

ject that does not offer visible and immediate profit to Italy. There were enough unoccupied Italian troops to fill the valley from Belgrade to Nish and to make the Teutonic irruption into Serbia impracticable. Their presence would have kept Bulgaria out of the fray, and would have immobilized large Teutonic forces on the Hungarian frontier, with an advantage to the Allies as a whole that would have been incalculable. But was there not a chance that the profit might have fallen to Serbia or Russia? Doubtless there was; and the current variety of Italian statesmanship, unlike that of the great Cavour, takes no chances.

MUCH has been written about what should be the relation of a statesman to the people of a democracy. No better answer could be given than to point to Secretary Lane's annual report. The head of a highly technical department of the government, a man dealing daily with very complicated facts, Mr. Lane has nevertheless succeeded in making his work understandable and alluring. His report is an example of the art of popularizing knowledge in its most inspiring form. There is no condescension in it, but a gifted enthusiasm and the warm assurance that its writer is singularly in tune with the very best of America. "I make bold to express the hope that no other policy of this government may be allowed to stay the internal development of this country." This is its first sentence, and it goes on to express the fear that the strengthening of the military forces will leave the government "so immersed in matters military and naval as to overlook these matters of less dramatic and perhaps less immediate concern." These are words which might be printed on the little bits of cardboard and tacked up over the desk of every official, every editor, and every citizen of the country.

A Negligible Germany

IN another column there is printed an extremely disquieting letter from Mr. Hilaire Belloc about the temper of the prevailing public opinion among the western Allies in respect to Germany. It was written to correct what its author fears may be a misinterpretation of the French and English attitude. THE NEW REPUBLIC has published several articles by correspondents suggesting that French and English opinion would be satisfied with an inconclusive ending to the war or a minor victory. Mr. Belloc seeks to expose any such falsification of the facts. His experience, his birth and his traditions, and his large circle of acquaintances combine to give authority to his judgment about French and British opinion. From the fulness of his knowledge he de-

clares without hesitation or qualification that the two countries are united in the "determination to reduce the enemy to impotence." Any achievement short of this would be regarded by them as utterly and culpably inadequate. Neither does he leave us in any doubt as to the proposed contents of the phrase "reducing the enemy to impotence." He means the killing of the German nation as an effective political organism. A political unit known as Germany will of course survive the war, but it will have been started on a journey which is to end in negligibility or extinction.

The object of Mr. Belloc's letter is not to justify the "determination" of French and English public opinion but to establish its truth. He asserts parenthetically that if the "Prussian tradition . . . is allowed to survive," "the old and rooted civilization of Europe is doomed"; but what he is most interested in establishing is the reality of the intention to exterminate Germany as a political body, and its entire practicability. If the Allies get Germany down, they will never give her a chance to recover. As a matter of sound political policy they will protect themselves by doing to Germany what Rome did to Carthage, or what so many victors in the wars of the past have done to their vanquished foes.

Although Mr. Belloc is very much more of an authority on French and English public opinion than we are, we refuse to accept the fidelity of this report. Undoubtedly most of the official statements which have been made in public about the object for which the Allies are fighting assert rather less sharply the same general purpose of reducing Germany to political impotence. Undoubtedly also these statements reflect a widespread and sincere conviction held not only by the ruling classes in the Allied countries but by many of the people. But surely they express a temporary flood of angry and righteous resentment rather than the quality of determination necessary to carry the proposed program into effect. The deliberate policy of making the German nation politically negligible in the future history of Europe would require for its realization a tenacity of purpose and an utter lack of moral scruple which is no part of the prevailing popular state of mind in France and Great Britain. The French and English people are infuriated at what they take to be a dangerous and wanton attack on their security and independence. In their indignation they are making resolutions to do many terrible things to Germany, but if their indignation is really well-intentioned, as we believe it is, they will never seriously seek to do as much as they say. When righteous indignation becomes the excuse for carrying out an unrighteous and unwise policy, it is soon either dissipated or transformed into a blind and malevolent passion.

We prefer the first of these alternatives.

