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South Africa and the War



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A LECTURE

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J. X. MERRIMAN, M.L.A.

AT STELLENBOSCH,

25 SEPTEMBER, 1914.



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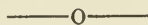




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South Africa and the War.



It is not two months since I quitted this peaceful town on a visit to Europe little dreaming of the hideous catastrophe which was about to overwhelm civilization. When I left, my portfolio was full of letters of introduction to prominent men in Belgium, where I hoped to be able to study the system of Labour colonies and other agricultural developments which made that country a model for Europe. Now, in this brief space of time, for more than a month past, Belgium has been a wasted ruin, whelmed by disaster in the bringing about of which she had no more share, than the peasants who live on the slopes of those terrible volcanoes in Java have in the eruptions, that hurl thousands to destruction. Sorely tried indeed is that pleasant land, for ages the scene of war and conflict. Two hundred years ago, English and Germans, allies then, marched and countermarched over its soil in a death-grapple with the French, who, under Louis the XIV., aimed at the military dominance of Europe. As we study the maps in the endeavour to follow the story of to-day: one comes upon the names of Ramilies, Oudenarde, Wÿnendael, Malplaquet, names famous in the history of Marlborough's campaigns, as well as of Fontenoy, where later on the French purchased a bloody and dearly bought victory over the allies. A hundred years ago the story was repeated, and Waterloo, Ligny, Charleroi, mark the different stages in which the greatest exponent of militarism sought to retrieve his fallen fortunes and met disaster. And now the whole dismal story is repeated on a more gigantic scale. Truly Belgium has been well named the cockpit of Europe.

BEFORE AUGUST'S FATEFUL WEEK.

Before attempting, as I intend to do, to try and bring before you the causes that led up to this awful cataclysm, and to explain the rights of the struggle, and the aims of those taking part in it, it may be well to glance briefly at the position of the several actors on the dreadful stage, as they stood, before the fateful week in August last. I hope that my remarks may lead my hearers to make a closer study for themselves of the true facts that bear on the situation, than is possible in my necessarily brief remarks. On one side we have France, Russia, England and Belgium. On the other Germany and Austria. The two latter with Italy formed what is known as the Triple Alliance. On the other side, France and Russia had entered into a close offensive and

defensive alliance which had been of late years strengthened by an understanding (*entente*) with England, which, however, as the correspondence shows, left the hands of the latter unfettered. Belgium was a protected State, her neutrality being guaranteed by solemn treaty engagements to which all the powers, including Germany, were a party.

The position of Germany really dominated the European situation. With a large and growing population amounting to sixty-five millions, she was hemmed in on every side by rival nations, and by neutral States, such as Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. Territorial expansion in Europe being forbidden, she turned to trade, and in the period since the Franco-German War converted Germany into a workshop, in many branches of which, notably in that of chemical production, she surpassed England and other countries. Her commerce was equally successful and in all the markets of the world claimed and obtained a large share. In her mercantile marine, her progress was no less remarkable. Some of the finest steamers, and what is even more so, some of the finest sailing vessels in the world belong to the German mercantile marine. The whole of this fabric of enterprise and industry was built up on a huge system of credit, financed largely by Russian and French money. No country had made greater progress. No country had given great hostages for peace than Germany.

But there were drawbacks. For the maintenance of her supremacy in war a huge and costly army was needed, ruled and directed by a military caste which held itself to be a privileged order above the common herd and entitled to trample upon them. The German army was at once the incentive and the model for other nations, until, at an ever-increasing pace, the whole of Europe became an armed camp involving a growing burden of taxation that became almost insupportable. The small neutral States held themselves comparatively fortunate if at a great cost they were able to maintain militia systems for defensive purposes.

GERMANY'S EVIL HOUR.

