

A Painter of the West

Frederic Remington and His Work

THE sudden taking away in his prime of an artist at work in two fields of art, such as Frederic Remington was, seems to affect the community like a double loss. For his was the rather rare instance of a painter doubled by a sculptor. It would be hard to say whether his paintings or his sculptures were the more popular, whether the scenes of the combat between the Indians and soldiers, the episodes in the life of cowboys and trappers, mine prospectors, and frontiersmen, depicted by his busy brush were more to the taste of the public, or the vivid groups which he modelled for bronze, wherein he brought to play an unrivalled knowledge of the horse, and, indeed, enjoyed the expression of that knowledge to the top of his bent. In both mediums he had the advantage of a long and intimate acquaintance with frontier life, at a time when specialized communities of adventurers and Indians still existed in certain parts of the country, and in both he has left a record of the particular way in which that life impressed itself upon him. What one man sees another overlooks. It is not enough to have the picturesque or the romantic or the grandiose present, there is also need of the brain to understand and the hand to execute. Though the problem is the same, two artists will not see it with the same eyes, any more than two historians will agree exactly in their accounts of a battle. Remington had his way of seeing things in the Indian country, his way of depicting the cowboy and the cavalryman; it was different, to mention contemporaries, from the view of Russell or Schreyvogel. Of course such a painter of Indians, for example, as George Catlin was still more unlike Remington, for while he had a more intimate acquaintance with Indians he did not have the training in art of the younger and later artist. Catlin approached the Indian from the standpoint of a student of natural history, to some extent an ethnologist, while Remington used the Indian as material for the telling of a story in paint or clay.

Essentially an illustrator at first, Remington rapidly developed into one of the leading artists of Indian genre, but he was not content, as many of his forerunners had to be, with one or two hasty trips to the West to accumulate sketches on which to base many years of work in the studio. By his time communications had become so well established that an annual visit to his artistic hunting-ground was possible, and he availed himself of the advantage very often. In his case there were the memories of years passed as minor and cowboy and hunter in the West during his early life to draw upon, but he was always refreshing his impressions and seeking new material to set against the background of the actual landscape. And all this was done with the zest that comes with delight felt in the work in hand and a physical well-being that made ordinary hardships a pleasure. The robustness of his health and the fine vigor of his manhood made the death of Remington peculiarly unexpected to his friends and acquaintances, for he seemed destined to a long life full of greater honors than any he had so far attained.

Remington's talent for telling a dramatic incident of frontier life is shown in a picture as that of cowboys at a water-hole besieged by Indians, who are riding round and round at a distance, watching for a chance to snipe the man who exposes head or shoulder above the low mound in which the coveted water lies, or that showing a prospecting party, lying inside a ring of their horses, keeping off a raiding party of painted braves.

Like these is "Missing," a column of Plains Indians marching by twos. A chief in buckskins mounted on a lean pony leads as prisoner a hatless and coatless trooper on foot. The chief's lariat is round the captive's neck. With their chins held sharply curved noses suggesting wolves, their foreheads rendered still more retreating by their feather or fur head-coverings, the Indians ride along as conscious conquerors, while the white man steps out proudly as if he meant to emulate the red man in the firmness with which he proposes to meet his death. This is perhaps as well composed, as characteristic, and as striking a picture as Remington ever painted. The march is across the parched plain, made still drier by the dusty branches of the sagebrush. Purple hills touched with snow peep behind the slope of yellowish distant plain. The conditions of Indian warfare are better told by this peaceful scene than by the liveliest scrimmage. It is true, however, that the public has been more impressed by those groups in painting and sculpture which deal with hand-to-hand combats.

Realistic to the point of ruthlessness, these pictures of the defence by the Indian of his ancient home are also real in that they reproduce the sharp outlines of the clear dry climate that brings out colors very vividly and makes it hard to judge distance accurately. There is a metallic hardness to be observed in some of Remington's paintings, a clean-cut definiteness due in part to the atmospheric quality of the West, which is apt to lack those infinitely tender transparent veils of moisture found in Europe and some parts of the American seaboard. In part, however, it is due to his strong bent toward form, which also led him into sculpture. Of late years he was painting with a broader and warmer brush, while he had attained a very singular mastery of drawing, especially the drawing of the horse. He retained his love of riding, a thing that many men who have been compelled to ride a great deal in earlier life for business, not pleasure, fail to do. He was never tired of horses. He loved to be with them as well as paint them. F. Remington, who painted the steeds of the Kabyles of Northern Africa, has left on record how difficult he considered the task of painting horses in motion. Purely on this side of his work, the painting of the horse, Remington certainly surpassed Meissonier and F. Pommont, Schreyer and Detaille.

