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THREE PIGEONS

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A SUCCESSFUL FIRST SPEECH,

Vanity Fair Portrait, 1907

Framed chromolithograph by SPY (Sir Leslie Ward) picturing Mr Fredrick Edwin Smith, later 1st Earl of Birkenhead, MP for Liverpool Walton and boon companion of Sir Winston Churchill until his early death. The subtitle, 'Moab is my Washpot', is from psalm 108 and is a proverbial declaration of total triumph over vanquished foes. F.E Smith is famed in Parliamentary history for his maiden speech in the House, known as 'I Warn The Government', described by the late Paul Johnson as "without question the most famous maiden speech in history, quite unprecedented, and never equalled since." In it he accused the Liberal government of arrogance, dishonesty and heavy handedness after their landslide victory at the election of 1906. He managed to catch David Lloyd George in a clear untruth and won the begrudging admiration of all sides of the house. He declared, in response to a suggestion by Lloyd George to the churches of Wales that the Tories wanted to 'introduce slavery to the hills of Wales' that: "I have no means of judging how heaven will deal with persons who think it decent to make such suggestions. The distinction drawn by the Right Hon. Gentleman is more worthy of the county court than of the Treasury Bench." He then went on famously to declare: "I venture to warn the government that the people of this country will neither forget nor forgive a party which, in the heyday of its triumph, denies to the infant Parliament of the Empire one jot or tittle of that ancient liberty of speech which our predecessors in this House vindicated for themselves at the point of the sword." He was a, according to the ODNB a 'champion of hard-drinking patriotic men' in the face of the temperance movement before his early death of cirrhosis of the liver.

DIMENSIONS: 45cm (17^{3/4}") High, 31cm (12^{3/4}") Wide, 2cm (0^{3/4}") Deep

PRICE: £270

STOCK CODE: AD1562 19

