

A LEAGUE OF  
NATIONS

HENRY NOEL BRAILSFORD

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# A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

**THE WAR OF STEEL AND GOLD : A Study of the Armed Peace. Fourth Edition.**  
2s. net. G. Bell & Sons. 1914.

"This book is, within its range, the most complete study of our recent foreign policy that we have seen . . . An admirable piece of work, and in its synthesis of ideas, original."—*Manchester Guardian*.

"Nowhere, up to now, has there appeared so clear and annihilating an account of the way in which foreign affairs are managed in England, nor of its results in recent years. . . . By far the most suggestive book on foreign policy that has appeared for many years."—*The New Statesman*.

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**SHELLEY, GODWIN AND THEIR CIRCLE.**  
Home University Library, 1s. 3d. 1913.

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**MACEDONIA : Its Races and their Future**  
Methuen. 12s. 6d. net. 1906.

"Few writers are better qualified than Mr. Brailsford to deal with Balkan affairs . . . acute observation and real understanding of Balkan psychology . . . admirable impartiality. . . . His style is both philosophical and brilliant."—*The Times*.

**ADVENTURES IN PROSE : A Volume of Essays and Sketches.** Simpkin, Marshall and Co. 5s. 1911.

**THE BROOM OF THE WAR-GOD : A Novel of the Greek War.** Heinemann. 1898. *Out of Print*.

# A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY

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*"The War of Steel and Gold," &c.*

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## PREFACE

THE war has called forth some good books on the future international organization of the world, and others on the settlement of the war itself. To my thinking, these two questions are a single problem which must be solved as a whole. The task which for us exceeds all others in importance, and must be made to include all others, is the making of conditions which promise security from further wars. The settlement of the national, colonial, and economic questions involved in this war, must be a settlement which will help the creation, and ensure the harmonious working of a League of Nations founded to maintain peace. In this book I have tried to consider how far such a League of Nations as President Wilson has proposed, can guarantee the security of Europe. Its success will depend, not merely on the wise drafting of its constitution, but upon the solution reached in the war-settlement of our problems of nationality, colonial expansion, international trade, sea-power, and alliances. I have groped in the following chapters for an answer to this question: Under what political and economic conditions would the creation of a League of Nations be a hopeful adventure?

The book was written during the summer of 1916 and finished in the last days of October. Much has happened since the manuscript was completed—the fall of the Coalition Cabinet, the German offer of negotiation, and the American tender of mediation. The German Chancellor has offered to join a League

for the Maintenance of Peace, and our own war-aims have been defined anew. It is imperative that we should consider whether a League of Nations is that "guarantee" for the future which we demand.

One chapter of this book (the fifth) has already appeared as a pamphlet. To readers of the later editions of "The War of Steel and Gold," I would apologize for some repetition, in a fuller form, of suggestions briefly outlined there.

My warmest thanks are due to Mr. Noel Buxton for his encouragement and help.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

*Christmas, 1916.*

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# A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

## CHAPTER I

### FROM FORCE TO CONFERENCE

NEVER since the young levies of revolutionary France marched to encounter the leagued kings of the old order at Valmy, has Europe seen at work an impulse so generous as that which fired the British democracy in the early months of this war. The challenge had found us mentally unprepared. Our attention was absorbed in our own Irish controversy. We believed, and believed truly, that our relations with Germany were better than they had been for many years. We had hardly noticed the presages of the coming storm or heeded the controversies over armaments and the Near East in which the select spokesmen of the German and Russian ruling classes had during the spring and early summer declared war upon each other, even before the occasion for war arose. So little was our mood attuned to strife that the murder of the Austrian Archduke stirred in us only horror and sympathy for a house tracked by the shadow of incessant tragedy. The result was that when war overtook us, after a few days' debate, we entered it without anger, without hate, above all, without desire. So little were we prepared for it that it struck us with surprise as the thing it is, an anachronism, an obsolete barbarity, a blot on

civilization. We had been living our own normal lives, in which the idea of force and power plays little part. We were not thinking on this plane, and the sudden perception that big guns, embattled armies, and colossal ships are the factors which work out the destinies of nations moved us only to an instinctive and all but unanimous revolt. We were consciously doing a thing repugnant to reason and instinct, and we told each other that we were doing it for the last time. The popular mottoes of the day were "Never again" and "A war to end war." A study of the leading articles in which our newspapers and reviews discussed the task before us would show, with rare exceptions, a recurrent emphasis on the idea that out of this war would somehow grow the resolve to organize Europe for the prevention of future wars. When that phrase with the ambiguous mask, "the crushing of Prussian militarism," was first adopted as a statement of our aim in the war, it implied in the national mind the belief that Germany alone had resisted the evolution of a peaceful Europe. It did but need a united effort to overthrow this single, this local, obstacle and the way would be clear, if not to the actual federation of Europe, at least to the creation of a friendly and pacific society which would eliminate war. So far were we from meditating any lasting injury to the German people, that we liked to think that our arms might do them a service by discrediting and weakening the ascendancy, as burdensome to them as to us, of the Prussian military caste. We were aware of the immense call which the war made on our energies, and looking around us, we saw and loved the spirit of self-sacrifice and nobility in the eager face of youth. We knew that the will was good which sent these millions of volunteers marching shoulder to shoulder. Our eager reasoning ran

forward to complete the argument and fulfil the prophecy. When such colossal forces, inspired by a high purpose, were set in motion, could the result fail to correspond to the effort? We dismissed the idea of a little victory, a mean victory. The end, we thought, must resemble the beginning; it must be, in completed fact, in concrete result, the vision and purpose of peace with liberty which had stimulated our minds at the start. When the first long lists of dead and wounded men bade us count the cost, our estimate of the value of the prize was only heightened. It could be no paltry end, no petty satisfaction of vanity or pride which cost so dear. We knew then that Europe would number the slain by millions before peace came, and our demand was the firmer that the peace must be constructive and enduring.

Few of us paused to ask the question whether force, even when clean hands wield it with a high aim, can achieve the ideal ends, the spiritual purposes which we reckoned among our tasks. One may by force frustrate and annihilate force; one may by force take territories, appropriate colonies, delimit spheres of interest and trade; but as yet we did not ask ourselves whether by force one may change an evil will, convert an enemy to better aims, and build the city of God. We knew that our power was great and our aims high, and we scarcely paused to inquire whether the means were appropriate to the end. A nation at war must subordinate its thinking to the necessity of success. It believes whatever will conduce to strengthen its will and confirm its purpose. Some beliefs, some opinions, some forecasts make for confidence and victory. These it selects and adopts. The scepticism which questions the efficacy of force to attain its end becomes for a people at war the subtlest and most disintegrating treason. It was

characteristic of the moral exaltation in which the whole nation lived in this first period of war that, though we were using force to attain the great end of a constructive peace, our thinking as yet scarcely admitted the idea of power. We were very far from the megalomania which cements vast empires with blood. So far were we from it that first among our conscious purpose was the wish to strengthen and multiply the little nationalities of Europe. It became a generous pastime with our scholars to reconstruct the map of Europe on the basis of nationality, and so sure were these idealists that the reign of force would be abolished, that few of them even paused to consider whether a little land-locked Bohemia or a diminished but independent Hungary could maintain their sovereignty under the pressure of the great military empires which would surround them. The explanation of this paradox is that we believed that military empires would soon be a thing of the past. We expected a future in which the greatest empire and the smallest nationality would negotiate on equal terms. We meant, in a word, to abolish the idea of power, to eliminate force as the decisive factor in international relations. Precisely how this was to be achieved we should consider at our leisure ; the first step was to defeat in Prussia the arch-exponent of the idea of power. We hoped that defeat would set up a more completely liberal Constitution in Germany ; and it did not disconcert us that by a contrary working of cause and effect we predicted that victory would bring the final triumph of constitutionalism in Russia. The world to our hopes was malleable and plastic. The hour had come for all the belated changes, the overdue advances, which the timidity of diplomacy, the dread of war, and the fetish of the *status quo* had postponed for more than a generation. But of all these



changes the greatest and the most beneficent would be the new temper of mankind, the new methods in diplomacy, the new structure of the family of nations which the last of wars would forge into an enduring peace. Without that vision of the better future we should have found the carnage, the embitterment, and the waste of this war an unendurable nightmare of horror. Our mood resembled very closely that of the French people in the early phases of the Revolution. In hours of energy and resolve a nation's task assumes a concentrated simplicity. To the men of that day it seemed necessary only to make an end of priests and kings, and the natural goodness of mankind would do the rest. We were fighting to defeat a military caste, and we believed that the idea of force would perish with it.

The habit of thinking in terms of force and power was in normal times so little developed among us that a stranger, who compared our habits of thought with those of any continental people, would ask himself whether we lacked a sense which other races possess. This peculiarity showed itself in many fields outside the field of foreign policy, and if any people is distinguished by it in a still higher degree, that people is the kindred American democracy. We had a horror of using force, and an even subtler and stronger horror of talking or writing in terms of force. What we condemned in Germany was not merely her abuse of her military power, but the habit in her rulers, and even in her thinkers, of talking in terms of power. It offended us alike in their academic speculations and in their bullying, sabre-rattling diplomacy. When we used force, an instinct of good manners, and it may also be the rooted English belief that force is itself an evil, taught us to do it quietly. We were distressed, as no other European people is

distressed, when we used force to suppress a strike, above all if bloodshed resulted. We shrank, as no other people shrinks, from the shooting of traitors and rebels. Our embarrassment, on the very eve of war, in dealing with the Ulster question came from nothing but this typical dislike of using force even to suppress force. Our repugnance to "paternal" legislation which involves coercion sprang from the same instinct, as our adherence to voluntary military service was its most notable expression. Even when we adopted conscription we respected, as no other people does, the scruples of the uncompromising pacifist, and refused to apply to him the penalty of death, which is his fate not merely in Germany but in France. The explanation lay, of course, not in any innate racial peculiarity (if such a thing anywhere exists) but in our history and our geographical conditions. The relative antiquity of our Constitution, the relative remoteness of our last civil war, our long immunity from invasion are, of course, its foundation. Our vast Empire might have bred in us the opposite temper. In point of fact it only confirmed us in our dislike of force. The lesson learned from the attempt to dragoon the American colonies was never forgotten, and even in the non-self-governing colonies our pride was that a handful of white men, by tact, by justice, by tolerance towards "native" ways of thought, by the English instinct of letting well alone, could govern without the constant display of force. Let us not assume that all this implied any original virtue in us. These were the tactics which our situation imposed on us. A nation with a vast Empire and a little Army was obliged to economize force. It ended by disliking force. Our experience reacted upon our character and formed our standard of conduct, and even our notions of "good form."

We possessed, indeed, in the Navy a tremendous instrument of force; we grudged no expenditure upon it, and we kept it in constant readiness for war. A nation may, however, maintain a great navy without developing the peculiar habit of mind called "militarism." It does not demand, as a conscript army does, the passage through its discipline of an appreciable fraction of our population. It cannot be used directly for territorial conquest, and few Englishmen thought of the Navy as anything but a weapon of defence. The traditional feeling about it was expressed in our grandfathers' phrase, "the wooden walls of England," and to the inexperienced popular mind the perception of its tremendous power as an instrument, if not exactly of offence, at least of coercion, has come in this war as a revelation. Continental nations, more accustomed than we are to think frankly in terms of power, had a more lively sense than most of us of the possibilities of sea-power, and understood that the empire which wields it has the ability to veto every movement, to thwart every ambition of the land rival who wishes to act beyond the Continent. We thought reluctantly and haltingly in strategical terms. We lapsed easily into a comfortable habit of regarding international policy as a reasonable exchange of views, crossed, indeed, by conflicting interests, by likes and dislikes, by racial and political affinities, but by no means governed by the concept of force. We indulged from time to time in those purely disinterested preoccupations over the slave trade, Congo misrule, and Turkish atrocities which puzzled our neighbours so deeply that they usually interpreted them as a disguise for some Macchiavellian design. Disinterestedness is the luxury of the secure. We lacked the painful stimuli which have made other peoples alert to perceive and quick

to use force. We had no unguarded frontiers and no history of invasion. We have never developed that vision of the possible movements of fleets and armies behind all diplomatic intercourse, that habit of measuring statesmen's words by the number of army corps behind them. Even more important, in any consideration of our attitude towards force, was the fact that we are a satisfied Power. We have grown up without the hungers and the appetites which dictate the view of other nations towards force. We have never known the passion to liberate kinsmen under a foreign yoke. We have no 1870 to avenge. There is no "unredeemed England" for ever calling to our chivalry. We have no romantic tradition that beckons us, like the Russian ambition to acquire Constantinople. Nor do we feel, as the Germans have felt for a generation, that our industrial future demands the acquisition of colonies and places in the sun. It was easy for us to condemn force, for we possessed all that force can win.

Out of this singular aloofness from the idea of power and force the war has dragged us roughly. We have gone to a hard school, and the new lessons lie on the surface of our minds, while the ingrained dislike of force survives beneath them. Something we have learned by sympathetic contact with our Allies. We are better able to understand why official France, with the problem of the lost provinces unsettled, welcomed the ideal of disarmament in the past decade no more cordially than Germany. We can understand the primitive, gallant warrior temper of Serbia, looking always to the liberation by arms of the brother peoples severed by the Austrian frontier. We know very well that in the years before the war such problems as those of Alsace and the South Slavs, though statesmanship might have mitigated them, could

have received a trenchant solution only by force. The cynical game of guessing when and on which side a neutral would intervene, taught us that military success may avail more to win allies than community of race, political sympathies, or past services. If we have learned much from our Allies and something from the neutrals about force, our chief teacher has been the enemy. We realize, rather vaguely perhaps, how much the German habit of discipline, the German ideal of co-operative work in science and industry, the instinctive subordination of the individual to the community, and the higher level of education in all grades of society has contributed to his power. We have begun to think about all the concerns of peace, from trade to education, in terms of war. Our normal and habitual attitude, that peace is the rule and war the improbable exception, has been shaken by our sudden experience. When we talk now of the reorganization which will be necessary in every department of life, we mean a reorganization adjusted to the fact that the world is governed by force, and that war is a real and terribly important possibility. We are facing the new facts, and it is proper that we should do so. We are like a man who was proud to live in his old timbered manor-house. He paid an insurance premium, for he had seen fires in his neighbours' houses. But when his own pleasant dwelling caught fire, he rebuilt it from the foundation with a single eye to this one risk, and sacrificed boldly both beauty and comfort.

It is probable that instead of loosening the ties of alliance which before the war divided Europe into two hostile groups we shall tighten and strengthen them. It is too early to foresee with certainty whether we shall make compulsory service permanent. But it is already probable that we shall alter the whole familiar structure of our

trade. We have learned in this war to discard for ever the lingering eighteenth-century conception of war as a struggle waged between small professional armies while the nations live their usual lives. We know now that war is a function of the whole people. It is waged with trade and credit and industry as surely as it is waged with armies and fleets. If we had a choice between totally disarming a dreaded rival or making and keeping him poor, we should probably choose to-day, on purely military grounds, to take his capital, his machinery, and his credit, and leave him his rifles and his guns. There is nothing new even for us in the idea for making war, while war lasts, on an enemy's trade. That is a tradition as old as trade and war themselves. The new idea for us is that even when war ceases in the field it must continue in our factories and our ports. We are realizing more fully the immense political use of exported capital. The continental peoples systematized it much earlier than we did. There was certainly a political intention in the vast French exports of capital to Russia, and the smaller German exports to Italy. We alone left our Government without the legal right to control our investments abroad. We are invited by the Economic Conference of Paris to subordinate our markets in the same way to a political or military end. The proposal is that for a term of years we shall close them, wholly or in part, to the trade of our present enemies, and also (an even more formidable measure) that we shall cut off these enemies, wholly or in part, from the supplies of raw material, minerals, and foodstuffs which they were accustomed to draw from Allied territory. Shipping, in its turn, will be controlled and regulated by political considerations. This policy means that we intend to subordinate our lives, for the early future

at least, to military considerations. This is not Protection in the ordinary sense of the word. It is not a simple proposal to favour the home trader at the expense of the foreign trader. It is a proposal to discriminate between foreign traders, according as they are enemies or friends. It brushes aside the questions, whether they are good customers of our own, whether they supply wants which others cannot meet so well, and whether they accord to us a favourable position in their markets. For all these usual considerations which have governed tariff-making in the past it substitutes one simple criterion—whether they were our enemies in this war. That criterion implies the belief that the enemy of to-day will also be the enemy of to-morrow. It introduces the idea of force and power, where it had scarcely entered before, into the fabric of British trade.

It meant a great revolution in our habits and a tremendous breach with the past when we adopted compulsory service. These proposals for the subordination of our trade to continental politics, not under the momentary stress of war, but during long years of nominal peace, carry us infinitely farther. They carry us to a world in which the idea of force, the conception of leagued power, the pitting of one vast coalition against another, must dominate the ordinary course of our lives. The object of one coalition during these early years of "peace" will avowedly be to inflict on the other, at a heavy cost to itself, the utmost injury which a thorough organization of its buying and selling power can compass. The purpose will be to weaken and therefore to injure the rival group. Nations are not economic machines. They cannot set out to injure each other without organizing and perpetuating hate. Their hate will be cast like molten anger into guns and armour-plate; and if we

move, as nations commonly do, from attack to retaliation, and from retaliation to renewed attack, the new armed peace must issue, so soon as there is a new generation ripe for slaughter, in another general war. That is our outlook. We have gone to school in the college of force, and we are graduates already. If the new facts are real and important facts, it is none the less true that our early mood has not been wholly submerged by the experience of this conflict. We want no further wars. We would still echo the "never again" of the first weeks. We would still welcome, though with many reserves, the conception of a system of arbitration and mediation, a Europe united in a League of Peace. We believe, as Sir Edward Grey put it, in "conference," as the only civilized method of settling the affairs of Europe. The generous mood which inspired us in the first weeks of war is not extinct. It is moribund only for lack of resolute and critical self-questioning. There is a contradiction here which must be faced. If we say "conference," we mean, if we mean anything, that we shall confer with our enemies, and settle with them in equity and tolerance our common affairs. But does one sit at a round table with a man with whom one will not even buy and sell? One may achieve justice and fair dealing where there is little cordiality and little liking. But no mutual consideration of interests is compatible with the resolve to use economic power to weaken and injure the other side. We hold to both these ways of thought. We have not renounced the hope of future peace, though we have embraced the idea of power. We have not rejected conference, though we have adopted boycott. The contradiction in our attitude is the consequence of the terrific emotional experience through which we have passed. Overwhelmed by new facts, oppressed by



the horror of the long carnage, indignant at the barbarities of the enemy, we hasten instinctively into measures of retaliation and defence, before the deeper purpose, the older tendency in us can find its clue to the unfamiliar world, and hew out a path that is worthy of itself.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

The motives and calculations which are hurrying us into this comprehensive policy of force are somewhat mixed, but foremost among them is the resolve to achieve security. An honest man would not deny that the desire for revenge, or for punishment (if that word is preferred), finds a place among them. The brutalities to which innocent Belgium was subjected, the savagery of the submarine campaign, and the wanton destruction of civilian life in the Zeppelin raids have made on all of us an ineffaceable impression. Some eminent Englishmen have argued frankly, in Old Testament language, that we should use the trade weapon to punish the German people for these excesses. It is possible, though one cannot be sanguine of it, that when our passions have cooled, our Christian Churches will recollect the New Testament teaching about revenge. In default of ethical arguments, however, mere revenge is clearly too costly a policy. There is an idealism of hate as there is an idealism of love, but the commercial world has never shown much inclination to idealism in any form. More general is the feeling that we prefer, for some time at least, to dispense with all intercourse with these people. That is an inevitable and natural feeling. But the stronger it is, the less necessary is it to enforce it by tariffs and prohibitions. For long years to come, the average Englishman will refuse to buy German goods even if they can be offered for sale, and the first

commercial travellers from Germany who venture to push their wares in this country will put our sense of decency and courtesy to a severe test. Intercourse of all kinds, whether social, political, scientific, or commercial, will be for long so difficult and at first so nearly impossible, that it seems superfluous to put legal barriers in its way. There is, no doubt, another motive which weighs and will always weigh in the balance of public opinion. Though no competent judge believes that a policy of commercial boycott of the Central Empires can be profitable from the standpoint of the British consumer, or even from that of the whole body of producers, there are undoubtedly some trades and more financial groups which stand to gain by it. Their voices are heard to-day, for they can play on the mood of the hour, but the silent and intimidated interests, which dread the loss of the German market, are probably still the majority, if one reckons the importance of their stake.

The real motive which is driving us towards the policy of a permanent anti-German alliance, both military and economic, is broader, saner, and more rational than any of these interested or sentimental considerations. What influences us is simply the determination to secure ourselves against any possible repetition of this war. The wider and more formidable we can make our alliance, the less likely is it to be challenged in the future. The inclusion in it of a species of commercial boycott is almost inevitable in a world where military power depends so largely on economic development. We reckon that though we have something to lose by it ourselves, especially in these islands, the Allies, as a whole, will lose by it much less heavily than the Central Empires. The calculation is hazardous, but let us assume that

it is just. We shall (by this risky reckoning) make good, or nearly make good, in Allied markets what we lose in Central Europe: we shall hold our own or even make headway in neutral markets against German competition. Germany, on her side, will suffer so severely from a restricted market, and still more from the difficulty of obtaining raw materials, that her trade and finance will recover very slowly from the ruin of the war. Her expenditure in armaments will in this way be automatically limited, and she will not again be in our generation the menace which she is to-day. We shall by this policy of striking at Germany's material prosperity compel her, not merely to keep the peace but to abandon the idea of bettering her case by arms. It is possible to challenge this forecast, but assuming that it be sound, it is still far from the idea which inspired us at the outbreak of war. It promises no end to militarism, but only a long reign of force, in which the advantage (such is our reckoning) will have passed to our side. It is the negation of any conception of European fraternity. It is a course which we should adopt only if no other seemed open to us. So long as we talk in abstract words about placing restrictions on German trade, the real bearing of this policy may be disguised. But it must mean, if it succeeds, the relative impoverishment of a nation, and the loss, we may be sure, will fall more heavily on the working people, most of them Socialists, than upon the Junkers and the financiers. A more repugnant use of force could hardly be conceived. Is there an alternative? Let us, for argument's sake, assume that at the settlement Germany were willing with her Allies to enter into a pact which promised to secure permanent peace. Let us assume that the scheme for conference, arbitration, or conciliation left, in words at least,

no apparent loophole for evasion. Let us suppose, further, that Germany would consent to give the only real guarantee which would prove her sincerity, her consent to a general limitation of European armaments. The supposition is not extravagant. Of one fact we must never lose sight. Whatever may be said of the views of some German soldiers and of some German industrialists, the temper of the German people on the whole is not consciously aggressive. Like that of every people at war, their view of the facts of recent history is partial and one-sided. On these facts they have reached the conclusion, surprising and unintelligible to most Englishmen, that this is for Germany a defensive war. In spite of their brilliant successes on land, a great section of opinion, including, not merely all the Socialists but most of the Radicals and some influential Conservatives, declared at the height of their success against a policy of conquest and annexation. That was a proof, and an entirely convincing proof, that for these men, at least, the belief that the war is defensive was honest and sincere. A man engaged in conscious aggression does not renounce the fruits when they are in his grasp. It is to be noted, further, that this moderate element (which includes also the powerful Catholic "Centre") is not the Opposition. It rallied more and more as the war went on to the German Chancellor, and sustained him against the attacks of the military and capitalist groups who are bent on annexation. It requires no great faith to believe that this moderate half of Germany welcomes a League of Peace. The Socialists have always preached it. The Radical press writes of it very much in the tone of our own Liberal newspapers. The Chancellor, after some vague and cautious approaches to the idea, has at length declared in the plainest language that Germany is ready to

adhere to a League of Peace. There is really nothing improbable in the supposition that an impoverished Germany would welcome a relief from the burden of armaments,<sup>1</sup> or that a nation whose casualties already exceed four millions is cured of the school-boy tendency of some of its literary men to idealize war. If it turns out that these indications may be trusted, if Germany does spontaneously turn her back on militarism by offering as part of an honourable settlement to enter a League of Nations and to join in a limitation of European armaments, what will our answer be?<sup>2</sup> It is inconceivable that it should be entirely negative. We could not refuse to her the benefits of conference, arbitration, and mediation, for to do

<sup>1</sup> The Washington correspondent of the *Daily News* telegraphed on December 15, 1916, that Count Bernstorff had made an apparently official statement to the American press to the effect that "it is Germany's desire, if the belligerents should enter upon a discussion of peace, to confer upon the question of the limitation of armaments. The Ambassador adds that in the view of the German Government a lasting peace can be accomplished only by reducing the armaments of Europe to a scale lower than that which obtained before the war. A rider is added to this statement that Germany views the international coalition which existed before the war as objectionable, and as opposed to the maintenance of peace." (See also *The Times*, December 16, 1916.)

<sup>2</sup> The German Chancellor's first approach to the idea was in his speech to the Reichstag on April 5, 1916:—

"The treaty of peace which ends this war must be a lasting one. It must bear in itself the seed, not of new wars, but of a new final peaceful organization of the affairs of Europe."

More definite was the brief, nay curt, assent on September 28, 1916:—

"M. Briand said in his last speech that France was fighting for a firm and lasting peace, in which international agreements should protect the freedom of all nations against attack. That is what we want too."

All doubt of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's meaning is removed by his speech to the Committee of the Reichstag on November 9, 1916. After announcing that he had never included the annexation

so would be at once to repudiate our own ideal, and to deprive ourselves of its advantages. But are we prepared to include her in any permanent League of Peace? A league whose members were engaged in an open trade war, with the boycott as its weapon, would be a self-contradictory conception.

Confronted by this difficult choice, the middle

of Belgium among his war-aims, and complaining that the Entente did, on the contrary, pursue a policy of conquest, he proceeded thus :—

“Such a policy of violence cannot form the basis for an effective International League of Peace, and it is in the strongest contrast to Lord Grey’s and Mr. Asquith’s desired ideal State where right governs might and all States form a family of civilized mankind, and can freely develop themselves, whether big or small, under the same conditions, and in accordance with their natural capabilities. If the Entente wishes seriously to take up this position, then it should also act upon it. . . .

“The first condition for the development of international relations by means of an arbitration court and the peaceful conciliation of conflicting antagonisms would be that henceforth no aggressive coalitions should be formed. Germany is ready at all times to join a League of Nations and even to place herself at the head of a League which will restrain the disturber of peace.”

The following passage recorded the Chancellor’s adherence to the League of Nations in a less polemical form :—

“When, after the termination of the war, the world will fully recognize its horrible devastation of blood and treasure, then through all mankind will go the cry for peaceful agreements and understanding which will prevent, as far as is humanly possible, the return of such an immense catastrophe. This cry will be so strong and so justified that it must lead to a result. Germany will honourably co-operate in investigating every attempt to find a practical solution and collaborate towards its possible realization ; and that all the more if, as we confidently expect, the war produces political conditions which will do justice to the free development of all nations, small as well as great.”

The important suggestion about the abolition of alliances should be noted, as also the Chancellor’s condition that Germany can adhere to the League of Nations only if it follows upon an honourable settlement. The full text of the speech is given in the Appendix.

voices among Englishmen and Frenchmen would pronounce in our present mood for a temporizing policy. The argument would run somewhat as follows: "We do not despair of constituting such a Society of Nations for the abolition of war. We hope, indeed, that something of the kind, loosely knit perhaps, burdened by no pedantic constitution, and respectful of national sovereignty, may be created in our own day. The thought that the children who have grown up with the spectacle of ravaged Belgium before their eyes should be summoned as their fathers were to stake, not their lives only but the future of civilization itself, in such a contest as this would make living a well-nigh intolerable tragedy. But he who would build firmly must build slowly. There is no need for haste. If only because the war has exhausted us all, we are secure for a term of years. It will be ten or twenty years before the ranks are filled again and credit restored: the gloomiest pessimist would allow us at least five years of peace. Time must heal these wounds, and if for a period intercourse is restricted between us and our late enemies at least the friction will be lessened. Let us begin by making our League of Peace among our own Allies. That will be a great society. It will include two-thirds of Europe, the whole of Asia and Africa (for Germany will be banished by our victory from these continents); and if the United States would join it our satisfaction would be the greater. But for a term of years at least it is idle to propose the inclusion of Germany. Can we pass a sponge over her misdeeds? Can we forget a crime for which there is no parallel since the days of Napoleon? Is there to be no penalty for a wrong that has come near to undoing civilization itself? Let a new generation first arise in Germany. When we see at the head of her affairs men whose

records are clear of this offence, we may open our League to include them. In the meantime, in no vindictive or revengeful spirit, we must bethink ourselves of our own security. The proposed restrictions on trade are as purely defensive as the trenches and wire entanglements which will guard our frontiers. We cannot allow Germany (in Mr. Runciman's phrase) to 'raise her head again,' because we fear that if she again acquires the wealth which is the necessary basis of modern warfare, her strength and her intelligence will again be used to disturb the world. We cannot, and would not if we could, prevent her recuperation. But we can delay it. We can limit it. We can ensure that our own recovery shall be the more rapid, and that step by step, at each stage, the balance of military and economic power is in our favour. We look forward, after a period of years, to a gradual easing of the tension, to a lowering of our hostile tariffs, and eventually, perhaps, to the restoration of a chastened and penitent Germany to full communion with the Society of Nations. For the rest, we are not impressed by your reminder that the German people in this war believes itself to be fighting on the defensive. A people subject to such delusions is for that very reason a danger to the world. If they defend themselves in this way, then we stand in continual peril from their defence. A people which imagines itself to be defending hearth and home when it hurls ultimata at half a continent and tramples (to defend itself) across the innocent soil of a neutral neighbour, can be acquitted of crime only if it is convicted of madness. Finally, when you suggest that Germany might be willing to sign an agreement to settle future disputes by peaceful means, it is plain that you have forgotten 'the scrap of paper.' Shall we, with that example before us of the levity



with which German statesmen can repudiate their treaty obligations, stake our own safety and the world's future on the chance that Germany would treat the constitution of a League of Peace as a bond more sacred than the Belgian treaties? No. A treaty to which Germany is a party will be valid and secure only so long as the Allies keep in their hands the means of punishing a breach of faith."

This answer does not, I think, overstate the blackness of pessimism which weighs upon us. If we do not ourselves perceive how near it comes to a despair of the whole future of civilization, the reason is that our anger is too vivid, our hopes of an eventual military success too bright, to allow us to perceive the full meaning of our political bankruptcy. For the speech which I have composed, interpreting as fairly as I know how the mood which dominates the hour, is a confession that the war in its larger purposes has been waged in vain. It has brought us to the admission that treaties in the world which emerges from this war will be no more secure than they were in 1914. Their sanctity will depend on the force behind them. The further conclusion follows that this force must be kept always united and always prepared. Assume that the extremer programme of the Entente is realized—that Austria is broken up and Turkey partitioned—Germany (especially if the German provinces of Austria were incorporated in her Empire) would still be by population the second Power in Europe, and by her military organization the first. Can such a Power be kept for ever isolated? No alliance and no enmity is eternal. Germany and Austria, Russia and Japan concluded alliances after embittered wars. Italy and Rumania are fighting their former allies; Bulgaria and Turkey are to-day in the same camp. We our-

selves, in the brief span of years between 1898 and 1904, transferred our weight from one scale to the other in the European balance, and within five years of Mr. Chamberlain's public overtures of alliance to Germany entered the Franco-Russian orbit. If we conceive the world after this war governed by the old principle of the Balance of Power, we must recollect that no balance was ever stable and no alliance eternal. There must be degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction even among victorious allies. No victory can give to each of them all they want, for some of them want the same thing. Italy and Serbia, for example, have irreconcilable pretensions in the Adriatic. It needs no very active imagination to conceive how Germany would feel her way among her former enemies, here inflaming a sense of dissatisfaction, there widening a jealous rift in the Entente. It is a law of world-politics that dissatisfied Powers will tend to come together. Isolated, beaten, and impoverished, Germany would still be a formidable Power, and she would serve as the nucleus round which the discontented and the less contented would cluster. Even at the settlement she would begin her work, as Talleyrand did at the Congress of Vienna. There are, even while the war lasts, factions in Russia, Italy, and Japan which stand for an understanding with Germany, and the Italian Pro-Germans were strong enough to delay for two years a declaration of war upon her. When the trade boycott is enforced (if it can be enforced) financial and commercial motives will reinforce the inevitable political divergences. For the losses and sacrifices involved in such a policy cannot be equalized. Russia, for example, can ill afford to lose the German market for her grain, and Antwerp would be ruined if it ceased to be a port for German commerce.

The problem of Japanese ambitions in China may be mentioned as the type of another set of difficulties. To maintain the League intact would demand from the leading Powers and their guiding statesmen a wisdom and resource that would tax the utmost scope of human wit. The effort would be made, and for a time it would succeed, though at a great cost in compromises and concessions. The more loyal of the Powers—the Powers which held steadfast to the determination to keep the League together for the world's good—would be called upon at every turn to make sacrifices to their more exacting partners. A Power which chose to play adroitly within the League for its own hand could by "flirting" with the enemy and threatening to transfer itself to the rival camp, secure for its own ends an almost unlimited toleration and complacency from its allies.

Towards the weaker members of the combination, the temptation would be to use harsher methods of pressure, involving, as in the Greek precedent, an occasional or habitual interference in their internal affairs. If, for example, the war should result in the creation of a number of independent or semi-independent Slav States, the conduct of their future policy would naturally preoccupy the Power which exercises the headship of the Slav world, and it might not always be easy for the little nation to avoid that clash between the claims of gratitude and the claims of national independence which ruined the relations of Russia with Bulgaria in the decade which followed her liberation. If delicate questions of that kind should arise within the Slav system, it would not be easy for the Western Powers to intervene, even where the small State belonged by its religion and its civilization, as the Poles, Czechs, and Croats do, to the Western world. The result of any attempt at interference

would be to break the League, and to drive the member whose conduct its allies reprobated into the German camp. Neither to vindicate nationality, nor to secure the due observance of treaties, nor even to prevent a minor war with a nation outside the League, would the greater allies venture to impose moral restraints upon each other. The overwhelming consideration of safety, in a world divided into hostile military camps, would paralyse the workings of public opinion. It may seem at first sight that a League which excluded one Great Power need not differ in kind from a League which included them all. But the more the two conceptions of a general League and a League of the Entente Powers are examined, the more clearly will it appear that they differ absolutely in idea and aim and effect. The Entente League would be from the start an anti-German League, and it could with difficulty be evolved into anything larger. Its unity would be limited to that one purpose. It could coerce Germany, and that is all that it could do. It would be a league of combat and not a league of peace, and it would with difficulty avoid the spirit of narrowness and faction, which ruined the Holy Alliance. So long as its main preoccupation was in trade, in armaments, and in diplomacy to maintain its front, formidable and unbroken against the enemy, it could make no advance towards the ideal of impartial justice which must inform a league of peace.

This gloomy forecast, it may be objected, fails to reckon with the factor of opinion, and it forgets that the resolutions of the Paris Conference contemplated restrictions on German trade, amounting virtually to boycott, only for a term of years. The notion that a Germany formally excluded from the European family would sit down quietly under this sentence and spend the years of her isolation in

a species of penitential retreat is too ludicrous to deserve discussion. That there will, if the settlement be reasonable and just, be a period of sharp reaction in Germany against militarism and the whole tradition of force is probable, if not certain. One may doubt, however, whether even so it will take the form of national penitence and confession. The view of the facts which led up to the war which is current in Germany has been fixed by the passions of the war itself and by the forcible suppression of the minority view. The theory of a defensive war will probably survive. A nation does not readily turn back to revise its memories when these have been hardened by suffering and loss. The revision, if it comes at all, will be the work of a new generation. The Germans are hardly more likely to realize to-morrow that theirs was the aggression than we as a nation are likely to modify our own reading of history where it was too summary or too harsh. What one may expect is not so much the sense that Germany has sinned beyond the measure of other nations, as a perception that the whole system of international relations that obtained before the war was anarchical and faulty, that every nation has suffered and erred by turns under this system, and that the future calls for radical reconstruction in a spirit of tolerance and charity. On such a basis a better Europe could be built, and a Germany which entered on the common work in this spirit would be a nation with whom her neighbours could deal. An intellectual perception that the European system was at fault would be, indeed, a more valuable positive contribution to the common stock than penitence. It is much to ask for this, when one recalls the pride, the sentimentality, and the mob passion which in all countries obscure the calm and critical study of contemporary history.

Let us ask ourselves what must be the effect of her exclusion from the Allied markets on a Germany whose opinions, under the chastening influence of loss and disappointment, were moving hopefully in this direction. Would her Junkers beat their breasts and acknowledge that this was the just punishment for their crimes? No nation, however gross its offence, ever has behaved, or ever will behave, in that way, for no nation ever has admitted the right of its enemies to be its judge. We need not look to Prussia for the first exhibition in history of a Christian poverty of spirit. What the Junkers would say is a secondary consideration, but the effect of such measures would be to make Junkers, Radicals, and Socialists unanimous. From the first beginnings of Anglo-German enmity in the last years of last century the less kindly among German politicians and journalists have had their ever-ready theory to explain our supposed ill-will. It was said that we viewed their rapid advance as a manufacturing and seafaring nation with jealousy and alarm. We had (so they argued) enjoyed for nearly a century a monopolist's position as the first of trading peoples, and our concern at the challenge of German efficiency was the deeper because we realized that we lacked the science and the habit of organization which underlay Germany's success. Our uneasiness, to their eyes, betrayed itself in such devices as the Merchandise Marks Act and the "Made-in-Germany" campaign, and in the revival of the Protectionist movement. That we were concerned at the increasing German competition is, of course, a fact, and it is also a fact that the less reasonable sections of our public passed rapidly from anxiety to hostility. What our German critics too often forget is, however, that in this early formative period, so fatal for the future develop-

ment of Europe, our official attitude was not one of hostility, but, on the contrary, of active and solicitous friendship. The public overtures to an alliance came from our statesmen ; and the rebuffs seemed to come from theirs. They feared that we meant to use them for our own purposes against Russia. Prince Bülow proclaimed the policy of the "free hand," and was resolved that Germany should go on her own course in full independence, not necessarily in opposition to us, but certainly uncommitted. Germany did not choose, as Dr. Naumann puts it in "Mitteleuropa," to be "the junior partner in the British world firm." <sup>1</sup> On the outbreak of the war every expression of jealousy was culled from the British Press, and every German knew by heart that monstrous leading article in which the *Saturday Review* called (September 11, 1897) for a war with Germany, because the destruction of her trade would add millions to our national income. The theory that we entered on this war with the object of ruining our chief rival in trade became the accepted opinion. Count Reventlow produced a violent but learned pamphlet, "Der Vampir des Festlandes," in which he developed the theory that from generation to generation British policy always has, through three centuries, followed the single aim of ensuring our supremacy in trade by means of war. First, the Spaniards and Dutch, then the French, and now the Germans have been our victims. Every nation has its worse self, which works more often subconsciously than consciously. Our temptation has never been the French love

<sup>1</sup> The whole story is not yet known. Sir Valentine Chirol (*Quarterly Review*, October 1914) states, with full personal knowledge, that in October, 1901, Germany offered us her alliance, on the basis of a mutual guarantee of all British and German possessions, except in the Far East. This we rejected, presumably because it did not insure us against Russia.

of glory but a calculating use of the material advantages of power. This is the charge to which we stand exposed, a charge which ignores, indeed, all that is great in our record and all that is fine in our present temper. As an interpretation of the mood in which we went to war, nothing could be more crudely or meanly false. A psychologist, however, would warn us that the whole of a nation's mind never comes to consciousness in these hours of exaltation. The meaner impulses do their work below the level of self-knowledge, and influence conduct when the first generous passions have subsided. From an enemy we need expect no fine psychology. War is so little an ennobling experience that every belligerent people makes it a virtue to think the worst of its enemy. This proposal of a trade war after peace does not surprise our critics and detractors in Germany; it merely confirms their worst and most malicious interpretation of our policy and motives. They said that our jealousy of German commerce was our motive—first, in joining the Franco-Russian Alliance, and then in entering the war. Into that reading of our motives the policy of these Paris Resolutions fits as the natural sequel. This programme of "a war after the war" gives the lie to those who proclaimed an idealistic purpose in the war, and confirms a calumny which will work against us in the future with a *perpetuum mobile* of strife. The man who causes it to be said of us that our aim in this war was something lower than a concern for the public law and the liberties of Europe inflicts on us an injury more lasting than any defeat. The injury, however, hurts a wider interest than ours. It must add immeasurably to the difficulties of every progressive party, of every humane thinker, of every charitable mind in Europe. It is only men of an heroic temper who will struggle to be



better than their age. Proclaim that this is an age in which one group of nations deliberately schemes how it may, not in war but in peace, injure and impoverish another, and inevitably you have wrecked the very idea of international morals. The German Radical and the German Socialist who would have struggled towards a better future, who would have combated the fanatics of racial pride and military dominion at home, will find themselves by this policy silenced and baffled in their internal struggles. In a world given over to organized hatred no man of common sense will dare to raise his voice against great armaments or menacing alliances. The popular statesman will be the man who promises to lead Germany, cut off from the best markets and the amplest supplies, by the shortest and surest road to the reconquest of her lost freedom of commerce. The resentment of the people will turn, not as it might have done against those rulers who led her into this ruinous war, but against the foreign enemy who pens her in. Even the Socialist Party, which declared when it cast its first vote for the supply of the war, that it held German diplomacy blameworthy for its outbreak, will be driven to move with the tide. If the boycott should prove to be in its effects as formidable as its advocates reckon, if it means for the German people high prices, low wages, and embarrassed industries, will the workman, as he turns away discharged from his factory, be philosopher enough to blame his own rulers as the authors of his distress? The chances are that he will curse England, and cast his parliamentary vote for the most blatant candidate who offers himself. This is not to crush Prussian militarism, but to destroy German Liberalism.

The boycott, we are assured, is not intended to be permanent. But it is timed, however, for the

moment when opinion in Germany will be malleable and fluid. For the first time the manhood of the nation will be released from military discipline, and its Press from the control of the censor. It will be a time of eager discussion. Parties will adjust themselves, programmes will be shaped, and a general election must be held. At such a moment, if the posture of the Allies after the peace pointed to a tranquil future, we might hope for the success of the progressives and the anti-militarists. But when all Europe talks only of closed markets, prohibitive tariffs, and diverted supplies, when, as it were, by formal enactment the enemy of yesterday is proclaimed the enemy of to-day and to-morrow, there can be no relaxation of discipline in the German camp. The answer to our boycott will be retaliation in kind. But in the face of a frank proclamation of continued enmity we must expect further measures. In such a situation a menaced and isolated nation renews its armaments, rebuilds its ships, and prepares for the next round of the struggle. The armed peace will have begun once more, but with less disguise than before, and a wider field for every sort of hostility that stops short of bloodshed. That, if the Paris Conference has fixed our policy, will be the final outcome of "the war to end war." Was there ever in history a more tragic frustration of high and disinterested hopes? Driven as it seems by the logic of our situation, we must fasten on mankind a new era of strife, and our challenge to the most formidable military system in Europe will inaugurate, not an epoch of goodwill but the reign of a new economic militarism more subtle and pervasive than the old.

This "war after peace" towards which we are moving is perhaps a necessary evil. Let us not on that account disguise from ourselves its ugly-

ness. Let us not pretend that it answers to our ambitions and our dreams. If it is a necessary phase in the evolution of mankind, we shall surmount it the more quickly if with clear eyes and sincere minds we see it as a mischief while we submit to the inevitable. Aspirations are not alone a sure guide. It is no sufficient argument to say that we dislike this future which leers at us with its mockery, while we dwell with satisfaction on the contrary picture of a world lapped in goodwill. Our preferences and ideals shrink in vain from what the whole march of history imposes on us. Distrusting mere wishes and sceptical of flattering schemes, let us in a questioning spirit consider whether to this future of strife an alternative be possible.

## CHAPTER II

### AMERICA AND THE LEAGUE OF PEACE

NO history is so dreary as the annals of a venerable hope. It is the new ideals that allure us. In spite of the mutation and complication which we call progress, men tend to believe that the thing which was will be, that the thing which in vain has struggled to become fact must remain a dream for ever. The idea of a League of Perpetual Peace has a life of three centuries behind it. The Duc De Sully laboured to bring it about. William Penn and the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, Rousseau and Kant employed their genius to keep it alive. Saints and philosophers were not its only votaries. It fired the ambition of Henry of Navarre, and for a moment amused Louis Napoleon; in his work at The Hague the Tsar Nicholas was but reviving in a timid form the much bolder inspiration of his ancestor, Alexander I. The most elaborate draft of this scheme has lain for two centuries on the library shelves, and Europe with a punctual cynicism has twice celebrated by a universal war the centenary of Saint-Pierre's "Perpetual Peace." This ideal has had too long a history. It must be some new fact, some fresh departure, some shattering of traditions, which will give it life again.

The new fact is before us. It comes from the New World, and it implies the breaking of the most obstinate tradition in politics. If President Wilson,

when he addressed the League to Enforce Peace at Washington (May 27, 1916) had been content to make an academic speech in favour of the processes of arbitration and mediation, we should have listened with a fatigued and languid attention. Persuasive and cultured orators have exhausted that theme in all the languages of civilization. Rousseau was more eloquent and Kant more acute. On the merits of the question Mr. Wilson said nothing new : there is nothing new to say. He made a new fact by shattering once and for all the tradition of American isolation. Since Washington warned his countrymen against "entangling alliances," and President Monroe formulated his "Doctrine," the principle that the United States must hold aloof from the politics of the Old World has reigned as an unquestioned dogma. It was more than a preference and an instinct. It was the condition on which Americans hoped to purchase the immunity of their own Continent from the ambitions of European dynasties and the invasions of European armies. The Doctrine was in the first instance a warning addressed to the Holy Alliance, which threatened to carry into Latin America on behalf of Imperial Spain its principle of legitimate authority and its habit of intervention. It survived to hold at arm's length the colonial aspirations of restless Powers. The United States do not meddle in Europe, primarily because they will not allow Europe to meddle in America. The doctrine of isolation had come to be much more than a maxim of statecraft. It seemed to guarantee to North America for all time a peculiar civilization of her own, based on a security unknown to the peoples of Europe. The Republic stood, when our war broke out, on the Atlantic shore, and watched our agony as the landsman in Lucretius watched the shipwreck at sea. The typical American mind is

not content to disapprove of war ; it barely understands it. In the profound peace of its unassailable continent, the belief in the validity of moral judgments and the confidence in the processes of rational conference have acquired such an ascendancy, that even able men seem unable to interpret our international life, dominated as it is by the ideas of force and power. It is a new human type which is evolving in this melting-pot of races, without the old formative influences of nationalism and militarism. It lives virtually without an army, and prizes above all its other advantages the security which permits it to escape the barracks and the taxes of Europe. Mr. Wilson's phrase, "too proud to fight," which stirred some of us to an unpleasant mirth, was the apt expression of this spirit.

From this aloofness, a policy not merely of self-interest and calculation, but of sentiment and morals, Mr. Wilson is prepared to step down. He has offered, not merely his services to assist Europe to form a League of Peace, but the power of the United States to back the authority of such a League. His speech was a deliberate and explicit pledge, that if a League is formed among the nations to conduct their common affairs by conference, conciliation, and arbitration, the United States will take her place in the League, and use her economic and military resources against any Power which makes war without submitting its cause to one of these processes. He has boldly adopted the idea of using "coercion" in "the service of common order, common justice, and common peace." It was a declaration, in words that consciously echoed the old Stoic maxim, that nothing which concerns humanity can be foreign to any civilized people. "What affects mankind is inevitably our affair." It means that hence-

forward to be neutral when wrong and aggression are suffered by any nation is a dereliction of duty. That is not a new idea in the world, but those who preached it have hitherto been dismissed by "all the right-minded" as Quixotes and Crusaders. Revolutionary France became an armed missionary of liberty in Europe, but only after her own existence as a republic had been threatened by a coalition of kings. For her own defence she carried the torch into their inflammable palaces. The Holy Alliance in its turn stood for a cosmopolitan ideal of reaction, but it too was based on a conception of self-defence; its sovereigns, when they bound themselves to assail revolution, were bent on protecting their own rights. More than once in our own history we have approached a cosmopolitan conception of national duty, when we sought to give an idealistic interpretation to the principle of the Balance of Power. When once we have embarked upon a continental war, we profess with an entire sincerity that we are fighting for the liberties of other peoples, but the decisive consideration for us is inevitably and naturally, that if we did not so fight, our own liberties and our own interests would be threatened by the dominant Power. That last consideration is only faintly present to the American mind—so faintly that in all human probability it will not emerge from its neutrality in the present war. There is a vague alarm about the future, a sense that even America is living in a dangerous world. But the alarm is so general, so little directed at any single Power, that it does not destroy the broader and humaner thoughts of international duty. The new fact in the world's history is that for the first time a Great Power with a formidable Navy, a population from which vast armies might be raised, and an economic and financial strength which might alone be decisive in

any future conflict, is prepared to stake its own peace, not merely to guarantee its own interests, nor to further the partisan aims of its allies, but to make an end in the world of the possibility of prosperous aggression. Whatever may be its fate as a constructive proposal, this American offer makes an epoch in the world's moral evolution. Ambition and fear have masqueraded before now in an international disguise, but the disinterested advocacy of a cosmopolitan idea of duty has been left to academic moralists and to Socialists. At length a Great Power, hitherto of all Powers the most isolated and self-centred, has adopted this idea as the permanent foundation of its policy.<sup>1</sup>

The scheme adopted by Mr. Taft's League to Enforce Peace, which President Wilson was addressing at Washington, proposes to unite all civilized nations in a League bound by treaty to settle all disputes which arise among them by peaceable means. Like most kindred societies, it divides disputes into two classes:—

(a) Those which may best be settled by legal process through an International Court ;

(b) Those larger issues "affecting the honour and vital interests" of a nation which have usually been excepted from arbitration treaties and clearly do not admit of settlement by legal methods, since they belong to the domain of policy in which no fixed principles are universally recognized.

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<sup>1</sup> This may seem an over-statement. Mr. Wilson (whose proposal was incorporated in the Democratic "platform") has been re-elected, but may not the Senate thwart his policy when it comes to be translated into a treaty? While such possibilities must be kept in mind, it is significant that the Republicans did not dissociate themselves as a party from this tremendous innovation in American policy. They even in their party "platform" adopted the principle of "a world court for the pacific settlement of international disputes." Mr. Hughes declared for the idea of a League of Peace in language which hardly differed from Mr. Wilson's. Mr. Roosevelt has his own strident version of the same policy. Ex-President Taft is President of the League to Enforce Peace. It is, in short, a national American idea.



The four articles in which the League summarizes its programme are as follows :—

1. All justiciable questions arising between the signatory Powers not settled by negotiation, shall, subject to the limitations of treaties, be submitted to a judicial Tribunal for hearing and judgment, both upon the merits and upon any issue as to its jurisdiction, of the question.

2. All other questions arising between the signatories, and not settled by negotiation, shall be submitted to a Council of Conciliation for hearing, consideration, and recommendation.

3. The signatory Powers shall jointly use forthwith both their economic and military forces against any one of their number that goes to war, or commits acts of hostility against another of the signatories before any question arising shall be submitted as provided in the foregoing.

4. Conferences between the signatory Powers shall be held from time to time to formulate and codify rules of international law which, unless some signatory shall signify its dissent within a stated period, shall thereafter govern in the decisions of the judicial Tribunal mentioned in Article 1.

It is a simple scheme, differing only in details from that of the kindred English committee, and much less elaborate than the Fabian Society's model. But the root idea of all these schemes is the same.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The programme of the British "League of Nations Society" is as follows :—

1. That a Treaty shall be made as soon as possible whereby as many States as are willing shall form a League binding themselves to use peaceful methods for dealing with all disputes arising among them

2. That such methods shall be as follows :—

(a) All disputes arising out of questions of International Law or the interpretation of treaties shall be referred to the Hague Court of Arbitration, or some other judicial Tribunal, whose decisions shall be final and shall be carried into effect by the parties concerned.

(b) All other disputes shall be referred to and investigated and reported upon by a Council of Inquiry and Conciliation; the Council to be representative of the States which form the League.

3. That the States which are members of the League shall unite in any action necessary for insuring that every member shall abide by the terms of the Treaty, and in particular shall jointly use forthwith their economic and military forces against any one of their number

They all suppose a voluntary union of all or most of the civilized States of the world. They all distinguish between the spheres of judicial settlement and conciliation. They all declare that where diplomacy has failed one or other of these processes shall be applied. They all prescribe coercive action by the member States against another which fails to resort to one of these processes. They are all content to leave optional the further application of coercive action if a State refuses to carry out the recommendations of the Council of Conciliation. They all rely in such cases on the effect of delay, public discussion, and the authority of an impartial finding to make war morally difficult, if not impossible. The crux of the problem of peace is for them to secure a reference to some disinterested authority.

Mr. Wilson, in his speech at Washington, gave a somewhat wider scope to the idea of a League of Peace. He laid down, like a thinker bred in the tradition of natural rights, these fundamental principles :—

1. That every people has the right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live.
  2. That the small States of the world have the right to enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty and for their territorial integrity that the great and powerful nations expect and insist upon.
  3. That the world has the right to be free from every disturbance to its peace that has its origin in aggression and disregard of the rights of peoples and nations.
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that goes to war, or commits acts of hostility, against another of the signatories before any question arising shall be submitted as provided in the foregoing articles.

4. That the States which are members of the League shall make provision for mutual defence, diplomatic, economic, or military, in the event of any of them being attacked by a State, not a member of the League, which refuses to submit the case to an appropriate Tribunal or Council.

5. That any civilized State desiring to join the League shall be admitted to membership.

These are broad principles, and this method of approaching the problem of peace has many advantages over the narrower statement of Mr. Taft's League. The question of machinery, important as it is, is really secondary. The world's peace depends in the end on the recognition of these great principles, and, perhaps, of one or two more. To nationality, the equality of States, and the responsibility of all for the prevention of aggression Mr. Wilson afterwards added, in his final summary, the freedom of the seas. He declared that the United States would aim in the settlement of this war at the creation of

a universal association of nations to maintain inviolate the security of the highways of the seas for the common unhindered use of all the nations of the world, and to prevent any war begun either contrary to treaty covenants or without warning and full submission of the cause to the opinion of the world—a virtual guarantee of territorial integrity and political independence.

The purely pacifist basis of the idea has here broadened out into the conception of an international charter of right.

A sceptical student of affairs may admit the moral value of this American initiative, and yet retain his doubts about its practical efficacy. The sceptic's case against any league of peace shall be fully and ruthlessly stated as we proceed. Meanwhile let us note that if the scheme can be made to work by any power of wisdom and goodwill, the inclusion in it of the United States immensely improves its chances of success. What might have been too difficult without this unexpected aid may now be feasible. That is the new fact. No one can have failed to note in the comments on the world's future of British, and even of German, Liberals a pathetic stretching of hands towards the New World. We all know what a tragic failure

we have made of the adventure of international life. Despairing of our own ability to surmount the accumulated hatred and distrust of our past, we look to the Republic to extricate us. At the end of this war she is to step down upon our reeling stage, like the god from the machine at the close of Euripides' "Elektra," who taught the blood-stained heroes how they might wash their stains at the altar, and obey the judgments spoken on the Areopagus. So far from under-estimating this American intervention, we tend, indeed, to trust too much to it, for no one can help us until we know ourselves. But clearly America is the ideal mediator. She is too strong and secure to dread the resentment of any of the combatants, as the weak European neutrals must do. She has, moreover, in her composite population spokesmen who can present the case of all the parties to our quarrel, and visit the action of the Republic's chiefs with their displeasure if it should be partial. So far from regretting that the German-Americans have influence, we should rejoice that they can gain a hearing for their Fatherland. America can do no service to a distracted Europe if she becomes a partisan, and allows her opinion and her actions to be governed by an instinctive sympathy based on the kinship of the majority of her population with ours. We must learn, if we look to a world based on rational conference and even-handed justice, to consider what guarantees any scheme offers to our enemy as well as to ourselves. It is of little use that we should trust a mediator or a Council, if he distrusts them.

A League of Peace must answer two tests: Can it be so composed that in normal times it will assure to all its members such a prospect of fair decisions in disputes, and such a chance of effecting reasonable changes in the world when they

are due, that war will be unnecessary? Secondly, can it be so composed that there will be in every probable contingency an available superiority of military and naval strength at the command of the League, if any member of it should resort to aggression?

