

## A DIFFERENT WORLD AFTER THE WAR

BY BOUCK WHITE

SAID Lord Rosebery at London University not long ago: 'All Europe is disappearing, never to return in its present shape. At the conclusion of the war, the form it will assume will be unlike anything with which the world has grown familiar.'

His words stand too nakedly. It is not a time for cocksure prophesyings. The breakup is over too wide an area, and is of so dismaying a complexity, that no intelligence is sufficiently cosmic to receive all of the factors and mould them into a coherent forecast. This much of his prognostication, however, is certain: Christendom at the close of the war will be in a state favorable for a reshaping into something different, something higher than it ever has been before.

The termination of hostilities is going to be the signal for a volcanic outburst. Through a large part of the last year I have been in Europe. I was in the trenches, field-hospitals, dugouts, and headquarters of high military command. I conversed with the men, sharing their dangers, their hardships, their pleasures. At the rear likewise, removed from the shouting and the tumult, I talked with peasants in their ancient habitations. I went over into Spain and traveled through France; I was in Switzerland and Italy; I touched at Greece when the Balkan outburst was preparing; I was in Asiatic Turkey; I passed through Bulgaria a couple of times, and was in Rome. From both Flanders and the Dutch coast I watched the naval activities on the

restless North Sea waves. I visited Germany, and England immediately thereafter. Front and back, on both sides of the battle-lines, I have seen.

In Europe's populace a restive spirit is setting in. Not articulate as yet. It has not bubbled up to the surface. But deep down, the fires are boiling; the brew is simmering. At the front in Flanders, I lived in a hamlet where the reserve trenches were dug. Here the troops from the front fire-line would come back at periodic intervals for recuperation, preparatory to a new turn at the parapets some miles across the meadow. A railroad train came once a day, connecting with the world outside. This train brought us the mail, including daily papers. Two dailies largely circulated among the soldiers were *La Bataille Syndicaliste* and *La Guerre Sociale*. The censor could expurgate the red matter from their pages, but he could not expurgate the title at the top, or the hundred subtle suggestions of revolt everywhere in their columns; and they were sold openly by hawkers. I asked one of them how these two papers went. 'Grandly,' said he; 'I sell 'em by the dozens.'

I am not saying that the presence of these papers betokens any trend toward present rebellion. The people in the trenches opposite are a sufficient deterrent. But I am saying that, with the coming of peace, the minds of soldiers nourished on this daily nutriment will be in a mood for anything but tame acquiescence if the terms of that peace should prove the war to have

been fruitless. One day, so it is reported, a sign appeared above the German parapet: 'The English are fools.' The sign disappeared, was succeeded by a second: 'The French are fools.' A third: 'We Germans are fools.' A fourth pointed the moral: 'Let's go home.'

I was riding on the Berlin-to-Bagdad railroad into Constantinople. Traveling in a compartment with me were some German soldiers, sent to the Levant. One in particular interested me. He had no enthusiasm for the war. Not that he was a shirker. Grit was finely in his composition. But he had no liking to throw his young life into a conflict of dynasties. I asked him then why he was in the war. He told me it was because he was forced. He quickly sought to cover up the nakedness of the avowal — for we were in the zone of martial law, and girt with espionage — by deriding the British. 'The English Tommy,' said he, 'is bribed into the war by belly-bait — roast chicken and jam tarts. Anybody would fight, if he could see that kind of ration-limber driving up through the communication trenches three times a day.' Thereupon he went off into a description of the hard fare that the Teuton Tommy got. It recalls the prediction of Herr Bebel: 'As long as all goes well and victory crowns our banners, they [the German Socialists] can do little but let themselves be swept along with the triumphant flood. But once let the impression take root that Hohenzollern prestige has lost its magic — once let the War Lord's pride be humbled by a genuine disaster to his arms — then prepare for a miracle.'

The prevailing sentiment in Austria I found to be one of profound lethargy. There the war is most unpopular. Now that they are in, they have got to keep on — like men in a treadmill, exhausted but still ceaselessly tramping on, because sharp knives wait at the bottom

to impale whoso faints or lies down. Said the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, Austria's Socialist organ, recently, 'Duty bids us be silent, but our hearts are burning.'

Throughout the central empires the idea I received from all save the military was that of a people who had got into the war without knowing it, and were now stunned by the fact beyond the power of intelligent activity to redress the evil. The Socialist organ, *Soltbrecht*, publishes this excerpt from a secret manifesto circulated by the Socialists of Austria-Hungary: 'After the war we shall imitate the French, who found a way to a republic through revolution.'

