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The Right to Live:—Mr. Claud Mullins, in the *Atlantic*.

The Government: Its Record and Prospects:—Captain Wedgwood Benn, in the *Contemporary*.

Tragedy of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico:—Mr. Alfred Tyrnauer, in *Current History*.

The Five Fears of South Africa:—Lord Olivier, in the *Contemporary*.

IT is difficult to read with gravity the article by Mr. Claud Mullins in the *Atlantic*, grave though it is intended to be. A solemn warning, from a brain that feels itself high and clear, to the numerous brains that are muddled and low,—this is what our mentor has set out to give us. He has discovered that there is no such thing as “the right to live”! And however alarming the news may be to those who hear it for the first time, Mr. Mullins will not abate the sternness of truth in any sentimental weakness towards popular feeling.

He is an English lawyer. As such, he is much impressed by the delusiveness of catchwords and phrases that pass current in the United States. Some of these, he points out, have proved very troublesome even in the land where they were coined. What answer, for example, could be given sixty-five years ago to a propagandist for the South who quoted from the *Declaration of Independence* that “The laws of Nature and Nature’s God entitle peoples to assume a separate and equal station”? Alas, the custom of invoking such abstract shibboleths has crossed the ocean. England too, as Mr. Mullins observes her, has become a prey, in this time of post-war economic depression, to the kind of maxims which no country can survive except by ignoring them.

The particular word now prevailing, with such ominous portent, is the word “rights.” And it is not the Labour men alone who have put it into circulation. It predominates in the propagandism of Liberals. It is “influencing more or less the legislative activities of the Conservative party.” Our critic has discovered that most of the alleged rights of the people have no foundation at all. But it seems that hardly any man, of any political group, could venture to say this on a platform in England if he had any hope of being

elected. Mr. Mullins has found that only in the City of London "perhaps", or in a university constituency, is it now possible to get the requisite votes for a candidate who dares on this matter to speak the truth. A sad plight, surely,—and a dismal outlook. Lies essential everywhere else, and in the few small areas of illumination only a "perhaps" prospect!

But it is known that in the end wisdom is justified of her children, and Mr. Mullins will let readers of the *Atlantic* into the real secret of this dark business. In one sense, but that one quite unimportant to specify, he agrees that there is a "right to live." It is true that "every human being has a right to continue his existence if he can." So no prescription of suicide is imposed by our mentor's scientific wisdom, and to that extent at least his readers may breathe more freely. But what is generally meant by "the right to live" is something very different:

In the political world it means that there is a right to be maintained by the community. The demand of the Socialist, whatever be his nationality, is founded on the assumption that everybody born into this world—unless, of course, he is of the "idle rich"—has a right to be housed, clothed, educated, insured, and pensioned.

This is the socially destructive doctrine which Mr. Mullins sets out to expose and refute.

Englishmen, he thinks, should be among the very last people to be misled by it. For England could not feed herself from her own products, unless—as an expert investigator has found—her inhabitants accepted potatoes as their main diet. Food must be imported. So if there is a universal "right to live" in that particular island, there must be a corresponding duty that rests on other countries to send the needful provender. But no one would be crazy enough to assert this. Hence, Mr. Mullins decides triumphantly, there can be no "right to live" in England. And though he at once explains that he would by no means doubt the Christian duty of giving alms to the destitute, he wants to make quite clear the contrast between what it is "right" for the prosperous to bestow and what is "a right" for the multitudinous poor to exact by legislation.

Naturally our critic becomes quite heated over the practice of allowing State doles to the unemployed. This he would brand as a form of "conscript charity." Either in ignorance of sound economic doctrine, or in artful solicitation of popular support at the polls, the British Government last year actually helped the

coal miners on strike by providing "out-relief" for their wives and children! Local poor-law authorities contributed to the same nefarious cause, so that the stoppage in the collieries might fairly be said to have been financed by the Boards of Guardians! Mr. Mullins can find no language adequate to characterize such crass ineptitude:

Not only were the wives and families of miners thus subsidized during the strike, but additional allowances were made, above the usual scale, to cover the fact that the miner himself was not legally entitled to relief. That this could be the state of the law, is scarcely credible. A powerful trade-union, knowing that its wage demands could only be met by means of a Government subsidy, calls all its men on strike, and, while the country loses hundreds of millions sterling in trade losses, the Government maintains the families of the strikers. Could there be any more glaring example of what the acceptance of the right to live leads to?

