

Lady at the tea-table last week telling how she had tried the experiment of having a well-educated Danish girl, over here to perfect her English, as cook, and how it had not succeeded: "My dear, she had an ermine coat. One can't have a servant who wears an ermine coat. And, anyway, she hadn't got the lower-class mentality. But, of course, how could she have, poor thing?"

JOHN HILTON

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Lucy T. Marks.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

In the Army to-day you get the best education possible, the best food, and you see the world at the expense of His Majesty. What more can any man ask for in this world?—Field Marshal Lord Milne reported in *Observer*.

The Great War lasted so long because the respective war aims of the two sides were incompatible, and neither side was prepared to give way until compelled to do so.—Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George in *Daily Telegraph*.

He [Mr. Chamberlain] saw no reason why the country should not be able to support the additional burden while at the same time preserving a rising standard of comfort. . . .

In political circles to-night it was suggested that Mr. Chamberlain's statement was made to prepare the ground for the new Unemployment Regulations.

If these regulations prove less generous to the unemployed than the present system—as will almost certainly be the case—it would be useful as justification for the reduction to be able to point to the parlous state of the national finances.—*Financial News*.

We hesitate to say we were shocked to learn of the charge of gross immorality against 276 Roman Catholic monks, members of the Franciscan brotherhood, at the Criminal Court of Coblenz. Our hesitancy lies in the fact that it might sound strange to be shocked at anything in the Church of Rome. Knowing of the unholiness of some of the Holy Fathers we cannot really be surprised at the misdeeds of the children.—*Churchman's Magazine*.

No doubt there are mitigating circumstances in British eyes . . . in the reflection that Nazism, as a form of Government, is, after all, a domestic preference and has no mission (as Bolshevism has) to export its system to other countries.—*Times* leader.

When I read of the success of the new bomber, my mind flew to the words of the first verse of the 144th Psalm, "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight."—DEFENCE, NOT DEFIANCE.—Letter in *Morning Post*.

Britain is discovering that its own resorts have nothing to learn from the best that foreign countries can offer.—*Sunday Dispatch*.

Clairvoyance Specs. Wear them and see clairvoyantly.—Advt. in *Psychic News*.

GOD-CONTROL

THE Albert Hall full to the ceiling. To-night it is for the Buchmanites, not long ago it was for Sir Oswald Mosley, to-morrow for the centenary of Joseph Chamberlain. A vast Union Jack drapes the organ; a smaller Union Jack is wrapped round the rostrum. The flags of the British Dominions are under the organ, and to the right and the left of the floodlit choir are the flags of the many nations where the Oxford Groups have taken their message. A swastika banner stands out in the line of conventional patterns. Only the flag of Soviet Russia is absent. The organ is playing gay and inspiriting tunes, changing quickly from one to another. I enter a box at the extreme back of the hall, facing the organ, to the tune of "Britons Scorn to Yield." The setting would need little alteration for to-morrow night's meeting, and the

audience will, I take it, be much the same people, predominantly well-dressed, upper middle-class people with rather a high proportion of women. A well-known benevolent employer sits in a box not far from me and next door is a carefully preserved lady with the set smile that is born of many bazaars. I watched a serious young woman listening attentively; she was looking, it seemed to me, in desperate earnestness for some compensation for not having any useful work to do. We stand to sing God Save the King. The conductor and the choir lead us; this is no perfunctory ceremony. So far I might have dropped into any of the three meetings, Fascist, Conservative or Buchmanite. Can it be that the religion of all three will prove to be much the same too?

