CHAPTER VI

CHANCELLOR OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY

1907-1925

by

SIR HERBERT WARREN, K.C.V.O.
Vice-Chancellor of the University, 1906-1910

Vice, that is by turns—
O'er pale faces mourns,
The black-tassell'd trencher and common hat;
The Chantry-boy sings,
The Steeple-bell rings.
And as for the Chancellor—*dominat*.

Keats, "On Oxford, A Parody," written during his stay in Magdalen Hall, September, 1817.

THE gifted artist, Philip de László, painter of the masterly portrait of Lord Curzon which hangs in the Hall of All Souls College, tells an interesting story about it. "When I began upon it," he relates, "I said to Lord Curzon, the first thing you must do is to forget that you were ever Viceroy of India. I am going to paint you as something far greater, as *le grand penseur*, the Chancellor of the University of Oxford." What Lord Curzon replied he does not say. But if not greater than the Viceroyalty, the Chancellorship was also 'great.' Lord Curzon gave himself to either with his whole being, with all his unwearying ambitious industry, eager to make the most of either office, to set his mark alike on India and on Oxford, to leave each better than he found it.

Largely for this very reason he was not, during the process, popular. He was an exacting chief, but if he taxed and tired his helpers in Oxford as elsewhere it was not so ruthlessly as he taxed and tired himself. He sweated the sixty minutes to the death, and was always trying to find sixty-one minutes in the hour, and twenty-five hours in the day. Oxford which had only seen him in his prosperous youth did not at once realize this. Even in his youth he was diligent to a fault. "What's the score?" he said to a friend sitting on the bench at All Souls and watching the last game of a set after which the two were to join in. "Five, Three," was the reply. "Oh, I'll go back to my rooms, I think I can just finish my article for the Quarterly. Call me when it's over." It was over very soon; and his friend summoned him. "Have you finished your article?" "No, but I've done three more pages," he said.

After his youth he too seldom gave himself time to enjoy and be enjoyed. He was for ever dashing off to the next engagement almost before the first was completed.

But if not a popular, he was certainly a great, Chancellor. Oxford has seen greater men fill this post, a Cromwell, or a Wellington, neither of them it may be remarked, her own son, the one forced upon her, the other invited by her, from outside; but she has not experienced since Laud, if ever, anyone who made so much difference to her constitution, her daily life, and her fate. It is the irony of history that much of the effect of Lord Curzon's work was swallowed up in that of the Commission which followed it. The prelude is lost in the larger composition, but without the prelude, the note of that composition itself would have been entirely different, for Oxford perhaps tragically different.

The problem and the powers of Laud were in no way parallel. Oxford was in Laud's day a small, homogeneous, ecclesiastical community, a seminary, or set of seminaries, containing perhaps about a thousand resident members, graduate and undergraduate, all but a very few belonging to, or preparing for, a single profession of which Laud was the head; cloistered and cut off from the rest of the community, no fierce light playing on its rulers, no enemies or new-comers beating on the doors.

Lord Curzon had known Oxford and been known by her for

something under thirty years when he became her Chancellor. To hold this office, her first magistracy, had been one of his avowed ambitions. He had, too, already been designated by others as the natural successor to the eminent Oxford man under whom as a newly-fledged graduate he had begun his career in the great world.

When however, after some thirty-five years' tenure of the Chancellorship, Lord Salisbury died in 1903, Lord Curzon was in India still immersed in his Viceroyalty. Had he been in England it seems likely he would have been elected then. It is probably fortunate for Oxford that this did not happen. The time was ripening, but hardly yet ripe, for his advent and intervention. Lord Salisbury, though always ready when a *dignus vindice nodus* arose, had followed the old tradition, and been as Chancellor, for the most part, a figure-head and an absentee. Here, as in other spheres, he was a pungent critic but not a reformer. He had made scathing remarks about 'idle Fellows', who had won their position by writing Greek Iambics, but he had let them alone. But now something more seemed called for. In the spring of 1906 Lord Goschen, who from the first had taken an active interest in these matters, told the Vice-Chancellor and others what he heard in political circles as to the imminence of a new Commission. The Campbell-Bannerman Government had just come in with an overwhelming majority, and many Liberals within and out of Oxford, thought the opportunity had arrived to follow the precedent of Gladstone's government in 1870. With this in mind Goschen took the characteristic step of looking into the finances of the University and Colleges, and asked to have statistical tables prepared to show what was being done by the Colleges voluntarily to assist the University in learning and science, in teaching and research.

These revealed that the Colleges, according to their means—two or three of the richer very conspicuously—had been most generous in this regard. At the same time that very remarkable son and benefactor of Oxford, the Hon. T. A. Brassey, who had headed a movement for the further endowment of his own College, Balliol, was beginning upon a similar effort for the assistance of the University as a whole.

In the midst of all this, on February 7th, 1907, Goschen, not a

young man, died quite suddenly, and the representatives of the University went down once more to Seacox Heath to bid the last farewell to the Chancellor whom they had inducted there not four years before. When the Chancellor dies the Vice-Chancellor takes charge. He is possessed of very considerable powers, but he is in a very delicate position. It is not for him to nominate or even suggest a Chancellor, indeed he is the last person to do so. And yet, as appeared again in 1925, he has much responsibility for guiding the process of deliberation so that a right choice, indeed *the* right and really representative choice, may be made. The deciding factors were in 1907, as they were in 1925, as indeed they generally are, public politics, academic politics, and College and personal influences.

