

WALTZ ME AROUND AGAIN WINSTON, AROUND AROUND AROUND

WE commented not long ago in these pages on the interesting fact that British politicians on opposite sides are, generally speaking, on friendly terms, and on the still more curious fact that this is invariably counted to them for righteousness. A striking example of this state of affairs is provided by the circumstances attending the marriage of Mr. Winston Churchill. Here we have Mr. Churchill, who has "thrown in his lot with the people," who has surpassed the commonest bawler of clap-trap vulgarities in Hyde Park in his denunciations of the House of Lords, and who, he informs us, is prepared to stake his future prospects and that of his party on the passage through both Houses of Mr. Asquith's anti-brewer Bill. Naturally the party which Mr. Churchill has deserted and the class from which, on one side, he springs cannot be supposed to love Mr. Churchill very much, and, while the ties of blood and the ties of old-standing friendship would be expected to prevent a complete rupture between Mr. Churchill and his own near relatives and immediate personal friends, it would not have been surprising to have found a certain amount of coldness arising in the relations between Mr. Churchill and the party and set he has deserted. Had anything of the sort taken place, and had Mr. Churchill, in the face of the openly-expressed disapproval and contempt of his own class, continued in his fervent and recently acquired convictions, it might have been possible to admire Mr. Churchill's strength of mind and to congratulate him on the sincerity of his feelings. But nothing of the sort has happened. Mr. Churchill's position in society remains as it was (strengthened by the addition of a useful £5,000 a year), the members of the class he has persistently attacked and undermined lavish their respectful attentions on him, and his wedding, which in itself is of considerably less importance than the merest "shocking affair in Battersea" or "horrible outrage in Soho," is exalted by the idiot press of both parties into an event of national moment. There is an admirable cartoon in an old number of *Punch* representing Lord Randolph Churchill as the modern Curtius leaping into a gulf at the bottom of which is a comfortable mattress inscribed "Popularity." It refers, of course, to Lord Randolph's "dramatic" resignation of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Mr. Winston Churchill has not even had to provide himself with a mattress to fall on, and the necessity for performing any act even so feebly "dramatic" as his father's resignation of office has been spared him. So completely is it now recognised that modern politics in this country are a "game," that there is considerably less feeling over them among politicians than there would be in a really serious game such as cricket or football. However popular a football-player might be, and however closely related by blood and by other ties to prominent members of his own team, he would have to be prepared to face a certain amount of unpleasantness if in the middle of a match he deliberately kicked the ball through the posts of his own goal and thus scored a point for the other side. But in the game of politics, as understood nowadays by the feeble time-serving phrase-choppers who "perform" in public on one side or the other, the idea of carrying political conviction into private life would be considered "quite impossible" and "most undesirable." As for Mr. Churchill, who shall blame him if, perceiving that the whole business is a game, and that success, obtained at whatever price, is the only thing that matters, and that he can successfully pose as a champion of the "enslaved people," an apostle of peace with everybody, especially with Germany, a denouncer of the corrupt and effete members of the House of Lords, and a scourge for the beer-swollen brewers, while continuing to enjoy the esteem, regard, and even the abject adoration for his "cleverness," of all these classes of people, including the

brewers, who shall blame him, we say, if he accepts the situation? He is not bound to bring his own martyrdom to practical issues when he can wear the crown without any of its inconveniences. He is in a position to plead that his case is analogous to that of an early Christian, who has openly professed his faith, and who, on being brought before the Judges, and having declared his willingness to die for his convictions, is politely asked to dinner to meet the High Priest of the Temple of Apollo and several other distinguished pagans, including that eminently safe and moderate politician the Right Honble. Pontius Pilate, who is still in a state of philosophic doubt as to the question at issue, and who is far too well bred to mean any of the things he says in public. What could the poor early Christian do under such circumstances? Nothing evidently. He is a victim of incurable kind-hearted tolerance. What can Winston do? Obviously he had better go on denouncing the House of Lords, making himself agreeable to Germany, and attacking the brewers, while he continues to eat the dinners, and drink the wine, and shoot the game, and marry the daughters of the members of the House of Lords, the harmless unnecessary generals, and the forgiving brewers. He knows perfectly well that when Mr. —, the member for —, denounces him as a danger to the country and a traitor to his class, his party, and his principles, Mr. — does not mean a syllable of what he says. Bless you, it is only part of "the game." Otherwise would Mr. — make such a tremendous point of leaving his constituency, which is a very long way from London, and coming up to attend "the Churchill wedding," there to proffer his congratulations, to exchange smirks and bows with his political opponents, and to offer up his humble prayer for a long line of little Winstons who shall in course of time be found "following in father's footsteps, following the dear old dad"? We trow not. Therefore rejoice O Winston and be exceeding glad, for you have been born into an age which is eminently suited to your talents, and which has a proper appreciation of American smartness. And if at any future time it shall become necessary, in the interests of the upkeep of the aforesaid little Winstons, to make a little gentle *détour* and to come back again into the Conservative fold, how pleasant to think that not only will the warmest welcome await you from your former colleagues, but that no member of the party which you at present adorn will be so "ill-bred" and so "uncharitable" as to allow his political convictions to interfere with his respect for you and your illustrious, not to say ducal, relatives.

"OF THE FIRST IMPORTANCE"

IT would seem that in the publishing business one requires nowadays a most level head. There is a firm, for example, which trades as Alston Rivers, Limited. We do not know whether anybody of the name of Rivers is connected with this concern; but it is certain that one of the principals is the Hon. Lancelot Julian Bathurst. We have reason to believe that this gentleman is Alston Rivers and no other. And on our well-known principle that the publisher of a book must share, and indeed take the brunt of, the responsibility which attaches to the publication of a book, we should like to know by what species of argument the Hon. Lancelot Julian Bathurst would justify the publication of a work called "G. K. Chesterton: a Criticism," which is just issued from the Alston Rivers Press. In a puff which is bound up with the volume, and is intended to be descriptive of it, Messrs. Alston Rivers remark that "G. K. C." are "the three letters with which the Christian names and surname of Mr. Gilbert Chesterton commence, forming a *nom de guerre* of the first importance in literary circles." If this is the Hon. Lancelot Bathurst's justification we can only say that it speaks for itself as well as for the Hon. Lancelot Bathurst. Messrs. Alston Rivers's puffer remarks further:

Everybody knows how delightful a humour is Mr. Chesterton's, and probably no one will enjoy the sallies of his anonymous critic more than he himself [*sic*]. Perhaps, however, critic is