

A WORD TO GERMANY.

After the profusion of advice offered by our press to the French nation with regard to the policy which it promises to make its own in the new period of peace, it is but fair that the German policy should likewise receive some consideration. In her present unhappy condition, France, though no longer an active belligerent, was compelled sooner than her late adversary to apply herself to internal legislation which to her became a question of vital necessity. For Germany, the peace practically only begins now, after the return of the bulk of the army. While half a million soldiers remained on foreign soil, sustained perforce by France, while negotiations were still pending, undecided questions and irritating conditions, afforded opportunities for collision, and while a German military governor held supreme sway in the occupied provinces it could hardly be called peace. The 16th of June and the festivals following in its trail are practical ratification of the treaty of the 10th of May. We are bound to appreciate the promptness and despatch with which Germany has—peace being once concluded—cleared the invaded country of her troops; of the half million men then in France only some hundred and twenty thousand remain now. But we fail to recognize in her other acts the fulfilment of the assurance and promises given us during the war. Germany has been the first to criticise and condemn the warlike spirit, the thirst for military greatness, and—as it is believed—for revenge, traceable in the acts and legislation of M. Thiers. Still that same spirit is visible in every act of the Government at Berlin. In former years when our unceasing recommendations of general disarmament gained us notoriety in the diplomatic world, Prussia justified her military preparations by the armaments of her western neighbour. That such armaments and the accompanying talk of war were likely in the end to result in war was never denied. It was reasonable to imagine, therefore, that the collapse of the French military power would be made the signal for German disarmament, the more so as assurances have been frequent that Germany, seeking strength solely by peaceful and moral development, was eager to constitute herself, by her own good example, the future guardian of universal peace. The acts which have followed the treaty of Frankfort are not quite in harmony with those professions; preparations for war and talk of war have become the most prominent characteristics of the country, and both apparently emanate from above. We observe, too, that the liberal press of Germany discerns in all this the germs of future war and the forfeiture of those good results the peace has promised to yield to the country. We must not be understood to censure Prince Bismarck's desire to introduce uniformity of organization into the German army as well as into other Imperial institutions; that is a work necessary for national unity. But so far from making the peace a signal for disarmament, he seems rather to have seen in it an opportunity for increased armaments. The army, which in its state of division was able to defeat in a few months the whole military force of France, ought in its state of union to suffice for all purposes of defence, the more so since the frontier has become incomparably stronger. But we find the Berlin Government, before a single measure of consequence has been passed to benefit the civil community, impatient to augment the military establishment by the formation of numerous new regiments as if that were a matter of urgent national necessity. At

the same time the fortifications of Alsace and Lorraine are, under Count Moltke's directions, being strengthened as if a new war was expected a twelvemonth hence; the arsenal of Spandau is being enlarged, the navy augmented, new fortifications on the north coast and on the banks of the Elbe are ordered without delay, and numerous other measures betoken how largely military projects preponderate in the thoughts of the Government. The proposed canal of Kiel is recommended on the strength of its strategical merits, and plans are before the War Ministry for the expansion of the railway system with a regard to strategical requirements in imitation of the French. Even if these measures were not in themselves apt to arouse apprehension, the time is so ill-chosen that they seem hardly compatible with an ingenious desire for peace. As the *Volks Zeitung* justly observes, these formidable German armaments, provoke corresponding armaments not only in France but by every European Power. Thus not only is Europe to be turned into an armed camp, and the disquiet and apprehensions of the period preceding the war are to be maintained, but an immense amount of money, which ought to enrich commerce and was never more urgently needed, is sunk in fortifications and armaments. The doubtful policy of Germany does not end here. At the time of the negotiations Government was anxious to represent the terms to the country as disabling France to renew the contest for at least twenty years. With the return of the army it changed its tune. General Kirchbach was the first to proclaim the probability of a fresh war after possibly only five years; he said this when the eyes of all Germany were upon him, and every word from his mouth was sure to strike with double force. The saying has been caught up by Government and the semi-official papers, who speak of a French war now almost as they did from 1866 to 1870; and a few days ago we find the Emperor himself at Settin contemplating the event of a new war, though not in his life time. All this may be, and probably is, intended merely to secure popular support for the proposed military expenditure: but it cannot fail to fill the public mind, both in Germany and abroad, with apprehensions of danger that are likely to lead to that danger itself. The course appears, moreover, to involve an unfair protraction of the war, as every threat, nay, every warlike prophecy, of Germany tends to embarrass France, not only by justifying her unfortunate armaments, but by impairing her credit in the great struggle for existence. It must prove the more injurious to peace, as Germany has of late betrayed not only an inclination still more to extend its territory, but has also assumed a domineering tone towards other Powers which it is likely to arouse suspicions that the immense army may after all not be intended exclusively for the preservation of peace. The paper already quoted comments very sharply, but none the less justly on indulge under the name of patriotism in the very sentiment which in the French it condemned under the name of Chauvinism. This attitude, and which the nation not to it may be gratifying to the self-love of Germans to find themselves raised into such enormous importance, and see, as semi-official papers triumphantly proclaim the political "centre of gravity" removed from Paris to Berlin. But it is neither honest to others nor just to themselves needlessly to indulge in this gratification. We accepted their assurances that they would employ their victory to make peace more secure,

and we have some right to claim an earnest of that promised peaceful policy. With its new power Germany has assumed new responsibilities which it ought not to disregard. At any rate, we trust the nation will not suffer an insatiable militarism to continue long. How suicidal it is to the country itself does not require to be shown. If a proof were required, we could find none better than that lately quoted from the *Elberfeld Gazette*, viz. the impatience of the victorious Germans to leave their fatherland with all its glories for the freer atmosphere of England, America, nay France itself, where, besides political and religious liberty, they find facilities for their energies which Germany does not offer them. As long as we can recollect, the Liberal press of Germany has teemed with appeals to Government not to stop up the channels of internal development for the barren growth of militarism. If it was shortsighted to disregard this popular wish before, it becomes doubly unwise now. For the nation which has routed the entire strength of France in a few months need not against its will submit to hateful impositions. We trust that it exert its power so as to avert a calamity threatening its own country with at least as severe consequences as any other, and to secure for Europe the only good that can be hoped to spring from the late war, enduring peace.

The General Staff in Berlin is preparing an official history of the campaign of 1870-'71. Colonel Verdy du Vernois, chief of division in the General Staff, has been entrusted with the general supervision of the work.

It was thought that the French Government had given up the idea of rebuilding the Fort of Issy, which is commanded by the heights of Chatillon, etc., but masons are at work walling up the breach and repairing the shattered casemates; and it is now said that the Government intends laying out a sum of about \$3,500,000 in building a huge fort similar to that of Mont Valerien, on the heights of Champigny, where the battle of the 2nd December was fought, in order to protect the valley of the Marne.

It is expected that the President of the French Republic will spend a good part of the vacation in visiting forts and various military positions, where engineers are already at work preparing new lines of defence. It is probable also that he will do much to re-organize the army on its present basis in concert with General de Chisey. There was a great deal of enquiry made by the National Assembly into a variety of military matters, but no laws were voted beyond the conscription for next year and the budget.

One hundred rounds per man of blank ammunition was allowed during the British autumnal manoeuvres. To each man were issued five rounds every morning, which supply was replenished, if required, during the day from the regimental ammunition carts, one of which followed each battalion. The regimental ammunition carts carried rather more than twenty-five rounds per man for a battalion of 600 men, and turned out each day, following in the rear, and within such convenient distance of their respective battalions as was considered necessary. Any ammunition taken from them during the day was replenished in the evening from the standing depot of the division.