

## Blow to Caste in Britain

By SIR PHILIP GIBBS,  
Member of the World's Work.

Without violence a social revolution has happened in England with the advent of the Labor party to the power of government. There is no outward sign of a new era in the history of England, beginning with the premiership of Ramsay MacDonald. One sees no difference yet in the daily life of the masses. There has been no alteration in State ceremonial and the ritual of Parliament. Every one is aware that the

strongest barriers in the social structure of Great Britain have been smashed. Gone forever is the age-long alliance to the caste system dividing class from class by invisible but deep trenches of sentiment and prestige.

There has been no word of incivility from the aristocrats to the democrats on matters of form or social custom, which formerly were considered of the highest importance. But it is idle to pretend that among the people of the old regime there is not a sense of the world having slipped beneath their feet when the Government of Great Britain and its offices of State have been taken over by six coal miners, three mill workers, one iron

moulder, one engine cleaner, two engineers, one telegraph operator, one hairdresser, and three elementary school teachers—although Ramsay MacDonald has added to his cabinet two of three peers, a former Viceroy of India, and a sprinkling of high-brows.

It is a shock to every tradition of English Government that a man like John R. Clynes, a real son of the people, born and bred in mean streets, should be Lord Privy Seal of England, an office which in former days was given only to great noblemen. It is almost a matter of apoplexy to elderly generals, who went from Eton to Sandhurst before joining expensive regiments and commanding the forces of the empire, that the Secretary of State

for War should be little Walsh, who was brought up in a board school and who would fall off a horse if he knew which side to mount.

But it was the doorkeepers of the government offices who were the most astonished men, the most outraged party took over the reins of power. The new ministers had kissed hands with the King on receiving their seals of office, and one of them, anxious to do the right thing, had gone down on two knees instead of on one when the King held out his hand after a genial speech to all of them. Then on the following morning they came down Whitehall at an early hour—far too early for the permanent officials—wearing dump hats and rather shabby overcoats, carrying hand bags, and looking rather like commercial travellers on their morning round.

J. H. Thomas, formerly the leader of the railwaymen and now Colonial Secretary, tells the story of his first appearance at his office.

"I was met by a porter on the steps. 'Whom do you want to see?' he asked very haughtily.

"I'm not quite sure, replied Mr. Thomas. 'I want the Colonial Office.' 'Yes, but whom do you want to see?' I want to see the office," said Thomas. 'I'm the Colonial Secretary.'

The porter looked at him with arrogance and contempt, and then turning to another said in an audible voice:

"Oh, another shell shock patient!" "I was not very flattered," said Mr. Thomas, "but at all events I had arrived."

Stephen Walsh, the new Minister for War, or "Little Stee" as he is called, is entirely unable to conceal his reverence for generals, and whenever any of them seek his presence he stands almost to attention, refuses to sit while they are standing, and shows them to the door which he insists upon opening himself. "Look here," said Field Marshal Sir William Robertson "you mustn't do that, you know! You're my chief now." But "Little Stee" shook his head. "I know my own place," he said. "You have commanded Armies in the field when I was nothing but a private in the ranks."

The wife of one of the members of the Government worked as a servant-maid at Oxford while her future husband, J. J. Lawson, who was one of ten children of a Cumberland miner and was himself a miner at twelve years of age, studied economic history at Ruskin College, where his fees were paid by the trade union. Another minister's wife never allowed her husband to make a speech unless she sat on the platform by his side, and she now feels aggrieved because she cannot act as his secretary in Whitehall and shelter him from all those designing females who haunt the streets of London and lie in wait for innocent Scotsmen. With these ladies as leaders of political society it is possible that London under Labor Government will be a respectable city, at least in the presence of ministers' wives. In any case the old prerogatives of wealth and birth have passed forever. The barriers between classes have broken down.

Meanwhile the humorists in high places are waiting with a sense of agony and amusement for the next State ceremony, when Tom Griffiths of the Steel Smelters Union directs the peers and peeresses to their places with a white wand, when Jack Davidson of the Ironfounders Union orders the State trumpeters to sound the fanfare, and when Johnny Parkinson of Wigan, now Comptroller of the King's Household, is confronted by a strike of Royal servants because he calls the Mistress of the Robes "my dear," shakes hands with the finkers, and cuts down the wine allowances of the King's coachmen. At private dinner parties the old regime is inventing gossip of that kind and laughing venomously.

### Invents Electric Ray

TO PROTECT BRITISH CITIES FROM AIR RAIDS.

LONDON.—H. Grindall-Matthews, an English inventor, has announced the process for a radio electric defence which will make air raids over London in any future war impossible.

The old military principle of "a defensive weapon can be found for every offensive weapon discovered," has been successfully applied again, according to Mr. Grindall-Matthews, who says that his invention will work against the most high-powered airplanes, carrying the most deadly bombs.

The system consists of the generation of electric power over an invisible ray, which can be shot in any direction. The inventor compares the form of electricity to be used to lightning and the ray to a lightning conductor.

The experiment thus far shows that with a small dynamo, Mr. Grindall-Matthews' rays will destroy every living thing in a 64-foot radius as well as explode gun-powder cartridges, and put out of commission magnets of airplanes and automobiles.

The most important feature of the scheme so far is the possibility of extending the rays so as to ruin magnets of any plane flying at any distance above the earth. A Zeppelin, particularly, would be vulnerable, as its envelope could be burned instantly as well as its magnets be destroyed.

# GRAND OPENING BRAND NEW MILLINERY

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After a drawing by P. G. Andrews in "Life"

## The Little Breadwinner

THIS little nipper of twelve, hawking papers in the midst of the city's maelstrom, his clothes in tatters, his eyes eager and shifty, his voice hoarse with shouting—can you see the tragedy of his life? He left school at ten to help earn bread for his mother and brothers.

Yet, Daddy had great hopes for him. Looking down at the wee baby face in the cradle he had said: "I'll give the lad a good start in life—a lift on to the first rung of the ladder."

That was eleven years ago. Daddy had not counted on dying, you see. But he did die—died at the wrong time before his plans had worked out. Are you willing to take a chance like that with your wife and little ones? An Imperial Monthly Income Policy will safeguard them from a danger you dare not ignore.

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