"C-B" AS A LEADER

Personal Notes of Campbell-Bannerman, Ex-Premier--Bland in Manner, But Firm.

By HENRY W. LUCY (TOBY M. P.).

It is a slight incident, attesting the personal popularity of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the British ex-prime minister, who died recently in London, that he was familiarly known by a diminutive name. To friends and foes alike he was ever "C-B." Familiarity in the designation of public men is not so common in England as it is in a country where the speaker of the house of representatives is commonly known as "Uncle Joe."

Since Palmerston's time there has been no prime minister personally so popular as "C-B" came to be in the brief course of his incumbency of the office. The condition of things was the more strongly marked by comparison with earlier stages. It would be impossible to exaggerate the difference between his position in the house of commons while he sat on the left hand of the speaker and that almost immediately conceded to him when he crossed over to the treasury bench. To those who knew him from early years and had enjoyed full opportunity of estimating his sterling worth there was something painful in the treatment he received while leader of the opposition. If demonstrations of disregard and something approaching personal dislikes had been confined to the political party opposite, there would have been no ground for complaint. The leader of the opposition, however small may be his following, is entitled to be treated with respect and courtesy. If failure is made in this respect, the responsibility and the discredit lie with the offending party.

The bitter pill "C-B" had to swallow almost nightly during the last parliament was administered by the hands of Liberals. He was habitually wounded in the house of a friend. A delightful conversationalist, an admirable speaker in sharp debate, he on field nights, probably oppressed by a sense of responsibility, formed a habit of writing out his speeches and in defiance of parliamentary etiquette reading them at the table. Mr. Balfour or Mr. Chamberlain following in debate rarely refrained from a sneer at this certainly unfortunate and, as was frequently proved, unnecessary custom. Had a taunt animated by a similar spirit been flung at either of these right honorable gentlemen there would have followed instant angry shouts of resentment from their partisans. "C-B" received no such gratification. On the contrary, when he appeared at the table with his bundle of manuscript the benches behind him and below the gangway began to empty. This state of things was made more painful to a sensitive nature by the fact that when Mr. Asquith was put up to speak the opposition mustered in full number, cheer after cheer driving home his salient points.

This was with slight variation the chronic condition of affairs under "C-B's" leadership of the opposition, a trial borne with marvelous patience and no sign of resentment. Within four months of his accepting the thankless post of leader of the opposition things in the house of commons had reached a condition unbearable by any other man. A fussy group of Radicals below the gangway were in open revolt. They daily flouted the authority of their leader and occasionally went out to the division lobby against him. In a signed article appearing under a familiar title in a Sunday newspaper I commented sharply upon this procedure. "C-B" wrote to me: "I do not foam and fret about it as much as you do, though I wince internally. I do not blame the active parties when self conceit leads them into these unruly courses, because they are acting only after their kind. I blame rather the decent, quiet, well disposed rank and file, who do not see the harm they are doing in following them." When six years later "C-B" as the result of a general election found himself master of legions, dispenser of places and titles, the member to whom veiled allusion is made in this passage humbly approached him with a petition for office in the new ministry. Had he been a man of the stamp from which ministers are made no personal memory of earlier days would have unfavorably influenced "C-B." As he was not, office was withheld, but "C-B" benignly bestowed upon him a knighthood.

When in 1906 the Unionists were routed at the polls and the Liberals installed in power by an overwhelming majority, it was by no means certain that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman would be prime minister. The prize was his by right and custom. But the group of ex-ministers long seated on the front opposition bench were notoriously divided. It was the provincial elector who settled the matter. With the advantage of perspective he had acquired a juster conception of the capacity of "C-B" than was common to members of the house of commons. It was made unmistakably clear that "C-B" was the choice of the nation, and before this decision personal cabal was hushed. But it died hard. An ex-minister of subordinate rank in Mr. Gladstone's last government was offered an important post of cabinet rank in the new ministry. He declined to accept it save on condition that "C-B" would carry his premiership to the house of lords, leaving the leadership in the house of commons in more habile, more virile hands.

The simple statement of this fact throws a flood of light on the misapprehension of the real "C-B" that clouded the view even of those who long lived in close colleagueship with him. Deceived by the bland manner, the indisposition to assert himself, the reluctance to give pain even where punishment was merited, they thought to shelve the premier in the luxurious obscurity of the house of lords. But "C-B" was already translated. The silken glove was off, flung aside, and behold the iron hand. He would not go to the house of lords. The center of power and influence was in the popular chamber, and that was the proper place for a Liberal prime minister.

