

Public Opinion

1864 AND 1917.

(Philadelphia Inquirer.)

A correspondent asks if we can give a comparison between the war conditions in this country in January, 1864, and in Europe at the present.

In 1864 the armies of the Union and the Confederacy faced each other on tolerably near the same terms as a year before, in spite of the fact that Vicksburg and Gettysburg had intervened. The Confederacy had lost heavily at Chattanooga, but considered it no more than an offset for Chickamauga. The important point to be made is that the hardest fighting of the war took place between May 1, 1864, and the surrender at Appomattox in the following April.

During the nearly twelve months Grant made his terribly costly, but final campaign, Sherman took Atlanta and marched to the sea, while Hood was smashed at Franklin and Nashville. During this period the armies were at their best, composed of veterans and more skillfully handled than ever on both sides. But when Sherman finally occupied Atlanta, manœuvred Hood to northwest, where Thomas took care of him, and went to the sea, he found the Confederacy a "hollow shell." All its resources had been expended in maintaining its power at the battle line.

Evidently our correspondent is of the opinion that the same conditions exist in Germany, that its resources have been expended in maintaining a long line of battle, and that if a break is once made there will be a speedy collapse. We do not know, but there are some signs to indicate that this is the case. Certainly German men, money and resources of every kind have been expended in the last two and a half years to a much greater extent than it has been possible to repair them. Evidently that is the belief of the Allies.

Who would have thought in the spring of 1812 that soon Napoleon would be a prisoner at Elba? It is impossible to know the real conditions in the Central Empires, but it is likely that the coming campaign will disclose them. In war the most surprising changes often take place very quickly. We make no prediction, but it is not unlikely that this war will have the same characteristics as those which have preceded it.

THE KAISER BUSINESS.

(A. G. G., in London Daily News.)

It is Hohenzollernism and all that it represents that is the ultimate enemy. If we cannot destroy that, the war will be in vain, no matter what its apparent results may be. It is the Kaiser and his creatures in Greece, in Sofia, everywhere, that we are fighting, and not this people or that. It is this fact which gives up hope. Europe can break a system that is poisoning its life if it has the will, but it cannot wipe out a nation. Let us clearly understand that it is the system, and not humanity, that is wrong, and that unless we smash the system we can never hope to deliver humanity from the hideous web that has brought it to ruin. The nations have to face this issue for themselves.

CANADA'S LAST FRONTIER.

(Outlook, New York.)

Among the wonders of "Canada's Last Frontier," as described in the "Wide World Magazine," is a huge gas "gusher" at Pelican Portage, on the House river. Set on fire 18 years ago, it has burned steadily ever since, shooting a flame 80 feet high in the air. It is calculated that during this time it has burned 26 billion feet of natural gas, or about four million feet a day. And in our middle states factories are shutting down for lack of gas.

THE FIRST GUN.

(Yonkers Daily News.)

The first gun in the industrial war which will be declared upon the United States when the war in Europe is over was fired the other day when a firm in England underbid all the firms in the United States for supplying the 16-inch shells for the United States Government.

DEMOCRACY AND ONE-MAN POWER.

(Minneapolis Tribune.)

The wisdom or folly of the president's peace note as a question aside, the people of this country well may ponder the significance of a power that directs, unrestrained, where "pitiless publicity" shall prevail and where it shall end. They do not know what moved the president to send forth his note. Whatever meaning they may read into Secretary Lansing's "verge of war" utterance that followed is speculative. They are not less in the dark than is congress. Had such an incident come about in Great Britain, parliament would have had the facts long before this, and the whole story would have appeared sooner or later in a white book, a blue book, or some other kind of official document.

More or less, we are at the mercy of a single temperament, of an individual mode of thought, of a judgment that may be excellent or the reverse.

THE MAJESTIC GROWTH OF BRITISH POWER.

(New York Times.)

France saved Europe at the Marne; Russia saved Europe by dividing the German armies and giving France breathing space and England time to arm; but England, too, saved Europe, for without her on the sea the war would long have been over. The part she played is not single, as it was when she faced Napoleon alone; she divides the honor with others, but her share was not the least, it grows greater all the time. The spectacle of that growth under blows is majestic. To the querulous ones who have said so much about the weakness of democracies in stress, there are two impressive answers; the sight of England confronting Napoleon, the sight of England confronting William II.

SEA POWER AND HISTORY.

(Chicago Tribune.)

