

For Closer Union Of England and America

H. S. Perris Urges More Sympathetic Understanding; Secretary of British-American Centenary Committee Pleads for Truer Interpretation of National Ideals

H. S. Perris, secretary of the British-American Centenary Committee, and of the Committee of Sulgrave Manor, the ancient seat of the family of George Washington, made a plea for a more thorough understanding of America by England and of England by America just before his departure for England recently.

"Though I shall be glad to be home again for Christmas," he said to a reporter of the New York Evening Post, "I am sorry that the time has come for me to say good-bye to America. I have had a delightful visit, renewing old friendships and making many new ones. I am leaving with a deep sense of gratification at the appreciation which has been given throughout the United States to the aims and objects of the organization which I am serving, the Sulgrave Institution. The old home of the Washingtons at Sulgrave, England, was purchased some time ago in connection with the Anglo-American Centenary Committee, and it is hoped that henceforth, under the direction of the Sulgrave Institution, this historic place will be the centre of friendship work between the two countries. I am sure that in this way our new institution (which during my visit has

been incorporated under the laws of New York State and a board of prominent citizens elected), will prove a powerful factor for the promotion of that real sympathy and understanding between British and American people which the war has so immeasurably strengthened, and which it is the duty and privilege of far-seeing men and women in both countries to forward by all means in their power.

A Story for England.

"It has been a stirring experience for me to see this great country of yours bending all its mighty strength, energy, and capacity to the great new tasks of war. It has thrilled me to see you coming now to join in freeing Europe and the world from a slavery to the dogmas and practice of a ruthless militarism and Caesarism. I shall carry back to England a story of America's great sacrifice for the common cause, a sacrifice of life, money, comforts, even of necessities, such as food and coal. It is a story which will deeply touch the hearts of my countrymen as it has touched my own heart. From what I hear from the other side, I am afraid they do not even yet fully realize the vast extent of the contribu-

tion America is making—just as over here I have sometimes found that my friends do not appreciate the full weight of the heavy burden England is bearing. "That brings me to speak of the main purpose of my visit to this country. In my dual capacity as secretary of the Centenary Committee and of the Sulgrave Board, I have been trying to do my bit for the advancement of Anglo-American friendship and understanding. It might well be asked, What more hopeful sign of friendship could there be than our new comradeship in arms? True enough—but the ideal of friendship between our two countries that appeals to me rises even higher than that. I look forward to a brotherhood in peace as well as in war, to a lasting friendship between the nations, based on a real understanding. If this union of hearts is ever to be fully attained, one sure fact stands out above all others: We must come to know each other better. We must in the fullest sense of the word understand each other. I cannot emphasize that too strongly.

Breaking Down the Barriers.

"Friendly speeches by public men, interchange of professors, business and professional conventions, and the like, are all to the good, but by themselves they are not enough. We must try to reach the springs of public feeling and public opinion. How can this be done? Obviously, there is no royal road to this goal, but I think I may say without exaggeration that no other single institution can play so big a part in bringing about good will between the peoples than the press. May I not, therefore, plead once more before I leave these shores for a better-informed and more impartial interchange of news and opinion between us? We speak the same language. We come from the same stock. Where are the barriers between us? Surely it ought not to be difficult for us to speak to one another as free men and friends. "And yet who can measure the abyss-



mal depths of ignorance in England of things American, and in America of things English. It is even worse than that. We are not merely ignorant about each other; we are more often positively misinformed. I would like to appeal to British and American newspaper correspondents to be more scrupulous than they sometimes are in surveying and reporting public opinion. We need in both countries, may, in all countries, a more exact, a more conscientious interpretation of men and events. In my opinion an even greater menace to the lasting peace and happiness of the world than Secret Diplomacy, even than militarism itself, is the menace of a merely partisan and superficial journalism.

"The outstanding need after the war will be for the peoples of all nations to 'get acquainted' with each other. Perhaps, as the French wisely say, if we knew all we should forgive all. Is it too much to hope that the journalists of America and of England will lead in this great task of mutual interpretation and friendship?"

IN PALESTINE.

(Manchester Guardian.)

A large and important village in Palestine which the British expeditionary force has occupied is Khan Yunis. The name translated becomes simply John's Tavern, and here there must have been from of old a halting place on the great caravan route from Egypt to Syria. The village was midway between Rafa and Gaza, separated from the sea by two or three miles of rolling sand dunes. Around it on every side is a belt of trees and orchards a mile or more in depth, and the water which makes possible this sudden blossoming of the plain is pumped from ancient wells lying in the midst of its lanes.

On the wooded hills above Khan Yunis and set low amid the trees rises another village with the Biblical name of Beni-Sela. Whether this place or Khan Yunis itself, actually goes back to the Bible times is not certain. Local legend claims that Dallah, the wife of Samson, came hence, but that story may be prompted by jealousy of Gaza, which has a certain connection with the hero of the Hebrews. The one historical event certainly connected with the place is more recent. It was here that Napoleon at the outset of his bold Syrian campaign was nearly captured. His advanced guard, which he had sent from Rafa to occupy the place, missed its way, and he arrived before the village with his personal retinue only, and found it defended by some Arab cavalry. But trusting to boldness and his "star" he charged with his score of men, and the Arabs took to flight.

Italians Again on Offensive

London, Dec. 21—The Italians on the northern line in Italy between the Brenta and Piave rivers, have ceased, for the time being at least, their defensive warfare against the attacks of the Austro-Germans and assumed the offensive, with signal successes on several sectors.

Attacking the positions which the enemy earlier in the week captured near Monte Asolone, General Diaz's troops have regained a considerable portion of the terrain and held it, notwithstanding the terrific artillery fire that was turned upon them.

The German war office, in endeavoring to belittle the success of the offensive, which it asserts was repulsed, shows that the effort of the Italians was a determined one, the troops to the west of the Monte Asolone delivering seven attacks against the enemy front. Admission is made in the German communication that the Italians also have taken the initiative in the fighting on Monte Perica and Mont Solaro, but it is declared that their attacks on these sectors, as on Monte Asolone, were without success.

Weight Against French.

With the French Armies in Northern Italy, Thursday, Dec. 20—(By the Associated Press)—A careful compilation of the strength and disposition of the tremendous Austro-German forces which originally concentrated for the Italian offensive, probably have been augmented by troops from the Russian front, has just been completed by the French military authorities. The summary shows that between the middle of November and the middle of December the bulk of the enemy forces has been steadily shifted from the lower Piave line to the sector between Vidor on the upper Piave and the Asiago plateau—the part that is held by the French—until the forces which are now trying to batter their way into the northern Italian plains have been nearly tripled and this army is all the stronger because of the fact that it includes fully seven German divisions known to be engaged against the Allies.

This formidable strength of the invader accounts for the scattered gains that have been recorded during the last fortnight, culminating in the capture on Tuesday of Monte Asolone. These positions are only a few miles from the plain proper and therefore, as in the case of Col Della Breda, captured a few days previously, their acquisition is valuable. Positions flanking other mountains still are held stubbornly by the Italians, although the enemy is able to enfilade movements to and from otherwise strategic heights.

In gradually relinquishing a few points and in falling back on this sector upon a new line, the Italians are again strongly and strategically located. They have made the enemy pay dearly for each yard of ground gained and have put up a determined defence that augurs well for the future, especially since the French are successfully holding every foot of their line and have strong reserve forces behind their battle fronts. The Italian troops by the end of October had increased forces on the Asiago sector and by the middle of November the sector from Asiago to Sterio had been vastly strengthened.

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