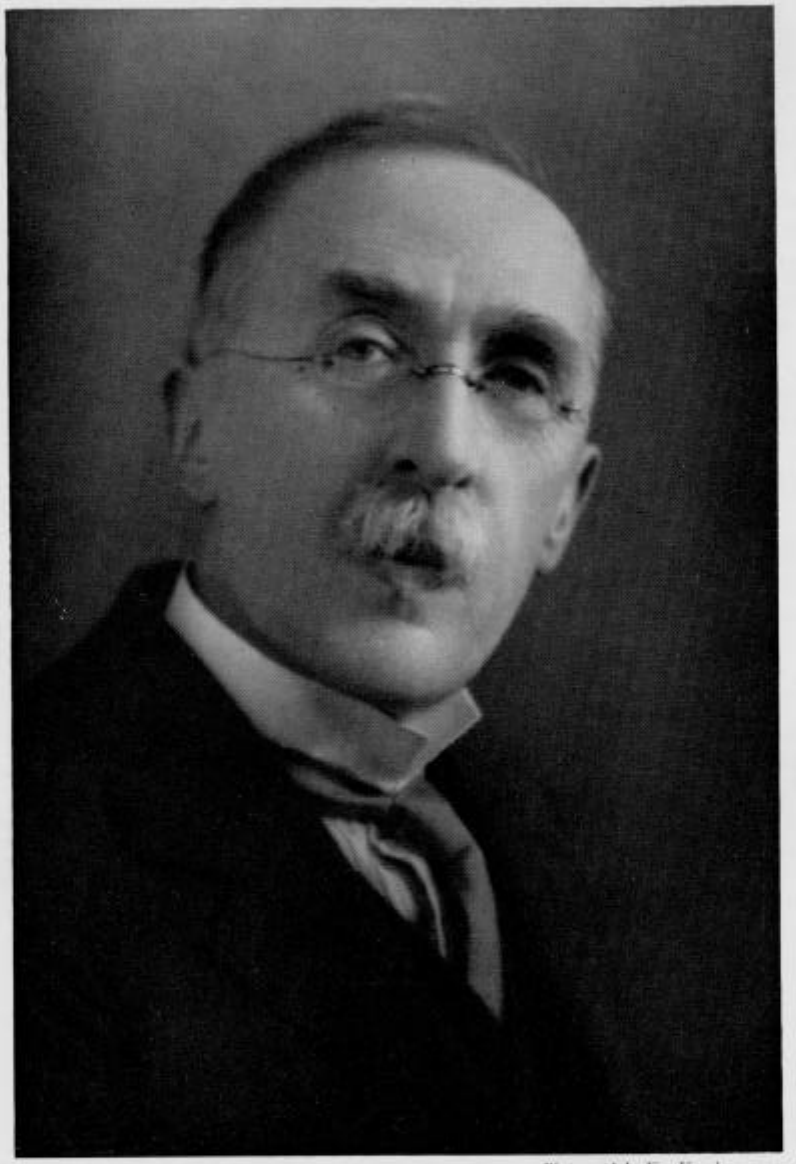
PLATE X



Photograph by Kay Vaughan, 1935

GEORGE PEABODY GOOCH, O.M., C.H.

GEORGE PEABODY GOOCH

1873–1968

I

GEORGE PEABODY GOOCH was born on 21 October 1873, his father being a business man, his mother the daughter of a clergyman in Norfolk. He owed his second name to the fact that his father, C. C. Gooch, had been first a clerk and then a partner in the firm of George Peabody & Co. (later J. S. Morgan & Co.). At the time of his birth his father had reached the early sixties, so that he seemed to the boy 'more like a grandfather' from the very first. From him the young George acquired some interest in popular science, while his mother inspired him with a lasting interest in music. He quickly became an omnivorous reader, moving indiscriminately into varied fields, but acquiring a particular fervour for history and general literature. Although more than once, later in life, he said how grateful he was for his original training in classics, he made it clear that at Eton, where he entered in 1886, he resented the narrowness of the school curriculum and particularly the failure to do justice to history. He explains that he disliked the games, the bullying, and the swearing and that he suffered from ill health at this time; and he seems to have told the friends of his old age that his tears induced his mother to take him away from the school when he was only fifteen. He reserved his gratitude for King's College, London, which he entered in 1888 and which was in a low condition at the time. Here theological studies had special importance, but they were made stimulating; Dr. Momerie's lectures awakened his 'life-long interest in philosophy'; and, though he believed that he would have become an historian in any case, the 'uninspiring' Sir John Laughton proved useful, since 'his encouragement came at a formative time'.

In October 1891 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, which he always regarded as 'the greatest College in the world'. Already he dazed his friends and terrified his acquaintances by his learning, talked of 'self-realisation for public ends', and mapped out a career for himself, which was to include becoming a member of Parliament. Already (as in his nineties) he had the habit of laying his hand on yours as he talked to you of history,

philosophy, and politics. And even now he had a portrait of Goethe in his room and tried to convert his friends to German literature, though he seems not yet to have known the German language. J. C. Powys says: 'He would have given anyone except myself a kind of metaphysical gooseflesh. . . He was also, I gathered, very rich. But in some mysterious way both his learning and his wealth were "dedicated". . . Gooch used frequently to express to me the spiritual difficulty he had in realising the Pantheistic Absolute which was the object of Spinoza's singular love. I can see his long white face and curious mouth and unhappy intellectual eyes as he said: "I can't catch the thing, Powys, I can't catch the thing".' Evidently in those days he loved to talk hour after hour in the darkness, because the light hurt his eyes and he felt a need to take care of his eyes. It was in Cambridge that he decided to be a Liberal, and Cambridge influences were at least partly responsible for the great interest that he came to have in social work.

His studies were chiefly in economic history under Cunningham and constitutional history under Prothero. He joined in the weekly conversation classes in political science which Seeley held in his dining-room and turned into a rigorous discipline. He chose for Special Subjects the age of Theodoric and Justinian, and Germany after the collapse of the Carolingian Empire. Having been placed in the First Class in 1894, he decided to spend a fourth year working for the Lightfoot Prize in ecclesiastical history; and, this time, he made a special study of the reign of Constantine, also religious life and thought in the age of Wesley and Butler. He won the prize and in the autumn of 1895 he went for three months to Germany—which he had visited twice already. Now, in Berlin, he heard the lectures of Treitschke, Ernst Curtius, Harnack, Adolf Wagner, Schmoller, and Gierke. A year later he stayed similarly in Paris, listened to Lavisse, Boissier, Faguet, Sorel, and Sabatier, and read Taine's *Origines de la France contemporaine*.

Having failed in 1897 to gain a fellowship at his own college, he was advised by the Master to try at other colleges but declined, saying that he had an idea of going into public life. A little later he refused to consider a post at Manchester University, feeling that London would offer him greater opportunities, and that he 'could never be content with a purely academic career'. In Stapylton's *Eton School Lists 1853–92* (1900) he is described as 'studying for the Bar' and this may at least have been in his mind. He now began to concern himself with popular education,

in which he remained interested throughout his life; and for some years he took a class in economic history at Mansfield House, and classes in history at the Working Men's College. He offered his services also to Toynbee Hall where he was invited to help clerical workers, etc. who were preparing for London Matriculation. For several years he had a close association with the work of a parish carved out of the territory in Camberwell for which the Trinity College Mission had assumed the responsibility. For a time, also, he was connected with the social work of the Church Army, becoming later a member of its Executive Committee.

