

—and, as he succeeded to his title of Lord Sempill soon afterwards, it was a pity that he had not waited to gratify his political ambitions by a seat in the House of Lords, where his high character and shrewd common-sense would have been appreciated. But it is by no means a matter of course that he would have got there, for Scotch peers are placed in a curiously anomalous position. They have to be elected by their brethren as representatives, and as that is a compact Tory body a Liberal has as much chance of entering the Kingdom of Heaven through the eye of a needle as reaching the interior of that august chamber by the votes of his compeers; and once in you have to stand re-election from time to time; and not long ago Lord Torphichen, who had committed the heinous crime of voting for the Budget, was ignominiously “chucked out” when his case came up for revision. When it was desired to provide Lord Reay, one of the ablest Liberal lords, with a seat, it was necessary to give him an English peerage. It is surely time to place the Scotch on the same level with the Irish, and enable them to fight for a seat in the Commons if they cannot find one in the “other place.” Soon after my election I was presented to the late King—then Prince of Wales—at a ball at Lord Huntly’s, and this was his first remark: “I hope you’ll make a better member than Briggs did.” For that was the nickname of my predecessor. I don’t quite remember what my repartee was; but I fear it was not like that of the man in the play, who said that “Many of my best impromptus took me at least three weeks to prepare.”