

THE LIVING AGE

Founded by E. LITTELL in 1844

NO. 3962

JUNE 12, 1920

A WEEK OF THE WORLD

GERMAN DISARMAMENT

A RECENT issue of *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* contains an inspired article describing the progress made toward abolishing the old military establishment. The General Staff was dissolved on October 1, 1919; most of its officers are now engaged in civilian occupations and the building it occupied has been taken over by the Interior Department. General Headquarters was abolished long ago, as were also the old war ministries still maintained under the Empire in Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, and Wurttemberg. All the military forces of the government are now controlled by the Ministry of Defense which is a comparatively modest body corresponding to the reduced establishment. For instance, in the old days, the Prussian War Ministry alone employed 606 officers and 1348 civilians. The entire National Defense Office, which has taken over the duties of four previous ministries, employs but 298 officers and about the same number of civilians. In place of the seven old army departments and twenty-five divisions, Germany now has three National Defense Divisions. Furthermore, it is stated that the old military academies have been abolished.

The article we publish this week, describing the mental distress of the German middle classes over the demand of the Allies that the Home Guard be disarmed, was written by a French Swiss lawyer who had recently visited Germany, and originally appeared in a paper of strong pro-Entente sympathies. We understand that the Home Guard is organized something like our Colonial Minute Men in 1775, but that its purpose is primarily to defend the country from domestic instead of foreign enemies. Somewhat similar associations have been formed in France to protect the state against political strikes and is reported to have contributed to keeping public service in operation during the recent cessation of work in that country; though, of course, the French societies are not armed, as the maintenance of order in that country is left entirely to the police and the regular forces.

Germany now has at least four military or semi-military organizations; the National Guard, which is a force of regulars and which it is proposed to limit to 100,000 or 200,000 men; the 'Free Corps,' or volunteers, like the famous Eckhardt Marine Brigade, which are groups of profes-

Copyright, 1920, by The Living Age Co.

sional soldiers who voluntarily gathered about popular leaders in the early days of the revolution and were employed by the government to maintain order, suppress revolts, and defend the Eastern frontiers; the 'Safety Police,' who resemble the gendarmes or constabulary in most European countries, and the Home Guard, which we have just described, whose members apparently receive no regular drill under the colors but are enrolled and armed and subject to call when their service is required for maintaining order.

TEUTON IDEAS OF AMERICA

AMERICAN Democracy has long been a favorite theme in the party polemics of Germany. The Monarchists were wont to emphasize what they alleged to be American backwardness in industrial and social legislation as evidence that the masses were better off under a paternal empire than in a republic. These arguments were often supported by intelligent though partisan accounts of conditions in the United States, and they undoubtedly helped to promote in Germany prejudice against American institutions and misunderstanding of our people.

We print this week an article typical of this literature, although more moderate than many German writings on the subject. Unfriendliness toward the United States and distrust of our aims appear to be growing rapidly in Europe. They are not to be attributed, however, to our rejection of the treaty. In fact, our disposition to return to our old policy of national isolation may tend to allay rather than increase this distrust.

Captain Von Knorr, a special correspondent for the *Berliner Lokal Anzeiger*, proceeding to the Orient via the Panama Canal, thus summarizes

his impressions of the United States revisited after the war.

I must confess that the tremendous vitality of this country, amounting almost to an intoxication — based as it is upon unrelieved materialism, and pitilessly, ruthlessly pursuing its ends — affected me very powerfully and with a certain sense of oppression. How can Germany ever measure itself against such a land? That was the pessimistic question which pursued my steps. I felt as if I were in the presence of a mighty force of nature; something like those lava flows which stream from the crater of the fire gods of Hawaii on the mountain slopes of Mauna Loa, and irresistibly push forward to the sea.

Yes, America too is pushing to the sea, thanks to the inspiration of the European war. It is building a vast merchant fleet. It threatens like the lava stream to thrust its way aggressively whither it will, and to unsettle the political equilibrium and even the independence of nations. Unchecked, 'running free,' America is now in the full fever of economic world conquest.

RADICALISM IN FRANCE

FRANCE has recently experienced a general strike, of which — so far as we can judge from its press — we have received but incomplete information. Apparently, however, the main outcome is sufficiently well understood. As has happened in some previous labor contests of a more or less political character — notably in New Zealand and Australia — the general public rallied so strongly to the support of the government in its effort to keep the railways, tramways, lighting systems, and other essential services in operation, that the strike weapon as an instrument of social intimidation failed. The article we print this week from a Conservative Madrid paper does not depict a typical cross section of the French Radicalism which inspired this strike. It is, however, an interesting picture of the minds of a small group of French theoretical terrorists and of the *milieu* in which they work.

