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THE TRIUMPH OF LLOYD GEORGE

The amazing and spectacular victory of Mr. Lloyd George in the recent British elections is the triumph of democracy in its best and highest ideals. Lloyd George stands out in English public life immutably silhouetted as one who though risen from the humblest sphere has absolutely made good. To the great bulk of the British people, irrespective entirely of their personal political opinions, Lloyd George, the son of land, and by profession a poor provincial attorney, saved England and preserved and welded together the British Empire. The last, alone, was no easy task with the numerous prosperous and independent self-governing colonies. At the period when the war started there was probably no man in party politics who was more detested than Lloyd George. To the Unionist and Conservative of the old staunch Tory school he was anathema; it was bad form even to refer to him! His ability at vulgar vituperation and his political juggling methods were contrasted with the best dignified traditions of English parliamentary life, form and speeches as exemplified by the Churchills and Mr. Balfour; the older types of Liberal—Mr. Asquith and Campbell Bannerman. In short the Lloyd Georgian style, speech and method were summed up in one brief but expressive phrase: "Whitechapel!" The "form" of the Goster—the essence of vul-

garity pyrotechnised with the crudest and most intolerant outbursts of religious cant. One has only to recall the political speeches of the period, particularly those of Messrs. Smith, Chamberlain and Winston Churchill, as Mr. Balfour in his philosophic calm and high Tory traditions could never descend from the high priesthood of British parliamentary life, with its glorious record of deeds and privileges, to the Lloyd George level in speech, method or even plane of thought. It was unthinkable, and so much so that even respectable Liberals—democratic pharisees—passed him by in the lobby, though they required his vote and influence, with tightly drawn coats, as an insignificant, canting, vulgar little Welsh attorney.

And yet it fell to the task of Lloyd George, as the principal supporter and admirer of Kitchener, even as remotely removed as they were one from another in profession, class and method, to save England. And in saving England, its moral beliefs and religious ideals, to help most substantially with all its strength of character, grit and resource to save Europe; to vindicate right as against wrong; civilisation as opposed to barbarity; the cause of the weak against the most ruthless and vile oppressor the world has yet known.

Lloyd George was called to the helm of state when all others had been tried, weighed most leniently in the balance and found wanting. The old traditions and cast iron prejudices, which had hitherto been the bulwark of Britain's sturdy respectability, and her national salvation were broken reeds, and unless the most drastic and sensational methods were put into operation and that immediately, the fate of England and her magnificent Empire augured well to become what the astute and unprincipled but competent Hun, with his scientific thoroughness, was cynically predicting.

Lloyd George knew at once his country's weakness and its latent strength. He was able to estimate his own ability and resources. He has also assessed at their real, superlative value the sterling qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race, its high ideals, its spirit of sacrifice and its latent power, its immense resources in material, men and wealth. The British people, after all, formed but a small part of it: there was still yet the great democracy on the other side. It was a race for time if right was to be forever vindicated, and might, hostility and crime were to ever go down before the civilisation of Calvary.

And the most amazing spectacle of all—to peer, bishop, merchant, soldier and labourer; to the intense surprise of all, for no one trusted him, no one for a moment believed in him,—the unknown village politician, he proved to be, among legions of apparently much more educated, well tried and capable men, the one man who was to save Europe!

No one among the average Britisher, irrespective of race, religion, political creed and environment had confidence in him. No wonder he soon attracted by his deeds, ability, perspicacity and daring the very men who possessing every requisite quality—the prompt application of which spelt ultimate victory. He gathered around him a band of highly competent and magnificent lieutenants—men of ability, attainment and judgment who were idly kicking their heels whilst the Hun carried all before him, pursued his hellish course and the rapid dismemberment of the British Empire, built up by fair and gallant deeds, pioneer enterprise and centuries of sea life and commerce sped kaleidiscopically before them.

The greatest in reputation and ability in English life had been tried and proved incapable. It was for Lloyd George and his lieutenants—men competent and in earnest, to save the empire, to give the English soldier and sailor at least a fighting chance.

And he has triumphed as no one ever in their wildest flights of imagination thought he was even capable of doing. The poor village schoolboy, whose parents were unable to raise him above a primary course—the son essentially in every detail and walk of life of the people, has won the greatest and most stupendous triumph for democracy this conservative old world has ever seen.

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At least, that is the attitude of the average Englishman, however much others may be unable to understand or appreciate it.

The recent election results are in themselves the most inspiring and most eloquent testimony. Lloyd George and his adherents—the thinkers, well tried patriots and workers have literally swept the polls. They have carried everything before them, and what matters in the tide of affairs "if England but to herself be true?" The men who during the war have stood out, often in but their own estimation and assessment, as leaders and political demagogues have gone down before the people like Jonah's gourd. Men tainted with treason, pacifists, Bolsheviks, "conchies," Suffragists and Liberals of approved respectability, traitors, in fact those of little purpose in life but their own personal advancement, views and aggrandisement, political, adventurers, jugglers and tricksters, have been swept before the popular storm and gone down before the reaper—vox populi.

The "Times" justly remarks the country voted for the man whose war record was beyond reproach.

The Daily Telegraph believes the verdict is the most complete triumph for the Premier in the history of parliamentary government. Pacifism and defeatism received such a lesson as wrong-headed mischief making never had before.

"Premier Lloyd George," the paper concludes, "will have unexampled power to carry out the tasks of peace and reconstruction. He has an unique opportunity. We are convinced that he will make the most of it."

The Daily Chronicle contends that the country was never more democratic, progressive and patriotic. It rallied to Premier Lloyd George as representing the patriot of the democracy and because it wants big things done. It will go ill with any party or section that stands between him and the execution of the peoples' mandate.

Mr. J. L. Garvin in the Observer writes that it was Britain's quietest election, but it proved by far the greatest.

"There is still patriotic stability and strong good judgment in the electorate," writes Mr. Garvin. "The people have a widening freedom of view, a deepening of social insight and resolute, constructive ideas of progress."

Summing up the result, the Observer says: "This verdict is an act of trust, the like of which was never known before. If the people put aside, for a time, Labor in

Henderson's sense, it is because their belief is that the Premier will be unalterably true to the highest spirit of social reconstruction; that of this Britain which emerged lacerated but triumphant from the war, he will make a forever better land; that he will raise the status of the common peoples, cleanse their environments, enlarge their opportunities; that he will be if necessary as fair and decisive and indomitable in the face of the forces of reaction and of reluctance in the ranks behind him as he was facing every emergency of danger throughout the war."

We also, in common with most people, believe he will.

PROCURING HAPPINESS

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