The meaning of the state of mind reflected in Mr. Belloc's letter is rather military than political. The Allies have a military task ahead of them similar to that which confronted the Germans at the beginning of the war. They must assume the offensive and drive the enemy out of a large amount of occupied territory. The enterprise will subject the morale of their armies to the severest kind of test. The traditional methods of the drill sergeant will not avail to keep soldiers advancing in regular formation under the gruelling losses, the crash and the confusion of a modern attack. That they may survive the shock as a coherent body they need to be possessed by a spirit of fanaticism similar to that which had apparently been deliberately cultivated in the German army, and which in the fall of 1914 was being justified by German intellectuals and moralists. Something similar seems to be happening among the Allies. There has been of late a perceptible increase of hatred against Germany, which, although to a much smaller extent, is receiving a partial justification from French and English intellectuals and moralists. Probably it will become more embittered during the course of the Allied offensive in the spring and summer; but in proportion as that offensive is successful it will diminish. The hatred is the child of fear, and as soon as the fear is robbed of its immediate oppressiveness the anger of the Allies will cease to dominate their minds and compel their wills. The people of France and Great Britain after the suffering and losses of two years will not consent to a continuation of the fighting for the sake of doing to their enemies precisely what they insist their enemies shall not do to them.

Even assuming that the Allies have the military power absolutely to break down German resistance, they will not and cannot convert a military triumph into a policy of deliberately extinguishing Germany as a political power. Of course the victors in a war can actually exterminate the vanquished as Rome exterminated Carthage. Or they can extinguish the political influence of a conquered people without exterminating them, as Rome extinguished the independent political life among the Greeks and the Jews. But these vague historical parallels, like those quoted by Mr. Belloc, are irrelevant and delusive. As we know from the history of Poland and the Balkans, modern nations are singularly tenacious of life, and the attempt to extinguish them is more dangerous to the conquerors than to the conquered. Mr. Belloc's policy of reducing Germany to impotence is "illusionary" because it is malevolent. By a supreme effort the Allies might succeed in making and keeping Germany politically negligible, but they would themselves gradually become politically degenerate. They would be subor-

dinating the political ideal of living and letting others live to the military ideal of slaying your enemy so as to prevent him from slaying you. In order to root out the "Prussian tradition in Germany" they would be seeding and cultivating it in their own political garden. They would be acting according to principles which they were pretending to destroy. They would be "dooming" the European civilization which they were so officiously and hypocritically proposing to safeguard.

The Allies will never win security for the future by exacting retribution for the past. They cannot treat Germany as a criminal without playing the part of judge and jailer. They are too good to act as jailer with any conviction; they are not good enough to act as judge. The German nation has made a culpable mistake. The future security of Europe depends chiefly on the recognition of this mistake by a sufficient number of the German people, and whatever the Allies do to Germany they should do nothing to make this recognition impossible. The proposal to reduce Germany to political impotence would not only prevent the mistake from being recognized, but would serve to perpetuate and even consecrate its impulse and its machinery. A Europe which conspired and combined to bring about the political extinction of Germany would be a Europe in which the German nation could survive only as a conqueror. Every German with any vision or spirit, no matter how liberal his sympathies and ideas, would be possessed by a passionate desire to see his country restored to independence, and he would support any government or any policy which looked capable of effecting the restoration. Europe would be rent by an irreconcilable feud which would poison its own internal life and falsify its relation to the rest of the world. As to the United States, its traditional policy of avoiding political entanglements with European countries would be confirmed at the very moment when it was about to be abandoned. As a matter of ordinary prudence we would be forced to preserve and emphasize an isolation which would be our only protection against a corresponding demoralization in our own life.

