WOODROW WYATT

Distinguished for Talent

What are the vital forces at work in Britain today? And whose are the hands and minds that control them? These are questions that go naturally together. The purpose of this book, by one of the foremost interpreters and commentators of the day, is to answer them accurately and to the minute. With no desire to feather-bed reputations, Woodrow Wyatt takes a long, cool look at the personalities who dominate, or may be about to dominate, their respective fields. By its sharp-eyed appraisal of individuals who, consciously or not, are re-directing the flow of British talent and ambition, this book adds considerably to the understanding of our times and circumstances.

The outlook of the editorial director of the *Mirror* Group of newspapers, with their vast circulations, is a matter of more than Fleet Street concern. Those unlikely companions, Sir Ian Jacob and Mr. Frank Cousins, are going increasingly to affect the pattern of British life and behaviour. Sir Eric James, in the field of education, and Mr. John Moores, the uncrowned king of Liverpool, make an impact on our society out of all proportion to society's knowledge of them and their tastes. These are the kind of people Woodrow Wyatt considers, and he covers a representative selection of

continued on back flap

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DISTINGUISHED FOR TALENT

Distinguished for

TALENT

Some Men of Influence
and Enterprise

by

WOODROW WYATT



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To

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I

Looking at Britain

THIS is a book about people. They are all alive in Britain today. Each of them makes an impact, or has left his impress, on his sphere. Some are at the top of their profession or occupation. Others are still climbing upwards. There is a theory that history is made and countries are shaped by deep currents, economic or otherwise, predestined to drift inexorably into forecastable channels. Whatever individual human beings, however remarkable, may appear to do, they are tossed about on the water above and can alter nothing. That seems to me to be inaccurate. No doubt there are great forces beyond the control of men, either singly or in groups, which may sway the future course of life. But it is absurd to suggest that the quality of its prominent men is irrelevant to a nation. Whether it is Caesar or Napoleon, Cicero or Churchill, Socrates or Shaw, exceptional men affect their country and its fortunes.

For the twenty-five short portraits that follow I have tried to select men in Britain who mean something and are actually or potentially influential on others in the same field. It is not an exhaustive list covering the whole nation, but taken together they may give some indication of what Britain is today and may become. There are only four politicians—and one of them, Sir Winston Churchill, is included not for his power in politics but in Parliament. There are two leading trade unionists, Mr. W. J. Carron and Mr. F. Cousins. There is the head of a great grammar school. Because communication and the dissemination of ideas and attitudes to the public is now more extensive than

ever there are six men connected with it. Lord Beaverbrook, whose newspapers continue to mould the day-to-day approach to life of millions. Mr. Hugh Cudlipp, the Editorial Director of the *Sunday Pictorial* and the *Daily Mirror*, who is in tune with, modifies and sometimes initiates the opinions of the masses. Sir Ian Jacob, who sets the tone of one half of the television world; and Mr. Valentine Parnell, who makes a considerable dent on the other. Sir Michael Balcon, who is the most consistently successful British film produer and who, in portraying the British character, has tended to consolidate it by reflection. Sir Allen Lane, whose *Penguins* have opened new worlds to millions who otherwise would have thought serious writing and serious subjects beyond their understanding.

In the area of more creative art I have included Mr. John Osborne, not as a playwright but for the feelings he represents and tries to give expression to; Mr. Henry Moore, because he has elevated the repute of British sculptors to its highest point and has advanced the appreciation of countless non-artists to a new stage; Sir Philip Hendy, who by his administration of the National Gallery has assisted in the enormous growth of interest in art.

From the business world there is Sir Simon Marks because he has succeeded in making available to everyone goods which previously only the opulent could buy. Mr. John Moores is an exercise in how to become a millionaire. The sole major industrialist is Sir Alexander Fleck, who is typical of the way in which I.C.I. have passed over from a mere pursuit of private profit to a sense of public service. Also in the commercial section there are four hardly known business men as an illustration that the post-war Welfare State need not impede enterprise. Because Britain depends on manufacturing, and successful manufacturing depends on inventors and discoverers, I have written about Sir John Cockcroft and Mr. Harry Ferguson.

All these men have in common vitality. Some are clearly more important than others. But Britain would not be the place it is without them and their kind. By writing about them I hope I may have constructed a partial picture of Britain.

We are at a moment when Britain is being reassessed in the world and when the British themselves are beginning to feel the need to examine their prospects. Two world wars, the change over from Empire to Commonwealth, the arrival of the Welfare State, the challenge to our export markets on which our life is founded, have all contributed to restlessness, a wondering about Britain, self-doubts and a paradoxically simultaneous determination not to look closely at the facts for fear of increasing the self-doubts.

Mr. Justice Douglas, of the United States Supreme Court, has read, thought, and travelled much. His standards of value are sober and liberal—of the kind that prevail in Britain. He could emphatically be described as pro-British. So when recently he allowed himself a forecast of the six nations that would dominate the second half of the twentieth century it was a shock to find that he had not included Britain. America, Russia, China, India, Germany, and Japan were his choice.

Mr. Douglas reflects a general American view that Britain is now a second-rate country politically and physically. The first time I went to America—in 1952—I was astonished and distressed that not only in Washington and New York, but throughout the whole of the United States, Britain was thought of by most of the Americans I met, including many highly intelligent and well informed, as almost without significance as a factor in shaping the world. Americans either did not know or attached no importance to the British view on major issues. Britain was regarded as a fading asset to the West which had to be propped up by American dollars because her complete collapse would leave a hole in the NATO defence structure. The idea that Britain had a stature remotely approaching that of Russia or America seemed to Americans to be laughable. Britain was just one of the also-rans which had seen great days and was now moving towards bankruptcy through loss of energy and will-power.

In three subsequent visits I found much politeness but little change in attitude. Americans are not inclined to regard Britain as a decisive nation any longer. Their interest in some aspects of

British scientific development, particularly in the nuclear field, was quickened by the Russian sputniks, but any respect for British achievements is usually smothered by the speed and skill with which the British contribution to an advance is obliterated by publicists and the main credit is claimed for America. The Suez intervention confirmed the American opinion that Britain was finished. That Britain could not develop fast enough the physical power to execute promptly the policy, right or wrong, of seizing the Suez Canal by force wrote, for Americans, the epitaph on Britain's might. To Americans looking at us across the Atlantic something appears to have gone out of our vitality and they assume it will not return.

If it were only America which thought little of Britain there might be no cause for alarm. But travelling in Europe, in Africa, in Asia, I have discovered the same critical and depreciating remarks made everywhere—and by those well disposed to Britain, sad at the debility they think they see. When Herr Strauss, German Minister of Defence, blurted out that he thought Britain was a second-class power, whose disagreement to anything proposed by Germany need not be seriously considered, the incident was glossed over. But he was merely saying what most Germans think. They see England as wobbling feebly, not even able to prevent the Germans, with the handicap of a more thoroughly war-smashed industry than ours, from capturing British export markets. When the European Army scheme was first discussed in 1950 Germany, France and the Continent longed for Britain to come in. Now the Continent no longer feels it a great loss to European strength or unity that Britain stood aloof. There was a period when the weight of opinion in Europe was so placed that progress towards European unity and identity could only be thought of with the active co-operation of the British. Now opinion has swung. If Britain comes into Europe, continentals think, she will gain. But if she fails to become part of Europe they will not be greatly disturbed and will conclude that the principal sufferer will be Britain. Europeans now see Germany as the prevailing power in Europe.

In the Middle East British prestige almost vanished after the Suez intervention. The collapse of that action made millions of Arabs, and others, feel that the remnants of British power had been resting on a bluff. In Pakistan and India there is acute disappointment that Britain's own economic difficulties have made her unable, although she has tried, to do more in assistance. When Britain ruled India a consolation for Indian nationalists was that they might be slaves but they belonged to an empire run by a world power. If it was not number one it at least ranked on level terms with the countries at the apex. Now in Indian eyes Britain does not look to be in the championship class. The outstretched hands of Asians are increasingly pointed towards America and their ears towards Russia and China. In Africa youth is not impressed by Britain. As in Asia the attraction is either for the flashing products of America or the brilliant promises of Russia.

Travelling frequently to many countries since 1955 and meeting every grade of person from men in the street to Prime Ministers, I have been forced to acknowledge that the world has a poor opinion of us today. Often we seem to outsiders to be posing as having more importance than our economic and political strength justifies. Some of our friends feel that we are in the sad position of desperately trying to keep up appearances and to offer a front to the world that is beyond our means to maintain. Instead of living in a smaller, modern, centrally heated and labour-saving, comfortable house within our means we cling to a large, ugly, Victorian mansion, which requires, to be kept habitable, more servants than we can afford: a gentlewoman in reduced circumstances pretending that nothing has changed.

But what do we think of ourselves? We seem muddled. On the one hand there is complacency and self-congratulation that Britain is the best country in the world with the fairest and most highly developed political institutions of all. We are happy to feel that dreadful things that occur elsewhere cannot happen here. We get much relish from our quiet reasonableness, our much-vaunted understatement, our commonsense. We are proud in having a Queen and pity those poor foreigners who lack this

noble symbol of greatness which continues to convince us that not only do we have a magnificent past but that the present and the future are automatically of the same order.

On the other hand there is a mood of despair. We have lost the race: it is no good trying to keep up any more. Our vigour has gone, other nations have displaced us, we are moving sharply and inevitably downwards. Initiative is stifled, taxation and the Welfare State, so the dirge runs, make it impossible for the young or the ambitious to make real headway. Out of this spirit of frustration and hopelessness comes a great part of the impulse to emigrate. Canada, Australia, and other countries draw thousands away who go not in a spirit of adventure anxious to conquer untamed spaces, but because they want an easier time with quicker rewards and have lost faith in Britain.

Often the same person combines in him the two approaches: the conviction that traditional Britain needs no changes—and defeatism. This leads to false appraisals and wrong actions. For instance, there are fifteen thousand engineering firms that could belong to the Production Engineering Research Association. That organization is partly Government-sponsored and partly paid for by contributions from industry. Its aim is to make available to engineering firms new techniques through which British designs and inventions can be rapidly, extensively, and cheaply produced. Failure to do this has led to British inventiveness being exploited, not by Britain, but by America and other forceful producing countries. At the Production Engineering Research Association in Melton Mowbray there is a tiny but brilliant staff—in Russia there are twenty times as many people working on similar engineering research and the same is true of America.

Nevertheless despite the fact that the Production Engineering Research Association has had many remarkable successes, only six hundred out of the fifteen thousand firms that could join had bothered by 1958 to take advantage of the organization. The few member firms are already the best and most forward-looking who need the service far less than the great bulk of the engineering industry. They belong because they are always anxious to learn

and benefit from anything new. But the non-joiners are quite satisfied to jog along in the same old way. A typical letter PERA received when trying to interest an engineering firm in their activities ran: 'Dear Sirs, We have been in this business for thirty years and we do not think that there is anything that anyone can teach us. We are quite satisfied with our past achievements. . . .'

Yes, that is the motto of much of Britain today. 'We are quite satisfied with our past achievements.' That is why in Liberia, in Kuwait, all over Asia—and indeed the world—you can see countless business opportunities neglected by the British. Some firms carry on the questing, thrusting habits of the old British merchant adventurers; but far too many of the others rely on the previous reputation of their firms and their country, on the belief that the slogan 'Made in Britain' is enough. They sit smugly at home waiting for the foreign customer to seek them out and place his orders. All over the world I have been asked why German firms invariably supply after-sales service and the British hardly ever do. Even in remote Jordan, where there is great friendliness to Britain, German motor-cars are displacing British partly because the Germans have taken the trouble to work out credit facilities which we do not give and partly because spare parts arrive promptly. Owners of German cars who have a breakdown do not have to wait, as many British car owners do, for months before they can get their car on to the road again. In Liberia a newspaper editor said: 'Don't you people know that Liberia has a dollar currency? We thought you wanted dollars. Everybody—the Germans, the Italians, the Americans—try to sell us things, but you don't bother.' Every year sees a further drop in Britain's share of the world's export trade. It is due to the lackadaisical approach of British firms which self-importantly imagine that being British is sufficient.

An illustration of a by-product of the myth that nothing has changed, or should change, is the mountain of effort often squandered on prestige projects. Nearly all of the disastrous fighter aircraft and guided missile production in Britain since the war has been a gigantic waste of money. The British aircraft

industry has been asked to do too much with far too little resources. Instead of concentrating on a few types of civil airframe and aircraft engine, and making them superlatively well, we have overstretched ourselves and turned out much that is inferior. And all the time the Americans have been producing excellent fighter aircraft and guided missiles in huge quantities which they have been willing to let us have—if we could swallow our pride enough to see that there is no point in our wasting our strength, in the military field, in trying to do something the Americans can do better. Instead we boast of our prowess when a British aeroplane captures a world speed record. We ignore the fact that usually there is only one such aeroplane, that it is never put into production and that Russia and America have hundreds of planes that go faster but they do not bruit their speeds abroad for security reasons.

Or again, we are told by economists and leaders of opinion that it is a splendid thing for us that half the world's trade is done in sterling. It shows how important and vital we are to the world. But it can only be done if international financiers consider that the pound is stable. So for this piece of prestige we make it possible for Russians and Argentinians, Japanese and Germans, to trade with each other with sterling that can be converted into dollars and other hard currencies. The only material good is the tiny commission which is made by financial houses in the City. To enable this practice to continue we worship the god that demands that the pound sterling must be kept strong. When international speculators have made it look a little weak we punish ourselves for imagined sins with crippling rises in the Bank Rate. We incidentally punish at the same time Commonwealth countries that depend on the export of their raw materials and are then faced, because rises in the Bank Rate restrict industrial output, with reduced world prices for their commodities which savagely set back their plans for economic development. No one stops to ask whether it is sensible for us to want to finance half the world's trade at the expense of our own and Commonwealth economic expansion. It is just an article of faith that Britain should do it.

Equivalent to the attitude of over-confidence and self-satisfaction is the despairing side of the equation. It leads to thousands of young men assuming that Britain is a dead country and that nothing can be done about it. It induces managements to take things easily in the belief that the industrial atmosphere makes it impossible to compete adequately. In the face of difficulties overseas or the hard work required to make businesses flourish that are at present marking time there is a tendency to give up. Nothing seems worth the bother.

All is not well with Britain today. It is not that our Government public relations fail to put across to foreigners what Britain is all about. Public relations officers are circumscribed by the policy of their employers. The fault is in ourselves. We have not thought out what our role can and should be in the second half of the twentieth century. One barrier to accurate self-examination is the concept we hold of Britain striding through history as the top, or nearly top, great power. We imbibe it from the history books at school, never query its correctness and assume that general collapse must follow if we are forced to concede that we are not the dominant factor in world politics that we once were.

But in the nine hundred years since 1066 Britain has only for short periods been a world power of the first rank. We look back to the glorious days of Elizabeth I and recite the names of the poets, the admirals, and the adventurers. We forget that to the Europe of the time England was not of paramount importance. It was worth trying to subdue her, or to get her support, but the name of England did not make Europe tremble—she was lucky to avoid being conquered. Whole centuries have passed in which the British voice in the councils of the world has been muted while at home great political, artistic, inventive, and other developments were taking place. During the Napoleonic wars Britain could never have taken on France by herself and won. Even in the second half of the nineteenth century, when perhaps British power, relative to the rest of the world, was at its highest, we could not stop the rise of Prussia or prevent the unification of Germany over the conquered body of France. Externally our

most powerful period was when the conditions of war were sufficiently primitive to allow the British Navy control of the seas and permit the administration of a vast empire. But, as the founders of that empire saw from the start, it was a matter of time before the holding of huge territories overseas by force would have to cease.

By exaggerating our world stature in the past we confuse ourselves about the present. For a short time, before America became interested in international politics and before Russia emerged as a world state, we may reasonably say that we were at the top. But these ratings are temporary and irrelevant to the main tenor of our progress as a nation. It may be that at the moment we are slightly down internationally, but we have been far lower many times before. Perhaps the fact of two world wars and the stimulus that later stages of the industrial revolution has given to countries with larger populations has temporarily forced on us a lessened status. But there is no reason why we should be in anything worse than a pause in our course, provided that we avoid dissipating our resources and concentrate on exploiting our best points. In the long run momentary ups and downs are unimportant so long as the basic structure is sound. It becomes unsound when we overburden it with expensive myths about prestige and moods of black gloom when we see that the myths are not deceiving the rest of the world.

I believe that there are men in Britain today as great and as distinguished as at any time in our history. We have not lost our inventiveness. In compelling the destructive elements of nuclear power to serve man instead of destroying him we lead the world. In the new industries of aircraft engines, chemicals, plastics, where new enterprises are not hampered by the dead weight of old plant and old methods, no country can better us. Our political system, which is managing to find a way between unbridled Capitalism and dictatorial Communism, is a model which many other countries wish to copy—and would do so more enthusiastically at once if we could produce more convincing evidence that we have not lost our old verve.

If I were born again I would rather be born in Britain today than anywhere else. The compound of old and new makes it both the most agreeable and the most exciting of all countries. It is the most civilized nation in the world. But that civilization can only be kept going, and improved, if we do not shrink from examining everything afresh from time to time, ruthlessly inspecting institutions and customs that we take for granted solely because they have been there for so long. Britain must be modern. By giving herself a shaking it is well within her both to make her own people prosperous and to enjoy a leading place in the world from which she can disseminate the essence of her civilization.

Every concept that we have been accustomed to assume correct must be looked at again. Take, for instance, the notion that British management is good and that the workers do not work hard enough. The truth is the reverse. British workers work longer hours than American and the amount of work they do is above the world's average. There is nothing wrong with the workers. Whichever firm they may be employed by they are much the same people as the workers who do extremely well in such firms as G.E.C., A.E.I.—or in ICI and Dexion which I have written about in this book. In the Army if a general sees a slovenly, dirty, ill-disciplined company of soldiers his first reaction is not to say 'What a rotten lot of soldiers,' but 'What a rotten lot of officers.' He knows that the soldiers are the same material that good leadership has made smart, efficient and contented in other units. It is the same with British management. Probably as much as 70 per cent of British management is lazy, out of date, and contented to coast along on the machinery, factories, and methods that were good enough forty years ago.

Or consider our conception of education. The weight of advice from schoolmasters to parents is still that their children will do better to specialize in non-scientific subjects. Engineers and applied scientists do not enjoy much veneration in our society. In the chapter on Sir John Cockcroft I quote him as saying that everyone pays lip service to scientific education but not enough is done about it. Oxford and Cambridge and the

leading public schools set the tone in educational curricula. They continue to maintain an environment of education more suited to rearing a cultured squirearchy than to fighting for life in the technological age. These are two examples from many.

We cannot make an impression upon the world, or even hold our present precarious position, unless we make prodigious exertions to ensure that every piece of latent ingenuity, inventiveness, skill, brain power, and resource that we have is developed and used to the maximum. Have we lost some extra quality and personality that once gave us a standing and an ability to thrive beyond our numbers and material advantages? I do not think so. What we are doing is to doze when we should be active.

None of the people I have written about in this book is guilty of sleepiness. I could, no doubt should, have included many others. Some of those who are here may be illustrations of how not to do things. But all have some bearing on the shape that Britain has been assuming, is likely to assume, and could assume.

2

Lord Beaverbrook

It was a very good cocktail. Lord Beaverbrook made it with his electric mixer which drove the ice into tiny chunks.

'Is it too cold for you?' he asked. 'It's made with limes, you know. I have them flown every day from my garden in Jamaica.'

Lord Beaverbrook stumped with sharp jerks to the mixer to fetch another drink. For a moment he stood motionless, slightly stooping, with his back to the room. Suddenly there was a touch of wistful melancholy, almost of loneliness, about him. Just as pity was mounting in the mind he turned and it was gone. The elemental currents which drive and sustain him were coursing through him again and he commanded the room.

Lord Beaverbrook, who was born in 1879, is the last of the old-style Press lords. He exerts unlimited control over the *Daily Express* (circulation over four million), the *Sunday Express* (circulation over three and a half million), the *Evening Standard*, the *Junior Express* (a weekly newspaper for children), the *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, and numerous other publications.

A Press lord is a British institution unknown to America or elsewhere. The small geographical size of the country means that morning papers published in London can reach even the most isolated places by breakfast time the next day. Provincial dailies are hopelessly outglamourized by their rivals from the capital. The first Press lord was Lord Northcliffe. He realized that an efficiently run London paper could overcome most of the competition from provincial dailies and might be made to have an effect on politics. At his peak he not only ran such popular papers as the

Daily Mail but had acquired *The Times* and was able to force at least one Prime Minister to resign in favour of another of his choice. Before Northcliffe died he advised his chief executives to keep an eye on the rising young Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook). Lord Beaverbrook set out to be heir to Northcliffe in the wielding of political power through the Press. In this he has mainly failed. But he has instead made a powerful impact on the non-political thought and life of the nation. His newspapers, which have achieved even wider circulation than Northcliffe's did, have done much to tear the Victorian cobwebs off Britain and to bring her into the twentieth century. He has stimulated a quick modern approach and has helped to lessen the dragtide of the past.

New, selfmade Press lords like Lord Northcliffe and Lord Beaverbrook and their lesser imitators are unlikely to occur again in Britain. The Welfare State, with high death duties and heavy taxation, has made the accumulation of the capital needed too difficult. Lord Beaverbrook was a millionaire in pounds before he was thirty. That was more than enough to buy and promote the *Daily Express* towards the end of the First World War. Today, partly because his own and similarly popular newspapers are so strongly established, a new national daily would need a capital of at least six million pounds if it were to survive. No individual, nor even a combination of a few individuals, is likely to have so much money to risk.

Everything about Lord Beaverbrook is quick and short. His sentences, his movements, come from some huge source of vitality that cannot be contained in smooth, even anonymity. That is not to say that he lacks charm or manners. On the contrary, when he chooses, he exerts a spell which persuades visitors that they are very important and interesting to him.

At the outset he attends with detailed care, and without the interposition of servants, to their physical wants. He enquires earnestly of their wellbeing and their opinions. By reputation a formidable and wayward tyrant, he disarms at the first encounter by being anxious to please. Frequently he has ready some obscure piece of information about a guest's background which flatters

him into the comfortable conceit that Lord Beaverbrook appreciates his significance.

Lord Beaverbrook is very conscious of the impression he makes and takes care that it should be the one he intends. When Arnold Bennett came to see Beaverbrook for the first time he refused to sit down until he had solemnly read out an attack on Beaverbrook that he had just written.

'That,' said Arnold Bennett, 'is going into the newspapers tomorrow.'

Beaverbrook comments: 'I asked him to sit down. He did so. We had lunch. He never referred to the newspaper attack again. It was not serious nor was it, in my opinion, sensible, but it appeared the next day just the same. At the end of lunch I saw I had made an impression on him—which is exactly what I intended to do.'

Lord Beaverbrook chooses plain settings in which to show himself off. There are no bright or colourful wallpapers. There are no antiques, no essays into the future. The furniture is what can be bought at any respectable middle-class furniture store and he seems to take little trouble about it. Once he said he had given his secretary the unusual assignment of buying some for him. He declared her merits in all other particulars, 'but she is no furniture buyer'.

I have only visited two of his six establishments. Both are comfortable but plain. At Cherkley, twenty miles from London, he has a large, untidily shaped house with ranging views of the gentle Surrey hills. At the top of Arlington House, above the Caprice restaurant, he has a simple flat. One visitor observed: 'Nothing is luxurious unless you sit in it or taste it.' The most striking object in both places is Lord Beaverbrook. The same, I believe, can be said of his two houses in the West Indies, his villa in the South of France, and his farm in Somerset. He allows himself no flamboyance in his clothes, which are neat but by no means smart. The colour is not in his clothes or his surroundings but in him.

His head at moments seems very large and equipped with

two rays rather than eyes sheltering under hairy stiff white eyebrows which signal impatience and other emotions. It is not the head of an intellectual but it is the head of someone who does everything with his brain. At first it appears topheavy. When you look again you see that this is an illusion and that his head is not much larger than anybody else's. It is simply that it exudes so much force and power that it seems out of the ordinary.

In an article published in America in 1918 T. P. O'Connor, the Irish M.P. and journalist, described him as 'a small, even insignificant person. A poor stammering speaker with no apparent gifts whatsoever for public life.' After forty years all that is recognizable of the description is the fact that he is small. He has learned to speak on the public platform and his appearances on television have been startling and successful. Many adjectives can be applied to Lord Beaverbrook but no one now would think of saying that he looked insignificant. In 1918 there were probably some inhibitions left which prevented his personality from bubbling out in freedom and coherence.

At his house at Cherkley, in Surrey, he has a lift because he feels his asthma, which plays almost as important a part in his life as his newspapers, would suffer if he were to climb the stairs. After dinner there one summer evening he was showing us round the house upstairs.

'You walk up. I'll go by the lift.' As he caged himself in he went on talking; telling some story. As the lift moved slowly upwards his loud voice went shouting on in time to the gesticulations of his hands and the animations of his face. Today Lord Beaverbrook is about as insignificant as a Prophet of the Old Testament ascending into Heaven.

Lord Beaverbrook seldom gives much notice of an invitation to dinner. He estimates correctly that most people will throw over other engagements to come to him. To dine with Lord Beaverbrook is an experience. To avoid him is escapism. He is the challenge of life itself. He makes you feel that you are at the centre of things, that it is not merely in his imagination that the world revolves around Lord Beaverbrook. Everything is un-

certain, even whether you will be wearing the right clothes. If you are in a dinner jacket he is not and vice versa. He may be in a good humour throughout the evening or he may become becalmed in a mood of dismaying boredom.

By the end of the day Lord Beaverbrook wants to be amused. New faces, different faces, entertaining faces are what he hopes for. Sometimes from a sense of duty he gets stuck with somewhat dull faces. Then he may march off the moment dinner is over into his private cinema to see a film, although, if it is a Saturday night, the cinema becomes a ritual, however entertaining his guests are. It makes no difference whether they want to see his film or whether they have seen it before. That is his amusement for the evening and he won't be deprived of it. Being amused is very important to him. He likes people who have stores of anecdotes to call on, but he will not have anybody in his immediate circle who tells the same story twice.

'Does he repeat his anecdotes?' he asked about a celebrated personality with a reputation as a raconteur who was to be brought to see him for the first time. Among the dearest to his heart during his life have been his jesters. There were Tim Healey, the Irish Nationalist M.P., Lord Grantley, and Lord Castlerosse. Often there has been, and still is, Sir Beverley Baxter, once a Beaverbrook editor and always a Beaverbrook writer. If a jester dies he is very sad and notices his departure keenly.

He has a gift for telling stories himself and only occasionally repeats them to the same person. Once he and Lord Castlerosse were travelling together in the South of France when they were halted by a road accident involving two women. Later that evening at dinner Lord Beaverbrook was developing an anecdote when Lord Castlerosse, as the climax of the story approached, interrupted: 'I wonder what happened to those two women on the road today?'

'Whatever did you want to stop me there for?' asked Lord Beaverbrook.

'Well, you were telling the same story when we found them.'

It made a profound impression on Lord Beaverbrook.

Lord Beaverbrook's fuel is people. He rarely sees less than fifteen a day when he is in London. He goes through them extracting information and ideas, and he is not at all ashamed of passing the latter off as his own. His dependence on people is not confined to those connected with businesses or politics.

People come to him because they cannot help it and because he knows how to manage them with flattery, kindness and cruelty. I rang him up once to say good-bye when the *Daily Express* had in the morning carried an announcement of his departure to Canada headed 'I go in gloom and sorrow' and signed 'Beaverbrook'. He came to the telephone and without a preliminary 'Hallo' began: 'I was talking about you yesterday. I told Churchill . . .' Who could resist that approach?

Lord Beaverbrook is both subtle and sincere in his flattery. He concentrates on what clearly are a man's good points and he will praise them to a third party knowing that his words will arrive where he wishes. He never holds back any spontaneous feeling of warmth. His congratulations are genuine and full.

Maybe that is his first step to possession. He depends on people and if they work for him in any responsible capacity he must have them completely. For members of the staff an invitation to dinner is a Royal command which may mean leaving a dinner they have just begun to go and eat his. An editor or senior subordinate must be prepared to drop any private arrangements and come at once. Lord Beaverbrook has never been defeated by any wife who think she has a claim equal to his on her husband's leisure.

'How would you describe the way in which you get the best out of your staff?' I asked.

'I keep them at full stretch.'

I asked him a question about the Public Opinion Poll run by the *Daily Express*. 'Charles,' he shouted. (Lord Beaverbrook never rings bells: he shouts.) 'Get me Mr. Robertson on the telephone—in here.' One of the several men who always hover near Lord Beaverbrook at dinner—dressed like bank clerks but

acting as servants—reported failure. Mr. Robertson, then the enormously well-paid General Manager, on whom the administration and business success of the *Express* newspapers depends, was out and not even Lord Beaverbrook could trace him.

One ex-editor told me: 'He knows exactly where your nervous point is and he presses it.' No one is a better judge of character and of weaknesses. With feminine and feline perception he works round to the vulnerable spots and strikes. Once he has made his victim do something he does not want to he is that much further committed. If he rejects some suggestion the cloud of Lord Beaverbrook's disfavour is on him and may not be lifted for a week, a month, a year.

'He loves to humiliate you,' another well-known ex-Beaverbrook executive said. 'By now I know the moment I hear his voice on the telephone whether there is someone in the room he is showing off to or whether he wants a serious conversation.'

The telephone was invented just in time for Lord Beaverbrook. In his early days of owning the *Daily Express* (he took control in 1918) he had a flat at the top of the building. He soon abandoned that for remote and unpredictable control by telephone. The movements and actions of a proprietor in an office can be plotted and there are times, perhaps when he is interviewing a distinguished visitor, that the staff can relax. But that probing, disembodied voice that seemingly sees, as well as hears, may come at any time.

His first words are often 'Anything new?' and his antennae for what is interesting are so keen that he probably knows it before he is told. Another opening, for use to editors, is: 'I liked your paper this morning'—pause—'but why on earth did you put that story on the front page? That's not a front-page story. . . .'

Lord Beaverbrook, like a bird, has regular migrations—beginning of October, Canada and the U.S.A.; mid-December to his houses in Nassau and Jamaica with visits to Cuba included; mid-February U.S.A. again; England briefly half-way through March; his villa in the South of France for April; May, June, and

July in England; the South of France until mid-September and, after a short say in England, the cycle begins again.

Everywhere except the West Indies, the telephone, supplemented by dictaphone records, is the weapon with which he pursues his staff. From the West Indies, because of defective telephone connections, he can only use the dictaphone—which cannot catch a man out the same way. The top executives will assemble for the call when he is, for instance, in the South of France and others, however junior, who have caught his notice for good or bad work may be summoned during the course of it.

On pour the comments into the telephone or dictaphone. 'The trouble with the *Junior Express*[1] is that it is too much like the senior *Express*,' hammers the electric voice with its vibrating Canadian accent. 'Your front page is deplorable. Terrible box in it breaking up the layout.'

'I keep them at full stretch'—on a rack of insecurity. He will tear a man to such shreds that he will go home and tell his wife that he knows he has lost his job when the idea is far from occurring to Lord Beaverbrook. Producing each issue of each Beaverbrook newspaper is a life-and-death matter. One moment it is a wonderful paper: the next it is a dreadful thing, no good at all—who did that? why was that done? Most members of the staff think every edition is critical. As the printing presses go to work there is always tension and it rises sharply when he is in England. He has so impressed himself on his employees that some of them are said to believe that the reason the sun rises every day is because it is *Express* policy that it should. 'How do you get this result?' I asked.

'If I may say so with humility personality has a lot to do with it. And I show them that the master is prepared to do as much as they are.'

Humility is a theme that swims into Lord Beaverbrook's mind occasionally. In his book which tells young men how to be millionaires, *Don't Trust To Luck*, he writes: 'There are three

[1] The *Junior Express* is a weekly paper for children first published by the *Express* on September 4th, 1954.

great rules for the successful man who wishes to be happy: to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly.' He adds with unnecessary candour: 'I cannot pretend to be humble myself."

Lord Beaverbrook's requirements are met at once with anguish but without fail because almost nobody dares say 'No,' or 'I'm too tired.' There is the panic of wondering what it is he does want and the deflation of finding it is something quite different.

When Percy Cudlipp became editor of the *Evening Standard* before the war he stayed the night at Cherkley. Lord Beaverbrook talked energetically till two or three in the morning until Cudlipp was nearly asleep. Towards the end the talk was of Lloyd George. As he accompanied Cudlipp to his bedroom Lord Beaverbrook handed him the bulky first volume of Lloyd George's memoirs. 'Tell me what you think of it in the morning,' he said.

Cudlipp struggled unhappily and on too little sleep to acquaint himself with the main details of the book. At nine o'clock the next morning a summons came for him to go to his employer. Lord Beaverbrook was in his bath where he works, reads papers, and often holds interviews.

'What did you think of the second leader in *The Times* this morning?' he demanded. In pursuit of Lloyd George the unfortunate Cudlipp had neglected to read all the morning papers as the editor of an evening paper should.

He will hand someone a huge pile of manuscript, perhaps a book that has been offered for serialization, at eleven o'clock at night. 'Tell me what it says. No hurry. Tomorrow evening some time.'

Lord Beaverbrook takes an intense and detailed interest in most things that happen around him. As a very young man in Canada he once became a newspaper proprietor. 'I was the publisher and sole proprietor of a paper, *The Leader*,' he says. 'I also set up the type. I stood at the case. Not only that but I ran the printing press, and I did it not by touching a button but by turning a handle in the same way as you turn a mangle. I did everything but distribute the type after it had been used. That I

would never do. It was too boring.' And one thing Lord Beaverbrook insists on with everything in him is not being bored. When he is bored, and it takes much and constant variety to keep him amused, he notifies it by a sulk.

He loves to torment his staff. He delights in any friction there may be among them and does not always refrain from encouraging it. 'To be with him,' as one of them remarked to me, 'is like having a terrible love affair with a dazzling and capricious woman.' Hardly anyone has ever worked for him without reaching hatred point, hating the perfectionism which is never satisfied, hating the ruthless drive through feelings, hating the singleminded pursuit of his own whims for which others must sacrifice their personalities, hating the daemonic ability to keep his subordinates dancing taut and trying to please.

Why do they stay? Nearly all his employees could get good jobs elsewhere. They stay because he is a contradiction. Everything about him is countered, and sometimes more than offset by something good.

Once during the depression of the thirties he ordered proposals to be made to him by his editors for dismissing staff to make economies. One editor prepared for Beaverbrook a list of people he could do without.

He looked at the first name. 'Isn't this the man who used to report my Empire Crusade meetings? Good fellow. You can't get rid of people like that.' He looked at the next name. 'But this man has a very good character.' And so on down the list until he abruptly concluded: 'We had better bring this conference to an end. I see you have no proposals to make at all.' The economy campaign foundered on Lord Beaverbrook's own sentimental attachment for anyone he knows personally who has ever worked for him.

'You can't say anyone who is 75 per cent kind is bad,' said a man who worked close to Beaverbrook for years. 'He is a bad friend if things are going well. A wonderful friend in trouble,' another Beaverbrook man remarked.

His staff are loyal to him because he is loyal to them. As well

as jesters he loves sinners and people in difficulties. It is unlikely that anyone who knows him at all well ever went to him for help, financial or otherwise, without getting it. He is father and Rock to them all and at the end he has their affection. If a writer or editor falls foul of the Parliamentary or civil authorities, big business or any other influence, Lord Beaverbook stands staunchly by him. Once the film companies tried to make him dismiss a film critic by threatening to withdraw their advertisements. The advertisements stopped, the film critic stayed, the advertisements returned. He excels in unravelling troubles and taking them on himself because one of his passions is people and the minutiae of gossip.

'How is Raymond?' I asked him as one of his men brought in another bottle of champagne. (Raymond is a valet I had seen with him several times in New York.) Lord Beaverbrook laughed happily and began an account of an argument Raymond had had with his chef in the South of France. 'Whose fault was it, Charles?' he asked, genuinely anxious to know the answer.

Everyone who has worked for him more than ten years is in his will. His Christmas gift list runs into thousands of pounds. He has numerous pensioners. At least one editor was paid his full salary, after leaving, until he died: then it was paid to his widow. Once, in New York, I watched him daily taking immense pains over one of his staff in America who had run into trouble immediately after announcing to the papers that he was about to leave Lord Beaverbrook's service and was very glad to go.

His generosity can no more be curbed than the other elements in him. If he hears someone's son is ill he may suddenly pay for the treatment; personally, as on one occasion, order him the warmest overcoat obtainable; and then pay for the father to take the boy away on convalescence. He may take an employee out for a shopping walk. If he buys something his companion for the day must have something as well. Lord Beaverbrook's generosity is not the indifferent charity of many rich men: he administers it himself with interested concern.

The rewards he gives are large and willing. It is nothing for someone to find his pay increased 50 per cent or even doubled if

Lord Beaverbrook likes his work. He is appreciative and responsive. He is also susceptible to flattery.

'I never knew a flatterer fired,' remarked an ex-Beaverbrook executive to me.

Lord Beaverbrook is magnificently eccentric, individual and purposeful. That makes working for him worthwhile. Once during one of his campaigns to make the Government relax duties on Empire food and put them on to foreign imports he had an alarm clock made. It went off every minute to indicate that another £1,000 had just gone to foreigners to buy food for Britain. As it rang all conversation had to cease. He can laugh at himself. After working fervently at some project for days he will suddenly turn it all into a joke. The figure of awe becomes the figure of fun.

He takes exacting care to train. Any promising newcomer to the staff of one of his papers he will nurse himself. First he must write trial articles for Lord Beaverbrook. Once two reviews of the same film appeared in the *Evening Standard* because he liked the trial notice written by the new film critic he was training and he thought the public should have it, too.

Lord Beaverbrook delights in developing talent and he can very nearly create it. He is pleased to discover someone young and unknown and proclaim him to the world. It does not disturb him that the very act of proclamation puts his price up and brings nearer the day when he can become independent of Lord Beaverbrook. He is proud of having let loose on Fleet Street a covey of outstanding journalists who have gone to edit or work on other papers.

He could not tell me how he decides that a man has it in him to do well. It is an intuition ripened by experience which divines instantly whether a man is suitable for Lord Beaverbrook. He is credited with an astonishing capacity for choosing the bright and brilliant although at the time of their selection they may not seem exceptional. But often what is remarkable is not their talents but the fact that Lord Beaverbrook can force them to perform in ways they themselves never suspected was possible. He will put

men into jobs about which they know nothing, because he believes in their qualities, and they flourish.

'Who have influenced you?' I enquired.

'Rudyard Kipling influenced me a great deal. He taught me to be a journalist. He taught me the first lesson which took me some time to grasp—several weeks—that the human being is more important than the thing. I didn't understand that before. If you do a story about a factory it is not how the factory works that matters. It is the man who runs the factory. Rudyard Kipling' (whom he met before the First World War) 'used to correct everything I wrote. He took enormous trouble over it.'

As a trainer of journalists no one can touch Beaverbrook. Although his own writing is usually abysmal he is the most skilful journalist of all. He knows exactly what it wrong with a story and what makes a good one. When he is abroad something goes out of his newspapers. They are not quite so crisp. The extra pains which make every story, even those of a few lines, sharp and pointed and packed with information have not always been taken.

Lord Beaverbrook's papers give more space to foreign and political news than any of the other popular papers. He also gives his opponents a better hearing than the other newspaper proprietors do. He prints many articles by Socialists and has no hesitation in employing a cartoonist, if he is sufficiently arresting, to lampoon himself and his policies. Before Beaverbrook came to journalism in Britain it was still cliché-ridden and long-winded. He stripped it of superfluous verbiage and infused it with entertainment. He made journalism a well-paid occupation by paying lavish salaries. By evolving the technique of the staccato sentence combined with the simple idea he made the public read leading articles again.

Rigidly he has excluded the pictures of the slightly dressed but fully developed girls used by some rivals. No hint of the pornographic or suggestive is allowed. No parents need worry that a Beaverbrook newspaper will sexually excite their children; and that is not true of all his competitors. It is a tribute to his skill

as a journalist that, without using the potent aid of sex stories and pictures, the *Daily Express* should still have the second largest daily sale in the country and that the *Sunday Express* remains a mass circulation paper.

However, by way of compensation, Lord Beaverbrook's newspapers are always first with the news about the intending separation or divorces of well-known husbands and wives. And the 'Crossbencher' column in the *Sunday Express* has no equal in the smearing of all politicians of all parties, suggesting to the reader that there is no sincerity in the political life of Britain.

Lord Beaverbrook hardly ever goes out to dinner. There are one or two old friends whose houses he sometimes honours and he does visit Sir Winston Churchill. Sometimes people venture to invite him but when the day gets near as likely as not a charming excuse and a case of champagne will arrive. He likes to be the central figure wherever he is and that is not so easy if he is not actually presiding at his own table. All the world must gyrate around Lord Beaverbrook. The importance of Lord Beaverbrook to Lord Beaverbrook cannot be overestimated.

He loves publicity. However remote the journal or obscure the author, any reference to Lord Beaverbrook is picked up and reprinted in his newspapers. The Londoner's Diary in the *Evening Standard* carries observations on Lord Beaverbrook drawn from out-of-the-way places all over the world. Partly that is vanity. Partly it is that Lord Beaverbrook knows the value to him as a newspaper man of being talked about. Some journalists and some Members of Parliament, when they feel that they would like some publicity, find that the simplest way of getting it is to mention Lord Beaverbrook either kindly or abusively.

When Lord Beaverbrook was a young man in Canada he attended a law school. To pay his fees he sold newspapers in the streets. There was a great function planned in the town to which all the important people of the locality were to be invited. The young Max Aitken knew a member of the committee arranging it and asked for an invitation. He was told he would get one.

He hired an evening suit and white tie but as the time drew close no invitation came. He asked his friend on the committee what the matter was. He was told that the committee had heard that he had been acting as a newsboy and they did not want newsboys at such a function. Lord Beaverbrook went home, put on the hired evening suit, looked into the mirror and said: 'The time will come when "they" will be glad to have me at an assembly like that.' The rest of his life has been devoted to making sure that 'they' would run after him and not he after 'them'.

As a contrast to the heights which he has climbed he likes to dwell on the lowliness of his origins. His father was a Presbyterian minister in Canada and on two hundred and forty pounds a year he fed and clothed a family of twelve. Lord Beaverbrook's grandfather, according to him, was an agricultural labourer. In photographs that exist of him he does not look quite like an agricultural labourer and would probably be more accurately described as a small tenant farmer if it did not suit Lord Beaverbrook to make his life harder than it really was.

Lord Beaverbrook often suggests that he is not interested in his money. In the conventional sense that is true. What Lord Beaverbrook cares about is power: the money is to help him to it. Luxury in itself makes no particular appeal to him. As he presses you to more champagne he remarks: 'I don't know what's the matter with you young fellows. When I was your age I could drink three bottles without it having any effect.' But I doubt if he ever drank heavily or immersed himself in immoderate comfort. If that had been his goal he would have stayed in Canada or lived comfortably wherever he chose on the fortune he accumulated so young.

Lord Beaverbrook has often been accused of leaving Canada because it had become too hot for him. The Bank of Montreal had asked him, at the age of twenty-nine, to investigate the possibility of the amalgamation of three cement mills. His imagination went much further than that and he decided on a great merger of all the important cement mills in Canada. He

forced it through and formed the Canada Cement Corporation. Nothing like it had ever been seen before in Canada and very little like it anywhere else.

He fell out with a Sir Sandford Fleming, a figure of commercial standing brought in to be honorary president of the new company. Sir Sandford wanted Beaverbrook to buy for the corporation a cement company he was interested in but Beaverbrook refused because he thought its acquisition would be a liability and not an asset. At once Sir Sandford and his friends, who were many, went to war against the young financial tycoon. They pursued him with whispering campaigns and through the newspapers. Doubts were thrown on his integrity: no abuse was spared. It was a shock to Beaverbrook and he was deeply hurt. It is strange that sometimes when he is harrying others with vindictiveness he does not pause for a moment to remember what his own reactions to being victimized once were.

He sold up his holdings and came to England. I cannot believe that he had done anything dishonourable because that is not his character. He was sharper than his rivals, no doubt, and big business does not always operate against a background of ethical beauty. His spirit and boldness startled but there was no law of any kind against merging cement companies, creating a near-monopoly and so enhancing the value of the shares of the new company.

No, Lord Beaverbrook came to England in pursuit of real power. London was the metropolis of the Empire. He was a patriotic Canadian. Determined to be a great man, Canada offered him too small a scope: his target was the Premiership of Britain. He wanted to be the greatest man in the greatest country, the centre of the greatest commonwealth in the world. He is absolutely sincere in his love of Empire and in his fanatical Kipling-inspired patriotism. But it is all intertwined with Beaverbrook himself. The British Empire cannot be allowed to be less than the greatest because he has chosen to be at its centre.

He arrived in England brashly young, immensely rich, knowing practically no one and with disagreeable rumours of

oversmart business practice hovering over his head. He quickly found that in England money made him a figure of interest and gave him useful levers but to get maximum power reputation had to be added. Only then could his fortune do the work he had assigned for it. There was one man who stood out as his potential friend: a fellow Canadian, high in the Tory Party, Bonar Law.

Bonar Law had judgment and great charm but he lacked drive. He befriended Beaverbrook because a Beaverbrook gave him a vitality that was missing from his own make-up. He drew strength from him and paid it back with respectability. Bonar Law's reputation for integrity was so great that people said of Beaverbrook that if Law was his friend he must be all right, after all.

He pushed Law, whom he had met shortly for the first time in 1908, into the leadership of the Conservative Party in 1910. In the same year, the first of his permanent occupation of Britain, he became a Member of Parliament himself. During the First World War he compelled Law, a member of the Coalition Government, to assert himself and engineered the intrigue through which Lloyd George overthrew Asquith to make Lloyd George Prime Minister.

When Bonar Law became Prime Minister for a brief period after the 1914–18 War it was Beaverbrook who advised and galvanized him. Winston Churchill remarked after Bonar Law had resigned and died in 1923 that Beaverbrook had sat on a three-legged stool. 'One leg was himself, the second his newspapers, the third Bonar Law. Now the third is gone he can no longer balance himself in politics.'

Beaverbrook likes to say that he was a political failure. He failed in his Empire Crusade—Britain has never adopted his policy of free trade within the Commonwealth and heavy tariffs against everybody else. He has always urged policies of isolationism and high wages but they have never been adopted—hence, says Beaverbrook, 'I am a failure.' But that is not failure in politics. No man can expect a country to adopt the whole of what he believes in. He must be satisfied if he makes an impact

which deflects opinion in his direction and provokes people to think about his programme. Lord Beaverbrook is a failure in politics but not for the reasons he gives. He wanted to be Prime Minister and he never was.

The excuse he offers is that at the time he assisted in the plot to make Lloyd George Prime Minister he had been promised an important job in the new Government, the Presidency of the Board of Trade. In those days any Member of the House of Commons appointed to Cabinet rank had to stand for re-election in his constituency. Beaverbrook, relying on the promise that he was to have the job he wanted, warned his constituency party at Ashton-under-Lyme to prepare for a by-election and sent his wife up to help in the arrangements. Lloyd George formed his new Government but there was nothing for Beaverbrook. He was distressed and humiliated that he should have warned his constitutents to be ready for a by-election that would not come. Then it was proposed that he should have a peerage and represent a number of departments for the Government in the House of Lords. Elevation to the Upper House automatically entails a by-election. Beaverbrook took the honour as much to avoid humiliation at Ashton-under-Lyme as for any other motive. In this century no peer has been Prime Minister. The growth of democracy has demanded that a Prime Minister should be elected to the House of Commons. Certainly Lord Beaverbrook, by becoming ennobled, put himself out of the running, in normal times, for the highest office of all.

But he would never have got it apart from that. His gifts are not of the sort which lead to ultimate success in British politics. He is too erratic, too sudden in his enthusiasms and dislikes, too emphatic in stating his views, too ready to trample over opponents in his own party, too impatient of orthodox party policy, too quick to make enemies, too violent and flamboyant for the safe Conservative Party of the twentieth century. The party which would not have Sir Winston Churchill until fright, and the Labour Party by refusing to join a Coalition Government under Chamberlain, forced them to take him in 1940 would be unlikely

ever to have accepted the bustling millionaire from New Brunswick.

