

WINSTON CHURCHILL, M. P.

Enough of His Life to Show Which Way He Is Going

“EPHESIAN”

THERE is surely something significant in the fact that the most picturesque, perhaps the most highly destined figure in British political life to-day, Mr. Winston Churchill, is half American by birth.

Mark Twain certainly thought so. More than a quarter of a century ago the humorist presided at a New York lecture; the speaker was a young, red-haired, snub-nosed British subaltern who had just effected a sensational escape from a Boer prison in South Africa. “Ladies and Gentlemen,” drawled Mark Twain, “the lecturer to-night is Mr. Winston Churchill. By his father he is an Englishman, by his mother, an American. Behold the perfect man!” Whether this brief introduction set the youthful lecturer at his ease, it certainly put the audience in good humor. True, the first time Churchill mentioned the Boers, a group of Irishmen in the hall rose to their feet and cheered vociferously. “I am glad to hear those cheers, gentlemen,” remarked the unperturbed speaker; “you are quite right to cheer the Boers. They are a brave people, and they deserve all the cheers you can give them.” Then even the Irishmen were content to listen.

Less modest than his client, however, Churchill’s lecture-agent de-

scribed him in an advertisement as “The hero of five wars, the author of six books, and the future prime minister of Great Britain.” Churchill objected strongly to this description, although the first two claims were not untrue, and the third is to-day extremely likely to be realized. Who was the twenty-six-year-old youth who could be presented in such superlative terms?

Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill was born on November 30, 1874, at Blenheim Palace, the ancestral home of the dukes of Marlborough. His father was Lord Randolph Churchill, a son of the seventh duke, and himself one of the meteoric figures of British politics in the latter half of the last century. Lord Randolph sat in the House of Commons and was the founder of the small but famous “Fourth party,” to which his distant cousin, Mr. Arthur (now Lord) Balfour, also belonged. The aim of the Fourth party was to “ginger” the Conservative party, emasculated by the withdrawal of Disraeli to the House of Lords, and to embarrass the closing years of Gladstone’s premiership. Lord Randolph and his three colleagues succeeded so well in this twofold task, that they caused the downfall of the Gladstone administration, captured their own

party caucus, and secured for their leader high rank in the subsequent Conservative Government. Finally, Lord Randolph became chancellor of the exchequer at the age of thirty-seven, but unexpectedly resigned after a quarrel with Lord Salisbury. With his fall from power he virtually ceased to play a part in politics. Illness and long journeys abroad closed his life, and he died in 1895, leaving behind him a memory of brilliance and independence that were unique until his son, Winston Churchill, succeeded to and surpassed his political inheritance.

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Lord Randolph, as a young man of twenty-four, married Miss Jennie Jerome, of New York, the elder of the beautiful "Jerome sisters." Their father, Mr. Leonard Jerome, was the owner and editor of the "New York Times"; he founded also the first two great American race-courses, Jerome Park and Coney Island Jockey Club, and shared with Mr. August Belmont the title of Father of the American Turf. During the Civil War he gave half his fortune to the North, and, when in 1862, the war became temporarily unpopular, the "New York Times" office was attacked by a mob. But Leonard Jerome swiftly assembled a battery of artillery and armed his journalists with rifles. They fired on the crowd and dispersed them, not without bloodshed. He afterward represented his country at Trieste. From this energetic and adventurous man, who won and lost and won again a great fortune, Winston Churchill certainly inherits many of the remarkable characteristics which have singled him out from his contemporaries in European politics.

Does he owe to Leonard Jerome his extraordinary physical courage? Or is this a legacy from his great British ancestor, John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, that paragon of generals of all time? Reckless bravery has distinguished Winston Churchill from the outset of his career. His father, not recognizing the boy's intellectual gifts, sent him into the army, and it was as a subaltern in the Hussars that young Winston first attracted notice. As a youngster of twenty, he took part in the Spanish campaign in Cuba. Technically he was only the correspondent of a London newspaper, but he underwent his baptism of fire and received a Spanish military decoration. Two years later, bored with the peaceful procedure of garrison life in the south of India, he attached himself, again in the guise of a correspondent, to an expeditionary force operating on the Northwest frontier of that peninsula. In the following year he served again with a similar force, on each occasion distinguishing himself by his contempt of danger.

