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184

WORLD PEACE
AND
AMERICAN
POLICY

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ONE SHILLING

A FOREWORD

How shall one of the great dramas of History be condensed to a few pages? The plot of it is unfolding before our eyes : its development is of profound importance to us all : the tale is still in the telling—yet, much that has already happened is oddly unfamiliar to many English people.

Certainly, there is more to tell than can be compressed into such a pamphlet as this : but by heavily inking-in the main outlines, and omitting most of the shading, one may hope to draw a sketch that shall be accurate within its narrow limits.

Thus, what follows is only an attempt to answer, for English readers, a question that has sprung to millions of English lips during recent years :—

' WHY IS AMERICA NOT A MEMBER OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, WHICH SHE DID SO MUCH TO FOUND ? '

Perhaps those who find the answer inadequate will be induced to enquire further for themselves. If they do, they will find much reward.

A. W.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. ISOLATION	5
II. WOODROW WILSON:—	
(i) A SPLIT MAJORITY	6
(ii) WAR: THE NEUTRAL	9
(iii) WAR: THE BELLIGERENT	13
(iv) THE PEACE-MAKER	14
III. OUTSIDE THE RING:—	
(i) THE EMPTY SEAT	20
(ii) THE TIDE TURNS	26
(iii) GROWTH	27
IV. THE PEACE PACT:—	
(i) PROFESSOR SHOTWELL	29
(ii) THE CONFERENCE THAT FAILED	30
(iii) MR. KELLOGG'S DIPLOMACY	35
(iv) PUBLIC OPINION	38
V. A FRESH START:—	
(i) ENTER MR. HOOVER	40
(ii) ENTER MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD	43
(iii) THE LONDON NAVAL CONFERENCE	45
(iv) ABOUT ' SANCTIONS '	46
VI. SOME CONCLUSIONS:—	
(i) GAINS AND LOSSES	51
(ii) LEARNING AND TEACHING	54
(iii) TOWARDS WORLD PEACE	56
(iv) WHAT NEXT ?	57

WORLD PEACE AND AMERICAN POLICY

I ISOLATION

WHERE shall we begin? With Columbus? Or the Pilgrim Fathers? Or George Washington? Or Abraham Lincoln?

Well, of course, all these play their parts in the modern story of America—just as William the Conqueror and Queen Elizabeth and Lord Nelson do in the drama of modern England. Their memory is the light by which, on the world-stage, the whole play is coloured.

American history, then, takes most of its colour from the fact that she has been *isolated*: historically, geographically, politically, isolated. To get away, and keep away, from Europe and all its works: not to meddle with Europe, and not to allow Europe to meddle with her: that is the coloured light in which we must see the play. Three thousand miles of the North Atlantic—a sea so stormy that it has a special load-line for ships all to itself—formed a physical barrier behind which there was time and space for the whole fabric of American life to be dyed with the idea of isolated self-sufficiency.

Englishmen, more easily than most peoples, can understand and sympathise! With no such giant barrier, we also used to glory in our 'splendid isolation': the policy of 'no alliances' and of 'no foreign entanglements'

was our own policy for generations, until it was ended by the Treaty with Japan so recently as 1902. Indeed, it was just this habit of refusing all obligations—of reserving our right to act as we might think fit in any future emergency—of binding ourselves to no commitments in advance—that earned for us in Europe our traditional nickname of '*la perfide Albion*.' Moreover, our short experience of military alliances and one-sided understandings, and of their results (1902-14), was not of a kind to encourage us to repeat similar experiments. So, if no other Nation can understand the American passion for isolation, England can—for it is so nearly our own.

II WOODROW WILSON (i) A Split Majority

Perhaps, the least arbitrary starting-point for this story is 1912: the year in which Woodrow Wilson became President.

The United States of America has been governed almost continuously by one political party ever since the Civil War (1861-65). The nature of the political abyss that separates the permanent Republican majority from the permanent Democratic minority does not here concern us: the distinction between them is not easily to be grasped by outsiders: what does matter is that the abyss is there, and that it is permanent. Democrats can very rarely hope to rule. How, then, came Woodrow Wilson, a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat, to the White House?

157
He reached office simply because of a split in the Republican camp. Two Republican candidates, ex-President Roosevelt and ex-President Taft, ran against each other: Wilson, the Democrat, romped home on a minority vote.

When a man has been elected President of the United States, he is invested with an extraordinary personal authority in conducting the external affairs of his country: the issues of Peace and War are in his hands to guide. His executive power is subject to only one limitation—his Treaties are not valid until they have been accepted by the Senate for his ratification. This is the feature of the Constitution of the United States which has, time and again, made it so difficult for other countries to do diplomatic business with her. Ambassadors, plenipotentiaries, Foreign Ministers, may negotiate and bargain, and end in some agreement with a President of the United States: after all the cards have been played, all concessions conceded, when the thing is finished, and the other parties are all committed, the Constitution of the United States enables the Senate to repudiate everything that its chief negotiator, its sole agent, has done. The Senators have no right to interfere during the discussions: the Lower House cannot interfere at all, unless the expenditure of money is involved: but the Senate has the absolute right to throw down the completed work.*

* See Note II at end

Underlying the many disagreements that there have been between President and Senate, there has been a deep political ground-swell: the Senate is jealous of the excessive powers placed in the President's hands, and would willingly cut them down—much as our Parliament has curbed the power of the Crown. This awkward cross-current, of course, reaches its maximum when the President and the Senatorial majority chance to be opposed in politics—which was the case during the latter part of Wilson's term of office.

If we are fully to appreciate the dramatic quality of much that is soon to follow, we must know something of the personality of the remarkable man who thus reached power greater of its kind than is wielded by other mortal hands on this earth. For Woodrow Wilson was more than a Democrat: he was also an Autocrat. While he was still President of Princeton University, he undertook to modernise the University Statutes, in face of an entrenched opposition that preferred the old to the new. It is said that, one day, while presiding over a somewhat stormy meeting of the governing body, he lost his temper, and with a thump of his fist on the table, demanded:— 'How do you expect me to make this into a democratic* University, *if you don't give me my own way?*'

True or false, the story tells us exactly what

* The word is used here, of course, in its ordinary, not in its special American political sense.

102
we need to know, in order to understand the way in which Wilson tried to do his work, and some of the reasons why his country rejected his policy.

(ii) War : The Neutral

Long after the pistol-shot at Sarajevo had fired the train of military alliances which exploded the piled ammunition-dumps of Europe, America continued to believe she could keep out of the trouble and remain *neutral*. Many influences combined to buttress this, the traditional policy of the country: the President's own temperament, the anti-British views so common among large sections of the original British stock, the mass of Irish hostility to English rule in Ireland, the many Germans, still potentially loyal to the Fatherland in its ordeal, however they might dislike Prussian methods. But Neutrality in the Great War was a status difficult to maintain, and especially so for the United States. Her claim, to continue trading unmolested with both sides alike, cut clean across the belligerent right to stop supplies needed by the enemy for waging war.* How, in such a life and death struggle, should Great Britain allow material essential to the enemy's resistance to sail untouched through the Fleet? Yet how shall a Neutral admit the right of either belligerent to cut off his commerce with the other, the Neutral himself being at war with neither, and on diplomatically good terms with both?

* For details of this historical problem, see the Union's pamphlet, No. 276, *The Freedom of the Seas*, price 6d.

The War was therefore not many days old when American protests began to be lodged against British naval activities. It was difficult, if not impossible, to keep the balance. Our methods, however vital to the conduct of naval war, enraged American opinion: so that there were many anxious weeks, during which only a capable and enlightened diplomacy averted consequences that might have been disastrous. A little more, and there might have been (*e.g.*) an embargo upon the export from America of all munitions of war to anybody.

We shall miss a point essential to the understanding of the story that follows if we do not realise that the oldest, the most dangerous, the only *real* quarrel between Great Britain and America was here ablaze.