But Lord Beaverbrook, though he had heavily handicapped himself by taking a peerage at the extraordinarily early age of thirty-eight, never gave up trying. He has often influenced the Conservative Party and its policy and he has been behind many intrigues. In the Second World War Churchill set the utmost value on his advice, his ferocious strength, and particularly on his judgment of men.

For one dizzy, perhaps unbalanced, moment Lord Beaverbrook thought war might break for him the convention that a Prime Minister cannot be in the House of Lords. In the Churchill Government he had been Minister of Aircraft Production from May 1940 to May 1941. Unquestionably he won the Battle of Britain by forcing the Civil Service machinery to produce aircraft by the methods of big business. It was a superlative performance and was recognized to be so.

During his service under Churchill he held a number of offices. He was a difficult colleague. When he could not get his way he would resign—in all he wrote fourteen letters of resignation to the Prime Minister. But the most significant resignation letter of all was the one he wrote in February 1942. On the 4th of February he had been made Minister of Production, a great post specially created for him by Churchill. Singapore, to the shame of Britain, fell on the 15th of February. It was the blackest hour of the war. Churchill's prestige was on the recoil and the country was turning against him.

Beaverbrook, who had been alternately demanding greater powers and moodily saying he would go, chose this exact moment to make a resignation that for once he would not withdraw. It took effect on the 19th of February, four days after the fall of Singapore. He estimated that Churchill would be driven from power by a dispirited and resentful country. He thought himself the automatic next choice. Not only was there the splendid and romantic production of the aircraft that had temporarily saved Britain behind him, but the month before he had

achieved another spectacular success. Companion to Churchill on a mission to America, it was he and not Churchill who had persuaded the Americans, new in the war as a result of Pearl Harbour, to increase, almost miraculously, their supplies to Britain and to multiply American production far more than had been intended before Churchill and Beaverbrook arrived.

He believed the country would demand him. But Churchill survived and the last moment of his life in which he had sanguine hope of becoming Prime Minister passed.

I once asked him if he thought there was much loyalty in politics.

'None at all as far as I can see,' he replied.

Churchill either did not realize the reason for Beaverbrook's resignation or chose not to think of it. In *The Hinge of Fate* he puts it down to the temporary dislocation, by asthmatic ill-health, of Beaverbrook's poise. Churchill did not tire of pressing him to return to the Government and when Beaverbrook came back as Lord Privy Seal in September 1943 he remained until the war ended.

No doubt Lord Beaverbrook's motives were mixed and his health was bad; but upon leaving the Government he promptly recovered. And no man abandons, within fifteen days of entering upon it, a great office personally created for him with troublesome toil by one of the outstanding war leaders of history unless there is some more impelling consideration than a brief spell of ill-health.

Of all the old friends now left to him Churchill means most. Theirs has been a long relationship interspersed with quarrels, as in 1919 when Beaverbrook was conducting a fierce onslaught on Churchill's policy of intervention in Russia. Churchill, instead of being cowed, remarked to Beaverbrook when he met him one night in Paris: 'The Press is easier squashed than squared.' It was a long time before Beaverbrook got over his resentment at Churchill's indifference to his power as a newspaper proprietor.

Today Beaverbrook can be lonely. So many of the old faces, reminders of past defeats and triumphs, are gone. It must have

been a sad occasion for Beaverbrook when Sir Winston Churchill retired—it was another void in Beaverbrook's life, an indication that he had moved that much further away from the centre of power. Churchill loves Beaverbrook not only because of old associations but because he can make Churchill relax and, after Bonar Law, he has been more loyal to Churchill than to anyone else in politics.

It is politics that is the overriding interest of Lord Beaverbrook's life. Everything else is secondary because it is through politics that you can have the maximum power over the most people. His political judgments are often fantastically wrong, such as the time before the last war when he regularly prophesied in his newspapers, until the last moment, that there would be no war. But he carries with him into politics the talent for judging other politicians as human beings that serves him in his businesses.

It would be wrong to say that he cares nothing for his money. He does not neglect his fortunes and he can be very touchy about paragraphs in his newspapers referring to the wealth of other men if he thinks that the extent of their possessions has been exaggerated or if it appears that they have more money than he has. How much money he had by 1958 is uncertain. It cannot be less than eight million pounds and it is probably not more than fifteen million pounds. Nevertheless its possession does not serve a primary function. He always intended it to be a weapon for power.

Similarly his newspapers are not for making money (the profits are usually ploughed back); nor are they an end in themselves. When the Royal Commission on the Press set up to enquire into the workings of the newspapers of Britain asked him what his main purpose was in running his papers, he replied: 'I run the papers purely for the purpose of making propaganda and with no other motive.' It was a completely true answer—propaganda for Lord Beaverbrook and the policies in which, from time to time, he believes. There is nothing cynical about these and often they are the most unpopular part of his newspapers.

Most of his reminiscences are of himself, with or without others, in politics. When he asks a member of his staff of a book connected with the politics of our time: 'What does it say?' he means: 'What does it say about me?' And if he finds some reference to him that has been overlooked he remarks sharply: 'You never told me about this.'

Connected with his failure in politics—it would be regarded as success by most men but Lord Beaverbrook must be judged by his own standards—is one of his motivating forces, envy. He cannot bear to think that other men should be accounted great when he is not quite certain that he will be. It was only with some reluctance, and lately, that he admitted Churchill to be great. Bonar Law, forgotten by most people, he calls great—but then he made him. When somebody like Arnold Bennett or Bernard Shaw dies he does not concede them greatness. 'No one will talk about him in thirty years' time,' he says.

Often this envy provokes him into feuds in which he persecutes the object of his hate vigorously and unfairly through his newspapers. Once it was Sir Stafford Cripps, who momentarily during the last war was on a pinnacle of public esteem even higher than Beaverbrook's. Often it is smaller people who are the subject of attack, people who have annoyed or riled him in some way.

He never liked Ernest Bevin because he could not, when he was Minister of Aircraft Production, get Churchill to overrule Bevin, then Minister of Labour, if there were disputes between the two departments. Admiral Lord Mountbatten has also earned his continuing dislike. During the war as Chief of Combined Operations he often had direct access to Churchill. This may have made Lord Beaverbrook jealous, and Beaverbrook is a very jealous person. Or the reason for it may be even less obvious. Mountbatten as Chief of Combined Operations was responsible for the costly raid on Dieppe in which many Canadian troops were lost. One night at dinner Lord Beaverbrook leaned across the table and attacked Mountbatten as the man who was responsible for the death of 'two thousand of my countrymen'. Because he

had behaved badly to Mountbatten, Beaverbrook could not forgive him.

Another element in his feud with Mountbatten is that Beaverbrook does not like royalty. The *Express* papers never miss an opportunity of attacking Buckingham Palace for inefficient arrangements, for alleged slights of worthy people, even, as in 1952, for picking the wrong date for the Coronation in order to suit their convenience rather than that of the public. Beaverbrook resents the unearned deference given to noble or royal birth and dislikes the irritating superficiality of the formalities that sometimes go with it. Yet, although he is very much not a snob, he cannot avoid being a little pleased at having, say, a grand-daughter who is the daughter of a duke. Nor, in his eccentric aspect, is he out of the tradition of the English peerage. Neverthless whatever the reasons Lord Beaverbrook's papers never cease to denigrate Mountbatten, the man 'who gave India to Nehru', the sinister uncle of the Duke of Edinburgh.

When one of Lord Beaverbrook's feuds is in full swing nothing is too petty or unscrupulous for him. In these moods he is only saved from utter wickedness by some odd sense of chivalry which prevents him from using certain types of information which others activated by an equivalent malice would not hesitate to use either directly or by insinuation. He will never for instance publish reminiscences of the valets or servants of famous men.

Yet, despite the massive nature of his faults, Lord Beaverbrook can feel very guilty. A sense of guilt often seems to make him ashamed of his lust for power. Lord Beaverbrook cannot altogether shake off his origins. Because his grandfather was on the land, when Beaverbrook came to England he felt a need to buy a farm in Somerset and make it pay. Because his father was a Presbyterian minister Lord Beaverbrook cannot quite get it out of his head that maybe Calvin was right, perhaps hellfire does await him if he does not take care. Although he would deny any feeling of guilt on the grounds that optimists never suffer from guilt complexes and that Calvinists accept the doctrine of pre-destination.

'What is your attitude towards religion?' I asked him.

'My attitude is one of gratitude. I am a son of the manse. My father and my mother brought up twelve of us. I don't know how they did it but they did it thanks to the Presbyterian Church and I am grateful to them for it.'

'How would you describe your religious beliefs?' I asked.

'I'll send a telegram to the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Canada and whatever he says I believe in, that's what I believe in.'

But, curiously, that is probably what he does believe in. Because of his Church Lord Beaverbrook must always justify himself. His possession of vast wealth is accounted for by the instructions contained in the Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian Church. He sent me an excerpt. The Presbyterian explanation of the eighth commandment is that it 'requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others'. There is a footnote to this explanation against which Lord Beaverbrook wrote, in his own hand: 'Footnote in the Shorter Catechism expanding on the above Divine Direction,' and underlined the word 'Divine' three times.

So whenever he has been bad Lord Beaverbrook must quickly do something good. When he thinks to himself that he has become too obsessed with power and loves too much the daily direction into the minutest part of the lives and thoughts of those around him he decides on abdication.

In 1927 he announced that he had left his room at the top of the *Express* building, that the Managing Director had taken away the key and that no one else would ever use the room.

'I planned the *Daily Express* as a great national newspaper. But the staff are more competent to manage it than I am.'

It cannot be said that the staff felt later that there had been anything more than symbolic about Lord Beaverbrook leaving his room.

In June 1930 an announcement in the *Daily Express* said: 'Lord Beaverbrook has made a gift of his controlling share interest in the London Express Newspaper Company to his elder son, Max Aitken.'

In a farewell article written in November 1936 before one of his regular trips to Canada he wrote: 'Let me say, too, for three quarters of the shareholding, represented by me . . .' There was no mention of how he had got his shares back.

Soon after another occasion when he again gave away his shares, and announced that control of the *Express* newspapers had passed out of his hands, I was speaking on the telephone to one of his staff. I said: 'Well, now you'll be able, when Beaverbrook rings up with his criticisms, to tell him that you are very interested in his views, but as he no longer has control of the paper you are afraid you will be unable to act on them.'

'We're not taking that risk yet,' was the answer.

The more Lord Beaverbrook gives away his property or claims not to run his papers the more often he is at the end of the telephone barking his comments.

His tendency to hypochondria is probably a by-product of this feeling of guilt. There is an avenging god who is waiting to pounce on him. Sometimes Lord Beaverbrook thinks that nobody understands how ill he is and it is hard to believe that this concentration of energy is supposed to be ailing. His travels are primarily taken to avoid the onset of asthma that Britain's climate induces. But it was very noticeable during the war that thwarting him in the Cabinet produced as violent an attack of asthma as any change in the weather. Yet he does have asthma; but it is his mind which is the chief producer of it.

Lord Beaverbrook's guilt even shows sometimes in his affections. Among those he has loved most dearly has been Michael Foot, the fierce Socialist, who was once Editor of the *Evening Standard*. Of incorruptible integrity and puritanical appearance, Michael Foot is apt with a Biblical quotation. When I asked Beaverbrook if he minded people leaving his service he said: 'I was really sorry when Michael Foot went.' Foot seems to carry in his person and in his words the accumulated background of the Plymouth Brethren and the Methodist Conference. It gets the son of the manse every time.

Lord Beaverbrook is so contradictory because there is so

much to him. He has constructed vast business enterprises from his youth, he has created some of the most successful newspapers in the world, he has made Prime Ministers and got within striking distance of being one himself. As he has bullied, cajoled and flattered his staff, so he has treated Britain and the Commonwealth. He has transmuted Kipling's mystique of Empire into the paragraphs of the daily newspapers. He has added colour to his era. His remarkable brain, which has little profundity but goes quickly to the central point, has never ceased to pierce and penetrate. He cannot be assessed in terms of good or bad: but it can be said that if he had not lived Britain would have been a duller and a poorer place.

Today as midnight approaches he will grow a little tired. The humorous face shows a slight strain but still he does not forget the detailed attention to the comfort of his guests.

"Will you have a bottle of good champagne now? Charles, get a bucket and some ice and put some salt on it."

Lord Beaverbrook may be a little lonely but he is not yet tired of life. He is fond of his family and proud of his son's very brave war record as a flyer. In return his son admires his father more than any other man alive—although he is a trifle diffident before him. Beaverbrook now gets bored even more quickly and it is harder for him to keep amused. His mind seems to leap from subject to subject even more glancingly than it did. But he will go on working until the last moment because he must. He feels that if activity stops everything else will stop, too. Since the war he has pursued his editors and staff with more constant vigour than in the thirties.

"Do you think you can be repeated?" I asked him.

"Not in the newspaper world," he answered. "But there is no reason why a man should not still make a lot of money. It's terribly difficult to start a newspaper now."

Now Lord Beaverbrook's final ambition is to be talked about, not merely today but when he has gone. His fear is that in the years ahead he may be one of the dim unremembered. I do not think he need worry. So long as there is a copy of the *Daily Express* left people will be telling stories about him.

His contribution to English life is that he has brought it sharpness and liveliness. The *Express* newspapers will continue after his death in much the same style as today. He has driven pomposity out of popular journalism. He has made readers feel dissatisfied if they do not get their information concisely and clearly, with illustration and anecdote. Despite the perversity of many of his opinions and policies he has kept afloat the idea that Britain is a great country which need not despair of its future. Laugh at the *Daily Express* as you may, it has encouraged the British in difficult times to continue to believe in themselves. No doubt Lord Beaverbrook has frequently been guilty of over-optimism but his bravado and excitement in life around him have encouraged the middle classes especially to hold on to their faith in their country. He has always been ready to applaud inventiveness and enterprise. He may be something of a swashbuckler but his attitude has done much to prevent Britons becoming morbid about their position at a time when their international power has been declining.

Mr. Hugh Cudlipp

A FACILE way of denigrating the *Daily Mirror* has for long been to ask the question, who owns it? The implication is, since it is not openly controlled by a single proprietor or family as most other daily and Sunday papers are, that there must be a sinister, unclean hand behind it. It is acceptable for mass circulation newspapers to hop inconsequently from supporting to attacking institutions, persons, and governments according to the whim of one rich individual. It is offensive, not to logic but to convention, if a proprietor cannot be clearly distinguished through the murk. That is the basis of the charge against the *Daily Mirror*—the suggestion that mysterious anti-patriotic and subversive influences are at work, aimed at disrupting the country.

On the Stock Exchange its shares are quoted well below their worth because the 'respectable' people who do business in and through the City do not care to own stock in a newspaper their friends regard as vulgar and dangerous to society. Yet the *Daily Mirror* appears to be the one daily paper that any person or institution rich enough could actually acquire control of. This could never be done with the other daily papers because a man or a family would stand in the way (or in the case of the *Daily Herald* the vast range of the Odhams Publishing Company would have to be bought as well).

The *Daily Mirror* has over 10,000 Ordinary stockholders. Its ownership is so spread about that the one really large shareholder is the *Sunday Pictorial* with slightly under 20 per cent of the Ordinary capital. There appears to be nothing—unless Mr. King, its

Chairman, chose to forestall the move by quicker buying—to stop anyone buying up 51 per cent of the shares. It might be a good use of trade union funds. Trade unions would not only have an investment giving them nearly 10 per cent on their money but would be able to exercise some control over *Daily Mirror* policies. However, the value of their investment would rapidly decline if they interfered with the management or the tone and direction of the paper. The *Daily Mirror* would have to be left independent or it would decline as the *Daily Herald* has.

The continued success of the *Daily Mirror* is due not to the drive of some colossally rich man but to the technicians and executives who actually do the job. Cecil Harmsworth King is the Chairman both of the *Mirror* and the *Sunday Pictorial* companies. He was born in 1901, is a nephew of the strange Lord Northcliffe, educated at Winchester, and, although assertive, appears conventionally upper middle class. You would not expect to find him reading the *Daily Mirror*. He has much newspaper experience, mainly on the administrative side, and is of great ability. But his is neither the flair that founded the *Daily Mirror* nor maintains it now. This is not to belittle him: he is a big man. But his remoteness from human contacts is not the stuff on which popular newspapers flourish journalistically, whatever they may do financially.

It is Hugh Cudlipp, the Editorial Director of the *Mirror* group, who really determines what is written in the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Pictorial*. He discounts this and claims that it is a combination of King and himself. Maybe, in a broad general way, it is. But what hits the reader is the impact of Cudlipp's thoughts and views.

Hugh Cudlipp is the youngest of three remarkable brothers. Percy Cudlipp, once the Editor of the *Daily Herald*, is now the Editor of the successful and intelligent weekly *The New Scientist*. Reginald Cudlipp has for long been the Editor of the *News of the World*. I have never met Reginald Cudlipp but Percy Cudlipp is an urbane, witty, contented-seeming man. There is nothing harsh about him. His younger brother Hugh makes a quite

different impression. He is jagged, often very rude, aggressive and thrusting. He also frequently dislikes those who were more expensively educated than himself. That is odd since Percy Cudlipp, his brother, completely lacks this trace of inferiority complex.

Hugh Cudlipp left school at the age of fourteen in 1927. In common with so many other outstandingly successful men, his first salary was half a crown a week. He went to work on a newspaper in Manchester. After some years in the provinces and a short spell on the *Sunday Chronicle*, he joined the *Daily Mirror* in 1935—at the instance of Cecil King who was then its Editorial Director—and by 1937 he became, at the age of twenty-four, the Editor of the *Sunday Pictorial*. In a short time he raised the circulation from a million to over five million.

Not surprisingly his star rose high. All went well until quarrels developed with Guy Bartholomew, King's predecessor as Chairman. Bartholomew was the originator of the sensational success of the *Daily Mirror*. He was probably too similar to Hugh Cudlipp for them to like each other. In 1949 they parted explosively. Hugh Cudlipp left both the *Sunday Pictorial* and the board of directors. From there he moved to the *Sunday Express*, as personal assistant to Mr. John Gordon, and shortly after became its Managing Editor. For two years he stayed there, not very happily one suspects, under the domination of Lord Beaverbrook. But at the end of 1951 Bartholomew retired from the chairmanship of the *Sunday Pictorial* and *Daily Mirror* and the way was open for Cudlipp's return. He went back to his old job as Editor of the *Sunday Pictorial* in March 1952. Within a year he had become Editorial Director of both the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Pictorial*.

The *Sunday Pictorial* is not significant in power or political terms. It has a weekly political column and an occasional political article. But it has no editorials and regards itself mainly as Sunday entertainment and relaxation. The *Daily Mirror* is quite another matter. It is a paper which counts both because it is daily and because it has a purpose.

Its circulation is over four and a half million, around half a million more than the *Daily Express*. It is read mainly by the young. Eighteen per cent of its readers are between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four. Twenty-three per cent are from twenty-five to thirty-four. Twenty-two per cent are from thirty-five to forty-four. Twenty-nine per cent are from forty-five to sixty-four and only 8 per cent are over sixty-five.

It not only has more young readers than any other newspaper, it tends to have more working-class ones. Thirty-eight per cent are state pensioners, widows, the lowest grade of workers and semi- and unskilled manual workers all of whose incomes range from less than £5 to £10 a week. Forty-three per cent are skilled manual workers with over £10 a week. Thirteen per cent are supervisory, clerical, junior managerial, administrative or professional people with under £750 a year. Only 6 per cent rise above the £15 a week level. Probably something like two-thirds of the Labour vote read the *Daily Mirror* every day—certainly twice as many Labour voters read the *Daily Mirror* as read the *Daily Herald*.

Hugh Cudlipp not only likes supervising the *Daily Mirror*, he enjoys reading it. He is representative of his public. As they think, so does he, or the other way round. He provides them with the daily newspaper which he would most like to read. There is a remarkable identity between the readership and those who run the *Daily Mirror*. Readers feel that the *Mirror* is really interested in them. They write to it in vast numbers and the most popular feature, Readers' Letters, is the responsibility of the readers themselves although they are enlivened by the comments of the staff who for this purpose quaintly disguise themselves under the name of 'The Old Codgers'.

After the letters it is probably the entertainment features—film page, TV, sport—which are most widely read. And, of course, the pictures and the page of strip cartoons are the most widely looked at. The *Daily Mirror* is often accused, mainly by those who never see it, of playing up an unsavoury sex angle. This is not true. The *Mirror* is happy to admit that sex is agreeable

and that it lightens the day to be reminded of it. Its pictures are not salacious but optimistic. They are real-life daydreams. There is the attractive girl, or man, attractively displayed. 'If only I could get to know him (her) we could have fun. Maybe if I wrote to the *Mirror* . . . Oh, well, lunch break's over. Back to work.' Sex is in the *Daily Mirror* because it is in people's minds. It is not presented as crudely as many readers would like but, in stories and in pictures, it occupies about the same space as it does in most people's waking thoughts. The *Daily Mirror* does more good this way than a thousand clergymen preaching strait-laced sermons. Pleasant expression is better than unhealthy repression.

What about the more serious features? There is not a leading article every day—only when the *Mirror* (Cudlipp) wants to make a pronouncement. When they appear they are brilliantly written and very short—usually around two hundred words. In most daily papers the leading articles are disregarded. Probably less than half the *Mirror* readers bother with the editorials but the section that does is still a far higher proportion than those who read the leading articles of other papers—including *The Times*.

Running his own daily leading articles is Cassandra. A research survey showed that more than half of the *Daily Mirror* readers (about thirteen million) read him regularly. He is a remarkable commentator, with no curb placed on him. Like his Editor he enjoys his life and everything around him. He has the good fortune always to be interested—and is therefore interesting. His admonitions come from a quarter somewhere near right of centre in the Labour Party, although they are by no means confined to political matters. It is Mr. R. H. S. Crossman who provides the purely political content in his three-times-a-week column. At first sight it is hard to explain why Hugh Cudlipp employs a writer with the type of public school and university background he dislikes. A possible reason is that Mr. Crossman expresses thoughts in words his Editor would use if he were intellectually cleverer or better educated, although in steadiness, consistency, and common sense Cudlipp is superior.

What is Hugh Cudlipp trying to do? Cynics think him a

cynic. Their justification is that he is obviously ambitious and relishes power. He likes to feel that he is running the most successful daily newspaper of all time, he is irked when not enough of the people who think they matter in the state pay attention to what he says, he is delighted when political leaders defer to him, he is certainly not unaffected by mammon.

But that is too easy. Even if the cynical appraisal contains truth it leaves out the fact that Cudlipp is a genuine do-gooder. He really does care about the causes that the *Mirror* advocates; he is for the common man and on the side of his readers. Like them he is both against the upper classes and the established authorities—and, paradoxically, for them at the same time. He dislikes 'bull' or discipline in the Army, and tilts against it while acknowledging it to be necessary. He is quick to denounce mutinous soldiers. He wants the Labour Party to be inspiring, lively, crusading. Equally he wants it to be sensible and practical. Emotionally, like his readers, he may be attracted to the wilder elements on the Left. Then, just as they do, he pauses and thinks, 'This will never work.' He is all for higher wages but is too honest to pretend that they can be usefully had without higher output. He is fascinated by the Royal Family but is disturbed by adulation of it.

Nor does he always tell his readers what they would like to hear. At the time of the Suez intervention the *Mirror* crashed out with violent attacks against Eden. It dropped nearly 100,000 in circulation. Cudlipp told me of newsagents deliberately sending the *Mirror* back unsold and of one who put out a placard: 'Sorry, but we have to sell it.' Despite the unpopularity of its Suez line the *Mirror* stuck to it.

It has consistently advocated the abolition of capital punishment against the views of a considerable majority of its readers. Although the Parliamentary Labour Party has always been in favour of abolition most Labour voters are against it. Similarly the Wolfenden Report recommendations on homosexuality were supported by Cudlipp although his readers were mainly against a change in the law.

Cudlipp consciously uses the enormous power of his paper, which derives from its journalistic skill, to advocate what he thinks right. Frequently the readership agrees, or can be persuaded to, but it is to his credit that he follows through his campaigns even in the face of opposition. As he once said to me: 'If the object were merely to sell a vast number of copies I would resign tomorrow.'

It is difficult to assess the actual influence that the *Daily Mirror* has on its readers, although it is axiomatic that it is greatly underrated by senior civil servants, most Cabinet Ministers, heads of institutions such as the Church, the universities, the controllers of industry and by all those who persist in believing that *The Times*, with its tiny circulation, is the paper whose editorials really exercise the most influence. (In practice leading articles in *The Times* make little difference to policies. They are hardly read except by those who quote them. Policy changes prompted by *The Times* mostly come about through readers' letters, not through the persuasiveness of the editorial matter. It is a convenient exchange centre of ideas for people with varying degrees of influence. If its readers switched their letters to the *Manchester Guardian The Times* would be in severe danger.) But one fact seems clear. The *Mirror*'s influence is far greater with Labour voters than with Conservatives. Whereas it is quite possible for a Conservative Prime Minister to carry on accompanied by screams from the *Mirror* that he ought to go, it is more difficult for a leader of the Labour Party to do the same.

It is true that Lord Attlee for long disregarded Hugh Cudlipp's trumpeted and reiterated suggestion that he should retire—mainly no doubt because he never reads the *Daily Mirror*. Nevertheless it probably did have a considerable effect on the atmosphere and feel of opinion in the Labour Party which was one of the factors Lord Attlee must have considered when he thought the time had come to resign the leadership. The Conservative Party is not influenced in the same way because its supporters tend mainly to read such papers as the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail*, and the *Daily Telegraph*.

One thing that gives the *Mirror* its power is its apparent independence from political allegiance. Despite the fact that its readers sense it to be on the side of the Labour Party it is quite willing to take a whack at Labour Party policy—and often does. This makes its plea at election time that everyone should vote Labour more convincing. Another certainty is that if the *Daily Mirror* were to print too much politics, too many serious articles, and belabour its readers too frequently on important matters it would have no influence at all. Most of the time it offers a diet of human interest stories, and much of its strength comes from the fact that it reflects accurately the amount of interest the average person has in politics.

Cudlipp seems to know exactly the moment when it is safe to try a serious exhortation or a detailed political analysis. The art lies in the skilful mixing. The big points that the *Mirror* wants to make politically are crashed in with a bang over the head. One day the front page may consist merely of the words

EDEN
MUST
GO

accompanied by a photograph of the unfortunate gentleman. Inside, or on the back, will be a leading article elaborating the telegram on the front page. The next day the front page will carry an enormous picture of, say, a teenage heiress who has just eloped with parents and police in full cry. Eden, and those serious matters of yesterday, appear to have been forgotten. Cudlipp invariably manages to get excitement and surprise into his political excursions. That is how he makes his readers swallow them.

It is true that all this is done after consultation with the chief figures on the *Mirror*—Sydney Jacobson (the Political Editor of the *Mirror* group), Cassandra and J. S. Nener, the *Daily Mirror* Editor. They talk the presentation over. But it is Cudlipp's flair which dominates the content and the shape—even though he

may have obtained an overall approval from Cecil King at the outset.

Cudlipp is the man who knows when to strike and who senses the current mood. He rarely fails to hit the right approach with his readers. He has ideas and the energy to operate them. He is ruthless and tough but decent instincts are uppermost. He is the kind of man who asserts that all wisdom is to be found in bars and public houses, may even half believe it, but in practice acts entirely on his own judgment based on what he has caught from the atmosphere around him and distilled from interchange with intelligent observers. One omission in the list of many causes championed by the *Mirror* is beauty. Not beauty of the female form—there is plenty of that—but beauty of surroundings, of towns, of houses, of streets. Somehow Cudlipp has failed to notice and exploit this latent urge. It is the vague longing of ordinary people to have something better and more rewarding to look at than the drab circumstances in which most of them live. It is a difficult subject but it is a part of human nature. If Cudlipp felt it strongly enough a *Mirror* campaign to beautify England, to make it more exciting, could evoke a great response. Such is the power of the *Daily Mirror*.

The people of Birmingham, say, know their streets are hideous, that their town is ugly, that their amenities are few and mean. They do not know how to express that feeling or how to replace the dreariness around them which prevents a full flowering of the human spirit.

The only basic mistake that Cudlipp seems to me to make is a possible misjudgment of the pace at which the taste of his readers is advancing. When the New Towns were being planned and built the *Daily Mirror* missed an opportunity. Instead of merely welcoming them because they were an improvement on the places the new inhabitants came from it could have demonstrated with pictures and words how architecturally and socially the New Towns could have been made far more exciting and handsome.

'Forward with the people' is the motto flown on the flagstaff of the *Daily Mirror* every day. But really to go forward *Daily*

Mirror readers need to be introduced to the pleasure of the theatre (hardly ever mentioned in the *Mirror*), of art, of handsome buildings and streets, and of everything which goes to make man able to exercise all his senses agreeably. The people of Bath, or of a beautiful village, get an extra pleasure out of their surroundings which is lost to those who live in Birmingham or in Manchester. Without understanding why, they absorb something satisfying into themselves every time they go out of their front door. Cudlipp exploits his readers' legitimate concern with the lighter side, with entertainment, with films, with TV. He does not seem to have realized that entertainment, broadly looked at, can cover the field that the Arts Council, inexpertly so far as a wide public goes, tries to propagate.

Writers like John Osborne and John Braine share many of the same ideas as Cudlipp although he has not appreciated it. He makes no use of them or other writers and artists on the same level. It is true that the *Mirror* is written in good clear English by outstandingly competent journalists. But that is not the same thing as also providing a stepping-stone that would help the people to go forward in a richer way that they themselves would enjoy. A three-days series, with pictures, explaining what Henry Moore is all about and why you can get something from looking at his sculpture would be more welcome to his readers than perhaps Cudlipp guesses. It need not be done in highbrow, high-faluting ways. It could be presented with precisely the same techniques as are so successful in every other feature in the *Mirror*.

Here maybe is Cudlipp's weakest point. He reacts to conventional emotions—the little dog that is drowning and is saved by the small boy, the deserted children, the brave cripple, the undernourished old-age pensioner, and other situations to which it is right and likable to react. He appears to lack sufficient vision to go a stage further. It would be a new departure in popular journalism but all great successes in newspapers are new departures. Today the *Mirror* is just beginning to mark time. It is lively and dashing but not quite original enough to continue advancing. Big advances flow from anticipating trends. The

trend that Cudlipp has not quite caught up with is that the working classes are rapidly ceasing to be the working classes in the old understanding of the phrase. They are fast becoming middle class. They would not stay in the tawdry surroundings—in the aesthetic sense—which the middle classes often create for themselves with bad pictures, bad decoration, bad surroundings if they knew the way out.

Cudlipp has destroyed so many of the deadening notions about snobbishness and self-important people that it is a pity he does not try to tackle the problem of persuading the public to have fuller, more agreeable lives through extending and raising their tastes. If he did—and he could—he would make an important contribution to British life.

But, despite his gaps, Hugh Cudlipp is one of the people who most decidedly make Britain what it is today. His echoing of his readers' wishes goes further than mere reflection. He has opened their eyes to, and given them greater understanding of, many subjects. He certainly has more political influence than Lord Beaverbrook or the Editor of *The Times*. It is all the more effective because he genuinely believes in what he says.

Sometimes the question is asked: 'Suppose he changes his mind and decides to go Tory?' The answer is that he could not. He might seek to back one wing of the Labour Party more than the other. He might try to influence Labour Party policy. But he could never become a Tory because he is not a Tory. This is not a question of financial convenience, stemming from the fact that the readership of the *Mirror* is predominantly Labour and a switch in policy could be economically harmful. It is a question of conviction. Hugh Cudlipp is the sensible Socialist: he has challenged authority, and encouraged his readers to challenge it, but he never falls into the error of thinking the country can be run without order. He supports the Labour Party, but not blindly. Without the backing of the *Daily Mirror* it is probable that the Labour Party would have been defeated far more decisively in 1951 and 1955. But his is the questing, stimulating type of support. Very much a man of the second half of the twentieth century he

is anxious that the Labour Party should adapt itself to new techniques and new developments. He does not believe that the policies laid down in 1918 are necessarily valid for 1958. He is anxious to knock away the stuffiness and old-fashioned outlook of some parts of the Labour Party. He has communicated his feelings to his readers and he has tried hard to make the Labour Party aware of the changes in society brought about by its own creation of the Welfare State. He is one of the forward-looking elements of English life. Reading the *Daily Mirror*, while it remains under his auspices, is not a bad way of finding out how the mass of people are going to view the future.

4

Mr. Valentine Parnell

At the beginning of 1958 there were already over eight million television sets in Great Britain. By the middle 1960s for a house to lack a television set will be as odd as it once was to have no wireless. And Mr. Val Parnell, Managing Director of Moss Empires Ltd., and of Associated Television Ltd., is going to do his uttermost to see that these sets are tuned in permanently to commercial television. For him television is show business and no one can say that he is not expert at that.

His father was a remarkable ventriloquist but Mr. Parnell's puppets are live ones. All the celebrated light entertainment performers are in awe of him. They are the figures on the stage who draw the crowds in. But they will not be there, or at least not so prominently and advantageously displayed, if Mr. Parnell decides against them. He has power and uses it. Not that he is an unfair man or allows his judgement of what makes a good act or show to be warped by personal prejudice. But there is vigour, determination, and a rough cragginess about him even in the way he fills the chair he sits in. If my living depended on Mr. Parnell I should think very carefully before I crossed him.

His strength is that he knows his business thoroughly from every angle. He was in it at fourteen—enthused early by his father—and acting as an office boy to an impresario as long ago as 1907. By the time the First World War came he had taught himself shorthand at night school and had graduated to selling tickets. During the 1914–18 War he kept in practice by organizing concert parties for his unit. After it ended he became

booking manager for ten provincial theatres. By 1928 he had become booking manager at the London Palladium, and has booked every act for it since.

He is an effective administrator and always ready for an emergency. He books the right acts because he has seen them all and has the gift of knowing what the public will like and how to compose a night's entertainment.

It is almost redundant to say it but, like almost every other successful man, he works and works. He is at it at 9.30 a.m. and is still seeing a cabaret show or making theatrical arrangements at midnight. Even before he went into television he never left his office before half past eight. Now, as well as live performers, he has to watch television—even the BBC—and *Sunday Night at the Palladium* on commercial television made him work all day Sunday as well.

As a theatre man you might have thought Mr. Parnell would have disliked television. On first consideration it would appear to be the mortal enemy of the live theatre. This is not Mr. Parnell's view. He thinks that in the long run it will do far more damage to the cinema because that is becoming more and more a repetition in larger form of what is seen on the television screen. His object is to harness television to the theatre to the advantage of both. And it can hardly be denied that the title *Sunday Night at the Palladium* reminded viewers of the existence of the Palladium.

Parnell likes television because it is a very fast-moving medium. The problems vary from day to day, continually giving him something new to think about. There is a succession of opening nights.

'Take the pantomime for example,' he said to me just before Christmas 1957. 'Everyone is working like mad from now until the opening night. But after that there is no more excitement. Everyone knows it is going to run thirteen weeks and then everything is quiet. It's finished from a staff point of view. With a theatre show one usually knows before the first night whether the public will like it or not—when it has been in rehearsal and is almost ready for presentation. By that time if we think they won't

like it we're stuck with it. But television programmes are always changing.'

When I asked him why he went into commercial television he replied: 'My chairman, Mr. Prince Littler, and I thought here was a new medium—so Moss Empires should be interested. The company was formed to provide entertainment for the public.' It certainly has. Mr. Parnell once said: 'I'm Woolworth minded. I cater for the masses.'

Commercial television has captured the major part of the audiences (with sets capable of getting both programmes) because it has had more men connected with show business running it. Hardly anyone at the BBC has inside practical experience of the theatre, particularly on the light side. It was inevitable that Mr. Parnell, with his contacts, contracts, energy, and knowledge, would defeat the BBC. For him preparing a show for television is essentially the same thing as doing it in the theatre. Some items have to come out and others have to be altered because a theatre stage is not the same size or shape as a studio but 'except for technical differences we try to give a slick fast-running show, just as we would at the Palladium'. This does not only apply to variety. 'Whatever you are doing you can't ram the same thing down a man's throat for two hours. You must break it up.'

Mr. Parnell is sensitive to charges that he is not interested in culture or trying to improve the taste of the masses:

'There are certain young gentlemen of the Press who seem to resent shows that are popular. They attack me—why don't I change my programme round? I suppose I have presented at the Palladium in the last two years more of the cultural stars than anyone—Gigli, Markova, Fonteyn, etc. But I don't make a complete programme of them. I only have them as one item so that if a viewer gets bored he knows he only has to wait for five minutes for something else. He doesn't have to see it all night long. The young gentlemen of the Press say I am wrong. Maybe they are right but the Palladium show is always first, second or third every week in popularity. But the young gentlemen don't know what the public want and always knock someone successful. . . .

'They do the same with artists whose careers they themselves have helped to build up. But if you give people something that's all cultural you're not going to serve any purpose: they'll just switch off. I don't think you will get a mass audience watching an orchestra playing Bach.'

And it is the mass audience that Mr. Parnell cares about. If he did not he would not get the advertisers. Financially commercial television has done better than expected. It is rapidly becoming the major medium of advertisers of mass consumer products. Magazines, even some of the rich women's magazines, as well as the daily newspapers are being heavily hit by the loss of a large proportion of their advertising revenue to commercial television. But despite the wealth and importance of the advertisers Parnell does not want sponsors to programmes 'telling us what we should have to put on and who should be in the programmes. One of the troubles in America is that there the business firms do want a say in the programmes. The advertising agents often bring pressure on the programme producers to use certain artists. We want the showmen, the people who know about it, to run the programmes.'

However, it is clear that advertisers, although they may not directly influence the content of the programmes, do select their time of advertising, and decide whether they are prepared to pay the price asked, according to the popularity of the programmes against which their advertisements are shown. If a programme is changed to another time or day eight weeks' notice is given to advertisers so that they can alter their bookings if they wish. So the connection between the advertiser and the programme is not completely tenuous.

I asked him how he saw the role of the new commercial television. 'I think it was to supply an alternative programme to the BBC. But the moment we did that the BBC copied us and there was no alternative programme. They did the odd variety programmes before—it's true. But they didn't show American films and they didn't present the variety programmes on the same scale as they do now. They weren't as good as they are today.

Commercial television has brought better television for the masses. It's stimulated the BBC into giving better television to the masses also.'

He complains that commercial television is constantly asked to put out serious or cultural programmes. 'One would have thought that the BBC which is state owned should have been responsible for the minority viewing programmes and the commercial boys left to plan the entertainment.' I pointed out to him that if the BBC did nothing but show serious cultural programmes they would have no audience tuned in to the BBC at all—so when the serious programmes came on no one would be watching. The pattern of viewing is largely set by the atmosphere on the particular channel. Viewers tend to go on looking at the same station if their interest has first been captured by it in the early period of their evening's viewing, and if they are not subsequently put off. Many topical documentary programmes on the BBC, for instance, would attract larger audiences if they were shown in the carefree surroundings of commercial television.

'Would it matter if the BBC had an audience or not? They don't have to provide any money—they are state owned. The National Gallery is not self-supporting from the money paid at the doors.'

Parnell thinks that the whole field of television entertainment ought to be left to commercial television. That the state should back a corporation putting out variety shows strikes him as unfair competition. He is all in favour of a Government network putting out heavy-going stuff provided that nobody is distracted by it from looking at commercial television. He can be said genuinely to favour the minority audience and the smaller the minority the better he is pleased. And even in this field he is anxious to attract the faithful away from the BBC. 'Serious programmes can be of interest to everybody provided they are made attractive.' By this he means that jazzing up political discussions, as in *Free Speech*, or treating serious subjects lightly, as in *This Week*, can produce an unexpectedly large audience. That makes apparently cultural items worth considering commercially:

Mr. A. J. P. Taylor's solo lectures (good by any standards) did well for a time until competition from the BBC programme *Tonight* slashed the audiences.

Mr. Bedford Attwood, the deviser and controller of the Television Audience Measurement service which records the numbers watching each network at any given moment, has told me that he thinks he can discern a perceptible rise in public taste. He even feels, after the novelty of commercial television has worn off, that there could be a switch back to the BBC.

Mr. Parnell seemed to be surprised at the suggestion. 'I wouldn't have thought there would be a switch back to the BBC. But as time goes on I think the television viewer will get more choosy. It will cease to be something that has just come into his circle. It will be "What shall we view tonight?" They will become discriminating. There's a saying that every man has two businesses—his own and show business. Viewers will think they are in the business and become critics after a couple of years. They'll say, "Oh, we won't look at so-and-so—he hasn't anything new. What's on the other programme?" I know several women in America—Mrs. Jack Benny, for instance—who make out their programmes for the week after reading through all the television papers. She sits in bed and switches from one station to the other on a remote control watching the programmes she has picked out. It could easily happen here.'

Mr. Parnell knows what he is about but it is not certain that he is going to have it all his own way. If the BBC were run with more vigour and flair it could get back a great deal of its lost audience and keep it. At the moment commercial television, largely because of Mr. Parnell and his kind, has got more vitality. Temporarily the advertisements, because they are new, actually enhance interest in the programmes. On commercial television everything goes to schedule—unlike the BBC no overrunning is allowed in them. (Although there is one curious feature about advertising—it is being found that an advertisement that appears in a very popular and absorbing programme can drive away

potential customers because of their irritation at having their viewing interrupted.)

But there *is* an onward march in public taste. Improved education and higher living standards are creating a search for something more worthwhile in recreation. People want to know more and want to understand how to appreciate the best. It will be a long time before the Palladium and the Crazy Gang drop in attraction—perhaps never. In their style they are good and rate high in skill and presentation. But there is an urge for wider horizons as well. That is why the Sunday night plays on the BBC often attract colossal audiences. Shakespeare, Shaw and other really intelligent plays, well presented, are finding more and more viewers. Programmes like *Panorama*, which often deal with very serious subjects without talking down, appeal to many millions. When the BBC plans thoroughly outside broadcasts, documentaries and plays, at which it is expert, it can beat commercial television. It is when they try to outdo Mr. Parnell that they become inept and embarrassing. Then they tend to take on the guise of the vicar's wife who has heard that young things want a little gaiety and to the horror of the village dances a rheumatic can-can on the wooden platform of the village hall.

But the pattern of progress in taste should not be exaggerated. There was the terrible night when commercial television went cultural with the Hallé Orchestra while the BBC was showing *Hamlet* at the same time. The Television Audience Measurement graphs showed the desperate viewing audience switching wildly from one programme to the other and finally a turning off in millions of homes as the country sadly gave up and retired to bed at an unprecedentedly early hour.

Nevertheless the trend is there. The BBC has immense opportunities in its own fields. It is extraordinary, for instance, that it should have allowed commercial television to beat it on news presentation, despite the fact that the BBC news is far better equipped with cameras and foreign correspondents. But the time may come soon when authority comes to those at the BBC who belong to the second half of the twentieth century and who are

more aware of the popular possibilities of information and more sophisticated entertainment. Gradually the public is moving in to a mood where it wants sustenance for its money of a kind Mr. Parnell does not fully understand and cannot readily supply. Then, although commercial television will not vanish, the battle will be more evenly fought.

In the meanwhile Mr. Val Parnell will flourish mightily. He is the professional old-time showman equipped with a magical new means of showing his stupendous shows to everyone at once. Through him Wigan can come to London every Sunday. But his success should not be taken as proof that public understanding is becoming more degraded or is lower than it actually is. It was inevitable that the many millions who like entertainment that makes no demands on the intellect should avail themselves of it the moment they got the opportunity. Behind the apparent upsurge and enthusiasm for television programmes which are often cheap and vulgar there is an upward curve for the better gathering strength. Curiosity, thirst for knowledge and ideas with which the brain can satisfyingly grapple, are permeating all sections. That is one reason for hoping that Britain in the next twenty years may turn into a kind of Athens of the modern world. When the BBC is able to make an intellectuals' programme such as *Monitor* acceptable to millions and commercial television feels obliged to put Sir Kenneth Clark on the screens at a peak hour to talk about art there is every chance that the pleasures of self-education which give purpose to leisure, and which distinguish civilized man from the mass-produced products of Russia and America, will less and less be confined to the middle and upper classes. It is not only by having better brains, but by exercising and developing them, that Britain will advance.

5

Sir Ian Jacob

IF LORD BEAVERBROOK were the Director General of the BBC everyone in the BBC would know it. At midnight or later the telephone would ring in the home of a producer who might be asleep, after going to bed with the comfortable feeling that the programme he had put on that night was rather good.

'What on earth did you want to put on a programme like that for?' would come the rasping Canadian voice. 'Not at all what people want to see.' Or it could be: 'That was very good. Who was that young interviewer you had? Oh, he was very good. You want to keep him.'

Two or three years before ITV was created a bustling schemer at the head of the BBC would have switched all his resources from radio into television. The strange Civil Service-like structure of BBC television would never have existed. All the time a Director General like Lord Beaverbrook would have been in constant contact with the producers of the various programmes. He would have treated them as editors of newspapers. They would have been summoned to him at weekends, at dinner, or at any other time. 'What are your ideas for the spring?' 'You're getting out of touch.' 'There's nothing new about all that.' 'Oh yes, that's a very good idea. I should try that. Oh yes.'

A promising young producer would have been given his head. His superiors would have been told: 'He's a very bright young fellow. No, you don't want to keep telling him what to do. No, you let him get on with it. No, if he's in trouble let him come to me.' There would have been no doubt where the responsibility

for decisions lay. And they would have been rapid. Lord Beaverbrook would have shown an unremitting interest in everything put out. He would have pounced on mistakes and rewarded enterprise. No one would ever have been in the position of devising a regular programme without meeting him several times before.

But this is not the way of the BBC. There issues for decision move slowly upwards and downwards. Most junior producers, although sometimes responsible for programmes with an impact on millions, have never had a real conversation with Sir Ian Jacob, the Director General. They may have met him glancingly —that is all. Between him and them is an array of Heads of Departments, of Directors and the like. Each has his area of influence and operates as a cushion between those who actually do the work of putting on the programmes and the man at the top. No one is greatly afraid and no one is greatly inspired. Sir Ian's personality, instead of being impressed on his subordinates, has drifted gently downwards. It has swathed the BBC with his approach to life rather than stimulated the Corporation to action.

Sir Ian is the son of a field marshal. He was born in 1899. He became an officer in the Royal Engineers at the age of nineteen. Out of his twenty-eight years in the Army sixteen were spent on the Staff. The last seven were as Assistant Military Secretary to the War Cabinet in close contact with the Prime Minister throughout the war. So Sir Ian is accustomed to order, orders, and ordering. The framework is a tidy one. As a staff officer it would not have occurred to him to initiate much but he was proficient at implementing the ideas of others. He is an absorber rather than a creator.

The ideals which he has absorbed are mainly respectable. The British Army has always had a strong sense of decency and fair play. Its Officer Class believes in discreet quiet behaviour— nothing flamboyant, rumbustious, or overbearing. The British Army is founded on the concept of public service and of putting the community above oneself. Much of its motive power depends

on tradition and it is not a keen welcomer of change. But it is a very human and understanding institution, turning out men of greater sensibility than is generally realized by civilians. Gandhi once remarked to me that the British Army produces a unique breed of soldier-statesmen: he had an immense admiration for them. Sir Ian is one of these although, primarily a staff officer, he is more set in his ideas and more inclined to judge that things are running well if they are running smoothly than a commanding general of the Montgomery type.

'How did you come to be Director General?' I once asked him.

'Sir William Haley invited me to tea in 1946. He asked me if I would like to run the European service. It seemed a good idea. After my specialized experience in the war I was familiar with Government policy. I thought it would be useful in the cold war period that was just starting.'

In July that year Sir Ian began to run the European service. This operates in conjunction with the Foreign Office and tends to reflect the Government view although allowing considerable space to Opposition disagreement. At the end of 1947 Sir Ian took over all the BBC Overseas services. But when Sir Winston Churchill became Prime Minister again in October 1951 he sent for Sir Ian. In May 1952 Sir Ian became Chief Staff Officer to the Ministry of Defence. Sir Winston disliked seeing new faces round him if he could retain or get back familiar ones. He was used to Sir Ian. 'How did you get on with Sir Winston?' I asked Sir Ian.

