

Premier Asquith

AN Oxford Contemporary" contributes the following article in a recent issue of the London Times: About the time when Jewett became Master of Balliol, a notable scholar was added to the foundation of that learned society. He came from the City of London School, and the influence of Dr. Edwin Abbott was apparent in the nicety of his scholarship and the finished style of his English exercises. By heredity he belonged to a class of shrewd Yorkshiremen, all of them Radicals and Nonconformists, and all imbued with the strenuous individualism which was then the staple of Radical politics. In the little world of Balliol it was soon made evident that Asquith was a man to be reckoned with, and a man who would go far. Milner, some years his junior, had a wider outlook on Imperial and social questions; Charles Gore had a kind of influence over his friends to which Asquith did not aspire. But there was, perhaps, none of his contemporaries who equalled him in trenchancy and force. When he closed his undergraduate career by gaining a Balliol Fellowship, Jewett wrote to a friend—"Of all the young men who have been under my care, Asquith is the one whose success in life I would confidently predict." At the Oxford Union, where the statesmen of the future are supposed to sit on every bench, Asquith's position can only be described by the word ascendancy. He took no great pains to be conciliatory, and he came from a college whose success provokes the light-hearted criticism of less privileged undergraduates; a Christ Church orator once referred to "the sons of Balliol, flown with insolence and tea." In his first attempt on the presidency, Asquith was defeated by Ashmead Bartlett; but he had his turn of office in due time. As treasurer, he allowed no tampering with the rules; as president, he asked for no indulgence from his critics, and he gave them none.

For a young man of 22, with a Fellowship to tide him over the years of waiting, the law was the best avenue to success. Asquith addressed himself to the common bar; and, just as Bowen had owed his first professional advancement to Coleridge, so Asquith in his turn was helped by Bowen. From the first, he obtained work, perhaps as much work as he wanted; but his success was not so decisive as his Balliol friends expected. On an occasion such as the trial of Mr. Cunningham Graham, he could speak, and speak well, but his forensic manner was lacking in ease, and in persuasive power he was excelled by men who were inferior to him in ability. He rose into leading practice just at the time when the Judges of our higher tribunals had contracted the habit of constantly interrupting counsel. When Lord Watson stopped a set argument with the observation, "The whole point of this case is just so-and-so," there were leaders who could say, "I am obliged to your Lordship for putting it in that way." Mr. Asquith was more likely to say, "If your Lordship will permit me, I will deal with that later on." If Mr. Asquith had given himself wholly to the law, there can be little doubt that his clarity of mind and his admirable style would in time have made him a great Judge. But his true vocation was for politics, and we shall have to look for our great judges elsewhere.

At the "perennial dissolution" of 1886, Mr. Asquith was returned for East Fife as a Home Ruler and a follower of Mr. Gladstone. The Scotch elector likes a member who reflects distinction on the constituency; the seat for East Fife is as safe as any seat can be in these troubled and confusing times. During the six years of his first Parliament, the new member's political duties were comparatively light. On both the front benches his debating speeches commanded attention, and even admiration; but the Commons are slow to welcome lawyers and especially lawyers who are regarded by their friends as coming leaders of the House. The more austere and the more extreme politicians on his own side doubted the quality of his Radicalism, thought, he gave too much time to his practice and his social engagements; and resented the idea that he would be in the next cabinet. But Mr. Gladstone, a nice critic of his legal colleagues and their work, had formed a different estimate, and when the administration of 1892 was formed, Mr. Asquith became Home Secretary. As a departmental minister he added greatly to his reputation; he showed both capacity and tact, and was not afraid of responsibility. His first serious difficulties were occasioned by his refusal to release the dynamiters; his refusal was at variance with Radical sentiment, and there was a movement of protest. It is understood that Mr. Asquith would not allow the administration of the law to be made even a cabinet question, and that Mr. Gladstone supported him in this contention. His action in regard to the Featherstone riots is still (very unjustly) remembered against him by a section of the Labor party. The measures which he took to protect persons engaged in dangerous trades were hailed as an instalment of Collectivism, whatever that means; but the political economy of his younger days has retained a strong hold on Mr. Asquith's mind. "We are all Socialists now," but there are better Socialists than he.

