

Through a Monocle

IT was Mr. Winston Churchill's misfortune that he visited this country when still a boy. Every time he takes a step upward in British public affairs, those who met him when he was here, marvel that sage old John Bull can place so much confidence in so bumptious and tactless an individual. Now we have all met John Bull more or less—at any rate in the pages of history—and we ought to know that he is a pretty good judge of men. If he is willing to entrust important positions to the hands of Mr. Winston Churchill, we might fairly infer that this cannot be the same lad who set everybody by the ears when he made his lightning tour through Canada in the character of Britain's "Future Premier". Some years have passed since then; and Mr. Winston Churchill ought to have grown up. Everything points to the conclusion that he has grown up. Personally I had an opportunity to hear him after his visit to Canada and after he had had the steadying influence of public life for a while; and I have never been able to identify the able and clear-headed young fellow I then listened to, with the character whom my friends report to have met under his name in Canada.

* * *

I HAVE no notion, however, that he was represented by a "double". It recalls rather the story of the custodian of a museum who absent-mindedly showed his visitors two skulls of Cromwell in different rooms; and, when taken to task on the point, said: "Oh, this is his skull when he was a boy." We have all been boys, and most of us would mightily hate to be judged ever after by the foolish things that we did and said during that callow period. At all events, Mr. Winston Churchill is now a man to be reckoned with. He is one of the "first class fighting men" in a Government which is not deficient in this respect; and he has shown great ability as a debater in the House of Commons. During recess, it is not too much trouble for him to run down to South Africa and look the situation over there; and we may hope that in some future recess he may come again to Canada and wipe out the unpleasant impression which there is no doubt he has left here. Neither Mr. Churchill nor this great Colony can afford to permit a wrong impression of this sort to continue to exist.

* * *

AS I write, there is as yet no contradiction of the statement that Mr. John Morley has accepted a peerage. Rather excuses have come over the cable. We are told, for instance, that he owes debts of honour; and that only by carrying his ministerial salary to the security of the Lords can he earn the money to pay them off. This explanation disregards the fact that he owes a far greater debt of honour than any financial obligation to the democrats throughout the Empire who have believed in and followed him. A man has no right to invite the confidence of a great section of the people, and to identify his name with their cause through a lifetime of public service to it, and then accept the livery of their opponents at the culmination of his career. By his life-long alliance with them, he has parted with a certain share of the ownership of his identity. If he changes his principles, he can then recover his whole identity; but he must confess his change of heart openly. For a democrat to accept a peerage without some such confession, is to betray a regimental flag into the hands of the enemy.

* * *

WHAT I have written will be just as true if it turns out that Mr. John Morley has not surrendered. It would be a curious thing if it should turn out that, while Mr. Gladstone began life as a high Tory and ended by refusing an earldom, his biographer began as a Radical in politics and religion, and ended as a Viscount with an unknown name. Mr. Winston Churchill belongs to a cadet branch of the House of Marlborough; but one does not have to carry the House of Marlborough very far back to find "Jack" Churchill, who was a man of action who cared little for precedents and previous affiliations. Whatever else may be said for or against Mr. Chamberlain, he did not at all events retire to the House of Lords; and by that much kept his fealty to the Radical principles by which he

climbed to power. If the democracy of Britain is ever to destroy the citadel of Privilege and make the vote of a Commoner as potent as the vote of a Peer, its leaders must have the fortitude to die in the faith.

* * *

THEY are remarking that Mr. Asquith is the first lawyer to rise to the British Premiership in many a long day. That will be a surprise to most Canadians who think that no man is qualified for a premiership unless he has learned to talk in a law office. It is true that one of our best Dominion premiers was a stone-mason; but he was only the exception which proves the rule. The legal profession has us hypnotised. Even poor Senator Ross, who had been a good school teacher, did not think he could get on in the world without making himself a nominal lawyer. To-day at Ottawa, a lawyer leads the Government, and a lawyer leads the Opposition. At Toronto, two lawyers face each other. Sir Oliver Mowat was a lawyer; and so were Messrs. Hardy and Ross. Sir John Macdonald was a lawyer, and so were Messrs. Abbott and Thompson. Sir Mackenzie Bowell and Sir Charles Tupper were not; but things went to pieces under them. I venture to say that most people think that it is a piece of presumption for any man to dream of being premier without a barrister's gown to his back. But in good old Britain, they do not imagine that it is unconstitutional to make a layman First Minister.

N'IMPORTE

GENEROUS.

A DESPATCH from London relates that while the notorious suffragette, Mrs. Pankhurst, was conducting a meeting at Newton Abbey, Devonshire, a farmer in the audience stood up and publicly offered to marry her. Mrs. Pankhurst replied freezingly that she was not there to answer personal questions. The farmer rejoined that he thought that as she was a widow a husband would be useful to her as a voter.

* * *

YOUNG CANADA.

By J. Hunt Stanford.

'Tis a land where nature hoarded wealth and wonder yet untold
For the Nation which she knew one day would be;
'Tis a land whose choicest riches are the prairies waving gold,
And the argosies she sends to every sea.
'Tis a land whose aristocracy are tillers of the soil,
And whose rulers from the scourge of sloth are free;
'Tis a land that seeks her heroes in the ranks of those who toil,
And young Canada is good enough for me!
—From "Miriam and Other Poems."



Local Oracle. "Well, gents, it's like this 'ere. There's things as is, and there's things as isn't; and there's some things as neither is nor isn't. And, to my thinking, this 'ere noo regulation o' the parish council comes somewhere between the last two."—Punch.