

TOPICS OF THE DAY

THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE: ONTARIO AND PROHIBITION: A
LOST VICTORY: "GETTING TOGETHER."

PARTYISM in Canada appears to have undergone a definite change for the worse of late years. There has been a revival of the old spirit of bitterness, which for a time appeared to have subsided and to be giving promise of remaining more or less quiescent, except upon special occasion. The recrudescence of partisan hostility was particularly manifest in connection with the recent Federal elections. A pitiful exhibition of it has been given in the press with reference to the main decisions of the late Imperial Conference. There was no real cause for serious debate or material difference of opinion concerning those decisions. Yet, because a Liberal Prime Minister and his cabinet colleague happened to be the official representatives of Canada, the newspaper organs of each party have solidly aligned themselves, the one to magnify, the other to disparage the doings of the Conference. One might suppose, in listening to the jangling discord of utterances, that Mr. MacKenzie King had been the whole Conference, and that its decisions embodied only his personal ideas. It would have been the very same thing, with a change of sides and of nominal opinions expressed, had our representative at the Conference been a Conservative Premier. To call this partisan childishness, would be to characterize it very mildly.

The truth is, as the intelligent public is well aware, that the outcome of the Conference would not have been different in any important respect had Mr. Meighen instead of Mr. King been in an official position to represent this country. There was no material disagreement between the present Prime Minister and his late chief political opponent on any Imperial question affecting Canada. Both were practically at one with Sir Robert Borden and his predecessors, Sir Wilfred Laurier and Sir John Macdonald. Neither disagreed with Sir Charles Tupper, who boasted of having given the *coup de grace* to the old Imperial Federation proposal; and nothing in his public career was more to his credit than that, as all can now see in the light of recent history. That way lay certain Imperial disintegration and ultimate disruption. Along the new paths, officially laid out and formally established by the Conference,

will flow the concourse of mutual goodwill, full understanding and voluntary co-operation.

It is perfectly true that nothing theoretically new has been declared by the Conference. The Dominions have gained nothing which they did not enjoy, in substance, before. As a matter of simple fact, the Imperial Conference was a stranger and an outsider to the British Constitution, and could not change one iota of it. It is a mere truism, therefore, to assert that it did nothing new. It could do nothing new. But it could and did affirm principles which had unostentatiously but firmly established themselves in the place of principles formerly not merely accepted but formally embodied in the British Constitution with regard to the Dominions. How and when did the British Constitution attain its present definite but not final form? Was it by formal document or deliverances of any kind? If so, when and at what date? Were such documents as exist in connection with it radical innovations, or were they merely the definitive statement of long-claimed although not always conceded rights or privileges? At what date, for example, was it formally decided that the King could do no political wrong? That his advisers must have the support of a majority in the House of Commons? That only the House of Commons can originate money Bills? That the Royal right of veto is in indefinite suspense? These are but a few questions to suggest the way in which the present British Constitution has come into existence, if that which is merely an airy nothing—without either local habitation or legal name—can be said to exist elsewhere than in general imagination.

The Constitution of Canada, although in accordance with the general lines of the British Constitution, differs radically in important respects therefrom. The former is written. The latter is not. The latter can be changed at any time by Act of Parliament, as well as modified by long-continued usage. The former has been supposed to be alterable, except in fixed particulars, not under or by itself, but only by Act of the Imperial parliament. It has shown itself to be the true offspring of its British parent by overcoming even its strict statutory limitations. Under the *British North America Act* the Governor-General is empowered and even required to reserve for the decision of the Imperial Government any Act of the Dominion parliament concerning which he may have doubts, or of which he or the Home Government may not approve. At the outset, Governors-General exercised this prerogative not infrequently. None of them has ventured to do so during the last forty years. None of them would ever again have

exercised it had the late Imperial Conference never been called. Under the B. N. A. Act the Governor-General was supposed to be instructed by the Home Government as to the course to be pursued by him in Canada. This practice too has long fallen, practically, into "innocuous desuetude." The Governor-General, as his official designation and still more his alternative title, "Excellency", imply, was to be, constitutionally, the direct emissary of the Home Government. He was accredited as the agent of a political committee elected by the people of the Old Country, and not of the British King. The attitude of the Canadian people towards his office gradually brought about a modification of his standing and functions, which, in spite of our written Constitution, was accepted by the British Government.