In an evil hour Germany conceived the idea of a fleet to match her army and embarked on a rivalry, which led to efforts in other nations, including England, maintained at incredible expense. Germany had one legitimate grievance. She had no colonies. Her huge and ever-increasing population were pent in, for the attempts to get territory where German folk could expand under the German flag had been anticipated by the seafaring nations of Europe. It seemed intolerable to the master of such forces that his subjects should be constrained to seek homes under alien flags while a country like France possessed what were once the richest provinces of the Roman Empire. It is no fanciful analogy that sees in the craving of the German people for oversea dominions at any cost, something not wholly dissimilar to the pressure that so many years ago drove their forefathers on to the more civilized parts of Europe in the successive waves that submerged the dying Empire.

If we turn to Austria we find a different class of problems. That loose and ill-compacted congeries of many passing nationalities and

religions has been held together under the rickety hegemony of a German minority and the personality of the Austrian Emperor. Their overmastering dread, to some extent shared by the German Empire, was the advance of the Slav domination and the desire of an outlet on the Ægean at Salonica. The recent events in the Balkans have strengthened the power of the Slav States, notably of Serbia, whose territory barred the coveted path to Salonica. Constant irritation accentuated by the revelation of the intrigues of Austria which were made evident by the production in a political trial in Vienna in 1909 of forged documents, the work of a member of the Austrian legation in Belgrave, culminated in the murder of the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife at Serajevo in June of this year. This event which drew universal reprobation was the pretext for subsequent action which will be related later.

ON THE OTHER SIDE.

To turn to the other side, Russia is, by common consent, regarded as the head and patron of the Slav nationality and its various off-shoots. Its huge population, some one hundred and thirty millions, presses along its western frontier on the Teutonic races of middle Europe. With an eye to the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, Russia has agreed—not without searchings of heart—to the foundation of the Kingdoms of Bulgaria and Serbia which, while removed from direct Russian control, from national and religious reasons always look up to the leadership of that power. In one respect, Russia is different from Germany. She is fortunate in possessing in Asia a boundless territory well-suited for European occupation and she therefore lacks the pretext for territorial expansion. France, with her huge territory in North Africa, and England with her vast commercial and financial interests were bound for every reason to maintain the peace of Europe. True, the former country had a traditional inheritance in the cry of revenge for the loss of the two provinces taken by the Germans as a prize of war in 1870. But the wound, though it rankled deep, seemed to be slowly healing over, and her military preparations were rather the outcome of the fear of German aggression than the desire of any warlike effort on her own part.

So short a time as two months ago the forces that made for disquiet were—the chafing of Germany at lack of any territory for expansion, the hostility of the Teuton for the Slav and the ill-concealed fear and distrust with which each of these nationalities regarded the other; the pressure of the cost of armaments upon all civilized European powers, which made the whole of Europe like a huge magazine filled with explosives, into which any spark cast by misadventure or design might shatter the whole work of years of industry and toil.

Over the primitive forces of nature, fluttered the intellectuals. One set urged us to regard war as the great illusion and to look on the fabric of credit, which bound one nation to another, and the great web of international trade that had subdued the natural ferocity of mankind. Others pointed to the advent of new forces, and hailed social democracy and even syndicalism as the harbingers of the reign of peace and goodwill. Others, again, wiser in their generation, vaunted the merits of

war, and sang pæans to the gospel of force. Learned men in Germany, headed by the able writer Von Treitschke, devoted themselves to pointing out the claim of Germany to the hegemony of the world and her clear mission to succeed to the heritage of England. The ruler of the country rejoiced in the name of war-lord and brandished his mailed fist in the face of all and sundry. Biblical before everything, the text: "Is not Ramoth Gilead ours, and shall we not go up and take it?" seemed to be graven on the heart of the false prophets who shouted, as in Israel of old: "Go up and conquer, for the Lord has delivered into thine hand."

AN EYE ON SOUTH AFRICA.

