

Imperial Press Conference Has Been a Huge Success

The Imperial Press Conference has been a big success. Everywhere the journalists from the overseas lands have been received with enthusiasm, and, indeed, have themselves been surprised and almost overwhelmed by the heartiness of their welcome. If they have any fault to find with their hosts it is that, as so often happens, the very generosity of the hospitality makes a great strain on the health and strength of the guests. I have had to try and keep up with the delegates for one or two of the many days of their visit, and I have felt pretty dead-beat at the end of the day; where I should be if I had not been compelled to attend to my own business on the other days of a memorable week I cannot say. But these men from over the seas seem to be a robust race, and though now and then they seemed a little jaded, I think on the whole they have enjoyed themselves so much that they are fairly fresh, mentally and physically, in spite of the strain upon them.

The New World Element

I have had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a considerable number of the delegates, and my dominant impression is that these overseas journalists bring to their profession the sharp wit, the great energy, the freshness and clearness of mind, and, in short, the general go-aheadness of those stalwarts of the New Worlds of which they are the children. I confidently tell any stay-at-home journalist that if he thought he had anything particular to teach to these men of the new young worlds he would soon find his mistake. It is more likely that he would have something to learn from them.

Festivities

The first of the festivities which I attended was the lunch given by the men of letters and journalists of the House of Parliament. This happy idea first found its home in the mind of Sir Gilbert Parker. Sir Gilbert is a Canadian by birth; has been in his day a wandering journalist, and served part of his apprenticeship to life and letters in Australia, and he is besides an ideal host and a man of boundless personal popularity. He communicated the idea of Mr. Rudolph Lehmann—still, amidst many other occupations, one of the wittiest writers on Punch, and once, for a brief period, the editor of the Daily News.

Incidentally Mr. Lehmann is what I may call the standing counsel of the Cambridge Club, and in his pretty and spacious house at Bourne End, keeps in close touch with those smooth waters of our glorious Thames which have given him so many pleasant hours. Then Mr. P. W. Wilson, the Parliamentary descriptive writer of the Daily News, came on, and then Mr. Snowden, the orator of the Socialistic party, and so on from this nucleus the idea grew until it was taken up enthusiastically, and by none more than by the universally respected Speaker of the House, and in a few days it had become one of the big events of the Conference. When the luncheon took place in the Harcourt Room of the House of Commons—so called because it is the creation of Mr. Harcourt, the present active Commissioner of Public Works, and as such in charge of the internal economy of the House of Parliament—one might boast that our colonial brethren of the Press saw around them some of the greatest figures of their land.

In the House of Commons

The Prime Minister sat at one table, Sir Edward Grey at another. One journalist told me beamingly that he had sat opposite two such notable Imperial figures as Lord Curzon and Lord Cromer. And, of course, at the head of the principal table was the Speaker. The speeches were few and brief; these poor Colonials are so occupied during every minute of the day that they had to weigh every second almost of their time. On such an occasion no one could make a happier speech than the Speaker, with that sly humor which helps him in his difficult position and so often brings the blessed relief of laughter to tense situations in the House of Commons. Mr. Birrell's speech was the success of the gathering. It was greeted at every sentence with bursts of delighted laughter.

At Downing Street

The proceedings of the next day began pretty early for even a Colonial, accustomed in his usually sunnier climate to early hours. Its opening was a breakfast to a large body of the visitors at 11 Downing street, the official residence of Lloyd-George. I would not like to have the job, but I would like to have the present residence of Lloyd-George. In the very heart of London, within a few very yards of the House of Commons, with all the thunder of the busy thoroughfare of Parliament street outside, No. 11 Downing street is yet like a very oasis of perfect stillness in all the arid desert of noise.

Its apartments are plain, but vastly spacious; it looks out on the pleasant green and the little lake of St. James's Park; it has a fair-sized garden of its own, and there is a beautiful terrace outside, on which there have been many historic meetings of Cabinets, dealing with historic moments and solemn events. You hear, for instance, from the lips of Lloyd-George himself the story of one strange, checkered afternoon, when the members of the Cabinet of Mr. Gladstone passed the time away on this very terrace waiting for the decision of the Geneva Arbitration Tribunal on the Alabama question.

