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The Week

THE apparently infallible method of regenerating a somewhat unregenerate American citizen is to elect him President of the United States. It is not unfair to describe the man Harding in his pre-presidential incarnation as unregenerate. His record was that of a machine politician who had throughout his career opposed every liberal and progressive movement in American politics. But as soon as he became President he underwent a startling process of evangelization. He developed into an enthusiast for peace, goodwill on earth and the welfare of all mankind, and he has convinced himself that he, Warren Gamaliel Harding, is the divinely appointed agent of some great human consummation. The romantic uplifter who is usually concealed under the waistcoat of every good middle-class western American, no matter how steeped he may be in the by no means uplifting realities of politics and business, is coming to possess him completely. His recent speeches reveal him as a man with a mission to redeem humanity. It is easy and not unreasonable to be cynical about the results of his conversion, but we prefer to give

him the benefit of the doubt, big as the doubt is. While he will try and fail, as other and better men have done, there is something about the present plight of the world which may give unexpected power and effect to a faithful and even semi-intelligent failure to uplift mankind.

NEWS from Mexico City is distinctly more favorable. According to the Evening Post, protests against the application of Article XXVII of the Mexican Constitution will be taken up this week by the Supreme Court. The Mexican Congress will begin consideration of Article XXVII on Monday. A committee of the majority party has submitted to President Obregon a project for the immediate settlement of oil problems, one feature of which is a statement that Article XXVII is not retroactive. Finally it is rumored that the State Department of the United States has submitted a new note according to which, while the confirmation of property rights by treaty is insisted on, such treaty is to be drawn up after recognition of the present Mexican government. If this news is true then the formula has been discovered by which the negotiations between the United States and Mexico may be carried beyond the present impasse, and the good will which the New Republic believes is beyond question on the part of both Secretary Hughes and President Obregon may be given effect in determining the relations of the two countries.

THE Senate Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, of which Senator Medill McCormick is Chairman, heard patiently and in detail the statement of the case against the naval occupation of the island made by Messrs. Oswald Garrison Villard of the Nation, Horace Knowles, former Minister to Santo Domingo and Stenio Vincent, former President of Haiti. There is no duty which the American government owes to itself and the world quite comparable with this investigation. Our behavior toward these weaker neighbors is the test of

all our grandiloquent aims in the war. If we have failed, if we have betrayed the cause for which we fought, we should know it and confess it. The lesson may make us more tolerant toward the mistakes and misdeeds of Europe. It is a difficult, a thankless, and it may be a dangerous duty to plead against one's own nation, to charge that her honor has been sullied by venality and her arms disgraced by military crime. The course which Mr. Villard and the Nation have pursued in keeping this matter before an indifferent public represents the highest kind of citizenship, the classic type of civic virtue represented by Cicero pleading against Verres.

EXTINCTION threatens the only organization which in spirit and in practical administration is fitted to deal with the problems of our foreign-born population. This is the Foreign Language Information Service. To be convinced of its value it is only necessary to read its report, obtainable at 15 West 37th Street. Through over three years of self-sacrificing work, the service has obtained the confidence of the alien and even the gratitude of the government. It has been in turn supported by the War Camp Community Service, the Community Service, Inc., and the American Red Cross. Budget reductions have forced these to discontinue their aid and now the Foreign Language Information Service must stop unless help comes before the middle of August. It has the promise of one half of its next three months' budget if someone will give the other half, \$22,500. This amount will enable it to keep on until plans are completed for its continuance on an enlarged and permanent basis. There must be someone who will see the tragedy of letting this first real bridge between America and the "foreigners" collapse, and who will give a fraction of the cost of the proverbial battleship toward civic peace.

THE activity of the American Legion in the field of education, as a sort of super-censor of patriotic morality, approved by the N. E. A., is marked by its appearance against Mr. Arthur Fisher, a teacher of law at the University of Montana. The Executive Committee of the Montana branch of the Legion petitions the State Board of Education to examine Mr. Fisher with regard to his views as to the right of a citizen to withhold approval of the action of the country in declaring war; and concerning his participation in the movement to urge upon the government the declaration of its war aims in May 1917. Mr. Fisher is not charged with advocating any violation of law—merely with holding that an individual "has the right to aid or

to refuse to aid (*within the limits of law*) in such war." This is a clear case in which the American Legion assumes that its function is to act as an extra-legal or super-legal authority—and its position is as impossible in a general conception of civil rights, as its censorship of education is intolerable. As to Mr. Fisher's interest in the movement to secure a definition of war aims from the Allied and Associated Powers, in which attempt we remember that Viscount Bryce was also concerned, do even the master minds of the American Legion deny that the war would have been shortened if Mr. Wilson's political offensive had started in May 1917 instead of eight months later, and that the errors of Versailles would have been avoided if the United States had thus early described and obtained acceptance of the cause for which she was fighting, in terms specifically abrogating the secret treaties?

