

have given a deteriorated House of Lords a new lease of life. Their virtues, their generosity, their abilities, and their energy have brought them what they deserved—partnership in the government of England.

American influence on English nerves is one cause of the change in the national character. English history shows clearly that in bygone times of crisis and difficulty neither aristocracy, nor the command of capital, but the Puritan conscience was the chief strength of Britain. Protestantism has its unlovely side, but the manes of Ulster and of Scotland, and the Bible readers and Sunday Schools of England, have been the true Imperial factors in times of storm. With American wealth came not only the Higher Criticism, but Yankee irreverence. In Transatlantic wit the largest ingredient is irreverence, and American wit has accordingly contributed to the decay of respect for things sacred or ancestral. Society has lost its courtliness. Fine manners became bad form. In the United States there are few ideals but money, so the worship of wealth soon replaced the earlier cults of Englishmen.

As reverence for age, rank, and knowledge disappeared the decay of faith during the last twelve years advanced with even more rapid strides. Clergy of all creeds incline more and more to resort to the arena of politics to recover the influence they have lost in the domain of faith.

The decay of faith in religion or in country is a new element in public life. A hundred years ago statesmen, high officials, and men of station constantly referred to their belief in a Supreme Being. In the Royal Navy the Providence of God was officially recognised, and even to this day grace before meat is the rule at the wardroom mess. To-day unbelief is no barrier to high place, God is unfashionable, and one Cabinet Minister at least was wont to spell His name with a little "g." The inability of the comfortable classes to maintain their old faith in revealed religion has naturally been followed by the working classes, who, as M. Jaurès says, having forgotten