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Peace

THE whole story is told in the simple ceremonies at the signing of the treaty.

"They were devoid of all dramatic effect," said the press reports. And this disappointed many who had come expecting to witness elaborate ceremonies. But imagine these official representatives of the victorious democracies engaging in pomp and pageantry on such an occasion.

There is the story. It was democracy that had triumphed and democracy's representatives were now completing the most momentous task which thus far had been assigned to men in their positions. Plain men representing plain people had come to seal the triumph of plain justice over the last ruling despotism and to secure forever the liberties of mankind and they had no heart to parade the paradox of imperial trappings. They came in the only spirit in which they could come, grim purpose and humility.

The force of the story is emphasized in the memory of the contrasted scenes surrounding the event which in that same Hall of Mirrors forty-eight years before crowned emperor of Germany the father of him whose inordinate lust for world power is now finally and officially doomed by the signature of his surrendered Prussia to this peace treaty.

America and her associates had never been concerned for mere revenge. They fought the war into which they were forced first, to destroy the menace of Prussianism and second, to secure the permanency of freedom and justice. They arranged the articles of peace to bind forever the victory achieved in the solemn consciousness that, "it is for us the living to see that these dead shall not have died in vain." How well they have succeeded time will tell, but notwithstanding the fact that they had at their mercy the power which in its day of transient glory had wantonly violated every tenet of civil and military law, every principle of moral decency, the allied statesmen spurned all thought of revenge and imposed upon the conquered foe only such obligations to be met as justice and safety to outraged humanity made necessary, keeping always in mind the none too pleasant contemplation of Germany's utter inability to pay in any form

or medium of exchange the full price of her depredations.

History holds no record of peace-making more significant of Christian influence. If errors of judgment crept into the terms of the treaty or as affecting the relations between the treaty and the League of Nations, we may assume that they will be corrected, but the world will profit by the unwavering determination of the victors to dictate nothing but a just and, if possible, a permanent peace, a peace designed most speedily to reconstruct the broken bonds between nations, vanquished as well as victor, and facilitate the factors which the very war, itself, ending set in motion for the establishing of a new epoch in the world's history.

So we are facing front, we are dealing with the future, not the past. The future holds a test of grace and grit, of human skill, ingenuity and power which perhaps no age yet has faced. In those five frightful years begun on June 28, 1914, with the assassination of an Austrian duke, and ended on June 28, 1919, with the signing of peace, the world was shaken to its base, enthralled by a power that impudently defied the only power that could save civilization, the power which now, in this momentous period of reconstruction, alone can finally control in the rebuilding of states and the readjusting of relationships—the power of the Christian faith.

Peace imposes problems more intricate than war, tasks not less. War's problem was solved when free nations found their way to the comparatively simple expedient of uniting their resources against a common enemy. Performing the task was only a matter of the time necessary to give adequate force to this union. But if "peace hath her victories no less renowned than war," peace also brings its problems far more serious than war, but let us bear this in mind: that the world is better equipped to meet these problems as a result of the common crucible into which it was plunged. Nations are closer together than they were. They know each other better. They continue to share common interests in peace as they shared them in war. They are determined by an enlightened experience to conserve the concert of power made necessary in war in attacking the problems of peace. At least so we must believe.

Afghanistan lay within a veritable horseshoe of British-Indian military lines. The opening of the horseshoe was on the north and led to what was then apparently the hopeless turmoil of a lawless Russia. With a considerable ignorance of the larger questions at issue in the world conflict, the Afghans began naturally to manifest an uncertainty that amounted to a suspicion lest the British-Indian expedition into Persia had been a deliberate advance against them.

They watched the railroad as it came at the rate of a mile and a half a day across the arid desert in Baluchistan. They knew that troops were being concentrated in large numbers at Quetta, and they realized fully that from Quetta these troops could be sent quickly to Nushki and to Chaman, from which two points they could readily enter the southern part of Afghanistan. Whatever their actual suspicion or fear may have been, we know that the Amir of Afghanistan began to recruit additional troops and wherever there was a post of British-Indian soldiers close to his border, not far away, on his side of the line, he established a post of Afghans.

