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FRANCIS JOSEPH is dead after a reign scarcely paralleled in history for its length, and for the vicissitudes which it has brought to him, his family, his dynasty and his country. As he dies the whole of Europe is fighting to decide whether the fabric of Hapsburg political power shall long survive him. The Hapsburg dominion is peculiar in that it has always been exerted not over a relatively homogeneous population, but over a group of people which included a large proportion of the nationalities of continental Europe. For a century the dynasty has been trying to check the increasing tendency to limit political allegiance by national bonds. It was thrown out of Germany because it opposed the aspirations of the German people for national unity. It was thrown out of Italy because it was opposed to the similar aspirations of the Italian people. Many Englishmen and Frenchmen conceive the most important political object of the present war to be a continuation of this work. The South Slavs, the Rumanians, the Gallician Poles and what remain of the Italians and even the Czechs,

must also be emancipated from the bondage of Hapsburg rule. Perhaps, but the case is not proved, and the historical analogy is not complete. The Hungarians, also, sought to erect themselves into a national kingdom, but they finally decided to accept a federal alliance with the Austrians rather than expose themselves to the perils of isolated independence. It still remains an open question whether the South Slavs and the Balkan peoples generally would not keep a larger measure of freedom by allying themselves with the Hungarians and Austrians in a triple empire rather than accept the alternative of unchecked Russian suzerainty. Federalism may well constitute a more fundamental political principle than nationality, and the Hapsburg dynasty may survive as its most conspicuous incarnation.

TWENTY-EIGHT months the neutrals have seen horror piled on horror until it appeared that nothing could move them any longer. Yet to-day the story of the Belgian deportations has revived the exhausted anger of the American people. Experience has taught them to hesitate at accepting such tales at face value, as it has taught them that no nation has the absolute monopoly of tyrannous deeds. But the first excuses from Germany are a confession of guilt, and the informal protest of our State Department confirms the newspaper stories. The deportations show that even now the Germans do not understand neutral interest in Belgium, do not realize that Belgium has become a symbol of what has made the liberal world anti-German in this war. Fair-minded men know that other inoffensive peoples have suffered more bitterly than the Belgians; they know that the Belgian crime is the most spectacular but by no means the only international violation; they know that the Allies have a record not altogether clean. But they care deeply about Belgium because it represented the type of neutral state resting on international good faith without which civilization is at present unworkable. A wrong done to Bel-

gium is measured not only by the sufferings of the Belgians but by the outraged faith of the neutral world.

NATURALLY Americans ask whether they can do anything now to stop the crime. A protest has been made, and its effect is not yet visible. What more can be done depends on the larger policy of our government. If the submarine war is found intolerable, and some intervention is planned, the wrong done American neutrality on the high seas can and should be bracketed with the wrongs done to neutral Belgium. But if the President decides on the bolder course, if he decides that the structure of international relations is being hopelessly damaged by those on both sides who propose to fight to the bitter end, then it would seem that the solution for particular questions like the Belgian is a move for a general peace. More and more the facts indicate that the only way to meet the insoluble issues of the war is to concentrate on an effort to end it.

AMONG the subjects of legislation at the short session of Congress, that of army reorganization is bound to be of critical importance. Although no complete report has been issued about the operations of the Hay bill, that ill advised measure has obviously failed to make the really needed improvements in the American military system. It has failed either to increase the size of the regular army or to provide for a sufficient reserve of trustworthy first-line and second-line troops. Under its provisions recruiting has fallen to a lower level than usual so that the number of enlisted men in the regular army is said to be smaller now than it was last May. The mobilization of the National Guard has proved with satisfactory finality the difficulties and impossibilities of federalizing the existing militia. If Congress really wishes to increase the regular army to approximately 200,000 men and to establish an immediate reserve of at least the same number of troops, it must in the first place induce American citizens to enlist by making service in the army, like service in the navy, sufficiently remunerative and, secondly, it must abandon any idea of using the state militia as part of the quickly available armed forces of the nation. If these lessons have been learned the Hay bill will be worth what it has cost.

ACCORDING to current rumors the Republicans of New York State are considering the repeal of the direct primary law and the return to the system of nominating candidates in party conventions. They are being urged to take this

step by powerful influences within and without the party, and they will have no difficulty in finding many good reasons for the proposed action. All over the country, and in New York even more than elsewhere, the direct primary has failed to bring about the nomination of candidates who are free from machine dictation and are representative of better party opinion. Nevertheless we do not believe Republicans will have the hardihood merely to repeal the present law and reinstate the party caucus in power. There is no measure so unpopular in a democracy as one which takes away from the voters functions which they already exercise. By repealing the direct primary law the Republicans would be presenting the Democrats with an obvious and a dangerous issue—so much so that a man like Governor Whitman is not likely to take the risk. Moreover, the voters would be right in resenting the resurrection of the party convention. Direct primaries have not improved the quality of the party nominees under ordinary conditions, but when public opinion is aroused they afford an independent candidate a better opportunity of securing a nomination than does the caucus. When we remember the gross abuses which were associated with the caucus, its resurrection without any attempt to remedy its abuses would be at worst barefaced reaction and at best a counsel of despair. Direct primaries are mostly a failure, but they should remain until political lawgivers are prepared to substitute something better for them.

