

The Philosopher

A CANADIAN COMMANDER

In accepting the command of the second Canadian contingent, Major-General Steele, from his bed in the Toronto General Hospital, where he was recovering from the injury he suffered when thrown from his horse, declared that within a week he would be physically fit and ready to leave for the front at a moment's notice. This is eminently characteristic of the man, who on the Western plains as on the South African veldt has proved himself every inch a soldier and a ready, courageous and able leader of men. The Canadian people are proud of him as a native Canadian, and confident that as the commander of the second Canadian contingent in the Great War he will acquit himself with distinction, as before, and like every other man in the contingent, prove himself of true mettle.

ACROSS THE YEARS

In these weeks of the year a middle-aged man's fancies are apt to stray back occasionally to his boyhood days. Strange that in this season more than any other such recollections should stir. It must be because spring was the time when as a boy he felt most alive. Who cannot recall days in the month of May, when the call of the wild to the youthful mind made school work a heavy task pursued under stress of mind and amidst many difficulties? What is it that makes a man's mind suddenly leap backward across the years to such a day, and make him feel himself a boy again, remembering vividly that when school was out and he investigated his pocket, a white alley was missing. After a second search, he had recourse to one of boyhood's means of locating it. You took off your hat, and put it on the ground, spat in your left palm, and struck it swiftly with the right index finger; and watching it splatter, you walked with untroubled faith in the direction plainly indicated. And what if this magic did not lead to the immediate recovery of the lost alley? Something else more important claimed your attention, some other piece of boyhood's occult lore, such as one of the innumerable infallible ways of curing warts. How a wandering breath of springtime will bring back such things—Saturday holidays from school, and boyhood duties and pleasures!

"HELP TO END THE WAR"

A full-page advertisement is appearing in most of the newspapers of the United States, calling upon the American people to "Help to End the War." It is signed by hundreds of people with German names, who appeal "the American people, industries and workmen not to manufacture, sell or ship powder, shrapnel or shot of any kind or description to any of the warring nations." Or as the New York World says:

"In order to 'Help End the War,' American manufacturers should not sell ammunition to the Belgians who are fighting to recover their country from a foreign foe that ravished the nation it had sworn to protect. In order to 'Help End the War,' American manufacturers should not sell rifles and cartridges to the French people who are fighting to drive an invader from their soil."

Moreover, Germany in the past has been the greatest of traffickers in munitions of war. The gigantic Krupp armament plants have enabled Germany to lead the world in that business. German manufacturers equipped the Turkish army with guns and ammunition in the Balkan War. The German diplomacy, the argumentations of the German professors in attempted justification of German methods, and the pro-German contentions and "appeals" of German-Americans are all of a piece. They will stand in history as breaking all records for their idiosyncrasies. They are grossly, contrary not only to the considerations of ordinary honor, but to the plain logic of fact.

A FORESEEING FRENCHWOMAN

There was printed recently in the London Times a letter written in September 1871, after Germany had so crushingly overwhelmed France, by the famous French literary woman, George Sand, which bears testimony to her penetration and foresight. In the light of present events it deserves attention:

"The time is soon coming when we shall have as much cause to pity the German people for their victory as ourselves for our defeat. The German triumph is for Germany the first act of her moral dissolution. The tragedy of her fall has begun, and as she works at it with her own hands it will proceed apace. All these great material organizations which defy right, justice and the sense of humanity are so many idols of clay. It is our duty and our interest to realize this. It is the truth. But the moral downfall of Germany is not the future salvation of France, and if we are fated to do to her what she has done to us, her ruin will not restore us to our life. It is not in blood that races can renew their youth. Streams of life may yet come from the corpse of France; the corpse of Germany will be a plague centre for all Europe. There is no resurrection for a nation which has lost sight of the human ideal."

