

Tennyson wrote this poem to celebrate his death," or that "George Eliot's real name was Mary Ann. She did not believe in God, and wrote many novels to prove this." Not so, again, if he rebel against the realization that few of his pupils ever distinguish, in spite of his best efforts, between fact and opinion, and if he be horrified to discover in the examination-papers, that his heretical theses boldly nailed to the very door of the cathedral, are reported placidly as laws of the church. But if such things trouble him not? Then he not only moves of necessity in the very highest society, but it is his responsibility to fit himself for such association.

He stands always before kings; yet he may not be servile; he is false to his trust if he does not keep an open mind. He is a herald, but an interpreter also; and he moves from court to court rejoicing, admiring, and comparing. That is his business, which others must snatch moments to enjoy. Surely in the whole stage-full of parts which life offers to actors of an unadventurous disposition, only the artist, the creator, plays a rôle more wonderful and shining than that of the humble supernumerary, the teacher of literature.

JAMES WEBER LINN.

The Shaping of English Parties

IT is the general belief in England that the distant day when peace returns will plunge us all into intense political activity. Even Conservatives assume that we shall at once set to work to "reconstruct" everything from tariffs to agriculture. Socialists look forward to quasi-revolutionary change, and see "the men from the trenches" leading a victorious charge against all the wire-entanglements of privilege. I am not sure whether this prediction is better founded than the prophecy which led us all in the early weeks of the war to expect a time of poverty and hardship. The men from the trenches will think a return to their firesides in itself a social revolution. I see them pruning their roses and going back to cricket with a new zest, and many of them will have to start life afresh and build up their fortunes from the foundations. Men who have faced death and escaped may think they have made sacrifices enough for one lifetime to public duty, and Society, which has thought it a hardship to see racing reduced, will plunge headlong into gaiety. There may be a tendency for a time to leave politics to the professionals, and reconstruction to the bureaucrats.

This, however, is not the general expectation: the world expects change, and even the politician, who normally lives in the moment, is adjusting his mind to it. Few of us expect that parties will survive in their present shape, and most of us would be disappointed if the next House of Commons resembled the inert and exhausted chamber which keeps a sleepy vigil during war. It has just rejected proportional representation by a small majority, as though the enfranchisement of women were innovation enough for one Reform bill. In this decision the instinct of self-preservation of our traditional politics powerfully asserted itself. Proportionalism would have hastened the break-up of

the two-party system, lamed the power of the machine-politician, and fostered the formation of new independent groups.

Even in its truncated form, however, the Reform bill will do something to disturb our political habits. It doubles the electorate, by admitting women and simplifying the qualification for men, and this means that the intensive culture of the voter by electorate organization on which the old electioneer relied will become more difficult. The Labor party will gain through the reduction of the costs of election, and Liberalism will be a little less dependent than it was upon the rich candidate and the interested subscriber. Finally, the transferable vote will make it much easier for a third party to intrude with success between the two governing parties, and for independent groups to run a candidate against the caucus. It will achieve, much more simply, what the second ballot accomplishes on the Continent. Hitherto the gravest obstacle to a Labor candidate or to any independent, was that he could always be accused of "splitting the progressive vote" or "letting the Tory in." For want of the second ballot labor made its way in politics far more slowly than in continental countries, and the older parties kept up an artificial discipline. The choice of the voter will be less impeded in the next English election.

The new outlook for English parties turns mainly on the answers to two questions. Will Mr. Lloyd-George return to the Liberal party, and eventually lead it, or will he form an independent "National party" of his own? Will the Labor party patch up its present dissensions, or will its more active Socialist element secede and gather kindred radical elements to itself? The two questions are closely connected. If Mr. George does return to the Liberal front bench, the advanced

anti-imperialist radicals will be less disposed than ever to remain in the party. If, on the other hand, he sets up for himself, he will attract the more official Labor leaders into his new "National" group. For the moment Mr. George is a homeless figure, poised on a dizzy and isolated eminence. The Tory party seems to draw away from him. His satellites try, with no marked success, to heal his breach with official Liberalism. It does not visibly close. The sharp personal resentments persist under a decorous public truce. The Nation and the Daily News write of him with cold and wounding criticism. Nonconformity distrusts him, and the feeling of the younger working men in such industrial centers as the Clyde is one of implacable hostility. If he comes back, he will split Liberalism, and if he remains outside, he will also split it.

