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MR. HARDING'S ancestry does not interest us in the least. It may be true, as cynics say, that Harding's election proves the truth of the old American adage that "any boy born in America may become President," but whatever the unpleasant truth of politics, the only test of a Presidential candidate ought to be his fitness for the office as proved by his own record. The scandalous underhandedness of the whispering campaign of the Democrats, and the indignation of the Republicans at the suggestion that their candidate might have Negro blood in his veins, only prove the spuriousness of all their protestations of belief in equal rights for black and white. It is to the credit of the *World* that alone among the New York newspapers it spoke out in this matter declaring that there was in the story "nothing that reflects in the slightest degree upon his [Harding's] character or his capacity." It is a reproach to the intelligence of the American people that a trace of black blood should be a bar to any job, office, or position for which the capacity of a man fits him, and it is moreover, a crime against the very soul of our institutions and our democracy to talk of the suggestion of Negro blood in anyone's veins as an "unspeakable disgrace."

IF you call a sheep's tail a leg, the answer to the old conundrum runs, a sheep still has only four legs. And if you call black white, and say that all is and has been well in Haiti, black is still black and conditions in Haiti are unchanged by the statement. All is harmonious at the

sessions of Mr. Daniels's committee of admirals investigating Haiti, and black is painstakingly labelled white, or gray at most; General Barnett has reduced the Haitian casualty list from 3,250 to 2,250 (which is still 183 Haitians to every American killed) and, after first reporting that 1,763 Haitians were killed in the attack on Port-au-Prince on January 15, 1920, and in the operations immediately following, he now gives ninety as the total number of Haitians killed in all the first six months of 1920. The "indiscriminate killing" is being reduced to two cases; in fact it is perfectly plain that this investigation is no investigation, but a mere deprecation. Senator McCormick promises a Congressional committee which will really investigate. If it investigates fearlessly and fully, on the spot and in the United States, and calls before it, not the commanding officers, but privates in the Marine Corps and Haitians, it will learn that but a small fraction of the truth has yet been told, and that the story of torture, coercion, and murder in Haiti and Santo Domingo is one to bring a hot blush of shame to every decent American cheek. The present official whitewashing only adds to the heat of it.

UNCHANGING is the imperialist mind and unaffected by differences in climate or by the experiences of others. The legal murder of Edith Cavell was worth at least two army corps in recruits to the British forces; no other single event on land did so much to consolidate the public opinion of the world against Germany. It is, and will always be, a classic example of German militarist stupidity. But that the English imperialists have learned nothing from it is perfectly apparent from the readiness with which they have sacrificed Terence MacSwiney. Doubtless Lloyd George, Carson, Balfour and Bonar Law are quite satisfied that the law has been thus "vindicated"—poor short-sighted imperialists that they are, they can look no further than Von Bissing. If they could, they would realize that the power of that man's self-sacrifice has thrilled the world. Even our jingo newspapers have spoken respectfully of him. The *New York Herald*, ultra-conservative, declares, that in starving himself MacSwiney richly fed the Sinn Fein cause. From Ireland comes the word that, long delayed as it was, the death of the Lord Mayor of Cork "firmly united all the Republicans and their sympathizers. Terence MacSwiney has accomplished his purpose." "The French press," reads a cable to the *New York Tribune*, "is unanimous in expressing sympathy with the Sinn Feiners. Some give expression to strong anti-British sentiments." Had the English Government let him out after twenty days, his self-starvation would have been forgotten in a week. As it is, a whole world grieves.