If History, as taught in American schools, sometimes presents a garbled version of old Anglo-American relations, the history of the same subject, in British schools, is almost a minus quantity. Suppose we illustrate, by a true story. In the summer of 1917, a young British staff-officer arrived, on duty, at Washington: he was warmly greeted by his 'opposite number' in the American Army. 'I expect you'd like to see the sights?' said his host, 'You'd like to see Washington? You remember you burnt Washington.' 'Burnt *who?*' answered the astonished Briton, 'I thought we had never burned anybody except Joan of Arc.' One tells the story as reminder that Englishmen have forgotten that feat of British arms: every

109
American knows it. And how many of our people know the reason for that exploit? Here is the story, in brief: we were fighting Napoleon, blockading the French ports, cutting off French supplies: our naval activities irritated America to the pitch of declaring war upon us (1812). One of their expeditions burnt York—now Toronto—in reprisal, we sent a raid up to Washington, fired the President's mansion, and the Legislative buildings, did other damage, and withdrew. How long would it take us to forget it, if an American Army had once fired Westminster and Buckingham Palace? We have not yet quite forgotten Guy Fawkes—and he was an Englishman.

More than once, during the century that followed, this same problem of belligerent rights at sea, still unsolved, and then still insoluble, led to angry debate between America and ourselves. So, from September, 1914, onwards, the most dangerous of all Anglo-American controversies lowered for months like a thunder-cloud over our relations with each other.

Out of this came, in the summer of 1916, a development which, as we shall see, was later to produce surprising results. American determination to enforce her views upon both belligerents, to make them keep their hands off her commerce, crystallised out in the Naval Construction Act of that year, under which no less than sixteen new 'capital' ships (battleships

and battle-cruisers) were to be built, as well as a great number of smaller vessels.

Then came the Presidential Election of November, 1916, when Wilson, Democrat though he was, secured his second term of office on the 'slogan' that he had 'kept America out of the War.' One still calls to mind the seemingly endless succession of Presidential 'Notes' of protest to both belligerents, the once-famous speech about being 'too proud to fight.' Nevertheless, five months later, America was fighting.

Possibly—probably—the world-vortex of the War would have dragged America into it in any case: yet the actual occasion of her entry shows how important is this high political problem of 'neutral rights.' For there was an inevitable difference between the British and the German methods of interference with sea commerce: holding the 'Command of the Sea,' we could conduct our 'visit and search' with the minimum of inconvenience, whereas Germany, driven off the surface, had recourse to the submarine, a weapon which could operate with full effect only by sinking its victim. Hence, the German form of modern 'blockade' had to be much more objectionable than ours—and a humanitarian reaction against a policy which ordered that neutral vessels should be 'spürlos versenkt' was superadded to the natural American preference for democratic Britain as against the Kaiser's Germany. In the end, the American decision was in accord

1910
with the entire tradition that has here been condensed to tabloid form. Germany, making a gambler's throw, announced her intention to use her submarines 'ruthlessly': Wilson once more protested; the protest was ignored: and so, on April 6, 1917, America declared War.

Thus the change from neutrality to belligerency was occasioned by German methods of interfering with neutral shipping.

(iii) War: The Belligerent

This change of status produced the classic example of swing-over in a country's views about neutral rights. For, as Lord Grey has aptly pointed out (Birmingham, November 11, 1929):—

'It is not true to say that there is an American view and a British view, which are totally opposed to each other. We have each held different views, but the two views have been held by both nations. If we had each held a particular view at the same time, there would have been no trouble: the mischief is that we have held similar views at different times.'

From September, 1914, to April, 1917, we held different views: from April, 1917, to November, 1918, we held the same views—for the only time in our History! That is how it came about that America, once in the fight, adopted and extended all the drastic methods of conducting naval war, against which she had, until then, so vehemently protested. Her action enabled

Sea Power to reach its completest expression: enemy commerce practically ceased to exist. Those who knew witnessed a stupendous proof that Admiral Mahan was right in his famous doctrine that:—

‘ In the last analysis, every great war is won by the Power that controls the Sea.’

Yet the American contribution to that overwhelming Sea Power did not consist so much in the number of her warships as in the shutting-down of the last sources of supply.

Those new ‘ capital ’ ships could not be completed in time to participate; work on them was stopped, diverted to other and more urgently-needed war efforts. The 1916 naval programme was postponed—though it was destined to revive under strangely altered circumstances.

In January, 1918, came the President’s famous Message containing the ‘ Fourteen Points ’—the terms of the Peace he hoped to see. They helped, in the fullness of time, to bring the Armistice; the Armistice ended the fighting; and the Peace Conference ended the War.

(iv) The Peace-Maker

So the vortex had dragged America out of her cherished isolation; and, for a time, she occupied the very centre of the world’s stage.

President Wilson decided to keep his diplomatic negotiations in his own hands from start to finish. The decision was (perhaps dis-

191
astrously) in keeping with his temperament, for he was unwilling, or unable, to carry with him sufficient backing from his political opponents at home to ensure that the delegation should be a fully national one. If this was a defect, it was a defect of the man’s quality; like Martin Luther, ‘ he could do no other.’ None the less, his action in going to Paris was without precedent, and gave dire offence; ‘ Would-go Wilson,’ people began to call him.

Admittedly, the Treaty of Versailles bears all too little resemblance to the scheme that had been outlined in the ‘ Fourteen Points ’; yet President Wilson signed it. Why? Because he was determined that the rules of conduct of the Nations to each other—what is now the Covenant of the League—should be irrevocably a part of the Peace Treaty. To gain that supreme end, he was willing to sacrifice most of the rest of his programme; but, at that point, he would give way no longer. He would not postpone the signature of the Covenant, even by an hour; the end of the War and the beginning of the League must date to the same moment, and be confirmed by the same signatures to the same document. The League, once in being, must be trusted to undo the evils; it was permanent—they were temporary.

Who, now, would venture to say that Wilson was wrong? As General Smuts has said (Oxford, November 9, 1929):—

‘ If this unique opportunity had been missed, the Peace might have become an

unmitigated disaster. There is no saying when another chance might have occurred again.'

But when, in March, 1919, the President returned to America, with the draft of the Covenant in his pocket, he found that a little cloud, like a man's hand, had arisen on the domestic political horizon. A group of his party opponents had begun to organise, hoping to prevent what was, in their eyes, beginning to look too much like a resounding Democratic success. The full story has been told by the leader of the group, Senator Lodge, himself. If Wilson were to succeed, there was an unpleasant possibility that Democrats, not Republicans, might control American affairs for a generation to come. It was admitted that, at Easter 1919, the Senate would have ratified the Treaty and the League almost without opposition; Senator Lodge and his friends set themselves to create the opposition they desired.

They succeeded. But the nature—and the narrowness—of their victory is not appreciated on this side of the Atlantic.

The idea of the League was, in itself, far too popular for direct attack; it was, after all, an idea, and an ideal, too largely American in origin and development for that. Tactics, therefore, consisted in rousing, and exploiting, traditional fears and prejudices. The task was easy enough; great masses of Americans think of Europe and its hoary mutual hatreds exactly

197
as we in England think of the quarrelsome little Balkan States. Anyone who has ever crossed from San Francisco to New York knows how remote Europe seems to be—how meaningless the antagonisms of its little Nations, whose peoples can (and do) live happily enough together once they have escaped from Europe into America. So Republican speakers denounced the Covenant as a document which would compel America to take sides in all such petty quarrels—the League was a 'foreign entanglement'—it was contrary to the Monroe Doctrine—the Treaty was unjust, a mere cry of *vae victis*—the British Empire had six votes in the League, while America had only one. These were some of the 'grace-notes'; the 'motif' of the symphony was political (and personal) hostility to Woodrow Wilson. But deep below that, the bass accompaniment was the national sense of self-sufficiency—the passion to be let alone, and to let others alone. Again and again, the appeal for support in opposing the Treaty came back to the tradition of *isolation*.

Strong as were all these motives, they would not have sufficed to defeat the President, had not the leaders of the opposition made brilliant use of the most peculiar feature of the American Constitution (see p. 7). For Presidential action in foreign affairs requires not merely approval by the Senate, but approval *by a two-thirds majority*. Note, also, that in the Senate, each State of the Union has two votes, irrespective of its size or importance; hence, that a

minority—even though composed of Senators from the minor States of the Union—a minority of a minority—can effectively block the will of the majority.

