

## Foreign Correspondence

## THE CALL FOR ECONOMY—THE REGISTRATION AND MUNITIONS BILLS—THE CASE OF THE ARMENIAN.

By JAMES F. MUIRHEAD.

LONDON, July 2.

The motto of the day in England is "Waste not, want not"; and no wonder, seeing that the annual national expenditure has increased by a billion of pounds sterling. We talk of nothing but thrift and saving. And the object of our thrift is to buy coupons and bonds of the Government war loan, to be used in the purchase of ammunition for killing as many men as possible in the shortest possible time. And nevertheless we believe this saving, with this object, to be a high and holy duty.

Prime ministers and bishops, bankers and generals, professors and prominent women are all appealing to us to live the simple life, to reduce our allowance of meat, to abstain from luxuries, to leave most of the smoking (like all of the swearing) to our troops in Flanders, and to see, so far as lies in our power, that our exports in goods and cash shall represent nothing except payment for articles directly useful in the prosecution of the war. The answer to this appeal, so far as subscriptions to the war loan can give it, promises to be satisfactory. The vouchers for small amounts, in particular, are being taken up in enormous quantities. In the two German war loans, the purchasers of stock in quantities of less than £100 accounted for a sum of £120,000,000, equivalent to about 17 per cent. of the whole. It is expected that our small investors will do at least as well. The value of small savings may be illustrated by the fact that a saving of 2s. 6d. a head per week would yield nearly £300,000,000 a year. A point of interest to American investors is that a measure seems not unlikely to exempt from income tax the interest paid to persons resident outside the United Kingdom. This is important, because, with our present income tax (very likely, alas, to increase), the actual yield of the loan would be £3 18s. 9d. per cent., instead of £4 10s. I understand that the American income-tax law of last year makes a concession of this kind to foreign investors on American securities.

Before leaving the question of waste, it may be noted that a considerable body of opinion considers that the British Government must in this matter pay some heed to the admonition, "Physician, heal thyself." This applies not only to the waste of food in military camps and the expenses, due to red tape, in some of our offices, but also to the fact that many mature and skilled artisans, who would be very useful at home, are serving at the front, while many unmarried youngsters of no particular skill are still among the slackers at home. But this brings us to the thorny question of universal compulsory service!

Mr. Lloyd George's Supply of Munitions bill turned out to be substantially of the character I outlined in my letter of June 18. Its passage through the House of Commons was attended with considerable criticism (for the most part in the nature of friendly amendment), but with virtually no real opposition. Sir John Simon explained that its object was

not so much to secure compulsory power as to take advantage of the voluntary spirit and organize it efficiently. Most of the Labor groups concerned have accepted the conditions of the bill without demur; but it would not be England if there were not some dissenters. Thus the miners object to compulsory arbitration, but have given Mr. Lloyd George satisfactory assurances that they will "deliver the goods," and avoid strikes. The cotton operatives make the same objection and will (it is expected) give similar guarantees. It is, indeed, quite possible that there will be no need to declare any establishment "controlled," as the power to do may in practice make the deed done. Masters and men alike seem to recognize that no risk must be run in the matter of production of munitions; and thus the restriction of profits and the abrogation of trade-union regulations will be cheerfully accepted.

Whatever else it has effected, there is no doubt that this agitation over munitions has done much to impress the gravity of the situation on those who have hitherto been a little impervious. The psychologic and moral tension has been stretched to greater resonance, and has awakened echoes in new quarters. It has made us feel the need of united action, and it has tended to focus our attention on the more dynamic strain of leaders, like Mr. Lloyd George. It has brought home to us that we, too, manifestly possess the defects of our qualities, and is making us recognize more and more keenly that what are mere foibles in time of peace may become sins or even crimes in time of war. We are still determined to resist the Prussianization of our tactics and to carry on the struggle in a manner consistent with our own traditions; but we see that our inherited methods must be purged of all dross and applied in their most perfect form. We still believe that Britannism is better than Germanism; but we are learning that our advantage is not enough to allow any slackness in its use and that we must turn on the full head of our supply. To use Lord Haldane's phrase, we are becoming, to some extent at least, a people of reflection as well as of energy and resource.

