

Victory, Soon, Sure and Overwhelming

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

Some of us had thought that the United States was slow in deciding to ally herself with the powers who were resisting the onslaught of Germany and her auxiliaries. It may be we were right. It may be we were wrong. Anyhow it is now apparent that the decision of the President to fight is the more impressive because it has been withheld so long. All his hesitations, all his expostulations, all his efforts for peace, even his phrases which stuck in our throats "Too proud to fight", and "Peace without victory" are just so many added justifications of the long-delayed verdict that the only possible course for an intelligent, peace-and-liberty-loving nation is to arise and attack the monstrous threat against everything humane and decent which is incarnated in the Teutonic armies.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the entry of the United States into the war. It is the assurance of victory, soon, sure and overwhelming.

XMAS IN THE TRENCHES.

It is becoming apparent now that none of us had correctly forecast the time-schedule of the war. The Germans at first expected it to be over by Christmas 1914. The common anticipation of the people of the Allied Powers at the beginning of fighting was that it would be over by Christmas 1915. One remembers the phrase "Christmas in the trenches" as epitomizing something peculiarly horrible, and impossible of repetition. Nevertheless there have been three Christmases in the trenches, and we are getting over our surprise. It used to be said, several years ago, on any mention being made of the possibility of the United States coming in, that the war would be over before they would be able to get ready to do anything effective. One does not hear that kind of talk now. It is not that we expect the war to last long. We do not, but we have learned to mistrust our expectations that it will not last long. We are recognizing the vast incalculability of war. It may end almost in a day. It may go on for a generation. So we are thrown back upon considerations of possibility, rather than of assured expectation. We remember that the Boer war lasted longer than the present war, and was immensely smaller. We recall the Seven Years war, the Thirty Years war, and even the Hundred Years war. We remember that the Napoleonic wars, nearest of them all in likeness to this, lasted nearly twenty years. We observe that while certain features mark the present conduct of hostilities as likely to shorten the period of their activity, others, such as the approximation to siege conditions in trench fighting, operate in the opposite direction.

Because human life is precious, and the enormous task of rebuilding what war destroys is mounting dizzily daily, it is imperative that every means in our power be taken to bring into the field overmastering forces at the earliest possible moment. And the resolve of the great Republic to cast its wealth of gold, and intelligence, and man-power into the scales is the finest assurance possible, in our scheme of considered possibilities, of victory soon.

Some may think that it argues a failing courage to speak of making victory sure. Not at all. That old Sunday School story of the drummer boy who had never learned to beat a retreat belongs with such a passionate and unintelligent conception. No one, who considers how incalculable a thing war is, will adopt such a position.

In spite of the tendency of war to become more calculable in its main features, so that it has been called "an extra-hazardous branch of engineering," there are still a number of elements in it which absolutely preclude certainty as to the outcome. It seems assured now that the most unrestricted submarine campaign possible to German resources will fail to isolate Britain. So we may set that contingency aside. Nor will we dwell upon another, in which there are undeniable ingredients of alarm, the making of separate peace treaties with some of the Allied Powers. But there are at least two other possibilities, either of which might upset all calculations which it has been possible so far to make.

One of these is the discovery of some terrible engine of destruction, the use of which would infallibly bring triumph to those possessed of it. So far, while there have been extraordinary developments of military implements in existence before the war broke out, there has been nothing notable or revolutionary launched during the war. Neither gas attack nor the "tanks" is an utter novelty, and neither is suffi-

cient to guarantee victory to the side using it. But our memories are haunted by the story of Lord Dunscombe's invention of a century ago, which he declared would infallibly bring complete triumph to those employing it. This claim was vindicated by a board appointed by the British Parliament, who nevertheless decided that the secret should neither be used nor given to the public. It is at least imaginable that, in these days of chemical and engineering wonders, something analogous might be hit upon, which would give as decisive an advantage to the army using it as rifles give to those who with them in their hands meet the onslaught of savages armed with bows and arrows.

A DISTURBING POSSIBILITY.

Another disturbing possibility is the rise of a military genius of the Napoleonic order. In the strange vision which Tolstoi saw, in which he beheld Europe engulfed in war, he predicted the coming of a man from the north "not a professional soldier...who shall hold Europe in the hollow of his hand until 1925." The forecast is quite in line with what has occurred in similar times of great wars. So a Caesar, a Charlemagne, a Napoleon appeared, and by sheer force of pre-eminent skill bore down all opposition and made the efforts of his rival strategists seem ridiculous. General Joffre is said to have expressed the opinion that if Napoleon were alive he "would find a way." It is at least possible that such a commander might emerge from the welter, and who can guess which side he would be on?

Now, the argument of this article is that the entrance of the United States brings such a force into the field that we may safely discount these contingencies. Even with such a bomb as Mr. H. G. Wells describes in his book about the last war of the world, and even with a Napoleon or an Alexander leading the Teutonic hosts, we need not fear the result.

