

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

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Again, at the eleventh hour the matter was thrust on the League. The problem was faced with courage and determination. The League subscribed some £26,000,000 and took over the bankrupt estate, appointing a Commissioner who should control the finances of Austria for a fixed period. At the same time the League gave to Austria a most solemn guarantee that her sovereignty should be respected and her territory left intact.

AND SETTLES OTHER DISPUTES.

"What other accomplishments has the League to its credit?—The League prevented a war between Finland and Sweden, and in the settlement demilitarised the Aaland Islands, and thus gave free trade to the Baltic Sea. It compelled Serbia to clear out of Albania by the threat of blockade, and though it could not achieve a settlement between Lithuania and Poland it at least stopped bloodshed. It is easy to criticise, and critics may well be asked to furnish a solution of the Vilna problem, where a city, for centuries Polish in population and thought, is surrounded by an equally ancient but only recently awakened population of Lithuanian farmers and peasants.

"Most successful has been the League's administrative work. It has kept Germans and Poles living in comparative friendliness at Dantzig. Here we have a German town situated on the Baltic at the mouth of the Vistula, which is the life artery of the Polish plain. To-day a Scotsman, Mr. M. S. MacDonnell, is governor of this international port. No less valuable is the administration of the Saar Basin, where German miners are working German coalmines for the French, but only under League control.

A FRANCO-BRITISH QUARREL.

"It is often said by opponents of the League that no question affecting a first-class Power has yet been brought before it. This is not quite true. The International Court of Justice is at the present moment dealing with a most serious quarrel between England and France. The French have compelled Englishmen residing in Algeria and Morocco to serve in the French Army. England protested, and after several unpleasant exchanges France at last agreed to submit the question to the International Court. This Court has already decided that the matter is an international one and not merely of domestic concern to France. What the next step will be remains to be seen. In pre-League days before 1914 there is little doubt that in face of such an issue patriots on both sides would have forced the countries into war.

THE MANDATED TERRITORIES.

"What is the League's position in regard to mandates?—The territories taken from Germany and Turkey have not, at least in theory, been annexed by any one Power—all belong fundamentally to the League, and the administrators must report annually to the Geneva Conference. Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine are to have self-government as soon as possible; meanwhile the first is being administered by England and the second and third by France.

"Other territories in Africa are more like Crown colonies. Islands in the Pacific are administered by Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Every one of these islands is demilitarised, and promises are kept, war on their account is made impossible. The ideal is that the interests of the natives shall come before anything else. There shall be no more Congo and Putumayo scandals. In New Guinea, New Britain, and New Ireland Australia has acquired supervision of territory more than twice the size of Victoria, with a native population of at least 500,000.

AUSTRALIA AND NAURU.

"This island of some 5,000 acres contains extremely rich deposits of phosphates. These are now owned by England, Australia, and New Zealand, but the island itself is mandated territory. The phosphates were bought from the Pacific Phosphate Company for £3,500,000. England and Australia contributed each £1,500,000, and New Zealand the remaining £500,000. At present Australia administers the island on behalf of England and New Zealand. The League watches jealously over the treatment of the natives, and it is satisfactory to know that, except for the introduction of Chinese indentured labourers, no maladministration has occurred.

DISARMAMENT THROUGH THE LEAGUE.

"What chances are there of the League leading to disarmament by united consent?—The League has made and is making serious attempts to deal with this difficult problem. The most hopeful is that advocated by Lord Robert Cecil and supported by M. Henri De Jouvenal, editor of the militaristic 'Le Matin,' with Loucheur, one of the two coming big men of France. The Cecil proposal is that the obligation to render assistance to a country attacked shall be limited in principle to those countries situated in the same part of the globe. It is hoped that if the intention of Article 10 of the League covenant is thus more closely defined the objection of America and certain other Powers may be overcome.

AUSTRALIAN BACKING FOR THE LEAGUE.

"What is the extent of Australian backing for the League?—The peoples of the countries united in the League are not leaving the League's success to chance. In the different countries are League of Nations Unions, groups of men and women whose purpose is to educate their fellow-citizens by way of moulding public opinion to assist Governments in carrying out the promises which their representatives made in signing the Covenant. South Australia was the first to have such a union, and now every State in Australia has followed suit. These unions will federate before long and thus exercise a most important influence on the policy of the Federal Government. The Prime Minister, himself favourably disposed to the League of Nations, will go just as far as the pressure of public opinion authorises him; from Victoria Mr. J. G. Latham, K.C., president of the Victorian League of Nations Union, is now a member of the Federal House. Our local union has now 1,000 active members, and with the accession of newcomers convinced of the necessity of their personal whole-hearted support of this one hope of civilisation should speedily double its strength."

Additional phases of the present position and prospect of the League were discussed by Professor Darnley Naylor, more particularly with reference to its labour, health, and social welfare programme and the valuable services of qualified women. His reply to appreciation of his public advocacy of the League and his comprehensive and valuable informative statement to the "Mail," was to pay his own tribute to the services being rendered to the local union by its president, the Chancellor of the University (Professor Mitchell), and the chairman of executive (Mr. Howard Vaughan), as well as to the rally to the League's cause of the returned soldiers, whose Town Hall meeting on April 30 promises to be a most striking and significant event.



CONDUCTOR AT WORK.
Mr. W. H. Foote, A.R.C.M., directing the Tramways Band at Henley.

COMMUNITY SINGING.

A New Year's Programme.