The parliament of 1892 was a short one, and the junior members of the ministry were overshadowed by the powerful personality of their chief. But before Lord Rosebery left office, Mr. Asquith had proved himself a statesman. His position in his own party was strengthened

by his conduct of the bill by which it was proposed to disestablish the church in Wales. This was only a reconnaissance in force, and no serious results followed; but the Welsh Liberals were pleased, and the Nonconformists rejoiced to see one of their own people appearing in the character of a Daniel come to judgment.

On leaving office Mr. Asquith went back to the bar. He is not specially qualified for the task of keeping a disheartened opposition together; and on some great issues he did not carry with him all the sympathies of his party. Time and experience have strengthened his sense of Imperial greatness and of our Imperial responsibilities; therefore, he is not a favorite with the people called Little Englanders. He is a believer in law and order, and, as an economist, he has not openly parted company with Mill and Fawcett. These are not the opinions of "forward" Liberals, and on his own side many doubted whether Asquith was holding the ground he had gained. After a rather long period of slackened and hampered activity, fortune and Mr. Chamberlain gave Mr. Asquith just the opportunity he needed. The cast of his mind is, on the whole, Conservative, and now free trade, an established institution of the country, was being attacked. Mr. Asquith was perfectly familiar with the arguments pro and con; he had read them as a student, and expounded them as a lecturer, in his Balliol days. His speeches, didactic, militant, and confident, did much to revive the Liberal party, depressed by the vigor of Mr. Chamberlain's attack. When the spoils of victory came to be distributed, it was generally acknowledged that Mr. Asquith had fairly made good his right to be the colleague and successor of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

There are those who, when they read or listen to Mr. Asquith's dogmatic expositions, are disposed to set him down as a narrow-minded man, who sees only one side of a case. But this inference is unsafe; Mr. Asquith is a practical man who accepts the party system. He is too well informed to ignore the fact that British trade is now facing a kind of competition which Sir Robert Peel did not and could not foresee. At the same time, he has convinced himself that tariff reform, as embodied in the proposals of Mr. Chamberlain, will do more harm than good. In the campaign of 1906, his main object was to turn back the invading force, and his tactics were his own, not his leader's. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman deserves great credit for the skill with which he kept the various elements of his party together; his patient stand for the Liberal programme as a whole gave him a personal ascendancy to which the younger leader has not yet attained. But when Mr. Asquith announced that, so far as he and his friends were concerned, Home Rule was not an issue in the election, there can be little doubt that he recalled to the colors a large contingent of British electors, quite content to acquiesce in the postponement of Home Rule. To some extent, though to what extent no man can say the victory was his.

The victory involves the new Prime Minister in what Mr. Haldane would call an antinomy, the solution of which is not yet apparent. For the colleagues who accepted his leadership, and made free trade the one cry of the last general election, are also at one with him in desiring to maintain the Imperial interests of this country, and to draw closer the ties between ourselves and our self-governing colonies. If this policy is to be made a reality, we need something more positive and more inspiring than the abstract generalities of the last colonial conference. Is Mr. Asquith free to recognize that the state of opinion in our colonies renders it necessary to revise our commercial policy? Can he devise any measures which will satisfy the colonial desire to recognition and co-operation, without subverting the domestic policy of free imports? In approaching these momentous problems, the Prime Minister has one conspicuous advantage; he is already familiar with all the constitutional and legal aspects of our colonial system. It may be that his tenure of power will not be long enough to show us all that is in his mind, but we shall look with interest to see in what direction he moves.

On the important issue of disestablishment the Prime Minister's record is clear and consistent; but there is at present a visible abatement of the energy with which this matter was pressed at one time. When the Church of Ireland was disestablished, an impulse was given to the activity of the Liberation society. Dr. Dale and Dr. Rainy spoke for a large body of serious politicians who sincerely believed that the separation of church and state would be fraught with spiritual benefit to the people. This form of opinion is not so strongly represented as it used to be. Attacks on the wealth and the inefficiency of the national churches have lost their point. The object lesson of 1904 has taught the free churches, in Scotland and elsewhere, that it is property, not establishment, which brings a church, for certain purposes, under the control of the state, and hampers her in working out her ideals. There is much more friendly intercourse between the denominations, much fuller acknowledgment of common beliefs and aspirations. These circumstances may suggest to a cautious leader that it would be unwise to begin a conflict, sure to be bitter and long. But in Wales and in Scotland the Prime Minister's disestablishment declarations have been carefully preserved; and we look forward with some anxiety to the first occasion

when East Fife requires Mr. Asquith to "come over the fundamentals."

