

ANTHONY EDEN - AN IMPRESSION

Men in great place are thrice servants; servants of the sovereign, or State; servants of fame; and servants of business; so that they have no freedom, neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times.
—Bacon.

and in England a quickening sense of the importance of the Dominions, we may be sure there will be.

Mr. Churchill's Tribute

All this sharpened New Zealand's interest in Mr. Eden as a guest, but the edge was fashioned by the man himself. His appearance and record were familiar to everybody. He came to the front early, and handsome, well-endowed; successful youth is always attractive. His record was unblemished. He had sacrificed office for his principles, and had been responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs in Britain's most critical war—and ours. Mr. Churchill has put it on record that Mr. Eden's resignation from the Foreign Office in 1938 had an effect on him which no anxiety in the war produced. In the crisis of 1940 and after, he could always sleep, but that night, "consumed by emotions of sorrow and fear," he could not. "There seemed one strong young figure standing up against long, dismal, drawing tides of drift and surrender, of wrong measurements and feeble impulses. My conduct of affairs would have been different from his in various ways; but he seemed to me at this moment to embody the life-hope of the British nation, the grand old British race that had done so much for men, and had yet some more to give. Now he was gone."

Even at this distance, when Anthony Eden's name was mentioned, one thought of four things—distinction of looks, charm of manner, ability, and integrity. A reputation for being good looking, and well dressed, and charming, might be a handicap. There are those who think ruggedness in appearance and manner are a surer sign of worth. But it is significant that in the United States, where Mr. Eden has also had to overcome the disability of being an English aristocrat, his reputation stands as high as it does with Britons.

Face to Face

What, then, is Anthony Eden like to meet? A representative of *The Listener* had an opportunity of talking with him. There were two immediate impressions, that Mr. Eden is no longer young, and is exceptionally charming. Of course, as statesmen go, he isn't old—in the early fifties—but, as we have done with Royalty (Edward VIII was a conspicuous case), we have tended to think of him as fixed in youth. He has much grey hair, and his face is heavier than some of his photographs have suggested. Think of the years, and what he has been through. We have said that all men are history. Anthony Eden goes back to Palmerston and beyond him, and later, to Salisbury and Grey. Of all departments, the Foreign Office is the most exacting on its Ministerial head. The number of despatches is enormous, and the Minister walks ever on a tight-rope. Other Ministers may blow off steam occasionally; he must not. He may think a certain ambassador is the father of lies, but no hint of this may be given. How very arduous the office was even in peace time forty years ago you may see from Grey's account of his steward-



ANTHONY EDEN waves farewell as he leaves New Zealand for Australia.

ship. Then, however, international conferences were rare; now they are almost continuous. Both Grey and Eden were Foreign Ministers in wartime. One gathers that both owed their capacity to stand the strain partly to the sensible English habit of week-ending in the country. Ministers often work just as hard away from the office, but the change does them good.

His Manners Have Style

Mr. Eden's manners may be described by a comparison with games. Two men can make a cover drive or a shot in tennis with equal effect on the score, but one man's style may delight you, whereas the other is just a player. When Anthony Eden asks you to take a chair and make yourself comfortable and offers you a cigarette, you feel that this is a stroke of good manners made with the polish of style. He is most completely at his ease, and wants you to be. There is nothing artificial about his manners. They are not of the salon (perhaps like Browning's "guests in hundreds, not one caring if their dear host's neck were wried"), but come from the heart, and are of the everyday intercourse of life. It wouldn't matter tuppence who his guest was. The style is the man. As he talks the impression deepens, and you understand why he has been so successful as a diplomatist. His voice is pleasant, with hardly a trace of English accent beyond the neglect of the "r" in "here," and his argument very easy to follow. You will have noticed in his broadcast speeches how well the facts were marshalled and the sentences framed, and how felicitous was his

choice of words. He doesn't talk at you, but to you, and he is a good listener. You feel he would always give the other side a courteous hearing and weigh up its case well.

Eden and Auckland

There was an enquiry about the Eden and Auckland families, and the connection of the name with our Auckland. Anthony Eden is distantly related to Lord Auckland, whose family name is Eden. Near Durham are three Auckland villages—Bishop Auckland, West Auckland, and St. Helens Auckland. There have been Edens there since the fourteenth century, and when in the eighteenth an Eden was raised to the peerage, he took the title of Auckland from these places, which belonged or were near to the family estates. Captain Hobson was indebted to Lord Auckland as First Lord of the Admiralty, so the new town in New Zealand got his name.

The talk ranged from Britain to New Zealand and elsewhere. It was clear he had seen and observed a good deal in New Zealand, which should stand him and England in good stead in days to come. But, reflecting on his short stay and the fullness of his days, we wondered if a time would come when such a visitor could be turned loose in New Zealand for a month or two if he wished, and told to do just what he liked, with no programme of receptions and speeches.

Anthony Eden has held great place, and served there with honour. There may be a greater place for him in the future. If this should be so, the past gives him good augury.

AN English historian has said that Java, after having been "magnificently administered by Sir Stamford Raffles for five years," was "idly handed over to Holland at the Treaty of Vienna by a statesman who didn't even know where Java was." There is much to be said in defence of Castlereagh's action, but it is quite likely that he did not know much about that literally precious island. Complete ignorance may not have dictated foreign policy there, but it may have done so elsewhere; in India, for example, where, so it is charged, we gave Chandernagore to the French in the belief that it was in the West Indies. If these statements are not justified, at any rate they point to a condition. Surprises are possible in foreign policy to-day, but not this sort of thing. Foreign Ministers know too much, or if they don't, their advisers do. The Office is in touch by cable or wireless or aeroplane with pretty well every part of the Commonwealth-Empire; the Minister can speak to a far-off community by radio; and the Press is most vigilant. In short, the good old days of isolation have gone—those days which began with the conditions Anthony Eden referred to in his speech at the State luncheon in Wellington, when, so he reminded us, communications were so slow that events might settle themselves before the news of them reached London. The world has shrunk until it is a whispering gallery in which no community can speak without being heard at once. United action is necessary if civilisation is to survive.

Men Are History

All men, like all landscapes, are history. Some, of course, represent far more than others. It is curious, and will be the subject of increasing comment by historians, that so few Imperial Ministers and ex-Ministers have visited the Dominions. The great Salisbury was in New Zealand as a young man, before he entered politics. Ramsay MacDonald looked in when the possibility of a Labour Government seemed only a dream. No Prime Minister has ever come here, no Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; nor, until Mr. Eden arrived, any ex-Secretary. It was not until the years between the wars that we received our first Secretary for the Colonies or the Dominions. It might not take two hands to count the number of Ministers in office who have come so far to see for themselves. The main reason is obvious. Before there was air travel, it took at least two months to come and return, which with the period spent here, would have been a long time to be absent from the office desk. Mr. Eden believes there should be more visits, and with this faster travelling