



THE WHIST CONGRESS, TORONTO

THE Canadian Whist Congress was not a great success in point of numbers, but all the competitions were well contested with the exception of the "Novice" fours. The Toronto Whist Club, though badly beaten by Hamilton in the inter-club matches held during the winter, secured revenge

by winning first and second in the Goodall Challenge Trophy for "senior" fours. In the play-off the winners were Messrs. Amsden (president C. W. L.), Higgins (treasurer), Kidd and Costello. London, which was well represented in the congress, furnished the winners in the Hay Trophy for pairs.

Collingwood won the "novice" fours and the ladies' pairs (Mrs. Irwin and Mrs. Arthur). Fraser and Mrs. N. A. Sinclair won the mixed pairs, and the latter also won the ladies' aggregate. Mr. George Biggar led in the men's aggregate, with Mr. George Shaw second.

PREMIER ASQUITH'S YOUNGSTERS

THERE is a renovated cabinet at Westminster. The additions are young men—very young as Cabinet timber goes. When Mr. Asquith became a Cabinet Minister in 1892, he was thirty-nine. As he owed his rise mostly to his own brains, people said he was very juvenile to be a Secretary of State, and they marvelled at Mr. Gladstone's experiments. As he was not afraid of his own youth, he has not been frightened by the boyishness of the first two men he has elevated from the lower to the higher ministerial rank, for Winston Churchill and Walter Runciman are both under thirty-nine.

That is to the good, especially as both promotions have been earned. Lord Rosebery used to talk solemnly about the terrible need of efficiency in the public service. He left the lonely furrow to preach the blessed gospel of capacity in high office—and then went back to the furrow, endued with little faith and less works. Others are practising what he preached.

The new Cabinet changes give you the choice of believing in or scorning prophecy. When Lord Rosebery threw up the leadership of the Liberal party, and as the event has proved, rendered it impossible for himself to leave an abiding mark in history, he prophesied that Mr. Asquith would one day be Prime Minister.

Lord Rosebery, therefore has joined the meagre company of the successful prophets, and may find the distinction to be a compensation for being also in the company of ineffective leaders.

But prophecy is a deceiving jade. Mr. Asquith has made Mr. Winston Churchill President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Education. The charming thing about both facts is that the distinction goes to Winston Churchill, Liberal, the same Winston of whom I heard it predicted, to his face, that he would be a pillar of Conservatism, to the end of his days.

Never prophesy unless you know; and then it is just as well to hold your tongue. Beware how you speak disparagingly of your opponent of to-day. He may be your ally of to-morrow, and the resurrection of old discourses may make you very unhappy.

The first time I saw Mr. Churchill was at his debut as Conservative candidate for Oldham, in the summer of 1899. He recited a brilliant speech, proofs of which were in the reporters' hands. Half way through it he referred to one of his two adversaries and resorted to a trick which only a very precocious youth or an incompetent old fool would adopt—he affected not to know the name of an opponent. "Mr.—a—a—Mr.—dear me, what is his name?" The dodge was successful, and a gossamer voice answered "Rubbingstones." Mr. Churchill was delighted, the audience was delighted, and "Mr. Rubbingstones" was assumed to be defeated.

But Mr. Rubbingstones, whose proper name was Runciman, was not defeated; and Mr. Churchill knows his name very well now; for they have had seats on the same Treasury Bench these two years and more. At that time, too, Mr. Churchill might have been given Mark Twain's advice to little girls: "Don't sass old people unless they sass you first." He was as contemptuous of the Liberal leader as he was of Mr. Runciman. He was puzzled to understand certain of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's sayings, and explained the difficulty by lightly observing that Campbell must have uttered one part of the speech and Bannerman the other. Just at that time, too, a Conservative member, Mr. George Whiteley, had changed his party. Mr. Churchill's horror at his perfidity was magnificently eloquent. How he lambasted that unfortunate man! He didn't wait to be sassed. Fierce indignation gat hold of him. Well, he knows now what it is to be reviled for obeying the still small voice of the Churchill conscience. His tongue is better bridled than it was in those far off days of '99.

In 1900 Churchill beat Runciman. He had come back from South Africa, a transparent hero. He had Mr. Chamberlain and more prophecies to help him. No wonder Runciman went down. But he has seen Mr. Chamberlain disappear and Winston Churchill walk over to his side of the House of Commons. Mr. Runciman is a little older and looks a little younger than Mr. Churchill. He has no scintillating brilliance, no affectation, (unless he has grown it since he became His Majesty's Minister), and will be a young man when Churchill is prematurely aged. He wins because he deserves to win. The only son of a Tyneside shipowner, for whom he secured a baronetcy two years ago, he married a wife who was a member of a School Board, and divided his own time between business and public service. He was a follower of Lord Rosebery, rather than Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, until he saw that the ex-Premier was too thin-skinned to play the patient game. He has his reward, and will make the most of it in a clean, brainy, large-visioned way—or I am a far worse prophet than Lord Rosebery.

So much for the two new men. They are worth watching, but not so interesting as the little Welshman in the prime of life who has become Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is not so young as Austen Chamberlain, was when he mounted guard over the Imperial purse. But Austen was his father's son; and nothing else besides. Mr. Lloyd-George was brought up by the village cobbler at Llanstumdwy, who was, and happily is, a lover of learning for its own sake, whose education of his fatherless nephew has culminated in a personal idyll, and a natural pride that together are one of the most heartsome portents of a rather unimaginative epoch. Mr. Lloyd-George has stepped into the second place in the House of Commons, and to an office which entitles him to wear gorgeous robes on great occasions, while he is still the occupier of a thirty-five dollar a month house hard by Wandsworth Common.

He used to say that his humble birth and modest income as a practising solicitor would keep him

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