Welsh National Society.

In determining to associate yourselves for the purpose of assisting in schemes for the amelioration and elevation of Wales, you have proceeded wisely in calling the spirit of nationality to your aid. In endeavouring to operate upon a community for good or evil you must discover first the elements which exercise the greatest influence upon its life and character. You are true to the highest scientific instincts in recognising that there is nothing deeper or more permanent than race. Now there are men in high positions who deny the very fact of our national existence. But you will find that those who most angrily repudiate the idea of racial difference in Britain are also the very men who scorn the assumption that the Welsh and Irish people are equal in any respect to the race they belong to. If Englishmen are so superior a race to Welshmen it must follow that the Welsh are a different race, and thus stand in need of different treatment. Lord Salisbury is a great sinner in this respect. He is always drawing implicit contrasts between the more exalted wisdom of the English as compared with what he calls the Celtic fringe, and this is to him manifest beyond question in the acknowledgment by Englishmen of his statesmanship. He seems to think that race distinctions in Britain are a fact existent only for the display of an English Conservative's superior extraction, and for no other. But a fact is a fact for all purposes. If a nation at all, then we are a nation to all intents. We cannot be an infirm race to point the moral of Unionist intellectual supremacy, and no race of any sort or kind to base a claim for self-government. In other words, we cannot be a distinctive nationality to establish one political proposition and cease to be one when it is sought to rebut another. Some men deal with facts as a builder does with a stone. He chooses from the pile the one that suits him best, rejecting all the rest. He then breaks and chisels and chips it into the shape and dimensions which suit his own object, and if, after all, it does not fit in he rejects it altogether. So do some politicians handle facts to fit into the superstructure of their political faith.

Our separate nationality ought to be the starting-point in the study of every Welsh question. It is true that human nature is the same all the world over. One man possesses every quality which his neighbour enjoys, but you will find that nature has endowed one man with certain qualities to such an extent as to give tone and bent to his whole temperament. It is that predominance which constitutes character, and any one possessing the least tact must take this balance of qualities into account if he wishes successfully to deal with that individual. It is equally true of nations. We do not claim that Welshmen monopolise any national gifts. Nor do Englishmen. Nevertheless, in its distribution of mental and moral gifts nature has been more prodigal of certain faculties in endowing our nation, and of different qualities in its equipment of the other, and the politician must be tactless indeed who overlooks this fact in appealing to a nation. By the formation of this society you show that you fully appreciate the importance of recognising it as a basis of political action.

But you have to contend with another objection—that is, that, while the existence of Welsh nationality may be admitted, it is said the sooner

it disappears the better it will be for the country. But is that so? I have a superstitious confidence in the prescience of providence in these matters. Welsh nationality has survived two thousand years in spite of every human effort to crush out its vitality. The strongest governing forces in the world have successively attempted to crush it, to coax it, and even to pray it out of existence. The Roman, the Saxon, the Dane, the Norman, and lastly the race which is a blend of all have waged an intermittent warfare against Welsh nationality for twenty centuries, and still, after all, here we are forming Welsh nationalist societies, establishing Welsh universities, and claiming the same measure of Welsh national self-government as our forefathers fought and died for hundreds of years ago. Have you ever in the course of your scientific studies come across anything which was created in vain? Until you do so I advise you to believe that providence has not made an exception in the case of Welsh nationality. Its strength shows no sign of decay or any symptom of senility, and I will continue to believe that its vigour has been fostered for the purpose of serving some beneficent purpose in the elevation of the race which is inspired by its influence. In forming a Welsh national society you are indicating your shrewdness as men of the world by recognising the most patent and potent agency in Welsh life. Above all, on higher grounds, you are doing well to tread the path to which the finger of providence unmistakably points.

Now, admitting our separate nationality, it may be asked, What has that to do with politics? My first answer is this: Racial characteristics affect, even if they do not determine, the social condition of a people. You simply have to take the land question to realise this. England has suffered quite as much from the fall of agricultural prices as either Ireland or Wales. But that depression does not produce such acute symptoms in England as it has in the other two countries. Why? For the simple reason that in Wales and Ireland you have to take into account the Celtic temperament, which has given rise to the land hunger, which does not exist in England at all. There is no part of the country which has been smitten more severely by agricultural depression than, let me say, Essex. But there, when the farmer finds that he cannot profitably cultivate the soil, he gives up his farm as soon as that has been made reasonably clear to him. But that is not the case in either of the other two countries. The Welsh and Irish peasants pinch and starve themselves and their families in order to cling to their homes. They sacrifice everything to this mad craving for land, which seems to be peculiar to the Celtic races. In Essex, the farmer surrenders his farm when he finds that it does not make roast beef and comfort for him. In the West of Ireland the cultivators of the land live on seaweed and potatoes, and even after being reduced to that state of abject poverty they require a corps of police, backed up by a company of hussars, to drive them out of their miserable hovels with baton and sword. That in itself is a sufficient illustration of the difference in the social condition of the Celtic peasantry in both Ireland and Wales as compared with that of the English peasant farmers. And it is all a matter of race. Moreover, racial characteristics have a large share in the

moulding of the political opinions of a people. Any one glancing at the political complexion of a map of the United Kingdom cannot escape from this conclusion. Lord Salisbury gloats over it, and Mr. Chamberlain, in appealing to English audiences, makes political capital out of it. The Celtic fringe is deeply Liberal, the Teuton is stolidly Conservative. And just look at their respective attitudes towards suggested reform. The Celtic peasants in Wales come before their Land Commission, and by an overwhelming preponderance of voices ask for Land Courts, fair rents, fixity of tenure, and similar drastic reforms which would make them independent of the landlords. The English agriculturists, on the other hand, go to their Commission to ask for bimetallism, a tax on foreign corn, and the hall-marking of foreign goods. The Welsh workman votes for a measure of temperance reform which would give him the power of absolutely closing public-houses and prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquor, but the English workmen repudiate a moderate measure of temperance reform giving them the power to control licences within a very limited scope as an undue interference with liberty. The Welshman passionately and persistently claims religious equality in this country, but the great majority of Englishmen regard it as an abomination which they cannot for a moment tolerate. There is the most fundamental difference in their methods of approaching political matters, which I might enlarge upon if I had time. This is easily accounted for. Politics are very much a matter of temperament. You can bring enough logic to satisfy any ordinary mind of the reasonableness of any side of political argument. It is the temperament of men that determines the issues for them. That is why racial characteristics possess such an influence upon the predominant political opinion of a nationality, and they have a still greater indirect influence. They fashion the habits, pastimes, and the moral discipline of a people. The man of the world of the Piccadilly brand thinks he knows everything because he wears the latest tie months before the despised Welsh provincials learn that there is any change in the fashion of twisting it. For all that, the Welsh peasant, with his vivid Celtic imagination, sees more of both heaven and earth from his hillsides than the shrewdest man of the world can from his fog-enveloped club windows. What is still more, he possesses a more favourable environment and temper for reflection upon what he observes. England, it is true, has a great literature, and I cast no doubt upon its popularity in that country. I do not say that England has no great musicians, nor do I doubt the love of her people for music. England has great preachers and powerful religious organisations. But in Wales, music and literature have been for centuries, and still are, the pastimes of the people. And as for religion, whilst in the great towns of England you have 80 per cent. of the population outside the walls of any and every religious association, in Wales you have barely 30 per cent. at the outside. All this must have its effect upon the political views of these respective nationalities. Now, football may be a great institution in its way for the development of the national muscle, and that is a laudable enough object, although I have never yet known how your muscular strength is supposed to be improved by stand-

ing, one out of 20,000, in a sloppy field for hours to gaze at thirty men straining theirs. Horse-racing is also a splendid institution for the improvement of the national character. I take that statement on trust. Mr. Chaplin says so, and he ought to know, although I confess in all humility that it has never yet been made quite intelligible to me what particular virtue is strengthened by attracting crowds to stare at a parcel of half-starved jockeys scampering madly round a fence. Still, I will admit, for the sake of argument, that the football field and the racecourse are calculated to evolve a much finer type of manhood than the Eisteddfod, the Cymanfa, and the Sassiwn. That I am not at all concerned to dispute now. All I say is, that it must be a very different type, and in nothing has this been made clearer than in the politics of the two races.

My third answer is this: that patriotism is a powerful incentive to unselfish action, and that in an age when every motive-power is pressed into the service of humanity, we ought not to neglect such a beneficent agent for good. We have already seen what it can do for the cause of education. It has built and endowed three colleges—the pride of the land. It has set up excellent secondary schools in every town throughout the country. It has given us a University over which the heir to the greatest Empire in the world need not be ashamed to preside.[1] It has in the course of a single generation raised a poor country from the position of being the most imperfectly equipped with educational advantages in Western Europe to that of a land whose educational institutions are quoted by statesmen as models to emulate. If it can achieve so much in one branch of national endeavour, why not in others? You have but to harness it to the political slow coach, and it will soon run up the hill. Military men are, I suppose, the most Imperialist, as far as their views are concerned, and yet there is no class that so thoroughly recognises the importance of local patriotism as an incentive to noble deeds. Sir Colin Campbell, when he wished his Scotsmen to storm a dangerous position, never appealed to those Imperial instincts which are supposed by Unionist politicians to be the only safe and sure incentive to right political execution. He simply said, "Highlanders, remember your hills," and they faced death with shouts of triumph—all for the honour of those beloved hills.

These nationalist ideals found expression in some swinging verses which Mr. Lloyd George composed in the early 'nineties as a political war-song. They were sung by a vast audience to the tune of "Captain Morgan's March" ("Rhyfelgyrch Cadben Morgan") at a great Liberal demonstration addressed by Mr. Asquith at Carnarvon on October 30, 1897; but although the words became popular throughout Wales, their author remained anonymous for many years. Much later, Mr. William George published a book of Welsh dialogues and recitations for children which, besides his own work, contained some verses composed by

[1] The Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII., had just been made Chancellor of the University of Wales.

Mr. Richard Lloyd, and also the song "Cymru'n Un." The secret of their authorship was then revealed, for in his preface Mr. William George said that he had obtained his brother's consent to the appearance of this song "amongst the family treasures."

It is to be feared that many of the readers of this book may suffer the penalty of being unacquainted with the mysteries of the Welsh tongue, and be unable to appreciate the excellence of the original. Mr. R. A. Griffith, Mr. Lloyd George's comrade in arms in the "Cymru Fydd" movement for national unity of organisation, has come to my aid, and I am indebted to him for the English version of the lines which is appended :

"CYMRU'N UN"

TON—"RHYFELGYRCH CADBEN MORGAN"

Tra teifl y bryniau gysgod dros y ddol,
Glewion a fegir yn eu col ;
Tra safant fel gwylwyr dros y cymoedd clyd,
Siglir gwladgarwch yn eu cryd :
Blant y bryniau, heriwn dwyll a brad,
Creigiau Cymru wen sy'n castellu'n gwlad.
Cydgan—
Blant y bryniau, heriwn dwyll a brad,
Creigaiu Cymru wen sy'n castellu'n gwlad.

O rwymau 'r niwloedd tyr y bryniau ban,
Pan gwyd yr huan gwyn i'r lan ;
Gorthrwm gadwynodd ysbryd Cymru fu,
Gwawried y boreu—gormes ffy ;
Blant y bryniau, goleu sydd gerllaw—
Boreu Cymru wen sydd yn tori draw.
Cydgan—
Blant y bryniau, goleu sydd gerllaw—
Boreu Cymru wen sydd yn tori draw.

Rhyddha y gwanwyn nentydd gloew'r glyn,
Ymlid yr ia o ffrwd a llyn ;
Dryllia'u gefynau, llamant fel yr wyn,
Dyfrhant y dolydd, ireiddiant y llwyn ;
Blant y bryniau, os traha rewa'n gwlad,
Gwanwyn Cymru wen ddaw ag awr rhyddhad.
Cydgan—
Blant y bryniau, os traha rewa'n gwlad,
Gwanwyn Cymru wen ddaw ag awr ryddhad.

Rhyddid i addysg, rhyddid fydd i waith,
Rhyddid i'n Hawen, yn rhydd bo'n hiaith,
Rhyddid i grefydd daena trwy y tir,
Rhyddid yr enaid sydd ryddid gwir ;
Blant y bryniau, unwn yn y gan,
Rhyddid Cymru wen a wnel Gymru lan.
Cydgan—
Blant y bryniau, unwn yn y gan,
Rhyddid Cymru wen, a wnel Gymru lan.

Gwent a Morganwg, Dyfed hefyd lŷn,
Gwynedd a Phowys—Cymru'n un,
Dehau a Gogledd, Mynwy hefyd ddaw,
Mynydd a dyffryn law yn llaw;
Blant y bryniau na foed cynen mwy,
Undeb Cymru fách a wnel Cymru fwy.
Cydgan—
Blant y bryniau na foed cynen mwy,
Undeb Cymru fách, ddel a Chymrn'n fwy.

SONS OF THE MOUNTAINS

A Song of United Welts

Long as the giant hills tower o'er the vale,
Children of valour never shall fail;
Long as o'er sleeping glens sentinel they stand,
Loyalty's cradle shall rock in our land;
Sons of the mountains, scorn the tyrant's chain,
Cambria's rugged rocks shall her ramparts remain.

(*Chorus*)

Sons of the mountains, scorn the tyrant's chain,
Cambria's rugged rocks shall her ramparts remain.

See how the mountain crests pierce the shadows dun,
As heavenward rises the gladdening sun;
What though oppression crushed our spirits long,
Fair breaks the morning, affrighted is wrong;
Sons of the mountains, freedom is at hand,
Lo! the light is dawning on Cambria's dear land.

(*Chorus*)

Sons of the mountains, freedom is at hand,
Lo! the light is dawning on Cambria's dear land.

Springtime brings joy to the brook on the hill,
And from wintry bonds frees lake and rill;
Loosed from their fetters, how they leap and rove,
To water the meadows, make green the grove;
Sons of the mountains, though pride our land oppress,
Cambria's fairer spring shall our wrongs redress.

(*Chorus*)

Sons of the mountains, though pride our land oppress,
Cambria's fairer spring shall our wrongs redress.

Freedom for learning and work we will wring,
Freedom our language to speak and to sing;
Freedom for worship shall thrill our country through,
Freedom of soul is the freedom true;
Sons of the mountains, swell the joyful strain,
Cambria fair and free shall be glorious again.

(*Chorus*)

Sons of the mountains, swell the joyful strain;
Cambria fair and free shall be glorious again.

Gwent and Glamorgan, Dyved's fertile vales,
Gwyneth and Powys—united Wales,
Northmen and Southmen march with Monmouth's band,
Highland and Lowland, hand in hand;
Sons of the mountains, let dissensions cease,
Cambria free from strife shall in strength increase.

(*Chorus*)
Sons of the mountains, let dissensions cease.
Cambria free from strife shall in strength increase.

R. A. G.

II

Home Rule for Wales and Home Rule "all round"—Discussed by Liberal M.P.s, 1896.

At the risk of seeming to anticipate events unduly, I venture to print in this chapter extracts from Mr. Lloyd George's letters upon the subject of "Home Rule all round." This policy of Federalism was the natural outcome of a demand for autonomy for Wales. If Wales asserted her right to a separate Parliament, Ireland could ask no more, Scotland no less. In March 1895 Mr. Lloyd George seconded a resolution moved by Mr. Dalziel in the House of Commons in favour of all-round devolution. At the end of the same year a "symposium" (for by that festive name the discussions of theorists have come to be graced) was commenced in "Young Wales," the organ of the advanced Welsh Party, on the subject of Home Rule for Wales. On November 2 Mr. Lloyd George wrote to his uncle, enclosing a copy of a letter which Lord Rosebery had written in response to a request for his views:

I quite agree with your idea as to replying to critics in the next number of "Young Wales." The same idea had occurred to me. There is a letter from Rosebery which, whilst it does not commit him definitely to Home Rule for Wales, shows pretty clearly that his sympathies lie that way. I enclose you copy.'

There follows a request to keep the letter private except in the intimacy of the family circle.

Its appearance will create quite a sensation. With patience and a thick skin we are on the right road to victory.

The letter from Lord Rosebery was made public on the 14th. It was a diplomatic, non-committal production—"it might have been written by the G.O.M. himself," said the "Westminster Gazette" very approvingly. The topic was "one to be thrashed out in Wales itself," but, wrote Lord Rosebery:

There is serious and perhaps increasing difficulty in obtaining the time and attention of Parliament for the discussion of subjects which do not directly concern England, but only the other members of the British partnership, unless they happen to involve burning principles of large application, such as Church Disestablishment, when they encounter the zealous hostility of the English Tory majority, in entire disregard of the wishes of the particular nationality affected. It is therefore a legitimate and practical topic for discussion how this difficulty may be met—by devolution or otherwise. . . ."

On February 27, 1896, Mr. Lloyd George touches on the topic again in a letter to his brother:

Lichfield won by 528. Flowing tide with us. The Liberal candidate put Home Rule all round well forward.

In the next month Mr. Lloyd George advanced the movement in favour of "Home Rule all round" another step. He organised a meeting of Liberal Members of Parliament, at which he proposed a resolution to the effect that this federalist policy should be recognised as the chief item in the party programme. The Irish Nationalists were a little alarmed at the first rumour of a proposal which seemed likely to postpone their own predominant claims.

