

# THE COURIER

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## MORE "PEP" IN LONDON

**P**ERHAPS the most important event in this war was recorded in London last week. Outwardly it amounted to little. England wrapped Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey in tissue paper and laid them quietly away. Then, reaching up to a certain high shelf, she plucked down two other men, unwrapped them, and gave them work. One might have thought it was a mere change of ornamentation—just as a Canadian house-wife decides to promote two pieces of fine china from the china closet to the plate-rail and bring down two others in their place. But as a matter of fact it marked—or we colonials should hope that it marked—the end of the period of polite war-making, and the beginning of something sterner. The time may come when England will require to unwrap Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward. But the time HAD come for the reinstatement of Milner and Curzon, and their type, in office. England had a right to expect it and the colonies had a right to expect it—and the Germans!

Britain produces two kinds of public men, and until last week the one kind predominated. She has two training schools: London and—India, Egypt, the colonies and dependencies. The one produces parliamentarians, the other statesmen—or nothing. The one turns out thinking-talkers and the other—thinking-executives. The one lays stress on the hustings and teaches men to fear public opinion. The other lays stress on the necessity of solving problems—somehow, anyhow, but SOLVING 'EM! The one gave its diploma to Gladstone, Chamberlain, Asquith, Grey. But the other certified to men like Clive and Warren Hastings, like Cromer and Milner and Curzon. Heaven knows none of these last could have handled the Home Rule crisis as Asquith did. Not one of them could have wriggled so skillfully as to escape the odium of Carson's successful effrontery. But neither could Asquith have gummed India together, or pinned Egypt to the hem of the Imperial garment, or forced South Africa into the Empire. There were some things, no doubt, for which these Empire-makers might be blamed—were blamed, indeed. But at least, in war time they are not polite and they have no fear of precedents. Canadians who have been in London since the war started and who have had the opportunity to see how magnificent has been England's management in the main, will feel a natural vulgar western satisfaction in knowing that at last men rather than gentlemen have been placed in power. The choice of Curzon and Milner shows which type of statesman the new Government intends to make use of. It confirms our overseas opinion that Lloyd George is "a live wire." It also causes us to remember that Asquith is above all things, not a great world statesman or empire executant, but a great Imperial Englishman.

**A**PPARENTLY, until last week, London was in the same state of political turmoil that marked it a little more than a year ago. At that time I had the doubtful privilege of seeing just how gloomy London could be. Canada, on the whole, had, and

*Thinking-Doers of the Over-the-World type replace Talking-Thinker Statesmen who are Masters of Home Problems*

By BRITTON B. COOKE  
Illustrated by T. W. McLean



New Premier to War Council of three Unionists, one Labourite and himself: "Day before yesterday, Liberal. Yesterday, Coalition. To-day—Look at us. Gentlemen, this is not politics. It's war. And if this council accepts any form of Kaiser peace—

Voice from the door: "David—public opinion will never let you, and you know it."

*From Lloyd-George's great war speech, September, 1914*

**"T**HEY think we cannot beat them. It will not be easy. It will be a long job. It will be a terrible war. But in the end we shall march through terror to triumph. We shall need all our qualities, every quality that Britain and its people possess—prudence in council, daring in action, tenacity in purpose, courage in defeat, moderation in victory—in all things faith, and we shall win. It has pleased them to believe, and to preach the belief, that we are a decadent, degenerate nation. They proclaim it to the world through their professors that we are an unheroic nation, sulking behind our mahogany counters, whilst we are egging on more gallant races to their destruction. This is a description given to us in Germany—'a timorous, craven nation, trusting to its Fleet.' I think they are beginning to find their mistake out already, and there are half a million young men of Britain who have already registered the vow to their King that they will cross the seas, and hurl that insult to British courage against its perpetrators in the battle-fields of France and of Germany too. And we want half a million more, and we shall get them."

has, a much more cheerful and much more wholesome view of the war than London, because, thanks to the censor, we do not hear the day-to-day squabbles in Westminster and

Whitehall, and we are left serene in the contemplation of the main and undeniable fact that we ARE going to win the war. But London was, and I venture to believe was until very

recently, a city of grumbling. I had the privilege one day in October of a conversation with Lord Milner. I was able to gather from him and from less distinguished sources, impressions of the men then in office and of the men who have since been chosen, particularly Curzon, Carson, and Milner. Ian Hamilton had just been recalled from the Dardanelles, and everyone with any friends in Westminster knew that the expedition was to be withdrawn. Rumours were current that French was to be recalled from the command in France. The Serbians were being driven from their country and London had sent a paltry six thousand men to Saloniki. The London papers, even at that time, were printing articles on "The Enigmatic Attitude of Greece." Liberal editors were whanging Lloyd George as a Cabinet plotter and Conservative editors were openly applauding him. Mr. Asquith was trifling with the theory of Conscription. Relatives of dead soldiers were in the habit of gathering in the Park behind the Horse Guards trying to absorb comfort from the sight of a few German guns captured in the Loos offensive. The Sunday editions were filled with the usual abominable back-biting of which London political writers alone are gracious masters. To a Canadian observer the situation was NOT a pleasant one, and apparently it did not change, in its essential characteristics, until last week! Asquith IS out and Lloyd George, whether he was a plotter or not, IS in.

**I**T is a mistake to try to form an estimate of Lord Milner from the mere facts of his influence in South Africa, either in regard to bringing about the war, or in regard to effecting the Union of South Africa. One might quite as well form an opinion of electricity and its uses by observing what a single lightning stroke did to a pine tree. Whether one condemned his zeal on behalf of the uitlanders or whether one had nothing but approval for the whole affair, makes no real difference in gauging this great man's worth in the present crisis. What he showed in South Africa was complete devotion to the cause of the British Empire and singular ability in constructing a happy state out of the ashes of strife. His ability was not of the common sort. It was distinguished by masterly perspective and at the same time an infinite capacity for details. He may have failed ethically, but he was a success PRACTICALLY. Whether he did rightly or did wrongly—he DID!

It is not unlikely that many Canadians formed their second impressions of Lord Milner, indirectly, through the organization known as the Round Table. While Lord Milner cannot perhaps be officially connected with that organization, at least it is known that it had its beginnings in his work in South Africa. That work made clear to him and to those who worked with him that a time was coming when the British Empire must be organized to resist disintegrating influences. An unobtrusive organization grew up in various parts of the Empire. It consisted of "groups" of