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THE FUTURE OF LIBERALISM IN ENGLAND.

Mr. Herbert Samuel, the Under-Secretary for Home Affairs, speaking the other day at Oxford, made an interesting reference to the relations of Socialism and Liberalism. Mr. Samuel is one of the promising young men of the Liberal party. A large part of his political career has been devoted to the analysis and accentuation of Liberal principles. He has gone to the length of writing a book with the purpose of defining what true Liberalism is or should be, what it may accept and what it should reject. He is, moreover, an earnest, conscientious politician, who, it is said, actually refused promotion during the last Cabinet changes in order to pilot his Children's Bill through the House of Commons. Mr. Samuel is thus a politician of the more speculative sort, whose theories must be received with some respect. "The great danger from Socialism," he is reported to have said, "is not that England will become revolutionary and that institutions will be upset. The danger is that the more revolutionary Socialism raises its head the more Tory and non-progressive England will become. It is from that side that the real danger lies. This has been shown by the recent by-elections." Probably Mr. Samuel, in frankly facing the enemy, is thinking neither of encouraging nor consoling his partisans; for the moment he is looking at party cleavages in the impartial spirit of a scientific inquirer, and, though we must agree with his view to some extent we doubt whether many Liberals would pay Conservatism the compliment of attributing to it so immense a vitality. Perhaps Mr. Samuel is estimating the force of Conservatism in its wider sense, as a force common to both political camps, with this reservation, that the Unionists, having forestalled the Liberals in claiming it on their side, might gain a political advantage which ought to be common property.

But Mr. Samuel's standpoint might be differently expressed in view of the divergence between the Radical practice of the present Government and its more complacent theory. "Liberalism is hypocrisy," a cynical politician has observed, "Conservatism is opportunism." Of neither creed is the dictum true. The cry that, because the Government have produced a Licensing Bill which is at once confiscatory and paternal, therefore they are both robbers and hypocrites, is as idle as the cry that Conservatism is the private preserve of a few great brewers. Both cries come from quarters in the respective parties which are not accustomed to a high standard of political judgment or of common honesty. They are cries of which the most may be made during elections, but when they are bandied across the floor of the House of Commons sensible men will know how to regard them at their proper value. The question with which we are concerned is less the manner in which self-seeking politicians attempt to eke out the slenderness of their political principle than the depth of those principles in relation to the welfare of the nation. No misconception could be more gross, or more unfairly exploited by its creators, than the suggestion which couples conservatism and stagnation under a single name. As Mr. Balfour pointed out a few months ago, there is scarcely a reform on the Liberal programme—whose value is national, not political—for which the Liberal party is not indebted to Conservative statesmen. What is more, the solidarity of Conservatism in its outlook on the future contrasts very remarkably with the distracted attention of the Liberal ranks. The present

majority in the House of Commons contains a combination of extreme theorists of singularly diverse standpoints. Can it be said that Home Rule or Free Trade are issues on which the Liberal party will speak with assurance and unanimity? Are the Education and Licensing Bills going to pass through the House of Commons without encountering reluctance and searchings of heart on the victorious side of that assembly?

If the House of Commons mirrors the views of the nation Mr. Samuel has good reason to fear that these are features reflected in those troubled waters which come too near caricature. The nation will tolerate a Government long enough, but it will not tolerate it when a travesty of its mandates is held up to it for applause. Mr. Samuel, speaking to a comprehending audience at Oxford, does not take the same buoyant outlook as, let us say, Mr. Lloyd-George, after the crushing blow of the Manchester election. He is openly dispirited and pessimistic as to the popularity of Liberalism. The country will come back to Conservatism in good time, we may be sure, though the causes of the change are not perhaps exactly as Mr. Samuel would have us think them. It is not so much that the country suspects the Liberal party of Socialist leanings as that it is growing weary of a policy of sledge-hammer reforms grotesquely executed on a miniature anvil. In every measure of importance since 1906 the cry has always been greater than the deed. The Licensing Bill, which is to reduce drinking, is found on examination, to hold out that as the last of its probabilities; the Education Bill, which is to satisfy everybody, is full of a contentious spirit; Old Age Pensions, the gilded sop so long kept in reserve, is left to the future under the name of the present. This incompleteness of constructive reform and these abrupt transitions from topic to topic, this vast oasis of theorizing from which one is projected into the deserts of achievement, by a curious reversal of expected conditions—these things more than a fear of Socialism are loosening the hold of the Government on the nation and preparing the day of Mr. Balfour's return to power.

GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Mr. Lonsdale (*Cons.* Mid. Armagh) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether proposals had been made to the Government with reference to connecting the British railway system in Africa with the German, and if Walfish Bay was in any way the subject of negotiations between the British and German Governments.

Sir Edward Grey replied to the first question in the negative. With regard to the second question, the Minister said that negotiations were in progress only with respect to the fixing of the boundary between the Walfish Bay territory and German South-West Africa.

On behalf of the Board of Agriculture it was stated that there was at present no intention of annulling the prohibition against the importation of hay and straw.

Mr. Lonsdale enquired further if the Ameer of Afghanistan had replied to the representations of the Indian Government with regard to the participation of Afghans in the last frontier disturbances, and if an explanation had been obtained of the hostile demonstration in the Khyber pass.

The Under Secretary of the India Office, Mr. Buchanan, said in reply that the Indian Government had received from the Ameer an explanation of the matter referred to, and his Highness had further given friendly assurances as to the measures taken by him to restrain the Afghans from joining the bands on the northern frontier of India. It would not be in the public interest to give particulars of the correspondence.

SIR EDWARD GREY ON ARMAMENT LIMITATION.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey, was the guest of the Iron and Steel Institute on Thursday evening and, in replying to the toast of "The Guests," said that for England it was desirable to combat the growing cost of armaments, but one nation without the co-operation of others was powerless in this matter. The Government was alive to the importance of maintaining British armaments. In particular, the expenditure for the Fleet must always be in proportion to that of other Powers.

INTERVIEW WITH HERR DERNBURG.

The London *Chronicle* of yesterday published a long article by Mr. Stead and an interview with Secretary of State Dernburg, who had had a conversation on Thursday evening with Dr. Jameson. Herr Dernburg was to be present yesterday at a luncheon in the rooms of the Chartered Company, and there to meet Mr. Bailey, the largest farmer in South Africa. Herr Dernburg denied that he wished to negotiate with reference to building a railway from the West Coast to the Transvaal, but added that the building of railways meant the building of the African Empire. "Build railways," he said, "and you will have no war. We shall soon have 3,000 miles in operation. There is no quarrel between Germany and England. Both are the administrators of the extensive South African property; both have the same work and often make the same mistakes. Let us keep the same end in view—to work together, and not as rivals. That is my ideal. (Applause.) I am glad to see that so many Englishmen are of my opinion. As to the Customs question, we believe in the open door and our practice corresponds to that belief."

THE FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION.

The great Franco-British Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush, London, was opened on Thursday by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who was accompanied by the Princess. During the opening ceremony His Royal Highness delivered a speech, in which he gracefully acknowledged the co-operation of France and expressed the hope that the Exhibition would awaken friendly rivalry, stimulate the exchange of opinions and ideas, strengthen fraternal relationship between the nations, and promote the peace and prosperity of the world.

On Thursday evening a banquet was given by the London Chamber of Commerce, at which speeches were made by the French Ministers, MM. Cruppi and Ruau, both of whom characterised the Exhibition as one of the most successful results of the *entente cordiale*, and hoped that the good relations between France and England would be still further developed.

THE SEDITION IN INDIA.

A telegram from Bombay reports that the editor of the native weekly independent journal, *Mongro-lewala*, has been arrested on a charge of inciting to rebellion.

(Continued on page 2.)