RUSSIAN INTELLECTUALS FOR RUSSIA

OUT of the chaos of Russia, there seems to be emerging a new spirit of Nationalism, chastened and instructed by years of disaster and suffering. If this betokens the approach of a period when compromise and tolerance shall have won a victory over discord and faction and intolerance, then this new phenomenon is very hopeful indeed. In an endorsement of the appeal of the Russian Intellectuals which we print this week, H. G. Wells says:

Can there be any answer but one from intelligent, educated men in England and America to this candid, reasonable, and moving appeal? It is difficult to find anything to add to what is said in this admirable document; it states its case so simply and clearly. The men who sign it are citizens of the intellectual community of the world; they appeal to us, across the stupid obstacles created by our politicians and our royalist and reactionary officials, for help in the gigantic task they are attempting not simply for Russia but mankind. We must needs answer with our warmest greetings and sympathy and the promise of our utmost help.

A recent article on Petrograd in the *London Morning Post* throws the following interesting sidelight upon present conditions in the former capital.

Petrograd as a city or single unit of population seems to have ceased to exist. It is broken up into a group of independent communities, each being one of the islands which are formed by the canals. Each island lives to itself in all essential particulars, with little life, traffic, or communication any longer passing from one to the other.

SCHOOL QUESTION IN HOLLAND

HOLLAND is discussing just at present the reorganization of its public school system. For fifty years the controversy between secular and religious instruction in that country has been acute. Under the existing law the public schools are entirely secular, but there is no discrimination against pupils educated in denominational

institutions such as prevails in Italy for instance. The public schools are now charged with responsibility for the rapid spread of Socialism. Since the recent revision of the Constitution, which makes such a policy permissible, a bill has been introduced into Parliament placing both religious and secular schools under state control, but at the same time providing for their support from the public treasury.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

THE *London Morning Post* publishes a Vienna dispatch of April 16, summarizing an instructive paper recently read there by the general manager of the Wittkowitz Works upon the present state of the iron industry in Czecho-Slovakia. Almost all the furnaces of the former Hapsburg Empire are situated within the boundaries of this new state. However, transportation difficulties have seriously reduced production. The Wittkowitz Works now turn out 300,000 tons per annum as compared with 530,000 tons before the war. Political conditions handicap mining operations and railway traffic. Some important mines are in Hungary, whose government forbids the exportation of the ore to the neighboring state. Indeed, the embarrassments caused by new political boundaries and legislative impediments are so great that arrangements are being made to bring iron ore from Sweden.

Czecho-Slovakia now has an elected parliament. The National Assembly, which preceded it, was an appointed body, in which the Germans refused to be represented. According to the latest returns, 141 members of the new legislature will be Socialists and 137 members of bourgeois parties. The old Assembly arranged the boundaries of the electoral districts so as to make it practically certain that the Czechs

would have a majority. This seems to have been attained, for about 60 per cent of the delegates are of that nationality, and 40 per cent are Germans, Hungarians, and Slovaks. Apparently, the tendency of the electors is to divide into a Socialist and a Clerical group, of which the latter is stronger in the farming districts and the former in the towns and mining regions. These groups do not form along the lines of nationality. There are German Clericals and German Socialists and Czech Clericals and Czech Socialists. Since about one third of the members will be Germans and a majority will be Radicals or Social Democrats, it is predicted that the new government will maintain very friendly relations with Germany.

The administration, like that of other European countries following the war, is over-loaded with civil servants. According to a recent Prague dispatch in the *Vossische Zeitung*, not less than 700,000 men and women are directly employed by the government, very largely in unproductive service. The state employees of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy, with nearly five times the population of Czecho-Slovakia, numbered approximately 400,000.

The new constitution seeks to prevent delays in legislation by providing that bills passed by the Lower House shall become a law if the Senate delays acting upon them more than six weeks. Bills originating in the Senate and passed by that body must be considered by the Lower House within three months. If the Senate rejects a bill passed by the House and the bill is again passed by the latter, it becomes a law.

ITALIAN NOTES

DURING the recent general strikes in Turin, most of the public services as well as private industries were stopped.

Italian press correspondents described the rails of the tramways as rusted from lack of use. The number of strikers exceeded one hundred and fifty thousand. Immense crowds of workmen thronged the streets in front of the government pawn shops, pledging their last effects in order to get money to feed themselves and their families. Labor unrest in Italy is following a course perilously like that in Spain. A number of workmen and gendarmes have been killed. Happily, however, these conflicts have not yet taken the vendetta character which they have assumed in Spain, where the newspapers frequently report the assassination of employers.

