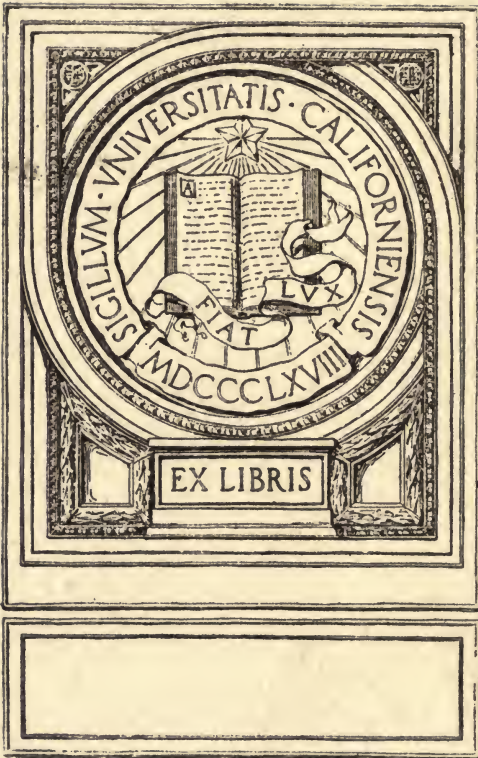


WAR AND REVOLUTION
IN RUSSIA

JOHN POLLOCK



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THE AUTHOR. PETROGRAD, 1916
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WAR AND REVOLUTION - IN RUSSIA

SKETCHES AND STUDIES

BY

JOHN POLLOCK

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"THE POPIISH PLOT," ETC.

UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

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TO
C. F. KEARY
IN FRIENDSHIP AND ADMIRATION

384885



EXPLANATORY LETTER

MY DEAR KEARY,—

To one coming from the north, the bazaar at Ekaterinodar, where I have been marketing, is a dream of indescribable gorgeousness. Here are no shimmering silks, or many-patterned Persian carpets, or stalls stacked with priceless gems ; this is not the East, nor is the land of the Don Cossacks stored with ancient treasure. But such riches of the soil brought together, heaped upon the cobbles, spreading over carts and booths and streets in endless waves of colour the eye could hardly see elsewhere but here. Row upon row of melons, cantelupes and water melons, melons ribbed and melons smooth skinned, back in the sunshine, fill the hot air with their luscious scent ; from end to end of two hundred yards loops of onions swing lazily, while under them a fortune of cabbages display their mild charms, their tender virgin green unviolated by hand of grocer ; and here is a riot of tomatoes that smile at you in outrageous profusion, and there waggons brimming with potatoes ; eggs enough to make a score of snowmen, and again young mountains of small cucumbers, such as are not known in England, beloved of Russians, clamouring to be eaten. And flour, fine rice from Turkestan, and fat egg plants scarcely contained in their purple skins, the drowsy sunflower with

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whose seed Russia drugs herself, and grapes and maize and coffee, and cream and honey, until eye and nostril are drunk with the wealth spread before them, and you wonder that there can be want in a world where such bounty is flung by nature into the lap of man.

At night when the bazaar is closed and a faery cloak enfolds the town, carpeting it with music, turning the poplars to cypresses and the wooden church half hidden by them to a Roman shrine of marble, I wonder indeed if the world can be at war when this end of Russia seems so remote from it. Yet when I tried to buy a tin-kettle, there was none in the town ; nor is any tea to be had ; and I know that those same melons which in Ekaterinodar cost at their largest thirty kopeks sell in Petrograd for twenty roubles and more. The potatoes that in the bazaar are ten kopeks a pound are unobtainable at eight times the price in the capital. For want of the corn that here bursts from the ground the armies on two of the Russian fronts are in danger of starving. This is Russia, a land of plenty and a land of want, a land of high ideals and of many shortcomings, of nobility and of shamelessness, a land where Socialists bawl that the State must control everything, and where soldiers crippled in the defence of their country are reduced to beg their bread in the streets.

For an enemy of Russia to write about her now would be easy. For a friend it is hard. Russia is sick, smitten with a dangerous disease, and it behoves her friends to think and speak of her as they would of one they love, whose mind is under a cloud. The simile is not exact ; for the greater part of Russia's best minds, almost the whole indeed of those formerly known as the

“intelligentsia,” members of the learned professions, civil servants, men of letters, officers, all in fact who have had education and are now miscalled in a lump the “bourgeoisie,” are under no delusion, but are keenly aware of the nature and causes of their country’s complaint.

One who wished for a type of Russia’s best intellect might take as his choice the late Professor Maxim Kovalevsky. Like all men, he had weaknesses: perhaps a shade too much cynicism in his appreciation of the world, a slightly too ready welcome for every plan that on the whole recommended itself without a thorough examination of its details, but a man of mark, a large man in every sense, as even his opponents said. As a reward for liberal views he was driven in youth from Russia by the autocracy and thus learnt to know many languages and peoples; was possessed till the end of his life of wits so lively that his talk was a perpetual delight; and, indeed, would find a point of irony to season any subject however solemn. His gift of brilliant generalisation was never used without revealing a basis of solid thought beneath; but he used it so easily and so freely that it did not seem, as with some good talkers, a performance, but a natural flow of the man’s ideas. But the most characteristic was his spacious geniality, an expansion and concentration, if the two may exist together, of a quality peculiarly Russian, which nothing to my taste describes so well as the slightly old-fashioned word, *affability*. Above all else, the Russian of the educated class is *affable*. Should you wish, you need never be for five minutes without company when travelling or in a public place; and the company is

almost always pleasant and often interesting. Yet there is a delicacy and an inborn restraint towards strangers. Do you desire silence, everyone will respect your wish, and you may journey from end to end of Russia many times without once witnessing the dreadful intrusions upon privacy that awaited the traveller in the first train he entered in Germany. In this respect Russians are neither frigid nor fulsome ; nor are they aggressive or haughty, as we are apt to be ; and it would be hard to find pleasanter companions than the three you may meet any day in a Russian second-class carriage, who have never met before and do not expect to meet again, and part without inquiring so much as one another's names. Qualities that are indeed much needed in times when, as now, the regulation four in a carriage becomes six, or sometimes eight, or ten ; yet, for all the Russians' usual excitability, it is the rarest thing to see bad temper or churlishness even in these trying conditions. You can see more during five minutes on a tramcar in Petrograd or Moscow, and it is noticeable that the row is nearly always started by someone of the lower class.

When "The School for Scandal" was about to be produced in Petrograd, Kovalevsky said : " It will not have success. My countrymen have not lived through the eighteenth century." I have found this pregnant saying a key to many puzzles. Talent and wide interests are so common among Russians that we are apt to forget that the nation is without many of the large experiences that go to make the Western world. Russia, for instance, has not known the Reformation and the Renaissance, the wars of religion, the Risorgimento,

and the French Revolution only by its backwash. Until sixty years ago Russia was a country of slaves whose persons could be sold with or apart from the land of their owners, spurred to progress by the devoted efforts of an infinitesimal educated class, that, without inheriting the traditions of the West, imbibed its teachings with the eagerness of men long denied the light. The children of those who saw the emancipation did not allow for the slowness of upward growth, and many believed until the events of the last few months that the system of government only needed to be changed for the nation to spring at a bound into the level path of unchecked achievement. One of their best representatives recently said to a patriotic lady who had worked in the revolution of 1905 that the "intelligentsia" were themselves to blame for the baleful influence at the present crisis of the extreme Socialists, for they had before refused to be satisfied with moderate gains from the autocracy, but had wished for complete triumph at a stroke. It is not a reproach to say that Russians lack experience in constructive statesmanship: with the madness that characterises weak despotisms their rulers took infinite pains to prevent them from acquiring it, and efforts that might have left an invaluable legacy of political wisdom ended in exile, Siberia, or death. The formula of a French economist: "*Tout se paye, rien n'est gratuit,*" is equally true in politics. The absence of healthy organisation of opinion was the logical result of the brutal prohibition of its expression during many years, and the cause of an uncertainty of aim and of a welter of ideals spawned by the revolution, reminiscent of the outburst of experi-

ments in political thought caused by the Civil War in England. The men of that age, said Lord Acton in one of his aphorisms that illumined whole epochs, had not mastered the art of understanding their opponents' ideas ; then it took a man all his time and the help of his friends to understand his own. Similarly, the revolution here came about so suddenly that Russians after the first days hardly knew what they would be at, and their idealistic conceptions have had to suffer much disillusion. A member of the First Duma said to me : " I lived for twenty years among the Russian peasants and thought I knew them. But two months' experience since the revolution showed me I had been mistaken ; they are only good for anything ' under the stick.' "

This phrase, " under the stick," attributed to Peter the Great, has been of late increasingly in men's mouths. It expresses the belief of many, not only educated Russians of the north, but also Armenians, Cossacks, Georgians, Little Russians, and Jews, that the typical man of Great Russia, who is a peasant, is incapable of pursuing a way for himself, and if he is not driven will fall into a slough of sluggish anarchism. It would be rash in a foreigner to differ from a view so widely held among the mere vivid elements of the Russian empire, but I venture to hope that it is too pessimistic. It is undoubtedly true that the soldier of old, that is, the peasant under discipline, was cheery, prompt, to all appearances affectionate towards his superiors, and happy ; now he has become sulky, careless, hangdog, and by every outward sign miserable. Nevertheless, a few cases with which I have come into close contact give me faith in the Russian peasant's potentialities.

For instance, I know an able seaman, a peasant from the government of Moscow, typical in feature, in his slow quiet speech, in his great strength. He can read and write, and in the navy learned to type-write, so that he was detailed for office work. In his spare time he is attending classes in history, mathematics and physics. He is of the most modest and kindly disposition, and gifted with a gentlemanly nature that is wholly free from vulgarity or silliness—one, indeed, of "*les cœurs nobles qui se trouvent dans tous les rangs de l'armée russe,*" as Cherbuliez well says. Before the revolution he can hardly have seen a drawing-room; yet I have watched him take tea with a party of ladies and gentlemen, mostly strangers to him, with complete unembarrassment, and join in the conversation unaffectedly and with good sense. He thinks independently, for without any prompting he one day inscribed himself as a member of the party of National Freedom. Once, the opinion being expressed that the evils of the time were due to the decay of religion, which has in fact a far shallower hold in Russia than is commonly supposed abroad, he dissented, and added in a very simple and reverent manner, "For myself, I do not believe." Vasily Simeonovich may be an exception, but if the soil that produced him is given a chance, such qualities must be brought forth in more general measure. They seem to me, with my limited chances of observation, to be fruits of a strong and generous nature that runs through the breadth of the Russian nation and must lead it finally to a true conception of patriotism and to be a power for good in the world. But not until the age has passed in which it can confidently be be-

lieved, on the one hand, that Lord Milner came to Russia to organise the revolution, and on the other, that the English have seized Archangel and will descend on Petrograd to suppress it by force. This will probably be not before twenty or thirty years of national education. And should the qualities of imagination and truthfulness that have powerfully impressed the world in her writers, painters, musicians, and men of science come in a more distant future to fruition in the mass of Russia's people, now sorely burdened by the legacy of stagnation inherited through three centuries of despotism from the Tartar invasion which for nearly three more made progress impossible, not we but our descendants may see an age of human achievement more glorious than any yet known to us in modern history. That at least is my faith in Russia.

Nearly fifteen years ago you urged me to go to Russia, and I hope you will accept this little book as a token that I am not unmindful. The papers brought together in it were written under widely differing conditions and must be read according to their respective dates. They do not, those at least that deal with public events, pretend to historical accuracy, and there are points that now might be corrected or amplified. But I have preferred to leave them as they were written (save with the amendment in the paper on Rasputin of a prudent pretence, necessary at the time to protect an informant from possible persecution), believing that if they have any interest it will be as a record of contemporary events seen by one who had no motive to distort them, and compiled from the best sources available to ordinarily observant persons. Since I have expressed opinions

concerning the present state of Russia that would seem opposed to those held by our Liberal Press, perhaps I should add that I am in politics a Liberal and, by conviction, a republican. Professor F. W. Maitland, one of the most level as well as brilliant minds of his age, said that "he had no use for modern kings," and the sense of their needlessness that I imbibed from or felt confirmed by his wisdom has been greatly deepened by a consideration of the deeds of Nicolas, Constantine, and Ferdinand of Bulgaria. But I refuse on that account to be prejudiced in favour of everything that has replaced Nicolas. For a patriotic citizen of one of the nations allied in arms against German domination, cupidity, and arrogance I can conceive no other rule than that the cause for which we do battle must come before all else. This gives us the right not to shut our mouths on matters touching the vital point in Russia as well as at home, and it might not a little have improved matters here since the revolution, had there been more plain speaking before. The Socialists' allegation that England and France favoured tyranny in Russia did much to create an atmosphere helpful to the policy of moral sabotage they have pursued. Before you receive these lines, surely before they are in print, much may happen to show how the balance of fate in the war will swing for Russia. Events move fast, and even while I write news has come of the fall of Riga and the repetition on the northern front of those symptoms that disgraced the army of the south-west. One thing at least is certain, that when this war is over, it will take an almost incredible combination of causes again to force the Russian peasantry, who are over 90 per cent

of the nation, to fight against a foreign foe. And when we have conquered the German Goliath, that can only be for the ultimate good of the world.

Yours ever,

JOHN POLLOCK.

September, 1917.

Note.—Most of the papers in this volume have appeared in the *Standard*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Fortnightly Review*, *New Europe*, and *Nineteenth Century*, to the editors of which I beg to express my thanks for consent to republication. In my absence from England on service in Russia, the book has most kindly been seen through the press by my father, Sir Frederick Pollock.

J. P.

[Section headings are inserted in the text to assist the reader in keeping count of the dates, not always exactly specified, to which the papers refer. Considering that Slavonic scholars are not yet fully agreed on the details of transliteration, I have not attempted to reduce the spelling of Russian names to strict uniformity.

