

favourable response of a small majority of the British Labour Party. Without either moral or physical help from the Allies, the "moderate" Russian republic still fought on and made a last desperate offensive effort in July. It failed after some preliminary successes and another great slaughtering of Russians.

The limit of Russian endurance was reached. Mutinies now broke out in the Russian armies, and particularly upon the northern front, and on November 7th, 1917, Kerensky's government was overthrown and power was seized by the Soviet Government, dominated by the Bolshevik socialists under Lenin, and pledged to make peace regardless of the Western powers. Russia passed definitely "out of the war."

In the spring of 1917 there had been a costly and ineffective French attack upon the Champagne front, which had failed to break through and sustained enormous losses. Here, then, by the end of 1917, was a phase of events altogether favourable to Germany, had her government been fighting for security and well-being rather than for pride and victory. But to the very end, to the pitch of final exhaustion, the people of the Central Powers were held to the effort to achieve a complete victory.

To that end it was necessary that Britain should be not merely resisted, but subjugated, and in order to do that Germany had already dragged America into the circle of her enemies. Throughout 1916 the submarine campaign had been growing in intensity, but hitherto it had respected neutral shipping. In January, 1917, a complete "blockade" of Great Britain and France was proclaimed, and all neutral powers were warned to withdraw their shipping from the British seas. An indiscriminate sinking of the world's shipping began, which compelled the United States to enter the war in April (6th), 1917. Throughout 1917, while Russia was breaking up and becoming impotent, the American people were changing swiftly and steadily into a great military nation. And the unrestricted submarine campaign, for which the German imperialists had accepted the risk of this fresh antagonist, was far less successful than had been hoped. The British navy proved itself much more inventive and resourceful than the British army; there was a rapid development of anti-submarine devices under water, upon the surface, and in the air; and after a month or so of serious destruction, the tale of submarine sinkings declined. The British found it necessary to put themselves upon food rations; but the regulations were well framed and ably administered, the public showed an excellent spirit and intelligence, and the

danger of famine and social disorder was kept at arm's length.

Yet the German imperial government continued to fight. If the submarine was not doing all that had been expected, and if the armies of America gathered like a thunder-cloud, yet Russia was definitely down; and in October the same sort of autumn offensive that had overthrown Serbia in 1915 and Roumania in 1916 was now turned with crushing effect against Italy. The Italian front collapsed after the Battle of Caporetto, and the Austro-German armies poured down into Venetia and came almost within gunfire of Venice. Germany felt justified, therefore, in taking a high line with the Russian peace proposals, and the peace of Brest-Litovsk (March 2nd, 1918) gave the Western Allies some intimation of what a German victory would mean to them. It was a crushing and exorbitant peace, dictated with the utmost arrogance of confident victors.

All through the winter German troops had been shifting from the Eastern to the Western front, and now, in the spring of 1918, the jaded enthusiasm of hungry, weary, and bleeding Germany was lashed up for the one supreme effort that was really and truly to end the war. For some months American troops had been in France, but the bulk of the American army was still across the Atlantic. It was high time for the final conclusive blow upon the Western front, if such a blow was ever to be delivered.

The first attack was upon the British in the Somme region. The not very brilliant cavalry generals who were still in command of a front upon which cavalry was a useless encumbrance, were caught napping; and on March 21st, in "Gough's Disaster," the fifth British army was driven back in disorder almost to Amiens. The jealousies of the British and French generals had prevented any unified command of the Allied armies in France, and there was no general reserve whatever behind Gough. Nearly a thousand guns were lost by the Allies, and scores of thousands of prisoners. Throughout April and May the Germans rained offensives on the Allied front. They came near to a break through in the north, and they made a great drive back to the Marne, which they reached again on May 30th, 1918.

This was the climax of the German effort. Behind it was nothing but an exhausted homeland. Marshal Foch was put in supreme command of all the Allied armies. Fresh troops were hurrying from Britain across the Channel, and America was now pouring men into France by the hundred thousand. In June the weary Austrians made a last effort in Italy, and

collapsed before an Italian counter-attack. Early in June Foch began to develop a counter-attack. By July the tide was turning, and the Germans were reeling back. The Battle of Château-Thierry (July 18th) proved the quality of the new American armies. In August the British opened a great and successful thrust, and the bulge of the German lines towards Amiens wilted and collapsed. "August 8th," says Ludendorff, "was a black day in the history of the German army." The British attack on the Hindenburg line in September ensured the Allied victory.

Germany had finished. The fighting spirit passed out of her army, and October was a story of defeat and retreat along the entire Western front. Early in November British troops were in Valenciennes and Americans in Sedan. In Italy also the Austrian armies were in a state of disorderly retreat. But everywhere now the Hohenzollern and Habsburg forces were collapsing. The smash at the end was amazingly swift. Frenchmen and Englishmen could not believe their newspapers as day after day they announced the capture of more hundreds of guns and more thousands of prisoners.