As sculpture Remington came later and to this medium he brought the habits of the illustrator and painter; that is to say he approached sculpture from the pictorial rather than the monumental side. One has only to regard his first and by far the most popular statue, "The Bronco Buster," a cowboy holding his seat gayly while his steel executes the familiar contortions of a vicious animal. Genre in clay is like genre in paint, it is realistic almost to the verge of the photographic, and one cannot expect in such literal transcripts of fact the largeness of heroic sculpture. Remington carried boldness to extremes, as when he modelled "The Outlaw," in which the horse is doing an acrobatic turn on its forefeet with the hind quarters almost erect in the air or when he made his "Mountain Man" with a horse and rider coming down a slope of rock which would offer doubtful footing for a goat. A stirring scene of hand-to-hand conflict is the group "Old Dragoons of 1870," in which mounted Indians with tomahawks and bows are grappling with troopers. Statuettes in which he embodied the stealthiness of Indian raiders may be represented by "Horse Thief" making off on a stolen pony and waving his blanket as a signal. A bit of character of the group of a cowboy and rattlesnake, the horse shying at the sight, and the horseman just about to cast his broad-brimmed hat over the repulsive coils. Remington's daring violation of many of the rules of sculpture in an effort to produce the literal scene can go no farther than the large group of buffalo, pony, Indian, of which only one example has been cast in bronze. An old buffalo bull has hoisted a pony on his shoulders so that all four hoofs of the horse are off the ground, while the buffalo is still rearing. At the impact of the two animals the nude rider has been hurled into the air above his steed. This buffalo supports horse, and Indian soars above both. The rule that sculpture ought to represent momentarily suspended action, if action is needed, has been broken here without remorse.

It is true that sometimes there is a feeling of disquiet, because natural laws of balance and equilibrium seem to be violated, but this is offset by the realistic method of modelling which seeks to give the roughness of the horse's coat as well as the shagginess of the buffalo's pelt as well as all those minute differences in texture that for their exact reproduction demand the resources of the "lost wax" process. Whenever animals appear in sculpture one marks naturally back to Barre, and then we find that if Remington specializes and models individual animals instead of generalizing, if he does not express the nature of the creature so simply and so romantically as the great master did, yet he shows as thorough a knowledge of the horse as any of his contemporaries.

Remington has rendered a service to his country by preserving scenes, types, and subjects in forms of art which are passing away, some of which have gone already. The painted brave on his war-pony, the cowboy on his bronco, the prospector on his mule, have run their course as such, dismounted from their steeds, and turned into mere commonplace men. Their kind is as dead as Don Quixote. A collection of his paintings and sculptures would convince those artists who demand more difficult results in color and composition than after all the man who sets to work to tell the story of some portion of his fellow men in art, and does it to the best of his ability, has not worked in vain.

A great deal of Remington's early work was published by Harper & Brothers. His popularity was quick in arriving, and it did not fail him to the last. People have a healthy,

normal, and well-grounded love of a story; they like to see deeds of daring; they are not squeamish about bloodshed and death; they reward in princely fashion those who know how to please them. Remington was one of them, shared their likings and dislikes, and through that sympathy and comradeship was able to give them what they enjoy. Since the days of Fenimore Cooper the red man has looked romantic to the eyes of the people who live far enough removed from possible reprisals. Remington has shown the courage of the Indian and the daring and tenacity of purpose of the white. Rarely has he painted the negro, probably because the negro, owing to his former servitude, is not liked, notwithstanding his many attractive qualities. Another and more artistic reason may be the fact that the negro in white man's clothes loses in dignity and beauty when encained in the "foolish tubes" which form the raiment of men today, and they lose far more



"A Bucking Bronco"

than white men, because their skins are naturally warmer in color and more beautiful than ours. As a last bit of injustice to alien races we ask them to hide their fine color and handsome muscles in the hideous apparel of "civilization." Fortunately for Remington, the red man used to go on the war-path nearly naked, leaving the precious products of our sweat-shops in camp, or he wore buckskin coats trimmed with feath-



"An Old-time Northern Plains Indian - The Coup"

ers or fur, decked perhaps with embroidery of colored quills, things that look right in the open air and broad sunlight, however out of place they sometimes seem within the four walls of a house.