Senator Lodge and his group therefore set themselves the task of collecting a miscellaneous minority of Senators; enough of them to checkmate Wilson's proposals. A really extraordinary campaign followed, for the details of which Senator Lodge's own account ought to be consulted. The President tried to counter by touring the country in person. In the middle of his arduous journey, already weakened by his years of office (and such years!) he broke down, paralysed. There was none to take his place; his autocracy had been too supreme; when he fell, his policy was left leaderless.

None can say whether he could have succeeded in his tremendous effort during 1919-20; perhaps the sound sense of the League idea would have so commended itself to the people that they would have overridden his opponents—perhaps the more he said, the more the opposition to himself and his party might have grown. But what everyone *can* say is that, in every other democratic country (to say nothing of the rest) he would have won, and won handsomely. Between November, 1919, and March, 1920, an astonishing tangle of resolutions and reservations were brought up by Senator Lodge's team, a mass so complex

143
that, even now, one has real difficulty in trying to determine the meaning of the many votes that were taken. As an extremely famous American has said:—

'Our Senate suffers from a reservation complex. If the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments were submitted to it, there would be at least two reservations to each clause.'

In spite of all this, when the final stage was reached, the Treaty of Versailles, Covenant and all, received a substantial majority of the votes. Eighty-four of the 96 Senators took part; 49 of them voted for the League, 35 against it. Elsewhere, this would have been conclusive in favour of America joining the League; in America, it was conclusive against. The majority was not a two-thirds majority.

One likes, now, to know that the broken President lived long enough to hear that his great ideal had only been deferred, not wrecked. During 1923, his friend, Dean Robbins, of New York, told him that many Americans, once hostile, were beginning to speak better of the League. Surprisingly, Wilson observed that he was *not sorry he had broken down*; because, he said:—

'If I had succeeded, it would have been a great personal and political triumph; but, as things are, the American people *will think their own way through, and that will be better.*'

Lying there, helpless, his policy in seemingly hopeless defeat, Woodrow Wilson's real greatness rose higher than it had been even at the summit of his fame. We shall see, as we read on, that his vision is already being justified.

III

OUTSIDE THE RING

(i) The Empty Seat

Just before the Senate had rejected the League, a great American novelist, Owen Wister (he who wrote *The Virginian*) had observed that:—

'We are coupled to the company of the Nations like a car in the middle of the train, only more permanently, for we cannot uncouple.'

What happened, when America tried to uncouple?

The first effect was, of course, a staggering blow to the new-born League of Nations. Even still, ten years afterwards, one sometimes wonders how the League managed to survive this unexpected defection of its chief begetter, its least war-damaged member.

But it did!

There is no room here, even for a paragraph, on the early struggles of the League, tempting though it is to sketch, for instance, the French rush back into military alliances that followed upon the rejection by America (and consequently by England) of the proposed treaties of guarantee. We are concerned here only with the American reactions; and these will be found

199
to contain a remarkably interesting story of world-politics.

The men who had so successfully organised President Wilson's defeat, not unnaturally took it for granted that, because America had decided to stay out, Wilson's League was automatically dead. They knew, however, that although 'the' League might be extinct, 'a' League was an immensely popular ideal all over the United States. The new Administration therefore proposed, through the mouth of President Harding (April 12, 1921) that a new 'Association' of Nations should be formed. It was, of course, to be free from the defects (whatever they were) of the first; though no one knows just what the differences would have been, for, by that time, the League was already more than a year old; 42 States had joined it; and no State at all offered to join the new 'Association.' Thus Harding found that even the United States was not big enough to run a successful League of Nations with itself as sole Member. It was his, not Wilson's, scheme that died, still-born. In truth, he could offer little inducement to anyone to become a Member; on the initiative of one American President, a League had been formed which, afterwards, America repudiated. Why should any State join another League proposed by another American President? What guarantee was there that the second institution might not likewise be repudiated? Better to use the one that actually existed, than take the risk of such another catastrophe!

This idea, to establish an acceptable (because Republican) alternative to Geneva, was the deeper political reason for calling the famous Washington Conference of 1921. Yet the proximate occasion of it was something much more obviously urgent. *The U.S. Naval Programme of 1916 was maturing.* When the war ended, the workmen took their tool-chests back to the ships whose completion had been deferred because the Allies had more urgent needs. Meanwhile, the British Navy had been scrapping its war-worn veterans, demobilising* to the extent of nearly 2,000,000 tons. In the result, people rather suddenly realised that a costly and disastrous race in naval armaments was about to begin, unless something was done about it, and done quickly. The United States Naval Budget for 1921 stood at £94,000,000; Japan had taken fright, and was spending £54,500,000; both were preparing for rapid increases in these already huge figures. Great Britain must have been driven to a similar, or greater, programme. Thus, two years after Peace had been declared, the victorious Allies seemed to have condemned themselves to build super-Nelsons and ultra-Hoods, at perhaps £10,000,000 apiece, with no known function except to fight each other. 'Feelers' were put out: America called the Conference.

The diplomatic technique of the Washington Conference was extremely different from that

* There is a delicate distinction, not always observed in discussing this issue, between 'demobilisation' and 'reduction of armaments.'

195
which the League was already building up at Geneva. It was diplomacy by surprise. Nobody knew what the American Government intended to suggest, until Mr. Charles Evans Hughes fairly staggered the assembled delegations by proposing that no new 'capital' ships should be laid down for at least ten years, and that all those, now building, or authorised, should be scrapped. In return, he called for limitation of size of vessels and an agreed 'ratio' of naval strength as between the five naval Powers. Much, very much, more was proposed; a programme which we now know to have been almost fantastically ambitious, was sketched out, to cover all forms of armament.

The only sections in which full agreement was reached were (i) the giant 'capital' ships—weapons which nobody could really afford; and (ii) certain technical, but extremely important, diplomatic problems in the Pacific and the Far East. Yet, on the long-range view, the American naval initiative of 1921 was an extremely significant event. Never before in world history has a Great Power, placed in an economic and political position in which it could grasp supremacy if it would, refused to do so.* Moreover the reduction in numbers and cost, and the limitation in size, of the world's warships, which was effected by the Washington Treaty, was drastic—even startling. The American share of the general reduction began with fifteen ships, *upon which no less than*

* See Note III at end.

£66,000,000 had already been spent; two of them were battleships which had already been launched, seven were battleships on the stocks, six were battle-cruisers on the stocks. There were also seventeen other ships of various sizes for which appropriations had been passed by Congress, but on which work had not yet actually started—the 'blue-print navy' as somebody called them. When all allowances have been made, public or private, why so unprecedented a scheme was proposed by the United States, it remains true that no Nation has ever given so large a proof, political and financial, of the bona fides of her intentions, as America did when she scrapped *new* ships to the value of £66,000,000.

The wider effects, even though only partial and limited, were not negligible. The great Naval Powers lowered the fleets (built, building and projected) by a total of 1,644,839 tons. If valued at roughly £200 per ton, this means a saving in first cost of some £325,000,000. The seventy ships, had they been built, would each have required most of £500,000 a year to keep in commission. With an estimated 'life' of (say) twenty-five years, we reach a total saving of something like £1,000,000,000 as the credit item on the balance-sheet of the Conference.

But the Treaty of Washington did not succeed in eliminating naval rivalries. The big 'Treaty cruisers' of 10,000 tons, left unlimited in numbers, proved to be an irritant as effective as, if less expensive than, the 'capital' ships.

196

Neither did the Conference succeed in supplanting the League. The statesmen who attended it saw more hope for dealing with the actual difficulties in the League, without America, than in America, without the League.

In point of fact, the relationship just at that time between Washington and Geneva, was as quaint an episode as can be found in history. Washington pretended that the League did not exist. It would not correspond with Geneva—would not so much as formally acknowledge receipt of a registered letter from the Secretariat. The Geneva correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News* wrote (September 5, 1921):—

'Everybody here is convinced that the aim of the present American Administration is to wreck the League, if possible, by refusing to co-operate therewith even in the most laudable humanitarian tentatives.'

But the same writer went on to say:—

'The result is that the League is merely strengthened in its determination to preserve its own existence.'

And that is what mattered to mankind.