Goschen's election had been exceptional. It was largely an agreed compromise. He was a Liberal Unionist who had become very much of a Conservative and had been nominated as his Chancellor of the Exchequer by Lord Salisbury when Lord Randolph Churchill "had forgotten him." Academically he was a 'moderate.' The Liberals, headed by men like Professor Pelham, accepted him as the most Liberal Conservative they could get, and the Conservatives because their "rising hope" was in India. Yet even Goschen had not been accepted without demur. The tradition had been that Oxford's Chancellor should belong to one of the old "governing families" and be of high, if possible the highest, public distinction. An attempt had been made by his old Balliol friends, notably by Dr. Henderson, Warden of Wadham, to run Lord Lansdowne, but he declined nomination. Lord Rosebery was then nominated, but his name had not been in the *Gazette* two days when he withdrew it and Goschen was elected without a contest. When the vacancy occurred again, Lord Lansdowne was sounded more deliberately by the Vice-Chancellor, but again definitely declined. Academic distinction had now come to be recognised as a very important factor. Lord Curzon fulfilled this, as well as all the other requirements. His Oxford career had been full both of promise and performance; his *cursus honorum* in public life even more so. But it began to be whispered that academically he was not so sound a Conservative as had been thought in 1903. "Die-hards"

like Mr. Case, the President of Corpus, who had no suspicions then, had doubts now.

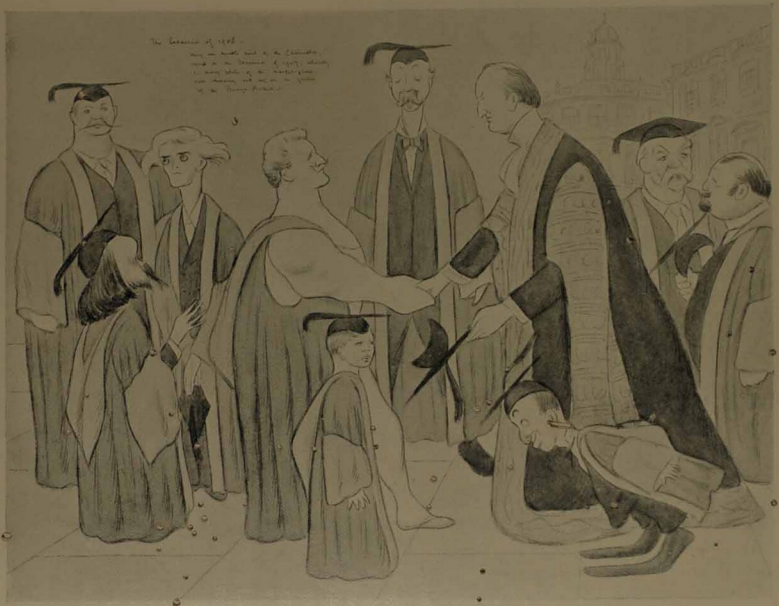
College interests, too, made themselves felt. Christ Church naturally casting about for a man, bethought itself of the brilliant Lord Rosebery and the sound Lord St. Aldwyn. But if the Liberals could divide Christ Church, All Souls had now become a leading force, and Sir William Anson as its head, at the very height of his well deserved influence, himself a Balliol man and the intimate friend of Strachan-Davidson and of Raper the "King-Maker" of Trinity, also originally of Balliol, could divide the Liberals, and Curzon could count on much support from Balliol. And so it proved.

The Liberals were anxious to fight, and again induced Lord Rosebery to become their candidate. The Vice-Chancellor, by request, held a non-party meeting at Magdalen. Other names were suggested, among them those of Lord Milner and the Archbishop of Canterbury; but they were not pressed. In the end the two candidates went to the poll, the progressive and eager Conservative and the reluctant Liberal, Lord Curzon and Lord Rosebery. The poll was not heavy, but the majority was large and decisive.

The new reign was inaugurated with what seemed an innovation but was really a return to an older custom.

The University had fallen into the dull and indolent method of admitting the Chancellor in his own house. A Dining-Room Admission is like a Drawing-Room Wedding and quite unworthy of a great historic University, and one moreover which can set its stage in some of the most stately and appropriate buildings in Christendom. It was suggested to Lord Curzon that he should be admitted, in full conclave, by a real Convocation and in the Sheldonian Theatre. He was the very man to inaugurate a better *régime* and he was more than willing; but with constitutional caution he asked what were the precedents. There were none. No Chancellor had been admitted, in Oxford since the Earl of Arran in 1715. The whole ceremony, mode and order of procedure, ritual directions, Latin formulæ, had to be invented *de novo*.

This was done, and on May 11 the Admission was carried through. Oxford was still fortunate in possessing as her noted Public Orator,



THE ENCAENIA OF 1908.

Being a humble hint to the Chancellor based on the Encaenia of 1907, whereby so many idols of the market-place were cheerily set in the groves of the Benign Mother

By courtesy of Mr. Max Beerbohm.

Ashmolean; large subventions to the Taylorian and the cause of Modern Languages, assistance to the Engineering School, and the securing of the generous and invaluable Dyson-Perrins Benefaction for Chemistry.

It also kept a number of distinguished Oxford men in the great world in touch with their old University. But above all it encouraged and suggested liberality in others. *Damus ut dent alii* was suggested as its motto, and in more than one case this motto was justified.

Still, the time was not a favourable one. Englishmen had forgotten and had not relearned how to give, or at any rate to give grandly as they learned to do in the War, and have done since the War. The Universities and their merits were less known to the business public. And it was no one's special office, as Brassey had made it his, to undertake the task, distasteful and thankless, then even more so than to-day, of personal begging.

The Summer Term closed brilliantly. The first Commemoration of a Chancellor is the flowering of the aloe. It is not repeated in his lifetime. The Chancellor, with the aid, no doubt, of suggestions, chooses the recipients of Honorary Degrees himself, submitting a list which the Hebdomadal Council, though it has the power to challenge any name, by custom accepts *en bloc*. Consequently it is not only much larger but more picturesque and daring than the short lists of men who have run the gauntlet of the votes of varied and critical minds. Lord Curzon himself had received the Honorary D.C.L. on the nomination of his predecessor as Chancellor, Lord Goschen. He walked up the Sheldonian side by side with Lord Tennyson, ex-Governor General of Australia, and as he did so, glancing at the gallery, said: "Good for these young fellows to see two Proconsuls like you and me getting this honour." He now chose excellently and boldly, including among others Prince Arthur of Connaught, the Prime Minister (Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman), the American Ambassador (Whitelaw Reid), the Chancellor (Lord Loreburn), the Speaker (the Rt. Hon. James Lowther, now Lord Ullswater), Sir Edward Grey, now Lord Grey of Fallodon, Lord Charles Beresford, Sir Evelyn Wood, Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity, and Dr. Warre of Eton, Auguste Rodin, Hubert von Herkomer,

Mr. G. F. Bodley, Sir R. Douglas Powell, Sir N. Lockyer, Sir W. Ramsay, M. C. C. Saint-Saëns, the veteran and poetic Archbishop Alexander of Armagh, Mr. Rudyard Kipling and "Mark Twain," Canon Scott Holland, The Rev. A. H. Sayce, Mr. Sidney Colvin, Sir Sidney Lee, and, certainly not the least audacious or picturesque selection, Mr. William Booth, the "General" of the Salvation Army.