A Place of Memories

There in the corner sat Lord Granville playing a game of chess, while Gladstone, with his

restless energy, either walked up and down or buried himself in a book—all awaiting anxiously the telegram that was to announce the verdict of a great tribunal between the two great nations. There were some forty to fifty guests around the long table in which the breakfast took place. The company was altogether of men, broken by just one tiny, delightful, quaint little figure—the figure of Megan Lloyd-George, that officiating little baby girl of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Shy, natural, and yet self-possessed, the dear little figure was, and many a Colonial journalist as he looked on the doughty combatant at the head of the table, had doubtless many an inner vision of some similar little figure left at home over the wide seas.

Journalists know too much of the inside of political life to share the popular illusion that men who differ on public questions so fiercely are divided in private life by personal animosities and therefore it cannot have been a surprise to them to see Mr. Bonar Law, the doughtiest of the Tariff Reformers, smoking one of George Lloyd's cigars in Lloyd-George's garden, for at the breakfast there were men of all parties. If they had been in the House of Commons on the following evening and had seen the set-to between the two, they would have known also that the most genial of private relations does not blunt the swords when the hour of conflict comes; for rarely has the House of Commons seen a duel between two first-class debaters more unsparring, more exciting, and more resulting than that that between Lloyd-George and Bonar Law on the Budget.

At Sutton Place

The afternoon of Tuesday belonged to Lord Northcliffe. The Colonial journalists were invited to pay a visit to his beautiful residence in Surrey—Sutton Place. Here they had the opportunity of seeing one of the most historic, typical and delightful of those great country seats which are such a feature of old England. Sutton Place has a history of, I believe, four centuries, behind it, which history you will find written in a delightful little monograph, by the brilliant pen of Frederic Harrison. He was one of the guests, looking young, brisk, perennially fresh and youthful, in spite of some ridiculous stories told by himself, among others, that he is seventy-eight years of age. I was not inclined to accept the story when I looked at his rosy cheeks and brilliant dark eyes, but he tried to convince me by palming off the other ridiculous fable that he was present at the Coronation of Queen Victoria. Long, anyhow, may he live. The house is, I am told,

by those who have seen the two, more beautiful than even Hatfield. All around it is the spreading green of the lovely county of Surrey. The function was managed with perfect organization. The lunch excellent, the service rapid and quiet, and everybody with his seat ready for him at the table where his name was entered.

Here again our guests had an opportunity of seeing some of the most striking features of the Mother Country. A little man with the short grey mustache, the bright, palest, piercing eyes, the frame as taut as a rope in a well-fitted and well-kept man-of-war, and all the frame and appearance breathing at once boundless energy and boundless self command—that little man is no less a personage than the great and daring soldier who led the march to Cabul and then to Pretoria, and when the single toast of the day—the toast of the King—was given, it was Lord Roberts who gave it. If you looked round the lawn you saw the two brothers Cecil—Lord Robert nightly appearing in the conflicts of the House of Commons—Lord Hugh momentarily eclipsed in the Parliamentary firmament, but perhaps appearing just above the horizon again as the possible successor of Mr. Talbot in the representation of the University of Oxford.

A Pathetic Note

There was one pathetic and striking figure whom I must not omit, for he attracted a great deal of the attention of the gathering. In a corner and stretched on a long chair was St. John Harmsworth. He is the youngest of the Harmsworth brothers, who a few years ago was almost smashed to bits in a motor accident, and still remains helpless and unable to move. I remember him when I saw him for a moment in the Ritz Hotel in Paris—one of the most strikingly handsome young men I ever saw. He is handsome today, though there are lines of pain in the face and in the expression of the eyes. But he is going to get quite well again, the doctors say, and he is going to get well by sheer force of will and of courage. There was a pathetic and at the same time thrilling lesson of courage and patience in the figure which at once moved one to sympathy and to admiration.

An Interesting Group

This was one of my fortunate days—one of those days when my professional desire and need of strong personal experiences was ministered to by some good fairy. For I got into the same carriage with a remarkable group of men. They were Sir Hudson Kearley, Sir John Ellerman, and Mr. Frank Lloyd, the pro-

prietor, and Mr. Robert Donald, the editor, of the Daily Chronicle. Sir Hudson Kearley has at last come by his own. One of the really great business men of the House of Commons, founder and chief proprietor of one of the big businesses of England, and of a business which had to be built up from a tiny foundation to the gigantic structure it now is, he remained for years an Under Secretary with all his vast abilities and restless energy and powerful personality eclipsed.

