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We Are Not Grumbling

(Continued from last week.)

In Oxford Town Hall I once heard him make a great speech about the land. With a merry look in his eye he exclaimed, "I wish they made Acts of Parliament now as they did in the old days. I've been looking up a land Act of Henry VII—Henry Tudor—and he was a Welshman, too! No wonder they were on the eve of England's greatest period in literature. They knew how to write in those days. Listen to this, . . ." and then with tremendous effect he read splendidly in that grand old Tudor English that can never be surpassed the King's charge to those old-time landlords, telling them they must cultivate their land better, for there had been, as the Act put it, "great wastage of victuals in this my land," and the King said unless the landholders cultivated to better effect he would take the land away. With a brisk nod and a grim smile behind it, Mr. L.G. commented, "That's the way to talk to them!" and a lady sitting beside me, who had felt his charm early in the meeting, and had exclaimed, "Oh, I like him, I like him," did not like quite so well his forceful politics as she learned them, and she wriggled angrily in her seat and muttered, "Oh, it's all very subtle!" It was not. It was a great statesman unfolding with telling effect a page of old England's past history, and as he did so, making more.

Just one more picture of him—a party meeting in Caxton Hall, Westminster, where we were discussing the Liberal land policy and arranging a plan of campaign for speakers. An unenthusiastic agent from Cornwall had misgivings—said his county was not ready for it, and he thought we should do better to make no more. "What," exclaimed Mr. L.G., "is England not to be allowed to think because Cornwall doesn't want to! That's just the sort of thing that drove John Wesley out of the Church of England," and his eyes flashed ominously. He does not take kindly to opposition from little minds. He has vision himself, and expects to find it elsewhere.

Mr. J. H. Thomas.

ANOTHER interesting character I have encountered at close range is Mr. J. H. Thomas, Dominions Minister to-day. I first saw him on the hearthrug of the League of Nations Union office in London in its early days, waiting for an executive committee meeting to begin. Mr. Thomas was talking to Professor Gilbert Murray, the famous Oxford don. They were humorously discussing that crime against good English, the split infinitive—the famous scholar's Oxford soul had been shocked by a fault of grammar in a memorandum prepared for the meeting.

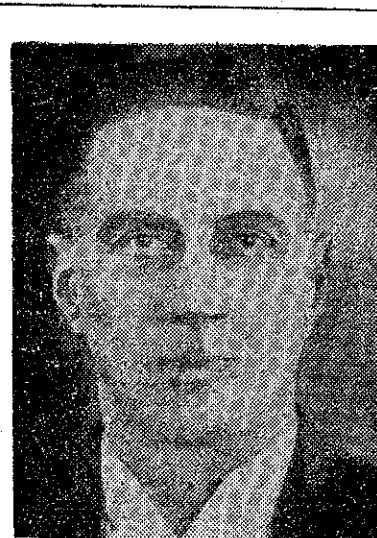
Mr. H. G. Wells was also in the group, I remember, and in an impish mood that day, and with a twinkle in his bright eyes and his hair all rumpled up he said, "But I like the split infinitive! I use the split infinitive!" and then Major David Davies, who took his seat the other day in the House of Lords, one of the peers in the last Honours List—the man who was financing the whole League of Nations outfit at that time and had given thousands of pounds in the cause, turned to me—I was acting secretary, and murmured in pained fashion with

a mystified air, "What is a split infinitive?" After that I thought the committee meeting had better begin, so I shepherded my flock!

Yes, our big men are all very human and delightful people to work with. I learned in Downing Street that if there are such men as supermen it is only because by hard work and application they have made themselves so, and we can all qualify for the highest office in the same way and all stand by and lend a hand in the world's work, and every one of us is wanted.

Do Not Talk Slump.

IF I may give a message to New Zealand to-night I would say this: Do not talk slump, New Zealand, do not let it get you down. I would like to throw down my gauntlet in chal-



F. C. Cooper,
bass, singing from 4YA on
July 26.

lenge of negative thinking, of slump psychology, of a pessimistic negative attitude toward life. Stand up to it cheerfully like the stout Anzacs you have always been, and stick it with a philosophic grin until you come out safely on the other side, even if it means plain living and sane thinking, and that for years to come. We are standing up to it at Home, you know, gamely, and quietly carrying on, while we carry the baby also for the whole world, more or less.

The economic blizzard struck us some years ahead of this country, and we have been up against it for a long time now, but we are not crumpling up and we do not mean to: that is not the British way.

The best side of British character comes out when we are up against things, and our prestige never stood higher on the Continent of Europe than it does to-day. All eyes are turning now to Ottawa, and the world over peoples are anxiously asking England, "After Ottawa, do you mean to forget you belong to Europe, too?"

They all represent us, they all rely on us. We must not forget that as an Empire, as a steady force among the nations, we belong to the world, and the world looks to people of British stock for a lead.

We must not disappoint them, we must keep a sane outlook and a steady balance, and equip ourselves for the task of putting the world on its feet

again. But the world will not be saved by British brawn. Trained intelligence is what we want now rather desperately.

Are We Big Enough?

THERE is definite work there waiting for you to do. I have a theory about New Zealand. You are, or may be, super Britons! I believe that in ages to come, when the tide of Empire may have swung away from the old tired countries north of the Line, and the Pacific may hold the balance of power, then you may be the Britain of the future in your green islands of the south. See to it, New Zealand, that you are ready when your time comes. Work for it, New Zealand, equip yourselves by hard mental training to become leaders of men, a force among the nations to whom people may safely look for a lead.

This is a land that breeds men, and they were never more needed than to-day, but they need to be men, not so much of muscle as of mind. We think too little, and we talk too much, and are you reading enough in this country, as we all need to keep our minds trained on true facts; are you giving reasoned judgment to world affairs as a whole?

Are you training your young people to use their franchise wisely and well? Have you thriving political organisations for your younger voters as we have at Home? Is the electorate under 30 equipping itself as a driving force on sound lines? Have you political debating societies and speaking schools for your young people? Or do second-rate American pictures all too largely fill the bill?

No work to do! There is the biggest job ever waiting for us, if we are big enough for it. Is it for nothing that we are the only people in the world with the word "Great" as part of our Motherland's national name? I think the English-speaking peoples have to save humanity to-day. I believe it was directly to us that the prophet Isaiah thundered his message down the ages centuries ago—I believe that message from the Almighty Creator of the universe to the people of the isles was meant for us:—

"Listen, O Isles, unto Me, and hearken, ye people from far. . . . Keep silence before me, O islands, and let the people renew their strength. Let them come near, then let them speak; let us come near together to judgment. . . ."

"Ye that go down to the sea . . . the isles and the inhabitants thereof . . . the isles shall wait for My law . . . and on Mine arm shall they trust. . . ."

"And the isles saw it and feared . . . the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near and came.

"They helped everyone his neighbour, and everyone said to his brother: Be of good courage!"

Are we big enough for that?
"We sailed wherever ship could sail,
We founded many a mighty state,
Pray God our greatness may not fail,
Through craven fears of being great!"

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