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Frontispiece]

AT CHURCH [Photo; "South Wales .New's "]

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BY
BASIL MURRAY

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER

THE RIGHT HON D. LLOYD GEORGE
p.a, M.P.

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PREFACE

BRON-Y-DE,
CHURT,
SURREY,

February 9th, 1932.

MY DEAR MURRAY,

You ask me to write an introduction to the biography which you have written of me. I am sorry that, for various reasons, I cannot do so.

It is, in the first place, a common supposition assiduously spread by the pretentious that I never read any books. One day I am going to issue a challenge to the people who are responsible for these reports to submit themselves to a public examination—to which I shall also submit myself—upon general knowledge of books and authors. I mean specifically to include in the challenge one eminent statesman who recently gave public utterance to this silly fable.

But this report has grounds for justification in regard, at any rate, to two classes of literature—or rather, shall I say to two kinds of printed matter which I always shun. One is the printed reports of my own speeches. Whatever I may read in the daily papers, these I always studiously avoid. The other is a biography of my own life.

I have reached the point of life at which we retain very few illusions, and as one who has had perhaps more biographies, lampoons and caricatures than almost any

living person it would not be surprising if I retain very few about myself.

Now I can read books about things which I know little about and enjoy them. On the other hand, I cannot read books about things which I know better than the writer with any sort of satisfaction. To take an example. I am a worshipper of George Borrow's books, especially those about gypsies, of whom I unfortunately know very little. But there is one book of his which I cannot abide, and that is his *Wild Wales*, because I know Wales so much better than he ever did. That is probably why I do not wish to read a biography of myself. In fact, the only biographical notices about myself which I should really be amused to read, but owing to circumstances over which I shall have no control I shall have no opportunity of reading, are my obituary notices. For out of sheer decency even critical writers will be more or less bound on that occasion to preserve a slight bias in favour of the subject matter; and that, to my mind, is, on the whole, the most attractive kind of biography—certainly to the victim. Ill-natured people are a minority in every race—especially the British.

I am told by those who have read it that your book is extremely readable stuff, considering the subject which you have chosen—and I wish you all success with it.

Ever sincerely,

(Signed)

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

Basil Murray, Esq.

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L.G.

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE was born in Manchester, on January 17th, 1863. So perennial is the vitality of the man that it comes as a surprise to many when they realise that he is now close on seventy years of age.

His father, David George, was a schoolmaster and the son of a Pembrokeshire yeoman. Well educated himself, he cherished dreams of the advancement of education for others.

Fate was not kind to him. After pursuing his ambitions without achieving the success of which he dreamed, he was forced to relinquish his Headship of a Grammar School in Haverfordwest, for the more certain, though less congenial, life of an elementary school teacher.

One privilege he enjoyed, however, contact with the mind and personality of Henry Martineau.

David George was not a strong man. After teaching in Liverpool, in Haverfordwest, in Pwllheli, where he married Elizabeth Lloyd, and finally in Manchester, the state of his health sent him back to Pembrokeshire. There, after barely two years in fruitless search for health, as a farmer, he died.

His affairs had not prospered, and his wife, Elizabeth, was faced with the task of bringing up two boys, the second born posthumously.

The farm had to be sold to pay off debts. There was nothing left.

Mrs. George had a brother, Richard Lloyd. He was unmarried and he now made it his business to watch over his sister and her children.

He took them with him to the village of Llanystumdwy, near Criccieth, and shared his cottage with them.

It is impossible to gauge the exact extent to which Lloyd George is indebted to his uncle, if only for one thing—his placing the material means towards a career within his nephew's grasp. It is impossible to measure the devotion and courage of his mother.

"My mother," testified Mr. Lloyd George in later years . . . "had to make a hard struggle to rear her children. But she never complained, and she never spoke of her struggles. It was not until long after that we were able to appreciate how fine had been her spirit in the hard task of bringing up her fatherless children. Our bread was home made. We never ate fresh meat, and I remember that our greatest luxury was half an *egg* for each child on Sunday mornings." (J. Hugh Edwards, *D. LI. George*).

As has been pointed out, however, this does not mean that the family were in the direst straits. Fresh meat, in the days before the universal use of cold storage, was not part of the daily diet of many families better off than that of Lloyd George.

Undeniably the surroundings, events and contacts of childhood influence the mind and character of a man. The deeds, achievements, judgments and even the weaknesses of manhood are, in part, reducible to their effects.

Life in the village of Llanystumdwy was dominated by three things, the struggle to live, religious enthusiasm, and an interest in politics, local and national. Add to these

the fact that the language of the people is Welsh, and that the village is situated amid some of the most beautiful scenery in Wales, and it is not difficult to understand something of the mentality of David Lloyd George, who spent in it the most impressionable years of his life.

Again, those were the days of the Squirearchy. All the while there was a growing resentment against the petty injustices and the local tyranny of the descendants of a feudal regime.

The nonconformist independence of spirit inherited by Lloyd George and the intensity of his own individuality were undoubtedly stirred by the conditions of life in his adopted village.

Keen, and quick of intellect, combining a sensitiveness to injustice, and a yeoman's son's dislike of interference, he was gradually acquiring in these surroundings the ideas and ideals he was later to fight for so uncompromisingly.

His later championship of the poor, his struggles for Welsh Disestablishment, his fights on land questions, were not the purely intellectual conviction of a doctrinaire. They were the inevitable and spontaneous convictions of a man who had lived his childhood in adversity under the show of a petty local tyranny, in a religious faith that was conscious of, and sensitive to, thinly disguised official hostility.

Out of that atmosphere might easily have emerged a rabid Socialist. Instead there came a young lawyer, an ardent Nationalist pledged to right wrong by constitutional means. Out of it came England's War Premier.

Analyse, however, as one may, the heredity, the circumstances and the surroundings of a man's life, it is impossible to explain everything in terms of these elements.

It is least of all possible to explain that intangible something which is a man's own individuality.

It is no chemical compound to be separated completely into ingredients, and made up again like a prescription.

Only from the manifestations of a man's self, revealed in his actions, can one gather what are the components of that elusive yet all important thing—personality.

The personality of Lloyd George was from the outset that of a leader, fired with a strong sense of right and wrong.

One incident will suffice to illustrate this. The National School—the only one in the village—was a church school belonging to the Anglican Communion. Twice a year the children, the majority of whom were Nonconformists, had to attend church to recite the creed and be examined in the catechism. The Nonconformist parents objected. Lloyd George's uncle, in particular, was among the most outspoken opponents of this custom. The nephew was so impressed by his uncle's pronounced dislike of the practice that he persuaded his schoolmates to pledge themselves to silence when next they were taken to the Anglican Church for prayers and catechism.

The repeated entreaties of the schoolmaster failed to overcome their determination. It was not until Lloyd George's brother, moved, possibly, with pity for the harassed master, began to recite the creed that the resistance broke down.

The day was won, however, and the practice was never repeated.

There is every indication that the future Premier, although precocious and clearly gifted beyond the average, did not differ from other boys in his love of mischief. Indeed he appears to have been a ringleader in this as in other things.



THE SMITHY AT LLANYSTUMDWY

Raids on orchards, practical jokes and every discomfort to the peace of their elders that small boys indulge in, came to be attributed either to him or to his influence.

In the smithy and in the shop of his uncle, Richard Lloyd, the cobbler, Lloyd George learned his first lessons in debating.

"Yonder smithy," he declared in 1909, in a speech at Llanystumdwy, as he waved his hand in the direction of a building near the bridge, "was my first Parliament, where, night after night, we discussed and decided all the abstruse questions relating to this world and the next in politip, in theology, in philosophy and science. There was nothing too wide or comprehensive for us to discuss, and we settled all the problems among ourselves without the slightest misgiving."

Richard Lloyd was an outstanding personality in the village. He was also the most independent of men. Into his workshop gathered everybody with a grievance, asking for advice. In that workshop also there were endless discussions of religious questions.

It is usually said that there are two subjects which should never be discussed, religion and politics. Had this been the case in Llanystumdwy the village would have remained almost silent, for no other topics were so keenly debated.

Richard Lloyd was an ardent Nonconformist of the Campbellite Sect—the strictest and most unbending. His workshop was the village parliament. There, also, the daily papers were read to those who knew no English.

There, while men aired their grievances and proclaimed their opinions, Lloyd George listened and made up his mind to work one day for the abolition of the injustices they complained of. It was noticed, too, that in discussion he was, even as a young boy, a match for all but the wisest of his elders.

When the time came for the choice of his career, it was his mother who suggested that he should become a lawyer. Others had thought that he should become a schoolmaster, like his father. Others, again, that he should study medicine.

Not unnaturally there had also been some question of his entering the Nonconformist Ministry. One thing, only, appears to have made his family hesitate over this. The Campbellite Sect had no salaried pastors. The service of the Ministry is undertaken freely, and they depend upon their daily work for their living.

It is said that Mrs. George was influenced in her choice of the legal career for her son by her admiration for a solicitor who had been a staunch friend of her husband.

Every obstacle, however, was in the way of such a choice. The chief of them were the lack of sufficient education and the absence of money. It was here that Richard Lloyd showed himself the truest of friends to his nephew.

He had laid aside in the course of a hard-working life a few hundred pounds for his old age. This money he willingly handed over for his nephew's education. In addition, he set himself to study so that he might help the boy to prepare for his examinations.

The confidence of the uncle was not misplaced. Lloyd George passed his preliminary examination and was then articled to a firm of solicitors in Portmadoc.

No praise can adequately express the splendid devotion of the uncle for his nephew. Lloyd George himself has said of him, "I can never tell how much I owed to this good man. He never married, but he set himself the task of educating the children of his sister as a supreme and sacred duty, to it he devoted his time, his energy, and all his savings."

The "village lad" of a hundred pranks, the keen observer of his elders, the sensitive, impressionable boy in whose heart was kindled the fire of national and political enthusiasm, was now settling down, at the age of sixteen, to become a man of the world.

He applied himself diligently to the study of Law.

His love of debating impelled him to join a debating society in Portmadoc, and his ability became more and more manifest.

The first reference in the Press to his powers as a speaker appeared in the *North Wales Observer* in 1882.

The subject under discussion was the "Bombardment of Alexandria by British Warships," and Lloyd George, foreshadowing his attitude towards the Boer War, "in a most eloquent harangue" denounced the war as a wicked one.

In this speech he expressed himself the champion of the peasants and the enemy of oppression.

The report is interesting as revealing, in embryo, thoughts and ideas that he was to develop later at great length.

While devoting himself with great energy to his legal studies, and to his debating, he managed to find time to add to his knowledge of history and of literature.

He realised that every moment was precious, and that the circumstances of his boyhood had been unfavourable to the acquiring of knowledge as wide as he might be called on one day to possess.

He made it his business, therefore, to read Ruskin, Macaulay and Carlyle.

This was but the beginning of an acquaintance which was to last right up to the present. Writing of Lloyd George, when he was still Prime Minister, the anonymous author of *Makers of the New World*, who has unrivalled sources of information, says:—

"I was fortunate enough to meet, a short time ago, someone who was in the process of putting Mr. Lloyd George's library in order, and I was told that the number of books he has collected is remarkable. And they are books which have been read and re-read, and by Mr. Lloyd George himself, for his familiar pencil marks appear, to record the fact. Grote, Gibbon, Mommsen, Macaulay, Froude, Green, Bagehot— these well-worn volumes have been his companions for many years, and he constantly refers to them. Carlyle, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Smollett, Fielding, Sterne are familiar friends to him, and of the more modern authors, his favourites are perhaps Meredith, Stevenson and Wells; but Mr. Bernard Shaw would probably learn with surprise—but not disapproval—that Mr. Lloyd George has read every one of his books as they appeared, with the intensest interest. 'He loathes me but I like his books,' was his comment on G. B. S., whose talent he admires greatly. 'Bernard Shaw is nearly as clever as he thinks he is—and that is putting it rather high,' he once remarked."

His alertness and adaptability were soon observed, and everyone who came in contact with him was convinced that the future was full of promise. His employer pointed him out. "Mark that lad; he will one day become one of the leading men of the land."

In 1884, when he was but twenty-one years old, he qualified as a solicitor.

It is tragic to recall, however, that he was unable to afford the money for the robes, without which he could not go into court.

When, at last, he was able to buy them, he soon began to make a name for himself.

His uncompromising championship of his clients' causes,

the wholehearted enthusiasm with which he threw himself into his cases, soon gained for him a reputation.

Yet another example of his mother's unfailing assistance is recorded in this difficult period. Realising, as she did, the inbred dislike of the Welsh peasant for visiting a lawyer's office, she took every precaution to welcome them. They would be greeted by her, in person, with the greatest cordiality, and when the dread interview was over, she would invite them to take a cup of tea with her, talk tathem and tell them that they might be certain of her son's most assiduous attention to their cases.

He was, from the outset, fearless in his attitude towards the Bench.

The traditional complacency of local magistrates was, on occasions, rudely upset by this outspoken young man, who often horrified older members of his profession. His downright manner won for him a salutary respect that was withheld from older and more accommodating lawyers.

The more memorable of his earlier cases are, like his first reported speech, clearly indicative of the line he was to take in his political career. They are worthy tales of the championship of the people's right by a young man of the people, by a young Welsh Nationalist who was the bitter opponent of anything savouring of injustice.

Many of them were undertaken on behalf of poachers, with whom he had a natural sympathy. In his boyhood he had indulged in not a little poaching himself.

There was another reason, however, for his sympathy. The squirearchy, which in his mind represented something antagonistic to the development of Wales, pursued the poacher for a few paltry thefts, while itself willing to squander money on the preservation of land for the

hunting and shooting of game. Both instinctively and logically he was opposed to the tyranny and injustices of a regime that laid a heavy hand upon his fellow-countrymen.

One of the features of the career of Lloyd George is the extent to which his name has been constantly before the general public. He has, from the outset, cultivated public attention. The beginning of his career as a lawyer was marked by the part he played in what was known as the "Llanfrother Burial Case." It became sufficiently prominent to call widespread attention in Wales to the fact both of his skill and his abilities.

The facts of the case are briefly as follows:—A quarryman named Roberts, of the village of Llanfrother, had lost a daughter, and she was buried in a new piece of ground recently attached to the churchyard. Just before his own death he had asked to be buried beside her. Roberts was a Nonconformist, and the Nonconformist Minister was to conduct the burial service.

The requisite notice was sent to the Rector, saying that his services would not be required. The Rector did not take the information kindly. Instead, he ordered the freshly opened grave to be closed and the cemetery gates to be locked.

The sexton was asked to prepare the grave afresh. In his dilemma he went to the Rector, who insisted that he had the right to choose a place for the grave and chose it in another part of the cemetery.

The dead man's relatives appealed to Lloyd George, who told them they were within their rights in choosing the place of burial, and urged them, if necessary, to force their way into the locked cemetery. This they did. The result was a legal action. The case was tried before a jury.

Such was the bias of the bench that the judge refused to accept the findings of the jury in favour of the defendants.

An appeal was made to the Divisional Courts, and the finding of the jury upheld. The result was not only a personal triumph for the young lawyer; it brought his name before the people of Wales.

In 1888 Lloyd George married, as the culmination of a boyhood romance. Margaret Owen and Lloyd George had met frequently in their childhood, usually on the Sundays when they were both taken to the Methodist Chapel at Criccieth.

The marriage was a fortunate one, and through the long and difficult years of his political career, his wife has, as he himself declared, "stood by through good and evil report." The year of his marriage was also the year of the "Burial Case," which had made his name so prominent.

It is difficult to gauge—difficult for Lloyd George to remember—at what precise date the thought of a political career came to be rooted in his mind.

One of the chief obstacles to such a career was, naturally, the lack of financial resources. He had to rely entirely on his practice as a solicitor for his living. To give that up and go to Westminster might be hazardous in the extreme. The days of the struggle to live were to be long and arduous, and many years had yet to go by before he knew the real meaning of the word comfort.

One event had a great effect upon him—the visit to Wales of Michael Davitt—the Irish Patriot. He had come on the invitation of a Welsh Patriot named Michael Jones. Jones, one of the most prominent figures in Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century, was a minister, and at the time of Davitt's visit he was principal of the Congregational Seminary of Bala.

His chief preoccupation, however, was not so much theology as Land Reform. He ardently desired to see the nationalisation of the land. So ardently did he work for this end that he was regarded by many as something of a fanatic.

Jones invited Davitt, in whom he saw a man of like ideals, to address a meeting at Blaenau-festiniog. It was a daring act.

Davitt was only too pleased to accept.

Lloyd George was on the platform at the meeting and, at the end, made a speech that was both witty and effective. It so impressed Michael Davitt that he did his utmost to persuade Lloyd George to take up politics, adding that he prophesied a future for him. This fanned the flame of his ambition, and presumably gave a definite shape to what was already more than half formed in the mind.

It was by way of the County Council and Welsh Nationalism that Lloyd George went to Westminster.

Opportunity counts for so much in the success of a career.

At this time feelings were running high in Wales on many subjects. Any man who showed those feelings and coupled with them the ability to take effective lead might readily hope to succeed.

These subjects were Church Disestablishment, Land Reform, the transference of the power of the squire to the people, and, in certain quarters, the demand for Home Rule for Wales. All of these things Lloyd George had at heart, and the moment was not far off when his championship of them would win him an election and set him on the path of his political career.

The farmers of South Carnarvonshire were forming themselves into a union to improve the conditions of rent

and tenancies. Lloyd George made it his business to associate himself with them; and offered his services to work with them in the achievement of their plans. He knew that the movement reflected a state of things that concerned the whole future of Welsh politics, and he was determined not to be out of it. At the same time he continued to throw his energies into the religious fights that went on side by side with the agitations for Land Reform.

Strangely enough, we are told, that as recently as the day on which he and Mrs. Lloyd George had left for their honeymoon (January 24th, 1888) and when they had talked of what the future might or might not hold, the possibility of a political career had not been entered upon. Now, a year later, there was every prospect of his playing a prominent part in Welsh politics.

The wider horizon, however, was as yet unsighted.

In 1889 he was unanimously adopted as Liberal candidate for the Borough of Carnarvon. Associating himself with Tom Ellis, whom he was so soon to follow into Parliament, and who was himself an ardent Nationalist and a keen politician, he declared it his belief that the Borough elections should be fought on political lines and that the chief issue should be "legislative autonomy for Wales."

There was strong opposition to such proposals. The squires in particular were apprehensive. They saw the possibilities of such a movement. It threatened the existence of their power.

Four districts offered to make him their candidate. It is remarkable that he refused every offer.

With a foresight that, on looking back, some might call an early manifestation of political astuteness, others

of sincere self-sacrifice, he refused every offer. He preferred he said, to work and keep himself in readiness.

The determination to make the County Council elections political issues was completely justified.

The result of the polls showed a complete victory throughout Wales for the Liberals.

The policy which Lloyd George had adopted of refusing to stand for any seat was also justified. He had made himself known and appreciated over a wider area than he would have done by accepting a seat, and his efforts were duly recorded by the Carnarvonshire County Council.

Almost the first act they performed on meeting was to elect him to the position of an alderman. He was the youngest alderman in Wales, and the fact was commemorated in the title of "the boy alderman" given him by Mr. Parkes—last Postmaster-General in Lord Salisbury's Government.

He at once showed a political turn of mind. He made it abundantly clear that, in his opinion, County Councils were not parochial committees, gathered to discuss parochial affairs.

"Wales," he is reported as having said, at one of the meetings, "expects a good deal from her County Councils, and the country at large will be greatly disappointed if these Councils do not accomplish something far beyond the mere duties prescribed by the Local Government Board."

He wished to infuse a thoroughly National spirit into these County Councils. Rightly or wrongly, he saw in them the nucleus of a national Parliament or groups of Parliaments.

The County Council should make it its business to be concerned with national issues.

So far was he prepared to insist on this and at the same time to seek some form of centralised authority that he advocated the formation of a County Councils Association, to be representative of the whole of Wales, and on whose board should sit three members from each local council.

Such a revolutionary notion was naturally opposed by the Conservatives with every weapon at their disposal, and it is not surprising that he did not succeed in these attempts.

Actually the Conservatives were within their rights in claiming, as they did, that he was seeking to take from Parliament and give to local authorities powers that belonged to the central authority.

It is more than likely that he himself realised this, and that he was only agitating for something he knew could only come as a result of Parliamentary legislation.

It is better to aim high. It is good policy to show oneself to be whole-heartedly in support of the strongest measures when one is dealing with national feelings. Such a method of procedure has been characteristic of other politicians besides Lloyd George. They have nearly always prospered.

Had he stopped short at this point it is likely that his schemes would never have succeeded. The forces ranged against any such plans were too powerful. An opportunity in wider spheres, the opportunity for which he had been waiting, now presented itself.

In 1890 the Conservative member for the Carnarvon Boroughs died.

To the relief, doubtless, of the Conservative members of the Borough Councils, who had suffered so much at the hands of the "boy alderman," Lloyd George was adopted as the Liberal candidate. They hoped that his defeat at

the Parliamentary polls might **put** an end to his public **career** and send him back to his solicitor's office a chastened **and** wiser man. The Conservatives, realising that the fight would be a hard one, determined to find the strongest candidate to oppose the young firebrand Nationalist with **the** persuasive tongue.

They found him in the person of Ellis Nanney, a man who combined in a singular degree both power and popularity.

He was the squire of the village of Llanystumdwy, and thus the fight began between two men who for many years had lived at opposite ends of the social scale in the same village.

The struggle had every appearance of being interesting, and the issue was by no means certain.

The chief Conservative agent of Wales appeared on the scene, and after careful consideration declared that their candidate was likely to succeed.

Every available weapon was used against Lloyd George, not the least effective being that of his youth. In Wales wisdom was considered the prerogative of the old.

With that opportunism that has always characterised him, Lloyd George made great use of the relative positions occupied by himself and the squire. It was only natural that the "village lad" should stress his village origin. His words, full of picturesque comparison—struck home at a time when men's minds are more easily influenced by a telling phrase than by a sound argument. Was he not, also, a champion of the National cause? He had everything to recommend him to the hearts of an emotional people. It is on record that the Conservative agent for Wales who had sent his prophecy of victory to London was obliged to change his opinion, and inform headquarters of the likeli-

hood of defeat, after attending a meeting addressed by the Liberal candidate.

The effect of oratory on the Celtic imagination was such, at this meeting in the Carnarvon Pavilion, and Lloyd George's use of the fact that he was "cottage-bred" created such enthusiasm, that the audience went wild.

Power to sway the emotions was clearly going to win the day. After a campaign lasting about a month the election was held and, after a recount, Lloyd George, whose defeat had been announced after the first count, was declared the winner by the narrow majority of eighteen votes.

It had been a hard struggle. Circumstances had combined to help the new Liberal candidate. Ten years before the ground might not have been so well prepared, and his gifts might not have served his purposes so well.

He owed his success to the rising tide of Nationalism, to the fact that he was able to point out to ears growing daily more willing to listen the mistakes and injustices of the squirearchy.

He had passed through a hard school, but every lesson had, in the event, proved a benefit to him. He was thereby enabled to force home his appeals.

Without all these attendant circumstances his gifts would not have been of such great avail.

A phrase-maker can only hope to succeed when he appeals to the emotions. A man of action requires opportunity.

In these respects—fate was kind to Lloyd George.

He went to Westminster on Budget Day, when the House was crowded.

One day, he was himself, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to introduce a Budget. The Members of Parliament could

be forgiven for not foreseeing that event. There was nothing to indicate that he had interests outside the Principality.

The Parliamentary correspondent of one newspaper recorded on that day—"Lloyd George is a young man, pale and stooping, and of a lounging gait."

CHAPTER II

L'ENFANT TERRIBLE

WHILE exercising his oratory outside the House, notably at a meeting of the Liberal Society at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, under the chairmanship of Henry Campbell-Bannerman, under whom he was later to serve, the new member was in no hurry to make his maiden speech in the House.

It was at the meeting in the Metropolitan Tabernacle that, as he himself relates, there occurred an example of the power of his speech. Hitherto his experience had been confined to Wales—now he was entering into a larger field.

Writing of the meeting he says: "I was stuck at the very end of the programme after three or four weary and dreary speakers and a collection had depleted the building of a considerable part of its audience, and of all but one or two of the reporters. Not a man moved whilst I spoke, they were all attention. The cheering and laughter which greeted my remarks drove me on from point to point, until notwithstanding the lateness of the hour and my fixed determination not to speak for more than five or ten minutes, I must have occupied at least twenty-five minutes. What was strange was that when I sat down the audience seemed surprised."

Inside the House, however, he realised how much depended on first impressions, and was not willing to take any risks.

He sought and caught the Speaker's eye for the first time on June 13th, 1890.

The local Taxation Duties Bill had gone into the Committee stage.

The question at issue was the disposal of £350,000 as compensation for the extinction of licences.

Mr. Arthur Acland, in an amendment, had proposed that the money be used in England for instructional purposes, Agriculture, Commercial and Technical. It was suggested that the share for Wales should go towards the requirements of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act. Wales, it was contended, was anxious to further higher education.

Lloyd George violently opposed any idea of compensation. In a short and pointed speech he outlined his opposition—attacking both Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, both of whom had previously opposed any such measures.

Gradually he won over the attention of the House and was congratulated by T. W. Russell, who followed him.

The speech created an impression, and was referred to in the Press as "a capital maiden speech."

In the short space of four months that preceded the prorogation of the House he had attracted the favourable attention of the Liberal leaders.

The Welsh papers prophesied a distinguished future for him.

Relieved of the responsibility of continuing to practise as a solicitor by his brother and partner, now also qualified, he was able to devote his entire attention to politics.

On the reassembling of Parliament in the winter of 1890

the first Bill to be introduced was that of the "Tithe Rent Charge Recovery."

The Welsh farmers were offering an increased resistance to the payment of tithes.

The Bill sought to remove the obligation of payment from the shoulders of the farmers, who were largely Non-conformist, to those of the landowners, the majority of whom belonged to the Established Church.

The Welsh members, as a group, opposed the Bill. They claimed that the money derived from tithe should be at the disposal of the nation.

Lloyd George, in whose scheme of things it was to further Disestablishment, saw in the measure a useful prop for the platform of such an agitation, and therefore decided to support the Bill. He proposed amendments for its furtherance, many of which were adopted.

He opposed the Free Education Bill in February, 1891, and angered its champions.

The first indications of his unwillingness to be a mere cog in the machine soon developed into something stronger.

He first really manifested what a thorn in the flesh he could be to those with whom he was in disagreement when the Government introduced in the early part of 1892 the "Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill."

The object of this Bill was to give greater disciplinary power to Ecclesiastical Courts in dealing with delinquent clergymen. It likewise proposed that the Bishops should be assisted financially with the costs of any proceedings against offenders.

The Government was, almost to a man, solidly behind the measure. In particular it commended itself to Mr. Gladstone,

Lloyd George was in violent opposition. He saw here the chance to attack the Established Church, and based his opposition on two points.

The House of Commons, he argued, was an assembly of men of other creeds than that of the Anglican Church. Why, therefore, should that heterogeneous body be concerned with the domestic problems of one particular sect?

In the second place, he argued that the present time was by no means one when the attention of Parliament should be drawn to ecclesiastical affairs while matters of a wider social importance were crying out for consideration.

At the second reading he proposed an amendment "that this House considers that it is no part of the functions of the State to attend to matters of Spiritual Discipline."

The Bill went into Committee, and then began a remarkable demonstration of the power of obstruction. Lloyd George, day in and day out, ably assisted by T. S. Evans, proposed amendment after amendment. The supporters of the Bill, from Gladstone downwards, were infuriated.

Every possible means was tried to get it through the Committee. Only after a long and tedious time was the Bill finally passed.

The "enfant terrible" had shown what a terror he could be.

Wales was delighted.

A general election followed closely on this; and Lloyd George, now opposed by Sir John Puleston, retained his seat and increased his majority from 18 to 196. Wales was solidly Liberal.

In view of the support that had been given to Mr. Gladstone and to the whole of the Liberal Party, the Welsh people hoped for some measure of recognition from him.

They hoped that he would turn his attention to Wales and assist her with some of her immediate problems.

Uppermost in everyone's mind, in none so prominent as in that of Lloyd George, was the question of Disestablishment. There appeared to be small hope of success. "Wales has lived long on promises," he said. The time had now come to make good these promises. He was willing to be patient for a little while longer.

Mr. Asquith, who was Home Secretary in the new Ministry, introduced a Bill early in the Session of 1893 "to prevent for a limited time the creation of new interests in Church of England Bishoprics, dignitaries and benefices in Wales and Monmouthshire."

This was something—but it was not what the Welsh members wanted. They appealed to Mr. Gladstone on the matter of Disestablishment, pointing out that any postponement of action might be "productive of the gravest consequences. It would result in the loss of several Sects in Wales and in weakness and defection in our own ranks."

Mr. Gladstone was still unwilling to be hurried.

A second and stronger appeal drew from the Liberal leader a promise that matters would be speeded up.

Suddenly came Mr. Gladstone's retirement. Lord Rosebery's appointment to office, brought new encouragement. Nevertheless, the debate of Welsh Disestablishment, though now due to come officially before the House, was relegated to the end of the agenda.

Lloyd George went back to Wales to put the situation before his countrymen. Feeling began to run high. There was some apprehension at Westminster. The Bill was introduced at once and gave occasion for Lloyd George to speak his mind on a subject that had for so long been near his heart.

Encouraged by his success, and before events occurred to divert his energies into wider channels, Lloyd George directed his attention to the Welsh National question. His purpose was so to consolidate national opinion that, if need be, the Welsh party could form itself into an organisation like that of the Irish Nationalists, urging similar claims and wielding a somewhat similar authority. The first step in this direction was to unite the Liberal Party in Wales. There were two distinct groups. The North Wales and the South Wales Liberal Federation. These he contended should be united into a National League.

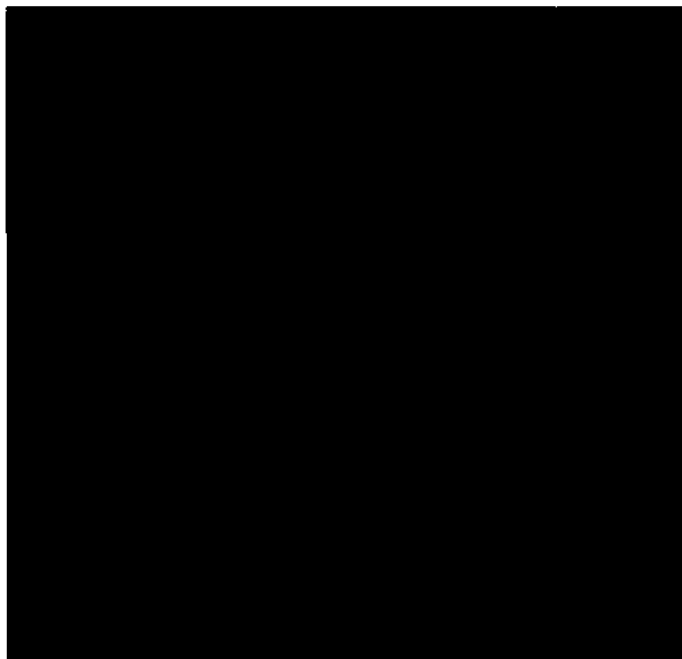
This plan did not succeed. He therefore resolved upon the formation of an organisation to be known as "Young Wales" : The object of this body was the development Of everything national, legislation, art, music and literature.

It would insist on Disestablishment, on Land Reform, on Local Veto and Home Rule for Wales,—an ambitious programme. It will be noticed also that Home Rule for Wales is last on the list.

Something more likely of achievement is put first. The order shows the mind of a man who, while wishing to make as wide an appeal as possible, knows what to put first and what to put last. It is a revelation of caution, and at the same time of clever window-dressing.

On the question of Disestablishment, the Bill as proposed suggested a commission of three to administer the liberated tithes.

Lloyd George protested loudly. Only one member of the commission was to be Welsh, and all ecclesiastics. He suggested instead that the property should be looked after by a Welsh National Council, drawn from the County Councils of Wales.



[Photo: "South Wales News"]

A WELSH UNIVERSITY CELEBRATION AT ABERYSTWYTH

The amendment was accepted, but before anything could be done there came another general election.

In asking for re-election Lloyd George, who foreshadowed a Conservative victory, promised to "be a thorn in Mr. Balfour's side. I will bring Wales continually to his notice until he is compelled to give us something, if only for the sake of peace."

He was again returned, this time with a majority of 194.

Fear of Home Rule had put the Conservatives in power. Lloyd George suggested a policy of "counter-irritation." He proposed that every country should be given Home Rule, and consulted with the Irish Party.

The proposal came to nothing. In the meantime, however, he was to be concerned in the discussions over the "Agricultural Rating Bill," his knowledge of which was to bring him distinction and the favour of his leaders.

The Bill proposed to give financial help to the farmer.

He gave his constant attention to it, in Parliament and in Committee. As a result he was paid the unusual compliment of being publicly thanked in the House by his leader, Sir William Harcourt.

It was an important stage in his career, and marked the beginning of a wider sphere of activity.

His attitude towards the Voluntary Schools Bill and the Irish Local Government Bill, in which he found himself in conflict with the Irish Nationalist Party, is an indication that he was settling down to a wider political outlook.

In 1899 Lloyd George was taking a holiday in Canada. In the middle of it came the threatening news of War in South Africa. He returned to England at once to oppose any suggestion of war. His protests were long and continued. He took upon himself the task of preaching, at any cost, a policy of peace.

It was a bold step, and in contrast to the attitude of the War Premier of nearly twenty years later.

Then he would have levelled at his opponents—should any have appeared—the very taunt of traitor levelled at him during the Boer War. His reply in 1899 was to ask,

"Is every politician who opposes a war during its progress of necessity a traitor? If so, then Chatham was a traitor and Burke and Fox especially, and in later times Cobden and Bright, and even Mr. Chamberlain—all these were traitors!"

He maintained that England was going to war for the enfranchisement of many who were not even natives of this country. "And this is being done by a Government that has divided three millions among its own supporters, backed by a Chamber composed of landlords who have benefited to the extent of hundreds of thousands—a Chamber for which no British subject has a right to vote."

He stigmatised it as the "conspiracy of a body of financiers."

"I should have thought that the greatest pride of the Uitlanders would have been to take part in this conflict. But how have they availed themselves of this privilege? They prefer to lounge about the hotels of Capetown, while English homes are being made desolate on their behalf. I am sure that I shall carry the House with me when I declare that such men are not worth one drop of British blood."

In spite of the fact that the speech was in violent conflict with the opinions of the House, Lloyd George was congratulated upon it—just as, later, he was congratulated upon his attack on Joseph Chamberlain over the famous case of the letters to Boer leaders written in a spirit of sympathy by Members of Parliament.

He was now unmistakably the "enfant terrible" of **the** House.

Sensing, doubtless, his growing authority, and confident in his proven ability in debate, he attacked the Government unceasingly.

Joseph Chamberlain was again the object of his most biting invective, over the question of the favouritism that, it was alleged, had been shown to the firm of Kynoch in the matter of War Office Contracts.

It was about this time that he began to make speeches outside the House against the War. One of these was at Glasgow in the early part of 1900. Every form of action was taken to break up the meeting—but the stewards and the police saved the situation and he was able to speak, in comparative calm, for about three-quarters of an hour.

He was always willing to take a risk. While rumours from his own constituency gave every ground for the belief that his attitude towards the War was keenly resented there, nothing could dissuade him from addressing a meeting at Bangor, where, at the best of times, his supporters were few.

Even those who were organising the meeting began to show fear of the possible consequences. Those responsible for the hall demanded a guarantee against damage.

His speech was constantly interrupted by the throwing of stones through the windows of the hall. Outside an angry mob gathered, and finally Lloyd George was attacked, struck on the head and forced to seek shelter.

It seemed certain that at the next election he would lose his seat.

The most that could be hoped for was that there would be no general election until the War was either over or had become unpopular, but the test was to come sooner than was expected.

At the end of the year 1900, the country was faced with a general election.

There was some doubt as to whether he should be adopted again as candidate for Carnarvon. Lloyd George arrived in the middle of the discussion. He withdrew nothing of what he had said, and repeated that whatever happened, he would maintain his attitude of opposition to the War.

