

alliance with Great Britain in case Great Britain and her existing Allies at the end of the war continued in combination expressly for the purpose of securing the fruits of a victory over Germany. It could not enter into an alliance with Great Britain until its existing controversy with that country in respect to the control of maritime commerce during war had been adjusted, and a charter of commercial rights satisfactory in some measure to pacific trading nations framed, signed and sealed. Finally, a definition of the scope of the arrangement and the limitation of the liabilities incurred by both parties under it, would involve at the present time enormous and perhaps insuperable difficulties.

But if a formal alliance is not possible in the near future, an increasing measure of mutual understanding is. Such an understanding can gradually be reached provided an enlightened public opinion in the United States seeks to bring it about, and as a means of bringing it about deliberately plans to adjust existing conflicts of policy, to establish routes of agreement, and to clear up the ambiguities of the existing relationship. The initiative should be taken by the agencies of American opinion, not because we would gain more from an understanding than Great Britain would, but because the obstacles to an understanding in this country are more serious than the obstacles in Great Britain. The greatest obstacle is the American tradition of national isolation—the sense that by committing ourselves to European responsibilities we should be surrendering something essential and noble in our heritage of democracy. This tradition is the enemy which must be exposed and exterminated, for unless it is exterminated we shall have misinterpreted the chief lesson of the war and permitted the nation to continue a policy of suicidal exclusiveness. As yet we seem to have learned nothing. The disheartening aspect of the current agitation for military preparedness is that it is animated not by a clear conviction of the international obligations and opportunities of the country, but by a kind of blind suspicion and panic. The proclaimed object of the armament is to defend our national isolation, not to realize a positive policy which will enable us to promote both our own security and the peace of the world. There can be no permanent security unless the pacific nations are welded into an organization sufficiently tough, alert, clear-headed and well-equipped to make their joint power count decisively in the balance against an aggressive disturber of the peace. An increasing understanding between Great Britain and the United States would constitute a necessary condition of any League of Peace, and if it could develop into an alliance it might become by virtue of unassailable maritime supremacy the substance and chief support of such a League.

“Plumb Insane”

IF reports are true, Mr. Thomas Shevlin has made a memorable utterance: “Against Princeton you must all go insane, plumb insane—but keep your heads.” The result is known to all the world, and how all the world feels about it can be seen from an account written for the *New York Evening Post*: “. . . through utter willingness to give the final measure of physical sacrifice, those men of Yale lifted from the muck a bedraggled, bedaubed blue banner, holding it on high so that it floated and snapped proudly once more, glorified by the light of victory.” Treitschke would hardly have done better than this: “If there was a Yale graduate who did not feel the impulse to stand in his place and uncover silently. . . ”

That it is a splendid thing to go insane, to keep your head, and to uncover silently is not to be denied. The glory of football is that it permits such things. A struggle in which a man can be an absolute partisan is a comfort indeed. No Yale man need question that Yale ought to win. Harvard men and Princeton men can be as certain. They can be loyal without a quaver of conscience, they can desire victory without thinking of consequences. Wherever they happen to belong, there they can put their faith. And even those hyphenates who go from Yale to the Harvard Law School may be for Yale and no questions asked.

If only life were like football, what a splendid education young America would be receiving. It would be learning that loyalty is greater than discrimination, that the crowd you are in is the best crowd of all. A Yale freshman who wanted to see Harvard win because Harvard contributes to human culture would be an ass. He would be treated by his classmates as Englishmen are now treated who admire German professors. For the point you are trained to in intercollegiate athletics is that there are only two sides to a question, and that the side you are against has nothing to recommend it.

There have been highbrow eulogies of football. It is, we are told, a harmless outlet for pugnacity; it introduces a dionysian element into our drab lives; it purges through pity and fear; it is to America what the Saturnalia was to the ancients. Perhaps. Yet one difference must be noted. The Greeks never supposed that the passions they put into their festivals were the passions that ought to dominate human life. In the spiritual democracy which they preached they gave representations to all the elements of man. With us this is not the case. We like to regard college spirit as a model. We expect a man to feel towards his country, his city, his corporation, his political party, about as

the freshman feels towards his team. We like to cultivate the habit of being partisan, and the habit attunes itself to any notions. We fail to say: "Go insane about Yale, but not about American concessions in Mexico. Go insane about DeWitt Clinton High School, but discriminate about Germany."