The leader of the meeting Mr. A. S. Loudoun Hamilton, M.C., formerly at Christ Church, Oxford, is a more attractive spiritual guide than Mr. Frank Buchman, who sits modestly amongst his followers. I first saw Mr. Buchman at an Oxford Group meeting in Geneva when I sat next to Kapp while he drew the admirable portrait that appears on the opposite page. Mr. Hamilton is a clean-cut university man with no frills and he wears his old school tie without ostentation. The keynote of the meeting, he tells us, is to be "national safety," only to be obtained by God-control. (Does God need a big air-force or not?) God must govern England through God-controlled homes, God-controlled schools, God-controlled business, God-controlled professional life and God-controlled international policy. A Brigadier-General, who trains racehorses, next tells us how he enlisted in the Oxford Movement and was changed. He used to swear at his men just as they swore at the horses. Now the men too are changed. No more war. To change society to a God-guided basis is a bigger job than an army command. We have to choose "between gas-masks and God's tasks." A lady from Aberdeen describes the change in her home life when her sons came under the influence of the Oxford Movement—"We have proved in our home that God controlling and guiding each individual is the answer to divorce, strikes, unemployment and war." A chartered accountant, a D.S.O. and an International Rugby player, tells us how God controls his business and home life, and a journalist, who used to drink too much, looks forward to the time when newspapers will be different because the people who make the news will be changed. (I wish questions were allowed at Buchman meetings: what happens to changed journalists if proprietors and advertising managers do not change too?) Mr. Holme, Winchester and New College, was studying for the Foreign Office. Very sensibly he asked how he could hope to solve international conflicts if he could not solve his own. We British played the part of a "hypercritical schoolmaster" confessing other people's sins instead of our own. We may not like other people's political structures, but they "may at least learn to work as a unit" and have "leaders with youth enthusiastically behind them." In certain countries "full responsibility for the state of the nation was taken by a few people. They started with their own country. They did what they meant to do . . . England can only take the lead when she has taken the lead from God." A Government, as one speaker put it, of "God-controlled experts." The Labour Lord Mayor of Newcastle spoke long and eloquently, but not into the microphone. He had been "in the seventh heaven" since his conventional Methodism had been turned to reality by the Groups. God would save Newcastle from unemployment. Five workers from the woollen mills of Yorkshire, who had been changed, had travelled down that afternoon to tell us about it and would be at work again at seven o'clock in the morning. Each had his or her little metaphor or jest prepared; the weaver was now weaving God into his cloth; Marion Clarkson, a "twister," had been shown by God "how to twist her life into others and help them to know that even twisters can be straight." Each of the five told us how they had not always worked honestly and well. One of them used to drink; they slacked off on flat rates and scamped through on piece-work. They had confessed to God and the foreman, and now they



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worked for God and made everyone happy in the workshop. The lady next to me quivered with pleasure. "So direct and simple," she said. She put down her lorgnette for a little volley of claps with small, chubby hands.

Then there was a novelty—a sort of recitative by a group of young people helped out by the choir. They told us they had been from the darkest Congo to barren Tibet, from the Arctic to the Antarctic, and they had everywhere found a worn-out and broken-down past. The Statesman planned and organised but the structure tottered; the Rich man could find no satisfaction in his riches; the Poor woman complained that her home was destroyed and asked why "her heart grew dull with hatred." Then God sang a solo and each of the characters found salvation. The Statesman found his work enduring. "Confidence spreads from our united work"; the Soldier pressed on in constructive work and the Church, which had complained that no one listened, raised the cross in victory. The Rich man became a steward of God's property, "triumphant when God guides me," the Poor woman found friends. "My troubled mind I have unlocked. God has taken care of all my need and poverty. It is spring-time in my home." (Had God paid the rent?) A French baroness told us of strikes in Paris, settled by a member of the Oxford Group. (I wanted to know the terms of the settlement.) Professor Norval of Pretoria, once a champion of Boer rights and a hater of Englishmen, told us how he had been changed, formed a coalition with his adversaries, now loved England and the British Empire and saw God's solution for all the racial problems of Africa. (I badly wanted to know whether God approved of the colour bar and the Pass system for natives). Another baroness (God does much of his work through people with titles and decorations), "the daughter of Prince and Princess Lieven of Russia," reported progress from Riga. She had seen real revolution; her property, everything was lost. She had been bitter, until changed by the Oxford Movement. Her country (no one mentioned Bolshevism) had been too late to accept God's guidance. England was not yet too late. The thin intellectual thread which ran through the meeting had guided us to its predestined conclusion.