THE significant fact in the Irish crisis, so far, has been the steady maintenance of the truce. The mechanisms of war in Ireland—courts-martial, sentences of death, the holding of M. P.'s in prison—have persisted in spite of the spirit of peace, but on the whole even the truculence of Dublin Castle has been repressed. This quietude is in its way the most formidable act yet committed by Sinn Fein. So long as hostilities were continued it was possible to ascribe everything to a "murder gang" and nothing to the people in general. But the absolute suspension of hostilities since the truce shows that the Dail Eireann is really representative, that the Irish Republican Army is nationally organized, controlled and responsible. This ends the talk of "outrage," "conspiracy," "shooting policemen from behind hedges." It defines the fact that a war has been in progress in Ireland, not a series of outrages that present a police problem and nothing more. A whole nation cannot be policed, and in entering into conversation and truce with the "murder gang," Lloyd George has abandoned the empty fiction that the Irish people are not in complete political and national insurrection.

ULSTER remains. To Sinn Fein Ireland the Unionists of N. E. Ulster, numbering in all about 800,000, offer the kind of problem that was given to the Allies by the minorities of Poland, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, and so on. We know how the Allies permitted these minorities to be sacrificed to irredentism, and we cannot suppose that Sinn Fein Ireland will have no irredentist policy. Meanwhile, however, the British imperialists have no intention of bringing N. E. Ulster and

Ireland together. The House of Commons chooses this moment of delicate negotiation to honor Sir James Craig, and the military have just suppressed a paper in Cork that abused him. This excites the war-feeling on both sides when the prolongation of war cannot help in any way—can, indeed, only attest the obstinate will and the benighted mind.

THE Relief Commission of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee is rapidly taking steps to organize forces within Russia to fight the famine. It is urging the peasants of the more prosperous districts to form committees, and especially to compile lists of mothers who are willing to make homes for children from the famine country. Every report shows, however, the pathetic inadequacy of the means at hand in the face of the greatness of the need. The Committee was able recently to dispatch two trains for the Volga each equipped to serve 6,000 children. There are 300,000 in the State colonies alone, and the total number of children in the famine region, according to the census of 1917, is 6,500,000. In the conscious sacrifice of the adult population to the children the Russian is showing the stoicism which in his literature from Gogol to Gorki makes him a sublime and tragic figure.

Reality in Politics

MR. NORMAN ANGELL'S article on War and the Public Mind in this number of the New Republic raises emphatically the question, What is reality in politics? The conventional definition of *realpolitik* is that it takes account of the actual, tangible objects of statecraft, and the practicable measures for attaining them—geographical expansion for the sake of defensible frontiers or a supply of raw materials, control of communications, extension of markets, economic conditions, alliances, armaments, balance of power. It is the essence of Mr. Angell's view that these practical things are not the ultimate realities which determine the relations of nations, that for the mass of men they do not exist or are but dimly apprehended, that "the main raw material" of politics is public opinion, and that upon the intellectual and moral character of a people depends the importance of these practical objects as determining factors in its relations with other peoples. The development of national character is then the object of Mr. Angell's teaching as it is of a school of publicists, Messrs. J. A. Hobson and Bertrand Russell in England, Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse in

France, F. W. Foerster and Walter Rathenau in Germany. It is one of the hopeful facts of the time that this type of thinker has appeared simultaneously in many countries. And their unity of effort is first of all evident in their method. They are all members of a *Clarté* movement; they take as a point of departure and apply to each people the ancient maxim: know thyself.

At first sight the arousing of a national intelligence and its application to international relations seems an impossible task. The most disheartening aspect of the last ten years is the way in which events have escaped from the control of such intellectual force as has been brought to bear on them. Even with the results of past experience supplemented by the lessons of the war and its disastrous settlement, the impotence of nations to choose aright suggests the working of a legion of devils entered into mankind, or a perverse spirit guiding the world to ironic catastrophe. England face to face with unspeakable horrors in Ireland, Egypt, India; France, fatalistically struggling to make her own claims on Germany worthless; Poland last year, and this year Greece, flinging themselves abroad in conquest; America playing with armaments, recognitions, Allied debts, rotting ships and the Fordney tariff,—all this suggests a world ranging between madness and imbecility.

But it is fair to add that even an external view shows certain signs of promise. For one thing, though the peoples of the world, during these last years, have presented the general spectacle of the Gadarene swine, rushing down a steep place into the sea, yet more than once that onset has been retarded, deflected, stayed just before its momentum became irresistible. A corner was turned when the Russian-Polish agreement was signed last summer, another when the reparations agreement was temporarily effected last May, another when the Silesian conflict was localized. Undoubtedly to assume that any of these routes to the sea has been permanently stopped would be too optimistic, and yet the fact that the rush has been diverted even for a time gives ground for hope. If we cannot allow great credit for avoiding imminent catastrophe to those who appear to be joyously in the lead of the throng, it would appear that a certain instinct for self-preservation had been aroused in the herd itself—that enough sanity remained to defeat the last excesses of madness. A second ground of hope is to be discerned in the fact that in the face of such overwhelming evidence as has accumulated everywhere since the armistice of the inadequacy of the national mind to its problems, the school of thinkers mentioned above continues to work with a zeal perhaps born of desperation. And that they are