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THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY

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HARTLEY WITHERS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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PREFACE

THE urgent desire of a distinguished British diplomatist in a neutral capital in Europe to reveal to the people among whom he lived the idea of a League of Nations as it presented itself to the minds of leaders of English thought led to the preparation of the pamphlets that are now assembled in this book.

Having been made responsible for editing such a series, I became convinced, in consultation with other men who agreed that in a League of Nations effectively at work lay the central hope for the future of the world, that the most helpful line of advance was, not to secure dogmatic definitions of the precise constitution and functions of such a League, but rather to ask representative men to explore the avenues of approach to it with which they were most familiar.

Viscount Grey contributed, as the first pamphlet in the series, that exposition of the project of a League of Nations which is already a classic. It is classical, among other reasons, because it initiated that intensive discussion of the project, in fellowship with President Wilson, which has at last led to the definite resolve to establish the League. It is of importance also to note that Lord Grey's pamphlet was, when first issued, translated into and published in, probably,

a greater number of languages and to a larger number of people in a shorter time than any document in all history. Even the remote Lithuanian, Armenian, and other oppressed peoples were swiftly able to read this prophetic message of purpose and hope in their own tongues; while the then closed lands of Germany and Austria received it in full and with speed.

The references to the War in Lord Grey's pamphlet and some others of the series are now out of date. But it seems best to issue all these essays towards a League of Nations precisely as they were written, and for two reasons. First, because the historic interest of the essays lies largely in the fact that they have formed a not unimportant part of that ladder of argument by which the mind of the world has climbed to the platform of the League of Nations. They are, in that sense, permanent documents. Secondly, it is of quite considerable interest, now that we have come through the War, to recall the determinations formed during the War, the immeasurable menace that lay then between us and the achievement of those purposes, and the work of moral and spiritual advocacy which still remains to be given in order to make the League the secure keystone in the permanent arch of world-peace.

BASIL MATHEWS.

February, 1919.

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INTRODUCTION

BY VISCOUNT BRYCE

THROUGH the long course of the War, one thought has been constantly present to every reflective mind. Is such a catastrophe the end to all our hopes of human progress, the result of all the efforts made to establish civilization on the basis of friendship and co-operation between the peoples of the world? Are similar calamities to be expected in the future, or can any remedy be suggested, any new departure be made which will avert their recurrence?

It is this question which has prompted the essays collected in the present volume. Their authors have written independently, having indeed a common aim and purpose, but each expressing his own views, and accepting responsibility for those views only. All are agreed in desiring to see some machinery established which may secure international peace in the future. But they have felt, as all must feel who have studied the subject, that the plan of creating a league to enforce peace is of immense scope, can be viewed in so many aspects, and raises so many issues upon which there is little experience to guide us, that it needs the fullest discussion and examination before any positive conclusions can be reached. Favourably as the idea has been received, it must be embodied in a definite practical scheme before the governments of

free and peace-loving nations can proceed to give effect to it by their joint action. These Essays are a contribution to that discussion, and will, I trust, be deemed to be all the more valuable because they represent the independent thought of many minds.

The few pages that here follow are intended to form a sort of general introduction to the Essays. They embody, with a few slight changes, an address which I delivered at Northampton on September 13, 1918, and it need hardly be said that they are as independent of those Essays as the Essays are of one another.

We must cast our eyes into the future and ask what can be done to save humanity from a recurrence of horrors and miseries such as those which the present conflict has brought upon it. Never have the sufferings war inflicts been so widespread and so terrible. But unless some action is taken, we can foresee that with the continued application of scientific discovery to methods of warfare, those sufferings will become even more cruel, and life will be sacrificed on an even vaster scale; while in the intervals between one war and another, the cost of maintaining huge and increasingly costly armaments will be a burden, beneath which the people will sink in despair. These are the facts we have to face. This is what compels us to seek some plan by which posterity may be saved from ruin and misery such as this War has brought. What is needed is a means of averting war in the

future. Is there any such means, and if so, how and where are we to find it?

If we could trust that the sins and sufferings of these years would change men's hearts, would make the thought of war hateful, and instil a love of justice and right and human brotherhood which would restrain rulers from plunging their peoples into war, as the German and Austrian Governments have done, we might hope for a peace resting on the most natural and most stable foundations. This may come in some future age. But experience does not encourage the hope that it will come in our time. So far forward as we can see, ambition and arrogance may do their wicked work in the future as in the past. Nothing but force will restrain those to whom Might is Right. Where, then, is the force to be found that will suffice? It must be a force stronger than that of any one nation, or even of any two or three nations who might conspire to attack their peaceable neighbours. It can be found only in a combination of a sufficient number of great states, states not only materially strong, but who love peace and freedom, and will work honestly for both by using their united strength against any disturber of peace. Had such a union existed in 1914, there would have been no war. Ought it not to be formed now, so soon as the war ends, and become a permanent League to maintain and enforce peace?

But some may say: 'How is such a League to

work? Must it not have other functions than merely the policing of the world? Controversies have always arisen between States, and must always be expected to arise, and there must be a way of settling them. Hitherto, when negotiation failed, war was the only means left, and war was resorted to. If war is to be hereafter restricted or forbidden some other means of settlement must be provided.' That is true. There ought to be such another means, and there is one. It is Arbitration, the determination of the question on which side right and justice lie in any dispute that arises. Or if the dispute is one to which the legal method of arbitration cannot be applied, then it becomes Conciliation, the investigation by an impartial authority of the causes and merits of the dispute, and the finding of some course which will either reconcile the contending parties, or will arrange a fair compromise between their respective claims in which both can acquiesce. Had there been some such already existing authority in 1914 which the European powers might have felt they could recognize as impartial, that proposal of mediation between Austria and Serbia which the German Government rejected when Sir E. Grey proposed it, because, forsooth, it was 'incompatible with the honour of Austria', might have been accepted, and war avoided altogether.

The States which are prepared to enter into a League of Peace will, accordingly, have to set up some tribunal to arbitrate, and some authority quali-

fied to apply the methods of Conciliation. Then, and not till then, will they be able to warn any aggressive Government that it must submit its case to be dealt with by these pacific methods, and that, if it refuses to do so, and proceeds to hostilities, it will have to encounter the whole armed strength of the League. Only along this line is there any prospect of a reduction of military and naval armaments. No nation that stands alone, however little it may desire war, can venture to reduce its fighting strength unless it is assured of defence against a sudden attack by an unscrupulous assailant. If that defence is guaranteed to it by the other members of the League, it will have their forces to rely upon, and need not live, as every nation has to live now, in constant suspicion and anxiety, spending gigantic sums on the army and navy essential for its defence. Thus we may say that a League is needed almost as much to ensure tranquillity and progress in time of peace as to avert the horrors and ferocities of war. But Force must be behind the League, and good faith also, good faith among the States within the League, which will make each of them perform its obligation to submit its disputes to a pacific adjustment as well as Force which will compel any State outside the combination to refer its claim to Arbitration or Conciliation before resorting to hostilities against any member of the League.

Now there are two kinds of force or compulsion, Military and Economic. Economic Compulsion con-

sists in the application of a commercial boycott to an offending country. If a State refuses arbitration and threatens war, the States that are members of the League can interdict all trade with the offender, can forbid their subjects to send exports to it, or receive imports from it, or to lend money to it. The refusal to a manufacturing country of raw materials for its industries and a market for its products would be a penalty it would scarcely venture to defy. Such a method might often be speedier than war, and quite as effective. But its efficacy would depend upon its being reserved as a weapon to check some aggressive action against a member of the League. An economic boycott applied in normal times by one nation or group of nations, to another, would be a means of provoking, rather than preventing, war. As the Prime Minister has well said, we must not give Germany a wrong. Those who have talked of boycotting Germany and Austria as soon as this War is over had much better wait to see how the War ends. To propose an immediate trade-war casts doubts on their hopes that victory will remain with the Entente Allies. How can it be declared in the same breath that the War ought to be prosecuted till the German Government has been made powerless for evil, and be also assumed that the Government will, at the end of the War, be as powerful for evil as ever, able to resume its insidious schemes against the industries and resources of other countries? If it

is then still able to do so, by all means let us deal vigorously with such a menace. Most of us, however, believe that if, even after realizing to the full, the disaster to which the perfidy of her rulers has led, Germany should still remain unrepentant, we can disable her from all such plots. The threat of economic war may be a powerful weapon in our hands to exact just and necessary conditions of peace in the coming treaty. Why throw away that weapon beforehand by announcing that the boycott must begin in any event? So, too, its value as a means of compulsion in the hands of the Peace League would be gone if it were applied forthwith: while the maintenance in normal times of a trade-war could not fail to keep alive and inflame hatreds and resentments that would become an incitement to fresh strife.

I must not pass over two objections that have been taken to the scheme of a League to enforce Peace—the name used by our friends in America, whose efforts on behalf of the scheme have found such warm and general approval there. One is that it will limit the sovereignty of the nations that enter into it. Doubtless it will inhibit them from going to war at their own free will. Every treaty limits the State that makes it, just as every commercial contract limits the freedom of the merchant who makes it. But the merchant deliberately limits himself because he expects to gain by the contract more than he loses by the limitation. Similarly, no State makes a treaty

unless it expects to gain more than it loses. Every State that enters this League will do so because it expects to gain much more in security against an unprovoked attack than it will lose by undertaking not itself to make such an attack, and by joining in the promise to protect by arms each of its fellow members. Surely a gain to each member of the League (not to speak of the gain to the world in arresting wars) far outweighs the limitation of its 'will to war', which it accepts in entering the Union?

The other objection is more serious. I do not attempt to conceal it, for we ought to study every aspect of so great and so novel a scheme. Will the members of the League stand faithfully by their engagements? Can they be trusted to refer their own claims to arbitration, and to join with the other members in defending any member who is attacked? To use a colloquial phrase—will the nations 'play up'? This is a question no one can confidently answer, but we already see how in actual working the Allied Nations have learnt both the difficulties and the value of international co-operation. Of one thing we may be sure, that it will be the true interest of the nations to fulfil their promises. The losses they have suffered by war, the benefits they will gain by the prevention of war, are both of them immeasurable. Let us also remember that the wars of the past have been mostly made by despots, or by oligarchies; and it is by them that the faith of treaties has been

mostly broken. But now, in nearly all the great States, power has passed to the people, and the people can be trusted, better than the monarchs or the oligarchs of former days, both to realize the value of peace and to do all they can to secure it. Democracies also have been sometimes swept by passion or lured into war by misrepresentation ; yet they are likely to feel a clearer duty both to refrain from aggression and to check it when attempted by others. They will better recognize the obligations of international honour and good faith, and their responsibility to mankind at large. They will feel more respect for the public opinion of the world.

Once the League of Peace has been established, its very existence will embody in visible form the principle of the solidarity of free nations, and will foster the sentiment of human brotherhood. Every year that it lives on ought to increase its moral authority and strengthen the respect for the decisions of its Courts.

It is among the workers of this country that the warmest zeal has been shown for this beneficent idea. It is from the great democracy of the West and its leaders, President Wilson and others, that the most powerful impulse has come. The difficulties are doubtless great. Much wisdom, much skill, will be needed to surmount them. But the people must supply the motive power. They must push statesmen forward. They must help to guide the policy of the League and to help it by watchful sympathy. And

behind the sympathy there must be to inspire it the sense of a great and high motive. Our motives in the War have been purer than ever were seen in a war before. We have fought for Righteousness against Wickedness, to protect the weak, to secure the recognition of conscience and duty as the highest power, those on whose rule the safety of the world depends. It is this motive that brought America also to our aid.

These are hopes not certainties. But they are not dreams. There are solid grounds for the hopes ; and this time is one in which we must hope, for if we do not hope we must despair. If we do not try to end war, war will end us. Moments come when evils have grown so frightful that new and bold experiments must be tried to escape from them ; times when men must go forward in the strength of faith and hope.

Let the War, which has seen not only so much cruelty, but also so much courage and devotion and self-sacrifice, have been fought not in vain. Let us make a supreme effort to do all that man can do to provide that no such calamities shall ever return to blast the prospects of human progress and involve the ruin of human society. Let us try to leave to those who will come after us, a better world, consecrated by the sacrifice of so many noble young lives, a world in which the spirit of a divine peace shall move upon the face of these storm-tossed waters and still them to an abiding calm.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THERE are projects that exist in a shadowy form in an atmosphere of tepid idealism, admired by those who see that if possible they would be desirable. From time to time an attempt is made to embody them in material form and make them of practical use in national or international politics. It is then discovered that what appeared as an ideal to be wholly desirable and amiable cannot be of practical use, unless we are ready to subject ourselves to some limitations or discipline that may be inconvenient, and unless we are prepared to overcome some difficulties that were not at first sight apparent. The ideal is found to have in fact a stern and disagreeable as well as an easy and amiable side to it. Thereupon a storm beats against it; those who never thought it desirable—for there are intellects to which most ideals seem dangerous and temperaments to which they are offensive—and who had previously treated it only with contempt in the abstract, offer the fiercest opposition to it as a practical proposal: many of its supporters are paralysed by the difficult aspects of it, which they had not previously considered, and the

project recedes again into the region of shadows or abstract resolutions.

This, or something like this, has hitherto been the history of the ideal that has now become associated with the phrase 'A League of Nations'; but it does not follow that the history of this or of other ideals will be the same after the war as before it. There is more at stake in this war than the existence of individual States or Empires, or the fate of a Continent; the whole of modern civilization is at stake, and whether it will perish and be submerged, as has happened to previous civilizations of older types, or whether it will live and progress, depends upon whether the nations engaged in this war, and even those that are onlookers, learn the lessons that the experience of the war may teach them. It must be with nations as with individuals; in the great trials of life they must become better or worse—they cannot stand still. They must learn and profit by experience and rise to greater heights, or else sink lower and drop eventually into the abyss. And this war is the greatest trial of which there is any record in history. If the war does not teach mankind new lessons that will so dominate the thought and feeling of those who survive it, and those who succeed the survivors, as to make new things possible, then the war will be the greatest catastrophe as well as the most grievous trial and suffering of which mankind has any record.

Therefore it does not follow that a League of Nations to secure the peace of the world will remain impossible because it has not been possible hitherto, and I propose in this paper to consider shortly, to state rather than to examine (for it would take a long time to examine thoroughly), the conditions that have not been present before and that are present now, or may soon be present, and that are essential if the League of Nations is to become effective. These conditions appear to me to be as follows:

1. The idea must be adopted with earnestness and conviction by the Executive Heads of States. It must become an essential part of their practical policy, one of their chief reasons for being or continuing to be responsible for the policy of their States. They must not adopt it only to render lip service to other persons, whom it is inconvenient or ungracious to displease. They must lead, and not follow; they must compel if necessary, and not be compelled.

This condition was not present before the war; to what extent is it present now? It is not possible to answer this question fully, but it can be answered certainly and affirmatively as regards President Wilson, the Executive Head of the United States, and this alone is sufficient to give new life and purpose to the idea of a League of Nations. President Wilson and his country have had in this matter the great advantage of having been for more than two

years and a half, before April 1917, able to observe the war as neutrals, free from the intense anxiety and effort that absorb all the thought and energy of belligerents. They were able not only to observe, but to reflect and to draw conclusions. One of the conclusions has been that, if the world of which they form an important part is to be saved from what they consider disaster, they must enter the war against Germany; another has been that, if national liberty and peace are to be secure in future, there must be a League of Nations to secure them. It must not be supposed from this that the Governments of the Allies are less ready to draw, or have not already drawn, the same conclusion from the experience of the war; but their countries have been at war all the time. They have been fighting, it is true, for the same ideal of national and human liberty as the United States, but fighting also for the immediate preservation of national existence in Europe, and all their thought and energy have been concentrated upon resistance to imminent peril. Nevertheless, in this country at any rate, the project of a League of Nations has met with widespread and cordial acceptance. On the other hand, the Military party in Germany are, and must remain, opposed to it; they resent any limitation upon the use of force by Germany as fatal to German interests, for they can conceive no development, and even no security, except one based solely upon force. Any

other conception is fatal, and this exclusive conception is essential to the maintenance of the power of the military party in Germany. As long, therefore, as this rule in Germany continues, Germany will oppose a League of Nations. Nothing will change this except a conviction in the German people that the use of force causes at least as much suffering to themselves as to others, and that security based upon law and treaty and a sense of mutual advantage is better than the risks, dangers, and sufferings of a will to supreme power and efforts to obtain it; and this conviction must so work upon them as to displace the military party and their policy and ideals from power in Germany.