The function went well. The new Chancellor had been furnished by his friend, R. W. Raper, with a collection of Latin formulae of reception at once ingenious and happy. It need not be said that they were admirably given and that the Ex-Viceroy in his bullioned and brocaded robe looked and played his part to perfection.

All was soon over.

> The tumult and the shouting dies,
> The captains and the kings depart;

The string of brilliant guests had taken their farewell. Full Term had long ended, their Oxford hosts were dispersed or dispersing; Oxford itself was settling down for the comparative repose of the Long Vacation; even the Vice-Chancellor and other officials, who are detained after others depart for necessary official business, were beginning to bethink them of a well-earned holiday, when suddenly the thunder rattled and the lightning flashed from the midsummer sky.

Lord Goschen's apprehensions had been only too well founded. The promoters of a Commission had been working pertinaciously both in Oxford and London. Lord Curzon's election had not pleased them, and they decided to force the issue. For reasons known to themselves they opened their campaign not in the House of Commons, but in the House of Lords, and with a Prelate as their mouthpiece. With no word of warning to the Vice-Chancellor, on July 24th, Dr. Gore, Bishop at that time of Birmingham, rose in his place in the Upper Chamber, and asked for a Commission to deal with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. His chief gravamen was not that Oxford and Cambridge did not contribute much to learning, science, and education, but that they were the preserve and playground of the "idle rich" and had little

sympathy with the poor. About the industrious rich he said little. He also took the line that the Universities were poor but the Colleges were wealthy, or at any rate many of them, and were inadequately taxed. This was perhaps true of Cambridge. It was hardly true of Oxford, as has been shown by the recent Commission. It may be noted that neither of the Colleges with which Bishop Gore was connected stood to lose much pecuniarily by the proposal. "*Cantabit vacuus*" as Henry Smith and Strachan-Davidson used to quote at Balliol. Indeed it was not difficult to show that many of the representations of the party which pressed for a Commission whether in the green pages of the *Westminster Gazette* or on the red benches of the House of Lords, were inaccurate and beside the mark. Bishop Gore was answered at the moment very effectively by his brother Bishops of Oxford and of Bristol; but what was most important was that time should be gained and that the matter should be delayed until the University as a whole had had an opportunity to make its voice heard in contradistinction to the clamour of one, and that the smaller, party. Though taken by surprise, the Vice-Chancellor and Sir William Anson met the crisis energetically. Lord Lansdowne, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a number of spiritual and temporal peers, were written to. They were sympathetic and helpful. But the deciding factor was Lord Curzon himself, and it immediately became apparent how wisely Oxford had acted in electing him. He was able to point out that already he had begun to consider the reform of Oxford "from within." Mr. Asquith, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, like Gladstone a whole-hearted and conservative believer in Oxford, was more than friendly, and so was Lord Crewe, the son-in-law of Lord Rosebery, Lord President of the Council and the spokesman of the Liberal party in the House of Lords, one of the most brilliant of Cambridge men, and a true friend at all times to both Letters and Science. Lord Curzon himself addressed a full and persuasive memorandum to Lord Crewe in which he was able to plead with much weight the appeal with which he had already made so much progress. Finally Lord Crewe announced that the Government considered it would be unfair to deprive a young and vigorous Chancellor of the opportunity of trying his hand at reform from within, and that the ques-

tion of appointing a Commission would be deferred for the present. Thus these three men, Mr. Asquith, Lord Crewe and Lord Curzon, but Curzon especially, saved the Oxford and Cambridge that we know. The party which had put forward Bishop Gore did not cease from their efforts, but in the end the Commission was deferred till after the Great War. The Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, canny and courteous as was his wont, and a Cambridge man, had indeed summed up the matter. On July 28th, he wrote to the Vice-Chancellor who had addressed a final letter to him pleading for such a stay of execution. "I showed your letter to Lord Crewe, who was to speak for the Government. I think the question is left very well. The need of reform has been ventilated, but hurry has been deprecated." This postponement, as has been hinted already, made an incalculable difference. The cavillings at the "idle rich" and the privileged classes were hushed and died away. The signal services then rendered and the sacrifices made, by graduates and undergraduates alike of both Universities, and by the Colleges in their corporate capacity, could not fail to have their effect on the country, to make them better known and understood, and to set them far higher in the popular esteem than they had ever been before in all their long history; and when the Royal Commission of inquiry and the consequential Statutory Commission came in the years 1923-6 they came neither in hostility nor suspicion, and indeed came, if that is not suspicious, "bearing gifts."

In this way the task was definitely entrusted to Curzon. Still two years short of fifty, though with a world of experience behind him and no little personal authority, and eager to attack such a labour, he set about it with all his promptitude, method and thoroughness.

His own words may be given. After quoting the language of the 1850 Commission which ran: "The Chancellor rarely appears in Oxford and seldom takes any part in Academic government. Still his office is one of much dignity and influence and his advice always has weight with the ruling body of the University," he proceeds, "My own conception has been at once more and less ambitious. I have felt that the Chancellor is in truth not so much the foremost official as the first servant of the University."

In the end it proved long and laborious, dragging on still uncom-

pleted through seven years, right up to the fateful summer of 1914.

