

an equal. She is from their point of view a weak, disorganized and helpless people whom they have habitually treated as a dependent and as a victim. She could not be admitted to the Pacific Concert until she was better able to fulfill her international obligations, so many of which were the result of her dependence and were imposed upon her by force.

The case of China is, consequently, reserved by the Conference for special and separate treatment. In his speech at the open session of the Conference on December 10th, Secretary Hughes foreshadowed a coming "agreement in which all the powers represented here may participate and to which possibly others may desire to adhere and may have the opportunity to adhere which will deal generally with the questions relating to the Far East and to policies in reference to China and also with respect to the territorial status of the countries concerned." The terms of this agreement will test the good faith of the members of the Concert and their willingness to begin the substitution of new bases of international law in the Far East for the existing treaties. These treaties were usually obtained by violence and fraud. Most of them more or less seriously deny the good old principles about the integrity and independence of China, which all the powers have repeatedly pretended to accept and all have ignored. If the new Concert is substituted for the Anglo-Japanese alliance, in that it reaffirms these principles in words and provides a shelter for their violation in practice, as apparently it may, it will not prevent the ultimate outbreak of war in the Far East. The only justification for isolating China and omitting her from the Concert is to treat her interests as a peculiarly sacred trust. But hitherto during the Conference Japan and Great Britain have shown far greater zeal in clinging to the privileges and possessions which they have obtained as the result of the helplessness of China than they have in satisfying the righteous demands for restitution which are put forth by the Chinese nationalists. It remains to be seen whether in the promised Chinese treaty they will convert the principles contained in the Root resolution, which they have in the past consistently violated, into what Mr. Hughes declares it to be—a charter of Chinese independence and self-government.

But in the meantime let us not underestimate the value of what the Washington Conference has already accomplished. The ratification by the Senate of the treaty which constitutes the Four Power Concert and the agreement as to the limitation of naval armaments will bring with them one important consequence and meaning which has hitherto not received sufficient attention. It will mean that

in the opinion of the American and Japanese governments their countries are now secure against military attack; and if this meaning is accepted in good faith, it should liberate both Japanese and American public opinion from one of the inhibitions which has recently most seriously cramped its freedom of movement. The American nation can go about the occupations of peace with the same sense of security and the freedom from the confusion between defensive and offensive armaments which it possessed from the end of the Napoleonic wars until the beginning of the twentieth century. It can consequently again consider its domestic problems on their merits and without reference to real or supposed military necessities. In so far as the American commonwealth and people are in danger, their danger will arise from their own blunders rather than from the threats and armaments of foreigners. If liberals cannot take advantage of this deliverance to increase the vitality and influence of progressive principles in American life, their failure will be merely a confession of their own impotence and incompetence.

Murray Butler Makes Moan

THE world has torn loose from her moorings and is driving wildly among the reefs. That is proved by Nicholas Murray Butler in an address on the Changing Foundations of Government delivered before the Illinois Bar Association. The foundations under the edifice of government are being sucked away by subterranean forces which no mind can grasp. A new sophistry is abroad which makes even the field of reason a chaos of bewilderment. If you don't look sharp you will find that this sophistry has manoeuvred you into the enemy army, to assist in the slaughter of your friends. No longer is a Republican a real Republican nor a Democrat a Democrat. But worst of all has been the case of the Liberals. Wasn't the meaning of the terms Liberal and Liberalism "fixed by their use in both ancient and modern times, and particularly since the overthrow of the Stuart monarchy in England"? Dr. Butler has read a recent book on Liberalism, with a chapter which invites you in a Liberal, and lets you out a Socialist. "Somewhere and somehow in that chapter the magician has drawn the egg from his sleeve, but the reader does not see how or when it is done." Even the university presidential reader is disagreeably puzzled. And that is not the worst of it. He can't wholly resist the temptation of doing egg tricks himself, which may result in unpleasant accidents to an academic sleeve. We shall point presently to certain eggs Dr. Butler tried

to manipulate, that will afford a chance of profit to the dry cleaner.

