The war and Wedderburn's failing health obstructed the movement; but in May he spoke at an at-home of the I.W.E. Association, sent a description to *The Times* (Educational Supplement, May 17), and continued his appeals. A pleasing addendum to this record of work in a cause that was very near his heart is to be found in the annual Statement on the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India (1920), from which we learn that there were then "sixteen women's colleges and 118 training schools for women . . . a little over 1,200 women undergoing university education, and about 3,500 in training schools."

In this department as in many others Wedderburn was a pioneer. During his term of official service the number of those actively interested were few indeed, but in the field of general education they were already becoming numerous, and Wedderburn's co-operation was continually sought and freely given. Having been an enthusiastic supporter of Lord Ripon's educational policy, he was stirred to action twenty years later by the attack upon the institutions of higher education embodied in Lord Curzon's Universities Bill, which was strenuously fought in the Legislative Council by the Indian members under Gokhale's leadership.

The passage of the Morley Reforms (1909) and

the declaration by the King at the Delhi Durbar of 1911 opened the way to another stage of educational effort. Convinced that an India preparing for self-government would rapidly become conscious of the supreme need of an educated population, Gokhale introduced a Primary Education Bill, aiming to provide elementary schools for all, and containing provisions under which the provinces were empowered to adopt a system of compulsory school attendance. The Government of India invited opinions from the provincial administrations. These were unfavourable, and the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, decided that nothing could be done. In the interval, however, Gokhale had been touring the country, addressing meetings and employing his unsurpassed powers in the mobilisation of opinion in support of his bill. Here was a cause after Wedderburn's own heart, and he threw his whole strength and influence into it. He circulated an explanatory memorandum by thousands in England, wrote articles and letters, and spoke wherever opportunity offered. In the years immediately preceding the war this advocacy of primary education for the whole of India absorbed the greater part of his time. But no concrete results could be attained. No legislation was practicable so long as the bureaucracy remained hostile and the influential men

in the various provinces believed that the educated classes were as a whole indifferent to the proposal. As usual, the event proved that the pioneers had read the signs aright; that, in fact, they were only a little way in advance of the demand. When Gokhale was dead, when the nationalist movement suffered change, and multitudes came under the spell of the prophet of Non-Cooperation, there can hardly have been an official in the country who did not regret that the rulers of India had lacked the wisdom to see that the foundations of mass education might have been laid.

Sir William Wedderburn's sense of responsibility towards India made him an earnest supporter of the temperance movement and especially an advocate of the reform of the Excise. Soon after his retirement from the Service he joined the executive of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association, and he remained in connection with the society till the end: attending committees, speaking at the annual meeting, subscribing regularly, and at every available opportunity pressing the case against a system which he believed to be calamitous in its social results.

He was a member of more than one deputation to the Secretary of State, and in 1912 he not only drafted a memorial to Lord Crewe but bore the expense of distributing the document and collecting

subscriptions. This memorial, together with a leaflet on State Ownership of the Drink Traffic which he wrote in 1917, summarised his views on the licensing system of India. He held that the Government as purveyor of drink offended the moral sense, and that the system did not tend to restrict the consumption of alcohol, or contain any provision for meeting a local demand for restriction or prohibition; indeed, that the Indian people themselves demanded restriction and local control, while the only effectual opposition came from the revenue-collecting department. He reminded the Government and the public that the use of intoxicants was forbidden by both Hindu and Moslem law; that every year the Indian National Congress passed a resolution in favour of restriction and control; that, whereas in pre-British days the traffic was irregular and discreditable, the British government officials sold licences to the highest bidder, till the Excise Department had become one of the most lucrative of public departments. "Experience in India shows," he concluded, "that state ownership is no remedy for intemperance, and the Government cannot be trusted to deal with this great national evil in accordance with the higher aspirations of the people." In an earlier memorial he had suggested independent inquiry, and had

urged the following as immediate reform measures:

1. Steady reduction of licences and hours of sale;
2. Extension and democratisation of the excise committees;
3. Abolition of the auction of licences;
4. Transfer of licences from the Revenue Department to some independent, preferably local, committee.

In one of his last letters to the Anglo-Indian Association he wrote: "There is now a great world movement towards temperance, and we are anxious that India should have in it that share that is her just due." And that share, he believed, should be expressed in the power of India to deal with the question in accordance with Indian wishes.

It should not be necessary to add that his interest in temperance was not confined to the problem in India. He was, as befitted so close a parliamentary ally of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, an untiring supporter of licensing reform in England; and he was an invaluable friend to the Band of Hope in Gloucestershire.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE MORLEY AND MONTAGU REFORMS

WEDDERBURN had retired from Parliament at a time of peculiar discouragement, and the obstruction he met with in his efforts on behalf of the Indian Famine Union certainly did not avail to change his outlook. In India the fresh spirit displayed by Lord Curzon during his first two years, and especially the vigour and humanity with which he had attacked the famine, had raised the hopes of the Congress leaders. But it soon became clear that Lord Curzon's single aim was a greater efficiency in the machine of government. He was outspoken in his antagonism to political change. The reform movement itself was suffering from lassitude. Indeed, as the century opened there was less activity in the progressive ranks than there had been for many years. It was Lord Curzon himself who introduced the new spirit and brought the latent nationalism of India into life. He rejoiced, as he

said, in "the *res gesta*, the thing done," and in the presence of such an administrator indifference could not continue. The situation was quickly changed by Lord Curzon's university policy and his scheme for the administrative division of Bengal. Thereupon India entered upon a stage of unprecedented activity.

The twentieth assembly of the National Congress (1904) was held in Bombay and presided over by Sir Henry Cotton, who had retired from the Chief Commissionership of Assam in the enjoyment of great popular esteem by reason of his efforts on behalf of the tea-garden coolies. Wedderburn, no longer pressed by urgent duties at home, went with him, accompanied by his younger daughter. He took only a modest part in the public proceedings, although throughout his visit he was closely engaged with Congress business and with callers. His particular task at the meeting was to move a resolution in favour of sending a Congress deputation to England. The early break-up of the Balfour Government was anticipated, and with it a return of the Liberals not only to office but to power. It was a favourable moment for the renewal of the educational movement in England, and the resolution bore fruit during the following year in the dispatch to Europe of Gokhale and Lajpat Rai.

As in 1889, the presence of two conspicuous public men from England made the Congress of 1904 an event of exceptional interest. The reception accorded to the leaders by the Bombay public was one of extraordinary fervour, which for Wedderburn was extended over a journey through Southern India in the new year. The main incident of this tour—an experience of great pleasure and refreshment to him—was a great meeting in the town hall of Madras and the presentation of an address from the citizens: an occasion which had its counterpart in each one of the famous cities—Madura, Tanjore, Trichinopoly, and the rest at which a halt was made.

India was now nearing the close of the difficult second part of Lord Curzon's viceroyalty. There were signs of a new and harder temper both in the administration and in the nationalist movement. The gulf between the Government and the people had never been wider, and at Government House everything connected with the National Congress was proscribed. Nor was the situation made easier by the conditions prevailing among the politically conscious classes. The Congress of 1904 was the culminating point of the movement as directed by the founders, and by those younger leaders who shared their political faith and were content with their methods. There-

after new and disturbing forces made themselves felt. The Curzon policy from 1902 had been in the highest degree provocative. In the sixty years between the Mutiny and the tragedy of Amritsar no administrative act had the importance of the partition of Bengal, which was projected in 1903 and consummated in October, 1905, in the last month of Lord Curzon's term and within a few weeks of the change of government in England. This blunder consolidated the Indian opposition, provoked a new and intense spirit of agitation, and in the Swadeshi-boycott (that is, the militant adoption of Indian home-made goods) anticipated by fifteen years the Gandhi non-cooperation crusade.