In September a great Allied offensive against Bulgaria had produced a revolution in that country and peace proposals. Turkey had followed with a capitulation at the end of October, and Austro-Hungary on November 3rd. There was an attempt to bring out the German fleet for the last fight, but the sailors mutinied (November 7th).

The Kaiser and the Crown Prince bolted hastily, and without a scrap of dignity, into Holland. On November 11th an armistice was signed and the war was at an end. . . .

For four years and a quarter the war had lasted, and gradually it had drawn nearly everyone, in the Western world at least, into its vortex. Upwards of eight millions of people had been actually killed through the fighting, another twenty or twenty-five millions had died through the hardships and disorders entailed. Scores of millions were suffering and enfeebled by under-nourishment and misery. A vast proportion of the living were now engaged in war work, in drilling and armament, in making munitions, in hospitals, in working as substitutes for men who had gone into the armies and the like. Business men had been adapting themselves to the more hectic methods necessary for profit in a world in a state of crisis. The war had become, indeed, an atmosphere, a habit of life, a new social order. Then suddenly it ended.

In London the armistice was proclaimed about 11 A.M. on

November 11th. It produced a strange cessation of every ordinary routine. Clerks poured out of their offices and would not return, assistants deserted their shops, omnibus drivers and the drivers of military lorries set out upon journeys of their own devising with picked-up loads of astounded and cheering passengers going nowhere in particular and careless whither they went. Vast vacant crowds presently choked the streets, and every house and shop that possessed such adornments hung out flags. When night came, many of the main streets, which had been kept in darkness for many months because of the air raids, were brightly lit. It was very strange to see thronging multitudes assembled in an artificial light again. Everyone felt aimless, with a kind of strained and aching relief. It was over at last. There would be no more killing in France, no more air raids—and things would get better.

People wanted to laugh, and weep—and could do neither. Youths of spirit and young soldiers on leave formed thin noisy processions that shoved their way through the general drift, and did their best to make a jollification. A captured German gun was hauled from the Mall, where a vast army of such trophies had been set out, into Trafalgar Square, and its carriage burnt. Squibs and crackers were thrown about. But there was little concerted rejoicing. Nearly everyone had lost too much and suffered too much to rejoice with any fervour.

CHAPTER 39

TWENTY YEARS OF INDECISION AND ITS OUTCOME

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| § 1. <i>A Phase of Moral Exhaustion.</i> | § 6. <i>The Irish Free State.</i> |
| § 2. <i>President Wilson at Versailles.</i> | § 7. <i>The Far and Near East.</i> |
| § 3. <i>Constitution of the League of Nations.</i> | § 8. <i>Debts, Money, and Stabilization.</i> |
| § 4. <i>The Treaties of 1919-20.</i> | § 9. <i>The Great Crash of 1929.</i> |
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- § 1

THE world of the Western European civilizations in the years that followed the end of the Great War was like a man who has had some very vital surgical operation very roughly performed, and who is not yet sure whether he can now go on living or whether he has not been so profoundly shocked and injured that he will presently fall down and die. It was a world dazed and stunned. Militarist imperialism had been defeated, but at an overwhelming cost. It had come very near to victory. Everything went on, now that the strain of the conflict had ceased, rather laxly, rather weakly, and with a gusty and uncertain temper. There was a universal hunger for peace, a universal desire for the lost liberty and prosperity of pre-war times, without any power of will to achieve and secure these things.

In many respects there had been great deterioration. Just as with the Roman Republic under the long strain of the Punic Wars, so now there had been a great release of violence and cruelty, and a profound deterioration in financial and economic morality. Generous spirits had sacrificed themselves freely to the urgent demands of the war, but the sly and base of the

worlds of business and money had watched the convulsive opportunities of the time and secured a firm grip upon the resources and political power of their countries. Everywhere, men who would have been regarded as shady adventurers before 1914 had acquired power and influence, while better men had toiled unprofitably. In the phase of post-war exhaustion it was difficult to restrain these newly rich and newly powerful men.

In the course of the war there had been extraordinary experiments in collective management in nearly all the belligerent countries. It had been realized that the common expedients of peace-time commerce, the higgling of the market, the holding out for a favourable bargain, was incompatible with the swift needs of warfare. Transport, fuel, food supply, and the distribution of the raw materials not only of clothing, housing and the like, but of everything needed for war munitions, had been brought under public control.

No longer had farmers been allowed to underfarm; cattle had been put upon deer-parks and grasslands ploughed up, with or without the owners' approval. Luxury building and speculative company promotion had been restrained. In effect, a sort of emergency socialist state had been established throughout most of belligerent Europe. It was rough-and-ready and wasteful, but it was more effective than the tangled incessant profit-seeking, the cornering and forestalling and incoherent productiveness of "private enterprise."