Those Englishmen and Frenchmen who crave to punish Germany will have their opportunity as long as the war lasts. The Germans as a nation have been martial by conviction. They elected to submit their controversy with the Allies to the test of battle, and they have fought in a manner which has added a new brutality to the most brutal business that the conscience of mankind has permitted to survive. It is natural that Frenchmen and Englishmen should wish to do them harm; and if in the course of this war they drink of the same bitter cup which they have forced on the lips of the Belgians and the French, we should be the last to deny that the

penalty was just. This kind of retribution the Allies are entitled to exact up to the measure of their ability. But if retaliation is part of the ethics of war it plays no part in the ethics of peace. The perfectly proper military method of doing your utmost to injure the enemy should be abandoned as soon as the fighting is over. The treaty of peace should be determined by political values, and there is no value in politics as fundamental as that of according to other people the same opportunity to live and grow that we demand for ourselves. The treaty which ended the war between Austria and Prussia in 1866 was beneficent because a great politician was wise and strong enough to resist the clamor of the soldiers for terms of peace which would perpetuate the quarrel. The treaty of Frankfort was maleficent because the same politician allowed its provisions to be determined by the military motive of protecting Germany against the consequences of an enmity which had been deliberately provoked. That the Allies will be able to start Germany on a journey of political extinction we do not for one moment believe; but even if they should be able to bring the German army to its knees, they would be mad and wicked to aim at keeping the German people in anything like the same position.

Southern Prosperity

IN the end the European war may prove a boon to the South. Though it has caused acute suffering among planters, merchants and manufacturers, it has enforced an invaluable lesson. It has convinced large sections of the Southern people that they cannot build their economic life upon cotton alone.

The lesson is not a new one. For decades agronomists and economists have preached against the prevailing one-crop system. It was a wasteful use of the land. It tended unduly to depress the price of cotton. It involved a heavy expenditure for food, fodder and fertilizers. Except in the richest bottom lands of the Mississippi valley, it meant a rapid exhaustion of the soil. It was highly speculative, for it based the agricultural prosperity of a whole section upon a crop which might rise or fall because of factors beyond the South's control. Despite this preaching the South still clung in the main to its one crop. Tradition, routine and shiftlessness worked in favor of cotton. It was the one pay-crop, the crop upon which usurious storekeepers were willing to advance money. Progress towards a diversification of crops was therefore comparatively slow until the ravages of the boll-weevil, and finally the low prices due to the war, gave to it a powerful impetus. When cotton prices sank, the farmers turned to the raising of hay, corn, oats, hogs and cattle.

The result has been spectacular. According to

the latest reports of the Department of Agriculture, the cotton crop has declined about 23 per cent (from over 15,000,000 to about 11,000,000 bales). Not all this decline is due to a restriction of planting, for the crop itself has been damaged, but the net result of these two factors, aided by bad crops in Egypt and India, by better warehouse facilities in this country, and by the lending of money at low rates of interest by the Federal Reserve banks, has been to enable the South to market its cotton at leisure and secure better prices. But the most significant development has not been the reduction in the planting of cotton but the correspondingly increased planting of grain. While the cotton crop has decreased 23 per cent, the corn crop has increased 33 per cent, or 301,000,000 bushels over that of a year ago. The combined production in the Southern states of wheat, corn and oats is now 1,598,000,000 bushels, an increase of 27.4 per cent over the previous year, as compared with an increase of only 9½ per cent for the whole country. The total value of grain crops in the South amounts to \$1,330,388,000, or considerably over 40 per cent above the average annual value of the cotton crop during the last decade.

The consequence of this partial escape from the obsession of cotton is a nearer approach to normal economic conditions. Six months ago cotton was selling at eight cents a pound, and there remained unsold one and one-third million bales in excess of the stocks of a year before. Merchants and manufacturers found their business restricted and their credit impaired. To-day the South is beginning to recover. Cotton is selling at twelve cents, and corn, oats and other agricultural products bring better prices. The South is regaining from cereals and live stock a part of what it has lost in cotton. It is the first fruits of an accelerated agricultural revolution.

No revolution takes place without counter-revolution, and no progress without reaction. We may therefore expect that as soon as cotton prices again rise, the cry will be "Back to cotton." The white fibre still holds the imagination of the South, as it did in the early years of the last century when the price went up to forty-four cents, or in the 'fifties when the South believed that cotton ruled the economic and political destinies of the world. Despite possible recessions, the tendency in the South must be towards a continuing economic expansion, which will make the role of cotton culture relatively less important. Industrially the South is coming into its own. It is beginning to utilize its varied resources. A diversified agriculture, an increase in large and small-scale manufacturing, and an expansion of commerce are all steps from a specialized agricultural dependency of Europe and of the North