

many ways, has led the French legislative bodies to exhibit much more than usual restraint in the treatment of public questions. All parties have been very cordially united in the supreme purpose of carrying on the war and driving off the German invader. Political crises have, consequently, been of more rare occurrence. The men who assumed the heavy task of administering the nation's affairs in the midst of the war have usually been strongly supported in the Chamber. Such Cabinet changes as have occurred have not involved any change of war policy. The Ribot Cabinet, headed by a veteran statesman who has for many years commanded universal respect, have been vigorous in their work, and have had the cordial support of the public. Their resignation at this time is to be regretted. The precise cause of the crisis is not very clearly indicated in the despatches, but it appears to have arisen from dissatisfaction in the large Socialist group. If the various elements are unable to unite under the leadership of a statesman of the high character, great ability and large experience of M. Ribot, it will not be easy to find another who can be more acceptable. It is to be hoped that matters may yet be so arranged as to allow a reorganization of the Government, with M. Ribot still at the head.

The Troubles of the Kings

TO-DAY, more truly than ever before, it may be said that "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." It is only the very wise King, surrounded by wise counsellors, who can hope to hold his position unchallenged to-day, and all Kings are not wise. Kings may still be, in form, rulers, but they can no longer govern. The day of the common people has come. Where the Kings are wise enough to see this, put themselves in harmony with the people and make themselves the people's representatives and agents, they can still keep their thrones. Where they are autocratic enough or stupid enough to cling to the ancient idea of kingly powers their thrones must totter and soon fall.

Happy is it for our British Empire that the sovereigns of our generations have had the wisdom to observe the progress of the world and be content to fill the part of the head of a constitutional government, in which the rule of the people is recognized. Autocracy cannot easily understand that system. In the recently published telegram of the German Kaiser to the American President, sent in the early days of the war, the Kaiser spoke of assurances said to have been given by King George, through Prince Henry of Prussia, that England would not interfere in the conflict that threatened. The truth of the report has been authoritatively denied. But apart from the question of veracity, it seems strange to Britons that anybody should assume that the British King was the person who would speak for the nation in such a vital matter. The Kaiser would, in such a case, be the authorized spokesman of Germany. Why should not King George be looked to as the authorized spokesman of Great Britain? To the Kaiser and to all who accept the Prussian idea of government it was natural that the views of the British King be sought. To all who understand the principles of British democratic government the fact is plain that King George would not for a moment have undertaken to speak for the nation, and that if an expression of the nation's views were deemed necessary King George would have referred an inquirer to a very quiet man

named Edward Grey at the Foreign Office, in Downing Street. This thing, so clear and simple to the Englishman, is a mystery to the Kaiser and his followers. The Kaiser is not one of the wise Kings.

Germany has made progress in many things, but in the art of government she has learned little. The Kaiser clings to ancient ideas which can no longer prevail. Kings have been known to plunge their countries into war to distract attention from the troublesome questions arising at home. Probably the Kaiser thought that a war for which he had prepared, against nations that were quite unprepared, would help him to maintain the old system of autoeracy. But early and marked success of such a war was necessary for the Kaiser's purpose. The anticipated success has not come. The triumph that was to glorify Kaiserism and give it a further lease has not come. Instead, the German people have had to make enormous sacrifices of the lives of their soldiers, have had their commerce driven from the seven seas, have lost their colonies, have been subjected to heavy taxation and a hundred self-denials in respect of food and comfort, have piled up a colossal debt which will be a crushing burden for many years, and have evoked a world-wide hostility which will operate against all things German for a century to come. Slowly it may be, but none the less surely, in spite of all efforts to shut out the facts, these things will come home to the German people, and the rule of William Hohenzollern, like that of Nicholas Romanhoff, will come to an end. He is not one of the wise Kings who can rule in the spirit which pervades the twentieth century.

