

of justice should have been so led into a series of false and dishonourable positions. The dilemma is still with us: justice or force. Does the conscious pursuit of justice mean inevitable war, and is the operation of international gangsterism the only hope of peace? I do not think that we can yet be persuaded that this was true even of the 1930s, certainly not by the partial story presented by this book.

MICHAEL COOK

ROSEBERY, by Robert Rhodes James; Weidenfeld and Nicolson; 50s.

Rosebery died in 1929, having succeeded in 1894 as Prime Minister the portentous figure of Mr Gladstone, who was terminating an enjoyment of high office that had begun in the reign of William IV. The joint careers of these two men more than cover the rise and fall of the first Liberal Party and the chief criticism of this life of one of its most remarkable figures is that it does not put Lord Rosebery firmly within that frame. The author takes Mr Gladstone's position as understood and passes over, in silence, the fortunes of Liberalism after 1911. But this is a political biography, for the personality of Rosebery, interesting enough in its way, is not sufficiently so to justify 500 pages, which show signs of over-hasty preparation and writing.

Gladstone created the Liberal Party out of the Whigs and Radicals whom, as a member of Peel's Government, he had started by opposing; his titanic energy and personality both embodied Liberalism and concealed its internal contradictions. For the word 'liberal' has two shades of meaning; it signifies 'generosity' and 'freedom'. Gladstone and his colleagues wanted to be generous to the under-privileged and this meant increasing state interference with social affairs; this inevitably meant restriction of private enterprise in many ways; it was not surprising that the Labour Party, which unhesitatingly accepted the implications of the policy, entered upon the Liberal inheritance. The tremendous performance put up by Gladstone, with his massive political expertise and cunning, postponed the show-down; but so soon as he vanished from the scene the conflicts within Rosebery made it quite impossible for him to control the divergences within the party. After a year of insomnia and nightmare Cabinets he resigned, never to hold office again, while the Liberal Party only temporarily regained a great majority in 1906 because Joseph Chamberlain had wrecked the Tories by his Tariff Reform campaign.

Rosebery had seemed destined for a splendid, not a tragic eminence. Handsome, deeply intelligent, capable of assiduity, an aristocrat by birth and temperament, fabulously well-read, rich by inheritance, he had married for love Hanna Rothschild, the greatest heiress in Britain. He stage-managed the Midlothian campaign of Gladstone in 1880 and then, after some curious cold-shouldering by the Prime Minister, stepped into the Foreign Office during the brief government of 1886, to reveal an innate mastery of its workings unequalled, perhaps,

until the days of Ernest Bevin. His second spell at the Foreign Office from 1892-1894 was marked by his refusal to tolerate any interference with his administration of the department and by the awe-inspiring Machiavellianism with which he made inevitable the Protectorate over Uganda.

In his time out of office he had manifested the range and penetration of his mind. He had visited and admired the USA, made a tour of Australia and, during it, proclaimed an enlightened attitude foreshadowing the modern Commonwealth. He became the first Chairman of the London County Council and increased the prestige he brought to that position by his admirable performance in it. He developed serious proposals for the reform of the House of Lords which are only now being tentatively approached. At a slightly later date his horses won the Derby, which endeared him to the race-going public, though not, typically enough, to his Nonconformist Liberal supporters.

With all this magnificent endowment, however, he lacked the one essential quality of a successful politician; a skin like a rhinoceros. The harshness of his mother in youth, the loss of his wife in early middle-age, exaggerated his introspection and sensitivity. The Premiership was a torture to him and nearly wrecked his mental and physical health. With all the wealth and interests a man could have it was not surprising that he could never bring himself to stand for office again. Possibly no one could have saved the Liberal Party from disaster; Rosebery was completely incapable of doing so.

He was not quite 47 when he became Prime Minister on March 5, 1894 and he resigned on June 28, 1895. He died at the age of 82, spending most of these last years between his great houses in London and Naples, Epsom, Mentmore and Dalmeny. The best known of the several books he wrote during this later period was his study of Napoleon on S. Helena, for his graceful pen was always felicitous in elegiacs. He loved lyings-in-state and visited Newman's. 'The Cardinal', he wrote, 'just like a saint's remains over a high altar, waxy, distant, emaciated, in a mitre, rich gloves whereon the ring (which I kissed), rich slippers. With the hat at the foot. And this was the end of the young Calvinist, the Oxford don, the austere vicar of St Mary's. It seemed as if a whole cycle of human thought and life were concentrated in that august repose.'

PAUL FOSTER, O. P.

RADICAL ALTERNATIVE: Essays in Liberalism by the Oxford Liberal Group, edited by George Watson; Eyre and Spottiswoode; 21s.

It was during the 1840s, in the politically confused years which followed the Repeal of the Corn Laws, that 'Radical' first became a chosen political label. In this country Radicals never founded a party of their own, but formed a loose-knit progressive wing of the old Liberal Party. In the 1880s Sidney Webb was a member of the Executive Committee of the London Liberal and Radical