

## Foreign Correspondence

## THE WELSH COLLIERS—A SERBIAN ARTIST—"TOMMY" AT SUBURBAN FETES.

By JAMES F. MUIRHEAD.

LONDON, July 20.

The strike of the colliers in South Wales is not a thing of which we are proud, but it would be as great a mistake to exaggerate its meaning as to minimize it. The miners believe that the coal-masters are making such abnormal profits now that, at the end of the war, it would leave them in a position to close down with equanimity and dictate their own terms to the men. No doubt the belief is not wholly justified, as the returns of the various mines show; but the owners cannot be altogether acquitted of blame in the matter of threshing out the disputed points openly and amicably. The strike has been declared against the will of the official leaders of the men, and without the taking of any general ballot; the assertion is that it is really engineered by a comparatively small group of syndicalist miners, mostly young men, who have cleverly contrived to secure control of the machinery of the "lodges." The miners have contributed their full quota to England's volunteer army; and it is not believed that, if the whole body could be canvassed, the result would be otherwise than patriotic. The object of the syndicalists is undoubtedly to force the state to nationalize the coal pits; but the situation, though serious, is not yet considered so desperate as to necessitate this measure or the equally revolutionary introduction of conscription. In all probability, a way out will have been found before this letter reaches America; Mr. Lloyd George is again to the front as the *deus ex machina*, though it is realized that it must have required some resolution on his part to risk his popularity in his native Wales. Even those who most sympathize with the strikers; even those who blame the Government for a certain tactlessness, precipitancy, and lack of foresight, are inclined to feel that the situation would not be permanently eased by a complete surrender to the men. It must be fully understood that the Munitions Act is not a dead letter.

It may be doubted whether the exhibition of the Serbian sculptor Mestrovic, now in progress at the South Kensington Museum, would have excited so much attention in time of peace as it has in time of war. It is not wholly clear how much of our interest is in the new artist, how much in the new ally. In justice to Mestrovic, however, it must at once be said that most of those who came to show their friendly feeling for Serbia remained to study a compelling artistic phenomenon for its own sake. The very fact that his work has excited an animated controversy in the newspapers is a proof that Mestrovic is no negligible personality. The man who forces the Slade professor of fine arts to tilt at him with lance in rest is surely no lay figure; and this opinion is confirmed on the positive side by the number of defenders who have also rushed into the lists. Some of these seem to regard Mestrovic as predominantly, if not solely, an exponent of Servo-Croatian nationality. Others refuse to

see anything except an individual talent, in full sympathy with the most modern development of art. Probably the truth lies, as usual, in the middle way. While it may be true that Mestrovic's work could never have been produced if M. Rodin had not lived and worked before him, it is at least equally true that none but a Slavonic pupil of that great French artist could have produced these particular works. It is easy to trace Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, Byzantine, Italian Primitive, and modern influences in the creations of Mestrovic; but there is always a substratum that we are forced to believe has vital and organic connection with the nationality of the artist. His works are no mere imitations; there are features that we are driven to ascribe to a blend of individual genius and racial inheritance. This belief is strengthened and, perhaps, justified by the fact that these terrible and tragic creations, with their controlled ferocity, indomitable endurance, and illimitable sadness, so completely reflect the tale of Servian history, with its five centuries of Turkish tyranny. Surely even such minor details as the sheer-cut, almost unmodelled nose must be somehow typical of the Southern Slav. If Americans have the chance, they should certainly see Mestrovic's works.

Suburban "gayety" has recently taken on a new lease of life, as every one with a garden the size of a counterpane is entertaining convalescing Tommies to tea and strawberries. Acquaintances who can sing a comic song or recite "The Wreck of the Puffin" are in great request, and the automobiles of the district are almost monopolized for conveying the guests from and to the hospitals—by as circuitous a route as possible. The appreciation shown by the men for these little attentions is very touching, and it is obvious that the break in their monotonous convalescence has a decidedly therapeutic effect. The courage and cheerfulness, even of those who have lost a limb, are beyond all praise. A charming Polish lady, who "assisted" lately at one of these functions, came home exclaiming: "Now I know what the English are really like! The English bourgeoisie—pah! the bourgeoisie are everywhere horrible, but the English 'peasant' is *magnifique*, and I adore him!"

If the volunteering spirit is not quite so extensive as its votaries might wish, it has certainly a marvellous intensive power in certain quarters, as is shown by the case of a man I recently came across who succeeded in entering the British army after twenty-one previous refusals of his services. If we could believe that the strength of such a recruit as this would be as the strength of twenty-two, we might confidently rely on our voluntary system; but I fear that not even the most vehement belittler of the pressed man would venture to assert this.

One very singular vein of volunteering was recently opened by an advertisement in the *Times*, reading as follows: "Skin—Officer requires 4 in. by 3 in. of skin to cover wound and expedite his return to duty; opportunity for unselfish patriot." Upwards of fifty people, most of them women and all apparently genuine, replied to this request and offered the skin required, generally without conditions. Unfortunately, my information ends here, as I have not heard whether the Army Airman concerned succeeded in patching himself up in this way.