In the earliest years of the war there had also been in all the belligerent states a very widespread feeling of brotherhood and of the need for service in the common interest. The common men were everywhere sacrificing life and health for what they believed to be the common good of the State. In return, it was promised, there would be less social injustice after the war, a more universal devotion to the common welfare. In Great Britain, for instance, Mr. Lloyd George was particularly insistent upon his intention to make the after-war Britain "a land fit for heroes." He foreshadowed the continuation of this new war-socialism into the peace period in discourses of great fire and beauty.

In Great Britain there was created a Ministry of Reconstruction, which was understood to be planning a new and more generous social order, better labour conditions, better housing, extended education, a complete and scientific revision of the economic system. And the word "Reconstruction" coloured the lives and sustained the hopes of the distressed multitude

everywhere. Similar promises of a better world sustained the common soldiers of France and Germany and Italy. It was premature disillusionment that caused the Russian collapse. So that two mutually dangerous streams of anticipation were running through the minds of men in Western Europe towards the end of the war. The rich and adventurous men, and particularly the new war profiteers, were making their plans to prevent such developments as, for example, that air transport should become a State property, and to snatch back manufactures, shipping, land transport, the trade in staples, and the public services generally, from the hands of the common weal into the grip of private profit—they were securing possession of newspapers and busying themselves with party caucuses and the like to that end; while, on the other hand, the masses of common men were looking forward naïvely to a new state of society planned almost entirely in their interest and according to generous general ideas. The history of 1919 is largely the clash of these two streams of anticipation. There was a hasty selling off, by the "business" government in control, of every remunerative public enterprise to private speculators. . . .

By the middle of 1919 the labour masses throughout the world were manifestly disappointed and in a thoroughly bad temper. The British "Ministry of Reconstruction" and its foreign equivalents were exposed as a soothing sham. The common man felt he had been cheated. There was to be no reconstruction, but only a restoration of the old order—in a bleaker form necessitated by the poverty of the new time.

For four years the drama of the war had obscured the social question which had been developing in the Western civilizations throughout the nineteenth century. Now that the war was over, this question reappeared gaunt and bare, as it had never been seen before.

And the irritations and hardships and the general insecurity of the new time were exacerbated by a profound disturbance of currency and credit. Money, a complicated growth of conventions rather than a system of values, had been deprived within the belligerent countries of the support of a gold standard. Gold had been retained only for international trade, and every government had produced excessive quantities of paper money for domestic use. With the breaking down of the war-time barriers the international exchange became a wildly fluctuating confusion, a source of distress to everyone except a few gamblers and speculators. Prices rose and rose—with an infuriating effect upon the wage-earner. On the one hand was his employer

resisting his demands for more pay; on the other hand, food, house-room, and clothing were being cornered against him. And—which was the essential danger of the situation—he began to lose whatever confidence he had ever possessed that any patience or industrial willingness he displayed would really alleviate the shortages and inconveniences by which he suffered.

In most of the European countries there was an urgent need of houses. Throughout the war there had been a cessation not only of building but of repairs. The shortage of houses in the last months of 1919 amounted to between 250,000 and a million homes in Britain alone. Conditions in France and Germany were even worse. Multitudes of people were living in a state of exasperating congestion, and the most shameless profiteering in apartments and houses was going on. It was a difficult but not an impossible situation. Given the same enthusiasm and energy and self-sacrifice that had tided over the monstrous crisis of 1916, the far easier task of providing a million houses could have been performed in a year or so. But there had been corners in building materials, transport was in a disordered state, and it did not *pay* private enterprise to build houses at any rents within the means of the people who needed them. Private enterprise, therefore, so far from bothering about the public need of housing, did nothing but corner and speculate in rents and sub-letting. It now demanded grants in aid from the State—in order to build at a profit.

And as another example of the inadequacy of a profiteering system to solve the problems of the time, there was a great crowding and dislocation of goods at the depots because there was insufficient road transport. There was an urgent want of cheap automobiles to move about goods and workers. But private enterprise in the automobile industry imagined it would be far more profitable to produce splendid and costly cars for those whom the war had made rich. The munition factories built with ready money could have been converted very readily into factories for the mass production of cheap automobiles, but private enterprise had insisted upon these factories being sold by the State, and would neither meet the public need itself nor let the State do so.

So, too, with the world in the direst discomfort for need of shipping, private enterprise insisted upon the shutting down of the newly-constructed State shipyards.

Currency was dislocated everywhere, but private enterprise was busy buying and selling francs or marks and intensifying the trouble.