Perhaps the most uncertain factor in the plans of the new administration is the composite Labor vote. Mr. Asquith's tardy acceptance of the Trade Disputes Bill has not been forgotten; and in its present mood the Trade Union congress may think it possible to dispense with the aid of statesmen imbued with traditional ideas about law and finance. But there are still Labor men who remember and appreciate what was done at the Home office between 1892 and 1895. The field of social reform is so wide that Liberalism and Labor may still continue to co-operate, without sacrifice of principle on either side; and the alliance may be as necessary to the one section as to the other, for none can tell how strong or how comparatively weak the Labor vote may be in the next parliament. Such measures as the Eight Hours Bill are not carried without creating a good deal of discontent; and the current which ran so strongly in 1906 may be checked by the British workman's dislike of interference.

Those who have watched the Prime Minister's career with sympathy and approval will look forward with high hope to his tenure of power. At the age of 50, by sheer force of talent and character, he takes the highest place which a subject can occupy. His party is still strong, and it will be sobered by misfortune. He may, if he will, withdraw his followers from some doubtful enterprises; he may, if he can, indicate safer lines of advance. The opposition is led by a statesman who has frankly expressed his admiration of Mr. Asquith's abilities, and with whom his relations have been as friendly as the conventions of party warfare permit. The foregoing summary of his position shows that his difficulties will be many and serious; but, as impartial critics, we may wish him all the success that is compatible with the unity of the Empire and the true interest of these united kingdoms.

NESTOR OF CANADIAN JOURNALISM

Death of Charles Lindsey Removes a Notability From the Literary Arena

The death of Mr. Charles Lindsey removes one who was for a long period prominent in Canadian literature. Indeed, he has been called the Nestor of Canadian journalism. He was a veteran in that field, certainly, being connected with the press of Toronto from 1842, when he came from England, until 1900 or later. Editor of the *Examiner* for some years, he became editor of the *Leader* in 1853, a post which he resigned only when appointed by Sandfield Macdonald, in 1867, Registrar of Deeds for Toronto. In this position he was a strong and influential advocate of Confederation of the provinces.

But editorship alone did not occupy his active pen. His first book, "History of the Clergy Reserves," was written in 1851; later he published "Prohibitory Laws in the United States," then after a trip west, "The Prairies of the Western States." In 1855 he went to Paris as Honorary Commissioner from Canada to the great exhibition in that city. His most important work was "The Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie," an admirable biography of a most uncommon man, which appeared in 1862. He next wrote "An Investigation of the Unsettled Boundaries of Ontario," Honorable David Mills writing on the same subject. It was along the lines laid down in these reports that the boundaries were finally settled by the arbitrators. In 1877 Mr. Lindsey published "Rome in Canada," a history of the Ultramontane struggle for supremacy over the civil power, which volume was added to and republished in 1897 during the Jesuit estates act controversy.

So much was he esteemed as a calm and impersonal but strong and logical writer that his services were in request by weekly non-political journals and by magazines. He was one of the founders of the National Club, and wrote for "The Nation," which weekly was the organ of the "Canada First" party. To him fell the honor of contributing the first editorial articles printed by the Mail newspaper and the Canadian Monthly and Review. About 1878, Mr. Lindsey began to contribute to the *Monetary Times*, and continued to do so for a quarter of a century. His knowledge of political economy, of which he was long a student, rendered his articles on economic subjects of great value; while his remarkable memory of earlier days in the country's development, his acquaintance with many of the makers of Canada, and his wide reading in Spanish, French, and English, made him an interesting writer on matters of finance, government, and commerce. For many years he contributed leading articles to the *Monetary Times*, and wrote as long as it was published the "Situation" in this journal.

When, about 1880, the Royal Society of Canada was instituted by the Marquis of Lorne, Governor-General of Canada, Mr. Lindsey was one of the original appointees. This was a deserved tribute to the character of his literary work, the spirit of fairness as well as thoroughness which distinguished his writings, and the already great length of his services to Canada. For reference to the characteristics of the deceased gentleman other than as a writer, this is hardly the place; though his intimate and welcome association with this office for so many years might even justify some personal allusions. It must suffice to say that during his long residence in Canada he commanded the respect of both business opponents and allies, and the warm attachment of all who were admitted to his intimacy. Mr. Lindsey was in his 89th year, and had resided 66 years in Toronto.—*Monetary Times*.