But first of all, what are those forces that are sapping away the foundations of government? They are numerous, according to Dr. Butler, but the gravest is the offensive conducted against the principle of liberty by the principle of equality. "Liberty leads to inequality and compels it. Equality makes liberty, and therefore progress, impossible. Liberty is the principle of life. Equality is a characteristic of death." Well turned sentences, these are, and effective. The battle is on between life and death, with death possessed of the heavier guns. There is, Dr. Butler points out, a possible compromise between Liberty and Equality, Life and Death. That is Fraternity. Life fraternizing with Death, to be sure, is a combination hard to grasp. But we will accept it on the endorsement of Dr. Butler.

Not all forms of inequality are as yet resented by the democracy. "But other forms are bitterly contested and quickly give rise to feelings of envy, hatred and malice." One of these proscribed forms is superior ability to determine what is politically and socially expedient to do. Though the most competent of university presidents were to offer his services to the American people, would they make him the head of their affairs? Never; the meaner passions of equalitarianism would snow him under with hostile votes. The other form of inequality that the democracy is unwilling to tolerate relates to property. "It is quite forgotten that property has an ethical basis and is nothing more or less than that which the individual has produced or acquired by his own capacity and thrift. So far from understanding that all individual property is the result of thrift, there are in increasing number those who cry out ecstatically with Proudhon that all property is theft. Property is an attribute of personality, and individual property is essential to liberty."

There you have an example of the juggler and the egg in his sleeve. Did you see how and when it came out? Of course you did, because it broke. Property is produced or acquired by the individual's capacity and thrift. That is true, isn't it? It is true of the property acquired by Brindell through the practice of shaking down unions and employers; it is true of the fortunes of gamblers, profiteers and grafters. But observe Dr. Butler's next assertion. "All individual property is the result of thrift." What an egg that was to juggle with!

And property is "an attribute of personality." God forbid that equalitarianism or any other force should mutilate personality in its essential attributes. But is property such an essential attribute?

It may be of some personalities, but most men of property, we believe, would rather be known and remembered for their other attributes. "Property is essential to liberty." Is it? Then the propertyless are slaves. Behold, in our juggling we have issued unawares into the most orthodox of socialistic doctrines.

The most disastrous piece of juggling is yet to be noted, however. In the great conflict now waging in every quarter of the globe between the principle of government by force and the principle of government by goodwill and consent, on which side might Dr. Butler be expected to take his stand? On the side of consent and goodwill. We confidently assert that he does stand on that side, in spite of occasional utterances savoring of *Machtpolitik*. "Under government by force there is no place for even Dr. Butler's kind of liberalism, for even his brand of traditionally regulated freedom of thought. He is not so afraid of democracy as to prefer, for example, government by force which for all he could do might turn out to be the kind that he believes to exist in Soviet Russia. And he is not so unbalanced an enthusiast as to believe in the theory of the philosopher-despot. If he did, he would have applied the theory in the institution over whose destinies he presides. No, not even Dr. Butler himself can convince us that he is a partisan of the doctrine of government by force.

But observe what his tongue does to his credit among men. Ever since the English and French revolutions the basis of government has been steadily shifting from force to goodwill. "Force can no longer be resorted to in dealing with many of the most important problems of government." Dr. Butler cites the case of the Irish settlement. "The stronger party in the discussion might theoretically resort to force and insist upon the settlement of its own choosing; but the stronger party has long since lost the disposition to do so and is now striving to settle this long-standing issue in terms of goodwill. It results from conditions like these that the selfish, the narrow-minded, the ignorant and the men of ill will may, if numerous enough, or if so organized as to exert their united power at a critical point in the economic structure of the state, cripple the state and subvert the public interest far more completely than great armies or navies could ever do."

We are plunging into terrible dangers by our apostasy from autocracy, force and militarism. That is the plain implication of Dr. Butler's words. What combination of perverse impulses is it that seizes hold of a man of stable character and forces him deliberately to discredit himself with a public which he sincerely desires to serve? We give it up.