All these changes, wrought by time, in the standing and relations of the Dominion with reference to the Motherland have now been formally acknowledged and proclaimed by a free Conference of representatives of all the self-governing countries constituting the British Empire. True, that Conference has established no new constitutional principle. Equally true, that Conference was utterly without power to modify the institutions of the Empire in any way or in the slightest degree. But, unquestionably, what it has declared will be as binding for the future as if it had been enacted by every parliament and legislative assembly in the Empire. Thus is the British Constitution once again shown to be not only great but wonderful.

But for the assembling and the declarations of this Conference, there is no knowing what trouble and conflict might hereafter have arisen. Some future British Government might have been ill-advised enough to take its stand on the letter of the B. N. A. Act, to insist on instructing a Governor-General how to act in some emergency, to order him to withhold Canadian legislation subject to Home Government veto, to direct him to disregard the advice of his Canadian ministers and to follow theirs. In the present-day state of Canadian public opinion and feeling, that would have been not merely to court but to insist on a catastrophe.

All danger of such a happening is now for ever removed, as has been almost every other possible cause of real friction among the various parts of the Empire. Each of the Dominions has now had its political freedom and its standing on an equal footing with the motherland acknowledged and proclaimed. Every source of practical loyalty and effective co-operation that ever existed has been left untainted and unimpaired. Not merely that, but the waters of those springs of national life have been clarified as well

as purified, and the beds of their streams have been freed from obstructions so that they can overflow in season for the gladdening of all British lands.

The Conference probably went as far as it could, but something yet remains to be done in accordance with and in completion of its work. A change in Dominion nomenclature is obviously desirable. The British parliament alone can effect that. It has been expressly declared by the Conference that the Governor-General of a Dominion no longer represents and acts for the British Government. It has been declared that he occupies the place of a substitute for the King, within his jurisdiction. This is in effect an announcement that he is hereafter to be a Viceroy. He should be so designated by Act of Parliament. There are unpleasant, not to say humiliating, implications in the word "Governor." It implies a ruler, not an independent ruler, but one subject himself to a higher power. This the Governor-General has now been declared not to be. His title therefore should be changed. His alternative designation, "Excellency", has long been reserved exclusively for ambassadors. When the Dominion of Canada was constituted, that was the idea of his official character and functions which the B. N. A. Act expressed. Time has obliterated the idea. The word should go with it.

It is understood that Sir John Macdonald intended to have Canada declared a Kingdom, and that this word was deliberately placed in the original B. N. A. Bill. It was elided, and "Dominion" substituted by the British parliament, out of consideration for possible American susceptibilities. The same objection applies to "Dominion" as to "Governor." It implies inferior standing, and connotes subjection to a conquering power. It never was a proper appellation for Canada. It is entirely out of keeping with the declarations of the Conference, and should be replaced by some term more in accordance not only with present acknowledged constitutional facts but with Canadian history and feeling.

In view of the definite constitutional order of things established or about to be established as soon as the various British parliaments can act, what objection could there be to designating each of the Dominions a State instead of a Dominion; and all of them, collectively, the British States? That would be a much more correct and appropriate appellation than "The British Commonwealth of Nations." The various States are not "Nations," in any accurate signification of the word. They are simply British countries. Unitedly, they do not constitute anything resembling a "Commonwealth", as the term is historically used. Why, as already suggested,

should not the King's special deputies in the various States be frankly acknowledged and proclaimed as Viceroys? As personal substitutes for His Majesty, each of them becomes, temporarily, an official Prince of the British Union. Then, why not, in accordance with custom, "His Highness" instead of, as at present, "His Excellency", a term which, as above intimated, implies ambassadorial standing and functions with reference to the Government of Great Britain and not the British King?

No one appears to have any serious complaint to make against the decisions of the Conference with reference to Canada. Then why a tweedle-dum-tweedle-dee partisan wrangle over them? Why not accept gratefully what has been accomplished, and devote our united efforts to perfecting the good work in all its details?

