

FIRESIDE REFLECTIONS—continued.

Neither could tell how soon a pretext might be found of hurling the same gauntlet in their faces. It therefore benumbed them to be friends and out of this feeling grew the settlement of 1904, by which France recognised the superior rights of Britain in Egypt and received in exchange the recognition of her rights in Morocco. The Triple Entente had become a fact. Germany must have been quite self-satisfied at the time for she made no complaint, Von Buelow declaring that Germany's interests in Morocco, were purely economic within a year Germany had changed her mind. The reason was not far to seek. The Prussian war-lords had viewed with complacency the formation of the Dual Entente between France and Russia. Now the efforts of M. DeCasse, France's Foreign Minister, had included Britain in the compact. Such a union must be broken at all costs. No time was lost in seeking a pretext.

The Kaiser in 1905 paid a dramatic visit to Algiers, secured the ear of the Sultan and promised him support in his refusal to accept the reforms which France had planned for his country. M. DeCasse objected so strenuously to the German Emperor's intrusion in Morocco that war must have ensued had not the French Cabinet agreed to the admission of Germany to a joint conference to settle the dispute. No greater insult could have been offered a civilized nation, and no greater humiliation suffered than by accepting it. The French Foreign Minister resigned, virtually thrust from office by the "mailed fist." With the results of the crisis Germany was apparently satisfied.

But it was not long before Germany found a new field in which to exploit her diplomatic methods. In 1908 the world awakened one day to find that Austria, who had charitably undertaken to promote certain reforms in the Turkish Provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, had declared the annexation of her proteges. Russia, always a friend of her small Slav sisters in the Balkans, protested vigorously. But before matters had gone very far, Germany stepped in with the declaration that if Russia did not immediately waive her protests, she (Germany) would mobilize. She was well aware that Russia, having just emerged from her war with Japan, was in no position to assume the burden of a second struggle. Here was the first overt threat to which Lloyd George referred. The second was equally dramatic.

Russia having been cowed, it now became all the more necessary for Germany to break up the Triple Entente if she was to achieve her ambition of arbiter of the destinies of Europe. Britain, France and Russia were aware that Germany's attitude arose largely from a fear that the new Entente aimed to hedge her in and throttle what she considers her legitimate growth. To disabuse the Prussian mind Britain sent Lord Haldane to Berlin in 1911, commissioned to do his best to uproot the spreading weeds of enmity. The mission failed. A few months later the *causa pro quod* of this rebuff became plain. All the nations were busy with their own housekeeping, outwardly all was calm, when, one day in July, across the blue harbor of Agadir appeared a German gun-boat. The same day announcements from Berlin explained that it was there to protect German lives and property in the town. As was expected Germany's latest method of addressing the Powers from the gun turrets of the Panther, immediately precipitated a crisis and, on interchange of notes,

it was found that the Germans claims were much more elaborate than at first appeared. Ignoring the Act of Algeciras, and the later Franco-German Agreement of 1909, they now demanded the reopening of the entire Moroccan question, insisting upon either a partition of the country or the exchange of a large portion of French Congo, for a release of German "rights" in Morocco. For three months the tension was at the breaking point and war was daily imminent. During this period the discussion centred mainly around questions of power (*Machtfrage*) and the coolness of French diplomacy was tested by the knowledge that German gun-boats continued to "protect" the closed port of Agadir in which not a single German citizen dwelt. Finally the discussion narrowed down to the issue at stake, and was carried on with more reserve on the part of Germany. Sufficient time had elapsed to prove to Prussia's arrogant ruler that his attitude was merely weeding the Entente into a strong defensive alliance. His coup had failed in its object, and a settlement closing the incident was soon effected, which made rectifications in the boundaries of German and French colonies in Africa, to the benefit of both countries.

Germany could now only mark time and await a better opportunity of converting the nations by force to her doctrine of "Kultur." In July, 1914, she deemed the time ripe. The comparatively minor incident of Sarajevo appeared to be on the verge of settlement despite Austria's extraordinary demands, when the German War Lords willed that it should serve as a pretext for hurling the nations into war. Now after two years and a half of the most sanguinary fighting, the world has ever seen, comes the cry of Peace from Germany. Will she have Peace? Yes, but only when the Entente lowers, and their Allies have seen to it that her "Swashbuckling through the streets of Europe to the disturbance of all harmless and peaceful citizens, has been dealt with as an offence against the law of nations." It is just a little over one hundred years ago since Napoleon's attempt to build by force a French hegemony in Europe was frustrated. In the midst of his efforts, a premature peace was signed at Amiens, which did little more than give him time to reorganise for further conquest.—It needed the decisive victory of Waterloo to establish a permanent peace. Should peace be made to-morrow, history would but repeat itself. This coming year the Allies' swords will carve a road to victory, but it will have been in vain if there is not found the pen of wisdom to write a lasting peace. The pen is mightier than the sword, but only when guided by the hand of equity and righteousness. We have no reason to doubt the outcome. The eyes of the Allied peoples are open to facts which have been obscured for years, and in their various countries, the crisis of war has brought out leaders whom the people can trust. For the rest of the war our motto must be the altered Machiavellian proverb: *si vis pacem face bellum*—if you desire peace make war.

Private Dick Bedford rose, stretched his six feet of brawny manhood, looked at his watch, and decided to roll in for the night. After undressing, gingerly he propelled himself caterpillar-fashion into his envelope of blankets, turned over, and went to sleep, to dream of the little girl who had fluffy hair the colour of an amber sunset and eyes of cerulean blue that seemed to hold within their depths the mysteries of the ages.

"SARGE."