A league which cannot satisfy both these tests is doomed to failure—if, indeed, it could ever come into being. The chief difficulty in the way of the creation of any effective concert or conference in Europe is notoriously the sharp division of the Great Powers into two groups of allies. So long as these groups are held together by the principle of mutual support, so long as they come to a conference (to use the Kaiser's illuminating phrase) like "brilliant seconds to the duelling-ground," there can be no real mediation and no honest handling of any question on its merits. "My ally, right or wrong," is the negation of any international ideal. That was our difficulty before the war, and it is likely to be much graver after it. Into this system of close partnerships and unyielding enmities the United States will enter, disinterested and uncommitted. We need not ascribe to her more than the European average of political virtue, but in none of the racial, strategic, or colonial questions which are likely to divide the European Powers has she any interest or concern. Beyond the American continent her only interests are the open door to trade, the freedom of the seas, and the maintenance of peace. She has no ally, and she will have none. If, on the one hand, kinship and common ethical ideals link her closely to us, her reading of maritime right separates her politically from us, as her detestation of militarism separates her emotionally from Germany. One may doubt whether, if the group system continued to prevail in Europe as sharply as in the past, a single Great

Power could by its casting vote preserve harmony and avert strife. That would mean in the long run a kind of moral dictatorship, which would be resented ; Europe would grow tired of the American Aristides. But in the first stages of the experiment it is indispensable that some powerful neutral should assume leadership.

But what if the League broke up? What would happen if a Great Power, or, worse still, a group of Powers, defied its authority, and made war without first submitting its case to conference, conciliation, or arbitration? It may be said that in this event we should simply be in our present position, and certainly in no worse position. That is not a convincing answer. The plain fact must be faced that pacific Powers, who went trustfully and loyally into a League of Peace and then found that a disloyal Power or group of Powers had enjoyed the security which it gave them only in order at a favourable moment to break the peace, might be in a much worse position materially than if they had remained in their isolation and kept to the old ways. For unless the League were a cold formality, which no one regarded seriously, it would in countless ways influence the demeanour and preparations of loyal Powers. No one is going to disarm merely because a League of Peace has been created ; but if the League means anything, there will be less zeal and less extravagance in armaments than there would be under an armed peace. It is probable that alliances would subsist, but in the effort to be just and reasonable, and to "give the League a fair chance," alliances would tend to become less strict, less exclusive, less exacting, and if the need of them suddenly came, they might be found wanting. A League of Peace would necessarily mean the abandonment of such a hostile policy in commerce as the Paris resolu-

tions contemplate, with the result that the aggressor might enter the fray richer, more prosperous, and better equipped than he would have been if other Powers had boycotted his trade. Finally, if the League had survived for a term of years, and had settled a number of claims or disputed points in international law, it is possible that on the balance the enemy might have won, by this process of conciliation, many considerable advantages which we might be pleased to concede to him if he were a trustworthy and loyal friend, but which we should regret too late if he were to break his bond. These are real objections to any League of Peace. They present us with a familiar dilemma. If, on the one hand, we adopt a harsh policy of precaution and distrust, if we aim at denying to our adversary even reasonable expansion and liberty to trade, he will certainly, sooner or later, justify our fears, and, spurred by a just resentment, renew the war. If, on the other hand, we decide to treat him as a friend, rely on his word, and trust his loyalty, he may disappoint our politic confidence and one day fall upon us unawares. The first policy is the narrow folly of the worldling, and the second the generous folly of the idealist. The policy of distrust is by far the crasser folly of the two, for it means certain catastrophe. The policy of trust might be splendidly vindicated, but it is unquestionably a gamble with human nature.

If the worst should happen, if some Power or Powers should break away from the League and threaten aggression, could the United States redress the balance, and make good to the loyal Powers by its aid what they might have lost by their own previous moderation? Unless this question is answered in the affirmative, the League will not be formed, or if it is formed, it will be a meaningless decoration, a plaster ornament which will fail

to disguise the sinister old structure of the armed peace. In plain words, would the United States have the will and the power, once the League was formed, to oppose aggression so firmly as to make it unprofitable? Would a sentimental, negative pacifism of the Bryan type prevail over positive, constructive pacifism of the Wilson type, so that the United States at the real crisis would give good advice but no active help? Would the selfishness which prefers the profits of neutrality to the risks of intervention defeat the new ideal of international duty? Further, if the States should intervene, would their material power be a decisive factor? The answer to all these questions is to be found in the new American movement towards "preparedness." It may evaporate in rhetoric, but at present it seems to be a genuine effort to prepare the means by which American diplomacy may play an effective part in the world. If the present shipbuilding programme of Congress is realized, America will be in three years the second naval Power in the world, and she will have an army, with its trained reserves, numerous enough to be a balancing factor in a European conflict, though distance and the need of further training would allow it to act decisively only after the lapse of some months from the outbreak of a war. We know, and the Germans know even better, how much the industrial and financial power of America has told in favour of the Entente, while she is still only a friendly neutral. It is not unduly sanguine to conclude that even if the aggression came from a great military Power, the aid of the United States in meeting it would be reliable and in the long run decisive. The movement for "preparedness," coupled with the abandonment of the old tradition of "isolation," is the new fact which for us makes a League of Peace a prudent and rational policy. Here lies the answer



to our dilemma. A policy of trust, with America to back it, ceases to be an idealistic folly.

Inevitably, we look at this question from our own angle. We want security first of all for ourselves. But we shall ruin the promise of this scheme if we allow ourselves to think and talk of "an Anglo-Saxon alliance." The States are not an Anglo-Saxon community, and the more we talk in this strain the more shall we antagonize the German, Irish, and Scandinavian minorities, who do not propose to give up to Great Britain what was meant for mankind. The American tradition is still adamant against "entangling alliances," and Mr. Wilson has been careful to explain that what he proposes is a "disentangling alliance"—a League which will make an end of the old partisan groupings. The United States will help us in so far as we act as a loyal member of a community of nations: they will not further our self-regarding purposes against our rivals. The American offer is not to back Britain or to join the Entente; it is to use the power of a continent against any future aggressor.

The offer will avail to found a League of Peace only if it brings confidence in equal degree to all its members. It must seem a good and reassuring offer from the French and German standpoints, as well as from the British. The French will ask, How soon could this new army which is to be "prepared" reach the Meuse and the Vosges? The answer to that very pertinent question is that the knowledge that it would arrive in six or even nine months would enable the French and British forces to be used with full effect at once, without the anxious economy of a Staff which must save its resources for a long trial of strength.

From the German standpoint the problem will be anxiously weighed. Absurd as it may seem

to us, the risk to the German mind will be that Britain might not be loyal, that she might not in every issue consent to a process of conciliation, and might not always accept the award of a Court or the recommendation of a Council. We must consent to smother our natural indignation and examine this hypothesis. Unless the League can reassure Germany, there can be no League of Peace ; there could only be an anti-German alliance of the old-world type. The German would at once give to his doubts a concrete form. "The League," he would say, "involves presumably some limitation of armaments ; at any rate, it precludes a really challenging and resolute attempt on my part to build a navy against Britain. While the League works well I am secure, and I save my money. But a moment arrives, ten years hence, when some capital issue of colonial or economic policy brings me into conflict with Britain. She refuses to carry the case before the Council of Conciliation, or else (what is more probable) she does go before it ; but when the decision turns against her, refuses to give it effect. What am I to do then? I have so far trusted the League that I have agreed to keep my navy within moderate limits. I have allowed England to retain her supremacy at sea. I have lost ten years' naval building, and I am now forced in consequence to bow to England's will, though the opinion of impartial judges is in my favour. The League from my standpoint is simply a proposal to stereotype England's naval supremacy, and with it her power to veto every claim and expectation that I may reasonably cherish outside the Continent of Europe. In such a case I could deal with France or Russia, if they defied the League, and need ask for no one's help. But I am powerless against the British Empire. If I go to war with England, however just my cause,

she will blockade me and seize my colonies, and all I can do is to sink a few of her ships and harry her towns with my Zeppelins. There must be some guarantee of equal treatment before I enter Utopia." As the world stood before Mr. Wilson's offer, that would have been the German's answer to any proposal for a League of Peace. Convinced that he was acting wisely, he would go on building warships. We should then denounce him as the one obstinate reactionary force in Europe and the one obstacle to the world's peace. We should feel so sure of our own integrity that we should regard his wish for material guarantees of our loyalty as a wanton insult, concealing the worst designs. If the German reminded us that we refused in 1899 to go to arbitration in our quarrel with Mr. Kruger, we should reply that there were in this case decisive and exceptional reasons. The new fact has its bearing on this difficulty. America is already a great naval Power, and she now aspires to the second place. If she believed that Germany had been wronged, if the issue were substantial, and our conduct were really "aggressive," her weight, if we were ill-advised enough to press a bad case to a quarrel, would presumably be thrown into the German scale, and our ability to make an oppressive use of our naval supremacy would then be at an end. An extreme instance of this kind is indeed almost unthinkable. Our cousinly feeling to America is so strong and our respect for her opinion so real, that we are never likely to risk a conflict with her, apart even from the fact that in this case the naval and economic odds might be fairly even.

The American Navy is therefore, in the last resort, exactly the material guarantee which Germany has the right to ask for as an assurance against the abuse of our superiority at sea. It is an ideal

form of guarantee, for we on our side know very well that an American-German combination against us is unthinkable, unless we were grossly and undeniably in the wrong. That imaginary case would never arise, not because we are too virtuous to abuse our power, but because we have too much sense for realities to act in a way that would combine such formidable forces against us. That, if the imaginary German in this argument were sincere, would suffice to reassure him. This balancing of future combinations on land and sea is a gross and repugnant exercise of the fancy. Diplomacy is rarely so crude as this. America's power in the League would rest broadly on the new fact of her readiness to intervene against the aggressor and the lawbreaker. No one doubts her ability to wield great power. What has been in doubt was her willingness to use it. Her conversion to the doctrine of international duty brings the League of Peace among workaday realities.

Before we examine the grave objections to any League of Peace, or consider the conditions in which it might be realized, let us note here that it meets the two chief difficulties in the way of any restoration of normal intercourse in Europe which confronted us in the last chapter. These were (1) the natural doubt, suggested by her conduct towards Belgium, whether Germany could be trusted to keep a treaty, and (2) the still more paralysing doubt whether her public opinion, which regards this war as "defensive" on her part, can ever be a reliable element in a League whose main purpose is to prevent aggression. The object-lesson of Belgium must inevitably destroy, while our generation retains its vivid memory of these years, any unsupported faith in Germany's respect for her own pledges. There has been in modern times no case of treaty-breaking so gross as this. It was aggravated by

the innocence of the victim, whose vow of perpetual neutrality made her a vestal virgin, entitled, if her weakness did not sufficiently plead for her, to claim the chivalry of Europe. The breach of a plain treaty shattered the fabric of public law in Europe: the needless brutality which disgraced the execution of an ill deed added to the account its tale of murdered lives, broken families, and ruined homes. It is fair to remember, however, that there is no similar instance of the violation of treaties by the German Empire during the forty-four years of peace which preceded this war; nor should we forget that some instance of the disregard of its pledged word or of treaty obligations (though none so gross) can be alleged in modern times against all of the Great Powers. The problem of good faith in international affairs is a common one, and it depends partly on a general raising of the level of international morality, partly on the reform of diplomatic procedure, and partly on the provision of external sanctions against treaty-breaking. Our experience in 1914 taught us that for this last purpose our influence was limited. It failed to save Belgium, for we could not concentrate on that single issue. We were bound also by honour and interest to France and Russia. We were part of a complicated continental system, with interests and associations wider than the single issue of Belgium. In the much simpler conditions that prevailed in 1870, when we stood aloof from European affairs, Mr. Gladstone made our neutrality in the Franco-Prussian War dependent on the single condition that Belgian territory should be respected by both sides. By this concentration he succeeded in saving her from violation. Sir Edward Grey's relationship to France (to mention no other reason) forbade him to repeat Mr. Gladstone's tactics. The special advantage of the entry of the United States into

a system of guarantees is that she would come in uncommitted, without allies, and without local interests of her own. She could act in every question of an imperilled treaty as Mr. Gladstone acted in 1870. Her whole weight would be available against the potential lawbreaker, and her action would turn (as ours could not and did not) solely on the question whether the treaty was broken or observed. It is not enough that a guarantor will certainly resort to hostile action if a treaty is broken : the Power which meditates the breach must also be sure that the guarantor will not act against him (for other reasons) if the treaty is observed. A European Power can rarely specialize in this way. The United States, on the other hand, is, and will probably remain, outside our system of continental interests and commitments. That it is morally impartial is important, that it has no interest which must drag it into a mere struggle for a Balance of Power or the possession of territory and strategical points is much more important. When it promises its adhesion to a League of Peace, all its members will know that America can afford to be the guardian, not merely of this or that State or of this or other interest but of the idea of right itself. If any Power threatened to make war without resorting to the procedure of the League of Peace, its European neighbours might be perplexed, each of them, by a whole variety of conflicting calculations, and some of them might be tempted to take sides at the prompting of considerations wholly irrelevant to the question of formal right. The United States alone could certainly afford to take its stand on the constitution of the League, and on that basis only. In an hour of crisis there will be one Great Power which will certainly say : " This mobilization, these threats of war, this hurling of menaces and ultimata are

a breach of our agreement, an offence against civilization, and a clear instance of aggression. To us beyond the Atlantic the rights and wrongs, the grievances and hopes which have induced you to adopt this behaviour are of no interest. For us the only vital fact is that you are threatening war before you have resorted to the processes of conciliation. Desist from these threats, demobilize your armies, and await the deliberations of the Council. If you refuse to observe the constitution of the League, if you persist in these appeals to force, then, however good your case, you are for us the aggressor, and our fleet, our army, and our finance will be used against you." President Wilson's speeches are, in effect, an offer to guarantee a League of Peace and to back international treaties by the promise that America will in the last resort intervene against the aggressor and the treaty-breaker. In other words, she stands security for such treaties in the future. Her intervention is a new fact, a guarantee of a kind with which the past was unacquainted. We need place no implicit trust in Germany's good faith, but with the certainty that America's power would be added to the forces that opposed her, if she should refuse to adopt the procedure of conciliation, it would no longer be necessary to question the value of Germany's signature to the constitution of a League of Peace. No Power will resort to aggression if it must by so doing raise invincible odds against itself.

It is indispensable that any League of Peace should have behind it the external sanction of a force strong enough to repress a recalcitrant Power. But the world's case would be nearly hopeless if the League had to rely mainly on measures of coercion. Unless there is a general will to peace, unless there is, at least in all the more advanced and powerful nations of Europe, a spirit which

abhors and condemns aggression, they would labour in vain who sought to build a League of Peace. I believe, for my part, that such a temper exists, that it has been infinitely strengthened by this war, that it has existed for a generation at least in Western Europe, and even that it existed in the minds of the majority of the German people on the very eve of this war. On the last Sunday of peace the German Socialists held in every large town of the Empire impressive demonstrations against war. They number one-third of the German electorate, and in these manifestations they seemed to have with them the good sense and the goodwill of a great part of the middle-classes. How came it that a week later these same Socialists, with heavy hearts perhaps, but still with an unquestioning obedience, donned their uniforms and marched obediently to Belgium or the Eastern frontier? No one doubts their sincerity: every country presented the same spectacle. Some of the most vehement orators among the Socialist and Radical leaders and Members of Parliament who protested in Trafalgar Square on the first Sunday of war (August 2nd) against our entry into the conflict in association with Russia, were addressing recruiting meetings themselves a few weeks later, or volunteering for the front. Few men in any country, even when they are accustomed as Socialists to the discomfort of belonging to an unpopular minority, keep their cool, critical temper when the rhythm of a nation's feet on the march is in their ears, and each hour brings news of the enemy's hostile acts. A man may think that there is much to censure and more to regret in the past conduct of his own country's diplomacy, but when the enemy is across the frontier the first duty will always seem to be to drive back the invader. The German Government (or some of its subordinates),



by exaggerating or even inventing the news that the Cossacks were across the East Prussian frontier, and by deliberately inventing the news that French aeroplanes had dropped bombs on Nuremburg, aroused this primitive defensive instinct, even before war had begun. A man might think the invasion of Belgium a crime, but the Russian advance had none the less to be met. Even if a German thought that the chief blame for the outbreak of war lay with his own Government, the danger brought about by its fault created the need of defence, and for some weeks East Prussia was actually overrun. The facile emotions of war-time presently gave even in Germany an ideal meaning to the war, and the German Socialists talked of destroying the Russian autocracy and liberating Finns, Poles, and Ukrainians, exactly as we talked about destroying Prussian militarism and liberating Alsatians and South Slavs. The details of the negotiations that preceded the war were imperfectly known, and it was easy in a heated atmosphere to ignore half the relevant facts and to over-emphasize the rest. To be sure, it was Austria which first declared war on Serbia, and Germany which first declared war on Russia. But grave as such a responsibility must always be, the mere fact that a Government has taken the last fatal step by sending an ultimatum or declaring war does not always prove that it is morally the aggressor. Neutrals did not so judge the action of Mr. Kruger in 1899, though he was technically the first to declare war. Our public opinion sided with Japan in her war with Russia, though she not only struck the first blow, but struck it without a declaration of war. The German view that Russia was guilty of the prior aggression because she first ordered a general mobilization, is not in the actual circumstances an adequate defence of German policy, but

theoretically it is reasonable to contend that in some circumstances a mobilization might convict the Power which ordered it of aggressive designs. "Aggression," in short, is a moral idea so equivocal, and so difficult to define, that in a complicated crisis no democracy can be trusted to apply it with certainty. A Power which puts forward unwarranted and oppressive pretensions is aggressive, though it may be slow to strike and correct in its diplomatic procedure. A Power whose case is morally sound may be "aggressive," if it presses it in a provocative way and wantonly forces war. To mobilize troops on your adversary's frontier may be "aggressive" in the grave sense that it first complicates and degrades the negotiations by what is, in effect, a threat of force. It may be a justifiable measure of precaution, if your adversary's attitude is disquieting, and he happens to be able to mobilize much more rapidly than yourself. The difficulty of deciding who is the aggressor is sometimes so great, that even in its judgment of wars long past the public opinion of a neutral nation wavers and transfers the blame. Our fathers, on the whole, regarded Louis Napoleon as the aggressor in 1870: in recent years the tendency has been to throw the chief discredit upon Bismarck. If even neutrals err in their judgments of past events in which their own country was not directly concerned, can we marvel at the fallibility and sophistication of interested contemporary opinion?

The unwelcome conclusion presents itself, that the general moral condemnation of aggression is worthless as a deterrent or preventive of war. When war does break out, the public opinion of each belligerent nation can always persuade itself that the war was "forced upon" it, and that it is in a state of legitimate defence. A statesman may dread the retrospective verdict of his country if

the war should be costly and unsuccessful, but even this verdict will not fall sharply or harshly if the country in the early days of the war has worked itself into the belief that it could not have been avoided. Indeed, in that case the success of the enemy increases the presumption that he willed the war and skilfully chose his time. No historian of civilization would hesitate to say that the attitude towards war has everywhere changed since the eighteenth century, though every country may still have its reactionary caste or party. There was no real shame in the eighteenth century over an act of aggression, provided that it prospered, and wars were frankly waged by all maritime peoples for commercial ends. Swift and Voltaire in their humanitarian attitude were far in advance of their age. The relative chivalry and the surprising absence of hatred in the eighteenth-century wars meant that the aristocracy on either side was employed in a congenial if dangerous sport, and bore the enemy no ill-will for providing it with the occasion for adventure, promotion, and glory. The rampant hatreds of our war are a consequence of the ascendancy which the habit of moral judgment has won over our minds. It is because every nation in arms regards war as an evil (as the old aristocratic and professional armies did not) that we all hate the enemy whom we regard as its cause. The paradoxical effect of the prevalence of a general condemnation of war from the humanitarian, Christian, or Socialist standpoints, would seem to be, as the world is constituted to-day, not to prevent war, but to make it, when it comes, less chivalrous, less merciful, and more brutalizing.

Must we conclude, then, that modern morality will always be impotent to prevent a war of aggression? We need not pause to point out that the secret conduct of negotiations, and the practice, which

obtains no less in Britain than in Germany, of postponing any discussion of the issue, or any publication of the dispatches, until the irreparable step has been taken, will alone suffice to frustrate the influence even of a resolutely pacific democracy. But to assume that every nation would judge fairly in its own case, if it had all the documents in good time before it, is to take an excessively sanguine view of human nature. There might in the blame-worthy country be more division of opinion than at present, but the mass mind is nowhere formed as yet for difficult feats of historical criticism. The only hope of "mobilizing" public opinion with any effect against an imminent war is to provide it with some test of "aggression" much simpler than is available at present. That is the great merit of the conception which underlies the League of Peace. Its procedure provides a uniform and mechanical test. The democracy need no longer dispute over the merits of the question, nor speculate on the motives of the adversary. The only relevant question for it, is whether its Government has kept its pledge to refer every dispute which baffles the ordinary processes of diplomacy to the arbitrament of a standing Tribunal or Council of Conciliation. No Western democracy is so simple that it cannot apply that test, and none so prejudiced that it would not apply it. A sceptic may point out that Sir Edward Grey did propose an informal conference on the eve of this war, which would have interposed the mediation of neutrals between Austria and Russia. The Chancellor's rejection of this expedient, which history may possibly regard as the heaviest count against him, does not seem (if it was generally known) to have disturbed public opinion in Germany. But it is one thing to reject mediation if the procedure and the Council must be improvised, if you have no security that in a

like case in the future the advantages of this method will be open to yourself, if further you doubt whether the proposed Council can possibly be impartial,<sup>1</sup> and quite another matter to reject conciliation if you and your adversary are alike bound by treaty to resort to it, if the Council is so composed that impartiality may be hoped for, if, finally, it is a standing institution which has proved its utility in other cases. To have accepted mediation in 1914 would have been for a German Chancellor a notable act of grace: to refuse it if a League of Peace is constituted would be a startling act of perfidy. It requires no excessive exercise of faith to assume that public opinion, if all the Great Powers were pledged to adopt this pacific procedure before resorting to arms, would be in each country sufficiently enlightened to insist upon it, and to condemn as the aggressor the statesman who broke the compact.

Further chapters will consider the many difficulties which will in practice confront a League of Peace. We shall find them only too real and only too formidable. It requires for its realization conditions which exact from European statesmanship a high and difficult level of wisdom. But in this preliminary statement of the idea we have found the two essentials for the fortunate conduct of a League. The promised adhesion of America provides not merely for an impartial and uncommitted element in its councils, but also for a powerful external sanction for the observance of its constitution and the fulfilment of treaties. The simple and almost mechanical test which it furnishes for the judgment of "aggression" promises for the first time in history to arm the moral conscience of civilized opinion in the service of peace.

<sup>1</sup> The prevailing view among Germans was that three of the four "disinterested" Powers—Britain, France, and Italy—were already biased against Austria, and only one (Germany) friendly.

## CHAPTER III

### ON PEACE AND CHANGE

These two methods of settling international disputes, the method of negotiation and the method of war, I ask you to consider in the light of this struggle. Do we not see the disaster of the war method conclusively shown? How much better would have been a Conference, or The Hague, in 1914, than what has happened since. Industry and commerce dislocated: the burdens of life heavily increased; millions of men slain, maimed, blinded; international hatreds deepened and intensified; the very fabric of civilization menaced—these form the war method. The Conference we proposed—or The Hague, proposed by the Tsar—would have settled the quarrel in a little time—I think a Conference would have settled it in a week—and all these calamities would have been averted. Moreover, a thing of vast importance, we should have advanced a long way in laying the permanent foundations for international peace.—Sir EDWARD GREY, in his interview in the *Chicago Daily News*, May 15, 1916.

IN these forcible and simple sentences Viscount Grey has said what every civilized man and woman must have thought throughout the months and years of this war. History will say, as it cannot say of our forefathers in earlier wars, that Europe knew in advance into what horror it was rushing, that the way of escape was offered, that it was closed against the conscience and desire of the many, by the evil will of the few. That offer by Sir Edward Grey of mediation by conference during those fateful days when he strove so unweariedly for peace will justly be counted a glory in our national records. It is well that we should approach the

question of conference and the League of Peace in this mood of conviction. On behalf of an innovation so momentous, involving as it does the overthrow or transmutation of the most powerful forces in human relations, we have need to enlist all our hopes. It is hard even to reject the services of an illusion which offers to serve in their ranks. But there can be no sound construction without ruthless and negative criticism. Let us turn from these hopes to an examination of the many difficulties which beset any attempt to set up the expedient of conference as the sovereign method for the solution of the graver disputes between nations. We may learn more from a study of actual cases, in which the play of real forces is seen at work, than from any attempt to think out the whole problem in the abstract.

Why, then, was it that Sir Edward Grey's proposal of a conference and the Tsar's proposal of a reference to the Hague Tribunal failed to avert war in the Serbian crisis of July 1914? Some readers will dismiss this question with the simple answer that Austria was resolved to crush Serbia by force of arms and that Germany was bent on imposing her will on Europe. There is too much truth in that simple answer, but it is not the whole truth. Austria after her first precipitate haste to make war did, in fact, at the Chancellor's suggestion, renew negotiations with Russia, and whatever must be said of some German soldiers, diplomatists, and courtiers, one does not from a candid study of the documents form the impression that the Chancellor himself desired war.<sup>1</sup> It must also be

<sup>1</sup> This was the view of M. Sazonoff. "I am ready to admit that Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg did not wish the war and was not the direct promoter of it, but numerous persons in the Chancellor's *entourage* did ardently desire it." (Interview in the *Russkoe Slovo* quoted in *The Times*, June 30, 1916.) There are now more docu-

said that the dominant trend of thinking in Germany during the last generation has emphasized the narrowly nationalist standpoint in politics and morals, and has viewed with cold scepticism all the larger developments of internationalism.<sup>1</sup> This came partly from pure Conservatism, and the

ments available for the formation of a judgment on the Chancellor's conduct than there were in the early days of the war. He cannot be acquitted of the grave initial error of allowing the Serbian issue to be exaggerated and forced to extremes. He probably shared the belief of his ambassadors that Russia would not fight, and his intention evidently was to settle the question of prestige in the Balkans by inflicting on Russia a decided and public diplomatic defeat. As the crisis proceeded, he realized his mistake, and perceived that the entry of Great Britain into the quarrel, on which he did not at first reckon, had transformed the problem, and would enable Russia to maintain a determined attitude. We have now ample evidence that in the last stages of the crisis, as he realized the risk of a world-war, he did put the most drastic pressure on Vienna, backed Sir Edward Grey's final proposals, and succeeded in getting negotiations resumed. The catastrophe followed the Russian general mobilization. The political significance of this mobilization lay in the fact that the Chancellor was throughout in conflict with the German military party. He knew early in the crisis what the boiling point would be for the warlike ardour of his own extremists. He saw that they would become uncontrollable if Russia were to mobilize on the German front. Accordingly he besought both London and Paris to prevent a mobilization of Russia's northern armies. Sir Edward Grey tried to stop it, but in vain. When it happened, in spite of all these warnings, indirect and direct, the German war party, as the Chancellor had foreseen, acted promptly. A brief and casual survey of these events is probably useless. I refer to the new facts only in order to suggest two conclusions: (1) that the Chancellor's sincerity in desiring the permanent organization of peace is not open to the same degree of doubt as it would be if he had marched with unflinching and unhesitating steps into the crime of the world-war: and (2) that the responsibility for the war is in some degree diffused. The real criminal was the anarchic European system of the Balance of Power.

<sup>1</sup> This impression is based among us chiefly on the German attitude to the reduction of armaments at the Second Hague Conference (see below, p. 119). It is contradicted by some early tendencies of the Kaiser's reign (see below, p. 119).



Chancellor probably felt in his inner mind the same instinctive dislike of the idea of conference that Castlereagh, Wellington, and Canning felt, a century ago, for the "mysticism" of the Holy Alliance. The "Areopagus" is not a Conservative principle, and Canning's notion of "a wholesome state of things" in Europe—"Every nation for itself and God for us all"—has been that of every German Chancellor from Bismarck to Bethmann-Hollweg. Behind this honest, short-sighted, slow-moving Conservatism lay, however, the more sinister calculation that Germany by her efficient and ever-ready war machine could, preferably by threats, but if necessary by deeds, secure more for herself than she could hope to gain by conference. Finally, we must reckon with the tendency of conferences, holy alliances, and leagues of peace to aim at a static peace, to avoid disturbing changes, to patch and compromise and evade sharp issues. To satisfied Powers this will seem an adequate way of handling the world's problems. It will not meet the ambitions of any restless Power or any aggrieved nationality which has set its mind on radical changes. That is, perhaps, the ultimate and inclusive reason why the German mind looks coldly on the idea of an Areopagus. To us empire is possession. To the Germans it is struggle and growth. We count the gifts of the past: they dream of the acquisitions of the future.

It is easy to accept Viscount Grey's belief that his expedient of a conference or the Tsar's proposal of arbitration might have averted war. But a conference which might have "settled the quarrel in a week" could have had only a very limited scope. If the real issue had been to decide what guarantees, consistent with her independence, Serbia could give to Austria against the hatching of murderous plots and the fostering of disruptive

movements on her soil, a conference might well have "settled the quarrel in a week." If the real issue was the question of fact, how far some Serbian officials may have been guilty of complicity in the Serajevo murder, the Hague Tribunal was the proper authority to investigate it. Indeed, if this had been all, one interview between the Austrian Ambassador and the Serbian Premier, if there had been goodwill, would have sufficed to settle it. But no one, even before the progress of the war had uncovered all its hidden causes, was so near-sighted as to suppose that it really turned merely on the question whether an Austrian assessor was to sit on the bench when Serbian conspirators were tried. Even if we confine our view entirely to the East, and leave out of account the Western and colonial questions which would infallibly be raised by a general war, the issue was as broad and as complicated as any which has ever set great empires at strife. The issue, as it appeared to the chief antagonists, was simply the mastery of the East. "Austria's action," said M. Sazonoff,<sup>1</sup> "was in reality directed against Russia. She aimed at overthrowing the present *status quo* in the Balkans, and establishing her own hegemony there." "If the Serbs," argues the German White Book, "continued, with the aid of Russia and France to menace the existence of Austria-Hungary, the gradual collapse of Austria and the subjection of all the Slavs under one Russian sceptre would be the consequence, thus making untenable the position of the Teutonic race in Central Europe." Each of these statements extracts from a perilous crisis the utmost menace that was latent in it. It may be said with truth that it is exactly at the moment when each side accuses the other of aiming at hegemony for itself and the destruction of its rivals that the services

<sup>1</sup> British Diplomatic Correspondence, No. 17

of neutral mediators are of most avail. The cold neutral who insists on disregarding these large and vague alarms, and addresses himself in a matter-of-fact way to the one narrow cause of conflict which cannot be evaded, may render to peace the immediate service of averting war. But how much of this larger issue could any mediating conference have settled and for how long would war have been avoided by the burial of the memory of Serajevo? The tension between Germany and Russia had been acute since the whole Eastern question was raised by the Balkan wars. Both empires were marching consciously, with vast and rapid increases in their armaments, towards a trial of strength, and in their public discussions the ablest writers on both sides had virtually declared the "inevitable war" some weeks before the Archduke's murder.<sup>1</sup> This big issue of the mastery of the East had several aspects. Let us glance at them very briefly one by one,

1. Austria stood in danger of disruption and collapse from the South Slav movement. The Serbs did not disguise their ambition of one day uniting the whole of the south-eastern region of the Dual Monarchy, with its Serb, Croat, and Slovene populations, under the leadership of Belgrade. Their military success in the Balkan wars gave them confidence that they would one day be able to repeat on behalf of the Serb race the rôle which the little kingdom of Piedmont had played on behalf of Italy when it too was under Austrian rule—with a Russian Tsar to help Serbia as Louis Napoleon helped Piedmont. So openly were such designs proclaimed that the clever daily newspaper of the military party in Belgrade was actually

<sup>1</sup> Especially in the illuminating controversy between Professor Mitrofanoff, the Russian historian, in the "Preussische Jahrbücher" and its editor, Professor Hans Delbrück (June 1914).

named the *Piemonte*. The Russian Pan Slavists encouraged these ambitions, and M. Hartwig, the Russian Minister in Belgrade, created the Balkan League in 1912, not merely to destroy Turkey but with the ultimate design, which is hinted even in the published treaty of alliance, of one day using the Serbo-Bulgarian combination in a war against Austria.<sup>1</sup> Efforts had lately been made by Russian diplomacy to reconstruct the Balkan League. Pan Slavist propaganda, conducted by Orthodox priests on behalf of Russian patriotic organizations, was meanwhile attempting to undermine the loyalty to Austria of the Ruthenians of Galicia.<sup>2</sup>

Austria felt that she must assert herself if she meant to survive, and the only way to do it, in her view, was to prove that Russia, when it came to the point, would not dare to protect Serbia. Russia had in the past often recognized that Serbia

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the treaty see Guéchoff, "L'Alliance Balkanique" (Hachette). For a brief but clear confirmation of the above statement as to the real objects of Russian policy in the Balkans in 1912 I would refer the reader to Prof. Paul Miliukoff's article in the *Retch* (July 25, 1916) on the policy of M. Sazonoff, the late Foreign Minister of Russia. Professor Miliukoff is not merely the leader of the Russian Liberals in the Duma and a distinguished historian; he is also one of the first authorities in Europe on Balkan affairs. He writes as a personal friend and admirer of M. Sazonoff. Here is the essential passage:—

"Sazonoff, receiving in heritage a situation thus complicated, formed a new resource—an alliance of the Balkan States which finally blocked the path of Austria to the South. First of all Sazonoff, *who prepared the alliance against Austria-Hungary*, did not realize in time that it would automatically turn against Turkey, and, together with the rest of Europe, was taken unawares by the Turkish War."

I am able to confirm this statement, as the result of independent conversations in 1913 with both Serbian and Bulgarian diplomatists. The plan of campaign was that the Balkan Alliance should be used first against Austria and afterwards against Turkey. The impatience of the Balkan statesmen upset Russian plans.

<sup>2</sup> See Steed, "The Hapsburg Monarchy."

is naturally within the Austrian sphere of influence (notably in the understandings of 1897 and 1903). There must be a return to that salutary arrangement. Failing this, Austria would sooner or later go to pieces, and Germany would be left without an ally. Some show of force (so ran the reasoning of the Central Powers) was necessary. It was useless to try to conciliate the Serbs. Indeed, their party of violence had murdered the Archduke, who was notoriously friendly to the Slavs, because his scheme of creating a great autonomous united Serbo-Croat province within the Dual Monarchy would have been fatal to their national ambitions.

2. The Serbian and Russian case against Austria has been rendered familiar by a multitude of persuasive pens in all the allied countries. The Austrian design to crush Serbia, it can be shown, is of long standing. It dates from 1908 and Count Aerenthal's lawless annexation of Bosnia, and was renewed in the threat of armed intervention in 1913. It disdained no methods to discredit the Serbs, and stooped even to official forgery and hired false witness. Who would trust even documentary evidence of the complicity of Belgrade in the Serajevo plot, if the Austrian police and Austrian Foreign Office had compiled it? The plight of the Croats under Magyar oppression had been steadily worsening for a number of years, and it was plain that the growth of a new spirit of unity and hope among Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes in the Dual Monarchy only excited the spirit of suspicion and tyranny in the narrow oligarchy of Budapest. The murdered Archduke, to be sure, had more liberal views, but would he ever have enjoyed power? Even he, under Jesuit influence, favoured the Catholic against the Orthodox Slavs. A genuinely liberal solution in the Hapsburg

“ police State ” seemed hopeless. Austria, in short, as a brilliant English writer has put it, “ craved the knife.”

3. With this Austro-Serbian question was closely bound up the future of Turkey. Roumania, under a Hohenzollern King, was the ally of the Central Powers. Bulgaria, under King Ferdinand, marched, on the whole, with Austria. Serbia, alone in the Balkans, stood in the path of a German-Austrian domination of the East. From the Russian standpoint the question of the Straits was becoming urgent.<sup>1</sup> Russia could not much longer postpone raising it: on a free egress for her warships from the Black Sea she meant one day to insist. But meanwhile Germany was in a fair way to settling the question in her own favour. The arrival of General Liman von Sanders in Turkey, at the head of a military mission charged with executive powers in the winter of 1913-14, seemed to mean that

<sup>1</sup> The diplomatic history of the Straits question in recent years is much in need of illumination. For a number of years, said Dr. Spahn, the leader of the Centre, in the Reichstag (*Times*, October 16 1916) the Central Empires had been willing to settle the Straits question with Russia. It has been stated that in his preliminary conversations with Count Aerenthal, M. Isvolsky, on the eve of the annexation of Bosnia, obtained Austria's consent to the opening of the Straits to Russian warships. What was the British attitude then? Later, when M. Tcharikoff was Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, he pursued a Turcophil policy, and made, according to some authorities, considerable progress in inducing the Young Turks to consent to the opening of the Straits, but on the mischievous condition that Turkish authority over Crete should be confirmed. He was suddenly recalled, and the statement has been made that this was done at the instance of France, which feared our displeasure if the question of the Straits were raised. If this be true, it is possible that our objection was rather to the Cretan arrangement. The failure to reach a peaceable settlement of this question between 1908 and 1914 was one of the root causes of the war, but it is impossible to decide where the responsibility lies. See Reventlow, pp. 358, 359, 441, and “ Nationalism and War in the Near East, by a Diplomatist,” p. 161.

Constantinople was becoming a German and not a Russian city. The two great strategical routes which dominate the East—Berlin-Bagdad and Bosphorus-Dardanelles—cross at Constantinople, and already the Germans were establishing themselves there with the eager complicity of Enver Pasha and the Young Turks. If Serbia should be brought within the Austrian sphere by the failure of Russian support, the fate of the Near East was settled. The Germans, on their side, saw in the hereditary Russian claim to Constantinople the negation of their economic schemes of railway-building, irrigation, mining, oil development, and the like, in Anatolia and Mesopotamia, and they suspected that the Entente Powers entertained definite plans for the eventual partition of Asiatic Turkey into spheres of influence, without according even a share to Germany. The last occasion on which this proposal is said to have been put forward was during the Balkan War.<sup>1</sup> Thus their economic future was indirectly at stake in this question of the Serajevo murders. The Russians were beginning to say that the road to Constantinople lay through Berlin. The Germans perceived as clearly that the road to Constantinople lay through Belgrade.

It requires a robust faith to believe that much of this conflict of vital interests would have been settled if a conference had averted war over the Serajevo murders. It might with ease have found a formula to define the kind and degree of reparation due from Serbia. But the Austrian and Turkish problems would have been no nearer to a settlement. That, perhaps, is a superficial and pessimistic view. A precedent would have been set. A Great Power in a question of honour and vital interest would have accepted mediation. The Areopagus would

<sup>1</sup> See Reventlow, "Deutschlands Auswärtige Politik," p. 322. Rohrbach, "Der Deutsche Gedanke," pp. 155, 162.

have come into being, and all the forces of reason in Europe would have felt themselves strengthened and encouraged. It might have been possible after this preliminary success to take a further step. A Congress might have been called to settle the affairs of the East. There is no reason in principle why the affairs of Turkey should not be settled in this way. It is, indeed, the traditional way, though the Congress has usually been called rather to regulate the consequences of an Eastern war than to prevent its outbreak. The usual precedents suggest that if Russia wanted a change in the legal status of the Straits, the consent of the other Powers would have to be purchased by a series of "compensations." It might have been very difficult to arrange these compensations. One can imagine a treaty by which all the Powers, after offering to Turkey the usual guarantee of her "integrity and independence," would then proceed to divide her into spheres of economic influence and to regulate the passage of the Straits in Russia's favour. The status of Egypt, Cyprus, Syria, and Mesopotamia would have come under review. The details would have been inordinately difficult to frame, for they would have involved at least one insoluble contradiction. Russia, in acquiring a great access of strategic and political power by the opening of the Straits, would have found it a barren gain if at the same time she had conceded to Germany the exploitation of a great part of Asiatic Turkey. Germany, at the moment when she had won this rich field of effort, would have felt herself cut off from secure access to it by Russia's appearance as a naval Power in the Levant. If an arrangement of this Turkish question would have been difficult, any radical solution of the Austrian problem would have involved a revolutionary departure from the practice and usage of the Powers. The South-Slav question (to confine our-



selves to that) admitted of two solutions. The Dual Monarchy might have been reconstructed on a federalist or "trialist" basis, with all its Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes united in an autonomous province or subordinate kingdom, under the Hapsburg crown. That solution, to be quite logical and final, would have involved, in some form or degree, at least by an alliance and a customs union, the total or partial absorption of the Serbian and Montenegrin kingdoms. The other solution would have been to lop off from Austria the whole of her Serb and Croat provinces, and to unite them with Serbia and Montenegro. Either solution would have resulted in the union of the Serbo-Croat race, with every guarantee for its own native culture and its self-government. The former solution would have brought a great access of strength to the Central Empires, the second, a great weakening. It is safe to say that no Congress would have considered either solution for one moment, save at the end of a decisive war. No Great Power would consent to submit its internal reconstruction to the decision of a Concert. Against the cession of the South-Slav provinces Austria and Germany would have fought to the bitter end. The absorption of Serbia (in default of heavy compensations) would have been resisted by Russia no less stubbornly. A Congress dare not have touched the South-Slav question.

If this conclusion be sound, we have reached what looks at this stage like a fatal obstacle to any League of Peace. There are many questions, some of them large questions, which might have been settled in the Europe of 1914 by the method of conference and conciliation. The problem of Constantinople and the Straits may have been one of them. But no cautious and experienced statesman would have ventured to assert that in 1914 any question of nationality which required either a drastic inter-

ference with the Constitution of a Great Power or a considerable diminution of its European territories (save perhaps by exchange) could have been settled by conference without war. One illustration is enough, but it would be easy to multiply cases. Poland, Alsace, and Finland at once present themselves among those problems of nationality which no one could have raised in 1914 without precipitating war. The conception of the sovereign State stood in the way. No European Power above the level of a Balkan State would have consented to accept from any Congress or Conference, save as the result of a war which had exhausted its powers of resistance, an order which required it either to alter its Constitution or to surrender an integral part of its home territory. Nor was the attachment of the Liberal Powers to this tradition less decided than that of the Central Empires. Let us ask ourselves candidly what our answer would have been if Spain, greatly daring, or backed by some first-class Power, had ventured to raise the question of Gibraltar, and invited us (after an angry controversy) to submit our ownership of the Rock and our control of the Straits to the decision of a neutral Council? The world was not ready in 1914 for any decision of such issues by means other than force. All the great territorial changes of last century came about as the sequels of war, and no one seriously hoped that further changes in Europe could come in any other way. The desire for these great organic changes none the less existed. It burned fiercely as an aspiration in some crushed or divided races: it surged as an ambition in some great empires. We have realized during this war how fierce and fundamental some of these passions were: we look back on the last generation as a time when all these nationalist explosives were accumulated, awaiting the match. Everywhere in Europe there were races or

parties in both of its camps who were forced year by year to say to themselves, "The solution of the problem which is vital to our personal happiness and dignity must await the next war." The diplomacy of the Continent was, in fact, a struggle between the conservatism of the sober or satisfied elements, who desired no change, and the radicalism of the wronged or ambitious elements, who cherished the suppressed wish for change by war. With all its goodwill, with all its humane horror of war, the diplomacy which was driven to a continual support of the *status quo* shares the responsibility for war with the restless elements which made it. Our English habit of pronouncing moral judgments is apt to lead us into a diagnosis of war and its causes which errs by its inadequate simplicity. We shall not find our way out while we are content to spend our whole minds in denouncing Prussian militarism. No words are too harsh for it, but when all our words are spoken, the fact remains that the European system as it existed in 1914 provided no means by which large and necessary changes could be compassed without war. There lay the root of all militarism. Let us glance at a question in which our passions are not involved. Who was to blame for the war of the Balkan Allies in 1912 against Turkey? The Turks, who made Macedonia a chaos of misery and oppression? The Balkan Allies, who deliberately and with foresight planned the war and drew the sword? Both were to blame, if we must speak of blame—a silly habit that darkens understanding. But behind them both was the Concert, which had steadily set its face against any radical and adequate solution of this question. It is idle to blame even the Concert, in the sense of passing moral judgments upon it. The statesmen who did nothing, or did too little, were often called upon to resist fanatical and aggressive cliques, and their decision to allow

the wrong to fester, so far from implying callousness, may have meant, on the contrary, a humane shrinking from any step which might involve Europe in war. Their prudence, however, had its reserves and its limitations. They did not, they could not, renounce the hope of change. But since change must mean war, they armed and formed their alliances for the moment when it should come. Each side professed in these preparations a purely defensive aim, and in a sense the profession may have been sincere. But each side knew that a fortunate war would enable it to achieve the change which without war was unthinkable.

A survey of the sub-conscious mind of Europe on the eve of the catastrophe would have revealed everywhere these suppressed wishes for war. They were never avowed. They rarely emerged above the threshold of publicity. Good men fought them down, and prudent men concealed them. But like the "suppressed wishes" which Freud's school has taught us to trace in the mental life of the individual, they coloured the dreams of many of the nations, and while they made no war, they subtly and unconsciously ruined peace. In crisis after crisis, when some decision had to be taken on a question seemingly irrelevant, the suppressed wish did its silent work, and the nation deviated a little from the course that might have led to lasting peace, and swerved a little into the course which eventually led to war. How promptly these suppressed wishes proclaimed themselves when at length war broke out! When the German Chancellor in his proposals for our neutrality<sup>1</sup> pledged himself not to annex French territory, but added candidly that he could not give the same undertaking about French colonies, who could fail to read the suppressed wish? Russian Pan-Slavism,

<sup>1</sup> British White Paper, No. 85.

the French demand for *revanche*, Italian, Serbian, and Bulgarian irredentism discovered themselves with equal candour. One may say of these aspirations, that while morals or prudence had restrained most of them for a generation or more from any declaration of war, all and each of them had been strong enough to cause the rivalry in armaments and the search for allies which had divided Europe into two camps and made our armed peace. In no case is defence and fear a sufficient explanation. Turn even to the most pacific and democratic of all the belligerent Powers, the Power which played the least active part in the outbreak of the war. One may say with conviction that in spite of an influential "nationalist" tendency, the French Republic would never, without fresh provocation, have declared war on Germany to recover the lost provinces. But with the same decision one must say that it was not merely the need of defence, but also the desire to retake Alsace-Lorraine, which caused her to ally herself with Russia and to connect herself with Britain. That desire worked, though it made no war, and it worked in crisis after crisis to render the dualism in Europe more acute. Even the German Government, despite the militarist tradition around it, had too much regard for the public opinion of its own people and the rest of the world to declare war frankly in order to acquire colonies. It let the Morocco question pass without war, and awaited another occasion on which it could point to Serbian murders and Pan-Slavist schemes, to turn aside the condemnation which even its own people would have passed on an avowedly Imperialist war. None of these aspirations was wrong in itself: some of them voiced a sharp cry for justice. We may think the German desire for expansion dangerous and inexpedient, but we who have acquired (thanks

to our naval supremacy) one-fourth of the inhabited earth cannot as a people say that it is immoral to cherish such ambitions. Of these many suppressed wishes it was only two, the German wish for economic or colonial expansion and the Serbian wish for racial unity, which actively and obviously made this war. But all these suppressed wishes played their part in making a durable peace impossible. There was in Europe a cause of war broader and more potent than Prussian militarism, the system or want of system which forbade organic change without war. One may give it another name. It was the anarchic and individualistic tradition of the sovereign State, which regarded all interference from outside or from above as an intolerable infringement of its natural right of independence.

The historic conception of a League of Peace took no account whatever of the world's need of change, growth, and readjustment. It seemed, indeed, to be a provision against the very possibility of change. The Christian sovereigns, who were to form the Confederation sketched by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, based their League upon a mutual guarantee, for all time, of all the States which they actually possessed. The map of Europe would have been fixed for ever by such an arrangement, and neither by revolution nor by conquest could any change have occurred in the distribution of territory. That could have come about only by marriage or inheritance. Poland would have been saved, but there could have been no united Germany, no Italy, no Belgium, and no Norway. Such a conception was natural in the early eighteenth century, when countries were still only the estates of princes, and peoples were merely their subjects. Even then it provoked from Leibnitz the retort that "perpetual peace" is a motto suitable only for

a graveyard. The same static view of international existence and the same principle of legitimacy were the fundamental ideas of the Holy Alliance, the child by collateral descent of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's scheme, on which the Tsar Alexander had pondered (in Rousseau's abstract) during his idealistic youth. The tradition of a static peace is deeply rooted even in contemporary pacifist thought, and it may ruin the effort of the twentieth century, to abolish war, as it ruined the Holy Alliance. Pacifist thinking flourishes above all in countries which have no need of fundamental change in their own national interest, and desire above all things security. Security seen from such an angle is apt to look like repose, and the mere absence of movement. A facile philosophy is readily built up to suggest that the factors which make for change are either sinister or unreal. One century blames its kings and priests ; the next curses its capitalists. Both believe that democracies, if they were really self-governing, would never go to war. One thinker traces all our ills to secret diplomacy, another to the illusion that conquest can enrich a people. There is truth, inexhaustible truth, in all these indictments, whether of the vanity of kings, the greed of capitalists, or the devious ways of a secret statecraft. But none of these diagnoses takes account of the fact that change is necessary in the world's structure, and that the pretensions of the sovereign State in its present conception are a fatal obstacle to fundamental change.

The national changes are the most baffling of all, and we dare not assume that we can foresee all that may ever be necessary. Forgotten races come to consciousness. Did not Kinglake pass through Bulgaria without realizing that a Bulgarian race existed? Ten or twenty years ago who took account of Slovacks and Slovenes? Backward races

leap, by industrial and educational development, into the position to claim their rights. Sundered races discover their affinity. Ten years ago, though every student understood the identity of Croats and Serbs, few practical politicians believed that they would surmount their religious and cultural differences, to embrace a single racial aspiration. Emigration, as the decades pass, may make for our children racial problems as grievous as these older European perplexities. It would be rash to say that there can ever be a final solution of the problem of nationality. The economic and colonial problems which give rise to war are even more obviously incapable of permanent solution. The decay of an ancient Asiatic Empire, the bankruptcy of a semi-civilized State, the discovery overseas of a new source of some raw material in great demand, the invention of a new industrial process—all of these may at any moment call for some readjustment of the kind that often leads to war. The Old World went out conquering for gold. Iron ore and petrol may be to-day the raw materials of war. Who knows over what rare mineral the syndicated industries of Europe and America may dispute a generation hence? Life is change, and a League of Peace that aimed at preserving peace by forbidding change would be a tyranny as oppressive as any Napoleonic dictatorship. New adjustments of frontiers to meet the real facts of nationality, or, failing these, changes within the Constitution of composite Empires, redistribution of colonial possessions or spheres of influence, the requirements of new trade routes, the equitable apportionment of raw materials, access for growing industries to new markets—all of these problems shift with the world's growth, call for periodic change, and will make war if change should be denied. The peril of our future is that while the



need for change is instinctively grasped by some peoples as the fundamental fact of world-politics, to perceive it costs others a difficult effort of thought. We have no unredeemed kinsmen ; we own more soil than we can till. America moves securely within the closed frame of her own vast continent. Pacifist thought flourishes readily among us. But there were no pacifists in Serbia, and few in Germany, outside the Socialist ranks. We must cease to attribute this difference to original sin. It depends on the varying urgency of the need which each people experienced for fundamental change. Unless we can make our League a possible instrument of fundamental change, it will rally the satisfied Powers and repel the peoples which cherish an ambition or suffer from a wrong. Our inevitably static conception of the world must learn to find a place for these restless forces which are bent on change. Unless these forces can see in the League of Peace a hopeful means of effecting needful change, they will see in it only a barrier to their growth, and the pulse of life within them will drive them first to armaments and then to war. Our problem is not merely moral ; it is biological. Granted that all war involves an element of "aggression" which the moralist must condemn : it is no less important to recognize that it involves a need of change which the statesman must satisfy. The failure to see the need for change as the central fact in world-politics may well prevent the formation of a League, and wreck it, if it should be formed. To the "have-nots" among the nations, the proletarian nationalities and the parvenu Powers, it will present itself as a League of all the "haves," to keep, to hold, to stereotype things as they are. Glance at the brief definitions of the ideal which have been given by Mr. Asquith, Viscount Grey, and President Wilson. Admirable and eloquent as

they all are, they all of them conceive the functions of the League as negative. It is to prevent action in others ; it will itself act only to repress. It is to stand in the way of the evil will. It is to stop aggression. Nowhere is there any stress on its resolve to do anything to render the world more tolerable for those who otherwise might be tempted to rebel. Such language is natural in the midst of war. The terrific fact in all our minds is that a tremendous act of aggression has been committed. The progress which the idea of a League has made is simply a reaction against this act. We want simply to prevent its repetition.

In this mood we lapse too easily into the conception of a static and changeless peace. It is significant that some of the authors who have done the most notable service to advance the idea of a League in Britain and America express the opinion that ultimately all matters of controversy among nations may be settled by judicial process, though most of them recognize that at present we must rely very largely on councils of conciliation. This may seem to be a remote and unimportant detail of procedure. But it reveals very clearly the belief that the need of large changes will diminish and can be eliminated. It suggests the analogy of a kingdom with a Constitution so fixed and a Statute Book so complete, that it could be ruled entirely by its magistrates, administering its existing laws, without the need of a Parliament or an Executive. This is to banish all thought of evolution and growth. It is to assume that no new ideas will arise to give fresh shape to international relations. It is to repress all movements of the will outside each national frontier. So far from representing an international idea and a Society of Nations, debating with each other, influencing each other, and deciding together great

issues for the common good, it seems to picture a condition of isolation, in which nations touch one another only as litigants before a supreme Court. The climax of this way of thinking is to be found in the suggestion that the cure for war is to be sought in the boredom which will overtake us all when international affairs are involved in the intricacies of a quiet, tedious, and quasi-legal procedure. This mode of thought represents the extreme and timorous reaction from war. It offers us a purely negative conception of peace, which may for the moment, drab and dull as it is, appeal to minds sated with the violent colours of war. In the long run humanity will ask for something more positive and interesting, for something that gives scope to the creative and shaping will, that brings together in the stimulating shock of contention, in debate if not on stricken fields, the diverse temperaments, the mutually complementary political ideals of civilized nations. A peace rich in this conception of co-operation will aim at international changes more daring, more constructive, more interesting than the elementary ambitions of war-time. We shall end by eliminating from our vocabulary the word "dispute," and regard the debates between nations over the conduct of our common affairs, not as dangers to be dreaded, concealed, and avoided, but as the promise and medium of hopeful and stimulating change. That will be a slow development. There is risk in attempting to think and construct too fast. But let us realize the still graver risk of defining peace and its organization in static and negative terms. To do that is to leave still fermenting in the dark places of the European mind its many suppressed wishes for war. The psychic healer who would cure mankind of these wishes will not attempt the vain task of repressing them.

He will bid them to be conscious and vocal. He will summon them into international publicity, and endeavour to transmute them into open and honourable demands for change, addressed to the reasonable goodwill of a Society of Nations, which can, when it is convinced of their urgency and justice, proceed to give them effect.

This general argument has carried us beyond the limited but vital question which confronted us when we asked whether a European Congress or Council could have settled the South Slav question. The obstacle to any settlement seemed to be the traditional refusal of the sovereign State, and especially of the Great Power, to allow any interference with its internal questions, or to contemplate, save after war, any surrender of his home territories. In consequence of this tradition, loyal and pacific statesmen had eliminated from the scope of diplomacy any consideration of problems which could be solved only in one of these two ways. Will a League of Peace be more daring? We have advanced an argument to show that it must be prepared to be very much more daring and more radical, if it intends by peaceful means to keep the world's structure adjusted to the recurrent need of change. But will it, in fact, be more daring? It is probable that the very experience of this war will make us all Conservatives in such matters. While the war lasts it is part of our fighting case to make the most of all these issues of nationality, and to urge its prosecution to the bitter end, lest our victory should fail to provide for the radical settlement of any of these questions. When peace returns, the contrary mood will set in, and to any one who points out that the Slovenes have been forgotten or the Macedonians wronged, public

opinion will oppose a massive indifference which will turn, if he persists, to anger and impatience. The very mention of a neglected nationality will ring to our ears like a proposal to begin once more the slaughter of men by millions. This mood may last for a generation, and it is probable that if any national question which might arouse European strife should be brought before the League, its Council would tend to offer a timid and compromising solution, which might none the less have value if it eased the strain without provoking determined resistance. It is even more probable that, however wise the recommendations of the Council might be, there would be little disposition on the part of the Great Powers to take any action whatever to enforce them, unless, perhaps, it were clear to all of them that only by prompt action could a devastating war be avoided. Much, no doubt, would depend on the standing and associations of the State against which action was required. The tendency of the cruder public opinion in both camps would be to declare that it was monstrous that the Council should dare to address even a recommendation to an ally; while if the offender were in the other camp the same voices would sound the clarion and summon the whole civilized world to coerce him. It will only be slowly, as the memories of this conflict fade, that an approach to impartiality will be possible. The responsibility of the United States at this early stage will be heavy, and many a long year will pass before the League could venture to use pressure, even moral pressure, against one of the more important victors in this war. For that reason the defeated Powers will be very chary of joining the League, and very slow to believe that they may hope for justice from it. The idea of the League requires for its smooth working, firstly, the loosening, if not the abolition,

of partial alliances among its members, and, secondly, some diminution of the arrogance and self-sufficiency which inflate our notion of the sovereign State.