The situation, therefore, of this first condition essential to make the League of Nations practical may be summed up as follows: It is present certainly as regards the Executive Head of the United States, which is potentially the strongest and actually the least exhausted of all the belligerent States: it either is or will at the end of the war be found to be present as regards the Governments of other countries fighting on the same side as the United States. Even among their enemies Austria has publicly shown a disposition to accept the proposal, and probably welcomes it genuinely though secretly as a safeguard for her future, not only against old enemies, but against Prussian domination.

All small States, belligerent or neutral, must

naturally desire in their own interest everything that will safeguard small States as well as great from aggression and war.

There remains the opposition of Germany, where recent military success and the ascendancy of Prussian militarism have reduced the advocates of anything but force to silence. Germany has to be convinced that force does not pay, that the aims and policy of her military rulers inflict intolerable and also unnecessary suffering upon her; and that when the world is free from the menace of these military rulers, with their sharp swords, shining armour, and mailed fists, Germany will find peaceful development assured and preferable to expansion by war, and will realize that the condition of true security for one nation is a sense of security on the part of all nations. Till Germany feels this to be true, there can be no League of Nations in the sense intended by President Wilson. A League such as he desires must include Germany, and should include no nation that is not thoroughly convinced of the advantage and necessity of such a League, and is therefore not prepared to make the efforts, and, if need be, the sacrifices necessary to maintain it.

2. The second condition essential to the foundation and maintenance of a League of Nations is that the Governments and Peoples of the States willing to found it understand clearly that it will impose some limitation upon the national action of each, and may

entail some inconvenient obligation. The smaller and weaker nations will have rights that must be respected and upheld by the League. The stronger nations must forgo the right to make their interests prevail against the weaker by force: and all the States must forgo the right in any dispute to resort to force before other methods of settlement by conference, conciliation, or, if need be, arbitration, have been tried. This is the limitation.

The obligation is that if any nation will not observe this limitation upon its national action; if it breaks the agreement which is the basis of the League, rejects all peaceful methods of settlement and resorts to force, the other nations must one and all use their combined force against it. The economic pressure that such a League could use would in itself be very powerful, and the action of some of the smaller States composing the League could perhaps not go beyond economic pressure, but those States that have power must be ready to use all the force, economic, military, or naval, that they possess. It must be clearly understood and accepted that defection from or violation of the agreement by one or more States does not absolve all or any of the others from the obligation to enforce the agreement.

Anything less than this is of no value. How worthless it may be can be seen by reading the debate in the House of Lords in 1867 upon the Treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of Luxemburg. It was

there explained that we entered only into a collective guarantee; by this it was apparently meant that if any one of the guaranteeing Powers violated the Neutrality of Luxemburg, or even if any one of them declined to take active steps to defend it, Great Britain and the other guarantors were thereby absolved from taking any action whatever. This was contrasted at the time with the Belgian Treaty, which entailed a separate guarantee. —

Hitherto the Nations of the world have made reserves in Arbitration or Conciliation agreements, showing that they were not prepared to accept the limitations upon national action that are essential to secure an effective League of Nations. An exception is the Conciliation Treaty between Great Britain and the United States negotiated before the war, but the statement made above is generally true.

The Nations have also carefully abstained from undertaking any obligation to use force to uphold the benevolent rules and agreements of general application that have been recorded at Hague Conferences; such obligation has been confined to local objects like the Neutrality of Belgium or to alliances between particular Powers made to protect or serve their special interests.

Are the Nations of the world prepared now, or will they be ready after this war, to look steadily and clearly at this aspect of the League of Nations, at the limitations and obligations that it will impose,

and to say whole-hearted and convinced as they have never been before, 'We will accept and undertake them'?

Individuals in civilized States have long ago accepted an analogous limitation and obligation as regards disputes between individuals; these are settled by law, and any individual who, instead of appealing to law, resorts to force to give effect to what he considers his rights, finds himself at once opposed and restrained by the force of the State—that is, in democratic countries, by the combined force of the other individuals. And we not only accept this arrangement, but uphold it as essential to prevent oppression of one by another, to secure each person in a quiet life, and to guarantee to each the greatest liberty that is consistent with the equal liberty of neighbours. That at any rate is part of the theory and object of democratic government, and if it is not perfectly attained most of the proposals for improving it look rather to increased than to diminished State control.

But in less civilized parts of the world individuals have not reached the point of view from which this order of things seems desirable. There is a story of a native chief in Africa, who protested to a British official against having to pay any taxes. The British official explained, no doubt in the best modern manner, that these taxes were used to keep order in the country, with the result that men and women and the flocks and herds and possessions of every tribe were safe,

and each could live in its own territory without fear or disturbance, and that the payment of taxes was for the good of all. The effect of this explanation was to make the chief very angry. Before the British came, he said, he could raid a neighbour, return with captives and captures of all sorts and be received in triumph by the women and the rest of his tribe when he returned. The need for protecting his own tribe from similar raids he was willing to undertake himself. 'Now', he said, 'you come here and tell me that I ought to like to pay taxes to be prevented from doing this, and that makes me mad.'

The analogy between States and individuals or groups of individuals is not perfect, but there is sufficient analogy to make it not quite irrelevant to ask, whether after this war the view held by great States of the relations desirable between themselves will be that of the African chief or that of individuals in what we call civilized Nations. Nothing but experience convinced individuals that law was better than anarchy to settle the relations between themselves. And the sanction that maintains law is the application of force with the support of the great majority of individuals behind it. Is it possible that the experience of this war will produce a settled opinion of the same sort to regulate the relations of States with each other and safeguard the world from war, which is in fact anarchy?

What does the experience of this war amount to?

Our minds cannot grasp it all. Thought is crushed by the accumulated suffering that the war has caused and is still causing. We cannot utter all that we feel, and if it were not that our feelings are in a way stunned by the very violence of the catastrophe, as physical nerves are to some extent numbed by great blows, the human heart could not bear up and live under the trial of this war. Great must be the effect of all this : greater after even than during the war on the working of men's minds, and on human nature itself ; but this is not what I intend to urge here. I will urge only one point and one that is for the head rather than the heart.

We are now in the fourth year of the war : the application of scientific knowledge and the inventions of science during the war have made it more and more terrible and destructive each year. The Germans have abrogated all previously accepted rules of warfare. The use of poisonous gas, the firing from the sea upon open undefended towns, the indiscriminate bombing of big cities from the air were all introduced into the war by Germany. It was long before the Allies adopted any of these practices even as reprisals ; but the Germans have forced a ruthless and unlimited application of scientific discovery to the destruction of human life, combatant and non-combatant. They have shown the world that now and henceforth war means this and nothing less than this. If there is to be another war in twenty or thirty years' time, what will

it be like? If there is to be concentrated preparation for more war, the researches of science will be devoted henceforth to discovering methods by which the human race can be destroyed. These discoveries cannot be confined to one nation and their object of wholesale destruction will be much more completely achieved hereafter even than in this war. The Germans are not blind to this, but as far as I can see their rulers propose to avoid future wars by establishing the domination of Germany for ever. Peace can never be secured by the domination of one country securing its power and prosperity by the submission and disadvantage of others, and the German idea of a world peace secured by the power of German militarism is impracticable as well as unfair and abhorrent to other Nations. It is as intolerable and impossible in the world as despotism would be here or in the United States. In opposition to this idea of Germany, the Allies should set forth, as President Wilson has already set forth, the idea of a peace secured by mutual regard between States for the rights of each and a determination to stamp out any attempt at war, as they would a plague that threatened the destruction of all.

When those who accept this idea and this sort of peace can in word and deed speak for Germany, we shall be within sight of a good peace.

The establishment and maintenance of a League of Nations, such as President Wilson has advocated, is more important and essential to a secure peace than

any of the actual terms of peace that may conclude the war: it will transcend them all. The best of them will be worth little, unless the future relations of States are to be on a basis that will prevent a recurrence of militarism in any State

‘Learn by experience or suffer’ is the rule of life. We have all of us seen individuals becoming more and more a misery to themselves and others, because they cannot understand or will not accept this rule. Is it not applicable to Nations as well? And if so, have not Nations come to a great crisis in which for them the rule ‘Learn or perish’ will prove inexorable? All must learn the lesson of this war. The United States and the Allies cannot save the world from militarism unless Germany learns the lesson thoroughly and completely; and they will not save the world, or even themselves, by complete victory over Germany until they too have learnt and can apply the lesson that militarism has become the deadly enemy of mankind.

May 11th, 1918.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE COMING RULE OF LAW

THE movement in favour of a League of Nations, or, in the franker American wording, a League to enforce Peace, has now gone so far that there is no need to argue for taking it seriously. Like the reforms of the Liquor Control Board and all other rational reforms, it has enemies or treacherous friends in the camps of opposite extremes. A handful of chauvinists, whose only war aim seems to be to make plunder of the battered and discredited shining armour of Prussianism for their own wear, denounce it with their shrillest screams as a pacifist fad. A handful of pacifists and semi-pacifists offer their insipid lip-service with the purpose of taking out all the backbone and converting a drastic remedy into a futile anodyne. But a cause that has commanded the public support of such men of action as President Wilson, ex-President Taft, and General Smuts, such practical scholars and publicists as President Lowell of Harvard and Lord Bryce, and such a profound and impartial jurist, in the best sense of that often abused word, as Lord Parker, can afford to neglect both extremes.

Our problem is to lay down constructive lines for the working institutions with which the general idea must be clothed in order to become a power capable of establishing a restored, amplified, and effectual law of nations on a sure footing. The old methods of custom and voluntary convention sanctioned by undefined general opinion have broken down: the new law demands a seat of justice and judgement: the new justice demands organs of counsel to frame its decrees, and instruments of execution that shall be strong, and at need swift, to maintain them.

Let it be premised that the foundation of a league for peace is already laid in the alliance of a score of free nations against William of Germany whose god is the Prussian State, Charles of Austria whose god is his dynasty, the Magyar oligarchy whose god is racial supremacy, and the satellite kingdoms and subdued provinces bound to them for just as long as their tyranny seems to prosper. The strength of that tyranny must be broken as the first condition of making such a peace as will deserve to be secured by better and more lasting covenants than the usual treaties. There must be no betrayal of oppressed nationalities in the east as the price of restitution in the west; restitution which is a matter, not of bargain, but of plain right.

All this must be settled before we can talk of receiving the Central Powers as partners or fellow-workers. Not that their willingness to join a league

of nations, unless Germany is to be the head of it (for that is what their official utterances indicate), is to be counted on. The only kind of partnership we ask for or can accept is one in which no single Power may be dominant. In the least favourable event a reinforced and regularly organized league, based on the present military union of the Western Powers and excluding the Central Powers, would in all ways be a great step in advance, and far more effectual for restraining future aggression than unorganized alliance or understandings. Doubtless the ideal is a League embracing a morally transformed Germany and a group of East European States differing in both moral and material aspects from the moribund Austro-Hungarian Empire. But meanwhile the League need not command the military power of the whole world. Enough for our day if it wields so much war-like strength, and so well organized, as to make defiance of it manifestly unpromising. Thus much for the preliminary conditions. If any one thinks they can be dispensed with or circumvented, I must respectfully differ.

How, then, shall the League of Nations be organized? Obviously by solemn express convention, a convention whose binding force must depend on the renouncement by every party to it, in some measure, of independent sovereign power, and in particular of the right to be judge in one's own cause. For the plan of merely persuasive authority, which any party may obey or

disregard at his own discretion, has been tried and found wanting.

Renouncement of sovereignty is still a sticking point with many publicists: see M. Seignobos in 'The New Europe' of April 4. They forget that some renunciation of individual right and discretion is the foundation of every agreement, public and private, that is to govern future action. All binding promises, great or small, restrain the promisor's freedom. That, indeed, is the essence of promise. No member of the Postal Union, which includes almost all civilized governments, is sovereign in the matter of foreign postal rates. The question for every contracting party in all forms of contract is whether the portion of liberty he surrenders is adequately recompensed by the portion of reward or security he acquires. Rights cannot be made out of nothing any more than mechanical work; as surely as there is no action without reaction in physics, you cannot create rights in politics without imposing duties and limiting freedom of action somewhere. But the right and liberty of self-defence, it is said, are indefeasible. Quite true in the last resort, and as much so for one man as for a society. Nevertheless all civilized laws keep self-defence within pretty strict bounds, English law rather specially so.

The first business of a League of Nations is to secure its members against military aggression. Every member must pledge itself not to take the law (or

what it deems to be the law) into its own hands against any other, and to aid the others, at need, in case of attack from without. The next duty is to provide regular and equitable means of settling disputes. Surrender of the liberty to assert one's claims by force can only be in exchange for reasonable assurance of judgement and justice. Then, the law of nations itself being at many points uncertain (a defect common to all bodies of customary rules), there must follow provision for defining and amending it. To carry out these purposes the League will need some common representative body having authority to supervise the working of the special organs and to see that their decisions are respected. Whether this body should be armed with power to issue direct executive commands is a question open to discussion for the present. I think myself that such power will come later if it is not granted at first.

The latest and fullest endeavour in this country to state the lines of a working scheme was made by Lord Parker in the debate on Lord Parmoor's motion on March 19, 1918, a debate which, at the time of this writing, still stands adjourned. Lord Parker's heads for the agreement that shall constitute the League are twenty in number, and have been carefully thought out. (It is useless to consult the press reports for them; they are set out only in the official Parliamentary Debates.) Space does not admit of copying them here, or following their exact order, but I shall

keep them in view. They deal very little with internal regulation; they are a first draft of the memorandum rather than of the articles, if one may borrow the language of company law.

First in place and importance comes acknowledgment—meaning formal and recorded acknowledgment—of the principle of settling disputes by peaceable means as binding on all civilized nations. As to the means, Lord Parker takes a rather peculiar line; he would postpone the question of a standing judicial court as involving excessive difficulties in settling the representation of different nations, constituting the tribunal so as to exclude any risk of partiality, and the like, neither does he propose to compel reference to the existing tribunal of The Hague. Apparently Lord Parker would have the League say to its members: ‘It may be a long time before we can agree on the frame of a permanent court of justice among nations. For the present you may refer disputes to The Hague, or to any agreed arbitrator you please, or you may provide a standing machinery by special treaties between any two or more of you; but in one way or another you must all bind yourselves to seek a peaceable settlement, and seek it in good faith. That is the fundamental condition of membership.’

I do not see why Lord Parker’s way should not be a very good way, and I think it would work out to the general adoption of not more than one or two

types of comprehensive arbitration treaties which in time, perhaps no long time, could be consolidated into one general ordinance or convention. The difficulties of creating a true judicial court, however, do not seem to me quite so formidable as they do to Lord Parker. For we must remember that the statesmen who come together to found the League of Nations will mean business from the first. Their meeting will be a wholly different affair from the Hague Conference, where the chief aim of one Great Power was to have as little done as was decently possible, and that of some lesser ones to magnify their own importance at all costs. When difficulties are faced by capable men not divided on any fundamental principle, and determined to reach a working agreement, they have already lost half their terrors. It is needless to say to any one acquainted with the work of the Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907, but the warning may be useful to others, that their constitution and procedure are wholly inapplicable to the construction of a League of Nations.

As Lord Parker relegates the formation of a standing tribunal to the background, he does not notice the distinction between a court for 'justiciable' and a council or board of conciliation for 'non-justiciable' disputes; Mr. Taft made this prominent three years ago, and almost every writer who has handled the matter seriously recognizes its importance. But a general council of direction is part of Lord Parker's

plan, and it is easily seen that its functions would in fact be quasi-judicial, and that it would have to specialize its work by some committee system for this and other purposes. It should be noted that even those schemes which include a formal judicature have not proposed to give it any immediate power of enforcing its awards. So Lord Parker's method is less remote from others than may appear at first sight.