Mr. C. F. Keary, my son's friend and mine for many years, whose diffidence alone prevented his distinguished qualities from being more widely known, died suddenly on the 25th of October. He had received and enjoyed my son's dedication in MS.; it therefore stands as it was addressed to him in his lifetime.—F. P.]

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WAR AND REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA

SECTION I THE FIRST YEAR

I

BERGEN TO THE ARCTIC

YOU have not been in Bergen five minutes before you recognise the country of Ibsen. Indeed, without foot yet set on shore, the shape of the hills soaring heavenwards and the cosy way the town snuggles down at their feet reveal on the one hand the mysterious aspirations, hardly of this world, with which the poet of Brand points the path to greatness, and on the other the latent possibilities of snobbery and jobbery against which Dr. Stockman directs his noble scorn. An hour and a half is the total allowance before the train starts for Christiania, and the mind turns to practical considerations, which would be overwhelming but for the kindness of the British Consul and his friends, who are nobly waiting in the teeth of the north wind

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with cabs, a truck, and a cart, and get our luggage registered with the minimum of delay. There is nearly a ton to be weighed, and the modest sum of £32 to pay on it as far as the Finnish frontier.

The station at Bergen, like the hills, is gaunt, but inspiring, huge granite blocks supporting the arched glass roof in fine proportion. The railway here was only opened in 1906, and everything is clean and good, and the guards hardly seem to have got over their pleasure as at a new toy. Railway stations, indeed, seem to fulfil an important function in the social life of the northern peoples. Just as Americans—not, of course, in the great cities, but in such as Providence, Rhode Island—frequent the cemetery as a meeting-place in this life also, so in Norway, Sweden, and Finland the populace makes of the station a promenade, and, indeed, on Sundays and holidays throngs it so much as to deprive the timid traveller altogether of his already slender chance of snatching a cup of coffee in two and a half minutes.

Scandinavia is a region of cold meat meals, elsewhere only to be found at a Dutch breakfast table. Breakfast, dinner (3 p.m.), and supper (nine to ten o'clock), the meal does not vary greatly, and on the railways it is a highly convenient system for travellers that you help yourself, take what and as much as you like, and pay a fixed price, including everything but beer. Plates of sliced meat and fish

of every description lie on the table, with probably one hot dish and potatoes. Salt meat and fish are popular, in the belief that they are specially warming ; but there is a complete absence of sweet things, except stewed prunes, unless goats' milk cheese is to be counted. Large brown biscuits almost replace bread, pervaded by the flavour of carraway seed. To the shame of British railways, excellent second-class sleeping berths are provided at a most moderate charge, and there is about twice the amount of air and leg-room allotted to the miserable passenger in our native isles. These practical details will perhaps be excused by reason of the extreme uncommunicativeness of travellers in Scandinavia, who number some hundreds every year, but, unfortunately, can only talk about fishing.

Christiania, where the morning frost bit sharply, was emptying out its population by rail and road for the great Easter ski competition ; and a strange thing it is to see a stream of vehicles at half-past seven o'clock each with one or two pairs of skis projecting into the air, a leafless and polished Birnam. The only other person prominent in the streets was Regina's wicked old reputed father, from "Ghosts," who, bibulous already, lurched round a corner.

Modest, provincial, and the people on its streets speaking nothing but Norwegian, Christiania had

nevertheless a welcoming air absent from its neighbour capital ; for Stockholm, with all its beauty and signs of prosperity and an astonishing proportion of passers-by full of politeness and fluent English for the inquiring stranger, has nowadays a sense of chill for us. The dreamy and poetic Norwegian likes and is interested in us—he is for the Allies ; the Swede, hard, practical, accomplished, is full of distrust. Seventy per cent., it is reported, are vehemently pro-German, and these contain all the upper classes. Only the Radicals or Socialists are on our side. Mis-lay your ticket for an instant and a gendarme is promptly hailed, and at the frontiers real regret is observable in the official if you bear a missive exempting your luggage from search. Withal, perfect politeness and correctness are met with, and even many unnecessary courtesies.

From Stockholm to the Swedish-Finnish frontier is a day and two nights' journey, very comfortable, though the train is not quite so well appointed as the Norwegian train, and is fuller. We are going due north now to a destination a thousand miles north of Stockholm ; at every stopping-place the snow is crisper and the air colder.

II

RUSSIA'S KLONDYKE

SO they call Karungi. The chief difference is that in Alaska gold is got—it was there that Burning Daylight had his “hunch”—whereas at Karungi it is left by the traveller urging across the frontier. The frontier itself lies midway in the river Tornea, half Karungi one side and half the other. But they lump the two together and call it the Russian Klondyke.

In August, 1914, Karungi was a settlement of a hundred and twenty souls gathered round a posting-house and a miniature station on an infinitesimal line that indolently served the summer farms farther north and carried occasional trucks of iron ore from the mountains. Then an eddy in the world-tide caught it and swept it athwart the stream of European traffic. It did not come to its own, indeed, till later in the year, when the sea route from Gefle to Rauno, not far north of the Aland Islands at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia, was closed to passengers by the danger of German mines. Goods continued to go that way till December, and can, it

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is said, still go—only no one can tell you what ship will risk the voyage, or when. Everybody and practically everything goes by Karungi.

And now Karungi knows the sweets of success. In three months its population increased to two thousand. There are three hotels and a "privat-hotel," a telephone system, and a telegraph office where you write your message in the parlour without at all disturbing the family dance around you; a kinema, with "London Bioscope and Englisch Krigsjournal"; several cafés, each with its gramophone; a branch of the Stockholm Handelabank, a Russian diplomatic agent, and a German consulate; this last, however, a mere empty boast, since consul there is none, but only the announcement nicely painted on a shield above a shanty window. The railway station, magnified to ten times its former size, has stuck out arms and taken in big yards, where the trucks lie ready for lading. A competent station master and his assistants speak some German and English. He has two passenger expresses to handle every day, besides the post trains and the goods. The greatest rush was in October and November, before the connection here was opened and traffic went by boat from Lulea to Salmiss, and thence by road to the town of Tornea.

Some five hundred people travelled each way daily. Since then on an average eighty pass into

Sweden, a hundred and fifty into Russia every day, with an occasional jump up to three or four hundred when men come back from Canada to join the colours ; and until February 15, when the last miles of the Finnish railway were built, all these, their luggage, and goods had to go from Karungi in sledges, twenty-seven kilometres, to Kaparanda, and there cross the river to Tornea. Now the sledge drive is only down to the river, and the two kilometres across it are on the ice. When the ice melts lighters will ply across the stream.

On the ice and the snow Karungi and its life are built. The older buildings—that shed, for instance, glorified now into the post office—are conspicuous by the drifts against their sides, but the majority stand neatly on snow, a yard or more deep. To dig it away would be impossible, and the new railway-lines also are, perforce, laid on top.

So far as eye can reach everything is under snow. Moustaches turn into icicles. A window left a chink open sticks solid with the ice formed as the moisture in the warm air freezes, and the unwary citizen who leaves water in his bucket must have recourse to the exhaust steam-pipe of the railway engine to melt it quickly. A southerly breeze warms the air to-day, and there are only 15° of frost C. ; yesterday there were 32°. The lowest temperature during the winter has been 39° below freezing-point

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C., which is just on 50° below zero Fahrenheit. Dress at Karungi consequently approximates to one pattern—heavy skin coat, mountain goat being the favourite, but also sheep and other varieties, fur or lamb's wool cap pulled well down over the ears, and gloves of fur or heavy leather lined with wool.

In footgear there is a greater choice. Some favour the simple golosh, others stout boots with anklets, while every kind of high boot is to be seen, from huge felt-lined cylinders like sewermen's waders to the product of some smart Eskimo cobbler, with fur on the outside, gaudy tassels dangling in front, and pointed toes turned up as on a fifteenth-century monument. The "nuts" of Karungi match the colour of the tassels with bright woollen belts six or eight inches wide round their furry waists.

It is Easter Monday, and daylight lasts from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m., while at midnight a pallid glow still streams from the northern sky. Who would have believed when last the leaves were young that the new British Minister from the Court of St. James's to Persia, Anno Domini 1915, would be transported virtually through Lapland reclining under sheep-skin rugs in a country sledge of gondola design with Eskimo dogs leaping and barking at his side? Had he wished for elegance he might without any difficulty have had a reindeer to draw him.

III

THE PORT OF SNOWS

MUSHROOM-LIKE in its growth, when the war is over Karungi will wither like a mushroom.

Meanwhile it makes the most of its luck. Even at the present rate some £50 goes daily into the pockets of the sledge owners for the passenger traffic alone. But far more important are the goods and the mails.

On the Finnish side a huge shed has been run up, differing only in size from the Central Hotel, the bank, and the cafés opposite ; for everything here is of raw, unpainted pinewood, and but for the fact that the Central Hotel, with its seven bedrooms, could be put inside the shed you might well mistake the one for the other. The shed has an off-loading capacity of ninety trucks, and thanks to the Easter holidays and a strike among the workmen, now settled (thus does fashion affect Karungi), is pretty full. The yard outside and at the Swedish terminus is littered with huge bales of English cotton and of Russian flax and linen ; inside crates upon crates of tea, coffee, dates, merchandise of every sort, are

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piled in immensely orderly heaps. Three hundred spades from a Sheffield firm glitter from one corner ; close by a pinnacle of tin pails seems to invite a Japanese juggler to knock them over and catch them ere they come to ground.

Much doubt appears to prevail in London as to the forwarding of goods by this route, and two regular agents were unable to give any information. It is therefore worth noting that 25,000 tons of goods have passed through Karungi since mid-December. The principal forwarding agents are the firm of Nyman and Shulz on the Swedish side ; on the Finnish, Karl Booström, who is also the agent in London for the former firm, except for butter, which goes to Jan Good and Sons in Newcastle. Single articles up to the weight of five tons can be and have been handled ; greater weights are impracticable, as the sledges, even two clamped together, cannot take them. As to the post, parcels of considerable dimensions are accepted, and the business done may be judged by the fact that a separate yard and some thirty yards of platform are reserved on either side for the mails. Here hundreds of packages, many from Siberia with valuable skins, are being put into the vans, and lie waiting sometimes to a depth of four feet. And parcels and letters for prisoners of war travel free over the whole line.

So all day long, from six to six, when the frontier gates are shut, two endless snakes slither across the frozen river, giving convulsive jerks as the sledges of which they are made strike hummocks in the ice, the drivers shouting lustily and a pleasant tinkle rising from the bells to that marvellous pale blue sky only to be seen under the northern sun.

But there is another less bright side to Karungi's bustling life. Among the thousands travelling thus with a queerly complacent interest through one of the most wintry of habitable places have been many refugees—Germans packed off from Petrograd, Russians ejected from Germany or escaped from most barbarous treatment. Wholly without money, often almost in rags, what can they have expected when they stepped from the train on to the bitter snow? Not what they found, one could swear. For the Russian Government has established at Karungi a branch of its Legation in Stockholm, with one of its secretaries made Consul and Red Cross officer for the purpose. This admirable man has since December devoted himself wholly to relieving misery and succouring the distressed. Other means have not been neglected, and the Russian Government has sent an agent of the Nordisk Reisebureau no fewer than seventeen times to Berlin to fetch away private luggage detained there. But the personal touch is worth more than many journeys

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of couriers, and the work done by M. V—— in helping the needy and sick is inestimable. He has organised a restaurant under a brisk Swedish hostess twenty yards from the platform, where every Russian can find a hot meal, a good coat, and a copy of the Gospels to cheer him on his way homewards. And English and French are welcomed and fed there too; nor even are Germans turned away. Every train is met, every inquirer is answered kindly, every wayfarer sent away with his heart warmed by simple, unaffected love. "God still works wonders in the world," M. V—— said of something else. He is indeed one of them himself.

In and around Swedish Karungi are many soldiers. A detachment of the XXth are quartered there, very picturesque in their sheepskins, and on skis, and more workmanlike in appearance than the military one sees in Stockholm in the eighteenth-century tricorne that is still worn. But in Finnish Karungi, besides the few gendarmes busy with passports, one sentry only is to be seen.

There is no Russian but laughs at the idea of Sweden as a possible object of attack. Though that fear seems still to afflict the Swedish mind, it has never any foundation in fact.

The trains on the Warsaw line are crowded—crowded with troops, crowded with officers, crowded with nurses, crowded with civilians, crowded even

with babies. There were forty-two in the second-class carriage, including at the start the only drunken man—a civilian—I have seen in Russia. How he got drunk was a mystery, for liquor can only be obtained by the ordinary person on presentation of a doctor's prescription, and under the eye of a police sergeant. But drunk he was, and he was forthwith bundled out of the train, and another took his place, and there were again forty-two. This is a large allowance, since two nights and a day and a half in a completely full coach must entail some discomfort, but everyone was so cheerful and full of brotherly feeling that it did not matter. It is worth far more than the money you save—some ten shillings—not to take a bed in the *wagon-lits* company's coach, but to occupy your bunk in the State railway carriage, a good wide bunk where you can sleep comfortably but not undress much. No doubt undressing and washing have their points, but pleasant company has its own too.

In our crowded compartment we all talk and are jolly; food is obtainable at frequent stopping-places, for part of the way there is a restaurant car, and an almost endless stream of tea gushes from our fellow passengers' tin kettles, replenished from the heater-stove that lives in a cupboard at the end of the car, or from a refreshment stall organised for the soldiers by the wayside. My immediate com-

panions are the wife of an army doctor, who has written to her to join him if she is not afraid of the cannonading, and she, as befits the daughter of a Cossack colonel, scorns the idea ; and a captain of the 16th Siberian Regiment on his way to the front. His men have been there since September, and he has been eating his heart out, detained far away on peaceful service. He is a splendid specimen of manhood, trim, vigorous, immensely alert in speech and movement, with imperturbable clear eyes and a bristling reddish moustache. These Siberians are a wonderful race—the Canadians of Russia, the race of the future.

The officers all wear khaki jackets, but the usual blue breeches ; this, he explains, is only for travel ; in action officers, as well as men, are all khaki. Swords, of course, are left behind, and his fighting equipment will consist of rifle and three revolvers. He will carry a thousand revolver cartridges, weighing alone ten pounds.