"I am still engaged upon my Home Rule All Round motion," Mr. Lloyd George wrote to his brother on the Saturday before the meeting.[1]

I cannot tell you how many different people I have interviewed. Did I tell you that the Editor of the "Chronicle" has promised an article on condition of my writing a letter?

Last night I interviewed Dillon, and this morning Healy. I arranged matters all right—striking out or altering such parts of the resolution as they objected to—nothing important. As a matter of fact I struck out one sentence which I had introduced purposely to assuage them!

I wonder whether ——[2] will attend the meeting. The rascals are doing their best to poison the Press against us. Well, we'll see on Tuesday.

The meeting, which ended without any vote being taken, showed no very wide gulf between the supporters and opponents of the advisability of making Home Rule all round the main plank in the Liberal platform. The resolution was opposed by Mr. Robson, Q.C.[3] and Mr. Haldane, Q.C.,[4] but the grounds of their opposition were tactical rather than fundamental. I quote an article from "The Saturday Review" for March 28:

[1] The meeting was held on March 22, 1896.
[2] A member hostile to the proposal. [3] Afterwards Lord Robson.
[4] Afterwards Lord Haldane, appointed Lord Chancellor 1912.

It is true that the gathering broke up without dividing or committing itself to anything, and that the party papers of all shades of Gladstonian sympathies united next day in belittling the gathering as an abortive and meaningless affair. But this shows only that the Liberal Press is badly served by those through whose eyes it studies proceedings at Westminster.

There is a reference to this article in a letter which Mr. Lloyd George wrote to his brother after the meeting:

You ought to read yesterday's "Saturday Review" on my "Home Rule all round" motion. There is a whole article devoted to it. So there is in the "National Observer." In that the article is headed "Mr. Lloyd George and others." The "Saturday Review" article, written, I believe, by Dr. Wallace, M.P., who is a determined opponent of Home Rule all round, and who was present at the meeting, says that although no resolution was carried, and the Liberal papers did their best to minimise what happened, there is no doubt that as the result of that meeting the whole position of the Liberal Party is altered. The article is quite a remarkable one, coming from so strong an opponent. Get it at the bookstall.

The cause, however, languished with the general atrophy of Liberalism that had set in, and two years later, when Mr. Herbert Roberts introduced a "Home all Rule round" resolution in the House of Commons,[2] with Sir Robert Reid to second it as the champion of Scotland, the House was counted out.

[1] Afterwards, as Lord Loreburn, Lord Chancellor, 1906–1912.
[2] March 15, 1898.

CHAPTER XI

(1893–1895)

I

Welsh Disestablishment—Mr. Lloyd George describes some fellow-members: Mr. Asquith, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.

FOR some time it becomes difficult to distinguish the biography of Mr. Lloyd George from the history of the agitation for Welsh Disestablishment. The story of the Parliamentary fortunes of that measure down to 1895 may be shortly told. It made a first tentative appearance in the House on May 24, 1870, when Mr. Watkin Williams, who had come in upon the full tide of the 1868 election, moved a resolution affirming the pious opinion that the Establishment in Wales should be brought to an end. Mr. Gladstone spoke against the resolution, and only 45 members were found to vote for it, with the result that it was defeated by a majority of 164. For sixteen years the question slumbered: in 1886 another Welsh member, Mr. Dillwyn,[1] took heart of grace and moved a resolution declaring "that as the Church of England in Wales has failed to fulfil its professed object as a means of promoting the religious interests of the Welsh people, and ministers only to a small minority of the population, its continuance as an established Church in the Principality is an anomaly and an injustice which ought no longer to exist." No vote was taken directly upon the resolution, but an amendment, proposed by Mr. Albert Grey, in favour of "Church Reform," was defeated by a majority of 12. Three years later, when Mr. Dillwyn again put forward his resolution, it was defeated by a majority of 53. But the demand for Disestablishment grew with the growing sense of a religious grievance and not less with the increasing corporate spirit that comes from a consciousness of nationality

[1] Member for Swansea.

and the adoption of a Nationalist policy. In February 1891 the fortunes of the ballot gave Mr. Pritchard Morgan the opportunity of introducing an anti-establishment resolution. There were so many members senior to Mr. Lloyd George who were anxious to speak in the debate on this resolution, that he took no part in it. It was on this occasion that Mr. Gladstone made his famous declaration that he had come to regard the demand for disestablishment as the demand of the whole Welsh nation, and felt it to be his duty to attend to it. A Liberal Churchman, torn between love of the Church of his fathers on the one hand, and a reverence for the principle of democracy on the other, could hardly come to a different conclusion when once he admitted the claim of Wales to be considered as a separate entity. The motion was defeated by 32 votes, but it was rightly felt that the support of the Liberal leader gave new hope of a larger life to the proposal it contained. Disestablishment for Wales had become part of the creed of Liberalism, and was a plank in the variegated platform adopted at Newcastle on October 1, 1891. It was then coupled, as people were soon apt to forget, with the Disestablishment of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, but in the course of evolution the stronger cause survived.

On February 23, 1893, Mr. Asquith introduced the so-called "Suspensory Bill," by which it was proposed "to prevent for a limited time the creation of new interests in Church of England bishoprics, dignities, and benefices in Wales and Monmouthshire." This was avowedly intended as the first step towards the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales. Mr. Lloyd George's account of the debate is interesting in more ways than one. It has the merit of being a first-hand report by a very competent and much interested critic, and it is a valuable record of the impressions made upon him at the time by the protagonists in the fight, with some of whom he was to become better acquainted. It is pleasant to be able to add that nothing that has happened would make him wish to retract any part of that early appreciation of those leading figures. The account referred to is contained in his letter published in the "Genedl" on February 28, 1893. He first points out with legitimate triumph that the determined stand which the Welsh Liberal members had made had persuaded the Government to take the first reading of the Bill before Easter. "On the first reading," he goes on, "we had a memorable debate."

Mr. Asquith, the Home Secretary, rose to put before the House the provisions of the Bill, and the reasons behind them. He is a short,

thick-set, rather round-shouldered man, with a face as clean-shaven as that of the most advanced curate, keen eyes, and a broad, intellectual forehead. He is the hope of the rising generation of Radicals. He is only a few years over forty, and has already won a prominent position in the world of politics. He is, or at any rate was, a Nonconformist, being descended from a family of Yorkshire Independents. There is only one man in the House who is more effective as a Parliamentary debater. He speaks clearly and emphatically. He sets out his arguments with great brilliancy and force. It is considered that upon the whole he fills the same position in the Parliament of 1892 as did Mr. Chamberlain in that of 1880–1885. On him are fixed the hopes of the Radicals.

Here was the very man to propose the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. The speech was what was to be expected from the speaker—bright, determined, beautifully phrased, thoroughly straightforward. He made several important changes in the structure of the measure. He had intended to introduce a measure which would stop the making of any new appointments whatever in the Church until disestablishment had been carried into law. This course would have met with strong opposition. Instead, his Bill provided that no clergyman appointed after the passing of the measure should have any claim to compensation for the loss of his curacy by Act of Parliament—a better idea by far, I think, under the circumstances. This, clearly, took the wind out of the sails of the Tories. They had all prepared speeches against the first proposal, which did not at all fit the second. The Welsh party was convulsed with laughter at the efforts of the Opposition in this direction, and especially with the statistics of the Bishop of Llandaff.

The first to rise was Sir John Gorst. The quarrymen of Merionethshire and Carnarvonshire know something of this knight. He is not unpopular. He has not succeeded with the Tory party as he should. His intellect and common sense are insurmountable obstacles to such success. Also, he has too much sympathy with the multitude to be very acceptable to his fellow Unionists. To him, as the representative of the Canterbury clericals, fell the task of leading the ecclesiastical army in Parliament. He spoke like a man who had lost all heart and belief in his work. He said that disestablishment would be very beneficial in some directions. He praised Welsh Nonconformists. He paid a high tribute to the piety and dignity of the Welsh quarrymen. He spoke reverently of Welsh nationality; and, although he tried to chide the younger members, it was impossible for the Tories to show any great enthusiasm for a speech of this kind. A political Balaam having ridden on the priests' back to Parliament turns to bless his foes. The fun was all on our side. He received hearty congratulations from us for one half of the speech, and laughter for the remainder, especially when he quoted to us the statistics of the Diocese of St. Asaph. He was seconded by Sir John Mowbray, an old and most respected gentleman, and an out-and-out Tory. He had a good hearing but did not convert anybody.

Replying to them both as Chairman of our Parliamentary party, Mr. Stuart Rendel made a very able and thoughtful speech. . . . When he sat

down the debate was continued by various members of the House who are also the lay preachers of the Church. . . . After a word from Sir George Osborne Morgan, Lord Randolph Churchill rose. It is obvious that he is on the point of superseding Mr. Balfour in the leadership. About a week ago, after two years' retirement, he came back, as he said, "to offer his services to his party." On that occasion he was so painfully nervous that every one thought his nerves were utterly shattered by illness, and great sympathy was felt for him, as he is very popular with all parties. With his usual doggedness and courage, however, he refused to give way to his nervousness. On Thursday he almost succeeded in throwing off all traces of it, and spoke with his old force and daring. His delivery is better than Mr. Balfour's, his voice is more melodious, and his gestures are more varied and natural. He has more wit, and a better understanding of human nature. He succeeded in raising the spirits of his party for the first time that night.

After him, up leaped the Grand Old Man. He spoke with greater vigour and more vehemence than at any time during the present session. When he had spoken for about half an hour, he complained bitterly that Lord Randolph ought to have left him another half-hour. He made short work of Lord Randolph's criticisms, and his speech was the most Radical he has made on the subject. That is the general impression among his followers, and they are proud of the fact.

Mr. Gladstone's oratory, however, did not enable the Suspensory Bill to be carried into law, and there is a less hopeful note in Mr. Lloyd George's contribution to the "Genedl" on June 20, 1893. Mr. Chamberlain, "The Tory Ahitophel," by his policy of obstruction to Home Rule, is, he says, incidentally putting obstacles in the way of Welsh Disestablishment, and other Liberal measures. "How are we to find a way out of this maze? Mr. Gladstone says 'By being patient!' For my part, I shall be quite satisfied if we get Disestablishment next year."

The same letter contains further, and less optimistic, references to Lord Randolph Churchill, and a comparison between Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain which time has helped to justify.

Mr. Chamberlain is by nature much more aggressive and stubborn than Mr. Balfour. The Tory leader lacks energy and application. Those who know him best think him rather indolent. He was never a hard worker. When he was Irish Secretary he worked harder than he ever has before or since, but even then he accepted without hesitation any explanation that was offered him by the Irish Constabulary in reply to complaints of injustice. It was much less troublesome to do that than to make a personal investigation into the matter. That is not Mr. Chamberlain's way. He is mercurial, always on the move, and full of life and vigour.

What of Lord Randolph Churchill? We have seen the day when he scorned to sit at the feet of Chamberlain, or any other Gamaliel for that matter. But, unhappily, it must be confessed that his powers have waned almost before the days of his youth are past. He was once buoyant, alert, a great attacking force. His glory has departed, his nerves are shattered, and his powers impaired. . . . The sun of Lord Randolph Churchill is indeed under a very dark cloud. The wish of all who knew him in the days of his greatness is that the cloud may recede before the sunset comes.

II

Irish Home Rule—Further impressions of his fellow members: Mr. Asquith, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, Mr. Redmond, Mr. Michael Davitt.

Mr. Lloyd George took no part in the discussions upon Irish Home Rule, although his sympathies were of course never in doubt. His letter to the "Genedl" for April 18, 1893, shows his impressions of the Home Rule fight, and is interesting in other ways. The references to Mr. Asquith and Mr. Redmond are particularly striking in view of subsequent events, and considering the date of the letter give its author a strong claim to be considered a very reliable judge of political form:

We are in the midst, or, as I trust, getting to the end, of the debate on the Home Rule Bill. So far as I can judge at present, the Government side has proved by far the stronger in the fight. That I believe to be the prevailing opinion in the House. The speeches in support of Home Rule have been much more solid, eloquent, and convincing than those delivered against it.

The first speaker of any note this week was Mr. Chamberlain. Of course it would be but a mean and narrow prejudice to deny genius and gifts to a man simply because he does not agree with us, and for my own part, as all my friends are well aware, I am a great admirer of the oratorical gifts of the Liberal Unionist leader. But it must be admitted that his effort on Monday night was poor and limp indeed. His speech was without substance, and his delivery thoroughly bad. His remarks received but a cool reception from his friends. His own disappointment was apparent. Even his son, Austen, who has never failed before to applaud the efforts of his father—even he was dumb.

As for the other speakers who opposed the measure, all of them were miserably weak.

Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett bellowed at the top of his voice, like a cheap-jack at a fair, for about two hours and a half. This man was given a thousand a year for six years by his own party, and a "Sir" before his name, just to keep him quiet during the last Parliament. But now they let loose any dog to bark and howl. There were barely two dozen

Tories in the House to listen to him. They did not want to hear him. Their aim was to waste time, so as to hinder the Government from discussing British reforms. Ashmead Bartlett does as well as any one else for this purpose.

When this noisy gentleman sat down we had a masterly speech from Michael Davitt. The moment this young man rose to his feet the benches began to fill, and when he sat down a crowded House applauded him. This was one of the most remarkable speeches ever delivered in the House of Commons. Mr. Davitt was pleading for a cause for the sake of which he had suffered nine long years of penal servitude. It was a wonderful sight—the Prime Minister on the one side, on the other a former leader of the House of Commons, Mr. Balfour, and many of the foremost politicians of the day, listening in respectful silence to an ex-convict who had worn chains and dragged trucks in Dartmoor prison. He surprised all but his most intimate friends in one respect. He was generally considered to be a hot-headed fanatic, imbued with wild ideas, expressing them in intemperate language, and with equally immoderate voice and gesture. Not so, however. He speaks in a low tone, in simple words, and the views he expressed were quite moderate. In spite of the cruel persecution he has suffered, to which his furrowed face and pallid cheek bear testimony, he has no malice towards his persecutors. He refers to them without a touch of bitterness. He proclaimed peace—and who has a better right to do so?—between his down-trodden countrymen and their opponents. Michael Davitt is a truly great man. There was an immeasurable gulf between his magnificently large-minded speech and the spiteful innuendoes of Joseph Chamberlain.

Another splendid effort was the speech delivered by Mr. John Redmond, the Parnellite leader; a man of exceptional ability. He is still a comparatively young man—about forty, I believe. At the death of Mr. Parnell he had not yet succeeded in attaining to a position of any prominence; but from the day when he was entrusted with the leadership of the party—then passing through critical and troublous times—he has developed immensely. Just now, I doubt if there is a better speaker within the House of Commons. His speech on Thursday was especially striking. When Mr. Chaplin sat down there were not more than thirty Tories in the House, with about the same number of Radicals. And yet Mr. Chaplin is a wealthy squire, and is considered a leading light of the Tory party. But before the young Irishman—who possesses no great wealth and but few followers in the House—had been on his feet a quarter of an hour, the benches on both sides of the House were packed with attentive members. That is the manner of place the House of Commons is. There is no favouritism shown to any one as far as the gift of oratory is concerned. But Mr. Redmond's speech was worthy of a hearing. I cannot at present recollect anything approaching its eloquence since I have been in Parliament. His audience was electrified by its harrowing description of the hopeless condition of Ireland bleeding to death under her deadly wounds.

The third great speech of the debate was that of Mr. Asquith. Some time ago I attempted to give a brief description of this promising young

politician. I ventured to prophesy then that he would occupy, with more dignity and usefulness, the position which Mr. Chamberlain held in the Liberal party previous to 1885. This becomes more apparent day after day. His great speech on Friday night was a decided step upwards. He properly roasted Chamberlain and Balfour, whilst, at the same time, he made a strong and clear defence of the Bill. The Liberals are easily holding their own these last days, while the efforts of the Unionists have been pitifully weak.

III

Mr. Lloyd George leads a revolt—"The Four"—Second Reading of the Bill—Fall of the Liberal Government, 1895—The Bishop of St. Asaph.

The Liberal Government had overloaded its ship with the cargo of the Newcastle programme, and Welsh Liberals, who could say with truth that they had been among the most loyal adherents of their party, were soon openly complaining that the Cabinet was half-hearted in its efforts to push a Disestablishment Bill through the House. Mr. Lloyd George was from the first among the boldest of the rebels. We have already seen him making one of a small group which, with a Conservative Government in power, had rebelled against the authority of the greatest of Liberal leaders. He had become by the spring of 1894 the centre of another small band of rebels who found that the Welsh Parliamentary party fell short of their views of the active aggression demanded by the occasion. The other members of this new "fourth party" were Mr. D. A. Thomas, Mr. Herbert Lewis, and Mr. Frank Edwards, the last-named acting as the "Whip" of the party. By this time Mr. Gladstone had resigned.[1] Lord Rosebery was anxious to placate his Welsh followers, no doubt, but he had other followers to placate as well. Mr. Ellis, who occupied a difficult position in that he sympathised to the full with the rebels and yet was entrusted with the discipline of the party, was doing all that a Whip could to push forward the Welsh measure. What Mr. Lloyd George and his friends demanded was an assurance that the Bill should be carried through the House of Commons in 1894, either by a prolongation of the session, or by the holding of an autumn session. Neither suggestion was agreeable to the Government; and Sir William Harcourt, as leader of the House of Commons, told the Welsh leaders plainly that the Welsh Disestablishment Bill could not be given the priority demanded. From 1893 onwards the Welsh members as a whole had been threatening

[1] Mr. Gladstone bade farewell to his Cabinet on March 1, 1894.

revolt, but in 1894 the majority of them were more easily satisfied than "the four." The curious result arose that on the very eve of the introduction of a Welsh Disestablishment Bill by Mr. Asquith, on April 26, 1894, Mr. Lloyd George led his followers in open revolt.