A turning-point came with the outbreak of the South African War. 'Hitherto I had specialised in social questions', he says. 'Henceforth problems of empire and international relations occupied the foremost place in my thoughts, and the idea of entering public life ceased to be a far-off dream.' The events of those days were to affect his interests as an historian and his later attitude to diplomacy; and all of this helped to shape the main part of his scholarly career. The moral issues involved in Britain's South African policy, the shock of the war itself and the bitterness of the controversy at home made the experience a very unhappy one for him. In *Under Six Reigns* he noted that 'the summer of 1899 is one of the most harrowing memories of my life'. The split amongst the Liberals, the feeling that the party itself had been brought into demoralization, and the social bitterness—the strain which divergent views produced inside families, including Gooch's own, which did not share his Liberalism—increased the anxiety and the pain. In his life of Lord Courtney—who now became his leader—he tells us that 'no problem in the ethics of citizenship is more difficult to resolve than the duty of men and women who disapprove of a conflict in which their country is engaged'. He was always unwilling to join the extremists, and saw that it was futile to stand out against the war itself—futile for a member of Parliament to vote against the estimates, for example. But he established a distinction that was to be useful to him at a later date, and set out to 'combat the agencies and ideologies' that had produced the catastrophe—even to expose them while the war was in progress, so as to improve the chances of a reasonable settlement. He now came into contact with most of the active opponents of Government and attended their gatherings at the homes of Leonard Courtney and Ramsay Macdonald. Here there existed moral indignation and all the

fervour of a missionary campaign, so that he could say later that 'the "Pro-Boers" were linked by a freemasonry which lasted up to the First World War'.

Soon after the outbreak of hostilities he produced a small brochure for the 'Transvaal Committee'—a body originally created for the purpose of spreading more accurate information, but later equally anxious 'to prepare the public mind for an honourable peace'. It was entitled *The War and its Causes*, but it was chiefly an attempt to throw light on the Dutch in South Africa, and later he was rather glad that his 'political début' had been an attempt to enlarge human understanding. His first exercises in journalism were contributions to papers that had been taken over by the opponents of the war—reviews for the *Speaker*, edited by J. L. Hammond; leaders, interviews, and reviews for the *Echo*, which had been bought by an Eton and Trinity friend of his, the later Lord Pethick-Lawrence. He became closely connected with Charles F. G. Masterman, and, when Masterman produced in 1901 the symposium, *The Heart of Empire* (to which G. M. Trevelyan contributed), this work, otherwise devoted to social problems, contained a piece by him which some people at the time regarded as an intrusion, and which the editor himself seems to have felt to be an anomaly. It was a long dissertation on 'Imperialism', in which Gooch showed more anger and presented more barbed sentences than readers of his maturer work would expect to find. He declared that, owing to the rise in the last generation of a movement called Jingoism by its enemies and Imperialism by its friends, 'the tone and temper of our public life has already deteriorated'. He attacked 'the worship of material prosperity' and 'the power of organised money', but also said that 'our clergy have assured us of the favour of Heaven in every campaign on record'. He was prepared to say that Kruger must share the blame for the conflict; indeed the British Government had not wanted war—it had merely behaved in a way that made war probable. Looking further afield, he declared that 'it is owing to England more than to any other country that Turkey has lived to do its hideous work'. In respect of the French, with whom relations had been dangerously strained, he held that all who were in earnest about peace ought to work for the sort of *entente cordiale* that had existed in the days of Walpole and Fleury. In a word about the Home Rule problem, he suggested that federalism might provide a compromise.

It came to be said of him that he had been 'Acton's favourite

pupil', but this did not entirely please him, and in his memoirs he pointed out that he never saw the man till the day he himself left Cambridge, by which time 'I had formed my own ideas without being particularly influenced by any of my teachers'. In a sense it was both his strength and his weakness that he never altered the initial framework of ideas which made him, to a certain degree, like Acton in his Liberalism but possibly prevented his penetrating to those deeper paradoxes of history that fascinated the older man. He seems to have arrived independently at a view which coincided with Acton's conception of ideas as 'not the effect but the cause of public events'; and his first research subject, which developed into the book, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, was chosen before he met the new Regius Professor—partly suggested by his love of Milton and Harrington, partly provoked by Figgis's *Divine Right of Kings*. He saw a good deal of Acton in the five years after 1895, however, and received from him considerable help in his initial researches, particularly the advice to study continental scholarship in the general field in which he was working. Acton supported his application for a fellowship at Trinity, and thought very highly of the dissertation that he presented. According to G. M. Trevelyan, Acton in fact was angry when he learned that the young man had just missed success. His influence was also evident in Gooch's main work down to 1914, or at least in his choice of subjects. In particular, he urged in a long letter the production of a chronological handbook, which appeared in 1901 as the *Annals of Politics and Culture* with politics on the left-hand page and culture on the right—a work for which Acton provided an Introduction.

Two of the chapters produced by Gooch for the *Cambridge Modern History*—both of them well within the range of Acton's special interests—led to the production of the most imposing and characteristic of his works at this important stage of his career. Both of these turned out to be largely 'books about books', and they owed much to Gooch's omnivorousness as a reader and his notions about the power of ideas in history. The first, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, was always regarded by him as his finest production, and it was his main preoccupation in 1911 and 1912, after the chapter in the *Cambridge Modern History* had been published. In spite of a distinguished essay by Acton in 1883, the history of historiography —hitherto very much a German study—had never provoked much interest in England, nor did Gooch's work, in spite of its

success when it appeared in 1913, greatly affect that general situation. It would seem to have had its greatest influence when conditions had changed after the lapse of forty years. Its author sometimes expressed surprise at the royalties which were earned by a revised edition of the book in 1952. In this work Gooch revealed not only that he knew at first hand a vast body of literature but also that he possessed clear and steady standards of judgement. A tremendous fervour gave wing to his English style, and made his thought more imaginative, his criticism more penetrating, than in any other book that he produced. His full treatment and authentic knowledge of Ranke's historical works, together with a great generosity of outlook which was connected with his Liberalism, enabled him to achieve profundity at a point where it is rarely reached, the point at which the historical critic meets his severest test. After producing for the *Cambridge Modern History* a chapter on the influence of the French Revolution in Europe, he worked before 1914 on a large-scale treatment of the effect of the Revolution in Germany. He found 'some consolation' during the later years of the First World War in further work on this subject and the result was the appearance in 1920 of his book on *Germany and the French Revolution.* Once again the scholarship was imposing; but the tendency to concentrate on books and to measure public opinion by these—also the author's very attachment to the question of 'the interaction of ideas and events', on which his notions were questionable—made this volume more open to criticism.

