

Reconstruction—economic, financial, political, international—is not as easy and as rapid as destruction. The Germans and their Allies realised this during the war. Let us now look at the Treaty of Versailles and consider as briefly as we can these questions: What is its intrinsic character? Is it just in spirit? Was good faith observed in the imposition of its terms? Is the reparation demanded reasonable? Can Germany pay? Does the Treaty look to the future? The Treaty is not perfect; no one has ever asserted that it was. Any keen eye can detect faulty details, any dispassionate mind can justifiably wish that certain problems had been dealt with somewhat differently; but if we fasten our eyes on this or that fault and take no account of the good features, we shall surely obtain a perverted view. Every one of the Treaty makers had in his own conception an ideal Treaty; but their ideals naturally did not coincide, so that there were only two courses to follow—to resume hostilities and widen the shambles of the world, or to effect a compromise. Every human institution, every social arrangement, every international understanding, indeed, individual human life itself, is based more or less on a compromise, which means that it contains certain elements objectionable to somebody or other. It cannot be otherwise. Perhaps the only way to avoid compromise and its inevitable disadvantages is by ceasing to live and by dissolving human society altogether. Another way is for all human beings to be converted into angels; but that means the same thing—cessation of human life and obliteration of human institutions. Some self-styled Christian critics, who would have us believe they are better than their fellows, say a little goodwill in the negotiations would have brought about an entirely different result. In the first place it is an unwarrantable begging of the question to assume the entire absence of it; secondly, it betrays a naive ignorance of men and affairs. Every day we see men with conflicting claims. Are they necessarily lacking in sincerity, or animated by ill-will?

Mistakes in Settlement.

In my opinion two of the weakest sides of the Treaty relate to the treatment of the German colonies in Africa and to the Shantung settlement. I think a special concession might have been made to the Germans in regard to some of their African colonies; not, however, on moral grounds—because on moral considerations they really forfeited the colonies—but rather for economic reasons, and therefore also in the interests of national and international stability. As to the Shantung settlement, a solution acceptable to non-Japanese and especially to Americans was made impossible from the first. As the price for her participation in the war, Japan demanded the succession to German rights in China. In 1917 by a secret agreement, Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy, undertook to support that demand. In 1918 China had agreed to concede the demand, and reaffirmed her agreement in 1918. Thus at the conference the hands of the British, French,

and Italian plenipotentiaries were tied; moreover, Japan threatened to withdraw from the conference if her claim was repudiated. If so, she would have been absolved from all obligations under the Treaty and the League of Nations Covenant, and would have had a defenceless China at her mercy; so that the situation in the Far East would have become an incomparably greater menace to the world's peace than ever. Thus President Wilson had two alternatives before him—either to force this danger on the world, allow Japan to assert sovereignty over China, and pave the way for another disastrous war, or leave Japan with economic rights over one Chinese province. President Wilson accepted the lesser evil. How would his critics have decided in 1919, after that horrible age of blood, poison, and fire? Let them rest secure in their armchairs, thank their stars they were not cast on the horns of such a dilemma, and let them ask for a little grace whereby they might restrain their carplings.

Treaty Just in Spirit.

The Treaty is not a Carthaginian peace; its aim is not to destroy the achievements of 1870, when German unity was established. The Allied Powers had no desire whatever to crush anybody or anything that stood in the way of their greatness. They have left Germany intact except for very small portions of her territory which had been forcibly annexed by Germany, and which it was thought just to disannex. Taking it all in all the Treaty is an embodiment of justice. Where there is regularised society there is law; to preserve society from chaos the law must be impartially enforced. The enforcement of law is justice. The aim of justice is "summa equitas tribuere" (to use the best and shortest definition ever devised)—that is, to give each one his due. This applies to justice as conceived in every sphere—social, legal, theological, philosophical, reli-