The Central Committee for National Patriotic Organizations has arranged for the

holding of meetings throughout the British Empire on August 4, the anniversary of England's declaration of war. The resolution to be moved at all of these meetings records an "inflexible determination to continue to a victorious end the struggle in maintenance of those ideals of liberty and justice which are the common and sacred cause of the Allies." The Committee wishes it to be understood that this resolution is not meant to express a spirit of glorification or triumph, but simply to renew the vows with which we dedicated ourselves a year ago to a task that has turned out to be even more vast than we believed it to be.

## H. W. MESDAG—THE PAINTER OF THE SEA.

By A. J. BARNOUW.

THE HAGUE, July 15.

On July 10, 1915, Hendrik Willem Mesdag died at the age of eighty-four years. His fame, like the ships on his countless canvases, has sailed the world, and at the news of his death many an American collector will proudly have raised his eyes to the Mesdags on his walls, remembering where and when he bought them. For half a century Mesdag has enriched the world with an endless variety of seascapes, painting the same sea never the same. From the Scheveningen dunes he studied it in all its aspects and moods, rough and calm, dull and blazing, at daybreak and at sunset, in all seasons, at all hours.

Mesdag took up painting at an age at which most artists have attained the height of their power. He was bred for business, and not until his thirty-fifth year could he free himself from books and figures and follow whither his talent beckoned him. The landscape-painter, Willem Roelofs, became his master; but it was not pasture and cattle and woods, such as Roelofs taught him to paint, which attracted him most. From the very beginning he found his own domain at the seacoast, first on the beach at Norderney, afterwards at Scheveningen, near The Hague, where he settled in 1870. Little growth is noticeable in Mesdag's art. He seems, at the outset, with one bold stroke to have struck the true vein of his power. His earlier pictures have, indeed, more of the dramatic in them than his later work; a stirring scene on the beach, at the return of the lifeboat from the wreck in the dark distance, is among his most popular paintings of that earlier period. But, unlike Josef Israels, who saw the sea as the tragic background of the fisherfolk's sad, awestricken home life, Mesdag grew more and more regardless of man's share in the life of the sea, and many canvases among his later work appeal to the spectator's sense of beauty by no other means than the sole expanse of sky and sea, a grand desert of water.

There is nothing theatrical or sentimental in the bold realism of this art, and in that the painter was true to the man. Mesdag was a strong, straightforward character, in outward appearance not unlike the type of fisherman whose watery element he loved with a sailor's love.

To his own country Mesdag has been a benefactor in a double sense. He has left it not only his work and his name for a lasting glory, he also gave it the precious col-

lection of nineteenth-century art, which, during his long life, he brought together with a true connoisseur's love and knowledge. At a time when few people in Holland were yet aware of the greatness of the Barbizon school, Mesdag purchased the Corots and Daubignys, which now form the pride of his small but exquisite collection in the "Mesdag Museum" at The Hague.

# ROUGET DE L'ISLE—HONORS TO THE AUTHOR OF "THE MARSEILLAISE."

By STODDARD DEWEY.

PARIS, July 17.

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see!

Rouget de l'Isle, if he still remembers the obscurity of his latter days and knows the national fame which has accrued to him on this Fourteenth of July, might think in such verse. Only lately there was an old woman living who told her childish remembrances of him. He died as late as 1836 in the village of Choisy-le-Roi, just above Paris, on the Seine, eking out his old age by subsisting on two friends of the Revolution, lunching with one, dining with the other, perhaps not always to his hunger, as the French say. But "The Marseillaise" which he had written as the song of Liberty ceased never.

—The ages plead,  
Present and Past in under-song.

It was so much the case that Alexandre Dumas heard it sung freely only after he was a grown man, for the restored Bourbons had done their best to silence its strains. It came back with Revolution in 1830, and, after another foolish prohibition by the Second Empire, it remains ever the spontaneous musical utterance of France through the centuries:

... a people's voice  
In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human fame—  
A people's voice! we are a people yet.

This was the burden of all that was sung and said in honor of the author of "The Marseillaise" on Wednesday when the tardy honor of the French nation brought Rouget de l'Isle's ashes from Choisy to the Invalides, where Napoleon is entombed. They are to go further, to the Pantheon of "a grateful country," when war leaves time for Parliament to place them there. This honoring of the poet who, in life, depended on the charity of his brother song-writer for the people, Béranger, was led by the President of the Republic and all its constituted bodies.

In the clear, cool morning, the stone coffin in which his remains were gathered years after his death was carried triumphantly up the Champs Elysées, hedged with troops, to Napoleon's Triumphant Arch. There it was set down before the great sculptured group in which Rude has depicted the departure of the volunteers of 1792, inspired by the notes of "The Marseillaise." This is at the right-hand corner as you come up the broad avenue from the Place de la Concorde—another name of Revolutionary remembrance matched by the present *Union sacrée* of the French people against ruthless invaders. And there the noble voices of Mademoiselle Delna and Henri Albers sang alternate strophes of the na-

tion's song, the great crowd far down the line taking up the refrain.