The League, however organized, would guarantee its members against acts of war committed against them by non-members. It would define what should be considered as acts of war. A nation refusing or neglecting to take steps for peaceable settlement of a dispute would be denounced by special resolution of the Council, and, if a member, would forfeit its membership. On an act of war being notified by the Council, the members of the League would be bound to break off diplomatic relations and commercial intercourse with the offending nation. If this does not suffice, military execution is to be undertaken on the Council's requisition by specified members of the League, consisting of the chief military and naval Powers. (Lord Parker seems rather to glide over the military problems involved here. Can the necessary joint action be effectually and promptly taken without preconcerted measures amounting to the establishment of a common General Staff? I doubt it. But that may stand over along with the question of a judicial

tribunal. Acceptance of the principle is what matters first.)

Thus Lord Parker's Council would be a body wielding no small authority. His plan for its constitution is novel and ingenious. 'Each member of the League should nominate one member of the Council. But for a special resolution'—that is, a resolution committing the League to measures of economic or military coercion—'there should be required, not only a majority of the members present and voting, but a majority of the councillors representing those members of the League mentioned in the schedule'—the executive Great Powers—'upon whom will fall the burden of any warlike proceedings.' This avoids by one bold stroke many troublesome questions of representation and contribution, and it may well be that no more exact provision would ever be needful. For, if the League be once fairly set up as a working body, it does not seem likely that dissension within or aggression from without will come to the point of calling for actual coercion.

Some new divergence of interests capable of breaking up the League is, no doubt, conceivable. Alliances are not eternal and constitutions are not infallible, but, if well made, they may do, as even with all former imperfections they have done, good service for a long time. Again, it is certain that, in the event of the German Empire remaining outside, the methods which recent disclosures have made familiar would be

employed to tempt members of the League into combinations inconsistent with its objects (but Lord Parker has not forgotten to provide against secret agreements) or otherwise to undermine their mutual confidence. As to this it is only to be observed that the same arts would no less surely be employed against an unorganized alliance, and with a better prospect of success. Even if reduced to a secondary degree of military power, Germany under continuing militarist rule would remain capable of giving trouble in this way. No better counter-check, indeed no other, than a well-knit league of the law-abiding nations has been suggested.

Lord Parker will have nothing to do with the most unwise proposal of the English League of Nations Society, 'that any civilized State desiring to join the League shall be admitted to membership'. (The objectionable clause is modified in that society's own comment by a half-hearted intimation that the League would have to judge in every case whether the candidate was civilized; but that is not the right word. Modern Germany is civilized and in some respects over-civilized; our case is that the Prussian type of civilization is a thoroughly bad type and not fit for decent company.) According to Lord Parker, on the contrary, a new member will be admitted only by special resolution of the Council, who must be satisfied that the candidate accepts the fundamental principles, and intends to act on them, in good faith. That is a frank declaration of

the only safe way. But this does not mean that the League would always be a kind of select club: 'no nation could be permanently excluded from membership, and in course of time we would hope that every nation would join.'

Also there is nothing about disarmament in Lord Parker's plan. Evidently he thinks it cannot be imposed at first, but must be left to follow the establishment of general confidence; just as in European society wearing swords went out of fashion when the improvement of justice and police had abolished the fear of highway robbers and suppressed private fighting as distinguished from formal duelling. That, indeed, survived much longer and yet lingers in some countries, but duelling is at any rate better than unruly brawling and chance medley. I am wholly of Lord Parker's mind on this point.

It is thought in some quarters, I am told, that states of less than the first magnitude might be shy of joining a league of peace, fearing that if they gave up any portion of absolute sovereignty they would lose their independence and sink to being mere protectorates under the Great Powers. This apprehension does not seem well founded. A Power such as Denmark or the Netherlands would have everything to gain by joining. It would be in a far stronger position to resist external pressure than ever before, having its independence and freedom from warlike aggression guaranteed by the whole force of

the League. It would have for the first time a definite right to a voice in all common counsel, not only in special conventions. An equal vote in all matters is not to be expected ; no company that I ever heard of gives the same voting power to the holder of a hundred shares as to the holder of a thousand.

Indeed there must be some provision, by Lord Parker's method or otherwise, against the Great Powers or a majority of them being bound on paper by a combination of minor Powers to some burdensome course which they disapprove. Certain paper majorities at the Hague Conferences may serve to point the warning. As for the contrary danger of the Greater Powers combining to partition the lesser ones, as it were, into spheres of influence, the answer is that such a plot could be hatched only by secret agreement, and secret agreements would be expressly forbidden by the constitution of the League. But no materially sufficient number of Great Powers, were they ever so evilly disposed, would in fact agree. The present attempts of Germany, Austria, and Hungary to compromise on their iniquitous ambitions with regard to Poland alone are instructive in this respect.

There remains a great object of the League which Lord Parker has left aside, regarding it apparently as a matter for later development which need not be expressly dealt with in the constituent convention: the restoration and better definition of the law of nations. Here Mr. Taft's proposal holds the field.

The Council of the League or a specially reinforced committee thereof would proceed, in a course of regular conferences, to frame conclusions in the nature of provisional orders; these would be laid before the governments of the constituent Powers and become binding if no dissent were expressed within a stated time. A lengthy process, it will be said, and subject to delays and possible set-backs. It would be so, and so it ought to be. Even within one jurisdiction a good code is not made in a year or two. Given the framework of secured peace within which the work could be done with fitting deliberation, five years would be no excessive time to allow for the first production of definite results, or ten years for completion.

Success in accomplishing all or any of the ends for which the League of Peace will be founded assumes initial good faith, continuing good will, and perseverance in carrying the business through. That is no objection at all. For the work will not even be begun unless the delegates of the free nations meet with such high and serious purpose as to make sure that these conditions are satisfied. With faith, courage, and patience it can and will be done.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

THE conception of a League of Nations in the shape it has taken during the past few years is marked by a feature which distinguishes it from all its predecessors. For the first time it appears to be assumed that Freedom of the Seas, or, in other words, the abolition of belligerent rights afloat, is an essential condition of such a League, and that the two ideas are inseparable, an assumption which carries the scope of recent proposals distinctly beyond the limits of those to which the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gave birth.

None of those schemes ever gathered strength to rise from the ground, yet none of them ever burdened itself with such a load as those of the present day are expected to carry. Indeed Freedom of the Seas in the ordinary acceptance of the term is more than a load. A frank examination of what it connotes will show that it must be a spoke in the wheels which in all probability would prevent any conceivable machinery of a League from acting with effect. Once formed, a League of Nations may be charged with the definition of belligerent rights at sea and with control

of their exercise, but without them it cannot be an effective instrument for peace.

Striking as the new development is it has received too little attention. It has been allowed to slip in almost without comment, and few, if any, of those who of late have been publicly discussing the subject have stopped to inquire why the new feature has intruded itself at this particular juncture. Its credentials are not asked for. Yet obviously its sudden appearance needs explanation if we are to obtain a clear understanding of the trend of opinion as it exists to-day.

The explanation is not far to seek. A glance at the history of the whole movement reveals it at once. It is that the more recent development of the old idea of a League of Nations is the result of a fusion of two schools of thought. The older one, whose object was a league to prevent war, culminated in the Holy Alliance. The newer one is that which grew up after the failure of the Holy Alliance had led men to despair of finding a means for the prevention of war. The new school, whose harvest was the Declaration of Paris and the Geneva and Hague Conventions, sought the more modest goal of mitigating the horrors of war. It is to this school of thought and not to the older one that the idea of Freedom of the Seas belongs. It indeed represents the high-water mark of what may be called the Hague school. It is the creed of its most advanced and enthusiastic advocates.

Naturally these men were also among the most earnest and convinced advocates of the revived movement for a League of Nations. Their support was needed to give it life. The price of their support was the incorporation of their special policy in the new programme. The price was gladly paid; but, at first, it certainly was not measured. The failure to diagnose the full meaning of Freedom of the Seas, and the even deeper failure to penetrate the actualities of Naval Warfare, prevented men observing how far the two conceptions were incompatible, if not mutually destructive.

As every one knows, Freedom of the Seas is an expression very loosely used, and with many shades of meaning, but for practical purposes it is enough to fix its content, as conceived by those who imported it into the programme for a League of Nations. The moment we endeavour to do this we are confronted by a paradox. It is obvious that Freedom of the Seas can only relate to a state of war. In time of peace all seas are free. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Baltic and Black Seas were finally thrown open to commerce, there has been no *mare clausum*, and except for such international regulations as have been agreed upon for the safety and facility of navigation, all men are free to pass the seas at their pleasure. It is only in relation to a state of war that there are any restrictions. If then a League of Nations can attain its object in preventing war the

question of Freedom of the Seas does not arise. As an article in the programme it is redundant and paradoxical.

The truth is that even the most devoted and sanguine advocates of a League of Peace realize that a complete extinction of war by that means is not to be expected. It is more than can be believed—at least until human nature has mellowed much farther—that all the nations of the earth will bind themselves never to go to war for any cause whatever, or entirely to abandon force as a means of defending themselves against attack. There must arise cases in which a League of Nations could not prevent war, and would not deem it just to prevent it; and it is presumably to meet such exceptional cases that Freedom of the Seas has become attached to the League of Nations. The intention doubtless is at once to mitigate the severity of the struggle as between the intractable belligerents and prevent the contest interfering with those who are no party to it. If this were the end of the proposed restriction nothing but good could come of it, and it would in no way be incompatible with the active existence of a League of Nations; but we have only to examine the actualities of Naval Warfare and the effect which Freedom of the Seas would have upon them to see that it is very far from the end. Its effect would reach much farther.

As used by its most pronounced advocates, Freedom

of the Seas denotes the abolition of the right of capturing private property afloat. They would deny to belligerents not only the admitted right to capture neutral property under the law of blockade and contraband, but would also make the trade of the belligerents equally immune, either altogether or in so far as it was not contraband—that is to say, that no matter how fiercely navies contend, peaceful merchants and fishermen shall be free to go about their business as though no war were in progress.

What such a revolution would mean to Naval Warfare is clearly not recognized, presumably because of the obscurity which for landsmen has always surrounded it. No such curtailment of belligerent rights has ever been suggested for the land. It is obvious to every one that if in time of war peaceful merchants and husbandmen were allowed to go their way unmolested by requisitions and free to pass where they would, armies could obtain no results. Even if battles could be fought at all, they could lead to nothing. Battles are fought not for their own sake or merely to destroy the enemy's forces. Their ultimate object is the power which the destruction of the enemy's means of resistance gives for so paralysing his national life that he has no choice but to submit. If non-combatants and private property were immune from interference the nation could not be coerced nor the fruits of victory garnered.

With the less familiar contests on the sea, this has

never been so self-evident. To the great majority of landsmen, Naval Warfare seems a far-off struggle in which fleets contend in defence of their coasts and cruisers prowl for booty. It is not generally understood that fleets exist mainly to give those cruisers liberty of action against the enemy's commerce, nor that, unless the cruisers can push their operations so far as actually to choke the enemy's national life at sea, no amount of booty they may get will avail to bring the war to an end. It is only by the prevention of enemy's commerce that fleets can exercise the pressure which armies seek, in theory or practice, to exercise through victories ashore; and it is only by the capture and ability to capture private property at sea that prevention of commerce can be brought about. Without the right to capture private property, Naval battles become meaningless as a method of forcing the enemy to submit. Without that right a Naval victory can give nothing but security at home and the power of harrying the enemy's undefended coasts—a form of pressure which no one would care to sanction in these latter days.

It comes then to this—that if Freedom of the Seas is pushed to its logical conclusion of forbidding altogether the capture and destruction of private property at sea, it will in practice go far to rob fleets of all power of exerting pressure on an enemy, while armies would be left in full enjoyment of that power. The balance of Naval and Military power, which has

meant so much for the liberties of the world, would be upset, and the voice of the Naval Powers would sink to a whisper beside that of the Military Powers. If this is the forbidding situation to which a League of Nations is to lead—and there is no avoiding it if it is to be clogged with full Freedom of the Seas—how can it be expected that the Great Naval Powers will consent to become parties to it? Yet it is amongst those Powers that are found the most weighty and convinced advocates of a League of Nations. Without their cordial support such a League can never be formed, and that is one reason why, if we persist in coupling the League with Freedom of the Seas, we lay upon it a load it can never lift.

But it is not the only reason. For even if we assume that the League could be formed with this difficult condition attached to it, it would still find itself deprived of the most effective means of attaining its end. All schemes for a League of Nations contemplate some form of sanction by which recalcitrant Powers can be coerced, and of all these sanctions the one that is at once the most readily applied and the most immediate and humane in its action is to deny to the offender the Freedom of the Seas, to pronounce against him a sea interdict. To kill, or even seriously to hamper, a nation's commercial activity at sea has always been a potent means of bringing it to reason, even when national life was far less dependent on sea-borne trade than it is now. At the present time,

when the whole world has become to so large an extent possessed of a common vitality, when the life of every nation has become more or less linked by its trade arteries with that of every other, the force of an oecumenical sea interdict has become perhaps the most potent of all sanctions. It is, moreover, one that can be applied without inflicting the inhumanities which other forms of coercion entail. For a League, therefore, whose object is to make an end of the inhuman practice of war it is a sanction which it would be folly to deny itself. Yet if absolute Freedom of the Seas is to be a fundamental article of its constitution that sanction cannot be applied. There would still, of course, remain the sanction of non-intercourse, but without the full sea interdict it would lose more than half its force, and often be too slow and weak in its action to be effective. In too many cases the only trustworthy sanction would still be open war, in which armies alone could bring vital pressure to bear.

To bring the truth of this view home to those who are unfamiliar with the mystery of sea-power is no easy task. To many it will seem to be no more than an obscurant clinging to the past with which they are resolved to break; and naturally enough, when we remember how often opposition to human progress is little else. But in this case the charge of mere obscurantism will not hold. The latest expressions of considered opinion are too weighty and too

sagacious to be so easily dismissed. The reality of the objection to fettering a League of Nations with absolute Freedom of the Seas has recently been recognized by a high authority whom no one can suspect of obscurantism. President Wilson, in his original pronouncement for a League of Nations, described his aim as 'a universal association of nations to maintain inviolate the security of the highway of the seas for the common unhindered use of all the nations of the world'. The high seas were to be open to all, in war as in peace, at all times and under all conditions. But that was in the early days of the war, when men had not yet had driven home to them what sea-power actually meant for the cause of peace and freedom and for the punishment of international criminality. In his message to Congress delivered on January 8, 1918, his attitude was profoundly modified. He then took occasion to utter an implicit warning that the original position of the promoters of a League of Nations which he had voiced on the previous occasion was incompatible with their aim. The substance of the message was a Peace programme, and its second article provided for 'absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and in war, *except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants*'. The declaration is perfectly clear. The official policy of the United States is that the old belligerent rights at

sea must be retained as essential to the executive ability of the League.

Obviously it must be so. For if those rights were abolished the Sea Powers as such could do nothing to enforce the will of the League. The executive force would lie almost entirely with the Military Powers, and the result of such unequal executive capacity cannot be contemplated with equanimity. It is too well known that the weight of a voice in the council chamber is not determined by reason alone, but in a much higher degree by the force behind it. The Naval Powers, bound hand and foot with the Freedom of the Seas, could speak, but they could not act, and inevitably the councils of the League would be dominated by the Military Powers. Is it credible that in the existing state of human progress a League of Nations under such conditions could make for the sanctity of covenants, the rights of small nations, and the peace of the world? Clearly it is not, and no less clear is it that if we are in earnest for a League of Peace we must concentrate on that end, and not dissipate energy in trying to achieve a wholly distinct aim at the same time. To strive for a League of Peace is to strive to prevent war; to strive for Freedom of the Seas is to admit war and strive to mitigate its terrors. Let us cease to confuse the two ends. Let us determine which line of endeavour we mean to follow, and pursue it with singleness of purpose and undivided effort. It will not be easy. It is to the

interest of the Military Powers to confuse the two tracks. They will, undoubtedly, use every device to keep them confused, for only by fostering the unhappy confusion which well-meaning men have hastily introduced can they destroy the balance between Naval and Military Powers, and so become the arbiters of the destinies of their weaker neighbours.

