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The Week

DURING the past two weeks the administration has taken a great deal of trouble to cultivate friendly relations with the Japanese government and to discourage the noisy propaganda in this country on behalf of additional armaments, directed against Japan. Its energetic demonstrations have had a beneficial effect and have helped to relax a condition of strain which, if it had continued, might have brought unpleasant consequences. We do not for one moment believe that the anti-Japanese Americans who were demanding additional armaments were any but an insignificant proportion of the American people. The state of mind of the United States is at the present time on the whole profoundly pacific. The great majority of Americans do not believe that the way to pre-

serve peace is to act as if war were probable and desirable. But a few military and naval propagandists can with the assistance of the newspapers make a noise as loud as a great host, and unless they are blasted by a forbidding official frown they may well provoke recriminations in Japan and excite the latent truculence which forms such an essential part of our existing moral conventions. An official demonstration against the militant agitation was, consequently, highly desirable and Messrs. Coolidge and Hughes went about it in a thorough-going spirit and performed a workmanlike job.

THERE remains, however, much still to be done if the coöperation towards naval disarmament which was started in Washington during the fall of 1922 is to be continued. The Washington agreements constituted a tentative and unstable compromise which unless they are extended and reinforced cannot even be preserved. They permit a resumption of the old competition in certain important types of vessels and in many of the most effective devices of naval warfare. The time is clearly coming when the revision and improvement of the agreements will demand discussion, and it will be interesting to observe whether Mr. Coolidge will rise to the occasion. If he really wishes to discredit those Americans who are fomenting ill-feeling between this country and Japan, he cannot rest content with his oral and literary attempts to keep the spirit of peace. He will have to take the poison out of their propaganda by doing away, if possible, with the expedients which naval patrioteers can still employ to scare their fellow countrymen and to foment ill-feeling.

ALTHOUGH there have been no flaws in the handling by the Administration of American diplomatic relations with Japan, as much cannot be said of its naval strategy. The proposed manœuvres of the American fleet in the Pacific during the coming spring are shrewdly calculated and no doubt intended to cultivate apprehension and suspicion in Japan and naval vaingloriousness in the United States. In the event of war with Japan the American fleet will not be strong enough to operate in Asiatic waters and the Japanese fleet will not be strong enough to operate in American waters. The

kind of cruise which is now proposed cannot, consequently, prepare the fleet for the realities of future war in the Pacific. American naval strategy in the event of such a war would be defensive. The cruise is merely a bellicose and defiant gesture. The Japanese will feel about it much as we Americans would feel if a formidable and a threatening Japanese flotilla carried on war-like exercises in American waters and was hospitably entertained in Mexico and Canada. Any Japanese citizen can read in the Roosevelt records about the motives which prompted President Roosevelt to send on one former occasion a powerful American fleet across the Pacific and Japanese public opinion will naturally consider that a similarly threatening motive is responsible for the coming demonstration. President Coolidge will not succeed in improving the relations between the United States and Japan by speaking soothing words on one day and by pointing a few days later the spearhead of the American fleet directly at Japan.

WE trust, consequently, that at an early date and while Mr. Hughes is still Secretary of State, President Coolidge will summon a conference of the four governments which are most interested in naval armaments and which participated in the non-aggression compact of two years ago. There are political as well as military reasons for such a conference. Since the end of 1922 a kind of deadlock has existed in the relations between China and the foreign world. Japanese aggression has become less threatening than it was, but nothing has been done to promote the proposed reforms looking towards the increasing economic and political independence of China. There is on the contrary an increasing demand for renewed intervention in China—an intervention which will be disguised under the beneficent appearance of a Dawes plan. The questions which are raised by the existing condition of China in its relation to Europe and Japan are assuming a form which has no doubt already become a subject of international negotiation; and it is certainly better to have this most important negotiation conducted in public at a conference and as a part of an additional disarmament agreement than to have it discussed privately and separately.

THE British Conservatives have taken their overwhelming victory at the polls as a mandate for the introduction of the tariff policy which was once proposed by Bonar Law and was the chief cause for his ignominious defeat. The development as announced by Mr. Baldwin in a speech the importance of which seems to have been largely overlooked by the American daily press, is to be a gradual and cautious one. Domestic industries are to be protected one by one as they are able to demonstrate that they deserve such treatment; and only then to a limited degree and in an experimental fashion. The other and more important half of the policy, at least at pres-

ent, is a system of imperial preference. Among imports, goods from the Dominions are to be favored over those from other parts of the world: a scheme which is obviously an attempt to knit the Commonwealth of Nations more closely together, both economically and politically. However, Mr. Baldwin says frankly that British public opinion has not yet been educated to the point of accepting tariffs on foodstuffs, and these are therefore indefinitely postponed. Among immediate developments the chief will be the restoration of some of the post-war "emergency" tariffs which had been abolished by the Labor government.