But these were little wars, and Churchill has never lacked ambition. He returned to England in 1897 eager to take sides in one of the Balkan wars or, what was much more difficult, to be included in the Nile expeditionary force that was about to advance into the Sudan under the command of Lord Kitchener. The Balkan combatants refused his services, while Lord Kitchener was known to dislike Churchill for his combination of journalism with soldiering and for his often undisguised criticism of operations. The young man nevertheless made his way to Egypt with a commission in the

Lancers. He took part in the charge at Omdurman, one of the most famous feats in British military history. Four hundred horsemen charged a compact mass of dervishes and, with heavy loss, forced their way through. As the battered Lancers reformed after the charge, Churchill saw one of his men, wounded and dismounted, beset by the enemy. He immediately turned his horse, galloped back and rescued him from mutilation and death.

Then came the Boer War. Churchill was no longer in the army. He had resigned his commission in order to devote himself to politics, and only a few weeks before the outbreak of hostilities, he made an unsuccessful attempt to enter Parliament. His interest in politics dated from his boyhood, when he first sat in the public gallery of the House of Commons. "What did you think of my speech?" a member asked him then. "I concluded, sir," replied young Churchill, "that the Ship of State is struggling in heavy seas."

He went out to South Africa, ostensibly as a newspaper correspondent, determined as ever to be in the thick of the fighting. His chance soon came. Outside Ladysmith, he defended a British armored train which was caught in an ambush by the Boers. For over an hour he rallied his handful of soldiers under a hail of bullets and shells, until at last they were overwhelmed. "Keep cool, men," he was overheard to say; "this will make good copy for my paper." He himself was rounded up by a Boer horseman who, disregarding with grim laughter his ingenious claim that, as a civilian correspondent, he

should be allowed to go free, drove him to join the other captives.

Six years later General Botha, the Boer statesman, came to London to discuss the future political organization of South Africa. At a dinner-party he met Churchill, then under-secretary of state for the colonies, who told him the story of his capture by the mounted Boer. "So you were the man?" said Botha; "I was the Boer on the horse."

Once again Churchill was unlucky to miss the Victoria Cross. It has been stated on good authority that, had he still been a regular officer, his heroic defense of the armored train would undoubtedly have gained for him this glorious guerdon of valor.

Captivity irked him; but it was not for long. Within a few weeks of his internment, Churchill effected the most sensational escape of the whole war. His political enemies have sometimes spread the slander that he broke his parole, but this is a lie. He scaled the wall of the prison one night and, though he could not speak the Boers' tongue and was ignorant of the country and almost without food, he succeeded in escaping to the Portuguese-African frontier, hundreds of miles away. His luck served him in this, as once before it had saved him from dying of thirst in the Egyptian desert and as it has saved him times without number, from enemy bullets. Thirst-racked, foot-sore and utterly exhausted, he dared to approach a Boer village, half-way to safety, and tap at one of the doors. It was the house of the only Englishman for a hundred miles around and, with his aid, Churchill consummated his escape.

The news reached England at a

moment when depression over the war was deepest. It seemed an omen of eventual success, and Churchill, now back at the Front again, was acclaimed the hero of the day. When at last the tide of battle turned and the British forces were in sight of victory, Churchill returned home to fight another election. The youth of twenty-five was met in triumph. His constituents elected him to Parliament, and the leaders of the Conservative party vied with each other to secure his presence on their platform. No man ever made a more sensational entrance into politics. Parliament seemed at his feet. Yet less than three years later he threw away all his popularity, all the prestige he had inherited from his father, all the influence of the Marlboroughs, all his hopes in the Conservative party, and went over to the Liberals in opposition.

The ostensible reason for his change of party was the protectionist issue raised by the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Churchill declared himself a rabid free-trader. But there were deeper reasons. The memory of Lord Randolph Churchill, the brilliant paladin of "tory democracy," and of the Fourth party's fight against the traditional stupidity of the Conservative leaders—these were the underlying forces, whether or not the young man was aware of it. He had indeed already committed the sin of independence. After a maiden speech in the House of Commons, which was well received and well supported by later speeches, Churchill fell foul of the Government's new army scheme. His father's political ruin had been due to an attempt to reduce expenditure on the army; the

son, in his own words, "raised again the tattered banner I have found lying on a stricken field," and in his turn, made a plea for military economy. From that moment he was a marked man. His Conservative leaders distrusted him; his colleagues jeered him; the preferment that he might have expected, was withheld; and bitter, unpopular and unhappy, the young man crossed to the Liberal benches, taking his seat there beside another young man who was afterward to become famous—Mr. Lloyd George.