During all this curious time, while an American Government was ostentatiously boycotting the embodiment of a great American ideal, other Americans, private citizens, were giving, and giving royally, in brains, and service, and money, to the new world-institution.

(ii) The Tide Turns

As datum-line from which to measure the advance which we are now to see taking place, here is the story of the very first direct contact that ever took place between Washington and Geneva.

Holland and the United States were both parties to an old pre-war Convention on the Drug Traffic. Soon after the League was established, the Dutch Government handed over their small share of this piece of international business to be dealt with by the League Secretariat. Shortly afterwards, the American Government had occasion to write to Holland on some matter connected with this Opium Convention—the letter was passed on from The Hague to Geneva, dealt with, and answered. Further discussion was needed; but Geneva was not on Washington's map. So, for a time, an absurd three-cornered correspondence ensued—Washington, The Hague, Geneva—until some one (who deserves, but has not received fame) issued instructions that official letters should be allowed to go direct to the League. A few days later, the Secretariat mail-bag was found to contain no less than *sixteen* letters from the Government of the United States!

The ebb-tide had ended; the flow had begun.

By 1923, the League had already done so much obviously good and necessary work that it could no longer be ignored. Significantly, the

197
irresistible force by which the League, like a vast magnet, first drew an official American across the Atlantic, was solid, practical work for the good of mankind at large—work that (superficially) bore no relation to any political or international theories. It was to attend the League's Health Commission as his country's 'official observer' that Surgeon-General Robert Blue arrived in Geneva in September, 1923. He was the first of a procession that has grown steadily in numbers and importance ever since—a procession that is plainly destined never to stop. By 1927, the United States was officially represented on all the League Commissions and Committees, save those few (important as they are) which she still feared might involve her in so-called 'European politics' or in League 'sanctions.'

(iii) Growth

Meanwhile, things were happening, both in Europe and in America, that were to bring about great changes.

(a) During the first years of the League's career, it bore far too close a resemblance to a League of Victors. This tended to range against it two large sections of American opinion: the German-Americans and the Irish-Americans. The first were hostile for reasons sufficiently obvious—the League seemed to them to be a mere Franco-British device for executing (the word has just the

right flavour) the Treaty of Versailles. The Irish group believed that President Wilson had 'let them down' by failing to secure 'self-determination' for Ireland at the Peace Conference. Neither group could see any benefit to be had from the League. But the reasons for both views began to melt away from the time when Ireland, first (1923), and then Germany (1926) joined the League as full members in their own right. It became futile for people to rail at an institution of which their homelands were respected and loyal members.

(b) In America itself, there grew up, during these same years, an extremely interesting movement for the (so-called) 'Outlawry of War,'*—anti-League, it is true, in its origin, but offering a fresh idea for organising Peace to the multitudes of good American citizens who wished also to be good world-neighbours. Uncountable thousands—millions—of consciences were sore to watch the rest of the world struggling to develop a system of peaceable co-operation *without America*; and American wealth, American prosperity, were all the time bringing the United States into ever-increasing contact with the rest of the world—breaking down that physical and mental isolation, building up mutual dependence. The world-wide process, from Contact through Rivalry to Co-operation, was irresistibly at work.

*See, for a commentary on this, the Union's pamphlet, No. 271, 3d., *Outlawry of War*, by Mr. Philip Kerr (Marquis of Lothian).

1978
IV

THE PEACE PACT

(i) Professor James Shotwell

So, by the end of 1926, the stage seemed to be set for something to happen.

We did not have to wait long.

It would seem that a great movement can, for once, be traced to the one human brain in which it germinated. Professor James T. Shotwell is a Canadian, on the staff of Columbia University. He had had much to do with the evolution of the League idea, and personally knew many in high positions on both sides of the Atlantic. Professor Shotwell, it is believed, was the first to suggest to M. Briand that a treaty of permanent peace between France and America would form a very splendid memorial of the Tenth Anniversary of America's entry into the Great War. M. Briand welcomed the proposal: on the exact date, April 6, 1927, he observed, informally, that:—

'France would be willing to subscribe publicly with the United States to any mutual engagement tending to outlaw war . . . as between these two countries. *The renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy* is a conception already familiar to the signatories of the Covenant of the League of Nations. . . . Every engagement entered into by the United States in this spirit towards another Nation such as France would contribute

greatly . . . to broaden and strengthen the foundations on which the international policy of Peace is being erected.'

The phrase that has been italicised above is the first appearance of the words that were so soon to become famous as Article I of the 'Kellogg Pact.'

Sufficiently interesting unofficial developments took place during the next ten weeks to warrant M. Briand, on June 20, in formally repeating his original suggestion to Washington.

At this point we must pause; not to digress, but to follow the changes in another part of the same dramatic story. The Sea, which divides and unites the Nations, is the real stage on which the play is being enacted: a storm from the North Atlantic now blows in upon the actors.

(ii) The Conference that Failed

The Washington Conference (see p. 22) had set a maximum limit to the size, though not to the numbers, of cruisers. This maximum, 10,000 tons, of course promptly became the standard. During 1924, as Mr. Winston Churchill has delicately put it:—

'The Admiralty convinced Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's first Administration that the immediate construction of five cruisers of the largest permitted size was necessary, and the Conservative Government followed, year after year, with smaller but still substantial replacement programmes.'

1499

The upshot of this was that rivalry had merely been transferred from 40,000-ton battleships to 10,000-ton cruisers: a cheaper, but not much less dangerous form of armaments race. Comparing modern cruisers of 29 knots and over; by the beginning of 1927 Great Britain had 40 (just under 200,000 tons) built, 11 (just over 100,000 tons) building, and three (30,000 tons) authorised: while the comparable American figures were ten (75,000 tons) built, two (20,000 tons) building, and three (30,000 tons) authorised. Total British cruiser tonnage, of this classification: 332,290—to which the Australian ships should be added. Total American corresponding tonnage: 125,000.

The trouble about these figures was this: American opinion—in the street, if not in the State Department at Washington—had assumed that when Mr. Balfour accepted the ratio of equality in naval strength, he had meant equality all round. Here is the critical passage in the speech which Mr. Balfour had made at the Conference:—

'The Government of the country which I represent is in the fullest and heartiest sympathy with the policy which the United States have brought to us for our consideration. . . . Taking . . . the battleships themselves, and the vessels necessary and auxiliary to a battle fleet, we think the proportion between the various countries is acceptable.'

The British view of this was that while the battleships, with their necessary auxiliaries, together forming the battle fleets, were to be strictly matched, other ships, patrols for trade routes and the like, were unaffected by the Treaty.

The large misunderstanding between these two readings of the naval ratio produced the result condensed into the figures just quoted. Many Americans, who supposed that we had agreed to a full 'parity,' observed that our tonnage of heavy modern cruisers was nearly three times as great as theirs, while we were building, just then, five times as fast, and so found themselves critical of our version of 'sympathy with the policy which the United States had brought to us for our consideration.' An insistent demand grew up for a completer form of 'parity.'

There is no need here to quote from the many speeches on both sides of the Atlantic which tended to exacerbate the rivalry. A leading protagonist of the American 'Big Navy' group was Mr. Fred Britten, hence the dispute about cruiser-tonnages was nicknamed the 'war between Fred and Great'!

We can now see why President Coolidge decided, early in 1927, to renew the discussions which had failed in 1921, and try for an agreed ratio of naval strength in categories other than the 'capital' ships. A small point illustrates the change that had been taking place during the

200
intervening six years; the Conference, though not under League auspices, was called at Geneva. The anti-Geneva complex was weakening.

The technical details of the Coolidge Conference do not here concern us; almost all we require to know is (i) that the debate between Great Britain and America presupposed the political possibility of war between them—although the premise would seem never to have been mentioned; and (ii) that the Conference broke down.

On the first of these points; the mere fact that America stood outside the ring of States pledged to a definite code of good behaviour to each other, was in itself a difficulty. But the political risk had been, unexpectedly, rendered greater by the provisions of Art. XVI (i) of the Covenant, which call for the economic boycott of a Covenant-breaker.

