

REVIEW

AFTER THE WAR—WHAT?

“Some would think the souls of princes were brought forth by some more weighty cause than those of meaner persons; they are deceived. there’s the same hand to them; the same reason that makes a vicar go to law for a tithe pig and undo his neighbors, makes them spoil a whole province and batter down goodly cities with the cannon.”

—Webster, ‘The Duchess of Malfi,’ Act-11, Sc. 1.

On the ceiling of the great “Salle de Glace” in the palace of Versailles is paraphrased the famous saying of Louis Quatorze, the builder of that stately pile, “L’etat c’est moi.” There we find painted the words. “Le Roy gouverne par luy meme.” Probably Bismarck looked up at them approvingly, when before the face of an astonished Europe he proclaimed, across the body of prostrate France, William of Prussia *Deutscher Kaiser*.

These words epitomize the dogma which caused the world conflict and today we ask the question—How far has the victory over them been won? What power do they still exert in Europe.

Let us survey shortly the past. The French Revolution destroyed feudalism. It planted the idea of the rights of man—yet outwardly made little change. At the end the Hapsburgs, the Hohenzollerns—the Romanoffs—the Bourbons were still absolutist dynasties and shared the despotic rule of most Europe, with Metternich as their prophet.

In 1848 a new era set in. Democracy and Nationality made headway for twenty years. But this was paralleled by reaction—the Second Republic in France gave way to the Empire. And Bismarck after suppressing democracy in Prussia, by the ruthless use of the sword brought about the unity of Germany. He created the German Empire and the third French Republic at Sedan.

But Bismarck also destroyed the Concert of Europe and substituted for it two great groups of European States in jealous rivalry. Bismarck destroyed the Concert of Europe when he was allowed to seize the Danish provinces without effective protest from the rest of the Powers, and then without consulting anybody went on to untie Germany, to deal with Austria and France with

the instrument which Moltke had forged and the nations awoke to find themselves face to face with the fait accompli!

After a period of suspense the new Europe crystallised into two armed camps—The Triple Alliance, composed of Germany, Austria Hungary and Italy—and the Dual Alliance of France and Russia. This alignment though not a true Balance of Power, because the groups were really antagonistic, still preserved the peace of Europe for forty years. What then caused the world War?

The world war was brought about by the fact that the political structure of Europe, and the world for that matter, was not adaptable to the changed conditions of modern times. Two adaptations or adjustments were needed.

The first as to power—that was the problem of finding a new and appropriate place for the expanding Germany created by Bismarck. She had few colonies. She needed raw materials and markets. She would soon have to import food stuffs. Yet the whole world was divided between the Great Powers and the navy of England the greatest of colonial and commercial Empires was paramount on the seas.

According to the militant philosophy then current in Germany there was only one course to adopt—and that was to make Germany's might sufficient to compel attention and as a last resort, compliance with her needs. Hence the Anglo French entente and the military and naval competition before 1914.

The second cause was the inability or unwillingness of Germany, Austria, and Russia to yield to the renewed democratic and nationalist movements of Central and Eastern Europe. The political structure of this continent East and North East of the Rhine and the Alps defied both nationality and democracy. It was this movement that caused the war for it was an argument for the physical force party, to wage a successful external war and then they should be able to crush such movements at home.

Very few people, today, still believe that anybody deliberately pressed the war button:—saying to himself "Here goes. If I press it its war—if not—peace." Yet it is essential that we realize that fact if we are to prevent a repetition of 1914. So long as the legend is still current that the troubles of the last ten years were the deliberate hand-work of two or three superdevils, men will never

discern the real causes or take the necessary action to prevent them operating again.

Germany met defeat, but by how narrow a margin her plans miscarried in 1914 every one now knows. The war was settled for a time—how short or long depends—the issues that produced the crisis. Germany's defeat settled her 'place in the sun': the other causes were also settled—for a time. The victory of the Allies and then the Versailles treaty gave—ostensibly—a new basis for a fresh start of liberty, nationality and democracy.

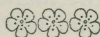
But there was another feature to the settlement which is in some ways the most important of all. That is the idea expressed in the facile phrase of today that the last war, 'was a war to end war.' People recognized that wars sometimes grew out of international order itself and that it was not caused always by the machinations of some superdevilish ruler thirsting for power. They have consequently hurled abusive but not always accurate epithets at such things as the Balance of Power, secret diplomacy—competitive armaments. This was to be altered. Nations would disarm—affairs of all peoples would be conducted from the point of view of the welfare of humanity. There would be a new era of unity and co-operation. The result as we all know was the Covenant of the League of Nations.

There are few examples of slumps in idealism more striking than that witnessed since 1919. From the United States the refrain 'Make the world safe for democracy' is no longer heard, only the sullen insistent cry: 'We want our money back.' The Dominions only wish to be left alone.' Canada is the only nation which has asked nothing and received none of the spoils of war—In Europe positive discord is rampant. The French occupation of the Ruhr was almost equivalent to new war. Italy has been at loggerheads with Jugo-Slavia and Greece. Turkey and Greece have fought out their old quarrel afresh. The international air has been poisoned by the miasma of reparation and interallied debts.

Webster read life truly. Economic motives remain the strongest motives actuating man. Mammon has the majority of humanity among his devotees and they all, when he is threatened, will fight for their god. The fact must be faced that from the economic standpoint Europe is a greater zone of friction now than in 1914.

We have one safeguard, the League of Nations—which is only half a League and as yet it has not been able to deal with one first class problem of Europe or the world. There are new forces abroad which are for change, new hopes for power and prestige—among the nations—new aspirations among the peoples, are in operation. The insistent question stares us in the face. Have we in the League of Nations the mechanism which will be able to make future adjustments when these changes become necessary? Has it the vision to reconcile conflicting rights? Can it accomplish these things in time and without war?

—J. R. H. F.



“To love God is to have good health, good looks, good sense, experience, a kindly nature and a fair balance of cash in hand. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. To be loved by God is the same as to love Him. We love Him because He first loved us.”

—Samuel Butler

“Assume the honourable pride demanded by your merits.”

—Horace.

“Avoid a remedy that is worse than the disease.”

—Aesop.

“Scarcely any virtue is found to resist the power of long and pleasing temptation.

—Goldsmith.

“Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interests, and not on metaphysical speculations.

—Edmund Burke.

“He that hath a satirical vein, as he maketh others afraid of his wit, so he had need be afraid of others' memory,”

—Francis Bacon.