He was adopted. At the political meetings, the atmosphere was hostile. He was faced with the biggest task of his career.

Realising that it might be well to pacify his hearers, he was ready, in his speeches, to admit that he might have taken a wrong view of the South African War, but that, at any rate, he had been sincere in what he had said. Leaving the situation there, he would pass on to other subjects, attacking the late Government on any other available grounds.

Wherever he spoke he usually succeeded in finally winning over his audience.

The clever politician was playing a difficult hand, skilfully. In spite of these signs that the hostility of the constituency was lessening, there were few who anticipated a victory for Lloyd George.

When he was declared the victor, and with a greatly increased majority, the enthusiasm was unbounded. Again, as the *Manchester Guardian* reports, he turned his victory to account with one of those phrases, the gift for which has been so largely responsible for his success.

"While England and Scotland are drunk with blood," he said, "the brain of Wales remains clear, and she advances with steady step on the road of progress and liberty."

Nothing could have been more apt, nothing could have served his purpose better.

His hearers were wild with delight—words, rather than blood, seemed to mount, from the tongue of Lloyd George to the brain of Wales.

He went to bed that night a tired man, worn out with the effects of the over-demonstrative enthusiasm of a constituency that, not long before, he had been in danger of losing.

Back in Parliament in December, 1901, he again showed that he was the enemy of any attempt to crush the Boer. With the capture of Bloemfontein, the Boers faced eventual defeat, but the Government now determined to annex the two Boer States. Lloyd George violently denounced any such policy. In his eyes this was to sweep away any shred of justification for the War that might have existed. He set himself to oppose this new turn of events with every weapon at his disposal. As usual, the chief of them was his tongue.

It was at this time that he paid his famous visit to Birmingham.

No one had suffered under the lash of his tongue more than Joseph Chamberlain. Chamberlain was the idol of Birmingham.

The news that Lloyd George was to visit the enemy's stronghold stirred up the bitterest feeling. The Birmingham papers set themselves the task of attacking the "violent pro-Boer/" and of doing all in their power to stir up such animosity that any attempt of Lloyd George to go to Birmingham might result in actual danger to his person.

The atmosphere of hostility was such that the Chief Constable of Birmingham, fearing a riot, urged him to

abandon the visit. The Liberal Association likewise tried to persuade him not to come. He refused to hear their appeal.

A mob gathered at New Street Station, to meet his train. He had come by the one before. The first move was a success.

He was spirited into the hall. The crowd was in a state of fiiry. They forced an entrance, swept aside the door-keepers and surged and shouted like maniacs. The chairman of the meeting in vain tried to speak. Lloyd George rose up. The uproar increased. Stones were thrown, windows smashed, the situation grew uglier every moment.

Lloyd George addressed the reporters in front of the platform. Even they could scarcely hear a word. He defended himself from the accusation of treachery. He pointed out that the real traitors were those who refused to listen to sense.

He tried to speak for nearly an hour—while the police were finding it more and more difficult to check the mob.

The justly apprehensive Chief Constable eventually persuaded Lloyd George to leave the platform. The police were being overpowered. In a back room he waited, calmly smoking a cigar while the tide of violence grew higher and higher. Finally, at the earnest entreaty of the police, he consented to leave the place in the only possible way that could save his lite. Few men have been nearer lynching than was Lloyd George on that day.

Disguised in the uniform of a policeman, he marched out of the building in a group of constables. One keen observer recognised him, but the mob was too violent and noisy to heed the shouted discovery. They insisted that he was still in the building, and, bit by bit, set about wrecking it.

Eventually the police made a baton charge, and in the struggle one person was killed and over thirty were injured. He himself left Birmingham with the promise to return. How far this attempt to hold a meeting was worth the trouble is a matter for discussion. It was certainly a triumph of courage for Lloyd George. It demonstrated to what extent he was prepared to go in defence of his convictions. In the event, however, it resulted in one death and many injuries. One might legitimately ask if the triumph was worth the cost.

Back in Parliament, Lloyd George sided with the Nationalists in opposition to his own party. It was evident that a spirit of compromise was in the air.

The Liberals were willing to support the Government with a view to bringing the War to an end.

Lloyd George fell out of favour with his own party. He would not do anything to favour the progress of the War. On the contrary, he violently attacked the scandal of the Concentration Camps, insanitary places in which the women and children of the Boers were herded. He pointed out to his leader, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, that the Liberal Party was contradicting itself in proposing an amendment to the Royal Address. The amendment was "that this House, while prepared to support all proper measures for the effective prosecution of the War in South Africa, is of opinion that the course pursued by your Majesty's Ministers and their attitude with regard to a settlement is not calculated to lead to the early termination of the War and the establishment of a desirable Peace."

Lloyd George insisted that they admitted the injustice of the methods used by the Government and yet were prepared to support it. In his eyes they were sacrificing their principles for temporary popularity.

These efforts lost him prestige among his own colleagues.

They earned him, and it was no joy to him, the cheers of his Tory opponents.

Curiously enough, when peace at last was declared, in 1902, Lloyd George was one of the few men who appear to have lost nothing of general public favour.

The War had been a wearisome business, badly managed. Public sentiment had sickened of it. In the height of the war-fever the country] was behind those who were conducting it. Inevitably, when the memory of it had become a distasteful thing, when the full force of its meaning and a complete understanding of the truth came home to people, its champions lost the favour of their former adherents. The "enfant terrible" bade fair to become a favourite child. The part he took in the debate on the Education Bill served to settle the matter.

In 1902 an Education Bill was introduced into the House by Mr. Balfour.

The Board Schools were supported by the Government. The Voluntary Schools belonging to various religious denominations, the Anglican, the Roman Catholic and the Jewish, received certain grants. All schools, by the New Act, were to be supported out of the rates. At once the Nonconformists were up in arms. Lloyd George, as usual, became the spokesman for Nonconformist opinions. The Nonconformists had few voluntary schools, which meant that they would not benefit in any way by the money this Bill proposed to provide for voluntary schools. That the other religious bodies who had voluntary schools were likely to benefit, they made a subject of a protracted and somewhat violent quarrel. Mr. Lloyd George used this opportunity to attack the whole of ecclesiastical

influence in schools. He was far from polite to the Bishops.

The quarrel had other complications and brought the fury of Lloyd George upon the Irish Nationalists. The Liberals had lost power because of their support for Home Rule. The Education Act, although a Conservative measure, was supported by the Irish Members because it would benefit the Roman Catholic Schools. Lloyd George bitterly complained of their attitude.

"It is rather hard, if they will forgive me for speaking candidly, to be put in this plight of being beaten down for the cause of Ireland, and that Irishmen, of all people, should then help our foes and theirs, to make our defeat the more intolerable/'

"Who are the people who are hit by this Bill? The people of Wales."

In spite of every effort on his part, the Bill progressed; finally, at the third reading, it drew from Lloyd George the following outburst:

"Give the children the Bible if you want to teach them the Christian faith. Let it be expounded to them by its founder. Stop this brawling of priests in and around the schools, so that the children may hear Him speak to them in His own words. I appeal to the House of Commons to use its great influence, now at the eleventh hour, and lift its commanding voice and say, 'Pray silence for the Master.'"

The Bill, however, was passed, and the Nonconformists in Wales were driven to pursue, under the leadership of Lloyd George, a system by which they might evade the Act. He astutely pointed out that there were certain loopholes in the Act which might be exploited without flagrant contravention.

Unfortunately, one borough, in its enthusiasm, refused to have anything to do with the measure, and Parliament was forced to bring in the Welsh Coercion Bill, obliging the whole of Wales to obey the new law, although in point of fact too much insistence was not laid on its enforcement.

As usual, the behaviour and attitude of Lloyd George, the important part he had taken in the debates, had enhanced his reputation.

Mr. Balfour said of him that in the course of the debate "the honourable gentleman has shown himself to be an eminent Parliamentarian."

Years of prominence on the benches of the Opposition were preparing the way for a place on the Ministerial benches. The paradox of his career up to this point is that he had gained popularity by championing the unpopular.

A feeling was in the air that the Conservative Government was steadily losing its hold. The Educate Act had alienated a large body of people.

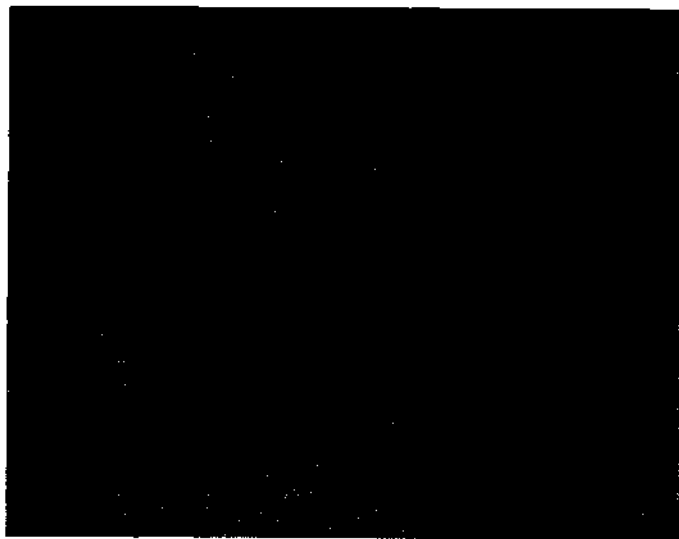
A growth of interior dissension and a loss of vitality was weakening the Conservative Party from within.

In the meantime Lloyd George used every means at his disposal to consolidate his own position.

He knew that the Liberal Party were growing in their admiration for him. Campbell-Bannerman publicly referred to him in terms of the highest praise. The days of office must be near at hand. This thought seemed to spur him on to greater activity.

He was the acknowledged and much admired leader of Wales. He had begun to widen his horizon and to show himself the champion of the poor in England.

He attacked Chamberlain on all occasions, presumably scorning any lesser opponent.



DAME MARGARET LLOYD GORGE AT A PRIZE GIVING

Chamberlain and his Party had to think quickly. They felt the need for a strong policy that would demonstrate their power.

At Birmingham, in 1903, Chamberlain announced the intention of the Government to impose tariffs.

It was a desperate attempt to distract public attention from the Education Bill.

Lloyd George realised this, and exposed it in a speech at the Albert Hall.

He warned his hearers that Chamberlain was seeking to distract their attention. He appealed to them to beware of allowing education to fall into denominational hands. He portrayed, again, the effects of the Education Act, and compared England with other countries where there existed religious equality.

Clever as all this was, Lloyd George realised that he could not go on for ever making capital out of the Education Act. He must not leave the Government to pursue a constructive policy while he beat a dead—or at least a dying—donkey.

That there existed a great deal of unemployment nobody could deny. That the conditions of the working classes were very unsatisfactory he had always maintained.

What was the best move? If the Conservatives could persuade the country and in particular the masses, that tariffs could be to their benefit, the hope of a near Liberal victory at the polls would vanish.

The issue was plain, and the Liberal policy of Free Trade was on its mettle.

At Cambridge, in 1903, he announced that "Free Trade is the surest form of Protection." In the meanwhile his aim was to do everything to discredit the Government in the country's eyes.

A Bill was introduced by a private member under the name of the "Old Age Pension Bill."

Lloyd George leaped to the assault. He himself had once proposed a similar scheme, which Chamberlain had attacked. Nevertheless the latter had, in years gone by, made many promises to the people along these lines.

What hope of success had this privately introduced measure?

A cliché from the South African War was revived. "Chamberlain," said Lloyd George, "had seen the beauties of the illimitable veldt and has forgotten all about old age pensions."

"What!" he represented him as saying, "deserving poor, are you clamouring for your pensions still?"

His main concern, however, was not with minor issues, but rather to discover some alternative and effective proposal to the imposing of Tariffs.

His first step was to contrast the conditions of this country with those of foreign countries where Protection was in force. He pointed out that they were thereby no better off. On the contrary, their conditions were worse. Consequently, he argued, Protection was not the remedy to be used.

It is interesting, in view of his subsequent office, when as War Premier, he threw all his energies into the prosecution of the greatest of all wars, to compare some of his later remarks with his utterances at this time.

In 1915 he was compelled to say, "We stand more in need of equipment than we do of men. This is an engineers' war and it will be won or lost owing to the efforts or shortcomings of engineers. Unless we are able to equip our armies, our predominance in men will avail us nothing.

"We need men, but we need arms more than men, and delay in producing them is full of peril for this country/'

In 1903 the vials of his wrath were poured out on armaments.

"We are spending forty millions a year more now than we did five years ago on the weapons of human slaughter, and every country in the world is increasing its armaments. Three or four hundred millions a year are being spent in Europe on these terrible machines of murder and we seem to be at the point of flying at each other's throats. Argument has failed to bring down this mad competition in armaments."

Then comes his counter-proposal *to* Protection.

"We cannot get these men to meet at the same altar, and the world is divided into its Protestants, its Roman Catholics, its Greek Church, its Mahomedans, its Buddhists and its followers of Confucius. There is one thing that will get them to meet in the market-place. They may come to the same mart, and men who have met each other in honest trade respect and honour each other. It is the next approach to friendship.

"With an open door to the trade of all the world we shall gradually help to break down the terrible system which is crushing industry in Europe."

This was his suggested remedy. In addition to its oratorical appeal, it had the added quality of transferring the issue from a purely national one, resulting perhaps in the endangering of peaceful relations with other countries, into a question of the general prosperity of Europe.

The speech was an inspiration to the Liberal Party and their supporters. They saw in it a new expression of Liberalism. A new road and a wide policy lay before them.

The condition of the poor was thereby made their concern. It was thrown into the greater relief of a National concern.

It is natural that once more Lloyd George found his prestige on the increase. He saw himself more surely than ever destined to office should the Liberal Party come into power.

For fifteen years, from 1890 to 1905, Lloyd George had thrown himself heart and soul into Parliamentary life.

He had seized every opportunity to make himself known and felt. Out of actions and circumstances that would have put an end to many men's careers he had acquired a name and a position from which he might reasonably hope to climb to higher things.

The "enfant terrible" had lost nothing of his fighting spirit, but he had become mellowed by experience. He had learned the cunning of political wisdom. His interests had widened. He had organised forces, and while still able to do for Wales as much as he had ever done, he had energy and ideas for other issues.

The time was now at hand when he would be called upon to serve in the Government.

Towards the end of 1905 he was on holiday in Italy. There he received a message recalling him to London.

Mr. Balfour, the Prime Minister, had unexpectedly resigned and Campbell-Bannerman was asked to form a Government. Lloyd George was offered the choice of two posts, either that of President of the Board of Trade or of Postmaster-General.

It is no secret that he was disappointed. He had always hoped that he would be appointed to the Secretaryship of State for Home Affairs. The office seemed to him more in accordance with his capacities.

The Post Office was undoubtedly outside his interests. He chose the Presidency of the Board of Trade as the lesser of two evils, although it carried with it a smaller salary. However, it presented him with the opportunity for making contact with the commerce of the country. Such an experience would naturally be invaluable.

It would be a test and a big test. There was something in his acceptance of it that resembled a knight picking up the gauntlet.

CHAPTER III

THE RADICAL STATESMAN

LLOYD GEORGE, accepted the post of President of the Board of Trade, in spite of the fact that he felt it to be less than his deserts. The prospect of holding office in a new Government must not be allowed to slip.

During the course of his political life he had acquired considerable knowledge of the workings of Government. Nevertheless, his was not the mind to lose itself in the labyrinth of departmental details. He welcomed the opportunity to make himself familiar with the industry of the country, but he was more likely to pursue his office on broad principles and to discover in a series of swift and intuitive flashes a line of policy which he could direct in general, leaving the working out of technical details to the permanent staff under him.

Not only was he surprised at the offer from Campbell-Bannerman, but the Press also expressed its astonishment. *Punch* at the time of his appointment asked the question that so many people naturally put themselves, "Will the sentimental orator be lost in the practical statesman, or will both be extinguished?" It presented, as his enemies thought, an excellent opportunity to be cynical. Those whom he had opposed in the past in a measure anticipated his failure, and were only waiting the downfall of one who **had** gloried in his powers as an orator, and used them at

their expense. He himself, whatever may have been his interior misgivings, certainly showed to the world at large no sign of anything but the most optimistic confidence. He said, after looking back two years, "When a solicitor went to the Board of Trade, people expressed surprise at the idea of putting a solicitor to look after business. They exclaimed, forgetting that the whole living of a solicitor depends on the way he looks after other people's business." To him, the situation which he occupied in such close contact with the commerce of the country promised a rich harvest both for himself and the development of the policy of the Liberal Party.

Commerce is the life blood of Britain, and for that reason it is necessary to ensure its vitality and its circulation.

One of his first acts was to examine the documents of the Department, and he found one which demanded of the Board of Trade that they should go fully into the state of British shipping, and in particular, into the conditions of life of British seamen.

In the past the conditions under which sailors had worked had been scandalous. The food provided for them, accommodation, the hours they worked, were at the mercy of the usually not too kind discrimination of men who had themselves served under almost harder conditions in the past. Masters of vessels and indeed owners of companies had enriched themselves at the expense of their employees. Sailors had no rights. Hitherto influence had been brought to bear which had made it impossible for any action on the part of the Government to better the conditions of seamen.

Lloyd George saw an opportunity to perform a task which was beginning by now to be considered almost

hopeless. As he had so often done in the past, and as he was so often to do in the future, he made it his business to consult those whose knowledge of the subject made them experts. Furthermore, he determined to consult not only the owners but also representatives of the seamen themselves.

The Bill in which the reforms were set out was the first legislative act on the part of the new Government. In his speech, which was characteristic and brilliant, he revealed his capacity for a quick observation, from other people's minds, of the details of a highly technical situation. This capacity for seeing clearly the details of a complicated situation has always served him well.

There is one example of his method of procedure when faced with a situation that normally would require years of patient study.

The incident occurred at a much later period, but it may suitably be introduced here as typical of Lloyd George in face of a difficult situation.

He was called upon to go into the complicated details of the Balkan question. He heard that Mr. Grant Robertson (now Sir Charles Grant Robertson, Principal of Birmingham University), at that time a Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford, was an expert on the Balkan situation. He went to Grant Robertson and told him that he had half an hour to spare, would Grant Robertson therefore tell him as much as he could of Balkan history during that time. When the half-hour was up Lloyd George shook hands and said, "Well, thank you very much, Mr. Robertson, I think I understand all about it now." To which Grant Robertson replied, "You may think you do, but you don't. It is a life study,"

The Bill passed its second reading. Lloyd George foresaw,

however, that the real opposition would come when the Bill went into Committee. He had had too much experience in the past of working in Committee not to realise that its success or failure would depend upon its reception there.

He doubtless remembered the famous occasion on which he and his colleague had talked a Bill almost to death by a constant series of suggested amendments and by the skilful exercise of obstructionist tactics. His experience had taught him that the only way in which a Bill might hope to succeed in Committee was to arrange that every detail that could possibly be covered should be foreseen and exhaustively elaborated. If he could forestall every possible kind of amendment it would then be impossible for obstructionists to suggest on the spur of the moment amendments, by the intelligent exploitation of which they could kill the Bill.

He therefore spent a considerable period of time in close contact and discussion with representatives of every interest concerned in the working of the Mercantile Marine. In this way, by discreet exercise of diplomacy, he was able to make adjustments that forestalled any serious obstruction. His tactics justified themselves. The Bill passed the Committee stage and successfully passed into its final reading in the House. Everybody concerned, shipowners and sailors alike, expressed their satisfaction at the details of the Bill, and the authorities of several seaport towns publicly declared their gratitude to the new President of the Board of Trade. Sailors to-day, who can claim their rights and definite hours and quota of rations, have to thank this President of the Board of Trade, who in so short a period coped with the details, and successfully negotiated the settlement of a question that had previously appeared hopelessly entangled.

His work had almost driven him to adopt the life of a hermit. He was at the Board of Trade from early morning until late at night, appearing in the House whenever he was called upon to answer questions concerning his office. For a man who had always shown a fondness for social intercourse this was a great sacrifice, but nothing was to be allowed to stand in the way either of his ambition, or of his sincere carrying out of a task, which he had set himself, with all the vitality and thoroughness at his command.

The next measure he brought before the House was an attempt to reformulate the laws regarding patents. The situation concerning patents had long required investigation. The existing laws were intended to encourage the inventive powers of English mechanics and engineers, and to protect their rights. It often happened, however, particularly in the case of the very poor inventor, that foreign companies would seek to acquire the complete control of an invention by means that could not be dealt with under the laws in their existing form.

The President of the Board of Trade was anxious to revise the law, to give fair play to the British inventor. The Bill was intended to counteract the attempts which were constantly being made by foreign companies to exploit their own patents in this country to the detriment of British industry. A clause therefore was inserted into the Bill, giving these foreign companies a year during which they were to decide either to work in this country on their own patents or to employ only British patents over here. The result of this clause was that within a very short period foreign firms were building factories in this country in which to exploit their own patents, rather than lose the use of their rights. By this Bill, therefore, Lloyd George not only

succeeded in safeguarding the rights of the British inventor, but he compelled foreigners to open up industrial fields that were a source of benefit to this country, and in particular a source of employment for British labour.

So far Lloyd George had dealt with situations which he was able to negotiate without difficulty or any bitter opposition. There now appeared on his horizon a cloud such as had not broken in England for many years.

Considerable feeling was growing among railwaymen that they were not being fairly treated. They claimed that their hours were far too long and their pay hopelessly insufficient. It became clear to everyone that unless some form of reconciliation could be made between the employer and employees the whole country would be disorganised by a national railway strike. The power of Trade Unions had steadily been growing, and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants had appealed to the employers to give their serious attention to the question of hours and wages. The railway authorities had no respect for the power of the Trade Unions, and refused to believe that the men were sufficiently organised to offer any effective resistance, still less to carry off a successful strike. The situation rapidly became serious.

Lloyd George was carefully studying the lie of the land, realising that he, as President of the Board of Trade, would be called upon when the emergency arrived. It is very natural that a man who from his earliest days had been on the side of those who were labouring under any form of oppression should be prompted to turn a ready ear to the just demands of the railwaymen.

Pursuing his policy of calling in representatives of every faction concerned in the dispute, he endeavoured to anticipate what appeared to him to be the inevitable

outcome of a ballot taken among the railway employees. He therefore summoned the directors of the railway companies and urgently impressed upon them the need for preventing a strike that would disorganise the industry of the country. He pointed out to the directors that the powers of the Board of Trade to deal with this situation were limited. He could not promise to settle the situation. He insisted, therefore, that they should no longer refuse to discuss the demands sent to them from the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. He set his staff at the Board of Trade to draft a settlement which in his mind would be acceptable to both parties. As a result of his prompt action the directors of the railway companies and the Trade Union officials were able to come to an agreement which for the time being averted a national disaster.

He had again demonstrated that without necessarily knowing every detail of the situation it was possible, by skilful negotiation and a diplomatic use of tact, to reconcile opposing parties and settle industrial disputes.

The Press acknowledged his skill, and *The Times*, in particular, was unstinting in its praise of the way in which he had conducted this difficult situation.

His leader, Campbell-Bannerman, publicly declared the country's gratitude to Lloyd George at a banquet held in the Guildhall.

He next turned his attention to the Port of London. This was in a congested condition, owing to the fact that close on twenty bodies shared the control of the river. Such a state of things clearly stood in the way of any reasonable progress. There was no reason why the Port of London, with its exceptional facilities and its large area of docks, should not hold its place among the premier ports of the world. Liverpool was then its great rival,

as Southampton was to be in the future. The only possible means of making the Port of London a satisfactory organisation was to endeavour to centralise its organisation and invest the control of the docks and the river in one authority. Certain continental ports were known to be exceptionally well organised, particularly certain of the North Sea ports. In order to familiarise himself with the organisation that had contributed to their success, Lloyd George visited them and again pursued his policy of consulting experts. The result was that after a period of investigation and negotiation the powers of the Port of London were vested in one central authority. The result was satisfactory, and has since justified the foresight of Lloyd George in making the change. It is in a large measure due to his action as President of the Board of Trade that the existing Port of London Authority has so successfully built up the efficiency of London to-day, and made this port one of the largest centres of mercantile trade, of which the prosperity has continued when nearly all others have suffered severely from the universal trade depression of 1929-31.

During this time there were many keen debates on Tariff Reform, and Lloyd George was frequently called upon to reply on behalf of the Government.

One remark of his *a propos* of the efforts of Austen Chamberlain in support of Tariff Reform is worth recording.

"I do not blame Mr. Austen Chamberlain," he said, "for sticking to his father. But the considerations which have made him Protectionist are not fiscal but filial."

For a long time the health of Campbell-Bannerman had given serious cause for anxiety. In 1907 it was clear that he could not continue in office much longer. He resigned

the leadership of the party, and in consequence the premier-ship was handed over to Mr. Asquith, who was at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer. The appointment of a new Chancellor was a matter for speculation. It was known that several members of the ministry were anxious to occupy that position. Lloyd George, who had taken over the Presidency of the Board of Trade, amid a storm of raillery, and who had put the Chambers of Commerce almost into a state of panic by his acceptance of the situation, had eventually come to be recognised as one of the most successful Presidents that the Board had ever known. His name figured largely in the discussion over the appointment to the vacant Chancellorship of the Exchequer. He had proved that it was possible for him to occupy the position for which, on the face of things, he did not appear by training or knowledge to have the requisite capabilities. Few people, therefore, were surprised and many were gratified when he was appointed to the vacant Chancellorship. The Government preferred a man who was likely to show originality rather than a technically experienced financier.

The Liberal party was interested in every kind of reform, and it was clearly within their policy to place a man in charge of the national finances who was pledged to every kind of effort to ameliorate the lot of the working classes.

It was quite clear that the new Chancellor would use his power not as a brake upon the action of the Government, nor as a man purely concerned with the technical details of balancing the Budget, but as a means of bettering the social conditions of the country. During the period of office of the Conservative Government, there had been repeated appeals to them for a reform in the administration

of law. All those efforts had failed because the Government were unwilling to spend the necessary money that such a reform required. Lloyd George was likely to turn a much readier ear to any such demands and to benefit the country by what he considered to be the just and proper disposal of money raised by duties.

One of the principal measures he introduced during his tenure of the Chancellorship was that which resulted in the scheme of National Insurance. He considered, and tirelessly repeated his conviction, that the State had an obligation towards those who had grown too old for work, in the same sense in which employers were, up to a point, responsible for those injured or incapacitated through their work. In his mind the whole legislation concerning Old Age Pensions and National Insurance was but the development of this one central idea.

Other countries in Europe employed certain systems of insurance, and just as he had gone to the Continent to familiarise himself with the workings of the larger seaports he now went to Germany to see their system of insurance in operation. While he was in Germany he met a number of statesmen, and he also met somebody with whom he was later to be closely associated during the days of the War, Monsieur Clemenceau, who was at that time Postmaster-General of France.

Interviews with him appeared in a number of German papers, and he was asked in particular to express an opinion on the relations between England and Germany. He expressed himself in favour of some kind of friendly pact between these two countries. Just as he had shown himself during the time of the Boer War to be the avowed and bitter enemy of any form of hostile relationship resulting in war, he now declared that it was his hope that

Germany and England would always be friendly. There had been manifest in England for some time past a tendency towards anti-German feelings. He declared himself to be in disagreement with these ideas.

Concerned as he was with the development of social and economic conditions, he saw in the cordial relationship between England and Germany the only means to further the prospects he had at heart. His progress in Germany was something in the nature of a personal triumph, but he did not forget the purpose of his visit, and demonstrated once more that it was possible for a receptive mind to gather experience and invaluable information from conversation rather than from a long and profound study of documents.

The attention of King Edward had been drawn by Lloyd George and he had on one occasion summoned him to dinner. Now with the advancement of his prestige, further honours began to come his way. He was given an Honorary Degree of D.C.L. at the University of Oxford, and other Universities conferred similar honours upon him. Rarely has any politician had such a spectacular rise to fame, and the picturesque, if not always comfortable, circumstances of his early life provided the authorities of these Universities with ample opportunity to make speeches full of pretty references to the Celt who had passed from the village smithy to a high Office of State.

However, the calls made upon his time and energy by the Chancellorship of the Exchequer required his retirement periodically into seclusion. It is no light task to draw up a Budget, and no man, still less one whose technical knowledge of the details of finance was so scanty as his, could afford to spend much time abroad.

The chief difficulties with which he had to contend arose

out of the spirit in which he conceived his role of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Social reform could not be carried out without considerable expense. These expenses required new funds. He therefore had to set himself to the difficult task of balancing the Budget that would justify his attitude towards the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer in the spirit of a reformer.

He introduced his first Budget in April, 1909. It was, as he himself called it, a "War Budget," for in his role of Chancellor of the Exchequer he had declared war on poverty and the bad conditions of the working classes. The Budget was also, through its advocacy of a Land Tax and other unprecedented enactments, a direct attack on the House of Lords. The debate upon it lasted from April till the following November, and by that time Lloyd George, with the exception of loyal support from his own party, was back in the estimation of the remainder of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords in the same place of unpopularity and bitter vituperation in which he had found himself during the Boer War.

The Lords refused to be ignored in the control of the national finance. It was declared that his proposed Land Tax was the scheme of a madman liable to crush British industry. The Press was loud in its attacks upon this second-rate "Jack Cade," as he was called. He declared that he was of the people, that he understood from his own bitter experience the misery of poverty, and that he was prepared to stand by his Budget, for the relief of working-class conditions.

The Lords naturally sought to make every conceivable type of change, but they realised that as it was the tradition of the English Parliament that the Commons

should be in control of the national finance, unless they were able to force some unusual departure from traditional proceedings they would have to allow the Bill to pass. Even his colleagues were not in entire agreement with his Land Tax; every effort was made to force him to withdraw it. However, he stood firm, and declared that the Budget should go through whole and entire or not at all.

It was not generally realised that the opposition raised by the Lords would ultimately lead to a considerable weakening in their Parliamentary powers.

Lloyd George declared that if they interfered in any substantial measure with the Budget, they would raise up questions that would bring about something equivalent to a revolution. Such was the implication of this Budget.

How far Lloyd George himself realised the implication of it is not clear. This much is certain, that he was deliberately attacking the land owners on behalf of the masses. It was undoubtedly the outcome of the days when he and his had suffered under a despotic squirearchy.

The Budget passed the Commons and now it was the turn of the Lords. In that House they sought to destroy it and labelled it a socialistic document. They were prepared to throw out the Budget and take the consequences. The rejection of the Bill was moved and it was declared that such a revolutionary Budget should not be passed without the consent of the country at large. The Lords, therefore, refused to pass it. This was what Lloyd George had, up to a point, anticipated. By now he realised that he had inserted clauses into the Bill that would strike at the very root of the power of the Lords. It was clear from all this that he was no mere juggler with figures, and he was using his power as Chancellor of the Exchequer

to force on the country a change in the powers of the House of Lords.

A situation arose, therefore, resembling in its intensity the Parliamentary storms of past centuries. The power of the purse had always been in the hands of the Commons, and Lloyd George refused to continue as a member of the Government unless it was made impossible for the Lords to interfere with their privilege. Mr. Asquith sided with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Parliament was dissolved. Lloyd George went back to his constituency and there explained the full significance of recent events. He knew that even if he had to give way in some measure he had set in motion a force that from now onwards would not be brought to rest without destroying in its passage privileges that he had all his life resented and longed to destroy.

During the recess he made speeches up and down the country in defence of his Budget, and lost no opportunity of attacking the Lords.

The Conservatives in his constituency of Carnarvonshire were hoping that as a result of the trouble that he had stirred up they would succeed in unseating him at the polls. They failed.

As a result of the Liberal victory animosity broke out everywhere against him in the Conservative Press. They maintained that he had occupied office for which he was unfitted, but the Government now determined to introduce a new measure.

They first of all wished to free the Commons from interference by the Lords in matters concerning the Budget. Secondly, that a consensus of opinion in the House of Commons should be respected during a Parliamentary period, and lastly they tried to introduce a measure which

would make a place in the House of Lords depend upon election rather than on heredity. It was clear that the power of veto by the House of Lords was to be finally removed.

^v The Budget was reintroduced into Parliament, and Lloyd George was able to justify his position and report the financial condition of the country to be satisfactory in spite of the delay caused by the Lords in rejecting the Budget. The House of Lords was finally forced to accept the Budget, and this most debated of measures was included in the law of the land.

This Budget had naturally made the name of Lloyd George anathema among his opponents. In his official capacity he was obliged to go into Society, and the atmosphere was not always pleasant. One offended Society woman—a duchess—finding that she could not avoid shaking hands with the odious Chancellor was surprised to find that he was not the ogre she had imagined. She is reported to have said afterwards to a friend: "I have just met Lloyd George and do you know that he is really quite a nice man!"

In contrast to this are his relations with his own people. There is an admirable illustration of what they thought of him—in the village—in the story of the elderly lady who was in London and went to hear him speak. She sent her name round from the crowded hall. Lloyd George at once came out to see her and placed her in the front of the hall. When she was back in Wales she told the story with amazement.

"I have heard that he has become a well-known man; but I never realised what an important person he was till I went to that meeting."

This was the statement of a life-long acquaintance

and stands in amusing contrast to the surprise of the duchess.

At this time the country was saddened by the death of the King.

This event for a time temporarily served to distract attention from political quarrels.

The members of the Opposition were asked to send representatives to a combined meeting of both the Parties to confer with representatives from the Lords in order to effect some reconciliation between the two Houses. The conference did not succeed. Nevertheless, it was not considered opportune to force a general election on the country.

It was clear that the Lords were doing their best to give the impression that in this struggle they were being attacked by the Liberal Party and not by the House of Commons in general.

Lloyd George replied that the Liberal Party was the accredited Government, and the representatives of the people; the Lords therefore were opposing the wishes of the electorate at large.

To no other country, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared, could we point, in which the Upper House was not in some way representative of the declared will of the people. "Snobbery is a charlatan creed. It is a bad thing to found a constitution upon," he said in a speech at Edinburgh.

After the reassembling of the House, Lloyd George introduced his famous Insurance Scheme. The employer and the employee were by this legislation to contribute proportionately to a fund on which the employee could draw at such times as he was incapacitated from work. Lloyd George, who had declared, when he introduced the

Budget, that it was a "War Budget," pointed out that on this occasion he was enlisted on the side of the "Red Cross"; he was asking for the relief of the wounded.

The mind of the House was for the moment distracted by the possibility of a war in Morocco. France, Spain and Germany were laying claim to certain territories; Great Britain made it plain that she would require to be consulted and taken into consideration before they could agree to any settlement of the subject under discussion. The various countries had sent either naval or military forces to the scene of the discussion, and an ugly situation might very readily have developed.

It was evident that a situation of this kind might easily bring the great powers into conflict, and it looked as if the enemy of England would be Germany. In a speech to bankers Lloyd George declared that England must be treated with the respect which was due to her in view of her place among the nations. By implication it was understood that this reference was directed principally to Germany. Fortunately in view of the strong attitude taken by Great Britain, the German Government did not maintain its arrogant claims, and what might have become an ugly situation was saved.

In view of his action and the important role he had played in this discussion, it was natural that he should now be numbered among the politicians whose names were respected not only in this country but throughout Europe.

The trouble between the railway owners and the employees which had been avoided by consultation in 1907, when Lloyd George was President of the Board of Trade, now broke out afresh. The hoped-for result of those conferences had not been achieved; it seemed likely that there would be a General Strike. Lloyd George, as one of those



ON BOARD SHIP

who had had experience in the past of such troubles, was called in to arbitrate. The strike, which had been declared at very short notice, was, by the intervention of Lloyd George, called off.

In spite of these distractions he never for one moment relaxed his interest in the scheme of National Insurance. Nevertheless, there was certain opposition towards this measure which was emphasised by slow degrees.

He had hoped that the Bill would pass the final stage as readily as it had passed the earlier, but he was doomed to disappointment. The most prominent opponents of the Bill were the doctors, who considered that they had not been fairly treated under the terms of the Bill. Lloyd George declared that the Bill would act as a test. He would stand by it and win or fail, according to the way in which it was finally received by Parliament. Every effort was being made to hold it up, but Lloyd George was insisting that the measure should be hurried through. Once again he was able to bring the opposing parties together by tactful concessions, and the Bill was finally put on the Statute Book.