An atmosphere of the front pervades everything. It is a curious sensation when you realise for the first moment that some forty miles off lies the German Army, no longer divided from you by that comforting silver streak of water, with the British Fleet in being, but only these miles of flat land, and that you depend on the stout Russian hearts between you and them to prevent their being on you in two days,

burning and slaughtering. After Wilna each car is given a sentry, who scrutinises every passenger wishing to pass from one car to another. Going to have dinner I am stopped, and only allowed to pass on the restaurant waiter vouching for my being in the company of an officer. On the second morning the sentry forbids tea to be brought into the cars, only yielding to the insistence of an artillery officer who wears the aide-de-camp's aiguillettes.

The Red Cross nurses are delightful to watch. The "little sisters," as they are called by everyone, evidently take the greatest delight in their calling. They wear every possible kind of costume—velvet, silk, leather, cotton—but all wear the linen headdress typical of the Sister of Charity in the Orthodox Church. These, of course, are not "sisters" in the religious sense, but the tradition of the headdress remains.

Poland when we wake is warm and bright. There is no longer any snow, and, bathed in a treacherous sun, the pine woods with the intermingled fields smile gladly as if the world were at peace. It might be the country, to all appearance, anywhere between Weybridge and Witley. Half an hour in front of us, at Warsaw, the German aeroplanes dropped twelve bombs yesterday.

IV

TOWARDS THE FURNACE

FAR down in the south, over a thousand miles away, the guns are speaking—Poland is lit by the flames, and resounds to the crash of her ruined homes. Here life is still snowbound ; deep, heavy snow, no longer with the crisp sparkle of hard frost, but damp and nasty, already half thawed. By Viborg it has begun to rain, and we know that spring is upon us. The winter in Finland has been terribly long, and the Finns look, if possible, a shade gloomier than usual. They are a dour race, and, though there are springs of sweetness underneath, the surface is hard and untractable, even repelling.

They have their reasons for gloom, and the chief is the effect on their country of the war. Nine-tenths of Finnish trade is in the exportation of wood, which goes down the Baltic in heavy barges to nourish the industries of other lands. This trade is at a standstill, for the barges are locked up by the German Fleet, and millions of pounds' worth of wood lie stacked all along the shores of the Gulf of Bothnia. If the war lasts over the summer Finland, never

rich, will be almost ruined. The Finns have, too, the example of Scarborough and Libau, and fear for the coast towns. They cannot fight in the war, for now they have no army of their own, nor do they serve in the Russian Army, but have thrown themselves into Red Cross work with such resources as they can. Theirs is a position to inspire sympathy and respect.

To the Allies Finland has become a corridor leading to the door of Russia, and as you near the gateway you are surrounded by evidences of a changed life. Russians joining the train regard the foreigner with considerable interest—when they wake to the fact that you are English, with pleasure. Here it is a retired general, who introduces himself and tells you how his daughter has gone to be a hospital nurse in England; will she get across the North Sea in safety? You reassure him, having come yourself a week ago.

She has gone to join an Australian doctor who came to Russia by the Trans-Siberian and worked for several months with the army; not a word of Russian did he speak, but he got on perfectly, and his skill was the admiration of all. Now he has gone on duty in England, and has invited the Russian general's daughter to his hospital. A pretty instance of the ever-growing interchange of life between the two countries. There it is a young officer who

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jumps up, unable to express himself in words, "pumphandles" you, all smiles, and as suddenly sits down again.

You discover that you are undergoing a change too. You thought you were plain Mr. So-and-so, travelling for your own purposes as you have often done before. Not at all. You are an Englishman, an ally. Even the gendarme officer at the frontier, properly strict in carrying out his duty, regards you with less suspicion once your identity as a "soyuznik" is established. For anyone but a Briton or a Frenchman it is, in fact, very difficult to travel in Russia now. But you say the Russians are as ourselves.

Petrograd! Rain, heavy rain, glistening mackintoshes, and every man, woman, and child in goloshes, for the streets are half an inch deep in water from the melting snow, now being dug up and dumped from hundreds of carts on to the surface of the milky slush that covers the frozen Neva. In such an atmosphere a deputation of distinguished professors, men of letters, and economists had been waiting over two hours at the dismal Finland station to greet the delegates of the "Great Britain to Poland and Galicia" Fund Committee. If there had been any doubt before, there can be none now as to the strength and sincerity of the pleasure with which the existence of the fund has been hailed in

Russia, or how serious a token of good will the advent of the deputation of its committee seems to Russian eyes.

Professors Lutugin and Chaikovsky are the spokesmen, and express in heartfelt tones the sense of Russian interest in the object of the fund, and of Russian joy at the movement of sympathy in Great Britain. Their words are repeated next day by the entire Press of the capital, and in substance by the numerous deputations of Poles, Jews, and others interested who come to call on the delegates.

SECTION II
THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE, 1915

V
LIFE IN WARSAW

BOMBS are not dropped on Warsaw every day—only occasionally. Nor do they do great damage. The principal objective of the Germans has been the new bridge over the Vistula, but so far they have not succeeded in hitting it, and their repeated want of success has induced them to abandon their efforts—except occasionally. Now they prefer to send out six or eight aeroplanes together on raids against country towns and drop a hundred or so bombs in rapid succession. By this means they must kill or wound some people, and in fact do: of course, almost exclusively non-combatants. On three nights during the week we have been here they are believed to have nibbled at Warsaw; the lights of the town were suddenly put out, and some shooting was afterwards reported, but if there was an attack it must have been easily scared away.

Warsaw, except when an attack is expected, has about a third of its lamps lit, and now, besides the desire to be inconspicuous to the Germans, there is an added reason for economy—want of coal. The great coal mines on the Silesian frontier being in German hands, the whole of the coal for Russia has to come from one district, and the output is not enough to satisfy all the big cities, which have therefore been running short. Warsaw factories normally consume one hundred trucks of coal a day ; they are lucky now if they get a supply of twenty. Worse still : Petrograd woke one morning to the fact that it was threatened with a coal famine, and instantly took measures that the capital should have the first claim on coal ; the second should belong to Moscow, and the third only to Warsaw. Warsaw, therefore, expects in a few weeks to be without coal altogether. Fortunately the weather will be turning warmer, but especially in view of the high price of wood the lack of coal will be a serious factor.

Gentlemen who write skittishly about the brilliant social life of Warsaw are, not to put too fine a point on it, talking through their hats. True, the theatres are open and well attended, but this is due to the presence in the city of a great number of officers waiting to be sent on duty, and meanwhile kicking their heels. The entire life of Warsaw has, in fact,

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been hitched to the chariot of war, and consists of the military, of those supplying their needs, and of others struggling not to be suffocated by the dust of the world war. On the north and south fronts together are fourteen armies; the fifteenth, they say, is quartered at the Hôtel Bristol, Warsaw. There, and at the two other principal hotels, is a kaleidoscopic bustle and chatter of officers, Cossack colonels, generals, aide-de-camps all day long, and orderlies in the hall and passages. Large grey Red Cross motors stand at the door, ready at a moment's notice to start on a hundred mile journey. And spies, or so it is said, spies everywhere, so that when two armoured cars came from England and were sent up to the front not long since, it was known at once where they were to break their journey, although not arranged beforehand, and half a dozen bombs were dropped in the night, fortunately without effect, except on the garden. The greater part of the furniture in the hall of the hotel has been removed to prevent eavesdropping. Warsaw still remains the focus of military interest.

The fear of the Germans has vanished. No one believes it now possible that they can ever take Warsaw. In October was the terrible time, and you can see a post put up in a wood not eight versts, less than six miles, from the city with the inscription scrawled on it: "Kaiserliche Deutsche Grenze."

Three things saved Warsaw then. The prohibition of alcohol, the bad roads, and the fact that the Germans thought the absence of defences a trap. While they were hesitating, and before they could get up the guns, two Siberian regiments were rushed into the town. They tore straight from the train, deployed into line, and charged with such ferocity that the Germans broke or fled. But almost every one of their officers fell. The colonel of one, mortally wounded, cried : " I die for my own country." He was a Pole, for in these two Siberian regiments were forty per cent. of Poles, who had been sent into the army in that far-off land, full, as it is, of golden promise.

There is another Governor-General of Warsaw now. He who was here at the beginning of the war, thinking it impossible to defend the city, summoned some of the principal citizens and told them that perhaps the troops would be withdrawn : " You need not be afraid, however, we are fighting with a civilised adversary, who will respect non-combatants." Three days afterwards came the news of Kalish, of which the Germans made a second Louvain.

VI

PERIMYSHL

THAT is what the Russians have always called it, and that will be its official name ; and as it is so much easier for us than the Polish Przemysl (pronounce, Pshemysh'l, and drop the final "l"), why should not we use it too ? There was a time when part of Galicia was Russian, before it became Polish, and about half the population consists of Russini or Ruthenians who are first cousins of the Little Russians of Kiev, who claim to be the first and purest of all the Russians.

Perimyshl, yesterday and to-day bathed in sunshine, lies nestling in its ring of hills, green with the fresh bloom of a still cold northern spring, like some lesser Florence, save that it lies on two small rivers instead of the one great Arno. A month ago Perimyshl fell and the sense of a captured city is strong upon it. In Lwow an effort can be made not to speak German ; here, unless Polish is one of your accomplishments, it is impossible not to. Not that there are many native German-speaking inhabitants, these being mostly Poles and Jews, but Ger-

man and Polish were the two official languages only a month ago, and Russian is as yet seldom to be found. That coquettish Austrian cap, too, is to be seen everywhere : students wear it, porters wear it, Austrian Red Cross officers retained here on their errand of mercy wear it. Whiskers cut *à la* Franz Josef have not had time to change. Austrian goods still fill the shops. And every pair of eyes in the street asks you the same unspoken question, What is to be our future ? The eyes do not mostly look very sad or desperate, only questioning.

It must be said that the Russian military authorities have given the populace every reason for confidence. The change inevitably means a great break, and the search that had to be made for ten thousand Austrian soldiers who changed into civilian clothes, hoping thus to escape, must have caused some distress ; but, to mention only two points, wives of Austrian officers taken in the town receive support from the Russian Government through the commandant of the fortress, while goods formerly the property of the Austrian Government which can be proved to have been honestly bought by civilians are exempted from the proclamation requisitioning all such articles, and reasonable time is allowed for claims to be substantiated. Practically no damage has been done to the town, which was not bombarded, and the occasional

aeroplanes were careful in their choice of a target. Further proclamations issued on a variety of subjects enjoin no one to take arms, motor-cars, furniture, or domestic utensils from the town without leave; prohibit the sale of alcoholic liquor; command inhabitants to be within doors after ten o'clock; forbid coming or going from the town without permits, prohibit the hoarding of money, the depreciation of the rouble below the value of $3\frac{1}{2}$ kronen; instruct the populace not to buy from soldiers (thus discouraging theft) food, clothes, horses, cows, gold or jewellery, not to talk to prisoners, spread false news, or sell goods at higher prices than those fixed by authority; enumerate the conditions on which schools or clubs may be opened; and fix a temporary scale of wages as follows:—

For 1 man and a 2-horse cart .. 2 roubles a day.

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------|---|---|
| a carpenter | .. 1.20 | „ | „ |
| a workman with tools | .. 1.0 | „ | „ |
| ditto without tools | .. 0.80 | „ | „ |
| a woman worker | .. 0.60 | „ | „ |
| an overseer | .. 2.00 | „ | „ |

Another sadder “bill” announces that since the brutal conduct of the Austrian officers in cutting out the tongue of a captured Russian telephonist no Austrian officer, being captured, shall be allowed to keep his sword.

The mystery of the fall of Perimyshl is not hard to solve. True, mystery always attaches to the fall of an important fortress, and rumour is busier over the taking of bricks and mortar than over the defeat of an army in the field, but this mystery was surely a shade vamped up. As for a "scandal," it is hard to discover where anyone can have spied it, unless indeed things have a different proportion for American eyes.

The reasons for the fall of Perimyshl, then, were mainly these :—

(1) The extravagant size of the garrison and population combined.

(2) The fact that large stores had been corruptly sold by officers of the Austrian "intendanz" to speculators.

(3) The fact that the fortress was not very heroically defended.

(4) The severe bombardment of the forts, which made the Austrians believe in the presence of a besieging army three times the size of that which actually took the city.

Perimyshl was a first-class fortress designed by a brilliant Polish engineer. Defended by thirty thousand men and with half its civil population, even with all its unwieldy numbers, had they been possessed of even greater stomach for a fight it must have held out much longer. Unfortunately for

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Austria neither of these two conditions was satisfied. Faulty strategy led to General Kusmanek being shut up in a small town with 150,000 men plus a civil population of 56,000, and neither he nor anyone else had the genius to give cohesion and fighting grit to this preposterous mass of humanity. The Austrian officers lounged at the cafés, we are told, powdered themselves, scented themselves, amused themselves with ladies whom Horace Walpole would have described as "virgins of the Strand." But what conceivable work or real interest was there for them, cooped up for months, and all day long hearing the distant roar of the Russian artillery? A few thousand men only were required to man the forts: the rest useless. Save under an exceptional commander, any troops must have undergone a gradual demoralisation. The Austrians, as we are never tired of reminding each other, hold the record for being always beaten, and the individual behaviour within Perimyshl was on a low level, but had it been of the highest order on the part of the regimental officers, a study of the situation does not justify the belief that this would have materially affected the result of the siege. There were fifty-three forts; only three of the smaller were captured, and this at a cost to the Russians of 20,000 men. This does not suggest actual cowardice on the part of the defence. The Austrian officers, besides other pets (*vide*

supra), had their rooms well stocked with butter, sweets, and preserves. Very likely, but there were only some 3000 officers, and what might have served for them, even had they eaten their horses, would not have sufficed the 180,000 odd other mouths in the town at the time of its surrender for more than a day. Nor do specimens of bread found at Periymsl carry greater conviction as to the abundance alleged by some. Large stores were found after the capture, but that was due to the fact that the speculators who bought corruptly from the Austrian quartermasters held over too long and lost the golden moment for which they had waited; the surrender took them by surprise and they were unable to disgorge. The point of exhaustion was not reached, but hunger was in the town. During the siege a cat fetched 10 kronen, a goose 40, and although the tale that the poor were reduced to gnaw wood is probably an exaggeration, still it is clear that if cats are openly bought for human food a considerable shortage must exist. Had General Kusmanek had a garrison of reasonable size, and had he been able to get rid of a portion of "les bouches inutiles," the stores that he believed to make up the total at his disposition would have lasted for months longer.

