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THE MILITARY MOULDED MIND OF THE GERMAN

Prof. Charles M. Bice Discusses Real Causes of the Great War. The Prussian Empire's Development.

The following letter dealing with what are claimed to be the fundamental causes of the great war is contributed by Prof. Chas. M. Bice of Denver, Col., who is known to Citizen readers by reason of previous interesting letters on different topics. Prof. Bice's first contribution to The Citizen, it will be remembered, was a letter taking issue with an article by Dr. Charles Morse, which briefly put forth the contention, in the latter's exceptionally able manner, that the war was properly designated the "Nietzschean War." This resulted in an interesting and instructive exchange by these two savants. Prof. Bice's letter herewith will be followed by others developing the writer's view in respect to the real causes of the war. A local interest attaches to these letters in the fact that Mrs. Bice is well known in Ottawa, where she resided for some years before her marriage to Prof. Bice.

Editor, Citizen.—Myriads of books and pamphlets have been written about the real causes of the great European struggle now going on, but few of them have any real diagnostic value.

It may be truly premised that all truth has a philosophical basis, and that this may be found if we are sufficiently expert in delving into the nomenclature, or underlying principles of it.

The subject which the above topic suggests cannot be fully discussed within the restrictive limits of one article in your paper, and we may therefore have to implore the "to be continued" privilege, which the importance of the topic would justify.

To assert that this horrid war is but the culmination of the great and irrepressible conflict between the principles of democracy and autocracy, is to announce our conclusion at the start instead of at the end of our ratiocative process, but this method has its advantage especially when the discussion is of an historical character as the one we are engaged in necessitates.

Before Prussian Empire.

Most of us who were lads at school a little after the middle of the last century, will remember the map in various colors in the old Morse geography, that portrayed the limits of the 36 petty little kingdoms and dukedoms, and what not, subsequently consolidated into the German Empire of to-day.

This most bloody of all wars in the world's history is the direct sequence of the failure of democracy and the success of autocracy, in the formation of the consolidated government that was to unite these petty principalities in one confederation in 1848.

A draft of a constitution in that year by a national assembly of 31 German states, elected by popular vote, with one member for each 500,000 of the population, brought forth what they called a "Grundrecht" of organic law for a German union, similar to the constitution of the U.S.

Opposed by Princes.

Germany was to become a real federation, the 36 separate states each to retain local self-government with a great Federal government over them, to which all were to owe primary allegiance. The citizens of the several states were to be guaranteed those rights which Britons had won in Magna Charta, the Habeas Corpus Act, the Bill of Rights, etc. These rights up to that time no German enjoyed, and does not even now possess, but they were all provided for in the Grundrecht. Germany, in short, was to become a true democratic federation.

This plan met the determined opposition of the princes and privileged autocratic classes, and, sad to say, was defeated.

Twelve years later, Bismarck practically governed Prussia, the principal of the German states, for five years in the face of the fiercest opposition of the democratic element, until he had secured an army of sufficient strength for his purpose, whereupon he boldly seized Schleswig-Holstein, east Austria out of the empire, and conquered France, and was able to propose a union for Germany as suited his autocratic purposes, based on the prerogative of the monarch and the ascendancy of Prussia. This form of union was not by the consent or will of the people, and contained no references to their liberty of speech, press or person. It was promulgated on the authority of the Emperor, after he had consulted with his fellow monarchs.

Power to the Rulers.

All power was vested in the hereditary rulers, and withheld from Parliament, and the people. The real executive authority was a secret council of Empire, composed of the nominated ministers of the German princes and kings, and having both executive and legislative functions. They were not responsible to the Reichstag but to the Emperor only, and if they came there at all, it was simply as spokesmen of the Bundesrath, and incapable of changing the policy of the heads of the government.

The Reichstag itself only had the power of criticism, amend or veto bills, and refuse their assent to new taxes. It was, however, to be elected by universal male suffrage over the age of 25 years. This concession to democratic principles, Bismarck justified on the ground that the Reichstag had such limited powers, the result would only lead to monarchial elections and do away with the Liberal bourgeoisie influence. The dominating power in the new empire was the course of Prussia, whose king became the German Emperor, and had absolute control of the army and navy.

The Emperor's Control.

The Emperor nominated the Chancellor, who was the executive officer of the Empire. This gave the Emperor complete control of the whole federal machinery of government, the small princes and the people having nothing to say, except to criticize within restricted limits, with no power to act. The constitution, if such it may be called, was so constructed that the prerogatives of the ruling classes were pre-eminent, and could not be changed by amendment, but only by a new one from beginning to end, a thing impossible.

