

ARE WE TO PUNISH GERMANY—

that we could discover a gas which would put our enemies out of action, but would not afterwards cause them pain. Suppose, then, that we used, not this gas, but the painful gas, with the object of punishing the Germans : those Germans whom we should punish would be poor soldiers who had used the German gas only because they were told to do so, and most of whom were fighting for their country from a sense of duty. The Germans themselves, perhaps, have used a painful gas because they thought that we deserved punishment for our misdeeds ; and we can see in a moment the cruelty and injustice of making our soldiers suffer for the supposed wickedness of Sir Edward Grey. Now I do not believe for a moment that we or our allies would use a painful gas, where a painless one would serve, with the object of punishing the Germans. I only give it as an obvious instance of the cruelty and injustice of reprisals in war, or indeed of any attempt to punish a nation. To those who make the attempt it is a nation that they punish, but to the nation punished it is individual men, or women and children, who suffer ; and they are only enraged at the injustice and cruelty of it, as we are at this moment, when we think of our soldiers choking with the gas or our defenceless countrymen and women drowning in the sea. When one nation tries to punish another, it is never the nation that suffers or is conscious of punishment. The nation is conscious only