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YOUNG H. W. N. (1875)

LAST CHANGES LAST CHANCES

HENRY W. NEVINSON



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DEDICATED IN GRATITUDE

TO ALL MY FRIENDS

MEN AND WOMEN, LIVING AND DEAD

Not for us are content, and quiet, and peace of mind, For we go seeking a city that we shall never find.

There is no solace on earth for us—for such as we— Who search for a hidden city that we shall never see.

Only the road, and the dawn, the sun, the wind, and the rain,
And the watch fire under the stars, and sleep, and the road again.

From "The Seekers," by JOHN MASEFIELD.

PREFACE

N this volume I take up the simple narrative of my experiences from the day of my return from Berlin after the declaration of war on August 4th, 1914, as described in the final chapter of "More Changes More Chances." In that and in the previous volume, "Changes and Chances" (both published by my present publisher), I spoke of my boyhood in an Evangelical family typical of the Victorian age, and at The Schools, Shrewsbury, at that time an old-fashioned classical school. I spoke of my youth at Christ Church, Oxford, and my transformation there under a remarkable friendship; of my early manhood at Jena University, and in the East End and other parts of London, where I contrived to make a precarious livelihood by teaching, by serving as secretary to the London Playing Fields Society, and by hesitating attempts at literature. Then came my service for the Daily Chronicle under Massingham, as war correspondent in the Græco-Turkish War of 1897, as his literary editor in London, and his war correspondent during the South African War, in Ladysmith and Pretoria. unhappy period of service to the same paper under a new editor with whom I had few points of agreement followed. but it was broken, first, by my part in exposing the abominations of Turkish misrule in Macedonia, and then by my exposure of the atrocious system of slavery in Portuguese Angola and the islands in the Gulf of Guinea. (1903 to 1905).

I next told how I was in Russia for the Daily Chronicle under Robert Donald, and in the Caucasus and Georgia for Harper's Magazine, during the revolutionary years of 1905 to 1907. Then how I gladly accepted service under Massing-

ham on the Nation, which he "created," and, whenever I was in England, wrote for him regularly. How he ceased to be editor in the year before his death is narrated in the present volume. During the "Unrest" in India (1907-1908) I was there for the Manchester Guardian under C. P. Scott, and on my return was appointed leader-writer for the Daily News under A. G. Gardiner. My support of the "Militants" in their demand for Woman Suffrage, and my protests against their treatment in gaol, broke that connection through no fault of the editor himself, soon after I had been present in his service at the violent outbreak in Barcelona and the simmering warfare upon the Riff in Morocco (1909). During the first and second Balkan Wars of 1912, 1913, I was again in Bulgaria, Albania, and Serbia, in the service of the Daily Chronicle under Robert Donald, and the Manchester Guardian under C. P. Scott. I was also present in Ireland at the time of the "Covenant" and the troubles in Ulster, for the Manchester Guardian. Finally, I was in Berlin for the Daily News under A. G. Gardiner when the Great War began, and through the kindness of Sir Edward Goschen, then our Ambassador, I was enabled to escape just in time, as narrated at the close of my last volume. It is at this point that the present volume begins.

The following Table of Contents summarises its subjects, but for further summary I may say that the narrative deals chiefly with my experiences during the Great War in Belgium, France, the Dardanelles, Salonika, Egypt, France again, and Germany after the Armistice; in Ireland during the prolonged troubles that led up to the Treaty of 1921; in the United States during a voyage of discovery and the Washington Conference of 1921–1922, at which I again served the Manchester Guardian under the same great editor; in Germany during the Ruhr occupation, serving the Daily News once more; in Ramsay MacDonald's Labour tour of 1924, serving the New Leader under H. N. Brailsford; and in Palestine (1926), again serving the Manchester Guardian.

At that point the last of these volumes of reminiscence ends, and I suppose it could not end better than in the Holy Land. I am quite aware of the charge that the story of one man's life and experiences cannot possibly be worth three volumes. I have heard that charge brought against the three volumes of even Lord Curzon's biography, and Lord Curzon's part in history was incomparably more important than mine could be. But, for all that, I think there may still be considerable interest in the records of one who has lived through the seventy years beginning in 1856, and has followed the course of their events with close interest, and sometimes with personal contact.

Historians have a habit of marking their periods by wars, and those seventy years, starting from the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, are easily marked by the Prussian wars against Denmark, Austria, and France: the Russian war against Turkey; the British wars in Egypt and the Soudan; the Græco-Turkish War; our South African War; the Russo-Japanese War; the Balkan Wars, and the Great War. Or one may mark the years by the political changes that have gradually brought the whole of the adult population, men and women, into the voting power of a democracy; and the social changes are at least as wide. In things of the mind those seventy years include a period of imaginative literature unequalled in our history for power and variety; a period of scientific discovery and invention beyond the dreams of miracle; and a new aspect of the world's development that has transformed the whole conception of history and religion. Anyone who during those seventy years has used even a few of such opportunities for thought and action as have been mine should certainly have enough to fill three volumes with his records. But even as it is, I have been obliged almost entirely to omit the more intimate and personal memories of the disappointment. depression, rage, hatred, joy, and love that occupy so much of everyone's existence.

And now that, at the very best, my remaining years of life

PREFACE

must be so few, I will take leave of those who have so kindly followed these reminiscences of a long and varied career. But the leave-taking must be rather hurried, for I am just starting to the Near East for the twelfth time.

H. W. N.

· London, August, 1928.

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