In the meantime, his concern with current politics had already begun to turn his mind to an entirely different historical realm which was to occupy him throughout the middle section of his career. He had been elected to the House of Commons as one of the two members for the constituency of Bath at the time of the great Liberal victory in 1906. He was to lose by a margin in the general election of January 1910 when, as he said, the Conservatives took care not to repeat the error of 'stampeding Free Traders into our camp by waving the flag of Tariff Reform'. Further defeats were to come at Bath again in 1910 and at Reading in 1913. After that, he decided to try no more.

So long as James Bryce was Chief Secretary for Ireland—that is to say, until the beginning of 1907, when he went as ambassador to the United States—Gooch served at his request as his unpaid Parliamentary Private Secretary. This and the political preoccupations of the next few years help to account for the slightness of his literary work between 1906 and 1910. He has

described himself as standing, along with the majority of his party, 'midway between socialism and individualism', critical of any extreme system of *laisser-faire*, and disposed to see 'in the state an indispensable instrument for establishing a minimum standard of life for the common man'. His maiden speech was in favour of old-age pensions, and these he wished to see at a moderate level—not so generous as to discourage thrift—but non-contributory, after the Danish rather than the German pattern. He spoke rarely in the House, would guide members to recommended books, and made his most ambitious effort when presenting one of his favourite proposals: that efficient moral instruction should be provided in every elementary school. He entered with enthusiasm into the social policies of the Government, and was delighted when, after his support of the Licensing Bill in 1908, 'on more than one occasion I was honoured with a broadside in the columns of *John Bull*'.

For the future, however, and for the direction which it gave to his scholarship, his interest in foreign affairs was now the important thing. This field became a main preoccupation because it involved him in criticism of the Government—severer criticism than came from the Conservative opposition. It is clear that the memory of the controversy which had divided Liberals during the South African War had not died out, and that Grey and Asquith were still distrusted as Liberal Imperialists. In any case, Gooch always carried into questions of foreign policy that hatred of cruelty and suffering which so distinguished his attitude to social questions; and at this date he had a poor idea of 'the balance of power', for the sake of which, in his view, too many evils were tolerated. He joined groups which tried to put pressure on the Government—an Indian Committee, for example—and was prepared to protest even when Lord Morley was at the India Office. He was one of a small number of members of Parliament who came together in order 'to keep the Egyptian question before the House'. He joined a Persia Committee, whose faith in a national and constitutional movement in Tehran doubled their hostility to the aggressive policies of the Russians. He never disguised his detestation of the Tsardom, and his distrust of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907; and he would have voted against Edward VII's visit to Reval to see the Tsar (at a time when 'the struggle between the Tsar and his people was at its height') if Grey's threat of resignation had not induced him to join the great number of abstainers. He joined also the Balkan Committee

under Noel Buxton; and his earliest and most persistent interventions at question-time were on the subject of Macedonia and Turkish reforms, for, since Noel Buxton had lost his seat in the House in 1906, Gooch 'endeavoured to represent the Balkan Committee in Parliament'.

He held that Lansdowne, the previous Foreign Secretary, had acquired for England a sort of moral leadership which had been particularly apparent in Balkan affairs. But at a later time—when, indeed Gooch had come to revise some of his former judgements—he confessed that, between 1906 and 1908, he and his friends had regarded Grey as representing something of a relapse. Early in 1908 he insisted in the House that informed people in England, many statesmen in Europe, and the populations of the Near East saw 'a distinct relaxation of effort on the part of Great Britain' since Grey had come into office. The achievement in the field of Turkish reform had been minute—'a very poor record for two years of diplomacy. . . The Foreign Secretary should somehow or other manage to convince Europe and the Balkans that he was in real earnest about the matter'. In 1909 a parliamentary question of his about the number and the purpose of Russian troops in Persia produced a swift course of cross-questioning for Grey, who declared that he had not concerned himself about the number of these troops—that, indeed, nothing in the Convention with Russia 'makes the one power responsible for the actions of the other'. A member inquired 'Are we to understand that so far as Great Britain is concerned, Russia has a free hand to do what she likes in Persia?' And Grey did not mend matters by replying: 'Our object is to protect British interests in Persia. When we consider that these interests are affected, we shall take suitable measures.' We can understand why, even in later years, Gooch was able to say that Grey could speak as a *Realpolitiker.* Even by the end of the First World War—and still more after he had been through the archives—Gooch had seen sufficient documents to convince him that Grey had been more deeply concerned about the situation than he could afford to reveal at the time, and had exerted private pressure to reduce the evils. He himself declared later that, after the Balkan wars, 'never again could I feel much enthusiasm for the Balkan Christians . . . for there was little to choose in savagery between Christians and Turks'. He ultimately wrote of Grey that 'in elevation of character he was the noblest Roman of them all and one of the few mortals whom the world cannot spoil'.

In a late essay he reveals that 'when I told [Francis] Hirst that my years of study in the archives of the Foreign Office convinced me that Grey as Foreign Minister was no more an Imperialist than he or myself, he called me a Greyite'. He seems not to have entertained the idea that Grey's whole policy might still have been affected by his remoter anxieties about India. To the end, however, he held that Grey judged the conduct of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the years 1908–9 on principles which he refused to apply to the French in Morocco or the Russians in Persia. Even at 85 he writes that 'in public at any rate' Grey 'had one standard of conduct for our friends, another for our political foes'.

All this has its bearings on the topic which was most greatly to exercise Gooch as an historian—the question of the origin of the First World War. And it was natural that, after leaving the House of Commons, he should continue to be preoccupied with foreign affairs. He had not yet quite abandoned his hope of a parliamentary career when in July 1911 the death of the editor of the *Contemporary Review* (of which he had been a Director since 1906) led to his becoming joint editor along with the Revd. J. Scott Lidgett. The combination lasted for thirty years, but he himself retained the editorship for two further decades, retiring in 1960. He contributed articles until he was over ninety and a short review of his appeared in 1968, the year of his death. Encouraged by connections which the journal had already acquired with certain writers—including E. J. Dillon, whom he regarded as too much under the spell of Russia, too ready to see 'the strangling of Persia with Russian eyes'—he set out to make the *Contemporary* 'the leading monthly in the field of foreign affairs'. While Dillon, continuing his regular survey of 'Foreign Affairs', denounced the Kaiser's Agadir policy, insisted on the danger from Germany, and gibed at the supporters of Persian constitutionalism, Gooch secured in quick succession articles from Noel Buxton, Professor Wolfgang Michael, and Sir Frank Lascelles in favour of Anglo-German friendship. He recruited his friends of the Persia Committee for criticism of the Anglo-Russian Convention, found writers to deplore the policy of naval armaments, and presented articles calling for a closer control of foreign policy by Parliament and the people. The most remarkable of these—and particularly close to Gooch, if not actually from his hand—was an unsigned paper entitled 'Our Foreign Policy and its Reform'. It had been

prepared on behalf of the Foreign Policy Committee, over which Lord Courtney presided, and it was an attack (supported by a crucial quotation from Lord Lansdowne) on what was regarded as Grey's policy of turning the *entente* into 'an alliance directed to the maintenance of the balance of power'. Between 1911 and 1914, therefore, the *Contemporary* provides a vivid illustration of the intensity of the controversies in England on the question of foreign policy. By 1914 Dillon's mood had come to seem gentler and in the July issue that year he wrote a discourse under the heading: 'Was Austria's Peace-Policy a Fatal Mistake?' He feared that the wisdom of Berchtold during the Balkan wars would be interpreted as weakness and so lead to catastrophe. When the great conflict of 1914 broke out, however, his review of 'Foreign Affairs' opened with the remark: 'At last Germany has thrown off the mask.' But Gooch turned this issue of the *Contemporary* into a wide-ranging symposium on the origin of the war, including a lively piece by H. N. Brailsford, who said: 'I can only marvel at the illusions and curse the fatality which have made us belligerents in the struggle.'

