

## CURRENT MAGAZINES

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**The Riddle of Lord Haldane:**—Prof. J. H. Morgan, in the *Quarterly*.

**Disestablishment by Consent:**—The Bishop of Durham, in the *Nineteenth Century*.

**"Mr. G.":**—The Right Hon. A. Birrell, in the *Contemporary*.

**The Protestant View of Sex, Love and Marriage:**—Dr. W. M. Tuppy, in *Current History*.

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AMONG phenomena of the Great War which it is at once painful and wholesome for the British democrat to recall, the case of the late Lord Haldane will be prominent in future histories. It is wholesome to recall this, just because the case is so painful an example of the follies into which democracy can be driven. Lord Haldane's recently published autobiography includes some record of it, presented in that tone of calm detachment which was so characteristic of him. He does not anywhere betray the impulse common in smaller men—to forswear all respect in future for a public opinion which has done personal injustice to one's self. Not a touch of Coriolanus revenge on those who had treated him so ill! On the contrary, Lord Haldane became more the democrat than ever, joining the Labour Party after this display of "mob mind" against him. His may well have been that deepest sort of contempt that has its roots in compassion—a deeper sort than that of Wellington, for example, when he pointed to the iron bars he had had to put on the windows of Apsley House! One remembers that "R. B. H." was a philosopher before he was in politics.

In the *Quarterly Review* his friend and admirer, Professor J. H. Morgan, discusses the "riddle" which Lord Haldane's career presents, now that it is closed, and the very different parts can be viewed together. It is fitting that his article should dwell upon details with penitential value for the reader, but too slight to be included in the autobiography. Professor Morgan has observed, with sardonic interest, the panegyric of those "unshriven scribes" who of late outdid one another in extolling the man they had tried to ruin. There has been no penance, he says, like it, "since the Franconian Emperor stood, barefoot and penitent, in the snow

in the courtyard of Canossa." The picture is helped by variety of comparison. Describing the press on the morning after Lord Haldane's death, he says:

Some thirteen years earlier, the greatest intellect that had ever been devoted to the State in our day and generation had been driven forth from our public life by such a cacophony of sound and fury in certain quarters of Fleet Street, by noises so imperfectly orchestrated, so compounded of the dissonances of panic, hate, envy, ignorance, and all uncharitableness, the weary iteration of the same theme, broken only by the occasional shriek of one of the instrumentalists, that the first appearance of a jazz band in our ballrooms was not more symptomatic of the mental disorders induced by the war.

Professor Morgan has, of course, poetic license just now in eulogy. And his zeal for his distinguished friend does him credit.

Lord Haldane said "Germany is my spiritual home", and all philosophers knew what he meant. But in the early days of the war, when foolish people considered it patriotic to deny that any glorious achievement in the field of the spirit was German, when such patriots were striving to find previously un conjectured weaknesses in German science and blemishes in German music and fundamental outrage upon the laws of God and man in all German speculative doctrine, a phrase such as this was appallingly quotable to a cabinet minister's ruin. Those were the days when, as Mr. Bernard Shaw has reminded us, a London mob attacked and burned down a church in which services were conducted in the German language for a German congregation, apparently—says Mr. Shaw—with the general approval of the pious public, who "thought it served God right for creating Germans"!

What, then, was the fate of Lord Haldane? His doom was sealed, says Professor Morgan, when a certain newspaper of immense circulation put on the streets, in August, 1914, a suggestive placard. It bore a single sentence: HALDANE AT THE WAR OFFICE! He was already under a measure of suspicion, but sending him to the War Office—in charge of the national effort at such a time—roused his detractors to fury. Thousands of abusive and menacing letters reached him each morning. "Three large sacks and a cart had to be requisitioned to transport daily this lamentable freight to his house at Queen Anne's Gate".