During these ministerial years other questions arose, of importance in themselves, but in which Lloyd George did not manifest particular interest.

The first of these was the dispute over women's suffrage. It was in Lloyd George's inclinations to consent to this measure for political reasons. He felt that women's suffrage would inevitably come, and would mean the creation of a new balance of power in the plebiscite.

On the other hand, he was unpopular with the majority of the women who were agitating for the cause. In addition, he was serving under a leader who was the avowed enemy of votes for women.

Lloyd George, however, following his political instinct, although actually attacked at one meeting by the agitators, spoke on behalf of the movement, and succeeded in turning aside the wrath of its adherents.

The Home Rule question during these years did not attract his enthusiasm. He inclined to sympathy with Ulster, but rarely spoke in public on the subject. In private conversation it might be gathered that he was not in favour of taking any steps either way. He was sure that the matter would settle itself in conference without difficulty, and was not therefore a subject worthy to occupy the arena of spectacular politics.

Another matter, of a very different nature, created great public excitement at the end of 1912 and the early part of 1913—the Marconi Scandal.

It was alleged that members of the Government had used their official knowledge to gamble in Marconi shares. Rumours went round for a long time. The matter was finally brought to a head by an article which appeared in the French newspaper, *Le Matin*.

In this article it was said that the English Government had entered into a contract with the Marconi Company to connect London, by wireless, with the rest of the Empire. Prior to the concluding of this agreement, members of the Government were alleged to have bought shares in the Company which they sold immediately after the publication of the agreement at a handsome profit. The persons attacked by name were Mr. Herbert Samuel and Sir Rufus Isaacs.

They at once went to law and triumphantly won their case.

Lloyd George, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was called upon for an explanation—as he had bought certain of these shares.

He indignantly denied that he had ever, in any way, attempted to benefit by his position, either in general or in this particular case. He insisted that he was a comparatively poor man.

A Committee of Inquiry was set up to go into the whole question. After a lengthy investigation it published its report, and in the words of the chairman, it was stated that apart from minor disagreement on sundry points, the members of the Committee unanimously agreed that:—

"No Minister, official, or Member of Parliament has been influenced in the discharge of his public duties by reason of any interest he might have had in any of the Marconi or other undertakings connected with wireless telegraphy, or utilised information given to him from official sources for the purpose of investment or speculation in any such undertakings."

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR PREMIER

LLOYD GEORGE, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had always expressed his dislike of heavy expenditure in armaments. He had entertained high hopes, along with other members of the Government, that the hostility between England and Germany that had threatened to grow serious about the time of the Agadir disturbance had completely subsided. Like everybody else, he was doomed to disappointment. It was clear that forces were at work in Europe that would wreck its peace. One of the first factors in all this was the growing and constant rivalry for Naval supremacy between the Powers, and particularly between Germany and England.

Lloyd George had always opposed war. As a man whose part in politics had been concerned very largely with reform and the amelioration of the conditions of the working classes, he saw in war the complete negation of everything for which he stood. Others, who were apparently more clear-sighted, gave their attention to the prospects of an outbreak of hostilities. Lloyd George continued to press on with his schemes for reform and development. It appears that he acted in this way partly because he was ignorant of the fact that certain secret negotiations had taken place between England and France. These dated back as early as the year 1904. Had Lloyd George known what exactly had taken place, it is likely that he would have been much more

concerned with what ultimately proved to be the inevitable consequences.

He was well aware of the existing rivalries in trade, and it must at some time have crossed his mind that the expansion necessary to the development of commerce might very easily lead to open hostilities.

He is reported as having once discussed this possibility when he was in Germany, and in the course of a conversation compared this country and Germany to Carthage and Rome. He once said in this connection when discussing the rivalry between the two countries, "I wonder if we, should ever war arise, should be as unprepared as Carthage." Little did he realise that it would fall to his lot, as War Premier, to repair the gaps in our defence, and to see that Carthage was better equipped.

There were, therefore, certain divisions in the Cabinet in the months that preceded the War.

Lloyd George was chiefly concerned with his schemes for Old Age Benefits and National Health Insurance. He naturally was opposed to the idea that the money which he had gathered for these schemes should be spent on building up armaments. There were constant requests from supporters of a policy of increased armaments for a more lavish expenditure. Lloyd George was disinclined to lend a favourable ear. Nevertheless, he could not stop the growing feeling that something had to be done to prepare for the eventuality that threatened. As a last desperate effort to put an end to a mad building up of armaments there was a demand for a reduction in these expenditures. Lloyd George was naturally in favour of it. He pointed out that our relations with Germany were, in spite of rumours, increasingly friendly. He also pointed out that the European nations were enlarging their armies rather

than their navies, and that it was on our navy that we relied.

The drain on the resources of Germany in building up her army would naturally restrict her in the development of her navy. Finally, he argued that there was a growing anti-militarist feeling in Europe.

In his mind a policy of armaments was in direct opposition to the spirit of the Liberal Party. An appeal was made through the National Liberal Federation to every local association asking them to pass a resolution in favour of the reduction of expenditure, so that there could be a clear indication of the feelings of the Party throughout the country.

This step was taken in order that the Liberal Government might know exactly where it stood before making its Navy and Army estimates for the year. In spite of the fact that the Liberal Party throughout the country responded to this call and demonstrated that they were in favour of such a resolution, certain leaders of the Party were not convinced at all. The consequence was that when the estimate was made those whose chief concern was preparation for war were able to see that fifty-one and a half million pounds were allotted to Naval expenditure.

In the middle of all these discussions there were signs of disturbances in Ireland, and attention was distracted for a time by the prospects of a revolt in Ulster and an outbreak in the rest of Ireland.

It was natural that Germany should feel that the prospect of trouble in Ireland would strengthen her, and if she had any plans for war she was convinced that Ireland would sufficiently hold our attention to keep us fully occupied.

As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lloyd George was urged by those who were concerned principally with the financial

state of this country to oppose any attempts on the part of his colleagues to bring England into war. He complied with those requests up to a certain point and argued against any kind of participation in hostilities. The situation, as far as England was concerned, depended upon interpretation of certain treaties. It was felt that our Entente with France bound us to protect her in the event of the German Fleet passing down the English Channel to bombard French ports.

It was evident moreover that there would be a majority of the Cabinet in favour of intervention. Mr. John Burns resigned from the Government. Lord Morley also resigned. It was expected that Lloyd George would follow them, but he refrained from doing so in the hope that at the last moment events might not take the fatal turn.

However, by that time Germany had threatened the neutrality of Belgium, and the Belgians had appealed to England to protect them in virtue of the Treaty which guaranteed them their neutrality.

It was this question of the violation of Belgian neutrality that determined Lloyd George's choice. He still hoped for some change in events, and still refused either to resign or to commit himself to the War. An ultimatum was sent to Germany, but it was impossible to persuade her not to do what she had intended. With her refusal Lloyd George was brought on to the side of war.

It was characteristic of him that once he was determined on a particular course of action he did not hold back his energy. The change in his decision had come about in the the short space of twenty-four hours. "The invasion of Belgium made the vital difference as far as I was concerned between peace and war." In this respect he represented the majority of the people in England. The event that

rightly or wrongly determined at least 90 per cent, of Englishmen in favour of war was the violation of Belgian neutrality.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer at the outbreak of War was called upon to fulfil a role as difficult in some respects as that which had to be faced by the military and naval leaders. The complications of modern finance and the fact that England was the centre of a large proportion of the world's trade carried on very largely by purely paper transactions, turned this paper in London into a currency of commerce for a great part of the world. Events shook this system out of its usual path, and there was something like chaos in the market. Every nation was living by credit and that credit was no longer good.

It was largely due to Lloyd George's firm handling of the situation that panic was averted and British credit enabled to stand the strain imposed by the congestion of those early days of the War. No one knew how long the conflict would last. "We are fighting an enemy that cannot submit to any terms we can accept, to any terms we can prudently accept, without a smashing defeat."

One thing was certain—the important part played by finance in this war. Lloyd George realised this, and when he introduced his first War Budget in November, 1914, he made heavy increases in taxation. In particular he determined to draw money for the War from direct taxation rather than from indirect taxation. He also discussed the floating of the largest War Loan that had ever been raised. At this particular period, day in and day out, he emphasised that it was the "Silver Bullet" that would win the War.

In 1915 he went to Paris, and there with French and Russian ministers went deeply into the question of the finances of the Allies.

In introducing his second Budget in May, 1915, he emphasised the three ways in which it was possible for England to render the highest services during the War. There were three ways open to her.

1. The building up of a large navy to protect the seas from the enemy.
2. The building up of a large army to assist on land.
3. The helping with financial support to bear a large burden of the economic strain of the War.

He pointed out that as in this War the amount of supplies and ammunitions would be far in excess of anything previously known, it was to the advantage of the Allies that England should concentrate on building up her navy and provide financial assistance rather than in building up a large army.

Those who were kept at home could be used for the all important formation of a large department for the production of necessary munitions.

In this year England turned the first difficult corner. There was still considerable confusion everywhere. The relations between the Government and the Army were not of the happiest, but at any rate the Exchequer was for the time being saved from chaos.

It is characteristic of Lloyd George that once he has discharged a function with his best efforts he instinctively grows dissatisfied and uneasy. He is anxious to embark upon some new and as yet unattempted project.

In the Christmas of 1914 he was in Wales. His attention was turning more completely to questions of strategy, and it was clear that he was anxious to take his part in the affairs of the War in a way not possible to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, In that office he was outside questions of war strategy.

During the time he spent in Wales he thought out what appeared to him to be a wise, strategic move. His attention was attracted to Serbia. It seemed to him that the Allies would benefit by sending forces to the Balkans in support of Serbia to harass Austria, and to prevent the Central Powers from linking up with Constantinople. No one was certain as yet what would be the attitude of various of the Balkan States.

He was anxious, also, to send forces to Syria to cut off the Turks. There was unfortunately among the military chiefs a resentment at interference in strategy by men whom they considered incapable of grasping the military situation. There was, regrettably, considerable personal feeling between members of the Government and the army staff.

General French was convinced that the War could only be won on the Western front. He would not hear of the withdrawal of men to the East. Kitchener, however, when approached on the question of an attack in the East, was inclined to view the situation favourably. Lloyd George urged that messages should be sent to Greece and Rumania pointing out to them the benefits of joining in with the Allies. For a time it looked as if the plans suggested by Lloyd George would actually come into operation. He went over to Paris with the purpose of persuading the French to join in the defence of Serbia. After some consideration Greece refused to join in the scheme proposed. This was largely owing to the strong German influence at the Greek Court, and Lloyd George had unfortunately to see his plans rejected.

Ultimately events justified him, for Germany did crush Serbia, and was able to link up successfully with the Turks.

Lloyd George, however, never favoured the plan pro-

posed by Winston Churchill of sending an army to support a naval attack on the Dardanelles, although the first bombardment of the Dardanelles had the effect of bringing an offer from Greece to supply troops for operations there, an offer that might have been of use at the moment when Greece was first approached, but was then little better than useless.

Lloyd George could only point steadily to the savage invasion of Serbia, that might have been prevented had his plans been accepted.

He was only too keenly awake to the hesitancy of our leaders. "Too late" was the phrase of which he stood most in dread. "Too late . . ." fatal words of this War. "The footsteps of the Allied forces have been dogged by the mocking phrase of 'too late,' and unless we quicken our movements damnation will fall on the sacred cause for which so much gallant blood has flowed."

The one thing that was becoming daily more and more clear was the need for endless supplies of munitions. Unfortunately the authorities who, during the past year, had been responsible for the preparation and equipment of the Army had been guided in their arrangements and preparations by the methods of such open campaigns as the Boer War. It is a remarkable thing that they had learnt nothing from the preparations that had been going on for many years in Germany. Even to the most casual observer the existence of such a thing as Krupps of Essen, and the fact that so many German factories could at almost a moment's notice be turned into means for producing munitions must have been obvious. Nobody in a responsible position seems to have made any similar preparations in England. The consequence was that at the outbreak of the War we were found to be wanting in guns. Our ammunition

was largely shrapnel. High explosives for the use of the Army were not available in anything like the quantity that was necessary. Furthermore, when the time came and it was necessary for us to set about making these high explosives it was discovered that a very large number of the skilled workmen capable of making this ammunition had enlisted.

General French was constantly complaining from France of the need for more supplies. These supplies were not forthcoming. Furthermore, those who had been drafted into the service of making munitions were agitating for higher wages. In such a situation it was evident that the Government must step in, and in 1915 a Bill was introduced by Lloyd George to empower the Government to take over all buildings necessary for the manufacture of shells and guns. The Bill was passed and up and down the country speeches were made with a view to allaying public anxiety on the question of the supplies. Every effort had to be made to paint the situation in bright colours, particularly as there was a likelihood that at this time Italy would join the Allies. Replying to a question in the House of Commons, Lloyd George said that between October, 1914, and March, 1915, the output of munitions had increased twenty times. Unfortunately these statements had only a substance of truth in them, They still did not refer to the almost entire lack of the necessary high explosives.

French, through the medium of the Press, departing from the usual tradition, made various statements on the situation. He had determined that he would stir those at home into some kind of activity. A War correspondent sent the following message which was calculated to make a strong impression in England.

"If we can break through the hard outer crust of the German defence we believe that we can scatter the German armies whose offensive causes us no concern at all. But to break this hard crust we need more high explosive, more heavy howitzers and more men."

A crisis in the Government brought about very largely by the resignation of Lord Fisher from his office at the Admiralty as a result of his disagreement with Winston Churchill, precipitated a remarkable change in the Government. It was felt that the country needed a Government that would do away with opposition, and the first War Coalition was therefore formed. As a result of this there was a change round of offices, and Mr. Lloyd George left the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and was given the new post of Minister of Munitions.

To the Ministry of Munitions was given complete control over the question of supplying guns and shells to the army, a power that had formerly been fixed in the War Office. It is interesting to recall that when Lloyd George was about to relinquish the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer the very men who some years before had held up their hands in horror at his appointment, now petitioned that he should be kept in the office. This was no small tribute from the business men of the City.

But at the present moment Lloyd George was needed far more in the Ministry of Munitions, and their appeal could not with safety to the conduct of the War be granted by the new Government. In June, 1915, he took over his new office, and gathered to the task three others, Sir Hubert Llewelyn-Smith, Dr. Addison and his secretary, J. T. Davies.

The Germans had been turning out, as far as statistics were available, nearly 100 shells a day to our 1. The

munition factories in England were not even working night shifts. This new group at the Ministry of Munitions met together with one purpose. They were to let nothing stand in the way of the accomplishment of their task. Lloyd George was fortunately gifted with a certain volatile singleness of purpose which allowed him to throw himself whole-heartedly into any scheme that called for his energies.

His first act was to embark on a campaign of speeches throughout the country, particularly in the North and West of England, to bring before the people as clearly as possible the urgent need for throwing themselves whole-heartedly into the production of munitions. He repeated everywhere he went that this was a War of Munitions. His campaign took him from Manchester to Liverpool and then down to Cardiff and Bristol. Everywhere he went he proposed the construction of factories devoted entirely to the making of munitions, each factory working to its utmost capacity. "We are fighting against the best organised community in the world, the best organised whether for peace or war, and we have been employing too much the easy, go-as-you-please methods which, believe me, would not have enabled us to maintain our place as a nation even in peace very much longer. . . . Everything that would help us to overcome our difficulty and surprise our enemy we want to mobilise in such a way as to produce in the shortest space of time the greatest quantity of the best and most efficient war material."

He visited French at G.H.Q. He instituted the first conference on munitions with the French experts. He came back from France convinced of the need for more and bigger guns regardless of the cost. He gave orders for a number of guns three times greater than was supposed to

be necessary. Subsequent events showed that even this so much higher estimate fell short of what really was required. He took over the control of the factories, and divided England into munition areas, each with a committee to direct operations, and in each place he appointed a man who would see that the work was carried through. There was no time to be lost.

His successor at the Ministry of Munitions, Mr. Montague, paid a generous tribute to the work he did at this time, and said that it was impossible to calculate how much was due to the energy and foresight of Lloyd George. French also paid a warm tribute to him.

He begged the Trade Unions to relax their rules for the country's benefit. He threw himself into the task of mastering the details of the manufacture of shells. In the Bill he introduced in the Commons at the end of June, 1915, there were full measures for the speeding up of supplies. It gave the State power over employers and employees, made provision for the settlement of disputes, and provided for heavy penalties in the case of strikes and lockouts. To the Board of Trade it was left to decide whether or not any particular Trade Union rule could be considered as effecting or retarding the progress of production. These drastic measures, it was insisted, were only temporary. Nevertheless, it was felt that necessary as they were they were a great restriction on personal liberty.

It is interesting to realise that at this time Lloyd George, at one time an opponent of war, the social reformer, the Chancellor of the Exchequer who had grudged every pound spent on armaments, had so given himself to the task of the winning of the War that he was prepared to work for conscription of labour. In point of fact, the results of his organisation were sufficiently satisfactory not to warrant

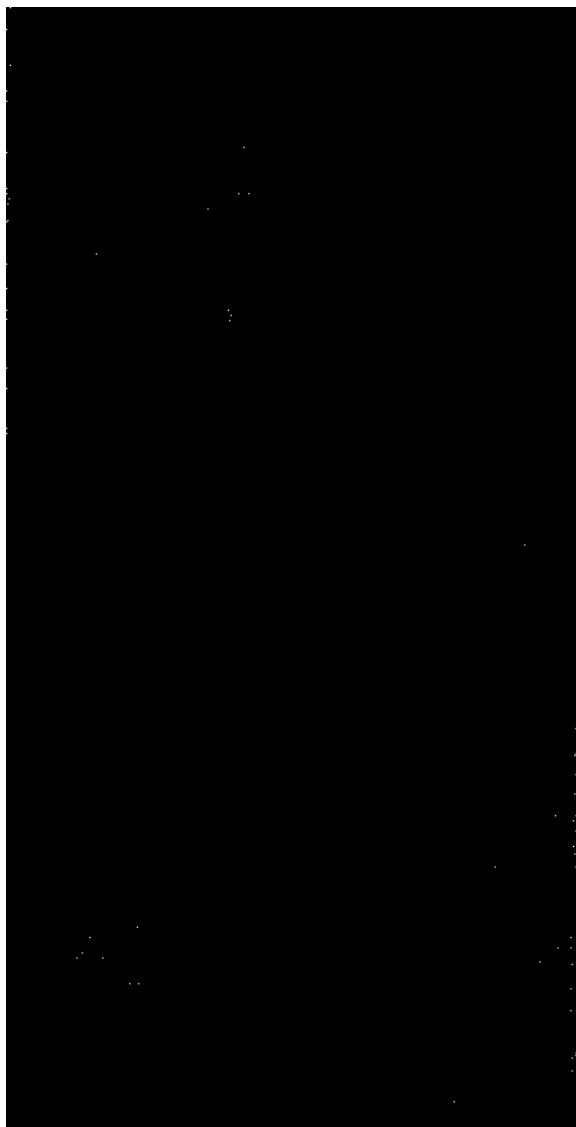
any such step. He did, however advocate military conscription. He justified it as something that was not a stigma **but** as something representing the best kind of organisation. It was a compulsory thing, but only in the sense in which taxes were compulsory.

He had done his work well, he had set the majority of munition factories in motion, and once again he was distracted to new adventures.

Lord Kitchener was the Secretary of War. When he was drowned on his way to Russia in June, 1916, it was necessary to appoint an adequate successor.

Lloyd George made no secret of the fact that he was anxious for the office. The success he had achieved in other fields inclined people to see in him a likely candidate for the post. His mind had always been attracted by strategy, and he was anxious to share in that department of the War. It so happened that he had been partly instrumental in the transferring of certain powers from the Secretaryship of War to the Imperial Staff, and it was in consequence to a somewhat limited position that he now came. Chief of the Staff was Sir William Robertson, a man of strong character on whom even the mercurial character of Lloyd George could make very little impression.

As was natural there was a certain conflict between the two men. Robertson was committed to the belief that the chief centre of the War was on the Western front, Lloyd George was a confirmed Easterner. As Secretary for War, he claimed that he was responsible in a general way for the strategy of the armies. The situation between himself and Robertson was not improved by the fact that Lloyd George went to Paris to consult with the French War Minister and did not invite Robertson to be present at the consultation.



A TYPICAL WARTIME AUDIENCE

Robertson, however, in all these matters had the support of Asquith, and therefore was not unduly disturbed by the possible consequences of any such conference.

The situation in 1916, especially after the Battle of the Somme in which the English and French casualties had reached a terrifying number, was not hopeful.

Rumania had come into the War on the side of the Allies. She had declared war on Austria. This declaration was followed up by declarations on her from Germany, Turkey and finally Bulgaria, the latter making a determined attack on Rumania, and producing there what had every appearance of an ugly situation.

Lloyd George, realising that the situation in the Balkans was growing daily more serious, sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister on September 4th, 1916. In it he pointed out that we could not afford another Serbian tragedy; that we had been warned before by events and that we should not this time fall into the same error.

He outlined four distinct facts in the situation:

1. Hindenburg's well-known Eastern inclinations.
2. The declaration of war by Bulgaria on Rumania, which he felt was the outcome of assurances to King Ferdinand that the Germans would help in any attack on Rumania.
3. The slackening of the German attack on Verdun. He foresaw that this attack must soon cease, and that the Germans could withdraw on the Somme without losing any vital position, thus obtaining sufficient men for a campaign in the East.
4. The inability of the Rumanian Army *to* withstand an attack of the combined forces of Austria, Germany and Bulgaria.

"I therefore once more urge that the General Staff should carefully consider what action we could, in conjunction with France and Italy, take immediately to relieve the pressure on Rumania if a formidable attack developed against her."

The old controversy between the supporters of the campaign on the Western front and the advocates of an Eastern campaign once more came to life.

As recently as January of this year—1932—there was an interesting reference to this controversy in the *Observer*. Reviewing Sir Norman Angell's book *The Unseen Assassin*, Mr. Wickham Steed there wrote:—

"During the War there was a famous dispute about the best way to wage it and to win it. Most British soldiers, including Sir Douglas Haig and his principal staff officers—who had learnt their skill in military thought from the great German teacher, Clausewitz—believed strongly that the only way to beat the enemy was to go for the point where he was strongest and to hammer away on the Western Front until they had smashed him. They hated and opposed what they called side-shows; and they came near to losing the War in consequence. They were always quoting Clausewitz to Lloyd George and other statesmen who did not agree with them because those statesmen felt that a way of thought which led to such doubtful results could not be right. Then Mr. Lloyd George, or somebody for him, read Clausewitz and found out where the mistake was. Clausewitz was writing about a war of movement in which armies could march and manoeuvre freely. But he had also a chapter on sieges, and in that chapter he said that the right way was to go for the weakest, not the strongest point of the enemy. 'This trench warfare,' said Mr. Lloyd George, in a famous talk with Sir Douglas

Haig, 'is a siege, and in the name of Clausewitz, we have got to go for the enemy's weakest point,' which happened then to be the Austrian front in Italy."

Lloyd George was without the support of Asquith, who as usual, tended to favour the decision of the Imperial Staff. France had expressed its willingness to join in an Eastern campaign providing sufficient support were forthcoming from England. Naturally, with the strong opposition from the Imperial Staff supported by Mr. Asquith that assistance was unlikely. France, therefore, would not act. Germany toyed with Rumania like a cat with a mouse, and slowly but surely surrounded the Rumanians and by the end of the year captured Bucharest.

There was a general feeling, as a result of the Rumanian disaster, that all was not well with the Government, and although Mr. Asquith had performed prodigies of tact and good statesmanship, a growing feeling of discontent against him was emphasised in certain quarters. Public feeling was in favour of a change. It so happened that Lloyd George had suggested wise moves. That these plans of his were not tested by practical application did not matter. He appeared to be at least thinking on right lines.

The bonfire was built and it only required a spark to set it on fire. The spark came from a most unexpected quarter, and as often happens a comparatively trivial matter served to bring about a change in the destinies of a nation. Certain territories in Nigeria that had been taken from the Germans were put up for sale to the highest bidder. In the opinion of the House of Commons this sale should have been restricted to British buyers. At a division 60 Conservatives voted against the Government and 71 for the Government. Bonar Law, the leader of the Conservatives, was seriously affected by this turn of events. He felt that the

incident showed dangerous weaknesses in the Government and suggested the formation of a War Council which was to include himself, Sir Edward Carson, Lloyd George, and Asquith as Prime Minister. Mr. Asquith refused to accept this proposal, though he agreed in principle to the setting up of a special body under his control to manage the conduct of the war.

It was impossible, apparently, for Asquith and Lloyd George to come to any decision as to the nature and power of the new Council. The news of the controversy was made public in the Press and it was suggested that Lloyd George intended to resign. The Conservatives were still willing that Mr. Asquith should remain Prime Minister, but they asked him to resign and re-form his ministry. Bonar Law, in order to make the situation easier, also offered to resign.

Asquith, Lloyd George and Bonar Law continued to discuss the formation of an effective War Council and appeared at one time to reach an agreement. According to this Lloyd George would be chairman, with four other members, Mr. Asquith could attend the Council as he saw fit, and when he attended he was to take the chair. When he did not attend he would be able to exercise a power of veto on the report made to him of the proceedings taken in the Council.

It was suggested that Mr. Balfour should leave the Admiralty, and that Sir Edward Carson should become a member of the Council. Mr. Asquith would not agree to this, but issued a statement to the Press which read:—

"The Prime Minister, with a view to the more effective prosecution of the War, has decided to advise His Majesty the King to consent to a reconstruction of the Government."

Lloyd George was understood to have other plans. *The Times* newspaper was then owned by Lord Northcliffe

and a leading article in its issue of December 4th, 1916, was believed to give a clue to these. They were "to establish a small War Council fully charged with the supreme direction of the War. Of this Council Mr. Asquith himself is not to be a member, the assumption being that the Prime Minister has sufficient cares of a more general character without devoting himself wholly, as the new Council must be devoted if it is to be effective, to the daily task of organising victory."

Asquith wrote to Lloyd George, referred to this leader, and told him that the suggestion that he should not be a member of the Council did not meet with his approval. The proposal gave the impression that he was being relegated to the position of an irresponsible spectator of the War, whereas the Prime Minister should have supreme and effective control of the War policy. In other words, Asquith was prepared to accept the proposals previously agreed upon, but not the new suggestions contained in *The Times*.

Lloyd George replied that he had not seen the article in *The Times*, and asked Asquith not to pay too much attention to it. He said in his letter that in his opinion Northcliffe "frankly wants a smash. Derby and I do not. Northcliffe would like to make this and any other re-arrangement under your Premiership impossible. Derby and I attach great importance to you retaining your present position effectively."

Asquith naturally began to feel that he was the object of a conspiracy. He wrote again to Lloyd George informing him that the King had authorised him to form a new Government. The supreme matter was the organisation of the War Council. He insisted that the Prime Minister **must be** its chairman. He refused again to remove Balfour

from the Admiralty, and would not accept Sir Edward Carson as a member of the Council.

Further correspondence followed. Lloyd George accused Asquith of going back on his own proposals and threatened to resign. Asquith replied that he regretted Lloyd George's letter, but that he could not accept his account of what passed between them in regard to Asquith's connection with the War Council. Lloyd George, whom Asquith had requested not to publish their correspondence, said that he could not resign without publishing the reason; the best way of doing that would be to publish the correspondence.

Asquith again asked him to refrain from publication, and told him that he had tendered his resignation to the King. Lloyd George was clearly forcing the issue. Asquith realised how disastrous would be Lloyd George's resignation and the publishing of the letters that had passed between them. There would be no more chance for united administration. There was only one course open to Asquith, resignation—he took it.

All that had happened did not take place suddenly. It merely reflected what had doubtless been going on under the surface for a long time. It would indeed be surprising if Lloyd George had not felt that he was the person most likely to direct the prosecution of the War with chance of a favourable issue. The thought, at any rate, must have crossed his mind. He is built like that, and whatever the secret force at work, whoever was responsible for the initial impulse that led to the final situation, he was as fit as, if not fitter than, any man to occupy the post of Premier in the national crisis. His qualifications were not entirely those of a man cut out for Premiership, but his experience and the energy he had shown marked him out as the man best

suited to preside over the nation's War Council, and what England required at that moment was not so much a Premier as an energetic war leader.

From this moment, also, dates the rift in the Liberal Party that has never again been fully mended, and in a certain sense Lloyd George's solitary position to-day was foreshadowed, if not foreseen, in the moment when he took over the reins of government from Mr. Asquith.

It was Bonar Law who was first asked to form the new Government, but the strength of his party was not sufficient for him to hold a commanding position, and inevitably Lloyd George was invited to form a Ministry. The division caused by his disagreement with Asquith did not prevent him from securing a sufficient majority of the Liberal Party to make it possible for him to succeed. He was not in favour of a large Cabinet, and he was not alone in that opinion. The first report of the Dardanelles Commission bears him out. "It must have been obvious from the first that the Cabinet was far too numerous to control effectively the conduct of the War. It is to be regretted that this rudimentary fact was not recognised immediately after the outbreak of the War."

He decided upon a Cabinet of five. One of his intentions was to include in the Cabinet Sir Edward Carson. Mr. Balfour was persuaded to relinquish the Admiralty and to accept the Secretaryship of Foreign Affairs. The War Council of five included Lord Curzon, Lord Milner, Bonar Law and Arthur Henderson. In order to devote himself more fully to the conduct of the War he did not concern himself so much with the task of leadership in the House, but confined himself almost entirely to presiding over the War Council.

One of the first things with which he was faced was an

attempt by the German Chancellor to throw out feelers for peace. It was a tremendous responsibility in a war of such magnitude to have to say whether or not to reject any sort of peace proposals. The Germans were indefinite in what they suggested. He felt, as everyone felt, that they could only meet the Germans on grounds to which it would be for them impossible to agree, things had gone too far. He felt justified, therefore, in refusing to accept any proposals for peace negotiations.

The air having been cleared, and the German peace proposal, which meant little more than an acceptance of a German victory, having been laid aside, Lloyd George had one aim and one aim only: to prosecute the War with the utmost vigour and to act in his new office as he had acted in the Ministry of Munitions. To prosecute the War, even though it resulted in a victory the fruits of which were not too apparent, was probably a wiser policy than to accept a state of things in which there had been no decisive issue.

Sir William Robertson, an uncompromising soldier, said of Lloyd George that, "he wanted a victory quickly. A victory while you wait." He replied to those whom he felt to be anxious to end the War, very vigorously. "Let there be no doubt as to the alternatives with which we are confronted. One of them is to make easy terms with the triumphant outlaw, as men are driven to do in order to buy immunity in lands where there is no authority to force law. That is one course. It means abasing ourselves in terror before lawlessness.

"The other is to go through with our divine task of vindicating justice so as to establish righteous and everlasting peace for ourselves and for our children. . . . Victory is an essential condition for the security of a free world. . . .

It is because I am firmly convinced that, despite some untoward events, despite discouraging appearances, we are making steady progress towards the goal we set in front of us in 1914, that I would regard peace overtures to Prussia, at the very moment when the Prussian military spirit is drunk with boastfulness, as a betrayal of the great trust with which my colleagues and I have been charged/

One of the outcomes of the refusal by the Allies to entertain Peace negotiations was increased activity in German submarine warfare.

"Lloyd George," said the German Socialist leader at the beginning of 1917, "is the true godfather of our Government's resolution to adopt the unrestricted submarine campaign."

Although in certain parts of the world, in the East and in Africa, the outlook was not so black, the situation in France, in the beginning of 1917, could hardly give cause for rejoicing. Lloyd George went to Rome for a conference of the Prime Ministers and Generals of the Allied forces, and the whole military situation was discussed, and a plan devised to attack the Austrians and relieve the pressure on Italy. On top of this came the news that Russia was likely to withdraw from the War. In this hour of disaster Lloyd George began to think more closely of the possibility of American Intervention. Freed from the necessity of holding the Russians, it was inevitable that the German armies would be flung against the West, and it was seen that the brunt of the attack would have to be borne on the Italian front. The need for this was also caused by the demoralisation of the Austrian Army. That alone called for some drastic step on the part of Germany.

Waiter Page, the American Ambassador, had always been friendly to England, and advocated the intervention in the War by America.

A fortunate thing for the Allies now happened. A cipher telegram to Mexico from Germany was intercepted. Germany proposed an invasion by Mexico. America was amazed. From then onward the task of persuading America to join in the War was made easy, and after a month President Wilson called upon his country to declare War on Germany. There was general rejoicing when America came into the struggle. In Lloyd George's mind this step was all that was required, not only for success but also to give a final proof of the nature of the War as he had always conceived it.

"This," he said, "gives the final stamp and seal to the character of the conflict as a blow struck against military autocracy throughout the world."

While the Allies were waiting for America to train and equip her men there was one more step which Lloyd George wished to see taken. He was anxious that there should be a centralised and supreme control of the whole of the Allied forces. He had always had a great admiration for General Nivelle, who was a man after his own heart. Unfortunately, his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the French forces did not last long, but Lloyd George planned that there should be some commander, if not Nivelle, who would take the leadership of the Allied Forces.

His first proposal, for he dared not reveal his hand at once, was an Inter-allied Organisation, a kind of International War Council which would direct all operations. Negotiations went on. Lloyd George made his opinion very clear in Paris and elsewhere. The objection naturally came from the professional soldiers. Sir William Robertson thought

that no English General should be called upon to serve under a foreigner.

The Germans, meanwhile, realising what the intervention of America meant, prepared to throw everything into one last struggle. They must win, so they felt, in the race between themselves and the Americans. In March, 1918, was launched an overwhelming offensive on the Western front. The Germans broke through at almost every point, and threatened to divide the English and French armies. Troops were rushed from every theatre of war from which they could be spared, and every attempt was made to stem the tide. At one point the Germans were within thirty miles of Paris. It was the moment for decisive action.

Lloyd George maintained that it was not lack of men or lack of good troops that was responsible for the failure of the Allies to force any decisive victory. In his mind it was the absence of any unity of control.

The success of the German offensive was a powerful argument in his favour. Not only was his plan for a combined control accepted, but what was more, Haig and Petain also consented. At a conference at which England was represented by Lord Milner, France by Messieurs Poincare and Clemenceau, and at which Haig, Foch and PStain were present, it was decided to place Foch in command of the Allied Forces.

This was, in a sense, the culminating triumph of Lloyd George's work during the War. When he was asked why this step could not have been taken long ago, he replied that "if the Cabinet only two weeks ago had suggested placing the British Army under a foreign General it would have been asked to resign."

In the meantime the Germans were pressing on, and Lloyd George sent word to the British Ambassador in

Washington, **Lord Reading, to lay** the situation **before** President Wilson. Wilson agreed **to send** 120,000 **troops** a month to Europe. The Allies would provide the shipping. Out of the 1,900,000 men sent by America about two-thirds were carried in British ships.

The Germans were not able to maintain their advantage. Foch drove back that section of their Army that was endeavouring to break through to Paris. August 8th, 1918, was the beginning of the end. It was now only a matter of time. Soon Bulgaria and then Austria and Turkey retired from the War.

It is difficult to estimate adequately the part that Lloyd George played during the War. It is difficult to know how far he was responsible for the Allied victory. This much is certain, that on all sides from friends and even from those who had not always been in agreement with him, he received praise that attributed to him a very large share in the victory that came with the Armistice in November, 1918.

But the end of his trouble was not yet in sight. With the cessation of hostilities, and even before then, began the task, almost as heavy as that of the conducting of the War, of making a satisfactory peace, and of assisting to conduct the difficult negotiations that this entailed with the minimum of offence and the maximum of justice.

CHAPTER V

THE PEACEMAKER

WINSTON CHURCHILL has remarked of Lloyd George that "he possesses two characteristics which were in harmony with the period of confusion. First, a power of living in the present without taking short views. Every day for him was filled with the hope and the impulses of a fresh beginning. He surveyed the problems of each morning with an eye unobstructed by preconceived notions, past utterances, or previous disappointments and defeats.

" In times of peace such a mood is not always admirable nor often successful for long but in the intense crisis when the world was a kaleidoscope, when every minute all the values and realisations were charged by some prodigious event and its reactions, this inexhaustible mental agility, guided by the main purpose of victory, was a real advantage. His intuition fitted the crisis better than the logical reasoning of more rigid minds."