THE United States, of course, is in no position to criticize the new British policy (which is, after all, not so new as it sounds, since Great Britain has not hesitated to lay duties in recent years whenever she felt they were desirable—as, for example, against imports from Germany). America is now the leading high tariff country of the world, and we cannot cavil if other nations choose to follow our example. At the same time, the new British policy may give us a painfully vivid object lesson as to the way in which trade is restricted by high tariff policies. Great Britain is an important customer of ours for manufactures, foodstuffs, and raw materials. The plans of the Baldwin government ultimately intend that the manufactures shall be produced at home and the foodstuffs, cotton, wool, etc., in the Dominions. We shall get more than a taste of our own medicine; and it is altogether probable that we shall not like it.

CHRISTMAS week has brought anything but peace in Europe. France is hysterically alarmed over the expectation, which seems to be quite groundless, of Communist uprisings in her chief cities. Germany is struggling with the difficult task of forming a coalition with enough power behind it to produce a government. Austria is in the throes of a severe business depression. In Italy Mussolini, faced by a rapid dwindling of his power and popularity, has taken action which is supposed to foreshadow a general election within the next ninety days. Albania, fighting border raiders who, she charges, are instigated by Yugoslavia has appealed for relief to the League of Nations. Fear of Bolshevik activities is producing a Pan-Balkan alliance among Yugoslavia, Rumania and Bulgaria which is announced at the moment when the Pope delivers an extraordinary blast against the Communists on the ground of their anti-religious activities. Russia itself continues to be agitated over the question of Trotzky, now cooling his heels in the Crimea. Add to this category of trouble the North African difficulties of Spain, England's dispute with Egypt, the continuing bad blood between Greece and Turkey, the quarrel between Turkey and Great Britain over the Irak boundary, resurgent Indian nationalism, the Chinese war, now only temporarily in abey-

ance, the tension between Japan and the United States—and you have as much gloom as the most confirmed pessimist could ask, with which to start the New Year.

ELECTION day did not end the Progressive campaign. The Conference for Progressive Political Action had already decreed that a later meeting should be held, whatever the outcome of the election, this meeting being for the purpose of deciding whether or not a permanent party should be attempted. A conference was held in Washington a short time ago, and decided that this question should be settled at a subsequent gathering in Chicago late in February. What action will then be taken it is of course impossible to predict. Some of the elements which participated in the LaFollette-Wheeler campaign are admittedly disheartened and wish to withdraw, this feeling being particularly strong among the railroad brotherhoods. Others argue that considering the small funds, the impromptu character of the national organization and the brief period of less than four months, a vote of four and a half millions, or about one in seven of the total vote, is an achievement of which anybody might be proud.

AMONG the problems particularly discussed at Washington was the future policy of Progressive women. Should they form a completely independent organization of their own? Or should they remain inside the general group, insisting on complete equality with the men?—something which they feel they by no means had during the campaign just closed. Both these points of view were strongly represented at the Washington gathering. Our own opinion is heartily in favor of the second course. The objects sought by the Progressives would benefit everyone, men and women alike. No such reason exists for creating a separate organization of women as lay behind the Woman's Party, or the National League of Women Voters. Indeed, equal participation and responsibility by men and women ought to be one of the principles of the Progressive party, if and when formed.

SAMUEL GOMPERS is dead, but his spirit goes marching on. William Green, Secretary-Treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America, who has just been elected President of the American Federation of Labor, is a rigid Conservative of the Gompers type. Not only did he oppose the endorsement of LaFollette in the late campaign, but his face is set against all commercial activities by labor unions, such as the labor banks, and the coal mining operations of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. While we regret the fact that the A. F. of L. is in for another term of strictly economic trade unionism, during which it will continue to be solely concerned with securing what benefits it can for the members of particular unions at particular

times, the event is neither unexpected nor unnatural. The membership of the A. F. of L., representing the best paid members of the skilled trades, is the most conservative wing of American labor. For the past thirty years the movement has been "on the make," and very successfully so. Such conditions inevitably produce the sort of policies which Gompers and Green have followed. That period, unless we are gravely mistaken, is nearly ended. But in the meantime, it is easy to understand why the attitude of a man like Green meets the approval of the A. F. of L. leaders, however wrong and objectionable it may seem to a minority of the rank and file.

THERE is now some hope that the Underwood Muscle Shoals bill may go over until the next session of Congress. The Progressives are lined up solidly against it; and since the last thing the administration forces want is a filibuster, they had rather have a postponement than to find their other projects for this session blocked. We believe it is wholly in the public interest that the Underwood bill should go over until next December. The more one considers this measure the worse it looks. Senator Norris charges that from the terms of the present proposal the development would almost certainly come under control of the General Electric Company, and that the latter organization is securing an enormous influence upon electric power resources in the United States. These are serious allegations and should be thoroughly sifted before irrevocable action is taken. It is further stated that the Underwood bill gives carte blanche to the lessee as to where and to whom it will sell its electric power; and seems to leave the whole project subject to no other restrictions than those which might be imposed by the state authorities of Alabama. There is not even an assurance that the limited amount of nitrates for fertilizer will be produced at a reasonable rate. The lessee would be limited to eight percent on each "turnover," which might mean very dear fertilizer indeed. At the same time, no limit is set on the amount of profit which can be earned in relation to the original investment. If the Ford offer was undesirable and deserved to be rejected, as now seems to be generally agreed, the Underwood bill is unquestionably just as bad and should meet the same fate.

