

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RIGHTS OF STATES

Is there no way out of this age-long struggle for this part of the world? Must it ever be the object of exclusive control by one nation or another? Must the conflict of empires go on to-day and possibly be renewed a generation hence as it has been from the beginning of recorded history? Is there no solution save dominion by one group of Powers or another and the sacrifice of the rights and the free development of a score of states and a hundred million people who are unwillingly involved in the controversy? Is there no alternative that will relieve Great Britain from the burden of protecting her empire and at the same time satisfy the claims of all other nations and guarantee freedom of access to the Mediterranean and the straits and passageways that connect this part of Europe with the outside world?

Is there no release for the Balkan states, Italy, Greece, and the peoples of the Mediter-

anean from the imperialistic control of the waterways which wash their shores? Is there no other solution than war or exclusive control of these trade routes? Are there no democratic principles that can be appealed to, and no assurances that can be provided to remove one and all of these problems from the arbitrament of arms? Can arrangements be made that will satisfy Great Britain and Germany, Russia and France, Serbia and Bulgaria, Italy and Greece? Cannot some new guarantees be devised that will assure for all time and in all emergencies the right to free, unimpeded development to one and all of these nations, and with it the development of the civilization of the world? *This is one of the great problems of peace.*

No nation is free, certainly no nation feels free, no matter how lightly the hand of the dominant Power may be, that is subject to the will of another nation in its contact with the outside world. And all of the states upon the Mediterranean suffer subjectively, as well as in their economic life, from the fact that their international relations are under possible inhibition from frowning fortresses, closed

waterways or railroads in the possession of some other Power.¹

The economic internationalism described in an earlier chapter² has also given the Mediterranean a new importance. It may become of great importance to the United States. For the life of a great industrial state is dependent upon free communication and especially on free access to raw materials. And Africa, western Asia, and the Far East are the only sources from which many of the raw products and food supplies can be secured. This condition will be intensified when the war is over. The exhausted world will rush for cotton, wool, oil, rubber, timber, dyestuffs, silk, cocoa and cocoa-oil, coffee, tea, ivory, metals of all kinds, as well as for the trade of Asia, Africa, and

¹ Great Britain recognized this apprehension on the part of Germany just before the war and made repeated overtures to satisfy it. Her Foreign Office held conversations with the German representatives for the purpose of ending the fears that lay back of the increase in the German navy. The letter of Prince Lichnowsky, the German ambassador at London at the outbreak of the war, and in many ways the most remarkable document yet published showing Germany's willingness to bring on the war, discloses the repeated efforts made by the British Foreign Office to relieve German fears and recognize German rights in Mesopotamia and the Near East.

² See Chapter I.

the Mediterranean countries. However important the Mediterranean was before the war its importance in the future will be vastly greater than at any time in the past. It will largely control the commercial and industrial life of Europe.

There are no substitutes for the products of the tropics, for cotton, rubber, dyestuffs, silks, cocoa, oils, timber, and the thousands of materials which enter into the diversified activities of the modern industrial state.

This is why the Mediterranean is of such transcendent importance to the industrial and commercial life of the modern world. And as time goes on the Mediterranean and the sources of supply of raw materials will be of supreme importance to other nations, our own included.

Peace must recognize that the old isolation is a thing of the past; that self-contained states no longer exist; that the whole world is interdependent and must have free contact with every other people if it would live. The exclusive nationalism of the last century has gone never to return. And the peace conferees must find some solution of the problems of waterways, of strategic land routes, of con-

necting straits that will put an end to the fear which is one of the causes of war and of continuing armaments as well. For the world will never disarm so long as the economic security and possibly the life of great states is in real or fancied peril from some other Power.