We saw [he said a month later] that whatever the good intentions of the Government might be, it was a matter of physical impossibility for them to carry that Bill, if they stuck to the programme they had mapped out. So we decided to strike for Wales.[1]

A sympathetic and well-informed writer in the "Manchester Guardian" interviewed Mr. Lloyd George after the revolt had broken out, and just before the introduction of the Bill.

I saw the member for the Carnarvon Boroughs on Saturday [he wrote] and heard his defence, and I must say that to me, who have for some time been among "the hesitants," that defence appears more than sufficient.[2]

There had been ill-natured criticism from some of the Liberals in the Carnarvon Boroughs themselves, but Mr. Lloyd George was little daunted by them, and let it be known that he was quite ready to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds and fight an election. The Government was full of assurances, but they were vague. Mr. Asquith had just made a speech at Plymouth in which he went as far as he could, but all his promises came to was that the Bill would be speedily introduced. One passage in the "Manchester Guardian" article, which seems to have been inspired by Mr. Lloyd George, may be quoted:

There is perhaps one word of warning which needs to be given at the present juncture. It is that Welshmen should be on their guard against those who are taking advantage of the present complications to assail the position and to make insinuations against the honour of Mr. Thomas Ellis. There are those who, while strongly supporting the attitude of Mr. Lloyd George and his comrades, do not question for a moment the absolute sincerity of Mr. Ellis, and who recognise to the full the acute difficulty of his position. As Mr. Ellis knows, and would be the first to testify, no one would pay a more cordial tribute to the Chief Whip in this respect than the member for the Carnarvon Boroughs.

In those difficult times, when Mr. Lloyd George was refusing to receive the official communications of the Liberal party, and was nominally at war with its Whips, it is pleasant to know that

[1] At Holywell, May 21, 1894.
[2] See the "Manchester Guardian" for April 25, 1894 (Welsh Notes).

no hostility or suspicion was engendered between the two leaders of "Young Wales." A year previously (on April 15, 1893) Mr. Lloyd George wrote in a private letter, "Ellis and I are more friendly in the truest sense than ever," and those words represented what to the end was the fact.

On April 26 Mr. Asquith introduced his Bill, and on the 30th Mr. Lloyd George took part in the debate. Friendly critics thought that he was not quite at his best.[1] He was hampered by having to combine a defence of the principles of Welsh Disestablishment with an expression of disappointment at some of the provisions of the Bill.

> The whole of that part of his speech which dealt with the details of the Bill [said Mr. Balfour, who followed him], was occupied in explaining that it was one of the worst Bills that was ever conceived, and that the result of it must be, not to bring that peace to Wales prophesied for the Bill by the Home Secretary, but to plunge Wales into discord even greater than that in which she is now.

His criticisms were directed against that part of the Bill which proposed to leave the clergy in full enjoyment of their benefices for life. "That would be," he said, "a direct incitement to disturbance in order to get rid of the clergymen."

In an interview three weeks later he again expresses his objections to the Bill.[2]

> The vested interests are treated *much* too leniently. At the rate of progress held out to us, we shall not get complete Disestablishment this side of the next fifty years. Meanwhile animosity will be increased in those places where, as Mr. Balfour puts it, 'the incumbent is young and healthy,' and lives on. Naturally, the people will object to these 'pensioners' being foisted upon them. . . . We shall insist that the alternative scale with regard to existing interests shall be rendered compulsory. Then there is that other absurdity by which the Welsh bishops will be replaced by English bishops in the House of Lords—that ought to go too.

In his defence of the principle of Disestablishment, Mr. Lloyd George had one very awkward argument for the opponents of the Bill, which he had already used against the Bishop of St. Asaph,[3] and now turned with deadly effect upon the Attorney-General, Sir Richard Webster, who had argued that the Church and Nonconformity were numerically about equal in the Principality. "What would that mean if it were true?" he replied. "That

[1] See "The Carnarvon Herald," May 4, 1894.
[2] "Westminster Gazette," May 16, 1894.
[3] *E.g.* at Shrewsbury on Feb. 23, 1893.

at the last general election and at several previous general elections tens of thousands of Welsh Churchmen must have voted for Disestablishment." The defence of the measure he based broadly, as might be expected, on the separate nationality of Wales. The Attorney-General, he said, was prepared to admit a separate Wales for Intermediate Education, and even Sunday Closing. But surely nationality was a question of fact. Either there was a separate Wales or there was not. According to Sir Richard Webster, the moment nationality was mentioned in support of a claim for Disestablishment, not only did it cease to exist, but by some peculiar process it had never had any existence at all.

He cited the Act of Union with Wales as indicating the separate character of Wales as a nationality, and this gave an opening to the dialectical skill of Mr. Balfour, who proceeded to quote the recital in the Act.

> Albeit the Dominion, Principality, and County of Wales justly and righteously is, and ever hath been, incorporated, annexed, united, and subject to, and under the Imperial Crown of the realm. . . and also because that the people of the same dominion have and do daily use a speech nothing like or consonant to the mother tongue used within this realm, and because some rude and ignorant people have made distinction and diversity between the King's subjects of this realm and his subjects of the said dominion and principality of Wales, . . . His Highness therefore . . . desires to extinguish all and singular the sinister usages and customs differing from the same, and to bring the said subjects of this, his realm, and of his said Dominion of Wales to an amicable concord and unity.

Thus the leader of the Opposition made merry over claims which it might have been more prudent, though certainly less amusing, to treat with some respect.

"The Four" now formed a Party whose energy was out of all proportion to its numerical strength. Official Liberalism, pretending to be amused, was really a little perturbed. In June one of the Party wrote to Mr. Lloyd George with information which betokens this:

> Dined at Osborne Morgan's last night. Causton[1] sat next to Mrs. —— (the writer's wife), and did his best to pump her as to the future policy of the four! I was greatly amused by the recital of the conversation on the way home. He expected information, he only got chaff.

Earlier the staid columns of the "Westminster Gazette" had contained an interview with Mr. Lloyd George.[2] He was asked if he intended to have an "Independent Welsh Party."

[1] Mr. Causton, afterwards Lord Southwark, was a Ministerial Whip at this time.
[2] May 16, 1894.

Certainly, that is our aspiration, or, perhaps, I should say, that of the younger men among us—a "Young Wales" party with "National" motives. You will find it an accomplished fact after the next general election. The idea of nationality is a vigorous and growing one, and, as a compact band, we shall get our wants promptly attended to by the Liberal party, in addition to being able to "squeeze" the Tories when in office.

Asked what the platform of the Party would be, he put Disestablishment first and foremost.

That question is the battleground on which our very existence as a nation has been challenged. It must therefore be decided first. Then Land Reform must come—a most pressing subject. Finally, Local Veto, and Home Rule for Wales. All Liberal measures, you will see, to none of which the party is, in the abstract, hostile.

He justified the "revolt," and when asked to account for the great fall in the Liberal majority at the recent Montgomeryshire election he had an apt answer ready:

To be perfectly frank with you, I will put the whole matter in a nutshell. The Welsh people are suspicious of the Government. They see that its promises have not been kept, and that there is a great deal too much lukewarmness about its actions. The Government are weak on this point, and in spite of the loyal way in which they have been supported the Welsh see it. I was talking to a farmer at the by-election. "What is the use of quarrelling with my landlord," he asked me, "when you give us nothing for it? You tell us to hope and stand out, you make us bad friends with the landlord, and then leave us in his clutches. It isn't worth it. I shall vote Tory." And vote Tory he did, and so did a great many more. You can't blame them when they know there is a lot of weak-kneed Liberals in the Government. Why, look at Lord Rosebery himself—declaring that he did not believe in Disestablishment as a principle, but only as an expedient.

Lord Rosebery, however, made amends by delivering a speech (at Birmingham) in which he deliberately asserted that when the Government met the country, they would meet it with a measure of Welsh Disestablishment passed through the House of Commons.

After this the Welsh Parliamentary party were able to hold a meeting, as they at once did (on Friday, May 25) in a joyful mood. They adopted a resolution which expressed their satisfaction at the efforts of the Government and committed the Party to the opinion that "in the interests of Wales, and particularly of Welsh Disestablishment, they should give the Government an honourable and consistent support."

Mr. Lloyd George addressed the meeting as the spokesman of "the Four." Lord Rosebery's pledges, he said, such as they were, had been extorted by the revolt and were its justification. Even so, they were quite ineffective owing to the position of the measures before the House. He proposed a "reasoned" amendment, for which he and his three henchmen, and they alone, voted, welcoming Lord Rosebery's declaration "as the most explicit and emphatic hitherto made on behalf of the Government," refraining in express terms from "suggesting any imputation upon the honour of the Government," and finally recording the conviction that the Government could not hope to perform their pledge if the measures introduced were proceeded with in the order of their introduction.

On the following Monday the Welsh Disestablishment Bill occupied for the first time a place upon the order paper immediately after the Budget and before the other leading measures of the Government. It may be that the peaceful persuasion of Mr. T. E. Ellis and the meek fidelity of the majority of the Welsh members had their share in bringing about this result, but it is difficult to resist a suspicion that the militancy of "the Four" directly contributed to it.

The Bill passed its second reading with a majority of 44 on April 1, 1895. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, about whose attitude toward it there had been much speculation, voted for the Bill. On March 26 Mr. Lloyd George made a very successful second-reading speech. In Committee he set himself to amend the features of the Bill which seemed to him objectionable, and one amendment of importance was at first refused and finally granted by Mr. Asquith. The Bill had proposed to vest the control of the tithe in the Commissioners appointed under it. The amendment substituted for the Commissioners an elective national council. In securing it Mr. Lloyd George had therefore gained a substantial victory for Nationalist demands. Wales was robbed, however, of the fruits of victory. While the Bill was in Committee the Government fell on the "cordite vote" of August 11, 1895, and the Liberal party, torn by internal dissensions, passed for eleven years into "the cold shades of opposition."

The Bill was buried; but buried, said Mr. Lloyd George, "in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection." [1]

The amendment to the Bill which Mr. Lloyd George had obtained was made, absurdly enough, a ground for adverse criticism by some very "candid friends" among Welsh Liberals. These

[1] At Bangor, July 4, 1895.

critics, who must have been more ingenious than accurate, propounded a theory that the amendment, and the embarrassment it caused to the Government, had been the real cause of the resignation of the Liberal Ministry. Strange to say, there were some who took the criticism seriously, and although the personal support which Mr. T. E. Ellis gave to his friend at the election which immediately followed ought to have silenced these detractors, the stupid story died hard; so that three years later, in a speech at Newbridge, in Sir William Harcourt's constituency, Mr. Lloyd George found it worth while to discredit a tale the intrinsic improbability of which ought to have given it no chance of survival:

> You will recollect [he said], that certain Welsh members, after some pressure, induced Mr. Asquith to accept an amendment which would hand over the management of the liberated funds to a representative national Council. You will also remember that the whole of the Tory Party, including its official leaders, accepted this Council openly in the House of Commons. From that position they can, therefore, never recede. So that by pressing the point we gained a great tactical advantage in pledging the leaders of both great political parties, for the first time, to the principle of a National Council for Wales. I have heard it stated that our action led to the defeat of the Government. That is unmitigated rubbish. The Liberal Government was beaten on the question of ammunition by a majority of seven. There were seven members of the Liberal Ministry absent unpaired from that division. Moreover, it is notorious that the Cabinet was more torn by personal dissension than any Ministry of modern times. This is the real explanation of the Liberal downfall.
>
> I am sorry to have to refer to such unpleasant matters. But I am not responsible for raking up the controversy. If people will insist on maligning their own countrymen in order to take the blame off the shoulders of the big men on whom it legitimately ought to rest, they must abide by the consequences of their own indiscretion. My amendment was sanctioned by the Welsh members, and the fact that it was accepted by the responsible leaders of all political parties shows that it was both reasonable and moderate. I rejoice in the fact that it has made it impossible for either party in the future to challenge the principle of national self-government for Wales in matters purely Welsh.

Over the question of Disestablishment, Mr. Lloyd George fought a long duel in Wales against the Bishop of St. Asaph. He always regarded this staunch supporter of the claims of the Establishment with respect,[1] and the friendship formed between them is one of the brightest features of religious controversy in

[1] In 1894 Mr. Lloyd George described the Bishop in an interview as "the most doughty champion the Church in Wales possessed . . . a foeman in every way worthy of their steel."—"Carnarvon Herald," October 26.

Wales. This book would perhaps be incomplete if it did not contain an anecdote which Mr. Lloyd George used to be fond of telling against himself, and although the story has lost the first bloom of youth it is printed here (in the form in which the late Mr. W. T. Stead gave it to the world).[1]

The Bishop of St. Asaph's Church Defence speeches afforded his young and agile opponent ample material for criticism and reply. At one of Mr. Lloyd George's reply meetings in Flintshire, the chairman—a Welsh deacon, with strong convictions but no sense of humour—introduced Mr. Lloyd George thus:

"Gentlemen,—I haff to introduce to you to-night the member for the Carnarvon Boroughs. He hass come here to reply to what the Bishop of St. Asaph said the other night about Welsh Disestablishment. . . . In my opinion, gentlemen, that Bishop of St. Asaph iss one of the biggest liars in creashon; but, thank God—yes, thank God—we haff a match for him to-night."

Mr. Stead added that he had the story from Mr. George himself, who "told it with great gusto."

[1] "Review of Reviews," October 1904.

CHAPTER XII

(1895—1896)

The 1895 election—In Opposition—The Agricultural Rating Bill—Mr. Chaplin—Mr. Lloyd George "suspended"—The Sunderland Election Petition—1896, a busy year—The making of a Parliamentary reputation.

LIBERAL candidates entered the election of 1895 with sinking hearts. Nowhere was there more confidence of victory in the Tory camp than in the Carnarvon Boroughs. The spoils had been awarded in advance to Mr. Ellis Nanney, who was unanimously selected again to champion the Conservative cause in December 1894. It was believed that the unpopularity of the Government and the "split" in Welsh Liberalism, to say nothing of the swing of an overdue pendulum, would be the undoing of Mr. Lloyd George. Perhaps he felt a little despondent himself. At any rate he told an interviewer in the previous October that even if he were thrown out, "it would not be such a dreadful thing. Parliamentary life is not such a very enjoyable position as all that."[1] Mr. T. E. Ellis came into the constituency to show that in their reliance on a "split" in the Liberal camp Tories were suffering an illusion. "They seemed to think that because the Liberals discussed a new measure, a project, a movement, for the purpose of thoroughly sifting it, they had parted from one another." Thomas Gee, a fighter to the last, felt himself young enough at eighty to come once more to his young friend's assistance. The member himself was in good fighting form. One of the speeches of his campaign deserves mention here. It dealt with the subject of Old-age Pensions, then a day-dream of politicians. Mr. Lloyd George said that he had that day come across a pamphlet on this subject. The framers of that scheme estimated that £5,000,000 would be required annually to meet it. He was in favour of old-age pensions. But where was the money to

[1] "Carnarvon Herald," October 26, 1894.

come from? Was Mr. Nanney prepared to apply the tithe towards it? In the old days the tithes were given to the poor. Now the order of things was reversed: the poor were in the workhouse, while the parsons received the tithe.

The same speech sounded the praises of the death duties and held up Sir William Harcourt's great Budget as the best ever introduced in the House of Commons.

The result of the election came as a crushing blow to the hopes of local Toryism. Mr. Lloyd George's majority was practically unchanged:

Lloyd George	2265
Ellis Nanney	2071
Majority	194

"The wave of Toryism which has swept over England has dashed itself in vain against the rocks of Eryri" [1] said the victor to his exulting constituents.

Upon Mr. Lloyd George the cold shades of opposition had an invigorating effect. The Tory Government was no sooner installed than it turned its attention to the relief of the impecunious landlord. The Agricultural Land Rating Bill introduced by Mr. Chaplin roused fierce opposition from those who doubted the genuineness of the squire's altruistic pleas for his tenants, and thought that there were other sections of the community more in need of financial assistance than the landowning class. The Bill was fought from the Radical benches with every legitimate Parliamentary weapon, and it may be said, without undue disparagement of the Opposition front bench, that the member for the Carnarvon Boroughs was virtually leader in many a forlorn hope and daring sortie. Upon the second reading of the measure he made a speech in which, disdaining polite periphrases, he boldly accused the Ministry of legislating in their own pecuniary interests. What was the distress of the landlord? he asked. They had had to dismiss carriages, they had given up some of their gamekeepers and men in buttons—that was all. The landlords declared that they asked for relief not for themselves, but for the distressed farmer. That was the old trick of the professional beggar, who pretended to beg for others, and then, the moment the charitable person's back was turned, spent the money in the nearest public-house. Mr. Chaplin himself would benefit by the Bill to the tune of £700 a year.

