

cornered by a group of interests, and that conditions of inflation, not only with regard to rice but also to other commodities, brought about an unprecedented high cost of living. About this time there were rumors that the Terauchi Government's attitude towards profiteering was entirely too complaisant.

The second event was the question of Siberian intervention. This turns out to be less of an influence than has been popularly supposed. In the opinion of trusted Japanese observers in this country, the course which Japan has taken in co-operation with the United States will not be affected by a Cabinet change. Japan's foreign policy seems indeed fundamentally settled, no matter what Cabinet is in power. The principles of that policy are the maintenance of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, friendship with America, and cordial relations with China and Russia.

The question of our course in Siberia therefore becomes all the more a responsible matter for us Americans. It should mean the making of Siberia. It should not mean any breaking between Japan and America, but a strengthening of friendly relations. Properly ordered and extended, it should also result in Russia's salvation, delivering her not only from the German yoke but from the even more dreadful yoke imposed upon her by some insane people of her own race.

The repercussion of such work upon home politics, whether in Japan, America, or Europe, cannot fail, we believe, to repeat the benefit which England experienced through a similar forward policy in India over a century ago.

#### BLOCK PARTIES

Recently there has swept through the city of New York and across the river into Brooklyn and down along the neighboring towns of Long Island a kind of war-time entertainment called a block party.

A block party is one where the neighbors, especially the people belonging to that particular street which is to hold the festivity, give a party along a specified block in their immediate vicinity. The street is roped off for the entertainment, and the crowds mass along the sidewalks. Usually there is a procession first; sometimes several persons dressed to impersonate various great leaders for liberty ride large truck horses, who in turn are decorated to look as though they were gay and dashing and uncontrollable.

The big event of a block party is the raising of a Service Flag with the stars representing the sons of the neighbors who have gone from that block. This is raised while the band plays "Over There" and the great crowd cheers.

But though this is the main event of the evening, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is played first while the American flag is raised and the people stand at attention. Then follow the national anthems of the various Allied Powers while their flags are raised to wave over the block along lines strung from a high window on one side of the street across to the other side.

The block upon which the party is being given is gayly decorated with bunting of all colors, with little flags of all the Allies, with colored lights and lanterns and streamers of ribbons and bright-colored materials.

After the ceremony of the raising of the flags is over a dance takes place. The couples dance in the center of the street, for which they are charged a small sum, and this money is contributed to various war-time activities, such as the Smoke Fund for the boys abroad, the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., comfort kits, or other patriotic purposes. The expense of the block party is covered by a small, very small portion of this, as the parties are gay and vivid in appearance but cheap in expenditures.

Old and young gather at these parties. They are given in all neighborhoods. And in some of the poorest of neighborhoods they make their dingy streets and barren-looking tenement buildings so changed and so different in appearance that street after street looks as though it had been given over entirely for a street carnival, and as though no poverty or dirt could be behind it all.

The parties are given by all races. There are some where every face seen is of a foreign cast. There are Italians, who

revel in block parties; there are Irish, who love these neighborly, sociable affairs; there are Jews of all nationalities; and there are Americans who have before been stiff with their neighbors but now enjoy block parties.

In the block parties the young and the old, the American born and the American naturalized, are getting together to cheer for the boys who have gone, to keep up the spirit of those who are left, and to unite with their neighbors in a general feeling of unity and patriotism.

#### OIL IN MEXICO

The American and British fighting fleets need oil. They can get much of their supply in this country. But not all. The other oil resources being closed to them, they must get the balance in Mexico, and it is a curious coincidence that American and British interests own most of the Mexican oil properties. Long since Germany foresaw the present situation. How could she prevent the oil owners from realizing the value of their properties?

Over a year ago the Carranza Government established a new Constitution in Mexico. One of its paragraphs declared that the direct ownership of certain products, including petroleum and all hydrocarbons, solid, liquid, or gaseous, was vested in the Mexican nation. But how to deal with vested rights? Why, impose licenses on them, requiring heavy rentals, and levy confiscatory taxes. This was done. The American and British Governments protested, on the ground that spoliation of property has always been regarded as affording internationally a basis of interposition. The Mexican Government, nothing daunted, thereupon went a step further. It decreed that upon the failure of the oil companies to submit to the new taxation the Government might seize their lands. The companies refused to submit, and relied, as before, on protection from their Governments. Those Governments had already called Carranza's attention to the necessity which might arise to impel them to protect the property of their citizens in Mexico. Finally, on August 12, Carranza, in effect, canceled his second decree. It still remains to be seen what he will do with the first.