"Mais oui," said a distinguished Russian officer with a deprecatory shrug of his shoulders, "il n'y a

pas à dire—ils étaient poltrons.” The Austrian officers are far less staunch than the Germans. Take them apart, and with a little flattery they can be induced to impart much information ; whereas the German will reply : “ For whom do you take me ? I am an *officer*,” in such a tone that further attempts are obviously hopeless. But as to the specific charge of cowardice, Colonel —— immediately went on to correct himself. How, indeed, was it possible for any officers efficiently to command such troops as the Austrian ? He had himself seen an officer and seven men, the remains of his platoon, captured ; of the seven men one was a Czech, one a Jew, one a Slovak, one a Pole, one a Croatian, one an Italian, and only to one of the seven, a German-Austrian, could the officer make himself understood with ease. Not only were there constant quarrels in the garrison, especially between the Magyars, who in this district as well as elsewhere earned a vile reputation among the population, and the Slav troops, but when the big sortie was made in the hope of breaking through towards the Carpathians, the Czech battalions refused to move. What wonder that in such circumstances the defence was not conducted to the last limit of heroic self-devotion ? That musty injunction, *divide et impera*, by which the Hapsburgs once ruled, has become a sword against them, and should be rewritten in memory of an old and

frivolous Emperor who had a greater chance than any man of our time—*divide et perde*.

Up on the forts is ample evidence of the severity of the Russian bombardment. Here were only 3- or 4-inch guns to support the mitrailleuses and rifle-fire should an attack be contemplated. The big guns, wisely, were kept behind, concealed in the woods. But life in the forts must have been a dreadful thing. In front, above, behind, the thick earth beaten down on its substratum of solid concrete is pitted and rent with the Russian fire. Far below in the bomb-proof shelters where the defenders lived like moles, the earth must have rocked and the air hummed to their tortured ears with the hail of bursting steel. Here an 11-inch shell has struck one of the gun cupolas and glanced off into the oak glades beyond. But that glancing blow scooped a hole inches deep in the steel, tore cupola and gun from their foundations, and sent the whole work of cement and earth crashing over on its back in utter desolation. There you can see where an 8-inch shell exploded on the roadway leading to the fort, and the road for the time being ceased to exist. If the evidence of a Polish telephone engineer, employed to keep the wires in the fortress in order, is to be trusted, the Austrian shooting was far from being so good: "Vier hundert Meter nach Links! Drei hundert Meter zu weit!" were the comments con-

stantly heard from the observation posts. The Russians had the range to a nicety. Yet such was the strength of the works, supported by the Austrian heavy artillery, guns that now stand in a forlorn row, their breech-blocks blown out and mutely pointing to the sky, dogs that can no longer bay the moon—that far less damage was done by the bombardment than by the subsequent destruction of the forts by the Austrians themselves.

On March 8th–23rd the Austrians fired 10,300 rounds at the Russian lines, killing forty persons and wounding some two hundred, mostly non-combatants. It was the swan-song of Perimyshl. The next morning a Russian officer was dressing at 5 a.m. when he was suddenly flung across his room and his dog was hurled from the floor to the ceiling by a violent explosion in the big Siedlitz fort, 8 versts away. This was the prelude to a series of explosions that lasted for four hours, destroying, so far as was possible, the forts, railway bridge, electrical and other works. Presently an Austrian colonel in a motor-car with a white flag drove out to the Russian lines and asked to see the Divisional General in command. To his surprise he was told that he could see the General of the investing army : it was contrary to Austrian practice that G.H.Q. should come so near the field of active operations. Taken before General Selivanov, he presented a sealed

letter which began by saying that no food was left in the fortress, a confession which enabled the Russians, hitherto unaware of the extent to which the food supply of the defence had been depleted, to insist on unconditional surrender. "In the first place these explosions must stop"—Boom! "No more damage must be done"—Boom! Boom! "But, General, it is impossible; they began after I left, and there is no means now of—" Boom! And in fact it did prove impossible. Nor was this the only damage done; for on hearing the first explosions, many of the Russians, thinking an accident had befallen the defence, went forward to attack, and were caught in the mine areas. All who were so caught, even though slightly wounded, lost their sight. Even now mines, undiscovered, explode from time to time.

At noon Colonel Pnevsky advanced into the fortress with an escort of a battalion of infantry and a battery of artillery. But the bridge over the river Wiar was blown up, and they could not pass. Then Colonel Pnevsky declared that he needed no escort, and advancing alone, swam the river, and entered the captured town alone and, dripping from every stitch, rode through the streets to General Kusmanek's quarters. His deed was an inspiration, a moment of greatness, a symbol of the dash and high spirit with which Russia wages this war for

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freedom and for right. The *pourparlers* lasted till next morning, and at 4 a.m. Colonel Pnevsky rode back into the Russian lines carrying with him the complete terms of the capitulation. The Russian troops immediately advanced and entered Perimyshl over a bridge of boats. It was then that a still greater surprise awaited the Austrians. The army that took Perimyshl and 130,000 prisoners amounted to but 60,000 men.

From the point of view of the Russians, it was a model siege and a great feat of arms; and the civilians in the town were practically untouched by the military operations. Had the position been reversed and the Austrians or Germans conducted such a siege, it is easy to imagine how much would have been left of the town. As it is, the villages in the Russian fire zone remained intact: those within range of the Austrian guns were wiped out.

VII

IN THE RUSSIAN TRENCHES

THE noise is not terrific, but continuous, and most varied. If music could be completely expressed in colour, as it has partially been expressed in curves on sensitised plates, this symphony would look like nothing so much as the patchwork quilt on which Mark Twain's chameleon burst in the effort to turn all colours at once. The necessity is not to talk loud but to "look lively," and looking lively here means keeping constant watch lest one shows the tip of a stray hair above the parapet. Russian soldiers run to solidity rather than height, but in the $4\frac{1}{2}$ foot deep communication trench even they must stoop a good deal; for a six foot man half a mile of fast going doubled up is painful, and our first impression in trench No. 1 is of immense relief at being able to sit down and stretch. The —th Siberian Rifles hold the line here, and the Germans are trying to give them a warm time to-day. "Not an attack, no," says Captain Vladimir Vladimirovich Burkovsky, who receives us. "Perhaps they want to make us

think that one is coming ; or perhaps it is that a fresh battalion has come into the trench and is being specially energetic." He only knows what is happening in his trench, but in fact there has been fighting this morning all along this part of the line. Quite early the big guns began to boom, and when we got out of the Décauville light railway, which links up the positions on the Northern Front, we were told that we could not go anywhere. In the end we went somewhere else, a spot to which the friendly prohibition did not formally apply, but at several points it required the presence of the Brigadier-General, whose guests we were, to get us past the sentries. So we came ultimately to a wood. A very pleasant pine wood, interspersed with birch ; so it looked from a distance. Come up to it, and you find a veritable fortress, compared to which Spottsylvania would be a joke. Chevaux-de-frises and a wilderness of wire entanglements, some with a new and special contrivance, front, flank, and almost surround the redoubts, which melt into the sandy carpet below the pines so as to be invisible more than a few feet off. The pines spring gracefully towards the laughing heavens ; only a few here and there have been felled to give the riflemen a clear view ; and Heaven help those who try to storm this wood. It is Tarak-Balimovski, round which have been fights that in earlier days would have ranked

as fearful battles. Here the Germans contested the ground with desperation as they retired, but the Russians were too quick on them, and they could not entrench. Nothing short of a cataclysm would dislodge the Russians now. Into the wood we plunge and presently emerge at another point where the Siberians have their quarters. Many are occupied in making those wire entanglements with the new contrivance; others water the horses tethered behind a leafy screen. Behind, to the right, to the left, the Russian big guns boom, quite close some of them, while the Germans try in vain to get the range for their 8-inch howitzers. The large field in front is pockmarked with the explosions. Monster holes like inverted mushrooms sunk into the ground, measuring thirty-four yards round, show the efforts of their 12-inch cannon, and hard by they have reduced what was a village to dust and a few walls, standing in gaunt unconsciousness of the caricature scrawled on them by retreating Germans and advancing Russians.

Across the field is another wood of hazel or young birch. As we pass through, one of the two officers with us says: "You can hardly go along this path at night. The Germans have the range splendidly here, and keep dropping shells on to it. One night some brushwood caught fire, and the Germans, thinking that our fellows were coming, fired over

two hundred shells at the spot. Ah, here we must get down." Get down we do into the communication trench, and go forward in single file crouching and only turning aside to let others, with big pots of soup, pass us. The bass instruments behind still keep up the music, while here the trebles begin to chime in too. Gentle purrs, long whines, screeches, whistles, and moans fill the air; we realise that but three feet perhaps over our heads death is flying. Another sound joins the chorus, multiplies, and almost dominates it, a sound singularly unpleasant and perturbing, like the detonation of a schoolboy's squib, but sharper and with a touch of viciousness. It is caused by the German explosive bullets hitting the trees and bursting. The officers, who wrongly call them dum-dums, say that the Germans always use them. I can at all events vouch for the fact that during my brief experience their use was liberal and continuous.

Swinging round the corner, two more gnomes carry a bag on a pole, and from that bag hang two boots, swaying and knocking one against the other. Our senior officer stops to inquire. "A grenade . . . burst right on top of him." The officer asks crouching, and crouching the soldier salutes and makes answer; for did either stand upright the chances are that he would join the one who has gone. So we pass on, crouching.

In the second trench, guarded only by one sentry, we find respite from the zip-zip and the horrid crack of the bursting explosives ; another minute, and we are in No. 1.

“ Send for a periscope, Vladimir Vladimirovich. I want to show the Englishman what we see of the Germans.” The Captain expresses his regret. He had four periscopes this morning, but three have been shot to pieces, and the fourth is in use further along. “ That sounds like good shooting. Are the Germans so close ? ” we ask. “ It varies. Here their trenches are about 100 yards away ; but in some places not more than twenty-five. This trench forms an angle ; we have the Germans not only in front but on our right.” The word is hardly spoken when we hear the soft sound we know too close at hand. Everyone makes for cover. The trench of course is built zigzag and the firing positions fully protected, but in the middle of the trench, which at this point is some four feet wide, it is possible to be enfiladed. Another new song in the air like the tune of a bushman’s whip when it refuses to crack. “ Ah, yes,” says the Captain, “ that is a hand-machine gun. Here is one of ours. You see one man can use it.” If it were not in the corner of a twenty-century battlefield, you would take this queer looking instrument for one of the more elaborate blunderbusses of a hundred and

fifty years ago. For some twenty seconds its tune fills the air, then stops and gives way again to the hiss and crack, the smash of our shells bursting in the German lines and the dull roar of the artillery far away. "And how long do you stop in the trenches?" "Three days in and three days out is the rule," we are told, "but of course when there is much pressure it may be longer. We were once in the trenches for twelve days without being relieved! Well, good-bye. It's so good of you to come and see us; the monotony is the worst part, you know." With a hearty handshake we go off, still crouching, gnome-like. In the communication trench we pass the other gnomes coming back, their pots brimming with savoury soup, vegetables and meat boiled up together and served in the soup, their arms hugging generous brown loaves. The Germans are said to get only 2 lbs. of bread a day between every three men. As we cross the large field again we note where fresh shell has fallen. The German gunlayers are still short by some hundred yards. In the colonel's bombproof shelter tea and oranges await us for lunch.

VIII
LOYAL LWOW

TEN years ago, in the ancient city of Lwow, Lwoof, Léopol, or Lemberg, for by these names it has been variously known, the Polish National Democratic party, which represents the heart and soul of Poland's hopes, resolved within itself that, should war come about between Austria and Russia, Austrian-Poland, otherwise called Galicia, should plump for Russia. Not that the Poles loved Russia more, nor yet that they loved Austria less. The Austrian rule indeed was not melodramatically oppressive. It was not, certainly, all that the surface seemed, which would have made Galicia appear a favoured child, with her own Parliament, her own Polish Stadthalter, her own University, her own banks, and her Uniate Bishops for such of her sons as belonged to that peculiar Church, chiefly known in England from a case brought from Canada before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. There was a certain quiet but none the less effective opposition to the economic progress of the country, which, however mild com-

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pared to the ruthless oppression of the Poles in Prussia, kept alive a sufficient distrust in Galician minds. But it is indubitable that of all the Polands, Austrian-Poland was in many respects the most free. No, the Poles within the stretch of Austria's sceptre plumped for Russia because they knew that only under Russia could Poland hope to attain reunion and free national life.

The moment you cross the frontier at Brody you recognise the handiwork of Austria. What good roads! What neat towns! What fine stations! The station of Lwow is a capital instance of Austrian architecture: bold, simple, convenient, finished with delicate ornament and fine sculpture, and marked by that taste which never deserts the Austrian craftsman and never visits the German. A very wide boulevard leads from it towards the centre of the town, paved with the same perfect setts that are the delight of Vienna. This town itself is a delight, exactly what a provincial capital ought to be. Spacious streets, welcoming parks, excellent statues seen to great advantage, dainty shops filled with appetising Viennese goods, and all of that quiet, pretty style which is nothing so much as "gemüthlich," with just enough seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings demurely peeping out to give it the gently mellow baroque flavour that suggests the presence of ancient aristocracy.

Lwow reminds you of Salzburg, of Graz ; it is a Vienna in little with nice shades of local meaning and character.