This was a surprise for old colleagues that almost took the breath away. They had speedy and full opportunity of growing accustomed to it. The formation of a government out of a party that had been in the wilderness for ten years bristled with difficulty. There were remnants of a former structure naturally looking for reinstatement in the new one. Other claims more or less justifiable had grown up among the rank and file of younger members. "C-B's" business was to get together a ministry that would best serve the state by carrying those social measures to which the Liberal party was pledged.

Every one was surprised by the originality, not to say the audacity, of some of the selections. To mention only two, there was Mr. Lloyd-George, in private business and status a solicitor in an obscure Welsh town. In the house of commons he had distinguished himself as a brilliant debater not unworthy of the steel of Mr. Balfour or Mr. Chamberlain. He must have something and might have felt himself well rewarded with an undersecretaryship or even a lordship of the treasury. There was John Burns, in social position a day laborer, whose political career was, among other things, marked by the distinction of a term spent in jail, following a disturbance of the public peace in Trafalgar square. Elected to the house of commons, he still wore a bowler hat and a serge suit. But he spoke effectively on topics within his personal ken, and for a government established by a great wave of democratic impulse it would be a desirable thing to have a genuine workingman numbered in its ranks. All things considered, an undersecretaryship would be rather overwhelming for John Burns. A junior post at the treasury, with a salary of £1,000 a year, would be a generous guerdon. "C-B" made Mr. Lloyd-George president of the board of trade and Mr. John Burns president of the local government board, both with seats in the cabinet.

That his kindly but keen eye knew a capable man when he saw him, disguised in whatsoever humble circumstances, has been proved by the success of these two appointments. In the case of Mr. Lloyd-George it has perhaps exceeded any other achieved by colleagues in an exceptionally capable administration.

Had "C-B" yielded to the gentle pressure put upon him on his accession to the premiership and sought the leisure of the house of lords he might have still been among us, hale and hearty, with the prospect of an aftermath of dignified rest. Had he been personally inclined to take that step there was an objection to him insuperable. Lady Campbell-Bannerman was strongly opposed to his retirement from the fighting line of the house of commons, and to him her wishes were a sacred law. It happened that shortly after he assumed office his wife was stricken with an illness that, long lingering, proved fatal. When in the session of 1906, his first term as premier, members watched the worn and weary leader seat himself on the treasury bench prepared for a long night's work, they knew he had spent hours by the bedside of his dying wife, had on some days of the week come on to the house after presiding over a cabinet council.

This touch of nature made the assembly kin. Political animosity disappeared before the spectacle of a brave man struggling with adversity. Old party ties were rebound and strengthened. Within a few weeks "C-B," doubtless to his modest surprise, found himself the most popular man in the house, his slightest utterance received with profound respect, his genial little jokes hailed with rapturous laughter.

In this sudden blaze of sunshine he bloomed. All that was best in him, chilled in the bleak weather of opposition times, unfolded and grew apace. After the period of depression that followed on the death of his wife was passed he found in work and in attendance on his parliamentary duties the best tonic, the surest solace. But opportunity came too late. The silver cord was fatally loosed. Too soon the golden bowl was broken. It is pleasing to reflect that after patient drudgery in untoward circumstances Henry Campbell-Bannerman, one of the truest hearted, finest natured men who ever served their country in high places, lived long enough to know that he was at length understood.—New York Tribune.

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Umbrella and parasol handles to match one's pet dog constitute the newest craze in fashionable circles. It is becoming the usual thing for a woman who owns a bulldog to buy an umbrella or a parasol with a bulldog handle. "If an exact likeness of the pet dog is wished," says a jeweler, "special sittings can be given, and the animal's head accurately carved out of ivory or bone. The heads of favorite cats and even horses, with precious stones for eyes, are carved on umbrella handles—pet parrots, too, and canaries. But pet dogs are most popular."

The Earliest Hospitals.

Since the earliest times there have been some sort of places which were designed for hospital work, although at first they were little more than shelters or cheaply built almshouses. In the Roman camps there was a medical staff to look after the wounded.

Among the earliest hospitals on record is that said to have been founded by Valens in Caesarea 370-80 A. D. and the one built in Rome by Fabiola, a Roman lady, although, like most others of that and even later times, both institutions probably were almshouses as well.

The origin of our present hospitals is traced to the monastic arrangements for the care of the sick and indigent. Every monastery once housed the sick and convalescent.

Almost the earliest record of the building of a hospital in England is in the life of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, who in 1080 founded two, one for leprosy and one for ordinary diseases. In the eighteenth century London, between 1719 and 1747, established five public and five special hospitals. In Ireland, between 1726 and 1774, there were five public and three special ones established in Dublin, one in Cork, one in Limerick, and in 1797 one in Belfast.—Washington Post.

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