The elections of 1906 overthrew the Conservatives and sent back the Liberal-Radicals with an overwhelming majority. Churchill was returned for Manchester. He was now, at thirty-one, one of the most forceful speakers in the country. His courage, evident in war and in his change of party, was no less conspicuous in his speeches, for, apart from the vigor and brilliance of his utterances, often outspoken to indiscretion, he had to fight an affliction of speech that would have deterred lesser men from ever entering politics. He had, and has still, a lisp which turns every "s" to an "sh." This may seem a small thing; it is true that the House of Commons soon became used to it, but it is a very serious affliction for a sensitive man called on to address large public gatherings. But Churchill, a modern Demosthenes, steeled himself to conquer his disability. He could not eradicate it, so he ignored it. He never chose his words to avoid sibilants, so common in English. He has had his reward, for to-day his audiences no longer heed the roughness of utterance, but concentrate on the eloquent and brilliantly phrased

periods of which Churchill is, after Lord Birkenhead, probably the greatest and most popular master in England.

The Liberals included Churchill in their ministry, with the office of under-secretary for the colonies. He soon displayed his courage in his new sphere. One of the principal Liberal election cries had been the "slavery" of Chinese coolies employed in the South African mines. In early official utterances Churchill, on behalf of the Colonial Office, admitted that to describe the terms of the Chinamen's employment as slavery was a "terminological inexactitude"—one of the first of his phrases to pass into common use. His Radical colleagues were aghast at this admission; the Conservatives were delighted. But their delight was not of long duration, for Churchill soon showed himself one of the most effective House of Commons speakers of the time.

He and Lloyd George were indeed jointly responsible for maintaining the Liberal party in power. Together they planned the audacious budget of 1909, which was intended to force the House of Lords into a constitutional struggle with the Commons. The Lords fell an easy prey, and as a result, England was convulsed with a carefully staged war between the "forces of privilege" and "the will of the people." Election succeeded election. The Liberals retained power, though only by pledging themselves to the Irish Nationalist party to introduce Home Rule. Churchill went from office to office. He became president of the Board of Trade and then home secretary; Mr. Asquith spoke of him as "my right honorable and picturesque colleague" and, with

Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Edward Grey, Churchill became one of the inner circle that dictated cabinet and foreign policy.

His great chance came in 1911, when the Agadir crisis forced on the British Government the realization that war with Germany was, if not inevitable, at least well within the bounds of probability. Hitherto both Churchill and Lloyd George had been enthusiastic pacifists, discounting in private, and sometimes in public, the forebodings of Lord Haldane and Sir Edward Grey. Now both became alive to the peril and, though Lloyd George changed his mind more than once in the next three years, Churchill never doubted that the only way to maintain peace was to prepare for war. He was appointed to the admiralty and, by his own energy and initiative and with the help of a naval genius, the late Lord Fisher, whom he called in as his principal technical assistant, he deserves the credit of bringing the British fleet into the war superlatively strong, well-equipped and well-led. His building up of the fleet and the prompt measures he took (turning, Nelson-like, a blind eye to official formality) in the fateful days preceding the actual outbreak, secured the safety of the Allies against the German menace in 1914. Had Churchill done nothing else, had he died then, before he was forty, this great achievement would secure his place in history. But this was only the beginning.

Yet fortune, which till then had smiled on him, now frowned. His best work was unknown to the general public and, in the storm of criticism which burst on Mr. Asquith's

government soon after the beginning of the war, Churchill was marked out as a scapegoat. Two great failures—one of them not a failure at all, the other only a partial failure—were unjustly held against him. These were the expeditions to Antwerp and to the Dardanelles. Democracy is often unjust; it loves to devour its own children; Churchill fell because a name had to be linked with the losses at Antwerp, and with the distressing muddle that stained the rugged shores of Gallipoli with the blood of countless British and dominion slain.

Yet responsibility for the Antwerp expedition was not Churchill's. He was sent there by Mr. Asquith and Lord Kitchener to persuade the brave but desperate Belgian garrison to maintain its defense until reinforcements, already promised, arrived. He did his part well. He put new life into the Belgians; he reconnoitered the positions under fire; he urged speed upon his own countrymen and must be given credit for protracting the defense of the doomed city long enough to secure the safety of the rest of the channel ports.

The Dardanelles story is more complicated. There was always a difference of opinion among the allied commanders whether it was wiser to seek to withstand and defeat the enemy on the bloodsodden battlefields of France or to endeavor to outflank him, by the British mastery of the seas. Churchill belonged to the wiser school that counseled outflanking. He saw no hope of a decisive allied victory in the trenches, though even at this time he was seeking to bring into being the tanks, the one great new military discovery of

the war. But opinion was divided even among those who thought as he thought. Some sought to outflank the enemy in the North, by a landing in the Baltic; others in the South, by operations against Turkey. Lord Fisher adhered to the Northern school; the admiralty war staff had indeed drawn up plans for seizing an island off the Elbe, bottling up the German fleet in its harbors, and thus permitting a large allied force to be landed on the Baltic shores of Germany. But the plan was dangerous. If the German island could not be seized and, if seized, held, all must end in disaster, for the British fleet, strong as it was, could not afford to split itself in two sections, one in the North Sea, the other in the Baltic, if the German fleet was able at any time to break the blockade. Moreover, the whole operation would require much time, and many things might meanwhile happen to ruin it. For this reason Churchill decided in favor of the endeavor to outflank the central powers in the South. Thus the Dardanelles campaign was conceived.