'I never felt I was in a position to "get on" with him. When he was intent on something you were just part of the furniture.'

After Sir Ian had been working at the Ministry of Defence a short time Sir William Haley announced that he was giving up the Director Generalship of the BBC to edit *The Times*. 'Who do you think will get his job?' Sir Winston asked Sir Ian. 'I don't know,' was the answer, 'but I think I may have some claims on it.' Sir Winston was magnanimous. 'I will tell the Governors of the BBC that if they wish to choose you I will make no objection.'

So by October 1952 Sir Ian was back in Broadcasting House, now in full command. To him it is a job to be done conscientiously in the tradition of the BBC which is reminiscent of that of the Army. Sir Ian delegates responsibility and de-centralizes. He likes a chain of command and thinks it improper to go over the numerous heads of department by talking direct to producers. He regards his function principally as dealing with staff problems and settling major policy decisions. He does not even attempt to do anything about entertainment—probably most of the entertainment programmes of BBC sound and television are meaningless to him. Religion, politics, talks, and discussions do, from time to time, provoke problems which are referred to him for decision. His reaction to programmes is broadly that of those with a similar background to his who are unconnected with broadcasting. He does not think it his duty to plough his way through the evening examining the output but turns on and off as he feels like it.

'I appreciate good speeches or writings. But I don't keep up with modern literature. I am most interested in books and articles about government, military affairs and modern development in industry.'

He leaves it to others to have the ideas on how to carry out the standards of the BBC—which he supports. 'The object of the BBC,' he once said, 'is to offer the widest choice of the best in every field. It is true that this sometimes demands an effort from the listener.'

It was not surprising that he violently opposed commercial television. 'The standards are bound to be lowered because the advertisers must have the most popular programmes.' At first it seemed as though the onrush of commercial television had weakened BBC standards. There was panic and a haunting fear that unless the BBC could keep up the numbers of its audiences it would not get the third television channel when it was eventually allocated by the Government. The theory was that if the BBC viewing figures dropped too far ITV would be able to claim two things. One, that the licence money was subsidizing a tiny minority programme and that some or most of it ought to

be given to ITV. Two, that there was no point in allotting the third television channel to the BBC since it could never do more than secure a minority audience.

Perhaps even Sir Ian was shaken. In the first two years of commercial television the BBC put out shoddy leg shows and flashy light entertainment programmes designed to keep people looking at BBC. As might have been predicted, this policy was a failure. Retired generals are unlikely to be able to beat Hyltons and Val Parnells in their own field. Fortunately not all the additional effort went into putting on inefficient light entertainment.

Some was left over for the new type of serious programme like *Panorama*, *Tonight*, and other documentaries that the BBC can do more effectively than anyone else. After two years of experimenting in the wrong direction with pseudo-Palladia Sir Ian was evidently persuaded that it was better to stick to the BBC's own serious endeavours and improve on them rather than try to imitate inferior products aimed at wide popular appeal. And the grip of *Panorama* on mass audiences has been remarkable. That an at least partly serious programme could capture the largest regular audience of all—around ten million a week—is testimony to the professional skill with which it has been put on.

But the successes of BBC television in dealing with subjects on an intelligent level are not due to the active participation of Sir Ian. The chief credit belongs to a remarkable but little-known lady, Mrs. Grace Wyndham Goldie. She was the sponsor of *Panorama*, of *Tonight*, and later of *Monitor*. She discovered and brought on most of the successful commentators. She has encouraged and trained the most brilliant of the young producers. Michael Peacock, who was born in 1930, and who, in two and a half years, built up *Panorama* as its producer, and gave it more influence than any daily paper, was her choice. So was Donald Baverstock, almost as young, and the first producer of *Tonight*. Mrs. Goldie was born at the turn of the century, but in attitude she is the most youthful of the important officials. Long before Sir Ian or most other high-ranking executives, she realized

that television would quickly displace sound broadcasting and become a far greater influence than radio had ever been. She grasped that presenting serious subjects to huge audiences needed imagination, detailed preparation, energy and hard work. It might be possible to have one person lecturing on a subject on the wireless—it was quite impossible to capture the attention of millions on television for adult ideas unless they were presented in varied and exciting forms. Making no sacrifice of accuracy she introduced a brightness and speed quite new to the BBC.

It is indicative of Sir Ian's lack of involvement in the most important aspect of the BBC's work—the programmes it actually transmits—that he has never recognized the value of her astonishing fertility in administration, in the selection of potential performers and producers, in the devising of new programmes and in everything which has kept BBC television in the fight against commercial. In a Gallup Poll published early in 1958, 62 per cent of those asked said that the BBC did documentary-type feature programmes better than ITV. Only 18 per cent voted for the wares of ITV in this department. Without Mrs. Wyndham Goldie the answers would have been very different. Sir Ian must be unaware of this or Mrs. Goldie would long ago have been promoted to a more elevated position. It may be her modesty which holds her back from claiming her dues (her name never appears on credit titles); or it may be prejudice against women occupying important positions that keeps her down. But if Sir Ian had been thoroughly conversant with what was going on in television she would not have stayed so long in the relatively lowly place of Assistant Head of Talks, Television.

But Sir Ian has never tried thoroughly to master the technique of television or given it the same significance in his day as sound radio. It is amazing that in 1958 the office of the Director General should still be in Portland Place miles away from Shepherd's Bush where the television studios, and hence all that matters most to the BBC, are centred. Often the main reaction at Portland Place to the outstanding success of serious programmes (for which Mrs. Goldie has been principally responsible) has been

resentment. Sometimes instead of praise and encouragement, rebukes have come to producers. Again and again the BBC news division, whose head is at Sir Ian's elbow at Broadcasting House, has tried to put the dull clammy hand of the colourless wireless news broadcasts on to the documentary side of BBC television. The reason BBC television news has been routed and outshone by the Independent television news is that in this department the old-fashioned negative controllers of the BBC sound news have succeeded in getting command.

Appreciation of the impact being made by television was slow to penetrate to the pundits of Broadcasting House. This was fortunate. During the vital three or four years in which BBC television was creating its own traditions and format Portland Place was asleep. Too late its residents woke in alarm to see that something had been created which was lusty, controversial, modern, outspoken, and worthwhile. They have done their best to curb and deaden BBC television, since they found out what had happened, but it has become so well entrenched that it is not a foregone conclusion that they will win. The sacking of Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge was an illustration of the attempt by Portland Place to curb its active television child. To anyone like myself who has worked for the BBC television that incident was only one outward sign of a general attitude.

With his mind, Sir Ian admits that sound broadcasting is almost dead. That is why more and more of the BBC's money goes to television. But his heart is still with the old-fashioned system. So his office has remained disconnected from the television life of Shepherd's Bush. Those who have been able to get his ear quickest, because they are on the spot, have been those exponents of sound broadcasting who believe that the BBC should never say anything to offend anyone, that serious subjects should be presented ponderously and boringly, who would rather be submerged by commercial television than do the intensive creative work needed to rival it.

With an atmosphere like that surrounding him it is not surprising that Sir Ian Jacob can get rattled when the BBC is attacked

by established interests he considers to be important in the traditional society—although Sir Ian would claim that he only meets outside pressures when he thinks they are reasonable. 'I try to be fair.' And Sir Ian does try to be fair. It is the key to his outlook. It is one reason (and this is the good side of his approach) why the BBC is trusted and why politicians, and others, complain to the BBC but leave commercial television unmolested despite far worse breaches of impartiality. Yet both are governed by Acts of Parliament.

Sir Ian deplores sensationalism. When it breaks out in a programme the producer is severely reprimanded, sometimes in public. The producers are so completely out of touch with the top sections of the BBC that there is often lack of confidence that they will be supported if they do something dashing. Occasionally they are tempted to go ahead without consultation because the organization is so slow moving that by the time an application to innovate has worked its way up and permission has slowly oozed its way down it is too late to do anything about it on television.

Much of the best work of BBC television has been done with the reluctant consent of Portland Place. Yet the BBC will only be able to keep abreast of ITV in public attraction so long as all its energies, and far more money, are devoted to documentaries, serious feature programmes, topical items with a news background, good theatre and the like. That is the field in which it is best. But it will lose its high place in our public life if, for fear of upsetting anyone, it begins to water down its own vitality. And that would be a loss to the country.

BBC television needs reorganizing. The younger elements, who are remarkably able, should be brought forward quickly. Swiftness of decision should be encouraged. There should be far more contact between the Director General and those actually responsible for communicating with the public—then he might be more readily sympathetic with their problems. But Sir Ian is unlikely to make any major reforms at the BBC. Seldom is anything fresh sparked off from him. There are no anecdotes

about Sir Ian. There is nothing to incite them. He is very agreeable and likable but not a man of vivid originality. In everything he is moderate, and conventional. He is a member of the MCC and of the Army and Navy Club. He likes good food and wine but is not particularly interested in either. On holiday he looks for exercise and an object. He is in his office by 9.30 every morning and leaves it at 6.15. On Friday night he goes to his home in Woodbridge, Suffolk, taking work with him. Everything is neat and orderly.

On the other hand some advantages to his outlook must be mentioned. A more dramatic person leading the BBC at the time of its heaviest competition with ITV might have changed its character. Some of the calmer, more contemplative values of the British might have disappeared. Sir Ian has his faults but he has his virtues. Although much of the excellence of BBC television has come about by default at least he has allowed it to happen. And he has, in days when commercial competition has alarmed the BBC, refused to permit any damaging of the ethical standards of the BBC. It has an ethos and Sir Ian has sustained it. Its prestige might have sunk badly but it has not—and overseas BBC sound broadcasting is still universally admired for its fairness and objectivity. Even in distant Liberia, Liberians told me that they believed every word that the BBC said but nothing that came out of Moscow or America. That is the best tribute to Sir Ian: as a public servant he has maintained the dignity of an institution which is identified with the nation itself. He has upheld the public belief that the BBC is honest and reliable. The fact that the BBC painstakingly broadcast all the criticism of the Opposition during the time of the Suez intervention will be remembered in the Middle East, and elsewhere, long after the political repercussions of the action have subsided.

Sir Ian is a bridge. He is a link between the past and the future. He is on the side of a form of society that is vanishing. But he has not, although he has doubtless been tempted, actively fought against the structure that is emerging. Under him the BBC, and particularly BBC television, have been allowed, even if grudg-

ingly, to disseminate adventurous and unconventional concepts. The brilliant young producers, who have kept BBC television alive, backed by Mrs. Goldie, are so well established, and are so sure in their knowledge of the new techniques, that they cannot easily be dislodged. Against all the handicaps, both from inside the BBC and from the superficially greater and quicker appeal that commercial television is able to make, they have kept up the BBC's high standards of integrity and worth, adapting them to the new conditions. These young producers are the most hopeful sign that television will be one of the means by which Britain advances itself.

But although the innovators in BBC television have secured a foothold, powerful forces are ranged against them. Portland Place is still trying to throttle them by a multiplication of unproductive officials and so-called current affairs advisers. The inappropriate system of writing memoranda, to be sent to higher authority for approval to be obtained before including items in such programmes as *Panorama*, has intensified. Burdensome delays have dampened spontaneity. Portland Place, jealous of Lime Grove's success, is desperately trying to envelop BBC television with its own timid inefficiencies.

If Sir Ian had had a more striking and adventurous nature, if he had had originality and a slight knowledge of what interests the majority of the people, he could have defeated commercial television, or at least confined its challenge within moderate bounds. As it is, he has failed to provide an adequate argument for the giving of a third television network to the BBC.

If the BBC were in control of another network, it would not be exciting enough, however worthy it was. One of the BBC's two networks would offer light entertainment in which it would be slaughtered, as far as size of audiences is concerned, by commercial television. The other would be a minority programme which would increasingly become like the Third Programme and be watched by almost no one. BBC television should continue to exist and should carry on with its attempt to interest a wide public in more serious subjects at peak hours than

those provided by commercial television. It would be tempted to abandon the effort if it were given another network to operate as well. And, in any case, to operate its present network successfully in the future it must do far more to guard against its increasing tendency to curb the independence of outlook and enterprise among its young producers.

So if the BBC is not to have the third network, which inevitably will arrive, who is? Commercial television claims that it has opened up more opportunities for expression in our national life. Unfortunately, this is not true. A large section of the major national newspapers has been given a stake in commercial television. A number of theatrical and film interests, already in a quasi-monopolistic condition in their own industries, have been handed a huge slice of commercial television. Big business and prominent supporters of the established order have been given much of the rest. Instead of the avenues of expression being widened they have been narrowed. In America the ownership of television stations is mainly in the hands of people unconnected with the theatrical, film, or newspaper industries. This means that the potential performer on, or contributor to, television in America has a far greater possibility of entering television than he does here. In Britain the equivalent person may have failed to please, say, the Rank Organization or Associated British Pictures with his work. If he turns to television he finds the same people heavily entrenched there, and understandably they are no more willing to employ him in television than they were in the film industry. The same applies to any journalist or commentator who may have incurred the dislike of a rich newspaper proprietor. And greed for profits leads the programme companies to put on cheap American films, which are quite unnecessary, instead of using British talent all the time.

Another great evil that has arisen is that many newspapers are now reluctant to criticize honestly the operation of commercial television, or the programmes it puts out, for the obvious reason that they have a substantial financial interest in it. Again, theatrical interests, already able to wield quasi-monopolistic power in the

engagement of actors, or in the bookings of provincial theatres, are given an increased hold over all those creative people whose only hope of working is through them. An additional unhappy by-product of the manner in which the Independent Television Authority have issued their contracts is that the quasi-monopolistic interests who have been awarded them are able, through the enormous profits made in commercial television, even further to strengthen their already too powerful position in the fields in which they operate outside television. For instance, it is already extremely hard to start a new national newspaper. Now that so many national newspapers are fortified by returns of around 200 per cent a year on their investments in commercial television, it is even more impossible for a new competitor to break into the national Press. The giving of contracts to groups in which local newspaper proprietors share creates a similar situation in the provincial Press. (And one or two local newspaper proprietors are no more representative of local opinion than are one or two local business men.)

So, far from offering new and diversified ways of creative expression in Britain, commercial television has actually succeeded in limiting them. State monopolies have been given very largely to those who previously had a semi-monopolistic position and have enriched those who are sufficiently rich and powerful. The Independent Television Authority appears to have acted on the principle 'For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath'. American experience shows that there is not the slightest evidence for believing that the people best qualified to run television stations are those versed in the newspaper, film, and theatre industries. Indeed, the Americans have carefully tried to prevent monopolistic positions being built up by not giving such people television stations. Quite unnoticed in Britain, the Independent Television Authority has been consolidating the position of elements who already wield an unhealthily strong power.

Commercial television has been successful to some extent in giving the public better television, both on the commercial

channels and, through stimulation, on the BBC. But it has been done at the expense of a contraction in democracy. Such people as Lord Rank, the wealthy proprietors of Granada, the A.B.P.C. (37½ per cent American owned), Lord Rothermere's *Daily Mail* group, the Conservative-inclined *News of the World*, Lord Camrose's and Mr. Michael Berry's Amalgamated Press, Mr. Harold Drayton (the Tory financier), Mr. Prince Littler, Mr. Valentine Parnell, the *Daily Mirror*, Mr. Roy Thompson (the Canadian millionaire owner of the Conservative *Scotsman*), the *News Chronicle*, various proprietors of local newspapers, the *Manchester Guardian*—to say nothing of such additional supporters of the established order as Lord Derby, Lord Townshend, Lord Bessborough—have been given, under Government auspices, great riches and great new sources of power. Making these people stronger weakens the capacity of others engaged in the communication of ideas and entertainment to stand up to them, not only in television but in all the other spheres which they control. And, to cap it all, the Independent Television Authority has solemnly undertaken that if they are allowed another network to operate they will give the best positions in it to the four major programme contractors at present operating. That will enable these four companies still further to augment their wealth and to extend their power, because they will also be allowed to retain what they hold now.

Clearly, it would not be in the interests of democracy to permit the Independent Television Authority to operate another network which they would distribute on much the same pattern as they have the first. Nor would it be likely to raise public taste. Two such commercial networks would result in a further drive towards programmes that attract nothing but the maximum audiences, irrespective of the merits of their content. (Indeed, the Independent Television Authority ought not to be allowed to renew the existing contracts when they expire in 1964 unless the present programme contractors are entirely reorganized to let in fresh blood and to reduce the power of the quasi-monopolists.)

A possible way out would be to set up an entirely new corporation to run a third network in which the shares would be partly owned by the Government and partly by private interests —the Government holding the majority of the shares. This would give sufficient inducement for private persons to do their best to provide good television, while enabling the Government to ensure that a conscious effort is made not to pander to the lowest tastes. It would also mean that over half the large profits made would find their way back to the direct benefit of the public at large. It is well worth considering whether a comparable transformation might not take place in the BBC. It does not lower the quality of *The Times* to take advertisements—it should not make the slightest difference to the BBC. And there is no reason why sound broadcasting should not take advertisements as well. At the moment, the BBC puts out as a public service hours of dance music every day paid for by licence money. If the BBC were on a commercial basis, which could be wholly owned by the Government, it could finance both its television and sound services without any licence money at all and show a profit for the State. If Sir Ian Jacob possessed sufficient imagination he would be preparing schemes on these lines now, instead of fighting a losing battle to maintain one not very efficient public service out of licence fees—and to add an additional network to be similarly operated.

Sir Allen Lane

SIR ALLEN LANE is a happy man. Out of his own industry and shrewdness he has made a first-rate business, doing something that he enjoys and which is thoroughly meritorious. He is the Managing Director of Penguin Books and he largely created the organization himself. For a period two of his brothers worked with him but his was always the central inspiration and drive.

He was thirty-two when he published the first batch of ten Penguin books in 1935 at sixpence each. It was obvious to everybody but Allen Lane that he was mad. Publishers and booksellers *knew* that trying to sell serious books in paper backs could not succeed. It never had and it never would.

Lane was sixteen when he became apprenticed to his publisher uncle, John Lane of the Bodley Head, on leaving Bristol Grammar School. He became a publisher by accident and remained one because he liked it. Early on he began to feel that it was wrong that so many of the good books his firm published would always be restricted to a small public because of their price. He was convinced, although the level of public taste at that time seemed low, that it was on the upgrade. When he first came to London in 1919 he stayed with an aunt at Wimbledon. The household reading was based on Hall Caine, Marie Corelli, and Berta Ruck. But intuitively he felt that a new inquisitiveness was stirring, that a great thirst for better books was coming.

In the mid-thirties he proposed to the directors of the Bodley Head that they should publish good-quality paper-backed books at sixpence. He visited booksellers all over the country showing

them a dummy of the first Penguin. They were not impressed, nor were the board of the Bodley Head. Allen Lane, backed by his brothers, was not discouraged, although he had only got orders for a sale of 7,000—too few to break even financially. They financed the production of ten titles which were distributed by the Bodley Head. They were moderately successful. They published another ten. And on January 1st, 1936, they set up their new company on a capital of a hundred pounds.

The only cheap premises Allen Lane could find were in the crypt of Holy Trinity Church, Euston Road. The rent was £150 a year. The accommodation was curious. 'We used the empty tombs for keeping stock in,' he told me. 'We put the petty cash in one tomb and invoice books in another. The lavatory was a bucket. When we prospered a bit we applied to the local council for permission to build a real lavatory. The man who came round looked at the establishment with amazement. We were breaking every known by-law. As he left he said: "If anyone says this place exists I will have to deny it. I just haven't seen it. If anyone says I have I will say 'they're a liar'." That was when we decided that we'd better find real premises.'

Lane had enjoyed himself in the crypt. He was on friendly terms with the verger, who would come down occasionally and ask for quiet because there was a service going on above. He had also learned from the crypt that it was easier to run a publishing firm if all the offices were on the same floor instead of having to run up and down stairs as you have to do in most publishers' houses. After a short stay in two rooms above a motor-car showroom in Great Portland Street, Penguin Books, towards the end of 1937, moved outside London. Lane bought three acres for £2,000 at Harmondsworth on the main road near London Airport. He has stayed there ever since and the site and buildings were valued in 1958 at over £100,000.

Penguins were already going well by the time of the move. Their sales were far more than the meagre seven thousand copies a time which the booksellers had first been willing to buy. The fact that Woolworths distributed them was a big help. The

number of titles rapidly advanced from the original ten to around a hundred. Then Lane had a shock. He was standing by a bookstall at St. Pancras Station when a woman came up and asked for 'one of those Pelicans'. She meant Penguins, but Allen Lane was alarmed. If a publisher with large resources started up under the banner of Pelican, Penguins might easily be driven out of existence—the name Pelican was too close. His lawyers advised him that he could not copyright the name Pelican. The only thing he could do was to publish books under the heading of Pelican himself and then proceed against anyone who did the same, on the grounds of imitation or 'passing off'. That was how the Pelican series was born.

Lane immediately got into action, planning a new series, educational and cultural in content, mainly of original books. The first nine came out in May 1937. They included two volumes of Bernard Shaw's *The Intelligent Woman's Guide* . . . for which he wrote special new chapters on Sovietism and Fascism; the first of the Pelican archaeological books; H. G. Wells' *A Short History of the World*; *Practical Economics*, by G. D. H. Cole; and other apparently heavy-going stuff. Despite the success of Penguins most publishers would still have thought this new venture crazy. But the books sold by the hundred thousand—showing once again that Lane's judgment was correct.

By 1958 in Penguins, Pelicans, Penguin Classics, Penguin Guides, King Penguins, and the rest, Sir Allen Lane had published approaching 2,500 separate titles. And 250,000,000 books in all had been sold. The pressure seems to rise all the time. 'We work five days a week and we reckon to publish a new book each working day.'

Sir Allen clearly cannot read them all but he has distinguished and expert editors in charge of each department. Some of the biggest sales have been the most surprising. The translation of *The Odyssey*, done specially by Dr. E. V. Rieu, has sold around a million copies. Books on mathematics, statistics, psychology, science, art, and economics, often top the half million mark.

Until Penguin Books began cheap paper backs were usually

lurid, if not pornographic. They attracted buyers, as many still do, with covers showing half-naked girls tied to posts with a brutal-looking man standing by, or similarly elevating scenes. 'I wanted to make the kind of book which, when the vicar comes to tea, you don't push under a cushion. You are rather more inclined to put it on the table to show what sort of person you are.'

'What has pleased you most about the whole operation?' I asked him.

'The fact that we have made our point that a man who may be poor in money is not necessarily poor in intellectual qualities. And, by providing the sort of things we think he wants, and think he should have to make him a whole person, we have contributed something to thinking people.'

It could be said that the growth of popularity of Penguin books has merely coincided with, and kept pace with, the improvement in public taste. Or it could be argued that they have contributed to it. I take the latter view. Penguin books could not have succeeded unless educational standards and public awareness had been rising. On the other hand they have stimulated and encouraged interest which otherwise would have stayed on a lower pitch of intensity.

Nearly six hundred of Sir Allen Lane's titles have been original, highly serious, and often specialist, books. Beyond that there are scores more of reprints of the classics, histories of art, and the like. And the twelve hundred titles which are mainly reprints of fiction have nearly all been by writers of literary merit. They have been fiction for the educated.

For many years since the war economics have forced Penguins to be sold at half a crown, Pelicans at three shillings and sixpence. It is way above the original sixpence, certainly, but it is still extraordinarily cheap. Penguins have done in books what Marks & Spencer have done in clothes and other articles. Penguin Books have made books of the highest quality available to the magazine public, and by doing so have inculcated the spirit that only the best is good enough for everyone.

'When we had an exhibition of Penguin books in Australia I remember noticing a tough-looking customer come in. I thought to myself that he was the sort of person you would expect to see looking for the kind of book you would get—with nudes in it—in the Charing Cross Road. Instead, he bought a book on psychology.'

That is part of Sir Allen's achievement. Pessimists believe that television is bad for the brain and prevents the reading of good books. Sir Allen disagrees. 'The Athenaeum is the Green Room Club of television,' he remarked. He was thinking of people like Julian Huxley, Bronowski, Mortimer Wheeler, and John Betjeman. When they appear on television the sales of their books go up. Interest, say, in archaeology is quickened by mention of it in television and more of the Pelicans on archaeology are sold. The same applies to every serious subject discussed on the wireless and on television or dealt with in the cinema.

'Television helps considerably. When the BBC television put on *1984* one Sunday night a couple of years ago, we had sixteen or eighteen thousand copies in stock on the Monday morning. We were out of stock by the Wednesday. The same week I was lunching with a retired air marshal. He was thinking of going to see the film of *Animal Farm*. I told him I had published it. "Oh," he said, "I didn't know it was a book." People were not aware that they were books by George Orwell or that George Orwell existed. We are tapping a new public.'

A million copies were sold of the ten-volume set of Shaw's works published to honour his ninetieth birthday. Shaw and Wells were among the most helpful to Penguin Books from the start. Shaw even departed from his customary attitude towards publishers in dealing with Allen Lane. Shaw normally acted as his own publisher, buying the paper, paying for the setting-up of the type and giving the publisher a 15 per cent commission for his work in distribution. With Penguins he allowed himself to be treated like an ordinary author. He was one of the few authors willing to consider restriction of circulation. When Sir Allen told him that *St. Joan* was being used as a text-book in schools he

was horrified. 'You couldn't have said anything that would have made me more depressed. This is what happened to Shakespeare. Too many children were forced to read his plays at school and have hated him ever since.'

In 1958 the costing of Penguin books was simple. Price to the customer half a crown. On the way to the customer the wholesaler and the bookseller have taken about elevenpence. Cost of production and overheads, including the author's royalty of $2\frac{1}{4}d.$ ($7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent), accounts for another 1*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.* 4*d.* Penguin Books is left with a gross profit of about 3*d.*—sometimes a little more and sometimes a little less. Pelicans are 3*s.* 6*d.* because, as original works, they require more editorial treatment. The author gets the full $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent royalty. (In the case of reprints the original publisher usually takes a share of the author's royalty but, as the author may already have made a fair sum by the time his book becomes a Penguin, the amount he gets from Penguins is a pleasant bonus rather than something he has to depend on for a living.) And, in addition, the setting-up of an entirely new book presents greater problems. Again, in some of the books there may be expensive illustrations.

In general, a first edition has to be of at least forty thousand copies or it will not show a profit. Reprints of Penguins must be of thirty thousand or more.

This means than an enormous stock has to be carried. Penguins are sold at the rate of a million a month but the revolving stock must be kept at about ten million—or half a million pounds' worth of books. This represents money that is tied up in the warehouses at Harmondsworth.

Financial difficulties have been the greatest that Sir Allen has had to deal with. The company has been kept private. The only money ever raised outside has been in loans from the bank. Each new building and expansion has come out of profits. Penguin Books have relied upon one year's profits to finance next year's business. It would have been easy for Sir Allen, who owns nearly all the shares, to have made his company public. Commercially he would have been able to go ahead faster, but he would have

lost some of his independence. 'If we had had shareholders to face it would have been much more difficult to publish books—which we know may lose us £2,000—simply because we think those books ought to be published.'

And Sir Allen would be unhappy if he were hampered in publishing what he thinks it is right to publish by financial considerations. Indeed any board of directors responsible to shareholders would almost have the duty to suppress many of the titles on the grounds that they could not possibly succeed with a mass audience. 'Looking at my list now,' said Sir Allen, 'I can't see one title that I would have dared to publish in the first batches.'

Just before the war Penguin Books published a series of political books. They called attention to the rise of Hitler, of Mussolini, and to the dangers abroad for democracy. They sold well. Since the war there has not been the same interest in political books of the accepted kind. Sir Allen believes that the interest is shifting on to wider and broader political planes such as the rise of the non-white countries. Now he is planning books about China, about Africa, about those areas which are going to move the balance of power in the world from a purely white ascendancy to a far more equal division of influence. He has travelled in North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, India, Japan, China, Russia, and Africa. The results of his journeys will be reflected in the Penguin output. As usual he will approach publication of the new books with authority. And it is much to Sir Allen's credit that Penguin Books are not tampered with. They give the case unexpurgated one way or another. He has not refused to publish books by Communists and other dissenters as well as by specialists who fit more easily into society.

Sir Allen is a radiant, cleanly scrubbed, fresh-looking piece of energy. He is of medium height with a roundish face full of animation. He talks rapidly but clearly. He has ideas all the time. He is widely read and is that remarkable being—a cultured and thinking publisher. Certainly he does not do all the book selection —he would be foolish to try to in many specialized subjects which

need experts to test the validity of what has been written. But he chooses people as editors of the various sections that his publishing covers who really know their subject and who also have an understanding of the problem of communication to a large audience. The Editor in Chief has almost from the outset been W. E. Williams (now Sir William Emrys Williams, Secretary General of the Arts Council). Dr. Nicholas Pevsner has been responsible for the Pelican History of Art, the Buildings of England and the King Penguin Books. Sir Kenneth Clark initiated the Penguin Modern Painters. The Editor of the Penguin Classics is Dr. E. V. Rieu, who himself was responsible for the first and brilliantly successful title in this imprint, his own new translation of *The Odyssey* for which he received an honorary Litt.D. from Leeds University.

Sir Allen's own intellectual capacity has enabled him to remain *primus inter pares* in his group of diverse and outstanding editors and helpers. That is why he was able to persuade eminent scholars to publish original works in Pelicans and other Penguin imprints. There was a resistance to be broken down. Serious academicians felt that their colleagues would look down on them if they did not continue to have their first fruits published by the staid old houses—even if that did mean a tiny royalty and an uttermost sale of two or three thousand copies. Gradually they came to realize that if the spreading of knowledge was their aim it could not be done better than through the medium of Penguin Books—and what was even more agreeable the royalties were likely to be rather higher for a mass sale on a specialized subject than on the limited number of copies usually sold. A forty-thousand print, which is the least Penguins do, ensures the author of an original work a royalty of £375. With luck two, three or four times that number will be sold with a corresponding increase in total royalties.

Many Penguins have been sold overseas. Sometimes Sir Allen gears a whole series—like *West African Penguins*—to a particular area. He is expanding that notion. He has been impressed by the Russian cleverness in disseminating throughout the world books

which do not necessarily have a direct propaganda or political content. Mass editions of Dickens, for instance, depicting the squalor of England without pointing out that it refers to a period at least a hundred years ago, have been circulated by Soviet publishing houses in the uncommitted parts of the world.

As well as having an office and a headquarters outside London Sir Allen has a house on the River Colne from which he can see the lights of London Airport. The river is at the bottom of his garden. The last time I met him, on a wintry, snowy evening in London, he told me he had just seen a kingfisher on the River Colne from his window. He spends a number of nights a week there and the week-ends on a farm which is close by another river, the River Lodden in Berkshire. But more and more he is being forced to come to London—to deal with publishers (who have been mainly co-operative rather than hostile to his policy of mass editions of cheap paper backs), with agents, with authors, and with the variety of people who impinge on a publishing business. For that purpose he has taken a flat in Whitehall Court, brightly decorated with delicated wallpapers. He may have to spend as much as three days a week there. In the end he will probably be driven back to the London which the earlier poverty of the firm forced him to leave.

Sir Allen is a remarkable man. He has had faith in the intelligence of ordinary people and he has assisted it to grow. Like Marks & Spencer he does little national advertising. He relies on the word-of-mouth praise of his product. He started from nothing despite the opposition of the board of the Bodley Head which he tried to interest in his new project. He has seen his business grow to vast dimensions while the Bodley Head has twice changed hands. He has been responsible for giving more people the means of self-education than any other publisher who has ever lived. In doing so he has started a snowballing demand for more and more information about subjects that enhance man's nature when he learns about them. Allen Lane can be proud of his part in ensuring that the rise in the standard of living over the last twenty years has not been merely physical.

The success of his enterprise is one of the hopeful signs for the future. It demonstrates that intellectual ability and curiosity spread far beyond the relatively few public school and university educated. Britain has little but her brains to keep her afloat. The avidity with which Penguins are consumed shows that brains, and a desire to use them, are the property of all strata.

7

Sir Philip Hendy

SIR PHILIP HENDY, Director of the National Gallery, lives in a handsome Georgian house not far from the Angel at Islington. A favourite Sunday morning entertainment for Sir Philip and his family is to walk the four miles between his home and the National Gallery. That way Sir Philip combines the relaxation he loves the most, walking, with the passion and work of his life, looking at pictures. When he is not looking at them he is arranging for their presentation and exhibition. When he is not doing that he is writing about them. When he wrote an illustrated report covering sixteen years of the work of the National Gallery up to 1954 he worked for months every night, after leaving the Gallery, and most weekends. At the same time, to complete the introduction to another art book, he had to get up at seven nearly every morning.

Tall, lean, and muscular, Sir Philip looks an unlikely person to be a Director of a Museum or an art expert. He is restless in his office which looks out over noisy Trafalgar Square and the fig-trees from which Queen Victoria was once given a basket of figs. His long keen face is always in movement. His greying hair curls crisply.

In a formal sense he has no qualifications to be Director of the National Gallery. He has no diplomas or degrees in art. At Oxford he read History. In 1923 he was about to become an assistant master at Eton when his father told him that D. S. MacColl, Keeper of the Wallace Collection, was advertising for a lecturer. At once Hendy sent one telegram to Eton to say that

the new assistant master would not arrive, and another telegram to MacColl. His enthusiasm won him the job. Soon, as a superior guide, he was lecturing audiences which, as they had not paid to hear him, did not feel obliged to listen if they were bored.

That is how Sir Philip became connected with museums and learned to understand how to interest the public. His self-taught capacities quickly carried him upwards. In 1946, when he was forty-five years old, he became Director of the National Gallery—the most comprehensive picture gallery in the world.

When Sir Philip arrived all the pictures were covered by glass —except one given by Lord Duveen with the condition that it should never be covered. The glass was the first barrier visitors had to penetrate to see the pictures. The next was the old brown varnish which lay heavily on most of the paintings. Varnish is necessary for preservation, but with time it becomes opaque and brown. And much of this had been put on darker than necessary to conceal clumsy restoration.

Sir Philip has built up from nothing a Conservation Department with a Chief Restorer, a Restorer, two Assistant Restorers, and four craftsmen. Before the war the National Gallery had only a half-time Scientific Adviser. Sir Philip has created a new Scientific Department staffed by a full-time Head, a Research Chemist, an Assistant Research Chemist, and two Nuffield students. With X-ray and other apparatus, through the chemical analysis of pigments and media, the scientists have made cleaning and restoration safer. And they are working hard to discover a varnish that will not go brown, so that cleaned pictures may not need cleaning again.

When Sir Philip started revealing the brighter original colours and more powerful forms of the pictures, many people were shocked. Violent letters appeared in *The Times* from those who thought that Old Masters had always been dull brown. Sir Alfred Munnings and Sir Gerald Kelly were among the clamant protesters. A feature which seemed to startle the critics most was the disclosing of the fact that the yellow of old varnish is the main threat to blue—a dominant colour in many Old Masters.

Cleaning made the strong blues reappear to the consternation of many who had been unaware that they had existed. But complaints today are not so much against cleaned pictures as about the pictures not yet cleaned.

Sir Philip has defined his work as 'making pictures visible and making people comfortable in front of them'. He believes it unsafe to exhibit pictures indefinitely without glass unless the rooms are air-conditioned. His hope is that, one day, the whole of the National Gallery will be air-conditioned. By the beginning of 1958 six of the thirty-one rooms on the main floor had been air-conditioned, and the contractors are now at work on a £3,000 scheme which will complete the air-conditioning of the west half of the main floor and of the reference section below it.

'Looking at, say, a Titian increases my vitality and my knowledge of life,' Sir Philip once remarked to me. He wants everyone to share his enjoyment. 'If one per cent of the population came to the National Gallery once a year I should be happy.' As it is, the attendances have gone up remarkably. In 1938, 628,000 people visited the National Gallery. In 1957 the total was 1,178,000. Sir Philip can claim much of the credit for this enormous public increase of the interest in old pictures. By showing them as much as possible as they looked when they were painted and by taking away the inhibiting glass he has made ordinary people feel that Old Masters are not old brown bores but things to be keenly enjoyed. By a careful arrangement of the rooms and greater consideration for visitors he has encouraged people to think it a pleasure and not a cultural duty to go into the Gallery.

But he is handicapped by shortage of money. The National Gallery gets only £12,500 a year (1958) to buy pictures. That is supplemented by approximately £12,000 a year, the income from bequests. To prevent the hundred and fifty or so really good pictures that are still in private hands from leaving the country the National Gallery needs around £100,000 a year at least. The prices of Old Masters still soar. The last privately owned Van Eyck was bought by the Frick Museum in New York for £357,000. That is the kind of market in which Sir Philip has to

compete. So long as Britain loses no more masterpieces Sir Philip will be satisfied—whichever gallery exhibits them. But at a time when pictures of National Gallery standard do not often cost less than £50,000 it is hard to prevent them disappearing abroad.

Although it is Sir Philip's task to preserve the art of the past he is an admirer of the art of the present. In his house there are sculptures by Henry Moore, paintings by Graham Sutherland and other modern painters. When it was proposed to buy a Henry Moore sculpture in Manchester in 1954 there were violent protests from local city councillors. Sir Philip wrote in strong defence of Moore. His attitude to modern art can be summed up in the remark he once made about Sir Alfred Munnings. 'Sir Alfred Munnings has done more for modern art than any of our critics. He has emphasized so strongly the wide gulf that exists between art which has ideas and art which has no ideas at all.'

He has never been afraid to speak out. When he was Director of Leeds Art Gallery before the war he once said: 'I have to beg, borrow, or steal from private people. The Corporation spends £6,000 a year running the Art Gallery, building and staffing it, but does nothing to make it worth while running it. The city is merely paying lip service to the idea of having a gallery. We cannot make bricks without straw.'

What Sir Philip has done at the National Gallery is to put modern techniques into the service of timeless art. It is not merely a matter of the scientific restoration and treatment of the pictures. It is the whole arrangement of the Gallery by which the original relationship between great artists and the people has been recaptured. Nor has he forgotten that it is only a minority of Englishmen who can visit the Gallery regularly. Besides the most learned catalogue of its collection, it publishes and distributes a much wider range of reproductions in colour than any other gallery.

In 1936 Sir Philip talked of 'the literary education which makes the man in the street incapable of using his eyes on anything but the printed word'. He complained of 'the decline of the visual

arts with the rise of popular education'. Presiding over the National Gallery, setting the tone for the other picture galleries in the country, he has done as much as anyone man could to reverse the trend and to make visual education march with written.

There is no point in technological discoveries if man does not become a happier, fuller being. We have to be in the lead in Britain in scientific research and in making new machines or we drop into decay. But materialism should serve the soul. Britain has the chance to show the world that she can compete with any country technically and culturally. The rising attendances at the National Gallery, other museums, houses open to the public and the like, are proof that a civilized love of beauty and art are spreading through all sections of the British public. Britain is developing the power to inspire the world to prevent man's personality from being suppressed by his own machines. Sir Philip, with his use of modern techniques in the aid of ancient art, is a symptom of the latent national understanding of the problem. We shall suffer both nationally and internationally if we do not give him something approaching the £100,000 a year he needs to help us become more aware of the satisfaction that the contemplation of art brings.

8

Sir Michael Balcon

I HAVE met a number of people in the film industry.

There was the amazing Filippo Del Giudice.

His usual greeting was: 'Have a cigar,' followed by absurdly lavish praise and exuberantly expressed pleasure at seeing you. Although the flattery was obvious, some of it, because of his flamboyant charm and one's own susceptibility, stuck. Disraeli was right about flattery when he recommended: 'Lay it on with a trowel.'

Del Giudice had a large and unattractive house in the country —Sheepcote. It seemed to be staffed by more footmen than Buckingham Palace and I believe some of them had actually come from there. While you were in the dining-room eating, the drawing-room was heavily sprayed with scent against the guests' return. Outside there was a great barn converted into a private cinema and, of course, equipped with an enormous bar.

Del Giudice, standing legs apart and hardly taller than the cigar in his hand, would explain how he had saved, if not created, the British film industry during the war. Certainly he was largely responsible for putting on Noël Coward's *In Which We Serve*, David Lean's *This Happy Breed*, Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*, Carol Reed's *The Way Ahead*, Anatole de Grunwald's *Demi Paradise* and *The Way to the Stars*. Few even among his many enemies would deny that he contributed considerably to the wartime success of British films.

In the post-war years, when I knew him, he was offering to save British films again. All he wanted was money. But he wanted

a lot and a good deal of it was for the upkeep of his establishment at Sheepcote and his other overhead expenses—which seemed trivial to him but struck others as substantial.

What was apparently extravagant he insisted was essential to provide the background in which the 'artistes' would feel happy and think at their best. If overloaded luxury is what film producers, directors, script-writers and actors require, they could not complain of any deficiency from Del Giudice.

He was one of the most convincing men I have ever met. He was able to persuade such unlikely people as Ernest Bevin and Sir Stafford Cripps to believe in him. Sir Stafford quite frequently visited him and sat drinking fruit juice and eating vegetarian food in the midst of sumptuous parties filled with beautiful potential actresses and all manner of men ranging from the patently sincere to those who live on the speculative and hazy fringes of finance. Sir Stafford at one time thought him almost a genius and forgave in him outrages that would have startled, if not appalled, him in others. The fact that Sir Stafford asked me, as a very young M.P., to do what I could to help Del Giudice prevented me for some time from assessing his value to the film industry as clearly as one might have done had Del Giudice been first met under other auspices.

Del Giudice quarrelled violently with the other executives of the film industry. He believed that his failure to succeed after the war was due to deliberate obstacles placed in his way by the Rank Organization and others. Their failing, he thought, was a petty-mindedness which could not appeciate his overtowering greatness. He was unaware of any failing in himself. He could not make films cheaply—it would have seemed sordid to him. He could not restrain his expenditure or his undiscriminating generosity. He was an overflowing caricature of a film king. As he waddled along (from time to time he disappeared for slimming cures on orange juice) he splashed geniality and ideas all around him.

It was partly due to his persistent advocacy to Sir Stafford Cripps of state support for films that the National Film Finance Corporation was set up to help British producers. It was ironical

that he got nothing from it and annoying to him that Sir Alexander Korda, who had a bigger yacht, did. Sir Alexander Korda also knew how to be extravagant. But he had a surer touch than Del Giudice in raising money and he had the advantage of knowing all the technical processes in film-making from the shooting of the film to its cutting. Del Giudice was an Italian lawyer who came to England in the days of Mussolini. Korda was a Hungarian. It was curious that both these men, who became so influential in British films, should have been of foreign origin. Superficially, although a man of great charm, Korda was not so impressive as Del Giudice but he was undoubtedly the better film-maker.

Lord Rank I met once and found unrewarding to talk to. He is a 'do-gooder' and has spent fortunes trying to promote British films in America and to curb the growth of the American film empire in Britain. But there is no more illumination in his eyes and conversation than there is in that of a commonplace business man. You feel that he is at greater ease with buildings, facts, and figures than he is with ideas.

The only other big film man, apart from Sir Michael Balcon, I consciously remember meeting is Mr. Doré Schary in Hollywood. I was taken to see him at his Hollywood house one Sunday morning. From the reverential way he was addressed I gathered that he was exceptionally powerful. He seemed, for a Hollywood emperor, to live modestly—only a very large swimming-pool and an expensively but tastelessly decorated and furnished house. I never discovered much about his views on films because every time I asked him a question about them he countered with a query on Stevenson and Eisenhower and speculation on the then current (1952) presidential election. However, I learned that at that time his answer to television was to make bigger and more lavish productions of so great an expense and size that television could not compete—and even Del Giudice would be impressed.

Sir Michael Balcon is quite unlike any of these. I don't know what you would put him down as on meeting him if you were not told his profession. If you saw him first plodding through

the mud at his farm in Sussex, you might think he was someone who had done well in the City as a young man and had retired to be a serious farmer. Farming is not a side occupation with him as it is with many business men who combine it with having a house in the country and with some mild week-end amusement which is paid for out of income tax rebates. Often whole chunks of his conversation are about his farming operations. Every Friday, when he arrives in Sussex from London, he receives a full report on the week's work. He cares about the land, and because he cares, like other successful farmers he is interesting about it.

If it were in London that you met him first you might take him for a prosperous family solicitor. He has a careful meticulousness and an air of quiet reliability. Or you might think that he was a very senior civil servant. It would never occur to you that he was connected with entertainment, particularly the mottled flashy world of picture-making. He appears too sober, sensible, with his head screwed on firmly. It is impossible to imagine him announcing a film as 'The biggest, best, most amazing epic ever presented on the screen!' He does not have any of the exaggerations or vulgarity of the conventional film man.

Sir Michael is short, neatly dressed, with a small, trimmed, black moustache. He has quick, searching eyes which lose their otherwise forbidding look when he smiles or laughs. At his house in Sussex, apart from an Epstein bust of himself, there are many paintings that could reasonably be called works of art. The house is very old but very comfortable. In contrast to Del Giudice's former house, it is pleasantly decorated and beautiful inside and out. And it is a home. Lady Balcon and he were married in 1924. She keeps the farm accounts and does much of the work of running the farm. It is often untrue to say that successful men would not have succeeded without their wives, but in the case of Sir Michael Balcon his wife has clearly made a tremendous difference to his progress. Together they produce a lively but relaxed atmosphere. They are two of the kindest and most spontaneously generous people I have met. Lady Balcon's charm and elegance must have

often smoothed over difficult situations with tiresome actors and other temperamental persons in the film world: talents frequently needed in an atmosphere where distrust and hysteria flourish.

Sir Michael is shy, almost reticent. He diffidently puts forward an opinion without assertion or aggressiveness. He is amiable about other people's qualities and abilities (this is possibly unique in the film world). He is kind and considerate—he really minds about other people's feelings. He is gentle. Yet he has toughness and resilience: otherwise he could never have survived in this racketeering, ruthless, and unethical industry.

Balcon always wanted to be in films. 'I had a creative urge. I have never been in it just to buy and sell things. The whole life of the cinema is only sixty years. Two-thirds of mine has been spent in it. I have grown up with it.'

His first connection with films was in 1920 when he was twenty-four. His job was to sell films to the cinemas of Birmingham for Sol Exclusives. He was not very good at it and disliked the disagreeable business of trying to force cinema managers to take films they plainly did not want. Together with an old school friend, Victor Saville, he went into the business of film-making himself—with £100 capital. They were not ambitious films nor ones likely to satisfy anyone's creative urge. They were instructional and advertising items made for big companies like the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Cinemas were paid £3 or £4 a time to show them.

After they had been doing this for a while Graham Cutts, a film director, walked into the office they had established in London. Birmingham is Balcon's home town—he was brought up there and was educated at the George Dixon School. Balcon had known Graham Cutts in Birmingham. He wanted a feature film made of a play called *Woman to Woman* of which he had bought the film rights. The two partners were almost insane with excitement. Balcon went back to Birmingham and borrowed money from Oscar Deutsch—then a metal merchant, later owner of a cinema empire—and several others. 'We must have been very earnest young men,' is Balcon's comment. In addition, Balcon

raised £7,000 from a distributor, and the £40,000 capital needed to make the film was collected.

In an effort to make sure of success Balcon and Saville engaged a famous American star of the silent films, Betty Compson. To induce her to come they had to sign her up for two films at the then huge salary of £1,000 per week. Clive Brook had the hero's role and a tiny part was played by an unheard-of professional boxer, Victor McLaglen. The film made a profit of £30,000.

But disaster followed jubilation. To fulfil Miss Compson's contract the inexperienced Balcon and Saville pushed too quickly ahead with a second film. All the profits on the first film, and more, disappeared. That was the last time that Balcon ever made a film without careful preparation. It was also the last time that he raised money from private lenders—thereafter he based his film production on arrangements with distributors. It was, incidentally, one of the rare occasions on which he imported an American star. Since then he has mainly relied on British actors in films and kept them predominantly British in flavour.

After more adventures which included an unsatisfactory period working for Louis B. Mayer; the burning down of the studios at Islington—which he had acquired with the aid of Major Reginald Baker; and an association with Gaumont British Picture Corporation, Balcon arrived at Ealing. 'Before Ealing,' Balcon once said, 'I was more interested in the financial success of films than in other aspects and I leant heavily on the American pattern.'

