

George Wyndham, the English Apollo

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WYNDHAM used to be too beautiful," said a famous London sculptor recently, "but I have noticed lately that the big work he is doing has strengthened the lines in his face and given it the last touch it needed to make it well-nigh ideal. I don't mean that it was ever a weak face—only that it was almost too perfect."

His classic outline is one of the remarkable things about George Wyndham, who, as Great Britain's chief secretary for Ireland, has drawn the attention of the world to himself by his Irish land bill. Even men admire his six-foot figure of perfect proportions, his finely cut face, his brilliant eyes, his dark hair and mustache; and he is variously and invariably described by such phrases as "the handsomest man in the House of Commons," "the English Apollo" and a man with "just a suspicion of Italian opera."

Another remarkable thing about Mr. Wyndham, who is now looked upon as the creator of a new and better Ireland, is that he is a direct descendant of one of the most famous and bravest of the old Irish rebels who fought England to the last drop of their blood. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, whose only daughter, Lady Campbell, was George Wyndham's grandmother, died of a wound which he received when leading his Irish followers against British troops.

On more than one occasion, when Mr. Wyndham, as Irish secretary, has been called upon to uphold the government's policy in the Emerald Isle against attacks made upon it by the Irish leaders, shouts have come from that direction to the effect that the speaker should keep well in mind the salutary example set him by his great-grandfather.

In the opinion of many of England's public men, this little circumstance in Mr. Wyndham's pedigree has made even the most vehement of his Irish opponents in the House of Commons more generously disposed toward him than they ever will be to Mr. Balfour, the present premier and former Irish secretary; and this, combined with Wyndham's initial experience in the very heart of Irish disaffection has helped him and will help him in carrying out his program for Ireland.

This experience is often referred to as Wyndham's novitiate, for he went through it as Mr. Balfour's private secretary during the four years when the prime minister held the very post of secretary of state for Ireland—with his official residence in that perturbed country—which Wyndham fills today.

It was while he was in this position that the coming under secretary of war made his second bid for fame. He was only 23 at the time, but then, when only 21, as an officer of the Foot Guards, he had gone through the wearing Sudan campaign and come out of it with distinction.

It was rather a paradoxical thing that a young man, who so comparatively lately had laid aside the sword should have scored his next success as a particularly effective letter writer, but that was Wyndham's destiny. He had hardly gone to Dublin with his new chief than there began a determined Irish attack upon Mr. Balfour, of which Parnell himself was leader by open speech and by innuendo, but mainly by letters to the newspapers. The most important of these screeds the Irish secretary's secretary undertook to answer, and



GEORGE WYNDHAM, CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND IN THE BRITISH IMPERIAL CABINET—HE FRAMED THE IRISH LAND BILL.

answer them he did with such vigor, wit and telling argument that in nine cases out of ten he completely discomfited their writers.

Politicians of every stripe began to ask themselves who this "George Wyndham" might be who was defending Arthur Balfour's policy so trenchantly, and there was a suspicion in some quarters that the name was a nom de plume which concealed Mr. Balfour himself. In fact, when Wyndham finally entered the House of Commons and made his first speech, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, leader of the opposition, rather sentimentally complimented the young politician on having proved to the world that he was not a mythical personage, like the "Mrs. Harris" of Salrey Gamp, but a being of bone and sinew.

Today George Wyndham's position is one which can be described as pretty nearly ideal.

Through his own efforts distinction after

distinction has come to him. The grandson of a peer, he began life like Lord Rosebery and Winston Churchill, with birth and fortune to aid him. He married a rich, beautiful and titled woman, the Countess Grosvenor, and by this act became stepfather to the young duke of Westminster, the peer in England, and connected with the marquis of Lansdowne, the former minister of war, whose blundering Boer war policy Wyndham, when under secretary of war, defended with such remarkable skill in the House of Commons. His gifts as an orator are not ordinary ones, for he not only speaks forcibly and gracefully, but he has the rare knack of presenting a subject in the clearest possible manner, and has proven his ability to make even figures interesting. Under a fusillade of questions from the Irish and liberal benches he displays a sang froid that not even Mr. Chamberlain himself can surpass. So it is little

wonder that he is being hailed in England as the probable next premier.

