

and relatively to other classes, it has weakened. The causes of this relative loss are complex, as Secretary Wallace points out. The chief cause he does not emphasize—the Treaty of Versailles. Ever since the signing of the Treaty Europe has been in desperate need of our food products. The hungry populations have been eager to work to pay for such products but the imbecilities of statecraft have been an insuperable obstacle. Versailles and the policies of enforcement that followed are the ultimate cause of our agrarian distress, as of British unemployment and German starvation.

**THIS** is to cry over spilt milk, it may be said. So it would be if statecraft were no longer engaged in active mischief, extending the influence of depression into the future. But it is. An intelligent settlement today would effect an immediate improvement in world economic conditions and go far toward mending our agricultural situation. Such a settlement would give financial practicability to Secretary Wallace's plan of selling our surplus foodstuffs on long term credits to the peoples of Europe. Without a settlement any such sales will be in fact gifts, thinly disguised, and no gift policy can go far enough to bring substantial relief to the farmer. If the administration does not use whatever pressure it can commend to second the movement for settlement now gaining head in Europe, it will miss an opportunity for solving the domestic as well as the international problem.

**SIMPLE-MINDED** persons who had begun to think of Mexico, because of these recent peaceful years, in Anglo-Saxon terms, have been sharply undeceived: the Latin temperament survives. The election campaign has suddenly turned into a revolution of a serious character. No fundamental policy appears to be involved. Adolfo de la Huerta, long Obregon's close friend, and regarded as one of Mexico's leading statesmen, some time ago resigned as Secretary of the Treasury. His successor, Alberto Pani, after taking office declared that the government was bankrupt, and attributed this condition to de la Huerta's incompetence. The latter responded by charging President Obregon with trying to force General Calles upon the country as his successor, and the revolution followed. De la Huerta and General Sanchez, his military chief, have captured Jalapa, capital of the state of Vera Cruz. The navy and a large part of the army are with the rebels, and the situation for Obregon is admittedly grave. American friends of Mexico must particularly deplore the resort to arms, because, whatever the outcome, relations with this country will be seriously injured just at the moment when the long efforts at reconciliation of the two governments seemed to be crowned with success.

**RECENTLY** the Pittsburgh conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church appointed a commission to consider some of the most urgent social and political problems. The Commission presented a report which was adopted at a recent session of the conference. The report endorsed the substitution of law for war, the World Court, the preservation intact of civil liberty and the so-called "social creed of the churches." But its most remarkable passage, which deserves the widest possible publicity, runs as follows:

We view with apprehension the conditions which exist in some of the mining and industrial towns of our state as illustrated by the inability of our Methodist Church to secure a clear and unconditioned title to a site for the erection of a Church building. The only available lease prohibits the use of the Church building for any purpose not strictly religious and is subject to cancellation with the allowance of ninety days for the removal of the building. One of our pastors has been forced out of the field simply for having expressed himself as believing in the cause of the employees and another is threatened with ejection for the same reason. This arbitrary position of the companies has resulted in closing towns to the preaching of the Gospel and is a serious evil to all who believe in the fundamentals of free government.

## The Rising Tide of British Labor

**SUPERFICIALLY** the important lesson of the British election is the defeat of the Tory government as a penalty for its general ineptitude. There are, of course, many facts which corroborate this interpretation. The Baldwin Cabinet had failed to handle the critical problems of either foreign or domestic policy in a manner which eased the discomfort or increased the self-esteem of the British people. Considering the completeness of his failure to get the better of his country's problems, Mr. Baldwin's sudden appeal to the voters on the irrelevant issue of protection looked like poor politics and worse statesmanship which the British people have punished as it deserved.