Throughout the War Lloyd George had shown himself to be optimistic about the state of the world when it was over. He was, as Winston Churchill had pointed out, the right man in a grave crisis because of his peculiar adaptability and his singularly inexhaustible fund of vigour. The problem set to the world by the declaration of peace was in its way as grave and as serious as the War. The situations that must necessarily arise were so varied

that they must necessarily present complications that could not be approached from a single angle.

During the War it was possible to have one motive idea—victory by every possible means. Peace, however, saw every nation asserting itself and jealous of its own rights. In war time the line of division between friend and enemy is clear, but in the settlement of peace even those who were banded together during the struggle might show suspicion towards one another and manifest a sensitiveness that necessarily complicated the situation.

Lloyd George had said during the War: "The world will be able, when the War is over, to attend to its own business. There will be no War to disturb and distract it. We can build up, we can reconstruct, we can till and cultivate and enrich, and the burden of terror and waste of war will have gone." As subsequent events have shown, the cancer of War had eaten more deeply than Lloyd George foresaw, and the equilibrium of the world is still very far from being established.

He set out on the quest for peace armed with the principle that it should not be dictated by extreme men on either side. "We must not arm Germany," he said, "with a real grievance. A Germany freed from military domination will be welcome into the great League of Nations/'

The Germans first addressed themselves to the President of the United States; the first offer to enter into negotiations was definitely made a month before the Armistice was signed, and for some time President Wilson took the centre of the platform. While the negotiations were in progress Lloyd George was watching very closely. It seemed at first to him that the Germans were not willing to enter sincerely into the spirit of the peace as proposed by the Allies. To his mind Germany must be completely

disarmed. He went to Paris, and there in conference with the Allies drew up the Armistice terms. There was no ambiguity about them. Germany had to surrender in full. The Germans refused unconditional surrender at first, but finding that the morale of both their army and navy was gone, at last accepted the unconditional surrender demanded of them.

On his return from Versailles, at a dinner given in the Mansion House, he made a speech which was in a sense a vindication of the policy he had advocated during the War. He had always insisted that Germany should be attacked through the East, and he pointed out that it was only when Turkey, Bulgaria and Austria had been cut off from her that the Allies sent their terms to her. "Forgive me for referring to them now. I have waited for this hour. I have been supposed to have been advocating little side-shows which frittered away the strength of this country upon irresponsible enterprises. You know why now. We wanted to get round by the back door to Germany. It helped those who were battling at the front door."

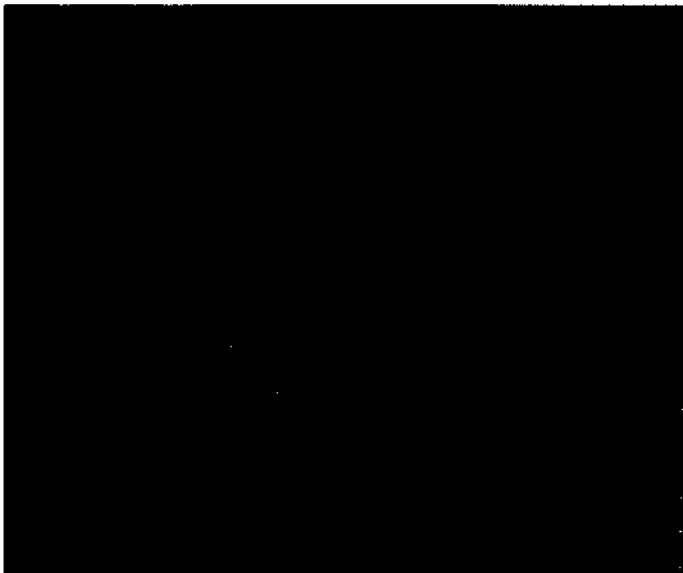
The first thing that Lloyd George did was to appeal to the country in a general election. He wished to enter into the negotiations for peace in a full knowledge that he had the country behind him. He had, and the Coalition showed a very large majority. Those who had opposed him were defeated. Asquith himself was unseated after thirty years. It was the crowning political victory of Lloyd George's life.

After a lapse of two months the Allies met in Paris to draft the Treaty. They first met on January 18th, 1919. Seventy of the most prominent statesmen in the world were assembled together. The unexpected presence of President Wilson at the conference produced a certain

disturbed feeling among the others. He had shown himself to be an idealist, and this conference had to be run on the most practical and realistic lines. Not only were they frightened at this, but he had the reputation of possessing an autocratic manner. He indeed expected that he would be appointed to preside at the conference. It was therefore not easy to inform him that the French Premier, in virtue of the fact that the Conference was held in France, had the right to this honour.

The Allies had all come there expecting in full the granting of their desires. As Mr. Wilson Harris has said, "Everyone who was anyone wanted something different." France wanted Alsace-Lorraine and the Saar Valley and the left bank of the Rhine and Syria and part of the Cameroons. Great Britain wanted Mesopotamia and German East Africa and South West Africa and some Pacific Islands and possibly Palestine. Italy wanted the Trentino and Trieste and Tyrol and Dalmatia and Fiume and parts of Albania and a foothold at Adelia. Japan wanted Shantung and some North Pacific Islands. Greece wanted extensions in Epirus and Macedonia and the return of the Dodecanese and considerable holdings around Smyrna. Belgium wanted parts of German East Africa and various concessions at the expense of Holland. Poland wanted independence, so did Czecho-Slovakia and Jugoslavia and the border States of Russia, while Rumania wanted Transylvania and Bessarabia.

The way, therefore, before the conference was a thorny one. It had to tread its way between the idealism of President Wilson and the very clearly laid down realism of the countries who wished for definite things. Lloyd George seems to have shared something of both points of view. He had always been something of an idealist, but



[Photo: Topical Press Agency

AT A ZIONIST DINNER WITH LORD AND LADY READING AND MR. AND MRS.
JAMES DE ROTHSCHILD

on the other hand his long connection with politics had inclined him to believe in the tangible and the practical. His position as the representative of Great Britain made it imperative for him to insist on her rights.

He opposed, for example, the granting to Poland of the port of Dantzig, a grant which had been recommended by a commission on which English experts were represented. He was also strongly opposed to the occupation of the Rhineland and to the marching of the French Armies into the Rhine Valley. He remained very firm in his insistence on the demands of Great Britain. It was obvious that if the conference was to succeed it could not remain as numerous as it was. The decision was come to, therefore, that the number should be reduced to ten, and that the remainder of the Ministers should be divided into various commissions to provide necessary information to the main body.

As the conference dragged on President Wilson informed his colleagues that he must return to America. Pursuing his policy of idealism, he proposed that a league of all the nations of the world should be formed, and that a covenant should be drawn up as the foundation statute of this new organisation which allied, enemy and neutral powers alike should be invited to sign. "The Covenant," said Mr. Lansing, "was to be the Maxima Charta of Mankind securing to the nations their rights and liberties and uniting them for the preservation of universal peace." To the practical mind of Clemenceau this idealistic notion appeared absurd. Lloyd George, however, was disposed to respect the wishes of President Wilson.

The conference set about drawing up the document. It was finally put into shape and President Wilson returned to America under the impression that he had achieved

something that would preserve a lasting peace in the world and equality of brotherhood among the nations. Wilson's triumph was short-lived. It was as unpopular in America as it was unimpressive in the eyes of his colleagues at the Peace Conference. The objection in America to the League was received with joy in Paris, and those who hitherto had been silent now publicly voiced their disapproval. It is interesting to recall this fact in view of the subsequent orientation of French policy and its increasing use of the League as a main instrument of diplomacy.

Meanwhile, Lloyd George was growing impatient at the delay in the development of the treaty. As he had shown on previous occasions, he believed that the real work could only be done by a small and highly centralised group. The ten members were considered by him to be six too many, so that he suggested that a body of four, British, French and Italian Prime Ministers, and President Wilson, should meet together and draw up the necessary treaty.

Mr. Lansing, who was the colleague of President Wilson, has remarked of Lloyd George at the meetings held in Paris, that "he disclosed that his training was that of a politician rather than that of a diplomat. He did not speak in the deliberate and precise manner in which President Wilson spoke, nor in the analytical and closely reasoned style of Signor Orlando when arguing a point. The British statesman was very much of a rough and tumble debater, quick to seize upon the weak points of an opponent and to attack them vigorously, sometimes with sarcasm and ridicule, and often with flat denials of fact.

"He was better in attack than in defence, as the latter required detailed knowledge of every phase of the question, while in attacking he could choose his own ground. Yet

nobody could come into intimate association with Lloyd George without falling under the spell of his personal charm. One might dislike his methods as those of a politician, one might even feel a measure of contemptuous surprise that he dared to discuss a question of territory without knowing exactly where the territory was, and there might be a feeling of surprise that he changed his mind whenever it seemed to be expedient. But with it all one liked the man."

Although the conference of the Big Four was continued in secret, there was a growing fear everywhere that all was not well. A crisis in the conference was precipitated by the demands of Italy for the concessions that had been promised her at the time of her entrance into the War. President Wilson strongly opposed her demands for the possession of Trieste and Fiume, whereupon Signor Orlando returned to Italy. Lloyd George supported Wilson, and insisted that Fiume should be handed over to Jugoslavia.

The situation became tense, and pressure was brought to bear on the conference by Japan, who claimed certain rights, and by the fact that Rumania began war again on Hungary. In the meantime France, having reduced her enemy Germany, was anxious to press her advantage home in every direction. The French were insistent that the Rhine should become the frontier between the two peoples. Foch was completely committed to this scheme. Again Lloyd George supported Wilson in his refusal to agree to any such proposal. He had said at the outset that we must make such a peace with Germany that she would be able to sign without dishonour. In the light of this statement the proposals of France appeared to him to be extravagant and excessive.

The fact that Lloyd George was so clearly behind President Wilson created considerable uneasiness in England. **Before** he set out for the conference he had insisted that he would make it his business to see that Germany should be forced to pay for the destruction she had created. Such was the anxiety in England that close on 400 members signed a message to Lloyd George in which they said that they expected "the first action of the Peace Conference would be, as you yourself repeatedly stated in your election speeches, to present the bill in full, and make Germany acknowledge the debt."

Lloyd George came over to England and in a characteristic speech quietened their misgivings. Reinforced in their confidence of Parliament, he returned to Paris to fight any attempt on the part of the French to annex the Rhine Provinces. The result was that the relations between Clemenceau on the one hand and Wilson and Lloyd George on the other, showed signs of becoming strained. The situation was only saved after some time by a counter proposal from Lloyd George and Wilson in which they offered to enter into a pact with France to unite with her should Germany ever attack her. This, it was suggested to Clemenceau, would be of greater value than the annexation of the Rhine Provinces, and it was on this basis that the treaty was finally drawn up and signed after five months, at the end of June, 1919.

Lloyd George, on his return to London, was received by the King and publicly acclaimed through the crowded streets of London. In the meantime, President Wilson returned to America. When he arrived there his reception was not so cordial. The clause in the treaty by which England and America had contracted to assist France in the event **of** aggression from Germany was held to be a contravention **of**

the Monroe Doctrine and repudiated by the American Senate. France was naturally perturbed. The strong military faction which had insisted upon the annexation of the Rhine Provinces had only been persuaded to withdraw this demand by the promise of such a guarantee from England and America. France felt that she was betrayed.

The militarists in France at once began to agitate for the occupation of the Ruhr. Lloyd George wished at all costs to avoid anything that would embitter Germany. He was also, in conjunction with the expressed opinion of his colleagues in England, the opponent of any scheme which sought to reduce Germany to a state of economic impotence. This viewpoint was natural, since Germany had always been one of England's best customers, and any threat to her economic soundness must naturally react on the trade of this country. France, on the other hand, was anxious to crush Germany completely.

In the meantime it was evident that France was prepared to encourage the formation of military alliances such as had been in many people's estimation the cause of the War in 1914.

France was supporting Poland against Russia and Rumania. Czecho-Slovakia and Jugoslavia were forming alliances and looking to France to foster their projects. Lloyd George was faced with grave difficulties. If he opposed France in every detail it would mean that there would be an end to the Anglo-French Alliance. On the other hand, he could not, for reasons vital to this country, consent to Germany's ruin, nor could he agree to the formation of such military alliances as France was evidently encouraging.

It was Germany that determined his line of action. Germany, realising the differences of opinion between

England and France, was seeking to use them to **her own** advantage. Lloyd George, therefore, joined with France in an attempt to force Germany to meet her obligations. To this end conventions were held both in London **and** in Paris in 1921. The Germans refused to offer adequate satisfaction, and the Prime Minister was left no alternative but to consent to the occupation of the Ruhr.

A further blow to Lloyd George's hopes came when the coal-fields of Upper Silesia, after a plebiscite, were handed **over** to Poland. It was not until America proposed a Naval conference at Washington towards the end of this year that there appeared to be any relief from the depressing situation. Lloyd George was delighted to see America back in conference with Europe, but the conference unfortunately was a failure.

Lloyd George insisted that they should try again, not in America but on this side of the Atlantic. He saw that the presence once again in Europe of American delegates would restore to these parleys some balance in favour of English plans. America, however, was not willing to interfere. Further, it was remembered what was the fate of Wilson's attempt to act in contravention of the Monroe Doctrine. Lloyd George was at his wits' end to find some means of softening the attitude of France towards Germany.

In the beginning of 1922 he went to Cannes, where the Reparations Commission was convened, with an offer to France of a Defensive Alliance with Great Britain. This was made in some measure to compensate for the clause in the Treaty of Versailles which the American Senate had refused to ratify, and a real pacification of Europe seemed at last within sight. Aristide Briand, then Premier of France, and Lloyd George were temperamentally

congenial, and the negotiations prospered. Amongst other tastes they shared a liking for golf, and one day a photograph appeared in the French Press showing the two men together in jovial mood on the links. Nationalist opinion in France was immediately inflamed: Briand was accused of being spell-bound by the Welsh wizard into sacrificing his country's rights, and, in the ensuing parliamentary crisis, he was defeated in the Chamber and replaced by Poincare, the declared opponent of any policy of leniency to Germany.

The only satisfactory outcome of the conference at Cannes was an agreement to meet at Genoa, to which all the European powers consented. Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, and even Russia were invited to send delegates. The purpose of this meeting was to restore in Europe the economic equilibrium, and to do away with anything that was an obstacle to commercial development and international trade.

Lloyd George described his hopes in the most glowing terms, but by this time the Powers on the Continent were growing cynical. Poincare determined not to be convinced, and only consented to come to the conference on condition that the question of German Reparations or the Treaty of Versailles should not be discussed.

There was something almost pathetic in Lloyd George's faith in conferences. Even after four years of uninterrupted personal contacts that had achieved nothing stable or satisfactory, even after agreeing to Poincaré's demands that certain very vital questions should not come before the conference, he still went to Genoa believing that he would succeed. All his old Liberal ideas came to the fore. He wished to see every nation treated with equal humanity. "We are not here," he said, "as allied or enemy States.

We are not here as belligerents and neutrals. **We have not** come together as monarchists or republicans or Sovietists. We are assembled as the representatives of all the nations and peoples in Europe to seek out in common the best method of restoring the shattered prosperity of this continent so that we may each build up in our own land, each in our own way, a better condition of things for our people than the world has yet enjoyed."

He wished to remove feelings of antagonism against Germany and Russia. He wished to re-establish trade with these countries as the only means of restoring mutual confidence. He was following in the footsteps of the Younger Pitt.

"The pulse of commerce is beating feebly and wildly. In some lands an artificial activity is stimulated either by demands for repairing the ravages of war or by generations of thrift, by the frugal and industrious among the people. But legitimate trade, commerce and industry are everywhere disorganised and depressed. There is unemployment in the West; there is famine and pestilence in the East. . . . What is the need of Europe? Peace—a real peace."

In these terms he called to the nations assembled at Genoa to see to it that the trade of the world was restored. Never had a Liberal leader a bigger audience for his plea for freer international trade relations. In particular he emphasised the necessity for including Russia in the family of nations, and opening up the vast fields of her resources to her own advantage and the advantage of all other nations.

But again the results of Genoa were disappointing. Certain useful economic objects were achieved, notably the setting up of machinery for closer co-operation between the great central banks. A pact of non-aggression was

signed by all the Powers represented, but the non-participation of America and the half-hearted attitude of France were insuperable obstacles to any real progress.

Finally a bomb was dropped on the conference when it was known that the Russians and Germans had held a secret meeting at Rapallo and entered into an agreement under which Germany recognised the Bolsheviks and Russia withdrew her claims against Germany as laid down at the Treaty of Versailles; debts between the two countries were wiped out.

Representations were made to the President of the German Delegation that they had violated their promise not to participate in any discussion which concerned the relations between the rest of Europe and Russia. Only Lloyd George's optimism seems to have kept the conference together. It was hoped that some sort of general agreement could be reached between the nations, but the action of Russia and Germany had made that impossible.

"Germany," he said at a later occasion, "threw away a great opportunity at Genoa when all the nations of Europe came together for the first time to discuss their troubles in a spirit of equality and amity. It is true that reparations were excluded at the instance of France from the programme of the conference, but the spirit engendered by a friendly settlement on all other existing questions would have rendered a reasonable and temperate consideration of reparations inevitable. Germany, by the foolish staging of its Russian agreement, made all that impossible. Resentment and suspicion were once more equipped with a scourge, and they used it readily to drive out all good will for Germany from the purlieus of that great Conference; another opportunity lost."

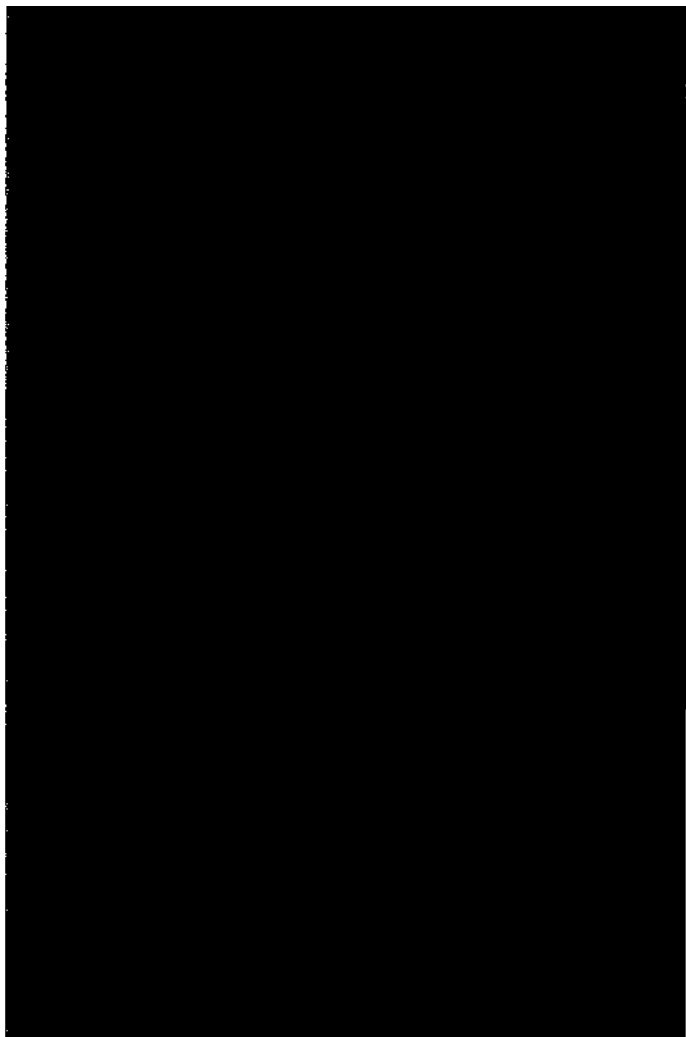
Disappointment had been heaped on disappointment.

Lloyd George, who had dreamed of reconciling the allies and their enemies, of opening up again the trade routes of the world by bringing the nations together face to face, had failed to achieve his principal objective.

Something had been achieved, but he had found that the making of a peace that would restore prosperity was a harder task than the guiding of a people to victory. The time was near at hand when yet another blow was to fall on him. The stern voice of America calling for repayment of loans was soon to be heard. It was impossible to pay back the borrowed money in gold, and Lloyd George suggested as an alternative that there should be an agreement under which countries consented to cancel War debts and to decrease their reparation demands.

The proposal did not meet with approval. Lord Balfour was asked to draw up a note to America in which the British Government declared that it was prepared to restrict its claims for debt on allied Governments to the amounts which were required to meet our own repayments of debt to America. The note, which was intended to gain time from America, unfortunately failed in its purpose. The obvious reaction was felt in Europe. If America pressed England, England must press France, and France Germany. At a conference in London the French Premier suggested that the allies should put a barrier round the Ruhr and take over certain of the German resources such as the mines and forests, but Lloyd George held his ground, and the conference broke up without contributing anything to a satisfactory general settlement.

In the meantime a serious situation had developed in Turkey, where an invading Greek army, backed by the moral support of the British Government, had been heavily defeated by the Turkish nationalists under Mustapha



[Photo : London News Agency

WITH LORD READING IN THE GARDEN OF HIS HOUSE AT ADDISON ROAD

Kemal. Smyrna was sacked and the Turkish forces advanced on the Dardanelles.

Sir Charles Harington was in command of a British force charged with the duty of defending the straits, and French and Italian troops were also on the spot. Lloyd George, whose sympathies were strongly anti-Turk, was in favour of a strong policy, even to the extent of further fighting. The position became acute when the French and Italian forces were suddenly withdrawn from the front and a small British army left at Chanak with a much larger body of Turkish soldiers facing them. War seemed imminent, but largely owing to the great diplomatic skill of Harington a compromise was effected, and the Turks withdrew.

The incident, however, served further to accentuate feelings of mistrust and hostility which had been growing against the Coalition throughout the year.

At the very outset of 1922 a move had been made by certain Conservatives to force an early election in which they should be free to fight as an independent party. The opposition of Sir George Younger, then in charge of the Conservative machine, was enough to frustrate this, but the resentment which had been aroused in many high Tory breasts by the Irish treaty, and the thought that, though their party held a majority of seats in the House of Commons, they were tied to a Liberal Premier, was unappeasable. The Chanak incident emphasised this split, and gave it open expression inside the Cabinet itself. Even though the danger of imminent war was averted, certain Conservative ministers, notably Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen and Mr. Baldwin, remained so perturbed that they asked Lord Curzon to arrange for periodic meetings between them at his house in Carlton House Terrace to discuss joint resignation if the occasion arose. Curzon himself dated the

break up of the Coalition from this time. In a note written by him and quoted by Lord Ronaldshay he says: "When a group of Cabinet Ministers begin to meet separately and to discuss independent action, the death tick is audible in the rafters."

This was at the beginning of October. Austen Chamberlain, who was the official leader of the Conservative Party since Bonar Law's retirement from office eighteen months before, remained loyal to the Coalition, and was ably supported by Lord Birkenhead. The most influential rebel was probably Lord Salisbury with his powerful following among the landed aristocrats, who have always formed the backbone of the Tory Party.

One more attempt to save the government by an immediate election on a Coalition basis was made by the Prime Minister and his friends, but the Conservative revolt had grown too strong, and on November 15th, at a dinner at Winston Churchill's house, it was decided to call a meeting of the Conservative members of the House of Commons at the Carlton Club four days later. It is worth noting that the meeting was summoned by those who were in favour of Lloyd George, and there is reason to suppose that they still believed that their view would prevail, particularly as Peers were to be excluded from the gathering. There is one indication that Lloyd George himself took a different view. On Tuesday, November 16th, Curzon called on him to protest at certain incidents which he regarded as slights on himself and the Foreign office, and to offer his resignation; he records that Lloyd George answered, "As I shall probably be resigning myself on Thursday we had better postpone a decision till then."

It was not till the very eve of the meeting that the result became certain. There was one man whose word could

decide the fate of the Government, Bonar Law. Despite his retirement from active politics he retained the undiminished affection and respect of the whole of his party, and constant appeals were made to him to indicate what he regarded as the right course. On the morning before the fateful meeting he was still undecided; by the evening he had resolved to lead the revolt next day and advocate the break up of the Coalition. The details of his conversion are known to few, but the man who had most to do with it was certainly his most intimate friend and most devoted admirer, Lord Beaverbrook.

The meeting duly took place at the Carlton Club on the morning of Thursday, November 19th, the proceedings were not prolonged, and after Bonar Law's speech the verdict was assured: a vote was carried in favour of an independent Conservative appeal to the country by 187 votes to 87. Lloyd George saw the King and tendered his resignation the same afternoon. Four days later Bonar Law, unanimously re-elected leader of the Conservative Party, became Prime Minister.

Thus, after sixteen years of office, Lloyd George retired from the Premiership without the satisfaction of having achieved his dreams of a post-war prosperity.

His record, however, was one of which any man might justly be proud and of which very few men could boast. He was allowed, moreover, the satisfaction of having dealt with one question which had long been a source of anxiety, and of dealing with it from England's point of view more satisfactorily than any other statesman would have done.

The Irish question had grown more and more acute. As far back as 1913, when it became clear that Ulster intended to resist any attempt to force Home Rule and to resist if

necessary with arms, the Irish situation had become one outside the control of any Government. In responding to the threat to arm on the part of Ulster the rest of Ireland prepared to follow suit, although at the outset of the War John Redmond, the leader of the Nationalist Party, had declared that Ireland in this dark time was "the one bright spot." The situation soon changed. Between 1914 and 1916 the Sinn Fein Party steadily prepared themselves for an open revolt. That revolt broke out in the Easter week of 1916. From that time onwards till 1921 there was an almost uninterrupted warfare in Ireland. Pressure was brought to bear on England through America.

The American Ambassador had begged Lloyd George as far back as 1917 to do something to settle the Irish question. The Nationalist Party had been rejected by the Irish people and a Parliament set up in Dublin. The greater part of Ireland was functioning almost entirely as an independent State. Feeling in England was growing outraged at the situation.

The use of a Mobile Auxiliary Police force, popularly known as the Black and Tans, had not impressed public opinion abroad. A policy of a life for a life, a murder for a murder could not continue indefinitely in a supposedly civilised community. An invitation was therefore sent in 1922 to the Irish leaders to come over to Downing Street and settle the dispute. The two principal figures among those delegated by the Republican Party were Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins.

They came to Downing Street, and after prolonged discussion a treaty was drawn up and signed. According to this treaty the South of Ireland became a Free State taking its place within the Empire on the same footing as the other self-governing dominions. Ulster, though provided

with a separate parliament of its own, continued to send members to Westminster and remained a part of the United Kingdom.

The delegates returned to Dublin, and after a series of stormy debates in the Dail the treaty was accepted by a very narrow majority.

A Liberal Prime Minister, estranged though he was at that time from a large section of the Liberal Party, had finally succeeded in settling a question that had intermittently dominated English politics for nearly half a century, and the settlement was one to which Gladstone himself might have given his approval. It is not surprising that this action did not meet with the approval of the majority of the Conservative Party, and was a contributory cause of his downfall.

But what of the future? After seventeen years of high office, after two consecutive premierships, after a period of despotic power which came nearer to dictatorship than democratic England had ever before known, how would such a man react to the stimulus of defeat?

A man's future can only be determined by an understanding of what determines his actions. Rudolph Kirschier has said of Lloyd George:—

"He cares nothing for parties except insofar as they can be of use to him. It is a matter of indifference to him what the party is called to which he belongs, he only wants a majority or sufficient following to enable him to carry out his own ideas. He knows no party but himself, no policy but his own, compromises only with himself and is his own coalition."

That there is substance in this judgment few will deny, though much that has happened in the years that have followed since his termination of office, would seem to disprove it. If the peacemaker never really made peace, he

at least expended as much energy as and indeed more than any man in an effort to do so. How far his need to rely on intuition and practical experience of men rather than on a fund of information, of diplomatic knowledge, of the vast technical details of every branch of international politics, was responsible for his failure to achieve his ambition, it is impossible to decide finally.

His charm is denied by no one, but behind his back those who came into contact with him very often were puzzled at the influence he could exercise over them when they were with him.

If he had always been able to bring those with whom he came into contact to the point of action while they were still under the influence of his personality, he might have achieved more. But that was not always possible, for although during the negotiations for peace he occupied a high position in the esteem of those who worked with him, he was frequently brought up against the combined resistance of some of the coolest and keenest intellects in Europe, against men too certain of their own conclusions to be influenced by the winged words of fire and the impassioned oratory of the intuitive Celt.

There were occasions when things went anything but smoothly. In his book *Paris Calling*, H. J. Greenwall has two amusing anecdotes of the peace negotiations.

During the last days of Clemenceau's life Mr. Greenwall visited him frequently. One day he asked him the story of how he and Lloyd George nearly fought at the Peace Conference.

"Yes, yes," replied the Tiger with a chuckle, "I well remember that we quarrelled very fiercely.

"We stood up to each other in the middle of the room and Mr. Lloyd George put up both his fists—like this."

Whereupon Clemenceau clenched his fists and stuck them under his visitor's chin.

On another occasion Pertinax, of the *Echo de Paris*, who was attacking Lloyd George bitterly, was approached by Lord Riddell, at the instigation of the victim in an attempt to persuade him to stop. The attack became even stronger.

Lloyd George asked the British Ambassador, Lord Derby, to intervene. The attack was even more intensive.

Finally Lloyd George, deciding that his friends did not understand the French journalist, invited Pertinax to breakfast.

"Next morning," we are told, "the *Echo de Paris* tore Mr. Lloyd George into little pieces and scattered the remains all over the newspaper."

If the chancelleries of Europe were recruited more extensively from the villages of Europe we might possibly see a world shaped after the heart of Lloyd George, but there are traditions and ideals that have been preserved elsewhere and frames of mind less radical that predominate. It is not always possible nor always desirable that statesmen of different countries should see eye to eye. Lloyd George himself undoubtedly anticipated much of the opposition that he experienced, but on the other hand his splendid confidence in himself led him to believe that he would triumph in the councils of Europe as he had triumphed in the political fights in North Wales.

But disillusionment never broke his spirit, and he remains to this day as full of hope and optimism as on that on which he first set out for the International Peace Conference in Paris.

CHAPTER VI

THE LIBERAL LEADER

THE exigencies of the War had obliged politicians to lay on one side certain animosities of party in order that the country might be preserved from disaster. Nevertheless, those animosities were never killed. When the War was over and the country returned to a more normal form of Government, the tides of feeling began to run high again. Nowhere was this more noticeable than in the Liberal party. In becoming Prime Minister Lloyd George had replaced the official leader of the Liberal Party. He was not a Liberal Premier but a War Premier.

His method of government during the years of the Coalition rendered it imperative that he should work in harness with the Tories. It was said of him that he had betrayed his Liberal self, for power. In the beginning of 1922 he was accused of having committed this unforgivable sin. Sir Gordon Hewart, speaking in his defence, replied to this charge:

"Now what was his unforgivable sin? I suggest to you it was this, and no more than this. He demonstrated to the country and to the world, at a critical moment, that there was more than one Liberal who was fit to be the leader of the Party, and the head of the Government."

To this his enemies, within the Liberal Party, replied that he had supported Tories against Liberals, that he

had done so deliberately, repeatedly and consistently, for more than three years.

Such a quarrel was not to be easily healed. Mr. Asquith and Lloyd George, as rivals for the leadership of the Liberal Party, were not, publicly at any rate, on good terms. Speaking at the Liberal Party demonstration on January 23rd, 1922, Mr. Asquith referred to the situation that existed between them.

"I am not, as you know, fond of personal references in pohtics, but there is not one of these men, or of the majority of those whose names are known to me who sat beside them last week on this platform; there is not one of them from whom in those days and much later I have not received professions of devoted loyalty and even affection. I have not changed. Liberal principles have not changed, and yet the Prime Minister thought it seemly in the speech which he delivered here on Saturday, to indulge in a number of personal gibes directed against me.

"I am not going to quote them, because it is just the sort of stuff that some of us can remember in the General Election of 1910, that used to appear in the leaflets and the broad-sheets of the less scrupulous of the Tory candidates.

"Those stale jocularities brought again to life by my old colleague and fellow fighter in those days, now the Prime Minister of England, are reported to have been received with appreciative laughter by those representative Liberal delegates. I am sorry for my old friend. I am too old, and perhaps too disillusioned, to look for anything like gratitude in politics. Nor, unhappily, is it possible to teach some people good taste and good manners."

This kind of thing, which illustrates the bitterness of feeling, continued throughout the year. The imminence

no

L.G.

of a general election accentuated the feeling between the two branches of the Liberal Party. The *Daily Mail*, in making its forecast said,

"The Coalition Liberals are practically dead and buried already/"

The Parliament elected in 1918 was finally dissolved in October, 1922, with the breach in the Liberal ranks as wide as ever. Asquith put forward 339 Candidates at the general election which followed; Lloyd George mustered 138. Of the two sections the latter was more successful, the Asquithians returning 60 strong and the National Liberals, with their smaller team, counting 57 seats.

Bonar Law with 344 members had a comfortable majority over all other parties combined.

In the debate on the address the Asquithians moved an amendment which included the ex-Premier and his supporters in its censure, and Lloyd George was, in consequence, forced into supporting the Conservative Government, but the fundamental agreement between the two sections of the Party on policy made the prospects of reunion brighter.

Early in 1923 a letter was addressed by Mr. George Lambert both to Asquith and to Lloyd George, informing them that a meeting of all Liberals was intended. Lloyd George replied as follows:

"My dear Lambert,

"In reply to your letter and in confirmation of what I have already told you verbally, I should be very willing at any time to discuss the matter to which your letter refers, either with the leaders or at a general meeting of Liberals»

"But I venture to suggest, that it would be wise first to secure some definite expression of opinion on the

part of the rank and file, before summoning such a meeting.

"Unless the rank and file are really anxious for union as well as the leaders, a premature attempt might widen differences, and tend to further dissension rather than to unity.

"You may take it that I will interpose no personal obstacle in the way of Liberal re-union, because no one is more fully alive to the fact that Liberal disunion is paralysing the influence and efficiency of Liberalism at the present time.

"D. LLOYD GEORGE."

The meeting was held, and adjourned, after the speakers had insisted that the Liberal Party should continue to meet in friendly discussion and co-operation.

Two days later, a statement appeared in the *Yorkshire Post*, by Mr. McCurdy, Chief Whip of the National Liberal Party, in which he stated that:

"The ex-Prime Minister was sincerely disposed toward a united Liberal Party, and it was accurate to state that Mr. Lloyd George—if any such action on his part would bring about re-union—would be perfectly prepared to serve under Mr. Asquith's leadership."

Later on in the year both Lloyd George and Asquith made speeches which indicated their desire for re-union, and Lloyd George again made it clear that he did not either claim leadership or seek leadership.

Negotiations continued till November. In the meantime, however, the face of politics had changed by the startling decision of Mr. Baldwin, who had succeeded Bonar Law on his retirement through ill-health as Premier and leader of the Conservative Party, to force an election on the Tariff issue.

On November 2nd, the news of Bonar Law's death brought grief to the whole nation, but there was no cessation of political warfare. Parliament met on the 13th, and on the same day a meeting of both sections of the Liberal party was held at which an agreement was reached and a statement issued to the Press.

"Arrangements are now completed for all Liberals to fight the coming election as a united Party. Both in the constituencies and at Headquarters all candidates will be adopted and described as Liberals, and will be supported by the whole strength of the Party without regard to any past differences"

The tone of the election speeches showed that the breach between Asquith and Lloyd George was healed, and the following quotation from a speech made at Paisley on November 24th by Lloyd George clearly indicates the change.

"Mr. Asquith's ringing tones and vigour show no traces to me of the worn-out pony. Let me say that I am unfeignedly glad to be on the same platform again. It was a deep and sincere grief to me that we should ever have separated. It is a real and sincere joy to me that we should find ourselves together on the same platform fighting side by side the same battles."

The election resulted in a Parliamentary deadlock, with no party holding a clear majority. The Conservatives had the greatest number of members in the House, but Asquith held that in view of the fact that the Election had been fought on tariffs, a subject on which Liberals and Labour were in agreement, MacDonald should be allowed to take office and receive the conditional support of the Liberal Party in the House. Lloyd George was in full agreement with this view.