The voices of unrest in England are many. I was talking in London with J. Ramsay Macdonald, Member of Parliament, who has been foremost in protesting against the war. 'You would be surprised,' said he, 'to see the letters I get from people who wish to hearten me in my stand, and to assure me that I am not alone.' And he pointed to a great heap of correspondence on his desk.

In Italy I was talking with a high official in one of the legations at Rome. The conversation turned on the slow progress made by the Italian troops. 'There's a reason,' said he; 'Italy has not called out her full force.' 'Why not?' I asked. He looked at me a moment. 'Don't you know,' said he, 'that Italy has been for a number of years on the verge of a social overthrow?' Count Tasso Tassinari, defending Italy for not taking part in the recent Balkan campaign of the Allies, writes: 'Salandra and Sonnino were loath to try the dangerous experiment of sending our men to foreign soil. Italy is enough for us, is the battle-cry of Italian Socialists; and Socialism in Italy is a very powerful party indeed.'

One night I was traveling through the Thracian Plain in European Tur-

key. It was on the railroad that fed the Gallipoli front. A Turkish officer was aboard, returning from service in the trenches. At a country station our train was side-tracked — it was a one-track road — to give troop-trains the right of way. The officer and I had got acquainted, and, as he spoke French, we were able to converse. It was moonlight. We left the train, climbed upon a stack of hay by the side of the railroad that had been accumulated for the transport horses, and spent the midnight hour in talk. Knowing that I was a war reporter, the burden of his talk was for me to use my influence to get America to intervene and stop the war. 'Not that we are afraid of the enemy,' said he; 'don't get that idea, Mr. White! We can take care of all that come against us. But of what use is the bloodshed? Slaughter, slaughter, slaughter! And on both sides. Yes, we have heavy casualties, as well as England. I'm willing to tell you the truth. No good will come of it all. More graves, more people mutilated, more families without a head. Help persuade America to stop the war, Mr. White. You will be doing a splendid thing.'

The sudden martial-law dissolution of the Duma some time ago is eloquent of the ferment within Russia's vast territories. And an order found on a French captive this past winter tells the same tale: 'The army commander has learned with indignation that, at several places on the front, conversations and even handshaking with the Germans have taken place. I am at a loss to understand how a Frenchman can sink so low as to shake hands with such bandits.'

Everywhere, save among the officers who are gaining glory, or among the army contractors who are heaping up riches, the war is growingly unpopular. The people impressed me as flies caught all in the same trap, and buzzing angri-

ly to find some outlet from the intolerable situation; colliding with each other the while. Life in Europe becomes every day more insufferable. As the back grows weaker, the load waxes heavier. Irritation is heaping up, mountain high. At present this irritation vents itself in wrath against the enemy. But with the coming of peace, that enemy will fold its tents and vanish. Then the dynamic hour will strike.

Always the disbandment of an army is a time of difficulty; and for good reason. War is a kind of playtime. It is a break in the monotony. One of the facts that most strongly impressed me in Europe was the zest of life at the front compared with the humdrum existence of those who were left behind. I saw both classes and I know. Not that I am underestimating the privation of the men in the trenches. I know what it is for soldiers to tramp in the mire. I have done it with them. I know what it is for weary men to sleep in the rain-soaked straw within gun-fire of the foe. I have shared that straw with them. I know what it is to be amid the screech of shells and the buzzing of bullets. None the less, I am certain that in time of war the army is the privileged class. They live a life in the outdoors in cheering *camaraderie*; they have no anxiety as to their daily bread; they are ministered unto in the matter of clothing and medical supplies. Each detail of their life is thought out for them by another. Their lot, of course, is one of peril, but the excitement nullifies the psychological effect of it. I remember being in a front trench in Flanders, at a point where the enemy was very close. The bullets were whistling, so that in walking about I ducked my head. The officer with me pooh-poohed my fear. 'You don't need to be afraid,' said he. 'Why, those bullets are at least three feet over our heads.' Danger gets to be a negligible factor in

the soldier's life. His existence is one long camping-out party, with the privations, to be sure, that always attend a camping existence, but also with the happiness that goes with a bivouac in the open. When men habituated to the care-free life of the camp come back into civil surroundings, with their normal restraints and their drudgery, they are ill at ease. It is ever a time of stress to the social fabric.