Its course was beset with difficulties and delays. It was not so much that resident Oxford "hated to be reformed," as that there was not a whole-hearted support for reform from within. The keener reformers regarded it as at best a *pis aller* and a stop-gap; they were not over anxious to see it succeed, as they still would have preferred the more drastic alternative of a Commission steered by their political friends. The "die-hards" in the opposite camp preferred that reform if it came at all should be forced upon them from outside rather than it should be their own act.

There remained the middle party of moderates, the constitutional leaders of the University, who desired to see many things improved, and were indeed constantly working at quiet reforms, but were very apprehensive of danger to the autonomy of the University and the Colleges.

One thing may certainly be said, that nothing short of the Chancellor's own sincere zeal for improvement, energy, perseverance, assiduity and statesmanlike combination of decision and tact would have achieved such a measure of realisation as in the end was actually reached.

When the call came he was more than ready. He had indeed begun on the morrow of his election. He could count on the loyal support of Sir William Anson and of all the official staff of the University and of a progressive and open-minded Council. He was fortunate in inheriting from Lord Goschen, as his unofficial "correspondent," Mr. Percy Matheson, whom he had known in his Balliol days, Fellow and Tutor of New College, a member of Council, and specially well acquainted with both University and College affairs and with Education.

As early as the first of May, 1907, Lord Curzon had requested him to continue his functions and to write a report on the position of University affairs at the moment.

His comments on this report show that already he anticipated the line which would be taken if a Commission were demanded. "The public is convinced," he wrote, "that if the University is poor the Colleges are rich, and a movement will grow to take more of their property."

The rising of Parliament, after Lord Crewe's pronouncement, had brought a temporary lull, and given the University time to envisage the situation. The party of reform now turned to the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Council.

It was a happy but ironical coincidence that the very first act of the Vice-Chancellor and Council when the University reassembled in October 1907 was to welcome what was constitutionally a revolution, the recognition of the Workers' Educational Association, commonly styled the W.E.A. The Vice-Chancellor immediately expressed his willingness to nominate the first representatives of this body, seven in number,[1] to sit with seven members of the "Extension Delegacy," as it was commonly called, on a composite Committee and on equal terms; and the University, with like readiness, legalised the arrangement, which worked excellently, and showed once more that sympathy with the poor student and the working-man was not the monopoly of the reformers. It had, too, a very great effect on the attitude of the Labour party.

The campaign of "Reform from within," however, definitely opened with the announcement of a circular letter to be addressed to the Chancellor, signed by Mr. A. L. Smith, Tutor of Balliol, and a number of others favourable to reform. Lord Curzon who had already determined to make a study of the persons, the problems, the institutions and the equipment, on the spot, now decided to do what no modern Chancellor had done before, to reside for a fortnight or so, to entertain and to make the acquaintance of the Oxford world for himself. He enlisted Mr. Buchanan Riddell, now Sir Walter Buchanan Riddell and Principal of Hertford College, as his Academic A.D.C. He had already, it is significant, engaged the Judge's Lodgings in St. Giles, before Bishop Gore showed his hand. On November 1st he came down, kept open house and an open mind. He interviewed a number of residents representing many different views, and with his usual rapidity and method tabulated the results, with a view to the preparation of a comprehensive

[1] The names were for the University: The Dean of Christ Church, Prof. H. H. Turner, Mr. A. L. Smith, Mr. Sidney Ball, Mr. J. A. R. Marriott, Mr. H. B. Lees Smith, and Mr. A. E. Zimmern, and for the W.E.A.: Mr. W. H. Berry, Mr. C. W. Bowerman, M.P., Mr. R. Campbell, F.S.S., Mr. J. M. McTavish, Mr. A. Mansbridge, Mr D. J. Shackleton, M.P., and Mr. A. Wilkinson.

scheme already forming in his mind. Nor did he forget to entertain a certain number of undergraduates. His parties whether of both sexes or of bachelors were very successful and he proved a most genial and even gay host.

On the first day of his stay he delivered the Romanes Lecture in the Sheldonian Theatre. The subject, "Frontiers," was one with which he was peculiarly fitted to deal and he handled it in a masterly manner, the only drawback being that the theme proved too large for even a full hour. A little later he writes that he is studying University Finance. "The present system seems to me to be very bad. There is no financial policy, no discussion of University Finance, no Annual Budget, no effective authority." It was understood that the various advocates of reform would now put their proposals in shape and that work upon them would commence with the New Year. On January 23, 1908, the Chancellor wrote to Matheson, "I am very much pleased at the recommencement of your letters; as soon as I can combine strength and leisure I will take the University question up. Meanwhile I am still waiting for the artillery of A. L. Smith's batteries." They proved to be of the old-fashioned muzzle-loading order and opened tardily. The reformers began in June 1908, in a letter to *The Times*, to complain of slow progress, but Lord Curzon was able to give them an effective answer.

All through the year, if more slowly than he himself liked, the scheme had been moving forward, and by the early autumn very considerable advance had been made, when a most untoward event put the prime mover himself more or less out of action.

"I have had a very bad motor accident," he wrote on October 5th, "which has precluded any of the final work on the Oxford Scheme which I contemplated. I have been in bed for three weeks, and am still there, and shall be permanently scarred."

The Jubilee of the University Museum was about to be celebrated. He was unable to attend, but wrote a letter from his bed. He had already inspected the Museum. "Some of the equipments are old-fashioned and obsolete, notably the old chemical laboratory, some excellent and up-to-date; in others great improvements are required."

Just at this time the Vice-Chancellor had told him that he desired

to nominate President Roosevelt and Mr. Arthur Balfour as Romanes Lecturers in 1909 and 1910 and asked him to do his best to persuade them to accept. "Roosevelt jumps at it," was his expression of the result. "Surely no one was ever asked to do a pleasant thing in such a pleasant way," were the opening words of Roosevelt's acceptance. Mr. Balfour said that, for himself, nobody but Curzon would have persuaded him to lecture.

"I consider it a great triumph," Lord Curzon wrote, "that I have secured for two successive years Balfour and Roosevelt."

