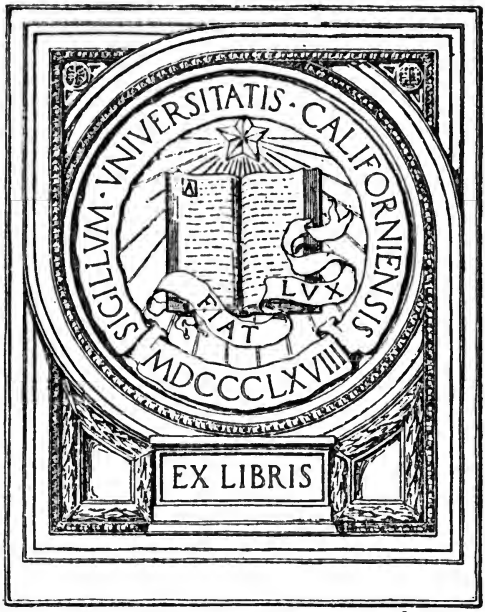
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THE FRUITS OF FOLLY

THE
FRUITS OF FOLLY

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

By the Author of
"*The Pomp of Power*,"

Lyon, Laurance
"

"There is no viler profession than the Government of Nations. He who dreams that he can lead a great Crowd of Fools without a great Store of Knavery is a Fool himself."

VOLTAIRE. (?)

"No people ignorant of its neighbours can have a sound foreign policy; and a people that has not a sound foreign policy is likely to perish in the storms of the coming century."

GEORGE MACAULAY TREVELYAN.

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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	ENGLAND IN 1929	7
II.	MUSSOLINI'S ITALY	26
III.	AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY: INFELICES AMBO	82
IV.	RUMANIA AND THE RUMANIANS	145
V.	THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN REPUBLIC, AND THE KINGDOM OF THE SERBS, CROATS, AND SLOVENES	168
VI.	GERMANY	200
VII.	THE POLISH PROBLEM	265
	EPILOGUE	295
	INDEX	315

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The Fruits of Folly

CHAPTER I

ENGLAND IN 1929

THE General Election of 1929 synchronised with the beginning of a period of European tension, arising from the proposal to supersede the Dawes Plan by the Young Plan. The accession to office of the Labour party thus assumed in the eyes of interested countries an immediate importance which it would otherwise have lacked. This was all the more apparent since, for some incomprehensible reason, the result was generally unexpected on the Continent, as well as in England.

The Conservatives were so amazed that many allowed themselves to be used for the purpose of a Press campaign which was virtually directed against the leadership of the former Prime Minister. It can hardly be said that many of the letters in which these disgruntled members of the party exposed their grievances threw any new light upon the subject. They simply drew attention to errors which most political observers had fully realised before the election. But they did show a surprising want of adhesion and of that spirit of loyalty which is even more essential in the dark days of defeat than in the sunshine of victory.

Possibly Mr. Baldwin may not be a great party leader. Lord Beaverbrook, who for some years past has been one of his severest critics, once wrote: "The plain fact is that I believe the Prime Minister to be a man of the utmost honesty of intention, but I am compelled by experience to think that he frequently errs in his judgment."

Dean Inge, in his estimate of the English national character, directs attention to the fact that "the absence of self-regarding prudential calculation distinguishes it from the ethics of success, so sedulously preached in

America.* That draws the exact line of demarcation between the views, beliefs, and characters of Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Baldwin. The former, who, whatever he may be by descent, is not in the slightest degree English by tradition or by temperament, believes firmly in the "ethics of success." Nor is it unreasonable that he should do so, for it is a rule of life which has answered his purpose.

But when all is said, the fact remains that Lord Beaverbrook possesses a first-rate intelligence, and also that there are very few men of his generation who have an equally sound and astute mentality. In this respect he is head and shoulders above the vast majority of politicians, not excluding those who have held or who to-day hold high office. His considered judgment, therefore, cannot be lightly dismissed, and he long ago gave it as his opinion that Mr. Baldwin "is not of Prime Ministerial timber." Lord Beaverbrook advanced several specific reasons for this conclusion. It is possible that he is right, and that it is only men of his own type who can successfully guide the country through this perilous period. If so, it means that statesmen of the kind who made England great in the past are not the breed which can to-day save her from decay. For Mr. Baldwin emphatically finds his place in another category. However, Mr. Bertrand Russell's criticism of the existing order probably has more foundation, and is certainly pleasanter, than that sponsored by Lord Beaverbrook: "The complexity of the modern world increasingly requires intelligence, and Doctor Arnold sacrificed intelligence to 'virtue.' The Battle of Waterloo may have been won on the playing-fields of Eton, but the British Empire is being lost there. The modern world needs a different type with more imaginative sympathy, more intellectual suppleness, less belief in bulldog courage, and more belief in technical knowledge. The administrator of the future must be the servant of free citizens, not the benevolent ruler of admiring subjects. The aristocratic tradition embedded in British higher education is its bane. Perhaps this tradition can be eliminated gradually; perhaps the older educational institutions will be found incapable of

* *England*, p. 63.

adapting themselves. As to that, I do not venture an opinion." *

If it were necessary to describe the late Prime Minister in two lines, they might be borrowed from Byron :

> " A man well known in the councils of the nation,
> Cool, and quite English, imperturbable."

It is sometimes forgotten that Mr. Baldwin himself has been a man of affairs at the head of a great industrial enterprise ; and his admirers are too prone to allow his character entirely to overshadow his ability. A very general opinion in England is that Mr. Lloyd George is a great politician and Mr. Baldwin an indifferent statesman. But Mr. Baldwin is undoubtedly clever—*pace* Lord Birkenhead : a saving grace in that respect is the very fact that he is not too clever. Undoubtedly he has committed errors ; but in that he only differs from some of his recent predecessors in that he accepts the consequences more stoically. It may well be contended that the General Election of 1923 was unnecessary, if not a positive tactical error. It is difficult to give a clear and satisfactory explanation of at least one part of his course with respect to the coal strike. But, despite the mistakes he has made, he is endowed with two qualities which, above all others, should be amongst the attributes of the head of any Government : he illustrates by his mode of thought, his way of life, his tastes and pastimes, everything that is English at its best ; and he inspires confidence both at home and abroad. He does not display the mental agility of Mr. Lloyd George. But, on the other hand, there is never any doubt about what he means ; and he neither confuses others nor loses himself in the mazes of his own verbiage. He has, indeed, expressed his contempt for " that appalling twopenny-ha'penny gift of fluency . . . the kind of rhetoric which stirs the emotions of the ignorant mob and sets it moving. It is because such forces can be set in motion by rhetoric that I have no regard for it, but a positive horror."

A love of literature, and an appreciation of what is beautiful in Art and Nature, is to be expected from one

* *On Education*, p. 44.

who has blood ties with the Burne-Joneses, with the late Sir Edward Poynter, and with Mr. Rudyard Kipling. Some of Mr. Baldwin's speeches show that while reading of the past he endeavours to apply its lessons to the present. Speaking in 1926 to the Classical Association, he said: "The voices that speak to us across the death and rebirth of nations touch every emotion of each succeeding generation, as they touched those who had ears to hear in Athens and in Rome; but they reach us with the added solemnity and pathos which cling to remembered sayings of those we have loved and lost. Every ultimate problem was theirs, as it is ours, and the more you open your soul to their appeal, the more profound your pity for stumbling humanity, the more eager your effort to bind together the family of man, rather than to loosen it. . . . Thus the chance word of a Latin inscription, a line in the anthology, a phrase of Horace, or a chorus ending of Euripides, plucks the heartstrings and stirs a thousand memories, memories subconscious and ancestral."

And he understands his race. No one has given a better summary of one side of our national character than did Mr. Baldwin when he said: "We grumble, and we have always grumbled, but we never worry. There are nations which do not grumble but worry . . . the Englishman has a mental reserve owing to that gift given to him at his birth by St. George, so that by the absence of worry he keeps his nervous system sound and sane, with the result that in times of emergency the nervous system stands, when the nervous system of other peoples breaks. The Englishman is made for a time of crisis and for a time of emergency. He is serene in difficulties, but may seem to be indifferent when times are easy. He may not look ahead, he may not heed warnings, he may not prepare, but when he once starts he is persistent to the death."

His own career vouches for the sincerity of the words he used when speaking at his old school, Harrow: "You mean by your greeting to assure me that you wish me well, and that whether I succeed or fail you have the belief in me that as a son of the Hill I will run straight; that I will bear my share of the burden; that if I fail I will not whine; and that if success is mine I will not be

puffed up; but that I will try in all things to follow in the footsteps of those who have trodden this same difficult path before me; and that I will, with God's help, do nothing in the course of an arduous and difficult career which shall cause any Harrovian to say of me that I have failed to do my best to live up to the highest ideals of the school."

But the reasons for the recent *débâcle* go deeper than any question of leadership. It can hardly be denied that the result at the polls has clearly shown the need not only of reorganisation but of a change in the basic foundations of the party. Undoubtedly one of the factors which largely contributed to the Conservative defeat was the extension of the franchise to women of 21 years of age. It would now serve no useful purpose to discuss how far that measure was urgent or necessary. But obviously it was one from which the Labour party was likely to reap the greater benefit. This rendered it all the more essential that every effort should be made to hold or to convert as many as possible of these new electors; and especially by a programme likely to arouse their interest and to win their adhesion. It cannot be said that this was done. At times the Conservative party is strangely reminiscent of the Bourbons, who learned nothing and forgot nothing. It might advantageously have remembered that in his day Disraeli foresaw clearly that Toryism would be submerged unless it promptly adapted itself to the changed character of the electorate, consequent upon the various extensions of the franchise—for one of which he was himself responsible. At one time it seemed as if Lord Randolph Churchill would become the great exponent of Disraelism. But Lord Salisbury adopted another attitude. M. Paul Cambon once said to me that Lord Salisbury always impressed him as a man who continued to fight, knowing that the battle was lost, but without ever thinking of yielding to the tendencies of the epoch. That was not Disraelism. Indeed, it recalls the remark attributed to Bismarck at the Berlin Congress: "Lord Salisbury is a lath painted to look like iron, but the old Jew means business." Lord Salisbury was replaced by Mr. (now Lord) Balfour, who completed the ruin of the party. He made no effort

either to retain the votes of one class or to obtain those of another class. He returned to country-life Toryism—certainly an agreeable existence, but one little calculated to win victories at the polls. If the Conservative party had had another leader, the progress of the Labour party would have been less rapid, although in the long run the result would have been the same. In any event, Mr. Balfour definitely lost what used to be called the working-class vote (the basis of the strength of Toryism once the franchise was extended), and did nothing to secure the support of the middle class, which Gladstone had firmly riveted to the cause of Liberalism.

In the same way Mr. Baldwin's Government increased the number of its probable opponents without making any vigorous attempt to attach them to Conservatism. The programme which was submitted to the electorate can be described only as one of arid complacency. It showed that the Conservative leaders had the greatest confidence in themselves and in their ability to retain office ; but it was hardly likely to arouse any enthusiasm in a doubtful voter. It is entirely to the credit of the Conservative Government that it refused to make promises which it knew it could not perform. But political honesty does not necessarily entail political stupidity ; and it is always crass stupidity to lose sight of the fact that, in the main, the electorate is composed of human beings, who, unless they are offered some clear and constructive plans, tending to enure to their advantage, will act like the donkey who is led on by the carrot suspended in front of its head. Mr. Baldwin's Government, apparently, could give nothing except genial platitudes. The result of the election might possibly have been different had it made its own the railway policy suggested (a little late in the day) by Lord Beaverbrook. For although the determination which Mr. Baldwin has always shown not to be controlled by newspaper proprietors is entirely praiseworthy, there would seem to be no good reason why a Prime Minister should not make use of any political intelligence which the latter happen to display.

However, Mr. Lloyd George and the Labour party both supplied carrots in abundance. The Labour party made many promises—so many, that doubtless much

time will have to be spent in explaining why most of them are left unfulfilled. But Mr. Lloyd George used the soundest tactics. He concentrated upon one scheme, which, with his habitual optimism, he claimed would speedily extinguish unemployment. Perhaps he did so all the more unreservedly because he realised that there was little chance of his being called upon to put it into operation. If his plan was not feasible from an economic standpoint at least it was plausible. That it had so little success in attracting votes is a significant sign of the decline of Mr. Lloyd George's influence. However, any leader of the Liberal party is bound to be confronted by the fact that the war sounded the knell of the middle class. In most countries there is to-day an upper class, consisting of an aristocracy and a plutocracy, and a proletariat, which is rapidly increasing in numbers and in power. That augmentation is derived largely by the absorption of a defenceless and bewildered middle class. But even a defiant proletariat, which is fast becoming arrogant, and which is impregnated with a belief in impracticable schemes, is preferable to a smug and self-satisfied middle class. In England the political expression of that element had become *doctrinaire* even before the war. It had all it could hope to obtain, and feared any basic change much more than did the most dyed-in-the-wool Toryism. It is logical that it should never have fully trusted Mr. Lloyd George, who was always sincere in his desire to improve the position of the proletariat, and who created a record by wrecking the Liberal party and all but wrecking the Conservative party. The result is that to-day Liberalism is static, having no driving force left.

A prophecy which, when made in 1917 (at a time when the Radical party was still powerful in the House of Commons), was regarded with scepticism or amusement, has now been fulfilled. I ventured to predict then and later that the Liberal party was doomed, and that its members would probably turn either to the Right or to the Left. This was before the gradual secession began, but since then many—Lord Melchett and Mr. Wedgwood Benn (to cite only two out of the multitude)—have definitely gone over either to the Conservative or to the Labour party. Nor is there any grave danger of a

permanent third party. Everything points to the gradual extinction of the Liberal group until its disappearance as an element which must be taken into account in political calculations. For although the General Election proved that Mr. Lloyd George was no longer a power in the land, his spell has not entirely lost its charm; and even to-day no other Liberal leader could win or obtain as many seats.

The very fact that the future struggle will be between the Conservative and the Labour parties emphasises the organic weakness of the former. The fault does not lie in Mr. Baldwin's leadership, except in so far as he must be held personally responsible for the type of men with whom he surrounded himself. In this he was only carrying out the tradition of the party. But the result was that in a certain degree his Government was completely out of touch with the present electorate. There is, and doubtless long will be, a strong and unswerving phalanx of Conservative voters. But numerically that does not suffice; and the future of Conservatism depends upon its success in capturing a fair proportion both of the newly enfranchised and of the former adherents of the disintegrating Liberal party. How many who held office in the last Ministry were capable of doing any useful work in that direction? How many would ever have attained Ministerial rank at all had it not been for their powerful family connections or for their inherited wealth? How many would ever have achieved political prominence had they been obliged to depend entirely, from the outset of their careers, upon their own exertions? I am well aware that many of Mr. Baldwin's colleagues do not fall within the category to which I am alluding, and in citing Mr. Amery and Sir Laming Worthington-Evans I am mentioning only two out of a fairly long list. But the percentage of those who owed their position to birth, inherited wealth, or similar adventitious circumstances, was unduly high—unduly high from the standpoint of practical politics. It would be invidious to mention them. There were many, both in the Cabinet and amongst those holding minor Ministerial posts, who were useless outside the boundaries of their own safe constituencies; and from whom any well-advised candidate in Scotland, in the North of England, or in the industrial Midlands,

would pray to be delivered if the Central Office proposed to send them to speak in his favour.

Nor were the politicians to whom I refer possessed of any superlative administrative capacities. In fact, those who now occupy the Front Benches have nothing to fear from comparison with their predecessors, except that they have less experience: certainly an important exception, but one which can only be rectified by holding office.

It should hardly be necessary to add that I am far from contending that the accident of birth or wealth should debar anyone from holding high office—any more than a donation to party funds should be a bar to the bestowal of a peerage—but neither should it be the reason. In practice the result of government by a so-called leisured class (and Mr. Baldwin's administration did not carry matters that far) is probably as much in the general interest as that of government by a rampant democracy—and it must be added that that would not be a fair description of Mr. MacDonald's Government. But it is feasible only under certain conditions. It would be incongruous and inconsistent with an unrestricted franchise; and while the advantage of men of means devoting their time to the conduct of public affairs is obvious, if the more conservative party in any State is to keep in contact with the country, the choice of such men becomes more important—and more delicate—in proportion to the advance of democratic sentiments. The composition of Mr. Baldwin's Government was such that it had few links with the electorate in which the proletariat now predominates. It was quite satisfied with its own consciousness of an upright effort to govern in the best interests of the country; and it exhibited a degree of complacency which was much more reminiscent of the days of Whigism than of Disraeli's wisely-tempered Toryism.

One part of the first King's Speech drafted by a Labour Government which aroused much quiet comment amongst European politicians was that which referred to electoral reform. The great difference in the average number of votes which each of the three parties needed in order to carry a constituency, and the fact that the Conservative actually polled more votes than the

Labour party, undoubtedly laid bare a lack of balance in the present system. But foreign observers, who have within recent years witnessed the downfall of parliamentary government in so many European countries, are wondering whether, in the changing course of events, the supremacy of the House of Commons will survive in fact as well as in theory. The war rendered it necessary to curtail the liberties of Parliament and to increase the power of the Cabinet. After the Armistice, Mr. Lloyd George appeared sometimes to ignore the House of Commons, and to be seeking to retain for the Government prerogatives which it had not possessed before 1914. His downfall led to a return to more normal ways. But even Mr. Baldwin showed some liking for measures enabling him to legislate by the equivalent of an Order-in-Council, or a Decree. More surprising was a deliberate statement which he made to the House of Commons respecting his view of the limits of parliamentary independence from party control. Speaking on February 22nd, 1929, when he announced that the Government would bow to the inevitable, and reverse its decision not to pay the Irish Loyalists in accordance with the Report of the Wood-Renton Advisory Committee, he said: "We recognise, however, that many of our supporters take a different view. We do not wish to use the ordinary machinery of party to enforce our view on our own supporters and override their sincere convictions on a matter of this kind, which, though in itself not large, has its roots in the grievous controversies of the past."

It would be interesting to know exactly what Mr. Baldwin meant by "the ordinary machinery of party" by which the sincere convictions of its supporters might be overridden if the Government so chose. Undoubtedly the power and independence of the House of Commons has declined ever since 1914; while that of the bureaucracy (which, of course, includes the executive Cabinet) has been constantly increasing. But these words of Mr. Baldwin, which were doubtless inadvertent, put the fact more openly, one might almost say more brazenly, than had hitherto been done. Did his statement mean that every member of the party in office, regardless of his sincere convictions, must vote as the Cabinet ordains? Undoubtedly a certain measure of party discipline is necessary in order

to prevent that degeneration into groups which debases parliamentary government abroad. But if party servitude is to go to the length indicated, then the same result would be attained, and a great saving of time would be effected, if the French system were followed, and members were supplied with ballots which could be used in their absence. The whole machinery, on the Government side, could then be manipulated by the Whips. And, in order to avoid complaints from the constituencies, an American custom might also be adopted at the same time. This would enable members to have printed in Hansard speeches which they never actually delivered, but which they could then send to their constituents—with the added advantage that they could punctuate their discourses with " Hear ! Hear ! " at their own sweet will. Probably no one would be any worse off. However, Mussolini does these things better, and more honestly, by openly abolishing all the powers of Parliament.

But naturally it is the question of the foreign policy of the Labour Government which excites the greatest interest in other countries. In France there is considerable uneasiness on this subject. Closer and better relations between Great Britain and the United States would doubtless go some distance towards ensuring the peace of the world. But, platitudes aside, it is clear that a definite orientation of English policy in that direction would have the effect of diminishing the position of France amongst the nations. This is undoubtedly the French view. As recently as July 2nd, 1929, *Le Journal des Dêbats* stated that the Washington Conference of 1921 had taught France " what would happen when Great Britain and the United States came to a preliminary understanding." Suspicion is also aroused by Mr. MacDonald's views regarding disarmament ; and there is some anxiety about his activities respecting Minorities. *Le Temps* commented with scornful indignation upon Mr. Lloyd George's warning to the Government that the problem of disarmament would not be solved simply by a reduction in the number of submarines, but that the abolition of the enormous Continental armies and reserves was also essential. The great French journal reiterated the well-known contention that, in default of a guarantee by all the nations, such forces

were necessary for the national security. It is difficult to take exception to the practical soundness of that position. But it is equally difficult to reconcile it with the Kellogg Pact, and with the speeches made by French statesmen when that innocuous document was signed. Even the Treaty of Versailles distinctly and unwisely (unwisely because, as the result proves, and as many foresaw ten years ago, there was little chance of its being carried out) stated that the disarmament of Germany was to be the prelude for the disarmament of other countries.

Upon the whole, the general opinion is that France has much to lose and nothing to gain by the advent to office of the Labour party. But it is hardly good tactics to disclose so openly the belief that Mr. Henderson will be found less pliable than was Sir Austen Chamberlain. In any event, it is regrettable that a section of the French Press should exude its bitterness, either in leading articles or in such unworthy gibes as that contained in the following "billet" by "Monsieur de la Palisse" (translation): "M. Poincaré will discuss, in the greatest detail, the whole question of reparations and debts . . . with equal simplicity and loyalty he will thus accomplish his duty. There is no better way of serving and defending the country. . . . If the Prime Minister had thought it necessary to arrange a meeting in some out-of-the-way place in the Auvergne or in Brittany, and to take a theatrical attitude by declaring in advance that it would be a meeting which would go down in history, his fellow-countrymen would have been somewhat astonished and somewhat uneasy. And they would have showed it, for they do not possess the phlegmatic nature of the English."

The whole tone of the French Press was largely attributable to the unwelcome discovery that the ratification of the Young Plan might lead to France eventually repaying her creditors more than she herself actually received from Germany. It is comprehensible that such a prospect should arouse the deepest feeling throughout the country. But it does not excuse serious newspapers for nonsensically asserting that France, having saved civilisation, is now being sacrificed. In an earlier work *

* *Where Freedom Falters.*

I criticised that part of the American people which persists in alleging that that credit belongs exclusively to the United States. It is true that possibly the Allies might not have won the war without the assistance of American troops. But the United States entered the war because her position as a Great Power was flouted by Germany; and because she realised that the defeat of the Allies and the triumph of Germany would both have weakened her politically, and would have also entailed immediate material losses. Had the preservation of civilisation been the only concern of the American people and their government, they would have come to the aid of the Allies a couple of years earlier.

Nor can it be said that the great effort made by the British race was inspired solely by that desire. Leaving aside the fact that the actual participation of England was precipitated by the violation of Belgian territory, it would in any event speedily have become necessary as a measure of self-protection. The only difference (but what a vast difference !) would have been that intervention would have come after, instead of before, the Channel ports were seized by Germany.

Nor is France the saviour of civilisation. No one can (or would want to) belittle the heroism displayed by the French during the long and bitter struggle on their own territory, or the sacrifices which she supported so courageously. But primarily, like England and like the United States, France fought to protect herself and her own interests. That was the attitude of every country engaged in the fray. Italian politicians were only franker than the others when they openly spoke of sacred egotism. To-day the world is amazed or fatigued by any people proclaiming itself to have been first and foremost. If the French sincerely believe that they are the saviours of our precious civilisation (and can it truly be said that what happened between 1914 and 1918 proved that we were so much more civilised than our forefathers ?) they should repeat it only to themselves. It finds no echo amongst other nations, and merely arouses a mild wonder at what is, at the best, an appalling lack of objectivity.

That France should pay more than she receives from Germany was never contemplated by those responsible for the Treaty of Versailles. Nor does it seem right.

But in view of the actual facts it is likely that any improvement in the French situation can only come, not from greater payments on the part of her debtor, but from some remission on the part of her chief creditor—the United States. Of that there is no likelihood at the moment. And the bleatings which have disfigured certain newspapers do not help the French case; though they ring strangely in the ears of those who think that France has some cause to claim to lead the world in culture. After all, has France suffered more materially than Great Britain as a result of the war? Anything may be deduced from the statistics, but the plain fact is that to-day, at least, France is more prosperous than England.

Italy might have more reason to deplore the change of government. Fascism must necessarily stink in the nostrils of the Labour leaders; and Mussolini can hardly hope to find Mr. Henderson as useful to him as was Sir Austen Chamberlain. Yet it is significant that the Italian Press, which is so often unpleasantly outspoken, showed the utmost reserve and prudence in commenting upon the unwelcome victory of the Labour party. The Duce does not cry out before he is hurt; and he realised that any loosening of relations between France and England could only be to the advantage of Italy. Germany also set a good example. For, whatever her secret hopes, the German Press took the stand that too much was not to be expected.

As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether there will be so great an alteration in British foreign policy as is anticipated in some quarters, and feared in others. The resumption of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia is rather incidental than otherwise. It also appears to be in accordance with the wishes of the country; for the Labour party made it clear before the General Election that this would be one of its first acts if returned to power; and the Government has since indicated that any Bolshevik propaganda in England will only lead to another expulsion. The Labour party has neither the desire nor the intention of being the scapegoat of Moscow. Time will probably prove that Mr. Henderson is not unmindful of the English tradition that foreign policy

(of which the basis has altered little since the days of Chatham) shall not change with every change of party.

Nevertheless, the underlying situation revealed by the Hague Conference may possibly affect the direction of our foreign policy. As a consequence of the war Great Britain has made greater financial sacrifices, and is carrying a heavier burden, than any of her Allies. Statistics of direct taxation give the following figures per head of the populations of the respective countries :

	£	s.	d.
Great Britain	15	2	8
France	8	5	10
United States	6	1	1
Italy	3	8	9*

Great Britain is thus paying four-and-a-half times as much as before the war, and France, which is always so ready to proclaim that, if any country should go short, it should be England, is paying only about two-and-a-half times as much.

This situation is tacitly admitted even by France. When the French Press assailed Mr. Snowden because he announced that England would make no further concessions for the benefit of others, it first attacked him solely on the ground that it was a political manœuvre on his part, designed either to enhance the prestige of the Labour party or to embarrass his leader, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. His figures respecting the loss which the Young Plan would entail for Great Britain were never seriously disputed. Even M. Loucheur's attempt to disprove them was notably weak. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer's numerous critics were so lost in indignant amazement when they found that England actually did not intend to pay for others that they conveniently lost sight of the facts. They upbraided the British representative for endangering the Conference on account of what they termed a comparatively small annual sum. But, curiously, they showed no disposition to bear that " small " loss themselves. They were even so averse to that idea that, when they realised that Mr. Snowden meant exactly what he said, they turned to

* It must be admitted however, that statistics per head of the population do not always indicate clearly the exact burden of taxation. Nor are the above figures universally accepted.

devising plans which might produce the necessary amount more or less at the expense of the smaller Powers.

One distinguished French journalist, M. Sauerwein, ingeniously suggested that Mr. Snowden was inspired by an English Nationalist group, which wished to prevent any friendly settlement between France and Germany. He blandly ignored the patent fact that, if France had sincerely wanted to engender a friendly feeling with her neighbour, she might have done so by acting differently—and in time—about the evacuation of the Rhine.

When it became abundantly plain that English public opinion, irrespective of party, was solidly behind Mr. Snowden, the French Press began to question the benefits of the Entente. In this instance the Italian newspapers joined in the chorus, and observed that in any event the differences of opinion at The Hague had had the good effect of uniting France and Italy "against the voracity of England." Signor Mussolini, although equally adamant, was more prudent in his own statement. He doubtless recognised that such a stand could hardly be taken consistently by a country which before the war had secretly practised, and which since had openly preached, the doctrine of sacred egotism.

No understanding between two countries is of any great value once one of them becomes dissatisfied with it. And no arrangement is eternal. It is, therefore, eminently right and proper that the French should examine whether or not the Entente operates to their advantage. Presumably the numerous diatribes on this subject are to be taken seriously. Some of them were curiously reminiscent of Thiers' momentary—and unfortunate—emergence from his retirement, in 1844, to denounce the efficacy of the alliance with England. The Quai d'Orsay always keeps some hold on the responsible French Press in matters of foreign policy; and it is inconceivable that such a campaign should have been launched without its consent. But it was, perhaps, a grave matter deliberately to lead the British public to ask itself the same question: What material benefits do we derive from the Entente? And what are the alternatives? This is a subject which, following the excellent example set by the French, should be considered free from all sentimental considerations.

Some years ago, at the time of the famous Thoiry conversations, France had, within certain limitations, the choice between England and Germany. If Thoiry did not produce anything definite, it was not because Germany was then unwilling to go further. But anyone who has closely followed German policy during the past few years, and who is familiar with the drift of German political opinion to-day, knows that France no longer has that option. As a matter of tactics, the Wilhelmstrasse would doubtless always be ready to suggest the possibility of a resumption of the Thoiry negotiations. And certainly it sincerely regrets that it has not a second string to its bow in the possibility of a serious alliance with Russia. But in existing circumstances Germany secretly cherishes the hope of a *rapprochement* with Great Britain. At present, therefore, it is, to all intents and purposes, England which has the choice. But, if nothing intervenes, it will finally be Germany who alone possesses alternatives; for Russia will not perpetually remain a weak factor in the European situation.

In the last analysis the basis of British foreign policy to-day, as for the last hundred and fifty years, is that the domination of any one Continental Power, both on land and on sea, would constitute an intolerable danger. And at present, more than ever before, our national well-being also demands the strongest possible guarantee of peace, so that the reconstruction and enlargement of the European markets may proceed apace. This necessitates some understanding, however informal, either with France or with Germany; or (and preferably) with both. And all the more so since now England is dependent upon a food supply which can be cut off, is open to bombardment from the air or from Continental Channel ports, and has all the disadvantages without the advantages which an island formerly enjoyed.

But although British policy has practically been the same for a century and a half, the means adopted to attain its ends have varied, from time to time, as circumstances required. This may best be illustrated by recalling that, for two generations after the Crimean War, English statesmen regarded Russia with the deepest distrust. Yet that tradition was quickly abandoned when it appeared to conflict with the vital interests of

the country. And that is the test to which, sooner or later, the Entente will have to be submitted.

If Germany remains a danger, then the powerful French Army is a protection for England as well as for France. Even if that protection is unnecessary, the size of France's Army is entirely her own concern ; although it may be difficult to reconcile the maintenance of a large military establishment with the pacts signed and the speeches made by her politicians. But French nervousness, even if it be exaggerated, is perfectly comprehensible. And, despite many irresponsible statements, there has never been any sign that France dreams of conquest or of territorial aggrandisement. But has England any sound reason to be similarly nervous ? And to what may she be committing herself by endorsing the policy of a country which, with a stationary population of thirty-nine millions, seeks indefinitely to keep in a state of inferiority a virile race which already numbers sixty-five millions ?

Moreover, it is doubtful whether France does not use her military strength to enforce her political views. The wisdom of her policy in respect to Poland is highly questionable. When Russia is comparatively weak, as at present, there is no need for a barrier against her. When she again becomes strong, Poland will be futile as a barrier. The pursuance of this policy will inevitably throw Germany into the arms of Russia at a crucial moment. The fact that that day probably lies fairly far in the future does not in any degree impair this contention. In foreign affairs Soviet Russia follows the path of Peter the Great and of Catharine the Second, far more closely and more jealously than did any subsequent Romanoff. The problem of Constantinople is dormant, not dead.

These, and other cognate considerations, all with innumerable ramifications, combine to raise the question whether British interests, and the cause of European peace (which are identical), are best served by an understanding exclusively with a country which, through sincere apprehension, seeks to prevent Germany from ever again exercising fully all the rights which are inherent to the sovereignty of a Great Power. Germany herself would undoubtedly welcome any *rapprochement* with Great Britain. Indeed, there is also a movement, fostered

chiefly by Herr Arnold Rechberg, which seeks to encompass the more ideal, and therefore the more difficult, plan of a close accord between England, France, and Germany.

In any event, the unanimous support given to Mr. Snowden's firm attitude at The Hague should have convinced all Europe that the events of the last few years have aroused in England a very pronounced public opinion upon at least one phase of foreign policy. It may be taken for granted that no future government will want, or will be able, to recede from the position which the Labour Administration has taken. Despite the latent conflict in the Conservative Party between the opinions held by those who are Imperialists—*et preterea nihil*—and the wider vision of Mr. Winston Churchill (himself no mean Imperialist), it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the latter may one day hold sway at the Foreign Office. Mr. Churchill has never yet entirely disclosed his views respecting European alliances.

Upon one occasion, in 1920, M. Loucheur, although himself discreetly refraining from any pronouncement on the merits, expressed to me his surprise that shortly before I should have said that, were I French, I should strive above all else for a closer understanding with Germany. But I doubt if any German politician will be surprised by the statement that, were I a German, I would to-day give daily thanks for the Hague Conference.

CHAPTER II

MUSSOLINI'S ITALY

It was Crispi's hatred of France which led to Italian participation in the Triple Alliance. The eventual failure of the Sicilian statesman's foreign policy did much to cool the ardour of Italy for that connection; although she never showed any desire to relinquish the protection which it afforded. But after the assassination of King Humbert in 1900 the Italian Government began a flirtation with France which soon degenerated into a liaison. The primary object in view was an assurance of freedom of action in any attempt to wrest Tripoli from Turkey. In exchange Italy was ready to acknowledge France's priority in Morocco. This agreement, which was in breach at least of the spirit of Italy's covenants under the Triple Alliance, was at first kept secret. In 1901, a year after it was made, Prinetti disclosed it to the Chamber of Deputies. But he carefully kept secret the agreement which he himself concluded in 1902, whereby Italy undertook to remain neutral should France be assailed by one or more Powers; or even if France felt compelled to attack Germany in defence of her own interests or of her national honour. This was utterly inconsistent with Italy's obligations under the terms of the Triple Alliance. When San Giuliano became Foreign Minister, four years later, he admitted to the German Ambassador that he would never have signed such a treaty. Nor was this the only clash between the various secret understandings contracted by Italy. M. Poincaré, while expressly stating that in signing the agreement then in force the Quirinal had not infringed the letter of the Triple Alliance, records that in 1913 he and M. Sazonov were both puzzled to perceive how, even with her genius for combinations, Italy would be able to reconcile the arrangement made by Visconti Venosta with Austria, the accord signed with France in 1902, and the Racconigi agreement with Russia. In brief, the

various transactions of the Quirinal were so shameless that Powers who agreed upon nothing else were at one in regarding Italy as a political prostitute. She was willing to be anyone's mistress for an immediate payment ; but no one could count upon her fidelity. Bismarck, no mean judge, once said of Italy, " Anyway, her promise is of no value if it is not in her interest to keep it." When, in 1906, Sonnino said, " Loyal from our heart to the Triple Alliance, we shall maintain the traditions of intimacy with England and our honest friendship with France," the Kaiser, with that shrewdness he often showed, but the recollection of which has been obscured by the wider publicity given to his many foolish utterances, remarked that even Italy was not agile enough to be true to three different interests ; and rightly predicted that she would end in the camp hostile to Germany. Nor was Poincaré under any illusions. In 1912 he observed to Isvolsky that neither the Triple Entente nor the Triple Alliance could count upon Italian support in the event of war, as the Quirinal would first adopt a waiting policy, and would then join the side which seemed more likely to be victorious. The Wilhelmstrasse and the German General Staff also both arrived at the conclusion that it would be highly imprudent to rely upon Italian adhesion to the Triple Alliance in the event of a conflict. However, when the war did break out, Italy was in a position legitimately to refuse to participate, upon the ground that Austria-Hungary, without previously consulting her, had taken the offensive against Serbia.

Italy was, therefore, free to sell her neutrality, or her more valuable intervention, to the highest bidder. From the outset of hostilities the preponderance of popular sentiment was favourable to the Allies, if only on account of the ever-smouldering hatred of Austria. But the political world regarded the question objectively, as one to be decided in favour of whichever of the two opposing forces would promise most, and could give the best guarantees of being able to fulfil its promises. In the early days the majority of politicians, irrespective of party (and even including Sonnino), thought that the interests of their country could best be served by neutrality ; a few even believed that the proper policy was intervention in aid of the Central Powers. But the victory of the

Allies at the Battle of the Marne, and the realisation that England had definitely cast in her lot with that of France, produced a revulsion of feeling, even in political circles. M. Poincaré has justly observed that the negotiations which the Italian Government carried out with the Entente Allies and the Central Powers concurrently before entering the war showed that the Italian Foreign Office was still the most adroit and subtle of all the European chancelleries. Sir Edward Grey told the Italian Ambassador, Marquis Imperiali, who was asking for definite promises, that when Italy was ready to co-operate with the Allied Powers they would be ready to examine her demands. Thereupon the Foreign Minister, San Giuliano, quickly telegraphed to Imperiali, " We must not allow the hope of any co-operation until after we have received the assurance of specified advantages." A little later—in August 1914—Italy made it apparent that she did not then contemplate joining the Allies. San Giuliano said to the French Ambassador, M. Barrère: " The Royal Government has received from Germany and Austria assurances which have dispelled any anxiety we might have had upon the disposition of the Central Powers in our regard. It therefore becomes very improbable that Italy will depart from her neutrality."

There really never was any great prospect of an agreement between Italy and the Ballplatz. For although Vienna would perhaps have been willing to make concessions acceptable to Rome, Hungary, as represented by Tisza, would never consent to the necessary sacrifices. But everyone was beginning to be fatigued by Italy's policy of attempting to get offers from each side, in order to play one against the other, while taking care never to commit herself by any definite proposal. Even Prince Bülow, who through his marriage with the daughter of Donna Laura Minghetti possessed great influence in Rome, was unable to make any progress. However, Italy became alarmed in the spring of 1915 by the rumours current that the Central Powers were upon the point of concluding a separate peace with Russia, since this would have exposed her to an attack by the whole Austro-Hungarian Army. Sonnino therefore took a decisive step. He asked for certain territory in the Southern Tyrol, and in the Adriatic, up to a point not far from

Trieste; the erection of Trieste into an autonomous and independent State; a number of the Dalmatian islands; a recognition by Austria-Hungary of Italy's sovereignty over Valona; and an agreement that Austria-Hungary would not interfere in any manner in Albania. In return for these concessions he was ready to promise that throughout the war Italy would maintain perfect neutrality.

Burian rejected this proposal. But on April 26th, Sonnino concluded the Treaty of London with the Entente Allies. That Pact provided that, in consideration of Italy waging war jointly with the Allies, Russia would at all times use a specified minimum of troops against Austria-Hungary. It was also agreed, *inter alia*, that upon a successful conclusion of the war Italy should be given the Cisalpine Tyrol as far as the Brenner Frontier, Trieste, Istria, together with most of the Istrian islands, and Dalmatia with the islands to the north and west of the Dalmatian coast, as well as full sovereignty over the Albanian port of Valona. The Allies also promised not to allow the Holy See to take part in a Peace Conference, or in any meeting to settle matters arising out of the war.

Italy had her full share of suffering and tribulation during the course of the struggle, which proved to be a longer and sterner contest than had been anticipated. But it would be closing one's eyes to the truth not to recognise that, at the conclusion of hostilities, the Italian Army did not stand high in the opinion of either French or English military experts. Due credit was given for the gallantry displayed in many actions; and especially for the wonderful work of the mountain troops. But the general impression was unfavourable. This was partly due to the disaster of Caporetto. The panic which took possession of the Italian Army after that defeat appalled foreign observers who witnessed the rout. One of these was the late Sir Henry Wilson, whose remarks, when I met him on his return from Italy, I well remember.

Nor do either the English or the Austrian version of Vittorio Veneto coincide with the Italian account of their participation in that battle. Signor Luigi Villari has written that "for the Fascisti, and indeed for all patriotic Italians, Vittorio Veneto, the great battle

which brought Italy's enemy to the dust, is a symbol of Italy's effort throughout the war and the country's national revival." *

It seems, however, that at first the Cabinet was by no means anxious to risk the Army in this encounter with the Austro-Hungarian troops. Mr. Wickham Steed has stated that " on October 24th, the British divisions under Lord Cavan had begun an offensive against the Austrians—a move about which the Italian Government was so nervous that it announced it as an isolated British undertaking. But after the initial success the Italian General Staff promptly ordered an offensive which made rapid progress and ended in the complete collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Army." †

This is entirely confirmed by Austrian narratives. Prince Louis Windischgraetz observes: " It was only little by little that the Italians realised and recognised that the morale of our troops had melted by reason of what had happened in the rear. The line had really been pierced by the action of two English divisions, which had paid dearly for the operation. The Italians had at first not even moved forward. It was only when they realised what had happened behind our front that they quickly imagined the story of a great battle, and that they staged, for their compatriots behind the lines, a great military operation." ‡

The Italian people had been led to think that after these trials a victorious ending of the war would mean an immediate era of material prosperity. Bitter, therefore, was their disillusionment when, like other nations, they found themselves faced by greater economic difficulties than ever before. The reaction was terrific. It soon generated a species of national disorder which no government was able to control, and which later found its outward expression in sanguinary conflicts between the Fascists and the Communists, who were at one only in their contempt for the feeble politicians who succeeded each other in office, and for the powerless instruments of State administration. Nitti, who never underrated the possibilities of Fascism, combated it unsuccessfully.

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* *The Awakening of Italy*, p. 182.
† *Through Thirty Years*, Vol. II., p. 247.
‡ *Mémoires du Prince Louis Windischgraetz*, p. 323.

Giolitti thought that he could make use of it to quell the Communists. He therefore armed the Fascists, believing that after the elections of 1921 he would be able to absorb and dominate them. But when the crucial moment came he discovered his error. Indeed, it was Giolitti on the one hand, and the capitalists on the other, who put in Mussolini's hands the weapons which eventually ensured his triumph. For if Giolitti gave the Fascists rifles, it was the capitalists, tired of the interminable internal strikes, who gave him large subsidies, in the hope that he would be able to restore order.

The details of Mussolini's early life—his humble parentage, his turbulent youth, the violent expression of his socialistic views, leading to incidents which at one time forced him to leave Italy, and also brought him into conflict with the authorities both in Switzerland and in Austria—are too well known to bear repetition. He scored his first great success in 1912 at the Socialist Congress of Reggio-Emilia, and thereupon became editor of the *Avanti*, a post which he still occupied when the war broke out. Mussolini was at first opposed to Italian intervention; for although his sympathy was with the Allies, he believed that, by forsaking her neutrality, Italy would be taking "a great risk," without being able to bring any effective aid to the Entente Powers. It is curious to follow the course of his gradual evolution. On August 26th, 1914, he wrote: "We have given a tangible expression of our sympathy for the Allies by invoking and maintaining neutrality, but to ask more is an absurdity. . . . The interventionists favourable to the French lose sight of one fact: that the aid of Italy, while exposing us to a great risk, would be powerless to determine the success of French arms. The success of France is confided to the French Armies, to the English Fleet, and to the immense reserve of man-power which is at the disposition of Russia. It is an illusion to think the military intervention of Italy would shorten the conflict. If Russia and England cannot succeed in breaking German imperialism, it is certainly not the assistance of Italy which will bring that miracle to pass. Conclusion—and there is only one: Italy must remain neutral."

Two months later Mussolini was more doubtful. Answering those who complained that the *Avanti*

lacked a precise policy regarding the war, he retorted that in the quickly changing circumstances only a genius or an idiot could be precise—and that he was neither the one nor the other. He added that, while still Francophile, he no longer believed that the war which the Allies were waging was either revolutionary, democratic, or socialist. But in various ways the article indicated the direction towards which Mussolini was slowly turning. There was, therefore, no great surprise when, a few days later, he urged the Socialist party to abandon the dogmatic formula of absolute neutrality, and to base its policy upon the shifting course of events. This led to his expulsion from the ranks of that party, after a stormy meeting where he was saluted by cries of "Traitor!" and was hardly allowed to make any defence. It equally entailed his resignation as editor of the *Avanti*. But shortly afterwards he founded the *Popolo d'Italia*, through which for some years thereafter he talked, in his usual vigorous fashion, to the Italian people.

In 1914—and later—Mussolini was still a republican and an atheist. For, inversely from Jaurès, who began as an opportunist and ended as a Socialist, Mussolini began as a Socialist and has become the most sagacious opportunist who has appeared in the political life of Europe during the last hundred years. It is piquant to read to-day what he wrote during the process of this evolution.

Both before 1914 and also in the early days of the war (but after Mussolini himself had passed through the successive stages of being opposed to Italian participation, of doubting whether that was the best policy, and of becoming an active interventionist)—he was wont to attack the King, whom he jeeringly called "the Numismat," in a fashion which can hardly be described as anything but insulting. Victor Emmanuel was, in reality, much more consistent than Mussolini, for the difference between his first and his final attitude was microscopic compared with the gulf which Mussolini so quickly crossed over. But it has always been one of the weaknesses of the Duce to treat as imbeciles or worse those who do not follow closely his mental gyrations, and who fail to arrive at the same conclusion as he does upon exactly the same day.

In 1912, at the Congress of Reggio-Emilia, he

expressed his indignation because certain Socialist municipalities had shown their sympathy upon the occasion of a recent attempt on the life of the King. "After all, what is a king exactly?" he asked. "By definition he is the most useless of citizens. There are nations who have sent their king about his business, when they have not wanted to go further by sending him to the guillotine. Those people were the advance guard of civic progress." And when Mussolini had once changed his view, but while the Italian Government was still negotiating, he wrote: "Many Monarchists are asking whether it is really indispensable to pay sixteen millions annually to a king who, even at a tragic moment in history, only knows how to assume a waiting attitude . . . no one would waste a tear on the Numismat if he took it into his head to abdicate, or to take his retreat anywhere outside this country." Even after the war Mussolini expressed his preference for a Republic; and asserted that the Fascists who had been returned to Parliament at the recent General Election should abstain from attending when the King made his Speech from the Throne.

In 1913 he had written a life of Jean Huss, in order (as he said) to inspire his readers with a hatred of all tyrannies, whether moral, profane, or theocratic. And in 1919 he saluted soldiers who were returning home by expressing his preference for a pagan people: "Épris de lutte, de vie, de progrès, qui refuserait son adhésion aux dogmes révélés et n'aurait que haussements d'épaules pour les miracles."

His national ambitions were then also much less far-reaching than they have subsequently become. Writing in the *Avanti* in November 1914, when he had already become an interventionist, he said: "We do not seek the conquest of Dalmatia, where the percentage of Italians is negligible. Let us agree to the conquest of the Trentino, but limiting ourselves to the Italian zone."

Mussolini has also expressed other opinions, which to-day make strange reading. Only a few weeks before his advent to supreme power he stated in the *Popolo d'Italia* that Italy must follow an anti-British policy, and that it was in her interest to contribute to the demolition of the British Empire. It may be taken for granted that this is an episode to which neither the Duce nor Sir

Austen Chamberlain ever referred in their conversations. In any event, Mussolini speedily discovered the importance of having the support of Downing Street for his foreign policy; and he made a *volte face*, as every opportunist is obliged frequently to do in the course of his career. But Mussolini is not the only statesman who, upon coming into office, has been obliged to repudiate or ignore the attacks he has previously made upon a foreign Power. Perhaps the most famous instance is the retraction by Gladstone of his onslaughts on Austria in the course of his Midlothian campaign.

In its earlier days the fortune of Fascism was variable. It met with no success in the General Election of 1919, when even Mussolini himself was defeated at the polls. It was then that the *Avanti*, with gruesome sarcasm, remarked: "A corpse in an advanced state of putrefaction was dragged out of the Naviglio yesterday. It was identified as that of Benito Mussolini." One wonders where the writer of that quip is to-day. But Mussolini always displayed a political instinct far in advance of that possessed by his blundering opponents. Once Fascists had the weapons and the opportunity, they knew how to make full use of both; and from the beginning of 1922 they had the superiority in respect to both arms and money. Whether or not it was the Fascist party which crushed the Socialists has long been bitterly disputed. The truth is that the Socialist party committed suicide when, victory being within its grasp, it split, at the Leghorn Congress of 1921, into two fractions—the one purely socialistic and the other communist. The former was inert. The latter was active and revolutionary; and it was this section which came into conflict with, and was speedily annihilated by, the forces of Fascism.

It is extremely difficult to obtain any clear and comprehensive definition of Fascism, either from the considerable body of literature which it has produced or even from a careful study of the speeches and acts of its principal exponents. One, which is said to have been approved by Mussolini, reads as follows: "Fascism may be defined generally as a political and social movement having as its object the re-establishment of a political and social order, based upon the main current of traditions

that have formed our European civilisation, traditions created by Rome, first by the Empire and subsequently by the Catholic Church.*

This interpretation will serve as well as another. But it hardly carries the matter very far. Fascism eludes any practical definition ; and can only be gauged by what it has done and by what it is doing. Giovanni Gentile has aptly said that Fascism " is not even a political theory which may be stated in a series of formulæ." Mussolini himself reduced things to their proper proportion when, on one occasion, he candidly remarked that, taking everything into consideration, the Fascist revolution had only been " a violent substitution of men."

However, the Duce sometimes contradicts himself. In the famous speech he made at Udine, in September 1922, he said : " We must have a State which will speak simply as follows : ' The State does not represent a party but a collective nationality ; it embraces every one, it is above every one, it protects every one, and combats whoever attacks its imprescriptible sovereignty.' " But even Mussolini is not always illuminating on this subject, for on another occasion he asserted : " Fascism is subservient to the State as long as the latter fulfils its contract ; but it has the right to substitute itself for the State whenever the latter fails to do its duty."

It is obvious that the Fascist creed is more correctly set forth in the latter declaration, since to-day about two million† Fascists govern forty million other Italians with a rod of iron.

The Duce has recently reiterated his conviction that Italy will be Fascism and that Fascism will be Italy. To the majority of impartial observers, it is to-day more evident that Italy is Mussolini and that Mussolini is Italy. The beneficial changes which the Duce has effected cannot be gainsaid even by those who condemn the methods by which he produces his results. His stern stoicism, and his strict enforcement of discipline throughout all classes of society, have enabled him to

* See *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, by James Strachey Barnes. (Williams & Norgate.)

† The number would be greater were it not Mussolini's policy to limit it.

restore order in a country which was the prey of internal dissension ; to impose a life of steady work upon a people who have no natural aptitude for sustained labour ; and in manifold ways to heighten the prestige of Italy abroad. His undisguised contempt for Liberalism, and for any form of parliamentary government, his refusal to be tied down to any programme, and the sagacious opportunism which he has always exercised, have aided him to attain his ends with almost incredible speed. The March on Rome undoubtedly effected a revolution. But Mussolini always vigorously denies the allegation of M. Georges Valois that Fascism is a continuation of 1789. The Duce has the proper conception of his own creation. The legitimate issue of the French revolution was Garibaldianism — and Mussolini usually ignores Garibaldi and all his works. The late Sir George Trevelyan, who knew and loved Rome so well, once wrote to Theodore Roosevelt that on the Janiculum summit sits Garibaldi " on his charger, nobly sculptured in bronze, overlooking all the city, from the point whence he fought the French in 1849. . . . He stands there the master of all he sees ; and he deserves it too." But to-day Garibaldi has small honour from the powers that be.

There is, however, a certain parallel between the political faith of Mussolini and that of Napoleon—who also was an Italian by blood, whatever his legal nationality. The Emperor subjugated the undisciplined French, and for years kept them under the yoke. But any limitations of its powers, or any independent criticism, is contrary to the true spirit and is fatal to the existence of a dictatorship. No compromise is possible between a tyranny, however benevolent, and any species of popular government. Napoleon's power was mortally impaired the day his misfortunes on the field of battle compelled him to abridge his own prerogatives and to have recourse to legislative assemblies ; and the " Liberal Empire " was an ill-starred conception of Napoleon III. History will doubtless record that the great Emperor and Mussolini alike were patriots, confident they knew what was best for their countries, and determined to impose their policies. Napoleon achieved his success by standing over the French with a whip, and driving them before him like a flock of sheep. Mussolini has used similar means ; and has,

moreover, openly avowed that he would enforce his will even upon a reluctant people.

But what remains to-day of Napoleon's vast work? The Banque de France; the system of centralisation; that great monument, the Civil Code; and the Statutes of the Comédie Française, which he dictated at Moscow —little else besides. Indeed, the Duce was not very happily inspired when, in September 1929, he told his followers that they might appropriately apply to Fascism the words once used by Napoleon when contemplating his own achievements: "Voici un trésor qui durera des siècles."

A genius, possessed of almost superhuman energy, and endowed with the gift of inspiring others, may, in propitious times, control and direct a whole nation, and temporarily guide the course of its destiny. But he cannot permanently alter the ingrained characteristics of a race. Mussolini has said that it is his aim to mould the Italian people into another form. In this attempt he will succeed no better than did Napoleon: although he is not handicapped by being a great soldier as well as a great statesman.

It is impossible to have anything but contempt for those Italians who, having sought refuge abroad from a government which was distasteful to them, and which, in some instances, possibly harassed them, spend their time in vilifying and holding up to contempt the man who has undoubtedly enhanced the importance of their country amongst European nations. The burden of their plaint is that Mussolini has destroyed all Liberal institutions, and that he is an enemy of democracy. No one will admit these allegations more readily than, or so joyously as, Mussolini himself. But the basis of democracy is that the will of the majority should govern. If the Italian population were to-day given the freest opportunity to express its views, probably at least 80 per cent. would vote in favour of the present régime rather than submit to the restoration of parliamentary government—of which they had such a bitter experience when a succession of feeble politicians held office during the years preceding the historic March on Rome. What legitimate ground for complaint have dissentient Liberals—the great protagonists of the theory that the will of the majority

should prevail—if that majority prefers to be ruled rather than to attempt to govern itself?

The late Signor Giolitti, who had little political sympathy with Fascism, said, not long before his death, in speaking of those in exile, voluntarily or otherwise: "I find their conduct, and especially that of certain leaders, such as Signor Nitti and Professor Salvemimi, not to mention any others, extremely blameworthy. Beyond the frontiers it is not right on any account to speak evil of our country and its leaders. What these gentlemen are doing is more contemptible, more deserving of censure, and more harmful even than that wretched act of granting pardon to the deserters. By blackening the name of their country abroad they thereby proclaim themselves unworthy of being Italians."

It is characteristic of Mussolini's courage and political sincerity that, further than is demanded by the barest necessities of diplomatic courtesy, he does not conceal his disdain for the League of Nations and for the various empty Peace Pacts. When, during his dispute with Greece, he saw fit to bombard and occupy Corfu, he bluntly told a protesting Geneva that he intended to do as he thought best in the interests of his country. The League, not for the first time, sought the aid of the Conference of Ambassadors to extricate it from the undignified dilemma into which it had got itself by attempting to match its own feeble futility against the inflexible will of the Italian dictator. But at least it learned its lesson; and has ever since been careful not to cross Mussolini's path. In these days of hypocrisy the Duce's scorn for subterfuges should be counted to him for righteousness. That vigilant defender of the present régime, Signor Luigi Villari, renders his master a doubtful service when he rushes into print to question whether Fascism really does despise the League of Nations; and adds: "What I can say from personal experience is that the Fascist Government from the start has taken a greater interest and played a more active part in League work than any of its predecessors." The Italian representative at Geneva was a better exponent of Mussolini's attitude. When, in October 1927, the German and Yugo-Slavian delegates referred to Italy's treatment of Minorities, he retorted that Yugo-Slavia had too many Minorities within

her own borders to give her any status in such a debate ; but that in any event the subject was a closed one for Italy, which did not acknowledge that the League had any rights in the matter ; and that he would not even attend any further discussions on the subject.

Italy's undisguised dislike for the League of Nations arises partly from the fact that Geneva wishes to maintain the *status quo*, which she sincerely believes does her an injustice. This is another of the unpleasant legacies which President Wilson, through his ignorant interference, bequeathed to Europe. The agreement between the Allies which was concluded at St. Jean de Maurienne, in April 1917, provided that when peace came Italy should be given Smyrna. But at the Peace Conference, Wilson (supported, it is true, by Mr. Lloyd George) authorised its occupation by Greece. The Italians still believe that Wilson forced this decision because he was irritated by the attacks made upon him in the Italian Press. He had some reason to be exasperated. Nevertheless, I believe that in any event he would have acted as he did. The ultimate result of this decision—while it in no way affected the United States, whose President was responsible for it—led to the overthrow of the Greek monarchy, to the discomfiture of Mr. Lloyd George, and to the abasement of the Great Powers in the eyes of the Moslem world.

But underlying everything is the Fascist conviction that the League of Nations is theoretical rather than practical ; and the determination that Italy, in her full tide of nationalism, shall not hamper herself by a compromising adhesion to any futile pacts or agreements. In 1928 the Italian Press, which is only the voice of the Government, bluntly stated that Italy signed the Kellogg Pact merely as a matter of courtesy ; and that there was " one great absentee," since Italy's soul was not behind her signature. The whole proceeding was ridiculed as devoid of any practical meaning, being " only the brief chronicle of a day." The Duce's brother, Signor Arnaldo Mussolini, who succeeded him as editor of the *Popolo d'Italia*, wrote : " Some wise and practical pacifists may ask us, ' What is the meaning of these movements of armed bodies, the tactical exercises, the great and small manœuvres, these preparations of men and material for

the war of offence and defence? Does Geneva no longer exist? Has not the Kellogg Pact condemning war, which is considered as outlawed, or at least as an instrument unnecessary to national needs, been signed only a few days ago?' Well, one must not deride this Pact, which has been signed with great solemnity by various Great Powers, Italy included. But if we want to be sincere, nay, severe, we ought to say that in this Kellogg Pact, and in the relative manifestations at its signing, there is a reciprocal leg-pulling, accompanied by much rhetoric and a transparent insincerity.

" If we wished to be benevolent in judging it, we might say that the signature of the Pact at Paris, in the capital of a people which for four-fifths of the last one hundred years has always been carrying on wars, was a platonic gesture which will have no influence upon the course of the history of the peoples. The Papacy is right when it affirms that the League Pact is not a novelty, but is already a millennial patrimony of the Church of Rome. At the same time, it is true that politics are an ugly pretence, and all this shouting against war, while everyone is arming in an underhand manner, besides being an act of insincerity worthy of reproof in this twentieth century, leads one to suppose that it is a question of a clever and shrewd attempt to safeguard themselves made by those nations which have already arrived, and which want to avoid being troubled, and desire that no one should disturb their slow digestion of gold and of dominion."

One cannot help wondering how Sir Austen Chamberlain, who was Mussolini's principal prop abroad, reconciled these clearly-expressed statements with his own equally clear pronouncements upon the same subject.

Although there is every ground for believing that Mussolini himself does not want to precipitate a war, some of his speeches are open to another interpretation. Upon the celebration of the fourth anniversary of the March on Rome he promised the people that their " impatience would one day be appeased " ; and preached the necessity of self-discipline until that moment for action arrived. In another speech he even stated the years between which a war might be expected to break out. It is unlikely, however, that behind these words there is any deliberate plan for a future offensive

movement. Nevertheless, the threatening tone which the Duce sometimes uses, together with his honestly-avowed belief that in the last analysis force must be the arbiter of the differences between nations, is unpleasantly reminiscent of the former Kaiser. Indeed, when a number of speeches made respectively by Bismarck, Wilhelm II, and Mussolini are placed side by side, the similarity between the two latter is extraordinary. Yet in character Mussolini has in some ways a great resemblance to Bismarck (both statesmen alike courageous and crafty), and in no way whatever has he any to the former Kaiser. Bismarck also was noted for his occasional oratorical outbreaks. Sometimes they were due to his irascibility. More often, however, his apparent anger was not genuine, but was assumed in order to create a certain impression. Mussolini likewise changes his tone according to the effect he wishes to produce, and does not invariably mean all that he says. But his theatrical manner, especially in those speeches which are interspersed with dark menaces, recall Wilhelm II more than the Iron Chancellor.

The most provocative feature of Mussolini's foreign policy is his treatment of Yugo-Slavia, and the nature of Italian relations with Albania. The Treaty of Tirana, signed on November 27th, 1926, provides that it shall remain in force for a minimum period of five years. Most of its provisions are vague. The chief clause provides that "Italy and Albania recognise that every disturbance directed against the political, juridical, and territorial *status quo* of Albania is contrary to their political interest." Taken all in all, the Treaty almost constitutes a protectorate. It is said that the former British Minister to Albania, Mr. W. E. O'Reilly, warned the Foreign Office, in the plainest language, of the hold which Italy was surreptitiously obtaining on the country, and predicted the ultimate result; and that this led to a protest by Mussolini, which resulted in Mr. O'Reilly being transferred to Venezuela. It is impossible to guarantee the accuracy of these statements. But what can be said with certainty is that Mr. O'Reilly saw more of Italian operations than he was meant to see; that he was clairvoyant about the future; and that in 1926 he was sent to another post. A further step was taken

when, in 1928, Ahmad Beg Zogu, against the advice of both England and France, but with the assent of the Italian Government, assumed the title of King of the Albanians.

Both financially and commercially Albania is now largely dependent upon Italy; and Italian advisers are to be found in many departments of the Government. What security Ahmad Beg Zogu enjoys is due largely to the support of the country to which he has bound his fortunes. The Albanians themselves have little liking for any form of dependence. Various incidents have shown that Italian predominance in the affairs of their country is distasteful to them. Italy tries to counteract this by exciting the hatred of the Albanians for Yugo-Slavia; and seeks to make them believe that their safeguard lies in close relations with Italy. But the risk in thus arousing violent nationalism is obvious.

Italy is very sensitive to the way in which she is treated by other Great Powers, and quickly resents any apparent slight. But she does not always extend to others the same consideration which she demands for herself. This is notably so in regard to Yugo-Slavia, and the lack of courtesy often displayed has done much to aggravate the whole situation. Many examples might be cited. It will suffice to recall that once, for many weeks, Mussolini, upon one pretext or another, refused to receive the Yugo-Slavian Minister. He is said to have done so finally only after certain representations had been made to him by the British Ambassador, Sir Ronald Graham.

The most constant refrain in Mussolini's foreign policy is that Italy must and will have further territory—preferably by peaceful means. The Duce's declaration that the Mediterranean is "*mare nostrum*" shows one direction towards which his eyes are directed. But it is not only over the Mediterranean that he claims primary rights for Italy. He also regards the Adriatic as an Italian lake, and implicitly denies the right of any other Great Power to participate actively in Balkan affairs. However, France pursues her own way, and pays little or no attention to these affirmations. Sir Austen Chamberlain once made a speech which greatly encouraged Mussolini to think that from Downing Street, at least, his pretensions

would meet with no opposition. Speaking to the Diplomatic Corps, Sir Austen said that England would intervene only in order to prevent a war on the Rhine, and was not interested in what happened in the rest of Europe. This statement, which to some extent corresponds with English public opinion, was intended to have a tranquillising effect. But Italian politicians cleverly converted it into an assurance that they were free to pursue any designs they might cherish respecting the Balkans.

At one time—and not so very long ago—Italy had absolutely no firm friend amongst the nations except Great Britain. But within the last three years Mussolini has concluded treaties with several of the lesser Powers. The support of England was his greatest asset. But it could not be relied upon as a permanency in view of the possible advent to office of the Labour party. To that party Mussolini's political creed, and many of his actions as dictator, are entirely repugnant. In these circumstances it was natural that the Duce should have cultivated closer relations with Bulgaria and Greece, so as to make Yugo-Slavia reflect upon the danger of finding herself at war simultaneously on more than one front. It is equally obvious that it is in Italy's interest to be on good terms with Turkey.

Mussolini's relations with Hungary are imprinted by an open strain of lyricism. It was not difficult for that consummate judge of human nature to read the Hungarian character. His pronouncement that Hungary had been hardly treated by the Peace Conference, and the various attentions which he has showered upon her, have convinced that country that she has everything to gain and nothing to lose by a clash between Italy and Yugo-Slavia. It has been predicted that at a propitious moment (and none could well be more propitious than that provided by such a war) Germany would support a Hungarian ultimatum to Belgrade. Upon the whole, that is singularly unlikely. The German sentiment towards Hungary is by no means the same as towards Austria. It is not forgotten that at the outbreak of the war, and later, Tisza prevented concessions to Italy which might have sufficed to ensure at least the neutrality of that country; and that at the close of the war it

was again Hungary which, even before the Armistice, turned her back on Berlin, and proclaimed that she had never willingly had any connection with Germany or with her policy. Italy, Hungary, and Germany have the common ground of dissatisfaction with the *status quo*. But Germany has come to the conclusion that little is to be gained by any partnership with M. Mussolini; which would only be too likely to recall the observation of Paul de Musset concerning his relations with his younger brother, Alfred: "Que voulez-vous? C'est comme cela. Alfred a eu toujours la motié du lit, seulement la motié était toujours prise du milieu."

More curious has been the recent course of Italy's relations with Rumania. It was because General Averescu was being too much influenced by his well-known Italian connections and sympathies that he was ousted from office by the late M. Jean Bratianu and the Liberal party. Upon again becoming Prime Minister, Bratianu showed clearly that the feelings he had always cherished towards France were still in the ascendant. Upon his death in November, 1927, the Foreign Minister, the brilliant M. Titulescu, gave vent to his own predilection for Italy, as I have reason to know through an incident in which I happened to be personally involved. The position was delicate. The recognition which Italy had finally granted of Rumania's acquisition of Bessarabia was of some moral value; for Bessarabia, and not Transylvania, is the Achilles' heel of Rumania. But as against that was the fact that Rumania and Yugo-Slavia are two of the three countries which compose the Little Entente; and that Italy's scarcely-concealed unfriendliness constantly causes Belgrade the greatest anxiety. However, M. Titulescu had, in January 1928, a long interview with Mussolini, which apparently caused the greatest satisfaction to both statesmen. But there is reason to believe that the Rumanian Foreign Minister and his colleagues were not entirely at one upon this question. It is significant that the final communiqué after the meeting of the Little Entente at Bucarest, in June, 1928, made no allusion to Italy. It was only some days later that a paragraph, containing a friendly reference to Italy was issued. The explanation given for the delay was that a semi-official news

agency had made an "error of transmission." This obtained little credence. It was generally believed in the chancelleries of Europe that the paragraph had been purposely suppressed, and was only finally given to the Press through the insistence of M. Titulescu.

Any relations which Mussolini may have had with Moscow are shrouded in mystery. In 1926, and again at one period in 1927, there were repeated rumours in diplomatic circles of conversations which were supposed to have taken place between the Duce and representatives of the Soviet Government. It is clear that in the event of hostilities with Yugo-Slavia it is in Italy's interest that Rumania should be occupied with troubles of her own. For that the best instrument is Russia, which even later, when she proposed the speedy ratification of the Kellogg Pact, announced that that step carried with it no implication of her assent to the *status quo* regarding Bessarabia. It is equally evident that in this manner Russia could best ensure some profit for herself from a clash between Italy and Yugo-Slavia. But although these rumours were disclosed to me in 1927 by the diplomats of several countries, who apparently had some belief in their accuracy, I know of nothing which can be taken as serious confirmation.

The extraordinary way in which the outcome of the war has shifted Italy's preoccupations is worth a moment's reflection. A gifted ambassador, who for some years prior to 1914 was accredited to the Quirinal, once told me how he had constantly impressed upon the Italian Foreign Office the error of taking too seriously the disagreements with Austria-Hungary. He contended that at most they were only as pin-pricks compared with the difficulties by which Italy would be confronted should a war, resulting in the dismemberment of the Hapsburg Empire, give birth to new Slav States, distinguished by their youthful vigour and activity, and possibly even by their pugnacity. The lapse of time has amply justified this sage advice. But in those days the ingrained Italian hatred of all that was Austrian overbore all other considerations.

A study of Mussolini's foreign policy naturally suggests an inquiry about the strength of the Italian Army and its value as a fighting force. Its peace footing is 310,000; but its quality varies more greatly than that of any

army in Europe: the men from one part of the country making excellent, and those from another part only passable, soldiers. This has always been an element of weakness in the Italian Army. In time of war it becomes more pronounced, for any reverse leads each body of troops to lose faith in its neighbour. The speeches which are apparently intended to excite military ardour are numerous. But such orations do not usually have the same effect on professional soldiers as upon civilians. And, once a war breaks out, the noise made by the cannon has a way of drowning the voices of the most eloquent politicians.

The material of the Italian Army is thought, by foreign observers and military attachés, to be excellent. This is specially true of the Air Force. It consists of about eighty squadrons of aircraft and four airships, the first line strength being 800 machines, with 800 in reserve.* Indeed, the Duce seems to have had ground for predicting that between 1935 and 1950 "the wings of Italian aeroplanes will obscure the sun."

There is also the Fascist Militia, an armed force, well disciplined, but less well trained for actual warfare, which could at once place several hundred thousand in the field. But its actual value in foreign warfare is problematical; and competence in civil contests does not afford any criterion. It should be added that the tension which at one time existed between the Army and the Fascist Militia has now entirely disappeared, and that at present the two are on excellent terms.