Sixty-eight slot machines were confiscated by police in Pittsburgh, Pa., and the 4,000 pennies they contained were added to the police pension fund of the city.

The Real India

THE *Real India* is the title of a book by J. D. Rees; C. I. E. M. P., which has just been issued by a London publishing house. It is thus reviewed by the London Times:

When a man sits down to write a book about India, too often he thinks it necessary to explain everything from the beginning. Mr. Rees starts in the mists of time with the fair-skinned Aryans, and arrives after very long jumps at Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal. There was no need to enter upon such a prolonged disquisition on the earlier history of India; any more than it was necessary to explain afresh the complicated system of administration. Even casual inquirers can learn all they wish to know on these matters from the pages of Sir William Hunter and Sir John Strachey. You cannot write an encyclopaedia of India in 350 pages, any more than you can cram a bushel into a pint measure. There is so much that is valuable in Mr. Rees' book that it is a pity he tried to cover so wide a field. Of course he wrote on the not unnatural assumption that the average reader knows little about India; but something must be taken for granted in such an undertaking. The chief utility of "The Real India" lies in its exposition of the existing situation, and its clear and pointed comments upon current problems. Mr. Rees does not attempt to be eloquent. There is nothing in his book about palm trees or marble palaces or crimson sunsets. He offers unpretentious and commonsense and often illuminating views upon the issues now arising in India for settlement. He has one special qualification often lacking in exponents of Indian affairs, for he has traveled from end to end of Asia, and lived in Russia. India cannot nowadays be considered as an isolated country. It is fenced in on the north by mountains, it has renewed its intercourse with other lands by the pathway of the sea. There are broadly identical principles uniting most Asiatic questions. To grasp the true inwardness of the vague movements stirring among the peoples of India, one must gain perspective by studying also the conditions of Persia and Arabia and China, and still more of Japan, as Mr. Rees has wisely done.

The most interesting sections of the book are those which deal with the recent unrest, the growth of the Congress, and the reforms propounded by Mr. Morley. Mr. Rees gives the first connected account yet published of the growth of agitation in the last few years. His analysis of the causes will not be accepted everywhere without question. He holds that the chief cause is the system of education. Too much is probably made of the educational system as a creator of disaffection. It is not well suited to Indian needs, but it is now almost a waste of effort to continue to declaim against it. We might as well go on to say that the origin of the trouble is the presence of the British. Far less will it be agreed that the police commission helped to produce unrest, or that its appointment was in any sense a mistake. The police commission had not only to investigate allegations of corruption and oppression, but also to perform the work of advising upon pressing questions of reorganization and improvement of pay. We cannot regard it as a serious factor of disturbance. Another cause cited is "the measures taken to stamp out plague in Bombay presidency." Had Mr. Rees said the prevalence of plague in the Punjab, he would have been nearer the mark. There has been little visible unrest in the Bombay presidency, and the plague measures there have ceased to be harassing ever since the riots of ten years ago. A great complaint against the Bombay government has been that for years it did very little to fight the plague. The fact is that one may argue interminably about causes of unrest. They are many and various; but at the back of them all lies that spirit of awakening independence, that craving for national existence, that impatience of European domination, that swept like a tide among thinking men all over Asia at the opening of the twentieth century.

Mr. Rees thinks the Congress should be "brought under regulation," but does not explain what new measures are required. We should have thought ample powers existed already if the Congress became seditious, which it is not. What is far more necessary is that the Congress should learn to regulate itself. His discussion of the Congress leaders and their methods is exceedingly interesting, and he pours a good deal of righteous scorn upon their associates in parliament. How many people in England realize that Sir Henry Cotton has actually advocated the withdrawal of the British army from India? He thinks that England could "secure treaty rights for India from the European powers." Mr. Morley, in a memorable passage, has told us what would happen if he telegraphed to Lord Kitchener "to clear out, bag and baggage." In his references to the partition of Bengal, which he is inclined to think unwise, Mr. Rees quite correctly says that "the scheme, be it good or bad, was not, as is often asserted, the invention of Lord Curzon." When the inner history of that heated controversy comes to be written, it will be found that the imputation of Machiavellian motives was one of the strangest blunders of Indian native politics. One of the most admirable features of Mr. Rees' book is his section on land revenue questions. The man who understands land revenue matters understands the most important thing in India; but even among civilians the number of real