These disturbed conditions call renewed attention to the general situation in Mexico.

Many people there suspect that Carranza is pro-German. Some feel that, had he dared, Carranza would have declared himself more openly than he has done. Nor can the press be said to be aggressively anti-German; certainly, despite the disclaimer of Señor Cabrera, formerly the Mexican Finance Minister, a part of the Mexican press has been spreading a malicious anti-American propaganda. It has been noted that when a pro-Ally paper becomes influential something is apt to happen to the editor; for instance, it is said that one editor who was doing good work in fighting the pro-German propaganda was given twenty-four hours to leave the country after he had intimated that certain Deputies were receiving German money.

As for the capital, it is again much as it has been in normal times, except that the present Government has taken over many beautiful old churches and has turned them into printing offices, garages, and storehouses. A peculiarly brutal and unnecessary act was that of Carranza's generals on entering the city the last time, namely, that of cutting down all the trees in front of the Cathedral; the Plaza Mayor is now a glaring square of sun-heated cement. The ostensible reason given for cutting down the trees was to show the architecture of the Cathedral; the real reason was to sell the wood for fuel.

As for the unrest in the provinces, we need but note the fact that Chihuahua, Morales, and several other States are still out of communication with the Central Government. For over three years there have been no trains from the capital to such an important city as Cuernavaca, for instance. Zapata has a kind of kingdom of his own in the surrounding territory. Yet Cuernavaca is only forty miles south of Mexico City.

Despite all this, Americans who have lived long in Mexico believe that a period of absolute peace, together with the re-establishment both of communications and confidence, would bring Mexico to its rightful position as one of the most prosperous countries in the world.

## SURRENDER—NOT PROMISED BUT ACTUAL

ON the western front the news has been glorious and inspiring. The armies of liberty are proving stronger than the armies of tyranny and plunder. Those who once doubted whether a victory at arms was possible doubt no longer. Victory, though it may not be near, is in sight.

Nevertheless the cause of the Allies during all the four years of war has never faced a graver peril than that which is confronting it in these very days of victory. Other perils have been averted, and this peril can be. It is not a peril to fear but to withstand. It is one that has been foreseen. It is occasioned not by force, but by subtlety. It comes not from Germany's military strength, but from her weakness. It is directed not against the bodies of the soldiers of the Allied nations, but against the souls of their peoples. It is the peril of the German peace offensive.

Germany has proposed in brief, not to accept President Wilson's suggested terms of peace, but to enter into a discussion on the basis of those terms. She has even indicated some so-called concessions which she says she is willing to make. She talks as if she really wanted to stop the fighting and enter into negotiations. We do not believe that Germany expected her proposals to be entertained. They certainly will not be. As with one voice, the newspapers and public men of America, as well as of France and England, have expressed their scorn of any discussion of terms with Germany. Everywhere there is the demand for but one thing—"unconditional surrender." Nobody of any influence, so far as we have heard, has intimated that we are ready to negotiate with the Hun. So far all seems safe. In all this there is no sign of peril.

It is beneath all this that the peril lurks.

Suppose, in answer to the Allies' scornful rejection of the German proposal for a discussion of peace terms, Germany should say, "Well, since you will not discuss it, and since I want the slaughter to cease, I promise to surrender." Suppose Germany should send delegates, consisting of so-called German liberals, to some point where they could meet representatives of the Allied Governments, and should bid these delegates to say, "We throw up our hands. We will demobilize our army. We will submit to your terms. What is your answer?" If that should happen, then the real peril would appear. It is not impossible that under such circumstances there would be many thousands in the Allied countries who would say, "We have won our victory. Let us make peace."