The victory of the Conservative wing of the Italian Clerical party at its last national convention has brought into prominence the young Sicilian leader of that group, Don Sturzo. Like his opponent, Miglioli, he is a land reformer, and was distinguished during his twelve years' service as the mayor of a Sicilian commune by his labors in behalf of the peasantry. But he does not believe in coöperative land management, the abolition of inheritance, and certain other extreme doctrines of his Radical-Clerical opponents.

A D'ANNUNZIO EPISODE

THE Fiume correspondent of *L'Echo de Paris* describes in a letter dated late in April, a typical exploit of D'Annunzio's legionaries. Being short of remounts for their cavalry, a party of them secretly left the city on a destroyer and silently reaching Abbazia, the well-known summer resort across the harbor, surprised and overwhelmed the Italian sentries stationed there and seized forty-six horses in a neighboring corral, making their escape by sea before a general alarm was given. As a result, the Italian commander ordered a strict blockade

of Fiume. D'Annunzio announced he would meet this measure by dropping over Italy from aeroplanes photographs of the horses with the following legend: 'Here are the forty-six horses on account of which the Italian Government is trying to starve forty-six thousand human beings.'

RADICAL IDEAS AT HAMBURG

DR. BENDIXEN, president of the Hamburg Mortgage Bank, proposes that the German Government solve its present fiscal and currency crisis by going still further with the policy of inflation. He suggests that all the German war bonds and certificates of indebtedness be converted into money by making them legal tender. In order to be accepted as currency they will require to be stamped and from that date interest will cease to accrue upon them. As rapidly as these bonds and certificates come into the national bank it will issue new notes against them. He thus proposes an increase in circulation of approximately seventy billion marks. The argument in favor of such a measure is that Germany has no choice between bankruptcy and inflation and that though the latter evil may be serious, it is the lesser of the two. It would save the country about five billions of interest and possibly enable the government to borrow at lower rates on its new bonds. Naturally, this suggestion is bitterly criticized by orthodox financiers.

After months of discussion the government of Hamburg has at last resolved upon the heroic method of rationing tenements in order to meet the housing crisis. Although this has been under discussion so long, the actual enforcement of such a measure has produced a most unpleasant shock upon the better situated classes. The authorities began with separate residences and villas, which were re-

quisitioned for homeless families, but finding this inadequate, have now levied upon apartment houses. Commissioners have inspected practically every dwelling in the city requisitioning two, three, four rooms or more according to the ratio the tenant's family bears to the quarters in which he resided. The people of Hamburg are said to have felt this invasion of the privacy of their homes more keenly than any other personal hardship inflicted by the war and the revolution. Naturally, the billeted families were not received cordially by the owners or by the people already in occupation. In addition, the housing authorities are accused of having been indifferent or tactless in the matter of placing in the same residences and apartments people likely to be uncongenial even under the best of conditions.

BADEN-BADEN

IN spite of Germany's political cataclysms, including the recent French occupation of Frankfurt only next door, the season at Baden-Baden promises to be prosperous. Naturally, the business crisis which has become chronic and universal affects this place also. Prices are nearly three times what they were last year. Pensions of the better class charge from fifty marks a day up. Good hotels charge from eighty to one hundred marks and the very best as much as two hundred marks. In middle class hotels no objection is raised to the prices demanded and the number of guests begging accommodation increases every day. Nowadays the permanent residents at Germany's great health resorts feel as much displeasure as they formerly felt pleasure at the arrival of guests. In fact their discontent has become so great that visitors to the City of Baden are permitted to remain only seven days.

The smaller towns — at least Baden-Baden — are more hospitable. So the famous old pleasure resort is gradually becoming crowded. Its clientele lacks the cosmopolitan quality of the old days of its pre-war glory, when it was a German Monte Carlo. Even the distinction given it during the war by the throngs of aristocrats and half aristocrats and automobile tourists and adventurers who crowded its accommodations during the racing season, is now absent. But these changes, according to recent accounts, have allowed the place to recover again its old traditional character and simple customs of a generation ago.

SPANISH COMPANY PROFITS

DURING the unprecedented prosperity of the war the industrial companies of Spain employed a considerable share of their profits to strengthen their reserves and increase their businesses. In many instances stock dividends of 100 and 200 per cent have been distributed among the shareholders since 1914. Dividing 131 of the principal companies into nine groups according to the business in which they are employed, *España Económica y Financiera* finds that 38 banks increased their dividends from 5.87 per cent in 1914 to 9.72 per cent in 1918. This group of corporations devoted the larger share of its profits to strengthening resources instead of to dividends.