I have good friends who are Buchmanites, and I get annoyed with those of my generation who affect to think that religion is unimportant. The technique for obtaining internal peace by surrendering one's life to a movement and a purpose beyond oneself works to-day as it has always worked. The four tests—absolute love, honesty, unselfishness and purity (which the sophisticated Buchmanite will explain in private as meaning unselfishness and fidelity in sex life)—these tests of conduct have changed people and given quality to life in every generation. There are, I am sure, many homes in England which are sweeter and less contentious places because the Groups Movement has reawakened people to a genuine belief in their nominally accepted morality. Selfish women make peace with their daughters and are kinder to their maids; children are more considerate to their parents; husbands and wives who were estranged honestly discuss their difficulties and rebuild on a firmer foundation. Greedy employers are more considerate to their workmen and their workmen respond. They tell us that Buchmanism is good business. Well, it is no new discovery that honesty pays and that in any branch of life the day is more happy and successful if its prelude is a quiet period of meditation and consecration to serious purpose. It is difficult to believe that life can be well lived or relationships happy without a deliberate use of the ethical tests which are common to all religions.

But the Oxford Movement is not content with individual salvation. It will change human society, it tells us, through individual change. I recall the history of many religious revivals. They have made the same claim. The stream of history has run on and the current of the age has swept them along with it. Wesley, who began a greater and more genuine revival, had no notion when he shook to its foundations a negligent Church and called the individual sinner back to Christ, that the historian a hundred years later would say that

the social effects of Methodism were to sanctify ugliness and canonise those virtues of obedience, thrift and industry which were essential if the new industrialism was to prosper. He did not know that we should agree to-day that his great religious revival served above all to persuade the starving workers of that period that they would be well fed in the next world; and that his hymns, that certainly comforted the dying and helped men to forget the misery of the slums, were a potent factor in inducing people to accept a slum life and a slum death. As I listened to the testimonies in of the Albert Hall tonight, I asked myself whether this new Salvationism was really so very different. The shape has changed; doctrine is unfashionable; Heaven and Hell are gone. This is religion without tears. To-day, with the world tumbling round us, members of the Oxford Groups want, as we all want, war and class conflict to cease. To face the causes of war or the causes of class conflict is too great a strain for many of us. How much easier if God's message is that these problems can be solved by national unity, if we can throw our burden upon the shoulders of God-controlled experts under a God-controlled leader! I think I know the social and political movement of which the Buchmanite movement is unconsciously a part.

July 7th, 1936.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

Correspondence

BRITISH POLICY

SIR,—For some time it has seemed to me increasingly plain that one of the chief aims of, at least, a strong section of the Government and its supporters is to patch up a settlement with Germany on the basis of a tacit understanding that, provided she does not invade French territory, she is quite free to go ahead against Russia, Czechoslovakia and possibly a few other States, with the assurance that we shall do nothing whatever to hinder her or to assist France if she goes to the rescue. I think that explains much of the zeal shown for getting Germany back into the League and for getting rid of its general coercive provisions against aggressors.

Anyone who doubts this diagnosis should study the *Times* leading article of Monday, July 6th, on "The League and Germany." This declares that British opinion "is prepared to go very far in guaranteeing the integrity of French territory," because "the safety of northern France and of Belgium, and for that matter of the Netherlands, is a recognised British interest." But "what British opinion is not prepared to accept is the leadership of France over the whole field of foreign policy, or to admit responsibility for all the liabilities which she has been accumulating in the shape of alliances on the further side of Germany." Then, after a few disapproving words about some of the worst features of the Nazi regime, we are reminded that there are "mitigating circumstances in British eyes" for these aberrations and also that "Nazism, as a form of government, is, after all, a domestic preference and has no mission (as Bolshevism has) to export its system to other countries. The Franco-Soviet Pact is not regarded here as a helpful diplomatic achievement." And finally, "the uppermost conviction of British opinion is that there can be neither peace in Europe nor a League of Nations worth the name without German co-operation in bringing this about."

Here is a plain hint that "British opinion" would much prefer Germany to Russia as a friend, though it is Germany that has flouted the League and laid powder mines under half Europe, while no one genuinely suspects Russia of plotting any aggression except the aggression of ideas. But is this true of British opinion? Not, I think, of the working-class majority, nor of the intellectuals. One may definitely not be a Communist; one may violently dislike many features in the Soviet regime, yet feel that the destruction of the Russian economic experiment and above all the spread of Nazism or Fascism over most of Europe would be a terrible misfortune for mankind. And what about Czechoslovakia, the one thriving, peaceful democracy still surviving in mid-Europe? Would we and should we, when it came to the point, sit quietly by and see all that destroyed, without lifting even an economic finger to hinder it? No doubt many would