But, alas, there is legal precedent for even this! Mr. Mullins has discovered a decision in a case of the year 1900, when the English Court of Appeal laid it down that the wives and children of men on strike are entitled to relief from the Board of Guardians "to prevent their starving."

Of course, our mentor proceeds, there will be more and more strikes as long as this foolish procedure is maintained. The healthy independence of the British poor will continue to be sapped and corrupted. Nor will the persons thus sentimentally assisted be in the least grateful for what is given them. "There is always someone round the corner who will bid higher." And is it not obvious that the least patriotic folk in the country are just those whose maintenance the country has thus taken upon itself? That was seen in the Great War. And in general, it seems, the Socialist is the most anti-social person in the community.

What, exactly, Mr. Mullins would have done during the coal stoppage of last year if he had been in the place of Mr. Baldwin, is a point on which one may speculate with interest. That he would have adopted those strong measures which are notoriously characteristic of weak men, may be taken for granted. As I went through his article, it seemed to me as if I was following once more the line of thought of a much greater man, who argued thus more than a century ago, but upon whom—if he were with us now—the lesson of experience would not have been so wholly lost. It was Thomas Malthus who wrote these startling sentences:

It appears to me that we are bound in justice and honour formally to disclaim the right of the poor to support . . . A man who is born in a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents, on whom he has a just demand, and if the society do not want his labour, has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food, and—in fact—has no business to be where he is. At Nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to begone, and will quickly execute her own order if he does not work upon the compassion of some of her guests.

Malthus was a clergyman, as well as an economist, and perhaps he had some theological ground for insisting that the parent has a burden which society may altogether disavow. One may question what he meant by "a world already possessed", whether he would not have admitted the propriety of any investigation into the title-deeds of some of those who are so fortunate as to possess it, and how "Nature"—whom he figures as a bountiful hostess—drew up her invitation list. The wretched poor of the time, who had "no business" to be there, and against whom the law of 1834 seems thus to have provided new penalties for trespass, might plead that they had not come "of malice aforethought" or even of their own free will. Many a victim of unemployment might have said, with the poor urchin in *Great Expectations*, that he had no knowledge of his own or his parents' antecedents, but that as soon as he "became aware of" himself he found he was in a somewhat desperate predicament. And there is point in Sir Leslie Stephen's remark that at the table of Nature's bounty certain people seem to have a reserved seat.

But Mr. Mullins is a lawyer, and by having "a right" to anything he obviously means having a claim for the enforcement of which a decree may be had from the courts, or which the legislature can be induced to sanction. One sees this from his remark that "the miners failed ignominiously to establish the principle" of the right to live. Thus the existence of "rights", in the view of this prophet, is something to be established or overthrown by legislation! That the word has another sense, the sense of those claims which the advancing wisdom and accumulating experience of time has made it seem just or proper for the community as such to acknowledge and respect, has plainly never occurred to him. Between that which legislation does enjoin and what it should enjoin, he has a lawyer's difficulty in distinguishing. Or, if this point has occurred to him at all, the thought has visited his mind in a setting of legal technicalities amid which its significance has been obliterated.

The doctrinaire assertion of "natural rights", from the time of Rousseau to the present, has indeed revealed many a vulnerable point. And in regard to the propriety or impropriety of the system of doles, no opinion is here offered. But if the doles are to be proved evil, their assailant must criticize them in a spirit very different from that of Mr. Mullins. He is far too like Sir Everard Romfrey in *Beauchamp's Career*, who thought of the game laws as the corner-stone of Law in general, and of the three Estates of the Realm as his own head-gamekeepers. Moreover, even by the questionable standard to which Mr. Mullins has appealed, he is doomed to lose his case. Law itself has failed him, and his country is thus going, as Mr. Mantalini said, "to the demnition bow-wows." It is a hard lot. And amid the universal degeneration, where Conservative as well as Liberal leaders have been so stupid, one fears that he has little to hope from those few last possible refuges of wisdom,—the City of London and the university constituencies! Like Dean Inge, he would doubtless prefer to have been born a generation sooner—perhaps even in the eighteenth century?