This admission may seem to some a reason for postponing any attempt to create the League until a number of years have passed. That counsel may be disguised to look like wisdom. But those who advance it must be prepared to show how, without the League, we may hope for a withering of the idea of force, how in default of it alliances are likely to decay, how without any attempt to build up international institutions the sovereign State can begin to lose its repellent individualism. Within the League all these developments will go forward. We must begin, as best we may, realizing the handicaps of our disastrous past and aware of the inordinate difficulties of our task. If we refuse to create the League now because we doubt our ability to overcome these moral obstacles, we are refusing to adopt the principle of conference which our own statesmen have proclaimed. Some principle we must follow, and the alternative to conference is strife and armaments, boycotts and force. Security is the overmastering need, and the Power which will not seek it or cannot find it in a League of Peace, will inevitably work for it by the disastrous methods of the past. It will bend its resources and its statesmanship to two ends—the strengthening of itself so that its defensive forces are overwhelming, and the weakening of the enemy so that any attack from him may be disregarded. Seen from the other side, this process means that the Power in question is making itself so strong that it might attack with impunity, while its rival must lack the means for defence. Absorbed in such fears and precautions, Europe could make no advance to a League. The favourable moment for

proposing it would never come. The obvious and natural moment to begin is when all the nations are assembled in council for the settlement of this war. If this moment is neglected, each side will see in this neglect a fresh reason for resuming, with the old suspicions, the old precautions.

If the resistance, inherent in the tradition of the sovereign State, to all organic changes suggested or imposed from without, is the reason which explained the accumulation of so many causes of war, if, further, we may hope only for the very gradual adoption in really vital cases of the principle of international regulation, it follows that we must endeavour in the settlement which precedes peace to effect at least the most urgent and difficult of these necessary changes. One may lay down in theory the most drastic principles of nationality. One may say, as President Wilson has said, that every people has the right to decide for itself under which State it will live. But no empire is going to accept that principle, if at all, without safeguards which will leave it the smallest possible range of application. It is idle to imagine that we could to-morrow conclude peace on the basis of the territorial *status quo* as it existed before the war, erect our League of Peace, and then through its Council invite Germany to test the allegiance of the people of Alsace-Lorraine by a *plébiscite*. Entirely reasonable as such a strategy would be, it demands too prompt a departure from the ideas of the past. We should not accept it for Ireland or Gibraltar, nor would Russia submit to it for Finland. Every Power will expect that the settlement shall give it the secure possession at least of its European territories for a long period to come. If there are to be cessions of territory dependent on a *plébiscite*, they must be defined precisely in the terms of peace. It is probable,

indeed, that the victors will ask that the settlement of territory laid down in the treaty of peace shall be accepted by all parties as a final regulation of the map of Europe. If they are disposed to adopt the idea of a League of Peace, there will certainly be a tendency on their part to regard the League as a Federation pledged to maintain the settlement for all time. They will probably require that its terms shall be embodied in the basis of the League's constitution. The utmost which those who realize that some scope for change and readjustment is essential to permanent peace, may hope to secure is that its provisions may be subject to review by the Council of the League after a long term of (say twenty) years. The balance between the dangers and advantages of a settlement which follows war is hard to strike. On the one hand, one may say that there were demands for change in Europe, unattainable without war, so urgent and necessary that permanent peace was barely thinkable without them. On the other hand, there is the risk that the victors (whatever principles they profess) will think chiefly of increasing their power and weakening the enemy, and will tend to regard the League simply as a guarantee of their conquests. A peace without annexations is the formula which would lead us most promptly to an end of the carnage. But a peace without some territorial changes would leave us in the grip of many of the acuter problems which made this war.

Can we find, with the League of Peace as our guiding principle, a clue through these difficulties? It is obvious that our answer to nearly every question which confronts us will differ with our faith in the possibility and efficacy of a regulated internationalism. If there is to be no League, then it is reasonable to say that national questions admit only of the trenchant solution by annexation or



partition. If a League exists, it may provide us with a super-national authority which can act as a court of appeal for imperilled nationalities within larger empires. In that event the war may stop short of a point at which these composite empires can be "broken up." Again, if there is no League, it is inevitable that Powers bent on achieving security, should press their efforts to obtain territory of strategical value to themselves, even at the cost of overriding nationality and prolonging the struggle. If, on the other hand, we believe in the attainment of security through a League, we shall see in these strategical aims attempts to reach it by obsolete means as superfluous as they are mischievous. The decision of some economic and colonial questions turns no less clearly on the same pivot. If our only hope of security lay in weakening the enemy and in keeping him weak, then clearly the policy of boycotting his trade, cutting off his supplies of raw material, and destroying his enterprises overseas would deserve careful consideration. If we look to a League, however, as the guarantee of the future, and wish to include him within it as a loyal and willing member, then to play with such proposals as these would be suicidal. Evidently the settlement of the war and the future of the League are inextricably bound up together. A weak settlement which shirked any of the graver issues in the war might compromise the whole future of the League by burdening it with problems which are far too heavy a weight for any new institution to carry during the experimental years. The next generation will have grown up, if schools and the Press do their duty, with some sense of loyalty and veneration towards the new super-national structure. Only when this confidence and fidelity exist as a real spiritual force behind the League, will it dare to propose solutions

of difficult problems which call for large sacrifices from powerful nations. A drastic and violent settlement might, on the other hand, leave Europe so torn with resentments that the States which had suffered amputation and felt the weight of the victors' ill-will could not be induced to sit down with them in council. It is a single organic problem which we have to solve, and both sides of it may be compromised unless it is considered as a unity. No civilized man will hesitate in his choice of the principle of a settlement if a League of Peace is indeed attainable.<sup>1</sup> Only a savage

\* Another test has, indeed, been proposed. Many of those who have advocated a drastic settlement and the utter crushing of Germany have added that their view would be altered if Germany were herself likely to overthrow her present Government, and in particular the Hohenzollern dynasty. Some even propose that we should refuse to negotiate with a Hohenzollern. That extravagance is fortunately subsiding. However much we might welcome a change of dynasty, the Liberal Powers cannot depart from the principle of our own Revolution, which proclaimed the right of every people "to choose its governors." The precedent of France is clearly inapplicable, for there it was "the usurper" Bonaparte whom the Allies overthrew, and the "legitimate" king whom they restored. Even so, the precedent is not a happy one, for France after a generation of peace (1815-48) made haste to recall the "usurper's" heir, and promptly returned to his tradition of militarism. It is another matter to hope that the Germans themselves may get rid of their dynasty. The hope is probably remote, for the Hohenzollerns have a great past behind them and many traditional virtues; the Kaiser, moreover, is an unstable and romantic idealist, whose dreams may well have undergone a change during the disillusioning experience of war. Kant, to be sure, laid down as the first condition of a League of Peace that all the States which entered it should become republics. The Germans, if we preach republicanism to them, may fairly invite us to begin at Petrograd: they may even ask whether our own Parliament has more control over foreign affairs than their Reichstag. Mr. Churchill said in the debate on the Paris Resolutions (August 2, 1916), to which he gave his approval, that if "Prussianism were definitely overthrown" and the "German democracy obtained control over their Government," the new situation would "call for wholly different

would sacrifice the future of mankind to the present moment, or condemn his children to peril for the crude emotional pleasure of a glorious triumph, or the still cruder material gains of trade boycotts and indemnities. If the League is attainable, its interests must be the guide and pilot alike of our policy in war and of our statesmanship at the settlement. How to found the League, how to ease its working during the first anxious generation, how to bring within it every Power which might be strong enough to wreck it—these are questions which transcend all the details of frontiers, indemnities, and tariffs. It is not enough to see that they transcend them. They must be made to include them. Every demand and proposal must face the test whether it will ease or compromise the creation of the League.

Two positions are intellectually respectable. It is reasonable (though it may be false) to say that a League of Peace is a vain dream : in that case safety depends on our being now and always the stronger. It is reasonable (though again it may be false) to say that a League of Peace is possible, and so desirable that every other consideration must be subordinated to it. The position which is weak and inconsequent is the attempt to mix a settlement by force with a League based on conference. But it is this third and intermediate position which so

measures." Does the true antithesis lie, as he implies, between militarism and democracy? If it does, we must despair of Russia. Surely the real test of a change of temper will be, not so much the readiness of Germany to change her Constitution as her readiness to enter a League of Peace? It may be noted, however, that the Chancellor has promised the reform of the Prussian franchise. More significant still was the recent decision of the Reichstag, accepted by the Government, to entrust its most powerful standing committee, the Finance Committee, with the functions of a permanent Committee for Foreign Affairs. It has the right to discuss foreign policy confidentially with the Government, and its control over the Budget assures it a certain influence.

far predominates in the current discussions of writers and orators in Allied countries. After crushing the enemy in the field, cutting his Empire in pieces, confiscating his fleet, accumulating punishments on his head, annexing straits, and snatching colonies, these writers will add the cheerful conclusion "and of course we hope to-morrow, though not to-day, for a League of Nations, and the enthronement of right." By such means we cannot prepare the League of Peace. Even among moderate writers, after a programme which may be wise and far-seeing, the suggestion of a League of Peace sometimes appears as an afterthought or a fortieth article. It must be less or more than this. If it matters so little that one may wade through blood for two or three years without regard to it, annex, divide, and restore without speaking of it, it is hardly worth the pains which it will cost us. If it matters profoundly, then it matters all the time, and it must guide us in all we do. Our Utopians are not Utopian enough. They do not themselves realize how great a transformation they are proposing. From force to conference, from armaments to reason, from monopoly to free intercourse, from rival alliances to a society of nations, from the sovereign State to the federal league, from exclusive nationalism to international solidarity—it means the reshaping of all our diplomatic traditions and the broadening of patriotism itself. The experienced and sceptical mind turns from the adventure in despair: it at least thinks clearly in its pessimism. The hopeless leader is the man who would tinge his vengeance and his caution with a little idealism, the man whose perorations are a wordy picture of the luminous future which all his acts will deny. We must choose our end and with the end the means that fit it.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROBLEMS OF NATIONALITY

THE difficulty of any honest discussion of European problems of nationality during the war is that they have become inextricably confused with the wholly different problem of weakening the enemy. It may be proper to pursue the design of achieving security by taking from the enemy the non-German races, who by their numbers, their aptitudes, and their wealth serve to swell his military and economic power. Our adoption of this aim as our avowed policy will depend partly on our readiness to prolong the war indefinitely, and partly on our despair of reaching security by other means. It is open to the obvious objection that it promises more than it is likely to yield ; for the enemy so weakened may in his turn despair of security and a tolerable future for himself and proceed, after an interval for recuperation, to arm and intrigue for the recovery of his old power. Certainly that will be the result unless in the meanwhile the world moves from the idea of force to the idea of conference. A settlement which, by numerous annexations and the violent destruction of ancient institutions like the Dual Monarchy, left on the mind of this generation and the next the impression that armed force is a tremendous instrument for the achievement of political change might not be the best preparation for an era of peace. The impression which we presumably wish to produce in the German mind is that aggression does not pay. The German mind may not draw that conclusion, for

it has been fighting in what it took to be a defensive war. The facts might suggest a different moral—that to be very rich, to have a supreme Navy, to gather many allies round oneself emphatically does pay. Permeated with the idea of power, the German mind works under the influence of the belief that in this world a people must be either hammer or anvil. To make Germany the anvil to our hammer would not disprove this reading of life. On the contrary, it would confirm it. The hope of the future depends on the decay of such metaphors. We must root up the assumption that Europe is necessarily a smithy. Our present ambition is to hammer such Thor's strokes on the passive anvil of the defeated German body, as never yet were struck in this world, and then to lock the smithy door for ever. But could we reckon on keeping the key?

Even on the assumption that there is no alternative to the policy of seeking a temporary security by weakening the enemy in the settlement, it is well to make clear to ourselves that nothing done with this aim can be a comprehensive solution of the European problem of nationality. We knew, quite well, before this war, though during the war we have tried to forget it, that the Russian Empire presents problems of nationality as numerous as those of the Central Empires, more productive of individual misery, and apparently much farther from a tolerable solution. We all hope that after the war (whether because of victory or in spite of it) Russia will at length undergo that transformation which so nearly occurred after the unfortunate Manchurian campaign. But, meanwhile we can only note that the composition of her Ministry becomes, as the war goes on, more pronouncedly reactionary, and that the position of the non-Russian races does not improve.<sup>1</sup> Further

<sup>1</sup> This was written before the fall of M. Stuermer. His successor met with a cold reception from the Duma.

inroads on the little that is left of Finnish autonomy have been threatened in a Ministerial programme countersigned by the Tsar. The Jews are no nearer than they were to the enjoyment of the common civil rights which Russian law denies them—the right to choose their residence freely, the right to use the national schools, and to enter the professions, the Civil Service, and the commissioned ranks of the Army. The *pogrom* broke out again both in Poland and Galicia during the Russian occupation, and the evacuation of Poland was so managed as to entail on the Jews sufferings which defeat the power of the imagination. It is true that a promise of autonomy has been made to Poland. But what sort of autonomy is contemplated? The assertion has been confidently made in the Russian Press that what M. Stuermer's Cabinet contemplated was merely some extension of local government without a Legislative Assembly. For the other non-Russian races of the Empire, the Protestant Letts and Esthonians, the Catholic Lithuanians, the Ukrainians (otherwise Little Russians), and the Roumanians of Bessarabia, not to mention the many interesting but less advanced peoples of the Caucasus, there is not even a promise. Because we cannot apply pressure to an ally, the optimist justifies his refusal to look at the bigger half of the European problem of nationality by the easy-going assumption that Russia will put her own house in order without prompting. Russian Liberals of the more official type are ready enough to make the same confident prediction. Let us hope they are right. But German Liberals say the same thing, and there are some very eloquent passages (which have since found an official echo in the Reichstag) in Dr. Naumann's "Mittel-europa," in which that popular prophet (perhaps the most powerful political writer of our day) predicts that Germany will learn from the better Austrian

tradition how to handle more liberally the problem of her Poles, Alsatians, and Danes. It is probable that there is a reason more subtle than the ordinary partiality of an ally, for our tendency to concentrate our minds on the Austro-Hungarian, and to forget the Russian, problem of nationality. The races of the Dual Monarchy which have a grievance are able to organize and agitate. They make a noise (most rightly and wisely), and we hear the noise. The non-Russian races of Russia are perforce silent, and because we hear no noise we forget that there is a grievance. The Finns are the exception. They still have enough liberty left to make themselves heard, and the British public (before the war) heard them with much sympathy. Yet the case of the Finns was enviable in comparison (say) with that of the Ukrainians, who have to complain, not merely of the destruction of their ancient national autonomy, but also of a suppression of their distinctive language so complete that not even a book of fairy-tales for children may be published in it. No race of Austria-Hungary is in that case. There are struggles over the respective claims, in mixed areas, of this language or the other to be the exclusive *official* language, but no language is suppressed; no Church is persecuted, and no race is denied (as the Russian Jews are) the ordinary civil rights of a citizen. Nationality is an acute political question, but the battle rages over the imperilled Home Rule of Croatia, the trickeries of the Hungarian franchise, and the continual prosecutions of Slav or Roumanian leaders for sedition. It marks at its worst a more advanced state of Imperial evolution than the Russian problem has yet reached, and though it leads in Hungary (as distinct from the far more civilized and tolerant Austria) to gross wrong, and to coercion comparable to that of our worst Irish period, it does not threaten the personal dignity and happiness of the average



individual so certainly as the denial of the more elementary rights in Russia does. If Austria-Hungary is going to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, the reason for the capital sentence will not be that she had half solved and half failed to solve her perplexing problems of nationality ; it will be because the Allies have made up their minds that the Central Empires must be weakened. That may be a good and adequate reason, but the better it is, the more frankly should it be stated. If concern for nationality were our only reason, there are facts enough to move us to a charitable view of other people's mistakes. We have not yet solved our one problem of nationality in Ireland, and half the members of our present Government spent the best part of their political lives in resisting its solution by autonomy.

#### ANTI-NATIONAL CLAIMS.

The disentangling of motives is an uncomfortable exercise. The importance of it in this instance is that if we deliberately adopt the weakening of the enemy by annexations and dismemberment as our aim, it may lead us in some important instances to solutions which gravely infringe the principle of nationality. We need not dwell on certain extravagances which have been advocated in a part of the Allied Press. The Russians, who talk of annexing East or West Prussia ; the French, who want to take Westphalia as well as Alsace-Lorraine ; and the English, who propose to restore to Denmark, not merely the small fraction of the population of Schleswig-Holstein (about 200,000) which really is Danish, but with it the million and a half of Germans who form the bulk of its population—these preachers of anti-national conquest are probably a small minority without official

countenance. The official programme, so far as it is known, involves, however, some serious departures from the principle of nationality. The Russian claim to Constantinople is one of them, and it may involve, not merely the city and the shores of the Straits, but also the whole of Thrace up to Adrianople and the entire southern coast of the Black Sea from the Bosphorus to the frontiers of the Caucasus. The Italian programme aims primarily at securing the control, for strategical and commercial reasons, of both shores of the Adriatic. The object is to bring about the disappearance of the Austrian flag from the waters of the Mediterranean, and more especially to make the Italian Navy, irrespective of its quality, supreme beyond challenge and rivalry in the Adriatic. Whether even from the narrow strategical standpoint this is a wise scheme is primarily a question for the Italians themselves. They might be secure at sea, but they would be subject on land to the resentment and ultimately to the military pressure of all the races—Germans, Magyars, and Slavs—whom they were excluding from the sea. Security at sea seems a doubtful gain at the cost of these new perils on land. One may doubt whether even an arrangement to make Trieste and Fiume into free ports for the use of Central Europe would reconcile these people to the loss of the sea. This Italian strategical claim involves a flat denial of nationality. The Trentino is, of course, a purely Italian district, and there can be no objection to its union with Italy. But while the towns of Trieste and Fiume are peopled by a majority of Italians, as also are parts of the peninsula of Istria, their hinterland and the whole province of Dalmatia is overwhelmingly Slav (Slovene, Croat, and Serb).<sup>1</sup> Dalmatia

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Seton-Watson, "The Balkans, Italy and the Adriatic" (1915).

contains less than 4 per cent. of Italians, yet Italy claims all its northern half. The Slovene population predominates even in the suburbs of Trieste, and in all the rural districts east of the Isonzo. While this Italian claim is questionable as strategy, and egoistic as economics, it also involves a gross overriding of national rights.

Farther south a new problem arises over Albania. Italy claims the port of Vallona. The Serbs and Montenegrins demand Scutari, Durazzo, and the whole northern half of the country, and the Greeks the whole southern half. The national rights of the Albanians were stoutly defended in 1912 by Sir Edward Grey. Backward as they are in civilization and politically immature, they have some qualities which other Balkan races lack—a sense of honour, truth, and personal dignity; they often develop high intellectual and administrative capacity so soon as they are removed from the depressing conditions of their native land, and there is no people of the peninsula which wins the regard of Europeans who have lived among them so readily. It must be remembered that they live on several distinct levels of civilization. The northern mountaineer clans are what our Scottish Highlanders in the remoter regions were in the days of the Stuarts, but even they require only opportunity to become civilized Europeans. The southern Albanians (Tosks), both Moslems and Christians, are in no respect inferior in enlightenment to Greeks or Slavs reared in provincial conditions. There are nearly half a million of them in America, where they retain their nationality, hoping always to return to their Fatherland. The Albanian race was slow in acquiring a sense of its political identity, but in the last generation many devoted men laboured against the persecution of the Turkish State and the Greek Church to reduce their peculiar language

(a distinct Indo-European speech, rather nearer to Latin than to Greek) to writing, and to spread the use of it as a vehicle of education. They may not yet be ripe for independence, without a preliminary period of foreign guidance and education, but to deny their nationality for ever by partitioning their country among Serbs, Greeks, and Italians would be a cruel and unworthy sentence. The Serbs, in particular, are their hereditary enemies: no Balkan people can be trusted to respect the language, religion, landed property, and political rights of another. Albania, as defined by the London Conference of 1912, was already a remnant, which had lost large districts, both in Epirus and in Kossovo, peopled by a majority of Albanians. It ought not to be diminished further.<sup>1</sup> If it is difficult to restore the Albanian Principality, Italy might be named as its protector for a term of (say twenty) years. She would be a tolerant mistress, and the only risk in this arrangement would be that she might attempt to plant colonies of her own people in Albania—an unjustifiable course in a poor country whose native population is forced to emigrate in great numbers. If this concession were made to Italy in Albania, she might be the less reluctant to abandon her claim to Dalmatia.

It is, moreover, only the principle of weakening the enemy (in this case Bulgaria), and not respect for nationality, which could prompt the Allies to reconquer Macedonia for the Serbs. In the autumn of 1915 the Bulgarians occupied some districts to

<sup>1</sup> The Greek claim to Northern Epirus and the town of Koritsa (to which Germany has given her sanction) has no sound basis in ethnography. The people of this district (which I have visited) are Albanians by race, and Albanian is their home language. Among the Orthodox Christians there is undoubtedly a large pro-Greek party. It cannot be the majority. The nationalist Christians and the Moslems together outnumber it.

which they have no just claim, but the greater part of the country is not Serbian by race or language, and it is emphatically, even fanatically, Bulgarian by allegiance and choice. It will be said, and said truly, that Bulgaria has deserved no consideration from the Allies. Undoubtedly a heavy account may be laid at King Ferdinand's door, for he shared the blame with the military parties of Serbia and Greece for the fratricidal second Balkan war. Allied opinion is, however, too ready to forget that that war broke out, only because the Serbs refused to give effect to the treaty of partition, which assigned the greater part of Macedonia to the Bulgars. Nor should it be forgotten that Russian military governors and diplomatists were at great pains, after the liberation of Bulgaria, to obliterate the claim of gratitude which their armies had won. These agents of Russian policy expected that a liberated Bulgaria would be a vassal dependency of the Russian Empire, and when they realized that Bulgaria meant to be independent, they acted too often on the maxim that in that case they would prefer that she should be small and weak. But the people whom we have to consider are not primarily the Bulgarians but the Macedonians. Let it be granted that Bulgaria is "ungrateful," and King Ferdinand an "adventurer"; does that obliterate the national claim of this Macedonian population? One might as well say that the folly of Louis Napoleon extinguished the rights of the people of Alsace-Lorraine. I will not attempt to add another page to the extensive controversial literature which deals with the ethnography and history of Macedonia. I will merely record my personal testimony, based on many months spent in intimate contact with the peasantry of Monastir and Ochrida as the agent of a British Relief Fund, after their rebellion in 1903, and on three visits to

Macedonia at other times. These peasants, whose language and education is Bulgarian, felt themselves to be Bulgars, and there was no suffering from which they would have shrunk to become citizens of Bulgaria. Many of their villages were prosperous, and, judged by Balkan levels, well educated. Illiteracy is far less common than in Roumania or in Serbia. The secondary schools gave a fair modern education, especially in natural science, and through the teaching of the Russian language opened an avenue to a great contemporary literature. These young students eagerly read any books of Tolstoy or Tourguenieff which they could obtain. I beg the reader to realize that this is not an abject or degraded population (save, indeed, in villages which lived directly under Turkish landlords). It thought and read and speculated, and it had its own sharply defined ideals, which it expressed in ballads and songs. Some writers have maintained that the Bulgarian aspirations of this Macedonian population were imposed on them by the revolutionary bands. I knew something of the structure of that organization, and was in a position to hear the genuine local view of it. It did terrorize, and it did contain some grossly criminal elements. But on the whole idealism and patriotism predominated in it, and most of the peasants looked up to it with pride, loyalty, and hope. It did not create their Bulgar patriotism: it grew out of it. The alternative to a Bulgarian Macedonia is a restoration of Serbian rule. The Serbs, who occupied the country in the winter of 1912 and held it till the winter of 1915, did nothing to win the regard of its Bulgar inhabitants. Their rule was based on the denial of all political and some civil rights, under a peculiarly drastic form of martial law, and it aimed, by the suppression of Bulgarian Church, schools, and language,

at a forcible denationalization of the people.<sup>1</sup> The Serbian tenure of this country cannot claim the prestige of long-established fact. It had lasted for barely three years. The Entente, moreover, in its offers to Bulgaria, admitted the truth about the nationality of Macedonia: on that it cannot honestly go back. The past teaches two lessons. One of them is that there is small hope of happiness for these Macedonian Bulgars under alien rule. The other is that there is little prospect of tranquillity in the Balkans while its frontiers violate nationality.

### THE FUTURE OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

The principle of weakening the Central Empires and their Eastern allies coincides only partially and by chance with the dictates of the principle of nationality. It ignores half the problem, and in some grave instances it promises to lead to an iniquitous violation of nationality. It has other inconveniences. The maximum Allied programme contemplates the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. Its more consistent exponents allow the union of the German provinces of Austria with the German Empire. Western Galicia is to be reunited, together with German Posen, to a more or less autonomous Poland under Russian rule, and Eastern Galicia to be merged in Russia proper. Bohemia and a diminished Hungary become independent kingdoms. Transylvania with certain other

<sup>1</sup> For a full description of the misery of Macedonia in 1913 see the Report of the Carnegie Commission (of which I was a member). The Report, based on inquiries on the spot, is signed, among others, by Professor Paul Miliukoff, the leader of the Liberals in the Russian Duma, and by M. Justin Godart, a member of the present French Ministry. For fuller details about Macedonia and Albania I may refer to my "Macedonia" (Methuen, 1905), or for a brief account to "The War and the Balkans" by Noel and Charles Buxton.

districts will go to Roumania. The Trentino and the Adriatic coast (including much Slav country) are Italy's share. The rest of the South Slav lands are to be united to Serbia. It is easy to draft such a programme on the map, though there are some competing claims to satisfy. But a young State asks for something more than frontiers. It wants internal harmony, external peace, and some outlet for its trade. Conceive the case of Bohemia. Without a port, wedged between two vast military empires, it must somehow so arrange its tariffs and its alliances that it could live and trade. Leaning on Russia for military protection, it must adopt the Paris resolutions and join in the trade war against Germany. The result might be beggary. Hungary would be in a still worse case, for it is racially isolated. It is easy to denounce Austria-Hungary as a "ramshackle Empire" and to call for its dismemberment, but the more one contemplates the strange fact of the union of these many races in one political unit, the more one is driven to the conclusion that there is a solid and natural reason for their combination. The reason is geographical and economic. This big continental region is ill-provided with ports. For ocean traffic there are only Trieste and Fiume, and for local traffic the Danube. National independence is a spiritual luxury, but access to the sea is an economic necessity. The ultimate reason for the existence and survival of Austria-Hungary probably was that, whatever were its political demerits, it was an economic system which enabled its mingled races to trade freely over its rivers, railways, and roads, and preserved for Germans, Magyars, and Slavs alike the common use of Trieste and Fiume. The abler advocates of the policy of dismemberment realize the difficulty which confronts them. Mr. Toynbee, after destroying an Empire which



took some blood and brains in the making, proceeds to create a new Austria, composed on an original recipe. He calls it a Balkan Confederation, and it is to include a diminished Hungary, an enlarged Roumania, a great Serbia, with Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece. It is to be based on a customs union, and to evolve towards a defensive alliance. The United States of Europe is a less Utopian idea. Soaked with their mutual blood, poisoned by accumulated hatreds, each busy in the task of oppressing conquered fragments of the others' population, these States, on their primitive level of morals and culture, will forgive the past less easily than France and Germany. Britain and Germany will fall more readily upon each other's necks. Moreover, if Italy takes Trieste and Fiume, and Russia Constantinople, the motive and incentive to union is gone, for the Balkan States can no longer share these ports. Austria-Hungary has the merit of existing. One cannot make a substitute at will. The "independence" promised to these little nations would be at best illusory. These little States would be forced, as they always have been, to oscillate between the German and Russian systems. Nothing would be changed in principle, and independence would still be for them an unattainable ideal, though their fate would now depend more on Russia and less on Germany. And what of their internal harmony? Most of these national States would include an "Ulster." There is in Bohemia a German minority which amounts to one-third of the population (the Irish Ulster is only a quarter of the whole), and it has the superiority in wealth and education. In the whole province of Posen, part of which must be restored to Poland, if its three sundered fragments are to be reunited, the Germans form nearly half the population. A just and skilful redrawing of frontiers might somewhat

reduce the numbers of the German minority in the case of Bohemia and Posen. But if Roumania is to expand at the expense of Austria-Hungary, there is no means of avoiding the subjection of a high percentage of Magyars and Germans to foreign rule. If Transylvania alone were annexed to Roumania, the proportion of Roumanians in the new province would stand as high as 55 per cent. But King Ferdinand's proclamation lays claim to a much wider area, bounded by "the line of the Theiss." There is no conceivable justification for this claim, unless it be that the River Theiss was the boundary of Roman Dacia. So far as I can ascertain from a careful study of the statistics, there are barely 40 per cent. of Roumanians in this large area. Three of the counties on the eastern bank of the Theiss, which it is apparently proposed to include, contain 98 or 99 per cent. of Magyars.<sup>1</sup> This is an anti-national claim, and the destinies of any alien population in Roumania must be considered in the light of the fate which has befallen the Jews of Roumania, who are denied citizenship and forbidden to own land, but are none the less conscripted in the army, and of the Bulgar farmers of the recently annexed Dobrudja, who have endured, not merely the suppression of their national churches and schools but in many cases the loss of their lands. The negotiations with Roumania were left apparently to Russia, and she may have allowed Roumania to make excessive claims at the expense of Magyars, Germans, and Serbs, because

<sup>1</sup> The statistics for the Theiss area can be given only approximately. The Hungarian census figures are given by counties, but since the Theiss cuts two of these counties in half, one can only guess from the map how much of the population lies on one side of the river and how much on the other. Dr. Seton-Watson's statistical studies in "Roumania and the Great War" are invaluable, though he did not anticipate this extravagant claim.

she herself refuses to surrender the Roumanian province of Bessarabia. The drawing of frontiers, in short, is the least part of the solution of the problem of nationality. The language difficulty, for example, in Bohemia would only have entered on a new phase, and what would happen when the Czech majority conscribed the German youth to serve in an army which would fight (if it ever had to fight) against Germany, and obliged the German manufacturers to boycott German trade? Each of these little States would reproduce in little the hatreds and confusions of Europe. Our continental strife would simmer within them as a provincial civil war. There might be migrations of minorities fleeing from the new conditions, as there were in the Balkans in 1913, but a tough rearguard would remain (as, on the whole, the Bulgars remained in Serbian Macedonia), hoping for the next war and redress. The dismemberment of Austria would not conjure racial strife. It would alter nothing fundamentally, save the balance of military power. Tolerance alone can solve these problems of nationality, and the principle of weakening the enemy and keeping him weak cannot make for tolerance. In these expedients there is no promise of a happier Europe.

These problems of nationality move in a vicious circle. Europe will never have peace as a continent so long as racial strife distracts certain mixed areas within it, and scatters its contagion beyond their frontiers to the greater masses of the kindred races which live outside them. That is the half of the truth on which we have all been dwelling during the war. It is equally true, however, that racial peace is impossible within these areas so long as the antagonism between the greater masses continues. One may say that Teutons and Slavs as a whole will never be at peace while Germans

and Czechs are at each other's throats in Bohemia. But it is just as true to say that Germans and Czechs will go on struggling in Bohemia so long as Teutons and Slavs, organized as Great Powers with their centres at Berlin and Petrograd, confront each other with their armaments and their rivalries in world policy. The local cause of strife and the general cause act and react on each other with alternate stimulation. Slavs and Teutons might have lived at peace if they had not happened to dovetail and penetrate geographically into each other. Czechs and Germans might have found a *modus vivendi* long ago in Bohemia if neither of them had been influenced by the larger rivalry outside them. This vicious circle could best be seen in all its elementary simplicity in Turkey under the old régime. The Balkan States were never at peace with each other or with Turkey, because they were a sounding-board for the local strife in Macedonia. The local strife in Macedonia never came to a pause, partly because the Balkan States pulled the strings, and partly because the local races looked to them for support. The practical conclusion is as easy to state as it is difficult to realize. Peace in Europe cannot be achieved merely by a settlement of the national problems—the various “Ulsters” stand in the way. Nor can the national problems be solved so long as there is the strife of “Powers” in Europe. It would be quite easy, if our victory were sufficiently complete, to make the German element the “under-dog” in all these mixed areas—Alsace, Bohemia, Posen, and Transylvania—but the consequence would only be a new phase of the dual struggle, the local strife of the races, and the continental strife of the Powers. Our problem, in short, cannot be solved merely by annexations and redistributions of territory, and it might by these means be aggravated. If our dream

is durable peace, we must somehow contrive both to reconcile the Powers and to compose the strife of the races. We come back, therefore, from this summary survey of the question of nationality to the other question of the League of Peace. If we mean to settle nationality, the principle of weakening the enemy is no help: it may even be a hindrance to our best intentions. The tolerance, the easing of the hostile tension which will enable majority and minority to live together in mixed areas, will hardly be attained until the two stocks to which they belong, organized as "Powers," have eliminated force from their relationship. If our aim is a general conciliation, it follows that the settlement of nationality must be fitted into the framework of a League of Peace. Some methods and schemes of settlement which might seem natural and almost inevitable, if we could solve the question of nationality without regard to the future relations of the Powers, may seem questionable when we realize that these mixed areas in their tranquillity or strife are likely to reflect the general condition of Europe.

The plan of settling questions of nationality by the trenchant methods of cession and annexation has its attraction. It sounds final: it seems to make clean work. We have seen, however, that in the mixed areas there is no possibility of clean work. There will always be a minority, often a considerable minority, for whose rights some provision must be made. In some degree every thinker, however ardent his nationalism, who really faces this difficulty, is obliged to have recourse at some stage to internationalism. There must be some system of guarantees and safeguards by which an international organization of Europe will watch over the rights of these minorities. That is to say, however complete our victory, however free our

redrawing of the map of Europe may be, we must still, even for this limited problem of nationality, have recourse to some Concert or League of Peace. It is not enough to say "some Concert." It must be an organization much more vigilant and effective than existed in the past. The old Concert was liberal with its stipulations, and they remained dead letters. How often was Turkey enjoined to introduce autonomy of one sort or another in Crete or Macedonia! A classical instance of futility is the international guarantee of the rights of the Roumanian Jews, which has always been "a scrap of paper." Admittedly we need such safeguards, but to enforce them we must have a much stronger and more harmonious international organization. A reflection and a query follow at this point. If we must, even for the sake of nationality, bring and keep the Powers together in a working Concert or League, it is plain that we must avoid in the settlement those forceful solutions which would tend to keep them apart. The query is this: If in any case we must trust to a Concert to protect minorities, is anything gained by the creation of many new independent States, each of which must be, to some extent, supervised? The two points tend to one concrete question, and that is, whether we should really do better for nationality and peace by "breaking up" Austria-Hungary, provided we could secure its reorganization on a federal basis. One need not here attempt to sketch the reconstruction in detail. The chief offenders are the Magyars, and the main point to secure is that the Croats, Serbs, Slovacks, and Roumanians, who at present suffer from their tyranny, should manage their own affairs, subject only to the Hapsburg crown and a Federal Parliament. How large and how numerous the units should be, need not concern us here: there is much to be said for large groupings—of Czechs

with Slovacks in the north, and of all the Serbo-Croats in the south. The advantage of a federal solution is that it would throw upon the central Government and Parliament in the first place the duty of watching over the interests of minorities. Vienna would see that the Czechs did not oppress the Germans in Bohemia, and Budapest would be vigilant for the Magyars in Transylvania. One need hardly pause to point out that such a solution would abbreviate the war immeasurably. To dismember Austria one must first have occupied it, from Prague to Semlin and from Lemberg to Trieste. But to procure from the Emperor a solemn declaration made to Europe of his intention to introduce a federal Constitution without delay would be comparatively easy.<sup>1</sup> The differ-

<sup>1</sup> In point of fact Austria-Hungary seems to be moving spontaneously towards the federal solution. One of the last acts of the Emperor Francis Joseph's life was to promise to the Poles of Galicia some new form of "autonomy"—presumably some higher status than the full autonomy they enjoy at present. There are rumours, which seem to be well founded, to the effect that the Emperor Charles is about to carry out the idea of the murdered Archduke, by creating a big South-Slav State within the Hapsburg dominions. It is to include, apparently, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and parts of Montenegro and the Serbian Kingdom. It is not known what degree of autonomy it will enjoy. The same rumours state that North-Eastern Serbia (the "corridor" or "dry Suez Canal") which contains the main railway route to the East) is not to be included in this South-Slav State, but is to be annexed in some other form. Clearly the creation in some shape of a South-Slav State has become as inevitable as the creation in some form of a Polish State. The Entente is in honour bound to restore the independence of the Serbian Kingdom. But it does not follow that the Serbs ought to be encouraged to maintain an attitude of aloofness and hostility towards Austria. Their best course is clearly to be good neighbours and to develop close commercial relations. It ought to be possible to secure for Serbia, at the least, access to the Adriatic at Ragusa or Cattaro by the annexation of a small strip of territory. In exchange for this Serbia might cede the few miles of her extreme N.E. corner required to connect Orsova (in Hungary) by bridge and rail with

ence might be measured in millions of casualties, and enough has been said to suggest that the easier solution is in many respects the better solution. It is better because it spares us some nearly insoluble problems—of defence, communications, tariffs, and national rights. It is better, also, because the annihilation of Austria would mean a dictated as opposed to a negotiated peace. From negotiation, from conference, from an adjustment of interests and claims, a permanent system of conference, a League of Peace, might arise. From war to the bitter end, and a peace based only on triumphant force, the transition to conference would demand a miracle. The League of Peace might never be called upon to interfere in the internal concerns of a Federal Austria. It would do so only in the last resort and with reluctance. But if the settlement on which the League is based, includes as one of its terms this declaration to create a Federation, it clearly would be within the competence of the League to interfere, if the declaration were not carried into effect. Some right of interference in such extreme cases the League must reserve to itself. Absolute sovereignty means irremediable anarchy. A guarded right of interference, where there is gross and clamant wrong, is the civilized alternative to war.

### THE POLISH QUESTION.

It may be agreed that much may be achieved for the subject nationalities of Europe by a general guarantee of liberty for their distinctive cultures, and, further, that the federal reconstruction of Austria-Hungary may be an easier and better solu-

Widdin (in Bulgaria). Many adjustments and exchanges are possible (see also p. 114), but Serbia itself must be restored intact. The strategical question is discussed in the next chapter.



tion than its dismemberment. Some problems remain, however, which call imperatively for territorial change. Where the great mass of any race is under one Power, the tendency in any detached fragment towards union, will generally be so strong that it is difficult to resist the argument for a clean settlement of such questions by cession. Even where the sundered race enjoys tolerant treatment it will not cease to desire union with its kinsmen over the border. No reasonable ground can be opposed to the annexation of the Trentino by Italy, for the Italians of this region are a compact and overwhelming majority. Vienna itself admitted that this cession could be made without vital injury to the Dual Monarchy, when it offered this territory to Italy as the price of her neutrality. No questions of mixed races or indispensable roads and ports militate against annexation here, as they do in the case of Trieste and the Dalmatian coast. The case of the Ruthenians of Eastern Galicia and the Bukovina may also require separate treatment. They had been relatively well treated by Austria in the matter of linguistic, educational, and religious rights, but they had much to suffer at the hands of the local Polish aristocracy. They are, of course, of the same stock as the Ukrainians or "Little Russians." Their transference without conditions to Russia would mean that their language would at once be suppressed, their schools and their section of Lemberg University instantly Russified, and their Uniate Catholic Church converted to Orthodoxy. The numerous Jewish population would also lose by the change. If Russia were to offer some degree of autonomy, were it only cultural liberty, to the Ukrainians, this moral difficulty in the way of cession would be lessened. Unfortunately, the extremer Panslavists insist, against the better opinion of Russian scholars and historians, that the Ukrainians

(or Ruthenians) are simply Russians. The expedient which would solve this difficulty would be the adoption of a *plébiscite* or referendum of the population concerned before any annexation could be carried out. No "Powers" sitting in congress are competent to decide that the Ruthenians would prefer Russian to Austrian rule. The probabilities, after their experience of forcible Russification under the Panslavist Governor, Count Bobrinski, during the winter of 1914-5, are that they prefer the far more tolerant Austrian system, faulty as it was. If a *plébiscite* were taken, however, Russia would be obliged to make some bid for the Ruthenian and Jewish vote, and if she offered reassuring terms, it is possible that the desire of the Ruthenians for reunion with their Ukrainian brothers would suffice to secure their suffrages for annexation.

By far the most important question in this category is that of the future of Poland, though any reference to it here must be summary and inadequate. It may be safely assumed that in France, in Great Britain, and among neutrals public opinion, if it were freely expressed, would be overwhelmingly in favour of the restoration of an independent Poland. It would mean by that, the reconstitution of the three sections of the dismembered body into a living unity, free to choose its king or to found a republic, free to ally itself as it pleased or to maintain neutrality, and subject neither to German nor to Russian hegemony. It must, further, be provided, by agreements for the navigation of the Vistula and for the use of Danzig as a free port, and by reasonable tariff conventions, with the conditions of a prosperous economic life. If the Allied Governments favour any solution less liberal than this, the reason is that they are bound to further Russian aims, or that they wish to ensure, for the sake of obtaining a favourable military

balance of Europe, that this capable and gallant population of twenty millions shall be enlisted in the Russian ranks. Such considerations may have weight, but they are remote from the idealistic exaltation of nationality which the statesmen of the Entente have professed. No one doubts what is the wish of the Poles, and it would be superfluous, though it might be politic, to suggest a *plébiscite*. The Poles have no natural affinity or attraction for the Russians. They are Slavs, indeed, but their culture and their religion link them to the West, and not to the East. The antipathy of the two peoples is mutual. Who can mistake the dislike which finds its expression in Russian literature, especially in Dostoieffsky? It is true that the Poles dislike the Germans even more than the Russians; only Austria knew how to win their loyalty. Race cannot settle this question. Pan-Slavism is no more inevitable than Pan-Germanism, and Russia has no better claim to the allegiance of the Poles than has Germany to that of the Dutch. Only one solid ground can be alleged for preferring Russian rule to independence, and that is that Polish industry was chiefly dependent on the Russian market. But why assume that Russia would refuse to an independent Poland a favourable tariff? On the other side of the account, apart altogether from the natural desire of the Poles to recover their historic independence in full measure, stands the unanswerable argument that any autonomy conceded by Russia would be precarious. History speaks too clearly. The experience of the Poles themselves is still a living memory: the Constitution granted to them by Russia in 1815 was never observed, and it was wholly destroyed in 1831. Finland offers her melancholy warning. If a generous measure of autonomy were given to Poland, the Russian reaction would scheme incen-

santly to undermine it or revoke it. But is there a probability that any real autonomy will be promised? Under some Russian Grand Duke as their Viceroy, with Russian bureaucrats as his ministers and officials, without so much as a legislative assembly to embody their natural existence (this seems for the moment to be the official plan), the proffered local self-government would seem to the Poles a mockery of their hopes. The Austrian Poles, who enjoyed a generous measure of Home Rule, and even played a considerable part in shaping Austrian policy, would lose by the change to Russian rule, and the German Poles, who at least enjoyed a high degree of material prosperity, would gain only in a moderate degree. Let us hope that if Russia is strong enough to insist that Poland must come under her flag, the Allies, who cannot disown their moral responsibility, will at least obtain for her the reality of self-government. It might suffice for Russian purposes that she should become a protected State, bound to Russia in military and diplomatic matters, but her own mistress in all her internal affairs. Such a solution means, however, a great prolongation of the war, for it implies, not merely the reconquest of the Duchy of Warsaw but the conquest of Posen and Western Galicia. It would be from the standpoint of peace and good-feeling in Europe emphatically a bad solution. The conquest of Poland by Russia would seem to the Germans merely a victory of force and numbers, and it would, in fact, be nothing better. The restoration of an independent Poland, on the other hand, would be a triumph for historic justice and the idea of nationality. We must not forget that while we in the West have grown into thinking the partition of Poland the thing it was, the worst of the world's international crimes, the average German schoolboy was taught to regard the acquisi-

tion of Posen as the chief glory of the great Frederick's reign. To demand the annexation of Posen and Galicia to Russia would involve us in the extremest form of the dictated and imposed peace. Even if we could be sure that the Poles and the German and Jewish minorities in these territories would be fairly treated, the surrender would involve (from the German standpoint) an immense transference of military and economic resources to Russia. The proposal that each of the three Empires should restore a province to reconstituted Poland is not open to the same objections: it is not a proposal of conquest, and it ought not to be felt by any of the three Powers (since it would demand from all an equal sacrifice) as a crushing humiliation. If we aim at a League of Peace and desire a Europe contented with the international order under which it lives, we shall certainly prefer an independent Poland to any other solution. But once more we must face the fact that it is folly to talk of creating an independent Poland, in any real sense of the word, unless at the same time we make a Europe united in a League of Peace. If we are doomed to return to the armed peace, aggravated by the trade war, independence would be a gift far too onerous even for a nation of twenty millions, wedged as it would be with no natural frontiers between Germans and Russians. Unless we can render war improbable, the prospect before Poland will merely be to serve as the battlefield in the next encounter. If we can base peace on goodwill, then Poland, lying as a neutral buffer between the chief rivals, might contribute to the sense of security of each of them. A sullen peace would force a nominally independent Poland to buy for herself some faint hope of security, by becoming the vassal of her strongest neighbour.

We know as yet too little of the German-Austrian

plan for the constitution of an independent kingdom of Poland to discuss it. This astute move has made it morally more difficult for the Entente, without doing violence to its own principles, to oppose Polish independence. The only statesman-like course is now to insist that the limits of the proposed kingdom shall be wider and its independence more of a reality than the Germans intend. One would wish to see German Posen and Silesia and the eastern part of Austrian Galicia united in one kingdom with the Duchy of Warsaw. Its sovereign ought not to be a subject (unless he be a Pole) of any of the belligerent Powers. But it must be borne in mind that Posen contains only a bare majority of Poles, and that Galicia under Austrian rule enjoys full self-government. The advantages of the ideal solution would not be in themselves an adequate reason for an indefinite prolongation of the war. There is no doubt that the Poles themselves, if they cannot realize at once both independence and reunion, would prefer to secure the independence of Russian Poland. There is a school of thought among them which contemplates the ingenious plan of electing the Emperor of Austria as King of Poland. The consequence would be the reunion of Russian and Austrian Poland, and the degree of independence secured by this purely personal union of the Polish and Austrian crowns, would not be less than Hungary enjoys. This solution is not likely to be popular in the countries of the Entente, but if the Poles were to adopt it freely (a rather remote hypothesis), it might offer a prospect of better arrangements by way of compensation, in other questions affecting Austria-Hungary, than would otherwise be possible—the creation, for example, of an independent South-Slav State. At present the tendency of all the belligerents is to think of the Poles simply as a

source of man-power which may yield two million bayonets. The Polish Question means for the "Powers" simply the distribution of these bayonets in the future military balance of Europe. We shall not "crush militarism" while we submit to this way of thinking. The Poles must settle their own destinies, and the only policy worthy of Liberal Powers would be to insist that they shall have liberty to choose freely.<sup>1</sup>

#### ALSACE AND THE PLÉBISCITE.

The most obstinate of all these European questions of nationality remains, in Alsace-Lorraine. It is a small question when we measure it by the numbers of the population affected. The "lost provinces" have only two million inhabitants, while there are twenty million Poles, thirty million Ukrainians, and twelve million South Slavs. But as so often happens, economics complicate nationality. Lorraine is the richest source of iron-ore in Western Europe, and German industry, if it were deprived of it by cession, and cut off from it by such a monopoly of raw materials as the Paris Resolutions prescribe, would find its production seriously hampered. Iron and steel are to any modern people, but especially to the Germans, as indispensable as corn, and the two proposals taken together—the annexation of the Reichsland and the economic boycott—are a tremendous threat to German prosperity. The Paris Resolutions have in this particular enormously complicated the solution of the European problem of nationality. If the cession of Alsace-Lorraine involved only a political change it would be sufficiently difficult. But while the Paris Programme stands as the declared policy of the Entente, every proposal to alter frontiers in the interests of

<sup>1</sup> See Note on p. 131.

nationality may also conceal a menace of economic disturbance which must double the resistance to any transfer. That is true of the restoration of German Silesia to a reconstituted Poland, but it applies especially to Alsace-Lorraine. In these provinces Germans have sunk their capital; local trade has linked itself by the close German organization of syndicates and cartels to the organization of the Empire; buying and selling have settled into well-worn channels; the cotton mills of Upper Alsace have a large place in the economy of German industry, the Saar coal-field and the Alsatian potash beds are important, but above all, German industry has become dependent on the iron-ore of Lorraine, which supplies three-fourths of the iron got in Germany.<sup>1</sup> If there were to be Free Trade after the war between France and Germany, the re-drawing of the frontier need involve little economic disturbance. Even if the usual system of the free export and import of raw materials which has hitherto been the general rule among modern States were to prevail, then, in spite even of a high tariff on manufactures, the Germans could still draw their iron-ore from Lorraine in time of peace—as, indeed, they used to draw large supplies before the war from the French part of this big iron-field. They would lose it, indeed, in time of war, but that restriction might be a guarantee of peace. Indeed, the more they are dependent on foreign supplies of essential things, the less likely are they to go to war. But the clause in the Paris Programme which prescribes a monopoly in “natural resources” for the benefit of Allies means that Germany could not reckon, if she surrendered Lorraine, on access to its mineral wealth. By this proposal the Entente has ensured the

<sup>1</sup> See a paper by Professor Gregory on “Geology and Strategy,” *Contemporary Review*, December 1915.



maximum resistance of Germany to its more idealistic programme, and if a moment should come when she might be willing to do full justice to nationality, she would still be compelled to resist us to save the future of her industry. Indeed, as the war goes on, and both sides betray in their controversial publications their passionate interest in the minerals of Lorraine and Alsace, one begins to suspect that the issue of nationality is altogether secondary to the economic conflict. It is the ambition of the German industrialists, for whom the notorious Six Economic Unions speak, to acquire the whole of the Lorraine iron-field, together with the coal-fields of Belgium. They even propose to expropriate the French and Belgian owners, compensating them for the loss of their property with the proceeds of an indemnity to be imposed on France. The French extremists, reckoning that they can lame Germany for ever by recovering Alsace and Lorraine, and adding to them broad districts with a purely German history and population, are no whit behind them. The explanation of the furious assaults on Verdun may well be that Verdun and Metz are the two strategical keys to the Lorraine iron-field, which the German extremists are bent on holding. For these sordid gains is human blood poured out. Once more, we must face the fact that the problems of nationality cannot be solved in isolation. If we dream of any League of Peace, we must drop this Paris Programme; in the act of dropping it we shall have made a fair settlement of the question of Alsace-Lorraine incomparably easier.

Even without this economic complication the question would still be inordinately difficult. It has held so long the central place in European politics, it has so concentrated the passion of the French and the stubbornness of the Germans, that

it has become, above all others in the world, a question of honour. A question of honour may be defined as one which men will not solve by reason. It awaits the hand of force, and even when it slumbers in the interludes of peace it leads to the accumulation of force. So much is this the case, that even the German Social Democratic minority, though it is proud to remember that Bebel and the elder Liebknecht voted against the annexation of these provinces, censures the French Socialists for desiring their recovery. Their transfer, if it takes place without a *plébiscite* and without compensations, will mean the unqualified victory of France and the unqualified defeat of Germany. That to many readers will seem to be the best of all reasons for insisting on it, though it should mean the slaughter of more men than there are people in Alsace-Lorraine. But unluckily the question is not so simple as our wishes. In the first place the French feeling about the provinces involves something more than the sense that their inhabitants have been wronged: a leading element in it was always the natural human wish to wipe out the military reverses of 1870 which so deeply wounded French pride. If the annexation is reversed, as it was carried out, by a simple application of the rights of the stronger, we must expect that the Germans in their turn will suffer from the elementary desire for their "revenge."

A mature nation of grown-up men and women might in time live down such boyish emotions, if there were no real wrongs to keep alive the sense of humiliation. The French might possibly have outgrown the wish for "revenge," if the Germans had conceded much earlier than in fact they did (1911) a large measure of autonomy to the Reichsland, and if the autonomy, when it came at length, had been somewhat more generous.

Their resentment was kept alive by petty efforts to restrict the use of the French language, and still more by an oppressive passport system imposed on travellers from France with a view to checking military espionage. The Reichsland was treated as a conquered country, not so much because it had been won by arms, as because the French would never relinquish their ambition to reconquer it. There was a moment when the Kaiser, shortly after his accession, made his attempt to conciliate France. Always that most dangerous figure in history, the impulsive romantic, he was then passing through a phase of youthful and self-confident idealism. He talked peace. He dismissed Bismarck. He promoted social legislation. He gave a new and most promising development to international institutions by the Berlin Conference on the regulation of the hours and conditions of labour. He did as much for colonial Free Trade in the Berlin Conference on the Congo Question, and he was one of the promoters of the Brussels Conference on the Slave Trade. His ambition seemed to be to lead a European movement towards internationalism and peace. In this mood he paid special court to the French delegates who attended the Berlin Labour Conference. Nor did he confine himself to empty courtesies; he introduced a milder passport régime in Alsace. His next move<sup>1</sup> was an attempt to break down the French intellectual boycott of Germany, by a special effort to induce French artists to exhibit at the coming Berlin Exhibition. With this object, his mother, the Empress Frederick, went to Paris, ostensibly to visit French studios, really, as the comments of the German press showed, to promote a social and political reconciliation. Paris gave its answer with

<sup>1</sup> For all these facts see Debidour, "Histoire Diplomatique de l'Europe," vol. iii. pp. 165-8.

fury and decision. There were hostile crowds in the streets, angry articles in the newspapers, and at mass meetings of protest orators declared that France refused a reconciliation with "the gaolor of Alsace." So ended a well-meant effort for peace, and like the headstrong and emotional man he is, the Kaiser allowed his anger so far to master him, that he again aggravated the lot of the Alsatians, and even (it is said) talked of mobilizing his army against France. Another episode is worth our attention. Russia proposed during the Boer War to bring together the chief neutral Powers to mediate, or, if necessary, to intervene by force. The motive may have been rather hostility towards the British Empire than a sincere concern for a little nationality struggling to preserve its independence, for the United States had already offered friendly mediation in vain. The case is interesting, if we can bring ourselves to regard it from the outside, as an illustration of the difficulty of creating a league of neutrals to enforce peace. Here was a war in which neutral opinion was unanimous in thinking that right was with the weaker side. It was none the less impossible to bring about intervention, and the reason was that the slumbering question of the "lost provinces" made co-operation between France and Germany impossible. When Russia brought her proposal to Berlin, Prince Bülow suggested that if the three Powers were to act together, they must give each other a mutual guarantee for the preservation of their European possessions. That condition broke up the proposed coalition—it may have been put forward by Germany with that intention—since France would not give an undertaking which would have involved the renunciation of her claim to Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>1</sup> It may be for us a matter of profound satisfaction

<sup>1</sup> See Reventlow, p. 147 ; Debidour, iii. 264.

that in this instance the French desire for the *révanche* rendered the solidarity of European opinion ineffectual. These two incidents carry, however, a larger moral. If Alsace-Lorraine should again change rulers by an act of force, it is dismally probable that the future will repeat the past. Twenty years hence some pacific French President, weary of armaments and trade boycotts, may attempt to court German friendship, only to be rebuffed with the answer that no reconciliation is possible while a German race is held under French rule. When the next war threatens us, an attempt to improvise a coalition to enforce peace may founder on the refusal, this time of a German Government, to enter a league with a France that holds Alsace. The capacities of this *perpetuum mobile* of European strife will not be exhausted in this war, if the Power which retains Alsace holds it by the right of conquest.