This was how Bismarck solved the problem of German unity, while the people in failing to unite on any definite plan were powerless to offer resistance. To this day the German people remain subject to an autocratic government in which they have little or no power, except to influence by persuasion; they can not control the government in any way.

They are all within the influence of the Prussian system with its deeply rooted belief in force, as the guiding principle of her policy, and all the people can do is to obey.

From the triumph of the Prussian autocracy all subsequent trouble, including the present horrifying war, has come.

Typically Militaristic.

Prussia has always been the typical military state. All power centered in the government, and the government was another name for the Emperor, backed by the army. The people were recognized only as automatons, to be drilled, disciplined and coerced into obedience to the wishes of the governing class. They were forced to obey the laws in the enactment of which they had no voice or part, but simply because they were commanded by the power above them, which always regarded itself as divinely authorized, while the sole duty of the people was to obey. All self reliance of the people was obliterated and their independence taken away. They were not responsible for the national policy and while they had the bare right of criticism within limits, every essential of popular government, was carefully withdrawn.

They had no effective alternative but to obey the commands of the ruler without question.

Compulsory Service.

Frederick the Great was the man who inaugurated the system of universal compulsory military service, forcible attendance at school, which was done largely with the object in view of creating the military power and making it supreme in the Empire.

This system is in force to-day and the constitution remains unchanged in any essential particular. The educational system of the country is controlled entirely by the government. It is true that it is lavishly fostered, but always on condition that there shall be cultivated the duties of political obedience and undisguised patriotism to the powers that be.

No appointment can be made without government consent and if any criticism is indulged either against the government or in favor of a wider freedom, it means prompt dismissal from service.

Ruled By The Military.

This means in practice, a deference of opinion to those who are higher

up, to the clique of German generals and bureaucrats, who, with the Kaiser, control almost everything in the country.

The army, with the Kaiser-appointed subordinates, drills the male population into habits of discipline and obedience to authority, while the press bureau, trained to mould public opinion in the direction required, is highly organized for the purpose, but is deprived of the freedom of criticism whenever the government considers it goes too far. It is as scientifically equipped and highly organized as the army itself, and works in times of peace as well as during war in moulding public opinion in favor of the ambitious schemes of the over lords. Besides all this, by means of the tariff, subsidies in shipping, railway rates, etc., most of the people are purposely made dependent upon the favor of the great bureaucratic machine.

The German policy, ever since 1871, has had but one aim, viz: not only to produce an obedient soldier who has no initiative of his own, except to obey orders, but to foster and create a plastic mind among the people, predisposed to acquiesce in the existing order of things and to regard criticism of superiors as unpatriotic.—CHAS. M. BICE, Denver, Colo.

"Are you the editor of the paper?" asked the lady with the drab spats, calling. "I am," replied the man with the poised pencil. "Well, I called to ask you if you wouldn't get larger type. My name was in your paper five times last week and a neighbour of mine told me she never saw it."

"What have you for dinner?" "Everything," said the waiter. "Bring it in."

"One order of hash," yelled the waiter. Willie—Paw, is radium the scarcest thing in the world? Paw—no, my son. Common sense is.

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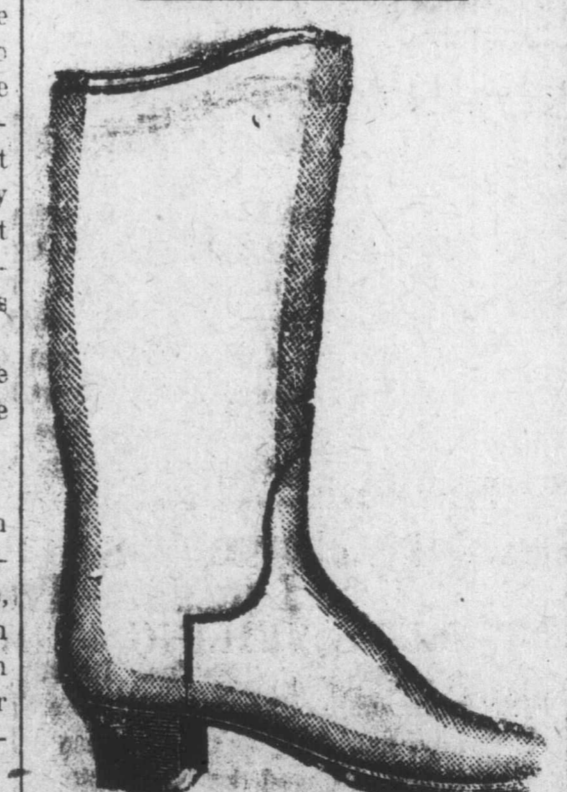
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