If Great Britain had not entered the war the economic pressure would be exerted by Germany upon France and Russia. The German fleet would rule the sea. France would be without coal, munitions, and sufficient food. It is hardly conceivable that, without the British navy, the coalition against the central powers could have maintained itself for two years.

The British navy has already extorted peace proposals from Germany. It has reduced the people of Germany to a diet which does not sustain the strength and morale of the people. It is the most powerful force which Germany is encountering. It is the one element in the war which Germany cannot handle. Raids against this power are spectacular and frequently successful, but the power remains with its strangling grip.

WHAT WE HAVEN'T GIVEN.

(Philadelphia Public Ledger.)

The London Times Red Cross fund, which has been helped by other newspapers, has now gone past the \$30,000,000 mark. In the last two years the whole United States has given the American Red Cross \$1,000,000 a year. The showing is utterly contemptible. We have about a quarter of a million members, and Japan has nearly 2,000,000.

WHY VERDUN STOOD.

(New York Sun.)

Salutations of respect and admiration to General Gerard Amanrich, Commander of the Legion of Honor, who has transferred himself from the retired list at the age of sixty-five to an artillery regiment as a private. It is easy to understand why the French at Verdun would not let them pass.

THE CHAMPION.

(Toronto Mail and Empire.)

The champion American neutral, according to Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, is the editor of a small paper in Kansas, who at the beginning of the war announced that the absurd fracas would never be mentioned in his paper. He has kept his word.

QUESTIONS INFERRED, IF NOT EXPRESSED.

(New York Herald.)

Between the lines of Mr. Balfour's calm and clarifying presentation of the issue there seem to run the questions:—"Who will underwrite a Prussian promise? Who will stand as guarantor of Prussian good faith?" They might be addressed to President Wilson.

Certainly the President would not undertake on behalf of the government of the United States to guarantee that any treaty Germany might make would be fulfilled. What, then, but harm can come from premature peace proposals when the Allied nations are sincerely determined upon a peace that shall be permanent?

Mr. Balfour's note should serve to sweep away the mists raised in neutral countries by the Prussian efforts to befog and becloud the supreme issue. In the end it should prove, also, a powerful factor in promoting the right kind of peace.

For if the German people are permitted to read for themselves the Entente's reply to President Wilson and this supplementary note of Mr. Balfour they will see that the way is clear for the peace they so greatly desire. They will realize that peace and their own salvation are dependent only upon their repudiation and overthrow of the Prussianism that is rushing them to destruction.

THE EVIDENCE.

(New York Evening Sun.)

The Entente Allies started the war, Germany says.

Their plan was, we presume for Serbia to conquer Austria-Hungary while Belgium devastated Germany.

England, especially, showed her hand when she hurled an enormous army of 100,000 men against only two or three millions of Germans . . . and these Germans, taken completely by surprise, staggered forward into France. They got nearly as far as Paris, we believe, before they recovered from their astonishment.

Yes, Germany was taken by surprise, as every German knows.

GERMAN PREPARATION FOR PEACE.

(From Chicago Commerce.)

Frederic William Wile, of Chicago, former Berlin correspondent of the New York Times and The Chicago Tribune, lecturing in London the other day on the subject of "Germany's Mobilization for Peace," said that the world at large probably fails to understand that in the course of the last six months the Germans have established practically a separate government to prepare for the coming business campaign. It is called the "imperial board for transition economics," and consists of a cabinet of the greatest business experts in the country, who are devoting all their time to mapping out ways and means for transferring German trade from a war to a peace basis with the least possible delay.

JOFFRE.

(Hartford Times.)

So Joffre is a marshal of France. He can never be as dashing as Ney, staggering out of Konigsberg, covered with blood and snow, to proclaim himself the rear guard of the army of France, or as romantically handsome as Murat, but he has shown himself of better stuff than Bazaine or even the high-minded MacMahon. And he possesses at least one claim to picturesqueness. Did he not fight the battle of the Marne in his underclothes?

"O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM!"

(Philadelphia Ledger.)

It is one of the ironies of history that the American city which bears the name of the birthplace of the "Prince of Peace" should have become the home of the nation's greatest armament factory!

WOOLLY, BUT NO LONGER WILD.

(Springfield Union.)

The late Buffalo Bill lived to see many wonderful changes in times and conditions, not the least of which was the transformation of the once wild and woolly West into the very citadel of timidity and pacifism.