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The path of history is strewn with the wreckage of unnecessary failures. It offers records of many men who had the world before them and the prospect of splendid careers but foolishly turned their back upon their own chances and threw away all the glittering prizes of life for some idea, some principle, some enthusiasm which they had allowed to capture their soul and which made them in many cases the laughing stock of their generation. In every age a cynical world has found it a laughable spectacle to watch men of first-class brains and capacity deliberately rejecting the ordinary guerdons of success to stand by some principle or pursue some will o' the wisp, ideal for which no ordinary man of sense would give up a single evening's leisure or enjoyment. There was poor Socrates in Athens with the possibility of a great career as a teacher or an advocate wasting his time in dile disputation at the street corners. There was Rembrandt who starved amid riches simply because he would not paint the class of pictures demanded by the rich bourgeoisie of the day. There was Shelley sacrificing his family patrimony and his place in British aristocratic society to battle for the cause of liberty with his soulstirring songs. There was the famous partnership of Wilberforce and Clarkson surrendering careers, the one in ~~the~~ politics and the other in the church, for some black men in distant lands whom they had never seen. There was another later partnership of John Bright and Richard Cobden forswearing office and pride of place till their work was done and Shaftesbury the great Tory reformer spurning all honors and rewards lest his work for the poor factory children of England should suffer. It is true that some of these misguided people have reaped some posthumous rewards for their eccentricities. Socrates has something of a reputation in the world of philosophy, Rembrandt's pictures are only accessible to men with long purses, the names of Cobden and Shaftesbury are honoured in every land and clime as the models of disinterested statesmanship but each of them in their day and generation was derided as a fool and a mad missionary if not a pernicious rascal.

In the beadrill of such misguided idealists the present Premier of Canada will never be found. He is one of those stern realists who appreciate the career and its perquisites at its proper value; he will allow no silly principles or idealistic nonsense to stand in the way of its achievement and when one door to advancement is closed he will blithely jettison all things that need be jettisoned to get entry by another. Among living politicians he and Mr Winston Churchill stand in a class by themselves as acknowledged masters in the advancement of self-advancement with this vital difference that Mr Churchill's commanding always prevent him from bringing discredit to any office he adorns and Mr King's variegated talents do not. Both have led great rhetorical lives and both are wondrous skilled in the art of self-advertisement; but probably their greatest asset is a capacity to face things as they are and their clear understanding that the duty of the successful man is to succeed. Therefore, the world being what it is, the chances are that they will manage in their respective parliaments to sit many more years on the right hand of the Speaker than on the Left. Mr Churchill has now discarded the title of Liberal but our Premier will cling to it till his dying day. Both however are fundamental conservatives on one primary issue, the necessity of conserving their own careers and if their countries were to suffer by reason of this necessity why should they repine? Our Premier will find no lack of complaisant biographers to limn him to posterity as a brilliant type of the successful realist and why should he have any cause to envy obscure idealists like Socrates Shelley and Shaftesbury living ridiculous lives of principle and sacrifice and going to their graves derided by their contemporary generation.

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