In such a setting could anything conceivable under the heading " free national life " be achieved ? Austria, with her genius for polished external civilisation, has never even grasped the existence of the fact expressed by those words, and when Venice or Bohemia or Bosnia revolts from her soulless administration, or Serbia refuses to come under it, to Austrian eyes such conduct bears only the mark of that Prince who made the first revolt of all. In her pride and victory Austria refused to learn the lesson hardly taught to many proud empires that no rule can be lasting, no power great which treats the component parts of empire as private possessions to be exploited, petted, protected, abused ; and in her sorrow and defeat she will still refuse to learn the lesson.

But the Poles, looking up from below, saw clearly and took their measures accordingly. Through all the petty intrigues conducted from Vienna to weaken their solidarity, in spite of attempts to prejudice them against Russia and make them quarrel with the Russian Poles, in spite of the insidious encouragement of German Socialism, they held firmly to their idea and their hope. And so when the thunder crashed and they found themselves in the heart of the storm, they were cool and

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steadfast. Galicia was justly proud of its "sokols," gymnastic and semi-military societies, much encouraged by the Austrian Government in the hope that they would prove a prolific recruiting ground. On the outbreak of war the sokols of Eastern Galicia were mustered at Lwow, and a strong effort was made by the Austrian representative to obtain from them a declaration of loyalty and the oath of service. The leaders of the sokols prevaricated: their numbers were not complete, their kit had not arrived; in any case there was no need to be precipitate. Their numbers swelled until they became, with ingenious intention, an embarrassment to the life of the city. Sixty thousand strong, the flower of young Galician manhood, they marched forth to camp nearer the frontier, but—oh, strange! as they proceeded their columns waned and pined away, until on reaching their destination there were not more than a remnant of less than five thousand. To them the leaders put the question fairly, Do you want to fight for Austria? If you do, we will not put difficulties in your way. Of the 5000, 300 answered Yes, and joined the Austrian ranks. Out of 60,000, 300. In Western Galicia, where the sokols were mobilised at Cracow, the Government was in a position to exercise more effective pressure, and got 10,000, but chiefly Socialists and other non-national elements of the nation.

Immediately following the Russian occupation the Polish National party produced a review, edited at Lwow. It was called *Unification*. They did not believe it would sell in the troublous times of war, and allowed for a sale of three hundred copies. The first number sold over three thousand. Unification is their motto—it was their dream; its realisation has been promised them, and in the fulfilment of that promise their national destiny will be achieved.

IX

OUT OF THE BELEAGUERED CITY

“ALL through! Oh, but ye-es! The whole siege! You see, I was—what you call it?—oh, it is so long since I talk English. Lots and lots of my parents are English, and my cousin is an officer, a marine officer, you know, in the English Navy, but all the war I haven’t spoken one word, so I begin all to forget. I was in a hospital in Germany when the war broke out—yes, that’s right, isn’t it?—studying to be a doctor. Then I went to Vienna. Why? Oh well, I *am* Austrian by nationality. Of course I had to go and be a nurse, and I wanted rather to be with the Austrians.

“When the siege was over I wanted to go back to Germany to finish my studies, but they won’t let me. You see, my mother was German. It’s such a funny long Danish name, ours, and so, you see, I’m a—what you call it?—a sort of confusion.”

It was strange to think that this bright girl had been, as she said, “all through.”

“I and another young lady were left all alone at

the Klinik in Vienna for a time—all the doctors had gone off to the army. Vienna was then rather, how to say, *ach, normale*, only there were lots of wounded, 60,000 you know, and everyone was getting a little sad. We both did everything in our ambulanz, the room for the lightly wounded, you know, things we knew nothing about, ordering réceptions [Anglice: writing prescriptions]—everything. At the front, of course, the nurses have to do operations too—little ones—that’s what I like, the chirurgie, though it’s not my *fach*—I was working at Irrenkrankheit—you know, mad people. Some of the doctors here were awful—the ones who weren’t Austrians—you know. So, so lazy, and didn’t do anything for the poor wounded. And the chief dentist knew simply nothing, he was a Jew—the under one, who was a surgeon, did all the dental work. The head of one hospital was put in prison. And weren’t we all glad! I was under a splendid doctor—he’s one of the finest ‘opérateurs’ in Perimyshl—at the Garrisonspital. He’s a Russian, by the way, though somehow he’s an Austrian subject, but he speaks Russian perfectly and understands all their ways: indeed he is Russian. *Vous viendrez, n’est-ce pas, le voir? Excusez-moi, que je parle anglais, mais c’est un si grand plaisir!*” This by way of parenthesis, to “sestritsa,” the “little sister,” who sits with us smiling her beautiful Russian smile of golden-hearted

kindness, though understanding but one word in every five.

“Yes, yes, she’ll excuse you. Go on. How did you come to be in Perimyshl?”

“With the 3rd Army—the Austrian, of course, I mean. I marched all the way with them and slept in the ambulance waggons. Oh, I never saw our *army*, really. The Sanitaries come at the end, with the train, and ours was a very long, long train. I got here about the middle of October, and then we marched out again to Nizankowice and founded our hospital there.”

“Then what happened to the 3rd Army?”

“It got off, I suppose. I don’t really know, because I didn’t ever see it, but I suppose it did, somewhere to the Carpathians, for one day the Red Cross delegate with the 3rd Army, who was a friend of mine, drove out from Perimyshl in an automobile and fetched me in. He said the Russians were coming. Just think, they only knew two days before that their army was anywhere near! I wanted to get away, to Cracau, but it was too late—the auto was broken, and the roads and the trains were all so crowded you couldn’t move, and I was shut up in this dreadful town. That was about November 5th.

“Then I worked in the Spital till I fell ill. Oh yes, lung complaint, and I used to cough up lots of blood.

But I'm all right now—only not strong enough to work. I went just now to ask one of the Russian doctors for some extra food, but he said he only could if I came on to nurse the typhus cases. But I'm not strong enough to nurse epidemics. I want to go back to the chirurgie—and my doctor wants me too, so I hope they'll let me.

“No one knows what I am, you see, that's always the difficulty. I was arrested six times during the war for being a spy. In Germany once, and three times in Austria, and then twice here during the siege. Once was when one of the doctors took me into the Siedliska fort, the famous one, you know, the most famous of all. Of course it was wrong of him, and they took me off to prison. Why, not even the officers were allowed near the fort! But I knew officers on the staff, and they came and got me out. Now I suppose the Russians think I should like to be a spy. But it's ridiculous. What I should like would be to go now and finish my studies in Sweden.”

“Were you all hopeful at first—at the beginning of the siege, I mean?”

“The others were, but I wasn't. Somehow I always thought it would end so. It was partly the fault of the 3rd Army. The general took lots of food from the fortress, more than they could spare, for the army. General Kusmanek didn't want to give it, but the other one was above him. Then Kus-

manek telegraphed to Vienna, but they said he must give the army what it wanted, so he had to. It was too late then to get rid of the civiles—you know, the population. Kusmanek ordered them all to go, but they hid underground and everywhere, and then the Russians were all round, so that it was no good.

“I don’t think *they* suffered very much, they always seemed to have to eat. But the poor soldiers! It was dreadful to see them. You see, it was calculated that the food would last only till January 20th, and it lasted till . . . March 22nd! At the end they were so weak they could hardly walk. The men in Siedliska, the village near the fort, where General Webe’s brigade was, couldn’t even walk to their baths. And when they made the last—what you call it in English, *une sortie*?—ach, *sortie*, I could hardly bear to see them. All they had to eat was that red cabbage, you know, and sort of—ugh!—bread. The bread was made from trees—the bark, mixed with meal and I don’t know what else. They couldn’t march at all, and Tomasi’s division—the Hungarians—got there two hours late.

“And then there was no soap, or sugar, or matches, and no sponges either. In the cafés there was nothing to be had but just tea and coffee—just that and nothing else! One of the engineer officers was such a clever fellow—he had been a captain in the Boer War, *for* the Boers, you know; he was one of

those men who have an enthusiasm for war, and he came back to fight from Africa or America or somewhere, although he was about forty-five and didn't have to. He was a Hungarian. Well, he made lots of things. Soap, out of horse fat and nitre—but it was very difficult to wash with, especially linen. And then matches—you see, here's a box, 'K. und K., Genie-division, Przemysl, Kriegszunder.' And look here, this tells you not to waste the striking part, that was awfully dear to make; and here's another notice, telling you to look out when you strike one. You see, you never knew whether it wouldn't suddenly blaze up into your face!"

"But when the Russians got in they found supplies. It's true then that the intendant sold the stores corruptly?"

The grimace was more expressive than the words.

"I don't know about all that. But there were three intendants: the first went off before the siege, the second died—people said he poisoned himself. The last one was a Hungarian, quite good. And there were several of the officers under the intendant who were put in prison.

"All that time I was ill, from January to March. I was given the status of an officer. In the hotel where I was it was all full with Hungarian officers, very noisy, but not bad fellows. My friends at the

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staff sent me over food—oh no! no milk, except that dry powder stuff. I had part once of General Kusmanek's horse; he had his killed first as an example, and it was very good, really.

“People said that Kusmanek was always being überweigert—yes, overruled, by the Obercommando, and lots of things were done he didn't want. That was one thing. And then the Hungarians and the Polands, oh, they hated each other!

“But it wasn't till March, when the snow fell, that hope was given up. Then my friends on the staff told me it was hopeless, so, oh no, it wasn't a surprise at the end. You see, the whole time we thought that the Russians had an army of nearly 400,000.

“The last day, when the bridges and everything were blown up, it was wonderful. I went with an officer to see the railway bridge, and we looked on quite close. A great bit of iron came right over my head, as close as that, behind me. But the powder magazine—it was the most beautiful thing I ever saw, huge pink and white—oh—*Wolken*, you know, *des nuages*, *c'était si joli!* Oh, *no*, it didn't frighten me at all! Shells used to come into the town sometimes, you see. I don't mind shrapnel, but I don't like bombs. One day, while I was dressing, they began to come right over the hotel—like that, o-o-o-o—and I didn't like that, because it would be

so horrid to die half undressed, wouldn't it? An officer came over to say that I'd better not come to the hospital, it was too dangerous—just think, eighteen shells fell right round it, and one through the roof, into the middle of the room for the lightly wounded officers, only no one was hurt!—but I didn't mind at all, because I was dressed by then.

“The aviators tried to get off the last day, but everything was in such a—what is it?—a mess that they burnt two aeroplanes by mistake. All the aviators who went were caught but one, who was a splendid flyer, and the commander of the flying corps went up in a balloon and was carried . . . into Russia! That same day an aeroplane came in—driven by an awfully brave boy—with letters and maps for the officers—and in the—what?—muddle a lot of letters were burnt.

“Of course it was an awfully interesting time, and we tried to do things. There wasn't any theatre, not regularly, though there was a Jewish one and a Poland one sometimes, but a friend of mine who was a kapellmeister at Vienna, got up a série of concerts. The last one was on March 7th: it was to have been on the 14th, but he said he was afraid we shouldn't be in Perimyshl then! People were always asking him, ‘Well, where will the next one be? Will it be in Kiev? or Petersburg?’—ach yes, of course I mustn't say that now—Petrograd! We had an

orchestra, and oh, such fun with the poor instruments that were all, you know, crashed—no, smashed, especially the brass, because the men had to keep their fingers over the holes! And singing too. There was one quite good singer from the opera at Vienna—not a chorist, but not one of the well known. We did Wagner and Schubert and—but I'll give you a programme. Some of the pieces could only be partly done; you see, we had to take the music there was, and some had got lost or spoiled. There was so much good music because the 5th Honved Regiment was at Perimyshl before, and that's supposed to be the most musical of all the Hungarian regiments—no, the second, the 17th is the very best."

"We've heard stories about officers who always got themselves up smart, and powdered."

"Oh, *no!*—at least, perhaps there may have been some. I don't see how they could have been smart after all that time, but you see there's a great difference between the officers who were always here, very lazy fellows, and those who came in, the working ones.

"Of course we tried to be, you know, *fidel-*merry. Even in the hospital you must joke, to keep up, you see. The bandages ran out and had to be washed, and remade, and then it was such fun, they had to use a lot of the Ruthencs' colours—red,

yellow and blue. But the yellow was all washed out and it looked just like the tricolore ! And the insects—— ! But we made fun of them too. We called the fleas Cossacks, because they jumped so ; the Läuse—how you call them ?—lice, were the artillery, and the bugs they were the big guns !

“ There’s no good in being sad, is there ? If you’ve given up hope, it’s better to, well, *faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu*. And then it’s in the Austrian character, you see, to look at things by the bright side. Being gloomy only makes it worse, oh, ever so much.”

That, as faithfully as I can render it, is Fräulein ——’s description of how they lived in the beleaguered city. I have no reason not to think it substantially correct. It is not contradicted by my other information. But, if trustworthy, it shows that my former account underestimated two points : (1) the number of troops which the Austrians believed to be surrounding them ; (2) the extent of the privation in the fortress. As to the latter, so many independent witnesses have since told me that a preparation of bark, or bread partially made of wood or of bark, was eaten that, although I hesitated at first to believe it, it is hardly possible it should be untrue.

X
IN LILAC TIME

FOR my second visit Warsaw put on its summer dress. No city can make a finer show of trees, which line the well-kept streets, and seen from an upper window break the grey surface of housetops, springing up from innumerable gardens. The trees are in the full, young leaf, and in the Jardin de Saxe and the lovely Lazenki Park that surrounds what was the summer palace of the Polish kings, the air is rich with lilac and acacia and pink and white chestnut. Overcoats have disappeared; the gendarmes parade the streets in holland blouses, the officials in white linen tunics and caps; young ladies astonish or delight in the shortest of muslins or dresses that look as if they came from a Glasgow Art School, and trip up and down, fully conscious of their charms, on high heels made still more rickety by the addition of circular rubber pads that never quite fit. The Gilberts of Poland, with equally agreeable mien, disport themselves in décolletés silk shirts with wide collars turned back over the coat, as it might be Fauntleroy's of sweet and twenty years.