As Italy has neither coal, nor iron, nor petrol, she could not alone wage a struggle of any long duration. A successful war might ensure her a future supply of these commodities, the present lack of which is a vital weakness for which no national self-confidence and no pitch of enthusiasm can compensate. But to embark upon a conflict without them would be a dangerous venture.

To-day few people in Italy want a war; but a greater number fear they will live to see one. Mussolini's policy in respect to Albania and Yugo-Slavia may one day precipitate a clash for which he has no desire

* These are the figures given by *Whitaker* for 1929. They are somewhat less than the estimate furnished me by a competent authority.

but which he will be unable to avoid. But the real risk lies not so much in any declaration of hostilities by Italy, or in any act of Mussolini, or of the men of his generation, as in the spirit which may be manifested later by those who have passed their impressionable years under Fascist rule. They are being taught to believe that the Italians are the greatest people in the world; that they are envied everywhere; that they saved civilisation and were then disloyally treated by their allies; that they must have space for expansion; and that, if it is not given to them, it simply lies with themselves to seize it at the first available opportunity. It is quite possible that Fascism is breeding an element which later it may not be able to control. It will not be surprising if the generation which will attain its maturity between 1930 and 1940 should be both bellicose and fanatical. The mystic obedience to the Duce renders the risk of this comparatively slight so long as he is at the head of the State. But afterwards?

Some idea of the views with which Italian children are inculcated from their earliest days may be gathered from the following catechism, which was taught in the Balilla, where about 500,000 children under fifteen are instructed in their duties towards the State.

Question: How many commandments has Italy given to her sons, and what are they?

Answer: There are ten commandments:

1. I am Italy, thy mother, thy sovereign, thy godfather and thy goddess.
2. Thou shalt not recognise any other mother, any other sovereign, or any other goddess above me;

and others in the same strain.

Then follow the twelve Articles of Faith:

1. I believe in Rome, the Eternal, the mother of my country.
2. And in Italy, her eldest daughter.
3. Who was born in her virginal bosom by the Grace of God.
4. Who suffered through the invasion of barbarians, was crucified and buried.

5. Who descended to the grave and was raised from the dead in the nineteenth century.
6. Who mounted to Heaven in her glory in 1918 and in 1922 [by the March on Rome].
7. Who is seated to the right of her mother, Rome.
8. Who for this reason will come to judge the living and the dead.
9. I believe in the genius of Mussolini.
10. And in our Holy Father, Fascism, and in the Communion of its martyrs.
11. In the conversion of Italians;
12. And in the resurrection of the Empire.

Monsignor Goggia, Bishop of Brescia, with the assent of the Vatican, condemned this catechism; otherwise it provoked no authoritative protest. Apart from the debatable question of taste, it is a striking illustration (and others might be cited) of the entire lack of a sense of humour invariably displayed by Fascism. That weakness is one of its two most outstanding defects. The other—and more serious one—is that by its very nature Fascism can never rest upon its acquired positions. It must always advance: for the day it ceases to do so the inspired enthusiasm for the cause will dwindle, and the imperfections common to all established régimes will begin to appear.

The enthusiastic belief in themselves which Mussolini has aroused in the Italians also finds frequent expression in vehement outbursts or daring prophecies about the future. Signor Marinetti, the founder of Futurism, once said: "Italy is divine. The ancient Romans having conquered all the people of the world, the Italian of to-day is invincible. The Brenner Pass is not the objective point, but the starting point. The least of Italians is worth at least a thousand foreigners. Italian products are the best in the world. . . . Italy has every right, since she retains the absolute monopoly of the genius of creation. Every foreigner ought to enter Italy religiously."

Signor Turati, Secretary-General of the Fascists party, speaking at Chiazi on August 8th, 1927, said: "We have lit at Rome not only the beacon of our pride, but the flame of a new civilisation. I do not know whether

one day, at the command of the Duce, we must rush forward for the Holy Battle which will give Italy her grandeur; but it is certain that all the peoples of the world to-day have their eyes fixed on Rome."

Sometimes France is made a target. Francesco Coppola, one of the best known of Italian Nationalists, who is supposed to enjoy the confidence of Mussolini, has remarked that on one side there is the young nation of Italy, over-populated and rich in manhood, but blocked in the Mediterranean, and without colonies; and on the other an old and under-populated country—France. He declared that there should be an alliance between the two—advantageous to Italy; and added that, as France was bound to grow weaker and Italy stronger, the longer the delay, the more Italy would gain, since later she would be able to exact better terms.

The same Coppola, in a speech at Catane, said: "If to-day Sicily is the extreme limit of Italy she will soon become her geographical centre. Italy will expand beyond the seas, into territories which will give her further diameter and power. Sicily is the bridge across the Mediterranean towards your colonial empire, which, if to-day it embraces only three or four possessions, will in some years be infinitely greater. Vast regions on the shores of Africa and Asia await the arrival of the new Roman legionaries. . . . We lack space and raw materials; but we have powerful arms for work, and agile brains, capable of adapting themselves to the new conditions of life; and also the courage to undertake the most risky adventures."

Still more extraordinary was an article in the *Roma Fascista*, which is supposed to be under the influence of Mussolini, calmly explaining how France ought to put herself under the protection of Italy: "Prolific hard workers, honest, economical, and loving family life, it is the Italian people which logically carries the standard of Latin civilisation. And France knows it well, despite her attitude of chauvinistic disdain. Therefore let France come to us! We will not found an Italian empire in order not to hurt anyone's susceptibilities. No! France and ourselves together will be united under a name which is equally dear to each of us: the Roman Empire. It will be a creation both new and

antique, to which France will bring her ancient unitary tradition, the strength of her military and civil history, and her rich colonial empire; that is, the treasures which others might capture, profane, and destroy. We, on our part, will bring our youth, the miracle of our civilisation which is always young although it has existed for thousands of years, the incorruptible force of our family life, the prodigious fecundity of our women, and the strong will of our workmen. A block of eighty million Romans extending from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, and held in the powerful grasp of Mussolini, would solve the dark and arduous problem of Europe. Our peasants already know the route which leads to the rich fields of France; our artisans are ready to infuse new blood into French industries and enterprises. And, so far as the necessary leaders are concerned, we possess them—they are resolute and capable! In the space of a single year France will again become herself. She would contribute powerfully to reconstructing the glory of Rome. And if the French people, despite our efforts to give her new blood, was nevertheless inexorably destined to disappear, it would at least have the consolation of dying in the immortal arms which rocked it during its infancy. It would not be destroyed by the barbarians, but absorbed in the maternal bosom of Rome!"

The majority of foreigners who read this bathos, appearing in quarters where one expects to find serious political pronouncements, are amazed. But the French are only amused. They have heard it all before. The former Kaiser more than once expressed the opinion that France was decadent, and nearing her latter end. In a letter to the Czar he once wrote: "I give you my word, Nikky, that the divine curse will for centuries weigh on these people." But despite all prophecies and fulminations, France refuses to die, and goes blithely on her way.*

Another Fascist writer, Pietro Gorgolini, who at one

* Since the above was written the Italian Press has changed its tone about France; and it now speaks of the two Latin countries being linked together to resist the "voracity" of England, as displayed at the Hague Conference. What is not said so openly is that both France and Italy (and especially the former) view with alarm the possible *rapprochement* of Great Britain and the United States.

period was very close to Mussolini, and who has been described as the least exaggerated of Fascist historians, has written that " the legionaries of d'Annunzio in rushing to Fiume gave the signal to all oppressed countries, to Nice, to Savoy, to Corsica, to Malta, to Gibraltar, to Ireland, to Egypt, to India, to Canada, to Montenegro, and to Albania." Exception might be taken to many parts of this statement. Signor Gorgolini would have some difficulty in finding any fraction of the population in Canada which considers itself to be oppressed. Presumably he has never been in that country ; and possibly not in all the other countries to which, in his ignorance, he refers so glibly. But before again writing about Canada he might do well to ponder the affirmation so often made by the acknowledged leader of the French-Canadian race, M. Alexandre Taschereau, that that minority enjoys the utmost liberty and freedom of action. Indeed, when some years ago there was a movement to abolish the appeal which, in certain cases, can be taken from the Supreme Court of Canada to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, it was the French-Canadians who most strenuously objected to this weakening of the Imperial tie. In any event, Signor Gorgolini's doctrine is irreconcilable with Mussolini's policy (which is, at least, consistent) in regard to the Upper Adige.

To boast of one's own powers or achievements has never been considered a sign of assured strength in a nation—any more than in an individual. The French, the most conceited people in Europe (and with some ground for their conceit), are convinced of the superiority of France and of everything French. But they never make open avowals of their belief in their own pre-eminence. They are quite indifferent to what others may think (so much the worse for foreigners if they are blind !), and they have too much faith and are too assured of their own position to feel the need of stimulating their self-confidence by constantly telling each other how great they are. That is precisely why the world at large believes more in the permanent greatness of France than of Italy. For, rightly or wrongly, it is generally thought that silence upon such subjects goes hand in hand with actual strength.

England also had her day of greatness—perhaps it has not yet passed away forever. But what annoyed many Germans before the war was that neither the English Press nor people would ever be drawn into a discussion about the comparative importance of the two countries. When Wilhelm II, after pugnaciously proclaiming that German civilisation and culture were destined to save the world, would cast a threatening look around, with one eye on England, there never was any echo to his veiled challenge—except possibly a subdued chuckle. Not that the English under-estimated the place their race occupied in the world. On the contrary, they were so sure of their position, and so sincerely indifferent (perhaps too much so) to the judgment of others, that they could perceive no room for any argument.

However, such comparisons would mean nothing to the Fascists. But there is one example which should impress them. They persistently contend that they have revived and are carrying on the tradition of ancient Rome. But one of the characteristics of the Romans was that they never boasted, either amongst themselves or to others, about the greatness which was Rome. They were content to let their deeds speak for themselves.

It is highly significant that Mussolini himself sometimes descends to making speeches in this strain. For the Duce's natural dignity is as serene as his political shrewdness; nor is he theatrical in the sense of consciously playing a part: the unconscious Italian manner seems histrionic to Anglo-Saxons, because if they acted in the same way it would be a conscious pose. It has been said that it is necessary to awaken the Italians to a sense of their own greatness. That is not very convincing. For the Italians were never notable (as are the Spaniards) for innate modesty, and a lack of faith in their own abilities. On the contrary, as Herr von Jagow, when Ambassador at Rome, once wrote, "L'Italien est une prima donna habituée aux applaudissements et qui ne sait point s'en passer."

But a careful perusal of Mussolini's speeches will lead to the conclusion that in fact their object is to impregnate the Italian people with a belief in the greatness and durability of Fascism. For that there may well be some need. Less than two million Fascists rule absolutely more than

thirty-nine million of their fellow-countrymen, who are given no voice in choosing either how or by whom they shall be governed. The Italians believe in Mussolini, who himself rules the two million Fascists, much more than they believe in and comprehend Fascism. Any intelligent Italian with whom one discusses this subject will probably begin by the usual shibboleth about the merits of the new form of government. But if pressed further he will say, " I believe in it because it has made us great, and will make us greater." While, if made to go one step further, he will admit that in his mind " it " means " he "—the great Duce.

The Press likewise constantly exalts the merits and beauties of Fascism. It seems to have taken as its motto: " Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works—and glorify the Duce who is in Rome." Such constant laudation of itself by any political party would, in an English-speaking country, be considered a sign of a lack of self-confidence. But in Italy it confirms the populace in its belief in Fascism. A perusal of Italian newspapers would give any uninformed reader the impression that the eyes of the whole world are fixed upon Rome, and that other countries envy the Italians the blessings showered upon them by Fascism. How far it is sagacious for any government to glorify itself at the expense of veracity is questionable. For, without a shadow of a doubt, these statements are inexact. Even those who felicitate Fascism upon its success cherish no such sentiments. When Fascist orators extol the greatness and the virtues of Fascism they are talking in the air, except when they address their remarks to Italians. For the greater part, no one wishes to contest their contention. They should, and they probably do, know what is best for their own country, to which Fascism has undoubtedly brought absolute tranquillity and a certain measure of prosperity. But there is no country which envies that form of government; and the general impression is that what brought peace to Italy would not be tolerated by other nations—perhaps because they have no need for such drastic remedies. Public opinion abroad may roughly be divided into three categories. There is a small body of observers which holds that Italy was fortunate to find, at a critical

moment, a suitable form of government; and which is carefully watching the ultimate result of the experiment. Another, and much larger, body consists of those Liberal doctrinaires to whom everything connected with Fascism or Mussolini is anathema. And finally a still larger number of people who are utterly indifferent to the whole question.

The Italian Press no longer enjoys even a limited measure of liberty. The National Syndicate of Italian Journalists is composed entirely of Fascists; and no Italian who does not belong to it can exercise his profession even by writing articles for reviews. How complete is the Government control is shown by the first Bulletin of the Syndicate, published in October 1927, which stated that "it is, and will even be to a greater extent in the future, a political instrument at the service of the Duce, and of the Fascist party." Mussolini, when speaking at the Foreign Office to a number of editors of Italian daily newspapers, claimed that "the Italian Press is the freest Press in the whole world." Even allowing for the various meanings which may be attached to the word "freedom," it is somewhat difficult to reconcile this assertion with the Syndicate of Journalists' own idea of its proper functions. The way in which Mussolini did so, by alleging that the existence of this liberty was proved by the fact that Italian journalism "serves only one cause and no régime," seems, to a foreigner, decidedly forced. Certainly the measure of liberty accorded Italian journalists would not be acceptable either to the Press or to the public of other Western European countries. But that distinction does not, in itself, constitute a criticism of Mussolini's peculiar views regarding the freedom of the Press. On the other hand, his legislation on this question is of a piece with his whole policy. It is entirely logical; for a dictatorship—and especially one which is openly based on the theory that the people must be governed in a certain way, whether they like it or not—is only sapping its own foundations if it allows public criticism of its actions. Moreover, this question goes to the very root of what Signor Luigi Villari has declared to be "the leading problem of Fascism . . . the *right* of the State and the *duty* of the individual."*

* *The Fascist Experiment*, p. 50.

Where Mussolini is not so consistent (and, indeed, this is one of the comparatively few inconsistencies in his record as a dictator) is that he resents, and would punish, any reflection by foreign journalists upon the Fascist régime, but allows the Italian Press, which cannot speak at all except with the approbation of the Fascist Government, occasionally to fulminate against France and the French in a fashion which is more vigorous than delicate. No explanation has ever yet been forthcoming as to why it should be a crime to disagree, in decent language, with either Fascist theories, their present result, or their future influence, but quite permissible for a State-controlled Press to publish much more objectionable articles about another country. Italy is often exasperated—and sometimes with reason—because the French Press does not treat her on a basis of equality as a Great Power. But for this the Italian Press itself is largely to blame. Not only does it sometimes make bitter attacks upon France, but it often emits ideas about the future of that country which are more curious than impressive. The French, who are the least artless people in the world, find it difficult to take seriously the naïve predictions which are nowadays current in Italy. For instance, *L'Impero*, on February 6th, 1926, remarked: "Either France will make war on Italy, and, in that event, she will not be able to employ her colonial reserves, and will thereafter be obliged to abandon all, or almost all, her colonies; or she will make war in alliance with Italy; and, in that case, she will be obliged to pay for the Italian alliance by ceding a great part of her African and Asiatic possessions."

Quite in accord with the tone of the speeches and articles to which I have alluded are the somewhat pompous titles bestowed by the Fascist Government. Diaz was created "Duke of the Victory"; Admiral Thaon di Reval "Duke of the Sea"; and d'Annunzio "Prince of the Snowy Mountain." However, I believe that the novelist originally assumed that title himself. It was not the first time he had taken the initiative in changing his name; for many years earlier he had deserted that of Rapagnetta for the more striking one of "Gabriel of the Annunciation." Similarly, when Mussolini decided that the grain production must be increased, he entitled the

campaign which he inaugurated " La Bataille du Blé." But this sonority, which English people are unable to comprehend, and even find difficult to take seriously, undoubtedly has its effect upon the Italian people; otherwise one would not find the Duce making constant use of it.

The population of Italy is now in the neighbourhood of 41 million, and it increases at the rate of 450,000 annually.* The birthrate, although still high, is lower than it was a quarter of a century ago. But, thanks to better hygienic conditions, and to the gradual extinction of malaria, the deathrate has decreased by about 30 per cent. during the same period. Moreover, Mussolini, who has an instinctive horror of the doctrines of Malthus, is constantly urging the Italians to breed more feverishly, and is doing his utmost to check the ravages still caused by infant mortality. Any slight fall in the birthrate immediately arouses him. The Fascist formula is not " Less children are born; let us save more children," but " Less children are born; let us have more children." As a practical inducement to legitimate fecundity, a tax has been imposed upon bachelors. However, Mussolini is hardly consistent, for he simultaneously demands that, because her own soil cannot provide sufficiently for her present population, Italy must have an outlet. That is, in plain language, that Italy must obtain territory now possessed by some other country.

But are the French any more consistent in deliberately keeping down their birthrate on account of the division of property involved, and simultaneously demanding assistance so that their country may retain its position as a great Power, which they are endangering by their own selfishness? One wonders whether Napoleon would have enacted a law providing (more or less) for the distribution of inheritances amongst all the offspring had he foreseen the result. After a great battle he sometimes used to say that the losses would be made up by a single good night in Paris. Nowadays it would

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* The figures for the first five months of 1929 showed a decline. There were 22,000 fewer births and 60,000 more deaths than during the same period in 1928; and the net increase was only 122,630 as compared with 209,085.

take a considerable number of week-ends to compensate for the mortality of an ordinary skirmish.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that to-day the United States is practically closed to Italian emigrants. Between 1902 and 1911 the average number of Italian emigrants was 600,000. Of these, approximately 350,000 crossed the sea, the majority going to the United States. In 1919, the first year after the war, 41,154, and in 1920, the last year before the American restrictions came into force, 170,000 Italians emigrated to the United States.

The adoption on July 1st, 1929, of the "natural origins" amendment to the United States Immigration Act reduced the Italian quota from 5,802 to 3,845. The calculation is now based upon the percentage which each country has contributed to the total population of the United States. The obvious weakness of this system is that it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to determine the nationality of the original immigrant ancestor of many people. In 1921 Congress passed the first quota law which limited immigration from each country to 3 per cent. of the people born in such country who were living in the United States when the census of 1910 was taken. In 1924 further legislation made the basis of the calculation the number of persons of each nationality domiciled in the United States in 1890. The avowed object of this, as well as of the recent alteration, was to give a favoured position to the races of Northern and Western Europe, which had contributed to the early growth of the country, in preference to the Mediterranean races, which had sent large numbers chiefly between 1890 and 1910.

In 1920 there were in New York and its vicinity 1,200,000 Italians; and in the City of New York itself 800,000—a figure which was exceeded by no foreign colony except the Russian, which amounted to 990,000. At that date there were 100,000 more Italians in Greater New York than in Naples, which is the largest city in Italy; and in the whole of the United States there were one-tenth as many Italians as in Italy. In all, more than nine million Italians live abroad.

Mussolini once said: "My order is that an Italian citizen must remain an Italian citizen, no matter in what land he lives, until the seventh generation." That

declaration is quite comprehensible from the standpoint of the Nationalists. But it is equally comprehensible that other countries are not desirous of any large influx of people impregnated with that theory. The United States, which owes its position in the world to-day to the ability it has shown to absorb emigrants, at least in the second generation, and which will not tolerate foreign centres in its midst, considered Mussolini's doctrine particularly obnoxious. There is no doubt that had it not already been protected by its restrictions against the influx of aliens, it would have enacted special legislation as a direct result of the statements made by the Duce, and of the activities of some of his agents. The Government itself did not take the matter too seriously. But in diplomatic circles it is no secret that the zeal shown by the chief representative of Fascism in the United States, Count Ignazio Thaon di Reval, was deeply resented; and that a speech he made in Naples a few years ago, when on a visit to Italy, led to protests being made both to the Department of State and to the Department of Justice. The cause of American irritation may be gauged from the nature of the articles which have appeared in Italian newspapers published in the United States. *Il Carrocio*, a magazine under the auspices of the Fascist League of North America, made the following pronouncement: "Let us be clear in our stand on Americanisation. Prior to Fascisimo, the governors [of Italy] were so weak that they permitted their sons to become citizens of other countries. But we must state our stand clearly. We must preserve for Italy its blood and its sons. To be a citizen of Rome is the highest attainment, and now, under the Fascist régime, the highest honour. How could we become so vile as to renounce that citizenship even for the citizenship of America?"

Giovanezza, another paper published in the United States under similar auspices, laid down that one of the aims of Fascisti in America was to "bring back to Italian citizenship all our countrymen who have been legally denationalised, and—what is much worse—who, by accepting foreign ideals and a foreign language, have made themselves bastards of Italy."

Anyone with even an elementary knowledge of the

United States, and of American sentiment, will realise the indignation which was provoked by the fact that Fascist journals should openly seek to change the nationality of those who had taken the oath of allegiance ; and who were making their living in the country, if they had not already made their fortune there. Nor were they any more favourably impressed by the efforts of the Fascists in America to spread Mussolini's doctrine that the State is absolute, and that " democracy is a relic of the Middle Ages." The situation was aggravated by the fact that Fascism was represented by delegates often more zealous than wise, and who not seldom came into conflict with the diplomatic representatives of their own country.

About two years ago several incidents warned Mussolini of the impending danger ; and he acted with characteristic thoroughness. A General-Secretary, attached to the Foreign Office, was empowered to appoint the secretaries of the Faisceaux abroad. All Fascists were strictly enjoined to yield obedience to the official representatives of their country, but were given a right of appeal to Rome. They were also instructed that they should not in any way interfere in the internal politics of the State in which they lived ; for Mussolini wished to make it clear that, unlike Bolshevism, Fascism carried on no international propaganda, and did not seek to undermine the foundations of existing governments. Since these prudent injunctions, the tension, especially in the United States, has visibly relaxed.

Italy no longer allows the permanent emigration of Italians. The Foreign Office circular in which this policy is described sums it up as a " strenuous defence of the demographic resources of Italy ; which cannot be lavished either on young nations desirous of increasing their restricted man-power, or on old nations who want to reinforce their impoverished strength with new blood." But this edict was somewhat tardy, since it only appeared after the United States had barred the hundred thousands of Italians who used to pass the Statue of Liberty every year, when South America was already largely saturated, and when various other countries had made it clear that they preferred not to have any more Fascists within their gates. There may have been some necessity for

regulations preventing Italians themselves from emigrating while they still could. But to-day no country, either in Europe or in America, wants to see them come in any great number.

The impression that Italy should have further colonial possessions is gaining ground both in England and in France. The French Colonial Empire has a population of about 66 millions; or, including the Mandated Territories, over 72 millions. The Italian colonial possessions have in all a population of only about 2,250,000 and an area of just over one million square miles. An undoubted injustice was done when, in the territories given under the Mandates of the League of Nations, France, Great Britain, and also some of the British Dominions and Japan, all shared, while nothing was allotted to Italy. But what country is now to provide Italy with a necessary outlet is less clear. Even when her ambition is achieved, she will only be at the beginning of her troubles. The belief that colonies can be founded by any country which has a surplus population is an error widely current throughout Italy. Colonies also demand capital. When that is not forthcoming, the workman, if he has the choice, prefers to emigrate to countries like the United States, or the South American Republics, where he is certain to find immediately well-paid employment. Unfortunately, Italy has no great capital available for colonial exploitations.

Mussolini showed his usual energy in putting the finances of the State upon a sound basis. He himself is not at home in that field. However, his perspicacity led him to obtain some definite arrangement about the Italian debts to Great Britain and to the United States. The satisfaction given by these settlements is expressed in one of the pamphlets issued under the auspices of the Government in 1927, "Anno V"—"La Politique Financière du Gouvernement Fasciste." It is said therein that the settlements mean "a remission of more than a hundred million dollars of interest . . . the renunciation of the United States upon the debt is about 80 per cent. . . . Italy has also obtained from England a reduction of about 85 per cent. of the capital of its debt, and the gradual return of the gold sent to London during the war. . . .

If a comparison is made with the agreements arrived at by France, one will see that Italy will pay 433 million dollars, while France must pay 1,723 million dollars for a debt in consolidated capital of 4,025 million dollars. France will thus pay the United States for a consolidated debt which is about double that of Italy, a sum about four times greater than that which will be paid by Italy."

But this pamphlet neglects to state clearly (and it is generally ignored) that the sixty-two Bons d'État which Italy gave the United States for the amounts falling due in the course of the following sixty-two years must at any time, on the demand of the United States, be exchanged for bonds which can be sold to the public, either in Italy or elsewhere; that is, bonds which Italy herself must absorb if they find no market. It is obvious that this provision gives the United States a powerful hold upon Italy.

Mussolini also quickly balanced the Budget. The financial year, 1922-1923, during only two-thirds of which Fascism was in power, closed with a deficit of three milliards and twenty million lire. In 1923-1924 there was a deficit of 418 millions; in 1924-1925 there was a surplus of 479 millions, being the first time there had been any surplus since 1911; and in 1925-1926 there was a surplus of two milliards, 268 millions. In 1927-1928 the surplus was one milliard, 171 millions. Also, between June 30th, 1922, and November 30th, 1926, the total of the National Debt was reduced by eight milliards, seventy-seven millions, and the Floating Debt by fourteen milliards. All this enabled the Government to stabilise the lire. Count Volpi, a Venetian who had been highly successful in his private enterprises, and who had already done excellent work for Fascism when Governor of Tripoli, was largely responsible for getting the country on a sound financial basis during the years he was Minister of Finance. He has since resigned; for it is the policy of Mussolini to make use of skilled technicians whenever necessary, but to replace them by tried, and generally by young, Fascists, when the situation is no longer so critical as to demand their services. How far Volpi was a Fascist by political conviction has been questioned. However, there is no doubt that he was convinced that Fascism

answered the needs of the moment. He once told a foreign visitor that Mr. Andrew Mellon, Secretary for the Treasury in President Hoover's Cabinet, had remarked, when staying with him in Venice a few days before, that Italian and American capitalism arrived at practically the same ends, the only difference being that Italy achieved politically what was done in the United States by the power and pressure of the banks and the great industrialists.

Count Volpi, despite his grave manner, can upon occasion exhibit a pretty wit. A caller, whom he was once conducting from his cabinet through the salon which leads to the corridor, thought he espied at the end of the room a portrait of Cavour. Knowing that the great Turin statesman is held in detestation by the Fascists, and that his name is never mentioned unless unavoidable, he jocosely remarked: " Mais, Excellence, c'est Cavour, n'est-ce-pas ? Je l'ai cru exilié ! " " Pas tout à fait," replied Volpi in the same tone. " Pas tout à fait : mais comme vous voyez nous le faisons faire antichambre." *

That great constitutional change, the electoral law, which was passed in May 1929 by an obedient Parliament, provides, in effect, that the National Councils, which are nominated, and not elected, representing the various branches of industrial and professional activity, shall, with certain other designated bodies, each submit to the Fascist Grand Council lists of candidates numbering 800 names. The Grand Council may eliminate any names on these lists ; and shall then choose from the total number so constituted 350 candidates, whose names, together with those of 50 others chosen directly by the Grand Council, are submitted to the electorate. The voting is on the whole list, and the ballot paper contains simply one query, " Do you approve the list designated

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* This statement regarding the attitude of Fascism towards Cavour was quite correct when written ; but in June 1929 the Government honoured the memory of the great statesman by placing an olive branch on his tomb, since his wish for a reconciliation between the House of Savoy and the Vatican had at last been fulfilled. It is curious (although quite comprehensible) that, although Cavour made visits to both Paris and London, he never set foot in Rome.

by the Fascist Grand Council ? " To which the elector must reply either " Yes " or " No." A bare majority, or even a tie, suffices to elect the whole list. In the event of a majority being recorded against the list, the Court of Appeal is to order a new election. The clauses governing this part of the procedure are far from clear. Possibly it was not thought worth while to waste much time in making provision for what is so unlikely to occur. The franchise is wide, the suffrage being given, upon certain conditions, to all males of 21 years of age ; and even to those between the ages of 18 and 21 who are married and have children. However, as the electorate can be represented only by those previously chosen by the Fascist Grand Council, and as the Chamber of Deputies is to be only consultative, that is of no importance. In the early days of his dictatorship Mussolini said that he had no intention of depriving the people of their toy—Parliament. But later he decided to define and limit legally the authority of Parliament ; which, in practice, he had already absorbed. As a compensation he gave his fellow-countrymen a new in the shape of a toy perfectly harmless ballot, widely distributed.

It is significant that when this measure was elaborated the Fascist Grand Council had no official status. It was, therefore, necessary to bring it within the Constitution. At the same time its sphere of influence was specifically extended to include such functions as deciding, if necessary, the succession to the Throne, and all questions affecting the royal prerogative.

The Election Bill encountered unexpected opposition in the Senate, and Mussolini found it advisable to intervene in the debate. Undoubtedly the constitutional changes which it makes are the natural sequences of those principles which the Duce has always professed and practised. The Report on the Bill, drafted by Mussolini himself, together with his Minister of Justice, Signor Rocco, openly admitted that it does not contemplate the holding of either an election or a plebiscite, but merely provides an opportunity for an expression of general approval or disapproval of Fascist policy. But as there is no liberty of public meeting, and no liberty of the Press, the Opposition is effectively shackled, and the Chamber

of Deputies is in no sense a deliberative legislative assembly. Signor Albertini seems to have been justified in alleging that Mussolini would have acted more logically had he simply abolished Parliament. In view of the disdain which he has for any form of parliamentary government, it seems strange that he did not do so.

Signor Albertini himself, as a Liberal, is one of those who has suffered by the enactment of the law regarding the Press. For a quarter of a century he was the editor of the *Corriere della Sera*, which during that period was the greatest of Italian newspapers. But in November 1925 he was compelled to resign; for proprietors, as well as editors and contributors, are affected by the legislation respecting the Press.

Not the least of Mussolini's beneficent reforms has been the suppression of secret societies. The Carbonari played a useful rôle during the period when the various Italian States were striving to obtain their liberty, and were feeling their way towards a united Italy. But in later years others, of a different character, had become a cancer, eating into the life of the nation. The Camorra had already been extinguished, but the Mafia still flourished when Mussolini began his dictatorship. This extraordinary organisation held full sway in Sicily, where it largely controlled the political situation. It had adherents in every class of society, and maintained its power by a widespread system of terrorism. For years it defied the spineless and spasmodic efforts of successive governments to check its baleful activities. The fear it inspired was so great that it was generally impossible to find any witnesses who would take the risk of giving evidence against it. When occasionally there were signs of official vigour it always had at its command Deputies who would warn the Government that unless it were careful it would lose seats at the next parliamentary elections.

But Mussolini would have none of this. He sent to Sicily a courageous and energetic *préfet*, with strict orders to proceed without fear or favour, and with assurances that he would be given the fullest support and assistance by Rome. The arrest and drastic punishment of amazed leaders and of prominent members of the Mafia—many of whom are now serving sentences of life-imprisonment

—speedily proved that even that dreaded body could not stand up against the Duce. The organisation collapsed, and serious crime in Sicily quickly decreased by more than 60 per cent.

Mussolini also turned his attention to the Masonic body known as the Grand Orient, which had extended its influence into every corner of Italy. It was Masonic only in name, being entirely a political society, closely in touch with the Grand Orient of France, but having no connection with the Freemasonry of England or other countries. Its principal object was the advancement of its own members, without any consideration for the welfare of the country. Mussolini took an early opportunity to dissolve an organisation whose continued existence was clearly incompatible with Fascist principles. But it is characteristic of his thoroughness and clear thinking that he should have announced that he had no objection to Italians becoming members of British lodges, which he realised were benevolent and non-political. Although this may seem only natural, anyone who has ever discussed the subject with French Roman Catholics, or with French politicians of any creed will know how hopeless it is to convince them that English Freemasonry does not exercise some occult political influence.

Another marked feature of Fascism is the morality which is enforced, extending from such a subject as sexual relations even to the length and height of women's dresses.

Even before Fascism seized power, Mussolini had realised the wisdom of obtaining the support of the Vatican. He had never been a devout son of the Church, nor had he formerly contemplated her as a possible ally. As already recorded, speaking, in 1919, to soldiers returning from the Front, he said: "I would prefer a pagan people, interested in the struggle for life and in progress, which would refuse its adhesion to revealed dogmas, and would only shrug its shoulders at miracles." But these tirades now ceased. There was probably no change in his inward convictions; he was simply obeying the dictates of political necessity. He had arrived at the same conclusion as did Macaulay some eighty years earlier: "There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserv-

ing examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilisation. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when the camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. . . . And may she still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

Before the elections of 1913 Giolitti had extended the franchise. The immediate result was the return to the Chamber of Deputies of 53 Socialists and 26 Reformists. But at the same time the Pope, Pius XI, had withdrawn the Non Expedit. This raising of the ban on the active participation of Catholics in politics led to the election of 33 Catholic Deputies. The Vatican had always been opposed to the formation of a Catholic party. But when, in 1919, Benedict XV reversed the policy which had previously been pursued, this group formed the basis of a definite Catholic party—the Partito Populare. Its leader was a Sicilian priest, Don Sturzo, who exercised wide influence. At one time he threatened to bar the way to the realisation of Mussolini's ambitions ; especially after the General Election of 1919, when his party captured one hundred seats, and Mussolini himself was defeated. Don Sturzo was endowed with great capacity for political intrigue. But the vital defect of his organisation was the lack of solid cohesion between its various elements. The only common ground upon which the ultramontane nobility and the revolutionary Agrarians (to cite only the two extreme fractions of the party) could meet, was a similar belief in the relations which ought to prevail between the Church and the State. That link was not sufficiently strong to hold them long together. Don Sturzo fell out of favour with the ecclesiastical authorities, who, ever cautious, began to fear that he might compromise them. This withdrawal of Papal support was also partly due to Mussolini's efforts to persuade the Vatican that it could expect more from Fascism than from the Partito Populare: " Codlin's your friend, not Short." In the end Don Sturzo was routed, and was forced to leave the country.

After he became Dictator, Mussolini lost no opportunity to conciliate the Church. Crucifixes were put in the schools; chaplains were appointed for all regiments; religious instruction was made obligatory in the primary schools, and the bishops were given the right to designate those who were to impart it.

Mussolini always cherished the legitimate ambition to heal the breach between the Quirinal and the Vatican —a feat so difficult that Crispi had once remarked that whoever successfully accomplished it could rightly be called the greatest Italian. The Duce never adopted the conception of a Free Church in a Free State. He wanted not only to give but also to receive; and his political shrewdness showed him that the basis of any agreement would have to be a declaration (as in the Constitution of 1848) that the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman faith was the only religion of the State, if Fascism were to benefit by the reflected glory of the Church's age and tradition, as well as be her actual universal power. For a time it seemed as if Mussolini was making all the concessions and getting nothing in return. But it was only in that way that he could allay the instinctive distrust of the Vatican, and acquire the confidence of the most wary centre of statesmanship in Europe. At first his progress was slow. No one can ever hurry the Vatican. In all negotiations it is placed in an advantageous position through its absolute confidence that it has more centuries ahead of than behind it; whereas Fascism, which has no past, and only an uncertain future, cannot well afford to go slowly. However, Mussolini was fortunate with his Pope, for Pius XI is as Italian as he is Papal.

In 1927 it became apparent to all close observers that the Church was willing to be wooed. There was every indication that it would soon become merely a question of terms. The details of a transaction between two such keen bargainers as Mussolini and the Vatican would be full of interest; and it is regrettable that they are unlikely ever to be disclosed. What did appear on the surface was that every time the Vatican advanced a little it quickly receded part of the way. On the other hand, Mussolini launched more than one *balon d'essai*; for in this matter, predominant as he is, he could not

ignore too brusquely the views of his followers, all of whom were by no means so enthusiastic as was Luigi Federzoni about the resumption of relations with the Vatican.

Circumstances, however, favoured Mussolini, for at this period two episodes emerged which, at the time, caused the Church considerable embarrassment and uneasiness, and probably made her all the more ready to strengthen her position in Italy by a Concordat with the State.

The less important of these incidents arose from a somewhat indiscreet use (if not abuse) of the universal right which the Church claims in respect to marriages. Ecclesiastical jurists can split hairs in a way which would confound even the most subtle barrister practising at the Chancery Bar. However, one can afford to disregard that phase of the question. The simple facts of the case which attracted attention the world over were that, in effect, the Church undertook to annul a marriage which had been duly celebrated more than a quarter of a century earlier according to the rites of the Church of England,* which faith both parties then professed, upon the ground that the wife had been coerced into marrying. That neither the husband nor the wife were Roman Catholics, that for more than twenty-five years after the marriage the wife had conveniently forgotten (or never knew) that she had been coerced, and that she had since divorced her first husband, and had again been remarried by clergy of the Church of England (which also was rather a remarkable performance), were not considered obstacles. Nor was there any satisfactory explanation given of how a marriage can be annulled, how it ceases to have created any link, *ab initio*, and yet the children of the marriage can remain legitimate; although I think that a plausible argument can be adduced either way on that point. The fact that those concerned not only occupied a high social position, but were possessed of large means, made the scandal all the greater, and deepened the conviction that they had obtained from the Church what would have been denied to those occupying a humbler station in life. The very

* To be exact, the American Episcopal Church.

knowledge that the Church of England also had departed from its usual custom in celebrating the marriage of a divorced person strengthened the belief that fortune and social situation had made their weight felt at every stage of the transaction.

A judgment of the Rota Tribunal annulling the first marriage—a marriage duly celebrated between two people neither of whom were Roman Catholics—provoked a storm of criticism, and general regret even amongst Roman Catholics. The defences made by the doctors of the Church were redundant but flimsy. But of more importance than ecclesiastical disputes was the fact that the occurrence actually threatened the prestige of the Church, which for once bowed to public opinion. I venture to make that assertion because there is sound reason for believing that no similar judgment will be rendered in the future. Hereafter, if any woman who is a Protestant, who was married as a Protestant, was divorced and remarried again as a Protestant, and then discovers that twenty-five years earlier she was coerced into her first marriage, to-day (being still a Protestant) applies to Rome for the annulment of her first marriage, she will receive a very different reception. Indeed, the offence caused, even to Roman Catholics, by the judgment in that case has led to jurisdiction in such matters being transferred entirely to the Congregation of the Holy Office, which consists of twelve Cardinals, and is the lineal descendant of the Inquisition; while it has also been made known that henceforth those who are not Catholic cannot apply for annulment unless there are special grounds. The Church itself has thus supplied the strongest possible criticism of its own action in the case to which I have referred.

Far graver, and of some political moment, was the other matter which disturbed the inward tranquillity of the Vatican.

The origin of this trouble was to be found in the policy pursued by Leo XIII, who did his utmost to rally all French Roman Catholics to the Republic. Speaking one day to the Baron de Montagnac, the Pope said: " Croyez moi, Monsieur le Baron, faites-vous républicain, républicain d'une bonne république. Vous comprenez?

Je veux que tous les Catholiques entrent comme une cohue dans la République."

To a large extent the Holy Father obtained obedience to his wishes; but the price was a grave scission between the religious Orders and the secular clergy. The former obeyed reluctantly, and always contended that the latter had gone too far in their republicanism. Their position became stronger when the Radicals, under M. Combes, aided by M. Briand, passed the laws against the religious Orders, expelled the Papal Nuncio from Paris, and set up the Diocesan Associations. And they found a firm supporter in Pius X. *L'Action Française*, which was founded at this period, fervently espoused the views held by the priests belonging to the different Orders. The directors of this newspaper were Charles Maurras, a Freethinker, and Léon Daudet, a practising Roman Catholic. For many years *L'Action Française* was the most vigorous defender of the Church in France; and although during the war it saw spies and enemies on every side, it was Charles Maurras alone of all those in France who wrote with authority, who made it a duty to explain to the public the reasons which forced the Vatican to observe a strict neutrality.

Nevertheless, in January 1914, the Congregation of the Index had condemned the works of Maurras. The Pope sanctioned this judgment, but never promulgated it; and, even after it was rendered, spoke of Maurras as a defender of the faith. Indeed, even six years later, Cardinal de Cabrières ended a letter with the following words: "Au revoir, mon cher Maurras, et bien respectueusement à vous dans le souvenir du Pape Pie X dont la volonté expresse vous a gardé pendant la guerre pour le bien de notre pays." And Cardinal Andrieu, Archbishop of Bordeaux, in a letter written to Maurras in October 1915—nearly two years after his condemnation—said, "You defend the Church with equal courage and talent." But the judgment had not even then been promulgated. For Benedict XV, who occupied the Papal Chair from 1914 to 1922, also allowed it to rest in abeyance. In fact, it would probably have remained unknown to this day had not certain political circumstances influenced the course of events.

During the war France had been placed at a disadvantage by the fact that, whereas Germany (and also England) had a Minister accredited to the Pope, she had no diplomatic representative at the Holy See. The Vatican was also anxious to re-establish direct relations with the French Government. Before the election of a successor to M. Poincaré as President of the Republic, the Pope took care to obtain the views of M. Clemenceau and of M. Deschanel upon this subject. The former said, in effect, that it would be better for all concerned not to disturb the existing situation. But Deschanel replied that he would be glad to see a Papal Nuncio in Paris and a French Ambassador at the Vatican. Briand, who was violently hostile to Clemenceau, is said to have expressed similar views in order that the weight of the Church's influence might be thrown on the side of Deschanel in the coming election. All this was in no small part responsible for the defeat of Clemenceau's ambition; although the gap which had been created between Foch and himself also told against him. These adverse negotiations were conducted mainly by the Abbé Wetterlée, formerly in the Reichstag, then a member of the Chamber of Deputies, and now at the French Embassy to the Vatican. In 1921 M. Briand actually did re-establish relations with the Holy See.

L'Action Française, for other reasons, always bitterly assailed Briand, to whom it invariably alluded in the most injurious terms. Briand finally became so exasperated that (being at the time Foreign Minister) he privately intimated to the Vatican that unless it expressed its disapproval of that newspaper the French Ambassador would eventually be withdrawn. It was as a result of these representations that, in January 1927, the condemnation of Charles Maurras, passed by the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, was promulgated—thirteen years after it had been rendered, and notwithstanding the fact that two previous Popes had thought it advisable to leave it in abeyance. No one was more surprised than Maurras himself to learn that during the many years he had been receiving letters from Princes of the Church, thanking him for constantly coming to her defence, he had been under condemnation. As is well known, the Pope reserves the right to make

cardinals *in pectore.* That is, His Holiness may announce a creation, but date it some years back, upon the ground that he had then decided to raise to the purple the priest in question. But it is going somewhat further secretly to put on the Index the works of a noted writer, to utilise his services, and to beslobber him with thanks and praise for years thereafter, and then, when political necessity demands, suddenly to announce that more than a decade earlier his books had been condemned as heretical, and that the faithful had been forbidden to read them. Apart from any question of injustice to the object of the denunciation, it would seem, logically, that if his works were really so dangerous in 1914, and equally so in 1927, the welfare of her children should have led the Church to protect them during all those years.

In the course of the controversy which followed, the faithful were forbidden to buy and to read *L'Action Française,* an order which had the effect of temporarily increasing the sales of that newspaper at the doors of every church in Paris. But other interests were involved. Cardinal Billot, a member of the Society of Jesus, had for years been outspoken in his testimony to the value of the services which *L'Action Française* had rendered to the Church. His Eminence was never such a storm centre in Rome as another French ecclesiastic, the late Cardinal Mathieu, famous for his witticisms, which amused many, but caused others to *rire jaune.* After having been all-powerful during the papacy of Leo XIII, he fell into disfavour under the more simple Pius X, of whom, in reference to his Venetian origin, he once remarked, " He steers St. Peter's barque with a boathook." Cardinal Billot, who taught at the Gregorian College in Rome until he was created a Cardinal by Pius X in 1911, was less turbulent than Cardinal Mathieu, but he was no less determined. He was shocked that the Church should for years have extracted all the benefit possible from the brilliant services of Maurras, while, unknown to himself, he had been put on the Index; and should then make full use of this sentence under the political pressure of the French Government.

Nor was Cardinal Billot willing to stultify himself as a sacrifice to the policy of the Vatican. In 1927

the rumour ran through Rome that he was about to return his Cardinal's Hat to the Holy Father, but the report excited more interest than it obtained credence. No such step had ever been taken in modern times. One Cardinal, it is true, had been deprived of his Episcopal See, suspended from his duties and privileges as a Cardinal, and threatened with deprivation of his Cardinal's Hat. Girolamo d'Andrea, a son of the Marchese d'Andrea, once Minister of Finance in the Kingdom of Naples, was a man of many parts. He was made a Cardinal in 1853, at the early age of forty. But he was the vigorous opponent and sarcastic critic of the Papal Secretary of State, the famous Cardinal Antonelli; and jeered at what he called the mystic ingenuousness of Pius IX. He never disguised his contempt for the political policy of the Vatican. He once referred to Victor Emmanuel as "King of Italy," and when in Naples boldly visited Prince Humbert. As Prefect of the Index, he refused to condemn a book written by Monsignor Liverani, and was thereupon suspended by Pius IX, who cordially returned his detestation. He was refused a passport, but managed to elude the authorities, and to make his way to Naples. It was then that the Pope cut off his revenues, and suspended him as a member of the College of Cardinals, despite his vigorous letters of protest. But three or four years later d'Andrea returned to Rome, made a rather grovelling submission to Pius IX, and died a few months later.

However, an edict suspending a Cardinal because of his opposition to the political policy of the Vatican is very different from a Cardinal refusing to remain one any longer because of that policy. But Monsignor Billot, who had passed his life in teaching theology, felt sure of his ground. He took the unprecedented step of resigning as a Cardinal because he felt obliged to do so in view of the action of the Holy See in respect to *L'Action Française*. The Vatican announced that his resignation had been accepted. That was a politic way of stating that it had submitted to the inevitable, for it was given no choice in the matter. When it was known in Rome that Monsignor Billot might really take this step, every effort was made to restrain him. Great was the consternation and great

the scandal when he actually did resign. To-day the Vatican can look back upon the incident with equanimity, if not without a shudder. But at the time it was regarded more seriously. What would happen if it became the custom for every Cardinal who dissented from the policy of the Vatican to return his Hat to the Holy Father! For one of the few times in its long existence the Papal See *a frisé le ridicule.*

It was these untoward events which, in those unhappy days, made the Church more ready to listen to the overtures of Mussolini. The Dictator once told the people of Rome that " the wheel of destiny passes, and the wise man is the man who is vigilant enough to seize it at that instant." He himself did not lose his opportunity.

However, in the result the Duce has met the same fate which has eventually overtaken all princes or statesmen who have been so bold as to imagine that they could deal with the Church upon a basis of equality. In explaining the new Concordat to the Chamber of Deputies, Mussolini was at pains to make it clear that the Government had made no renunciation or concession to the Church. In fact, his speech went so far in that direction that it aroused much ill-feeling in Vatican circles. As was generally anticipated, the Dictator attempted to correct this impression by using more moderate language when he addressed the Senate. But it was only after the latter discourse that the Pope saw fit to break his silence. In a letter dated May 30th, 1929, addressed to the Cardinal-Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, and published in the *Osservatore Romano,* on June 5th, 1929, His Holiness corrected Mussolini in no uncertain terms. He told him that he had used words which were " hard," " crude," and " drastic," and which were neither " necessary, useful, nor suitable." He reproved him for his " heretical, and worse than heretical, expressions on the very existence of Christianity and Catholicism." He declared that absolute liberty of discussion or absolute liberty of conscience was entirely inadmissible; and in many other respects he reproved Mussolini in a way which the latter must have found novel and galling. Nevertheless, the Pope took care to state that the Concordat was inviolable. But the document is chiefly characteristic—

and irritating—in that throughout the Pope addresses the proud Duce as a vassal.

The position in which Mussolini has thus been placed is obvious. Devout Catholics will not hesitate to believe that the Pope must be right in all his contentions. Those who have little faith either in Popes or politicians are laughing at the manner in which the Duce has enmeshed himself. It is only the active Fascists who align themselves with Mussolini in this curious dispute. And their number is, comparatively, infinitesimal. Even allowing for unbelievers, there are probably at least ten Italians who regard the Pope as infallible to one who attributes the same quality to the Duce. Moreover, the situation is complicated by the fact that many Fascists never liked the arrangement with the Church ; and are therefore all the more discontented when they find the Pope publicly rebuking their leader in a fashion which no terrestrial monarch would to-day dare to adopt. Nor is Mussolini in a position to do anything to improve the situation. If he so pleases he may fulminate in speeches to his heart's content. But the Vatican will pay no attention to these outpourings unless some day it suits His Holiness again to reprove Mussolini as if he were simply a naughty schoolboy. The Holy See has obtained what it wanted ; and henceforth, so far as the Italian Government is concerned, its position is both superior and unassailable. The Church has never consented (except occasionally, when compelled by actual force) to deal with any other power upon a basis of absolute equality. Nor is she bound to do so ; for she is neither trammelled by those restrictions of time which often hamper civil governments, nor is she overburdened with scruples in obtaining her own way. The Duce's legitimate ambition caused him to forget the lessons of history. And any careful student of Machiavelli could point out where, in this matter, Mussolini ignored the teachings of his admitted mentor.

I purposely avoid any extensive reference to the Italian Syndicates, since the outline of the system is well known, and any detailed consideration of this interesting experiment would demand more space than a single chapter. I will only recall that the Syndicates represent legally all the employers and all the workmen of the

industry or profession in question, including even those who are not inscribed as members; and have the right to impose upon the latter the payment of annual contributions. Incidentally, the success of Fascism is by no means so dependent upon this conception as one might imagine from merely considering the provisions of the Constitution.

Nor do I propose to discuss at length the question of the Brenner Pass. The allegation that the inhabitants, who for long centuries have been thoroughly Germanised, are Italian because their forebears once had that nationality, will not bear examination, and can hardly be taken seriously. But Mussolini has announced that he is determined, at all costs, to Italianise them; and has even decreed that the names which they have borne for some hundreds of years should be changed to their original cognomens. All this is entirely inconsistent with the accepted theories regarding the treatment of national minorities. But who shall say that Mussolini is wrong? A definite settlement of an irritating and unpleasant question (and what question is more distasteful than the Minority problem which to-day poisons the atmosphere of so many countries in Europe?) is undeniably better than its indefinite prolongation. It is more than likely that Mussolini's policy will, within a generation, lead to a settlement in the form of an extinction of the whole dispute. In the meantime the necessary process is undoubtedly disagreeable. I should myself greatly dislike to change my nationality. But common sense tells me that should I, for instance, become a Frenchman, my grandchildren would experience no regret that through my action they were citizens of France. The vital question is whether or not the Italian Government is using harsh methods. Much has been written upon that subject. As I have not myself visited the region it is only with diffidence that I express the opinion (which, however, is my firm conviction) that Mussolini is pursuing resolutely, but with all consistent consideration, a policy which is inevitably antipathetic to the majority of the inhabitants.

It is characteristic of the Duce that he both governs the capitalistic class firmly, and yet is exempt from any tinge of demagogism. More than once has his hand

fallen heavily upon men of wealth who were found to be attempting unduly to increase their riches at the expense of their fellow-citizens. Yet he has extended direct taxation even to working-men who earn certain wages; and has also abolished the succession duty as between kindred.

His efforts to reduce illiteracy are well known. But this is a task which cannot be quickly accomplished. In 1872, 75 per cent. of the male population of Italy of twenty-one years of age and upwards was classed as illiterate. In 1907 this was reduced to a little over 50 per cent. Even to-day probably nearly 40 per cent. is still illiterate.

I have no undiluted admiration for the Fascist form of government. But no system has ever been found which, viewed in the abstract, can be regarded as absolutely perfect. The highest form is one which is adapted to the needs of the country where it is in force, and (although Signor Mussolini would doubtless dissent from this corollary) which meets with the voluntary approbation of the people living under it. What has been provided by Fascism amply fulfils these conditions. It is as suited to the character of the Italian race, in the present period, as the German Constitution is the reverse in respect to the German people. I admit that I am glad not to live under Fascist rule. But that proves nothing. As I have had occasion to write before, the belief so prevalent amongst those of British nationality that we have discovered a form of government which, under all circumstances, will prove adequate, is fatuous. The very excellence of our system lies in the fact that it is so eminently appropriate for the English race; and that it is the product not of a revolution but of a constant evolution, which is still proceeding. Equally false is the idea, so widespread in other lands during the seventy years preceding the war, that it was only necessary to adopt the British model in order to ensure all the blessings of what was termed liberty—amongst which was placed foremost that of material prosperity. Divers experiments have shown that parliamentary government will never operate smoothly and effectively in any Latin country—any more than in Germany.

But the ultimate success and the permanency of Fascism is another question. It is too soon to prophesy.

The Empire of the third Napoleon inaugurated a brilliant period, and one of great national welfare, but it ended at Sedan. Nor are speculations about what the future may bring forth advanced by a perusual of Mussolini's speeches. His constant reiteration of his conviction that Fascism will govern for a century—or for ever—makes no impression upon the foreign observer, whatever its effect may be upon the Italians themselves. Not that the Duce's sincerity can be questioned. A leader of a parliamentary government cannot, indeed, afford to confess openly the doubts which may—and very often do—haunt him. But a dictator cannot safely indulge in having any misgivings, even though kept in the inmost recesses of his being. Their mere existence is the presage of decadence, and inevitably saps that self-confidence which is one of the chief assets of an absolute ruler. The late Sir George Trevelyan once wrote to Theodore Roosevelt that "it is a very unhealthy thing that any man should be considered necessary to the people as a whole, save in the way of meeting some crisis." Mussolini is still meeting a crisis. Speaking in the Chamber of Deputies in 1926, he himself said, "I consider that the Italian nation is in a state of permanent warfare." But I am inclined to think that what constitutes the great strength of Fascism to-day—the fact that Fascism is Mussolini, and Mussolini is Fascism—may be its eventual undoing. For Fascism is an engine as delicate as it is powerful. Even in the most propitious times its success must depend very largely upon the skill and temperament, perhaps one may even say upon the genius, of its director. Mussolini understands perfectly how to manipulate his own creation. But there is no reason to think that Italy will discover anyone who can replace him ; or even anyone possessed of his dominating personality. Nature endows few with the talents essential to the success of a dictator, great courage and great prudence : and Mussolinis are not born in every generation.

It is too often forgotten that Fascism is derived from, and finds its active support and direction in, two distinct elements : the Nationalists, and those who lost faith in the Socialistic creed, either during the war, or in the succeeding years of internal turmoil, but who remained

Syndicalists after they had abandoned Socialism. These groups have to this day retained their diverse views. It is only because both bow to the decision of the Duce that so little is heard of the disputes which arise in the very bosom of the party.

Whatever the result, Mussolini has, up to the present time, deserved well not only of his own country, but of Europe. It cannot fairly be held against him that (like many of lesser degree) he is constitutionally incapable of attaching any faith to the figment of the League of Nations, or to the fallacies of the Kellogg Pact ; and that, unlike some other statesmen, he is too honest hypocritically to hide his convictions by a flow of words. And he has rendered a distinct service to Europe by bringing order out of chaos, and by pacifying Italy at a moment when her dissatisfaction threatened to spread beyond her own frontiers.

But whatever may have been the views he held some years ago, Mussolini himself seems now to have recognised that he is the cornerstone of Fascism. He has written that he wanted " to strip from our party the personal character which the Fascist movement had assumed because of the stamp of my will. But the more I wished to give the party an autonomous organisation, and the more I tried, the more I received the conviction from the evidence of the facts—that the party could not have existed and lived, and could not be triumphant, except under my command, my guidance, my support, and my spurs. The meeting in Rome gave a deep insight into the fundamental strength of Fascism, but especially to me it was a revelation of my personal strength." *

And again, " Because of my personal situation, in having created the party I have always dominated . . . This consciousness of my incontestable domination has given me the ability to make the party live on." †

But the debt which Europe owes to Mussolini arises from the sincerity and the clarity of his foreign policy. There is no longer any of that tortuous dealing by which the Quirinal was distinguished before 1914. One may or

* *My Autobiography*, p. 139.
† *My Autobiography*, p. 270.

may not agree with the Duce's view ; but one can never be in any doubt either about what he means or that his words will, if necessary, be followed by actions ; for he possesses in a supreme degree that quality so valuable to statesmen —and which they so rarely possess—courage. He had good reason to write : " The loyal character of my foreign policy, followed and appreciated by all Italians, has given Italy more consideration from other nations. Loyal policy is the one which scores the greatest success ; ambiguities and vagueness are not of my temperament, and consequently they are strangers to any policy of mine. . . . I spent many months and years to bring about a realisation abroad that Italy's foreign policy had no tricks in it. It was always straight-going and swerved not. It was always vigilant."*

The comparison is often drawn between Bolshevism and Fascism ; and, from the two extreme ends, certain curious analogies can, indeed, be observed. But even more striking are the points of difference. One of them is that even the sincere Bolshevists (and there are more sincere and fanatical Bolshevists than Western Europe realises) believe that it is their duty to convert others, and that they are entitled to use any available means in order to spread their theories. But Mussolini does not regard Fascism as an article for export. He does insist that every Italian, in whatever corner of the globe he may be, must remain Italian ; and that while Italians may be non-Fascist, they cannot be permitted to be anti-Fascist. But (as already related) when he realised that some of his followers in foreign countries were displaying more zeal than prudence, he promptly took steps to regulate their pernicious activities. Possibly he may think that he has discovered the true science of government in the practical application of the principles of Machiavelli. But he has not the faintest desire to proselytise beyond the borders of Italy. The itch to confer upon all nations what they consider the best form of government is a point of similarity not between Mussolini and the Bolshevists, but between the Bolshevists and that nineteenth-century Liberalism which is now moribund. Mussolini has a profound contempt for

* *Ibid.*, pp. 236 and 227.

parliamentary government. Nevertheless, he probably believes that it is more suitable than Fascism to the character of the British people.

Still more absurd, and without foundation, are the comparisons sometimes made between Lenin and Mussolini. Lenin was a fanatic and a visionary, who by the chance of circumstance obtained an opportunity to put his theories into practice ; and who before his death was obliged to admit that they were a hopeless failure. Mussolini is an uncompromising realist of the deepest dye.

Finally, Mussolini is the one great statesman who has appeared on the political horizon since the war. France is still governed by the same politicians who rotated in office before 1914. In England we have a body of amiable mediocrities (always excepting Mr. Churchill) of varying degrees of capacity—or incapacity. Germany is in the greatest need of a few men possessing political abilities of the first order. And in no other country has any new star appeared. But of Benito Mussolini, whatever may be his ultimate fate (and in years he is still young), it is not too soon to assert that he will rank in history amongst the few exceptional men (for the number is never large) of his century. And to his very marrow he is an aristocrat in the true sense of that word. Count Keyserling has written : " The bourgeois is the man of security ; the aristocrat is the man of danger, of risks." * One day in the Chamber of Deputies the Duce said (and never did he expose more clearly his innate character) : " But we must understand each other : nations, like individuals, can either live or vegetate. . . . To live, in my opinion, is something very different. Living, for me, means a struggle, taking risks, and showing tenacity."

* *Europe*, p. 288.

CHAPTER III

AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY: INFELICES AMBO

In considering the present position of Austria, and what she may reasonably expect in the future, it is necessary to dwell to some extent upon her immediate past, as well as upon the policy which eventually led to her being marooned in Central Europe.

For that purpose it will suffice to go back to 1908, when Count Aehrenthal, then Prime Minister of the Empire, shocked and startled Europe by annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina, which since the Congress of Berlin had actually been occupied under a mandate given by the other Great Powers. I well remember the excitement which prevailed in Belgrade during the remainder of the autumn. On all sides one heard inflammatory speeches or conversations. But Serbia was powerless, since Russia, still suffering from the effect of the war with Japan, was unable to come to her aid, and was herself obliged reluctantly to accept the inevitable. For no room was left for doubt as to the result if Russia did not acquiesce. The Kaiser made a bellicose speech, threatening that if necessary he would come to the assistance of his ally. Moreover, in March 1909, the German Government peremptorily demanded that Russia should agree to the abrogation of Clause 25 of the Treaty of Berlin; and stated that Austria would be allowed to attack Serbia unless the Tzar's Government gave a speedy and satisfactory answer. The incident is perhaps best described in the dispatch which Sir Arthur Nicolson (later Lord Carnock), then Ambassador at St. Petersburg, sent to the Foreign Office, after he had called on M. Isvolsky, at the latter's request, on March 23rd: "He said he would first begin with a peremptory *mise en demeure* which he had received yesterday afternoon from the German Ambassador. . . . The German Government requested to know precisely from the Russian Government whether, if Austria-Hungary sounded the Powers as to accepting

the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, Russia would agree to the abrogation. The German Government wished to have a speedy reply in clear terms ; and he had been told that if the reply was a refusal or evasion, Germany would *lacher l'Autriche sur la Serbie.* M. Isvolsky said that this summons, which had the character of a diplomatic ultimatum, was of so grave a nature that he had requested that a Cabinet Council should be summoned, and he had laid the question fully before his colleagues." Sir Arthur Nicolson also described the impression which this incident made upon him : " My firm opinion is that both Germany and Austria are carrying out a line of policy and action carefully prepared and thought out. . . . Russia is temporarily weak, with a timorous Foreign Minister. She had to be frightened out of the Entente, and the first step towards this has been eminently successful. The Franco-Russian Alliance has not borne the test and the Anglo-Russian Entente is not sufficiently strong or sufficiently deep-rooted to have any appreciable influence. The hegemony of the Central Powers will be established in Europe and England will be isolated. The activity in building up the German Navy is significant."

It has since transpired that it was Kiderlen-Waechter who was responsible for this ultimatum being sent to Russia. It was by no means the most commendable or the wisest act of his career. Kiderlen was at that time still German Minister at Bucarest. But being on leave in Berlin, acting temporarily as Foreign Secretary in the place of the feeble von Schoen, he took the matter into his own hands. When, some years later, he was relating the incident to Take Jonesco, Kiderlen said : " I knew that the Russians were not ready for war, that they would not embark upon one in any event, and I wanted to draw all the profit possible from this knowledge. I wanted to show that the days of Russian tutelage over Germany, of that tutelage which dated from 1815, have passed for ever. Schoen and company would never have dared to do what I undertook upon my own responsibility." Take Jonesco rightly remarks that Kiderlen's entirely superfluous gesture contributed in no small degree to the subsequent European entanglement.

It is curious that at 3.35 a.m. on March 22nd (March 9th

according to the Russian Calendar) Nicolas II sent a long telegram to the Kaiser, beginning with the words: "The last proposal of Prince Bülow, sent through Pourtalès, seems to express Germany's desire to find a peaceful way out of the present critical situation." For in reality this disclosure of German policy, coming after the affair of the abortive Treaty of Björke, when Wilhelm had taken advantage of his personal ascendancy over the Czar to induce him to sign a document which was hardly consistent with the alliance between Russia and France, marked the beginning of the end of the cordial relations between the two monarchs. The Kaiser evidently realised this; for in answering the Czar's telegram on March 27th, 1909, he said: "I hope that Serbian affairs will not interfere with our friendship."

On January 9th, 1909, in the earlier stage of the trouble caused by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Wilhelm wrote to Nicolas: "The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a real surprise for everyone, and especially for us, for we were informed of Austria's intentions even later than you. I think it is my duty to direct your attention to this fact, for Germany is being accused for having pushed Austria to accomplish this act. This charge was inept and was as false as that which was made about the Sandjak railway."

As a matter of fact, Isvolsky's own hands were not clean; and he had not told the whole truth to Sir Arthur Nicolson. What had really happened was this: In July 1908, Isvolsky had sent Aehrenthal a memorandum in connection with the Sandjak and Danube-Adriatic railway proposals, in which he had suggested that, in view of the situation of Turkey, Russia might settle the question of the Straits once and for all by obtaining the right to send warships through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles; and that at the same time Austria might annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. Naturally, these suggestions were quite agreeable to Aehrenthal. At his instance a meeting took place in September 1908, at the Castle of Buchlau, in Moravia, which belonged to Count Berchtold. The two conspirators found themselves to be completely in accord. But according to Isvolsky (and his subsequent anger at Aehrenthal's precipitate action seems to substantiate the allegation),

he laid down that the changes must be approved by a Conference of the Powers; and Aehrenthal agreed. It is, therefore, easy to understand the Russian Foreign Minister's exasperation when Aehrenthal informed the Powers on October 6th that Austria had taken possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina; since it left him without any prospect whatever of at last securing his aspiration of opening the Straits for Russian men-of-war. It may be mentioned, in passing, that some doubt is thrown upon the surprise at Austria's action which the Kaiser expressed to the Czar, since on September 26th Aehrenthal had written privately to Bülow informing him of what he proposed to do; without, however, fixing any exact date. In any event, in these circumstances Isvolsky was precluded from disclosing everything to Sir Arthur Nicolson; and from denouncing fully the faithlessness of Aehrenthal. Indeed, his position in this respect was so weak that he was subsequently obliged to beg that certain letters which he had written during the negotiations with Aehrenthal should not be published.*

Count Aehrenthal doubtless imagined that he had scored a brilliant success by this unexpected coup. This was true to the extent that he obtained what he wanted—despite an indignant and humiliated Russia, and without

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* The manner in which Professor Sidney Fay recounts this incident constitutes, I think, the chief objection which can be taken to the first volume of *The Origins of the World War*—which is, and probably will remain, the classic work on the subject of which it treats. Professor Fay expresses, in brief, the opinion that it is unfair to accuse Germany of having issued an ultimatum to Russia; and that, in fact, she was simply attempting to arrange matters as well as possible. All that Russia was asking was that the matter should be submitted to a conference of the Great Powers. The proper analogy, therefore, is that of a man who, meeting one weaker than himself, threatens to thrash him if he attempts to take civil proceedings against a third person for a wrong which he believes he has suffered. That would generally be considered an ultimatum, and one of a somewhat violent nature. However, it is only fair to add that a German statesman, who had a close contemporary knowledge of these events, once told me, in the course of a detailed discussion of the whole matter, that the German communication to Russia was in no sense an ultimatum; and that Isvolsky, so far from regarding it in that light when it was first communicated to him by Pourtalès, joyfully welcomed it as an exit from a difficult position. I am bound to acknowledge that this would apparently correspond with the terms of the Czar's telegram to the Kaiser, quoted above. Nevertheless, I believe that the facts, so far as known, bear out the conclusions submitted.

the good wishes of Great Britain and France. But, as time proved, the victory was not only temporary, but it was one for which the Austro-Hungarian Empire was destined to pay heavily. For nothing which had occurred before then did so much to solidify the links binding the Triple Entente together and to arouse suspicion regarding the aims of the two Central Powers. It was a defeat which Russia could neither forgive nor forget. Under date of March 29th, 1909, the wife of General Bogdanovitch records in her diary: "The Czar is disconsolate. He cannot pardon himself for having yielded to Germany and having recognised the countries annexed to Austria: that is the true reason of these festivals without any solemnity. The Czar cannot ignore that all the military world, and the whole of Russia, consider this act as a more terrible defeat than that of Tsoushima." *

The manner in which Aehrenthal acted without warning, and despite his implied undertakings, had excited the indignation of Russian public opinion; and also, in a lesser degree, that of England and France. But it is an extraordinary fact (which I have never yet seen mentioned) that, had he so wished, Isvolsky could have given an answer which would have silenced those who aroused feeling against him in Russia. The insurrection of Serbia and other countries which were then Turkish dependencies led to the interview of Reichstatt, which took place in July 1876, between Gortschakoff and Andrassy. The two statesmen considerd the possibility of either the victory or the defeat of Turkey. They agreed that in the latter eventuality Bosnia and Herzegovina (with the exception of certain small portions which would be given to Serbia and Montenegro) should be annexed to Austria-Hungary, and that Russia should obtain territorial augmentations in Turkey. It was agreed that this Treaty should be kept secret; and it

* It must be admitted that Madame Bogdanovitch's stories were sometimes more startling than credible. Under the date of July 7th, 1901, she records that the Kaiser had sent an agent to suggest to the Czar an alliance between Russia, France, and Germany, which would keep both the English and the Japanese in check. This was not communicated to Osten-Sachen, then German Ambassador in St. Petersburg. But the fantastic part of the tale is the statement that, while the Kaiser did not intend to return Alsace-Lorraine to France, he was disposed to let her have Canada, which was to be taken from Great Britain!

may be added that the secret was, indeed, well guarded.