Immediately after the election a meeting of Liberal Members of Parliament was held, at which Mr. Asquith spoke as the leader of the re-united Liberal Party. Lloyd George was also there and spoke in generous terms of Mr. Asquith.

In his reply to the other speakers Mr. Asquith said:

"There is no rift in the Party unity now. There is no discordant opinion, there is no dissentient voice."

As the year 1924 wore on, the Parliamentary situation became increasingly difficult. MacDnald and his ministers displayed the same arrogant demeanour towards the Liberals who kept them in office, as they were later to do in 1929. Finally, the gross scandal of the Campbell prosecution, with its implications of political interference with the processes of justice, brought a brief and unmourned administration to its doom.

A strenuous election campaign began immediately, one of the features of the Liberal attack being to show that the other parties, where they had been successful, had borrowed from the Liberal programme.

This is how Lloyd George described the situation:

"It was very remarkable that although the two other parties were waging a deadly war against them, they had both tacitly admitted that Liberalism was the need. Mr. Baldwin announced with a flourish that he was going to send out an expedition on a voyage of discovery for a programme. The explorers came back the other day having discovered a verdant land. It was the Liberal programme, insurance in all its forms, which had been inaugurated by the Liberal Party. He went and broke the glad news to the dames of the Primrose League at the Albert Hall, and they hailed him as a new Christopher Columbus.

"And the Socialists? They had had to fall back upon the Liberal programme."

The Liberal campaign continued uninterruptedly. The Liberal members continued to point out that the other parties borrowed from them.

"There is one peculiarity about the present situation," said Lloyd George in a speech at Manchester, "everybody is professing Liberal principles. The Conservatives and the Socialists are each of them ashamed of their particular nostrum."

Within a week of polling day the whole position was transformed by the *Daily Mail's* publication of the notorious "Red Letter," which was supposed to contain instructions from Zinovieff for causing disaffection in the British Army. The resultant panic gave the Conservatives an overwhelming majority, and reduced the Liberal strength in the House to a mere handful of 42.

There was evident need for a reorganisation of the Party's machinery and forces, and still more for the working out of some positive programme on which an appeal to the country could be made in place of the somewhat feeble recriminations of 1924.

To this end Lloyd George organised a number of committees of enquiry into the troubles of agriculture and industry throughout the British Isles and the possible methods of removing them. These committees consisted of Liberal politicians, agricultural, economic and industrial experts, and publicists.

The principal committee, dealing with the land question, produced a report on agricultural land in England entitled "The Land and the Nation," which came to be known as the "Green Book." Amongst other less controversial recommendations, it proposed a new system of land tenure, under the control of specially appointed bodies to be known as County Agricultural Authorities, which was designed

to give the tenant farmer greater security in his holding, and encourage him to spend money in developing its greatest productivity.

This proposal was strongly opposed by a section of the Party, and the old hostility between the Coalition and Independent Liberals again became manifest. Lloyd George, however, was firmly convinced of the value of the scheme and, with a view to furthering it and organising a campaign in the constituencies, founded the Land and Nation League, with headquarters at Old Queen Street, Westminster.

This body, which later changed its name to The Liberal Campaign Department, became from then until the general election of 1929 the chief propaganda organisation of the Party. It was financed from the old Coalition Fund, maintained a large staff of agents, publicity men and speakers, issued millions of pamphlets besides three newspapers, and had a special team of experts, who descended on any constituency where a bye-election was in progress to support the Liberal candidate's campaign.

As a specialised political machine it is doubtful whether anything like it has ever been seen in this country. In bye-elections it was undeniably effective, and the quality and quantity of both verbal and printed propaganda with which it was able to deluge a given constituency at short notice caused consternation in the opposing camps.

Unfortunately there was no corresponding improvement in the Liberal organisation in the country at large. Many constituencies had become virtually derelict; trained agents of long standing had drifted to other jobs, many erstwhile Liberal strongholds were without candidates until a few months before the general election. A centralised effort which could exert tremendous influence on one constituency, or even three if there were simultaneous bye-elections, was

powerless when faced with the task of converting the whole country at the same time.

It is this undue centralisation that was responsible both for the high hopes raised amongst Liberals by the series of bye-election victories in 1928 and 1929, and the fiasco of the general election which followed them.

But to return: at the beginning of 1925, when controversy over the Land policy was at its height, a meeting of the National Liberal Federation was called to formulate a declaration of Liberal principles and aims. At the opening meeting there was a dramatic echo of the old disagreement between Asquith and Lloyd George. They both spoke from the same platform, and Lloyd George, in the course of his speech, said:—

"When, eighteen months ago, in the prospect of an attempt to convert this country into a Protectionist land unfortunate differences in our ranks were healed, and we decided to re-unite our forces to fight the great battle of Free Trade, I then unreservedly, without qualification, and might I also point out, without any conditions, accepted the leadership of Mr. Asquith. I have seen no reason since then to alter or modify the decision which I then took. Mr. Asquith and I have had no differences of opinion as to policy, and least of all, may I say here, have we had any personal differences.

"The unity of the Party is essential to the restoration of its vigour, its power and its authority. Differences discourage Liberals throughout the land. There is much to be said against pacts, but there is one pact which is essential, and that is the pact among ourselves."

A report of the meeting describes what then took place. "Turning towards Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George continued :

"And, Mr. Asquith, it is because I am thoroughly convinced in my heart that your continued leadership is essential to the preservation of Liberal unity that I stand for that leadership at this hour.'

"Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George then shook hands, and withdrew."

Throughout this period there was a section of the Liberal Party which favoured fusion with Labour, but Lloyd George disagreed with any such proposal. In the beginning of 1926 he said during a speech made at Carnarvon:

"In my judgment it is not the wisdom of Liberalism at this moment to negotiate alliances with another party. Prudence dictates that it should make a powerful position for itself in the country with a view to securing a large representation in the next Parliament. This, I feel assured, it can do by sustained and united efforts on the right lines. When that is achieved then it can decide to co-operate with any body of men who will undertake to carry through the programme it approves."

The final breach between Lloyd George and Asquith came with the calling of the General Strike in 1926. Asquith, Lord Grey and Sir John Simon all declared themselves whole-heartedly in support of the Government in its determination to crush, if necessary by force, what they regarded as a dangerous revolutionary movement. Lloyd George, while by no means, as has sometimes been alleged, supporting the strike, favoured further negotiation and the avoidance of any measures which might further inflame the unions. Two episodes provided the *casus belli*.

In the first place Lloyd George declined to attend a meeting of the Shadow Cabinet of the Liberal Party, and in addition to that he contributed an article on the strike to the American Press, which met with the strongest dis-

approval from his colleagues. Mr. Asquith, or Lord Oxford, as he was now, wrote a letter in which he outlined the grievances against Lloyd George including the maintenance of a separate political fund. Lloyd George replied that he had done his best to preserve the re-union that had taken place two and a half years before. Concerning his speeches he insisted that they contained nothing by way of criticism of the Government, that he had not previously said with Asquith's approval.

As for the articles in the American Press, he refused to believe that they could contribute seriously to the quarrel. He insisted that the real reason for the trouble was his refusal to attend the meeting of the Shadow Cabinet. He explained that he did not come, because he foresaw that he would be obliged to disagree with their decisions; he therefore judged it wiser to remain away. The Liberal Shadow Cabinet rallied round Lord Oxford. In a letter to him, they said:

"We cannot allow you to bear the whole brunt of the criticism which has been directed against you on the ground of your letter to Mr. Lloyd George. It is due to you that we should say unreservedly that we support the course which you, after endless patience and lifelong service to Liberalism, have felt obliged to take."

Lloyd George in a speech at Manchester defended himself against the attack that was being made on him. He claimed that he had not had a square deal. He said that he had not been informed of the criticisms that were being passed upon him. The question, in particular, of the Party Fund which was for a time to create something of a sensation had, he claimed, been sprung upon him. He maintained that that fund had been separately accumulated during the days of the Coalition and was vested in trustees,



LEAVING WESTMINSTER ABBEY AFTER THE MEMORIAL SERVICE TO
LORD OXFORD

[photo : Sport and General

[Face page 118

The burden of the cost of the election-of 1923 had fallen on that fund and liberal help had been given to the party out of it. The matter, however, of the Party Fund was not to be allowed to rest there. Considerable negotiations went on as to the use of the fund and, during the last three months of 1926 the Liberal Administrative Committee discussed the question of the fusion of party funds by the transfer of Mr. Lloyd George's Political Fund to the official party organisation. Lloyd George agreed to place at the disposal of the Party the income from his Political Fund, and, in certain circumstances, some of its capital, providing certain conditions were accepted.

The conditions were in outline that a new Party executive should be formed with a neutral chairman, not identified with either faction; that its joint secretaries should be Mr. Oldman and Colonel Tweed, who were the chief organisers of the respective groups: that the Land and Nation League and the committees of enquiry should be a first charge on the fund: and that the arrangement should hold good until at least three months after the next general election.

On these conditions it was stated:

"Mr. Lloyd George is ready to advise the trustees of his fund to place the whole of the income from his available financial resources at the disposal of the Liberal Party . . . (and) if at the end of any given year the total income available from all sources . . . is less than the amount required, then the balance will be made up by a payment from the capital held by the trustees."

Ultimately Lloyd George withdrew the conditions, and after further negotiations an agreement was come to under which Lloyd George's Political Fund was to render assistance to the Liberal Party in general.

Commenting on this, with a view to removing any misunderstandings that might have arisen, an official Liberal organ said:

"In accepting assistance from Mr. Lloyd George's political fund . . . the Party may be acting wisely or unwisely . . . but the suggestion that the Party is in some way sacrificing its independence, either in organisation or in policy, is totally inconsistent with the democratic nature of the only body that can exercise control. The Party is not selling anything; Mr. Lloyd George is not buying anything, and those who care for Liberalism will leave the use of these words to our enemies."

Meantime the other Committees of enquiry had been pursuing their work. The first had been set up in 1924 to investigate the joint question of coal and power. Its report is a thorough investigation into the situation of mines, and an appreciation of the value and importance of power in modern times. It goes into the conditions of the miners, the question of the nationalisation of mines, and suggests solutions and legislative proposals on all these subjects. It examines the importance of power, and reviews the state of various countries in the world in relation to power. It treats also of the place of electricity in modern life. In an interesting introduction to the report, Lloyd George deals with its scope and with the origin of the Commission.

"There is no subject of more importance to the economic well-being of the people of Great Britain than the health of the coal-mining industry and the beneficial use of coal. It is certain that the industry itself is not in a healthy state to-day, and that the nation is not getting anything like full value out of the coal that is raised. • . .

"In 1919, at a time when serious trouble was clearly impending, I made a number of proposals for solving the difficulties in the coal-mining industry, and on behalf of the Government of the day I offered to submit them for Parliamentary approval.

"They included the State purchase of mineral rights, co-operation between labour and capital on area boards in determining working conditions, and the creation of a special fund for ameliorating the social conditions of the miners through a levy on the purchase price of material. However, the Miners' Federation would not consider anything short of complete nationalisation, and the mine-owners did not welcome the closer association of the workers with the conduct of the industry. It was, therefore, found impossible to proceed with the scheme. The disastrous coal stoppage of 1921 followed. . . .

"Nothing could do more damage both to miners and mine-owners, and to the nation than that the industry which produces its primary raw material should now become the centre of a prolonged and bitter political struggle. . . . To-day, of all times, when what is needed most is work and reconstruction to make good the losses of the War, and to equip the nation for that more intense competition which is inevitable in international trade, it would be almost fatal to start a struggle over the coal-mining industry which would divide the nation and involve years of turmoil and strife.

"In March of this year, therefore, with another serious stoppage in prospect, a number of people, including Liberal Members of Parliament and other representatives of the different elements in the industry, and of the public life of the country, were invited to form a committee of which I was chairman, to endeavour to find out what was really

wrong, and to formulate proposals for reform which might be carried into effect by general consent, **and** with the minimum **of** controversy and delay. . . . This volume, *Coal and Power*, is the result. It has been perused by Mr. Asquith, who fully approves of its recommendation. It has been prepared in no partisan spirit. It is an attempt to face fairly and squarely, without bias, the problems which confront the coal-mining industry to-day, and to find a way of solving them by a process of reasonable compromise without a long and disastrous struggle, and of supplying the nation with cheaper and better forms of Power and Heat."

Reference has already been made to the report of the Committee on agricultural land in England. Another report on land in towns and cities is stated to be "complementary to the Land Committee's Rural report . . . which dealt with the agricultural use of the larger part of our total land surface. . . . It treats of the many questions which arise from the use of a smaller area for the commerce, industry, recreation and domestic life of our towns.

"Part I states the case for a vigorous policy of Urban Land Reform, and Part 2 the Proposals put forward by the Committee. Part 3 summarises a mass of information derived from other countries on their Urban problems and their methods of solution."

"The two Reports," says the foreword, "will, it is hoped, be read as one. The proposals of each are wholly consistent. But the concern of the committee has been to preserve the fundamental unity of the nation's interest in the use of all its land for all its people."

A fourth report, that of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry, was published in 1928, under the title of "Britain's Industrial Future," better known as the "Yellow Book."

Lloyd George was a member of its Executive Committee, which also included Sir Herbert Samuel and Sir John Simon. The preface tells us how the enquiry came to be set up.

"It was felt by many of those who attended year by year the meetings of 'The Liberal Summer School/ that there was need for fresh investigations of the economic and social problems by which the nation is now faced, and for the formulation of a policy to deal with them starting from the Liberal standpoint and aiming at the application of Liberal ideas.

"With these objects in view, the Summer School Committee, which was fortunate *in* securing the active co-operation of Mr. Lloyd George, took the initiative in getting together the men and women who have collaborated in this Inquiry. These include not only some of the leading members of the Liberal Party, but also business men, Trade Unionists and others, some of whom have no connection with it. The material of this report has been prepared by Special Committees dealing with various divisions of the wide field which has been under investigation, while a large number of persons, qualified by their experience to speak with authority, have given evidence, supplied information, written reports, on British or foreign conditions and assisted with advice and counsel."

The pregnant and closely reasoned volume which follows puts forward an entire scheme of industrial reorganisation in Britain. It deals with questions of Wages, Foreign Trade, Iron and Steel, Cotton, and the funds of the Co-operative Societies. It investigates labour disputes. It provides statistics of roads and population, of emigration and investments overseas. It treats of local rates and the expenditure **of local** authorities. Finally it advocates an overhaul of

our banking system, the transference of certain key services and industries to semi-public corporations, and the mobilisation of the unemployed to work on a gigantic, loan-financed scheme of national reconstruction.

It is primarily a Liberal document addressed to Liberals, but its appeal is national.

"Liberalism stands for Liberty; but it is an error to think that a policy of liberty must always be negative, that the State can help liberty only by abstaining from action, that invariably men are freest when their Government does least. . . . Often more law may mean more liberty. But not, of course, always. The principle may be pushed too far. . . . The fact remains that there is much positive work that the State can do which is not merely consistent with liberty, but essential to it. The idea of the extreme individualist, that in proportion as State action expands freedom contracts, is false.

"Equally false is the idea that because State action on the widest scale is favoured by Socialists, those who are not Socialists must oppose any and every extension of State action. It will lead, it is said, to Socialism in the long run.

"In the last hundred years in this and every other industrial country the State has progressively assumed a vast range of functions that closely affect industry and commerce. . . . What would the conditions of employment in Great Britain have been if the Factory Acts and Mines Regulation Acts and Trade Boards Act had never been passed? . . . Almost the whole of the modern system of regulations and assistance—and we have given but a few examples out of a long list of such measures—has been due to Liberal statesmanship; there is scarcely one of the reforms which has not either been carried or

initiated by the Liberal Party. We believe that the party will not be slow to take up the new duties which belong to a new age."

The last of the series was the report of the Scottish Land Inquiry, known as the "Tartan Book," which dealt with such vexed questions as deer-forests, land-reclamation in the Highlands, and the impoverishment of the crofters.

Together these five reports, whether or not one agrees with all their recommendations, provide as sane, as thorough and as perspicacious an analysis of the problems which faced Great Britain at the time, and to a great extent face it still, as any other publication or group of publications that exists.

It is the fashion nowadays to extol the Soviet Government for its wisdom in adopting a plan of national reorganisation, and whether we like it or not, it is evident that the Five Year Plan in Russia has proved a far greater success than would have appeared credible at its outset.

Lloyd George saw the need for a plan in Great Britain eight years ago: he directed all his energy and intelligence to its formulation: he spent prodigally the great stores of wealth under his control to enable it to be worked out in the utmost detail: he offered to support to the full any Party or group of Parties that would adopt it.

He was rejected, but the far-sighted patriotism which actuated him throughout those five years of unremitting effort, and the actual printed record of his labours, must entitle him, as surely as any of his previous achievements, to the gratitude of posterity.

It is natural that in the life of a politician, a man who by tradition is concerned with the thing of the moment, there should be certain variations and at times seeming contradictions in speech and action. This is no less true

of Lloyd George than of any other politician. Nevertheless, a close examination of the general framework and fundamental principles of the ruling impulses and directive ideas of his career reveals a coherence and consistency of which his participation in these committees is an outstanding example.

Since the War there has been so little political stability and so much that is critical in the ever-changing phases of political activity, the Liberal party have had so little Parliamentary opportunity to exercise anything like a control in the House, that it is not to Westminster that they have devoted their activities so much as to the country. Lloyd George has always valued public opinion in the country. As a man who can always claim the public ear, and one who speaks with authority, it is by his criticism of the Government, both in the Press and on the public platform, that he has rendered his best service during recent times.

The constructive programme embodied in the various Liberal reports was complete by the beginning of the year 1929. It was on this programme that Lloyd George was determined to fight the forthcoming election. But with his unerring instinct for the issue of the moment he realised that one problem overshadowed all others in the mind of the public. It was a problem before which Conservative and Labour Governments had alike retired baffled, the problem of Unemployment.

Lloyd George decided that here lay the battle cry which might bring him and the Liberal Party back to power. The policy, work instead of maintenance, work on a great scheme of national reconstruction involving road-making, land-drainage, electricity development and a hundred other activities, was to hand in the Yellow Book.

The record of the Party at recent bye-elections had been encouraging. After the gloomy days of 1926 and 1927 when almost every contest showed a drop in the Liberal vote, prospects were improving. Over the preceding twelve months there had been an average rise of over a third in the Liberal polls. Three constituencies had recently been won from the Conservatives—Lancaster, despite the opposition of Lord Ashton, the millionaire linoleum king, who had hitherto regarded the seat as his pocket borough; Eddisbury, an agricultural division in Cheshire, which had not returned a Liberal since 1910; and, on the very next day, Holland with Boston, a scattered but fertile Lincolnshire constituency with a powerfully organised local Labour Party. The Conservative polls and majorities were showing a startling decline: even in such strongholds as Marylebone and Holborn they were down by half. There was no evidence of a real swing to Labour. In these circumstances it seemed that, given a strong lead and a popular slogan, the Liberal Party, with its 500 candidates and its highly organised election machine, might work wonders in the country.

The lead and the slogan were announced at a meeting of Liberal members and candidates at the Hotel Victoria on March 1st, 1929. The battle cry was to be "We can conquer Unemployment." In a long and carefully prepared speech—parts of it were read from typescript—Lloyd George announced to his followers and the world his policy.

"We are here" he said, "representing a Party which, judging by recent events in the House of Commons, is the only united Party to-day.

"The coming election will be in many respects the most momentous election of modern times, when you consider the issues that have to be determined and the effects it must have upon the destinies of this country."

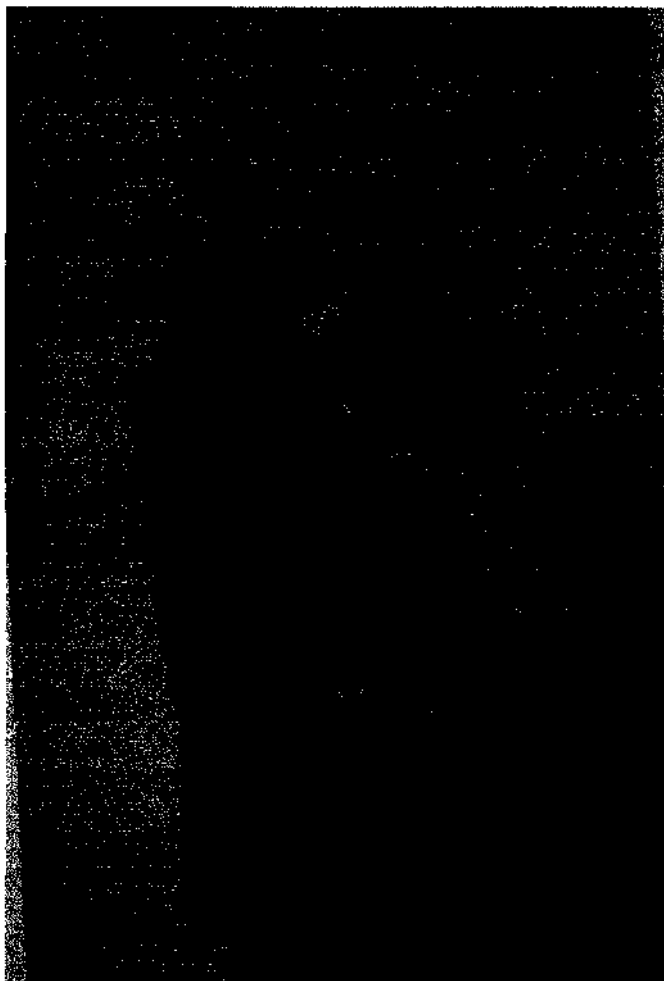
He then passed in review and subjected to strong criticism the work of the Conservatives and the Labour Party during their period of office.

"Now I come to the Party which in my opinion is the only Party capable and competent to deal with the situation, and that is the Liberal Party.

"The Liberal Party has one great political advantage for dealing with such an emergency as the nation is passing through now. It is historically the Party of prosperity. . . . The efficiency with which a Government deals with a national crisis depends upon two things. One is the soundness of their plans and the next is the capacity of the men and the women who put those plans through. Judged by both tests I say the Liberal Party is the best. . . . The ablest economic thinkers in this country to-day are Liberals. We have been spending the last five or six years in a series of systematic and thorough enquiries into the national problems and the best way to solve them. Some of the greatest experts in the country have not merely been consulted but have actively co-operated. They are not merely men with academic qualifications, they are men who have an intimate personal acquaintance with the problems themselves—great business men. . . .

"Now, if you will bear with me I will deal with the most urgent problem of them all, and that is Unemployment and trade depression. It is a heavy burden on the land. Like a pall it keeps out the sunshine, it is damaging to our prestige, it is doing us harm. . . . Unemployment impedes the progress of the system of rationalisation, which is to make our industries more efficient. I will tell you what I mean.

"What is the leading principle of the Liberal policy on Unemployment? . . . It is a well known principle. . . .



W.TH MEGAN, ON H.S RECENT CRUISE TO CEYLON

Its something known to every business man in the country, that when a concern is net doing well your first business is to.-cut down relentlessly all unnecessary and unprofitable expenditure, but to use all your available resources of cash and credit for setting things right that may be wrong in the business, for removing defects and weaknesses that may exist in the business, for increasing facilities for your business, for Improving, extending and development in all promising directions—in fact, to recondition and to revitalise the business. That is the Liberal policy for this great business nation.

"I will tell you what I am prepared to do. I am prepared to give a definite pledge with regard to unemployment. This is very important. I have considered even the very words of it. That is why I will not give it to you except in the very words which my colleagues and I will stand by. After going into the matter very carefully with colleagues who, like myself, have spent years in working out these problems with experts, I am prepared to make this statement:—

"If the nation entrusts the Liberal Party at the next general election with the responsibilities of Government, we are ready with schemes of work which we can put immediately into operation, work of a kind which is not merely useful in itself but essential to the well-being of the nation. The work put in hand will reduce the terrible figures of the workless in the course of a single year to normal proportions and will when completed enrich the nation and equip it for successfully competing with all its rivals in the business of the world. These plans will not add one penny to the national or local taxation.

"Now that is a startling statement, and no one who has held a high responsibility would make a statement of

that kind without having good grounds for it, and I am prepared now, with your indulgence, to sketch the outlines of our plans, and not only that but to give you the finance.

"The first thing is the reorganisation of the transport system of this country. . . . It is important that it should be taken in hand. . . . I will give you three reasons. The first is that now you have labour available. If you had a return to prosperity you would need to use labour for the ordinary pursuits of the nation. The same thing applies to material. You will not be able to get your material delivered then. And what is the third reason? There is a greater need for it. It is because you must prepare for prosperity so that when it comes it will not double your congestion and your difficulties. Therefore, it leads to prosperity by preparing for prosperity."

He then outlines at length the way in which the reorganisation of transport and the reconstruction of roads must necessarily relieve the trouble of unemployment, and continued:

"For every million you spend on those roads you employ 5,000 men directly and indirectly. It is not all pick and shovel work. You must get your ferro-concrete, you must *get* your iron for the bridges, you must *get* your quarries to provide the material. You must get your tar, you must get your machinery, you must get your transport, so that means 5,000 men per million."

Lastly he dealt with finance, and showed why the scheme need involve no increase in taxation: economy on armaments, the natural increase in the Road Fund, and the taxation of land values created by State action.

"First of all you would cut down the unprofitable expenditure on armaments. Postpone Singapore until you

have attended to England, Scotland and Wales, The Road Fund produced £25,000,000 in the last return. This year it is much nearer £30,000,000, and it will certainly be £30,000,000 in two years. Then there is betterment of site values upon the land to which value is given by the expenditure of public money.

"If you go to Kingston by-pass you will be very lucky if you can get a piece of frontage worth £60 an acre at twenty times what you could have got it for before the scheme was suggested.

"There is land there that was not worth £60 an acre before this by-pass began. They are now asking for a frontage £1,800 and for back premises about £600 an acre. All that value was created by public money, work and enterprise. The values created there would more than pay the whole cost of that road. . . . You would have to anticipate your revenue for a few years. You could not do it all out of revenue, but after all the Government has borrowed forty million pounds to keep men in enforced idleness and yet cannot borrow forty million pounds to get them out of that enforced idleness."

The effect of the speech was electric. The audience rose to its feet and cheered for nearly five minutes. Every newspaper in the country carried the pledge in black type on its main news page. A pamphlet was issued from Old Queen Street under the title "We can conquer Unemployment, " and sold over half a million copies at sixpence apiece. Liberal "majorities" rose sharply on the Stock Exchange. Finally off went the brave five hundred to their constituencies from Lerwick to The Lizard with Yellow Books under their arms and cheerful smiles on their faces.

During the ensuing weeks unemployment and how to cure it was the sole subject of discussion in every railway

carriage, every club, every public-house. From ten thousand platforms night after night the famous pledge was reiterated. A few hedged: Mr. Walter Runciman, in his Cornish fastness at Land's End, was reported to favour the policy—a great advance—but to be unusually silent: perhaps he was already looking forward to that happy day, two years later, when he could make his seat safe for ever by announcing to his constituents that he would put a tax on imported daffodils.

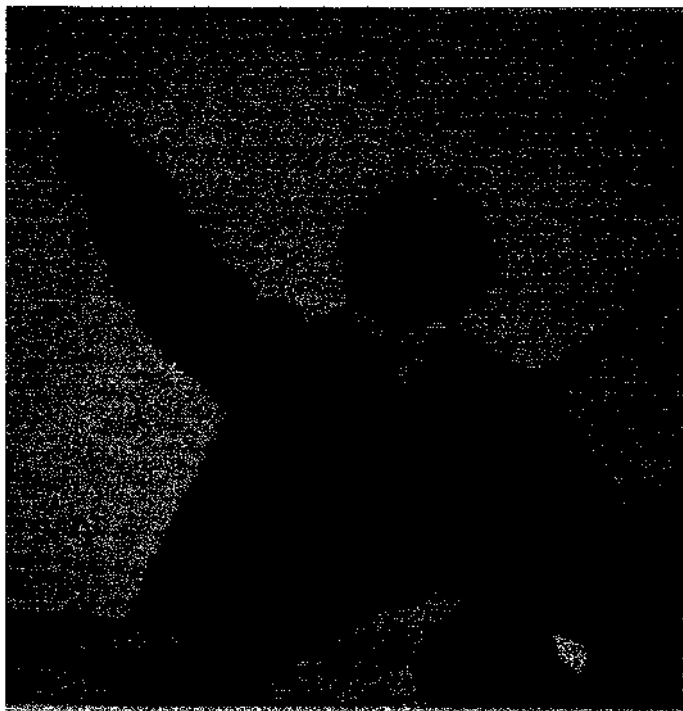
The other two Parties were forced on to the defensive. Here and there the Conservatives were militantly Protectionist: more frequently they confined themselves to praise of their leader and safety first. A cartoon by Low appeared in the *Evening Standard* depicting Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain and the Conservative organisers waiting anxiously at Palace Chambers for another "letter from Mr. Zinovieff." The Labour campaign was a curious jumble of frank Socialism, recriminations against the Liberals for stealing their programme, and attacks on the incompetence of the previous administration.

The three leaders made whirlwind tours of the country, and no election of recent years had seemed more open. On the day of the poll Liberal "majorities" reached their highest point on the stock exchange since quotations opened.

And then polling day and the count.

I had been standing, myself, for the Highland county of Argyllshire, an enormous constituency containing, amongst other terrors, forty-six islands which had to be visited. It took so long to carry the voting boxes in from the outlying districts that our count could not take place till two days after the poll.

I remember sitting with my wife in an hotel in Oban exhausted but confident, after a long and strenuous



A CHARACTERISTIC GESTURE

campaign, as the results began to trickle through on the wireless. By midnight it was evident that the Conservatives were out; by [the time we went to bed at three it was still clearer that the Liberals were not in. Next day, as news from the county divisions arrived, the full extent of the fiasco became apparent. The great Liberal offensive had failed. Here and there a bright spot might be discerned—Frank Owen in for Hereford, Megan Lloyd George for Anglesey, Eddisbury and Holland with Boston held—but the general impression was one of utter disappointment. I hoped vainly that I might have fared better than my friends, but two days later in the gloomy court house at Dunoon, I duly learnt that I had not.

The great armada that had set sail with so fair a wind from the Hotel Victoria three months before crept back to Westminster less than 60 strong.

But there were two features of the situation that from a Liberal point of view were encouraging. Small though the Parliamentary Party was, it was more homogeneous than any of its predecessors since the War. The group of "right-wingers" typified by such men as Colonel England and Captain Guest were wiped out at the polls. The survivors, almost to a man, were cordial supporters of Lloyd George's leadership and the policy of national reconstruction. More important still no Party had a clear majority in the House of Commons and the Liberals were therefore in a position to dictate terms to whatever Government might be formed.

One peculiarly unpleasant episode marked the weeks that immediately followed the election. Following the precedent of 1923-24, Lloyd George was willing to give conditional support to a Labour Government and

MacDonald proceeded to form a Ministry. He found some difficulty in filling the post of Attorney-General, and finally offered it to Sir William Jowitt, a close friend and colleague of Lloyd George who had been returned as a Liberal for the two-member constituency of Preston. It had been definitely agreed by the Liberal leaders that they would not take office in the new Government. Sir William Jowitt's loyalty was not equal to the strain put upon it by the offer of a post he had long coveted. He accepted office and went to Churt to break the news to his old leader. He arrived shortly before dinner and the private interview between the two men lasted less than half an hour. Jowitt, not unnaturally embarrassed, prepared to leave, but his host refused to let him go, saying that no one should come to his house at meal times and go away unfed. During dinner Lloyd George held the conversation with such perfect equanimity and good temper that, according to one who was present at the table, no one in the room was aware of what had just happened. When the news of Jowitt's acceptance of the appointment became known, it aroused more bitter personal hostility against the new Attorney than any political action of recent times. Not only in Liberal circles but in the Temple he was ostracised and cut. At first he declined even to fight a bye-election in his constituency: later, under the pressure of public opinion, he submitted himself again to the electors of Preston, and, with the aid of a Liberal-Labour pact, held his seat.

He was a leading figure in the last House of Commons, but after again changing his party, this time to National Labour, he was defeated in the election of 1931 and has been unable, despite the repeated efforts on his behalf of his new friend and leader, Ramsay MacDonald, to re-enter Parliament since.

From the new Government Lloyd George demanded two pledges as the price of his support: a forward policy or unemployment and a measure of electoral reform. The latter point had been for years a plank in all Radical programmes, but it had become urgent in view of the gross under-representation of the Liberal Party in the three preceding elections. On an average it had required three times as many votes in the country to secure the return of a Liberal member as a Conservative or Socialist. The Liberal strength was spread evenly throughout the constituencies: the two other Parties could count on winning all the seats in certain favourable areas. Moreover, the large number of three-cornered contests had resulted in a corresponding number of members being returned to the House on a minority vote.

Of the three chief methods of electoral reform the one hitherto favoured by most Liberals had been Proportional Representation, but this was repugnant to the Labour organisers, on the grounds that it would tend to reduce their dominance in the large cities without giving them compensating advantages in the rural areas. The second ballot was at one time Lloyd George's own favourite, but the extra expense which it entails, coupled with its encouragement of secret deals and lobbying, were sufficient to discredit it with the public. The alternative vote remained, and it was this system which the Government agreed to enact in return for Liberal support over a period of years. An Electoral Reform Bill was actually introduced and passed through all its stages in the House of Commons but was so drastically amended in the Lords as to render it useless. It was widely believed that the Government would, if necessary, force the measure on to the Statute Book under the provisions of the Parliament Act, but long before any

such action was possible the financial crisis in Germany, and later in this country, brought about the fall of the Government and the abandonment of every kind of reform.

Lloyd George was strongly criticised at the time for his insistence on Electoral reform as a condition of any bargain with the Labour Party, but there can be little doubt that the survival of the Liberal Party as a political force depended on obtaining it. In a single outright ballot such as we have at present in our Parliamentary elections, the middle Party is bound to suffer, and must tend ultimately to disappear. The disappearance of the Liberal Party would have seemed to many even of its confirmed political adversaries, a disaster likely to embitter and precipitate class conflict. The Liberal leader cannot, then, fairly be accused of putting Party before Country in his insistence on this change of system.

The position with regard to unemployment grew steadily more acute. Mr. J. H. Thomas who, as Lord Privy Seal in the new Government, had been given special charge of this paramount problem, revealed a capacity for inaction surprising in one with so vigorous a past. Weekly the figures mounted, until they were almost double the total at the time of the election. Lloyd George and the Liberal members exerted constant pressure on ministers to embark without further delay on the reconstruction plans to which they were committed no less by their election pledges than by subsequent agreements.

A joint committee of Liberal and Labour leaders, which included both the Prime Minister and Lloyd George, discussed and elaborated the proposals from every angle, but still nothing was done. The principal obstacle to action was Mr. Snowden at the Treasury. With the fanaticism that has marked every stage of his extraordinary career,

the Chancellor fought grimly against any scheme which would, in his view, make more difficult the task of balancing his Budget. To continue to maintain the millions of unemployed just above the starvation line by dole payments might be desperately wasteful as compared with setting them to work on a reconstruction plan, but the actual immediate pressure on the public purse was less, and economy in the narrowest and least imaginative sense was the one object which dominated Mr. Snowden's mind and policy.

As the summer wore on the financial situation on the Continent grew steadily more perilous. Starting with the failure of the Credit Anstalt, in Austria, an economic paralysis spread like a plague over the whole of Central Europe. In Great Britain it became apparent that the makeshift Budget of the spring would fail to balance by an enormous sum probably in excess of a hundred and fifty million pounds. The Cabinet hastily summoned to Downing Street from interrupted holidays in different parts of the world, proceeded to concoct an Economy Bill which, in conjunction with increased taxation, would cover the deficit. Two slogans were proclaimed to the world by the Prime Minister: "The Budget will be balanced/" and "Equal sacrifices for all." The subsequent events are still too recent to be seen in true perspective. How far the Trades Union leaders abused their power in resisting the economy cuts; whether those cuts were really necessary; whether MacDonald proved himself a great patriot or a great careerist by abandoning his Party and consenting to remain in office with a predominantly Conservative administration, are questions for future historians to answer.