What the Russians have not been able to do for their own cities they have done for Warsaw. The Polish capital, which after the last revolution of 1863 threatened to sink into a state of complete delapidation, was changed from a slovenly, ill-kept city into one of the finest in Europe, a transformation due to the late General Starankevich, President of Warsaw, who induced Sir William (then Mr.) Lindley to undertake the construction of sanitary, street, and water-works for the town. The main streets are laid with neat wood pavement after the London pattern, instead of the heavy hexagonal blocks of Petrograd, at one time also used in Chicago and San Francisco; the latter both wear worse and, being much less easy to take up, are allowed to go without being mended until the street is nearly impassable. Moreover, a larger proportion of the streets are wood-paved, those that are not being laid with good setts that compare favourably with the atrocious cobbles of the Imperial capital. The streets themselves are wide, the buildings of a pleasant modern character, with a strong flavour of Italian craftsmanship in the older quarter, due to the historical connection of Poland with the South. Fine arc lamps would in a happier time illuminate not only the main thoroughfare, but most of the by-streets too. Now that the city will be governed by an elected council which comes into

being next year, a number of citizens are applying themselves to redeem the banks of the Vistula from their present bedraggled condition as the home of factories and, until recently, the receptacle of rubbish. The Vistula, indeed, is not a stream of beauty, with dreary shoals protruding from its grey waters, but it will certainly be improved by the boulevards now being planned to flank it. It was a pretty sight when to welcome flaming June a thousand children trooped from different districts to a point chosen on the embankment, and each planted a tree—a Polish “Arbor Day,” designed as well to plant a sense of civic pride and duty in the mind even of the barefooted gamin. In contrast to the excellence of its municipal government, Warsaw rejoices in one of the worst principal hotels in Europe. Dear and badly served under a discourteous management, its success illustrates the less lovable aspect of Polish commercialism. It is the only hotel with telephones in the rooms and modern accommodation, so everyone on business connected with the war must stay at the Bristol; in quality it is said to have fallen off, probably with deliberate recognition of this, about 50 per cent since the beginning of the war. Its only redeeming features are an American elevator and a clever Jewish hall-porter. If you are not on war business, stay somewhere else.

The Poles of Warsaw are a race of *flâneurs*, whose gusto is only whetted by occasional Taubes circling in the evening sky. The streets are always thronged, the numerous cafés always crowded, and you soon fall into the regular Polish habit, if you have nothing better to do, of having a stroll in the Nowy Swiat or the Marshalkowska. While engaged in this occupation it is curious to notice how extremely Polish Polish people look. Perhaps this is only another way of saying that Polish types are not so well known to Western Europeans as to prevent their frequent repetition from surprising us. But it *is* surprising to meet half a dozen Chopins, Stanislas Poniatsowskis, and Kosciuszkos within the space of thirty minutes. Among the women a frequent type is reminiscent of Leonardo's Mona Lisa, and you can hardly go the length of a block of houses without finding yourself face to face with some kitchen Gioconda. Another curiosity to be noticed in the streets is the lack of good church architecture. For its size and importance Warsaw must have fewer good churches than any other great city. The cathedral, which dates from the thirteenth century, but was spoiled in the seventeenth, makes a poor show within and without; and the other churches are devoid of interest. To supply the deficiency, one must suppose, the Russian Government has built an Orthodox Greek cathedral,

finished only three years ago, which combines almost every possible defect : conventional without being classic, expensive without richness, massive without grandeur, the interior plastered with pictures that jostle and kill one another, it stands in a square too small for it, and with a foolish inept look as if it had been brought bodily on a truck like an American villa and might be taken away again. If it were, the void it left would not extend beyond the physical.

Until the other day one of the most characteristic features of Warsaw in war time was the bevy of nurses—"sisters"—in their billowy white head-dresses, charming spots of demure gaiety against the eternal background of khaki. They were everywhere, and everywhere pleasant to look upon : dashing up and down in motor-cars with officers, serving tea at the cafés, applauding the performances of the company now visiting Warsaw from the Imperial Theatre of Petrograd. Wherever an officer was, there also was very often a "sister." Pray do not scent a scandal ; the great majority of the "sisters" in Warsaw were most honestly the wives of officers quartered there, who rather than submit to the lonely life of war-widows enrolled themselves as nurses and followed their spouses to the front—even, it is said, into the trenches sometimes. But, alas ! for their innocent enjoyment,

there came a day when Prince Oldenburg, head of the Russian Red Cross Society, on a flying visit to Warsaw, bethought him that it smacked of levity, and orders went forth that henceforward no petticoat should ride in a military or Red Cross car with an officer, and no "sister" be in a café or theatre after nine of the evening. As by magic restaurant and playhouse were cleared of the dainty forms, none more could be seen in fleet Fiat or busy Benz; but what was still stranger was a notable diminution in the number of the motor-cars themselves. Mars, deprived of Venus (and seriously deprived, seeing that a general's sister was asked by a patrol to leave a car into which she was stepping with her brother), disdained to speed alone along the streets; and, instead, the road was on a sudden full of little cabs in which the war gods rambled gently enough, the once romantic half-shrouded forms by their sides tamed into quite simple little ladies. The cab-drivers reaped a rich harvest, and a naughty wit suggested that it was they had denounced the "sisters" and spoiled the fun.

XI

WITH THE ARMY

“LOOK out!” yells the driver. We go with a bump into the air and come down thump on the cushions again. For we are flying along the road towards the advanced positions in a 60-h.p. Austrian Mercédès, not captured, but honestly bought before the war, and the road has been shelled. Along the sides are piles of hard stone to fill the holes if the process should be repeated, every pile painted white on its inner face so as to be visible at night. The holes have all been filled once, hence the bumps. Beside the driver sits Purishkevich, in the uniform of a civilian with general officer’s rank (rather complicated to the plain British mind this), fair of hair and beard, ruddy of countenance, blue-goggled, and tremendously important to the drivers of passing carts. The *enfant terrible* of three Dumas has turned his fierce-mouthed energy against the Germans within and without the realm, and has command under General Volkoff of part of the Red Cross organisation of the northern front. He is taking us to inspect some of his “feeding-points.”

No need for the driver to use his horn here ; the voice of the orator shouts down the wind and clears the road as if by magic. Gangs of men at intervals keep the surface free from mud, for this is one of the main arteries of the army's life ; but where we swing off the turnpike into a lane the " fifth element " reigns supreme. We are forced to admit the justice of Napoleon's hackneyed description of Polish mud. Again the car swings round almost against a railway embankment and pulls up before a small settlement of white tents. Smiling nurses, a doctor, and his assistant greet us, happy to have company and to see their chief ; but we cannot wait, and push on to the next point, Teresin. This is a more important spot. A few versts only from the enemy, the canteen here has fed 60,000 men during the last month. From the tent poles flutters the Red Cross. In one tent for the officers, with candles for light, is spread what appears to be an infinity of " zakusky " and the best tinned meats and preserves. Beyond in this little white city are the stores ; huge brown loaves, bread of a quality never seen in England, stacks of chocolate boxes, rations of every description, and a great cauldron in the ground whence the soup is ladled in a ladle that holds a quart into the soldiers' plates. They sit to their meal in the open, for all the world like children at a beanfeast. They are so well treated that when they are moved else-

where they grumble. "Why should we go? Let us stay. We're so comfortable here!" A larger round tent completes the equipment of the point. It is the dressing station for the wounded, empty now.

The yellow sausage that has been hanging overhead is momentarily growing larger; it is the observation balloon of our—that is, the Russian—army, and they are winding it in to relieve the observer, his being a most arduous service. For a few minutes it wallows on the ground, then majestically rises again to its place in the empyrean, held in relative stability by its aerial anchor of balloonets, strung out from it like a covey of wild swans seen against the sky. Some miles off floats another—the eye, this, of our enemy. The Germans have been shooting at our yellow friend this morning, and we are shown the casing of an incendiary shell which fell hard by and failed to burst. All along the road we have seen lines of defence ready prepared against the event of a retreat, which seems all the more improbable now that we have watched a bit of the Russian fighting army in its place. It is so calm, so confidently joyous, that Teutonic hysteria must break upon it like the wave on a rock.

The next point is Zyrardow, and we are transferred to the care of Alexander Ivanovich Guchkoff, formerly President of the Second Duma, now head

of the Red Cross section attached to the First Army. Aeroplanes from the opposite camp visit Zyrardow every day between twelve and two, in the hope of wrecking the station. To-day they have already left their visiting cards, and the outskirts of the station yard bear witness once again to the fact that the German shooting is not good. A capital luncheon is served on a Red Cross train, and then—we are “somewhere in Poland,” nearer now to the enemy’s “eye” than to our own. Absolute quiet reigns, says the General; he has only fifty or sixty wounded a day. Spasmodic shell fire goes on, with ever and again a spluttering burst from the rifles and the hoarse cackle of the machine-guns. An occasional detonation like a heavy slap is only the engineers experimenting with a new form of bomb. General Zaharoff is so unmoved we can hardly believe that at any moment these placid, wide fields between strips of wood might be the scene of a bloody battle. Little would he reck if it were, for he is one of the heroes of Gumin, where the Germans attacked every day for weeks running and counted their losses well-nigh by the 100,000. General Zaharoff lost 36,000 men there; his division has been remade for the third time. His men adore him, and call him the “trench general,” because he was always with them, dressed like one of them, fighting alongside of them. They not only greet him, as is their duty,

but run forward with obvious pleasure as he nears. Everyone with a beard he calls "Daddy," those without "My fine fellow." "Come here, you!" he calls. A bronzed young peasant runs out of the group. "These are Englishmen come to visit you. Tell them why the Germans are fighting us. This is their political catechism," he whispers. "Because they want to take Russian soil from us." "And what will the end of it be?" With a grin comes the answer: "The Germans will be worse off at the end than they were at the beginning." "And why are we fighting the Germans?" "Because we don't mean them to take any Russian soil." "Well, then, are we going to beat them, or they us?" At this the whole group bursts out: "We'll beat them!" An older man steps forward: "May I speak, your Excellency?" "What is it?" "We want to tell the English soldiers that we are proud to be fighting with them, and that we shall win together." And so, for want of a better interpreter, here is the message to the British Army from a hundred or so of their Russian brothers, war-worn like themselves, but stout of heart and in good case.

No. 3 trench is behind us now, and we are within range of shrapnel fire. Here is No. 2, with its formidable redoubt in the centre, and some twenty yards in front a low wire entanglement in a sunk

ditch, which, invisible to an attacking force, would catch them unawares and pen them inextricably in the shambles. A Cossack guard picks us up, and we go forward through fresh entanglements across a meadow-like plain, beyond which a pretty wood hides the distant view. We have to come within a few feet before we see that the wood hides something else besides—No. 2 battery of the Field Artillery. Less than half a mile in front is our first trench, then two hundred yards and the Germans. “A nice wood, isn’t it?” says the General. We agree. “It’s mine,” he adds, with a twinkle in his eye. The fact suddenly dawns on us that it is not a natural wood, but one planted *ad hoc*. “This was the ideal spot for the guns,” he explains, “so I said ‘Make a wood.’ My soldiers made it in two days.” Never surely was Nature better imitated. The copse is complete with larches and pines, hazel and the profuse undergrowth of an English hedgerow. And it is real. Not made of lifeless sticks thrust into the ground, but of living, growing trees transplanted without damage. Some of the trees must be thirty years old. It is like a conjuring trick.

In the middle, sticking out from their incongruous bowers, are the 75’s. Dull, yellowish green, but spick-and-span. There is no litter, no rubbish; all is as neat as on parade. “Would you like to see one in action?” asks the commander. No sooner

said than done. Bang! Whe-e-e-w; we wait breathlessly till a distant explosion tells us that the shell has burst. "In the enemy's second trench," says the commander. The field telephone burrs. Enemy aeroplanes have been spied, and in a few seconds these mount into view, heard before seen, two biplanes, dragonflies in their gracefulness against a sky of Italian blue. Puffs of the prettiest down spring into being below them and hang in the still air, telling us that further along our line the guns are making a cast for them with shrapnel. The airmen soar serenely. They are almost directly over us now, when at an order given the men dive for their shelter.

We are taken for tea to the officers' bombproof hut. It would be stupid to risk getting a bomb among us without object. Inside the hut the party is merry; the General and the battery commander are full of jokes and pleasant attentions. Once more we have occasion to admire the spotless cleanliness of everything, as well as the excellent quality of the food. Officers and men are alike in the best spirits; a well-disciplined sense of good fellowship prevails. The sun sinks, and a thin crescent rides the sky in place, as it were, of the balloon being hauled down. Hushed by the beauty of the evening the guns cease to speak. Our cavalcade starts back for the railway, and the General, driving with the ladies, gives me

his horse. "We have only had two other visitors here," he says. "General Pau and your own General Paget. Greet them through the London papers from the division and from the battery and from myself; give them a great greeting." And so to the motor-cars, and bump, thump, fifty miles without head-lamps back to Warsaw at 1 a.m. Huge searchlights stab the air for prowling Zeppelins.

XII

A VISIT TO GENERAL ALEXEIEV

“**S**TAVKA ” is Russian for G.H.Q., and there my train arrived, barely two hours late, at the end of a wriggly, cross-country journey from the front. The hard, settled frost of the real Russia was bracing after days of alternate rain and snow, *verglas* and slush. The station, like many on this side of the world, two versts from its town—a place of some local importance but not otherwise distinguished—had an air of unexpected neatness, the result of subtly trim changes in the bearing of porters and minor railway officials on whom greatness for the time being has been thrust. A few staff officers, too, who had come on the through train that I had joined in the morning lent a smart touch to the surroundings. Nobody asked my business, and my specially procured pass, signed and countersigned by generals, reposed peacefully in my pocket. Every hotel exhibited a sign, “ All rooms full,” and though I was sent by high authorities on business to yet higher, it hardly seemed decent at the outset to ask the latter’s staff officer, supposing I could

catch him, for such a simple object as a bed. But then I bethought me that there must be our own general attached to the Commander-in-Chief's staff, and that months ago I had sent him a letter of introduction. The thought was fruitful. He made me welcome at the staff quarters in the best hotel in the town and put me under the charge of the officer on duty, who without more ado gave me a room in the hotel and a standing invitation to the staff mess as long as my business should keep me.