THERE can be no evasion, no beclouding of the issue decided by the people of Ontario in the recent local election. It was Prohibition, and nothing but Prohibition. Of course there was political and religious partisanism intermixed with it, but in so many and such mutually neutralizing forms that only Prohibition really remained for popular adjudication. The decision against it was so overwhelming as to be entirely unmistakable. And it was no hasty or unfairly prejudiced decision.

Prohibition was adopted by a sweeping majority of the electors, then all men, some ten years ago. Another popular vote, the second time including women, was taken in 1924. The majority, although greatly reduced, was still for Prohibition. On neither occasion was there generally organized or effective public discussion of the question. No constructive temperance alternative was submitted to the electors. They were simply asked the vague question—"Are you for or against Prohibition?" It is as good as certain that a majority, of those who then took the trouble to vote, confounded prohibition with temperance, and believed they were upholding the righteous side of a supposedly moral or semi-religious issue. In the late election they were offered, as definite alternatives, Prohibition and all that personal experience and observation had forced them to associate with it, or government instead of "boot-legging" control of the liquor supply. Had the second alternative been more explicitly stated, it is probable that its acceptance would have been still more emphatic.

Plebiscites, so called, have been proved in Canada, as elsewhere, to be grossly misleading and almost valueless as a means of ascertaining public opinion. It is worse than useless to submit an

abstract question to an unenlightened electorate for determination. It is obvious folly to ask electors if they are or are not in favour of Prohibition, when most of them are quite incapable of distinguishing between the proposed legislative means and the social end. Probably nine out of every ten of all who have ever voted for Prohibition in this or any other country have fancied that they were voting for temperance, and not merely for the enactment of a law which might, so far as they know, be a potent means of promoting intemperance and many other evils to which the voters were strongly averse.

In dealing politically with such a social question as temperance, there is a choice between two, and only two, proper methods of procedure. The first is the constitutional one, that is, for a Government to introduce a measure dealing with the matter as in its opinion it deems best, and then standing or falling by that measure in parliament and before the country. The second is—and it is the wise and well-trying Swiss way—for a Government to present a Bill, designed to be put into prompt operation if it receives popular approval when submitted, as a proposed enactment, to the electorate by what is called a referendum. The difference between a plebiscite and a referendum is that between utter vagueness and considered exactness. In the one, electors may be voting for anything or nothing. In the other, they must vote directly for a law which will be binding on them in all its details if they accept it. In the first case, they are voting for the indeterminate idea of someone else; in the second, for an explicit piece of practical legislation. Probably most of the thoughtful and well-informed people of Canada would prefer the manly old British constitutional way, because they have more faith in the ordinary good judgment of the chosen representatives of the electors than in the easily swayed masses themselves.

Premier Ferguson of Ontario adopted a middle course. He did not introduce a temperance measure in parliament, although he had a large majority therein. He did not submit a Bill for referendum purposes. But he took the public fully into his confidence as to what he intended to enact as law if returned to power. He proclaimed his determination to repeal the misnamed "Temperance" Act of Ontario, and to substitute for it government control, by commission, of the liquor supply of the province, and to do away with the hypocritical and demoralizing requirement of medical prescriptions. The people could not misunderstand his declared intentions. They had confidence in his good faith. They voted accordingly. They cast aside almost every other consideration in

voting. They left their former parties by thousands, on either side, to vote for or against the promised temperance legislation. They had been convinced by actual experience, contrary to their supposed former opinions as expressed in the first plebiscite, that Prohibition was neither "temperance" nor a satisfactory means of advancing temperance; so they accepted the promise of a more hopeful means of control. Not merely the number of Ferguson supporters actually elected and the great majority of them over all other candidates, but the huge individual majorities polled in most cases for the Ferguson candidates as compared with those of even the candidates of Mr. Ferguson's opponents who were elected, indicate how strongly the tide of public feeling was running against "Prohibition" and in favour of its repeal.

