

PROBLEMS OF POWER

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

MR. MORTON FULLERTON is an American who has now for many years lived in Paris. He was for some time the Paris correspondent of the London "Times." He is a writer of distinction—and in this case distinction applies to manner no less than to matter—and he knows the many-sided modern France, the France of politics and art, the France of lofty purpose and the France of strange and twisted indifference both to loftiness and to purpose, as few men not by birth Frenchmen have known it. He has studied the problems of power of which he writes with peculiar facilities to understand them, and he knows inter-

national politics, and especially the international politics of Europe, as few other Americans, save two or three men of exceptional diplomatic experience, do know it. His book "Problems of Power" (Scribners) is of interest to every educated and thoughtful man in any country who is concerned with the great problems of the future. But it is of especial interest to Americans.

Mr. Fullerton at the outset shows his keen appreciation of the new forces at work in international politics. He says in the opening sentences of his work:

Behind the façade of Government two occult powers are now determining the destinies of the

world. One of these is the disseminated wealth of the Democracy, canalized both by the plutocratic oligarchy of the bankers (*la Haute Finance*), whose clients, the modern states, great and small, are constrained to apply to them for immense loans, and by the great manufacturers and mining proprietors who tend to be actuated solely by economic interest, and who often combine in international trusts, the operations of which are merely hampered by patriotic questions of national policy and national honor.

The other power is the mysterious, pervasive force known as Public Opinion, which is becoming more and more conscious of its efficacy, and, as its curiosity concerning the public weal and concerning international facts and correlations grows more alert, is manifesting a proportionately livelier jealousy of its prerogatives.

During the last fifty years the development of world politics has been in a direction totally unforeseen by the wisest prophets of preceding periods. Every one remembers Napoleon's prophecy after Waterloo, that within a hundred years Europe would be Republican or Cossack. At that time both Germany and the sovereignty of any German house seemed to him and to others negligible elements in the future. Yet a hundred years have well-nigh passed, and the prime power in Europe is neither Republican nor Cossack, but autocratic, imperialistic Germany. When Napoleon spoke there was no more thought of Japan becoming a world power than of Siam so becoming. Yet Japan is the one power to-day which in organized efficiency, especially of its army, can be ranked with Germany.

Fifty years ago the distribution of political power was still substantially as it had been after Waterloo. Russia, after having rendered all Europe uneasy beneath the shadow of its colossal and gloomy strength, had been sharply thrown back within its own borders. Austria had proved unequal to facing France and had lost Italy, but retained the leadership in Germany. France was still the great military power of the world; and there was no thought anywhere of contesting the dominion of the sea with Great Britain. Then came Germany's colossal leap to greatness, under the lead of Prussia. There was much jealousy of German triumph; but for forty years after Sedan Germany was able to keep her enemies divided and hating one another more than they hated her. During the last dozen years, however, Germany's growth at sea has thoroughly alarmed England, Russia's defeat by Japan has thrown the Slav empire once more back on Europe, and France has realized the folly of attempting

to gratify more than one enmity at a time. The Triple Entente of Russia, France, and England is now a real offset to the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy; and both the entente and the alliance have been rendered uneasy about the future by the striking success of the Balkan States against Turkey.

Mr. Fullerton writes from the French standpoint. It would be impossible for him to write otherwise. He also writes from the standpoint of England, which is for the time being identical with that of France. There is no space in which to go in detail over his really noteworthy study of international European politics. Yet every American with any interest in the future of his country ought to be familiar with the facts which Mr. Fullerton sets forth; because he clearly shows that it is impossible for us much longer to blind ourselves to the fact that we have international relations, and that we have no choice save to perform our international duties. We may perform them well or badly, but perform them we must; we may meet the problems that we have to face either wisely or foolishly, but meet them we have to. All that we can decide is whether we shall do our work well or ill.