On entering the mess my first impression was that I had stepped straight into that chapter in "Anna Karenina" where Vronsky's regiment offers a dinner to General Serponhovskoy. And if this was the first, so it remained a vivid impression to the end, daily intensifying the sense of Tolstoy's astonishing power to create his characters true to type. Yashvin was at my table, with his great body, red face, and merry eyes of a *viveur*, and his air of high pride. Petritsky sat next me, and Count Alexander Vronsky, looking a little out of place in the midst of so many young and energetic officers, was at the next table. Almost anywhere you might find Alexis Vronsky himself, cool, handsome, inscrutable, an imperturbable Russian gentleman. And while we wait to begin, who should come up the room but General Serponhovskoy, bronzed and slim, with eyes quick to take in every change of detail. Here he is not the

dashing cavalryman back from the East, but quarter-master-general.

One figure, indeed, cannot be fitted into the Tolstoy scheme, the little great man for whom we are waiting. The room is arranged much like a college hall, with a high table to seat sixteen, and down the room six tables of eight each, with the service table at the far end. He, of course, takes the head of the high table, and unless he is absent no one sits down before him. He is of a punctual habit, and the room is not full before he enters, with quick strides and a happy look, nodding right and left in acknowledgment of our bows. He picks out the newcomer and has a special smile of welcome for him. But I have to ask before feeling quite certain, "Is that General Alexeiev?" "Yes, yes, but why?" "He is so unlike his photographs." "Well, you see, he hates being photographed; that is most likely the reason."

Alexeiev has been described in the newspapers as "a pale, silent force"; probably by those who have only seen his photos. A picture is conjured up of a military Sherlock Holmes, or one of those monosyllabic heroes who are the delight of certain novelists. Moreover, scowling at the photographer, the general is distinctly forbidding. In the flesh nothing could be more different. Alexeiev is small, pink-cheeked, and smiling. Grey hair and a white moustache set off an air of charming benevolence.

I should give him five foot four or, at most, six inches ; a good height for a fighting man, if there is anything in historic example. For his height he is broad in the shoulder and narrow in the hips, and he moves with an alert balance. So far from being the speechless image of legend, he chats freely and pleasantly with those round him. He would, indeed, appear to have a predilection for cheerful society, for he lunches and dines as often as possible at the staff mess, whereas the foreign generals attached to the staff regularly attend the Emperor's table whenever the latter is, as now, at the Stavka. For the rest he looks a Russian of the Russians, with the wide face and large brow of the good peasant stock from which he has sprung ; only in him the type is illumined by a bright and pervading intelligence, in contrast to the look of patient illiteracy on a similar face seen in the ranks. Russians of the modern progressive sort are pleased to hear that our own Sir William Robertson, too, is of the people, and count it a good sign of the time that the nervous system of both our armies should find its central point in such men rather than in any of the tall and blue-blooded officers with which all armies save the French and the American abound.

The whole meal passes with a pleasant sense of the good-fellowship that exists in a peculiar degree among staff officers, the more pleasant for the fact

that everything is over in little more than half an hour. At lunch there are only two courses and coffee, at dinner three. The food is simple and well cooked. The bottles of light Madeira and Bordeaux that stand on the tables are nowhere punished. Coffee is absorbed, and without waiting Alexeiev rises and steps quickly down the room with the same bright smile.

The Russians have ceased in this war to count their chickens before they are hatched. They believe that those only can be called great who in the end achieve great things. With this in mind, I recently sought from a well-informed source what was thought in service circles of the Chief of Staff to the C.I.C. "On pense que c'est un homme capable," was the decided answer. "Yes," said another in close touch with staff opinion, "I think that Alexeiev has the situation well in hand." For my own part, all I can say as to this is that the General's appearance and manners lend force to these hopeful judgments.

SECTION III
THE RUSSIAN RETREAT, 1916

XIII
THE RETREAT

IT was beautifully appointed, a hospital depôt on wheels. With four sister trains, each bearing the Empress' own crest and initials, it has been doing its work, and doing it hard and well. It differs from some other sanitary trains in this, that it carries no operating-room or nurses, but has a separate daughter train to render personal service to the wounded, while its own coaches, except the living coach, are filled with hospital stores and comforts. Stores of sheets, blankets, socks, under-linen are there for a hundred thousand men ; there is a disinfecting room for the cast-off clothes ; there is a coach filled with preserved meat and soup ; there are four thousand boot-soles on board for distribution. No need of a cobbler, for every battalion will be sure to number one or two among its ranks. What perhaps is most valuable of all, when hard knocks are going, is the admirable

dispensary from which the doctors in the field can readily be supplied with drugs and bandages. It had just come back from Jaslo, with but three hours to spare, and hospitably took us in for the night, hospitable from the chief of the train to the friendly orderly with the pure Muscovite accent and the monk who administered spiritual aid to the wounded.

Hospitable and friendly ; and who can be more so than Russians ? But our thoughts were far from laughter round the table in the little dining-car. At such a moment it is hard to talk or to think of anything else. It was of *that* the talk had been, and the thoughts for four days. Among those who knew, for longer, but for us for four days, from the moment we first heard of the air raid on General Radko Dmitrieff's headquarters. The next day at Perimyshl the guns were plainly heard, and the day after that in the stillness of the night there thundered into the little town six motor-cars and two heavy *fourgons* belonging to the Bessarabian Red Cross detachment. There was little sleep then in the hotel, every ear open to catch the frantic tale. "One doctor has gone mad—another deaf and dumb—half of a Zemstvo detachment has been cut off—the line broken in three places—the Red Cross falling back on Perimyshl." "And how dared you, Red Cross sisters, leave the fighting line ?"

It was the doctor who spoke. "Your place is there, with the wounded, not here!" Their nerve was broken, that was their excuse; it happens to men, too, but very rarely to these devoted women who go without flinching to the battle and face the roar of the German artillery. (One, only one other case was related to parallel this, where a Red Cross detachment lost its head and abandoned forty wounded officers at a railway station. In the Empress' train it was spoken of with deep sorrow.) In the two days that followed Dame Rumour lifted her head and spoke with her hundred tongues, urging the fortune of war to and fro, now in our favour, now casting the die for the enemy's arms. It was for Jaslo that the fight raged principally, so much grew clear. Along the Dunajec, a stream that feeds the mighty Vistula, the attack had stormed. Seven German army corps, it is said, were swiftly moved down on that fatally efficient network of railways, and from behind the shield of the Cracow forts burst on the Russians with the sudden force of a hurricane. Worse still, they came with an irresistible concentration of superior artillery, known from prizes taken to be partly manufactured in the Belgian arsenals. Behind the Russian lines, alas! is no such network to feed the army, no means of hastening up the big guns that mean so much. And there are but two army corps against seven.

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The retreat is honourable, the fighting heroic. Tarnow is taken, retaken, taken again. Jaslo, further south, has become the scene of dreadful carnage. Here, as is certified by eye-witnesses, the enemy had his heaviest metal, even to the semi-mythical 42-centimetre guns. And here their shooting was marvellously accurate: time after time the shells burst in the very trenches, and where they burst the trench with its complement of living, of dead, of dust, of empty cartridges, water-tins, and supplies were turned into a veritable "kasha." "Kasha" was the word used by two separate officers: it is the Russian for porridge. Yet the retreat from Jaslo was orderly. Thirty bombs were dropped on the station alone in the morning, and during these days in Jaslo not less than a hundred every day, but the nurses worked on heedless of the falling death: each one had her name taken for the reward that valour merits. Nothing was left to the enemy: all the stores were removed, and the Union of Zemstvos which succours soldiers and civilians alike gave away all their store of tea, chocolate, sugar, bread to the first comers. "Oh," cried a happy little girl, "the Magyars gave us chocolate too!" So the Germans took and burnt an empty town. From Gorlice and Biecz the same story, where 5000 Russians are said to lie dead upon the ground. But from the north comes a tale of strong

reinforcements ; a Circassian regiment has made a gallant rearguard charge with their knives, saying, in their quaint style : " Come, let us cut a little." Pilzno is held and 10,000 Germans are reported captured.

Under the hanging oil-lamp the mosaic is pierced together, and the scum of legend melts from the hard surface of fact. Here are men from Jaslo, others from Tarnow, another from Sanoc. The situation is serious it is admitted ; but not one man doubts the future or the ultimate result. How has it befallen ? The question is on all lips. Two main reasons are given. One, the Germans' superior information, their immense system of espionage, even that black word treachery (for cannot the cause, flagrant as it was, of the downfall at Suwalki be repeated ?) : thus have they known of the Russian dispositions, and that the reserves of artillery ammunition had not come to hand. The other, the railways—eternal problem confronting our Allies, who are hampered everywhere, defective organisation, by lack of railways, single lines, shortage of cars ; and here most of all, for in Galicia the gauge differs from the Russian, and save for a few converted cars Austrian rolling stock must be used. But there is yet another reason. On the northern front, where the battle was fought to a deadlock, the enemy is known to be terrible in attack, and no precaution is neglected

against him ; here it is we who have been attacking, the great push was just to come, and no one foresaw the necessity for defence. Before our eyes almost, only a few miles away, the lesson is being taught with ghastly effect—never despise your enemy. Yes, here he was despised, we felt the triumph already within our grasp, and, behold, he has taken advantage of us.

To be successful in war, said a great German soldier, you must fight to the last gasp—and then you must go on fighting. His successors have enforced the precept by practice against our side : their strength seemed to be failing, they were spent and grew listless ; then suddenly Mackensen with his fresh corps, his marvellous artillery, and the young Austrian General Fischer, promoted from the rank of captain since the war began, have dealt us this shrewd, unlooked-for blow. Nor was anything neglected to enhance the force of the assault. The Emperor William himself has come ; “ Lwow must be taken,” is his order, and the German infantry are sent forward under the brilliant intoxication of ether. But if the Russians were taken aback for a moment, now they strain every nerve. If they have the worst of it in guns, their cavalry is immeasurably better than the enemy’s, for the Germans lack horses, and it was with four cavalry divisions which the great man hurled against the German line that

the centre was held. For he came himself, speeding through the old Galician capital on the night of the 7th, and with him four cartloads of precious food for the guns. Held, but at what a cost! The 10th Army Corps has gone, to find a niche in history beside the heroes of Thermopylæ; the 63rd division has shared its noble fate; of the Orlovsky regiment and another are some four hundred left; of the Kursky only two officers have come through unscathed. So from all quarters runs the tale that was told in the Empress' train. But—the centre was held. And the Dukla Pass? Was that held too? That no man knows.

Next morning against a bitter wind from the mountains our course lies to the west. The sun is beneath the horizon as we pull up at the outskirts of Jaroslav, standing on its hill above the San. Skimming aloft in the pale azure four silent forms with motionless wings have called our halt. On the white road our car would be an easy mark, were they the foes; but they swoop circling down, and sail to rest in a level field hard by, and we know them for friends. They are Henri Farman biplanes; the famous airman is known to be in Galicia, and may be here himself. It is dark before the engine stops panting in front of the shabby hotel. The other and better has been taken bodily for those in command, and within two hours a pack of grey motors,

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brilliant each with three headlights, dash along the street, coming from the other direction, miss their way, stop, turn, and throb back to their quarters. In the limousine, Cossacks on the footboard, two a-side, clinging to the sides against the rush of air, is the adored leader, the hero of Kirk Kilisse and Lule Burgas, the victor of Lwow. The very walls of the town he is in bear witness, with their shell-rent holes and plaster pitted with rifle bullets, to another of his triumphs. He is bearded now, his face is very stern. And after him, all the night long, clatters the stream of transport over the setts, with officers' baggage, forage waggons, all the million requirements of an army on the move, and here and there a black-robed monk squatting in a cart: all going towards the east.

Modest in its resources, the restaurant is soon reduced to impotence by the crowd of officers demanding sustenance. First the soup gives out, then the bread, last of all the tea. "Can I be of any assistance?" says a cheery voice. He could be, and he was, and thanks to his kindly intervention and our own bread, gladly shared, a meal was obtained. "Why, yes, I guess it seems queer to strike English right here. No, I'm Russian all right, born in Petrograd, but I'm a mining engineer and I've knocked round some. Know America? Why, sure, I was there for years. Say, you a Har

ward man? Now, ain't that bully! I'm on the general's staff here. See you later." The whirligig brought us together again, only for a moment. Jaroslav was not a good place to ask questions in, least of all for the only foreigners in the town. But we managed to ask the mining engineer the big, unanswered question—What about the Dukla Pass? "I'd tell you if I knew, sure; but I don't. Say, if I were you, I'd step lively. We cross the river ourselves next night." Picking our way out of the town at noon a doctor stops us for news, and we get his. He is only waiting an hour longer; he thought he was stuck, but unexpectedly his transport has turned up. There is smallpox and scarlet fever, too, and wounded in large numbers. They must all go; the hospital furniture has mostly gone, and the wounded are lying on mattresses in the courtyards waiting to be moved. The wounds are often of a fearful character, and point clearly to a liberal use by the enemy of explosive or expanding bullets. From one hospital five have run away, for the Germans are killing the wounded, so it is said and believed, and these poor men, crippled as they are, prefer chance outside to the possibility they dread of being bayoneted where they lie. Many eyes are cast upwards to the smiling heavens, but hostile aircraft are not aloft this morning. On the road is a long line of empty transport going into the town to load.

Everything, save for a few stragglers, is orderly, quiet, restrained. It is impossible not to admire the simple, manly bearing of men and officers.