A reserved and self-contained man to his acquaintance, a jovial and companionable one to his few intimates, Frederic Remington made an impression not merely on the public, but on his fellows in art. In sculpture as well as painting his early successes pointed a way and set the pace for other artists, who gathered hope when they saw how well patronized he was, and very naturally followed in his footsteps, often with greater reserve and a finer technical method, but not with greater popular success. In this way Remington was a path-breaker. His pictures and statuettes, if not monumental in the restricted sense as applied to works of art, constitute in their entirety a monument to a vanishing class of mankind.

ARMAGEDDON: THE GREATER DANGER

(By Robert Blatchford)

MR. BALFOUR once declared that the problem of imperial defence was the problem of the defence of Afghanistan. But times have changed since then, and I shall propose an amendment to the following effect:—

The problem of British defence is the defence of France.

There it is; the greater danger, the nearer danger than the danger of a German invasion of England, is the danger of a German invasion of France.

A German writer, quoted by me in a previous article, says that directly Germany feels herself menaced she will strike and France will be her victim. He continues thus: "Unhappy France! The British Navy may destroy the German Fleet and ruin German foreign trade. But nothing on earth can prevent the German Army from over-running France from Paris to Lyons and from the English Channel to the Mediterranean. The French are laboring under a dangerous delusion if they suppose that Germany would be satisfied with an indemnity at the termination of such a war. Germany would take permanent possession of the northern provinces of the French Republic, thereby gaining access to the sea at Calais and Boulogne, while Belgium and Luxembourg would be annexed to complete the triumph of the Teutons."

Now, what do the Blue Water school say to that? Supposing France attacked and conquered by Germany, how would our Fleet prevent the annexation of Calais and Cherbourg? And what could our Fleet do to prevent the German conquest of France?

As for Belgium and Holland there would be no need for Germany to annex them. With Calais in German hands the Netherlands would be quietly absorbed.

Then Germany would have Calais at one end of the Channel and Cherbourg at the other. Also she would have Amsterdam and Rotterdam and Antwerp, which Napoleon said was like a pistol pointed at the heart of England. Also she would have the Dutch Navy and the Dutch craftsmanship. Then France would be a crippled Power, and Britain would

be unable to keep pace with the German output of battleships and sailors.

That is why I say that the problem of British defence is the problem of the defence of France.

Whether or not we form an offensive and defensive alliance with France the result is the same: the defeat of France is the defeat of Britain. The downfall of France is the downfall of the British Empire. The aggrandisement of Germany is the humiliation of Europe.

Now let us ask ourselves whether the defeat of France by Germany is possible. The Germans feel sure of it. The French apparently believe it; for it is not long since France was challenged by Germany and declined the combat.

The French have a grand Army: numerous, gallant, hardy, and well-trained. But the impression in military circles seems to be that France lacks the German perfection of organization and readiness.

Perhaps the presence of a great general, a Moltke or a Napoleon, on either side would make the difference. But that may not be known until the war begins. If Germany has the greater commander France is lost; if France has the great commander Germany may suffer a disastrous repulse. But so far as we may judge the chances are in Germany's favor.

Now, should France prove unequal to the task of repelling a German invasion, the Blue Water school would be helpless. Our Navy could do nothing.