gious. The fundamental principle of ideal justice is necessarily that desert shall be required. Justice is not the same as consideration, mercy, magnanimity, or benevolence. As Newman Smyth says in his "Christian Ethics" (page 376):—"Benevolence without invigorating sense of justice is so much moral laziness, murky as it is warm, and debilitating to men. . . . A prompt, strong sense of justice is indispensable to a thoroughly helpful manliness." The founder of Christianity, whose courtesy, benevolence, and self-sacrifice were incomparable, at times showed righteous indignation, and did not hesitate even to use physical force when occasion demanded it. The dictates of the sense of justice, together with the international law and practice of a thousand years, gave the victors the right to impose terms on the vanquished, who were guilty of the most licentious conduct, and were responsible for widespread destruction and devastation.

Righteous Judgment.

The hard terms imposed conform to the demands of universally established international justice. In 1871 Germany herself applied such principles—and most stringently and excessively, too—against a defeated France. Justice, of course, may be tempered by generosity and mercy; but if it is not so tempered, it does not cease to be justice, and the men who apply it do not cease to be just men. We cannot be generous to our lawless enemies at the cost of sacrificing our friends. That would indeed be injustice to our friends, and at the same time be setting a premium on licentious aggression. The Treaty is an instrument of righteous judgment. It is a judgment consonant to right, and right is the standard and criterion of conduct recognised and, if possible, enforced by society. When the Germans committed their thousand brutalities, they acted contrary to the established standard of right; and when the victors imposed stern terms they acted in accordance with right, that is their action proceeded from a righteous judgment. Before the negotiations began the Allies promised the vanquished justice. The Treaty gives them more than justice—it gives them a great deal of consideration, which they did not deserve. There is very little of the element of retaliation in the treaty, unless it be the taking away of Alsace-Lorraine, but that was a wrong set right. There is no trace of revenge or vindictiveness at all in the proper sense of the term. If A takes B a watch by force; and B, when he becomes a little stronger, takes it back by force, is his act an act of mean revenge? The Allies did not even impose penalties for the numerous violations of the laws of war, for the ghastly policy of "shrecklichkeit," "spurious verschenken," and "leave them nothing but their eyes to weep with." Again many pronouncements were made in Germany during the war (for example, by Count Bernstorff and by Count Reventlow), as to the terms they would exact in case of victory. Without going into these demands it is not an exaggeration to say that our terms were a mere scabite by comparison. Besides, we need not dwell on mere theories and threats, we have actual examples of harsh and unconscionable impositions—the treaty of Brest-Litovsk dictated to Russia, and the Treaty of Bucharest dictated to Roumania.

Question of Good Faith.

The self-complacent assailants of the Treaty say the framers violated good faith in disregarding the 14 points of President Wilson—a strange charge, in view of the fact that the Germans, in invading Belgium in 1914 (according to their pre-arranged programme, and not through necessity) violated her pledged word, and in the belligerent operations violated every principle of God and man! Even then the charge of bad faith is unfounded, because the 14 points were not alone the basis of the terms. So much attention has been paid to the 14 points that other most vital considerations have been lost sight of. Let us recall the facts. On June 8, 1918, President Wilson delivered to Congress his message containing the 14 points. On February 11 he specified four principles on which territorial adjustments should be made. On July 4 he amplified these principles and emphasised that one of the objects the United States was fighting for was "the destruction of every arbitrary power." On September 27 he declared that impartial justice must be done, without discrimination; that every particular settlement must be consistent with the common interest of all. Thus before the war ceased, President Wilson himself made several declarations supplementary to and more or less modifying the 14 points; and these quite as much as the 14 points constituted the basis of the Armistice agreement of November 11. On October 5 President Wilson received appeals from Germany, Austria, and Turkey for an armistice. The then Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, said he accepted the 14 points and the President's later utterances as a programme for general peace. The Allies then informed the President that they were prepared to accept the

same with certain qualifications; first, as to freedom of the seas; and, secondly, that they interpreted "restoration," in points 7, 8, and 11, as compensation for all damage done to the civilian population by land, by sea, and from the air. Dr. Wilson said nothing about the first qualification, but agreed to the second. On November 5 the President communicated this to the German Government, and on November 11 the Armistice was signed. Undoubtedly it contained stern terms, but they were necessary to ensure the object proclaimed by Dr. Wilson, namely, to secure "the military supremacy of the Allied armies in the field," and to "leave the Allies in a position to enforce any arrangements that may be entered into."

