

THE SCANDINAVIAN NATIONS AND THE WAR.

First Part: The Past.

THE attitude and opinions of the small neutral nations during this war are well worth studying for the light they cast on the influences that have been moulding the European mind during the last thirty or forty years. This is particularly true in the case of the three Scandinavian nations, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. They are, all three, important centres of culture, quite on a level with the most progressive States of the world in their general development. They are besides in very close contact with German thought and are kept very well informed as to the international situation by their publicists who, whether they are conservative or radical in tendency, all recognize that it is a question of life and death for them to know the real situation and estimate it rightly; the great democracies on both sides of the Atlantic have been in comparison quite careless and anything but well informed till very recently. It is true there is often a certain reserve in the expression of Scandinavian opinion. Readers of their periodical literature can hardly fail to notice the very cautious, half apologetic tone in most of their writers when they venture upon any criticism of Germany's doings. There is no such hesitation or timidity in their way of referring to spots on the history of Russia, or Britain, or France, but they are obviously afraid of the terrible vindictiveness of the German towards the small peoples that cross his path. Menaces from the German papers seem to mean something different to them, from the momentary ebullitions of the French or British press. During the early period of the war, a distinguished Norwegian publicist, Chr. Collin, felt himself compelled to remonstrate mildly—oh, so very mildly—against the violent threats the German press was addressing to Norway on account of Norwegian sympathy with Belgium's plight. "Let those," he writes in the *Samtiden*, who threaten us with punishment, if we venture to show the smallest sympathy with any others than Germany, remember that during the Boer war, when the Englishmen had to exert themselves to the uttermost, our