The new spirit was a direct challenge to the elders of the National Congress. With their rooted belief in constitutional procedure, they could not fail to be disturbed by the apostles of an aggressive nationalism and the popular success of the Swadeshi-boycott. But on the other hand they agreed entirely with Bengal in making the partition a test issue, and they were bound to rejoice over the swift and thorough awakening of the nation to the evils of a revived despotism. Wedderburn, for example, was accustomed to say that he greatly preferred the new unrest, with all its serious aspects, to the apathy of the preceding ears.

The Conservative Government in the meanwhile came to an end. In November, 1905, Mr. Balfour gave place to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Mr. John Morley became Secretary of State for India. His appointment was hailed in India as an event of extraordinary significance. Mr. Morley, the most distinguished liberal intellectual of his time, was in himself a high promise to the Indian people. A month later, G. K. Gokhale, from the chair of the National Congress at Benares, said :

"Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a master, and the heart hopes, and yet trembles, as it has never hoped and trembled before."

It was not only the knowledge of Mr. Morley's difficulties and perils that made Gokhale apprehensive. He knew also that his plea for the reinforcement of constitutional effort, even with the altered omens in England, would encounter scepticism in the Congress and a nascent contempt among younger Indians everywhere. It would be increasingly difficult to hold the Congress to the constitutional position. The extremists were as yet in the minority ; but it was clear enough that unless there was an immediate and decisive change in the direction of the government, their numbers and influence would rapidly multiply.

The new Secretary of State, however, had inherited a mass of difficulties, and he was not in a position to approach the political problems of his office for many months. He moved slowly and with extreme caution. After all, in no department of affairs was his discipleship of John Stuart Mill more thoroughgoing than in the department which had now come under his charge. Early in 1906 Mr. Morley committed himself to the opinion that the partition of Bengal was a settled fact; and pressure from the Anglo-Indian members effected only a reiteration of this statement. As a consequence, the division in the Congress ranks was widened and deepened. Gokhale, with the backing of his older friend in England, seemed to be fighting a losing battle. In the first year of the Liberal Government the elders of the Congress, led by Sir P. M. Mehta, made a desperate effort to avoid a split between moderates and extremists by calling to the chair the veteran Dadabhai Naoroji, who, in his eighty-second year, faced the adventure of a voyage from London and a journey across India in order to preside in Calcutta. The effort was so far successful that the Congress of 1906 passed without an open quarrel. This, however, was the last meeting of the undivided assembly. A year later, at Surat, despite the self-sacrificing endeavours of Gokhale

and his friends, the left wing of the nationalists under B. G. Tilak broke away, and the session ended in disorder.

The disaster of Surat was for Sir William Wedderburn the stormy close of a quarter-century's unremitting work and on the whole of harmonious progress. It was a bitter grief to him, for he could not disguise from himself that it might involve the ruin of a great part of his life's work. But despair was entirely alien from his nature. He had no doubt of the recovery of the National Congress, and his hope was not long in being fulfilled; for, as a matter of fact, the Surat disaster came only a few months before the active work associated with the shaping of the Morley reforms began to absorb Wedderburn's whole energies.

The preparations for the Indian Councils Bill were of necessity very slow, and in the midst of them (when the Cabinet was reconstructed by the new Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith) Mr. Morley decided to take refuge in the comparative tranquillity of the House of Lords.

The story of the reforms has been told with vivid strokes and in brilliant detail by Lord Morley in the second volume of his *Recollections*. From the side of the Indian reformers it is a record of much difficulty and harassment, and of a constant

struggle against disquieting forces. Wedderburn, the most cautious of men, was impressed by the unwisdom of slowness. Action on a large and generous scale was long overdue. He thought that the Liberal Government had everything to gain by the adoption of a courageous policy.

In March, 1907, fifteen months after the general-election triumph, he made a very careful statement of his views in a letter to Mr. Morley, taking advantage of the occasion to refer to his own situation and his desire to help the Government in some positive way.

He wrote, he said, as one who for close upon half a century had been fighting the battle of the Indian people on liberal principles. Now that the Liberal Party was for the first time in overwhelming strength (Labour and the Irish being on this point in active sympathy), he had expected to see those principles openly and freely applied to Indian affairs. But time was passing, and there was reason to fear that, unless some overt move were made, the best opportunity for action would be lost. He went on to explain the position in India. The popular feeling was that of hope deferred: the heart of the people was getting sick. The reformers had become divided. A struggle was going on between the old constitutional party, which kept to the lines upon which

the Congress was founded, and the Young India Party, which had been created by the reactionary policy of the past ten years. That party denounced constitutional agitation as mendicancy and preached the boycott and passive resistance. The older men, urging patience, said: "Wait, trust in Mr. Morley and the Liberal Party." But day by day their position was growing weaker, since they had nothing to point to in support of their assurances. The extremists, on the other hand, were gaining the enthusiastic support of the younger generation. "As the bitterness and boldness of these missionaries increase, excited officials will doubtless adopt measures of repression. Martyrs will be manufactured; secret societies formed; a policy of coercion forced on a Liberal Government; and the raw materials provided of an Irish or Russian anarchism." The determined attempt of the extremists to capture the Calcutta Congress had only been frustrated by the strenuous efforts of Mr. Gokhale and his friends. These men were entitled to some recognition and support, but they were now writing from India almost in despair.

Discussing the steps that should be taken to allay this dangerous unrest, Wedderburn urged, first, a sympathetic declaration from Mr. Morley himself in reference to the partition of Bengal,

which clearly was "the open sore from which the poison oozes"; secondly, some personal *rapprochement*—as, for example, by the appointment of an eminent Indian to the Secretary of State's Council, together with some recognition, in the evening of his day, of "the lifelong and selfless devotion" which the veteran Dadabhai Naoroji had given to India. Thirdly, Wedderburn suggested the appointment of a commission of inquiry, the recommendations of which might be the foundation of future action. He added that he himself was being pressed, both from India and by friends in the House, to come forward again for a Scotch constituency; but he felt that he could do more useful work outside. He concluded:

"My wish is to be engaged in constructive work for India, which is much more congenial to me than criticism, into which I have unwillingly been driven owing to the bureaucratic and anti-liberal spirit of the Indian administration. . . . The condition of the agricultural masses in India has been my specialty, and I do not think that my strongest opponents have ever alleged that I am not an authority on this question. My crime in their eyes is that I have sought to apply the principles of Liberalism to Indian affairs, and they have (as in the case of the 'Pro-Boers') invented a theory of unaccountable hostility to my own profession and my own countrymen. For years I have had to submit to

such aspersions, but feel that, with the present constitution of Parliament, and with yourself as head of the administration, I am entitled to be relieved from this outlawry and placed in a position to utilise my experience for the benefit of India."