The writers insisted that Lord Haldane was well known to be a shareholder in Krupps' munition works at Essen, that he had delayed the despatch of the Expeditionary Force in order to serve the enemy cause in which he was financially interested, and so

forth. Perhaps the most amusing stroke was in a letter Professor Morgan received. "Are you not aware", asked the writer, "that Haldane is an illegitimate son of the Kaiser?" As they looked through the pile that day together, this missive attracted the notice of its maligned victim specially. "I think that letter will amuse my mother", he said to his friend; "let me keep it". The campaign of attack drove him from office, and—despite his resolute composure of mind—he was never quite the same man again. It was not only the mob of vulgar anonymous letter writers that assailed him, for the social boycott was ruthless, and he must have felt indeed like a fallen idol. One can readily understand, then, the thrill with which, after the Peace, he received from Viscount Haig a volume of the Field-Marshal's despatches, bearing this inscription:

To Viscount Haldane of Cloan—the greatest Secretary for War England has ever had. In grateful remembrance of his successful efforts in organizing the Military Forces for a War on the Continent, notwithstanding much opposition from the Army Council, and half-hearted support of his parliamentary friends.

Is it not a singular irony of fate, Professor Morgan asks, that the man in the cabinet of August, 1914, who from the very first was intensely bent on war should have been later abused as a pro-German, while the man who was hardest to reconcile to a war policy should have been later acclaimed as the greatest of military organizers? Such were the respective rôles, as they are now known, of Lord Haldane and Mr. Lloyd George.

There are other features of great interest in this sketch. Anecdotes of personal kindness, for which the philosophic statesman seems to have been so well known; the story of his handing over his large fee for arguing the Scottish United Free Church case before the House of Lords, when the case had been lost, and there was need of money for reparation of the damage; reminiscences of the immense pains and time Haldane would give to help a junior in his profession at a difficult piece of work; and, in particular, his extraordinary filial devotion to his mother who lived to be perhaps the oldest woman in Great Britain—such *causerie* makes this a vivid tale of a notable public man.

What was the "riddle" about him, which is mentioned in the title of the article? I suppose, though this does not very explicitly appear, that it refers to his abandonment of the Liberal for the Labour Party. In conversation with Professor Morgan, as far back as 1917, he dwelt upon the need for "reorganization of in-

dustry—with educated foremen, and a gradation of highly-paid workmen". This, he said, was a matter he was working out in conference with the Labour leaders, for to their party the future belonged. "The Liberal Party is dead; so is the Unionist". It was in contact with men like Mr. Sidney Webb that he met with the conception of what he liked to call "a thinking department" for industry, and it was just here that he felt how the Prussian genius for organizing things was a chief peril to Great Britain in the competitive struggle. Vast schemes for nationalisation, vast projects of the bureaucratic State, floated before his mind, and the Labour people were as keen to attempt them as the Liberals were wedded to dogmas that obstructed them. Incidentally, though perhaps *apropos* of nothing, there is a good story in the article about Bismarck. It relates to the time of the Schleswig-Holstein affair, when a deputy in the *Landtag* asked the Chancellor what he would do in case of intervention,—if, for example, a British Army disembarked on the German coast. "He replied, amid roars of laughter, that he would send for the police". The adequacy of such a method is better understood by the German mind now. And Lord Haldane's Expeditionary Force did much to bring enlightenment.

One point in the riddle of his personality has not been mentioned. That Labour Lord Chancellor, some can recall, used to belong to the most Imperialist section of the Liberals—to the group that formed "The Liberal League" about twenty-five years ago, with Lord Rosebery as its high priest. Lord Haldane was one of its three vice-presidents, and Mr. Lloyd George was then a leading spirit among the ultra-Radicals who opposed it. During the South African War, too, this coming Labour Lord Chancellor was an Imperialist of the Imperialists! Memories are notoriously short, but a certain Prussian cast in Haldane's political temperament had been long obvious. Was it not this suspicion that was subconsciously at work in those early war days of 1914? The somersault towards Labour in 1923 makes such a case all the more curious.

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**D**ISCUSSIONS about the Anglican Prayer Book have been giving place, in leading magazines, to a discussion about possible Disestablishment, and the Bishop of Durham's article in the *Nineteenth Century* has been a surprise to not a few readers. The Dean of St. Paul's, out of all patience with him, has spoken of his chameleon-like changes, and wonders whether he will not yet be found in the

ranks of the Labour men—about the only still untried rôle for him to adopt. What surprises so many observers is that he should have joined the advocates of Disestablishment, though explaining that it is not a violent measure—rather a measure “by consent”—he has in mind.