Mr. Ferguson's triumph has been called "a victory for tolerance." In a sense it was, because tolerance is really only another name for temperance. But unless that meaning is clearly read into "tolerance", the victory was rather one over *intolerance*—the intolerance of a minority dominated by extremists who regarded all who could not agree with them as sinners if not criminals. That it was actually a minority, has now been unmistakably demonstrated. That many if not most of its leaders were unreasoning zealots may be fairly inferred, if not from their persistent adherence to a law which never was and could not be adequately enforced because of lack of popular support, at least from their conduct in the Ontario campaign and from the undue influence which the ministers of certain ecclesiastical bodies sought to exercise by religious appeals in a purely secular matter with which religion had no more to do than it has with any other political question. Temperance is a Christian virtue, with reference to which the clergy of all churches as well as all laymen are agreed. There is no division of opinion concerning it, any more than there is with regard to the other virtues. And temperance, as a virtue, stands in no special category. It is by no means the most important of the virtues. How to curb by social regulation its, in one sense, antithetic vice, drunkenness, is strictly and absolutely a political problem with which no church has more or other to do than with the upholding of free trade or its economic antithesis, protection.

The people of Ontario have indicated forcibly that they understand this, and that ministerial dictation in secular affairs stands as little chance to-day as it ever did of being successfully practised in any part of Canada. If the shoemaker should stick to his last, for a stronger reason the ministers of religious denominations should keep to their own vocations. As citizens and electors,

the clergy are as free as others to hold and express their opinions on all public questions and occasions. They have exclusive domain in their pulpits for the propagation of their religious views. If they are wise, they will not drop the spiritual substance in attempting to grasp the elusive political shadow. They can only weaken themselves and their cause without strengthening society. They may injure religion. They cannot benefit politics. Enforced asceticism is no part of Christianity.

FEW could or did doubt the fact that Germany dominated and intimidated Europe before the Great War. That was why the war was fought. Those who may now fancy that Germany is not once again morally predominant, or that the League of Nations can or will long restrain her within military and physical bounds, have a rude awakening to expect, for their children if not for themselves. Nations no more change their distinguishing characteristics, except by the infinitely slow process of evolution, than the leopard changes its spots or the Ethiopian his skin—by internal or external will. Germany, as a nation, is to-day what she was before the war. She will continue to be the same indefinitely, with unaltered desires, ambitions and motives. She has shown no variableness or shadow of turning since her national history began.

War has no more cast aside its primitive and inherent character than has Germany. Such as it was when a band of tree-dwellers or a more advanced clan of cavemen strove for material advantage over their neighbours, it is still and will continue to be as long as men lift up murderous arms against one another. No war in all history was more conscienceless and brutal than the Great War. The next war, when, and if, it comes, will be still worse, for it will be waged by practically unseen enemies from the sky or from ocean depths against unarmed and defenceless civilian populations. Yet at the close of the Great War those who charged themselves with the dictation of terms, alike to the conquerors and the conquered, placidly, with school-masterly or demagogic cheerfulness, took it for granted that they had merely to say "peace, peace" to ensure future amity and justice among the nations; that they were entitled to ignore German history, and to disregard the age-old principles of war-settlements, especially against undisguised, defeated aggressors.

Germany deliberately planned, prepared for and began a war of aggression primarily and particularly against France, but ultimately against universal civilization and liberty. Her avowed aim was to conquer and dismember France for her own territorial aggrandizement, as a preliminary step towards the annexation of the Netherlands, the humiliation of Britain and the absorption of her overseas dominions, the absolute hegemony of Europe for herself, and the subjection or intimidation of the United States. This intended programme was paraded before the world by the German Emperor and his military satellites. Has it been forgotten by civilization? It was calmly ignored a month after the close of the war by those who arrogated to themselves the right of settlement with Germany. France, which had borne the physical brunt of the war, and against which it was directly waged, was elbowed aside while Mr. Woodrow Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George strode to the front and assumed dictatorial positions at the Versailles council board. Two men less fitted by training or character for such an undertaking, it would be difficult to imagine. Mr. Lloyd George was obviously in practical ignorance of the United States Constitution and of the limitation of the President's powers of negotiation under it. Mr. Wilson knew little of European history, apart from his reading of American school books. Mr. Lloyd George was scarcely, if at all, better posted than Mr. Wilson with regard to world history.