CAPTAIN Wedgwood Benn, who recently left the Liberal party to join the ranks of Labour, has been unburdening his mind to readers of *The Contemporary Review*. His article is not a defence of his own change. It tells us nothing about the superior promise of the party he has joined over the party he has left. Captain Benn is concerned with a review of the pledges of the Baldwin Government two years ago, and with a marshalling of what they have achieved against what they undertook.

Mr. Baldwin came into office in consequence of a convulsion over two issues,—the now almost forgotten "Campbell case", and the treaty concluded by the Labour Cabinet with Russia. The prosecution of one Campbell, a radical editor, for seditious articles had been dropped. It was the complaint of Conservatives that it had been dropped owing to political pressure by the Labour Government's friends, and that herein was a piece of horrible tampering with the course of justice. Here are Mr. Baldwin's own words, spoken in the House shortly after the 1924 election:

The late Government gave instructions that no political prosecution should be directed by the Attorney-General without the sanction of the Cabinet. Such an instruction, in the opinion of the Government, was unconstitutional, subversive of the administration of justice, and derogatory to the office of Attorney-General. His Majesty's Government have therefore given directions that the instruction be excised.

It was the argument resounding on the hustings throughout the electoral campaign that an "enquiry" into the details of the Campbell case should be undertaken forthwith, and that the good name of the British judiciary should thus be cleansed of the stigma.

But, once in office, the Baldwin Cabinet proceeded no farther with the enquiry. It was soon made evident that the Campbell case, having served its turn, had "sunk beyond all plummet's sounding." Mr. Baldwin declared that the country had given its decision on the matter at the polls, and that no good purpose would be achieved by any further investigation of it. Captain Benn is careful to point out that the Prime Minister had given no direct pledge about instituting an enquiry. But he had come into power in consequence of a popular upheaval initiated by a vote in parliament that such enquiry was urgent. And just one week after he had expressed himself with such vehemence against his predecessor for permitting "politics" to deflect the action of the Attorney-General in a trial, he used these startling words:

In the view of His Majesty's Government, it is the duty of the Attorney-General... when the proposed prosecution is of such a character that matters of public policy are, or may be, involved, . . . to inform himself of the views of the Government or of the appropriate Minister before coming to a decision.

How these two deliverances, separated by only seven days, are to be reconciled, is a point which Captain Benn leaves to his readers to determine.

What about the Russian treaty? The Labour Government, we were told, had guaranteed repayment of a loan raised by the Bolshevik administration among British investors, "if the Bolsheviks, in accordance with their principles and their practice, should fail to repay that loan." But how do these scornful words from Mr. Baldwin impress one to-day, when it is remembered that in a debate of last year—according to the *London Times*—"speech followed speech, and there were very few, even among those of the Conservatives, which did not support the backing of Russian bills"? It was pointed out that the joint-stock banks were financing trade with Russia, and that what was safe for them should be safe enough for the Government!

So much for the comparison between pledges on an election platform and fulfilments when the election had been won. Captain Benn next dwells upon the general attitude of the Baldwin Ministry towards Russia, upon such speeches as those of Lord Birkenhead, upon the inevitable consequence in the hampering of British policy

by Moscow so long as we have those "bickerings and insults which compose all official reference to her." He agrees that the Soviet leaders are disposed to fish in troubled waters; but, he adds, "they do not create the stream." There is less and less readiness to attribute the Cantonese movement to Bolshevism, as its real character is better perceived. And our critic points out how quick is an organ like *The Times* to minimize the charge brought by the Coolidge Government of Russian intrigue in Mexico.