WHILE thousands of men and women watched the body of Terence MacSwiney laid to rest in the "Republican plot" of the cemetery at Cork, while hundreds of thousands in Ireland mourned and hundreds of thousands in America gathered in great meetings to pledge their faith to the nation that Terence MacSwiney died to save, while

the world seemed hushed in momentary realization of the value of human heroism, the Irish town of Templemore was still quivering after a night of terror at the hands of a band of drunken British regulars. That British troops should avenge the killing of three soldiers by an armed attack with petrol and hatchets and guns on the innocent inhabitants of an undefended town would be bad at any time. But that the moment when Ireland seemed sobered and softened rather than inflamed by the death of her martyrs should be chosen for this exhibition of military terror vividly illuminates the grave danger of the situation. We wonder if the British fully realize the effect of such methods on the American people as well as the Irish. Not only the hundreds of thousands of Americans that filled halls and stadiums in New York and Boston and Philadelphia to honor Terence MacSwiney, but the great mass of decent men and women everywhere are being filled with a dangerous resentment. Each hour renders clearer the need of a rapid solution of the present crisis if the peace of the world is not to be endangered.

THE renunciation last week by Great Britain, two years after the cessation of hostilities, of the right of confiscation of German property is a notable act of conciliation and good faith. It marks a long step toward peace and a return to the fair and honorable dealing which war makes anathema. Elsewhere in this issue *The Nation* prints an article on our alien property custody—or rather confiscation—which makes clear our duty to follow promptly Great Britain's example and to erase as far as possible a discreditable and wholly unnecessary chapter of our war making, one whose continuance brings needless suffering and fear of total loss of income and property to thousands of women and children, widows and orphans, aged and infirm whose sole support was derived from funds invested on this side.

A BIT of comedy and a heavy dose of tragedy, thrice-told fish-tales, a little sinister intrigue and a little unlimited ignorance—stir them up with a pinch of red ink, and the recipe still holds for Russian news, good, bad, or indifferent. The proportions vary, but the ingredients are the same. Now we have it on the word of Chicherin that Mr. Washington D. Vanderlip and a group of Pacific Coast "magnates" have taken from the Soviet Government a concession for Kamchatka. The magnates do not deny it, and Mr. Bainbridge Colby, our ineffable Secretary of State, even adds to the story a morsel of his own usual authoritative information. He says that an American official in the Baltic told him that somebody said that H. G. Wells said that Lenin said that Vanderlip said that he in some way represented Mr. Harding. Well, it may be so, and then again it may not; the fact that Mr. Colby says it sheds little light on the matter. But the Kamchatka peninsula is a bleak and barren region, where a really warm summer day sends the temperature up to 54; it is very far from Soviet Russia, and if it is under anyone's control today, it is under Japanese control. So the news that the owner of that bitter anti-union sheet, the *Los Angeles Times*, and Mr. E. L. Doheny, of Mexican oil fame, were interested with Mr. Vanderlip in opening up Soviet Russia, via Kamchatka, to foreign trade, becomes more curious still, and the fact that all these magnates come from a Japanese-hating section may shed even more light on the proportions of the ingredients of the present recipe.

CUBA'S moratorium, like the Japanese panic of April and May, is but an acute local symptom of the world process of deflation through which all nations will have to pass in the coming decade. When the bottom dropped out of the silk and cotton markets, and the price of raw materials was cut in half, Japanese merchants who had speculated on the basis of the inflated war and armistice prices were caught, and banks and stock exchanges were closed while temporary adjustments were being made. Cuba's difficulties are similarly caused by the sensational drop in the price of sugar and rice. Sugar alone accounts for three-quarters of Cuba's total exports, and when the artificially high prices in the United States broke, Cuban banks, which had been lending on the basis of prices one hundred and fifty per cent in excess of those now prevailing, were inevitably short. American bankers can tide Cuba over her present crisis, but the adjustment must be disastrous for many who had speculated upon the high prices. A similar process is inevitable elsewhere; and just as the burden of war prices was borne by the workmen and middle classes, so the onus of deflation is discharged upon the workmen in the form of lowered wages and jobs abolished, while retail prices drag far behind raw materials in the promised price drop.