This comment is true, but it is far from being the whole or the most important truth about the British election. Although Mr. Baldwin has suffered a deserved defeat, his defeat may eventually prove to bring many compensations—if not to his country, at least to his party. The Conservatives will certainly turn out to be stronger and more capable in opposing than they have been in conducting the government. A really successful government for Great Britain is just at present difficult almost to the point of impossibility. Mr. Baldwin's successor, whoever he may be, cannot form a government with a united and aggressive English majority opinion behind it; and even if he could the practical impossibility of formulating and

carrying out a capable foreign and domestic policy would before long assure his downfall. If he be unsuccessful and another general election soon follows, the Tories would enter the contest under so much more favorable conditions that they might well win a clear victory. After a demonstration that the only practicable substitute for a Conservative government was one which is no more capable of governing successfully than the Conservatives had been, the British public might jump to the conclusion that the Conservative party provided the least undesirable variety of fumbling. And whenever they resumed power they would be more united than they have been, more sharply distinguished from their adversaries and more confident of the comparative availability of their own modest program.

The most significant aspect of the British election, as we see it, is not the defeat of the Conservatives but the unexpected increase in strength of the Labor party. Labor fought the election under prodigious handicaps. It suffered from insufficient preparedness and equipment, from the lack of aggressive fighting spirit, from a dearth of well-known candidates and popular speakers and from a somewhat general attitude of discouragement within its own ranks. Its program contained a number of unpopular planks and no longer aroused as much enthusiasm of conviction among its supporters as it once did. It was opposed not only by a more united Tory party but by a reunited Liberal party. Its opponents appealed to the voters through the voices of the most capable and popular speakers in Great Britain, including practically every man who had served in the government for the last ten years. The Liberals in particular were aggressive and confident. They fully expected to substitute themselves for Labor as the party second to the Conservatives in strength; and they expected as the result of the election to demonstrate an increase in popular support which would prophesy their ultimate return to power.

In spite of all these handicaps the Labor party won an astonishing victory. It elected almost 190 members to the new Parliament as compared with less than 150 in the last. With one exception it returned to Parliament all its most capable leaders, which was not true of either of its rivals. Its candidates triumphed in almost half the constituencies which it could afford to contest. If it could have contested another hundred seats, it could have increased its strength considerably. The next Parliament will contain approximately almost more Labor than it will Liberal members. The party is by far the most compact, able, experienced and trustworthy organized group of political and economic radicals which has assembled under one political flag in any modern nation. Hitherto its sympathizers in other countries, if they were

candid, could not reasonably conceive it as anything but a plant of tender growth which might not survive the rough and tumble fights and the costly vicissitudes of practical politics. But as the result of this election the Labor party can fairly claim to be a hardy perennial with roots deep enough in the soil of British political and social life to survive much unfavorable weather. It is likely to keep growing and ultimately to undertake the responsibility of government.

The Labor party won its victory even more at the expense of the Liberals than at the expense of the Tories. Its success increases the probability that Labor rather than Liberalism will finally emerge as the official competitor with Conservatism for temporary possession of the right to rule Great Britain. The Liberals have steadily insisted that, if they were reunited and presented with an issue which sharply distinguished them from the Conservatives, they would regain their prestige and popularity and reduce Labor to the negligible dimensions of the former Independent Labor party. This claim now seems less plausible. The recent elections reunited the Liberals and gave them the one issue about which they could talk most confidently. Yet they added little to their popular support and still ran a poor second to Labor. What will become of them hereafter? Are they capable of gaining enough votes at the expense either of Conservatives or of Labor to give them an ultimate majority? If they cannot gain in this way, are they not likely to shrivel as Labor adds to its membership, until in the end their right wing will go over to the Conservatives and the left wing rally to Labor?

These are, of course, extremely practical questions; and the events of the next few months will throw some light on the answers to them. English government in its traditional form becomes impossible when Parliament is divided into three factions, no one of which contains a majority and no two of which will coalesce. That is apparently the situation today. It is probable that one of these three factions will have to give way and distribute its members between its rivals. Manifestly it will not be the Tories. In any changing constitutional state, one party must represent the class which benefits from the established institutions of the country and consents reluctantly to proposed alterations in the balance of political and economic power. The question is whether the alternative party, the party of conscious organized social progress, will call itself Liberal or Labor. The answer to this question still remains doubtful, but after the election it is more than ever probable that Liberalism will eventually combine with Conservatism to form a party, which, while it would not merely obstruct political and economic readjustment, would use every pretext to prevent reconstruction from travelling too far or too fast.