A little later, "I have always meant to put forward Women's Degrees. It will be in a compartment by itself. The University can take or reject it, but I shall certainly put it forward."

Shortly after this he started, under medical advice, for a voyage to South Africa, promising Matheson to send the completion of the scheme from the Canaries. He wrote from there that he was making good headway, though hampered by want of secretarial assistance, and only allowed to work about three hours a day.

"It is a great tax doing all this far away from books and with no possibility of reference."

"Buluwayo, January 16, 1909. I am stranded here for a week, but am proceeding with my MS. Never will a 'Memo' have been written in more diverse circumstances, in cabins, on decks, in hotels, in trains, at odd moments, 6,000 miles from England and books."

With his return the stage of printing approached, and Curzon naturally became anxious. His letters show his remarkable combination of the *fortiter in re* with the *suaviter in modo*. If a man is to accomplish anything considerable, and especially if his task is to "reform," the first quality must predominate.

And he still had both the fear and the argument before him, "lest a worse thing befall." He was working under a respite not a reprieve. He stood between the ultra-moderates and the party of "thorough," Gore, Rashdall and the *Westminster Gazette*.

"One thing rather amuses me," he writes, "the complaints that my proposals are not more definite, combined with a sharp assault upon any proposal that does happen to satisfy that test."

He showed the greatest willingness to accept corrections and at

the same time firmness in resisting alterations in principle or the whittling down of substantial reforms.

> "There is scarcely a statement in my memo for which I have not definite authority. However, the main thing is to eliminate anything that will give offence. No one can write a Memo of two hundred pages on University Reform without treading on someone's toes and you have to contrast my humble movements with the heavy tramplings of a University Commission."

At this period letters passed almost daily between the Chancellor and Matheson, in addition to letters to the Vice-Chancellor and Sir W. Anson, and this though he was still far from well, and frequently in bed with severe pain. From the Vice-Chancellor and Anson he received expressions, which cheered him, of admiration for the skill and scope of the document, and its great value as furnishing both material and guidance for legislation. Sir William, however, constitutionally prudent and having his constituents to consider, counselled caution.

It was arranged that the Chancellor should come to Oxford and preside at special meetings of Council to consider it.

A hectic session was held at Hackwood just before the end, consisting of the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Heberden, Matheson and Gerrans, beginning early in the afternoon, carried on through tea and dinner, and ending at 2 p.m. to pass the "Memo" for the press.

Some question arose as to whether it should be published before the first Meeting of Council. On this Lord Curzon was clear and emphatic. "I see no advantage," he wrote, "in Council meeting with the Chancellor in the Chair, a thing unknown for centuries, to discuss a secret document. It involves the whole matter in an air of superfluous mystery."

Oxford is shy and some had scruples, but the Chancellor was right. With April the Red Book, or "Scarlet Letter" as it was dubbed, was published.

It received a very good press and also had an excellent reception

in critical Oxford, and the keener reformers like Prof. Gilbert Murray, Arthur Sidgwick and Estlin Carpenter were not the least laudatory. Strachan-Davidson, the Whig, and A. L. Smith, the Liberal, agreed in welcoming it. Walter Raleigh, a free lance, was warm in praise, and W. B. Gamlen, the cautious Secretary to the Chest, pronounced it "a monument of industry, knowledge and statesmanship and also full of literary charm." Miss Wordsworth wrote that it was "lucid, interesting and opportune," and Miss Penrose spoke with the same cordiality. Lord Morley in London thought it "a very effective piece of work."

It had been arranged that Council should proceed by resolutions, adopting *seriatim* the principle of the several items and then appointing Committees to consider and formulate definite proposals. These resolutions the Chancellor drafted himself.

He came to Council for the 27th and 28th of April. He proved an excellent Chairman, business-like, but not wanting in either geniality or humour, and found far more general agreement and less individual opposition than he had feared. The task was necessarily tedious, but finally the whole memorandum was gone through as arranged.

On May 20th, he dined with the Oxford Medical Graduates Club in London. He took the precaution of informing himself beforehand of the position up-to-date of the Oxford Medical School and expressed his special thanks to Professor Gotch.

On June 1st, he came down to Oxford for the celebration by Brasenose of its Quartercentenary, and the conferment of the Hon. D.C.L. on the Principal, Dr. Heberden.

On June 15th, he gave a luncheon at All Souls, and made an excellent full-dress speech to the Conference of the Press of the Empire.

The consideration of the measures of Reform was now going steadily forward: and Lord Curzon, though he was afraid that the Finance Board might be whittled down to nothing, was generally much pleased. Extra meetings of Council and its Committees were held in the early weeks of the Long Vacation, and the reports on the main points got in.

The task was resumed in the autumn of 1909 with the Chancellor

again in the Chair. It was a long business. "After the meeting," he wrote to Matheson on November 3rd, "it occurred to me that the Chancellor might himself have hurried on matters a little. If he did not do so, it was from a desire to let everyone be heard."

"What splendid work the Committees have done!" he wrote on March 10th. The effort of 1910 was to complete and bring out the Report of Council.

Again the task proved long. All through the summer term and far into the Vacation it continued. Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Matheson were at work all July, and even after that a special editing committee was busy getting together the Report and assisting the Chancellor with an introduction which he was to prefix to it himself.

He had a conference with the Vice-Chancellor and Matheson on August 2, and on August 3 he wrote "We shall have a big task at the beginning of next Term."

Now again he was far from well and, as Matheson and Ball noted, he was much worn and worried.

However, *more suo*, he soon recovered his energy and his good temper. "I have practically been compelled to write everything afresh," he wrote. But he really liked doing so.

> "As you will see," he wrote, "the Report is at the same time my Report and that of Council, and the combination is I think rather effective. I have endeavoured to throw everything into a harmonious form and to give a little literary shape. It is the Introduction that will be quoted and criticized.
>
> By all means show anything to Gerrans if that excellent man is about. I am very grateful to you and Ball."

