

Review

Will Ireland accept the peace terms signed by her delegates? We shall probably have the answer before these pages go to press. But as it is quite possible that the ratification may not come so soon the situation invites speculation and is a trap for speculative prophets. My own forecast is that the Republican Parliament will show a clear majority for the pact, and that if a plebiscite is called it too will show a safe majority for its acceptance, and that the entire country will accept that decision as final.

The delegates have in fact secured all that the leaders of Sinn Fein aimed at in the beginning and all that they could have hoped to secure when they agreed to a conference. One may go further and say that they have secured all that they desired to secure. For if you consider the things which they have conceded you will realize that they are things which the Irish did not value as of any consequence. No one in Ireland was ready to die for the name Republic, but all were prepared to die if necessary in order to secure control of their own destiny, to pursue their own aims and develop their own national life. This right they have secured, the name Republic they have dropped. There was not any desire on the part of the Irish to burden themselves with a standing army, for they expressly repudiated Imperialism, and they did not calculate on being compelled to maintain an attitude of defence against England after settlement; they agree not to maintain an army out of proportion to their population. There never was in Ireland any solid body of sentiment hostile to the kings of England; they now engage not to attempt to undermine the sovereignty of Great Britain, for that is the meaning of fidelity to the king after allegiance to the Irish state. All this material, the counters in the game, was yielded to Lloyd George, with every show of reluctance of course. It really was of no use to the Sinn Fein and it was of great use to Lloyd George, for it enabled him to dress up a capitulation with the give and take appearance of a treaty.

Lloyd George will not deny that he was rescued from despair by the Irish delegates' steadfast purpose to have England a strong and friendly neighbor rather than the center of a disrupted and crumbling empire; and I do not hesitate to say that, so far as in him lies, he will carry out this compact in the fullest fidelity to his pledges.

Is De Valara satisfied with the pact? I think there is not any doubt of it. He is now the elected President of the Republic and it is his duty to those who elected himself and the rest of the Dail to hold up the treaty till the voice of the people be unequivocally heard. If a plebiscite be necessary to that end there will be a plebiscite; if not, not. I think we may say to the new Ireland, *Salve! robur et aes triplex!* You are the most heartening thing within sight on the round world today. Idealism, fortitude, discipline, and enlightened leadership have sustained you and borne you to victory. Against calumny you are no longer compelled to struggle for the calumniators themselves have capitulated. To fair weather friends you may say, with Dr. Johnson, "I hope it is no very cynical asperity on my part not to confess obligations where none have been received, etc." May your ancient glories be new born, and all the golden days of Celtic culture be renewed. We in Canada owe you gratitude for having accepted our State as the norm of your own. And we shall watch you with the deepest interest, for we may be well assured that you do not purpose to lose the substance of what you have won in a tangle of wavering words.

THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

There are people praying for the success of the Washington conference who have no idea of the nature of the questions involved nor of the issues which would be regarded by the conveners as satisfactory. Indications were not wanting, before the opening of the conference, that the President's action in calling it was not entirely popular. Of the vast numbers who dropped their Democratic allegiance in protest of Wilson's attempt to entangle America in a League of Nations, few, if any, favored it. Preliminary discussion as to the order of procedure to be followed in the presentation of questions, the nature of the questions to be submitted, the personnel of delegations and

of subsidiary committees, and the manner of conducting the negotiations, openly or in secret, gave many opportunities of public expression to this genial distrust; so that by the time when the conference had convened the air was so charged with criticism that a febrifuge had to be resorted to. This Secretary of State Hughes imagined he supplied in the dramatic proposal, in the opening session, of wholesale reduction in the naval armaments of the United States, Great Britain and Japan. The proposal, it was hoped, would be accepted as an earnest of intent to do something worth while for the easement of the galled and fatigued jade, Democracy. But Democracy has picked up a cynical half-enlightenment of late in the cruel evolutionary school of the struggle for life. She looked at Hughes, his beard and all, which once had earned for him from Hearst the addition of an "animated feather-duster" and she asked herself whether he was capable of such infantile simplicity, or whether he was capable of the guile which was its only apparent alternative. Viviani doubtless could have characterized the situation pat from Victor Hugo;

Les peuples ne sauront, dans leur stupeur profonde,
Si ses mains, dans quelque autre monde,
Ont porte le sceptre ou les fers;
Et dans leurs chants de deuil et leur hymnes de fete
Ils se demanderent si les feux de sa tete
Sont des rayons ou des eclairs.

Viviani's own mere cynicism left him no doubt, even had he been without premonition, as to whether the light surrounding that head was a glory or a sulphur flame. He saw the first step, and he thought it an awkward one, towards the main purpose of the conference, namely, to force Japan into the position of recalcitrant and thereby to bring about a rupture of the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the formation of an Anglo-American one instead.

There was then a fine moment of congratulation from all the delegations and of fervid protestations of acceptance, in principle. If Hughes had uttered the Beatitudes as the law of international relations there would have been an even more cordial acclaim, of the principles, but modifications, in practice would doubtless have been deemed necessary, here and there.

