

The Butterflies

By GAMALIEL BRADFORD

At morning when I lie awake
And wait for lingering day to break,
A thousand lovely verses rise
Like many-colored butterflies.

They float aloft on airy wings,
Impalpable, fantastic things,
And with my half-awakened sight
I revel in their transient flight.

But when, beneath the garish sun,
I try to count them, one by one,
Their grace is gone, their glamour fled,
And I find ghosts of songs instead.

The Return of M. Caillaux

By ERNEST DIMNET

Banished from Paris for three years, this leader of the Defeatists again rises
in the troubled sea of French politics. It is a dramatic story which
M. Dimnet tells of Caillaux's policies and ambitions

M. CAILLAUX, although banished from Paris for three years and deprived of his political rights, has never ceased to travel, speak, and write as if he had never been condemned by any High Court. But he had refrained so far from addressing an audience in his once familiar tone of leader of the Radical-Socialist party. It was not till the other day that, speaking at Denain, a strong mining center in the devastated regions, he left the country in no doubt at last that at the next election he would resume command of his troops. His three years will be up in April, when the general election takes place. He is still popular in his constituency, even with the clergy, whom he zealously protected against the very anti-clerical laws he was championing in the French Chamber, so there is little doubt that he will be re-elected; and as he is hampered by no exaggeration of modesty, and as his party is hard up for leaders, we can expect to see him promptly push his substitute, M. Herriot, back to his place as a second fiddle. It will show once more how different the French political atmosphere is from

that of sterner nations, how prevalent tolerance, based on an idea of freedom, is in France.

M. Caillaux has become quite a personage in America and England, as well as in some South American countries, owing to the articles in which he serenely criticises his own country before foreign opinion as if he had every right to criticise. On the whole, his influence is far from being good, not merely because his judgment is well known to be frequently warped, but because his statements are apt to be amazingly incorrect. It was only the other day that he wrote in the London "Fortnightly Review" that M. Poincaré's characteristic is "a fear of responsibilities"! His British readers must have stared, but, as usual, they probably made up their minds that "a distinguished Frenchman like that must know." A little investigation into his political past would make things much clearer.

M. Caillaux is the son of a good family, which he is a little inclined to imagine even better than it was. His father was a well-off banker who dabbled in politics on the safe and sound conserva-

tive side. The boy was brought up according to the approved canons of elegant financial milieus, was educated at a smart Jesuits' school, went to the École des Sciences Politiques, which, apart from its own sterling value, attracts the scions of all the old families, and finally competed for an inspectorship of finance, which he brilliantly secured, for he early showed that capacity for mastering figures which will always be his chief asset. He was well dressed, dashing, impertinent, and conceited. People who used to complain of his *hauteur* gradually became accustomed to it, as he impressed on them that he thought himself, on the contrary, extremely condescending. In a short time he went into politics, on the paternal side, naturally, and stepping in the shoes of a duke. He made his mark as a financial expert and a master of lucid explanation of what can be clear only to a few and at best deceives the rest into imagining they see it clearly. Specialists both in the financial science and in foreign affairs were so scarce at the time that they were sure to attract attention. Long before he was forty M. Caillaux found himself a Cabinet Minis-

ter in the Waldeck-Rousseau administration, a Moderate of Moderates, and probably looking askance at the first Socialist ever taken on board the wagon of a government, a lawyer of the name of Alexandre Millerand.

Those were the days, however, when moderation and capacity could only lead to a useful career, and men too often think themselves above that. One Moderate Deputy, Jean Jaurès, reappeared after four years' eclipse as a resolute Socialist, a man who could not beat Millerand at actual reforms, but certainly beat him at beautiful talk about reforms. M. Caillaux, who always had in him a touch of a Catiline, followed suit. Being a financier, he could not decently become a Socialist, but it was the easiest thing to become what was, and still is, called a Radical-Socialist—that is to say, a *bourgeois* in the tradition of the great Revolutionists. These were *bourgeois* themselves, and never inclined to give much power to the lower classes of the population, but they found it convenient for rhetorical purposes to substitute the word people for the word nation, which previously obtained—a philological *nuance* fraught with unsuspected consequences. On the other hand, being a financier, M. Caillaux could not become a mere Radical ranter; he adjusted the difficulty by becoming a financial Radical and associating his name with the then new departure, viz., the substitution of the income tax for taxation based on visible property. He may have become sincere in his conviction since, but it is not sure that he was in those days.

One of his letters to a lady-love, published by the "Figaro," a letter which shortly before the war brought about the violent death of its editor, Calmette, at the hands of Madame Caillaux, said in definite terms that, "while pretending to advocate the income tax, he in reality was preparing its ruin." But the effect was produced, and by the year 1910 M. Caillaux had become an "advanced politician" who surprised and, indeed, delighted his new friends, as he still does, by aristocratic airs coupled with demagogic views.

Politicians, as is well known, are the prisoners of their own parties and of their parties' doctrines. In time M. Caillaux became a pro-German, as all French Radicals always are, from sheer fear of a war, and because a financier is inevitably attracted by the chances of business on a large scale offered by a Franco-German combine. During seven years M. Delcassé, at the French Foreign Office, had worked for an Anglo-French Entente;



Keystone

Joseph Caillaux, former French Premier, who has "come back"
—at least part way

M. Caillaux went on the other tack, and actually governed as Prime Minister as if he were sure of an alliance of France with Germany. The results are well known. Before the war M. Caillaux made over to Germany a splendid French colony in Africa against a German permission to France to develop Morocco under narrowly definite conditions. During the war his attitude was suspicious. It will be best understood by people who have read M. Dumur's novel "Les Défaitistes" and realize that a man can act in a strange way without being conscious of it, and be on the verge of treason, thinking himself a patriot all the time. Certain it is that M. Caillaux was condemned to three years' banishment for "endangering France's alliances," not by his political adversaries, but by Senators of his own party.

Most people would be crushed by such a blow coming at such a time. But M. Caillaux showed astonishing resilience. As soon as he was released from his imprisonment he began to speak and write in a lofty, prophetic manner, and while

waiting for an audience in his own country he almost immediately secured one abroad. The success in America of his confusing books and articles—as difficult to follow as his spoken utterances are clear and elegant—has long been a surprise to people who know how to read. Somehow Americans have deceived themselves into imagining that here was another Dreyfus and a high-minded pacifist, not mentioning one of the greatest financiers alive. His most obscure statements and his most violent denunciations of his own country have been listened to with respectful attention.

Well, M. Caillaux is no victim; he is, on the contrary, an exceedingly lucky person. As for his views, they consist in a vague advocacy of international reconciliation based on labor co-operation and in definite measures tending to prompt nationalization of individual property. In America he would be regarded as an extremely dangerous politician, but, as he happens to speak of peace in the tone of Signor Nitti, he is looked upon as a Christian instead.