There is still another reason. A time of war is a time of gag-law. Discontent may arise in the heart, but it is not allowed utterance. A prime purpose of the declaration of martial law is to put padlocks on every tongue, whereby turbulent spirits are forced to keep an unwilling silence. Therefore, during an extended reign of martial law, inflammable material accumulates in the heart. With the coming of peace this lid is lifted. As a consequence the pent-up dissatisfaction, which in many cases has festered and gone morbid because of the unnatural restraint, surges forth. The spirit of criticism in the people is then like a young and vigorous dog which has been a long time tethered and is suddenly let loose — it dashes forth with an energy proportioned to the length of time of its tethering. Hearts now dumb in silence will not permanently hold their peace, but will voice their displeasure at the secret diplomacies which led the world into so evil a conflict — diplomacies wherein the masses were as sheep appointed for meat.

The experience of Paris after the Franco-Prussian war is to the point. The opening of the gates of Paris to the Prussian conquerors was the signal for an uprising of the larger part of the French army. Three hundred thousand of the National Guard refused to surrender their arms to the French government located at Bordeaux. Baricading the streets of Paris, they drag-

ged cannon to the heights of Montmartre, and from thence resisted all overtures of surrender. Pitched battles were fought between the rebels and the regular army at Versailles. The latter finally pierced the barricades, but even then the fury and the folly of the Communists were not at an end. They had put the direction of their affairs in the hands of half a dozen men as wild of head as themselves, and now this self-styled 'Committee of Public Safety' began an era of destruction. They murdered their prisoners and set public buildings in Paris afire. The 'Red Week' in May, 1871, will not soon be forgotten by students of social history. At one time four or five of the splendid architectural monuments of this queenliest of cities were in flames. Even the Tuileries did not escape the fire-brand, so that the Louvre, with its ageless and irreplaceable treasures of art, was threatened. Fortunately, the troops from Versailles burst into that part of the city in time to extinguish the flames and save the Louvre; but the Tuileries palace was beyond saving. It is a melancholy fact that Paris suffered more from her own infuriated populace after the war than she did from the Prussians.

The soldiers who will come back to the haunts of peace at the close of the present conflict will have abundant pegs upon which to hang the themes of their discontent. Of these, the burden of taxation will probably be the chief one. Holiday-makers ordinarily take their outing on money saved up beforehand, so that their return to the work-a-day world, when the vacation is at an end, is not made more cheerless by debts. Military campers, however, pay for the outing after they go home. In other words, the expenses of a war are paid out of borrowed money which must be repaid when the soldiers return.

On a dining-car in France, traveling from Paris to Havre, I was seated opposite a Frenchman of some position in the world of affairs. We conversed on various things. As we were approaching the military zone, I broached the subject of the army. 'Let us not talk about the war,' he entreated. Nor was I long in learning the reason. 'The economic crisis after the war,' said he, 'will be something formidable.' A time of war is ever a time of inflation. The artificial prosperity produced by armament orders and the disbursement of huge war budgets creates a semblance of business activity. Helfferich, Minister of Finance of the German Empire, reckons the cost of the war at seventy million dollars daily. That amounts to \$25,000,000,000 each year. Borrowers ride prosperously for a season, but their judgment day is never far off.

There is still a further cause for the popular restiveness that always follows war. During the military operations, the people are in a semi-hysterical state of excitement which prevents them from taking due note of the miseries that the war is accumulating. With the signing of peace, this excited state of the nerves passes, and, like the ebbing of a tide, lays bare the mud-flats of reality in all their unsightliness. Some of the governments are refusing to publish the number of the dead, or any statistics as to the wounded. But these figures will refuse to be covered up forever. The casualties will some day be reckoned. The returning soldiers and the communities that greet them will have full leisure to count the losses and to observe the mutilated wretches of men dragging their bodies along every street.

All of this spells a popular reaction when peace is finally ratified. War is like the debauch of a drunkard. In the evening, among the wine-cups, his state is glorious, but with the morning after

comes headache and a time of irritation against himself and the world. Unless all auguries are at fault, the present conflict will not be attended by decisive victory on either side. There will be, therefore, no spoil to divide; nowhere an indemnity to restore the ravages. So that in all of the countries the returning soldier will be faced by a diminishing budget and a swollen debt. The greater part of Europe will feel the heave of the rebellious tide. A wave always gains in height as the breadth and volume of the creating disturbance extend. Europe, when the peace concordat is signed, must face a time of tumult. A fire will be kindled, and it will be tempestuous.