If anyone thinks this overdrawn, let him turn to the work of General Von Bernhardi. It would be possible to fill pages with quotations in support of what I have said above. The whole of his argument is framed—apart from a general rhodomontade in favour of war—in order to show that, a war with England was inevitable, and that the sooner it came the better. Incidentally one notices a thinly veiled allusion to our own country. After pointing out that the true interest of Germany would be little served by annexations in tropical Africa, he goes on: "Other possible schemes may be imagined by which some extension of our African territory would be possible. These need not be discussed here more particularly. If necessary, they must be obtained as the result of a successful European war" (p. 10 J.). It is, of course, possible to take Von Bernhardi and his like too seriously. It is, however, undoubted that his school of thought was more popular in Germany than that of Mr. Norman Angell was in England, and that, coupled as it was with a profound belief in the decadence of England, helped to make subsequent events possible.

Then, over the deceitful calm of the political ocean in Europe, came up the cloud no bigger than a man's hand of the Serajevo incident, and in a few brief weeks all the elemental passions were unchained, and it was shown how little the nature of man has been altered by the veneer of civilization.

On the 28th June, the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife were murdered, while on a visit to Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia, annexed to Austria in 1909. There can be little doubt that the plot was hatched in Servian territory, or that the materials were supplied, and the agents smuggled over the boundary, by certain minor Servian officials. It is also certain that Servia has bitterly resented the annexation of Bosnia to Austria, and that many secret societies in Servia have carried on intrigues to foment disturbances among the Slav population in Bosnia. There is, however, no proof, nor is it alleged, that the Servian Government was implicated in this dastardly crime. The Austrians at once instituted a judicial investigation into the facts at Serajevo. The remainder of the story is told in the White Book issued by the British Foreign Office, which in all essential particulars is confirmed by the German Denkschrift which gives the account of the negotiations from the German point of view.

The documents cover a period of less than a fortnight from July 20 to August 4. And never, I suppose, has a more stupendous tragedy been worked out in so short a period of time. Through every line of the commonplace diction of diplomacy one sees the grim march of the remorseless fate which was to plunge the unsuspecting peoples of Europe in ghastly ruin, and to blot out for a time our common civilization.

THE OPENING OF THE DRAMA.

The correspondence opens with a letter on 20th July from the British Minister to the British Ambassador at Berlin. To this the Ambassador replied that he had seen the German Foreign Minister who mentioned an expected demand by Austria on Serbia: he thought that the matter should be left to Austria and Serbia without interference and therefore he did not think Germany should interfere.

A SERIOUS POSITION.

The next day, July 23, Sir Edward Grey, the British Minister, saw the Austrian Ambassador who promised to furnish him on the 24th July with the text of the demand made by Austria on Serbia, on the 23rd. Conversation ensued, and on the Ambassador mentioning that the demand included a time limit and was in the nature of an ultimatum, Sir Edward Grey became fully conscious of the seriousness of the crisis.

THE SPARK IN THE POWDER MAGAZINE.

Next day, the 24th July, the Austrian Ambassador communicated the text of the demand on Serbia which had been presented on the 23rd. This was the flaming torch thrown into the European powder magazine, and, as will be seen, there was little more than twenty-four hours' time allowed for those interested to quench it, before the explosion took place. The demand begins by an historical retrospect of the relations between Austria and Serbia from an Austrian point of view, and demands that the Servian Government should publish, on the front page of the official journal, and also communicate to the army, a strong denunciation of all propaganda directed against Austria, and a regret for the fatal result of such proceedings. It further made certain specific demands under ten heads, with an intimation that the Austrian Government expected a reply at the latest before six o'clock on the evening of the 25th. [Mr. Merriman then quoted the terms of the Austrian demands and proceeded:]

The Royal Servian Government further undertakes:

1. To suppress any publication which incites to hatred and contempt of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the general tendency of which is directed against its territorial integrity:

2. To dissolve immediately the society styled Narodna Odbrana, to confiscate all its means of propaganda, and to proceed in the same manner against other societies and their branches in Serbia which engage

in propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The Royal Government shall take the necessary measures to prevent the societies dissolved from continuing their activity under another name and form ;

3. To eliminate without delay from public instruction in Servia, both as regards the teaching body and also as regards the methods of instruction, everything that serves, or might serve, to foment the propaganda against Austria-Hungary :