Above all should these smaller nations beware of putting themselves in line on this question with the Military Powers. The temptation is great. Their sufferings as neutrals during the present war have been so severe that their tendency is to snatch at the first means that seems to promise relief in the future. Their troubles are directly traced to the extension of belligerent interference upon the sea to which new developments in war conditions have inevitably led, and it is naturally in Freedom of the Seas they see the only remedy. But in truth their sufferings at sea are only a symptom of the underlying cause. The fundamental difficulty is that the vitality of nations has become so much a common vitality that no nation can fully enjoy a state of peace while other nations are at war. Neutrality as it formerly existed has ceased to be possible, and Freedom of the Seas would be only an alleviation, not a cure. The only real remedy is a League of Nations which would prevent war, but a League of Nations could not permit neutrality as a right—any more than by the English common law a citizen had the right to stand aside when

a criminal was being pursued. Except in case of special dispensation all would have to join in enforcing the sea interdict, and all would be in a state of war with the recalcitrant Power.

Whether, then, a League of Nations were formed or not small nations would not see the end of suffering or sacrifice, even if it were possible by a stroke of the pen to abolish so old and well-established a practice as capture at sea. On the other hand, if no League could be formed, or, being formed, could not be made effective, their condition would be more precarious than ever. For without belligerent rights at sea the Naval Powers would be without means to protect them, and they would be at the mercy of the Military Powers with no one to whom they could turn in time of trouble.

For the Minor Powers there is only one escape from the miseries of war, and that is an effective League of Nations. The policy which, in common with all men of goodwill, they must pursue is to see it accomplished, to remove everything that is likely to prove a stumbling-block, and to permit nothing which may cripple its vigour when it comes to life. The seas our ship will have to pass are stormy and full of shoals, and of this we may be sure, there is little hope of her avoiding wreck if she is made to labour with this perilous deck-load of Freedom of Seas. If it is our real desire to bring her safely to port it must be jettisoned—and the sooner and more completely it is done the better.

Only in this way can we cease to confuse the issue. The all-important end is to get a League into being. Until it is a living fact we cannot tell what form it will take or how much of humanity it will embrace, and until we know these things we cannot tell how far the preservation of belligerent rights at sea, or to what extent their control by the League, will make for the success of the Great Cause.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

THERE is no sphere of international Politics in which the application of the principles involved in the idea of the League of Nations more convincingly appears to be called for, or in which, if the builders of such a League are in earnest, it could be more simply, promptly, and beneficially effected, than in that of the relations of European to primitive peoples. For the defects in these relations are, in regard to matters on which the conscience of mankind is fully agreed, more glaring and less likely to be overtly disputed on behalf of any Power than are the causes of discord between the civilized nations; whilst at the same time the ground is in a much more favourable state for the establishment and action of a central authority, both because of the special character of the history of the existing relations and of the comparatively short period and imperfect degree of their development in the greater part of the area to be dealt with.

‘Foreign Politics’, said the late Lord Salisbury, ‘mean African Politics.’ When he said it, Africa was in fact the chief sphere of activity of those policies of the extension of sovereignty, control, and economic exploitation on the part of European Governments over territories in the possession of less civilized or

weaker peoples that were then keeping diplomatists busy. That dictum is as true to-day as ever, in the very significant sense that, whilst the Powers partitioned primitive Africa and the Pacific without coming to blows in the process, the crash of the world-war has come because, when they had safely disposed of all the 'primitive' peoples available, and, after a few tentative demonstrations in South America, had been chased away from that neighbourhood by the watchdogs of the Monroe Doctrine, they proceeded (in rivalry now with Russia and Austria also) to apply to half-civilized and more-than-half-civilized Africa—to Morocco and Tripoli, to weak or backward States in Europe—Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Turkey—to Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Persia—very similar processes of encroachment, intervention, and control, on the same justificatory principles as they had appealed to in partitioning Africa, and as are now being applied, on the plea of much the same arguments, by the Central Empires to Poland, Rumania, and the dismembered racial groups that recently made up the Russian realm. Meanwhile, the United States had entered upon a similar policy among the surviving possessions of Spain in the Antilles and the Philippines, with further interventions in San Domingo and Haiti.

The world-war came, it may fairly be said, because the general politics of Europe had taken on the character and the colour of the politics of the 'scramble for Africa'—because all Foreign Politics had *become* 'African' Politics.

What, then, was the vice of the politics of the 'scramble'? In regard to principle, it was the ignoring or the denial, in dealing with primitive peoples, of the conceptions of international (or 'supernational') Right ('*Jus*') which Christendom had evolved and asserted as between civilized peoples. The history of that break-down is too long to be sketched here. It was unquestionably affected by the ancient and quite logical claim of the Papacy to be the guardian and exponent of such Right, a claim which had indeed come to be interpreted, so far as primitive peoples were concerned, as implying responsibility rather for their spiritual than for their temporal security, but the revolt from which on the part of Protestant nations conduced to setting them to look elsewhere than to any general authority for their principles in dealing with such peoples, or indeed to ignore any principle whatever except that of their own wills and interests. This revolt helped competitive individualism and the doctrine of the Right of the stronger, in the struggle for life, to dominate international, as it had come to dominate industrial and social relations.

In regard to practice, their vice was the rapacity, cruelty, and stupidity of subjects and officers of the partitioning Powers in their dealings with natives, the impunity such agents were allowed and the support given to them by their Governments, and the reluctance of any Power to intervene or remonstrate.

The tropical lands that primitive peoples occupy yield, or are capable of yielding under organized and

instructed development, valuable minerals, food-stuffs, and raw materials required by the whole world. There can be no reasonable question of locking up these sources of wealth because certain barbarous tribes, as the result of migrations of centuries, are found in this age sparsely inhabiting the countries which can produce them. Freedom of access to and exploitation of these natural resources is now generally recognized as a common right of mankind, and no true friend of primitive races would propose entirely to exclude, or to withdraw, European intercourse and influence from them, or even to hand back to them, at this period, that unregulated and unsupported responsibility for their own governance under which slave-raiding, brigandage, and internecine violence were rampant. Under proper control such intercourse and the development of the natural resources by civilized enterprise are of recognized advantage to the natives. The ghastly instances to the contrary, where native populations have been oppressed, enslaved, and destroyed by policies of ruthless exploitation, do not establish a case for the abstention from European penetration. They do establish the duty of regulating such penetration by the erection of a controlling authority actuated by the dictates of human conscience and guided by the experience which has been gained of the compromises and safeguards whereby the human rights of both Europeans and natives may be maintained.

But the partition of Africa and the Pacific was not entered into or regulated on any concerted basis of

rational or humane principle or purpose, or with any genuine consideration or guarantee of the rights or lives of the natives : it was, as between the partitioning Powers, a hurried scuffle of blackmailings, bluffings, and bargainings, incidentally provoked by the enterprises of De Brazza and Stanley, by gold discoveries and by other advertisements of potential sources of wealth, and precipitated by the sudden decision of Germany to create for herself a Colonial dominion by the same simple methods of seizure as had been the foundation of some of the earlier Empires. The apprehensions of England as to the threatened developments of this policy, the assertion of shadowy traditional claims to vast realms by Portugal, competing activities by France, and international jealousies as to the future of the great interior territories intensified the fever of annexationism ; and what resulted was, in fact, an emergency settlement very vicious in important respects and heavily fraught with factors of future trouble.

England had, for some time previous to this outbreak, been justly entitled to claim the best record for humanity and intelligent liberalism in dealing with African natives, and had, in fact, acquired a reputation as the champion of liberty and justice ; because, under the impulse of a religious revival that quickened her conscience, combined with the democratic inspiration that produced the political revolutions of the period, she took the lead in abolishing slavery and suppressing the slave-trade.

But if England's record was in this degree good,

Englishmen nevertheless had cause for chagrin at her failure to follow that humane impulse more boldly. Had England so willed, she could have done, not only far more than was done, but far more than any other nation could possibly do to save native races from the cruelties that have befallen them. At a period when she could, by an understanding with France, have taken almost any step she chose in tropical and southern Africa, she both refused herself to assume either sovereignty or protectorate over many African tribes that begged her to do so, and later abandoned to the ruthless Colonial inexperience of Germany Namaqualand and Damaraland, which Bismarck had twice almost invited her to claim, and the Cameroons, which had asked her protection and where British missionaries had established Christianity and education.

It was, however, perhaps healthier for the future of the world that England refused to live up to her reputation by becoming the paramount patron and protector of African peoples. She did refuse to do so, forswearing, in 1865, future annexations; and later, when she was forced out of inaction, she accepted in good faith the principle of concerted European participation. That, so far as it went, was a further-looking ideal. But it did not go far enough. It did not go so far as to secure proper treatment for natives, which the fearless extension, at the time when it might have been possible, of British sovereignty probably would have done, or even to stipulate for it.

The fact, however, that acquisitions in Africa were divided, on something like a basis of give and take,

between European Powers, although it did not create a permanent international guardianship for primitive peoples, yet rendered such a creation a much more obvious and attainable ideal.

And a most important approach was in fact made towards this ideal, for in regard to the exploitation of the Congo Basin an International Conference was assembled, at which the principle of international guardianship was powerfully advocated and to some extent established in practice. When Bismarck, at this (Berlin) Conference (1885)—in which he had refused to allow the Pope to be represented—proposed to declare that the sole purpose of its proceedings was to establish freedom of trade and navigation in the Congo Basin, the British Plenipotentiary deprecated this limitation, urging that commercial interests should not be regarded as the exclusive subject of the deliberations. The United States Minister warmly supported this attitude. And so the unpretentious realism of the Prussian confession of purpose was generously expanded by the pronouncement: "All the Powers exercising rights of sovereignty in the said territories undertake to watch over the preservation of the native races and the amelioration of the moral and material conditions of their existence, and to co-operate in the suppression of slavery, and above all of the slave-trade. They will protect and encourage all religious, scientific, or charitable institutions established for these objects or tending to educate the natives in the advantages of civilization."

Perhaps more importantly still, the Act also pro-

vided for the neutralizing of the Congo Territories in the event of war between any of the consenting Powers. But, on the other hand (and this too is important), whilst the European Powers were prepared and proposed in the draft Act *jointly* to guarantee this neutrality, thus laying a possible foundation for a similar consensual exclusion of militarism from the whole of Africa, the United States Senate refused to concur in this provision, and it was struck out. Consequences of this omission were (1) that when, simultaneously with her violation of the neutrality of Belgium, Germany mobilized her troops in East Africa (abutting on the Belgian Congo) the Allied European Powers (not unnaturally) declined to maintain the neutrality of the Congo State, and prepared for action against Germany on that side; and (2) that President Wilson, to whom, at a later date, Germany, having seen reason to think better of her policy of setting Africa on fire against the Allies, appealed for intervention on behalf of neutrality, had to point out that he possessed no *locus standi*. *

Further, in relation to the idea of a *supernational* authority, which it was proposed in this case to provide for, and which President Wilson's advocacy of a League of Nations encourages the hope that the United States Government would now view differently, it is significant and noteworthy that the General Act of the Berlin Conference is headed, and its declarations and provisions purport to be made, 'IN THE NAME OF ALMIGHTY GOD', thus indicating at any rate a feeling that some *supernational* and moral authority was still

required for the nations represented to have any right to frame laws for each other and for the world. It is a short step from this recognition to the deduction that it is the right and the duty of a human international concert to enforce the observance of mercy and justice, the acknowledged laws of the conscience of professed Christendom, in the dealings of European Powers with natives whose lands they have entered on the plea of Divine authority. Nor will any advocate of the constitution of a League of Nations be disposed to demur to such a deduction. On the contrary, it is precisely for the enforcement of such principles that he will desire to see it formed.

In speaking of a League of Nations we have, of course, in view a World-League that shall include the German Powers, to prevent the recurrence of war and to guarantee the rights of now subordinate peoples. But even if, unfortunately, the war should end without such an inclusive organization being established, it is clear that some settlement would have to be made with regard to the future of Germany's former colonies, in which, at least, all the active belligerents among the allied Powers and as many as possible of the neutral Colonial Powers must be associated. Holland, the foster-mother and hostess of International law and pacification, the disinterested clear-headedness of high democratic civilizations such as those of Switzerland and Scandinavia, will be indispensable partakers. What ought to have been done in the Partition of Africa, what was attempted and in some degree foreshadowed in the Berlin Congo Act,

must then be done, at any rate with regard to these lands. These territories of primitive peoples, to whatever sovereignty they may be committed, must be given security that they shall be governed conformably to principles laid down in the light of the experience in African affairs that the world has gained during the last thirty-five years—a conformity to be enforced by the joint guarantee of the Powers associated in the settlement.

If, on the other hand, we assume that the future of these communities may be deliberated with Germany as a party, the situation will afford a much more satisfactory and permanent basis for the framing of a World-charter of the liberties and rights of primitive peoples. An international authority, clothed with effectual powers, would, by a common consent, be addressing itself to the resettlement of arrangements established previously with the sanction or assent of the same associated Powers for the government of certain territories.

Inevitably the League of Nations, if it is constituted at all, will be constituted with the deliberate intention that it should apply certain principles of Supernational Law. As in regard to European and Asiatic subject communities, so in regard to the territories of primitive peoples, it must take account both of the manner in which authority has been hitherto exercised and of the principle of 'self-determination'.

Whatever agreement the League may be able to reach for the limitation of national armaments among the Powers, the prohibition and the guarantees

against military developments in these territories must be absolute. Whatever the League may be able to do for the liberties of subordinate civilized peoples elsewhere, the safeguards against the oppression of primitive peoples under European overlordship must be absolute, under penalty of forfeiture.

The character of these safeguards can here be only summarily suggested. They must include—

(1) Protection of Native land rights, and sufficient Native Reserves.

(2) Prohibition of forced labour, except for definite and approved local services.

(3) Restriction of contract labour.

(4) Complete separation of administration from exploitation.

(5) Maintenance of and respect for tribal authority, law, and customs, wherever possible.

(6) Exclusion of distilled liquor.

It is not advisable when such overlordship exists to assign control to committees of different Powers. Joint sovereignties have not worked satisfactorily. What it seems most desirable to aim at is the reposing of undistributed local authority in whatever government may be the trustee of sovereign power, with responsibility for observance of principles laid down, enforceable through appeal to the Court of the League. The transfer of such trusteeship, in the case of the Congo territories, from Leopold II to the Belgian National Government is an example of how such responsibility can be enforced. But if these safeguards

should be prescribed in regard, for example, to the Colonies which have been conquered from Germany, then, clearly, they must equally be made the law of the League for any territories whose sovereignty may be changed as for those that may be resettled under the same sovereignty. Nor will it be possible for Powers who concertedly attach such trusts to any sovereignties that they deal with jointly, to refuse to acknowledge similar obligations in respect of the territories which they already severally hold. The more successful Colonial Powers would have no reason to shrink from entering into such a self-disciplining compact; its enforcement on some of the less efficient now in control of primitive peoples would be distinctly desirable; and no Council acting on the lines which have been suggested, as an organ of a League of Nations, could, without glaring hypocrisy, refuse to call for such houses to be set in order.

The establishment of such a Council, acknowledging the Romano-Christian notion of supernatural Right as paramount above the individualism, commercialism, and Might-politic that dominated the Partition of Africa, and has borne its appalling fruit in the barbarization of Europe, has been recognized for a generation, by all who have watched the facts, to be essential for the preservation of primitive peoples. It will now have the immense reinforcement of the spirit of America, the youngest and most boldly liberal of Colonial Powers, though she, too, may still have something to learn at home.

