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## WHAT WE OWE TO FRANCE

### A SOLDIER'S MEMORY

By IAN HAY

THE sense of indebtedness to France which most soldiers cherish, and will always cherish most deeply, is human and personal. A front-line battalion is not always in the front line; it spends many weeks, in the aggregate, in the civilian zone that lies in the background of the theatre of war. That is where our memories linger. Over four million British soldiers have crossed the Straits of Dover during the past four years, and of those who come back there will be few who will not cherish some pleasant memory of life behind the line, in rest billets among people—poor people; chiefly women, children, and old men—whose amazing faculty for cheerful companionship no anxiety could depress, and no suffering abate. As for those who are not coming back, you may rest assured that their graves will never be neglected.

Here is an average billet as most of us recollect it. A farmhouse, accommodating some 200 British soldiers and their officers. The men sleep in the barn, their meals being prepared for them upon the company cooker, which stands in the muddy road outside. The officers occupy any room which may be available within the farmhouse itself. The company commander has the best bedroom—a low-roofed, stone-floored apartment, with a very small window and a very large bed. The subalterns sleep where they can—usually in the *grenier*, a loft under the tiles, devoted to the storage of onions and the drying, during the winter months, of the family washing, which is suspended from innumerable strings stretched from wall to wall.

For a mess, there is usually a spare apartment of some kind. If not, you put your pride in your pocket and take your meals at the kitchen table. A farm kitchen in Northern France is a scrupulously clean place—the whole family gets up at half-past 4 in the morning and sees to the matter—and despite the frugality of her home menu, the *fermière* can produce you a perfect omelette at any hour of the day or night.

Then, the family. First, Angele. She may be 25, but is more probably 15. She acts as adjutant to madame, and rivals her mother as a deliverer of sustained and rapid recitative. She milks the cows, feeds the pigs, and drags her young brothers and sisters. But though she works from morning till night, she has always time for a smiling salutation to all ranks. She also speaks English quite creditably—a fact of which madame is justly proud. "College!" explains the mother, full of appreciation for an education which she herself has never known, and taps her learned daughter affectionately upon the head.

Next in order comes Emile. He must be about 14, but war has forced manhood on him. All day long he is at work, hewing very large horses, digging, hoeing, even ploughing. He is very much a boy, for all that. He whistles exuberantly—usually English music-hall melodies—grins sheepishly at the officers, and is prepared at any moment to abandon the most important tasks in order to watch a man cleaning a rifle or oiling a machine-gun. We seem to have encountered Emile in other countries than this.

After Emile, Gabrielle. Her age is probably seven. If you were to give her a wash and brush-up, dress her in a gauzy frock, and exchange her thick woolen stockings and wooden sabots for silk and dancing slippers, she would make a very smart little fairy. Last of the bunch comes Petit Jean, a chubby and close-cropped youth of about six. Petit Jean is not his real name, as he himself indignantly explained when so addressed. "Moi, z'ne suis pas Petit Jean; z'suis Maurice!" He is an enthusiast upon matters military. He possesses a little wooden rifle, the gift of a friendly "Ecosais," tipped with a flashing bayonet cut from a biscuit-tin; and spends most of his time out upon the road, waiting for some one to salute. If his salute is acknowledged—as it nearly always is—Petit Jean is crimson with gratification.

Last of all we arrive at the keystone of the whole fabric—Madame herself. She is one of the most wonderful women in the world. Consider. Her husband and her eldest son are away—fighting, she knows not where, amid dangers and privations which can only be imagined. During their absence she has to manage a considerable farm, with the help of her children and one or two hired laborers of more than doubtful use or reliability. In addition to her ordinary duties as a parent and *fermière* she finds herself called upon, for months on end, to maintain her premises as a combination of barracks and almshouse. Yet she is seldom cross—except possibly when the soldiers collect her fallen apples and pelt the pigs with the cores—and no accumu-

lations of labour can sap her energy. She is up by half-past 4 every morning; yet she never appears anxious to go to bed at night. The last sound which sleepy subalterns hear is Madame's voice, uplifted in steady discourse to the circle round the stove. She has been doing this day in, day out, since the combatants settled down to trench warfare. Every few weeks brings a fresh crop of tenants, with fresh peculiarities and unknown proclivities; and she assimilates them all.

The only approach to a breakdown comes when, after paying her little bill, and wishing her "Bonne chance!" ere you depart, you venture on a reference, in a few awkward, stumbling sentences, to the absent husband and son. Then she weeps copiously, and it seems to do her a world of good. All hail to you, Madame—the finest exponent, in all this war, of the art of carrying on! We know now why France is such a great country.

