

Aids to Understanding the League of Nations

EVERY American citizen who takes much interest in public affairs wants to know something about the obligations which will be imposed upon the United States if the Senate ratifies the Treaty of Versailles so that this country shall become a member of the League of Nations. He also desires clearly to understand precisely what benefits are expected to accrue to the United States from participation in the proposed covenant. These topics are being talked over everywhere that men meet in serious conversation; but we fear that dogmatism is the chief characteristic of their discussions. Among the scores of books which have recently been published as aids to an understanding of the league we note two which are of special value, namely: *Present Problems in Foreign Policy*, by David Jayne Hill, our former Ambassador to Germany, and *The League of Nations: Its Principles and Practice*, a collection of papers written by sixteen authors of varying degrees of distinction and edited by Stephen Pierce Duggan, professor of education in the College of the City of New York.

II.

Dr. Hill's *Present Problems in Foreign Policy* contains the strongest presentation we have seen of the case against such a League of Nations as is contemplated by the Treaty of Versailles and approved and advocated by President Wilson. His objections are those of a statesman and expert in international law. He points out that the proposed league is nowhere pledged to the maintenance of international law or to the recognition of the inherent rights of States, but it makes the exercise of power instead of the promotion of willing obedience to the law of nations the main purpose of its existence. Instead of creating a law abiding society of peace loving States it aims to establish a supergovernment by a predominant group within a general association; and it sets up a mandate system which is imperialistic in character and therefore liable to the gravest and most dangerous abuses. "How can the United States," asks Dr. Hill, "in the person of a representative appointed by the President, even if confirmed by the Senate, participate in issuing 'Acts and Charters' for the government of territory not owned by the United States and not subject either to the Constitution of the United States or to the laws of Congress?" At the close of the war, according to Dr. Hill's views, the future peace of the world could have been best insured by the union of the Entente Allies in an agreement something like this:

"We the signatories agree that if peace should be anywhere threatened we will together inquire into the cause of aggression, and if we find that the law of nations has been anywhere violated we will by mediation together use our best endeavors to avoid strife. If war is begun we will together consider what measures we should take in common. And we mutually agree to submit any difference we may have with one another or with other nations to a like mediation. To this end we continue our close association of intimate counsel and we will receive into our understanding other governments when circumstances render it proper to do so."

In the view of statesmen like Elihu Root in this country and James Bryce in Great Britain, peace can be permanently preserved only by extending the scope of international law, recognizing its universal application and observing its rules

in the judicial determination of such controversies as may arise between nation and nation. Just as individual persons, throughout the civilized world, have learned to resort to courts for the redress of wrongs which they have suffered at the hands of other individual persons instead of indulging in duels or fatal feuds, so nations, which are aggregations of individual persons, may consent to settle their disputes by submitting them for decision to judicial tribunals organized and maintained for the purpose of administering international law and punishing those nations proved to be guilty of any flagrant violation thereof.

III.

The volume edited by Prof. Duggan is quite different from Dr. David Jayne Hill's book. It is encyclopedic in character and presents different sides of many of the important questions arising under the proposed League of Nations as formulated in the Treaty of Versailles. The editor is favorably disposed toward the project. If it accompanies a just peace, he says, the league is needed to realize its provisions and build upon them for a better future; "and in the case of an unjust peace the league is the only organ existing that can possibly remedy the evils that would result from the continued enforcement of its unwise provisions." Accordingly, Prof. Duggan holds that the adoption of the league, like the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, is a first step toward making the world a better place to live in. In a chapter on the historical background of the league Carlton H. Hayes, professor of history in Columbia University, shows that it is a mistake to compare it to the Amphictyonic Council of ancient Greece, which was an interurban instead of an international organization and really was chiefly concerned with the regulation of the celebrated oracle at Delphi. The division of Europe into a number of separate States, each State representing a nation, was first recognized by monarchs and statesmen at the end of the Thirty Years' War; and the practices which such States observed in waging war and making peace were the origin of modern international law as expounded by Grotius and his successors. Prof. Hayes reviews the various schemes which have been propounded for a league of nations to perpetuate peace from the time of Henry IV. of France to the present day; and he attributes their failure to "the assumption that the parties to them were independent sovereign States which had interests of their own at variance with and superior to the interests of mankind at large." He admits that the doctrine of nationalism has inspired glorious and noble deeds, promoted popular education and stimulated art and literature; but he deplors its failure to develop "a confederation of all the free nations of the world for mutual cooperation and support." The objection to this aspiration is that it contemplates a supergovernment over all the nations of the world—a condition for which mankind is hardly prepared as yet, and least of all that portion of mankind embraced within the citizenship of the United States.