The bishop’s contention is that, by the refusal of the House of Commons to allow the proposed alternative Prayer Book, the Church is shown as enslaved to the State:

The Church of England cannot be saved by pageants. A slave is none the less a slave for being bound with fetters of gold, and adorned with the master’s gifts. If it be the case—and the House of Commons has made it quite plain that it is—that the Church of England cannot so much as determine the manner of its Eucharistic worship, nor control its sacramental ministrations to the sick and dying, without the permission of an assembly which is not even in theory Christian, then the Church of England is not adequately free. The bitter cry of the Prophet comes irresistibly to mind: *Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord’s.*

If such enslavement is an inevitable feature of an established Church in the England of to-day, freedom must be purchased at any price. The bishop’s plan is that, in conference and co-operation with the Free Churches, the Church of England should approach parliament, asking that this knot be loosed.

He reflects upon the change which the last generation has witnessed, and points out that Disestablishment has now lost not a few of its earlier disadvantages. Most of the old reasons against it, he says, have lost their validity. Social changes have made “the ecclesiastical factor” quite unimportant in national affairs, so that the risk of allowing so powerful an institution as the Church of England to exert itself “uncontrolled” has become negligible for the State. Many functions which used to belong to the clergy have passed into other hands, and the lay teacher now exerts an influence by which that of the parson is challenged. “Sentimental” pleas of the past, for a national recognition of Christianity, have ceased at all events to indicate as needful the maintenance of an Established Church, because more and more in recent times such national recognition has been the work of all Churches acting together. Appeals to the nation, on religious matters, are commonly signed by the Nonconformist as well as by the Anglican leaders. “Disestablishment, we can now see, need not hinder the coronation of the Sovereign with religious rites”.

Moreover, reflects the bishop, there would be at least two great advantages in it. From the point of view of the Church itself, it

would make possible the effective control of ecclesiastical lawlessness now so rampant because of the loopholes which the State-appointed standards provide, and which parliament has refused to amend. From the point of view of the nation, it would remove a serious cause of social discord, which already threatens to end in a deadlock. But it ought to be "by consent", and the Church which neither can nor should ward it off had better prepare for it in advance, by joint action with the Nonconformists. Nothing is to be gained by waiting—that counsel of expediency which would be unlikely to reach even an ignoble "success". National Churches, in the bishop's view, are doomed, having outlived their usefulness and even their meaning. They are an object of very general dislike since the war, and in England the Church could secure far better terms by taking the initiative than she will get if she waits to be driven.

It is not to be wondered at that the Dean of St. Paul's has found such advocacy too great a strain on his patience. The bishop's article, like all that he writes, is most lucid and impressive. But one can admit this without sharing his conclusions, and the subject is of such interest just now as to justify some further reflections on Disestablishment. In the first place, is it really so—as suggested—that the Church of England as a State institution is disliked far more than formerly? Has there really been an intense revulsion towards Voluntaryism?

At all events until last year, the proposal to separate Church and State seemed to have been steadily losing its attractiveness for the English people. Whether a reaction began last June, no one can tell. Against the confident diagnosis by journalists, who have nothing to lose by a mistake, we may set the obvious and very suggestive hesitation of political party managers. But there is no doubt that, fifty years ago, Disestablishment was on the crest of a popular wave. In 1876 John Morley could write in *The Fortnightly Review* that this was the issue which the Time-Spirit had at length made paramount, that here was the one subject on which a speaker could be sure of a crowded audience in any large town and on which all groups of progressive thinkers were agreed, that every leader of industry had given a strong and distinct pledge to vote for Disestablishment. It would be supported, he said, by a large and growing section in the Church of England itself, while it would elicit enthusiasm on the part of all the Nonconformists and at least two-thirds of the Roman Catholics. Not only did it hold this unique place among the projected reforms of the time, but it was in truth for the sake of their conduciveness to this that all other

enterprises of political reform were chiefly valued. Thus were the movements of the Time-Spirit discerned by the most brilliant of English journalists fifty years ago. It is needless to point out how ridiculous would be such a description of public feeling now. Those "progressive" people of Morley's tale have somehow faded out of the picture. Why has Disestablishment so fallen behind, that the words of a bishop now urging it seem amazing to the layman? It is indeed urged by two kinds of extremist—the extreme Evangelical and the extreme Anglo-Catholic, for opposite reasons. Is it not the very singularity of this union which has helped to make the average English layman suspicious? He is alarmed, I think, at the simultaneous attack, by two groups differently *intransigent*, on the historically tolerant Church, which has lasted just because it was a makeshift, and has held together just because it was inconsistent. For the average Englishman sees his own elastic and practical temperament reflected in that great institution of his country.