The National Registration bill is not likely to enjoy quite so peaceful a progress as the Supply of Munitions bill. It provides for the registration of all persons (male and female) between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five, with a view to ascertaining their potential capacity for national service. The root of the opposition will be the very natural desire to continue to adhere for as long as possible to our traditional voluntary system, and the suspicion that this compulsory registration is only the first step to compulsory service all round, whether military or industrial. Some of the opponents are men of high standing and unimpeachable patriotism, whose attitude must be considered as free of any factitious element. After all, it will be more of a triumph if we can win without exchanging British methods for German. The *questionnaire* of the bill does not seem as clear as it might be, but I understand that Government will be quite open to amendments on certain points. The inclusion of women in the registration has also caused some discussion, and has even been ascribed to somewhat unworthy motives; but I am unable to see in it anything but plain common-sense and fair play.

It should be noted, however, that many of

our wisest thinkers do not consider the National Registration bill as an abandonment of the principle of voluntary service. It is rather in the nature of a system of channels into which our copious streams of voluntary help may be easily guided and through which they may be properly distributed. It is an effort to remove all barriers and obstacles, so that the course of the most diffident, scatter-brained, and casual of well-wishers may be made obvious and attractive—a scheme to make it impossible for ignorance or inattention to be pleaded as an excuse for inactivity. For there is undoubtedly a huge reservoir of somewhat sluggish and inert good-will waiting to be tapped, as well as many ready volunteers waiting only for a clear lead.

The Germans have just torpedoed another vessel, the Armenian, with American citizens on board. As, no doubt, it will be alleged that the Armenian brought her fate upon herself by refusing to stop after a shot had been fired across her bows, I wish to call attention to a point made by the *Daily Chronicle* of this date. Under the conditions of naval warfare hitherto subsisting, the Armenian would certainly have been bound to stop or take the consequences, if a German cruiser had fired a warning shot. But in the case of submarine warfare, as practiced by the Germans in this war, the captain of the Armenian knew that his vessel would be sunk in any case. As a brave and patriotic man, he was bound to take the one chance, slight as it was, of saving his ship. Hence he is in no sense responsible for the deaths of the American members of his crew, who were sacrificed solely to the needs of Germany's illegal method of submarine attack.

## A WAR BOOK OF ANATOLE FRANCE.

By STODDARD DEWEY.

PARIS, July 3.

Anatole France at seventy offered himself for the military service of his country in her hour of need. He now takes the lead in a series of five patriotic books sold for the *mutilés de la guerre*—the maimed and mangled of this horrible war.

The other volumes are by Maurice Barrès, Remy de Gourmont, Gabriele d'Annunzio, and Charles Maurras. These are great names of the passing generation, but it is the first time they are found together. It is an instance among many of the *Union sacrée* which is one of the clearest results of war in the French people. The publisher serves in the French army and, like the writers, has no personal interest in the sale of these books. They are published "to the memory of Jean Pierre Barbier, dead on the field of honor the 26th December, 1914, by his friends." He too was a writer, but of the generation who are coming.

Anatole France's contribution is a miscellany around the fixed idea of these harsh times. It has a dedication, in facsimile of the author's handwriting, to "Albert the King":

King, in you Republicans hail a hero and a just man.

It would be hard if there were not intellectual eating and drinking in any collection of writings by Anatole France. Not the least savory here are words which have come to him from disciples at the front. They surely write to him as *cher Maître*. In a Christmas

appeal, he had summoned as a witness to French courage and devotedness a military doctor, dead as he supposed at his post of duty:

"In bombarded Ypres, he was caring for fifty-four of the German wounded, and, being urged to quit his hospital, refused, jealous to give enemies the example of humanity—and he was killed at the bedside of a German soldier by a German shell."