It will be noticed that the agreement reached by the Congress of Berlin three years later was largely in accord with this understanding—which was, of course, entirely unknown to Disraeli and Lord Salisbury, and probably was unknown to Bismarck. For in 1879 Bosnia and Herzegovina were put under the control of the Hapsburg Empire ; and Russia, despite the protest of Rumania, was allowed to retain the Bessarabian provinces of which she had already taken possession. Isvolsky, therefore, was in a position where he might well have said that Aehrenthal, in announcing the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, had only done what Russia, some thirty years earlier, had secretly agreed that she might do whenever it suited her convenience ; and that Russia herself had already obtained what was guaranteed to her by this convention. Nor could it fairly be argued, as between Russia and Austria-Hungary, that the agreement of Reichstatt had been superseded by the Congress of Berlin, since its existence was never disclosed.

A European statesman who knew well both Isvolsky and Aehrenthal, and who was in close touch with the whole episode of 1909, in expressing to me his surprise that Isvolsky did not take this course, told me that he could only account for it on the ground of the latter's overweening vanity : he preferred to give the diplomatic world the impression that an upright Isvolsky had been deceived by a treacherous Aehrenthal.

Isvolsky, always restless and sensitive, was morally overcome by his discomfiture. He felt that he could no longer continue to act as Foreign Minister ; and as soon as possible he made way for M. Sazonov, while he himself became Russian Ambassador to France. It may be said in passing that he there incurred the strong dislike of M. Poincaré. In the various volumes of his political memoirs, the former French Prime Minister refers in scathing terms to Isvolsky, and makes no secret of the low esteem in which he held him. He accuses him of misquoting or inventing conversations in the reports which he sent to St. Petersburg ; and he hints that his personal intentions were dishonest when he asked his Government to make advances on the ground

of the necessity of subsidising the French Press. However, there is some reason to doubt whether Isvolsky was so black as M. Poincaré paints him. One must remember that in his dislikes the French statesman has all the tenacity which is his birthright as a native of Lorraine. He showed it some years ago in his drastic and harsh treatment of M. Philippe Berthelot, who, for a trifling offence committed under Poincaré's predecessor at the Quai d'Orsay, was suspended from office for a period which would have debarred him from future employment as having passed the age limit. M. Herriot and M. Painlevé rendered a service to their country in reinstating Berthelot; for France could ill dispense with, and certainly could not replace, him. They also saved M. Poincaré from some future embarrassment; for it is reasonably certain that he would later have been unable to obtain the co-operation of M. Briand except upon the condition that he himself restored M. Berthelot to his former position as permanent head of the Foreign Office.

All this tends to prove that M. Poincaré's bitter criticism of Isvolsky must not be accepted too literally. Undoubtedly Isvolsky was excitable, sometimes lacking in discretion, unreliable to the extent of being uncertain in his ways, and occasionally given to flights of fancy. He was temperamentally incapable of judging a situation calmly, or of acting coolly in time of crisis. He had none of that stolidity to which his colleague in London, Count Benckendorf, owed so much of his success. In brief, Isvolsky, whatever his qualities (and he had many), did not possess those which go to the making of a successful diplomatist or of a great Foreign Minister. But withal there would not seem to be sufficient ground for the hatred with which M. Poincaré has pursued him beyond the grave.

Isvolsky's memory has also been blackened by the legend that in the early days of the conflict he used to talk of "my war," and to boast that he had brought about the conflict. It will be remembered that for a generation or more the late Empress Eugènie was subjected to the same reproach regarding the war of 1870. Indeed, it was generally accepted that in an unwise moment she had made that remark. But in a

conversation which she had with M. Paléologue in 1906* she vigorously refuted the story, and even mentioned that she had a letter from M. Lesourd (the First Secretary of the French Embassy at Berlin, to whom, according to the calumny of Thiers, she had made this statement at Saint Cloud, on July 23rd, 1870), denying that she had ever used to him either those words or their equivalent. Isvolsky was no more guilty than was the Empress Eugènie. The best known authority, but possibly not the origin of the story, is to be found in the Diary of the late Lord Bertie, whose contemptuous dislike for Isvolsky was well known.†

Isvolsky was sometimes foolish, but Aehrenthal was always dangerous. The latter died an embittered man. For some years he was obliged to struggle against the intrigues of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and the warlike ideas of the latter's protégé, Conrad von Hoetzendorf. In this prolonged contest he was the victor. But as his end approached he realised that he had lost his influence over the Emperor—who had little use for dying men ; and doubt as to the ultimate wisdom of the foreign policy which he had pursued caused him even greater anguish.

M. Poincaré has quoted approvingly the remarks of the German historian, Professor Foerester : " La mentalité germano-autrichenne et la mentalité magyare témoignaient d'un entêtement inexplicable à l'égard des transformations qu'il eût été temps d'entreprendre pour faire de la monarchie dualiste danubienne un État national fédéraliste. C'est cet égoisme des deux peuples seigneuriaux . . . en contradiction profonde avec l'âme et l'esprit veritable de l'Empire habsbourgeois, qui, en realité, brisa la monarchie danubienna." ‡ And he cites with approval the German Socialist Breysig, who wrote : " Pour établir une entente confiante et pacifique entre l'Autriche et les peuples balkaniques, il ne fallait pas prendre ces mesures de violence grossières dans lesquelles le gouvernement entrichien voyait le seul remède aux aspirations d'une

* See *Les Entretiens de l'Imperatrice Eugènie*, by Maurice Paléologue, p. 136.

† *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, Vol. I, p. 75.

‡ *Les Balkans en Feu*, p. 62.

plus grande Serbie. Il fallait, au contraire, changer complètement la manière de traiter les Slaves du Sud en Autriche-Hongrie et enlever notamment la Croatie à la domination magyare. Au lieu de cela, que vit-on ? Des diplomates dont la pensée ne dépasse pas les limites de la politique de violence et de domination ; des hommes d'épée qui déclarent faiblesse et erreur toute tentative de conciliation diplomatique."

However, the policy so justly blamed by M. Poincaré was not entirely responsible for the *débâcle*. Undoubtedly the suicidal course pursued by the Ballplatz in the summer of 1914 hastened the end. But even a wiser policy would only have delayed the final issue. The old Emperor, as the Empress Eugènie confided to M. Paléologue, shortly after a visit to Ischl in 1906, was persuaded that the Monarchy would not long survive his death. He had been struck by the ease with which Norway had detached herself from Sweden in the preceding year ; and he perceived in this event a warning that, once he had departed this life, the Hungarians, the Bohemian Czechs, the Southern Slavs, the Galician Poles, and the Rumanians of Transylvania, would swiftly break the links which still bound them to the Empire. In his latter days, the old Hapsburg Sovereign saw clearly. The basic defect was that the various Minorities together outnumbered the Austrian majority; and that each of these Minorities was daily becoming more alive to a realisation of its own nationality. The late M. Take Jonesco summed up the situation when he said: "Austria is a State essentially different from all other States. She is a fossil in the modern world. She is a State without being a nation. She is, in reality, only a dynasty, a government, and an army. No nation can calmly contemplate the annexation of millions of individuals of another race. Such a mixture destroys the national unity to the detriment of the effective force of the State ; or it imposes upon the State the difficult task of violating consciences. Austria had no scruples or difficulties of this kind. Since she was only a dynasty, what difference would it make that she should have under her sceptre two or three more nationalities ? Did she not go into Serbian Bosnia, and has she not wanted to strike still further into the Southern Slav world, in order

to compensate herself for the territory she lost in Italy ? " This is apparently the only explanation which can be given of the strange belief of Austrian politicians, that a State, already undermined by reason of the variety of unassimilated nationalities within its borders, could strengthen itself by stretching out and increasing by annexation the numbers of the hostile Minorities.

Even apart from the purely racial problems involved, it was generally felt that the death of Francis Joseph would be the signal for internal storms and disturbances, for his heir, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was widely disliked, and in many quarters distrusted. Count Berchtold, who had known him well since they were boys together, was one of his few devoted adherents. He was violent and avaricious. A fanatical Ultramontane, he detested Italy and the Italians on account of the way in which the House of Savoy had treated the Vatican. He was an avowed enemy of the Hungarians ; and the situation was complicated by the fact that while the children of his morganatic marriage could not succeed him as Emperor, there was no constitutional bar to his eldest son one day becoming King of Hungary. But if the Hungarians dreaded the accession of Francis Ferdinand, it was joyfully anticipated by the Rumanians in Transylvania, whom they had so long oppressed. And as his wife, the Countess Chotek, belonged to an old Czech family, that race also counted upon favourable treatment. The Archduke's tendencies were said to be strongly in favour of the Slavs. But by the Balkan Slavs as a whole he was mistrusted, both because of his known dislike of Russia, and because it was thought that he would make an energetic attempt to incorporate within the Empire, and to detach for all time from Serbia, the Serbs who were actually within the borders of Austria-Hungary. What course he would have pursued will now never be known. But it seems unlikely that he would have given any large measure of autonomy to the various races. It is more probable that he would have replaced Dualism by Trialism.

Although the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife at Serajevo in June 1914 provided an excellent pretext for attacking Serbia, that tragedy was not the actual cause of the war. For it had already

been decided that it was essential to the welfare of the Empire to bring about a conflict with her smaller neighbour. Nor is there any proof that the Serbian Government had any responsibility for the Serajevo tragedy. However, although the assassins were Austrian subjects, they undoubtedly were in relation with Colonel Deimiprievitch, the head of the Serbian "Unity or Death" Society.

It is on record that Herr Weisner, who was entrusted by the Foreign Office with an inquiry regarding the murder, wrote in his official report, dated July 13th, 1914: "The complicity of the Serbian Government in directing the attempt, or in the preparation or the delivery of arms, is not proved, and is not even to be presumed. More than that, there are reasons for which that must be considered impossible." It should be added that this report was sedulously concealed by the Imperial Government when it accused the Belgrade authorities of being privy to the murder. It was only published in 1919, after the Hapsburg rule had come to an end.

Moreover, Herr Leo Pfeffer, who was the principal Instructing Magistrate in the Serajevo investigation, wrote on August 2nd, 1924, in the *Karlovatchki Glas*: "The dossier which was compiled proves indubitably not only that the Serbian Government knew nothing of the attempt, but also that the preparations were concealed from it." And even General Conrad von Hoetzendorf admits in his memoirs that no documentary evidence had been obtained of the complicity of the Serbian official world.

As early as June 24th—that is, some days before the Archduke Francis Ferdinand went to his death in Serajevo—the Ballplatz had drafted a memorandum setting forth that the situation in the Balkans had become intolerable for the Empire, and that her interests demanded that she should, in respect both to Rumania and Serbia, forsake her policy of tranquil waiting. It was suggested that the proper course was to bring about an alliance between Bulgaria and Turkey, which might be used against Serbia. It is interesting to remember that for a number of years Austria supported Serbia as against Bulgaria, and that the far-seeing Bismarck had once warned the Ballplatz that later she might find it difficult

to curb the Serbian ambitions which she was thus arousing. Immediately after the assassination of the Archduke, Francis Joseph sent a copy of this memorandum to the Kaiser, with a letter emphasising the views expressed by the Foreign Office, and saying " the efforts of my Government must henceforth have as an object the isolation and the diminishment of Serbia." From this it is clear that the death of Francis Ferdinand was only a pretext, albeit an excellent and most timely one, for the aggression against Serbia. Indeed, the Minister for Foreign Affairs openly admitted to Count Tisza that he intended " to profit by the crime of Serajevo to settle accounts with Serbia." When Karl Kautsky came across this document in the archives of the Wilhelmstrasse after the revolution of November 1918, he justly remarked that it was simply a plan for a preventive war against Russia. Count Hoyos, in drafting the *procès-verbal* of the Cabinet Council held at Vienna on July 7th, 1914, wrote : " It is clear that as a consequence of our invading Serbia a war with Russia would very probably ensue." But Count Berchtold changed the wording so as to make it read : " It is clear that our invasion of Serbia may result in a war with Russia " ; but he argued that it was better that the clash should come then, as Russia was every day becoming more powerful in the Balkans. Count Berchtold did not foresee the ignominious way in which the invading Austrian troops were destined to be repulsed by the Serbs. But what he might and should have foreseen was that he was staking too much for too little. Undoubtedly the position of the Empire was far from satisfactory. However, the decline was gradual, and many things might have retarded the end. But it was obvious that an unsuccessful war would be fatal to the Hapsburg Monarchy ; while it was by no means certain that even a successful issue, resulting in an increase in the numbers of the Minorities, would have wrought any amelioration. Austria may deplore her fate to-day ; but it is the inevitable sequel of her own political stupidity (not to say duplicity) in precipitating a war.

Another crushing proof of the deliberate intention of the Austro-Hungarian Government to attack and humble Serbia, and of the truth of the assertion that the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand was not the cause,

but simply (from the standpoint of the Ballplatz) a fortunate and timely coincidence, was disclosed on December 6th, 1914, when Signor Giolitti told the Italian Chamber of Deputies that on August 9th, 1913, the Italian Government had refused to co-operate with Austria-Hungary in an attack which the latter country then meditated upon Serbia.

The successive steps whereby the Empire made war inevitable (thus ringing its own death-knell) are too well known to need repetition. It will suffice to recall that during this critical period the Ballplatz exhibited a cynical duplicity rivalling that shown by Aehrenthal when he annexed Bosnia and Hungary some six years earlier. For, in order to soothe Russian public opinion, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg was instructed to assure M. Sazanov that, despite its ultimatum, the Government had no intention of annexing any territory or of infringing the sovereign rights of Serbia. How false was this statement is shown by the official report of a meeting of the Cabinet held in Vienna (translation): "Then began the discussion of the objective of the military action against Serbia. Upon the advice of the President of the Hungarian Council of Ministers [Tisza] it was decided that Serbia, her territory once having been diminished, should not be completely annihilated, out of regard for Russia. The President of the Austro-Hungarian Council of Ministers remarks that is was very desirable that the Karageorgevitch dynasty should be removed from the throne, and that the Serbian crown should be offered to a European Sovereign; and that it was equally necessary to look forward to this reduced Serbia being economically dependent upon the Dual Monarchy."

Indeed, Austria-Hungary was deceitful even towards her own ally in respect to her real intentions regarding Serbia. On July 28th, 1914, the German Ambassador in London, Prince Lichnowsky, telegraphed to Berlin that on the previous day his Austrian colleague, Count Mensdorff, had told him confidentially that Vienna was "absolutely determined to have war, as Serbia was to be 'flattened out'"; and also that "Austria intended to present parts of Serbia to Bulgaria" (and presumably also to Albania). This caused Bethmann-Hollweg to

write in the margin of Lichnowsky's dispatch the following note (translation) : " This duplicity of Austria's is intolerable. They refuse to give us information as to their programme, and state expressly that Count Hoyos' statements, which discussed a partition of Serbia, were a purely personal expression ; at Petersburg they are lambs with not a wicked thought in their hearts, and in London their Embassy talks of giving away portions of Serbian territory to Bulgaria and Albania."

Nevertheless, Bethmann-Hollweg does not seem to have had much right to complain about Austria-Hungary's designs for the dismemberment of Serbia : although the German nation itself might well reproach statesmen who disregarded Bismarck's advice to beware of acting simply in the interests of Austria-Hungary in Balkan questions. For, according to the *Memoirs* of Conrad von Hoetzendorff, a secret agreement (subsequently confirmed by the civil authorities, but never communicated to Italy) had been made in 1909 between himself and Field-marshal von Moltke, extending the *casus fœderis*. Germany thereby undertook to support Austria-Hungary in an aggressive policy against Serbia, and to lend her military assistance should that policy lead to a war with Russia.

Such was the way in which Austria-Hungary intended to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of Serbia. Her deliberate intention to violate Serbian sovereignty was further illustrated by the rejection, at a later meeting of the Cabinet, of Count Tisza's demand for a public declaration that she herself did not seek to annex any Serbian territory. The first step in the downward path was taken by Aehrenthal, a dangerous if able politician. The last fatal move was made by Count Berchtold, a weak man of no great calibre, generally under the influence of the person he had seen last, and of whom the clear-headed Kiderlen-Waechter once complained that he never knew what he wanted.

It is, however, necessary to refer to the various meetings of the Cabinet, and other negotiations which preceded the actual declaration of war, in order to throw as much light as may be possible upon a point which is still in dispute : namely, whether any, and if so what,

measure of responsibility attaches to the late M. Tisza for the fatal step which was eventually taken.

For a number of years after the rebellion of 1848 (when Austria was saved by Russian intervention) the Hungarians took no part in the public life of the Empire. But Francis Deak and Count Andrassy induced their fellow-countrymen to abandon the policy of isolation. The wisdom of this course was quickly proved, for the Hungarians, with their astute political sense, soon acquired a commanding position in the councils of the State. For many years before 1914 Count Tisza had been at the head of the Hungarian Government. In reality he was much more than that. His influence on the foreign policy of the Empire, especially after the death of Aehrenthal, was often preponderant. He could usually count upon the support of the Emperor, for Francis Joseph had unbounded confidence in Tisza's ability and faith in his devotion and loyalty. The latter was, indeed, the leader of the party which (as opposed to that still holding the pure and undefiled doctrine of 1848) firmly supported the Empire ; but supported it solely as being essential to the welfare of Hungary, for no member even of the 1848 group was more wholeheartedly Hungarian than Tisza.

Although the majority of the country was Roman Catholic, Tisza was a Calvinist ; and it is noteworthy that at the present day it happens that the Regent, Admiral Horthy, the Prime Minister, Count Bethlen, and the Foreign Secretary, Dr. Walko, are all Protestants.

In his sombre clothes, and always bespectacled, Tisza had all the air of a professor. But, despite his appearance, he was a duellist whose skill as a swordsman, together with his imperturbable coolness, caused him to be dreaded by his opponents. He fought with Szecheny, with Pallavicini, twice with Rakovsky, and with nearly a dozen others. In one famous contest he deliberately touched Karolyi an untold number of times ; until at last, tired of showing his superiority, he put his excitable antagonist *hors de combat.* Years afterwards Tisza one day generally observed that he thought he had perhaps been wrong not to have killed Count Karolyi that day. The remark was truer than he knew himself ; for, indirectly at least, Karolyi was eventually responsible for his own death.

Tisza was stern, reserved, and cold. Despite his long tenure of office, he was, before 1914, always unpopular, alike with the people and with the political world. They accepted his predominance reluctantly, and solely because it was impossible to fill his place. There is indeed a parallel in this respect to be drawn between M. Poincaré and Tisza.

In Budapest I was once told by one close to him through family ties that Tisza had throughout opposed the declaration of war. When in Bucarest, some weeks later, I happened to repeat this to M. Duca, then Minister of the Interior, and formerly Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Rumanian Government, who retorted with some warmth that this was in contradiction to the records of the Cabinet meetings preserved in the archives of the former Empire.

The facts are that at the Crown Council held at Vienna on July 7th, 1914, after Berchtold had expressed the opinion that the opportunity should be seized to attack Serbia immediately, Tisza disagreed, upon the ground that by such a step Austria-Hungary would be placed in a bad light in the eyes of all Europe. In his opinion certain demands should be made upon Serbia, but, although severe, they should not be of such a nature as to render them absolutely inacceptable. In brief, Tisza would have been satisfied with a diplomatic success upon that basis. It may be remarked in passing that naturally he was not so affected by the death of Francis Ferdinand as was Berchtold : the latter had thereby lost a lifelong friend, whereas the assassination had delivered Tisza from the dread that the Archduke, once he came to the throne, would make short work of the measure of liberty which Hungary had finally succeeded in acquiring.

However, all the other members of the Council supported Berchtold, who held that a diplomatic victory would by no means suffice. Tisza exposed his views in letters to the Emperor Francis Joseph, to whom he wrote : "*I have learned from Count Berchtold that it is his intention to take the opportunity of the Serajevo murder in order to bring Serbia to her knees, and settle up all old scores, transcended by that outrage. I did not hide from Count Berchtold that I viewed such intention as a fatal mistake and that I would have no hand in it. First, we*

have so far no evidence that could suffice to throw upon Serbia responsibility for the assassination. Should Serbia tender explanations exculpating herself in some tolerable form, we have no ground left on which to fasten war upon her. No effort on our part could contrive a worse position for ourselves. We should stand forth before the whole world as the disturbers of its peace and we should have kindled a huge war with the worst prospects for ourselves." And he laid stress upon the necessity of an express declaration that there was no intention of destroying or annexing Serbia. He considered that if Serbia rejected the demands made on her, with the result that she was defeated in an ensuing war, Austria-Hungary should be content with certain rectifications of her strategical frontier, although Serbia might be diminished in favour of Greece, Albania, and Bulgaria.

But in the Crown Council held on July 19th, 1914, Tisza finally consented to the sending of the ultimatum which he had formerly opposed, and which was intended to, and did, precipitate a conflict. Already, on July 14th, he had, after a further conversation with Berchtold, gone to see the German Ambassador, Count Tschirschky, who reported the interview to Berlin in the following words: "He said to me that he had always advised prudence, but that every day had confirmed him in the opinion that the Monarchy must take energetic measures." However, at that meeting he again urged that the Government should make a public declaration that it would not annex any territory. But in this also he was overruled. In any event, it was the irony of fate that, having struggled almost until the last moment against Berchtold's plan, Tisza, who had always been so unpopular, should suddenly have become the hero of the hour in Budapest, because he was thought to be responsible for the declaration of war.

Undoubtedly the Archduke Ferdinand had been a disturbing factor; but if his death removed one danger, it automatically replaced it by another. For it left no successor to the old Emperor except a young man of weak character, who had not even been trained as one who might some day govern the Empire. As the French Ambassador, M. Dumaine, wrote at the time: "La puerilité menace de succèder à la senilité."

Until his death in November 1916, Francis Joseph

took a close and intelligent interest in all the affairs of his Empire. Although never a man of great intellectual attainments, or even wide capacity, the result of being so many years on the throne was that as time passed he became more, rather than less, capable ; except towards the end, when his great age, and his fatalistic conviction that the Hapsburg Monarchy would not long survive his death, led him to avoid any decision or action in various great and urgent questions. It was probably only after his death that Germany realised the loss she had thereby sustained. The fidelity of Francis Joseph could always be depended upon ; but after his death Austria-Hungary was never a certain ally. Nevertheless, he had no great liking for Prussia or for Prussian methods ; and he could never entirely forget that it was Prussia which had defeated Austria in 1866. The former Kaiser probably had more affection for him than he had for any other ruler. But it is generally understood that those sentiments were not reciprocated ; and that Francis Joseph considered Wilhelm II often entirely lacking in dignity. The old Emperor undoubtedly possessed the respect, though hardly the affection, of his people ; and, whatever the fortune of war, it is doubtful whether, had he lived, the Hapsburg Monarchy would have crumbled as it did.

In order to get a clear idea of the last days of the Hapsburg Monarchy, and to comprehend the circumstances which hastened and contributed to its downfall, it is necessary to understand the character, and to remember the many faults, both of commission and omission, of the young Emperor Charles. The pathetic ending of this unfortunate Prince has excited such general compassion that he has usually been excused by the statement that he was not brought up to occupy the high position to which he was called as a result of the tragedy of Serajevo. Considered simply as an excuse, that plea leaves little to be desired. By nature Charles was endowed with a weak character—and also with the charm that so often accompanies such a character. His education was not calculated to strengthen his mental or moral fibre. And in the interval of little over two years between the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his succession to the throne—an interval passed in the turmoil of warfare—

there was no opportunity to prepare him for the heavy burdens which he was obliged to assume.

From the outset of his reign it was evident to those who were close to the young Emperor that he had no liking for anyone who spoke his mind plainly ; while, on the other hand, his advisers often had cause to complain that they were unable to obtain from their Sovereign an open statement regarding his position or opinion in respect to any subject. He could not tolerate those who sought or seemed to control him upon the ground of their greater experience ; and all the less so because, when he first came to the throne, he desired to examine and settle himself even the most minute questions. It was this sentiment which led to his quickly displacing Conrad von Hoetzendorf from his post of Chief of the General Staff. It is probably a fair summary judgment to say that von Hoetzendorf excelled in creating and elaborating a plan rather than in superintending its execution : he was somewhat too much inclined to overlook technical difficulties. His imagination often surpassed his sense of reality. Nevertheless, these are not necessarily fatal defects in a Chief of General Staff. Conrad von Hoetzendorf himself undoubtedly indicated the real reason for his removal when, in referring to the matter some months later, he smilingly remarked that a young girl just beginning housekeeping never wants to take with her the governess under whose control she has been in the home of her parents. Much more to Charles' liking than the outspoken von Hoetzendorf was his successor, the ever jovial and courtly Arz von Straussenburg, who, sometimes to the neglect of his more serious duties, accompanied his Sovereign on his innumerable journeys. For Charles travelled constantly and almost feverishly, thereby rendering regular work difficult both for himself and for others. Undoubtedly this was mainly due to his desire—ill regulated though it was—for information upon various points. But some of those who knew him well still hold the opinion that occasionally he liked to escape from the one critic whom he had no power to dismiss ; and to whom, in fact, he was sincerely devoted, although sometimes oppressed by her insistence. The Empress Zita had undoubtedly a much stronger character than her husband. She was more daring in her

conceptions ; and as persistent as he was fitful. She was probably reactionary ; she was undoubtedly Ultramontaine. Much has been written about Charles' piety ; and undoubtedly he was a faithful son of the Church. Nevertheless, General von Cramon, no mean observer, who for four years represented the German G.H.Q. at the Austro-Hungarian G.H.Q., has written that he could attribute only a very relative value to the Emperor's piety ; for although " no man observed more scrupulously than did he the exterior marks of the Catholic Liturgy, none knelt more scrupulously, and none made the Sign of the Cross more respectfully, yet also, on the other hand, no one appeared more bored than he did when he thought he was unobserved. For him piety was visibly a purely exterior thing, a reciprocal contract made with the Lord."

It was the Empress Zita alone who could rouse Charles in the periods of depression which so often followed untoward events. For to her credit it must be said that she never allowed herself to become the sport of circumstances, and that in the very worst hours her proud spirit showed itself by cold disdainfulness. However, it is not for nothing that she was born a Bourbon-Parma. Not only had she the taste for rash political intrigue which has distinguished some of the women as well as many of the men of that family, but she possessed in an unusual degree that obstinacy which is such a well-known characteristic of the Bourbon race. It is a trait which was prominent while she reigned with her husband in Vienna ; and which, since his death, has been the source of no little anxiety to the leaders of the Legitimist party in Hungary.

Equally repugnant to Charles as the tutelage of Conrad von Hoetzendorf was that which, in another sphere, was exercised by Tisza. The Hungarian statesman had not endeared himself to the Emperor by insisting that, Calvinist though he was, he should crown him as King of Hungary, thus disregarding Charles' wish that that ceremony should be performed by the Archduke Joseph. It has been stated by M.M. Jerome and Jean Tharaud (and widely believed) that Tisza was dismissed by the young Emperor Charles in an almost brutal fashion after an audience given him in the Imperial railway

carriage.* However, this was denied by Count Joseph Hunyadi, formerly First Minister of the Emperor Charles' Court, in an article published in the *Pester Lloyd* in January 1929. According to this account, the Emperor called upon Tisza either to give his word of honour that no act of violence would take place in Parliament, or, alternatively, to resign, and that Tisza chose the latter course. Count Hunyadi says that the Emperor always appreciated Tisza's high qualities; and that on the day he received the news of his murder—November 30th, 1918—he exclaimed: "Now all is finished; they have killed my Tisza."†

There is every reason to believe that the truth, or at least the whole truth, lies between these two statements. Charles fully appreciated Tisza's force of character, but for that very reason he found it embarrassing to have him as one of his intimate advisers. The discussion arising from the proposal for a wider suffrage, which was opposed by Tisza and supported by the Hungarian Opposition, took such a turn that Tisza naturally offered his resignation, thus giving Charles an opportunity which he was not slow to seize.

It would, however, be unfair not to recognise that the young Emperor was always animated by the best intentions, and especially that he was throughout desirous of a speedy peace. Unfortunately, the means he took to attain his ends in more than one instance were such as to discredit alike his political sagacity, his loyalty to his ally, and his reputation for veracity. It is certain that nothing he could have done would have averted the impending dissolution of the old Empire; it is probable that nothing he could have done would have saved the Hapsburg dynasty. Possibly he neglected some chances. Had he offered the various races political autonomy and independence in a federated Empire a year earlier, instead of in October 1918, he would doubtless have embarrassed the plans of Dr. Masaryk, Dr. Benès, and the other Czech leaders; and would also have increased the chance of keeping the Yugo-Slavs within the fold of Austria, which, in a later appeal, its Prime Minister called "*la*

* See *Quand Israel est Roi*, p. 80.

† See *Le Temps*, January 15th, 1919. But obviously the date is incorrect, since Tisza was murdered on October 31st.

maison familiale commune." But there were obvious objections against adopting that course except as a last expedient : although a far-sighted and courageous statesman might have done so in time, realising that last expedients usually end in failure.

Again, when the Governor of Bohemia, Count Coudenhove, urged him to be crowned in Prague as King of Bohemia, Charles accepted the idea with alacrity. Coudenhove promptly began to make the necessary arrangements. But Charles reconsidered his decision after the Government had been warned by several Czech members of Parliament that he would make his entry into Prague through empty streets. It is problematical what the result might have been had the Emperor followed Coudenhove's advice : but the plan was at least worth a trial. The very fact that the Czech leaders were opposed to it showed that they themselves were uncertain as to what might be the effect of such a ceremonial.

But what throws into clearest relief the characteristic tendencies to which I have alluded is the extraordinary story of the peace negotiations conducted through the Empress's brother, Prince Sixte of Bourbon-Parma. The plan originated in the fertile mind of the Empress's mother, the Duchess of Parma ; and was started when she went to Switzerland to meet Prince Sixte, who was serving in the Belgian Army. As a result of their conversations, and after several meetings with Count Erdody, who was acting for the Emperor, Prince Sixte, together with his brother, Prince Xavier, came to Vienna secretly in March 1917, following a suggestion made by Czernin. He at once had an interview with the Emperor, and Count Czernin, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs. Prince Sixte stated at the outset that the French Government would agree to enter into negotiations only upon the condition that Charles first undertook to support France in her claim for the return of Alsace-Lorraine. Czernin had no hesitation in pronouncing that to be impossible. As a matter of fact, he doubtless thought that such a course might eventually be necessary ; but he considered that it would be the height of bad policy to throw away his strongest card in the preliminaries of negotiations. The matter, therefore, ended so far as he was concerned. But, as the result of a conversation

which he had alone with Prince Sixte on the following day, Charles gave him the letter demanded, as well as one alleging that he was acting in accord with his Minister. When Prince Sixte showed this communication to Poincaré, the President of the French Republic was so impressed that he said he regarded it as a considerable step towards peace. Upon his advice Prince Sixte repaired to England to place the matter before Mr. Lloyd George ; and the Prime Minister, taking the same view as Poincaré, even spoke of going to Switzerland himself in order to carry on the negotiations.

But however promising its inception, the matter was brought to a halt on account of the stand maintained by Italy. When Mr. Lloyd George and M. Ribot met Baron Sonnino at Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne in May 1917, the latter was asked whether, in view of an early peace, Italy would accept less than was guaranteed to her by the London Convention of 1915. When Baron Sonnino replied in the negative, France and England were obliged to inform Prince Sixte that they could not proceed further. Some obscurity still envelops this part of the proceedings. For when Prince Sixte communicated the result to the Emperor he was told that Italy had herself recently made overtures to Austria-Hungary for a separate peace, and had expressed her readiness to be satisfied with territorial concessions considerably less than those contemplated by the London Convention. However, it is, I think, doubtful whether in reality any such negotiations were of a serious nature or upon an official basis.

On the other hand, what is as certain as illuminating is that when the Emperor Charles met the Kaiser at Homburg, only some days after the visit of Prince Sixte to Vienna, he never mentioned the highly interesting conversations he had had with his brother-in-law, or the still more interesting letter with which he had entrusted him.

A year later, after the great success achieved by the German troops in their offensive of March 1918, Czernin made a speech, in the course of which he alleged that some weeks earlier Clemenceau had sounded him, through an intermediary, upon the possibility of peace ; but that the matter had come to nothing because France insisted upon regaining Alsace-Lorraine.

On April 9th, 1918, Clemenceau issued a statement to the effect that no French Government would ever consent to discuss the question of Alsace-Lorraine ; and added (translation) : " Who would have believed that there would have been need of a Revertera* to enlighten Count Czernin about a question regarding which the Emperor of Austria has himself said the last word ? For it is the Emperor Charles who, in a letter dated March 1917, has confirmed in his own hand his assent to the just claim of France to Alsace-Lorraine." It was also stated that there was another letter from the Emperor, claiming that he was acting in accord with his Minister.

Czernin promptly retorted that Clemenceau's declarations were entirely false. At the same time Charles telegraphed to the Kaiser to the same effect, and added that he repudiated with indignation the assertion that he had ever recognised France's claim to Alsace-Lorraine. But Clemenceau was equally quick in retorting. He simply published the letter which Prince Sixte had communicated to Poincaré. This letter dealt in detail with the conditions of a possible peace. In particular, it laid down that Belgium and Serbia should have the same boundaries as before the outbreak of the war. The paragraph referring to Alsace-Lorraine read as follows : " Je te prie de transmettre secretement et inofficiellement à Monsieur Poincaré, Président de la République Française, que j'appuierai par tous les moyens et en usant de toute mon influence personelle auprès de mes alliés les justes revendications de la France relatives à l'Alsace-Lorraine."

This disclosure threw Charles into confusion, while at the same time it excited the lively indignation of Count Czernin, who realised that he ran some risk of being the victim of the Emperor's double-dealing. However, Vienna extricated itself from the dilemma as best it could by issuing a declaration that the text published by Clemenceau had been falsified ; and that in the original the passage concerning Alsace-Lorraine read as follows : " J'aurais engagé toute mon influence personelle en faveur des revendications Française relatives à l'Alsace-Lorraine, si ces revendications avaient été justifiées :

* Revertera acted for the Austro-Hungarian Government in certain negotiations in Switzerland.

or, elles ne le sont pas." At the same time Charles telegraphed to the Kaiser that Clemenceau's accusations were so base that he had no intention of continuing the controversy, but that his answer would be given by his cannon on the Western Front. However, if this grandiloquent message deceived the Kaiser (which is hardly likely), it certainly did not have the same effect in Austria; nor, needless to say, in Allied or neutral countries. The proofs produced by Clemenceau of the authenticity of his version of the letter were generally considered to be conclusive. And this judgment was correct.

Nevertheless, this did not end the troubles which the Emperor had created for himself by his conduct in this matter. His Foreign Minister had no intention of being the *bouc emissaire*, in the eyes either of his contemporaries or of posterity. Czernin was neither an intellectual nonentity like his predecessor, Berchtold, nor a doctrinaire like his successor, Burian. His abilities had even attracted the attention of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who, had he lived to succeed his uncle on the throne, would have made him his Foreign Minister. As it was, he had been instrumental in having Czernin sent to represent the Empire in Bucarest, with instructions to examine the possibility of riveting close relations with Rumania in return for concessions to be made in Transylvania at the expense of Hungary. But Czernin, despite his experience and his undoubted skill in diplomatic negotiations, was of a very nervous and highly excitable disposition. Moreover, at the moment of the disclosure respecting the letters which Charles had given to Prince Sixte, he was especially irritable as a result of the recent conference at Brest-Litovsk, in which he had been forced to take a part which was equally difficult and unenviable. In his wrath he entirely lost his self-control; and, in the course of a lengthy interview, attacked Charles in unmeasured terms. He finally insisted that for his protection the Emperor should give him a written statement, guaranteed by his word of honour, to the effect that he had written only one letter to Prince Sixte, and that the one stating that Czernin was in accord with him had never existed; that Prince Sixte had not been authorised to communicate any letter to the French Government; and that, in any event, the one letter

which he had written did not contain a reference to Alsace-Lorraine in the words quoted by M. Clemenceau.

Thus was Charles involved still deeper in the meshes of his own duplicity.

> "Oh, what a tangled web we weave
> "When first we practise to deceive."

But apparently this did not weigh heavily upon him. For, not content with the denial which he had telegraphed to the Kaiser, he sent for General von Cramon, representing the German G.H.Q., and, as an evidence of his fidelity to his ally, requested him to read the copy he had kept of the letter which he had given to Prince Sixte. In this draft the passage relating to Alsace-Lorraine was not in the terms cited by Clemenceau, but corresponded to the version which the Austrian Government had given in its denial. General von Cramon was astonished—but not deceived—by this clumsy manœuvre.

Upon another occasion Charles began a direct negotiation with King Ferdinand of Rumania, which he was careful to conceal from the German Government, as he knew full well that Berlin would have made strenuous objections.

The outrageous nationalism of which Hungary was always guilty, and the way in which she considered only her own interests, and disdainfully ignored those of the Empire, were also largely responsible for the collapse of the Hapsburg Monarchy, and equally for the plight in which Hungary finds herself to-day. It is perhaps not so surprising that in the earlier days of the war Budapest resisted German pressure to make certain concessions regarding Transylvania in order to induce Rumania to align herself with the Central Powers. But it is more difficult to give any rational explanation for her conduct in later and more critical days. It is probable that the last desperate effort to save his throne, which the Emperor Charles made in the autumn of 1918, was doomed to failure in any event. But the attitude assumed by Hungary deprived it of any chance of success which it might ever have had. When, on October 1st, 1918, Baron von Hussarek announced in the Reichsrat that the Government intended to grant autonomy to the various

races of the Empire (as well as to recognise an independent Poland, in which Galicia would be incorporated), the new Federal State thus constituted to remain an Empire under the Hapsburg dynasty,* the plan was bluntly rejected by the Czech members, who claimed that their lot should only be decided by an international congress. Nor did the scheme meet with much greater favour in the eyes of the Yugo-Slavs. The general impression was that these proposals had come too late. Even the Poles, who were loud-spoken, made it clear that the time for words had passed, and that steps must be taken without further delay for the formation of a Great Poland—and one which should be free from any species of Austrian control. Indeed, National Councils or Assemblies were convoked both at Prague and at Cracow; and on October 11th there was a meeting of the Yugo-Slav National Council, at which the various elements of the Yugo-Slav race throughout the Empire were represented.

In the circumstances Charles and his advisers rightly came to the conclusion that the best course was speedily to grant full liberty to the various nationalities within the Empire. From the standpoint of internal affairs little or nothing remained to be lost by such a policy, since the Emperor would only be giving voluntarily what would evidently soon be taken; while his spontaneous action in this direction might possibly be advantageous to the House of Hapsburg in the negotiations with President Wilson and with the Entente Allies. But Hungary alone was unable to read the writing on the wall. She obstinately refused to resign herself to the fact that, in his dire distress, the Emperor was forced, as a last resource, to grant Croatia the largest possible measure of autonomy, within the new federated Empire. Nor could she comprehend that it was even in the interest of Hungary that he should do so. Instead, Budapest merely reiterated what the President of the Hungarian Council had already said on September 18th, 1918, namely, that the Croatian problem was simply an administrative question which concerned Hungary alone. Charles was held strictly

* In April 1917, Czernin had announced that the Empire was willing that Galicia should be united to Poland, and that both should be placed under German sovereignty, provided that Germany would consent to give up Alsace-Lorraine.

to that term of his Coronation oath whereby he had sworn to maintain the integrity of Hungarian territory. To the very end Hungary's passion for Magyarisation (which astonished even such an independent observer as the German General von Cramon) persisted—with all its fatal consequences.

It was in these circumstances that the Emperor advised Tisza to examine, himself, on the spot, the stage which the Yugo-Slavian question had reached. Tisza accordingly went, with the Royal assent, to Serajevo, to Agram, and elsewhere, and promptly discussed the situation with the various leaders. It is probable that in his long and stormy political career he had never received such a shock as that which he then encountered. Like the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen, he had a considerable contempt for the Croats; but he firmly believed (although one wonders why) that the Serbs living within the boundaries of Hungary were firmly attached to the crown of St. Stephen. But it was those very Serbs who throughout the war had manœuvred in a fashion which had completely deceived Hungarian statesmen. Externally their conduct had been such that in the event of a victory of the Central Powers they could count upon their apparent fidelity ensuring them an enhanced prestige and measure of influence at Budapest. But at the same time they had not hesitated to dangle before the eyes of the Croats the possibility of a new—or, to be more exact, an enlarged—kingdom, should ultimate success rest with the Entente Allies. And they displayed an acute intelligence in never speaking of a Great Serbia, which would hardly have enchanted the Croats, but in being careful always to allude to a Yugo-Slavian kingdom. Naturally the Hungarian Serbs had become more open in their endeavours in this direction in proportion as the probability of the defeat of the Central Powers had increased. Matters were nearly ripe for more definite action when Tisza made his famous visit. In fact, a Yugo-Slav Committee had been formed only two days earlier; and it did not hesitate to present Tisza with a memorandum which forced him to see the situation in its true light. For the first time he realised that if the war was lost Hungary could not segregate herself and escape the logical consequences of having been on the

losing side ; a fact which was only brought home to other Hungarian politicians some time later. But Tisza was under no illusion. At the time he only gave vent to his fury by apostrophising the Yugo-Slav representatives in violent terms. It is asserted that at Serajevo he said that the right of peoples freely to dispose of themselves was "*une fausse monnaie*" (and to-day some valid arguments might be adduced in support of that theory) ; and that he told the Yugo-Slav leaders, " It is possible that we may perish, but before doing so we will have strength enough to crush you." But, despite these outbursts, Tisza realised that the edifice which he himself had largely constructed was destined to crumble before his own eyes. From this moment he was a changed man ; and in these events may perhaps be found the reason why he took no steps to protect himself against the dastardly murder of which he was subsequently the victim.

Tisza was a characteristic example of his class and race. He was quick to perceive what was in the interest of Hungary, and always on the alert to extract some advantage for her out of every situation. But he was indifferent regarding everything that did not affect his native country ; and, indeed, was largely incapable of understanding other matters on a broad basis. For many years he had been the leader of that Hungarian party which advocated the maintenance of the Empire. But his policy rested solely on the belief that it was the one which would prove most profitable to Hungary ; and no sentiment of fidelity to the Hapsburg dynasty would have stood in his way had he at any moment arrived at another conclusion. At the very outset of the war he claimed for Hungary certain territorial extensions ; and later, when it appeared that the creation of the federated Empire was the only solution which might possibly save the Hapsburg dynasty, he cherished a plan whereby Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia, with a Croatian kingdom, should all be united to Hungary. That vision was destroyed only by what he learned at Agram and Serajevo.

Undoubtedly Tisza, although holding only the office of Hungarian Prime Minister, long exercised more influence than anyone else in moulding the foreign policy of the Empire. It is beyond contradiction that he was a man of great strength of character. Possibly he was even,

as Take Jonesco wrote, "*la plus forte tête des puissances centrales.*" But he was so deeply impregnated with nationalism that his range of vision was narrow, and constantly became narrower, to the detriment of his political judgment. It is Take Jonesco (himself so well-known in many European capitals) who has recounted that Tisza one day told him that he had not been out of Austria-Hungary for seven years, and that he was unable to understand that a statesman had any need to travel abroad. He lived, indeed, in a state of intellectual isolation, which prevented him from obtaining any just appreciation of events or currents of thought in other countries.

The Emperor proceeded with his plan for issuing a manifesto announcing the transformation of Austria into a federated State. On October 15th, 1918, a Crown Council discussed the subject at length ; and instructions were finally given to Baron von Hussarek to draft the document. The Hungarian Prime Minister, Wekerle, had not arrived in time for the meeting. There was, however, some ground for hoping that Hungary would consent to the sacrifice; for on October 11th Wekerle had declared to the Hungarian Parliament that it was necessary to admit that the integrity of Hungary could not be maintained in its entirety. Apparently he had, in the interval, recovered from that moment of feebleness—or of lucidity. For when he rejoined Baron von Hussarek he insisted that the manifesto should contain a clause clearly guaranteeing the future territorial integrity of his country. Hussarek properly pointed out that this would to a large extent render the manifesto futile both at home and abroad, since such a statement necessarily prevented a settlement of the Yugo-Slavian problem along the lines proposed. But Wekerle was intractable, and finally closed the discussion by saying, " If the manifesto does not contain the clause regarding the integrity of Hungary, I will cut off supplies from Austria." No remark could better illustrate the selfish impracticability of the Hungarians ; for at that period there was abundance in Hungary, while Austria was saved from starvation only by virtue of what she drew from that country. Moreover, Wekerle was also able to rally to his support the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Burian

(who was likewise of Magyar origin), although at the meeting of the Council of the Crown the latter had approved the manifesto in a form which announced the political independence of the various races by the creation of national States. The exact words had been: "Conforming to the will of its peoples, Austria will become a federated State in which each nationality will organise itself into a State upon the territory which it inhabits. This measure does not in any way prejudice the union of the Austro-Polish territories with the independent Polish State. The city of Trieste will receive, following the wishes of its population, a situation apart."

But the result of adding the clause guaranteeing the integrity of Hungarian territory was that, of all the races composing the old Empire, the Yugo-Slavs alone were not assured of political independence. Hungary herself promptly regularised her own position by the following declaration: "Austria having adopted a federated system, we place ourselves on the ground of personal union. Consequently we shall organise our political life, both as regards economic questions and national defence, independently and autonomously." But this independence which Hungary was so quick to seize she was not willing to grant to others, for at the same time she made it clear, in the plainest words, that political unity with Hungary was binding upon the Croats.

The end came with the disintegration of the Army. The situation was aggravated by the fact that a message which the President of the Council, Lammasch, had sent to President Wilson on October 30th remained unanswered, although in the meantime Wilson had communicated not only with the National Committee at Prague, and with the Government of Count Karolyi at Budapest, but even with Herr Seitz, the President of the provisional National Assembly of German-Austria. There is little doubt that Professor Masaryk, who had acquired Wilson's confidence, and whose hatred of the house of Hapsburg was unlimited, was responsible for the manner in which the expiring Government was thus patently ignored. All this conduced to a demand for the abdication of the Emperor. That astute priest, Professor Seipel, who was then a member of the Cabinet, did his utmost to bar the way to any irremediable action. He suggested various

expedients, seeking to save Charles from a definite surrender of his crown. But one day in November 1918 the Emperor was warned that the Viennese populace would march on Schönbrunn at four o'clock unless he had already abdicated. Thereupon he signed the deed whereby he renounced participation in all affairs of State.

The Empress, from a condition of agitation, thereupon passed to one of cold disdain. But almost the only other person who remained calm was Count Andrassy, who a few days earlier had been named Foreign Minister. He had repelled Count Czernin's plan that order might be obtained by asking the troops of the Entente to enter the country, saying that such an idea amounted to high treason. And when a number of superior officers asked whether they were absolved from their oath of allegiance by the decree of the Emperor stating that national armies would be formed in the new States, and that it was permissible to take any oath that might be exacted, Andrassy told them that their present duty was to remain faithful to the Emperor.

Nevertheless, few men had stronger or closer reason to be disturbed than Andrassy. Already Hungary had thrown off her allegiance. Charles had entrusted Count Karolyi with the task of forming a Ministry. But the following day Karolyi had asked to be released from his oath, and the King had reluctantly consented. Then quickly followed the demand for abdication. Prince Windischgraetz and Count Andrassy entered Charles' study while he was still telephoning. Andrassy, aghast by the treason of his son-in-law, Karolyi, took the telephone and shouted, " Have you gone crazy to ask the abdication of the King ? " Count Batthyani, Minister of the Interior in Karolyi's Cabinet, and until then Minister of the Imperial House, who was at the other end, answered, " If he does not abdicate we will chase him like a bad servant." Perhaps Batthyani was remembering how his ancestor had been shot by the Austrians after the rebellion of 1848 ; and how his grandmother had then been disgracefully treated by the ignoble Haynau.

Prince Louis Windischgraetz condemns more bitterly than any foreigner would dare to do the conduct at this juncture of Austrian officers of high rank, and especially of those attached to the General Staff. Speaking

of the days preceding the crumbling of the Empire, he remarks that hardly anyone except military officials completely abandoned the King during the first days of the disaster. He even does not hesitate to characterise the behaviour of many officers as most shameful; and observes that at the moment of danger they were the first to place themselves in safety. And he adds: "When for the first time it was a question of showing personal courage, character, and fidelity, qualities which during four long years they had exacted with merciless severity from every territorial, and which they had represented as being the first and the most sacred duty of every soldier, they themselves evaded the issue, and asked to be released from their oath, in order that they could place their services as quickly as possible at the disposition of the new authorities. The example was given by the officers holding the highest positions on the General Staff. As long as the war had lasted they had walked in the middle of the pavement; but while, during the general crumbling, the officers at the Front were making superhuman efforts to keep in order the soldiers under them, and while the company officers were faithfully observing their oaths, the greatest military chiefs neglected their duty and disappeared. When the desks of these heroes were opened they were found to be filled with documents demanding the Cross of Marie-Thérèse. Since they knew the desperate condition of the Army, the only thing they had in their heads was to procure for themselves the highest decorations that the Monarchy could confer."

Prince Windischgraetz also draws a striking picture of the scene of desertion he found reigning at Schönbrunn. There were neither any soldiers on guard, nor any lackeys performing their usual services. And the courtiers had followed the example of—or given example to—the servants in deserting the Sovereign. Charles was all alone; and as Prince Windischgraetz went through the solitary rooms he thought to himself: "Where are they to-day, the Lobkowitz and the Auerspergs, the Clams and the Schwarzenbergs, the Czernins and the Esterhazys? Where are the Zichys, the Batthyanis, the Fesztetics, the Kinskis, all the noble lords of Austria and of Hungary, who since centuries have knelt on the steps of the throne and have lived on Royal favours!"

And there is the story of how a solitary officer was found fast asleep. However, this gallant sailor has awakened after some ten years' slumber ; and in November 1928 he gave to the *Vienna Journal* his account of what really took place during the last days at Schönbrunn :

" Since Prince Ludwig Windischgraetz, in his book, *Vom rotem zum schwarzem Prinzen*, describes how he came to Schönbrunn and there found only Korvettenkapitaen Schonta in the ante-chamber of the Emperor, something of the glory of a ' last pillar ' has stuck to me. Lately again I read an account by a man who came to Schönbrunn as courier of the Ministry of War, and who says that he met me there, lying on a *chaise-longue*, worn out from exhaustion and asleep. I would have no need to defend myself against this ' nimbus,' which could certainly only add to my honour, if it were not that through such descriptions my comrades are put in a false light. Therefore I feel it is my duty to say that at that time, in the daily life of Schönbrunn, there was nothing to be noticed of the excitement of a breakdown period ; nobody left their place and everything went its regular way. The Court attendants were even assembled in greater number than usually had been the case in war time, during the stays at Baden, Saxenburg, or Reichenau. The governess of the Royal children, Thérèse, Countess Schmising-Korff-Kersenbrock, the two ladies-in-waiting, Countess Agnes Schönborn and Countess Gabrielle Bellegarde, the two Masters of Ceremonies, Count Josef Hunyadi and Count Alexander Esterhazy, the first adjutant Field-marshal-Lieutenant Prince Zdenko-Vinzenz Lobkowitz, the Court Chaplain, Bishop Dr. Ernst Seydl, the head of the Military Chancery, General-Major Baron Zeidler-Sterneck, and the head of the Press, Captain Werkmann, all lived in the castle, besides all the five Flügel-adjutants (Col. Count Wladimir Ledochowski, Lieutenant-Colonel Rudolf Brougier, Major-Count Paul Esterhazy, Major Ritter von Brosebek, and myself). But generally only two of us at the same time were in attendance on the Court. Finally, even the head of the General Staff, General-Oberst Baron Arz, stayed in Schönbrunn. The guards stood on duty as usual ; sometimes even the guard-officers, who generally only marched out on formal occasions, made a regular post. All did

their duty with their habitual goodwill. Even long after the breakdown nobody left their post unless ordered to do so by the Sovereign. Of the five Flügel-adjutants, Colonel Count Ledochowski and I were allowed to accompany the Emperor and Empress to Eckartsau, into exile. Everyone would have thought themselves lucky to follow their master. We Flügel-adjutants had even arranged during the last period that two of us would always be in the immediate neighbourhood of the Monarch. Certainly there was not very much for us to do. The two telephones were the end of the last nerve-strings that still tied the Imperial castle to the country, and one felt that they were slowly dying off. The telephone man had to report more and more often that he could not get the required connections, until finally he was no longer connected with anything. I permitted myself to call the attention of the Monarch to this man who had done his utmost by persuasion to obtain some communication. The Emperor himself summoned him. 'I thank you for holding out so long and award you the Golden Cross of Merit with the Crown.' This was one of the last reigning acts of the Emperor Charles.

"There were very few audiences. The second Flügel-adjutant, who did duty voluntarily, could very well go in an adjoining room and rest or read. I mention this because of the description of the courier from the War Ministry and the story of the sleeping adjutant. During duty certainly none of us ever slept! Perhaps that gentleman was let in through a side room, where sometimes those who were off duty used to stay. Once a friend of mine asked: 'How was the atmosphere at Schönbrunn? Had you no fear of the revolution?' There really never was any revolution, no strong movement called up by the multitude. There only was great disorder brought about by all sorts of disturbers. There only were soldiers wanting to get home, and starving people looking for food."

The picture is less startling than that drawn by Prince Windischgraetz, but it is possibly nearer the truth. Be that as it may, the Emperor Charles and the Empress Zita one evening left Schönbrunn, never to return.

The course of events in Hungary, after the separation of the two countries, was entirely different from that

in Austria. When Karolyi was released from the oath of office which he had sworn to Charles (an oath, by the way, which was given by telephone, and which was cancelled in the same manner), he formed a National Council which took the place of the regular Government.

Michel Karolyi was a weak and extravagant creature hampered by a physical defect (he had an artificial palate), always trying to play a leading part, never quite succeeding, and more often than not making himself ridiculous in the attempt. He had inherited a vast fortune. But even in Hungary, that land of gamblers, he was notorious for the enormous sums which he staked and lost in play with other magnates at the National Casino ; and when the war broke out he was already heavily burdened by debts.

Upon the death of Francis Kossuth, early in 1914, Karolyi succeeded him as the leader of the party which adhered to the traditions of the rebellion of 1848. He was bitterly opposed to the link which the policy of the Empire forged between Hungary and Germany. On the other hand, he was friendly towards France, and, what is stranger, towards Russia. For it is somewhat inexplicable how a descendant of the heroes of 1848 should have been favourably inclined towards the race whose interference led to their defeat and inexorable repression ; and especially Karolyi, whose grandfather, Batthyani, was shot by the Austrians for the part he had taken.

Some months before the outbreak of the war Karolyi went to the United States, in order to explain his views to the two million Magyars who had emigrated to that country, and to collect the money necessary to further his political projects. Upon his return he landed at Bordeaux after hostilities had been declared, and for a short time he was detained by the French authorities. But he was soon allowed to go his way, upon giving an undertaking that he would not bear arms against the Entente Allies. He was wont to claim that he owed this indulgence to his relations with the French political world. But both Karolyi and his supporters always exaggerated his influence in that connection. It is true that it was perfectly well known in France that—in contrast to many other Hungarian politicians—he was inimicable to Germany, and that he bitterly resented what he considered to be the dictation

of the Wilhelmstrasse. But it is also significant that Dr. Max Nordau, who in the German Press had often attacked French policy, and who had also been stopped in transit at Bordeaux, was released at the same time.

Karolyi arrived in Budapest to find his fellow-countrymen fired with enthusiasm for the war. In the circumstances it was natural that for some years he was obliged to live almost in retirement. His voice was not heard until the evil days set in and the end began to loom in sight. Then the ever fickle populace commenced to think that after all it was Karolyi who had clearly foreseen the future. And Karolyi, with his deathlike countenance, his mannerisms, and his indistinct utterance, incited the people by incendiary speeches, and multiplied his activities in every form and in every direction. His one ambition was to be at the head of the political administration of the State. In order to attain that aim he considered no one too low, or too dangerous, to serve as his tool ; little reeking that within the space of a few months he would himself become a helpless tool in the hands of the scum with which he thus surrounded himself. In those days many passed the portals of the Karolyi palace who a few years before would have been ejected by the concierge. And in everything Karolyi was feverishly seconded by his wife, Catherine, the younger daughter of Count Andrassy, whose elder sister had married a Pallavicini. Andrassy, of course, differed from his son-in-law upon nearly every political question. But, despite the warnings of Prince Windischgraetz, it was not until the end actually came that he could believe the lengths—and the depths—to which Karolyi's ambition would lead him. Indeed, there were moments when both Karolyi and his wife were wrought up to a hysterical pitch by their own actions. Apparently they realis d that only a revolution would answer their purpose ; but at times they were appalled by the nightmare of the possible consequences.

When, on November 16th, 1918, Karolyi swore fidelity to the Republic, in the presence of forty thousand people who surrounded the Houses of Parliament, he was accompanied by Count Batthyani—but also by Boehm, the Communist shoemaker ; by the much more dangerous and less trustworthy Kunfi, a renegade Jew,

whose real name was Kunstaedter ; by the disreputable Abbé Hock; and by other members of the National Council. But it was only three days later that Bela Kun arrived in Budapest.

And Tisza no longer barred the way. By the irony of circumstances, after having enjoyed unmerited popularity in 1914, because he was then thought to be the principal instigator of the war, he became, for the same reason, the most hated man in Hungary in the autumn of 1918. Soldiers returning from the Front could be heard cursing him in the streets of Budapest. The Communists had also marked him for destruction as being the one man who might yet possibly cause them trouble. His life was known to be in danger. On October 30th he received more than one warning that he should escape while there was still time. But, a Calvinist through and through, he believed in the doctrine of predestination, and to the pleadings of his friends his only answer was, "What must be, must be." Nor did he even seek to leave behind him any justification of his actions. On the contrary, on the last day of his life, and when he knew that he was doomed, he purposely destroyed the copy of the letter which he had written to the Emperor Francis Joseph in July 1914, as well as the report of the meeting of the Crown Council, at which he had warned Berchtold and his other colleagues of the danger of precipitating a war.

On the afternoon of October 31st, three men entered his drawing-room, and shot him in the presence of his wife and niece.

Karolyi, who on October 25th had organised a National Council, may not have been directly responsible for the assassination of Tisza ; but undoubtedly he knew, as did everyone else, that his opponent was in danger, and he took no steps to protect or to save him. The fact that he failed to do so will always remain a blot on his reputation. It has been alleged that his guilt goes even deeper, and that the National Council secretly decided to get rid of the only man it feared, and employed the murderers who committed the deed. Karolyi sent a floral crown, with the words, "To my great adversary, in sign of reconciliation." The Countess Tisza ordered the flowers to be thrown away.

Karolyi's race was quickly run. He held the strange belief that in the day of defeat Hungary could separate herself from Austria, and then complacently declare to the Entente Allies that at heart she had always been their friend. It is fair to add that many thousands of Karolyi's fellow-countrymen deluded themselves with the same idea. Nothing comes more naturally to a Hungarian than to believe sincerely what he wants to believe, and to ignore disagreeable realities. The first illusion was lost when, on November 6th, 1919, Karolyi and some of his colleagues went to Belgrade to settle the terms of an armistice with General Franchet d'Esperey. Karolyi read a memorandum which set forth that it was the Hapsburg Monarchy, together with Germany, which had been responsible for the war; but that he and his colleagues represented the Hungarian people.

Franchet d'Esperey, who generally expresses his view with more vigour than suavity, chilled the delegation by his curtness, although he treated Karolyi personally with a moderate degree of courtesy. He told the amazed band of adventurers that they had no right to say they spoke for the Hungarians; that at best they represented the Magyars, who had for years oppressed all other races within their reach. He ridiculed the idea that the neutrality of Hungary was now of the least value to the Allies; and announced that, as Hungary had fought side by side with Germany, so she must likewise pay the penalty. Finally he dismissed them with an outline of terms which they considered of the harshest; although they were, in fact, much lighter than the conditions imposed on Hungary in the final settlement.

This shock was followed on December 1st, 1919, by the unpleasant announcement that the Transylvanian Rumanians had declared their secession from Hungary, although it is difficult to understand why Budapest had not foreseen this step.

In the meantime there were daily differences of opinion between the Communist and the more Conservative element in Karolyi's Cabinet. The former, however, always had the upper hand, and soon were left in undisputed possession of the field. It was during this period that Bela Kun became active in Budapest. Before the war he had been an unimportant journalist of no standing.

Having been captured by the Russians in the campaign of 1916, he was first sent to Siberia. But after the Russian revolution he was used by the Bolshevists to impregnate their doctrines, and to recruit troops amongst the prisoners of various nationalities. Bela Kun arrived in Hungary with sufficient funds to enable him to launch a newspaper, *Voros Ujsag* (The Red Journal), which soon distinguished itself by its incoherent violence. A little later he landed himself in prison as a result of heading a small mob which attempted to seduce the troops still left in Budapest and to upset the Government. But he had already acquired the confidence of the Communists, who really controlled the situation, partly by his explanation of Bolshevist methods as then exploited in Russia, but, without doubt, mainly because he was plentifully supplied with money. He was therefore speedily released. It is true that shortly afterwards, as the result of a riot, he found himself in jail again. But in the brief interval his influence had increased to such an extent that he was master of the situation. By this time Karolyi was only a puppet in the hands of the unknown adventurers who surrounded him. On March 21st, 1919, less than five months after the revolution had placed him in power, another revolution cast him out. Kunfi, and an obscure young Jewish journalist, Keri, forced him to sign a proclamation, whereby he resigned in favour of the proletariat of the Hungarian people. All Michel Karolyi's schemes and dreams thus led to his holding office for a few brief weeks, and with only a semblance of power. A thoroughly discredited man, despised and shunned by his own class which he had betrayed, and scorned by those whom he had thought to use to further his own ambition, he became an exile from his native land, a wanderer upon the face of the earth. And Bela Kun came forth from prison to take his place.

In the months which followed there was a veritable reign of terror. Secret denunciations were followed by domiciliary visits. Executions took place without any trial and upon the vaguest pretences. Everyone went from day to day in terror for his life. Nor was this criminal tyranny confined to Budapest. Armed bands were sent throughout the country districts. However, as usual, Bolshevism could make little headway against

the obstinacy of the peasants, and the capital remained half famished. But Bela Kun proved up to the hilt that he had learned his lesson thoroughly in Moscow. Nevertheless, the Rumanians and Czechoslovakian forces suddenly began to approach. After some initial successes the Red forces collapsed utterly. Bela Kun, and those closest to him, hastily departed during the first week in August. Such of his associates as did not escape at the same time were caught and hanged.

The impression made on the Hungarians by the horror of this period was deep and lasting. I was struck by the fact that in Budapest they seem to remember and to recount all that took place as if it happened yesterday. Nor do they forget that it was Karolyi who took the wrong turning. One magnate, who, I should think, was far from being of a bloodthirsty disposition, told me in trembling tones that if Karolyi ever dared to set his foot in Budapest he would shoot him, unless forestalled in that act. But Karolyi will never return.

After the flight of Bela Kun, Budapest was obliged to submit to the Rumanian occupation, with its accompanying exactions. That also is a period the memory of which arouses bitter recollections. The Hungarians accuse the Rumanians of plundering right and left. This the latter vigorously deny, and are able to produce the testimony of some witnesses in their behalf. Where the exact truth lies it is difficult to say. But in considering the allegations of the Hungarians it is well to remember that they always regarded the Rumanians as an entirely inferior race, and therefore found all the more galling the position in which they were placed ; and also that they themselves had recently assisted in looting Rumania with the utmost thoroughness.

The only events of political importance subsequent to the Rumanian occupation were the two attempts of Charles to regain the Hungarian throne—in March 1921, and in October 1921, respectively. It will suffice to say that these expeditions were ill advised in their conception, and were carried out without any proper measure of preparation. Apparently even those whom Charles thought would be faithful to him were not apprised of his plan until he was actually in the country. This raises the question of the attitude assumed by

Admiral Horthy, who had been elected Regent in March 1920. For technically Hungary is still a kingdom ; and presumably a Regent must be keeping the crown in trust for someone. It is said that Horthy refused Charles' demand to hand over to him the reins of government ; and that he gave as a reason that to do so would lead to an invasion by the Little Entente. No one can say what may actually have been Horthy's innate desires. But there is no doubt that in acting as he did he saved his country not only from complications with the Great Powers but from an actual invasion. Anyone who peruses the many dispatches sent by Dr. Benès during these periods will realise that he fully intended to take forcible steps to drive Charles out of the country. In fact, on the second occasion the mobilisation of the Czechoslovakian troops was actually begun. In an account of these two attempts, said to have been related by A. Boroviczeny, Charles' A.D.C., it is stated that the former King " had absolute guarantees from Briand's Cabinet that he had nothing to fear from the Little Entente. The Great Powers would merely protest, as when King Constantine returned to Greece, their only aim being to avoid war." * With some knowledge of the facts, I have no hesitation in stating that this is entirely untrue ; and that M. Briand never gave any guarantees, direct or indirect, that the *fait accompli* would be recognised.

It is true that Horthy's entire attitude as Regent is an enigma—an intriguing but not highly important enigma. When the war broke out he was a captain in the Austro-Hungarian Navy, and his advancement was rapid. He was noted for his good looks, a certain liking for theatrical display, and a fondness for bestowing liberally, for any services to his person, the various decorations which were placed at his disposal. He never was, and is not to-day, considered to be a great political force. It is possible that through vanity he wished to remain Regent as long as he could, although I know of no direct evidence to warrant such an assumption. But, however that may be, he acted in the interests of Hungary in taking the stand he did in 1921.

* See *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, by E. Ashmead-Bartlett, p. 250.

To-day the Royalist party in Hungary is somewhat divided. The pure Legitimists support the candidature of Charles' eldest son, who is being educated in Luxembourg. But, as already mentioned, the former Empress Zita is both obstinate and dictatorial ; and she has been able to make these qualities felt even at a distance. This has led to an increased support for those two Hapsburg Archdukes, who, through lifelong residence in the country, and complete identification with its interests, have become entirely Hungarianised.

However, there is no prospect of any immediate restoration of Royalty in Hungary. After Charles' second attempt to recover the throne, Czechoslovakia, through the Conference of Ambassadors, brought pressure to bear upon Budapest to declare that all members of the House of Hapsburg were ineligible for the crown of St. Stephen. The result was that on November 10th, 1921, an undertaking was given in the following words (translation) : "The Hungarian Government hereby engages itself to follow the decisions taken by the Conference of Ambassadors on February 4th, 1920, and April 3rd, 1921, which interdict the restoration of the Hapsburgs. It declares, moreover, that before resolving the question of the election of the King it will come to an agreement in advance with the Great Powers represented at the Conference and will not proceed without their consent. In order to assure more efficaciously the intent of the law and to safeguard the responsibility of the Government, Hungary has the intention to promulgate a law which, in addition to the penal dispositions already in force, will permit it effectively to combat any attempt or any propaganda in favour of the Hapsburgs or of anyone else whose candidature shall not have been presented in conformity with the above statement."

The Austro-Hungarian Empire had an area of about 240,000 square miles and a population of about 53,000,000 souls. The present Austrian State embraces only 32,000 square miles with a population of 6,500,000. For some years after 1918 the country passed through a period of the most abject poverty and the direst distress. The situation was eventually alleviated through the wise aid extended by the League of Nations. But there has not yet been, nor under existing circumstances can there

ever be, any return to the former measure of prosperity. The reasons are clear to anyone who examines the resources of the country, bearing in mind the fact that out of the total population nearly two millions are congregated in the city of Vienna. There would undoubtedly be a radical change if the customs barriers and the tariff walls, which cut off Austria and the surrounding countries from each other's markets, were abolished and torn down. The plan has often been mooted amongst those most interested. The benefits which would accrue from its adoption are undeniable. But the many minor difficulties incidental to the necessary settlement have hitherto proved an insuperable bar.

Speaking before the Foreign Committee of the Czechoslovakian Senate in April 1925, Dr. Benès said: "I do not regard as possible either the plans for the joining of Austria with Germany—and certainly the guarantee pact which has been prepared will simply show also in this sense that all the interested parties take their stand on this question on the provisions laid down in the treaties signed—or the plans for a Danubian Confederation or Customs Union. The only correct solution of the economic difficulties and problems of the new Central European States is their close economic *rapprochement* in the spirit of the last commercial treaty between Czechoslovakia and Austria, the principles of which can be developed further in conjunction with the maintenance of the full economic and political sovereignty of the respective States. I repeat that, given the good-will of the parties concerned, this policy will certainly lead to the desired end."

In view of the explicit statement of M. Benès, it would be interesting to know what authority Sir Robert Donald had for writing: "It has been the dream of M. Benès to create an economic customs union in the Balkans and include Austria and Hungary." *

At the present moment, however, an attempt is being made by the three members of the Little Entente to arrive at a close economic arrangement between themselves, as the difference of their political interests in several respects is such that it seems necessary to

* *The Tragedy of Trianon*, by Sir Robert Donald, p. 305.

reinforce the basis upon which the whole fabric rests. However, the Czech Agrarian party is attacking the proposal, upon the ground that it would lead Czechoslovakia into an economic alliance with two agricultural countries, and contends that the proper policy is a large measure of protection.