The interval between this letter and the introduction of the Councils Bill was filled with serious events in India. The Government of Lord Minto, in grappling with the results of the Curzon régime, was driven to the adoption of measures such as had not been tried since the plague disturbances of ten years before. In May, during troubles in the Punjab clearly traceable to economic causes, the notorious regulation of the East India Company (No. 3 of 1818) was used for the purpose of removing Lajpat Rai. This arbitrary action, strikingly reminiscent of the Irish policy against which the John Morley of the eighties had set his face, was the beginning of a series of measures by which Lord Minto's Government sought to restrain the spread of aggressive nationalism. The spring of 1908 brought the definite beginning of political assassination, from which India suffered more or less continuously till the rise of M. K. Gandhi with his doctrine of non-violence. Sharper forms of summary justice were introduced. The Press was restricted, and public meetings proscribed. Tilak was condemned to six years' transportation.

At the end of the year the deportation ordinance was again invoked, this time against a number of Bengali leaders, at least one of whom, Krishna Kumar Mitter of Calcutta, was a prominent moderate and social worker.

Against these measures the leaders of the National Congress submitted a series of energetic protests. It was indeed an ironical circumstance that during the whole of the hopeful activities accompanying the passage of the Morley reforms Sir William Wedderburn and his friends, in and out of Parliament, were compelled to devote a very large amount of labour and time to fighting the policies of the Executive in India—policies of exacerbation which seemed to them to be militating against the entire purpose of the great scheme to which Lord Morley had set his hand.

Wedderburn was not at any time tempted to underestimate the difficulties. He realised that Lord Morley had to carry with him, not only the Conservative Party in England, but also the bureaucracy and commercial public in India. The fate of Ripon was before his eyes. The greatness of these obstacles was not fully understood by his Indian associates. Many even of the older leaders began to lose faith in the Liberal Secretary of State. Wedderburn himself never lost faith or heart. He performed a most valuable

task for the Government in steadily urging his colleagues to patience and in a continual effort of education, the purpose of which was to make the home public understand the essentials of Indian reform. Lord Morley was always appreciative of these efforts. If he was somewhat too anxious in public to imply that his personal relations with the Indian Congress party were of the most detached and formal kind, he was sufficiently frank and confidential in private. Wedderburn kept him constantly informed, and Lord Morley wrote to him with great frequency. These letters, though usually very brief, were full of character. He was quick in approval or dissent; and no less quick with a stab of satire, not seldom at the expense of some folly or stupidity on the reactionary side. Wedderburn on his part gave himself without stint to the work. In the shaping of a constitutional scheme he was in his element. And there is no need to say that with all the progressive clauses that were finally embodied in the Councils Act of 1909 Wedderburn was in complete accord.

There remained one further service for him to render in person to the Congress. In 1910, when he was in his seventy-third year, he yielded to the strong appeals of the older leaders and went out to India for the last time to preside over the twenty-fifth Congress held at Allahabad. The six

years since his previous visit had brought great changes in Indian public life. The Morley scheme was on the point of being put into effect; but this victory for the constitutional party had not tended to reduce the disagreements in the Congress. Those, indeed, were now greater than ever. Lord Minto's viceroyalty had been marked by a large increase of revolutionary crime, and by the emergence of several Indian leaders who, by virtue of great eloquence or other gifts, had carried the gospel of nationalism beyond the bounds of the educated classes. Executive repression had, as always, bred fresh trouble, and the moderate party was in a position of extreme difficulty between a government that had given way to panic and a wild faction whose methods it deeply disapproved. Racial bitterness was intense, and this was further complicated by a revived hostility between Hindus and Moslems, due largely to the system of communal representation which Lord Morley had felt compelled to embody in his bill.

In the midst of all this Wedderburn went out to carry an old man's message of hope and reconciliation. No outlook, however dark, could make him despair, and he opened his speech at Allahabad with the characteristic declaration:

"I cherish an enduring faith in the future destiny of India. India deserves to be happy. . . . And I feel confident that brighter days are not far off."

India could take hope, he maintained, from the Morley scheme, a conspicuous victory for the National Congress, and from the appointment of the new viceroy, Lord Hardinge. A stage had been reached in the evolution of the country, and the moral for Indian citizens was that there was an enormous amount of good, solid, useful work for the welfare of India to be done—in education and technical training, in industrial regeneration, and in the completion of the Congress programme. All this meant self-sacrificing effort and co-operation. He urged his hearers to accept and apply the principle of conciliation and unity in respect of their relations with officials, the Hindu-Moslem difficulty, and the two opposing wings of their own movement. He asked them to remember that the reforms, so tardily conceded, had followed Congress lines; and once again he pressed upon them his conviction as to the supreme importance of the educative work in England, carried on, as he knew only too well, often under disheartening conditions. There had been born in India, as he rejoiced to recognise, a new spirit of self-reliance; but that must not mislead them into the evil of race hostility. "Hand in hand with the British people India can most safely take her first steps on the new path of progress."

That was Sir William Wedderburn's last spoken

word to an assembly of the Indian National Congress.

The correspondence between himself and Mr. Morley in these years is full of interest. Wedderburn had a strong belief in Mr. Morley's spirit and aims, and he trusted greatly in his power of getting things done. In the early days of the new Government he wrote to Bhupendranath Basu: "A man like Morley does not come to guide the affairs of a country every day." The exchanges between Meredith and Flowermead were very frequent, and on Mr. Morley's part they were often of a lively character. In June, 1907, Wedderburn congratulates Mr. Morley on the success with which he has carried through his first important concessions, "without arousing the dangerous animosity of opponents: indeed, their journals are full of praises." When, however, he speaks of the first Indian nominations to the India Council, and his hope that they will be welcomed in India, Mr. Morley cannot agree. He writes, indeed, a letter which, for once, sounds a note of impatience with the Indian response to his efforts. A month later he has a word of cordial thanks for one of Wedderburn's many appeals for patience and generosity:

"I am much obliged to you for sending me the piece, and far more for writing it. It is the first

frank plea for giving me a chance that has yet come from the camp of Indian reformers, either there or here. I firmly believe that we shall be able to do something good, if people will follow your temper in these most risky days."

This was in September, 1907, after the agitated summer which had followed the deportation, without trial, of Lajpat Rai. Mr. Morley was attacked, fiercely and continuously, from the radical benches, which followed the untiring lead of Frederic Mackarness. Wedderburn was in full sympathy with the protests, although his own methods were the gentlest possible. He writes to Mr. Morley a few days after the deportation ordinance had been applied by Lord Minto:

"The result will be that the popular leadership will pass from a responsible person who at bottom was our friend to irresponsible persons who really hate us. When the authorities sent for Mr. Lajpat Rai the sensible thing would have been to say to him: 'State clearly what the people complain of. We are willing to make full inquiry. In the meantime you, as their leader, must be responsible for law and order.'"

Five years later, some time after Lord Morley had left the India Office, an article of Wedderburn's in the *Contemporary* evoked from him a few

words of hearty thanks: "It is very generous. You have never been otherwise towards me, in all the difficult days."

Not seldom he is as frank and off-hand as may be. In June, 1912, Wedderburn had sent on to him a sinister rumour as to an alleged political event impending. From Flowermead, Wimbledon, Lord Morley sends his sharp note of scepticism:

"I do not believe a word of it. The thing is impossible, even in a world where much is possible."

The succession of Lord Crewe to the India Office was welcomed by Wedderburn, since he was satisfied that the spirit introduced by Lord Morley into the administration would continue. He was further encouraged by several of the new appointments to India, especially those of Lord Pentland to the governorship of Madras and of Lord Carmichael to Bengal. Both men were personal friends of his, and they wrote freely to him on conditions as they found them in India. Their letters had a liberal note that was to Wedderburn most refreshing after the long succession of bureaucratic rulers to which he had been accustomed. He was pleased, moreover, with the appointment of Lord Hardinge to the viceroyalty in 1910, and he rejoiced over the administrative changes announced by the King at the Delhi Durbar of

1911 as the opening of a new and brighter chapter. To Wacha he wrote:

"I always told my Bengal friends that the partition could be rectified by a stroke of the pen at any time, but to have carried this out while the reforms were trembling in the parliamentary balance would probably have been fatal."

