

Europe threw off a master, only to be controlled by a former mistress instead.

Yet in fairness to France it must be recognized that she has probably arrived at this position by inadvertence rather than design. The primary concern of France at the close of the War was military security against Germany. With this in view, Foch demanded the Rhine as a frontier. Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson flatly refused, but undertook instead a military guarantee of France against further aggression by Germany. When the guarantee was repudiated by the United States, Great Britain refused to undertake it alone. France, having now neither the Rhine nor the guarantee, began the formation of alliances with the successor states of Central Europe. Yet even then she does not appear to have believed that this was the best avenue to security. She turned at the same time to the League, which she had hitherto regarded with tolerance rather than enthusiasm, and endeavoured to revive the idea that all members of the League should collectively guarantee the territorial integrity of each. Meantime it had become clear that France would not disarm without guarantees in advance. This situation induced the British Labour Government to meet the French half-way, and the Geneva Protocol of 1924 was the result. The Protocol aimed to strengthen the League by making more certain the application of sanctions against an aggressor, and provided for calling a disarmament conference once the Protocol was accepted by a certain number of states. The Protocol, however, received its quietus at the hands of the British Conservative Government and the Dominions. On second thought, all the British members of the League objected to definite commitments in advance. Moreover, they saw in the Protocol the possibility of friction with the United States, should they ever be called to fulfil their bond.

An alternative plan was, however, brought to maturity the following year in the Locarno Agreement, which marks the greatest concession (to French views) made by Great Britain since the Peace Conference. By Locarno, Great Britain and Italy agreed to come to the aid of France or Germany in the event of either being the victim of aggression at the hands of the other. It marked an equally important concession on Germany's part, since it assumed the acceptance of the territorial settlement in the West, that is to say, the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and the demilitarization of the Rhineland and the strip thirty miles wide along the east bank of the Rhine. Germany in turn was to be supported for membership in the League and for a permanent seat on the Council.