These are facts that the historian of mankind is obliged to note with as little comment as possible. Private enterprise in Europe in 1919 and 1920 displayed neither will nor capacity for meeting the urgent needs of the time. So soon as it was released from control, it ran naturally into speculation, cornering, and luxury production. It followed the line of maximum profit. It displayed no sense of its own dangers; and it resisted any attempt to restrain and moderate its profits and make itself serviceable, even in its own interest.

And this went on in the face of the most striking manifestations of the extreme recalcitrance on the part of the European masses to the prolonged continuance of the privations and inconveniences they suffered. In 1913 these masses were living as they had lived since birth; they were habituated to the life they led. The masses of 1919, on the other hand, had been uprooted everywhere, to go into the armies, to go into munition factories, and so on. They had lost their habits of acquiescence, and they were hardier and more capable of desperate action. Great multitudes of men had gone through such brutalizing training as, for instance, bayonet drill; they had learnt to be ferocious, and to think less either of killing or being killed. Social unrest had become, therefore, much more dangerous.

It was not that the masses had or imagined that they had the plan of a new social, political, and economic system. They had not, and they did not believe they had. The defects we have pointed out in the socialist scheme were no secret from them. It was a much more dangerous state of affairs than that. It was that they were becoming so disgusted with the current system, with its luxury, its waste, and its general misery, that they did not care what happened afterwards so long as they could destroy it. It was a return to a state of mind comparable to that which had rendered possible the debacle of the Roman Empire.

Everywhere in Europe the forces of social revolution began to stir, and most notably in Italy and Germany. Communism displayed exceptional aggressiveness in Italy. In various parts of Italy there appeared communist mayors, and in Bologna there was a forcible attempt to put communist principles into operation. In July, 1920, Giolitti, a neutralist who had opposed the war, replaced Signor Nitti as head of the government. He made various experiments in co-partnership between the industrial workers and their employers. In September many steel works and other factories were seized by the workers, who began to operate them on socialist lines. These proceedings received the support and endorsement of the government.

The slide towards communism continued during 1921 in the face of a gathering opposition, and there was rioting and violence in Florence, Trieste, Puglia, Pisa and many other places. The socializing measures of Giolitti had produced a violent reaction among the classes interested in private property, and an organization of young men had grown up, the Fascisti, who affected shock heads, black shirts, nationalism of the intensest sort, and anti-socialism. They met violence with violence, they carried it to new extremes, they established an anti-socialist terror. They found a leader of great energy and slight scruples, Benito Mussolini, formerly a radical journalist. Under his skilful direction the Fascisti speedily outdistanced the sporadic and sentimental outrages of the communists. Liberal leaders and writers were waylaid and beaten with clubs. A favourite method of the Fascisti was the administration of over-doses of castor oil to those who criticized their proceedings unfavourably. Murder, beatings, torture, the burning of the private property of liberal thinkers, became the methods of social control in Italy. The shadow of communism was replaced by the reality of brigand rule.

By October, 1922, the Fascisti had grown to such strength that they constituted a veritable army and could march upon Rome. The Cabinet proclaimed martial law and prepared to fight, but the king refused his assent to these measures and invited Mussolini to take control of affairs. This he did. He became head of the government, and agreed to disband his blackshirts—a promise which was never kept. The Fascisti were put in control of the police and armed forces of the country, the freedom of the Press was destroyed, elections became a farce, political opponents continued to be assaulted, terrorized, murdered; and Mussolini, under the title of *Il Duce*, became virtual dictator, the king falling back into relative obscurity.

For a time a certain rough economic efficiency was restored to Italy, greatly applauded in some circles abroad. But the true interest of the Italian situation to the rest of the world lay in the fact that it manifested in the harshest and crudest forms the quality of the extreme left and the extreme right in contemporary human affairs, the inpracticability and incapacity of the former and the readiness with which private ownership and enterprise, when put upon the defensive, can degenerate into violence and brigandage. Italy, like Russia, had become a jail for every free-minded person. The creeping disease of illegality, upon which we have already animadverted in our criticism of *Stalky and Co.*, was in full flower in both these

countries. But Italy does not stand alone in this matter; it is merely the most fully developed instance of a universal tendency of the times. In Germany, France and Great Britain the Fascisti were to find rivals and imitators, but so far their activities in these countries had amounted to a nuisance rather than a tyranny.

§ 2

President Wilson at Versailles.

We have noted the general social and economic disorder of the European communities in the years following the war, before giving any account of the work of world settlement that centred on the Peace Conference at Paris, because the worried and pre-occupied state of everyone concerned with private problems of income, prices, employment and the like goes far to explain the jaded atmosphere in which that conference addressed itself to the vast task before it. One cannot expect a vigorous public life when individual lives are confused and distressed.