THE dance of the statesmen over the question of French debts to Great Britain and the United States would be amusing if such important relationships were not bound up with it. Great Britain hears that the United States is considering funding the French debt on better terms than those under which the British debt is being paid off. Promptly she demands equality of treatment; and supplements this by the announcement that France must match every payment to the United States with one to Great Britain. Next, the cables carry the news that the

Baldwin government is offering highly advantageous terms to France if the latter country will get to work seriously on the question of her obligations. This time, the howl of protest comes from Washington. America demands equality of treatment with Great Britain. And so on, and so on. The whole debate, of course, is political in character and intended for political effect. The financiers know that France won't be in a position to pay anybody a penny for a decade to come. Even if she were, she will be in no hurry to discharge an obligation which seems to her unfair, since in her interpretation, the money was borrowed and spent in prosecuting a struggle "to save civilization" which was quite as much in the interest of her allies as herself.

MOREOVER, the French cannot fail to have learned something about international finance since 1918. They have discovered that debts between nations are uncollectible except by military force, and perhaps not even then. And military force costs more than any debt is worth. Therefore, payments must be voluntary; which means that the debtor, practically speaking, can set his own terms. Great Britain played the honorable part in arranging terms with America; and is staggering under the enormously heavy burden which was thereby laid upon her. Germany, feeling that her cause was hopeless anyhow, elected not to pay more than the allies could take from her by force; and it is altogether likely that she will escape without turning over any great additional sum. France is therefore at liberty to choose. She may voluntarily step into jail and serve a long sentence; or she may remain free and apparently be none the worse off for doing so. Evidently the ethics of capitalism need revision when they come to be applied to international affairs.

NOW we have four years of Republican rule ahead, are we not assured of four years of prosperity? The Cleveland Trust Company Business Bulletin publishes a comment in point. In the last forty years we have lived twenty-four years under Republican administration, sixteen under Democratic. There have been recurrent alterations of prosperity and depression; have they corresponded with the political complexion of the administration? No. Under the Republicans fifty-five percent of the months have been marked by prosperity, forty-five by depression. Precisely the same percentages hold for the Democratic years. Employment has been as satisfactory or unsatisfactory under the one party as under the other. On the heels of the Harding landslide of 1920, with its promise of high tariff, came the great slump of 1921. Politics has less effect on economics than the politicians—especially during a few months of every fourth year—would have us believe. The greater the pity that their propaganda is swallowed so readily.

The Christmas Holiday

THE two outstanding festivals of the Christian year are Christmas, the anniversary of the day on which Jesus was born, and Easter, the celebration of the day on which He underwent, in the minds of His humble followers, a second and more victorious creation. The two festivals differ profoundly both in their nature and in the meaning of the piously remembered event. It may be worth while to pause for a moment during the holiday season and consider what the difference is and what light it throws on the parts which Christianity plays in the lives of ordinary Christians.

The Christmas festival belongs, of course, essentially to the people and to the fireside. The churches hold services on the morning of December 25 in which there is probably more singing and less preaching than usual, but what the congregations mean by the holiday is not and does not need to be celebrated in any ecclesiastical building. Wherever there is lively, attentive and articulate good feeling within a family and among friends, there the fuel exists which gives warmth and light to the Christmas festivity. Those who share in the festival gather spontaneously around the fireside and express in acts of simple generosity their good will towards relatives and friends but particularly towards their children. They remember also the poor, but only as dependents towards whom they are benevolently disposed. The characteristic vehicle of Christmas benevolence is a personal gift—a gift which at its best expresses not merely the kindness and the generosity of the giver but an insight into the needs of the recipient. The person to whom Christmas brings the liveliest pleasure is the one who divines what other people would like and has the means to satisfy their wishes. In addition to this rare personal aspect of the Christmas festival there is, of course, a large ingredient of indiscriminate and abounding good fellowship which induces most men and some women to put their ordinary scruples aside and to present themselves with an abundance of good things to eat and drink.

On Christmas day, that is, the natural kindness and expansiveness of human nature find expression by the most obvious and least critical routes. Quite simply we give more or less freely to other people, not what may be good for them but what they are likely to want, and we satisfy these generous impulses particularly at the expense of children and the poor who do not possess the means of obtaining what they want for themselves. This natural kindness is released through vehicles which in origin are partly pagan and partly Christian. When the pagan wished to represent by some symbolic act his good will towards all his world and towards himself, he almost always waxed convivial. He ate and drank more than was good for him—sufficient at any rate to soothe his grievances and drown his sorrows. He used this perfectly natural