Mr. Fullerton reminds us of what never should be forgotten, that the crushing disaster of the Franco-German War was preceded in France by a period of sentimental declarations for universal peace and international good will. The actions and speeches of sentimentalists who refuse to see the actual facts are not only foolish, they are perilous to national honor. In the May "Century" there is an editorial which actually speaks of President Taft's universal arbitration treaties as if their defeat were regrettable from the standpoint of peace. If the amiable author of the "Century" article were merely writing of something within our borders, or if his crusade were for universal vegetarianism, for example, or for anti-vaccination, there would be no reason to condemn his harmless illusion—which I may instance as a sample of the kind of editorial that is continually appearing in magazines and newspapers which pride themselves upon representing the "educated conscience" of the Nation. Unfortunately, amiable fatuity in international matters is not harmless. In this case the especial harm was to our National honor. The Administration which proposed on behalf of the Nation universal international arbitration proceeded immediately afterwards to break the

National promise, specifically made, to arbitrate before the Hague Court every such question as the Panama Canal tolls. While engaged in breaking this promise, while sending to Great Britain a note that was in effect the repudiation of a solemn agreement, the President continued at peace banquets and the like to utter pleasing general sentiments about arbitration. These sentiments apparently gave some good people as much pleasure as if he were at the time engaged in keeping a promise instead of breaking one. Cannot the professional peace people be made to understand that the all-important question is not willingness to make promises but resolute purpose and good faith in keeping them?

The other day in the papers it was announced in one column that we were threatened with the gravest trouble with Japan over the question of the ownership of land by Japanese in California. In another column it was mentioned that the Senate intended to abrogate the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, because it found it inconvenient to have the country asked to keep its solemn promise to arbitrate the Canal tolls question. And in a third column it was announced that Mr. Bryan, on behalf of the Administration, intended speedily to propose universal arbitration treaties to arbitrate everything, including questions of National interest and National honor. Mr. Bryan owes it to the Nation not to make such general statements unless he is prepared at once to apply them to the specific matters now at issue. Does he mean that we shall keep our promise and arbitrate the Canal tolls question? To fail to insist upon arbitrating this question, and yet at the same time to talk of general arbitration, comes unpleasantly near being an invitation to National dishonor when the speaker is a public servant of the Nation. No honest man, not gifted with the characteristics of Mr. Micawber, ever regards the refusal to keep a promise as offset by entire willingness to make another extravagant promise in place of it. Yet this is precisely and exactly what is being done by every international arbitrationist in America who at this moment clamors for universal international arbitration. It should be clearly understood that it is dishonorable to agitate for any arbitration treaty of any kind until we have in good faith lived up to the arbitration treaties we have already made. It should also be clearly set forth that we do not intend to arbitrate any questions of national honor

and vital national interest, such as our right to decide what immigrants we shall admit to our shores, and further to decide whether or not these shall be admitted to citizenship and the ownership of land.

It would be a good thing for all our people to read Mr. Fullerton's book, but especially good for worthy persons who have not thought deeply on international subjects. Unless the United States is prepared to take a place beside China, it will keep its navy and its little army at the highest point of efficiency; if we cannot protect our own interests with our own navy, then all the arbitration and other treaties that all the international philanthropists of the world can devise will not, in even the smallest degree, protect us. If we believe otherwise, we shall have a bitter awakening; and if ever that bitter awakening comes, I trust that our people will remember the foolish philanthropists and the recreant Congressmen and other public servants at whose doors the responsibility will lie.

I do not mean that I agree with all that Mr. Fullerton writes. In his natural irritation at the folly of the well-meaning persons who invite frightful disasters in the name of philanthropy he sometimes forgets that international righteousness is entirely compatible with international strength. For instance, he by implication blames us for having treated Cuba too well; and yet he insists that Germany would be better off if she had followed a course of conduct which in substance is precisely the course we followed in Cuba and San Domingo and Panama. In these three matters, and in all questions of international politics that were solved at the same period, this country acted according to the highest standards of honor that would obtain in dealing between man and man. It scrupulously respected the rights of others; it acted so as to increase the sum of world peace and well-being; and yet it behaved with a dignified strength that forbade any foreign power, however strong and however conscienceless, to attempt to deal with us save as our honor and our interest demanded. Every Senator and Congressman who, like Senator Burton of Ohio, votes against upbuilding the navy or fortifying the Canal, and every newspaper or magazine writer who supports such a policy, is working against the cause of peace, and against the honor and the interest of America; and every such man should be held accountable, in severest fashion, by the American people.