President Harding Hesitates

PRESIDENT HARDING has one qualification for his high office which appeals particularly to his fellow countrymen and the existence of which they could not have suspected from his earlier career. He is fundamentally a good man; and by good we mean something more than merely well-intentioned. He is good in a sense that ex-Presidents Roosevelt and Wilson, in spite of their superiority to him in moral energy and intellectual ability, were not so good. He is not an egotist. He is kind, patient, fair-minded, considerate and apparently disinterested. He possesses not only a keen but an humble sense of personal obligation to all his fellow-citizens. He wishes them to be happy. He hopes to make them happy by faithfully considering their problems, by listening to their proposals and grievances, by composing, if possible, their differences and by leading them soothingly along the middle of the road to some accessible and eligible goal. Finally, while he is not yet an enlightened man, he is by way of being flexible and open-minded. He has learned much since the assumption of his grave responsibility opened his eyes and aroused his conscience.

In order to understand how much he has learned we only need to compare the dogmatic and arid formulas in which he formerly expressed his ideas about the domestic policy of the United States with the more analytic, tentative and troubled language which he now employs. He begins, for instance, his recent message to Congress by plaintively calling attention to the breakdown of the regular system of government. Almost since the beginning of the Republic, one out of two competing parties has constituted the responsible governing agency in the United States. The American people at the last election placed the Republican party in power by an overwhelming majority. He is the leader of that party and he sincerely wishes it to assume and vigorously exercise its responsibility. He wishes above everything to avoid executive intervention and the substitution after the manner of Roosevelt and Wilson of presidential for party government. But, unfortunately, Republican party government no longer governs. A bi-partisan agricultural bloc in Congress frustrates the plans of the party leaders even when those leaders are honestly seeking to carry out the pre-election Republican program of making this country a happier hunting ground for manufacturers and millionaires. He finds himself confronted, consequently, by a distressing dilemma. He must either substitute his personal presidential initiative for that of the party leaders and force the party program

through, which would mean a bitter fight with a powerful faction in Congress and the exchange of the sword for the olive branch as his own personal emblem. Or he must accept the humiliating course of sitting still and of witnessing without protest or the proposal of a positive alternative the failure of both his administration and his party as an agency of responsible government in domestic affairs.

Difficult as this dilemma is President Harding probably would not hesitate were it not for one grave complication. If he still firmly believed in the salutary power of the party program, he would almost certainly take the initiative in his own hands and rescue his party and his administration from their threatened impotence. But when he compares candidly the halting processes of American industry, the manifest obstacles to a revival of international commerce and the class cleavages which are dividing American society against itself, with the official Republican methods of dealing with them, he clearly hesitates. It begins to dawn on him that the impotence of his party in carrying out a domestic policy is chiefly traceable to the poverty of its ideas. "Suppose," he may well say to himself "that I did strain my executive power and prestige in order to force on Congress the enactment of a much higher tariff and a lowering of the super-taxes, would I not by adopting such a course split my party and wreck my administration (as Taft did) without accomplishing anything to redeem my own political personal responsibility for the welfare of my fellow countrymen?"

He is being gradually aroused to analyze the American problem of today from a point of view very different from the orthodox dogmas of his own party. He is, as his address to Congress reveals, troubled by the gravely compromised position of the farmer in the American economic system. The farmers are selling almost everything that they produce at prices equal to or less than pre-war prices. But they are paying for everything they need far more than pre-war prices. They would have to pay, so it is stated, in 1921 six hundred and fifty bushels of corn for a farm wagon, which in 1913 would have cost them two hundred bushels of corn. If they are to avoid impoverishment and a substantial reduction in the volume of their products, either the price of agricultural products must go up or the price of manufactured articles must come down. Inasmuch as the prices of agricultural products are largely determined by world conditions which will remain adverse for many years, it looks as if the prices of manufactured articles would have to come down; and this