He approved the transfer of the capital to Delhi as tending to remove the Government of India from the special interests of Calcutta, and on the subject of the Delhi decisions generally he wrote to the Viceroy:

"In my opinion the announcements rank with the South African settlement in wise and courageous statesmanship, while exceeding it in far-reaching importance. I believe that its success will be the same."

His inner mind on the course of affairs in India during the war years was most fully expressed in his regular letters to D. E. Wacha and Bhupendranath Basu. During the autumn of 1914 he was writing in the natural exhilaration of what he hoped might prove to be a permanent change in the attitude of England, and especially of the governing classes, towards India. The whole world, he said, had been "impressed by the noble behaviour of India," and he rejoiced in "the

new spirit of brotherhood between East and West." Wacha, face to face with actualities in Bombay, was much less assured. Wedderburn, in October, writes that he does not share his Indian friend's gloomy view of the Congress outlook, and he adds: "We see the effects of its teaching in the wise determination of the Indian people to throw in their lot with the British Empire."

This hopeful mood, however, could not last beyond the early months of 1915. The formation of the first Coalition Government in June was unfortunate for India in that it caused the removal from office of Lord Crewe and Mr. Charles Roberts, the admirable under-secretary. This kind of thing, wrote Wedderburn, "has always been India's fate"; and towards the end of the year he wrote to Mr. Bhupendranath in a depressed tone unusual with him:

"I am afraid we need not expect much from the present régime. We are back again to the old days of Lord Curzon, and all our vision must be swept away. The Anglo-Indian in India is just the same as before. It is his fault as well as ours, and the Anglo-Indian Press is openly hostile. I do not expect much from England after the war, for though England may be willing, Anglo-India will block the way to a true *rapprochement* between the Indians and the British, and as we know to our cost Anglo-India will prevail."

It was as he feared. After the first delighted recognition of India's wonderful response to the call of the Allies, blindness and repression on the part of the Executive had chilled the educated classes and stimulated all the forms of extremism. As a consequence, the constitutionalists were being annihilated. The National Congress, as Wedderburn had known it, was finally disappearing. Mrs. Annie Besant, while vigorously supporting the war, had created the Home Rule for India League with its demand for full and immediate self-government. The League grew fast under the stimulus of Mrs. Besant's power of oratory and her gift for popular agitation. Many of the older Congress leaders, more than ever despairing of the cause in its constitutional form, were caught up by the new crusade. It was a grief to Wedderburn, who could see nothing in the adventure to approve. It seemed to him a wanton destruction of the movement which had proved its worth and had done all the spade work for a generation; and he was deeply hurt when Dadabhai Naoroji permitted his name to be associated with the League.

But if 1916 was for Wedderburn a depressing year, the following summer brought him an immense encouragement and hope. Mr. Austen Chamberlain was succeeded at the India Office

by Mr. E. S. Montagu, who had gained an unusually thorough knowledge of India as under-secretary in the Asquith Government. The appointment was followed immediately by an event of the highest import: the formal proclamation of August 20, 1917, to the effect that the goal of British policy in India was the progressive establishment of self-government by way of provincial autonomy.

The proclamation came to Wedderburn as one of the most momentous events arising out of the world-wide upheaval of war. It was a consummation of infinite meaning and promise. It seemed literally like the crown of his own life work. The ideal and programme of the Indian National Congress, the purpose and dream of its founders and leaders, and in his own case the faith, the labour, and the self-sacrifice of forty years, had had no other goal than this—the recognition by the Imperial Power that the logical result of British rule in the greatest of dependencies was a completed fabric of self-government.

Wedderburn was now an old man. His race was almost run. And for him to hear thus, in the evening of his long day, a declaration of policy so simple, complete, and unqualified, was a greater happiness than, with the memories of recent troubles pressing upon him, he had felt himself

able to hope for. He was further delighted by the announcement that Mr. Montagu would visit India immediately, in company with his own trusted friend, Mr. Charles Roberts. Aged as he was, and in broken health, he would yet have been prepared to make the Indian voyage once again had that been possible. Since it was not possible, he used what yet remained to him of health and energy in furthering the plans of the Secretary of State and his colleague. On the eve of their sailing he expressed the hope that the younger generation in India "might gradually realise that the thirty years of work of the Old Guard of Congress Moderates is the force that has brought round British opinion."

One week after the historic announcement he wrote to Sir Krishna Gupta in Calcutta a letter which was in effect a farewell message on public policy to his friends and fellow workers for the cause to which his life had been devoted. Had India won a sweeping victory at the polls, he said, it could not have secured a more important political advantage than this. And he continued:

"We now seem to see before us the dawn of the most wonderful peaceful revolution that has ever occurred in the world's history: a revolution bringing contentment and prosperity to India, and a mighty accession of strength to the free and tolerant

spirit which, for want of a better term, we have been accustomed to call the British 'Empire.' As General Smuts has well pointed out, we do not desire an 'empire,' as denoting dominance, but a free and loving brotherhood of nations. Now Mr. Montagu has announced his intention of proceeding to India during the coming winter, for the purpose of friendly consultation with the British authorities and the representatives of Indian opinion, with a view to arrangements that will be beneficial to all interests concerned. The question is: what in the meantime should be the attitude and action of India, in order to strengthen the hands of her friends in this country, and facilitate a happy ending of existing troubles?

"1. India should resume her true and natural attitude of mind—calm, dignified, and reasonable—which has earned for her universal trust and respect. If, in recent times, there has been a display of excitement, impatience, and immature political demands, this has been the result of ill-judged official action; but India must not play into the hands of her opponents by a demeanour which will lower her in the eyes of plain people in this country. Calmly to await Mr. Montagu's developments is no abandonment of any Indian aspirations. 2. Realise that this is not a case of conflicting claims between races and nations, but a glorious opportunity of making the world safe for democracy."

## CHAPTER IX

## GLOUCESTER AND MEREDITH

THE thoroughness and constancy with which Sir William Wedderburn discharged his duties as a Scottish member of Parliament showed that devotion to India had made him not less but all the more a citizen of his own country. His life in Gloucestershire provided even more abundant proof of this.

On the death of his father, in 1862, the small property at Tibberton, five miles west of Gloucester, became his mother's permanent home. Part of every furlough from India was spent there with her, and Wedderburn found pleasure in laying out the grounds. She survived her husband nearly twenty years, dying not many months before her elder son, David, in 1882. Thereupon the estate passed, with the title, to Sir William; and at Meredith Lady Wedderburn and he, with their two daughters, went to live in the summer of 1887 upon his retirement from India. With the passage

of time Meredith became more and more the centre of his affection and care.

His personal life was the complete embodiment of his philosophy. He had an intense and practical belief in the community to which he belonged. Its institutions and needs made a continuous appeal to him; and hence, year after year, his fund of quiet energy found an outlet in every kind of local service, the various forms of public education holding perhaps the first place in his regard.