In any event, the political question would doubtless still remain open. I give elsewhere the reasons for my belief that the Anschluss will probably prove to be the solution. It will suffice to recall here that when a general demand arose for the political independence and liberty of the various races comprised in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire the so-called Austrian-Germans were amongst the first to advance their claims. And to-day it seems difficult to contend that they should not be allowed the same freedom of action as was granted to the other nationalities. Although there was an Austrian dynasty there never was an Austrian race; and no treaty can create one by any use or perversion of nomenclature. The inhabitants of the present Austrian State are simply Germans. The population of Austria to-day is German quite as much and to at least as great a degree as the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia are Czechs and Slovaks, or the inhabitants of Yugo-Slavia are Serbs and Croats.

In the meantime, Mgr. Seipel, who did his utmost to save the throne for the Hapsburgs, bent, during his chancellorship, all his capacities to the work of keeping Austria in a sane path. His task was by no means an easy one. The Fascists and Communists each maintain some species of armed forces; and if the actual clashes are not so frequent as might be expected in the circumstances, yet the danger is constant. Vienna itself is largely in the hands of Communist rulers, who have lavishly spent public money and recklessly abused the rights of private proprietors. The luxurious municipal public baths are one of the sights of Europe.

The recent developments in this contest have disclosed a possible alternative to the Anschluss. It is difficult to discover who supplies the funds for the operations of the Heimwehr. All that can be said with certainty is that the money comes from various and varied sources. It is alleged that the Vienna Rothschilds

are amongst the financial supporters of the movement ; which also undoubtedly obtains money in Germany, and which has, in a large degree, the moral support of the Church. The only common link between all the contributors is their opposition to Communism. And the uprooting of Communism, rather than any fixed political design, was originally the object of the Heimwehr. But lately the atmosphere has undergone a change. It is thought that Mgr. Seipel is now interested in the Heimwehr, and that he seeks to use its influence to secure a union, under a Hapsburg monarch, of the Austria and Hungary of to-day. Many of the old Austrian families would greatly prefer that to the Anschluss. In Hungary, however, the project meets with a mixed reception, even amongst the Royalists. For while Mgr. Seipel is an ardent Legitimist—and is, apparently, pointing the Heimwehr in the same direction—in Hungary there are many Royalists (including probably both Horthy and Bethlen, as well as the great majority of the Protestant Royalists) who favour one of those Hapsburg Archdukes who have long been identified with the interests of that country.

What would actually happen if it came to a decisive conflict between the Heimwehr and the Communists is doubtful. At present the Heimwehr is issuing defiant messages warning the Austrian Government that it will march on Vienna, and seize the power, if the present Administration does not show proper energy in repressing Communist activities. This is so clear an imitation of the actions of the Fascists, before their famous March on Rome, as to be simply ludicrous. The Communists, who centre chiefly in Vienna, probably outnumber their opponents. But in any serious conflict between the two factions the result would depend upon which possessed the better organisation, and which (if either) had a leader possessing sufficient ascendancy and force of character to animate his followers, and to hold them together. But it is doubtful if the soil of Austria will produce even a minor Mussolini.

As a result of the war, and equally of its immediate aftermath, Hungary lost on all sides more territory than she had ever anticipated. To-day she remains a country with an area of 36,000 square miles, or about one-ninth

larger than Austria. The population is approximately 8,500,000, of which number just under 90 per cent. are Magyar ; and of the balance over 6 per cent. are German.

On the other hand, there are said to be about two million Hungarians incorporated in the adjoining Succession States. Hungary has for ten years continued to protest that she will never accept as final this diminution of her ancient territory. "*Nem! nem! soha!*" (No! no! never!) are words which one meets throughout Budapest, and sometimes in the most unexpected places ; or the vow,

> "I believe in one God. I believe in one Fatherland.
> I believe in the resurrection of Hungary."

This agitation has been re-echoed in various quarters, and within the last eighteen months it has received additional impetus from the powerful support given it by Lord Rothermere and his various newspapers.

Undoubtedly there is an engaging element in the Hungarian character which tends to enlist sympathy. And the racial defects (which are no more numerous than those to be found in other nations) are, for the greater part, so childlike and ingenuous as to be almost disarming. Indeed (as I have reason to know), it is easier to arrive at an unbiassed conclusion on questions affecting Hungarians when at a distance from them than when in their midst. Nor is it extraordinary that their case as bruited abroad contains a certain amount of fiction as distinguished from fact. Indeed, I have little doubt that Hungarians themselves by this time sincerely believe these fables. However, before examining their claim to a revision of the Treaty of Trianon (I will refer later to the question of feasibility) I propose to place the matter upon a level basis by exposing these pretensions.

The venerable Eugene de Rakosi, who had an equally distinguished career in politics and in literature, wrote only a few months before his death : " Down to the very last moment, the leading politicians of Hungary opposed the idea of a war ; being unable to prevent the outbreak of a war, the Hungarian nation naturally maintained its tradition of loyalty and courage, and to the very last moment remained true to its allies."

For the last decade the protagonists of the Hungarian

cause have done their utmost to make the world accept as facts the two ideas suggested in this statement. But the record of history is against them. Tisza was the Hungarian politician who was in a position to do most to bring about or to prevent a war. At best his opposition to the attack on Serbia was only relative and temporary. Indeed, he himself wrote: " It would be the least of my worries to find a suitable *casus belli* " ; he only questioned whether the one proposed was opportune and timely. There was even less equivocation about the attitude of the Hungarian people. The belief that Tisza was one of the principal authors of the war at once raised him to a point of popularity which he had never before attained in the course of his long political career.

On the other hand, when, on October 18th, 1918, Lovaszy proclaimed in the Hungarian Chamber of Deputies, " Yes, certainly we are the friends of the Entente Allies. We have always been partisans of the Entente," his remarks were received with approbation as well as with disapproval. Indeed, as was soon made clear to all the world, it was he, and not his critics, who expressed the views then held by the majority of his fellow-countrymen.

The suggestion that Hungarian politicians did not want to go to war on the side of Germany, but that, once having done so, they were to the end faithful to their ally, is, on both counts, the exact reverse of the truth. What ideas the Hungarian peasants may have held on the subject is another question. In using the word " politicians " I am simply following what the late M. de Rakosi wrote. But M.M. Jerome and Jean Tharaud, who, although often critical, cannot be called hostile to Hungary, have summed up this question out of the fullness of their knowledge, and with the utmost fairness, in the following words : " Mais s'il est juste de dire qu'au cœur d'un paysan hongrois il n'y a jamais eu de sympathie pour l'Allemagne et de haine contre les Français, comment les journalistes et les politiciens, qui depuis cinquante ans soutenaient avec passion la politique allemande, osaient-ils se réclamer de ces sentiments populaires, et les fortifier encore en exprimant en pensées claires ce qui, dans la foule hongroise demeurait à l'état confus ? Comment pouvaient-ils oublier que depuis cinquante ans l'aristocratie, la finance, l'industrie, le commerce, tout ce qui

comptait dans le pays s'était dévoué corps et âme à Berlin ? Par quel aveuglement ne se disaient-ils pas que l'Entente même n'était plus libre, qu'elle avait pris des engagements envers d'autres États qui, dans les circonstances particuliérement difficiles, s'étaient rangés à ses côtés, et que l'heure était venue pour elle de tenir ses promesses ? Enfin pouvaient-ils se flatter d'avoir crée l'unité sentimentale de leur pays, et fait de toutes les races qui l'habitent une nation unie par le cœur ? Tous ces peuples divers étaient-ils aussi convaincus que les Magyars de l'indestructibilité de la Hongrie millénaire ? Serbes, Roumains, Ruthène et Slovaques n'allaient-ils pas réclamer pour eux-mêmes l'indépendance dont les Hongrois s'enthousiasmaient aujourd-hui, et profiter de la victoire pour s'émanciper à leur tour ? "*

By the Treaty of Trianon Hungary lost about two-thirds of her former territory. But it must be borne in mind that that territory included much that was not Magyar by nationality, and much that never would have been part of the Hungarian State had there been any right of self-determination. According to Lord Rothermere, the result of the Treaty has been to transfer 3,300,000 " pure-bred " Hungarians to the various Succession States ; and he contends that, if the line which he proposes were adopted, about two million out of the total number would be reincorporated in Hungary. It is excessively difficult in the multitude of differing statistics published by the various countries interested to be certain what are the correct figures. My own impression is that Lord Rothermere's estimate of the number of " pure-bred " Hungarians detached by the Treaty of Trianon is excessive. Nor do I think that a statement that 1,880,000 of this number " formed part of the compact central mass of the Hungarian nation " can be accepted without qualification. It is even still more doubtful whether the rectification of the boundaries as suggested by Lord Rothermere would not result in some sections being rejoined to Hungarian territory in which the majority of the population is certainly not " pure-bred Hungarians "—a phrase which I take to mean " Magyars." Incidentally, it should not be forgotten that in

* *Quand Israel est Roi*, pp. 148, 149.

Transylvania, the loss of which is so bitterly deplored by the Hungarians, although the towns are largely Magyar, the country districts are populated chiefly by Rumanians ; and if the town and the country are taken together, the latter have a clear majority.

In any event, is there any sound justification for alleging that, if the Rothermere frontier were accepted, Hungary would be definitely satisfied with what she thereby recovered ? The impression I have received certainly is that, once obtained, it would be regarded only as an instalment. I am aware that Dr. Emil Nagy, a former Minister of Justice, who supports Lord Rothermere's proposals, has said : " Hungarians must abandon the idea of pre-war integrity and must resign themselves to the loss of territories inhabited by compact masses of alien nationalities, if, on the other hand, they get back those Hungarian and German territories which were irrationally alienated from the Mother country." But I should be more interested to read a direct statement on the point from Count Apponyi. He represents the views of his fellow-countrymen to-day far more than does Dr. Nagy. It is only begging the question to call Count Apponyi a Die-Hard. Or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that the Hungarians are a nation of Die-Hards. When Count Csaky, the Minister of Defence, was defending his Estimates in May 1928, he said that the Government was at one with the nation in thinking that the present frontier of Hungary could not be maintained for ever (any more than the military restrictions under which she laboured). But it is significant that he did not indicate that the rectification suggested by Lord Rothermere would satisfy the national aspirations.

In his introduction to Sir Robert Donald's book, *The Tragedy of Trianon,* Lord Rothermere says that " no reasonable being can contemplate the revision of treaties, involving rectification of frontiers, by force of arms . . . now is the time for readjustment to be taken in hand, for specific influences to be put into operation." But neither there, nor elsewhere in the various articles he has written on this subject, does Lord Rothermere indicate definitely any feasible manner in which the changes he advocates can be effected peacefully. He does, indeed, suggest that pressure should be brought to bear by the

great financial houses of London and New York. That presumably means that those bankers should not lend money to the Succession States so long as they are recalcitrant about adopting the Rothermere frontier. In fact, writing on June 21st, 1928, Lord Rothermere said: "What investor in his senses is going to lend money to Rumania and Czechoslovakia while they retain by force within their borders populations which will never cease to strive for reunion with the Mother country from which they were ruthlessly torn?" Since then Rumania has actually obtained the great loan of which she stood so sorely in need. The question of her relations with Hungary was never an appreciable factor in the long-drawn-out negotiations. Rumania did not obtain the desired loan earlier partly on account of the financial policy pursued by M. Vintila Bratianu, and partly because she was loath to submit to the exactions of the lenders. Czechoslovakia, so far as I know, is not in need of further foreign assistance. On the contrary, part of the Rumanian loan was placed in that country. But in any event, rightly or wrongly, the history of the last half century and more shows that when there is a prospect of making money international bankers are seldom affected, and still more seldom deterred, by sentimental considerations. Probably the most famous example of pressure of that nature was when the late Mr. Jacob Schiff, head of the great American banking house of Kuhn, Loeb and Company, blacklisted Russia on account of her treatment of the Jews—the Rothschilds being also thought to have thrown their powerful influence in the same direction. But Russia usually had little difficulty in finding plenty of money, especially in France. If she was unable to do so at the height of the Russo-Japanese war, it was certainly not on account of her mistaken policy towards the Jews, but simply and solely because she was so unsuccessful in the struggle which she was waging. And, indeed, it was Japan which was the more exhausted financially at the end of that conflict. In any event, that instance affords no parallel for the situation of Rumania or the other Succession States which run no risk of being involved in an unsuccessful war with Hungary.

If there were any case which demanded action it would

be logical to expect it to be maintained by the League of Nations. But probably Lord Rothermere realises that experience shows that, no matter how righteous a cause may be, no material support is to be expected from that quarter if intervention means that serious difficulties may be encountered. The League of Nations has an excellent record for never borrowing trouble. But in this instance it probably sincerely agrees with Sir Austen Chamberlain, who, in July 1928, told the House of Commons that, in his opinion, nobody served the interests of peace by urging the revision of the Treaty of Trianon.

On the other hand, the covering letter which M. Millerand sent to the Hungarian Government with that Treaty reasonably raised expectations which have never been fulfilled. M. Millerand admitted that an inquiry on the spot might perhaps show the necessity for changing certain parts of the boundaries of Hungary as then fixed ; and stated that later a Delimitation Commission would be appointed to correct any injustice which it would be in the general interest to remove. But this promise has had no practical sequel.* A Commission was, indeed, named ; but the Conference of Ambassadors restricted its powers to making only such alterations as were of trifling importance, and in regard to which the Commission was unanimous. Obviously the weak point is that while the Millerand letter told Hungary that she might hope possibly to get something back, the Succession States were not at the same time informed that they might be called upon to recede some portion of the territory already awarded to them.

And what would the Succession States answer if such a demand were made on them ?

I remember discussing that question with the late M. Jean Bratianu in November 1927, not many days before his death. Bratianu had been speaking soberly of all the trouble which had arisen from Rumania's inability to create overnight an efficient administration for the newly-acquired territories, and had expressed his conviction that time and education combined would finally

* There were certain secret *pourparlers* on this subject between the Hungarian Government and the French Foreign Office (represented by M. Maurice Paléologue) in April 1920. But their exact nature, and what prevented a concrete conclusion, is still obscure.

overcome the remnants of racial dissension. But when I asked him about the possibility of Rumania giving back part of Transylvania if such a request were made by the League of Nations or the Great Powers, he banged his fist on the table and thundered, " Never would we give up an inch ! They would have to tear it away from us, and we would fight to the last man." In my opinion, Jean Bratianu infinitely excelled the majority of his fellow-countrymen in strength of character and tenacity of purpose. He has left behind him few who are so capable of transmuting their sentiments into action. But the views he held on this subject are certainly those of the whole Rumanian people to-day, irrespective of party.

Nor is the outlook any different in Czechoslovakia. It has been reported by Sir Robert Donald * (and I have heard elsewhere a similar allegation) that, according to Professor Joseph Imre, President Masaryk, in speaking to a deputation from the Hungarian University of Bratislava on May 27th, 1919, said : " I admit frankly that I would transfer to the new States as few Hungarians as possible. I did not find it desirable, but Marshal Foch, for strategic reasons, wanted the frontier to be established on the Danube." I understand, however, that Masaryk does not admit that he made this statement; and, moreover, denies that he ever at any time suggested the possibility of Czechoslovakia receding part of the territory with which she was endowed.

In fairness I must also add that the late Colonel Repington, in his account of a conversation which he had with Dr. Benès in March 1921, quotes the Czecho-slovakian Foreign Minister as having referred to a possibility of a readjustment. Colonel Repington's exact words are as follows : " The Magyars were 600,000. Are they not rather a weakness to you ? Yes, they were, and he thought in time there might be room for a re-arrangement here." † However, I am bound to say that in the course of a long conversation which I had with Dr. Benès in 1928, when, with his usual lucidity, he went over the whole ground of Czechoslovakian foreign policy,

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* *The Tragedy of Trianon*, p. 288.

† *After the War*, by Lieut.-Col. G. à Court Repington, p. 114.

including his attitude towards the Hungarian agitation for a revision of the Treaty of Trianon, he gave no indication that he would be favourable to a change of frontier, even at some future date. Indeed, he was definitely opposed to the alteration advocated by Lord Rothermere. I am convinced that at present there is little chance of Czechoslovakia yielding any territory voluntarily, or even under pressure—unless that pressure actually went to the extent of the exercise of superior force.

Incidentally, it is noteworthy that, according to Colonel Repington, Dr. Benès estimated the number of Magyars within the boundaries of Czechoslovakia at a very much smaller number than does Lord Rothermere—600,000 as compared with 1,660,000. The difference of over one million is somewhat startling.

The remaining Succession State, Yugo-Slavia, is less involved in this question, and Hungary is less insistent and less bitter in advancing territorial claims against her. But the Serbs, a hardy and almost aggressive race, which for centuries past has thriven upon intermittent warfare, has never enjoyed a reputation for willingly or peacefully giving away any of its possessions.

In brief, while submitting to the full the charm of the Hungarian character, and admitting that the Treaty of Trianon showed some severity, I think it is incontestable that, in order to create a sympathetic atmosphere, the Hungarians habitually misrepresent their attitude before and during the war ; that the statistics by which Lord Rothermere supports his views are incorrect—I could answer them by other figures equally authoritative, and only refrain from doing so because, after prolonged examination, the only thing I could assert with certainty is that neither estimate is correct, and that it is practically impossible to obtain definite figures which would bear strict scrutiny ; that neither Lord Rothermere nor anyone else has so far suggested any way in which the peaceful adoption of his proposals could be secured ; that there is every evidence that the Succession States would oppose them, even by force, if necessary ; and that (although this is consequently of less importance) there is no reliable evidence that, in any event, Hungary would be satisfied with Lord Rothermere's plan as a definite settlement.

Throughout the Balkans and the adjacent countries an intense curiosity prevails as to what led Lord Rothermere to become the champion of the Hungarian claims. It is a question which one is constantly asked ; and most fantastic reasons are suggested, varying from an interest in concessions for railways, to the influence said to be exercised over him by an imaginary fair lady. I confess that I would have been more interested in hearing something definite about the lady than about the railways. But no inquiry could elicit any information, or even the scantiest details, about the identity of the one or the whereabouts of the other. And these are only a sample of the idiotic tales which are in circulation—and even amongst those whom Lord Rothermere is seeking to aid. I am uncertain whether the reflection lies properly upon the mentality of the scandalmongers or upon our national character. But it is certainly a fact that the vast majority of the people in that part of Europe find it impossible to believe that an Englishman can give his services to others from conviction, and unactuated by interested motives. Some of them do recollect that Gladstone aroused Europe about the Bulgarian atrocities —but that episode now belongs entirely to history. In a lesser degree the Buxtons are also favourably known and remembered. But what are they amongst so many ? In any event, the name of Rothermere has not yet been enshrined amongst the elect.

It is probable that Lord Rothermere derived a certain measure of satisfaction from the fact that his campaign was mildly embarrassing Mr. Baldwin's Government. It is possible that he did not find entirely disagreeable the odour of the incense which the Hungarians burned so lavishly before him. But it is inconceivable, even to one who ventures to dissent from the opinions which Lord Rothermere holds on this subject, to imagine that either one or the other of these considerations is in any degree responsible for his actions. Undoubtedly Lord Rothermere sincerely, if mistakenly, believes that he is, at one and the same time, supporting just claims and working for the peace of Europe. I cannot help thinking that opponents who impugn his motives do little credit to their own intelligence, and no good to their cause.

Despite the great difference in the character of Lord

Rothermere and that of his brother, the late Lord Northcliffe, there are also very marked resemblances. In a book published before Lord Northcliffe's death * I wrote (although I never was one of his wholehearted admirers) that, notwithstanding the intensity of his feelings, he never sacrificed any principle to personal resentment ; and regretted that he had not been at the side of Mr. Lloyd George during the Peace Conference. Not that I thought that the adoption in Paris of all Lord Northcliffe's views would have been either beneficial or advisable ; but because he possessed a fixity of purpose, irrespective of popular opinion, which, in those weird days, would have been of incalculable value. Whereas Mr. Lloyd George (to whom popularity was the breath of life) was always anxious about and seeking to forestall public opinion, Northcliffe regarded it as his mission and duty to mould public opinion. Which doubtless explains why Mr. Lloyd George infinitely excelled Lord Northcliffe as a politician, but was his inferior in certain other respects. In any event, it is indubitable that in his public actions Lord Rothermere is as impersonal as was his brother.

In his introduction to Sir Robert Donald's book, *The Tragedy of Trianon*, Lord Rothermere has qualified Donald as " an independent journalist and an experienced investigator." I have myself, in the course of a number of years, investigated, and at great length, many problems, in a field that one way and another has stretched throughout Europe, from Spain and Italy to Poland, and from France to Rumania—although I should add that I have never done so at the instance of, nor published the results in, any newspaper; and that, for the greater part, those results simply remain recorded in my memory and notebooks. At first sight I envied the talent which apparently enables Sir Robert Donald to solve with ease the most complex questions, and to reach sweeping conclusions, with no shadow of doubt as to their correctness : at least, no doubt in his own mind—the effect on his readers may not always have been the same. But I subsequently realised that it was not difficult to do so provided one arrived in a foreign country—and as an investigator !—prejudiced, and with one's mind already made up. Anyone

* *The Pomp of Power*, pp. 251, 252.

can then obtain all the stories he wants to support the opinions he is known to hold. However, he is then simply an advocate, and there is nothing judicial about his attitude. I willingly admit that in the scheme of things advocates are as essential as judges. But no thoughtful person accepts their *ex parte* statements. I could match every one of the tales told by Sir Robert Donald with another equally as strong, and quite as well substantiated, on the other side. They would be of just as great value as his narratives—but no greater. I cannot conceive that either are worth printing-paper.

Moreover, Donald seems to have had the extraordinary experience (or perhaps that was only because he was an advocate and not really an independent investigator at all) to find that absolutely and without exception all the angels were on one side, and all the elements of darkness on the other. There is no similar terrestrial instance. To find a parallel one must go back to the time when the Almighty thrust Lucifer and his cohorts out of Heaven.

Sir Robert Donald complains that when he was in Czechoslovakia Government detectives followed him and watched his doings. Presuming that the statement is accurate, I cannot see anything extraordinary in the fact. If, for instance, an openly hostile foreign writer had gone to Ireland during the troubled days some years ago, he would have been lucky if he had only been followed.

I came across Sir Robert Donald's track in January 1928. When I was passing through Vienna, a Mr. W. N. Keller was brought to see me. I had never heard of him ; but it appeared that he was an American citizen who had been attacked and injured in the riots which had broken out about a month earlier, following a students' congress at Oradea Mare, a town which had originally been in Hungary, but is now in Rumania. Keller lived at Oradea Mare, having married, after the war, a native of that place. He had made a claim against the Rumanian Government through the American Minister at Bucarest, the Honourable W. S. Culbertson—now American Ambassador at Valparaiso. However, he wished to have the matter prosecuted on his behalf privately, instead of through the American Government. He asked me, through the person who

had brought him to see me, if I would try to get some settlement for him. I knew various members of the Rumanian Government then in office, but I declined to consider the matter, until Mr. Keller happened to arouse my interest by telling me of an interview he had had some days previously with Sir Robert Donald, who said that he would write about the matter both in the English Press and in a book which he was then preparing. From the standpoint of the general welfare (and obviously Donald had no personal interest in Keller, whom he had never known or even seen before) nothing was to be gained by pouring oil on the flames. I therefore agreed with Keller that I would try to obtain a payment for him, always provided that he would not attempt to try his case in the newspapers ; and, specifically, that he would write to Sir Robert Donald, breaking his engagement to meet him again, and requesting him to print nothing about the matter. Keller subsequently, on January 11th, 1928, wrote me from Budapest as follows :

Referring to your letter of this date, I hereby fully undertake to agree that while my case against the Rumanian Government is in your hands neither I nor any member of my family will give any interview of any kind about the matter to any member of the Press ; and will, so far as possible, refrain from all conversation about it. Moreover, I also agree that in the event of your making any settlement which I accept, I will not give any future statement to the Press, except—if you so desire—one drafted by yourself upon the conclusion of the matter.

On the same day he wrote to Sir Robert Donald as follows :

Budapest.
Hotel Hungaria, January 11th, 1928.

Dear Sir Robert Donald,

I hope that you will kindly give me an assurance that you will not refer to my case in anything you may write. As you will remember, I did not care to discuss it. That was not only because I had been advised that any conversation was likely to prejudice my position about a

matter which is still being examined, but, in any event, I myself did not think it fair even to seem to criticise a Government under which, as a foreigner, I have lived amicably for more than six years.

I should be grateful if you would kindly write me a line in answer.

I am,
Yours very truly.

So far as the sequel is concerned, it will suffice to say that Mr. Culbertson (whom I happened to know), having first cabled to the State Department in Washington, and obtained its consent to transfer the matter to me, I finally obtained from M. Duca, then Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, a payment for Keller in settlement of his claim. It should be added that the latter loyally kept to his engagement. I cite the episode only as showing the potential harm which may be done by " independent journalists," however " experienced," who dabble in the internal affairs of foreign countries.

However, it is not only Lord Rothermere who has shown public interest in the demands of Hungary. No less a person than Signor Mussolini has said : " Hemmed in among the States of the Little Entente there exists a nation whose relations with Italy have attained an intense degree of cordiality. I refer to Hungary. . . . We must recognise that the Treaty of Trianon cut too deeply into Hungarian territory. We may add that for centuries Hungary has filled a historic mission of essential importance in the Danube basin. Hungary, fervent with patriotism, conscious of its tenacious strength, hard-working in times of peace, deserves a better fate. Not only from the point of view of international justice, but also from that of Italy's interest, it would be well if this better fate for the Hungarian people were realised."

Somehow I do not believe that Signor Mussolini is quite so disinterested as is Lord Rothermere. The reason for this suspicion is not hard to seek : Mussolini must always have a watchful eye upon the Little Entente —and especially upon Yugo-Slavia. And if the worst came to the worst, Hungary might not be altogether negligible in a conflict.

On the other hand, I question whether Count Bethlen,

most cautious and wary of statesmen, views Lord Rothermere's campaign with unalloyed delight. Undoubtedly it is well that Hungary's claim to be a victim of injustice should be put before the whole world through a powerful agency. But there is some uncertainty about the moment being opportune. And even the support of a great newspaper proprietor may not be pure profit if it also embarrasses, in any way, the British Government. For, naturally enough, Count Bethlen would rather have one encouraging word from Downing Street than untold columns in Lord Rothermere's Press.

But one may be sure that the Hungarian Prime Minister has no such momentary qualms about Mussolini's speech. Indeed, the Duce's words, and the sentiments he has shown in various ways and at different times, have intoxicated many Hungarians—although it may be taken for granted that that prudent Calvinist, Bethlen, is immune. Nevertheless, I was more than a little surprised when a Hungarian who does not rank far behind Bethlen either in position or influence, in the course of an interview in his official room, in November 1927 (that is, even some months before Mussolini's speech to which I have referred), told me calmly that not only did he consider a war between Italy and Yugo-Slavia a possibility, but that he thought it could be segregated ; and, further, that Italy would certainly be the victor in such a clash ; and therefore, in the result, Hungary had only to gain, since Italy was the surest friend she possessed in Europe.

The outcome of any war is always a very uncertain matter. The old Austro-Hungarian Empire made a vital mistake in thinking that the Turks were certain to be the victors in the Balkan War which preceded the outbreak of 1914. Elsewhere I venture to speculate upon the issue of a conflict between Italy and Yugo-Slavia. But what struck me most in the extraordinary statement which I have quoted was the idea that a war could be segregated. Such a view seems to be in defiance of the most elementary lesson which everyone should be able to draw from what is now generally called the Great War. I might also add that it is a deluded statesman who counts upon Signor Mussolini letting many crumbs fall from his table.

Hungary has also, apparently, obtained another adherent to her demand for revision—one of a very different type from Mussolini, but whose influence at a certain juncture might possibly be decisive. According to a dispatch from the *Daily Mail's* Budapest correspondent, sent when President-Elect Hoover was in Buenos Aires, a memorandum on the Treaty of Trianon was submitted to him in the name of 200,000 Hungarians resident in South America ; and Mr. Hoover, through his secretary, wrote in reply as follows :

The President-Elect was greatly moved by the warm greetings and sincere trust of the Hungarians of South America. The position and destiny of the sympathetic Hungarian nation greatly arouses the attention of the President-Elect. The Hungarian nation should feel confident that the favourable tendency in the Western European situation will bring about that spirit of conciliation which is inevitably necessary for the elimination of the exaggeration of the peace treaties. The President-Elect requests that you should forward his warmest greetings to your distant beautiful country and nation.

If authentic, this statement is extraordinary, and not without its importance.

Undoubtedly the Treaty of Trianon contains some imperfections. Most treaties do. I refer elsewhere to the question of Minorities, as well as to the interminable Optants dispute between Hungary and Rumania, which, however, seems to be finally on the way to settlement, thanks largely to the new Rumanian Government. But the frontier as delimited creates various incongruities similar to those to be found in Upper Silesia. For instance, Estergom is in Hungary, but its railway station is in Czechoslovakia. Pecs and Szeged are both in Hungary, less than 80 miles distant from each other. The former has coal which the latter needs for its factories. But as the railway between these towns crosses the frontier twice, to send coal that way would involve paying a twofold import duty. Therefore coal from Pecs can only be sent by way of Budapest, which means a journey of nearly 500 miles. At Salgo Tarjan the miners live in Czecho-

slovakia, and the mine where they work is also in that country ; but as the entrance to it is in Hungary they are bound to show viséd passports twice a day.

But whatever else the war may have altered, it certainly has not changed the character of the Hungarians. They remain what, for the greater part, they have always been—a people of infinite charm, but incapable of growing up. They scornfully ignore realities which are in disaccord with their desires. The magnates will still talk to you as if one of the essential needs of the world was that they should be reintegrated in the possession of their vast estates. For they are blandly oblivious of the fact (and it is a fact) that in Transylvania, for instance, the peasant proprietors have found a freedom of ownership they never enjoyed under their native Hungarian rule, to which they now have no desire to revert.

Of all races in Europe the Hungarians are the least democratic. Having myself no belief in the virtue of democratic institutions I do not cite this as being blameworthy ; although I am afraid that in this day and generation it may not be advantageous. The land reform measure adopted in Hungary is of the mildest. The right of secret voting hardly exists. Out of 245 constituencies, only 42 have the secret ballot. The effect of this is illustrated by the fact that at the last General Election the Government obtained less than 30 per cent. of the votes cast in those 42 constituencies, and more than 70 per cent. in the constituencies where public voting was obligatory. Moreover, although Hungarians pride themselves upon their religious tolerance (and rightly, even though the chief cause is that neither Roman Catholics nor Protestants have any deep religious feelings), the same tolerance does not extend to the Jews viewed as a race. There is a *numerus clausus* law which, in its original form, was used to prevent Jews entering the universities. It was then amended so that the test should not be nationality, but " patriotic reliability," as well as academic qualification, and a consideration of the number of students coming from the urban and agrarian districts respectively. Naturally, these somewhat vague and elastic provisions do not satisfy the Jews.

The Hungarians are, in brief, a race of Diehard Peter Pans. The interest excited by their complaints has

certainly inflamed their imagination—a feat which can, however, always be accomplished without great difficulty. It is more requisite to convince those countries to which, in the last analysis, Hungary must necessarily look for any peaceful change in her existing frontiers. No progress has been made in that direction; and until it has been the Hungarian question will remain, so far as other nations are concerned, in the same position as did the Polish question for a century and a half. Those who argue that the present situation will lead to a war are simply conjuring up a spectre in order to stampede public opinion. The griefs of which Hungary complains will lead to no war; on the other hand, she would doubtless stand every chance of being a gainer by the cataclysm of any general war which might break out. But those who to-day inspire the Hungarians with hopes of a speedy readjustment of their lot can hardly be considered as working for peace. They might perhaps do well to bear in mind the lesson which one of the greatest Hungarians of the present generation, the late Count Julius Andrassy, wrote that he had learned from the war: "that the political idealist, actuated by noble motives, is often more dangerous than the political realist with his policy rooted in self-interest. It is possible that a genuine Utopia may cost too much blood. The idealist has usually a finger in every pie and meddles with affairs that do not concern him—which, moreover, he is incapable of understanding."

CHAPTER IV

RUMANIA AND THE RUMANIANS

WHEN the war broke out Rumania coveted Transylvania, the Bukovina, and Bessarabia. But as the two first were Austro-Hungarian provinces and the last a Russian province, it did not seem that she could possibly obtain all three. However, it was still clearer that by simply being neutral she would not obtain any of the three; and as what she most hankered for was Transylvania, it was natural that she should ally herself with the Entente.

In 1914 King Carol was still alive. A Hohenzollern of the Roman Catholic branch of that family, he could not imagine taking the field against Germany; although he knew that the hatred of the Rumanians for the Magyars was so intense that it would be difficult to align his troops with those of the Central Powers. The Queen, "Carmen Sylva," was even more strongly German in her sentiments. But the King died in the earlier days of the war, and was succeeded by his nephew, Ferdinand, who entirely shared the views and sympathies of his English wife.

In 1883, Rumania and Austria-Hungary had made a treaty whereby each country had agreed to assist the other if either were attacked without provocation. By a separate document, signed on the same day, Germany adhered to this agreement; as did Italy in 1889. This treaty was renewed for the last time in 1913, for a period which was to expire in July 1920. But before then much was to happen.

Some years earlier Rumania wanted to go even further, and to have the Triple Alliance transformed into a Quadruple Alliance. But Berlin, which saw nothing to be gained by thus offending Russia, gently put the request on one side and also refused Rumania's plea to extend the *casus fœderis* to an attack, in certain circumstances, by Rumania upon Bulgaria—justly remarking that that

would be to change the existing defensive into an offensive treaty.

Even after King Carol's death the party led by Peter Carp strongly opposed any intervention against Germany. But Jean Bratianu* was certain that the hour had come to found a Great Rumania. Nevertheless, he delayed taking any step until he had secured a favourable and definite understanding with the Entente Allies. By his prudent delay he almost entirely exhausted the patience of Russia, who more than once threatened to stop her offensive in Galicia and the Bukovina. But Bratianu had every reason to be cautious.

Rumania, as the late Take Jonescu once said, is a Latin island in a Slav sea; although it should be added that Count Keyserling has remarked that the Rumanian contention that the country belongs within the Latin sphere of culture "is pure fraud." According to his view, the Rumanians mistake Byzantinism for Latinism. But he admits that "the peasantry is healthy to the core." †

However that may be, Jean Bratianu never forgot the lesson to be drawn from his father's unhappy experience following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. The Czar's Government had then been allowed to send its troops through Rumania, upon guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the country. But, despite all his efforts, the elder Bratianu was never able to wring from St. Petersburg any definite agreement about some reward after the war for her services; not even when, later, Russia, having been checked by the Turks at Plevna, summoned Prince Carol and the Rumanian Army to aid her to break down the barrier which she was unable to force alone. In the end her ironical recompense was the seizure by Russia of the three districts of Bessarabia which the latter had lost after the Peace of Paris in 1856; an unwilling Rumania being forced to take in return the much less fertile Dobruja, which had just been conquered from Turkey. When the Congress of Berlin revised the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878, Rumania

* Although in Rumanian Bratianu's first name was "Jonel," I am throughout giving the French equivalent, "Jean," for so he was generally known in political circles throughout Western Europe.

† *Europe*, pp. 306 and 310.

vainly attempted to have this high-handed proceeding rescinded. But, notwithstanding Disraeli's support, she was obliged to be content with her recognition as an independent principality—a status which she changed into that of a kingdom three years later. It is eminently characteristic of the Russian mentality that it could never comprehend the enormity of thus seizing territory belonging to an ally who had helped her in the day of dire distress. Even such an open-minded statesman as the late M. Sazonov, after admitting that this was done " despite the promise which she had made to the Rumanian principality to respect her territorial integrity," in exchange for that country's permission to allow the Russian troops to pass through Rumania, proceeds to say that, although the Czar's Government may have committed " certain errors of form," yet the Rumanian interpretation of her action was not in accordance with the real facts. In support of this theory he alleges that he has heard that, although there was no written understanding, the Russian Government had warned Rumania that she intended to retake these provinces ; and he expresses surprise that Russia should have been generally accused of gross ingratitude and disloyalty. In brief, his theory was that a burglar who obtained entry to one's house by promising not to steal anything was quite excusable if later he simply told those who had opened the door to him that he had changed his mind.*

It is therefore comprehensible that Jean Bratianu absolutely refused to move until a clear understanding was concluded. He particularly wanted to have a formal promise that the Entente Allies would not make peace until the claims of Rumania had been entirely satisfied. After long negotiations the latter agreed that so far as the outcome of the war allowed they would obtain for Rumania any part of the territories in question which she had herself been unable to conquer.

Bratianu signed the Alliance with Enlgand, France, Russia, and Italy on August 4th, 1916. It is curious that the diplomats who represented the Central Powers at Bucarest never fully realised that the decisive hour was at hand. Czernin was, indeed, convinced that, if she

* *Les Années Fatales*, pp. 111, 112.

could remain neutral long enough, Rumania would eventually join whichever side appeared to be sure of the victory. But as late as August 25th, 1916 (three weeks after the Alliance between Rumania and the Entente Powers had actually been signed), he reported that there was no reason to think any immediate step was contemplated—an opinion in which his German colleague entirely concurred. The Austro-Hungarian General Staff was always fully alive to the impending danger. But the German General Staff was much more optimistic; and it was Falkenhayn's mistaken confidence in the continued neutrality of Rumania which led to his fall, and opened the way to the Supreme Command for Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

It should have been obvious that, despite the opposition of the Conservative party, led by Peter Carp, Rumania would, at the first favourable opportunity, link her destiny to that of the Entente Allies. Bratianu's policy was clearly the one which would naturally be pursued by any patriotic statesman whose chief ambition was the creation of a Great Rumania. But the idea that Rumania (any more than Italy) went to war either through her love of liberty or her hatred of Germany is fantastic. Her action was dictated solely by a legitimate consideration of her own interests. All this is now so evident that within the last few years a legend has arisen that even before 1914 Rumania had reached a practical understanding with Russia. I was told in Budapest that when, shortly before the war, Sazonov was in Bucarest, he motored with Bratianu to Transylvania, and pointed out to him the Promised Land—the very territory which would fall to Rumania if she were Russia's ally in a successful war. Sazonov, in his Memoirs, says that Bratianu took him over the Carpathians; and that their motor-car did, in fact, cross the frontier, and penetrate into Hungary for a distance of some kilometres. He adds that it is quite possible that he and Bratianu were both thinking that they had entered a country which was in fact Rumanian, and which was only awaiting deliverance from the yoke of the Magyars; but asserts that neither disclosed his thoughts to the other, as the moment for such confidences had not yet arrived.* M. Bratianu, to

* *Les Années Fatales*, p. 123.

whom I mentioned the episode, laughingly gave me a similar account ; and specifically denied that he had then had any conversation with Sazonov about the possible eventualities of a war.

When I was in Budapest, early in November 1927, I received one day a visit from M. Trajan Stircea, the Rumanian Minister to Hungary, who said he called at the instance of the Prime Minister, M. Jean Bratianu, to urge me to go to Bucarest, and to facilitate my journey. I had, indeed, written to M. Bratianu that I was going to Budapest, and might possibly proceed as far as Rumania.

I arrived at Bucarest at a moment of political tension, which was, however, destined to become still more acute a few days later. The recent General Elections had given the Liberal party an overwhelming majority. But it was generally said that they had not been impartially conducted, and that the Government had made unsparing use of its highly centralised powers in order to influence the result. In this charge there was undoubtedly a certain element of truth. Not alone in Rumania, but in many European countries, those who have wielded power for years have been unable to see that the free exercise of the franchise must be concomitant with the granting of universal suffrage. I have met Rumanians who have frankly admitted that the elections were not fairly held, but have defended the Government on the ground of the ignorance of the peasants in political matters. This statement of fact would have been correct even if it had gone further ; for the great mass of the agrarian population (which embraces 80 per cent. of the total number of the inhabitants) not only was entirely ignorant about such subjects, but was equally indifferent —until it had been aroused. It had for years been deeply dissatisfied because the land was so largely in the hands of the great proprietors. The Agrarian Laws were necessary as had been explicitly recognised even before the war, in order to avoid a general rebellion. But there was no such widespread demand for the right to vote ; and all the less so when the grievances of the peasants had been assuaged by the division amongst them of a great part of the arable area. It was, therefore, a mistake suddenly to extend the franchise so greatly, and to give it to those who could not be trusted to use it properly. In

the result, the peasants, with the ballot in their pockets, were exactly like people who, having been neglected during years of poverty, suddenly become of interest to bankers searching for clients to buy their securities. Some astute politicians were quick to realise that the Liberal party had forged a weapon which could be turned against itself; and they proceeded to organise a Peasants party, and to instil in its members some rudimentary knowledge of, and interest in, public affairs. Fortunately for the country the political leaders of this movement were able and upright men—for it might just as well have happened that the votes of the people should have been captured by a group of adventurous demagogues.

At this time M. Bratianu was 63 years of age, although he appeared to be somewhat older. His father, to whose memory he was so devoted, had been the chief founder of the new Rumania under King Carol, whom he had himself conducted on the dangerous journey across a hostile Europe to Bucarest. He always cherished the dream that his country would one day extend her borders, and would include within her frontiers the majority of the vast number of Rumanians then under foreign suzerainty. His son had lived to see that vision become a reality, largely by his own efforts. He had been in power for the greater part of a quarter of a century, and had, in all, occupied the office of Prime Minister for many years. The influence of the Bratianu family ("The Holy Family," as it was sometimes derisively called) was predominant throughout Rumania, partly by reason if its intimate connection with all vital questions of State since the very inception of the kingdom; partly through the many tentacles which, in the course of more than half a century, had linked to it potent allies in every layer of the social structure; but, above all, by reason of the vigorous intellect and the powerful personality of Jean Bratianu. More often than not when the Liberal party was, for a brief interregnum, out of office, it was at its own volition, as a matter of tactics. It was thus that at one juncture the weak and unstable Averesco, and at another Prince Stirbey, Bratianu's brother-in-law, and the close friend of the Royal Family, held office for a short time. But his long sway and his great success did not tend to render more tolerant a man who could ill brook

opposition, who never suffered fools gladly, and who made enemies lightly. However, despite these infirmities, Bratianu was, above all else, patriotic; and to the innermost depths of his being a lover of a country which probably does not yet fully realise all that it owes him.

His force of character and his resourcefulness were alike recognised in every European chancellery; and had he lived in a larger country he would undoubtedly have played even a more conspicuous rôle. In his latter years he was the last great survivor of the old school of statesmanship, as Dr. Benès was the leading exponent of the new political system; although it must be confessed that by nature he was more akin to the dictatorial Mussolini than to the adaptable Benès. But in 1927 Jean Bratianu gave me the impression of a man old before his time, worn down and enfeebled by the heavy burdens which he had so long carried, and with no patience left either to learn new ways or to cope with the difficulties inherent in the situation for which he was so largely responsible.

M. Bratianu laid the basis of our conversation by remarking that he knew I had written that the peace of Europe depended in the last analysis on Great Britain and France acting as one, and that it was an opinion in which he fully concurred, and a policy he had always regarded as essential for the welfare of his own country. He then passed in review the various aspects of the Central European position and the forces which operated on it.

He expressed considerable admiration for the work accomplished by Signor Mussolini in and for Italy. But he did not conceal his apprehension that the Duce's foreign policy, or, rather, his opportunism which took the place of any fixed policy, might one day create a situation which would bring about a war, even if Signor Mussolini wished to avoid one. In this connection he deplored the relations existing between Italy and Yugo-Slavia; but he added that Italy could do little without the support of Great Britain, which, therefore, threw a considerable responsibility upon Downing Street.

M. Bratianu then went on to talk about the campaign which was being carried on in favour of Hungary. He said, and reiterated, that the majority in the territory acquired by the Treaty of Trianon was Rumanian;

and laid great stress upon the fact that the laws of which Hungary complained, and especially the Agrarian Laws, were applied alike to the Rumanian majority and to the Hungarian and Saxon minorities. In his view the agitation was largely factious in that it was the work of the disgruntled Hungarian magnates, who, like the great Rumanian proprietors—himself included—had been deprived of the larger part of their estates for the benefit of the peasants. But he claimed that the peasants themselves were not dissatisfied. His conclusion, repeated several times, was: "Time will do its work—time and education together. If we are left alone, the Minority question will eventually solve itself." The Hungarians were an impulsive race, and it was not difficult to make them believe that other nations were ready even to go to war in order to extend Hungarian frontiers. Those who were responsible for creating that false impression were simply threatening to disturb the peace of Europe. Anyway, the agitators should not omit to point out the logical consequences of their demands—namely, a war. Rumania, for instance, would never cede a foot of the territory which had been obtained by the efforts of his father, himself, and others. Dangerous as was the Hungarian campaign, he had every confidence that Great Britain and France would never support it. He was certain that neither country would sacrifice a single life in order to change Hungarian boundaries.

A point in the conversation in which M. Bratianu showed the greatest interest was regarding the alleged discussions of the Italian Government with Soviet Russia, tending towards an agreement whereby Soviet Russia would invade Bessarabia in the event of Rumania being involved in any conflict. To that subject he returned again and again, commenting upon certain rumours, and asking if I had gathered any impression from conversations which he knew I had recently had with several Foreign Offices and various politicians.

Leaving the political field, M. Bratianu said that he was disgusted by the sensational stories about Rumania which had appeared in the English and American Press. I ventured to suggest that, while internal Press regulations were entirely a domestic matter, it was perhaps hardly wise in the circumstances to leave the foreign Press

without a plain statement. "But I cannot stoop to deny that I have imprisoned the Queen," he said.

Bratianu remarked that in the course of his long career he had sometimes been criticised by the English Press, but had never before been misrepresented; and that he could not, in his latter days, bring himself to issue denials. While I was in Bucarest I followed with considerable interest the articles which were supposed to give news about the situation in Rumania. Upon this subject there was such a diversity between two sections of the London Press that the only possible conclusion was that either one had the gift of second sight, or that the other was strangely negligent in informing the public of events of some importance. A London newspaper of November 5th, 1927, contained an article from its Sofia correspondent, headed across two columns, "Queen Marie as a Prisoner." So far as I could discover, neither *The Times*, *The Morning Post*, nor *The Daily Telegraph* seemed to be aware of this situation. In another newspaper there was one day a dispatch asserting that several people had been injured or killed in riots in the Rumanian capital. I had every reason to know that nothing of the kind had actually occurred. But a few days later I asked the Bucarest correspondent of *The Times* why his newspaper had given no account of such a startling event. "I send news, but not fables," was his reply. Again, it is not uninteresting to contrast the sensational news contained in one London newspaper of December 12th, 1927, with the silence of *The Daily Telegraph* of the same day. Although I was in Bucarest at the time, and in close touch with the whole situation, I could never find any trace of the exciting episodes to which some English newspapers gave such prominence. But as those journals never contained any subsequent denial of these stories, I can only conclude that their correspondents at Sofia and at Budapest were able to see what was hidden both from myself, and from the generally watchful eyes of the representatives at Bucarest of *The Times* and of other newspapers.

It was understood that the remainder of our conversation should be regarded as confidential. It related mainly to various incidents which occurred at the Peace Conference, and to the opinions which M. Bratianu

held regarding certain European statesmen. I should add that throughout there was little reference to Prince Carol; for M. Bratianu always took the stand that that was a closed matter and that the abdication must be regarded as final. M. Bratianu also urged me to discuss certain matters with other members of his Government; and especially to see his brother, M. Ventila Bratianu, and his most trusted lieutenant, M. Duca, then Minister of the Interior.

A few days later, thanks to the courtesy of M. Bratianu, I was enabled to visit one part of Rumania, old and new. The Prime Minister was good enough to send me one of his motor-cars, his chauffeur (who, like Jehu, the son of Nimshi, drove furiously), and one of his secretaries, to whom I was indebted for much information and many explanations. In the course of a few days I visited Ploesti, the centre of the oil industry; Slenica and the Government salt mines; Sinaia and the royal chateau, which, despite the money it had cost, I found it impossible to admire; the monastery where Take Jonescu is buried; and, after driving over the Carpathians, the Transylvanian town of Brushov. Later, the Castle of Bran, and the restored Church of Curtea d'Argesh, the burial-place of the Rumanian kings, and a jewel of Byzantine architecture—a mass of gold and pale blue, beautifully blended, and set in the midst of a garden of roses. Unfortunately, despite its treasures, the interior does not equal the exterior. There is a curious legend attached to the building of this church by Manole. All the work he did in the daytime was destroyed by some unknown hand every night. Constant watching was of no avail, and the construction of the church never advanced. But one night an angel appeared to Manole in his dreams, and told him that if he wanted to complete his work he must wall in the first woman who set foot in it. When he awoke he swore he would do as the angel bade him. The next day, when, as usual, the women brought the midday meal to their husbands, the first to arrive was his own wife. Manole stoically kept his vow, and immured her. But the improbable part of this tradition is that the wife willingly consented to be sacrificed. Finally we stopped at Florica, the country home which M. Bratianu loved so well, where his father's room is religiously kept as it was on

the day he died, and where, scattered throughout every room in the house, are countless books, annotated by Jean Bratianu.

M. Bratianu had arranged to meet us at Florica (together with the French banker, M. Dreyfus), but sent a message that he was unable to leave Bucarest. He was, in fact, detained by the Manoilesco case, which I have always thought hastened his end. M. Manoilesco had been an Under-Secretary in General Averescu's Cabinet. Whatever his qualities as a soldier, Averescu himself, who has thrice been Prime Minister for short periods, is, as a politician, notably changeable and weak. In that capacity, indeed, he inspired so little respect that the National Peasant party was contemptuous of the aid which he later offered it. His most marked characteristic is his pronounced sympathy for Italy and for everything Italian ; due, perhaps, to the fact that he was educated at the Military Academy of Turin, and that his wife is an Italian. It was when he was on the point of concluding an agreement with Italy which Bratianu considered was then inopportune that the latter drove him from office, to his unconcealed chagrin. After the fall of Averescu, M. Manoilesco entered into relations with Prince Carol ; and it was when he returned from visiting the former heir to the throne in Paris, in November 1927, that he was arrested upon the charge that certain documents found in his possession proved that he was conspiring against the State. He was brought for trial before a court-martial, undoubtedly in order that he might serve as an example to those who were adopting certain methods in order to upset the existing régime. The prosecution was a tactical error, as it could only injure the Government in the event of an acquittal. General Averescu promptly came to the assistance of his former colleague ; and all the more readily since he was thereby enabled to direct a blow at those who had ousted him. His evidence clearly showed the bitterness of his feelings towards Bratianu. Nevertheless, his testimony undoubtedly carried weight, and was largely responsible for the acquittal of Manoilesco. This decision shook the prestige of the Government.

Upon my return to Bucarest I lunched with M.

Bratianu—encountering as I entered his house the greatly depressed members of the Cabinet, who were dispersing after a meeting held to consider the situation. On that day Bratianu appeared to be a sick man, and he admitted that he felt far from well. But no one was prepared for any fatality. In fact, some days later, I received a message from the Prime Minister saying he would like to see me again before I left, and that he expected to have recovered from his temporary indisposition within a few hours. On November 21st I dined with one of his secretaries, who told me that his chief would be at work again within a week. On Tuesday, November 22nd, I lunched with his nephew, M. Pillat, a Deputy who is even better known as a poet. M. Pillat told me that he had been assured that morning that his uncle was better. On Wednesday, November 23rd, M. Stircea, the Rumanian Minister to Hungary, who was on leave in Bucarest, came to say goodbye to me before returning to Budapest. He mentioned that M. Bratianu had just had a slight local operation, which was not, however, at all serious. But in the afternoon one of the Prime Minister's secretaries telephoned to tell me that Bratianu's condition had, within the preceding twenty-four hours, become most serious, and that the worst was anticipated. It was not until the evening that I happened to meet the correspondent of the Associated Press, when I found that the secret had been so well guarded that he was not even aware that Bratianu was so gravely ill. In return for the news I was able to give him I asked him to send me a message after he had obtained what information he could, and the note I received in the night convinced me that I would awake to hear that Bratianu was dead. And so it was.

The lasting work of Jean Bratianu is the Great Rumania which he left behind him. In 1912 the population of the country was 7,200,000, of which more than 92 per cent. were Rumanians; and by 1915 this total had increased to 7,900,000. In 1920 there was a population of nearly 17,000,000 (which to-day is in the neighbourhood of 18,000,000), of which about 5,000,000, or approximately 30 per cent., belonged to other nationalities. The comparative figures at that date were as follows:

—	New Rumania	Old Rumania	Total	Per cent.
Rumanians ..	5,005,000	6,800,000	11,805,000	69·9
Magyars ..	1,518,000	50,000	1,568,000	9·3
Ukranians ..	792,000	—	792,000	4·7
Germans ..	690,000	35,000	725,000	4·3
Jews	600,000	300,000	900,000	5·3
Bulgarians ..	140,000	150,000	290,000	1·7
Bohemians ..	60,000	225,000	285,000	1·7
Lipovanians ..	59,000	40,000	99,000	0·6
Poles	37,000	—	37,000	0·2
Turks ..	—	170,000	170,000	1·0
Others ..	196,000	30,000	226,000	1·3
	9,097,000	7,800,000	16,897,000	100·0

Before the war (but after the readjustment of the Dobruja frontier in 1913) the area of the country was 74,460 square miles ; to-day it is approximately 160,000 square miles.

Naturally, the proportionate increase of the Minorities has brought in its wake the usual problems and difficulties. Transylvania is the storm centre. The statement so often made that Transylvania rightly belongs to Hungary will not bear examination if the numbers of the two races (that is, in effect, the right of self-determination) is to govern. The population of Transylvania in 1919-1920 (including the Banat and the departments of Bihor, Satu-Mare, and Maramuresh) was 5,113,124, of whom 2,930,130, or 57·5 per cent., were Rumanians ; 1,305,753, or 25·53 per cent., were Hungarians and Szeklers; 534,327, or 10·45 per cent., were Germans (either Saxons or Swabians) ; and 184,340, or 3·6 per cent., were Jews. According to a more recent estimate by the Rumanian Statistical Office, the total population in 1923 was 5,487,966, 58·9 per cent. being Rumanians, 24·73 per cent. Hungarians and Szeklers, 10·16 per cent. Germans, and 3·71 per cent. Jews.

The difference in the Rumanian and Hungarian estimates of the racial population of Transylvania arises mainly from the divergent way in which they made

their respective calculations. The Hungarian Government (as a reference to its census of 1910 will show) counted as Hungarian all of whom it could be said that Hungarian was their natural tongue. Moreover, except in the part of the census referring to the different religious faiths, it added all Jews to the Hungarian list ; and as the total number of Jews in 1910 was over 910,000, or more than 5 per cent. of the total population of Hungary, this in itself made a considerable difference in the result. On the other hand, the Rumanian Government has adopted the system (which, from any practical standpoint, is undoubtedly more logical) of classing the inhabitants according to their ethnical origin—that is, their nationality according to birth—and also gives the Jews a separate classification.

The Rumanians are extraordinarily prolific. The percentage of births per thousand has risen as high as 26. But, as is so often found in cases of high natality, the mortality is also very heavy, going at times up to 27 per thousand. For this the scarcity of doctors and the lack of elementary medical knowledge, as well as of proper daily nourishment, is largely responsible. The general neglect of cleanliness is also partly accountable. A Rumanian doctor has written that the peasants in his country have a bath only twice in their lives —when they are baptised and when they are dead.* The character of the people of old Rumania is aptly described as amiable. There is also a strain of wit, which is to be found even in the country districts ; but wit tempered by a little water would probably be more appreciated by foreigners.

Before the war the Magyars treated the Rumanians who lived in Transylvania with the same contempt as they showed to all Minorities under their rule. In various public buildings in Transylvania one could read the warning : " Dogs and Rumanians not allowed here." This conviction of their superiority over certain other races persists to the present day. In a book entitled *The Minorities in Rumanian-Transylvania*, by Zsumbor de Szaez, formerly a member from Transylvania

* But despite all this the population of the former Kingdom of Rumania increased at an average rate of 120,000 a year.

in the Hungarian Parliament, the author compares "the empty past of the Rumanians to the long and glorious history of the Hungarian race." In the original Hungarian edition he goes further, and remarks that "stupidity is one of the qualities of the Rumanian race." But the fact that the Rumanians are not unduly impressed with a sense of their own superiority over other races has had a marked effect. To-day, to the disgust of the great Hungarian proprietors, thousands of Magyar peasants in Transylvania have no longer the slightest desire to return to Hungarian rule.

The sudden and unexpected disappearance of the most powerful personality in the political life of the country created momentary consternation. The surviving leaders of the Liberal party realised the expediency of a reorganisation of the Government. An attempt was made to effect a juncture with the Opposition, and M. Maniu was asked to join the Cabinet, several seats being placed at his disposal for his chief supporters. This proposal was rejected. M. Maniu, a Transylvanian lawyer, who is remarkable for his prudence and his fixity of purpose, did not see how he could consistently ally himself with those he had been so bitterly denouncing on a charge of fraud and corruption at the polls. Moreover, the National Peasant party was confident that it would soon be in office, and would then be able to hold an uncontrolled election which would give it a large majority. My impression was that this estimate of the sentiment which would be expressed by the country if given an opportunity was correct. But I failed to see how M. Maniu and his followers were first going to get power, so that they might force a dissolution. For, however it was obtained, the Liberal party was strongly entrenched behind a solid parliamentary majority. It had at its command all the administrative forces and influences of the State; and, short of active intervention by the Regency, it could hardly be displaced against its will. But M. Vaida-Voevod (who had himself been Prime Minister in 1919), with whom I had had several conversations, assured me that the National Peasant party, of which he was vice-president, would undoubtedly be in office within a certain number of months. So it proved to be; nor was M. Vaida-Voevod very far out in the exact

time within which he predicted that this change would occur.

In the interval M. Maniu, M. Vaida-Voevod, and M. Popovici (who had been Minister of Finance in the Vaida-Voevod Cabinet) took care to disassociate themselves from foreign attacks upon Rumania, and to make it clear that Carlism was not an integral part of their policy. Although they read without displeasure criticisms in the English Press of the alleged autocracy of the Bratianu Government, it became another matter when this campaign was also based upon the assertion that Transylvania was being oppressed. Such a charge came closely home to each of them, for all three were Transylvanians. Therefore, when M. Popovici was in Paris, in January 1928, instead of directly blaming the Government for the riots which had taken place about a month earlier in Transylvania, he stated in the Press that " there had lately been some outbreaks against the Minorities, of which I, as a Transylvanian, am in a position to understand the real origin. They were the work of certain violent elements, with which the population was not in complicity. It should be understood abroad that our régime in the new Kingdom is as liberal as that of the Magyars was peremptory. Before the war Transylvania had only three *lycées* for 3,000,000 Rumanians. Now we have more than forty *lycées*, where the teaching is in the Hungarian language, for 1,200,000 Magyars. I think these figures will suffice to show the change which has been made." * To *The Times* Dr. Popovici confided that it was a misapprehension to imagine there was any danger of a political upheaval in Rumania. †

It was also made equally clear that the future of the National Peasant party was not bound up with the fortunes of Prince Carol. My conversations with M. Vaida-Voevod and M. Popovici had already convinced me that the former Crown Prince had been more useful to that party than it was ever going to be to him. He had served his purpose ; and any political group which now espoused his cause could only compromise itself. The assertion that the Army and the peasants alike longed for his return was the veriest nonsense. The former

* *Le Matin*, January 25th, 1928.
† Letter to *The Times*, June 30th, 1928.

was unable to see in what light he could be regarded as an asset, and the latter were utterly indifferent. It is generally admitted that Prince Carol possesses certain abilities. But neither common sense nor discretion is numbered amongst his qualities. This was shown later by his conduct in England, where his activities, although more foolish and mischievous than of any serious importance, caused the Government to request this great-grandson of Queen Victoria to leave the country. In Rumania he had already given abundant proof that he was unfit to rule. The Rumanians are far from being Puritanical, and they are not inclined to be severe in judging the human weaknesses of themselves or of others. Carol would have had almost unbounded liberty for the indulgence of his propensities if he had not himself advertised them, and if he had not allowed them to interfere with his duties as heir to the throne. But his marriage at Odessa during the war to a Rumanian lady, Mlle. Zizi Lambrino (which, with his consent, was subsequently annulled), his open relations, after his marriage to Princess Helena of Greece, with another lady, and his three separate renunciations of his royal rights, fully demonstrated the instability of his character. Princess Helena, although not endowed either with the intellectual force or with the taste for publicity which are characteristic of her mother-in-law, Queen Marie, has earned the sincere respect of all classes of Rumania by her dignified mode of life, and by her unostentatious charity. It is no secret amongst those in her intimacy that she has frequently affirmed that, if Prince Carol were allowed to return to the country, she would leave it. Royal princesses have distinctly less freedom than that which is to-day enjoyed by the average woman. They must often bow to considerations of State, especially when they happen to be the mother of a king. It is conceivable that Queen Marie's maternal feelings might lead her to attempt to secure another chance for Prince Carol. But, although Princess Helena might change her mind as readily as any other member of her sex, the general belief is that she would not consent even to a formal reconciliation unless the only alternative were the loss of her son.

Upon the death of Jean Bratianu, his brother, M.

Vintila Bratianu, naturally succeeded him. The only other possibility was M. Duca, then Minister of the Interior. I had known of M. Duca through the favourable impression he had created when, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, he had gone to Geneva a few years earlier. In Bucarest I had several conversations with him, primarily at the instance of M. Jean Bratianu, who had told me that Duca was the ablest member of his Cabinet and the one closest to himself. M. Duca is to-day barely fifty years of age, and it can safely be assumed that his political career is not yet closed.

M. Vintila Bratianu, although not cast in the same mould as his greater brother, was a painstaking and hard-working Minister of Finance. His great cry was " Rumania for the Rumanians " ; and his bogey was the fear that foreign capitalists might dominate the country. His subjugation to these delusions led him to a policy which was largely negative, until ultimately it became actively ruinous. Rumania is still largely an agricultural country, 80 per cent. of the inhabitants being engaged in cultivating the soil. The main sources of the national wealth are her wheat and maize fields. Consequently a poor harvest, due to a few weeks' bad weather at a critical time, may entail a difficult financial year. There are, however, vast national resources which are only awaiting development. Rumania herself has certainly no money to spare for these undertakings, which are therefore dependent for support upon the investment of foreign capital. M. Vintila Bratianu entirely exaggerated the danger arising from this situation. No doubt in one period after the war he did protect his country from the raids of rapacious foreigners. But his policy of devoting all his energies to guarding against the evils which might be wrought by the invasion of outside capital, and his restriction upon importations and exportations, which caused commercial stagnation throughout the country, were disagreeably reminiscent of the parable of the steward who tied up in a napkin the talent with which he had been entrusted, rather than run the risk of seeking to make it fructify. Apparently M. Bratianu ignored the example furnished by the United States, which sixty or seventy years ago had no money available for the development of its resources, and borrowed largely

abroad for the construction of its railways and other great enterprises. The resulting prosperity was such that, even before the war had made the United States the Midas of the world, it had been able to repurchase the control of its own undertakings. But M. Bratianu was adamant, and even laid down the terms upon which foreign money would be welcomed in Rumania. He seemed entirely to forget that, in the last analysis, it is the lender, and not the borrower (whether the latter be a country or an individual), who can insist upon fixing the conditions. He lost sight of the fact that, if foreign bankers could not obtain in Rumania the return and the protection they wanted for their money, they could still place it to advantage elsewhere ; whereas, on the contrary, Rumania was dependent upon them, since she could not look elsewhere for the capital which she so sorely needed. His obstinate but sincere adherence to his principles made it impossible for M. Bratianu ever to secure the loan which was essential for Rumanian reconstruction ; and the passing of time only rendered the internal situation worse, and thereby led to the terms offered continuously becoming more onerous.

In July 1928 Vintila Bratianu became so discouraged by the difficulties he encountered that he arrived at the conclusion that it was essential to form a Coalition Cabinet, even if that entailed making considerable party sacrifices. But just at that moment the French bankers made certain proposals, which were supported by the approval of the French Government ; and Bratianu again changed his mind, and decided that he would be able to finish the negotiations successfully without the assistance of the Opposition. During all this period he had apparently enjoyed the full confidence of the Regency, which gave him the most complete latitude. In respect to that body his position seemed to be fully as strong as was that of Jean Bratianu, who at all times was more powerful than the Regency itself. It may be said in passing that the Regency, which is composed of Prince Nicolas (the younger brother of Prince Carol), the Patriarch, and the Chief Justice, is distinguished only by its weakness, and is likely to be governed rather than to govern. But one day, to his amazement, Vintila discovered (and in a curious way) that the despised Regency had made a private arrangement

with the Opposition, whereby when the loan was completed, and the indignation of the country was at its height on account of the new taxes which the terms would undoubtedly necessitate, the Regency was tacitly to aid the Transylvanian and Peasant party in upsetting the Government. Vintila Bratianu wasted no time after he made this surprising discovery. He resigned immediately, thus placing the burden of concluding the loan upon his political adversaries. M. Maniu had no desire to accept office in such circumstances if he could in any reasonable manner avoid doing so. An attempt was therefore made to form a temporary Government under the leadership of M. Titulescu. But any chance there might have been of the success of this plan was defeated by the attitude of Vintila Bratianu, who had no intention of thus rendering the path to power easier for his opponents.

Naturally, the interesting puzzle is: Who inspired the Regency to make this arrangement with the Opposition?—for it is out of the question that the Regency should have acted on its own initiative.

M. N. M. Titulescu is one of the most notable figures among Rumanian politicians. During the month I spent in Rumania he was Minister for Foreign Affairs, after having been Minister to England—a post which he now again occupies. But for the greater part of that period he was too ill to be able to perform the duties of his office. However, on one occasion he requested me to call to see him at his house in connection with a certain incident. He was unable to move from his lounge, and was evidently very far from well. Although our conversation began by a rather violent disagreement about the episode in question, I was sensible to the charm of an original and peculiar personality, and to the subtle mobility of a brilliant intellect. M. Titulescu, who was one of the leaders of the Bucarest Bar, is amongst the small group of orators who are famous throughout Europe, and his duels on the everlasting Optant question with his equally celebrated rival, Count Apponyi, have for some years been the only joy of the drab meetings of the League of Nations. It may be added that M. Titulescu's party ties are not so strong as those of most Rumanian politicians.

The loan which was finally concluded by the Maniu

Government has not afforded the immediate financial relief which everyone in Rumania anticipated, although it rendered possible the stabilisation of the lei. Out of the hundred million dollars thus obtained the State was first obliged to meet its internal debt to various industries for material supplied. According to the original official calculation, this debt was estimated at 3·8 milliards lei; but it eventually proved to be 6·5 milliards lei, or approximately 40 million dollars. When the Government began to pay a percentage of the individual sums making up this total, its creditors proceeded to reduce their overdrafts at the banks, and the latter, in their turn, remitted these sums to their foreign correspondents who had helped them with credits. The result was a heavy drain on the reserve of foreign currencies maintained by the National Bank. This naturally led to a halt in payments by the Government.

The general situation has been further impaired by several successive bad crops. The immediate future depends largely upon the result of the next two harvests. A recovery of the whole economic condition may confidently be expected should they prove to be bounteous. But at the best no such exportable quantities of wheat can be garnered by the peasants, working their small farms in an antiquated way, as were obtained when large properties were cultivated by the great landed proprietors.

M. Maniu's task is no easy one. Last year the Budget showed a large deficit; the State railways were operated at a heavy loss; and, above all, the trade balance was an adverse one. Efforts are being made to effect drastic economies by the amalgamation of Government departments and by the wholesale dismissal of functionaries. In the past equally well-meaning efforts have been wrecked because the interests of party were placed before those of the country. If M. Maniu should prove firm enough to carry through these and other proposed reforms, regardless alike of the loss of popularity which he and his party would thereby incur, and of the pressure which will undoubtedly be brought to bear upon him by his own political supporters, he will indeed have deserved well of his compatriots.

Rumania is essentially an agricultural country. It was that fact which rendered so imperative the Agrarian Laws dividing the land amongst the peasants. But that

very legislation prevents the peasant proprietors from alienating their property. Therefore, since no complete system of agricultural banks has yet been established, the small landowners are, in bad years, obliged to borrow at rates of interest which vary all the way from 25 to 40 per cent.