There have been several tentative and imperfect

anticipations of what is looked for in a League of Nations, in schemes to provide for and—in more or less shadowy and optional degrees—to guarantee the independence of weak civilized or help less primitive peoples. These have all had two common vices: they have aimed entirely or predominantly at the interests of the guarantors, and they have provided no commanding common sanction. An international Act guaranteed, in a very feeble and negative manner, the neutrality of Luxembourg. An earlier Act had guaranteed, with a more actively operative form of sanction, the neutrality of Belgium. An international Act asserted, in a manner which the British and other participant Governments treated as laying no charge upon them to assure its observance, the liberties of Bosnia and Herzegovina. An international Agreement guaranteed, without effectual sanction, the good administration of the New Hebrides under the joint sovereignty of France and England. An international Act guaranteed, with more practicable possibility of enforcement, the good government of the Congo State; and effectual action was, in fact, taken in this case by some of the guarantors to correct abuses. The Brussels Act of 1890 embodied further resolutions for the suppression of the slave-trade and the trade in firearms; other international Acts have aimed at regulating the trade in liquor. But the authority of all such extemporized and unconnected anticipations of the League of Nations has proved in great measure ineffectual, for lack of goodwill or good faith in one or other of the parties, or for lack

of ability *in the concert* to enforce the obligations entered into. Their enforcement has depended entirely upon the officiousness of particular Powers that happened to care something about the matter.

However cynical, however incredulous of its being worth while to have any consideration for 'niggers', the temper of any particular nation may be, such cynicism and callousness do not gain ground, but are relaxed and modified, by any international contact between able and public-spirited men. International Conferences, Councils, Leagues, effectually, if gradually, raise the *professed* standard of administrative principle to the highest common level of humane conscience and purpose. The Berlin Act, in view of its sequels in Congoland, might, no doubt, suggest the imputation of hypocrisy to some of the participants in it. But such standards, once set up, remain on record: it need not transpire, and indeed is soon forgotten, how far, in asserting them, tribute may have been paid by vice to virtue. The vicious may even grow virtuous by imitative observance. However incompletely the Congress that will deal, after the war, with these affairs may realize the hopes of those who are looking towards a League of Nations, it must inevitably, if for such reasons alone, be an event of far-reaching advantage and promise in the history of the fates of primitive peoples.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: ITS ECONOMIC ASPECT

FROM the economic point of view the case for the League of Nations is so strong that it hardly needs to be stated. The question that now confronts mankind is literally this: Are its best energies and efforts to be devoted henceforward to production or destruction? If there is a League of Nations the answer will be Production. If not, Destruction. If the answer is Production, then all that we need for a healthy, comfortable, and, in the best sense of the word, civilized life will, or can, be turned out for us in abundance. If the answer is Destruction, then we shall have to be stinted in the supply of all that makes life good and pleasant and wholesome, in order that we may compete in the race for the greatest output of death-dealing weapons and the greatest efficiency in their use.

The question will be asked: Why is this terrible dilemma now before us? What has happened to force this choice upon us? The answer is in the facts of the present war, which has shown how inexhaustible

is the demand of a modern army for mechanical contrivances for destruction, involving an enormous amount of materials, labour, and ingenuity in their preparation and use. Before the war it was generally believed that a war involving the great Continental Powers must necessarily, if it happened, last a short time, because the needs of the fighting hosts in the matter of guns and shells and all the machinery of transport would be so great that the civilian populations would be unable to supply them. The war's experience has shown that these needs were infinitely greater than was expected, but nevertheless they have been supplied over a period of more than four years, because the productive power of the nations has been found, under the stimulus of war's needs, to be much greater than it was believed to be. As the war went on new methods of applying scientific labour and ingenuity to destruction were continually developed. Submarines and aeroplanes grew bigger and more effective, weapons designed for their defeat grew more varied and numerous, tanks were invented and developed, and science astonished even itself with its successes in such devices as poison gas, and in perfecting defences against them.

Thus the war has shown us in the first place that when man gives his energies to the task of destruction he makes a call upon them which is insatiable in its demands; and, in the second, that those energies of his have been able to meet the call to an extent

which was undreamt of, because man did not know how hard or how well he could work, until the stimulus of this war made him put every available ounce into facilities for mutual slaughter.

It is these practical lessons of the war that have shown us that we stand at the parting of the ways, and that one of the roads open to us leads us to despair and ruin; while the other can take us, if we make good use of the experience gained, to a new and much higher level of material prosperity, with opportunities for a great step forward towards things much more important than material prosperity—a higher and more widely-diffused intellectual development, a truer appreciation of beauty, and a great improvement in the general standard of conduct, and in the relations of man to man in the ordinary affairs of life.

For we have always to remember that the income—that is, the amount of good things to be consumed—of every town, of every village, of every nation, or of the world at large, consists at all times of its output. Apart from the claim on the goods of other peoples that investments made in the past may give us—a small item in the income of most peoples—we cannot as a community, large or small, consume or enjoy more than we make or grow. Our power to make and grow is limited by our stock of raw materials, the amount of work that we can put into them, and the amount and efficiency of the equipment and machinery and tools that we have got, owing to our own previous

exertions and those of the workers and organizers who have gone before us. Many people are unable to recognize the truth of this simple platitude because they confuse the issue by thinking of the national income, or the world's income, in terms of money. Some, especially in these days, go still farther, and think that it is possible to make us happier and better off, and to cure our financial difficulties by manufacturing money and increasing the number of coins and pieces of paper that we carry, and the amount of credit that we have with our bankers.¹ But multiplying money is useless and worse unless it helps us to multiply the good things that we want and need. Otherwise it simply causes a rise in prices. If the new money is evenly distributed to all then we are all just as we were. If, as is much more likely, it is unevenly distributed, then some are better off and some are worse off, and there is discontent and friction and readjustment, and a jarring of the machinery of production, which is sure to restrict the output of goods.

We can only be made better off and more comfortable by increasing the supply of good food, good clothes, good houses, cheap travelling facilities, good teaching, and that freedom from anxiety about the means of life which makes people more likely to be kindly and considerate in their treatment of one another. How does a League of Nations help towards the achievement of these objects?

Let us see first how this achievement is likely to fare if no League of Nations can be set up. In this case, the war will end in a peace which will leave the world in the condition in which it was before it, but with its evils infinitely aggravated by all that the war has taught about the need for elaborate and costly armaments, with the further addition of all the bitterness and vindictiveness, and the legacy of hatred that the war will, in that case, most surely leave behind it. There will be no room in the world for a nation that is not fully armed. Instead of making good things for our enjoyment and comfort, the best energies of every people will be put into devising and making weapons of destruction, thinking out new and even more costly and deadly ones, and training the flower of the nation's manhood in their use. Submarines, aircraft, huge guns that will shell defenceless towns a hundred miles away, devilish variations in the beauties of poison gas, new machines of destruction of a kind that we cannot yet imagine—these will be the objects which our ablest men of science and our most energetic captains of industry will be called upon to furnish, and our armies of workers will be busied in producing. Taxation will take a larger and larger toll on the buying power of every citizen, transferring it to the State to be spent on such 'commodities' as these, instead of on the comforts and pleasures and decencies of a well-ordered life. And then, after some years of this miserably perverted

activity, a spark will be set to the smouldering flame of international suspicion, and mankind will set out upon the business of mutual destruction armed with all the hideous weapons that will in the meantime have been invented and perfected, and a war will blaze up which in horror and destructiveness will distance the present one even farther than it has distanced all that went before it. After years of preparation in which production will have been concentrated on the power to destroy, that power will be exercised with ruthless effectiveness on such products of material civilization as will at that time be in existence.

But this is only half the story. Not only will the output of every nation have been seriously checked by the diversion of so much of its energy, skill, and labour into devising and making weapons, and exercising itself in their use; but the diminished store of energy, skill, and labour that will be available for the production of material goods will have found its efforts seriously hindered by the nightmare of war preparation. Hitherto the nations have been able to benefit themselves and one another by exchanging the goods that they produce. Though each nation's income is its output it does not necessarily consume the whole of that output itself. A large or small part of it it can use for sale to other peoples, taking the proceeds in goods from abroad of a kind that it cannot produce itself, or cannot produce so

well as other nations, owing to differences of climate, natural aptitudes, or physical facts such as the distribution of metals on the earth's crust. The benefit to mankind that has been wrought in past centuries from the interchange of commodities through oversea traffic is an economic commonplace that is universally recognized. But if there is no League of Nations, the experiences of this war will tend very seriously to check this interchange. For every nation will see that when the next war happens the development of the submarine that may take place in the meantime may make oversea intercourse impossible, or so precarious that to depend on it would be to court disaster. And not only oversea trade would be checked, for no nation could be sure that it will not some day be at war with its next-door neighbour across the frontier, and so in view of modern conditions of warfare will prefer to consume its own products rather than foreign. In other words, it will be the aim of every nation to make itself as far as possible self-sufficing, to train its inhabitants to make everything for themselves, and to refrain, as far as possible, from the use of goods that have to come by sea or over the frontier. And so, instead of the supply of good things being quickened and improved by being turned out in the countries where they can be made best and distributed over the world by the process of international trade, there will be a tendency for each nation to confine itself to things that it can make for

itself, and this at a time when its best energies will be devoted to making killing machines. The consequence is likely to be that every nation will fare much as an individual would fare who had to depend on his own exertions for his food and clothes and shelter, and at the same time gave most of his thought and energy to devising traps for his neighbour and means of killing him when they next came to blows.

And not only would the interchange of goods and division of labour between nations, by which mankind has so enormously benefited in the past, be checked by the need for self-sufficiency which modern warfare imposes. A further check would be provided by the difficulties of international finance if the war left the world faced by the need for preparation for the next one. In former wars, when Governments carried them on in a more or less gentlemanly manner, financial contracts between debtors and creditors could be carried out to some extent. For instance, Russian bonds were long a favourite investment among British capitalists because they remembered that all through the Crimean War English holders of Russian bonds were punctually paid their interest as it fell due. In the present war a new precedent has been set up. Governments not only do not pay what they owe to the subjects of Powers with which they are at war, but do not allow their subjects to carry out contracts with enemies. It follows that if there is no League of Nations international investment and international

business of all kinds will be seriously hampered by the certainty that, if war breaks out, any money invested in enemy countries will pay no interest, and the securities representing it will be saleable, if at all, on most unfavourable terms, and that debts due from enemy debtors will most probably be bad debts until the war is over. If every one could know exactly with what other countries his nation was going to be at war, the deterrent effect of this check on international financial arrangements would be less serious. But as it would be impossible to foresee with certainty on this point, since new problems might arise and bring new groupings among the nations in their train, all kinds of business between nation and nation would be carried on with hesitation and difficulty unless a League of Nations could be set up.

Moreover, such industrial, trading, and financial activity as was possible under such hampering conditions would at all times be subject to panics and alarms. Before the war a large number of people jogged along at their business in the belief that war on a Continental scale was so improbable that it might be left out of their calculations. This belief has been shown to be wrong, and the confidence in enduring peace that is essential to the vigorous conduct of industry and finance has been so rudely shaken that it cannot be fully restored unless there is some drastic alteration—such as that which would be brought about by the establishment of a League of

Nations—in the manner in which international disputes are settled. The experience of the war has also shown that a sudden attack by any nation that decided on war would, with the latest developments in weapons of attack, be a short cut to victory. There would be no preliminary fencing. War would be in full swing in a day, and the whole machinery of commerce would be crashed into by the organization of destruction without warning or notice. Traders, manufacturers, and financiers would live in a state of such acute nervous apprehension that no approach to the old activity and confidence could be possible. And business activity is largely a psychological question—that is, a question of the state of mind of those who keep the wheel of enterprise spinning. If they believe that what they produce or buy will find a ready market, then the wheel spins merrily. If they have any doubt, then comes dread of glut and sluggish markets, and grass begins to grow in the highways of commerce. ✓

It may be said that certain fortunate nations have been shown by the experiences of the past four years to be outside the orbit of war, and that they at least have nothing to dread from a return to the *status quo ante*. But he would be a bold prophet who asserted that because a people has stayed outside this war it could be certain not to be sucked into the wider whirlpool of the next. And even if this certainty were possible, the position of the neutrals would

hardly be economically happy if all their principal neighbours were reduced by the constant fear of war to a condition of diminished production and consumption. Full prosperity in these days is only possible when it is world-wide. With the chief nations of the earth intent only on the means of destruction it would be impossible for a small minority to achieve anything like the economic progress that might be theirs under happier circumstances.

Summing up, then, the economic future of the chief nations of the world, if it does not succeed in establishing a League of Nations, we see that it will consist chiefly in the diversion of their productive activity to the invention and manufacture of destructive weapons; taxation, on a scale undreamt of before the war, will reduce the buying power of the individual citizen and divert it to the State to be used for the purposes above named; the course of commerce will be warped and checked by fears of what the next war will bring in stopping all kinds of communications, with the result that every people will strive to be as far as possible self-sufficing, and purchases of foreign goods will be discouraged and prohibited; international investment and business will be checked by the memories of the present war, and expectations of a sudden outbreak of a new contest will undermine the confidence which is essential to active enterprise. And when the next war comes at last, with all the weapons that have made the present one so hideous developed

and perfected to a degree of efficiency that we can at present hardly imagine, its destructiveness seems likely to wipe out most of the patiently achieved successes—such as they are—of our present civilization.

Such is the picture of what we may expect if the League of Nations is not established to rescue mankind from destruction. On the other hand, what may we expect if it can be achieved? There is no need to dwell on the enormous economic advantage that would result from a reduction of expenditure on armaments, owing to the establishment of an international police force, to keep the peace, to which each nation would contribute a quota, which at any rate need not be more costly than the forces which it maintained before the war. In course of time the contribution to the international force might be made much less, but even this would be an important economic relief as compared with the expenditure that would be necessary for all the chief nations that meant to preserve their existence, if they were forced to develop their powers of offence and defence on the scale that the present war has shown to be essential for preparation for another. Taxation for armaments would be incalculably lighter, and the energy of the nations, set free from the nightmare of competition in destruction, would be able to apply to the purposes of peace and production the lessons taught by the war concerning the unsuspected power of mankind to turn out such articles as are found to be necessary. If the

peace of the world could be assured, and if hearty co-operation on the part of all who work the productive machine can be brought about, the output of all kinds of goods might evidently be made very much greater, thanks to scientific improvements and the better organization of industry, and the discovery that thousands of people who had never worked before were able to do good work when war made it necessary to call on them.

It is true that the war debt will be a burden which most nations will have to bear. But in so far as these debts are held at home they will involve merely a transfer of buying power; and economic enlightenment and widened franchises may be relied on to see to it that the burden is laid, in due proportion to ability to bear it, on the shoulders of those who enjoy a margin above the means of subsistence, generously interpreted. The war debt charge payable to debt holders within the nation is a totally different burden from the charge involved by armaments and preparation for destruction. It does not take a man away from productive work, it does not lessen the volume of goods to be consumed, it does not turn the thought of a single inventor or scientist from improving man's lot to helping to compass his death or maiming. Its due apportionment will involve difficult problems, but if the increasingly greater output that is possible can be secured, its burden will grow lighter in every year of peace.

With confidence restored, and the exchange of products between nations no longer hampered by fears of war, a great increase in international trade might well be expected, and a world-wide development of production would be assured. With a greater output of goods, there would be an opportunity which statesmanship, freed from war's nightmare by a League of Nations, might surely be able to grasp, of improving the distribution of wealth, so that the nations might rival one another, not only in the figures of their trade and the mass of their products, but in the well-diffused prosperity and high standard of comfort among all classes of their citizens. And when these material gains have been won, then it will be possible to go on to winning still higher victories, and diffusing not only prosperity but educated intelligence and some opportunity of a really noble life.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND LABOUR

FOUR years of warfare on an unprecedented scale cannot have failed to produce a passionate desire for peace. For the multitudes of people in every country whose lives have been darkened by the present tragedy the struggle can have only one issue worthy of the sacrifices and sufferings they have endured: no settlement can be accepted as final which does not offer to them the promise that henceforth upon earth there shall be no more war.