At last he has been put in his proper place as a leader of men, and the chief of a gigantic and difficult task—the chairmanship of the new Port of London Board. To restore order to chaos, to control hundreds of officials, to restore prosperity and efficiency to the great port of the greatest city in the world, and to pay a dividend on thirty-eight millions a year of capital—here is a labor of Hercules which only a man of commanding character and personality could even face, and Hudson Kearley is the only man I know to whom, I think, such a task could be safely committed. And this is what a man like him ought to be doing. In our political system, where everything except actual capacity has so often to be considered, it is a relief to find the right man put in the right place.

The World of Commerce

And as we travelled home I found myself getting more closely acquainted with another great figure in our world of commerce. The Budget naturally came on for discussion. The debate was finally left between Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Donald, and Sir John Ellerman. Two were Liberals and ardent friends of the Budget, but the tough Tory was quite equal to fight his corner as an enemy of the Budget, with even such strong opponents. And then I got in microcosm the mighty part London plays in the finance and commerce of the world. We discussed papers, Sir John Ellerman revealed himself as the proprietor of the Financial Times, of the Drapers' Record, and as part proprietor of the new group that has acquired the Times. And he was able to give some hints with his shrewd sense to even us old journalists who have no other occupation.

But he was only beginning to reveal a slight little glimpse of his manifold activities. He discussed the tax on breweries. "I am chairman of the Lion Brewery," incidentally observed Sir John Ellerman. Then when the conversation turned to brewing in America, "I am a director of a brewery in Milwaukee," quoth Sir John. A coal tax was suggested. "I am chairman of a colliery company." And

then shipping was mentioned, and Sir John said that his line to India had found this; his line to Australia that; his ships to South Africa told a different tale, and so on through the long list of great shipping companies of which he is the controlling spirit. "Is there anything in which you have not a hand?" Dr. Donald at last asked; it seemed this wonderful man was everywhere.

At the Mansion House

The lunch given by the Lord Mayor in the Mansion House was a very pleasant experience. The present Lord Mayor is a man of education, of excellent diction, of pleasant and taking manner, and an old Cockney like myself might well be pleased to see the City and its history and splendor embodied so well in his person. The proceedings were brief. There were only three speeches—that of the Lord Mayor and two by delegates. The first delegate to speak was Mr. Stanley Reed. Mr. Reed is the proprietor of the Times of India—one of the greatest journals of that country. He employs more men, I was told by an ex-Anglo Indian, than Lord Northcliffe. Never have I heard a more perfect little speech than that in which Mr. Reed responded.

In a few brief little word pictures and portraits he traced the historic association between the City of London and the mighty British Empire. You could see, as you followed his simple, restrained, terse sentences, the whole great, thrilling, dramatic story—from the days when a couple of English explorers, with the daring, the unsatiable curiosity and the enterprise of their race, started out for the unknown lands of the East, to the hour when India has become one of the chief possessions of the country. It was all done so soberly, and yet it was so dramatic—so truly impressive.

A Moving Episode

And then came another and also striking and moving episode. There advanced to the front of the great table at which the Lord Mayor sat, a tall, spare figure with a long, keen, clear-cut face, and that extremely pale fair hair which marks another race. In words that came somewhat slowly, and in an accent that was evidently foreign, this man spoke of the intimate association between South Africa and England. It was a strange reversal of old rancors, for the speaker was Mr. Engelenburg, editor of a journal in Pretoria, and one of the brave Boers who fought on the Boer side in the late war.

Lord Morley

I attended but one of the conferences held at the Foreign Office. The subject was Literature and Journalism, in which, naturally, I take some interest. It was a very excellent debate. Lord Morley was in the chair. He gave an admirable address, just like a page from one of his essays—simple, direct, and yet with that perfect and distinguished language of which he is such a master. There was an interesting glimpse into his literary canons by one incident which he mentioned. A young journalist came to ask employment from him, and when he questioned the applicant as to what was his particular gift, he answered, "Invective." And when asked if he had any other qualification, again he answered, "No, general invective."

The youth was not employed; but, added Lord Morley slyly, he thought that the youth had got employment elsewhere when he read some of the writings in some of the journals published today. The incident showed the man who has always cultivated, both in writing and in speech, the saving graces of reserve, gentility, and fairness. Mr. Winston Churchill is not a man to let any opportunity slip of preaching, in his own bold, broad pictures, any opinions he holds strongly; and his speech was a veiled, but very pronounced, plea for international peace, and against panics and alarms.