What both of them surely should have known was that the only satisfactory means ever discovered of dealing with armed aggressors is to deprive them of or lessen their powers of future aggression. This they both sublimely disregarded. France had been savagely ravaged, impoverished and stripped of territory in a German raid of less than half a century before. She was supposed to have cherished feelings of revenge in consequence—feelings which prompted Germany to a renewed raid with a view to seizing any remaining French territory which might strengthen her. Lest Germany should become actuated by similar revengeful feelings against France, which might thereafter prompt her to another war, France was sternly forbidden to lay a finger on German territory. Although the main cause of the long continued struggle between French and Germans had been possession of the Rhine, the natural boundary between the two countries, the one dividing line which would enable France to fortify and defend herself successfully against future attack, Germany was secured and established in full possession of that river, except the small section of it which lies between her and the restored provinces, which she wrested

from France in 1870. French representatives, civil and military, protested and pleaded in vain. In lieu of a natural and defensible boundary, they had to accept the personal "guarantees" of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George that the United States and Great Britain would spring to the defence of France should she again be assailed wantonly by Germany as she had been so many times before. The world, and Mr. Lloyd George, were promptly informed by the American Senate and the American electors, upon the return of Mr. Wilson to Washington, that, so far as the United States were concerned, his "guarantee" to France was "a scrap of paper"; whereupon Mr. Lloyd George withdrew his promised "guarantee" and put it, unsigned, in his pocket. France was left alone and unclad, in the cold.

There remained, to compensate France for the villainous assault which had been made upon her and the wholesale devastation she had suffered, the promise of vast indemnities, arranged by the two great statesmen named, which Germany was neither able nor willing to pay, and which she has not paid, nor has she any present or future intention of paying, although now reduced to a mere fraction of the sum originally fixed. France had the additional privilege accorded her of maintaining a "security" army of occupation across the Rhine, which Germany is supposed to like and for which she was sentenced to pay, but has not paid and will not pay. That, naturally, would not irritate her, nor arouse "vengeful" feelings in her gentle bosom. Germany was forbidden to maintain an effective army or equip herself with arms, a prohibition which did not ruffle her in the least because she never had a thought of observing it, and knew well, by past experience, how to avoid it. Britain was "made secure" by the surrender of the German fleet and the award of a small portion of indemnity which she, in turn, with her usual politeness, has in effect surrendered. At least, she has received none of it. And the German fleet, by crooked German hands, lies rusting at the bottom of Scapa Flow instead of abiding safely in German harbours as a perpetual, costly and dangerous white elephant on the hands of the German government and nation.

Such, so far, are the tangible results of the supernal, instinctive diplomacy of the late Mr. Woodrow Wilson and the, physically, surviving Mr. Lloyd George as exhibited in the Versailles convention. The unhangd Kaiser, subsidized by annual millions from Germany, sleeps comfortably not in Flanders field but in Doorn Castle, Holland, and awaits once more The Day. "The German Rhine" flows as securely as ever through German territory and

makes Germany's western frontier impregnable, while France's opposite frontier is an undefended and undefendable meadow. Germany's "Crown Prince" and his family are back in the bosom of the Fatherland, available whenever "called." Germany is free from debt, and better equipped than ever before for profitable industry. She is not only a member but already the leading member of the League of Nations, as the circumstances of her entry testify. She has signaled her entry not by requesting but by demanding the withdrawal of the Arms Commission from her territory, and the recall of the foreign armies of occupation, while indicating her determination not to honour her promises to pay even the repeatedly whittled-down indemnity.

France is overwhelmed with debt incurred largely in making good German devastations. She is virtually bankrupt, but forced to maintain a large standing army and general preparedness for war, principally on account of Germany. She is being dunned by the United States for debts incurred in their common cause, which she is wholly unable to pay. Her rate of taxation is so excessive that it defeats its own purpose by making collection almost impossible. She is being worried and threatened by Italy, which is now courting Germany for her support. She has just concluded a costly war in northern Africa. She has another still on her hands in Syria.

Great Britain has had civil war after civil war on her hands, in the form of industrial strikes, ever since the Great War. She is hampered by doles to the unemployed. She is crippled by contractual obligations to the United States because of debts incurred for the benefit of other nations, including the United States, from which she cannot free herself for sixty long years, two whole generations, while other nations are avoiding their obligations to her by the primitive process of disregarding them in greater part. The United States, while insisting on their full pound of flesh from Great Britain, are excluding by a prohibitive tariff its importation except in the form of gold of which they already have almost a world monopoly.