The experiences of the last four years have, by a strange paradox, converted one of the strongest influences making for war into a powerful argument for permanent peace. Fear of military aggression on the part of other nations has led every people to believe that the only way to keep peace is to be ready for war. Under the influence of fear the people have been persuaded to spend their energies in building up costly armaments. Fear is the chief sanction of the system of conscription which has enslaved the manhood of Europe for generations. Increase of armaments led to war-scares; war-scares led to further increase of armaments. In this vicious circle the nations have

moved, and will continue to move, hating one another because they fear one another's designs, until they learn that the ultimate guarantee against war lies in the common will for peace.

In the stress of this mighty conflict the common will for peace has been evoked in support of the idea of a League of Nations; and the very fear which formerly made for war has become the most potent argument that can be used on behalf of this constructive proposal. All thinking people, whatever their political views may be, now realize that if some means of preventing future war cannot be devised civilization itself will be destroyed. Enlightened self-interest has combined with the highest form of political and social idealism in support of the idea of world-peace. War consumes not only the material wealth of civilization and the finest manhood of the race; it paralyses the impulse towards social progress and spreads black despair in the hearts of men and women devoted to great causes. It destroys the hope of social betterment and blocks every project of reform.

In the atmosphere of international ill-will, under the perpetual menace of war, estranged from one another by suspicion, jealousy, and fear, the nations will not be able to carry out the great schemes of social reconstruction upon which the best minds of our time are now engaged. Nor will any country be able to afford the cost of social reconstruction on the grand scale if the threat of another and greater war

compels expenditure upon armaments, and the energies of its peoples are absorbed in preparation for the struggle.

This is the first and most compelling reason why the organized working-class movement supports the proposal of a League of Nations. Labour recognizes that in this proposal lies the hope of deliverance for all the peoples from the severest economic pressure and the most terrible risks of suffering and loss, from heavy burdens of taxation to maintain large armies and navies. Our hope for the future is bound up with this question of security. The specific programme of reconstruction in which Labour is interested presupposes two essential conditions which must be fulfilled before it can be carried into practical effect: the first condition is the defeat and destruction of Prussian militarism; the second is the establishment of a League of Nations which will make the world safe for democracy.

The project of a League of Nations is the keystone of the new social order that Labour desires to build. It stands also in the forefront of the Labour policy of international conciliation. Neither national reconstruction nor international conciliation is possible as long as the people are preoccupied with the menace of foreign aggression, and Governments are forced to spend huge sums yearly upon the means of national self-defence. In the past many necessary reforms have had to be postponed or altogether abandoned for

this reason. Future Chancellors of the Exchequer will have a far more difficult task to raise the revenue necessary to meet the enormous charges arising out of the War; and if they have to impose heavy taxation for military purposes the nation will be unable to bear the additional burden of expenditure involved in the great and far-reaching schemes of social reconstruction which the War has made imperative. If nations are to be forced to continue to pay the blood-tax, even on the pre-war scale, it is useless to talk of reform.

But we can be quite certain that warlike expenditure on the pre-war scale, unless measures can be devised to safeguard the security of nations, will not be adequate: if the nations have to organize their resources for future war they will do so in a far more thorough fashion. Conscription will become a permanent system in this country, with all that conscription implies as a drain upon the life-blood of the people; standing armaments will grow ever larger and more costly; industry will be impoverished, and the natural growth of trade will be checked; and indeed civilization itself will collapse under the strain of another war. From these evils there is no escape except by way of a League of Nations, which will guarantee peace and security for all peoples, and leave them free to develop their material and moral resources without the menace of recurrent wars.

But British Labour supports on other grounds the

proposal to establish a League of Nations. No other practicable suggestion has been made which will have the effect of promoting the unity of peoples. The aim which organized labour keeps steadily in view in the field of international affairs is the solidarity of nations, because we realize that the final safeguard of peace does not lie in the machinery of judicial arbitration and conciliation, however skilfully devised, but in the spirit of international goodwill and the understanding between nations based upon the essential identity of their interests. Two—or twenty—nations at war are like one great nation committing suicide. The establishment of a League of Nations will be a dramatic declaration of the fact that the peoples of the world form one family, and will show that they have learned that war is a family quarrel which humiliates every member of it, and destroys the happiness and prosperity of the whole. When the League is established, it will keep before the eyes of all nations the truth that peace is the greatest of human blessings, and that a dynasty or a government bent on war is the enemy of the human race.

In the forefront of the policy of international conciliation to which the organized workers stand pledged this project is prominently placed. The organized proletariat conceive this war to be a struggle between two kinds of civilization and two irreconcilable systems of government—between the system which treats a country as if it were the private property of

its king, and gives one crowned person an almost unqualified right to dispose of the lives and property of his subjects, and the system which recognizes the right of democratic self-determination, and steadily and consistently develops this principle in politics and industry and social life. Seeing the War as a struggle to make the world safe for democracy, the organized workers declare that no conceivable issue of the War, however much it might contribute to national self-glorification, or an extension of territory for any nation, or increase of its political influence in the world, would compensate for the failure to secure such international machinery as will help to develop democratic institutions in every country, and curb the sinister forces that make for war.

The clearest and strongest affirmation of the organized proletariat in the allied countries, at the conference held in London last February, was that, whoever wins, the peoples will have lost unless an international system is established which will prevent war. 'It would mean nothing to declare the right of peoples to self-determination', the inter-allied conference said in its memorandum on war aims, 'if this right were left at the mercy of new violations and was not protected by a super-national authority. That authority can be no other than the League of Nations, which not only all the present belligerents, but every other independent State, should be pressed to join.'

Organized Labour, however, regards this League as something much more than an organization to prevent war. The prevention of war is indeed one of its cardinal objects: it involves the immediate establishment, by a solemn agreement of States, of International High Courts for the settlement of all disputes that are of a justiciable character, and for effective mediation between States upon other issues that vitally affect their honour or interest but are not susceptible to judicial treatment. But in Labour's view, the ultimate purpose of such a League is to create a common mind in the world, to make the nations conscious of the solidarity of their interests, and to enable them to perceive that the world is one, and not a number of separate countries divided by artificial frontiers.

Side by side with the international courts set up for purposes of conciliation and judicial arbitration the workers have, therefore, proclaimed their desire to further the project of an International Legislature. Representatives of every civilized State, if this project is realized, will co-operate with one another in shaping the body of international law by which we hope the intercourse of States will hereafter be regulated, and which will be accepted as binding upon the several nations that have joined the League. It is an essential condition of the scheme, as Labour understands it, that the consenting States shall pledge themselves to submit every issue between two or more of them to arbitration on the lines indicated; and refusal to

accept such arbitration, or to submit to the settlement proposed by the court, could only be regarded as a deliberate aggression which would justify the League in making common cause against the aggressor, and in using any and every means at its disposal, economic or military, in order to compel the offending nation to keep the world's covenant of peace. That is a democratic doctrine. It was the greatest of modern Socialists, Jaurés himself, who pointed out that the question which of two belligerents was engaged in a war of national self-defence could be determined by showing which of them had refused to submit the issue to arbitration.

It is obvious that the proposed League of Nations can derive its authority only from the fact that it speaks for the public opinion of the world as a whole. In setting up the League, organized Labour insists that it shall be based on something more than an agreement between Governments: it must be the first step in creating a real League of Peoples. More than a hundred years ago, at the end of another great war, an attempt was made to realize a similar ideal. The League which then ~~came~~ came into existence developed into a mere league of kings pledged to maintain the *status quo*, to protect the monarchical principle, to suppress every liberal and humanizing idea, to check every democratic movement in the direction of liberty and equality. The Holy Alliance which was established at the close of the Napoleonic Wars fell

to pieces because it was rooted in the idea of privilege: it was a league formed by rulers against their peoples.

Organized democracy to-day has resolved to establish a League of Nations on an entirely different foundation. It is pledged to a policy of pacific internationalism. It insists that the League must be based upon the idea of public law and the right of peoples, not merely upon the agreements of governments and kings. It believes that the League can only be established after the destruction of militarism on a foundation of true democratic freedom, beginning with freedom of trade and commercial intercourse, and including the abolition, by agreement, of compulsory military service and standing armaments, which limit the development of democracy and menace the existence of free institutions everywhere in the world.

In the view of organized Labour the decision to establish such a League, and willingness to accept its findings, imply the complete democratization of every country concerned. Peace cannot be maintained merely by getting together an international assembly of lawyers and diplomatists any more than it could be secured by standing armies and navies. The ultimate assurance of permanent peace lies in the resolute repudiation by every people of the tawdry and vulgar imperialism which rests upon the armed domination of one race over another. It is the League itself that will supersede the arbitrary powers that have hitherto

arrogated the right of choosing between peace and war. It will bring foreign policy under the control of popularly elected assemblies resolved to maintain the sovereign rights of peoples. It implies the suppression of secret diplomacy and the development of Parliamentary control over Cabinets. It will mean that a vigilant watch will be kept over the activities of Foreign Ministers, diplomatists, and the agents of international finance. It involves full publicity for all agreements between States. It will render powerless for further mischief the evil influence of the armament trusts which are so largely responsible for the awful tragedy in which the world is at present involved.

Of this struggle there can be only one issue: there is no place in the world for militarism and autocracy, which have darkened the lives of millions of human beings in these last years, have poisoned the political life of Europe for generations, and have thrown back the progress of the race perhaps for centuries. Merely to repair the ravages of the War will exhaust the energies of the nations for decades; and if the War ends without adequate machinery being instituted to make future war impossible, no nation will be able to summon up the courage and strength to begin the task of reconstruction. Given a sense of security and a promise that their labour will not be in vain, the peoples will turn hopefully and resolutely to the tasks and duties of reconstruction. They will not

spare labour and sacrifice to replace the wealth that has been consumed.

But if the coming peace sows the seed of future war, if this project of a League of Nations to prevent war fails to materialize, and if the peoples are required to spend their strength in building up new armaments in preparation for new conflicts—then indeed we shall find that we have entered upon what Nietzsche called Europe's tragic era, the watchword of which will be not Reconstruction but Revolution, and in which the remaining treasures of our civilization may be totally consumed.

Democracy stands at the cross-roads. Whether the path taken is the one that leads to a new social order giving freedom and security to all, or the path that leads to revolutionary struggles and a violent and stormy close to the story of Western civilization, depends very largely upon the fate of this project of a League of Nations. If we fail here we fail irretrievably. Wars more frightful than the present will waste the substance of our race, and we shall lose even the belief in the possibility of progress.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE DEMOCRATIC IDEA

AMONG all the evil aspects in which War has revealed itself to our generation there is none more horrible or more widely felt than its enslavement of whole nations to the will of the few.

It is no part of my task to discuss the origins of the present War. The verdict of history is, in my judgement, already irrefutably pronounced ; the War of 1914 was a war of ambition forced by the German Government upon an unwilling world. But my present purpose is to discuss the War merely as a fact, irrespective of any questions of its 'justice' or 'injustice' or the comparative degrees of guilt resting on this party or that. Whatever view a man may take of the origins of the War, it remains clear that millions of poor men in divers regions of the world have been dragged suddenly, and without any previous action of their own, into a quarrel which they neither made, nor desired, nor understood ; and in the course of that quarrel have been subjected again and again to the

very extremity of possible human suffering, while those at whose will they fight for the most part contemplate the battles from a distance or else sit at home in glory. To say this is not necessarily to condemn the belligerent Governments. In my opinion some of them were grossly to blame and others quite innocent; but even if all were equally to blame, or if no one was to blame at all, it would make no difference. The fact is unchanged that, under the present conditions of state organization and national sovereignty, the life and liberty and property and happiness of the common man throughout the world are at the absolute mercy of a few persons whom he has never seen, involved in complicated quarrels that he has never heard of. No artisan, no peasant, no remote wood-cutter or shepherd in the whole of Europe, however law-abiding and God-fearing, can be sure henceforth that he will not suddenly by due process of law be haled away to a punishment more cruel than that normally reserved for the worst criminals. If not killed, he may be wounded, blinded, maimed for life, his business ruined, his family reduced to want and his home broken up. And not only that. He must lose not only his happiness but his innocence also. He must do things which his whole soul abominates. He must give himself up to the work of killing other men like himself and previously as innocent as himself. And all of it owing to no fault and no will of his own!

True, when he is called upon to come and fight for his country, the matter is generally put to him in such a light that the average man responds with instinctive loyalty. He joins the colours willingly and he fights bravely. But this trustful innocence of the victims does not diminish the moral hideousness of the whole transaction. The wrong is doubtless more flagrant and obvious when a Russian Jew, or Techeh, or Croat, or Schleswiger is forced to fight and die for a cause he hates; but I doubt if it is inherently more repulsive than the injury done to these willing victims in every nation, so simple and often so basely deceived.

This does not mean that the individual statesmen responsible for a war are villains. Of course the true war-makers are. The men who plot deliberate wars for national or personal ambition stand ever more deeply damned as we consider the full nature of their action. But the wrong done to humanity may be almost as great when the statesmen concerned are, in ordinary parlance, free from all blame. It sometimes happens that mere historical causes bring two states into such a clash of national interests or ideas of honour that, under present conditions, they can hardly help declaring war. In such a case, it may be that a greater degree of wisdom might have found a peaceful way out of the difficulty. But, judged by ordinary standards, the statesman who, with a just cause behind him, declares war cannot

be blamed, even where the result of his action is to spread fruitless misery over whole continents.

It would seem, then, clear not only that war, when it occurs, is a monstrous evil to mankind in general ; but, more specifically, that the whole principle on which questions of Peace and War are decided at the present day involves, in most cases, a frightful injustice to the common people. One can see what the revolutionary Socialists mean when they asseverate wildly that all wars are made by a few 'capitalists and blood-suckers', and that no people, if fairly consulted, would ever make war on another.

A philosophic Socialist, especially if his experience is drawn from Russia or the Central Empires, will drive this point further home.

If we analyse roughly the obvious tendencies that make for War, he will point out, not of course that they are confined to one class in the population, but that, in part at least, they do consist in 'sinister interests', and that such interests naturally flourish more among the rich than the poor. Of course it does not in the least follow, because a man has a sinister interest, that he is necessarily guided by it. There are thousands of countervailing motives, motives of conscience, honour, public opinion, and ordinary habit, which among decent members of an average decent society swamp and obliterate the sinister motive. It is to the interest of the medical profession that there should be epidemics, to that of the under-

takers that they should be fatal; but neither profession can be accused of habitually pursuing these ends. 'Still', our Socialist will argue, 'the sinister interests are always there, a source of possible danger. In a completely unmilitarized and uncorrupt society they do no harm; but if once the poison gets into the system, they begin to act.'

The most obvious 'sinister interest' is that of the Armament firms. We most of us remember the revelations that took place in 1913, showing that Krupps, for example, not only possessed German newspapers—one of them professedly Socialist!—which they used for their own purposes. This was bad enough. But they actually owned French newspapers as well, and had press-agents in Russia; and thus manipulated the press on both sides of the frontier. This was an obvious infamy. One can hardly imagine that after the War the state of things which led to it will be tolerated in any decent society. The Armament rings are great commercial companies which will be ruined if the nations enjoy long and secure peace, will make considerable fortunes if there is frequent fear of war, and colossal fortunes if there is actual war. In other words, here we have groups of people, and powerful groups, who are subject to an enormous and perpetual temptation to compass the utter misery of their fellow-creatures, and who have every facility for doing so in secret.

Again, though commerce and finance have on the

whole always suffered heavily through war, it is notorious that a great many persons and companies have made vast fortunes, both in this and in previous wars ; and it is not likely that none of them expected to do so beforehand. Some, no doubt, were completely taken by surprise by their own profits ; and no one would for a moment suggest that because a firm made money out of some war therefore its directors desired the war. But evidently there do exist a number of moneyed interests to which an outbreak of war means success and prosperity.