But his article is by no means wholly blame. Captain Benn gives all credit to the Baldwin administration for "Locarno." He agrees that Sir Austen Chamberlain has effected a great improvement in relations between France and Germany. The Imperial Conference notably transformed for good the disposition of General Hertzog. No fewer than 200,000 new houses, built in 1926, are the outcome of the Chamberlain Housing Act, and for such successful measures towards relief of a dangerous situation Captain Benn thinks Mr. Neville Chamberlain should be called the most successful member of the Cabinet. True, however, to his principles, he adds that this success is "within the compass of Conservative policy." That other policy might show far greater triumphs, he does not doubt. And he cannot help recalling how the great Liberal venture in South Africa, which has been so abundantly vindicated by its results, was the object at the time of the most violent Conservative abuse.

The Broadcasting organization receives, too, a word of praise. Effected by a Conservative Government, it is commended by Captain Benn as a real step towards Socialism. But we are reminded that unemployment, for which the Ramsay MacDonald administration was so much reproached, became worse than ever under these austere critics. There is promise of a Franchise bill, to fix the same age for voters of both sexes. But it is rumoured that this will be done by levelling up the age for men to 25 rather than by reducing that for women to 21. And if this plan is to be adopted, Captain Benn foresees the suspicion that it is meant to "disfranchise thousands of young men who were involved in the mining dispute." The Direct Action party will thus gain a crowd of recruits.

Altogether this article is surprisingly temperate, distributing praise and blame in turn. And, like all good political articles, it has its touch of humour. In the interests of domestic trade, says Captain Benn, it was solemnly proposed by Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister to force foreigners to colour their eggs and butter! Such "compulsory advertisement", reinforcing the attraction of quality

and price, would—he thinks—have an effect just the opposite of what was intended.

NEWS about the death of "the Empress Carlotta", as about the death a little while ago of "the Empress Eugénie", must have come to not a few English readers with a shock of amazement. For these two stately figures of a European situation long since vanished had become just historic, and one realized with a start how they had still been survivors in a world that knew them not.

It is a pathetic tale that Mr. Tyrnauer brings back to our minds. No doubt a good many people still living can recall the Mexican escapade of Napoleon III. For, after all, remote as it now seems, it happened just a few years before M. Georges Clémenceau was Mayor of Montmartre in the fierce time of the Commune,—and M. Clémenceau is even yet by no means negligible on the European stage. Mr. Tyrnauer has a good deal that is new to tell us about the Mexican affair, for his article is based on original documents of the Imperial Court of Vienna just lately opened for scientific research. The main features of the case may be summarized quite briefly, before note is taken of what this investigator has to add to the knowledge previously at our disposal.

Archduke Maximilian of Austria, brother of the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef, was married to Carlotta, daughter of Leopold I of Belgium, and granddaughter of Louis Philippe of France. Those were the days when Napoleon III was disposing of thrones and rearranging the map with a success which Mr. Lloyd George has recently likened to that of Mussolini. In 1864 this despotic arbiter of international affairs, at the request—as he said—of a band of Mexican exiles, invited Maximilian to become ruler of Mexico. Maximilian was an ambitious prince, with an ambitious consort, so that the bait of such titles as "Emperor" and "Empress" was too tempting to be refused. The American Civil War had begun, and the sympathies of Napoleon were with the South. It is conjectured that part of the plan was to establish a new aristocratic régime in Mexico, forming an alliance with the Southern States whose victory the French Emperor thought he could foresee, and thus providing a tremendous counterpoise to the "Munroe Doctrine" of the insurgent North.

