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CONSTRUCTIVE CONSERVATISM.

(From our London correspondent.)

Now that there is a lull in the political strife the outlook of thoughtful people tends to expand beyond the limits which party places on the mind. To defend issues or to propagate policy blunts the perceptions of great statesmen when their activities are hampered by the necessity of steering a prudent as well as a direct course. How much more, then, do the inevitable limitations of practical politics blunt the broader perceptions of ordinary men, who look to the machinery of Government for such motive power as may bring nearer the desired ends of their political faith. Let us assume that the present Government has sought to justify itself as a reforming and peace-fostering administration; let us even assume (simply for the sake of argument) that it is to go down to posterity with the good name it claims for itself; but let us take the standpoint of an outside observer rather than that of a party worker. How do our observations bear on the future? Can it honestly be admitted that Liberalism is still what it professes to be, that it is justified by modern conditions in keeping up the tone it acquired under Gladstone?

Liberalism, strictly speaking, takes its primary justification from two causes, an industrial and a social revolution; it is the revolt against privilege and exploitation; it is the protest of the individual against the State. The old Conservatism of England, as of Europe, was reactionary; it was the claim of the State to dispose of the individual at its own discretion; it was the last burst of energy in a decaying system. There are still reactionaries in Europe; if there are any Tories left in England they exist simply as quaint survivals whom nobody heeds. The conditions of modern life are as inconsistent with true Tory feeling as they are with an Egyptian hierarchy. Call it democracy or plutocracy, call it an oligarchy of wealth or merit or chance, the system of Government today, be it Conservative or Liberal, displays uniform characteristics which repeatedly outlive the change of parties. The increasing delegation of powers to local bodies, the increasing administrative independence of the Cabinet, the increasing impotence of the House of Commons to form a true link between the country and the Cabinet while simply acting as a great debating society from which Prime Ministers choose their henchmen—these are tendencies which override all differences of party, all principles of policy, and all mandates from the country. Whatever may be the value of the present system in affording able and ambitious men opportunities to rise from obscurity to power, the professed object of Liberalism is not attained. The changes effected from the time of the Reform Bill to the present day have been social rather than political. In spite of an extended franchise, in spite of extended education, in spite of the wider knowledge which modern facilities foster, it cannot truly be said that the people as such rule more directly than they did when Liberalism had achieved its great elementary reforms. Certainly, the atmosphere is clearer, the adjustment of social forces is juster, the democratic feeling stronger and more sincere than it was in the days of Pitt or even in the early days of Disraeli. But beyond that point Liberalism cannot advance. The divergences from the Conservative plan of action run along lines of policy, and details of policy, rather than along lines of principle. Liberal and Conservative statesmen are pledged to identical reforms at home, to one identical policy abroad. Almost every section of Liberal opinion, with the exclusion of the indeterminate and somewhat incalculable extreme left, could be included in the admitted tenets of Conservatism, whatever may be the respective views on the means to achieve the end.

Beyond certain points, however, Conservatism overlaps into new regions. Imperialism, as a constructive policy bound up with tariff reform, and Home Rule cannot by any process of argument be distributed over both parties. These are great questions on which there are fundamental differences; and they are the questions, moreover, on which Liberalism must stand or fall. As regards Home Rule, nobody who is at all acquainted with the tactics of politicians can doubt for a moment that the majority of Liberals are cold or lukewarm. As regards tariff reform, let us say (with

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moderation) that it is less easy to kill the heresy than the initial fanfares of Mr. Asquith's Administration implied. Supposing, then, that the reforms of the Government are substantial and permanent, there is reason to believe that the country is ready for the constructive proposals of Mr. Balfour's party; supposing, on the other hand, that the reforms are inadequate or badly executed, there is reason to believe that the country would welcome a change of method in approaching the same problems. Such a change is not possible without a change of parties; but, whether Mr. Balfour accepts or rejects Mr. Asquith's work, there are questions of vital importance which he has undertaken to approach and which the country seems anxious that he should approach, and at no distant date. One hears it admitted even by good Liberals that we seem to be on the wave of a strong Conservative reaction. It is timely. There are many ardent believers in the traditions of English Government who, without being narrow-minded or mistrustful, view the helter-skelter methods of Liberalism with misgiving and wait patiently for a return to statesmanship based on far-sightedness and consistency. Let us hope that when the day comes men will be as plentiful as measures, and that the solid traditions of the past will not crumble through the lack of personal forces.

GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE KING OF SPAIN IN ENGLAND.

London, August 25. After making a short stay King Alfonso left London this afternoon for the Isle of Wight, to join his consort, Queen Victoria, who is staying with her mother, Princess Henry of Battenberg.