Oratory

It was a study to watch the face of Lord Milner while this speech was being uttered. The long, thin, severe and almost harsh face became wreathed in scornful smiles, and when Lord Milner's turn came, he replied by a veiled but quite clear appeal to arms and the sharpening of swords. Mr. Birrell made one of those rollicking speeches of his in which under the joke and the smile there runs a real purpose. His plea was for impartiality in journalism, especially in dealing with the individuals who play the prominent parts in political warfare. And then W. L. Courtney, of the Daily Telegraph, whom I regard as now one of the best after-dinner speakers in England, made a brief, delightful, beautifully-worded little speech. After which I said a few words myself.

And now as to our visitors themselves. I have not time or space to single out those who struck me both from their public speeches and their conversation, for I found so many of them interesting. But I was very much interested by Mr. Kirwan, a young Irishman settled in the golden regions of Western Australia, who made an excellent speech at the Parliamentary lunch; by Mr. Cunningham, the editor of the Melbourne Argus; by Mr. Brierley, proprietor of the Liberal organ in Montreal; and Mr. Lukin, a venerable figure who has left his mark on the journalism both of Australia and New Zealand; and by Mr. Banerjee, the Indian journalist, whom I used to know when he was a young student forty years ago, and walked the pavements of Fleet street; by Mr. Kyffin Thomas, of the Register, Adelaide, and Mr. J. A. MacDonald, of the Globe, Toronto. More I may write of these remarkable visitors of ours should circumstances permit.

Something for Red-Haired People

That there is a common prejudice against red-headed people is undeniable. It has an unhappy knack of turning up at all sorts of times, usually the most inconvenient possible. A certain lady, Mme. de Perrot by name, is so disgusted with it that she proposes to form a club or association of the red-haired where they may meet one another, and find peace. "My life from childhood has been made unhappy because of my hair," she says, "and I was brought up to know that I was regarded as very ugly." Often, she declares, she has been shamefully ridiculed, and especially in childhood, subjected to any amount of teasing.

Professor Boyle, who has made a serious study of the question, points out that victims find no consolation, but rather the reverse, in the assurance that the feeling is universal—recognized in all countries probably, and all ages; for that suggests that it is an instinct of human nature. But one cannot seriously argue, he maintains, that dislike of a particular complexion is an innate idea. The fact that mankind has always objected to red hair should lead us to seek a cause or motive of general application. When found it may prove to be rather flattering on the whole.

The earliest peoples of whom we have record were the Egyptians or the Accads. Of the latter there is nothing to be said in regard to the subject, but the abhorrence of the Egyptians for red hair was almost a mania. Every book dealing with them must needs allude to the matter, for it had consequences. They themselves attribute their horror to the fact that Set, who murdered Osiris, had that complexion; but, surveying the world-wide prevalence of the distaste, we may be tolerably sure that "it was the other way about"—they gave Set red hair because that was a hateful color.

A Tainted Race

The Laws of Mena forbid a man of caste to marry a red-haired girl. Ages before, a Vedic hymn prayed Indra to destroy certain enemies who were "red-haired and uttered frightened yells." Chinamen have a shuddering detestation of the tint. They used to call foreigners "Fan-Oui," red-haired, not so much because they are fair as because they are abominable. But it will be noted that in India and China a red-haired native cannot be found, unless of foreign stock; and in Egypt only the abhorred caste of shepherds offered samples. A point to be remembered.

Even Plutarch seldom names the complexion of his heroes, graver writers thought such a detail beneath the dignity of history. It is significant, therefore, that he mentions the red hair of Marius and Sylla, whom he describes as most ruthless tyrants. Perhaps they were not very red. Gaius Julius Cambrensis says that Rufus was so called, not because his hair was red—it was flaxen—but because he was

such a thorough-paced villain; and he quotes a Latin fable which ends, "Mper nos haec fabula rufos evitare."

So Judas Iscariot is always represented with red hair. One would think that our own forefathers, when English blood was pure, could not be prejudiced against a hue which must have been so common. But Alfred himself, most genial of mortals, wrote: "The red-haired man is a rogue, quarrelsome, a thief, the king of mischief." There is a proverb current still in North Germany—"Trust not a red-haired man nor a Swede."

The objection crops up everywhere—in the most unexpected places. A mediaeval doctor prescribes "a considerable quantity of a healthy young man's blood" for epilepsy—but he must not be red-haired. On the other hand, the learned Crolius opines that an artificial mummy—to be taken in powders—should be made, if possible, from the corpse of a red-haired youth.

Is It All Due to Jealousy?