Violation of Agreement

It must not be forgotten that the Amir of Afghanistan had violated his agreement to keep all foreigners out of the country when he allowed the spies of Germany and of Austria and of Turkey to take refuge with him, and that at a time when Great Britain was

at war with each of these countries. It must be remembered also that there was a lack of stability about his government, that his authority was incomplete, at least to the extent that he was unable to prevent parties of Afghan raiders from going occasionally across the border into India, and into Persia, and also into Baluchistan. After these raids would occur he would fail to apprehend or to punish the raiders, and disclaiming official sanction or responsibility for what happened, he would make no restitution.

The difficulties in the whole situation were multiplied very recently when the old Amir was assassinated. Disagreement as to the succession and the fluctuating influence of several factions contributed to increased disorder in the internal affairs of the state, and accentuated the general lawlessness on the borders.

It is probable that the present disorders in Afghanistan are in part a belated result of the war time efforts of German agents. But it is possible also that some of the most recent disturbances, including the assassination of the Amir, are the work of the reactionary element in the country, who, with an emphatic but unenlightened patriotism, still protest against the opening of their country to the advantages of modern civilization.

For about twelve hundred years the various tribes that make up the six and a half million people in Afghanistan, a country the size of Texas, have been left to the practically uninterrupted influences of the conquests of Islam. Before they can remain free they must be set free.

Educated Christian Negro as a Counselor

By S. J. FISHER

THERE is among both whites and blacks, especially in the south, a frequent questioning concerning the treatment of the negro after the war. It is recognized that he has shown a perfect loyalty and an unsurpassed patriotism. And now many of them naturally inquire whether they are to be still denied their rights and compelled to submit to a racial inferiority. A fine intelligent young negro, the son of a minister, remarked to his father that he was entirely willing to go to France and fight in our behalf, but he wondered if on his return, he should be subject to the same trying experiences, so common before the war. Men who have been willing to make the great sacrifice at the call of our country, may well be excused for hoping for a larger justice and more considerate treatment.

With this questioning spirit abroad, it is a pleasure and a hopeful sign to note the attitude and counsel of educated Christian negroes in the south. At the conference held in January at Rogersville, Tennessee, of workers under the Presbyterian Board of Freedmen, this subject arose in connection with the discussion of the northern migration and several of these thoughtful, earnest men expressed a desire for better treatment and the hope that the whites would recognize the justice of their complaints. On the other hand two of special force and intelligence, one of them the president of our admirable negro university, counseled patience, a wise restraint, and a broader vision. One of these speakers reminded the conference that while unquestionably many of his race had advanced and

proved by great results the capability and value of the negro, the elevation, education and development of a large number was, as yet, unaccomplished.

"You cannot," he said, "elevate and transform an entire race in a half century, or in a hundred years. Undoubtedly there are in increasing numbers those who are fit for every and any condition, and may well deserve consideration, but these are the highest peaks, the comparatively limited class of a race and there should be patience and self-sacrifice to lift the remainder and prepare the mass for their duties and responsibilities." "We," he said, "who are the favored leaders, must bear and forbear, must wait hopefully and create a sentiment of willingness to suffer, to endure and be treated with less than justice, for the sake of order, peace and the guidance of God."

Are not such leaders a valuable force for peacefulness in the South—men who have a better claim to the just and generous treatment than thousands of white, who yet are willing to tread the path of suffering, that they may lift their race and be peacemakers?

What a great asset for quietness and restraint such men as those who spoke at Rogersville, what noble pacificators! And because these men are the product of the Presbyterian Church, and its Board, and our schools are quietly and nobly hastening, as Dr. McCrorey said, the uplift of his race and fitting it for a true citizenship by a Christian education and a true ministry, our Church should by larger funds enable the Board to hasten the day for which the broad-visioned negro hopes and prays and by God's help waits.