The story of the conference turns very largely upon the adventure of one particular man, one of those men whom accident or personal quality picks out as a type to lighten the task of the historian. We have in the course of this history found it very helpful at times to focus our attention upon some individual—Buddha, Alexander the Great, Yuan Chwang, the Emperor Frederick II, Charles V, and Napoleon I, for example—and to let him by reflection illuminate the period in which he lived. The conclusion of the Great War can be seen most easily as the rise of the American president, President Wilson, to predominant importance in the world's hopes and attention, and his failure to justify that predominance.

President Wilson (1856-1924) had previously been a prominent student and teacher of constitutional law and the political sciences generally. He had held various professorial chairs, and had been President of Princeton University (New Jersey). There is a long list of books to his credit, and they show a mind rather exclusively directed to American history and American politics. He retired from academic life, and was elected Democratic Governor of New Jersey in 1910. In 1913 he became the Democratic presidential candidate, and as a consequence of a violent quarrel between ex-President Roosevelt and President Taft, which split the dominant Republican party, President of the United States.

The events of August, 1914, seem to have taken President

Wilson, like the rest of his fellow-countrymen, by surprise. We find him cabling an offer of his services as a mediator on August 3rd. Then, for a time, he and America watched the conflict. At first neither the American people nor their President seem to have had a very clear or profound understanding of that long-gathered catastrophe. Their tradition for a century had been to disregard the problems of the Old World, and it was not to be lightly changed. The imperialistic arrogance of the German Court and the alleged inclination of the German military authorities towards melodramatic "frightfulness," their invasion of Belgium, their use of poison gas, and the nuisance of their submarine campaign, created a deepening hostility to Germany in the United States as the war proceeded; but the tradition of political abstinence and the deep-rooted persuasion that America possessed a political morality altogether superior to European conflicts, restrained the President from active intervention. He adopted a lofty tone. He professed to be unable to judge the causes and justice of the Great War. It was largely his high pacific attitude that secured his re-election as President for a second term.

But the world is not to be mended by merely regarding evil-doers with an expression of rather indiscriminating disapproval. By the end of 1916 the Germans had been encouraged to believe that under no circumstances whatever would the United States fight, and in 1917 they began their unrestricted submarine warfare and the sinking of American ships without notice. President Wilson and the American people were dragged into the war by this supreme folly. And, also, they were dragged into a reluctant attempt to define their relations to Old-World politics in some other terms than those of mere aloofness. Their thoughts and temper changed very rapidly. They came into the war side by side with the Allies, but not in any pact with the Allies. They came into the war, in the name of their own modern civilization, to punish and end an intolerable political and military situation.

Slow and belated judgments are sometimes the best judgments. In a series of "notes," too long and various for detailed treatment in this *Outline*, thinking aloud, as it were, in the hearing of all mankind, President Wilson sought to state the essential differences of the American State from the Great Powers of the Old World. He unfolded a conception of international relationships that came like a gospel, like the hope of a better world, to the whole eastern hemisphere.

Secret agreements were to cease, "nations" were to determine

their own destinies, militarist aggression was to cease, the sea-ways were to be free to all mankind. These commonplaces of American thought, these secret desires of every sane man, came like a great light upon the darkness of anger and conflict in Europe. At last, men felt, the ranks of diplomacy were broken, the veils of Great Power "policy" were rent in twain. Here, with authority, with the strength of a powerful new nation behind it, was the desire of the common man throughout the world, plainly said.

Manifestly there was needed some overriding instrument of government to establish world law and maintain these broad and liberal generalizations upon human intercourse. A number of schemes had floated in men's minds for the attainment of that end. In particular, there was a movement for some sort of world league, a "League of Nations." The American President adopted this phrase and sought

to realize it. An essential condition of the peace he sought was he declared to be this federal organ. This League of Nations was to be the final court of appeal in international affairs. It was to be the substantial realization of the peace. Here, again, he awakened a tremendous echo.

President Wilson was for a time the spokesman of a new age. Throughout the war, and for some little time after it had ended, he held, so far as the Old World was concerned, that exalted position. But in America where they knew him better there were doubts. And, writing as we do now, with the wisdom of subsequent events, we can understand these doubts. America, throughout a century and more of detachment and security had developed new ideals and formulæ of political thought, without realizing with any intensity that, under conditions of stress and danger, these ideals and formulæ might have to be passionately sustained. To her community many things were platitudes that had to the Old-World communities, entangled still in ancient political complications, the quality of a saving gospel. President Wilson was responding to the thought and conditions of his own people and his own country, based on a liberal tradition that had first found its full expression



President Wilson

in English speech; but to Europe and Asia he seemed to be thinking and saying, for the first time in history, things hitherto undeveloped and altogether secret. And that misconception he may have shared.