Committees immediately began to consider modi-

fications and it became apparent forthwith that little progress could be made till other questions, naturally precedent, should be settled. Japan, for instance, could scarcely be expected to agree to the scrapping of her fleet till a general discussion of Pacific questions made clear the policy of the Powers with regard to them, and consequently the measure of her own requirements there. Therefore the question of China has been brought up, and the Chinese delegates have been heard. That was decidedly unfortunate; for the Chinese, with their ten points, brought home to the understanding of the man in the street a state of affairs so discreditable to the Powers engineering her "development" as to give a marked impulse to the tide of popular feeling already arising against the entire drift of the conference. Herein became apparent one disadvantage of the American plan, which had discouraged the submission of agenda before the opening of the conference. Is it possible that Harding and Hughes were so hypnotized with prospect of scoring on Japan and, obliquely on Wilson, in the matter of the Shantung concession that they forgot that China had older and deeper wrongs to be righted. Anyhow, the Chinese delegates emptied the sack-areas of exploitation, spheres of influence, railway "concessions," extraterritorial jurisdiction, "free ports," compulsory minimum tariffs and foreign post-offices, in a word, the whole story of the brigandage of the nations represented in the chamber of audience by the debonair Viviani, the benign Balfour and the most suave Kato. Did any of them bat an eye? Not one. They thanked the Chinese delegates for the very illuminating presentation of their case, applauded their demand for the abrogation of these infringements of sovereignty, accepted that sovereignty, in principle, and appointed committees to consider modifications of it in practice.

These committees have made some progress, chiefly by way of recommending commissions of "experts" to visit China and look into the whole matter of China's fitness for exercising these sovereign functions now taken care of by others; and, if their reports be favorable, some steps tending towards progressive devolution of such functions will hereafter be taken, by the powers affected

This sort of solution is not very satisfactory to those who seek the righting of wrongs, and the fact that Harding and Hughes should acquiesce in it was not very soothing to the popular feeling which claimed for America the position of disinterested exponent of justice.

I am of opinion that the straightforward language of China has given the coup de grace to the conference. Japan is not the only aggressor in the Pacific, and the snubbing of her will not create enough popular enthusiasm to launch a special pact with any of the others. A four cornered arrangement is therefore entered into between the United States, Japan, France and Great Britain for the mutual preservation of rights in the Pacific. The pact is to hold for ten years. It is being denounced by members of the Senate and by a large section of public opinion; but it is not yet certain whether Harding will ask ratification of the Senate, or will carry it through as an executive measure, which would leave it in danger of being scrapped at the next Presidential election. Now one wonders from what source they anticipate aggression in the Pacific within ten years if not from one of themselves. It may be a sociable device to give Hughes the pleasure of signing a treaty; it may be a joke of Balfour's designed to test the American people's reaction to the idea of alliance; but I think it is none of these. Is Chili perhaps about to embark on a career of imperialism in the Pacific, or has the uninvited delegate of another great "self-governing nation" lying upon the Pacific been all the while so grim and taciturn as to raise in the excited minds of the delegates the nightmare of a Jolly Roger flung from the masthead of a truculent Niobe or Rainbow "strayed amid lonely islands, mazed amid outer seas"? If it means none of these it must mean that if trouble arises between Japan and the United States Britain and France must go and fight whomever they elect to regard as aggressor. A clause exempts domestic questions from the operation of the treaty; therefore the signatories will not be bound to assist in suppressing the present Indian mutiny; but, should Afghanistan or Russia interfere, even by so much as a gesture, the treaty obligation could be invoked. It would be worth while subsidizing a few friendly Afghans or a few impecunious Soviets to get the treaty into operation.

The net results of the conference to date are really nothing positive. A treaty has been signed but is not to be effective till a satisfactory settlement of the Yap differences is reached, which may mean till the Greek kalends; all else is in suspense. On the negative side, however, the Harding administration has lost favor, America's prestige has suffered heavily, the good will of South America towards the United States has probably been adversely affected, and Japan has had a clear vision of the essential antagonism between East and West.

THE STATUS OF CANADA

Since the Anglo-Irish Treaty makes Canada's status the norm of the Irish Free State we may as well make up our minds that the exact meaning of that status is going to be delimited. It is no part of the policy of the clear-headed men who fought their way to the position in which they deemed they might rest without compromising their national aspirations, to barter substance for empty phrases; and we may be sure that close questions were put and answered as to the meaning of "self-governing nations within the Empire" and "British Commonwealth of Nations." They had before their eyes, from day to day, public comments, by two of these nations, that could not fail to engage attention; for Smuts had refused to go to the Washington Conference unless invited by the United States, and Sir Robert Borden, uninvited he too, had gone in the wake of the British Delegation. Now the value of these two facts in the effort to reach mutual understanding of the terminology of the treaty that was being worked out, could not have been overlooked; and the question was certainly asked, "has Smuts an exaggerated idea of his rights as Premier of the Union of South Africa or has Borden a slavish idea of the rights of the Dominion of Canada?" Then again there was the case of Mr. Sastri of India (who, for all I know, may be the re-incarnation of the Akoond of Swat). Sastri was at Washington in exactly the same capacity as Borden, that is to say the British Delegation told him to come along; and he was at some pains to let the press agencies of Washington know that he was as big a figure as Borden, and would sign treaties for India just as Borden would sign for Canada. And he did

so, with as clear a mandate; that is to say, with none at all.