Now, at Ealing Studios in the late 1930s, his main career was about to begin. Major Baker has provided the administrative and financial structure against which Sir Michael Balcon has worked. The two have fitted together admirably. Balcon has been enabled by Baker to allow his imagination to flourish. He has been the little-heard-of base on which the famous Ealing comedies have been built.

'Which films that you have made have pleased you most?' I asked Sir Michael.

'Of the wartime ones,' he said, '*The Foreman Went to France*, *Next of Kin*, *Convoy*, and *San Demetrio*. They were artistically good and they gave audiences a sense of identification. Since the war *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, *The Man in the White Suit*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *The Cruel Sea*, *The Divided Heart*, and *The Lady Killers* were some of the ones I liked best.'

All these films have a quality of Englishness not often achieved by other British film makers. They have reflected back to the British something of their own nature and outlook. Sometimes they have formalized unconscious attitudes and have tended to make audiences a little complacent about themselves and their country. But in some there has been an attempt, particularly in the comedies, to inject, as Sir Michael puts it, 'a mild anarchy—a revolt against regimentation. They have sometimes symbolized the little man who wanted to kick his boss in the teeth.'

Sir Michael is ready to admit that in the 1950s Ealing films have not been as sharp or as pungent as creative work should be. 'They've had a slightly middle-class, old-school-tie approach—afraid of being critical of institutions.'

But even when over sixty Sir Michael is still, in 1958, awake to the danger of subsiding into comfortable formulae. When he read an article by Kenneth Tynan pointing out some of the weaknesses of British films, including those from Ealing, he at once got in touch with him and put him to work in the Ealing organization. According to Tynan Sir Michael has an astonishing receptivity to other people's ideas and is very modest about his own.

Ealing Films are now launched on a programme of social criticism. This is intended to put them in tune again with the mood of the day, as they were during the war. It was significant that *Next of Kin*, made at the Government's request as a propaganda film to warn the public of the dangers of loose talk, should have had so great a commercial success—it was perhaps the only time a government made a profit out of films. It succeeded because it hit accurately at a social problem. People were conscious

of need for security and the story was real enough to make them feel they were part of it.

Ealing Films are a little like a school with Sir Michael as headmaster and his secretary as matron. The presence of the headmaster is felt always. Everyone smartens up as he walks round. There's an instant anxiety to get busy and look busy. When he arrives on a set a chair is immediately whipped forward for him by a property man. Despite his quietness and shyness socially, on the job he is a decisive figure. He walks very fast with his head down through the studios. Suddenly he stops—shoots out a question then marches on again. One ex-Ealing Films employee said he gave her the impression of a 'fire-cracker—energetic, verbose, almost inclined to shout. But I adored him as a boss. And as a boss he is anything but shy. Unless there was something unpleasant to do—like sacking someone—then he delegates it.'

The creation of a film is almost a committee job. Frequently ideas come up from below. Sir Michael presides over the decisions on them. He finds that an original story thought of as a film subject from the start is the most rewarding. The task of the producer, once the story has been agreed and the writer is at work on the script, is to set up the organization to make the film. He must find the director best suited to the story and appoint an associate producer as his second in command for the production. Then there is the job of casting actors and selecting the cameraman, who must not only deal with the script visually but get along happily with the director. There must be an art director to design and build the sets, a costume designer and a cutter to edit the film as it is shot. All these have to be moulded into a team and a schedule worked out to fit the budget. Sir Michael's great gift is in giving their heads to those he chooses for the various tasks.

'I do not believe that a great film is ever made cynically. Enthusiasm is the essence of good morale. And the root of good morale is good leadership. In the film studio leadership must come from the producer.'

Sir Michael considers that art must be subordinate to the capacity to reach a wide audience. 'To put it crudely, the best

film-maker makes his film as artistic as he thinks the audience will take. Film-makers are usually accused of underestimating public taste. But what are the facts? Some time ago a Gallup Poll reached the conclusion that the best customer of the cinema is aged nineteen. There are many pictures in our Ealing record which would not have been successful if their only appeal had been to immature minds.'

While Sir Michael aims higher than that he is confined by the thought 'that no art has ever been so dependent on public approbation as films are'.

As the work on a film progresses Sir Michael sees his role as producer thus—'he does not interfere with the interpretative work of director and cast while it is going on; the wise producer never breathes down their necks. His usefulness is much greater if he stands well back and then gives an objective opinion and advice on each day's work when he sees it screened next day.'

So far, Balcon's main achievement has been in expressing British understatement and character. In doing it he has sometimes almost hopped over into burlesque. He has encouraged the British to be smugger than they might otherwise have been. He has added his weight to the cloying notion that the British sense of humour and the British character place them so much above others that they have not much to worry about. For a moment he lifted the level and sharpened the thrusts during the war. But in the immediate post-war years a blurring veil was placed again between the public and reality.

Sir Michael, despite his somewhat conventional outlook, is a Socialist by conviction. Evidently he has been having qualms about his own output, feeling no doubt that it tends to make audiences feel more comfortable than they have a right to be. With his approaches to such young men as Ken Tynan, Lindsay Anderson—who made a startlingly realistic film about the deaf and dumb—and John Osborne, there are signs that Ealing Films are about to embark on a more positive analysis of British society.

Assuming that Sir Michael has not lost his gift of popular appeal, what comes out of his studios in the next ten years may

be of more significance than all the films he has made in the past. Sir Michael is a craftsman, who has learned the technical side of his job completely. No film he is responsible for is ever jagged or marred by amateurishness. He cannot make a really bad film. He has a sense of creation and of social responsibility. He is cautious in deploying the latter but when he feels the times are suitable for combining messages about society with entertainment he produces remarkable results. Directly after the war, after the long period in which he had made purposeful war films, he relaxed into the type of film that could neither offend nor shake nor stir anyone. He came dangerously near to holding up a mirror of complacency to the nation. Sir Michael has it in him to depict reality, to stimulate, and to indicate to the British through films what they must do if they are to survive and thrive in the tough competitive world. I hope I am not wrong in thinking that he is preparing to embark on the task.

The cinema even in the TV age need not despair. The size of the screen, the atmosphere of the cinema itself, the superior photographic quality, enable a good film to make a greater impression on the audience than a television programme presented on television screens which can never, in small living-rooms, be much larger than they are at present. A television programme has the disadvantage of ephemerality. A cinema film can acquire accumulative impact persisting for months or years. Not only in the interests of Britain, but in its own, the film industry should stop trying to rival television with fleeting trivialities forgotten as soon as the exit doors are reached and drive much deeper into topics that really matter with films that engage the audience's attentions and emotions not merely while they are watching but long after they have emerged into fresh air.

9

Mr. Henry Moore

When we called on Henry Moore it was a September evening. The light was going slowly, hanging on to the day and to summer. He was not in the house. Mrs. Moore rang the extension to his studio. He was not there either.

'He must have gone for a walk. But he hardly ever does that,' she added.

We walked through the garden behind the house into a field which seemed to me to be about 200 yards across at its widest point and then began to converge like an apex of a triangle. Dotted across it were huge Henry Moore figures, a living part of the space they inhabited. If archaeologists had recently uncovered them in their places the field would have been a national monument. As it was, I kept visualizing an absurd Thurber cartoon in which a faded woman (which Mrs. Moore is not) is saying despairingly: 'My husband's hobby is sculpture. He will keep leaving the things about everywhere.'

Towards the top of the field on the right-hand side was a new studio. We looked inside while Mrs. Moore went into a clearing which had just been made in the woods to look for her husband. 'How neat and tidy it looks,' we said. (Later Henry Moore remarked that it was usually in a terrible mess. He had just had it tidied up because he could not get at some work he was trying to do.)

Then out of the shadows he came, a short man, walking briskly, sturdily. His face is honest, firm, decisive. It is lined and weathered like a countryman's from working out of doors. He

is not big. But he is tough and well made. An instantly likable man.

He took us back in the direction he had come from. The sides of the field were running closer and closer. There were more statues. In a circular glade at the end was the figure of a mother with a child.

'I am trying all these out in different places out of doors, to see what their best setting is. I want to see how things look in various lights and in different settings. You don't always have to have a lot of space around sculpture.' He demonstrated how the rounded figure of the mother and child fitted into the roundness of the trees and their shadows.

Many of the figures in the field and in the clearing beyond running beside the river bank were old plaster casts beginning to disintegrate. Some were bronzes ready to go off somewhere else, or not on exhibition at the time.

We went into the new studio. On the verandah there was a great plaster figure (a model for his UNESCO statue) with hoops of thin iron jutting out of it looking faintly like a gigantic hospital patient after an accident.

Henry Moore designed the studio and built it himself with the help of a builder. The great doors slide open to allow enormous pieces of material to be wheeled out so that he can work on them in the open air. As they are designed to be seen in the open, he believes they should be worked on in the open. The roof over the verandah lets him go on working however bad the weather. The physical effort of the work keeps him warm. Much warmer than the coldest times he can remember—when he was a student in Assisi and even had to wear his gloves to eat.

'How would you explain to a child what you were trying to do when you made that cross, and why the man on it doesn't really look like a man and why the cross isn't like a conventional cross?' I asked, pointing at a sculpture eleven feet high standing in a corner of the studio.

'I'd say that's meant to go outside. It's supposed to be first seen from a long way away. And from a distance you can see it's

a cross, and has the symbolic meaning of a cross. But it's a combination of a cross and a figure all in one. It's not supposed to be the whole figure. It's just supposed to be old and aged and worn, a rudimentary cross, as it were—as old as infinity.'

Then, flatteringly, he added for us what he wouldn't say to the child. 'There's meant to be in it a feeling of power—and a rising movement.' As he spoke one could almost sense the twisted figure on the cross pushing upwards.

'What about the holes?' we asked. He held his fist in the air and dropped it. 'First of all you see that fist and then you take the fist away and see the hole the fist made.'

That's partly how the holes in Henry Moore's sculptures have come. Space is at the centre of Henry Moore's thinking about sculpture. He once wrote:

'A piece of stone can have a hole through it and not be weakened if the hole is of a set size, shape and direction. On the principle of the arch it can remain just as strong. A hole made through a piece of stone is a revelation. The hole connects one side to the other making it immediately three-dimensional. A hole can itself have as much shape-meaning as a solid mass.'

When I asked him what he felt he had added to Art as a sculptor he replied that he thought that if he had added anything it had been the feeling of space. 'I have opened up the solid matrix by the use of cavities.'

A week later in Milan I asked Manzu, the Italian sculptor, the same question. He said that Moore had shown how to make form out of a thought.

In his large sculptures he has always thought out the main idea and vision of what he's going to do before he starts. Then the stone or whatever material he's working in may carry him away to do something slightly different. But the work is planned ahead. His materials excite him—pebbles or bones which resemble something else—like the bone he picked up in his studio which looked like a fist.

'But pebbles are inert. They may have a very satisfactory shape but there's no life in them. Always you have got to do something to give them life. Bones and shells, being organic in origin, have more life.'

Moore's ideas come from an accumulated observation of natural forms, mixed with his obsession for the human figure and with his knowledge of it. 'Looking at a figure that is sad or unhappy or ill, I understand the feeling of that figure by putting myself into its place. A sculptor's own body teaches him a lot. You should understand people through your body. From the way a person walks, how he holds himself, say, when feeling really well—a sculptor can learn the principle of buoyancy, of health.... The form vitality of a piece of sculpture can be thrown back on to a person who looks at it—in that way the energy in a work can be passed on to the observer.'

Until recently sculptors for centuries had given up the direct carving of their work. They simply made models in clay or plaster, and the models were copied by professional stone carvers to the size and in the material required. Even Rodin did no direct carving himself. The skill and craftsmanship required in working on the materials had been neglected. It is because Moore thinks the material is so important, and is almost a part of it, that he determined to do all his carving himself. His relationship thus becomes much closer to the material he's working in than that of a sculptor who merely makes a model.

When Moore's first exhibition appeared in 1931 he was a teacher at the Royal College of Art. The *Morning Post* apologized for publishing a photograph of one of the sculptures.

'Revolting as a representation of a woman.' 'Deformed. Aesthetically depraved.' 'All the canons of Art broken'—were among the phrases the art critic used.

'It is almost impossible to believe that it came from the hands of a man of normal mentality. It is deplorable that he should be paid by the nation to teach others to become teachers or professional sculptors. Frankly we think that Mr.

Moore's work is a menace from which students at the Royal College should be protected.'

The *Morning Post* is now dead and its memory will soon be gone. Mr. Moore is neither dead nor in danger of being forgotten.

'Did you mind those attacks at the time? Did they upset you?'

'I didn't like them. I might easily have lost my job and very nearly did. It would have been serious because I was earning no money from selling what I made.'

Now that Moore is far beyond the range of conventional onslaught it is hard to imagine how disturbed he must have felt suddenly exposed to it at the age of thirty-three. He had struggled all his life to make progress with only the money he could earn from scholarships and teaching. If the respectable people who controlled public institutions before the war had been swayed, as they might easily have been, by the *Morning Post* and similar attacks, everything that Henry Moore had worked for might have been jeopardized, or delayed.

The sculptures at Henry Moore's first exhibition could have been bought for a few pounds. Sir Michael Sadler did have the foresight to buy some which were sold for substantial sums after his death. But it was mainly other artists who recognized Moore's genius. Epstein and Augustus John immediately helped him and advised others to buy his work. For some time he sold mainly to other artists. £200 a year was about the total of his earnings from sales up to the war. The rest of his income came from teaching. It was during the war that he began to make a living as an artist, and then not so much from his sculpture but from his drawings (particularly his air-raid shelter drawings).

But even as one of the foremost, if not the foremost, sculptors in the world he does not make a fortune. Take a large bronze such as the 'King and Queen' or a standing figure—one of which seven and a half feet high stands magnificently perched on a rock overlooking the Scottish countryside near Dumfries. The current

price to the buyer would be about £3,000. The plaster and incidental costs might come to as much as £500 before casting. The actual casting costs around £1,000. The gallery conducting the sale would take approximately a third commission on the price. Left to the sculptor is £500 for a work which will always be regarded as a masterpiece and which may have taken him months to complete.

It is true that on the way he may have made little models of which there can be, perhaps, as many as nine copies selling at 100 guineas or so each. But even they are not all profit. He makes tiny models because the smaller the model the easier it is to see from every angle without having to stand back. 'You can be like a great god looking at this tiny little object from above, below and round every side, imagining it to be enormous.'

On the UNESCO project, that we found him working at, he had started off with a small bronze of a woman and child seated against an open wall, which would not have been practicable in stone. At first he thought it might be all right in bronze but then he turned against it because it could not be seen from all round. So he had to start again and made seven or eight further maquettes before deciding on the idea for the final statue. This statue had then got to the stage of having marble cut for it in Italy, and having corners sawn off in great chunks at different angles, leaving him several inches away from the final shape to work on. He would still have to toil at it for months but some of the labour of chopping off enormous blocks—which would have taken several more months—had been saved.

One of the things that Henry Moore hopes and feels that he has done for English sculpture is to help give it a new status. Henry Moore is admired as an outstanding sculptor all over the world. No major exhibition anywhere is mounted without some of his work being on it.

Some of the barriers against sculptors in Britain are now down. The Arts Council today actually give advances to young sculptors so that they can have their casting done. There is a group of young sculptors coming on who, before Henry Moore,

might never have had a chance at all. Today in some London galleries there are nearly as many sculptors on the books as painters. Henry Moore has made people believe that the English can be as good sculptors as anyone else.

He told us he depended a great deal on his wife's judgment. 'She gives me knocks every now and again and says: "No, that's not good, start again"—I really need that.'

Once they lived above a studio he worked in. His wife could always hear the noise of his working underneath. Whenever the tap-tap-tap ceased she would call out: 'What are you doing?' He would answer guiltily: 'Thinking.' She disliked that because she thought it meant he had stopped working. So sometimes when he didn't feel like work he would bang on a piece of material to give the illusion that he was working hard at it.

It is Mrs. Moore who gives the garden at Much Hadham in Hertfordshire its beautifully kept appearance. In the house his works are everywhere. It is a modernized old rambling house with new large windows. The furniture is a mixture of simple good modern furniture and old—mostly basic English oak. It is very shiny and clean—a little like his sculptures standing on it—and very solid like Henry Moore himself.

To him artists are the people who matter most in the world. 'Without them we should lose our awareness, lose some sense of the purpose in life. For many people there is nothing when they stop work at the end of the day, except television. But even looking at television is a kind of search, for people to get something out of other people's minds—all art is obviously that, too. . . . The important thing for an artist to do is to add something to experience, to make an extension in his art.' Henry Moore has added the feeling of space, he has made it mean something. Brancusi, he told us, added the egg. He proved after many years how beautiful an egg is. Other considerable artists have each made their addition revealing something, pointing out a beauty of which we had been unaware.

Henry Moore matures all the time. His is not a flash of genius which sparks off a few glittering works and then fades through

a failure to stay the course. He is founded on work, study and application.

His father was a miner and Moore was the youngest of seven children, most of whom became teachers. His father wanted him to do the same. At first he agreed. But then came the Great War. He left a teaching job at his old elementary school when he was eighteen and joined up. He was gassed at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. By March the next year he had been promoted to lance-corporal as a P.T. and bayonet instructor. In February 1919 he was demobilized and thought he was old enough to decide for himself what he should do. He got an ex-serviceman's grant which took him to the Leeds School of Art in 1919. In 1921 he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art to come to London and the British Museum. To him the British Museum's collection of antique and primitive sculpture was a revelation and remains one of the streams of his inspiration.

He had to become a teacher—his father won that point—but he was an art teacher and still learning.

'I always wanted to be a sculptor. At the beginning of my training I worked for many years from the life model—and if I had been told then that I could only be a portraitist, I would have been quite happy.' As it is he has moved steadily forward in the field that suits him best.

Talking of building his studio in the field (he has another by the house), he said: 'There's a great pleasure to be got doing cement and concrete work. It's a job you can complete and finish without heart-aches. It's got no international standard of comparison. No one comes along to say, "That's not as good as a Michael Angelo floor."'

Henry Moore works and works hard. He lives simply, having his main meal in the middle of the day and a light supper or a high tea. He doesn't drink much.

The keynote to Henry Moore is direct simplicity. He has the gift of the really great man of going straight to the essentials without frills. Some artists, of a far lower standard, are too grand to try to explain in comprehensible terms what they're doing.

They erect a barrier of high-sounding terms to make themselves sound more imposing and to conceal the fact that there is nothing imposing to be concealed.

Henry Moore is honest in conversation and in approach to his work. He has grown out of the English earth and has patiently constructed beautiful objects from it. He is rooted on the ground and never seeks to escape his relation to it. As he showed us photographs of the splendid siting by the owner, Mr. W. J. Keswick, of some of his sculptures in wild landscape near Dumfries his excitement mounted. He was enormously thrilled to see that someone had appreciated the right setting for his work.

One reason why he is anxious to help younger sculptors—and he has done so tremendously—is because he had all his early encouragement from other artists. In success he does not forget gratitude. He has given English sculptors self-confidence and the means to use their abilities. He has impressed on America and the Continent that England can produce great sculptors. And he has done something else. He has proved that genius need not die with youth and that decadence need not overcome the ancient vitality of Britain. He is in the tradition of the great artists whose work grows still better until they die.

10

Mr. John Osborne

'WHY did you choose me to write about?' asked John Osborne. 'Wouldn't somebody like Kingsley Amis have been better?'

I chose John Osborne because his play *Look Back in Anger* has evoked such a remarkable response. About nothing in particular except the frustrated irritation of its hero who is unable to adjust himself to the world or allow anyone near him to live in it peaceably, it nevertheless has validity. Jimmy Porter is a real person with real discontents. Every generation in its adolescence is discontented. There would be no life if it were not. But of England this is more true than of most other countries. Since the 1914–18 War each university and public school educated generation has suffered from nostalgia and grievance. There is a feeling that life was jollier, fuller, and more exciting for people of their age in the past and the conviction that in the future they will be victims of bungling by the old men in charge of the nation. Wars, the fear of war, and injustices, are seen as the fault of inefficient politicians, and of parents and grandparents who failed to insist that the world should be a better place.

Until recently this mood was almost entirely confined to the middle and upper classes. The Welfare State has changed that in two ways. Now around three-quarters of Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates are state assisted instead of the 20 per cent before the war. The opening up of the grammar schools and universities to those without money has meant that attitudes which once belonged to a minority group are today possessed far more

widely. The other effect of the Welfare State has been to spread disillusion deeper. The young idealists from comfortable backgrounds are deeply disappointed that they find England drab and not enlivening. The less well off have lost many of the personal sufferings which previously they could have fought to remove and are left with a vague dissatisfaction. There is an even greater sense of let-down than usual among youth and it affects far more.

John Osborne is a Socialist by temperament but he is furious with the Labour Party because he feels that it has not made people think beyond material values—that it just works for more money for everyone. 'If that's all that the Labour Party stands for why don't they tell us: then we'd know where we were,' he said to me.

A recent survey taken by a Cambridge undergraduate journal showed that nearly three out of ten undergraduates were thinking of leaving England. A more scientifically conducted Gallup Poll of the whole nation in February 1957 revealed that four out of ten people would emigrate if they had the chance. Never has there been so much lack of confidence in the future of Britain and it is reflected all the way through the country in the six million people between the ages of twenty and thirty.

John Osborne may not be exactly typical of his generation—no one is—but he certainly speaks for a large number. After *Look Back in Anger* had been seen on television by over four million people the audiences which were already large at the Royal Court Theatre became overflowing. He has something to say which must be understood if the course of Britain is to be plotted accurately.

Kingsley Amis writes amusingly. He is a new-style Evelyn Waugh and built on much the same trivial but pleasing model. Erroneously he has been described as an angry young man. He is not angry about anything. He is a drifter aimlessly catching humour as it passes.

Colin Wilson, another 'angry young man', had an astonishing commercial success with *The Outsider*. The only explanation is that, anxious to be told something, readers were prepared to

believe they had got it when a doctrine was confidently presented to them in the shape of an undergraduate-style thesis linked with copious quotations. The upshot of it all was, apparently, that Mr. Wilson wanted someone to supply him with a new religion as an escape hatch out of life into dreamland.

As the hero of a novel, he selected Jack the Ripper as the biggest outsider of all. The hero of *Look Back in Anger* he describes as a pseudo-outsider 'who doesn't possess the strength of mind to create anything—all he does is to brew tea and read papers'. It is not clear what creative function Mr. Wilson believes that Jack the Ripper performed. I cannot think that Mr. Wilson, who informed the Royal Court Theatre that he proposed to use it as his platform for a period of four years—although he had not yet written a play—is representative of anything but absurdity. He maintains a lofty view of John Osborne, remarking that he takes a bit of life and looks at it through a microscope. 'Hopkins and I are going to examine everything with a telescope.' Mr. Hopkins is an author friend of Mr. Wilson's.

Hard work and love of life are John Osborne's theme. He wrote five plays before *Look Back in Anger* which he never expected to be produced at all. He went to what he calls a cheap boarding school in Devon which he was thrown out of when he was seventeen. For nearly a year he worked as a journalist on trade papers in Fleet Street, making the tea and doing odd jobs. He wrote his first play when he was eighteen. It was produced at Huddersfield. At about the same time he started being an actor. Even after his success as a playwright he will not leave the stage. 'I just like being with actors.'

After his first play had been produced at Huddersfield it was five years before another of his plays was acted—this time in Harrogate. But Osborne was never discouraged. He wrote on and on reflecting life as it hit him. His chief difficulty as a playwright, he tells me, is finding the right language to communicate with everyone and not merely one section. In America, which is still absorbing elements from all over Europe and is still not a settled society, playwrights do not have this problem. The

language of Tennessee Williams gets across to everyone despite its particular Southern setting. 'Here is the age,' says John Osborne, 'in which there are the greatest possibilities of communicating with ordinary people and yet they're not being told anything.' What he is trying to do is to find a common denominator which gets through to every class.

In his anxiety to explain what he's getting at his sentences are sometimes mixed up and incoherent with constant breaks. 'I'm afraid I'm not being very articulate,' he will interrupt himself to say. He was born on December 12th, 1929. He is tall and almost a little gangling, with a long face. From sheer modesty he blushes frequently and the day I first met him he was a trifle nervous.

'I can't tell you the answer about cement or sugar,' he said. 'I'm trying to do something about qualitative values which all seem to be lacking at the moment. Ordinary working people have got no ethics. I can't provide a programme. I'm searching. I feel that something can be done—something we can do. We must find some new symbols. Even in America they've got James Dean and Marlon Brando who make a sort of mythology. But you can't go into a dance-hall where they're doing rock-'n'-roll and tap a chap on the chest and say: "Jesus Christ died for you." He'd just say: "So what?" The greatest symbol in Britain today is the picture of the Queen over the saloon bar. Surely we ought to have something better than that?'

John Osborne is really hitting out at the complacency of Britain. He and his generation feel that we are weighed down by self-satisfaction and the past. He wants to reveal why people like Jimmy Porter are hopelessly unable to use their talent, why their life is a dreary round of bitter Sundays spent wading through the newspapers and weekly magazines, why they are contemptuous of the Anglo-Indian pukka sahib ideal, why they are caught with no ethical values with which to face the world and enjoy it. Many critics have made the mistake of identifying the whining hero of *Look Back in Anger*, with his flashes of brilliant diagnosis, as John Osborne. They imagine wrongly that he, who is merely trying to express the feelings of people and his feelings

about them, has a chip on his shoulder. It is not he who is maladjusted, he complains, but often those who interview him.

'Journalists come and see you,' he said, 'and actually look at your shoulder and say, "Have you got a chip on it?" And you can see the chip on their shoulder practically preventing them from getting through the door. Particularly the Beaverbrook ones—who are really quite Left wing or say they are—and are very cynical about what they're doing. They ask you if you're not being corrupted by money. But isn't what they're doing corruption?'

There is a simple-minded theory that Osborne's financial success will make him so contented that he will cease to write about the things which previously moved him. Of course, having money is different from having none. 'I can pay the rent now. It's very difficult to think if you have no money. Now I can go into a bookshop and buy a book if I want it instead of having to wait weeks in a library queue.'

With money, or with security, there is an obvious change in the mental background in which the writer works but not necessarily in what he writes about. Osborne, whose life centres in the theatre, could never afford to sit anywhere but in the gallery before. As he rightly says, it is almost impossible to enjoy anything from there. Today he knows that someone will be interested in what he writes. Before, he was writing in a vacuum and only in moments of wildest optimism thinking that anything he wrote would be seen by a large public. Having somewhere to write comfortably and feeling that your days of labour are not wasted improves a writer if he is not lazy—and John Osborne is exceptionally hardworking. I do not believe that fame will make any alteration to Osborne's direction.

'I believe in conflict for its own sake. I believe in shattering the terrible smugness and inertia into which this country has sunk. I'd rather have a terrible row going on. . . .' Osborne is trying to stir things up. It is all the better for his purpose if conventions are outraged in the process.

When Sir Laurence Olivier went to see the play *Look Back in*

Anger he was infuriated. It seemed nonsense to him. He was angry with Mr. George Devine of the Royal Court for having inveigled him there. That was early on in the play's run which began on the 8th May, 1956. After the play had become a success Sir Laurence returned to the Royal Court to see *Look Back in Anger* again. At that time the play was in a repertory season. Sir Laurence bought his ticket at the box office and found that the play he was seeing was *Cards of Identity* in which John Osborne was playing one of the parts. But he had come to apologize for his first outburst of annoyance at *Look Back in Anger*. Not discouraged by seeing the wrong play, he sought out John Osborne to tell him he had made a mistake. Sir Laurence by then was anxious to be in a play by Osborne—such is the effect of success on the critical judgment. And in *The Entertainer* Sir Laurence found one of his best vehicles for displaying his many-sided talents.

What has John Osborne got? He has a gentle charm which infuses his tentative gropings to express himself as he talks. He is the opposite of an outsider, he is not detached from but is a part of life and likes it. He has a tender compassion for humanity—he is as aware of Jimmy Porter's tiresome faults as the audience but he cannot help feeling for him. He does not arrogantly believe that he can solve the problems of England or of his generation. He is probably not even consciously trying to portray them although that may be the effect of his writing. He has a gift for startlingly vivid dialogue born of close and patient observation. He is not condescending to his characters but anxious to be on the same level with them. Osborne wants to communicate with everyone, not merely with the middle classes who are the bulk of the theatre-going public. Jimmy Porter is significantly not of any class at all—he is in the twilight of Welfare State classlessness. Porter drifted unintentionally into running a sweet shop; educated better than his parents he is at odds with a world he cannot comprehend.

Above all John Osborne wants to do something about life. He protests that he cannot provide a programme with ten points neatly tabulated on the back of a postcard. But he can, as an artist, describe what is going on and kick up a row about it.

'I'm a born trouble-maker. I love being in the middle of trouble. I enjoy it.' He is proud that in *Look Back in Anger* he found language that got through to the stage-hands and the doorkeeper, even though it took longer finding its way into the heads of the more sophisticated theatre audiences. He will go on writing, and searching, as a professional. As he matures his approach will doubtless become rounder and smoother. That will be an improvement—not a diminution of talent brought about by success. I would recommend every politician who wants to comprehend the mood of Britain's younger generation to see every one of John Osborne's plays.

Despite the apparent bitterness, and lack of blueprints for the future, in his work John Osborne is not a defeatist. He is trying to reactivate old symbols and find new ones. He is aiming at a set of modern ethics to which people can hang on to give them something to believe in beyond the immediate struggle for material existence—a problem which has largely been removed by the arrival of the Welfare State.

And those who may have been distressed by the sorry figure cut by the Anglo-Indian father of the heroine in *Look Back in Anger*—so painfully inadequate to deal with the new position England finds herself in now that her Empire has gone and utterly unable to make contact with his children—may be consoled by this. John Osborne does not want to emigrate. For him Britain is still the best country.

'When one's abroad it's all very exciting and different and you can drink any time you like and so on—it's very nice. But when you come back to England and the Customs man says: "Have you anything to declare, sir?" you know you're back in England and the Queen's on the throne and everything is all right.'

II

Sir Eric James

GOING bald on top, narrow sharp face, pipe in mouth, quick to speak and to laugh, enthusiastic. That is Sir Eric James, appointed High Master of Manchester Grammar School in 1945 at the age of thirty-six after twelve years as an assistant master at Winchester.

He is a passionate believer and propagandist. He believes in equality of opportunity for its own sake and because Britain in her straitened circumstances needs to develop to the full every scrap of intelligence in her young if she is to survive. Some public schools—twenty to thirty out of the hundred and fifty or so establishments which call themselves public schools—provide excellent education. The better public schools apart, Sir Eric believes that the proper vehicle for making sure that boys from every strata of society can rise to the top, using their talents to the best advantage for themselves and the nation, is the good grammar school, such as Manchester Grammar School.

Like most enthusiasts Sir Eric is a bit of a crank. He supports higher education for women. He does not seem to value it for any practical purpose but because he thinks sixth-form girls make better wives and mothers as a result of the standards of taste they have achieved in their last years at school. 'I am standing,' he once said, 'in a pair of socks that have been darned not once but many times by a woman who went to Oxford and studied the classics. I feel that they are darned better because of it.'

And he hates the idea of using television for school education purposes. 'A television set for looking and listening to the BBC and still more for looking at commercial television would enter

Manchester Grammar School over my dead body.' When I suggested that it might be possible to work out an idea for doing a television programme of Manchester Grammar School he was very alarmed. 'Not commercial, I hope,' he said in an anguished voice. 'They're the devil.' Like many critics of television he does not possess a television set. And he discourages the parents of his boys from getting television sets—which must be a pretty uphill task. 'If you are really interested in education,' he said, 'sell your television set and buy a Plato.' It seems improbable to him that any education good for the intelligent child can come out of this new-fangled invention, the enemy of reading and of thought.

It is strange to find him so old-fashioned in this matter. He was the first High Master of Manchester Grammar School to have been educated as a scientist and to have done scientific research. In every other way he belongs very much to his times. And he is sharply aware of the need for the British educational system to switch more of its emphasis from the classics and the humanities to science.

In Russia today everyone capable of receiving a scientific education gets one. This is the process which at the end of twenty-five years has resulted in the technical capacity to send sputniks round the world. Every year the Russians turn out twenty times more applied scientists than we do, yet their population is only four and a half times as great. They have over two hundred and fifty thousand qualified science teachers against our less than twenty thousand. If we do not act soon to remedy the disparity the time may not be far distant when we fail to keep our export markets because a relative shortage of scientists in industry will make us unable to compete with Russia, Germany and America.

Yet in Britain prejudice is still too much against scientific education. The public schools and the great universities cannot tear themselves away sufficiently from the old system. In Britain it is still considered to be not quite gentlemanly to be a scientist or engineer. Oxford and Cambridge, by implication, say so. All Souls College, Oxford, is a rich and ancient establishment designed to advance learning and research. Not one of its many

Fellows had ever been appointed to research into a scientific subject by the time the first sputnik flew. In the Civil Service, after a certain grade has been reached the non-scientific civil servant is actually paid more then his scientific equivalent!

It is owing to the foresight of men like Sir Eric James that the position is not worse. At Manchester Grammar School for 64 per cent of the boys in the sixth forms the main subjects are scientific. Sir Eric is anxious to see the number rise until only a quarter or one-third are on non-scientific subjects. In some other grammar schools the number of sixth formers on scientific subjects is around 60 per cent. But it is still only 50 per cent in the public schools.

So if you go to Manchester Grammar School you are encouraged to do science. What other advantages does life under Sir Eric provide? Half the places are free. The other half go to boys who have won a place through merit and whose fees are graduated according to their parents' income. The state makes a *per capita* grant enabling the fees to be so adjusted that no boy who could profit from the education is kept out because his parents cannot afford it.

It is a large school with over thirteen hundred boys. As these are drawn from a wide area around Manchester the intellectual standard is exceptionally high. Manchester Grammar School claims to win more scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge than any other school in Britain. It does this despite the fact that at Eton there is one master for every twelve boys while at Manchester Grammar School they cannot afford to provide more than one to every eighteen (the masters' salaries at Eton are much higher). An illustration of how good the academic training is at Manchester Grammar School is the fact that out of all the scholarship awards at Oxford and Cambridge over half are won by boys from public schools although there are six times as many potential entrants for the same examinations from the grammar schools. Consequently it is quite remarkable that Manchester Grammar School should have the best scholarship record in the country. It is at least partly due to Sir Eric.

To him the mere act of teaching is in itself fascinating. He finds it a satisfactory experience to teach something to somebody. He has a genuine educational vocation. Although an advocate of more science he is insistent that even the scientists should have a wide cultural background. He himself takes two periods in organic chemistry every week, 'Just to show I can.' He also does some non-science work with various sixth forms—Plato's *Republic* and the history of Christianity. That is the extent of the direct teaching he does. Apart from this teaching he sees his job as High Master like this: Looking after and encouraging the staff; meeting the prefects and some of the top boys; seeing the parents.

'I would rather be the headmaster of a grammar school than a public school. I've got every sort of boy from the sons of mill workers to the sons of company directors.'

Sir Eric is a man of great understanding and sympathy. He is also dedicated to the task of improving education. What excites him about Manchester Grammar School is that he is making possible the best education in the world to clever boys irrespective of their backgrounds.

'Our national well-being depends on a minority of unusually gifted individuals. The crux of the problem is the clever child.'

So at one and the same time he hopes he is providing egalitarianism, since class barriers do not impinge on his school, and enlightened leaders of democracy. In a letter to *The Times* he wrote once that the

> 'function of the grammar schools in the community is vital. . . . It is not generally realized how high the level of work is in many of these schools or how necessary is the maintenance of that standard by encouraging men to remain in them who possess not only teaching ability but intellectual distinction. . . . The grammar schools have a dual responsibility . . . as the source for the recruitment of administrators, scientists and teachers upon whom alone our hopes of social progress can be soundly based. . . . They also have a duty of cultural leader-

ship without which the growth of leisure and the development of a more broadly based culture may simply lead to a specialization without any true standards of value. In the last fifty years the grammar schools have fought to extend to all classes the chance to meet these responsibilities. Much success has been achieved in this task of true equalitarianism. Our aim should be to reward equality in education wherever it is found.'

Sir Eric is vehemently opposed to the comprehensive schools in so far as their inception threatens the existence of grammar schools. The idea of the comprehensive school is to do away with the much disliked eleven-plus examination by which children, at the age of eleven, are divided into three streams —grammar school, secondary modern school and technical school. Many parents correctly feel that a social stigma arises from failure to get to a grammar school and that if one child achieves a grammar school and another is shunted into a secondary modern school a bad atmosphere is created in the family. It is also argued against the grammar school that it is a system of segregation which creats an élite unhealthy both for the children and for society.

Some who think this way favour the comprehensive school aimed at replacing all other schools (with the temporary exception of fee-paying public schools) by this one type of school only. In every school would be gathered together around two thousand children. The theory is that putting all children in an area into the same school makes it easier for late developers to get the education equivalent to their increasing abilities than it would if they had been stuck into a secondary modern school—and encourages staying on beyond the compulsory fifteen years of age. The example of the brighter children is an incentive to the not-so-bright. The better facilities and educational variants possible in a larger school provide an inducement for those who are at a dead end in a secondary modern school at fifteen to profit by continuing to absorb learning till sixteen, or seventeen or more.

What does Sir Eric say about comprehensive schools? 'They get the worst of both worlds with uncanny skill.' On the one hand, he asserts, the comprehensive school is so large that it loses much of the personal relationship between headmaster and teachers and pupils. On the other, he says, it furnishes too small a grammar school content to allow the brilliant to get all the help they need. Much of the onward thrust in the higher reaches, he claims, comes from the stimulus of competition with children of similar abilities. That cannot help but be missing to a large extent at a comprehensive school and the smaller the comprehensive school is the worse it is for the outstanding.

The problem can be stated this way. Since only a fairly small proportion of the population is fitted for sixth-form work, as the leading educationalists understand it, a comprehensive school must be very large indeed to provide a sixth form of reasonable size. If sixth forms are too small there will not be enough staff to go round nor will the great majority of the staff at huge schools have the academic qualifications to deal with intensive sixth-form work.

To quote Sir Eric: 'There are too few physics teachers to go round.' He means that if too many good ones were diverted to the comprehensive schools they would not have enough bright pupils to teach and they would teach from a higher level than necessary for many of the other children. So they would be wasted. Again the first year or so at some comprehensive schools is spent on a common curriculum. Sir Eric remarks that this entails the best children taking five years to get to the G.C.E. standard instead of four. 'The plain fact is,' said Sir Eric on one occasion, 'that if you have these comprehensive schools up the age of fifteen we know perfectly well that you cannot possibly provide the variety of curricula or the variety and speed of approach to the work that is demanded by the varied need of the child.'

At a good grammar school of, say, seven hundred pupils a sixth form can be created of a hundred and twenty. That allows of seven sub-divisions in the sixth form and further specialization even within this subdivision. The critics of the comprehensive

school, and Sir Eric is foremost among them, claim that this could not happen at a comprehensive school unless it were so vast, perhaps about four thousand, as to produce enough children with the requisite ability for proper sixth-form achievement. Nor is it only a matter of education.

'One of the most important things a headmaster has to do,' says Sir Eric, 'is to talk to the parents about their children. How can the head of a school two thousand strong find the time to deal with that number of parents? My school with thirteen hundred boys is too big.'

Sir Eric is not against the building of some comprehensive schools. What he is against is the destruction of existing schools that are doing effective work to make way for them. Indeed it is hard to see how, without an extensive system of state scholarships to boarding schools, children in many areas of the country are to get the education they deserve without comprehensive schools. For many children the journey to the nearest grammar school is impossible. About one in four of the children aged thirteen in England and Wales go to grammar or technical schools but the number varies erratically from area to area. In Norfolk it is less than one in six. In Northumberland it is one in seven. In Rutland it is less than one in ten. You have to be born in the right area to be able to go to a grammar school. And even then the quality differs immensely according to the district. In Merionethshire seven out of ten children go to grammar schools but the education they receive is unrecognizable as grammar-school education. If we are not going to waste ability through allowing its training to be a matter of chance we will have to build many more comprehensive schools.

Certainly experience of comprehensive schools so far is more encouraging than the pessimists feared. Mayfield Girls' Comprehensive School at Putney was built around, and is an extension of, an existing grammar school. The headmistress of the comprehensive school was also the headmistress of the grammar school.

'I was very worried,' she told me, 'that standards might go down. In fact they haven't. If anything they are slightly up.'

And the headmaster of Tulse Hill Comprehensive School, who was previously acting High Master at Dulwich, a public school, finds that standards are remarkably high. The great justification of the comprehensive school is that in 1958 80 per cent of the children at them were staying on voluntarily past the age of fifteen, compared with 20 per cent in the secondary modern schools. London, with twenty-one comprehensive schools in 1958, had 12 per cent more children than the national average staying on at school past fifteen. Academic standards do not appear to be suffering for the brighter children and have definitely risen considerably for the others. The comprehensive school is the great hope of removing from the child who fails the eleven-plus the dreary prospect of receiving, through no fault of the teachers, who are harassed by over-crowded classes and bad conditions, an inferior secondary education ending at the far too early age of fifteen at the secondary modern school.

Sir Eric is not against public schools. (He is against closing down any school.) His own son is at Winchester where he was previously an assistant master. He shares the view that there should be a widening of entrance to them, 'the main criterion should be ability.'

I asked Sir Eric what he thought the nation's programme for education ought to be. 'The main things to be done are unspectacular, involving the constant spending of more money. There are still hundreds of unreorganized schools in which children remain from the age of five to fifteen. There are still hundreds of slum schools. Every class in every primary school needs to come down in numbers. (Half the classes in the primary schools of the country in 1958 still have more than forty pupils.) Fundamentally we mean by education that any child should be able to get power. They should all have the same chance to control the conditions of life.'

Clearly this cannot be done so long as thousands of children are held back at the outset by being put into overcrowded classes in appalling buildings that ought long ago to have been demolished. Sir Eric remains convinced that the school-leaving

age ought to be raised to sixteen and that the county colleges envisaged in the 1944 Act ought speedily to be established, making one-day-a-week after-school education compulsory until eighteen.

But above all he is the advocate of the grammar school. And he fears that it is becoming harder to get the right sort of teachers for them. The Burnham scales have largely swept away the differentials. Potential teachers of the high quality needed are drifting into other occupations. He would like to see two differentials—one which would give grammar-school teachers substantially more than the non-grammar-school teachers, and the other which would perhaps give scientific teachers more. Nothing will shake him in thinking that the grammar school, with its emphasis on selection by merit, is the key to survival. Selection in the past was based on ability to pay. In a grammar school it is based on ability to learn. Disappointment to parents is inevitable when a child has not the intelligence to become a doctor or a scientist. But that is the price of equality of opportunity. Nor is Sir Eric dismayed by the eleven-plus examination.

He once wrote:

> 'There is no doubt whatever that exceptionally able children could be picked out at the age of eleven or earlier . . . the content of their education must be highly verbal and they must be taught by teachers of great intellectual ability. Two-thirds of the teachers in the country would never even begin to understand the work these children are capable of doing. They must have a generous staffing ratio. I am not much troubled by fear of over-specialization. More frustration is caused to the very able child by pursuit of a general education than by specialization. Give them a broad general education up to G.C.E. and then give them their head.'

Sir Eric is a remarkable man. At a time when the trend was moving heavily towards the extinction of grammar schools and their replacement by comprehensive schools his was the voice raised most loudly and most persuasively in defence of the

grammar school. It is largely because of him that the most ardent advocates of the comprehensive school are beginning to draw back a little. There are not so many now who wish to abolish grammar schools. Instead a compromise is being worked out by which it is likely that comprehensive schools will live side by side with the best grammar schools, providing an alternative means of education.

Once Sir Eric was sympathetic to the Labour Party. Now, over education he has lost that sympathy because he feels many in the party do not agree with him that it is in the grammar schools that the Socialist idea of equality of opportunity is being given its fullest expression. He despaired at the Labour Party's initial wholesale championing of the comprehensive school. He saw it as a fearful levelling down instead of the chance for all to rise according to their talents. But he does not really need a political party because he is a one-man political party on education himself. Ministers of Education, and educational experts in the political parties, are all obliged, because he is both practical and persistent, to listen to his views. He has never missed an opportunity to press his theories on anyone who might have the slightest influence on educational decisions. And he never will.

Sir Eric is probably wrong about comprehensive schools. I think his hostility to them is overdone. Without knocking away grammar schools like Manchester and Watford they are the only way of raising the level of education for the great mass of children and are the surest road to early extension of the school leaving age. But Sir Eric cannot be wrong about the importance of scientific education and of developing to the maximum every scrap of talent a child may have. His place in English and British life is that he has always stressed the value of the exceptional person in an age when attention to the needs of the average man has sometimes come near to submerging the outstanding. Through the efforts of him and his like the prospects have been made brighter that Britain will get the full services, because their education has been highly cultivated, of the top 5 per cent on whom an imaginative and creative flourishing nation depends.

Mr. W. J. Carron

THERE are more than three thousand pages in every edition of *Who's Who*. Over twenty-six thousand people are considered important enough to be included. Yet out of this vast horde of the distinguished and pompously undistinguished there is reference to only a tiny handful of trade union leaders and officials. Dear, slow, traditional old England living by the concepts of the past, unaware of the revolution in her midst. Nonentities are respected by the yard. Thousands who matter, and on whose decisions the continued existence of the nonentities depends, are ignored.

Looking through my copy of *Who's Who*—admittedly it is an old one published in 1954—I could find no mention of Mr. W. J. Carron. Today he is the President of the A.E.U. But by 1950 he was already forty-seven, and in that year he won a vital trade union election. In division number five of the Amalgamated Engineering Union he defeated a powerful Communist-backed candidate for a seat on the National Executive Council of the A.E.U. To compete he left his comfortable job as a local union official in Lincoln and gambled his livelihood. He did it reluctantly under pressure from friends who thought he was the only man well enough known in the area to be able to defeat the Communist nominee. 'I had no ambition to leave Lincoln at all,' he once told me. 'I was quite happy there.'

If Mr. Carron had not won that election the executive council of seven would have consisted of three Communist Party controlled members, three non-Communists and one who inclined to support the Communists. The President of the A.E.U.

has only a chairman's casting vote in the event of a tie. So Mr. Carron's defeat in 1950 would have put the union virtually under Communist control. The A.E.U., the second largest union, has nearly a million members. They are the major part of our engineering industry. Under Communist control the A.E.U. could be directed towards sabotaging exports and production. It would be a splendid instrument to further Moscow's ambition to make the West collapse internally.

Mr. Carron repeated his triumph in 1953 when he again defeated the same Communist-backed candidate, despite the fact that he was firmly entrenched locally as Secretary of the Communist-dominated A.E.U. District Committee in Sheffield. This time it was an even tougher battle as a large number of votes in Sheffield were cooked by the Communists and were only disqualified as a result of the vigilance of non-Communist officials at the headquarters of the A.E.U.

In 1956 Mr. Carron took another chance. He stood down from the executive council in order to run for the union Presidency. In the first ballot a Communist topped the poll but did not get a clear majority over the other two candidates, of whom Carron was in the lead. The second ballot therefore was between Carron and the Communist. The Communists were hopeful of winning the Presidency, and felt certain of winning division number five now that Carron was no longer a candidate. Once again in 1956 a win in division number five would have given them control of the Executive Council of the A.E.U. If they could score the Presidency as well their grip would have been that much tighter.

They had high hopes of giving the screw another twist in the latter part of 1956 when the post of General Secretary was due to be contested. The General Secretary of the A.E.U. has no vote on the executive council but he has the power to discharge and replace the staff at headquarters; and he is in sole charge of the material that goes into the union journal. So the General Secretaryship would have rounded off the total victory the Communists hoped for in 1956. As candidate for the General Secretaryship

they had Mr. Scott, a well-known and able Communist who stood down from his position on the executive council, on which he represented division number seven, to compete for the post.

But largely through Mr. Carron and the help he got from a few determined and courageous Labour Party supporters all these Communist plans were frustrated. On the second ballot for the Presidency the Communist candidate got thirty-five thousand votes; but Carron had the record vote of nearly eighty-four thousand. The Communist-supported candidate for division number five was defeated. The Communist candidate for the General Secretaryship came third in the first poll.

