

A PHILOSOPHY EMBATTLED.

THE DEEPER CAUSES OF THE WAR. By Emile Hovelague. (E. P. Dutton & Co.; \$1.25.)

AMERICA'S RELATIONS TO THE GREAT WAR. By J. W. Burgess. (A. C. McClurg & Co.; \$1.)

LE PLAN PANGERMANISTE DÉMASQUÉ. By A. Chéradame. (Plon; 4 fr.)

DEMOCRACY AND PEACE. By James Bissett Platt. (Richard G. Badger; \$1.)

L'AVEU. By Lieutenant Louis Madelin. (Plon; 1 fr. 50.)

LA GUERRE INFERNALE. By Gustave Dupin. (Jeheber; 3 fr. 50.)

LA SUPPRESSION DES ARMÉNIENS. By René Pinon. (Perrin; 1 fr.)

THE WAR AND HUMANITY. By James M. Beck. (G. P. Putnam's Sons; \$1.50.)

POLAND'S CASE FOR INDEPENDENCE. (Dodd, Mead & Co.; \$3.)

EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. By J. A. Murray Macdonald. (T. Fisher Unwin; 2s. 6d.)

POLITICAL FRONTIERS. By Sir Thomas Holdich. (Macmillan Co.; \$3.)

It seems not unlikely that in the literature of this war the future historian will find a tragic euthanasia. It pours forth with an abundance which shows no sign of cessation. M. Hovelague restates its philosophic basis not, indeed, with either profundity or completeness, but with a clarity that is not without its charm. Professor Burgess pursues his rôle of indignant dissatisfaction with the American attitude; and he continues to make havoc of history and public right that he may somehow construct a case. M. Chéradame has written a forcible study of the broad outlines of the German plan of conquest, which is useful for its vigorous handling of the geographical issues involved. Professor Platt's little volume is one of the typical reveries this war seems destined to produce without number; it is as true as it is obvious, and so obvious, for the most part, as to be

hardly worthy of publication. M. Madelin gives us some interesting documents taken from German soldiers who fought at Verdun which throw a vivid light on the objective of that tremendous failure. M. Pinon has written with biting irony of the Armenian massacres. Mr. Beck proceeds in characteristic swashbuckling style to display his jovial and boisterous faculty of whole-hearted hate and uncritical admiration. The volume on Poland is a brilliant statement not merely of national achievement but of the main issues involved in what is, in some sort, the most tragical of historic destinies. Mr. Macdonald states simply and clearly the principles which should underlie the European reconstruction. Sir Thomas Holdich's volume derives a special value not only from the fact that he is the foremost practical authority upon his subject, but also because it brings home to us, in realistic fashion, the task which will face those who refashion the map of Europe. His book is easily the best discussion of its subject that exists in the English language. I can only hope that in a second edition it will be given the illustrative maps it so badly needs.

What all these books make tragically clear is the simple and vital fact that it is against a philosophy that the allied powers are contending. Each age and each people seems guided in its destinies by a conception of some good superior to that which it has achieved. What is the ideal which has actuated Germany in the last half-century? Her philosophers significantly ceased to proclaim the inviolability of law. They no longer taught us that personality, whether human or national, is of itself worthy of respect. They did not insist on the worth of human fellowship. They did not emphasize the part that coöperation may play in the conquest of pain. Not that the Germany of the nineteenth century ceased to employ a categorical imperative. On the contrary, tutored by Fichte and Hegel, it did not shrink from proclaiming that the national soul must be true to herself. It insisted on her pursuit of all that might add to the richness of her experience. It demanded her right to that material permanence of form in which alone the spirit can adequately flourish. It etherealized the principles of Machiavelli, and erected them into an ethical system. Hegel gave to them a philosophic, and Treitschke a quasi-historical, justification. That they might prosper and grow strong, they were nourished by Bismarck on blood and iron. But the appetite grows by that on which it feeds. Strength turned to domination; the giant sought abroad for his victims. Exulting in his

capacity for achievement, he called for sacrifice to his lust for power. Slowly and cautiously and of set purpose he fashioned the weapons of his desire. Science and art and education became the handmaidens of his theories. They were bent to the service of his will. He felt within himself the quality of leadership which demands conquest that his strength may not waste nor grow old with the lapse of time. His ambition was fostered by the prospect of an easy victory. His bow was the bow of Ulysses, which none save he could bend. Nor did he fail to clothe his purpose in the specious phrases of moral endeavor. He was, so he told himself, the minister of civilization. There was no science in which his subjects did not labor to magnificent achievement. Music no less than commerce, art, the drama, theology—all these they had made their own. Mystically, perhaps, yet none the less certainly, the giant felt the call to action. A world that he did not dominate was a mean and ignoble thing. A world which thought differently from himself was on the road that led to political and philosophic damnation. He must save it from itself, that the greatness of his *Weltanschauung* might be made manifest. It was, of course, a stupid world. It would not surrender its right to think and to hope in its old and fitful fashion. It rioted in an antiquated individualism. It was torn by meagre scruples. It aimed at preventing that which was destined to save it. By war alone could it be made to perceive its errors. Terrible, indeed, it was that such a medicine should be the path of tutorship. But the world is a blind world; and only the roar of cannon can shock it into sight.