Except for the killing, this first report was authentic. The doctor wrote back in person, illuminating victims really dead:

"I did not die, . . . but I escaped death only by an extraordinary chance.

"I was making out my report at the exact spot where the shell fell. I left my worktable some seconds before its fall. It was an enormous *marmite* (pot) that tore down a whole wing of the hospital and made mince-meat of Léonie and her old dog. A poor little black woollen shawl with a few bloody fragments hanging to it was all that was left of the cook of Ypres hospital. At the sight of it, Charles Stanforth (the English interpreter who had already given out the report of the doctor's death with the rest) was weeping. And I said to him—'See! there beside Léonie I was writing to General Vidal.'

"He looked at me strangely. Perhaps I struck him as a ghost might. . . . Good Léonie! a simple soul, with a heart of the people, a sacrificial heart! Against fear and for protection, she had set up between two slim candles an image of Notre Dame de Thuynes, the patroness of Ypres who, in other days, saved the city. Every day the image changed place, now on the sideboard, now on a chair, even on the floor, always flanked by its two candles.

"The same shell buried M. Gaymant under the ruins of his pharmacy and cut in pieces an English provision convoy. . . . Of all these victims only M. Gaymant survived. He was for weeks in the Poperinghe hospital. While we were dressing his many wounds and wiping off with oxygenated water the dust from bricks that encrusted them, he smiled and said: 'Now, doctor, I run no more risk—I am like a fortress, I am built of lime and sand.'

"Belgian humor is unspoilable."

The doctor explains his own escape as of one "predestined to bring back to you, in the beautiful light of love, the veritable meaning of the State!"

Anatole France gives ear otherwise to voices uniting the French people in their country's extremity:

"Stones speak to those who know how to listen.

"The little town says to Frenchmen looking down from the hilltop:

"See, I am old, but I am beautiful. My children's piety has embroidered me a robe of towers and spires and dented gables and belfries. I am a good mother; I teach labor and all the arts of peace, I exhort citizens to that scorn of danger which makes them invincible. I nurse my children in my arms. And, when their task is done, they come, one after another, to sleep at my feet under the grass where sheep are feeding. They pass; but I remain, to keep memory of them. I am their memory. This is why they owe all to me, for man is man only because he remembers. My cloak is torn and my bosom pierced in wars. I receive wounds which they say are mortal. But I live because I hope. Learn of me—it is holy hope that saves our country.'"

More in Anatole France's peace manner is the dialogue "after Herodotus" between Xerxes and Demaratus, that exiled King of Sparta who took refuge at the Persian Court.

"All my task—and I have found it very pleasant—was to gather into a single dialogue maxims and conversations scattered through the old historian. . . .

"Certainly I have not tried to make Greeks resemble ourselves. . . . It is no very philosophic amusement to dress up the ancients so as to recognize ourselves in them. But to descry in all times and countries Man, changeless Man; and discover in distant ages features seemingly peculiar to our own and really holding to human depths that change never, and to get a sudden glimpse that our species, varying so slowly, has not varied at all in epochs whose memory we keep—this it is that moves and interests and speaks strongly to imagination.

"If I mistake not, such human depths, such characters peculiar to our species, appear strikingly in these extracts from good Herodotus. This is why I think my fellow-countrymen, reading them, will more than once call back their thoughts from the 75th Olympiad to the present hour so grave, so full for us of glories and sorrows and big with a future in which we put high, vast hopes.

"Xerxes. Demaratus, I wish to ask about something which I am desirous to know. You are aware that the Greeks are gathered to defend this pass (Thermopylae) under the command of Leonidas, King of Sparta. A spy I sent out has been observing those who hold this side of the wall which they have raised to close the pass. They are Spartans. Putting their arms down by the wall, they went naked to their athletic sports or combed carefully their hair. I cannot believe that is the way they prepare themselves to die fighting. They seem to me, on the contrary, to be acting very ridiculously, and I predict that, within four days, they will retreat. What do you think?