Is it any wonder that there is uncertainty everywhere and consequent unrest? To expect or hope that an international debating club organized and christened as a League of Nations by the late Mr. Woodrow Wilson, an inexperienced American professor, can overrule such a welter of conflicting interests and circumstances by the unsupported word of its mouth, is to manifest an untutored enthusiasm of spirit rarely witnessed beyond early childhood.

THE natural if not inevitable consequences of the above-indicated facts and conditions are now beginning to threaten Europe and the world. Germany is again being looked up to and courted as formerly. She has assumed her old airs of superiority. She has negotiated a secret treaty with Russia whereby that vast and potentially powerful country has been directly attached to her train. Italy is openly currying favour with her. Great Britain has been steadily playing into her hands, for imaginary altruistic, if not other-world reasons. France has at last unmistakably taken the hint, and is manifesting her readiness to come in out of the chilly, post-war rain, and seek shelter under the inviting German umbrella. There have been persistent rumours for several years of proposed commercial and industrial arrangements between the two historic opponents. Lately these have been given definite shape and substance by direct political negotiations, the particulars of which have been kept more or less secret by the parties concerned.

The Fortnightly Review for November devoted its leading article, written by Mr. Hugh F. Spender, a distinguished English publicist, to the private meeting at Thoiry of Herr Stresemann of Germany and M. Briand of France, as a sequel to the diplomatic Locarno love-feast, at which Germany's entry into the League of Nations was arranged. Mr. Spender opens his article with the customary touching platitudes, mostly borrowed from Herr Stresemann's own utterances, about that gentleman's loftiness and purity of intention and motive. He has, it would appear, room in his breast for only one grand passion—a burning love of the League of Nations and a yearning desire for its success as “an effective bulwark against the danger of wars.” Meanwhile, he would like to have the international Arms Commission ejected from Germany, and the armies holding the bridge-heads of the Rhine immediately withdrawn. “We must think in European terms of the problems which the war has left us”, declares Herr Stresemann. That, obviously, is how Germany is again thinking, exactly as she did before the war. And Herr Stresemann is her new prophet. In his opinion, “If European peace and prosperity are to be placed on a firm foundation, the German people must be convinced that they are being fairly and justly treated in the post-war settlement, and *not as a conquered nation* on whom harsh terms have been imposed.” He is not, as yet, quite ready to demand an apology from the Allies for having forcibly thrust Germany's socially-visiting armies out of France.

The foregoing is the substance of Mr. Spender's introduction to his account of the secret Thoiry meeting between Herr Strese-

mann and M. Briand, "to hold their now historic conversation over the problems which still remain to be solved." Thoiry is in the French Jura. It appears that Herr Stresemann and M. Briand had become enamoured of each other at Locarno, that modern summer-resort of the angels. It is to be noted that the inn chamber in which they met has "a low ceiling and humble furniture", circumstances peculiarly adapted to heart to heart confidences. All that has been revealed of their communion is that "they were in complete accord." The interesting thing for the world, and especially the British world, is as to the end to which that "accord" tends. There is no doubt in Mr. Spender's mind that the phrase is no "idle" one, but that "it conveys the truth."

The main subject of the Thoiry conversation is assumed to have been France's pressing need of money. Herr Stresemann would seem to have particularly emphasised the desirability of the military evacuation of the Fatherland. M. Briand dwelt on the already almost complete evacuation of the treasury of La Patrie. The problem was to find someone able and willing to fill the French treasury as a *quid pro quo* for the withdrawal of French occupying troops from beyond the Rhine. The conversation resolved itself into a simple question, not of marks or francs, but of dollars and cents. Where but in the United States of America is the native home and everlasting abiding-place of the Almighty Dollar, and its infant progeny, the cent? Herr Stresemann had no doubt that if the desired re-stocking of the French treasury was to be effected, "America must find the necessary money", not dumping it directly into the French treasury, of course, but supplying it to his country to support the flotation of German railway bonds from the proceeds of which Germany might be enabled to finance France. It was hoped that a sufficient balance of American dollars might remain from this proposed happy transaction to permit Germany to repurchase the Saar mines, and thus remove the once detested but now fondly cherished French "form from off" Germany's door, the *status quo ante* thus to be fully restored.