Of course there was a specious pretext, under which the imperialist scheme was veiled. Mexico was a debtor state, and it was alleged that the purpose was to enforce just payment. England and Spain at first joined the expedition on this understanding, but withdrew their troops as the covert motive of Napoleon became

apparent. The Emperor of Austria, though disapproving of his brother's plunge, agreed eventually to assist with an armed force, that he might get rid of the disturbing claims of so popular a prince upon a succession nearer home. Thus supplied with a formidable armament, Maximilian landed in Mexico. His French General, Bazaine, won a few easy victories over the ill-paid and ill-disciplined levies of Mexican republicanism, and it seemed at first as if the new Empire would be set up with little difficulty. But the success was short-lived. It was not just Juarez, the ragged Indian, with his discordant staff and his unmanageable troops, that had to be encountered. By the time the invader reached Mexico, the Civil War was over, and the victorious North had no idea of permitting a French or an Austrian Empire to be established on the American continent. Napoleon and Franz Josef, thus menaced from Washington, withdrew their forces, and from that hour the fate of Maximilian was sealed. His assassination shortly afterwards was the last scene in the drama.

So much had long ago been more or less shrewdly guessed about the part the United States had taken in bringing the scheme to disaster. But historians had also dwelt much upon the discontent among the French people, and upon that vacillation in foreign policy which such domestic anxieties had introduced in the second decade of Napoleon's rule. What Mr. Tyrnauer has quoted from the Vienna archives is evidence that not the weakness and changefulness of Napoleon's character, but the sharp action of Seward on the American side, led to recall of the French troops. Despatches from the Austrian ambassador at Washington to his home Government are cited at length, and they show how it was made plain to the Court of Vienna that the United States had war in immediate contemplation. Baron Wydenbruck reported instance after instance of studied insult to Maximilian, mentioning how Juarez was given official American recognition as still the "sovereign authority", how the brother of Franz Josef was described in semi-official public speeches as an "adventurer", and how Seward had definitely told him that the Austrians must "quit Mexico". Most explicit of all is a despatch under date April 25, 1866, to the effect that no one believed the Austrian contingent to consist of "volunteers", that the expedition was becoming regarded as an act of war against the United States, and that the American ambassador had been instructed to demand his passports at Vienna as soon as the first troop-ship should leave for Mexico.

This seems to raise a doubtful hypothesis to the level of a certainty. Mr. Tyrnauer has cast genuine light on a curious and

involved historic situation. The remainder of his article just retraverses some very familiar ground. We are reminded how the Empress Carlotta in vain importuned Napoleon to stand by the venture he had instigated, and how she appealed in vain for the good offices of Pope Pius IX when she saw that her husband was in peril of his life. The American veto was not to be resisted. On the assassination of Maximilian, his hapless widow became mentally deranged, and for more than sixty years afterwards—living in secluded pomp near Brussels—she was humored in the dream that she was still Empress of Mexico! In the gorgeous castle that was assigned for her residence, her Belgian countrymen dutifully accepted Cabinet rank or knelt for decorations at her mimic throne. And even the commander of the invading German troops during the Great War respected the sanctity of her “imperial” Court.

Had that commander a prescience of what might be in store for Wilhelm II? At Doorn, one hears, there is even yet a “Court”, and the old Prussian obeisances are maintained, to one who in his fall has still a self-esteem like that of the demented Carlotta. But here the analogy ends. The monarchists of Mexico were but a wretched handful, and the ruler they followed for a time was chosen not by them but for them. One feels that a Hohenzollern restoration is not yet by any means wholly outside the hazard of “practical politics”.

LORD Olivier was Secretary for India in the Labour Government. He may thus be supposed to speak with special knowledge about Dominion problems, and he speaks without that official restraint or reticence which always hampers—or should always hamper—a man under the sense of Cabinet responsibility.

During the South African War it was the freely expressed view of some observers on the spot that the tragic occurrences of that time were a sort of nemesis alike on Briton and on Boer for harsh treatment of the natives. This article in the *Contemporary* is in large measure a plea for the coloured races. Lord Olivier speaks of that peculiar institution about which South Africans have in the past been so complacent, the “Kaffir Boy,” upon whom the burden of all the manual work was laid, and upon whose enforced labour the whole white community has long “sat enthroned.” An institution so satisfactory to the leisured class might be supposed to be made all the better by the multiplying of such human tools. But South Africa of late, it seems, has become alarmed lest these

should be multiplied to such an extent as to "swamp white civilization." The natives, for example, may compete with Europeans in the wage-labour market. Hence the recent "Colour-Bar" law, to exclude them from skilled occupations. It seems too bad that it is not possible to have an inferior race at once intelligent enough to be good servants and docile enough to challenge nothing in their masters' monopoly.