One may be satisfied that the population of Alsace-Lorraine was almost unanimously opposed in 1871 to the German annexation. Thanks to its own stubborn and gallant temper, and even more to the harshness of Prussian rule, it remained, though a generation went by, loyal in its affection to France. But Germans will repeat that the population of Alsace is purely German by language and race. They will say that it was an integral part of the old German Empire, until the conquests of Louis XIV united it to France. They will point out that since 1870 there has been a considerable immigration of Germans into these provinces. They may say—and there is a good deal of evidence, French,<sup>1</sup> English, and Alsatian, as well as German, to back the statement—that the younger generation in Alsace on the eve of this war had ceased to

<sup>1</sup> See especially Marcel Sembat, "Faites un Roi, sinon faites la Paix." M. Sembat was a member of the late French Cabinet.

desire a violent solution, that it accepted annexation as an accomplished fact, and asked only for a fuller measure of autonomy and an equal status as a member of the German Federal Empire. Some difficulties France will certainly have to surmount if she re-annexes the two provinces. She will find that a large part of the working-class population of Alsace speaks no French. She may encounter some opposition from the clerical element in Catholic Upper Alsace, which may not rally willingly to a secular Republic. The manufacturing districts may regret the change, if they experience a serious disturbance to their trade. Exceptional measures to prevent espionage may be necessary against German travellers, and against residents of German sympathies. All this, added to the rancour which commonly follows defeat, may prevent Germans from writing off the two provinces as a final loss, and they in turn may cherish a sentiment which will be as deadly when it is called *Rache* as it was when we knew it as *revanche*.

Is political wisdom impotent in the face of such a situation as this? It is only because Europe, influenced by the spectacle of Prussian success, has itself fallen under the empire of Prussian ideas that the solution of a *plébiscite* seems difficult or visionary. Yet one may say of it, without exaggeration, that in the restless and eventful decade which preceded the final triumph of Bismarck's statecraft, it was the accepted method for effecting transfers of territory. Louis Napoleon submitted to its test before he finally annexed Savoy to France. Italy, as she grew, followed the same principle. There is, however, an even more instructive precedent. After the Austro-Prussian War, which settled the fate of Schleswig-Holstein by annexing it to Prussia, Austria proposed and Prussia accepted the condition that the Danish minority should not be incor-

porated in Prussia against its will. The stipulation in the Treaty of Prague (1866) ran "that the people of the northern districts of Schleswig shall be ceded to Denmark, if *by a free vote* they manifest a desire for union with that country." That clause remained a dead letter, and Denmark accepted the accomplished fact. It ought to be revived at the coming settlement. In those days even the Prussian people did not yet accept the Bismarckian theory of conquest. When at the same time Bismarck was engaged in incorporating Hanover, Frankfort, and other minor German States in the Prussian system, the Lower House of the Prussian Diet replied to his proposal of direct annexation, that "mere force alone now no longer suffices as a basis of national ownership: no professor of international law recognizes it as giving title." <sup>1</sup> If our aim, when we speak of defeating Prussian militarism, really is to break the ascendancy of Prussian ideas, we shall find no better means of demonstrating the return of Europe to a more liberal tradition, than by reviving the principle that no population shall be transferred from one sovereignty to another, save with its own assent recorded in a free vote. The principle is French in its origin, and it is difficult to believe that the French Republic will be less liberal than the French Empire. It is unnecessary to discuss details here, which have been well treated in Mr. Arnold Toynbee's "Nationality and the War." Alsace-Lorraine ought not to be treated as a single problem. It falls into three well-marked areas. (1) Western Lorraine (the Metz region) is Catholic, and French by choice, race, and language, but it contains only 15 per cent. of the total population of the Reichsland. (2) North-eastern Lorraine, on the

<sup>1</sup> Seignobos, "Political History of Contemporary Europe" (English translation), vol. ii. p. 472.

other hand, is mainly German and Protestant, and, together with the northernmost district of Alsace, would certainly prefer to be German. (3) About the real opinion of the greater part of Alsace, German by race, Catholic by religion, but with a persistent French tradition, no one can dogmatize. There is obviously a far stronger case for the annexation of the Metz district to France than for that of the other regions, and probably this instalment of justice, if we could obtain no more, would suffice to end the historic feud. The doubt whether Alsace would yield a majority for reunion with France, though it explains the hesitation of some Frenchmen to welcome a *plébiscite*, is the strongest of all reasons for taking it. A conquest made against the will of the majority of the inhabitants would be a burden to France and a curse to Europe. It is possible that Germany would accept a solution by *plébiscite*, at all events in Lorraine (the Metz district), much earlier in the war than she would face annexation without conditions. In that connection it is essential to remember that the attitude of Germany to this and every other unpalatable proposal, will be influenced by the whole character of the proposed settlement. The loss of territory, even with the qualification of a *plébiscite*, will be resisted to the bitter end, if it is combined with a harsh colonial readjustment, with the closing of Turkey to German enterprise, and with a system of boycotts and the economic war. Even some loss of territory may be accepted as an evil that is still compatible with a tolerable future if the rest of the settlement, and especially its economic chapters, contain no menace to the prosperity and growth of a peaceful Germany. This question must be solved if Europe is to have peace. It probably could be solved (at all events by the cession of the Metz and Thionville districts), even in the present



condition of the military balance, if France were willing to consider some exchange of territory in Equatorial Africa against the French-speaking districts (see p. 243). To insist on the whole demand, however, would mean a serious prolongation of the war, and in the end the real wishes of Alsace might not be what Frenchmen believe and hope. The importance of insisting, here and elsewhere, on a *plébiscite* lies in this, that it would make an end of the rule of unqualified force in Europe. It must be an honest test of opinion. It must be held in conditions that allow free public discussion in meetings and in the Press, and the vote ought to be taken under the supervision of neutral commissioners. If a substantial majority decided in favour of France, no movement for a *revanche* could thrive in Germany. The unteachable military party might still cherish hopes of another war. But it is inconceivable that the mass of the German nation should countenance any party or any leader of opinion who proposed to disturb the world's peace in order to reverse the declared will of a people.

#### NATIONALITY AS CULTURE.

Public opinion in all the Allied countries has been fixed so firmly on the settlement of national problems by territorial change, that it may seem an arrogance to suggest that in this respect war has driven us back upon the more primitive and less civilized solution. Before the war the trend of liberal thinking about nationality was moving in the opposite direction. We saw the contentment of the Boers in South Africa and the French in Canada with a settlement which respected their national identity and culture within a tolerant Empire. Austria (as distinct from Hungary) was evolving, happily, in the same way: her Poles

were contented and loyal, and even the Czechs were inclining to rally to her. She had managed, when she conceded manhood suffrage, to introduce an ingenious expedient which promised to prevent racial conflicts in the working of representative institutions. She created for the Reichsrath, distinct electoral units, confined to one race, and of these two or more might co-exist in the same area. Within each of these the normal political struggle between Socialists, Clericals, Agrarians, and Liberals went on without the racial complication. Thus in a mixed area Germans and Czechs voted separately, each returning their own member, who stood for a solid racial constituency, though the races might be living intermingled. The result was to wean them in some degree from their barren racial strife, and to turn their minds to the more constructive questions which interested the whole community. What is the essential element in nationality? Or, rather, does nationality necessarily include the State idea, and require the sovereign control of a definite territory by a single race? Our answer on the eve of the war inclined, I think, to the view that on the ultimate analysis the essential thing in nationality is not territory but culture. A race which nowhere rules may none the less find in its Church, its schools, and in the cultivation of its distinctive spirit in literature and art a corporate life which can keep its national consciousness alive. The typical Western mind does not readily adopt this idea, and for races which do not control some fatherland politically—the Jews, Armenians, and Parsees, for example—we feel a certain pity. When one has had some experience of the East, this Western association of nationality with sovereignty comes to seem less inevitable. Grouped round their Churches, the various Christian races of Turkey had no difficulty in preserving their nationality, and

perhaps because all the manifold life of their community—its Church, its schools, its charities, and (of late years) its political party and its clubs—was voluntary, it was really more interesting and intense than that of a State organization. The national temperament and the national idea are expressed richly and vitally in the peasant art, the ballads, even in the newspapers and the party politics of the Balkan States; but they do not really shape the organization of the States themselves. They all based their Constitutions on Western models, and there is very little in their Ministries, their Parliaments, their systems of police, their rudimentary social legislation, and their armies which is not copied consciously from the institutions of the more advanced Powers. Greeks and Bulgarians hate each other, and their racial characters are as dissimilar as they are antipathetic; but on paper a comparison of their political institutions would show curiously little difference. If they diverge in the future, it will be rather under the influence of differing economic conditions than of racial character. Nationality does not in the East need the State for its expression, and where it has the State it seems to fail to mould it in its own likeness. One may have an elaborately organized society without the State. The essential for nationality is that it should be wholly free to cultivate its own language, to worship in a national or "autocephalous" Church, to express itself with entire sincerity and without external restraint in literature, journalism, and the arts, to maintain its own tradition in a complete educational system under its own management, ranging from the village school to the University, and, finally, to associate with full liberty in parties, clubs, and in literary, commercial, co-operative, or charitable societies. If it has all this, if its schools receive their fair share

of any national grant, if it is subject to no legal disabilities and inequalities, its destinies are in its own hands, its culture is secure, its soul is its own. With this minimum even a highly conscious nationality may lead a tolerable existence. It is no longer "an oppressed nationality," and while it may regret, and we may regret for it, that it lacks the outward symbols and power of nationhood, the conditions which deny it these good things may not be the intolerance of other peoples, but the confused ethnography and the difficult geography of Central and Eastern Europe. If it should be able to acquire autonomy or national independence, it would presently discover that its new status made it no easier than before to solve the real political problems which confront every modern community—land tenure in an agricultural State, the relations of labour and capital in an industrial State—while it brought new burdens and perplexities over armaments, tariffs, and communications.

These are one-sided reflections. They do not alter the fact that on the whole every distinct European race does desire national independence, or, at least, Home Rule. They will not lessen our desire to bring about a settlement, wherever possible, on those lines. The middle course, and perhaps the best course, may be in Austria-Hungary territorial Home Rule under a federal Constitution. But this line of thought does suggest that where we would not or dare not or cannot insist on territorial autonomy or independence, there is a certain minimum which we may prescribe. If our aim really is to settle national problems, and not merely to weaken the enemy, we cannot ignore the many Russian problems. Now, it is certain that the Allies will not at the settlement, or after it, themselves interfere, or allow others to interfere, in the internal Constitution of Russia. Their concern is solely with

the enemy's victims. It is probable, moreover, that for a generation to come no League of Peace will risk its own stability by attempting to order or even to advise Russia to give Home Rule to the Ukrainians, or to treat Finnish Home Rule as a reality. Home Rule is everywhere regarded by Conservative opinion as a risky and disruptive innovation. But the League ought, none the less, to lay down a certain minimum standard, to which all its members will be expected to conform. It will be, in a sense, a League of mutual insurance, and, to use a homely metaphor, it ought not in prudence to insure any rotten or inflammable structure. It has the right to insist on this minimum, not so much because abstract political doctrine requires it, as because the peace of Europe demands it. We could not, for example, guarantee the safety of Serbia if she chose to oppress Bulgars in Macedonia: there are some risks which the League ought to decline. The same principle applies even to the greatest Power. One possible procedure would be to lay down in the settlement specific stipulations on behalf of certain racial minorities by name. If this method were followed, we should probably name the Jews of Roumania and prudently forget the Jews of Russia. Even if this were done, it seems indispensable that the Powers should adopt in the Treaty of Peace, or in the Constitution of the League, or in both, some general declaration designed to secure the cultural liberties of all subject nationalities. It would require skilful drafting, but some such formula as this may serve meanwhile to give a rough idea of its scope:—

The signatory Powers, convinced that the interests of peace require the free cultural development, irrespective of political allegiance, of all the races of Europe, hereby declare that they will not in their European territories impose any political or civil disabilities on the ground of race or religion, and further, that in their European

territories they will accord to every race reasonable facilities and rights for the use of its language, for the development of schools in which its language is the chief medium of instruction, for every form of association consistent with the order of the State, and for the free exercise of its religion.

If every Power adopted this article, it could not be regarded by any as a humiliation. The formula is elastic ; but while it would allow of the suppression of openly seditious organizations, and would permit a composite State to insist that its official language should be thoroughly taught in all schools, it would remove such elementary wrongs as the oppression of the Roumanian and Russian Jews, and the practical prohibition of the Ukrainian language. It would also secure the rights of racial minorities in such mixed areas as Bohemia. Its application is confined to Europe so as to avoid raising difficult colonial questions. A Europe based on this minimum might not be an ideal, but it would be a habitable Continent. The effect of such a clause would be felt gradually but surely. A reactionary Government would try to ignore it. But the setting of a standard which the Government had itself adopted would be no small gain. The opposition at home would appeal to it. Critics abroad would make a polemical use of it. Friendly Governments, dreading an international scandal, might in grave cases remind the defaulter of his obligations. In the last resort, if domestic opposition, foreign criticism, and friendly remonstrance had all failed, if the oppression were gross enough to cause European unrest, and so notorious as to overcome the habitual inertia of diplomacy, some member of the League would be entitled to bring the case before the League's Council of Conciliation. The traditional school of jurists and diplomatists will object that this is to propose an intolerable violation of sovereignty. That may be true. Sovereignty,

in the old absolute sense of the word, is the very principle of anarchy, and no reading of it which in the last resort forbids the intervention of the collective conscience to redress gross wrongs to nationality, can on a long view be consistent with European peace. To forbid intervention to-day is to invite war to-morrow.

#### THE MAP OF POLAND.

An ethnographical map of Poland, for which I am indebted to the Polish Information Committee, will be found at the end of this book. The percentages of the Polish population indicated on it were compiled with the utmost care, but the data may be insufficient for absolute accuracy. Later figures give for Posen 75 instead of 62 per cent., for the Kingdom of Poland 89 instead of 92 per cent., and for the district of Kholm 39 instead of 57 per cent. I do not feel competent to discuss in detail what the frontiers of an independent Poland ought to be. Some portions of the race must probably be sacrificed. It is not possible to include the Poles of West Prussia, since this would cut the two portions of Prussia in half. The Masurian Poles of East Prussia, who are Protestants, are for the most part Germanized. A moderate war-settlement will probably exclude Lithuania from the Polish Kingdom, and in spite of the long association of the two races in history, the doctrine of nationality will insist rather on the liberation of the Poles than on the restoration of their kingdom in its ancient limits. I have not discussed the Baltic Provinces, for Russia will certainly insist on retaining them. The German element is too small to justify a claim based on nationality. The native Letts (ethnologically the same people as the Catholic Lithuanians), in spite of their Lutheran religion and German culture, would probably prefer Russian to German rule, because they dread the Russian official less than the German landlord. The national consciousness of all these non-Russian races of Western Russia, except the Poles, seems to be but half-developed.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ROADS OF THE EAST

A LONG war is apt to change not merely the moods of the combatants, but the objects for which they fight. New dangers emerge as the wrestling nations sway hither and thither ; new problems are created by the entry of fresh champions to the lists ; difficult tasks are discarded and compensations for their abandonment are sought in other fields. Above all, the constructive, idealistic purposes, which men emphasized at first in the effort to reconcile themselves to the horrors of war, fade from their inner vision ; they adjust themselves to the hatreds of the moment, persuaded that these hatreds must govern the world for the rest of their lives. The hope of any permanent international organization grows dim while we submit to this mood, and in its absence (since we must somehow solve our problems) the cruder methods of settlement by partition and annexation find increasing favour. There is a risk that if this state of mind endures, the war, which was hailed as a war of liberation, may degenerate into a harsh struggle of competing empires.

It is significant that as each month passes the Eastern purposes, alike of the Entente and of the Central Empires, assume an overwhelming relative importance among the many issues of the war. Germany is fighting to keep in her power the Berlin-Bagdad road. For Russia, as even Professor



Miliukoff, the leader of the Liberals in her Duma, proclaims, the supreme object of the war is the possession of Constantinople and the highway of the Straits. We are less obsessed by the East than are Russia and Germany, but even to us the campaigns round Salonica and in Mesopotamia seem vital, because they touch "the road to India."

In the West of Europe, where the German Government has long ago abandoned its hopes of conquest—if it ever entertained them—there is no sufficient reason for the prolongation of the war. In our embargo on Germany's trade, our occupation of her colonies, and our growing military ascendancy we have assets enough to secure a good settlement of West European questions. But outside this nearer region lies the Turkish problem. If either side insists here on its extremest claims in the East, the war may well last for one or two years more.

## I. THE HIGHWAY OF THE STRAITS.

The significance in the political geography of the world of the two narrow straits which link the Black Sea and the Mediterranean has become familiar to the simplest English mother, since the lads of Dorset and Lancashire died in vain on the Gallipoli peninsula to cut a way to Constantinople. In Russian history these straits recall more distant memories and older dreams. Since the days of Peter the Great Russian statesmen and soldiers have held it as the manifest destiny of their Empire that it should one day acquire Constantinople, and in the curious but probably apocryphal document which passes as his "testament" this conquest is defined as the grand object of Russia's national policy. The problem matured slowly, for it was only in comparatively modern times that Russia herself

became possessed of the European and Caucasian shores of the Black Sea. The aim was never forgotten, and through two centuries a long series of wars with Turkey brought her always a little nearer to it. Her opponent in Europe has always been the Power which stood behind the Turks as their protector. In that part Germany to-day is the successor of Great Britain. The chief motive which has always influenced the more realistic sections of Russian opinion is, of course, that the Power which holds Constantinople controls the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and with them the highway of the sea that leads to Odessa and Batoum. If this Power were only a weak Turkey, standing alone, and easily overawed by the superior power of Russia, her guardianship of the Straits might be tolerated. But Turkey in modern times has never been left to stand alone. It was Great Britain and France which actively vindicated the Sultan's rights in the Crimean War, and made them an article of the public law of Europe. They even went so far in restricting the naval expansion of Russia as to forbid her in the Treaty of Paris (1856) to maintain a fleet in the Black Sea. She took advantage of the Franco-Prussian War to tear up that oppressive "scrap of paper," and to liberate herself from its prohibitions by a simple declaration, without the assent of the other parties to the Treaty. In 1878 Disraeli, by sending our Fleet to the Sea of Marmora, arrested her armies at the very gates of Constantinople, and in the Treaty of Berlin, mainly by British influence, the Sultan's power was again buttressed by the restoration to him of the unhappy regions of Macedonia, which Russia had liberated. In those days the fathers of the men who died at Gallipoli used to sing the "Jingo" rhyme, which swore that "the Russians shall not have Constantinople." We even took Cyprus for

ourselves as a naval base convenient to the Turkish coast, in order to prevent the further encroachment of Russia upon Turkish territory. Our traditional relationship towards Turkey came to an end in the eighties of last century, partly because British Liberal opinion revolted against a policy of complicity in the oppressions of Abdul Hamid, but mainly because a British Liberal Government had occupied Egypt. With the consequent decay of our ascendancy in Constantinople, Russian interest in the problem of the Straits perceptibly dwindled. It revived as Turkey fell under German influence. The decisive fact for Russian opinion was the arrival at Constantinople, shortly after the second Balkan War, of General Liman von Sanders at the head of a large military mission, charged with the reorganization of the Turkish Army. The Russian Press took this to mean (rightly, as it turned out) that Turkey had in a military sense definitely entered the German camp. A Turkish control of the Straits might be tolerated, but a German control involved a direct negative to Russian ambitions. Nothing that is Turkish is permanent, but Germans build solidly. The emphatic diplomatic protest which Russia entered against the large executive powers entrusted to this mission (1913-14) was really the overture to the coming world-war. It was followed by a series of panics and crises throughout the spring and early summer of 1914. At one moment the German Press discovered traces (as it believed) that a secret naval convention was being arranged between Russia and Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> Then the extensive military programme of Russia, her increased peace effectives, her new artillery, and her strategical railways were held to point to a plan for making war somewhere about 1916. At intervals the

<sup>1</sup> See Schiemann, "Die Letzten Etappen zum Weltkrieg," pp. 151, 224.

German Press directed its attention to the efforts of Russian diplomacy to reconstitute the Balkan League, this time as a Slav vanguard against Austria. In the midst of this tension a controversy broke out in the influential pages of the *Preussische Jahrbücher* between Professor Mitrofanoff, of Petrograd, and Professor Hans Delbrück, its editor. The distinguished Russian historian wrote already as though war were imminent and almost inevitable, and his thesis was that Russia must control the Straits, and that unless Germany made terms with this historical ambition, then the road to Constantinople would lie through Berlin.<sup>1</sup> Europe was

<sup>1</sup> Professor Mitrofanoff, who had been in youth a student under Professor Delbrück in Berlin, wrote at the latter's invitation to explain the anti-German tendency in Russia. His article, which appeared in the June number, opens with a brilliant historical analysis of the causes, social and political, of the Russian dislike of Germany and Germans. The section on Turkey concludes with the sentence, "It is now clear to Russians that if everything remains as it is at present, the road to Constantinople lies through Berlin." There follow some confident sentences in which Germans are warned that the Russia of 1914 is a much stronger Power, in the military, financial, industrial, and political senses of the word, than the Russia of 1904. The grievance of the tariff (soon to be renewed) is touched upon. "If we fail to meet with a disposition to understand our case and make concessions, things look ugly" (*so ist die Sache schlimm*). . . . "We have no desire to attack Germany; we have too much admiration for German civilization, and for the contributions of the German people to the world's development, to wish for ourselves an Attila's victory." (The Germans are not yet the Huns!) "We are also fully convinced that Germany is far from having directly aggressive tendencies; but we feel ourselves on all sides hampered and hemmed in by German pressure, on our flanks, in Turkey, in Sweden, in Austria: we meet with no recognition of our present situation, no reckoning with our present strength, and we are resolved to win for ourselves the position which is due to us. . . . War with Germany would be a misfortune, but one cannot escape from a bitter necessity, when it is really necessary."

Soon after Professor Mitrofanoff had addressed this startling warning to the German reading public, a certain Prince Kotchubey, who holds a position at the Russian Court, contributed a similar article

already in peril of war on the eve of the Serajevo murders, and the issue which dominated both Russian and German opinion was the question of Constantinople and the Straits. When Turkey entered the war (as was indeed inevitable) on the side of Germany, Russia arranged her claims with her Allies. The Russian Premier has told us that in March 1915 Great Britain and France gave their full consent to a Russian annexation of Constantinople. So much is known. What is not known is whether our statesmen pledged their two countries to continue the war until Constantinople has been conquered, or whether they merely declared that they have no objection to the realization of Russia's ambition.

It is not easy to decide how far this ambition is a strategical demand, prosaic, intelligible, and eminently natural, and how far it springs from sentiment and romance. The foundations of Russian civilization were Eastern, and throughout the East Constantinople has always been regarded as the Imperial City, "Tsarigrad," the New Rome, the goal of conquerors, and the centre of world power. It is, moreover, the seat of the Œcumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, and though his authority and prestige are far less than those of the Pope in the more centralized Western Church, the possession of his seat and the planting of the Cross

to the Paris *Correspondant* (June 26, 1914). It covers much the same ground, with the addition of an exhortation to France to adopt three years' service and to us to adopt conscription, and the usual hint that Russia, failing this support, may after all enter the German camp. The chief feature of this article is an assurance, bluntly phrased, that an attack by Russia on Germany would be enormously popular in Russia: "On what tremendous forces could the Russian Government rely, if one day the Duma were to compel it to declare war on Russia!" These two articles were written in time of peace, before the Serajevo murders. They helped to confirm the German belief that Russia was preparing for an aggressive war.

once more on the dome of St. Sophia would mean far more to the Russian Church and to the simpler sections of Russian opinion than the opening of the Straits. It was the question of the holy places of Palestine which led up to the Crimean War, and there is still a vast Russian world, not merely in the villages but at Court, which makes pilgrimages, believes in modern miracles, and venerates sacred places. It was the native reactionary school which kept alive the dream of acquiring Constantinople. It was an obsession for Katkoff, and Skobelev, and especially for Dostoevsky, who popularized the Slavophil doctrines in the seventies and eighties of last century. Their whole view of life was based on a fundamental opposition of East and West. Russia stood for the believing spirit against the liberal West, firmly based on the three fundamental Slav institutions—the autocratic throne, the Orthodox Church, and Slav nationality. This creed, which mingled an elevated Christian mysticism with a crude racial Chauvinism and a deplorable intolerance,<sup>1</sup> blended readily with Panslavist schemes of political expansion, and for both these allied schools of thought, the possession of Constantinople was the symbol of the great destiny to which Russia was called as the Power of the future and the mistress of the East. The dream is woven into the hereditary sentiment of the Russian people, and its romance is probably a subconscious influence even with Russian Liberals, who reject the whole Slavophil tradition as mediævalism and reaction.

While this traditional sentiment explains the popularity of the Turkish campaign in Russia, a diplomatist would state the case for the Russian

<sup>1</sup> See for a statement of it the curious book by M. Pobiedonosteff, the notorious Procurator of the Holy Synod, "Reflections of a Russian Statesman" (1898).

annexation of Constantinople in plain prose. The historical pressure of Russia towards an ice-free port is one of the commonplaces of world-politics. It carried her across Siberia to Vladivostock and Port Arthur. It has in the past turned her attention towards the Persian Gulf, and it has made Sweden deeply anxious. All the while there was an ice-free port at no great distance from Petrograd, Alexandrovsk, waiting only the building of wharves and the construction of a railway. The plans for its construction lay for years in the official pigeon-holes, and were brought out only in the stress of this war. But an empire of so vast an extent needs many ports. For commercial purposes, of course, in time of peace the ports of the Black Sea are always open. But this question of a Russian port, like the German demand for "the freedom of the seas," has reference, not to peace but to war. The high seas are perfectly free while the world is at peace, and so is the sea road to Odessa. The Russian grievance is primarily this, that while the Straits are always open in time of peace to the merchantmen of all nations, the Sultan has the right, and exercises it, to close them both in peace and war to warships. That means that the Russian Black Sea Fleet is confined within its waters as effectively as though the sea were an inland lake. During the Japanese War, for example, it could not sail out to reinforce the Russian squadron in the Far East. If at any time Russia wishes to "show her flag" in the Mediterranean, to intervene in some Balkan complication, or to take part in those international naval demonstrations which were common during the reign of Abdul Hamid, her ships must sail from the Baltic ports (closed during part of the winter) and pass on their way through the narrow straits of the Sound, Dover, and Gibraltar. This restriction on the movement

of her ships (and therefore of her armies) is a serious limitation to the immense potential military power of Russia. It means that she cannot act effectively anywhere to the west of her own territory. It has made her primarily an Eastern Power. She could not, for example, in this war bring effective succour to Serbia, though she, and not the Western Powers, was the champion on whom the Serbs relied. The ability to use the Straits freely in war-time would mean, in short, a doubling of Russia's military range of action, and her entry by a new road into the European system. Such an increase of power would be felt, of course, in peace as well as in war, for in diplomacy the reach of a Government's arm is accurately measured. To this primary reason for the acquisition of the Straits some others must be added. The closing of them in this war has cut off Russian exports to the detriment of her credit, and excluded military supplies to the peril of her armies. Nor are the disadvantages which flow from the Turkish ownership of the Straits entirely limited to Russia's military interests. If Turkey is herself at war, while Russia is neutral, and Turkey is obliged to defend the Straits against a naval attack, she may be compelled to close them, or at least to limit traffic. That happened at awkward moments during the Turco-Italian and Balkan Wars, when the Italian and Greek fleets threatened the Dardanelles. Some vexatious delay resulted in the export of the Russian harvest. To balance all these considerations, the only advantage is that when Russia is at war and Turkey neutral, the Straits are closed against Russia's enemy. That consideration may, however, be dismissed, for if Russia held the Straits herself, the strongest naval Power would not venture, after our experience, to attack them.

The reasons why Russia desires to control the



Straits are so eminently intelligible that we need not dwell further upon them. It remains only to add that in the present view of her statesmen no control will be satisfactory unless Russia is physically in possession of the shores of the Straits themselves. That involves, of course, the possession, not merely of Constantinople but of some territory on both continents. It may mean the whole of Turkish Thrace, including Adrianople. There is even an influential school among Russian soldiers which argues that, in order to hold Constantinople securely, they must have access to it by land. Roumania and Bulgaria close the shorter European road, and they therefore claim the whole southern shore of the Black Sea, in order to link the Bosphorus with the Caucasus. Thus the claim to control the Straits means, on an extreme reading of it, the acquisition of great reaches of Turkish territory. Before the war Russian diplomacy asked for much less. M. Isvolsky, for example, wished to open the question during the Bosnian crisis (1909-10), and at that time Russia would hardly have claimed more than the right to send her warships through the Straits. That right would, of course, hold only while Russia and Turkey were at peace one with another. To-day a Russian would reply that, since Turkey has become the ally or vassal of Germany, such a right would become worthless when it was most wanted. The right to move outside the Black Sea would be a restricted privilege, if it could be exercised only at Germany's good pleasure. Finally, to suggestions that the control of the Straits should in some form be internationalized, the prevailing Russian answer is, that Russia wants some better security than "a scrap of paper." She will feel sure that the Straits will always be open to her warships only when her own guns command them.

War is a state of absolute partisanship, and the

tendency, while it lasts, is to assume that everything which an ally may claim is a proper object to pursue. But if the world is to be freed from the reign of force, we must school our minds to abandon the habit of thinking strategically. We have to inquire whether we can fit into our ideal of the future Europe this Russian claim for the means to exert power far beyond her own frontiers. To bring into the Mediterranean, as a factor in its naval and military balance, a Power which has neither province nor colony on its shores would be a questionable innovation. The real bearing of this question is primarily on the future of the Balkan States. Mr. Gladstone popularized the watchword "The Balkans for the Balkan peoples," and that ideal, infinitely difficult to realize, would be best served by a Balkan Federation—a solution, one fears, of the very distant future. In the meanwhile the gravest peril for Balkan liberties would be the establishment of any great empire in the peninsula. The same arguments which tell against the establishment of Austria at Salonica apply also to Russia's claim. Entrenched at Constantinople, able to strike at will by land or sea, holding the exit of the Black Sea, and sending her ships freely into the *Ægean* and the Adriatic, Russia would control the Balkan peninsula, and dispose at her pleasure of the destinies of its people. There are many reasons which explain the choice of Bulgaria in joining the Central Empires, and the long-continued neutrality of Roumania and Greece, but among the considerations which weighed most heavily with them all was their reluctance to see any great empire established at Constantinople. Roumania is wholly dependent on the Straits for her commerce with the outer world, and, though Bulgaria now has a worthless and isolated port on the *Ægean*, her commerce still depends entirely on Varna and Burgas,

both of them Black Sea ports. Finally, it is well to remember in this war, waged professedly for the doctrine of nationality, that there are no Russians, nor even an appreciable number of Slavs, in the regions which Russia proposes to annex. The Turkish population, which is in a majority, would prefer almost any other foreign rule to that of its hereditary enemy. This consideration, which has weight if only a small strip of territory were annexed, would become very serious if the larger schemes of the military party were carried into effect.

There are several alternative solutions which would give to Russia the free use of the Straits, to which she is entitled. The essential point is really, not that Russia should possess the Straits but that Germany should not dominate them. Sir Edwin Pears has sketched an ideal scheme—the creation of a small international State, guaranteed by the whole Concert of Europe, under executive officers nominated by it, which would control both shores and guarantee a free passage to all the world. This plan would guarantee the inhabitants of Constantinople against any form of foreign rule which might aspire to denationalize them, and under it they might develop to the full their own municipal and communal institutions. The city might become with security and freedom of trade the great centre of education and affairs for the Balkans and Anatolia, the intellectual and commercial capital of the Near East. One does not readily abandon oneself to flattering dreams amid this war, but I confess that a vision sometimes shapes itself in my mind of a still greater future for Constantinople. When the League of Nations is firmly established, it must acquire some social centre, some capital which will impress the imagination and focus the intercourse of the nations which

compose it. It could find no nobler site for its capital than Constantinople, and the imperial traditions of New Rome would give to it a glorious foundation in the past, and make for it a claim on our veneration. Its distance from Western Europe may seem an objection. Western Europe is, however, inclined to be provincial, but on the shores of the Bosphorus no one could forget how momentous for the destinies of mankind is the recovery of the East for civilization. With one of the smaller Western cities, The Hague, for example, as its site, the international capital might be dwarfed by Paris, London, and Berlin. Placed in the Near East it would swiftly raise the whole level of East-European culture. It must be admitted, however, that the idea of an international State is adventurous and difficult. What would happen if war again broke out among the Great Powers who controlled it? Who then would assure the freedom of the Straits? For this reason there is everything to be said for the suggestion, urged by Mr. Toynbee and others, that the United States of America should be entrusted, as the mandatory of the League, with the guardianship of Constantinople and the Straits. They have no material or political interests in this part of the world, and their great educational work in Turkey has already won the gratitude and confidence of all the Near Eastern peoples.

Unhappily, this plan, by far the best of all, might require for its realization a great prolongation of the war, for it presupposes the expulsion of the Turks. It is possible, however, to suggest modifications of it, which would meet the legitimate requirements of Russia without presupposing the annihilation of Turkey. The Turks might be left in undisturbed possession of the city and its shores. They would be required, however, to demolish all

the fortifications of the Straits, and an International Commission would be charged with the duty of watching over them, to assure at all times their free navigation, in war as in peace, for merchant vessels of all nationalities, and for the warships of the States bordering on the Black Sea. This Commission, on which the United States might be largely represented, should have the right to call upon the naval or military forces of neutral Powers, if on the outbreak of war force should be necessary to maintain the provisions of the treaty. It is probable that Russia, while she greatly values the right of free exit through the Straits for her own warships, is no less anxious to possess the right to close them to the navies of other Powers. That also might be provided for in the treaty. In other words, the guardianship of the Straits would pass from the Sultan to an International Commission, and the arrangement might be more acceptable to Russia if this Commission were to consist only of the representatives of States which have no competing interests in the Near East. By this plan, or by some variant of it, an assured access to the seas may be guaranteed to Russia in a way which would not menace the political liberties of the Balkan States, the national autonomy of the population of Turkey and Thrace, or the freedom of the world's trade. It is, of course, an indispensable corollary to this plan that the territory bordering the Straits must be neutralized, so that in the event of war between Russia and Turkey it shall not be a legitimate field for warlike operations. Unless the world is prepared to put its faith in such "scraps of paper," the battle over the rights of Belgium will have been fought in vain.

Our attitude towards this Russian claim will depend in the last resort on whether we believe

that the future of Europe must resemble its past. If we believe, with Lord Grey, that international questions must be settled by "conference" and "negotiation," we shall have listened unmoved to the greater part of this argument. If we want to have done with the diplomacy whose success is measured by the reach of the arm behind it, the main item in this case falls to the ground. If, on the other hand, we see nothing before us but a dismal prolongation of the rivalry for a balance of power and a balance of armaments, the struggle always in diplomacy and trade, and periodically in war, of one group of Powers against another, then, on one condition, we shall back the Russian demand. That condition is, of course, that we are quite sure that the present grouping will persist, and that Russia will be for all time our ally. The answer of the average statesman would hesitate between these sharp alternatives. "I *hope*," he would say, "that we shall manage to set up an Areopagus, and all that sort of thing. I am all for conference and negotiation. But I don't trust the other side. I must, therefore, strengthen myself and my friends, so as to be ready for every contingency. I shall, accordingly, build fleets, fortify straits, and, when necessary, annex the shores that control them, but, of course, I hope that we shall all live happily ever afterwards, and arbitrate before we fight." That is the attitude which, above all others, curses life with a duality of purpose, poisons sincerity, destroys confidence, and arrests progress. If a man hopes he must also believe. If he intends he must have faith. If he has turned his back on the evil past, he must discard its calculations. The probability of future war turns largely on the expectations of mankind. If the world believes that war will come, the belief will realize itself. So long as that belief dominates us,

our actions will be busied with all the preparations that almost fatally make war—the armaments, and, still worse, the diplomatic groupings. Array Europe in two hostile groups, and it is idle to talk of conference, for no conference could meet in that mood of coolness and impartiality from which alone a just settlement of any conflict can result. What makes the belief of mankind in such a case? Deeds rather than words make it. A whole library of poisonous books, by all the Bernhardis of all the nations, would do less to create the belief that a future war is inevitable, than the insistence of Russia on annexing Constantinople and the readiness of the Entente to back her claim by months or years of warfare. We could hardly say more plainly that all the talk of “the war to end war” was nothing but self-deluding rhetoric. An international solution is possible, and our answer is that we have no faith in “scraps of paper.” That would be an admission that the war had been fought in vain. If we desired to show that our purpose had been achieved, if we meant boldly, like strong men, to imprint our will upon the world’s history, we should take the exactly opposite course. We should set up our “scraps of paper” with a defiant and gallant gesture. We should call them a monument more lasting than armour-plate. We should give them validity by our faith, and keep our arms, if need be, to defend them. A coalition which acts on this principle will have destroyed the belief in the next inevitable war, and by so doing it will have made the intellectual basis of an enduring peace.

## II. THE ROAD TO BAGDAD.

If the central object of Russia in this war is to open for herself the naval road to the Mediterranean, the Germans are no less bent on securing for

themselves unhampered military access to Turkey. Russia's interest in the Straits is mainly strategic, though her strategical thinking is coloured by sentiment. German policy, on the other hand, shows the characteristic modern combination of strategy with economics. Coming very late into the colonial field, and unable to secure for herself any sphere capable of development by white settlers, her attention since the opening of this century has turned increasingly to Turkey. Into this sphere, also, her traders came late, and found it occupied mainly by French educational and financial and British commercial influences. They enjoyed, however, certain advantages. Prussian soldiers, beginning with the great Von Moltke and then with Von der Goltz, had done much for the Turkish Army. They had no past to overcome in appealing to Turkish sympathies, and when our policy after the occupation of Egypt became definitely anti-Turkish, they rapidly acquired a predominant position in Constantinople. It was won, like all their achievements, by method, intelligence, and perseverance. Their great ambassador, Marschall von Bieberstein, worked while others idled, and was friendly, accessible, helpful, where others were stiff, contemptuous, and indifferent. The Kaiser's more theatrical methods of proclaiming himself the friend of Islam in general and of Abdul Hamid in particular served their immediate end. From all the demonstrations, reforms, and intrigues that centred round Armenia, Macedonia, and Crete, German diplomacy stood aloof, and if this was bad political morals it was also good business. "We pursue in Turkey only economic ends," was the invariable answer of Baron Marschall to any attempt to enlist his interest in such questions. The answer was true as a statement of motive, but economics cannot in Turkey be divorced from politics. The exploita-



tion of a backward country on the great scale of modern capitalism depends far more upon contracts, concessions, and loan operations than upon the direct pushing of their wares by private merchants. In Turkey, as in China, all these larger operations of finance are the concern of diplomacy, and every alert Embassy persuades, bribes, negotiates, or even threatens in order to push the interests of its country's financiers. The Germans were particularly successful in the sale of their armaments, and with the final granting of the Bagdad railway concession in 1903, they became economically the predominant Power in Turkey. French finance still held by far the larger passive stake in Turkey, but the new and more enterprising power was the Deutsche Bank. This position was not won without careful political nursing. The Young Turks, when first they made their revolution (1908), were anxious to conclude a defensive alliance with Great Britain. Their overtures were coldly received. The dispatch of the German Military Mission to Turkey, after the Balkan wars, meant that Enver Bey's pro-German policy had prevailed over the pro-French and pro-British inclinations of his more liberal colleagues, and shortly after the outbreak of the world-war the Turco-German alliance, already half-concluded, became the decisive fact in the Eastern theatre of war.

The Bagdad railway was not originally a German scheme. In the middle years of last century certain Anglo-Indian engineers eagerly promoted the idea of a railway linking the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf. It was to have run from Alexandretta by an easy desert route to Basra. A Parliamentary Commission reported in its favour, and the Turks welcomed the scheme. Capital, however, was shy, and after our occupation of Egypt, which gave us control of the Suez Canal, it ceased to interest us.

Our concern in it had been purely strategic, for we regarded it as an alternative road to India. While favouring the scheme, the Turks had always tried to induce its British promoters to expand it into a more ambitious project, a Constantinople-Bagdad railway.<sup>1</sup> From the Turkish point of view this railway was an administrative and military necessity. Railway-builders who considered only the needs of trade would not have been attracted by it. The denser population in Turkey is to be found clustered in limited areas near the coast—round Constantinople, in the big hinterland of Smyrna, in the rich alluvial plain of Cilicia, in Syria, and along the coast of the Black Sea.<sup>2</sup> The natural course was to drive short railways (of which there are still too few) up from the ports, so as gradually to develop the roadless interior. But for the purposes of government, police, and military concentration, it was precisely through the sparsely peopled, half-tilled, and inaccessible interior that the Porte most wished to drive a road. Only by this means could the primitive anarchy of some provinces be brought to order, but, above all, such a railway, by shortening the time required for mobilization, would add enormously to the military power of Turkey, whether for offence or for defence. Commercially, the Bagdad railway is unlikely to be profitable for many years, or even decades. In the northern half of its course it serves a population varying in density from twenty-five to ten to the square mile, and the other half of it runs through desert which does not boast five souls to the mile. The greater part of it involves no engineering difficulties, but the mountains of the Taurus and the swamps of lower Mesopotamia present costly obstacles. Nor are the prospects of

<sup>1</sup> See David Fraser, "The Short Cut to India," p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> See Hogarth, "The Nearer East," p. 150.

the railway as a through-route even for passenger traffic particularly good. It is barely possible that it can beat or even equal the time of the P. and O. boats to India. For long-distance goods traffic it can never compete with the sea-road, and the best that can be said for it from an economic standpoint is that it will gradually concentrate population along its own course, and bring cultivation to the waste places. This has happened already in the plain of Konia. There was everything to be said for such a railway from the Turkish standpoint, but much less from that of the foreign trader. It followed that the railway could be built only under the usual Turkish system of subsidized profits, by a kilometric guarantee, and as always happens in the land of baksheesh, the foreign capitalist drove an unconscionable bargain. The railway may never pay its way, but its promoters have none the less secured a rich return for their outlay. They reckon, also, on larger and more legitimate profits from subsidiary enterprises. A railway concession commonly carries with it the expectation that other large enterprises, mines, harbours, and the like, will be conceded to the same group of capitalists. The promoters secured from the first a monopoly over the rich oil-wells of Mesopotamia, and they reckoned that their undertaking would serve as a basis for a future claim, to be founded, first, upon accomplished facts, and, finally, perhaps, on treaty, that the whole region served by the Bagdad railway is a German economic sphere. If this were to include the irrigation of Mesopotamia, it would be probably the most valuable privilege still open in any undeveloped country. It was this indefinite possibility of extension which really made the Bagdad railway an attractive economic opening to German enterprise. Since Germany was in a fair way to make the greater part of Turkey, her

economic preserve, she had an imperative interest in maintaining its "integrity and independence." Other Powers might wish to partition Turkey. Germany wished to absorb it whole. We had ourselves followed the same logic during the greater part of the nineteenth century; but while we valued our gallant Turkish allies and turned a blind eye to their misdeeds, we were too busy with more promising commercial possibilities elsewhere to concentrate our minds, as the Germans have done, on the economic exploitation of Turkey.

The sinister aspect of the Bagdad railway as a strategical line has been amply illustrated in the present war. It means two things strategically. It is first of all the Turkish military high-road, essential to any development of Ottoman power. Turkey, however, is too weak to stand alone, and inevitably the idea of the line has expanded until every German to-day thinks of it as the Berlin-Bagdad connection. The present relationship of Germany with Turkey repeats in all essentials the older Anglo-Turkish tie. Any Power which comes into intimate touch with Turkey is forced to become her protector, and the protector who takes risks on her behalf will naturally wish to use her as an ally, and to pay himself by exploiting her undeveloped economic resources. The risk of a forcible partition of Turkey has been real for the best part of a century. The Tsar Nicholas I proposed an amicable agreement to partition Turkey on the eve of the Crimean War. The Germans believe that Nicholas II and Edward VII discussed some similar scheme at Reval in 1908, and reached an understanding about it.<sup>1</sup> That plan (which had some existence in fact, at least as a scheme of reforms to be imposed on Turkey) was abandoned when the Young Turks made

<sup>1</sup> See Reventlow, "Deutschlands Auswärtige Politik," p. 322; Rohrbach, "Der Deutsche Gedanke," pp. 155, 162.

their revolution to escape it. The Germans allege that it was revived during the Balkan War, and that it took the shape of a proposal to delimit the "economic spheres" of the Powers in Turkey on the Persian model. Such plans were undoubtedly in the minds of some of the Allied statesmen, though there was probably no thought of attempting to realize them, save by a European agreement. They revived when the war broke out and Turkey became involved in it. It is said by those who should know, that the secret compacts of the Allies contemplate a partition on this basis: Constantinople goes to Russia, with the Armenian provinces as a vassal State under her suzerainty; Syria is to be French; Mesopotamia and Arabia, British; and Cilicia, Italian. The Entente offered the greater part of Asia Minor, with Smyrna, to Greece, but failing her acceptance, it is to be supposed that Turkey will be allowed to retain so much of Asia Minor and Anatolia as Russia does not absorb in order to secure her hold on the Straits. The conception of a Turkey protected, developed, and strengthened by German influences stood opposed to these ambitions of the Entente Powers. The issue was simply one of power, a *Machtfrage*, which could hardly be settled without war. It is "the Eastern Question" which distracted the lives of our fathers and grandfathers, with Russia still in her old rôle, and Germany filling the traditional part of Great Britain.

This exchange of parts between Germany and Britain involved a disastrous strategical complication in the Balkans. Our command of the seas enables us to act in the East without possessing a continuous land route. It suffices for our purpose that we hold Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and Egypt. Our statesmen have always held that the vital interest of our communications justified us in disregarding in these cases the doctrine of nationality. Germany

has no such command of the seas, and if in any conflict over Turkey to which we are a party, she must be able to reach Turkey, the only route open to her lies by land across the Balkans. An independent and hostile Serbia is a fatal obstacle to any full use for strategical purposes of the Berlin-Bagdad line. Once more, as in the case of the Straits, the problem is not commercial, and has no bearing whatever on Germany's right to use such a road freely for the export of her manufactures. For that purpose the line was always open to her, and, in point of fact, the bulk of her trade has always gone, and is always likely to go, to Turkey by sea. What she required was a road, or, as it is often called, a "corridor," by which she could at all times send troops and munitions from Berlin to Constantinople and Bagdad. Without that facility she could neither protect nor dominate Turkey. It was not necessary that she should suppress Serbia and Bulgaria as independent States, but it was absolutely necessary for her Eastern policy that they should both be complacent and friendly neutrals, if not actual allies. The obstacle of a hostile Serbia is of recent date, and did not exist when the Bagdad line was first planned. At that time Serbia, under the Obrenovitch dynasty, was a nearly negligible factor in Balkan affairs, the satellite of Austria and the friend of Turkey. It is a grave mistake to suppose that Serbia had always been the protégé of Russia. Again and again, and for lengthy periods, whenever it suited Vienna and Petrograd to come to an arrangement, Serbia was explicitly recognized (e.g. in the pact of 1897 and probably again in 1903) as within the Austrian sphere of influence. It is too often forgotten that Russia actually agreed to the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the price of Austrian neutrality during the Russo-Turkish War. The change began with the murder

of the Austrophil King Alexander (1903) and the return of the Russophil Karageorgevitch dynasty, and it was completed only with the open breach between Austria and Russia, which Count Aerenthal and M. Isvolsky brought about in 1908. From that moment Serbia was the vanguard of Russian influence in the Balkans, an isolated outpost thrown across the route of any Austro-German advance. The German motive was partly the desire to strengthen her ally Austria against the South-Slav danger, and partly the wish to open the military road to Turkey. That object has for the moment been attained by the obliteration of Serbia during the swift autumn campaign of 1915. The Berlin-Bagdad line is to-day wholly under the control of the Central Empires. Control would be permanently attained if, as the result of this war, Turkey and Bulgaria remained the allies of the Central Powers, while Serbia was either annexed to Austria or reduced to a condition of vassalage. So long as an independent Serbia remains, free to ally herself with the Western Powers and Russia, the Berlin-Bagdad line does not exist as a strategical road. The Serbian question is the key to the mastery of the East.

If we aim in this war at a settlement which will assure permanent peace, it follows that the one kind of success which we must labour to prevent is a gain based solely on strategical requirements. The Berlin-Bagdad idea is the obverse of the Russian Constantinople idea, and both of them are based on the conception of a Europe still dominated by force. It follows that we are bound in policy, as we are pledged in honour, to see an independent Serbia restored. With the restoration of Serbia, the strategical menace of the Berlin-Bagdad line would be destroyed, and it would become, with the settlement of the world's peace, an innocent highway of civilization.

There remains the further question whether our opposition to the strategical idea Berlin-Bagdad need involve us in a denial of a German ambition to lead the economic development of Turkey. A truly independent Turkey cannot exist by its own strength in our generation. It must either be partitioned or controlled. Partition means the indefinite prolongation of the war, and when it is achieved a triumph rather for Imperialism than for freedom and nationality. The Turks themselves, or at least their dominant party, have made their choice. They have placed themselves under German direction. To disturb that choice, if we are resolved upon it, we must face an indefinite destruction of the best manhood of Europe. Is the end desirable in itself? No one who knew the mind of Germany before this war can doubt that her ruling class, including her financiers and industrialists, drifted into the attitude which made this war under a sense of thwarted economic ambitions. They saw the greater part of the world that is capable of colonization divided between Britain, France, and Russia. With an economic development immensely more advanced than that of France and Russia, conscious of great energies, and counting their growing population, they had turned restlessly for a generation hither and thither in the search for new outlets, spheres to develop, and "places in the sun." They saw the great empires growing bigger—Morocco and Persia were the last object-lessons—while the combination among the three World-Powers had seemed for a long series of years to forbid their own expansion. This mood undoubtedly eased the sudden plunge into the crime of this war. If European statesmanship had been far-sighted, it would have realized that a nation of such energies and power must sooner or later be tempted to seize a field for those energies corresponding to its power. There were two ways



of averting such a catastrophe. If all the Powers could have been brought to treat their dependencies, not as estates to be exploited but as trusts held for the world and the native inhabitants ; the tariff walls around most of them had been broken down, and the opportunities for mining, railway construction, and the like thrown open impartially to the enterprise of all nations, then, indeed, the Germans would have had no reason to desire, still less to conquer, exclusive markets and spheres for themselves. Failing that solution, which our Empire alone had ever approached, and only then in part, the prudent course would have been to further the moderate realization of German economic ambitions, and by an amicable arrangement to find for her a sphere worthy of her energies which she might develop as her own. That was at two periods the policy of British statesmanship, and for the injury to European concord we must look to the long interval occupied by the Morocco Question (1904-11) which lay between them. Lord Salisbury facilitated the acquisition of the German African colonies in 1886. Sir Edward Grey, on the very eve of this war, had all but completed a treaty which would have met the German claim for the chief share in the development of Turkey. After a decade of friction and jealousy we withdrew all opposition to the Bagdad line, and took precautions in our own interest only where it will approach the Persian Gulf. Sir Edward Grey even went so far in withdrawing from competition with Germany that he declined as a matter of policy to press for concessions to British subjects in Turkey.<sup>1</sup> The struggle for the mastery of the Near East lay in 1914, not between Germany and Britain, but between Germany and Russia.

The war has destroyed the feeling of goodwill with which Sir Edward Grey drafted that statesman-

<sup>1</sup> See his speech in the Foreign Office debate, July 10, 1914.

like arrangement over Turkey. On sober grounds of policy there is, however, as much to be said for it as in the days before the war. We know better than we did then what formidable energies are latent in the German people. Now, as then, the chief problem for European statesmanship is to turn those energies into a harmless and productive course. Thwart them, deny them their outlet, and once more they may overflow in a destructive flood; prepare their channel for them, and they will help to turn the wheels of civilization. The short-sighted anger of to-day takes the form of proposals, not merely to strip Germany of all her colonies but even to exclude her commerce more or less completely from the Allied markets. A peace based on such terms would be merely an angry truce, during which Germany would arm and scheme to renew the war, not for glory or plunder, but simply to win for herself the right to live and breathe and trade. These evil plans may be forgotten when once the moment for negotiation comes. But there are difficulties about the restoration of some of Germany's colonies. The natural field for German expansion lies in Turkey. The simplest solution would be at the settlement to revert to the British policy of 1914, and tacitly or explicitly to recognise the "predominant interests" of Germany in Turkey. That is, of course, merely to accept an accomplished fact, or, rather, to refrain from prolonging the war until the fact has been altered. The Straits must be opened under an international guarantee. The railroad through Serbia must be politically under Serbian control in the sense that only by her free consent may it be used for the transit of troops; it might be well to arrange that this and other trunk railways and ports of the East should be subject, like the waterway of the Danube, to an International Commission, whose duty it would be to ensure equality of treatment for the commerce

of all nations which use them. There must be no interference with the existing rights (including equal treatment in the Customs-house) of other foreigners in Turkey. Armenia, which the Turks have turned into a wasted and depopulated hell, must be freed from their rule, and receive autonomy under Russian protection. But with these reservations the Powers should agree not to interfere with the informal control which Germany has acquired over the Turks, and not to oppose such further schemes of railway building, mining, or irrigation as the enterprise of her subjects may promote in Turkey.<sup>1</sup> The development of the country under German guides would bring great material gains to its inhabitants, and their orderly, if too rigid, discipline would be a

<sup>1</sup> It may be urged that the claims of France to Syria as "a sphere of influence" should be enforced. France is no longer the dominant commercial and educational Power in Syria. But the exclusion of Syria from the understanding that Asiatic Turkey is a German sphere would not seriously interfere with it. The Syrians, moreover, owe much to French influence and are developing a nationalist tendency. There is much to be said for an autonomous Syria under French protection. But every economic aim of this kind must be weighed against the claims of nationality in Europe. The more the French urge their pretensions to Syria, the harder will it be for them to secure Alsace-Lorraine. Nor should the natural and proper ambition of the Jews to found a Zionist State in Palestine be forgotten. Incidentally, the creation of a Zionist State, neutralized under an international guarantee, would provide the security of the Suez Canal, and prepare the way for its more effective neutralization. Until we know more of the Arab rising in the Holy Cities, it seems premature to raise the question of the Caliphate. My own impression is that we exaggerate its importance. A Sultan under German influence has clearly ceased to wield any real authority outside his own dominions as the spiritual and political head of Islam. On the other hand, to set up an Arab Caliph who would appear to owe his position to British protection would be (if any one were so foolish as to contemplate it) an entirely delusive success. A puppet Caliph is a useless ally to any Christian Power. The plain fact is that the Caliphate is to-day, morally, an obsolete institution, and could only be revived by a Moslem prince who possessed the reality of independence, and power with prestige.

prompt cure for the Turkish habit of slovenly and indolent disorder. The absorption of German energies in this fruitful but very difficult task would in itself be a guarantee for the world's peace. Before we dismiss this remedy for a destructive militarism, let us ask ourselves in all candour how long we should have kept our warships in home waters and our Army at Aldershot, if we had lacked the vast estate of India and Africa, Canada and Australia, in which the energies of Empire-builders and capitalists, the ambitions of Pro-Consuls, and the high spirits of adventurous youth find an innocent outlet and a beneficent field of work?

### III. THE ROAD TO INDIA.

“By the exercise of cool judgment and Christian charity,” the reader may say, “I can just grasp your argument that Germany has, not indeed a right but a reasonable claim to some share in the work of developing half-civilized countries. Three years ago the idea of a German Turkey might not have seemed more monstrous to the world than the idea of a British India, a British Egypt, a French North Africa and Indo-China, and a Russian Siberia and Central Asia. But you have forgotten that Mesopotamia touches the Persian Gulf, and that the Bagdad line is the short cut to India. If you allow the Germans to hold that line, what security have you, that when you have spent a generation in recuperating from this war and in drilling the Turks, they will not lead a Turco-German army to the conquest of India?” There can be no absolute security against such a danger. At various periods between the Battle of the Nile and the Battle of Jutland the French, the Russians, and the Germans (or some aggressive elements among each of them) have coveted India. We

have only one security, which is nearly absolute, and that is the contentment of the people of India with our rule. If we know how to keep that contentment and to deepen it by the adaptation of our institutions to their progress, we have little to fear from any aggressive empire. There are other guarantees (apart from the moral guarantee that the Germans have suffered lessons in this war which will not be forgotten for a generation), notably distances, deserts and mountains, and our command of the seas.