Germany Not Deceived.

It is clear, then, that the Germans did not lay down their arms on condition that the 14 points were exclusively and literally adopted. If any further evidence was wanted, we have it in the recent "Memoirs" of Ludendorff himself. "On October 23 or 24, 1918," he says, "Wilson's energetic reply to our Note arrived. He set forth this time clearly that the conditions of the armistice were to be such as to prevent Germany from resuming hostilities, and to give the Allies the power to regulate themselves the details of the peace accepted by Germany. In my opinion we could therefore do nothing else but continue the struggle." Hindenburg thought the same. In the evening of the 24th he signed an order of the day containing these words:—"Wilson's reply amounts really to a demand for unconditional surrender. It is unacceptable to soldiers; nothing remains to us but to resist with all our might." This order of Hindenburg was never issued. He and Ludendorff retired on October 27. Then the German Government received the Armistice conditions, had time to think them over, and were free to reject them, but chose to accept them. Thus it is these Armistice terms that form the true basis of the Treaty; and, what is more, President Wilson himself held they were in substantial accord with his 14 points. It is clear, therefore, that those who talk about the Germans being duped or deceived about the basis of the Treaty and about President Wilson being "bamboozled" over his 14 points, talk balderdash. Also to attribute the present troubles and sufferings of the world to the Peace Treaty (instead of to the war) is hardly consistent with sanity. To say that the Treaty is a Carthaginian peace, or that it is lacking in justice, and even in generosity, is to betray ignorance and obtuseness. To attack the Allied plenipotentiaries for doing their utmost to prevent on the part of Germany a repetition of her unspeakable deeds, is to reveal the meanness of a jelly-fish.

The Reparation Demand.

Certain other criticisms are made by these high-minded and enlightened objectors; namely, that the amount of reparation demanded is unreasonable, that it is simply impossible for Germany to pay it, and that the Treaty does not look to the future. Let us very briefly examine these allegations.

Reparation Reasonable.

We know something of the military casualties. But who is to calculate the number of civilians of the Allies—men, women, and children—who perished through the barbarous treatment to which they were subjected, and who is to estimate the disastrous consequences, social and economic, of such treatment for France (to take but one example now). Apart from the annihilation of machinery of natural resources, the power of production through such diminution in the population is considerably reduced. How can one convey to a person, who has not actually seen for himself, the nature and the extent of the destruction and devastation committed in the ten departments of North and North-East France alone? The richest and most prosperous districts, with highly-developed agricultural and industrial pursuits, were blotted out wilfully and systematically, though these districts were removed from the actual scene of hostilities; machinery smashed to pieces or removed to Germany, mines destroyed, factories burnt down, documents and records pilfered, houses pillaged and then razed to the ground, rolling stock and other means of transport destroyed, cattle carried off—all done with the intention of crippling France. After the Germans left, nothing but a desert remained. No living thing could be seen—not a horse, nor a cow, nor a sheep, nor a child—but only a bird here and there and vermin. And yet these were the regions that before the war produced most of the French products, agricultural, mineral, and industrial; for example, coal, 60 per cent. of the French supplies; iron ore, 90 per cent.; steel, 80 per cent.; woollen goods, 80 per cent.; cotton goods, 70 per cent.; electric energy, 55 per cent.; sugar, 70 per cent. Besides this, France lost a third of her merchant fleet and 57 per cent.

of her male population between the ages of 19 and 24 were left on the stricken field. The French war debt alone amounts to 257,000 million francs. The cost of reconstruction in this district for the year 1921 was estimated at 16,500 million francs.