FROM Berlin we have received a cablegram begging for American aid because the Allies are now demanding 810,000 cows in four yearly instalments in addition to the 140,000 required within three months of the signature of the Treaty of Versailles as part of the restitution to France and to Belgium. If Germany obeys this order, so the cablegram reads, it means the death of thousands upon thousands of children—most of them born since the Armistice—and a grave blow at the vitality of the aged and the sick. We heartily wish that the Allies might have played the part of good Samaritans, particularly as there is now far less distress for lack of milk in Belgium or France than in the countries of their recent enemies. Berlin now has only 190,000 liters of milk per day as against 1,000,000 before the war. But if the Allies insist upon their pound of flesh, the Germans must do their share—their rulers had no thought of the French and Belgian children during the war. As the Germans promptly yielded the ships and docks demanded of them, are giving up their arms and are lately delivering the coal pledged in larger than specified quantities, so will they doubtless yield the cattle asked. But this means that The Friends' Relief Committee in Germany will have to work harder than ever and that American generosity will have to make still greater sacrifices for the innocent victims of the Versailles Treaty. It is a great opportunity for our German-Americans and we hope that they will live up to it. They have by no means gone deeply into their pockets—not even in response to Mr. Hoover's appeals. There are ships in plenty to be had, and there has been such a marked falling off in the export of condensed milk from this country that it would be a godsend to the industry if it should now receive large orders for shipment abroad.

CIVIL war continues in the West Virginia mine region, and civil war is likely to break out at any time in the Alabama mines. Shootings, such as that of October 31, are more or less chronic in the company-owned towns of Mingo County, West Virginia, where the miners are unorganized, and until the conditions described by Mr. Arthur Gleason



in *The Nation* last May are remedied murder is likely to continue. The mines of Alabama have been under martial law for a month, and the State Federation of Labor has just demanded the impeachment of Governor Kilby for defying the State Constitution in suppressing the civil rights of free speech and free assembly. The Alabama mines are non-union mines; they defied the Federal government during the war and refused to carry out many of the Garfield awards; today they are surrounded by barbed wire fences, and workers are allowed to enter only upon showing a pass. American Federation of Labor organizers on occasion have been tarred and feathered and driven out of the mine towns; today, by order of Brigadier General Steiner, commanding the State troops in the region, mass meetings and processions are forbidden, and the unions cannot hold even private business meetings except upon giving notice to the troops, who sit in at these meetings and occasionally stop them to arrest a speaker who, they think, goes "too far." Such repression inevitably breeds revolt; but it has achieved unintended good in that it has given rise to a new sense of comradeship between colored and white miners.

IS the general public for militarism? Delaware County, New York, answered that question with a decided and unmistakable No! in this year's primaries. John D. Clarke, candidate for Congress on the Republican ticket, came out squarely against peace-time conscription. His opponent declined to take a stand on the matter. The largest number of voters turned out that the county has ever seen, double the number of last year, and gave 3,543 votes to Clarke out of something over 4,700. The vote for the Republican candidate for Governor was several hundred less than for Congressman, so that there can be no question where the interests and sympathies of the people lay. Some day there may be a national referendum on the same question, and there is little doubt that the answer, if not perhaps so overwhelming, would be the same. Meanwhile, we pay our warmest respects to the editor of the *Walton Reporter*, a Democratic journal in a Republican county, who by his brave pen has sent this Congressman to Washington—nomination is equivalent to election. No wonder this gallant editor, Mr. John P. White, has won for his paper the largest circulation of any rural weekly in New York State. A Democrat who can control a Republican primary is a wonder anywhere. Fortunately his cause was of the best.

IN the "Clansman," that epic of one hundred per cent American race hatred, the hooded knights of the Ku Klux find guilty and "execute" a Negro because the Klan physicians (all leading citizens, these clansmen!) when peering into the terrified victim's eye discovered upon the retina an image of the "slain girl's face." Retinal photography is, of course, a myth, as impossible a feat as recovering the sound of an explosion by listening at the blast victim's ear. The night-riders of 1920 hand out the same brand of "rough justice" but their sphere of activity is much enlarged. Take it from the words of their own "Imperial Wizard," Colonel William J. Simmons. "It is designed," he says, "to memorialize the clan of the reconstruction period and to perpetuate the principles for which it stood." (That means you, Negroes!) "Its membership is composed of native-born white American citizens who owe no allegiance to any foreign power or organization, religious or political." (No Catholics need apply.) "It stands for the preservation of

American ideals and institutions, the protection of the home and the chastity of womanhood, the maintenance of the blood-bought rights and liberties of the Anglo-Saxon Race." And that, of course, includes labor leaders who are against the "blood-bought right" of exploiting workers, cotton ginners who will not cooperate in the "American ideal" of keeping the price of cotton up, and persons in general toward whom an imperial, royal or ducal wizard may happen to feel feudishly inclined. Yes, it is wholly natural that the renaissance knights have enlarged their scope and, in addition to "the principles for which it stood," are carrying a side-line of anti-Catholic, anti-labor, anti-liberal propaganda.

