



Peace--or a Truce

WE all have so great a horror of the frightful realities of war that, almost from the moment that the first gun is fired, we keep an anxious and open ear ready for whisperings of peace. The few and altogether inadequate pictures of what war means, which come to us in flashes, now from a wounded soldier telling his little story, now from a correspondent who has been permitted to get near enough to the conflict to see the "killed" in their stark attitudes, are nevertheless sufficiently grim and gresome to sicken us with the brute cruelty of it all. If we could really see a battlefield—or even a field hospital—it is doubtful whether the civilian nerves could endure it. So we ceaselessly long for peace—and we long all the more keenly, the longer the terrible massacre goes on.

BUT we should consider carefully what a truce will mean—a truce as distinguished from a peace. I think that it will become a patriotic duty for the most pacific of us to steel our nerves and strengthen our resolution to endure the pain of continued fighting until we shall have won peace—and not merely a truce. I do not want to count our chickens before they are hatched—and I admit that it is a bit early to begin writing about what terms of peace we will "impose" on a foe which still holds our territory; but this war has moved so rapidly that we may easily see a formidable movement for a premature peace by the time these lines are published. And I had rather be ahead of time, with my discussion of such a condition, than be fatally behind time. I should think it highly probable that the moment the German Government comes to the conclusion that it cannot this time decisively defeat the Allies, it will cast about for a chance to make peace on the most favourable terms possible while it is still in a state to pretty well dictate what they shall be. The longer it fights a losing battle, the less will it be able to resist costly conditions proposed by the Allies.

YET at the first hint that Germany has had enough of it and is willing to talk peace, there is bound to be tremendous pressure upon the Allies to accept the "olive branch." Every interest in their own countries which is being hurt by the continuation of the war, will want peace—and a quick peace. Every neutral people, like the American, will press for peace; and we will be threatened with a swing of the public opinion of these countries against us, and for Germany, if we refuse to discuss terms with the Germans when the Germans are willing. Then the "pacifists," professional or merely "constitutional," will sigh for peace. "Let us put an end to this tragic slaughter at all costs," will be heard from the old women of both sexes. And, in democratic countries like France and the British Empire, these forces are certain to exert a vast amount of influence; and we may easily see our Government taking their reddened hands from the iron plough of war before its grim task is done.

BUT we should consider carefully what a truce will mean—a truce as distinguished from a peace. A peace, under modern conditions, is going to be bad enough. This chatter about disarming our fallen foe, is the most irresponsible and misleading nonsense. You cannot disarm a great people like the Germans. No matter how complete a victory you may win, the moment you take your hand from their national throat and give them leave once more to govern themselves, they will begin to re-arm. Any self-respecting nation would do the same thing. It may be possible for Britain to get possession of the German navy, and then to announce that the moment Germany builds another navy which runs beyond a certain limit, war will automatically begin. But it is easy to think of a hundred things which would make such a regulation a dead letter—one of which would be the utter inability of Britain to wage a war against Germany without the help of military powers.

NO; any peace that comes will be an armed peace. But it need not be a mere armistice, if we can decisively defeat the enemy. If, on the other hand, this war is to end with Germany saying—"Well, I didn't bring it off this time; but I'll get ready again and have another 'go' at it," we shall all be in for a far more destructive and paralyzing period of frantic preparation for war than that which so nearly did for us—in a financial way—between the Balkan Wars and the present conflict. The world will simply hold

its breath awaiting the next shock. Industry will feel that it is doing a hasty and tentative business, with a burning fuse leading to a powder magazine, in the basement. Commerce cannot promise delivery more than a month ahead. Capital will stay in hiding. We will be in the hot and oppressive pause between two thunder-storms.

THAT will be the price of a too hasty peace—a further paralysis of progress, and then another war. A real peace may last for a generation. The last peace has lasted since 1870. There have

The White Paper and Dark Persons Or "The Niggers in the Wood Pile"

THERE is little use in reading "white papers" to try to fix the responsibility for the war. Everyone has his own views on the case. But these "white papers" do contain some interesting sidelights on the personal element involved in the ante-war diplomacy. The centres of interest were Vienna, St. Petersburg and Berlin. There were the two situations to be considered, the Austro-Servian and the Austro-Russian which the former created. The German ambassador at Vienna was involved in both. Of him the British Ambassador at Vienna, Sir M. de Bunsen, wrote July 30th:

"Unfortunately the German Ambassador is himself so identified with extreme anti-Russian and anti-Servian feeling prevalent in Vienna that he is unlikely to plead the cause of peace with entire sincerity."

On August 1st, when diplomacy seemed to be exhausted, the Russian Foreign Minister talked freely to the British Ambassador who reported the former, M. Sazonoff, as saying:

"The policy of Austria had throughout been both tortuous and immoral, and she thought that she could treat Russia with defiance, secure in the support of her German ally. Similarly the policy of Germany had been an equivocal and double-faced policy, and it mattered little whether the German Government knew or did not know the terms of the Austrian ultimatum; what mattered was that her intervention with the Austrian Government had been postponed until the moment had passed when its influence would have been felt. Germany was unfortunate in her representatives in Vienna and St. Petersburg; the former was a violent Russophobe who had urged Austria on; the latter had reported to his Government that Russia would never go to war."

Yet even then (August 1st) the Russian Government was willing to adhere to this position:

"If Austria, recognizing that her conflict with Serbia has assumed character of European interest, declares herself ready to eliminate from her ultimatum points which violate principle of sovereignty of Serbia, Russia engages to stop all military preparations."

