

The logic of the Orangeman is as wonderful as his religion. His professed programme is "Equal rights for all and privileges for none." But just ask him if he thinks Catholics ought to have fair representation in Parliament, among the judges, or even on the Belfast Corporation, and he will faint at the monstrous idea. He swears he is loyal and in the next breath he tells the King that he will kick his Crown into the Boyne if Orange privileges are not maintained. He calls the Sinn Feiners pro-German, while he worships King Billy and arms himself with Mauser rifles and invokes the protection of "a powerful European Potentate" against British tyranny. He abhors bigotry and he will go round to business men asking them to dismiss Catholics from their employment. He talks of fair play and he pays a horsewhipped cad to calumniate dead women and to go round the country arousing sectarian strife at election times. You will ask if there is anything under the sun more abominable and more disgusting than such men—and their female helpers. Well, there is: it is the politician who willfully abets the Orangeman and creeps into position on so foul a ladder. Such is not unknown amongst us in this land over which the wowsers crawl, an offence and a scandal to God and man.

LLOYD GEORGE FOR EVER AND EVER?

It must have occurred to some observers of British politics that if things adhere much longer to the mould in which they have begun to crystallize, Mr. Lloyd George will be in power to the end of his natural life, or at least to the term of man's normal activities (says the *Nation and Athenaeum*). For the Prime Minister has contrived to impress upon the country a new political formula. For the first time in its later history he has induced it to live without parties and without principles. But he has also persuaded it to dispense with success. No one can say that the England of Lloyd George is either happy or prosperous. In the brief period since the war it has suffered an unexampled decline in material wealth, in political stability, and in moral power and repute. The industrial outlook is such that if our ships go on leaving our shores without coal cargoes the country must look either to a long decline in her foreign trade, or to its permanent eclipse. In other words, the England to which the present Government is conducting us may be too poor to feed and keep its present population.

Nevertheless this falling-off fails to produce the usual high-spirited or impatient rebound against the Government. Public opinion has fallen on a mood of pessimistic quietism. It accepts Lloyd-Georgism, knowing it to be bad, in fear lest a worst thing befall it. "Who else is there?" the average Englishman is wont to say. "Asquith? Impossible. The Labor Party? Unsafe, and not able enough. Lord Robert Cecil? Good, but we don't know where he is." As with men, so with the familiar landmarks and historic instruments of the Constitution—the rule of the uni-principled Cabinet, the deference to Parliament, the change of governors and mental outlook which the quiet rotation of the party system used to provide. A new and fixed category has been added to our political thought. It is "The Government." The Government is no longer a body of politicians who climb to power and presently are turned out of it. It assumes an irremovable and impermeable quality, a Hindu godhead, all-pervading and doubtfully benign. It seems to have all the money and all the patronage. It cares nothing for liberty or personal right, and its rule in Ireland differs from Austria's in Italy chiefly in being more brutal. Not really trusting the country, or being sure of itself, it suppresses opinion, resorts to the spy and the informer, and flies to force when it has muddled an industrial dispute to the point of an open collision. It placards its ever-changing policies as if they were ripened fruits of the national will, and justifies them on all the hoardings at the national expense. It comes to decisions for which the England of to-day, and of many days to come, will have to pay, but it never communicates them

to any representative body of Englishmen. Above all, it avoids accountability. On one day Mr. George defies his Tory supporters to call him a Liberal; on the next, he dares his Liberal friends to set him down a Tory. He praises miners for their orderly behaviour during the strike within a few hours of the Lord Chancellor's denunciation of them as a Bolshevik conspiracy. To all men he offers a reflection of the humor of the hour; and by the time it changes, he has changed too, so that the chief hope of getting rid of him is that, like the cham-eleon on the tartan, he may expire of the effort to be all colors at once. He never achieves or settles anything. But he soothes and he threatens; and either way he defers.

Thus after-war England tends to sink, like some exhausted satrapy, into a state of dependence on a single unstable will, a man in whom, even in his best days, the true spirit of ameliorative action and moral renovation never resided. The cause is a lethargic, uncritical public opinion. The idealist retires within himself, to build his cloud-world of the dim and distant future. And the "practical" man thinks, as we have said, that we can "jog along with Lloyd George." But can we? Three things are wanted to restore the well-being of the country—a foreign and an Irish policy of peace, an economic policy of free trade, and an industrial policy of reconstruction. Mr. George cannot be trusted with any of them. Even if he be counted an intermittent pacifist, he is no free-trader, and he has lost the confidence of the workman and the social reformer. But there is not only the crisis of industry, and of Irish and external policy; there is the crisis of *moral*. Mr. George depresses the good in the British character. Strange and loose fish disport themselves in his muddy aquarium; honesty and independence do not flourish there. It is almost presumed of his colleagues' statements to Parliament that they will be evasions or downright lies; while of himself it is no longer required or expected that he should be anything but clever. We do not believe that since the days of Charles II. England was so lightly or badly spoken of in European capitals as she is to-day; let alone the often insulting obloquy of the great new Continent beyond the Atlantic.

Thus a grave and unmerited cloud falls on the country; it is judged to be deliberately brutal and cynical, when in sheer languor after its great effort it has allowed itself to be governed immorally and incompetently, and has given into the hands of an extremely skilful but very ignorant politician more power than he knows how to wield. For the moment we have lost sight of our true self; the poetic greatness of England; the fineness of her experiments in freedom; her real, if capricious, sense of justice; her tolerance and moderation in success. But that will not do at all. It is an imbecile end to all our Empire-making for the Motherland to fall under the very moderate spell-binding of Mr. Lloyd George. He is clever; let us applaud his cleverness. But he is not good enough; he has no regard for truth and the fixed courses of things; and his snippety, provincial mind, and ingenious gift for chaffering and a bargain, furnish too scantily the vast and accumulating needs of the hour.

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