SKETCH OF CHARLES JAMES FOX THE GREAT WHIG STATESMAN

His Unique Personal Charm Felt By Everyone Who Came in Contact With Him—A Scholar and Orator of the First Rank—An Ardent Friend of Liberty.

London Times: Pitt's death was of immense political and national importance; it deprived England of the man who, in the opinion of the great majority, was her chief defense against the world-embracing ambition of Napoleon. But except among his colleagues, the leaders of the Tory party, the disappearance of the great statesman left but little sense of that personal bereavement which the death of Fox occasioned in every class of the community. It was not only the Dissenters and, as we should now call them, the advanced Liberals who mourned him, like that old Manchester merchant whose pathetic story is recorded in Sir George Trevelyan's book, and whose son, a child at the time, used afterwards to describe the scene: "The untasted meal; the unaccustomed tears; the uplifted hands; the exclamation that the cause for which so much had been sacrificed, and suffered, had received an irreparable blow." Nor was it only the Whig party, though they saw in the death of Fox the foundering of their hopes of bringing to a conclusion the long and exhausting war and of devoting themselves at last to long-desired domestic reforms. Everybody, in fact—except the King and Madame Du Deffand—everybody who had seen him, heard him, or come into any kind of contact with him during a public career of six-and-thirty years, had received from Charles Fox the impression of a unique and personal charm. Professional scholars admired one who knew Homer and Euripides as well as they did, and enjoyed them infinitely more. A parliamentary colleague had said long ago, "There are forty of us, every man of whom would willingly be hanged for Fox." He trampled on Lord North in Parliament, and a few days afterwards North addressed him as "Charles," in terms of unshaken affection. Once in his unregenerate days the London mob tried to murder him, but a few years afterwards the electors of Westminster were, and continued to be, his humble slaves. Old Johnson, the most truculent of Tories, said, "I am for Fox against Pitt, for Fox is my friend." The hypercritical Horace Walpole could not restrain his admiration for the "genius, nay, inspiration," which Fox revealed in debate. His wife adored him, and he adored his wife. Everybody knows the stories about the Duchess of Devonshire's devotion to him; what is less known is that the mere sight of him made a profound impression upon a much more demure lady, the young and virtuous Tory, Hannah More. In 1784, she wrote: "Unfortunately for my principles, I met Fox canvassing the other day, and he looked so sensible and agreeable that if I had not turned my eyes another way, I believe it would have been all over with me." And, lastly, his death drew a poem from that most stalwart of the Tories of 1806, Walter Scott, anxious that his muse should "record, Fox died a Briton, yet!"

But personal charm is evanescent, and scarcely survives the generation which has directly experienced it. We can never hope to understand the attraction of Fox as it was felt by his contemporaries; and for one of the causes he himself is in a great measure responsible. The record of his parliamentary speeches, on which, after all, our estimate of his political charactor must be based, is imperfect, because they were imperfectly reported, or not reported at all—only recorded from memory. Johnson, in a famous phrase, has described the nature of the so-called reports of speeches in Parliament which he himself supplied to the Gentleman's Magazine: "I saved appearances tolerably well, but I took care the Whig dogs should not have the best of it." When Lord Erskine, many years afterwards, edited Fox's speeches, he had something to go upon a little more trustworthy than Johnson, but he laments that the shorthand transcripts were so few. It was true, he said, that "in the most imperfect relics of Fox's speeches the bones of a giant are to be discovered," but bones give nothing more than a skeleton at best. The truth is that, in that unseemly contest between the House of Commons and the press, which raged in and about the year 1770, young Fox was the most active and by far the most efficient of the soldiers of what was called privilege. Modern Liberals are fond of speaking of these years as the "frivolous beginning" of Fox's career, but they were serious enough while they lasted, and the work that he did then has been a double injury to his fame. Still, the records of his speeches, taken together with contemporary comments, give a sufficiently complete picture of his public work and of his influence upon English history. They show us that the belief from which he started and from which he never swerved — though his practical applications of it were as various as the patterns of a kaleidoscope—was a belief in the power, dignity, and almost the sacredness of Parliament. It was through a wrong-headed deduction from this principle that he took sides against the electors of Middlesex, and through another, in those early "frivolous" days, that he fought with such preternatural ingenuity against the presence of reporters in Parliament. It was only long afterwards that he came to see and to admit that "the public has a right to know what Parliament is doing." The same principle, that of the sacredness of Parliament, led him, when experience had opened his eyes, to strain every nerve against the power which was deliberately corrupting Parliament, and, by a system of places and pensions, was turning it into a convenient tool for despotism. What evil could be wrought by a despotic and obstinate King, working through a corrupt House of Commons, was soon made apparent in the American war; and from this time forward Fox, who had given a taste of his quality in the debates on the royal marriage bill, was vehement in Opposition, constantly protesting against the war, and clamoring in vain for an appeal to the country. When at last the Whigs came into power, the ill-luck which was always to attend him as a minister, broke up the ministry and deferred the peace. Rockingham, the prime minister, was a dying man, and Shelburne, Fox's co-secretary, could not or would not work with him. The Government collapsed; the coalition that followed with North was a failure, and the rule of the youthful Pitt began, and continued for twenty eventful years.