Moreover, Lord Olivier points out, this fear of increase in the number of the natives has its source partly in "bad conscience." The Colour-Bar law is not the first of the impositions. Take the matter of land. The white population is about one-third as large as the coloured, while this small minority of settlers has appropriated about fourteen-fifteenths of the total available territory! It is true enough that the white man's weapons can always repress native rebellion. But there are some forms of terrorism which humanity forbids, and there are forms which in the present age of the world—as contrasted with an earlier time—it is not practicable for even the least humane to exert. The writer reminds us how this cherished feeling of race-dominance, based on colour, had a rude shock when some of the Boer prisoners, interned in Ceylon during the South African War, "assumed as quite natural and legitimate in their relations with the dark-skinned people of that British colony the standards of behaviour normal among South African Europeans in their relations with natives." There was some nasty retaliating. As the Americans would say, the thing could not be "put across." And in South Africa itself the natives are said to be ceasing to respect the whites. Lord Olivier regards such lowered subservience as not without frequent justification:

It is questionable whether the ideals and morals of triumphant European civilization as exhibited in Johannesburg, to say nothing of its eclectic delights and interests as advertised to the world through the "moving pictures", could reasonably or desirably be expected to enhance the reverence of the natives for white people. If the native had not sufficient sense of dignity and decency to despise a great deal in European civilization, in proportion as the ostensibly typical interests of its prosperous classes are more and more pressed on his notice, the prospects of South Africa and of any similar mixed community might well appear more ominous than they actually are, or need be if the white man will safeguard his own standards of dignity, decency and good taste.

We have seen this sort of situation before. The strident braggadocio of "Anglo-Africans", with their insistence that those who blame them are sentimental "uplifters" quite ignorant of local

conditions, will take its place along with the similar rhetoric of planters in the Southern States of this continent. How futile it is to rely in one period of the world upon "arguments" that would have found ready acceptance in an earlier period, is a point which the dull-witted will never appreciate. But a lesson should have been learned from that British general election of twenty-one years back, in which the protest against "Chinese slavery on the Rand" swept England like a tornado.

Another of the "Five Fears" in South Africa is, we learn from this article, that of infection for European stocks through contact with the Kaffirs. "The white man may adopt Kaffir habits." And Lord Olivier reflects that there are but two ways to prevent this, (1) by the drastic measure of killing off the native increase year by year, or (2) by taking means to effect an increasing civilization among the inferior race. One may suppose, let us hope, that the first of these alternatives is not seriously contemplated by anybody, and our critic assures us that the second is by no means chimerical. If it has so far been attempted with very indifferent success, the reason is not far to seek in the methods of mining as so far practised and in the appalling "residential and sanitary scandals" of the places where the natives live in a South African town. Lord Olivier is satisfied that a great deal of harm has been done by fostering the idea so congenial to certain minds in this part of the world that work is only for Kaffirs, and he augurs much further evil from that South African Native policy to which General Hertzog has committed himself. Tinkering with the political franchise so as to ensure white dominance is, in his view, "a provocative imbecility." That dominance, so far as it is wholesome, does not appear at present to be imperilled, while the proposed measures are fraught with much risk for good relations between white and coloured races both in Africa and in Asia.

The whole article is a suggestive comment on that Boer attitude of mind towards the natives which was quoted to weaken sympathy for the men of the Kruger régime, and to temper one's judgment of Olive Schreiner's famous book, *The Story of a South African Farm*. General Hertzog is a survivor of those days long past, and it may well be that some of their darker moods are still characteristic of him. But he unlearned a good deal, apparently, at the last Imperial Conference. And perhaps that international charity which he has preached since then may—like charity in general—be induced to begin its practical manifestations at home.

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