Notwithstanding all his political activity, the secretary of state for Ireland has found time to develop the literary gifts that he first displayed in his campaign with the pen against Mr. Balfour's Irish disparagers. He has won much distinction by means of his essays, and introductions contributed by him to new editions of Plutarch and Shakespeare's sonnets have gained high praise. He also has written some uncommonly good verse. Recently it has been hinted that Mr. Wyndham was writing a novel, but the rumor has yet to be confirmed. It was George Wyndham who first drew general attention in England to Stephen Crane by a brilliant magazine article on "The Red Badge of Courage."

Mr. Wyndham's career shows only one great disappointment. That occurred in 1896, when Lord Salisbury was choosing a cabinet to succeed Lord Rosebery's official family. It was thought that the friendship of the premier's nephew, Mr. Balfour, for Wyndham made him certain of a portfolio. But too many of Mr. Chamberlain's friends had to be accommodated in order to make sure of the Birmingham chief's allegiance, and Mr. Balfour proved unequal to the task of bringing him into the cabinet.

The disappointment was a severe one, and many men would have sulked under it. George Wyndham, however, did nothing of the sort. To occupy himself he took up the study of the South African situation as it was then and for some time made the southern part of the Dark Continent his specialty.

Finally changes came in Lord Salisbury's cabinet, with the result that Wyndham was chosen to fill one of the vacancies—that of under secretary for war, with Lord Lansdowne as his chief.

To the young politician the honor was a great one, but, in ordinary circumstances, the new under secretary would have had small opportunity of attracting attention to himself. However, there began the war in the Transvaal, which completely changed the aspect of things. Wyndham found himself one of the most carefully watched men in the government. He knew it was his great chance and he took advantage of it. Soon his remarkable speech in support of the war office, when Lord Lansdowne's blunderings were enabling the Boers to gain victory after victory, drew national attention to the young man who had practically saved the government from disaster, and his political future was secured.

When his old chief, Mr. Balfour, became premier, Wyndham was made secretary of state for Ireland.

He is just 40, an age that, in the House of Commons is not uncommonly regarded as one of discretion. He is a member of Parliament for Dover, a fact that makes him also a director of the London, Chatham & Dover railway, one of the most important lines in the country.

Although Mr. Wyndham has a handsome young son of his own, he is a great chum of his stepson, the duke of Westminster, a rather hot-headed, strong-willed youth of the kind that would not be able to get on well with the ordinary sort of stepfather. The young duke is a brother-in-law of Mrs. Cornwallis West, who, before her second marriage, was Lady Randolph Churchill.

Gleanings From the Story Tellers' Pack

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S tour of the west recalls a story of the time when President Hayes was in Kansas twenty-five years ago. His train stopped at Hutchinson for a few minutes and a crowd pressed forward to shake him by the hand. Among the number was an intoxicated man, who did not know what all the excitement was about. When this man's turn came the president grasped his hand and said: "Glad to see you, my friend." "Same to you," was the genial reply, "but you have the best of me. Say, somebody introduce me to this gen'l'man. Nev' saw him before in my life."

Here is the favorite story of General H. V. Boynton of Washington, a printed copy of which he always carries with him for the entertainment of his friends: A German addressing his dog said: "You vos only a dog, but I vish I vas you. Ven you go mit the bed in, you shust durn round dree times und lay down. Ven I go mit the bed in I haf to lock up de blace und vind de clock und put de cat oud und undress myself, und my vife vakes up und scoles me. Den de baby cries und I haf to vank him up und down; den maybe ven I shust go to sleep, it's time to get up again. Ven you get up you shust scratch yourself a couple of times und stretch, und you vas up. I haf to quick lite de fire, und put de kittle on, scrap mit my vife already, und maybe get some breakfast. You play all tay und haf plenty of fun. I haf to vork all tay und haf plenty of drouble. Ven you die, you's dead; ven I die I haf to go to hell yet."