From 1891 till his death he was chairman of the Tibberton voluntary school management board, and its official correspondent. There was no village institution that was not encouraged and generously supported by him. Nor was he less active in the affairs of the county. He was J.P. and deputy-lieutenant of Gloucestershire. For nine years he represented Newent on the county council, and was disappointed when no place was found for him on its education committee. The combination of rural and urban conditions in the neighbourhood was especially interesting to him. One who had during his official life in India displayed a mastery of the problems of rural economy naturally found much in the country life of England to occupy his mind. On the county council he was the unwavering friend of the

working man, and especially of the country worker. He urged his claim to small holdings, his right to education, and (what few were ready to concede) his value as a magistrate. In connection with the last-named reform he brought forward a proposal for the reduction, to a nominal five shillings, of the qualification fee for justices of the peace, with the purpose of opening as widely as possible the way to the magistrate's bench. He agreed strongly with the view to which, among his contemporaries, Sir Horace Plunkett has given frequent expression, that in modern society and administration a right place and scope are not accorded to rural experience and the rural intelligence. In all such matters as these there never was a more faithful and watchful Liberal than Sir William Wedderburn. In every department of public life he believed in the application of his ruling principle.

A good Indian civilian always has a special interest in roads and in transport generally. It was owing to Wedderburn's exertions, in co-operation with his friend Canon Park, vicar of Highnam, that in 1908 a new road was opened between Barber's Bridge station and Hartpury. The road was named after Canon Park, while the little bridge built at the same time over the river Leadon was styled the Wedderburn Bridge. He

was the prime mover also in an approach to the Great Western Railway in regard to improved marketing facilities for the fruit-growers, the conjunction of better farming with better business being, as he urged upon his neighbours, an object of vital concern to the whole community. So was it also with every other public cause, in the city and county—as, for example, temperance education and licensing reform, the better care of the feeble-minded, provision for the aged, and the humaner treatment of cattle by means of public abattoirs.

From beginning to end of his residence in Gloucestershire he stood and worked, as a matter of course, for Liberalism in national politics. In the full and exact sense of the good old phrase, he was a Liberal stalwart; in respect of the Liberal faith and its application he stood like a rock. The fact that any Liberal measure or cause was unpopular at the time was merely an additional and compelling reason for his identifying himself with it without reserve. This was true of Irish Home Rule during the hard years of the first Gladstone fight. It was true of his opposition to the South African War, and his stand on the economic and racial questions which were fiercely debated after the peace; of the position of Indians in the British Dominions; of non-sectarian

education of Free Trade, and the cause of the industrial worker during the period when a determined assault was made upon the rights he had won during a century of organised effort.

There happens, moreover, to be one very particular illustration of his strength and fidelity in the records of Gloucestershire Liberalism. It was very largely through Wedderburn's stedfastness that Sir Charles Dilke was enabled to recover his place in Parliament. It may well be doubted whether, without the immovable advocacy of his friend in the division, Dilke could have succeeded in gaining the suffrages of the Forest of Dean, with the electors of which division Wedderburn stood always in the very highest esteem. The two men were afterwards firm parliamentary allies, and both while he was in the House and afterwards Wedderburn was able to count upon Dilke for constant support by voice and vote in all his efforts on behalf of India.[1]

The later years at Meredith were filled with quiet occupations and spent in that serene enjoyment of which Wedderburn held the secret. Soon after coming into possession of the place he had extended and improved the gardens; and when

[1] The Dilke Memorial Hospital, begun in 1922 at Cinderford and probably to be opened during this summer, owed its initiation largely to Wedderburn's unceasing effort (1923).

he sold Inveresk Lodge, the old family home at Musselburgh which was retained till 1910, he added to the house a dining-hall which provided adequate space for the tapestries and ancestral portraits brought down from Scotland.

Sir William's elder daughter, Dorothy, married an old family friend, Hugh Fownes-Luttrell (second son of George Fownes-Luttrell of Dunster), who sat as Liberal member for Tavistock 1893–1900, and again 1906–10, and had for many years shared his political ideals. And soon after returning with her father from the Congress visit to India in 1905, the younger daughter, Griselda, married Lieutenant (afterwards Captain) Charles Fremantle, R.N., younger son of the Hon. Sir Charles Fremantle, K.C.B.

In the meantime the family were compelled to face the fact that the Indian climate had permanently injured the health of Lady Wedderburn, so that it was not possible for her at any time to share to the full in her husband's activities. For many years in succession a visit to Vichy or Llandrindod Wells was a necessity for her, and not infrequently one of the daughters would be Sir William's companion on the political and other journeys which were an important part of his life. After his seventieth year his own health became a matter of anxiety to the

family, particularly in regard to the bronchial weakness which made the English winter a trial. Accordingly the practice was adopted of spending the spring, until 1914, in the South of France or at Falmouth.

At Meredith, however, notwithstanding constantly recurring ill-health, Lady Wedderburn was able to fulfil the duties of hostess to an almost continuous stream of visitors. The Indians who came in numbers every year felt for her an especial appreciation, chiefly perhaps because she united a full understanding and support of her husband's public aims with that affectionate guardianship of his health which they regarded as essentially Eastern. The respect and admiration which his Indian friends felt for Lady Wedderburn was expressed in concrete form in 1912, when at a reception given by Lady Swann at her house in Kensington Mr. Gokhale, on their behalf, presented her with a necklace of Indian workmanship and a pendant in the form of a lotus set with jewels.

As old age approached Wedderburn was obliged to limit his railway travelling as much as possible. For some years before the outbreak of war he went up to London only when important public events or urgent business in connection with *India* or the National Congress made his presence essential.

The quiet routine of his life was therefore very little interrupted, save by the annual journey in pursuit of health and sunshine. In the country he was apt to wake early, and often to spend an hour or two before rising in drafting or revising an article, or speech, or public letter. He was a decidedly old-fashioned literary worker. There was nothing in his study associated with the modern contrivances of file-cabinet or card-index. He had his own methods of reference, which, whatever they may have looked like to others, enabled him to put his hand on fact or document as it was needed. He made drafts of his letters in rough notebooks, and transcribed them carefully in a handwriting which retained to the last its characteristic quality. His numerous public interests in England and Scotland brought him a great deal of work, while there was no man of his time who, over so long a period, kept in personal touch with a larger or more diverse group of correspondents in India. Most of these, happily for himself, were occasional only; others were both regular and profuse. Among the latter were three especially, without whose continuous flow of information and suggestion it would not have been possible for Wedderburn to maintain the intimate contact with men and events in India that was the basis of his continued

influence in the reform movement. These three were Sir Dinshaw Wacha, of Bombay; Bhupendranath Basu, of Calcutta, and later of the India Council in London; and G. K. Gokhale. Week after week, over a very long term of years, their letters were delivered at Meredith. Wacha wrote with astonishing copiousness, by every mail for more than a quarter of a century, covering the day-to-day history of the movement with the detail appropriate to one who was described by Henry Nevinson as the "most statistical of Parsees." Mr. Bhupendranath—who, as Wedderburn said, had kept his faith when all others were inclined to despair—wrote with peculiar care, in a beautifully neat hand, letters comprising the informed and competent memoranda of a master counsellor and organiser. Both correspondents were highly valued by Sir William, who never thought his week's work was complete unless he had dispatched in reply to them, as well as to Gokhale, his own report, less voluminous but equally careful, of happenings on this side, together with his comment upon the ever-changing scene in India.