And on July 30th Sir Edward Grey thought that:

"If Austria, having occupied Belgrade and neighbouring Servian territory, declared herself ready, in the interest of European peace, to cease her advance and discuss how a complete settlement can be arrived at, I hope that Russia would also consent to discussion and suspension of further military preparations, provided that other Powers did the same."

Perhaps it was because Austria did not in fact occupy Belgrade and take Servian territory that no agreement could be made. The Servian resistance was too strong for the world's peace.

The British Ambassador at Vienna tells us that Austria and Russia had about reached an agreement on the Austro-Servian dispute when the conflict between Germany and Russia over mobilization loomed larger. He says that as between Austria and Russia an agreement seemed almost in sight. On August 1st the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg at last conceded the main point of issue by announcing to the Russian Foreign Minister that Austria would consent to submit to mediation the points in the note to Serbia which seemed incompatible with the maintenance of Servian independence; that Austria, in fact, had yielded. But Germany's ultimatum to Russia and France was dated July 31st.

Perhaps the most remarkable statement of Germany's position is this:

"We were fully aware, in this connection, that war-like moves on the part of Austria-Hungary against Serbia would bring Russia into the question, and might draw us into a war in accordance with our duties as an ally."

The German "white paper" discloses distrust of Russian diplomacy. On July 29th the German Military Attaché at St. Petersburg reported to Berlin a conversation with the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian army as follows:

"He stated that he could not answer for the future, but he could declare most emphatically that no mobilization was desired by His Majesty in the districts touching on our boundary. However, many reports have

been wars elsewhere; but the industrial and commercial activities of central Europe have not been seriously disturbed since Sedan. But Sedan was a complete and crushing victory. The Germans did not make peace at the frontier on that occasion. They made it within gun-fire of Paris. There is, I admit, one possible development which might make so thorough a peace an impossibility. That would be the proven inability of the Allies to establish a real superiority over the German defence. When we have finally made it clear that the Germans cannot beat us, then we must take up the far heavier and more formidable task of beating the Germans. And unless we are witnessing a swift and dramatic collapse of the German military machine—something that does happen sometimes—it is not going to be a short or a cheap job to beat the Germans. We may quite conceivably fail at it, if we lack resolution and the spirit of unlimited sacrifice. But if we do fail, then this war will be a far greater curse to mankind than we have yet imagined. It will be but the beginning of a number of terrible wars in which the civilization and leadership of Europe may come to an end.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

reached here and also Warsaw and Vilna of the levying of reservists in various parts of the empire. I therefore told the General that I was confronted with a riddle as the result of his announcements to me. On his word as an officer he repeated, however, that such reports were untrue; that a false alarm may have been raised here and there. In view of the positive, numerous reports before me of actual levying, I am compelled to consider the conversation as an attempt to mislead us with regard to the extent of the measures that have already been taken."

The German "white paper" contains some apparent inconsistencies. In its general summary it says:

"On the 26th Sir Edward Grey suggested that the difference between Austria-Hungary and Serbia be laid before a conference of the Ambassadors of Germany, France and Italy, with himself presiding over the sessions."

Yet on July 27th, a day later, the German Chancellor cabled to London: "Nothing is known here as yet as to a suggestion of Sir Edward Grey to hold a four-sided conference in London."

The seriousness of the situation did not prevent the use of expressions which some may consider rather slangy. The German Chancellor said he was "pressing the button" at Vienna, perhaps too hard. The Austrian Minister declared he had not "banged the door" in the face of Russian discussion.

Further personal elements occur in the report of Sir W. E. Goschen, British Ambassador at Berlin, on his return to England. Britain had asked Germany for assurances not to violate Belgian neutrality. A time limit was fixed. Incidentally it may be noted that the Ambassador's telegram reporting Germany's reply was never received in London. Sir William Goschen then describes the attack on the British Embassy, after a flying sheet, issued by the "Berliner Tageblatt" has announced that Britain had declared war on Germany. He writes:

"After order had been restored Herr von Jagow (German Secretary of State) came to see me and expressed his most heartfelt regrets at what had occurred. He said that the flying sheet circulated in the streets had not been authorized by the Government; in fact, the Chancellor had asked him by telephone whether he thought that such a statement should be issued, and he had replied: 'Certainly not, until the morning.' It was the 'pestilential "Tageblatt,"' which had somehow got hold of the news, that had upset his calculations."

G. C. B.

The Busy Thames

DOLEFUL pictures have been published of the idle German ships tied up in New York Harbour by the war at sea. Still more melancholy descriptions have been printed of deserted docks and empty ships in German ports. But a writer in the London Times gives a very different picture of what is going on along the English Thames. He says:

"While sailing past these miles of shipping, and listening to the pleasant clangour of human industry from dock and wharf and yard, it is difficult to imagine that a war, such as history has never known and in which the Empire having London as its centre is one of the belligerents, is being waged across the Channel, just a few miles beyond the veil of thick mist which so often hangs in front of Southend."

"London is still the port of the world's commerce, for Britannia rules the waves and the trade routes are open. Foreign names are borne and foreign flags are flown by many of the ships that line each side of the Pool, cheerily employed unloading or loading with the aid of their attendant barges. Nor are all the foreign flags those of neutral countries. The Belgian, French, and Russian colours can be seen among them. Glimpses can also be caught of numerous funnels and masts in the docks telling the same heartening tale of commerce at full swing."