By a cruel stroke of fate the man who, of all others, had the wisdom and experience to handle a national crisis of

such magnitude was rendered powerless by a serious illness. Throughout the complex negotiations which preceded the formation of the first National Government Lloyd George was on a sick bed. In one respect only did he interfere, and that was to protest with all his strength against the holding of another general election, which he foresaw would result in an overwhelming Conservative majority. Otherwise he played no part in the great events of the Autumn.

He was operated upon at his London house in August; after about six weeks he was moved to Churt where his convalescence proceeded so rapidly that in December he was able to leave on a voyage to Ceylon. At the general election his campaign in Carnarvon Boroughs as an Independent Liberal was ably conducted by his wife, with the assistance of his daughter from her neighbouring constituency of Anglesey. It is pleasant to record that they were both returned without substantially decreased majorities.

He arrived back from Ceylon in January, 1932, and staged his political come-back in the following March. His first public pronouncement was a speech to the Junior Liberal Club, the sole official Liberal organisation which would in all probability have endorsed his attitude of hostility to the Government. As a display of rhetorical fireworks this speech equalled any performance of his career. He looked a picture of health: his gestures were as vigorous and inspired as ever: his words were a stream of brilliant satirical attacks on almost every member of the National Government, and particularly his own Liberal ex-colleagues. The audience, which was as motley a crew as I have ever seen, containing as it did members of every political group, social celebrities and every notable Pressman in London, laughed without stopping for an hour and a half, and then stood up and applauded for at least another

five minutes. There was nothing constructive in the speech, nor was there intended to be, but it served two useful purposes. It proved beyond question that the slander-mongers who whispered that the old lion had lost his strength were utterly wrong, and it indicated to the world the fact that Lloyd George, the most dangerous political fighter of the century, meant to lead a Radical Free Trade Opposition in Britain regardless of Parties and contemptuous of compromise.

On the following day he formally took his seat in the new House of Commons on the Opposition side.

CHAPTER VII

THE ORATOR

IN discussing the value of printed speeches and their power to influence, Lloyd George has written: "The purpose of oratory is to persuade the listener to action; and if the speaker succeeds by word, voice and gesture, in moving his auditors to the action he desires, then the nobler the action, the more exalted the orator. Yet how many successful speeches of thirty years ago will bear re-reading, however carefully they may have been prepared? The most effective speeches I ever heard on the platform or in the Senate would be quite unreadable to-day. At the time they were hailed by partizans as triumphs of eloquence—either stately, brilliant or sweeping, or all three. They may still be referred to as events but they are never read as literature."

It is as an orator that Lloyd George has gained his greatest victories. His sense of the dramatic occasion, his ready grasp of the temper of an audience, the charm of his manner and his voice, his faculty for coining apt phrases, and his Celtic enthusiasm and contagious fire, have united to make him one of the most effective political speakers of modern times.

Even so, he does not expect for his written speeches a kinder fate than that of the great orators of the eighteenth century.

"I am not vain enough," he writes in his introduction to Philip Guedalla's anthology of his speeches, "to make any literary claim for my utterances."

Any reproduction of his speeches is to be looked upon as "my honest contribution to the discussion of causes which are as living to-day as they were when the words were first uttered."

Lloyd George has occupied the public attention as an orator for more than forty years, and the field he has covered during that time is wide, and the level of his speeches remarkably high. From the outset he has been able to play upon his hearers at emotional crises. His political career began with a defence of Welsh National ideals, and his capacity for impressive personal contact has, from those earliest days, been nowhere more manifest than in his ardent appeal for the country of his birth.

As far back as 1896 he said of Welsh Nationality, "Welsh nationality has survived two thousand years, in spite of every human effort to crush out its vitality. The strongest governing races in the world have successively attempted to crush it, to coax it, and even to pray it out of existence. The Romans, the Saxons, the Danes and the Normans, and lastly the race which is a blend of all, have waged unintermittent warfare against Welsh nationality for twenty centuries; and still after all here we are forming Welsh Nationalist Societies, establishing Welsh Universities and claiming the same measure of Welsh national self-government as our forefathers fought and died for hundreds of years ago."

Ten years later he said at Cardiff, "Let no man despise Wales, her language or her literature. She has survived many storms; she has survived many empires. Her time will come. When the last truck load of coal reaches

Cardiff, when the last black diamond is dug out of the earth of Glamorgan, there will be men then digging gems of pure brilliants from the inexhaustible mines of the literature and language of Wales.'

Ten years later he is again speaking of Welsh Nationalism at Cardiff. "The small nation is like a little stream. It does not cease to have a separate existence because its waters are merged in the great river. It still runs along the same valley, under the same name, draining the same watershed, and if it ceased to flow and to gather the waters of its own plain, the great river would shrink, the great river would lose half its impetus, and the purity of its waters.'

The greater part of Lloyd George's oratory has been poured out in defence of the oppressed and the impoverished. As early as 1891 he is attacking the unfair distribution of wealth and comforts.

"The most startling fact about our country is that you have men who have accumulated untold wealth, living in gorgeous splendour in one street, and a horde of miserable, poverty-stricken beings huddled together in the most abject penury and squalor in the adjoining courts. Incalculable wealth and indescribable poverty dwell side by side."

Although there has naturally been a development in Lloyd George's style, there apparently was never any time at which he was not master of the suitable phrase. His earlier speeches, though characterised by a love of imagery, are more restrained than his recent speeches. With the passage of time his wealth of metaphor and simile seems to have grown. At times it seems to have grown beyond limits of control.

One mark borne by both his speeches and his writings

is peculiar to himself. He is not content with suggesting a comparison. Once he has found the idea he develops it and builds upon it. It is his gift to be able to do this not only without wearying his hearer but also without losing in clarity or force. His comparisons are never fantastic, they are readily grasped by anybody, and are taken as a rule from sights and incidents of everyday observation. The following is an example.

"A man brought up in destitution is like a tree, the soil around whose roots is scanty and impoverished, which has no space in which to expand its branches, which has neither light nor air to give brilliancy and health to its foliage. It becomes an unsightly stump, its leaves are shrivelled and blackened, and its branches crabbed and deformed/'

To him one of the greatest causes of poverty is drink. "What are some of the direct causes of poverty? There is the fact that a man's earnings are not adequate to maintain himself and his family; there is the inability to obtain employment for economic reasons, and there is the inability of men to pursue their avocation owing to sickness, old age, or inherent lack of physical stamina or vitality. Then there is the most fertile cause of all, a man's own improvident habits, such as drinking and gambling. That is supposed to account for 60 per cent, of the poverty in the land. It is indirectly responsible for more. Drink not only impoverishes the individual, but it indirectly contributes to unemployment by diverting earnings from necessities of life, the manufacture of which would give three times as much employment as the production of drink."

These words were spoken in 1906. It is interesting to compare the downright force they reveal with the article

written many years later on the subject of Prohibition, which is quoted in the following chapter.

In the same speech, which was made at Penrhyn-deudraeth, the advocate of National Insurance and Old Age Pensions tells us what he means by a fairer distribution of wealth.

"I do not suggest that there should be a compulsory equal distribution of the wealth of this country among its inhabitants, but I do say that the law which protects those men in the enjoyment of their great possessions should, first of all, see that those whose labour alone produces that wealth are amply protected, with their families, from actual need, where they are unable to purchase necessities owing to circumstances over which they have no control. By that I mean not that they should be referred to the scanty and humiliating fare of the pauper, but that the spare wealth of the country should, as a condition of its enjoyment by its possessors, be forced to contribute first towards the honourable maintenance of those who have ceased to be able to maintain themselves.⁰

His ideas on Land Reform are also outlined in this speech:

"Then there is our absurdly unjust land system. Drink and the landlords between them are responsible for nine-tenths of the slumminess of our towns, and our system of land-ownership was responsible for labour conditions in the country which drive men in thousands from the villages into the towns. Who can expect anything else? Most of the landlords of Wales extort annually as much for the mere licence to till the land as the man who actually does the work obtains for his labour and his thought upon it the whole year round. Even

then, from year to year the man is subject to the caprice of the landlord. How long do you think that will last? It has broken down hopelessly in Ireland; if Britain had not been an exceptionally prosperous country it would long ago have ended in revolution here."

He has always insisted that the Liberal Party, with its policy of reforms, is the most suited to stem the evils of poverty. At no time has he ceased to wage bitter war on the conditions of the working [classes as the concern of a Liberal politician. His very first Budget he declared to be a "War Budget," and he has right up to the present resolutely refused to declare a truce to that war.

Speaking in London on December 18th, 1925, he made a characteristic and impressive speech which ended on a note that he knows so well how to strike.

"I hope I am a good Protestant. But there is one appeal in Catholicism that always moves me, and that is the ever present picture of the Mother with the pleading eyes and the Child at Her Heart.

"We are approaching the celebration of the Great Nativity. May I ask of Protestants and Catholics alike, that in these days of rejoicing we shall not forget the pitiful Madonna of the Slums with her pallid children."

A man of Lloyd George's antecedents and upbringing must naturally be a defender of Nonconformity. He has always favoured the freedom of the individual conscience in opposition to the dictatorship of the Churches. He has for this reason frequently shown himself to be the enemy of Established Religion, in so far as its organisation infringed on what he considered to be the

right of the individual. In particular he has constantly defended the people of Wales against the inroads of religious organisations other than the Nonconformist.

As long ago as 1891 he spoke in no uncertain terms of the reported progress in Wales of ritualism. He makes his point, as usual, by a figure of speech:

"The Church is making tremendous efforts to regain its lost influence; that we admit. It builds new churches and restores old ones; it founds extension societies and other societies; it multiplies its forces in the way of curates and lecturers; but it does not strike the right chords, and the heart of the Welsh people does not vibrate. It is nothing but a strenuous endeavour on the part of the organ-blower to play the organ. You can hear the whistling of the wind as it rushes through the pipes; you can hear the creaking of the machinery; you can see the sweating and perspiring of the man at the bellows; but not a chord of music can you hear. There is no one to press the pedals or to touch the fingerboard. The preaching of Wales, the hymns of Wales, her patriotism, her religious fervour, these are not voiced, and yet all that wheezing and puffing of the machinery will, we are asked to believe, withdraw the ear of the nation from that grand symphony which has held successive generations of Welshmen in rapture.

"Wales is going to turn back seven hundred years, to the days of Ritualism! I see no indication of it. Certainly not at this moment, when she is striving and straining every nerve in the eagerness of her advance along the paths of national progress. Woe to the institution that stands in the way of her onward march! She is founding colleges, universities and schools. She is organising her

national resources to win national triumphs. Wales is not going back."

In his enthusiasm for Nonconformity he is not reluctant to give what to many must appear a peculiar interpretation of the facts of history.

"The Ancient British Church is still in existence. Being expelled from cathedrals and bishops' palaces, it found a home in the monasteries. When those institutions were suppressed and plundered by the rapacity of the founders of the present Anglican Establishment, it fled to the hills, finding shelter in Puritan Conventicles. At last it has discovered a habitation and a sanctuary in the Temples of Dissent. The bishops chosen by the people, the great patriot preachers whose inspiration is ever given in the struggle for freedom, the enormous popular gatherings to listen to these matters of the assembly—all these features of the old Welsh Church are restored in Nonconformity with more than their pristine glory."

He then goes on to open up vistas of possibilities which reveal a point of view superficially opposed to the ideas of Nonconformity, and which, nevertheless, must fundamentally be authentic, since they come from the lips of one in a position to know the aspirations of Welsh dissenters.

"And the restoration is not to stop at Nonconformity. One day, which is not distant, the old Church will re-enter into full possession of the cathedrals from which it was driven. The national spirit is rising rapidly in Wales. You cannot converse for a few minutes with a young Welsh clergyman without discovering that it is already percolating and trickling into his Church. There is nothing but the embankments and dams of establishment that now keep it out. Once these are removed it will rush in like a deluge.

Then we shall once more enjoy bishops who shall be the elect of the people. . . . Then shall the national life of this Church not flow from the flats of Canterbury and stagnate into unhealthy pools and morasses which poison the Welsh atmosphere. It shall come straight from the hills in a quickening torrent which shall purify its waters, deepen its channels and beautify and fertilise the valleys through which its course runs/'

Although spoken some months previously, the following phrase is, as it were, a corollary to the foregoing:

"The career of the English Church in Wales has been one of dire wrong, spiritual and temporal, inflicted upon the Welsh nation. . . . Establishment has persecuted and plundered our nation time out of mind. It has endeavoured to thwart every national movement. It is still doing so; and I refuse, on my part, to be a party to any compact to provide padding for gloves with which to spar at the oppressor or to furnish cushions to ease its fall."

Over against these vigorous statements, in which sides are unmistakably taken, we may place the words from a speech made at Wrexham a year or more later. The sentiments do not appear to be implied in the earlier speeches. Perhaps they mark a further step in the evolution of the speaker.

"When the last sect in Britain shall have vanished among the spent phenomena of the past, the ideal of Christianity will shine forth like the stars to illuminate the darkness surrounding the duty and the destiny of the human race.

"Sects are ephemeral; the teachings of Christianity are for ever."

Free Trade is naturally a subject to which some of his finest flights of oratory have been devoted. In 1903 he

spoke at Paisley, in reply to the attacks of Mr. Wyndham. Wyndham had severely criticised what he called the "Cobdenite Ritual."

"What," asks Lloyd George, "is the Cobdenite Ritual? Mr. Wyndham said that as for the balance of trade, the services we rendered to the world and the invisible exports, he would sweep them all away. Before we sweep them away it is just as well that we should know what they are. What is the balance of trade which he would sweep away as Cobdenite Ritual? We buy from foreigners; yes, but we sell to foreigners, too. Not merely do we sell to foreigners, but we render great services to them. Not for nothing; it is not a British habit. We carry their goods and passengers at a price—and a good price. We pay better wages in our ships than any country in the world, and still we are masters of the seas.

"What do we get paid for that? We get paid considerable sums of money; we get commissions; we have foreign investments. What is the result? That upon the balance of what we buy and what we sell, and what we receive from freights and commissions, foreigners are indebted to us to the extent of thirty or forty millions a year. The balance is in our favour. Sweep it away, says Mr. Wyndham. Don't touch it! Making a profit out of foreigners! It is unpatriotic. If you want thirty millions, extract it out of your own countrymen; but thirty millions out of foreigners is a Cobdenite Ritual; sweep it away.

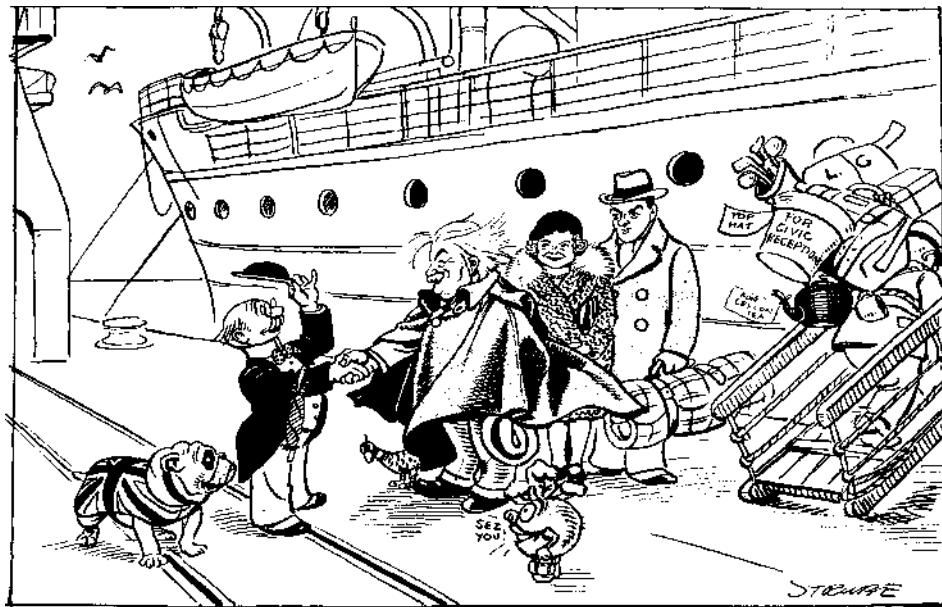
"Then there are the invisible exports. It is rather a difficult thing to sweep away what is invisible. Still, Mr. Wyndham would sweep away the invisible exports. What are they? The invisible exports are the sums of money which we get when we carry goods for foreigners. I had an excellent instance of this given me before coming

to this meeting. A ship started **from** here **with a cargo of coal** for Manila; thence it went off somewhere else, **and then** to Japan; then it came back to Sumatra; then to Aden; from that place to somewhere else, and at last it came here. It started with a small cargo, worth about £3,000, and it came home having carried goods for foreigners. How much do you think it earned? Forty thousand pounds. Where did most of that money go? To British pockets. Sweep it away! Don't touch it; it is foreign gold. That is Mr. Wyndham.

"Do you know that in the course of a year foreigners pay us for carrying their goods the colossal sum of ninety millions. What does that mean? It means that we carry more than fifty per cent, of the trade of America. America used to have ships of her own, but that was in the days when she had Free Trade. She used to carry seventy-five per cent, of her own goods, and a further large proportion of ours as well. That was before 1861, when she was practically a Free Trade country. She then became Protectionist, and she is now carrying exactly thirteen per cent, of her own goods across the seas, and barely a ton of anybody else's. That is what America got out of Free Trade and Protection."

In 1904 he attacked Mr. Chamberlain on the subject of Free Trade.

"Mr. Chamberlain is going to tax the foreigner. Is he? How much? Ten or fifteen millions so he says. Why? We are doing it now. The foreigner is paying the bulk of our naval expenditure at this moment. And we are asked to throw over this bona-fide tax for the sake of **a sham, a chimera** of Mr. Chamberlain's brain. 'Ah,' they say, 'Britain is alone.' So she is. 'Look all over the world,' **say** these patriots, who believe in every country's intelli-



THE LEAVE BOAT

[By courtesy of the

Little Man.—Well, I wish you a *bon voyage* and a speedy return to health. You've had some hard knocks lately, so hurry up and come back fit again—for some more!

gence except that of their own. 'Look at Germany,' they say. 'Look at Russia.' Yes, look at her. 'Look at France and the United States.' They are all protecting except Britain, and they say, 'It is time that you gave up this Free Trade, and followed these wise foreigners.' It is not the first time that Britain has stood alone. Yes, and the world has to thank Heaven for it.

"Britain stood alone practically in the world for constitutional freedom, not for sixty years, as she stood for Free Trade, but for generations—for freedom, for a free Press, for free speech, for free conscience, and for a free Parliament. She stood alone, and there were Tories in those days."

In the next year he is again attacking Mr. Chamberlain on the subject of Free Trade.

"Mr. Chamberlain talks as though Free Traders were advocating the compulsory purchase of German goods. It is purely a question of individual freedom. If a German article is cheaper and better for the purpose than a British article, why should we not be at liberty to buy it? Is it immoral or wrong? Certainly not. Surely it was intended that the nations of the earth should traffic one with the other. As humanity progresses, as science brings the nations together, are we going to set up barriers, scowl at each other, and treat each other as enemies? No friend of humanity, no friend of progress, no real friend of his country would advocate such a course." It is interesting to compare these phrases, spoken a quarter of a century ago, with his most recent utterance, and to observe the consistency of his views.

Free Trade is part of, and not the whole of Liberal policy. Lloyd George has spoken of Liberalism and what it stands **for** with eloquence over a long period. As far back as

1903 he made a speech on Liberalism in Newcastle, in which he told his hearers how the Welsh looked on the subject.

"We never squabble in Wales about past, present or future Liberal leaders. We just stick to Liberal principles—principles which were in existence before any of these leaders ever came on the boards, and which will remain after the last of them has disappeared. In sticking to Liberal principles, we never trouble about leaders. We trust that there are leaders; we say, in an abstract sort of way, that we follow the Liberal leaders, leaving it to you gentlemen in England to say who they are. . . .

"I think that it is a great mistake for us to discuss amongst ourselves who this leader is going to be, and who the next leader is going to be. I will tell you why. No Party has ever existed with one leader. That sounds, perhaps, a little strange; but the fact is that the best leader for a man is the man he chooses to follow. One man suits the temperament of one section; another suits the temperament of another. So long as both leaders lead along the right path, each section follows its own leader and each leader will lead him to the same place.

"I remember that when I went into politics a few years ago, there were two leaders. There was Mr. Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal Party, but there were many who followed Mr. Bright. That is the state of things; there will be one towering figure, but there will be others who will affirm the convictions of a large section of the Party."

In Perth in 1904, he again defines the mission of the Liberal Party.

"I believe that the Liberal Party has been called to the task of maintaining the commerce which has filled every sea with British shipping and every land with British

merchandise—the commerce which has made this Empire the wealthiest under the sun. But I believe that the Liberal Party has also been summoned by heaven to an even nobler task, and that is to see that there is no man found dying of hunger in the meanest attic of this splendid Imperial palace. I believe that it will be part of the pride of the Liberal Party to defend the honour of Britain's flag to the ends of the earth, and I believe that it owes a more sacred duty to that flag! It is this—to see that it no longer is disgraced by waving over dens where myriads of men, women and children of British blood rot in wretchedness, poverty and vice."

After the War, when the political situation was difficult, and internal dissensions were threatening to disorganise Parties, Lloyd George insisted that country must be put before everything, and that Party, if necessary, must be put last.

"The interests of the country must come first. I have seen Parties destroyed by personal resentments. I have seen Parties rendered impotent by personal resentments. I have seen their judgment deflected; and for that reason they were not making the contribution they ought to make to the well-being of the people for whose prosperity we are most deeply concerned. We will not make that mistake, whatever happens. We will consider the land to which we are deeply attached first. Its interests must be deepest in our hearts. Its interests must be highest in our concerns. Britain first. Any party, even our own, second and even last."

Lloyd George, himself a man of energy, sees the Liberal policy as a policy that calls for energy. Speaking at the National Liberal Club in London in 1924, he warns his hearers of the need for keeping energetically abreast of the times.

"Liberalism, in order to live, must demonstrate to the new generation that it represents a real and deep human need which cannot be satisfied by any other Party. Its appeal must be a living one to the times we live in. Toryism undoubtedly makes an appeal to one essential mood of human nature—that of fundamental inertia; and that is sometimes a real human need. Every time the nation is exhausted with a great effort to advance further along the road of progress, it falls back on the post of Conservatism. The year 1874 is the classical example in our generation of this process.

"A tired nation is a Tory nation. Every man tends to become a Tory himself when tired, disinclined for exertion, wishing to be left alone, cross with anyone who proposes new efforts, and, may I add, tempted to view the drink traffic with an unusually friendly eye. Toryism makes an inherent and instinctive appeal to very prevalent moods in human nature—contentment with your own lot; indifference to the lot of others, often through ignorance of the conditions or lack of imagination to realise them; rooted habits and prejudices. All these things make 'Die-hard' Toryism as perennial as the vegetation which springs up spontaneously in the fallow land.

"Toryism would, if left alone, do nothing, Liberalism would break the soil with the plough. Socialism prefers to do it with an earthquake. Russia has shown that by that means you only litter the ground with debris for a whole generation."

In a stirring speech to the 1920 Club in April, 1927, he points out the identity between the natural aspiration towards Liberty and the policy of the Liberal Party. It is an effective piece of oratory, belonging to the best days of his maturity:

"The story of Liberalism has not yet been told. Whether it will have the responsibility, the independent responsibility, for the destiny of this great people and this great Empire as it has in the past, or whether it will act in combination with others as it practically has done since 1886, and what combinations and associations there may be, I am not going to predict; but I am quite sure that the central ideas that Liberalism stands for are vital to the life and the continued power and influence of this country and of the world.

"Liberty is not as popular as it was when I was young. There are few here who can go back as far as I can. I remember the magic effect of the word 'Liberty' in a meeting. There was a thrill in it, which carried something that no argument and no eloquence could convey.

"There is something that has deadened its power for the moment. Liberty is at a discount in many lands. The rulers of Italy mock at it openly, saying: 'You want order, discipline, authority. You want prosperity and material well-being. What is all this talk of liberty? That is dead and gone.'

"In Russia there was a revolution. It was created by a desire for liberty. Then there came in a great sinister force which dethroned liberty before it had taken the sceptre into its hands. They said: 'It is not liberty you want. It is something known as the power of the proletariat, the rule of a small class dominating over vast multitudes.'

"The peasant in Russia has no liberty. In Spain constitutional liberty has, for the moment, disappeared. I do not know the effect of the revolution in Greece. I cannot tell. But there is no doubt that liberty for the moment has lost its magic power upon this generation.

"Young people to-day do not remember what it meant to the generation in which I was brought up. There are to-day other ideas and other appeals, but liberty will come back to its own again. It is no usurper, liberty; no pretender, liberty. It is something which is one of the most vital ingredients in human progress. Material prosperity cannot make up for the loss of it. Better wages, better conditions of labour, shorter hours, even the rule of the proletariat cannot make up for the loss of liberty.

"It is something that inspires and dignifies mankind, and distinguishes man from the beasts of the field. You may turn him into rich pastures, and treat him well and house him. He will still be a beast of the field.

"Liberty is what belongs to real manhood; and because Liberalism stands for something which is eternal on the way to the emancipation of man, I am in favour of every organisation that brings young men and women together to work for it."

The land question is one of his most fruitful sources of inspiration. He has fought the Battle of the Land ever since he went to Parliament, and some of his most impressive speeches have been made on this subject. As far back as 1891 he is speaking on this subject from the point of view that he has constantly maintained throughout.

"The land of this country was distributed amongst its owners, the predecessors of its present holders, for the express purpose of enabling them to organise and maintain a military system in the country for the defence of its coast, and even for aggressive purposes when necessary. The land was also to maintain Royalty and **the** expense of dispensing justice and preserving law and order. What has happened? The land is still in the

possession of a privileged few. What has become of the burden of maintaining the army, law, order and Royalty? It has been shifted upon the shoulders of the toilers of this country. . . . Thus burdens have been cast upon the wealth-producers of the land—burdens that ought to have been borne by the wealth consumers. It has been the constant effort of the Liberal Party to relieve labour by replacing the burden upon the right shoulders."

In 1913 his speeches on the subject form a complete expression of his point of view. He said at Bedford:

"Walking along the principal streets of our great cities you will see displayed advertisements calling attention to the allurements of Canada, Australia and New Zealand for British labour. There you will find a picture of a nice home, with most beautiful surroundings. There you will see a large tract of land just before the harvest, thick with corn blowing gracefully under golden ears. There you will find cattle grazing on rich pastures, and there again you will see an orchard laden with fruit, and no doubt not a landlord anywhere to be seen and not a gamekeeper.

"During recent years these advertisements have attracted scores, nay hundreds of thousands of our best labourers to find a home across the flood. And point has been given to it by contrasting their experiences and the difficulties of winning a decent livelihood for themselves at home. Do you know when the land question will be settled in England and Scotland and Wales? It will be when similar advertisements setting forth the attractions of settlement on British soil will be displayed in some of the most prominent windows of the streets of every city and town in the land.

"Then you will have picture and print assuring the British workman that he need not flee across oceans and continents in order to find food and freedom and contentment and plenty for himself, his wife and his little children; that they can find it all in the old homeland they love so well. You will find a picture of a delightful cottage with clinging flowers, not hiding decay and dilapidation and death, but adorning comfort. There will be a large garden full of the sweetest and most nourishing food for the labourer's table. There will be pictures of nice little farms with cattle, sheep and pigs and poultry and corn, and all the best produce of the earth.

"Then if you go to the great valleys and mountains of the North, instead of a wilderness over which the deer roam uninterruptedly, you will find the crofters in the valleys tilling the soil, the soil their fathers cultivated and bled for. And looking up the mountain-sides, you will see them clad with forests, to shelter and give warmth and give employment during the winter months to the men down in the glens. Where you now see rush, thorn and bramble and covert for game, you will have luxuriant crops feeding the hungry. You will have pictures then of contented men, happy women and merry children, care, anxiety, hunger driven for ever from their faces by the sunshine of the new hope that will have dawned on their native land. Then it can be said of this rich, fertile, beautiful land, as was said of another country where Jubilee protected the home of its peasantry:

" Thou visit est the earth and makest it very plenteous,
Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness and Thy
clouds drop fatness,

They shall drop upon the dwellings of the wilderness,
and the little hills shall rejoice on every side,
The folds shall be full of sheep, the valleys also shall
stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and
sing."

Again at Swindon he said:

"What you want is more capital in the land. You want to induce the cultivator to put all his energy, all his brain, all his labour, all his capital into the land, and to attract as much capital as he can for the purpose. He could not do that unless the law secures to him that he will reap the full reward of whatever he puts into the land. And I will tell you where security is very, very important, especially important. Until you give security to the cultivator, he has not the necessary inducement to develop land which does not pay him within the first year or two.

"There is one great difference between agriculture here and abroad. A farmer is as good here as in any country in the world, but you will find more land of the second quality and third quality brought into cultivation abroad than you do here. A man who has only an assurance that he can remain on his farm for twelve months or eighteen months and no more may make his best out of the farm, if he knows that he will reap his harvest within twelve or eighteen months; but he would be very loath and would be very shy of spending money on the development of land which may not pay for five, ten or fifteen years. The success of every business depends on your being able to look ahead for at least ten years/'

During that speech he made one prophetic statement:

"You never can tell when the strain will come upon the might of England; when she will need the sturdy peasantry, which, in the past, has many a time preserved her from a catastrophe and restored her strength when she had fallen. You must, therefore, attract the population to the land quickly, and there is only one way of doing that. You must induce the stream of emigration from the towns to flow into the land of your own country. You must be able to attract the surplus population of the towns as well. You cannot do it now. Trade is good, thanks to the Liberal Government, but no Government can resist for ever the inevitable fluctuations of trade. We have had bad trade before; we may get it again. With bad trade comes unemployment. You want, when thousands are wandering in the streets of our great towns—thousands of sturdy workers—you want to be able to have a placard up and say: 'Why starve when there is plenty of excellent work to be had within a few miles of you on the land?' "

On the question of the land he has always held the strongest radical views. He sees in the rating system a burden and a drag upon the development of the land and of every other form of business.

He makes his criticism of it amusingly in a speech at Middlesbrough:

"The worst of the present rating system is that the moment a man neglects his property, he escapes rates; the moment a man begins to improve his property he is fined as a ratepayer. A shopkeeper extends his premises, a great workshop is erected, the rate assessor comes down and says: 'I am informed,' or let us put it in technical language, 'Information has been laid against you, sir, that you have extended your works, that you are

providing more employment for hundreds of workmen: are you guilty or not guilty?' He says 'I cannot deny it.' Then says the assessor, 'I fine you £50 or £100 a year as long as you live, and don't do it again.' And he goes on to a moorland near Leeds—not a building in sight, not a plough on the land, no sign of one. Then he says: 'This is all right, no improvements here.' He meets the proprietor and says: 'What are you doing with this land?' The proprietor says, 'I am holding it up until Leeds people want water: then I am going to charge them eight hundred years' purchase for disturbing my pheasants.' The rate collector takes him by the hand and says, 'It is such men as you who make the greatness of our country; we will only put you down 12/- an acre. We have to put something down.'

"He goes home feeling that he has done his duty. But somebody meets him in the street and says, 'Have you heard that Mr. Brown has added a bathroom to his house?' He says, 'I don't believe it; I will go there at once.' He goes and says, 'Is this true what I hear about you, that you have put a new bathroom to your house?' Mr. Brown says, 'I am sorry'; and the official replies, '£2 added to your assessment, sir.' He walks home past a slum district and he says, 'No baths here, anyway.' He meets the proprietor and he just asks him the question. The proprietor reassures him on the spot. He says, "No improvements about my property; it is not worth as much now as it was years ago.' He takes him by the hand, and he says, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; go and write quickly thy assessment down by 15 per cent.'"

In this speech he also insists upon the independence of country and town.

At Holloway, towards the end of 1913, he **outlined** his policy of Land Reform. He wishes to see an equable and fairer distribution of the land.

"The first condition of good housing is a fair, just, equitable price for the land which you secure. The State has been like a bad housekeeper—slovenly, slatternly, extravagantly mismanaging things; some children wasting substance, others crying for bread. That is the old order of things which, please God, is passing away. The new dispensation is on the road, when the resources of the* country will be well ordered, well husbanded, fairly distributed. Where now you have land abandoned to the pleasures of the few, then it will be producing the best, the sweetest food, to sustain, to gladden the hearts of the multitude. You will have more dwelling-houses; you will have fewer public-houses.

"As for slums, you will have no more of those pest-houses and plague pits to poison the life of the people. Honest labour will be requited with plenty, comfort, leisure. Instead of workmen seeking labour with heavy hearts, you will have work seeking workmen. The children will be the wards of the State, the aged and infirm will be its honoured guests. The sick workman will be cared for by the community; for the nation will be one family, and its might and its majesty will not rest in camps and great engines of war, but in the homes of its people. And because we know that in order to lay well and truly the foundation of that new order of things you must root every privilege and monopoly out of the soil; that is why the Government are placing before you these proposals for land reform, and we shall wait with confidence the verdict of the people upon them."

I have so far given a variety of quotations to illustrate the range of subjects covered by Lloyd George. Before going on to draw upon his speeches in further illustration of his facility and his fecundity, it may be useful at this point when from the foregoing it has been possible for those hitherto unfamiliar with the manner and substance of his rhetoric to form their own opinion, to give the criticism passed upon his speeches by that shrewd student of politics, the late E. T. Raymond, in his book on Lloyd George,

"Mr. George as an orator has been subject at various times to unduly high praise and to unjust disparagement. At his worst he is very bad indeed; a really bad Lloyd George speech is almost reminiscent of the Carmagnoles of Barrere, except that he never condescends to misuse the classics. But even his greatest speeches are seldom worth reading in full after the occasion has passed. There are isolated passages of great beauty, often—though more rarely of late years—touches of true poetry; his similes have sometimes bettered the best of the German Emperor's, who sometimes contrived, among much bombast, to introduce a figure of high dignity; indeed, it might be possible to show a real similarity between the oratorical methods, and even the mental processes, of these opposed autocrats.

"But the very fitness of Mr. George's rhetoric for its purpose tends to make his speeches out of date with the last edition of the paper in which they are reported. They are seldom witty, if wit means the power of vitalising wisdom and making a true thing memorable. They are seldom humorous in the genial English sense. But Mr. George is unequalled in the use as a weapon of a certain verbal gaiety. He blows bubbles, so to speak, that seem to be the mere emanation of high spirits, but they give off, in bursting, a gas of deadly corrosive power.

"His light chaff, which appears thoroughly good natured and almost unconsidered, is far more lethal than were the laboured and frankly murderous gibes of Disraeli. But the whole point of the thing is its spontaneity, its perfect adaptation to the circumstances, and an attempt to recall the atmosphere is generally no more successful than the German master's effort to explain all the bearing of his famous joke on the Schleswig-Holstein complications. . . .

"Hence there are few good anecdotes of Mr. George's platform and parliamentary contests. For example, how little point there appears when stated in cold print in a story often told by Mr. George's admirers to illustrate his quickness in retort. In his early days of office he was obliged repeatedly to postpone an engagement to speak at Cardiff. 'Well,' he said in beginning his speech, 'I have been a long time coming, but here I am at last.' 'So am I,' said the usual "Voice". 'Yes,' said Mr. George, 'but are you all there?' The audience was convulsed. The reader will probably, like Mr. Pickwick, merely envy the ease with which some people are entertained.

"The truth is that whether in gay mood or gray, Mr. George has but one thought, that of capturing his audience as a barrister does a jury; and much of the effect of his speeches is purely histrionic. He is a master in the fine art of leading up to 'Loud-cheers.' He often makes of design a slight slip in order that he may entrap an adversary into an incautious interruption. He will deliberately provoke laughter for the purpose of quenching it with a sudden solemnity. The shrug of his mobile shoulders, the sudden puckering of his face with a half-reproachful smile, suggest unutterable depths of depravity, or the most abject simple-mindedness in an opponent."