Mr. Carron had saved his union from Communist domination: he had done more than that. He had saved British industry from falling under the sway of the Communist Party which, defeated at General Elections, seeks every course to get power by the back door. And Mr. Carron had ensured as well that the great block vote of the A.E.U. could not be used by the Communist Party at Labour Party Conferences to impose on the Labour Party a Communist and not a democratic Socialist policy.

Since 1953 Carron has had to face violent and persistent campaigns of abuse directed at him by the Communists. No one who has not suffered from these campaigns can realize how vicious and disagreeable they are. The aim is to smear the victim in every conceivable way politically and personally. Carron, a stout defender of the workers, has been pilloried as a tool of the capitalists, an enemy of the working classes, an agent of the Vatican (he is a Roman Catholic), a traitor, and everything else in the wide Communist vocabulary. He has stood up and fought back although, as he has said: 'I have got to admit I was sometimes sick with anxiety.'

Nor are his troubles over now. Building on the apathy of 90 per cent of the union members the Communists infiltrate, with their fellow-travellers, everywhere. They never miss a chance of making things difficult for their elected leadership. Trade unionists today have a far fuller life than their struggling predecessors had when they founded the trade unions. A higher

standard of living, television, cinema, and all the appurtenances of economic advance have dulled the enthusiasm of the ordinary trade unionist for his branch meetings. The proceedings are boring, and when there is comparatively little unemployment and no industrial dispute they often seem irrelevant and unimportant. The rank-and-file member is content to leave things to someone else. He cannot even be bothered to vote in his union elections and sometimes it is hard to blame him. In the A.E.U., for instance, national offices, and many others, have to be voted upon every three years, making for an astonishing prolification of elections which the ordinary member cannot keep track of. Nor, as a rule, is he willing to take on the tiresome unpaid jobs of Branch Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman, Shop Steward, and so on. But the Communists and their fellow-travellers, keen to capture power in the A.E.U., are always willing to do the donkey work. They regularly attend the meetings and, by default, are often elected to minor, but in the aggregate very important, positions. Another factor leading to the non-attendance of the ordinary member to his branch meetings is that he is driven away by the rantings of the Communists who sneer at anyone not endorsing extreme opinions as non-militant, non-progressive backsliders. The Communists also drag out the business at branch meetings so that non-Communists eventually leave in sheer weariness: votes are taken when they are gone. Lack of leadership at the lower levels prevents effective answers being given to the Communist jeers. The quiet man who does not like the disagreeable atmosphere learns to stay away.

So although the rise of Communism has been checked in the A.E.U., under the leadership of Mr. Carron, it can only be kept under by the unremitting work of the handful of devoted Labour Party supporters. All but a few of the A.E.U. members are anti-Communist—just as the country is. (The Communist Party membership sank after Hungary from over 33,000 members to just over 20,000 in early 1958.) But this frenzied group is assiduous in its attacks on the trade unions at their weakest point—the apathy of the members. A few thousand strategically placed

Communists, aided by fellow-travellers and dupes, could capture the A.E.U. as they captured the Electrical Trades Union. Many issues at Labour Party Conferences are decided by less than a million votes. The switching of the A.E.U. block vote from the side of reason at Labour Party Conferences to a straight support of Communistic policies could profoundly affect not only the Labour Party but the whole country. Yet heroes like Mr. Carron and his little band of like-minded and similarly hardworking supporters remain unsung, although they are one of the major bulwarks of our democracy.

Carron first became a union official when he was elected an unpaid Branch Secretary in 1932. In 1945 he was elected a local full-time official. His experience is long. He has been forced to use much of his time in combating the Communists but he is far from being a negative trade union leader. Obviously he accepts all the traditional functions of trade unionism—the achievement of higher wages and better conditions for members, and the obtaining of these by weight of influence on employers and on governments. But he looks further ahead than that. He wants unions increasingly to make and keep industry efficient. There are remarkably few restrictive practices in the A.E.U. Carron is glad to see the higher standards pressed on employers resulting in the installation of new plant and equipment designed to get greater output. In that respect he follows the model of American unions which continually force reorganization and modernization of factories to enable employers to pay higher wages and at the same time produce greater and cheaper quantities of goods. He is an advocate of the trade unions educating their members in the problems of management so that they have an understanding of the difficulties and potentialities of the industry in which they work. At the moment, the trade unionist makes his annual pilgrimage to demand higher wages because of the continual rise in the cost of living. This worries Carron; but so long as the cost of living continues upwards it seems inevitable. What he would like to see is a different basis of negotiation which was able to leave out the cost of living and concentrate on

increased productivity and profits of which the employees would get a share and be guaranteed further shares on the basis of further increases in output. (In America, Mr. Carron points out, unions covering the same fields as the A.E.U. get a far bigger cut of the profits than in England.)

I asked him what he thought the average trade unionist expected from his union. He replied: 'Security.' Most factory workers are doing much better than they did before the war. They want to feel confident that the new standard of living they have reached will be maintained and not suddenly disappear overnight. Security of tenure is often more important to them than the negotiation of a higher wage for this or that section of the industry. It is no comfort to know that the rate for the job has been increased if the job has gone. Hence he strives towards a system by which the workers will be employed on the same sort of contractual basis as salaried staff. This would give them a status and a sense of security that they lack today. They would gain through the length of notice required for dismissal, and the method of remuneration, as well as inclusion in firms' pension schemes. Already dockers and workers in industries like sugar beet have made substantial progress in converting casual to fixed employment. Carron wants to see the process taken much further.

He feels that there are many misconceptions in the public mind about trade unions—that they strike unnecessarily, that they exert disproportionate and unfair pressure on governments. 'When you consider that many individual unions could, by withholding labour, bring the country to a standstill, it is remarkable how little this power has been used. And it is far more often the Government which comes to the trade unions than the other way round.' He sees unions as a constructive force in the country. He is anxious that their influence should be directed towards improving general prosperity for the good of everyone. 'We are not a body for subversive purposes.'

One of the obstacles to the A.E.U. providing better benefits for its members and wider training schemes to improve individual capacity is the rate of subscription. In proportion to the needs the

funds are nowhere as great as one would imagine. Although the A.E.U. in 1958 had assets of £11½ million they could soon be swallowed up in a strike. 'Do you realize,' Carron once said to me, 'that in 1854 a Section I member of the A.E.U. (the craft section to which most members belong) paid 1*s.* 6*d.* a week contribution and local levies brought the average up to 2*s.* a week. Today the Section I contribution is still only 2*s* 3*d.* a week. Those who pay it are earning ten to thirteen pounds a week, sometimes a little more. In 1854 their wage would have been 21*s.*' It is very difficult for a union to run itself in a modern way on that basis of contribution. And the complexities grow yearly. In 1936 the scope of negotiations conducted by the A.E.U. covered only five or six industries. Now it is over thirty. In addition there are the international ramifications of huge firms which require co-operation with trade unions in other countries—all adding to the work. Yet just as members are apathetic about attending their branch meetings they are equally unenthusiastic about paying higher contributions.

In politics Carron is an orthodox member of the Labour Party. He is not extreme but sensible. 'I don't believe in wild-catting for popularity. I support majority decisions even when I don't like them. I console myself with the thought that I may have lost today but I may win tomorrow.'

Carron is short and sturdy. He has a round chubby face and a cheerful, happy manner. He thinks hard before he speaks and what he says always has wisdom in it. He has had to deal with many awkward and unpleasant situations. He has learned to act cautiously but decisively. His three main qualities are intelligence, courage and loyalty. He is not bigoted or bitter, but friendly and open-minded. In the thirties he was unemployed and even had to postpone his marriage because he had been thrown out of work. But he has never borne malice. 'I detest the preaching of a doctrine of pure hate. It is not a human characteristic at all.' He is prepared to advocate a strike if there is no other way out but he would infinitely prefer to deal with the matter by sensible negotiation. Nor, when the substance of a point has been gained,

will he allow himself to be drawn into prolonging a strike to win the acclaim of the so-called militant, but actually dotty, fanatics who revel in destruction whatever it may cost the average trade union member.

Anyone who can call this good-humoured man, who pins his faith on the better side of human nature, a friend can be not only proud but happy. He will never let them down and he will always be ready with sound council. He is one of the most far-seeing and best servants the trade union movement has. And by the same token he is of immense value to the country. It will not be his fault if managements do not press on with automation, with making themselves more efficient, and with creating the basis for prosperity in the future.

13

Mr. Frank Cousins

THE first time I met Mr. Frank Cousins was one afternoon at Transport House. In the morning I had been to see Lord Salisbury, then Lord President of the Council, to try to persuade him to take part in a television programme about the future of the House of Lords.

'How very kind of you to come and see me,' said Lord Salisbury, getting up from his chair as I came through the door of the Lord President of the Council's office.

'You were one of our Governors on the National Film Institute.' (As Lord President of the Council, Lord Salisbury was responsible for the appointments.) 'Just tell me how you think it works and what you feel about it.' Lord Salisbury at the height of his power was charm and amiability. And, of course, he had not the least intention of appearing in the television programme: he merely wished to make the path to his refusal agreeable.

As I walked into Mr. Cousins' large office he didn't move from his chair behind the desk. The sun was pouring through the window behind him right into my eyes. It was hard to see him at all to begin with.

As I moved to sit down he said in an almost hostile voice: 'You made a mistake about the salaries we pay our officials in your booklet.' (This was a pamphlet about Communism in the trade unions.) 'If there are similar mistakes in the rest of the booklet it can't be of much value.'

Lord Salisbury has been used to power, and the idea of power,

all his life. It fits comfortably on him—it does not seem strange to him to speak with authority. Frank Cousins has had real power only since December 1955 when he became acting General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union because of the illness of his predecessor. He was elected General Secretary on 11th May 1956.

To him power is a novel, almost alarming thing. He is still discovering how to use it and what its limits are. As yet unsure of himself he doesn't conceal his feelings. He attempts to dominate from the outset. Yet I prefer his approach to Lord Salisbury's. I didn't know what Lord Salisbury was thinking until the end—I was aware immediately of Frank Cousins' disapproval. Like Ernest Bevin, whom he greatly admired, he is suspicious of anyone in the Labour Party who is not working class.

Unless he decides otherwise, Frank Cousins will be the General Secretary of the T. & G.W. until 1970, when he will be sixty-five—the retiring age for the General Secretary who, in this union, holds the job for life. This permanency in office, added to the great size of the T. & G.W., makes him potentially the most powerful trade union leader in the country. While other leaders reach the retiring age, or fail to win re-election, Frank Cousins will remain a constant factor. Before he became General Secretary, he had already been a trade union official for twenty years. By the time he finishes he will be one of the most experienced leaders the trade union movement has ever had.

But first, will he stay with the union or will he be tempted into politics? 'I couldn't be Foreign Secretary,' he said, 'I don't know enough about it. I couldn't be Chancellor of the Exchequer —I would probably make some awful mistake. I don't want to be Minister of Labour because the Minister of Labour is nothing at all—I can push him around.'

To Frank Cousins his job seems almost the most important in the country. He sees no point in giving it up for the hazards of politics. He is not attracted by earning more money, say, in a nationalized industry. 'I am quite willing to work for no salary because of the importance of the job.'

His consciousness of power may be heightened by his relations with Arthur Deakin when the latter was General Secretary. Arthur Deakin tended to suppress Cousins when he was in charge of the Road Transport Section of the union. They quarrelled. Arthur Deakin never let him have his head. Deakin was the pillar of the Right wing of the Labour Party in the post-war period when Sir Stafford Cripps was urging wage restraint on the unions. Deakin prevented strikes, did not give unofficial strikes official blessing, resisted demands from members for wage claims. Deakin was a violent opponent of Communists in the trade unions. This prompted him often to feel that anyone who criticized union or Labour Party policy was a Communist. As Frank Cousins said to me: 'He would always say about any demand for a pay rise, "they are Communists, they are fellow-travellers".'

When Cousins took office he wanted to be different in every way from Arthur Deakin, who undoubtedly had become a little out of touch with the rank and file. This fitted in with the general feeling among the unions that wage restraint and a denial to themselves of the use of the strike weapon had gone on too long. It was one thing to hold members back when a Labour Government was restricting dividends and operating taxation to curb profits. It was quite another thing to do it when the Conservative Government was no longer willing to use the same controls over dividends and had taken away food subsidies. The continuance of a rigid restraint by the trade union leadership was giving the Communists an opportunity to pose as militants in the trade union movement. They had already captured the E.T.U. and in 1956 came near to winning a majority on the Executive Committee of the A.E.U.

So it suited the occasion and Frank Cousins' temperament to offer himself as a militant trade union leader of the Left. He was willing to take the official hand off the brake and press the accelerator. He was not willing that the leader of the T. & G.W. should be a target for Communist, fellow-travelling, and left-of-centre abuse at T.U.C. and Labour Party Conferences.

Hence his blunt speeches declaring himself in favour of wage claims and warning the Conservative Government that the trade union movement would no longer support it in a policy of wage restraint. Hence his aggressive assertions that he is an old-fashioned Socialist who believes in nationalization. 'I believe in the extension of the principle of public ownership and we want a Government with a policy that believes in it,' he once said truculently at Leicester. Hence his almost marked and sometimes irresponsible dissociation of himself from the old guard of the trade union leadership when he first became General Secretary of the T. & G.W. As, for instance, when he voted against Mr. W. J. Carron, President of the A.E.U., when the issue before the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions was that the engineering strike in early 1957 should come to an end. Hence his apparent identification of himself with Bevanite trends in the Labour Party.

All these were sincere manifestations of his feelings. It was mainly coincidental, though fortunate, that they moved with the current mood of the rank and file in the trade unions.

Frank Cousins hopes to remove the sense of frustration in the lower reaches of the unions. He wants to give expression to the rank and file. That does not mean that he is prepared to see the tail wagging the head, but he is anxious to meet the rank and file half-way. His evident wish to be in sympathy with some of the militant and politically active elements on the shop steward level has led to a misunderstanding of his aims and purpose. Political journalists, ever anxious for a story of sensational splits, used his sharply pointed references to a need for more nationalization and a Left incline in the Labour Party to suggest that a new cleavage in the party was emerging. They have painted him as a bogeyman who employs strikes to overthrow constitutionally elected governments and as a violent extremist who would push the Labour Party in a Bevanite direction, with the aid of the great million-and-a-quarter block vote of the T. & G.W.—by far the largest block vote at T.U.C. and Labour Party Conferences. Equally, the so-called militants in the trade unions, mainly Communists,

fellow-travellers and the foolish, heralded him as a man who would be as irresponsible as themselves. Both groups will be disappointed.

Certainly Frank Cousins believes in the use of the strike weapon and in wage claims—to him the trade union movement has seemed to have a Civil Service mentality since the war and to have been a kind of subsidiary government. It has been saying to its members 'you be restrained, and you do this, that and the other', as though it were a Government department instead of sticking to its real objectives. He wants to make trade unionists realize that there is real leadership representing the rank and file, and that they will be asking for a wage increase before the Communists and fellow-travellers, if one is really needed.

'People think that strikes are always the fault of the workers. They are not. They are very often because the management won't see the workers have got a claim to consideration. They ought to be consulted as to how things are to be done and treated as human beings. Not merely just told there is going to be redundancy, and that's that. After all, the employers go to a great deal of trouble to look after their machinery and they should do the same with human beings.

'But we don't want to strike for the sake of a strike. It is not very clever to have one for itself alone. We want to bring the chaps out for something; we don't want a business where a fortnight after it is all over we wonder: what the hell did we go out for? What did we gain out of that? We want something real out of it.'

Because they don't appreciate this realism in his approach many of the strikers in the Covent Garden dispute in 1957 were furious when Mr. Cousins called the strike off. It was a strike that was doing nothing except damage the trade union movement. It was clear common sense for Frank Cousins to put an end to it. Similarly, at the T.U.C. Conference in 1956 he opposed the immediate demand for a general forty-hour week. When it comes to dealing with actual situations, Frank Cousins looks at the facts and acts on the logic of them. To run a great union like

the T. & G.W. in any other way would be silly, and Frank Cousins is far from being silly; he is shrewd and able.

It is certainly true that he has emphasized his belief in old-style Socialism and nationalization with almost dogmatic fervour. He is also anxious, forcibly, to remind the Parliamentary Labour Party that the trade unions created the Labour Party.

'It is their expression. It does what they want. I don't want to have a party which is full of people with no connection with the trade unions at all and representing all sorts of liberal ideas. I know the address of the Liberal Party Headquarters and if I want to join the Liberal Party I know where to go. I am in the Labour Party because I want it to be a Labour Party. I am not afraid of nationalization—I want to see more of it.'

While conceding that the Parliamentary Labour Party needs other people in it besides trade unionists, he is convinced that it has now gone too far the other way, that there are too many middle-class 'intellectuals' floating about in it with no roots and with no organic understanding of the working class. That was why he powerfully urged on the Labour Party that more trade union candidates be adopted by local Labour Parties. Nor did he leave it as an expression of views, for he took positive organizational action to see that it happened. 'I am not going to have it. We are not going to put up with it,' he said vehemently several times when speaking of the trend towards the adoption of non-trade union Parliamentary candidates.

But although he intends to have a decided influence in moulding the shape in policy of the Labour Party, he is likely to do it more by pressure and persuasion than by direct intervention. The forecasts that he will intervene to support Bevan against Gaitskell are wide of the mark. With a background of trade union experience, he attaches too much importance to the unity of the Party to encourage fissiparous tendencies. He wants no rocking of the boat. Personally, he gets on extremely well with Gaitskell and is aware that, although they may sometimes differ in the emphasis to be attached to particular details, their aims are fundamentally the same.

MR. FRANK COUSINS

The idea of Frank Cousins leading a Gaitskell-must-go-to make-way-for-Bevan movement is absurd. As a practical man Frank Cousins knows that Gaitskell is the only leader who can unite the Labour Party in present conditions and carry the country with it. He is more interested in seeing the Labour Party gets into power so that it can operate some of its principles than in futile debates about personalities, which can only serve to prevent the Labour Party from winning an election.

Frank Cousins is deeply interested in politics. They are a part of trade union life and an understanding of them is an essential piece of equipment for a trade union leader. But I would judge that the thing he cares about most is his union. As he said to me: 'When Ernie Bevin came into the job of General Secretary he thought he would leave things better than when he started. And he was certainly able to do that.' Frank Cousins hopes to do the same. As he sees it, there is plenty left for the trade unions to do. Their basic objectives, to improve the living standards of their members, remains unchanged. But today, that includes a close examination of productivity, automation, old age pensions, social services, and the like. As important as physical conditions, is the question of status. Frank Cousins believes that the period is over when employers can just give a man a week's notice and turn him out of a job. The dismissals at the British Motor Corporation without prior consultation were the cause of a strike. What Frank Cousins is searching for is a scheme which will give workers a contractual basis for employment—the same sort of security in their jobs as the staff get. He wants managements to appreciate that they have a greater indebtedness to their workers than the other way round. The details of such a plan would need careful working out on both sides. One advantage it could lead to would be the forcing of employers to take more trouble to plan ahead so that they avoid redundancy.

Frank Cousins is keen, too, on greater participation of the workers in the actual running of industry. He is sure that it is practicable and draws on his experience of the road services when they were nationalized. Not only did British Road Services run a

more efficient service than had been run before. There were also very effective workers' committees which had a real say in what went on and decided important issues. Frank Cousins believes that this system could be widely extended into other industries. For getting across his ideas, both on giving the worker a contractual relationship with his employer and making him more actively a part of the firm he works for, he relies on the co-operation of the best firms. Although, for instance, he thinks ICI is a somewhat autocratic, paternal institution, he thinks they are good enough to be able to see the merits of raising the mental well-being of their workers by allowing them contracts.

Critics of the T. & G.W. complain that it is cumbersome and clumsy because it is swollen into a hampering elephantiasis. Frank Cousins does not agree. 'What do people mean when they say we are too large? Is a million all right? And if a million is all right, then why isn't one million one hundred thousand?'

The T. & G.W. is divided into thirteen national trade groups, all of which are more or less independent, although under central direction. When there is a big issue the heads of the groups come to the top for consultation and decisions, but in a general way they manage their own claims and deal with their own affairs without interference. A huge union like the T. & G.W., with over a million and a quarter members, could easily get out of hand—just as a vast concern like ICI with 120,000 employees can disintegrate if it is not properly organized. But there is no evidence at all that the T. & G.W. is unwieldy. And the advantages of being able to mobilize a vast number of workers under one umbrella when it comes to negotiations with employers are tremendous. With his lively awareness of the dangers of trade union leadership getting out of touch with the rank and file, it is unlikely that during Frank Cousins' long years of office there will be a vast gap between leaders and led, so far as the machinery of consultation between the two is concerned.

Frank Cousins is not worried about the future of trade union leadership. He is unconvinced that the modern educational

system is skimming off natural leaders and sending them to grammar schools and universities instead of jobs from which they would have advanced up the ladder of promotion in the trade union hierarchy. 'There are sixty thousand people,' he said to me, 'who voluntarily work on committees in the Transport and General Workers Union. If we want to raise sixty officials, don't tell me that you can't get sixty very good chaps for any jobs we need to do out of the sixty thousand who take a real interest in what is going on.'

This belief that higher education is unnecessary for a trade union negotiator in the future is both optimistic and mistaken. As the unions become more involved with management problems and, to fulfil their function, take part increasingly in policy decisions in industry, so will their officials require to have a far greater background of scientific engineering, technical training, and the like. Just as we move into the period when the trade union leader requires to be more qualified than ever before to match the managements with which he must deal on level terms under more complicated conditions, the supply of intellectually gifted trade union leaders is dying out. The trade unions will not allow official positions to go to men who have not worked their way up from the factory floor. But today the potential Ernest Bevins, W. J. Carrons, Tom Williamsons, Frank Cousinses, are not going into the factory workshop when they reach the official school leaving age. They are staying on at school and winning their way to universities. The unions will have to modify their system for recruiting officials or they will be unable to stand up to managements in the complex negotiations of the future which will include a far wider range of subjects than just pay and working conditions.

Since he started work at the age of fourteen and graduated to being a lorry driver, Frank Cousins has lived a tough, battling life. He is accustomed to argument and hitting opposition and criticism hard. But as you talk to him, he thaws out and speaks his thoughts frankly and with persuasiveness. He owes his position to being a very hard worker, with outstanding administrative talents.

At the bi-annual conference of the T. & G.W. in 1957 he was able to answer almost every point raised on the varied activities of the T. & G.W. He knows his job thoroughly.

And he carries him with an air of authority. A very tall man, built big, he moves quickly; his grey-haired head looks hard and from it come hard, strong opinions on every subject. At the moment, some of his actions may seem rough and a little out of tune. I do not think they will do so when he has eased himself more into the coat of power. Probably the man he has admired most is Ernest Bevin. Just as Bevin was once a terror of the nervous, so Frank Cousins is today. But in the same way that it was eventually recognized that Bevin was one of the bulwarks of our liberties and one of the great architects of the justified advance of the workers, so I believe it will be recognized ultimately that Frank Cousins is in the same mould even though he is not as considerable a man.

It is his job to argue and to make tough deals with the employers, but they will be fair deals. His members expect him to do what he can to make the Labour Party understand their views and implement them. But Frank Cousins is not primarily a politician. He is a practical man, with a grasp of what is possible and what is not. He is more interested in results than conversation. One of the surprises of the next Labour Government to those newspapers who have so far made only superficial judgments of Frank Cousins is likely to be the high degree of co-operation between Frank Cousins and Gaitskell. By that time, it is probable that any disharmony between himself and his other colleagues among the trade union leaders will have been ironed out. His failure to persuade the T.U.C. to give him the support he asked for during the London bus strike of 1958 will have had a sobering effect on him. He will have learnt from it that his trade union colleagues cannot be forced, even by the largest union among them, to back ventures they consider harmful both to the trade union movement and to the Labour Party's electoral chances. It will doubtless also occur to him through the same experience, that there may be many occasions when, in their own interests,

workers enthusiastic to strike should be dissuaded by strong leadership.

For many years Cousins' quick, almost machine-gun like voice, making logically thought-out speeches, will be a major factor at Labour Party and Trade Union Congress Conferences. The prospect is that it will be a focus of stability and unity and not of discord.

Sir John Cockcroft

MAKING a television programme in America I once drove out from New York to Princeton to interview Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, who is not the subject of this chapter save by way of illustration. He had gone there as Director of the Institute for Advanced Study after he had been declared a security risk and had been prevented from doing further government work on nuclear projects. Accusations of Communist leanings and associations had been whirled around without much foundation. When I met him it was just after the Russians had put up their second sputnik. Many Americans were acutely wishing that they had not lost the services of Dr. Oppenheimer. His absence from the government laboratories seemed to them to give the Russians an opportunity in yet another field to overtake America.

Nothing Dr. Oppenheimer said to me suggested that he was either a Communist or had Communist sympathies. He spoke almost with horror of the unbalance of the mind of Klaus Fuchs imprisoned in England for giving away atomic secrets to the Russians. He thought that the atmosphere of the Hitler Germany from which Fuchs had come had unhinged him but did not excuse what he had done. I found Dr. Oppenheimer very impressive. His head is large and seems to widen out at the top as though to take in his enormous brain. His body, which is tall and slight, appears to have little connection with his head which falls, or starts up, independently of the rest of his frame which acts solely as a vehicle for carrying his head about. The fact that

he has very little hair accentuates the illusion that he is all brain like a Wellsian man from outer space.

The afternoon I saw him he was nervous and jerky. It may have been apprehensiveness at giving a public interview after the many disagreeable attacks made on him had placed him in a difficult and vulnerable position. Or, as I imagine is more likely, an atmosphere of nervousness and high sensitivity may be natural to him. Dr. Oppenheimer is clearly a sincere idealist. He believes that science ought to serve the needs of all mankind irrespective of country. In our television interview he spoke movingly of the success that came from British and American co-operation in the atomic field during the war. He spoke of his distress that this co-operation had been ended by America when the war was over and of his own efforts to have it renewed. A lesson of the sputniks, he maintained, was that scientists of America, of Britain—and of the other NATO countries—should work together again. And then he added that he hoped that all scientific secrets would not only be shared among these countries but among all the nations of the world.

His statement had been persuasive and emotional. When I thanked him for it, and assured him that it would come over well, he said he thought perhaps I had not liked the last bit—about sharing scientific secrets with the whole world. That was indicative of his rawness after the violent onslaught made on him by extremists who denounce him as un-American. It also reveals him as the type of scientist who puts knowledge, learning and research above all things including territorial boundaries. He would never be disloyal to America or betray a secret but he does not think that America, or the West, ought to have any *scientific* secrets. He is a great friend of Mr. George Kennan and probably does not differ very greatly from him in his opposition to Russian Communism. Yet he has an other-worldly approach a trifle in the clouds. Talking to him I had the feeling that he regards an America First attitude as a somewhat parochial approach. That was probably what puzzled the government authorities and led them into making what I should judge to be their quite erroneous decision that he was a security risk.

No one could possibly make the same mistake about Sir John Cockcroft. Whether he is as much of a genius as Dr. Oppenheimer in unravelling the mysteries of the nuclear world only the greatest experts could tell. They are clearly both in the same class. But whereas Dr. Oppenheimer tends to be dreamy, perhaps a tiny bit credulous about the practical and political world outside his direct sphere of operations, Sir John is as rooted, solid and sane as the Yorkshire he came from. If Britain stays in the running as a world power, and advances her standards of living as fast as, or faster than, the average among the leading industrial countries it will be due to him as much as to any other one person.

Sir John is plumpish and round faced—almost baby faced despite his grey hair. He is quiet and unassuming. If you met him without knowing who he was you might take him for a careful, successful, but unostentatious business man. Not a professor because he carries the air of a man who administers and constructs. It would be a surprise to discover that he is one of the greatest living scientists.

He was born in Todmorden near the Lancashire border in 1897. His family was engaged in cotton manufacturing, and still is. His first education was at a church school. From there he went to the local secondary school, winning a county scholarship to Manchester University. He was only seventeen when the First World War began. But with the simple patriotism that still burns behind his calm exterior he joined the YMCA at a Welsh camp. As soon as he was old enough he entered the Army and fought at the Somme, Passchendaele and Cambrai. Afterwards he said his 'three years in the Army had deepened and increased his capacity for scientific work rather than damaged it'.

At the end of the war he returned to Manchester to study electrical engineering and later became a student apprentice at Metropolitan-Vickers. In 1922 he went to Cambridge where he read Mathematics. As an academic scientist he had behind him the maturing experience of Army life and of practical industrial engineering. His feet were squarely on the ground and always have been.

I asked him what was the most exciting moment he had ever had. One of them was the transmutation of lithium by light atoms. That was in 1932. He and his colleague, E. T. S. Walton, were the first to split atoms by artificially produced high-speed atoms. Atoms of lithium turned into pairs of helium atoms. This is reported to have been almost the only occasion on which Sir John showed unrelieved exuberance. The apparatus that he and Walton had used was home made. 'We made two towers of glass petrol pump cylinders which we stuck together with plasticine and pumped out to make a very good vacuum inside. . . .' They had appreciated that the energy required to produce nuclear transmutation was a great deal less than had been supposed—two or three hundred thousand volts and not millions. The machine they used is now in the South Kensington Science Museum.

Another great moment of excitement for him was when he saw the first impact of radar. That was at the time of the Munich crisis. He was asked in September 1939, with other university figures, to set up a chain of radar stations to detect low-flying aircraft from the Shetlands to the Thames Estuary. He demonstrated his remarkable gifts as an administrator by completing the complicated assignment in six months. That was part of his contribution to the winning of the Battle of Britain.

After that Cockcroft became Chief Superintendent of the Air Defence Research and Development Establishment and did not give up the post until 1944. Then he went to Canada to supervise the Anglo-Canadian atomic project. But he was not only thinking about bombs. He was already planning research on the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. It was Sir John who chose Harwell as the place for the Atomic Energy Research Establishment and converted it from an R.A.F. aerodrome into Britain's chance for the future. Cockcroft was its director from 1946 to 1958. By 1958 Harwell had grown from nothing to a staff of about six thousand. Sir John with his extraordinary combination of scientific genius and administrative skill coaxed out of his brilliant researchers results which have put us ahead of the world.

One reason for success was that Cockcroft carefully selected projects within the capacity of his team and was never tempted, as the aircraft industry has been, to try to undertake too many projects at once. He has produced miracles from a few concepts instead of nothing from many.

Towards the end of 1957 he told me that Britain is a year, or two years, ahead of America and Russia in developing nuclear power for industry. That may not last. 'They always catch up in the end. But we are being driven to it because of our dependence on external fuel supplies.' Sir John hopes that nuclear energy will by 1970 save three hundred million pounds a year in foreign exchange. Until 1962 nuclear power will cost around 10 per cent more than the equivalent in coal or oil. Thereafter the difference in cost will narrow until by about 1963 there should be nothing in it. Beyond that nuclear power will become increasingly cheaper than coal and oil. By 1975 Sir John anticipates that nuclear power in Britain will be doing the work of thirty to thirty-five million tons of oil or of fifty to sixty million tons of coal. Sir John is a cautious man. His estimate may be pessimistic because all the time his own efforts have shot past his forecasts. It is already certain that by 1963 there will be four nuclear power stations of Calder Hall size, three stations four times as powerful, and two seven to eight times as powerful.

And all the time Sir John is on to something new.

The nuclear power so far used in industry is the peaceful side of the atom bomb. Harwell, ahead of anyone else, has made considerable progress in research aimed at the development of thermonuclear power—the peaceful equivalent of the H-bomb. It will at least be twenty years before they can give it practical application but they have unravelled some of the principles of doing it. Harwell is already preparing to make its own nuclear power stations out of date in the face of the thermonuclear power stations its research scientists are thinking about and planning for.

In getting answers to science fiction type questions from Sir John about the future one might be discussing an overdraft of

£500 with the bank manager. But his matter-of-fact and careful approach serves to heighten the strangeness of the prospects.

Great ships, according to Cockcroft, powered by atomic energy may in the long run become cheaper to run than ships using other forms of fuel. And one advantage will be that they would have to refuel perhaps only once every three years.

'Do you think motor-cars will ever be run on atomic fuel?'

'No. I don't think it will ever be practicable to power motor-cars with atomic energy. The reactor needed would be far too heavy. Anyway, there's no need. At the end of the century we may be making much of our oil at home. We won't need to import it.'

I was startled.

'Oh yes. Oil can be made from carbon which is in coal or in the atmosphere together with hydrogen. If we have cheap nuclear power we will produce oil economically.'

And if Sir John says it will be usual to make it that way by the end of a century that probably means, allowing for his Yorkshire caution, that it will be done on a large scale some years before that. The stimulus of the unsettled state of the Middle East in making our oil supplies unreliable—to say nothing of our shortage of foreign exchange—is forcing us to learn to do without natural oil and make it artificially. Extreme Arab nationalists in their frenzies are creating a situation in which we will be able to do without the oil which is their sole source of foreign income much sooner than previously imagined. To that extent Nasser may be said to be advancing the cause of science even though the millions of poor Arabs in the oil-producing countries will one day not thank him. Other Harwell scientists speak of plucking fuel out of the air, or getting it from coal, as a common-place process by the next half century.

Nuclear power is not going to be the only way in which Harwell, and Sir John, will save us imports. For instance, there will be no need to go to remote parts of the world to make aluminium. 'You'll be able to generate sufficient power here.' Nuclear radiations are being applied on a research scale to make

new types of chemicals that have not been used before. The process will continue. To quote Sir John: 'You can make plastics with the aid of radiation. You can improve the output of a catalyst in a chemical plant. All this is just beginning. . . .'

Sir John thinks that at the moment our top scientists are still better than those of America and Russia. He does not know how long they will remain so. He is worried about our attitude to scientific education. He finds the present position of the Atomic Energy Authority satisfactory in that the employees are only semi-civil-servants, yet they are not completely divorced from the Government and its great resources. This half-and-half condition enables the Authority to promote quickly the ablest scientists without too much difficulty. The Authority is able to acquire a man of the stature of Sir Edwin Plowden as chairman which would not have been possible if it had been a fully Civil Service department.

But one danger is the number of scientists that may be lost to America and other countries. At the moment the defections are not very serious. But the real threat, in Sir John's view, will come if those scientists who are attracted away by better conditions and payment start to be drawn from the top 5 per cent of the best scientists. That he believes has not really happened yet, though a large proportion of our young scientists who go with Fellowships to North America do not return.

It seems incredible that we could contemplate a situation in which we allow scientists upon whom our survival depends to be lost to us because envy and niggardliness prevent them from being paid at a rate comparable to their service to the state. Sharp business men can make millions through take-over bids—we continue to grudge our top scientists a few thousand pounds a year although we cannot hope to survive without them.

Sir John is disturbed by the Government's slowness in carrying through an adequate technological and scientific education programme. 'Everybody pays lip service—the general public and the Government and so on. But not enough happens. We're going to be overtaken by America and Russia in the next ten years if

we don't do something about it. We were supposed to be increasing our scientists and engineers by about 7 or 10 per cent a year which should double the total in ten years. The funds which are being made available to the universities in the next two or three years are not adequate to provide the staff needed to teach the increasing number of science and engineering students who are now coming along.'

In fact, insanity of insanities, the scientific education programme is being cut back instead of being enlarged. It is a part of our extraordinary slowing down of capital investment—the building of new factories, new equipment, new laboratories—imposed in an endeavour to stop inflation and strengthen the pound abroad. But to restrict the growth of scientific education and the development of new industrial processes in order to stop inflation is throwing the baby out with the bath water. Whatever else we cannot afford we must afford investment in those things which will keep us abreast and ahead of progress in other industrial countries.

Behind all the ideas and visions of the future that pulsate in Sir John's mind is a sturdy patriot. He is not so narrow as to wish to deprive the rest of the world of the benefit of scientific co-operation—far from it. But Britain is his country and it is in her that he has his faith and hopes. He does not want Britain to fall behind through inertia and failure to take obvious and elementary steps. That is why he has spent so much of his time as a super public relations officer for Harwell and nuclear science. He gives many lectures, writes articles, tries to familiarize the public with nuclear science and to inspire the young to become scientists. There are many things in science which are exciting. The more that is understood the more it will encourage the young to become scientists. He is doing what he can but the nation appears slothful in taking up the challenge despite the fact that in Sir John Cockcroft, a genius at transforming or transmuting one substance into another, we have in our midst the modern possessor of 'the famous stone which turneth all to gold'.

Sir John Cockcroft, in charge of all scientific nuclear research,

is doing for us, if we will let him, the equivalent of what the first Elizabethans like Raleigh and Drake once did. He is opening up new worlds. And with it all he remains serenely balanced and purposeful. He loves listening to music. He reads continuously, he relaxes in gardening. He is the centre, with his wife, of a contented family with five children. Above all he has character and strength. The awesome secrets of nature which he has uncovered have not unnerved him as they have some other scientists. When future generations look back on those who are alive today there may not be more than two or three in Britain whom they will single out as great, but Sir John Cockcroft will be one of them.

15

Mr. Harry Ferguson

'He's an impossible man to work with.' 'He's not really an inventor. He just takes other people's ideas.' 'He's a bit mad.' 'This new car of his is no good. It would be too expensive and anyway it's not new.' 'His ideas are just not practicable.' 'He's a stubborn old fellow. He always wants his own way about everything. If you don't do everything the way he wants it then he breaks with you.'

That is the sort of hostile and bewildered comment you can hear from many people in the motor industry about Mr. Harry Ferguson. He has been pummelling and sticking pins into them for years. Naturally they are not pleased when he tells them they are slack and unimaginative. When he forecasts disaster for the British motor-car industry if they do not rid themselves of their smugness and produce some new designs to put Britain ahead in the export markets his critics shrug their shoulders. They point complacently to the gratifying rise in exports since the war, glossing over the occasional big dips and danger signs from the increasing success of foreign competitors. Many British motor manufacturers behave as though Volkswagen, with its cheap mass production, reliability, and tremendous after-sales service, were no threat at all. Travelling all over the world I have found dismal complaints of British motor-cars. Door handles that come off, fitments that break, unobtainability of spares, high prices, disinterest in selling, complete indifference to what happens to the car once the customer has bought it. I have seen markets in places like Kuwait and Liberia deserted by the British and left to go to

Americans and Germans, where a little effort on the part of the British motor manufacturers would have gained millions.

The British motor manufacturer was lucky at the end of the war. The world was short of dollars and could not buy American cars, assuming that they had been suitable and that American manufacturers had thought it sufficiently remunerative to go into the export business. Britain was the only major country in a position to produce motor-cars in large quantities. She did so and had an easy job selling everything she could make. Overseas sales were still going up in early 1958 because of increasing demand but all the while the long-term position becomes more precarious. The Germans, the Italians, and even the French, frequently take more trouble about the quality of their cars and the service they give. They are also often much more thrustful in selling. The Americans, too, are showing more interest in exports. In many importing countries plant has been set up for complete assemblies and even in Commonwealth countries the assembly firms are often not British. Unless the British motor industry does something new and becomes far more efficient than it has been it will be eclipsed.

Harry Ferguson has since 1955 been trying to persuade the British motor industry to make on a large scale his new automatic transmission and a motor-car designed on an entirely new basis. The big manufacturers have had plenty of chance to take it up. But at the beginning of 1958, despite some nibbling, no big manufacturer was yet either fitting the automatic transmission to his vehicles or contracting to make the new Ferguson car, although the Pressed Steel Co. were sufficiently impressed by this time to make a body in the prototype of the new car. Tooling up to make a new car, or even a new transmission, requires a large capital expenditure. Manufacturers have preferred to rest on easy current sales, forget about tomorrow, and excuse themselves by running down Harry Ferguson.

Harry Ferguson is a genius. Even if no one ever makes his new car he will still have made a tremendous impact on British industry and on the world of agriculture.

MR. HARRY FERGUSON

He was born on a farm in County Down in Northern Ireland in 1884. From the start machinery fascinated him. By the time he was sixteen he was running a garage in Belfast. He sold, and specialized in servicing, motor-cycles and motor-cars which were just beginning to appear. He worked on the principle that the way to make money was to give service. He made money. In 1909 he flew a monoplane he had designed and made himself and became the first man to fly in Ireland. By 1911 he had added a motor-car distributing business in Belfast to his other activities.

During the First World War the Irish Department of Agriculture asked him to supervise the maintenance of all tractors and farm implements in the country. A farmer's son, he became immersed in the problems of farm production. He determined to eliminate, as far as possible, all animals needed for pulling carts and ploughs. He concluded that they were the chief obstacle to increased agricultural production, requiring acres of land to feed and preventing food prices from being cut. The problem was to make a tractor that would carry and power farm implements without the machine being so heavy that its weight would pack the soil and make it less fertile. And the implements had to be controlled from the driving seat. For years Ferguson worked on the ideas that were to revolutionize farming.

At last he produced a tractor which satisfied him. In 1936 the Ferguson tractor was manufactured in Huddersfield by David Brown and Co. But soon production stopped because the coming war started to turn ploughshares into swords. In 1939 Ferguson went to America and called on Henry Ford, senior. He demonstrated his tractor. At once Henry Ford said he would go ahead and make it in partnership with Ferguson. The partnership lasted for eight years during which over three hundred thousand Ferguson tractors were made and sold. But when Henry Ford senior died his successors disowned the agreement and began to put out a tractor of their own almost identical with the Ferguson tractor.

Immediately Ferguson hit back. He set up a new factory of his own in Detroit and went to see Sir Stafford Cripps in England. Sir Stafford, always quick to seize on good ideas, told Sir John

Black of the Standard Motor Company that his firm should make the tractor and that his steel supplies would be cut if they did not. Although they did not appreciate it at the time this was to be the making of the Standard Motor Company. Soon they were earning millions of pounds and millions of dollars a year in exports of the Ferguson tractor. At the same time the new factory in Detroit flourished and beat the Ford tractor in its own country.

In the meanwhile, Ferguson was preparing the biggest industrial law suit in history. He sued Henry Ford II and the Ford Motor Company for two hundred and fifty million dollars for copying his inventions, for violating the agreement he had made with Henry Ford senior, for conspiring to destroy his business, and on many other complaints. It was a remarkable case, employing two hundred lawyers and involving a court hearing that lasted for more than a year. The Ford Company were ordered to cease making the hydraulic equipment for their tractor in the form it then was by the end of 1952. It was agreed that they should pay Harry Ferguson nine and a quarter million dollars. It was a lot less than he had sued for but it was the largest sum ever to result from a patent action and it completely vindicated Harry Ferguson. It demonstrated, after the most searching examination of hundreds of witnesses, that the Ferguson tractor was entirely Ferguson's invention. And that is partly the answer to those critics who say that he is not an inventor but uses other people's ideas.

Harry Ferguson is a millionaire. He has a fortune of anything from six to eight million pounds. It was doubtless pleasurable to make Fords pay his American company over three million pounds, but money was by no means his sole object. He wanted, as well, to protect other inventors from being deprived of the profits of their ingenuity and so being discouraged from inventing. He is also a man who honours his agreements and believes that others should be forced to do likewise if they renege. And there was the publicity. All the newspaper reports of the great law suit served to advertise the Ferguson tractor. His victory emphasized that the Ferguson tractor was the one and only Ferguson tractor that could be bought. So the sales soared.

MR. HARRY FERGUSON

Harry Ferguson is a small, thin man, with a wizened, eager face. He moves about quickly, he talks a great deal, he is a non-stop propagandist and enthusiast. Once when he was staying in London I went to see him in his hotel suite. He bounded up and down. In a few minutes there were blueprints, quite meaningless to me, all over the floor and Mr. Ferguson was busy explaining to me the merits of his new car—which he was already working on before he won the law suit against Fords.

He is not religious. The Wye parish church, near the Wye Agricultural College in Kent, wanted to include pictures of the Ferguson tractor in some new stained glass. When told about it Mr. Ferguson was surprised that he should be connected with religion.

'But,' he said hopefully, 'maybe when I get to the pearly gates it will prompt St. Peter to let me in instead of sending me to the other place.'

Although an agnostic he has a strict, almost Puritanical manner of conduct. Some business associations with Ferguson would have lasted longer if the associates' behaviour had been more in accord with Ferguson's mode of living. Some business men enjoy the bonhomie of a dirty joke; Ferguson is fatally repelled by it. Others think that heavy drinking shows a sporting, generous nature; Ferguson thinks it is disgusting. He smokes an occasional cigar and drinks a little wine, but he eats frugally and is inclined to be ascetic. In religion he may have disowned his stern Protestant Ulster ancestors, but they live on in his habits.

However, his critics have some grounds for complaining that he likes things done in precisely his own way. He has never been as keen as some rich men on giving money away to charities or people. He thinks either that they will not know how to spend it or that they will not spend it as he thinks it should be spent. He has a similar approach to manufacturers and to those in authority. If he is consumed by an idea he cannot comprehend others not being equally excited about it. Maybe it is his constant theme that vast production must be used to reduce prices and beat inflation, or perhaps it is his current theory that what matters most about

motor-cars is that they should be safe and cause less accidents. He bombards Ministries and public people with letters and newspaper cuttings demanding their instant attention to his proposition of the moment. If they do not act at once he dismisses them as no good.

And it is true that a firm which proposes to manufacture one of his designs must conform absolutely to what he thinks correct in the way that they set about it or they will not be allowed to do it. Take his new car. A number of people would like to incorporate one part or another in their vehicles but they must make the whole car and nothing but the car, and in quantities that he thinks are sufficient to bring the price down. The same applies to his automatic transmission.

The average business man tends to be confused and knocked off his balance by the tempestuous, dominating Mr. Ferguson. He gets flustered and resorts to the vague generalities mentioned earlier to excuse his reluctance to deal with Ferguson. He is not used to designers and inventors who are powerful enough —and rich enough—to tell him to take it or leave it. He thinks that he should have the deciding voice, as he can with most private individuals. But it is useless attempting that with a man who has millions of pounds, is not interested in money, is passionately wedded to his own ideas and incessantly acts as a fervid missionary for them.

I know that Mr. Ferguson could long ago have sold his new car designs, and made millions out of royalties, to foreign manufacturers. In the end he may do this rather than that his idea of what a car ought to be should be lost to the world. But he is ultra-patriotic. In 1958, after three years of trying to get a British manufacturer with suitable capacity to develop his car and transmission, he was still persistent by attempting to ensure that they should be British made.

The British motor-car industry has been foolish not to take up Mr. Ferguson's latest ideas. Those qualified to given an opinion, and who have seen them, declare that they are good. Everybody in the business knows that Ferguson is Britain's outstanding motor engineer. They have the fantastic success of the Ferguson tractor

to remind them of how much money can be made by co-operating with Harry Ferguson. It is a petty-minded inability to acknowledge greatness, and a far from admirable timidity to venture, that have held them back so long. Why has not Ferguson made the car himself? Two reasons. One, it would take years to build a completely new factory large enough. Two, it would cost too much even for a millionaire several times over.

Harry Ferguson would not deny that in designing his automatic transmission and his new car he has used the ideas of others, for which they have been well paid. He does not claim to invent everything. But only a supreme engineer of high calibre has the instinct and the understanding to select and combine the contributions of others with his own in order to make the ideal car.

There are two separate inventions: the automatic transmission, which can be put into any car, and the new car itself. Mr. Ferguson explained the automatic transmission to me. It would be rash of me to attempt to repeat the technical details. Broadly it is very simple. There is no gear at all. If you are ever able to step into a car that is fitted with a Ferguson automatic transmission all you will have to do is to start the car, press the accelerator and drive away with a speed of from 0 to 80 miles per hour, and upwards according to the strength of the engine, without any loss of power. There are no jerks as there are in the automatic gear-changing systems, because there are no gears.

The whole new car takes everything much further. Each wheel has independent suspension and independent drive. The correct distribution of the weight on the new-type chassis adds to the tremendous traction power. In short, it means that the car will not lurch or bounce about, that it will go excellently through any sort of country, mud, snow and desert. The car literally adheres to the ground, eliminating skidding and providing rapid braking. The Ferguson car was tested against other cars. The test was throwing a dummy man into the road forty yards ahead of each car as it broke through a tape at fifty miles an hour.

Under the same conditions for all cars—on the 23rd August, 1956—a Vanguard struck the dummy and stopped in forty-one

and half yards, a Standard 10 hit the dummy and pulled up in forty-two yards. A Vauxhall did the same. A Volkswagen (with its engine at the back making for better weight distribution) stopped in thirty-seven yards and did not hit the dummy. The Ferguson car stopped in twenty-one and a half yards.