Another sinister interest is that of the professional Army and Navy, especially in their more ambitious elements. To say this implies no prejudice against the soldier or sailor ; it implies only that their nature is human nature. To educate a man for the Army ; to train him in a walk of life which, to those who follow it, seems by far the most thrilling and glorious in the world ; to accustom him to the thought that war, when it comes, will bring him a chance to use all his powers, to serve his country, to rise in his profession, and to leap perhaps from obscurity to the most dazzling form of glory that humanity knows : to do all this and then expect him not to desire war is surely to demand too much of human nature. Of course a conscientious soldier will often work conscientiously to avoid war. An experienced soldier will often feel more gravely than any civilian the horrors of war. But one has only to talk intimately

in time of peace to a few young officers to realize how their spirits naturally leap up at the prospect of putting in practice the art to which they have devoted their lives.

It is no doubt quite the reverse with the average unprofessional army, whether volunteer or conscript. The temporary soldier makes all the sacrifice and stands to receive almost none of the rewards. In most wars it is the higher command which has the most to hope for and the least to suffer.

And the statesmen? Our Socialist critic will not let them off lightly. Statesmen have no friends. If he is reasonable we may get him to admit that among those statesmen whom he has known personally there was as great ability and as much strength and loftiness of character as he could have expected to find in any other walk of life. 'But', he will argue, 'statesmen deal habitually with such large issues, and have to preserve their calm of mind amid such vast ebbs and flows of human suffering, that their judgement in such matters becomes, and ought to become, to a certain extent inhuman. If it is part of your daily business to sign death-warrants you cannot afford to feel upset about each one of them. Remember, too, that the career of a statesman offers dazzling prizes, and therefore is specially attractive to men of strong ambition; and then consider how a very ambitious man who longs for a great place in history may be tempted by the thought of a victorious war.

Such a man, like the Milesians in the Greek proverb, is not by any means a devil, but he may act as if he was.'

It is considerations like these which explain both the passionate protest against war and war-makers which rises from the democratic and socialist parties of Europe, and also the belief of many pacifists that the one antidote to the poison of war is Democracy pure and simple.

'The common people,' they argue, 'alike in almost every war, feel that they never made it. They were trapped into it. The war was prepared in secret by small numbers of rich and powerful men—not of course by all the rich and powerful, but by some small groups of them—and only sprung upon the peoples when it was too late to speak. And whoever may gain from the war, the common man can only lose; he loses more no doubt if his country is beaten than if it wins, but he loses either way. His business is merely to bear the burden; to fight and be killed, and suffer and continue to suffer, sometimes to go mad from prolonged agony, while eminent persons in comparatively safe positions make touching speeches about his high animal spirits and careless heroism. The people who gain are a few scores of politicians, a few hundred soldiers and adventurers, and a few hundred thousand profiteers—from contractors to munition-workers.'

Thinking along these lines, the remedy seems plain.

‘Let the people themselves conduct their own foreign policy. Let there be no more “secret diplomacy” ; no secret treaties, nor conclaves, nor understandings, nor negotiations. Let every word spoken and every step taken be absolutely public and open.’

The weakness of this programme soon becomes visible. For one thing, in order to work, it must be accepted by all countries alike. It cannot be unilateral. It would be too dangerous having diplomacy open in Britain and America while it remains secret in Germany ; having one party reveal all their counsels and the other not. But beyond that, there is confusion of thought in the phrase ‘secret diplomacy’, because it does not distinguish between the negotiation and the result of the negotiation. To avoid secret treaties is quite practicable, at any rate in times of peace ; and Great Britain had as a matter of fact during the present century resolutely avoided them. None the less we were drawn into war. To avoid secret negotiations is a totally different thing, and, to my mind, an impossible one. It would imply that no two statesmen are ever to discuss an important international question together, except in the presence of reporters. Such a rule would be utterly destructive of business. Delicate situations must sometimes be talked over in private if they are not to result in open ruptures. Indeed, as a matter of practice, if statesmen themselves were forbidden ever to meet for consultation without informing the

Kölnische Zeitung and the *Daily Mail* they would simply depute unofficial friends to meet privately on their behalf. The idea is impracticable.

But the fundamental error lies deeper. The whole notion that because war and war-making, as things now stand, not only cause practical injury to the common people, but constitute an intolerable outrage on human freedom, therefore a mere democratizing of international machinery would ensure peace, is, in my judgement, a false inference.

If wars sprang entirely from class interests, from deliberate avarice or ambition, there would be some plausibility in the theory, though even then we should have to admit that there are large classes among the rich who suffer cruelly from war and large classes among the poor who make high wages by it. But notoriously other causes are at work too. Wars spring just as much from national passion and ignorance as from selfish scheming. And in most wars of recent times you could find as much war frenzy in the Jingo mob as in the most plutocratic club or drawing-room. The idolization of the working class is not much less foolish than other idolizations. Man's virtue does not vary according to his class or his income; it varies neither directly nor yet inversely; and it merely obscures counsel to talk as if it did.

True, if you take the real leaders of the working class throughout Europe they have a remarkably

clean record in this matter. That is because the working classes, like most other large groups, are led not by their average men but by their idealists. No one can attend many Socialist conferences or Trade Union Congresses, or Workers' Educational gatherings, or other meetings of the élite of the working class in Great Britain without feeling the strong idealism of the atmosphere. And I believe it is much the same in most other civilized nations. The audiences at such meetings will be duly interested, no doubt, in plans for raising their own wages and shortening their hours of work, but they are not roused or swept into enthusiasm except by an appeal to some great cause or ideal. Indeed, unless my insight is at fault, I should say that, in a meeting of working men, even when the discussion appears on the surface to be concerned merely with material subjects, the hearts of the audience are generally set on something quite different. They are not thinking of 'bread and circuses'; they are thinking, however crudely, of the building of the New Jerusalem. And, together with other great causes, they believe intensely in Freedom and in Peace. But that is in part because the societies that I speak of, the Socialist bodies, the Trades Unions, the workmen's Liberal and Radical Associations, have, in all the democratic nations alike, an idealist atmosphere. They tend to be led by the best minds of their class, who agree in most matters with the best minds of other classes. No doubt the

workers' hatred of war is intensified by the plain facts of their own class interest, and this makes the general sentiment for peace stronger in the working class than among the wealthy. But the working-class crowds at racecourses and football matches, in public-houses and music halls, are not appreciably more peaceful-minded nor yet high-minded than wealthier people of the same type.

Throughout most of human history there have been from time to time outbreaks of theory tending to glorify the absolute proletariat. Not merely the worker or craftsman, but the outcast, the disinherited, the oppressed. Its latest outcrop is Bolshevism. The proletariat, in the strict sense of the word, is that completely undistinguished mass of human kind which remains permanently at the bottom, while other people have either saved money or shown ability or made a reputation or learnt a trade, or somehow provided themselves with some security against the future. And the ground for glorifying them is mere despair of human nature. The Bolshevik theorist has observed that it is not only kings and priests and soldiers who oppress the community; all through society each class is hard upon the class below it. The capitalist oppresses the small trader, the bourgeois oppresses the workman, the skilled artisan oppresses the unskilled and unorganized. Therefore, he argues, the only way to avoid oppression is to put power in the hands of

the lowest class of all. They alone are entirely innocent; and they alone can oppress nobody!

The truth of course is that, as soon as the power was put in the hands of the 'proletarians', they would have changed their social character. They would have become a ruling class, different from other ruling classes only in their large numbers and, perhaps we may add, in their extraordinary lack of talent. They would be exposed to all the temptations that beset every governing class, and would be particularly ill-suited to resist them. Their rule would be no safeguard against war or anything else.

The fundamental error of the Bolshevik or sans-culotte theorist lies, I believe, in his conscious or unconscious acceptance of class selfishness as the natural and unavoidable basis of human government. If every ruling class is, as a matter of course, to rule in its own interests, then by all means let the largest class rule; but the hypothesis itself is one that destroys all hope for the future of mankind. To accept it is a sin against the whole spirit of Democracy. ~~The essential doctrine of Democracy is that each man, as a free human soul, lives of his free will in the service of the whole people. This ideal is no doubt hard to attain, but it is not hard to aim at.~~ It is the only ideal permanently possible for any society that has emerged from the rule of mere custom or the divine right of kings. In certain ancient Greek cities a man, before casting a vote,

swore in the presence of the gods that he was voting to the best of his judgement for the good of the whole city. And that is still the spirit in which every good citizen ought to vote, and as a rule does vote.

The externals of Democracy as a form of government can be attained easily enough: parliamentary institutions, universal suffrage, abolition of privileges and the like. But Democracy as a spirit is not attained until the average citizen feels the same instinctive loyalty towards the whole people that an old-fashioned royalist felt towards his King. It is that spirit which is first needed in order to build up the organization for preventing war.

For that is the need before us. It is not enough to trust to the presence of wise statesmen; they can be so easily thwarted by fools. It is not enough to make them directly subject to democratic control; nor to remove the sinister interests which make for war and the aggravating causes which make disputes more difficult than they need be. All these things are good, but they are not enough. War does not always arise from mere wickedness or folly. It sometimes arises from mere growth and movement. Humanity will not stand still. One people grows while another declines. One naturally expands in a particular direction and finds that thereby it is crossing the path of another. The strong and civilized peoples tend to spread over the world. The uncivilized and incompetent peoples both tempt others

to war by their weakness and provoke them by their turbulence. Races hitherto subject to others make progress and demand their freedom. All these modes of growth produce situations which cannot be solved without great international changes, and there is at present no machinery for accomplishing such changes except the monstrous machinery of war.

It is right that Italy should be free and united; yet how could that have been achieved except by war? How could America have become independent? How could the Balkan peoples have escaped from the yoke of the Turk? All these changes were obviously desirable, and there will be others like them in the future.

When the need for change occurs within the limits of one sovereign state the machinery for dealing with it exists, and the difficulty is far less. Most of the British colonies gained their powers of responsible government without serious friction: England had learnt her lesson in America and Canada. The gradual growth of self-government in India will be an infinitely difficult but probably a peaceful process. The great classical instance in recent times is the separation, ~~without war~~, of Norway and Sweden, an achievement which filled Europe with admiration.

When the impending change affects the interests of two sovereign states, it needs good statesmanship and favourable circumstances to avoid a quarrel. The peaceful partition between the Powers of 'spheres of

influence' in Africa was justly considered a great achievement of statesmanship; but there no Power was required to give up anything. It was only a question of mapping out their future gains. Yet it came very near to war. The peaceful clearing up of the outstanding issues between Great Britain and France towards the end of last century needed the wisest and most patient diplomacy, though the points at issue were none of them worth even a day's war. At one time it actually seemed as if war might have ensued because, in a clause of the old Treaty of Utrecht, granting certain fishing rights to the French, no one had thought of deciding whether lobsters were fish. At another time a boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana, in which the maps were not in agreement, seemed incapable of settlement except by war between Great Britain and the United States. And such wars would have been madness.

True, these acts of madness were avoided. Throughout the nineteenth century and up to 1914 an ever-increasing number of international difficulties were settled without war. The method was diplomatic conference and, when that failed, arbitration. In 1914 special arbitration treaties already existed between most of the Western nations, except Germany; and not only the treaties, but the spirit of fair dealing and 'cordial understanding' which had grown up between Great Britain and most of the other Powers, made the final cessation of war between civilized

states a goal by no means unattainable. It only needed the further spread of the 'cordial understanding' to include Germany and Austria, and so achieve that 'bringing together of the two great groups' which was the main purpose of Sir Edward Grey's policy.

Instead we have had the Great War. But in this, as so many departments of life, the War presents us not with a conclusion but with a tremendous interrogative. Shall we go infinitely back or decisively forward? Shall we become much better than we were or vastly worse? It must be the one or the other. We must either devote the whole of our national energies and resources, all our science, all our imagination, all our leisure, to preparation for a next war, not very distant, which must surpass in horror anything that the world has known and must leave European civilization poisoned if not dead; or we must by deliberate effort build up some permanent structure of international understanding which will make such a war impossible. To do the first we need only drift with the tide; to achieve the second we must rise up and conquer circumstances.

The problem is entirely one of self-control and self-guidance. Every thinking person knows that if the states of Europe continue to practise war their doom is sealed. The precipice is visible, straight before us; are we men, with the power to think and check ourselves and turn aside, or are we as the Gadarene swine, incapable of turning? The situation is in some ways

like that of the drunkard or the drug-taker who knows that, saved for once, he must from henceforth either abstain or perish. But in one way it is much more difficult. It is complicated by the constant suspicion that, if we abstain from war, other nations will not. If we disarm, suddenly or gradually, they will seize the opportunity to strike. As we think on these lines, it seems as if we must at least be prepared for war; and if we begin to prepare, of course others must do the same; and thus begins the fatal competition in armaments which leads to gradual bankruptcy or to swift destruction.

There is no way out except co-operation. We must face the sacrifices. We must give up some part of our freedom. We must be prepared on occasion to allow a Congress of Powers to settle questions which we should prefer to treat as purely domestic. We must tame our pride a little. And in return we shall both form a habit of friendly consultation with other Powers instead of hostile intrigue, and shall be saved from the deadly dilemma of either provoking war by making preparations or inviting attack by going unprepared. A number of nations which act together can be strong enough to check an aggressor though no one of them alone is so strong as to threaten its neighbours.

America is already committed to the League. America, the richest and strongest and most peaceful Power in the world, stands as the nucleus. Some other Powers

will for certain join it. The hope is that the League will be so strong and general that to stand out of it will be a marked action. The Power that stands out will thereby be confessing that it means still, in spite of all that the world has suffered, to cleave to war and make its fortune by war. Let us hope there may be no such Power. But if there is, its existence will not wreck the whole League; it will perhaps bind it the more together, as law-abiding settlers stand together against a robber or pirate.

As to machinery, what is needed in the first place is probably a very simple thing: merely an adding together of the present arbitration treaties, so that the various nations which have separately agreed to arbitrate their differences shall form a League with mutual guarantees. At present if there are two nations bound by treaty to arbitrate and one chooses to break the treaty the offender suffers no penalty. He has only one enemy, and that an enemy of his own choosing. But if there are twelve nations the offender has eleven enemies. Again, where there is a League of many Powers there is no danger, as there may be in a separate arbitration, of two arbitrating Powers settling their differences at the expense of a third. Still more important, such a League would be a permanent organ, always ready to act, and embodied in a permanent machinery. It would not, like the old Concert of Europe, have to be called into action at the last moment to deal with a trouble that

is already acute. And it would not, like the Concert, consist of diplomatists whose normal business is to think only of their own country's interests. It would consist of men trained and accustomed to think for the common good.

Most of the schemes hitherto proposed for a League of Nations contemplate the formation of two international bodies for dealing with the two different forms of international friction which at present act as causes of war. These are, first, definite questions of right and wrong, of damages and reparations, which can be brought before a judiciary Tribunal and decided on legal principles. Secondly, those clashes of interest or national honour which are not capable of such decision, especially those of the sort already mentioned, which arise from the development of the human race and the natural expansion of the more civilized populations as compared with the less civilized. These clashes of national need are not matters of law, nor yet of arbitration: they call for foresight and constructive statesmanship.

For the first class of differences there must be a Tribunal, judicial in character, like the Tribunal at The Hague, composed of learned and disinterested lawyers, chosen from different nations in some more or less fixed proportions, but of course by no means regarded as representing national interests. They are there to do justice, irrespective of nationality. The formation of this body should not be difficult.

The problem has already been solved at The Hague.

The other body presents both greater difficulties, and, if successful, greater advantages. It is sometimes styled a Council of Conciliation, sometimes described as a sort of International Parliament. Its business will be not to judge causes or give binding decisions, much less to issue decrees like the Tribunal, but to discuss beforehand problems of international policy, to enable the nations to join in common council and to exercise a common foresight. Such a Council of Conciliation ought to have four special advantages. It will discuss questions early, before they have grown dangerous or inflamed. It will, by the mere presence of a calm and disinterested majority, tend to keep the atmosphere cool and the chief disputants reasonable. It will make it easier for either of them to give way, since he will not be yielding to his opponent but accepting the opinion of their common friends. And lastly, though it would be a mistake to introduce an element of compulsion into the discussions or recommendations of the Council, there will be the knowledge that, where the general opinion is clear, there is force somewhere in the background. A nation which goes definitely against the policy of the Council of Conciliation knows that sooner or later it is likely to face the Tribunal, and behind the Tribunal there is the sanction of the economic boycott, of excommunication, and ultimately of a crushing war.