PERHAPS the most ominous aspect of the contemporary American politics is the prevailing attitude of helplessness and discouragement in the presence of the recognized and flagrant failures of state government. Only a few years ago reformers were alive to the practical breakdown of our state political institutions, and they were proposing plans of reorganization which included not merely the direct primary but the short ballot, executive initiative in legislation and various devices for keeping these more powerful agencies of government in closer connection with popular opinion. But the reforms, such as the direct primary and direct popular government, which were adopted, have not accomplished what was expected of them, and almost every attempt to secure the adoption of other reforms such as the short ballot and executive initiative in legislation which might have accomplished better results has failed. The advocates of state political reorganization are at a loss what to do. The state governments are passing on the whole a better quality of legislation than formerly, but in administration they are still drifting helplessly in an ocean of incompetence and

waste. As state government is chiefly a matter of administration there is more ground for pessimism than complacency. Reformers have been definitely if not finally checked in their attempt to reorganize state and county political systems as successfully as they are reorganizing those of the cities; and their comparative failure in the larger work must be traced chiefly to the deeper infection of the state political organisms with the poison of the two-party system. The national parties are unable themselves to provide a responsible government for the states, and they have so far blocked every effort to adopt a substitute.

“**B**ELGIUM,” said John S. Sumner, Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Vice, opposing birth control at a public discussion, “was an overpopulated country, and is it a coincidence that within the last two years Belgium has been devastated and her population scattered?” Of course Mr. Sumner did not stop there; the logic of his position led him to mention flood and pestilence as other correctives for too great fertility. Nor is this mere isolated obtuseness; Mr. Sumner was giving voice to the uncritical parlor Darwinism of the “survival of the fittest” type, which is still authentic science to many people, and to the very widely held belief that nature attends to the too presumptuous races. Ultimately, nature does attend to them. But surely the advocates of birth control are entitled to claim that what they propose is less an affront to nature than that reckless breeding which, according to Mr. Sumner himself, is always punished by the whips of flood, disease or war. Interference with these particular forms of “natural” selection has become the task of nine-tenths of the progressive and liberal people the world over. Posing as a glib apologist for the invasion of Belgium because of one’s opposition to birth control is hardly an inspiring intellectual performance. The old-fashioned religious temper which found ingenious theological uses for the wrack and pain of the world here has a curious modern parallel.

THE capture of Monastir by the troops under the command of General Serrail gives something more than humorous point to the jest of an American newspaper writer: “Although the Serbians only make up about twenty per cent of the fighting force in Macedonia, they seem to be doing about eighty per cent of the fighting.” The carrying of Hill 1212 by assault and the fighting at the Cerna bend—with the men sometimes up to their necks in mud and water—was of the desperate and heroic kind that marks the small Serbian force as composed of the most formidable soldiers in

the Balkans. These soldiers had survived the death-swept Island of Corfu, the field of Kossovo, the agonies and spiritual anguish of the Great Retreat. They literally had nothing left but their hatred of the invaders. Also the entrance into the town must have stirred memories of the brilliant capture of Monastir in the Turkish war four years ago. Berlin already claims that the victory is largely of sentimental importance, and that by the evacuation of the town their defensive position is considerably strengthened. This is but partly true, although the capture of Monastir from a technically military point of view seems to be of little advantage. Continued Allied pressure on the Monastir plain may very well compensate for local success of the Central Powers in Transylvania and also draw off some of Mackensen’s hard-pressed forces in Dobrudja. The real importance of the capture, however, lies in the effect on the Bulgarians. If Germany offered any special inducements to Ferdinand, probably Macedonia was the chief among them. To lose Monastir will mean every bit as much to the Bulgarians as the capture of Constanza. Monastir takes its rank with Verdun as one of the two Allied successes around which national emotion and human feeling are richly clustered.

