

remind him that fair play requires that all the ex-Service men should have the same chance? Let them have a fair field; and let the best men win! The *temporary* men who fail can be consoled with the vacancies in the lower grades created by the success of the *permanent* men."

IN the current issue of "The American Mercury," Mr. H. L. Mencken unburdens himself on the subject of the raiding of England of rare books and art treasures by American collectors. He is sure that in the long run this will have an evil effect upon Anglo-American relations. Mr. Mencken is always provocative and his anti-Puritanism is one of the most refreshing notes in contemporary American journalism. Among other things he says:—

Every time an American dealer rises at a book auction in London and begins bidding his English colleagues under the table the patriotic English squirm, and every time they squirm they show sound feeling and sound sense. Suppose we were poor and the English were rich, and some of our most precious national heirlooms had to go to on the block, and the English sent hard-boiled commercial gents across the ocean to buy them, and every effort of an American to save them was met by a gaudy flashing of money, like that of an Elk in a supper-club. Who would squirm then? The two cases are exactly parallel. For the books that the agents of American profiteers now gobble so copiously in London are not merely old books; they are, in many cases, national treasures of the English people. Some of them are quite unique; when the single known copy comes to America there is none left for England. The English, seeing this single copy go, feel that they have been stripped—that there has been something unfair about the transaction. Nine-tenths of these books are of English origin. They constitute, collectively, one of the great glories of England. To take them away is to do violence to the national *amour propre*.

IT is very sporting of Mr. Mencken to feel like this, but I am afraid he has inadvertently fallen into a romantic fallacy. As a man of letters naturally books and objects of art assume an undue importance to him. There is not a library or gallery, private or public, in any country of Europe, that does not contain countless art treasures out of their original setting. The greater proportion of Cézannes, to cite a modern instance, is owned outside France. I prefer that Egyptian antiquities be in the British Museum or the Metropolitan Museum, rather than in Cairo, subject to the vagaries of political children like the Egyptian nationalists. Aesthetic susceptibility and political sagacity do not go hand in hand. International relations are governed by men of affairs, and there are plenty of these who do not know a first folio from a Breeches Bible and who probably think an incunabulum is a kind of insect.

CERTAINLY some of the "hard-boiled commercial gents" of whom Mr. Mencken speaks are offensive, but I don't think that we regard them as worse than any other variety of the species because they travel in books. If American newspapers make a fuss when a new art treasure reaches American shores solely because "a prodigious and unprecedented price has been paid for it," ours are not much better. We have the habit of ignoring what Mr. Mencken calls "the great glories of England," until some rich American comes along and buys one of them, and then the Press sets up a howl. I hope I am not cynical, but such is the way of the world.

OCILLUS.

## Will Liberalism Survive?

CAN Liberalism survive? Will Liberalism survive? Liberal headquarters have been hearing a good deal of evidence on these points recently, but most of the witnesses have been interested parties. With all deference we offer for their consideration a few observations on the condition of the patient from an outside study of the symptoms. "To see ourselves as others see us," must sometimes be the ambition of even the pundits of Abingdon Street.

Can Liberalism survive? Understood in its widest sense, this question can only have one answer. While intelligence and generosity, in however small proportions, continue to be attributes of the human animal, Liberalism must survive; and until the race has acquired the fixity of habit and mechanical routine of the insects, so long must Liberalism, in some form or another, be a permanent quality of its mind. But unwelcome as the admission may be to the rank and file party politicians, Liberalism in this wide sense of the word has had some of its most distinguished representatives in the Tory Party. Lord Castlereagh, who has been vilified by every Liberal historian for a century past, used his influence in an essentially Liberal direction in the settlement of Europe. The late Mr. George Wyndham, the founder of this journal, was a Conservative by conviction and habit, but his method of approach to many of the political problems of his time was more essentially Liberal than the cut-and-dried shibboleths which the Liberal caucus adopted. Liberalism, in short, is an attitude of mind, and is part of the common possession of every Englishman.

But that is not the point for Liberal headquarters. What they want to know is not whether Liberalism in some form or another can survive, but whether it can survive in that particular form known as the Liberal Party with a palatial club on the Embankment, half a club in Pall Mall, and headquarters at Abingdon Street. But even here the answer is not ambiguous. There is always room for a party of rational progress. With the Labour Party falling daily more and more into the hands of its extremists, there is no reason in the world why the Liberals should not gradually resume their traditional position in the councils of the State. They must resolve their differences, revise their programme, and reorganise their machinery; and Time, the great arbiter of political fortunes, will sooner or later provide an opportunity. There can be no doubt that the Liberal Party *can* survive.

But *will* it? That is the question for us who are living history, not merely reading it. The same process, which has made Liberalism a permanent possession of intelligent beings, provides no guarantee of its having a permanent repository. The spirit of rational change is tied to no un-