authorities is limited. We should be inclined to look askance at Mr. Rees' suggestion that a permanent settlement might be made with each individual holder; but it is not without good points. Another excellent chapter, perhaps the best in the volume, is that upon social reform. It is full of plain wisdom, and is marked by that deep sympathy for the Indian peoples which Mr. Rees manifestly possesses in common with many Anglo-Indians who, while admiring their conspicuous virtues, decline to beslobber them with fulsome adulation. We cannot quite follow Mr. Rees in his contention that the seclusion of Indian women need not be a bar to social intercourse between the two races. However one may theorize, there will always in practice remain a barrier so long as Indian men expect a privilege which their customs preclude them from conceding in return. In his references to the foreign affairs of India, Mr. Rees advances a powerful argument in favor of the expenditure of money in the development of British interests on the shores of the Persian gulf, a matter of some urgency just now. He contends that if we are willing to expend funds in subsidizing Afghanistan and making roads in Chitral and elsewhere, and supporting turbulent and ungrateful tribesmen, we ought not to hesitate about incurring some outlay in the gulf. That is a very pertinent and suggestive observation.

In a work dealing concisely with such a multitude of topics there are naturally one or two slips. The popular name for the wider party in the Congress is still the "Extremists," and not the "Nationalists," as they would like to be called. When Mr. Rees says that interference with women and children in factories is likely to prejudice, without materially assisting, those whom it is intended to advantage, we cannot think he has studied the evidence recently given before the factory commission in Calcutta. If half the children working in Calcutta mills are from six to nine years old and many children under fourteen are working as adult laborers, some intervention is plainly necessary. The statement that Lord Curzon "acquired great unpopularity among the educated English classes of Bengal" in consequence of his educational proposals is presumably a misprint. These and a few other minor blemishes, and a certain tendency to repetition of statement, do not, however, seriously detract from the value of this important and timely contribution to our knowledge of current Indian affairs. Its perusal is essential to a proper understanding of the present situation; for there is no other book that covers quite the same ground.

SNAKES VERMIN DESTROYERS

Following an agreement made early last spring, melon growers in the southern Illinois watermelon belt stopped killing non-poisonous snakes, and this year the wisdom of the agreement is shown. Heretofore melon planters have had their fields devastated in a single night by mice, which burrowed into the hills, eating the planted seed. It was decided to keep the mice in check by not killing snakes. This year few mice are seen.—*Carmi correspondent Indianapolis News*.

HAD PREJUDICE AGAINST OVERCOATS

"My venerated grandmother looked at me rather scornfully when I approached her clad in my first overcoat, and I'll never forget the 'roasting' she gave me for having one," said J. M. Bond, of St. Louis.

"She said that no sensible man would descend to the effeminacy of an overcoat and that the effect of wearing one was to reduce vigor and the hardness that comes of battling with cold weather." She pointed to the fine example of a statesman with whom she had a personal acquaintance, the Hon. Hannibal Hamlin, elected vice-president of the United States with Lincoln, who in his whole career never put one on, no matter how low the mercury dropped.—*Baltimore American*.

READING IN BED

Astigmatism, which is a condition where the refractive powers differ in the different meridians of the eye, is in most cases hereditary, but it is often acquired. The error of acquired astigmatism often takes place during and after a severe illness, and can be avoided by proper precautions. The whole system is in a weakened condition, and the person so afflicted, being confined to the house, will resort to reading to pass away the time, and this is often practiced while in a reclining position. There can be nothing more injurious than this practice.

Reading under these conditions overburdens the muscles, and the action of these muscles upon the form of the eye causes an irregularity in the curvature of the cornea which is known as astigmatism. This is detrimental to distant vision and makes reading and near work difficult.—*Health*.

The New York World, after conducting an investigation announces that Gotham women are gambling crazy. Mrs. Susan Merrill, of East Edgington, Me., has supported herself for ten years and sent her two boys through college by making feather beds of real goose down and selling them in New England.



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