Let us consider briefly what a Turco-German attack on India, with Bagdad and Basra for its land and sea bases, would involve. Note in the first place that under the conditions already proposed, such an attack could not take place without the aid, or at least the very friendly neutrality, of Russia. We have restored Serbia in our sketch, placed Russia in occupation of Armenia, and left her in possession of North Persia.<sup>1</sup> If the Germans, then, are going to march on India, they can do it only with Russian goodwill, for Russia would have to acquiesce in the first stride across Serbia, and then sit complacently neutral while the Turco-German armies, with their flank all the while exposed to Russian attack from Armenia and Persia, prepared their advance by land or sea or both. To contend that a Russo-German combination against us after this war is a likely contingency, is to condemn our whole European policy since the Anglo-Russian Understanding of 1907, and in particular the partition of Persia. For in the event of a Russo-German combination our chief object for regret would not be that we had allowed the Germans

<sup>1</sup> I am inclined to think that from the standpoint of Persian nationality the establishment of a Russian Protectorate over all Persia (excluding, perhaps, the port of Bunder Abbas) would be preferable to the present partition into Russian and British spheres.

to get to Bagdad, but that we had furthered the establishment of the Russians in Persia. If, on the other hand, as British public opinion, on the whole, believes (I confess myself a sceptic), our policy was based on a sound calculation, if the Russo-German antagonism is lasting, if Russia is herself evolving rapidly in a liberal direction, if she has outgrown the old earth-hunger which used to covet India, if, finally, we have won her enduring friendship in this war, it is out of the question that she should assist, or even connive at, a Turco-German attack on India. If we have in Russian policy this unlimited confidence, it is unnecessary to dread Germany. If, on the other hand, we retain a certain scepticism about some elements of Russian opinion, it is folly, by making Germany for all time our foe, to evoke a Russo-German coalition against us. Without Russian connivance a German march on India would be a mad adventure.

The fear of an invasion of India from Mesopotamia must be put to the test of a large-scale map. There are 3,000 miles of railway from Berlin to Bagdad. From Bagdad by land across Persia there are 1,300 miles before our outer defences could be reached at the frontiers of Beluchistan. There is no railway along the Persian shore; there is no road, and the country is a sparsely peopled desert, arid, torrid, and unhealthy. Or, if the fear is of attack by sea from Basra or Koweit, there are two remarks to be made. In the first place, the naval police of the Gulf must remain in our hands, and with it some guarantees for the free navigation of the Shat-el-Arab. Koweit is and should remain a British Protectorate. Secondly, the Turkish ports could not be made into a naval base without long preparation. Such preparation could not be hidden, and it would be a legitimate occasion for protest and interference.

The naval use of Basra, a port accessible only to vessels of light draught, might, if necessary, be forbidden by treaty. If the treaty were broken, then ours would be the right to strike first. At the worst, a glance at the map will show that the Persian Gulf is far from offering a favourable base for a naval attack on India. The shore of its narrow entrance is in our recognized sphere, and its ports and islands are at the disposal of our Navy. The Power that holds Bunder Abbas and the islands could close the Gulf with minefields without so much as exposing its fleet to attack. From the standpoint of strategy, the wiser course, if ever India has to be defended against an attack from the West, is not to expose ourselves far from our own base, whether in Mesopotamia or in Persia, but, on the contrary, to compel the enemy to attack us as far from his own base as possible, and to make of distance and desert, obstacles which he, and not we, must overcome. The art of trench warfare developed in this war, and the discovery that defensive lines can be drawn across a narrow sea ought to leave us few anxieties about our ability at need to close the Persian Gulf and to defend the natural mountain frontiers of India. Our dangers would begin only if we insisted on taking our stand in the plains of Mesopotamia or the deserts of Persia.

Mesopotamia has a long military history, and even for a modern Power the records of Babylon, Assyria, and Bagdad are full of instruction. It was always easy to build up a powerful civilization between the two rivers, but its wealth made it a dazzling lure to all its poorer neighbours, and its flat plains were never easy to defend. Babylon and Nineveh were forced to expand and to become conquering empires, simply because they could find security only by holding the distant mountain chains

which bar the roads to the Garden of Eden. If we held Mesopotamia—still worse, if we held only its lower half—so far from having made our position in the East secure, we should merely have acquired new frontiers to defend, and given ourselves as neighbours Powers with a greater military organization than our own. The case for the permanent adoption of conscription would be immensely strengthened, and our new acquisition, profitable to a few financiers and contractors, would prove to be a heavy burden to the masses of our population. It is a dangerous policy for a sea Power to plant itself on distant coasts with the object of barring the access of land Powers to the water. We curse the folly which led us to play that part against Russia; let us not adopt it towards Germany. The land Power in such a case will bend its mind to the task of breaking through, and we shall find that we must meet it on land with a great army, and not merely on sea. It is a mad military logic which makes the defence of India a pretext for extending our Empire over unlimited stretches of the earth. We took the Cape, Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, and South Persia under the spur of that strategical argument. We have roads enough to India.

But is it really the strategical argument which has led our Imperialists to propose to themselves the acquisition of Mesopotamia? They are at least well aware of its vast potential wealth. Restore its ancient canals, and there is little doubt that its deserts would soon attract a population and produce a wealth as great as those of Egypt. It is the granary and the cotton-field of the future. I would urge no moral argument against its acquisition. The Ottoman Empire can plead no right against the civilized world to keep this garden for all time a wasted and disorderly desert. Its



native Arabs and Kurds have no loyalty to the Turks, and few moralists would care to defend the right of a handful of degenerate semi-savages to exclude the millions who might live by tilling the soil which they neglect. Mesopotamia must be reclaimed, and will be reclaimed, and the only question is whether the work shall be done by British or German or international enterprise. A strong argument might be put forward for an attempt to set up a system of control and development by international institutions. An even stronger argument, I think, can be advanced for the thesis that a far-sighted prudence would welcome the recognition here of a sphere for German work. In the long run, our children and children's children will have cause to regret our decision if we should insist on adding Mesopotamia to our own Empire. An impartial tribunal, if it were to allot the still unappropriated "places in the sun," would have some regard to "equality of opportunity" among the Powers. It would not always give "to him who hath." It would remind us that we already hold sway over a fourth of the inhabited earth. It would ask us whether with Egypt and India already in our possession, we need another great dependency of the same type. Our people went into this war with a disinterested purpose. History will judge us, not by our mind as we went in, but by our hands as we come out. A nation which wages war for an idea must come out of it with empty hands. Its reward must be the triumph of the idea.

If we aim at an enduring peace, we must realize that to leave our enemy with a grievance is to defeat our hopes of peace. The best hope of lasting peace lies in a general content. While there can be no tolerance for German strategic aims in the East, there should be no refusal to recognize in Turkey the field of work which she

has marked out for herself. No high purpose can justify the prolongation of the war for the sake of a Russian annexation of Constantinople or a British annexation of Mesopotamia. On the contrary, by insisting on strategic aims we proclaim our disbelief in a future based upon conference and negotiation. The more we insist on these strategic and material aims, the less ability, the less bargaining power shall we have in the settlement to insist upon our ideal purposes, and to secure concessions for the rights of nationality. The more we eliminate from our purposes what aims only at our aggrandizement, the more we confine our claims to what makes for the general good of the world, the less need will there be to continue the war. When each side has purged its programme of egoism we shall have peace, and deserve it.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FUTURE OF ALLIANCES

IN his sketch of a Christian commonwealth which should ensure perpetual peace, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre laid it down as an axiom that no partial league would or could be formed within the great Confederation. This stipulation reminds us of the deadly sentence in which Rousseau damned at once the scheme and the contemporary world. There was, he said, nothing impossible about the scheme, save that it should ever be adopted by princes. On this question of alliances or leagues within the great alliance, theory and reality seem to stand in the sharpest contradiction. From the standpoint of principle, any student who attempted to work out the plan of a league of peace would be driven to Saint-Pierre's position: partial alliances within the League of Nations would menace it with disruption. If they were offensive, they would imply a willingness in some conditions to make war in spite of the League. If they were defensive, they would imply a doubt of the goodwill of other members, and also of the League's ability to carry out the general obligation of mutual defence which is its foundation. If I really believe that, should I be attacked, all my neighbours will rush to my defence, I shall not be at pains to bind one rather than another by a special promise to defend me. The line, moreover, between defensive and offensive alliances is notoriously hard to draw.

From the moment that the making of alliances began, each alliance would call forth its counter-acting alliance, and the League would be what Europe was before this war, an uneasy collection of groups, arming and intriguing against each other, divided by mutual suspicions and partisanships. Since each Power must care first of all for its own allies, the hope that conferences or Councils of Conciliation would ever render an impartial or objective decision would be slight. A neutral, like the United States, standing outside the two chief groups might, indeed, mediate between them ; but that responsibility might in the long run prove too onerous, and the Power which attempted to take this duty on itself might come to be regarded as an aspiring dictator. The belief that the system of groups might by creating a balance in Europe preserve the peace, since each must be so formidable that an attack would always be risky, was very generally held on the eve of this war. It was often advanced as a tenable theory, and was put forward by official and inspired writers in all countries whenever it was necessary to answer the critics of the system. The Balance of Power is in some contexts a peculiarly British policy, but it was adopted universally in the last generation. No one knows what exactly are the terms of the Franco-Russian Alliance (contracted in 1894), but the most authoritative of contemporary French historians states that it is a pledge to give mutual support if the diplomatic concert had failed "to maintain peace and the European balance."<sup>1</sup> References to peace and the Balance of Power became commonplaces in royal toasts. Statesmen really believed in the salutary effect of "the grouping of the European Powers, whose value for the preservation of the Balance of Power and peace

<sup>1</sup> See Debidour, "Histoire Diplomatique," vol. iii. p. 193.

is proved." <sup>1</sup> It is generally supposed that idealists have a monopoly of illusions. Those of the practical man are as fantastic, and they are commonly duller. Need one point out to-day why a Balance of Power is always a precarious—nay, an impossible—expedient for the preservation of peace? No one sincerely wants a balance, in the sense of an exact equilibrium of forces. Each side strives to make a balance favourable to itself. No Power or group of Powers was ever known to refuse an accession of strength, lest thereby it should disturb the balance. Calculation of the balanced forces does not suffice to prevent war, because the hope is always present that some part of the enemy's structure of alliances will break down, as the Italian and Roumanian outworks of the Triple Alliance did, or else that his armaments may prove to be less formidable than they appear. The group system seemed to prevent some wars. Thus it is known that Germany twice vetoed aggressive action by Austria in the Balkans during the crisis of 1912-13. But we may make too much of such a service. If there had been no strong ally behind Austria, she would not have dared on these two occasions even to dream of aggression; nor would she have ventured on her Bosnian coup in 1908, and, above all, she would not have challenged Russia by her ultimatum to Serbia in 1914. A strong Power cannot always veto the forward policy of an ally; if it invariably did so, its alliance would not be in request. The common apology for alliances, that they are always defensive, need hardly detain us. In modern times there is no such thing as aggression: it is understood that every war is for every participant in it defensive in motive. Even the alliance contracted by the Balkan States in 1912

<sup>1</sup> From the official communication issued after the meeting of the Tsar and the Kaiser in July 1912 (Reventlow, p. 440).

for the dismemberment of European Turkey was based on a treaty which was in form purely defensive. Defence may be defined as the movements of one's own sword. But even if an ally feels in his own inner mind that his partner is acting aggressively, he may not feel free to leave him to his fate. The consequences of allowing one's ally to be destroyed might be fatal to oneself. If, for example, Germany had said in 1914 that Austria was behaving aggressively, and had refused to support her (at one moment the German Chancellor did threaten to use such pressure), Austria might have drawn back; but if she had chosen to persist, Germany could hardly have remained neutral, for the collapse and dismemberment of Austria would have left Germany isolated and weakened. If we had chosen to think (it would have been a grotesquely perverse view) that France acted aggressively in 1914, could we have afforded to remain neutral to the end? Some of the considerations which weighed with us when we held France to be innocent of aggressive motives would have been as cogent if she had been guilty—in neither case could we have allowed her to be weakened beyond a certain point without grave danger to ourselves. The Balance of Power is a non-moral idea, and one cannot import moral conceptions into it. If an alliance is a necessary part of one's own defensive system, it follows that one cannot allow one's ally to be weakened, whatever one may privately think of his conduct. Of the system of alliances which prevailed in Europe before this war one can say only one thing with complete confidence: it made it certain that any European war must be a universal war. Alliances, moreover, are open to all the grave moral objections which Tolstoy raised against oaths—the objections which that undeservedly neglected philosopher Godwin advanced

against all promises.<sup>1</sup> It was plain to us all that alliances frustrated the Concert since, on each issue that arose, they made every Power in advance a fettered and committed partisan. They would make a League of Peace unworkable.

If this theoretical objection to alliances be sound, it is plain that the League of Peace lies in the dim future, if it is even there. The whole trend of our thought is to render alliances more permanent, more intimate, and more pervasive. So far from proposing to dissolve them after this war, the study of all our practical statesmen is how we may deepen and extend them. It is proposed to carry them from warfare into commerce. We are to base upon them our tariffs, our shipping legislation, our whole system of production and exchange. This is more than policy: it answers to a deep sense of comradeship. Nations which have mingled their blood in one trench will never hereafter think of each other as strangers. This tendency is as marked on the other side as it is on ours. The ideal of a "Central Europe" united for war and trade was preached with lofty eloquence and glowing sentiment by Dr. Naumann long before our own programme had been defined in the Paris Resolutions. If the Allies impose terms on Germany, they will have to maintain their bond, in order to ensure to themselves the fruits of their victory. If they acquire territory, their next thought will be how best to defend it. The suggestion that we should dissolve the Alliance

<sup>1</sup> If my promise contradicts my duty, it is immoral; if it agrees with it, it teaches me to do that from a precarious and temporary motive which ought to be done from its intrinsic recommendations. . . . By promising we bind ourselves to learn nothing from time, to make no use of knowledge to be acquired. . . . Promises deprive us of a full use of our understanding.—*Political Justice*.

would certainly excite to-day in most men's minds a mingled fear and indignation. It is not so certain that this feeling will be permanent. Their co-operation in the Crimea was far from leaving a sense of mutual trust in the breasts of British and French statesmen sixty years ago. The Allies will all be heavily in our debt, and the relation of debtor and creditor is rarely the happiest. The working out of the Paris Programme will demand from every one a continual sacrifice of legitimate interests. Large coalitions composed of partners whose risks and services, whose development and resources are markedly unequal, inevitably develop jealousies and the sense of imperilled independence. The current Allied view of the hostile coalition is that it is composed of a bully and his vassals. The Germans take an equally unflattering view of our own combination. These are the exaggerations of enmity; but it is true that every coalition must impose unequal burdens and require some measure of subordination. But whatever the future of alliances may be, it is in the last degree unlikely that Europe will, after the war, dare to dispense with them. The architect of a League of Peace who set out with the axiom that alliances are treason to the League, would write himself down a hopeless doctrinaire. If alliances are to be shaped on the aggressive lines of the Paris Programme, then it is idle to speculate about any League of Peace. But alliances will survive in the sense that some Powers will continue to shape their external policy in common, and to concert together their means of defence. Are such bonds necessarily a barrier to any general League?

In theory any alliance within a League is at best superfluous, as at worst it must be subversive. Let us beware, however, lest we fall victims to theory. The same individualist reasoning led



Rousseau to the doctrine that any association of citizens within the State is implicitly treason against it. That view has been the parent of much oppression from the days of the French Revolution downwards. An international League, like a national State, can tolerate many associations and parties within itself, provided there be loyalty in all to the conception of the general good and obedience to the general will. The surest way to destroy this loyalty or to prevent its growth would be to frown upon associations which have an historical or emotional meaning. Within our League there must be room for temporary and even for permanent groupings among States which have a common past, which pursue identical ends, share common interests, and are conscious of close affinity in race or civilization. If we must admit so much, is it possible in practice to forbid States which are aware of these closer bonds and habitually act in accordance with them, to express their unity by contracting military obligations towards each other? In practice such alliances will imperil the League, but if we must take the view that they would utterly destroy it, then it seems that the creation of the League must be postponed. To postpone it may well be to refuse it altogether, for if once the process of competitive arming starts again, aggravated by the trade war, Europe will not move towards the League, and only a miracle or a revolution would bring it within our grasp.

There were not wanting, in the past, expedients by which the Powers sought to modify the apparent menace of their hostile confrontations. Of reassuring declarations there was never any lack. We always maintained that while the *Entente Cordiale* implied a special intimacy with France it had no "point" against Germany. When, however, "conversations" of our military and naval representatives

were followed by significant changes in the dispositions of the two fleets, it was plain that while the Entente might be defensive in intention, its defence was adjusted to the assumption that Germany was the common enemy. The intimate links between the German and Russian Courts were another device which probably did achieve much to soften political and military rivalry, but the exchange of telegrams between the Kaiser and the Tsar on the eve of this war showed how frail a support of peace such personal relations must always be when national passions are aroused. The various interpenetrations that went on between the two systems ought to have lessened their latent antagonism, but the general effect of these partial approaches was rarely happy. When Italy composed her long feud with France, and entered into friendly arrangements with her in Mediterranean questions, the German comment was that Italy was being "debauched" from her alliance, while the French congratulated themselves that they were "dislocating" the Triple Alliance.<sup>1</sup> The same moral discomfort followed for a time the close approach of Russia, under M. Sazonoff's guidance, to Germany in the Potsdam agreement of 1910. Our own attempts to reach an Anglo-German understanding in 1912 and 1913, though they resulted

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the equivocal position of Italy may well have been the determining reason which induced the German Chancellor to refuse Sir Edward Grey's proposal of mediation by the four neutral Powers in July 1914. In a dispute between Russia and Austria, it seemed at a first glance that Germany and Italy, Great Britain and France would constitute a well-balanced jury. Two of the four were allies of Austria, a third the ally and the fourth the close friend of Russia. But Italy was an ally only in name, and perhaps the least likely of all the four Powers to adopt an attitude friendly to Austria. The German Chancellor may possibly have thought that he was being invited to enter a council in which the voting would be three to one against him.

in real good feeling and in a comprehensive set of understandings between the two Governments, and served to bridge the dangerous Balkan crisis, did not avail to improve the general relations of the two groups. Franco-German, and eventually Russo-German, relations grew in 1913 and 1914 steadily worse, and the rivalry in land armaments reached a phase of intolerable menace.

There always was in the minds of our statesmen a sharp distinction between an *entente* and an alliance. We were not (after the close of the Morocco episode) bound by any formal treaty to support France or Russia. None the less, by the general trend of our policy, but above all by the contingent military and naval arrangements which we had made with them, we had led them to form well-grounded hopes of our support, while we had allowed or encouraged France in the disposal of her Fleet to act on these hopes. When the crisis came, there seemed to be a chance that an expert diplomatist might make use of the uncertainty of our attitude in the interests of peace. If Germany and Austria were sure that we should oppose them by arms, while Russia and France were left in doubt whether we should support them, each side would have the appropriate motive for moderation. The Foreign Office probably aimed at producing these two distinct impressions. It would have been an almost impossibly difficult feat, and as a matter of fact it did not succeed. France, if we may judge by the tone of President Poincaré's letter to the King, really was for a few days in painful doubt, but she was not formally a principal in the quarrel, and could do little to avoid it. Russia, on the one hand, did by some means reach the conviction that she could rely on our naval aid, and this undoubtedly strengthened her attitude at the critical moment. Germany, on

the other hand, whether because her Ambassador was too sanguine, or because our marked friendliness since 1912 had impressed her unduly, or because she misread the national character, did not believe until the last moment that we would fight. Her surprise and fury, when at last she realized the truth, do not authorize any criticism of our good intentions, but they do suggest that the loose, uncertain tie of an *entente* has grave disadvantages which render it a doubtful instrument of peace. When the Germans blamed Sir Edward Grey for the outbreak of the war, they implied that if they had realized in time that he would fight on the side of Russia and France, they would and could have avoided the war. It is from their standpoint a deadly admission, for it seems to follow that the war was not in reality "forced upon" them. At the risk of passing moral condemnation on themselves, they succeed in making a technical criticism of us. The loosely knit *entente* was not, as things turned out, an improvement in diplomatic technique on the old alliance. It may, indeed, have been adopted, not because our Foreign Office supposed that it was preferable to the conventional continental defensive alliance, but because public opinion, and especially Liberal opinion, was not prepared for a closer tie even with France and did not, in fact, realize how close the tie had become. As an instrument designed for the preservation of peace the *entente* had all the disadvantages of an alliance, for no alliance could have dug a sharper and deeper chasm across Europe than that which the creation of the *entente* caused from 1905 to 1911. It lacked, however, the one advantage of an alliance, since it did not so surely warn the enemy that he would have to meet united forces. An open alliance, based on a published and clearly drafted treaty, might, in

fact, have been less risky than a vague *entente* which depended for its interpretation on the personal relations of a little circle of Ministers and Ambassadors.

The subtlest method of depriving an alliance of any appearance of aggression was an invention of Bismarck's. His famous Treaty of "Re-insurance" has been rather generally condemned, but it is the inevitable fate of a genius who wrought much ill, that even his good or harmless actions are likely to be harshly judged. The case has more than a theoretical interest for us, because it throws light on the working of the German official mind in 1912, when the Chancellor proposed a similar arrangement to Lord Haldane. The facts are these. In 1879, immediately after the Berlin Congress, which had left in the Russian mind a deep resentment against Germany, Bismarck concluded the alliance with Austria which gave place three years later to the Triple Alliance. It was a purely defensive alliance; it was to be kept secret and to come into force only if Russia should attack Germany or Austria; the two parties in concluding it actually recorded in its text their hope that it would never be necessary to invoke it, or to publish it. In 1884 the three Emperors met at Skierniowice, and gave each other an undertaking that they would observe benevolent neutrality if any of them should be attacked. They had in mind in all probability the chance of a French attack on Germany (the *Déroulède-Boulangier* movement had just begun), or of a British attack on Russia. In 1887 this pact was renewed for a further period of three years, this time between Germany and Russia alone, though the Austrian Emperor was informed of it. Once more Germany and Russia promised benevolent neutrality towards each other if either of them should be attacked by a third

Power. At this time Austro-Russian relations were strained, owing to the Bulgarian Question, and when long afterwards the treaty became known, it was commonly held that Bismarck, while allying himself to Austria, had promised Russia his neutrality specifically in case of an Austrian attack on Russia. But would Austria ever have dreamed of attacking Russia alone? Even had she done so, was Germany, which had made only a defensive alliance with her, bound in any way to countenance her aggression? It is really more probable, as Count Reventlow argues,<sup>1</sup> that Bismarck was promising Russia that in case of an Anglo-Russian war. (always in those years a possibility) he would remain neutral, and so relieve Russia from any anxiety about her European frontier, while in return he received in effect an assurance that Russia would not intervene for her own profit in a Franco-German war. However this may be, the Treaty of "Re-insurance" might have meant, and in certain conjunctions would have meant when read in connection with the Triple Alliance, that Germany would defend Austria if Austria were attacked by Russia, but would show benevolent neutrality to Russia if Austria attacked her. Was there any duplicity here? Personally I cannot see it. It seems to me an ingenious way of underlining the defensive character of the Austro-German alliance. "So genuinely defensive is it," said Bismarck in effect to the Tsar, "that I'll be your friend if Austria attacks you." But undoubtedly the arrangement was felt even by Germans to be riskily subtle, while Austrians considered it treacherous. Certainly, if an alliance means "my ally right or wrong," if it is a pledge of mutual support irrespective of the merits of the case or the conduct of the ally, then "re-insurance" was an act of very questionable

<sup>1</sup> "Deutschlands Auswärtige Politik," pp. 18-26.

faith. If diplomacy always includes "attack" when it says "defence," then certainly the treaty was treacherous. Count Caprivi, partly because he was a blunt and honest man, and partly because he was, on the whole, pro-British and anti-Russian, would not have renewed it—even if the Tsar had been willing. Baron Marschall (as Foreign Minister) gave in the Reichstag this interesting retrospective explanation: "In a critical emergency Germany would have had to settle the difficult question whether it was a case of attack or defence, and in either event when Austro-Russian friction occurred, would have been under the unpleasant necessity of flinging away either Russia's friendship or Austria's." This is noteworthy because it makes the useful admission that in such cases it is not easy to discriminate between aggression and defence.

This ambiguity was the real objection to Herr Bethmann-Hollweg's attempt to revive Bismarck's "re-insurance" device in 1912. The facts about Lord Haldane's mission to Berlin are much more fully known to us than those relating to most diplomatic episodes of the kind, and there is no appreciable difference between the British and German official versions.<sup>1</sup> If the German proposal, that we should pledge ourselves to neutrality if war should be forced upon Germany, had been read in the light of this historical Austro-German-Russian precedent, it might, perhaps, have been regarded with less suspicion. It was not a new device. It was a return to an old Bismarckian technique. His intellect, which so oddly compounded subtlety with bluntness, revelled in that complex triangular arrangement. Bismarck may have cared nothing for peace in the abstract, but there is no doubt whatever that he desired peace between

<sup>1</sup> For the former see our newspapers of September 1, 1915, and for the latter our newspapers of September 9, 1915.

Germany, Austria, and Russia. His method of securing it was to tie them up by these complicated treaties which made aggression on the part of any of them almost unthinkable. On a charitable view of German policy in 1912, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg aimed at a similar system of "re-insurances" in the still more elaborate diplomatic structure of our time. (1) Germany, Austria, and Italy were bound by alliance for mutual defence. (2) Russia and France were similarly bound to each other. (3) Great Britain was to promise Germany her benevolent neutrality if she should be "forced into war." This would have left us free to aid France and Russia if they should be attacked. Our weight, therefore, seemed to be reserved as a penalty against aggression; an arrangement which, on the surface at least, promised to be a powerful guarantee for peace. The offer was refused. Sir Edward Grey was willing to declare that we would not join in any act or pact of aggression against Germany, but to neutrality he would not bind himself. The reason which our Government gave to the German Ambassador was (as he quoted it) that it "did not wish to jeopardize friendly relations with France and Russia," and "could not incur the risk of losing French friendship." It may also have had another entirely legitimate reason. A war might begin by an unprovoked attack by Russia or France on Germany, and end with an equally criminal attempt by Germany to crush and destroy one or both of these Powers. It might be proper that we should be neutral at the start, but we might be compelled to intervene before the end. In that difficulty there lay a good reason for rejecting the German formula. The reason commonly given—that Germany would always dishonestly pretend that a war had been "forced upon her"—is hardly decisive. We should have been the judges of our



own conduct, and it would always have been open to us to say in any given case that in our opinion war was not "forced" on Germany. This episode has inevitably been interpreted on both sides during the war as evidence of premeditated treachery. The almost unanimous view of our press was that Germany was manifestly seeking to tie our hands in view of the attack on our friends which, in its view, she was even then planning. The German comment<sup>1</sup> was, that we refused neutrality because from King Edward's accession onwards we had been the heart and soul of a hostile coalition against Germany, and if we pretended in 1912 to desire Anglo-German friendship, it was only because we wished to gain time until Russia's backward armaments were completed. These are the nightmare opinions of war-time. The probability is that the German Chancellor was then as sincere as Sir Edward Grey undoubtedly was in desiring, not merely Anglo-German friendship but an arrangement which would prevent the general war which even then cast its shadow over Europe.

These two experiments in reinsurance are proof enough that it is not a satisfactory expedient. Even Count Reventlow admits (p. 431) that "without a doubt the conclusion of a neutrality treaty would have meant the breakdown of the Triple Entente." It is clear from Baron Marschall's retrospective comments that the German Foreign Office realized between 1887 and 1890 that the similar neutrality treaty with Russia might mean the breakdown of the Triple Alliance. The device, however honestly meant, is too subtle to escape misinterpretation. It is, however, a conception too natural to be dismissed in this summary

<sup>1</sup> For a really clever, though wrong-headed, development of this thesis see Count Reventlow's comments on the Haldane mission, pp. 429-41.

way. Its logic is really difficult to escape. A promises to support B if C should attack either of them. But both A and B vow in the most solemn language that they have no thought of attacking C, and declare that their treaty is purely defensive. Very well, if they are sincere, is it not reasonable that they should go further and promise C that they will at least be neutral if any one attacks him? Ought peaceful Powers to shrink from such a test? It evidently was in Sir Edward Grey's mind that some general promise, of the kind which Germany desired, ought to be given, not merely by Great Britain to Germany but by the whole Triple Entente to the whole Triple Alliance. This was apparently what he meant by his famous "Utopian proposal."<sup>1</sup> It may be doubted, however, whether a general undertaking by all the Powers, jointly and singly, to avoid aggression or aggressive pacts would have any practical value until "aggression" is defined, and further, until there is an organization of Europe which can supply a simple and automatic test to distinguish aggression from defence. Instead of thinking that Bismarck and Bethmann-Hollweg were treacherous, the historian who surveys these two tentative approaches will say, I think, that they were feeling after some technical expedient which would extract the sting from alliances, and reconcile the system of mutual defence with a measure of general goodwill. But so long as the terms "aggression" and "defence" retain their fatal ambiguity, every defensive alliance is potentially aggressive, and every pact for defence

<sup>1</sup> If the peace of Europe can be preserved and the present crisis is safely passed, my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangements to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her Allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately (British White Paper, No. 101).

will be interpreted by the Power against which it is directed as a deliberate menace.

There emerges from this brief study of the efforts which the Powers have made to escape the risks of the system of alliances an inevitable conclusion. The penetration of one system by a member of the other leads only to suspicion: the loose structure of an *entente* produces dangerous uncertainty: "re-insurance" is not in practice workable. But with the conception of a League of Peace in our minds, it may be possible to adapt Sir Edward Grey's "Utopian proposal," so that if defensive alliances survive, their purely defensive intention shall no longer be equivocal. Aggression must mean in the future one of two quite definite acts. A Power is the aggressor, firstly and most obviously, if it goes to war or becomes involved in war through its own refusal to conform to the procedure of the League. If A is willing to arbitrate or to state a case for the League's Council of Conciliation, or to accept any similar procedure laid down by the Council of the League, whereas B refuses any of these methods of settlement, then B is aggressor, and it will be idle for him to argue that war has been "forced upon" him. In the second place, it is equally clear that if the International Tribunal has given its verdict, or the Council of Conciliation issued its recommendation, or the Concert or Conference of the Powers laid down its view, and war still results, the aggressor is the State which becomes involved in war through its refusal to adopt the verdict or recommendation of an impartial body. There may be a third case, if both parties to a dispute refuse conciliation, or if both reject the findings of the impartial body. This third case sometimes occurs in Labour disputes, and if the League of Peace is weak, and passions on both sides are hot, it may occur in international disputes.

In this third case both parties are aggressors, and neither is entitled to the respect due to defence. The problem is to devise some general formula which will cover all these cases, a formula which must override all past or future obligations contracted in partial treaties of alliance. A special formula repudiating aggressive designs or pacts is hardly necessary, since all the Powers adhering to the League will have bound themselves not to go to war without submitting to the procedure (arbitration or conciliation) appointed by the League. The formula governing alliances might run somewhat as follows :—

The signatory Powers hereby declare that in no case will they give armed support to any Power, notwithstanding any treaty of alliance or any understanding which they may have contracted or may hereafter contract, if that Power has declared war without first submitting to the procedure appointed by the League, or has become involved in war by reason of its failure to submit to this procedure, or to give effect to the award or recommendation of a Court or Council of the League.

Such a formula seems an indispensable supplement to the general pact on which the League is based. Without it the survival of alliances within the League would render it helpless when any serious crisis arose. With such a formula, if it were honestly observed, the survival of alliances, though it would always be a source of anxiety and a cause of division, need not destroy the utility of the League. The effect of this formula would be that an innocent and loyal Power would be able to reckon on the support of allies. A disloyal and aggressive Power would be isolated. The whole influence and pressure of allies on both sides would be used to deter a partner from action which would break up the alliance. If it should happen that both parties to a dispute refused to submit

to the procedure of the League, or to give effect to an award or recommendation, the effect of this clause would be that while the rest of the civilized world might intervene forcibly to prevent or arrest the conflict, neither of them would be supported by allies. At the worst, if no joint intervention could be organized, the conflict would be "localized" and confined to the two disloyal Powers. So far from being entirely harmful, alliances subject to these conditions would even have a certain utility. It may not be easy to organize the League on the basis of an undertaking to enforce the awards of its Courts or Councils. A Power may be willing to submit its case to conciliation, but not to promise in advance to accept the finding of the Council. Similarly the League as a whole may be willing to use coercion in order to require a Power to submit to conciliation, but it would not so readily agree to enforce the award. But the effect of this proposed clause governing alliances would commonly be to supply a certain automatic sanction to any finding or recommendation of the League. The State which agreed to give effect to it might call upon its allies for support, even if it proposed itself to take up arms to enforce the award. The State which ignored or repudiated the award would find itself isolated. This arrangement in most cases would probably suffice to ensure that the award would be respected.

The whole conception of the League implies a certain general average of good faith and goodwill. If we may assume this, then we may also claim that this formula for the regulation of alliances has solved our problem and conciliated the claims of theory with the facts of reality. Theory forbids alliances within the League. Reality warns us that defensive alliances will survive this war. They may be tolerated (though they will always

cause anxiety) if it be agreed that no Power is in a state of legitimate defence, or is entitled to invoke the *casus fœderis*, unless it is willing to submit its case to some process of conference or arbitration, and to carry out the findings of the League's Councils and Courts.

## CHAPTER VII

### ON SEA-POWER

THE questioning mind which attempts to work out the transition from a system of force to a system of conference in the relations of civilized peoples encounters on the threshold a difficulty which may well seem insuperable. However sincerely the nations may turn their minds towards the ideal of an equal and reasonable intercourse, the fact remains that for generations to come these nations will possess in unequal degrees the means of using force, and in their dealings some sense of this inequality must persist. Confidence will come slowly as the League of Peace proves its efficacy. We may live to see a point at which the small State will maintain its rights against the Great Powers, thanks to the vigilance and the impartiality of the League, as boldly and successfully as a working-man, when his trade union is behind him, will defend his personal rights in a just court against a wealthy employer. It is a high and difficult ideal, and manifestly the ease or difficulty with which it will be realized, depends partly on the incalculable growth of moral forces and the slow education of the international mind, partly, also, upon the measurable physical inequality of the Powers. The League will mean nothing at all unless it means that in some measure the weaker States will no longer experience a sense of constriction and foreboding, or think a calculating modesty incumbent upon them,

when they contemplate the power of their greater neighbours. It will contribute to this end if the legend of the invincible military might of Germany is dissipated by the war, and the power of a coalition proved against the overgrown strength of a single empire. But in some measure every great empire overshadows its neighbours. One must have known Swedes and Bulgarians to understand what they feel when they look at the colossal bulk of Russia. Even Spaniards had and still have (as Señor Maura has reminded us) the sense that Britain and France, the two Powers which by their sea and land power and by their financial resources might dispose of the destinies of Spain, have not treated her on a footing of equality. Equality, in fact, there is not, and cannot be, in such cases, but it is possible none the less (especially where there is equality in civilization, though not in power) to conduct negotiations without reference to this disparity of forces, precisely as men and women who are free from vulgarity deal with each other without reference to their inequality in wealth.

The concrete problem which we in this country have to face, if we mean to promote an era of equality and conference, is to reconcile with it our overwhelming naval supremacy. It is probably wise to assume, as a given fact, that it is the national will at any cost and under all circumstances to maintain this supremacy. When Mr. Asquith and Lord Grey spoke of abandoning the ancient principle of force which has hitherto ruled the world, they probably did not mean that they would be willing to enter into any arrangement which diminished our relative superiority at sea. To a general reduction of the scale of armaments they and their successors would doubtless consent, but always on the understanding that it recognized and even stereotyped our naval supremacy. For



some sacrifices we may be prepared, when the moment comes for the revision of the law of the seas, but no one who has watched public opinion during this war will expect a British Government to assent to any reading of international law which gravely impairs the value of a fleet. Nor is it likely that in our day, however we may apply the doctrine of nationality elsewhere, we shall surrender the exclusive control of the Straits of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal, or abandon any of the numerous islands, coaling-stations, or other territories which are essential to our purpose. From this temper we shall not be moved until a new race has come to maturity, capable of the generous thought that it is a greater deed to contribute to the difficult spiritual adventure of the world's concord than to add territory to its own empire. When that day comes, it will be easy to transfer Gibraltar, Malta, and Suez to the guardianship of an international Council. Our faith in the regulation of the common life of nations by international institutions might not stand that test as yet, and perhaps it would be extravagant to demand it. We ought none the less to realize that our own hesitation to make this heavy sacrifice will react formidably on the minds of other nations. The authority of any international Council will be largely fictitious, and the confidence which it inspires will be limited, until we can bring ourselves to this surrender. There may be a general hope that the new order will be solid and effective, but this hope will be rather the inspiration of idealists than a belief on which practical statesmen will venture to act. The world will hope that it has entered a secure era of rational intercourse, but it will not dare to dispense with the means by which Powers sought, under the old régime, to assure their safety. Mankind may rejoice that a Court is sitting somewhere to dispense justice, but

every one will still think it prudent to carry a "six-shooter." We shall live in the familiar transitional stage of precarious security familiar to new and unsettled communities. This dangerous and uncertain phase will last until some Power steps out of the vicious circle by an act of faith which demonstrates that it believes in the new international life, and will stake something upon its belief. Meanwhile we must expect to hear from other nations outside the immediate circle of our allies the comment that our "navalism" is only militarism which has suffered a sea-change. We shall show candour if we recognize frankly that our insistence on our supremacy at sea is a handicap to the creation and development of a League of Nations.

At this point an objection probably shapes itself in the reader's mind, as it does in my own. May we not say, on the contrary, that with our sea-power we bring the greatest possible contribution to an international League? We might go farther, and say that without it such a League would be almost unthinkable. We are offering in effect, if we unreservedly join the League, to place at its disposal a supreme Fleet, served by a nation which inherits a unique tradition of seamanship, backed, not merely by the wealth and technical skill necessary to a great navy, but by all the strategical adjuncts in the shape of vital straits and bases which are necessary for its effective worldwide use. The range of action of a purely military Power is severely limited; its pressure is more to be dreaded than that of sea-power, but it can overawe only its own neighbours. Sea-power is the type of mobility and can strike in all the four quarters of the earth. By enabling the leagued nations to impose an embargo on the trade and communications of a disloyal member or of an aggressive outsider, our Fleet would suffice almost

unaided to make the authority of the League respected. May we not claim that we are endowing the League from the start with an invaluable force, and turn the objection to our naval supremacy by claiming that, so far from insisting on an egoistic predominance, we shall be placing our unmatched resources at the service of the commonweal of nations? This is a consoling and plausible view to take of a claim which by hostile critics is sometimes confused with a pretension to worldwide dominion. Nor is it merely a self-deluding view. The League could not be formed if we and our Fleet were outside it; and if it is ever necessary to take overt action against a powerful lawbreaker to vindicate the League's authority, unquestionably sea-power is an instrument which has in general many advantages over land-power. It can effect much by bloodless pressure: an embargo is commonly a less cruel measure than an invasion.

It is not so easy, however, to argue that the League will more easily wield its authority, if it can command our supreme Navy, than if it could summon three or four great and approximately equal fleets to its service. The difficulties which may follow from a very unequal distribution of force are obvious. The most obvious of all is, of course, the doubt, which may seem less extravagant to others than it does to us, that we might happen to be the Power which did not choose to submit to the decisions of the League. Even our Fleet, however, would not avail to protect us from a kind of pressure which in the long run might be decisive, for if we had all or most of the world against us, even though our Navy protected us against military measures, a trade boycott, on the lines of Napoleon's continental blockade, might eventually bring us to terms. But the objection to the predominance of one Power in force is based,

not so much on fanciful calculations of what might happen if the actual use of force were necessary, as on a jealousy of the excessive influence which a Power possessed of disproportionate force inevitably acquires. We most of us tend to think of military and naval power as a force which slumbers inoperative during peace, and wakens to achieve the ends of policy only when war is declared. That is a delusive misconception. Under the armed peace the big guns, though they were never fired, kept up a muffled obligato to the conversations of diplomacy. Every diplomatic note was worth the number of army corps and battleships which its author commanded, and ambassadors in a crisis, as they went in and out of the Chancelleries of the Powers, were simply the heralds and *parlementaires* of their armies. While statesmen seemed to be reasoning over equities and rights their minds were all the while working out their calculation of the numbers, resources, and equipment of their allies or opponents. From this obsession by the idea of force in its crudest form the League may deliver us. But in a subtler form the dread and jealousy of force will return upon us even within the League. It may not interfere at all with the legal decision of justiciable disputes. It is more likely to disturb the minds of delegates sitting in a Council of Conciliation. It will work most surely of all whenever the Powers meet in a conference which may be required to act as an executive of the League. If it is necessary to take decisions which cannot be equally welcome to all the Powers, above all, if these decisions might commit the Powers to action, it will be impossible to eliminate considerations of force. To use a homely illustration: every one has remarked that societies and committees which depend unduly on the financial support of some individual member are apt to be dominated by

that member. His colleagues do not like to insist on a policy to which he is opposed, for it would hardly be fair to expect him to pay for it, yet without his contributions the society would collapse ; on the other hand, if he is willing to pay for some line of action about which the majority is not enthusiastic, the tendency of a weak society will usually be to let him have his way. The same considerations would have weight within a League of Nations. No Power would venture to press a course of action which might at some stage depend on effective naval or economic pressure, unless Great Britain were decidedly favourable to it. The knowledge, moreover, that Great Britain could usually take effective naval action without troubling to ask the League for its assent, would commonly dispose most of the Powers, if they wished to keep the League together, to give their consent, reluctantly and grudgingly perhaps, to the course which we proposed. This is perhaps too simple a presentation of the difficulty, but it may serve to illustrate what really is axiomatic, that in any association for common ends, the Power which commands a relatively large proportion of its means of action, will tend to dominate its policy. It is not a sufficient answer to say that we have faith that our statesmen would use this preponderance modestly and for the common good. Unless that conviction were shared by all the other Powers, the fear might formulate itself in some of their minds that a League of Peace would tend to be in practice the political counterpart of our naval supremacy. The Germans, with their overtrained habit of translating all human relationship into terms of force, would undoubtedly say that if Britain were to be in effect the Lord High Admiral of a League of Nations she would thereby achieve a world-dictatorship. Force is an equivocal gift to any

League of Peace. It promises to arm the right, but it seems to create an ascendancy for the Power which brings it.

For this reason, and for other reasons which are equally entitled to respect, some of the ablest and sincerest advocates of international organization have urged that internationalism ought not to be an armed doctrine, and that the League ought not to contemplate the use of force as one of the regular methods by which it proposes to make its will respected. To my thinking, this line of thought is more helpful to the League than the opposite tendency. The muscular pacifism of the Roosevelt school, which delights in brandishing a "big stick," and thinks of the Great Powers, especially the "Anglo-Saxon" Powers, as "policemen" licensed by Providence to act as special constables to the universe, would wreck any League in a single speech. This attitude of megalomania is the characteristic form which militarism has assumed in a Puritan atmosphere. To set in the foreground the aspect of the League as organized force is probably the worst mistake which its friends could make. The more it is conceived as overwhelming force the greater is the risk that it will inspire dread rather than loyalty. This would be a grave risk if its force were supplied by several nearly equal Powers; a still graver danger is that one or two Powers may be forced into a position of "leadership," which would soon be called "dictatorship" by the jealousy of others. But to renounce the use of force in extreme cases seems equally impossible. A League which took no measures against brutal and lawless aggression would not maintain its hold on the imagination of mankind. It would be for ever calling on strong and weak alike to give up much of their traditional sovereignty, yet there would be no compensation for this sacrifice, since there

would be no certain increase of security. Unless the League will itself, after due patience and the use of all the milder means of persuasion, enforce in very grave cases the changes necessary to the world's development, there can be no decay of militarism, for nations will, in default of the League's action, be driven to make these changes for themselves. It may be that the compact on which the League is based should rather pledge its members to meet together to concert common action when war is threatened, or the findings of its Council are disregarded, than exact from them in advance a promise to take military action. Much, and usually enough, will be gained if the aggressive Power can be isolated, deprived of allies, and subjected to a general boycott. In that condition he might yield without the use of any military measures at all, or it might suffice that one or two States (with the general approval) should repel his aggression or right his victim. The first definitely hostile measure of the League (after the failure of friendly action) might normally be to apply economic pressure—ranging from prohibitive tariffs on his exports as a first step, up to complete blockade, embargo on all trade, and absolute non-intercourse. But this economic pressure could not be used effectively unless adequate force stood mobilized and ready behind it. The boycotted Power, if he had a big fleet or a formidable army, would treat the boycott as an act of war, and he would retaliate by striking at the more vulnerable members of the coalition which surrounded him. It would be unfair to ask the weaker and more exposed members of the League to join in economic pressure against a strong Power, unless the League had its fleets and armies ready on a war footing to protect them. Economic pressure is a formidable weapon, and humane opinion does well to lay stress on it, for

it may coerce a brutal Power without bloodshed or devastation. But it would be a fatal error to regard it as a substitute for military preparedness. An armed coalition might use it with deadly effect. An unarmed coalition which relied on boycott alone would dissolve at the first invitation which it addressed to the neighbours of a powerful wrongdoer.

The true way of escape from the difficulty, that a League which may sometimes have to use force will be dominated by its more powerful members, lies, to my thinking, in the chance that it may gradually evolve some kind of federal Parliament, though it might have but a consultative voice, which would act as the representative, not of armed Powers but of opinions which unite civilized peoples across the barriers of their frontiers (see below, p. 311). Wherever Governments deal with each other it will be hard to exclude the idea of force. When Governments vote at a round table the ballots which they drop into the box are counters representing fleets and armies. Though it must retain the eventual right to the use of force, the League's future depends on its ability somehow to evolve a corporate personality independent of the Governments which adhere to it. Though it must have for action its executive, which can pledge Governments and organize their powers, it must strive by its councils of conciliation, its courts, and finally, perhaps, when time has somewhat healed our wounds, by its Parliament, to rally round itself the moral force of opinion, and to win for itself a veneration which will command obedience.

We have passed too lightly over the various proposals which may be put forward to mitigate the political dangers inseparable from a naval supremacy vested in any one Power. The hopeful line of



approach to this question is clearly to be sought in a revision of the law of warfare at sea. The reduction of armaments does not touch it, for in our generation, and probably beyond it, no British Government would consent to a reduction which lowered our relative strength. If we bind ourselves to any fixed ratio of building, it will be a ratio which leaves our preponderance in capital ships unchallenged. If we propose anything of the kind in future, we must be careful to avoid the ambiguities which exposed our good faith in the past to criticism.<sup>1</sup> There is everything to be said for any plan which will check the waste of the world's labour on unproductive expenditure. There probably will be a disposition even in Germany after this war to accept any fair arrangement which fixes relative strengths at the old level, while providing against an enhancement of the scale of building, or, better still, for its reduction. Perhaps the most practical plan would be to propose a total suspension in the building of capital ships for a short term of years, on the understanding that some more permanent arrangement should be discussed before the "naval holiday" came to an end. Arrangements to suspend or to reduce naval competition will meet the universal need of all the Powers for economy, but they do not touch the larger question of the use and abuse of force.<sup>2</sup> That we shall have to face when the time

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill held himself free to accept ships from the Colonies above the agreed ratio, and when war broke out, congratulated himself that our Navy actually stood to Germany's, not as 16 to 10 but more nearly as 2 to 1.

<sup>2</sup> It seems premature to discuss what can be done to reduce armaments on land. It is certain that every European Power (including possibly Great Britain) will maintain universal service. The stocks of munitions will be kept far above the old level, and probably every vulnerable frontier will be fortified by permanent entrenchments. Some arrangements to fix a certain agreed level of expenditure seems theoretically possible, though inordinately difficult in application. A

of settlement comes, and the demand for the revision of sea-law, or rather for its re-creation, will come with as much urgency from the United States and other neutrals as from the enemy. It would be an impertinence for a writer who is neither a lawyer nor a close student of naval history to attempt any detailed inquiry into this most intricate subject. Nor is there yet beyond official circles any adequate knowledge of the real facts about the war at sea. Our policy must to some extent be guided by considerations of which the layman can know little or nothing—for example, by the probable future development of the submarine. There does, however, emerge from the Anglo-American controversies during this war a broad conflict of principle, which affects the whole conception of sea-warfare, and in no sense depends on the view which competent lawyers may take of “juridical niceties.”

We have carried in this war our claim to interfere with enemy trade, and incidentally with neutral trade, far beyond anything that had been practised as expedient or defended as legitimate in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It would be pedantic to inquire how far these extreme measures—the novel embargo on enemy trade, the “black list,” the examination of neutral mails, and the “rationing” of the smaller neutral nations, whose whole commerce has been by one means or another brought under our control—were a legitimate extension of recognized principles. We defended our sharper deviations from acknowledged rules as “reprisals,” justified by the grosser excesses of the enemy. It is true that our measures have involved no inhumanity to neutrals, as the German measures do, but they have

practical measure might be to limit the term of service and training in the active Army by agreement to one year in the infantry at least, or even to six months—a step towards Jaurès' conception of national militias.

involved some loss to neutral commerce, and worst of all, an offence to the national dignity of small but highly civilized peoples. They have, in fact, caused resentment of which our censored press has not kept us adequately informed. It is probable that we should not have ventured to go so far, had not the enemy by his barbarities at sea put himself out of court. Whatever the view of impartial jurists may be, it is unlikely that the dominant opinion in this country will be willing to surrender the advantages which this extreme exercise of sea-power has seemed to bring us. Even were the surrender to be made for some equivalent, the precedent of this war would remain in the national memory, and the tendency in any future war would be to stretch definitions, until the Navy had once more recovered its maximum power. On no subject is our public opinion so imperious or so little disposed to consider the views of other nations, and Mr. Asquith's contemptuous reference to "juridical niceties" when he spoke of neutral rights at sea, will live in history as a sort of footnote (in very small print) to the German Chancellor's remark about "scraps of paper." On a calm review of tendencies it seems probable that this extreme development of naval power against commerce is part of an inevitable social evolution. Commerce is becoming more than ever a function of the organized nation, if not of the State, and it is difficult to-day to exempt it from the operations of warfare on the individualistic grounds which were the basis of the doctrine of the Manchester school and its American forerunners.

The thesis of this school is, in brief, that civilized warfare is a relation of hostility between States and their armed forces.<sup>1</sup> It seeks to screen

<sup>1</sup> By far the ablest recent statement of this view is the essay by Mr H. Sidebotham in "Toward a Lasting Settlement." My own opinion has changed in some degree since the publication of "The War of Steel and Gold."

the private citizen from its operations, and to protect the continuance during war of innocent trade. It maintains that enemy ships should be free to continue their commerce to and from neutral ports unmolested, provided that they carry no contraband. It would have the traffic in food absolutely free. It is extremely jealous of the whole doctrine of blockade, and inclines to allow the blockade only of fortified places, and then only as an extension at sea of siege operations on land. Needless to say, it would prohibit all those interferences with enemy trade through neutral ports and in neutral vessels on which the success of our embargo has depended. According to this rigid and logical doctrine, the functions of a navy are solely to combat the armed vessels of the enemy, to stop his transports and military supplies, and on occasion to play its part in the siege of his naval bases. With the normal pacific commerce of an enemy, with the export of manufactures and the import of the raw materials of civilian industry, with the supply of the wants of his civil population, a navy must not interfere. The part which remains to a navy is still large though severely limited. It will keep open the seas for the military use of its own country, and deny the military use of them to the enemy : above all, it may enable the stronger Power to seize the colonies of its opponent.

The debate round these proposals turned in the years before this war too exclusively on the right to capture the enemy's merchant ships at sea. But even before the war our expert opinion had weakened on this limited issue. Sir Edward Grey indicated that we might be willing to abandon capture if we had satisfaction for our reading of the rights and methods of a modern blockade. The event has shown that wireless telegraphy will usually enable the enemy's merchantmen to escape capture on the

outbreak of war, while our own ships, which keep the seas, are exposed to the submarine danger. The real question of the future turns partly on the functions of the submarine in commerce destruction, but chiefly on the future of the blockade, expanded as it has been by our practice into a general embargo which involves no close besetting of the enemy's coasts. It is really idle to insist that an enemy's own ships shall not carry his trade, if his cargoes may travel safely in neutral vessels, and his goods pass freely overland in and out of neutral ports. The trifling loss inflicted on him by depriving him of his profits as a sea-carrier (for that is all that capture means in practice) is hardly worth considering, if we allow neutrals to conduct his trade for him. The issue is to-day far wider than the limited question of capture. The real choice lies between two clear principles, of which one insists that innocent trade at sea ought not to be suspended by war, while the other claims the right by every means consistent with humanity to stop every form and outlet of the enemy's commercial activity.

The naval policy which we have followed in this war seems at a first glance to mark a reaction: it is certainly a return to eighteenth-century usage. The stoppage of food supplies for the civilian population adds a new horror to war, though it does not in principle differ from the traditional siege. In any estimate of the value of these methods some balancing considerations must be kept in mind. Our own shipping has suffered, in fact, from the right to capture and sink, more heavily than that of Germany, and our trade will be handicapped by the scarcity of ships when peace returns. Germany, moreover, will certainly take steps, which may be effectual, to make herself independent of foreign supplies in any future war, partly by developing her agriculture and partly, perhaps, as Dr. Naumann

and others have proposed, by the creation of great permanent national stores of rubber, copper, petrol, and other indispensable imported articles, with the double object of providing against a blockade and of stabilizing prices in time of peace. If we contemplate the permanent adoption of the embargo as the basis of our strategy, we must face the fact that not every war in which we might be engaged would be so favourable to its exercise as this has been. If we alone had been engaged in war with Germany alone, an embargo would have been wholly impracticable. We could not have stopped her overland trade to and from Russia, Austria, and France, and no Great Power would have allowed us to put it on "rations." It is probable that we exaggerate the gain to be derived from stopping an enemy's external trade. In great measure, in such a war as this, exports, at least, will be checked automatically, because the male population is under arms. That happened in France, though her ports were open. If, moreover, a nation believes (though the belief may be a fanatical exaggeration) that it is really fighting for its life, it will fight as long as it has men and food and munitions, and will not be deterred by the fear of financial ruin. The importance of the economic factor varies, of course, with the character of each State; it is vital to us, and a little less serious to Germany, while it matters least of all to Russia and the Balkan peoples. None the less, the force of the argument that trade is a national interest which cannot be exempted from the operations of war, is powerful to-day and certain to grow. The English and American authors of the opposite doctrine visualized war as a struggle between small professional armies, whose limited strife did not suspend the normal life of the nation. They were usually individualists, who regarded trade as the private concern of merchants, and their view

that it should be nearly immune from interruption by war, was part of their general doctrine that it should be nearly free from interference by the State. This economic individualism no longer reflects either the actual facts of trade or the working principles of modern States. Industrial efficiency has become a prime factor in military success. The "private" merchant, and the "non-combatant" civilian population, women no less than men, contribute to the State's power of endurance, even when they are engaged in "innocent" trade. It is a commonplace that credit, exchange, and the balance of trade are vital factors in victory. It seems impossible to disregard these notorious facts, and to urge that a State which has the physical ability to stop an enemy's external trade can be expected to allow him, by pushing his commerce, to prolong his power of resistance. There was, I think, some exaggeration in the argument of the Manchester school that a civilized and humane age ought to renounce the predatory practices of sea warfare. It may be barbarous to confiscate enemy ships and enemy goods captured at sea. A reform in the sense that enemy ships and cargoes may be stopped, but not destroyed or confiscated, deserves consideration. But the analogy from land warfare does not bear the weight which some exponents of this view have laid upon it. No army will allow the enemy to continue his external trade by land, in so far as it has power to stop it. A naval Power affects to-day to treat the sea as an occupied territory, and in this war we have seen a development of mine-fields at sea which resembles the permanent entrenchments on land.

So long as we consider only the enemy and our relations to him, these extreme developments of sea-power seem inevitable and defensible. Our moral, legal, and political difficulties begin when we face the fact that every effective restriction on

the enemy's trade is also an interference with the convenience and rights of neutrals. When we say that parts of the high seas are "a war zone," and treat them as we might treat occupied territory, we meet at once with the counterclaim that the seas must always be a free highway for all the world. Our claim to lay an embargo on all trade between neutrals and enemies is thus brought into irreconcilable contradiction with the American doctrine of the Freedom of the Seas. That doctrine means much or little, but at the least it means that (blockade apart) neutral flags cover innocent enemy cargoes, and that neutral ships may trade freely in everything but contraband between two neutral ports. It matters little whether our ingenious stretching of the ideas of blockade and continuous voyage be good law or clever sophistry. In either case it involves an injury to neutral interests which is not likely to be tolerated as a permanent method of warfare, if neutrals should ever have the power with the motive to resist it. This extreme use of sea-power is a standing challenge to other maritime peoples to combine against our naval supremacy.