In neither event can Liberalism survive the war unchanged, but while the riddle of Mr. George is unsolved, its future escapes prediction. Under its present chiefs it is not visibly moving or adjusting itself. Since they left the Coalition, Mr. Asquith and his colleagues have effaced themselves. They have said nothing to contribute to an earlier end of the war by negotiation, nor even to advance the idea of internationalism after the war. How much of their free trade opinions they retain, in spite of their adoption of the Paris Resolutions, is a mystery, nor do they seem to be thinking out an industrial program. They are unemployed leaders, and the radicals who are thinking actively have no clue to their future conduct. The chances are on the whole that the Liberal front bench will in the end make terms with Mr. George, and adopt something of his "nationalism," which means that stress will be laid rather on Imperial Federation than on any international League of Nations, that in some form we shall adopt trading preferences though rather as subsidies than as a tariff, and that the inevitable extension of the activities in the state in all directions will be favorable to powerful agglomerations of capital, and will entail an immense extension of bureaucracy. That is not a natural policy for Liberalism, and if Liberalism has learnt no other lesson from the war, its fate will be to suffer secessions and decline. It will, of course, continue to profess its faith in the forms of political democracy. But this vast social mechanism, tending continually to closer organization, eludes the control of political democracy. Parliament has dropped the levers, and the voter is as helpless as his representative. It is within the economic system itself that democracy must contrive to establish its control.

The fate of the English Labor and Socialist party depends, I believe, on its ability to invent and

popularize a form of democratic control more penetrating and pervasive than any purely political machinery can provide. This party is more obviously impelled to reconstruction than Liberalism, and cannot postpone it much longer. Its present structure was the creation primarily of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and the Socialist wing, and it has disappointed their hopes. By federating the trade unions in a political party, they acquired numbers and funds. They expected to supply the ideas and the leadership. What happened in fact was that the trade unions invariably chose as their candidates for Parliament and as their spokesmen in the councils of the party, their own officials. These men, mostly elderly, usually overworked, are by training administrators rather than politicians. They have risen by their ability to conduct the business of the unions, which are benefit societies as well as industrial combinations. It is rare to find among them either education or magnetism or the ability to think politically. Before the war the Socialist leaders maintained a precarious ascendancy by reason of their better intellectual equipment, but the war has undone their work. Official labor has obtained offices and salaried posts, but it has ceased to be an independent force in politics. It broke away from its Socialist leaders, and without them it has dropped tamely into the wake of the government of the day. The trade-unionist basis of the English Labor party differentiated it sharply from the continental Socialist parties. It attracted few educated adherents, for they could rarely find a place in it for work and leadership, and its intellectual life and standing, alike in Parliament and the press, suffered in consequence.

It is probable that the active, conscious Socialist element will break away from this oddly constituted Labor party. Its pacifism made the original break, and the Russian Revolution came to it at a moment of dejection and helplessness with an immense stimulus. It began to hold mass meetings to celebrate the revolution. The immense success of these gatherings revealed to it the great volume of popular discontent, and everywhere crowds applauded the argument that our conditions call for quasi-revolutionary action. Out of these meetings sprang suddenly an improvised convention, drawn from all parts of the country, which met at Leeds and resolved to set up Workmen's Councils in the Russian model. The imitative aspect of this movement is a weakness. Its revolutionary language sometimes suggests a failure to perceive the difference of longitude between England and Russia. None the less it is organizing. It is thinking out a program. It has life, and ability and courage. It is the only vital stirring in our stifling wartime atmosphere.