Several serious revolts had made it abundantly clear that only the division of the land amongst the peasantry could prevent for long the outbreak of a rebellion which would imperil the dynasty itself. Even before the war, therefore, it had been decided that the necessary legislative measures should be taken. And in the very midst of the conflict the King assured his people that the promise given would be executed as soon as peace was restored. Since 1918 the long and complicated work of expropriation and subsequent division has been nearly completed. The reform was as sorely needed in the newly-acquired territories as in the old Kingdom of Rumania. In Transylvania, for instance, 50·51 per cent. of the agricultural population owned only 6·01 of the soil; whereas ·11 per cent. of the population possessed 27·06 per cent. of the agricultural land. Moreover, the Rumanians in Transylvania were practically prohibited from acquiring any property. Indeed, until 1848, none of the peasants of Transylvania and the Banat were allowed to own any agricultural property. There were also reasons which rendered some agrarian reform a matter of urgency in Bessarabia. The Rumanian Government has been accused of enacting different agrarian laws in the old Kingdom, in Transylvania, and in Bessarabia respectively. There is no ground for this charge if the implication is that proprietors in one part of the country were treated with more leniency than those in another. Such divergencies as there were arose from the very nature of the problems which had to be met. For instance, in Transylvania and in the Banat there is not sufficient arable land to satisfy the needs of all the agricultural workers upon the same scale as in old Rumania and in Bessarabia.

The regulations regarding the amount to be paid by the peasants result, in effect, in their acquisition of the land for one half the price which the State gives for it. This measure was taken so as to afford some compensation for the injustice of the past. On the other hand, for the purpose of fixing the payments to the proprietors,

various methods are adopted; it being generally provided, however, that in no event shall the amount exceed the value of the land in 1913, or at some other fixed date. The former owners are paid in State bonds, bearing interest at 5 per cent. and redeemable in 50 years. But no allowance is made for the depreciation of the value of money. In brief, in Rumania, as well as in the other Succession States, the Agrarian Reform Laws are of a confiscatory nature. But in Rumania, at least, there was no alternative.

The Optant question, which has given rise to so many brilliant speeches at Geneva, and to so many highly-paid and conflicting legal opinions (which make excessively dull reading), requires no comment, since a settlement now appears to be in sight.

Undoubtedly Rumania is still faced by some years of internal stress. Her financial condition had at one moment become so desperate that complete recovery cannot be expected immediately. But her natural resources are so vast that under a sane and orderly Government she need have no fear of the ultimate future. It is more than likely that within a decade foreign money will be flowing into Rumania. In the meantime it must in fairness be said that the present Government is doing its utmost to accomplish its difficult task. But, unfortunately, it suffers somewhat from lack of experience. Probably the strongest man in the Cabinet is M. Virgil Madgearu, the Minister for Industry and Commerce.

Externally, Rumania's weak spot is Bessarabia. She can afford calmly to disregard the plaints of the Hungarian magnates about Transylvania, but the attitude of Russia in respect to the Bessarabian provinces is an entirely different matter. It is significant that the Soviet Government, in suggesting an immediate ratification of the Kellogg Pact, took care to make it clear that in signing that document she herself did not in any way acknowledge the rights of Rumania in Bessarabia, or relinquish her own claims. So much attention is paid to the attempts of the Russian Government to inculcate Bolshevist doctrines in other countries, that it is, I think, not generally recognised that Moscow from the outset adopted, and has constantly followed, the foreign policy of Peter the Great and of Catharine II—and much more zealously and consistently than did ever the later Czarist Governments.

CHAPTER V

THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN REPUBLIC, AND THE KINGDOM OF THE SERBS, CROATS, AND SLOVENES

In 1914 Conrad von Hoetzendorf, as Chief of the General Staff, encouraged the Ballplatz in precipitating the conflict with Serbia, even though he recognised that it might lead to a clash with Russia. Apparently he attached little importance to the fact that many belonging to the various races of which the Imperial Army was composed would fight with little or no enthusiasm for the Hapsburgs; and that the Czechs, who were notably good soldiers, would, upon the whole, do so only with repugnance, and in default of any feasible alternative. Conrad indubitably displayed either a lack of prudence or a misconception of the situation in not tempering his advice with some qualification. But it would be unreasonable to blame him for not foreseeing that extraordinary organisation which was destined to convince the leaders of the Allied countries that the future of the Czechs and Slovaks was an urgent problem: the raising of armies to take the field against the Central Powers from Czech prisoners who had been captured while wearing the Austro-Hungarian uniform; and the recognition of Czechoslovakia as an independent State by the Great Powers even before the end of the war. But such were the results of the sagacity and the untiring zeal of two men, Dr. Masaryk and Dr. Benès, assisted in no small degree by Stefanik, of whom less is generally known, as he met his death a few months after his country had recovered her liberty.

It is a curious coincidence that both Masaryk and Hindenburg entered upon that stage of their careers which was to give them world-wide fame at the mature age of sixty-five. That is probably the only point of resemblance between the two men. Masaryk was born of Slovak parents in Moravia. His father was a coachman, and it was not without difficulty that Masaryk acquired the means to give himself the education he coveted. But

eventually he became a lecturer at the University of Vienna, going in 1882 to Prague as Professor of Philosophy. In 1891, and again in 1897, he was elected a member of the Reichsrat, where he became the leader of a small group of politicians who were called the Realists. In the meantime he was becoming known in other circles through the publication of various philosophical works. But his name became familiar to a wider world by his connections with several notorious cases in which he came to the aid of the persecuted. In 1909, when the Hapsburg Government accused a number of Croats and Serbs of high treason, Masaryk did not hesitate boldly to assert that the documents which formed the basis of the inculpation were forgeries—and to prove it, to the discomfiture of the Imperial authorities and at no little risk to himself. Again, when in the high tide of anti-Semitism, a Jew, Hilsner, was charged with the ritual murder of a young girl, and condemned to death, it was Masaryk who, although not of that race, rushed to his defence. In fact, it has been characteristic of his career that any act of flagrant injustice, however far removed from his path, has always aroused him to indignant protest and to ardent activity. This has been such a marked feature of his long life that the very fact that he is President (and a President who is not merely a figurehead) casts doubt upon the tales of injustice which Hungarian protagonists relate about the Czechoslovakian administration. And it is noteworthy that no one has ever yet dared to question Masaryk's uprightness or sincerity.

During his years in political life Masaryk became convinced that the Hapsburg Empire was thoroughly rotten and would soon crumble; and he regarded the seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a step on the downward path. This belief impressed him with the necessity of developing the Czech national character. But Prince Louis Windischgraetz recounts in his *Memoires* a curious episode. He states that Count Berchtold had the excellent idea of sending Masaryk, whom Windischgraetz strangely describes as an "*autrichien convaincu et monarchiste fervent*," to Serbia in order to rally his friend Pasitch to a policy more favourable to Austria. It is alleged that Masaryk was entirely successful in this mission, but that when he returned to Vienna, enthusiastic about the results

he had obtained, he was coldly received by Berchtold, who did not pursue the matter further. Windischgraetz claims that later Berchtold explained to him that he had abandoned the project because he did not care to have anything to do with political adventurers like Pasitch and Masaryk.

The whole story seems highly improbable—beginning with the extraordinary statement that Masaryk was a convinced Austrian and a fervent monarchist. Frivolous and irresponsible as Berchtold was, it is hardly credible that he had sufficient sense to enlist the services of Masaryk (had it been possible to do so), or that he was so entirely devoid of sense as to reject a favourable understanding with Pasitch had one been within his grasp.*

A mind which was essentially analytical, and many years of calm reflection, enabled Masaryk, when the war broke out, to perceive as practical possibilities what to others were, at best, merely the day-dreams of visionaries. It was natural that the high value which he placed upon the liberty of the individual should range him, intellectually, on the side of the Entente Allies. But he also realised that the future of his country depended upon their success. He was not long in avowing to his friends, both at home and abroad, his conviction that the hour had come for the recovery of Czech independence. However, it was not until July 1915 that in a speech at Geneva he announced that, as a Slovak, he would thereafter strive only to encompass the downfall of the Hapsburg Monarchy, and the political independence of the Czechs and the Slovaks.

After that bold pronouncement he found it impossible to dwell again in Prague. He spent some months on the Continent before coming to London. But wherever he was, he, together with Benès and Stefanik, directed the activities of the Czechoslovak National Council—that extraordinary organisation which, through the foresight and exertions of three men, brought into being a new State. Masaryk was tireless in inundating the Allied Governments with memoranda (which were often very able State papers) treating alike of the present and the future. His information was generally correct, and his breadth of view

* *Memoires de Prince Louis Windischgraetz*, pp. 33, 34.

was remarkable. I have written elsewhere that the doings of Colonel House during the war were not kept so secret as he imagined, and have described their effect.* Between House and Masaryk there was this important distinction, that whereas the former thought he could make progress in Europe by using methods which he had uniformly found successful in the United States, Masaryk showed an almost uncanny skill in speedily diagnosing the particular line it was necessary to take in order to create an impression in different quarters. One who from time to time learned something of his movements, and who at first was unable to believe in his prescience, was struck, however, by the persistency with which, during good and bad days alike, he adhered to his determination that eventually his country should be liberated from all foreign control. Finally he had his reward. For the Allies, beginning with France, formally recognised the political independence of the Czech provinces as one of their war aims, and officially acknowledged the National Council. When the indefatigable Masaryk, after raising an army amongst the Czech prisoners in Russia, passed to the United States by way of Japan, he quickly gained the confidence of President Wilson.† And, always alert, when he heard through his agents that the Emperor Charles was about to issue a manifesto promising to transform Austria into a Federal State, he promptly published a Declaration of Independence. This astute move forestalled any compromise on the part of the Allies, and led Wilson to declare, in replying to Austria, that he recognised the Czechoslovak National Council as the *de facto* Government of the Czechoslovak nation. Even before the Armistice the flag of the new Republic was flying over the house in which its Provisional President, Masaryk, was then living.

It is an extraordinary fact that the one man who, from the very beginning of the war, was able to draw the map of Europe practically as it was destined to be upon the conclusion of hostilities was an elderly professor. Those of us who were for long unable to accept his vision may

* *Where Freedom Falters*, p. 165.

† A Hungarian propagandist publication asserts that Masaryk's influence with Wilson was due to the fact that they had formerly been school fellows ! It omits, unfortunately, to state when and where.

console ourselves with the recollection that even the statesmen of the Allied Powers were not immediately convinced.

As the story of the war emerges from the smoke which still envelops it, the figure of Masaryk will stand out clearly in history, not only on account of his foresight, of the deadly accuracy of his intellectual perception, and of what he actually accomplished, but also (and perhaps above all) because of his absolute single-mindedness of purpose. To him the much-abused name of patriot may be given without fear or reservation. To-day he is generally praised as being a sincere democrat. I gladly admit both his claim to that title and that the breed is rare. But having myself little faith in the doubtful blessings of democracy, that would hardly incite my enthusiasm. My unfeigned admiration for Masaryk is due to his courage, his fearless love of justice (which, by the way, is not, as many seem to think, a monopoly of democracy), and, above all, to his absolute realism. Masaryk never allowed his wishes, his dreams, or his ambitions to interfere with his clear view of things as they actually were. Doctrinaires are a curse in political life; and more harm may be wrought by a statesman who deceives himself than by one who limits himself to deceiving others. It is to the lasting credit of Masaryk that his uprightness and his intellect preserved him from ever doing either.

Judged only by years, Dr. Masaryk may have seemed somewhat old to have taken upon his shoulders the burden of leading his country to independence. But his chief collaborator might reasonably have been thought unduly young to carry the responsibilities which fell on him. Dr. Edward Benès, who was born in Bohemia, was only thirty years of age when the war broke out. He was at that time a lecturer on Sociology in the University of Prague. He immediately offered his services to the *Čas*—the newspaper then edited by Masaryk, who previously had seen little of Benès. But he soon realised the valuable assistance which the latter could render; and he has recounted, with evident emotion, how Benès one day disclosed to him his ambition to devote himself to the cause of the national resurrection. From that time the two men worked closely together. Benès was able to remain in Prague somewhat longer than Masaryk; but eventually he made his headquarters in Paris. He

became secretary of the Czechoslovak National Council; and, as such, dealt with the Governments of all the Allied countries, usually acting on his own initiative on account of the absence of Masaryk. Before the end of the war he had already become a marked figure in the diplomatic world. He represented his country at the Peace Conference, has since been Prime Minister for a short period, and has continuously occupied the office of Minister for Foreign Affairs, although he belongs to the Czechoslovak Socialist party, which has not a large representation in Parliament, and obtained only about 8·5 per cent. of the total number of votes cast at the last General Election.*

Benès, like Masaryk, is distinguished by his regard for realities, and his capacity for lucid thinking. These qualities have contributed to the great influence he soon acquired at Geneva, and to his quickly earned reputation as one of the most astute statesmen in Europe. His energy and his resourcefulness were shown in the organisation of the Little Entente, which was largely his creation. He ranks only after Masaryk amongst the founders of the Czechoslovakian Republic and the actual controllers of her destinies. Of all the statesmen I have known, none has excelled (and few have equalled) Benès in the clear exposition of their policy and the frank objectiveness in discussing it from any angle.

On October 28th, 1918, there was a peaceful Czechoslovakian revolution, when the National Council took over the whole State administration. The National Assembly, consisting of nominated members, representing the different parties, met in Prague on November 14th, 1918. The statement, so often repeated, that the Peace Conference brought about the downfall and dismemberment of the Hapsburg Empire is inexact. That structure, weakened by the disasters of the war, fell through its own ponderous weight, which rested upon foundations which had for years been insecure. The Treaties did, indeed, fix or confirm territorial limits. But long before the Peace Conference met various component parts of the Empire, such as the Czech provinces, Slovakia and Transylvania, had not only declared their independence, but had effected an actual separation.

* Benès has at present no seat in Parliament.

Czechoslovakia has to-day a population of approximately 14,000,000, The Constitution created a democratic republic ; and its democratic character was emphasised by a law, passed in December 1918, abolishing all titles of nobility and all honorific distinctions, except those conferred in recognition of scientific or other learned attainments. For Czechoslovakia is a bourgeois State, just as Austria is tinged with Socialism, and Hungary is technically a kingdom—and probably looks forward to one day again having a king.

There is a Senate of 150 members elected for eight years, and a Chamber of Deputies of 300 members elected for six years. Each is chosen by universal suffrage, upon the basis of proportional representation. Both sexes have the franchise, and voting is compulsory, the right to vote for members of the Chamber of Deputies being given at twenty-one, and for members of the Senate at thirty years of age. Czechoslovakia's claim to be democratic is also borne out by her representative system. The contrast with Hungary is striking. In that country men have the right to vote only when they have attained the age of twenty-four years, and provided they have been of Hungarian nationality for ten, and have resided in the country for two years ; while women are given the franchise only at the age of thirty. A still more important difference is that throughout Czechoslovakia voting is secret, whereas in Hungary it is so only in a few districts.

I have little belief in the system of proportional representation as an adjunct to parliamentary government. But it cannot be gainsaid that the Electoral Laws of Czechoslovakia achieve their purpose. At present there are, in the Chamber of Deputies, according to nationality, 204 Czechoslovak, 73 German, 13 Magyar, 8 Ruthenian, and 2 Polish members. These figures are almost in exact accordance with the respective numbers of the various races. For instance, the Germans, who form the most numerous minority, constitute 23·3 per cent. of the population, which, upon a strict mathematical basis, would entitle them to 70 seats.

Dr. Masaryk is virtually President for life, for there is no limit to his re-election. But the Constitution provides that his successors shall be elected for a period of seven

years by both branches of the Legislature sitting together as one assembly. This is exactly the same system as prevails in France. Mr. Coolidge, when President, once claimed, in a singularly ill-informed speech, that the new European States had adopted the American form of government. The fact is that, after prolonged examination, every one of them took particular care to avoid the unrepresentative and undemocratic system which prevails in the United States.

Czechoslovakia began her existence as a larger State than had been contemplated, and with a population which was possibly greater than her founders desired. The country is one of the richest in Europe. Under the Peace Treaties it obtained about 80 per cent. of all the industries of the old Empire ; and it possesses or produces within its borders—and in profusion—such a variety of natural and manufactured products as to render it almost entirely self-supporting. It has no outlet to the sea. But the arrangement providing harbour facilities at Hamburg and at Stettin has been found to answer all requirements. Czechoslovakia is on a sound financial basis, and enjoys a degree of commercial prosperity which has not yet attained its final limits. But President Masaryk has rightly warned the people that the retention of their recovered independence is contingent upon the intelligence, prudence, and tenacity which they display. Under his guidance all these qualities have been shown by successive Governments ; and in the councils of the nations the country has occupied a position and has exercised an influence which has sometimes seemed disproportionate to its size and actual strength.

The memory of past oppression has left a fear and hatred of the Hapsburgs which is translated into active alarm whenever there appears to be a prospect of any member of that family again becoming King of Hungary. When Charles made his futile attempts to recover the crown of St. Stephen, Czechoslovakia threatened Budapest with summary action ; and on the second occasion even began to mobilise her troops. It was due principally to the pressure brought to bear at Geneva by Dr. Benès that Hungary was forced to enact a law whereby she debarred all Hapsburgs from the throne, unless the prior assent of the Great Powers had been obtained.

However, Czechoslovakia suffers from some of the trials and tribulations which are the lot of any country having large bodies of Minority races within her borders. Out of the total population of 13,613,000 (census of February 15th, 1921) there are 8,761,000, or 65·5 per cent., Czechoslovaks; 3,123,000, or 23·3 per cent., Germans; 747,000, or 5·5 per cent., Magyars; and 461,000, or 3·4 per cent., Ruthenians. According to the census returns there are 180,855 Jews. However, although that is the number which claimed Jewish nationality, there are 355,000 who profess the Jewish faith.

The Hungarian propagandists do not accept these figures, and allege that in 1921 there were in Czechoslovakia, within an area of 34,415 square kilometres, more than 942,000 Magyars. The total area of Czechoslovakia is 1,403,430 square kilometres; but as the great majority of the Magyars dwell in the region referred to, presumably, despite the ambiguous wording, it is not claimed that their total number is greatly in excess of 942,000. It is true that, according to the Hapsburg census of 1910, there were, in what is now Czechoslovakia, 1,066,500 people who spoke Magyar. Consequently, if the assertions made had been limited to those already quoted, they might have thrown some doubt upon the reliability of the Czechoslovakian census of 1921. But the Hungarian propagandists are not exempt from the failing which is the mark of their breed the world over. For the very same publication comments upon the decline in the number of Magyars in Czechoslovakia (and especially in Slovakia), although it attempts to evade the obvious inconsistency by claiming that this decrease dates from 1922, or, strangely enough, just one year after the census. But Sir Robert Donald, who may be naïve, but is always sincere, did not adopt any subterfuge. He says plainly, "Since 1919 no fewer than 700,000 refugees" have returned to Hungary from the Succession States.* If this estimate of the number who have chosen to leave these countries is correct (and I accept it only for the purpose of this demonstration), it means that at least 250,000 have come from Czechoslovakia. The deduction of this number from 1,066,500 (the figure given by the

* *The Tragedy of Trianon*, p. 266.

census held in 1910 under the Hapsburg régime) will leave a balance that is reasonably near the 747,000 of the 1921 census. But, leaving aside all figures, the Hungarians place themselves in a dilemma when at one and the same time they seek to prove that there are more Magyars in Czechoslovakia than shown in the last census (indeed, that there are practically as many as there were in 1910), and also complain that the number of Magyars in Czechoslovakia has greatly decreased. However, this is only one amongst many startling contradictions which confront anyone who studies the publications issued by various Hungarian organisations. I have, in the course of a number of years, examined the propaganda literature of many countries upon a variety of questions. I have never yet come across any which is acceptable in its entirety. The curious point is that the propagandists, who are generally able to marshal equally well both facts and fallacies, seem incapable of putting themselves in the position of those whom they seek to convince—incapable of estimating the degree either of intelligence or of gullibility possessed by the average person. But, upon the whole, Hungarian propaganda is perhaps the most clumsy I have ever encountered. This is all the more regrettable since Hungary has doubtless some grievances which merit a more effective presentation.

No nation ever treated Minorities within its powers more contemptuously than did the Hungarians. Their domination ended so recently that it would be idle to expect absolutely good relations to prevail between the Czech-Slovaks on the one side and the Magyars on the other. But the case of the German Minority rests upon an entirely different basis. There is no deep racial animosity. The principal grievance is in respect to the Land Laws and their application. However, as this Minority has two members in the Cabinet, it can hardly be said that its claims receive no consideration. In respect to the number of Germans now incorporated in Czechoslovakia, it is, I believe, a fact that, during the sittings of the Peace Conference in 1918, Dr. Benès wrote to M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, President Wilson, and Signor Orlando, asking that only two, and not three, million Germans should be brought into the new republic. It is the only incident of the kind of which I am aware.

It shows that the founders of Czechoslovakia were actuated by sound prudence rather than by that unbridled greed of which they have sometimes been accused.

There has also been some discord between the Czechs and a fraction of the Slovaks. But in that dispute there was never the desperate bitterness which has developed in the unhappy contest between the Croats and the Serbs. Nor, indeed, is the parallel between the two countries complete. The trouble in Yugo-Slavia arises from the fact that it is the less populous race, the Croats, which has the higher degree of culture, and, therefore, objects to what it regards as Serb domination. In Czechoslovakia the Czechs outnumber the Slovaks, and undoubtedly have attained a higher intellectual level. Amongst the Czechs there is less than 1 per cent. of illiterates—a record which the Slovaks are far from being able to equal; although in Slovakia illiteracy is being rapidly reduced.

There are also other striking differences between the two peoples. Not the least pronounced is that, while the Czechs are, for the greater part, nominally Roman Catholics, they take their religion somewhat lightly, if not nonchalantly. Many of them even go so far as to assert openly that they would prefer a National Church to direct allegiance to Rome. They cannot forget their conviction that the Church was a willing instrument in the hands of those who for centuries were their oppressors. The Slovaks, on the contrary, are pious and ardent Roman Catholics.

However, any reference to this dispute must inevitably lead back to the famous Pittsburg Convention. That meeting took place on May 30th, 1918; and the agreement then made provided that Slovakia should have an autonomous administration in the future State. President Masaryk's own account of this transaction is as follows: "The other weighty consequence lay in the negotiations at Pittsburg between Czechs and Slovaks. There, on May 30th, 1918, I signed the Convention [the "Czechoslovak Convention"—not Treaty] between the Slovaks and the Czechs of America. It was concluded in order to appease a small Slovak faction which was dreaming of God knows what sort of independence for Slovakia, since the ideas of some Russian Slavophils, and of Stur and Hurban-Vajansky, had taken root even among the

American Slovaks. Therefore Czechs and Slovaks agreed upon the Convention which demanded for Slovakia an autonomous administration, a Diet and Courts of Law. I signed the Convention unhesitatingly as a local understanding between American Czechs and Slovaks upon the policy they were prepared to advocate. The other signatories were mainly American citizens, only two of them being non-American, though further signatures were afterwards added without authorisation. In the Convention it was laid down that the details of the Slovak political problem would be settled by the legal representatives of the Slovak people themselves, just as I subsequently made it clear that our Declaration of Independence was only a sketch of the future Constitution, and that the Constitution itself would be finally determined by the legal representatives of the people. And so it was. The Constitution was adopted by the Slovaks as well as by the Czechs. The legal representatives of Slovakia thus expressed themselves in favour of complete union, and the oath sworn upon the Constitution binds the Slovaks, the Czechs, and me too. Even before the Pittsburg Agreement, on May 1st, 1918, the representatives of the Slovaks had declared themselves in favour of union at Liptovsky St. Nicholas, and they renewed the declaration on October 30th, 1918, at Turcansky St. Martin." *

The agreement was, therefore, simply one between the Czechs and the Slovaks resident in the United States. At the time the importance of these groups was predominant because they supplied the funds which enabled Masaryk and Benès to carry on the work of the National Council, without having recourse to financial assistance from the Allies. But obviously, although the support which they thus gave entitled their views and wishes to consideration and respect, it was not they, but the actual inhabitants of the Czechoslovak provinces, whose decision would eventually be decisive. It is therefore difficult to perceive how clear-sighted people could sign such an agreement, couched in language which undoubtedly gives the impression that they believed the document would be of practical effect.

In the circumstances some dissatisfaction has been

* *The Making of a State*, pp. 208, 209.

evinced because Slovakia has not been granted autonomy. But the efforts made to enlarge and spread this feeling have met with no success. The statement which has been made in part of the English Press that the Slovaks would prefer again to come under Hungarian rule rather than remain part of the present Czechoslovakian Republic simply will not bear serious examination. Those who are responsible for it are either ignorant of, or deliberately misrepresent, the actual sentiments of the people.

However, the very fact that there are considerable bodies of Minorities in Czechoslovakia gives the Hungarians an opportunity to distort or exaggerate such friction as actually does make itself apparent from time to time. Sir Robert Donald collected all these allegations so carefully that it is perhaps convenient to take his book as a compendium of them. Before citing various specific instances, he remarks that he " will describe the general effect of Lord Rothermere's intervention on behalf of helpless Hungary. While the Rumanians and Serbs were seriously perturbed, the Czechs were staggered. They were still reeling under the effect of his championship of the Magyars when I visited Slovakia in October and November 1927. They could not see straight or act with common prudence."

It happens that I myself was in Czechoslovakia a few weeks after Sir Robert Donald's visit. The statement that " the Czechs were staggered " and were " reeling " as a result of Lord Rothermere's efforts is more entertaining than accurate. The official world, which was under no delusion regarding either Donald's activities or the fact that he had arrived in the country with his mind already made up, seemed to regard the whole episode with considerable equanimity. In their opinion Lord Rothermere was probably being misled by his emissaries ; and they foresaw (and quite correctly, as events proved) that Donald would defeat his own ends by clearly showing that his investigations had entirely lacked any semblance of judicial impartiality. But Donald also narrates that, despite their alarm, " the Czechs pretended that the bomb which Lord Rothermere threw into Central European politics was a dud." I might, therefore, think that I was unable to see through a blind which the keener perspicacity of Sir Robert Donald enabled him to penetrate,

did I not happen to know the views held by some of the leaders of the Minority parties. When I asked one of them, who had been denouncing to me various alleged iniquities on the part of the Government, whether he and his friends did not welcome the Rothermere campaign, he replied that, however laudable the intention, he feared it would have little permanent effect, since it was too apparent that judgment was being rendered without hearing and weighing evidence on both sides. He regretfully recorded his conviction that it was futile propaganda. Incidentally, it was this politician who asked me why, if Lord Rothermere was sincerely interested in the wrongs of oppressed Minorities, he did not also express his indignation about the treatment of the German Austrians in the Brenner Pass, instead of constantly bepraising Mussolini and all his actions. Whatever may have been the result elsewhere of Lord Rothermere's campaign (and certainly it has greatly—and even unduly—encouraged the Hungarians), its chief effect in Czechoslovakia has been to draw the Czechs and the Slovaks more closely together.

The first of the claims advanced by the protagonists of the Minorities in Czechoslovakia is that the Hungarians in Slovakia and in Subcarpathia expected, and should have been granted, the right of self-determination. I admit that I am unable to understand or sympathise with the theory, dear to the Czechs, that they are entitled to correct to-day the wrongs committed after the battle of the White Mountain in 1620. President Masaryk himself has recorded that his English friends were surprised when he rested his demands for the resurrection of the Czech race mainly upon this historical basis. Indeed, the story of the battle of the White Mountain always fell on deaf ears when recounted to the Allies ; and if Masaryk obtained all he wanted, it was entirely upon the ground of the right of self-determination. And it is well that it was so. For if the doctrine advocated by the Czechs were generally accepted, not only would the map of Europe be in a strange state to-day, but the seeds would thereby be sown for many future upheavals. I regard Masaryk as one of the very few sincerely democratic rulers in the world to-day : one who, without having in his composition a single grain of demagogism or

Communism, embraces democracy not as a matter of expediency, but because he firmly believes in its virtues. It is therefore strange to find him such an upholder of a doctrine which is curiously reminiscent of the Old Testament, and which would visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the uttermost generation. Surely the foundation of true democracy is not what one's ancestors did or did not do some centuries ago, but the will and the wishes of the people alive to-day. However, the sincerity of Masaryk's attitude is abundantly proved by the fact that it was not necessary for him to use this argument. In the Upper Silesian muddle an attempt was made to evade any expression by the inhabitants of their predilections by alleging that the skulls of their forefathers proved from what particular race they sprang. But Masaryk, who voiced the sentiments of the Czechs of to-day, was not obliged to have recourse to debatable historical support.

Even the right of self-determination would, like any other doctrine, be reduced to absurdity if carried to extremes. The ultimate result would be the creation of separate States out of numerous national fragments. In Slovakia and in Subcarpathia, 21·5 per cent. and 17 per cent. respectively of the population are Hungarian. There would, in principle, be just as much reason to grant the right of self-determination to the several thousand Czechs who at present dwell in Lower Austria. Nor are these Hungarians massed together in any compact body. On the contrary, they are scattered throughout the country.

The various Land Laws enacted by the new republic are the most potent cause of criticism. Nevertheless, some drastic reform was inevitable, and all the more so because it had been so long delayed. In no country will the bulk of the people submit indefinitely to conditions which provide those who wish to live by the cultivation of their own land with barely sufficient for their subsistence, thus obliging all members of the family, except possibly the eldest son, to seek their livelihood elsewhere. Moreover, the loss to the State in capable man-power, through enforced emigration, is serious.

In 1918 there were in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia 1,049,450 properties of two hectares or less. This was 70 per cent. of the total number of properties, but

comprised less than 6·5 per cent. of the total area of all the properties in the country. In Slovakia and Russian Subcarpathia there were 401,600 properties of 5·75 hectares or less, being 73 per cent. of the total number of properties, but only about 16 per cent. of their total area. Less than 10 per cent. of the proprietors owned one-third of all the land. Such figures need no comment.

But however urgent any land reform may be, it can never be effected without a certain measure of hardship —and a greater volume of complaint. Towards the close of the war the belief that the land would be expropriated without any indemnity had obtained wide credence throughout Czechoslovakia, owing to a number of indiscreet political speeches. But the National Assembly at once recognised that this procedure was impracticable. However, the various groups composing that body were embarrassed by the fact that the people expected more than could be given them, and were in no mood to wait long for some actual results. Perhaps the Socialists were in the most uncomfortable situation; for, believing as they do in State ownership, they wished to see as little land as possible divided amongst the peasants, since a mere change of ownership in no way advanced their views. Yet they could not well afford to incur the disfavour of the vast majority of the electorate.

The first Land Law which was enacted provided that tenants who had occupied any land since 1901 could purchase it, on particularly easy terms, provided that it had been cultivated by themselves and their families alone, and that all the land they held did not exceed eight hectares. Although this measure gave the proprietors less than they obtained under subsequent expropriation laws, it has caused less dissatisfaction, and has given rise to fewer complaints about discrimination and distribution, than has any subsequent legislation. This is perhaps due to the fact that it operates, almost automatically, through the courts.

Under the general expropriation law the basis of payment is the average value of land between 1913 and 1915. Half the price is supposed to be paid in cash (although it is said that in practice this payment is often deferred) and the balance is inscribed in the Book of Indemnities, bearing interest at the rate of 4 per cent.

per annum. One half of 1 per cent. goes towards an amortisation fund covering a period of fifty years. These provisions apply only to properties not exceeding 1,000 hectares; further deductions are made in the expropriation of larger estates. All payments are made in Czech crowns, which have only about one-sixth the value, or less that the Austro-Hungarian crown had in 1913-15.

However, these terms are somewhat less harsh than they appear to be at first sight. From the outbreak of the war—that is, during part of the period between 1913 and 1915—the price of land was rising; and the very fact that half the compensation is spread over fifty years may operate to the advantage of the owners, as there is every reason to believe that the Czechoslovakian crown will appreciate in value.

Nevertheless, there is a glaring inconsistency between the law fixing the mode of calculation and another law, enacted on the very same day, April 8th, 1920, whereby, for the purpose of the capital tax, the value of the same land is to be taken as similar to that of high-priced areas before the war, plus 75 per cent. to represent the increase since 1914. But this inconsistency has to some extent been remedied by a subsequent law (August 12th, 1921), providing that in respect to land expropriated by the Government within ten years, the difference between the capital tax so calculated, and the tax as based on the price awarded as compensation, shall be refunded to the owner.

But no matter what words are used, the legislation on the subject constitutes, in effect, a species of confiscation, since the land is forcibly taken from its owners, who are paid only a fractional part of its actual value. It is as inevitable as it is unfortunate that confiscation, parading under various aliases, prevails to-day over a great part of Europe. The English laws by which heavy estate duties are imposed, and death duties so crushing as often to render the sale of great estates obligatory, are, in effect, confiscation: the State takes property for which it gives nothing directly in return. It is therefore piquant to find Sir Robert Donald, for long years a stalwart of the party which sought to go even further in that direction, waxing wroth over the Czechoslovakian land reforms, and lauding the policy of Hungary

(the most conservative country in Europe), where the magnates are clinging to their vast estates, and stand ready to resist desperately any attempt to diminish their holdings. Not being myself imbued with any democratic notions, I witness with regret the passing of great estates, while at the same time realising that it is not only unavoidable, but also a barrier against the inroads of extreme Socialism. The respective paths of a Tory and of a Tory Die-Hard diverge where the latter refuses or is unable to read the writing on the wall ; and proceeds to give the undignified and quite futile spectacle of knocking his head against a stone wall. In some instances the intensity of the provocation may well excuse this lack of common sense. But it is a comic surprise to discover that Sir Robert Donald, a pillar of Radicalism in England, is a Tory Die-Hard when he reaches Central Europe.

The Czechoslovakian Land Laws and their operation are open to further serious criticism. It was originally provided that the compensation payable should be fixed by law—that is, by a legislative measure which would have been duly discussed. That was never done ; and the tables upon which compensation is actually calculated were simply issued under a Government Decree. It is unlikely that the landowners would have obtained better terms in any event ; and certainly this procedure avoided much bitter debate : but its irregularity is undeniable. Of still greater importance is the operation of the law. Czechoslovakians are quick to resent any comments on their legislation. They fall back upon the dictum that they have a right to dispose of their own territory as they see fit. That assertion is unanswerable, even if one adds the rider that due respect should be paid to the established canons of private international law. But even Czechoslovakians can hardly dispute that their own laws should be administered fairly and equitably. In this respect the operation of the Land Law is not entirely above reproach. It is directed by a Land Office, and above that body is a Board of Control, which is all-powerful. It is doubtful whether even the President of the Republic has the right to remove the head of the Board of Control. This absolute independence of the political rulers of the State appears on the

surface to be exemplary. But the members of the Board of Control were chosen for political reasons. They did not cease to be politicians upon taking office ; and it is regrettably true that in various ways they have favoured their own friends at the expense of others. It would have been inestimably better had more direct influence been left in the hands of President Masaryk, whose wisdom and moderation have never yet made default. The whole matter may be summarised by saying that strict impartiality has not been observed either in expropriation or in distribution.

The law provides that preference should be given to small farmers, artisans, and tradesmen ; to farmers who were enrolled in the Czechoslovakian Legions ; to war invalids ; to co-operators included in the categories above mentioned ; to Communes and other public bodies ; and to scientific and humanitarian institutions. The State itself is also empowered to keep certain lands which are to be utilised in various specified ways. The Land Office is supposed to re-sell expropriated property at the price paid to the original owners, plus 50 per cent.

On the other hand, the great proprietors, and especially the German landowners, take a stand which seems to be unsound ; and which, in any event, can lead to no beneficial result. They contend that as the Constitution was adopted by an Assembly which was not elected, and in which the Minorities were not represented, it had no legal foundation ; and that therefore the clause which authorises expropriation, and confirms the law already passed, has no valid effect. The futility of this argument is apparent. Even assuming that the contention could be seriously maintained, it is obvious that, were the Constitution in need of any further validity, that could be fully conferred by the now duly elected Parliament merely passing a resolution of ratification. It is quite comprehensible that those deprived of their land are dissatisfied with compensation which does not, in fact, represent the real value of their property. But the wisdom of their course in absolutely refusing to recognise the social necessity for the reform, and that expropriation on some terms was the only alternative to anarchy, is certainly doubtful.

In Czechoslovakia education is compulsory. Needless

to say, the whole school question is infected by the usual depressing charges of discrimination against the Minorities. I have no intention of delving deeply into it.

Probably no Government can, or ever will be able to, present a record which Minorities will consider satisfactory. But in this instance I am convinced that no grave injustice is being done. It is characteristic of these disputes that the statements are woefully conflicting. However, on one main point there seems to be a certain measure of accord. The Czechoslovakian statistics for the year 1924-25 give 14,017 primary elementary schools, divided amongst the various nationalities as follows :

Czechoslovaks	9,226
Ruthenians	459
Germans	3,339
Magyars	814
Poles	85
Rumanians	2
Jews	9
Mixed	83

A Hungarian publication, *The Situation of the Hungarian Minorities in Czechoslovakia* (issued by the Central Bureau of the United Oppositional Parties in Slovakia and Carpathian-Russia), accepts these figures with this comment : " As the number of the Hungarian population makes out 5·57 per cent. of the entire population after to the census in 1921, in the case of a just treatment, from 3,570 schools the Hungarian population should have 769 schools in Slovakia, and in Carpathian Russia, where the number of the Hungarian population is 17·03 per cent. of the entire population, from 560 schools should be 95 Hungarian, so in whole on the territory of Slovakia and Carpathian Russia together 864 schools should be Hungarian. As according to the official statistical publications there are together 814 schools, 50 schools are failing, also under that condition, if we accept the Czechoslovak statistical publications as perfectly true." *Ipsissima verba !*

The difference is not great. Indeed, the various Minorities seem to be given about their proper proportion of schools. But there was no similar equitable distribution in Slovakia before 1918. In that province there was then one school for every 480 Magyar inhabitants,

and one school for every 2,000 Slovak inhabitants. The number of primary elementary and primary superior schools in Slovakia in 1918 and 1924 respectively were :

In 1918 :	Slovaks	502
	Magyars	3,501
In 1924 :	Slovaks	2,747
	Magyars	831

The Hungarians claim that the Minority schools are often in charge of teachers who do not speak the language properly, and that in various respects they are not in reality Magyar schools. The Czechoslovakians allege that there are no primary Slovakian schools in Hungary for a Minority population which amounts to 142,000. Certainly the statistics, considered together, seem to confirm the Czechoslovakian case. But it is fair to add that Sir Robert Donald states that he has himself visited schools in Hungary where the children are taught Slovak, with Hungarian as a second language ; and where the school books are printed in Slovak on one side of the page and in Hungarian on the other.*

I frankly confess that even were it of any interest to do so, I should be at a loss to refute in detail all Sir Robert Donald's allegations. I am, unfortunately, not gifted with the same facility for arriving at positive conclusions upon complex questions, complicated by analysis of contradictory evidence. Indeed, the ease and the confidence with which this distinguished journalist passes judgment upon the most involved issues are little short of marvellous. But as I read and re-read his book I was reminded of a conversation at which, many years ago, I happened to be present. A great man of affairs—who has long since departed on that journey which irrevocably separated him from his many millions —was considering whom he would send upon a mission of some importance. One of his associates suggested a certain man. " No," pronounced the money king, in his habitual vernacular, " no, I don't trust that fellow's judgment. He's never wrong."

If Czechoslovakia believed that the voice of Lord Rothermere was that of the English people, she would

* See *The Tragedy of Trianon*, pp. 256, 257.

to-day cherish definitely unfriendly feelings towards Great Britain. Fortunately, although the country resents many of the imputations made, it is convinced that Lord Rothermere speaks chiefly for himself. On the other hand, the Hungarians, barring some sceptical political leaders, do not doubt that he represents the bulk of public opinion in England.

The Czechs are a Slav race. Dr. Benès once described Czechoslovakia as the Western advance guard of the Slav people. There is, therefore, the danger that upon her may fall the burden of what, in the words of the great historian, Palacký, is the " constant contact and struggle of Slavdom with Romanism and Germanism." But those who have resurrected Czechoslovakia are both alert and prudent. They have no ambition to make their country the victim of that ancient controversy. The Czechs are not only a Slav race, but seem almost destined to become the leaders of Slavdom. They have many qualifications for the task. They possess all the soundness of judgment, and a patient solidity (possibly due in part to German infiltration) which is so lacking in the character of the more volatile Poles. The roots of their traditional attachment to Russia are firmly implanted in the Czechs, and that alone tends to widen the gulf with Poland; just as the anti-Russian policy of the Austro-Hungarian Government (and especially of the Hungarians) during the latter years of the old Empire still further alienated the Czechs, who to-day look forward to the eventual regeneration of Russia.

How sincerely the Czar's Government returned this devotion is an interesting but obscure question. M. Sazonov has stated in his Memoirs * that from the outbreak of the war Russian statesmen were preoccupied by the necessity of securing entire political independence for the Czech people. It is, however, curious to compare this assertion with M. Paléologue's account of a conversation he had with Sazonov in January 1915. The French Ambassador suggested that the war might be ended if Austria were detached from Germany, and consented to cede Galicia to Russia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina to Serbia. Sazonov natually inquired what,

* *Les Années Fatales*, pp. 293, 294.

in that event, would be the fate of Bohemia and Croatia. To which Paléologue replied that the lot of the Czechs and of the Southern Slavs was not of primary importance to France, and that it would suffice to give those races a large measure of autonomy. According to Paléologue, the proposal impressed Sazonov as one well worthy of consideration. But despite the charm and the literary distinction which impregnate all that M. Paléologue, writes, there is, I think, ample reason to be cautious in accepting, without control or confirmation, his views about the effect produced by any of his own actions. Masaryk's comment upon this incident is that if Paléologue's account is accurate it proves that during the first period of the war Sazonov had no general Slav policy, as otherwise he would have pronounced himself adverse to the proposal.*

But still more curious is the French attitude as related by M. Paléologue himself. There is a certain piquancy in the fact that M. Philippe Berthelot is now variously hailed or condemned throughout Central Europe as the maker of the Little Entente (of which Benès, more than any single man, was the actual creator), when the French Ambassador admits that in 1915 he told the Russian Government that France attached no great importance to the fate of the Czechs and the Croats. The wisdom of this avowal is questionable. But it is, of course, undeniable that the Allies more than once contemplated the contingency of bringing the conflict to a speedy close by securing the defection of Austria-Hungary. Indeed, the actual steps taken to achieve that end, after the death of the old Emperor, Francis Joseph, might have been crowned with success had the negotiators been a little more skilful ; and, above all, had another than the unfortunate Emperor Charles been on the Hapsburg throne. Not that Charles was, like his predecessor, imbued with an abiding sense of loyalty towards his ally. His tortuous course amply proved the contrary. Nevertheless, one cannot wholly blame a Sovereign who is willing to go to great lengths in order to stop a war involving an appalling loss of life, and which is also ruining his country, and endangering his throne. Charles' motives are hardly

* See *The Making of a State*, pp. 143, 144.

open to criticism ; nor is what he actually did, so much as the way in which he did it.

Certainly if the war had been won through a scission between the Central Powers there would have been no wholesale dismemberment of the old Empire, and Czechoslovakia would not have been established as an independent State. Dr. Benès never lost sight of this possible contingency. But it was characteristic that, ardent Nationalist as he was, he always fully realised that it would be the policy which, in those circumstances, would be indicated to the Allies alike by prudence and by a proper consideration of their own interests. In that event Russia, had she still been under Czarist rule, would undoubtedly have acquiesced. But this does not in any degree impugn Sazonov's sincerity when he states that, from the outset of the war, he cherished the hope of witnessing an independent Czechoslovakia. He regarded the Czechs as one of the strongest and most trustworthy members of the Slav family ; and it is not without significance that (although he actually died at Cannes) he passed the last years of his life in Prague.

The basis of Czechoslovakia's foreign policy is the firm support of France, with whom she has a treaty providing that the two contracting parties shall give one another " mutual aid and assistance " in case either should be attacked ; and also the practical guarantees derived from the alliance known as the Little Entente, which, from its inception, has enjoyed the approbation of the Quai d'Orsay. The interests of Czechoslovakia, Yugo-Slavia, and Rumania are by no means identical. In fact, they might well clash at certain points. But the binding link is the common fear of danger from the neighbouring countries which have lost what the Succession States have gained. Czechoslovakia, unlike Rumania (and, to refer to a country which does not form part of the Little Entente—Poland), has no fear of Moscow. It is only Germany which causes her any alarm. Czechoslovakia, with her population of less than 15 millions, is 1,000 kilometres in length and about 200 kilometres in breadth, and on three sides is surrounded by Germany with her population of more than 60 millions ; having on her other frontiers Austria and Hungary, as well as Rumania and Poland. This situation, as Dr.

Benès once said, demands a relatively strong Army; and Czechoslovakia certainly cannot afford to lead the way in disarmament. The actual strength of the Army on a peace footing is 150,000. But while this is necessary as a protective measure, it is obvious that only a good understanding with Germany can ensure permanent tranquillity.

President Masaryk, who blames Imperial Germany without reservation for precipitating the war, sagaciously realises that the future depends largely upon the nature of the relations finally established with the Reich. For Germany will never be less populous or less powerful than she is to-day; but, on the contrary, is bound to grow greater and stronger. The Little Entente was a brilliant conception which solidified the situation of the Succession States, answered the needs of the moment, and can still accomplish much useful work. But more is needed. Fortunately the Czechs have never had the same hatred of the Germans as that inspired in them by the Austrians and by the Magyars; and Germany has never evinced any hostility towards Czechoslovakia. Even to-day the relations between the two countries are in no way embittered, but room for improvement remains.

The recent renewal of the Little Entente agreement shows that although the point where their various interests separate is to-day more clearly defined than ever, yet the links which bind the three countries together are stronger. The passage of time has clarified the situation. The Little Entente has already enjoyed a longer existence than any other grouping of European nations since the war. Its strength lies in the fact that it is what may be called a "natural alliance." Even if there were no formal treaty, Czechoslovakia would undoubtedly go as far with Yugo-Slavia as she is bound to do as a member of the Little Entente. What is important is that there is no secret about what each of the countries forming this alliance is not bound to do. Czechoslovakia is under no obligation to support Rumania if the Russians invade Bessarabia; nor to give aid to Yugo-Slavia in the event of a war with Italy; and these limitations are reciprocal. A study of the history of the Little Entente will show that, while its policy is unchanging, it is sufficiently elastic

to be able to vary the application of that policy according to circumstances. Upon the whole, it is the closest approach to open diplomacy which Europe has yet known.

From the standpoint of Western Europe, Czechoslovakia possesses the great merit of not being chauvinistic, and of not cherishing any dreams of extension or conquest. There is no likelihood of Prague ever embarking upon perilous ventures, which might result in confronting France and England with the alternatives of either repudiating the Czechoslovakian Government or of rendering it material assistance. But a people who for three centuries never lost the conviction that they would eventually recover their independence, and who have so tenacious a memory that to them the battle of the White Mountain seems as fresh a disaster as it did to their forefathers in 1620, naturally reject the idea that their history begins with the Peace Conference. They also resent any form of tutelage, and become indignant when told that their State is an artificial formation which, unless they do as they are directed, may be dissolved by those responsible for its origin. While giving Lord Rothermere personally full credit for the sincerity of his motives, it is difficult to perceive what beneficial results can be expected from a campaign which consists largely in heaping abuse upon a friendly country, which excites animosities in a region where it is of primary importance that mutual goodwill should be cultivated, and which does not even indicate any practical means by which its avowed objects are to be achieved. Although Lord Rothermere has never been known as a Liberal, this method of interfering in the affairs of other countries by loudly condemning alleged abuses, and by sympathising with alleged grievances, is strangely reminiscent of the Liberal policy which was rampant in the last century, and which was invariably a source of danger to all concerned. Its fatal defect is that it encourages movements to which, at the crucial moment, it can give no material support. The last instance was when Mr. Lloyd George urged the Greeks and the Armenians towards their doom, and then was obliged to abandon them to their fate. It is conceivable that, even without intending to do so, Lord Rothermere might incite Hungary to some rash action. But how many amongst his millions of readers

would he then be able to persuade to sacrifice themselves for the ambitions of that country?

Anyone who has seriously studied the situation in Central Europe must realise that there is no present prospect of any alteration of the frontiers now separating the different countries. If any change ever does come peacefully, it will not be the result of an agitation such as that which has recently been directed against the Succession States. Undoubtedly the uncertain fortune of war might lead to anything. But whoever risks starting a general conflagration assumes a heavy responsibility. Leaving aside that contingency, it is improbable that there can be any settled changes in the map of Central Europe until Russia once again enters into full comity with the rest of the world. In the meantime the most vehement and vindictive campaign will not deflect Czechoslovakia from her steady pursuit of internal national development; although it may do an ill service to the cause of European peace.

The population of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats,* and Slovenes amounts to about 13 millions. Of this number, about 74·4 per cent. are Serbs and Croats 8·5 per cent. are Slovenes; 4·3 per cent. are Germans; 3·9 per cent. are Hungarians; and 3·7 per cent. are Albanians. The religious census shows that the Greek Orthodox faith has 46·6 adherents, the Roman Catholic 39·7; the Mahommedan 11·1; and various Protestant creeds 1·8 per cent.

The rift in Yugo-Slavia is not exactly between the Serbs and the Croats, but rather between the Serbs of Old Serbia on the one side and, on the other, the Croats and the Serbs who were formerly under Austro-Hungarian domination. The basic dissension arises from the fact that the latter have a Western European form of culture, which is greatly superior to the Byzantine species prevalent throughout Old Serbia. Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian administration was immeasurably superior to that which is to-day centralised in Belgrade. Under the Hapsburg Empire the Croats had autonomy. To-day they are governed entirely from Belgrade; and as offices

* Since the above was written the name of the Kingdom has been changed to Yugo-Slavia.

under the Serbian Government are allotted solely as political rewards, with little or no regard for efficiency, the Serbian administration is perhaps the most inept, and is certainly one of the most cumbersome, in Europe. The Croats resent being placed under a system which is notably inferior to that to which they have been accustomed. They resent it all the more because, although they are the more heavily taxed, the greater part of the Budget is spent for the benefit of the inhabitants of Old Serbia. There are also various differences in the traditions and in the characters of the two races. The Croats are Catholics, whereas the vast majority of the Serbs are Orthodox. And while the Croats, although obstinate, are a genial people, the oppression which the Serbs have resisted for long centuries has rendered them dour and aggressive.

Matters were brought to a head when, in June 1928, the Serbian deputy, Ratchitch, suddenly produced a revolver in the Skuptschina, killing two of his colleagues, and wounding the Croat leader, M. Raditch, who died as a result some weeks later. Ratchitch had always been particularly obnoxious to the Croats because he constantly persisted in speaking of "Greater Serbia" instead of "Yugo-Slavia." But what shocked the Croats most, and what made it clearer than ever to them that their civilisation was widely different from that of the Serbs, was that the latter, while regretting the incident, seemed to attach no great importance to it. The Croats were unable to comprehend that their obstructive methods in Parliament, however exasperating, should be considered any justification for such a relapse into barbarism. All this led Raditch to protest, in the last political conversations he had before his death, that the only possible solution of the problem was a change in Constitution, giving Croatia an independent form of Government within the Yugo-Slavian State, and leaving the King as the sole link between the two countries, by virtue of the sovereignty he would exercise over both. But the last thing the Croats care to consider is the idea of an entire separation. It is significant that their leaders were greatly disturbed when it was reported on good authority that several of the King's closest advisers had counselled him to break all ties with Croatia, and to let that country make her

own way as best she could. It must be remembered that, even if they are not aggressive, the Croats are difficult in their dealings. Were they otherwise—had they been more tactful instead of standing stiffly on their positions —they would probably have already obtained many changes which would have gone far to satisfy their aspirations. The Slovenes, who had some similar causes of complaint against Belgrade, have got by their diplomacy much of what they wanted, without any open clash. The brutal manner in which Raditch was done to death cannot be too strongly condemned. Unfortunately, the Serbs seem quite oblivious to the fact that assassination within the Legislative Chamber itself makes a highly unpleasant impression upon Western Europe. It recalls all too clearly the details of the murder in 1903 of King Alexander (of the Obrénevitch family) and his Queen, Draga, which cleared the way for the return of the Karageorgevitch dynasty ; but which also caused Great Britain to sever diplomatic relations with Serbia for a number of years. I recollect that when in Belgrade a little later, a cousin of Draga's who had been one of the royal secretaries (and who owed his life to the fact that he was not on duty when the conspirators entered the palace and chased the King and Queen from room to room) pointed out to me the tree upon which, he said, one of the bodies had been caught when it was thrown from the window. For the accuracy of the anecdote I cannot vouch. But I well remember being amazed to find that Serbs of all classes regarded this tragedy as a natural episode ; and were bewildered by the British Government's disapprobation of their indulgence in the harmless pastime of killing their own King.*

But the disappearance of M. Raditch from the political field has cleared the atmosphere, as will be more apparent when time assuages the bitterness aroused by his murder. Whatever his qualities, he was undoubtedly a demagogue ; and all the more dangerous because he constantly shifted his position, and was always able to carry with him a considerable portion of the electorate whenever he did so. The King's action in temporarily superseding

* A Serbian history glides gently over this embarrassing episode by simply saying, "Some weeks later the King and the dynasty disappeared."

constitutional government, which a variety of circumstances had rendered impotent, was undoubtedly courageous, and was probably wise. But, sooner or later, there must be a return to the Constitution—doubtless an amended one—for the royal dictatorship cannot be permanent. It therefore remains to be seen whether, in the interval, a *modus vivendi* for the two races can be found. Unprejudiced observers are at one in agreeing that the only solution lies somewhere half-way between the absolute autonomy demanded by the Croats, and the strict centralisation practised by the Serbs.

The outstanding feature of Yugo-Slavia's foreign relations is the apparent impossibility of arriving at a sound and sincere understanding with Fascist Italy. The Government had hoped that its long delayed ratification, in 1928, of the Nettuno Conventions (which had been concluded in 1925), and which was far from meeting with universal approval in Yugo-Slavia, would lead to a more friendly spirit on the part of Italy. Great, therefore, was the disappointment when the first event of importance thereafter was the proclamation, under the ægis of Italy, of Ahmad Beg Zogu as King of the Albanians. The whole question is a source of constant danger, and is fruitful of incidents, any one of which might lead to a conflagration. A diplomat who represents his country in Belgrade as Minister—and whose Government may reasonably be considered as more favourable to Italy than to Yugo-Slavia—told me, in 1928, that he was bound to admit that it was the Italians, or the Albanians under their protection, and not the Serbs, who were generally provocative.

On the other hand, the Italian Press, which is so dependent upon the Government that it is impossible to disassociate the one from the other, bitterly denounced the Treaty concluded in November 1927 between France and Yugo-Slavia ; although it was somewhat comic to find many of the criticisms based upon the assertion that it was opposed to the affirmations of the League of Nations, since Signor Mussolini himself has always treated Geneva with scarcely-veiled disdain. But the underlying fact is that Italy, in effect, takes the stand that she alone of the Great Powers has any right to interest herself in the Balkans. However this alliance

with France undoubtedly calmed the nervousness from which Yugo-Slavia was suffering.

Unfortunately, the possibility of a conflict between Italy and Yugo-Slavia cannot be entirely excluded from any serious consideration of the actual European situation. But the outcome of such a war is, in my opinion, by no means so certain as is generally imagined—for reasons to which I have already alluded.

The Macedonian question is too well known to need any commentary. It drags out its weary course. But it is significant that the common interests of Yugo-Slavia and Bulgaria are becoming of more importance than their differences, and that the two countries are manifestly drawing closer together.

Before the war Serbia had no seaboard. Subsequently her ambition to possess, with free access through her own territory, either Trieste or Fiume, was defeated by the Treaty of Saint-Germain, by the Pact of Rome, and by the Treaty of Rapallo ; although the agreement arrived at in Rome in January 1924 gave Yugo-Slavia full sovereignty over the Port of Barlass ; and, by her arrangement with Greece, she has a Free Zone at Salonika. It is therefore necessary to fall back upon the development of a port clearly within Yugo-Slavian territory. The choice seems to have fallen upon Split (Spalato) ; but whichever is eventually chosen will entail a very considerable expenditure, largely on account of the difficult nature of railway construction.

The political leaders of the country take perhaps even less kindly than do those of the other Succession States to being lectured by foreigners. Yugo-Slavia has not been made a target to the same extent as Rumania or Czechoslovakia. But a strange incident occurred some two years ago which nearly led to unpleasant repercussions. A certain Englishman, armed with excellent letters of introduction, arrived in Belgrade, and requested the Legation to put him in relations with members of the Government. He was asked how he should be described, and replied, " As a great friend of Mr. Baldwin." It subsequently appeared that he was indeed upon friendly terms with the Prime Minister, although he was not warranted in using Mr. Baldwin's name in that way. Having been introduced in this fashion, he proceeded

hectoringly to threaten statesmen and officials of the fate which was in store for them if they did not promptly amend their land reform measures, which affected property belonging either to himself or to a member of his family. The situation was becoming decidedly strained when the Minister, who had been absent, returned to Belgrade, and brought this personal campaign to a speedy conclusion. Since then the individual in question has contented himself with more general public denunciation of the ways of the Succession States.

At the meeting held at Agram, on October 29th, 1918, when Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slovenia declared their independence, the President of the National Council of the Southern Slavs concluded his speech by saying that the viability of the future State would depend upon every Croat, Slovene, and Serb being given not only the same rights from a national point of view, but also the same situation from a social and economic standpoint, so that each could live according to his national character, under a single government. At present Yugo-Slavia, after a serious crisis, is passing through a transition stage ; and it is even more apparent to-day than it was ten years ago that the solidity and prosperity of the country depend upon its problems being solved in the spirit of those words.

CHAPTER VI

GERMANY

If any serious survey of the Italy of to-day naturally leads a student of contemporary politics to the Balkans, the Balkans will, with equal reason, lead him to Germany. The extraordinary changes which have occurred in Italy during the past six years find, in many respects, their counterpart in Germany. But, in making this comparison, one must also draw a vital distinction. Mussolini has, indeed, turned even the idle portion of the Italian race into a hard-working people, and has imbued them—temporarily—with a sense of discipline which in reality is quite alien to their nature. A century ago a still greater Italian kept in forcible subjection for nearly twenty years a still more turbulent Latin race. It was a transient period; for even the formidable genius of Napoleon could not, in the space of a generation, permanently alter the character of a nation. In Germany, on the contrary, it is not the guidance of any dictator, but the inherent qualities of the race itself which have supported the country during a period of stress and trial. It is the ingrained capacity of the people for continuous and intensive work, together with their disposition to obey any constituted authority, which is responsible for the visible changes since 1923. Then Germany was in a state of financial chaos which, indeed, had not yet attained its full momentum. The political confusion was such that it was difficult to discern how the country would ever emerge from it. One heard only words of despair, occasionally varied by recriminations. Even the period before the war was, in 1904, described by Lamprecht as one of "irritability"; and this feeling was still more poignant immediately after the war. None of these conditions prevails to-day. Thanks to the industry of her people, Germany has not only in a certain measure recaptured her lost commerce, but affords every indication that within a few years her mercantile position will

be impregnable. The financial situation is still one of hardship, but at least it is in no way confused; while for some years past the foreign policy of the Reich has perhaps been the calmest and the most clearsighted displayed by any European State.

In considering the origin of this metamorphosis, as well as the effect it may possibly have upon Great Britain and upon British policy, it is necessary to look backwards.

Discussions about the responsibility for the war are now stale, flat, and generally unprofitable. As Joseph de Maistre once wrote: "Combien ceux qu'on regarde comme les auteurs immédiates des guerres furent entrainés par les circumstance! Jamais l'homme ne perçoit plus vivement dans ces crises la débilité de son esprit et l'inéluctable puissance des lois mystérieuses qui mènent le monde." Moreover, it is necessary to distinguish between the actual cause at the source, however remote that may be, and the proximate *causa causans*. Of the latter all are at liberty to form their own conclusions upon the evidence now before the world. Posterity alone will be the judge. Indeed, the question would never have produced such an abundant and fruitless mass of contemporary literature had it not been for the curious conceit of the Solons of Versailles in forcing Germany to sign a statement proclaiming her own guilt. The childish futility of this was obvious, since it was well known that the signatories would, five minutes after, as well as five minutes before signing the Treaty, vigorously deny the truth of an assertion in which they sincerely disbelieved. This is a view which I ventured to state a number of years ago. It is only within the last few months (so far as I know) that it has been confirmed by any statesman holding office in any of the Allied Governments at any time during the war. In a recent edition* of his *Twenty-five Years* 1892-1916, Lord Grey observed that it was "very unfortunate that this Article was put into the Treaty at all," and characterised it as "useless," adding that it was "of no moral effect to make individuals or nations sign confessions of guilt by force."

No corroboration could be more valuable. For of Lord Grey more than of most statesmen it may be said

* Published October 1928.

that throughout his political career he seldom or never forgot the words of Shakespeare :

> "This above all : to thine ownself be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

It is, however, curious that both in France and Germany some of those in high authority think that Lord Grey might have prevented the outbreak of the war, and are perhaps inclined to blame him for not having done so. In a conversation which I had with Monsieur Poincaré in 1920, he expressed the view that Germany would not have taken the decisive step had England defined her eventual policy earlier. While he admitted the constitutional obstacles to such a course, he referred to the efforts he had made to obtain such a declaration, both by the letter which he wrote to King George in July 1914, and through the activities of M. Paul Cambon in London. And a German statesman who, in 1914, occupied one of the highest posts in the Empire once said to me rather bitterly that there would have been no war had only Lord Grey brought pressure to bear upon Russia not to mobilise ; although he promptly and fairly added that he fully recognised the sincerity of Lord Grey's explanation that the British Government could not give the appearance of interfering unduly with the policy which the Czar's Ministers saw fit to pursue. This was the general view of the Foreign Office. On July 24th, 1914, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, the late Lord Carnock (then Sir Arthur Nicolson) made a note on a telegram from Sir George Buchanan, to the effect that the Government must be prudent, as its attitude during the pending crisis would be regarded by Russia as a test, and care must be taken not to alienate that country.

On the other hand, the late M. Sazonov has also expressed the conviction that the war would have been avoided if Great Britain had declared her solidarity with France and Russia, as through Sir George Buchanan he had urged Mr. Asquith to do.* However, the late Lord Oxford and Asquith, in referring to this matter in his own

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* *Les Années Fatales—Souvenirs de Sazonov*, pp. 43 and 195 (Payot, Paris.)

Memoirs, says that no serious proof was ever given the Cabinet that a threatening or irreductible attitude on the part of Great Britain would have succeeded in leading Germany and Austria-Hungary to leave the path which they had chosen.

In any event, forcing Germany to sign a confession of guilt which was simultaneously repudiated showed the confusion of ideas which more than once was so prominent a feature of the Peace Conference. A treaty which a vanquished nation is obliged to sign is merely the last of a series of acts of violence which in their totality constitute a war. A defeated nation signs such a treaty not willingly, but because it is compelled to do so in order to avoid worse consequences. In truth, the hard theory that to the victor belongs the spoils is one in which all had acquiesced before 1918. The only limitation of the doctrine was that for their own future welfare the victors were well advised if they did not swallow more than they were capable of digesting. The proper object of a treaty concluding a war is to provide that certain things should be done or be left undone. The fantastic idea that a treaty might change opinions, or that an admission extracted in this way would be of any importance in the eyes of posterity, was alike novel and dangerous. The treaty-makers might have been well advised to remember what Sièyes once wrote to Talleyrand : " Quand une cause a été jugée par la victoirie, c'est la remettre en question que d'imprimer des phrases." Or they might with advantage have remembered the dictum of Sir Lucius O'Trigger : " Do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay ? No, by my soul, they drew their broadswords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it." The farce of compelling Germany to sign a false confession had a curious, but not illogical, sequel. It created the belief that, if it could be proved that Germany was guiltless, the Treaty of Versailles would immediately be changed. But the truth is that to-day there is far more interest in the practical question of who is going to pay for the war than the more theoretical one of who was responsible for it.

Nevertheless, in considering the future it is necessary to examine the basis of Germany's policy before 1914,

and the motives which then actuated her politicians. It may be said at the outset that, despite the tendencies of certain individuals, it would appear that, whatever may have been its mistakes, German policy was not consciously aggressive. It is clear to-day that its fundamental error was in forgetting that the alliance with Austria-Hungary was not in itself an end, but simply a means to an end; and in allowing Germany to remain tied to her "brilliant second" after the latter had become a corpse. When, after his fall from office, Bismarck was writing anonymously or was inspiring articles in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, and otherwise seeking to annoy the Kaiser and to decry the policy of his own successor, he said, "Least of all is it Germany's business to support Austria's ambitions in the Balkans." And again, he issued a warning that "by following the path upon which she has entered, Germany is in danger of gradually becoming dependent upon Austria, and in the end she may have to pay with her blood and treasures for the Balkan policy of Vienna." But his advice was unheeded. As the late Baron de Courcel said to M. Paléologue in 1905: "Donc, ce n'est plus le sort de l'Autriche qui est lié à celui de l'Allemagne; c'est le sort de l'Allemagne qui est lié à celui de l'Autriche. . . ." Mommsen had also foreseen and predicted that Austria was "destined to become the Turkey of Europe, a conglomeration of States each interminably struggling against all the rest."

To Bismarck the possible attitude of Russia was a constant source of uneasiness. He often regretted that he had been unable to include that Empire in a triple alliance. However, he recognised clearly that a pact with Russia alone would never suffice, as it was bound to be largely personal—"that is, it depends on the moods of the reigning Emperor of Russia"; (and, as time showed, also upon that monarch being secure upon his throne). Bismarck never forgot that it was Frederick the Great's sarcastic remarks about Elisabeth which arrayed Russia against him during the Seven Years' War. But he had no illusion about the weakness of the Austrian Empire, and the danger in the rivalry between the various races of which it was composed; although he believed that any Austrian Government would be faithful to its engagements.

The more one studies the course of events during the years between the resignation of Bismarck and the outbreak of the war, the more one is convinced that whatever mistake there may have been in German policy was, in the last analysis, due not so much to any consistently aggressive spirit as to the almost constant shrinking of those in power from assuming responsibility. The various secret treaties which Bismarck made on all sides present such a tangle that it is obvious that at certain moments he would have been unable to keep his word to all to whom he had made promises. Professor A. F. Pribram gives a fair summary of the position as it stood in 1887 in consequence of the Chancellor's various conflicting engagements: "This security on all sides and against every eventuality enabled Prince Bismarck to pursue towards allies and opponents alike those tactics of threats and promises, admonitions and pleadings, pacifications and elucidations, by means of which he attained the goal he held unswervingly before him—the maintenance of the peace of Europe. It was a dangerous game that he was playing. Only a master like himself could hope to bring the ship of State through all the rocks and shoals into safe harbour." *

Nevertheless, it may well be doubted whether Bismarck's policy was in reality as dangerous as that pursued by some of his successors. Anyway, he was more successful in actually guarding the peace of Europe. Moreover, he never lost sight of the fact that an alliance between France and Russia might well prove fatal to the Empire of which he was the chief creator. Circumstances, indeed, forced him, in 1879, to make with Austria the Dual Alliance for joint defence against any attack on either by Russia. But he was only too anxious to return to closer relations with the latter, as was shown by the Alliance of the Three Emperors in 1881, and its various renewals; not to mention the Reinsurance Treaty of 1887, which he always blamed Caprivi for not again renewing.

It would undoubtedly have been difficult for any German statesman to have maintained his country in the political situation which Bismarck had created for it, and in which he left it upon his enforced retirement.

* *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary*, 1879-1914.

During his latter years the great Chancellor was convinced that Germany had reached her apex of power, and that any further attempt at extension, either by way of colonial enterprises or otherwise, would be dangerous, if not disastrous. But in politics nothing is more difficult than to maintain a state of immobility ; and that is especially so for a rapidly growing nation which, by its very geographical position, is bound to rely upon the possession (not necessarily the use) of force for defensive purposes. Possibly none of Bismarck's successors could have long continued his policy. Perhaps, indeed, his chief defect as a statesman was that that policy was too personal, and that therefore there was no provision for its successful continuance after his death. For although the Chancellor hoped that his son, Herbert (so well known in London two generations ago), might one day take his place, there is no ground for thinking that the latter's shoulders were broad enough to bear the burden long carried by his illustrious father. But in any event Bismarck's successors were far from being of his calibre. They were never so closely in touch with reality ; nor did the undeniable versatility of the Kaiser render their task any the easier.