[1] "The Eagles"—the Welsh name for the mountains of "Snowdonia."

Mr. Chaplin declared that he would not benefit by a single sixpence. Hereupon there arose from the Ministerial side a storm of cries of "Withdraw." Mr. George declined to withdraw, amending his former statement by the declaration that at any rate the estate of the President of the Local Government Board would benefit to the extent he named. Nor was he alone in this happy state. A capital value of two millions and a quarter would be added to the property of members of the Ministry. "And this," he said, "is all done to relieve the distressed farmer."[1]

In a hurried letter to his brother Mr. Lloyd George wrote that the speech had been "the greatest hit" of his political life.

House in a ferment. Congratulations showered on all sides. There may not be much in the descriptive columns of the papers, for the reporters have boycotted the debate, but the Front Opposition Bench was full, and Morley, Asquith and the whole lot of them were delighted.

A (politically) unfriendly critic wrote amusingly in the "Western Mail" of Mr. Lloyd George's assiduity in the discussions of the Bill:

"Has Lloyd George been speaking all the morning?" "Lloyd George speaking?" "Lloyd George still speaking?" "Hasn't any one else but Lloyd George spoken?" These were the inquiries I heard put by different men as they came in one after another, only to find the member for Carnarvon where they had left him when they went out, namely, on his legs, and addressing the House.

The final stages of the discussion of the Bill led to a dramatic incident in a House wearied and highly strung with the strain of an all-night sitting. At twenty minutes to four in the morning of May 22 Mr. Lloyd George was suspended, on the motion of Mr. A. J. Balfour, from the service of the House of Commons. He was not without companions in adversity. With him Mr. Herbert Lewis, Mr. Dillon, Dr. Tanner, and Mr. Sullivan were "named" by the Speaker. Their offence was nothing more serious than a protest against the relentless application of the closure by Mr. Chaplin. It took the form of a refusal to leave the chamber for the division lobbies, and the Speaker had to be called in by the Chairman of Committees. "I decline to go," Mr. Lloyd George replied to Mr. Speaker Gully's question whether he persisted in his refusal, "as a protest against the action of the Government." The penalty was a suspension of a week. Mr. Lloyd George, fortified by the approving comments of the Liberal press of Wales, went down to tell his constituents

[1] From "H. W. L.'s" Parliamentary Sketch, "Daily News," May 1, 1896.

"why he had been excommunicated." "Every wise man," said the "Herald Cymraeg," "can justify the action of the members: every zealous man can praise it."

The suspension certainly did him no harm at the headquarters of Liberalism, and both Sir William Harcourt and Lord Rosebery now regarded him as a follower of importance. On July 1 the former took the unusual step of complimenting Mr. Lloyd George in a speech in the House upon his achievements in the debates upon the Agricultural Rating Bill. I quote again from Mr. Lloyd George's letters to his family:

June 30, 1896 (*after an all-night sitting*).—Harcourt wants me to speak to-morrow on the third reading of Rating Bill. So I must prepare. I have not had any sleep yet. I am quite fresh.

July 1, 1896.— . . . I had five minutes on the Rating Bill this afternoon. There was no more time left. Harcourt made a most flattering reference to me in his speech in the House; and it was greatly cheered too. This is a most unusual thing to do for a leader—to single out one of the men who have fought for special allusion. It is so lucky that this has turned out to be the great Bill of the Session.

July 2, 1896.— . . . *Vide* "Westminster Gazette."[2] All the papers full of Harcourt's compliment. "Standard" says only difference between Harcourt and "the acknowledged leader of the obstruction" was that I spoke to the point and Harcourt not.

I may be permitted to tell here an authentic story which illustrates Sir William Harcourt's admiration for Mr. Lloyd George's parliamentary abilities. In August 1896 a trusted supporter, and future Cabinet Minister, was staying with his leader in the New Forest over a week-end. The Scottish Rating Bill was then under discussion. The veteran was discussing the measure with his follower, and looked through the amendments which the Scottish members had put on the paper. He did not think much of them. He read them through; then, with a snap of the fingers, he said, "All the Scotch members together are not worth Lloyd George's little finger."

I have already quoted from those of Mr. Lloyd George's letters during 1896 which dealt primarily with the Agricultural Rating Bill. I cannot perhaps better relate his other activities

[1] The House sat for seventeen hours and twenty minutes.

[2] "Sir William Harcourt's pointed compliment yesterday to Mr. Lloyd George—'whose eminent services with regard to this Bill will be recognised by the House'—was certainly well deserved. It is doubtful if a private member has ever done greater service to his Party in Parliament. He started this Session a little suspect with the majority of Liberals, but it is generally recognised now that, primarily on the Rating Bill, but also on the Education Bill, no words of praise could be too strong for what Mr. Lloyd George has done."—"Westminster Gazette," July 2, 1896.

during the year than by making further extracts from his correspondence. The first five letters quoted refer to the Sunderland election petition, brought by Mr. Samuel Storey (Liberal) against the return of Mr. Doxford (Conservative). Mr. Lloyd George was the solicitor for the petitioner, who based his case upon a charge against the respondent of having wilfully made false representations as to Mr. Storey's conduct of his business. The petition was ultimately dismissed by the two judges, Mr. Baron Pollock and Mr. Justice Lawrance, on the ground that the agent who made the false charges against Mr. Storey made them with an honest belief in their truth.

January 10, 1896 (8, *New Inn, London*).—(*Sunderland*). Conference over. Jelf and Roskill [1] told me it was the best drawn set of papers they ever had. Jelf said so when I saw him first thing, then Roskill arrived shortly afterwards and said exactly the same thing. They spoke very highly of the analysis. . . . I am dining with Tom Ellis to-night.

January 26, 1896 (*Sunderland*).—I am deep in Sunderland petition. The other side have at the last moment substituted Pope for Murphy,[2] the latter being ill. . . . Their case contains no element of surprise for me. I had already conjectured it. All depends on judges. Jelf and Roskill arrive to-night.

January 27, 1896 (*Sunderland*).—Things gone off as well as we expected. But we've only had Jelf's opening statement yet. He did exceedingly well. I think the other side were taken completely by surprise with one part of our case. This morning they did not attempt to conceal their contemptuous satisfaction with their case. This afternoon there was a heavy fall in Doxford stocks. Their faces lengthened a good deal. . . . No one knows what will happen. We have cross-examination and Pope's speech yet in front of us.

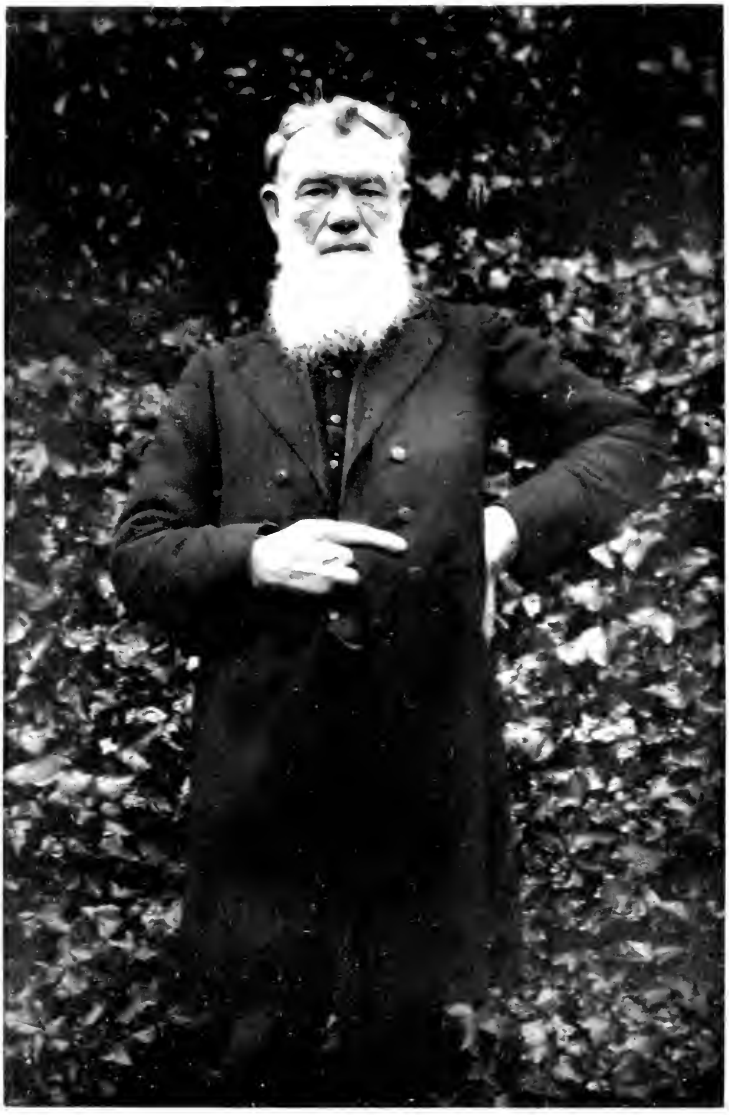
January 29, 1896 (*Sunderland*).—Evidence on both sides concluded. You may take it that we are, I am sorry to say, BEATEN. Jelf says we are "as dead as mutton," to use his own expression. So don't expect a wire. Judgment will probably be delivered to-morrow evening. Speeches will take up to 4 at any rate. Jelf has fought magnificently. . . . You may take it without gammon that we are beaten. We made every point, but can't help it.

January 31, 1896 (*Sunderland*).—I haven't had a moment's leisure from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. to write one word. Last night I wrote a word or two whilst awaiting judgment, but quite forgot to post it in the hurly-burly. . . . (There follow comments on the judgment.)

March 27, 1896 (*to his uncle, Mr. Richard Lloyd*). . . . I am waiting my turn to bring on the question of intimidating Welsh witnesses on the Land Commission. I fear it cannot come on to-night. If it doesn't then I

[1] Mr. Jelf, Q.C. (afterwards Mr. Justice Jelf), and Mr. Roskill were counsel for the petitioner.

[2] *I.e.*, Mr. Pope, Q.C., for Mr. Murphy, Q.C.



MR. RICHARD LLOYD.

Uncle of Mr. Lloyd George.

must keep them until the small hours of the morning on Monday about it—because bring it on I will.

Last night Herbert Lewis and I had a great time on Pembroke Dock.[1] Last year we supported Allan on the question even against the Liberal Government, so our record was a clean one. I told Goschen that Lord George Hamilton had then urged the Liberals to do the very thing the Tory Government were refusing to do now. Goschen at last got irritated—he is a short-tempered chap—and said I was misrepresenting Hamilton. At this I sprang up—quoted from Hansard Hamilton's own words—appealed to the House whether I had misrepresented him. Great cheers. I then went for them hot and strong for their electioneering dodge in promising this thing before the election and now that they had won Pembroke declining to pay up. I said they had won the seat on false pretences. I am told on all hands that I never spoke better in my life. Herbert says I never did so well in the House. The Liberals cheered frantically. For a short time there was great excitement. After that I kept the thing going, and whereas they expected to get their Naval Works Bill before dinner they didn't get it until nearly midnight. Lowther, the Chairman of Committees, said he would not go to dinner without first getting through it, even if he had to sit in the chair until the dawn. Very well. He was jolly glad to adjourn at a quarter to nine without making much progress. They thought they might get a Bill called the Military Manœuvres Bill through before midnight, but I soon developed a keen interest in soldiering. I moved an amendment on the spur of the moment. Lowther would not allow it because it was not strictly in order. Very well. I altered it at once. He had then to take it. I divided, and their Bill was talked out. The Under-Secretary for War came to me just now to say he would be most willing to meet my views on the subject if I had any objection to any part of the Bill. That's the way to play the game. My blood is now up: I hadn't warmed to it before.

March 29, 1896.—My motion on intimidation of tenants was not reached last night after all. I must make the Government sit up for a couple of hours after midnight on Monday. That is my only chance, and I shan't be sorry for it. You must make them feel a certain amount of inconvenience if you mean to get anything out of them.

My motion on National Councils will also come on Monday next. So I shall be pretty full between them.

Herbert Lewis is with us here in the flat, and we have been going over things to prepare for Monday.

May 8, 1896.—L. & N.W. Ry. Co. has involved me in no end of correspondence, interviews, etc.[2] They are taking it up in earnest down

[1] The Conservatives (and Lord George Hamilton in particular) had during the Liberal Government's tenure of office taken up the position that the naval dockyard at Pembroke should be so constituted that in time of war it would be capable of undertaking the repair of every vessel that came into the harbour. From this position they receded when in office.

[2] Mr. Lloyd George opposed the London & North-Western Railway Company's Bill in 1895 and 1896 on the ground of various Welsh grievances against the Company. See Hansard, April 25, May 9 and 10, 1895; April 14 and 24, 1896.

Carnarvonshire. I think we will make a good show and gain something. No harm in proving that Nationalism means something more immediate and substantial than ideals.

I think I shall speak on the Education Bill next week, although I am keener about the Committee stage. It would do me harm to speak unless I fairly attained the level of my last performance, or at any rate did not fall much below it. I haven't so far got anything specially striking to say. I have about a score of amendments which I can put in when the time arrives. Have you seen my amendments to the Rating Bill? I send you copy. . .

I had a question to Chaplin to-day.[1]

May 12, 1896 (*to his brother*).—I can't get a look in in the Education Debate. I might perhaps by sitting in the House and getting up after every speaker for the past four days have got a chance. But that I could not do owing to London & North-Western Railway and other things. So I have devoted to-night to writing up amendments on the Education Bill. If I put them in to-night I may get in front of others. Every line of my speech will do for Committee. Birrell has just made effective use of one of your points—" Reasonable number." It was a very good one too.[2]

London & North-Western Bill came on to-day. When they saw we were ready they instructed their counsel to withdraw the Welsh clauses out of the Bill so as not to imperil the whole of it. So that we have defeated them at any rate for a year. Great rejoicing amongst our men.

I spoke on the Finance Bill last night in order to postpone it, and succeeded, much to the amusement of the whole House.

The last paragraph of this letter needs a short comment. A reference to Hansard shows that the speech which Mr. Lloyd George improvised in order to delay the Finance Bill was a plea for the remission of the tea duty upon colonial produce, so as to make a beginning towards a Zollverein. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) said that he did not know whether he was to take the speech seriously, and pointed out with great gravity that its proposals embodied, if not Protection, at any rate very reactionary economic doctrines. Mr. Lloyd George's letter shows that his speech is not to be taken as an indication of any deep-seated affection for the policy of colonial preference, and the amusement of the House is easily comprehensible.

On June 19 the shock of a great bereavement was added to the burdens of a busy Session. On that day Mr. Lloyd George's

[1] The question was " whether the President of the Local Government Board was aware that the Central Associated Chamber of Agriculture at a meeting recently summoned to consider the Agricultural Rating Bill decided that in their opinion provision should be made in the Bill for dividing the rates between owner and occupier," and whether he proposed to accept amendments carrying out this recommendation.

[2] See Hansard, 4th ser., vol 40, pp. 1186–7.

mother, who had been ailing, but still active, for some time, passed away in the seventieth year of her age.

June 25, 1896.—Been at it three times to-day already. They accepted one of my amendments, and I shall be on again in another few minutes.

Harcourt spoke to me very sympathetically about our bereavement. So has almost every one. Burns[1] came to me this very instant, just as I was writing the last sentence, and spoke very nicely about it. . . .

July 4, 1896.—Returning from Hornsey. A large gathering.[2] I meant to send you yesterday's "Sun" with a very good photo of myself and a most appreciative and eulogistic series of paragraphs.[3]

July 8, 1896 (*to his uncle*).—It is so good of you to send us every morning a budget of Criccieth news. If you saw the eagerness with which it is read you would be amply repaid for your trouble. . . .

I have been at it once or twice to-day. Yesterday I was very busy—spoke repeatedly. The "Chronicle" as usual makes very laudatory references to my fight yesterday. So does the "Daily Mail"—a Tory morning. . . .

We hope to keep the Finance Bill over until to-morrow. There will be nothing much after this, and I am glad of it, for I feel rather done up. Am dining to-morrow with Haldane, Q.C. He is a great friend of Rosebery's.

Rosebery invited me to dine with him on Wednesday next.

At Lord Rosebery's board Mr. Lloyd George met a select and interesting company—Lord Herschell (then Lord Chancellor), Lord Ripon, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, Sir George Trevelyan, Mr. Acland, the editors of two Liberal papers, and a few others. After-dinner confidences must be left to conjecture, but it is safe to guess that Mr. Lloyd George did not miss the opportunity of putting his favourite project of "Home Rule all round" before his host and fellow-guests. His own view was, as has been seen, strong upon the point. Even the problem of the House of Lords, which seemed to Lord Rosebery the first lion in the path of Liberalism, was to his mind a subordinate question.

That question [he wrote] failed to rouse the country, even when the Lords had really done some mischief. Now for the next five years they will do nothing and the English people won't start a revolution on a

[1] Mr. John Burns, M.P. for Battersea: afterwards (1906) a Cabinet Minister.