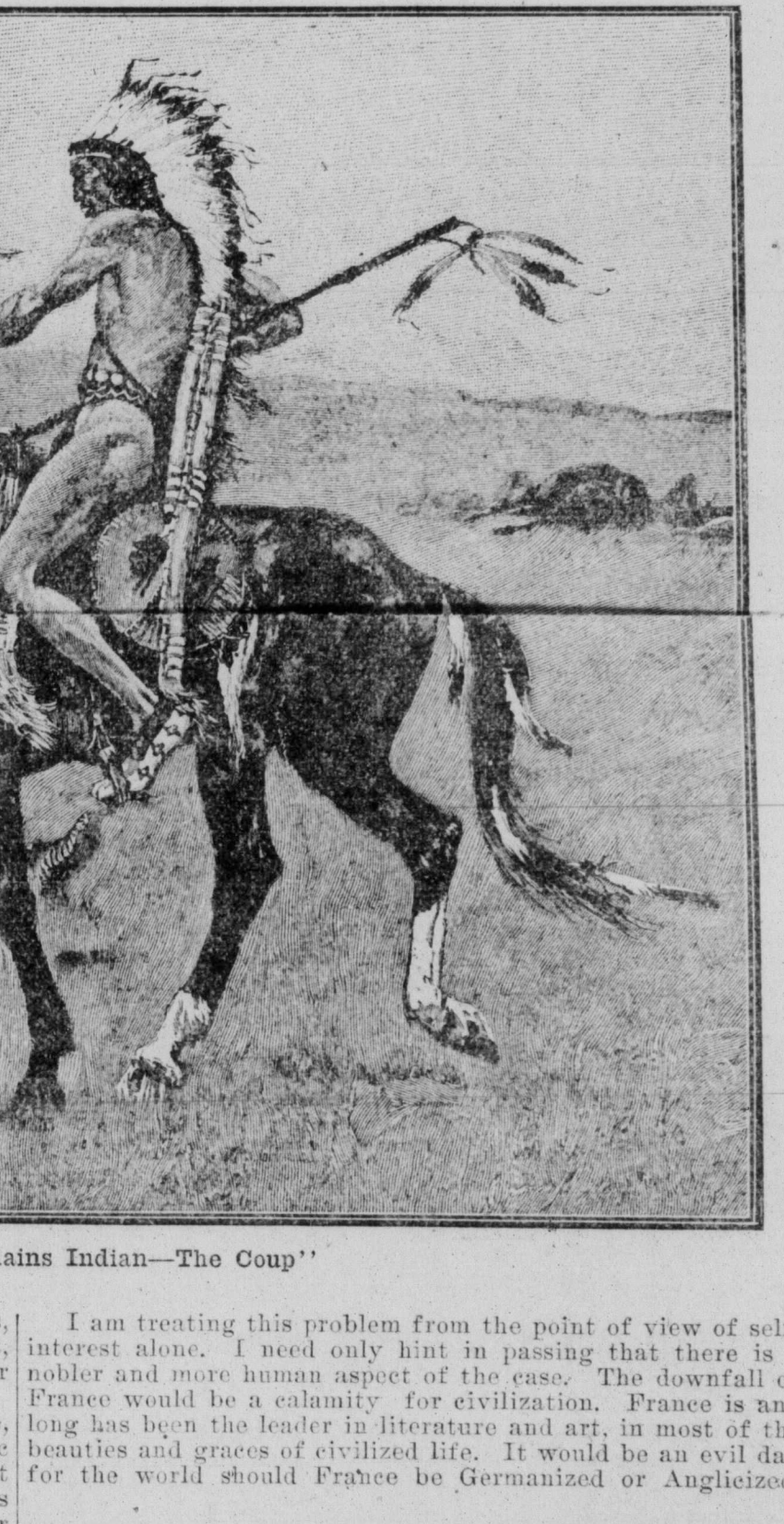
No. To make France secure, and in doing that to make ourselves secure, we should need a first-class British Army of at least half a million men—a million would be better. With a British force of half a million men in Belgium and Holland, with the French, British, and Dutch Fleets united, Russia, France's ally, might attack Germany on the eastern frontier. Then if Austria and Italy came in we should have Armageddon. Now, the Blue Water school have left Armageddon out of their calculations.

The Germans are a brave, stubborn, well-disciplined people, very obedient to their rulers. But it is doubtful whether they would allow themselves to be driven into a war so desperate and so unprovoked. A wanton invasion of France without the pretext of a quarrel, would not, one may suppose, be popular in Germany, even under present conditions; but a universal European conflict, provoked by the ambition of the Pan-Germanic Party, would be calculated to exhaust the patience of the German people.