To-day, the enemy, by what we hope is his final convulsion, has overrun yet another strip of French soil. A mile or two of territory more or less matters little. The real tragedy of the last German advance is that the folk with whom we lodged in Armentières and Alberta and Bailleul, and a thousand hamlets and farms of the Pas de Calais—folk who had lived secure for more than three years behind the bulwark of the British trenches, accommodating soldiers and refugees with a hospitality which no mere considerations of cubic space seem able to limit—are now refugees themselves. This to the British soldier is again a personal matter. He has taken it deeply to heart. He feels somewhat that he has failed in his trust towards his friends; and we know that when the great day comes, and the Boche is finally relegated to his proper place in the animal kingdom, not the least of the joys of the home-coming soldier will be the certainty that he is leaving behind him those simple, kindly, voluble hosts of his restored once and for all to their own hospitable roof-trees.—*The Times*.

## GERMANY AND AFRICA

IN the spring of 1914 a paper was read before the Royal Colonial Institute by Professor Bonn of Munich, on German Colonial Policy. Viscount Milner was in the chair and many distinguished persons were present. That paper, written in admirable English, is a mine of information, which may be relied on as both accurate and up to date, so far as it brings the history of the German colonies—that is, to the end of 1913. How little those who formed the audience of that instructive lecture could imagine that, twelve months later, that colonial empire of which Dr. Bonn told would have ceased to exist save in East Africa, and that, by December 1917, it would have vanished altogether! But has it vanished irreversibly? German writers and speakers with one voice proclaim that their colonial future will be settled on the battle-fields of Europe, and they are obviously right. People who live in Africa, Australia, or New Zealand may regard the "return" of German colonies as "unthinkable." But it cannot be too clearly understood by all these that peace terms will be made, as a whole with so many interests to consider, that the less may have to give way to the greater good of the greatest number. If, in that mighty settlement, Germany is still strong enough to stand out for terms, what can the people of Australia or Africa say, should their wishes on some points be subservient to those, say, of Belgium or France? Are our sufferings (I speak as a South African) comparable to theirs? Have we given even what our Mother Country has given—our whole manhood—to fight or work? There is only one way in which we may hope for a settlement that will satisfy us—the utter defeat of the enemy up to a point when he will not be able to stand out for any terms.

As a matter of fact, it is in Africa that we have really to fear most from Germany's ambition. Out of the 1,100,000 square miles of her colonial territory (five times as large as Germany itself), all but 96,000 square miles were in Africa. Her scattered possessions in the Pacific were considered, by all but her most chauvinist writers, to be comparatively useless. As coaling stations they did not make her, in the days when her mercantile marine was so numerous, independent of British ports; for the fact is that Britain held the keys of all the great trade routes. Nor could she comfortably resume that part proprietorship which constituted her status in Samoa and New Guinea. The colonial expansion of Germany began in the 'eighties without much plan—indeed, it was a case of scrambling for any fragments that were left. A large school of opinion in Germany disapproved of this dissipation of force. The writer has met many Germans who laughed at their ineffective and yet expensive little colonies. Then came a school which, it is believed, had the support of the Emperor, and which desired to found real white

## TO A FIREFLY BY THE SEA

LITTLE torch-bearer, alone with me in the night,  
You cannot light the sea, nor illumine life.  
They are too vast for us, they are too deep for us.  
We glow with all our strength, but back the shadows sweep:  
And after a while will come unshadowed sleep.

Here on the rocks that take the turning tide  
Here by the wide lone waves and lonelier wastes of sky,  
We keep our post-watch as patient poets should,  
Questioning earth's commingled ill and good to us.  
Yet little of them, or naught, have truly understood.

Bright are the stars and constellated thick,  
To you, so quick to fit along your flickering course,  
They seem perhaps but glowing states in other fields.  
And all the knowledge I have gathered yields to me  
Scarce more of the great mystery, their wonder yields.

For the moon we are waiting—*and behold!*  
Her ardent gold drifts up, her sail has caught the breeze  
That blows all being thro' the Universe always.  
So now, little light-keeper, you no more need nurse  
Your gleam, for lo, she mounts and sullen clouds disperse.

And I with aching thought may cease to burn  
And humbly turn to rest—*knowing no thought of mine*  
Can ever be so beautiful as have been to me  
Your soft beams here beside the sea's elusive din:  
For grief too oft has kindled me, and pain, and the world's sin.