In fairness to the former Kaiser it must be said that, despite his various memoranda on despatches, he cannot be held personally responsible for the war ; while throughout the struggle he was probably as unhappy as any of his subjects, since from the outset he lost, to a large extent, his commanding position, and ceased to be actively supreme in either the civil or the military life of the Empire.

This is the view which I expressed elsewhere some seven years ago, and which is to-day more fully substantiated than ever, both by the opinions held by many who were close to him and also by the facts which have since become known. Even then I mentioned that I found it difficult to believe that a Cabinet Minister had discussed with me the form which the trial of the former Sovereign would probably take ; and had regretted that the repairs which Westminster Hall was then undergoing would prevent its being held there. But if such a reminiscence seemed extraordinary in 1922, how much more difficult is it to-day to imagine that we were ever possessed by any

such idiotic idea? To give the French due credit, it was a matter in regard to which they were largely indifferent. Clemenceau was too much of a realist, burdened down by the weight of too many vital problems, to be greatly interested in such flights of fancy. But Mr. Lloyd George had fought the election of December 1918 partly upon the definite statement that the former Kaiser would be brought to trial; and it should be added that there is no reason to doubt that at the time he was entirely sincere. Apparently he had forgotten the lesson to be drawn from the effect of our treatment of Napoleon a century earlier. Fortunately the Dutch Government saved the Allies from what might have been a ridiculous, and certainly would have been an embarrassing, position, and one entirely of their own making. At this distance of time one can only wonder that Mr. Lloyd George and those who were supporting him did not see the evil precedent which they were thus seeking to create. For if the rule were established that a more or less absolute monarch should pay in his own person, should the fickle fortune of war lead to the defeat of his armies, it is clear that at some distant day the politicians then governing more democratic countries would doubtless stand an excellent chance of going to the gallows. However, such sombre thoughts doubtless never entered the mind of Mr. Lloyd George.

Had the Kaiser been born in another station of life he would doubtless have achieved eminence in any calling which he had adopted. But unfortunately he thought that his Imperial rôle entitled and obliged him to lead in everything. His greatest defect undoubtedly was his inherent inability to judge others. To take one example which is not too controversial, it is hardly to the credit of his knowledge of men that in one of his telegrams to the Czar after the Dogger Bank incident he should have qualified Lord Lansdowne as the "impetuous Lansdowne." It would be impossible to imagine a more inaccurate, and, indeed, a more fantastic description of the late Lord Lansdowne. Not only was caution one of his distinguishing characteristics, but it led to such deliberation that at times it appeared to amount to a defect from a political standpoint.

On the other hand, if there was not another reason

which is known and admitted by those well informed to be the true one, one would be inclined to doubt the former Kaiser's mental stability when one reads the comments which, for instance, he made regarding Sir Edward Grey, in annotating a message sent from London by Prince Lichnowsky on August 1st, 1914: "Then he's a false rascal!" "He lies!" "The rascal is crazy or an idiot!" "My impression is that Mr. Grey is a false dog who is afraid of his own cheapness and false policy, but who will not come out into the open against us, preferring to let himself be forced upon by us to do it."

But as a matter of fact these violent remarks, which almost seem to suggest insanity, were merely those of a man almost bereft of reason when faced by the probability that war—an actual war, and not merely a blustering scene in which one talked nonsense about "shining armour," and the sword being drawn from its scabbard—could hardly be avoided. For it is no secret—it is not even a secret which has been well kept—that, so far from being bellicose, the Kaiser was in a state of fear which appeared almost to approach physical cowardice. To the stern Prussian generals by whom he was then sedulously surrounded that was nothing less than a personal affliction.

At the present moment there is, in certain quarters in Germany, a revulsion of feeling in his favour due to the publication of his mother's letters at the very time when he was holding at Doorn the harmless celebration of his seventieth birthday. In the German edition of this book the effects of the adverse judgment upon Wilhelm II's character were largely mitigated by a preface which he signed, but which was, in reality, written by the well-known journalist, Herr K. F. Nowak.*

The letters confirm a widespread impression that the Empress Frederick was clever and well-informed rather than acutely intelligent. Like her father, the Prince Consort, but in a less degree, she was sometimes weighted down by the extent of her knowledge. Her lack of subtle intelligence was shown in her comparison of everything German with everything English, to the disadvantage of the former—a comparison which was constant except

* Herr Nowak has written *Der Weg zur Katastrophe* and other works.

when she interrupted it to rebuke anyone in England who dared to raise his voice against Germany. She was a feminine Diehard, for with all her ability she completely lacked a sense of what was politically practicable, and of what a Prussian Crown Princess or a German Empress could or could not do successfully.

It seems to have been the recent revival of the controversy about Sir Morell Mackenzie which led Sir Frederick Ponsonby to publish these letters. The main outlines of that incident are now perfectly clear, although some of the details will always remain a matter of dispute. Nearly everyone concerned made some error. It was the German doctors themselves who asked that Sir Morell Mackenzie should be called in consultation. Bismarck assented, and the request was conveyed through the British Embassy as the proper channel. Queen Victoria spoke to her Physician-in-Ordinary, who significantly remarked that, whatever might be the opinion of the public, the medical profession did not consider Mackenzie the leading man in his own special branch of surgical work. It is no reflection upon that degree of skill which Sir Morell Mackenzie certainly possessed to say that he was one of those whose names, had he lived to-day, would frequently have appeared in the popular Press. He did, however, successfully perform some difficult operations, more by reason of exceptional skill with his hands than on account of any deep medical knowledge. However, as the German doctors had asked for him, the Queen thought that he must go; and he went so hurriedly that he did not even take with him his major instruments. This was all the more unfortunate since the Emperor's condition had become so uncomfortable that the German doctors had already decided that it was necessary to take immediate steps towards giving him relief. Mackenzie therefore took something from the larynx for the purpose of examination. Some days later a lady in close attendance upon the Empress observed that it was extraordinary that only after this had been done had the Emperor for the first time lost his voice. The belief has since gained ground that Mackenzie, by mistake, touched the healthy instead of the diseased vocal cord. This theory is borne out by the fact that Virchow was unable to find any trace of malignant

disease in the portion which Mackenzie had taken out for examination. What, if any, effect this had on the sequel is still a speculative question.

In any event, Bismarck did not hesitate to make an unfair use of the whole Morell Mackenzie incident to the detriment of the Empress. With the possible exception of the first Napoleon (who, however, laboured under the disadvantage of not having even a titular master), Bismarck was undoubtedly the greatest statesman of the nineteenth century—greater by far than Metternich or Castlereagh ; greater than Palmerston ; and not equalled by Disraeli. But it is an indelible blot upon his memory that he always pursued with vindictive rancour not only those of whom he had some reason to complain—like Arnim, who eventually died in self-imposed exile—but even those who dared to differ from him. His formidable and unscrupulous methods were successful against all with whom he was brought into collision except the Vatican and two clever women. With the latter he was particularly unfortunate. The old Emperor Wilhelm was generally (although not invariably) as clay in the hands of the potter. But from the outset Bismarck was regarded with dislike, not untinged with condescending contempt, by Queen Augusta ; whose sentiments remained unaltered even when by his efforts she had become an Empress. Through her disdainful guard Bismarck was never able to penetrate. It is true that few people did find favour in her eyes, and that if she despised Bismarck's political morality she also had little esteem for the mental attainments of Wilhelm I. As a Princess of the Grand Ducal House of Weimar, she had inherited the traditions of the little Court to which Goethe had given lasting fame ; and to them she added a personal independence of character which at times bordered upon the eccentric.

Bismarck conceived that he had a definite reason for disliking Augusta, and for dreading an influence which she was occasionally able to exercise in opposition to his policy. For if the Crown Princess was more English in her views than was seemly in the wife of the heir to the throne, her mother-in-law was openly and uncompromisingly French in her predilections. The Chancellor, who was often the victim of his own suspicions, regarded with profound distrust her intimacy with the

Princess Léonille von Sayn-Wittgenstein (the step-mother-in-law of Prince Clovis of Hohenlohe), who, although Russian by birth, was French in spirit, and—still worse—a pillar of Ultramontism ; as well as other manifestations of her Gallic sympathy, which, in reality, were not sufficiently important to merit his attention.

When the Crown Princess, a vivacious young girl of seventeen, first came to Germany as a bride, she brought a gleam of brightness to a very dull Court. For some time she was in high favour with her mother-in-law. But after the lapse of a few years a rift came in their relations. However, it was during this period, while her tender youth and her ignorance of Prussia still left her malleable, that she conceived that distrust of Bismarck which she never thereafter lost.

Sir Frederick Ponsonby published the Empress's letters with the avowed and laudable object of disculpating her memory from accusations and insinuations which were unquestionably false. But although the motive was excellent, the immediate result can hardly be considered satisfactory. Before making his decision, Sir Frederick wrote to the German lady who for many long years was closest to the Empress Frederick, and asked her advice. She replied that in her opinion the letters should not yet be given to the world, and urged Sir Frederick at least to make a careful selection of which should be published, and to consult a certain person regarding the whole matter. However, Sir Frederick had apparently already made up his mind.

The publication of the letters has undoubtedly depreciated the former Kaiser still further in English public opinion ; which, however, was not the end Sir Frederick had in view. They had no other effect in England, where the Empress's conduct was in no need of defence or explanation. But in Germany they have permanently lowered her in general esteem, and have provoked a reaction (of no political importance) in favour of the former Kaiser. The German conception of family relations—even that of Royalties—is somewhat different from that prevalent amongst English people. Despite anything Wilhelm II may himself have done, Germans are shocked by various statements deliberately made by the Empress in writing in disparagement of her own son.

As one bearer of a great Prussian name said to me: "Now one can see that Bismarck was right in his opinion, however tyrannical in his actions; the Empress Frederick was incurably English: no German mother could write that way about her own son, whatever he was or whatever he might have done."

The historical value of the letters is indisputable. But the avowed object of their publication would have been more surely achieved had they not seen the light of day until both the former Kaiser and the few surviving spectators of the period depicted had passed away. During the intervening years—which must necessarily be comparatively few—the memory of the Empress Frederick would not have suffered further; and the whole subject could well have been judged with that impartiality which posterity alone can bring to bear.

With all his many and varied talents, and despite the modern spirit which he liked to display, the Kaiser's mentality was inherently that of a monarch who governed by Divine Right. Unfortunately for him, he lived in a generation when that doctrine had fallen into abeyance. On the other hand, he was not always greatly helped—at times he was not sufficiently opposed—by those whom he successively called to the highest political office after he had dismissed Bismarck. Caprivi, Hohenlohe, Bülow, Bethmann-Hollweg, Michaelis, and Hertling, all undeniably patriotic, but not one of them possessed of sufficient strength of character to take a firm stand against the Kaiser at the risk of incurring his lasting displeasure. And this commentary may fairly be applied even to the most brilliant of the group, Prince von Bülow, despite his attitude in the matter of the famous interview published in the *Daily Telegraph*. At times their fault went further than merely concealing the truth from the Kaiser, or impassively acquiescing in decisions which they believed to be wrong. Sometimes they actively persuaded him to follow a risky course against which his own judgment revolted. In brief, it may be said that, if Wilhelm II was not an easy master to serve, it was equally true that in the many years of his reign he was, on the whole, unlucky in the servitors he chose to fill the principal office in the State.

As a matter of fact, the chief influence in the conduct of foreign affairs was for many years in the hands of that

remarkable man, Baron von Holstein. He eventually held the position of political director at the Foreign Office. He not only had no desire for advancement, but seemed to live in active dread of anything which would bring him into public notice. For him decorations had no charm; and he only accepted the title of "Excellency" when it was forced upon him years after he had legitimately earned it. To many in the Wilhelmstrasse he was unknown even by sight. It is certain that for years he purposely never appeared before the Kaiser; and finally only did so at a private dinner because his Imperial master insisted upon meeting him. At first he absolutely refused, alleging that he possessed no evening clothes—which, of course, was quite untrue. But to maintain the stand he had taken he actually came in morning dress. It may be said in passing that the dinner was not a great success. His private life was of the simplest. Unmarried, he led a solitary existence in one of the suburbs of Berlin. But if he so fancied, he kept ambassadors waiting in his ante-room; or sometimes refused even to see them. Upon three successive Chancellors, Count Caprivi, Prince von Hohenlohe, and Prince von Bülow, he exercised the greatest influence. Even after he had retired (for one day, to his amazement and fury, the resignation which he was in the habit of offering from timre to time was accepted) he was still not without power. He had originally been one of Bismarck's adherents; but by his defection when the Iron Chancellor left office he incurred the latter's implacable enmity. But if Holstein was one of Bismarck's disciples he possessed but little of his courage. On every side he saw dark shadows, which generally prevented him from taking any step, and which certainly caused him to avoid any positive policy. So far from concluding too many alliances, his great object was to make as few commitments as possible of any nature. Prince von Bülow (the only one of the former Kaiser's Chancellors who is still alive to-day) is generally accused of having missed the opportunity of a practical understanding with England. No doubt he must bear such responsibility as there may be in that matter; but it is only fair to remember that in this he was following the advice of the Eminence Grise of the Foreign Office.

Holstein would never believe in the possibility of any arrangement between England, France, and Russia. He always adhered firmly to Bismarck's theory that a treaty with England was of doubtful efficacy because it would naturally have to be kept secret until the day for action arrived, and then it would be of no avail unless, and until, it was ratified by Parliament. It may be added that the same line of reasoning for some time delayed the conclusion of the formal alliance between Russia and France. In the event parliamentary institutions did not prove to be any barrier to the due execution of agreements or even looser understandings. The only legislature which failed in this respect was that of the United States. But in that country the parliamentary system is entirely spurious. The members of the Cabinet are not responsible to any legislative assembly; and, apart from administering government departments, they simply form a committee whose advice the President seeks, and follows or not, as he may see fit.

Holstein pronounced Chamberlain's declaration that "if unable to come to terms with Germany he must apply to Paris and St. Petersburg" to be nonsense. No doubt the views with which he inoculated Bülow were responsible for the latter saying that it would be an excellent thing if the Kaiser, without undertaking any obligations, led English statesmen to believe that Germany would in the end come to an agreement with them. Count Andrassy justly remarks that Holstein reminds one of the Lord Halifax who flourished in the seventeenth century, of whom Macaulay, with playful irony, wrote that "his mind was so clear that he could perceive every drawback, actual and potential, of every situation, which always prevented his taking any decisive step; like a man with eyes so sharp that he cannot drink the purest water on account of the infusoria being visible to him!" *

In recent years some curious and amazing facts about Holstein have become known. On December 16th, 1925, the *Berliner Tageblatt* published extracts from a large number of private letters he wrote to his financial agents between 1875 and 1897. These seemed to prove conclusively that Holstein had been absolutely corrupt; and

* *Bismarck, Andrassy, and Their Successors*, by Count Julius Andrassy, pp. 430, 431.

that during the period when he was largely responsible for the direction of German foreign policy he had (in the words of Prince Lichnowsky, who accepted this correspondence as authentic and unanswerable) "not only been a heavy speculator on the Bourse, but that he had been in the habit of using official information obtained through his connection with the German Foreign Office for the purposes of his clandestine transactions in international stocks. The letters showed, too, that he had, on occasion, even tried to manipulate German foreign policy for egotistical financial ends." * This might seem to throw an entirely new light upon the character of Holstein, who during his lifetime and afterwards was always considered a misanthrope, who cared for power only for power's sake, and who had as little use for money as he had for titles and decorations. Nevertheless, it is true that Holstein cared little for wealth. The whole thing is otherwise explicable. When he was in the German Embassy in Paris, Bismarck used him as a tool to spy upon the Ambassador, Count Arnim. Undoubtedly Arnim was intriguing, and hoped one day to supplant his chief at the Wilhelmstrasse. But he never did anything to justify the vindictiveness with which Bismarck pursued him until his dying day. It is, I think, the late Prince Alexander von Hohenlohe who recounts that in the days when his father was Ambassador in Paris there was a curious article of furniture close to the wall in the room adjoining the Ambassador's Cabinet, in which, according to the legend then current, Holstein used to hide himself in order to listen to Arnim's private conversations. In any event, he gave evidence against the latter at the trial instigated by Bismarck. His conduct in this respect was such that thereafter he was ignored socially by many of his own world in Berlin. Holstein was not only a gentleman by birth and breeding (for, alas ! even gentlemen have been

* *Heading for the Abyss*, by Prince Lichnowsky, p. 20. I may here add that I entirely dissent from the malevolent portrait of Kiderlen-Waechter which is given by Prince Lichnowsky. Undoubtedly, as I have myself stated, when Kiderlen-Waechter was finally called to Berlin as Foreign Secretary, the addiction to alcohol which he had acquired during his long exile in Copenhagen and in Bucarest, and his general mode of life, had had their effect, and he had passed the apex of his powers. But Lichnowsky goes too far in some of the traits which he attributes to the most far-seeing statesman possessed by Germany since the death of Bismarck.

known to listen at keyholes), but also extremely sensitive. From that time he sedulously separated himself from the world. But the episode affected his whole future career. One day, many years later, when he was walking with Princess Bülow in the garden of the Chancellor's palace, he said, with marked bitterness: "Vous savez, madame, je suis un homme taré." * The manner in which he expressed himself had made a deep impression upon the Princess, who communicated the incident to her husband, and also to the statesman who has given me these details.

In brief, it was Holstein's desire for mental excitement, increased to an unhealthy degree because he was thus cut off from his own world, which led both to his lust for power at the Wilhelmstrasse, and to his transactions on the Stock Exchange. As a matter of fact, he was not long in losing the remnants of his own fortune, of which probably a part had already disappeared before the sojourn which he had made earlier in life in the United States—a period of his life which is still obscure. Thereafter he speculated with the funds of a lady with whom he had for many years retained friendly (and purely platonic) relations. The greater part of her fortune followed his own. It may be debatable whether information about foreign affairs is of less value on the European Bourses than is generally supposed, or whether Holstein was singularly inept in using the information which he undoubtedly possessed. But the one certain fact is that he was an almost constant loser.

Of all Bismarck's successors, the most notable undoubtedly was Prince von Bülow, of whom so much was expected. A man of brilliant parts, he was a politician of ready expedients, and one who took particular care never to be entrapped. His claim to far-seeing statesmanlike qualities rests upon a much more insecure basis. For instance, he also never believed in the possibility of an alliance between England, France, and Russia, terming it "a spectre invented to frighten us, which the English have used for years."

Bülow's oratorical gifts added to the power which his office gave him in the debates in the Reichstag.

* Presumably these words were spoken in German, but I give them in French, as that was the language which the statesman in question habitually used in his conversations with me.

Socially he was famous for his witty and epigrammatic comments; while his marriage to the daughter of the Italian statesman Minghinetti and the famous Donna Laura went far to give him an enviable reputation beyond the borders of his own country. His fall from office was ostensibly caused by his defeat in the Reichstag upon a financial measure which aroused the opposition of the Junkers because it proposed to place upon the great landed proprietors, in the form of an inheritance tax, a reasonable share of the taxation necessary as a result of naval construction. But, as a matter of fact, his doom had been sealed some months earlier, when a breach with the Kaiser was caused by the fact that he failed to defend his Sovereign with any vigour or apparent conviction in the Reichstag during the discussions about the famous interview in the *Daily Telegraph*. Apparently the Kaiser did have some cause for complaint about that matter; for, however indiscreet the interview may have been, yet, before consenting to its publication (at the instance of Major-General Stuart-Wortley), he first had it laid before von Bülow, as his responsible adviser. The latter simply passed it on to one of his subordinates, and in the ordinary course the document came back to the Kaiser as having met with the approval of the Foreign Office or the Chancellor. His indignation, therefore, when Bülow defended him so weakly, is quite comprehensible. In any event, the incident led some months later to the latter's disappearance from public life. His swan-song, however, was only heard after the outbreak of the war, when he exerted his great abilities, and made all the use possible of his many Italian connections, in an attempt to persuade Italy to join the Central Powers, or at least to remain neutral. His failure in this last effort was certainly not Bülow's fault. From the outset Italy was determined to give active support to the side which promised her most, and which seemed more capable of keeping the promises given. It is sometimes alleged that if Austria had been more generous in her offers the result of the competition for Italy's favour would have been different. Upon the whole, I think that is unlikely. The Allies were not only willing to offer more than Austria, but there seemed more likelihood that, in the event of victory, their promises

would be kept, if only for the reason that, unlike Austria, they were offering something which did not belong to them, and therefore cost them nothing. Moreover, Italy's adventure in Lybia naturally made her more dependent upon the maritime power of England and France.

But however successful Bülow may have been as a politician, he seems, in retrospect, to have been rather a brilliant opportunist than a far-seeing statesman. At least he forgot Bismarck's maxim that it was essential for the welfare of Germany that she should always be on good terms with either England or Russia. It would not be unfair to apply to him Richelieu's saying : " Les plus grandes esprits sont plus dangereux qu'utiles au maniement des affaires. S'ils n'ont beaucoup plus de plomb que de vif-argent, ils ne valent rien pour l'État."

To-day one often sees Prince von Bülow in the streets of Rome : a survival of a past which is so far distant that he and his career already seem to belong to history.

Marschall von Bieberstein (who died shortly after his appointment as Ambassador to England) well earned the formidable reputation which he acquired during the period he represented his country in Turkey. During many years he was almost an uncrowned king in Constantinople. No other Ambassador had a tithe of the influence which he possessed. Anyone who was in Turkey some twenty years ago can well recollect the extraordinary power then wielded by the German Embassy. The late Sir Gerard Lowther was quite unable to cope with the situation, and British influence sank to a low ebb. But although Marschall was for some time Secretary for Foreign Affairs, his passage at the Wilhelmstrasse left little mark.

Whether the relations between England and Germany would have taken a different course had Marschall von Bieberstein not died in 1912, soon after his appointment to the Court of St. James, is an interesting speculation. One of those closest to him has told me that when he returned to Germany, after spending a short time in London, he spoke very gravely about the situation, and said that he expected to encounter great difficulties in his new post. The late M. Paul Cambon, then French Ambassador in London (who had himself once served in Constantinople), had great curiosity about this

point, as he mentioned to me in the course of a conversation on Christmas Eve, 1919. However, few men make a lengthy sojourn in the East without paying the penalty of a change of character, which, in some degree, unfits them for the conduct of affairs in Western Europe. I suspect that Marschall von Bieberstein was no exception to this general rule.

The statesman who seemed to be most closely in touch with reality was Kiderlen-Waechter. Unfortunately his career was largely ruined by the fact that, through some indiscreet remarks, repeated by a rival for Imperial favour, he incurred the dislike of the Kaiser, to whom for a number of years he had been attached by the Foreign Office during the annual cruises in Scandinavian waters.

The editor of the biographical notes included in Lord D'Abernon's Memoirs * says that Kiderlen-Waechter was not in favour with the Kaiser because he was a pacifist. No description of Kiderlen-Waechter could well be more misleading. It is true that he wanted to avoid war with England, but solely because he thought that Germany had nothing to gain and everything to lose in such a conflict (and, amongst other things, that it would lead to the introduction of the parliamentary form of government, which he considered unsuitable to the German character). He was therefore strongly opposed to Tirpitz' naval policy. In this controversy the Kaiser supported Tirpitz. Presumably it can only have been this incident which led the editor of the notes in question to make the statement I have quoted. So far from being a pacifist, Kiderlen-Waechter more than once contemplated the possibility of a war ; and on one occasion at least, in the long-drawn-out Morocco negotiations, he made good use of a threat of Germany's military power, as he afterwards gleefully boasted. In brief, he was (despite their difference in respect to the Navy) a " pacifist " very much of the pattern of the Kaiser himself : he wanted Germany to be a strong military Power with the object of thereby being able to further her political ambitions, without being actually obliged to resort to force.

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* *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. I, p. 172.

The Kaiser's dislike to Kiderlen-Waechter arose from an entirely different cause, and its origin went much further back. The incident has been well known for more than twenty years. The facts are recounted by M. H. Simondet, in his introduction to *Kiderlen-Waechter Intime*, the French edition of Professor Ernst Jaeckh's book which was published in 1926. In 1898, when Kiderlen was Minister at Copenhagen, he was actually on board the Imperial yacht, when (according to Simondet) Admiral von Senden-Bibran told the Emperor that he made certain sarcastic remarks about him. Wilhelm II was so enraged that he made Kiderlen disembark immediately. Indeed, he would have been forced to leave the Diplomatic Service had it not been for the intervention of Philippe von Eulenberg, who was then at the height of his influence. Jaeckh states that Senden-Bibran had had Kiderlen's correspondence opened by the secret police, and, finding the free way in which Kiderlen was accustomed to express himself in his private letters about everything and everybody, he informed Prince von Bülow. It happened that the latter discovered at the Foreign Office confidential letters, referring in certain terms to the Kaiser, written to Marschall von Bieberstein, which the latter had forgotten when he left the Foreign Office in 1897 to go to Constantinople. And Bülow used these letters with the Emperor in order to discredit Kiderlen.

This account, which corresponds exactly with the one told me many years ago (and which, indeed, was, I thought, known to everyone), is substantially correct. But I have recently been told by a German statesman (who, I understand, actually saw one of the letters) that it does not disclose the real part played in the tragedy by one of the principal actors. Unfortunately the communication of this curious fact was made to me confidentially, and under a promise that I should make no present use of it.*

In any event, it was a tragedy for Kiderlen-Waechter, for it led to his being kept ten years in Bucarest, to which

* Take Jonescu, who was on very close personal terms with Kiderlen, has related that his breach with the Kaiser arose from the latter making some jocular remarks regarding Kiderlen's personal affairs, which that statesman promptly resented with his customary outspoken bluntness.

post he was sent in 1900. There is reason to believe that Prince von Bülow took care, so long as he was Chancellor, to see that the Emperor's indignation did not fade away, and that Kiderlen should be kept in what finally amounted to a species of exile. For Bülow, despite his many brilliant parts, was not only far from being a strong man, but also dreaded the competition of those who, like Kiderlen, were possessed of characters more forcible than his own.

Although the Kaiser (who had never doubted his ability) was finally made to see the necessity of putting Kiderlen at the head of the Foreign Office, he never again took him fully into favour. Moreover, Kiderlen was always detested by the Empress on account of his somewhat lax morals, as exemplified by his mode of life. When Kiderlen finally was brought back to the Wilhelmstrasse his physical decay had already begun, while mentally he had become somewhat orientalised. He was still a tremendously hard worker; but there were periods, which gradually recurred with greater frequency, when his powers seemed to be mobile. But he was always a lucid thinker and a stern realist. Despite some violent dissensions, Kiderlen and the French Ambassador, M. Jules Cambon, agreed very well. A lady well known in Berlin society and diplomatic circles once showed me a curious letter, or rather two letters written on the same sheet of paper, one side by Kiderlen-Waechter and one by Jules Cambon, announcing to her, each in his own way, the final settlement of the Morocco question, which, as they both said, they had so often discussed under her hospitable roof.

The capital of Rumania was then undoubtedly a post of considerable importance, but during that period Kiderlen-Waechter saw many of his juniors promoted over his head to more important positions. He was finally considering leaving the service entirely when he was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in June 1910. Kiderlen was always a protégé and devoted friend of Holstein, who had died in 1909; but in some important respects he did not agree with his views on the European situation. He was strongly in favour of some understanding with Great Britain, not because he had any love for the English—the "Roastbeefs," as he called

them—but because, like Bismarck, he believed that an Anglo-Russian understanding was within the bounds of possibility.

Kiderlen-Waechter lacked the charm of Prince von Bülow. But he was a hard fighter and an uncomfortable opponent. Moreover, he had the good points of his defects; for he cherished few illusions. Such an astute observer as M. Jules Cambon wrote to Caillaux that Kiderlen-Waechter was "l'homme le moins théoricien, mais le plus sensible aux faits que j'aie jamais vu." *

The late M. Sazonov mentions in his Memoirs that Kiderlen-Waechter's principal merit in his eyes was that he did not attach any exaggerated importance to Austria-Hungary, but regarded the alliance with that country in the same light as had Bismarck.† Indeed, in October 1912, Kiderlen wrote: "Berchtold annoys me, because he absolutely does not know what he wants. We must do everything possible to prevent political control passing from Berlin to Vienna: Aehrenthal unfortunately succeeded in getting that control from Bülow. That may well cost us dearly one day." And in discussing German foreign policy before the Commission of the Reichstag, only a month before his death, Kiderlen pointed out that there was always the possibility of Austria being obliged to resort to violence in view of Serbia's claim to a port on the Adriatic; and remarked that the danger of that situation was that in such an event it was by no means certain that the Russian Government would not be forced by public opinion to interfere in favour of Serbia.

There is no reason to doubt that Kiderlen-Waechter was quite sincere when he said: "D'ailleurs, vous savez combien sincèrement je souhaite maintenir la paix. Nous n'avons rien à gagner par une victoire et nous aurions tant à perdre par un échec! Le temps travaille pour nous: d'ici en dix ans nous devenons beaucoup plus forts que nos ennemis. Vous n'avez aucune idée du merveilleux essor économique de l'Allemagne. Que ferions-nous de la guerre? Supposons que nous soyons victorieux: irions-nous annexer encore d'autres territoires étrangers pour accroitre nos difficultés? Et

* *Les Balkans en Feu*, de M. Raymond Poincaré, pp. 284, 285.
† *Les Années Fatales—Souvenirs de M. S. Sazonov*, pp. 31, 32.

puis, il y à encore autre chose a quoi vous ne pensez probablement pas. Toute grande victoire est l'œuvre du peuple : et ce peuple, il faut le payer. Déjà nous avons dû payer la victoire de 1870 par le suffrage universal. Une nouvelle victoire nous donnerait le régime parlementaire. Or vous savez ce que j'en pense : pour nous Allemandes ce serait un malheur irréparable." *

The late M. Take Jonescu recounted that Kiderlen, while not concealing the fact that he had no predilection for England (especially on account of her parliamentary institutions), dwelt at length upon the necessity of establishing an accord with that country simply because, as Bismarck years before had written to Holstein, England was one of the great factors for peace in the world, and therefore Germany could have no interest in wanting to destroy her. He further confided to Take Jonescu that he had been unable to give effect to his convictions because of the attitude of Tirpitz, supported by the Kaiser, in respect to building a great Navy.

It is, of course, well known that, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Kiderlen-Waechter was opposed to the policy of a great Navy. He expressed his views openly in an interview with Admiral von Tirpitz, who was then Secretary of State for the Navy—the only result being that he drew upon himself a letter of rebuke from the Kaiser. Kiderlen-Waechter did not hesitate to write in a private letter :† " I am an adversary of Tirpitz, because I am afraid that his policy may lead us to war with England. I consider Tirpitz to be the greatest —— to be found in the streets of Berlin." It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that the nation as a whole looked upon its rapidly growing marine as a challenge to Great Britain. Strange as it may appear to us, the truth is that the German people were simply unable to understand why the enormous increase of the Empire's sea-power had entirely changed English feeling, and the apprehension which was felt at the mere idea that the Kaiser would have at his behest not only the most powerful Army on the Continent, but a Navy which bid fair to

* *Kiderlen-Waechter Intime*, by Jaeckh, p. 360.

† *Ibid.*, p. 315. The word used by Kiderlen, and which was evidently of an injurious nature, is omitted in Herr Jaeckh's book.

rival that by which Great Britain had so long maintained her domination on the seas.

In any event, the plan of developing Germany's maritime power to the highest possible point was a fixed obsession with the Kaiser. Writing with the insight which she sometimes (though by no means always) displayed in her correspondence, his mother, the Empress Frederick, said: "William's one idea is to have a Navy which shall be larger and stronger than the British Navy, but this is really pure madness and folly, and he will see how impossible and needless it is. One large enough for German requirements and as good as possible of its kind is all that ought to be aimed at—with prudence and safety. But he has some fantastic idea of Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, etc., who did so much by their own initiative, and forgets how Germany is thirsting for liberty and reform in so many things, and how his true work cut out for him, left him as a legacy by his father, is of a very different kind."

The Kaiser's dream of naval supremacy was, in his own eyes, quite consistent with the pacific views which he sincerely held. He lacked political acumen in not recognising its futility. It was all very well to proclaim that Germany's future lay upon the seas; and flamboyantly to style himself the "Admiral of the Atlantic," while he wrote to the Czar as the "Admiral of the Pacific." But he should have realised that England would never allow herself to be out-distanced in naval construction; and that while he might (and did) endow Germany with a Fleet far superior to those of France and Italy, any attempt to place the Fatherland upon a naval equality with Great Britain would merely result in the latter country outbuilding Germany in a contest which would bear heavily upon the taxpayers of both countries. As a matter of fact, Lord Haldane made that abundantly clear when he talked to Tirpitz in Berlin.

It is said that the Kaiser admired Admiral Mahan's famous book, and largely agreed with his conclusions. But be that as it may, German military strategists never attached sufficient importance to sea-power. The General Staff had for years considered in every aspect the position in which Germany might be placed if she was at the same time in conflict with France and with Russia; and had

once at least varied the plan to be followed in such circumstances. But it was only during the course of the war that it realised that a superior hostile naval force might prove a dominating factor. Indeed, even the politicians might have acted differently had they been impregnated with this truth.

But Kiderlen-Waechter realised (if no one else did) that the elder Pitt's statement in the eighteenth century, that "England could not afford to let France have a strong Navy," would, in British opinion, apply with equal force to Germany in the twentieth century. It was doubtless on account of his views on this subject that, to his indignation, Kiderlen-Waechter was not summoned to the meetings which Lord Haldane had with the Kaiser and Tirpitz in Berlin in 1912. In that connection there is one point to which attention has perhaps not been sufficiently directed. The German proposal was that Great Britain should engage herself to "observe at least a benevolent neutrality should war be forced upon Germany." Gibbon has truly said that "aggressor" is "an ambiguous name, the seed of discord." Nevertheless, it is doubtful just how near Sir Edward Grey was at one moment to agreeing, in exchange for certain satisfaction about German naval conditions, to adopt the clause thus suggested. Certain it is that Germany was given some cause to believe that the proposal might possibly be adopted; for on March 6th, 1912, the Kaiser telegraphed to Count Metternich, then German Ambassador to England: "From your conversation with Haldane, the account of which was laid before me yesterday, it appears that, in spite of all contrary assurances, both the British Cabinet and he himself have given up the idea of pursuing our negotiations." It does not appear from the telegram that the Kaiser was at the moment aware of the cause of this decision; possibly he had not yet been informed that M. Poincaré had intimated bluntly that if England did not reject the proposal it would mean the termination of the understanding with France. In any event, the result was quite in accord with what Kiderlen-Waechter foresaw.

Kiderlen-Waechter's greatest political virtue was that he never deceived himself. It may seem despicable for a statesman to deceive others (although it is a bold man

who will assert that it is not sometimes as necessary as is a *ruse de guerre*), but it is disastrous if he deceives himself.

Unfortunately this clear-sighted statesman died suddenly in December 1912. Had he been alive in 1914 events might possibly have taken a different course. Such a statement is no reflection upon Herr von Jagow, who, in any event, would have preferred to represent his Government abroad rather than to conduct the foreign policy of his country in turbulent days. He left Rome, where he had acquired a position of peculiar distinction in the diplomatic world, with the greatest reluctance, and only upon the reiterated insistence of the Kaiser that he should go to the Wilhelmstrasse. But the period between his appointment and the outbreak of the war was too brief to permit him to change the direction of the policy pursued ; and too brief to permit a fair and independent judgment to be passed upon him. It is only right to remember that as late as July 13th, 1914, the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Edward Goschen, wrote to Sir Arthur Nicolson that he was persuaded that Herr von Jagow (as well as the Chancellor) wished to avoid hostilities ; and that that was also the desire of many Germans, financial and industrial interests being in the highest degree opposed to a war, and especially to one which, in their opinion, did not directly touch German interests.

Nor was the nation, as a whole, asking for war. The Germans are in no sense a warrior race. They are not, to use the words of Anatole France (who was not referring to them), " Des vrais militaires, qui prennent tout et ne gardent rien comme, par exemple, les Français." Moreover, they are the antithesis of the Poles, of whom their King, John Casimir, used to say that their fatal defect was a complete lack of the virtue of obedience. For the Germans are distinguished by a desire to know that someone is set in authority over them, and by a passive obedience to that authority. These qualities make them thorough and capable soldiers. But that is an entirely different thing from being a warlike race. On the other hand, they are naturally non-political ; which in some circumstances is equally dangerous. In 1914 the mass of the German people had no innate desire to go to war ; but it was, as ever, ready to do as it was told. It is perhaps true that its political leaders let their country slip

into the contest, and were not as adroit as they might have been in avoiding it. For even the political world did not actually desire war ; any more than did the Kaiser. The latter, however, was consumed by an ambition to make Germany so strong a military Power, both on land and at sea, as to enable her to dictate without actually having recourse to the arbitrament of arms. He forgot the dictum of the sage Bismarck—who, after 1870, was less militant than he sometimes pretended to be—that " Europe will not stand any ' cock-o'-the-walk ' business."

Before the war, Germany, thanks to the organising ability of her great industrials, and the capacity for work of her people, had almost become the leader in the field of commerce amongst European nations, and apparently had not yet reached the limit of her production. Although her neighbours regarded this progress with no favourable eye, that alone would never have welded the Allies together. Germany's success in the world markets had little or no effect on Russia. Even France could afford to be largely indifferent to that phase of the situation. It was Great Britain which had the most to lose, and which actually had lost most, by this competition. But what led to the Triple Entente was the German Weltpolitik. It was not any general community of interests, and still less any sentimental feeling, which gave birth to the understanding between Great Britain, France, and Russia : for while sentiment is sometimes a good cement, it is never anything but a precarious basis for international relations. It was the fear of a danger which seemed to threaten all alike—the absolute predominance of one country upon the Continent of Europe. Any attempt to achieve such a position has always met with opposition and ultimate failure. It was in that way that Spain and Holland sank to the level of second-class Powers. And if, later, France did not meet the same fate, at least Louis XIV and Napoleon both bled her white in seeking to satisfy their ambitions to achieve that end. England has always viewed with alarm the possession by any Continental Power of a great Army together with a Navy rivalling her own. And it is a menace against which she will always find allies amongst countries which would regard the situation with the most perfect equanimity if it were only a question of Great Britain's

commercial position being undermined. As a matter of fact, German statesmen were at no time anxious for a war. They infinitely preferred to obtain their ends without a conflict. But with the exception of Kiderlen-Waechter they did not perceive that a peace which was preserved only by pointing to a powerful Army and Navy in the background could only be illusory and temporary. It lacked that minimum degree of mutual confidence which was essential. The disappearance of the so-called Weltpolitik was a natural sequence of the war. But although the war was directed against that policy, its original object was not to deprive Germany of her position as a Great Power. Politicians in 1914 saw more clearly than they did in 1918 what was, and what was not, feasible. Yet it should not require any deep or long reflection, or any abnormal knowledge of history, to convince anyone of ordinary intelligence that it is impossible to keep in a state of permanent inferiority a nation in Central Europe, having a population of more than sixty millions, and a capacity for sustained effort unequalled by any other race. I leave aside any question of how desirable that result may have appeared in the moment of exacerbation at the close of the war. I am only seeking to point out that it did not fall within the realm of practical politics.

The war ended with what is sometimes called the revolution. But, despite certain scenes of disorder at Kiel and elsewhere, it was a revolution of an almost bloodless nature. The wonder is that the vast military forces returning from the Front should have disintegrated as peacefully as they did. Even the Socialists were not extreme in the measures which they advocated. It is true that a Republic was proclaimed. But at a Cabinet meeting, only a few days earlier, Scheidemann, then one of the Secretaries of State, said: "A monarchy which would be really parliamentary, nearly of the same kind as that which exists in England, would be acceptable to the Social-Democrats. In any event it would be better than a republic of money-bags like that which prevails in France." As it turned out, Germany has been fortunate in her two Presidents. The late Herr Ebert, whatever his own political tendencies may have been, gave, while in office, an example of moderation which was beneficial to his country at a most critical period, and which rendered

him immune from any serious attacks by the Right. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg has succeeded in sinking his personal proclivities in an even more striking fashion : for although he was always considered a firm Monarchist, he has, as President of the Reich, been a loyal exponent of the Weimar Constitution.

It is, I think, questionable whether the present form of government is that which is best adapted to the needs of the German race : although, as Kiderlen-Waechter foresaw, it was the inevitable outcome of a war. The idea that simply because parliamentary government is suitable for England it will meet with a like success in other countries cannot be defended either by sound logic or by practical illustrations. The great prosperity which Great Britain enjoyed during the Victorian age was in no way due to parliamentary government. But in any event the successful operation of that system is dependent upon the maintenance of two, and only two, great parties in the State. And until now that has always been the position in England, except when there has been a small group which existed for one particular purpose, and took no part in general affairs—as, for instance, the Irish Home Rule party. Of the three Latin countries in Europe which adopted the English form of government, two are now ruled by dictators, while the third—France—is distinguished by what we, at least, would regard as political instability : during the four years that Mr. Lloyd George remained in office after the war there were no fewer than four Prime Ministers in France. I believe that Moltke was right when he wrote : " There can be no doubt that every State requires a government suited to its individual idiosyncrasies. A Constitution like that of England . . . gradually developed out of the character of the nation, could never be transferred to the Continent of Europe." Bismarck went to the root of the whole matter when, speaking in the Diet in 1868, he said : " Constitutional government is impossible if the Government cannot rely upon one of its greater parties, even in such exceptional matters as are not entirely to the taste of the party. . . . If a Government has not at least one party in the country which regards its views and leanings from such a standpoint it degenerates into coalition ministries, and its policy betrays fluctations

which have a very prejudicial effect upon the State itself, and more especially upon the Conservative principle." How true was this prediction is shown by the fact that in the German General Election of 1928 more than thirty parties put candidates in the field—although it should be added that fourteen of them failed to obtain even a single seat. The result is that Germany is obliged to rely upon coalition governments. This to some extent blocks constructive legislation, and also has the undesirable effect of unduly increasing the powers of the bureaucracy and of permanent officials. However, it can be said with certainty that at present there is no widespread wish to restore the Monarchy. Even then Natioalist party has lately been split in twain upon the question of whether or not a Nationalist must necessarily be a Monarchist. The outcome of the war was to make Germany thoroughly democratic ; though possibly not republican.

The parliamentary system has not yet produced many men of outstanding political talent. This is perhaps explicable by the fact that in its present form it has only prevailed in Germany for the last ten years. I am, however, inclined to think that the real reason is to be sought elsewhere. Men of talent abound in Germany, but that ability is rarely of a type which gives its possessors any special aptitude or taste for a political life. Moreover, the intense commercial activity which distinguishes the Germany of to-day, and the almost universal determination to better the material position of the country and to regain its lost prestige, engulfs many who would otherwise devote themselves to the service of the State. The result is that the Reichstag has its fair percentage of professional politicians, and only a few leaders of eminence.

A distinguished German politician, himself a member of the Reichstag, once pointed out to me that the experience of only ten years afforded no reasonable test of the ultimate success or failure of parliamentary government. He said, with some reason, that the great weakness was a lack of political leaders, and that they would only discover themselves after years of parliamentary experience. Moreover, he claimed (without any dissent on my part) that the situation of Germany to-day, especially in respect to her foreign relations, was such that no party could expect to inspire sufficient confidence

to give it a majority in the country. But in his opinion there was nothing in the German character which, under normal conditions, would militate against the parliamentary system, based upon two great parties. He cited the present Government of Prussia (which, of course, is not hampered by any questions of foreign policy) in support of this contention; and predicted that in the course of time the Centre party would disintegrate, leaving simply a Right and a Left.

This point of view is undoubtedly interesting and worthy of serious consideration. Undoubtedly it would be unwise to attempt to make absolute deductions from the history of the past decade. However, all that carries the matter no further, leaving still open the question as to whether or not Bismarck and Kiderlen-Waechter were right in their estimate of the character of their fellow-countrymen, and in their comprehension of English parliamentary government. It would require some temerity for a foreigner to presume to pass any final judgment upon that complicated piece of machinery —the German character, so far as it is shown by the workings of German mentality. I therefore limit myself, strictly, to saying that I shall be surprised if time proves that Bismarck and Kiderlen-Waechter were wrong.

Less impressive is, I think, any lesson which can be drawn, in the way indicated, by a study of the Prussian Government and its methods. Undeniably that Government is conducted with great efficiency. Also it is, in my opinion, well adapted to the Prussian people—and the Prussians are both the strongest and the most numerous race in Germany. But it is impossible to say whether the system would work so smoothly if that Government had to solve problems of foreign policy, with which the Central Government of the Reich always must be confronted. My informant was likewise singularly astray when he assumed that there was no difference between the way in which parliamentary government is practised in Prussia and in Great Britain.

A great distinction is to be drawn between the adoption by England of responsible parliamentary government as a logical step in the evolution which has been proceeding for centuries, and its adoption by various other countries (and often suddenly) as a direct measure

of democracy. That illustrates in a certain degree the varying results of evolution and revolution. It also provides one reason why the deathknell of that Liberalism, which flourished so luxuriantly throughout Europe in the second part of the 19th century, did not weaken the power or the operation of parliamentary government in England to the same extent as it did on the Continent.

Some years ago the late Walter Rathenau was considered by many to be the destined leader. Rathenau was a man of wide interests and cultivated intellect, but his character suffered from a pronounced vein of self-esteem. He had many qualities which fitted him for the conduct of political negotiations. He could, for instance, shift his ground in an extraordinary fashion, without any apparent self-embarrassment. In reality he was a man of many expedients rather than an opportunist, for his aims were more constant than his actions seemed to denote. But the way he veered from point to point eventually produced a certain lack of confidence in the stability of his political opinions. Nevertheless, his untimely death was a distinct loss to Germany.

Unquestionably, the outstanding figure in the political life of Germany to-day is Gustav Stresemann. Dr. Stresemann, who is only fifty years of age, was first elected to the Reichstag in 1907, and has since sat there continuously, with the exception of a break during the two years preceding the war. In those days he was a National-Liberal. But this group disappeared in the general collapse of all parties in November 1918; and it was Stresemann who was then foremost in founding, as its lineal successor, the German Peoples party. In 1923, at the worst stage of the inflation period, he became Chancellor for a few months; and will always be remembered for having put an end to the Ruhr conflict. It was at the close of the same year that he went to the Foreign Office, and thus entered upon that stage of his career which has since given him a leading place amongst European statesmen; for there is little doubt that it is the impression made by Stresemann, and the confidence he has inspired at various conferences of the Great Powers, which is largely responsible for the progress Germany has made in recovering its place in the councils of the nations. Exactly how far Stresemann will go remains to be seen. As a matter of

fact, he carries a burden too heavy for any one man to bear. Unlike Chamberlain or Briand, he is not supported by any clear parliamentary majority in such a way as to enable him to give his time and attention completely to foreign affairs, free from other political worries. He is always dependent upon coalitions, of which his own party forms only a fraction; in the last election the Peoples party returned forty-four members out of a total of four hundred and eighty-nine. Herr Stresemann himself realises that this situation is unavoidable. He admits that at present the country must be governed by the middle parties, with the support of one of the large wing parties, Nationalists or Socialists. In his view, the middle parties take in everything from the Peoples party on the Right to and including the Democrats on the Left. From a parliamentary standpoint a system of successive coalitions can never be called satisfactory. In Germany it has more than once led to a crisis; and on these occasions no one has been more useful than Stresemann himself in untangling the political skein. But it is almost a tragedy for his country, as well as for himself, that Herr Stresemann has, for some time past, been in indifferent health, owing to the drain on his strength during the past few years in preserving the balance and composing the disputes between the various political groups, while, at the same time, guiding Germany's foreign policy.*

Should Herr Stresemann become incapacitated, it is difficult to imagine by whom he would be replaced. To-day the choice is not great in Germany. But in that respect she does not differ from other countries. Few, if any, men of note have come to the front either in England or France since the war. Indeed, it becomes more apparent year by year that parliamentary democratic institutions, while prolific in politicians, produce few statesmen; and that the tendency is towards standardisation at a comparatively low level.

A possibility (I myself do not consider him a probability as things stand to-day) as a successor to Stresemann is a man not unknown in England, who at the moment occupies no position in public life, but who is far from being inactive in the *coulisse*—Herr von Kühl-

* Since the above was printed, Herr Stresemann has died—a victim of overwork.

mann. In fact, his presence in Paris during the Reparations Conference in May, 1929, caused the German Government to state that it had no responsibility either for his movements or his actions. It will be remembered that in the years preceding 1914 Kühlmann was the Counsellor at the German Embassy in London, and was supposed to be the real power, since it was thought that the Wilhelmstrasse preferred his reports to those of his chief, Prince Lichnowsky, who saw the situation in a different light. It has been said that they sent conflicting reports to the German Foreign Office, which regarded Kühlmann's views with greater favour. However, one who was then occupying a high position at the Wilhelmstrasse has given me a categorical denial of this legend. The same authority has assured me (although the published despatches do not altogether bear out this statement) that the nearer war actually approached, the more certain became Lichnowsky that England would remain neutral—despite all the warnings he had sent to Berlin in the earlier days of his ambassadorship. In a measure, this is, indeed, confirmed by an account of the last days of July written by the late Take Jonescu, who was then in London. He mentions that on July 27th he expressed to Lichnowsky his determination to return to Germany forthwith in view of the impending danger; and that the German Ambassador replied that there was no possibility of war, that the chances were 99 to 1 against it, and that, anyway, he was by no means sure that in the event of war England would intervene. It should, however, be added that Lichnowsky judged the situation in a different way on the following day.*

Lichnowsky attained a certain degree of success during the brief time he passed in London, partly because from the outset he was friendly with, and had absolute confidence in, Sir Edward Grey; and partly because, aided by his accomplished wife, he quickly made a social centre of the German Embassy, which had been a morgue in the days of his predecessor, Count Metternich. He accomplished this all the more easily since he was not faced by any grave competition. Count Mensdorf was entertained more than he entertained himself; and M. Paul Cambon, although still a marked figure in Society,

* *Souvenirs*, pp. 17, 18.

was already beginning to feel the weight of his years, and rarely threw open the French Embassy in Albert Gate.

In some respects Lichnowsky had a clear comprehension of English life and character, although his deductions were often too far-fetched. He had the misfortune to die while in bad odour with the majority of his fellow-countrymen. *My Mission*, which first appeared in Switzerland in 1918, was excellent propaganda from the English point of view; and therefore, rightly enough, it was used to the fullest extent. However, it is, I believe, now generally admitted that it was originally published through an indiscretion, and without Prince Lichnowsky's authorisation. But a great deal of nonsense has been written about the perfect understanding of England which Lichnowsky possessed. As late as 1909, writing in the *Deutsche Revue*, he asserted that "English statesmen have artificially created a fear of Germany simply in order to inspire the people to greater efforts to retain their economic position." He even alleged that they would be loth to destroy the German Fleet and German commerce because they would thereby annihilate the bogey which enabled them to further their schemes of Empire. It is true that by 1912 he had begun to modify this curious view. The fact is that, despite various amiable qualities, Lichnowsky was far from being either a sound or a far-sighted diplomatist.

During the war Kühlmann was for a short time Foreign Secretary. Both in experience and in natural ability for the conduct of affairs he probably excels any of his rivals. But the actual situation of political parties (always a more delicate matter when it is necessary to govern by means of coalition governments) would be likely to militate against his recall to the Wilhelmstrasse. It is also questionable whether Kühlmann stands high in the favour of Marschal Hindenburg. Although, of course, it is not the President who decides such appointments; nor, to give him the credit which is his due, would Hindenburg ever dream of allowing any personal feeling to stand in the way of what he considered to be in the best interests of his country. For Kühlmann, while he was Foreign Secretary, opposed with marked firmness, and even with cunning (for in those days it required cunning), the preponderant part which Hindenburg and

Ludendorff were then playing in political matters. One instance will suffice. As a result of a Council of the Crown, held on September 11th, 1917, the Government was given power to make, if it saw fit, a declaration that Germany would be prepared to re-establish Belgium integrally ; the only proviso being that if peace did not ensue before the end of the year the proposal should be re-examined. But only a few days later, on September 15th, Hindenburg (at the instance, it is said, of Ludendorff) wrote to the Chancellor that for both economic and military reasons it would be necessary to occupy Belgium for some years after the conclusion of peace. Herr Michaelis, who was always as wax in the hands of Ludendorff, apparently acquiesced. But when this letter was published by the Republican Government in 1919 a storm of indignation swept over the country ; and Erzberger bluntly made the accusation that Ludendorff, Hindenburg, Michaelis, and Helfferich had prevented a move towards a possible peace. Ludendorff, who realised the gravity of the position, especially as he was the person chiefly assailed, gave his version of the matter in a letter ; and on August 7th, 1919, Michaelis also published a letter (approved and countersigned by the other three) which can only be described as a specious version of the episode. But this document was not signed by Kühlmann, despite the fact that Ludendorff was anxious to make him at least equally responsible.*

Next to Stresemann, perhaps the most interesting political figure in Germany is Otto Braun. Braun is neither a Junker, nor a lawyer like Stresemann. For some years he carried on the trade of an engraver and printer, but eventually made a name for himself as a writer in the Social-Democrat Press. With the exception of a short interval, he has been Prime Minister (or Minister-President, as it is called) of Prussia since 1920. He is himself a Prussian through and through, in the sense that he embodies the best characteristics of that race ; he has a great capacity for work, together with a decidedly marked tenacity of purpose, and a firm belief in the virtues of a simple, if not austere, mode of

* I gave full details regarding this incident in *The Path to Peace* pp. 112-116.

life. He is rarely to be seen in public, and is said generally to have an understudy ready for any ornamental occasion. It may be added that he never evades a conflict with the Federal Government when he thinks that the rights of Prussia are in any way infringed or imperilled.

It is also worthy of remark that no tendency towards ideas of so-called revenge are to be discovered in the Germany of to-day. It was otherwise in the years immediately following the war. But those taking part in the active life of the country are now working as one man to reconquer the position in the world of commerce which Germany held before 1914; and, with reason, are not entirely dissatisfied with the progress already made. To discover any revengeful sentiments one must seek out the old militarists—who numerically are of small importance. The question of Alsace-Lorraine is, I think, sincerely accepted as settled once and for all. It would be asking too much of human nature to expect that Germans should not be somewhat amused by (and perhaps somewhat inclined to magnify) any troubles that France may have with the recovered provinces. But I do not believe that the younger generation is taught that it may live to see, and should look forward to seeing, Alsace-Lorraine once again under German rule. The question of the Polish Corridor (to which I will later refer at more length) is upon an entirely different basis. There certainly is no thought of now altering the situation by any violent measures. But in their hearts the German people do not, and never will, accept this scission of Prussia. Without having any definite plans, they rely upon the future—just as the Poles themselves for more than a century had faith in the restoration of their dismembered country—to rectify what they will always regard as a crying injustice.

But although more interested in work than in politics, there are certain political questions constantly present in the mind of nearly every German; and precisely because they are matters which vitally affect and weigh upon the industrial life of the country: the Occupation of the Rhineland; Reparations; Disarmament.

After passing some months in Germany in 1922, I wrote: "A nation of less than forty millions cannot for ever keep disarmed one of more than sixty millions,

unless she herself gives some evidence of her belief in the blessings of disarmament. If the Germans are not a military race, they are, what is equally dangerous, a people who have no political instinct. They are certain to adopt unquestionably whatever their rulers may decree. They want to be governed, and will obey with a blind docility unknown in England. To-day Germany is uncertain which is the right path to take. The next few years will decide whether the military group, which now makes its headquarters in Munich, will again wield power or whether Germany will become convinced that in this century peaceful ways pay better. The attitude adopted by France will be a determining factor in this matter. If that country, with her thirty-eight millions, shows a belief that force, and force alone, is decisive, Germany, with her sixty-one millions, will naturally look to the day when she can appeal to the only test which her neighbour considers final.

"But if it is possible to give Germany a chance to work out her own salvation; above all, if she herself renders it possible by showing her sincerity, and recovers through years of stern civilian effort, it is conceivable that she will recognise that her future depends upon breaking with her past. The military party is well aware of this, and therefore what it fears is that the present régime should get a fair start and show that it can accomplish something.

"Germany understood force, and force only, so long as she was persuaded that the rest of the world would allow her to adopt, and was adopting, that scale of measurement. Since then she has learned half the lesson. Whether she learns the other half (if, indeed, she can be taught it at all) depends largely upon the Allies. If they will not teach, or Germany cannot learn, the outlook is not cheerful. For the late struggle has left Germany fully convinced that war does not necessarily pay. But what has happened since 1918 has not entirely led her to believe that in the long run the greatest material advantages are to be obtained along the path of peace."*

In referring to the question of Reparations and the financial crisis through which Germany was then passing,

* *The Path to Peace*, pp. 374, 375.

I wrote : " The experts to whom the German Government turned for advice say that a moratorium is necessary in order to stabilise the mark and to render possible a foreign loan. That may well be correct. But the time is past for the report of experts, who can always be contradicted by other experts. The only sane course is that the Allies should take control of the whole financial situation : a German Debt Commission, sitting permanently at Berlin. . . . If a Commission, free from political control, and too strong and too independent to be manipulated as Mr. Lloyd George manipulated the Reparation Commission, reports that Germany cannot pay at any fixed date, or can only pay so much, that will satisfy France that more cannot then be obtained, and will satisfy the United States (which it may yet be useful to do) that the Allies are at last acting seriously ; and the German people will, in the long run, be the gainers if her politicians devote their energies to showing them the way towards reasonable payment and the re-establishment of their good faith in the eyes of the world." *

I venture to think that such predictions as are contained in these paragraphs have been fully justified by the course of events. But to-day, more than ever, the future course of German public opinion and of German foreign policy is dependent upon the attitude taken by the former Allied Powers. Upon the whole, it must be said that during the last three or four years German policy has at least been as consistent as that of her former antagonists. As lately as 1928 an English newspaper, which possesses a vast circulation and some influence, recalled that it had always opposed setting Germany upon her feet financially, as that could only lead to competition with English commerce. The idea of keeping Germany indefinitely in a state of inferiority is also put forward time and again in a certain section of the French Press. If the watchword after the Treaty of Versailles was signed was " *Delenda est Carthago,*" this would be entirely logical. The wisdom of such a policy, or how many adherents it would have rallied in its support, is another question. But such statements, at this stage, are somewhat misplaced. Since the Dawes Plan went into

* *The Path to Peace*, p. 330.

effect Germany has met her obligations under it; or, in other words, has paid what neutral judges considered her capable of paying. What is, perhaps, more important is that during those years Germany seems to have given such evidence as she could of her desire to join the other Great Powers in preserving the peace of the world. The Locarno Pact, for which Herr Stresemann was partly responsible (but in the origin of which Lord D'Abernon also certainly participated), was a step in that direction. The allotment to Germany of a permanent seat on the Council of the League of Nations was a tacit admission that she was again given her former place amongst the nations.

These facts bear directly upon the question of the occupation of German territory. The whole story of the occupation under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles is somewhat curious. As a matter of fact, French statesmen always had the latent idea of annexation (or at least of some form of international control) up to the left bank of the Rhine; but for various reasons they were rather coy about disclosing it, and perhaps not altogether frank. For when M. Doumergue went to Russia in 1917 he obtained a formal promise that the Czar's Government would support France in the matter—an understanding which was concealed from the British Cabinet. Later, when the Treaty of Versailles was being drafted, Marshal Foch made an impassioned appeal that, in order to protect France in the future, the line of the Rhine should be held for ever. However, all the Allied generals were not in accord. The late Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who has been accused of being sometimes unduly influenced by Foch, states in his diary that he regarded this as impossible. Wilson's own opinion was that the occupation should not be extended beyond two years. Eventually, as is well known, it was agreed that, in exchange for the assistance of England and the United States against any aggressive attack (a promise which fell to the ground when the American Senate refused to ratify the Treaty), a certain portion of German territory should be occupied for fifteen years, a stated zone being evacuated at the end of each five years' period. The late Mr. Bonar Law's

pronouncement upon this arrangement is one which might possibly be recalled by members of the Conservative party to-day: "The occupation has only two objects—to protect France and to guarantee the execution of the Treaty. In neither case is the period of fifteen years justified."

Even since the Hague Conference the French Press sometimes contends that continuous occupation for the full time is essential to guard France against any possible attack on the part of her former enemy. Leaving aside all question of German ability to place in the field, before 1935, a force sufficient for that purpose, the main point is that France has already implicitly agreed that German intentions are as pacific as her own. She was not obliged to adopt that attitude. She might, if she so desired, have taken the stand that she had no faith in the German Government, and that she would not be a party to any arrangement which was based upon confidence in the promises of German statesmen. French polemists claim that military occupation of German territory is a better guarantee than any pact. That cannot be denied. But the natural reply to that contention is that if France wished to adhere rigidly to that view, and was not satisfied with such guarantees as were given at Locarno, manifestly she should never have signed that Pact. Moreover, it is obviously illogical that a nation should be summoned to assist in regulating the peace of the world, and should, at the same time, be told that she herself is so little to be trusted that she must be kept in check by foreign troops. But even if France is fearful of what Germany may do at some distant date, there was very little to be gained by prolonging the occupation until 1935. The only result would have been that a country of forty millions would have succeeded in thoroughly exasperating its neighbour with a population of well over sixty millions. If Germany is still to be dreaded by France as a possible aggressor between 1929 and 1935, fifteen years' occupation is not sufficient. To-day Germany is stronger and in every way more capable of standing on her own feet than she was in 1919. Undoubtedly she will be in a still better position in 1935. If, therefore, France contended that occupation must be continued until the full period prescribed by the Treaty

because any abridgment thereof would imperil her safety, it is clear that no specified period would suffice. But, if that is so, France should never have been a party to the Pact, and should have opposed the admission of Germany to the League of Nations.

The strongest argument in favour of a speedy evacuation of occupied German territory was that it would be beneficial alike to France and to England, as well as to Germany. It was in the interest of France because she had nothing to gain and everything to lose by prolonging the occupation to the utmost limit. To do so would not only have exacerbated a neighbour who is bound again to become powerful, but would have convinced that neighbour that her former enemies were entirely insincere. It was in the interests of Great Britain because it will undoubtedly lessen the chances of another clash in Europe, or will at least delay that catastrophe. Moreover, public opinion in England favoured a speedy liberation of German territory. In this connection it is worth remarking that in 1928 the Allied Army of Occupation had a nominal strength of 60,000 French, 8,900 Belgian, and 7,900 British troops. Finally, the termination of the occupation was in the interests of Germany for many obvious reasons—not the least of which is that no self-respecting nation can allow itself to be treated as a trusted partner at one moment, and at the next to be told that it is under the grave suspicion of contemplating treachery of the grossest kind.

It is, however, probable that French statesmen themselves had long ago concluded that occupation beyond the first few years after the war could serve no useful purpose, so far as ultimate protection was concerned. In reality the French opposition to the speedy evacuation of the Rhine country was based largely upon the desire to connect the question of occupation with that of reparations, and to get some speedier or greater payment in exchange for evacuation before 1935. But in this attempt to bind the two matters together the members of the present French Cabinet were placed in a singularly awkward position. For when, some years ago, M. Poincaré was engaged in vigorously attacking the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, he admitted and regretted

that no relation had been established therein between the Occupation and the payment of the German Debt. And in answer to Marshal Foch's argument, "*Occupons la rive gauche et nous serons payés*," M. Tardieu (next to Clemenceau, the person chiefly responsible for the Treaty) went on record as saying that experience had proved that payment was not hastened by occupation of territory.

It is perhaps significant that though this subject was much discussed in the German Press and in German political circles during the early months of 1929, it was rather avoided by all concerned during the Reparations Conference held in May and June. Possibly that was due to the two representatives of the United States, who were determined to effect some arrangement of the financial problem, leaving this delicate question to be settled by the politicians before ratification. Subsequent events proved the wisdom of this course.

This naturally leads to the question of disarmament. Mr. Lloyd George recently expressed the opinion that Germany had complied with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in this respect. He was answered by Profesor J. H. Morgan, K.C., in a letter to *The Times*. Any statement on this subject by former Brigadier-General Morgan deserves attention, not only because he claims to have originated the policy of the Rhine occupation, but because after the Peace Conference he was one of the leading figures in the Military Control Commission which sat in Berlin. Professor Morgan's letter quoted figures to show what Germany was doing at present, and then proceeded, in effect, to tell Mr. Lloyd George that he did not know what he was talking about ; and suggested that he was not aware of the contents of a certain report about German disarmament which the British Government had not yet published. Obviously no one is in a position to comment upon an unpublished report, and therefore this cryptic statement can hardly be said to have thrown any clear light on the discussion. So far as any evidence is available, it would seem that Germany was effectively disarmed by the Military Control Commission. That statement must be qualified by saying that undoubtedly a number of rifles were retained by private individuals. After all, in order to accomplish its purpose, disarmament must be moral as well as material ;

that is, it must be voluntary. For that reason it is important to examine by what sentiments the German people are animated. There is to-day no warlike or aggressive spirit generally current in Germany. The militarist party is smaller in numbers, and is of less importance otherwise, than it was in 1923. That party consists largely of the professional soldiers. It was only natural that those who had always held the belief that Germany's position in the world depended upon the sword should not change their lifelong conceptions merely because a war had been lost. But there is every sign that even the return of an abundant measure of prosperity will not of itself breed warlike feelings, either in the people or in their leaders.

In discussing the subject of reparations six years ago, I suggested that it resolve itself into three main points :

(1.) Does Germany want to pay ?
(2.) Can Germany pay ?
(3.) Is Germany trying to pay ?

To-day these questions may at least be answered more briefly than in 1923. The answer to the first query is : Up to a certain point, the same now as then. No country ever wants to liquidate a war debt except as a matter of convenience :

> " Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold
> Of dire necessity. . . ."

It is a liability for which individuals feel no personal responsibility. Therefore the only incentive to pay is that it is the best policy to do so in order to obtain relief from an uncomfortable or unprofitable situation. But the difference between 1918 and 1929 is that in the latter year both the German people and its leaders have become firmly convinced that it is essential to get the reparation debt upon a firm basis, and to have a final decision upon the total sum to be paid. The corroding influences which were so noticeable in 1923, and the idea of evasion by any means, are now entirely lacking. This of course does not mean that German statesmen have not tried to do their utmost to make the best possible bargain for their country.

The question as to whether or not Germany *can* pay

is largely technical, and also depends upon a host of circumstances. No one except an expert (and even experts disagree amongst themselves) can pronounce with any authority upon that matter. It may be said, however, that the commercial progress made by Germany in the last five years is truly astounding. She has surpassed the expectations even of those who always believed that the national energy would again make her a formidable rival in the markets of the world. Indeed, she is surprised herself at what she has accomplished in so short a period. A study of the statistics is instructive. Nevertheless, the cloud which darkens the sun for the German industry is the lack of capital. Although many of the big trusts and combines are undoubtedly prospering, a large percentage of the smaller interests carry on their business on far too narrow a margin. If the working men have little or no margin from their wages after taxation deductions and the payment of the actual cost of living, the employers of labour are often in a state of weekly apprehension about how they are to obtain the money necessary to meet these wages. The inevitable result is that employers are more dependent upon the banks than they would like to be ; and more dependent than is healthy for the stability of the country. Incidentally, an interesting inquiry might be made as to the extent of the control exercised over many industries to-day by the great banks, either directly or by the directors thereof, in their private capacity, as compared with that exercised in 1914.

Upon the whole, one gets the impresion that what now sometimes passes for German prosperity is, to a certain extent, a façade. No doubt behind that façade the whole German people is working almost feverishly. However, in this connection, it should be remembered that even before the war Germany carried on an immense trade which was entirely disproportionate to the comparatively meagre capital which she herself possessed. In the last analysis the real wealth of the country lies in the enormous capacity of the people for sustained work. This was noticeable even before 1914. To-day it is more evident than ever, because the percentage of the population earning its daily bread, and helping to pay the financial burden of the country is much greater.

Edmund Burke said of the makers of the French Revolution :

> " They have one thing, and one thing only, but that one thing is worth a thousand ; they have energy."

Not the only virtue of the German people—but one amongst many—is " that one thing worth a thousand " —energy. In this respect it is noticeable to one who has studied the two countries that, taking them as a whole, the Germans are undoubtedly more hard-working than the inhabitants of the United States. And this is so not only through the dire necessities of the present day : thrift and hard work are amongst the outstanding features of the national character. But there seems no reason for the suggestion made by the late Prince Alexander von Hohenlohe that the German people now show that their only ideal in the future will be the recuperation of material wealth. His contention that a people which has lost its moral foundation is bound to perish may well be true. But the vigour and determination which the Germans have displayed during the last few years in their effort to extricate themselves from what at one time seemed a bottomless abyss is far from giving any sign of moral weakness. Admittedly a great deal of what has already been accomplished has been done by means of money obtained in the United States and elsewhere. In fact, the Agent-General under the Dawes Plan, Mr. Parker Gilbert, has criticised the total of the amounts which have been borrowed for public works and improvements.