[2] This letter is written in pencil on the back of a leaflet advertising a garden party, organised by the Hornsey Liberal Association, held Saturday, July 4, 1896. Speakers: The Rt. Hon. H. J. Gladstone, M.P., T. E. Ellis, M.P., D. Lloyd George, M.P., and Miss Florence Balgarnie.

[3] Three paragraphs concerning Mr. Lloyd George appeared in "The Sun" for July 3, 1896, under the heading "People of To-day." He was described as "the rising hope of the Welsh Home Rulers—now a considerable body." "Some of the older and staider Liberals in the Principality used to shake their heads dolefully about the member for Carnarvon, whom they were fond of disparaging as 'a young man in a hurry.' . . . Through evil and good report, however, Mr. Lloyd George clung tenaciously to his ideas; and his erstwhile detractors have long since joined the popular chorus in his praise."

stale grievance. "Home Rule all round" is not an abstract question. The one fact in the situation is that the House of Commons has broken down as a business assembly.[1]

On July 17 Mr. Lloyd George replies to a comment upon his comparatively prolonged silence in the House:

What can I say? There is nothing doing in which I am at all interested. I must not throw away what reputation I have acquired by talking on subjects I don't understand. The House would resent one's interference in Irish matters.

Last night I was present at the Radical dinner given by Mr. Jacoby, M.P. After dinner there was some speech-making.

July 31, 1896.—I spoke last night. Military Manœuvres Bill is, we are told to-night, dead. So we did the trick last night.

Up to about this point in his career Mr. Lloyd George had been a local hero. His reputation, great as it was in Wales, had not yet become firmly established in the eyes of the English public, to whom Welsh nationalism meant little. Hard things are said of the Imperial Parliament. Disappointed men, whether their resentment at the failure of their hopes be justified or not—and it is not always justified—encourage us to take pessimistic views of the value of popularity in the assembly and with the public as a test of merit. But with all its faults, and in spite of all the complaints of its critics, the House of Commons remains a very tolerable touchstone of merit. Mr. Lloyd George entered the House with the hopes of a nation centred upon him. He might have encouraged those expectations even had he been merely the boyish adventurer with the Celt's gift of speech that his enemies imagined him. But in that case he would have raised the hopes of his countrymen only to dash them. There is no great prospect of advancement in politics for superficiality, however strongly the arts of rhetoric may rally to its aid. The grandiloquent periods of the platform fall very flat upon the ears of members who remember their own efforts at contested elections. Reputations are not built upon perorations; and journalists who write as if rhetoric alone had been Mr. Lloyd George's passport to power are singularly forgetful of his history. During these early years in the House he was paving a way by a close attention to all the lessons it could teach and by a serious and business-like study of politics to the triumph which was to be his at the Board of Trade. It was not a mere caprice which made that man of clear and weighty judgment, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, select Mr. Lloyd George, when the Liberal triumph came, for a post

[1] From a private letter written just after Lord Rosebery's dinner-party.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S MOTHER.

that seemed, even to some of his friends, an uncongenial one, as if a Rupert of debate were being tied to a dull office stool. During the session that closed in 1896 no man had made a greater mark than he, and he had made it by persistent attention to the business of the House.

Let it be remembered that this success was achieved in a House in which Liberalism, not to say Radicalism, was at a discount. The Opposition was small and enfeebled. One can hardly resist a comparison with the House which assembled after the Tory landslide of 1906. But there was this difference—that, while the great Liberal majority of that date had no lack of high ideals—had, its enemies would say, ideals too many, too various, and even too exalted—the House of 1895 was, as a writer in the "Westminster Gazette" well expressed it at the time, "the child of national exhaustion, of a self-protective cynicism, of class interests." "An appeal to a generous sentiment falls dead," said the same observer, "a cynical appeal to practical selfishness is more acceptable, a ribald joke evokes the ready laugh. . . . It has been a difficult year for any orator to make his mark." In such a Parliament, most surely, the man with a mere gift for weaving words into brilliant phrases would have found his level: in that Parliament Mr. Lloyd George established his reputation.

To see that this is so it is only necessary to look at the comments of Parliamentary correspondents, who summed up the results of the sessions with remarkable unanimity, for, as on the stage, so with our newspapers, "when they do agree, their unanimity is wonderful."

To Mr. Lloyd George [said the representative of the "Daily Chronicle"] —a man of great ability, ingenuity, force, and readiness of mind—must be put the first beginnings of the fight on the Agricultural Rating Bill. Mr. Lloyd George has a very acute temperament trained in legal subtleties, combined with a rapid parliamentary judgment, though his vision may not be wide. He has a remarkable eye for weak points in debate, and his keen criticisms have often been caught up later by the Front Opposition Bench, and been adopted as the main line of attack. This was especially so on the Rating Bill, and many of the points over which the Liberals waxed most eloquent were first suggested by Mr. Lloyd George. He was also largely responsible for the policy of "enlarged discussion" on small Bills which blocked the Government's path for a long time after Whitsuntide, and drove them into their legislative *impasse*. His policy—always conducted with a grave weight and seriousness far other than obstruction, as it is vulgarly used—was at first looked at rather suspiciously, but at the end of the session it was appreciated by all. Of all the young men on the Liberal side, I should certainly say that Mr. Lloyd George has made the greatest mark of the session.

In his article "From the Cross Benches," the correspondent of "The Observer" endorsed the verdict of his colleague:

The nearest approach to the establishment of a new reputation during the last session [he said] is found in the case of Mr. Lloyd George. The member for the Carnarvon district is not new to the House of Commons. He has sat in Parliament since 1890, and has not in earlier sessions been reticent of speech.

Early in his career he suffered from the indiscretions of an enthusiastic countryman who hailed him as "The Welsh Parnell." In endeavouring to live up to this mark, Mr. Lloyd George succeeded in obscuring what the House has this session recognised as sterling qualities in debate. Both on the Education Bill and on the English Rating Bill he disclosed a perfect mastery of the subject, a readiness of force and resource in debate much more nearly resembling the gifts of Mr. Tim Healy than the earlier stages of his career recalled the manner of Mr. Parnell.

CHAPTER XIII

(1897—October 1899)

I

Leaderless Liberals—The Voluntary Schools Bill, 1897—Major Rasch draws the line at Mr. George—Mr. Lloyd George and the Irish—Speech at the N.L.F. Meeting—A prophetic pressman.

THE troubled period in the fortunes of the Liberal Party which culminated in Sir William Harcourt's resignation of the leadership at the end of 1898 served to bring into further prominence the fighting power of Mr. Lloyd George. When the hearts of many Liberals were faintest, he kept his spirits and refused to be downcast. When the appointed leaders of the Opposition shirked their duties, he stepped into the breach and led spirited attacks upon the enemy.

Why [he asked] should Liberals be depressed because of difficulties about the leadership? Conservatives have been no more fortunate in the past. Upon the death of Lord Beaconsfield, the Tory party first of all elected Sir Stafford Northcote. He did not satisfy them, and they appointed Sir Michael Hicks Beach. They got rid of him in six months, and then Lord Randolph Churchill was made leader. He got sick of them in six months, and then came Mr. Balfour. Five Tory leaders in a few years. The Tories ought not to taunt us with the fact that we have lost two leaders!

Elsewhere he expressed his optimism in another way:

We will follow any man who can bring us specimens of the grapes of Ascalon, and we don't care what his name is—Joshua, if Moses goes; and if Joshua goes, anybody else who can lead us into the promised land.

In the discussion of the Voluntary Schools Bill, introduced in 1897, Mr. Lloyd George found a further opportunity. Another glance at press cuttings of those days shows that the gallery had

begun to see good "copy" in him, and tributes were offered by political opponents which were perhaps even more valuable, in view of their obvious sincerity, than the congratulations of his friends. "The ranks of Tuscany" could not forbear to cheer. He was the leader of a little group of four or five young Welsh members, who sat immediately next to the Irish members in their place below the gangway. The Irish party, torn by sectional disputes since the fall and death of Parnell, had lost much of its old power, and on the question of religious education was not unfriendly to the Government. If that thorn in the side of the Tories was removed, they still had to face a skilled and disciplined attack which was not less harassing. Journalists wrote in 1897 as they had written a few years before when Mr. Lloyd George was barring the progress of the Clergy Discipline Bill.

Mr. Balfour, when amendments by the dozen moved by Mr. Lloyd George and his followers were plausibly, forcibly and relevantly debated day after day, seemed at first unutterably bored and then provoked. Once when Mr. Lowther, then Chairman of Committees (and afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons), refused to accept a motion for the closure, Mr. Balfour's friends confessed that for the moment he lost the good temper that characterised him. An incident in the same debates added a new word to the index expurgatorius of "unparliamentary" language. One of Mr. Lloyd George's speeches was continuously interrupted, after the cheery fashion of the House, with a sustained chorus of "'Vide, 'vide" from the young bloods on the Tory Benches. Mr. Lloyd George bade his opponents stop "grunting." The word did not pass the censorship of the Chair, and was withdrawn.[1]

It was not often that the House was reluctant to hear Mr. Lloyd George. One of his efforts upon the Voluntary Schools Bill stands out as an example of the hold he had gained upon the House, and the means by which he had acquired it. The House, as he himself said in a lecture which he delivered more than once upon "The House of Commons," "is a purely democratic chamber, and it listens to and judges a man entirely upon his merits." When those merits include a sense of humour and gift of mordant satire, their possessor is fairly sure of a hearing. The speech to which I now refer[2] aroused from all quarters in the House more boisterous laughter than had been heard for a very long time. It was, in fact, a consummate piece of acting. In the course of it Mr. Lloyd George read out questions and answers from a catechism which had actually been in use in a Cardiff Church school. "Who alone is the true ruler of Christ's Church in this diocese?" was

[1] See Hansard, March 4, 1897. [2] Delivered on April 20, 1898.

one of the questions. Mr. Lloyd George read it out in reverent tone, suited to the solemnity of the subject. The House waited, all unsuspecting, for the answer in the Catechism. Then, slowly, and in a tone of quiet irony it came: "The Bishop of Llandaff!" —and Homeric laughter was let loose.

The same Bill gave him a new opportunity of showing the Parliamentary skill he had acquired. The drafting of "instructions" to a Committee of the House is a task which old Parliamentary hands are apt to bungle. When the Voluntary Schools Bill went into Committee seven "instructions" were moved, and six were stifled at birth by the rules of order, vigorously applied by the Speaker. The friendly comment of that most judicial and experienced of critics, "Toby, M.P.," deserves to be recorded:[1]

> Great triumph to-night for Lloyd George. Another step in successful Parliamentary career achieved by sheer ability, lived up to with unvaried modesty. To frame Instruction on going into Committee has always been, for technical reason, work of great difficulty. To-night six Parliamentary hands essayed it with respect to Education Bill. The youngest alone accomplished it.

This "Instruction" aimed at the insertion of clauses with a view to making provision for ensuring the adequate representation of local authorities or parents on the management of the Schools in receipt of the aid grant. Not only was it technically in order, but it served the further purpose of dividing the Ministerialists, some of whom went the length of supporting Mr. Lloyd George in the division lobbies, rather than vote with their party against so equitable a principle as it embodied. Not so one gallant member—Major Rasch—the peroration of whose speech on the subject may be quoted as an example of refreshing candour. He rather liked the proposal, he explained, and certainly would not vote against it. But he could not vote for it. "I shall not go into the lobby with the honourable member for the Carnarvon Boroughs," he said, "because—one must draw the line somewhere."

One speech which Mr. Lloyd George delivered on the Bill, in February 1897, is a good illustration of the crushing force which he could give to his repartee. He was dealing with the demand made by supporters of the measure for the teaching of "dogma." "What is meant by 'dogma'?" he asked. He had no definition, and the House had no definition. An honourable member recklessly interposed the phrase, "The religion of the parent." Mr. Lloyd George seized upon the words. Would the Government

[1] "Punch," March 6, 1897.

apply that test to Welsh schools, where nine-tenths of the parents were Nonconformists? Would they permit parental control over those schools? If so, he knew and they knew what the result would be.

All the fight seemed to have gone out of the accredited Liberal Leaders. The financial clauses of the Irish Local Government Bill were very vulnerable, but, as the "Westminster Gazette" said in reviewing the session of 1898, the attack upon them "was left in the main to Mr. Lloyd George and the private member." It was calculated (and admitted) that the Bill would put £300,000 directly into the pockets of the landowners. Mr. Lloyd George, as one extract from the debates will show, knew how to point the moral of this. He asked the Speaker to rule that the votes of those members who would benefit personally under the Bill should not be accepted.

> The honourable member for Hunts, I understand, is one of those who will receive a large amount of money under the clause he has voted for in the last division. The honourable member, I understand, will receive £800 a year under that very clause. The honourable member for North Armagh is another member in the same position.
>
> *Colonel Saunderson* (M.P. for North Armagh): Hear, hear!
>
> *Mr. L. G.*: I am glad the honourable member admits it. There is nothing like pleading guilty if you want a light sentence.

The Nationalists were friendly to the Bill, and Mr. Lloyd George tried to persuade them of its injustice by pointing out that the rural districts of Ireland would be benefited at the expense of the towns. The Nationalists refused to be talked over in this way. "Let us take care of ourselves," said one of them. At this Mr. Lloyd George changed his tone. "Ah! that's your policy, is it?" he said; "then let me tell you it is time that British members were beginning to take care of themselves."

He was, however, soon in the good graces of the Irishmen again. "Have just had my final fling at the Local Government Bill," he wrote to his brother on July 18, 1898. "Smoothed the Irish down."

He was indeed unlikely to remain on terms of estrangement from the Irish party for long, even though earlier in the year he had taken a line upon the question of a Roman Catholic University for Ireland which could not be welcome to them. In his speech on the Address (February 17, 1898), he dealt with the two main difficulties of that question—first, the poverty of Ireland, secondly, the preponderance of the Roman Catholics in the population.

He thought [he said] that it was possible to overcome those difficulties without setting up a Catholic University in Ireland. There ought to be no difficulty in establishing a University there which a clever boy, however poor, could enter, and in which the Catholic creed would be in a position of absolute equality with every other creed. But there must be something more than that behind the demand of the Irish members. The real object must be to set up a University, Catholic in tone, Catholic in atmosphere, in a word, a Catholic University; and the Nonconformists were determined to oppose the creation of such an institution, no matter from what side of the House the proposal came.

At the meeting of the National Liberal Federation in March 1898, Mr. Lloyd George was chosen to move a resolution dealing with electoral and Parliamentary reform. It was said that he had "never spoken more splendidly." His speech "was a piece of Celtic oratory, which completely captured the audience."[1] In it he dealt with the charge constantly brought against the Liberal Party that it did nothing but "tinker at the machinery." For himself he was not concerned to deny the charge, because he had observed that a fairly dull man could turn out more good work with a perfect machine, than a skilful workman could with an obsolete and ineffective one. Even Tory legislators passed more democratic measures than those which Liberal Governments had failed to carry into effect—the hydraulic pressure of legislation had been increased to such an extent that it lifted even the dead weight of Toryism. There was still, however, a great deal to be done. The good old Liberal maxim of "trust in the people" had not yet been fully incorporated in an Act of Parliament. They gave one vote to one man, and thirty to another, and he had never been able to discover on what principles they had made this unfair distribution. They gave one vote, or probably no vote at all, to the man who handled the plough, whilst they gave ten votes to the man who handled the hunting-whip. They gave one vote, or no vote at all, to the man who sowed the seed, whilst they gave ten votes to the man who neither sowed nor reaped, but only consumed. One vote to the busy bee, and ten to the devouring locust. It occurred to him that if they were going to deprive any one of votes, they ought to start with the men who contributed nothing by their exertions to the creation of the wealth and prosperity of the country. He worked not, neither let him vote. But they must not deprive people who worked hard, and risked life, health and comfort in order to contribute to the prosperity of the nation. It was not the soil, but the soul of the country that they wanted to be represented in the House of Commons.

[1] "Westminster Gazette," March 24, 1898.

And after all, had not the drones got a house all to themselves, which they guarded as jealously as if it were a pheasant preserve? He had never been able to understand why the House of Lords should be so dear to a people so famed for their common sense as the people of England—because the responsibility was entirely theirs. Welshmen washed their hands of the whole concern, for the Celtic fringe had just enough common sense to see the absurdity of the House of Lords. Why did the people of England commend and uphold this institution?

It is entertaining to look back upon the journalistic criticisms and prophecies which Mr. Lloyd George's early career in Parliament provoked from time to time, and one of those published in 1898 has a piquancy of its own:

> When the barely full-fledged lawyer entered the House of Commons, seven or eight years ago, he was described as "a clever young Welshman, who spoke his mother tongue with alarming fluency." He is something more than that. He has all the narrowness and self-sufficiency of the class for which he often speaks in the House of Commons—namely, the political Dissenters and the sworn foes of the Anglican Church—but he has also several gifts of the professional Parliamentarian. He is one of the very rare men in politics who is an effective platform orator and a skilful debater in the House of Commons. If he could only shift his point of view a little, and just remember that the whole population of the world does not consist of dissenters and teetotallers, the young member for Carnarvon might certainly achieve something in the course of time.[1]

There is a fine line between the criticism which damns with faint praise and that which praises with faint condemnation. It may be left to the reader to decide on which side of the line this amusing appreciation fell, and how far it has been justified as a prophecy.