"Demaratus. O King, fear not feigned words from me. I have told thee already what men the Greeks are. They nourish no vast desires and are content with what they possess. They fear the divine Nemesis which lowers those who lift themselves up too high, and they keep measure in all things. . . . These men have come to defend the pass against thee and they are making ready to do so. Now this is their custom—before making their sacrifice of life, they crown their heads with fillets and wreaths.

"Xerxes. What you say, Demaratus, is scarcely believable. How can these Spartans, so few in number, fight my numberless army?

"Xerxes. Man for man, a Persian is worth more than a Greek, as I shall make you see. For Persians, commanded by one alone, exceed their natural valiance by all the greatness of that which is imposed on them and which leads them to deeds that of themselves they would never dream of doing. For those who are least brave, obedience takes the place of courage and the fear of the master is stronger in them than fear of the enemy. Scourged onward, they throw themselves against lances and javelins. Such are Persian soldiers. Yours, being equal and free and obeying not one only chief, do in battle only their own pleasure and are inspired only by their heart which oftenest is but middling—for, in all countries, great hearts are rare.

"Demaratus. Greeks are free, O King; but they are not free every way. . . . As to Sparta, there not dying but flying is death. O King, such is the truth.

"Xerxes. I will disclose to you another advantage of the Persians over the Greeks. It is this—the Persians are closely united under my authority, and the Greeks are for ever quarrelling with one another. . . .

"Demaratus. Their dissensions ceased at thy approach, O King. . . .

"Xerxes. No matter, Heaven is on my side. Alone among men, Persians know the true gods. . . . My design is not only to conquer Greece, but all Europe. Europe is beautiful, her heavens kind and her earth fruitful. . . . Of all mortals, I alone am worthy to possess her.

"Demaratus. Son of Darius, if thou believest thyself a god, if thou thinkest to command an army of immortals, thou hast not to listen to my opinion. But if thou dost acknowledge thyself to be a man commanding men, think how fortune is like a wheel ever turning and overturning those it has uplifted.

"After these words Xerxes dismissed Demaratus, without anger. He was not irritated against him because he believed him to be out of his senses."

These scattered extracts show Anatole France at his best—in the present need. What his present faith is he proclaims in three final letters. To the *Clarion* of London:

"The Allies owe to all Europe and owe to themselves to pursue this war of liberation until the complete stifling of the Pan-German aspirations which have troubled Europe forty years long.

"They must, at the price of the most cruel sacrifices, destroy to the very root the military power of Germany and German Austria. —No peace, no truce, till the enemy of human kind is brought to earth!"

To the Russian *Novosti*, April 26:

"Friends, this war which we did not wish we shall wage to the end; we shall pursue our terrible, bountiful work to its entire accomplishment, to the total destruction of the military power of Germany."

To W. English Walling, New York:

"The idea they are sowing in America at this hour, to hasten the end of the war by prohibiting the exportation of arms and ammunition, proceeds not, I swear to you, from any French inspiration. No more does it proceed from any really human inspiration. For neither France and her Allies, nor the whole world, would profit aught by a peace that would leave still subsisting that perpetual cause of war—German Militarism."

Quite apart from the thought enshrined in such pages and the deserving object of the sale, the book has been given a form worthy of booklovers. ("Sur la voie glorieuse," par Anatole France. Paris: Champion; 3.50 francs).

The end, sudden and somewhat surprising, is an "Invocation" in lapidary style that Dr. Johnson might have approved, in spite of his aversion to Americans:

American Union  
born gloriously in storm  
nursed from infancy  
by Liberty  
on the milk of the strong,  
Thou who hast consecrated thy robust youth  
to superhuman toils  
People just and magnanimous  
Hall