

War—the Way Out

The European Anarchy, by G. Lowes Dickinson. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$1.00.

IN civil life when a man calls you a drunkard you do not shoot him. You sue him for libel. You are sufficiently Chinified to let some out-of-the-way judge pass on the question of your personal virtue, and you feel completely vindicated if you secure a favorable verdict and indemnity to the amount of a postage-stamp. It is idle, therefore, to say honor cannot be arbitrated. It is only legitimate to say that in the absence of the machinery of arbitration a miserable difficulty exists.

At this moment many Americans are ready to contemplate war with Germany. It is only a small minority, however, who are talking of honor. Most of those who contemplate war put it on the basis of actual injury. They feel this country has suffered hideous damage and provocation. They feel it cannot tolerate further transgression. They believe it is incumbent on us to join forces with the preponderant Powers of Europe to punish and regulate an enemy which has defied our own and European rights.

In the midst of this crisis it is well to take counsel with sane men whose own governments have already undertaken the business of punishment and regulation. One of the sanest of these men is G. Lowes Dickinson, and one of the sanest of his utterances is "The European Anarchy," a book that can be purchased for a dollar and read and digested in less than three hours.

The chief point that Mr. Dickinson argues is that international damages, transgressions, provocations and the rest do not arise from any particular wickedness in any particular nation. They arise from a condition of international disorder that all great modern states, caring for power and wealth, have permitted to exist, turning the disorder, if possible, to their own advantage; and these disputes are incapable of satisfactory settlement by the mere process of conflict under arms. What is required is a body of law that converts international disorder into order. To put armaments behind that law is a necessity for securing enforcement. Then "the nations must submit to law and to right in the settlement of their disputes."

It is not apparent to many Americans that self-interest figures in their present attitude toward Germany. They simply feel righteously indignant. But the basic fact, of course, is that the *status quo* in the world at large is threatened by Germany, and many thoughtful Americans subconsciously fear that our future may be at stake. They prefer a balance of power to a greatly aggrandized bellicose empire. They fear Germany greatly aggrandized. They think it important, as England does, to punish an aggressive Germany. It is not that they put punishment above civilization. It is that they cannot contemplate with equanimity Germany's terrific assault on the *status quo*.

Why the Germans should be content to accept that *status quo*, with the British dominant on the seas, Mr. Dickinson does not argue. Nor does he discuss at length by what process under international law the appetite for power and wealth and the factor of competition can be reasonably arranged for and satisfied. This seems to me the real difficulty. But what he does demonstrate is how the Machiavellianism of modern diplomacy, the appeal to passions and imbecilities, has utterly failed to accommodate that appetite; and his greatest service is to acknowledge how England and France and Russia, as well as Germany

and Austria, have failed to live by a decent international ideal or to be reasonable about new claims.

The classes that are opposed to those new claims that arise by reason of political and economic evolution are to be discovered in every country, including America. And much of the sentiment for "preparedness" emanates from such classes, not from persons who are solicitous of a public law. The incident of an injury with such classes is no argument in their minds for legal adjustment of international relations. It is an argument for high self-assertion. And Mr. Dickinson indicates that every nation, under the present anarchy, has had to endure grievances and injuries of various kinds.

After the Morocco crisis, in which Germany felt it had been deceived and outraged, M. Georges Bourdon went to Germany for the *Figaro* to look over the ground. He found that the bulk of opinion in Germany was strongly pacific, but he discovered a large clique shouting for "preparedness." These were mainly the Pan-Germans. He described them as "exasperated, wretched windbags." "They have the yellow skin, the dry mouth, the green complexion of the bilious. They do not live under the sky, they avoid the light. Hidden in their cellars, they pour over treaties, cite newspaper articles, grow pale over maps, measure angles, quibble over texts or traces of frontiers."

At a moment when America feels itself to be deceived and outraged, when the bulk of opinion is still strongly pacific, it remains to be decided whether our "preparedness" people are exasperated jingoes, stirred to fever by the same sort of green and yellow bug that excited the war spirit in Germany.

Here is the jingoistic class M. Bourdon found in Germany: "It was composed largely of soldiers, both active and retired; the latter especially looking with envy and disgust on the increasing prosperity of the commercial classes, and holding that a 'blood-letting would be wholesome to purge and regenerate the social body'—a view not confined to Germany and one which has received classical expression in Tennyson's 'Maud.' To this movement belonged also the high officials, the Conservative parties, patriots and journalists, and of course the armament firms, deliberate fomenters of war in Germany, as everywhere else, in order to put money into their pockets. To these must be added 'the intellectual flower of the universities and the schools.'"

It does not follow from this that Mr. Dickinson takes an indulgent attitude toward the aggressiveness of Germany. He shows how Germany resisted the limitation of armaments and manipulated for the present trial by battle. But in the ultimate causes he thinks all the states at war were implicated, and he disputes with full conviction "the view which seems to be almost universally held in England, that Germany had been pursuing for years past a policy of war, while all the other Powers had been pursuing a policy of peace."

Mr. Dickinson differs from many Americans in his final outlook. He seems to have no faith whatever in the proximate value of a new and better balance of power. Is America's participation in this war the way to bring about a machinery of justice which all nations, including Germany, will accept? It is this new kind of decision, based on something very different from French indignation over Alsace, British indignation over Belgium, German indignation over Morocco, American indignation over the Lusitania, that Mr. Dickinson seeks to stimulate by his humane and conscientious research.

F. H.

An American Feminist

Julia Ward Howe, 1819-1910, by Laura E. Richards and Maude Howe Elliott. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$5.00.