The British cabinet favored the Dardanelles scheme, but Lord Kitchener stated definitely that no troops could be spared to assist in it. It must, therefore, be a purely naval enterprise. Discouraging though this was, it did not necessarily invalidate the project. In the first place, only old ships, which in any case would soon have to be dismantled, would be used; secondly, if at any time the operations failed, it would not be difficult to withdraw without serious loss. Orders were given and the British fleet began its attack on the Dardanelles. At first all went well.

Then suddenly, unexpectedly, disastrously, the army decided to take a hand. The naval operations were held up until the troops should arrive. Invaluable weeks were wasted. When the troops arrived, they came in driblets, too few to succeed, too many to risk in failure. There is no need to recapitulate the poignant story of the Dardanelles failure. Had Churchill exercised supreme authority over the forces of the empire, the Dardanelles would undoubtedly have been forced and the war shortened by two years. But the very measure of his subordination to other men was the measure of the failure of the operations and of his unjust disgrace. In the late autumn of 1916, he ceased to be a member of the cabinet, and went into the trenches of Flanders in command of a battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

“War is a game to be played with a smiling face,” he declared to his officers, and he still indulged his fondness for strolling about under fire. His headquarters were in a farm-house close behind the line, which was repeatedly shelled. One day a fussy general on a tour of inspection, told Churchill that he ought not to put himself and his officers in a position of such danger. Churchill explained, with studious respect, that there was no other spot suitable for headquarters. “But I tell you it’s very dangerous, very dangerous,” insisted the general. “Yes, sir,” said Churchill politely, “but, after all, this is a very dangerous war.”

One evening he entertained at dinner a party of important staff-

officers. “It’s a lovely night,” he remarked after dinner, “I expect you’d like to go out in front.” No guest wished to appear hesitant and Churchill, conscious or unconscious of their discomfort, led them, to the delight of his battalion, on a long and dangerous tour of the trenches, from which they returned unharmed but extremely muddy and cross.

But at the same time he impressed on his men qualities suitable for present-day warfare, showing them how to do most harm to the enemy at least risk to themselves. In this admirable endeavor, it was his practice unexpectedly to harass the opposing trenches with a sudden feint of activity. The supporting artillery would be rung up in the middle of the night and requested to support Churchill’s demonstration. It is not on record that his superior officers ever ventured to rebuke him for his independent zeal; perhaps his high political prestige made them chary of interference.

From raw recruits his men soon became the smartest and best disciplined battalion in the regiment. He brought the army also the promise of the tanks. He was not, of course, the inventor of this weapon; many men had sought to bring it into being. But without Churchill, tanks would never have existed. While he was still at the admiralty at the outbreak of the war, he was attracted by the idea and, carefully concealing the necessary expenditure from his own subordinates and from the treasury, he ordered the secret construction of several of the new engines of war. This was one of his most daring exploits, and is a good example of how much a “damned politician” as sol-

diers call them, can do to win a war. Had the experiment failed, Churchill's career would have been utterly blasted. His opponents would have accused him of squandering public money on a foolish enterprise; he could not have hoped for mercy. But the tanks were a triumphant success, though the very soldiers who had jeered at them as "Winston's folly" became so anxious to employ them that they were prematurely risked in battle before a sufficient number was ready. Fortunately the German command was equally slow in recognizing their importance, and the premature disclosure had no serious result.



It is a tribute to Churchill's value as a statesman that, after he had been absent from Westminster for a few months, he was urgently called home. A Dardanelles commission was in existence, and this made it impossible for him to enter the Government. For some time he may be said to have acted as an unofficial member of the Government, but at last the ban was lifted and in the summer of 1917, Lloyd George made him minister of munitions. His work in that capacity is known to every person intimately concerned with the conduct of the war. Under his energetic control the output of munitions of every kind miraculously increased. More and more responsibilities were thrown upon him. The United States Government gave him almost *carte blanche* to equip its armies in Europe. He was able also to make good from his surplus, the enormous Italian losses of equipment after the disaster of Caporetto. In the pursuit of his duties he spent much time at the

front. He used to work in Whitehall during the morning and, at noon, fly to Flanders. More than once he watched a battle from an aeroplane precariously perched over the battlefield.

