

would be no neutrals in the wars to come and, therefore, the protection of neutral rights would no longer be a valid claim.

Although President Wilson's dream of a universal League of Nations was not realized and the greatest neutral claimant to the freedom of the seas still remained neutral, nevertheless the project has been little discussed in these post-war years, either here or abroad. In England only a few pacifist journals or radical thinkers have referred to it from time to time and their advocacy has not counted for much with Britain as a whole.

The dependence of Great Britain upon the protection of its fleet is a conception more deeply rooted in the British mind than any other single fact. Convictions as well as conditions are facts of history; and any proposal, therefore, which seems to hamper or restrict naval strategy is regarded by the average British citizen as a direct attack upon the security of the British Empire, the independence or even the very existence of the British nation.

The battle fleet of Britain, to which it entrusts its safety, was built for free use, under its own command, on those seven seas which bind the empire together. A doctrine which proposes to deny henceforth the legitimacy of the strategy which has prevailed from the days of Drake and Frobisher to that of Jellicoe and Beatty—the heritage of Nelson—can only win its way to serious consideration by sheer weight of inescapable realities. Nevertheless, that is just what is happening at the present time.

The failure of the Geneva Conference on Naval Disarmament was a great shock to British opinion, especially to those, in all parties, of a liberal trend of opinion; all the more so as it was felt that one of the chief underlying causes of that failure, so far as Britain was concerned, lay in the new obligations it has assumed under the Covenant of the League and the Treaty of Locarno to guarantee the peace of the world against violation, even when the war was not its own.

A new and serious re-examination of the whole problem of the security of the British Empire is now under way, and in the forefront of the discussion lies this question of the rights of neutrals (meaning American) on the very seas which are both the nexus of the Empire and the field of strategy in case of League action.

It is recognized now that the conditions of the last war, the alignment of the powers, at least, might not be repeated in a possible conflict in the future, and that if Great Britain had to maintain its food supply in the face of an attack by submarines with wide cruising radius and vastly increased sea coasts for refuge along neighboring countries, it might go hard with a nation dependent upon those supplies for its very life.

Then there is the question of hostile airplanes hunting the cargo boats as they near the ports but are still on the high seas.

The prospect of warfare is rapidly changing for those who look out of European windows; and, whatever the Admiralty may have in mind, the questions which are arising in the field of the technical expert are being taken over into that of politics by those who claim that the only settlement lies in eliminating the cause of the danger and not in attempting to out-top the world in armaments.

So far, most of this political discussion has originated in Labor or Liberal circles, and its thesis is apparently fully developed in the volume by Commander Kenworthy and Mr. George Young, abstracts of which have reached America. Another group is that which has given most attention to the League of Nations.

But if any color of political partisanship is discoverable in these circles, this can hardly be said of a document pre-

## Heroes

### By Lupton Wilkinson

In a tall corvette on the shores of Heaven  
The great sea marshals held converse and laughed;  
And they were happy, for the air they quaffed  
Was blue, and the gold sun, like leaven,  
Lifted their spirits in high dreams of old.  
Never a sailor on that vast, white sloop  
But once had trod his own bethundered poop  
When wave and conflict in bright fury rolled.

A galley captain, tanned for Cæsar's Rome,  
Chided a shining Greek from Samothrace,  
And Drake was there, scornfully at home.  
They all were glad with battles they had won,  
But Nelson walked aside and turned his face  
And wept to think on Lady Hamilton.

pared as a draft treaty between the United States and Great Britain by specialists in international law, which states the whole case for freedom of the seas in terms consonant with the Kellogg proposal. One of the proponents of this draft is a jurist of world-wide fame, whose name is already attached to documents of lasting historical importance. The text itself, a copy of which lies before me, has not yet been published, but has been somewhat widely circulated in England and referred to in discussions.

But more significant from the standpoint of practical politics is the fact that the "Round Table" devotes a major article to this subject and comes to the conclusion that Great Britain should not merely accept the theory of the freedom of the seas, but should do so without delay, and if necessary take the initiative.

The "Round Table" is a forum of outstanding importance for the discussion of imperial politics and is conducted by a group of men of long and distinguished service in the upbuilding of the British Commonwealth of Nations, men who have had much to do with the constitutional development of India and South Africa and the negotiations which

brought the Irish Free State into existence, and who have had experience as well in the conduct of imperial politics at home.

The fact that the "Round Table" publishes this article does not by any means imply that the British government, let alone the sea lords at the Admiralty, has been won over to the new proposition. There are no signs yet from that direction. But it does mean that the question is now seriously before the liberal section of those most concerned with policies of the empire—or commonwealth—as a whole.

The article in question begins with a frank discussion of the reasons for the failure of the Geneva disarmament conference and finds them in the fact that America, Britain and Japan have each a different problem in sea strategy and, therefore, different needs in naval armament; the result being inevitable disagreement so long as the debate continues in its present terms. There is no likelihood of future conferences succeeding if they are to be held along the line of the Geneva attempt.

The solution of the problem, says the writer, "lies in the acceptance of the new principles of naval warfare, and the chief of these would be the proposition

that Great Britain should not use its fleet in the future for any purely British blockade; that its control of the high seas should never be exercised for itself alone; but only in fulfilment of an international obligation to which the United States and Japan would be co-signatories.

"For Great Britain the issue is comparatively simple. The days of her imperial temptations are over. She is no longer the only sea power in the world. The choice before her is whether she will be prepared, not to relinquish her naval strength or her right to protect her vital communications against improper attack, but to recognize that she must only use it to interfere with the trade of other nations in accordance with international law and in support of peace through arbitration. That may seem difficult. But the long view shows that it is by limitation not of her rights as a belligerent, but of her right to become a belligerent that her trade and that peace which is her greatest interest are secured. If she refuses she will simply impose competition on the United States under conditions which will justify such competition, and in such a contest the greater purse will prevail."

In another place the writer of this article states the issue still more clearly: "It is whether any nation shall have the right to interfere with the trade of neutral nations when it goes to war on its own initiative alone, or whether the

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