BRITISH SHIPOWNERS TO CO-OPERATE.

(From our own correspondent.)

London, August 25. The evening papers give notice to the fact that three of the largest British shipping firms have agreed to form a "safety route" round the world, which will be habitually followed by all the vessels of the fleets belonging to the three companies concerned. These are the New Zealand Shipping Company, White Star ("Round the World" route), and Messrs. Shaw, Savill, and Co., whose good example has long been needed to promote more extended amalgamation for the common good among British shipowners. The value of the arrangement consists in the fact that the accepted track will be frequently traversed by the vessels of the united companies, and any mishap entailing danger or delay to any one vessel will be quickly discovered by that which follows her, and assistance given if needed; while if the accident was of such a nature as to necessitate a crawl home, passengers or any pressing business could be carried forward, and news given of an overdue vessel to allay anxiety at Lloyd's or among relations. Altogether it is to be hoped that this amalgamation for the protection and furtherance of common interests will be quickly copied, where possible, by other large ship-running lines; and that the lesson so taught will be commonly

understood to be this: that instead of engaging in rivalry among themselves, British shipowners should realise that it is best for themselves and best for the nation that they should band together and compete against the foreigner.

GERMAN LINER'S RECORD RUN.

London, August 25. The North German Lloyd steamer "Kaiser Wilhelm II." arrived at Plymouth yesterday from New York, after a voyage of 5 days 9hrs. 55min., from Sandy Hook to the Eddystone. Her average speed was 23.71 knots, the performance being the best ever achieved by one of the German Atlantic lines. The vessel has brought London within 5 days 17hrs. of New York, although she had to take the southern or longer course. The passage is the quickest time ever accomplished for the course of 3,080 miles, and the vessel's speed had only been exceeded by the "Lusitania" and "Mauretania." Despite the latter's additional knot speed, the "Kaiser Wilhelm II.'s" mails reached London in a world's record time.

BRITISH ENTERPRISE IN TURKEY.

Constantinople, August 25. The English Government have decided to appoint to the Embassy here an attaché who is an expert on commercial, financial, and industrial questions. This step is to be taken in consideration of the excellent opportunities afforded British manufacturers and commercial houses by the granting of a Constitution and other symptoms of awakening in Turkey.

HONOUR FOR FORMER TAMMANY BOSS.

London, August 25. At a special meeting of the Dublin Corporation yesterday, Mr. Richard Croker entered his name in the roll of honorary burgesses of the city, and was presented with the certificate of the honorary freedom of Dublin. Mr. Nannetti, M.P., in eulogy on Mr. Croker, said everyone knew the latter was and is a power in the ruling destinies of the United States. Mr. Croker, replying, hoped he would live long enough to see Ireland free.

VETERAN ATLANTIC SKIPPER TO RETIRE.

The approaching retirement of Captain J. B. Watt, commander of the "Lusitania," and commodore of the Cunard fleet, is announced by the Liverpool *Journal of Commerce*. His resignation, postponed some time back at the request of the Cunard directorate, is now to take effect—probably after his next voyage—and he leaves the bridge for good. Captain Watt, who comes of a long line of Scottish shipmasters and shipowners, entered the Cunard service in the year 1873, after considerable experience in sail. He successively commanded the "Umbria," "Etruria," "Lucania," and "Carmania." The latter was the first venture of the Cunard Company in the matter of turbine steamers, and Captain Watt, alike by his experience of that vessel and his standing in the company's service, naturally succeeded to the command of the "Lusitania" when she was ready for sea. He has handled the mammoth vessel with the same success and freedom from accident as distinguished his previous commands. Many an Atlantic voyager will learn with regret that the doyen of the Cunard service now desires rest and retirement.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE TARIFF QUESTION.

The latest advantage in the Presidential contest lies with Mr. Taft, who, by his definite announcement regarding the Tariff Question, has, to a very large extent, taken the wind out of Mr. Bryan's sails. Hitherto the Democratic candidate has shown the better strategy, but it is a clever move on Mr. Taft's part to notify his rejection of the anti-revision policy urged by certain of his following, at the very moment when Mr. Bryan, at Des Moines, is, out of that self-same policy, endeavouring to make political capital. The Democratic Press now professes to see in the statement a ground for aggravated dissensions in the ranks of the Republicans, but such an argument is hardly admissible, seeing that Mr. Taft is, after all, simply reaffirming what he has stated on previous occasions, while, at any rate, the Tariff Reform section of his party is sufficiently strong to justify the step he has taken.

(Continued on page 2.)