It is perhaps a rule of spiritual hygiene that a man who doesn't go insane about something is likely to go insane about everything. And Yale is as good an object to go insane about as almost anything we can think of at the moment. But the trouble with insanity as an ideal of education is that it doesn't exactly prepare for the sort of world we live in. That world requires the faculty of doubting, of making distinctions, of caring enormously without sinking into credulity. Just what colleges are doing to cultivate these faculties it is sometimes a little hard to see. There are professors awake to the problem who would like to abolish football, because in the competition for attention it wins so easily. That is the stupid easy remedy. After all, football puts the professor on his mettle by showing him how far he is from enlisting human passion in the cause of science; and the grim joke which gives football coaches a bigger salary than teachers is a fairly good indication of what education has still to accomplish. There have been teachers whose memory was brighter than the brightest victory.

Constitution-Making

AN extraordinary discrepancy exists between the legitimate purposes of constitution-making and the means by which we actually make our state constitutions. With popular sovereignty the first postulate of our political system, the primary purpose of our constitution-makers ought to be to construct effective machinery for the execution of the popular will. Yet throughout our history we have packed our conventions with men who distrust the people, and whom the people distrust. Our constitution-makers ought further to provide us with a system of legal principles of wider acceptability and superior validity than ordinary legislation requires. They should therefore display a more scrupulous regard for the opinions of minorities than do the regular organs of legislation. But nowhere do we make any adequate provision for minority representation in constitutional conventions. The political parties, which may have an appropriate place in carrying on the government under the constitution, arrogate to themselves the very function of constitution-making. It has even come to seem natural that a constitutional convention is controlled by Republicans or by Democrats. Hence we are not shocked when a mass of partisan

projects is thrust into the body of what ought to be our fundamental law, acceptable to everyone. The struggle of classes, it will be agreed, ought to be conducted under the constitution, not in it. But in practice the several classes strive to dominate the convention and write the fundamental law in their own interest. Not without certain concessions to patriotism, to be sure. The late New York State convention was perhaps as good an example as we have ever had of a partisan body representing primarily the interests of a single class—the property owners of the state—yet it produced a constitutional project which was freer from partisan and class vices than most American state constitutions. Perhaps the labor forces will control the next convention, and we shall have an opportunity of learning how far the working class is capable of subordinating its own interests to the general good.

Our art of constitution-making is based on false principles. It should not be the aim of any party or class to control the process of making a fundamental law for all. Effort should be made instead to get every definite, self-conscious interest to participate in constitution-making. It is natural for the country to oppose the city, but this opposition ought to work itself out in the legislature, where the ill-considered action of one session may be revoked in the next. The constitution ought to contain only provisions under which both city and country are content to live. Capital and labor have many opposing interests, and struggle between them is inevitable. But the constitutional convention is no proper arena for this struggle. An honest fundamental law would leave open for legislative determination such matters as are in dispute between the economic classes.

The people of New York State are not satisfied with their existing constitution. It is antiquated and obstructionist, a source of legislative ineffectiveness, of social waste. The substitute provided by the late convention was an improvement on the old constitution, but not enough of an improvement to command strong support from any quarter. And there is not the slightest reason for supposing that the next convention will be more successful. We shall continue to live under a constitution adapted, possibly, to the needs of half a century ago, while growing social forces, finding themselves thwarted in their natural development by rigid constitutional barriers, will assume an increasingly revolutionary character. Thus political ineffectiveness and social disorder are part of the price for our failure to work out a rational method of constitution-making.

Yet the task is by no means insuperable. We have no official means of giving minorities adequate representation in conventions, no official means of securing representation of fundamental interests in