Our moral defence of these practices is, none the less, impressive, and implies a half-developed principle which may point to the solution of the difficulty. We have invited neutrals to endure the inconveniences of our irregular blockade, because we claimed to be fighting the battle of civilization and defending principles which are as vital to them as to us. There has been no determined protest against our methods, partly because the neutrals lacked the necessary sea-power for an effective resistance, partly because their increased trade with the Entente has more than balanced their lost trade with the enemy, and partly because they recognize an element of truth in our claim that we



are fighting for civilization. American sympathy was, on the whole, overwhelmingly with Britain and France against Germany; but it made large reservations as to some of the other Allies and their purposes, and especially since the Paris Conference, it has become critical of some of the larger common aims of the Entente. The view of the abler and cooler Americans might perhaps be summarized as follows: "We unhesitatingly prefer the British and French conception of civilization to the German conception, and therefore we desire the victory of the Entente and acquiesce in the inconvenience to which it has subjected our trade. We mean, however, to adhere to our own reading of public right at sea. But we also think that if neutrals are to be asked to submit in the name of civilization to such losses, they ought to be consulted. We had no opportunity of giving our voice before this war broke out. We have no share in determining either the duration of the war or the policy of the victors, and we perceive already, in the threat of a permanent trade war, the danger that its outcome may imperil some of the principles which in our view are vital to civilization. If civilization is in future to be defended, at some cost to all civilized States, the effort ought from first to last to be a common enterprise." In plain words, if there are to be wars to defend civilization, either all civilized States must take part in them, or at least they must give their mandate to those who claim to be their champions. If civilization is really at stake, then plainly neutrality is a dereliction of duty.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, if a coalition of allies,

<sup>1</sup> Compare these two sentences from President Wilson's "acceptance address": "No nation can any longer remain neutral as against any wilful disturbance of the peace of the world. The nations of the world must unite in joint guarantees that whatever is done to disturb the whole world's life must first be tested in the court of the whole world's opinion."

some liberal, some autocratic, reinforced by calculating partners who were originally in the other camp, chooses to add together all the private interests of its several members, it must not assume that these interests collectively are the concern of civilization, or expect remote neutrals to endure without remonstrance the losses and humiliations incidental to its war. There was great force in the adroit appeal which Mr. Arthur Balfour addressed to the United States, when he asked them to remember that if they insisted on disarming sea-power, by depriving it of the right to strike at an enemy's trade, they were on the whole favouring the land arm against the sea arm and strengthening the relative power of militarism. But we certainly cannot with sincerity proceed as far as this unless we are prepared to go much farther. It is too high a claim to make on the world that it should leave this tremendous weapon of sea-power in our hands, a weapon capable of destroying the trade of any rival and ending with ease all his ambitions or achievements overseas, unless we mean to offer guarantees that we shall never use it for egoistic ends.

We shall eventually, if we follow this line of thought candidly, come in sight of these two conclusions :—

1. It is indecent, and may in the long run be impossible, to expect neutrals to submit to the onerous and humiliating infringements of their sovereignty, which are necessary to the effective use of sea-power in any war undertaken by the uncontrolled will of a single State in pursuit of its own national interests, however legitimate these may be.

2. It is, on the other hand, expedient for civilization to preserve the right to make this drastic use of sea-power, provided that civilized peoples as a whole have the means of determining whether

any given war is really waged in the common interest.

In short, the idea of a League of Nations provides the solution of a problem which might otherwise seem insoluble. Civilized peoples might agree to retain the embargo on enemy trade in its most drastic form, in any war undertaken with the sanction of the League, against an enemy who had defied its principles. Given such a League, none of its members in a war of this kind has the right to be neutral. All of them, even if they do not aid with arms, must be willing at least to give the passive assistance involved in renouncing trade with a Power which is recognized as the enemy of the whole League. We abolish the difficulty of respecting neutral rights by abolishing neutrality itself. In other words, these questionable methods, of which the embargo is the full expression, must be forbidden to any single Power engaged in a private war; an embargo may be declared only by the authority of the League against some enemy who by rejecting its procedure of conciliation has been guilty of deliberate aggression. If, on the other hand, private wars should break out without the intervention of the League—in a case, for example, where neither belligerent would submit to its good offices—then the League would insist that no neutral can be required to suffer loss in order to further the egoistic aims of either belligerent, and it would collectively maintain a stiff reading of neutral rights. A war of this latter kind, so far from being of any conceivable service to civilization, would be an offence against the world's order, a danger to the continuance of the League, and an uncompensated nuisance to neutrals. In such wars the whole society of neutrals, acting through the League, would combine to uphold "the freedom of the seas,"

and their right to trade with belligerents, subject only to the prohibition of contraband and the blockade of fortified places. If this suggestion is workable, the law of sea-warfare must be revised under the auspices of the League, and the revision would take the form of recognizing three distinct chapters :—

1. Certain provisions of humanity (a revised Geneva Convention), applicable to all wars.

2. A stiff definition of the right of neutrals to trade with belligerents in the sense of Cobden's doctrine, with articles abolishing capture at sea, freeing food, and confining blockade to fortresses. This chapter is applicable only to "private" wars, in which the League as such is disinterested.

3. The embargo, in its most drastic definition. This the League alone may proclaim, and when it is proclaimed, every member of the League is pledged to prohibit and prevent all trade and all dealing with an enemy whose defiance of civilized procedure has placed him under an interdict.

These will seem to the English reader large and hazardous proposals. They involve none the less the highest compliment which can be paid to a nation. They imply a belief in our sincerity. If we defend our naval supremacy on the ground that by it alone can a League of Nations be armed for the defence of right, if we justify our infliction of injury on neutral trade on the ground that we are defending civilization, these limitations on our power are not merely what we should be prepared to endure ; they are what we should ourselves invite. If it is our high purpose never ourselves to refuse the settlement of disputes by conference and conciliation, if it is no thought of furthering our egoistic ends which arms and launches the armadas that command the seas, if we mean to dedicate our strength to the common good of civilization, there is no sacrifice for us and no surrender here. Our sea-power remains intact in any war of defence, in

any war of right. It will be confined to bounds only if in some momentary aberration of self-seeking, we should in the pursuit of ends that promise no good to the world, engage in war without exhausting the resources of conciliation. The proposal is put forward on the assumption that the enemy on his side subjects his formidable land-power to like restraints, and binds himself on his side to enter the League in a spirit of loyalty. Lord Grey has hinted that we may be prepared to consider the restriction of our naval power when Germany in her turn abandons her militarism. These proposals are an attempt to give that offer a concrete shape. Our naval supremacy is the key to the future of the League—nay, to the future of civilization. If we mean to use it only to exclude our rivals from colonial expansion, and to give its sanction to the prohibitions and boycotts of a trade war, if for these ends we make our interests the canons of sea-law, then it is the most potent and the most pervading of all forms of militarism, and its maintenance will be the negation of any international advance. If, on the other hand, we will nail the flag of a commonweal to our masthead, and renounce the use of oppressive force for private ends, the League is made, and made by an act of faith.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EMPIRE, SEA-POWER, AND TRADE

It has been suggested that our example will count for nothing because our preponderant naval position will still remain unimpaired. I do not believe it. The sea-power of this country implies no challenge to any single State or group of States. I am persuaded that throughout the world that power is recognized as non-aggressive and innocent of designs against the independence, the commercial freedom, and the legitimate development of other States, and that it is therefore a mistake to imagine that the naval Powers will be disposed to regard our position on the sea as a bar to any proposal for the arrest of armaments or to the calling of a temporary truce. The truth appears to me to lie in the opposite direction. Our known adhesion to these two dominant principles—the independence of nationalities and the freedom of trade—entitles us of itself to claim that if our fleets be invulnerable they carry with them no menace across the waters of the world, but a message of the most cordial goodwill, based on a belief in the community of interests between the nations.—SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, in the *Nation*, March 2, 1907.

The passage which stands at the head of this chapter expresses with clearness and eloquence the view which the better elements of British public opinion hold, and for long have held, about our sea-power. Though the writer was perhaps the sincerest and the most enlightened Liberal of our time, his words might stand as well for that finer tradition of Conservatism incarnated by Lord Salisbury in the last generation and by Lord Robert Cecil in our own day. The personality of the man lies behind the words, and the record of his policy stands for a proof of the loyalty and straightforwardness of his declaration. It is a familiar

position, but just because it has woven itself inextricably into all our thinking, it is imperative that we should make clear to ourselves exactly what it implies. It starts from the frank admission that we possess, and intend to maintain, "our preponderant naval position." Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in this appeal, which he addressed to the world, and especially to Germany, shortly before the second Hague Conference, was inviting our rivals to enter into an arrangement with us for the limitation of navies. The scale of building was to be reduced all round and the competition was to cease, a proposition which meant that our preponderance or supremacy must be tacitly recognized, and that other Powers should abandon the ambition to overtake our traditional superiority at sea, or to lessen the disparity in strength between their navies and ours. Look at that proposition for a moment with continental eyes, and it may not seem that its acceptance was altogether so easy as our public opinion supposed. Our case for the maintenance of a supreme Fleet in the interests of defence is from our own standpoint unanswerable. A land Power strengthens itself against definite perils: it can be attacked only by its immediate neighbours, yet even a land Power aims at the maximum of security by conscripting every able-bodied man. An island nation is open to attack by any and every sea Power: a second-rate fleet to it is useless, and the only possible rule of safety for it is to build against "any reasonably probable combination of Powers." We can point to the length of our coastline, to the importance of our commerce, to our scattered overseas possessions, to the smallness of our professional Army, and to the fate which would overtake us if our food supply were cut off by a successful blockade. Our geographical position and our dependence on

overseas commerce obliged us to create our naval preponderance, and until the world has changed, not merely its laws but its habits of thinking will oblige us to maintain it. The argument of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was that, in spite of this preponderance of force, our character, our policy, and our record ought to reassure the world as to its use. We are an unaggressive Power; we grudge to no other State its legitimate expansion and development; we respect the claims to nationality even of the weakest people; we shall never use our Fleet to interfere with the commercial freedom of others. This tremendous instrument wakens into life only to defend our good right, and while no other State attacks us, our force slumbers, vigilant but harmless.

These are the only grounds on which the possession by one Power of this vast potential force can be rendered tolerable to the rest of the world. It is the whole argument of this book that we must endeavour to give to our resolve to avoid aggression, to our respect for nationality, and to a generous reading of commercial freedom some international sanction and organization. But to ask the world, without any binding treaties or permanent declarations from us, to accept our character and record as a sufficient guarantee that we should never abuse our supremacy at sea was to make a heavy draft on our moral credit. The British overtures for disarmament failed; and from Germany's refusal in 1907 to discuss an agreement which must have stereotyped our supremacy and her inferiority at sea dates the first deep impression among us that she is, and for long has been, the one incorrigibly reactionary element in Europe, and the chief, if not the only, obstacle to international organization. It is worth while to inquire what were her reasons for this attitude.



The hostile analysis of German political thought has been pursued during this war with learning and assiduity by multitudes of capable writers. It is well that we should understand what the school of Treitschke stood for in morals and policy. Its work is written to-day in blood and fire across a continent, and its memory will be execrated with an ever-increasing vehemence as the sense of international solidarity in the world grows at the expense of national egoism. It is possible, however, that while we have pursued this line of thought, we have not sufficiently considered the external facts which gave this Prussian tradition its ascendancy in Germany. It had behind it a disastrous past of weakness and disunion. The devastations of the Thirty Years War, the French and Russian invasions of the eighteenth century, and the Napoleonic conquests explain why a land exposed to powerful neighbours had to evolve a strong military power. The provincialism of the petty German States and the division between the two creeds are the reasons why a race with only a weak sense of its own unity had to realize it through the mechanism of a paternal and bureaucratic State. In our own day the comparative failure of the democratic elements in Germany to overcome the Prussian tradition was due in great part to another factor—the dissatisfaction which patriotic Germans increasingly felt at the modest part which their country played in colonial expansion. They were secure at last in Europe, and might have relaxed the iron discipline of the armed camp, when a new motive arose to keep alive the mentality of strife. In the following pages I propose to set forth, as fairly as I can, the general position of German Imperialism. I shall draw on writers of two opposite schools. Count Reventlow, the able but fanatical exponent of the anti-British policy of

the Tirpitz faction, represents neither the German Foreign Office nor the German masses, but in an exaggerated form he does state a view of naval and colonial problems which was widely held. His "Deutschlands Auswärtige Politik" was in its first edition a careful and comparatively sober history of German foreign policy in the Kaiser's reign. In its third edition, issued during the war, it has become less honest, less objective, and in some passages merely fantastic. Dr. Rohrbach and Dr. Naumann represent a much less sinister tendency, a popular democratic Imperialism, which is consistent with a frank admiration for British institutions and a critical attitude towards the Junker tradition. I shall try to interpret these writers rather by summary than by quotation, and I will beg the reader to remember that in many of the following pages I am not speaking in my own person, but am deliberately stating, or rather reproducing, one side of a case. The immense indictment against German policy needs no further repetition in our language, but some understanding of the continental attitude towards our sea-power is essential for our own future guidance. On a long view, over wide spaces of time, British policy towards our chief rivals in the colonial field has always in the end righted, recovered, and vindicated itself, after periods during which it seemed to depart from the spirit of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's declaration. Our dealings first with France and then with Germany suggest that we are rather slow to grasp the inevitable feelings of a land Power when confronted with our supremacy at sea, and our diplomacy, though in both instances, after a weary struggle of armaments and some near approaches to war, it ended the friction with a generous arrangement, is apt to move slowly and seems to reach with difficulty its final perception of the real

issue. That issue will confront us once more at the settlement. A review of the reasons which led Germany to challenge our ascendancy at sea has therefore a direct bearing on our immediate problem.

Confronted by such a declaration of British policy as this statement by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a German critic would make his first point by reminding us that our policy is subject to fluctuation. If he were honest and well-informed he would frankly admit its sincerity, but for how long, he would ask, will such counsels guide us? To go into an arrangement with a great naval Power implies something a little more than a belief that this Power will not act in a crudely aggressive way. Short of a wanton and forcible attack, such a Power may make a very formidable use of its strength. The claim, for example, that Britain respects "the independence of nationalities" came a little oddly in 1907 from the Power which in 1902 had annexed the Boer Republics. To be sure, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman himself nobly combated that wrong, and went far to repair it by conceding full self-government. The fact remains that his predecessors suppressed two civilized independent States, and achieved their end only because the naval force which they wielded forbade the interference of other Powers. Nor does the case stand better with freedom of trade. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman spoke for himself and for a great and victorious majority, but who could feel sure that the tendencies which Mr. Chamberlain represented would never, by the normal swing of the pendulum, attain to Power? If "Tariff Reform" should triumph, the whole meaning of our vast overseas Empire would be changed. The self-governing colonies already set up barriers against German trade, but India and the tropical colonies were still open. Our naval supremacy might come

to mean that we should hold these vast markets for a British monopoly.

One simple perception of a physical fact dominates all German writing about sea-power, empire, and trade. A Power which possesses an indisputable mastery of the seas is free itself to act as it pleases in most of the distant regions of the earth, and can defy the jealousy, or the moral disapprobation of its rivals. It can expand at will in any region removed from the direct access of a rival land Power. That is much. But further, it can control and prevent the expansion of other Powers. It was by the operation of these two principles that our Empire grew up in the eighteenth century on the ruins of its French and Dutch predecessors. To-day, not only can we continue to expand at will; we can veto the expansion of any continental rival. Captain Mahan did much to elucidate this connection between sea-power and empire, and his books have been at least as influential in Germany as in England. This war has worked out this theoretical thesis in actual practice. By the simple fact that we closed the seas against reinforcements and supplies from Germany, we have been able at our ease and leisure to occupy all the German colonies. What we have done in this case we might also have done in a war against the other colonial Powers, France, Italy, Holland, and Portugal. We could, moreover, have done it much more easily in a single-handed war than in this struggle. In this war we have had to divert the greater part of our resources to help France and Serbia and to attack Turkey. Single-handed against any other colonial Power, our success overseas would have been prompter. The reader may dismiss such strategical forecasts as a typical instance of the German mania for thinking in terms of force. That is too summary a dismissal.

We may feel sure that we shall never succumb to the temptation to use our sea-power in this purely predatory way. The fact remains that it gives us in all our dealings with colonial rivals a tremendous leverage, and a power of attack which is balanced by no corresponding vulnerability. There is no disputing the plain physical fact that our sea-power means that other Powers hold their colonies at our goodwill, and can expand only with our goodwill. Our sea-power gives us the physical basis for a potential ascendancy which might be nearly absolute over Africa, over all the richer and more populous regions of Asia, and over all the islands of the seas. The perception of this physical fact has penetrated all German political thinking in our generation. It did not trouble the quiet, unenterprising nation which was content to limit its ambitions to its home territories. It gripped and obsessed the nation which felt itself compelled by the growth of its population and the almost miraculous expansion of its trade to adventure in a wider world, to embark on "world-politics," and to become itself, like its older rivals, a "world-Power." For a generation after 1870 Bismarck's expression that Germany was "gorged" (*saturiert*) held true, and throughout this period the Triple Alliance, with the Russian "re-insurance" treaty sufficed to guarantee her position on the Continent. The desire for overseas expansion became an acknowledged and conscious tendency shortly before the Kaiser's accession (1888), and it was dominant by the end of the century. Hitherto, we had been an informal and semi-detached adherent of the Triple Alliance, and both Bismarck and Caprivi regarded our Navy as a kind of supplement or completion (*Ergänzung*) of its forces. When Germany aspired, however, to colonial expansion, a choice had to be made. She

might expand by our permission and with our aid, taking what we chose to assign to her as her share ; or she might build up a fleet, and make her own way in the world. The reasons which governed her choice were partly sentimental and partly practical. She disliked the idea of being beyond the seas a satellite in some sense of our Empire—"the junior partner in the British world-firm," in Naumann's phrase. She dreaded, moreover, that we should exact a heavy price for our goodwill by requiring her aid in a policy certainly of hostility, and possibly of war against Russia. Something of the kind seemed to be in our minds, for the series of speeches in which Mr. Chamberlain invited Germany and America to form with us a Pan-Teutonic alliance were full of menace and ill-will towards France and Russia. The history of this period is not yet fully disclosed. We know only that in 1901, when Germany did definitely offer us her alliance, we no longer cared to accept it—probably because Germany stipulated that it should not be applicable to the Far East. The Kaiser was certainly friendly so long as Queen Victoria reigned. On two occasions at this time we played into the hands of the school of which Admiral von Tirpitz came (from 1897) to be the determined and capable leader. We replied in 1896 to the telegram in which the Kaiser congratulated Mr. Kruger on his escape from Dr. Jameson's freebooting raid, by sending out the "Flying Squadron" to cruise at large. Our intention, doubtless, was to suggest to the Germans that it was idle for a people without a navy to dream of interfering even with such a lawless outrage as Dr. Jameson's. Their reaction to our suggestion was not immediate, but when the Boer War eventually fulfilled the promise of the Jameson raid, the lesson was learned. The seizure of their liner

the *Bundesrath* in that war completed the education which the "Flying Squadron" had begun. Count Reventlow is not always a trustworthy historian; but when he states that the agitation for a great navy, of which he was the chief literary spokesman, could not have succeeded without these two object-lessons, he is probably a reliable and competent witness.<sup>1</sup> The whole course of the Boer War made upon the German middle class the humiliating impression of Germany's impotence. Germany realized that she had been "attempting to conduct world-politics with insufficient means." That, indeed, is commonly the effect of the spectacle of war upon neutrals. This war has led to the American movement of "preparedness," and to a vast increase of the American Fleet. By the same process of thinking the Boer War made it possible, after many earlier failures, for the Tirpitz school to impose the first plan of a great navy upon the Reichstag (1900).

We have gone far enough into the origins of the Anglo-German naval rivalry to realize that the crucial point in the claim which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman put forward on behalf of our sea-power is that "throughout the world that power

<sup>1</sup> We continued to supply object-lessons. Shortly after his fall (1905) M. Delcassé divulged to the *Gaulois*, in an interview, the fact that Lord Lansdowne had promised him in a Moroccan complication the aid of the British Fleet. The *Matin* and M. Jaurès both supplied the details of the plan a few weeks later, and both claimed ministerial authority for their statements. The plan of campaign included a landing by a British Expeditionary Corps in Schleswig and the occupation of the Kiel Canal. It so happened that immediately after this crisis, for the first time since the Crimean War, we sent the Channel Fleet to cruise in the Baltic (August 1905). It visited the Danish ports, and actually (so ran the German reports) practised landing exercises on the coast of Jutland. This was a startlingly dramatic way of reminding Germans of the meaning of our naval supremacy (see Reventlow, pp. 263, 277-9). There is a brief reference to the German alarm over this incident in the *Annual Register* for 1905.

is recognized as . . . innocent of designs against . . . the legitimate development of other States." Have we, as the greatest of colonial Powers, watched without jealousy the attempts of younger rivals to build up modern empires overseas? It is not easy to see ourselves as others see us. Our feeling as we watched the growth of Russian power in Asia before 1907, or of the French colonial Empire before 1904, may not have been so much jealousy as alarm. Our possessions are so scattered that it is difficult for any rival to take a forward step without approaching some route or position that seems vital to our safety. We were sensitive when a rival approached the Afghans or the Boers or bestrode our road to India. Our long rivalry with France lasted for twenty years and culminated in the Fashoda incident. It may be worth while to recall the impression which that incident made upon Frenchmen. M. Debidour,<sup>1</sup> in his admirable "*Histoire Diplomatique de l'Europe*" (iii. p. 67), opens his narrative thus:—

England, which had long been the first colonial Power in the world, had acquired the habit of watching jealously the overseas policy of France, and was disturbed when she carried her flag and sought to establish her dominion both in Asia and in Africa, in the neighbourhood of her own possessions. When she saw her, so soon after her great disasters of 1870 and 1871, undertaking and carrying out methodically numerous conquests, which might permit her to rival her own power, she naturally made no attempt to conceal her alarm and her annoyance. The stolid opposition which she maintained to her in Tonkin, in Madagascar, and in the interior of Africa, during the last years of the nineteenth century, was one of the most singular elements in the diplomatic history which we are about to sketch.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the leading French historians and a Professor of the Sorbonne. His book is commended by M. Léon Bourgeois as a "classic" and has been "crowned" by the Academy. This praise is perhaps too high, but it is a careful and laborious book. He is a warm partisan of the Entente Cordiale, and wrote or completed this section of his work during this war.



The details which follow in M. Debidour's record are often singular and sometimes incredible. They range from a long series of frontier disputes and boundary questions in Africa, through incidents in which it is said that we aided savage chiefs with arms against France, up to such official acts of unfriendliness as our refusal at the time of France's disasters in Indo-China, to allow her ships to coal at our stations. In the end, as M. Debidour, and, indeed, all Frenchmen recognize, Lord Lansdowne brought the long and bitter rivalry to its close in a handsome and generous settlement, to which Sir Edward Grey adhered with scrupulous and unflinching loyalty. The end blots out the record, but the moral remains that for the future we should seek in our dealings with colonial rivals rather to avoid such episodes than to repair them. For our unfriendly attitude towards French colonial expansion we had, of course, reasons more solid than jealousy. It was partly retaliation for the opposition of France to our permanent occupation of Egypt. It was governed, even more, by the fact that the guiding principle of French colonial policy was then, and still is, commercial monopoly. Wherever France expands our merchants know only too well that their trade is doomed.

Neither of these reasons can be advanced to explain the repetition of the same phenomenon during part of the period of German expansion. We had no serious political quarrel with Germany before 1905, and even then we were not principals in the Moroccan affair, but merely France's second. The commercial policy of Germany in her colonies is, moreover, as enlightened as our own. Not only is there no tariff preference for German over foreign goods, but the administration invariably welcomes the foreign merchant.<sup>1</sup> It would be the reverse

<sup>1</sup> Nothing in West Africa is more striking than the attitude

of the truth to say that our early attitude to German expansion was unfriendly. On the contrary, Lord Salisbury did much to facilitate it. We acquiesced in it in East and West Africa, in Samoa, and in Kiao-Chau. Nevertheless, we seemed to be anxious to set limits to it. After some hesitations, we withdrew our early opposition to Germany's establishing herself in South-West Africa, but we would never give up its natural harbour, Walfisch Bay, and the arrival of the Germans in South Africa was the signal for a rapid advance of British Imperialism, first in Bechuanaland, and then in Rhodesia, with the manifest object of preventing any further extension of the German sphere in the unoccupied interior. What we dreaded was, of course, their junction with the Boers. The "leading case," however, in this chapter of our history turns on the ambition of the Germans to acquire the Portuguese colony of Angola and the northern part of Mozambique. These colonies are almost derelict for lack of enterprise, capital, and orderly administration. They are based, moreover, on a system of scarcely disguised slavery and slave-trading, which has been described by Mr. Nevins, and denounced in the plainest language by Lord Cromer. Portugal was in a condition of chronic insolvency, and sooner or later must have realized her assets. In 1898 we concluded, or all but concluded, a bargain with Germany, by which we, as the protector or "ally" of Portugal

adopted by the several colonizing Powers towards commerce. At present Germany is easily in the front rank: her policy towards business men is the most enlightened of any Power. . . . The British merchant knows with absolute certainty that he may rely on receiving a warm welcome and every assistance in German colonies. He knows too that none will be given a preference before him ("Dawn in Darkest Africa," by the Rev. John H. Harris; Smith, Elder & Co., 1914).

and the reversionary heir to her African estates, agreed to facilitate the purchase of the greater part of them by Germany. Some authorities state that a secret treaty was actually signed to this effect in September 1898.<sup>1</sup> Nothing came of it, and the reason is not fully known. We helped Portugal out of her financial difficulties, and prevented her selling to Germany a coaling-station in Madeira. With King Edward's accession a definite step was taken in somewhat dramatic form, which was interpreted in Germany as a warning that we had ceased to favour her colonial expansion. The King's first ceremonial visit abroad was to Lisbon, and there, in public and emphatic words, he announced that the maintenance intact of the Portuguese colonies was the object of his best wishes and endeavours. The effect on German opinion was considerable,<sup>2</sup> and it served to underline what was already guessed regarding the King's personal relations with the German Court. The Foreign Office still followed for a time a pro-German policy in the unpopular Venezuelan affair, the abortive Chinese Treaty, and even in the early stages of the Bagdad negotiations. In the end it refused the overtures of Germany (see p. 27, note). Our uneasiness at our isolation among the Powers, which the Boer War had taught us to consider rather perilous than splendid, the refusal of the German Government to enter into any alliance which might involve it in a war with Russia, the pro-French leaning of our Court, the anti-German tendency of some of our commercial circles, and our very natural alarm at the progress of German naval building, all combined to range us definitely in 1904 in the continental system and within the camp opposed to Germany.

<sup>1</sup> See Reventlow, 121 ; Debidour, iii. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Reventlow, p. 199.

From this moment until the end of the Moroccan affair in 1911 the relationship was one of open antagonism, and it turned primarily on the use of our sea-power to prevent what Germans regarded as their "legitimate development." A full survey of the Moroccan period would involve us in a lengthy digression. It has been reviewed by Mr. E. D. Morel with equal knowledge and courage ("Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy"), and more briefly by Mr. Lowes Dickinson ("The European Anarchy"): the attitude of almost the whole Liberal Press in England, and of the Socialist Press in France, was, throughout it, uneasy and critical. The Germans contrived by the bad manners of their diplomacy, their preference for dramatic and challenging strokes, and their vulgar, sabre-rattling, bullying procedure to destroy the sympathy to which on the merits of the case they had some title. It is fair to point out, however, that if they had really been bent on war the favourable moment for them was 1905, when Russia could have played no part and France was admittedly unready. It is interesting to find that a "realist" like Count Reventlow censures his Government in this connection for its excessive devotion to peace. There was much to regret in the Anglo-French conduct of the case—the assumption, for example, at the start that we had the right without consulting other Powers to dispose of the destinies of Morocco, and the reluctance of France to enter a conference. Worse still was the equivocal honesty which published a treaty guaranteeing the independence and integrity of Morocco, while secret clauses and a secret Franco-Spanish treaty provided for its eventual partition. Such dealings are fair neither to the nation at home, nor to other Powers, nor to the victim nationality, and when once they are divulged, they expose every subsequent treaty to

similar suspicions.<sup>1</sup> When at length the Conference met at Algeciras, the French, British, and Spanish representatives solemnly negotiated with the Germans for a species of international régime in Morocco, knowing all the while that they had arranged among themselves for its eventual partition. The Conference over, France, disregarding the spirit of its decisions, set to work promptly and efficiently to make a partition of Morocco inevitable, and she achieved it in the brief period of five years. Did the German Government itself wish to make Morocco, in whole or in part, a German colony, as the Pan-Germans certainly did? Probably it did not, and by its reserve it earned the criticisms of the Reventlow school. But if it had done so (as our Foreign Office during the Agadir crisis suspected), would there have been anything monstrous in that? Why is it legitimate for France to expand and a capital crime in Germany to wish to expand? We were ready, as Mr. Lloyd George in his Guildhall speech (1911) told the Germans, with a menacing publicity worthy of the Kaiser himself, to go to war to prevent the realization of this design. Why? Morocco is important for two reasons. It was one of the few regions of the earth still unappropriated, which are suitable for white settlement. It is also rich in iron-ore. Consider the two claimants (if Germany really had been a claimant). France, with a stationary population, has already two colonies of the same type (Algeria and Tunis), while Germany, with a yearly increase in her population of nearly a million, has none. France exports iron-ore: Germany must

<sup>1</sup> Thus we find Dr. Rohrbach speculating as to what are the secret clauses in the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. What was in the mind of the Turks when in September 1914 they refused the Entente's guarantee of Turkish integrity and independence? They may have remembered the fate of Morocco and Persia.

import. The real concern of the German Government, which knew, as we also well know, the tendency of French colonial administration to commercial monopoly, was that this potentially rich area should be closed to her merchants, contractors, and mining prospectors. What angers, suspicions of "encirclement," armaments, and threats of war this sorry quarrel over a rich field for speculative exploitation caused in Europe we know too well: the present war is in some sense its aftermath. Read this episode in connection with our opposition to the Bagdad Railway, and we have the clue to the reasons for the refusal of the Germans in 1907 to accept as final the existing ratio of naval strength. They had decided to arm at sea because they wished to expand overseas. They realized, in the Kaiser's phrase, that "Empire means sea-power and sea-power means empire (*Reichsgewalt*)." At that moment, with their experience in the Angola bargain fresh in their minds, and the Moroccan affair still unsettled, a hopeful approach to the limitation of naval armaments demanded negotiations of a much larger scope than our Government then contemplated. If a nation is arming for a definite end, there is only one pacific way of inducing it to disarm, and that is to offer it with goodwill some part at least of what it means to attain by struggle. The problem, in other words, was to offer some tangible guarantee that our naval supremacy, if the Germans would acquiesce in it, should not be used to thwart their legitimate expansion or to limit the world's area of commercial freedom.

The second approach of our diplomacy to Germany was more comprehensive: it was inspired by a man who understood the workings of the German mind, and it succeeded in creating real goodwill between the two Governments. Lord

Haldane in these negotiations performed a notable service to his country, and there is nothing in Lord Grey's long record which will serve him better with history than his adoption of the new policy which he followed from the end of 1911 down to the outbreak of the war.<sup>1</sup> A final settlement of the naval question was not reached, though the competition was greatly eased. The formidable personality of von Tirpitz (then, as now, the Chancellor's determined opponent) stood in the way, and it was impossible for us to accept the condition on which even at that early stage it might have been settled—a "re-insurance" treaty based on mutual neutrality. Our reasonable economic and colonial concessions sufficed, however, to change the whole atmosphere. The generous terms on which the Bagdad Railway question was finally settled are known from public declarations made by both sides. The conclusion of a secret agreement over the Portuguese colonies, which apparently was actually signed, is not so generally known in this country. It seems to have been substantially a repetition of the abortive bargain of 1898, based on the understanding that when German capital had sufficiently "penetrated" these colonies to lay the foundations of a claim, we would facilitate their purchase by Berlin. Looking back upon the past, one may reflect that if in 1904 it had been possible to conclude an arrangement on these lines with Germany, our happy approach to France need not have involved the sharpening of the rivalry in

<sup>1</sup> The goodwill of the German Chancellor and of Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter deserves equal recognition. Neither of them (as Count Reventlow deplures, pp. 386 and 456) belonged to the naval school, and their policy (according to this hostile witness) was based on the resolute maintenance of peace, an approach to Russia, an approach to Britain, the removal of the Franco-German friction, and German expansion in the East.

Europe. If, further, at any time between 1904 and 1914 Russia had been able to come to terms with the Central Powers over the freedom of the Turkish Straits, this war might have been avoided. It was these concrete issues which underlay the rivalry of the two groups of Powers. But in 1904 we were in no mood for an arrangement with Germany, and the Kaiser's love of posing in "shining armour" made it at all times difficult. It was a great achievement that, in spite of all the moral and material difficulties, Sir Edward Grey did contrive in 1912 to ease and even to end the overseas rivalry between the two Empires, and to this we may point with confidence as a proof that our policy did not permanently aim at using our sea-power to check the expansion of others. The significance of this colonial arrangement for our present argument is, that from it the terms emerge on which our naval supremacy may be rendered tolerable to the rest of the world. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman foresaw what these conditions must be. It remained to translate his declaration into concrete and binding undertakings. A League of Nations, if it is to use and sanction our sea-power, must work on the same lines. It must offer safeguards against aggression and assure nationality. But it is equally imperative that it should guarantee freedom of trade and provide for the legitimate expansion of growing nations.

The reader may object that the argument of this chapter has assumed that the kind of Imperialism exemplified in the German ambition to lead the economic development of Turkey and to administer Angola is "legitimate expansion." Why, it may be asked, if Germans may freely trade with our colonies should they wish to have colonies of their own? That is a two-edged question. We might and did trade freely with their colonies; why, then,



should we object to their increase? Even if we take the question on this purely material level, it cannot be dismissed so simply. No nation has any guarantee, in the present state of the world, that any other colonial Power will continue to follow an enlightened policy of commercial freedom. There were limits, moreover, to the enlightenment of the best colonial Powers. The trade of foreigners in goods might be encouraged, but on the whole every Power preferred to reserve for its own subjects the big opportunities for profit—"political" concessions as they are sometimes called—railways, telegraphs, harbour works, roads, oil-wells, and mines. It is on these concessions far more than upon the merchants' trade in goods that the politics of Imperialism turn to-day. The flag follows these capital investments, and the investments follow the flag. There is more involved in this process of appropriating concession areas than the simple desire to invest profitably in regions where labour is cheap and unprotected. There is the desire to obtain a secure supply of raw materials. The need of our Navy to obtain a supply of oil-fuel which would always be under our political control, goes far to explain the partition of Persia and our appropriation of the oil-bearing southern sphere. The need of the German steel industry to obtain a cheap and ample supply of iron-ore underlay the Moroccan question, as it complicates the problem of Lorraine. But in peace, at least, the reader will object, the Germans could always have bought iron-ore from a French-Moroccan syndicate. Yes, at the French price, which might in some circumstances become a monopoly price. They would naturally have preferred to eliminate middlemen's profits, and to avoid the risk of artificial prices by working the mines themselves through a syndicate representing the consumers. If there is any risk of the adoption of the Paris Programme, this

question of raw materials will dominate the whole politics of the world, for rival alliances will control these natural resources, and use their control frankly and avowedly to combat the economic prosperity of their commercial rivals and political opponents. The reader may object that even this real difficulty over raw materials is not a decisive reason why Germany should insist on having colonies or spheres of her own. We live in an age when all trade, and especially overseas trade, tends to be managed by syndicates, trusts, and cartels. There seemed before the war to be no valid reason why these financial groups should be exclusively national. If Germany needs iron-ore, and desires to have some control over its production, why should not a Franco-German or international syndicate develop the mines of Morocco, and ensure a fair distribution of the product to the various national industries which consume it? That probably is the only possible formula for the equitable solution of such questions. But it encounters grave difficulties in practice. A concession was actually given by the colonial administration of Algeria to a Franco-German syndicate for the working of the rich Ouenza ore-field. It was revoked by the Chamber on political grounds. Arrangements were actually made for the association of French, German, and other capital in the working of the Moroccan mines. They came to nothing in circumstances which suggested that the French Government could not bring itself to tolerate German enterprise in Morocco. These unfortunate essays in co-operation need not be accepted as decisive proofs that it must always fail. But they do suggest that guarantees for good faith are necessary. On paper a colonial Power inspired by a tradition of monopoly may promise an open door to the foreign trader and to the foreign capitalist; it may even refrain from imposing differential tariffs. But in a hundred ways

an administration may by a sedulous attention to detail render these undertakings of no effect. Officials who do not mean to welcome foreigners can, in colonies where the whole administration is bureaucratic and personal, so hamper their activities as to render them difficult and unprofitable. The French Congo is the classical instance of this policy. The only safeguard is reciprocity and the possibility of retaliation. Unless Germany is somewhere in a position to say to France, "If you hamper my access to your colonial raw materials and markets, I shall reply by forbidding mine to you," she clearly is at the mercy of a competitor's goodwill. She could not, in fact, bargain on these terms, and this weakness in her position drove her to desire colonies and spheres of her own. The adoption of a policy of commercial freedom by all the colonial Powers ought in theory to check the desire for empire, but a too unequal distribution of coveted areas is an obstacle in practice to its general adoption. If each of the chief industrial competitors had something which they could deny to others, the exchange of opportunity would come about by the natural pressure of interests.

The economic motives were in Germany, as I believe they are in every modern community, the chief forces which drove it to desire expansion overseas. They were not the only forces. The pressure of a rapidly increasing population must also be taken into account. The figures do not at first sight bear out this argument. The mass emigration which was so marked a feature of German social life in the middle decades of last century diminished and almost ceased with the progress of German industry. Before the foundation of the Empire, Germany was a poor country, with a low standard of comfort and an urgent problem of unemployment. To-day her industry and her agriculture can together absorb all the skilled labour of her growing population, and

more than all its unskilled labour. There is, in fact, a contrary process at work, and unskilled labour, most of it migratory, is imported from Russian Poland and from Italy. None the less the problem of emigration is acutely felt. It is not usually the artisan or the peasant who goes abroad to seek his fortunes. The modern phenomenon is an immense exodus of educated men from the middle classes, merchants, clerks, teachers, expert technicians, chemists, and metallurgists. Germany no longer exports labour: she exports brains. It is a more valuable export, and rightly or wrongly it is felt to be a more serious loss. It is an inevitable consequence of a worldwide trade, and without it her commerce could not be developed or maintained. We have the same experience, but in our case this exodus is directed largely to British colonies. It involves for us no expatriation, no abrupt passage to an alien civilization, no sacrifice of patriotism. These German emigrants have a hard choice. In their African colonies they cannot make a permanent home. They may go abroad for a term of years, endure exile, make a competence and return; or else they may settle, become naturalized subjects of another State, and rear children who will speak the language and think the thoughts of another nation. The German patriot finds small consolation in the thought that his country in this way adds its quota to a cosmopolitan civilization: he deplures the loss in man-power to his own Fatherland. There is here a real hardship to the individual and a real grievance for the nation. The explanation is to be sought, of course, in history. Prussia was busy up to 1870 in creating a German Empire in Europe, and even after 1870 Bismarck, until the last years of his long career, despised overseas expansion and allowed chance after chance to go by. When, however, Germany did at length ardently desire it,

she found obstacles in her path, first in South Africa and then in Morocco. Some Germans complained of the unflinching application of the Monroe Doctrine, and it is possible that the establishment of a German colony in South America would have assisted to ease our European problems. We do not, in fact, need all the territory we have appropriated. Generations will pass before Canada and Australia are fully peopled. Even to-day the vast Northern Territory of Australia, which Mr. Hughes describes as "a fertile land of almost illimitable potentialities," with an area as great as France, Germany, and Italy put together, has a population of only 1,182 Europeans. The retort will come hotly that Prussian militarism and its grasping ways forbade not only us but our colonists and the Americans to welcome any extension of German power. There is a vicious circle in this reasoning. It is precisely this opposition to German expansion which in our generation has perpetuated Prussian militarism. It is hard to suggest a way out of this difficulty at the moment, but a step will be gained if we can bring ourselves to understand why it is that the Germans, as they watch the free expansion of Britain, France, and Russia, in illimitable spaces, feel that our sea-power throttles and confines them.

The requirements of Germany's growing trade and population afford explanation enough of her desire to possess an overseas empire. There are other motives at work which it is not so easy to estimate. The economic motive has always been the pioneer of empire, and the more ideal considerations make themselves felt only when the primitive hunger for land or trade has been satisfied. The sentimental or idealistic element in German Imperialism may not, in fact, be its driving force—that comes from the industrialists and the financiers who think in terms of markets, raw

materials, and dividends—but it is powerfully at work to create acquiescence or even enthusiasm among the “intellectuals,” and even in the masses, who are not conscious of a direct material interest in the question. Much of this sentiment is the simple and intelligible human instinct which enjoys the sense or even the illusion of wielding power. Much of it is the universal megalomania of our species, which feels that its personality is enlarged and enriched, when it can contemplate great territories on the map and call them its own. It is not for us to censure this tendency, or even to smile at it. With all our enthusiasm for little nationalities, we have taken some pains not to be one ourselves. English children reared in slum dwellings are supposed to derive some emotional satisfaction from contemplating on the schoolroom wall the map of the Empire on which the sun never sets. It is eminently natural that the Germans, with a population that exceeds ours by twenty millions, a trade which is rapidly overtaking ours, a higher general standard of education, and a capacity for applied science and social organization, which has been cultivated far beyond our present level of achievement, should think that their estate in the world ought to correspond more closely to their national stature. Dr. Friedrich Naumann, in “Mitteleuropa,” perhaps the most powerful book which the war has called forth in any European country, points out that even the realization of the dream of “Central Europe,” in its fullest sense as a coalition for trade and defence of Germany, Austria, and Turkey, would still leave this composite structure much inferior in extent and population to the estates of the other world-Powers. Such ambitions, neither better nor worse than those which made the British, French, and Russian colonial empires, are capable either of a vulgar or of an

idealistic statement. The more idealistic and liberal statements are undoubtedly popular with the German reading public. My copy of Dr. Paul Rohrbach's very readable book, "The German Idea in the World" ("Der Deutsche Gedanke in der Welt")—first published in 1912, but since rewritten—is marked "90th thousand." Dr. Rohrbach is a pastor, whose interest in Eastern and colonial questions began with his work as a missionary in Turkey. He supports this war (which he considers, with evident sincerity, defensive), and advocates an extension of the German colonial empire in Africa and of German enterprise in Turkey and China. He is opposed to annexations in the West, and feels so little bitterness against England that he is continually reminding his readers that our success as a colonizing Power depends primarily on character; in his final chapter he even proposes a programme for the future of close Anglo-German co-operation in China. He is very far from the self-complacency of the average Imperialist in most countries, and writes some eloquent and penetrating chapters on the various moral and intellectual defects of German civilization—the survival of class barriers and feudal exclusiveness in German society, the spirit of caste in the German Protestant Churches, the aristocratic tradition in diplomacy and the lack of any popular control of foreign policy, the decline of German culture and the growth of "spiritual illiteracy" (*innere Unbildung*) in our generation through an excessive specialization, the noisiness and assertiveness of German manners; and, finally, he traces the unpopularity of Germany abroad to the fact that she is regarded as an anti-democratic State. I refrain from quoting his frank and scathing pages, because it seems to me that our present need is rather to see the good elements of German culture than to be helped to diagnose its defects.

It is worth noting, however, as a sign of the times, that Germans read such self-criticisms eagerly, and, further, that German Imperialism is not necessarily the purely materialistic tendency which we commonly suppose it to be. It is an inspiration to minds which are, according to their lights, liberal, Christian, and democratic. It is fair to note in this connection that Dr. Friedrich Naumann (also a pastor and a democrat) includes in his equally popular book some frank passages of confession as to the "meanness" of German policy towards Alsatians, Danes, and Poles. These things are not the moralizings of defeat: they were written partly before the war and partly in the full tide of German military success. These writers (but more especially Rohrbach) see in German expansion primarily the means of winning scope and ground for the working out of "the German idea" in the world. One suspects that Rohrbach's Imperialism was largely a reaction from the flamboyant, pretentious British Imperialism of the nineties of last century, when we moved from the conquest of the Soudan to the conquest of the Boer Republics, the phase incarnated in Cecil Rhodes and his prophet, W. T. Stead. Rohrbach quotes continually what he describes as a current English saying, "The world is rapidly becoming Anglo-Saxon." Certainly that was the Rhodes-Stead-Kipling attitude. For Rohrbach the crucial question is whether the British Empire, which at present dominates the world beyond the European continent, will make room for Germany beside it. Both these writers disclaim any thought of dominating the world: their claim is for a share in shaping its destinies. They cannot stand still, they argue: they must win a place by the side of the Anglo-Saxons or perish. How can they renounce the thought of expansion when in every three years they add to their popu-



lation as many Germans as there are Swiss in the world, and in a generation create a second nation to increase their former numbers, as numerous as the Spaniards and Portuguese together? The decisive and absorbing questions which confront the world are, to Rohrbach's thinking, these three: the civilization of the negro races, the adaptation of Islam to modern conditions, and the reawakening of the ancient civilizations of the East. These three questions, it seems to him, are at present receiving a solution in an Anglo-Saxon sense. Our hands are guiding the most decisive movements of the human race. He pays a generous tribute to the capacity of these hands of ours, but he has the not ignoble ambition to use his own. What is the German idea which he desires to see at work in the world? It is primarily an ideal of intense, thorough, co-operative labour, in science, in production, and in social organization. Rohrbach dwells especially on German accuracy and industry. Naumann has an almost lyrical passage on the communal social spirit which causes German scientists and German industrialists to work together, with a pride in the merging of the individual in the greater social organism, and a sense of patriotism which permeates all they undertake. It is for him the antithesis of the traditional British individualism in thought and trade. The German "idea," in short, is not merely an infinite capacity for taking pains: it is a social genius. The desire to set this tradition to the solution of African, Turkish, and Chinese problems is not unworthy of practical idealists. I confess to some mistrust of efforts, be they British or German, to disguise the plain economic meaning of Imperialism. The "intellectuals" who gild it with an exalted ethical interpretation are, however, helping to create a sentiment which can and will bring the more predatory

elements of Imperialism under control. Facile as their idealization too often is, it has its uses in helping to build up a high standard of administration. For Rohrbach the noblest application of the creative power of human nature is the shaping of States. The Imperialism which conceives its task as a supreme architectural achievement may claim respect as a movement which partakes, in some degree, of idealism.

The question which Dr. Rohrbach has stated is, indeed, not the least of the many that confronts us. What will be our attitude towards German Imperialism? The ability always latent in our sea-power to frustrate it, to thwart and even to veto it, is now actuality. We occupy all the promising beginnings of a German overseas empire. We hold the seas; we can forbid this career to our enemies—at a price certainly of a prolongation of the war, possibly of a bad settlement of European questions, and beyond a doubt of much future rancour. It is well to put the choice in concrete terms. If we mean to keep all or any of Germany's colonies, if, further, we are bent on taking Mesopotamia, and, still more, if France must have Syria—if, in short, our overseas gains are regarded, not as pawns to be bartered in the settlement but as permanent acquisitions, then plainly we must either continue the war until the enemy is literally prostrate, or else we must abandon some of our purposes for the better settlement of questions of nationality. We may have to choose between taking colonies or liberating Poland and Lorraine. Let us, however, for argument's sake, dismiss this consideration, and suppose ourselves omnipotent at the moment of the settlement. Is our policy then to be to oppose a universal negative to German expansion, and to confine the most energetic and the most prolific

of West-European peoples in an era of world-trade and world-politics to its own home territories? What in that case will be its reply to our veto? It is possible (though extremely doubtful) that the consequence might be to end or at least to postpone indefinitely the ambitions cherished by the naval school. The idea of forcing a way through the Straits of Dover might be forgotten: the idea of challenging our supremacy at sea might be abandoned; the hope of expanding in Africa or of taking a share in the development of China might fade. All this would be, the reader may say, an inexpressible relief to ourselves. Possibly, but at the cost of turning German energies in another direction. "Empire is sea-power and sea-power is empire" is not perhaps so axiomatic as it sounds to us. There are some achievements within the scope of land-power alone. The vast Russian Empire, which certainly has not yet reached its limit in the Far East, is one illustration. Though Dr. Naumann nowhere states it expressly, the directing thought which led him and his school to the conception of "Central Europe" must have been a perception of the difficulty of competing with our naval power, in the hope of creating a wide-flung empire, scattered in many seas. The line of least resistance for Germany, the path dictated by her speciality of military efficiency, is the shaping of a continuous continental empire. With Germany and Austria-Hungary as its nucleus, it would first consolidate itself by linking itself through Bulgaria with Turkey. It might hope to add a vassal Poland, and in time to draw into its system Holland and perhaps the Scandinavian kingdoms. Its political structure might be loose, but it would form a single economic and military unit. To that alternative the German imagination will infallibly turn, if we deny to it a future beyond the seas. It did, in fact,

turn to it, because the necessity of seeking our permission to expand was galling, and the chances of obtaining our permission doubtful. This ambition is not one which a good European would wish to see fulfilled. It would perpetuate the division of the world into two camps, and overshadow the life of the Continent by its immense military power. Its internal structure, moreover, would rest, not on federation but on German dictatorship. None the less it is not as Naumann outlines it, in the worst sense of the word, an aggressive conception. It presupposes the voluntary adhesion to the system, for mutual advantage, of its various component units. It aims at creating a great area of internal Free Trade. Its central idea is purely economic—the extension over this large and wealthy region of the German commercial system, its cartels, its enterprising banks, its national organization of production and exchange. It would mean primarily the “speeding up” of Austrian and Eastern economic life to “the rhythm of German work”; nor should it be forgotten that in the wake of the German capitalistic cartel there would follow the German socialistic trade union. It is a more constructive ideal than our schemes of “war after the war”; it contains no suggestion of a tariff war, of hostile or punitive measures against the enemy, or, indeed, of any raising of trade barriers against the outside world. Its aim is positive—to develop a great estate: it is not, as our answer is, negative, to prevent an enemy from ever “raising his head.” It is none the less a conception full of menace to the world. It is founded on the negation of any international ideal: it cannot be fitted into any framework of a League of Nations. Naumann may give to it a comparatively liberal and unaggressive statement, but under the conduct of ruder and cruder minds and amid the stress of the alarms

and retaliations which it would evoke, it would split the world and doom it to intolerable strife. It is probably, in its fullest and completest sense, an unrealizable conception, partly because the weaker members of the partnership are jealous of German predominance, and still more because German trade itself would not find within Central Europe an equivalent for its overseas trade, which the inevitable reprisals and counter-coalitions would threaten.

To these alternatives we must oppose a third possibility—a return to Sir Edward Grey's pre-war policy, an attempt by definite arrangements to reconcile our sea-power with commercial freedom, and the claims of others to a reasonable expansion. We must, in short, make room for German ambitions beside our own in the world, for their trade, for their colonies, and for their participation in the development of such countries as Turkey and China. If we refuse to do this, our "navalism" will stand at the bar of history to answer a heavy charge, and it needs no prophet to warn us that our refusal will impose upon us and our children the burden of continual armaments to defend our veto on German expansion, and that in the end all our precautions may fail to prevent another explosion of the human forces we have sought to repress. We shall consider in the next chapter what measures a League of Nations might take to enlarge commercial freedom, and regulate the development of half-civilized countries, and the use which it might make of the economic advantages which it would confer upon its members to ensure peace. In regard to Germany, the first step towards the realization of this policy must be the restoration of her colonies, as an item in the general balance of the settlement which may be set off against the heavy sacrifices which, even on a conservative reading of it, the doctrine of nationality.

must impose upon the Central Powers. There are some grave difficulties in the way of this policy. Japan will not tolerate the restitution of Kiao-Chau (Tsing-tau) to Germany. Its original seizure was a predatory act, and if it is restored in good faith to China, there will be for international morality a real gain. It is also said that under no circumstances will our colonies yield up the lands in the Pacific and in Africa which they have won from Germany at some cost in blood. General Botha has a delicate internal situation to consider, and the German effort to foment a Boer rebellion from South-West Africa left the natural impression behind it in the colony that the Germans are not desirable neighbours. It is difficult to see any similar justification for a claim (if it should be officially made) from Pretoria to retain German East Africa. It lies far beyond the natural geographical limits of South Africa, and its conquest, though a difficult operation, demanding skill and endurance, is not to be compared in human cost with one day's "push" in France. If the colonial forces should demand that they shall keep all that they have taken, they may be imposing on the Allies further efforts which may cost in blood many times over what they have spent. If we cannot reckon East Africa as a piece to bargain with, then we, or the French, or the Russians may have to take at vastly greater cost some region of the enemy's home territory, which will serve as an equivalent element of barter. East Africa is a comparatively new colony, and its seizure cannot be compared with the forcible annexation of the smallest strip of a nation's home territory; none the less, to take away by force a piece of work on which men have spent much labour and thought is not an act which should be lightly contemplated, nor would it be readily forgotten. It may be,

however, that the restoration of all the German colonies will be impossible. In that case we must be prepared to find equivalents for them. This ought not to be inordinately difficult. It is doubtful whether the Belgians, as a nation, are really anxious to carry the heavy burden of the Congo. Their ablest statesman, M. Vandervelde, and their Liberal Party as well as the Socialists were originally opposed to its transference by King Leopold to Belgium. The genius of this home-loving people does not turn readily to colonial enterprise. Experts warn us that the Congo ought to cost Belgium annually at least a million sterling for twenty years, if it is to be administered on any plan consistent with the happiness of the natives. At present the reform of King Leopold's nightmare rule has been only partial, and the burden is probably beyond the resources of a small State. If it should turn out that Belgium is inclined to part with her rights for a fair price, any transfer must, of course, be made outside the framework of the Belgian settlement itself. Germany owes an indemnity to Belgium, and full compensation for the devastations of her armies. If she cared to purchase the Congo or part of it, the price must be something distinct from the indemnity, and additional to it. France might be willing to consider some rearrangement of the confused distribution of French, British, and German areas in West Africa. There is also to be considered the problem of the Portuguese colonies. If the Allies propose to retain for themselves the German Pacific colonies and South-West Africa, the equivalent might be found by concentrating German colonization in the wide area of Equatorial Africa, and if something more than an exact equivalent were offered, the settlement of European questions would be the easier. In any arrangement of this kind,

if we retain some German colonies for ourselves and allow her to acquire others in their stead, the purchase price would, of course, fall on us.

An arrangement of this kind must satisfy several tests. Historically the Great Powers engaged in colonization for their own advantage, and the predatory element, which began with slave-raiding and persists in various forms of forced labour, has been brought only slowly and not everywhere completely, under the control of a humaner opinion. One half of our duty in colonial affairs lies in insisting that no Power ought to monopolize opportunities of profit and gain. But it would be monstrous to discuss colonial rivalries on the assumption that our duty is ended when we have dealt fairly with our European rivals in the process of capitalistic expansion. The native has also to be considered. Long experience and the slow victory of humane opinion over predatory impulse has made our rule undoubtedly the best for the natives, especially in tropical Africa. That might in extreme cases entitle us even to dispossess other colonial Powers; but if we were to act on that risky principle, there are unhappy regions of Africa which would claim our attention before any German colony. I have no first-hand knowledge on this subject, but the available records go to prove that German policy towards the natives, relatively bad in some colonies at first, and still only moderately good in the best, has profited by experience; it has lately been much improved by reforming colonial secretaries from Berlin, and there is growing, even outside the Socialist ranks, an organized humanitarian opinion which has even now some effect in controlling it. I am content to be guided by the opinion of a man whose comparative knowledge of the West African colonies is intimate and extensive, and whose zeal for native welfare has inspired the



whole of his career. The Rev. John H. Harris, whose services to the Congo are second only to Mr. Morel's, in a book published shortly before this war broke out, proposed that we should support an immense extension of Germany's rule in Central Africa. He wished that we should facilitate her purchase of the whole or the greater part of the Belgian Congo, and he even added the still more daring suggestion that in return for some concessions in Alsace, Germany might take over the whole or the greater part of the French Congo. It is possible that, for other reasons, he has since modified his programme, but it is still fair to quote his opinion that "on the whole, both from the commercial *and native standpoint*, the Congo basin stands to gain by a transfer to the German Empire."<sup>1</sup> So far from losing their value as the result of the war, these proposals rather gain a new significance. There will come a point in this war (if indeed we have not reached it already) when France will have to face the fact that to conquer Lorraine (to say nothing of Alsace) she must be prepared to fight on for six or twelve months more, at the cost of half a million lives at least. The same equation will present itself in regard to Poland and every other claim of nationality. If we know that an extension of German rule in Africa would be a gain to the natives in the French, Belgian, and Portuguese colonies of the Congo area, if we know also that it would be a gain to commercial freedom, if we realize that to occupy German energies here is to give them an employment which must make for peace in Europe, what hinders us from proposing an honourable exchange of colonial expansion against the satisfaction of nationality? From a sullen peace, which closed the avenues of national

<sup>1</sup> "Dawn in Darkest Africa," p. 301.

energy to one great nation, and deepened its sense that it is hemmed in by the jealous prosperity of others, we can hope no good. The best peace will be the peace which removes the enemy's grievance as well as our own. We can achieve this double end by exacting from him concessions to the wronged nationalities of Europe, while in Africa and Turkey we find scope for his reasonable economic aims. In Turkey, as the war map stands to-day, he is already in possession, and there we can only assent to his existing economic predominance, while removing from it, by opening the Straits, any element of menace to Russia, and, by restoring Serbia, any threat to Balkan liberties. If Armenia is liberated (as it must be), and some reservations made in regard to French interests in Syria, Turkey, on our present showing, cannot be reckoned to the credit side of the Allied account in a bargain. Our asset in a bargain of economics against nationality is Equatorial Africa.