After M. A. Quay's sensational denuncia-

tion of David Martin on the floor of the United States senate, early in 1885, following the turning down of Penrose for the mayoralty nomination, Martin, it will be recalled, assumed the attitude of what is termed a "goo-goo" in municipal affairs, and talked a great deal about pure politics and reform. A friend who had been through more than one strenuous campaign side by side with Martin asked him one day:

"Dave, doesn't it take a lot of nerve for you to come out in the glare of day as a reformer?"

"Well," replied Martin, "it did at first; but I sustain myself by thinking of the newly arrived Celt who one morning regaled some friends with an account of the glories of a play he had witnessed the night before."

"How much did all that lux'ry cost yes?" asked an envious member of the group.

"'Nivver a cint,' was the reply. 'Ol jist walked in backwar-rd an' th' mon be th' dure thought it wuz goin' out I wuz.'"

Among several amusing incidents recited by Judge Alfred C. Cox of the United States circuit court in a lecture delivered to Columbia students, reports the New York Times, was the tale of a young lawyer who came before the supreme court to argue a case in which he was both counselor and defendant. "I once heard an old French adage," said he, "which said that he who argues his own case has a fool for a client. Despite this, however, I propose to present the defendant's side in this case, as I know more of it than anyone else."

Then the young lawyer went on to offer

his argument. Before he went back to his home in St. Louis he left word with a friend to notify him by wire as soon as the court's decision was handed down. A week later he received a telegram which read:

"Old French adage affirmed."

When "Gabe" Bouck was representative from the Oshkosh district of Wisconsin, relates the Century, a pension bill came before the house to his great vexation of spirit, for, while his personal convictions were directly opposed to it, his political interests were strong enough to whip him into line. On the day the bill came up for final disposal a fellow member met Bouck in the space behind the last row of seats, walking back and forth and gesticulating excitedly, bringing his clenched fist down into the hollow of his left hand, to the accompaniment of expletives which would hardly look well in print.

"What's the trouble, Gabe?" inquired his friend. "Why all this excitement?"

"Trouble?" snorted the irate lawmaker. "Trouble enough! That pension bill is up and all the cowardly nincompoops in the house are going to vote for it. It's sure to pass—sure to pass."

"But why don't you get the floor and speak against it—try to stop it," suggested the other.

"Try to stop it?" echoed Bouck. "Try to stop it? Why, I'm one of the cowardly nincompoops myself."

A former city official who is well known in many sections of the borough had occasion to attend a concert given in a large hall the other evening, reports the Brooklyn Times. His wife and many friends

were among those present. During an intermission every one was somewhat startled to hear a stentorian voice ring out from the gallery.

"Is the Hon. Mr. Blank present?" the voice said.

Slowly and majestically the aforesaid erstwhile official rose from his place in a prominent part of the house and faced the gallery in a dignified manner, as suited his station in society.

"I am Mr. Blank," he replied, as he drew his rather stocky figure to its full height.

"Sit down, you lobster," called the voice with an emphasis that was as great as it was embarrassing.

The dull thud that was heard immediately after the above sally was only the noise caused by the ex-official's anatomy as it came in contact with his rather hard seat. During the laughter and confusion that followed the guilty one escaped.

Dr. Patton was delivering a lecture recently in his course on ethics at the Princeton Theological seminary and experienced much annoyance because some of the students ate peanuts instead of attending to him. Finally he administered this rebuke: "Gentlemen, I have delayed starting the most important part of today's lecture hoping that the stock of peanuts would be consumed and a restful quiet be restored. As the quantity seems ample to meet the demands and the supply appears inexhaustible, I feel constrained to request that your appetites be restrained until the conclusion of the lecture. I would be greatly pleased if in the future anyone wishing to conduct a 5 o'clock tea in the classroom would confine the refreshments to sponge cake."