IN discussing, in our issue of September 25, the Root plan for an international court we pointed out that the court could not rise higher than its source, which was the Covenant of the League of Nations, and that the Covenant hamstrung the court by specifying that a party to a dispute could not be brought into court save by his consent. The Root draft undertook to overrule this by providing obligatory jurisdiction. Last week it was submitted to the Council of the League of Nations at Brussels, which promptly declared that it could not recommend the obligatory jurisdiction for the precise reason that the plan "went further than the Covenant." If our forecast was correct, we take only a melancholy satisfaction in it. For any world court to succeed, obligatory jurisdiction over all parties to a dispute is essential. The most discouraging feature of it all is that Norway and Denmark, two small nations, were the ones that protested at Brussels—the very type of nation that ought to cherish the idea of a court that could compel the attendance of any great bully of a country as well as the smallest member of the family of nations. Discouraging as this is, it simply means that there is more educational work to be done.

THE war and its aftermath have numbed the power of quick and sensitive sympathy. What can the individual do against a world in ruins? But the intellectual workers of America must let no fatalism or sluggishness overcome them in the matter of the distress of the creative spirits of Europe. This distress is by no means confined to Central or Eastern Europe. A recent letter from M. Paul Fort, assuredly one of the glories of contemporary France, depicts his pitiful case. With his aged parents, his wife and three small children, he is living in a single unheated attic room. The *Mercure de France* will not publish his new volume. Paper is too high. In the name of his war services he applied for government relief. But France has no funds today for the men and the interests on which her true fame rests. Last summer Hugo von Hofmannsthal, once heir to a considerable estate, always an internationalist in the noblest sense, begged for nourishing food for his adolescent children. If such is the condition of men of the stature and reputation of Fort and Hofmannsthal, it is not difficult to picture to oneself the dire misery of lesser men—especially of those younger creative spirits in all the arts on whom, quite literally, rests not only the hope of their own country but of the world. Here is a task for our faculty and authors' clubs, our poetry societies and drama leagues, which will be far more productive of fine scholarship, of poetry and of drama than many of the activities in which they are now engaged. Bread cast upon these waters will come back in the form of permanent spiritual values.

## The Defeat of Wilsonism

TO the fable of Phaethon must one turn for any analogy to the fate which has overtaken Woodrow Wilson—the one fell from the heavens after his wild ride in the chariot of the Sun-God; the other has fallen from the highest pinnacle of human hopes and aspirations which any modern has attained. Rejected now by millions of his countrymen and countrywomen, he is at once the most tragic and the most guilty figure on the globe. Less than two years ago he sailed for Paris bearing with him a charter of liberty for the race; upon him were centered the faith and all the hopes of the plain people of the whole world. Alas, no one could measure the disappointment and the heartbreak with which those who had knelt before him, actually and spiritually, witnessed the revelation that the new Moses was of such common clay as to abandon the tablets upon which he had himself inscribed another Messianic code for the government of tribes and nations, that he had stooped to scramble in the market-place of the victors. At once the hero fell from his pedestal; months ago Europe lost the last vestige of interest in Woodrow Wilson. Today we have the final touch in the crushing repudiation of the man and his works by his own people, and the tragedy becomes the grimmer, the more pitiful, when one considers the physical suffering of the man, for whom every humane heart can hold only pity. History may yet judge that there was a pathological reason for the disaster of Paris.