It was a world that seemed consciously to have erected barriers in the road of German achievement. Slowly, indeed, but with a grim certainty it was fastening upon the necks of men the ideal of public right. Slowly, again, but with an equal certainty it was compelling men to recognize the sanctity of international obligation. In Belgium and in Switzerland it had created buffer states for no other purpose than to make difficult the ideas underlying the ambition of German development. It was a world preaching almost with the fulness of genuine conviction the right of any nation, however small or feeble, to work out in its own way whatever destiny it could accomplish. It was a world which seemed unwilling to recognize the priority of German achievement. It spoke of what France had done, England, Italy, in the record of human progress. Wherever Germany turned, foes seemed to confront her. The giant could not under-

stand that the rattling of his scabbard produced no trembling. He was compelled to don his armor lest the virtues of which he was the appointed guardian might come to be branded as sin. That which he desired, he knew it was his mission to take. Once success had proclaimed his virtues, he knew that a world which frowned now at his swash-buckling would crown his brows with the laurel of a merited homage. He would teach them the manliness of a savagery which philosophy had erected into a system. He would fling the defiance of conscious supremacy in the face of pigmies who had slept and played while he toiled and grew weary in the preparation for this hour. He would bestride Europe like a colossus; and when victory came, he would proclaim the splendor of hardness in the ruthless vigor of his conquest.

So did ideal right take might unto itself, in order that it might cease to be merely ideal. Never in the whole process of history has a nation so consciously wedded itself to the lust for power. *Weltmacht oder Niedergang* has been an ambition written into the practical terms of territorial acquisition. But what Germany failed tragically to understand is the hold that freedom has taken upon the heart of Europe. There is no compensation for servitude. Efficiency, order, comfort—these are no more than instruments to be handled when the spiritual penumbra of life has been given the substance of attainment. The gifts Germany could bring were great gifts; but to accept them upon her terms was to choose stagnation and sloth. Her veins might thrill with the ardor of her nationalism; but the blood of Europe must not be tapped that she might assist in the swelling. To a belief in the philosophy of anæmia, in fact, she could not persuade her neighbors. And where she had failed to convince, she drew her sword that she might slay.

As she had calculated, she found a Europe that was hardly prepared for her onslaught. As she had calculated, her legions could hack their way to the very gate of their destined heaven. But yet that Europe which she had deemed old and tired awoke to the fresh buoyancy of youth when it found that it was fighting once more the ancient battle of liberty. The war became a crusade; and the young men died gladly that they might become the trustees of a later freedom. And the more desperate became the issue, the more sternly, even the more proudly, did they advance to the conflict. The philosophy which was to proclaim its strength began to vaunt itself on its meekness. The eagle which was

to peck at the liver of Promethean Europe turned to batten on a starved but courageous Belgium.

Nowhere has been more clearly envisaged the error of German statecraft than in its occupation of Belgium. It admitted its wrong and made a virtue of its treason. For the public opinion of humanity it seemed to care nothing. Of a whole country it made a desert that it might proclaim the *Pax Germanica*. History records no annals more terrible than the German treatment of Belgium. It was consciously planned and consciously executed. There is no crime of which the most diseased imagination can conceive, of which the conquerors were not guilty. They murdered men and women and children with a deliberate and ruthless impartiality. They laid waste with a brutal joy in desolation to which the annals of modern civilization bear no parallel. They exacted tribute with an insolent cruelty which, to the last day of German history, will be remembered with shame. They vaunted proudly of their achievement before a people whose only sin had been that they cherished their honor and their public virtue. They attempted the calculated destruction of a national existence. They forced the sons of their enemy to fight against their fatherland. They made outrage a daily necessity, and of merey the rarest of luxuries. That Belgium was writing with her blood and tears the epitaph of this philosophy, Germany seems in no wise to have understood. That her brutal severity must be the measure of her condemnation seems never to have penetrated into her consciousness. Yet nations, like men, are pursued by those Furies who, in the process of time, compel the soul to attempt its sorrowful purgation.

In a real sense it is by Belgium that European liberty has been saved; and there is something of supreme irony in this contrast of the protagonists in those early days of that mighty drama. In the new Europe that is dawning it is no less certain that the glory of Belgium will be remembered than that, for Germany's own sake, the occasion of reparation will be offered. The forces of liberty have maintained an unbroken front in this contest. The effort has been long and it has been difficult; but in the mind of man there has been vivid memory of the splendor of the goal. The page that is now being written in the history of human freedom is fundamental in its importance and its uniqueness. The youth of Europe have sacrificed spontaneously their manhood that in their death the ideal of right may conquer. The free-will offerings of free peoples have been a buckler and sword to

humanity. The principles that have been sustained are those upon which the happiness of men most greatly depends. That they have been maintained with such passion and such determination is surely the proof of their necessity in a world which cares most deeply for the richness of a free inheritance.

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