

Falkland

"The English are just, but not amiable." A well-bred Frenchman, who has recently travelled in India, and who published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* an interesting account of what he saw and heard there, ends with this criticism. The criticism conveys, he says, as to the English and their rule, the real mind of the best informed and most intelligent of the natives of India with whom he conversed. They admitted the great superiority of the English rule in India to every other which had preceded it. They admitted the good intentions of the English rule: they admitted its activity, energy, incorruptibility, justice. Still, the final impression was this: something wanting in the English, something which they were not. *Les Anglais sont justes, mais pas bons*. "The English are just, but not kind and good."

It is proposed to raise, on the field of Newbury, a monument to a famous Englishman who was amiable. A meeting was held at Newbury to launch the project, and Lord Carnarvon made there an excellent speech. I believe the subscription to the monument does not grow very rapidly. The unamiable ones amongst us, the vast majority, naturally perhaps keep their hands in their pockets. But let us take the opportunity, as others, too, have taken it, for at least recalling Falkland to memory. Let us give our attention for a moment to this phenomenon of an amiable Englishman.

Clarendon says:

"At the battle of Newbury was slain the Lord Viscount Falkland; a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive ^{TRR} simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed Civil War than that single loss, it must be most infamous and execrable to all posterity. *Turpe mori, post te, solo non posse dolore*."

Clarendon's style is here a little excessive, a little Asiatic. And perhaps a something Asiatic is not wholly absent, either, from that famous passage, -the best known, probably, in all the *History of the Rebellion*, -that famous passage which describes Lord Falkland's longing for peace.

"Sitting among his friends, often, after a deep silence and frequent sighs, he would with a shrill and sad accent ingeminate the word *Peace, Peace*; and would passionately profess that the very agony of the war, and the view of the calamities and desolation the kingdom did and must endure, took his sleep from him, and would shortly break his heart."

Clarendon's touch, where in his memoirs he speaks of Falkland, is simpler than in the *History*. But we will not carp at this great writer and faithful friend. Falkland's life was an uneventful one, and but a few points in it are known to us. To Clarendon he owes it that each of those points is a picture. In his speech at Newbury Lord Carnarvon said: "When we look back to the history of the Civil War, I can think of no character that stands out in higher, purer relief, than Falkland." "Of all the names," says Lord Carnarvon again, "which have come down to us from the Great Rebellion, none have come invested with higher respect and greater honour than the name of Lord Falkland." One asks oneself how this comes to be so. Falkland wrote both in verse and in prose. Both his verse and his prose have their interest, yet as a writer he scarcely counts. He was a gallant soldier, but gallant soldiers are not uncommon. He was an unsuccessful politician, and was reproached with deserting his party. He was Secretary of State for but two years, and in that office he accomplished, and could then accomplish, nothing remarkable. He was killed in the four-and-thirtieth year of his age. Horace Walpole pronounces him a much overrated man. But let us go through the scanty records of his life a little more deliberately.