Open-minded experts who have had the chance to look acknowledge that the Ferguson car will revolutionize the motor industry when taken up. It is extraordinary, and illustrative of the indifference of many English manufacturers, that this car was not in production in 1956. It could have established for Britain for many years an unassailable lead in motor-car exports. It can still put us ahead if it is taken up even at this late date. It is no excuse for manufacturers to plead that Harry Ferguson is a difficult man. It is the way of genius to be tiresome and exacting. No doubt Michael Angelo was a difficult man, and many inventors of ideas that have taken man a step further have been awkward customers to deal with. But Mr. Ferguson is not all that difficult. If manufacturers could overcome their shortsightedness a moment they would realize that they, too, would be the gainers by co-operating with him. It was, after all, the Ferguson tractor that efficiently carried Hillary to the South Pole.

Harry Ferguson is a monument of stumping determination. He has the valuable talent of seeing the main points and going after them. His is the kind of mind that does not accept anything which has been done previously simply because it works tolerably well. He looks at what is required and fashions his machine to do the job. Farmers for generations will ride on and continue to use Ferguson tractors. One day we may all be riding in Ferguson-type cars. It will be our fault as a nation if they are not made in Britain.

Again and again a Briton invents some entirely new concept. Almost as frequently British industry fails to move quickly to develop it. It is taken up by another country, often America. We buy the product and almost forget that it was British in origin. We do not seem to care that the value of producing it has been lost to us. Let us hope that this is not going to happen with the Ferguson car or with the Ferguson automatic transmission.

16

Lord Attlee

It is said that Mr. Attlee once sent for a Minister he wanted to dismiss. '——, I want your resignation,' was the curt greeting.

—— was bewildered. He thought he'd been doing rather well. 'Could you give me any reason, Prime Minister?' he asked. 'Perhaps I could——'

'No good, that's all. No good,' said Mr. Attlee. The interview was over.

On another occasion Mr. Attlee was reported to have tried to dismiss a Minister more kindly. The Minister was an elderly man, one of the best of the party's stalwarts. Mr. Attlee asked him to come and see him. Suppose his name was Tom.

'Well, Tom,' began Mr. Attlee, 'some of us who have worked as long as you have for the party get to feeling a bit tired as we go on.'

'Yes,' said Tom.

'The time comes, doesn't it, for some of us older ones to hand over to those who are a bit younger. We have to make way for new blood,' said Mr. Attlee at his most tactful.

'Good heavens, Clem, you're not thinking of resigning, are you?'

The two stories may be apocryphal although I have always believed them. But if they are not true they ought to be, because they are true to the person.

One reason for Mr. Attlee's abruptness was his shyness. He always seemed to find it difficult to be on familiar and intimate terms with anybody. I saw Sir Stafford Cripps the evening after

he resigned before his last illness. He had been to see Mr. Attlee. 'I had the first real conversation that I have ever had with him in all the years I have known him,' said Sir Stafford. 'It was the only time we ever talked frankly and openly to each other.'

Being aloof gave Mr. Attlee extraordinary strength and dignity. He was not the sort of man to whom you would propose an intrigue or offer to play the fool with. He largely kept his opinions of people to himself. He never revealed anxieties that might be disturbing him. Sometimes he would appear hardly interested in the troubles that were racking his party. Yet all the time he was watching acutely. Like a great batsman he played the ball very late. You thought he was going to miss it—then with a neat flick of his wrist it would be streaking all along the ground to the boundary. Another row was smoothed over.

I cannot think of a more formidable man. As Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party he had a detachment and reserves of strength which put him quite apart. Talking to him was like being a junior schoolboy speaking to the headmaster. You were almost certain to say something idiotic out of sheer nervousness. And when you met him it always seemed to be at a moment you were doing something you should not, making a foolish joke or decrying a proposition in absurdly extravagant language. Probably only Ernest Bevin after the war talked to him on level terms. Ernest Bevin had no ambitions to be Prime Minister. Mr. Attlee suited him as a Leader because he let him do exactly what he wanted at the Foreign Office and Bevin protected him stoutly against all intrigues aimed at replacing him. Mr. Morrison never got close to Mr. Attlee and was timid in front of him. Even Sir Stafford Cripps was a trifle apprehensive.

One of the silliest observations ever given currency about Mr. Attlee is that he was a mousy little man, a good chairman of committees and nothing else. In fact he was sharp, resolute and efficient. Unlike Churchill he delegated responsibility and did not interfere with Ministers he had appointed so long as they got on with the job and did it well. But no one could be more severe than he with Ministers who were not up to his standard. To be

rebuked by Mr. Attlee was painful and crushing. 'Why do you have to be so abusive?' he once said to me angrily when I had been making an excitable speech in the House. I felt about two inches high. Yet he could be very kind and encouraging, writing a note of congratulation, for instance, if he thought you had done well as a Junior Minister answering questions.

Lord Attlee is a genuinely good man with far deeper feelings than his critics have credited him with. Look at his history. He came from a comfortable middle-class background. He did not have to do social work in the East End as a young man although many others have dabbled in it. Mr. Attlee did not just visit the Limehouse area in the days when it was rough: he lived in it. He gave himself wholeheartedly to doing what he could as an individual to remedy injustices. That was how he became the Labour Mayor of Stepney in 1919. He slogged his way through the five years of the First World War undramatically but conscientiously and was wounded in Mesopotamia. Throughout his political life he has been an honourable man and that is not always easy at the top. He has never let anyone down or, as far as I know, broken a promise. If his Ministers were in trouble all they had to do was to go to him. Then he would help and protect them. What he could not bear was discovering that someone had made a mess without telling him.

He first went into Parliament in 1922. It was possible, but not certain, that he might not have become the Leader of the Labour Party if many of its big figures had not temporarily disappeared from the débâcle of 1931. Consistently underrating him many politicians thought that his appointment as Leader of the Party in 1935 was a stop-gap arrangement. What they overlooked was Mr. Attlee's steadfast loyalty to the Labour Party and determination to keep it together. He has been through many splits and schisms. He has seen defections and returns. And he never put his own views in Opposition, before the war or after the war, above those of the party.

He tried to keep it steady, always dropping down a plumbline to test the depth and to get the general mood and feeling. He

gently guided the Labour Party into sensible channels but he never sought to bully. Unlike some who continually and ostentatiously declare themselves wedded to principles which override their loyalty to the Labour movement, Mr. Attlee thought that his loyalty was to the party. Without him the party on several occasions would have dissolved almost completely. He has enormous integrity and it is the integrity of a man who knows his own limitations. He knew he could not make rollicking inspiring speeches and that his mind was not of the imaginative sort to create attractive, pulsing, new policies. But he set himself to give practical effect to the Labour Party policy in which he believed. His speeches in the House of Commons were usually brief, almost terse. He did not waste any time trying to think up grand phrases but rattled off the points he thought essential to the situation. Sometimes this made him seem below the occasion. At others his quiet commonsense remarks went right home to the target. Often the unflamboyant are tempted to desperate essays into the dashing. Mr. Attlee never succumbed to that temptation.

Although he did not think creatively he thought brilliantly in an empirical, pragmatic way. Unlike many modern Ministers he did not allow himself to be stifled by detail. Standing back from the scene he surveyed it and knew exactly when to strike. For example, he did not get deeply involved in the technicalities of independence for India. After the war he knew the time had come for it. First he sent a Parliamentary Delegation out to India at the end of 1945. That was intended to soften up the atmosphere and diminish some of the hostility of Indian leaders towards Britain. Then he sent Sir Stafford Cripps and the Cabinet Mission to try to negotiate a settlement between Congress and the Muslim League and sort out the difficulties. That made some progress but did not produce agreement. Mr. Attlee saw that the situation must be made more fluid. He replaced Lord Wavell by Lord Mountbatten and issued the famous time limit by which the Indian leaders must agree or the British would be gone. He calculated exactly the moment to deliver the shock and it worked. If he had been immersed in day-to-day negotiations he might

easily have missed the right moment. But he had held himself back and could look at events calmly.

His detachment was so great that he would occasionally appear to be indifferent to politics. He probably shut them out of his mind altogether when he left the House of Commons in the evening, and turned to the cricket scores. Nothing was ever able to surprise or overwhelm him. He took disaster and good fortune with equal imperturbability. He was never greatly elated nor ever very downcast. This unchangeability inspired confidence which mounted over the years. Even the most suspicious could see that what he cared about was the survival and progress of the Labour Party, and its general attitude towards the removal of social injustice and the making of Britain a fairer place to live in. He had abundant courage and was quite prepared to back Ministers engaged in unpopular action if he thought they were justified.

As usual, the timing of his departure from the Leadership of the Labour Party was precise and accurate. After the election defeat of 1955 he wanted to give enough time for the uncertainties and tremors caused by the Bevanite upheaval to quiet down. He wanted to be sure that he knew where the party was aiming to go so that it would get the right successor. If he had believed that all elements of the Labour Party—the solid Labour voter as well as the party activists and the trade unions—had wanted Mr. Bevan as Leader he would have chosen a different moment for departure and would have seen to it that the party got what he felt that it, as a whole, wished. If he had thought that Mr. Herbert Morrison was the right successor, again there would have been a different timing. But he did not and he waited long enough to put Mr. Morrison out of the running through age if for no other reason.

What is the imprint that he has left on the country and on the Labour Party?

He proved that a Labour Government could work in practice, that the Labour Party had really come of age. He convinced millions that the Labour Party was not 'dangerous' but eminently sensible and practical. To the Labour Party he got across the

realization that fanciful ideas are no good if you cannot make them work, that hot air is no substitute for administrative and punctual efficiency. And he demonstrated the fundamental point that the Labour Party can only succeed if it operates as a team. By his emphasis on loyalty to the movement he rebuked the excesses of those in the Labour Party who have tended to pose as if they were the only true believers, the sole repositories of the genuine socialist faith who alone know all the answers. Country and party first, self second, was his example, and it has been a good one.

Better than anyone else could have done he patiently and steadily supervised the building of the Welfare State. As a leader he had the ancient Greek virtue of balance and moderation. He never fell into extremes or veered wildly. Often as heated arguments went on around him, in Opposition days, he would doodle on a piece of paper, apparently not listening but in reality awaiting the decisive point to intervene and make order out of chaos. I once showed a doodle he had dropped near his seat to a psychiatrist without telling him who had made it.

'What do you think of the character of this person?' I asked.

'Neat, orderly, resolute, fair, traditional, and very conservative in his outlook,' was the reply.

In politics he was conservative in the sense that the Labour Party and trade unions are conservative and stick to precedents and long-held beliefs. And he is traditional. He believes not in revolutionizing Britain but in gradually changing it—preserving the best of the past and marrying it with the best of the future. Some seemed surprised when he accepted an earldom. But there was nothing surprising about it. By tradition retired Prime Ministers are entitled to an earldom. Why should Mr. Attlee change a perfectly good custom? And it meant that he could give his successor a chance to feel his way in the House of Commons without having his ex-Leader breathing embarrassingly down his neck. Yet at the same time it allows Lord Attlee to continue enjoyably to take part in affairs and to give his valuable advice in the House of Lords whenever he thinks it necessary.

It is the opposite of what Sir Winston Churchill did. But Mr. Attlee would never think it right to remain, as a possible encumbrance, once he had decided to hand over power. He is indeed the opposite of Sir Winston. Not for him the violent memorandums to subordinates, the addressing of a Cabinet as though it were a public meeting, the thundering introduction of destiny into his speeches. He has always preferred a quiet, modest getting on with the job.

At first acquaintance the sight of an outwardly ordinary man tackling the great issues of state is not inspiring. The inspiration comes when, after a period of years, the remarkable qualities of loyalty, persistence, and decency have impressed themselves on you. It may well be that in a hundred years' time historians will admire Churchill more as a flamboyant character and Attlee more as a statesman. Sir Winston successfully brought Britain through the war. Lord Attlee held the country together in the times of adaptation and change brought about by the totally different position in the world that Britain held at the end of the war from the one she had at the beginning. He steadied the nation, ironed out many of the rough and potentially explosive frictions and gave it a base from which it could reconsider the future and how to move into it.

17

Mr. Aneurin Bevan

At the end of 1951, two months after the Labour Government had been defeated in the General Election someone asked me whether I thought Nye Bevan would ever be Prime Minister. It had been his resignation from the Government earlier in the year that had split the Labour Party. It was clear that the active rank and file of the Labour Party were behind him in his continued attacks on the Labour Party's rearmament programme. The Parliamentary Labour Party also showed signs of moving towards him.

'No,' I answered, 'not unless there is a war against Russia and he is head of a Coalition Government.'

'Good heavens!' said my questioner. 'Do you think he would fight, then?'

I did and I do. Bevan is both intensely patriotic, at times almost chauvinistic, and brave. He is dramatic enough to lead a nation in war. Better than anyone he could combine Right and Left in an all-out effort for survival in modern conditions. Even many near fellow-travellers would regard his leadership as a certificate that it was all right to resist the Russians. The rest of the country would respond to his colourful flourishing oratory as it did to Churchill's. Bevan's persistent attacks on Churchill during the war were those of one grand strategist criticizing another. His plans might not have been as good—they would certainly have been as bold. And boldness and confidence are the morale-builders of wartime.

But the Russians are not going to start a war. So it is hard to see how Mr. Bevan can become Prime Minister. The very bril-

liance and changeability that are a needed stimulus in wartime are disturbing explosions in peace. It may be that if he got the job he would be a good Prime Minister. He has a wide vision and a willingness to deal originally with the tasks of the future. But the British people are unlikely to take the risk of electing a Labour Party led by Bevan. In the quieter times of peace with long hauls ahead they want a steadier leader, not one whom they think would be liable to do unexpected, unpredictable things. It is an acknowledged truism that Churchill would never have been Prime Minister unless there had been a war. He had long been discarded by the Tories.

Yet once there was a time when it looked as though Bevan had geared himself to the patient building up of a reputation for reliability and responsibility that would have carried him to the leadership of the Labour Party. That was in the first few years after the war. As Minister of Health he painstakingly coaxed the legislation for the National Health Service through Parliament. He argued with and cajoled the doctors and dentists and convinced them that they would be wrong not to co-operate. He was admired by his civil servants as an outstandingly good administrator. It seemed that, as so often in the past, giving a rebel individualist a job to do had turned him into a solid capable statesman, willing to co-operate with his colleagues—despite the faint hints of trouble and threatened resignation of which Francis Williams wrote in 1951:

'The threat to resign has been almost the most persistent single theme in Bevan's ministerial career. I remember calling on him at the Ministry of Health about four months after the Labour Government took office in 1954. His opening words to me were: "Tell the Prime Minister unless I get backing on this I am going to resign." "This", was a dispute over material priorities for housing which he was having with the Ministry of Supply. Since then he has threatened to resign on one issue after another—the last time on the eve of last year's Labour Party Conference when for an hour or two his resignation was,

I believe, actually in the Prime Minister's hands. He has been like a man who threatens suicide so often that no one believes him until he actually does it. . . .'

But Francis Williams wrote that at the time when Bevan had actually resigned. To most observers Bevan had appeared to be going well. He had defended the Labour Government's foreign and rearmament policies. He had flayed the Tory opposition time and again in debates on housing. It looked as though nothing could stop him.

What were his attractions?

First, that compelling wizardry of speech. Bevan speaking is like a beautiful car that has been standing in the cold. As it starts it splutters and stutters. It jerks. Then the engine warms and the car streaks away purring comfortably. Dangerous bends and steep inclines are taken without hesitation. The car of his oratory combines artistry and workmanship with sound engineering. Whenever I saw Bevan's name on the tape in the House of Commons I would go in to hear him for the sheer entertainment of the performance. Dim and tedious details are illuminated by flashing phrases. The speed of the words obliterate opposition and carry the listener along. I have never heard him completely fail in making a speech either to the House of Commons or a public meeting. A few notes scribbled on a piece of paper are all he needs on which to build a brilliant structure.

But his charm does not stop at set speeches. In conversation he is gay and serious in turn. His emotional nature arouses him to glorious flights particularly in argument. He also has the gift of listening even though he may be quite unconvinced by what he hears. There is so much warmth in him that it spills over the room.

Charm in public and in private are the basis of his personal success. Because he makes things seem exciting he was bound to appeal to the younger section of the Labour Party. But he also appeals to the old-guard Socialist who thinks still in terms of the 1930s. Bevan was born the son of a miner and at the age of

thirteen he was working in the pits himself. Nowhere in Britain were the conditions worse than in the South Wales mines between the wars. His own father had pneumoconiosis. In the days when employers manifestly did not care what happened to the miners it was natural that Bevan should not only be a Socialist but an extreme one. He became a Member of Parliament in 1929 when he was thirty-one and he brought the bitterness of his people with him to London.

There his obvious talents brought him into contact with lively and interesting people in every field, including the rich. He is self taught through the reading of hundreds of books, romantic and political. He likes talking, eating, and drinking. In art and literature his tastes are those of the intellectual. He is the sort of person who uses any money he has to live agreeably in pleasant surroundings. He did not move by gradual progression from the working class upwards. He leaped right out of it into an elevated classlessness. His visits to his constituency in Ebbw Vale are an occasion. He takes the eighteenth-century view of the relationship between a Member of Parliament and his constituents. It is their honour to have him represent them rather than his job to pursue and humour them as so many modern Members of Parliament do.

In his attitude to life he is now quite different from the people from whom he came. That does not mean that he does not get on well with them. A visiting hero, particularly the local boy who made good, is always a success when he goes back among the admirers at home.

I would guess that Nye Bevan has often been quite conscious of the temptations of succumbing to the easy comfortable life his talents could have brought him in London. Maybe at times he has felt himself slipping away from his origins in a fashion that he does not like. Perhaps as an antidote against that, and to maintain the link with his roots, he has expressed a more violent and vituperative brand of Socialism than most other leaders of the Labour Party. Possibly his language has been more extreme than it would have been if there had not been a subconscious need to maintain an identity with the miners of South

Wales. Keeping his contacts with his past alive has maybe been a major reason for his long and stubborn adherence to the doctrine, the whole doctrine, and nothing but the doctrine of Socialism as he knew it in his youth. That is an explanation of why he at once reacted so violently to the suggestions that other means of public ownership than outright blanket nationalization should be considered.

But where this unwillingness to change has been a weakness to him as a statesman it has been an enormous strength to him inside the Labour Party. His rigid deference to the philosophy of the 1930s has evoked a tremendous response from many of those keen active party workers who are powerful in the organization of the constituency Labour Parties. He has appeared to them as the principal carrier of the standard of true unyielding Socialism. His slashing onslaughts on the Tories, his blaming of all our wrongs on the wickedness of the capitalists, has found a ready echo in their hearts. Curiously in this he has been appealing to the ever dwindling group of party activists who themselves are drifting away from what the public in its changing moods really wants. Since Nye Bevan became a Member of Parliament in 1929 three new generations have come—thinking new thoughts and seeing the world in a different way.

But this marriage of his words with the emotions of the hard core of the constituency party faithfuls gave him great power. So long as he was prepared to act with even a façade of soberness it made his position as ultimate leader of the Labour Party impregnable.

He had never had much to do with trade union leaders—they were suspicious of his cleverness with words and had doubts of his trustworthiness. Ernest Bevin, for instance, was not the sort of person to appreciate Bevan's attacks on him when he, Bevin, was Minister of Labour in the war. In 1944, after a stoppage in the Yorkshire coalfields, Bevin took powers under Order 1 AA to make anyone starting an unofficial strike liable to imprisonment and fines. On the 28th April in the House of Commons Nye Bevan said of the new Order:

'It elevates the irresponsible trade union official—and I use the word "irresponsible" in the constitutional sense of the term, because a trade union official is irresponsible; he is not subject to election, as we are; he is not exposed to pressure, as we are. George Bernard shaw said, in *The Apple Cart*, that the person in this country who is in the most strongly entrenched position, next to the King, is the trade union official.'

Ernest Bevin remarked in reply:

'Making catch phrases is an easier job than directing 24 million people in a war of this character. . . . Some Members would rather that the working class went to hell through chaos than that they won a victory through organization.'

But the doubts of trade union officials were dormant so long as Bevan co-operated with the Labour Government. It is the Parliamentary Labour Party that elects the Leader of the Labour Party. If Bevan had continued to have the support and confidence of the Parliamentary Labour Party there would have been no objection from the trade unionists to his ultimate arrival as Leader.

So what went wrong?

The answer is in Bevan's character. In 1951 he was fifty-four but he still could not cope with restraint even if it were self-imposed. He was impatient and impetuous. Like many brilliant men before him he could not understand why his colleagues did not always follow his advice. Nor did he care to have himself identified among the party activists with the more cautious aspects of Labour Government policy. He probably felt that a gap was opening between himself and the very militants from whom he gained his strength. He was presumably anxious also to climb higher than Minister of Labour, which he had been made in 1951 and which did not seem much by way of promotion from Minister of Health.

His exasperation was already reaching flood point before the

1951 Budget came with its charges on teeth and spectacles, designed as a contribution towards paying for the rearmament programme which on the 15th February (two months before he resigned) he had vehemently defended in a remarkable speech in the House of Commons. After the Budget his indignation broke the floodgates and poured all over the Labour Party and the country. It is old history now how he justified his resignation on wider grounds than his original dislike of charges in the Health Service (he himself had once introduced a measure for making a charge in the Health Service and had also agreed that there should be a limit on expenditure on the Health Service)—and brought in rearmament and the whole range of the Labour Government's foreign policy.

It was a call to all those in the Labour Party who for various reasons had been worried by the Labour Government's firm stand against Russian encroachment in Europe. It united crackpots of the earth-is-flat variety with fellow-travellers. It stirred many sound and solid elements of the party who had an unhappy feeling that it must be our fault that we could not get on better with the Russians. In short it produced a turmoil. I believe that Bevan was convinced of the truth of all he said. He would no doubt argue today with much force that he was right. I do not wish to go into the merits of that battle now fortunately long past. But the effect of it was that in the end influential trade unionists, the bulk of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and the majority of Labour Party supporters, as distinct from activists in the constituency organizations, thought that whether his arguments were right or wrong his resignation had fatally rocked the boat. It all might have gone the other way; but the way it went was to leave the impression in the Labour Party as a whole that he had acted far too hastily. The loss of the 1951 election was widely ascribed in the Labour Party to him. That may be fair or unfair but it is a fact. Consequently he was ruled out as a potential leader. The chance that came so close to him had disappeared.

Now, almost unexpectedly, he has since the 1955 election mellowed and softened. His spirit is still as quick but he seems

more willing to compromise. It is as though he has settled down to allowing his destiny to take its course rather than driving battering-rams at Fate to influence it.

If he becomes Foreign Secretary he will be a brilliant one, worthy of Britain. He will be no anaemic figure to represent us but a man of stature and compelling manner. The uninformed have sometimes thought him unpatriotic. This is totally untrue. He is as British as Palmerston but he uses the techniques of our times in his handling of other countries. When India was seriously debating whether to leave the Commonwealth—it was during the aftermath of Suez when India was not only angry about our armed intervention but about the British Government's attitude on Kashmir—it was he who, on a visit to India, completely changed the atmosphere. His speech to the parliament in New Delhi brought back the waverers to a belief in the British connection, and in the virtues of Britain, which they were fast losing. The Government could not have done it; nor could have any other single living Englishman. That alone was evidence that he will know on the world's stage how to placate charmingly without appeasing, to persuade without hectoring.

Opponents of the Labour Party hope that he will fall out with Gaitskell. On the contrary it daily grows more probable that together they will make, as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, the best team at the head of affairs that Britain has had for many a year. Nye Bevan has already achieved much in his contribution to the creation of the Welfare State. It may well be that his next years will be the most constructive and fruitful of all. Britain needs in the Foreign Office a man with a brain delicate and flexible enough to uphold her interests at a time when her power relative to the rest of the world has so greatly diminished. Nye Bevan has the imagination, the command of language, the gift of drawing out brilliantly illustrative points from a labyrinth of complications, to do just this.

Mr. Hugh Gaitskell

SOME popular misconceptions about Hugh Gaitskell: He is a dull fellow. He is a bit of a prig. He lacks emotion. He is a minor figure. He is lukewarm about Socialism.

The person he really is: He is amusing, warm, and friendly. He likes dancing and being gay. He is carefree and attractive at home with his wife and two daughters, entertaining his friends. He has immense moral courage and resolution. He is a convinced Socialist. He believes passionately in equality—particularly in the equality which gives all the same chance to develop their talents, whatever their background. He is loyal to principles and people. He is as emotional as Nye Bevan—but his emotions are more controlled.

Why did the misconceptions arise? Partly because he is very sincere. Often sincere people do not have a natural gift of eloquence in which they can lose themselves in their words and in their audience. They may sound a trifle austere. That is because of an intense anxiety to tell the truth. Those who are careful to avoid exaggeration and to present an accurate picture frequently put their case without jokes, quips, and flashy illustrations which might distract from the central theme. The academician —and Hugh Gaitskell is an academician—is trained to be precise, to use the almost scientific approach to any problem he is discussing. In trying to convince or to be persuasive he avoids tricks but appeals to the intelligence of the listener by logically marshalling the facts.

Hugh Gaitskell after leaving Winchester and Oxford was a

lecturer in economics. Physically not strong, until recently, he became a temporary civil servant at the beginning of the war. He was principal private secretary to Hugh Dalton when he was Minister of Economic Warfare, and then became a Principal Assistant Secretary at the Board of Trade until the end of the war. The impress of his early academic training was even more strongly emphasized by his subsequent experience in analysing and dealing carefully and exactly with the problems that came before him as a civil servant.

But his emotions have never been asleep. When he was twenty he drove a car for the strikers in the General Strike. A little later he was in Vienna working with the Socialists who were trying to keep Austria a democracy. And all the time from his university days he has been an ardent member of the Labour Party. When it was not so fashionable or popular to be a Socialist as it is today he was doing party work and giving W.E.A. lectures.

But it was in 1945, when he went into Parliament, that he began clearly to blossom out from his academic and slightly Civil Service past. In just over ten years he advanced to being Leader of the Labour Party—one of the quickest rises ever in politics. How did it happen?

If it had not been for the war he would have been in Parliament at the General Election which would have come in 1939 or 1940. He had been adopted as Labour candidate for South Leeds in 1938. He missed five years of Parliamentary life which would have made his rise less rapid. But even if he had been in Parliament all through the war fifteen years is still a short time in which to achieve the Leadership of the Labour Party—and at the age of fifty.

One explanation is that he is exceptionally able. His maiden speech was one of the best even in the new 1945 Parliament which contained a platoon or more of fresh and remarkable Parliamentary performers. In May 1946 he became Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Fuel and Power. He was very efficient. His experience of economics and the Civil Service gave

him an ascendancy of his subject in the House. His speech winding up the Bill on the nationalization of electricity in February 1947 established him as a House of Commons speaker of outstanding authority. When Mr. Shinwell was moved from the Ministry of Fuel and Power in October 1947 Hugh Gaitskell was his natural and obvious replacement. But he was not yet in the Cabinet.

Even so, his quick promotion to full Ministership in charge of the newly nationalized coal, electricity, and gas industries excited attention and some jealousy. Some thought, and some may even have hoped, that he would fail. But he was far too competent an administrator not to succeed in the office and he had already mastered the technique of dealing with the House sufficiently well to survive there. Those who are going to rise to the top politically gain stature at each upward stage and that is the case with Hugh Gaitskell.

In 1950 he became Minister of State for Economic Affairs, subordinate to Sir Stafford Cripps then Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was not promotion so much as a sideways move. Yet in practice it was an important landmark. As Minister of Fuel and Power he had already been in the sphere of Ministers responsible to Sir Stafford. Sir Stafford admired him greatly. I had been Personal Assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps on the Cabinet Mission to India in 1946 and continued to see him frequently until his last illness forced him to retire and go to Switzerland in hope of recovery. From the many things that Sir Stafford Cripps said about Hugh Gaitskell it was clear that he thought of him as upright and brilliant. No doubt, although he never said so, he saw something of himself reflected in Hugh Gaitskell's honest and clear-headed approach to every problem.

When Sir Stafford Cripps felt obliged to resign in October 1950 he strongly recommended that Hugh Gaitskell should be his successor as Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was Hugh Gaitskell that he thought most capable and, because of his moral qualities, most likely to pursue his own determined attempt to put Britain's economy straight by telling the truth and by never flinching from hard measures, if they were necessary, despite

disagreeable unpopularity. It was to the credit of Hugh Gaitskell, at the age of forty-four, that Cripps should have so much confidence in him.

At one stroke he was lifted from being a Minister without Cabinet rank to one of the three top posts in the Government. He had jumped from secondary to major power in an afternoon and only five years after entering Parliament. In a sense he was lucky. There was no other person of comparable character and ability, and with knowledge of economics, available to do the job. It was not a moment at which to appoint an amateur, however talented, to run the Treasury.

That advance put him in a position from which he could become Leader of the Labour Party. It also placed him on a platform from which he could have fallen irretrievably into oblivion. He was up among older and more experienced members of his party—some of whom had been important Ministers for most of the war. Some would be bound to feel a trifle resentful at being overtaken, on paper at least, by a comparative newcomer. A combination of tact and resolution was needed if the new Chancellor were not to be buffeted about, overriden by the Cabinet, and relegated to a place where he would be the mere agent of the Cabinet in framing economic policy rather than the originator.

It was not long before his character was sharply tested. In his first, and sole, Budget he had not only the habitual problem of inflation to deal with; he had to finance a great new rearmament programme promoted with the unanimous agreement of the Labour Government, but not of the Labour Party, following the Chinese intervention in Korea. He had to try to hold expenditure down. Every year the social services automatically cost more in terms of money. He aimed to limit the increase in the health service by imposing small charges on teeth and spectacles. The sum involved in this section of the Budget was around £11 million, nowhere near as much as the £50 million over which Mr. Thorneycroft resigned in 1958. But it was a definite part, with other economies, of an overall plan to deal with the economic position.

As the shape of the Budget began to be seen by the Cabinet friction began. Nye Bevan told a meeting in Bermondsey, a few days before the Budget speech was due to be made on the 10th April, that he would not remain a member of a government which made any charges in the Health Service to the patient. He, and those who agreed with him, were using what pressure they could to compel Hugh Gaitskell to reformulate his Budget. But he never wavered in his course. He offered to resign if the Cabinet wished him to, saying that there was still time for somebody else to frame the Budget, but if he were to remain Chancellor of the Exchequer it must be his Budget in the form that he saw it.

The Cabinet—Mr. Attlee the Prime Minister was at the time in hospital—were satisfied that Gaitskell was right. They supported him. The Budget went through and the uproar began. Many politicians, after the resignation of Mr. Bevan and others, thought that was the end of Hugh Gaitskell.

The Labour Government was precariously perched in the House of Commons with an effective majority of five or six. Now it was hideously split. Nye Bevan was wildly popular with the rank and file in the constituency Labour Parties and with many trade unionists. He also had substantial support in the Parliamentary Labour Party. It seemed almost certain that the wrath of the Labour Party would fall on Hugh Gaitskell for precipitating so grave a crisis by refusing to modify his Budget. When the Labour Party lost the election in the autumn of that year many more became convinced that Hugh Gaitskell was finished. Even Mr. Attlee seemed to be irritated with Gaitskell. Neither he, Mr. Morrison, nor any other leading member of the Labour Government defended either their own rearmament programme or Gaitskell in the controversy that broke out in the Labour Party after Nye Bevan's resignation. He was left, with the aid of one or two supporters, not only to put his own case but that of the Labour Party. At times it seemed that the Parliamentary Labour Party itself might turn against him. Yet he did not hesitate or flinch.

It was in this period that his courage, persistence, and loyalty

to principle were triumphantly demonstrated. In adverse conditions he travelled the country facing Labour Party audiences which were often hostile. Instead of being broken he was created a man of greater stature. Gradually those who had habitually underestimated his attributes and his staying power came to see that here was a leader. Equably, but stoutly, he repulsed the violent attacks that were made on him. He knew he was right, as indeed he was, and nothing, not even the temptation of political convenience, was going to make him say otherwise.

It was an outstanding illustration of the proposition that standing by what you believe pays in the long run, even in politics.

From someone who had been a relatively obscure figure in the Labour Party he was transformed into the famous champion of those who prefer to be guided by reason, good faith, and common sense, rather than be tossed about by erratic emotions and dreams that are unrelated to the facts. Sir Stafford Cripps and Ernest Bevin had gone. Mr. Attlee had stood aloof from the contest and was plainly seeking to hold the party steady and see it on a safe course before he retired. Mr. Morrison, in his public speeches, had not been exactly neutral but neither had he gone out of his way to take up a clear position. He was also thought to be getting too old for the Leadership of the party. For various reasons others who might have been likely to succeed Mr. Attlee were out of the running—apart from Nye Bevan.

The issue of the future Leadership was really decided when in September 1954, after he had made strenuous efforts to be elected, Nye Bevan was defeated by Hugh Gaitskell for the post of Treasurership of the Labour Party. For that office all sections of the Labour Party, including constituency parties and trade unions, vote. Thereafter Hugh Gaitskell consolidated his position with a series of brilliant speeches in the House of Commons and, on Mr. Attlee's retirement, it was inevitable that he should be elected Leader—on December 14th, 1955—by the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The battle was won. But after victory the wise man seeks

conciliation. The divisions in the Labour Party had riven it in the country and had greatly damaged its electoral prospects. Hugh Gaitskell's first task was to re-unite the party, to eliminate the often artificial barriers between the so-called Left and Right wings. With the careful persistence that is always his he set about it. He also used his considerable personal charm.

The Labour Party needed a new look. Many of its slogans and concepts were appropriate to the days of unemployment of the 1930s and earlier. There was nothing wrong with the spirit but it required modern dress and adaptation to suit the times and to meet the future adequately. It is illustrative of Hugh Gaitskell's sagacity that he has been able to get all sections and opinions of the party working together once more to a common end. That demanded patience and hard and steady work. Laying the foundations for a new and thoughtful approach is not immediately glamorous or exciting, but it is essential.

It is complained that Hugh Gaitskell is colourless and dull. I have heard many of his speeches in the Parliamentary Labour Party meetings, in the House of Commons, and outside. Not one of them has been dull. It is said by his critics in the Labour Party that he is not really a Socialist but is merely a mild reformer and tinkerer with the existing structure. It is true that he does not believe in the efficacy of wholesale nationalization as a cure for all our problems. He is intelligent enough to see that there are other ways of achieving public ownership and control which in many cases may be far more effective. But the fact that he guided the Labour Party into abandoning, apart from the re-nationalization of Steel and Transport, block nationalization as an instrument of policy may obscure the vitality of his intentions. He by no means excludes the taking over by the Government of backward firms and the creation of new firms in industries, new or old, that need stimulus. His notions on economic control and taxation are more far-reaching and efficient than those of some of the more vociferous elements in the Labour Party because they are better founded. I have heard business men declare that they would rather have Nye Bevan as Prime Minister because he would not

have the same knowledge with which to stop up taxation loopholes as Hugh Gaitskell. It is unlikely that many non-Socialists will welcome his plans, for example, for a capital gains tax. At the same time he has presided over the emergence of new Labour policies such as the great national superannuation scheme. He adheres almost violently to the belief that every child should be provided with the same opportunity to advance; and he remains convinced that there are still far too many divisions between one class and one income level and another in our society.

But he hopes to achieve progress through the ways of the second half of the twentieth century and not of the nineteenth century. He sees the facts as they are and not as many people would like them to be. Born in 1906 he belongs to the present. He knows that Britain will not survive if ability and inventiveness are not encouraged, if we do not build on our discoveries in the nuclear and engineering fields, if we do not greatly expand scientific and technical education. He is prepared to take strong, and if necessary unpopular, action to ensure the future.

Criticism has often been printed that he is aloof, that he moves in a small circle of intimate friends and eschews close contacts with trade unionists and non-intellectual sections of the Labour Party. It is not quite clear how this gained credence. It is true that he is loyal to his friends. It may be an unusual quality in politics but it is not generally thought to be a bad one. He has firm friendships with many trade unionists, leading and otherwise. He is readily accessible and always open to argument. He is quite remote from the Tammany Hall type of leader. He does not believe in 'fixing' things either in Parliamentary Party meetings or at party conferences. He is content to display the facts and the arguments and trust that good sense will prevail—as in the end it usually does.

Not everyone in the Labour Party is pleased that he has become its Leader. There is always capital to be made out of the fact that a Socialist Party is being led not by a trade unionist or a worker but by an old Wykehamist with considerable academic and administrative achievement behind him. And,

naturally, the non-Socialist Press do what they can to make mischief. Utterly untrue stories appear in the political gossip columns of mysterious sherry parties to which it is said only a handful of middle-class Socialists are invited and at which Labour Party policy is decided. It is due to the eternal credulity of mankind that such rubbish is heeded.

In my experience Hugh Gaitskell never dissembles and never, unlike many politicians, declares support in public for a policy that he denies in private. He would rather resign. He may attempt to get compromises where the alternative is anarchy—that is quite another matter—and he shares one great attribute with his predecessor Lord Attlee: loyalty to the Labour Party.

But will he make a flashing, adventurous Leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister? At the start of each new part of his career there have always been a great many people who have thought that Hugh Gaitskell could not do it. Each time they have been proved wrong. I am certain that they will be found to be wrong yet again.

Hugh Gaitskell has not had much opportunity to be dramatic or to flourish thrilling gestures. As the Leader of the Labour Party he is still amazingly young. On the way there he has had to quiet raw emotions. He has had to build up again a unity in the Labour Party without which it would have split uselessly into warring factions. He has had skilfully to coax the Labour Party into meeting the challenge of the future instead of fulminating and disputing about the past. All the time he is still feeling his way. But the fire and the intensity are there. He is ideal as a British Prime Minister. He is steadfast and sane and he has courage and vision. He is the sort of man from whom people like Sir John Cockcroft will be able to get the support they need without the country wasting its money on crazy schemes that cannot succeed.

He is already a stronger Leader, so far as the shaping of policy and its enunciation goes, than Mr. Attlee was. He has genuine inspiration and feel for what must and can be done. He is not drab but exuberant. He has no Puritan streak leading to a love of austerity from masochistic pleasure. When he advocates

toughness to the nation it is because it is needed to prevent ruin and to initiate an upward turn. His sympathy is with those who think that Socialism should mean a fuller, more exciting and satisfying life in which standards of surroundings and enjoyment enlarge for everyone. But the communication of a forward-looking leadership is largely a matter of language, of finding attractive, glittering phrases to show what you mean without losing accuracy.

Hugh Gaitskell has not yet achieved this command of words in speech and writing. But just as he has risen to the right level in everything he has had to do in the past, so will he probably surmount this last, and very difficult, obstacle. The quality of his speeches, and public manner, have shown a constant improvement since 1945. He is a man who is not too proud to examine his own defects. That is why he continues to mature and in due course he will master the art of presentation.

Maybe then his critics will acknowledge that it was not accident but his qualities that brought him to the Leadership of the Labour Party. It is fortunate for Britain at this crisis in her history that a comparatively young man not weighed down by the conventional politician's clichés should be in so commanding a place. Whatever the difficulties he has the character to meet them. He has the brain to see what is right and the determination to do it.

Sir Winston Churchill

IN PARLIAMENT

NINETEEN-FORTY-FIVE to nineteen-fifty-five were the last ten years of Sir Winston's active Parliamentary life. It was in that great decade of his later maturity that he achieved, in conditions of unbridled party warfare, a domination over the House of Commons that is not likely to be seen again in our lifetime.

In this period, during which I watched him almost daily when the Commons were sitting, Sir Winston Churchill did not of an afternoon walk into the House. He appeared in it suddenly from behind the Speaker's chair. He did not seem to have legs like other human beings: his face and body looked all of a piece like some fabulous Humpty Dumpty. The moment this miraculous creature was noticed coming into sight the atmosphere changed tangibly. Visitors, if they were at the back of the Strangers' Gallery, stood up or, if they were at the side, thrust their heads over the railings to make sure of at least one glimpse of this phenomenon. Members became sharper and more aware. Murmurs of 'here comes the old man' passed along the benches. The huge, almost baby-like face was carefully examined for signs of entertainment, excitement, or tranquillity to come.

There was no concealment on that face: on the broad white canvas an emotion was set for a moment, wiped off, then instantly replaced by another which might make the spectator wonder how its predecessor ever got there. There was the scowl, directed at everybody. There was the baleful, nearly malevolent, look some-

times concentrated on an individual Member to whom Sir Winston had taken a temporary dislike. There was the child's sulk when, perhaps, he thought the Speaker, or the Opposition, had been unfair to him. There was the twinkling eye—a signal to the House that a Churchillian joke appreciated by its author was on the way. There was the large, full-sized smile which seemed to divide Humpty Dumpty somewhere at the middle when he felt he had made an opponent uncomfortable. There was the air of mock penitence. There was the convulsed, or laughing, face when the world, the Opposition, or a Parliamentary situation which had turned to the ridiculous, struck him as grotesquely wonderful. There were the looks magnanimous, contemptuous, indifferent, very bored, mischievous, sombre, despairing, arrogant. . . . All were emphatic, unmistakable, rich, and firmly lined. Only one look was missing: the look apologetic.

He might not utter a word, yet as long as he sat on the bench, the great head moving round, the face animated or so lifeless that it had the quality of a bust worn by time, the changed temper of the atmosphere was sustained. Every gesture, every move of hand to ear, had significance. When he got up to go something of the vitality of the House went with him. It settled down to a quieter jog like a reception after the guest of honour has gone.

This Humpty Dumpty had a magic which touched all, even those who sincerely, or affectedly, declared that they were indifferent to, or detested, him. From his opponents he evoked successively violent hatred, dislike, derision, friendliness, and love. From his supporters he called out the two last emotions and added to them bewilderment, frustration, misery, and enthusiasm. Like the shape in which it lived the personality was round and full, embracing everything a human being can encompass. It could not act in the assembly of the House of Commons without provoking ripples.

'I have lived nearly all my life in the House of Commons and I believe it to be the enduring guarantee of British liberties and democratic practices.'

Hansard, March 7th, 1950.

Parliament always came first with Churchill. He gave more of himself to it than to anything else. His achievements as an author, an administrator and a statesman, vast though they are, do not reach the level of his genius as a Parliamentarian. Parliament was his stage and Parliament responded to him.

Queen Victoria still reigned when Sir Winston first took his seat. He had been jerked into national prominence by his adventures in South Africa. He was familiar with battle and physically brave. But even he was intimidated by the House of Commons' serene and unswerving timelessness. Then he could not speak without memorizing every word beforehand. That is an inconvenience in an institution where the course and mood of debate can alter so quickly that a previously prepared speech may become as irrelevant as the nine o'clock from Paddington to Birmingham is to the man who wants to go to Brighton. The way Churchill approached his maiden speech was a sample of the future. He worked at it with a thoroughness infused by an energy above mere industry. In his seventies if he was to speak in the House he applied himself as hard as when he was twenty-six. In the worst moments of the war he continued to put the preparation of a Parliamentary speech in front of all his other duties. In the *Hinge of Fate* he writes of the speech he made on January 27th, 1942, when the war had brought the biggest single accumulation of disasters: 'I did not grudge the twelve or fourteen hours of concentrated thought which ten thousand words of original composition on a vast, many sided subject demanded. . . .'

This unremitting work was at the heart of his success as a speaker. He was not a natural speaker. In his set speeches every word had been gone over several times before. But he knew what he was going to say so well that he did not read, but acted, his phrases: yet it was more than acting because he was the author and believed in his script. He might deliberately provoke an interruption and the answer to it was often already written in his notes. In later Parliamentary life he was able to speak briefly, but uncomfortably, without preparation; retorts and answers to questions from long practice and custom came more quickly to

his mind: in the Parliamentary sense at least his brain moved faster in old age than it did when he was young. But for years he floundered if he had to leave the script. As F. E. Smith (Lord Birkenhead) once remarked, he 'devoted the best years of his life to the preparation of his impromptu speeches'.

So it was with his maiden speech. He arrived to speak in a debate on the South African war with a number of different speeches ready to deliver. One of them, he hoped, might be suitable. As the moment that he would be called grew closer he despairingly tried to think of some opening sentence which would smooth the way into his speech and appear to have some connection with the speech then being delivered by the young Lloyd George whom he had to follow. Lloyd George had put on the order paper an amendment moderately critical of the Government but it was not certain whether he would move it. Aid came to Churchill in his unhappiness, now nearly defeated by his own terror, from an old Parliamentarian, a Mr. Bowles, sitting nearby. Only someone who has had to make a speech in the House and is certain at the last moment that he cannot do it can fully understand the extent of Mr. Bowles' charity. Mr. Bowles whispered, as brilliant phrases dropped unheard around the young Churchill: 'You might say "instead of making his violent speech without moving his moderate amendment, he had better have moved his moderate amendment without making his violent speech".' Churchill repeated the words as he stood for the first time in the House of Commons. The Commons is always pleased, if it can, to help a new speaker through the agony of his first speech. There was a glad laugh and Churchill put the most appropriate of his prepared speeches into gear and drove away.

His speech, while not outstandingly brilliant, was not as colourless as most maiden speeches. The Conservative Government, and he was then a Conservative, were for the ruthless prosecution of the war and for damnation to all Boers. 'If I were a Boer,' he said, 'I hope I should be fighting in the field.' He went on to demand that it should be made 'easy and honourable for

the Boers to surrender'. The whole of his speech, which generously recognized the claims and feelings of the Boers, contradicted the trend of Government and majority thinking. That may not seem much to the non-Parliamentarian but for an ambitious young man, aware of the consequences, to go against his own Government so early needed courage.

If application was the ground on which his Parliamentary career was built courage was its foundation. Courage is the element which lifts a Member out of the ordinary. Many are brash, but few are brave. Courage is not contrariness, which is often akin to pleasure at shocking or being in a tiny minority. It is the deliberate refusal of a man who has the ability to be politically successful to shirk saying things he feels to be true even though no one would comment on his failure to say them. It is something more than sincerity although that is included. A man can be sincere in everything he says and yet take care not to say anything which will disconcert his potential supporters.

No Parliamentarian can be of the first rank without courage and Churchill has always had it. In the thirties he could at any time have joined the Government if he had been more willing to compromise with his views on the dangers of Nazism. He could have softened his criticisms of the Government's feebleness in front of Hitler, he could have been less frank without in any way being untruthful, but he thought it was his duty to Parliament to speak as he did and that unless he used powerful language his warnings would have no effect at all. Office was worth less to him than truth; and that, since human beings are as frail in politics as elsewhere, is remarkable.

Simply to have the capacity to endure hours of preparatory drudgery and a courage large enough to impress the House is not sufficient to establish a dominating role in Parliament. Members of the House of Commons individually are fallible in their estimates of each other. Collectively they rarely make a mistake. The combined judgment of the House of Commons on a man's character and abilities contains a high element of accuracy. No assembly can be more forgiving, more charitable, more

shrewd, or fairer. It searches out all a man's qualities and weaknesses as they show up in good fortune and in bad, in the interplay of debates, and in the association of many years with his colleagues. It was the proof of Winston Churchill's stature as a Parliamentarian that he passed through all the tests and because of the huge volume of accumulated respect he earned in the House he could get away with breaches of the rules and traditions which would never have been allowed to others.

The British temperament is peculiarly suited to Parliamentary Government and it has fashioned a chamber of exactly the right shape in which to exercise it. Churchill has understood that completely, as the memorandum he wrote as Prime Minister on the rebuilding of the blitzed House of Commons chamber shows:

> '. . . its shape should be oblong and not semicircular. Here is a very potent factor in our political life. The semicircular assembly which appeals to political theorists, enables every individual or every group to move round the centre, adopting various shades of pink according as the weather changes. . . . It is easy for an individual to move through those insensible gradations from Left to Right, but the act of crossing the Floor is one which requires serious consideration. I am well informed on this matter, for I have accomplished that difficult process, not only once, but twice. . . . Logic, which has created in so many countries semicircular assemblies with buildings that give to every member not only a seat to sit in, but often a desk to write at, with a lid to bang, has proved fatal to Parliamentary government as we know it here in its home and in the land of its birth.
>
> . . . it should not be big enough to contain all its members at once without overcrowding, and there should be no question of every member having a separate seat reserved for him. The reason for this has long been a puzzle to uninstructed outsiders. . . . Yet it is not so difficult to understand if you look at it from a practical point of view. If the House is big enough to contain all its Members nine-tenths of its debates will be

conducted in the depressing atmosphere of an almost empty or half-empty chamber. The essence of good House of Commons speaking is the conversational style, the facility for quick informal interruptions and interchanges. Harangues from a rostrum would be a bad substitute for the conversational style in which so much business is done. But the conversational style requires a fairly small space, and there should be on great occasions a sense of crowd and urgency. There should be a sense of the importance of much that is said, and a sense that great matters are being decided, there and then, by the House.'