This movement aims at an effect more permanent than its immediate task of popularizing the Russian conception of a democratic peace. Its leaders are thinking out a social program, and the effort has revealed the rapid evolution during war of socialistic thought. Before the war "guild socialism" was a heresy. To-day it is the manifest line of advance. The workers themselves have reached its position instinctively as a result of the experience of wartime. Their struggle during the war in the "controlled" munition and shipbuilding works ranged them less often against the private capitalist than against the bureaucracy. They felt the paralyzing despotism of an unqualified state socialism. Abandoned by their own orthodox labor leaders, who were either comfortably installed in official posts, or else, disarmed by the Defense of the Realm act which forbade strikes, they turned to their elected "shop-stewards" for leadership. It was easy for speculation to build upon this experience and to sketch a future structure for industry, in which, while the state may own the means of production, the producers themselves will form an autonomous guild, and control their own conditions of work. To the workers in the innumerable industries which the state has temporarily taken over during this war, Utopia readily shapes itself in this form. The Socialist leaders are themselves moving in this direction.

The great interest of guild socialism lies, however, in this, that it may serve as a bridge for the more open-minded of the younger Radicals. These men were rarely hostile to the ideal side of socialism. They had no obsolete illusions about the competitive system, and on every issue of the day they were ranged against capitalism. If, none the less, they remained Liberals, the reason was partly that there was no obvious place for them in the class-organization of the English Labor party, and partly that they dreaded the inelastic, mechanical bureaucratic organization of the socialist state. They, in their turn, are beginning to see in guild socialism means of reconciling the autonomy and initiative of the producer with the ownership of the whole community. It is conceivable that if the new Socialist movement, which made its start at the Leeds Convention, can elaborate a sober constructive policy, it may rally to itself a considerable body of Radicals and intellectuals. There will be at the least a favorable atmosphere for its proposals. It will be able to compel attention and secure discussion. The problem is no longer academic. The state actually controls most of our greater industries, railways, mines, breweries, metallurgical and chemical works. Whether control shall presently pass into ownership, and what the status of the actual producers shall then be, is the practical issue

of the day after tomorrow. The official Labor party has neither leaders nor ideas. The official Liberal party has leaders without ideas. A coalition between the Socialists from the former camp and the Radicals from the other is by no means impossible. There are in the logic and morals of our political situation unanswerable arguments for an insurgent movement. It is, however, precisely such reasons that an English inertia knows how to answer.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

At Flavigny

THE brigadier and I were standing on the stone bridge that strides across the Moselle with five flat-footed arches near the little village of Flavigny in Lorraine. The leaves of the forests had ripened from dull green to russet in the first fall frosts, and the golden fingers of sunset laid crowns upon the hilltops. The valley was peace itself. Even the gray blue of uniforms of stray groups of poilus seemed to melt into the evening mists that rose from the river. The division was resting at Flavigny after two red weeks near Verdun.

The brigadier is a man of fifty—a true French type, small, with a strong aquiline nose, and crisp brown beard and mustache. In civil life he had been an exporter of ivory and other African products, with a large business in Paris built up as a result of hard years spent in the Colonies. At the outbreak of the war he was living again in France with his family, happy in the prospect of spending the latter period of his life in the circumstances for which he had labored all through his youth. He could undoubtedly have found some soft administrative berth, but he chose the field and was made quartermaster of a motor section.

This man of big affairs could not have attended more faithfully to his duties had he held a cabinet position. Every morning at seven o'clock he cranked his camionette and travelled from camp to the nearest supply depot, which at the front is always a favorite morning target for the long-range Boche guns. Upon his own back he carried the provisions from the bins to the trucks, returning in time for breakfast. At ten o'clock one would see him with a bucket and sponge and a great pair of sabots washing his mud-spattered car. And until late every night he labored on the elaborate French system of accounts and reports. Three years of this, day after day, and his business gone beyond repair, yet never a word of complaint; never a sign of doubt but that this was the work for which he had been born. . . .

Downstream were two soldiers strolling on the