Suppose, at any time prior to August, 1928, that the Covenant had been flagrantly violated? The League Council might have felt compelled to invoke this Article. If so, Great Britain might well have been faced with a serious dilemma; had our share of the boycott included a blockade by sea of the offender, it would, almost inevitably, have involved helping to cut off his commerce with the United States. Would America have recognised the new 'police' function of such international action? Would she have, even tacitly, co-operated? Should we have kept our Covenant pledge and taken the

risk of trouble with Washington? Or should we have permitted supplies essential to the waging of an illegal war to sail unmolested through our Fleet? Nobody knew the answers to such questions. And nobody who knew the history of Anglo-American relations on the subject liked the prospects. Thus, the American rejection of the League had left us in a special quandary of our own—because part of the League's own mechanism for discouraging war looked like creating Anglo-American disagreement upon the only issue that has ever been really serious between us (see pp. 9-13).

On the second point: the reactions after the breakdown* were strange and interesting. Each side, of course, blamed the other for the failure; both were angry and irritated, and were stung to an additional annoyance with each other by the subterranean and egregious Mr. Shearer. In *America*, the Navy Department drafted a Bill calling for the construction of no less than 71 new ships, to cost £150,000,000. In *Great Britain*, Lord Cecil resigned from the Government in order to mobilise public opinion towards reduction in armaments; and Mr. Baldwin's Government did not increase, but reduced, our current construction programme. In this way, a suicidal naval armaments race was averted.

* An Australian commentator has observed that naval experts were expected to solve a political question, and said that 'one might as well expect to settle the question of freedom of conscience and religious toleration by a conference between a Fundamentalist and an Irish Jesuit.'

257
Mr. Winston Churchill's comment (September 5), after the breakdown, would appear to confirm the view that political, not technical, difficulties were the obstacle:—

'... No basis for agreement existed for the Conference at Geneva to meet upon. The United States could not be expected to consent to embody in a treaty anything short of numerical "parity," and we could not consent to embody in a treaty any form of "parity" that did not take into consideration the special conditions of these overcrowded islands.'

At about this time, someone said that in America 'though one should speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not Parity, one's voice would be as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal'!

(iii) Mr. Kellogg's Diplomacy

Now to resume the story of M. Briand's proposal (p. 30). The reason it had vanished from sight ever since June, is because Washington had given no hint, during all the intervening months, as to the nature of its reply—not even whether it intended to reply at all.

Then, on December 28, just a fortnight after the Naval Bill had been tabled, Mr. Kellogg sent his answer:—

'It has occurred to me that the two Governments . . . might make a more signal contribution to World Peace, by joining in an effort to obtain the adherence of all the principal Powers of the World.'

An invitation to a tête-à-tête between two of the oldest friends on the political map had been accepted, not only by the invited guest, but also, by him, on behalf of everybody else as well—who had *not* been invited. Here was another case of diplomacy by surprise.

The foundations upon which Mr. Kellogg was building were, of course, supplied chiefly by the movement for the 'Outlawry of War.' His sudden, unexpected extension of the original French idea was none too popular in Paris. French comments grew anxious, filled with complexities and draft reservations of a kind that, in Washington, seemed to spoil the pristine simplicity of the plan. In America, as in our Dominions, the New World is beginning to look upon war as a damnable institution which ought to be utterly abolished; in Old Europe, we still tend to think of it as a dangerous surgical operation that may sometimes have to be performed.*

At the beginning of 1928 there was a real risk that this difference in view between the New World and the Old might prove an abyss large enough to engulf the whole scheme.

Once more, however, American diplomacy sprung a surprise. Mr. Kellogg addressed himself on April 13, 1928, to the other Great Powers—ourselves, Germany, Italy and Japan—enquiring for opinions upon his ambitious project. Germany accepted, by return of post, on April 27. Our reply, delayed by the necessity

* See also below, p. 52 *et seq.*

207
for inter-Imperial discussion, did not go until May 19. It was an extremely interesting document; for Sir Austen Chamberlain built a bridge between France and America:—

'After making a careful study of the text contained in Your Excellency's Note, and of the amended text suggested in the French Note, His Majesty's Government feel convinced that there is no serious divergence between the effect of these two drafts.'

Looking back over the full story of the Pact (April 6, 1927, to August 27, 1928) one wonders whether success could have been achieved without this diplomatic bridge. Criticised as it was from both ends, it none the less provided a way by which the two ends could meet. On June 23 the American general reply was circulated to all the States concerned.

On August 27, 1928, these first fifteen States* signed the Pact in Paris, amid a blaze of publicity from cameras, 'movies' and wireless. On the same date, official invitations to adhere were sent to forty-eight other States, and, a day or two later, to Russia. All of them, with the exception of a couple of South American Republics, accepted. Formal ratifications followed; the last of them, that of Japan, was deposited on July 24, 1929. Practically the whole of civilised mankind had solemnly renounced war 'as an instrument of national policy,' and had under-

*These were (i) the six Great Powers, (ii) the three other (so-called) 'Locarno' Powers, (iii) the six British Dominions.

taken never to seek the solution of a dispute save by peaceful means. The keystone of the old 'militarist' arch had been removed; the ancient 'sovereign right' to declare war at one's own pleasure had been formally abandoned; *and the United States was within a ring of Nations, bound to each other by a public code of neighbourly good behaviour.*

Thus rapidly did a great and simple idea attain success. An important part of the American 'Outlawry of War' programme was taken up into the international law of the world.

(iv) Public Opinion

This tale of the Kellogg Pact has carried us on with a rush far past the odd situation in which Washington had found itself at the New Year of 1928. We must turn back (p. 35) and pick up the dropped thread.

That Naval Bill had been tabled by one Department of the Government, just when another Department of the same Government was holding out proposals of all-round Peace. American cartoonists were not the only people who wondered which end of the dog to believe—the end that wagged or the end that growled.

American public opinion provided the answer to the question. Here are the actual words of Mr. Butler, Chairman of the House Committee on Naval Affairs:—

'In all my experience in Congress, covering a period of thirty-two years, during which I have been a Member of the

753
Naval Committee, I have never known such widespread protest to be registered against any measure under consideration. Letters and telegrams, all voicing opposition to the Bill we have now before us, come from all over the United States. They represent all classes. . . .'

This deluge of opposition had a marked effect. The Naval Bill was cut down from 71 ships to 17. The Peace Pact was pressed onwards. Later, the Naval Bill, even as reduced, was shelved. Not very often has there been so clear and striking an instance of what public opinion can do to direct the policy of a great Government towards the path which the people prefer.

Yet, strangely enough, the same international naval debate was soon to provide another, and an equally striking, example of the same power. In an attempt to break the deadlock on Disarmament which had brought the work of the League's Preparatory Commission to a standstill, Great Britain and France, during the summer of 1928, discussed proposals for mutual agreement on certain difficult points. When the terms of the proposals became known, their effect was, for a time, disastrous. Coming, as they did, just at the moment when the Pact of Paris was being prepared for signature, they persuaded many Americans that Europe was 'double-crossing' the United States; and, in particular, that Great Britain was trying to put through a private deal by which she would

obtain limitation of precisely those types of warship which America wanted, and to retain, unlimited, the types which suited Great Britain. The Franco-British naval plan of 1928 was, in truth, barely distinguishable from that which America had rejected at the Coolidge Conference in 1927. But, from the day it was first mentioned (July 20) until, months afterwards, its terms were officially made public, it met with vehement disapproval from almost every section of the British public; regardless of party allegiances, Conservative united with Liberal and Labour organs of opinions to condemn it.

Thus, as in America during the spring, so in England during the autumn, public opinion compelled a great Government to turn from a path by which the people did not wish to travel. Our Government dropped all further debate on the subject—though not before some harm had been done. The American cruiser Bill was taken down off the shelf, and became law (February 5, 1929) just three weeks after the Senate had ratified the Pact of Paris.

V

A FRESH START

(i) Enter Mr. Hoover

In November, 1928, the rule of President Calvin Coolidge was drawing to a close, and Herbert Hoover was elected to reign in his stead. A new and powerful personality came

204
to the centre of the stage. President Hoover is a *Quaker*, with all that community's dislike of violence; he is a *Republican*, and therefore on the 'right' side of the domestic political house; he is, above all, an *Engineer*, with an unequalled record for successful large-scale organisation, both at home and abroad. With such a man in office, what kind of action would one expect? His term (only four years certain, only eight years at most) would seem likely to be distinguished by quick action, by concentration upon first things first, and by efforts limited to those factors of international peace which the man could himself directly influence.