4. To remove from the military service, and from the administration in general, all officers and functionaries guilty of propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy whose names and deeds the Austro-Hungarian Government reserves to itself the right of communicating to the Royal Government ;

5. To accept the collaboration in Servia of representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Government in the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy ;

6. To take judicial proceedings against accessories to the plot of the 28th June who are on Servian territory. Delegates of the Austro-Hungarian Government will take part in the investigation relating thereto ;

7. To proceed without delay to the arrest of Major Voijs Tankositch and of the individual named Milan Ciganovitch, a Servian State employé, who have been compromised by the results of the magisterial enquiry at Serajevo :

8. To prevent by effective measures the co-operation of the Servian authorities in the illicit traffic in arms and explosives across the frontier, to dismiss and punish severely the officials of the frontier service at Schabatz and Loznica guilty of having assisted the perpetrators of the Serajevo crime by facilitating their passage across the frontier ;

9. To furnish the Imperial and Royal Government with explanations regarding the unjustifiable utterances of high Servian officials, both in Servia and abroad, who, notwithstanding their official position, did not hesitate after the crime of the 28th June to express themselves in interviews in terms of hostility to the Austro-Hungarian Government ; and, finally,

10. To notify the Imperial and Royal Government without delay of the execution of the measures comprised under the preceding heads.

The Austro-Hungarian Government expects the reply of the Royal Government at the latest by 6 o'clock on Saturday evening, the 25th July.

Seldom have such terms been presented by one Sovereign power to another except with the intention of provoking a certain conflict, and never has a crisis involving more momentous issues been thrown before the powers of Europe. On the same day, 24th July, the British Ambassador to Russia reported a conversation with M. Sazonof, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

SERVIA'S ATTITUDE.

Great Britain, France and Russia pressed Austria for an extension of time to Serbia, and Germany forwarded the appeal of Great Britain to Vienna for the favourable consideration of that power. In the Telegram, 25th July, No. 18, White Book, from our Ambassador in Berlin, he reports this and goes on to give details of an interesting conversation with the German Minister, who, "admitted quite freely that the Austrian Government wished to give the Servians a lesson and that they meant to take military action. He also admitted that the Servian Government could not follow certain of the Austrian demands. He remained of opinion that the crisis could be localised. He confessed privately that he thought that the note left much to be desired as a diplomatic document, and he disclaimed very earnestly any knowledge of its contents. On the same day, 25th July, the Servian Government forwarded its reply to the Austrian demands. It practically amounted to a complete acceptance of the Austrian terms, humiliating as they were. Only as regards No. 5 of the Austrian demands, the proposal for a joint commission to carry out reforms, they demur, but add, that they will admit such collaboration as agrees with International Law with criminal procedure, and with good neighbourly relations. Our representative at Belgrade said he believed that this complete surrender was due to Russian advice. It was, however, not accepted, and at the expiration of the time specified, the Austrian Ambassador left Belgrade which the Austrian Government protested did not mean declaration of war. The British Ambassador at Vienna sends a telegram to Sir Edward Grey on the 27th July, which throws much light on the situation.

No. 41.

Sir M. de Bunsen to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received July 27.)

(Telegraphic.)

Vienna, July 27, 1914.

I have had conversations with all my colleagues representing the Great Powers. The impression left on my mind is that the Austro-Hungarian note was so drawn up as to make war inevitable; that the Austro-Hungarian Government are fully resolved to have war with Serbia; that they consider their position as a Great Power to be at stake; and that until punishment has been administered to Serbia it is unlikely that they will listen to proposals of mediation. This country has gone wild with joy at the prospect of war with Serbia, and its postponement or prevention would undoubtedly be a great disappointment.

I propose, subject to any special directions you desire to send me, to express to the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs the hope of His Majesty's Government that it may yet be possible to avoid war, and to ask his Excellency whether he cannot suggest a way out even now.

The next proposal of Sir E. Grey was that the matters at issue should be considered at a joint conference between Great Britain, France,

Italy and Germany. But Germany preferred direct communication between Russia and Austria.