For the philosopher and moralist there is material in this overwhelming tragedy for themes without end in the centuries to come. Terrible as it is, it is also profoundly stimulating, for, paradoxically, it is both disheartening and full of encouragement to struggling humanity. If Woodrow Wilson fell as fell the angels, let us rejoice that his true measure was so quickly taken, that so correct a judgment has been passed upon him. There is no room here for lasting discouragement and no time for vain regrets. The unerring instinct of the plain American people has, in a situation of extraordinary complexity, administered a rebuke so stunning as to carry its warning for generations to those who espouse liberalism and then betray it; to that most dangerous of politicians, the pseudo-liberal, who stops at no compromise, who in the supreme hour when liberalism is put to the test takes on the manner and thought of the reactionary; to the politician who, voicing the loftiest of ideals, finds himself unable to give these ideals reality and substance when the final opportunity is at hand. That in order to administer this rebuke the American people felt itself compelled to the choice of the candidate of a group who mean still less well for the Republic is the dark side to the shield. *The Nation* would have had the people destroy both the old parties; but one at a time has been the popular decision in the absence of a real and vigorous liberal party and liberal leadership. There are times when the fire seems entirely preferable to the frying pan—if one does not dare to try for the hearth beyond. In this instance it was perhaps inevitable to set the unequivocal seal of disapproval upon the man who has betrayed liberalism in its own home; who was too proud to fight and then fought unnecessarily; who was for peace without victory and then, five months later, was for complete and crushing defeat of the enemy; who by faithlessness to the ideals he helped to set up has done inestimable harm by destroying men's faith

in the attainment of the supreme objectives he outlined, and in the possibility of those ideals themselves. We are fortunate, indeed, that the verdict leaves no room for a Burleson or a Palmer to claim that their baseness has met with popular approval.

In place of moral instability and moral insincerity, reaction in all its stark nakedness is eminently preferable. The prime need is to doff sheep's clothing, to have men show clearly under which flag they fight. One can deal frankly with a Leonard Wood or a Harding because with them there is no danger of any illusions, or misunderstandings, or deceptions. One knows where they are to be found, however skilfully balanced their phrases, however apt their opportunism. At least they do not use the language of idealism to conceal their thoughts; they do not address their appeals to the stars when they are bent only upon things earthy, when they are frankly materialistic and frankly for the old order of special privilege and profit. The enemy will be in front and not in the rear ranks. Discouragement? Not for any real liberal. The horizon has cleared. Crass reaction we shall indubitably have to face, and repression and suppression as well. We shall see greater materialism, more control of the processes of government and of our social life by that invisible government which Woodrow Wilson entered office in 1912 to destroy and has left more firmly in the saddle than ever. But if the "New Freedom" is still in the offing, the louder the call to liberals to gird on their spiritual armor. The bigger and the clearer the fight, the better the struggle, the sooner will ideals be clarified and the lines be drawn.

As for Mr. Harding, nothing that he or his party or his campaign speeches have done has affected the result. His election is the gift of Mr. Wilson, and of no one else. The League of Nations debate has appealed only to the intellectuals, and so Mr. Harding's choice was fore-ordained months ago. He receives the greatest office in the world with the slightest record of achievement. Upon his lap has been placed this prize through no effort of his own, first by act of a small group of professional politicians at Chicago, and secondly, by the vote of the people given with no enthusiasm and often with the profoundest shame that such a choice should be laid before the American electorate. His negative campaign, his unimpressive personality, his inability to arouse popular interest in himself or his cause—all these bode ill for the success of his administration. For him we have few congratulations and much pity. The great economic forces which are shaping the destinies of the world are likely to have no mercy for him, since he neither understands them nor apprehends their existence. The champion of an outworn order, he can no more oppose the slow sweep of peaceable economic revolt than could King Canute the tide. Moreover, Mr. Harding has not been able to make it clear what position he will take toward the one great achievement of his party, which is the defeat of the Treaty. But of this we may be sure: He will labor in a fiercer light of publicity than has beaten upon any man of late years, and against the system that he represents will stand united the battalions of all the liberals and the progressives and the reformers and those supporters of the League of Nations who have really believed that it promises a better international order.