The answer to the third query—Is Germany trying to pay ?—must to-day be entirely different from that given in 1922 and 1923. In those years the country was in a state of financial turmoil, and to some extent the prey of speculators. On the surface there then seemed to be fair reasons for doubting that the country was really doing its utmost to meet its liabilities. But a healthy tone has been restored ; and since the Dawes Plan has come into operation Germany has met the payments which were thereby imposed upon her. That Plan, as Mr. Parker Gilbert pointed out in his report of June 1928, was recommended by its authors, not as an end

in itself, but rather as a means of meeting an urgent problem. In fact, at the time the Allies regarded it as a method of restoring the financial stability of the country, thus allowing Germany eventually to meet reparation payments. There was general agreement with Mr. Parker Gilbert's statement in his report of December 1927, that " neither the reparation problem nor the problems dependent upon it will be finally solved until Germany has been given a definite task to perform on her own responsibility, without foreign supervision and without transfer protection."

The Committee of Experts which met in Paris in the spring of 1929 was the logical sequence of the Dawes Plan; and, like the Committee which drafted that original arrangement, it was free from political bias or control. If the Paris Conference finally arrived at an agreement accepted by all concerned it was due mainly to the efforts of Mr. Owen Young and Mr. J. P. Morgan. The representatives of the United States had crossed the Atlantic with the firm determination that their voyage should not be fruitless. The accomplishment of that end was undoubtedly in the general interest. But it was especially in the interest of Germany; for had the Conference resulted in an absolute breakdown, had it failed to fix a total amount for the debt, a feeling of pessimism and a loss of confidence would have ensued, leading to such a *débâcle* in the Reich as would have affected German credit abroad. As a matter of fact, the necessity for some agreement was more important than the details of the agreement itself; for surely anyone is unduly sanguine who imagines that there will not be further changes in the next quarter of a century.

Neverthless, it was Germany herself who nearly brought the Conference to an untimely end. Indeed, the Paris negotiations will ever remain memorable as an excellent example of how Germany excels all other nations in putting herself in the wrong. When, after some six weeks of joint debates, the Allies finally made a definite proposal, the head of the German Delegation (who is also President of the Reichsbank), Dr. Schacht, answered by producing another and very different proposal, which he announced was not a basis for negotiations, but an ultimatum,

Obviously, if he intended to present an ultimatum instead of to negotiate, Dr. Schacht must have decided upon the terms of it before he left Berlin. It is, therefore, quite comprehensible that the representatives of the Allies were at a loss to know why he had not given it to them on the very first day, instead of allowing many weeks to be wasted in useless discussion. But still more extraordinary was the fact that the German authorities did not immediately recognise that they were simply inviting the world, and especially the United States, from which they had borrowed so heavily, to doubt their good faith, when their agent thus bluntly declared that Germany could not or would not pay a sum which, on the whole, was less than that which Mr. Parker Gilbert had stated they were well able to meet. However, the unpleasant impression was produced rather by the way this stand was taken than by the action itself. The comments of the American Press soon opened the eyes of the German Government; and it was not long before messages were being sent, officially and otherwise, to the great financial houses, stating, in effect, that Dr. Schacht's ultimatum had not been an ultimatum at all, and that he had not meant what he had said. The excuses were rather lame; but they were readily accepted because everyone wished to see some tangible result.

The origin of the whole matter is not quite clear. According to the information given me, the German Government wished the Conference to be so untrammelled by any political influence that it had allowed Dr. Schacht an absolutely free hand *ab initio*, and had not even known what he meant to do. Undoubtedly it is advisable, and eminently proper, that an international financial conference should not be controlled from day to day by directions from the various Foreign Offices. But it would be absurd that a financial mission should be sent forth to arrange such matters as those in question at Paris without first being instructed by its Government as to what might possibly secure political acceptance, either way. In the circumstances a separation of powers may be laudable; but an absolute divorce is folly. And all the more so because, although politicians are generally futile financiers, great financiers are usually fatal politicians. Of that a memorable example was given

by the late Herr Stinnes a number of years ago at the Spa Conference.

I may add that I was also told that Dr. Schacht was anxious that his name should not go down in history as having surrendered so much as was demanded by the Allies. The only comment one could possibly make upon such an extraordinary statement was that if Dr. Schacht preferred to have his name go down in history as one who had committed a notable *gaffe*, it was simply a question of taste.

The truth is that, despite the awkwardness of her proceedings, Germany was in the best of good faith; as, indeed, she has been throughout the past few years. The very fact that she did not want to sign any undertaking which she considered herself incapable of performing may not unfairly be taken as an evidence of that good faith. But the whole incident is curious mainly because it illustrates that, while some nations can, without incurring grave reproach, do what is undeniably reprehensible, Germany often seems to go out of her way to excite the suspicions of other countries.

In December 1928 the German Chancellor spoke quite openly about the Anschluss. Probably that speech may be taken simply as an indication of the view held by Herr Müller—a view which is also that of many other German politicians. The people of Germany, as a whole, consider a union with their racial brethren in Austria a right which transcends all treaties, and are confident that it will one day come to pass. In the meantime the German Government is taking no active steps to bring about the union. At the most it is paving the way for it by acting with Austria in assimilating the laws of the two countries. Undoubtedly the Wilhelmstrasse is wise in preserving a calm and passive attitude. It can well afford to do so, for time plays in favour of the Anschluss.*

Writing in 1923 regarding the Treaty of Versailles, I said: " On the other hand, the Four, in parcelling out Austria-Hungary, would seem to have been at particular

* In *L'Illustration* of October 8th, 1927, M. Ludovic Nadeau gives a complete list of the incidents from 1919 to that date which he thought proved that the accomplishment of the Anschluss was amongst Germany's fixed designs.

pains to segregate six million Germans in one country, and to cut them off from all the wealth in which they had formerly shared. To-day Austria is a shell; one large town and a poor country burdened with debt, and having a population which is overwhelmingly German in blood and in sentiment. When the deed had been done, some bright intellect (history will disclose who it was) suddenly perceived that in the ordinary course of events this marooned and impoverished country would naturally seek its salvation in a union with Germany. To guard against that contingency it was prohibited by the Treaty. In those days the Four still had a naïve belief in the binding virtue of their edicts. But already (defying orders to the contrary) part of Austria has held a plebiscite by which its desire to become annexed to the Reich has been clearly announced. Barring the upheaval of a Balkan war (and perhaps anyway), it is certain that sooner or later that will be the sequel; and Germany counts on it."

One qualification now to be made of this statement is that to-day Austria, thanks to the action of the League of Nations, is on a sounder financial basis than in 1923. But the opponents of the Anschluss do not make out a very strong case when they attempt to prove that Austria can ever be reasonably self-supporting, or fundamentally prosperous as she is at present; while some of the most determined adversaries of the Anschluss are not very consistent, since they have themselves been the most outspoken advocates and beneficiaries of the doctrine of self-determination. That theory had its ups and downs, even at the Peace Conference. Mr. Wilson, who was its godfather, was occasionally inclined to forget it. But sometimes Mr. Lloyd George would not allow him to do so. About Shantung they both, indeed, agreed to ignore it; and consequently China did not sign the Treaty of Versailles. But when it came to Upper Silesia, and Mr. Wilson was again oblivious to his former pronouncements, the British Prime Minister promptly declared that it was "Mr. Wilson who has proclaimed on every occasion the right of self-determination," and Wilson wilted. But no one had a word to say for Austria. Mr. Lloyd George apparently did not remember that when talking about Upper Silesia he had remarked: "But the

legal is not the only aspect ; there is sentiment, and I want to know about that." He did not want to know it about Austria.

There are some things so natural that their coming to pass can never be prevented indefinitely by any number of treaties. The chiefs of the Peace Conference might have done well, before attempting the impossible, to ponder upon the words of the astute and practical Bismarck. Speaking to Anton Memminger in 1890, he remarked that " the Germans in Austria are people of the real Bavarian race " ; while in his Reminiscences, when describing his enthusiastic reception in Austria, when he went to Vienna in 1879, he wrote : " All these phenomena were the unequivocal expression of the desire of the population of the capital and the German provinces which I had traversed to witness the formation of a close friendship with the new German Empire. I could not doubt that community of blood would meet with similar sympathies in the German Empire, in the South more than in the North. . . . It is possible that the wedge of the Slav (Czech) population . . . has intensified in the German Austrian those German sympathies."

M. Briand recently issued a warning that in respect to the Anschluss a *fait accompli* would not be accepted. But the League of Nations has uniformly yielded in the face of any show of determination. It will be remembered that it awarded Vilna to Lithuania. But when General Gelikhovsky occupied it with his troops, and the Polish Government proclaimed that it was the inalienable possession of Poland which would not be surrendered to anyone, the League tamely acquiesced in the situation ; and in order to extricate itself from the awkward position thus created, owing to its previous decision, it arranged that the subservient Council of Ambassadors should duly confirm the Polish title. Again, when Mussolini, after his dispute with Greece, bombarded and occupied Corfu, he first contemptuously ignored the League of Nations and then rebuffed it. Geneva was embarrassed ; and though it tried to save its dignity, the way in which it did so deceived no one. It is noticeable that since that episode the League has treated the Italian Dictator with marked respect, and has been particularly careful not to cross his path in any way.

These incidents, and various others of the same nature, did not enhance the standing of the League of Nations. But they proved to the world at large what every practical politician already knew, namely, that that institution, like any group of the Great Powers before 1914, was likely to cede if confronted by a *fait accompli*, no matter how distasteful.

Not only the League itself, but any members thereof who undertook forcible action in the event of the Anschluss, would simply be drawing attention to one of the grossest inconsistencies of the series of Treaties which the Peace Conference evolved. The League and its adherents are, to some extent at least, bound by the doctrine of self-determination; but, apart from that, they are perpetually engaged in hearing the complaints and determining the rights of those Minorities in various countries which, at times, do not get on any too well with the national majority. It would therefore be passing strange to find any member of the League seeking to oppose the union under one Government of two neighbouring countries of the same race and speaking the same language. I am not making any argument in favour of the Anschluss. It might be the beginning of a German *bloc*; and whether that would be for good or evil is a speculative question, the consideration of which here would lead too far afield. But it is futile to deceive oneself; and the Anschluss is a possible eventuality. Those who carefully denuded Austria of all Minorities, thus leaving more than six million Germans adjoining sixty million other Germans, are responsible for it. The break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was inevitable, with the consequent creation or extension of what are now known as the Succession States. But what is extraordinary is that those who did the partitioning did not perceive the probable corollary.*

But while it seems possible that in the natural order of events these two German nations living side by side may eventually come under the same Government, yet it

* But as I have mentioned in the chapter on Austria and Hungary, recent developments (which have occurred since the above was written) indicate that the elements which prefer the alternative of a union with Hungary are increasing in strength, and have, apparently, obtained the support of the Heimwehr.

is not the Reich which would be the gainer. The material benefit of the Anschluss to Austria needs no demonstration. But it is much more difficult to perceive how Germany would profit. On the contrary, even if the *fait accompli* were accepted, she would be paying too much for too little. For undoubtedly the advent of the Anschluss would destroy any sympathy which may exist in Western Europe for German aspirations, and would delay—indefinitely—any prospect of a change in respect to the Polish Corridor, except by the gamble of a war. It would arouse ill-feeling and hostility on the part of Czechoslovakia and of Poland ; and would excite the suspicions of both England and France regarding the speedy formation of a German *bloc*. There are observant Polish politicians who quietly rejoice whenever German statesmen are so ill-advised as to give vent to the sentiments which were expressed by Chancellor Müller. They realise that the Anschluss would weld together the former Allies in defence of the existing Polish frontiers.

Moreover, the incorporation of Austria in the Reich would mean an addition of about six million Roman Catholics to the population of Germany. This would (to the detriment of the Socialists) increase the strength of the Centre party, which, whatever its defects, has probably more comprehension of the art of parliamentary government than any other group ; due alike to its comparatively long traditions, and to the discipline which has always been exercised within its ranks.

It remains to consider the question of the future. Some nations, like some individuals, bring their best qualities to the fore in days of hardship, but are unable to observe the same well-balanced attitude in the high-tide of prosperity. Germany has certainly shown the former characteristic during the past few years. Possibly Prince von Bülow was right in stating that his countrymen appear to the greatest advantage in times of stress and trial. Obviously no positive answer can be given as to what, if any, change there will be in the disposition of the German people when the conditions of life become easier. All that can be stated with certainty is that six years ago Germany was at the turning of the ways ; and that since then she has given such evidence as was possible that she preferred to devote herself to pacific reconstruction,

if only because that was the more profitable course to take. But all this does not mean that either the political leaders of to-day, or the younger generation, are at all disposed to abdicate Germany's position as one of the great European Powers. The one thing which might well give birth to a powerful military party would be a widespread belief that Germany's former antagonists are determined, in one way or another, to keep her in a position of inferiority. Already there is a general feeling of bewilderment that countries which enforced the disarmament of Germany—and enforced it not solely on the ground that they were the victors, but because they claimed that it was to be the prelude to a new order of things—find so much difficulty in arriving at any general measure of disarmament amongst themselves. No European nation of more than sixty million people can be prevented from arming unless either it is constantly held in check by a more powerful force, or is led to see, by the example of adjacent countries, that disarmament is a matter of good policy. Apparently the theory of the Treaty of Versailles was based on the latter principle. Indeed, the very clauses in the Treaty relating to disarmament are preceded by the words: "En vue de rendre possible la préparation d'une limitation générale des armaments de toutes les nations, l'Allemagne s'engage à observer strictement les clauses militaire, nevales et aériennes ci-après stipulée."

Moreover, the final protocol of the Locarno Conference, which was signed by Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, referred particularly to future disarmament. It declared that: "The representatives of the Governments represented here declare their firm conviction that the entry into force of these treaties and conventions will contribute greatly to bring about a moral relaxation of the tension between nations . . . and that in strengthening peace and security in Europe it will hasten effectively the disarmament provided for in Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. They undertake to give their sincere cooperation in the work relating to disarmament already undertaken by the League of Nations, and to seek the realisation thereof in a general agreement."

Since that date M. Painlevé, Minister of War, has

stated that France needs a large army in order to protect herself; and in the name of M. Poincaré specifically disavowed M. Paul Boncour's statement at Geneva, to the effect that the first step must be to stop the growth of armaments. And it is also since Locarno that M. Benès has said that there could be no question of any reduction of the Czechoslovakian forces. I am not contending that the maintenance of these armies is not in the best interests of the countries in question. Nor am I commiserating with Germany because she is only allowed to enlist 8,000 recruits each year as compared with the 330,000 which France enlists. The fact is that Germany is thereby saved considerable annual expense, and is also thereby provided with a further source of man-supply for use in the industrial life of the country—although that is not an advantage when unemployment is increasing. But I am concerned to point out that statements such as those made by M. Painlevé and M. Benès—and, what is more important than the statements of politicians, the actual actions of practically all the Allied nations—are in absolute disaccord with these various conventions which they sign from time to time—the last in order of date being the absurd Kellogg Pact "outlawing war." The objection I am urging is not against the policy which these countries see fit to pursue, but against the shocking hypocrisy or futility of making these solemn promises one day, and then calmly proceeding to ignore them the next. Absolutely no progress has been made about disarmament in a period of ten years. Nor is there any real sign that any advance will be made in the near future. This unfortunately supports the conclusion of those of us who have always regretfully doubted the feasibility of disarmament. The phrase "defensive" armies is deceptive—and yet deceives no one. Obviously, if that is the standard to be followed, every country will decide for itself what forces it needs. That is reminiscent of the Kellogg Pact, which, as even Senator Borah admitted, does not in any respect weaken the inalienable right of any sovereign State to take measures in self-defence—and each signatory is entitled to interpret that right absolutely as it sees fit. It is, therefore, evident that that Pact leaves matters precisely where they were before.

In February 1887 Bismarck created a sensation by a speech in which he proclaimed that, if Germany was again obliged to defeat France, she would crush her so utterly as to prevent her ever again becoming a danger to the Fatherland. But when he found it advisable to explain these remarks to the British and Russian Governments he said that his only object had been to frighten France, who he thought was showing warlike tendencies. He added that in reality "it was impossible to destroy a nation of forty millions . . . and therefore, in the event of another German victory over them, a peace as lenient as that he made with Austria-Hungary in 1866 would be advisable." It is, however, more than doubtful whether Bismarck's successors would have been equally moderate had Germany been victorious in the last war. But one of the great Chancellor's qualities was that he was able to judge when it was profitable to be lenient, and when it was safe to adopt extreme measures. On the other hand, the fate of this speech provides a striking illustration of how dangerous it may prove for a statesman to make assertions which he does not actually mean. For, despite the explanations he gave to other Governments at the time, it was cited during the war, both by the French and by the Germans, as a justification for the severe terms which each wished finally to impose.

It may well be said that the former Allied countries have shown every disposition to maintain peace; but it cannot fairly be contended that they have evinced any belief that that can be done except by the aid of more or less powerful military forces. The Germans may not be a warrior-like race, and they are certainly not a political race. Nevertheless, it is somewhat too much to expect them to swallow the theory that it is right and proper for other and smaller countries to have large standing armies, but that the same policy would be wrong on the part of Germany.

The French are often the victims of their own logic. Part of the secret of such success as the English race has achieved is due to the spirit of compromise which we generally exhibit both at home and abroad. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that we seem to realise when it is expedient to compromise. And

it was the temporary lack of that instinct in our rulers (although, to be fair, some of them saw the pitfall) which lost us our American colonies. But as a rule we compromise in business, in politics, and even in religion: Lord Halifax, who presumably believes in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and an Evangelical who will denounce it as a Papist superstition, can belong to the same Church. All that is out of tune with the mental processes of any Latin race, and especially with the remorseless logic of the French. Yet undoubtedly compromise is often essential in earthly affairs (I have more doubt and less experience about theological questions), and nowhere so essential as in the intercourse of nations. But that mode of reasoning is so repugnant to the Gallic mind that any concession made generally comes after so much altercation, and after such a lapse of time, as to rob it of any value as a basis for future relations.

The English position is quite clear. The majority of the people are disposed to forget so far as possible what, in the years succeeding the Civil War in the United States, used to be called "the late unpleasantness." Probably the tendency in that direction is so extreme that some of the useful lessons of the war are thereby being lost. But whether or not that point of view is correct, the fact which inevitably impresses any observer is the widely different feeling which obtains on this subject in England and in France. The truth is that, in some respects, we are irrepressible islanders. The war was not fought on our soil, and we were spared the hardships which fell to the lot of our Allies. The bombardment of a few coast towns made no lasting effect upon public opinion. But there is little doubt that other sentiments would prevail to-day if any attempt at invasion had actually succeeded.

The difference in national character and in mentality is such that the French and German races will never comprehend each other.

Anatole France gave in *L'isle des Pingouins* the extreme view in one direction:

"Vous n'aimez pas les Marsouins?"
"Nous les haissons."
"Pour quelle raison les haissez-vous?"

" Vous le demandez ? Les Marsouins ne sont-ils pas les voisins des Pingouins ? "

" Sans doute."

" Eh bien, c'est pour cela que les Pingouins haissent les Marsouins."

" Est-ce une raison ? "

" Certainement. Qui dit voisins dit ennemis. . . . Vous ne savez donc pas ce que c'est que le patriotisme ? "

The other extreme is exploited by those happy idealists who think that by signing a pact war can be eliminated for ever. The late Theodore Roosevelt must have turned in his grave the day the Kellogg Pact was signed ; for it was through Roosevelt that Kellogg, then a lawyer in St. Paul, became known throughout the length and breadth of the United States. At the President's behest he was retained to fight certain Trusts ; and did so with such vigour that he was then known as " the Trust-buster." However, all that was a quarter of a century ago. In the interval, Mr. Kellogg has waxed older and mellower. It is, however, permissible to doubt whether, at the same time, his power of lucid thought has not somewhat diminished.

As Louis Philippe once said to Thiers, there is no need for two nations to love each other because they are allies : and still less does such a necessity arise if they seek merely to be on amicable terms. It is, however, undeniable that, despite her understanding with France, and not unmindful of French interests, Downing Street has always shown more confidence in Germany than has the Quai d'Orsay. This tendency will probably be still more pronounced since a Labour party has come into office. It is unlikely that any British Government will break with France simply because it does not share that country's views in regard to the proper policy to be pursued towards Germany. But, on the other hand, Germany is likely more often to reach agreements with France through English intervention than if she dealt with the Quai d'Orsay direct. From our standpoint it is also to be remembered that England to-day possesses all the disadvantages without having any of the advantages which formerly pertained to an island. Her food supply can be more or less cut off, she can be bombed from the air, and bombarded from the Channel ports. All this

makes it essential that Great Britain should now have a clear understanding with one of the great Continental Powers. Some years ago it seemed as if France, and France alone, was indicated in this respect. But to-day it appears as if this would entail giving at least moral support to France in keeping Germany indefinitely in a position of inferiority. Even if this object were desirable, it would doubtless mean that, sooner or later, moral support would one day have to be replaced by military assistance ; for such a course would undoubtedly eventually lead to an explosion.

M. Painlevé, in defending the Estimates of the French War Office before the Senate in December 1928, claimed that the military expenditure in question was justifiable because a strong French army made for peace. These words are all the more significant coming from M. Painlevé, who, although he has an undoubted liking for the post of Minister of War, has, from the time he first came into political notice as a witness at the Dreyfus trial, never been actuated by anything approaching militarism. Moreover, Painlevé is sincerity personified. Indeed, his candour is his weakness as a politician, although entirely to his credit as a man. His speech on this occasion amounted to an implied statement that Germany could not be trusted. The latter country is sometimes accused of expecting too much from the Locarno Pact. Undoubtedly she will be going astray if she expects that agreement entirely to abrogate the Treaty of Versailles. But it is not unreasonable that she should consider that France's adhesion at Locarno indicated that Germany inspired her with a certain degree of confidence.

My own observations lead me to the conclusion that the preponderant sentiment in Germany might be summarised in the words, " No war in our time." Nevertheless, it is quite comprehensible that the French are nervous, and that they are influenced by the past. It is unfortunate for all Europe that two races, so well fitted to misunderstanding each other, and who have clashed so many times during past centuries, should be neighbours. French and Germans can each see with the utmost clearness the weak points in the national character of the other ; but they are each somewhat more obtuse in perceiving the qualities of the other.

Having no unlimited faith in the power of any organisation, or the binding effect of any pact always to prevent war, I am more readily open to conviction in respect to the need of standing armies. But I am then forced to agree with M. Henri de Jouvenel, who, in replying to M. Painlevé, contended that such forces were on a scale apparently out of keeping with the aspirations towards disarmament so freely expressed at Geneva and at Locarno. M. de Jouvenel may or may not have been right in his statement that France could put into the field at a moment's notice only 240,000 fully-trained men as against 400,000 Germans. But it is undoubtedly true that France has not a sufficient population permanently to support a great army, and that her present military superiority is merely temporary.

Napoleon is credited with saying that victory is on the side of the heaviest artillery. But in a war, as distinguished from a single battle, it is generally the side having the greatest number upon which to draw which, other things being equal, will emerge the conqueror. The instance generally advanced against that theory is the Russian-Japanese conflict. But then other things were not equal; for Russia was obliged to transport her troops several thousand kilometres, and also to forward supplies the same distance, with only the Trans-Siberian railway as a means of communication.

The contention that peace can best be secured and guarded by the maintenance of large standing armies is exactly the theory held by Germany before the war—for which she has been severely criticised far and wide. On the other hand, this conception entirely undermines the very basis upon which the League of Nations is erected. It is also in absolute contradiction to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles; which, as I have already mentioned, states in so many words that the disarmament of Germany was to pave the way for the disarmament of the other countries signing the Treaty.

M. Painlevé, in defending the size of the French army, quoted President Coolidge as saying (after the signing of the Kellogg Pact) that, if European nations had neglected their defence, war would have broken out earlier, and that a country which took care of its defence contributed to peace. The late Mr. Woodrow Wilson,

speaking at the Guildhall on December 29th, 1918, said : " The peoples of the world want peace, and they want it now, not merely by the conquest of arms, but by agreement of mind." The two pronouncements do not appear to be in accord with each other. The only comment to be made is that, if force is again to be considered as a peace measure, the logical sequence of the view expressed by M. Painlevé will be a new competition in armaments. The handicap of France's stationary population would be felt in such a contest ; and Count Bernstorff has already given warning that, if forced along that path, Germany would accept the challenge.

I purposely do not venture any opinion upon the general question involved. It suffices to point out that a nation which has on its borders a more populous neighbour places itself in a dangerous position when it lays down the doctrine that one must seek peace and ensue it by a show of military force.

The human race will only be made to cease fighting sporadically in one of two ways—if at all : either by making men not want to fight, or by making it impossible for them to fight. The former would be a long process of education, of which none of us alive to-day would see the end. We, who are glutted with bloodshed, are incapable of clearly foreseeing the future ; our vision is obscured by memories of the recent strife. We are apt to ignore that after every great war the cry has always been that that was the last. But the next generation, uninfluenced by the past, has always gone its own way. In some letters written after the battle of Waterloo it was said that anyway, after all the bloodshed of the Napoleonic Wars, there certainly could never be another conflict between nations. But who, at the battle of the Somme, ever thought of the battle of Waterloo ?

The latter way means disarmament. Whether or not disarmament is feasible I do not profess to say. But certainly no encouraging progress has been made during the last ten years. To-day, as always, the majority of nations would be quite willing that their neighbours should disarm, but would be very unwilling to do so themselves. The one thing certain, which should be realised and faced to-day, is that what prevails in practice, as distinguished from preaching, amongst the former Allies,

will also eventually prevail in Germany. Any idea that that country can be held forever in a species of tutelage is an idle dream. As Mussolini recently remarked, there are many dangerous things in the world, such as Bengal tigers and mosquitoes which carry malaria; but the one which exceeds all others in risk is imbecile optimism.

A closer understanding between England, France, and Germany would be the best safeguard against all the evils that might spring from the mutual racial incomprehension of France and Germany. Undoubtedly that understanding would be difficult to achieve, but it is equally clear that it is essential. It may be remembered that this policy was urged by Mr. Winston Churchill in a vigorous speech which he made at the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in June 1921.

The views I venture to express are in no way an argument in favour of the general revision of the Treaties for which the Peace Conference is responsible. At one time a clear-cut line divided all those who discussed these questions into revisionists and anti-revisionists. One argument put forward (and with some show of reason) by the latter group was that any revision in favour of one country would entail similar treatment for other countries affected by these various Treaties. To-day the whole matter is on a different basis, for the very simple reason that the Treaty of Versailles has already been changed in several respects; and doubtless will be changed further within the near future. But such alterations do not *ipso facto* open the door to the demands of every country. Alterations have been and will be made in the Versailles Treaty not from any altruistic motives, but simply and solely because of expediency; or even by reason of the lack of any practical alternative. A country which raises claims or makes pleas against the operation of the Treaties affecting it will have to submit to having its case judged on its own merits. There can be no precedent applicable. What seems best for preserving peace will govern. The cry of justice will alone be of little avail. This may seem a hard saying; but it is preferable to one which is hypocritical. Any concession which may be made to Germany (or which English public opinion would like to see made) will, in reality, be due to our belief that that policy is the wisest, and will be

the most profitable, to all concerned. Justice, like liberty, is something very difficult to define, even as between individuals; and generally much more so as between nations.

Finally, it is not uninteresting briefly to examine the attitude of Germany towards England. In the first place, it may be said that there is little hostility or bitterness about the past. Presumably some exists in certain quarters, but it is extremely difficult to discover it in any class of society. On the other hand, the belief in the virtues of the English character, and the praise often bestowed upon it, are sometimes embarrassing.

During the last two or three years British foreign policy has been a disappointment, alike to German statesmen and to the German people. There is a firm (and erroneous) belief that Downing Street has been entirely at the beck and call of the Quai d'Orsay. Notwithstanding the respect inspired by his personal character, Germany was relieved when the direction of foreign affairs passed from the control of Sir Austen Chamberlain. But the Wilhelmstrasse does not expect too much from a Labour Government. It believes that English policy will now be more independent than it imagines it latterly to have been; but realises that, despite the variations which are inevitably consequent upon a change of the party in office, the sound tradition which prevails in England that there must be a certain continuity in foreign policy still holds good.

It should be added that there is a curious distrust of Lord Tyrrell, who is supposed to be somewhat hostile to Germany. Presumably this idea has its origin in the influence which he exercised in the fateful days of July 1914, when, as Prince Lichnowsky openly stated in his dispatches, it was he who was closest to, and exercised the greatest influence over, Sir Edward Grey. In any event, whatever the reason, the belief exists. And this despite the fact that Lord Tyrrell's mother was German. Yet was not the mother of the former Kaiser an English woman? Undoubtedly the Englishman whom German politicians hold in the highest esteem is Lord D'Abernon. There was considerable excitement in certain circles in Berlin when the extraordinary forecast was made that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald intended to make him Foreign Minister. For Germany has very sound reasons for being grateful to the former Ambassador.

But it is Mr. Winston Churchill whom the political world regards with the greatest interest, and whose every word and action is most closely scrutinised. It has come to the conclusion—rightly enough—that he is by far the strongest character in English public life; and that, in view of the fact that he is still comparatively young, much may still be expected from him. Perhaps the knowledge of a few who are highly placed in the official world that Churchill's Gallipoli policy nearly brought about the discomfiture of Germany is not entirely alien to this judgment. It has, I think, long been generally understood that the defenders of Constantinople were in a desperate condition when the British troops suddenly withdrew. But of this fact I had the absolute confirmation when a statesman, by reason of the post he then held in the Government of the Empire was in a position to know the facts, recently told me that both the Turks and Berlin were equally amazed by the retreat. Indeed, the Wilhelmstrasse hesitated to credit the news. For only a few days earlier the Foreign Office had received a dispatch from the late Herr von Wangenheim, then German Ambassador in Constantinople, asking for instructions as to where he should betake himself and the Embassy archives, since (he affirmed) the Turks would be obliged to surrender within less than a week. Upon the whole, it can I, think, fairly be said that everything which has become known during the past ten years has gone to show that Churchill's policy was correct. Undoubtedly it was daring. Possibly it might even be called a gamble. But in time of war such gambles are sometimes not only permissible but necessary. However, their successful achievement depends upon a certain degree of courage being possessed by all concerned. In this respect Churchill failed to receive proper support either amongst his colleagues in the Cabinet, or from the military advisers of the Government. Their lack of his foresight—but above all of his courage—was responsible for the prolongation of the war.

Perhaps any consideration of the question of the position of the Reich to-day can best be concluded by recalling the words used by M. Millerand, never a great friend to Germany, as far back as the Spa Conference, when he described that country as a "necessary and useful member of the European family."

CHAPTER VII

THE POLISH PROBLEM

IN 1772 Marie Thérèse expressed her forebodings of the future when, in reluctantly agreeing to the spoliation of Poland, she wrote to Kaunitz :

" When all my lands were invaded, and I knew not where in the world I could find a place to be brought to bed, I relied on my good right and the help of God. But in this thing, where not only public law cries to Heaven against us, but also natural justice and sound reason, I must confess never in my life to have been in such trouble, and am ashamed to show my face."

And when, a few days later, she gave her official assent, she did so in these words :

" Placet—since so many great and learned men will have it so ; but long after I am dead it will be known what this violating of all that was hitherto held sacred and just will give rise to."

No prophecy was ever more fully verified. Even to-day, ten years after the end of the war, it is the Polish question which looms most prominently as a menace to peace. Many of its symptoms are depressingly familiar as being common to the various Minority controversies with which Europe is empoisoned. But the resemblance is only on the surface ; the roots of this matter go much deeper than those of the other problems with which it is often loosely assimilated.

The whole complicated question can probably be reduced to its simplest form by first recalling briefly the steps which led to the existing situation, and then considering separately the position of Upper Silesia, the Corridor, Danzig, East Prussia, and Poland herself.

Of the different Polands which existed before the war, it was Russian Poland which always attracted the most attention ; and which, indeed, was indirectly responsible for the fatal isolation in which France found herself in 1870. The Tzarist Government always repressed with

great severity the outbreaks which from time to time proved that Polish nationalism was not dead. After the rebellion of 1863, Napoleon III urged the Russian Government to submit the whole question to a European Conference. Doubtless the dilemma in which he was placed by being unable to explain why his doctrine of independence for every nationality was applicable to the Italians, and not to the Poles, partly dictated this policy. But in fairness it should also be remembered that Napoleon's action was entirely in accord both with his sincere convictions and with his innate kindliness. However, his insistence at St. Petersburg only led Alexander II to close the discussion by saying bluntly that, as he held his power from God alone, he was not obliged to account to anyone except to Him and to his own people. The only practical result was that Napoleon impaired the close understanding with Russia which he had established soon after the Crimean War. He had been then quick to perceive that the mistrust with which Russia was regarded by all English statesmen—Palmerston, Clarendon, and Russell alike—would make that country appreciate an arrangement which might later also be of service to France. Nor was this a miscalculation. For in 1859, immediately after the battle of Solferino, it was the Tzar who warned the French Government of the peril of Prussia taking advantage of the road to Paris lying open while Napoleon and his troops were in Lombardy.

The check which thus halted Napoleon III's endeavours on behalf of the Poles threatened to undermine his whole foreign policy. At that time—and later—any arrangement with Russia was largely personal : as Bismarck once said, it depended " on the moods of the reigning Emperor of Russia," and the German Chancellor himself never forgot that Frederick the Great had arrayed that country against Prussia during the Seven Years' War solely by his sarcastic remarks about Elisabeth. Napoleon therefore not unnaturally thought that the great Exposition of 1867, which drew kings and princes to Paris—all eager to see the sights of the gayest and most brilliant city in Europe, and all flocking to hear Hortense Schneider in *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*—was an opportune occasion for repairing the breach wrought by the Polish episode. But the Emperor and his advisers foolishly

ignored the weight of public opinion; and the people frustrated the designs of the Court. The vast crowds were glacial while the Tzar passed through the streets; and when he was crossing from the Palais de Justice to go to the Sainte Chapelle, a member of the Bar, Floquet, who in later years achieved some political prominence, called out to him in the prevailing silence: "*Vive la Pologne, Monsieur.*" But worse was yet to come. The next day, when the Imperial party was returning from Longchamps, the revolver-shot of a Polish refugee barely missed ending the days of Alexander II. And when the assassin was brought before the Assize Court the jurors rendered a verdict of attenuating circumstances, after his advocate had vigorously denounced "the Polish executioner." The Tzar left Paris congratulating himself that already, in 1863, he had concluded an alliance with Prussia, whereby that country had promised that, in case of need, it would give him military assistance against the Polish rebels. From the day he became Minister for Foreign Affairs, in 1862, Bismarck had realised that in the Polish question he might find a means of detaching Russia from France. Throughout he cunningly nourished the Tzar's growing suspicion of Napoleon III. He had his reward when, in an interview at Ems, on June 4th, 1870, Alexander agreed that if, in the event of a war between Germany and France, Austria should show signs of giving aid to the latter, the Russian Army would march on Vienna. Forty-one days later Germany and France were actually at war.

At a later date it was Poland which again all but barred the way to a change in French policy which was destined to be of momentous importance to Europe. For the alliance with Russia, finally concluded by M. Gabriel Hanotaux and Count Mouravieff, ran the risk of foundering on the strong wave of Liberal opinion in France, which then, as in preceding generations, condemned Russia's harsh treatment of Poland.

In 1914 her Allies thought the proper policy was for Russia to grant a Constitution to Poland without further delay. The French Ambassador, M. Paléologue, approached the delicate question somewhat timidly in a conversation with M. Sazonov. It was his recollection of the events above narrated, together with others still further in

the past, which led the Russian Foreign Minister to reply, with barely veiled sarcasm, that, in view of the lessons to be drawn from history, he would, if French, be superstitious of giving assistance to the Poles; and, if Polish, he would be superstitious about accepting it.

Nevertheless, M. Sazonov himself was not blind to the importance of satisfying the Poles. He did his best to persuade his colleagues of the necessity of giving a Constitution forthwith. When he failed to bring them to his view he drafted a form of Constitution for which, supported by the Chief of Staff, General Alexieff, he procured the Tzar's approbation. But a few days later the Sturmer Cabinet obtained a reversal of the Imperial decision, upon the ground that such a step would be inopportune in time of war. Some months earlier, in August 1914, the Grand Duke Nicolas, as Commander-in-Chief, had issued a proclamation exhorting all Poles to exhibit loyalty to Russia, and holding out the hope of Polish autonomy. But the day had gone by when such a promise could arouse any enthusiasm. It did, however, cause M. Poincaré to record in his diary that the Russian Government was going somewhat too far when, without consulting the other Allies, it offered both German and Austrian Poland autonomy under the rule of the Romanoffs.* Almost the only other visible result was that St. Petersburg commemorated the Grand Duke Nicolas' appeal by having struck a silver medal, showing a Russian and a Polish peasant embracing each other, the inscription being: "Russia to her beloved brethren." However, it was quite characteristic that the Government also forbade the wearing of this medal.

It was left to Germany first to proclaim an independent Poland by an Imperial proclamation issued on November 5th, 1916. At the time this not only seemed to be, but actually was, a good tactical move. Nevertheless, its eventual soundness from the German standpoint obviously depended upon whether or not Germany won the war. It was a gamble—one well justified by the circumstances—but still a gamble. To-day Germany possibly regrets this step. It gave an indescribable impetus to the moribund cause of Polish independence;

* See *L'Invasion*, p. 101.

and it placed the Entente Allies in a position where they could not offer less to the Poles than Germany had promised, and at the same time debarred the latter country from protesting. The hope that it might lead to large bodies of troops being raised in Poland counted for something in the decision. In fact, General von Cramon has written that that was the reason of the famous proclamation. The military advisers in Poland of the Central Powers had, indeed, assured their Governments that they could rely upon fifteen divisions being obtained there in a comparatively short time. These anticipations were never realised. The Austrian Poles, who formed a Legion of their own, were the only ones who ever showed any disposition to take part in the conflict.

As the war drew to a close Polish aspirations increased. They were fortified when one of President Wilson's Points laid down that any territory which was indisputably Polish in population should be embraced within the Poland which was to be resurrected. There was never any declaration that territory which was in the same way indisputably German should be separated from Germany and put under the tutelage of Poland. However, at the Peace Conference Poland claimed much that certainly was not "indisputably Polish." The extent of these demands alarmed Mr. Lloyd George; and it was his insistence which secured a plebiscite for Upper Silesia. Lord D'Abernon has recently recounted that, in March 1921, the British Prime Minister said to him: "It is entirely due to England that Germany has a chance of getting the whole or part of Upper Silesia. President Wilson was anxious to give the whole country to Poland; so were the French; the English were alone in resisting. I brought the whole Cabinet over to Paris, and they sat—with brief intervals for sleep—from 6 p.m. Saturday until 10 p.m. Sunday. The discussion was a very fair one; there was no rancour against Germany—no bitterness. The whole of the evidence was reviewed and the decision come to that, in fairness to the country, it could not be given to Poland. We should have been favourable to giving it to Germany, but we compromised on a plebiscite. My inclination is that the country should be kept together, and I will not agree to partition unless I am obliged to. We are all interested in German prosperity.

After all, if we wish Germany to pay, we have to leave them something to earn money with." *

The idea of a plebiscite in Upper Silesia was by no means pleasing to the Polish delegates in Paris. But as M. Paderewski had long been proclaiming that the majority was indubitably Polish, there was no way out of the dilemma. However, a concession was obtained in the postponement of the voting to some future date, to be fixed by the Polish Government in agreement with the Allied Powers.

As is well known, the plebiscite was held on March 20th, 1921 ; and the final figures showed that 707,605 had voted in favour of Germany and 479,359 in favour of Poland. The provision entitling those who had left the country to return to vote accounted for 130,000 of the total poll in favour of Germany. But a still more curious condition, disenfranchising those who had settled in Upper Silesia later than 1904, deprived Germany of something over 60,000 votes. Six hundred and sixty-four Communes gave a majority to Germany and five hundred and ninety-seven to Poland.† The result was entirely unexpected, and created the greatest confusion. Germany claimed that she should be awarded the whole area. Poland contended that a line of delimitation should be drawn through Upper Silesia more or less in accordance with the vote by Communes. While these discussions were proceeding the country was invaded during the summer of 1921 by an army of Polish irregulars led by Korfanty, which was opposed by a local irregular force commanded by General Hoefer. It was only the tactful intervention of the British Commissioner, Sir Harold Stuart, which finally led to a truce.

The Allied Commissioners being unable to arrive at an unanimous decision, the matter again came before the Supreme Council. But Mr. Lloyd George and M. Briand were inflexible in their opposition to each other. The whole question was therefore referred to the Council of the League of Nations, which appointed a sub-committee

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* *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. I, p. 139.

† Lord D'Abernon is apparently in error when he states (*An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. I, p. 199) that the majority of the Communes voted in favour of Poland. It may be added that, out of the seventeen electoral districts, thirteen voted for Germany and four for Poland.

composed of a Belgian, a Spanish, a Brazilian, and a Chinese member, assisted by one Swiss and one Czecho-slovakian expert. The partition recommended by this body, dividing the rich industrial section, was subsequently approved by the Allied Governments.

It has been said that although the frontier thus traced is in itself absurd, it would probably have been impossible to suggest a better one, if a partition were indeed necessary. This statement may well be accepted without demur; for little is to be gained by discussing relative degrees of absurdity. Obviously the real question is whether any division was essential.

The inhabitants of Upper Silesia are, for the greater part, a mixed race. They speak a dialect called Water-Polish, in which there are some thousands of German words; and practically all of them understand German. German culture predominates. It is probable that if the plebiscite had posed the question as to whether Upper Silesia should be autonomous, or should be part of either Germany or Poland, there would have been a majority in favour of autonomy: but it is certain that even stronger than a predilection for either country was the feeling of the majority against any partition. Even the autonomists foresaw economic disaster in any partition; while, as one of their leaders stated, they realised that a purely Polish Upper Silesia would be "too heavy a burden for the Polish economic structure to carry."

The result has shown that these forebodings were well founded. The figures, of which I quote only a few, speak for themselves.

The frontier line which was drawn through the middle of the industrial district gave Poland 80 per cent. of the coal-bearing area, and fifty-three out of its sixty-seven coal mines. Also 84 per cent. of the total output of zinc; 72 per cent. of the total output of lead; all the zinc and lead works; five out of the eight smelting works, together with twenty-one out of the thirty-seven blast furnaces; nine out of the fourteen rolling mills; and fifteen out of twenty-five iron and steel foundries.

Poland itself possesses great coal fields in the Dabrowa and Cracow districts, which produced 9,000,000 tons in 1913, that is, 90 per cent. of what was needed by Poland; and this production could have been greatly increased.

There was, therefore, no economic reason which demanded the cession to Poland of the Upper Silesian coal fields, which in 1913 had a production of 32,300,000 tons. But Germany did stand in great need of this coal, of which, before the war, 75 per cent. was used by East Prussia, leaving only 25 per cent. to be marketed elsewhere. The result has been that the output in Eastern (Polish) Upper Silesia has never yet attained the pre-war level; whereas, on the other hand, the output in Western (German) Upper Silesia has increased to more than 175 per cent. of what was produced in 1913. The exact figures, which are instructive, are as follows:

In Eastern Upper Silesia. In millions of tons.		Percentage.	In Western Upper Silesia. In millions of tons.		Percentage.
1913	32·3	100	11·1		100
1922	25·6	79	8·8		79
1923	26·5	82	8·7		79
1924	23·7	73	10·9		98
1925	21·4	66	14·3		129
1926	25·8	81	17·5		157
1927	27·7	86·6	19·4		175
1928	30·3	94·5	19·7		177

Poland is at a loss to know what to do with its coal. Despite the decline in the output, she has been forced to sell abroad more than 40 per cent. of the entire production. Moreover, she has done so at a loss, except during the English coal strike, which to her was a veritable Godsend. It probably saved the country from bankruptcy. In any event, it provided an immediate market for her surplus coal; and, at a financial loss, she has since been able to retain a large part of that market. For, despite English competition, Poland at present supplies about half the needs of the Scandinavian and Baltic States. The Polish Government gives the coal industry every possible assistance. The State railways carry the coal at a rate which is manifestly unprofitable. On the other hand, an attempt is made to fix a comparatively high price for coal used in Poland, in order that the profit on the domestic consumption may offset the loss on export abroad.

Another tale of retrogression is told by the pig-iron statistics. The production in 1913 amounted to 134,000

tons ; in 1922 it was 82,000 tons. From that point it sank, until in 1927 the total was only the insignificant amount of 6,000 tons, or about 4·5 per cent. of the 1913 figure. The production for the first nine months of 1928 was 12,000 tons.

An almost similar story may be told about the smelting industry ; although the first ten months of 1928 showed that, after being much lower, the percentage, as compared with the 1913 production, was 74·4 per cent. of crude iron, 83 per cent. of ingot iron and steel, and 84 per cent. of rolling mill products. But against that one must put the fact that in Western (German) Upper Silesia the figures in 1928, taking as a basis the 1913 statistics, were 64·3 per cent. of crude iron, 149 per cent. of ingot iron and steel, and 175 per cent. of rolling mill products.

Although Poland was given more than 84 per cent. of the output of the Upper Silesian zinc mines, and 72 per cent. of the lead ore, the production to-day is less than it was in 1913 ; whereas in Western (German) Upper Silesia the production has been increased to almost double the pre-war output. But, again, Poland is unable to use herself all this output, and must find a market abroad ; whereas Germany is in the greatest need of it.

Systematic degermanisation has at times been openly supported by the Government. Thus Sikorski, at that time Minister-President, speaking in Posen in April 1923, said that " the process which is called the degermanisation of the Western Voivodeships should be proceeded with in the shortest possible time and at the greatest possible speed " ; and he added that " might is always right." One strong motive for this policy is that Poland feels by no means sure regarding public opinion abroad in respect to the partition of Silesia ; and therefore wishes to be in a position to prove, at any critical moment, that the districts in question are actually Polish in population.

For the same reason Poland has put obstacles in the way of Germans who wish to acquire Polish nationality ; and this despite the fact that in Article 4 of the Minorities Treaty Polish citizenship was ensured to everyone born in Poland. The Hague Tribunal has more than once denounced the illegality of Polish procedure in this respect. A number of Germans have also been

expelled without any compensation for their land being granted them. Naturally this action is based upon an interpretation (or, to be more exact, a misinterpretation) of the laws governing these matters. It will suffice to recall that in September 1923 the Hague Tribunal said that such condemnations were "not in harmony with Poland's international obligations."

But although the number of Germans may have decreased, the German vote registered has augmented. For instance, in two districts the total vote for the German party was 169,209 in 1922, and 187,217 in 1928 —thus increasing the number of members of the German party for these districts from three to seven. In the communal elections of 1926 in Polish Upper Silesia, about 45 per cent. of the total number of votes recorded were in favour of the German party candidates.

In Upper Silesia there are the conflicting tales of oppression which are, unfortunately, thoroughly characteristic of the existing relations between Germans and Poles. In the front rank of these questions stands the inevitable wrangle about the educational facilities afforded to Minorities. The Germans allege that the Poles constantly and consistently infringe the regulations of the Geneva Convention regarding their right to have their children educated by German teachers. Without attaching too much importance to this grievance itself, but rather in order to illustrate the prevalent Polish tendency in the treatment of Minorities, I am bound to recognise that upon the whole it seems to have some foundation. The Geneva Convention, which applies to all Poland, provides that when application for school enrolment is made by the parents their declaration regarding the language spoken by the child must neither be disputed nor questioned, but must be accepted integrally. There is no doubt that the Polish authorities violate this provision in various ways. In Upper Silesia parents are generally obliged to appear in person; they are then asked where they are employed, and pressure is often brought to bear on them through their employers. The fact that in 1926 nearly 7,000 out of 9,000 applications for enrolment in German schools were rejected as invalid speaks for itself. It has been alleged that the time of the League of Nations should

not be wasted by individual appeals upon matters of such trifling importance. But it is difficult to perceive what other course, except tame submission, lies open to those who feel that their guaranteed rights have been set at naught. However, if another form of procedure is desirable, it is obviously the duty of the League to provide it.

On the other hand, it is true that, although there are throughout Poland about 80,000 children attending the various German and bi-lingual schools with German classes, there are only 500 children attending the Polish Minority schools in German Upper Silesia. Poland is bound to provide Minority schools throughout the whole of her territory ; whereas Germany is under legal obligation only in respect to German Upper Silesia. Nevertheless, the Prussian Government issued, in January 1929, regulations respecting the establishment of Polish schools in any part of Prussia which are at least quite as liberal as those prevailing under the Geneva Convention. Despite reports to the contrary, I have satisfied myself that there is no widespread unfair pressure such as that of which the Poles are accused. It may well be retorted that Germany has no need to use such methods; but that does not affect the fact, although it does explain the extraordinary diversity in the figures quoted. For any impartial investigation will show that for the greater part the Poles in German Upper Silesia prefer that their children should go to German schools, and are content that they should learn and speak Polish at home. They are convinced that this will conduce to their future welfare more than being taught in schools conducted in Polish. And, indeed, whatever importance one may choose to attach to the purely national side of the question, it is undeniable that the German language is of more practical service than the Polish ; and that, of the two cultures, the German is superior.

But much more deplorable is the suspicion awakened by the nature of the actions taken by the Polish authorities from time to time against Germans of acknowledged position in Upper Silesia. Instead of recording the details of two unsavoury cases which came under my notice, I will limit myself to saying that they did not enhance my admiration for the administration of justice in Upper

Silesia. Undoubtedly, from an Anglo-Saxon point of view, German administration has not always been equitable. Before the war there were several instances which were characterised by what we were wont to term Prussian brutality. To-day, so far as general accusations are involved, there is probably exaggeration alike in the charges made against the Germans and against the Poles. But, in considering specific instances, one cannot help being struck by a very vital distinction. The accusation against German officials was, in effect, that they displayed excessive harshness ; but it was never suggested that they lacked the courage to avow and defend openly whatever they did. On the other hand, it is at least curious (and all the more so since the Germans are by no means an imaginative people) that these complaints against the Polish authorities are, on a smaller scale, so often strangely reminiscent of the scandalous episodes of the Dreyfus case—except, of course, that it is not a question of anti-Semitism. Nor is confidence in Polish justice increased by the decree, issued a few months ago, whereby the independence of the judiciary is entirely abolished ; the judges no longer holding office for life, for a term of years, or during good behaviour, but being now liable to dismissal by the Government at any time.

In days gone by the Poles themselves suffered in the same way ; and the sequel provided a curious object lesson of the result of the ill-treatment of any race by a nation which is temporarily stronger and more powerful.

Little or nothing can be said in defence of the ruthless way in which Russia kept its Polish province in subjection and of the cruelty shown in putting down revolts. The gradual change in this policy came too slowly and too late to compensate for the past.

The Poles in German Poland never suffered to the same extent, and had never to complain of any barbarous treatment. Nevertheless, they were kept strictly under the stern Prussian rule, which accorded so ill with their volatile temperament. During the time of the Kulturkampf, Roman Catholics in Poland experienced considerable harshness at the hands of the Government. Moreover, the drastic measures which Bismarck took

with the intent of Germanising the country by colonisation are indefensible. It may be said in passing that this policy failed to achieve its end. Between 1896 and 1913 the German holdings in the Polish province decreased by about 98,000 hectares. But the German treatment of the Poles was no worse than that which the Poles to-day mete out to the German Minority. The systems of the two races differ, the Poles acting more insidiously and more surreptitiously, and resorting to methods which never have been tolerated under the austere Prussian rule. Nevertheless, the seed of German severity bore its fruit. For when, in November 1916, Germany proclaimed the independence of Poland, her hope that she would thereby obtain recruits for her armies met with wholesale disappointment.

Different again (yet equally instructive) was the case of the Austrian Poles. To none of the many Minorities which composed the Empire did the Hapsburg dynasty extend such privileges as to the Poles. Indeed, one result was that there was a Polish party which exercised in Vienna a political influence so great as to be entirely disproportionate. But when the war broke out an Austrian-Polish Legion was formed ; and it was with that body that Pilsudski, and his subsequent rival, Haller, served against the Entente Allies.

The idea that because the Poles themselves were once oppressed they should now oppress others may possibly be a natural human instinct. But its folly is as manifest as its ultimate consequence is certain.

Poland herself provides a striking example of the fact that nations will rarely have recourse to arms to restrain the tyranny of others—unless it be to their own interest to do so. For more than a century and a half many speeches were made deploring the fate of Poland. Yet the war which was destined to reconstitute her as an independent State was not begun with that intent, nor even with any idea that it would have that result. But an economic abnormality may at any time lead to an explosion. That fact is well established by the history of nations ; and, therefore, one naturally enquires what underlying reasons were responsible for the partition of Upper Silesia with the consequences already outlined ; as well as for bisecting the most populous and most

virile country in Central Europe by a wedge driven through its territory.

At the Peace Conference, and afterwards, England, as represented by Mr. Lloyd George, advocated moderation in the creation of the new Polish State. But France was determined to erect a strong Poland ; and upon the whole she was supported by Italy. When the Poles, already infected by megalomania, demanded the whole of East Prussia, it was Mr. Lloyd George who suggested the Polish Corridor, in order to defeat these fantastic claims. However ill-conceived the remedy, and however unfortunate the result, the British Prime Minister must be given credit for the sagacity of his intention. In the same way, what was known as the Curzon line contemplated the creation of a country which, upon the whole, would have been truly Polish ethnographically.

The Treaty of Versailles formed the Polish Corridor by detaching from Germany the greater part of West Prussia and nearly all Posen. The history of this territory shows that it was German (belonging to the Teutonic Knights) for about 200 years ; that at a later period it was under Polish rule for another two centuries ; and in 1772 finally reverted to Prussia, which also obtained Danzig in 1793. There is, however, no record of the wishes and views held in 1919 by the people concerned ; for the Peace Conference decided to transfer this territory without a plebiscite. All that can be said, therefore, is that, according to the German census of 1910, which seems to have been accepted as correct at Versailles, the Corridor district then had within its borders 570,000 Germans, 460,000 Poles, and 104,000 Kashubes—who certainly are not Polish.*

In the Thirteenth of his Fourteen Points President Wilson had stipulated that : " An independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and integrity should be guaranteed by Covenant."

* There is, however, one district—Poznania—which, taken alone, is undoubtedly Polish, both historically and otherwise. I do not think that Germany either disputes this fact or contemplates Poznania ever again coming under her dominion.

The figures cited show that what is now known as the Polish Corridor was not "inhabited by indisputably Polish populations." But even those figures are only arrived at by means of an arbitrary calculation, and by thrusting a wedge through German territory. There is no logical reason why the population of Danzig in 1910 should not be included—unless, indeed, it be a reason that such a procedure would be fatal to Polish contentions. At that date there were in Danzig 315,000 Germans, 9,500 Poles, and 2,100 Kashubes. The actual figures for the whole territory which was thus being dissected were, therefore, 885,000 Germans, 469,500 Poles, and 106,100 Kashubes.

Clearly this territory was far from being indisputably Polish. And President Wilson had never promulgated the principle that territory which was indisputably German should be severed from Germany and placed in any degree under the tutelage of Poland, as was Danzig. In retrospect it is difficult to see why Germany was torn asunder, and why the seed of so much future strife was sown, simply in order to gratify an ambition which had no legitimate or logical basis. For in reality Poland had no need either of free access to the sea or of control of the Port of Danzig. At Versailles Germany proposed to set aside for Poland, under any regulations required, a portion of the harbours of Königsberg, Memel, and Danzig, and to internationalise the Vistula. Czechoslovakia, in a similar way, was assigned rights at Hamburg and Stettin; and the system adopted has never given the Czechoslovakian Government any cause for complaint. Indeed, Stettin is practically not used at all, business going entirely by way of Hamburg. Switzerland, with an export and import commerce enormously larger than that of Poland, has no access of her own to the sea, and in no way suffers from the lack of one. But it is not surprising that Poland quickly seized the opportunity which was presented; and that nothing would satisfy her except that Danzig should be separated from Germany, and that she should be given the control of the Vistula.

Since then, however, Poland has herself furnished the proof that the Port of Danzig was not necessary for her industrial welfare; for she has proceeded to construct

another harbour at a distance of a few kilometres, and has entered into direct competition with Danzig. The Port of Gdynia (or Gdingen, as it is called by the Germans) already has in operation an outer basin with a depth of eight to eleven metres ; an inner basin with a depth of eight to ten metres ; and quays with warehouses, cranes, and other accommodation for twenty ships. It is rightly advertised as being one of the principal ports on the Baltic ; and is at present able to handle between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000 tons. When it is completed, in 1931, it will have 13,500 metres of quays and will be able to handle about 15,000,000 tons annually. In the Polish pamphlet which I have before me it is stated that, amongst other enumerated advantages, " Gdynia is never closed by ice." It happened that on the day I went over the port it was firmly blockaded by ice in every direction. However, the winter of 1928-29 was so exceptionally severe that this hardly invalidates the claim made.

In the Port of Danzig itself there was ample room for extension, and ample space for the construction of further quays and warehouses. It is undeniable that it could have sufficed for all the business there is likely to be for a number of years to come. Obviously the object in constructing Gdingen (at the expense of Danzig) was partly, if not wholly, political. Poland wished to show that she could do something practical, and that there was no justification for her well-known reputation for inefficiency. In a large measure she has been successful. A new port has been created by Danish and Dutch contractors with almost incredible celerity. But it remains to be seen whether, for a certain period, the harbour facilities will not be disproportionately large for the available traffic. In the meantime the Poles are in somewhat of a dilemma when required to explain why they demanded that the Port of Danzig should, for their benefit, be placed under what is equivalent to a neutral commission, if they intended to construct another competitive port next door. They meet this query by pointing to the fact that the total turnover of the Port of Danzig has risen from 2,450,000 tons in 1912 to 7,900,000 tons in 1927. But these bald figures are quite misleading. The exports now consist mainly of coal,

timber, ores, and other bulk goods. For the greater part they do not even pass through the hands of Danzig merchants.

The statesmen who at Versailles suggested that Danzig was again being placed in the position which she had occupied between the middle of the fifteenth and the end of the eighteenth century went somewhat astray historically. During that period the Polish Sovereigns had only certain personal rights, such as choosing annually a Governor from a number of names submitted to them by the Danzig Council. It is true that they more than once attempted to obtain a greater measure of control; but in this they were never successful. And Danzig at all times (until attached to Prussia) conducted her own foreign affairs, maintained her own army and navy, made war and peace when a member of the Hanseatic League, had her own coinage, and otherwise acted as an entirely independent State. The well-preserved archives show that proclamations, requests, and demands were never addressed through Poland, but to Danzig directly; and that the Council always sent its responses in the German language.

Very different is the situation to-day, for now the Free City of Danzig is free only in name. Pursuant to Article 102 of the Treaty of Versailles, it was created, in November 1920, as a sovereign and independent city and State. But it is bound by whatever tariff Poland chooses to adopt; and the present Polish tariff operates greatly to the disadvantage of Danzig. Moreover, all intercourse with foreign States must be conducted through the Polish Government.

The Constitution, proclaimed in 1922, which is guaranteed by the League of Nations, provides, *inter alia*, for a Diet of one hundred and twenty members, which elects, from amongst its own numbers, twenty-two senators. The President and seven of these twenty-two are known as the Chief Senators, hold office for a period of four years, and, in effect, form the Cabinet. Poland is given no rights in the Free City. But that country is entrusted with the management of the railways, in so far as the latter are purely local. There is a Harbour Board, consisting of an equal number of Polish and Danzig members, with a President, who must be of Swiss

nationality ; and also a High Commissioner, representing the League of Nations, to decide disputes between the two States.

These arise largely from Poland's attempts to exploit Danzig for her own benefit. In the little island of the Westerplatz, in Danzig harbour, about seventy houses were destroyed in order to allow Poland to erect a munitions depot upon their site. It is evident that this structure, which occupies a strategic point and a commanding position, would be of great importance in the event of a war with either Russia, Germany, or Lithuania. It is not so evident why the League of Nations should have allowed it to be placed upon the territory of Danzig, which is a sovereign and independent State under the protection of the League itself. Still more inexplicable is the fact that Danzig was forced to pay half of the total cost of the building, a contribution which amounted to something over three million gulden. Moreover, although it is specifically provided by the Constitution that no foreign Power should maintain troops within the limits of the Free City, Poland does maintain a small military force at the Westerplatz. Perhaps the explanation is that as Poland systematically disobeys or ignores its injunctions, the League finds it less humiliating simply to agree to any demand she makes. One morning the population of Danzig was surprised to find that in the night a number of Polish letter-boxes had been placed throughout the city. The League finally decided that some of them should be removed. They are there to this day. About 1921 Geneva decreed that Poland had not the right to maintain in Danzig offices for the management of railways situated beyond the territory of the Free City. Poland has declined to pay the least attention to this decision. And when, in the very matter of the munitions depot at the Westerplatz, a judgment was given by the League in favour of Danzig's reasonable request that she should at least be allowed to have police supervision of a part of her own harbour, it was simply flouted by the Polish authorities.

The population of the municipality of Danzig is 206,000, and that of the whole Free City is 384,000. Of this latter number, 369,000, or about 96 per cent., are German, and 7,700, or 2 per cent., are Poles. It is to be

observed that this is not one of those numerous frontier enclaves, with a mixed population, which are at present a subject of so much unhappy controversy. Danzig is not only German historically, but to-day almost its total population is thoroughly German, both by blood and by sentiment. It is difficult to imagine a clearer case for the right of self-determination, or what justification there was for putting it under the domination of a foreign country. Since that is the central fact at the root of all the trouble, present and future, there is little to be gained by discussing at length the specific grievances and acts of oppression alleged by Danzig. My own conclusion is that many of them are well founded, and some are exaggerated. But anyone who is considering the question objectively might well disregard all these complaints were there any prospect of amelioration in the relations between the Free City and Poland. Unfortunately there is no foundation for any such hope. The people of Danzig are determined to remain German; and they count absolutely upon one day being reunited to Germany. In the meantime they regard with hostile distrust their more powerful neighbour who has been put in authority over them.

The Peace Conference disposed of twenty-nine districts of the province of West Prussia without consulting the inhabitants. But a clause in the Treaty of Versailles did provide that a plebiscite should be taken in four of the six remaining districts; and that only if it went in favour of Poland was a frontier to be drawn to the east of the Vistula. Even in that event the German population was to be assured " to the fullest extent and under equitable conditions access to the Vistula and the use of it for themselves, their commerce, and their boats." The result of the plebiscite was decisive. Out of 105,000 votes cast, only 7,950 were recorded in favour of Poland. Nevertheless, five villages on the right bank were afterwards apportioned to Poland for purely military reasons; and the Commission which finally fixed the frontier placed it on the right or eastern bank of the Vistula at a distance of twenty feet from the river itself. To all intents and purposes, the Prussian population is absolutely cut off from the Vistula. Following a recent investigation, *The Times* concluded that

its " access to the river can only be described as a farce."

The economic prosperity of East Prussia has been largely destroyed by severance from the rest of Germany. The blow is all the heavier because the former trade with Russia has now almost entirely disappeared. But considering the matter as a whole, not from the standpoint of justice (for who shall say what is justice as between nations ?), but simply from that of the danger it comports to Europe, it will suffice to remark that economic hardships at best do not make for peace. How artificial and arbitrary is the whole frontier may be illustrated by mentioning that in order to proceed by railway from East Prussia, by way of Danzig, to the main part of Germany in the West, it is necessary to go through the following gyrations :

From Germany to Danzig ;
From Danzig to Poland ;
From Poland to Danzig ;
From Danzig to Poland ;
From Poland to Germany.

It may be taken for granted that a virile care of sixty-five millions will not for ever passively consent to a wedge being driven through its territory ; any more than the inhabitants of the United States would permit Canada to extend through the middle of the State of Maine. A member of the Polish Cabinet recently remarked that no one would ever dream of depriving thirty million Poles of access to the sea merely because some two million Germans resented being separated from the great body of their fellow-countrymen. But, if arithmetic is to play a part in the dispute, it would seem equally relevant to take into account the feelings and interests of the sixty-three million Germans who are cut off from their fellow-citizens in East Prussia.

It has been alleged that Poland cherishes the idea of annexing East Prussia, but it is only fair to state that the Government does not appear to foster that dream. Anyway, it is debarred from doing so by its constant contention, as against German claims respecting the Corridor, that the frontiers as defined by the Treaty of Versailles must remain inviolate. The political authorities are at present sufficiently occupied with

the task of creating a sentiment of national unity amongst people who, until little over ten years ago, lived under the rule of three different countries. But the feeling that the last word about East Prussia has not yet been said, and that time plays in favour of Poland, is sometimes disclosed; and occasionally the matter is put more plainly.

In 1925, M. Skrokowski, formerly Polish Consul-General at Königsberg, wrote: "No sacrifice can be too great in order to gain possession of East Prussia in some way or other." This statement would be of no great importance were it not that it is a repetition of a demand actually made at the Peace Conference, when the Polish delegate said: "If East Prussia is to remain an integral part of German territory . . . West Prussia must also remain in Germany's possession. If East Prussia remains in German hands as an isolated Prussian possession cut off from the main body of the country by the . . . districts lying in between, it will be a source of unending strife between Poland and Germany. . . ." And, indeed, this is a succinct description of the situation which has arisen to-day as a result of the creation of the Corridor. East Prussians are eminently a stubborn people. No less than the inhabitants of Danzig are they determined both to remain German and, one day, to be reunited to their Mother-country. The words, "This land remains German," which are inscribed on a monument in Marienburg (now incorporated in East Prussia), seem to be the very essence of the will of these people. How dominant is the national sentiment in East Prussia was shown in the election of 1928, when a population of 2,250,000 gave the Polish party only 4,700 votes. But the Poles, who, openly or secretly, are seeking the eventual annexation of East Prussia, cheerfully overlook the danger there would be in adding a further minority of two and a quarter million to a population which already includes in its total of thirty millions about eleven millions belonging to various minority races.

Turning to Poland, the Sejm consists of 444 and the Senate of 111 members. Both deputies and senators are elected for five years. The Constitution makes the will of the Sejm decisive. But Pilsudski's *coup d'état*, which created a dictatorship, practically renders the

Constitution abortive. Even Mussolini does not treat parliamentary institutions more contemptuously than does Pilsudski. When giving evidence, in June 1929, at the trial of M. Czechowicz, a former Minister of Finance, the Dictator stated, without qualification, that his rule had been directed against the ignoble conduct of the Sejm, which had attempted to exercise the sovereign power in the State, whereas the President was alone sovereign. This testimony was only a confirmation of a long article which Pilsudski published in various Government newspapers in April 1929, denouncing the Sejm with invectives which were more violent than politic, and threatening again to assume the office of Prime Minister if Parliament made itself troublesome.

The division of parties, graduating in the usual Continental way from Right to Left, is, therefore, for the moment, of no great interest. It may be said that upon the whole the various Minorities are not represented proportionately to their numbers. The total of the Minorities population is a matter of dispute. Count Skrzynski, who is a pronounced chauvinist, maintains that they number only about 9,500,000. It is very difficult, even impossible, to arrive at any exact conclusion. Doubtless the truth lies between the two extreme assertions of the opposing parties. The Polish figures are obviously vitiated by the system, which usually prevails in practice, of counting all Roman Catholics as Poles. As a matter of fact, there is a material number of Roman Catholics amongst the White Russians and Ukranians, and to a lesser degree amongst the Germans. I think a fair estimate would probably be about 5,000,000 Ukranians, 3,000,000 Jews, 1,500,000 White Russians, and about 1,100,000 Germans, as well as a number of Russians, Lithuanians, and Czechs. According to Polish statistics at a time when the total population was reckoned at about 27,500,000, there were 17,375,000 Roman Catholics, 2,030,000 Uniats, 2,840,000 of the Orthodox faith, 2,850,000 Jews, 1,015,000 Protestants, and about 740,000 professing various other creeds. That is, nearly 64 per cent. of the population was Roman Catholic. Even the Polish statistics admitted that in 1921 only 69 per cent. of the total population was Polish.

The real power remains in the hands of Pilsudski, and of the band of close supporters by which he is surrounded. The present situation regarding Pilsudski himself is not absolutely clear. It seems certain, however, that his health is shattered, and that consequently he takes as little part in arduous work as is compatible with the retention of leadership. But despite the fact that he is comparatively inactive, and that the only official post which he holds is that of Minister of War, he is undoubtedly both a real dictator and the one outstanding personality in the country. What would happen in the event of his death is problematical. But it is unlikely that his successor would be found amongst those who are to-day nearest to him; for they are more remarkable for their activity than for any conspicuous ability.