[Photo : London .New's Agency
AT A LAND AND NATION LEAGUE MEETING

Another comment from a highly experienced politician and like himself a Welsh member, is worth quoting in this context. It occurs in a letter from Lord Rendel, who represented Montgomery for many years, to Sir Stafford Howard, and is printed among his personal papers. "There is nothing cowardly," he writes in 1910, "about Lloyd George's speeches. Some can call him scurrilous. But he never hits below the belt. He has chivalry as well as courage. His worst offence is that like the rude, vulgar boys in *Punch*, he shocks the self-complacent, trips up the pompous, and strips off the Tory buckram. . . . Thackeray was a snob in his satire of English snobbishness. Lloyd George is not a snob. He is as a Welsh peasant simply outside social veneration that neither he nor his forbears have ever known."

These two criticisms from two men widely differing in politics but each highly gifted with political insight, are illuminating even if not wholly convincing.

Everyone is prepared to admit the weaknesses in Lloyd George's style and manner, but there is more excellent rhetoric than the critics have been prepared to allow.

Budget speeches are notoriously dry, and it is interesting to look through the Budget speech of 1909 in an attempt to discover if Lloyd George is any exception to the rule. It will probably be felt that this speech is, with others of its kind, more interesting as an historical document than as a masterpiece of literature. Nevertheless, it is worth while noticing how the usually poetical speaker can adapt his language to the matter in hand with a twofold purpose of clarity and persuasiveness.

"I come to the consideration of the social problems which are urgently pressing for solution—problems affecting the lives of the people. The solution of all these questions

involves finance. What the Government **have to ask themselves** is this: can the whole subject of further social **reform** be postponed until the increasing demands made **upon** the national exchequer by the growth of armaments has ceased? Not merely can it be postponed but ought it **to** be postponed? Is there the slightest hope that if we deferred consideration of the matter we are likely within a generation to find any more favourable moments for attending to it?

"And we have to ask ourselves this further question: if we put off dealing with these social sores, are the evils which arise from them not likely to grow and to fester until finally the loss which the country sustains will be infinitely greater than anything it would have to bear in paying the cost of an immediate remedy? There are hundreds of thousands of men, women and children in this country now enduring hardships for which the sternest judge would not hold them responsible; hardships entirely due to circumstances over which they have not the slightest command; the fluctuations and changes of trade, even of fashion; ill-health and the premature breakdown or death of the breadwinner. Owing to events of this kind, all of them beyond human control, at least beyond the control of the victims, thousands, and I am not sure I should be wrong if I said millions, are precipitated into a condition of acute distress and poverty."

This may not be the highest flight of rhetoric, but it is an admirable introduction to the point he wishes to make, concerning the extending of the Old Age Pension to the "Meritorious Pauper" although a happier word might have been chosen to describe the pauper.

Later on in the speech he tells us the impression made upon him by the German Pension Scheme.

"When Bismarck was strengthening the foundations of the new German Empire, one of the very first tasks he undertook was the organisation of a scheme which insured the German workmen and their families against the worst evils which ensue from these common incidents of life. And a superb scheme it is. It has saved an incalculable amount of human misery to hundreds of thousands, and possibly millions of people who never deserved it.

"Wherever I went in Germany, north or south, and whomsoever I met, whether it was an employer or a workman, a Conservative or a Liberal, a Socialist or a Trade Union Leader—men of all ranks, sections and creeds, of one accord joined in lauding the benefits which have been conferred upon Germany by this beneficent policy."

From Pensions and Insurance he passes on to afforestation, which he develops with some interesting statistics.

"Any man who has crossed and recrossed this country from north to south and east to west, must have been perplexed at finding there was so much waste and wilderness possible in such a crowded little island. There are millions of acres in this country which are more stripped and sterile than they were, and providing a living for fewer people than they did even a thousand years ago—acres which abroad would either be clad in profitable trees or be brought even to a higher state of cultivation. We want to do more in the way of developing the resources of our own country. There is much to be done for the resettlement of neglected and forgotten areas in Britain.

"We have been spending for the last two or three years two hundred thousand pounds to three hundred thousand pounds a year upon work which I would not like to discourage. I have no doubt that it has relieved a great deal

of distress, and that it is the best thing that could be done as a temporary shift and expedient, and all thanks and gratitude are due to the people who have devoted their time, leisure and labour in expending the money in the most profitable way possible, but still it is a wasteful expenditure. Sometimes, I have no doubt, some good is done, but it is wasteful whenever you create work for the sake of creating it. We think that the money could be spent much more usefully and profitably and with better direction so long as we take a wider view of our responsibility in the matter."

The impression given by Mr. Lloyd George's Budget speeches is one not of textbook economics but of the economics of a purely observant man. There is no trace of the academician, little of the theorist, only the ever-present eagerness of the practical man of action suiting a principle to the immediate need.

The following quotation from the same Budget speech indicates this:

"We are not getting out of the land anything like what it is capable of endowing us with. Of the enormous quantity of agricultural and dairy produce and fruit and of the timber which is imported into this country, a considerable portion could be raised on our own land. . . . There is a certain amount of money, not very much, spent in this country in a spasmodic kind of way, on what I call the work of national development, in light railways, in harbours, in indirect but very meagre assistance to agriculture.

"I propose to gather all these grants together into one Development Grant, and to put in this year an additional sum of £200,000. Legislation will have to be introduced and I will then explain the methods of administration and

the objects in greater detail, but the grant will be utilised in the promoting of schemes which have for their purpose **the** development of the resources of the country.

"It will include such objects as the institution of Schools of Forestry, the purchase and preparation of land for afforestation, the setting up of a number of experimental forests on a large scale, expenditure upon scientific research in the interests of agriculture, experimental farms, the improvement of stock, as to which there have been a great many demands from people engaged in agriculture, the equipments of agencies for disseminating agricultural instructions, the encouragement and promotion of rural transport so as to make markets more accessible, the facilitation of all well-considered schemes and measures for attracting labour back to the land by small holdings or reclamation of wastes.

"Every acre of land brought into cultivation, every acre of cultivated land brought into a higher state of cultivation means more labour of a healthy and productive character. It means more abundant food, cheaper and better food for the people."

One particularly interesting point is raised in this Budget speech of 1909 concerning the problem of motor traffic, which was for the first time making itself felt. Looking back on the difference between conditions then and conditions to-day it is instructive to read what Lloyd George has to say and his optimistic forecast for the future of the motor trade; nor does he ignore the problems of street casualties.

"I propose that a beginning should be made this year with a scheme for dealing with the new but increasingly troublesome problem of motor traffic in this country. We are far ahead of all other European countries in the

number of motor vehicles upon our roads. We have at least three times as many as France and more than four times as many as Germany. And I am informed by those best able to judge, that to-day among the products of our factories are some of the best cars procurable in the world, both as regards the comparative perfection of the more costly vehicle and the value given for the prices asked for those designed for popular use.

"I therefore look forward to a great future for this industry and I am the last to wish to hinder its development or be responsible for proposals which would be in any way hostile to its interests. Quite the reverse. I am anxious to be helpful to its growth and prosperity, but I cannot help feeling that this problem is urgent, and calls for immediate attention. Any man who takes the trouble to consider the damage which is done to the roads of this country, often by men who do not contribute, or perhaps I ought to put it another way, who have not been given the opportunity of contributing to the upkeep of the roads they help so effectively to tear up—the consequent rapid increase in the expense of road-maintenance, the damage done, if not to agriculture, at least to the amenities of rural life, by the dust clouds which follow in the wake of these vehicles, above all the appalling list of casualties to innocent pedestrians, especially to children, must come to the conclusion that this is a question which demands immediate notice at the hands of the Central Government."

He then proposes schemes for the making of new roads, saying "Roads are too narrow, corners are too frequent and too sharp, high hedges have their dangers and the old metalling, admirably suited as it was to the vehicles we were accustomed to, is utterly unfitted for the motor car."

All the difficulties were clearly foreseen; the only thing that was not and could not be anticipated, was the extent to which these difficulties would be magnified during the course of the next twenty years.

Naturally some of the most highly-coloured and striking of Lloyd George's oratory was inspired by the War, and called for by the need brought home to him for stimulating the people in making one of the most exacting efforts in the history of this country. Up to 1914 he had seized every opportunity to speak against war and against the building up of armaments. His speeches against the Boer War are remembered as some of the most daring of his career. From the moment when he accepted the War in 1914 he spared no effort of speech, just as he spared no effort of mind in his whole-hearted devotion to the cause of victory. He made a striking speech at the Queen's Hall in September, 1914:

"There is no man who has always regarded the prospect of engaging in a great war with greater reluctance and with greater repugnance than I have done throughout the whole of my political life. There is no man more convinced that we could not have avoided it without national dishonour. . . . Why is our honour as a country involved in this War? Because, in the first instance, we are bound by the honourable obligations to defend the independence, the liberty, the integrity of a small neighbour that has always lived peaceably. She could not have compelled us; she was weak; but the man who declines to discharge his duty because his creditor is too poor to enforce it is a blackguard. We entered into a Treaty, a solemn Treaty, two Treaties, to defend Belgium and her integrity.

"Our signatures are attached to the documents, our signatures do not stand alone there; this country was not

the only country that undertook to defend the integrity of Belgium. Russia, France, Austria, -Prussia, they are all there. Why are Austria and Prussia not performing the obligations of their bond? It is suggested that when we quote this Treaty it is purely an excuse on our part—it is our low craft and cunning to cloak our jealousy of a superior civilisation that we are attempting to destroy. Our answer is the action we took in 1870. What was that? Mr. Gladstone was then Prime Minister. Lord Granville, I think, was then Foreign Secretary. I have never heard it laid to their charge that they were ever jingoes."

He then quotes an address of thanks from the municipality of Brussels to Queen Victoria, who had intervened to protect Belgium and her neutrality from France and not from Germany.

"That was in 1870. Mark what followed. Three or four days after that document of thanks a French army was wedged up against the Belgian frontier, every means of escape shut out by a ring of flame from Prussian cannon. There was one way of escape. What was that? Violating the neutrality of Belgium. What did they do? The French on that occasion preferred ruin and humiliation to the breaking of their bond. . . .

"But Belgium is not the only little nation that has been attacked in this War, and I make no excuse for referring to the case of the other little nation, the case of Serbia. The history of Serbia is not unblotted. Whose history in the category of nations is unblotted? The first nation that is without sin, let her cast a stone at Serbia. She was a nation trained in a horrible school, but she won her freedom with a tenacious valour and she has maintained it by the same courage. If any Serbians were mixed up

in the assassination of the Archduke they ought to be punished. Serbia admits that.

"The Serbian Government had nothing to do with it; not even Austria claims that. The Serbian Prime Minister is one of the most capable and honoured men in Europe. Serbia was willing to punish any one of her subjects who had been proved to have any complicity in that assassination. What more could you expect? What were the Austrian demands? Serbia sympathised with her fellow countrymen in Bosnia, that was one of her crimes. She must do so no more. Her newspapers were saying nasty things about Austria, they must do so no longer. . . . She promised not to sympathise with Bosnia; she promised to write no critical articles about Austria, she would have no public meetings in which anything unkind was said about Austria.

"But that was not enough. She must dismiss from her army the officers whom Austria should subsequently name. Those officers had just emerged from a war where they had added lustre to the Serbian Arms; they were gallant, brave and efficient. . . . Can you name a country in the world that would have stood that? . . .

"Then came Russia's turn. Russia has a special regard for Serbia. . . . Germany knew it and she turned round to Russia and said, 'I insist that you shall stand by with your arms folded whilst Austria is strangling your little brother to death.' What answer did the Russian Slav give? He gave the only answer that becomes a man. He turned to Austria and said, 'You lay hands on that little fellow and I will tear your ramshackle empire limb from limb;' and he is doing it.

"This is the story of two little nations. The world owes much to little nations. . . . The greatest art in the

world was the work of little nations; the most enduring literature of the world came from little nations; the greatest literature of England came when she was a nation of the size of Belgium fighting a great Empire. The heroic deeds that thrill humanity through generations were the deeds of little nations fighting for their freedom. Yes, and the salvation of mankind came through a little nation. God has chosen little nations as the vessels by which He carries His choicest wines to the lips of humanity, to rejoice their hearts, to exalt their vision, to stimulate and strengthen their faith; and if we had stood by when two little nations were being crushed and broken by the brutal hands of barbarism, our shame would have rung down the everlasting ages. . . .

"I will not say a single word in disparagement of the German people. They are a great people, and have great qualities of head and hand and heart. I believe, in spite of recent events, that there is as great a store of kindness in the German peasant as in any peasant in the world; but he has been drilled into a false idea of civilisation. It is efficient, it is capable, but it is a hard civilisation; it is a selfish civilisation; it is a material civilisation. They cannot comprehend the action of Britain at the present time; they say so. They say 'France we can understand; she is out for vengeance; she is out for territory—Alsace and Lorraine.'

"They say they can understand Russia; she is fighting for mastery, she wants Galicia. They can understand you fighting for vengeance, they can understand you fighting for mastery, they can understand you fighting for greed of territory; but they cannot understand a great Empire pledging its resources, pledging its might, pledging the lives of its children, pledging its very existence, to

protect a little nation that seeks to defend herself. **God** made man in His own image, high of purpose, in the region of the spirit; German 'civilisation' would re-create Him in the image of a Diesel machine—precise, accurate, powerful, but with no room for soul to operate.

"Have you read the Kaiser's speeches? If you have not a copy I advise you to buy one; they will soon be out of print, and you will not have many more of the same sort. They are full of the glitter and bluster of German militarism—'mailed fist' and 'shining armour.' Poor old mailed fist! Its knuckles are getting a little bruised. Poor shining armour! The shine is being knocked out of it. There is the same swagger and boastfulness running through the whole of the speeches. The extract which was given in the *British Weekly* this week is a very remarkable product as an illustration of the spirit we have to fight. It is the Kaiser's speech to his soldiers on the way to the front:

'Remember that the German people are the chosen of God. On me, the German Emperor, the Spirit of God has descended. I am His sword, His weapon and His Vicegerent. Woe to the disobedient, and death to cowards and unbelievers.'

"Lunacy is always distressing, but sometimes it is dangerous; and when you get it manifested in the head of the State, and it has become the policy of a great Empire, it is about time that it should be ruthlessly put away. I do not believe he meant all these speeches; it was simply the martial straddle he had acquired. But there were men around him who meant every word of them. This was their religion. Treaties? They tangle the feet of Germany in her

advance. Cut them with the sword! Little nations? They hinder the advance of Germany. Trample them in the mire under the German heel. The Russian Slav? He challenges the supremacy of Germany in Europe. Hurl your legions at him and massacre him! Britain? She is a constant menace to the predominance of Germany in the world. Wrest the trident out of her hand. Christianity? Sickly sentimentalism about sacrifice for others! Poor pap for German digestion! We will have a new diet. We will force it upon the world. It will be in Germany the diet of blood and iron. What remains? Treaties have gone. The honour of nations has gone. Liberty has gone. What is left? Germany. Germany is left! 'Deutschland uber Alles!' . . .

"I envy you young people your opportunity. They have put up the age limit for the Army, but I am sorry to say I have marched a good many years even beyond that. It is a great opportunity, an opportunity that only comes once in many centuries to the children of men. For most generations sacrifice comes in drab and weariness of spirit. It comes to you to-day, and it comes to-day to us all, in the form of the glow and thrill of a great movement for liberty, that impels millions throughout Europe to the same noble end.

"It is a great war for the emancipation of Europe from the thralldom of a military caste which has thrown its shadows upon two generations of men, and is now plunging the world into a welter of bloodshed and death. Some have already given their lives. There are some who have given more than their lives; they have given the lives of those who are dear to them. I honour their courage, and may God be their comfort and their strength. But their reward is at hand; those who have fallen have died consecrated deaths. They have taken their part in the making of a new Europe—a new

world. I can see signs of its coming in the glare of the battle-field.

"The people will gain more by this struggle in all lands than they comprehend at the present moment. It is true they will be free of the greatest menace to their freedom. That is not all. There is something infinitely greater and more enduring which is emerging already out of this great conflict—a new patriotism, richer, nobler and more exalted than the old.

"I see amongst all classes, high and low, shedding themselves of selfishness, a new recognition that the honour of the country does not depend merely on the maintenance of its glory in the stricken field, but also in protecting its homes from distress. It is bringing a new outlook for all classes. The great flood of luxury and sloth which had submerged the land is receding, and a new Britain is appearing. We can see for the first time the fundamental things that matter in life, and that have been obscured from our vision by the tropical growth of prosperity.

"May I tell you in a simple parable what I think this War is doing for us? I know a valley in North Wales, between the mountains and the sea. It is a beautiful valley, snug, comfortable, sheltered by the mountains from all the bitter blasts. But it is very enervating, and I remember how the boys were in the habit of climbing the hill above the village to have a glimpse of the great mountains in the distance, and to be stimulated and freshened by the breezes which came from the hilltops, and by the great spectacle of their grandeur.

"We have been living in a sheltered valley for generations. We have been too comfortable and too indulgent—many, perhaps, too selfish—and the stern hand of fate has scourged us to an elevation where we can see the great everlasting

things that matter for a nation—the great peaks we had forgotten, of Honour, Duty, Patriotism, and, clad in glittering white, the great pinnacle of Sacrifice pointing like a rugged finger to Heaven. We shall descend into the valleys again; but as long as the men and women of this generation last, they will carry in their hearts the image of those great mountain peaks whose foundations are not shaken, though Europe rock and sway in the convulsions of a great War."

This may serve as an example of Lloyd George's War speeches. The others, and there were many of them, although they may have differed in details concerned with the practical questions of carrying on a successful struggle, never altered in tone or spirit. In this chapter, because of his fame as a speaker, the oratory of Lloyd George has been laid under heavy tribute; we may fittingly conclude with one of his post-war speeches, in which he is seen facing the perplexities of peace-making in a calm and less rhetorical manner.

The speech was made at Genoa in the Spring of 1922.

"This is the greatest gathering of European nations which has ever been assembled in this Continent, and having regard to the magnitude of the assembly, the character of its representation, the importance of the topics we are here to discuss, the results of the conference will be far-reaching in their effects, either for better or for worse, upon the destiny not merely of Europe, but of the whole world.

"We meet on equal terms provided we accept equal conditions. We are not here as belligerents and neutrals. We have not come together as Monarchists or Republicans or Sovietists. We are assembled as representatives of all the nations and peoples of Europe to seek out in common the best methods for restoring the shattered prosperity

of this Continent, so that we may each build up in his own land, each in his own way, a better condition of things for our people than the world has yet enjoyed.

"But if we meet on terms of equality it must be because we accept equal conditions. These conditions the inviting Powers laid down at Cannes. They apply to all alike. They are the conditions which hitherto have been accepted by all civilised communities as the basis of international good faith. They are in themselves honourable. They are essential to any intercourse between nations. They do not derogate from the complete sovereignty of States. We fully accept them ourselves. They are the only conditions upon which we can consent to deal with others.

"I will summarise them in two or three sentences. The first is that when a country enters into contractual obligations with another country or its nationals for value received, that contract cannot be repudiated whenever a country changes its Government without returning the value. The second is that no country can wage war on the institutions of another. The third is that one nation shall not engage in aggressive operations against the territory of another. The fourth is that the nationals of one country shall be entitled to impartial justice in the courts of another.

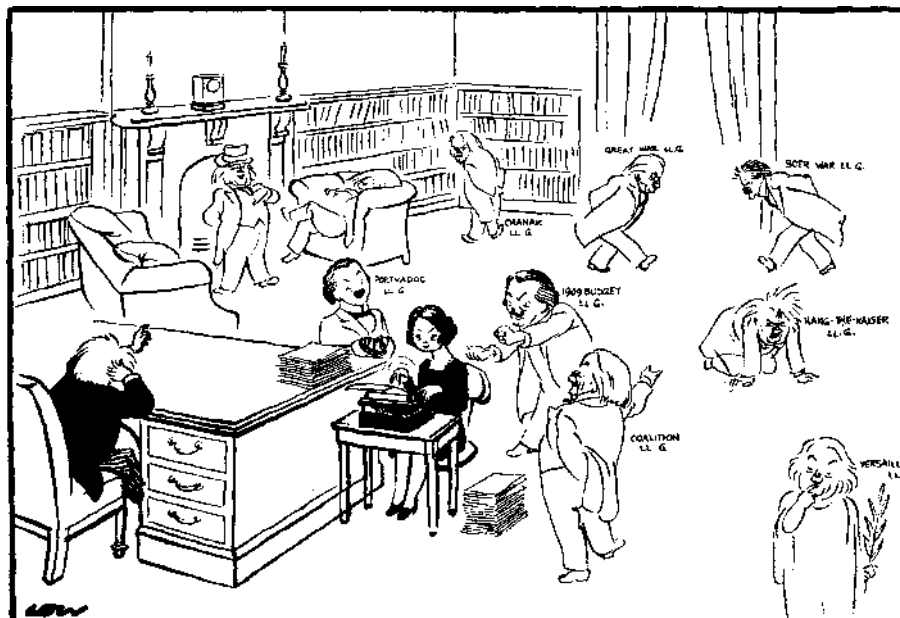
"If any people reject these elementary conditions of civilised intercourse between nations, they cannot be expected to be received into the comity of nations. These conditions were laid down at Cannes. They were incorporated in the invitation to this conference. They are the fundamental basis of its proceedings, and all those who accepted the invitation must be presumed to have accepted the conditions, and I have every reason to believe that that is the view which every nation represented at this assembly is prepared to adhere to in the letter and in the spirit.

"Mr. Resident, you have set out in forceful language the object of this conference. Europe undoubtedly needs a common effort to repair the devastation wrought by the most destructive War ever waged in this world. That War came to an end over three years ago. Europe, exhausted with its fury, with the loss of blood and treasure which it involved, is staggering under the colossal burdens of debt and reparation which it entailed. The pulse of commerce is beating feebly and wildly.

"In some lands an artificial activity is stimulated either by demands for repairing the ravages of war or by generations of thrift by the frugal and industrious amongst the people. But legitimate trade, commerce and industry are everywhere disorganised and depressed. There is unemployment in the West; there is famine and pestilence in the East. Peoples of all races, of all classes, are suffering, some more and some less, but all are suffering, and unless some common effort of all the nations of Europe is made, and made immediately, to restore European efficiency, I can see symptoms, not merely that the suffering will continue but that it may even deepen into despair.

"What is the need of Europe? Peace—a real peace. We propose to study currency—good. We propose to examine the question of exchanges; that is also good. We propose to discuss transport and credit; that is all good. But unless peace is established and goodwill amongst the nations, all these discussions will be of no avail. On the other hand, if a real peace is the issue of this conference all those things will be added unto you.

"But there is no peace in Europe. It is true that actual fighting has ceased; but the snarling goes on; and, as there are many dogs in every country who imagine the louder they bark the deeper the impression they make of



[By courtesy of the " Evening Standard "

THE LLOYD GEORGE FAMILY DICTATE THEIR MEMOIRS

their ferocity and determination, Europe is deafened with this canine clamour. It is undignified; it is distracting; it destroys confidence; it rattles the nerves of a nerve-ruined continent; and we shall only make a real contribution to the restoration of Europe if at this conference we can stop the snarling; Europe needs rest, quiet, tranquillity; that is, it needs peace.

"If we act together in the same spirit we shall succeed—not in the spirit of a greedy vigilance over selfish interests, but with a common desire to do the best to restore the world to its normal condition of health and vigour. We shall do so if we measure the success of the conference by the good we achieve, and not by the good we prevent. We must not roll boulders in the front of the ploughs. Let us think more of what we can accomplish than of what we can restrict. We have all of us one common restriction in the public opinion of our own countries. The public opinion of one country is concentrated perhaps more upon a different object. That undoubtedly creates difficulties. It is not easy to reconcile these diverging opinions, even when they are not conflicting.

"But public opinion is not a rigid fact like the Alps or the Apennines. It is amenable to guidance, to direction, and to the appeal of reason and of conscience, and I feel confident that in every way it will yield a good deal to an appeal made to its mind and heart by the common statesmanship of Europe. It can be taught that the good of another country is not necessarily an evil for its own one; on the contrary, that what benefits all lands must necessarily be the best for its own.

"The world is one economic unit. Economically, it is not even two hemispheres; it is one round unbroken sphere. For that reason I regret that the great American Republic

is not represented here. However, much that has happened and is happening in Europe makes them cautious of interfering in our affairs. But if we can set these things right at this conference, I feel sure that America will not merely come in, but come in gladly.

"A distinguished citizen of this city once upon a time discovered America, and, as Genoa in the past discovered America to Europe, I am hopeful that Genoa will once more render another immortal service to humanity by rediscovering Europe to America. There are thirty-four nations represented at this table, and the interest taken in the conference by the world is by no means exhausted by that representation. The Press of practically the world is represented. They would not be here if the great publics which, according to their genius, they either fortify and instruct or alarm and chasten were not deeply concerned in our proceedings and anxious as to the results. The world will follow our deliberations with alternate hopes and fears.

"If we fail there will be a sense of despair which will sweep over the whole world. If we succeed a ray of confidence will illuminate the gloom which is resting on the spirit of mankind. Europe is the cradle of a great civilisation, which, during the last five hundred years has spread across the globe. That civilisation has been menaced with destruction by the horrors of the last few years; but if we do our duty manfully and fearlessly, we shall prove that this conference, meeting as it does in the sacred week of that civilisation, is capable of achieving its exalted purpose by establishing on a firm basis, peace and good-will amongst men."

CHAPTER VIII

THE JOURNALIST

LLOYD GEORGE began his career as a regular journalist in 1922. Up to that time he had been in office, and therefore was not able to write on political subjects. Beginning his career at so late a date, it is natural that there should be a great similarity between his writings and his speeches. Actually, if one compares the printed records of his speeches with his articles the resemblance between the two is very striking. One might take up any article and, reading it over, imagine that one were listening to him from the auditorium at some political gathering.

The chief characteristic of his writing as of his speaking is at once the homeliness and vividness of his metaphors and his similes. He thereby impresses on the memory what he has to say. He coins the telling phrase, and although at times his metaphors are a little confused and perhaps a little extravagant, nevertheless fewer writers can impress the memory more readily. An examination of his writing reveals also a power to analyse a situation, a power of keen observation, and a love of dramatic turns of phrase. Strangely enough, although a gifted journalist, he is said to have been a bad correspondent. One biographer records of him:—

"He is an adept at phrases, and yet all through his life he has hated writing. There is a tradition among some of

his friends that even in his less busy periods, if you wanted to get a reply from him on any topic you had to send him two postcards addressed to yourself on one of which was written 'Yes,' and on the other, 'No.' This, it was said, was the only way you could make sure of a prompt response, or indeed of any response at all."

The earliest of his articles were contributed to the *Daily Chronicle*, and were published simultaneously in other papers. He wrote almost uninterruptedly for the *Daily Chronicle*, of which he was at the time the principal proprietor, from 1922 to 1924. His very first article was a review of the election, in which he analyses the Conservative majority and points out the unfair proportion between the number of votes and the number of seats gained to the Liberal Party thereby. Nevertheless he cannot, as ever, fail to end on an optimistic note.

"There was a great volume of popular sentiment behind our group. I visited Britain, north, south, east and west, and I have never witnessed such enthusiasm. . . . We have now for the first time full opportunity for placing our case and point of view before the country and organising support for them. It is our duty to do so."

This might easily have been the peroration of a speech. The orator's style is unmistakable.

The value of these articles lies in the fact that they are the written records of first-hand information about the European situation, during and after the War, by a man who was uniquely placed to write of them. The points which he makes are chiefly about reparations, the attitude of France to Germany, the question of the Ruhr, and the position of America both during and after negotiations for peace.

An example of the impression made upon him in France which confirms his attitude towards the Franco-German relationship is revealed in the following:

"You cannot talk long to a Frenchman without realising how this spectre of German childhood haunts France and intimidates her judgment. These children, it is said, are nourished on vengeance, and one day the struggle will be resumed, and France has no natural defence against the avenging horde that are now playing on German streets and with the hum of whose voices German kindergartens resound."

The irony of this reference to France's fear of Germany's growing population is unmistakable. He is constantly correcting false impressions by events that happened at the conference. He is never weary of warning his readers against the horrors of war. "The march of science is inexorable, and wherever it goes it is at the bidding of men, whether to build or to destroy it."

He is anxious to let us know what he feels should be America's attitude to the War. "There are now graves not far from the Rhine wherein lies the dust of men who less than six years ago came from the banks of the Mississippi with their faces towards the Rhine."

His earliest essays into journalism at the very outset of his political career were thumb-nail sketches of his parliamentary contemporaries. With the passing of time, his power of description has lost none of its keenness. His article of December, 1922, describing the signing of the Irish Treaty contained portraits of the Irishmen who came over to Downing Street.

That of Erskine Childers, the one man who bitterly opposed the Treaty, is interesting. "Outside the lobby sat a man who had used all the resources of an ingenious

and well-trained mind, backed by a tenacious will to wreck **every** endeavour to reach an agreement. Mr. Erskine Childers, **a** man whose slight figure, whose kindly, refined **and** intellectual countenance, whose calm and courteous demeanour offered no clue to the fierce passions which raged inside his breast. At every point in the negotiations he played **a** sinister part. He was clearly Mr. De Valera's emissary, and faithfully did he fulfil the trust reposed in him by that visionary."

That is a good passage, but Mr. Lloyd George, the orator, cannot always restrain himself as he reaches the climax. "Truly the path of Irish freedom, right up to the goal, is paved with tragedy. But the bloodstained wilderness is almost through and the verdant plains of freedom are before the eyes of this tortured nation. Ireland will soon honour the name of the Green Isle, and I am proud to have had a hand in creating the pillar which will for ever mark the boundary between the squalor of the past and the hope of the future."

He also uses his pen in his own defence. He is accused of a want of friendliness to France, because he opposes her on the Rhine boundary question. "In conclusion, I should like to add that to denounce me as an enemy of France because I disagree with the international policy of its present rulers is a petulant absurdity. During the War I twice risked my Premiership in the effort to place the British army under the supreme command of a French General."

He can describe picturesquely, if a little extravagantly, the state of the nations during the years following the War. "The tarantella was still in their blood. The mad war dance was still quivering in their limbs, and they could not rest. The crackle of musketry was incessant and made

needful repose impossible. There was not a country in Europe or Asia whose troops were not firing shots in anger at some external or internal foe. America rang down the fire curtain until this hysterical frenzy had burnt itself out. Was she right? It is too early to give the answer."

One sometimes sees in the surcharged phrases of his journalism a similarity to the Irish bull. He writes and thinks so fast that he is forced to condense ideas without distinction.

"Where does peace stand? The weary angel is still on the wing, for the waters have not yet subsided. She may perhaps find a foothold in the great West and Britain is fairly safe—not yet Ireland."

He is never tired of attacking the militarists. "The economic recovery of Europe is seriously retarded by the cost of the new militarism. The old continent is with both hands throwing to the dogs of war the bread that should feed its children. • One day those dogs will, in their arrogant savagery, turn upon the children and rend them."

He is constantly calling for the return of America to the Tribunal arbitrating on reparations. He very astutely points out, "The real trouble is not in solving the problem itself, but in satisfying the public opinion which surrounds it." Germany, he insists, must not be overstrained to pay. He regrets that the Tribunal as then constituted under French influence must almost of necessity be biased. "Now the only disinterested party has retired from the Tribunal. The most interested party is in the chair, with a casting vote on certain questions. This is not the Treaty signed by Germany."

The methods employed by France to obtain reparations are stigmatised strongly, if a little strangely. In an article

in the *Daily Chronicle* for January 20th, 1923, entitled, "Digging out Coal by Bayonets," he writes: "France has once more jumped on the prostrate form of Germany, and the sabots have come down with a thud that will sicken the heart of multitudes on both sides of the Atlantic, whose friendship for France stood the losses and griefs of a four years' War, . . . As long as reparation coal is dug by bayonets, and reparation timber is cut down by swords, it is idle to talk of restoring the mark by putting German finance in order."

Recalling the financial panic at the beginning of the War, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he points out how the good name of Britain saved the financial situation. There was nothing but a bundle of flimsy papers signed by men, most of whose names were unknown to the bankers.

"There was one signature, however, on each paper which was known to bankers, and carried with it the good name of Britain throughout the world; it was that of some well-known British firm. Traders in far distant lands parted with their produce on the credit of that signature and of the country with which it was associated."

He cannot for long leave untouched the situation in the Ruhr. He insists that it is unpopular in France. "Driving through the villages in agricultural France you find yourself asking 'Where are the young men?' The answer invariably comes, 'This village suffered severely in the War.' You will receive the same answer in the next village and the next. We cannot wonder, therefore, that bye-elections in rural as well as in urban France display an unmistakable weariness of plans which involve the marching of armed Frenchmen into hostile territory."

He remembers a little wistfully, for in it he had such faith, the conference at Cannes. He still believes that it could have been a success.

"Neglected opportunities litter the path of this troublesome question. There were the Cannes conversations broken off just as they were reaching fruition. Had they been continued another week they would have ended in a helpful settlement which would have brought reparation to France, confidence to Germany and peace to Europe."

He follows up this statement with a characteristic metaphor. "They struck on one of the many sunken reefs which bestrew the French political seas, and it will not surprise me to find that the whole cargo of reparations disappeared then beyond salvage into the deep with these shipwrecked negotiations."

Writing in March, 1923, of the danger of embittering the German workman, he warns the Frenchman out of his own experience. "The miners and engineers in all countries are proverbially independent. They take no orders even from their own Governments. During the War they had to be reasoned with before they could be persuaded to take a course urged upon them by the Government of the day in the interests of the country."

France, he tells us, is going deeper into the quicksands in her militarist dream. The situation is now a puzzle. The French are in the Ruhr and nobody knows the terms on which the French army is to evacuate that territory. Poincare has forgotten. He is just waiting for something to happen. "Most human tragedy is fortuitous," he ominously predicts. For a time he leaves the French question and deals with affairs at home. In May, 1923, he writes on Prohibition.

It is an inconclusive article, not at all in the traditional manner that one might have expected from the one-time temperance advocate. The opening paragraph, however, is a fair summary of the contrast between the American and the English attitude towards Prohibition.

"America treats Prohibition as one of its greatest moral triumphs. Britain treats it as a joke."

In June, 1923, he tells us that the Soviet has come to stay in Russia. During the peace negotiations and the discussions on reparations he made it clear that he was convinced of this. He now repeats the statement. "The sooner we have the courage to recognise this fact the sooner will real peace be established."

It strikes him as strange that so few people have, after all the trouble that has been taken, had the interest to read the Versailles Treaty. "I have recently had special opportunities for appreciating the extent to which the Treaty of Versailles has not been read by those who have formed very definite opinions concerning it. There is no justification for failure to peruse this great international document."

In July, 1923, there appeared one of his most flamboyant, or, as some would call it, forcible, articles. It is a declamatory and dramatic outburst in support of the Zionist settlers in Palestine. In his enthusiasm his pen appears at times to run away with him.

"Of all the bigotries that savage human temper, there is none so stupid as the anti-Semitic. It has no basis in reason, it is not rooted in faith, it aspires to no ideal; it is just one of those dank, unwholesome weeds that grow in the morass of racial hatred.

"Through the centuries, in every land, whatever he does or intends, or fails to do, he has been pursued by the echo

of the brutal cry of the rabble of Jerusalem against the greatest of all Jews—Crucify Him!"

Without much attention to the historical and geographical facts of the past, he adds, "The land flowing with milk and honey is now largely a stony and unsightly desert." He ends with a typical peroration. "Is it too much to ask that those amongst them whose sufferings are the worst shall be able to find refuge in the land of their fathers, made holy by the splendour of their genius, by the loftiness of their thoughts, by the consecration of their lives, and by the inspiration of their message to mankind?"

He is not so kindly disposed towards the Turk, of whom he writes in July, 1923. "The Turk may be a bad ruler, but he is the prince of anglers, the cunning and patience with which he lands the most refractory fish, once he has hooked it, is beyond compare."

In the same article he tells us, with a flash of humour that is not so common in his writings as in his speeches, that the history of the Levant and possibly of other countries has been changed by a monkey's bite, the bite that killed King Alexander.

"That the history of the East, and probably of the West, should have been changed by the bite of a monkey is just another grimace of the comic spirit which bursts now and again into the pages of every great tragedy."

He waxes scornful over the discussions on debt between France and England. He calls it a pen and ink war, and writes cuttingly about it.