We are dealing here with an able and successful professor of political science, who did not fully realize what he owed to his contemporaries and the literary and political atmosphere he had breathed throughout his life; and who passed very rapidly, after his re-election as President, from the mental attitudes of a political leader to those of a Messiah. His "notes" are a series of explorations of the elements of the world situation. When at last, in his address to Congress of January 8th, 1918, he produced his Fourteen Points as a definite statement of the American peace intentions, they were, as a statement, far better in their spirit than in their arrangement and matter.

This document demanded open agreements between nations and an end to secret diplomacy, free navigation of the high seas, free commerce, disarmament, and a number of political readjustments upon the lines of national independence. Finally, in the Fourteenth Point, it required "a general association of nations" to guarantee the peace of the world. He sought "peace without victory."

These Fourteen Points had an immense reception throughout the world. Here at last seemed a peace for reasonable men everywhere, as good and acceptable to honest and decent Germans and Russians as to honest and decent Frenchmen and Englishmen and Belgians; and for some months the whole world was lit by faith in Wilson. Could they have been made the basis of a world settlement in 1919, they would forthwith have opened a new and more hopeful era in human affairs.

But, as we must tell, they did not do that. There was about President Wilson a certain narrow egotism; there was in the generation of people in the United States to whom this great occasion came—a generation born in security, reared in plenty and, so far as history goes, in ignorance—a generation remote from the tragic issues that had made Europe grave—a certain superficiality and lightness of mind. It was not that the American people were superficial by nature and necessity, but that they had never been deeply stirred by the idea of a human community larger than their own. It was an intellectual, but not a moral, conviction with them. One had on the one hand these new people of the New World, with their new ideas, their finer and better ideas, of peace and world righteousness, and on the other the old, bitter, deeply entangled peoples of the Great

Power system; and the former were crude and rather childish in their immense inexperience, and the latter were seasoned and bitter and intricate.

The theme of this clash of the raw idealist youthfulness of a new age with the experienced ripeness of the old was treated years ago by that great novelist, Henry James, in a very typical story called *Daisy Miller*. It is the pathetic story of a frank, trustful, high-minded, but rather simple-minded American girl, with a real disposition towards righteousness and a great desire for a "good time," and how she came to Europe and was swiftly entangled and put in the wrong, and at last driven to welcome death by the complex tortuousness and obstinate limitations of the older world. There have been a thousand variants of that theme in real life, a thousand such transatlantic tragedies, and the story of President Wilson is one of them. But it is not to be supposed, because the new thing succumbs to the old infections, that is the final condemnation of the new thing.

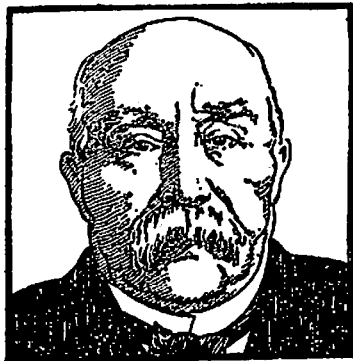
Probably no fallible human being manifestly trying to do his best amidst overwhelming circumstances has been subjected to such minute, searching, and pitiless criticism as President Wilson. He is blamed for conducting the war and the ensuing peace negotiations on strictly party lines. He remained, it is charged against him, the President representing the American Democratic Party, when circumstances conspired to make him the representative of the general interests of mankind. He made no attempt to incorporate with himself such great American leaders as ex-President Roosevelt, ex-President Taft, and the like. He did not draw fully upon the moral and intellectual resources of the States; he made the whole issue too personal, and he surrounded himself with merely personal adherents. And a grave error was his decision to come to the Peace Conference himself. Nearly every experienced critic seems to be of opinion that he should have remained in America, in the rôle of America, speaking occasionally as if a nation spoke. Throughout the concluding years of the war he had, by that method, achieved an unexampled position in the world.

Says Doctor Dillon:¹ "Europe, when the President touched its shores, was as clay ready for the creative potter. Never before were the nations so eager to follow a Moses who would take them to the long-promised land where wars are prohibited and blockades unknown. And to their thinking he was that great leader. In France men bowed down before him with awe and affection. Labour leaders in Paris told me that they

¹ *The Peace Conference.*

shed tears of joy in his presence, and that their comrades would go through fire and water to help him to realize his noble schemes. To the working classes in Italy his name was a heavenly clarion at the sound of which the earth would be renewed. The Germans regarded him and his humane doctrine as their sheet-anchor of safety. The fearless Herr Muehlon said: 'If President Wilson were to address the Germans, and pronounce a severe sentence upon them, they would accept it with resignation and without

a murmur and set to work at once.' In German-Austria his fame was that of a saviour, and the mere mention of his name brought balm to the suffering and surcease of sorrow to the afflicted. . . ."