WHEN Mrs. Kate Helen Weston told me that community singing would begin again on Friday, April 20, I thought at once of a large number of people who would be very glad to hear it. They have asked, ever since March, "When is community singing beginning this year?" and their second sentence has nearly always been, "We do miss it so." Friday has been robbed of its rightful red letter since community songsters have been in recess. Even those among us who only know "God save the King" by trying it over in earnest, have a legitimate pride in the enter-



MRS. KATE HELEN WESTON.

prise, for it is one of the several undertakings in which all the other States of Australia, and even New Zealand, have followed our own municipal example. Mrs. Kate Helen Weston is, indeed, its Australian fairy godmother. A contribution to her musical column in The Woman's Record, in which Mr. Henniker Heaton dealt with "Music and the People," so fired her imagination with its description of community music, that she did not rest until, with a small committee and no funds

to speak of, the little movement started out to grow into a big one. Today Mrs. Weston is still the devoted honorary organizing secretary. Mr. Victor E. Cromer has been appointed hon. treasurer, and he is ably helped by Miss Amy Tomkinson.

"We have all kinds of people at our gathering," says Mrs. Weston; "but I think that most of all it appeals to the house mothers. So many of them have said to me, 'Our life is just doing the same thing, week after week, week after week. If you only knew what it means to slip away for one hour a week and to be cheered and refreshed!' You see, it is in middle age that interests and friends slip away and there is no time to make new ones. Tired housewives come to the singing hour and feel themselves at one with the rest of the world. There is no formality; each one may share a book or fall into pleasant conversation with her neighbour."

"They must love singing the old songs." "Yes, but not just the old songs. Now this year we are going to have a lot of new songs. We don't by any means intend to get into a rut! A new song book will be issued, and there will be many excellent modern songs in it. We don't want anything too sentimental, but something that will rouse and uplift. You remember that in 1921 we offered a prize of 25 guineas for the best song suitable for community singing, a prize won by Mr. Theodore F. Tourrier, of Glenferrie, Victoria. Miss E. Shanks, of Wayville,

sent in a song which was equal in musical quality, but choral, and therefore not so suitable in form. Her exhibit, "A Song of Fellowship"—We gave it a special prize of five guineas—will be a feature of the programme this year."

Mrs. Weston is first and foremost a writer, and as novelist she must have enjoyed the insight into human nature which is given in community gatherings. She gave me an impromptu sketch of one or two of the fellowship. There was the blind man who found a heaven in the music in which he could join. "I make a real nuisance of myself at home with these songs," he says cheerfully, as he brings along his weekly free offering. He it was who, with patient labour, made two decorative coat hangers for a present for Mrs. Weston and Miss Tomkinson. Another man made two orangewood batons, in case an extra pair should be wanted. Every one is willing to help. Then, on the other hand, there is the old lady who wants reserved tickets for the final meeting, because "when her husband was alive she was always accustomed to the best." When gently but firmly refused, on the score of unfairness, the old lady retired under protest. At the end of the evening she approached the organizing secretary again with something gleaming in her eye. "Well, you've left something out of the programme this time." "Oh, thank you very much, and what was that?" The old lady drew herself up triumphantly. "I just won't tell you now!"

Prejudices are encountered now and then, as when one woman voiced a conscientious objection to singing "On the road to Mandalay," which rejoices in a land "Where there ain't no ten commandments and a man can raise a thimble." "I asked her," said Mrs. Weston, "to try and put herself in place of the little cockney soldier in a new land. It was the first time he had ever been able to do what he wanted without some one saying 'Thou shalt not,' and it intoxicated him. The new viewpoint is the great benefit of community gatherings; it means putting ourselves in other people's places. I think it is sweet that a mother should learn a lullaby like "Oh, hush thee, my baby, thy sire was a knight." What if, as she sings it to her baby, she has nothing to look at

but a backyard and a clothesline? In imagination she sees further than that."

Mrs. Weston herself is looking forward to beginning work again on what is one of her favourite activities. Among other appointments Mrs. Weston is hon. organizing secretary of the Dr. Barnardo's Homes Penny League, member of the Liberal Women's Educational Association executive, and delegate and press secretary to the National Council of Women.

ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

FINE CHAMBER-MUSIC CONCERT.

The series of concerts given at the Elder Conservatorium is always of particular interest, the two sides of the work being illustrated most effectively in the alternating programmes for chamber music, including many of the finest compositions of master musicians, performed by members of the staff, and students' concerts which give examples of what is being achieved, and at the same time afford to the aspirants to musical success the most valuable experience in facing an audience, and learning to convey the true meaning and spirit of the writings they are called upon to present. The booking of seats for the season is sufficient proof of the lively interest taken in these concerts, which bring some of the greatest music within the reach of every one at the price of a medium seat at a picture show. The fact that this opportunity is being more and more widely appreciated, is a source of particular satisfaction to the Director of the Conservatorium (Dr. Harold Davies) who believes most strongly that the place of music is right in the heart of daily life—a means of self-expression, an inspiration, and no mere "accomplishment." Each year, it is hoped, this will be more widely felt, and that the Conservatorium will become a source of ever-growing influence in the musical life of the State. The students' orchestra is already preparing fine material, which will be of value in the future, and, of course, the same may be said of all branches of Conservatorium work. It was fitting that the introductory fixture should be one of the chamber-music concerts by the staff, which have been ever increasingly popular. There was a good and enthusiastic audience in the Elder Hall on Monday evening. Lady Bridges and suite were present, as also were the Chief Justice and Miss Murray, and Dr. and Mrs. Davies. The programme was well balanced, the two concerted pieces being well contrasted, and the vocal numbers were all thoroughly interesting.