CALE YOUNG RICE, in *The Bookman*.

colonies—daughter states, like Britain's. Unfortunately only one, or perhaps two, of the German possessions offered such possibilities—German South-West Africa, and to a certain extent, German East Africa. The former is a country which some years ago would have been pronounced uninhabitable; but two things altered its prospects—the discovery of diamonds and the progress in dry farming. Over 16,000 farmers, settlers, and agriculturalists had been brought in by 1913, as well as 2,000 artisans and 900 merchants; and the women and children numbered 5,000.

But in order to settle these white colonists the native Hereros had to be dispossessed, and they fought for their country so tenaciously, that it cost Germany twenty million pounds to subdue a people who never numbered more than 100,000. In the end, very few were left. The other big tribe, the Ovambos, whose country lies to the north, were only being brought under German jurisdiction when war broke out. Professor Bonn, in an illuminating passage, declared that these attempts at founding true white men's colonies were now acknowledged to be a mistake. "The German Government has shown plainly that their ideal of colonization is not a policy of settlement, but of commercial exploitation."

Where, except in Africa, is this policy of commercial exploitation possible? As Professor Delbrück and other German publicists have declared, the building up of German industries, and the industries of that great commercial syndicate of "Mittel Europa" which she hopes to form, will depend largely on the supply of those indispensable raw materials which are being more and more largely obtained from tropical Africa. The colonies of Togoland and the Cameroon were already exporting over one million pounds' worth of native rubber and palm oil kernels, and the cotton production of East Africa was increasing by leaps and bounds. Herr Delbrück, Dr. Solf (Colonial Minister without portfolio), and other writers, have said plainly that their destiny demands a solid block of tropical Africa, and there is little doubt that for such they would gladly barter the Pacific islands and German South-West Africa.

In his message to Congress of January, 1918, President Wilson declares that America stands (*inter alia*) for—  
(5) The free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based on the strict observance of the principle that is determining all such questions the sovereignty and interests of the population concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

Admirable as is the tone and intention of this declaration, it must be confessed that it is difficult to apply it to the conditions prevailing in the colonies which will be under dispute. Of the national sovereignties and interests of the interesting inhabitants of the Bismarck Archipelago, the writer is not in a position to judge; but if any impartial body begins to try to adjudicate on the question of "sovereignty" in German East Africa or Togoland, for instance, they will find their work cut out. How is one to secure guidance on the subject in territories which include under the same jurisdiction the lowest type of pagan savage and the highly civilized Mohammedan landowner, as is the case in Togoland or the Cameroon? In German South-West Africa, as we have noted, the Herero population has been practically wiped out. In German East Africa a very large population—some 72,000,000—includes at least two distinct native races whose territory is one of the most thickly populated parts of Africa. The coast is settled with Arabs and

Indians, and a medley of tribes inhabit the interior—some pagan, some Mohammedan.

Is the question for decision to be whether the interests of the population require any European over-lord or no? An answer in the negative would plunge these regions back into the horrors of the slave trade and inter-racial war; but this, at least, is "unthinkable." No, the point at issue is obviously which European nation is to control the destinies of these populations. It is, from the British point of view, a pity the question could not be settled by a plebiscite of the natives concerned. Natives may not like any rule but they unquestionably prefer British to German. As to French rule, it is more difficult to say. The French are singularly successful with the more civilized Mohammedan type of native. But whatever their private predilections, the African native will always think it best to declare for the "man in possession," and in German East Africa, except in the area where Belgian administration has been established, and in German South-West Africa, that is Britain. In Togoland and the Cameroon, France and Britain have divided the administrative burden.

But if we in Africa are puzzled by President Wilson, it must be confessed that Mr. Lloyd George has done more; he has even frightened some of us in Johannesburg, for instance—into meetings of protest. He said: "Regarding the German colonies, I repeatedly declared that they are at the disposal of the Conference, whose decision must have primary regard to the wishes and interests of the native inhabitants."  
The "free, open-minded and absolutely impartial" tribunal of President Wilson, therefore, resolves itself into the "Conference"—presumably the Peace Conference—of the Nations, which *ipso facto* cannot be either open-minded or impartial except in so far as everyone will be playing for his own hand. But Mr. Lloyd George goes farther than President Wilson in his allusion to the colonial population—*he says not only their interest but their wishes are to be considered, and these, as I have shown, will be extremely difficult to ascertain.* South Africans, who do not hold this sub-continent for the white races and for civilization by virtue of the "wishes" of the native population, view this democratic suggestion with some alarm. Their agitation is premature. No conference which included representatives of Belgium, France, Portugal, Japan or even the United States (with a tropical empire in the Philippines) would consent to inquiring from the natives what form of government they prefer. As for the "interests of the native inhabitants," there will be considerable difference of opinion as to this, for neither Belgium nor Portugal is at all convinced that the policy of Great Britain as regards natives is really in their interests. Both those Powers (and many Colonial and English-born men who know their colonies agree) believe that every dictate of humanity can be observed without according to the natives that entire immunity from all obligation to work which he can, with a little ingenuity, enjoy in British territory. The writer expresses no opinion on this head—merely giving these facts for what they are worth.