People have often asked themselves what would have happened had Fox, and not Pitt, been prime minister of England during the early years of the French revolution. As he was in Opposition, he saw no reason to be any more moderate in the expression of his views on the popular side than he had been during the American war. His public utterances did not materially differ from what he wrote in a private letter to his friend Fitzpatrick on the fall of the Bastile: "How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world, and how much the best!" Under the Bourbon regime, Fox's leading idea in foreign policy had been an alliance between England and the states of Central Europe directed against France; but now he wrote to the Duke of Portland to say that with a revolutionary government in France he was quite willing to be connected. Suppose for a moment he had been able to carry out the idea, and that by throwing the weight of England into the scale he had contrived to make terms between Louis XVI. and the revolution, to stop the invasion, and to prevent the Terror! England might never have had a national debt and the world might never have heard of Napoleon. But such speculations, interesting as they are, are unhappily futile; and, as we know, events followed a quite opposite course. Europe was plunged in a devastating war, and, in this country, the realization of the objects which lay nearest to Fox's heart had perforce to be postponed for a generation. As it was decided not to attempt to guide the revolution, we had to fight it; and to fight it meant reaction at home, persistent and long continued. As historical students we may admit the painful necessity of it, but it is quite certain that no Englishman of today, to whom liberty is as natural and as necessary as the air he breathes, would like to experience a revival of it even for a week. Charles Fox may have aimed at ideals which in the circumstances of his time could not have been realized without disaster; but we, who are the heirs alike of his efforts and of Pitt's, should not hesitate to record our gratitude to one who, in the words of his Whig biographer, was, with all his eccentricities and all his waywardness, "an ardent, consistent and thorough lover of liberty."

HISTORY OF GRAY'S ELEGY

MODEST AUTHOR DID NOT WRITE IT FOR PUBLICATION.

Stoke Poges Put Up for Sale—The Poem Finished There.

HISTORY 6 ..6 ..6 ..6 ..6 ..6..6..6..

A day or two ago Stoke Park, which includes Stoke Poges, was put up for sale. Everybody knows that Gray's "Elegy" is associated with Stoke Poges churchyard, though it seems doubtful whether the idea originated there. The poem contains practically no topographical details; there are scores of village churchyards in England which might just as well have served for background. But it is pretty certain that Gray finished the "Elegy" at Stoke Poges, and the association will no doubt live as long as the words. More interesting than this, however, are the details of the publication of the poem, which my readers may be glad to have recalled. Gray was shy and sensitive and shrank from the nervous anxieties of publication. After the "Elegy" was written the author passed it round among his friends. After a time he allowed copies to circulate in manuscript, one of which, through the carelessness—or possibly, the kindliness—of Horace Walpole, fell into the hands of the editor of the Magazine of Magazines. This gentleman, in a way which would not be tolerated nowadays, informed Gray that he meant to print the "Elegy," which forced the poet to print it himself. Writing to Horace Walpole he said: "I have but one bad way left to escape the honor they would inflict upon me; and therefore am obliged to desire you to make Dodsley print it immediately (which may be done in less than a week's time) from your copy, but without my name."

Walpole obediently followed Gray's directions, adding an advertisement to the effect that the publication was due to an unavoidable accident. Yet, after all, Dodsley was too late. The "Elegy" appeared in the Magazine of Magazines in February, 1751. It was introduced thus by an imaginary literary wag: "Gentlemen, give me leave to soothe my own melancholy and amuse you in a most noble manner, with a full copy of verses by the most ingenious Mr. Gray, of Peterhouse, Cambridge. They are stanzas written in a country churchyard." The Dodsley edition, in quarto, at the price of sixpence, appeared anonymously a few days later, with the title, 'An Elegy wrote in a Country Churchyard." On the title-page were the unnecessary and conventional symbols of crossbones, skulls and hour-glasses. In two months the slim volume went through four editions, and eleven in a short time, besides which the poem was largely pirated. Gray left all the profits to Dodsley, he himself consistently declining to accept any payment for his poems. Thus fame was thrust upon a man who had no desire for publicity, being perfectly content with the approval of his friends. The original manuscript of the "Elegy" is still in existence, written with a quill pen on four sides of a double half-sheet of yellow foolscap in Gray's neat and legible hand.—T. P.'s Weekly.

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FORCED TO REMOVE APPENDIX FROM TWELVE CONGO NATIVES

Before Operating on Congo Chief—Extraordinary and Trying Experience of a Belgian Surgeon—The Marvels of Chloroform.

