

ALSACE-LORRAINE

FRANCE is not at war about Alsace-Lorraine, but nobody doubts that if the Germans are beaten she will get back the provinces torn from her forty-four years ago. Her sacrifices, her credit, her security require their restitution, and since an unprovoked attack upon her has revived the memory of her bitterest humiliation, her people will be content with nothing less. But French pride and French power are not alone concerned. There is a sense of justice to be satisfied, and the desire for a lasting settlement. Perhaps some Englishmen are a little doubtful (though their sympathies are heartily with our Ally) whether a better could not be devised in the interest both of the inhabitants and of European tranquillity. They have been told that the problem is delicate and complex. It is clearly less simple than it was before the German experiment, which has failed, but has inevitably introduced new factors. Is there no case for compromise, for an equitable partition, or for the establishment of a neutral 'buffer' state?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us go back to the Treaty of Frankfort (May 10, 1871), by which Alsace-Lorraine, the Reichsland, came into being. The Germans, when they exacted the surrender of French territory¹ as part of the price of peace, did nothing for which history does not furnish precedents in plenty;

¹ It comprised the department of the Lower Rhine, almost all that of the Upper Rhine, more than half the department of the Moselle, a third of the Meurthe and a corner of the Vosges. All the Alsace of history, except Belfort, is included in this territory, and about the third part of the Duchy of Lorraine, with Metz and the Pays Messin