What, then, are to be our gains from the war? An enduring peace, an advance from the era of force to the era of international organization, the gratitude of liberated nationalities, the respect of our Allies, and even of our enemies, when they realize that we have fought with clean hands, and come out with empty hands—are these no gains? There is in the history of an allied nation an example which might inspire us. When, on the eve of her own Revolution, a chivalrous France sent her army and gave her treasure to assist the cause of liberty in America, the question twice arose whether she would accept compensation for her sacrifices. The Americans suggested, after the triumph of Rochambeau at Yorktown, that they in turn might help the French to recover Canada. When the treaty of peace was negotiated, they next proposed in their natural gratitude to confer some

advantages upon French as against British trade. With a fine gesture of generosity, both proposals were rejected, and the Government of France proved itself worthy of the enthusiasm of Lafayette and the nobility of Rochambeau. Her motive was as simple as it seems unworldly. She would not sully a noble action by self-seeking. That was the great deed of an aristocracy, which would not forget magnanimity, because it had learned to love liberty. Must a democracy be less generous?

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ECONOMICS OF PEACE

THERE stands in the way of any discussion of the economic policy of a League of Nations the hard fact that the Allied Governments have officially adopted the Paris Programme. That programme, in its frank declaration of a war of tariffs and exclusions after the war of flesh and blood, and in its refusal to admit the enemy peoples at the return of peace to the society of nations, is indeed a flat negation of that "partnership" to which Mr. Asquith has bidden us look forward. There is one hopeful way of explaining this contradiction. Statesmen do not disdain the minor arts of "bluff," and it is possible that the Allied Governments, in fact, conceive this nightmare of a "war after the war" rather as a means of putting pressure on the enemy at the settlement, than as a policy which they desire, on its merits, to enforce. They may regard it as a kind of imaginary prolongation of our blockade. Any kind of peace, however sullen and unreal, involves of course that we must restore the freedom of the seas and open the closed roads to Germany's ports. But the Paris resolutions suggest that a further mechanism of prohibitions, preferences, and exclusions might, in a nominal state of peace, continue to deprive the enemy of a great part of his trade, delay the recovery of his prosperity, and condemn him for the future to relative poverty and an abject dependence on our omnipotent sea-power,

which henceforth would forbid him, not merely expansion in the unsettled regions of the earth, but even the free use of their produce. How far this threat is really impressive I will not pause to discuss. Much depends on the condition of the "war-map" at the settlement. If Austria and Turkey were "broken up," Bulgaria crushed, and Germany isolated, it might be exceedingly impressive. Even then, however, some balancing consequences are to be foreseen. The difficulty of trading with the outer world might stimulate in Germany an inventive ingenuity which would find substitutes for the materials we denied to her. Reliance on monopoly might, on the other hand, check among ourselves the hopeful tendency to seek in better organization and more thorough education the means of assuring our economic position. Further, it is certain that any attempt by the Allies to discriminate against neutral and especially American trade, would create a resentment from which the Germans would profit. In the end we might discover that the price of our vengeance against Germany was the loss, not merely of the respect, but even of the trade of the United States. While it is doubtful whether we stand to lose less than the enemy by this policy, it is certain that it does menace him at a critical moment with grave injury: it is in that sense a real threat, though it has also its suicidal suggestion. It is, above all, a threat against civilization as a whole. It is possible, however, that our Government (or half of it) had some vague idea of using it primarily as a means of bargaining. We may threaten to refuse "most favoured nation" treatment to German trade, to starve her of raw materials, and to penalize her shipping, as a means of inducing her to accept certain conditions. What are those conditions? That depends on the open question what our war aims really are. We shall not know until the treaty

of peace is signed, whether, in fact, we have been fighting to create a better Europe, or merely, in the spirit of the past, to weaken an enemy, to crush a commercial rival, and to achieve conquests of territory which our capital may exploit. If anything survives of the exalted spirit with which we began the war, then the only bargain which can suggest itself is that to Germany we concede commercial freedom in return for her adhesion to a League of Nations. Let us barter the Paris Resolutions against her militarism. It follows that if this strategy is adopted, the League of Nations must be more than an association bound by a promise to arbitrate. It must be also a League which removes economic opportunity from dependence on military and naval power.

#### THE SENTIMENTAL TARIFF.

Before we attempt to develop this constructive idea, it is necessary to consider some subsidiary arguments which are advanced in defence of a trade war against Germany. In the first place let us dismiss the muddled notion that such a "war" would be a logical application of the economics of Protection. The issue is much narrower than the general dispute between Protection and Free Trade, and a Protectionist is no more committed by his premises to "the war after the war" than a Free Trader. A "scientific" tariff follows, or attempts to follow, certain aims which are in flat contradiction to the scheme of this "war." It may try, by imposing disabilities on foreign imports, to win a more favourable position for our own exports in foreign markets. Any idea of such a bargain, aiming at reciprocity through retaliation, is excluded by the new political Protection, which seeks, not to obtain advantages for ourselves but to inflict injury on others. The skilful constructor of a tariff considers

minutely what is the minimum stimulus, in the shape of a protective duty, that he must administer to a growing, a struggling, or a decadent trade in order to ensure its development or recovery, and he will not allow himself to be driven by the least fraction above that minimum, lest he should demoralize instead of strengthen the trade in question, and enable it to advance its prices, to the detriment of the consumer, far beyond what a reasonable margin of profit demands. The new Protection is debarred from such nice graduation of duties as this : against German goods, at least, it must impose, not the minimum duty which might stimulate our own trade, but a prohibitive maximum. Finally, the attempt might be made (as the Trade Union Congress desires), if we are going to adopt Protection, to discriminate against certain foreign goods because they are produced by underpaid or overdriven labour, to exclude "sweated goods," and to realize something like that abortive Australian conception of a quasi-Socialistic "new Protection"—which is, of course, only a project even in Australia, for the Law Courts have defeated it in action. This, too, would be impossible under the Paris plan, which would oblige us to favour, for example, the "sweated" produce of Japanese industry against German goods manufactured under an enlightened system of labour legislation and the check of well-organized trade unions. One need not pause to insist that "war after the war" would be an especially flagrant departure from Free Trade. It is no less to the point that it would defeat every object which a rational or "scientific" Protection might pursue. Under it there could be neither bargains for reciprocity, nor the skilful graduation of duties, nor the use of tariffs to protect labour. The conception, in short, is not merely one irrelevant to economics, it is anti-economic. Based on hatred,

envy, and fear, it proposes to subject economics to politics. The popular conception of a sentimental tariff, which will give a preference to Colonies over Allies, to Allies over neutrals, and to neutrals over enemies, assumes that we are prepared to subordinate our business to our emotions, and to make of our likes and dislikes the foundation of our trade. The chaos into which this principle would lead us is beginning to be recognized to-day ; in its extremer form it can hardly survive the annihilating argument of Mr. Hobson's analysis in "The New Protectionism" (Cobden Club, 6d.). There is no guarantee, there is barely a possibility, that Russia and France, devoted, both of them, to high Protection, will so lower their duties in our favour as to compensate us for the loss of the German market. Nor can Russia (which especially valued the German market for her grain, because geographically it is, for some of her provinces, more accessible than her own ports) hope for compensation in our market, if we are going to give a preference to Canadian wheat. If we discriminate against neutrals, it is to be foreseen that they will retaliate against our goods, a situation of which the Germans will know how to take advantage. British trade under such a system would find itself obliged to confine its hopes of expansion mainly within our own Empire. America and Germany would be united against the Allied policy, and would eventually be driven into an economic and possibly into a political and naval alliance against us. This crazy scheme can hardly outlive the emotional exaltation of war. If we are destined to adopt Protection (it is to be hoped devoutly that we are not), its mischiefs will be redoubled, and its alleged benefits frustrated, unless we are free to confer advantages and erect barriers on economic grounds alone.



## PENETRATION, DUMPING, AND KEY INDUSTRIES.

Some special reasons (apart from the anger and fear which are the real reasons) are advanced in support of "the war after peace." Most of these arguments are inadequate; while they may suffice to support some minor changes in our traditional fiscal system, they will not carry the weight of the case for a general boycott of German trade. There is—

1. The argument from German "penetration." It seems to be assumed that when German capital settles in a country to develop its resources, or to conduct the manufacture of its own patented specialities, it is doing an injury to the country in question. It is hard to see what this means. Russia, Italy, and Roumania, poor in accumulated capital and deficient in skilled management and technical science, have certainly benefited from the German export of capital and brains. So far are we from thinking this modern development in itself injurious that we are proposing, under official control, and in the case of Italy with a financial guarantee from the Treasury, to push this process of penetration ourselves on a greater scale and with a more conscious national purpose than ever before. Every advanced industrial country exports capital in this way, and there was nothing singular about the Germans' practice, except perhaps that their banks did more to promote it than ours, and that they exported management as well as capital more habitually than did the French. If they concentrated their penetration upon European countries, the reason for their choice was largely that they had no large colonial sphere of their own which invited their capital. The history of our own export of capital goes to show that in the early decades of last century, especially in the pioneer period of railway building, our finance operated largely on the

Continent, and migrated farther afield only as America and our Colonies called for it. The prevailing impression that such recent "penetration" by German capital as there has been in this country was a hostile or "aggressive" movement is based on a lapse of memory. We invited it ourselves. It was the direct consequence of Mr. Lloyd George's patent legislation, which obliged large numbers of German firms to set up factories of their own in this country. I confess myself unable to understand in what sense a movement of capital which brings with it enterprise and new ideas, and promotes employment and industry in the "penetrated" country can be regarded as an injury to that country: the benefit to the country which exports the capital, or at all events to its working class, is often much more questionable. But if it be an evil, this at least is clear, that tariffs, so far from checking it, must promote it. The reason why German enterprise set up factories with German capital and under German management in Russia or Italy, was often that the Russian and Italian tariffs forbade the profitable export of goods manufactured in Germany. The goods could not pass the tariff wall, but capital could jump it.

2. The fear of "dumping" is another popular argument in favour of a boycott or a prohibitive tariff. One might suppose that "dumping" was a peculiarly German practice: American and British industries attempt it at least as often as German industries. Sober economists question whether it has often succeeded in killing the rival industry which it sought to destroy. In its first stages, when it offers goods at less than the current price and forces the home producers to lower their prices, it is, of course, a benefit to the consumer. It becomes an injury only when the foreign trader, after ruining the home producer, takes advantage of his monopoly to raise prices above the former

level. There seem to be few authentic cases of such successful dumping in the past. It is hardly worth while to discuss the suggestion that Germany is actually accumulating great stocks of merchandise for a worldwide campaign of dumping after the war. The blockade deprived her of the necessary raw material. Conscription took nearly the whole of her male labour, while munition-making and agriculture employed the women. The rise of prices in her closed home market would induce every manufacturer who possessed accumulated stocks to realize them promptly. Successful dumping implies a long purse: the dumper must be able to work at a loss, or at least to forgo profits, in the hope of a rich harvest at a later date. It seems improbable that German industry will after the waste and ruin of this war, with interest at a high figure, be able to work extensively on this system of deferred and speculative gains. But at the worst, if dumping be on the whole an evil, and if there were reason to fear a great extension of it, there are methods of coping with it less dangerous than the boycott or the general tariff: the Canadian plan is to impose a surtax on imported goods which are offered in the foreign market at a lower price than in the home market of the producing country. It is a crazy plan to exclude all German goods because some German goods may be dumped, while allowing others to "dump" at will, and the effect of it would be to expose ourselves to combination and exploitation on the part of home producers, who would take advantage of the absence of effective foreign competition to raise prices.

3. The argument from "key" industries attempts in a similar way to pass from a small admitted risk to a remedy which is needlessly sweeping. It was an inconvenience in the early months of the war that we had no home

manufacture of dyes, drugs, optical glass, and some similar articles which the superiority of the Germans in applied science had enabled them to monopolize. Our early efforts to supply ourselves gave us inferior articles at fabulous prices, and it is not yet certain that when peace returns, our new industries will be able to compete with the Germans either in quality or in price. To exclude the foreign article in these conditions is to injure ourselves, and in the case of dyes the injury to our exports of textiles to foreign markets might be serious.

The more we act on the assumption that future wars are probable, and proceed, at some inconvenience to ourselves, to reorganize our manufactures and our commerce on a war basis, the more likely is it that this anxious expectation of war will realize itself. The dilemma is familiar. If a nation refuses to prepare adequately for war, its unreadiness (if it is rich, ambitious, and possessed of vast and enviable estates) may invite attack. But if it so prepares that its preparations overshadow peace with the ever-present thought of war, it will sooner or later militarize the minds of its citizens as well as its institutions. These special adjustments of our trade to the possibility of future war all involve some departure from the ethical ideal of Free Trade, which sees in the interdependence of nations an image of their fraternity and a pledge of peace. If we should ever realize the militarist ideal of national independence in trade, wars might indeed be fought with less risk of commercial loss, but the restraint on the war-makers which comes from the fear of commercial loss, would be correspondingly diminished. To the idealistic Free Trader the whole world is a co-operative society. He aims at a natural division of labour, so that each nation shall produce, for the good of the whole human society, the things which its genius, its resources, and its

climate best fit it to produce. He sees in protective tariffs, and in the endeavours of militarism and nationalism to limit the free exchange of goods, interferences with this natural division of labour which inflict a double injury. They mean that, by one expedient or another, a people whose aptitudes or resources have not naturally led it to produce a particular kind of goods, are stimulated or obliged to make these things which others were producing elsewhere better and more cheaply. There is a money loss, for the goods so produced behind a tariff wall will commonly be dearer than those which had been imported freely. That is the smallest part of the injury. What really happens is that something has been added wantonly to the sum of the world's labour. The effort to make dearly in England what had been made cheaply in Germany, implies that there is some addition to the world's unnecessary toil and some subtraction from the world's possible leisure. A man may be justified in producing dear vegetables in his own garden, though a market-gardener can do it better and more cheaply, because gardening is good exercise and a pleasant recreation. But if we insist by means of a tariff on growing in England with much toil what can be produced with less toil in a more genial climate, we are laying a burden on the backs of our countrymen. Protection must nearly always mean that on the whole something is added to the sum of a nation's hours of labour. That is the ethical aspect of dearness and high prices. No one would dispute this principle where climate is the prime factor in cheapness: only a lunatic would suggest that we ought to tax foreign bananas and grow them at home under glass. But it applies also to national aptitudes. The taste and manual deftness of the French give them a pre-eminence in producing for the world beautiful articles

of luxury. The scientific training of the Germans gives them a similar superiority in the chemical industries. Other specialized trades, like the watch-making of Switzerland, depend on a local organization which has become traditional and a skill which is almost hereditary. To insist on interfering with this natural division of labour among nations is to increase toil wantonly, to diminish the total wealth, comfort, and leisure of mankind, and to destroy its sense of solidarity and mutual interdependence.

This general argument is so strong that every plea for a departure from it in special cases demands a critical and sceptical scrutiny. It may be pushed unreasonably far. If we left the whole production of beautiful things to the French, we should starve our own æsthetic aptitudes for lack of exercise. If we abandoned the trades that require scientific knowledge to the Germans, we should be depriving ourselves of an intellectual stimulus. A nation which lives by exporting dyes and drugs will develop its brains somewhat further than a nation which lives by exporting steam coal. There are, of course, other means of stimulating our intelligence, but clearly, if this consideration weighs with us, we shall wish that British chemical industries should achieve success by merit, and not by monopoly. The surest way to fit ourselves to succeed is to diffuse scientific education, and that not only among the salaried experts, but among the capitalists and managers who conduct our manufactures. A subsidy or a guarantee of profits would be infinitely preferable as a means of stimulating these new trades than a prohibitive tariff, for if all foreign competition is excluded, the consumer has no check upon the inertia of the producer, who might be content with high profits on a dear and inferior article within a closed market. A man who has built himself a wall may be tempted to

go to sleep behind it. But State aid involves State control over prices and conditions of labour, and it ought to be limited to a few years. Another alternative would be to nationalize the industry. If our concern were solely to provide against the eventuality of war, it would suffice to accumulate large stocks of these products of the so-called "key" industries under State control. That plan is under consideration in Germany, where it is proposed to concentrate grain, rubber, copper, oils, and other necessities of foreign origin in national stores. These stores may be so managed by the State in time of peace as to stabilize prices, while in war they will serve to defeat a blockade. We might adopt the same plan in the case of dyes and drugs, to supplement any possible deficiency during war in our home production. There are, to sum up, several alternatives to the imposition of a tariff. If we should in the end adopt the worst method of protecting these few "key" industries—a duty on certain imports—even this is far from committing us to a general tariff on all manufactured goods. Further, if our aim be, for military reasons, to foster the home production of these few articles, the duty ought logically to be imposed impartially on all imports of these goods, and not merely upon imports from Germany. A few exceptional duties, if levied impartially, would not seriously modify our fiscal system, and though, in fact, they would injure some important German trades, they need not by their form or their intention commit us to the principle of the boycott and the "war after peace."

4. Finally, it is urged that in order to stimulate the recovery of the districts of France which have been occupied by the enemy, the Allied countries ought for a period to exclude German trade, and in some degree to penalize neutral trade. The

logic of this argument eludes me. As consumers the people of these districts will suffer by a policy which must raise prices. As producers it is doubtful whether they will gain more by receiving some small advantage within the Allied system, than by the inevitable loss of the German market. We cannot help them much by reserving raw material for their use: they use chiefly cotton, which America supplies, and iron, which is got locally. One can understand that in order to stimulate the trade of Lille and Roubaix, France might raise her duties on articles which compete with their products. If instead of doing this she lowers her duties upon British competing goods (while excluding German goods), it is not clear that Lille and Roubaix can gain. To advance this special case as a reason for adopting a system which favours Allied trade generally, and colonial trade, and gives a preference to Russian as against American grain, is a grotesque and dishonest attempt to exploit sympathy. If we wish to help these sorely tried regions of France (and clearly we ought to help them generously), let us do it directly. If an indemnity is out of the question, as it probably is (and what humane man would wish to spill more blood in order to extort money?), let the Allies whose soil has escaped invasion make a handsome grant to assist the recovery of these regions. It is customary in such cases to remit all taxation for a short term. If we are really anxious to help, let us give to the French Exchequer the equivalent of all or a part of the revenues which it will lose by this sacrifice. Our market is free, as our fiscal system stands at present, to anything which Lille and Roubaix will be able to send to it. To impose a duty on French (and other Allied) goods, even though it be a relatively low duty, seems a paradoxical way of assisting the invaded departments.



## THE RETURN TO MERCANTILISM.

None of these four subsidiary arguments, even if all of them were sound, supply any reason for the adoption of the policy of the trade war ; they may at the most convince us that there is a case for some modification of our traditional system of free trade, to encourage "key" industries, and protect ourselves against "dumping." The real reasons for the adoption of the Paris policy are simpler and cruder. Clausewitz said that war is a continuation of policy by other means. The Paris Programme means the continuation of war itself by other means. Its design is plainly by an economic combination to pursue the aims of war, to weaken, if not to subjugate, the enemy. The authors of this policy have given us an object-lesson of its working. Mr. Bonar Law, not content with drastic measures which have rooted out all the agencies of German trade in our African colonies, winding up their firms, and selling their warehouses, lands, and wharves, has taken steps to deprive them for a term of years of the use of one of the most important raw materials which West Africa produces. To exclude, or at least to discourage, the German buyer in our colonies is, be it noted, an injury, not merely to German trade but also to the native producer. The Germans had been prompter than we were to grasp the value of the oil derived from palm-kernels as the basis of margarine, soap, and cattle cake. They had installed powerful crushing mills, and by attention to the details of through rates, efficient handling at their ports, and canal transport had got the trade almost entirely into their own hands. The war gave to our "infant industry" its opportunity, which it was prepared to take ; but the usual argument was advanced, that a monopoly during three or more

years of war would not suffice to establish it securely. One way of ensuring its future would have been (if good machinery and a reform of our ports were not enough) to place a duty on imported palm-kernel oil. Mr. Bonar Law preferred the much more drastic method of refusing to the German industry all access to the raw material. Note the meaning of this choice. Either measure would have involved a sharp departure from Free Trade. An import duty on the oil would have protected our own industry. An export duty on the kernels aims at two objects: it protects our industry, but it also destroys the German industry. The old Protection was commonly a defensive policy: the new Protection is avowedly offensive. Its aim is not merely to benefit ourselves, but also to weaken and injure others. That is not the only objection to this method. It inflicts injury at the same time on the native colonial producer, nor does the injury to him involve a benefit to the home consumer. The duty of £2 a ton to be imposed for five years after the end of the war on all kernels exported from West Africa to foreign countries will probably be prohibitive, and Mr. Law has stated that if it should not prove to be so it will be raised. It will continue in peace the conditions which war had already brought about. The German buyer was eliminated, and the British buyers, representing a very small number of firms, were able to combine to lower the price paid for kernels. The price paid to the native rapidly fell, but the price paid by the home consumer at Liverpool did not fall with it.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> See the Commons debate of August 3, 1916, Mr. Molteno's speech in Hansard. The price per ton at Lagos fell from £19 in 1913 to £9 and £10 in 1915, and finally to £6 15s. When kernels cost £19 in Lagos, they stood at £24 in Liverpool. When they fell to £10 in Lagos, they rose to £25 3s. 9d. in Liverpool.

shipping interest was not to blame ; what happened was what might have been foreseen : the few dealers made a "corner" in kernels to the equal disadvantage of the native producer and the British consumer. The result must be a rapid decline in the prosperity of the colony.

We have in this instructive object-lesson an illustration of the comprehensive reaction which war commonly brings with it. The Coalition raced backwards, not to the Protection of the early nineteenth but to the mercantilism of the eighteenth century. This is the policy denounced by Adam Smith, the policy which destroyed the Spanish colonial empire, and with its "impertinent badges of slavery" jeopardized our own. It started from the premise that colonies are estates controlled by the mother country for its own exclusive commercial advantage. It applied this principle chiefly by drawing up ample lists of "enumerated" articles of colonial produce, which our colonists were forbidden to sell to any but British purchasers. The calculation was simple. By limiting the market open to the colonial producer our forefathers reckoned on keeping prices low for their own advantage, while by monopolizing many important raw materials they gave to our manufacturers an advantage over those of other nations. Mercantilism caused, while it dominated the world, an endless series of colonial wars between the French, the Spanish, the Dutch, and the British peoples—for it meant that only by seizing colonies for itself could a trading nation hope to thrive—and an endless series of colonial revolts, for it drove the colonists to protest against its doctrine of exploitation. If we are about to revive it in the twentieth century, the consequences can hardly be less disastrous to the world. It may be objected that one mischievous tax does not make mercantilism. But

we have pledged ourselves in the Paris Resolutions to continue in this course. The Allies are there bound to "conserve for the Allied countries before all others their natural resources" during the "transitional period of reconstruction," which is apparently to last for five years. If these words mean what they say, they imply that we shall refuse to supply Germany with coal, and that France will stop her former exports of iron-ore. They also mean (if they are applied in the spirit of the palm-kernel tax) that the Allies, who among them control Africa and subtropical Asia, will deny to German industry the raw materials which their overseas dominions produce. In some cases (e.g. palm-kernels) there is no alternative source of supply. In other cases the Germans will inevitably turn to the alternative sources of supply in Brazil, Venezuela, and the Dutch Indies, and endeavour by bargaining or by pressure to draw these neutrals within their economic camp, and even to monopolize their raw materials for German use. Indians and Egyptians might not be quite so helpless as West Africans, if we should forbid them to sell their cotton to German buyers: the new mercantilism would not be more conducive to loyalty than the old. But the worst consequence of this policy will be its reaction on international relations. It means that the whole politics of the world, its alliances, its sympathies, and its armaments will revolve inevitably round the question of raw materials. We shall arm and intrigue, and eventually we may have to fight, over iron and coal, copper and tin, oil and rubber. The attempt to destroy German industry (to prevent it "raising its head" is the correct ministerial phrase) by denying its access to raw materials means primarily that possessions beyond the seas and sea-power, which Mr. Churchill once described as a "luxury"

for Germany, will have become for her a dire necessity. Sooner or later, this time perhaps in alliance with the United States, she would be driven, if only to recover her pre-war level of commercial prosperity, to challenge our supremacy at sea. The Paris policy means the frank abandonment of that condition which, to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's mind, rendered our sea-power tolerable to the rest of the world: it means the end of commercial freedom. This forecast is perhaps too pessimistic. Formulæ rarely mean what they say, and statesmen, when they have spoken a phrase to amuse the gallery, forget it when hard facts confront them. The danger is not so much that we shall really follow the policy of "war after peace" with a consistent, ruthless, and intelligent purpose: it is that by playing with it in a spirit of demagogic levity, we shall stimulate the resistance of the enemy, prolong the war, and miss at the settlement the opportunity for a healing and constructive peace. There will be no League of Nations while a vestige of this policy remains, and that for two reasons: Germany will not enter such an association if we menace her future; America will not help to guarantee the peace of Europe if we make peace impossible by an egoistic policy. But even if this policy should survive the settlement, I refuse to believe in its permanence. Those dismal phrases, "war after war" and "war after peace" which to-day excite our elderly non-combatants and amuse our sedentary men of letters, stir in our soldiers a movement of contempt and disgust. They feel no hate (as one of them has put it) against "the men who sat opposite to us in the mud." They know what war is, and they want no more of it. They enlisted in the pathetic hope of making an end of wars. Their votes, when they can cast them, will turn the country to a policy more worthy of

its traditions and ideals. Flesh and blood will not for ever submit to be sacrificed in wars of tariffs and trade.

### A CONSTRUCTIVE ECONOMIC POLICY.

Let us turn from these controversial discussions to inquire what the economic policy of a League of Nations must be. The reader may object on the threshold that he sees no reason why a League of Nations should adopt any economic policy at all. "Each nation or group of nations," he may contend, "must settle its economic policy for itself. A League of Peace must pursue the limited but all-important object of securing peace, by enforcing the obligation to refer all disputes to some process of peaceful settlement. Commercial freedom may be a matter of the first importance, but it is no concern of the League's. Its only aim must be to enforce peace." This objection implies a curiously negative conception of peace. Peace must mean something more positive than the existence side by side of nations which just contrive to avoid bloodshed. If it be only the bare avoidance of war, it will stir no enthusiasm and enlist no loyalty. It must come to mean for us some conception of a worldwide human society, within which a sense of solidarity may grow up. It must learn to impose checks on national egoism, not merely because this egoism leads in the end to the horror and waste of war, but even more because nations are aware of a certain solidarity, and desire to exchange services, intellectual and economic, for their mutual good. This sense of corporate unity cannot be made by treaties or leagues: what these outward bonds can do is to create the material conditions in which it may develop. It will not develop (save by reaction) while Great Powers are using their military success

and their sea-power to refuse any reasonable expansion to their rivals, to monopolize for themselves the profitable enterprises of undeveloped countries, to close the markets of their colonies, and to reserve for themselves the raw materials which force has brought within their control. The attempt to enforce peace under such conditions would be impossible. No League, however powerful, can in the long run enforce peace, unless it will also enforce justice. It will be a hopeful undertaking to enforce peace, only when we have first removed the more general causes of war. Of these general causes the failure to recognize nationality is one, and we have argued that the League must be prepared to require from its members at least some elementary tolerance for the language, the culture, and the religion of racial minorities. No less important, as a general cause of war, is the failure to recognize commercial freedom. The world is not yet ripe for a proposal to establish universal Free Trade, though to me it seems that those who in all countries aim sincerely at peace must direct their thoughts and unite their efforts to this end. Short of this broad solution, however, there are some elementary economic principles which must even now be laid down, if nations are sincerely resolved to live in harmony.

The narrower conception of a League of Peace as an organization which functions only when it is called in to prevent a dispute from becoming a war, would hardly succeed for long in avoiding these economic issues. They would arise in dispute after dispute, and to attempt to solve them empirically, in each case as it arose, would be hazardous and unsatisfactory. Judge-made law is rarely an adequate substitute for legislation. Let us imagine a case. We will suppose that in spite of the Paris Resolutions the League of Nations has

been founded, and that Germany has joined it, and further that the war has ended as Allied opinion hopes that it will end. Germany has lost Lorraine. Her industries struggle to recover, but as the months go by, she finds that without an adequate supply of iron-ore she is faced with ruin. Her capitalists become clamorous, and her workers desperate. France, however, has forbidden the export of iron. Germany attempts to negotiate with France for the free export of the ores which she used to control in Lorraine. France refuses, and Germany thereupon calls upon the League to consider the dispute. The Council of Conciliation meets, and the neutral votes upon it are just numerous enough to lay down the general principle that no nation ought to be starved of an essential raw material in this way, and to recommend that France shall allow the free export of ore. France again refuses, appeals to the Resolutions of the Paris Conference, protests her loyalty to her Allies, and calls upon them for support. They give her their support—how could they do otherwise? She is carrying out their common policy. That would mean the disruption of the League. Such questions cannot be left to be solved step by step as the League develops. There must be some agreement at the start on the essentials of peaceful intercourse among civilized nations.

The case for a constructive economic policy as the basis of any League of Nations may be approached from another angle. Our thinking, while the war lasts, is inevitably preoccupied with questions of force. Force is to-day the only power at work in Europe. Even the current ideas of a League turn to force as its foundation. The American propagandist society has laid stress on this aspect in its title: it calls itself a League to "enforce" Peace. We seem unable to conceive



any international association which rests on anything better than threats. To some of its advocates in the American press the League is merely an international court of criminal justice, which is to deal, perhaps justly but certainly sharply, with any aggressive offender. The machinery for redressing grievances preoccupies these thinkers very little. They will recommend some kind of settlement when a dispute arises, but they will take no steps to ensure its adoption. They care more about stopping wars than about removing injustice. That commonly is the spirit of criminal justice. It will prevent a starving man from stealing a loaf, but it will not help him to earn his bread. Unless we can evolve somewhat beyond this harsh conception of international relations, the League may do something for law, it will do little for justice. A basis of force is indispensable as the world exists to-day, and a league which was not prepared to use concerted force to repress anarchic force would hardly be worth creating. For the moment we divide mankind into allies, enemies, and neutrals, and the sense of common interests and a common purpose in civilization has deserted us. As our thinking becomes more normal, we may realize that all fruitful associations, whether of individuals or of nations, must, in the end, find their sanction and their justification rather in advantages than in threats. Unless the nations who compose it can look upon the League with a sense of gratitude, they will never come to feel loyalty towards it. It must be their benefactor before it can hope to command their obedience. If it is ever regarded merely as an overwhelming association of forces too strong for resistance, it will, even at the height of its power, bear the seeds of its dissolution within itself. Nations must think of it as the once sundered fragments of nations think of the United Kingdom,

of United Italy, of the German Empire. It must be an association which, with a new security, has also given them an ampler intellectual life and a larger and more prosperous economic existence. Every union which has in the course of history commended itself and achieved permanence has had, in fact, this dual basis of advantage, spiritual and material. The ampler intellectual life will come of itself: it will be largely independent of organization, and will make its own organization as it comes to self-consciousness. The basis of material advantage must be organized, and something of its foundations must be apparent at the start. It would be futile to propose at this stage anything resembling the immense advantage of economic unity and complete internal freedom of trade which the United States, the United Kingdom, the German Zollverein, and United Italy were able to offer to their component States. But something of the kind we must offer. We are engaged in a difficult adventure. We are trying to make, consciously, artificially, a great association of peoples. There is no unity of race beneath it, nor of religious faith. So far from possessing the unifying influence of a common history of struggle and comradeship, it will inherit the memory of a bitter feud. There has been no slow growth of the spirit of unity as there always was in history. Bismarck and Cavour did not make Germany and Italy: they merely executed the aspirations of millions of Germans and Italians. Perhaps the aspiration towards the unity of civilization is deeper to-day than we can see. But the obstacles to the factitious creation of a League are so serious that we cannot afford to neglect the lesson that emerges from more natural and less conscious achievements. The narrower, parochial, provincial minds among Germans and Italians were reconciled to union,

because it carried with it evident gains to their commerce. To-day there are interests which imagine that they are going to derive immense advantages from a policy of commercial egoism: that it will be very profitable to destroy our chief commercial rival, to keep her colonies, and to monopolize the world's raw materials. They may be right. To some groups of financiers it will be profitable. Against them we must appeal to a broader calculation. It must be evident to most of mankind that the organization of peace does promise something to the general prosperity, not merely because it will diminish the waste of armaments, and may end the waste of wars, but also because at the same time it promises a measure of commercial freedom. The statesmanship of the League must learn to rely on this calculation. It must seek to keep nations loyally within it, not because they dread superior force and bow to threats, but because they see their interest in remaining within it. Inevitably we shall have to ask sacrifices from them. It will not always be easy for a strong Power to refrain from war when victory seems certain, nor to accept an award that tells against it, nor to keep its word to its own hurt. They must be made to feel that these sacrifices are trivial in comparison with what they gain. Is it not enough that they gain peace? Peace, to the generation which will grow up with no memory of this hideous war, may not appear a gain so clear as it seems to us. We live in an iron age, and the ideal advantages of peace are little regarded in comparison with the economic advantages. The surest way of keeping the League together will be to attach to membership of it economic advantages so evident and so large that no sane nation will venture to forfeit them by secession, or by disloyal conduct to bring about its own

eviction. Commercial freedom must be realized if the world is to have peace, and clearly it ought to come as the gift of the League. It has often been pointed out with much reason, especially by American writers, that an economic boycott of a self-willed Power might, if the world were united, avail as effectively as war to reduce it to reason. That is true only on one condition. The condition is that, before committing or meditating its offence against civilization, the Power in question were living in a condition of reciprocal intimacy with its neighbours, that it depended on its trade with them, and enjoyed in their markets advantages whose withdrawal would threaten its prosperity. If, on the other hand, we are all moving towards the conception of national economic independence, if we give few favours to others and receive few in return, if half the world is normally boycotting the other half, then clearly no use could be made of the economic weapon to ensure peace, and war would be the only effective means of enforcing the general will. The more the League of Nations can bring about a general condition of economic interdependence, the larger the diffused advantages of mutual commerce which it has secured to its members, the greater will be its power in an emergency to act through economic pressure and without the use of force. Nor need this strategy be confined to the future. On the contrary, the moment of all others when it may be used with the greatest effect will be at the settlement of this war. If the Allies of the Entente, with America behind them, can say to Germany: "Our purpose is to make an end of militarism, both yours and ours. Our terms include here and there some sacrifices, even it may be some territorial sacrifices in the interests of nationality which you may be reluctant to make. On the other hand, we

offer you, in addition to a reasonable colonial settlement, a degree of commercial freedom which the world has not hitherto known, assured by general and permanent conventions. Agree on your side to come into the League of Peace, and to discuss with us measures of general disarmament, and we, on our side, will work out with you a general charter of commercial freedom. Refuse your consent to the international organization of peace, and we withdraw our offer of an economic charter. The answer to your militarism, if you insist on maintaining it, will be on our side the withholding of the generous economic concessions which we are ready to discuss with you." Let us consider what such a charter of commercial freedom might include. It must touch on these four questions at least : (1) tariffs in home markets, (2) tariffs in colonial markets, (3) the regulation of the export of capital, and (4) guarantees for the access on equal terms of all industrial peoples to raw materials.

#### A CHARTER OF COMMERCIAL FREEDOM.

1. It must be assumed that no European Power is prepared to give up its sovereign power of devising tariffs for its own home market. None of the European Powers seem to be moving towards Free Trade, and our own attachment to it appears to be weakening. It is useless at this stage to suggest any restriction on the right of each Parliament to protect its own home trade by imposing such duties as it may see fit to fix. There is, however, one condition which ought to be laid down as the basis of any League of Nations : that its members shall not discriminate from any motive of political hostility against each other. It is our right, for example, if we wish to develop our manufacture of dyes,

to impose a duty, even a prohibitive duty, on all foreign dyes. That is an economic duty. Clearly if our intention is to protect the British producer, we must protect him as much against French and American dyes (if there are any) as against German dyes. A general, impartial duty involves no political hostility. A special duty imposed only on German dyes, or a differential duty with varying levels according to our sentimental affinities, is not economic Protection at all: it is political warfare. That we shall continue to feel political disapproval, distrust, and even resentment after the peace may be inevitable, but to perpetuate it and proclaim it by Act of Parliament is to destroy any hope of a League of Peace. Our tariff would be a prosaic Hymn of Hate. There is only one recognized and traditional guarantee against hostile political discrimination in trade, and that is a return to the general practice of the past, by which virtually every State, while it lived in outward friendship with its fellows, accorded to them and received from them "most favoured nation" treatment. The phrase sounds almost emotional in its generosity. It means, in fact, very little, but it does, at any rate, forbid tariff wars and boycotts. It would not prevent us from destroying the German trade with Great Britain in drugs and dyes, for, since we imported them from no other country, a duty, however general in form, would strike in effect only at German trade. All it does is to impose upon us a certain decency in the form of doing the thing. Germany would doubtless answer with a counter-blow at some speciality of ours, but still with the same appearance of impartiality. An agreement that all members of the League will accord "most favoured nation" treatment to each other in their home markets would, however, preclude boycotts and differential tariffs, and that is

virtually all that it would do. It is a negative but indispensable sign of peace.

Two difficulties arise in applying this formula. We accept tariff preferences from our colonies, though we allow none to them. When this policy was first originated it led to a tariff war between Germany and Canada, and to some rather delicate diplomatic passages between London and Berlin. In the end the status of our colonies as independent States in the matter of their tariffs was accepted. Plainly on this basis we could not on our side in the future give a preference to colonial trade without risking our own "most favoured nation" position in foreign markets. None the less to give favours to a colony is hardly an act of political hostility towards other peoples—certainly not in the same sense as a discrimination between foreign States would be. The difficulty would disappear, of course, if the whole British Empire were a true Customs Union (*Zollverein*), with a single tariff (high or low, protectionist or for revenue only) against all outsiders. The other difficulty turns on the peculiar relations of Austria and Germany. They are not merely allies of long standing; they are also neighbours, with somewhat similar institutions, a partial identity in race, and a common language in general use for trade. This is a much closer tie than exists between any of the Allies of the Entente. The Central Empires will certainly fail to create immediately the system of internal Free Trade which Dr. Naumann advocates. They may possibly (though not certainly) agree on a common tariff against the outer world, while adopting a lower tariff against each other. If we should object (as of course we should), and claim for ourselves equal treatment as "most favoured nation" with Austria, the German answer might be: "We have no colonies to compare with your

Canada and Australia. Legally they may be your colonies. In fact, they are independent sister nations. That is really our relation to Austria. She relies on us for military and economic support in a unique way. It is rather unreasonable that you by a legal quibble may receive preferences from your colonies, while we by the fiction of Austria's independence are debarred from accepting the same favours from her." There is some reason in this argument (which may never, in fact, be presented, for it is doubtful whether Austria-Hungary will accept the Central Europe idea), and it is worth considering whether in fairness such cases can be treated on different lines. If we object to Germany's receiving favoured tariff treatment from Austria, we probably ought to surrender the preferences which our self-governing colonies accord to us. The effect in both cases of this surrender of special privileges would probably be some desirable lowering of tariffs generally.

### COLONIAL FREE TRADE.

2. The suggestion put forward by the Belgian economist M. Henri Lambert, and also by the New York Reform Club, that all colonial Powers should agree to impose in their non-self-governing colonies tariffs for revenue purposes only, is far from being visionary, nor would it involve any violent or general change. It was our rule in India and the Crown Colonies, and it had been followed also in the German and Dutch colonies.

In none of these did the trade of the home merchant enjoy any advantage in the customs-house. The Berlin Convention of 1885 forbade all monopolies and made the impartial treatment of all overseas trade, whether from the mother country or from foreign countries, in respect of the free use



of rivers and ports, as well as in the matter of tariffs, an obligatory rule in the "conventional area" of the Congo—a wide term which covered all Equatorial Africa, including German East Africa. In practice it was ill-observed by the French, Belgians, and Portuguese, though even by them it was rather circumvented than defied. Formal pledges (whatever their value may be) of a similar kind have applied also to Morocco and Tunis. There seems to be no insuperable difficulty in extending this or some similar Convention to all colonies and spheres administered by Powers which adhere to the League. The chief opposition would come from France, but her objections might be overcome if as an article of the same settlement she recovered Lorraine. Russia is in an anomalous position, for though Siberia and Central Asia resemble colonies, they are legally on the same footing as any other part of the Russian Empire. If this case were not pressed against Russia, that might stand to her credit side in the balance of the settlement. If the proposal seems too large (and why should it be so?), it might at least be adopted, by way of a beginning, as a general rule for all Africa—excluding perhaps Algeria and certainly the self-governing dominion of South Africa. The case for it follows so necessarily from our previous argument that it needs no enlargement here. Apart from the fact that all experience proves that colonies do not thrive under a system of monopoly, it is clear that only by allowing to all comers a general use of the advantages of colonial trade can the Powers which chanced, by the good fortune of past history or the use of their greater sea-power, to acquire great colonial estates, protect themselves against the inevitable jealousy of others.

## THE EXPORT OF CAPITAL.

3. It is much more difficult, but it is hardly less important, to devise some means by which the capital of the various industrial peoples may enjoy some approach to equality of opportunity overseas. The case for creating some organization to secure this end is in principle the same as the case for the opening of the non-self-governing colonies to equality of trade in goods. In the modern world the export of capital has become perhaps more important, and certainly more contentious, than the trade in goods. The opportunities for large investments in loans, railways, harbour works, and mines are peculiarly valued, and because they involve direct dealings with the Government (native or European) of the territories in question, they inevitably engage the attention of diplomacy, and lead almost as inevitably to international rivalry, not merely between national groups of financiers but also between their Governments. The struggle to "develop" some potentially wealthy area commonly ends (after it has done its full tale of mischief to the relations of the competing Powers and left its mark on their naval and military budgets) in an agreement by which "spheres of influence" are recognized as monopoly areas for the enterprise of a particular nation. The result is commonly fatal to the independence of a weak State which is monopolized or partitioned in this way, and the Power which has got the big concessions is also in a privileged position in pushing its ordinary trade in goods in the local market. Most of the rivalry of the Powers in the past generation has turned on this economic issue of the export of capital, in Egypt, Morocco, Asiatic Turkey, Korea, Manchuria, China, and Persia; and the struggle for a Balance of Power in Europe, with its restless groupings, combinations, and arma-

ments, had for one of its chief motives, probably its chief motive, the decision of the question which of them should control the economic development of these great areas overseas.<sup>1</sup> To break down the customs barriers which protect some of the colonies of certain Great Powers is not a complete solution of this question. No Power does in practice admit foreign contractors or financiers to a share in the construction of public works or allow them to build commercial railways. In this respect even our own policy is one of monopoly (perhaps inevitably), both in India and tropical Africa. Such enterprises are now regarded as "political," and in respect to them it cannot be said that we practise without large reservation the policy of the "Open Door." While this is so, the pressure from other Powers, especially from Germany, to obtain "places in the sun" and monopoly areas of their own is bound to continue.

So long as the dread of war remains, every Power will maintain its objection to the participation of foreign finance in enterprises within its own territories which are political or strategical, especially in railways. The Berlin Convention neutralized the Congo area, and laid down the principle that even in the event of war among the Powers which control it, their colonies within it should be treated as neutral territory. This admirable and humane provision has been violated during this war. Had it been observed, it might have been possible to propose as part of a wider agreement for the establishment of commercial freedom in Africa, that the capital

<sup>1</sup> There is a brief but masterly statement of this question in Mr. Hobson's essay on "The Open Door" in "Towards a Lasting Settlement" (Allen and Unwin, 2s. 6d.) and also in "The New Protectionism." It is the principal subject of my book "The War of Steel and Gold" (Bell, 2s.). See also Walter Lippmann, "The Stakes of Diplomacy" (Henry Holt & Co.).

of all the chief industrial and colonizing Powers should share in the work of railway building in Africa. Failing a broad international solution of this kind, which may one day be feasible, we cannot meanwhile resist the case for a fairer distribution of economic opportunities which involve "political" concessions. For this reason it has been argued in the previous chapters that, with some reservations, we should as a balance for concession to nationality in Europe (1) recognize the prior claim of Germany in the economic development of Asiatic Turkey (excluding Armenia and perhaps Syria), and (2) restore, rearrange, and facilitate the enlargement by purchase of the German colonial dominions in Equatorial Africa.

Africa is already partitioned, and in one way or another the destinies of Turkey will be determined by this war. The rest of Asia is occupied or annexed, with one large exception—China. The political problem of the export of capital relates now primarily to two great regions of the world, China and Latin America. The Monroe Doctrine for the present excludes South America from the arena of strife. That doctrine has received from Mr. Wilson a larger extension than from any former President of the United States, and it now opposes a barrier to concession-seeking by European Powers. His view is that European capital, if it wishes to share in South American enterprises, may invest in South America as it would in North American companies. The European capitalist would probably answer that his initiative and his management are as necessary as his money, if South America is to be "developed," and he would want to know whether the Government of Washington, while opposing European concession-seekers in South America (as it has lately done), will frown equally upon those of its own nationality. There may lie

latent in this question of South American concessions a serious cause of strife between Europe and the United States, but it is not urgent or likely to confront us for long after this war is over. Europe will not have a great surplus of capital for exportation, nor will its Governments care to pursue a contentious issue in the New World. It seems capable of two solutions: (1) that the prohibition of concession-hunting be applied impartially, and that diplomacy (including that of the United States) should in Latin America refuse to touch this dangerous and speculative business. The result would be that all the available money would go to the orderly "A, B, C" States (Argentine, Brazil, and Chili), while the rest of the continent would be neglected until its civilization is more advanced; or else (2) that an International Commission, representing the United States, the "A, B, C" States, and the chief European Powers, should regulate the allocation of economic opportunity in the less advanced portions of South America. To this latter solution, however, the Monroe Doctrine may be opposed and so interpreted as to exclude European enterprise altogether.

The question of China is urgent and cannot be postponed. Japan has used the opportunity of the war to demand for herself a general hegemony in China, with rights over the appointment of "advisers" and "instructors" which amount to a claim to exercise a protectorate. The Chinese have managed to resist Japan's more sweeping claims, but her recent alliance with Russia has placed her in a strong position. This immense area for capitalistic development will not be abandoned by Great Britain, the United States, and Germany without a struggle. The real issue is whether a solution will be sought by delimiting spheres of influence or on international lines. The former solution would

mean in the long run the partition and the disruption of the Chinese Republic, which of itself tends to split up. The latter solution would conserve the independence and integrity of China, avoid a dangerous scramble for spheres between the Powers, and test the ability of the League of Nations to follow a constructive policy of internationalism. It is not feasible, in dealing with a weak, corrupt, and disunited Republic, to propose that diplomacy should stand aside and leave the Chinese Government itself to treat directly with financial groups, whose morals are often predatory. One plan would be to encourage European, Japanese, and American financiers to form international syndicates for banking, railway, and mining development which would operate over the whole territory of the Republic, thus avoiding the delimitation of national spheres. Questions arising between these syndicates and the Chinese Government might be decided by an International Commission, nominated by the League of Nations. It might (following a slightly different line of thought) be possible to create for them an international legal status—to invent the conception of an international legal personality—so that they might sue or be sued before the Court of The Hague. In any event, it seems essential to create for a term of years an International Commission, composed of men who, while understanding finance, could be trusted to deal honourably with China. This Commission must represent all the Governments chiefly concerned (Great Britain, the United States, Japan, Germany, Russia, and France), and enjoy full powers to control the operations of foreign capital in China, with a mission to avoid international conflicts and preserve the political independence of China.

## ACCESS TO RAW MATERIALS.

4. The war has familiarized us with the control of raw materials by the belligerent Governments, and with the use of this control as an instrument of policy. Shall we, after the war, relapse into the old habit of free, individualistic trading? In other words, when an "enemy" German firm, an Allied Italian firm, or a neutral Greek firm want to buy steam coal, will they all compete freely on equal terms with the British buyers at Cardiff and pay a price which is regulated solely by supply and demand? If that should be so, and if the sale of iron-ore, copper, rubber, palm-kernels, and other important raw materials is equally free, there is no acute political problem. But the Paris Resolutions contemplate the continued official regulation of the international supply of raw materials. The Allies not only agree to "conserve" these resources for each others' use, but "undertake to establish special arrangements to facilitate the interchange of these resources." That means, if it is anything more than verbiage, an end of "commercial freedom" altogether, and the establishment in a period of nominal peace of a militaristic quasi-socialism which must subject all the chief articles of international exchange to rigid regulation. Raw materials will no longer move freely across the seas from producer to consumer in obedience to economic demand: they will have become pawns in the diplomatic game. The intention is, of course, to starve German industry. But have the architects of this policy reflected on the consequences to other nations? Take, for example, the case of Italy, which has no coal of her own and depends almost absolutely on supplies bought from us. German writers, who enjoy cynical plain speaking, sometimes predicted, even before this war, that this single fact, which

placed her whole economic life at our mercy, would force Italy to remain in our camp. It is wiser not to inquire too closely into the diplomatic mysteries of the recent past. Looking into the future, however, it is plain that, up to a certain point, our Foreign Office, if it can control Italy's coal supply, can control Italy's foreign policy. Repeat this illustration indefinitely, and it is plain that an alliance which will control a great proportion of the world's raw materials may dictate to the world. The system of "rationing" little neutrals must continue, and diplomacy will not be diplomacy if it doles out our "national resources" without some political equivalent. The system might normally be administered slackly and mildly. In times of tension it would be tightened, and it might then become the most terrific instrument of oppression which the world has known. There could be no freedom in such a world, and if there is no freedom there will be no peace.

Can we go back to free exchange and the open market? It is doubtful whether we can. War has given an impetus to the consolidation of trade into national groups, and there will be more trusts, cartels, and syndicates in the world than ever before, and inevitably Governments will have to control them. Even without a diplomatic motive there was a good deal of this undesirable control of natural resources before the war. Brazil restricted the export of the coffee crop; Germany limited the output of artificial fertilizers—in both cases solely to keep up prices. Much worse was the conduct of those ingenious persons who, having discovered in India the only workable deposit of the rare mineral required for the manufacture of incandescent mantles, sold it cheaply to the German and charged a prohibitive price to the British manufacturer. If national syndicates of consumers can monopolize



raw materials in this way, the effect, though not political in intention, may be extremely irritating and destructive of good international relations. The effect of the war has been to make it probable that all these essays in monopoly will be extended, organized, and dominated by a definite political purpose—here to control and there to ruin another nation. A League of Nations could not ignore this fruitful source of resentment and oppression. The way out has been indicated by the Paris Resolutions. There must be “special arrangements to facilitate the interchange of these resources.” But over the conduct and control of these arrangements all the nations which adhere to the League, the small peoples as well as the Great Powers, the “enemies” as well as the Allies, must have a share. The less interference there is with free exchange the better: “rationing” is at best a cumbersome, offensive, and risky system. But wherever there is interference, above all, wherever there is an attempt to use the pressure of monopoly for diplomatic ends, there the aggrieved nation must have a right of appealing to a standing International Commission on Raw Materials, which will administer and enforce the League’s principle of commercial freedom. If any Power should persistently defy that principle, and frustrate the work of the Commission, it would have to answer an indictment before the Courts and Councils of the League itself, and the penalty for its continued defiance would be the withdrawal from it of the privileges secured to it in this charter. “Most favoured nation” treatment in the home markets of the member States, and equality of treatment for its trade in their colonies, are valuable privileges. The power to cancel them where there is gross and continued offending and to expel the offender from the League, will be the chief sanction at its disposal. The ability of the

League to control offenders, to redress oppression, and to check aggression must not be measured in terms of its military power alone. The less we parade that, the sooner shall we reach the atmosphere of reasonable discussion and conference. The real power and the ultimate authority of the League must rest on its ability to confer benefits. If it assures to the world, not peace alone but commercial freedom, not commercial freedom only but with it the political freedom which commercial monopoly in the hands of diplomacy would threaten, it will command the loyalty of nations by its title to their gratitude.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE LEAGUE

THE difficulty of drafting a formal constitution, real as it is, is perhaps the least of all the obstacles which confront a League of Nations. No promise to arbitrate and no machinery to enforce arbitration will preserve the world from war, unless it has first removed by a bold treatment of the questions of nationality and economic expansion the chief causes of war. If the elementary rights of nationality are still insecure, if the Powers are still divided into two unyielding groups of allies, if sea-power can be so used as to impair commercial freedom and check the legitimate expansion of growing nations, the task of a League which attempted from crisis to crisis to impose reason upon an anarchical world would be impossible. Whether at the settlement of the war, or in Congresses which immediately follow it, some general principles must be laid down for the ordering of our chaos, and these principles must serve as the basis of the League of Nations. In the previous pages an attempt, inevitably hasty and tentative, has been made to explore this difficult ground. The suggestions which have so far been discussed may be summarized briefly as follows: (1) That every adherent of the League must agree to respect the cultural liberty of racial minorities; (2) that the obligations of allies to each other must, in case of conflict, yield to their obligation to the League; (3) that the extremer uses of sea-power shall be reserved for wars

declared or sanctioned by the League; (4) that a general recognition of commercial freedom and commercial amity shall obtain within the League, which will by international commissions safeguard the "Open Door" for capital and trade, and ensure free access to raw materials in an open market. A world which recognized these principles might contrive to work the difficult machinery of conference and arbitration. A world absorbed in the pursuit by rival alliances of the balance of power, a world distracted by the spectacle of oppressed and persecuted races, a world abandoned to the greeds and hatreds of a trade war, would profess in vain its zeal for the abstract principle of arbitration. No promise will hold nations who pursue an ideal of national egoism, and no common action for a disinterested end could be organized among them. These principles, or something like them, are the indispensable charter of any League of Nations which hopes to maintain an enduring peace. If we can start from this basis, but not sooner, we may go on to consider the specific question of the obligations into which the members of the League shall enter, the Courts, Councils, and Conferences by which it shall conduct its common life, and the sanctions by which their decisions shall be enforced. These constitutional questions have already been the subject of close study, both in our country and in America. In the sketch which follows, I shall attempt to give a brief outline of the results of these discussions, and to note certain divergencies and doubtful points in the schemes which are generally accepted.

#### THE FUNDAMENTAL OBLIGATION.

The problem of stating the fundamental obligation which must underlie any League of Nations would seem to be the most difficult of all, but it is

precisely here that the fullest measure of unanimity exists. It seems to be agreed that no Sovereign State will, as yet, so far abandon its own self-determined independence as to renounce the right in the last resort to go to war for the maintenance or advancement of its own interests. There is, however, a general belief that even to-day civilized States will pledge themselves to submit to a certain delay in order to allow of the discussion on its merits of every dispute, by the appropriate process, before the most suitable Court or Council. That is the minimum on which any League of Peace could be founded. There is also agreement in dividing disputes into two categories, (1) those which are justiciable, and can be decided by legal process before such an arbitral tribunal as the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, and (2) those which involve broader questions of policy and are unsuitable for legal settlement.

The first class of disputes will include questions of the interpretation of treaties, all questions covered by international law, questions of fact as to breaches of international obligation, questions of the reparation due for such breaches, and boundary disputes in so far as they depend upon treaties. Such questions rarely lead to war, unless they are deliberately used as pretexts to cover wider differences. It should lie with the Permanent Court of The Hague, or with any Court which may replace it, to decide whether a dispute is of a justiciable character. Some propose that members of the League should pledge themselves in the general treaty to abide by the decision of the Court. This would be in form a great step in advance, but it is not strictly necessary, for a long experience of arbitration shows no instance of a refusal by any Government, when once it has gone to arbitration, to accept the award of the Court.

The disputes of the second category include all the wider questions of policy which in fact lead to war—the questions of “honour and vital interest” which are commonly excluded from the scope of treaties of arbitration. These must be submitted to a Council of Conciliation, which will have no recognized code of political wisdom to apply to them, and can only make a recommendation based on common sense and the political morality of the day, a decision which will not claim to render ideal justice, but will aim in the given circumstances at a practical adjustment which may avail to keep the peace. It is not proposed that the States involved shall pledge themselves to accept the Council’s recommendations, nor that the League itself shall be bound to enforce them. The essence of the obligation is simply that no member of the League will go to war until his case has been submitted to the Council of Conciliation, and for some short period after it has made its report. The exact definition of the time limit need not detain us at this stage. There must be some provision against dilatory procedure by the Council, and there must also be some period of grace after it has reported, in which further steps may be taken to renew negotiations and permit public opinion to act. The Council must report, say, within twelve months—perhaps too long a limit. The period of grace after the issue of its report ought not to be less than six months. Nor is it sufficient to forbid actual war within this period of delay. It has been suggested that all “hostile preparations” against any signatory Power should be forbidden. Certainly mobilization must be forbidden.

