

The Ignorance of Our "Pacifists"

By THE MONOCLE MAN

THERE are a number of things which the action of Germany in ruthlessly precipitating and relentlessly prosecuting the present war should have taught mankind. Yet one has only to read the writings and speeches of some of our publicists on this beatific continent—Canadian as well as American—to see that we have not yet been taught these obvious and even compelling lessons; and that there are sincere and somewhat accepted leaders of opinion who are preaching even to-day, in the face of the roar of the guns, the more pleasant prophecies of international law and order and of a firmly settled peace. Sometimes we try to admire these men for keeping their faith and enthusiasms amidst a drizzle of discouragement; but the truth is that they are very dangerous men who may succeed in bringing the free institutions and spacious civic liberties of this continent down in irreparable ruin.

SURELY one of the truths taught us by this war is that it is by no means inconceivable that a nominally civilized nation may deliberately arm itself in secret and go out stealthily to rob an unarmed but wealthy sister nation. Our pleasant prophets have been in the habit of lifting their Pecksniffian hands and unctuously urging that "this is impossible!" And they did obtain almost universal credence for this comfortable gospel before the beginning of the present war. That was not surprising. Decades of peace and closer international relations had led most of our people to believe that the days of planned predatory wars were over. But the amazing thing is that men should still be found who ignore the plain and ugly teachings of the war and continue to administer blandly their old brand of soothing syrup. They talk as if the moment this horrible strife is ended, the Millennium would come in, when it would be pure pageantry for any peaceful-minded nation to spend money on idle soldiers.

OUR good neighbours, the Americans, are in, perhaps, the greatest danger from this sweet poison. They are a nation of great wealth. They are well worth burglarizing. If Bismarck a half century ago remarked that London would be "a great city to sack," we may be sure that his successors, who have bettered his pagan doctrine of "blood and iron" by demanding the blood of babes and maiden nurses, have not failed to note that New York would be a great city to hold to ransom—as unhappy Lille has been held. An American writer in the current "Century" magazine lays before his fellow-countrymen some cold facts which they will do well to heed. He relates that "a responsible staff officer of one of the great European powers" pointed out to him that "it is true that your country is very large, but its heart is very small and very vulnerable." Then he called for a map and showed what he meant. He drew a line from Chesapeake Bay along the series of natural strongholds to the Canadian boundary at the top of Lake Champlain, and said that this line (600 miles in length, about that of the line across the Western front) was the first natural line of defence for the eastern section of the United States. It is much stronger, naturally, than that held by the Germans in France and Flanders. The mountains are higher and the rivers and lakes wider. Such a line, he said, could be held by 400,000 trained European troops. Consequently all that is necessary for an enemy to do would be to land, say, half a million men at different points on the American coast, quickly dispose of the few forces the Americans could bring into action, fight his way to this line of natural strength, fortify his army along it, when they would hold the life of the United States within the hollow of their hands. "The country east of it would become a second Belgium, wherein the slightest resistance or insubordination on the part of individual men would result in the visitation of dire reprisals upon entire communities." This new American "Belgium," while containing only three per cent. of the United States in area, would contain half the wealth of the nation and twenty-five million people. If Germany held this grip on the vitals of the American Republic, she could levy indemnities on New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, et al, at will, and dictate her own terms of peace.

I HAVE given space to this picture because it is not a fancy sketch at all, but a quite possible reality if predatory war is permitted to pay handsome dividends in the case of the gigantic speculation ventured upon by the Prussian oligarchy last year. The Germans are out to-day to discover whether international highway robbery is still a paying business. They are following up the policy they

liked so well in 1866 and 1870. Possibly they had not read the super-pacifist puerilities of one "Norman Angell" and so learned that they did not profit by the victories of 1866 and 1870 at all. Anyway, they are trying it again. And if they emerge from this war without being crushed, they will call it a profitable investment; for they will then proceed to "cash in" on their formidable military prestige in all parts of the world.

UNLESS, I repeat, they are crushed, and the lesson taught the whole world that even the best armed national highwayman is now bound to be borne down by the combined law-abiding nations, the doctrine will be re-established that might makes right, and that the only law of the international highway is the foot-pad's law that all wealth lies at the disposal of the man with the best pistol. I have already said in this department that I believe that the first prize coveted by the Teuton highwayman

would be the British Empire; and that the choicest bit of the British Empire to German eyes would be fat and unplucked Canada. But it is also true that, if the Germans are allowed to roam the world, with one hand on a revolver-butt and the other held out for loot, they will presently note the fact that the United States presents a dazzling temptation to the thug—and has practically no guardian on the premises to keep him at bay.

NOTHING, to my mind, can prevent such an outcome from this war, short of a firm and punitive peace dictated in Berlin by an allied army, and emphasized by the cession of large sections of German territory to the Allies as a guarantee of good behaviour. As Germany took Strassburg in 1870, because she regarded it as "a pistol aimed at the heart of Germany," so the Allies must seize and hold some Prussian pistols aimed at the hearts of her neighbours. More than that, Germany must indemnify Belgium, Serbia, France and Russia for injuries inflicted. A "stalemate" will leave the international highwayman at large. Even such a complete victory over Germany will not wipe out the fact that, in the Twentieth Century, a great nation did try to burglarize civilization, and there will be no sure guarantee that it may not try it again.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

Neither Last Nor Least in Great Trek

83rd Battalion from Niagara Camp, Marching in Front of Toronto City Hall



On Friday of last week, the 83rd Battalion, under command of Lieut.-Col. Reginald Pellatt, reached Toronto after marching a hundred miles from Niagara. As it passed through the city to its winter quarters, it was reviewed by the Mayor. Toronto's garrison of overseas troops now consists of six battalions of Infantry, three batteries of Artillery, cyclists and other details. These include the 37th, 58th, 74th, 75th, 83rd, and 92nd Battalions. Later the 81st and 95th will be added.