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THE BOZZY FOR ALL ENGLAND

A Wonderful Glimpse of an Enchanted Stage Filled with Great Actors

WHETHER you like politics mixed up with literature and philosophy or not, you can't help being interested in what Viscount John Morley thought about all the great people he had ever met—and he seems to have met most of them. Morley was to England what Bozzy was to old Dr. Johnson. His book of Recollections is the greatest thing of its kind that ever came out in any language. Written by a man who sidetracked literature for politics, but never became Premier, who hated war, but loved England; who never knew much about Germany and took very little interest in Canada; absorbed in scientific and literary people, but caring little for art and nothing at all for music. We don't have John Morleys in Canada. One would be a great blessing. Just one.

THIRTEEN years ago I first and last encountered John Morley, Little Englander, lukewarm Imperialist, friend of Ireland, student of India, man of letters and editor, acquainted with most of the leading men of science and literature in every country but Germany, author of *Life of Gladstone*, of Burke, Voltaire, Cromwell, and finally of his own *Recollections*, of which this article is an appreciation. Be it known I did not meet the most distinguished scholar-statesman of England in a social way. I was sent to interview him at the home of Goldwin Smith. John Morley hates interviews. He came downstairs on purpose to tell me so. I remember well that as he stood over me—I sat down again in one of those pre-Raphaelite hall chairs of the Grange—he was dressed in black trousers, navy-blue coat and waistcoat and a flaring tie, only a shade redder than his keen, honest face, whose eyes bored me through and through. I was determined to get an impression; he equally not to give one. He protested in most elegant English on his horror of interviewers, gave me three contradictory reasons why no man should labor on the Sabbath and very courteously followed me to the door.

Knowing almost everything that a man needs to know for happiness on earth, he had divulged nothing. Having just completed his exhaustive *Life of Gladstone*, whose closest political friend and adviser he was, on his way to visit President Roosevelt at the White House, he seemed to regard me as another tiresome specimen of the lesser fleas sent by the Creator to pester real humanity. I quite enjoyed the courteous contempt of this famous man and perfect English gentleman.

"It's a lovely morning, sir," I ventured to remark.

And it was—one of those glorious Canadian autumn days which he could have described so well, for he has several landscape appreciations in his *Recollections*.

"On that I have no opinions whatever," he said, teleologically.

This last of Morley's books is one of the rarest of its kind. I have been comparing it casually with Bismarck's *Thoughts and Recollections* covering about the same period of time. What a difference! All that Bismarck was, John Morley was not. The difference between these two, if it could have been understood by England while Bismarck was alive, would have made the war impossible.

John Morley began to understand England when he became editor



By THE EDITOR

of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and a friend of John Bright. He came to maturity in an England that had ceased to take active interest in Europe after the Crimean War. Hence he knew the thinkers of France, and by association those of Italy. He seems to have taken very little interest in Germany and not much more in Russia, except as that country affected the problems of India, whose Secretary of State he was during the whole term that Lord Minto was Viceroy. His allusions to Canada are almost painfully monocled. He scarcely seemed aware of our existence. He was here but once; twice in the United States, the first time in 1868; never in India, though in his letters to Minto he often spoke of going there; never in South Africa, though he was almost a pro-Boer; seldom or never in Germany, or Russia—or anywhere much but in dear old England, to which he belonged as much as Charles Dickens; and sometimes in France.

John Morley represents all that is best in the real Englishman: King, Lords and Commons—and the Fourth Estate; and his own constituents in Parliament were workingmen. Not a bit of a snob; a true Liberal, but never a Radical; as much a friend of Joe Chamberlain's as of Gladstone or Parnell. England to him was full enough of people and problems to keep him busy. His brain was never idle. He was an Oxonian, continually delving into the classics and steeped in literature; a literary man, who by force of necessity became a statesman, and a politician; a thinking man, almost a near philosopher, who never found politics too small. Mentally one of the biggest men of his day, he was superbly at home in college halls; but he made himself equally at home on the hustings. Books were his constant delight. He loved to write. Style and poetry and forms of beauty were more to John Morley than problems of Empire. But he had also an inborn John Bull love of an open fight—in language.

TEMPERAMENTALLY a pacifist, he hated war, which was one reason he sympathized with the Boers. He was an apostle of conciliation. That he was never Foreign Secretary must have been a mistake. Perhaps he was too much of an Englishman. He had a fellow-feeling for Ireland, and was an ardent Home Ruler. He liked the Scotch and was elected time and again by Scotchmen. He was born in a factory district, town of Blackburn in Lancashire; and he never lost his sincerely good-natured interest in factory problems. To him the wheels of dear old England ran hard enough, and the parks of England were fine enough, the landscapes of England lovely enough—to keep any man interested for one lifetime. He often spoke of the Himalayas, and he had seen the Alps but he makes no references to the Rockies.

Oh, well, we could forgive him all his neglect of Canada, if only he had taken the trouble to study Germany. To him the Rhine valley was a hinterland. He speaks sometimes of Bismarck, always ad-