Russia opened communication with Austria urging delay, offered to use her influence with Serbia to stay any provocative measures. Gave notice, however, that in event of war she could not remain indifferent. Failing direct negotiation would agree to conference.

AUSTRIA DECLARES WAR.

On the 28th July, Austria declared war against Serbia. On the day following, Russia ordered a partial mobilization of her forces in certain southern districts. The Russian ambassador still remained at Vienna, and the pitiful, futile attempts of diplomacy to avert the awful catastrophe still continued.

On the 29th, our ambassador at Berlin informed Sir E. Grey of a communication from the German Chancellor in regard to British neutrality. Similar discussions had taken place both with Russia and France, who both urged Great Britain to declare that in the event of a general war taking place, she would side with them, which they pleaded would stop Germany.

The position taken up on these points by Sir Edward Grey was perfectly clear—and may be summarized as declaring that in a struggle between Austria and Serbia, or in the larger issue between Teuton and Slav, we would take no part.

He disclaimed any formal engagement either to Russia or France, and this was not pleaded by either of those powers. We should decide what national interests required us to do in event of a general war.

We could not allow France to be crushed in the general interest. The Germans must clearly understand that our overmastering desire for peace would not prevent us from intervening, if, and in such direction as British interests demanded.

On the 30th July, in answer to an enquiry from Germany as to terms on which Russia would demobilize, the latter replied she would do so, if Austria gives assurance that she will respect sovereignty of Serbia and submit certain of the demands of her note to Serbia, which latter has not accepted, to an international discussion.

There seemed for a moment a flicker of hope that the crisis might pass over.

The policy of the British Government was embodied in a communication from Sir Edward Grey, which is a record of unfulfilled aspirations.

On the 31st July, both Russian and German Governments issued orders for a general mobilization.

BELGIAN NEUTRALITY.

On the same day, Sir Edward Grey telegraphed both to France and Germany asking whether these Governments were prepared, in accordance with existing treaties, to respect the neutrality of Belgium as long as no other power violates it. He pressed for an early answer.

Germany meanwhile sent an ultimatum to Russia that unless she countermanded her mobilisation within twelve hours, Germany would order a complete mobilisation on both frontiers. France replied to Sir E. Grey's question as regards Belgium in the affirmative. Germany remained silent on that point. On being pressed she gave a shuffling reply. Germany also informed France that she was going to call next day at 1 o'clock to learn what attitude France was going to take.

On the same fateful day, the 31st July, the French ambassador again pressed for some favourable declaration by the British Government. Sir E. Grey's reply was clear and consistent.

RUSSIA FOR PEACE.

Desperate attempts continued to be made on August 1st to stave off the calamity. As far as documents go, Russia appeared most anxious to go to almost any lengths to preserve peace; at one time there seemed some faint hope, but on that day Germany informed Russia that she must regard their refusal to answer the demand for demobilization, as creating a state of war, and orders for mobilization were at once issued, to begin next day.

On August 1st, the situation was critical, but not absolutely hopeless. Austria and Russia both expressed their readiness to discuss the substance of the Austrian ultimatum to Servia. Both powers expressed their sense of the efforts made by Great Britain to preserve peace.

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE CRISIS.

By the evening of that day Russia, France, Austria and Germany were practically in a state of war. There only remained the faint prospect of keeping Great Britain out of the conflict. Everything turned on the maintenance of the neutrality of Belgium, to which all the great powers, Germany and France included, were fully pledged. In response to the enquiries of the British Minister on the point, France had given a satisfactory assurance, Germany had given a shuffling reply and further qualified it by saying that unless Belgium—poor Belgium, who asked for nothing more than to be left alone—sided with her enemies, ample reparation would be given to her at the conclusion of the war.

On the 2nd August the German troops violated the neutrality of Luxemburg, which had been guaranteed in 1867—on the same day the British Government gave to the French Government an undertaking that if the German fleet came through the North Sea, into the Channel, to

attack French coasts, the British fleet would, subject to the approval of Parliament, give all protection in its power.