Sufferings of Other Countries.

In Belgium—wholesale massacres, systematic confagurations, enormous fires and impositions, forced contributions of 40,000,000 francs a month. In the province of Brabant, 5,833 houses burnt down, 15,024 pillaged; in the province of Liege, 3,441 destroyed; of Antwerp, 3,333; of Namur, 5,243.

Roumania—The invaders confiscated and pillaged all they could lay hands on, and left the country in utter wretchedness. Most of the resources were taken for the army of occupation, which cost Roumania 700 million francs per annum—a higher sum than the pre-war budget.

Italy—Wholesale pillage and destruction. In one province of a population of 1,151,000, 208,000 left their homes, which were then stripped bare by the invaders. The damage done by bombardment was estimated at 1,732 million lire.

Serbia—Greatest loss in lives in proportion to the population. In 1913 the population was 4,500,000. The military loss was 400,000, and civilian 845,000 (of whom 311,000 were males over 15 years of age). To this veritable hecatomb must be added 24,000 military and civilian cripples. The Serbian claim for damage to agriculture, railways, mines, loss of movable property, and exactions in money and kind amounts to 17,758 million francs.

Montenegro—Estimate of damages at 728 million francs. What about Poland, Armenia, &c.?

And what about the civilian losses alone of the British and the Americans? Does it need a great imagination to realise the financial burdens imposed on all these countries as a result of the losses due to such lawless destruction and devastation? One or two examples of budgets will suffice:—

France—In 1913 was between 5,000 and 6,000 million francs; in 1920, 48,000 million.

Belgium—In 1914, 800 million francs; 1919, 6,600 million francs.

Great Britain—1914, £200,000,000; 1920, £1,418,000,000.

How long will the Allies be bowed down under these gigantic burdens? How long will the work of reconstruction take? What arduous toil will be necessary to restore the normal national life, the economic, industrial, and financial conditions? And yet in the face of all this incalculable slaughter and demolition and pillage, only the minimum reparation is demanded by the Allies, being less than a tenth part of the total losses and war debts incurred, namely, £50,000,000,000. The pecuniary compensation fixed at £8,600,000,000, payable within a term of years, represents a much smaller present actuarial value; it does not include a penny for indemnity in the full sense (such as Germany exacted from Austria in 1866 and France in 1871), and which the Allies were legally and justly entitled to demand. Their forbearance surely shows remarkable consideration and generosity.

Can Germany Pay?

Undoubtedly Germany can pay if she is disposed to fulfil her undertaking honourably. Before the war the great wealth, the economic resources, and industrial progress of Germany were proclaimed to all the world by German authorities; for example, Dr. Helfferich (a former director of the Deutsche Bank, and who was Minister of Finance in 1917) and Herr Steinhilber-Bacher. We were told that the estimated national wealth of Great Britain, Germany, and France would be as follows:—

	1910
Germany,	£10,000,000,000.
France,	£16,000,000,000.
Great Britain,	£12,500,000,000.
	1920
Germany,	£17,500,000,000.
France,	£12,500,000,000.
Great Britain,	£16,000,000,000.
	1930
Germany,	£20,000,000,000.
France,	£15,000,000,000.
Great Britain,	£21,000,000,000.

The German Budget for 1920-1, presented at the assembly of the Reichstag by Dr. Wirth, the Minister of Finance, shows a sum of 4,000 million marks for the army and navy. For a country pretending to be impoverished this seems very heavy expenditure for this purpose, and as Germany is spending it, she must possess it.

Capacity for Payment.

Above all, we must remember that the German works, mines, and other natural resources were left untouched by the war. Take coal, for example. Before the war Germany possessed about 55 per cent. of the coal in the Continent; she had more than double the amount of Great Britain, and 25 times the amount of France. The Ruhr coalfield alone is estimated to contain more than 200,000