There are indeed numerous considerations by which this increasing attachment to a Church once in such danger can be explained. Nor will the manifold kinds of national service which the Establishment has rendered seem to admit of fulfilment with equal success by a Free Church, once the leaders of the country have come to consider what in actual working the change would mean. The Bishop of Durham is struck by the vast social transformations which have destroyed the point and validity of many a plea for Establishment in the past. Has not the Church of England thus survived the ceaseless changes of many centuries, never defensible to one generation by just the same reasons which justified it to another? Is it not, in this respect as in so many others, a perfect replica of the English Constitution on the model of which it has been so largely planned? And is not this a token of its toughness, its probable long survival? Still, though the bishop's article suggests a somewhat premature panic in ecclesiastical circles, it is an admirable provocative to re-statement of the case against it by those whom it does not convince.

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WE used to hear often, and to our literary delight, from Mr. Augustine Birrell. That vivacious and witty style, so pleasing to some and at times so irritating to others, which came to be known as the manufacture of "Birrellisms", has been far less often than formerly exemplified to magazine readers. So it is all the more welcome to have the artist back again, advanced as he now is in years,

and to find him dealing with a subject so congenial to his talent as the personality of Gladstone. It was as "Mr. G." that the Grand Old Man was commonly known to his cabinet colleagues, and spoken of by them to one another. And in reminiscence of those days long past, it is "Mr. G." that is taken as the title of this *Contemporary Review* article.

The author has been stirred to write it by the publication of the book called *After Thirty Years*, in which Lord Gladstone has given us "a series of filial notes" on various aspects of his father's "long and amazing life". Mr. Birrell naturally muses on the whole biographic art, reminding us how until recent years the biographies of British Prime Ministers were exceedingly dull. Of course, he gaily admits, there are men of whom a truthful record could not be written without violation of decency. But one might at least be spared an *untruthful* record of them! A great improvement has been shown in this field, however, by the appearance of such books as Morley's *Gladstone*, Buckle's *Disraeli*, and Lady Gwendolen Cecil's *Salisbury*.

Mr. Birrell does not in this article indicate much that is new in Lord Gladstone's memoir of his father, except for the emphasis it places on one feature that the outsider might well have missed. One easily thinks of that old statesman as impatient of contradiction in opinions, and as very insistent on his own way in practice. But within his household, we learn to our surprise, he was quite the reverse, leaving an energetic family to their own tastes and preferences, "with an indulgence almost too easy". Mr. Birrell adds that even in his cabinets he was the least interfering and meddling of men, and that there is ground for national regret in his abstention from sharp measures towards some of his colleagues, "two or three" of whom (we are not given names) might well have been spared. "He was content to demur when he should have dismissed". Once again, too, we have that constantly recurring reference to the sensitiveness and decisiveness of Gladstone's character, coming out even in a trifle. On his first interview with the leader when sent from Liverpool to get the dates of two meetings interchanged, Mr. Birrell marked the dark cloud "on that commanding brow" at the proposal to vary what had already been announced to the public. "I am sure you will agree with me that in matters of this sort we cannot be too careful to avoid anything in the very least resembling a breach of faith". Gladstonian indeed, both in thought and in expression!

There is a final word in the article about Gladstone's literary remains—so often called unreadable. Mr. Birrell dissents, with

the remark that this is the view of men who notoriously read nothing but the newspapers and detective novels. Even at almost eighty, the old touch of satire—the authentic Birrellism—is still there. One noticed it too in a recent speech, when a literary society was reminded of Carlyle's books, "many of which are known to you, I am sure—by name"!

AT first sight, there is something quaintly ridiculous in the title of that Report to which Dr. W. M. Tuppy has written an introduction in "Current History." It promises a statement of the *Protestant* view about sex, love, and marriage. Are we to understand, then, that the great doctrinal rift in Christendom has involved an antagonism of "view" even about the ethics of family life? Most of us had hoped that here at least there was a lull to denominational feud. The contrast of Christian with anti-Christian views of marriage was obvious enough. But why should there be a distinctively *Protestant* way of defining this relationship—any more than a distinctively Protestant attitude to war, or to bimetallism, or to free trade? Moreover, Dr. Tuppy's opening sentence seems distressingly the reverse of the truth. What is one to make of this?

