

REVIEW

The Locarno Pact

The International Conference chose for its last meeting one of the most beautiful and fascinating spots in all Europe. People go to Locarno, one of the most glorious resorts on the shores of Lake Maggiore, as they do to Lugano for its sun. In its gardens the magnolia and the olive flourish in the midst of camellia, mimosa, oranges and lemons.

In picturesque and striking contrast to modern hotels and casino, which cater to the tourist, is the ancient architecture of the old town, for Locarno is a place of great antiquity, dating from the sixth century before Christ. Congregated around the market place in the great square, one may see the peasants from the surrounding districts with their multicoloured costumes. Above the town stands the Capucine cloister, the Madonna del Sasso, in the chapel of which are the frescoes of the school of Luini, "The Flight into Egypt" by Bramantino, and "Christ borne to the Sepulchre" by Antonio Ciseri.

The whole region is one of glorious colour, in which even the tint of the water varies, being green in the Northern arm in Switzerland, and blue in the Southern one in Italy. From the surface of the Lake, Monte Rosa and other giant summits of eternal snows are visible, and cypress trees on the banks emphasize the Italian character of the wonderful scenery.

It was in such surroundings, so fitted to call up man's noblest emotions, to recall to his mind the sublimity of beauty in nature, to make him feel that all this belonged, not to Frenchman or Italian or German or Englishman, but to all mankind, to impress him with the tranquillity of peace, that Britain, France and Germany have shaken hands on equal terms. Cologne is being evacuated, and Germany will enter the League. These are the chief meanings of the Western Pact. They bring a new spirit into European affairs. The Genoa Conference failed—perhaps it was premature—but to the exasperation of forty nations it failed. But where Genoa failed, Locarno has succeeded, and Mr. Chamberlain and M. Briand on the one side, and Herr Luther and Herr Stresemaun on the other, have achieved the greatest triumph in con-

ciliatory diplomacy since 1914. We may say that Europe is once more.

Not of course the Europe that will be restored to the confident genius, which, through two thousand years of vitality, created modern civilization—advancing every art and founding almost every science that exists; not that Europe that will arise in a new renaissance of peace, unity and prosperity, based on the strength and progress of its co-operating peoples. But, nevertheless, an Europe on a firm and hopeful road to larger things.

One must here pay a tribute to Mr. Chamberlain. He has rounded the Cape of Good Hope of Foreign Ministers. Patient, quiet, not given to show, he has worked on, implanting in all who came in contact with him, the conviction of good faith and sterling personality. And, too, they realized his judgment is as sound as his honesty; they realized he desires to reconcile all nations; that no matter how painful the process, he tries to understand every view point, and above all, that he knows how to respect the dignity of those from he differs, and to consider their views without prejudice.

He does not advertise, he does not hang out false lights, but has convinced his fellows of the foreign chancelleries that no man is more able in promoting peace by practical adjustments and genuine sympathies. The Foreign Press has freely granted him praise, and his honours have just been rounded off by his receiving the Garter, the only commoner, barring Balfour, to receive that honour since the days of Walpole. Of course we must consider that nothing could have been achieved without the support of his colleagues—French, German, Belgian and Italian.

The question may be put: What has been achieved? The answer is that the Western Pact is in the main a voluntary Treaty of Peace on equal terms between Britain, France and Germany. The Reich, not on compulsion, but on its own initiative, finally concedes Alsace Lorraine to the French Republic. No wiser step was ever taken by a nation. It completes the process of separation of the non-German Teutons, we might call them, such as the Netherlands, and the German Canton from the old ill-assorted mediaeval Reich. France, in return, recognised the indissoluble integrity of Germany proper.

The dream of Rhenish separation is dead. Though fears may linger and suspicion rankle, we believe that the thousand year feud between Gaul and Teuton, which convulsed Europe in almost every generation, is terminated.

Of course alarmists may paint their favourite devil on the wall. They may suppose that France, consolidated in territory, and solidly secured, will attack Germany in the interests of Poland. But Poland has lately made a gesture of friendliness to her old enemy, which, we think, will do much to ease relations in the East of Europe. At any rate, the contingency is removed many years hence, and long before that, conditions in Europe are likely to be decisively improved.

There is one hope for Europe renascent, and that is, Britain, France and Germany working together and holding together. Without that, ultimate war of some kind is certain. There must be political and economic adjustment going on always, and in minor ways just as minor adjustments and subsidences occur often after great seismic upheavals. There must be widening co-operation in Europe, not excluding Russia, to the incalculable increase of the material welfare of all its people.

Europe has a vast population and enormous natural resources. Nothing but obsolete fears, prejudices, the sad inheritance of political superstitions, its petty racial conceits, prevent its overtaking and outstripping the United States. The European renaissance will come. It may come late in the century. It will come in this decade if its new generation of men and women have the strength and vision and charity to work together and for all.

There are many signs of hopefulness. Poland has conciliated her Jews, and has extended the hand to Germany; France has abjured the Poincare system; Germany is today on terms of substantial equality. There remains much to be done—there remain many danger spots. Our Press and our government in Canada may do its share by creating a healthy public opinion here, which cannot fail to have its repercussion throughout the world, and to advance the cause of Peace.

—J. R. H. F.