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THE NEXT STAGE.

THE Conference meets again this morning, but not, we are afraid, in circumstances which promise well for a good conclusion. We take for granted that in due time the House of Commons will be made aware of the course of the proceedings, and in the interval we had better not rush to premature conclusions. Even if failure has to be reported, there will be no reason to assume that the last word has been said. The idea of a Conference at this stage was well conceived, and the country has reason to be grateful to the KING for using his influence and the authority of his position to bring the leaders of parties into consultation. That was an entirely right and wise exercise of the constitutional functions of the Crown, and the KING at all events will have no reason to reproach himself if consultation has not produced agreement. Other consciences may need a little more searching. The premature publication in the *Times* last Monday of information which ought to have been communicated first to the House of Commons was a disastrous blow at the public interest, which is not to be justified by any plea of journalistic enterprise or any explanation that it was derived from "private" and not from public men. It raised suspicions that something was being done behind the scenes which might be communicated to a newspaper as a settled conclusion, without so much as a "by your "leave" to those who were finally responsible. It created an atmosphere of suspicion on both sides, and threw both into an attitude of anxious watchfulness lest anything that they thought important should be given away by their representatives. These were not good conditions for the calm and impartial deliberation of high matters, but we are not required to conclude that all is lost if in such circumstances an agreement has not been reached.

We do not wish to anticipate more trouble than is necessary, but, assuming that the misgivings which are current this morning prove to be well-founded, we may ask what the Government is to do next. In general terms its object must be to show that a fair opportunity is being offered to the "homogeneous" populations in Ulster to make their choice between coming in under the Dublin Parliament and standing out from it. An ideally perfect distribution may not be possible, but the country ought to be satisfied that any considerable blocks of people belonging to one persuasion or the other have the chance of voting themselves out or voting themselves in, and, having that chance, are without excuse for breaking the peace or flying to arms to make good their claims. The best means of effecting this object will probably be to go ahead with the Amending Bill or possibly to substitute for it another Bill which will effect the purpose in a simpler and easier way than that of reamending the Lords' amendments to the original Bill. It is, of course, impossible to hold men bound by concessions which they were willing to make on condition that they obtained a settlement, but the Nationalist Party will, we are sure, see the great advantage of making clear to the country that they are resisting the forcible exclusion of their own people and not seeking forcibly to include homogeneous blocks of reluctant opponents. If the Amending Bill leaves the House of Commons in the form we suggest, we cannot believe that the House of Lords will take the responsibility of rejecting it.

Still less can we believe that responsible men in the Unionist Party will sanction violent measures in Ulster while these last stages are in progress. We are surely entitled to say that any such action must be sternly reprobated by the responsible and sober-minded people who fear "civil strife." Men who fly to arms not for their own liberties, which are in no wise threatened, but for imposing their view upon other people whom they will not trust to exercise an option by ballot, can have no sympathy from sober-minded people, and can claim no sanction from history and experience. The Government will be expected to do justice and stand firm. Its danger, as its opponents know, is that in attempting to appease men who refuse to be conciliated, and in exercising forbearance to law-breakers who requite it with defiance, it will lose touch both with its own supporters and with the mass of people in the country who desire to see the law respected. At all stages of this affair the temptation to compromise the Government and to present it to the country as weak and ineffective has been the ruling motive with the Tory die-hards; and at critical moments it has overridden the desire of the more responsible members of the party to procure a settlement. Even while the Conference has been sitting an incessant clatter has been kept up in a section of the Unionist press that Ministers must either yield everything to Sir EDWARD CARSON and lose the respect not only of their own supporters but of the country at large, or see the Conference break up and "civil "war" proclaimed. The Government owes it to itself and owes it to the public to withstand this clamour. More important things even than the Irish question are at stake on this issue. If the Tory die-hards had their way, and the Government broke in confusion and sent its supporters to the polls without guidance or policy, the result might indeed be a Tory victory, but let there be no mistake about what it would mean and what would inevitably follow from it in due course. It would mean not that the country had sanctioned either the Unionist policy or Sir EDWARD CARSON's methods, but that it required stronger measures than the Government had taken against reactionaries and breakers of the peace, and from it in due time would come a more formidable democratic movement than this country has yet seen.

NAPIER.

THE INVENTOR OF LOGARITHMS.

Edinburgh is en fête to-day to celebrate the tercentenary of "the most excellent John Naper, Lord of Marchiston." To the development of mathematical science up to the time of Napier these islands had contributed little or nothing for many centuries, but that does not necessarily imply that its claims were unrecognised during that period. Did not Roger Bacon, "doctor mirabilis," declare that Mathematics is the Alphabet of all Philosophy. In the next century an Archbishop of Canterbury, in the person of Thomas Bradwardine, "doctor profundus," wrote a volume on perspective, and two Oxford Professors, Richard of Wallingford and John Maudith, are said by Loria to have delved into the mysteries of Trigonometry. Cuthbert Tunstall, before finally devoting his life to Theology, bade a public farewell to the science he loved when he published his "De Arte Supputanti Libri Quattuor," in 1522. With Robert Recorde's "Grounde of Art" and Oughtred's "Clavis Mathematica" we come to the period when British thinkers became determined to remain ignorant no longer of the work of their mathematical brethren on the Continent. But one step more was to bring us to the glorious period of the mighty Newton. The transitional stage is marked by two names—John Napier and Thomas Harriot. The invention of logarithms was disclosed to the world in the "Canonis Logarithmorum Mirifici Descriptio" of 1614. To fix the ideas chronologically, we may remember that two years later Harvey was to announce in the Lumleian Lectures his views as to the circulation of the blood, and within a week of the date of that epoch-making announcement Shakespeare breathed his last. Napier was born four years after the birth of Tycho, fourteen before Galileo, and twenty-one before Kepler. The Emperor Rudolph had become the patron of Brahe when poverty and neglect drove the famous astronomer from Denmark. Tycho presented Kepler to his new patron, who conferred on the brilliant young aspirant the title of Imperial mathematician, and allotted to him the task of preparing the Rudolphine tables. Computation was ever in those days synonymous with toil, and years were spent upon what with the proper tool could have been achieved in a few weeks. No wonder we find Kepler writing thus eagerly to his friend Schikkart on March 11, 1618: A Scottish baron has started up, his name I cannot remember, but he has put forth some wonderful mode by which all necessity of multiplications and divisions are commuted to mere additions and subtractions, nor does he make any use of a table of sines."