The reason why Liberalism will probably coalesce with Conservatism rather than Labor and thereby lose many of its more radical members is sufficiently obvious. Liberalism is less divided from the Conservatism of today than it is from Labor. The first two are expressions of the points of view of a middle class, whose prestige depends on the association between the ownership of private property and political power. They are alarmed at the prospect of confiding the government of the country to workers who do not own private property. At present both of the older parties are partially progressive. They admit the necessity of planning innovations in industry and government, but they are not willing to accept the shift in the distribution of social power for which the Labor party contends. Labor proposes to reform the institution of private property by distinguishing drastically between those forms which are socially beneficial in their operations and those which are not beneficial. It represents the rise of a class which, while it seeks increasing comfort and leisure, is trying to obtain what it seeks not by personal accumulation but by increasing the amount of socialized property and by giving increasing dignity and competence to labor by hand and brain. A class of this kind has, as the result of the trades-union and the coöperative movements, gradually overcome the obstacles to its social leadership. No doubt it still needs an increase in numbers, in self-consciousness, in technical ability and in social vision before it can successfully assume the onerous responsibility of governing in the interest of reconstruction, but it is going strong and it has a fair chance of arriving. Its advent and its increasing success are quite the most promising and significant political and social enterprise which is taking place in the world of today.

## The Background of American Withdrawal

**E**LSEWHERE in this issue we publish a letter from Mr. John F. Moors in which he criticises an article recently published in the *New Republic* entitled *The Obstacle to Peace* for misrepresenting the reasons which induced the Senate to reject the Treaty of Versailles and for injustice to ex-President Wilson. As these criticisms of Mr. Moors express with moderation the honest objections which Mr. Wilson's friends continue to urge against any dissent from the course which he adopted in Paris, it is worth while to answer them candidly and carefully. The discussion may throw some light upon a difference of opinion which is having extremely unfortunate results in dividing the friends of world peace into separate camps.

If Mr. Moors had read the article in question more sympathetically, he would have seen that it

did not, as he implies, attribute the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles to dislike by the Senate of the Treaty itself as distinguished from the Covenant of the League of Nations. The article did not pretend to tell the story of how or why the Senate repudiated the Treaty. It was evaluating the conduct of the American nation in suspending the political partnership with Europe into which it had entered by coöperating with the Allies in defeating Germany. Ex-President Wilson had stigmatized the withdrawal from Europe which resulted from the rejection of the Treaty as a cowardly and ignoble act. Some people who participated in the decision may have been prompted by cowardly motives or explained their conduct by ignoble reasons; but our contention was and is that under the circumstances the decision to withdraw was and will be ultimately beneficial. For Mr. Wilson had imposed on them an alternative of either withdrawing or of entangling themselves without the guidance of any recognized rule or sufficiently educated opinion in the conflicts of European power politics.

There would have been something cowardly and ignoble about American withdrawal if the European statesmen assembled in Paris had in framing the Treaty sincerely tried to substitute law and conference for force as the ultimate arbiter of European politics. But a League of Nations which would not admit Germany was not a sincere attempt to provide an adequate remedy for the causes of international competition for power, while on the other hand the Treaty itself contained a group of international adjustments which derived their only possible permanent sanction from a continued preponderance of force in the hands of its beneficiaries. The great previous European settlements—the Treaties of Westphalia and Vienna—depended on force for their sanction and were bound to result in future wars; but they served to allay the animosities of the moment and they set up a future balance rather than an attempted monopoly of power. Germany imposed the Treaty of Frankfurt on France in defiance of justice, but compared to the Treaty of Versailles it was a triumph of compassion and of moderation. Under its provisions France could survive, recover and prosper. Germany could not survive, recover and prosper under the Treaty of Versailles. The Treaty operated to erect military force into a more affirmative fact, and conference, law, and fair dealing into less affirmative facts in the politics of Europe than they had been before the war.

Under these circumstances the refusal of the United States to ratify was an act of justifiable self-protection. For the United States the Treaty and the League could not be disentangled. In explaining their reasons for an adverse vote the senators naturally emphasized the League rather than the Treaty. The antipathies of the war were