Dr. Emil Maestricht, surgeon-major in the Belgian army, stationed in the Congo Free State, saved the lives of twelve negroes by operating on them for appendicitis, and none of the negroes had appendicitis, but they had to be operated on or be killed with a war club. The young Belgian surgeon put them all under the knife as an act of mercy, hoping against hope that none of them would die. As a matter of fact, they all recovered.

No surgeon ever faced a more terrible responsibility. Imagine an operation for appendicitis in a jungle, under an equatorial sun, with no trained nurses, no surgical appliances, no hospital staff, no cleanliness, no means of keeping down the inevitable fever!

And yet these were the awful conditions under which the young surgeon worked and watched for six sleepless days and nights. He worked not only to save the lives of the twelve dusky patients, but to save his own, for he felt certain that if even one of the twelve died his own life would pay the forfeit.

Dr. Maestricht was attached to an expeditionary column sent to explore the almost inaccessible jungle between the Mombangi and Congo rivers north of their junction near Bakungo, only 50 miles above the equator. The column set out from Leopoldville on Jan. 21, ascending the Congo in a river steamer as far as Bakungo, making one stop for boat repairs at Maduma.

EXPEDITION PLUNGED INTO THE JUNGLE.

The party arrived at Bakungo on Feb. 3, where it halted until Feb. 10, in order to engage native carriers. Sailing from Bakungo on Feb.10, the steamer proceeded slowly up the river to Upoto, where there is a Belgian military post and missionary settlement. At Upoto the expedition left the river and plunged into the jungle, making towards the country east of Mugwardie, where there was believed to be a vast area of rubber forests as yet untouched.

It was at a native village 100 miles east of Mugwardie that Dr. Maestricht performed the twelve operations upon as many natives who did not have appendicitis. The village was a large one and the natives were exceedingly friendly. Stories of Belgian cruelties had not reached that far in the northern region of the Congo Free State. Besides, the expedition was made up of 25 Belgian soldiers, who with their native servants were well armed. This fact doubtless added to the friendliness of the village.

The lieutenant in command of the expedition was under orders to establish a post in the vicinity, to engage natives to make a clearing and assist in erecting the necessary buildings, to make contracts with the native chief for supplies of rubber, and to establish a line of communication by means of native runners and carriers to Upoto.

CHIEF OF THE TRIBE ILL.

The negotiations proceeded slowly because the chief was ill. Dr. Maestricht was sent to see him, and by questions addressed to the chief, through an interpreter, satisfied himself that the native potentate was suffering from incipient appendicitis, which might demand an operation.

It required many hours of laborious effort for Dr. Maestricht to explain to the chief just what was the matter with him. The chief knew less about anatomy than he did about the planet Mars, and he couldn't be made to understand what an appendix was and how it could be cut out without killing the man.

An old man in the village died and the young surgeon saw a way open to make the chief understand. Taking the chief to the dead man's hut he opened the body. He showed the chief the appendix and finally made him understand that he could open a live man's body, cut out the appendix, and that the man might get well.

Then a new difficult presented itself. The chief was afraid to allow the young surgeon to operate on him. He feared he would die. Finally, after hours had been spent in wrangling, the chief suddenly gave an order to one of his boys. The boy ran away quickly and returned with a young woman.

"Operate on her first," said the chief, with a crafty gleam in his dusky eyes. "If she gets well, perhaps I'll believe you."

YOUNG WOMAN PLACED UNDER KNIFE.

The young surgeon protested in vain that the young woman was not sick, but the chief grew suspicious and said that the surgeon had deceived him and wanted to kill him. There were angry mutterings all through the village, and the friendship of the natives rapidly was turning to open hostility at the news that the white doctor wanted to kill the chief. The success of the expedition was endangered almost in a moment.

"Operate on the woman, major," advised the lieutenant. "It's our only hope of getting away without a fight."

"But if she dies?" asked the young surgeon, anxiously.

The lieutenant puffed his cigarette lazily. "Well, we'll fight and run for it, then," he said.

Dr. Maestricht finally decided to perform the operation. Then a new difficulty presented itself. The young woman, who had learned what the fuss was about, refused to be operated on. She struggled and bit and filled the whole village with her frightened screams.

The chief gave a guttural order, and in a moment a muscular, grinning savage appeared, bearing a huge war club, at the sign of which the girl shrank to the ground, her screams silenced by the fear of death. She crawled to the chief's feet, clung to his knees, and begged for her life.

"Do as the white man's doctor says or you die," was the chief's sentence, and the girl arose and went to the surgeon.

CHIEF WATCHED EVERY MOVE.