The Report appeared on August 28th. The Chancellor presided at a special meeting of Council on October 12th to discuss procedure.

On November 8th, actual legislation began. The preamble of the Faculties Statute was introduced by the President of Magdalen, now ex-Vice Chancellor, having completed his term of office and been succeeded by Dr. Heberden, in Convocation on November

8th, and carried by a large majority. The Responsions Statute, making Greek optional, introduced by Matheson on November 22nd, was less fortunate.

On December 13th, 1910, the Chancellor came again to discuss the question of the Finance Board, and yet again on January 19th of the New Year, 1911. The Faculties Statute amendments dragged on through two terms, its case fought by the President of Magdalen with the aid of Anson and Strachan-Davidson, and at last was carried.

On May 16th, Matheson moved a modified reform, making Greek optional for men taking Honours in Mathematics and Natural Science, with more success, to the Chancellor's great satisfaction.

Matheson was away during the Autumn Term. When he came back he found the Chancellor anxious and chafing at the slow pace of progress. He was much afraid of a Commission which was still being agitated for. "The University has stumbled badly," he wrote. "We are appreciably nearer the edge of the gulf. Unless the University carries through the most important of the Reforms by the end of this Term or early in next, I shall not myself resist the demand for a Commission though of course I would not initiate or encourage it. If in three years the University is powerless to do the little we have asked of it then Reform from within is a figment."

In February and yet again in March he repeats the same warning and speaks of "the folly of the long delays that have postponed the final decision for nearly five years!" He is "in acute despair." "Think of what all the bright prospects of four years ago have dwindled down to."

On May 1st, he says, "I have seen or heard no signs of Gore moving as yet, but it will come sooner or later." And ten days later:

> "You will not be surprised when I tell you that I have given up the government of Oxford as beyond hope. When a statute like that of the Fees and Dues can only attract 63 votes out of a total of 600, Congregation itself ceases to be defensible. I am in a most difficult position. The Prime Minister consulted me last night as to the desirability of a Commission. I have merely

to lift a little finger to get it. Every consideration but one tempts me to say "Yes," and that is the conviction that a Commission would destroy the Oxford that we know, and that curriculum, finance, government and colleges would go in one sweep.

I am appalled at this prospect and yet Oxford never takes a critical step or faces a critical issue without bringing home to me that the *status quo* is impossible.

Can you say anything to guide my troubled mind in the matter?"

In the next letter (May 19) he asks for a paper "giving in a brief and succinct form, for submission to the Prime Minister, the information you recently gave me as to the change of view on the part of the working classes (resulting from the Tutorial Classes), who now seem to prefer that the University should go out to them rather than that they should come in numbers as undergraduates to Oxford."

Two days later, after first saying that he had been trying vainly to persuade Milner to become Chairman of the Finance Board and been "terribly disappointed," he returns to the W.E.A. question.

> "The revelation you give me of the Working Men's attitude in their own Report is very frank and very ominous. How any man after reading it can desire a Commission in which such views would probably to some extent prevail, I cannot understand."

But there were those both in Oxford and London who were still eager for a Commission. On June 7th, the Chancellor was presented with a strongly signed petition begging him to procure one. With some difficulty, and at the cost of a good deal of labour, he staved it off. Still they were not satisfied. A final determined effort was made by a special deputation to the Prime Minister. Fortunately he was not of their opinion. He replied that he found that both at Oxford and Cambridge "there was too much divergence of opinion to justify him in taking action" and that he must

wait for more unanimity. Cambridge had now begun to react. It was about this time (June 1912) that the President of Magdalen had a chance interview with Mr. Asquith after a Foreign Office Dinner, and that to the President's great relief he said, "We'll let it simmer, we'll let it simmer." So in October the Reform business began again.

In the autumn of 1913 Lord Curzon adverts to the Report of the Finance Board and asks a number of questions as to facts and figures, the contributions of Colleges, etc.

Thus the fateful year 1914 was reached.

January 22. "Glad to receive the opening letter of a New Year," he writes. "I am glad that after all Council have reverted to my proposal of an Hon. Degree Committee which they would not look at when I proposed it. Indeed if ever I glance at the Red Book it seems to me I have been wiser than I thought and if it had been decreed straightaway by a ukase I don't think it would have been half a bad thing for the University."

March 6th. "Council have been doing a lot of work lately and I view with surprise the gradual conversion of Ball into an ancient Tory."

June 5, 1914. "How grievous about Anson! I can scarcely express my feelings. I have been pressed by *The Times* to supplement their notice of this morning. I have sent something composed amid incessant interruption in the turmoil of a big party. Let me hear what is the talk in Oxford about (1) new M.P. (2) new Warden of A.S."

His next long letter is written on October 20th, after the War had been on foot for over two dire months.

"I have been rather anxious," he writes, "about the War up-to-date, and even now am apprehensive about its long duration" (in this he agreed with Kitchener and not with the many who said it must be short). "At whatever cost I think we should see it through to an end that has real finality.

"I have the Belgian Royal Family in my home at Hackwood, Belgian refugees in my stables, Belgian wounded in my house at Broadstairs, Belgian Relief Fund in my London House."

His last letter to Matheson, who was leaving Council and giving up his post as Correspondent, forms a very pleasing finale.

"Thanks to you I have always been kept in touch with the thought and feeling, as well as the action, of the University, and have never lacked a wise counsellor.

"During the period of our co-operation the University has not always moved as quickly as I should have liked or exactly on the lines I should have chosen. But substantial advance has been made and at any rate we have staved off for some years—an invaluable breathing time—an assault that at one moment looked really dangerous. I send you heartfelt thanks for the service you have rendered me, and on hearing that the V-Ch. approves I will ask Grant Robertson to take your place."

With the War normal Academic legislation ceased. It had been fortunate for Oxford that Lord Curzon when he was elected Chancellor was out of office. Now, in the autumn of 1914, he was swept into the world tides, first as a private citizen and then once more as a leading public man and Minister, becoming by degrees one of the foremost figures in the struggle, at first in war and then in peace.

