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**THE ALLIES AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.**

There are three passages in public speeches reported in the London papers of December 31 which go straight to the main issues at the Peace Conference. Let us set them out in order:  
"You know that the United States has always felt from the beginning of her history that she must keep herself separate from any kind of connection with European politics. But she is interested in the partnership of right between America and Europe. If the future had nothing for us but a new attempt to keep the world at a right peace by a balance of power, the United States would take no interest, because she will not join any combination of power which is not a combination of all of us."—President Wilson, at Manchester.  
"There is an old system which appears to be discredited today, but to which I am not afraid of saying I am still faithful. Countries have organised solidly defended frontiers with the necessary armaments which is not a combination of all of us."—President Wilson, at Manchester.  
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four-Power combination, which is in M. Clemenceau's mind, to a three-Power combination which will presently, when Germany and Russia revive, have all its work cut out for it to be secure against a war of revenge. There will in that case be no abolition of conscription, and probably a large increase of expenditure on armaments. When the last farthing has been extracted from Germany, there will still be an enormous load of debt to carry which will make the financial problem all the more insoluble. And all the time the nations will have to be thinking of war and preparations for war, diverting an immense deal of their mental energy and physical power to self-defence, and living all in dread that some new scientific weapon will be invented which will frustrate all their preparations and give the other side a short cut to a devastating victory. The development of aircraft alone will change all the conditions and expose the civilian population everywhere to dangers and terrors of which we have had only a foretaste in this war.  
Now, if this is the situation which the Peace Conference, which they each of them at once have to face the most serious and perplexing internal problem. Their accords will not balance without crushing taxation, their working-class populations, promised relief and a better world, will be deeply disillusioned at finding themselves condemned to a new and worse period of militarism and to conditions which must everywhere intensify poverty. Even if external security could be obtained this way, internal would be gravely jeopardised. It would be the height of folly for Governments to think that they could promise of safety first, and then to realise that there is in all countries a great body of working-class opinion which is determined that this shall not be. There are risks on either hand. With half the Governments of the world swinging rudely on raging torrents, there is no safety in any specific alliance. But the greatest promise of safety lies, we are persuaded, in an honest attempt to make the world new. We are, therefore, glad to hear the French Foreign Secretary say that the French Government have "accepted the principle of a League of Nations, and would work for its effective realisation." There is virtue in the word "effective." If the League of Nations is to heal the wounds of the world, it must not be a pale and negative idea seeking merely to prevent war, but a positive and vital force running through the whole policy and practice of the nations that accept it, and making them co-operate for common ends the touchstone of their conduct.

**INFLUENZA IN ABYSSINIA.**

Letters from Addis Ababa the capital of Abyssinia, tell of the extraordinary virulence there of the influenza epidemic, though its height of nearly ten thousand feet above sea level, would naturally make it a particularly healthy spot. At the time of writing the market was closed and deserted with the exception of two bakers' shops and one Greek grocer's. Meat and even live sheep were unobtainable, though chickens could be bought at high prices. A bottle of methylated spirit cost two dollars, and medicines were almost unobtainable; hundreds were dying daily in the country, and according to latest advices there had been three hundred and seventy one deaths amongst the natives in the city. Twenty Europeans have also succumbed, amongst which are Dr. Wakeman, an English physician, Dr. Le Page a Frenchman, and Dr. Deuvelstein, an Armenian, so the community is left without any qualified medical aid. A curious fact, which has also been noticed in South Africa, is the mortality amongst monkeys, which are apparently attacked by the same disease that is proving so fatal to man.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."  
1 Timothy 4: 8.