



JOHN CHURCHILL, First Duke of Marlborough.  
(From the original sketch in oils by Sir Godfrey Kneller  
in the National Portrait Gallery, London)

# "THE MARLBOROUGH TOUCH"

(Written for "The Listener" by C. R. ALLEN)

Winston Churchill has enlarged upon the strategy of his ancestor in the Netherlands. He has also written the biography of his father Lord Randolph Churchill, an Harrovian like himself. This is generally allowed to be one of the most brilliant political biographies of our period.

## An Early Victory

Here is a story of the Prime Minister in his school days which may not enjoy the currency it deserves. A master at

Harrow knocked on the study door of a colleague who was delivering a homily to young Winston, who sat huddled in a chair. The intruder begged pardon, and withdrew. After what seemed to him a reasonable time he knocked once more, and opening the door he discovered a small boy with round collar and Eton jacket standing with his back to the mantelpiece, while the master had collapsed into the chair.

It was said of the Churchills that they flower early and fade fast. The comparative collapse of Lord Randolph might justify this saying; but the general-

isation is given the lie to-day, it would seem. Within sight of the allotted three score years and ten we find this brilliant and versatile intellectual and man of action taking the lead in one of the greatest enterprises of all time. Jack Churchill would seem to have something of the opportunist in his composition, but his descendant has more than once gone against the dictates of expediency in order to satisfy what seemed to him to be the dictates of principle. Whether or not he was right when he crossed the floor of the house is a matter of opinion, but as Mr. Duff Cooper remarked in one of his earlier broadcasts, the step was one that demanded a peculiar kind of courage.

## A Literary Prime Minister

If we except Lord Baldwin, whose literary influence was sufficient to establish the reputation of Mary Webb, we have to go back to the days of Lord Balfour to come upon a Prime Minister in Great Britain who is also a man of letters. If Robert Louis Stevenson had lived a little later he might have said of the Prime Minister in this year of grace what he said of Barrie in a letter to Edmund Gosse: "that young man should beware of the journalist at his elbow."

Winston Churchill is of course a rhetorician. He revels in the telling phrase, and he does not mind your knowing it. He would have little time for the literary graces and convolutions of Henry James. He once told Beverley Nichols that the only way to succeed as a writer was to keep on writing. It was no use to say that you were not in the mood, or that you had indigestion.

So he kept on. The result has been "The Life of Lord Randolph Churchill," and a series of brilliant short biographies which were collected under one cover.

## His Secret of Success

One might adapt this precept to the exigencies of the hour, "The only way to succeed in fighting is to keep on fighting." His roots are embedded more deeply in English history than those of any Prime Minister since Lord Salisbury. Joseph Chamberlain was a beneficiary of the industrial revolution in Great Britain. The ordinary man could not tell you off-hand who were the Baldwins or the Macdonalds or the Lloyd Georges or the Asquiths or the Laws or the Bannermans; but when you get down to Cecil and Churchills he calls to mind that their history was part of the school curriculum.

England was interested in her tree-felling Prime Minister. For one thing he took up the cudgels against Darwinism. But England is more interested in her brick-laying Prime Minister because he has taken up the cudgels against Nazism which denies the right to take sides with or against Charles Darwin. It would deny the right of an Englishman to be contentious about religion or anything else, and paradoxically enough when an Englishman finds his right to quarrel with his fellow-Englishman threatened he joins hands with him against the common foe.

"The First Great Churchill," the story of Winston Churchill's famous ancestor, is now being broadcast by 2YA Wellington. The second episode will be heard at 9.15 p.m. on Wednesday, August 21.

"I SOMETIMES wonder whether Jack Churchill has any military stuff in him," says the Merry Monarch as he is portrayed by Bernard Shaw in his latest play "In Good King Charles's Golden Days." His brother, the Duke of York, destined to be James the Second, replies, "What! That hen-pecked booby!" — to which Charles replies, "He may be hen-pecked: what married man is not? But he's no booby."

James returns to the attack on the future Duke of Marlborough: "Jack got no more education than my groom." Charles replies: "Latin grammar is not much use on the battlefield as we found out. Turenne found Jack useful enough in Spain: and Turenne was supposed to be France's greatest general. Your crown may depend on Jack; by the time I die he will be as old a soldier as Oliver was at Dunbar."

John Churchill was born in 1650, so that if the Prime Minister survives another decade he may celebrate the tercentenary of that interesting event. His father was a Winston Churchill, so it seems that we come full circle. Jack Churchill married Sarah Jennings, a beauty of her day. He was created Earl of Marlborough by William the Third after the Battle of the Boyne.

## "VARIETY CALLING" : A Chance For Local Talent

"FROM accordion players to xylophonists, let 'em all come!" said an NBS official after last week's "Radio Variety" show presented from 2YA. He was referring to the need for local talent for future variety shows and in particular for "Radio Variety" which is to be broadcast on successive Thursday nights. Few listeners to "Radio Variety" last week realised that here was a show composed entirely of local artists, and a jolly good show, too.

Always on the look-out for new talent, the NBS tried this as an experiment. They wanted a vehicle in which local performers could go through their paces. It was to be just what the title implied — radio variety. It was not intended to be a revue containing stars of great magnitude but a happy little combination of artists who would appeal to every taste — with an ounce or two of novelty thrown in and a spot of humour just for good measure. They got what they wanted in "Radio Variety," and so have decided to continue the show.

Here is the bill of fare offered by "Radio Variety" next week:

First there's Anne Luciano, a soprano whose songs should appeal to everyone. She should be well-known to New Zealand audiences, for she did several tours with revue companies a few years ago. Then there's John Parkin, a pianist who is no newcomer to radio. A touch of novelty and a great deal of musical skill is added by Edward Sundberg, a youthful star of the xylophone. Another highlight of the show is "The Harmowaians," an unusual musical combination who contribute some real Sol Hoopi hits in a distinctive style. These "Harmowaians" are versatile artists. There are five of them, Viv. Middleton (leader), Bon Wrightson, Stan Donoghue, Bill Hoffmeister, and Ted Hall; and each one is capable of playing three or four different instruments. And we haven't mentioned the compere who throws in his share of humour, aided by the band of artists who will provide another of their entertaining little sketches.

To keep the show going is the headache of the NBS officials at the moment. They want more artists. As one of them remarked, "I don't care if people come along who want to show me how well they can sing through their ears, I'll



Spencer Digby photograph

ANNE LUCIANO

... Her songs should appeal

listen to them and if they are good, then there's a place for them in "Radio Variety."

So, come on all you piccolo-players or what-have-you—it's "variety calling!"