There is likelihood that uprisings will blaze out against the wealthy in Europe's chief cities. When the common soldiers come back from the war and face the misery and mutilation round about them, they are going to behold along the Wilhelmstrasse and Piccadilly and the Champs Élysées mansions little touched by privation. They will see palaces full of all manner of goods; a life of sumptuous splendor, not pinched to the point of pain by the desolation of the residue of the people. An irritation will be kindled within them, particularly when they remember that the statesmanship which precipitated the war was in the hands largely of the same ruling aristocracy. Some of them will go against those palaces with a shout.

The tide of passion sweeping over Europe will make itself felt in America. The world is at last one. Oceans no longer separate. The Atlantic is a broad and smooth highway rather than a barrier. This internationalizing of the world will envelop America in the tumult; she will feel the backwash of the European wave. In 1776, our Revolution had a quick repercussion in Europe. Lafayette and his compatri-

ots went back from Yorktown to carry the sacred fire to the avenues and the thoroughfares of Paris; the French Revolution that broke out in 1789 was the lineal descendant of the American Revolution of 1783. There would, therefore, be a working of the law of compensation if the direction of the tidal advance should now be reversed, and America were caught in the swell of a European wave, as Europe aforesaid was caught in the swell of the American wave. A windy storm is on its way.

The important thing is that this stirring and upheaval on the part of the multitude be turned to reconstructive account; else it will go off into red excess. Indeed, very clear and foresighted eyes have detected this darker possibility, and on both sides of the battle-front. Said von Bülow to the wife of a Roman minister some months ago: 'Germany's efforts are indeed great, but she has an army, the best army in the world. Next spring this army will be increased by 4,000,000 new men, and even if we do not win at once our resistance will be long and may be changed into victory. The war will be frightful, monstrous. It will exhaust both belligerents and neutrals, who next year will suffer famine. Revolts will follow. And the world has never seen anything equaling such a great disaster.' The London *Economist* is even more explicit: 'As soon as the main issues for which we are fighting can be achieved, it is just as much the duty of our statesmen to make peace as it was in the view of Sir Edward Grey to make war at the end of July last. The time may come before long when it will be possible to consult the dictates of humanity and at the same time secure the objects indicated by Sir Edward Grey. If such an opportunity is lost, the war will not go on forever. It will end in Revolutionary chaos, be-

ginning no one can say where and ending in no one can say what.'

In order to put a programme, something of clear-sightedness and sure-footedness, into a folk-movement, leaders of trained intelligence will be essential. Here is the danger-point in the whole situation. At present, the college minds and the people of cultivated mentalities generally, are not with the forces that make for change, but are still lolling at ease in the comfortable camp of the established order. This means that the populace is being left at present to the leadership of minds as undisciplined as itself, who, when the moment of action comes, will lead the multitude into wild orgies of excess.

It is a time for calm nerves. Tempest weather is gathering. The ship of civilization is headed for stormy seas. Wisdom commands that we read the barometer intrepidly, trim ship expertly, and set ourselves with stout hearts to ride the gale. The months still intervening should be utilized in getting ready. The 'Let-me-sleep' and 'We'll-muddle-through' policy is by every portent antiquated. Supposing that, after the war, the world should sink back into its old condition — naught to show for the waste and the blood and the infinite birth-pangs: would it not be an incalculable sorrow, an irreparable blow to mankind? Society now, if never before, must begin consciously to shape its future. And the first step to take is for the educated class in America to join itself to the disinherited mass at the bottom, sharing their privations and uncertainties and dangers.

The identification of the people of culture with the disinherited mob, while always a blessed thing, would be of transcendent value in the present crisis. I spoke of the likelihood that the stormy bosoms of the victims of the present war will, if undirected, vent their storminess in shoutings and de-

predations that will go off into blood-guilty riot. The way — the only way — to prevent that crimson outbreak is to turn those turbulent energies into constructive channels. To seek to quell the storm by screwing a lid down over the boiling pot only prepares a more violent explosion. Give the people a serious and weighty enterprise of social reconstruction; it will sober their doings. Instead of dampening their vehemence, it will encourage vehemence; but will turn those mighty energies into an adventure wherein an architectonic responsibility will guide the exuberant forces into a work of building up, instead of a work of still further tearing down.

