Edward was a contemporary at Oxford just after the war, and it was then that I first met him. He was at Christ Church, and everyone who came across him was at once impressed by his scholarly and benign nature and by the fact that he talked to everybody in exactly the same way, making no distinction between them. Thus despite his obvious ability he never created any barrier between himself and others, save only that his manner was already that of a middle-aged man, and his appearance that of some college don cast improbably amongst the students. His interests were very academic and he would speak of them without any awareness of the response that his remarks might produce on his hearers, which meant that no-one ever felt put down by him, even if they did not really understand what he was saying, for the kindliness of his demeanour flattered rather than insulted their intelligence.

In politics he was earnest and fair-minded, a Tory of the old-fashioned kind whose inspiration seemed to be essentially paternalist, being motivated both by the demands of logic and a genuine concern for the well-being of humanity at large – in the manner of the Liberal Government of 1906 in which the early Churchill served.

His speeches at the Oxford Union which won him election to the offices of that club were always serious and listened to with the respect which they deserved, and it was through our common membership of the Union that he and Kenneth Harris and I were selected to go to America for the first post-war debating tour in the winter of 1947–48 – a five-month trip that took us to 60 universities and colleges in 42 states. For all of us, coming from the austerities of post-war Britain, this tour created an immensely strong impression and Kenneth Harris’s book *Travelling Tongues* caught the spirit of it most excellently.

Edward found America and American ways strange in the extreme, and some of the things that happened to us – and to him – gave rise to great hilarity. On the very first day there, when we had been put up
in the Harvard Club in New York City, we were introduced to the buffet lunch which I suspect Edward found very unfamiliar. He was not a very practical person and when he saw the coffee urn being used he wrongly deduced that it was a pump, which had to be moved backwards and forwards to produce results. This he did, as little spurts of coffee fell into his cup, causing much merriment to those who were waiting, but unfortunately, having filled it to the brim he left the tap in the middle – or ON – position so that as he moved on, a powerful jet of boiling coffee continued to pour on to the carpet.

In his speeches to American student audiences Edward was as impressive as he had been at home, and his mature look, manner and learning were most effective in showing up the more formalistic forensic skills which were then being taught in a rather mechanistic way to the students of Debates.

Edward had a great sense of humour and I can recall many occasions when he burst out in a fit of laughter that seemed to shake his entire frame and was highly infectious. He could also be very critical of American civilisation and on one occasion, in Arizona, where it was very hot, Edward stood, in the bathroom, in his long woolly underwear which he had brought from home, drinking whisky out of a bakelite tooth mug and describing Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg address as ‘a load of rubbish’.

I recall that he was deeply shocked when he discovered, while we were staying at the British Embassy in Washington, that his wallet had been stolen in a drive-in café which we had visited. He persuaded the British Ambassador to lend him the official Rolls-Royce to go back and look for it, only to learn that the wallet itself had been dumped in a trash bin, the dollars gone but the pounds sterling left as worthless.

We were both elected to Parliament within a few weeks of each other and it was not long before Edward had made his mark on the House, and on his colleagues in the Conservative Party, so that it came as no surprise to anyone when he was appointed to ministerial office, a responsibility he discharged with dignity and effectiveness. It was during his period on the government front bench that the troubling of his conscience began to play a part in the development of his own later life, for he was committed to causes that, even then, made him suspect amongst some of the right-wing of his own party, as for example when he voted, on a free vote, for the abolition of the death penalty. The real test came