"This", writes Mr. Spender, "was the plan which it is said was discussed at Thoiry, M. Briand showing that he was not averse to a speedy and total evacuation of the Rhineland, the early restoration of the Saar valley to Germany, and the withdrawal of Allied military control over German armaments, in exchange for League supervision, if monetary assurance could be provided for France." "If this statement of the Thoiry conversation is correct", adds Mr. Spender, "it proves that M. Briand has grasped and

admitted the reasonableness of the German argument, that now that Germany has been admitted to the League of Nations on terms of equality and has entered into treaty relations with her former enemies, there is in reality no further *excuse* for the continued occupation of two areas in the Rhineland." Note the word, "excuse". It also indicates clearly, if it does not absolutely prove, that a close political and commercial *rapprochement* is in progress between France and Germany, and that an *entente*, if not a definite treaty, such as already binds Russia to Germany, may be, and indeed is likely to be, the final outcome.

It is known that negotiations have been going on for a number of years past between powerful financial interests in France and Germany for the bringing into close partnership of the iron ore of Lorraine and the coal and coke of the Ruhr, whereby the product of the Alsace-Lorraine mines would receive specially favoured treatment from Germany. Herr Stresemann is said to regard this as "an extremely important contribution between France and Germany" to "world peace." And small wonder, for Great Britain would thereby be isolated in Europe, commercially as well as industrially, and Germany would be able to dominate the Continent in peace—perfect peace. Having failed to dominate Europe by force of arms a few years ago, owing mainly to British military and financial intervention, this is naturally highly gratifying to Germany, as the junior member of the League of Nations from which, in her young enthusiasm, she hopes so much for the future "peace of the world", under her benign and disinterested control.

All these prospective blessings we owe to the altruism of certain British statesmen who, after having half-ruined their nation in fighting Germany, have now done their utmost to complete the work by planting Germany once more firmly on her feet and virtually forcing France into her arms. Even Italy is preferring Germany to Britain. The United States has the British government securely in its debtors' prison for sixty years to come. Britain thus has again in direct contemplation for herself that "splendid isolation", the comforting phrase descriptive of what Lord Grey of Fallodon calls the previously most menacing period in her history, which is supposed to have been coined by our Canadian Senator, Hon. George E. Foster. But the phrase was actually minted and printed, several years earlier, by Lord Beaconsfield, who, had he been alive when Mr. Foster was being quoted and complimented, might well have written, like Vergil of old, *Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores*. But, "let us wait and see." The best laid schemes of mice and men, of wolves and women, oftentimes come to nought.

Providence is fabled to take special care of the incapable. So, we may at least hope that Britain will once more "muddle through."

W. E. M.

P. S.—Since the foregoing was written, the Wilsonian spirit of international love has once more descended and "troubled the waters" of the Bethesda pool which is at, or near, Locarno. Herr Stresemann, "coached" by Mr. Austen Chamberlain, promptly plunged into it, and came up with the expulsion of the international Arms Commission from Germany and the withdrawal of the international armies of occupation on the Rhine in his teeth. Of this, a leading German publicist writes: "Stresemann's method is good. He is following the recipe of Bismarck. *He plucks the leaves of the artichoke one by one.* He forecasts a German demand for an Austro-German and Austro-Chechoslovak union, and fresh Dantzig-Memel demands." One more dip into the Locarno, Bethesda pool, will probably tone Germany up to the open bearing of her old "shining armour." Of the latest Locarno "incident" a London press despatch reports that "The feature which is causing most doubt in some British quarters is Sir Austen Chamberlain's acquiescence in the policy of declaring that the Rhineland disputes are to be settled between the nations directly concerned—France and Germany—which these sections of opinion fear may re-open the whole vexed question, involving Britain's assuming the burden of responsibility with the minimum of consultation by other powers." In plainer words, the complete restoration of pre-war conditions with regard to the Rhine frontier is provided for, with the difference that Germany is now shaking her invincible locks, like a young giant refreshed by sleep, virtually free from debt, equipped as never before for profitable industry and fearing neither God nor man, while France and Britain are bound hand and foot by obligations incurred in the late regrettable "unpleasantness." Thus is Milton justified in his remark that "Peace" (Woodrow Wilson—Lloyd George Peace) "hath her victories no less renown'd than war."

W. E. M.