What is the meaning of all this? Professor Boyle thinks it comes out clearly from the evidence cited—in fact, the German proverb, coupling a Swede with a red-haired man, tells the secret. That is the complexion of energy, daring, rash and desperate enterprise. School-boys recognize it when they say, "Ginger for pluck." But in old times energy found vent in raids and quarrels and the "joy of fight." The red-haired led the way whenever brave deeds were to be done. Legend always told that the skin of captured Danes were nailed on the doors of churches; science has confirmed the story, and in four cases at least, microscopic examination proves that the unfortunate were red-haired. They would be fearless savages who ventured too far, seeking blood and plunder—for it can be shown that the color was not very frequent among the Vikings. But all Europe suffered from the Norseman ravages, and in earlier times, doubtless pre-historic, fair-haired barbarians were constantly raiding southward—the red most terrible.

So in Egypt. Of the last great grand forays by the Achaeans, Sardinians, Philistines, and others we have full account, and we know they were fair. Probably the Hyksos, themselves were fair also, since they came from Syria—India was always a prey to the fair-haired Northerners, and China to the Tatars, among whom red hair is comparatively common.

If Professor Boyle's theory be correct, the popular prejudice does not imply disgrace. It is a memory of the world's terror for the red-haired.

Many of the greatest men of the world have ever seen have been of the red, or "ginger" haired type. Amongst many others might be cited Wallace, Bruce, Richard Coeur de Lion, Gen-

eral Wolfe, Marshal Ney (who was the "bravest of the brave"), Garibaldi, Sir David Wilkie, the great painter, the dashing General Custer, of America; while the hair of even the great Napoleon himself was said to have been of a "reddish" brown color.

HART AS A BOY

Opportunity and luck have played a prominent part in the success of many men; others have lifted themselves from the ruck by sheer hard work and patience. To the latter class belongs Sir Robert Hart, "The Grand Old Man of China," who is just now enjoying a well-earned rest after half a century of diplomatic work in the Far East.

But Sir Robert always was a worker. As a boy at school he was nicknamed "Stewpot," for so great was his passion for study that he was in the habit of stealing fifteen minutes of his lunch hour to work at Hebrew.

And he was always a reasoner—never satisfied until he knew why and the wherefore of matters in which he was interested. Says Juliet Bredon, in her absorbing book on Sir Robert Hart, "To the masters he must have been something of a trial."

"One day, for instance, when a certain master spoke somewhat sourly, and irritably to him, Sir Robert then and there took it upon himself to deliver him a lecture which, in its calm reasoning, was most disconcerting. It is wonderful the way you treat us boys," he said; "just as if you were not a little dust and water like the rest of us. One would think from your manners you were our master, whereas you are really our servant. It is we who give you your livelihood—and yet you behave to us in this high-handed manner." Naturally this tirade made a pretty row in the school."

An amusing story of Sir Robert's first school is also told by the authoress of this book, who, by the way, is a niece of the great pro-consul. One day two visitors were announced. One was a stoutish man, with sandy hair; the other a very long person, like a knitting-needle. The stout man called the boy to him, passed his hand carefully over the bumps of his head, and then, turning to the father, said, "From what I gather of this child's talents, from my examination of his cranial cerebraion, my brother's system of education is exactly the one calculated to develop them." The men were two brothers named Arnold, who proposed to open a little school, and were tramping the country in search of pupils.

Read history. Many of the problems which vex us today were grappled with and solved by our ancestors. Some of our pet modern notions were exploded centuries ago.



NATIVE QUARTER, COLOMBO



E-SHADED CANAL-COLOMBO

like a faithful dog. Other dusky shapes fit spectre-like along the shore to take up their work in the distance. You cross to the bathrooms and the bathrooms are for the bathrooms here opening pool sixty yards long and width, forming the central court of the quarter. Then you dress and again in a window while breakfast receives one breakfasts in the big room. The end of the day has begun. Little by little every kind pass to and fro—carttany ponies shining like satin—sahs and babies—servants bringing in leath—more babies in rickshaws mothers beside them on bicycles—tuples on horseback—a troop of natives with their crimson turbans and non-decked, clattering across the verywhere the bright mosaic of huge closer pattern and yet more brilliant colour.

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is Colombo—the gateway of India in the first night and morning relers spectacles.

INTERESTING RELIC

is tooth, presented to President most for a treaty by a Fiji Island the relics shown in the Smithsonian exhibit at the Alaska-Yukon-osition.

JEFFERSON'S DESK

he interesting exhibits in the Gov-lding at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific is the original desk upon which Jefferson wrote the first rough draft of the Declaration of Independence.

er daily expends the little uncom-ns are what count, so in the ex-our time, the odd moments can be omplish much.