When his Chancellorship became again a reality his unique work for Oxford, which had filled just seven years, was over. The "reform" which he had inaugurated and largely shaped was advanced in detail by the University itself, until it became incorporated and carried to conclusion by the Royal Commission and the Statutory Commission which followed, acting in the spirit and with the impetus of a new era, and armed with a power which he had not possessed, the command of the public purse and the Parliamentary Grant. In the appointment of these Commissions he took, of course, a prerogative part, and followed their action with interest; but their task was no longer his personal or official concern.

Yet his own work undoubtedly influenced theiss, " Astonishingly little," wrote Dr. Hogarth in his notice for the British Academy, " in general or in detail, divides the judgments of the Chancellor's Report from those of the Royal Commission, and none now will grudge a tribute to the comprehensive grasp and prescience which make one man's findings so largely anticipate those of a dozen Commissioners."

He returned from his exceptional attitude to being a Chancellor of the usual type, modern no doubt, but a modern modification of the older tradition. He came to Oxford when occasion called, he gave her his careful attention and advice whenever it was invoked. He presided of course in person at the Grand Encænia after the War. He appeared when special degrees had to be conferred such as that accepted by the Queen, when he walked in stately progress with Her Majesty from Balliol down " The Broad " to the Sheldonian, a splendid scene and pageant. He headed and entertained a Deputation which presented the D.C.L. to the King of the Belgians, who with the Queen was his guest at Carlton House Terrace. As time went on, increasing physical disability and preoccupation made his visits less frequent. He was often obliged to receive the Vice-Chancellor and Oxford visitors in his spartan bedroom, or lying out on a day-bed, obviously weary and suffering, in the park at Hackwood. How different from the days when Matheson found him cheerily raking his own gravel paths. But ill or well he would always give his mind to the question in hand and rise to the height of any real call, and the flame and sometimes the flash of the wit and humour, which in his youth had dazzled and delighted the " Souls " and the Crabbet Club, would burn and brighten again.

Among his happiest appearances in Oxford were some of his latest. At the Centenary Banquet of the Union Debating Society his speech was not only the best of the evening, but could not have been bettered. At the end of the Summer Term of 1923 he was persuaded to be present at the celebration of the Tercentenary of the Botanic Garden, a favourite resort, where he had loved to stroll with " Bob " Raper in undergraduate days, and on a temporary platform under a spreading tree, delivered a brief happy discourse on " Gardens." He had to dash back to meet a gathering of Ambassadors at Hackwood,

and he was present for little more than an hour, but wrote that he enjoyed every minute.

In the following summer (1924) he came for the Tercentenary of Pembroke College as he had come before the War for similar celebrations at Brasenose and Wadham. Again he was in a genial mood and delighted all his hearers at the Dinner, speaking most happily on the *rôle* of the smaller colleges. He charmed, too, the party with whom he breakfasted the next morning at Magdalen, among them being, as it happened, his successor, Lord Cave, and Lady Cave, whom he pleasurably startled by remembering after many years the work and personality of Sir Lloyd Mathews, and when she said he was her brother, seemingly affecting surprise.

He had meditated a longer visit the next year, repeating his experiment of November 1907, residing for a short period in the Summer Term, and entertaining and making acquaintance with the resident University old and young. It was, indeed, sad that this project was never carried out. It might have dispelled or diminished much preconception and prejudice about him, and would have made his personality known to a new young generation of Oxford men and women. But fate denied this enjoyment to both Chancellor and student.

It remained for him to be revealed after his death as a Benefactor. Already in 1908 he had procured for the Bodleian a notable benefaction, a splendid collection of Sanskrit MSS., which made the Library richer in such MSS. than any outside India. It was his influence with the large-minded and munificent Prime Minister of Nepal, Sir Chandra Shum Shere Jung Bahadur Rana, on whom, at the Chancellor's suggestion, the University had conferred the Degree of D.C.L. at the Encænia of 1908, which induced him to purchase and present these literary treasures.

Now he bequeathed to the University, to be preserved if possible in the Bodleian, his collection of Napoleonic books, prints and relics, together with the furniture of the room in which they had been kept.

What Lord Curzon would have done as Chancellor had he fallen from the first on days of ordinary routine it is difficult to conjecture.

Something he would probably have discovered to make his reign memorable. As it chanced it was a case of "the hour and the man." He was called on to save as well as to serve Oxford, and he welcomed the opportunity in the spirit of the "Happy Warrior." That he loved Oxford there can be no doubt. Whether loved or not in return, he should certainly be highly esteemed by her.

He counted nothing that affected Oxford as indifferent to himself. If nothing was too great nothing was also too small. The mass of letters on University affairs which he left, neatly sorted and docketed, is astounding. He received, sought and unsought, an immense number. He replied to each and all, and might have used with truth the words of the greatest of letter-writers. "See in what large characters I write to you in mine own hand!"

He wrote on all sorts of topics, Geography, Anthropology, The Indian Institute, the University and City Buildings, the creation of new professorships or the appointment to the old for many of which he was an elector, or with regard to which he was consulted by the Prime Minister or other important external authorities.

He was delighted on occasion to be appealed to on the question of whether the Galliambic was a permissible metre for the Chancellor's Latin Verse Prize. "The matter," he wrote, "is one in which I take a natural interest both as a donor of the Prize and also as a former runner up for it, for in 1881 I was published as *Proxime accessit*."

His unfailing and singularly kind letters of condolence or congratulation, when Heads like Dr. Daniel of Worcester or Dr. Heberden of Brasenose were removed by death, or when Dr. Macan retired from University College after a strenuous and brilliant tenure, or old friends like J. A. Smith were elected to Professorships, were greatly valued.

He was always ready to throw the *ægis* of the University over any member who could rightly claim it. The young men were less shy of approaching him than their elders. The Master of the "Drag," Mr. "Volly" Heath, killed early in the War, did not hesitate to ask him to head a subscription for procuring new kennels for his hounds. The President or Secretary of the

Canning and Chatham, or the President of the Union, invited him freely to their dinners and ceremonies and he enjoyed nothing more than accepting. The President of the O.U.D.S. did the same. He liked pomp and state on occasion but he also loved to unbend and be young again.