Battalions of dragoons and cuirassiers kept guard roundabout, with the sun gilding their casques and their horses' caparison. Overhead aeroplanes soared and wheeled and dived. Veterans of the last war, in which France suffered mutilation, and eighteen-year-old youths who are now making ready to fight in her new struggle for life, came and laid their flags reverently on the coffin. Then, the long funereal pomp wound its slow way, with soldiers of every arm and uniform of France, to the great court of the Invalides. The catafalque was left there so that, all the day long, the people of Paris might defile before the remains of Rouget de l'Isle. The President of the Republic, flanked by all the authorities of France and the representatives of other nations, made the only speech. He is the spokesman of his people and he had something to say worth hearing in these troublous times:

"By decreeing that the ashes of Rouget de l'Isle should be solemnly brought to Paris on the national holiday, the Government of the Republic not only intended celebrating the memory of a French officer who expressed, in a tragic hour, the eternal soul of our country. It also wished to bring together, under the country's eyes, two great pages of our history and recall to every one of us strong lessons of the past, and—while once again, France struggles heroically for Liberty—to glorify the incomparable hymn whose accents have awakened so many superhuman virtues in the nation's heart.

"The sublime and improvised hymn of Rouget de l'Isle was, in 1792, the cry of vengeance and indignation of the noble people which had just proclaimed the Rights of Man and refused proudly to bend the knee before the stranger. . . . Wherever it resounds, 'The Marseillaise' calls forth the idea of a sovereign nation which has the passion of independence and all of whose sons deliberately prefer death to slavery. It is no longer for us Frenchmen alone that 'The Marseillaise' has this grand meaning. Its stirring notes speak a universal language and to-day they are understood by the whole world.

"Once more the spirit of domination has come to threaten the liberty of the peoples. For long years our toiling democracy had taken its pleasure in the labors of peace; it sought but to keep up courteous relations with all the Powers; it would have thought that man a criminal or a fool who would have dared to nurse projects of war. . . . And, on the morrow of the day when an agreement had been made between France and Germany, regulating between the two countries their Oriental interests, at a moment when Europe reassured began taking breath again—it was then a thunderstroke set the pillars of the world trembling.

"History shall tell what has followed. . . . Each of us, in all serenity, may revive his memories and examine his conscience. At no moment have we neglected to utter the word or make the gesture that might have dispelled the threat of war, if a mad attack on the peace of Europe had not long been willed and prepared by implacable enemies. We have been the innocent victims of aggression most brutal and most scientifically prepared.

"But, since they have forced us to draw the sword, we have no right to sheathe it

before that day when we shall have avenged our dead and the common victory of the Allies shall enable us to repair our ruin and make France whole again and guard us efficaciously against the periodical return of provocation.

"Of what would to-morrow be made if it were possible that a lame and breathless peace should come to perch on the ruins of our destroyed cities? A new Draconian treaty would at once be imposed on our lassitude and we should fall for ever into vassalage, political and moral and economic, under our enemies. French manufacturers, French farmers, French workmen, would be at the mercy of triumphant rivals, and France, humbled, would sink down in discouragement and self-contempt.

"Who, for one moment, could linger over such a vision? And who would dare so to insult the common sense of our people and our national clear-sightedness? Not a single one of our soldiers, not a single citizen, not a single woman of France, that does not understand clearly how all the future of our race and, not only its honor, but its very existence, hang on the weary minutes of this inexorable war. We have the will to conquer, we have the certainty of conquering. We have confidence in our strength and that of our allies as we have confidence in our good right.

"No, no, let our enemies make no mistake! It is not to sign a precarious peace—an unquiet and fugitive truce between a war cut short and a war more terrible—to be exposed to-morrow to new attacks and mortal risks, that France has risen, whole and entire, thrilling to the manly notes of 'The Marseillaise.'"

## Notes from the Capital

### THE ANCHOR OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

To most men filling positions of importance in the Government at Washington, our present vexed relations with Germany are a momentous event; to one they are merely a notable incident. He has witnessed so many such encounters that his nerves are not easily stirred by them, for he has been in active diplomatic service for forty-five years. Boy and man, he has seen the United States embroiled in three wars—the one with Mexico, the Civil War, and that for the liberation of Cuba—and in the last named he was a direct partaker on its diplomatic side. We might add to the list, perhaps, the Philippine insurrection, and, as a near-war, the Boxer rebellion in China, during part of which he was our acting Secretary of State. Then, there were the clashes with Chili over the maltreatment of our sailors in Valparaiso; with England over the Venezuela boundary; with Italy over lynchings of Italians in Louisiana and Mississippi; with Spain over the Virginilus affair, and a dozen others less worthy of mention.

Alvey A. Adee, Second Assistant Secretary of State, might well be called the anchor of the State Department, for he is the one man in it whose permanency was never in doubt, even in an administration so kaleidoscopic as Blaine's or so spoliis-ridden as Bryan's. His partisan affiliations have nothing to do with