

THROUGH A MONOCLE

THE BRITISH POLITICAL KALEIDOSCOPE.

PERHAPS you have read Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Marcella." In it there is an account of a political campaign for the reform of the land laws in Great Britain. As is a habit with Mrs. Ward, she was here merely adapting history. There was such a campaign in England nearly forty years ago, and John Stuart Mill was in the midst of it. Nor were the reforms proposed of a mild-mannered kind. Mill and his fellow adjutators advocated the taking of the entire future unearned increment in the value of land for the state. That campaign failed; and now the United Kingdom is in the midst of a constitutional crisis because David Lloyd George has proposed to do one-fifth of what was advocated by John Stuart Mill nearly forty years ago.

THERE is an interesting reference to this campaign of the seventies in Morley's Life of Gladstone. Mill and his friends were members of the advanced wing of the party which Mr. Gladstone led. The Prime Minister's difficulties in keeping his followers together were great. "Divisions in the Liberal party," he wrote, "are to be seriously apprehended from a factious spirit on questions of economy, on questions of education in relation to religion, on further parliamentary change, on the land laws. On these questions generally my sympathies are with what may be termed the advanced party, whom on other and general grounds I certainly will never head nor lead." On "further parliamentary change" Mr. Gladstone in his later life moved well beyond "general sympathy" with the advanced wing. On "the land laws" the course of political discussion did not in his time swing into the realm of practical politics.

IT may be doubted, however, whether at that time, or yet later in his life, Mr. Gladstone would of himself have gone even as far in the reorganisation of the English land system as would to-day Mr. J. Ellis Barker and other Unionist advocates of peasant properties. The Gladstones were not of the old landed class but made their fortune in commerce. Their most distinguished son, nevertheless, had a high estimate of the value of the position of a landed proprietor. In the course of his management of the estates of Sir Stephen Glynne, Mrs. Gladstone's brother, he accumulated large landed property. During his lifetime he conveyed this property to his eldest son and in doing so impressed upon him both the high "position of the landed proprietor" and,—a characteristic note—"the serious moral and social responsibilities which belong to it."

THE next time the land question comes to the front in Mr. Gladstone's career, the radical is a man who just at present seems to be on the other side of the fence. The time was just before the

birth of the Unionist party. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who was then a member of Mr. Gladstone's cabinet, was going about the country saying what Lord Morley ironically calls "terrible things." In a speech at Birmingham he declared in favour of a bill to enable local communities to acquire land and of the breaking up of the great estates as the first step in land reform. Mr. Gladstone spoke of these utterances as "ominous enough" in their bearing on the solidarity of party; but "upon the whole," he said, "weak-kneed Liberals have caused us more trouble in the present parliament than Radicals." So, apparently, Mr. Gladstone was still inclined to sympathise with the advanced party on the land laws.

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TO-DAY a land-tax budget has brought the Welsh Chancellor into conflict with the House of Lords. Twenty-five years ago, when Joseph Chamberlain delivered the speech which Mr. Gladstone called "ominous," the same spirit of radicalism which led him to attack the great landlords, led him also to tilt against the House of Peers. The "Brummagem" statesman warned the Upper Chamber that the agitation against them was then only in its beginnings; and in this connection he told an Ipswich audience that "this country had been called the paradise of the rich" and warned them no longer to allow it to remain "the purgatory of the poor." Now, in the present unsettled state of British politics—with the Unionists in favour of their own brand of reform both of the House of Lords and of the land laws—I do not mean to risk my reputation by insinuating that Mr. Chamberlain has vaulted any fence. I will merely muse—to myself you will be glad to hear—on the peculiar tricks played us by the political kaleidoscope.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

Beresford's Answer

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD, who, not for the first time in his life, finds himself in the position of a Parliamentary candidate, has had some amusing experiences in that role. He once contested the constituency of York against Sir Christopher Furness at a time when the country was at the white heat of military and naval fervour. Lord Charles Beresford was the popular idol, but in no instance did he so increase his popularity as in these circumstances: There was a great meeting in the city, and Lord Charles, with his breezy style, had been carrying all before him.

Question time came, and a meek man with a red tie rose in the middle of the hall and said he wished to put a question. Permission being granted, the questioner went on in a most deprecatory manner, and in the mildest of voices put his query something after this manner:

"In the event of the noble lord being returned to parliament, would he, supposing that war broke out, deem it his duty to go to Westminster or would he go and fight?"

Lord Charles stepped forward, and, sinning against all the canons of electioneering, roared out: "Go and fight."

It probably won him the seat.



The first Canadian Northern Ontario Train, from Hawkesbury to Ottawa, arrived in Ottawa on December 5th. The Canadian Northern has thus completed its short route from Ottawa to Quebec.