Another King who seems to have much trouble is Alfonso of Spain. He is a young man of amiable character who is believed to be inclined toward reforms which the spirit of the age suggests, but hardly possessing the personality to accomplish them. He has seen much of England, he married an English princess, and he may therefore be supposed to have some appreciation of British ideals of government. But the ruling classes in Spain, of whatever parties they may be, have little sympathy with modern ideas. There is little of the spirit of national unity. Sectionalism is strong. The centralism which Madrid encourages is resented in the different Provinces. Among the mass of the people there is suspicion and distrust of all political leaders. Two-thirds of the people are illiterate. They do not understand the winning of reforms through conditional agitation. Revolution is the only way known to them. The unrest that is so widespread frequently breaks out in disorder which is, with more or less difficulty, suppressed. Such has been the situation in Spain for some years. Quite recently the despatches have reported several outbreaks and the proclaiming of martial law in some sections. Spain has been able to survive these troubles in the past and may yet be able to do so a little longer. But the conditions prevailing there and the influence of events transpiring in other nations suggest that the day is not far off when the upheaval will be beyond the control of the monarchy and Spain's King will have to retire.

In Greece, too, the throne is a slippery place. King Constantine, with all the aid and comfort that the Kaiser could give him, was unable to keep his place; he is an exile in Switzerland. His son has been accepted for the time by the Greeks who still prefer the monarchial form of government. But the propriety of adhering to that system is openly challenged in the Greek Parliament, M. George

Cafantaris, chairman of the Greek delegation which recently visited the United States, said he was much impressed by what he had seen of the Republican system, and even while he proposed the address to the King in reply to the speech from the throne, he closed with a strong expression favorable to the establishing of a Greek republic. Premier Venizelos hastened to explain that the Government did not sympathize with M. Cafantaris' speech. But in doing this the Premier said some significant things concerning the future. He had, he said, often told King Constantine that "the nations of the world were gradually approaching the idea of abolishing the institution of kingship, and that it depended on the existing Kings themselves to hasten or postpone this inevitable consequence." King Constantine's policy, the Premier continued, had been such as to win favor for the republican movement. The Government, he said, in conclusion, were still anxious to maintain the monarchy, but the monarchial system was now having its final trial.

Oleomargarine

PARLIAMENT has had quite a long session and members are beginning to talk of the day of prorogation. It is strange that there has not been any serious discussion of the old law prohibiting the manufacture, importation or sale of oleomargarine. Many questions of much less importance have engaged attention and been referred to committees or commissions, but nobody has seriously proposed to abolish a prohibition for which, whatever may be said for its wisdom at the time of its adoption, there is no sensible defence or excuse under the war conditions of to-day. Some farmers' organizations have the notion that the prohibition helps to keep up the price of butter, and on the principle of "What we have we'll hold," have asked that the prohibition be continued. Perhaps such action on their part is not surprising. But it is safe to say that the most intelligent farmers are well aware that the prohibition under present conditions is absurd and would have more respect for a Parliament that abolished it than for one which maintains it. Butter is and has long been at a price in Canada which to a very large extent places it beyond the reach of the poorer classes. It is not probable that the admission of margarine would have any effect on the price of butter, though if it should cause some reduction, Heaven knows that would be no evil.

Margarine is a useful substitute for butter for some domestic purposes. The admission of it would be helpful to the housekeeper who is engaged in the struggle against the high cost of living. The claim that it is unwholesome can no longer be used successfully. In England, where there is the best protection of the public interest respecting the purity of food, margarine is sold everywhere at about 22 cents per pound—half the price of butter. In Canada the housekeeper is not allowed to have margarine at any price. If there are people who still doubt the wisdom of using margarine let the question of its treatment after the war be reserved. When butter can be obtained at ordinary prices nobody in Canada will want margarine, and the question will then be of little or no importance. But at this time, when the pressure of high prices is so severe, surely the people should not be denied the privilege of buying an article that is so widely used elsewhere.