

MARGINAL NOTES

OUR PHILOSOPHER-KING—"Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and wisdom and political leadership meet in the same man cities will never cease from ill The perfect ruler must be a philosopher And do not suppose that there will be many of them!"

Thus we read in *The Republic* of Plato. But the philosopher there desiderated is not such a ruler as was the saintly Marcus Aurelius who could dream in the solitude of his study of the whole world as a commonwealth with all men belonging to the same body-politic, and yet be guilty of a political blunder which contributed to the decay and dissolution of the empire over which he ruled. The philosopher-king must first apply his wisdom and his leadership to the promotion of the security of his realm and the welfare of its people; this duty discharged, he may then lend his aid to men of good-will abroad who seek to put the peace and prosperity of the world on sure foundations.

That the new occupant of the British throne will measure up to the requirements of Plato's philosopher-king is beyond all doubt. His ability to do so is established by his broad training for kingship while Prince of Wales, and by what he has publicly said and done since his accession. He knows the British Empire and the world at large better than any other public man in England. It has been said of him that "Men twice his age are lucky if they have seen half as much." That gives him a truly cosmopolitan outlook on life. How he can enter into sympathetic contact with those of his subjects whose station in life is a lowly one and those to whom fortune has not been kind, was well exemplified during his visit to Glasgow in the early part of this month. The avowed purpose of his visit was to inspect the giant Cunard-White Star liner *Queen Mary*, but he had a finer purpose to serve. I take my facts from the newspapers. He was told before going to Glasgow that some of the Left-wing city councillors declined to be presented to him. "That's perfectly all right," said the King, "tell them I'll come and have tea with them instead." And he did. Entering the shipyard, he was greeted by the spontaneous cheering of thousands of workmen, and, when he left, the air resounded with the shout of "Good old Teddy." Then he proceeded to visit the tenement-dwellers in the "Reddest" part of his kingdom. He first knocked at the door of a blind man who called out, "Who's there?" "I am your King, may I come

in?" was the answer. Inside the house the King bent over the cradle of a fortnight-old baby and exclaimed "Bonnie baby!" He expressed his sympathy with all those he visited in their troubles and privations. When he was leaving the district the tenement-dwellers cried out: "God bless you, Sir, God bless you!"

Small wonder, then, that we should hear the poet thus acclaim His Majesty King Edward VIII as he ascends the throne:

"Sire, we salute you—raised above us all
And yet still one of us; you always knew
To greet men without stooping; your high call
"Robs not the lowly of the friend in you.
"Your long line stretches well-nigh without end
To where in Nordic forest it began;
Your great heir-loom our happy racial blend,
"Happiest in you, the foremost Englishman."

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THE COMIC MUSE AT WESTMINSTER.—It is a matter of difficulty for the professional humorist to persuade his public that he is to be taken seriously in any of his ways or works. That Thomas Hood was a genuine poet is manifest in his *Song of the Shirt*—perhaps the most poignant appeal to compassion for the poor in English poetry—and yet the public of his day made it hard for him to escape from the lesser domain of the parodist and punster in which he started his literary career. So, too, the transmigration of Mr. A. P. Herbert from *Punch* to Parliament may create some perplexity in the minds of those who know him only as a wearer of the mask of the comic muse. They will be loath to lose the laugh-maker in the law-maker, and inclined to search any legislation which he may introduce to see if the truth of Horace's saying that a big thing is often better done in a jesting than in a serious mood or manner is not tested therein. In short, they may be beguiled into thinking that in Mr. Herbert's new sphere of activity there is no reason why the formal and the flippant should not be *très bien ensemble*.