At the time of the assassination in Sarajevo, Gooch was suffering from a nervous breakdown, due to overwork. As a member of the Reception Committee of the International Congress of Historians, which met in London in 1913, he had had special opportunities for talks with famous German historians, and had taken great pleasure in these. His attachment to German scholarship and literature, the fact that he had a German wife, and the critical attitude that he had taken to Grey's foreign policy were bound to produce tension in his mind, for he himself deplored German autocracy, German militarism, German blustering, and he could not tolerate the breach of Belgian neutrality. He did not join those who protested against Britain's entry into the war, and for a long time he made no public statement about his attitude. He may have been sensitive about his own position, for in a study of Morley he shows his gratitude for the fact that 'during the phase of rampant Germanophobia in the war of 1914 the octogenarian statesman who rarely left home and was never in the least pro-German insisted on travelling to London to pay his respects to my German wife'. In reality, as soon as his views became apparent, he had come to the conclusion that, if England had remained neutral, her position at the end of the war would become impossible. At the same time, he felt that the policy of the

country had been partly responsible for producing the whole predicament. He was willing to support the Union of Democratic Control at a later stage, when the object was not opposition to the war but the promotion of a reasonable settlement. After Lansdowne's peace-letter to the *Daily Telegraph* of 29 November 1917 he joined the group of people who visited him to declare their support.

He had the opportunity to explain his war-time attitude when, in the spring of 1917, he wrote the major part—the twentieth-century section—of *A Century of British Foreign Policy*. This is a booklet which he produced along with the then Canon J. H. B. Masterman at the suggestion of the Council for the Study of International Relations. He tried to set out the issues fairly, but one of his objects was to present his reasons for questioning a defence of Grey which Professor Gilbert Murray had published. He raised doubts about the morality of the secret clauses of the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, and about the policy of Great Britain in the subsequent international crises; and he went to some trouble to explain how Germany had come to desire a navy. Though he recognized Grey's tremendous work on behalf of peace, he made it clear that he was perturbed about the treatment of both Morocco and Persia, and about the way in which the *entente* had tended to become an alliance. Fifty years later he was still proud of the fact that, amid the fever of war, he had registered his tensions in his concluding paragraph, where he said that the time had not yet come

> for a judicial verdict on the whole policy of Continental commitments, unaccompanied as they were by an army of Continental dimensions or by a frank explanation to Parliament and the nation of their contingent liabilities. Looking back over the crowded and anxious years, it is clear that on the one hand it increased the probability of war with Germany by involving us in the quarrels and ambitions of our friends, and that on the other it ensured that if a conflict arose we should not be left to fight it alone. The risk and the premium will have to be balanced against each other by the historical actuary of the future.

At the end of the war he was invited to work in the Historical Section of the Foreign Office which was preparing handbooks for the British delegates in the peace negotiations. He assisted Sir George Prothero in the revision of the writing submitted by others, and himself wrote on French claims in the Levant, which went back to the Crusades. He declined an invitation from

Sir Adolphus Ward (on behalf of the Cambridge University Press) to spend five years writing a history of British diplomacy, and suggested that if Ward would direct a co-operative work on the model of the *Cambridge Modern History* he would be prepared to be joint editor. The three-volume *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783–1919* was the result, and Ward produced the plan of this by the summer of 1919. Hitherto, Oscar Browning and Holland Rose had opened the archival study of this period, and they had been followed (though still only in the earliest decades of the period) by Harold Temperley and Charles Webster. The new Cambridge work was to be important chiefly for the stimulus it gave to further documentary researches in nineteenth-century diplomatic history. The Foreign Office took an interest in the production, opened its archives to 1885 (instead of 1860) for contributors who allowed their work to be inspected, and even communicated materials where its own officials had elucidated points of recent history. Gooch performed the usual editorial duties and when one contributor complained about his remuneration, he offered to meet the difficulty by surrendering part of his stipend—when another complained about the limitations of space, he offered to surrender twenty-five of the pages which had been allotted to him. But he left the main decisions to Ward, sending his suggestions with the reservation, 'It is *your book*.' He himself contributed three hundred pages on the latest period of all—two hundred on the period 1902–14—using such documents as had already been published but also 'information derived from Cabinet Ministers, diplomatists and Civil Servants', further material supplied by the Foreign Office, and sundry recollections of his own. In this larger study the arguments and even the phrases of his former work were repeated, and attention was concentrated on England's policy of European commitments, though now there was distinctly less hesitation in judgement. He still saw too much of *Realpolitik* in Grey, whom he quoted as saying, 'I ask the House to drop dealing with the internal affairs of foreign countries'; and he described the chilling effect of Grey's reply to him and his friends when they went to him as a deputation from the Balkan Committee in 1907, and he said that 'We were not the whole conscience of Europe.' Now the criticism of the military conversations with France became explicit: 'The neglect to consult the Cabinet was against the theory and the practice of Ministerial solidarity'; and Grey's excuses for this were rigorously treated.

In 1922 he received the degree of D.Litt. from the University of Durham. From 1922 until 1925 he was President of the Historical Association. He had quickly renewed his connections with German scholarship, and declined to attend the International Historical Congress at Brussels in 1923 because the exclusion of the Germans made it 'international only in name'. The *Contemporary Review* worked for reconciliation and was soon to carry articles by refugees from Fascist Italy—he claimed that, at this time, 'no British monthly could boast of such an array of specialists in foreign affairs'. He regarded the rule of Lloyd George as a 'quasi-dictatorship', and, in the absence of a better alternative, he followed Asquith, for whom he 'felt no enthusiasm'. In the inter-war period he particularly interested himself in the Liberal Summer School that held its meetings in Oxford or Cambridge. In 1920, besides *Germany and the French Revolution*, he published the biography of his friend Lord Courtney. In 1923 he delivered the Creighton Lecture in the University of London, and, since 'Poincaré's foot was on the neck of his prostrate foe', he spoke on *Franco-German Relations 1871–1914*, attacking France's Moroccan policy, and declaring that, until the sending of the *Panther* to Agadir, 'the policy of Germany had been irreproachable'. Then in 1924 he was drawn into the greatest undertaking of his career—the work of editing the *British Documents on the Origins of the War*. It may be interesting to see how the task came to fall on him.