There is yet another adjective to be set before the word victory, as we employ it to describe the issue of the war, now that President Wilson has appeared at the head of his hundred millions as our ally. It is the adjective overwhelming.

So far from "peace without victory," being the desirable outcome of the struggle, the truly desirable

outcome is such an utter rout and destruction of the Prussians and their accomplices that neither they nor any of the same spirit will again venture to disturb the peace of mankind. After all, this is a war between ideas. We wish no ill to the great mass of submissive, docile and self-sacrificing German artisans and peasants whom it seems must be killed or captured for the sake of the honor and peace of the world. Indeed, their liberation can come only through their defeat. Nothing else will shake them free from the nightmare of militarism. The idea which possesses and crazes them must be driven from the face of the earth.

When the Kaiser bade farewell to the German portion of the expeditionary force which was to make its way to Peking at the time of the Boxer troubles, he used language which made a profound impression on the whole world. He commanded them to so conduct themselves that a Chinese would never again look askance at a German. We need that same stern advice to-day, only it is not that one race is to be humiliated and cowed by another. There will never be peace on earth while it consists of some nations saddled and bridled to be ridden and other nations booted and spurred to ride them. It is rather that one idea is to be cowed and humiliated by another.

So some great leader, like a Mazzini or a Lincoln come to life again, might adopt the words of the Kaiser, and say to the armies who are now battling against battles, and paying the dreadful price of their hearts' blood in order that there should be "peace at any price, even at the price of war." "So conduct yourselves that tyranny and cruelty shall never again dare to look askance at honor and freedom."

Experience teaches fools, ran the old adage. It is not unlikely that in the long future which our descendants may enjoy on earth some ill-balanced personage may be lifted to a seat of great power. Then, as he dreams of augmenting his glory, and persuades himself that he is justified in using any means whatever to increase his power and fame, he will remember that William the Second of Germany in the early decades of the twentieth century made such an attempt, and, in spite of the vast strength and skill he was able to command, failed miserably. He will remember that almost the whole world rose in horror, and with inflexible determination united to overthrow him. So will his wish pass as a dream and peace continue. For the sake of centuries yet to come we are glad that the entry of the United States guarantees victory, not only soon and sure, but also overwhelming.

The High Cost of Living---Peace Prospects

By CIVICUS.

Much has been written about the shrinkage of the Canadian dollar, but few attempts have been made to investigate the economics of the case. Apart from the inquiring consumer, who wanders around more or less aimlessly looking for someone to blame, and the politicians, who see in simple criticism of trusts and combines a chance to obtain votes, nobody has made a move. The Federal Government passed an Order-in-Council widening the scope of the municipalities to investigate the high cost of living, but unless the municipalities made the initial move nothing was done. The Toronto City Council did initiate an investigation but nothing has been heard of it for weeks. This proves that local attempts to solve the question have and will prove abortive, because of their limitations.

THE PROBLEM HAS A FUTURE.

But whether or not supply has been minimized by the actions of the Dominion Government, the high cost of living problem has a future, the seriousness of which transcends practically every other problem apart from the war with which the Federal Government may be called upon to deal. The future of this question when viewed in the proper light portends great difficulties, and demonstrates that prices entailed by the war and general war financial conditions are only details of the larger question, and unless a strong hand takes hold of the situation, the consumers in this country will probably yet suffer in this particular manner as much as the people in the war-wrecked lands of Europe.

When war broke out Canada was on the parapet of a dire trade depression; there was much unemployment. Canada had boomed, and the camp-followers of "progress"—real estate speculators—had

gathered in the harvest. They were taking in their shingles to live in sleek comfort until good times returned. In the meantime the boom-crazed people, who had sunk their earnings in heavy payments on city lots far removed from urban districts, were feeling the pinch of the depression.

WAR ENHANCED DIFFICULTY.

With the assassinations at Sarajevo, the war clouds gathered, Canada was drawn into the vortex of war right on top of a year or two of luxurious living on borrowed capital. The financial systems throughout the world collapsed like houses of cards, and Canada was confronted with very serious problems. Throughout the past two and half years the world has been re-establishing itself financially. The countries have been re-organizing their system, and discovering new sources of wealth with which to carry on the war. Money is being spent freely. There is an abundance of gold in circulation outside the immediate war zone, and because of this, and the gradual decrease of supply, increased prices have been entailed. This applies more particularly to domestic commodities.

Under these circumstances, what will happen when peace is declared? Canada must commence re-organizing her trade, undoubtedly enlarging her trade connections if she is to benefit by the proposed allied trade conference. Can she again take up her task of nation-building as well as be a part producer of the world's goods?

VERY HEAVY DEBTS.

With a heavy pre-war debt, and with a war debt of about one and half billions, Canada's population of about eight and half million people will have to pay huge annual debt charges on this indebtedness,

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