II

In piam memoriam: George Osborne Morgan, Thomas Gee, T. E. Ellis—Reminiscences of Mr. Gladstone.

"This is a fresh illustration of the dark fate that seems to overhang Celtic nations, that whenever they have found a national leader in whom they have complete trust, he is taken from them." In these melancholy words Mr. Lloyd George paid tribute to his friend T. E. Ellis when, in 1899, he was cut off in the prime of his life. During the three years from 1897 to 1899 there died three men, all national heroes of Wales, and all in varying degrees con-

[1] From "Parliamentary Pictures," "Manchester Sunday Chronicle," April 24, 1898.

tributors to her growth. Also they had all played a part in the career of the young man upon whom the hopes of Wales were now beginning to be fixed. These men were George Osborne Morgan, Thomas Gee, and T. E. Ellis.

Osborne Morgan had been Chairman of the Welsh Party from the date of Lord Rendel's elevation to the peerage. "He possessed just the necessary qualifications," to use Mr. Lloyd George's own words. "With the experience of age he preserved all the enthusiasm of youth, and not only the zeal of youth but its adaptability." He had been from the first attracted by the young recruit who attacked old problems with such vigour and freshness, and from 1890 onwards wrote to him in kind and friendly terms. I may perhaps quote one letter written after Sir George Osborne Morgan's last election contest:

July 21, 1895.

My dear Lloyd George,

Permit me to thank you most sincerely for the help you gave me last Thursday, which I am sure helped my majority greatly. I was very sorry to miss you, but I had an *enormous* amount of work to do elsewhere that day.

I was, I need hardly say, delighted with your success. As I said at Wrexham, the wave of reaction had spent its force upon you before it reached me, and you stemmed it nobly!

Believe me
Very truly yours,
G. O. Morgan.

Sir George Osborne Morgan died in August 1897, and in a conversation published in the newspapers of the day Mr. Lloyd George spoke of the work he had done for his country. There is so much in his words that throws a light upon his own experiences in the House that it is worth while to reproduce them here:

He was equipped with too much imagination to allow his political opinions to become fossilised. To all those who attended the meetings of the Welsh Parliamentary Party during his last Session in the House, it was quite pathetic to observe the keen delight with which, when apparently broken and bent physically, he looked forward to the great representative convention of Welsh Liberals, which is to be held at Cardiff shortly. The very last conversation I had with him he was quite full of it. Nothing dulled the brightness of his political hopefulness for his country's future. He possessed a keen sense of his duty to Wales. In spite of much physical feebleness, which was sometimes painful to observe, he was always plucky. I have never seen him shirk a fight. When the younger members of the party wished to press any question upon the attention of the House, he was

full of encouragement. He was not the sort of man to damp ardour with doubt and depreciation; and when the fight came on—be the matter great or small—he might be relied upon to be in his seat, and generally to say a word of approval publicly, but invariably to stimulate the endeavour by private messages to those carrying on the fight.

He possessed in a great measure that kind of moral courage that braved derision when duty demanded action. When you come to deal with the interests of a comparatively small country like Wales in a Parliament that controls the destinies of such a large Empire as ours, you must necessarily now and again raise debate on matters that appear trivial to the bulk of the members of the House of Commons. On these occasions Tory members are inclined frankly to jeer and Liberal members to smile patronisingly, and I don't wonder. Sir George Osborne Morgan, however, although essentially of a highly sensitive temperament, appeared quite impervious to the atmosphere of cynical contempt which surrounded him, and fearlessly pleaded the cause of his country in things small as in great.

In appraising the character of another a man not seldom reveals himself. Nobody sympathises with sensitiveness except the sensitive, and we may conjecture that the call for courage to face, and remain impervious to, the gibes of the Saxon has been insistent more than once in Mr. Lloyd George's career.

Similar reflections may be entertained about his appreciation of Thomas Gee, who in the fulness of age died in the year 1898. Thomas Gee had grown more and more to admire Lloyd George since his first meeting with him in the exciting days of the Tithe war. One instance of this may be seen in his attitude in relation to the proposal to form a National Council. At first, as his letter (quoted above) [1] to Mr. R. A. Griffith bore witness, he was half-hearted about the proposal. Later, when the attack was renewed in circumstances which have been briefly narrated, he became enthusiastic about it under the spell of Mr. Lloyd George's influence, and at the date of his death he was himself President of the new and efficient National Council. In the year before his death Thomas Gee received a national testimonial from his fellow-countrymen. Many orators spoke on that occasion. They sounded his praises as a publisher, as a journalist, as a political and social leader, and dwelt upon his qualities as a friend. Mr. Lloyd George was one of the last to speak, and his tribute struck a new and characteristic note.

The character in which I admire Mr. Gee most [he said] is that of a fighter. He was raised up at a time when Wales sorely needed leaders, and he has nobly stood in the forefront. A man who is afraid of fire is of no use in a battle, and Mr. Gee is the soundest Salamander I have ever come across.

[1] P. 91.

He has ever been ready to take his share, and more than his share, in the burden and heat of the day. The effect of his lifelong services has been to banish fear of the ruling classes from the hearts of the Welsh people, to teach them self-respect and self-reliance, and to help them towards the attainment of full political and social rights.

It is labour of the kind Mr. Gee has done for Wales that has made it possible for "Young Wales" to do its present work in Parliament, and he still exercises his influence over us with ideas and suggestions through the columns of the *Baner*. He writes letters to us with the object of keeping fresh in our minds our sense of duty to our country, and it is clear that the objects for which he has worked in his youth are still dear to his heart. Someone has wished him a peaceful end, but that is the worst thing that could happen to him. He is still full of fight. I do not wish to see that characteristic disappear, but to see him remain a fighter up to the end.

I have said that in three years three national heroes were lost to Wales. No Welshman will quarrel with me if I add to that melancholy list the great name of a man not born a Welshman. Mr. Gladstone, five years before his own death, said, speaking of Napoleon Bonaparte, that "in one sense, the giant's death was only news, in another, when we think of his history, it was enough to shake the world."[1] "In my opinion," said Mr. Lloyd George on the day of Mr. Gladstone's death, "Mr. Gladstone was the greatest leader of men since the days of Napoleon." But Gladstone's death, when it came, seemed less the uprooting of greatness than the passing of a saint. If ever a man's soul has survived in a cause, he was that man. "I would rather march with an army out of bondage," Mr. Lloyd George once said in a great speech,[2] "with Gladstone's bones at the head of it, than with many a living leader I know."

We have seen how at the beginning of Mr. Lloyd George's parliamentary life he was brought into collision with his great leader. In private life there were, as might be expected from the great gulf of time separating them, few points of contact. I once asked Mr. Lloyd George what reminiscences he had of Mr. Gladstone in private life. He met him privately twice only, he told me, and the chief opportunity he had of hearing him talk was an occasion when Mr. Gladstone, Mr. T. E. Ellis and Mr. Lloyd George were guests of Sir Edward Watkin in his chalet on Snowdon.[3] Mr. Gladstone showed his usual vivacity, and displayed the encyclopædic knowledge which amazed and delighted his contemporaries. The conversation turned to the unpromising subject of corrugated iron.

[1] Morley's "Life of Gladstone," Book x. ch. vi. [2] At Sheffield, 1901.

[3] In September 1892. It was during this visit to Wales that Mr. Gladstone, in a public speech, indicated his intention of instituting an inquiry into the Welsh land question.

Mr. Gladstone described minutely the process of its manufacture, explained how, when first it came into use for roofing purposes, it was found to make the interior of a building too hot in summer and too cold in winter, and how this defect had been remedied by processes which he outlined in some detail. They talked of the changes which had come over the system of transport in this country with the introduction of railways, and Mr. Gladstone amplified the theme by discussing the difference in character between the older transport worker and his successor. Railwaymen, he said, were models of sobriety, but the old stage-coach drivers were much given to intemperance. Mr. Gladstone told a story which pointed this moral. On one occasion in his youth he was sitting on the box seat of a coach behind an old driver of bibulous appearance, with whom, to beguile the time, he began a conversation. Mr. Gladstone was young enough to be proud of a very fine "repeater" which he carried, and by way of interesting the driver he showed it to him, and explained its complicated mechanism. The driver took a more or less intelligent interest in the works, and after some time said, "What I want to know is, how do you wind that watch when you're drunk?"

The price of sugar candy was another of the subjects on which Mr. Gladstone had descanted. It was very dear in his childhood, he said, and he had been amazed on looking into the window of the village shop to see how cheap it had become.

Discussing the French national character, Mr. Gladstone said that he thought it superior to the English. "Listen," said Tom Ellis in an aside to Mr. Lloyd George—"listen to the Grand Old Frenchman."

In a brilliant article in "Young Wales" for July 1898, Mr. Lloyd George described the Gladstone he had known—how, during the debates on Home Rule in 1893, he had sat, "a shrunken figure," on the Treasury Bench, "huddled up and torpid, apparently in the last stage of senile exhaustion," and how, lashed into activity by the gibes of Mr. Chamberlain, he would become transfigured: "there stood before you an erect athletic gladiator, fit for the contest of any arena."

I have already quoted Mr. Lloyd George's declaration of his belief that no man since Napoleon had been such a leader of men.

> No other man [he added] has excited the same personal loyalty and enthusiasm amongst his followers. His death leaves a gap like that made by the fall of the greatest of the oaks of the forest. He was the only political leader that the Welsh people had ever followed. Although he had retired from the House of Commons, the Welsh Members had the feeling, which the

Welsh people have in regard to their lost heroes, that one day when the occasion required it he would once more return to lead the fight. It is only now that they begin to fully appreciate the fact that never more shall they receive the inspiration of his voice and presence, and it is this that accounts, not merely for the deep grief, but for the sense of irreparable loss, which has fallen upon them and upon the whole of the Liberal Party, and has cast a gloom over them which is unprecedented in the case of the death of any great leader, at least in the present century. The fascination of his personality was never better illustrated than in the crowd that thronged the House of Commons this afternoon. Only once has a similar spectacle been seen, and that was when Mr. Gladstone himself was going to deliver his great speech on the second reading of the Irish Home Rule Bill. To-day the crowding for seats was done in a solemn and subdued manner befitting the hour, but it showed the same eager desire to come together, attracted by the magnetism of the same dominant personality.

III

1899—The Welsh Party's new Chairman—A Nationalist proposal—The Tithe Rent-charge (Rates) Bill—Mr. Lloyd George's Second Reading speech.

At a meeting of the Welsh Liberals in the House, after the death of Sir George Osborne Morgan, Mr. Alfred Thomas (Lord Pontypridd) had been proposed as Chairman of the Party. Mr. Reginald McKenna proposed and Mr. Herbert Lewis seconded an amendment that Mr. Lloyd George should occupy the position, but the latter declined to be placed in competition with his friend Mr. Alfred Thomas, who was then unanimously elected.

The progressive and "nationalist" wing of the Welsh party made a strong attempt under Mr. Alfred Thomas's leadership to press forward the policy which, as will be remembered, Mr. Lloyd George had expounded in 1894 to an interviewer—the policy of an independent Welsh Party. At a meeting of the Welsh members held on May 19, 1899, it was announced that Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, now leader of the Liberal Party, had offered to appoint a Welsh member as one of the Opposition whips. This offer was regarded as a bid for the continuous allegiance of Welsh Liberals to official Liberalism, and was in consequence suspect. Mr. Lloyd George moved a resolution declaring that the meeting constituted itself an independent party, and argued for an independent existence and practical detachment from the regular Opposition on the lines adopted by the Irish Nationalists. There was a long discussion, and some dissension. Mr. Bryn Roberts moved a peace-making amendment to the effect that, while the Welsh Liberals did not constitute an independent party, and considered themselves

to belong to the Liberal Party, it was their duty to direct special attention to questions affecting the Principality; and, without a vote being taken, the discussion of the subject was adjourned.

In 1899 the question of the Tithe was again before the House of Commons, in a new form. The President of the Board of Agriculture, Mr. Walter Long, introduced in June a measure which even supporters of the Government saw to be unpopular.[1] Its object was to relieve the clergy, in part, of the burden of rates levied upon the tithe rent-charge, which were said to press heavily upon some of them. Liberals answered the plea of the distressed parson by the retort that a Church famous for a multitude of fat livings ought not to come to the State for charity. Under the Bill 10,000 or 11,000 incumbents benefited to the tune of £87,000, and it was pertinently asked why the more richly endowed among the clergy should not relieve their impecunious brethren out of their superfluity. Upon the second reading of this measure (June 27, 1899), Mr. Lloyd George made a speech which those competent to judge declared to be by far the best he had yet delivered in the House of Commons. It owed much to its delivery, but even in cold print its merits are obvious, and it is not, I think, exaggerating them to describe it as being, from many points of view, a model second-reading speech.[2]

IV

An appreciation of Lord Salisbury (1898)—Of Sir William Harcourt—Lord Rosebery—Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.

Earlier in this volume I have quoted Mr. Lloyd George's first appreciations of Lord Salisbury and of some of the chief personages in Parliament. I collect here some of the judgments of this later period, beginning with an amusing piece of criticism of Lord Salisbury[1]:

> The "one strong Foreign Minister of modern times," the man "with a backbone of steel," came into power, and the Tories said that although with such statesmen as Lord Rosebery, Earl Kimberley, and Sir Edward Grey the powers of Europe might do as they pleased, they would quail before Lord Salisbury's word. "There will be," said they, "a shudder passing through the Courts of Europe; France will tremble, and crowns will fall." When he had only to deal with the weak little Republic of Venezuela, Lord Salisbury was firm in his claim and in his refusal to refer the matter to arbitration; but when another and more powerful Republic declared that it would not have the little one bullied, what did Lord Salisbury reply? In

[1] See, *e.g.*, the "Daily Telegraph," June 22, 1899.

[2] The speech is reprinted at the end of this volume. See Appendix.

effect he said, "Well, I would not be so rude as to contradict you; therefore I will arbitrate." Then there came the Cretan question. When tyranny had produced an uprising, and Greece intervened, Russia objected to the island belonging to Greece, and Lord Salisbury said, "I quite agree with you." Then somebody said—perhaps Germany—"We had better turn the Greeks out." Lord Salisbury observed, "Quite so." Then Russia or France suggested that the Turks should go as well, and Lord Salisbury said, "Yes, I think it would be better." But the Turks said, "We will not go," on which Lord Salisbury said, "Well, if you won't, it cannot be helped." The Greeks said if the Turks would not go they would not either, so Lord Salisbury merely said, "Well, if you decline to go, I suppose you must remain." They suggested a governor for Crete, and our Foreign Minister said, "Yes." Russia named somebody, and Lord Salisbury said, "Just the man!"—but Germany interposed with, "We object to him," so Lord Salisbury said, "He won't do." Then they said they would have a Governor, and Lord Salisbury assented with "Yes, we must"; but when it was mooted, "Supposing we do without a Governor?" his reply was, "That is exactly what I think." That is the statesman with a mind of his own—a strong, clear-minded man. But when a few British seamen were slaughtered by the Bashi-Bazouks, and the matter was dealt with by a British admiral, and not by a vacillating Foreign Minister, the Turks had got to leave, and they are now gone. Then Lord Salisbury has had dealings with France, and Madagascar and Tunis and Siam show of what metal this firm and strong Foreign Minister is made. Our treaty rights in Madagascar—which were not touched while Lord Rosebery was Foreign Minister—have vanished under Lord Salisbury. Lord Salisbury seems to have said to France, "Is there anything else I can do for you, gentlemen?"

"In fact," said Mr. Lloyd George, "it is rather a good thing the French Foreign Minister has never asked for Yorkshire, or you would all be Frenchmen by now!"[1]

The following remarks were occasioned by the resignation of Sir William Harcourt, and their reference to Mr. Asquith may be compared with the earlier appreciation of him in a Parliamentary letter which has already been quoted:

Personally, Sir William Harcourt is the most popular occupant of the Front Opposition Bench, especially among the young fellows of the Liberal Party. There is a human nature about him which is rather wanting in some other leaders. The young fellows, I repeat, have a positive affection for Sir William Harcourt, and if it were thought that his retirement were due to any kind of intrigue against him, they and the bulk of the Party would rally round him at once. Politically speaking, he is not so much in touch with the younger spirits as Lord Rosebery, whose Imperial sympathies are greater. From the point of view of capacity, Mr. Asquith is obviously the man to succeed Sir William, but he has a large practice at the Bar, and it is impossible for a man to lead the Liberal Party in his leisure moments.[2]

[1] Haworth, Oct. 24, 1898.

[2] "Daily Telegraph," Dec. 15, 1898.

Mr. Chamberlain gave many opportunities to his opponents when he joined "the party of gentlemen," and nobody was better able than Mr. Lloyd George to make fun of the aristocratic tendencies of the second stage in that statesman's career. The following quotation (from a speech at Swansea), may be taken as typical.[1] Mr. Lloyd George is referring to a meeting at which the Colonial Secretary has "poured contempt" upon the programme of the Liberal Party.