That German colonies have been built up on the old plan—not on modern British lines—every student knows. The name of Karl Peters occurs to one in this connexion. Dr. Solf, who personally visited the African colonies, was credited with having modified some of the austerity with which natives were treated, but people who have admired the splendidly built German colonial towns, such as Lomé or Dar-es-Salaam, and contrasted them to the disadvantage of English

settlements in adjacent colonies, should reflect on two difficulties which all British colonial governors have to face—the labor difficulty, and the policy which forces them to keep taxation low and will not permit them to burden their colonies with debt. Now in 1913-14 the expenditure on German colonies was estimated at £8,000,000, of which they themselves had to find 34 millions, while about £3,000,000 were to come from reproductive loans, leaving Germany only 1½ millions to find. Besides this, the colonies had loans amounting to £14,000,000, paying interest of £500,000 per year. It will be seen that, while her colonial budget was economical, Germany must have worked her colonial dependents pretty hard to find 6½ millions per annum. Their produce was heavily taxed—their meat and grain practically shut out of her markets (says Dr. Bonn), while even rice and maize were taxed as possible competitors with her own oats and barley. Dr. Bonn put the matter in a nutshell when he said that the German government wanted colonies for "commercial exploitation." Now there is all the difference in the world (as a dweller in Rhodesia is bound to know) between a government which exists to maintain order and protect the inhabitants and one which is also out for commercial exploitation. In British Crown Colonies, it is the work of the Government to hold the scales between the companies and individuals who are there for commercial purposes and the native inhabitants. Considerable friction is the result, but, on the whole, there is no reason to be vastly dissatisfied. We may not have as well-built houses or public buildings, we may cost more to begin with, but the system which has built up the Gold Coast and Nigeria to their present state of prosperity compares favorably with contemporary German achievements.

But when the balance comes to be struck, there is one count against Germany, which, surely, cannot be overlooked. In the White Book on the Treatment of English Prisoners in East Africa, published in 1917, we have the sentence against the Germans in Africa writ plain for all who can read. It is not merely that many of these prisoners were priests, doctors, nurses and others who should never have been detained, but that they were deliberately subjected to outrages of the most degrading character, and exhibited to the natives in such a way that they were spoken of by a name which no African uses of another save as an insult. The Askari soldiers were put on to guard, and permitted to insult white women—indeed the outrages to decency committed on these unfortunate ladies, missionaries and nurses, were too bad to be quoted. Mr. Lloyd George, in his speech, said very truly that the vaunted loyalty of the Askaris was due to the fact that this fighting tribe were permitted to lord it over other natives. When it is remembered that white men were compelled to clean the latrines of their Askari guards, and that Askari guards were put over white ladies, it will be seen that Mr. George must have under-rated rather than over-stated his case. One of the most serious features which all white Africa would have to face, if East Africa were restored to Germany, would be the certainty of the prosecution of this dangerous policy of taking a large and warlike tribe and making it into a sort of Praetorian Guard. South of the Zambesi we have no native troops—only police—and our whole native policy would receive a shock if we had to reckon, on the borders of Northern Rhodesia, with such black forces as the Germans would undoubtedly raise.

In the question of the interests and wishes of the native inhabitants, surely must be included those of the white settlers throughout South Africa, upon whose destinies the conduct of every European nation which assumes the white man's burden must reflect. Tried by this canon what can be said for Germany? Her East African colony was begun by such men as Karl Peters—slave traders and loggers—her South-West colony founded in the blood of almost the whole Herero people. In this war she deliberately committed race treachery to discredit her enemy, and she slave-raided to get carriers for her army (of this there is ample evidence). The writer has letters from eye-witnesses in East Africa who saw these miserable slaves left to die by the wayside from hunger, when too weak to carry any further. They had to be chained to prevent desertion. One writer tells of a little Bushman taken to a tree and left to die of starvation, of starving convicts driven to draw a roller by a warder with a sjambok, and of native bodies flung daily out of the compound opposite that of white prisoners. In the future, what hopes have these people, if restored to a Power whose sole design is commercial exploitation? These questions cannot be too clearly faced now, nor can the charges against German colonial policy, and German war policy in her colonies, be too carefully prepared. Written in the heart of Africa, cut off from books or documentary evidence save what comes in personal letters, this article can do little more than attempt to draw attention to the subject. But facts should be ascertained, and a clear and definite case made out, before the moment arrives when Germany must face the world in an attempt to save as much as she can from the wreck of her world policy.