The very first article of the treaty brought up this question of the positions of Canada and India within the Empire; for Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand are named in that article as the types of the new Ireland; but India is not. Can India be called a "self-governing nation"? "No!" says Lloyd George. "Canada?" "Yes." "But they both signed the Paris Treaty on the same footing" urged Griffith; "it was not then as self-governing nations that they signed." "Why not! They all helped us in the war; it was a courtesy." "Is it as the delegate of a self-governing nation that Sir Robert Borden will sign any instruments at Washington?" "As a delegate, no! he was not sent by Canada; we took himself and Mr Sastri along as representatives of the two outlying portions of the Empire." "But if he had been sent by Canada, could he sign or refuse to sign with an eye to Canadian interests?" "It would have been embarrassing, in the present state of the evolution of the Empire, for Canada to have insisted on that as a right," replied Lloyd George we could scarcely have told them that we in England do not admit that right, as yet. Of course both Canada and Australia are vitally interested in the issues of the conference; but they have shown the fullest confidence in the mother country; they have not insisted. Anyhow they were not invited; the United States did not invite them, you know." Here the grim Griffith relaxed into a cold prison smile and the truculent eyes of the big assassin Collins were snapping with fun. "With South Africa it was different," went on Lloyd George a little flurried. "We are here to be perfectly frank with each other. There is, as you know, a strong sentiment of independence in South Africa. It was the whole issue of the last election there. We felt sure that Smuts could save the situation and the plebiscite would strengthen our position, for the time. It did so; but the situation is critical and we did not wish to further involve it by taking Smuts along, an annex to our delegation," he added, looking across the table with the frankest of smiles. The Irish delegates both looked grave. "You spoke a while ago of the evolution of the Empire," said Griffith in a restrained voice. "I was coming to that," replied Lloyd-George. "The present position of the

autonomous dominions cannot endure. I should not wish to have it put to the touch of another election, anywhere. You see what is taking place in Canada. You have seen the platform of the Progressives; they want to go their own way and have no entanglements where their own interests are not served, immediately. That's plain enough; and Meighen, our best friend, has gone down before them. Fortunately the Liberals have pulled a working majority out of the three cornered fight, and they will handle the situation more gently. But the drift is inevitable; unless the Empire is speedily converted into a free association of nations it must go to pieces. Ulster does not understand that," he added with another smile across the table; "you are hard on Ulster" "We hope not," began Griffith, "every guarantee. . . . "Yes, Yes," interrupted Lloyd George; "but you judge Ulster by the twentieth century; she is living in the eighteenth. But we are sorry to lose you" he continued meditatively; "for, in the new order of things the influence of each nation must be proportional to its population and perhaps to its commitments in the general interest." "However," he added after a short pause, "our interests are more nearly identical than those of any other two members of the group, and I see no reason to fear that either of us should endeavor to undermine the other."

"The very logic of Geography, so to say," Collins volunteered. Lloyd George joined heartily in the laugh. "Ah!" said he with a shake of the head, "thank God all that is over. I only wish we could scrap our armies with the same security with which you may yours."

There was a short pause. "Since the drift of events is in the direction that we all recognize," said Griffith, "it would appear that the fact and logically, the formula of allegiance are bound to undergo modification." Collins took up a pen and began to write. "If the new order is to be an association of really free nations," continued Griffith, "with status of perfect equality, then the first allegiance of each group will naturally be to the charter of its nationhood, its constitution. They cannot constitute a nation without that allegiance. But, inasmuch as they will enter the association freely, and inasmuch as they will probably wish to retain the monarchy as the symbol of their unity,

their formula of allegiance to the sovereign will be really one and the same thing as their pledge of fidelity to the general interests of the association,"

"Exactly," said Lloyd George "We trust that the several nations will find it is to their own interest to remain within the league; and while within the league their pledge of mutual fidelity holds. But since they shall be free nations, freely associated, it must also be true that, should any one of them determine to withdraw, its nationals would not thereby violate their oath of allegiance." "Would this formula possibly provide any relief," said Collins, and he read the formula as it appears in the pact. Griffith and Lloyd George looked at each other across the board while he read. When he had ended there was a moment's silence. Griffith broke the silence. "In that sense, Mr. Lloyd George, we could sign " he said.

When the Irish delegates brought the treaty to Dublin and discontent with the status secured began to be manifest in some quarters Lloyd George rose in the Commons and said; "When we think of the million men—young, strong, brave, indomitable young men—who came from the dominions to help the motherland in our danger, and realize that they came to help the empire to carry out the policy they had no share in shaping, we felt that in future it would be an unfair dilemma to put them in. The control of foreign policy is now vested in the empire as a whole. That is the new fact. Joint control means joint responsibility.