On the 4th August, the British Minister sent the Ambassador at Berlin a message, stating that the King of the Belgians has made an appeal to His Majesty the King for diplomatic intervention on behalf of Belgium.

To this, the practical reply of Germany was to inform Belgium that she intended to advance through her territory by force of arms if necessary. At once she attacked Liege.

Upon which Sir E. Grey sent an ultimatum to Germany.

ARMAGEDDON BEGUN.

No reply having been received, war was declared.

Armageddon had begun—nine million of men were plunged in deadly conflict—the whole face of European civilization had changed, and the material progress of the world had been arrested.

No one who studies the events that led up to the final catastrophe can doubt that if the cause of any war is just, in the present case the people of Great Britain may make that claim. We strove for peace not for ourselves but for Europe. We could have purchased neutrality for ourselves by abandoning France to the hands of the spoiler. We could have stood aloof and refused to fulfil our engagements to Belgium and thereby handed the small powers of Europe over to the military dominance of Germany. Thank God we did neither! Often of late years have we, her sons, thought that our Mother Country's practice has scarcely kept pace with her professions. We dreaded lest that might come.

“When men change swords for ledgers.”

Therefore we rejoice, that she should stand as the champion of small States and free institutions and the determined foe of that lust of military domination, that tramples under foot all treaties as mere scraps of paper, and proclaims by the mouth of its servant the doctrine that necessity as interpreted by itself knows no law, and that it can only have one thought, to “hack its way through.”

Of the miseries, of the losses, material and moral, of this war, who shall speak?

The direct cost in money has been variously estimated at from £4,500,000, to more than double that sum *per diem*. The indirect loss is far greater. The incredible devastation of such a country as Belgium, which, without a shadow of interest in the cause of quarrel and through no fault of her own has been made the arena of conflict, must move the pity of mankind. Two months ago that little country was the admiration of all. Densely populated, a hive of industry, the garden of Europe, she is now a blood-stained waste.

THE DESTRUCTION OF WAR.

Nor can we yet speak of the destruction of the works of man, of the conveniences of modern civilization and the treasured monuments of the storied past. I fear their tale is not yet full.—And the human side. The breaking up of homes, the uprooting of family life, the deep hopeless distress of the poor, whose breadwinners are torn from them in obedience to the laws which have created this huge peril of militarism now in its death grapple, we trust the final one, with the ideals of freedom and liberalism. May I read one passage which sets out well the state of one country just after mobilization. It is a description of Vienna on August 2nd.

“It is not possible to give those who have not been in this country during the last few days even an approximate idea of the calamity which has befallen the country. You cannot speak to any person who has not either a son, a brother, or even a father called to arms, or in imminent danger of being called on Tuesday when the *second* Landsturm is mobilised. My own two sons must go, although one is thirty-eight years old and the other has never served in the army. All businesses, wholesale and retail, all banks, post and telegraph offices, tramways, all trades, newspapers, printing establishments, have had to give up one-half and more of their employees. The whole city with its two million inhabitants is leave-taking. The trams are crowded with as many men, women, and children as they will hold, for the women insist on accompanying their husbands to the stations, outside which great Bosnian corporals are on guard, bayonets on their rifles, only admitting those who go to the trains. Every kind of vehicle halts outside the stations bringing officers and their wives, and foreigners anxious to leave the country before it becomes impossible. Every reserve man has permission to carry a small box with his belongings, and these hundred thousands of boxes add to the confusion. All the children witnessing these scenes are crying, which adds to the despair of their parents. The mobilisation proclamation on Friday was not perfectly clear, and there are offices where magistrates explain to each citizen his duties and rights. I have seen streets lined from one end to the other by young men, four deep, kept in order by the police, anxious to know their fate, and obliged to stand in the street for five and six hours before they can gain admission. Newspaper work has ceased. The newspapers publish a leader or two revised by the military censor, and regulations on the mobilisation, on the railway traffic, on dealings at the banks. Almost every regulation is a prohibition and we must recollect that this goes on over the whole of Europe in every country and every class.”