But we have not an Army of half a million to send; and a two-Power standard Fleet could not help France nor defend the Dutch and Belgium.

That is what I call the greater and nearer danger: the danger of a French defeat by Germany. While such a defeat is possible the Germans have no need to risk an invasion of Britain. They can defeat Britain without fighting her.

The old theory of splendid isolation can be no longer held by Britain. An Empire like ours cannot stand aloof from the struggles of Europe. The balance of power means more to us today than it ever meant. A German Empire embracing Germany, Holland, Belgium, Austria, and perhaps Turkey, and having ports and fortresses at Calais, Cherbourg, Trieste, Antwerp, and Amsterdam, would wipe us out; would defeat and conquer us without firing a shot. Our Fleet would go; our trade would go; our Colonies would go; India would go. We should sink into the position of what one of our Cabinet Ministers calls "the conscript appanage of our stranger Power."



"Driving Cattle on the Plains"

I am treating this problem from the point of view of self-interest alone. I need only hint in passing that there is a nobler and more human aspect of the case. The downfall of France would be a calamity for civilization. France is and long has been the leader in literature and art, in most of the beauties and graces of civilized life. It would be an evil day for the world should France be Germanized or Anglicized.

by side with Germany we fought against Bonaparte at Waterloo. Today we have to stand by France or fall when she falls. We cannot escape our fate. We must uphold France or partake of her humiliation and share her ruin.

That is why the Blue Water school is wrong; that is why the strongest Navy will not serve our turn; that is why the nearer and the greater danger for us is not the invasion of Britain but the invasion of France; that is why the problem of the defence of Britain is the problem of the defence of France.

That is why we must have an Army as well as a Navy. That, I believe, is what lay heavy at the heart of Lord Roberts and the Cabinet Ministers, when they spoke daily of impending danger.

That is what the British people do not understand and ought to understand while there is time to avert the threatened doom.

GERMANY AND ENGLAND

(By Robert Blatchford)

THE Pan-Germanic policy is based upon Bismarck's theory: "The destiny of Germany must be worked out in blood and iron." It is a blood and iron policy, and all hopes of overcoming it by a policy of milk and water are doomed to failure.

Take, as an example, the fate of the innocent proposal for the limitation of armaments.

Any limitation of armaments must embody the principle of Britain's naval supremacy. But it is exactly that which the Pan-Germans resent and defy.

It does not require a very great effort of the imagination to enable us to see that proposal with German eyes. Were I a German I should say, "These islanders are cool customers. They have fenced in all the best parts of the globe, they have bought or captured fortresses and ports in five continents, they have gained the lead in commerce, they have a virtual monopoly of the carrying trade of the world, they hold command of the seas, and now they propose that we shall all be brothers, and that nobody shall fight or steal any more on the sea."

That is how a German must see the position. But the Germans see and believe much more than that. They believe that Britain has grown fat, and stupid, and cowardly. They see that Germany has a population 50 per cent. larger than Britain, and very much better educated, better trained, and better organized. They see that our Army is small and uncared for, and they know that their is excellent in quality, overwhelming in numbers, and in readiness and organization without a peer. They are sure that they can crush us on land. They believe they can beat us in trade; they hope on our outbuild and outspend us and so become our masters on the sea.

And their rulers hold the theory that the destiny of Germany must be worked out in blood and iron.

To these strong, resolute, and stern men of blood and iron some of the suave and modest British ambassadors of compromise and conciliation. "My dear brothers," says one ambassador, "may I suggest a cessation of this ruinous rivalry in battleships? Would you mind curtailing your naval programme so that I may retain command of the seas without incurring more expense than my constituents will approve. I am really very sorry; but the command of the sea is essential to our national existence. Our people decline to become soldiers, and unless we are allowed to boss the sea we shall become an easy prey for any enemy. So, if you don't mind, we will arrange with you for a limitation of armaments, which will save us money and prevent you from using your superior military strength against us."

Now, is not that a pretty dish to set before a Kaiser? Really; the men of blood and iron did not laugh so loudly as one might have expected.

In fact, they did not laugh at all. They just shrugged their shoulders and went on building harder than ever. It is one of the funniest political episodes I can remember; and the funniest thing about it was the British Government's innocent and pained surprise.