ETHEL (COLQUHOUN) JOLLIE, in *United Empire* for June.

## NEWS OF THE SEA

—A Canadian Atlantic Port, Aug. 20.—The Newfoundland three masted schooner *Bianca*, before reported captured by a German submarine on Saturday of last week off this coast, was towed into port this morning. The *Bianca*, which was abandoned by her crew by order of the U-boat commander, was picked up adrift three days ago by a Boston fishing schooner. This vessel took the *Bianca* in tow and arrived off the harbor last night. The Newfoundland schooner has been somewhat damaged.

The Germans evidently set off a bomb in her hold, as a portion of the deck is raised and the vessel is leaking considerably, but the ship's stout frame held together despite the shock of the explosion, and her cargo of tobacco kept her afloat. The *Bianca* was bound from Bahia for this port. Her crew landed safely on this coast two days ago.

—Washington, Aug. 29.—Lieutenant Henry J. Bowes, commanding officer; Ensign G. H. Randolph, executive officer, and fourteen enlisted men are still missing from submarine chaser No. 209, which was mistaken for an enemy submarine and sent to the bottom by the American steamer *Felix Taussig* off Fire Island on August 27.

A report from the captain of the *Taussig* reached the Navy Department today, showing that the little chaser went down abaze three minutes after being hit by two of four shots from the merchantman's bow gun at a distance of 200 feet. According to the account of the *Taussig's* captain, the gun crew opened fire when an object resembling a submarine appeared and crossed the steamer's bow without showing lights. Apparently one of the shots exploded a depth bomb on board the chaser, quickly ending her career.

—Paris, Aug. 31.—Another Spanish ship, the *Alexandrine*, has been torpedoed, according to a Madrid dispatch to the *Journal*.

—Stockholm, Sept. 1.—The Norwegian steamer *Horsdal* has been torpedoed and sunk. According to information received here twenty-five men of the crew have landed at Cape Race, on the south-eastern coast of Newfoundland.

—A Canadian Atlantic Port, Sept. 1.—The chief officer, second engineer, two wireless operators, a gunner and eight Malays, of the crew of the British steamer *Esrick* arrived here to-day on board an oil tanker, which picked them up about five hundred miles from the French coast three days after their ship had been torpedoed. Two other boats, with the captain and twenty others, got away from the *Esrick*, and the survivors arriving here believe they were picked up by a destroyer or passing steamer. The *Esrick* had a crew of thirty-seven. An engineer and two firemen are believed to have been killed when the torpedo struck the engine room. The steamer, which was bound from Bordeaux, Aug. 13, for Montreal, in ballast, was torpedoed without warning, the night of August 16th. She sank in twenty minutes. Chief Officer Llewellyn told the Canadian Press to-day that he remained on the scene until daylight in the hope of joining the other boats, but that he saw no sign of them. He made for land, and after covering two hundred miles, was picked up by a steamer bound for this port.

A few minutes after the *Esrick* went down, he added. "The submarine came alongside us and asked for our captain. I said he was not in our boat. They then inquired for the wireless operators and gunners. I did not answer and the U-boat then disappeared. I suppose she went in search of the other lifeboats."

—St. John's, N. F., September 2.—Twenty men from the fishing schooner *Elsie Porter*, of Lunenburg, N. S., and five from the schooner *Potentate*, of La Have, N. S., landed here to-day, reporting that their vessels were sunk by a German submarine last Friday. The captain of the *Porter* was held a prisoner on the submarine.

—A British Port, Sept. 2.—The American steamship *Omega* has been torpedoed. The vessel foundered Friday night. Twenty-nine persons were saved. Twenty-six are missing. Many bodies have been washed ashore. The captain of the *Omega* was drowned. His body has been landed.

The *Omega* was 3,636 tons gross and was built at Belfast in 1880. She was owned by Barber & Company, of New York. The vessel was 400 feet long, thirty-nine feet beam and twenty-one feet deep. The *Omega* was formerly the *S. V. Luckenbach*, and before that was known under the names of *Brooklyn*, *MacPherson*, *Obdam*, and *British Queen*.

—Paris, Sept. 3.—The French steamship *Pampa*, of 4,471 tons, was sunk by a torpedo on the night of August 26th while on a voyage from Bizerta to Salonika. Four Serbian soldiers, out of the 359 persons on board, are missing.