Now as a matter of fact Mr. Herbert has furnished ground for the assumption that he conceives it is quite proper for him to do homage to the comic muse even at Westminster. He has introduced a Bill into the Commons to amend the laws relating to public refreshment. The Bill seeks to assimilate the English laws in that behalf to the existing laws in France, and to that end the Home Secretary is instructed "to ascertain

what are the laws of France at the date of the passing of this Act." For a private member to shoulder the duty of making his Bill intelligible on a member of the Government is extremely naïve, but the Home Secretary will hardly appreciate the drollery of it. Then it is worth while examining the preamble:

"WHEREAS it appears that the laws concerning public refreshment are vexatious and unreasonable and are not well fitted to the good sense of Englishmen and the conditions of the present time: AND WHEREAS the said laws as at present administered are a hindrance to improvement in the resorts of the people; a cause of intemperance, a burden upon trade, a danger to the King's revenue and a discouragement to foreign travellers proposing to visit this realm: AND WHEREAS it is commonly accepted that England is now to be considered as a part of the Continent of Europe and should so conduct herself in all proper and peaceful affairs; and in this affair it is expedient that she should follow the good and civilised customs of France, which, by reason of the said laws is now not possible."

I leave it to my readers to say whether Mr. Herbert by this experiment in legislative draftsmanship has added in any measure to the dignity of Parliament. At all events this is what *The Spectator* said about it in a recent issue: "The whole Bill in fact reads like one of Mr. Herbert's own articles in *Punch*. There is really no place in the House of Commons for the professional humorist as such, particularly when his constituency is Oxford University."

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AN EXPENSIVE EDUCATION.—Mr. Samuel W. Jacobs, K.C., Member of the House of Commons for Cartier-Montreal, seems to share the views of Edmund Burke as to the duties appertaining to a representative of the people in the English parliamentary system. Burke would have us believe that to make the popular chamber "the express image of the feelings of the nation" it is necessary for the members to have "an anxious care of public money; an openness, approaching facility, to public complaint." On every hand at the present time we hear of the waste of money by governments in maintaining useless public services. So, in view of the premises, we were not surprised to read in the press the following account of a recent episode in the Dominion Parliament:

"Publication of the *Labour Gazette* is a waste of money in the opinion of Sam Jacobs (Lib., Cartier-Montreal). He told the House of Commons so yesterday when Hon. Norman Rogers, Minister of Labour, sought approval for the estimate of \$30,000 to cover the cost of the monthly magazine which the Labour Department has issued for many years.

'I don't know of any person who reads it,' said Mr. Jacobs.

'Here is one here, said A. A. Heaps' (C.C.F., Winnipeg North).

'I suppose I have to admit my honourable friend is a 'person,' said Mr. Jacobs, 'but I doubt if the government needs to contribute \$30,000 a year to his education.' "

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THE GERMANARYANS.—*The Law Times* (London) has published in two recent numbers (Feb. 22nd and 29th) an epitome of the decrees, administrative measures and legal decisions governing the position of 'non-Aryans' in Germany at the present time. This epitome was prepared by Mr. James G. Macdonald, High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees coming from Germany, and was appended to his letter of resignation as tendered by him some time ago to the League. The following extracts from the epitome may prove interesting to the readers of the REVIEW:

"He is only a citizen who is a national of German or cognate blood and has shown by his behaviour that he is willing and fit loyally to serve the German people and Reich. . . . No Jew, therefore, can be a member of the national community.

"Judges are deemed to be 'the personal appointees' of the *Führer* and Chancellor, and may be dismissed without cause.

"The 'non-Aryan' lawyer must be excluded from the living development of German customary law, which he does not understand and in which, in any event, he can have no part."

Interesting is it, indeed, and painful, too, to realize that such parodies of sound political theory could issue from a Germany so wise in earlier days. How ill they accord with the counsels of Kant who taught that the only true aim of civil society is to make possible the constant exercise of good will between man and man, and that while the State is necessary for the governance of social communities, such limits as are imposed upon the liberty of the individual by the necessities of the State must be imposed by himself. Nor can we forget that before Hegel attacked Kant's political theories and captured the absolutist Prussian mind by his apotheosis of the State, Kant's essay on "Perpetual Peace" found appreciation at the hands of some of his distinguished compatriots of whom Goethe was one.

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