II

There had been some 'desultory' talk about the publication of British documents relating to the origin of the First World War; and Lord Grey, the former Foreign Secretary, had given the impression that he would be friendly to such an idea. The effective stimulus came, however, from E. D. Morel who, in a parliamentary question on 20 February 1924, drew attention to 'falsifications' in the Russian Imperial Orange Book, and besides asking for a White Paper as a corrective, raised the issue of a wider publication of material. The Librarian of the Foreign Office, Stephen Gaselee, while drawing attention to the magnitude of the task, suggested that on the latter of these points the answer might be 'sympathetic'; and the reply to the parliamentary question stated that 'the Prime Minister is considering some further publication of pre-war records'. The idea was then taken up with some enthusiasm at the Foreign

Office, Gaselee handing the problem to James Headlam-Morley, the Historical Adviser to the Office, and suggesting that 'if we do come to any kind of publication, the Historical Adviser would be in charge of it'. In a Memorandum of 29 April Headlam-Morley showed how backward the British had been in this matter, and how much they were losing through this, especially as 'we have nothing to hide'; but he added: 'I should press very strongly that the whole work should be done by and in the Foreign Office, and that no countenance should be given to proposals which have been made that the publication should be entrusted to scholars with no responsibility to the Foreign Office.' Gaselee agreed with Headlam-Morley that the staff of the Foreign Office might be temporarily strengthened by the engagement of competent historical scholars. He thought that two would be needed, and that they would be required for about two years, each receiving a stipend of something like £1,000 a year. 'It will not be easy to find suitable men', he said—men young enough to accept the subordinate position that was envisaged for them, and sufficiently free from other commitments, but also competent for the task and likely to be 'trusted by those who believe in us least'. On 28 May he suggested the name of Kingsley Martin, whose book on *The Triumph of Palmerston* had recently appeared—a man of 'slightly bilious temperament', he wrote: '. . . no one would accuse him of trying to find excuses for the British Government.' And although, by this time, Headlam-Morley seemed prepared to consider a broader policy as a possible alternative—though, also, Sir Eyre Crowe, who had been enthusiastic from the first, preferred to entrust the task to independent scholars, and to pay a handsome remuneration in order to secure good ones—it was Gaselee's plan that was put into execution.

The plan was changed during the course of execution by either an admirable woolly-mindedness or some streak of perversity and independence in Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who was both Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. His goodwill had been apparent from the first but already in a minute of 1 May he had made the curious remark: 'It is time we published some *histories* about the events leading to the War.' The Foreign Office itself had already recognized the inadequacy of such a policy, but they failed to drive the idea out of his mind. When the name of Kingsley Martin was suggested to him, along with that of R. B. Mowat (who, also, had now been recommended to Gaselee), he was not over-impressed, and he called for further

information. It was then agreed that he should ask Gooch (whom he had known since the Boer War) to give him his opinion of these men. He opened the matter with Gooch in a letter of 5 June which began: 'On my instructions the Foreign Office is compiling an important historical work which will, I anticipate, take some years to complete.' He added, however, on his own account: 'As to yourself, I do not suppose it is much use my suggesting you should assume a responsibility which would entail a tie upon you extending over a period of possibly so long a duration as five years.' On 9 June Gooch replied that Kingsley Martin, in *The Triumph of Palmerston*, had been dealing with public opinion at the time of the Crimean War—not acquiring experience of archival work. At the same time Mowat's latest book on nineteenth-century diplomacy had been a disappointment, he said. Gooch added that there were better men, such as Harold Temperley and Charles Webster, though he could not be sure that they would be available.

It is clear that Ramsay Macdonald was responsible for the ultimate engagement of Gooch, and the officials at the Foreign Office admitted later that it was he who decided to confide the important task to independent scholars. They rightly claimed that the Office had accepted this policy without the slightest demur. Indeed the Office wanted the publication of the documents, no matter which of the alternative schemes was adopted, and it was the officials who became impatient when they saw that the negotiations were suffering delay. It was they who became afraid lest Ramsay Macdonald should fall from office before the matter was settled. After the lapse of four weeks, a further parliamentary question from Morel made Gaselee wonder whether Gooch had replied to the Prime Minister's letter; and he attempted to reanimate the proceedings. The Prime Minister had said: 'I do not wish the matter to be delayed', but Gaselee was correct when he wrote a little later that 'the matter was held in abeyance for a couple of months by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, owing to the press of other business, as he preferred to carry on the negotiations with Dr. Gooch'. On 11 August the Prime Minister wrote to Gooch about 'this matter of the editing of our documents relating to the war,' and said, 'I wish you would take it up yourself', though he still made it clear that he wanted 'to produce a sound historical narrative, properly documented'. Gooch replied on 13 August that 'no "historical narrative" would give the world what it is waiting for, and neither my name nor any other would convince

everybody that the whole truth was being frankly and impartially set forth'. The students of the origins of the war required 'the essential documents themselves, not extracts worked into somebody's narrative'. Also, it would be 'imperative' that there should be more than one editor. 'I should be content with one colleague if he were such an experienced scholar as Mr. Temperley and if the work was confined to a short period.'

Ramsay Macdonald had said: 'I would place at your disposal all the documents at the Foreign Office and of course you would work with the people there, especially those in charge of the archives.' He had added: 'I should like the matter to be settled at once, as I do not know how long I shall be here.' Though it was he who was responsible for the appointment of Gooch, the men at the Foreign Office were delighted and Sir William Tyrrell wrote a little later: 'We welcomed his appointment, as he had been one of the most persistent critics of the foreign policy of this country.' In an interview at the Archives Section at the Foreign Office on 19 August, Gooch made it clear that he would wish the proposed publication to comprise not only dispatches but also 'private letters of the Secretary of State when relevant, and a certain number of minutes, though not very many'. It became apparent that he was 'very anxious to have an assistant editor, less perhaps to take the work off his shoulders than because he feels that two names would carry greater weight than one—he does not wish to have the sole responsibility. . . He would very much prefer to have as his assistant editor Mr. Temperley than any one else.' He also made it plain that he, for his part, would want to do the work without any remuneration.

It was now the Foreign Office view that the whole production would require five royal octavo volumes ('the size in which our treaties are at present published'), each of the volumes containing three to four hundred pages. Headlam-Morley and Gaselee had had it in mind that the year 1904 should be the starting date, and when Gooch suggested that 1899 might be a possible alternative, they still hoped to induce him to agree to the later year, though Crowe had favoured the time of the Boer War. The appearance of a volume of the *Grosse Politik*, which contained an account of Chamberlain's proposals for an alliance with Germany, was regarded not only as calculated to intensify the demand for the publication of British documents but also as clinching the argument for beginning with the year 1898. In any case, the editors wished this to be the starting-

point. On 6 September Stephen Gaselee was in Cambridge and called on Temperley who agreed to co-operate, though he hoped that there would be a public statement to the effect that 'the editors had a free hand in dealing with the documents'. Crowe welcomed the co-operation of an historian who had previously done satisfactory work for the Foreign Office.

