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The Conscience of a Nation

the War Which He Pro-

Sheringham, Norfolk, Eng., April 15, 1915.

oe Mitchell Chapple Editor National Magazine, Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Chapple:

For the last two years you have very kindly sent me a copy of The National Magazine, which I have always read with the utmost pleasure. I admire and appreciate so much the personal note which you contrive always to impart to each number, and which is an element entirely lacking in similar producnumber, however, has brought me

very disagreeable surprise. Frankly I have not read an article since the commencement of gruesome war which commends itself so little to my intelligence or her word to Belgium or be for to my sympathy as the article by ever dishonored. Great Britain Mr. Burgess entitled "The Causes went to war. The conscience of a of the European Conflict.

I want you to believe, Mr. Chapole, that I am not one of those pig headed Englishmen who see no side of any question except their own. Patriotism and nationality are great things, but there is, believe, behind and governing them, a directing influence of thought which comes to our aid at times like this, and helps us to form an independent judgment ven on matters in which our own nterests and sympathies are deep ly involved. I am an Englishman, out I am also, in a modest way, a thinker. To me this war comes. perhaps, with less of a shock because I have prophesied its advent by word of mouth and in print for the last six years. I lay claim to no particular insight in this matter, for Germany has all the time sharpened her sword in the sight of the world; she preached war wanted war, and has got it. But I do claim to a mental attitude one's literary habitude and abilunbiased and unprejudiced.

There is, without a doubt, a easonable German case to be presented against England. That case, however, has not been pre- Burgess'. sented by your contributor. The truth about the war is so much a matter of common knowledge that it is scarcely necessary to point out the grossly distorted misstatements which all the while underlie the airy rhetoric of Mr. Burgess' article. I confine myself to one most flagrant paragraph, the at the table of a sovereign, I am that paragraph in plain and un- tion and learning should apparenttwisted phrases. Let me offer you ly have gained his knowledge or

the truth in place of falsehood. upon made it clearly understood afraid Mr. Burgess is. that she intended, notwithstanding her written word, to persevere in her original intentions. length of this letter. If you will Her pretext that France had already violated the neutrality of magazine, I shall be proud and Belgium by invasion was false. No single French soldier had set foot upon Belgium soil. Belgium appealed to England.

"You signed the treaty guaran- exchange of thoughts. teeing our neutrality," she pointed out. "Germany threatens it. I call upon you to fulfill your share of the compact."

position and reminded Ger-prayers.

Letter From E. Phillips many of their joint agreement. Oppenheim, the World's Let me quote the actual words of Most Popular Novelist, on a portion of Mr. Burgess' conclud-"And when the Germans asked

phesied Many Years Ago to be assured that Great Britain herself would respect the neutrality of Belgium throughout the entire war, and remain neutral on the basis of the fulfillment of her requirements by Germany, the British Government made no reply, but declared war on Ger-

This, Mr. Chapple, is sheer buncombe. There is no confusion of issues possible here for the unbiased student of the situation. England's sole demand was that Germany should respect her treaty, and Germany's sole reply was: "We are going to march our tions on this side. Your March troops through Belgium. Surely you will not go to war with us for the sake of a scrap of paper!" Her counter offers were dishonorable and beside the point. On the plain issue of whether she should keep nation, Mr. Chapple, is as the conscience of an individual. I think that in Great Britain's place you would have done the same.

I have confined myself to one issue only amongst those raised by your contributor. Nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have commenced from the beginning and to have done my best, with the axe of truth, to have hewn down the structures of this misleading and pernicious article. But really why should one ask you for space to controvert obvious misstate statements, when it is open to every man and woman interested in this subject to purchase for themselves the official papers issued by England and Germany, to read them carefully from their own standpoint and form their own judgment. Isn't that best, after all? One may twist and bend and color facts, according to ity, but it is rather a waste of time. The truth is there, and I do not imagine for a moment that the opinion of a single person can be molded by such articles as Mr.

One parting word, sir. When I look at that long array of letters after your contributor's name, when I allow myself to be impressed by his naive confession of descent from Dorset squires and curates, when I read with awe of the consideration accorded to him one entitled "Belgium's Neutral- still driven to an immense wonder ity." Let me, if I may, rewrite that a person of so great distinc-

impressions of the Russian peo-The independence of Belgium ple, either from the cinema palwas guaranteed by Germany, aces of your smaller cities, or France and England. I think you from the pages of melodramatic will agree that when the repre- but out-of-date romances. The sentative of a nation signs his savagery of the Slav is a thing one name to a treaty, he commits his doesn't speak of now. There is no, country and his country's honor nation in this world holding aloft to its observance. Germany de- a civilization more beneficent, aimsired to break that treaty and in- ing at a national ideal more pure vade France through Belgium, and democratic than Russia. To She made propositions to Belgium speak of the savagery of the Slav which may or may not have been and the culture of the Teuton is favorable. Belgium had a perfect to acknowledge oneself an ignorright to refuse them, and she ant person, and notwithstanding chose to refuse. Germany there his learning, that is what I am

My best wishes to you, Mr. Chap ple, and my apologies for the use it, or any part of it, for your grateful. If not, let it be a little message from one of those readers to whom you so often make a direct and sympathetic appeal for

Faithfully,

E. Phillips Oppenheim

A few advanced invocations might Great Britain acknowledged her have saved a host of beblated peace

THE WAR AND THE WEATHER

it certainly affects almost everything else; and it were strange in mundane sphere than the 3,000 miles of frontier along which the nations of Europe are fighting

If you do not believe it, look back a litle to the time when the North and South fought like tigers. After the three-day battle at Gettyburg the whole of Southern Pennsylvania and of Northern Maryland had drenching rains which swelled the streams unprecedented heights. That was the result of canonading in which not more than 300 field pieces were in use upset Jupiter Pluvius, and he wept conditions were unsettled by this

From the artillery standpoint the explosions in Europe are easily 25 times more extensive and disturbing in their effects on atmospheric conditions. Firing 20,000 shells in a German assault on Przemysl, could not but result in climatic upheavals more or less extraordinary in the areas immediately affected, to say nothing of remoter portions of the

But no one part of the atmospheric be so rent and sundered as that of the continent of Europe, without affecting intercontinental changes. That may account for the prolonged screen eastern portion of North America. going well into the middle of June. peratures. And it is perfectly plausible that the clouds of war, including Germany's asphyxiating stunts, have so rays down to an April temperature in the heart of early summer.

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