The Eastern Question and Its Solution

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THE EASTERN QUESTION
AND ITS SOLUTION

BY

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WITH A MAP OF THE NEAR EAST

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TO
AGNES REPPLIER.
AS A TRIBUTE OF FRIENDSHIP
PREFACE

This book is an outgrowth of two articles on "Is the Near-Eastern Question Capable of Solution?" which I contributed to the New York Sun of December 7th and 14th, 1919. In the enlargement I have had particularly in mind to set forth our interest as Americans in a question of world-wide significance that lay at the root of the war in which we became involved. The Eastern Question will continue to be a menace to the peace of the world until it is rightly settled, as it has been such a menace for over a century. It is therefore a matter of vital concern to us to see to its settlement. If the world continues to be in a disturbed and restless condition, we will suffer along with European nations. Besides this selfish point of view, we also have an interest of a higher character in the lands that have now been released from Turkish sovereignty, by virtue of our large participation in educational
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work in the Near East for more than half a century, as also because of our intense sympathy with Armenia which has suffered so frightfully during the war. Then, too, a country like Palestine makes an appeal to us, as it does to the entire world because of its historic and sacred associations, and one may also urge our human sympathy with all the peoples of the Near East that have languished for centuries under the awful conditions produced by neglect and misrule. Finally, our commercial relations with the Near East challenge our concern for the future welfare of that region.

At the same time, I share, to a large extent, the strong feeling in this country against our assuming a mandate over any part of the Near East, whether it be for Armenia or for Armenia and Turkish Asia Minor; and I do so, despite the recognition of the correct principle of responsible trusteeship underlying mandates, because our national traditions warn us to caution against becoming involved
in political complications not of our making, and because mandates in the form in which they have been proposed involve sending a considerable army across the ocean for an indefinite time, and with the possible sacrifice of American lives. If, however, American help can be extended towards the resuscitation of the East, which is the very core of the problem involved in the Eastern Question, without the danger of entangling alliances, and without the necessity of keeping a large army of occupation on the spot, it ought not to be refused; and I believe that public opinion under these circumstances will favor extending whatever help can be given. With this in view, I have tried in the last chapter of this book—and this is my main purpose in writing it—to set forth a plan for the solution of the Eastern Question that embodies the idea of guidance and trusteeship, but without the objections to be urged against entrusting each subdivision of the Near East to a single mandatory power, and without
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the dangers inherent in such a distribution. My plan, to which I have been led by a prolonged study of the ancient and modern East, proposes to utilize the spirit of international coöperation which won the war, by applying that spirit to the situation that confronts us after the war in the Near-Eastern lands, in Turkish Asia Minor, in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbeijan, in Syria and Palestine, in Arabia and Mesopotamia, all of which need now to be reorganized and reconstructed.

It was not possible within the compass of a small book to develop the details of the plan; nor is this necessary at the present time. I regarded it as more important to lead up to the solution by setting forth the reasons for the failure of what I call the traditional diplomatic policy of the European Powers towards the East, and to show how the present muddle is a result of the attempt made during the war, by secret treaties and by official declarations, to continue that policy.