Gooch was unable to start work until the beginning of the year 1925, as he was preparing his *Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell* and had to produce a book on Germany. Temperley would be unable to begin until his return from the United States in January. It was understood that both of them should regard the undertaking as calling for only half their time. In the meantime, further delay had been trying the patience of the Foreign Office, and, as yet, no announcement had been made to the public. On 16 October 1924 Stephen Gaselee suspected that the Treasury might be holding matters up 'on the chance of there being a change of Government and so a chance of defeating the scheme'. On 12 November an article in *The Times* by Sir Sidney Lee and on 15 November a letter from Professor Seton-Watson to the same paper made it likely that the outside world would soon be showing its impatience again. On 19 November Headlam-Morley, for further reasons, held that 'probably in a few days *The Times* will bring out a very strong article'. It seemed unwise to wait for a statement in Parliament, which was regarded as the proper course; and Sir Austen Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary under a new Conservative government, not only ratified the arrangements made by his predecessor, but announced them in a correspondence with Professor Seton-Watson. His letter appeared in *The Times* on 28 November.

The editors soon discovered that the undertaking was much bigger than they expected; and publication was not completed until 1938. It was quickly recognised that eleven volumes would be necessary; and, even after this, the single volume sometimes had to appear in two parts, each of which was very much bigger than had been anticipated. The task itself proved to be an unexpectedly stormy one, for, in spite of a lot of goodwill, it raised some delicate issues. The publication of minutes (throwing light on the considerations that were involved in the making of policy) had been contemplated in the earliest discussions at the Foreign Office. Once the work was confided to independent scholars, the possible inconvenience of this became more apparent and gave anxiety to Crowe,

who insisted that, in this matter, the editors should be controlled. After his death, and 'largely due' to it, this policy was 'largely modified', though the Foreign Office and Secretary of State reserved a final power of exclusion in special cases. Gooch later said that the exclusion had reference to hasty or frivolous minutes which did not represent a serious point of view, and both the editors and the Foreign Office left it on record that on this sensitive issue no difficulty in fact arose. In general, the Foreign Office made no claim to act as censor, though offering informal suggestions which generally raised no problems; and the Secretary of State refused to behave as censor, Austen Chamberlain declaring on one occasion that if the India Office wished to exclude a document it must defend the exclusion itself. Trouble arose chiefly in connection with the susceptibilities of foreign governments.

Before the work began Headlam-Morley revealed that he had already been preparing a selection of the documents for the crucial month of July 1914. It was agreed that the last volume of the series—volume XI, covering the period between the assassination at Sarajevo and the outbreak of war—should be the first to appear; and, according to a Foreign Office memorandum, it was 'at the editors' request' that this volume was 'prepared for them' by Headlam-Morley, on the understanding that 'for this purpose he should work under their supervision and should be responsible to them and not to the Office'. Headlam-Morley himself insisted that Gooch and Temperley had the responsibility for the selection of the documents. Before the volume appeared, the editors had to be informed that delicate passages would have to be referred to foreign governments that might be affected by them, the consent of these governments being necessary. And here the editors took umbrage, because this was an issue that had not been mentioned at the time of their appointment. It had in fact been touched upon in the reply to a parliamentary question in 1924, and everybody seems to have forgotten that Temperley, in the same year, had himself reminded the Foreign Office of the need to consult other governments. The difficulty became more acute when, early in 1926, the French demanded a considerable number of exclusions, omissions, and alterations in the case of the volume that was to be published first of all. The editors did not know that their friends at the Foreign Office shared their exasperation, and that Headlam-Morley had found it 'difficult to have any confidence in the straightforwardness of

the French in matters of this kind'. (A little later, the officials at the Foreign Office were to be angrier still when similar objections by the French happened to coincide with the assertions of French historians that the British were doctoring their records.) The editors were particularly incensed at the thought that the Foreign Office had even transmitted to them a request for the alteration of a text (as distinct from a mere omission, which might be indicated by dots). When Headlam-Morley had been to Paris and induced the French to become more amenable, Gooch and Temperley were still unhappy and demanded in writing from the Foreign Secretary a definite assurance that they would not under any circumstances be asked to omit any document which they considered vital. Sir Austen Chamberlain declined to give an undertaking in advance, but said that if in a given case he had to require the exclusion of a document, the names of the editors might be removed from the title-page. He would then have to explain their withdrawal to Parliament. 'I undertake to put all possible pressure on foreign governments', he said; and, 'if sufficient reason was shown', he would be 'prepared to publish against their will'. In the summer of 1928 the editors were required to omit a French document which had been found at the War Office, but they declared the fact in a proposed Introduction to volume III and, in connection with this, they announced their decision to resign 'if any attempt were made to insist on the omission of any document which is in their view vital or essential'. This raised the question whether the editors had a right in their Introduction to divulge some hint of what they had been asked to conceal, and at this point the controversy became serious, so that the Foreign Secretary had to intervene. All this answers the question why, in the Introduction to volume III (and to all the following volumes), the editors published the unexplained threat that they would resign if they were compelled to exclude anything vital.

Immediately after this a further issue arose, for a document discovered at the Foreign Office really belonged to the Committee of Imperial Defence, and its publication was regarded as calculated to injure British interests in the East. Controversy now became so intense that the whole undertaking was subjected to a thorough review. On 28 July 1928 Gaselee, Headlam-Morley, and Sir Maurice Hankey produced a complete history of the work of Gooch and Temperley for the enlightenment of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India, and the

Foreign Secretary. They declared that the attitude of the editors 'has on some occasions not been conciliatory. More than once they have begun a discussion by presenting to the Office something in the nature of an ultimatum, and throughout the negotiations they have again and again resorted to the threat of resignation'. Also they had been 'slow to recognise the very exceptional efforts which have been made to assist them'. In this connection the Foreign Office produced a remarkable list of the occasions on which Gooch and Temperley had threatened to resign. All these things may have been part of the inescapable stresses and strains of the enterprise. The editors could not know how vigorously they had been supported by the officials at the Foreign Office, and how greatly these officials sympathized with their point of view. But the Foreign Office failed to see that the intransigence of the editors played its part in the story, and itself provided the means of putting pressure on other countries. The officials, in fact, relayed to foreign governments the threat that the resignation of the editors would be accompanied by the publication of the reasons for their action, or they pointed out that if there was the request for the alteration of the text of a document the fat would be in the fire.