In making formality informal and informality formal Churchill excelled. When he spoke each Member of the House felt that he was taking part in something important. He could not avoid being flattered by the immense pains which had been taken to impress him. Sometimes, because the speeches had been prepared in the expectation of the House being in a different mood to the one it assumed in the event, they misfired. His speeches on India and Burma in the post-war Parliament were quite disconnected from the main movement of ideas in the House—making him seem like a materialized ghost from a dead age posturing in front of perplexed and unhappy supporters. Once in the 1945 Parliament the Labour Party deliberately disconcerted him by a conspiracy to remain completely silent throughout the whole of his speech. The voice grew quicker and sharper, the hand and the chin were thrust forward to provoke the anticipated interruption —which was to be smitten down at once by the previously polished retort—but no interruption came. Instead of angry shouts there was an atmosphere of stolid complacency. It was difficult even for the great composer and conductor to make the symphony sound well with some of the loudest instruments silent when their harsh background was most needed. Occasionally Churchill has had periods of indifference or even arrogance towards the House which it has resented. Surprisingly these cleavages have at times gone deep. Sir Stafford Cripps told me of

a time during the war when, in his view, such a divergence had occurred and he said so to Churchill.

'Two things I put above everything in my life,' said the Prime Minister, 'God and the House of Commons'.

'Well,' said Sir Stafford, 'I hope you treat God better than you do the House of Commons.'

But these were only temporary patches of misunderstanding. Usually the touch was sure and with time it so matured that it is hard to believe that there has ever been anything better in Parliamentary artistry than the handling of the House of Commons by Churchill in his seventies.

Yet, underneath it all, there lay a hint of arrogance, of contempt for those who disagreed. There was something in the criticism that Churchill did not often take the opinion of the House into consideration when executing policy. He paid the House of Commons elaborate respect but little attention. His aim was usually either to control the House for his purposes or to use it as a vehicle for appealing to the nation and the world.

Churchill always gave great care not only to his phrases, in which much use was made of the unexpected adjective and noun, but to the construction of his speeches. Since the speeches were elaborately fashioned in advance he could not make adjustments to suit the vagaries of the House as such debaters as Aneurin Bevan can. Consequently he had to impose himself on the mood of the House. This could only be done if his anticipation of the likely reactions of the House were not too wide of the mark. During the early months of the 1945 Parliament he had a number of successes by provoking the interruptions he wanted from the great Labour majority—about half of whom were new to the House and easily tricked. Hearing him for the first time during the debate on the Address in 1945, I marvelled at the cunning way he trapped us. In the General Election campaign he had made Harold Laski, then Chairman of the Labour Party, into a national bogeyman. He had tried to convince the country that the Cabinet of a Labour Government would for the first time in British history be responsible to some Politbureau-like outside body—

Mr. Laski and the National Executive of the Labour Party—and not to Parliament. After the election Laski, still ebullient, made a speech announcing that British policy in Greece was to be altered.

In the House Churchill dealt, in a style to become familiar, with the excited rows of Government supporters, still resentful of his broadcast suggestion that Socialism in Britain would eventually lead to a police state. The more we grew indignant the better he enjoyed himself.

> Mr. Churchill: What precisely is Mr. Laski's authority for all the statements he is making about our foreign policy? How far do his statements involve the agreement or responsibility of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? We know that Mr. Laski is the Chairman of the Labour Party Executive Committee.
>
> Labour Members (derisively): Gestapo.
>
> Mr. Churchill (blandly): Everybody has a right to describe their own party machine as they choose.
>
> This is a very important body. I have been told—I am willing to be contradicted and to learn—that it has the power to summon Ministers before it. Let us find out whether it is true or not. Evidently it has got great power, and it has, even more evidently, a keen inclination to assert it.
>
> I see that Mr. Laski said in Paris a few days ago that our policy in Greece was to be completely changed. What is the meaning of this? I thought we were agreed upon our policy towards Greece especially after Sir Walter Citrine's and the Trade Unions' report.

Here a babel of fury and shouts broke out from the Labour benches, particularly from the substantial section that during the next few years was vehemently to criticize Ernest Bevin. Churchill was ready for the interruption because he had intended it. With great solemnity he stood squarely at the despatch-box, gazing almost sympathetically at the benches opposite:

'I would say to hon. Members not to speak disrespectfully of this report,'

and here he sharpened the emphasis with heavy point on each word and with the utmost significance on the last three,

'. . . or they may be brought up before that body.'

Hansard, 16th August, 1945.

The effect of this comical surprise was devastating on the crowded Labour benches which were transfixed with astonishment.

If his speeches could not avoid the use of many figures and technicalities there were always breaks in them designed to restore the attention of the House to a high pitch should it have grown a little bored. In March, 1953, he was obliged to make a complicated speech on defence policy. To relieve the gloom of the manpower statistics there were at intervals of about ten minutes such passages as this:

'I must now warn the House that I am going to make an unusual departure. I am going to make a Latin quotation. It is one which I hope will not offend the detachment of the old school tie and will not baffle or be taken as a slight upon the new spelling brigade. Perhaps I ought to say the "new spelling squad", because it is an easier word. The quotation is *Arma virumque cano* which, for the benefit of our Winchester friends, I may translate as "Arms and the men I sing". That generally describes my theme.'

Hansard, 5th March, 1953.

A speech on the international situation in December, 1950, was designed to annoy the Opposition by the inclusion of a demand that during the difficulties caused by the Korean war the Labour Government should drop the nationalization of steel. At times he had lost the sympathy of the House, as he probably knew

he would. To regain it there was a passage which suddenly broke the partisan nature of his speech and lifted it to another level.

'When nations or individuals get strong they are often truculent and bullying, but when they are weak they become better mannered. But this is the reverse of what is healthy and wise. I have always been astonished, having seen the end of these two wars, how difficult it is to make people understand the Roman wisdom, "Spare the conquered and confront the proud." I think I will go so far as to say it in the original: *Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*. The modern practice has too often been, "Punish the defeated and grovel to the strong." '

Hansard, 14th December, 1950.

In April, 1951, he was dealing with a complicated argument about the appointment of an American Supreme Commander in the North Atlantic and the proposed appointment of a Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean. He was arguing through a maze that was becoming a trifle tedious that the Government had made the wrong decision in allowing an American North Atlantic Supreme Commander through Ministers failing to keep a sufficiently firm grip on the negotiations.

'This very serious mistake arises from the fault of planning from the bottom instead of planning from the top. When the top are incompetent to plan or give guidance, the process naturally begins from the bottom. We suffer from the fallacy, *deus ex machina*, which, for the benefit of any Wykehamists[1] who may be present, is "A god out of the machine." There are layers of committees and super committees, and the business is passed upwards stage by stage to a decision. When all the process has been gone through the machine speaks, but what one gets at the end is not truth or wisdom or common

[1] Sir Winston was always amused by the fact that Winchester, the public school with the highest academic record of all, has provided a number of distinguished Labour leaders such as Sir Stafford Cripps, Hugh Gaitskell, R. H. S. Crossman and Douglas Jay.

sense: it is a White Paper. All that comes out of the machine is unreal and meaningless formulae expressed in official jargon and accompanied by fatuous grimaces.'

Hansard, 19th April, 1951.

Each speech was a composition. After the war in some respects they were even better than the wartime performances. Then he made orations, pointed very directly at the country and the world, in an atmosphere of party unanimity. They did not ignore the House but they did not have to give it first place as the speeches since 1945, delivered among the unrepressed and bubbling informalities of party discord, had to. In his last speaking years all his Parliamentary experience and wiliness were blended with his great gifts of meticulously contrived expression.

When Churchill was to follow a major spokesman from the other side, if it was a controversial debate, he frequently began with a skilfully wrought reference to him. In these references there was sufficient humour slightly to neutralize the anger of the Opposition but enough venom to indicate that the performance would include a number of violent blows.

In May, 1947, the Labour Government, during the course of the National Service Bill through the House, had been forced by a number of Labour dissidents to announce a reduction in the period of military service prescribed in the Bill from eighteen months to twelve months. The Conservatives, having once indicated their willingness to support the Government in their demand for the longer period, were indignant at this reversal. Mr. A. V. Alexander, the Minister of Defence, after previously justifying the absolute necessity for the longer term of service, was now obliged to give the reasons why the shorter period would do. He was uncomfortable in introducing the amendment to the Bill on the Committee stage. When he had finished Churchill began:

'I have been looking around for something upon which to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman. After some difficulty, I have found at least one point on which I can offer him

my compliments, and that is the control of his facial expression, which enabled him to deliver the ridiculous and deplorable harangue to which we have listened, and yet keep an unsmiling face. Indeed, there were moments when I was not quite sure whether he was not taking his revenge on the forces which compelled him to his present course of action, by showing them how ridiculous their case was, and how absurd their position would be when it was presented to the House of Commons.'

Hansard, 7th May, 1947.

A similar beginning to a Churchill speech, infused by an impish mischievousness which often broke out, came after the General Election of October, 1951. The Bevanite split in the defeated Labour Party was still raw and there was a slight tendency in the Labour leadership to try to win over the malcontents. Mr. Attlee had just finished criticizing the new Government's King's Speech on behalf of the Opposition.

'The right hon. Gentleman will excuse me if I say that he does not seem quite to have got clear of the General Election. A great deal of his speech was made up of very effective points and quips which gave a great deal of satisfaction to those behind him. We all understand his position: "I am their leader, I must follow them." '

Hansard, 6th November, 1951.

Herbert Morrison frequently provided the machinery by which Churchill levered himself into a speech or into forewarning the Opposition that he was out to hurt. Early in the 1945 Parliament when the dislike he had formed of Morrison in the War Cabinet was still on him he said:

'I hope he is not going to lecture us today on bringing party matters and party feeling into discussions of large public

issues. There is no man I can think of from whom such rebukes and admonitions come less well. I would not go so far as to describe him in the words used by the Minister of Health [Mr. Bevan] a year ago, when he was in an independent position, as a third-class Tammany boss. I believe that was the expression his colleague used about him, which I resented very much at the time. I thought it was very much to be deprecated using disparaging expressions about important institutions of friendly countries.'

Hansard, 31st May, 1946.

He was still using Morrison nearly six years later as a vehicle for getting himself under way:

'The right hon. Member for Lewisham, South [Mr. Morrison] is a curious mixture of geniality and venom. The geniality, I may say, after a great many years of experience, is natural to himself. The venom has to be adopted in order to keep on side with the forces below the Gangway. [Where Labour Members critical of their party leadership usually sit.] Some parts of his speech were unexpectedly moderate, but, obviously, he had thought it necessary to prepare the way, as I often see hon. Gentlemen doing, in putting himself on good terms below the Gangway by saying a number of things in which I know he does not believe and of which I am sure he is ashamed.

The right hon. Gentleman accused me of being cowardly in asking my right hon. Friend to open the debate. Does he believe that I am really afraid of opening a debate? Why would I be afraid? I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that the spectacle of a number of middle-aged gentlemen who are my political opponents being in a state of uproar and fury is really quite exhilarating to me. I have not had fifty years' actual service in this House without having got used to the rough and tumble of debate.'

Hansard, 21st May, 1952.

Churchill always enjoyed a noisy House. As he said later the same year:

> 'Hon. Members opposite will give me credit for not being afraid of interruptions or noise. It even would be much easier to be shouted down continually or booed down, because I have not the slightest doubt that I could obtain publicity for any remarks I wish to make, even if they are not audible in the House.'
>
> *Hansard*, 4th December, 1952.

The speaker who is the centre of a disturbance has, if he remains cool, an advantage over his interrupters. He can wait until they subside and no further business can be done, if he keeps standing, until order returns. It is he who has the floor. He need not give way to any individual Member who wants to interrupt him but he can make his own choice of a remark out of the confusion to which to make an effective reply.

In his last Parliamentary period Churchill was brilliant at quickly selecting the right target. One of his most frequent interrupters was tiny Sidney Silverman who sat in a corner seat in the front row below the Gangway with his short legs hardly touching the ground. During a debate on the long delays in bringing German generals to trial for war crimes Churchill was commending Mr. Harold Macmillan, who had opened, for what he called 'his very restrained and carefully phrased speech'.

> Mr. Sidney Silverman (shouting): I wonder what the right hon. Gentleman would say if he abandoned restraint.
>
> Mr. Churchill: The hon. Gentleman is always intervening. On this occasion he did not even hop off his perch.
>
> *Hansard*, 21st July, 1949.

The House collapsed into laughter.

During a debate about Allied Command appointments Mr. Shinwell interrupted him to observe: 'All I say to him now

is that the discussions about the Mediterranean and the discussions about the whole command have been taking place simultaneously.'

To which Mr. Churchill promptly replied: 'They may have been taking place simultaneously but one ended before the other. That sometimes happens in horse racing.'

When interruptions are dealt with in this way it is the speaker who scores heavily, by encouraging his own side as well as by neutralizing his opponents. By staying unmoved in the face of hostility a speaker can get an ascendancy over the House, if he has a strong personality and the ability to regain the thread of his speech unbroken. Churchill was not only unafraid of such scenes but welcomed them. He rose to the excitement and if he was a little sombre at the start he was gay by the end. Sometimes he would stimulate an uproar to divert attention from the fact that he did not know the answer to some pointed question put to him by the Opposition—if he were for once making a bad case.

A lively passage in the House was to Churchill an indication of vitality. He several times remarked in the House that politicians should not be too mealy-mouthed in what they say and he never hesitated to live according to his dictum. It was of Aneurin Bevan that he said early in the 1945 Parliament that he threatened to be as great a burden in peace as he had been 'a squalid nuisance in time of war'. His invective against Stafford Cripps was more polished but equally severe. In condemning him for taking the leading role in the Indian mission of the three Cabinet Ministers which prepared the way to the independence of India, he said:

> 'No one more than he has taken responsibility in this matter, because neither of his colleagues could compare with him in that acuteness and energy of mind with which he devotes himself to so many topics injurious to the strength and welfare of the State.'
>
> *Hansard*, 12th December, 1946.

Perhaps his most remarkable abuse was directed at Ramsay MacDonald when MacDonald was Prime Minister of the 1929 Labour Government which stayed in office by permission of the Liberals. Frequently they let him down and the Government would either be defeated or have to withdraw some proposal or Bill. Each time, however, that MacDonald was humiliated he behaved as though nothing had happened and as if it did not matter. Churchill, who despised him, said:

> 'I spoke the other day, after he had been defeated in an important division, about his wonderful skill in falling without hurting himself. He falls, but up he comes again smiling, a little dishevelled but still smiling. . . .
>
> I remember when I was a child being taken to the celebrated Barnum's Circus which contained an exhibition of freaks and monstrosities, but the exhibit on the programme which I most desired to see was the one described as "The Boneless Wonder". My parents judged that the spectacle would be too revolting and demoralizing for my youthful eyes, and I have waited 50 years to see the Boneless Wonder sitting on the Treasury Bench.'
>
> *Hansard*, 28th January, 1931.

Nor did he in the least resent what was said to him. Once in 1947 I happened to follow Churchill after he had made a speech deploring the grant of independence to Burma. I vigorously attacked him. Afterwards I met him outside the Chamber and he kindly said that I had made a very good debating speech. I said, as I was a very young Member, I hoped that he did not think I had been too rude to him. He answered: 'I ask for no quarter and I bear no malice.'

He could be mean and almost petty, but never for long. Up came the generous side of his nature suddenly to dispel the animosity which he himself had created. This virtue was in such abundance that it touched magnanimity without giving any impression of offensive patronage. In an assembly whose business

is almost entirely based on the clashes of human beings this is one of the main qualities which, added to his others, made him a great Parliamentarian. Of the same quality was the dogged loyalty which he held for his friends or for any member of his Government who was in trouble. Occasionally this personal loyalty might appear to conflict with the public interest; but that was such a human failing that it enhanced and did not diminish his Parliamentary stature. A typical incident was when Duff Cooper, who as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster during the war had been in the Far East, was being blamed for the disasters in that theatre. The Prime Minister in the House of Commons flatly declared: 'When I am invited under threats of unpopularity to myself, or the Government, to victimize the Chancellor of the Duchy and throw him to the wolves, I say to those who make this amiable suggestion—I can only say to them—"I much regret that I am unable to gratify your wishes" —or words to that effect.'

This comprehensive human being lacked no emotion nor avoided arousing every range of feeling in the rest of the House. I have seen him with tears on his cheeks and they were never simulated. He in turn could make the tears move on one's own. To those who knew Stafford Cripps well and who followed the course of his last fluctuating illness the poignancy of Churchill's tribute in the House of Commons was deeply affecting. After describing generously and accurately his merits he suddenly, in referring to Lady Cripps, lit the pathos of the final situation.

> 'Our hearts go out to the noble woman, his devoted wife, who through these long months of agony, *mocked by false dawns*, has been his greatest comfort on earth.'
>
> *Hansard*, 22nd April, 1952.

He brought the Parliamentary art nearly to perfection in every sphere. In my ten years in the House at the same time as Churchill it seemed to me that he could only be defeated decisively in two ways. One way to get under his armour was to

suggest that he was either speaking against or failing to uphold some British interest. If he felt slightly guilty or unhappy about the matter this rarely failed even if he could make a good show of rationalizing his conduct over the particular issue by justifying it in a wider context. The other way was to take advantage of the slowness with which his mind sometimes alerted itself to a new point or complication in debate or at Question Time: curiously this became more difficult and not easier with time, demonstrating that despite his age he had not lost mental vigour or grip on affairs.

Churchill is the only man of our epoch to be declared an ancient monument in his own lifetime. All his Parliamentary life he screwed the maximum advantage from any position. He was very sensible in his later years of the political usefulness of the public's veneration while he enjoyed it. To be old has its drawbacks—why not try to counteract them with any benefits that age may incidentally bring? was his thought. If he could persuade the House of Commons that it was in some way unParliamentary, unpatriotic, or unworthy to trip him up or to attack him, that was the fault of the House of Commons and of the public—not his. He did not ask for special treatment nor did he think it wrong of anyone to refuse to give it him. But if he could confound his enemy by canalizing on him public and Parliamentary indignation that a great statesman and national hero should be flouted in his last years he did not hesitate. The notice which decorated him, to the effect that care must be taken not to damage or treat roughly this national institution, was a political asset to him but it was totally unnecessary as a means of protection.

As a Parliamentarian he never scrupled to use any weapon which came to hand. He might shrink from belabouring his opponents with some stick that attracted him by its power of injury because it would be unwise to use it but never because it would be unfair. If a debate were going hard against him, and he was in office, he did not, for example, have qualms about suddenly producing some forgotten document designed to dis-

credit his opponents although its production hardly accorded with Parliamentary ethics. When denounced or exposed he would admit his fault with a happy smile and shrug his shoulders. He would swiftly move from consideration of great matters on the highest plane to some very disagreeable party manœuvre and accompany the change by a look which said: 'Well, we are all politicians, aren't we? Do not let us be over-nice.'

To challenge Churchill in the House was enjoyable. If it was at Question Time he would sometimes (after his hearing began to go) look at you with a slightly amused air wielding his hearing aid, unusually shaped like a lollipop, as an additional Parliamentary artifice. If a point went home there would be a sudden frown or perhaps quick indignation. If he thought defeat might be coming and he did not feel in the mood to try to avoid it at once, he would not listen or seem not to listen, to what was being said. Then he would slowly get up and make a reply which had almost nothing to do with the subject in hand—but as it was probably prepared in advance he would by making the House laugh appear to have won where he had really lost. If he was in a good humour and the question was not unfriendly he might smile amiably as he rose slowly to answer and the accumulated charm of decades poured out into the Chamber.

Attacking Churchill in a speech, and not by question and answer, it was essential that there should be nothing half-hearted in the onslaught. To activate him there had to be a series of hard knocks delivered without the slightest compunction. After he had been banged at for ten minutes or so the colossus began to stir—if there was substance in the thumps. At some point anger might be forced up in him. Then you had got him. He might be stung into making some impromptu observation which, if he had had time to think, he would have left unsaid or phrased differently. His defences were down and for a brief glorious second he could be destroyed: to rise again as fresh and formidable as ever a moment later.

This wonderful ornament to Parliament, and to British democracy, contained in his Parliamentary days all the contradictory

virtues and defects which make the full man. Where he was dishonest he was at the same time honest. Where he was unscrupulous he was still fair. Where he was vindictive he was nevertheless generous. Robust and extrovert he was capable of introspective thought. Keenly awake he could slump into lethargy. The only other person I ever met to compare with him is someone whom he would feel to be utterly alien to him—Gandhi. Gandhi was a great man because he was not afraid of the elements in his own character. When a politician denies the defects in him he dams up a force inside him which will burst and destroy him or pervert him to second-rate usefulness. He must recognize to himself what he is and allow the bad and the good to move inside him. By knowing the bad and watching it he can canalize it constructively.

Churchill and Gandhi have had the ability to get energy and fullness from their faults. In them what might have been vice turned to a mischievousness adding charm and lovability. Both were amazingly arrogant in their youth and both mellowed into justified, but not overweening, assurance. A mercurial quickness in change of mood and attitude was common to both. Because they made no attempt to obliterate or conceal their defects both managed to derive from them strength and an identity with vast numbers of their fellow-human beings.

After all the brain power, the industry, the hard-won oratorical gifts, the acute political judgment, the patriotism, the tremendous driving power are taken into account, superb greatness is only achieved if at the end a man still comes through to himself, remains himself and is himself.

It was Churchill's achievement as a Parliamentarian to portray and combine his many-sidedness in a cohesive whole without losing the virtue from any one element. For anyone who has ever sat in Parliament at the same time as Churchill it will be a privilege that they will recall with pride as long as they live. He stamped himself and his being on the House of Commons of which he was an active member for nearly sixty years. Until the end of this century speakers and politicians in the House who rise to prominence will find themselves compared—as a guide to

their stature—with Churchill. Although he often disregarded the opinions of Parliament in his zenith he always loved it—which is quite another matter. He cherished its ceremonial and enlarged its customs. No intelligent newcomer, ambitious for a great Parliamentary career, will set out on it without studying the way in which Churchill approached the varied facets of Parliamentary life—particularly in the ten years after the war. For decades to come politicians will learn from the manner in which Sir Winston presented himself and his thoughts.

Sir Alexander Fleck

SIR ALEXANDER FLECK is Chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries. He got there without family influence or even the money to buy a public school or university education. He is a phenomenon of the managerial revolution—and so is ICI. With a capital of around two hundred million pounds ICI is far too large for any one shareholder or group of shareholders to attempt to control it. The Directors work to their own judgment. Lacking any immediate or organic responsibility to shareholders, they have made their organization a self-perpetuating one with efficiency as the decisive criterion. ICI appoints its officials and directors without the influence of nepotism or without any consideration but merit. It can draw from the whole range of its 116,000 employees to find its leaders.

There is much to be said against great combines—there is also something to be said for them. The most serious danger of a great business to the community is that it may be run by one or two socially undeveloped persons. They may have as their only aim self-aggrandizement or riches. In the pursuit of these objects they do not care what happens to the country. Alternatively great firms may be under the control of a few substantial shareholders who continually insist on larger and larger profits without consideration of any other factor. That has happened to firms such as General Motors of the U.S.A. whose chief executive, with unconscious humour, once proclaimed 'what is good for General Motors is good for the U.S.A.'. But when a firm becomes too large to be controlled by a small group or financial interest

it can afford to be public-spirited. It is inevitable, indeed, that it should be so assuming that its self-appointed directors and important executives are neither vicious nor foolish.

ICI is not private enterprise at all except in the sense that it is free from interference from the Government. Over the years it has become an institution. The stockholders get a reasonable dividend but the provision of a dividend is not the main interest of the directors. Their energy is concentrated on making ICI a bigger and better firm and to this extent they are, even if accidentally, in accord with the public interest. Like all well-run institutions they have acquired a conscience about employees, their own motives, and about the good of industry as a whole. In the process ICI have established a model for a new type of public ownership as an offshoot of their aim to build a good business.

Instead of nationalizing a firm like ICI the Labour Party might do well to take over many of the backward firms and industries in this country—and they are legion—and put them into the hands of men from ICI and similarly enterprising and progressive organizations. It would be the task of such executives to rejuvenate the under-par firms and to make them fit the conditions of the age. If drastic action in this field is not taken Britain will fall grievously behind in the international race of the second half of the twentieth century.

An outstanding feature of ICI executives is their sense of dedication and of enthusiasm. They would not be in any way hampered by coming under a broad central economic plan devised by the Government; but a direct ordering about might damp their spirits. Executives of this kind need no encouragement or explicit instructions except the knowledge that they can continue to expand their operations as they think fit—provided that they do not throw awry any central measures which are needed to compel the country to bring up to date its factories, plant and capital equipment to compete forcefully in the export trade.

Sir Alexander Fleck does his job because he likes it, and it

fills his life. By business standards he is not fabulously rich. He probably earns around £20,000 a year but he will not have had the same opportunities as many directors to amass a fortune out of capital gains. The last time, before visiting him, that I had been in his walnut-lined office at Millbank the man behind the desk was Sir Stafford Cripps, then President of the Board of Trade. ICI's offices were then still requisitioned by the Government. In some ways Sir Alexander Fleck, white-haired, with a long mobile face and bright blue eyes, is reminiscent of Sir Stafford. There is the same thrusting energy as he swivels round his chair and makes quick movements as he talks. He also neither drinks nor smokes. Neither does luxury interest him. He remarks of the round of entertaining unavoidable to the chairman of a vast commercial undertaking: 'One of the difficulties of my job is to keep down the amount of calories that enter my body.' His tastes are simple: wood-chopping at his home in the Tees valley at weekends, reading books in the evenings in his flat overlooking Hyde Park. He, like Cripps, began his working life as a scientist—and that is where the similarities between him and Cripps end. Sir Stafford came from a prosperous English background. Alexander Fleck was born in 1889 into a poor Glasgow family.

He began work at fourteen as a laboratory boy at Glasgow University. After the work he was paid to do was over he studied. Eventually he forced his way into being a full-time student. When he was twenty-two he got a chemistry degree and an appointment on the university's staff as an assistant in the physical chemistry department. By 1913, when he was twenty-four, he was in charge of his own research laboratory as physical chemist to the Glasgow and West of Scotland Radium Committee. The original research he did was outstanding and has been useful to scientists in the same field ever since. It won him a university doctorate.

When the First World War started the British chemical industry was far behind the German in a number of ways. Most of our important chemical supplies came from Germany. To build up our own chemical industry the Government enticed academic

chemists out of the universities into the factories. Fleck went into a factory which later became a part of the great ICI combine. He was at once attracted by the problems of industry and by the time he was thirty he was works manager. 'I had a flair for getting on with the workmen although they were a tough bunch.' From then on he was committed to industry. 'I have had to recognize that the way I have developed I could never go back to being a successful research chemist. It never works.'

Gradually he climbed higher. Five years after the ICI merger in 1926 which amalgamated four great British chemical firms Fleck became Managing Director of ICI's General Chemicals Division. In 1944 he was put on to ICI's main board. In 1951 he became a Deputy Chairman and in 1953 he reached the top as Chairman. He had completed the by now traditional upward course of ICI Chairmen.

'We've nearly all come up through the organization,' he said, speaking of the board of directors. 'A company promoted man on the board of directors knows the basis of what he is administering, he can sift out the facts and he is capable of conveying them to his colleagues.'

On a board of twenty-three directors there are only four outsiders. None of them is there as 'a name'—all afford some valuable experience or knowledge from the outer world to keep ICI in perspective and from planning in parochial terms.

Surprisingly, Fleck does not work a very arduous day. He is in his office at 9.45 and usually out of it by six. 'In his office' is perhaps not quite accurate: he believes in darting about to the various great enterprises that ICI runs. That keeps him in touch. But he expresses himself better on paper than in words. 'Often my colleagues look round the door and say "Still writing?" When I am in the office much of my time, apart from looking after board meetings, is spent discussing things with members of the directorate. The rest of it I like to use for writing.'

Naturally to Fleck science seems the most important subject for study. After that he puts history. 'I read a lot of history especially on the years between the Magna Carta and the beginning

of the Elizabethan period. I feel that the development of the English social structure in these times has not been fully worked out.'

'How does this help you to run ICI?' I asked.

'It comes out in my approach, in the way I do things from hour to hour, it makes me a better judge on the personnel side.'

ICI are fanatical on the subject of labour relations. As Mr. Chambers, a Deputy Chairman, said to me: 'We spend a fortune on them. Other firms are reluctant to put money into labour relations because you can't show an immediate profit or loss on them in the balance sheet. But it pays in better work in the long run.'

There is an elaborate structure of works councils. Each factory has a works council composed of elected representatives of the workers and members of the management. Each factory works council elects representatives to a divisional works council covering a group of factories. Each divisional works council elects representatives to the central works council for the whole of ICI, which meets twice a year. All the other works councils meet frequently. The works councils discuss live issues, not merely whether or not the canteen should be open at a different hour. No new plant is put in without the workers being fully informed well in advance of what the plant is intended to do and how it will affect them in their jobs. The ICI view is that the workers are just as important as the machines. This obvious truth has not yet been learnt by the mass of British industry. As a consequence in ICI it is rare that there is any dispute between workers and the management—although the stage has not yet been reached where the workers have any real effect on the policy of the company.

The workers of ICI are encouraged to feel that the management can be approached directly. 'Suppose an ICI employee had a grievance that he felt had not been met by his superiors on the spot and he wrote to you?' I asked Sir Alexander.

'If he had worked for ICI for more than five years in what-

ever capacity I would personally see that the matter was investigated and that he would get a letter back signed by me.'

The labour turnover in ICI is much lower than the average. Three-quarters of those who leave the firm each year have been employed by ICI for less than two and a half years. Once a man has settled down with the firm it is unusual for him to want to go. That is the basis of the new profit-sharing scheme which ICI began in 1954.

Every employee who has worked for ICI for two and a quarter years is entitled to a bonus. The bonus is based on a proportion of the employee's annual pay worked out against whatever percentage above 5 per cent is given that year to stockholders in ordinary dividends. If the ordinary dividend is 6 per cent the bonus for each employee is 1 per cent of his pay. For some time the annual dividend of ICI was 10 per cent and from 1954 until 1958 the bonus was at the rate of 5 per cent. That is, the gross bonus for a man earning £600 a year has been £30 a year. In 1956 the gross bonus paid out to ICI employees came to £3,224,000. This bonus, after deduction of income tax at each individual's personal rate, is paid over to the Trustees of the scheme to use it to acquire ICI Ordinary Stock from the Company. In 1958, when ICI declared a dividend of 12 per cent, the amount of the bonus went up from 5 to 7 per cent.

The idea is to give employees a stake and an interest in their own firm. The scheme also has educational advantages. Before it began a worker could read in the newspapers that an ICI £1 share was valued at 55*s*. He might think that when a dividend of 10 per cent was declared the 10 per cent was on 55*s*. and not on £1. Now that he himself is a stockholder he realizes the true position. The price at which the shares are issued to the employees is based on the average price on the London Stock Exchange during the month of January following the end of the bonus year or on the last day of January, whichever is the less. ICI workers have become very keen readers of stock exchange prices in an endeavour to estimate how much stock they will get on the assumption that the 10 per cent dividend will be maintained.

In the first instance the stock is held by Trustees on behalf of each employee until he has accumulated twenty-five or more one-pound units. This meant that in the first year of the operation of the scheme ICI employees were not automatically entitled to a copy of the Company's Annual Report. When this was explained with the information that a report could be had on application the result was astonishing. The Company expected that perhaps as many as 10 per cent would want to see the Company Report. In the event 30 per cent asked for it, with the unusual consequence of a Company Report running into several editions.

There are no restrictions on what an employee may do with his stock. It is exactly the same as stock bought and sold on the Stock Exchange. It is difficult to say how much of the stock will be retained by employees as the scheme is still young. However, in 1957, £1,680,000 stock was handed over to more than 50,000 employees. Seventy-five per cent of this stock was still retained by employees four months after it had been handed over. This is a remarkable figure set against the lure of cashing in to buy a television set or a secondhand motor-car. Employees have regarded their stock, in the main, as a saving and as a way of participating in the Company's affairs.

Critics of the ICI profit-sharing scheme suggest that it is a stunt to avoid nationalization. Maybe ICI feel that the more contented their workers the less likely they are to be taken over by a Labour Government. But whatever the motives for the scheme it is genuine enough. Vast sums are being issued every year in shares to employees of ICI. If they held on to their shares they could conceivably, over twenty years, become the largest single ownership block in the whole Company. Massey-Harris-Ferguson of Canada thought it worth while to buy an 18 per cent shareholding in the Standard Motor Company in order to influence its policy. Twenty years of issuing more than three million pounds' worth of shares to the employees of ICI could add up to a very large workers' influence in the policy of ICI—irrespective of works councils. And a scheme of this kind once started can never be dropped.

Mr. Frank Cousins, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, has remarked to me that ICI is conducted on a basis of 'benevolent autocratic paternalism', although he concedes that it is one of the best-run firms in the country. No doubt there is an element of paternalism in ICI's approach to its workpeople. It is very difficult to strike exactly the right note in a huge firm. But I am convinced that the men who run ICI are sincere in wanting not only to give their workers fair treatment but to make them feel that they have a dignified status. They regard them as human beings because the directors and high officials have come up through the organization themselves without shedding their humanity on the way. They know, too, that men who believe that their management look on them with respect, understanding and as fellow human beings will work better. Obviously mistakes are made but painstaking care goes into putting them right.

Sir Alexander Fleck is typical of the men that ICI is turning out—one-third civil servant, one-third business man, one-third scientist. ICI succeeds because it looks beyond the machines and materials it makes into the wider world. It tries to keep in tune with the movement of ideas socially as well as commercially.

I asked Sir Alexander Fleck what advice he would give to a young man going into industry today. 'I would tell him that enthusiasm for his subject is not enough. However much of a specialist he may be he must study the surrounding impacts of his work. If he is a chemist he must think of the effect of his research on the accountancy side, on the personnel. . . . We encourage the broad view here.'

Many English business men praise ICI—too few imitate its methods. It is a brilliant example of how to maintain a personal, individual atmosphere within a colossus. Initiative flourishes, ideas bubble. Sir Alexander Fleck is thinking out improvements and encouraging merit all the time. With a high sense of duty, as well as for commercial reasons, ICI fiercely competes in the export market. Once Germany was the centre of the world's chemical manufacuring. It is no longer. And ICI continually

devises ways of keeping footholds overseas. It does not wait for a foreign government to take over an overseas branch—when appropriate it takes the lead in offering partnership to local elements.

Most ICI employees, including many Communists, do not want to see ICI nationalized. In the sense of performing extensive public service it is nationalized already. Any basic alteration in the manner in which this firm conducts its research (it probably leads the world's industry in the installation of automation), in the way in which it advances ability within its ranks, in the course of its vigorous industrial progress, in its humane handling of its employees, would be crazy. And it is symptomatic of ICI that this quiet, exceptionally gifted man, Sir Alexander Fleck, should have found his way to the top. He is a fervent believer in Britain's greatness and capacity to stay great. His achievement lies in passing on and adding to the remarkable traditions already accumulated by ICI. It is a comforting thought that others like him, but younger, in ICI are being prepared for the day when they must control this vast enterprise in their turn.

Sir Simon Marks

I WAS once out at dinner at the house of an executive of Marks & Spencer—a nephew of Sir Simon Marks. Sir Simon was also there.

'Run up and fetch those sweaters you've just got, Brenda,' he said to his nephew's wife. She returned with three. Sir Simon handled them lovingly and passed them round. They were a new line. Two Americans present were astounded. Instead of £4 or £5 each they were a quarter of the price. They were good. Sir Simon knew they were good. He was happy and proud that they were good.

He is a small man with the dark expressive head of a little gnome. As he spoke of his sweaters there was a light in his eyes and his face was cut in half by his pleased smile. Sir Simon is happiest when he is thinking about his goods. As he is thinking about them nearly all the time he is awake he is very happy. So are the shareholders in Marks & Spencer who watch the value of the stores, the turnover, the profits and the dividends rise steadily. Enthusiasm to buy his shares worries Sir Simon a little. 'The public overprices them,' he once said to me deprecatingly.

I imagine that Sir Simon has said that for the last forty years and will be saying it for at least the next ten. The phenomenal success of Marks & Spencer, however, which makes everyone in it and everyone outside it, but with a financial interest in it, contented, is due primarily to the fact that Sir Simon loves merchandise.

He is a splendid administrator—he would have been outstanding in any executive position. He is an accurate selector of men. He is expert in the finances of the business. Other men have these gifts, too. They are successful but they do not have that last quality which puts Sir Simon above all others in the retail business —a passion for the articles that are going to be sold. In most stores the buying is not done by the Chairman or Managing Director (Sir Simon is both Chairman and Joint Managing Director) but by salaried buyers. In Marks & Spencer it is Sir Simon who is at the centre of the buying and the designing.

Sir Simon feels about his goods because he feels about people. He has a genuine wish to help and be kind to them. 'He makes his staff down to the salesgirl feel like ladies and gentlemen,' an executive said to me. To work for Marks & Spencer in any capacity is to be paid well and to have good conditions—pleasant dining-rooms, pretty rest rooms, complete welfare services and even subsidized hairdressing. In a year most of the stores only have a minute turnover in their female staffs.

I have been shown round many factories and firms by managing directors and other top staff. From the way people react as the party approaches and leaves you can gauge the relations between management and workers. When Sir Simon was my guide there were no metaphorical jumps to uncomfortable attention, reactions of alarm, bursts of sudden activity, whisperings or mutterings. There was a natural friendliness and pleasure when he asked for an explanation. Not that anyone thought that they could get away with anything—Sir Simon knows every detail of his business—but they were glad to discuss what they were doing with him.

Sir Simon really cares about others being treated fairly. It would give him pain if he thought that a working-class housewife had got less than value in one of his stores. He wants everyone to be able to buy the best quality. He is a business man, too, and one of his standards of measurement is profit. But he would not like the profit half so well if it did not go with the conviction that he has also provided service.

Unwittingly, or intentionally, and I suspect the latter, Sir Simon has done more to remove class barriers than almost anyone else alive in Britain. Today factory and office girls can look as well dressed as the rich thanks to Sir Simon. Four out of five of Marks & Spencer's six million customers a week are women. They roughly correspond to the different income groups in the country although women from households earning more than £750 a year are in a slightly higher proportion among his customers than others. That may be because some of the better off have been quicker to appreciate the exceptional bargains Marks & Spencer offer. Underwear, nightdresses, scarves, handbags, can be as little as a third of the price charged in other shops for comparable quality. Prices in 1958 ranged from about 3*s.* 11*d.* to 95*s.* And not only are Marks & Spencer good—they are up to date in using new materials like Terylene, Orlon, Banlon, and brushed nylon quicker than their rivals. And their clothes are modern in style and design.

That is why women, whatever their social background, have no hesitation in wearing Marks & Spencer clothes. The whole female cast of a West End stage play was once smartly dressed by Marks & Spencer. For many articles of women's clothing it is simply pointless extravagance to buy elsewhere—there is nothing better of their kind. The same is true of men's pyjamas, sweaters, shirts and of numerous other articles.

Nor is it only a matter of clothes. Marks & Spencer also apply the same standards of high quality and low price to food. By 1958 they were selling forty thousand tons of cake a year, cooked in thirteen bakeries to Marks & Spencer's specifications. The very fact that a great chain store is retailing food in vast quantities stimulates others in the same business to produce better and cheaper.

How has Sir Simon done it? Basically by carrying on and extending the business principles of his father, Michael Marks—hence the trade name of St. Michael which appears on most garments. Michael Marks, a Polish immigrant, began operations with a haberdashery stall on a trestle table in Leeds in 1884. He

got the idea that he might do better if he paid more for his goods so that their quality could be improved. He also thought he would sell them more easily if he knocked the prices down. Articles which would have been considered good value at 3*d*. he sold at 1*d*.—still managing to make a 25 per cent profit. He translated this practice into a slogan: 'Don't ask the price. It's a penny.' His turnover rapidly increased.

In 1894 he was joined as partner by a friend, Thomas Spencer, whose photograph still stands on a table in Sir Simon's office at the firm's headquarters in Baker Street. It shows a large-faced gentleman with a bushy Victorian moustache. He was the sales manager of a textile firm in Leeds. Looking at his photograph you can almost see him stomping through the market on a frosty morning, a cloth cap on his head and his breath turning to steam with each gigantic puff from his mouth.

Spencer put £300 into the business and Michael Marks £400. They began to acquire store sites and were rich in six years. But they did not live long to enjoy their money. Tom Spencer died in 1906. (Mrs. Spencer was still alive in 1958—and with an interest in the firm.) Michael Marks died in 1907, only forty-four years old.

Simon Marks, already well entrenched in the business, became head of it in 1917 and has run it ever since. He would be the first to concede that Marks & Spencer has never lost its upward trend because he has followed the example of the original partners in aiming ceaselessly at quality.

In 1958 there were 237 stores. In the financial year that ended in 1957 the turnover was £125 million—£7 million more than the previous year. The stores were then worth £154 million. On an average each store made a profit, after paying tax, of £23,000. Marks & Spencer were employing 20,000 people and the average annual sales per head of the staff came to over £6,000.

Sir Simon has told me that in his lifetime (he was born in 1888) he does not intend that Marks & Spencer should have more than 250 stores—that leaves only thirteen to go. The reason

he gave was that he would not be able to maintain a personal supervision with more than 250. He likes to appoint the manager and the assistant manager of each store although the pressure on him sometimes prevents this. But he does want to be able to have intimate knowledge of what is going on and he feels he could not do that with more than 250 stores. Instead the stores will be enlarged and improved and that will also bring in more business. Between a third and a half of the entire week's trade is done on Saturdays—sometimes on a Saturday afternoon it is almost impossible to get into one of the small stores. Enlarging them will mean more customers and more business.

The quality is kept up very largely by the operations of Marks & Spencer's research and testing departments. Sixty-five per cent of the articles sold are designed by Marks & Spencer. Manufacturers receive contracts to make them to a definite specification. Marks & Spencer's contracts become so important to manufacturers that they are very responsive to suggestions that their prices should come down. That is why Marks & Spencer are able to sustain price reduction campaigns for long periods. But whether the goods have been designed by Marks & Spencer or not they are all tested.

Sir Simon took me through some of the rooms where examination is in continual process. I was shown tiny blemishes, almost unnoticeable mis-stitchings, and minute defects which would not have troubled most retailers. But Marks & Spencer send them back to the manufacturers explaining what has gone wrong. Frequently manufacturers are glad of the advice—the Marks & Spencer tests help them improve the quality of their output and sometimes may even save them money in production costs. When articles are tested the price is neither known nor interesting to the Marks & Spencer tester. They are only concerned with quality, whether the article will do what it purports to do and wear as the customer might reasonably expect it to. Elaborate machines pummel and bash garments and fabrics. Some clothes are washed again and again to see how often they can be laundered without collapsing.

Marks & Spencer do not let customers try things on. But they do take back anything a customer is not satisfied with—changing it for a different size or for cash. Complaints are not frequent but always acted on. However, allowing customers to exchange goods that do not fit or they do not like is not all altruism. It is good business in two ways. One, it gives customers a sense of confidence. Two, it saves valuable store space. Not having dressing-rooms means there is more room available for valuable counter space from which goods can be sold. It also means that dresses, nightdresses, and other clothes must look attractive on the hangers. The customer feels that she knows what the article is going to look like on her. Complicated and over-fancy styles are avoided. There are no very small and very large sizes. Marks & Spencer cater mainly for the average.

Another way in which Marks & Spencer save normal overheads is by not having warehouses. Instead the manufacturers, whether making goods to Marks & Spencer's specifications or not, send direct to the shops. A skilful system of ordering prevents popular articles from being out of stock. Again, Marks & Spencer do not usually hold sales. Dud lines are sold off cheap at any time of the year. And bold action is often taken. At the end of the Korean campaign when the commodity prices started to fall rapidly Marks & Spencer slashed their prices and cleared the decks for fresh production.

Sir Simon is always looking for ways to improve. Not long ago it occurred to him that there was far too much paper work that seemed to be carried out because it always had been—and no benefit could be measured from it. After a ruthless inspection of form-filling about eighteen million forms a year, weighing nearly a hundred tons, have been eliminated. Returnable empties have been replaced by non-returnable ones. A drive to reduce the numbers of written records has made a thousand filing cabinets redundant. Activities of this kind keep the overheads, and the prices to the customer, down. Another saving is that Marks & Spencer do not make a practice of advertising—save occasionally for special and local reasons. That cuts out the huge cost of

national advertising campaigns which ultimately the customer has to pay for. Marks & Spencer are satisfied to rely on their reputation for value and service being echoed from customer to customer.

But always it comes back to the goods. The research and testing departments which cost half a million pounds a year to run ensure the highest consumer standards of any chain store in the world. Sir Simon's sense of design and appearance, together with the team of designers he himself has selected and supervises, ensure style. And his own lodestar of quality presses him on to raise the level of taste. He always wants something a little better. And because he does millions more every year are learning to appreciate something a little better. He has done as much to raise standards of beauty as a thousand artists.

Indeed he is an artist. And like many artists he has warmth and generosity. The Royal College of Surgeons, for example, has been endowed lavishly by him. So have charities in Israel. He is a patriotic Englishman anxious, as I have discovered in many conversations, for the economic future of Britain. But that does not stop him from being an ardent Zionist as well.

Life and vitality, energy and enthusiasm, quickness and shrewdness, abundant enjoyment of all around him—that is Sir Simon Marks. He loves parties, both giving them and going to them. At the end of a dinner party if someone suggests going to a night-club he is the first to say yes and he is still at it at two in the morning. And all the time he is thinking, or perhaps dreaming, of the goods he is going to sell. 'It's all in my mind,' he said once. 'My work is talking, thinking, planning.' It is fortunate for him that his work is also his hobby. It is fortunate, too, for the factory and office girls who can go to any function and look as well dressed as a film star even though they may not be always quite so conspicuously or elegantly attired as the lady who pays Dior fifty times more for a dress than she pays at Marks & Spencer.

Sir Simon has raised the English girl's level of dress to that of

the American. The example of Marks & Spencer has compelled competitors to attempt to eliminate the shoddy. His price-reducing campaign has also forced them to cut their prices too or go out of business. He has made it impossible in the future for any chain stores in Britain to do other than give good value to the customer.

Mr. John Moores

It would seem almost impossible for a millionaire to feel insecure, but Mr. John Moores did—even after he had become one of the richest men in the country. His first job, before the Great War, was as a Post Office messenger boy in Manchester at six shillings a week. Even before that he was saving against a rainy day.

His father worked as a builder—working class but not in poverty. His mother gave him threepence a week pocket money with the proviso that if he would put it into the Post Office Savings Bank and not spend it he would be given an additional halfpenny to buy sweets. Once he wanted a cricket bat. It was not until he had saved eleven shillings towards it that his parents contributed the other half. 'A man who has nothing,' observed his mother, 'gets nothing in this world.' The future promoter of the world's biggest gambling operation concluded immediately that he could get everything he wanted by saving—and without gambling.

The next step from Post Office messenger boy was to become a telegraphist with the prospect of the then fabulous salary of £4 a week. He got there by doing a correspondence course and going to night school to learn telegraphy. At seventeen he advanced to 18s. 1d. a week as a junior operator with the Commercial Cable Company. Not yet security. After war service in the Navy he was demobilized in 1919 at the age of twenty-two. He was sent by the Commercial Cable Company to Waterville on the south-west coast of Ireland where the company maintained a large station for dealing with trans-Atlantic cables.