Those who looked for speed and decision in the new handling of American foreign policy were not disappointed. In his Inaugural Address (March 4, 1929) Mr. Hoover said that:—

'I covet for this Administration a record of having further contributed to the cause of Peace.'

Before the following month was out, his spokesman, Mr. Hugh Gibson, was addressing the League of Nations' Preparatory Commission for the future Disarmament Conference. Basing his case squarely upon the Kellogg Pact, he transformed the prospects of that session. Here are a few of the salient passages from a notable speech:—

'If our solemn promises in the Pact mean anything, there is no justification for a war-taxed peace.'

Selecting the *naval* part of the problem, he cut deep with the challenge:—

‘ Let us ask ourselves honestly what these establishments are for ? ’

‘ We need no exact balance of ships and guns which can be based only on the idea of conflict. . . . What is really wanted is a commonsense agreement, based on the idea that we are going to be friends, and settle our problems by peaceful means.’

After which, he tabled the quite unexpected proposal to try for a formula by which to measure the relative strengths of navies—the now famous ‘ yardstick.’

Already we seem to see a ‘ Hoover touch ’ in this kind of diplomacy. Advice, no matter how excellent, from a President of the United States, cannot directly affect (*e.g.*) the number of trained reserves to be maintained by the French Army; but an American President can directly influence the function, number and size of American warships. Hence, all such problems as French reserves are set aside, attention is directed to Navies.

Lord Cushendun, on behalf of the British Government, warmly welcomed the fresh initiative; and the Commission adjourned to enable the Governments to examine the new proposals. President Hoover had broken the deadlock in the League’s own Commission on Armaments. It is worth turning back to p. 26 in order to measure the advance that had been made in eight years.

(ii) Enter Mr. Ramsay MacDonald

The hazard of our General Election (May 30) transferred to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald the immense responsibility of conducting, as our Prime Minister, perhaps the most important discussions in which this country has ever engaged. Is that too sweeping an assertion? [If anyone thinks so, one would ask him to estimate the value of establishing a system whereby the United States may be enrolled in the organised joint effort to *render war useless*. The attempt to do so is one in which, from the nature of the case, Great Britain must take the lead; no other Member of the League is in a position to discuss with authority, the problems of Sea Power. Once more, we find that our drama is being played out on the Ocean.

When the time comes for us to look back upon the events of 1929–30 in their historical perspective, we shall probably see reason to rejoice that, from the beginning of the present act in the play, both sections of the English-speaking world were led by men of whom neither was necessarily committed to views expressed during earlier stages of the debate. For such views, as we have seen, were conditioned by the political possibility of war between the parties; so that, once the ‘ Kellogg Pact ’ had ruled out that possibility, the political framework of the problem was fundamentally changed. That is why it is fortunate that both sides, during 1929, secured the advantage of fresh leadership.

No one, as yet, needs to be reminded of the landmark in History which was set up by Mr. MacDonald's visit to Mr. Hoover. Enough, here, to quote the personal message sent to him by King George:—

'On the eve of your journey, I wish you God-speed. It is a departure that will be surrounded by good wishes, for it is a contribution to those happy relations between two great peoples which must be an article of faith among all men of goodwill.'

October, 1929, is likely to be a permanently memorable date in the story of a world struggling towards Peace organised through commonsense and justice. This essay has already had occasion to stress the effect of public opinion upon public policy; the reception accorded to the friendly meeting between the two Heads of the English-speaking communities left no room for doubt that they were doing exactly what their peoples wanted them to do.

On October 9, Premier and President issued a Joint Statement. It was studiously, deliberately, vague; but it contained passages of the utmost significance. For example:—

'Our conversations have been largely confined to the mutual relations of the two countries *in the light of the situation created by the signature of the Peace Pact.*'

And again:—

'We approach the old historical problems from a new angle, and in a new

206
atmosphere. . . . These problems have changed their meaning and character, and their solution in ways satisfactory to both countries has become possible.'

The Peace Pact was beginning to bear fruit. The responsible Departments, alike in Washington and Whitehall, were being set a new task; in the words of the *Times* (October 15) it was becoming their duty:—

'To explore and to measure the obsolescence of contending principles *that have quietly come adrift from reality.*'

(iii) The London Naval Conference

These Anglo-American conversations had so far advanced the prospects of wider agreements, that Great Britain decided to invite the five parties to the Treaty of Washington to meet again. Such a Conference was due to take place, under the Treaty itself, before the autumn of 1931; the movement of events had made it seem worth calling a year or so ahead of time.

Useless to attempt here a review of the three months' session. To tell the story, and appraise the effects, would be to put this pamphlet out of scale. Yet, as first-fruits of the Kellogg Pact, and as marking the present stage of international development, the Conference had features so interesting that a few of them must be summarised.

It *succeeded*, where all previous efforts had failed (we have described some of them here), in stabilising completely the major sea-forces

of the world—eliminating all competitive building and all the irritant suspicion that accompanies every ‘armaments race’—as between ourselves, America and Japan; so setting both a precedent and an example that are bound to react favourably upon the wider problem of armaments as a whole. It *failed* to secure the adhesion of the two other parties, France and Italy. Battleships reduced in number, their replacement postponed, but not abolished; limitation, but not reduction, in cruiser tonnage; an Anglo-American ratio so near to ‘parity’ that hostile critics on both sides claim that their own side has been outwitted into accepting ‘inferiority,’ submarines ‘limited’ (to an unduly high tonnage) and ‘humanised’ (God save the mark!). How came it that so large an advance was not still larger? Why could not five co-signatories of the Kellogg Pact register a 100% success?

(iv) About ‘Sanctions’

For answer, one must set out, in opposition to each other, the essentials of two conflicting theories as to the way a peaceable world should be organised; a problem of world-politics still unsolved.

How shall Peace be ensured? Those who are familiar with the fascinating story of the conception, birth and growth of the League and its Covenant, know that this is a debate which was opened before the League was born.

Here are the two views:—

(1) As recently as last September, at the Tenth Assembly, M. Briand lamented the ‘lacune grave, qu’il faut tôt ou tard combler’—the ‘great gap, which must sooner or later be filled’; the absence of ‘un bras seculier, pour punir celui qui susciterait guerre’—a ‘*secular arm to punish him who provokes war.*’ The phrase suggests mediæval theories of the relationship between Church and State—theories the practice of which have left behind them an unpleasant memory to this day.

(2) Contrast M. Briand’s view with that of Mr. Stimson, President Hoover’s Secretary of State. In his Memorandum (November 18, 1929) recommending that America should now join the World Court, Mr. Stimson points out that no people have greater reason for confidence:—

‘In this judicial method of developing the law of conduct between separate States’

than Americans who have seen their own Supreme Court ‘wisely and flexibly’ at work under the Compact of 1787:—

‘*With no other power of sanction than the mandate of such a compact and the force of public opinion.*’

France, logical in her belief that peace must be enforced if necessary by arms, has never ceased to press for definite ‘guarantees’ of

'security'; she heads what one might fairly call the European Continental School of thought on the subject. America, psychologically free from the European 'war-complex,' has steadily refused to commit herself, in advance, to any positive action as against a breaker of rules. She will not (perhaps, under her Constitution, she cannot) tie her hands in respect of future action under unforeseeable circumstances.

Is there any middle course between these extremes? Great Britain, true to national type, takes her position just about half-way between the two logical ends. Unlike 'isolationist' America, this country is committed, up to the hilt, to mutual consultation for the effective prevention of war; unlike 'legalistic' France, public opinion here shows little sign of accepting automatic devices for finding out and punishing the breaker of rules.

Yet it ought surely to be possible to work out an acceptable international policy in this supreme question of War: a policy which shall aim at *stopping hostilities* and not at punishing the culprit, not at forcibly imposing an award, still less at standing aloof from an obvious duty to civilised order in the world. Perhaps this may be the essentially British middle-course contribution to ordered Peace.