The two editors acted in combination during these controversies, but it gradually became apparent to the officials that Temperley rather than Gooch was responsible for the rough tactics and the stormy character of the correspondence. Gaselee learned to distinguish between the two, and would tend to qualify his complaints with the remark that Gooch, for his part, was a reasonable man. The character of the collaboration between the two editors throws light on Gooch himself, who in many cases added his signature to letters which his colleague had rapidly concocted. He lacked the animal vigour that would have been required for strong leadership and he found himself yoked in this undertaking with a man who was determined to assert himself. Though he liked to talk afterwards as though everything had gone smoothly, he would open out to a person who challenged him on the point; and, after that, he declared that he hoped never to have to repeat the experience. Strain occurred chiefly because Temperley rightly thought that he was more shrewd about diplomatic documents but at the same time wrongly tried to drag Gooch into militant ways. Temperley even conducted a private warfare of his own—claiming, for example, that he had the permission of Sir Ernest Satow to publish certain private letters of his, and would print them

on his own account if they were excluded from the official volumes. (Gaselee, knowing that Japanese susceptibilities were involved, had to induce Satow to withdraw the permission.) It is not clear that Gooch joined Temperley in the demand for the publication of the letters in which Asquith reported to King George V on the Cabinet meetings that took place during the crisis of 1914. The cause was a good one, but Temperley threatened to resign and was defeated because the papers did not belong to the Foreign Office. (They had been copied in the first place for J. A. Spender, who used them in his life of Asquith, and the Foreign Office were able to say that Spender did not agree to their reproduction.) On the other hand, the Foreign Office was able to look after its interests, and the editorial work required a reasonable degree of alertness. When perturbed by the possible consequences of the publication of a C.I.D. document that was found amongst their papers, the officials—anxious not to forbid the publication themselves—gave the alarm to the C.I.D. and the India Office. Tension was unavoidable, and there would have been disadvantages if there had been no militancy at all.

All this helps to explain the impressive character of the *British Documents on the Origins of the War.*

III

In the meantime—and largely, if not entirely, after his commitment to the editing of the *British Documents*—Gooch had produced a more topical and popular work on *Germany* which appeared in 1925. In it he showed a considerable knowledge of the cultural life of the Weimar Republic, and he surprises us by his interest in Spengler's *Decline of Western Civilisation*—'the most important and influential book published in Germany during the last decade'. His views on the origin of the war were now more trenchant. 'Both before and after the murder of the Archduke the intentions of the Wilhelmstrasse were as pacific as its policy was maladroit', he wrote. He was anxious that the Englishman should understand the attitude of the Germans to the 'war-guilt' clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. Not long after this he signed the petition against the 'war-guilt' clauses which was organized from the office of *Foreign Affairs* by Mrs. Swanwick. In 1927 he published under the title *Recent Revelations of European Diplomacy* a very much revised and expanded version of a lecture which he had given at the British Institute of

International Affairs in 1922. On this occasion Lord Asquith, the chairman of the meeting, had denounced as 'a travesty of history' his statement that in 1914 Britain's hands were no longer free owing to her entanglement in the quarrels and ambitions of her friends. The book of 1927 was of the kind that Gooch always enjoyed; a survey, country by country, of the documentary publications, the historical writings, and the personal memoirs which, since 1919, had thrown light particularly on the origin of the war. In swift strokes it showed where each work had contributed points that were strategic; and a concluding chapter, which achieved some circulation after being turned into a gramophone record, carried the verdict:

> The ultimatum to Serbia was at best a gambler's throw; but it was envisaged by the statesmen of Vienna and Budapest as a strictly defensive action, offering the best chance of escape from a danger which was certain to increase and which threatened the existence of Austria as a Great Power. The conduct of Germany was no less short-sighted but no less intelligible. Austria . . . was the only power, large or small, on whom Germany could rely . . . wedged in between a hostile Russia and a France bent on revenge.

In 1927 Gooch visited the United States and delivered at Harvard the Lowell Lectures in which he discussed eight of the statesmen who had been involved in the diplomacy of the pre-war period. In 1928, having declined to be the first occupant of a chair of International Politics at the new Hochschule für Politik in Berlin, he agreed to deliver the Carnegie Lectures which had been established in place of the chair, and spoke on the policy of Grey between 1905 and 1909. On 14 February 1929, before his departure, he showed some toughness in an interview with Lord Grey, whom (according to his notes) he induced to admit that Sir Eyre Crowe had been anti-German, and that neither the Kaiser nor Bethmann-Hollweg nor Jagow had wanted war. Then in 1933—on his way to the International Congress of Historians at Warsaw—he spent a little time examining Nazi Germany and visiting Czechoslovakia. Henceforward the refugees took up much of his attention at home. In the Munich crisis he believed that England was unable to save Czechoslovakia but rejected the suggestion that Neville Chamberlain had achieved 'peace with honour'.

In 1936 and 1938 he published the two volumes entitled *Before the War: Studies in Diplomacy*. In a sense they were an expansion of his Lowell Lectures, for they presented the story

through an examination of ten of the leading statesmen of pre-war Europe. In a more important sense, they were meant to stand as the consummation of all his efforts in this field, his previous works serving now as preparatory exercises. Single comprehensive surveys of the diplomatic antecedents of the war had already been produced by other historians. He thought he would break the narrative up and catch fresh light by moving from one platform to another. The account is now more scholarly than before, the style more taut, the argument more closely knit. On the one hand, much of the older work was rolled and kneaded into the new, the crucial phrases returning, the former criticisms just perceptible. On the other hand (and particularly in the treatment of Grey), the work on the British archives made the difference, and the novelty lay in the virtue found in Grey precisely at the point where he had once seemed most disappointing. Gooch's diplomatic history now became more profound, his Persian story so transformed that one wonders what he must have thought of his former attitude. And, in the complexity of the new narrative, even the old criticisms now seem to have become almost marginal. He was still troubled about the *entente* that turned into an alliance-commitment, and in two papers, 'British Diplomacy in the Light of the Archives' in 1939 and 'the Diplomatic Background of the First World War' in 1941 or 1942 (both of them published in his *Studies in Diplomacy and Statecraft* in 1942) he returned to this point, bringing to it now his closer scholarship and his additional evidence. He had come to hold that in regard to the Moroccan crisis in 1906 and the Anglo-Russian Naval Convention of 1914 it was hardly possible for anybody to have acted differently from Grey, though Grey might not have realized how far he was going. He saw also that there was a process which Grey could not control—that, for example, the very response of the Central Powers to the *entente* was almost bound to produce a tightening of the latter. He still set out to show in detail how the cleverness and the deliberate policy of the French and Russians had assisted the process and clinched the case.

In the spring of 1941 he moved out of London to escape the bombing, so that he dismantled his very considerable library, giving to the Institute of Historical Research his books on the origin of the previous war. His house at Chalfont St. Peter could carry few books, and he made great use of the London Library, but his main researches were over and he produced, often in

the first place for the *Contemporary Review*, essays that were based on his general reading, or accounts of people whom he had personally known. One of the volumes in which these came to be collected—the earliest one, *Courts and Cabinets* (1944)—was itself another 'book about books', this time a survey of memoir-writers, and its Preface presented an explanation which was applicable to its successors: 'These studies are designed for readers without time or inclination for the originals or who lack access to large libraries.' The interesting feature of a whole series of these volumes was the way in which Gooch now became engrossed in the enlightened despots of the eighteenth century—a thing understandable if one notes that the series began with Frederick the Great (1947), an inviting subject for a man who had been so interested in German scholarship. In reality, little attention was paid to the narrative history and the bulk of the volume on Frederick consisted of excerpts from Frederick's writings and correspondence, together with an outline of the historiography of the subject. Gooch had loved to traverse such tremendous publications as the *Politische Correspondenz* and now produced large extracts, clearly writing with the books before him, intending to deal largely with personal relations and social life. Volumes on Maria Theresa (1951), Catherine the Great (1954), and Louis XV (1956) came in natural succession, and there were other similar volumes. In 1958 he surveyed his own life in *Under Six Reigns*, revealing how deeply and permanently he had been influenced by the attitudes adopted in the decade before 1914. In *Historical Surveys and Portraits* (1966) he produced further reminiscences in his accounts of politicians whom he had known. He had been almost blind for a few years when he died on 31 August 1968.