This prophetic utterance forty-three years ago by a Frenchwoman of genius says all that there is to be said philosophically of the result of the German conquest of France in 1871, and its reaction upon Germany. Out of that German success and the prodigious tribute imposed on vanquished France has

grown the German war machine and the German idolatry of force and the German use of the methods of the wolf and the tiger, as evidenced in the treatment of Belgium. As George Sand prophesied, Germany has lost sight of the human ideal. The German system thinks nothing of standing an innocent civilian up against a wall and shooting him, or of torpedoing a neutral merchant ship and drowning innocent men, women and children. A cat catches and kills a bird in the same spirit. The German Emperor spoke in that same spirit when he instructed the German troops he was sending to China that they must make themselves terrible as the Huns of Attila made themselves terrible. No nation in all history has ever stood in need of such a dire lesson as Germany must now be given, without losing sight of the human ideal. It is plain now that a main object of the present war is the levying of such huge ransoms on conquered nations as would wipe out Germany's crushing load of debt due to the costliness of the German military system. Civilization must be guarded against any such resort in the future by any nation to the methods of the wolf and the tiger. The human ideal must be made secure.

A WESTERN SUBJECT

Though mechanical contrivances have displaced draught animals in this war to an extent undreamed of a generation ago, the horse still holds an important place in military operations and shares in the perils and the suffering of the campaigning. Will the horse become extinct in the future, before the advance of mechanism? The question used frequently to be asked in the early years of the automobile. Undoubtedly the horse will be more and more displaced, and will tend to disappear from the streets of cities—which no true lover of the horse will regret. But that the horse will be driven to extinction by mechanism driven by gasoline, or electricity or any other force is surely unthinkable to anyone who has ever felt the wonder of those quivering muscles straining at the girths. What is a thing of bolts and levers, compared to a thing of flesh and blood? The motor has its advantages, but it has its failings, too, and they are abominations. The horse's virtues are like human virtues and its failings are like human failings. When he is a horse of sterling worth of character, and runs true to his kind, what else in the world can compare with him? He will have a neigh of recognition for you; he will rub his nose against yours with a whinny of delight. There are mean and cunning horses as there are mean and cunning human beings; and among horses as among humans, there are shirkers. But those are not the qualities that the horse brings to mind. Courage, strength, speed, affection, beauty—these are what the horse stands for. Undoubtedly there will be wonderful further developments of gasoline and electricity. But the time will never come when the saying of Lord Herbert of Cherbury will not stand true, that "there is no finer sight than a fine man on a fine horse." Certainly that saying will never cease to be true in the West.

SEEING THE WORLD IN A FALSE LIGHT

Whatever the German autocrat may say, however loudly he may continue to make use of the name of God, he stands pilloried by the neutral opinion of the world as the responsible author of the war, and branded with the mark of Cain. Infatuated as the Kaiser is with the hallucination that he rules by Divine right and has been entrusted with the Divine commission to bring Europe and the world at large under German domination, he may have convinced himself that he could not have averted the war. Delusions of this character are not uncommon in persons who are the victims of an obsession in regard to their place in the providential order of the universe. In the Hospitals for the Insane at Selkirk and at Brandon, as in every other such institution in the world, there are cases which are of this class. Wilhelm differs from the others in being an autocratic Emperor in actual fact. Such an autocrat, crazed with the delusion that he is God's viceroy on earth, believes, of course, that whatever he does must be right, and that all blame and guilt must rest on others. He blames not himself for the war, but the nations that instead of looking to him as their Divinely appointed master, and submitting to him, undertook to fight in defence of their rights and liberties and the cause of freedom and justice in the world against despotic military force. That the German Emperor and the men of the ruling caste in Germany planned to destroy the rights and liberties of neighboring nations and to make Germany dominant in the world, is known to every intelligent person in the world. Proof of it has been piled upon proof of it since the war began. Nor can there be any enduring peace, or any hope of peace unless and until the German Emperor and the ruling German caste and the mass of the German people, whom he and the ruling caste have inoculated with the madness of the doctrine that might can make right have been forced to see this world and human life in the true light.