Now we are in a position to appreciate the political meaning of the French Statement of February 14, under which the existing French

200
Navy was to be substantially* increased, but which ended with the vital sentence that France remained:—

'Ready to consider favourably any form of agreement for a mutual guarantee of security the effect of which would be to transform the absolute requirements of each Power into relative requirements.'

So straightforward a statement on a great issue of international politics hardly needs further simplification. On the answer depended the question whether the Treaty was to be a Five-Power or a Three-Power success. Was America willing to take part in some Pact of Consultation? Was Great Britain prepared to think of a 'Mediterranean Locarno'? Would either or both of the English-speaking Nations move towards the French position? Would some such movement, short of complete acceptance, be inducement enough to France to modify her programme?

The discussions which ensued were of exceptional interest. Mr. Kellogg, commenting upon his own Pact, observed that:—

'It is not necessary for this Treaty to contain provisions for consultation in the event of threatened hostilities. *Such consultation is inherent in the Treaty.*'

* Increased to 724,479 tons. But from what present size? The Italian and the British reckonings differed extraordinarily from that of the French. The *Times* estimate of the French Navy in 1929 was 418,000 tons. The French Memorandum gave the figure as 681,808. Navies are not easy to count! Doubtless obsolete ships and projected programmes created the discrepancy.

The American Delegation formally stated that:

'America had no objection to entering a consultative pact as such. . . . It will not, however, enter into any treaty where there is a danger of its obligations being misunderstood as involving a promise to render military assistance. . . .'

Consult if the war-clouds lower? Certainly; but America refused to buy the reduction of French naval 'requirements' with a Pact to consult. There is movement—there is even a hint as to possible future negotiations—but not one inch towards the French thesis. In like manner, the interpretation of Article XVI came in for a keen examination, public as well as private, by British authorities, both inside and outside the Conference. Here, too, it was made abundantly clear that no further military commitments, no obligatory, automatic, action, would be considered, even as the price of a complete Five-Power Treaty. The Conference 'adjourned'—just a year after Mr. Gibson's speech that started the negotiations (see p. 41)—with the handsome record of accomplishment already recorded, and with a prospect of more to follow—yet incomplete.

Here, for the moment, our drama ends; but at the end of a scene, not of the play.

VI

SOME CONCLUSIONS

(i) Gains and Losses

Are any morals to be gathered from the story?

The developments of the last ten years, sketched here in such brief outline, prove that the United States cannot permanently isolate herself from the successful efforts of the rest of civilised mankind to manage their international affairs on more sensible lines. In less than nine years, we have watched her attitude to the League of Nations change from a complete official boycott to a nearly complete official co-operation. Interest naturally concentrates on those parts of the League's programme with which America has shown no sign of co-operating. Is there a reason?

As time goes on, we begin to see that there may have been certain advantages in America's absence from the League at the start; there are credits to set off against the serious debits. In this old Europe of ours, changes in traditional policies have become necessary, and have begun to be made, which might have been bitterly resented if there had been any excuse for supposing that they were being dictated by the United States from a seat on the League Council. An English writer, hostile alike to the League and to America, said lately that America had trapped us into a League we did not want, and had then 'left us tied together like a bag of snakes.' Possibly the experience

has been salutary. For we have had to work out our own salvation in Europe, if without American aid, at least without American 'orders.'

It is even possible, oddly enough, that U.S.A. membership of the League from the outset might have embarrassed the League's own constitutional development; an adverse vote, in the Council, or the Assembly, or even on some of the League's Committees, might easily have blocked some desirable scheme—and yet an American delegation, even though itself in favour of the scheme might have found itself so tied by the rigid bonds of the American Constitution that it would have been forced to oppose. As things are, the growth of cordial co-operation, without membership, may in practice provide nearly all the advantages, without drawbacks such as are here suggested.

We may even dig deeper, and find reasons why we may come to be grateful for the early years of American isolation from Geneva. Is it possible that there will be a New-World contribution towards solving the problem of 'sanctions' (see p. 46) and 'security'? Careful study of what the British Dominions have done at Geneva may give food for thought.

The Covenant was born of the War; in Europe, all men's minds are obsessed by the idea of war—even when we try to provide for peace. The appeal of the League is, for many of this generation, rather its negative promise that war may be averted, than its positive work

710
of building up a more civilised world-order; so many people still think that Peace is the mere absence of War! Whereas, if that were the only, or even the chief, reason for the League's existence, it must certainly collapse, as soon as the children, who have no memory of 1914-18, come to maturity.

Now it so happens that the normal conditions of life in America, as in our own Dominions, have been such that normal thought is practically free from this 'war-complex.' They are able, as Europe is not, to think in terms of a world-society which shall have got rid of the arbitrament of force in dealing with disputes between civilised communities. We have found this American attitude hard to understand; we think it illogical; and yet, already, it has profoundly modified a mass of opinion. Witness the British proposals to 'cut the dead wood' out of the Covenant, by eliminating from it the right *ever* to declare war—so bringing the Covenant into line with the Pact of Paris.

Is it possible that this, the *atrophy* of force as an argument and not the elaboration of automatic forcible 'sanctions' is to be the line of development? Let us remind ourselves of the most remarkable Disarmament Treaty that has ever been negotiated—the Rush-Bagot agreement that made the Canadian frontier the safest frontier in the world, because it is entirely unfortified; that the World-Court of Justice was an American idea; that sensible plans like Bryan's 'cooling-off' periods have become part

of the world's routine in dealing with dangerous disagreements. Facts like these make one suspect that some of the major problems of world-peace may find their answer in the New World, and not in old Europe, hag-ridden by the nightmare of war, unable even to imagine a world-order from which war has been eradicated.

If this should prove to be the direction of growth, we may yet see reason to be glad that America refused to be bound by the original terms of the Covenant.

(ii) Learning and Teaching

But if, possibly, we have lessons to learn from the New World, we have also lessons to teach. Each can learn from the other. We have realised the need for a 'machine'; a visible, organised, routine; a definite code of rules; a permanent staff. Señor de Madariaga has condensed the lesson thus:—

*'No institutions, no co-operation ;
No co-operation, no Peace.'*

Jammed tightly against each other, as we are, the Nations of Europe could learn much more easily than remote, isolated, America that the *Institution* was a necessity. Hence the Covenant, the Court, the Council, the Assembly, the Secretariat, and all the rest of the new mechanism. With these organs, work can be done—with them aspirations such as the Pact of Paris can be turned from dream to reality; without them, ideals of that sort would be likely to

211
remain for ever 'castles in the air.' Rich, and large, and strong, and far away, America is, naturally enough, taking years longer than Europe to understand the primary need of an ordered world—the sharing of mutual duties and responsibilities. Consequently, the politically important part of the story we have told is the ceaseless growth of American participation in the daily routine of the League's work. During 1930, it seems (humanly speaking) certain that she will actually join one of the great League institutions—the Permanent Court of International Justice.

In point of fact, as General Smuts observed on Armistice Day, 1929:—

'America could not really wash her hands of her own work; the great ideal underlying the Covenant kept haunting her. The fair-minded and reasonable men and women of that great people felt disturbed in their conscience. . . . And, before long, America was once more on the move—moving forward with an immense stride on lines of her own in support of the peace ideal. The apparent deserter reappeared at a critical moment in the light of a great reinforcement in the struggle for world peace on right lines. . . . What appeared as a bad set-back in 1920 has been transformed into a resounding victory in 1928, and America is once more in the van of the great movement towards world peace.'

(iii) Towards World Peace

The story we have here so briefly summarised is interesting enough in itself; it becomes even more so when we realise that it describes the extremest possible example of a world-wide process—the linking-up of communities once isolated into a new order of interdependence, wherein duties are not less prominent than rights.

Study the pre-War system; its hostile groups of military alliances, its lack of routine for the joint discussion of troubles before tempers had begun to rise. This is what Viscount Grey was talking about when he said that:—

‘By the end of the 19th century, the system was so firmly fastened on the Continent of Europe that no great Nation had any choice but to go on with it. . . . It was one which people had hoped would not lead to war. The event proved that that was a mistake, and that the system was one which did not make for security, but made for war. *It was a wrong system.*’

Contrast those days with these: see how we co-operate ever more and more with each other, learning the habit (and the technique) of keeping the peace, by doing together what cannot be done separately. Lord Grey, in the same speech, went on:—

‘Is it not reasonable to hope that, just as the bad system led to catastrophe in the end, so the right course will in the end reach the goal?’