IV.

One of the best papers in Prof. Duggan's volume is that on "Some Essentials for a League of Peace" by another Columbia professor, John Bassett Moore, formerly Assistant Secretary of State and one of the ablest of American publicists. Back of all devices for the preservation of peace we must, he thinks, rely upon the cultivation of a mental attitude among the people of the world which will lead men, first of all, to resort to amicable processes rather than to war when international differences arise. He evidently has more confidence in the judicial method of settling disputes than in any other, but he says it remains to be dealt with in a comprehensive and effective way. Unfortunately it has received very little attention in President Wilson's League of Nations.

President A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard University contributes a suggestive paper, in which he points out the advantages of what he calls the automatic form of a league of nations. The several States which were members of such a league would upon the occurrence of a specified emergency be bound to perform the acts prescribed in the league covenant, such, for example, as to cease intercourse with an offending State, go to the aid of the member unlawfully attacked or perform any other obligation which had been agreed upon—and this without waiting for any action or command from a league

congress or other representative body of control. President Lowell thinks that such an automatic league whose compact provided for armed resistance in case of attack on any one member would certainly have prevented Germany from plunging into the great war which has resulted in her ruin.

The studious reader will find in Prof. Duggan's collection of papers information and enlightenment on the principal questions which have arisen concerning the covenant of the League of Nations embodied in the treaty of Versailles. "Any expectation of creating immediately a full fledged league of nations that shall be a perfect and permanent organization of the world is doomed to disappointment." So writes Prof. Raymond Garfield Gettell of the chair of political science in Amherst College in the chapter on the

"Freedom of the Seas." Mankind cannot be wholly reconstructed out of hand just because there has been a great world war. Sensible reformers will content themselves with little by little. The two books which are the subject of this notice, with the official documents which they contain in the form of appendices, indicate that any league of nations, however wisely constituted, involves difficulties which are not adequately appreciated by many of those who champion the President's covenant without due consideration.

PRESENT PROBLEMS IN FOREIGN POLICY. BY DAVID JAYNE HILL. D. Appleton & Co.
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: ITS PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE. Edited by STEPHEN PIERCE DUGGAN. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Unrealism for Children

WITH so many nurseless nurseries crying aloud to be amused almost any collection of juvenile stories is welcome, and so there will be hands to grasp at *The Children's Fairy-Land*, translated and adapted from the fairy tales of the Countess D'Aulnoy and illustrated in silhouette by Harriet Mead Olcott. It is hard to tell whether the small patrons will like or resent the grafting upon these apparently new forms of limbs or even whole torsos from the body of aged fairy lore. In a single story, appropriately called *The Chestnut Tree*, the motifs and sometimes the exact language of such classics as *Red Riding Hood*, *Hop o' My Thumb* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* are seized and blended with a certain degree of skill. We should like to know if these romances are modern creations or established variations of folk ideas.

There is a profound allegory lurking in the humble pages of Mrs. Arthur H. D. Acland's book for children, *The Queer Beasts*, but the bliss of ignorance may blind many to its true worth. We showed it to a light hearted boy the other day and he scoffed at such silly trash. The

book's appreciative readers must be limited to a certain more or less unhappy class who will find here no phantasy but the quite inadequate recital of painful actuality, and they will not be children. The opening situation of an unsuspecting factory youth who exchanges his job and small belongings for a handsome country estate is unusual enough to provoke general interest, but unfortunately the story's unfolding is handled with no convincing art. This is why we say it will not appeal to children. Such happenings as a mouse changing to an elephant and back again in violent succession must be skilfully presented except to the holder of a distant summer place, who has seen his prize cow change to a scrap of paper in the caretaker's pocket, and blue blooded herds and droves converted in the twinkle of a tenant's eye into the vulgar field variety.

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