

The Guardians of Liberty

German democracy has struggled in vain, Might and Power recognizing this liberating influence within their own domain, have seized the hour to avert revolt by forcing international strife. Oppression, without further aggression, could not long endure, and so German autocracy has thrown its challenge in the world's face, and it has been left to peace-loving England and liberty-loving France to unite with Russia, in an effort to spare the rights of lesser powers, and protect mankind from the aggressor's heel.

Belgium, silent, innocent, the repository of the honour of nations now at war, seeking only to guard inviolate the trust by which her liberties were

guaranteed, has become by a strange irony of fate the scene of conflict in the opening chapter of this, the greatest tragedy the world's history may ever record. Her valor, her chivalry in the maintenance of her integrity and the defence of France have shone over the bewildering chaos like a radiant star in a storm-swept sky, an inspiration to nations and to all mankind. For, she

"hath taught us by this splendid deed,
That under all the brutish mask of life
And dulled intention of ignoble ends,
Man's soul is not all sordid, that behind
This tragedy of ills and hates that seem,
There lurks a godlike impulse in the world,
And men are greater than they idly dream."

PART II.

THE RISE OF NATION AGAINST NATION

I. AUSTRIA AND SERVIA.

THE note from the Austro-Hungarian government of Serbia containing the demands of Austria upon Serbia was received at Belgrade, the Capital of Serbia on the night of Thursday, July 24th. Serbia's reply was given to the Austrian Ambassador on Saturday, July 25th at 6 o'clock. In the interval the Servian Parliament had been summoned for an extraordinary session and an extension of time in which to reply to Austria's note asked for by Serbia. This, however, was not granted by Austria, and at 6 o'clock on Saturday night the Austrian minister, with his entire staff, left Belgrade. The withdrawal of the Austrian minister was taken by the Servians to mean a virtual declaration of war on the part of Austria and they immediately began preparations for defence. The formal declaration of war was not made by Austria until the afternoon of Tuesday, July 28th, when the following declaration appeared in the official gazette.

Text Of War Declaration.

"The Royal Government of Serbia not having replied in a satisfactory manner to the note remitted to it by the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade on July 23rd, 1914, the Imperial and Royal Government finds itself compelled to proceed itself to safeguard its rights and interests and to have recourse for this purpose to force of arms.

"Austria-Hungary considered itself therefore from this moment in a state of war with Serbia.

(Signed) "COUNT BERCHHOLD,
"Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary."

On the afternoon of the same day, the Emperor Francis Joseph issued a rescript and manifesto to the Austrian people in which he said: "The intrigues of a malevolent opponent compels me, in the defence of the honor of my Monarchy, for the protection of its dignity and its position as a Power, and for the security of its possessions, to grasp the sword after

long years of peace."

Immediately war was declared, the Servians destroyed the bridge at Semlin, which crosses the Save, a tributary of the Danube, at a point separating Hungary from Belgrade, and the Austrians began the bombardment of the Servian capital. The troops having withdrawn from Belgrade, the Capital was left undefended, but the bombardment continued. Engagements between Austrian and Servian forces became general from that time.

II. GERMANY AND RUSSIA.

AUSTRIA'S declaration of war was in the late afternoon of Tuesday, July 28th. A council of state was held in St. Petersburg, the Capital of Russia, on the following day, and on receipt of the news of the bombardment of Belgrade an ukase ordering a partial mobilization confined to the Army Corps stationed on the borders of Austria-Hungary was signed.

What are known in diplomatic circles as "Conversations" were frequent between the Ambassadors of Germany and Russia in the Capitals of these two countries prior to Austria's declaration of war; they continued with added significance and gravity after the declaration. Their exact terms are not known, but in substance they appear to have been to the effect, on the part of Russia, that she could not be indifferent to an attack by Austria upon Serbia, and on the part of Germany that she would take no part in the Austrian-Servian quarrel unless some other Powers interfered to prevent Austria from obtaining satisfaction for the murder of Francis Ferdinand and his wife. If any other Power interfered Germany would do her duty by her Austrian ally. Both the Austrian and German Ambassadors are understood to have maintained the view that the Austro-Servian conflict was no concern of Russia's.

On July 29th the Russian Emperor telegraphed Emperor William to help in averting a European war by restraining his ally, Austria-Hungary, from going too far. It is alleged by the German Government that the Emperor took up the task of mediator,