The end of the war found him once more a leader of the nation. The ministry of munitions went into liquidation, and Churchill took charge of both the war ministry and the air ministry, as if one office was not enough to absorb his abundant energies. At the War Office he had to arrange the demobilization of the vast British armies—a process which, begun in confusion, was transformed under his sympathetic handling, into an orderly process. At the air ministry it was his congenial task to control the latest and greatest fighting force of the country. He remained a minister until 1922 when Lloyd George fell from power, and the Coalition Government, which had carried the country to victory, was disintegrated into its component parts. Once again Churchill's political career was eclipsed. He shared with Lloyd George the obloquy of the reaction from the war.

In his enforced leisure he turned to authorship as a solace. He was no novice for, ever since his first campaign as a subaltern, he had earned a competence as author and journalist; he wrote the standard books on the Malakand and Nile campaigns, and his life of his father, published in 1906, is admittedly one of the finest political biographies in the language. He was now to surpass his former successes; the four volumes of his study of the war, "The World Crisis," written after the fall of the Coalition, will forever take their

place among the chief authorities on the great upheaval.

The lure of politics soon re-awoke. He stood as an independent candidate for Parliament, and was elected. When Mr. Baldwin returned to power in the winter of 1924, following the fall of the unpopular minority premiership of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, he appointed Churchill as his chancellor of the exchequer—a choice which reflects as much credit on the vision of the prime minister as on the ability of his new colleague. Thus Churchill, twice fallen and twice restored, returned at last to his father's party, assumed his father's chancellor's robes, which had been carefully preserved by his mother against this day, and disclosed himself as the holder of more ministerial offices than any other British statesman of our time.

Nor has he yet reached the zenith of his career. He is to-day only fifty-two, an age at which very many men in England are only entering politics.

Is it possible that the American press-agent's prophecy will now come true and that Churchill will become prime minister? No one can say for certain. The path to the British premiership is beset by accident. The rise of Mr. Baldwin, for example, from obscurity to Downing Street in a few months, demonstrates how strange are the workings of the political fates in England. But Churchill is to-day still young; he is at the height of his intellectual and physical powers; he has indomitable energy and endless courage; he has overcome the earlier unpopularity against which he had to fight. You cannot keep a good man down; and I fail to see how, barring amazing ill-luck, he can fail to succeed in what undoubtedly is and has always been, the supreme ambition of his life. When he becomes prime minister, America may well consider his success as in large measure due to his moiety of American blood, the workings of which have already been so evident.

JOB OR JOY RIDE

It Is Harder Work To Be a Mother Than a Daughter

BLANCHE BATES CREEL

IT MUST be that the truths of life have a certain burrlike quality, sticking fast until they win recognition. There are so many things my mother told me, things without meaning at the time—in one ear and out the other—that now come back to me with perfect clarity.

She was an actress, as was her own mother before her, and with my father as co-star, toured the country from coast to coast. I was born "on the road," and must have been nursed between acts, for I never play any of the old Western theaters that I do not meet some ancient stage-hand who claims to have held me while mother went on as *Juliet*, *Queen Elizabeth* or *Lady Macbeth*.

A roving life, of course, but never were children given greater love and care. John McCullough was once her leading man, Edwin Booth and Modjeska were her friends and admirers, but when my little sister and I were of school age, mother put away brilliant offers, and settled down in San Francisco to the drudgery of stockwork that we might have a home and proper training. A play a week for fifty-two weeks in the year!

Victorian to her marrow, as were so many of those old-time strolling

players, my sister and I were subjected to an iron discipline that ordered our lives at every turn, often in violent contradiction to our own wishes. Once I accused her of not *wanting* me to have a "good time," and it is her answer to that childish accusation that now comes back to me with such clearness and force:

"What about my good times?" she asked. "Don't you think I'd have a much happier life if I let you run loose and do just as you pleased? But you don't happen to be responsible for yourself, my dear. All of the responsibility is *mine*. Some day you'll find out that being a mother is a whole lot harder than being a daughter. It's *work*."

Let me say right now that I have found it out. Heaven knows I make no pretension to being one of these 100 per cent parents—certainly my two youngsters will never give any impression of having stepped out of the pages of a "Little Elsie" book—but I do assert a full acceptance of my responsibilities, however unintelligently I may have discharged them. And after fifteen years of it, I freely admit that my mother was right. It is work.

It is this feeling, I imagine, that puts me so out of patience with these