Seven metallurgical companies, several of which have declared stock dividends, written off large sums for depreciation, and added to their plants from earnings, have increased their cash dividends from 4.87 to 14.45 per cent. Four distilleries doubled their dividends. Nineteen electrical com-

panies increased their average dividends from 4.73 to 6.89 per cent. These companies have suffered in several instances by the increased cost of fuel. Very little can be inferred from mining dividends because some companies have been very prosperous, while others have suffered losses and even become insolvent. In general metal mining has yielded heavy profits.

Six sugar companies increased their average dividends from 6.33 to 25.55 per cent. These are the most prosperous enterprises in Spain, with the exception of shipping companies. Ten of the latter raised their average dividend from 8.60 per cent to the remarkable figure of 134.60 per cent. In addition there have been heavy increases in capital, so that the real earnings have been even higher than these figures would indicate.

In sharp contrast with the shipping companies, the dividends of the Spanish railways fell from 3.69 to 3.62 per cent. Their rates have not kept pace with the rise of salaries and the increasing cost of materials.

THE wasteful expenditure of money in the reconstruction areas of Northern France threatens to create a new source of controversy between that country and Germany. *Vorwärts* comments as follows upon this situation:

In fact we are presented with a scandal which threatens to become of enormous proportions, if the German Government does not make timely protest. Billions upon billions are at stake. It is none of our business how France rebuilds its ruined areas. However, we should not leave that country or the Reparation Commission in doubt for a single moment that, while Germany is obligated to pay the expense of reconstruction, it is in no way bound to fill the pockets of the capitalist hyenas who have been turned loose in that unhappy region.

[*Land and Water* (Popular Liberal Weekly), May 6]
BETHLEHEM UNDER THE BRITISH

BY CLAIR PRICE

BETHLEHEM is still occupied enemy territory. The white, limestone town in Palestine, which is holy to half a billion Christians, is passing its fifth consecutive war-year without pilgrims. Formerly, the slopes of Khar-rubeh, under the fortress wall of the Church of the Holy Nativity, glittered nightly with the campfires of hundreds of Russians. But Turkey's entry into the war in 1914 put such a sudden end to the pilgrimages of the Russians that a few of them are still stranded in Bethlehem. The Crescent and Star, with which Selim the Grim hewed his way into Palestine in 1518, was hauled down from the Turkish *serai* in Bethlehem when the British army occupied it in 1917. Pending the dictation of peace to Turkey, Bethlehem is administered by the British army, and no civilian is permitted to enter it without British military permission.

Before the war Palestine was a noisome, sealed-up Turkish place, off the trade routes, difficult to get at and more difficult to get about in after one got there. Two military secrets, however, were revealed when the armistice with Turkey was proclaimed in 1918. One was the completion by the British army of the Palestine Military Railway. The other was the completion by the enemy of the stupendous Taurus tunnels in the *Chemin de Fer Impérial Ottoman de Bagdad*. Taken together, these two projects have opened new windows and doorways into Palestine, so that the winds of the world may blow through and anybody who has

the railway fare may walk in and see for himself. After the Turkish settlement has put an end to martial law in Bethlehem, it will not be necessary to take one's chances on the Jaffa landing. A few years more, and one will be able to book direct from the *Gare de l'Est* in Paris to *Bab el Hadid* in Cairo, with a stop-over at Ludd for Bethlehem. By the old sea route Bethlehem was 3500 miles from Havre. By the new rail route it is 2100 miles from Paris.

The first civilians to reach Bethlehem after the Turkish peace is signed will see a single line of old Turkish trench zigzagging like a white hair across the far side of the Rahib Valley to the south. They will see plenty of British soldiers, whose prospect of demobilization is remote, and little groups of British officers on leave, guided by the same dragomans who three years ago were guiding German officers on leave to Bethlehem. They will find three soldiers' restaurants, whose owners are Syrian and whose cooking is degraded British, consisting in the main of tea, hard-boiled eggs, and European bread. And if they have not visited Bethlehem before, it may not occur to them how miraculously the place has been scrubbed and scoured and whitewashed.

Outside of these things they will find no trace of the war in Bethlehem. The ancient, rock-hewn cistern known throughout the world as David's Well, and the small, domed, Moslem burying place known as Rachel's Tomb,