The "Mirificus Canon" was not the first book published by Napier. "A Plaine Discouery of the whole Reuelation of Saint John: set downe in two treatises: The one searching and prouing the true interpretation thereof: The other applying the same paraphrastically and historically to the text. Set Foorth By John Napeir, L. of Marchistoun, younger. Whereunto Are annexed certaine Oracles of Sybilla, agreeing with the Reuelation and other places of Scripture," is the simple title of a work which appeared in 1593 and brought no small repute to the writer as in advance of his time. It will be remembered that Newton, in his turn, was to attach importance to his own researches in the sphere of theology. And some of the followers of that great genius became infected with the idea that mathematical methods might be of avail in almost any field of work. Thus, John Craig, a dozen years after the appearance of the "Principia," brought out his "Theologiae Christianiae Principia Mathematica," in which he maintained the simple thesis that faith in the Christian religion must diminish with the square of the time. The reader may calculate for himself the exact date at which Christian faith must on this hypothesis

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NOTE.—This column is occupied every day by an article reflecting the policies, principles, and opinions of this House of Business upon various points of public interest. SELFRIDGE & Co., LTD.

The "Outsize" Problem.

BY CALLISTHENES.

The "outsize" problem has been dealt with from time to time in this column, and a forthcoming event of particular interest to our lady customers makes it again an appropriate subject for discussion.

Briefly, the argument is this: The majority of men and women have long since found that they can buy costumes and suits ready to wear with far less trouble and just as much certainty of being well fitted as if they had them made to their individual measurements.

But the minority, those who imagine themselves too short or tall, too stout or slim, for the art of the ready-to-wear tailor, have in many cases resigned themselves to the necessary delays, to the fittings, chalking, pinning, &c., of the bespoke tailor.

This constituted a deficiency which Selfridge's set themselves to remedy three years ago. The problem was recognised from the first as a difficult one, and was tackled with all possible care, with the result that to-day this House is known to thousands of people, both men and women, as one which caters as thoroughly for the needs of the "outsize" as for the "stocksize" figure. These words "outsize" and "stocksize" are indeed meaningless to Selfridge's, for where the stock carried includes clothes for *all* figures, there can be no "stocksize" or "outsize."

* * *

For the moment, however, the Men's "Ready-for-Service" Clothing departments must take care of themselves, for, as was mentioned above, an event of more than ordinary interest to ladies takes place next week, and to it in particular—or rather, to those ladies for whose benefit it was designed—this article is dedicated.

The event is one of those "sizes" sales of ladies' costumes which have played so large a part in the making of Selfridge's reputation among their "outsize" customers.

For five days (from Monday to Friday next) this sale will be held in the Costume department on the second floor, and it will provide an excellent opportunity for those ladies who have not yet realised to what perfection the ready to wear principle has been brought to do so, and at the same time to buy a fashionable costume for the moors, the seaside, or the promenade that will make the most inveterate bargain-hunter open her eyes and her cheque-book with equal astonishment and delight.

* * *

After all, there is nothing to be surprised at in the splendid achievements of the ready to wear clothing designers and manufacturers.

It is simply the natural evolution of ideas carried into effect. There are parallels to be seen everywhere. The department-store is the evolved form of the country market and the ready-to-wear costume is the evolved form of the old "ready-made."

The evolution of the latter, however, has been so rapid that most people now living can remember the late Victorian horrors, when it was a case of "stock size" or nothing. The next generation, having been brought up in an age when such ready-to-wear costumes as Selfridge's are offering next week are to be had will take much more readily to the ideal than some of their elders, for they will have no ill-fitting "ready-mades" with which to compare and confuse the more recently-evolved articles.

But even to-day, few women could do without the privilege of seeing themselves in their new costumes without any loss of time or obligation to purchase.

* * *

The costumes to be offered on Monday include some wonderful values in Harris Tweed tailor-made coats and skirts—not only ready-to-wear, but ready to golf in, fish in, climb in—clothes which will be as appreciated for their practicality as their stylishness; they are priced at £3! Real Harris Tweeds at £3! Then there are some very smart navy serge suits (by the way, why have the ladies' tailors commandeered this last masculine noun?), smart and becoming in style and worth much more than the prices asked, which are £4 and £5.

Among the greatest bargains are the covert coating suits. This delightful fabric is rainproof and lends itself to as graceful and *chic* treatment for outdoor garments as any that ever left a loom. These are priced from £5.

A few representative costumes will be illustrated in the "Daily Telegraph" announcement on Monday, and with this as a hint of the wonderful value, an early visit to the department will be irresistible. But remember, the sale lasts only five days!

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