Through an interpreter Dr. Maestricht explained to the woman that his knife should not hurt her. Aided by three of the Belgian soldiers who had been trained in hospital work, he prepared a rude table under the shade of a clump of large trees. Then he placed the girl under the influence of chloroform. The chief stood by and watched every move. The young surgeon performed the operation, through which the girl under the influence of the anesthetic never moved. So still she lay that the chief declared she was dead and that the white man's doctor had killed her.

Finally, to the chief's amazement, the seemingly dead girl stirred. Then her eyes opened languidly. After awhile she was able to speak in a weak voice. The chief asked her several questions, which she answered.

"It's the work of the evil spirit," asserted the chief. "She says the white man's doctor's knife never hurt her. She didn't feel it."

Still the chief was not satisfied. He sent for another young woman and ordered Dr. Maestricht to perform the operation on her. The young surgeon was forced to obey, for the chief said with a terrible gesture that unless he did the girl should die.

Again the Belgian doctor performed the operation, successfully as before, and again the chief stood by, suspiciously watching every move. As before, he insisted that the girl was dead, and he showed the same doubtful surprise when she came out from under the influence of the chloroform.

PATIENTS GUARDED DAY AND NIGHT.

Although exhausted from the strain of a double operation and the terrible responsibility under which he had been placed, Dr. Maestricht remained by the side of his two patients all night. It hardly seemed possible that they could recover from so serious an operation in that dreadful tropical climate. He divided the 24 hours into three periods of eight hours each, and requested his soldier nurses to take turns in assisting him in watching the patients, who were hovering between life and death. No royal patient in Europe ever was watched with more solicitude, for Dr. Maestricht realized that upon the recovery of these two negro women depended his own life and doubtless the lives of all his party.

The chief was at the "hospital" as Dr. Maestricht called the little clearing under the trees, early the next morning. He didn't conceal his surprise at finding them still alive. He sent for another girl.

"Her, too," he said meaningly to the surgeon.

Dr. Maestricht performed the third operation, the chief looking on. Before nightfall the surgeon had been compelled to perform operations on two more women, a man, and a boy, and he had seven patients in his hospital, all trying to recover from the effects of serious operations.

"The chief had progressed far enough in his education into the mysteries of appendicitis to understand the operation. He saw the five women, the man and the boy operated on. He saw that they did not die. He talked with them. But what he could not understand was their deathlike sleep after the doctor had placed a little paper funnel over their faces, into which one of the soldiers from time to time poured a few drops of a colorless liquid from a little bottle.

Dr. Maestricht poured a small quantity of chloroform on a sponge and held it to the nose of a terrier dog which belonged to the lieutenant. The dog struggled a moment and then lay still. Apparently it was dead. The chief pushed the limp body around on the ground with his naked foot. The dog never stirred. The chief declared it was dead. The doctor waited a few minutes and the terrier revived and in five minutes afterwards was as lively as ever.

Still the chief could not understand it.

Then he sent for five young men, all healthy young warriors.

"Them, too," he said.

There was nothing for the surgeon to do but to perform five more operations for appendicitis. As in all the other cases, the chief watched suspiciously and was careful to talk alone to each of the young men when they revived.

CHIEF CONVINCED AT LAST.

At last he was convinced. He had seen twelve persons sink into the deathlike slumber and recover. All of them were alive. He consented to be operated on himself.

There was great terror in the village when word was passed around from mouth to mouth that the chief was dead, and that the white man's doctor was cutting him up with a knife. Women wailed to the monotonous thumming of the big war drums and the warriors gathered in sullen groups to await the result. The lieutenant calmly smoked his cigarette, swaying in his hammock before his tent; but his carelessness was affected. Every soldier was alert and expecting the signal for battle.

Dr. Maestricht, with his nerves drawn to the highest tension, worked grimly at his task. The huge bulk of the chief lay before him like a black dog, never stirring with so much as a quiver of a muscle. The soldier nurses did their work with the precision of military hospital training. Every precaution was taken to insure a successful operation. And it was successful, else Dr. Maestricht had not lived to write the details of his terrible experience to an old university classmate at Antwerp. Not only did the chief recover, but all of his twelve appendixless subjects recovered, and Belgian authority firmly is established in that part of the Congo Free State.

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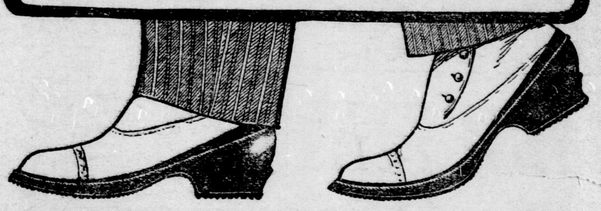

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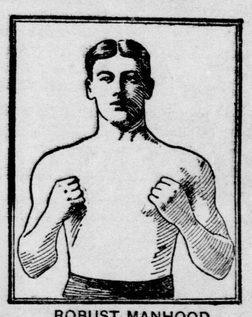

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