After the war, civilization will be in the melting-pot. That will be a time of grave peril, but it will also be a time of superlative opportunity. Whenever mankind is melted up, the hot human lava can wander undirected into waste heaps and desolations; or it can be poured into channels prepared for it, and be remoulded into forms of utility and of a beauty unspeakable. Without the least question we are going to see a fluid world after the war. Upon the willingness of the people of education and culture to identify themselves with the masses in personal self-commitment, will depend whether that fluid world shall be a reflux into savagery, or an advance into a democratic reordering that shall bring industrial paradise visibly within our human horizon.

As to-day is a culmination for which long ages have worked in slow, toilsome preparation, and from which ages

still further-stretching will take their form and texture, so it is a day charged with fateful destinies that can go either into brightness or into blackness. Not often is humankind in a migratory mood. The inertia of the mind of man has ever been the despair of social dreamers: inertia, against which, as against an immovable wall, heaven-born idealists have dashed their heads in desperation and defeat. Now, however, and as a gift unasked-for, that migratory mood has arrived. The war's world-earthquake has shaken man out of his slumberings. The soul is awake, and it will rouse up in even greater alertness when the European populace, now drugged into insensibility by martial law and the battle-fever, shall wake up out of its sleep. Man is willing, as he has not been before in eighteen hundred years, to break camp, pull up stakes, leave the spot where he has been stagnating so long and so ignobly, and renew the journey of pilgrimage. It is a moment of incomparable preciousness — and of incomparable responsibility. For if man, now that he is shaking off his sloth of soul and is gathering together his spiritual effects for a resumption of his pilgrim's task, can be guided into the upward heaven-seeking path, it will be a gain worth even the blood-cost whereby it was purchased. But if, for lack of competent guides, mankind's new travel mood wears itself out in byways, its end will be in swamps and wilderness. A reaction will set in that will thenceforth make stagnation more stagnant. And the earth will have been disquieted in vain.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB

### DISCONTENT IN A GARDEN

OUR literature has recently been enriched by a fragrant phrase, 'Content in a Garden.' The words breathe of boxwood and of roses, but observation leads me to the opinion that the phrase, 'Content in a Garden,' is as fallacious as it is fragrant.

I write as one who has for unnumbered years lived with gardeners without becoming one. I have never planted or transplanted anything, or weeded anything, but I have been torn from many a book, wrenched away from performing many a charitable deed, caught back to earth when I was walking the sky on many a country ramble, by people who demanded that I stop, look, and listen to the doings of the dirt. Gardeners among my kinsfolk and acquaintance have grasped me by the inoffensive nape of my neck and incontinently thrust my nose into the mud in order that I might see therein an indiscernible green line of lettuce.

Now, unlike other germs, the horticultural bacillus is increasing in virulence. More people garden to-day than ever before in history. Against the spread of the epidemic I have exerted my personal influence and private eloquence, but so far with small effect. I have therefore resolved to appeal to a larger public and to raise in print my warning voice, pointing out the perils to poise and to peace inherent in any intimacy with the soil.

Theoretically, I should expect as much disquietude among gardeners as I have practically observed. They voluntarily expose themselves to disillu-

sion. Much may be said in favor of hitching your hopes to a star, but what about burying your hopes in sixty square feet of spring mud? The wise ancients always represented the devious ways of deviltry as taking place in the hidden bowels of the earth, yet the modern horticulturist is always expecting archangelic behavior from the blackest bit of mould into which he dares to delve. In the fifth act of *The Bluebird*, where the little unborn mortals are exhibiting their transcendent inventions, portentous with future disappointment, the preponderance of disillusion is given to the gardeners. The gardeners who are going to be born and the gardeners who have been born long enough to know better are alike in expecting their daisies to be big as cartwheels, their peas to be larger than grapes, their apples to rival melons, their melons to outstrip the pumpkin. Should an intelligent investor of his life's happiness bank all on the uncertain behavior of the weather and the weevil?

Intelligence, however, is not a quality to be looked for *a priori* in a gardener. What clearness of view could you expect from people who are continually curled into a ball tending sordid seedlings? Does one not shudder to mention the mental and moral disintegration risked by association with vegetables, — instance the gross irregularities of cucumbers and cantaloupes when they neighbor each other! Is there anything in the nature of the case that should make intimacy with cabbage-heads and beet-tops contribute to spiritual uplift? Yet such is the popular fallacy.