"Ha!" said the men of blood and iron, "I smell funk. They are beginning to feel the pinch. Hurry up with those Super-Dreadnoughts." And it was so.

Then the Labor delegates went over to Germany and slapped their German comrades on the back and cried, "Hoeh, hoeh, hoeh!" And Mr. Keir Hardie actually believed that the fraternizing of British and German Socialists in Germany would so delight the Emperor that he would, to use Mr. Hardie's own words, perform the remarkable feat of "killing the war spirit before it was born."

Well, the British and German comrades "hoehed," and out boys came home. And when I was in Germany a few weeks ago I stood in Essen and looked at the chimney forest of Krupp-town, and reflected that the German blood and iron works had recently taken on twenty-eight thousand new hands, and that, in spite of our Labor members, Germany was now able to arm thirteen Super-Dreadnoughts in a year. It is not as though the Socialists had not conciliated the Kaiser for nuts. Even the resolution of the Labor party seems to have failed; perhaps because "the destiny of Germany is to be worked out not by speeches and majorities, but by blood and iron."

Then there is the expedient of building Germany in with a series of alliances. A really statesmanlike idea, were it not that Germany's obstinate resolution to break out makes it very unpleasant for the allies who are within reach of the giant's arms.

And there is the Socialist theory of joint action by British and German Socialists for the prevention of war. The idea is to stop the supply of coal and stores by means of strikes. It is one of those harmless games with which some Labor statesmen amuse themselves on dull days. The main result of it would be to hamper our Fleet. The Germans would settle their strike in swift and summary fashion—by the arguments of "blood and iron."

And there is the dazzling Mr. Winston Churchill, who called Lord Cromer and me a pair of "ridiculous Jingoes," and illuminated the whole crisis by the brilliant declaration that there is no danger as long as we continue to build up to a two-Power standard.

Building to a two-Power standard means, when Germany is in full swing, the arming of twenty-six Super-Dreadnoughts in a year. This, as the Frenchman said when the hand-box fell on his hat for the third time, "becomes amusing."

But we are told by many well-meaning countrymen of ours that all this sense about Germany is absurd, because of the evident friendliness of the German people and the British people for each other. "The British do not want war; the Germans do not want war," say these amiable persons. How true; how true. But it does not account for thirty-nine battleships a year.

Now I shall suggest that all these attempts at conciliation and compromise are based upon a misconception of the policy and government of Germany.

I believe the German people (although they have a million members in their Navy League) are not unfriendly to us. But the German people have no control over the German policy. They cannot prevent the increase of German naval power, even if they would—which is doubtful. They cannot prevent a war when once their rulers have decided upon war. They do not know the game their rulers are playing. They would be plunged into war before they were aware of the danger, and once in, their own soldiers would suppress any attempt at interference, supposing any attempt were made.

The Bismarck theory of blood and iron has the great merit of being simple and concise. The German theory of warfare fits it as a bludgeon fits the hand of a footpad. "Full steam ahead" is the motto for the German Navy. "Forward" is the motto for the Army. Go straight for the enemy and smash him; never mind the cost. We have plenty of men. We can afford heavy losses. But we must win.

This theory demands loyalty, courage, and discipline from officers and men. The German Army and Navy possess them. The theory of blood and iron is simple. You single out one of your neighbors at a time. You cajole him with friendly treatment while you prepare to make an irresistible and unexpected attack upon him. When you are quite ready, and when he is off his guard, you knock him down, jump on his chest, and accept his watch and purse as compensation. This is your destiny fulfilled.

Now a gentleman working on these lines is not to be fobbed off with fine speeches. He will not restrain his mailed fist because his victim is weak. Weakness is the opportunity he looks for.

No. If we do not want war with Germany we must be strong enough to cause Germany to want peace. Though Germany is a brave, resolute, and mighty enemy, she is not omnipotent, nor is she invulnerable. But she means business—blood and iron business—and all conciliation, subterfuge, and compromise provoke her to contempt and scorn.

Germany puts her destiny into the hands of warriors; we leave ours in the hands of politicians. Germany acts; we talk. Words count for nothing in the game of blood and iron. Arm or surrender; fight for the Empire or lose it. We can choose our alternative; no middle course is open to us.