AN issue of justice has been made before Governor Whitman of New York which ought to be noted by everyone interested in the course of justice in this country. A farmer was murdered in New York State nine months ago, and a reward was offered for the murderer. After a month’s delay a farm-hand named Charles F. Stielow was arrested. A confession of guilt was soon made by him. He was duly tried and sentenced to death. Three facts connected with the case drew attention to it: first, the character of the activity of the private detective who received the reward and fee; second, an apparent deficiency of motive; third, the docile, suggestible, helpless, illiterate and mentally defective character of the condemned man. On the strength of these facts a struggle for this Stielow’s life was undertaken, a struggle handicapped by the rules for “newly discovered” evidence. Seven times he was sentenced to die, and seven times execution was suspended. A short time back it looked as if the case could be cleared up because of a second confession, this time by a man named King. Whether or not influenced, King repudiated this confession and Stielow remained to be punished. His execution is now set for the week of December 11th, but a group of New York attorneys together with Spencer Miller, Jr., former deputy warden at Sing Sing, have prepared a strong statement which calls for the im-

mediate attention of Governor Whitman. It is almost inconceivable that he will fail to use his constitutional power, in the interest of the law.

ONE of the minor personages of the nineteenth century was a man who called himself Sequaw. Sequaw was a human benefactor who toured all Europe in a band-wagon, distributing a wonderful elixir called Prairie Flower. This stuff was guaranteed to relieve any ache or pain whatsoever, and every town Sequaw visited bore testimony to his glory and the potency of Prairie Flower. The spirit in which Boston is now greeting Billy Sunday is essentially similar to the spirit in which villages used to greet the ringleted hero of the band-wagon. There is the same rumpus, the same eloquence, the same lack of mercenary consideration, the same art of collecting from the crowd, the same accumulation of converts and coin, the same excitement, the same partisanship after his departure. Of the two Billy Sunday has the better of it. Sequaw's lubricant was physical while Billy's is religious, and nothing can become so popular as a slick brand of religious Prairie Flower. Sunday's success in Boston may seem extraordinary to those who retain the traditional view of Boston. The clue to the actual Boston of to-day is given by its newspapers, which, with two exceptions, have the semblance of the noisy newspapers in rapidly-growing middle-western towns. Will Billy Sunday reach his typical unsophisticated public in New York early next year? Not if the New York newspapers keep the attitude they have established toward patent medicine.

IT is easier to estimate the judging power of censors if they pick out things to praise as well as things to condemn. Perhaps the new national board of movie censors, which may be one result of the Episcopal convention at St. Louis, will remember this and act on it. The House of Deputies remembered it. The resolution which the House passed, and which directs the church social commission to create a board of censors, does not confine itself to saying that some movies show "distorted views of affection, suggestions of lust and license, and details which combine to develop a school of crime." The resolution also praises other movies. The censors ought to do the same. Undistorted "views of affection" are rare in our movies, plays, short stories and novels. The worst scenes in all these are usually the love scenes. Scenes between those about to get engaged, illicit love scenes, wedded bliss scenes—nearly all, whether loud or quiet, are utterly toneless. Whenever anybody writes a tolerable love scene he deserves praise, just to remind him that

he has a few spectators to whom not all love scenes look alike.

Moving Toward Peace

RUMORS that President Wilson intends shortly to take some positive action in favor of peace are prevalent and what is more, they are intrinsically probable. The time has come, if not for a settlement, at least for a show-down. And by a show-down we mean not only a clear statement by the several belligerents of the terms on which they will make peace, but also a clear statement by the major neutrals of the kind of peace which they are willing to guarantee. Public opinion throughout the civilized world both in neutral and belligerent nations needs above all to know the precise nature of the political objects for which each of the belligerents will insist upon continuing to fight. It needs to know also whether or not the readiness of the most powerful of neutral nations to participate on certain express terms in the waging of war or in the structure of peace will serve to appease the apparent irreconcilability of the attitude of the belligerents. More than any other man in the world President Wilson needs this knowledge; and better than any other man in the world he may be able by ploughing sufficiently deep to bring it to the surface.

Positive action by President Wilson in behalf of peace may not succeed in its immediate purpose. When the political objects of the several belligerents are defined they may prove to be so divergent that mediation by a neutral, no matter how powerful, will be insufficient to bridge the gulf. But President Wilson's action on behalf of peace is not likely to take the risk of complete failure which an offer of formal mediation would assuredly incur. What is needed is a frank discussion of the possible bases of peace, a thoroughgoing ventilation of the air-tight compartments in which so many Europeans are obliged perforce to live, such as could be obtained only by a general conference. A general conference would enable Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, Russians, and Americans to decide how far the different political objects for which the several governments are fighting can be justified. The liberals in every European country are starving for lack of the knowledge which would be furnished by such an assembly. As long as the political objects for which the fighting is being carried on remain undefined or are defined only in terms of national safety, the socialists in Germany and the liberals in France and Great Britain are unable to bring any effective criticism to bear on their own governments. Public opinion is fatally terrorized in nations which are, or believe themselves to be, fighting for their lives, and it cannot