Could you expect anything else? There was a peer in the chair. A Lord moved a vote of thanks to him, an Earl seconded, a Viscount supported, and, at the end, Mr. Chamberlain referred to "My friend, Lord So-and-so." This is the gentleman who made the abolition of the House of Lords one of the cardinal points of his programme not many years ago. Now he sneers, and looks with disdain at everything in our programme. Educational Reform? Popular Control? There isn't a word that can measure his contempt for popular control. Of course, in the society of peers, to talk about popular control is very vulgar. Home Rule? Mr. Chamberlain was a Home Ruler before Mr. Gladstone, and yet he talks of Home Rule as an unclean thing—a deadly sin. These things unclean? Mr. Chamberlain has soiled his beautiful aristocratic fingers with all of them. And yet he comes and talks about unclean things!

Taxation of ground rents? Mr. Chamberlain was one of the men who initiated it. But taxation of ground rents now means taxing "my friend, Lord So-and-so." . . . This renegade Radical, this man who walked the paths of freedom with us, who led the host, has fallen in the wilderness. No: he has joined the Amalekites.

V

Religious views—"The Christian Cæsar"—Speeches against Ritualism;

A fair account of Mr. Lloyd George's career would be incomplete if it did not give some attention to his incursions into the field of theological controversy. I do not refer to arid disquisitions upon dogma: it may be doubted if doctrinal subtleties ever appealed to him. From his schooldays he belonged to the church militant. In Llanystumdwy the boundaries between truth and error were marked out clearly for all to see. In the larger world those lines of demarcation became, we may believe, less sharply defined. But the forcible application of the Church Catechism had done its work.

On the positive side it was a part of his creed, publicly expressed, that Christian ethics should dictate the policy of the State. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" was true teaching; but then Cæsar was an autocrat. A Christian democracy—"the Christian Cæsar"[2]—must be dominated by Christian ideals.

[1] December, 1898; annual meeting of the Swansea Liberal Association.

[2] This was the title of an address he delivered at Acton, December 17, 1893.

BEREA, THE CHAPEL AT CRICCIETH ATTENDED BY MR. LLOYD GEORGE.

(Photograph by Ernest Mills.)

With these views there was united a great detestation of priestcraft and religious privilege, which found frequent expression at a time when the High Church movement was making rapid and widespread advances. I quote one of his perorations from a speech delivered at a Free Church gathering.[1]

He who gives to drink unto one of the little ones a cup of cold water shall be rewarded. Quite right, says the State Church; not only a cup, but as much cold water as you like for the little ones—and the richest vintage for the big ones. Toleration is good enough for the little ones—patronage is for the great. Equality indeed! That is a theory invented by the atheists of the French Revolution! Is that really so? Then they were better Christians than your State priesthood, who cling to their superiority. You may recollect reading a story of the French Revolution told by one of our greatest writers. During one of those street-fighting episodes of which the Revolution was full, a band of students, all infidels, led by a young lieutenant, also an infidel, rushed into the Louvre. Every picture at all obnoxious to their ideas was torn down. At last they came to a picture of Christ. Muskets were lifted to destroy that also, when the young lieutenant shouted in commanding tones, "Halt! there is He who taught brotherhood to man." Instantly every musket was lowered, every cap was doffed, and every voice with one acclaim rang out, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" These poor atheists in the madness of strife, in the smoke of the conflict, saw Christ more clearly than the priests of Christendom with all the candles lit on their church altars.

It is right to add that hatred of priestly influence did not blind him to the sincerity and earnestness of some of the priests. The Ritualists, he said in the same year at Nottingham, were prepared to go on with their programme whatever the consequences might be. They did not fear Disestablishment; and in a struggle one man who is prepared to face the hazards is worth a hundred who shirk them. The Jesuits turned out more martyrs than any fraternity in Christendom, and the leaders of the Ritualistic movement in England fought with the same recklessness of consequences.

VI

A holiday in South America (1896)—The ubiquitous Welshman—Buenos Ayres—The Welsh Colony and its Spanish Governor—The brave Galleuses—A visit to Canada (1899).

In the summer of 1896 Mr. Lloyd George escaped altogether from politics for two months, spent in a journey to South America. He was accompanied by Mr. Herbert Lewis. The travellers were fortunate in their holiday. Both the outward

[1] The Congregational Union at Halifax, October, 1898.

passage and the return voyage were as good as they could be, the natives were friendly, and, what was more, compatriots were found eager to welcome them. At Vigo they were asked to unveil a statue which a native general had erected in his own honour. At Monte Video they found a Welshman named Jones at the head of the telegraph system. He at once communicated with the Ministers of State, and the Government left nothing undone which could add to the pleasure and interest of their stay. They were entertained at a dinner which was attended by two ex-Presidents—Roca and Pellegrini—some ministers, and representatives of all the English banks and commercial houses, and they were admitted temporarily to the membership of the leading clubs. The latter was no small privilege, for Mr. Lloyd George told an interviewer that the clubs were the finest he had ever seen. "One of them is a perfect palace of luxury—you can see nothing like it in London. Fencing-rooms, boxing-rooms, swimming-baths—everything you can think of in the way of recreation is provided."[1] Mr. Lloyd George gave the interviewer his impressions of Buenos Ayres:

It is not a town that possesses any unique or striking individuality of its own. It is fairly well built, but the streets as a rule are narrow. They have, however, cleared about a mile of slums, and the avenue which has taken their place is perhaps finer than any of our streets. The docks, again, are run by English capitalists, who are now about to spend thirty millions on them. In fact, the resources of the country are infinite, and a very inadequate idea prevails in this country as to their extent. The tramways take up the greater portion of the streets; foot passengers are confined strictly to the side walks, for besides their narrowness the streets receive the full benefit of a glaring sun, while the side walks are deliciously cool and sheltered. There is a saying among the citizens that only dogs and Englishmen walk in the middle of the road.

The travellers "spent several delightful days in the Cordova mountains":

Sometimes we were riding through groves of great palm trees. Variegated parrots would fly chattering across our path, humming birds would start beneath our feet, cactus and mimosa trees filled the whole air with fragrant perfume. At other times we rode through fine vineyards, and every cottage had its fig trees, on which the figs were ripening in the summer sun. Life in such a land is an idyll.

The natives in the hills received them in very friendly fashion, and gave them a royal welcome:

[1] See an interview with Mr. Lloyd George in the "Manchester Guardian," October 26, 1898.

As we entered their encampment we heard a kid, or "gavarita," bleat; half an hour later it was cooked ready for our eating. After meal-time our guide or peon sang us a Spanish song to the accompaniment of a guitar which he himself played. A native minstrel was stirred to emulation, and responded in fine style. There we remained till nightfall, expecting to return when the moon had risen. But instead of a moon we had a thunderstorm. We hastily mounted our horses and rode after our guide and the Indian through lonely glens and over narrow passes flanked by a precipitous chasm on the one side and steep rocks on the other. Sometimes we could not see a foot in front of us; then the whole wild scene would be suddenly lit up by a vivid flash of lightning. Our two guides rode ahead, nothing heeding, twanging their guitars and singing love-songs. It was an experience we would not have missed for anything.

The Government offered to lend a gunboat to Mr. Lloyd George and his companion, so that they might visit the Welsh colony at Chubut. That was impossible, but they met a large number of their fellow-countrymen none the less, among them Y Bonwr Lewis Jones, "the father of the Welsh colony, and the recognised chief of the settlers." Mr. Lloyd George interviewed Señor Tello, the Governor of the Welsh colony, and it would be a pity not to reproduce his account of that interview. It must have done the Radical member's heart good to hear that these "Galleuses" in a distant land were fighting for their language and their religion:

When he [the Governor] heard that I was a Galleusis—as they call the Welsh out there—his first words to me were in the dialect of South Wales, "Shwd mae y machan i?" ("How are you, my boy?") His stock of Welsh, however, was limited. He said that the settlers eat too much "Bara menyn a the" (Bread-and-butter and tea), and he was lost in astonishment over the numerous eisteddfodau held. A singing race was a novelty, a curiosity to him, and so were their many chapels and strict Sabbatarianism. Lately he had been having a good deal of trouble over the military drills. Everybody in the Argentine has to be drilled, you know. The Welshmen don't object to that, but they object to its being done on a Sunday, so they refused to turn out, and several of them have seen the inside of a gaol in consequence. The poor Governor could not account for such a state of things. "They are," he said, "such a quiet, law-abiding people that it is quite inexplicable." However, the matter is being satisfactorily arranged at last. Another burning question is that of the Welsh language. "If I tell them that they are English," said the Governor, "they get in a fury, and say they are not. If I want them to speak Spanish, they say that they are British subjects. They won't have any one who does not know Welsh in the schools, and they *will* have their own way. And one young lady (who is now in this country)

refuses ever since that bother to salute me in the street." And the Governor was quite hurt about it. "Then," he continued, "they won't do anything but grow corn, corn, corn. They won't keep cattle; they won't make butter and cheese, but they grow corn, corn, corn."

I suggested to him that he must find such a people rather troublesome. "Ah! señor," he answered, "not at all. They are a fine people; they are a brave people, a noble people. Last year I went up country, and was surrounded by six hundred Indians. But the brave Galleuses heard of it, and 150 of them mounted their horses and rode up country and rescued me. No, no! They are not troublesome, they are a splendid people. Send me more of them—as many as you like of them." I hinted that the land would not bear many more. "More?" he replied; "there is plenty of room for them among the hills. A party of them have already gone up the Andes to Cwm Hyvryd, and there is room for more." So I believe, from what I could gather, that their present condition is good, and their future promises well.

The holiday was not spoiled by any serious inquiry into the politics of the land, although the two members of Parliament visited the House of Deputies once, and "could not help being interested in the manner in which the two Chambers work, and how Ministers, for instance, are brought from the Upper to the Lower House to answer a challenge." There may have been occasions since when Mr. Lloyd George would have liked to have that strenuous five minutes with Lord Lansdowne upon the floor of the House of Commons, a vision of which is conjured up by the South American custom.

In the autumn of 1899 came a visit to Canada. With Mr. Llewellyn Williams, afterwards a Member of Parliament, and Mr. W. J. Rees, Mr. Lloyd George accepted an invitation of the Canadian Minister of the Interior to visit the country and see the advantages it offered to emigrants. At Ottawa they interviewed the Minister and met other prominent Canadian statesmen. The official aspect of the visit need not detain us, but I may be pardoned for dwelling for a moment upon its unofficial side. On the journey out, some sensible organiser persuaded Mr. Lloyd George to take the chair at a concert in the saloon of the s.s. *Bavarian*, at which, according to the custom at such functions, a collection was made on behalf of a charity—the "Seamen's Home." The eloquence of the chairman charmed a good deal of money into the plate. A correspondent of the "Western Mail" has left on record[1] some characteristic witticisms from his impromptu speech. As there was a school of very large whales spouting outside, he said that it was perhaps permissible that little Wales should spout inside.

[1] "Western Mail," Sept. 15, 1899.

A steamer belonging to another line was making strenuous efforts to overhaul the *Bavarian*.

Mr. Lloyd George confessed that since he had discovered that their rival was captained by a Welshman and steamed by Welsh coal, his hope that the *Bavarian* would keep the lead was but lukewarm. Becoming serious, he treated his audience to some very fine passages of oratory. He cited Nevin, Carnarvonshire. In every home in that town there was a sailor member, and every one of those homes mourned the loss of a loved one whose grave was in the mighty deep.

A clergyman moved a vote of thanks to the chairman, and referred in passing to the love of music of the English and the Scotch. Mr. Lloyd George, provided with this irresistible opportunity, reminded the audience that the love of music was not unknown in Wales.

VII

A retrospect—Domestic history—Family councils.

At the close of the period covered by this volume, David Lloyd George was well launched upon his public career in England. Clouds were gathering across the seas in Africa which were to burst into a storm whose lightning, while it played about him, brought him into a far greater prominence. Already, however, after six years in Parliament, his name was well known to all serious students of politics.

These important years of his political adolescence had been important also in his private life. He was now the father of four children—the eldest, Richard Lloyd, a boy of seven, two daughters, and a second son.[1] Two extracts from his letters written when his first-born was in his third year and his little daughter Mair less than a year old, may help to show the place the children took in his busy life.

June 16, 1891.—Before coming on here (House of Commons) I took the little chickens, with Maggie and Kate, to St. James's Park and left them there. Dick delighted beyond measure looking at the boats and "wag-wags." "Look, look, daddy: a ship on the sea!"

July 10, 1891.—I've secured in the members' ballot a couple of tickets for the great review to-morrow at Wimbledon, and Maggie and I will take little Dick there to see the bands and redcoats and "geewups." He talks excitedly about it even now. We took him to see the procession to-day. He was very pleased with the soldiers, especially the cavalry, but he saw nothing for special admiration in the Emperor.[2] He took a much greater fancy to his horses. . . .

[1] Richard Lloyd George, b. Feb. 15, 1889; Mair Eiluned, b. Aug. 2, 1890; Olwen Elizabeth, b. April 3, 1892; Gwilym, b. Dec. 4, 1894.

[2] The German Emperor was visiting London.

The most inspiring feature of David Lloyd George's private life was this—that the mother who had worked for him, the uncle who had trained him, the brother who had been his comrade in work and play, the wife who had given him her companionship and love, the sister who was a second mother to his children, had formed themselves into a league for his advancement. It was a powerful league, for its motive, an admiring love, inspired the most complete and selfless devotion. It would not be too much to say that uncle, brother, and wife judged all important questions first and above all in the light of the effect of their decision upon his career. Of his uncle's sacrifices no more need be said here. His brother, junior partner in the firm of Lloyd George & George, uncomplainingly did the work of two while the senior partner was at Westminster. Mrs. Lloyd George gave up the quiet home-life of Criccieth to follow her husband to London, where, first in rooms in Essex Court, Temple, hired during the Session from Mr. S. T. Evans, then (1891) in Verulam Buildings, Gray's Inn, she devoted herself to her husband's career. In the ordinary course in these early days the idea for a speech would be propounded first of all to her, and then the notes of it sent off to Criccieth for criticism by his brother William and by " our G.O.M. at home," as he called his uncle in one letter. He set great store by his wife's judgment, and experience taught him that her criticisms were a very safe guide to success on a platform or in the House. Mrs. Lloyd George, when duty to her husband took her from her children, left them to the care of his sister, whose part in the family alliance cannot be too highly estimated.

Between his brother and uncle and himself letters passed daily. His brother remained his confidant. One must never think of him as growing away from early associations. The old uncle whom he knew in childhood as the embodiment of wisdom remained his mentor when he got to Westminster. He never fancied, falling into the besetting sin of those who win fame quickly, that those who were not climbing with him were intellectually below him. On the contrary, he regarded them as partners with him in an enterprise which happened to throw him into the light of publicity while they remained in comparative obscurity. So freely did he write and accept their suggestions that some of his speeches may be regarded as joint efforts of this family partnership, vivified and adorned by his personality and rhetoric. Of his mother no more need be said than that the tender devotion she always showed towards him was most truly reciprocated. She cared little about politics, but she watched

her son's career with quiet satisfaction. She had seen him three times elected a member of Parliament, and he was well on his way to fame when, in June 1896, Mrs. George died peacefully in her seventieth year.

One matter which stands apart from the public aspect of his career dealt with in the preceding chapters is the formation of the London firm which bore his name. Soon after he came to London he took a partner and started a practice, which, beginning with "agency work" for country solicitors, rapidly began to grow. "I am not sure," he wrote in 1891, "that later on, when I have thoroughly picked up the work here, I may not establish a tolerable London practice." That modest prediction was quickly fulfilled.

When he had been in Parliament for about a year he had other aspirations. He was strongly tempted to follow the example of his friend, S. T. Evans, and take the steps precedent to a call to the Bar. He went so far as to make the necessary application to the Benchers of the Middle Temple, and for years his name remained "screened" in the entrance to the Hall of that honourable Inn. He abandoned the idea because he was bent upon a political career and saw the danger of a serious conflict between the claims of Parliament and the Bar. Later on, when he accepted office, we shall see that he gave himself up entirely to politics.

APPENDIX

I.—THE DEBATE WITH A CURATE AT SARN

The following is an abridged translation of a report in the "Herald Cymraeg" for July 5, 1887, which describes in detail the incident mentioned in Chapter VII., 1, p. 75.

THE TITHE WAR

Debate between a Parson and a Solicitor in Lleyn

On Monday, a week yesterday, great open-air meetings were held in Aberdaron and Garn, Lleyn, under the auspices of the Lleyn and Eifonydd Anti-Tithe Society. The meetings were addressed by Mr. D. Lloyd George, solicitor, Criccieth (secretary of the Society).

The meeting at Sarn led to an extraordinary incident. A fair was being held in the village, and there were a large number of farmers present from the surrounding country. The chair was occupied by Mr. Robert Edwards, Sarn, and a speech on the tithe question was delivered by Mr. Lloyd George. At the close of the speech Mr. Lloyd George invited clergymen who were in the audience to ask questions or say a few words for or against the tithe.

Upon this the Rev. Mr. Roberts, parson of Bryncroes, went forward and asked excitedly, "Are you the man who compelled the rector of the parish of Llanystumdwy to pay the poor rate when he had not received his tithe, and do you consider that just?" (Laughter.)

Mr. George: Yes, it was I that had the pleasure of compelling the rector of Llanystumdwy to pay the poor rate. (Laughter.) And as for the justice of the thing, let me say that the fourth part of the tithe belonged to the poor when it was first granted. I have not heard that the rector of Llanystumdwy ever paid one-fourth of his tithe to the poor. It is a very small thing for him to pay a bit of a rate towards their support. (Applause.)