M. Clemenceau

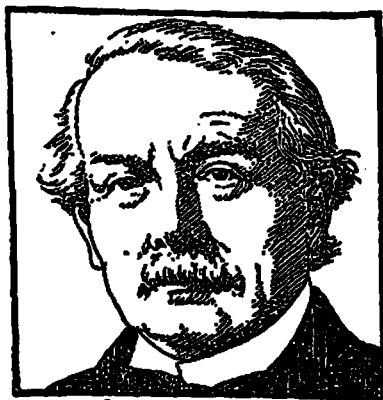
Such was the overpowering expectation of the audience to which President Wilson prepared to show himself. He reached France on board the *George Washington* in December, 1918.

He brought his wife with him. That seemed, no doubt, a perfectly natural and proper

thing to an American mind. Quite a number of the American representatives brought their wives. Unhappily, a social quality, nay, almost a tourist quality, was introduced into the world settlement by these ladies. Transport facilities were limited, and most of them arrived in Europe with a radiant air of privilege. They came as if they came to a treat. They were, it was intimated, seeing Europe under exceptionally interesting circumstances. They would visit Chester, or Warwick, or Windsor, *en route*—for they might not have a chance of seeing these celebrated places again. Important interviews would be broken off to get in a visit to some "old historical mansion." This may seem a trivial matter to note in a History of Mankind, but it was such small human things as this that threw a miasma of futility over the Peace Conference of 1919. In a little while one discovered that Wilson, the Hope of Mankind, had vanished, and that all the illustrated fashion papers contained pictures of a delighted tourist and his wife, grouped smilingly with crowned heads and such-like enviable company. . . . It is so easy to be wise after the event, and to perceive that he should not have come over.

The men he had chiefly to deal with, for example M. Clemenceau (France), Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour (Britain), Baron Sonnino and Signor Orlando (Italy), were men of widely dissimilar historical traditions. But in one respect they resembled him and appealed to his sympathies. They, too, were party politicians, who had led their country through the war. Like himself they had failed to grasp the necessity of entrusting the work of settlement to more specially qualified men.

"They were the merest novices in international affairs. Geography, ethnology, psychology, and political history were sealed books to them. Like the Rector of Louvain University, who told Oliver Goldsmith that, as he had become the head of that institution without knowing Greek, he failed to see why it should be taught there, the chiefs of State, having obtained the highest position in their respective countries without more than an inkling of international affairs, were unable to realize the importance of mastering them or the impossibility of repairing the omission as they went along. . . .¹



Mr. Lloyd George

"What they lacked, however, might in some perceptible degree have been supplied by enlisting as their helpers men more happily endowed than themselves. But they deliberately chose mediocrities. It is a mark of genial spirits that they are well served, but the plenipotentiaries of the Conference were not characterized by it. Away in the background some of them had families or casual prompters to whose counsels they were wont to listen, but many of the adjoints who moved in the limelight of the world-stage were gritless and pithless.

"As the heads of the principal Governments implicitly claimed to be the authorized spokesmen of the human race, and endowed with unlimited powers, it is worth noting that this claim was boldly challenged by the people's organs in the Press. Nearly all the journals read by the masses objected from the first to the dictatorship of the group of Premiers, Mr. Wilson being excepted. . . ."

The restriction upon our space in this *Outline* will not allow

¹ Dillon, *The Peace Conference*.

us to tell here how the Peace Conference shrank from a Council of Ten to a Council of Four (Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando), and how it became a conference less and less like a frank and open discussion of the future of mankind, and more and more like some old-fashioned diplomatic conspiracy. Great and wonderful had been the hopes that had gathered to Paris. "The Paris of the Conference," says Dr. Dillon, "ceased to be the capital of France. It became a vast cosmopolitan caravanserai teeming with unwonted aspects of life and turmoil, filled with curious samples of the races, tribes, and tongues of four continents who came to watch and wait for the mysterious to-morrow.

"An Arabian Nights' touch was imparted to the dissolving panorama by strange visitants from Tartary and Kurdistan, Corea and Azerbeijan, Armenia, Persia, and the Hedjaz—men with patriarchal beards and scimitar-shaped noses, and others from desert and oasis, from Samarkand and Bokhara. Turbans and fezes, sugar-loaf hats and head-gear resembling episcopal mitres, old military uniforms devised for the embryonic armies of new states on the eve of perpetual peace, snowy-white burnouses, flowing mantles, and graceful garments like the Roman toga, contributed to create an atmosphere of dreamy unreality in the city where the grimmest of realities were being faced and coped with.

"Then came the men of wealth, of intellect, of industrial enterprise, and the seed-bearers of the ethical new ordering, members of economic committees from the United States, Britain, Italy, Poland, Russia, India, and Japan, representatives of naphtha industries and far-off coal mines, pilgrims, fanatics and charlatans from all climes, priests of all religions, preachers of every doctrine, who mingled with princes, field-m Marshals, statesmen, anarchists, builders-up and pullers-down. All of them burned with desire to be near to the crucible in which the political and social systems of the world were to be melted and recast.