These letters to India resembled those to which his friends and associates in England were accustomed. No communication from him was without its kindly personal touch, however brief

it might be; but, except to his closest intimates, he never wrote letters for amusement. The best way in which to describe his ordinary correspondence is to say that the bulk of it was simply committee work. It was the product of a man engaged in certain well-defined public tasks, to which his whole mind was given. It consisted of just those matters of fact, advice, and suggestion that committees exist to deal with; and it reflected the infinity of patience, care, and fairness which in combination made him an example of the rarest kind of public man.

His friendship with Gopal Krishna Gokhale was the closest and most fruitful personal association of Wedderburn's later life. The two men had become intimate during the sittings of the Welby Commission on Indian Expenditure while Sir William was still in Parliament, and their intimacy was uninterrupted till the death of the Indian member of the partnership in February, 1915. From 1906 onwards Gokhale made long visits to England, and at such times in London or at Meredith the friends were constantly together. Their minds were in complete accord. They shared every purpose and every plan. Wedderburn could not possibly have found a younger colleague more perfectly suited, by temperament and training, to co-operate with him—whether at his side in

England, or, in India, within the Legislative Council and in the Congress Movement. During a large part of the time when the Morley Reforms were in course of preparation they worked together day by day; and there was nothing that gave Wedderburn greater pleasure than to observe the unqualified success of his friend, as the spokesman of India, with every kind of group he met and every audience he had the opportunity of addressing. They corresponded with unbroken regularity, their letters covering every Indian political event of the period and every turn in the Congress situation. Gokhale's letters in particular constitute in the mass a candid and detailed history of the movement, with its continual difficulties and its frequently jarring personal forces. It was characteristic of both men that, notwithstanding the closeness of their relation, they retained to the end the formal mode of mutual address. When Gokhale died, worn out by his labours on the Public Service Commission and by the manifold anxieties created for him by the growth of the newer, and markedly anti-constitutional, influences in the National Congress, Wedderburn was conscious of a calamity far greater than the loss of a beloved friend and invaluable political associate. It was to him a matter of profound grief that the man whom he rightly regarded as the fine flower of

modern public life in India, its finest brain and purest character, should have been removed from the scene at the moment when the overturn of the European system, with its immense reactions throughout the British Empire, was sweeping India forward to her greatest opportunity and her most severe ordeal.

Wedderburn at Meredith lived the traditional life of a country gentleman of the quiet and cultivated sort. He conducted daily family worship, reading from the Book of Common Prayer and almost invariably choosing his Scripture portion from the New Testament. He usually divided the day between his study and the garden. He read thoroughly a certain number of English and Indian newspapers, keeping a large collection of press cuttings. He was practically never without some piece of writing on hand. His articles, pamphlets, and public letters involved much labour of drafting, rewriting, and revision, and he was accustomed to read them aloud for criticism. He never allowed a slipshod page or paragraph to go out. Every piece was constructed with care; the statement was as exact, as regular and complete, as he could make it. He worked always with the utmost deliberation, and liked best to alternate a turn in the garden with a spell of work indoors. Nothing in the garden

escaped his eye, and he was constantly occupied in it. On winter evenings he rarely missed his rubber. He was fond of all games, and even when advancing years caused him to relinquish lawn tennis he continued to play a very fair game of golf. He had the deep affection for animals that belongs to his type of the open-air Briton.

The failure of Wedderburn's health was manifest as he approached his eightieth year. He continued to take his annual cure at Llandrindod Wells, and in the summer of 1917 this seemed to be unusually successful. During his stay in Wales that year the long life of Dadabhai Naoroji came to an end, and Wedderburn found himself unable to resist the pressure of his Indian friends who could not endure the thought of any other chairman for the memorial meeting in Westminster. He went up to London, and, owing to a strike of taxi-cab drivers, was obliged to stand for some time in the rain. He caught a severe chill, which proved to be the beginning of the break-up. He could not shake off the effects, and although as autumn approached he was greatly exhilarated by the Montagu declaration of Indian policy (August 20), his strength waned steadily, and with the new year all hope rapidly disappeared. The end came at Meredith on January 25, 1918.

The winter of her bereavement held a bitter

succession of trials for Lady Wedderburn. Eleven days only before Sir William's passing, death had claimed the husband of her elder daughter, and on March 21 the younger daughter, Griselda Fremantle, was called away.

It would be almost impossible to exaggerate the fervour and universality of the tributes paid to his memory in India. The Indian people have long memories and a profound sense of gratitude, and, considering Wedderburn's unique relation to the Indian cause, it was natural that the public expressions of admiration and gratitude should be comparable only with those called forth by the death of Lord Ripon some years earlier. The India Press extolled his life and character in hundreds of articles, and large numbers of his friends contributed their personal testimony. "It was part of his nature," wrote Mr. G. A. Natesan, of Madras, "to treat the Indians with the considerateness due to equals and the tenderness due to those who felt that they were politically subordinate," and he went on to speak of "the perfect self-effacement, the sagelike forgivingness and serenity of spirit" exhibited in his whole life as virtues making an especial appeal to the Indian nature. The *Leader* (Allahabad) said: "He was an official, a member of the I.C.S. itself, but unlike so many others in his position he always conducted himself as an

affectionate and dutiful servant of the people and not as their race-proud master." These quotations are typical of innumerable eulogies uttered in the Press and on the platform throughout India. Memorial meetings were convened in all the principal cities; that held in the Excelsior Theatre, Bombay, on March 20, 1918, under the chairmanship of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, being the most notable for the reason that it was attended by many prominent citizens who had known Wedderburn during his official service.

Tributes came also from a large number of distinguished English public men, more especially those who had been associated with Wedderburn through the years of arduous labour for Indian Reform in Parliament and outside. Two examples of these must suffice here. His old friend Frederic Harrison wrote: "For sixty years he gave the cause his whole strength—his time, his fortune, his wise intellect, his immense patience, sagacity, and courage." And G. P. Gooch, the historian, a valued associate of essentially like mind, wrote: "His long official experience, his immense knowledge, his deep sympathy with Indian ideals, his gentle nature, his old-world courtesy, his statesmanlike moderation—here was a rare and precious combination of qualities for a pioneer. He and Gokhale made a noble pair."

On March 5 Sir Herbert Roberts (Lord Clwyd) presided over a memorial meeting in the Caxton Hall, Westminster. The occasion befell just as the final sombre chapter of the war was about to open, and it could not be other than a modest affair. But it brought together many of those, both men and women, who in working on behalf of India, and more generally towards the transformation of the British Empire into an organic commonwealth of free peoples, had found in Sir William Wedderburn not only an elder colleague and counsellor, but a tower of strength.

## CHAPTER X

## THE RELIGION OF PUBLIC SERVICE

*For our sake he went into Parliament, for our sake he left Parliament, for our sake he made friends, for our sake he entered into hostilities, for our sake he undertook the most menial service that can be undertaken. Nothing was too small or too laborious for him to undertake, if only it was for the good of India.*—G. K. GOKHALE at the 1910 Congress.

WHEN Sir William Wedderburn died it was said by one who had long worked with him that the cardinal fact of his life was that during a period of nearly sixty years he had not lived a day without performing some act of service for the cause of India. The statement is literally true; and it illustrates the characteristic upon which all who knew Wedderburn would wish to lay a special emphasis. He belonged to that company of men and women—the glory of the modern world, and perhaps the peculiar glory of our branch of the human family—for whom public service is far more than a vocation or a

career: for whom, in the strict and full sense of the word, it is a religion.