This reverend gentleman then went away, and the curate of the parish came forward and asked if he would be permitted to speak for about five minutes.

Mr. George said he would, but he himself must also have five minutes to reply. (Laughter.)

The curate climbed a wall and said that a great deal of ignorance existed in Wales in regard to that question, and he would try to enlighten them.

(Laughter.) Mr. George had said that the Church had robbed the poor, but it was not so. He knew very well it was the parsons that gave most to the poor. (Laughter.) It was their duty to do so. (Cheers.) The property of the Church belonged to her by right, just in the same way as property might be left to any one of them by will. It was the will of the dead that had given the tithe to the Church, and to take it from her was nothing but robbery. He regretted very much that agitators of this kind should go about creating dissension amongst neighbours. Dissension was the curse of Wales. That was how she lost her battles in days of old, and religious disagreements were quite as harmful now. Nonconformity was the curse of Wales. He was preaching in church the previous Sunday, and wished all the sheep to return to the fold.

Mr. George said that that was the opinion of a curate from Cardiganshire of Wales, her ignorance, her Nonconformity, and her parsons. The curate boasted that parsons were generous to the poor. That was the first time he had heard of it. (Cheers.) But if they were so it would only be a part of their debt. One-fourth of the tithe belonged to the poor. But for hundreds of years the portion of the poor had been swallowed by the parsons. (Laughter.) Zaccheus, the publican, boasted that if he had deprived the poor wrongly of anything he had restored it fourfold. The parsons would have to give the whole of their tithe to the poor before they would be as just as that publican. (Laughter.) If the tithe belonged to the Church by the will of the dead, why did not the parsons do the same as solicitors did in circumstances when there was doubt as to the right of a client to property—take the will to the court and place it before the jury. (Loud cheers.) He asked the clerical defender of the Church to produce a copy of the will. Where was it ?

The Curate : Oh, it was made ages back. (Laughter.)

Mr. George : Yes, in the ages of magic and witchcraft. Since very early times in the history of Britain there were copies of deeds transferring rights in land, but there was not to be found a copy of a deed or will giving the Church a right to the tithe. (Cheers.) His clerical friend had said that Nonconformity was the curse of Wales. He was surprised that he should venture to say such a thing to an audience of Nonconformists, though that was in the heart of every parson. (Cheers.)

The Curate (excitedly) : I did not say that.

There was considerable hubbub, the curate saying that he did not make such a remark, and the people saying that he did.

Mr. George said that "Nonconformity" was the word, but that was too big a word for "ignorant" people like them (as suggested by the curate) to use, and that a smaller word than "Nonconformity" would do. (Laughter). At the same time, he accepted the curate's explanation, and he was glad that he was beginning to be ashamed of what he had said. (Laughter.)

The Curate : Nothing of the kind. I never used such words, and I do not withdraw anything.

Mr. George, proceeding, said that the fact that the curate had stated that he wished they would all go to the same fold showed what his opinion of Nonconformity was. What was the condition of Wales when she was being taught by men of the order to which the curate belonged before Nonconformity made its influence felt ? Low in morality and religion. It was the giants of Nonconformity that made the desert a paradise in spite of the parsons. Still this curate had the audacity to say that those mighty men, those splendid leaders of Nonconformity, had been a curse to Wales. ("Shame.") The clerical gentleman had given them a bit of his sermon. He could not blame him for doing that. It was not often that he got a congregation to listen to his sermons, and

when, through luck, he got one the temptation was very great. (Laughter.) He was of the same opinion as the curate, that dissension was the curse of the Welsh people. In that way they lost their battles for freedom when struggling against the oppression of the Englishman. He hoped they would take the advice of the curate, and unite better. If they did that they would be able to fight the battles of freedom victoriously. They would sweep away the oppression of the alien, and not the least alien was the alien Church to which this curate belonged. (Cheers.)

The curate remarked that as the speaker had said so much about the parson, he was going to say something about the lawyers. They were a very honest and just people—remarkable for these two virtues. Their great object was to drive people to fight each other; but he hoped they would not be misled, and advised them to live in harmony. Rather than take away the tithe from the clergymen of the Church of England, he hoped they would contribute more towards the support of their own ministers.

Mr. George said that his opponent had insulted the lawyers and thrown suspicion on their honesty and integrity. As a lawyer it was not for him to say much about members of his own profession. But whatever the dishonesty of lawyers, they were too honest to charge people who never asked advice of them. (Cheers.) He knew of another order who boasted of their virtues, and who were accustomed to send big bills to people who never asked for their service, and were never inside their offices even. (Laughter.) Without making any boast as to the integrity of lawyers, if their integrity was not greater than that of those publicans they had but a poor chance of entering the kingdom of heaven. (Loud laughter.) And another thing about lawyers was this—it was well to have them when people took possession of property that did not belong to them. Only one-fourth of the tithe belonged to the parsons. As to their claim to the other three parts he would use the word of his opponent to describe it—it was "robbery." (Cheers.) When a farmer purchased a holding his lawyer asked for the title of the seller, and if he had not got one the lawyer advised the farmer not to pay. He had inquired into the title of the Church to the tithe. To three parts out of four, at any rate, she had no right. Therefore he advised the farmers not to pay. (Cheers.) It was a good thing to have such lawyers, when there was a rather bad title. (Laughter.) As to the rest of the curate's speech he could not answer it, as there was nothing in it to answer. When he tried to deal with it he felt as though he were "beating the air," and fighting with the wind. (Laughter.) An agreement was a good thing when it was upon fair terms. It was a very bad thing to agree with a robber, if they could conquer him. (Cheers.) It was said, "Agree with thy adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him," but if he was a highwayman, it was a different thing. (Laughter.) The curate advised the people to contribute towards the support of their own ministry. The best way to bring that about was for him to advise the parsons to give up the tithe. Then the people would have more to give their ministers. (Cheers.)

By this time the audience had greatly increased and was very much excited. After continually interrupting the other speaker, the curate again tried to address the audience, but he was not permitted to say anything, and at last they rushed at him to pull him down, though the chairman appealed for fair play.

A farmer standing in the middle of the crowd suggested that they should divide—every one for disestablishment to go to the right side and every one for the tithe to go to the left.

Mr. George: Yes, the goats to the left. (Laughter.)

The crowd then moved to the right, leaving one constable to represent the tithe and the Church.

Reports about this meeting have spread through Lleyn, and it has been arranged to hold similar meetings in various places soon.

II.—MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S SPEECH ON THE SECOND READING OF THE TITHE RENT-CHARGE (RATES) BILL, JUNE 29, 1899.

The right honourable gentleman[1] has invited us on this side of the House to make hay while the sun shines ; but as all the hay has been carted on to the landlords' and the parsons' hayricks, I do not think there is much for us to attend to. The right honourable gentleman has also every confidence in the justice of the cause which he puts before the country ; but that confidence does not appear to be shared by Oldham, where both the Conservative candidates absolutely repudiated this Bill, and said that if they were returned, they would vote against it ; but I understand that this Bill has destroyed any chance they might have had of carrying out the promise. Since this Bill of doles has been introduced into the House, the electors of Plymouth have expressed their opinions in an emphatic manner, and completely at variance with those of the honourable and learned Member representing them in this House.

But I rise now as a Welsh Member to protest against this measure, because we have a grievance with regard to this matter. Our grievance is a peculiar one, because this measure seeks to appropriate funds which are very largely drawn upon for educational purposes by Wales. Our grievance is still stronger, for the reason that in Wales we have exhausted every means under the Constitution to protest against using funds which belong to education to keep up a Church which only applies to a minority of the population. I would not say anything if a strong case were made out for remedying an obvious injustice, but in this case the clergy are not the only or the greatest sufferers by the anomalies of our present system of rating. It is not merely the rating of income, but the rating of machinery which produces the income as well. What is the case of the lodging-house keeper in seaside resorts, as in my own constituency ? He lives in a house which is larger than he himself can use, and from which he derives a precarious income, and he is rated upon the value of that house to an extent larger, perhaps, than the income he receives. But the case of the shopkeeper, the lodging-house keeper, the quarryman—all these are forgotten, and only the case of one section of the community is to be considered. The Government pick and choose. While on the question of the Agricultural Rating Actt I am glad we have had an expression of opinion from the Royal Commission in regard to that Act, which confirms exactly what we pointed out at the time it was under discussion. It has increased the burdens on the general ratepayers throughout the country. I hold in my hand a statemen, which has been produced by a rural district council in Yorkshire, which

[1] Mr. Walter Long.

shows that in every single parish of the district the effect of the Agricultural Rating Act has been to raise the rates—in one case to the extent of 1*s.* and in another case to 1*s.* 9*d.* in the pound. This is due entirely to the miserable system of doles initiated by the present Government. It is perfectly true that the clergy suffer, but what about the shopkeeper, the artisan, the lodging-house keeper, and all other sections of the community? Not a word is said about them. A good deal has been said during this debate by way of expressing sympathy with the clergy in their distress; but the way in which the clergy have acted in this matter has lessened the sympathy which might otherwise have been felt for them. They gave evidence before the Royal Commission. They were there to represent their parishioners; they knew perfectly well that the grievances they endured were participated in by all their parishioners. But not a single word was given of any grievance suffered by these parishioners. It was all about their own injustice, their own grievance.

The Rev. James Manners Sutton, a rector from Suffolk, gave evidence. One of the first questions put to him was, "I understand that the rates in your parish have, as a matter of fact, risen very much during the last three years?" His answer was, "Very much indeed in my case, if that is what you mean." "I mean in the parish as a whole," said the Chairman. To which the reverend gentleman replied, "I have not gone into how the rates of the parish as a whole have risen." It is only when the facts are elicited, and when it is shown that the rates of the parish have gone up very largely through the operation of the Agricultural Rating Act, that this reverend gentleman very reluctantly admits that others suffer as much as he does. This is the "Am I my brother's keeper" attitude taken up by the spiritual guides of the people.

Hon. Members: Oh! Oh!

I do not see why these gentlemen should be spared. They are coming here to ask for £87,000 at the expense of the people, who are suffering in many cases much more than they are, and I think it is high time that the facts should be stated in regard to them. They are not taxed on their professional income. The point has been made over and over again, that the maintenance of the poor was a tax on the tithe. That has been challenged. Of course, it was imposed in the first instance for the maintenance of the poor. We hear a good deal of the opinion of the Fathers of the Church nowadays. It is always quoted whenever there is a question of ritual. One of these Holy Fathers wrote:

> Men pay tithes for God's church: let the priest divide them into three—one part for the repairs of the church, the second part for the poor, and the third part for God's servant.

What has become of the poor's third part? At the present moment they are getting 2*s.* in the pound, or a tenth, whereas formerly it was a third, or 6*s.* 8*d.* Now they say "a tenth is too much, we should only pay a twentieth." The Fathers of the Church may be good enough for quotation to justify a breach of the law of the land in regard to extravagant ritual, but whenever it is a question of fulfilling the obligations imposed on them, then the Fathers

of the Church are thrown overboard, and "The King *v.* Jodrell" is brought in instead. It is very wonderful how the opinions of the clergy alter according to the character of these decisions in regard to ecclesiastical matters. The right honourable gentleman [1] who has just sat down quoted very largely from some authority with regard to the voluntary contributions of the Church towards carrying on its work. This was in reply to the taunts made from this side of the House, that if the clergy were in distress, the members of the Church should supplement their income by their own subscriptions. There was a letter in the "Standard" this week, which supports the Clergy Tithe Rent-charge Bill. The writer, who signs his name, says:

> I have examined the reports of the Church funds and charities, and have analysed the offertories at many large churches, with the result that the average contribution scarcely represents 1½*d.* per worshipper.

Now the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales contribute 30*s.* per head, and among the members are the quarrymen of the community. These men sacrifice their lives to earn every penny they place on the altar; and yet they are asked by this Bill to contribute in addition in aid of clergymen whose supporters value their services at 1½*d.* per head. No marvel that there is a strong feeling in every part of the country in regard to the iniquity of this proposal now before the House.

On what is this dole of £87,000 based? Upon a Report brought up in a hurry by a Commission appointed for another purpose. I trust honourable Members have perused the Report. As far as I can see, the main pillar and support of this policy was a clergyman of the name of Jones. The changes are many on the name of the Rev. Mr. Jones on page after page of the Report. First of all we have what the Rev. Mr. Jones said in 1836, and then what he said in 1840; and then there is a pamphlet which proves that the Rev. Mr. Jones is of the same opinion in 1850; and then there is a quotation in a footnote from a letter written by the Rev. Mr. Jones to Sir Robert Peel. All is Jones, until you get sick of the Rev. Mr. Jones, in spite of the honourable and ancient name he bears, and until you do not care "What Happened to Jones." Jones is really the basis of the whole case. But then he is supported by the Rev. Mr. Stevens, who is said to be an authority on tithe—quite a superfluous explanation, for he is a clergyman. It is just like saying that a lawyer is an authority on fees. Then after this clergyman there is some gentleman of the name of Peterson, who is a kind of bum-bailiff for the collection of tithes. That is the kind of impartial gentleman who gives evidence on which we are asked to grant this £87,000. Finally there is the climax of the whole thing—the evidence of the secretary of the Church party in this House. And that is the evidence on which we are asked to vote money out of the funds used for educational purposes. It is said we must make deductions for the services of the clergy. What an insult to the clergy! Their services are valued by the Government at half the sum paid for them. I should say the services of the clergy are worth what they are paid for them. No, there is really no grievance. I would

[1] Sir W. Hart Dyke (Kent, Dartford).

invite the attention of the House to the grievance Mr. Jones makes out. He says, before the Commutation days the income of the clergy was not known, and therefore the overseers could not get at it; and in the case of the land the overseers could not ascertain what the value was, and the farmers got off. But since the Commutation the value of the clergyman's interest is known, and he never escapes his little liabilities! And this grievance has lived since 1836, and Mr. Jones has left this as a *post obit*—that the clergy are not now in as good a position to deceive the overseers as formerly. This is a grievance seriously put forth by a minister of the only "Hall-marked religion" in the land. Is that a grievance on which to base a claim of this character? It is necessary not merely to make out a case of grievance, but a case of urgency. It is admitted that our system of local taxation is unfair, unequal, and inequitable. It is admitted by honourable gentlemen opposite that large sections of the community are suffering sorely from the same grievance. Therefore we say Why not redress the grievance of everybody at the same time? If you redress the grievance piecemeal, it is not made less, but is increased. The grievance will be increased to all except the clergy by another 2*d*. in the pound by this Bill. You profess that you have got a case of special urgency for the clergy; but the real urgency is to be found in the case of the rural ratepayer, whose rates are exceedingly high at the present moment in many districts of England and Wales. A rate of 8*s*. in the pound has been quoted, but I know of a case where it is 11*s*. 3*d*. in the pound. The result of these high rates is that there is a practical bar to every public improvement. The provision of open spaces, increased accommodation for the working classes, improved sanitation—all these things are being stopped by the high rates. I can give evidence of clergymen themselves to show what a terror an increase in the rates is to them. One clergyman says, "I am very much afraid that next year will bring in some sanitary expense." Human nature is pretty much the same, especially if it is in holy orders. We have heard a good deal of the condition of the poor in large towns, of fever-breeding congested districts, and of people rotting in the slums, but nothing has been done to improve these conditions. It is the high rates that are stopping the improvements, and in passing this Bill we will aggravate the matter. What an answer this Bill will be to those Welsh constituencies who at the last election gave up their share in the great struggle for religious equality, which has been part of the inheritance of their race! And what for? For a prospect of a 5*s*. pension when sixty-five years of age, and for the sake of the prospect of improved dwellings. All I can say is that the mess of pottage promised to them has been consumed by other gentlemen who are higher up at the table. Yes; the disappointment is not confined merely to the Welsh constituencies. Go into Lancashire, into Cornwall, and all over the country, and any one who looks up the record of this Government must see what effect it will have on the rural constituencies. There you have a gentleman who owns the whole of a parish, and all over the country there are communities working hard, late and early, to increase his wealth and consequence. He has got his old-age pension already.

Hon. Members: Question.

It is the question, and honourable Members will find it out. He has got it already ; and then comes the priest of his household, who gets three times the income which the poor Nonconformist minister receives (£10, £20, or £50 a year)—and he gets his pension. But the man who was talked about far more than any other at the last election, the working man, is entirely left out. There was not a word said about the Clerical Tithes Bill then. It was not on the "Manchester Card." It was not on the "Birmingham Liberal Unionist Programme." But the promises made to the working man were there clear, definite, and detailed. The age was fixed, the amount of the pension was fixed, and "any further particulars can be supplied by the Liberal Unionist agents." But the money which was to be devoted to this purpose has been given to the landlord and the parson. Why, the squire and the parson have broken into the poor box, and divided its contents among them. I would remind honourable gentlemen opposite that these promises were not made by politicians hungering for office, and making any promises at random. They were made by gentlemen who at the moment were Ministers of the Crown, and that was what lent importance to them, and that is why they were believed. They were spoken, not on behalf of a great party, but in the name of the Throne, and "shall Cæsar send a lie ?" I say that the men who were promised some provision for old age are still left out in the cold, and the Tammany ring of landlords and parsons are dividing, by this Bill, the last remnants of the money between them.

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