Even neutral countries such as Switzerland and Holland have to endure a ruinous strain. Of all such countries they are hit the hardest. Thriftiest and most industrious of mankind, they find their industries crippled and their savings spent on heroic attempts to preserve their countries from the horrors of war. Of indirect losses, who shall speak? They must be beyond imagination. The universal suspension of trade and cessation of industry in all the advanced countries of Europe, the fall in the value of securities, mean an absolute loss of countless millions. Two items which I chanced to see will give you some

idea of what this means on a large scale. Before the actual outbreak of war, the fall in the value of securities on the London Stock Exchange was estimated at one hundred and eighty-eight million pounds. The treasurer of the United States estimates the loss in Customs duties owing to the war at forty millions sterling, and these are only two items in perhaps the most prosperous countries. Who can measure the total of the rest? Thousands of men who were accounted rich a few weeks ago are now paupers. Multitudes of industrious wage-earners and of thrifty peasants are homeless wanderers. Traders of every kind all over Europe are ruined. The cataclysm is complete. When we look in imagination over this wide-spread scene of universal misery and ruin, we may well exclaim:

AN END TO MILITARISM.

It may be that offences come, but woe be to the man, and to the system by whom the offence cometh. And we, as far as in us lies, determine, that come what may, and cost what it will, an end shall be put to militarism, and that no longer shall it be possible to drag mankind into such misery at the will of those who consider themselves their masters. Whatever the paltry origin of the strife, whoever the combatants may chance to be, the real issue is as old as the ages: the struggle between force and law, between the military tyranny, that knows no law but force, and the sense of freedom that recognises the right of small nations, and of small men, to the protection of the law, and to the disposal under law of their own destinies. Who, that looks to the graver causes underlying the quarrel shall say this war is unjust? What freeman will be found to range himself on the side of military autocracy? It is surely the conviction of this feeling that has worked so remarkable a change in our own Empire and not in our own Empire alone. In Canada all party strife is stilled and Frenchman and Briton—divided of old by a race question of the intensity of which we here have happily no idea—stand shoulder to shoulder. In India where possibly our foes counted on an embarrassing state of suppressed discontent there has come a spontaneous manifestation of loyalty and of assistance that must have exceeded even the most sanguine hopes. In Ireland which seemed a few weeks ago to be trembling on the brink of a state bordering on civil war, there has been by common consent a cessation of strife, and a wholehearted determination to support the cause. All over the Empire the vexed questions connected with labour have been laid aside in face of the common danger, just as in France, the hot bed of syndicalism, all classes, and all opinions, have rallied to the country's call—and shall it be said that we here in South Africa alone are to strike a jarring note—that we alone should wrap ourselves in the mantle of strange doctrines? I had almost said ludicrous doctrines, of "passive resistance," and impracticable neutrality. That we, who boast ourselves freemen of the free, should on one specious pretext or another, range ourselves on the side which, if successful, must mean the destruction of small nations and the enslavement of mankind by the military caste. Forbid it heaven! To me, at any rate, with such light as is given me, to see our duty—it seems that it lies in presenting an united front, in sinking all petty differences, and in stilling the voice of

political strife. Differences of opinion upon this or that detail may well come, but duty surely calls upon us to see to it that our country speaks with no divided voice, the voice of the Government supported by Parliament.

GENERAL BOTHA'S EXAMPLE.

An example has been set us by General Botha that may well claim our admiration. He has sacrificed his comfort and his ease, to undergo all the risks and miseries of a campaign: he, who, if ever any man had earned repose from such tasks, had a right to claim them. He has done this, confident in the justice of our cause, as I am confident, and surely we can, each according to our position, make such sacrifices as we can to follow a noble example, in order that South Africa may preserve her reputation as a land where no sacrifice is held to be too great in the cause of freedom.

The issues of this dreadful struggle lie in the hand of the Divine Disposer of events. Let us bring as our share to its solution, "Duty and Discipline," so that our country may present an united front to the common foe, and that in the cause of free institutions, and the rights of small countries and of common men, South Africa may speak with no uncertain voice.



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