Nothing indicates more clearly the social importance of the home than the present extraordinary interest in its welfare, and the general concern which is felt over the dangers which seem to imperil its safety.

I invite the reader to consider whether the critic would not have kept far closer to the notorious facts of the case if he had substituted this:

Nothing indicates more clearly the social insignificance of the home than the present extraordinary disregard for its welfare, and the obvious lack of concern over the dangers which seem to imperil its safety.

No doubt it is "democratic" to look upon the degree of attention paid to anything as the sufficient test of its importance. But when tried by this test, it is indisputable that the cause Dr. Tuppy has so much at heart has been steadily and rapidly declining. Faith in its ultimate recovery is thus possible only for those with a measure of non-democratic contempt for what is ephemerally popular on the stage and vocal in the most widely circulated magazines.

It is indeed somewhat characteristic of our time that social thinkers should thus console themselves for the steady downward

drift of a vast number by remembering the tokens of exceptional alarm which are shown by relatively few. In truth, they are entitled to take heart of grace at the sight, provided they definitely acknowledge that the majority indications are the wrong way, and that only in the hope inspired by the small minority of reflective people for the future—perhaps a distant one—can encouragement be found. But as a rule their argument is that the unrest of the present, the excitement, the rebelliousness against old usages and the zeal for a fresh start, are not merely symptoms of coming cure in a decadent social state—rather signs of a social state already better than any in the past! For instance, take the optimistic reflections about religion. Far fewer people are going to church now than, say, thirty years ago. But a sanguine friend explained to me some time ago, “It *means so much more* to go to church now. An older generation went because it was compulsory. Those who go now are going of their own free will. They have thought it out for themselves, not taken it for granted on the word of others”. Apply like reasoning to another case. Suppose a sharp rise in the jail population. Ah, says our cheery optimist, you must bear in mind that in these times of free thought on morality it means so much more to keep out of jail. An older generation was submissive to law because it was law. Those who observe it now are observing it of their own free will. They have thought out ethical problems for themselves, not taken the word of others for what they should do or should not do. So the rise in the jail population would actually signify a higher moral level!

The Report to which Dr. Tuppy has written this dubious introduction is indeed one worth pondering, both for its thoughtful reflectiveness and for the circumstances which its appearance has betokened. It was “The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America” which appointed two years ago a “National Committee on Marriage and Home”, and it is this body of very representative social thinkers that has issued, after much enquiry, a statement about the disturbing family situation of our time. It discusses “companionate marriage”, divorce by mutual consent, the scandal of “the marrying parson”, and other matters by which American social life is disgraced and the contents of the American periodical press have been made so foul. Space does not permit here any detailed account of the Committee’s recommendations, or of its reference to the fault chargeable upon the Churches for failure to influence more deeply the social thought of the time. But the Report is full of suggestive ideas alike about the cause of the evil and about the chances of remedy.

It is not in the United States alone that these last years have seen the multiplication of scandals in this field, or that it has become needful to re-argue what an earlier generation fortunately was able to take for granted. The spectacle of prosecution after prosecution within the last few months in England for the issue of a demoralizing novel, the tremendous increase of cases in the English divorce court, the calm reviewing in once respectable literary journals of such obscene garbage of the press as it should be accounted a shame even to name,—all this is a sign of the times. Its hideous implication will not be explained away by some fatuous remark about “the enquiring minds of young people”. And perhaps the most disquieting feature is the apparent timidity of Churches, the unwillingness to risk conflict with this aspect of “the spirit of the Age”. But by “Churches” is not here meant just gatherings of clergy. In the end, it is social pressure which determines a great deal of conduct. An earlier generation was capable of a wholesome austerity of boycott towards those whose outrage on the decencies of family life was notorious. To-day the social reaction seems to vary with the wealth or poverty of the offender. One recalls a comment in a play by Ibsen: “A man who gives as good dinners as you do can snap his fingers at morality”. Mr. Bernard Shaw drew a like moral in *The Irrational Knot*. If the novelists and dramatists can waken up such bodies as the committee which issued this Report to the fact that the laity are responsible for more in such matters than pointing out the inadequacies of the clergy, they will have deserved well of their time.

H. L. S.