THE IRONY OF DESTINY

The Archduke Franz Ferdinand, of Austria, whose assassination by a Serbian student was made the occasion of bringing on the Great War, would have opposed with his utmost determination, had he been alive, the German design of precipitating the conflict of the nations. There can be no possibility of question in regard to that. For the whole purpose of his policy, the work to which he devoted his life, was the consolidation and unifying of Austria-Hungary, so that when he should succeed his father, the Emperor Francis Joseph, his Empire would be strong enough to hold its own against Germany, the ally he feared. He had already proved himself a man of extraordinary force of character and ability, and made himself the dominating personality in the Imperial Government at Vienna. The object he kept constantly before him was the transforming of the Slavs in Austria-Hungary into ardent upholders of the Empire. Not until he had welded the Empire into union and strength would he have been a consenting party to a war. His assassination not only furnished the Berlin plotters of the war with precisely such a starting point as they wanted for their machinations, but it removed an important and powerful personality whose opposition to their design would have been a formidable obstacle in their way.

AS ONE ENGLISHMAN PUTS IT

It would not be easy to give in briefer form the reasons why the British Empire is at war than they are given in a letter which the Philosopher has received from a friend in England. "The first and most obvious reason is that we were bound in honor to defend the neutrality of Belgium. The second is that we could not afford to let France again be overthrown by Germany. These two reasons, the first of honor, the second of self-interest, are both sound and sufficient, and each might have a large book written to express it fully and adequately. And there was a third reason, and it is the one which was at first most frequently given in conversation—that, if we had not gone in, we could never have looked a Frenchman in the face again. To the average Englishman, like myself, this was, and is, overwhelmingly cogent. Sir Edward Grey expressed it when he said in the House that Germany's proposal that we should stand by while France was conquered, was 'an infamous proposal.' There was never an utterance more wildly cheered in the whole history of the House of Commons than Sir Edward Grey's statement of how that 'infamous proposal' was rejected." At first glance, it may be thought that the three reasons set forth in this extract from a letter from England do not cover the whole matter. But if you will think them over, and consider all that they imply, you will agree that they make an entirely adequate statement. They include the whole case for freedom and justice against brutal force.

THE KULTURAL POINT OF VIEW

The official biography of Bismarck written by his secretary, Dr. Moritz Busch, has been quoted from on this page more than once since the war began. It is an enlightening book. As the war has advanced, the Philosopher has found it throw more and more illumination on Kultur. There should be widespread dissemination given to the light which Bismarck's declarations during the siege of Paris throws upon the present German declarations that the blockade of Germany by the British sea power is a barbarous outrage on civilization justifying the sinking of neutral ships by German submarines, and the drowning of non-combatants, including women and children. The Germans in 1871 starved Paris into surrender; but it was repeatedly declared from Berlin after the beginning of the present war that the German Empire could provide its own food supplies from within its own borders. In January, 1871, when the besieged Parisians were reduced to eating rats, Bismarck said they should have a day's supply of food sent in to them, and told that they must accept the terms laid down by him or starve. These are his words, as recorded by Dr. Busch:

"If the Parisians first received a supply of provisions, and then were once more obliged to starve, that ought, I think, to work. It is like flogging. When it is administered continuously, it is not felt so much. But when it is suspended for a time and another dose inflicted, then it hurts." and here is an entry from Busch's diary, January 28, 1871:

"They have been on very short commons in Paris for some time past, and the death rate last week amounted to about 5,000. The mortality was especially heavy among the children up to two years old, and coffins were to be seen in all directions."

One of the fundamental doctrines of Kultur is that it is uncivilized for other nations to put into operation against Germany methods of warfare which are unquestionably legitimate, and which Germany has used itself. If Germany were able to shut off food supplies from the British Isles, that is the first thing Germany would have done. The German atrocities in Belgium are, in the light of Kultur, entirely right and proper, but that any nation should even think of blockading Germany is, when viewed by that same strange light, a crime against high Heaven.