217
This little essay submits evidence in proof that, despite all the obstacles, historical, geographic, or political, the world-forces that have made the League are too strong to be successfully resisted. We have watched the process in action; seen the first outgrowths of tissues that, like rootlets, take hold in new soil, feed upon it, and make fresh growth. If the many and powerful influences militating against the League in America have failed to prevent what has already happened, how shall they prevent more and greater changes of the same kind?

There is also a moral more directly personal to ourselves. If these anti-League forces have been steadily losing ground in the extreme case of the United States, how shall they hope for success elsewhere? Let us quote once more from General Smuts:—

‘Great, true ideas are wonderful things. . . . Once a great idea has appeared in concrete form, it seems to be well-nigh indestructible. . . . The League belongs to this fruitful order of ideas. If it had not, it might never have survived the enormous difficulties which surrounded its origin and progress, and it would never have arisen, as it has done, Antæus-like, fresher and stronger from every fall and every set-back.’

(iv) What next?

Prince Bismarck is said to have been asked once to name the most important political fact in the world. His answer was that ‘The

Northern part of the American Continent speaks English.' Who can estimate the importance of that single fact in regard to the future organisation of peace in the world? If no Member of the League had spoken a language understood by the American people, how long would it have taken to establish contact and collaboration? If England, inside the League, can so interpret it to America, outside, that joint action is secured for preventing, or stopping, war? It is worth remembering that control of overseas supplies means control of most of the means by which war can be waged; sea-power, in this sense, could render most wars impossible.

That is, perhaps, to peer too far ahead. What is the next step likely to be?

Obviously, no one need expect America to enter into any undertaking, in advance, that she will bring physical pressure to bear upon any State. Events may, of course, prove M. Briand to be right: an organised international police force may be a necessity. That day is not yet. In the terms of the Wild West, the Nations have only just appointed a Sheriff to call out good citizens against some horse-thief; they have not yet begun to consider creating a permanent police. Must we all therefore stand still, for a generation or so, until France is proved right or wrong? Hardly.

'It seems to me,' said Lord Grey to the Pilgrims, 'that the Peace Pact makes it very clear that any Nation that breaks it would

213
not be popular. No one can say that anything definite will happen, but no one can say what will *not* happen. . . . The apprehension of the unknown is sometimes as efficient a restraint as fear of what is actually known.'

So, what one would expect to see, during the forthcoming months and years, is a steadily increasing co-operation between America and the League in the building-up of the positive machinery of Peace—the fuller development of the key-article of the Covenant:—

'Any war, or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, *and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of Nations.*'—(Art. XI.)

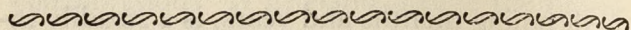
The public discussions during the Naval Conference would seem to point straight towards organised consultation to this end; for, as Mr. Kellogg stated:—

'The time is past when war is of interest only to the belligerents; it is now of interest to all the world.'

If, therefore, experience in the recent past is a fair guide to the future, the United States will be found working with the League, in the spirit of the Preamble to the Covenant:—

'To promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security.'

Yet our essay is history, not prophecy; so the best way to end it may be to instruct the printer to put, as colophon, a gigantic *COMMA*, as emphasis that the story is not ended.



NOTES

I

Re-reading the pamphlet, one is appalled by the number of gaps that have been left in it. There is no mention of the Dawes Plan, nor of the Young Plan, nor of Mr. Jeremiah Smith and Austrian Reconstruction, nor of Mr. Morgenthau and the Greek Refugees, nor of a score of other American activities in post-war Europe. That is, perhaps, inevitable: yet the essay would be wholly false to its title if it did not include, somewhere, mention of the American contribution to organised Peace elsewhere than in Europe. The trouble is, that to develop the full story so as to include the Pan-American and Pacific Ocean policies would involve details about whole classes of international issues with which British readers are unfamiliar: and, as this pamphlet is for British readers, much of the material would seem remote from our immediate concern. Reluctantly, therefore, these parts of the picture have been omitted. But, for those who may be tempted to delve further into American foreign relations in the New World and the Pacific, they will not be found less interesting—indeed, in some respects they are more so, inasmuch as they form a kind of experimental laboratory where, free from old-world restrictions, novel ideas can sometimes be tried out. (See the list of books on p. 63.)

II

There is a curiously interesting historical reason for this unique method of conducting foreign affairs. Originally, the United States was a *confederation*, each State of which claimed to be *sovereign* and *independent*. Joining together for certain purposes of common action, they voluntarily surrendered to the Federal Government some of their sovereign powers, making at the same time such reservations of their rights as they felt necessary. Among the sovereign powers thus surrendered to the central authority was the conduct of foreign relations: but with the stipulation that agreements, such as treaties, which were to become binding upon the whole country, must have the approval of an ample majority of the sovereign States themselves—that is to say, of their representatives, the Senators. Thus, to understand the function of the Senate, we may picture it as (in a loose, non-technical sense) a permanent Conference of the Ambassadors of separate States. Its peculiar powers are therefore an outgrowth of the federal character of the United States. These methods of transacting the national business (however foreign to our ideas) are a part of the Constitution of 1787—and are therefore practically unalterable. (p. 7.)

III

Per Jacobsson, Secretary-General of the Economic Defence Council of Sweden, has pointed out that, on the figures for 1928:—

‘If Europe devoted to armaments the same percentage of its aggregate income as the U.S.A., it would be spending, not at the rate of £524,000,000 as at present, but something like £160,000,000. That would mean universal reduction to the level of armaments now obtaining in Switzerland or Austria, or, in other words, the elimination of all aggressive elements in the defence organisations of European countries.’

The United States, with a population of 120,000,000, whose income exceeds one-third of the income of the whole world, accounts for less than 17% of the world's armaments expenditure, while Europe with a population of 480,000,000, and an income about the same as that of U.S.A., is responsible for 66%. (See p. 23.)

IV

In any study of this kind, one has to be continually on one's guard against the temptation to 'personify' nations and national opinions. 'Uncle Sam' and 'Britannia' are figures more mythical than Jupiter or Venus.

Any national action, which aims at expressing a national opinion, is the resultant of a host of varying views. So that an amusing way to exorcise these national super-ghosts is to collect a set of opinions on some such topic as Reduction of Armaments, and see how closely a school of thought in one country resembles its opposite number in another. The views of our Navy League, for instance, are matched by those of an American Admiral:—

'Since 1812 it has been the policy of the United States Navy to arm its ships with the heaviest batteries possible. Let that policy continue, and America will have Peace, and, with a broad human sympathy, be in a position to engender a spirit of goodwill throughout the world.'

By contrast, a group of such men as Viscount Cecil and Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler could probably agree upon a scheme of Anglo-American co-operation as easily and as completely as those others would agree to a programme of eternal antagonisms.

Which type stands for the "national" policy? Does Lord Cecil or the Navy League best embody the real British view?

715

The activities of the International Labour Office have thrown a flood of light on this problem of 'national' opinions. German (and other) employers find themselves agreeing much more easily with French (and other) employers than either of them do with employees of any nationality. The supposedly 'national' viewpoint tends to break up into its more real sections, and new alignments show themselves, which disregard political frontiers, because they are more in accordance with the facts of life.

V

BOOKS RECOMMENDED.

WOODROW WILSON AND THE WORLD SETTLEMENT,
R. S. Baker.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF WALTER H. PAGE,
Hendrick.

INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE, Seymour.

HISTORY OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES, R. G. Adams.

THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE, R. L. Buell.

DISARMAMENT AND THE COOLIDGE CONFERENCE,
P. J. N. Baker.

AMERICA COMES OF AGE, A. Siegfried.

THE SENATE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, H. C.
Lodge.

THE PACT OF PARIS, J. T. Shotwell.

These, and other books on the subject, can be borrowed by Members of the Union from the Library, free of charge, except postage both ways.