EVERY now and then, in talking, have we not all of us a sudden excited sense of having put into words some idea, some sensibility, with an accuracy and an adequacy that seem perfect, miraculous! And it is at such times that we get for response an "I know what you mean," along with an indulgent, helpful laugh. We want of course to hiss, "But I've just *said* what I mean!" In a little while, however, we regain our pleasantness, unless it was a contemporary who proclaimed himself so good a guesser. Between contemporaries there should be a common idiom—that's surely a "vital illusion."

In reading the diary and letters of the last generation but one, we find ourselves often on the point of making just that irritating response. It needs such cordiality to penetrate behind their phrases. Their way of assured generalization is not our way of thought; their moral and religious forms of speech strike us as vague and imperfectly realized. But what carries us through the two volumes of *Mrs. Howe's Life and Letters* is the number of times we do understand her instantly—her extraordinary vitality, her wit, her great heart so enliven the idiom of her generation.

Her completeness as a woman is what perhaps more than anything else makes us listen to her with that "romantic sympathy" she herself felt was needed by Emerson. She was an imaginative and devoted wife; able to efface herself when she chose; she bore six children and seemed supreme and life-giving to them till her death; she was a woman of the world, kindly, simple, in the best tradition; she had the grace of admirable fooling; she was a tireless and eager student. When such a woman, whose energies might be exhausted delightfully in her private life, chooses to enter public life, the cries about woman's sphere lose force. That vital power should remain in her for public service must be because of some deep-rooted sense of solidarity, some persistent desire for larger growth. When she was twenty-eight, she called herself "a pilgrim in pursuit of something that is neither house nor lands, nor children, nor health"—all good things, by the way, that she had. "What that something is I scarce know. Sometimes it seems to me one thing and sometimes another. Oh, immortality, thou art to us but a painful rapture, an ecstatic burthen in this earthly life." It is hard, of course, sometimes not to make that rejoinder. Playfulness so steps lightly and is gone.

As "the pretty blue stocking, Miss Julia Ward," who, "they say, dreams in Italian and quotes French verses," she had a girlhood of many suitors and of pleasant occupations with the arts. Her four languages and her music and her verses we can imagine as adventurous; she studied harder than was the fashion. When she was twenty-four, she married Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, who had fought in the Greek War of Independence, and whose good looks had a romantic quality. Also he was forty-one years old and had been for nine years director of the Perkins Institution for the Blind. After a summer in London with him, and a winter in Rome, after much exhilarating use of her sense for society, Julia Ward Howe went to live in this Institution, two miles outside of Boston. Here she found her husband accustomed to rule and absorbed in his work, while she had babies and household cares and not much money. Yet here she seems to have kept always, perhaps

largely to have created, her feeling for him as "the man of lion-mood," "a bolt of fire." Her verses to him have the Byronic fashion, but their essence is the deep experience of a loving woman—the clear sight that is yet romantic.

Indeed, in these early years of her marriage, spent close to the Institution, she seems always to be realizing and studying her experiences, with on the whole an effect of pleasure. She can seem hard, at times, with that hardness which depends on really enjoying the free play of the mind. She writes to her young sister about to marry: "Marriage, like death, is a debt we owe to nature, and though it costs us something to pay it, yet are we more content and better established in peace, when we have paid it."

Free activity for her intelligence became more and more her great need—what she consciously fought for. Since she was lucky enough to have her heart satisfied abundantly, she could be aware of her mind with splendid pride. She could dare express restlessness and dissatisfaction. She could dare disengage the whole real woman.

It was during the Civil War that she definitely became a public figure. It was then her study of German philosophy and of St. Paul made her feel qualified for "ethical exposition." "I determined that I could only be good in fulfilling my highest functions—all else implies waste of power, leading to demoralization." She speaks of her real suffering when she had to be silent at a Unitarian Convention. "I feel that a woman's whole moral responsibility is lowered by the fact that she must never obey a transcendent command of conscience. Man can give her nothing to take the place of this. It is the *divine* right of the human soul." In the face of much family remonstrance, she began giving "philosophical readings" in friends' houses, in Boston and Washington and New York. She was about forty-seven and was aware that she was making use of all she had thought and learned. One gets glimpses of how much she enjoyed this expansion,—as when she quotes two of her witticisms, because "they interested me, opening to myself little shades of thought not perceived before."

Such desire as hers for activity was remarkably prevalent after the Civil War, when women had grown used to working on committees and commissions, and many women's clubs were founded to occupy this unrest. Mrs. Howe, who helped form several, long afterward declared they had given her her faith in woman's power to develop. "Like so many others, I saw the cruel wrongs and vexed problems of our social life, but I did not know that hidden away in its midst was a reserve force destined to give precious aid in the righting of wrongs, and in the solution of discord." The war of 1870 roused her to use all organizations of women in a Peace Movement, and she addressed an appeal that reads like one of to-day, "to Womanhood Throughout the World." She became president of the American Branch of the Woman's International Peace Association, and spoke at many meetings in America and England. A bit of wisdom she owes to such activity is: "The special faults of women are those incidental to a class that has never been allowed to work out its ideal."

When men and women who had worked for the freedom and the civil rights of the Negro formed the New England Woman's Suffrage Association, she became its first president. She had seen, she writes, a "new domain," that of "true womanhood, woman no longer in her ancillary relation to man, but in direct relation to the divine plan and purpose, as a free agent fully sharing with man every human right and every human responsibility." Do we hear ourselves laughing helpfully, "I know what you mean"?