Just as there was never in his mind the thought of any other profession than the Indian Civil Service, so his character, and the tradition in which it was moulded, made it impossible for him to look upon his calling save in one way. The public service was simply the service of the public. The civil servant in India was the servant of the Indian people. He could not regard himself as the agent of a despotic system, although none knew better than he how despotic the Government of India was, how rigid its theory and methods had grown to be in the course of a century of development. When, therefore, he allied himself with men of Indian birth who were striving to transform the imperial system, he was not adjusting himself to a new conception of the public servant's duty. He was taking the line to which everything in his nature and training impelled him.

Of Sir William Wedderburn as administrator, and later as independent reformer, two things especially should be made clear. The first is that he believed profoundly in government as a science and a craft. He was a constitutionalist to the marrow. He stood as far from the revolutionary or the philosophical anarchist, on the one side,

as from the autocrat or bureaucrat on the other. He disagreed with the classic assertion as to the inconspicuous part which laws and rulers play in the framing of "all that human hearts endure." How, indeed, could any man who had laboured among an Eastern population fail to observe the immeasurable power of institutions and lawmakers in enhancing or diminishing the sum of human well-being? Wedderburn at all times was intensely concerned with the creation and improvement of institutions. Whenever a political or social problem was submitted to him, he at once set to work, not only to discover the lines of escape or settlement, but also to devise machinery for permanent administration. He could not be persuaded that the chief part of the necessary work had been done when a specific grievance seemed to have been removed. He saw at once the necessity of constructive effort. The parable of the house swept and garnished, with its irruption of seven devils, was for him an apologue of universal application. Moreover, as a complete Liberal he believed without reserve in the principle of self-government, and in its method of consultation, discussion, and mutual adjustment. He was entirely convinced that the way of peace, of contentment, of efficiency and fulfilment, lay through common effort

to secure the free contribution of all the units in the community. Freedom, in his view, was the completed work of co-operative discipline. The extraordinary position he attained in India, the unreserved affection and trust which the people of all ranks reposed in him, from beginning to end, without change or deviation, came to him as the result of the perfect balance of intelligence and conscience in his character.

The second important thing to note is this: never at any time did Wedderburn envisage, as a practical possibility, the severing of the tie between Britain and India. In this, undoubtedly, he was of the same mind as his Indian associates in the founding of the National Congress. They were content to describe the imperial connection as providential. And Wedderburn, with his profound realisation of the contribution which the British commonwealth of nations was capable of making for the benefit of the less advanced peoples within its borders, was certainly not tempted to use a milder word. Times and minds changed rapidly in India after the opening of the present century. The younger generation of Indians began to dream of an India free and independent, long before they had learned from M. K. Gandhi to repudiate an alien imperial rule as infamous. To Wedderburn all such ideas

were, as politics, unreal and remote. He recognised the enormous difficulties lying in the way of unity and common action in India. He knew the overpowering necessity of organisation in the modern world, and the immense interdependence of the peoples. He could see no tolerable future for the Indian people except in partnership with the British Commonwealth. And he believed that it was in the power of the Indian people so to transform the administration as to make it truly a national government. To this belief he held even in times when the imperfections, and the positive evils, of the bureaucratic system were pressing most severely upon his mind. He held to it with greater conviction than ever at the close of his life, amid the high hopes that had been created by the declaration of 1917. His faith, as we have seen, found practical expression in his programme of complete self-government, with every part of Indian public life organised and directed by Indian leaders. Such leaders, he felt, must come from the educated classes; and must be quickened and fortified by Western knowledge, thought, and experience, and continuously vitalised by contact with the masses of their own country.

So much for the conception of life and politics which underlay the whole of Wedderburn's pro-

longed effort on behalf of the Indian people. It was central with him, and all-pervasive; but, manifestly, it would have been of little worth but for the steadfastness of mind and solidity of character by which it was carried into everything he did. This gave him the simplicity and patience, the singular tranquillity, of which everyone who met him in any capacity became immediately aware.

From the moment of his taking his stand for Indian reform, in the days of Lord Ripon, to the last months of his life, Wedderburn was under fire. The man who touches a vast sacred edifice like the fabric of an imperial system need look for no mercy from his opponents; and this is particularly true of a fabric so exceptional as the administration of British India. In India the members of the old order condemned Wedderburn as a disloyal officer of the Raj. In the House of Commons the thick-and-thin defenders of the existing system denounced him as a Little Englander, a crank—with his continual tirades against the bureaucracy, his incessant pleading for the Indian rayat. Identified as he was with the Indian National Congress, he was steadily abused by the imperialist Press as a nuisance, an enemy, a man who must somewhere have a sinister motive for his hostility to the service

which he had entered. This part of his experience Wedderburn accepted as inevitable. If the men who said such things believed what they said, they could not know what it was they were saying. If they did not, it was the worse for them and for the system they were anxious to uphold. He had chosen his own part. It was his duty, as a servant of India, to urge the need and the rights of the poor and unrepresented masses of the Indian people. Knowing their case, he could do no other. Direct and continuous obedience to the inner vision was the one test of his religion.

Standing up thus to attack, he was at all times ready to reply. If his character or motives were called in question, he kept silence. If his facts were challenged, he verified, restated, and amplified them. If a counter-argument were submitted to him, he met it in full. He was never known to shirk an issue. The assault might be offensive, abominable. His answer, all the same, would be couched in the simplest and most courteous terms, without a trace of anger or impatience. I recall one occasion when a pertinacious Anglo-Indian member of Parliament had charged the British Committee of the National Congress with a particularly odious sort of propagandist activity. At the next meeting of the Committee

Wedderburn read the draft of his reply. It contained a calm recital of facts and an offer of ocular proof if the adversary wished it. "That letter is written," said the veteran Allan Hume, "on the assumption that he is a gentleman, which he is not." Wedderburn was incapable of acting on any other assumption. He would speak at times with grave reprobation, in subdued anger, or occasionally with the sting of sarcasm in his words. But I suppose there is no instance on record of his having lost his temper or uttered a word at which the most unreasoning opponent could take offence.

Nor were his political conflicts confined to the region of Indian controversy. After his return to England he fought through all the great domestic campaigns of his generation. He saw the old Liberal Party pass, and the Conservative Party change out of all recognition under leaders brought into the fold from outside. From the first Home Rule Bill, through the Boer War and Tariff Reform, to the tremendous struggle over the Lloyd George Budget and the House of Lords, he played the part of a valiant Liberal man-at-arms; and never for a moment was he betrayed into an unfair or unworthy stroke or retort. This is surely a marvellous and inspiring record, in an age when most people seem to have per-

suaded themselves that the pitch of politics is an inescapable defilement. I have been through masses of his letters and memoranda, without finding a single note or an exclamation inconsistent with his character and ordinary habit. Indeed, so unbroken is the uniformity of his expression in fairness and courtesy, that it is almost with a start one comes across a letter to an old friend in Scotland, written during the wild campaign of calumny which raged between the Boer War and the Liberal triumph of 1906, in which Wedderburn permits himself to suppose that "that rascal Joe" may be up to some of his old tricks again!

So also was it throughout the endless labour and the wearing anxiety of the Indian reform work, which filled some part of every day from the year of the Victorian Jubilee to the last year of the great war. There were always financial worries to be met. There were personal difficulties with dissentient groups or awkward individuals. And in the later years there was an unremitting struggle to prevent the clashing of factions in the movement. The burden of all this was borne by Wedderburn, and in reality by him alone. No other could so have carried it, for none possessed, as he possessed it, in a measure that was without limit, the trust and

reverence of all men and all parties. The explanation is the simplest possible. He had no selfish ambition, no personal ends to serve. His was the dedicated character, the dedicated life.