What Germany might do Bulgaria has done; and there are newspapers that are saying that we want from Germany a Bulgarian capitulation. Though, to our discredit, we did not make war upon the nation in the Balkans that has gloried in imitating the Prussian, our people have hailed the surrender of Bulgaria as if she had been our enemy. It has even been said that by remaining on friendly terms with those who have raped and outraged and looted and devastated Serbia we have brought about the victory over Bulgaria, as if the brave men, the unconquerable Serbians, the French, the British, and those Greeks who kept their faith, had, by splitting the Bulgarian army in two, done nothing. We have no reason for taking credit for this victory; but we have very good reason for rejoicing in it. We have still more reason for being on our guard against counting it as a precedent. Bulgaria has not yet surrendered. She has promised to surrender, and she is in process of surrendering. Her surrender will be complete and satisfactory only when her armies are demobilized and disarmed, the Austrians and Germans and Turks that are in her territory are out of it, and the Allies are in control of her Government. Even then her surrender may be incomplete, for there are pro-German Bulgarians who must be rendered powerless. It may have been wise for the military authorities of the Allies in the Balkans to accept Bulgaria's promise; for they may have known that they had power to enforce it. But to take the Bulgarian promise of surrender as a model of what we want from Germany is to incur the gravest of perils.

We do not want words from Germany—not even words of surrender. We have had enough of Germany's words. When Grant accepted and returned Lee's sword, he was dealing with

an honorable man. We must not lose sight of the fact that our foe is not a Lee, but is the Hun. We want no proposal from Germany, no statement of terms, no promise of any kind whatsoever. Germany is most dangerous when she cries, "*Kamerad!*" She has taught her soldiers to raise their hands in surrender, and then when our fire is withheld to shoot from pistols hidden in the palms of their hands. What she has taught her soldiers to do she is ready to do herself. We want no cry of surrender; we want action. We want her armies withdrawn from occupied France, from Alsace and Lorraine, from Belgium and Luxembourg, from Poland, the Ukraine, Rumania, and wherever else they have gone in search of conquest. We want her to put her arms and her munitions into the possession of the Allies. We want her to open the door to Berlin. We want her, not to say that she will do these things, but we want her to do them. The world will not be "safe for democracy" until Germany is put under a guardian. The victory will not be won until the lands she has occupied are evacuated, her military forces and instruments are in possession of the free peoples of the world, her leaders are in the custody of those they have tried to subjugate, and her whole land is placed under a receivership. It will be better for her if she proceeds to see that these things are done voluntarily, for there is no other way by which she can obtain mercy. If she does not do this of her own accord, she must be made to do it. Then, whether Germany voluntarily surrenders or not, the "peace conference" will be one attended only by representatives of the Allies, and the terms it will reach will be those it dictates.

## THE Y. M. C. A. REINTERPRETS RELIGION

If a hundred years hence a scholar shall write a history of religion with particular reference to the latter half of the nineteenth century, he will probably characterize that period as the renaissance of social service. He will note that the roots of the movement were in Kingsley and Maurice, but that the early efforts were confused and uncertain—chiefly adventures through settlement houses in slums, institutional churches, the introduction of psychology and sociology into theological seminaries, and all kinds of abortive and conflicting campaigns to abolish the sale of intoxicating liquors. He will also tell of the rise of the Young Men's Christian Association as a potential organization which never really found itself until the outbreak of the war for democracy, or the People's War. His studies will be concluded with the statement that the years 1850-1900 formed a threshold period, in which there was an almost imperceptible diminishing of dogmatic and sectarian emphasis, leading up to the period of 1900-1950, in which all the churches, by tacit consent, found their way back to Christ's dominating thought of the kingdom of God on earth and united their vital energies to a realization of that ideal.

Religious manifestations are almost entirely a matter of emphasis; fundamental ideas rarely change. And there is more than sufficient in the life of Jesus Christ to warrant the application of religion to almost every phase of social and industrial activity. No better example of the new emphasis can be found than the Y. M. C. A. If studied as an example of the reinterpretation of religion, that organization must yield very fruitful results.

Born in the years when church life was emphatically evangelical, the Y. M. C. A. was at first a mere echo of prevailing belief, with a few mild social features to make it more attractive to young men. Slowly those social features expanded until they became educational and economic factors in many communities. The local Y. M. C. A. grew into a club, an athletic association, a combination of school and college, a playhouse, an experiment in housing, a laboratory, and a clinic where prevailing ideas were examined and applied. But the Y. M. C. A. still rested upon a rather narrow religious foundation—the evangelical test. No one can doubt that the aggregate good accomplished by the local associations was very considerable, particularly in strengthening the character and increasing the industrial efficiency of vast numbers of boys and men.

The People's War put every belief, habit, institution, and