#### THE MORATORIUM.

On the novel principle of a moratorium for hostilities all these schemes are based. There

is, I think, a tendency to place too much faith in the benefits of mere delay. American writers commonly refer to it as a "cooling-off" time, and beneath their insistence on it there lies a somewhat optimistic psychology of war. The suggestion is that nations go to war only in hot blood, often over trifles, and always under the influence of the sensational press or the demagogue. Allow time for passions to cool, and no nation will go to war. There are two assumptions here. The first of them is that on a cool view, and with sufficient deliberation, nations will rarely go to war, and the second is that delay will promote coolness. Both assumptions are questionable. Some nations will cherish for a generation the project of some necessary change, scheme and arm for the inevitable struggle, bend all their minds to it, and march with full knowledge into a war of which the last details have been thought out. That is what Bulgaria did in 1912 against Turkey in order to win Macedonia, and no moratorium would have "cooled" her perfectly cold and deliberate resolve. The only way to prevent that war would have been to liberate Macedonia without war. Further, will delay make for coolness? Perhaps it will when the Atlantic separates the disputants. In Europe, however, across conterminous land frontiers the year of inquiry and delay would commonly be a period of tension and apprehension. Each side would wonder week by week what the other was doing. "Is he inventing a new battle-plane, a 'tank,' a submarine, a new explosive? Is he stealthily mobilizing? Is he laying up great stores of munitions?" Rumours and lies and suspicions would heat the air to an intolerable temperature. It is proposed to forbid "hostile preparations," including of course, chiefly mobilization. Could any human power secure the literal observance of this provision?

Any Power, in such a case, would at least insist on overhauling its equipment, completing its railways, perfecting its plans, and drilling every available man. Nor would this prohibition tell impartially. It puts a premium on a state of constant preparedness. A militarist Power, always armed and ready, would lose nothing by it. An easy-going, pacific Power would be condemned to remain unready during the crucial year. Two morals emerge from this brief examination of the idea of a moratorium. (1) To dwell on the gains of delay unduly may lead us to think too much of the means of preventing an outbreak of war, and too little of the means of enforcing the changes which can alone avail to make war unnecessary. (2) To ensure the observance of the rule as to "hostile preparations" demands a much higher development of international organization than most of these schemes contemplate. A query should be marked against this particular phrase. Mobilization by Powers engaged in arbitration or conciliation must certainly be forbidden, but it would be difficult and it might be unfair to forbid them to furbish up their equipment, and to lay up stores of food and munitions.

#### THE SANCTIONS OF THE OBLIGATION.

The fundamental obligation is, then, that no member of the League shall go to war [or mobilize its army or fleet?] until it has submitted its case to arbitration or conciliation and allowed an interval [of six months?] to elapse after the Council or Tribunal has issued its recommendation or award. What is to happen thereafter we shall presently discuss. The first question is to consider what steps the League will take to ensure that this fundamental obligation shall be observed. It is un-



necessary to repeat the argument scattered throughout the previous chapters, that in the last resort the League must be prepared to enforce this obligation. That is the whole meaning of President Wilson's teaching, that in a world conscious of its international obligations, no nation can henceforward stand by indifferent when another violates international right. We may hope that the mere knowledge of this resolve would usually avail to ensure loyalty to the fundamental pledge of the League. Against some Powers it might suffice to use economic pressure—first to refuse them loans and forbid the sale of munitions to them, then to exclude their ships from all the ports of the League, and, finally, to lay an absolute embargo on all their communications with the outer world, whether by land or sea. The last measure would be apt to lead to war, unless the State in question were a small one. The possibility of a war by the League against some defiant Power cannot be ignored, and ought not to be minimized. However the obligation to join in such a war may be worded, it would be cowardly to shirk the central fact that the League must contemplate the possibility of such common wars. It follows that it must prepare for them, and the risk that they will occur will be the greater in proportion as the organization to conduct them is weak and unready. A disloyal Power will challenge the League only if it hopes to find it unprepared and disunited, and gambles on the chance of achieving its end before the great unwieldy mass can be set in motion.

One way of securing the necessary cohesion and decision within the League may be to make its statutory obligation extremely definite and drastic—to exact from all its members the pledge that in the event of a breach of its fundamental provision they will, if necessary, go to war against the offender. This is the basis both of the American League

to enforce Peace and of the British League of Nations Society. They say bluntly "the signatory Powers shall jointly use forthwith both their economic and military forces" against the offender. Another way of defining the undertaking would be to say that the members of the League will support any fellow-member who may be attacked in defiance of the fundamental obligation of the League with such concerted measures, economic or military, as may be most effective and appropriate. This implies an obligation in certain circumstances to go to war. It is still too vague, however, for it does not yet tell us what organ of the League shall decide what measures are effective and appropriate (whether an economic boycott, for example, will suffice), nor does it attempt to define to what extent each Power is committed to share in the common war. The latter point is crucial, for clearly little is gained by extracting in advance a promise to go to war, if the obligation can be discharged by a formal declaration of war, followed by the dispatch for the sake of appearances of a gunboat to the scene of operations, or a small expeditionary corps to one of the enemy's colonies. From some of the minor members of the League this, perhaps, is all that would be required. But the common war might come to a lamentable end if the Great Powers were to act in this spirit. An alliance which "means business" commonly stipulates that each ally shall make a certain minimum contribution, and put a certain number of men in the field. Stipulations of this kind would be of little use, however, to a League of Nations, which, unlike most alliances, might have to act anywhere and (theoretically) against any Power. It will break down unless several of the greater Powers are prepared to use their whole strength at need in its service, while the others join, at least passively, by maintaining a boycott of the

enemy. The exact conditions of such a war cannot be foreseen, which means that effective action will depend on the League's possessing a strong and vigilant Executive Council, which will assign to each member his part in the common effort. None of the published schemes, as it happens, provide for the creation of any executive authority whatever.

This academic argument may be sound in theory, but it takes no account of the prejudices of Sovereign States. One would expect that they will be chary of promising to take part in a common war, that they will be still more reluctant to define their contribution to it in advance, and most reluctant of all to allow any executive to dictate to them what part they will play in it. None the less Lord Grey has laid special stress on the obligation to take part in common wars. Two difficulties especially present themselves: (1) Will any Power (if alliances survive the war) really promise to take an active part in applying forcible coercion to an ally? Are we going to invade France in co-operation with a German army, if France should make war on Germany on some "question of honour" over which she refused to arbitrate? Is Germany going to join Italy, in similar circumstances, in an invasion of Austria? If the undertaking were given, it would be only because both allies were convinced that the case would never arise. (2) More delicate still is the position of the smaller European States. Are Holland and Denmark going to promise to make war (if the case should arise) on Germany, knowing very well that their geographical situation might expose them to the fate which befell Belgium in this war, before the lumbering forces of the League could come to their aid? It is easy for British and American advocates of the League to lay down these onerous obligations in drastic and absolute terms, for we run little risk of enduring the worst horrors of

war. But Holland and Denmark are unlikely to face such risks lightly against Germany, while Sweden and Roumania would feel equally prudent in regard to Russia. Is it likely that Japan or the Latin-American Republics will promise to share in every common war in Europe, or necessary that they should do so? A League of Nations might perhaps be formed without these small States, but in that case, dominated as it would be by the Great Powers, it might be tempted to follow towards the smaller nations an overbearing or contemptuous policy, while, for want of the element of impartiality which they can contribute, it would in its turn suffer heavily by their absence. A League of Nations from which the smaller peoples were excluded might come to bear an unpleasant resemblance to the Holy Alliance.

The fact is that we are not yet sufficiently in possession of the continental view to carry this discussion very far as yet. It must inevitably differ somewhat from the British and American view. The question whether the League is workable depends very little upon paper treaties. This war has offered us the spectacle of two States, one of them a Great Power, actually engaged in hostilities with the Central Empires to which in August 1914 they were still bound by treaties of alliance. Peoples must pledge themselves as well as Governments. The League will be a reality only if the chief nations adhere to it with sincerity. If the peoples of Britain, France, Russia, Germany, and the United States mean that it shall succeed, formulæ are a secondary consideration. On the whole, the best formula might be one which pledged the League to secure the desired end, while leaving its Executive to devise the means. It might be worded somewhat as follows :—

When a breach of the fundamental obligation of the League is threatened, the Executive of the League shall forthwith determine

by what means, military or economic, its observance may be secured. The States which adhere to the League shall give their support to such common measures as the Executive may prescribe in accordance with the undertakings which each of them shall have given on its entry into the League.

This form of the pledge contemplates the probability that some States may make reservations—that some will not bind themselves in advance in all cases to join in military measures against an ally, that some will share in economic but not necessarily or in all cases in military measures, or that they will share to a limited extent, in certain fields, or with so many ships and so many army corps. Better such reservations honestly made at the start than faithlessness when the emergency arises. It may be necessary to make some distinction in status between the Great Powers and the smaller nations. The former alone may be willing to promise in all cases to enforce the fundamental treaty by arms, and they alone would be represented on the Executive. The latter would adhere to the League and enjoy its advantages, but their share in its common military operations would depend on circumstances and their own free will. They cannot, however, escape all contributions nor all risks : the strategic use of their territory, for example, and their help in an embargo, might be necessary for the conduct of an effective campaign.

These military questions lead us into difficult ground. They must be faced, but it is possible to exaggerate their importance. In practice I believe that the provision on which Chapter VI laid stress—that allies shall not support each other against the League—is really the clue to the military problem, and would of itself suffice in all the graver cases to ensure the authority of the League. If a lawless Power can be isolated, there is force enough to ensure its defeat in the rest of the world, even if its

own allies and the smaller States took no active military part against it. Let us not lose sight of the possibility of using a more persuasive strategy to hold the League together. It cannot dispense with arms. But it will go ill with it if it comes to rely on force alone. Its best course is to link its members by internal cohesion, to attract and hold them by economic advantages which they will be loath to forfeit by disloyalty.

### THE LEAGUE AND OUTSIDERS.

The American draft of the principles of the League provides for no means of defence, if a member of the League is attacked by a State which has not adhered to it, or by a State which has seceded from it. This oversight would wreck any League from the start. If any Power wished to behave aggressively, all it need do is to remain outside the League, or to step outside it, in order to enjoy complete immunity. The League will be called upon to coerce its own members only if they adhere to it insincerely. If it has to act, it will usually be against outsiders or seceders. We cannot at present foresee what States will adhere to the League: that may depend on how far it uses economic privileges as its force of attraction. No commercial Power could afford to remain outside it, if the enjoyment of large commercial advantages is dependent on membership. But clearly it cannot be assumed that all States will join it. If the League is to maintain peace in the world, it must pledge its members (as in Article IV. of the British version) to mutual defence against outsiders. Should it fail to do this, it will never replace the old alliances, and if it is to these that nations must look for security, the League will maintain a feeble academic life beside them, forgotten and ignored.

## THE ENFORCEMENT OF AWARDS.

So far we have considered only the steps by which the League may seek to prevent the outbreak of lawless war. It will by these measures ensure a period of delay before disputes can culminate in war. The Council will issue its recommendations, and the constitution of the League then requires a further delay of six months, during which the Council's report may be considered by Parliament and public opinion in the nations concerned. They may resume direct negotiations and agree between themselves to settle their dispute more or less on the lines recommended. They will be aware that the civilized world expects from them some deference to an impartial report; they will be subject to considerable moral pressure, and each will know that if it becomes involved in war through its failure to adopt the Council's report, the public opinion of the rest of the League will be against it.

In all minor disputes and in some grave disputes this would suffice (if the Council's recommendations were themselves equitable and moderate) to bring about a peaceful settlement. Neither the British nor the American draft proposes any further action to ensure peace or to enforce the Council's recommendation. Some reserve is essential in this matter. It is neither possible nor desirable that the nations of the League should bind themselves to enforce the report of the Council. One cannot bind millions of men to act on the opinions of a bare majority of a non-elected Council, however distinguished it may be. Moreover, if this tremendous responsibility did attach to the decisions of the Council, it would with difficulty confine its thoughts to the merits of the question, nor would the Governments behind the Councillors be willing to allow them to speak and vote freely. A

Councillor must not be hampered by the thought that if he votes for an equitable settlement, he may be committing his own country to war. On the other hand, it seems a mockery of justice that the civilized world should hold back two States from war, call upon its ablest men to recommend a settlement of their dispute, and then wash its hands of the consequences if the stronger of the two (after waiting for the prescribed term) laughs at the Council's proposals and proceeds to fall upon the weaker. Morally the Power which ignores the voice of impartial justice is as clearly the aggressor as the Power which goes to war without waiting for it to speak. When in any dispute one of the parties will accept the Council's decision and the other will not, the League can hardly fail to discriminate between them. It seems essential that from the moment that the Council has reported, the League's Executive must prepare itself for some possible action. The two disputants may negotiate directly with success, but a further offer of mediation by one or more of the Powers may now be a hopeful step, for, by some adroit modifications, the Council's report may be made acceptable to them both. If one of the two is clearly in the right and the other as clearly in the wrong, then it can hardly be disputed that the League ought to defend the former and repress the latter, and that it must enforce, if not the Council's actual recommendations, at least some minimum based upon them. Unless, in the long run, and by one expedient or another, the League can ensure some elements of justice to its members, and bring about changes in the *status quo* which are urgent and necessary, it will not succeed in preventing wars. In some cases, however, the issue may not be clear, and in others both disputants may reject the Council's decision. There are many courses before the Executive. It may



announce that it will make common cause on behalf of the League with one of the disputants, if necessary by arms. It may threaten to expel one or both of them from the League and cut them off from its economic privileges. It may be content to apply temporary economic pressure—a boycott or embargo—to one or both of them. It may wash its hands of their quarrel, hold the ring, and enforce the strictest reading of neutral rights against them both, refusing to either of them the right to have recourse to an embargo or a blockade (see p. 207). At the least it must remind the allies of the State which becomes involved in war, by reason solely of its own failure to adopt the Council's decision, that it expects them to remain neutral (see p. 183). It seems essential to add to the two model drafts a provision to this effect: that if any Power should fail to accept or to give effect to the award of the Tribunal, or the report of the Council of Conciliation, the Executive of the League shall meet forthwith to devise such collective action (if any) as it may be expedient to take to meet this situation.

#### THE EXECUTIVE OF THE LEAGUE.

A League which intends to act must acknowledge some executive authority. Neither of the drafts before us provides for it, and presumably the draughtsmen assumed that when action was required, the Governments of the member States would confer among themselves, either by telegraphing right and left to one another or by summoning a conference. Discussion by telegram between eight or more centres involves time and is apt to lead to misunderstanding. Conferences, if they must be called for each special occasion, involve still more time. Unless we make some provision to the

contrary, the smallest of civilized States would have a right to be consulted. Must the League wait, before it can act to prevent an outbreak of war in the Balkans, until it has consulted the Latin-American republics, or until an envoy from Buenos Ayres or Tokio has travelled to The Hague? If the League starts with such a constitution, it will either find that it cannot act and will fall to pieces, or else three or four of the greater Powers will form a habit of acting for it. It seems essential that the League should have a permanent Executive, that it should sit at a fixed centre; and probably it ought to represent only the Great Powers, though it should summon others to consult with it when their interests are directly affected.

The term "executive" is perhaps a misnomer. The real Executive will always be the Cabinets of the Great Powers. No Government would place in the hands of any representative the right to commit it to steps which might involve war. If the Executive consists of eight men, representing the six European Great Powers, the United States, and Japan,<sup>1</sup> each of the eight will, in fact, be an Ambassador, who will keep in constant telegraphic communication with his Government. In effect he might come to be regarded as a more important personage than the Foreign Minister, for in his hands would lie all the graver issues of policy; but clearly he must be the nominee of his Government, obeying detailed instructions and subject at any moment to recall. From time to time certain Ministers of the Great Powers might attend the Council, as the leading statesmen of the Allies have met in this war. The Executive of the League would be, in short, a Cabinet of the Cabinets of the Great Powers.

<sup>1</sup> Japan may not wish to take part where the issue at stake is purely European.

The alternative of telegraphic communications through ambassadors between the eight capitals would throw us back upon the dilatory procedure of the old Concert. It would, moreover, be no one's business to set it in motion—if motion be the name for its actions and inactions. The model for the League's Executive is to be sought rather in the Conference of London which sat during the Balkan wars. It might move in rotation among the capitals of the Great Powers, sitting in each of them, under the presidency of the Foreign Minister. That would have awkward consequences when the Power in question was involved in a current dispute. It seems better that the Executive should have a fixed seat in some city, which should come to be regarded as the capital of the League. This city might be Constantinople, if any sort of international régime is established there. No other city save Rome would make the same appeal to the world's imagination. A city in neutral Switzerland might be chosen, either Berne or Geneva. Luxemburg is a possibility. Probably the best choice (failing Constantinople) would be The Hague, which already has its associations. The Executive would then consist of the Ministers (raised, of course, in their standing) accredited to the Dutch sovereign, and its chairman and convener might be either that sovereign's delegate or, preferably perhaps, one of the Ministers themselves, chosen by vote, rotation, or seniority. They would necessarily have a capable suite of military, naval, legal, and commercial attachés. The military and naval attachés would form an Advisory General Staff for the League, which would watch over any arrangements it may make for the reduction of armaments, and conduct communications when forcible action was required. The commercial attachés would be charged in the same way with a watching brief

over the League's policy of commercial freedom. If a Commission is nominated to deal with raw materials, its seat would be here. Here, too, would sit the Tribunals and the Council of the League, and here would naturally be gathered the offices of the Postal Union and other existing international institutions.

#### THE CAPITAL OF THE LEAGUE.

The chosen city would come to be the physical embodiment of the international idea. Let us not neglect the task of endowing the League with some imaginative appeal to the masses of mankind. It must seem to exist somewhere, to have some corporeal form, if it is to impress the plain man and the growing child. The conception which children in elementary schools all over Europe form of it, when teachers try to explain to them that the Great War ended in the creation of a League of Nations to maintain a lasting peace, may in the end matter more to the future of the League than all the details of its constitution. If the children of the European masses grow up with some definite cosmopolitan idea which has gripped their imagination and touched their emotions, as the idea of the Fatherland does to-day, then, and only then, will the League exist in the hearts of mankind. The child must be able to visualize the League under some figure: his thoughts must be fixed on some centre. He must turn to this favoured city when he prays for peace, as the Moslem turns to Mecca and the Christian to Jerusalem. No detail of architecture should be neglected which can give to the idea some concrete form. One would wish to see in the capital a cathedral dedicated to the idea of humanity and peace—might it be St. Sofia! An international University, devoted especially to social studies—the history of civilization, economics.

anthropology, and international law—might attract the learned world. Labour would fix here its international headquarters, and congresses, whether of Socialists or of learned societies, would naturally be held here. It must be the meeting-place of nations as well as the capital of the League.

### THE COUNCIL OF CONCILIATION.

The conception of a Standing Council of Inquiry and Conciliation for all non-justiciable disputes is the big experimental idea through which the British and American movements have made a new contribution to the constructive mechanism of peace. It marks a reaction against the old diplomatic expedient of conferences and congresses. At these there sat only the official delegates of Governments, diplomatists by profession, bound hand and foot by instructions, and tied to the telegraph-wire. They bargained, they bartered, they bought and sold nations and populations. Their whole training taught them to think only of the interests of the Powers they represented. Rarely or never were they guided by the plain resolve to find a solution just on its merits and acceptable to the nations concerned. If the League's Council continues this tradition, it will register only the fluctuating calculations of the Great Powers. The new conception is that the members of the Council shall be appointed by the Governments adhering to the League for fixed terms, and without reference to current disputes, that they shall not be tied by instructions from home, and, save in rare cases, it is not desirable that they should be professional diplomatists. It follows that their decisions will in no case bind their Governments. On this Council the small States must be represented as well as the Great Powers. Some elaborate schemes have

been drawn up to fix a basis of representation by population, or by wealth, or by volume of trade, or by some cunning combination of these factors. There are difficulties in all these schemes. Perhaps the simple proposal that the eight Great Powers shall each send three representatives, and other civilized States one each, may be as good a working basis as any. Italy and Japan would be over-represented and Spain under-represented, but no possible scheme can reflect quite accurately the real relative importance of nations as factors in civilization. Such a Council would not be an unmanageably large body, and it would probably conduct its business largely through sub-committees, which would report to it. Where disputes arise between members of the League and outside States the Council must be free to report on them also, and in that case should admit a representative of the outside State for the special occasion.

The Council must be free to act on its own initiative, not merely when an international dispute has arisen, but when a condition of unrest threatens to lead to a dispute. It ought also to be free to draw up recommendations of a general scope when the state of the world calls for legislation or for the reform of international law, to make proposals for the reduction of armaments or for the better organization of commercial freedom. It might deliberate also on matters referred to it by the Executive of the League, or at the request of the Government of any civilized State. When its report is drawn up it will communicate it to all the Governments which adhere to the League, and especially to the Executive of the League. Its procedure will be public or private at its own discretion, but its completed reports must be published to the whole world, for an appeal to public opinion is the whole meaning of its existence.

## MEMBERSHIP.

It is common ground that the membership of the League must be open to all civilized sovereign States. Since its essence is that it is a voluntary association of nations, the right of secession from it must be acknowledged and respected. It seems inevitable, especially if full use is made of the idea that it will confer valuable economic privileges, that it should have the right of expulsion against any State which has violated its constitution in the letter or the spirit. It remains to determine which of its organs shall decide the delicate question whether a State—e.g. China or Mexico—is “civilized” and may be admitted, and when a State must be expelled. This power might be vested in the Executive, but perhaps it would be well to add the provision that if the Executive is not unanimous, it shall take the opinion of all the Governments adhering to the League, and expel or exclude only if there is a majority for this course both among the Great Powers and among the lesser States. The Great Powers must not be permitted to establish a dictatorship, but scope must be allowed to their leadership.

## THE LIMITS OF THE CONSTITUTION.

In discussing any scheme it is often as important to consider what it omits as what it includes. The American and the British plans for the constitution of a League of Nations are agreed in this, that they are confined to the one central task of defining the machinery by which wars may be prevented. Mr. Wilson went much farther, and evidently had in his mind a larger and more organic scheme. His League will do more than assure peace. It will establish the principle of nationality, and guarantee

the freedom of the seas (see p. 38). One imagines that a thinker who started from these premises would be willing to assent to the argument of this book, that the League must also in some sense and to some degree assure to its member nations some elementary measure of commercial freedom. The objection is to be anticipated that to add provisions of this kind to a simple scheme to assure peace by arbitration and conciliation is to confuse and overload it. I would answer to that objection that a scheme which omits these essential conditions of any real peace is delusive in its simplicity. One wants to know before one insures a man's house against fire whether he keeps a powder-magazine in his cellar and habitually smokes on top of it. To my thinking, a world which respected nationality and acknowledged commercial freedom would hardly need any elaborate coercive machinery for arbitration. Its whole atmosphere would make for peace. The machinery is wanted, firstly, to ensure these two real conditions of peace, and, secondly, to provide a channel for change. To this I imagine two answers will be offered. In the first place, it will be said that an agreement for commercial freedom may very well be reached outside the League, or perhaps in due course within the League, but why aim at it from the start or embody it in the constitution? There are two practical reasons. The first is that no League can be formed until the idea of "the war after the war" is definitely negated. The second is that by including certain commercial privileges in the terms of membership of the League we gain a new sanction for its decisions. To rely solely on military coercion is risky and a positive encouragement to a new phase of militarism. The power to expel a disloyal member is a sanction easier by far to apply than military coercion. But



it will not be effective unless expulsion entails the loss of valued privileges.

It must be borne in mind that the League will be from the start and throughout its career engaged in a very delicate conflict with the idea of sovereignty. The presumption will be that it entails no restrictions on sovereignty other than those which expressly figure in its constitution. The sovereign State promises to adopt a certain procedure in disputes. That, as these two drafts stand, is the only limitation imposed on its sovereignty. If the attempt were made to deal empirically and by the light of common sense with questions of nationality and commercial freedom in the Council of Conciliation, the offending State would certainly answer that such infringements of sovereignty were never contemplated by it, or by any one else, when it joined the League. It would maintain that it is a prerogative of sovereignty to fix the rights of racial minorities, or to determine the conditions in which raw materials may be exported. British and American jurists are accustomed to courts which enjoy a much wider latitude in interpreting and even, in effect, in making law than continental States allow. Our law rests in the main on precedent. It is natural, therefore, for us to imagine that the Courts and Council of the League might build up a system of case-law for the League and settle questions without an appeal to accepted principles. An international Court or Council, influenced by continental traditions, might not be so bold, and continental Governments might be less complacent than we anticipate, in bowing to it, if it did venture on pioneer decisions. The first question which every Government will ask about the League will be: "In what particulars does it limit my sovereignty?" If we intend that it shall be limited to the extent that it may not grossly oppress racial minorities

or aggressively infringe commercial freedom, we must say so in plain words. For these reasons I would urge the inclusion in the constitution of elementary charters of national rights (p. 129) and of commercial freedom (p. 273).

#### LEGISLATION.

The American draft lays stress on the conferences which the League will call from time to time to elaborate a code of international law. It does not, however, enter into the difficult question of their composition. The model of the Hague Conferences clearly stands in need of radical reform. They are too large, including the representatives of States which are neither truly civilized nor effectively sovereign. Their whole procedure is vitiated by the antique theory of the equality of sovereign States. Venezuela counts for as much as the United States, and Montenegro for as much as Russia. The result is that these Conferences do not in reality vote at all, and are dominated by the Great Powers. They can do nothing unless they are unanimous, and their legislation has no binding force on any State which omits to adopt it. The first step towards reform is to exclude the half-civilized and half-sovereign States. The next is to devise some method of voting which recognizes the plain fact that nations are not equal, either by adopting the rough rule that a Great Power has three votes and a small State one, or by attempting some more accurate measurement.<sup>1</sup> This done, the question arises in what circumstances, if any, a majority vote can establish legislation which the Courts of the League may enforce, irrespective of its ratification by Governments—a tremendous infringement of the tradition of sovereignty. These

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 316.

questions have been worked out in great detail by the Fabian Society, and the results are available in a brilliant book edited by Mr. Woolf.<sup>1</sup> This problem, however, does not affect the League in its initial stages, and I do not propose to discuss it here. One note of interrogation, however, must be appended to its able scheme. It proposes to unite in one body the functions of a Legislative Council and of a Council of Inquiry and Conciliation. This is a risky proposal which might in effect destroy the utility of the Council of Conciliation. It ought to be a body whose authority rests on its independence and the individual distinction of its members. On the other hand, a Council which is going to legislate for the world cannot be independent. Its members would inevitably act for their Governments and under their instructions. Governments will not leave their representatives free, if they may be bound by what their representatives do.

#### THE REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLES.

By mechanism alone we shall never unite the world, yet without mechanism its best impulses, its instincts of fraternity, and its craving for peace may be squandered and frustrated. The best achievement of a rational constitution is that it will constantly bring the Powers together, and link them in undertakings which will develop the perception of common interests, and strengthen the devotion to common principles. Is it only the Powers that can be united? The word itself is sinister: it calls up only the vision of battleships and great guns, of parks of artillery and legions of uniformed automata. Is it impossible to evolve an international organization which will unite nations as well as

<sup>1</sup> See "International Government," by L. S. Woolf (Geo. Allen and Unwin, Ltd.), 6s.

Powers? We have brought together a few eminent men nominated by Governments in a Council of Conciliation, seated judges of many races on the same Bench, gathered Ambassadors in an Executive, and foreseen the meeting in World-Congress of legislators who will be the instructed delegates of their Governments. Nowhere in all this mechanism will nations come into touch. Not a single spokesman of the working class is likely to find his way into any of these gatherings. They will all be composed of rather elderly and highly successful men of the professional and ruling classes, and comparatively few of them are likely to hold even moderately liberal or progressive opinions. It is inevitable that we should begin in this way. On Governments it will depend whether any League of Nations can come into being, and in foreign affairs all Governments are jealous of sharing their authority even with the Parliaments to which they are responsible. Unless the war should bring in its wake—as conceivably it may—a revolutionary mass movement for peace, we must be content to act through Governments, and to press no proposals to which Governments will object. Better an orderly and peaceful world secured by Governments, than the anarchy and strife which Governments have made in the past.

So long as our Councils, Executives, and Congresses represent Governments directly, it is inevitable that they should bring together only delegates who each stand for the idea of a State and for nothing more. The several delegations may come together with more or less fraternity, but it will only be because they speak for States which have certain common interests. The danger will be that the British, French, and Russian delegations will form the habit of acting together *en bloc*. The Germans and Austrians will do likewise. Each

faction will endeavour to win over neutral votes, not by argument but by barter and concession. The only hope of moderation and fair play will be that the United States may be able to rally the other neutrals so as to form a balancing centre group.

There is a way out of this difficulty, and probably there is only one. It is to adopt a system of representation which will give play, not merely to national interests, but to opinions which cut across the lines of nationality. Men are not merely Britons or Germans. They are also Liberals, Conservatives, and Socialists, with an outlook on life curiously similar, in spite of the differences of nationality. If in our common Councils we could devise a means by which our several representatives should speak, vote, and group themselves, not merely according to nations but according to opinions which are broader than nationality, the Councils themselves would come to represent something more than a balance and compromise between States: they would reflect the real opinion of the population of Europe. There is, I believe, a simple device by which this end can be attained. All the States which are likely to adhere to the League have Parliaments. Each of these Parliaments represents a population of so many millions of human beings. Let us say that for each five millions represented by it a Parliament shall send one delegate to an International Council—or twice that ratio, as might be determined. In that case the British House of Commons would have to elect nine international members. How should it choose them? By some better process, one hopes, than the manipulation of "whips," who would nominate only tame official personalities. Let us suppose that the House voted for the nine by a system of proportional representation. They would then reflect

its balance of parties and opinions. We should have to-day (roughly) four Conservatives, three Liberals, an Irish Nationalist, and a Labour Member. Each of the other national Parliaments would act on the same plan, and in the result the International Council would reflect (albeit indirectly) the real balance of opinions in Europe. At first, perhaps, the national delegations would hold together, and seek associations according to national alliances. But little by little as debates proceeded, and the members came to know each other, loose international groups would be formed. The Socialists of all countries would be the first to come together. The clericals would soon find a common bond. Liberals, anxious on the whole to develop the international idea, would tend to unite. Conservatives, jealous for the rights of sovereign States, would associate for their defence. Free Traders and Protectionists would form groups. Leaders would presently be recognized. All over Europe Socialists would think of Vandervelde, or Branting, or Bernstein not merely as a distinguished Belgian, Swede, and German (if they should be elected), but as European leaders. Such a figure as M. Briand or Professor Miliukoff might come to lead European Liberalism, while Mr. Balfour, or perhaps Prince Bülow, would rally European Conservatism. No one would think of a vote of such a Council as a victory for some nations over others. The delegations would rarely vote solidly. What would happen would be that British Liberals, Russian Cadets, German Radicals, and French Radical Socialists, and Socialists of all nations might unite against British Conservatives, the German Centre and Right, and the Russian Octobrists and Nationalists to prefer some more progressive to some less progressive plan. Is the idea fantastic? Fantastic it is not, but shocking and subversive it may be, to minds

which cling to national separation and an exclusive patriotism as the foundations of world-order.

A true Parliament of this type, which would prepare schemes of world-legislation and appoint a standing committee to act as a Council of Conciliation, may not come into being in our day. The opinion of experienced and sagacious men is rightly fixed on schemes more easily realized, and more likely to commend themselves to Governments. It would be unwise at this stage to press a more democratic ideal, but it would be weak to forget it. There is nothing, however, to prevent the early creation of a Parliament as a consultative body within the League, but not at first as its sovereign body. The various national Parliaments, if one of them would lead, have the right to act. They need only proceed by resolution, on the plan suggested, to elect their delegates. If once these delegates came together, and met annually for two or three months, the Parliament constituted in this informal way would soon come to attract the interest of the European peoples. It might send up resolutions on disarmament, on commercial freedom, on international labour agreements, or sketches of reforms in international law to the League's Executive. It could not be ignored, for its representative character could not be questioned. Little by little it would establish itself as a recognized consultative Council, and eventually, though not perhaps in our generation, it would become the sovereign authority of the League. We may begin with a workable official scheme, but with the firm intention of evolving towards democracy. Our advance to peace and the organization of international life will depend more on education than upon the work of the makers of Constitutions. This battle is to be won in the schools, in the universities, in newspaper offices, and in associations

of working men and women. Without an international opinion we are helpless. But let us not forget that for the average man and woman, and above all for the child, opinion depends on the concrete realization of an idea. The average human being believes in what he sees. Ideas for him must wear a human face and stand upon the earth. They must be embodied in institutions. When we have housed our League in its capital, and given it a voice in its Parliament, then and then only will simple men begin to think an international thought.

#### THE BASIS OF REPRESENTATION.

Academic writers may be able to propose a basis for the representation of States on international bodies which is theoretically defensible. Practical statesmen will consider only one test—the risk that their nation may find itself in a permanent minority. The rough plan of three votes for every Great Power and one vote for all other States would, in the present grouping of Europe, place the Entente Powers in a permanent majority. The smooth working of the League will hardly be possible, for some years after the war, unless the present neutrals hold the balance of voting. On this basis the Entente, with five Great Powers (Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Japan) and five other States (Belgium, Serbia, Roumania, Montenegro, Portugal) would command 20 votes. The Central Powers (Germany 3, Austria-Hungary 3, Bulgaria 1, Turkey 1) would have only 8 votes. The European Neutrals (Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Spain, and Greece) would have 7 votes, and the United States 3, making 10 in all. On a strict party vote (to use a Parliamentary term), the Entente would thus have a standing majority of 2 (20 to 18). The following modifications might be considered. Italy, Japan, and Spain might have 2 votes each. Serbia and Montenegro might be grouped together with a single vote. The "A, B, C" States (Argentina, Brazil, Chili) might be included, together with an independent Poland, each with one vote. This would give us a more workable balance: Entente 17, Central Powers 8, Neutrals 15 votes. No international organization will be workable, however, if these partisan groups survive.



## CONCLUSION

THROUGH its wandering course this book has pursued a single idea. The meaning of the war was changed from the moment that the conception of a League of Nations became, through the prophetic declarations of Mr. Asquith, the eloquent hints of M. Briand, the reasoned support of Lord Grey, the determined advocacy of President Wilson, and the support of the German Chancellor, the programme of statesmen who have power to realize it. Defeat means our failure to achieve international organization, and victory means our success. It is impossible any longer to measure our accomplishment by any scattered tests. We may acquire colonies, impose indemnities, conquer regions of Turkey, and effect territorial changes in Europe, but if we fail to create the organization of an enduring peace we have failed in the only aim which could compensate the world for these years of heroism and misery, of endurance and slaughter. The settlement of the war and the creation of the League are not two separate problems. They are a single organic problem. The League cannot be based on a settlement which merely registers the claims of successful force. The settlement must be the preparation for the League, and its guiding principle must be to make the changes, and only those changes, which are indispensable for an enduring peace. If we despair of a League of Nations, then perhaps no other choice might be open to us but to follow the weary precedent of other wars, to

weaken the enemy and to strengthen ourselves, to isolate him and to consolidate our own faction in the world. From that logic follow "wars after peace," trade boycotts, armaments, and permanent conscription. If, on the other hand, we have reason to believe that the solid structure of a League of Nations can be created, we must find in it a place, not for ourselves only but for the enemy also. We must face the thought that he, too, will be a partner in a co-operative task. The world which creates a League of Nations must be a world in which all may labour freely and fruitfully, cherishing neither the hope of revenge nor a grievance which will prompt them to break the peace. Without the promised co-operation of America we might well have despaired of making this League in our own generation. Her aid is indispensable; but if we know that we must come to her to countersign our bonds and guarantee the enemy's observance of the treaty, it follows that the settlement must make a world which has in her view the elements of permanence, order, and goodwill. She will not guarantee a peace which is based on exclusions and boycotts, on conquests and punishments. Her offer is to ensure the idea of international right.

We have to choose between two conceptions of security. One is a world in which victorious force, always prepared, always united, imposes its will on an enemy whose numbers and talents and spirit cannot be destroyed, a world which would pass from exhaustion to a renewal of strife, and from strife to war. The other is a world which has used the shock and disturbance of war to purge itself of its worst mischiefs, and on that foundation of contentment has built a society of co-operative work and international conference. This better world is within our reach. Our own statesmen desire it. America will help us to create it. The enemy, himself, through his chief

spokesman has declared his assent. We set out to destroy Prussian militarism. It will be destroyed at the moment when a German Government pledges itself to enter a League based on arbitration and conciliation. Short of that we may slaughter Prussians, but we cannot destroy militarism.

In the remaining pages I propose to sum up and set together in a balanced whole the various suggestions scattered throughout the book for a settlement designed to prepare a League of Nations. Two preliminaries must be assumed. The first is that the enemy will agree to restore without reserves the independence of Belgium and to indemnify her for the wrong done to her, to render back to France (if he still holds them) the occupied Departments, and to restore the Kingdom of Serbia. In these preliminaries the positive designs of his militarism are overthrown, for he will have given up the military road to Calais and the military road to Bagdad. The second is that he has agreed in principle to enter a League of Nations, and has thereby with his own hands (no others can do it) destroyed the moral spirit of his militarism. After these preliminaries the Powers may proceed to a negotiated peace. Nothing else is for us a vital question of honour, and the extent of the concessions which we may secure will depend on the extent of the concessions which we are prepared to make. The formula which would best answer the real needs of both sides would be: concessions from the Central Powers to the idea of nationality in Europe; concessions from the Allies to the idea of commercial freedom and colonial opportunity beyond Europe. The war settlement (which is likely to come only through American mediation) must come first, and in it the ideas of a League of Peace, of commercial freedom, of the reduction of armaments, and of the reform of the law of war at sea would be defined only in

outline. To work out these conceptions would be the task of further Congresses over which America would naturally preside. The order of these Congresses might be so arranged that our final assent to a charter of commercial freedom might be delayed until the enemy on his side had ratified a satisfactory Constitution for the League of Nations, and assented to a reasonable plan for the reduction of armaments. With the reminder that nationality may be secured, not merely by partitions and annexations but by the concession of autonomy, let us proceed to trace this settlement in broad outlines. If the form of the sketch seems dogmatic, that is only because to say at each sentence "I venture to suggest" or "perhaps we might consider" would consume space and time.

#### I. THE WAR SETTLEMENT.

1. *General.*—The signatory Powers agree to meet in congress after the conclusion of this treaty, to evolve permanent plans for the future organization of international relations. They will draw up (a) a plan for the prevention of wars by enforced recourse to arbitration or conciliation; (b) a plan for the general reduction of armaments; (c) a scheme for the reform of the laws of war on land and sea; and (d) a general charter of commercial freedom. Ratification shall follow only when all these *Guarantees* are settled.

In the interval the communications between the belligerents shall be resumed provisionally, on the basis of the commercial treaties in force before the outbreak of this war.

2. *Restitution.*—Germany will recognize the independence, integrity, and neutrality of Belgium, and pay to her as *Reparation* an indemnity to be fixed by a neutral Commission nominated by the President of the United States.

The belligerents will on the signature of this treaty evacuate the occupied territory held by them, save as provided in Article 3.

3. *Nationality.*—The recognition of the rights of nationality in Europe shall be insured by the following territorial and political changes. Commissions shall be nominated under neutral presidency to delimit frontiers, to conduct *plébiscites* in cases where either party contends that the wishes of the population are in doubt, and to arrange for the migration of such portions of their population as may desire to remove, with the minimum of hardship.

(a) The French-speaking districts of German *Lorraine* shall be ceded to France [and the status of Alsace determined by a *plébiscite*] France will permit the free export of iron-ore from *Lorraine* to Germany. (See below, Article 6.)

(b) The Italian-speaking districts of the *Trentino* shall be ceded to Italy.

(c) *Poland* shall be constituted an independent State. A Convention directly elected by universal suffrage shall determine its Constitution, and elect its sovereign (if it decides for a monarchy). The Polish State consists of the Duchy of Warsaw [the western region of Galicia and certain regions of Posen and Silesia].

[(d) The *Ruthenian* districts of Galicia and Bukovina shall be ceded to Russia and the Roumanian district of the Bukovina to Roumania, if the inhabitants so determine by *plébiscite*.]

(e) *Austria-Hungary* undertakes that it will forthwith so remodel its Constitution as to ensure full autonomy to all the component nationalities of both monarchies.

(f) The restored [and united] kingdoms of *Serbia* and *Montenegro* shall, by the necessary rectification of frontiers, obtain access to the Adriatic at Cattaro. [Direct communication shall similarly be provided between Hungary and Bulgaria *via* Orsova-Widin.]

(g) To Bulgaria shall be restored the "uncontested zone" of *Macedonia* as fixed by the treaty of 1912, and her former *Dobrudja* frontier.

(h) *Albania* is restored within its former limits, and placed for a period of twenty years under the protectorate of Italy.

(i) *Cyprus* shall be ceded to Greece.

(j) The six *Armenian vilayets* are ceded to Russia, which undertakes to confer autonomy upon them.

(k) *Kiao-Chau* is restored to China.

4. The *Straits* of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles shall be open in peace and war to the navigation of Russian vessels whether naval or commercial. They shall be neutralized, and their shores disarmed, and placed under the guardianship of an international Commission.

5. The Powers recognize the priority of German claims to the development of industrial enterprises requiring concessions in *Asiatic Turkey* [excepting Syria]. Neither by customs nor by railway or harbour rates shall Turkey discriminate or allow discrimination against any signatory Power. [The priority of French interests is similarly recognized in Syria. Palestine shall be created an autonomous province with a Jewish Administration under an international guarantee.]

6. *East Africa* is restored to Germany. The Allies, if they elect to retain the other occupied German *colonies*, shall, among themselves, whether by purchase or exchange, arrange to cede a convenient and

accessible zone of Equatorial Africa to Germany, equivalent in value and extent to her annexed colonies. [The further extension of this zone may be provided for by understandings conferring on Germany the right of pre-emption over certain adjoining regions under French, Belgian, or Portuguese rule, or by the exchange of the French Congo, in part or whole, against Alsace-Lorraine.]

The passages within square brackets in the above outline include questionable items, some of which are not within the scope of a negotiated settlement as the military balance now stands. Details manifestly depend on the course and duration of the war. It is difficult to secure an exact balance of gain and loss between allies on either side. This might be achieved within each group by a division of the financial costs of the war. It should be noted that though Serbia and Roumania will not on the balance gain territory, Serbia achieves her ambition of an outlet to the Adriatic, and both States secure the liberation of their kinsmen in Austria-Hungary by the gift of autonomy. Russia surrenders Poland, but only to Poles. She secures her ambition on the Straits, and has in Armenia territory to balance the loss of Poland.

## II. THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

The constitution and principles of the League of Nations shall be determined by a Congress which shall sit [within one year from the conclusion of peace]. At this Congress, in addition to the late belligerents, the United States of America shall be represented, and to it such other civilized sovereign States as the American President may name, shall be invited. The following sketch conveys suggestions for the constitution of the League :—

### I. *The Prevention of War.*

The signatory States agree to refer all disputes incapable of adjustment by diplomacy—(a) if justiciable, to a court of arbitral justice ; (b) if non-justiciable, to a standing Council of Inquiry and Conciliation, to which their Governments will nominate representatives for a term of years. They undertake neither to make wars nor to mobilize against each other until the Court or Council has, within a stipulated time, issued its award or recommendation, nor for a stipulated time thereafter.

The Executive of the League [representing the Governments of the Great Powers] shall, in case of a threatened breach of this fundamental obligation, concert effective measures, military or economic, to ensure its observance. The signatory States will support this common action, subject to the several undertakings into which each of them may enter on their adherence to the League.

The Executive will concert measures for mutual defence when a signatory State is attacked by any State which refuses to submit its case to the appropriate Tribunal or Council.

Should any State fail to accept and give effect to the recommendations of the Council of Conciliation or the award of the Tribunal, the Executive will forthwith determine what collective action, if any, is required to meet this situation.

The Executive, subject to safeguards to be agreed upon, shall determine the right of any State to be admitted to the League, and may expel, subject to safeguards and the right of appeal, any State which has violated its constitution. The right of secession is recognized.

No treaty of alliance, past or future, shall bind any State adhering to the League to support an ally who has engaged in war without submitting his case to a Court or Council of the League, or has become involved in war by reason of his failure to accept or give effect to the award or recommendation of a Court or Council of the League. (See p. 184.)

## 2. *Nationality.*

The signatory Powers will define in a declaration, to be embodied in the constitution of the League, their resolve to accord to all racial minorities in their European territories full liberty for the use of their language, the development of their culture, and the exercise of their religion. (See p. 129.)

## 3. *Reduction of Armaments.*

The Powers will consider measures for a general reduction of armaments on land and sea. [This might provide (a) for the limitation of the term of service in national armies, say to six months in the infantry; (b) for the suspense of all building of capital ships for a term of years, until a permanent agreement could be reached as to ratios of building.]

## 4. *The Law of War at Sea.*

This may be remodelled on the principle that embargoes on commerce, blockades, and the capture of enemy merchant vessels are permitted only in public wars sanctioned or declared by the Executive of the League. In private, unauthorized wars the strictest definition of neutral rights as maintained by the American school will be enforced. (See p. 207.)

## 5. *Humanity in Warfare.*

The conventions regulating warfare shall be revised, particularly as regards aircraft, submarines, floating mines, the use of gas, and the exception of food destined for a civilian population from the rigours of a blockade.

*6. A Charter of Commercial Freedom.*

(a) The signatory Powers shall accord to each other in their home markets "most favoured nation" treatment; (b) in their non-self-governing colonies they will impose tariffs (if any) for revenue purposes only; (c) they will concert measures to secure "the Open Door", to all foreign enterprise in undeveloped regions, particularly in China; (d) they will appoint as an organ of the League an International Commission to ensure free access for the trade of all the signatory Powers to raw materials and other natural resources. (See pp. 273-86.)

A writer who attempts amid the noise and passion of war to frame some sketch of the better organization which we hope to build on the sacrifices and heroism of those who have fallen, works in the dark and questions the unknown. It may be that agreements concluded in secrecy commit the peoples of Europe to protracted warfare for very different ends. It may be that the passions which strife has kindled, have obscured in the minds of statesmen the aims which still survive in the hearts of the volunteers who took up arms to make an end of wars. That early impulse of idealism still lives, but it struggles with the resentments, the fears, and the appetites which have grown up in three years of bitterness and disillusion. It is easier to believe in victory than to cherish faith in the organization of peace. The danger is not that we shall deliberately reject the programme of a League of Nations: it is that we shall postpone it. Because the noise of strife has distracted our efforts to think of it at leisure, we are tempted to thrust it into the remoter future. To postpone it may be in effect to reject it. Unless we know ourselves what we intend by it, unless our plans, through neutral channels, are known to our enemies, unless America, encouraged by both sides, will push her advocacy of the scheme, we shall reach the settlement undecided and unprepared. Without the firm resolve to make the League itself an article,



and the first article, in the settlement, our need of security will drive us inevitably to other expedients. The settlement, unless the idea of the League penetrates it and inspires it, must draw its principle from the older statecraft of anarchy and force. It will not make the Europe that could enter into a League. The hope may still haunt us, but the moment of creation will have passed. Each side will turn away, sullen and alienated, from the Congress which will have ended the war only to make an armed peace. We shall return to our normal lives only to resume the old precautions. Naval programmes must be drafted. Alliances must be renewed. Conscription must become a permanency. Treaties of commerce must be negotiated, and if they cannot be based on the idea of co-operative work and commercial freedom, they will announce the "war after peace." Amid recriminations and retaliations, our movement will not be towards a League of Nations. There are those who contemplate five years of a penal and hostile peace, a time for boycotts and punishments, a time for the passing of resentments which the slaughter and pain of the battlefield had not sated. In five years, they say, the world will be purged of its crimes and its hatreds, and we may turn with relief to the organization of peace. Men's passions will not keep these timetables. The blows we dealt would be answered. Boycott would reply to boycott, and wherever the enemies met in the wide world, it would be as foes who would add new counts with each embittered year to the indictments of the past. The five penal years would bring no healing, and at their end we should be farther from the League of Nations than we are on the battlefields of to-day. The hope of the world is in our grasp. At the settlement of this war we may realize it. If that moment escapes us, we and our children may expiate our cowardice

and our indecision in an epoch which will turn to revolution as a mild alternative to war.

We are nearer to our goal than we know. In both camps men have fought for it, died for it, and slain each other to realize it. The enduring peace is the hope which has sustained the enemy's soldiers no less than our own. The will to realize it is more massive and more general than the will for strife. The future of Europe is irredeemably dark only to the pessimist who has seen in this war nothing but the working of forces of destruction. Violent and egoistic as the impulses were which ranged the nations in antagonisms that could issue only in war, these impulses were in themselves a proof of vitality. They have driven countless legions to death, they have squandered the productive forces of hand and brain, and poisoned civilization itself. It is possible, none the less, to look on all this ruin and yet to hope. It sprang from many passionate resolves to extort change from destiny. It was an act of insurrection against the death in life which acquiesces in hampered conditions and unsolved problems. There was in this concerted rush to ruin and death the force of a rebellious and unconquerable life. It was bent on change, for it knew that the real denial and surrender of life is not physical death but the refusal to move and progress. The evil in Europe was not so much the statement of these positive demands for change, reckless and self-regarding as some of them were. It was rather the inertia, the impotence, the suspicion, the lack of social sense which stood in the way of these necessary changes. The way of hope is not in the retrospective moralizings which distribute blame and to blame would add punishment. The way of hope is to accept these impulses which uttered a genuine tendency of living men, to find for them by adjustment and compromise the satisfactions which are possible in the settlement, and to

prepare in the future organization of the nations, the promise and possibility of regulated and ordered change. Let us defeat anything rather than a genuine impulse of life. The settlement will be fragile and temporary if it leaves any nation thwarted and frustrated. Some ambitions must be content with partial satisfaction. Some must be realized with less than that dramatic completeness which flatters the vanity of one people, while it condemns the other to the bitterness of revenge. For all the warring nations we must make the conditions of present life and future growth. On a peace which aims at general contentment we may build the League of Nations. From penalties and retaliations it will not come: these are the means by which an ill past perpetuates itself. It will come when each nation turns to its fellow and speaks, though it be still in bewilderment and pain, the wish to create the co-operative world in which all may live and grow.

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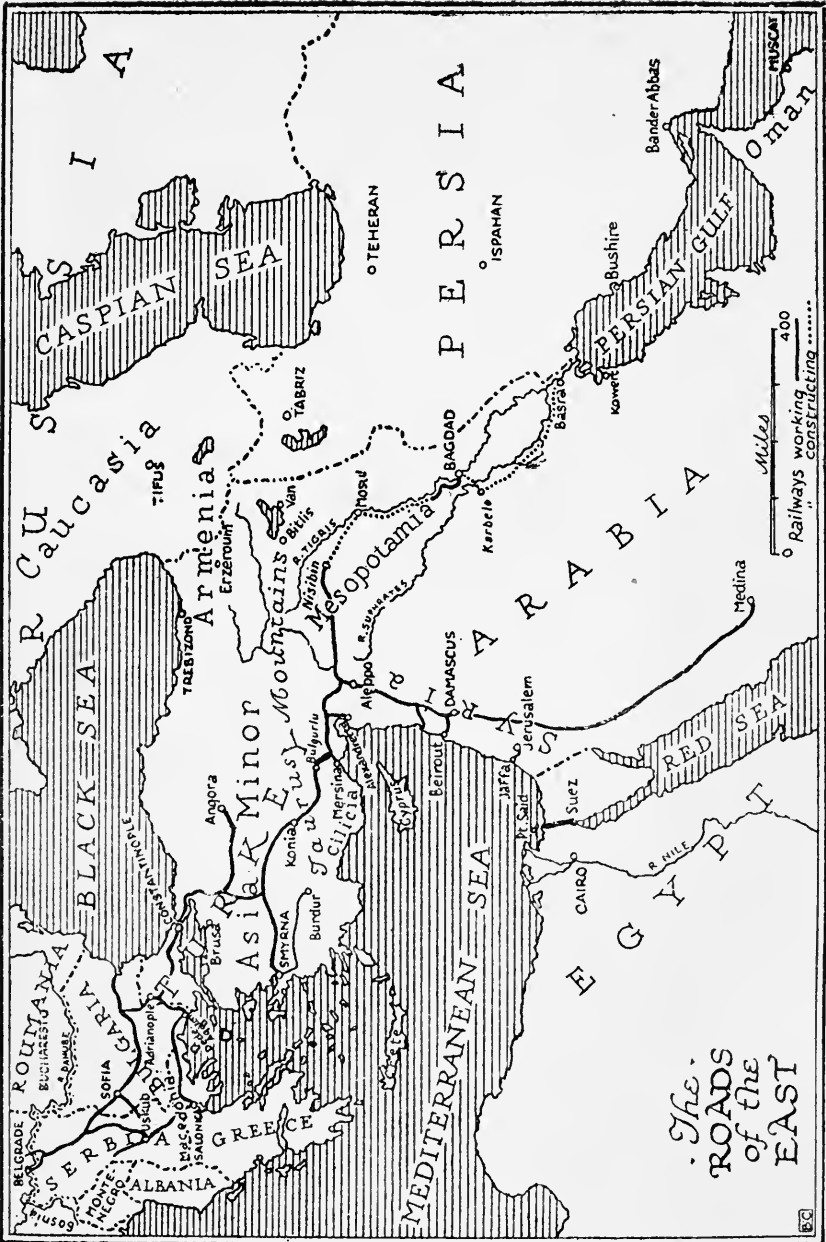
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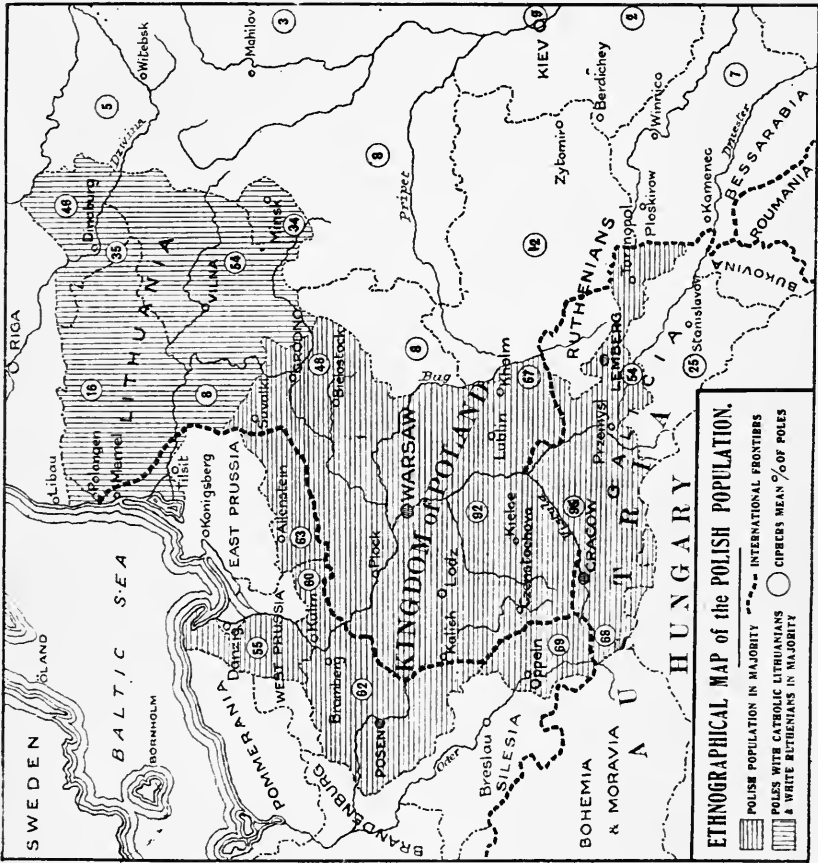










The  
ROADS  
of the  
EAST





**ETHNOGRAPHICAL MAP of the POLISH POPULATION.**

-  POLISH POPULATION IN MAJORITY
-  INTERNATIONAL FRONTIERS
-  POLES WITH CATHOLIC LITHUANIANS & WHITE RUTHENIANS IN MAJORITY
-  CIPERS MEAN % OF POLES





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