An interesting objection has been raised to the working of this Council. The members, it is argued, if selected by their various nations, as they must naturally be, will be merely so many diplomatists, each representing his own nation and bound to act in its interests. And, since they will not be dealing as judges with definite points of law, but as politicians arguing for discrepant policies, the analogy of The Hague does not help us much. 'Imagine a clash of interests', the objector says, 'between France and Germany. The French representative will speak for French interests, the German for German interests. Each will expect his friend to act as "a brilliant second", like Austria at Algeiras. And the result will be not justice nor even an attempt at justice. It will be merely a veiled struggle. And in the end perhaps it will be decided by the far from disinterested votes of some Balkan or South American states, following the lead of the Power that they fear most. How can we expect any spirited nation to accept such a decision?'

To this objection, which is no doubt a serious one, there are three chief considerations to urge in reply. First, the character of the Councillors selected. It is not in the least impossible, it is not even difficult, to select in any of the leading Powers half a dozen or more wise and trustworthy men, who will discuss a great question with a sincere desire to reach the best and fairest decision, undisturbed by either per-

sonal or national interest. I could certainly name six Englishmen who could be perfectly trusted, and I think I could name an equal number of Frenchmen, Americans, and Scandinavians.

Secondly, the members of the Council will have working permanently upon them a stronger motive than any ordinary motive of national pride or ambition—the determination to avoid war. It is a commonplace to point out that this motive is enormously strengthened since 1914. No doubt the War may have acted in two opposite ways at once. It may have familiarized great numbers of men with the thought of slaughter. It may have doubled or trebled the tendency to crimes of violence. But it has surely burned deep into the hearts of all sane human beings the sense of what war means—the horror, the misery, the incalculable loss. We may, I think, feel sure that during the next ten or twenty years at least, when the Council will be forming its habits and fixing its character, the members will meet in a quite different spirit from that of an ordinary Diplomatic Conference of the old sort. Then their minds were full of their various national ambitions and antagonisms; in future such desires will surely be dwarfed by one main concern—to avoid by common counsels the common ruin.

In the third reason we come back, at last, to Democracy. Our imaginary objector argued that each party of delegates would be exposed to the full

blast of public opinion at home—of chauvinism, nationalism, aggressive finance, natural prejudice, and the like. There are many ways known for protecting them against these influences, as for instance Judges are protected. But, beyond all, it will be the duty of the peoples themselves, and especially of their leaders, to make their international connexions a reality and not a sham.

Fortunately other practical influences are already moving in this direction. The greater social and political questions are already overflowing the geographical boundaries of particular nations. Capital and industry are largely and increasingly internationalized. It is a matter of vital concern to workmen in one country that the workmen of a neighbouring country shall not be locked out or starved. Their fortunes are involved in the fortunes of their fellow-workmen throughout Europe. And the same is true of the employers and organizers. The churches, too, if they are to keep alive, must know what is interesting similar churches in other nations. The philanthropists, temperance reformers and the like, in various countries, are forming more and more the custom of conferring and acting together. In one of the greatest problems of the future, the treatment of subject nationalities and inferior races, it is absolutely necessary that the friends of the 'native' should try hard to act together, since those who exploit him are already instinctively

in league. These obvious international needs will have their effect on public feeling and are bound to be reflected in the press. The great questions will, as a matter of fact, be chiefly questions of economics, of industry, of political principle and theory, and so far as they are mere struggles of interest they will be class conflicts rather than national conflicts.

This tendency must be helped and encouraged. Everything must be done to prevent the great issues which divide men's minds from taking the form of brute struggles of greed or pride between armed nations. Let us hope that the disputes which come before the Council of Conciliation will not, even at the worst, be merely tugs-of-war between nations, with no principle involved but competing desires. They will also raise an issue between Free Trade and Protection, between Industry and Agriculture, between Liberalism and Reaction, between Socialism and Capital, or between some other of the great principles or groups of thought which divide on more or less similar lines all the progressive nations of the world. Divisions of this sort may lead to hot party feeling. They may cause grave domestic inconvenience. But no matter how hot the feeling or how grave the inconvenience, we can put up with them, for they cannot in themselves lead to war. No split of opinion or even of interest, neither political nor social nor religious, is fatally dangerous as long as it is not a split between sovereign states, because it is only such states, and

not parties or churches or social groups, that hold the keys of the arsenals.

The principle that will solve the problem of war is not Democracy, but Internationalism. Or if that word seems to imply a lack of proper devotion to one's own country, let us say it is not Democracy nor yet Internationalism, but Brotherhood. We need the growth of brotherhood within each nation, and brotherhood between the nations also. It may seem folly at the present time, when half the world is wild with hatred of the other half, to speak of brotherhood at all. But great extremes lead to great reactions. And the feeling of kindness and almost of tenderness that good soldiers so often have for the men who have fought against them and borne the same sufferings, may easily spread over the world more widely than most people now imagine. The orgy of nationalist passion which the War has roused will in part perhaps persist, but in part will produce its own antidote. Things have been done no doubt in this War which no man living who knows of them can forgive. But a generation soon passes. The burning lava quickly cools, and the grass and flowers grow over it. I wish one could be as confident of a recovery of wisdom and uprightness in the public affairs of Europe as we can be of a reaction towards peace and goodwill. For in the building up of a League of Nations, as in all great constructive work, neither correct principles nor good intentions suffice to ensure success. In the

last resort it is a question of human character and human wisdom.

The next European war, if it ever occurs, will surpass in horror anything that the world has known. It will be to this War as this War has been to the old wars of our fathers, which now seem but small things, strangely chivalrous and ineffective and almost merciful. A strong fear, if nothing else, will drive the nations of the world into some common refuge, as wild beasts in a flood will take asylum together and forget to fight. But let us not libel our own nature. We can, after all, rise to the call of higher emotions than mere terror. We children of men are, in spite of present appearances, something better and gentler than the tiger and the snake. And the War itself, which opened such an abyss of human cruelty, has revealed also heights hitherto undreamed of, not merely of physical courage but of devotion and loyalty and self-sacrifice. The plain fact is that the men who are caught in the whirlpool of this War are too good for the life they now live. They are too good to be used for cannon-fodder, too good to be trained to drive bayonets into one another's intestines or stamp with nailed boots on one another's face. It is not only the pacifist and the eccentric who is craving in his heart for a gentler world. It is not only the thoughtful soldier, bent beneath a burden of intolerable suffering, who is torn by a long conflict between duties, in which he is forced to accept

the most hateful as the most compelling. It is the common man and woman, the workman and peasant and teacher and civil servant and tradesman, who after this surfeit of hatred is wearying for a return to love, after this waste of bestial cruelty is searching the darkness for some dawn of divine mercy, after this horror of ill-doing and foulness unforgettable is crying out, each man in his loneliness, for the spirit that is called Christ.

These things are not fancies. They are real forces and full of power, which no wise statesman will overlook or forget to reckon with. The building of a League of Nations is not an affair of emotion; it is a work of reason, of patience, of skill in international law and statesmanship; but those who have faith in the work will be helped forward by these hopes and longings. And even those who have no faith left in any of the often-baffled, often-discredited, schemes of human brotherhood will yet hesitate to reject the attempt at a League. For if the way forward shows only a doubtful hope, the way backward is blocked by a fear that is not doubtful, a certainty more ghastly than our worst dreams.

Human scepticism and human inertia are powerful forces, but these things are surely stronger.

THE SPIRITUAL SANCTIONS OF A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THE proposal of a League of Nations, now upon every one's lips, is evidently beset with difficulties of very serious kinds. Some of them are due to the mere complexity of the subject-matter; and these can only be lessened and overcome by the patient work of experts, supported and impelled by a deepening intelligence in the peoples as to what is at stake, and a strengthening determination that the way should be found. But other difficulties are of a different kind. They have to do with the sources and amount of motive which can bring about so great a change; and which can not only supply the steam to work a very complex machine, but also compel its construction.

The present enthusiasm for the idea is much more than merely sentimental or rhetorical: it is serious and moves serious men; and this in itself is hopeful. But it does not make the prospect easy; and those who see most what is at stake will be most desirous to convince themselves that there is, indeed, behind the movement the strength of those moral motives which ultimately prevail.

It should not be very difficult to do this, and to do it satisfyingly, if we put the case for the League of

Nations sufficiently high, and detect the real principles which underlie it. It will not be enough, though it will be very well in its way, to invoke the motive of humanity, and (with the evils of war present as they are to the minds of all) to claim acceptance for the League of Nations as giving at the worst a chance, and at the best a bright prospect, of preserving peace where otherwise war will recur, perhaps in annihilating forms. For so great a gain the League would be well worth trying as a mere diplomatic experiment, and it might be rather confidently expected to rally an increasing amount of prepossession, and even of enthusiasm, to assist its successful working.

But in its essence this would still be more a mechanical than a moral improvement. The forces, remaining what they were, would be adjusted to run with less risk of friction and more skilful compensations.

What we want is more than this. We want a moral change with a political development which will both answer to that change, and by exercise stimulate and strengthen it.

Take the latter first. The curious course of human history which seems to have promiscuously engendered with no chronological order states of the most various sizes and values, such as unchanging nomad or pastoral tribes, vast empires, little highly organized independent cities, may perhaps disguise from us a real trend in the affairs of men, from the particular to the

more universal, from simpler to more complex and larger systems. The ancient history of the West gave striking evidence of this trend. The Roman Empire with its 'peace' was perhaps the best result of it; great in actual effect, and great in its permanent imaginative influence. Its ultimate failure was due to its want of real citizenship, and of the virility and defensive force which this creates.

But through it men's minds gained an intuition of a true all-embracing state.

After the crash of the barbarian invasions, the same trend working its way out of the early mediaeval chaos produced the nation as we know it in the kingdoms of the West. Internally these states have become, in different forms, fine unities of human life, with much internal harmony and subordination. But their mutual relations have been frankly elementary. The name of international law stands for something of whose extent and reality the 'layman' can hardly judge; but the associations of the name are largely ironical.

Remembrance of the Empire and Christian aspiration made men feel for some more inclusive ideal, but vaguely and without effect.

This is the stage which we have reached. But it must be a very stubborn believer in the dull creed that what has never been will never be, who thinks that there we must stop. The older among us remember the sound constantly in our ears of the 'Concert of Europe'. Clumsy, halting, and ineffective, it was not

wholly powerless, and it was significant of the current's trend. Along with it went attempts such as the Berlin Convention to bring the Native Races within the shelter of European corporate guarantees. In other words, to acknowledge a common European responsibility for world welfare.

But since then at what a pace things have moved! Colonies or Settlements building up, as in Australia, Africa, and Canada, into Dominions or Commonwealths; the British Empire yielding more and more of its prerogatives, but only to find itself 'enlarged' in a more complex unity better named a Commonwealth or else a thing which waits for a name. And then the War, with its extraordinary co-operative results — its unprecedented unities of command and the like in economic matters, in finance, in matters of supply and transport, and the whole habit of intimately interwoven actions with independent states.

‘Out of the eater has come forth meat.’

The War, in accustoming four great Powers and some twenty smaller ones to act together for a common cause, has been training its own antidote. And the increasing perception that such combinations must be used in the interests not only of the partners but of the world, gives to the combination double measure both of dignity and of *raison d'être*.

Thus we are brought, by tracing political developments which have all of them constructive promise,

to the patent need for a moral change which can supply binding power, and can quickly but steadily tune into a higher key of unity the current common-places, and the accepted conventions, and the accredited sentiments which have such power in human affairs.

Will any supply meet the demand? The answer, I submit, is to be found in the influence of the War upon human morale; its *creative* moral power. For profoundly uncertain and speculative as forecasts of the moral effects of this convulsion may be—and we may seem to be laying a path of progress as upon mists—it is at least clear that the War has brought out new capacities in character and new standards of value, in a way which we are all occupied in trying to understand. Among such changes, matters of commonest observation are increased sense of service to a cause, and increased satisfaction in the comradeship both of men and of nations.

But above all these is the revealed contrast, colossal and lurid, between two alternative Spirits or Ways. Against the Way which Germany (or the men who speak for her) has been persuaded to make her own, the way of selfishness growing ever more brutal and ruthless, the other Way, the way of unselfishness, of common service and sacrifice, stands out in all the dignity and effectiveness of a true ideal.

Now the principle thus recognized cannot be less than cosmopolitan in its reach and strength; the welfare of humanity comes out more and more distinctly

and inevitably as the one adequate object towards which the human conscience drives. The manner in which Germany has stiffened itself in conscious antagonism to milder ideals has been the testimony of a true instinct as to the real enemy which her ideals of force had to face. The final issue, Christ or Anti-christ, has been more distinctly seen, and the enthusiasm with which the victory has been greeted has sprung in its depths from the sense of what the real issue has been. That sense, burnt into us during the years of war, became articulate and undeniable when the great neutral Republic came in for the right under the guidance of its President.

It has been wonderfully dramatic that the man who had the handling of the machine should also have had the insight to see clearly and steadily what the action of his nation meant and must mean, and to discern that behind the supremely important crisis of national policy there was the even more important crisis of opportunity for a world-change. It is no disrespect to Mr. Roosevelt to illustrate this by contrast with what he could have done. He could have brought America in with a fine chivalry, an indomitable energy, a righteous rage. And no doubt he would have used its success kindly and well. But he would not have discerned, as his successor has, how the action of himself and of his people has done more than decide a situation, however prodigious; how it has inaugurated an epoch of which *the characteristic is*

that its horizons are ultimate. The world may never fill them out; there may be follies and weaknesses among those who mean to do well, and there will be abundance of treacheries and persistent sinister combinations of interests, intent on serving themselves at humanity's expense. But the ideal has been declared once for all.

It is perhaps to say the same thing in another way if we claim as a moral support of the League of Nations a quickened belief among us that there is behind the world a real meaning—a Purpose with power.

Without referring again to the German contrast, we may do well to remind ourselves that the international sphere has been, especially in our later knowledge of it, the region in which it was hardest to see more than the tangle of forces, the pulls and counter-pulls of a thousand powers, national, fiscal, commercial, of revenges and resentments and antipathies.

Across all this the crisis of the great War and the great Victory has cut like a flash of blinding revelation. It did matter, then, what the standards of diplomacy were! A condition in which states were assumed to act like the economic men of the old Political Economy, by the one motive of self-interest or self-protection, proved a rotten condition! You arrived that way at a terrific crisis which every one feared but no one could avert. The whole system shared responsibility for the result which its most

unscrupulous and violent member precipitated. On a vast scale the ancient Righteousness has been vindicated; and the lineaments and trend of an age-long purpose of love for humankind are seen, and men of goodwill answer to its challenge.

They will have no illusions of a sudden international Utopia. They will know how long and treacherous the path to be trodden is. They will be aware that the effort of humanity to follow it may, unless God avert, stagger down into failure.

But the opportunity is in a most true sense new. For never before have the issues been at once so simple and clear and yet so grandiose; never have antagonistic opportunist ideals been so discredited; never before has the way been so clearly revealed down which humanity might drive, delayed only by its own blind follies and grievous faults, towards the goal of a human brotherhood, existing to give fullest expression to the life in humanity, and to bring the variety of its gifts and products into the wealth and beauty which Unity secures. That is the League of Nations, of which such League as we may know will only be the green and crude shoot, yet that from which alone the summer's flower can spring to its perfection.

It will be plain to my readers that for myself the issues of the future (and implicitly of the League of Nations) depend on the consent of mankind to travel *Christo duce et auspice Christo*. Nor have I any doubt

that the security for this will be in the number of those who definitely follow His acknowledged Captaincy in sacrifice and service. But it is the Christian faith that in Christ all that is true in human wisdom, and effective in moral and spiritual capacity, comes to self-recognition. In the realm of principles and of the forces, economical, social, ethical, by which human affairs are leavened and moulded, Christ has also a secret sway, and leads, whether or no they are conscious of His leading, all men of goodwill.

EDW. WINTON.

