

LORD TWEEDSMUIR

Lord Tweedsmuir of Elsfield was born at Perth, Scotland on August 26, 1875. He was the first child of the Reverend John Buchan, a minister of the Free Church of Scotland and Helen Masterson. When only a few months old, his parents moved to Fife and his early life was spent in a little grey manse in the village of Pathfield, near Kirkcaldy, on the north shore of the Firth of Forth. His summers were spent at Broughton with his maternal grandparents.

In November, 1888, the Buchan family moved to Glasgow, and John attended Hutcheson's Grammar School. The first year he won a bursary sufficient to pay his fees. When he was 17 years old he entered the University of Glasgow. His entrance examinations earned him a bursary of 30 pounds per year for four years. He contributed to the University magazine and his writing, even at this early age, was clear and mature and had a gracious ease. While attending Glasgow University he had articles and stories published by Blackwoods and Macmillans.

In January, 1895, he went down to Oxford for Scholarship examinations and was elected by Brasenose College to a Junior Hulne Exhibition of 80 pounds per year. That autumn he entered Oxford. A glimpse of family love and loyalty is shown here - as long as his mother lived he wrote to her every morning. She died in her eighty-first year.

In 1897 he won the Stanhope prize for a historical essay - Sir Walter Raleigh - and in 1898 he won the Newdigate prize for English verse - the Pilgrim Fathers. In 1898 his name appeared in Who's Who and in his final he was raised from a Junior to a Senior with 130 pounds per year. In 1899 he graduated from Brasenose College, Oxford, winning a First Class in Finals in "Greats".

While attending Oxford, John Buchan worked out a pattern of living which he followed as closely as possible the rest of his life. He rose early, went for a walk, had breakfast and worked until dinner. This gave him six hours work every day for his writing. This persistence was more effective than spasmodic effort. His concentration was complete. He wrote fast, the right word was always there, and his work needed little revision. In addition to the many offices which he filled with honor and distinction, he wrote at least fifty-five books. He loved the great outdoors and spent many happy hours walking and exploring the countryside. His favourite indoor pastime was reading.

Early in 1900 he went to London to study Law. He was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1901 and in August of that year he became secretary to Lord Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa. Returning to London in 1903 he returned to the Bar for three years. Then he became a partner in the publishing firm of Thos. Nelson and Sons, Edinburgh. He was associated with this firm for ten years and served as vice-president.

In July, 1907, he married Susan Charlotte Grosvener of London. To this union were born three sons and a daughter. During the first World war, he was correspondent for the London Times, then in 1916 he received a commission in the Intelligence Corps. In 1917 he became Director of Information under Mr. Lloyd George. During the war years he suffered from ill health but by 1919 he had recovered his strength. About this time he sold his London home and purchased Elsfield, four miles from the city of Oxford. In 1923 he became Deputy Chairman of Reuters News Agency.

From 1927 to 1935 he was senior member of the House of Commons for the Scottish Universities. Also, for 1933 and 1934 he was Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. His duties included opening and closing the Assembly - appearing at its meetings and for a fortnight he resided in the Palace of Holyrood-house. On June 17, 1934 he was made an Honorary Fellow of Brasenose and Oxford bestowed on him its highest honor, Doctor of Civil Law.