"Every day, in my walks, in my apartment, or at restaurants, I met emissaries from lands and peoples whose very names had seldom been heard of before in the West. A delegation from the Pont-Euxine Greeks called on me, and discoursed of their ancient cities of Trebizond, Samsoun, Tripoli, Kerassund, in which I resided many years ago, and informed me that they, too, desired to become welded into an independent Greek Republic, and had come to have their claims allowed. The Albanians were represented by my old friend Turkhan Pasha

on the one hand, and by my friend Essad Pasha on the other—the former desirous of Italy's protection, the latter demanding complete independence. Chinamen, Japanese, Coreans, Hindus, Kirghizes, Lesghiens, Circassians, Mingrelians, Buryats, Malays, and Negroes and Negroids from Africa and America were among the tribes and tongues forgathered in Paris to watch the rebuilding of the political world system and to see where they 'came in.' . . ."

To this thronging, amazing Paris, agape for a new world, came President Wilson, and found its gathering forces dominated by a personality narrower, in every way more limited and beyond comparison more forcible than himself: the French Premier, M. Clemenceau. At the instance of President Wilson, M. Clemenceau was elected President of the Conference. "It was," said President Wilson, "a special tribute to the sufferings and sacrifices of France." And that, unhappily, sounded the keynote of the Conference, whose sole business should have been with the future of mankind.

Georges Benjamin Clemenceau was an old journalist politician, a great denouncer of abuses, a great upsetter of governments, a doctor who had, while a municipal councillor, kept a free clinic, and a fierce, experienced duellist. None of his duels ended fatally, but he faced them with great intrepidity. He had passed from the medical school to republican journalism in the days of the Empire. In those days he was an extremist of the Left. He was for a time a teacher in America, and he married, and was afterwards divorced from, an American wife. He was thirty in the eventful year 1871. He returned to France after Sedan, and flung himself into the stormy politics of the defeated nation with great fire and vigour. Thereafter, France was his world, the France of vigorous journalism, high-spirited personal quarrels, challenges, confrontations, scenes, dramatic effects, and witticisms at any cost. He was what people call "fierce stuff," he was nicknamed the "Tiger," and he seems to have been rather proud of his nickname. Professional patriot rather than statesman and thinker, this was the man whom the war had flung up to misrepresent the fine mind and the generous spirit of France.

His limitations had a profound effect upon the Conference, which was further coloured by the dramatic resort, for the purpose of signature, to the very Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in which Germany had triumphed and proclaimed her unity. There the Germans were to sign.

To M. Clemenceau and to France, in that atmosphere, the

war ceased to seem a world war; it was merely the sequel of the previous conflict of the Terrible Year, the downfall and punishment of offending Germany. "The world had to be made safe for democracy," said President Wilson. That from M. Clemenceau's expressed point of view was "talking like Jesus Christ." The world had to be made safe for Paris. "Talking like Jesus Christ" seemed a very ridiculous thing to many of those brilliant rather than sound diplomatists and politicians who made the year 1919 supreme in the history of human insufficiency.

(Another flash of the "Tiger's" wit, it may be noted, was that President Wilson with his Fourteen Points was "worse" than God Almighty. "Le bon Dieu" only had ten. . . .)

M. Clemenceau sat with Signor Orlando in the more central chairs of a semicircle of four in front of the fire, says Keynes. He wore a black frockcoat and grey suède gloves, which he never removed during these sessions. He was, it is to be noted, the only one of these four reconstructors of the world who could understand and speak both French and English.

The aims of M. Clemenceau were simple and in a manner attainable. He wanted all the settlement of 1871 undone. He wanted Germany punished as though she was a uniquely sinful nation and France a sinless martyr land. He wanted Germany so crippled and devastated as never more to be able to stand up to France. He wanted to hurt and humiliate Germany more than France had been hurt and humiliated in 1871. He did not care if in breaking Germany Europe was broken; his mind did not go far enough beyond the Rhine to understand that possibility. He accepted President Wilson's League of Nations as an excellent proposal if it would guarantee the security of France whatever she did, but he preferred a binding alliance of the United States and England to maintain, uphold, and glorify France under practically any circumstances. He wanted wider opportunities for the exploitation of Syria, North Africa, and so forth by Parisian financial groups.

He wanted indemnities to recuperate France, loans, gifts, and tributes to France, glory and homage to France. France had suffered, and France had to be rewarded. Belgium, Russia, Serbia, Poland, Armenia, Britain, Germany, and Austria had all suffered, too; all mankind had suffered, but what would you? That was not his affair. These were the supers of a drama in which France was for him the star. . . . In much the same spirit Signor Orlando seems to have sought the welfare of Italy.

Mr. Lloyd George brought to the Council of Four the subtlety of a Welshman, the intricacy of a European, and an urgent