On the other hand it is hardly necessary to say that both the discipline and the dignity of the University were never in fairer or firmer hands.

In the spring of 1910 he conceived the idea of arranging a Royal visit to Oxford, of a rare and spectacular kind. King Edward's death in the early summer destroyed the half-formed project and in its place he had to lead the University deputation which presented the loyal Address to King George V.

A lasting memorial of Lord Curzon's effective and vitalizing Chancellorship is a resuscitated St. Edmund Hall. The Commission of 1877 had decreed, as Curzon notes in the Red Book, the absorption, subject to the life interest of the existing Heads, of the old public Halls in Colleges. Only St. Edmund Hall, the oldest, the most picturesque, remained, thanks to Dr. Edward Moore, who, appointed in 1864 as a young man of 29, was still Principal in 1907, when Lord Curzon succeeded; and continued so until 1913. But it was living with a halter round its neck.

The Chancellors were the Visitors of the Halls, and encouraged by the advent in 1907 of a new and vigorous Patron, some of its members made an appeal to him in the December of that year. Lord Curzon from the first showed himself sympathetic. The Bishop of Carlisle, who became Principal in 1913, spoke at a later date with justice of his "constant kindness to the Hall." He favoured its preservation as an independent academic entity. But there were many difficulties. Queen's College, though inclined to be generous with pecuniary assistance, was at first, and not unnaturally, reluctant to forego its claims, and, indeed, it was doubtful whether the Hall could maintain itself alone. Without support it pretty certainly could not. To strengthen its pecuniary position an Act of Parliament had to be passed severing the Benefice of Gatcombe from the Principalship. In this Sir William Anson was most helpful. Then a new statute must be adopted by the University

and approved by the King in Council. It was not till 1913 that these difficulties were overcome. Then, in June 1914, encouraged by the Chancellor, who himself gave £100, a public appeal was put out. Money was coming in, and over £1,000 had been promised when the War suspended all operations.

Unforgetful and undaunted, the Chancellor took the matter up again in the spring of 1919 in a letter to Council, suggesting that the University should now espouse the cause of the Hall as an institution of its own. He also pleaded its case with the Endowment Fund Trustees. His advocacy was successful with both. The Hall was set on a sound footing. With a new constitution, increased numbers, the old buildings repaired, and fresh accommodation added, it is more prosperous to-day than it had ever been.

He took a keen and constant interest in the award of Oxford's Honorary Degrees, the old distinguished D.C.L. especially. He was all for honouring undoubted merit, and the most indubitable in his view was that of public service, though he was eager to recognize literature—he himself suggested both Swinburne and Kipling—and also notable discovery and eminent art. He was encouraged in his high estimate of their value by the letters sent him by the most distinguished recipients. One of the most striking may be quoted, that of Marshal Foch in May 1919.

"Cher Lord Curzon,

"J'apprecie à toute sa valeur l'honneur que l'Université d'Oxford veut bien songer à me décerner. Je sais la place qu'elle a tenue et tient encore dans l'histoire de la pensée et dans l'action de l'Empire Britannique. Ses élèves ont voulu prendre dans la guerre un part d'autant plus grand que les liens qui unissent leur université à la vie nationale étaient plus étroits. Beaucoup ont donné leur vie; tous ont servi avec éclat.

"J'ai eu l'honneur de leur commander; je ne l'oublie pas."

In the Spring of 1924 the Chancellor's aid was invoked by St. Hugh's College to end an unfortunate deadlock which had arisen in its administration. His prompt adjudication relieved the personal situation at the moment, and also secured not only for St. Hugh's

but for the Women's Societies generally a "more defined and harmonious co-ordination among the authorities, by a considered revision of their Constitution." It is noticeable that Somerville College now made the Chancellor its Visitor.

About the happiness of their relation with him, his successive University Correspondents, Mr. Matheson, Mr., now Sir, Charles Grant Robertson and Mr. Jenkinson speak with one voice.

His untiring industry, his attention to every letter and every point, amazed and impressed them all equally. He asked not only for facts but for "*aperçus*, prospects, policies." Above all he asked for what he gave, complete confidence. Candour, "the maximum of candour," about both things and people, was what he postulated.

"No one could ever have been kinder than he was. The idea that he was an Olympian Jove imposing his superiority on anyone in not so exalted a position was, so far as my experience goes, a ridiculous caricature"; "a great man with whom it was a privilege to work." So Sir C. Grant Robertson writes of him.

Perhaps the best summing up of Curzon's attitude to Oxford is to be found in his own words which form the eloquent conclusion of the Introduction written by him to the "Gray Book," the Report issued in 1910 on behalf of Council upon the earlier volume, "The Principles and Methods of Reform."

> "We have made no attempt to build a new Oxford on the ruins of the old. We have too profound a conviction of the part that is still capable of being played by the older universities and, as we think, by our own in particular, in the life of the nation, to wish in any degree to impair its essential character or its inspiring influence. We want Oxford to remain what it is, but to become, if it may be, better: still to keep alive the transmitted flame, but to see that it illumines every corner of the temple of knowledge, and is accessible to all sections of the community: above all since our University is an imperial training ground for character and intellect, to arrange that the scheme of life which produces the former is worthy and sound, and that the scheme of instruction which develops the latter is comprehensive and efficient."

Surely Oxford's gratitude should be his meed for such faith and such affection, nor less for the self-sacrificing intensity with which he toiled to implement this high profession. Surely as the years go on, and like some receding peak he towers up among the Chancellors of the past, it will be rendered to him more ungrudgingly than it was in his youth or in his mid-career.

"I have been dogged through life," he said, "by an undergraduate epigram." So it was in the past, so to some extent it still is. To-morrow appreciation will take the place of criticism. As Horace wrote of Augustus,

> "*Urit enim fulgore suo qui praegravat artes*
> *Infra se positas, extinctus amabitur idem.*"