"When the exhausted British knights have been re-invigorated by French waters, they will once more charge full tilt at the French champion—at least they

will have made up their minds by then whether they will shiver another fountain pen against his blotting pad."

The attitude of Mussolini towards the Balkans calls from Lloyd George's pen a typical passage:

"The shores of the Mediterranean have from time immemorial been the scenes of eruptions and earthquakes, which generally break out without warning. Sometimes they are devastating in their effects, destroying life and property over wide areas, and on a vast scale. Sometimes they provide a brilliant spectacular display, terrifying in appearance but not causing much harm."

He is not wonder-struck by Mussolini, who to him is no original, but only the reproduction of a phenomenon that has already appeared in history. This calls from him one of the rare literary illusions to be found in his writing.

"Signor Mussolini would probably claim Caesar as his prototype, but Cromwell was the first great modern Fascist."

Here he quotes the well known passage from Carlyle's *Cromwell*, referring to Pride's Purge, as giving the whole substance of Fascism.

"There you have the whole attitude of the Fascist in this historical deed of the greatest modern example of the type—Oliver Cromwell—described sympathetically by the greatest exponent and advocate of the doctrine—Thomas Carlyle."

When, in December, the news came to him in Canada, of Mr. Baldwin's unexpected resignation, he writes in December, 1923, of Mr. Baldwin's action as something he fails to understand. He discusses the different effects of heights on various people. For him, high places have no terror. He cannot understand Mr. Baldwin.

"So ingrained in human nature is this dizzying effect of an altitude that the Devil, with his sinister knowledge of our weaknessess, on a famous occasion used this temptation as one of his three testing allurements. I can find no other explanation for Mr. Baldwin's mad leap into the abyss from the pinnacle of Premiership."

The biblical allusion is never far from Lloyd George's mind or from his pen. Often he has used it to make his most striking and dramatic effects.

In view of the recent happenings in China, it is interesting to recall his article of September 27th, 1924, entitled "China's Backward March." War was still raging, although on a smaller scale than before.

"The great conflagration burnt itself out six years ago, but ere the verdure has recoloured the whole of the blackened waste, forest fires have broken out in three continents, and the horizon is beginning to crimson with the blaze. In China, Morocco and Georgia fierce fighting is taking place."

His article is full of prophecy and sarcasm.

"Let us keep our eyes on China. She is a vast and incalculable country. Her possibilities are endless. Inside her immense territories dwell a population twice that of the whole American continent. They are as industrious, frugal, intelligent, courageous and honest a race as dwells on this globe. They are a people at once docile, enduring and fearless. A redoubtable combination of qualities in the hands of a master.

"They have suffered much in their relations with foreign powers, because they had the misfortune to have climbed that altitude of civilisation which despises trial by butchery before the rest of the world had reached the foothills of sanity in international quarrels.

"China is indeed becoming modernised. She is not only learning the lessons of the twentieth century from the West, she is unlearning the lessons of twenty centuries taught by the East.

"What a joke they are, and have been, for all men with a conventional sense of humour, and the greatest jest of all is their utter inability to understand that the only way for nations to settle disputes is to kill or get killed.

"Taking it all in all, the news from the East is promising. China is getting on. She is marching back at double-quick to civilisation. I wonder whether our children will be equally pleased when they find China has arrived at the destination to which between us we have lured and goaded her gentle people."

Of Morocco he writes as follows, "Spain is in real trouble in Morocco. She has the Riff Mountain Goat by the horns but can neither tame it nor let it go. Its butts are fierce, sudden, and occasionally staggering. The mountains do their best for the refractory animal. Mountains love rebels who fight for freedom, and they give them shelter and opportunity.

"Why is French Morocco comparatively quiet and prosperous whilst Spanish Morocco is a constant source of anxiety and bloodshed? It is because in the French sphere the bulk of the population live on fertile and acceptable plains, and are thus more easily dominated. The Spanish zone, on the other hand, is a tangle of mountains and defiles."

Ever since the end of the Coalition Government the chief preoccupation of Lloyd George has been to build up a strong Liberal Party. In his analysis of the election in November, 1924, he discusses the Liberal defeat.

"The Electors of Great Britain, the United States of America, Germany and Italy, turn to the Right—the French electors turn to the Left. But they all, without exception, swung in the direction where they thought tranquillity was, for the time being, most likely to be found. That is the present mood of the world, and having regard for the excitements and upheavals of the past ten years one ought not to be surprised at it.

"Up to the present faction has not frustrated unity, but it has prevented the (Liberal) Party from reaping its full benefits. That had much to do with the putting off until the battle was upon us of the reorganisation which was so essential to any Liberal revival.

"Liberal success at the next election depends on a sterilisation of these disintegrating and paralysing influences. If that is accomplished I look with confidence to a Liberal revival in Britain that will astonish the world/

Lloyd George, whether in speaking or writing, has never failed to see the success of the future, in spite of the failure of the present. How far, one wonders, is that a true reflection of his own mentality? This optimism is apparent whenever it is a question of his own undertaking. He is never afraid to paint the future of other schemes in gloomy colours. In this strain he writes of the Egyptian crisis.

"We must not be deluded by appearances into the belief that the Egyptian crisis is at an end."

He warns those concerned that they must approach the situation in Egypt with an understanding of racial and national ardour. He writes from his experience of the Irish question, and reveals what sentiment prompted his actions in 1921.

"When you are confronted with a deep national sentiment it will find the ways and means for expressing its

resistance. An Arab rebellion is no longer possible. But our Irish experience shows that there are available other methods of protest which are more embarrassing, less easily tracked down, and which cost more in money and prestige to the occupying power."

Writing at the end of 1924, he sees no hope for relief from the difficulties of the time. He opens with a paragraph that is typical of his descriptive power, and unusually gloomy for him.

"The deepest impression left on my mind by 1924 is of a world once more reconciled to drab. The iridescent colours of a new hope flung on the sky by the Great War, after becoming year by year fainter and more mildewed with the unfavourable weather that followed the Peace, seem finally to have faded away altogether during this year, and a dull grey hangs over the earth."

This depressing article was his first contribution to the columns of the *Sunday News*, after the sale of the *Daily Chronicle* had been negotiated. It is rare to find him so depressed, and he concludes his article once again with some suggestion of hope. Even now the depression is only temporary.

"For the time being disillusionment is the prevalent feeling among all classes and in all lands. There is a temporary collapse everywhere of the desire to struggle upward. The Turks of Angora and the Riffs of the Atlas Mountains seem to be alone in thinking that there is anything left which is worth fighting for. This mood will not last long, but as long as it does last politics will be the least exciting of all pursuits. I hear that at the Dundee election well-known ex-Cabinet Ministers from the late Government could not attract more than a handful to listen to their political expositions. The electorate are



THE JOURNALIST AT WORK

satiated and weary," to want a little repose so as to think over what has happened. Two or three years hence they will have recovered their interest, and the future of mankind will depend on the conclusions they have come to during the period of half-conscious cerebration which they are passing through. Meanwhile they have taken refuge in the drab."

He expresses early in 1925 his point of view about our debt to America and our right to payment by the Allies. He disapproves, strongly, of the settlement reached by Mr. Baldwin. "There was a time when no French Government dare put forward such proposals, but Mr. Baldwin's one-sided settlement with America has conveyed a general impression that the British Government, under his leadership, is capable of being bluffed into any terms.

"As to the French and Italian debts to Britain, there is not the slightest indication at present that anything will ever be paid."

An illuminating article on Democracy appeared in the *Sunday News* in January, 1925.

"Democracy must pull itself together if it is to survive this generation.

"The War, which was to make the world safe for Democracy, has led in two, if not three, great European countries, to a most serious challenge to democratic institutions. Friends of Democracy should keep a vigilant eye on events in Italy and Germany.

"The Democratic experiment is of recent birth. There may be doubtful precedents amongst the small States of antiquity. But the first purely democratic Government ever tried on a large scale—in the sense of conferring equal rights upon the whole adult population of a country to

choose their rulers and determine **their** laws—was **that** **of** the United States of America.

"Universal suffrage has only been established **there** within living memory, and even then it was by no means a complete application of the democratic principle. Men of a certain colour were, and still are, for the most part, given as little say in the formation of the laws they have to obey as the helots of the Athenian democracy. And it is only a few years since female citizens were allowed to participate at all in the making of Governments and Laws.

"In Britain adult suffrage is a matter of only seven years, and it is too early yet to come to any conclusion as to its working. On the Continent of Europe it has produced the worst confusion of tongues since the days of Babel. Germany has a score of parties competing for the smiles and favours of King Demos. If any country ever stood in need of unity and co-operation amongst its peoples, that country is Germany.

"The instability of Governments has been the besetting vice of European democracies and it will, if it continues, lead to the downfall of constitutional liberty."

He sees in the attitude of Mussolini a grave danger to Democracy.

"Signor Mussolini makes no concealment of his intention to govern by force and not by registered opinion. If the Italian electors return a Parliament which will carry out his behests, he is as ready to accept Parliamentary assistance as Charles I was on similar terms, but if they elect a Parliament which disagrees with him and opposes his desires and decisions, then he is as determined as Charles I was, in the face of the like opposition, to govern without Parliament. For outside critics the answer of

Charles was the pillory. Is Mussolini's reply any gentler?

"The real struggle of democracy, however, is coming in Germany and Italy.

"At the end of the eighteenth century the Battle of European liberty was fought out on the banks of the Rhine and on the plains of Lombardy. Reactionaries and Liberals in all lands watched the conflict then with anxious and expectant hearts. Ere it was over, they were all involved in it from sunrise to sunset, East and West, from the Ganges to the Mississippi. History may yet repeat itself in this twentieth century's trouble of the people of Europe to maintain the freedom which they have won through so much tribulation and suffering. I believe Democracy will get through its troubles in the end but it is idle to deny that it has in front of it dangers that will imperil its life."

The foregoing quotation has been given at some length because it is at once a good example both of Lloyd George's interpretation of history and his journalistic abilities. He continues to write in the *Sunday News* on problems of European politics. Germany is constantly in his mind. Wherever he goes the unfortunate state of Europe and the enormous changes brought about by the War, appear to haunt him. In these moods he writes well.

"What a changed old continent Europe has become since the War. This was brought home to my mind in a striking way by a visit to Madeira, of all places. During a short stay at the beautiful Paradise of the Atlantic I visited the villa where died the last of the Hapsburgs. The last occupant of one of the proudest thrones in Europe died in a bungalow placed at his disposal by a kindly Portuguese merchant, who never owed him fealty, and whose country was ranged with the great Alliance that shattered his army.

The whole building could have been placed inside one of the reception rooms of the ex-Emperor's old palaces, and there would still have been space for the dance. But he was too poor to rent a home even of this size, as he had to give up the modest apartment which he had occupied in an annexe of an English hotel for the same reason. The charity of his foes found him a shelter in which to die. He is buried in a small church dedicated to the Virgin of the Mount.

"Gazing upon his tomb, surrounded by a festoon woven from the ribbons attached to the wreaths placed on his bier by order of the surviving monarchs of Europe, regnant and exiled, I could not help dwelling sadly on one or two incidents where I had been brought into contact, more or less direct, with this unhappy young man, who had inherited a catastrophe which rushed him to a premature grave.

"The first was in 1917, Y/hen he sent a relative of his Empress, a young Prince who was domiciled in an Allied country, to suggest terms of peace, first to France and then to Great Britain. . . . Unfortunately for Austria, for Europe and the world, Germany came to hear of these whispered negotiations. Karl was young and inexperienced, and he had no statesman at his back strong enough to make a stand against German imperiousness.

"The next episode was an inevitable sequel to the first.

"It came at the end of October or the beginning of November, 1918. . . . A telegram was put in my hand signed 'Karl' asking me to use my influence, as head of the British Government, with the President of the Swiss Republic, to ensure a refuge for him in the mountains whence his ancestors had come many centuries ago.

It is passages of this kind that reveal to us Lloyd George's gift for sympathetic writing and the vividness of his power for telling a story. His use of superlatives apart, and that may be forgiven a man who all his life has been accustomed to drive home his points from the platform, there is an economy in this description of a situation or of a scene which reveals that his eye is swift to grasp the outlines of a situation. This quality has served him well, not only in journalism but in many a political tight corner.

Some day, perhaps, an interesting collection of aphorisms will be made from the writings of Lloyd George. There are sufficient of these to fill a large volume. "When nations talk War they walk into War .," is a fair sample of the type of phrase he can coin so readily.

Hitherto he had written mainly for English newspapers, but in 1926 he signed a contract to contribute a regular fortnightly article to the Hearst chain in America, the fee he received being believed to be the highest ever paid to a journalist.

His article on the General Strike of this year, which created so much trouble in the Liberal camp, appeared in the *New York American*, on Sunday, May 9th. It is such an excellent example of his best journalism, and has been subjected to so much unfair criticism, that it may be quoted at length here. It is, out of all his writings, the one nearest to the traditions of English essayists.

"Britain has the unenviable distinction of being the first victim of the long threatened General Strike. There have been sporadic attacks in other countries since the War. But they were like a one day feverish cold which passed away as rapidly as they came. But here the real thing has at last arrived. It is serious, determined, purposeful and well-organised.

"Britain is the real home of Trade Unionism. In this country it commands a more numerous, better disciplined and more efficiently equipped army than in any other land. Most of the workers who are engaged in the vital trades—all except agriculture and domestic service—are enrolled in 'one Union or another, and obey its orders up to and over the brink of hunger if necessary. Coal mining, transport of all kinds by sea and land, iron and steel and the metal industries, printing, textiles—all these industries essential to modern civilisation are run by Trade Union workmen.

"All the Unions have not yet been called out. But those who are engaged in the performance of services which are indispensable to the working of any industrial system under present conditions are now, standing idle at the word of command from the Trade Union Council.

"There is no train service for goods or passengers on any line of railway, main or branch, from Stornoway to Dover. You could play tennis to-day on the platform of any great terminal station in Britain. Factories and workshops are deserted, and millions of workers are making holiday in the streets of our industrial towns. Until the order comes from the Union headquarters that is how things will remain. A few fancy trains may be run here and there, but for all practical purposes the railways will remain eliminated out of the business, the convenience and comfort of the bulk of the people until this strike is countermanded. The complicated business of signalling and shunting cannot be learned and worked by an improvisation of enrolled amateurs—certainly not for months.

"The same observation applies to our sea transport. Britain is almost isolated from the outside world. The Continental service has been cut off. You can travel

neither from nor to our shores. Food distribution and hospital service are alone privileged. The nation is not to be allowed to work, but neither is it to be permitted to starve. St. Paul's famous behest is to be set at defiance: 'He who doth not work neither let him eat.' It is all as if you lived in a nightmare.

"It is difficult to realise, as you see the change around you, that you are awake. Men and women as they look out through the windows in the morning rub their eyes hard. As I look out of my window on the Chelsea Embankment I see the Thames rolling past as free from boat or barge as it was in the days of Julius Caesar, but the road is crowded with motors, vans, cycles, carts, all packed with men and women, making their way slowly towards shop or counting house in the East End of the town. Some of them it has already taken one hour to get so far; it will be another hour ere they reach their destination, and yet the whole journey does not exceed four or five miles.

"The judges are complaining that they cannot reach their Courts under two and a half hours. Most people of all classes are already finding that walking is more expeditious than motoring. And nothing has impressed me more in this pilgrimage than the shamle and shuffle which proclaim that most of these pedestrians are taking serious walking exercise for the first time in their lives. As you look at their laboured and swingless efforts you wonder whether trams, buses, trains, tubes, motors and lifts will not ultimately deprive civilised man of the use of his lower limbs altogether, and whether a General Strike now and again will not become a medical necessity to save the race, and will not at some future date be ordered, not by the Trades Union Congress, but by the British Medical Council or the Ministry of Health!

"So far the strike has been conducted with all due regard for order and law. There have been in the East End of London a few attacks on the improvised transport which is a substitute for trams and trains, and the police charged a mob engaged in wrecking these vehicles, but on the whole good temper is a prevalent characteristic of this unprecedented and arresting challenge.

"The novelty and the excitement of what they are experiencing constitute for most people a welcome break in the monotony of their lives of grey routine. The good weather, the crowded vehicles of joy riders, laughing along their road to business, the breakdown of caste and convention which you witness when the sumptuous limousine of some magnate is packed with typists, clerks, shop assistants and waitresses he has picked up from amongst the weary pilgrims—all this reminds one strangely of the first wild and exhilarating days of the Great War before the casualties arrived to sober and depress.

"How long will this extraordinary industrial upheaval last—how long will the good humour endure, and what will be the ultimate outcome and effect of it all? These are the questions asked by thoughtful men. Most people have not yet taken it seriously. I wish I could feel as confident about the speedy termination of this deplorable struggle as most of my countrymen seem to be."

His articles in the American Press have been by way of a commentary of European affairs interpreted to Americans by an expert. They have covered most of the ground of international affairs since the signing of Peace.

Some of the most interesting paragraphs are those which sum up his views of the departing year.

Of 1926 he writes; "Europe has buried 1926 with a



[Photo: London News Agency]

WITH DAME MARGA at AND MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE IN THE LIBRARY

melancholy dirge and is now greeting its successor with a swelling anthem of Hope. Hope which never had an altar or a shrine is now the favoured deity of European Chancelleries and Marts. The atmosphere is charged with the incense burnt in its groves. Never did a year begin with such outburst of optimism from the Urals to the Atlantic. America years ago cashed hope into confidence. Europe is still living on forecasts and horoscopes."

At the beginning of 1927 he is apprehensive for the future. "It is nine years since the last shot was fired on the Western Front and a war which cost the nations 200,000,000,000 dollars and 10,000,000 picked young lives came to an end. . . . The nations are all arming on the avowed assumption that some day or other the conflict will be renewed."

He sees 1928 as the year in which democracy will meet its supreme test, and his judgment on that year was expressed in a forcible phrase at the outset of 1929. "Democratic institutions in Europe are falling like green figs."

"From the international point of view 1928 has been a chequered and discouraging year. Depression in the neighbourhood of Geneva, owing to repeated failures to make any progress in the disarmament, has spread over Europe and extended even to America. The relations between some of the greatest nations have been cloudy and chilly."

At the end of 1929 he says that the events of this year "will demand an important chapter when the history of the first decade of the post-war history comes to be written."

He attributes this to the fact that events of an international importance have taken place in Europe, culminating in President Hoover's speeches on Glsarmament. But 1930 is back in the doldrums of depression.

"Europe will part company with 1930 with the same satisfaction as one says adieu to a sulky and disagreeable travelling companion."

Lloyd George has always been an ardent Nonconformist and we may close these journalistic impressions with a quotation from an article on Religion which appeared in June, 1928. He sees in religion to-day as interpreted by the majority, an attempt to get back to a simpler Christian revival. There is not much interest in religion. "Petrol has declared war on the Pulpit and for the moment it is winning.

"Side by side with this wilting of churchdom there is a striking revival of interest in all that concerns the Founder of Christianity and the mysteries of the hereafter.

"It means that the post-War generation are rebelling against the involutions and subtleties of doctrine; that they have ceased to be awed or attracted by pomp of ritual and that they are harking back to the simple and human appeal of the great Teacher."

CHAPTER IX

THE MAN

IT has been said that man is by nature a political animal; certainly Lloyd George properly fulfils this definition. The history, technique and practice of politics are a constant preoccupation with him, and no topic unconnected with them can for long hold his interest. It is probably this capacity for single-minded absorption in one subject that is the chief cause of his great success in life, and it is certain that his long experience and continual pondering of political problems have given him that instinctive judgment and foresight which make him so formidable an adversary.

A good example of this has been provided in the last few months. When the first National Government was formed in August, 1931, Lloyd George was on his sick bed, slowly recovering from a very serious internal operation. There is, however, no doubt that he was fully prepared to give his support and the support of the Liberal Party to a temporary all-party administration created for the sole purpose of dealing with a particular emergency.

What followed is familiar to everybody.

The temporary all-party administration, depending for its support on a House of Commons in which no party had a clear majority, was rapidly driven by Tory intrigue and newspaper pressure into a panic coupon election. The

large majority of the Liberal Party, both at Westminster and in the constituencies, was led away by specious pleas for national unity, and tricked into sacrificing both its independence of action and its integrity of principle to make a Tory holiday.

Almost alone, Lloyd George, now convalescent at Churt, protested against this peculiarly unscrupulous ramp, and pointed out the danger of an overwhelming Conservative majority being returned to the new House of Commons in a moment of unthinking panic. Almost alone, he perceived and declared that such an outcome would be a national disaster, weakening the true cause of national unity and committing the country to a system of tariffs which it would be difficult, if not impossible, ever to repeal, and which could not but retard the revival of world trade. The Press treated his remarks as the wanderings of a mind diseased. When polling day came the four million Liberal voters trooped like sheep to the slaughter to record their votes for the Tory candidates who represented in reality all that they most disliked. Radicalism was wiped out in a night, and the most reactionary House of Commons for a generation promptly set to work to carry out, with scarcely a pretence of national government, the programme which the Conservatives had always cherished.

Only now, many months after the event, are Liberals beginning to see the wisdom of their leader's counsel, and to wish that they, too, had been gifted with the sagacity to foresee the consequences of their own actions.

It would be interesting to speculate as to what is the chief reason for Lloyd George's devotion to politics. His nationality and heredity must have had something to do with it, like all small and race-conscious nations, the Welsh have always been politically minded.

His gifts, particularly his eloquence, gave him outstanding fitness for political life in a democratic age. But most of all, I believe it is the expression of a character that would command success in any profession. To Lloyd George his job is the supremely interesting thing in life, and the thing to which he likes to devote all his thought. If he had become an engineer, he would, I suspect, have been a monomaniac on the subject of bridges or locomotives.. As it was, chance made him a politician, and from the moment the first step was taken politics had, perforce, to be his ruling passion.

In this respect he represents much more the great leaders of the last century than his own contemporaries; Gladstone and Disraeli lived for their politics and were proud of it. Balfour, Asquith, Baldwin and MacDonald all in their way rejoiced to reveal the fact that they had many interests outside their profession. The contrast is even more striking if one compares Lloyd George with his most recent adversary, and one who in other respects curiously resembles him, Lord Beaverbrook. In their quickness of wit, their charm, their early experience of adversity, their love of show and their delight in power, they are strongly alike. But one dissipates his energy and ability on a dozen different activities and so achieves supreme success in none; the other concentrates all his powers and all his interests into one channel and has, in his own chosen field, the greatest field of all, reached a position incomparable in the whole world.

Yet, this fundamental preoccupation with one subject does not result in a limited field of conversation. Rather his talk and thought range widely, ever searching for fresh fuel to feed the furnace of his passion. He is intensely interested in all that goes on around him, and in each fresh

person that he meets, but his interest evaporates immediately he senses that his companion is likely to hinder or prove a burden to him on whatever course he is at the time embarked. Not greatly concerned with psychological niceties in the individual mind, he has an uncanny perception of the mood of a group. It has been well said of him that he has more sympathy with mankind in the general and less in the particular than any man alive.

With individuals his judgment is frequently coloured by immediate events. He may bestow high praise on a man one day, and by the next, a hostile speech in the House of Commons or news of some suspected disloyalty or intrigue may have completely reversed his opinion.

His circle of acquaintance is, of course, immense, and ranges from obscure friends of his early days to almost every statesman, financier and publicist of importance. His attitude to all is the same—if they have something of interest or amusement to give him, they are cordially welcomed—if they thwart him they are cold-shouldered. No other criterion is admitted, and in consequence he is perhaps the least snobbish man alive.

At different times he has been on very intimate terms with most of those who have subsequently become his bitterest opponents. During the War, Beaverbrook and Winston Churchill were constantly in his company; now he seldom sees either of them, though he retains a humorous affection for both. I remember on one occasion at the height of the Empire Free Trade agitation, a visitor at Churt began to vilify Beaverbrook and to accuse him of insincerity. Lloyd George interrupted the attack, and told at length the story of Bonar Law's death and of the splendid devotion which his friend showed him throughout a terribly distressing last illness,

Amongst other things he mentioned the following incident as an example of Beaverbrook's imaginative tact.

Bonar Law, who was dying of cancer of the tongue, had always been fond of a small flutter in the City. One day, very near the end, he mentioned to his friend that he would like to have one more gamble, and that he fancied steel was due for a rise. Beaverbrook encouraged him to buy, and then proceeded himself to use the whole weight of his vast resources to support the market. Steel rose, and Bonar Law died happy in the belief that his own financial judgment had not deserted him. "A man who could act with such generosity and disinterestedness," said Lloyd George, "must have a very noble side to his character."

Much later Mr. Snowden became what might be called a very intimate acquaintance. Living not much more than a mile away, he and Mrs. Snowden used to dine at Churt almost every Sunday night.

The two men differed so fundamentally in character and temperament that there was never any real friendship between them, and it was rather their common devotion to politics and mutual respect for a worthy foe that drew them together, despite a thinly veiled and persistent rivalry.

One evening a number of young Welsh candidates were staying at Churt for the week-end. After dinner they were encouraged to sing folk-songs in Welsh, Lloyd George joining lustily in the choruses. Snowden sitting uncomfortably on a hard chair in a corner—he seldom uses an arm-chair because of his paralysed leg—stood it for almost half-an-hour. Suddenly he rose painfully to his feet and announced that now he would sing a real song. He hobbled to the piano; Mrs. Snowden took her place at the keys, and the Iron Chancellor proceeded to give a complete

rendering of that I famous—and protracted—Yorkshire anthem, "On Ilkley Moor 'baht hat."

This intimacy ended when Snowden proved obdurate in blocking the Liberal unemployment proposals by refusing finance, and since their illnesses the two men have scarcely met.

It is natural that one who has in the past taken the lead in great events, should wish from time to time to return to that past, and Lloyd George is no exception. He is seldom happier than when hobnobbing with some distinguished colleague or subordinate of the War years. It may be some General or Admiral, a high up civil servant, one of the "business" ministers like Sir Eric Geddes, or a knowledgeable journalist. Hour after hour they will sit recalling old battles and disputes, correcting each other's memories, and poking malicious fun at almost forgotten failures and obstructionists. To a young man who was still at school during those epic days, such conversations recreate the war atmosphere more vividly than a hundred novels or plays. And it is one of Lloyd George's most agreeable characteristics that he is almost invariably kind and encouraging to the young. Particularly during the last few years he has made a practice of inviting groups of young Liberal candidates to spend the week-end with him. There was never anything formal at these parties yet they served two very useful purposes; the leader was able to gain an idea of how the minds of his younger followers were moving, and the followers were able to temper their enthusiasm with a knowledge of political realities which only experience could provide.

Nearly always on such occasions Megan Lloyd George acted as hostess, Dame Margaret for reasons of health spending most of her time in Wales,

Of all his children—there are three others—Richard, who is a farmer; Lady Carey Evans, wife of a successful Harley Street specialist; and Gwillam, M.P. for Pembroke—Megan most resembles her father. Small, dark, extremely alert and vivacious, she has inherited much of the famous Lloyd George charm and passion for politics. She only took seriously to them as a profession about five years ago on her return from a long stay with Lord and Lady Reading in India. Since that time she has studied very conscientiously, and is now perhaps the best instructed member of the House of Commons of her age. When she started public speaking she was, like most good orators, intensely nervous; now, as a result of sheer hard work, she is a first-class platform performer. Her voice is pleasant and her imagery on occasion challenges comparison with her father's best. Her matter is prepared with the most diligent care, and before an important speech she will spend the best part of a week accumulating figures and arguments. Yet for all this she is no blue-stocking, and next to politics her principal pleasure is dancing. Unless she out-taxes her strength, and her health is none too robust, I prophesy that she will make a big position for herself during the next decade.

Lady Carey Evans, who is the wife of a busy doctor, lives in London. Fully occupied with her family—she has two small boys and two girls—she takes no active part in politics, although in any important contest she proves a valuable canvasser and chauffeuse.

In recent years Churt has become more and more the family centre. Criccieth has still the first place in the hearts of all the Lloyd Georges, but it is a long way from London and the house there is small and old-fashioned. For some years after the War Lloyd George tented Sir

Archibald Sinclairs house in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, as his London home, but in 1928 he bought the lease of one of the large houses on the east side of Addison Road. Architecturally undistinguished, it has the paramount advantage in its owner's mind of a large garden where he can grow vegetables and even fruit with great success. Two hundred yards down the road, on the opposite side, lives Sir John Simon, but in this case, it must be admitted, with regret, that physical propinquity has not been productive of political co-operation.

Bron-y-de, the Churt house, is an ideal retreat for a busy man. It lies at the foot of Hindhead, with lovely views over the Devil's Jumps and the pine and heather commons which cover that part of Surrey. London is less than fifty miles away, and Farnham, with an excellent train service, only six, but the grounds themselves are as secluded as any in England. The house is a two-storey L-shaped building of red brick and is architecturally excellent. On three sides there are open loggias, so that one can sit in the sun at any time of day. There is a hard tennis court and a narrow strip of flower garden and lawn, but most of the surroundings are left to their native heather. On one side the ground slopes steeply to a small lake which is supposed to contain trout, though they seem to be a particularly wary clan of fish. Inside, the house is simply but very comfortably furnished and full of light. The principal living-room is a long chamber with a barrel-shaped ceiling, large open fire, and windows on three sides. Its chief furniture seems to be a grand piano and a quantity of extremely comfortable sofas and armchairs. One wall is lined with books, and on the piano is a copy of the statue which Lord Rothermere set up at Finsbury to the memory of his son Vivian.

On Saturday nights a screen is put up at one end of this room and the whole party, together with the servants and sometimes a few neighbours, settles down in great comfort to enjoy a full length cinema programme. After Charlie Chaplin, Lloyd George's favourite fare is a full-blooded "Western"; but whatever the film he enters into its spirit with immense gusto, invariably prophesies what is going to happen next, and is almost as invariably wrong.

The whole house is full of books, and the range of subjects is surprising. It is frequently and very stupidly stated that Lloyd George is ill-read. Nothing could be further from the truth. He is and always has been a voracious reader, and one with a peculiarly retentive memory. In his early years he devoured nearly all the classics, he has a thorough knowledge of history, and has read all the great biographies, frequently quoting anecdotes from them in conversation. Novels on the whole he avoids, although in his recent illness, like many other great men, he nearly exhausted his friends and relatives by making them read endless detective stories to him.

I remember once when we were out walking a point of Byzantine history cropped up in conversation. Lloyd George declared that the speaker, a classical scholar, was wrong, and stuck to his view although the whole party disagreed with him. Directly we returned to the house, he went over to a bookcase, picked out the right volume of Gibbon, and in less than a minute had found the passage which completely vindicated him.

He reads every newspaper and most of the reviews with unfailing regularity, which is one reason for his almost superstitious belief in the power of the Press. There is

one custom, however, which he has not yet adopted but which obtains in Lord Beaverbrook's house—that of supplying each guest with a complete set of the morning papers at the same time as his morning tea!

The real joy of Churt, however, is not in the house but in the model farm which adjoins it. Lloyd George is perhaps prouder of this than of anything else he possesses. The soil, when he came there, was notoriously bad, just the usual dusty sand of the Surrey commons. Now, as a result of intensive cultivation and endless experiment with different artificial manures, it gives remarkable yields per acre of almost every crop. A good deal of the land is under fruit and vegetables—the apples are particularly good—but there are also sheep, cattle and pigs. Lloyd George is never tired of conducting people over his fields and showing off his farm buildings, particularly the piggeries, where there is one much treasured animal whom its owner considers to be the double of a leading politician on the opposite side.

An amusing example of how politics may help farming is provided by the fact that a field of broccoli did very well last year. Those who remember the Cornish speeches of Mr. Baldwin and the Liberal leader during the 1929 Election may be amused to hear that it was planted at Churt in the autumn of that year!

Love of the land is a genuine and deep-seated influence in his temperament, and it has clearly given him keen pleasure to be able thus to make a wilderness flourish. He has also set an example of land reclamation which may encourage others to attempt similar experiments elsewhere. But it must at the same time be admitted that the farm could not possibly pay on a commercial basis, and that no one without substantial means from other sources could afford to finance a *tour de force* of this kind.

Apart from his farm, his books and his conversation, Lloyd George requires no other distractions. He plays no games except an occasional round of golf, although he enjoys watching lawn-tennis. He does not shoot nor ride, and all the exercise he requires is obtained by walking. He probably covers at least five miles every day when he is in the country, and men of half his age have found it difficult to keep up with him and at the same time conduct their side of the conversation, when climbing a steep ploughed field.

Right up to his recent illness, his health was boisterous, and he seldom suffered from anything more severe than a cold in the head.

This is the more remarkable when it is remembered that on his first arrival at Westminster he looked so delicate that competent observers prophesied that he would never be able to stand the strain of political life.

He takes great care of himself, and leads a simple and abstemious life. Waking always soon after six in the morning, he reads the papers and generally takes a walk before breakfast. Whenever possible, he sleeps for an hour after lunch, and he likes to retire for the night before eleven. His capacity for sleep is remarkable, and he regards it as one of his greatest assets. During the 1924 election campaign he conducted a whirlwind tour of the constituencies, travelling by train and addressing the crowds at every station *en route*. An official who accompanied him on that occasion told me that after leaving each town he would ask how many minutes it was to the next stop. He would then go straight off to sleep, leaving instructions that he was to be woken one minute before the train arrived at the next station. There he would appear at the window of his carriage wide awake and perfectly self-possessed, deliver his speech and repeat the process as the train drew out.

There can be no doubt that this gift was of inestimable value to him in the War years when he had more anxieties and more work to do than any Premier has ever had before.

Throughout the early part of his life he was a rigid teetotaller and he is still a strong temperance advocate, but he now takes an occasional glass of champagne at dinner or of lager beer if he is thirsty after a walk. He never touches spirits.

A curious idiosyncrasy which he has retained since childhood is his liking for buttermilk. He has a tumbler of this beverage before every meal, and has a great belief in its health-giving properties. Megan has acquired the same habit, but mercifully guests in the house are not required to partake!

Apart from this, his chief weakness is a taste for large strong cigars, of which he smokes a considerable number every day. The food at Churt is simple but excellent, almost everything, including the bread, being home-made and home-grown.

Since his serious operation last autumn, Lloyd George has had, of course, to make certain changes in his habits, and it would be foolish to minimise the very grave nature of his illness. There is, however, this to be said. Although the operation, which he had to undergo is inevitably dangerous to a man of his age, it proved, in this case, completely successful.

Clemenceau had the same operation performed on him and lived to be again Prime Minister of France; in the opinion of some observers his character and mental capacities were never stronger than in the last few years of his life. The same may well prove to be true of Lloyd George.

Gladstone held office when he was over eighty, and no one who has followed the recent developments in politics

should be surprised to see Lloyd George once again at Downing Street.

He is reported to have said recently during his cruise to Ceylon that he did not propose to take any active part in this Parliament; that after the experience of 1924-1929 he realised the futility of opposing a powerful Conservative majority in the House of Commons. He has already shown by his recent speech at the Junior Liberal Club that this pessimistic view no longer holds him. Already there are signs of disunion in the ranks of the National Government's supporters. Already the mood of panic which swept the country at the last election is passing and the old Radical feeling of the electorate beginning again to assert itself.

Since the conversion of the Prime Minister to reaction, Lloyd George is the one outstanding Radical leader in active politics. It is inconceivable that he will not accept the opportunity thus thrust upon him. He is ideally fitted for the task.

The rebirth of Radicalism must come in the constituencies; the politics of Westminster are frozen for five years. It is in the country that the only effective opposition to the present Government can be developed, and it is in the country far more than in the House of Commons that Lloyd George excels as a leader and an orator.

The role of political prophet is most perilous, but if I had to forecast the future, I would say that within two years we shall see Lloyd George leading a great Radical crusade in the constituencies, supported by a Labour movement that has ceased to regard Socialism as a panacea and a Liberal Party that has recovered the ideals of its great days. I would see mass meetings held nightly in the great industrial centres and the little indomitable figure with snow-white locks once again swaying great

audiences with the spell of his voice. And more dimly I would discern a Very different Parliament meeting at Westminster four years hence and the little white-haired figure back in his old place on the Treasury bench.

But all this is mere guess work. We know the wonders which this man has worked in the past; we know something of his powers to-day; let us believe that when the time comes he will, as always before, prove equal to his destiny.

