

SOME PROGNOSTICATIONS AND A PREFACE

il a aussi sa raison." Even scholars rush to run down the German science they have always profited by and learned bodies to remove their German members. Anti-German Leagues break up Quaker meetings, disturbing the immanemorial Elian quiet. Even in Parliament a military member back from the trenches was allowed to declare without rebuke from the Speaker that if he had had another honourable member in his battalion at the front, that gentleman would have been strung up by the thumbs before he had been there half an hour! There could not be a more salutary illustration of Burke's axiom that "the civil power, like every other that calls in the aid of an ally stronger than itself, perishes by the assistance it receives."

Such things at home do not tend to put an allegation like the Baralong episode at sea beyond the need of formal disproof by the Admiralty.

Undoubtedly the pitilessness of Prussianism is responsible for much of this *débâcle* of Britishism—that is how evil engenders evil. But unless these phenomena prove—as we must hope they will prove—the mere mania of war-fever, to be dispelled by the first cool touch of peace, Germany—even if we pulverize her—will have destroyed the Britain we knew—

"A land of settled government,
A land of old and just renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent."

One wonders, indeed, whether Tennyson would have carried out his threat to leave such an England—

"Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime
And individual freedom mute."

How odd that it is from a member of Mr. Asquith's constricted House of Lords that comes the stately reminder of Britain's real greatness as the pioneer of freedom.¹ And how pathetically reads the letter² of the veteran Liberal, Sir Edward Fry, on the murder of Magna Charta! "The shock that I have received from the judgment of Sir Edward Halliday has made some words of the ancient document resound continually in my ears."

The late Emil Reich, whose clairvoyance of the coming war was

¹ Lord Parmoor's letter to *The Times*, March 1st, 1916.

² *The Times*, February 25th, 1916.