John Moores and his fellow-workers were indignant at being overcharged by the local shopkeepers. Moores, it is not surprising to know, had succeeded in saving money in the Navy. With it he established the Waterville Supply Company. He ordered goods from England and resold them to the company's employees. He learned to play golf and acquired an agency from Dunlop for the sale of golf balls on which there was a good profit. He was soon, with fifteen hours' work a day, earning £20 a week from all sources. In two years at Waterville he saved £1,000—later the foundation of Littlewood's Pools.

Pools were not his idea. A small pool was already struggling to survive in Birmingham based on the French *pari-mutuel* system of betting. With two other Cable Company workers who had each saved two or three hundred pounds he decided to go into business. Littlewood had once been the name of one of the two telegraphists who joined in the venture with John Moores. By 1923 the station at Waterville had closed and the three were back in Liverpool—still working for the Cable Company. They each drew £50 from the bank and rented a small office. Four thousand coupons were printed and in February, 1924, John Moores took them to the Manchester United football ground and hired small boys to distribute them. The takings for the first week were £4 7*s*. 6*d*. The three partners had decided to deduct only 10 per cent for expenses. Eight and ninepence was hardly enough for them. There was also the terror that the Cable Company would discover what they were doing and dismiss them.

The venture did not prosper. Printing bills and expenses far exceeded the 10 per cent. By the end of the first season the 10 per cent still only amounted to five or six pounds a week. Costs were nowhere near covered. The partners were faced with more heavy printer's bills. Between them they had lost £600. John Moores was the only one of the three who still thought that the pools could work. He offered to buy his partners out at £200 a piece. They tried to dissuade him but Moores was adamant.

The office girl was dismissed. Mr. Moores and his wife,

joined by his brother and sister, sat at home each Sunday morning marking the coupons. John Moores still worked at the cable office—with overtime—to keep going.

The losses continued until one day the printer asked Moores why he only took out 10 per cent. He pointed out that the more sensible course would be to take out his actual expenses for printing, stamps and other overheads plus a small commission for himself. A curious point for a future millionaire to miss. John Moores took the printer's advice. By the end of the 1926–7 football season the receipts had gone up to £2,000 a week and Littlewoods Pools began to look like a business. He hired girls and offices. By this time Cecil Moores and three sisters were working in the firm. The receipts were going up and up and the organization was rapidly extended.

By 1932 John Moores was comfortably a millionaire. Yet he still felt insecure. There were slump years—maybe people would give up doing football pools. Or there might come a government which would make them illegal or nationalize them. Perhaps becoming a millionaire through football pools had been a fluke. John Moores felt that even being a millionaire was not secure if the foundation was a football pool. He determined to prove that he could be a conventional millionaire running an ordinary business. He had delegated so much to his brother Cecil and the rest of his family that the pools could get along without him.

But John Moores did not want to become a millionaire for a second time through using a lot of the money he had already made. His next operation was to be started at the bottom, like the first, to establish that he was a real business man who could create something less flamboyant that a football pool. It was a return to the mail order business with which he had become acquainted at Waterville. It began with an office and a typist and a tiny warehouse and at the beginning Mr. John Moores ran it without his brother Cecil Moores who remained whole time with the pools. Again the basic idea was not Mr. John Moores'. In the Liverpool public library he took out a book on the mail order business by Max Ritson.

John Moores was impressed. He went to London to learn more about the mail order business. Mr. Ritson advised him to conduct a poll among his football pool clients to discover whether they would prefer a mail order business in which cash was sent with individual orders or a system of clubs with a small weekly contribution. In the clubs members would draw lots to decide the order in which subscribers would receive the goods. Say the subscription was a shilling a week and each member proposed to buy a pound's worth of goods and there were twenty members, then the winner of the draw would get his goods on the payment of his first shilling and so on down the line.

The vote was decisive for the twenty-week club. John Moores got a catalogue from each of the eighteen mail order businesses already in existence in Britain. He sent for catalogues from other countries with mail order businesses. Then he took them home to his mother's house and cut out all the boys' and men's clothing advertisements from the catalogues. His mother, his wife, his sisters and sisters-in-law were all asked to choose the goods they liked the look of best. From the classified telephone directory in Leeds he made up a list of wholesalers and arranged to buy batches of clothes from them. His brother Arthur prepared an illustrated catalogue. Twenty thousand letters were sent out to pools gamblers. Two hundred and forty-five wrote back enquiring how to form a club. Later seventeen wrote again to say that their clubs had been formed. The first week's takings were £35. In 1958 the takings of the mail order business and the chain stores which Mr. John Moores has since added are around £50 million a year.

Mr. John Moores is still Chairman of Littlewoods Pools which now employs over ten thousand people and pays around £13 million a year in tax. Pools, mail order business and chain stores are privately owned by the family with Mr. John Moores as the senior member. There is no doubt that Mr. Moores' fortunes now rest solidly not only on gambling but on selling goods.

But what is it all about? Does Mr. Moores have any fun with

his money apart from the knowledge that he has earned it, that it represents security and achievement?

He lives thirty miles from Liverpool at Formby near the golf links, the headquarters of the mail order business and the pools. He has no wish for a villa in the South of France or to live anywhere more exotic than Lancashire. Yachts, luxury and entertaining the fashionable and great do not appeal to him. He is against all ostentation. He looks small and ordinary and he tries to stay ordinary. He plays golf frequently and he plays a little bridge. His favourite recreation is the theatre. Whatever is on he goes to the Liverpool Repertory Theatre every week. He hopes it will be a straight play, a problem play and not a comedy, but he hardly seems to care so long as the play is good enough to let him lose himself in the characters. 'I forget myself in the movement of the play and I come away feeling rested.' The theatre makes him more relaxed than anything else although he gets a similar effect from music, particularly Beethoven.

'What do you get out of your money?' I asked him.

'If anyone's sick I can help them. I have an enormous lot of trusts. I have a big income but I give a lot of it away by paying seven-year covenants to every grandchild of Mother's.' (A man who pays 18*s* 6*d*. in the £ income tax can through a seven-year covenant enable the recipient to recover large amounts of the tax paid from the income tax authorities and multiply the original gift considerably.)

One of John Moores' relations lives in Central Africa. 'Mother said: "They've got a little boy. Wouldn't it be nice if you gave him six or seven hundred a year—also something to the boy's mother."' John Moores gets tremendous pleasure from giving money away to his family. He is entrenched in family life. On Christmas Day twenty or thirty relations meet at his mother's house and the next day at his. The Moores have always wanted to be together.

John Moores was one of eight children when there was no wireless, no television, and hardly any cinemas. They even had no electric light. All their entertainment was home made—snakes

and ladders, ludo, whist. At school the brothers stood together against anyone who might want to fight them. They've done the same in the larger world—led by their mother. Most of the family have business ability. A sister had a husband who ran an artificial-flower-making concern. When he died she carried it on and made it very successful. His brother Cecil is an exceptionally good business man. A younger sister runs a small store. They all like work and they all like staying in control.

Once they considered issuing shares in the pools to the public but they were advised that the market would never back a gambling concern. But they were quite happy to stay as they were. John Moores has given a lot of his money away to his children to avoid death duties. One day he is afraid that he may have to turn to the public to finance more chain stores. There are seventy now and he would like another fifty or sixty. If a tight money policy is operating it might not be easy to raise loans. One store building alone can cost £150,000 and to build fifty stores at that price is a lot of money even for Mr. John Moores. But he is reluctant to have the public in because they might not allow him to follow his own idea of a correct policy especially in bad times. He might even be forced to dismiss old employees who did not strictly justify their salaries. He might be criticized if he bought and sold his own shares.

It would seem crazy to suggest that John Moores has not always quite known what he was doing in building up his business but sometimes he gives that impression.

'You get talked into running a factory you don't mean to. I took over a Government factory during the war. Then pressure was brought on me to keep it open to avoid post-war unemployment. We didn't know how to find jobs for the men. I started making furniture and spring mattresses. I never planned it at all. I was friendly with various Government departments and just got pushed into it. I can't get out of it now. No one wants it because it's near Carlisle and it's very difficult for transport. I can only just make it pay.

'There was another factory I took over in the war. The people

there asked to be allowed to stay on when the war ended. I'd like to be free of factories but I get carried on by force of circumstances outside my own volition.'

Millionaires have surprising gaps in their efficiency and knowledge of the world. The first time I met Mr. John Moores was at a luncheon. John Moores was aggrieved. He thought the Treasury had been unfair to him in not allowing him dollars for use in Canada while prospecting the possibility of setting up a business there.

'But surely,' I said to a Treasury official who was present, 'this is just the sort of operation for which the Government does allow dollars.'

'Yes,' said the Treasury official, looking very puzzled. 'I can't understand it.'

'Who did you apply to?' I asked.

'Oh,' said John Moores, 'someone from my office in Liverpool went down and saw the local bank. They said the Treasury wouldn't allow the dollars.'

'Did you leave it at that?' I asked. 'Oh yes,' said John Moores. It had not occurred to him to write to the Treasury, state his case for an allocation of dollars in Canada and ask for an explanation if he were not allowed them. He permitted himself to be frustrated on a low level and nothing was done about raising the matter at a higher level until the luncheon was arranged. The Treasury official told him to do what he should have done before —write in. It was what anyone connected with business might have been expected to know, and to have done.

Mr. John Moores has never got very far away from the outlook and background of those from whom he makes his money. He understands the mail order club organizer because he is really John Moores in a minor key.

'Why do people want to run these clubs?' I asked. 'It can't be just the money.' (Today the number in a club is about fifteen. Members usually pay between half a crown and five shillings a week for an average number of seventeen weeks. The organizer sends the total subscriptions in to Littlewoods each week. His

recompense is 10 per cent in cash or 12 per cent in goods. So the most an organizer is likely to make is around *7s. 6d.* a week for a good deal of work.)

'It always seems to be a good type of person who becomes an organizer,' said Moores. 'Someone who is industrious, not a drinker. The kind of person who likes being on committees, who likes doing things and being at the centre of activity. It's a paying hobby.'

Once John Moores stayed with a club organizer. 'She had a very nice semi-detached house with a telephone. I didn't think she would need to do this,' he said in a surprised voice. 'But she did it for the interest.'

Many people organize the mail order clubs because it gives them a chance to get into other peoples homes and to make friends. They enjoy the excitement of sharing in surprise gifts planned for other members of the family. They acquire a worthy sense of importance. But John Moores does not pretend that his object is to do good. 'I like to be helpful but I have to keep my wife and children and I wanted to send my children to a good school. That was my main aim in building up a business—to look after my family. Of course as a business man I like to give good value and service.'

That is a claim which can be substantiated. All the goods whether in the mail order business or in the stores are tested in laboratories before they are sold. Littlewoods want to keep prices down but not at the cost of selling shoddy goods and losing their reputation. Manufacturers sometimes try to sell them an inferior product by removing something from the article to keep the price down. Littlewoods always check to see there is no fake.

The only advantage of buying through the mail order service is if you live some way from a town or do not like shopping. The catalogues, the cost of organizing the clubs, and the postage are expensive. Mass produced goods sold in a mass way like most men's and women's clothing are cheaper in a store. But articles like furniture, which the Littlewood mail order service arrange with the manufacturers to deliver direct to the customer, can be

cheaper. But at any rate even if the prices in the mail order business are high the customer does get exactly what he is told he will get in the catalogue. In business honesty frequently is the best policy.

Because he is so close to them John Moores understands the anxieties and the situations into which people can get. Big pools winners find that there is a whole department at Littlewoods concerned with advising them how to invest their money and trying to guard them from throwing it away.

He is not an original man. He has remarkably few ideas of his own. But he does have the art of delegation to a high degree.

'Delegation is getting people to help you. As they learn with you you let them do the work. If they're good you gradually give them more and more. I will leave someone for a week then look at what he's done and shake him up a bit if he hasn't done it well. If he turns out not to be capable I usually don't get rid of him. I bring in somebody else over him. Although if a man goes on not doing well I will chat with him and keep telling him what I want and if he still doesn't do well he has to go.

'You can't possible delegate unless you know the job yourself and then you can delegate perfectly. You have the man working with you, discuss your problems with him, then he gets used to you and you to him. Delegation is not just an idea. You must work with someone and know them first.

'Sometimes I have to go back. About a year ago I had to go right back on the buying side. We were getting the wrong goods. I went to various stores and spoke to the salesgirls and found out what they wanted. I talked to girls with a dress sense about fashions. I let them tell the buyers what was needed. For the last twelve months I have had to work like stink and I am only just getting it right now. That is because I left too much to the buyers to do. Previously I had always put the emphasis on organization and finance. Now I am putting it on buying. I'd like to do less again now. I had started painting. I turned a small room next to the office into a studio and gave up a couple of afternoons a week and Sunday to painting. I want to get back to it.'

Mr. Moores has grown so enthusiastic about painting that he has become a major patron of the Arts. He has found a new pleasure in his money—sponsoring art exhibitions with substantial money prizes. His first one at Liverpool at the end of 1957 offered £4,000 in prize money. The choice of judges ensured that the prizes did not go to conventional artists but to bright and adventurous painters. The artists who are getting Mr. Moores' prizes, such as Sir Matthew Smith and Mr. John Bratby, seem at variance with Mr. Moores' own background.

John Moores works regular hours from about 9.15 to 6.30. But often work continues in the evenings—talking to people, finding out, pepping up. Seven or eight hours a day may be the maximum when everything goes well. But if they are going badly he is available all the time, weekends included.

Oddly, since he had little formal education himself, in choosing top executives John Moores goes for the public-school or grammar-school boy. 'I find that an elementary schoolboy will do well quite far but when you get to the top you need someone with a better education. It must be something to do with mind training. The public-school boy has a better start.'

When he looks at the store managers he tries to find a common thread running through the failures and the successes. 'I believe tremendously in "it's dogged that does it". So many people fall down because they won't stay the course. When you run a hundred yards you must run a hundred and one or a hundred and five, not just a hundred. Many want a bit of stuffing in them. People who are always moaning don't get anywhere.

'I think anyone can get on with energy and enthusiasm. I started the pools in 1923 at about the time we had a long coal strike. In 1932 the mail order was started with large unemployment. It gives me the gripes to hear people talking today. If you put an old-time salesman on the job now he'd be amazed. Money has never been so easily made as at present. Any good service can make more money than ever before.

'Today everyone gets a chance of getting training in any big company. If you have average common sense or a little more

you can get on if you want to. I agree that some dumb-bells have no brains at all and a lot of people just aren't interested. They want an easy, pleasant life. Of course they are the salt of the nation who keep the country going. I wouldn't belittle the ordinary man who does an ordinary job. He's a model citizen. But the man who gets on is the one who's ambitious. He's full of nervous energy. He's got ants in his pants and he's a fidget. He can't stop going on. You must have ideas but behind the ideas in many of the things you do there is no great virtue. I still feel that energy and enthusiasm can make you a millionaire.'

John Moores proves that application can take a man to the top. He does not have to be a genius. He has to be concentratedly persistent. Moores is the ordinary person energetically self-boosted. He has used his own experience, his own origins, as the standard by which to decide what the masses want. With his football pools he has encouraged the little man to feel that luck and riches may be just round the corner: it may be a necessary inspiration for many whose lives are otherwise drab. With his mail order clubs he has enabled thousands to get a social sense that they are doing something useful, something which makes them a part of the community. With his chain stores he has extended the system of making available large quantities of good value articles to the masses. He is a fair and honest man without conceit or pretension. He enjoys his success and remains surprised at it.

It would be churlish not to concede that he has given pleasure and value to millions. It is easy to decry football pools but they answer, without much harm, the deep-felt human urge to get outside oneself. In doing that they are a tonic for the spirit. The mail order business accidentally gives scope to good instincts. Mr. John Moores can be satisfied with what he has done, albeit incidentally and unintentionally, to make Britain a happier place.

Four Men of Enterprise

ALL the men I have written about in this book are well known except the four that follow. They are included because three of them have already made a success of building up a business since the end of the war and the fourth, Mr. Edward Bals, has painstakingly developed a good idea which he has not yet transformed into a commercial success. But even if he never makes money from his idea his spirit deserves remark. All four men are illustrations of Mr. John Moores' proposition that, despite the grumbles about high taxation and barriers to enterprise, it is still as possible to advance in Britain as it ever was. All four work through private companies and have had to finance themselves out of their own profits or by persuading one or two individuals that they were worth backing.

They all have this in common: a determination to succeed and a will-power to fulfil the determination. They also have ideas and ingenuity. They are the answer to the despairing emigrants who leave Britain, not out of a sense of adventure, but because they mournfully conclude that it is not possible for a private individual to get anywhere in the age of the Welfare State.

MR. CHARLES PURLEY

'Somebody is always doing something that someone said couldn't be done,' says the notice in the office of Mr. Charles Purley, Managing Director of Lec Refrigeration Ltd. 'There must be a

better way' reads a placard prominently displayed on the factory floor.

There are thousands of complete Lec refrigerators turned out every week—not to mention engine and compressor units sent all over the world to be put into other makes of refrigerators. The works, which only started making refrigerators in 1945, now has an employees' car park that takes up more space than the original factory. In 1937, 75 per cent of the refrigerators were exported. Ninety per cent of all the refrigerators that went into Canada from Britain in 1956 were made by Lec. They are even getting into America, the home of the refrigerator. They are sold in large numbers in Germany where competition from refrigeration manufacturers is strongest. Even Iceland takes them.

Every year the firm expands another 10 per cent. Its buildings, built by the firm's own labour force, are moving inexorably into the fields around. At this rate of progress the Lec factory just north of Bognor will soon take large chunks out of the Sussex Downs, in the direction of nearby Goodwood. Already Lec have created a fleet of lorries, established a dock at Bognor and their own railway siding from which refrigerators are despatched. Beyond the railway siding is a private airfield for the Lec aeroplanes. One is used for comparatively short-range journeys. At a moment's notice it can fly to the Continent with an engineer to make repairs or demonstrate refrigeration methods. This ensures instant and impressive service. Frequently this aeroplane is sent to fetch a potential customer and fly him back to where he lives on the same day—in the North of England or Wales. Sometimes it is used to fetch a replacement for a vital part of machinery—the lack of which would hold up production for hours. Once it was sent to Birmingham and back for some machinery. Covering the distance at 140 miles an hour, using only a gallon of petrol every twelve miles and preventing a loss of production of up to twenty-four hours, the journey became not an extravagance but an economy. In 1956 it took Mr. Frank Purley, in charge of exports, on a trip round Europe and to North Africa on a sales tour. He

was able in quick time to cover twenty-one countries. Instead of having to adjust his journeys to airline bookings and schedules he only had to stay in any one place for so long as his business conferences actually lasted.

The other aeroplane is newer and larger, capable of flying all over the world. Most of the seats have been taken out and the inside is fitted as a showroom, carrying samples of all the models. Able to make long tours abroad it is the first flying refrigerator showroom in the world. The advantage is that overseas buyers often find pictures and catalogues misleading—they are suspicious of them. A catalogue can never beat a demonstration of the actual article. As this aeroplane flies low near towns a wind-skin, local regulations permitting, trails behind it advertising Lec.

Lec is a firm that is convinced that unless they are more up to date in their approach than their rivals they will die. When a complaint came in from an English housewife that her new refrigerator was making a noise the technical director of Lec arrived at her house on a Sunday morning to put it right. He discovered that after leaving the factory the refrigerator must have had a jolt displacing a part of the machinery. Helping the housewife helped the firm to ensure that this fault could not occur again. Fifty large commercial refrigerators were sold to Holland. A report came in that something in the dampness of the atmosphere had caused heavy icing up. To prevent it a rubber tubing addition was required. The next day two men were sent abroad in a service van, calling on every customer who had bought one of that particular batch of refrigerators—even though the great majority of buyers were not yet aware anything might go wrong. The prompt service gave a tremendous prestige boost to Lec in Holland.

At the centre of any new and rising firm there is usually one man who stands out as the driving force. Once the firm is soundly based it can continue on the pre-determined lines. But it would never have made the grade without the initial impetus given it by that one man. In Lec it is Mr. Charles Purley, the Managing Director, born in 1910.

'How would you describe him?' I asked senior members of his staff.

'An H-bomb. Dynamite,' said one. 'Really a sort of human bulldozer. Goes through anything and everything. Once he gets an idea in his head it's no good saying it can't be done.'

We were sitting in the firm's technical library. 'He'll come in here if he's working on a problem and take out a dozen books,' said another. 'He'll go on hammering at it at home until three or four in the morning. He'll ask us all our opinions separately—twenty of us sometimes. Eventually he'll solve the problem.'

'He doesn't believe in orthodox methods,' said a third. 'He leaves me breathless. I was used to doing things my own way for years, but once you meet Mr. Purley your ideas are thrown out of the window and you get on with his. And his are usually right.'

'Of course,' said another, 'things are much quieter and go more smoothly when he's not here. Maybe completed cabinets are coming off the line when suddenly Mr. Purley reads or hears of some improvement which he thinks we should incorporate. He'll rush out on to the shop floor and fling the cabinets off the production line. He'll turn the place upside down, saying "Why can't this be done?" The drawing-office people will fly round like bluebottles. The workers curse at the time, but they know it's good for the firm in the end.'

Charles Purley was originally a fishmonger. In pre-war days refrigeration was a prohibitively expensive and rare item for fishmongers. He started making home-made storage refrigerators for himself and his friends. By 1938 he had got tired of the fish trade and began an engineering works fulfilling small Government military contracts. In 1940 he was joined by a friend, who is now the director in charge of production. They had known each other since they were both eighteen. At the end of the war they were ready to begin Lec Refrigeration Ltd. and make not home-made, but professionally engineered, refrigerators. They concentrated on exports because the Government would only release steel to firms with a high export trade.

'What is your ambition?' I asked Charles Purley.

'To keep the place successful,' he said. 'You have to expand. If you stop you go back. We're always thinking that next year we'll just consolidate, but it's never possible without turning trade away. Greater trade is coming in for new models. The field of refrigeration isn't even scratched yet overseas and at home. (Only one house in eight in Britain has a refrigerator.) As food gets dearer and scarcer you must save it. At the moment we have a bigger demand for refrigerators than we can possibly supply.'

When the Lec refrigeration factory began in 1945 it had £1,600 worth of capital held by four directors. Charles Purley had, and still has, a controlling interest. Ten years later that original capital had become worth at least a quarter of a million pounds. No money has come in from outside. The million pounds needed to build up the firm has all come out of profits.

'I'm always working. I think about the problems all the time and make a study of them—I like doing that. I go to sleep and it often comes to me in the morning.'

Charles Purley has a house on the beach at Middleton, not far from his factory. As we walked through the garden towards the seashore, he stopped me.

'Look at that.'

It was the word 'Lec' cut out in flowers.

Charles Purley is a remarkable chess player. Apart from that, like many other successful men, he has an almost total absorption in his work. Nor does it ever occur to him that he might not succeed.

'Anything I tackle I believe will be successful. I wouldn't take it on if I didn't think it would be.'

Lec Refrigerators are kept flexible. Bigger firms lay down production lines to turn out thousands of a certain size of refrigerator and nothing else. Lec makes fourteen different types of domestic refrigerators alone. If any new idea comes up while the refrigerators are being manufactured—in it goes. The firm is not too large to make quick decisions and sudden changes impossible.

Always Purley is developing new materials and methods to

reduce the costs. A new idea using plastic for the inside has increased the space for storing food, lowered the cost of manufacture and led to the refrigerators burning less current. The last is particularly important in many places overseas where electricity is expensive. Charles Purley is working to the day when a refrigerator will require no more power than an average electric light bulb and need turn itself on to keep cold less than half the time. Although the Lec refrigerator is already amazingly cheap, he is determined that its performance and efficiency will never be less than that of the most expensive.

The moral of this man is that he never stops thinking about his work. When he has an idea he burns to implement it. Refrigerators may not be very exciting to most of us but for Mr. Charles Purley they are the most glamorous and fascinating objects in the world. No one really succeeds unless they find work that they like. To Charles Purley working is a recreation. As he has determination, organizing power and ingenuity he is able to maintain his operation at a high degree of intensity. He has understood that exports can only be expanded if British salesmen go out of their way to be adventurous and original and if their firms back them up with after-sales service. I do not suppose that Mr. Charles Purley thinks very much about the value to society of his firm. But it is just the type of business that Britain needs. And it proves that high taxation and all manner of modern difficulties are not a bar to the ambitious.

MR. KENNETH WOOD

He had a shed next to a fish shop in Goldsworth Road, Woking, in 1948. Now he has a growing modern factory employing four hundred and fifty people. From making a few toasters then he has advanced to turning out thousands of complete food-mixers every month, as well as fan heaters, portable mixers, automatic irons. . . . The whole operation is as remarkable as its founder, Mr. Kenneth Wood, born in 1916.

His father died when he was thirteen. Young Kenneth was not prepared to let anyone else pay for his education. He left his local county school and went to sea in a tramp steamer as a cadet. Theoretically he was learning to be a Merchant Navy officer. Practically he did all the jobs that no one else wanted to do. Kenneth Wood's father was a salesman. Cruising round the world his son began to add experience to the flair that he had inherited. The pay was minute. But there was a jam ration. If you saved it you could exchange it in any South American port for money or objects of value. When Kenneth Wood returned to land after four years at sea he had the knowledge of human nature of a man of thirty. He had also discovered that to get on in a rough world a man must be tough.

'What's he like to work for?' I asked his top executives.

There was almost a chorus.

'He'll never take no for an answer. If there's the slightest chance of getting a thing done he'll stop at nothing.'

Said one director: 'He's difficult to work for. He demands 100 per cent effort.'

Another director, Clifford Sidebotham, a big distributor from Manchester, who was brought on to the board to put the customer's point of view, said: 'When he comes up to Manchester we are often talking till four in the morning. The last time my wife called downstairs: "Are you coming to bed or shall I come down and make you breakfast?" If I'm down at Woking and try to leave the office at 5.30 his voice calls out: "Do you think you're going out to lunch?" After I've been down here five days I'm glad to get back to Manchester where it's peaceful.'

After he left the sea Kenneth Wood started learning to be an engineer. He had built crystal sets as a boy; as a young man he went to night school four nights a week. By the time the war began he had founded a little engineering business of his own with £30 capital. Then he went into war work.

'Did you sell the business well?' I asked.

Sheepishly Mr. Wood admitted that he had given it away to a man down on his luck whom he thought needed some help.

By the end of the war Kenneth Wood was ready to launch out again. He could see that automation was the future. And if there was going to be automation in the factory, why not automation in the kitchen? Industry was being forced to use labour-saving devices because of the shortage of labour. Full employment meant no servants and, in any case, the modern housewife was demanding more leisure. Besides that, Wood thought it was a good idea in itself. 'You can't split a man's life or a woman's into half. If they use old-fashioned methods in the home they won't take to modern techniques in the factory. Automation in the kitchen is one way of getting people to be modern minded.'

Wood had about £800 to start off his factory in the shed in Woking. The cheapest things he could tool up and make were toasters. 'We were in a fantastic sellers' market. A lot of people started businesses in mews and back streets everywhere at the time. I knew I could sell toasters. We sold eight hundred a week. Then we were faced with the fact that many firms were turning out toasters and irons. We had to think of something different that most people wouldn't make.'

So the food mixer was born. Again and again Kenneth Wood had noticed how much labour and time women wasted in the kitchen. Something electric that would act as the housewife's servant would be certain to sell.

The first Kenwood food mixer was a copy of an American design. From the start Kenneth Wood was anxious to have a large export trade. The broad rule of the Company was made that if possible no one country should ever have more than 20 per cent of Kenwood's annual output. There were two reasons. One, the greater the international spread the broader the structure and the less risk of ruin from a slump in any area. Two, Kenneth Wood is very British—a sort of merchant adventurer. And he likes travelling.

Early on an order came in for ten food mixers from Belgium. Kenneth Wood couldn't understand it. He knew American mixers were better. He flew to Brussels and found that the man

who had ordered the Kenwood mixers had never seen them. It was simply that shortage of dollars had put restrictions on the number of American mixers that could be imported.

'This will never do,' thought Wood. He set about designing a mixer that could do things that no other mixer in the world did. He analysed the problem of design and solved it in one weekend. The next task was to make an unsurpassable mixer at the cheapest possible price. That was the origin of the Kenwood Chef.

'It never occurred to me that it wouldn't succeed. If you start thinking "Will it, won't it?" then you don't ever succeed.'

Some money was raised out of previous profits, some from a Government-sponsored finance corporation, and some from private sources. It was hard to get going in a big way. Sub-contractors of the various parts of the machine would only give credit if they thought the firm could really sell its products.

Customers and suppliers had to be brought together. Everybody needed to be convinced that Kenneth Wood was not a man with a mad idea but a good idea. General Motors believed in Kenwood and provided the motors. Wood even got himself on to the board of an export company to make sure that the Kenwood Chef really would be exported.

'Design and selling are the two main things; you can nearly always buy the middle bit—the actual manufacture of the product.'

The aim was to produce an article of superb quality and then to give service with it. Every machine that has ever been sold has had its guarantee card with it. By 1958 there were over twenty mobile service vans with Kenwood trained engineers. When someone buys a machine, fills in a guarantee card and sends it in, an engineer goes round to see if everything is working all right. He may be there within forty-eight hours. For a guinea a year the housewife can have an engineer call twice a year to overhaul her mixer completely. That service covers 95 per cent of the country. The shopkeeper has no worries about collecting or re-delivering machines for repair after he has sold them. He gets a supply of cards addressed to the nearest servicing engineer. If a

customer wants anything done the shopkeeper simply fills the card in and Kenwoods see to the rest. The job is done in the customer's home.

There are some unusual aspects to the welfare side. A hairdresser comes twice a week. 'The men's hair grows while they are working,' says Ken Wood, 'so they can have it cut in the Company's time too.'

There was a full-time Welfare Officer appointed long before the size of the Company justified it. There is a part-time works medical officer whom anyone can go and see once a week. He is in addition to National Health Service arrangements. The explanation is that Kenneth Wood thinks many people do not want to go to their own doctor for fear of worrying their family.

The workers are really pleased when trips are organized to the Ideal Homes Exhibition to see the demonstrators at work selling Kenwood machines. They like to see Kenwoods' bright advertising, watch the factory expanding and see new plant for machinery coming in. They know they belong to something that is growing. Now Kenwoods are going through a transitional stage. They are moving on. Previously, when it was small, the firm was built round Kenneth Wood.

Today a new top stratum is being formed. The world is being divided into sections for Kenwood exploitation, with one Kenwood official in charge of each part. Starting to sell in North America can cost millions of dollars in promotion and advertising. The most difficult, but surest, way is to train salesmen to go direct to the housewife—knocking on the door. Kenwoods are doing that in the U.S.A. In the land of gadgets, the Kenwood food mixer is supreme in its class. Not all the cut-throat rivalry of American business can keep it out.

All over the world there are many imitators. In Germany there are two vigorous competitors but their machines are ponderous —they are without the Kenwood streamlined look. The closest imitator is in Switzerland—but they have not got it right. As one Kenwood executive said to me: 'They copy all your old mistakes while you're already on your next move improving the machine.'

Kenneth Wood is an engineer who keeps thinking about design. He understands the technical aspects. His imagination flickers endlessly around and over his machines. The Kenwood sales method is to go out and get the business, at home or abroad. They think of a figure that it is possible to sell in a period of, say, three months, then they double it and treble it. Salesmen sent abroad are carefully selected, given a thorough examination and training. 'When you're abroad you have got to catch the important person in the firm you want to sell your goods to. You must get him alone in the daytime or at night. Then explain to him just what he can or cannot do with the machine.'

'How do you see your future?' I asked Mr. Kenneth Wood.

'To become a world-wide organization. To have manufacturing companies abroad. To have our own complete sales organization in Canada and the States. Unless this country gets internationally minded we won't get anywhere.'

MR. EDWARD BALS

Mr. Edward Bals is immensely tall and immensely genial. Fair and blue-eyed, he is an Austrian born in Czechoslovakia, who lived in Germany and left it as a young man of eighteen in 1934 to start life again in China—because of Hitler. He chose China because it was the cheapest ship passage he could get for the furthest distance away from the Nazis. For a time he worked for a big German industrial concern selling diesel trucks. Then the German Embassy found out that he was an anti-Nazi and his job came to an end in twenty-four hours. He moved on to Indonesia, working for an American insurance company. 'Life is too comfortable in Indonesia—you eat and drink too much. It gets dull after a while, everything's so easy.'

But he did not have long to get bored in Indonesia. Germany invaded Holland and the Dutch, who then ruled Indonesia, locked Mr. Bals up. When the Japanese started roaming over South-East Asia the Dutch moved Mr. Bals to India for safe keeping.

After the collapse of the Dutch in Indonesia the British Indian Civil Service took over the job of interning him. You might have thought that Edward Bals' anti-Nazi record would have been good enough to allow him to be released. But the Indian Civil Service could not get past the fact that he was Austrian.

For six years he was in an internment camp. He could not bear to be idle. He started a laundry business in the camp to do the washing for those internees who were too rich and too lazy to do it themselves. He was only released from internment in 1946 after a commotion in Parliament. If he were not so amiable he might have had hard feelings about the British. But after a quick look at Germany he decided that England was where he wanted to live in the post-war world. That is how I was able to find him in 1957 in a little house in Battersea High Street running one of the strangest and most enterprising factories I have seen. Two or three people putting together machines in the back rooms and back yard that have captured a large part of the world's export market in machines to protect crops from pests.

Mr. Bals got his experience and his ideas in the East. The way of life he likes and the base he has chosen is British. His staff—partners he would put it—and the help he has had are English. When he first came to Britain in 1948 he worked for a firm concerned with devising ways of shielding crops from ravages by pests. Travelling in Indonesia he became interested in a problem which was apparently insoluble—spraying tea plants thoroughly and often enough to prevent them being devoured by the fungi that feed on them.

'I thought of driving a low mist across a whole estate and letting it settle. But how?'

It was driving a car in England on a day when the roads were wet that gave him the idea. The car in front of him, going at about seventy miles an hour, threw up a fine spray that completely covered his windscreen with tiny spots. It atomized the moisture and spread it quickly without waste.

'That is what is wanted,' he thought. A motor-driven machine which will push the spray out just as the back wheel of a fast-

moving car shoves out the mud on a wet road. Bals is not an engineer but he believed that the machine in his head could be made reality on the ground. The firm he worked for was not interested. They were busy working on machines to spray powder. 'Powder's no good,' said Bals, 'it can be blown off too easily.'

'Are you an engineer?' they asked him.

'No,' he said.

'Then you don't know what you're talking about,' was the reply.

Bals could not get the established firms in the business to take up his idea. But he did not despair. He borrowed £250 from a friend and got the same amount from a trusting bank manager who was impressed by Bals' enthusiasm. He gave him enough money to live on while he constructed a machine held together with bits of string. At this time the Ceylon tea growers were greatly worried. Once a red rust blight had destroyed the coffee industry. They were anxious to avoid a similar disaster to their tea plants. They saw Edward Bals and his machine.

'How much would you want,' they asked him, 'to make one not held together with string and take it out to Ceylon for three to six months to try it out?'

'One thousand five hundred pounds,' was the reply. They gave it to him and Bals went to Ceylon. The machine was ideal, but unfortunately the water-based chemicals then in use were unsuitable for a tropical climate—they evaporated too quickly. What was wanted was a chemical with an oil base, but there was none in existence.

In the meanwhile, experiments with the machines went on. Some were sold for use in areas where oil-based chemicals were not needed. The tea growers loyally stood by, putting in some £7,000 for development and waiting for something that would help them. Eventually they decided that their Articles of Association would not allow them to go on financing Bals because nothing had emerged of any service to them. The original company, Clean Crops Limited, was put in the hands of the Official

Receiver, and the tea growers, ever generous, paid up the creditors.

At this point, 1954, Bals' fortunes were low. He decided with the help of a few friends to form a new company, Micron Sprayers Ltd. The assets of the firm, apart from Bals' brilliant concepts, were knowledge of the conditions where the machines might be used. Micron Sprayers aimed to make them foolproof for use by Africans and other untrained labour. Simplicity is the basis.

Broadly what happens is that a one-speed engine turns a fan which blows out air at around 2,000 cubic feet a minute. The air spins a rotary atomizer on which small droplets of spray are formed and it carries them forward in a beam. The machine can be used either to force the spray in amongst the plants or to set up a cloud which will drift with the wind and settle on the leaves.

But it was not easy to sell the machines. In the first place the spray is so tiny that the naked eye cannot see it. Farmers and planters refused to believe that the plants had been sprayed at all. The old-fashioned water-spraying machines soaked everything so much that you could see the leaves were sodden. If powder is used you can also see that on the plants. The virtue of the atomizing sprayer—that it only uses two or three gallons of moisture to cover an acre instead of hundreds—was its undoing when it came to selling it.

Then Bals started to use a fluorescent chemical for demonstrations. After the spraying the farmer was invited to pick any leaves he liked. Put under an ultra-violet lamp the spray is immediately revealed. This magic was convincing and sales overseas began to get under way—practically none were sold in Britain. In 1950 they were turning out only one machine a week, in 1956 output had gone up to an average of two and a half big machines a week (needing motorized transport to carry them) and several smaller machines. By 1957 the weekly output was five big machines a week, worth around £500 each, plus twenty-five new model baby machines that can be carried and used by one man.

The parts for the Micron Sprayers are made by sub-contractors. They are assembled at the house in Battersea, where the

construction of prototypes also takes place. There is not much room in that house even for the tiny staff of twelve.

'What has been your biggest mistake?' I asked Bals.

'Having 100 per cent export and no home sales,' he replied. Micron Sprayers sell to fifty-three countries. Until 1957 they had not sold more than a dozen machines in Britain. No company can be effective and have such a top-heavy structure as that. There must be some element of home sales to keep the organization steady. But to be fair to Micron Sprayers, it was difficult to get the new idea across to the conservative-minded farmers in Britain. In tropical countries insect plagues are so violently destructive that they can destroy a man's capital in a month. He can see the need and urgency for a machine that will protect his crops with a tenth or less of the labour and a tenth of the expense than was required before. But in England not only the people are more moderate than elsewhere—so is nature. Blights and farmers move slowly.

But in 1956 there was a caterpillar plague in England. Mr. Bals demonstrated in the Isle of Wight how a farm could be cleaned up at a cost of only one gallon an acre. At last the Micron Sprayer began to catch on in Britain.

And on the export side there has been good fortune for the tea growers who so generously supported Edward Bals at a crucial moment. At last an oil-based fungicide that will protect tea plantations has been produced. Now the people who first had faith in Edward Bals may benefit by securing 100 per cent protection in the future for the plants on which their livelihood depends.

What Edward Bals has done is to capitalize on an obvious idea—so obvious that nobody saw it. Once you do that you are half-way there—if you have enough persistence and persevere until you have got your product perfect. It is the same story as Watts and the kettle. Anybody could have seen that steam generates so much force that it can drive things. Nobody realized its significance until Watts and nobody would have appreciated it even then unless he had actually made a steam engine.

MR. DEMETRIO COMINO

In early 1957 I was standing in Accra, capital of the Gold Coast, watching Africans putting up the grandstands for the coming Independence Day celebrations. I put some shots of them in the television film I was making. After it was shown I had a letter from a firm called Dexion. 'Did you realize that those grandstands were being built out of Dexion Slotted Angles? When the celebrations are over the dismantled grandstands will be turned into schools, farm buildings, racks, looms. . . .'

It sounded like a British firm with imagination. It is. In 1947 Dexion employed three people. It made its first meccano-like pieces of constructional material in 1948.

In 1958 Dexion had three factories in England with an annual turnover of £3½ million. It has set up factories in Canada, Australia and Belgium. Dexion is being made under licence in France and America. New factories are going up in India, South Africa and Greece.

All from a 1947 zero.

It has been done on the brains and energy mainly of one man, with little money to back him. Anyone with a similar idea could have done it if he had the patience and guts. Demetrio Comino has the head, the sensitive face, and the passion of a poet. He was born in 1902. But in his eyes are the dreams of a young man. The difference between him and many poets is that he has made facts out of his fantasies.

'I always wanted to produce things. I knew that if I got the product right I could sell it in great volume.'

Mr. Comino's father was an Australian of Greek origin. When he died the family came to England in 1920. 'I wanted to be an engineer. I thought "England's the place for me—there's not much engineering scope in Greece." '

First Demetrio Comino trained as an engineer. A few years later, with the help of his mother's savings, he set up a tiny business as a printer near Oxford Circus. Comino worked till midnight every day, weekends included. He had no holiday in

seven years. 'You get a second wind about nine, perk up and then you're exhausted at midnight.' They were hard times and he lived on 30*s* a week. He did it because he knew that unless he could get something behind him he could never fulfil his dream of successfully manufacturing one simple object. But printing jobs were too varied and quickly finished to give him the satisfaction of a continuous process in huge quantities.

Three years before the war he had his idea. He got it because in his tiny printing works he could never find enough storage space. It occurred to him that there was a great need for a cheap universal construction unit that could be simply and speedily put together—and taken down—and used in scaffolding, buildings, racks. . . . Still doing almost every job in his own printing business he started to develop his dream. Some engineers, after they had had an idea like this, would have spent three weeks on it, not three years. But Demetrio Comino was determined that his article would be perfect.

Since Dexion began to flourish there have been many imitators. But none has succeeded in producing the same strength of material or simplicity of design. 'The Accra grandstand job,' said Comino, 'took five weeks. It would have been seven months with any other material. You put two pieces together and run a bolt through them. Untrained Africans or anyone else can do it in thirty seconds.'

The war was a fallow period. It was impossible to open a new factory or do anything other than turn his printing works into a tiny munitions factory. The moment the war was over Comino turned back to his great idea. He had painstakingly saved £7,000 in his thrifty years as a printer. He borrowed another £7,000 from the bank and went out to look for a factory. It took him two years to find a suitable one. It cost him £8,000. Next he needed a machine to make the slotted angle. Comino wanted one that would give continuous production for volume. The machine makers tried to dissuade him. They thought he was mad. 'You haven't made any of the stuff. How do you know it will be any good?'

'I've thought enough about it. It will be,' said Comino.

He bought a machine to produce 3,000 ft. an hour, although he had not got a buying order for a single foot. The enterprise was lunatic. Two or three men working away with no customers making a product no one had ever heard of. As the first buyers trickled in they were made to pay cash or the works would have closed down altogether. Nineteen-forty-seven was a bad year to start. Soon the steel supplies ran out. The alternative was expensive aluminium at well over £100 a ton.

Comino asked ICI for credit. After much discussion ICI gave him £3,000 worth of aluminium—but no more until the bill was paid. He settled the account and ICI increased their deliveries. Aluminium kept the firm going while the firm sent out their salesmen to demonstrate what Dexion would do. An order came in from a West End store near Mr. Comino's printing business at Oxford Circus. They wanted it to save storage space.

The first major enquiry came from the Rank Organization in 1948. 'We hired a car and put some material in it,' said Mr. Comino. 'Geoffrey Young—now in charge of our exports—and I went out to the studios in great excitement. We knew Dexion would be ideal for making film sets. They were very nice to us and gave us tea. Then we erected a structure. They seemed impressed. They would think about it. . . . It looked like a big order and we were even more excited. When it came it was huge for that time —several tons of Dexion.'

Dexion got into its stride and kept growing. Demetrio Comino owns 90 per cent of the firm and his brother 10 per cent. But the profits go back into expanding the business. Demetrio Comino only takes a managing director's salary.

'When I wanted to buy a house I had about 2*d*. in the bank. When my wife asks for a holiday abroad I tell her we can't afford it, the money's going into the business.'

'Are you surprised at how big the business has got?' I asked.

'I didn't expect it to get so big so quickly. I never set targets that are very high. I always set them a little beyond reach but not much. When you approach the first target you set another a few

rungs higher up. I don't doubt the business will get still bigger. We're broadening our foundations, we're improving our production methods, developing our staff and training them all the time.'

Comino has always considered the staff as his main asset. 'The business will be built up by people and not by machines. Our biggest effort is towards finding people and encouraging them. At first it was difficult. We had to pay them less than trade union rates. Now it is different.'

Comino learned a lot about labour relations during the war. He encouraged his workers with high wages and output doubled.

'I was frightened by the rattle of the machines—by the way the girls were pounding at them. I thought: "They won't last: they need a lot of maintenance." When the girls got browned off I used to pep them up by buying a dress from a West End shop for a competition. That would put output up by another 50 per cent.'

The nature of the work done in the Dexion factories does not allow for that kind of incentive. But Comino has other ways of inspiring enthusiasm. He picks ambitious men. 'You can judge whether a man is going to be good by looking at his record—ambition is the most important thing. Has he got sufficient drive to get the things he wants?'

Comino believes that the management should be in daily contact with the workers, keeping them informed of exactly what is happening to the Company's products at home and abroad. As soon as Comino decides on new plans he sees to it that everybody down to the latest recruit knows what they are. Once all the factories were closed down so that everyone could go to a production conference. Each day the coaches came and drove the workers in to London, returning them at night. Departmental managers, Dexion salesmen from overseas, men on research development, all talked to them. Even the customers were represented. ICI and Shell sent representatives to tell Dexion employees what they thought of their slotted angle and what they wanted from it.

Each Dexion factory turns out thousands of miles of Dexion every year. Besides the output of the overseas factories half of the Dexion produced in England is exported. Dexion turned to exports because the Labour Government were more willing to allow steel to firms with overseas markets. The export business is conducted vigorously and imaginatively. And Dexion tends to advertise itself. An explosion and fire swept the docks at Gibraltar. The only thing left standing was a Dexion structure. In 1955 a terrible hurricane swept Barbados. The roofs which did not come off were Dexion made. The local government opened the traditionally built churches as refuge shelters. They closed the church with a Dexion roof thinking it unsafe. The Dexion-topped church stayed unscathed. The others were wrecked. The Dexion representative had no difficulty in getting orders for rebuilding the shattered houses.

'Our motto is "Every firm can use Dexion". We had a report from Bombay recently saying that even the Russian mobile library units distributing Communist propaganda are constructed with Dexion.'

Dexion bring their foreign agents over to England for a month's training and after sales, unlike so many British firms, they give service. Eighty per cent of their orders are repeat orders from satisfied customers. Even with bad use there have only been one or two collapses in the millions of feet of slotted angles manufactured by Dexion. And if the customer complains Dexion give him a replacement even though the fault in the material may have been the customer's inexpert use of it.

When a government closes down on imports Dexion try to find a way round. That is why they built their factory in Australia in 1954. In undeveloped countries there is a great future for Dexion. It is a cheap material for quick and badly wanted housing. It can be put up by anybody, however little he may know of modern industry. Always the Dexion representatives are travelling, helping and checking up on their agents. Speed and ingenuity are Dexion self-incentives. In London the Dexion lorries are radio controlled. If the docks are busy whole days can be

wasted in queues by lorries waiting to load their goods on to ships. Under the Dexion system the first lorry down radios back the position. If it is bad the others do not waste their time by coming. Every lorry always carries a few extra hundred feet or so in case a customer rings through on an urgent order. A lorry is then diverted to give it to him. Once a customer in London rang for more Dexion. The radio-controlled lorry delivered it in twenty minutes.

So Mr. Comino's dream has come true but he is not altogether happy. He thinks of the future when he has gone. Death duties will take a large part of the firm—it will have to be sold. He does not want to do the same as many other industrialists. It would be easy for him to turn his firm into a public company and sell shares at a huge capital profit on which he would pay no tax. But he is afraid that if he does so greedy shareholders will prevent all the profits being ploughed back, as they are at present, into the business. He is also afraid that he will lose control of the direction and development of his idea—his life's passion.

When he is not thinking about the Dexion slotted angle Comino is thinking about Britain and her future. He runs a one-man crusade, through publications distributed by his firm, to wake up Britain. He wants the Government to encourage managements to be modern and to meet in time the challenge of overseas competition. He campaigns for boldness and energy. He is a remarkable example of the best in British industry. If only 50 per cent of the other managements in Britain followed his lead there would be no cause for anxiety about Britain's economic future.

ENSIGN BOOK STORE

continued from front flap

influence-makers, ranging from industrialists to writers, from politicians to refrigerator manufacturers. By examining these brilliant individuals the reader will come to a far greater understanding of the country and of the future that is being created by its most dynamic pace-setters.

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