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THE CHARACTER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

Nearly all the great self-governing nations of the world are now combined in a desperate struggle against the scarcely-veiled military despotism of the Central European Powers, and the object of the struggle is the securing of freedom for democracy, so that it shall be safe from the threats of militarist and conquering empires.

In the forefront of the group of States engaged in the defence of democracy stands the British Empire, the greatest dominion that has ever existed in history, which covers a quarter of the earth's surface, and in which a quarter of the earth's population is subject (at any rate, in form) to the rule of two small European islands.

The very existence of this huge Empire seems to many people to stultify in some degree the cause for which the world's democracies are fighting. It seems, at first sight, to be simply the greatest example of that spirit of conquest and of military dominion against which we are striving. This is the view taken by some neutrals. "Imperialism is the enemy," says one Swiss writer; "whatever form it takes, German or Russian, British or French, it is equally the foe of free government." The Germans themselves make great play with this notion. They describe the British Empire as a vast, greedy tyranny, built up by fraud. They invite us to free the oppressed millions of India before we talk hypocritically about liberty. They assert that the naval supremacy of Britain is far more dangerous to the freedom of the world than the military power of Germany could ever be. Some people even in the allied countries are affected by doubts of this kind. The Russian Socialists, for whom imperialism has in the past meant nothing but a hideous repression of freedom, are ready to assume that the British Empire, because it is called an empire, must mean the same ugly things. And criticism of the same kind can sometimes be heard in France, in Italy, in the United States, and in Britain herself.

THE TRUTH EXAMINED.

Men's minds are extraordinarily easily influenced by mere words. The word "Empire" suggests, to many, conquest and dominion over unwilling subjects. The character of government and of the bond which holds the Empire together would be much better expressed by a phrase which is now being widely used in Britain—the British "Commonwealth of Nations".

There are certain outstanding features of this war which throw a striking light upon the character of the British Empire.

Over a million volunteer soldiers have come from the great self-governing Colonies without any compulsion being exercised upon them. The Princes and peoples of India have vied with one another in their generous and spontaneous gifts to the Cause, while Indian troops have fought gallantly in all parts of the world for this we call 'Empire'.

Apart from the unhappy troubles in Ireland—the work of a small minority—and the rebellion in South Africa—promptly put down by the South African Dutch themselves—the Empire has been free from disturbance during the four years' strain of war.

It appears then, that the subjects of 'Empire' have for the most part no quarrel with its government but are well content that it survive and even go so far as to give their life-blood that it may be preserved.

PARTNERSHIP OF NATIONS.

It is rather a partnership of nations in every grade of development than an organised and consolidated dominion. Five of its chief members are self-governing and share the common burdens by their own free will. All the remaining members are organised as distinct units, though subject to the general control of the Home Government. The resources of each member are employed exclusively in its own development and they pay no tribute.

The war has proved however that for purposes of defence the 'Empire' is organised, not by its military preparedness but by the spirit of partnership for the general weal of 'Empire'. The keynote of its organisation is trade, but when threatened with war the combination of nations of a peace loving nature are such that nothing can stand against 'Empire'.

"MY TYPEWRITER"

Says Mr. Trow to all the Camp,
"In rain or shine, in dew or damp,
"I've sought it far; I've sought it
near;
"Alas! it's lost to me, I fear—
My Typewriter."

"That crowd of Contacts o'er the
way,
"Have plagued and teased me day
by day;
"Their 'taking ways', without a
doubt
"Have left me sad, to do without—
My Typewriter."

"That Captain stern, Room 53,
"With angry tone, he said to me,
" 'For two days only, I'll grant
their plea
"If I loan it longer you'll never
see—
My Typewriter.' "

" 'In future I'll teach those Con-
tacts bold,
" 'And the many we have, from
them withhold;
" 'For two days only, the **one**
they'll see;
" 'So, soon they'll learn to ask of
me—
My Typewriter.' "

Says Mr. Trow, "My heart is sad,
"That wily bunch, so vile, so bad,
"For 'two days only', my Orders
read,
"Now look at me, I'm nearly dead!
"(For they've quarantined)—
My Typewriter."

"So tell me, tell me, friends so
true,
"What shall I, can I, must I do;
"Unless the Colonel grant my plea,
"For 'this side France', I'll never
see—
My Typewriter."

"Canada."

THE ROUND-ABOUT.

Loud roared the thunder overhead
The lightning's flashes dazzling
broke
Through sky of lead.
Four hundred soldiers with full
packs
Marched from the camp in
column route
For Grand Trunk tracks.
In front of riding school they
tramped
The band in lead with swinging
tune
Their clothes just damped.
Four hundred happy boys for over-
seas
Their forward path diverted to
the left
Might wake 'gee-gees'.
The band was hushed a silence fell
Upon the men when they were
told
A 'gee gee' wasn't well.
Four hundred men can make a
healthy noise
But how about the thunder over-
head
So asked the boys.
The horse commands the love of
honest men
But why this round and round
about?
It beats my pen.

Giddy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

Editor of
"Knots and Lashings".
Dear Sir:—
Miss Allen in the absence of Mrs.
Imrie, Treasurer of Red Cross
Group No. 2, wishes to acknowledge
and thank the men of the E. T. D.
for the sum of \$30.68, being one-
half of the collection taken up at
Service held on August 4th.
Lillian Allen.
St. Johns, Que., Aug. 5, 1918.