The geographical position of Poland, placed between Germany and Russia, renders her situation precarious. She has frontiers abutting on Russia, on Germany, on Czechoslovakia, on Rumania, on Lithuania, and on Latvia. With none of these neighbours except Rumania is she upon really good terms. Poland is therefore compelled to maintain an army of which the peace footing is 260,000 men; although doubtless her alliance with France obliges her to have such forces. This military establishment consumes 40 per cent. of the total revenue of the country. The consensus of expert military opinion is that the Poles make good soldiers when well led, but that for the greater part their officers are inept. In Poland great importance is attached to the fact that the army is being trained by French officers. But it is worth remembering how confidently Austria counted upon the success of the Turkish forces in the Balkan War because they had been trained by German officers, and the amazement of the Ballplatz when they were ignominiously defeated.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that, although the Peace Conference gave the new State of Poland more territory than she had any reason to expect, the Poles have since forcibly added to their possessions, and are not satiated even to-day. After considerable fighting Ukranian-Galicia was obtained; and in November 1919 the Allied Powers allotted it to Poland for a period of twenty-five years, upon the condition that it

should be given an autonomous administration, with a separate Sejm. But the Polish Government disregarded these directions, and simply annexed it. In 1920 came the conflict with Russia.

At the San Remo Conference Mr. Lloyd George and M. Millerand agreed that representatives of the Soviet Government should be received in London for the purpose of discussing certain commercial questions. Soon after his arrival M. Krassin complained to me that, whereas he had had conversations with Mr. Lloyd George and with Lord Curzon, the French Government had only sent commercial attachés to London; and asked me to submit certain preliminary proposals on his behalf to M. Millerand, who was then Prime Minister. In the course of the conversations I had with him before agreeing to do so, he said that, unless he succeeded in his mission, Russia would within the next few weeks attack Poland vigorously; and he predicted that in that event the Russian Army would soon be at the gates of Warsaw.* M. Krassin was not very far astray in either of his assertions. Lord D'Abernon† has recently told in his Memoirs that the German Government was convinced that if Warsaw fell Bolshevism would sweep over Germany. And the Russian forces did, indeed, come within a few kilometres of Warsaw; which was saved, not by Pilsudski, but by the skill and energy of General Weygand, and the French officers with him, who rallied the panic-stricken Poles at a moment when the Russian Army itself was exhausted. This was the turn of the tide; and by the terms of the subsequent peace Poland got a further addition of territory, amounting to 110,000 square kilometres, having a population of over 3,600,000, of whom only 1,050,000 were Poles.

On October 7th, 1920, Pilsudski signed, with the Lithuanian Government, the Treaty of Suwalki, whereby a line was fixed beyond which troops should not pass,

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* See *The Pomp of Power*, p. 263.

† When in Poland, in June 1929, I read in a Warsaw newspaper, published in French, the following translation of a paragraph which had appeared in the *Polska Zbrojna*: "*Rappelons nous lord Aberdéen, ancien ambassadeur anglais à Berlin, décédé récemment, conservateur, dont les sentiments germanophiles ont souvent influé sur la politique du gouvernement anglais.*" Presumably the reference is to Lord D'Abernon—despite the mis-statement that he is "*décédé récemment.*"

and Poland undertook "not to violate the integrity of Lithuania." But on the evening of the very same day Polish forces began an attack upon Vilna, which fell into their hands on October 9th. In response to the indignant remonstrances of the League of Nations, Poland pretended that General Zeligowski had acted on his own initiative, and against the orders which he had received. According to Signor Tomasini, formerly Italian Minister to Poland, on December 6th, 1922, the day before he resigned as President of the Republic, Pilsudski informed the English, French, American, and Italian Ministers that the attack on Vilna had been carried out by his orders, which Zeligowski had only been obeying. Whether or not this is exact, the undeniable fact is that Poland took no steps to obey the injunctions of the League and to recall the Polish forces occupying Vilna. This city had already been adjudged by the League to Lithuania. But when Poland made it clear that she intended to remain in possession, no matter what orders were sent from Geneva, the matter was finally brought before the Conference of Ambassadors, which, for no intelligible reason, except that it was thought advisable to extricate the powerless League from its dilemma, awarded Vilna to Poland. It should be added that, out of the 1,175,000 inhabitants of this district, the Polish population amounts at the utmost to 20 per cent.

Le Temps * recently complained that M. Voldemaras based the re-establishment of nominal relations between Lithuania and Poland upon the question of the possession of Vilna, and reproved him for his "*attitudes singulièrment audacieuses*" towards the League of Nations. M. Voldemaras' lengthy speeches certainly did not make for his popularity at Geneva. But *Le Temps* might well remember that, even in the opinion of such an eminent French statesman as the late M. Léon Bourgeois, it was Poland who was first singularly audacious in seizing Vilna, in disregard of its promise to the League, as well as of the Treaty signed with Lithuania only a few hours earlier; an act which he characterised as "a violation of obligations undertaken towards the League," and which Lord Balfour considered to be "a European scandal."

* January 17th, 1929.

French policy is largely responsible for the Poland of to-day. That policy is based on the theory that having lost an ally in Tzarist Russia, and even having in her place a hostile Bolshevik Russia, it is essential to create some barrier in North-Eastern Europe. The idea is also widespread amongst French politicians that a strong Poland is the only alternative to a Russian-German combination. It is, I think, highly doubtful whether that is correct. On the contrary, it would probably be much nearer the fact to postulate that an unnaturally strong Poland will, in the long run, leave Germany with no alternative except a close understanding with Russia. At the moment there is no ground for fearing the conclusion of that alliance. Even such dealings of another nature as the present situation has allowed Germany to have with the Soviet Government have not been found satisfactory. But that is only yesterday and to-day. To-morrow—the to-morrow which it is the statesman's duty to foresee—may well be different. In Germany the opinion is firmly held that French policy is actuated by imperialistic aims, or at least by a desire to ensure her military domination on the Continent. For my own part, I have no doubt that France cherishes no imperialistic dreams; and that she embarked upon her present policy as a matter of self-protection. Germany does not, and cannot, realise the intense nervousness about the future which still inspires France ; and which did so perhaps in even a greater degree in the years immediately following 1918. Viewed in this light, the conception of a barrier against Russia is comprehensible ; always provided that the price paid is not too great—and throwing Germany into the arms of Russia certainly would be too heavy a price. But, in the last analysis, the true test is not the desirability but the feasibility of such a barrier ; or, at least, the feasibility of securing it through the agency of a bloated and largely artificial Polish State, together with Rumania.

The result to-day is that, instead of an advance guard and a prudent instrument of French interests, France has created in the new Poland one of the most chauvinistic countries in Europe. Her grasping policy may well lead, at a day convenient to Moscow, to reprisals on the part of a Russia which might otherwise be quiescent. And her

uncertain military strength under any severe strain may prove that an alliance with her is more of a liability than an asset.

M. Poincaré, in his Memoirs, dwells upon the weakness inherent in the old Hapsburg Empire, arising from the large number of Minority races within her frontiers; and he quotes with approval the late M. Take Jonesco's comment: "Aucune nation ne peut facilement envisager l'hypothèse de l'annexion de millions d'individus d'une autre race. Une pareille mixture détruirait l'unité nationale au détriment de la force effective de l'État, ou bien imposerait à l'État la tâche difficile de violenter les consciences." These strictures are eminently applicable to Poland, who has within her territorial limits a larger number and, with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia, a greater proportionate percentage of alien races than any other country in Europe, but, nevertheless, is not averse to increasing that number.

In 1847 Persigny (who, though greatly Morny's inferior intellectually, and possessed of none of his tact, did not lag far behind him as a realist in politics) was in hospital at Versailles, the state of his health having exacted a temporary release from the imprisonment which he was undergoing as one of Louis Napoleon's companions in the Boulogne expedition. He passed a great part of his time in collecting material for his friend, but political adversary, Falloux, who had chosen the Polish question as the subject of his first speech in the Chambre des Députés. Persigny concluded a long and interesting memorandum by remarking that he was not, however, in accord with Falloux, because he refused to believe that Poland "pût servir jamais de barrière à cette colossale puissance qu'était la Russie." He doubtless went too far in asserting that Poland was a dead nation, and one which had committed suicide. But many of those who to-day rejoice in her resurrection, and only desire to see her prosperous, are also fain to echo Persigny's final words: "La Pologne ne périra pas, disent pompeusement les grands hommes d'État du jour: mais, bon Dieu, il s'agit bien de la Pologne. Il y a bien d'autres intérêts en péril! Et pour peu que tout cela dure, on verra bien d'autres choses que la Pologne." *

* See *Un Roman d'amité entre deux adversaires politiques: Falloux et Persigny*, by Georges Goyau, pp. 105, 106.

I have referred to France as the creator of the Poland of to-day because, although, strictly speaking, it was the work of the Peace Conference, yet such a swollen Poland would never have emerged had it not been for pertinacious insistence on the part of the French. Moreover, it is France which made with Poland the military alliance which enables that country to maintain an army which, in Europe, ranks in size next to that of Russia and of France herself. Mr. Lloyd George opposed Poland's demand for the whole of Upper Silesia, and was alarmed by the claim she put forward to Eastern Prussia. The wisdom of his tactics is open to doubt, but the sincerity of his action cannot be questioned. Thereafter, England stood aside from all participation in plans for Polish aggrandisement. But recently there were indications that, except in regard to military conventions, Downing Street was harmonising its attitude towards Poland with that assumed by France. In Germany and elsewhere the facile explanation was given that the Foreign Office was bound hand and foot to the Quai d'Orsay. However, this fiction will not bear serious examination. Undoubtedly it arose in part from the urbanity generally displayed by Sir Austen Chamberlain, and his obvious desire to be on good terms with everyone: an ambition which Lord Palmerston would never have been able to comprehend, and which Lord Curzon would never have been able to achieve. But the roots of British foreign policy go somewhat deeper. The change to which I have adverted probably was based upon the sincere but utterly mistaken idea that Poland might, if need be, form a strong barrier against Russia. If so, I venture to think that Downing Street made an error for which it had less excuse than had the Quai d'Orsay. For we do not dwell near the Rhine, and we have not behind us that unhappy history of conflicts with Germany extending over three centuries. We possess, therefore, less reason than the French to be impregnated with ineradicable suspicion of everything that is German; and we should be able to judge more objectively the danger of a policy which, if pursued, must inevitably result in bringing Germany and Russia together. The only other alternative lies in the notion that it is possible to hold perpetually in a state of tutelage, and in a position

of inferiority, sixty-five millions of the most virile people in Europe. But surely that curious fallacy has never taken root in England.

If the whole question resolved simply into one of Minorities in Germany and Poland becoming accustomed to new conditions, claims of oppression and of unfair discrimination in regard to education of children might be disregarded as natural and necessary incidents during a transition period. But the matter goes much deeper. The embryo of the trouble lies in the separation of East Prussia from the rest of Germany. That is an open sore which the passage of time will never heal. Much allowance must be made for exaggeration in the presentation of each side of the case. But that does not affect the vital fact that a new danger has been created in Europe. Despite an innate admiration for the astuteness of the Quai d'Orsay, I cannot help thinking that in this phase of her policy France has committed the greatest—and perhaps the only one great—mistake of the last twenty years and more.

One of the ablest and most lucid writers on this vexed question concluded his survey of the situation by saying that the Poles would fight "to their last gasp" to prevent any alteration of the frontier as established by the Corridor. But it is equally certain that, at a propitious moment, one possibly fairly far in the future, the Germans will fight to their last gasp to effect that very change—not as a result of incitement by any military party, not through any lust for conquest, but simply and solely because the nation, as a whole, sincerely believes that the scission of Germany constitutes an intolerable wrong, which is not justified even by the loss of a war, or the strict application of the stern doctrine of *Væ Victis!* Nor can Poland take the stand that such a conflict merely means another move in the eternal strife between the Slav and the Teutonic races; for in this instance the greatest and most powerful of the Slav nations—Russia—will be found ranged on the side of Germany.

In a matter so fundamental neither the cut-and-dried repetitions of the League of Nations, nor any number of idealistic facts arraigning the country which rekindles the flame of warfare, will be of the slightest effect. Nor is

there any logical difference in the position of a country which defends acquired territory, or that of one which takes the offensive to recover territory of which it honestly believes itself to have been despoiled, and in the loss of which it has always refused to acquiesce.

It is inevitable that Germany should be the victor. What is less clear is the more far-reaching consequences which may follow. But it is those who have the vision and the courage to face reality (however distasteful) while there is still time, by altering an abnormal and untenable situation, who will be rendering a practical service to the cause of peace and of civilisation.

EPILOGUE

JULES SIMON, in speaking of the possibility of a war between France and Germany, once said : " J'affirme que chacun des deux peuples peut être battu et perdu. Je redoute même la victoire : car le vainqueur sera emporté dans le cataclysme aussi sûrement que le vaincu." With certain qualifications it may be affirmed to-day that the latter part of the French statesman's forecast has been fulfilled—and upon a larger scale than he probably ever anticipated.

Ten years have passed since the Treaty of Versailles, which was to make the world safe for democracy (a somewhat questionable benefit), and to usher in a firmer and more enduring peace than the human race had ever before known, was solemnly signed. After the lapse of a decade it is not unreasonable to inspect the fruits brought forth by the stupendous changes in the map of Europe which the Omnipotent Four (at times reduced to Three) made so confidently—almost blithely—in the course of a few hectic months. The melancholy conclusion after nearly two years spent in studying the situation in the countries most affected is that the peace-makers who sat in Vienna a century ago more nearly attained their avowed ends than have their successors. Possibly that is because the Vienna theory was more candid ; or, at least, practice and theory were in closer accord in the subsequent years than they have been since 1919.

In 1815 the accepted doctrine was that it was the right of the Great Powers to command and the duty of the smaller nations to obey. At Versailles there was much loose talk (often based upon little knowledge) about the right of self-determination, and the prerogatives of the lesser Powers. But even at Versailles, M. Clemenceau (and, from every practical standpoint, with sound reason) intimated bluntly to the representatives of the latter countries that they were to be seen and not heard—except when they were commanded to talk by the lords of

the Conference; and the French Prime Minister overruled, with scant ceremony, a protest made by Sir Robert Borden. Similarly, since the Treaty was signed it has been abundantly proved that such authority as the League of Nations possesses rests in the Council; which, in effect, can act independently of the Assembly. The Council means the Great Powers, for they alone have permanent seats; although, under an arrangement made some years ago, a few places are allotted to the delegates of other countries, elected by the Assembly for varying terms. In the result the permanent members of the Council usually come to an agreement at private conferences, and simply direct the League to register their decisions. Nor do the Great Powers scruple to ignore the spirit of the Covenant of the League when they consider it is in their interest to do so. One piquant instance will suffice. In 1926 the Government of Abyssinia (a country which is a member of the League of Nations) received from the British and Italian Governments Identic Notes informing it, in the words of the Abyssinian protest to the League, that: "These Governments had arrived at an agreement to support each other with a view to obtaining a concession for the British Government to undertake the conservancy of waters of our Lake Tsana, and for the Italian Government to construct a railway through our Empire. We have been profoundly moved by the conclusion of this agreement arrived at without our being consulted or informed, and by the action of the two Governments in sending us a joint notification. . . . We have the honour to bring to the notice of all States, members of the League, correspondence which we have received, in order that they may decide whether that correspondence is compatible with the independence of our country, inasmuch as it includes a stipulation that part of our Empire is to be allotted to the economic influence of a given Power. We cannot but realise that economic influence and political influence are very closely bound up together, and it is our duty to protest most strongly against an agreement which, in our view, conflicts with the essential principles of the League of Nations."

It is quite comprehensible that the Secretary-General of the League was not very anxious to publish this

document, which, taken in its entirety, was a decidedly sardonic production. But the Foreign Office in its reply, and Sir Austen Chamberlain in his explanation to the House of Commons, made the somewhat specious plea that the Identic Notes did not, in themselves, reserve any part of Abyssinia to Italian economic influence, because all the British Government had agreed, so far as it was concerned, was to recognise that influence—which in no way bound the Abyssinian Government. The Foreign Secretary did, indeed, make it clear that England herself was not going to take any advantage of Abyssinia. But he would not guarantee what Italy might see fit to do, and he did not give any explanation of why he had undertaken to support her. In brief, he disclosed no justification for such Notes having been sent at all to an independent nation. In its protest the Abyssinian Government had very pertinently remarked: "On our admission to the League we were told that all nations were to be on a footing of equality within the League, and that their independence was to be universally respected, since the purpose of the League is to establish and maintain peace among men in accordance with the will of God. We were not told that certain members of the League might make a separate agreement to impose their views on another member, even if the latter considered those views incompatible with its national interests."

To this Sir Austen Chamberlain gave no satisfactory reply. He was unable to do so. For the statement that all members of the League are on the same footing is grossly false. If any sensible person ever had any doubt on that point, this incident sufficed to dispel it. For, had the United States been a member of the League, would Sir Austen have dared to have been a party to addressing such a Note to that country?

I hasten to add that I am only commenting upon the explanation given by the former Foreign Secretary, and that I am far from criticising his action. No doubt he had excellent if undisclosed reasons for his arrangement with Italy; and presumably, in one way or another, it was in the interest of Great Britain. I am here only seeking to make it clear that the whole proceeding was absolutely at variance with the spirit of the League. And such proceedings will continue to occur from time to time. "Plus

ça change, plus c'est la même chose." Sir Austen Chamberlain's curious explanation only shows that Governments are quite as predatory as of yore, but less frank in acknowledging it.

It was natural that the greatest and most costly of wars should be followed by the most determined and the most grandiose effort to control the future. For we have established a strong claim on the attention of our children and grandchildren by having sold posterity into bondage more definitely (the total direct servitude being fixed at sixty-two years) than did ever any preceding generation.

Amongst themselves the Great Powers obstruct, and always will obstruct, the ostensible objects of the League, by reason of the fact that they all reserve matters which they will not submit for decision. Despite all the brave talk about the right of self-determination, the best policy for all minor Powers is still that given by La Fontaine :

> " Petits princes, videz vos débats entre vous ;
> De recourir aux rois vous seriez de grands fous.
> Il ne faut jamais les engager dans vos guerres,
> Ni les faire entrer sur vos terres."

The European statesman who has been most honest (precisely because he has been the frankest) in respect to the League of Nations is Mussolini. He occupied Corfu because he thought it best to do so in the interest of his own country ; and he made it clear to Geneva that he placed, and always would place, that consideration above all others. There is something comic in the fashion in which the Council of the League, fearful of any further loss of prestige, has since been careful to avoid a clash with the Italian Dictator. When any possibility of a dispute with the Duce now arises it bears in mind the words of Aristophanes :

> " Best rear no lion in your State—'tis true,
> " But treat him like a lion if you do."

In the last analysis, the success or failure of the League of Nations as a potent factor in Europe—the answer to the question which now hangs in the balance, whether the League will actually become a force in the progress of civilisation, or will sink to the level of an agent employed

to register the decisions of the Great Powers—depends upon what success it has during the next ten years in bringing about some measure of disarmament. Certainly the record of the last decade is not very promising. In the Treaty of Versailles the words preceding the clauses regulating German disarmament state that Germany binds herself to observe strictly the conditions mentioned in view of rendering possible the preparation for a general limitation of the armaments of all nations. About two years ago *Le Temps* not only repudiated the apparent meaning of this paragraph, but contended that by the Treaty Germany was for all time placed in a position of inferiority. It is true that it is laid down that partial disarmament of Germany is to be permanent. But that might be taken to support the argument that the reduction of the German forces was to be followed by those of other countries.

Lord Cecil of Chelwood has said that the case for the reduction of armaments is unanswerable. That statement is accurate only with the qualification that security is also assured. This naturally raises a host of difficult problems, not the least of which is the question of comparative land and naval disarmament. To-day, ten years after the signing of the Treaty which contemplated a general reduction of military forces, the French Minister for War makes the claim that, as a measure of security, his country is bound to maintain a large standing army. The contention may well be sound ; but it is curiously inconsistent with signing pacts abolishing war.

The ardent supporters of the League of Nations point proudly to the fact that interwoven with its work are the treaties concluded at Locarno—that beautiful spot which, until 1925, was better known in fiction than in history : for it was to Locarno that the Duchesse Sanseverina took Fabrizio after his escape from the citadel of Parma. But the strange point is that these treaties assume that armed forces are available, since the pledge is to use them when necessary. These pacts are, therefore, quite inconsistent with disarmament ; and yet the whole future of the League of Nations lies in that direction.

When Napoleon III was still Prince President he proposed a reduction of British and French armaments,

and a European Congress to settle the state of Europe. Palmerston wrote to Lord John Russell that such a Congress would be futile, since it would be unable to give effect to its resolutions " without establishing a European gendarmerie " : that is precisely the obstacle by which the League of Nations is confronted to-day.

That the men who emerged from directing the most gigantic slaughter in the annals of the human race should have thought themselves qualified to point out the way to an eternal peace indicates a considerable degree of fatuity ; as well as a complete absence of any sense of humour. The general idea was not even original. As far back as the early years of the eighteenth century the Abbé Castel de St. Pierre was the author of a plan for an organisation called " La Société des Nations," the council of which was to pass judgment, without any appeal therefrom, upon all European conflicts of which there appeared to be any possibility. The chief result of this proposal was the expulsion of the Abbé from the Académie Française in 1718. Curiously enough, amongst his principal admirers was the Maréchal de Richelieu, who did his utmost to force the Académie to reverse its decision ; and Prince Eugène was reported to have said that if all Sovereigns were wise they would adopt this project.

Equally ancient are the objections of those who insist that such attempts were bound to fail. These sceptics make a curious medley—men who would seem unlikely to be in accord upon any question. Without going back too far, I will recall that when, in his last years, John Adams was asked for the support of his name by an association formed " to discourage war," he replied that his long experience had convinced him that wars were " as necessary and as inevitable in our system as hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanoes. . . . Universal and perpetual peace appears to me no more or less than everlasting passive obedience and non-resistance. The human flock would soon be fleeced and butchered by one or a few. I cannot, therefore, be a subscriber or a member of your society."

And the late Lord Morley (who detested Woodrow Wilson and all his works), when requested, in 1919, to give his opinion about the Covenant of the League of Nations, replied : " I have not read it and I don't intend to read it.

It's not worth the paper it is written on. To the end of time it will always be a case of ' thy head or my head ' ; I have no faith in such schemes."

While a person of a very different political hue, Theodore Roosevelt, said : " Let us support any reasonable plan, whether in the form of a League of Nations or in any other shape, which bids fair to lessen the probable number of future wars, and to limit their scope, but let us laugh at any or all assertions that any such plan will guarantee peace and safety to the foolish, weak, or timid characters who have not the will and the power to prepare for their own defence. Support any such plan which is honest and reasonable, but support it as a condition to, and never as a substitute for, the policy of preparing our own strength for our own defence."

But one European statesman who was contemporary with John Adams accurately foretold the march of events. Talleyrand's character is held in such contempt that it is often forgotten that he was the most far-seeing politician of his day ; and that his talents were not always used only to betray others or to enrich himself. Perhaps his measure can best be realised by contrasting him with Metternich. Both were essentially aristocratic, not only by origin but also by instinct ; and Talleyrand's contact with the Revolution did not alter him in this respect. But Metternich wanted no change in the best of all possible worlds ; and anticipated none—until the events of 1848 cast him out into the darkness of exile. At heart Talleyrand was probably equally conservative. His outbursts about liberty must always be taken with reserve. And if he was an Orleanist in 1830, it was only because Louis XVIII, while willing enough to use him to effect the Restoration of 1814, was equally ready a year later to break the implied bargain that his share in the death of the Duc d'Enghien should be forgotten and forgiven in reward for his later services.

Talleyrand often deceived others, but he rarely deceived himself. He never allowed the fact that he had no sincere liking for " progress " to interfere with his clear vision of the future. To-day some of his letters or despatches—as, for instance, the one in which he foreshadowed the spread of popular education at the expense of the State—read like inspired prophecies.

He was always an ardent advocate of peace; and as early as 1792 he conceived the idea that wars would eventually be avoided, not by the more or less personal alliances of reigning families, but through all countries possessing the same ideal. And more than thirty years later he wrote: "Ce sont les progrès de la civilisation qui formeront désormais nos liens de parenté."

A distinguished historical scholar, Mr. George Macaulay Trevelyan, has justly observed that "the League of Nations is not a substitute for mutual understanding; rather it assumes that such understanding exists, and if that cannot soon be brought into existence, the League will fail, and with it the hopes of mankind." *

That mutual understanding certainly does not exist to-day. Despite recent gestures, it is impossible to rely absolutely upon the sincerity of the Soviet Government. And although it cannot be asserted that Italy wants a war, it may fairly be said that the head of the Government, as well as the majority of the Italian people, doubt whether the ambitions which they are determined to realise can be satisfied in any other way. But the majority of nations, having had their fill of bloodshed, having seen at close range the horrors of warfare, and suffering as they still are from its devastating economic consequences, are resolutely averse to any conflict. It is their apprehension, and to some extent their disinclination to face the issue, which renders them so ready to regard that frail institution, the League of Nations, as a solid barrier. However, as Lord Balfour once said, the League can exercise only moral pressure; and in the affairs of nations there often comes a point when that is no longer of any avail. Its whole structure is based upon the fiction that human nature has changed—or can be changed. But exactly when did the former phenomenon occur? Certainly not before 1914. For although all European peoples would then have indignantly rejected the charge that they were no more civilised than their forefathers of centuries earlier, they proved in the following years that the only difference was that they had attained a greater degree of skill in killing more quickly and more cruelly masses of their fellow human beings.

* *The Recreations of an Historian*, p. 241.

The sober reading of history will serve to remind us that we are not so different from our ancestors as we sometimes flatter ourselves. Yet Disraeli once spoke in the House of Commons, of " the nineteenth century with its extended and its elevating tendencies." Anatole France came nearer the truth when he wrote : " Ce que les hommes appellent civilisation, c'est l'état actuel des mœurs, et ce qu'ils appellent barbarie, ce sont les états antérienes."

The crucial test of the measure of success which the League of Nations can obtain in actually preventing war (it to-day does excellent work in other respects) will come in fifty years, when the recent European conflict will be only a tradition to those who knew it not. And everything in history goes to show that that tradition will be of little or no effect. Napoleon was unable to change the character of the French ; and time will show that Mussolini was unable to remould the Italian people—which he avows to be his ambition. In the same way the League of Nations will never alter the character of the human race. In its essence the League is but a poor imitation of the Holy Alliance. When, after the Napoleonic Wars, the Great Powers were satiated with fighting, they decided that there should be no further conflicts between themselves, and that they would not permit the smaller nations to disturb the peace. The League professes to obtain the same end by permitting all nations to take part in its deliberations. Obviously, whatever may be alleged in favour of this procedure in the name of democracy, in practice it could only lead to a multitude of counsellors obscuring the issue and preventing any decision. The Great Powers avoid this dilemma in the manner indicated. But this is entirely inconsistent with the spirit of the League, and with all the propaganda of its protagonists. The Holy Alliance was less democratic ; but it was also less hypocritical. And it remains to be seen whether the League will be equally successful in maintaining European peace for nigh on forty years.

The late Count Andrassy, in the years following the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire, saw the whole situation in the clear and chilly objectiveness of a disillusioned man : " The Great War was a stupendous event that must shatter one's confidence in the efficacy of an idealist policy. We witnessed such a confused conglomeration

of the most hyperselfish imperialistic motives allied with the purest, noblest, and most exalted, that faith in the triumph of right and justice could not help taking to her death-bed. Who could believe in altruism, when on every hand were heard ' the rights of the small nations,' ' self-determination,' and other shibboleths, glibly pronounced by the very people who kept—nay, still keep—millions under the yoke ?—when those who reiterated ' a just peace, without penalties or annexations,' have crippled, mutilated, and sentenced to the (economic) galleys, to drag out a weary existence, all the defeated nations, by virtue of instruments miscalled ' Peace Treaties ' ?

" After such disenchanting experiences, Bismarck's philosophy (cold as it is) is more acceptable to me than Gladstone's ; and I am disposed to believe in those politicians who confess *sans phrase* that they are concerned only with their own country's cause, in preference to those who are constantly preaching peace and justice and denying their national egoism.

" To-day also I see the highest and most salutary service for humanity at large in the apparently narrower sphere of service for one's own people. The cause of all mankind can be served most effectually by the uplifting of individual nations." *

Anyone who laboured under the delusion that the recent war was waged " to make the world safe for democracy " must also be disappointed in the result ; for the harvest has been the most bounteous crop of dictators which Europe has known for some centuries. Despite much prating, the tendencies of modern life are utterly inconsistent with democracy ; and are much more prone to oscillate between tyranny (using the word in its original and better sense) and demagogy. But was there ever a truly democratic State after the palmy days of ancient Greece ? Venice—so often cited—was an oligarchy, with a most unrepresentative form of government. For when it was necessary to choose a new Doge, the youngest Privy Councillor, having asked the divine blessing at St. Mark's, seized the first boy he met in the Piazza. The Great Council then excluded all its members

* *Bismarck, Andrassy, and Their Successors*, by Count Julius Andrassy, pp. 62, 63.

who were under thirty years of age. Ballots for the remaining number were placed in a hat, thirty of them containing a piece of parchment upon which was written the word "lector." The boy drew the ballots, handing one to each Councillor. Those who received the thirty pieces of parchment remained, and the others left the Assembly. By a similar process the thirty were subsequently reduced to nine. The nine then chose forty, each by a majority of at least seven votes. The forty were then reduced to twelve, and the twelve proceeded to elect twenty-five, each by a minimum majority of nine votes. The twenty-five were reduced to nine, who then chose forty-five, by a majority of seven votes. The forty-five were reduced to eleven, who chose forty-one by a majority of nine votes. The forty-one then heard the Mass of the Holy Ghost. Each of the forty-one put the name of his candidate in an urn. One paper was taken from the urn, and the person named thereon, after any charges against him were heard and refuted, was elected if he obtained twenty-five votes! Switzerland is probably the nearest modern approach to a truly democratic State.

The basis of any real democracy is that all citizens should voluntarily participate in guiding the destinies of the country, either directly by giving their own services, or indirectly by choosing others to represent them. But even in republics those who have the franchise are nowadays indifferent about exercising it. For twenty years the number of those voting at presidential elections in the United States steadily decreased; until in 1924 only 51·3 per cent. of those entitled to do so made any use of the ballot. In 1928 a record number went to the polls; but there is every reason to believe that this was due only to the interest evoked by certain temporary issues. In Czechoslovakia, Holland, and several other European countries voting is compulsory. But sincere democrats would flock to the polls, instead of being driven there by the fear of a fine or imprisonment—unless they can produce a doctor's certificate. Such unwilling voters are in the same category as many of the inhabitants of the United States, who by a similar threat of fine or imprisonment become involuntary prohibitionists—unless, likewise, they are protected by a doctor's prescription.

Speaking generally, the difference in the sentiment

animating the Great Powers in the years immediately preceding 1914, and to-day, is that during the former period all felt obliged to prepare for war ; some because they wanted it, others because they were certain of its eventuality. Sir Edward Grey was almost alone in believing in the possibility of peace. He did his utmost to maintain it, and not least in 1912 and 1913. It was for this sincere statesman a real tragedy when, in 1914, he saw the structure which he had done so much to build crumbling before his eyes. Austria had for some years the firm intention of attacking Serbia, although clearly realising that it would probably lead to a general conflagration. She would have done so in 1913 had she not been restrained by Germany. Russian statesmen were convinced that a conflict between Slavdom and Germanism was inevitable, and only wanted to have it postponed until the Romanoff Empire had recovered from the effects of the war with Japan, and had placed its military establishment upon a sounder basis. When one of his Ministers took leave of the Czar before re-joining his post abroad, the Monarch impressed upon him that, no matter what happened, Russia must not be involved in any war before 1915 ; and even expressed his preference for a later date.

It is, however, grossly unfair to place M. Poincaré in the category of those who believed that war could not be avoided, and who contemplated the prospect with complacency. This distinction was illustrated when, during his visit to Russia in the summer of 1912, Sazonov communicated to him for the first time the text of the treaty which had been concluded between the Balkan States in February of that year, with the approbation, and even with the diplomatic assistance, of St. Petersburg. M. Poincaré has recorded the indignation he felt when he saw this document ; which contained—as he promptly pointed out to Sazonov—the germ of a war against Austria as well as against Turkey, and which had been made under the patronage of Russia without being communicated to her French ally. M. Poincaré's own account of this matter is entirely confirmed by M. Sazonov's Memoirs. The Russian Foreign Minister admits that on this subject there was a difference of opinion between M. Poincaré and himself. "The French Minister

saw in it before everything else the threat of a Balkan war. . . . The benevolence with which the Russian Government regarded the Balkan Alliance aroused the lively apprehension of the French Government. M. Poincaré feared that this treaty would provoke a war in the Balkans. On our side, we also considered a Balkan war as possible, and even probable ; but we considered that the cause would be much less the conclusion of even an offensive alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria than the state of war which had existed since the autumn of 1911 between Turkey and Italy for the possession of Tripoli and Cyrenia." *

The most practical prop of peace is the fact that throughout Europe people are now much less ready than ever before submissively to go to the slaughter—to become cannon-fodder at the behest of their rulers. If war broke out to-day, the burden of proving that it was not the fault of their policy would be placed upon the politicians. The future may show that this is a passing phase, consequent upon the recent conflict ; but I doubt it.

In August 1914 Nicolas II said to the French Ambassador, M. Paléologue : " In order to win the victory I will sacrifice everything, even to my last soldier." The Czar's comprehension of what was demanded by loyalty to his Allies was admirable. But the characteristically feudal way in which he expressed it was quite in keeping with the manner in which monarchs were ready to sacrifice their soldiers—first and last—without going through the formality of consulting them.

A picture of war as seen from another standpoint has been vividly painted by Carlyle :

" What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net purport and upshot of war ? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain ' Natural Enemies ' of the French, there are successively selected, during the French War, say thirty able-bodied men : Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them ; she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them

* *Les Années Fatales*, pp. 58, 59.

up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charges, some two thousand miles, or say only to the South of Spain; and fed there till wanted. And now, to that same spot in the South of Spain, are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending: till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition, and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word 'Fire!' is given: and they blow the souls out of one another; and in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest! They lived far enough apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! Their Governors had fallen out; and, instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot. Alas, so is it in Deutschland, and hitherto in all other lands; still as of old, what devilry soever Kings do, the Greeks must pay the piper!" *

But if the rulers of a country—which nowadays means the dictator, or, under a constitutional form of government, the politicians in power—are to be blamed for any disaster, Mr. Lloyd George's wild campaign cry, "Hang the Kaiser," was logical. Not that the former Emperor was guilty of causing the war. He may justly be blamed for not using every exertion to avoid it. Perhaps he may fairly be condemned for precipitating it. But the origin of the clash arose when Wilhelm II was a boy; or, if one goes to the root of the matter, even before he was born. The Kaiser committed no crime. But he was guilty of what Talleyrand considered even a greater offence on the part of a Sovereign—he made a mistake. And, in the same

* *Sartor Resartus*, II, 8.

way, the capital error for a politician, as for a punter, is to back the wrong horse. But one of the essential points of difference between a statesman and a politician is that the former has what Wellington described as the distinctive mark of a great general—the intuitive knowledge of what is on the other side of the hill; whereas a politician only guesses. But all that is of little account. For if the Kaiser had been punished it would not have been because he waged a war—not like a murderer who is hanged because he has committed a murder—but because he had lost a war: since, obviously, there would have been no question of hanging him had he been victorious.

Mr. Lloyd George's reasoning (although at the time he was not, in fact, reasoning at all, but only electioneering) was fairly sound. But the principal he laid down, perhaps unconsciously, opened up a bleak prospect for politicians. The divinity that doth enhedge a king nowadays is a skimpy covering; but the politician would not have even that wherewith to hide his nakedness in the day of atonement. And a Radical demagogue values his neck just as much as does the offshoot of any royal house. The idea of hanging the Kaiser was equally monstrous and ridiculous. But it must be admitted that the example would have made both princes and politicians wonderfully prudent about thereafter risking the lives of others.

An interesting subject of speculation to-day is the individual tendencies of the various European countries; and also the respective situations towards each other which Europe and the United States will occupy in the course of the next quarter of a century. I am inclined to think that in his latest book, *Europe*, Count Keyserling, the founder of the Darmstadt School of Wisdom, makes out a better case than does that ardent advocate of Pan-Europa, Count Coudenhove. The plan which the latter puts forward is somewhat visionary, both because its realisation would be too near perfection, and also because it presupposes a state of mutual confidence and trust between the nations of which there is far from being any sign at present. He sets himself a harder task than does Count Keyserling, who is content to observe the governing characteristics of the various

races, and to point out whither they are likely to lead. Count Keyserling indicates what probably will, whereas Count Coudenhove paints what he would like to see, happen.*

Although unable to speak with the assurance of these distinguished writers, I am under the impression that Europe has not yet entered upon a period of permanent eclipse, or of total inferiority, much less one of decadence. Money and economic power are, at the moment, mainly in the hands of the United States. The policy of that country in using the means of pressure thus at its disposal in order to influence or coerce Europe, without itself accepting any responsibility, is distinctly irritating and provocative. But as Europe recovers (as she will recover) the gap between the power exercised by the United States and by Europe will gradually grow less, until the day when the former will no longer be able subtly to dictate.

In the meantime Europe still leads in all that pertains to culture—which still counts for something in the world. Mr. Gladstone was wont to ask travellers returning from the United States whether the sceptre of civilisation was being transferred there from Europe. To-day the answer is as plain as it was then. As Mr. Bertrand Russell has written : " The intellectual level in Western Europe and the artistic level in Eastern Europe are, on the whole, higher than in America. In almost all European countries the individual is less subject to herd domination than in America ; his inner freedom is greater even where his political freedom is less. In these respects the American schools do harm."

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* Count Keyserling often refines his theories to such a point that it becomes a display of very clever hair-splitting, at the expense of weakening the force of the original proposition. Moreover, his language is somewhat complicated ; and unless his work is read in the original it is often difficult to comprehend his meaning. For instance, the greatest concentration is necessary to understand the following sentence in the English translation : " Whenever a proposition, at the very moment of its incidence, is formulated and set forth, *i.e.*, devitalised by utterance, it at once eludes the complete organism ; then, by the psychological law of compensation, the personality, as it continues to develop, becomes primitive instead of more differentiated."

Count Coudenhove may reasonably claim to have some knowledge of more than one nation, since his father was Austrian and his mother Japanese.

The United States, with all its riches, with all the qualities both of head and of heart possessed in no scanty measure by its inhabitants, will produce no civilisation equal to that of Europe for many a long day to come; unless, indeed, we speak a different language, and mean a different thing, when we use the word "civilisation."

The European situation, taken as a whole, is unsatisfactory, more on account of the failure of the optimistic hopes held ten years ago by the victorious Allies than because of any threat of immediate danger. Undoubtedly the gravest problem in Europe to-day is that created by the Polish Corridor. The very fact that no decisive movement is to be expected in the near future, the very fact that it is bound to remain a problem for many years to come, only accentuates the menace.

The other uncertain spots on the map of Europe are Russia and Italy. The mystery with which Russia is enveloped necessarily renders any discussion about that country purely speculative. It seems fairly clear that her military forces are to-day much less powerful than in 1920, but that is a condition which probably will be only temporary. The inevitable struggle between the ruling Communist group and the agriculturists continues, and is bound to be constant. But there is also an internal conflict between the two sections of Communists, who, although numerically few, now form a governing class; and, indeed, the only party. Stalin and Trotsky are the leaders of the opposing factions. The former is getting further away from Leninism than even did Lenin himself before his death. According to Trotsky, the "Testament" of Lenin is considered by the Stalinites to be a counter-revolutionary document, the circulation of which is punished by arrest and exile. However, it is quite comprehensible that Stalin is not anxious to spread Lenin's last will far and wide, since he himself is therein described as "disloyal." Presumably Russia is passing through a period of slow evolution. But so long as the *de facto* Government maintains itself in power it is difficult to see what ground any other country has for complaint, much less for interference. This is true, not only irrespective of how far one differs from Communistic principles, but even if it be

a fact that the majority of the Russian population would show its dissatisfaction with the existing régime if there were any way in which it could freely express its opinions. But the corollary of this axiom is that Russia should herself be scrupulous in avoiding any interference with the internal affairs, and especially in attempting to undermine the form of government, of other countries. Until she has given every evidence that she is mending her ways in this respect, and that her Government is no longer seeking to disseminate Communistic principles abroad, the United States, at least, will not recognise Soviet Russia. So long as such recognition is withheld, so long will Russia find it impossible to obtain the credits which she needs. In the meantime she will be unable to resume her rightful place in world-wide commerce. That is a loss which affects all countries; but Russia herself more than any other.

I have already referred to Italy at such length that it will suffice to say that, although neither Fascism nor its leader are inspired by any definite warlike plans or intentions, yet their ardent patriotism, and their determination that their country shall eventually obtain what they believe to be her just rights, are so firmly ingrained that they would not shrink from a conflict. There is also always a danger that Mussolini's foreign policy may one day place him in such a position that he will be unable to avoid going to war. For, as has been already observed, one of the inherent weaknesses of Fascism is that it can never retreat.

But the solution of these questions, as well as others, such as the determination of France to maintain herself, despite a stationary or decreasing population, as the dominant military power on the Continent, and the resolution of Germany to regain her lost position, are undoubtedly largely dependent upon the future of the League of Nations. The protagonists of that body, and those who (like myself) have little or no faith in its ultimate efficacy, are to-day in agreement on that point. This situation has arisen not through anything which the League has actually accomplished, but because, even apart from the idealists, many statesmen have yielded to the temptation of shirking the unpleasant duty of facing realities; and have only been too glad to entrust the

burden of the future either to Geneva, or to more or less empty pacts.

The solution of all political problems is now more than ever before controlled by financial considerations. It is incontrovertible that world-wide instability is caused by the fact that one country, which through its predominant wealth is able to exercise the greatest influence, steadfastly refuses to take an active part in the affairs of the world, and to accept the risks incidental to doing so. The situation is without precedent. For several generations Europe was, indeed, the banker of the United States. But the debts then incurred were contracted voluntarily; not under the pressure of impending disaster, but in order to develop natural resources, which fructified so bounteously that there was a wide margin for the repayment of all loans, without any recourse to heavy taxation. Europe can expect no further return from the money which it borrowed in the stress of wartime. It was then obliged to discount the future, and to place, alike upon the present generation and upon posterity, a grievous burden. So long as the United States possesses the overwhelming preponderance thus obtained—so long as Europe is drained of gold—the world will resemble a ship which flounders because its cargo is shifted to one side. It would be equally difficult and daring to suggest the ultimate outcome. But it is not too venturesome to predict that in one way or another, and perhaps in some fashion little foreseen to-day, the balance will right itself before the lapse of half a century.

In the meantime the position of Great Britain is perhaps more precarious than that of any other Great Power. Nevertheless, she is constantly accused of undue egotism; although the greatest surprise is displayed whenever she does not exhibit a large measure of self-abnegation. But these sentiments are traditional. In 1848 Palmerston told the House of Commons that while England should, with moderation and prudence, be the champion of justice and right, there was no reason why she should become the Don Quixote of the world; and he added: "It is a narrow policy to suppose that this country or that is to be marked out as the eternal ally or the perpetual enemy of England. We have no eternal allies and we have no eternal enemies. Our

interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow."

These are words upon which, at the present juncture, many European statesmen might advantageously ponder.

THE END

INDEX

ABBÉ CASTEL DE ST. PIERRE, 300
Abyssinia and the League of Nations, 296
Adams, John, 300
Aehrenthal, Count, 82, 84, 85, 87, 89, 94, 95
Agram, Meeting at, 199
Ahmad Beg Zogu, 42, 197
Albania and Italy, 41
Albertini, Signor, 64
Alexander, King of Serbia, 196
Alexander II of Russia, 266, 267
Alexieff, General, 268
Alsace-Lorraine and France, 103, 104, 237
America and Italian Emigrants, 58
Amery, Mr., 14
Andrassy, Catherine, 118
Andrassy, Count, 86, 96, 113, 118, 214, 303
Andrieu, Cardinal, 70
Anschluss, the, 126, 249, 251, 253
Antonelli, Cardinal, 73
Apponyi, Count, 131
Arnim, Count, 215
Asquith, Mr. (Lord Oxford and Asquith), 202
Assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, 191
Augusta, Queen, 210
Austria and Hungary, 82 *et seq*; annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 82; and Emperor Francis Joseph, 90-99; assassination of the Archduke, 91; War on Serbia determined, 94; Count Tisza and Emperor Francis Joseph, 97-102; Emperor Charles, 99 *et seq.*; Peace negotiations, 103; Hungary proposes autonomy, 108; Yugo-Slavian question, 109; disintegration of the Army, 112-116; Emperor Charles abdicates, 116; Karolyi and the Republic, 118; Count Tisza shot, 119; Secession of Transylvanian Rumanians, 120; Bela Kun's activities, 121; Charles attempts to regain Throne, 122; Horthy elected Regent, 123; Hungary bans Hapsburgs, 124; the Anschluss, 126; the Heimwehr, 126; Treaty of Trianon, 128, 130; rectification of boundaries and Lord Rothermere, 130 *et seq.*; and Mussolini, 140; President Hoover and the Hungarians, 142; Hungarians and democracy, 143; Hungarians and their grievances, 144
Austria and Hungary—*cont.*
Avanti, the (newspaper), 31
Averescu, General, 44, 155

BALDWIN, MR. STANLEY, 7, 9, 10
Balfour, Lord, 11, 289; and the League of Nations, 302
Ballplatz, the, 90, 92; duplicity of, 94, 168
Banat, the, 166
Barlass, port of, 198
Barrère, M., 28
Batthyani, Count, 113, 118
Beaverbrook, Lord, 7, 8; Railway policy, 12
Bela Kun, 120, 121, 122
Benckendorf, Count, 88
Benedict XV, 66, 70
Benès, Dr., 102, 125, 134, 151, 168, 172, 175, 177, 189, 255
Benn, Mr. Wedgwood, 13
Berchtold, Count, 84, 91, 93, 95, 97, 106, 170
Berlin, Congress of, 87, 146
Berlin, Treaty of, 82 *et seq.*
Bernstorff, Count, 261
Berthelot, M. Philippe, 88, 190
Bertie, Lord, 89
Bessarabia, 44, 87, 167
Bethlen, Count, 96, 140
Bethmann-Hollweg, 94, 95
Bieberstein, Marshal von, 218
Billot, Cardinal, 72, 73
Birkenhead, Lord, 9
Bismarck, Prince, 11, 27, 87, 92, 204, 205, 206-215
Björke, Treaty of, 84
Boehm, Communist, 118
Bogdanovitch, Madame, 86
Bolshevism and Fascism compared, 80
Boncour, M. Paul, 255
Borah, Senator, 255
Borden, Sir Robert, 296
Boroviczeny, A., 123
Bosnia-Herzegovina, annexation of, 82, 85
Bourgeois, M. Leon, 289
Bran, Castle of, 154
Bratianu, Jean, 44, 132, 146, 148; political views, 151; and London Press, 153; at Florica, 154

Bratianu, Vintila, M., 132, 162
Braun, Otto, 236
Brenner Pass, the, 76
Breysig (German Socialist), 89
Briand, M., 70, 71, 251
Buchanan, Sir George, 202
Buchlau, Castle of, 84
Bülow, Princess, 216
Bülow, Prince von, 28, 212, 216; and the *Daily Telegraph*, 217; breach with the Kaiser, 217
Burian, Count, 29, 106, 111

CABINET, POWER OF THE, 16
Cabrières, Cardinal de, 70
Cambon, Jules, 221
Cambon, M. Paul, 11, 202, 218, 234
Camorra, the, 64
Caporetto disaster, the, 29
Caprivi, Count, 213
Carbonari, the, in Italy, 64
Carlyle, Thomas, on War, 307
Carmen Sylva, Queen, 145
Carnock, Lord, 82, 202
Carol of Rumania, Prince, 160, 161
Carp, Peter, of Rumania, 146
Cas, the (newspaper), 172
Cavan, Lord, 30
Cecil of Chelwood, Lord, 299
Chamberlain, Joseph, 214
Chamberlain, Sir Austen; 18, 20, 40; and Treaty of Trianon, 133; and Germany, 263; and Poland, 292; and Abyssinia, 297
Charles, Emperor, 99 *et seq.*; and the Kaiser, 104; and Alsace-Lorraine, 105; abdication of, 113; attempt to regain Hungarian throne, 122, 175, 190
Chotek, Countess, 91
Churchill, Lord Randolph, 11
Churchill, Mr. Winston, 25, 262, 264
Classical Association, the, 10
Clemenceau, M., 71, 104, 295
Combes, M., 70
Committee of Experts, 247
Compromise, the Spirit of, 256
Congregation of the Index, 70
Conservatism, future of, 14
Conservative defeat, the, 11
Constantinople, problem of, 24
Coolidge, President, 260
Coppola, Francesco, 49
Corriere della Sera, 64
Coudenhove, Count, Governor of Bohemia, 103, 309
Courcel, Baron de, 204
Cramon, General von, 101, 107, 269
Croatia, 108, 195
Croats and Serbs, 195
Csaky, Count, 131
Curtea d'Argesh, Church of, 154
Curzon, Lord, 288, 292
Cuthbertson, Hon. W. S., 138
Czechoslovakian Republic, the, 132, 134, 168 *et seq.*; the National Council, 170; the Constitution, 174; population of, 176; Land Laws, 177 *et seq.*; Minorities in, 180, 181, 187; Education in, 186, 188; Foreign policy, 191; the Army, 192; and Little Entente, 192
Czechs and Slav Race, 189
Czernin, Count, 103, 104, 105

D'ABERNON, LORD, 219, 240, 263, 269, 288
Daily Telegraph, the, and Prince von Bülow, 212
d'Andrea, Girolano, 73
Danzig and Poland, 279, 280, 282
Daudet, Léon, 70
Dawes Plan, the, 239 *et seq.*
Deak, Francis, 96
Deimiprievitch, Colonel, 92
Democracy, basis of real, 305
de Musset, Paul, 44
d'Enghien, Duc, 301
Deschanel, M., 71
d'Esperey, Franchet, General, 120
d'Imperiali, Marquid, 28
Direct taxation statistics, 21
Disraeli, 11, 87, 210, 303
Dogger Bank incident, the, 207
Donald, Sir Robert, 125, 131, 138, 176, 180, 184, 188
Don Sturzo, 66
Doumerge, M., 240
Draga, Queen of Serbia, 196
Duca, M., 97, 162
Dumaine, M., 98

EAST PRUSSIA AND POLAND, 284
England, 8
Entente, benefit of the, 22
Erzberger, Herr, 236
Estergom, 142
Eugène, Prince, 300
Eugènie, Empress, 88, 90
Eulenberg, Philippe von, 220
Europe and the United States, 310 *et seq.*
European Alliances, 23, 24, 25

FALLOUX, M., AND POLAND, 291
Fascism, definition of, 34; and League of Nations, 39; and the Press, 53; in the United States, 58, 59; and Secret Societies, 69; Morality regulations, 65; and the Church, 65 *et seq.*; as a form of Government, 77; and Bolshevism compared, 80; and the League of Nations, 312
Fascist Grand Council, 62, 63
Fay, Sydney, Professor, 85
Federzoni, Luigi, 68
Ferdinand, Archduke Francis, 89, 91, 98
Ferdinand, King of Rumania, 107
Florica (Rumania), 154

Foch, Marshal, 240
Foerester, Professor, 89
France, Anatole, 303
France and Morocco, 26
France and Poland, 24
Franchise Extension to Women, the, 11
Francis Joseph, Emperor, 90, 93; and Count Tisza, 96, 97; and his Empire, 99
Frederick, Emperor of Germany, 209
Frederick, Empress of Germany, 208, 224
Frontier question in Hungary, 130 *et seq.*
Futurism in Italy, 48

GASPARRI, CARDINAL, 74
General Election of 1923, the, 9
General Election of 1929, the, 7
Germany, 200 *et seq.*; responsibility for the war, 201-203; policy before 1914, 203 *et seq.*; Bismarck, 204-210; Dual Alliance, 205; the Kaiser, 206-208; Empress Frederick, 208-211; Foreign affairs and von Holstein, 213-216; Prince von Bülow and the Kaiser, 217; Marine challenge to England, 223-225; German people and the war, 226; Republic proclaimed, 228; President Ebert, 228; parliamentary government, 229 *et seq.*; Walter Rathenau, 232; the Peoples Party, 232; Gustav Stresemann, 232, 233; Alsace-Lorraine settled, 237; Rhine occupation, 237, 240-242; Reparations, 239 *et seq.*; the Locarno Pact, 240; disarmament, 243; the Dawes Plan, 246; Committee of Experts, 247; the Anschluss, 249 *et seq*; the future, 253 *et seq.*; the Kellogg Pact, 255; "no war in our time," 259; revision of treaties, 262; England's future foreign policy, 263; and Poland, 268, 293; Treaty of Versailles, 299
Gilbert, Mr. Parker, 246
Giolitti, Signor, 31, 38, 66, 94
Giovanezza in America, 58
Gladstone, W. E., 12
Goggia, Monsignor, 48
Gorgolini, Pietro, 50
Gortschakoff, Prince, 86
Goschen, Sir Edward, 226
Graham, Sir Ronald, 42
Grand Orient Masonic Body, 65
Great Britain's heavy burden, 21; precarious position of, 313
Great Powers, rights of, 295 *et seq.*
Grey, Lord, 28, 201, 202, 208, 234, 263, 306

HAGUE CONFERENCE, THE, 241
Haldane, Lord, 224, 225
Hamburger Nachrichten, the, 204
"Hang the Kaiser," 309
Hanotaux, M. Gabriel, 267
Hapsburg Monarchy, last days of, 99; excluded from Czechoslovakia, 124
Harrow, 10
Heimwehr, the, 126, 127
Helena of Greece, Princess, 161
Henderson, Mr. A., 18, 20
Herriot, M., 88
Hindenburg, Field-Marshal von, 168, 229, 235
Hoefer, General, 270
Hoetzendorff, Conrad von, 89, 92, 95, 100, 168
Hohenlohe, Prince Alexander von, 215, 246
Hohenlohe, Prince von, 213
Holstein, Baron von, 213-215
Hoover, President, and Hungarians, 142
Horthy, Admiral, 96, 123
House, Colonel, 171
Hoyos, Count, 93
Hungary, a separate State, 116, 128; Lord Rothermere's statistics, 135 *et seq.*; Hungarians, 143; and Jews, 143; Frontier question, 144
Hunyadi, Count Joseph, 102
Huss, Jean, life of, 33
Hussarek, Baron von, 107, 111

Il Carrocio in America, 58
Imre, Professor Joseph, 134
Inge, Dean, 7
Isvolsky, M., 82 *et seq.*
Italy and the Triple Alliance, 26; and Treaty of London, 29; and League of Nations, 38; Strength of Army, 45; Air Force, 46; Catechism for Children, 47; Journalists National Syndicate, 54; Tax on bachelors, 56; Emigrants and United States, 57; and Colonial possessions, 60; Finances, 60, 61; Suppression of secret societies, 64; and marriage laws, 69; Syndicates, 75, 76; and Austria-Hungary, 94; and separate peace, 104

JAECKH, PROFESSOR ERNST, 220
Jagow, Herr von, 52, 226
Jerome, M., 101, 129
Jouvenal, Henri de, 260

KAISER, THE, 27, 50, 52, 82, 84, 104, 206; and Lord Lansdowne, 207; and Lord Grey, 208; the Empress Frederick letters, 208; mentality of, 212; and von Bülow, 212, 217; and Holstein, 213; Kiderlen-Waechter, 219; favours Tirpitz, 219; on naval supremacy, 224; Admiral Mahan's book, 224; Lord Haldane and Tirpitz in Berlin, 1912, 225; message to

KAISER, THE—*cont.*
Metternich, 225 ; Lloyd George and, 309
Karageorgevitch Dynasty, the, 94
Karolyi, Count, 96, 112, 113, 117
Kaunitz, 265
Kautsky, Karl, 93
Keller, Mr. W. N., 138, 140
Kellogg, Mr. 258
Kellogg Pact, the, 18, 39, 45, 79, 167, 255
Keri (journalist), 121
Keyserling, Count, 146, 309
Kiderlen-Waechter, 83, 95, 215, 219, 222, 226
Kipling, Rudyard, 10
Kossuth, Francis, 117
Krassin, M., 288
Kühlmann, Herr von, 234, 235
Kuhn, Loeb and Co., 142
Kunfi (Kunstaedter), 119, 121

LABOUR PARTY, the English, 7, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20 ; Foreign Policy of, 17, 21 ; relations with Russia, 20 ; and Germany, 263
L'Action Française, 70-73
Lake Tsana, 296
Lambrino, Mlle. Zizi, and Prince Carol, 161
Lammasch, President of Council, 112
Lansdowne, Lord, 207
Law, Mr. Bonar, 240
Le Temps on Disarmament, 17 ; and Poland, 289
League of Nations, the, 38, 124, 133 ; Assembly and Council, 296 ; and Abyssinia, 296 ; and Mussolini, 38-40, 298 ; and Lord Balfour, 302
Lenin and Mussolini, 81
Leo XIII, 69, 72
Leonville von Sayn-Wittgenstein, Princess, 211
Lesourd, M., 89
Liberal Party, the, doomed, 13
Liberalism to-day, 13
Liberties of Parliament, the, 16
Lichnowsky, Prince, 94, 208, 215, 234, 263
L'Impero, 55
Lithuania and Poland, 289
Little Entente, the, 44, 173, 190, 191, 192
Liverani, Monsignor, 73
Lloyd George, Mr., 9 ; and Unemployment, 13 ; and Smyrna, 39 ; Peace negotiations, 1917, 104 ; and Lord Northcliffe, 137, 193 ; and the Kaiser, 207 ; and France, 229 ; on disarmament, 243, 250 ; and Poland, 269, 278, 288 ; and the Kaiser, 308
Locarno Pact, the, 240, 254, 299
London Convention, 1915, the, 104
Loucheurs, M., 21, 25
Lovaszy, 129

MACDONALD, RAMSAY, and disarmament, 17 ; and Minorities, 17 ; and Lord D'Abernon, 263
Mackenzie, Sir Morell, 209
Madgearu, M. Virgil, 167
Mafia, the, in Italy, 64
Mahan, Admiral, 224
Maine, Sir Henry, 77
Maistre, Joseph de, 201
Maniu, M., 159, 164
Manoilesco, M., 155
Marie of Rumania, Queen, 161
Marinetti, Signor, 48
Masaryk, Dr., 102, 112, 134, 168, 174
Mathieu, Cardinal, 72
Maurras, Charles, 70, 71
Melchett, Lord, 13
Mellon, Mr. Andrew, of U.S.A., 62
Mensdorff, Count, 94, 234
Metternich, Count, 225, 234, 301
Michaelis, Herr, 236
Military Control Commission, 243
Millerand, M., 133, 264, 288
Minghetti, Donna Laura, 28
Minorities in Rumanian Transylvania, the, 158
Moltke, Field-Marshal von, 95
Montagnac, Baron de, 70
Morgan, Mr. J. P., 247
Morgan, Professor J. H. and Lloyd George, 243
Morley, Lord, and President Wilson, 300
Mouravieff, Count, 267
Müller, Herr, 249, 253
Mussolini, Arnaldo, Signor, 39
Mussolini, Benito, Signor, 20, 22 ; early life of, 31-36 ; and Fascism, 34 *et seq* ; and Napoleon, 36 ; and League of Nations, 38-40 ; his Foreign Policy, 41, 312 ; and the Balkans, 43 ; relations with Hungary, 43 ; and Rumania, 44 ; relations with Moscow, 45 ; Freedom of the Press, 54 ; and Malthus doctrine, 56 ; and emigration, 59 ; Colonial possessions, 60 ; Balanced the Budget, 61 ; the Election Bill, 63 ; suppressed secret societies, 64 ; and the Vatican, 65 *et seq.* ; the Brenner Pass, 76 ; and the future, 78 ; on parliamentary government, 81 ; and Lenin, 81 ; on Hungary, 140 ; and Jean Bratianu, 151

NAGY, DR. EMIL, 131
Napoleon I, 36
Napoleon III, 36, 266, 299
National Syndicate of Italian Journalists, 54
Nicolas, Grand Duke, 268

Nicolas II, 84, 307
Nicolas of Rumania, Prince, 163
Nicolson, Sir Arthur (Lord Carnock), 82, 84, 85, 226
Nitti, 30
Nordau, Dr. Max, 118
Northcliffe, Lord, 137
Nowak, Herr K. F., 208

On Education, by Bertrand Russell, 8
Optant question, the, 167
O'Reilly, Mr. W. E., 41
Origins of the World War, the, 85.
Osservatore Romano, the, 74
" Outlawing War," 255
Oxford and Asquith, Lord, 202

PADEREWSKI, M., 270
Painlevé, M., 88, 254, 259, 260
Palacky (historian), 189
Paléologue, M., 89, 90, 189, 204, 267, 307
Palmerston, Lord, 300
Parma, Duchess of, and Peace negotiations, 103
Party discipline, English, 17
Peace Conference, 173, 177
Peace Negotiations in 1917, 103, 104
Pecs (Hungary), 142
Persigny and Poland, 291
Pfeffer, Herr Leo, 92
Pillat, M., 156
Pilsudski, 285
Pittsburg Convention, 178
Pius IX, 73
Pius X, 72
Pius XI, 66, 67
Ploesti (Rumania), 154
Poincaré, M., 26, 27, 71, 87-90, 104, 202, 291, 306
Poland and France, 266 *et seq.*
Poland, coal output of, 272
Polish Corridor a grave problem, 311
Polish problem, the, 265 *et seq.*; citizenship, 273; Education, 274; and Germans, 276; the Corridor, 278; Danzig port, 279; East Prussia, 285; the Constitution, 285; division of parties, 286; Vilna, 289; and Russia, 290; and Germany 293
Ponsonby, Sir Frederick, 209, 211
Popolo d'Italia, the, 32
Popovici, M., 160
Population of Italy, 56
Poynter, Sir Edward, 10
Pribram, Professor A. F., 205
Prinetti and France, 26
Prussian Government, the, 231

QUAI D'ORSAY, THE, 22

RACCONIGI, AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA, 26
Raditch, M., 195
Railway Policy, Lord Beaverbrook's, 12
Rakosi, Eugene de, 128, 129
Rapallo, Treaty of, 198
Ratchitch, Serbian Deputy, 195
Rathenau, Walter, 232
Rechburg, Herr Arnold, 25
Rectification of Hungarian boundaries, 130 *et seq.*
Reichstatt, Agreement of, 86, 87
Repington, Colonel, 134
Responsibility for the War, 201-203
Reval, Count Ignazio di, 58
Revision of Treaties, 262
Rhine Occupation, the, 240
Ribot, M., 104
Richelieu, Maréchal de, 300
Rocco, Signor, 63
Roma-Fascista, the, 49
Rome, Pact of, 198
Roosevelt, Theodore, and Kellogg, 258; and League of Nations, 301
Rothermere, Lord, 128, 130; his Hungarian statistics, 135 *et seq.*; his intervention, 180, 193
Rumania, the Loan, 132; King Carol, 145; Carmen Sylva, 145; Ferdinand, 145; and Triple Alliance, 145; and Russo-Turkish War, 1877, 146; San Stefano Treaty, 146; alliance with Entente Allies, 147; " Imprisoned Queen " report, 153; the Manoilesco case, 155; Bratianu's death, 156; population figures, 156; National Peasant party, 159; Prince Carol, 160; Princess Helena; 161; Queen Marie, 160; the Regency, 163; the Loan completed, 164; M. Titulescu, 164; the Maniu Government, 165; Agrarian Laws, 165; the Optant question, 167
Russell, Lord John, 300
Russell, Mr. Bertrand, *on Education*, 8; Europe and America, 310
Russia, Diplomatic relations with England, 20; and world-wide commerce, 312

SAINT-GERMAIN, TREATY OF, 198
Salgo Tarjan, 142
Salisbury, Lord, 11, 87
Salonika, 198
San Giuliano, 26, 28
San Remo Conference, 288
San Stefano Treaty, 146
Sandjak Railway proposal, 84
Sauerwein, M., and Mr. Snowden, 22
Sazonov, M., 26, 87, 94, 147, 148, 189, 202, 267, 306
Schacht, Dr., 247
Schiff, Jacob, 132
Schoen, von, 83
Schönbrunn, last days at, 115
Seipel, Professor, 112, 126
Seitz, Herr, 112

Senden-Bibran, Admiral von, 220
Serajevo assassination, the, 91 *et seq.*
Serbia, insurrection of, 86; and Serajevo assassination, 91-93; Austria determined on war, 94
Serbian Skuptschina, 195
Serbs and Croats, 195
Sikovski, President, 273
Simon, Jules, 295
Simondet, M. H., 220
Sinaia (Rumania), 154
Sixte, Prince, of Bourbon-Parma, 103-106
Slenica (Rumania), 154
Smyrna, 39
Snowden, Mr., on Concessions, 21; at The Hague, 25
Sonnino and Treaty of London, 29; and Peace negotiations, 104
Soviet Russia and diplomatic relations, 20, 302
Spirit of Compromise, the, 256
Steed, Mr. Wickham, 30
Stefanik, M., 168
Stircea, M., 156
Straussenberg, Arz von, 100
Stresemann, Dr. Gustav, 232
Stuart, Sir Harold, 270
Stuart-Wortley, Major-General, 217
Sturgo, Don, 66
Suwalki, Treaty of, 288
Switzerland, a democratic State, 305
Szeged (Hungary), 142

Take Jonesco, M., 83, 90, 111, 148, 154, 223, 234
Talleyrand, Prince, 301
Tardieu, M., 243
Taschereau, M. Alexandre, 51
Tharaud, M., 101, 129
Thérèse, Marie, 265
Thiers, M., 22
Thoiry Commemorations, the, 23
Tirana, Treaty of, 41
Tirpitz, Admiral von, 223
Tisza, Count, 93, 95, 96; and the War, 97; and Emperor Charles, 102; and Yugo-Slavia, 109; assassination of, 119; and Serbia, 129
Tisza, Countess, 28, 43, 119
Titulescu, M., 44, 164
Tomasini, Signor, 289
Tragedy of Trianon, the, 131
Transylvania, population of, 157
Transylvanian Rumanians secede from Hungary, 120
Treaties, revision of, 262
Treaty of Berlin, 82
Treaty of Versailles, 19, 295, 299
Trevelyan, Sir George, 36, 302
Trianon, Treaty of, 128, 130, 131, 140, 142
Triple Alliance, the, 26, 27, 145
Tsana Lake, 296
Tschirschky, Count, 98
Turati, Signor, 48
Tyrrell, Lord, 263

Unemployment in England, 13
United States and Europe, 310 *et seq.*
United States and Italian Emigrants, 57
"Unity or Death" Society of Serbia, 92
Upper Silesia; 265, 269, Plebiscite, the, 270

Vaida-Voevod, M., 159
Valois, M. Georges, 36
Venosta, Visconti, 26
Versailles, Treaty of, 295
Victor Emmanuel, King, 32
Villari, Signor Luigi, 29, 38, 54
Vilna and Poland, 289
Virchow, Dr., 209
Vittorio Veneto, 29
Voldemaras, M., 289
Volpi, Count, 61, 62

Walko, Dr., 96
Wangenheim, Herr von, 264
Weisner, Herr, 92
Wekerle, Hungarian Prime Minister, 111
Weltpolitik, the German, 227
West Prussia and Poland, 283
Wetterlee, Abbé, 71
Weygand, General, 288
Where Freedom Falters, 18
White Mountain, battle of, 181, 193
Wilhelm I, 210
Wilhelm II (*see* Kaiser).
Wilson, President Woodrow, 39, 112, 171, 250, 260, 278
Wilson, Sir Henry, 29, 240
Windischgraetz, Louis, Prince, 30, 113, 114, 169
Wood-Renton Advisory Committee, 16
Worthington-Evans, Sir Laming, 14

Xavier, Prince, 103

Young, Mr. Owen, 247
Young Plan, the, 18, 21
Yugo-Slavia, 41, 43, 109, 135, 178, 194; Foreign Affairs, 197; Treaty with France, 197

Zeligowski, General, 289
Zita, Empress, 100, 101, 116, 124

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