## CHAPTER XI

## THE HOUSE OF WEDDERBURN [1]

THE Border name of Wedderburn is of ancient origin. The earliest recorded mention of it, as of other old Scottish families, is in the famous *Ragman Roll*, in which Walter of Wedderburn is among the lesser barons of Scotland, swearing fealty to Edward I at Berwick-on-Tweed in 1296. Afterwards we find on the Border John of Wedderburn in 1364, bearing the family arms on his seal, and a William of Wedderburn in 1375, and again later from 1407 to 1452.

Of this Border family, according to tradition, came the Forfarshire house. The connection between the two has not been traced,[2] but the tradition is supported by the identity of the armorial bearings—at a time when arms were

[1] The writer has to thank Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, K.C., author of *The Wedderburn Book*, for the material of this chapter.

[2] The account attempted in the *Life of Sir David Wedderburn* (1885) is neither full nor always accurate.

not casually adopted—and of a territorial surname at a time when the only barony of Wedderburn was the Border one.[1] Further, as the name becomes prominent on the Tay, it ceases to be so on the Border.

By whom or when the Dundee family was founded is not known. No common ancestor has been found for it. Whoever he was, he must have gone north before the end of the thirteenth century, as by 1450 there were four distinct branches of the family flourishing in Dundee. To one of these belonged James, John, and Robert Wedderburn, early Scottish reformers, authors of satirical plays and of the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis*, or Wedderburn Psalms. *The Complaynt of Scotland*, first printed at St. Andrews in 1548–49, exhorting Scots to unite in love and duty towards Scotland, is now accepted as the work of Robert. Of this branch, too, came James (d. 1639), tutor to the sons of Isaac Casaubon and later Bishop of Dunblane.. James Wedderburn was a friend of Archbishop Laud, and when Scotland became no place for prelates he went to Canterbury, where he died and was buried in the cathedral. His elder brother, John, settled in Moravia, where he was *protomedicus*, and

[1] Later on the Forfarshire property was constituted a barony of Wedderburn.

where descendants of his were living in 1816. There is a letter, written by him in 1647 to Alexander Wedderburn, third of Kingennie, in which he addresses Kingennie as "primm of our neam."

It is from the Kingennie family, long prominent in and near Dundee, that Sir William Wedderburn came. His forbears were, with the Scrymgeours, among the principal citizens. Their arms may still be seen on some of the houses, and in the Howff is the old family "lair" where many of them are buried. Alexander, first of Kingennie (1561–1626), who was, like his father before him, Clerk of Dundee, accompanied James VI to England and was one of the signatories to the treaty of Union in 1604. A ring presented to him by James is still preserved in the family. The line of his eldest son, Alexander (d. 1687), ended in an heiress who died in 1778, since when it has been represented by the chief of the Scrymgeour-Wedderburns of Wedderburn, Forfarshire. The second son of Kingennie, James, was father to Sir Alexander of Blackness, and to Sir Peter of Gosford, great-grandfather to Alexander Wedderburn, Lord Loughborough (and later Earl of Rosslyn), who, after a dramatic exit from the Court of Session, came to London, and was the first (but by no means the last) Scotsman to occupy the woolsack.

Sir Alexander of Blackness (1610–76) took constant part in the public life of his time. In 1638 he was already "one of the skilfullest of the burgh clerks," and in 1647 was elected by Parliament one of six Commissioners to treat with the English. He purchased the estate of Blackness, lying to the north-west of Dundee and now part of the city, and is said to have entertained Charles II there. His eldest son, John, who was an advocate and later a principal clerk to the bills, was created in 1704 a baronet of Nova Scotia with remainder to his heirs male, so that on the failure of his male line in 1723 the baronetcy fell to his nephew Alexander, who had already bought the estate.

This Sir Alexander had been Clerk of Dundee, but was among those who rode out to meet "King James the Third" when he came to Dundee in 1716, drank at the market cross to his success, and accepted James's appointment of him as governor of Broughty Ferry Castle. Fearful of such conduct, the Town Council with difficulty deposed him, and the long and continuous[1] tenure of the office by members of the family thus came to an end. He died in 1744.

His eldest son, Sir John, was destined to lose not office but life for his adherence to the Stuarts.

[1] Except for a brief period in Cromwell's time.

He and his two brothers as well as his eldest son were out in the '45 and were at Culloden. The son was grandfather to Sir William, who could thus claim to be a "link with the past." This was due to Sir William's father being the son of his father's second wife, and born when his father was sixty. Sir William's own father too was close on fifty when Sir William was born. It always interested him to think that his grandfather had been at Culloden.

Sir John was taken prisoner, brought up to London, tried, sentenced, and hanged on Kennington Common, November 28, 1746. His family may be proud of the calm fortitude with which he met his fate. It is said that when told that he was to die next day he was playing backgammon in Southwark gaol, and that he undisturbedly bade the messenger "stand out of the light until the game was over."

Letters that he wrote that night to his wife, to Prince Charles Edward, and others, all testify to his calmness. Efforts had been made for a reprieve, but (he writes to his wife) "I was among the number of the elect and not to be parted with." A brief postscript to his letter on the eve of execution says, "I have ordered James to send down my linnen."

His eldest son, John, succeeded in escaping

to Jamaica, where he was joined later by his brother and other members of the family, some of whom acquired much property in the island and were partners in the once well-known firm of West India merchants whose "Wedderburn rum" was much in demand. Sir John, for so (his father's name having been in no act of attainder) he continued, after a time, to call himself, returned to Scotland for good in 1768 and bought the estate of Balindean in Perthshire. He brought with him to Scotland as a personal servant a negro slave named Knight, who after some years of service and marriage suddenly left him. He was arrested at the instance of Sir John, but successfully contended in the Court of Session that the moment he had set foot on British soil he had *ipso facto* ceased to be a slave.

Sir John married (1) in 1765 Lady Margaret Ogilvy, who died in 1775, and (2) Alicia Dundas, daughter of James Dundas of Dundas. He died in 1808 and was buried in the Howff of Dundee, being almost the last of his name to be laid there.

There is an anecdote of Sir John in the autobiographical portion of the life of Lord Chancellor Campbell, who was in 1798 tutor to the son of one of Sir John's cousins. "I remember meeting there," (says Campbell) "Sir John Wedderburn, who with his father had been 'out' in '45. . . .

Being asked whether he was not of the family of Lord Loughborough, then Chancellor, he replied, 'The Chancellor is of mine.' And I believe (adds Campbell) Sir John was the true chief of the Wedderburns."

He was succeeded by his eldest son, Sir David, (1775–1858) at one time a partner in Wedderburn and Co., member of Parliament (and a Tory) for the Perth burghs, and for some years Postmaster-General of Scotland. He was given in 1803 a baronetcy of the United Kingdom.

Some attempt had been made, through the Chancellor, Lord Loughborough, to get the Nova Scotia baronetcy purged of attainder, but such a concession to a Jacobite family had not commended itself to the advisers of the Crown. Sir William had it at one time in mind to see if he could get the attainder annulled.

Of this 1803 creation the second baronet was the father of the subject of this memoir. Sir David had had two sons, but they both died young, and on his own death in 1858 he was succeeded by his half-brother Sir John.