

**POINTS OF  
VIEWS. VOL. I**

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Points of views. Vol. I by Frederick Edwin Smith Birkenhead

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**FREDERICK EDWIN SMITH BIRKENHEAD**

**POINTS OF  
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POINTS OF VIEW

# POINTS OF VIEW

BY

VISCOUNT BIRKENHEAD  
LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
LIMITED      LONDON

## PREFACE

THE Papers, Essays, and Criticisms contained in these volumes mostly appear for the first time. There are, however, some exceptions. Two Speeches are reprinted. The first dealt with the Reform of our Divorce Laws, and it appears here because I am deeply concerned to place on record my individual repudiation of the inhuman and immoral system under which we live. The second was concerned with the reconstitution of Europe, was addressed to the International Chamber of Commerce, and anticipated, I am bold enough to think, the Policy of Genoa in its more promising aspects.

Of the other Papers, two are Military. One is concerned with Lord Kitchener. Lord Kitchener was my friend. He never failed to show me kindness, and, I will even add, affection, at the moment of his greatest power. Lord Esher, a distinguished writer, observer, and man of affairs, has published an estimate of Lord Kitchener which I believe to be fundamentally unsound. Not all the respect and kindness which I feel for Lord Esher can prevent me from placing plainly

on record my own view of the part played and the qualities shown by Lord Kitchener.

The second Military Paper is concerned with the Battle of Le Cateau. I naturally offer my views upon this debated subject with much diffidence. But I had occasion, when in France, to study the subject deeply, and I have been careful to keep myself abreast of everything which has been written with authority since. I have no doubt whatever that Lord French—if I may for a moment use his old name—did as much injustice to General Smith-Dorrien in his book as he did justice in his Contemporary Despatch. I feel bound to place on record the conviction which I have formed and the reasons upon which it is founded.

The two Essays upon "A Ministry of Justice" and "Judges and Politics" should be read together. There has been much undigested talk among those who are unaware of, or have not sufficiently considered, the difference between Latin systems of legal organisation and our own, as to the necessity of a Ministry of Justice. I am sanguine enough to believe that, in impartial and competent minds, the views under consideration will not survive the study of these Articles.

I have not, in the Essay on "Judges and Politics" elaborated, as otherwise I should have done, the reasons for retaining the anomalous



office of Lord Chancellor, because the two Essays, read together, provide the full material.

The Essay on "Fusion" must, of course, be read and judged in relation to the date at which it appeared. I have as little doubt now as to the wisdom of that which I wrote, as I had when I wrote it. The future alone can show whether I was right, or whether—if I was right—it is too late to recapture the path of sanity.

It remains only to say a word of the personal sketches which are collected in this volume. Sir Samuel Evans, Mr. Neil Primrose, Colonel Jack Scott, Mr. Edward Horner, were all near and dear friends of mine. I have collected—and in some cases a little elaborated—that which I wrote of them when they died. In discharging a pious duty, I have given myself a melancholy pleasure, and I hope that the friends of the Great Dead may in some cases be a little comforted by that which I have written.

BIRKENHEAD.

CHARLTON, *September 1922.*



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