After reading his morning paper, he would write until lunchtime, except during the considerable number of years when he generally went to study the Foreign Office records. He was a member of so many organizations and benevolent bodies that, while he lived in London, his afternoons were often spent in committee work. It was his custom, at any rate during his later decades, to entertain visitors at tea-time, and there was a long period during which his regular guests were refugees. Towards the end, when he was nearly blind—and could just take pleasure in a red rose that he might see from his window—he would have friends who read to him in the evening, and invariably would listen to records of classical instrumental

music. His latest friends, like some of his early ones, found that he liked to sit in the dark and complained of the light which hurt his eyes; so that sometimes it was a difficult business to 'humour the old gramophone and fit the needle into place'. For a long time it was his habit to write his letters at the end of the day, and to take a short walk to catch the last post.

He seems to have done his writing out of an easy mind and an easy memory, after all the tensions had been overcome. He studied as one who traverses swiftly a great amount of literature, knowing what he means to look for—not as one who collates the evidence inch by inch, restructuring a story that has been broken down into its elementary particles. He read just by passing his eyes down the middle of the page, and it was said of him that he would remember not merely the date of an event, but even the day in the week. Mme Lazarus, who helped him so much from 1958—and whose periodical return from Switzerland for work with him would awaken him to new vitality—would help him to test his memory for dates and quotations, and this was never found to fail. In spite of the great compassion behind so much of his life and thought, he was unreal and remote in a sense, and he who could describe one moment in his life with the remark, 'I was then in my Shelley phase' may have allowed his bookishness almost to become a screen. He learned to play the piano but 'he thought of music as a thing you just learned—like that! There was nothing more to do about it. And when he had heard a piece of music he had "done it"—just as in the case of reading a book.' The Spanish Civil War greatly shocked him, and he could talk of nothing else—he would tire the listener. But he and his wife were at opposite poles on this subject, and he could accept the disagreement without great tension. And when, from a distance, he saw London burning during the war, he said, 'This is history', as though the occasion were only a matter for wonder. Though he was clear about the moral issues in history and politics, he could never believe that anybody he knew could be really wicked—he would say, 'But this man is a member of my Committee', or he would try to slur the matter off. For decades he presided over the Central London Branch of the Historical Association; and countless historians of Great Britain heard him, as chairman, deliver their own lecture before they were allowed to speak. If one's lecture differed from the views which he had put forward, he might repeat at the end what he had originally said; and one did not know whether he was smiling

and smiling and being a villain or was merely impervious to anything that he disliked to hear. He loved children, however young they were, and exercised upon them a fascination that was never forgotten; but in retrospect they were not always clear that the relationship had been personal, or that this man, so far ahead of them, would have been useful to have as a teacher. You wondered if other people ever really made a dent in him—whether they were not to him more like ghostly substances gathered from German metaphysics. And, as he talked, you felt that now indeed the Ancient Mariner had taken possession of you. In his memoirs he talks about the people with whom he had been connected but the reader who hopes to learn about the relationship is disappointed—it is as though he had merely read (or considered himself to be writing) an article in a biographical dictionary; and often, as when writing about his time at Eton, or life in Norfolk, he would point to somebody else's book on the subject. He could set the whole company in a restaurant on the alert as he raised his voice to a high register and piped, 'You know, Butterfield, what I have always loved are Ideas.' Even in wartime he could tell the Trinity College Historical Society that the thing to do was to divide the power of executive government. 'Cut it up!', he said, 'Cut it up!' Yet he could be down-to-earth and he maintained from the very first that no British Prime Minister would ever shake the position of Ian Smith. When he called his Liberal friend, Francis Hirst, a hanging judge, the latter retorted that Gooch himself, if he were on the Bench, 'would never send even the most hardened criminal to the gallows'. Yet it was Gooch who, during the controversy over capital punishment, said that sufficient attention was not being paid to the possible victims, and that a man who committed two murders, one who killed either a policeman or a prison-warder, and one who, going armed to a burglary, had then taken a life, ought still to be hanged. He was the most concise of letter writers, and if there was anything to negotiate—the terms on which he would edit the *British Documents*, for example—he seemed to grasp the issues instantly, and his statement would be curt and business-like.

In *Historical Surveys and Portraits* he wrote:

> After a lifetime of study and reflection I must confess that I have found nothing to suggest that human destiny has been in any way determined by supernatural influences. I should not dream of denying such a possibility for we see through a glass darkly: I merely say that I find no reason to accept a solution which fails to fit the chequered

record . . . The human spectacle as I have witnessed it for eight decades leads me to Pascal's conclusion that *les révolutions changent tout sauf le cœur humain.*

In a similar moment of confession at the end of *Under Six Reigns* he said that he did not expect that there would ever be peace on earth. He married in 1903 an art student, Sophie Else Schön, from Zittau, Saxony, whom he had met during his first visit to Berlin; and her later return to the practice of Catholicism, which did not perturb him, made their devotion to one another more touching. She loved to paint, particularly in water-colour, but he himself had no eye for the visual arts. She seems to have had asthma all her life and a Cambridge correspondence of his between 1920 and 1922 shows her seriously ill for long periods, suffering from many things, including an enlarged heart. A former neighbour describes how he would walk with her to the church-door, and read to her the offices of the Church when she could not read them herself—though he once confessed that in the week before Easter he found the Gospel long. And, when she was ill, he would perform wonders for her. As a young man, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he had set out to learn about the cónditions and the life of the poor. As a member of Parliament, he showed the same concern—went with a party of newly elected members to visit the congested districts of Ireland, and sat on the Select Committee which prepared legislation on sweated labour. He was exemplary in his generosity and kindness and interested himself in young students of history. Only in respect of himself was he austere—having no car, not caring for taxis, and, at least in his old age, living quite a Spartan life. To a friend who, when he was unwell, advised him to go away for a change, he replied in all simplicity, 'But we have had our holiday.' And even the doctor, when he was called in, had to pretend to be making a social call—otherwise Gooch would be angry and say that there was nothing wrong with him. Until his eyes began to fail he conducted the *Contemporary Review* as a monthly journal, writing all letters by hand, correcting the proofs himself, and producing his own contributions—never failing the journal even when he went abroad.

In 1926 he became a Fellow of the British Academy. He was made an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College in 1935 and received in the same year an honorary doctorate from Oxford. In 1939 he was made a Companion of Honour; in 1955 he received the German order *Pour le mérite.* When he was presented

with the Order of Merit in 1963 he talked with the Queen, afterwards revealing how he had told her that her father had been the most popular King of England since Alfred the Great. Some of his devoted friends in Buckinghamshire wondered if he had held her hand.

HERBERT BUTTERFIELD