

A RUSS DEFENDING FRANCE!



This picture, taken by a French war photographer, shows one of a battalion of the Russian troops in France, holding a position in a wood not far from Verdun. The initials carved on the tree over the soldier's head bespeak the love-making traditions of this locality before the war.

Concerning War and Peace

By THE EDITOR

FROM a large percentage of the talk in the newspapers of late we imagine that peace is the main object of certain neutrals and belligerents who may imagine they represent the best part of the World's opinions.

No doubt every country in the world wants peace. There never was such a general desire for peace in the world at large. We know now that war can rack the world to pieces and disrupt its economics in a way that nothing else can do. Earthquakes, famines, cyclones, storms, political upheavals, strikes, race riots—all these in combination do not work the havoc that war is working with the world's complicated machinery. The world has already lost materially more in this war in less than two years than it can make up again in ten times that period. Economically war is the greatest destructor and waster in the world. Therefore, as all modern sane nations are economic at the basis, all modern sane nations desire peace, that men may get back at the world's work which is not essentially war. At the present time in a world which was never before so organized for world business at high pressure, there are 25,000,000 of the world's best workers engaged in the business of using the world's resources to undo the work that civilization has built up in long years of science and industry, and at the same time trying to kill as many of the workers as possible. All the countries at war are heaping up incalculably huge war debts to be paid by the people of to-day and by posterity—but

not payable until the world gets back to its average creative business of production.

All this is monstrously uneconomic, and there is no country in the world that on a merely economic basis would not have it stopped if possible, and as soon as possible. On this we are in perfect agreement under all flags, friendly, enemy or neutral—even to the United States, which has made financially out of the war a great part of what other countries have lost.

Yet the Allied nations are not talking peace. They are repudiating the idea of the kind of peace that must be the result of any peace proposition likely to be accepted by Germany. Sir Edward Grey made that plain in his recent speech in the British House of Commons. Premier Asquith and Lloyd George made it clear long ago. So far as we know they have not receded from the position then laid down at a time when the British Empire knew only in a vague way what that statement of his position meant.

Since that time and up to the present most of the peace talk has come from Germany, directly or indirectly. Above all nations Germany now desires peace, just as a year and a half ago Germany above all nations desired war—and got it. When President Wilson and King Alfonso of Spain talk about mediation in Europe they are talking more on behalf of Germany than on account of any of the Allied powers opposed to Germany. The United States sincerely desires peace. And Germany is anxious that Uncle Sam shall keep on desiring peace, no matter how noisily on the verge of a Presidential election he talks about preparing for war.

Why does Germany so peculiarly desire the world's peace; and why do the Allied nations repudiate that desire as it comes from Germany? On one side it is plain enough. Germany has already gained from the war all she can ever hope to get, and in all human probability a great deal more than she will ever be allowed to keep. To get this, Germany alone has lost about a million men killed and about twice that many wounded. That is a staggering price; and Germany is too economic a nation not to be tolerably sure of getting a reasonable quid pro quo on the transaction. Some time ago Bernhardt said that if Germany went to war she must be prepared and could afford to lose a million men in order to achieve her purpose. She has already paid that price and more. Has she achieved her purpose? Germany alone knows. But she is too shrewd a bargainer to stop short of her purpose after paying the price. The Central Empires have already got by robbery and spoliation, most of Belgium, a good part of France, Russian Poland and Serbia with all the resources in raw materials which these territories contain. Is that worth a million men, more or less?

"No doubt about it," says Germany. "We are willing to quit now if we can keep all or most of that and don't have to bother paying you people any beastly indemnities. We don't pay indemnities. We exact them. Remember what we did to France in 1871. Remember, also, that whatever we decide to give up of these war gains, we still have Germany on whose soil not an army corps has yet been destroyed. And you cannot crush Germany. If we decide to go on organizing for war in the future that is our own business. War is our business. We like it. We believe in it as a part of kultur. What Prussia things, Germany does. Germany is—Prussia."

All this and much more Germany can say with obvious sincerity. And it will stay in one ear of the Allies long enough to go out at the other. Germany wanted war when the Allies were unprepared for war—and got it. Now that the Allies are organized for the kind of war that Germany wanted and got, she desires peace, because she is only beginning to know what it feels like to have a taste of her own medicine. For the first time in history four great sane countries of Europe and some smaller ones are united and organized with a terrific war machine capable of paying a great insane nation back in her own coin. Germany coolly proposes that we halt that machine just as it is becoming efficient, and let her keep as much as possible of what she has got by her own war machine which in 1914 was efficient while ours scarcely existed as a competitor except on the sea.

So, in spite of Uncle Sam's opinion that the war has reached the stage of deadlock; in spite of the slow-paced, grim and relentless holdfast of the great machines of war, we concluded that peace just now on any such terms as Germany would be likely to accept would be worse than a continuation of the war. We are just getting to the point where we can adequately fight, not merely resist, Germany. We should be economic idiots to stop just as our efficiency is getting towards its maximum and when Germany's is beginning to wane.

Thus far it is mainly a case of economics, for the sake of which we should be foolish to stop now just because Germany thinks that for the world's sake—but mainly for hers—we ought. And above all

the economics there still remains the great principle for which England originally went to war and which has no need to be repeated here. Posterity and free peoples have a right to be respected. This war is paying posterity and free peoples the biggest and most costly compliment they ever got—and we somehow reckon the compliment has got to be paid in full.

A RECENT article in The Fortnightly Review indicates very pointedly a sanguine belief of the writer that the main business of the war can be concluded in 1916.

There will never be peace in Europe till the German army has been utterly defeated in the field. An economic victory would mean nothing but a renewal of the contest at a later date.

What is clear at least is that Germany is coming to the end of her first line troops—that is to say, men who are competent to go anywhere and do anything which efficient soldiers are expected to do. In the course of the last five months nothing but her interior lines of railways have enabled her to place her effectives now on one front and now on the other. . . . The attack on Verdun has taken its full toll. There must come a period when the spearhead of the German armies is blunted or destroyed, and an insufficient number of mobile soldiery exist for any given front.

On the other hand, our own personnel has inherited in full measure the spirit of the original expeditionary force, while the Territorials have become war-hardened troops with which anyone might be proud to serve.

The main facts seem to be that our troops are now superior as tactical and mobile units to those of the enemy, and that we should possess a great superiority of force. The German troops on the western front are usually estimated at 2,000,000, but they could be, and no doubt would be, considerably reinforced in view of an attack being directed against them shortly. None the less, they would still be very inferior in point of numbers.

At the lowest estimate then, we should be able to put three Anglo-French soldiers against two Germans, while a concentration of two to one on the sectors selected for attack could be made with complete safety to the rest of the line.

The three conditions which must be postulated for a successful advance are: Unlimited shells, greater numerical force, and an army not inferior in courage, skill, and administration to the German. The two first conditions have been fulfilled. What of the third? The pessimist contends either that no army can break through modern field defences, or that, at any rate, our army cannot.

The answer to this argument has been given at Hooge, Neuve Chapelle, Loos, and elsewhere, though these actions have been often written down as "partial successes or incomplete failures." The German front has been broken frequently up to the first line, several times up to the second, and at least once up to the third.

A PRINCE, BUT NOT NEUTRAL.



This man is one of the Roumanian Royal family—a prince, married to an American woman. In his attitude toward the war this debonair young man is neither Roumanian nor, like his wife, American. He has been fighting with the French forces for many months.