Perimyshl seems a different place from the town we left four days earlier. Then work was going on outside, but the centre was stagnant ; a few soldiers to be seen, a few Jews leaving the place, a few nurses—nothing more. Now it is a hive of industry, a continuous movement coated in dust. Hundreds of army waggons, drawn by capital, well-fed horses, restive even after a day's work, pull out towards their camping ground within the forts ; another stream passes them—fine, well-set infantry these, marching into the town, and singing as they march. And here is news at last. The Dukla ? The Dukla, that cost so many thousand Russian lives, was abandoned days ago. The retirement was imperative, but was not effected without serious loss. He himself who tells the tale was in Hungary when the storm burst, and with his field hospital got back across the mountains by the roughest paths and byways. At Sanoc, some twenty-five miles from Perimyshl, the battle is raging now. The hospitals are warned to be ready for all emergencies. The bridges on the upper San have been blown up. The Russian line to the north is being drawn back to the positions chosen by its commanders. Here, at least, at Sanoc the German

attack is checked. They cannot cross the river, and forty guns have been captured from them. At Sanoc, at Sambor, and all along the tensely stretched line, a still greater battle, a still deadlier clash, is expected. Bellona, the insatiable, has opened her maw too wide. In the fight for Galicia that began with the month—"der wunderschöne Monat Mai," that Heine sang—the Russian losses are believed to have totalled a 100,000, and the enemy must have lost more. Intermingled with the distant murmur of the guns, we seem to hear an echo of the shrieks of those drowning on the *Lusitania*, and calling for a judgment on the insensate policy of Teutonic aggression that let slip the dogs of war and is deluging the world with blood.

XIV

POLISH DISTRESS AND RELIEF

THE first dreadful rush is long since past, and refugees no longer crowd the streets seeking where to lay their heads. But the need remains, and the work. There are still 50,000 Jews in Warsaw above the great normal Jewish population, driven out of the neighbouring towns ; still other thousands of peasants are in the shelters, helpless, hopeless, deprived of everything. Half the newspapers and periodicals in Warsaw are still in a state of suspension owing to the high price of paper and the dearth of advertisements ; lawyers, engineers, artists are still out of work ; the factories still work half-time or less ; the price of living is still twice as high as the ordinary. This last is a factor common to Russia, as well as Poland. Meat is twice as dear as before the war ; leather nearly twice as dear ; wood has risen enormously in price. Army boots that before cost 10s. are now nearly 18s., and a small ambulance cart, built on a Finnish model, which would cost about £15 in England, including the retailer's profit, here costs £45. This would appear

surprising, in view of the stoppage of exports, but there are three chief reasons for it : the immense supplies of all sorts required for the army, the shortage of labour owing to the young men being called to the colours, and the deficiency of railway transport. " Railways, railways, our kingdom for railways ! " might be the cry in Russia, and not only railways, but rolling stock, is urgently needed. If Russia had the same military laws as Germany her army would not be three or ten, but thrice ten million men ; but she could not carry them or their supplies. The same shortage in the railway department that affects the army also presses hard on that part of the civil population which is already hit by the war.

Warsaw, looked at from beneath the surface, is a vast relief station, managed by that remarkable body, the Citizens' Central Committee, which came into being the day war was declared. Warsaw is the seat of the main committee, and in that part of Poland which is free from the Germans are 456 branch committees, while in the country occupied by the enemy are over a hundred more at present beyond the reach of communication. The figures prepared to show the amount of the damage, direct and indirect, suffered by the country are appalling. They are only available till the end of last year, but a very careful calculation for the first five months of

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the war gives the result of damage done to the value of £114,668,000. And the damage has been multiplied since.

To alleviate the suffering caused by these prodigious losses the Citizens' Central Committee has laboured day and night. Under the joint presidency of Prince Severyn Sviatopolk Czetvestinsky and Prince Lubomirsky—admirable complements each of the other, the one practical, businesslike, with imperturbably clear vision of what must be done, the other idealist and dreamer full of new schemes for the committee to test and adopt—it comprises every eminent man and woman of business and society in Warsaw, and it says much for the strength and sobriety of the Polish mind that their work is characterised by neither exaltation nor despair, but rather by a luminous sense of duty and of simple pride at their country's bravery. Within the first fortnight of the war the committee organised a military hospital containing 2,000 beds at the Corps de Cadets de Suvorov, where, under the care of Dr. Kievsky and the most distinguished surgeons of Warsaw, the wounded are tended in what must be one of the most beautiful hospital buildings in the world. It is admirably kept, staffed, and equipped, and the atmosphere in the wards show how far ahead the Polish surgeons are of their French and Belgian colleagues in understanding the im-

portance of fresh air. Every employee in the hospital, the fifty-seven doctors and 400 nurses included, takes a bath on the premises daily. There is bath accommodation for fifteen at a time, and from eight to four every day it is fully occupied. The storerooms, under the charge of the religious sisters of the town, are models of neatness and cleanliness, and a fortnight's provisions are always kept in stock in case supplies be temporarily cut off. All the medical and administrative work is done voluntarily. The evacuation point at the Petrograd Station, capable of dealing with 1,000 wounded daily, was also organised by the committee, and is run on the same successful lines, being also thoroughly equipped with sterilising machines, operating rooms, and provision for dental surgery.

On the civilian side the committee has organised and maintains fifty-eight kitchens or dining-rooms in Warsaw, of which three are exclusively for children. In the poorer quarters an excellent meal, enough certainly to keep a man from starving for twenty-four hours, is provided for about 1½d., while for the unfortunate members of the professional and higher classes who have been brought to penury slightly daintier fare is offered in more luxurious surroundings for 3d. There are, moreover, 600 shelters and residences where the penniless refugees are kept till they can be sent off into the country, or

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where the distressed "Intellectuals" can live for the inclusive fee of 1s. 3d. a day. All the work in connection with these enterprises is given voluntarily, and in all these institutions, even the poorest, the predominating feature is cleanliness. Outside Warsaw feeding points for the starving peasants are established, and in co-operation with the Union of Russian Zemstvos flying columns carry food and medical relief right up to the Russian lines.

Nor have the Jews been behindhand in relieving their own people. Forty thousand refugees are placed in private houses by the Israelite community, and receive 5d. or 7½d. daily, and 10,000 more receive food and help. In all the Jewish relief costs £15,000 a month, and there are besides workshops organised by the Citizens' Committee and the Israelite community, where refugees are put to their own trades and earn from 3s. upwards a day.

The disorganisation of life in the country is complete. The Russian army pays for the goods and the labour it takes, but military requirements destroy normal conditions. Peasants are sent away with their carts on duties which ultimately take them far from their homes; their families meanwhile have to be cared for by the committee. One case is known where a Polish peasant and his cart were captured

by the Germans, sent to the Western front, were captured by the French, and are now working in France. Where the Germans have been everything is destroyed and carried off without payment, and the Hungarians have earned a specially bad name for the thoroughness of their robbery. Hundreds of thousands of peasants were turned out into the winter with nothing but the clothes which they wore. At first the infant mortality among these refugees was tragic, averaging 50 per cent., but since the committee has been able to induce mothers to give over their children to crèches established for that purpose it has been greatly lessened. Through the committee the Government distributes corn for sowing, but in the districts fought over scarcely one farmhouse remains—all have been destroyed by artillery fire. Most touching of all is the devotion of the peasant to his land; as soon as the Russian army drives back the Germans the recovered land is instantly seized by the peasants, who follow in the army's train regardless of danger, and after one battle the general found that he had twice as many peasants as troops with him; and that they had taken as many prisoners as his soldiers.

Throughout this maze of misery and courageous work the Citizens' Central Committee works hand in hand with the Russian authorities and the Zemstvos in all loyalty and devotion to their common

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cause. This is a sight that inspires to hope and confidence in the progress of mankind. A year ago no one would have believed it possible. To-day nothing seems impossible.

XV

LUTSK

WHEN I got out of the train at Kiev, my first object was the office of the Commandant of the station, to beg seats for myself and my companion, a long-limbed young poet from Odessa, to Lutsk. The trains to the front start from Kiev in the evening, and unhappy indeed is he who goes seatless. Therefore we took a short cut over the rails and through a standing train to get our word in early. Quick as we were, an energetic colonel, who had travelled in our carriage and absorbed more than a pint of privately bought vodka the previous afternoon, was before us on the same errand, and we entered with him. The commandant was short-tempered, because he had been saying the same thing probably to some three officers every five minutes since break of day. "No, gentlemen, I can do nothing for you. There are no trains this evening. The usual train service is altered from to-day. There is only one train at 9.15 to-morrow morning to Kasatin. Beyond that I know nothing. How can I give you seats? It is a bezplatzkartny

train." His tone was of one who should imply that we ought all to have known. This news meant an early start. A platzkart is a fixed and numbered seat in the train from which no one, even a general or a bishop, can eject you : a bezplatzkartny train is one where the passengers scramble for seats, and as many as possible crowd in. Therefore in the hope of being in time we were on the platform at 7.30 the next morning, to find a small and shivering crowd already waiting outside the locked doors of the train. In the three-quarters of an hour before they were opened, our crowd swelled to between twenty and thirty, while at the other end of the coach stood a long queue of civilians faintly hoping to get seats after the officers were accommodated. A young Circassian lieutenant in an immense black sheepskin hat, balancing his coat on his shoulders without using the sleeves, kept up a constant stream of conversation, teasing all the railway officials who passed to let us into the train. However, only the guard had the keys, and the guard it seemed was breakfasting. In front of the first-class coach next to ours, the crowd was smaller but contained two generals and some elegantly dressed ladies, probably at the head of committees or hospitals. One of the generals suddenly noticed the first-class guard inside the coach, and executed a furious tattoo on the window, hoisting himself up on tiptoe.

For some minutes the guard took no notice at all. Then he began to shout inaudibly through the glass, but remembering that the window could open, let it down and faced a clamour to have the doors unlocked. Perfectly unmoved he let the storm die down, then answered with a blissful smile: "It's no use—all the seats but two are already taken." "What? Why? How are they taken? This is a bezplatzkartny train!" "Yes, but the compartments have had labels gummed on them by the commandant's orders!" And he shut the window in triumph. Nothing could have produced a state of more perfect beatitude in the guard's mind than to be able to make this announcement. There are two things that every true Russian official loves beyond measure. One of them is to tell people that they can't.

But now a cry went up from our own crowd, for our guard was seen to be making his way to the other end of the coach, oblivious of the Circassian's yells. What! Were we, who had borne the brunt of the chilly wait to be ousted by newcomers who had slept late and breakfasted? At the thought we seized our bags and made as one man for the further door, where a fierce mellay had begun. Ancient experience as "corner" in the field game* enabled me to get a good place, and I was in the carriage, and had two seats before the worst began. Then it

* Eton Football.

was that females screamed and strong men swore themselves hoarse, for a good fifty were trying to squeeze themselves and their luggage at once through a passage made for "one at a time," and rather a slender one at that, into carriages already overflowing with humanity. Not one civilian got a seat. When the train started there were not less than ten in each compartment (made for six), the corridor was a staggering human wall, and even the lavatories and platforms were packed as with sardines. A sister who, getting out at a wayside station, found herself in the wrong carriage was practically passed from hand to hand and almost overhead before she could regain her original seat.

It is on occasions like these that Russian patience, a quality that has also its defects, shows up well. Nobody displays ill-temper or tries to pinch another's seat, everybody is jolly and agreeable. Colonels cheerfully stand while subalterns who have got there first sit. In the second class we are not perhaps so quite awfully jolly as the *soldatiki* (little soldiers, the nearest equivalent to "Tom-mies") in their goods-waggons—*teplushki*, they call them, as one might say, "warmies"—shouting five different songs at once, perhaps with a *balalaika* and a concertina going too; but with the aid of a little palmistry, and infinite cigarettes and chatter, we do well enough.

Thus for about five hours to Kasatin, a junction where is one of the best railway restaurants in the world. Here an astonishing crowd from all parts of the south-western front was collected, all going in different directions and all gobbling, because no one knew whether his train would go in five minutes or five hours. The train to Rovno going after three and a half, I had ample opportunity to watch the proceedings. Probably at no moment were less than two hundred persons eating ; yet at this time of atrocious transport and cornering of food products by greedy speculators, an endless supply of soup, fish, flesh, fowl and excellent bread poured from the kitchens. The only thing that gave out was the tartlets. I had not long before been reading Mr. Curtin's description of fare in Germany, and thought with pleasure of the monotonous sardines, potato bread, and cheese that he grew thin upon.

The journey of nine hours on to Rovno was a repetition of our previous performance complicated by the addition of civilians who had been waiting since the previous day at Kasatin, and at 4.30 a.m. we were dumped out in the muggy darkness before dawn to be told that no passenger train would go that day to Lutsk, but a goods train might be made up at nine. This hour would naturally have no relation to the time of the train's starting, while as to arrival it could not take less than five and might

take nine or ten hours. Any prospect seemed better than this, and after some prowling about the town we had the luck to hit on a motor lorry that was to start at nine for Lutsk by road. In the event it started at eleven, and landed us, after a drive of four and a half hours pillowed on convenient bales, in the town that has attained fame in the communiqués of the general staff.

Lutsk has no other claim to fame. It is one of the horriddest towns I have been in. Mean, damp, dirty, it possesses no attraction but a nice Polish café that freakishly has chosen its abode here. What it did in time of peace is unimaginable, for the entire population of Lutsk appears to consist of downtrodden Jews. Now it does ceaseless trade with officers who have nowhere else to go. The hotels of Lutsk are worse even than its streets, but with an easy excuse found by the proprietor for all defects: "What can you expect after the Austrians have been here?" Candour compels me to believe that Lutsk was neither better nor worse before the Austrians came. None of the windows or doors fit properly, and my first night when half a gale blew through the room was one of the coldest I remember to have spent.

It is an instance of the power of imagination let loose by the absence of a regular post and the presence of a censorship, that I was told in Petro-

grad that Lutsk was half in ruins and rooms almost impossible to find. In fact no damage has been done at all in the town, with the exception of the burnt railway station and one of the barracks on the outskirts. Presumably the Austrians thought the place nastier when left standing than if destroyed. Rooms, moreover, were to be found in at least three hotels. Wild tales were also told of the unit belonging to the Anglo-Russian hospital, that was here for a time : how it had been forced to retreat, abandoning its buildings and equipment ; how one of the doctors had been killed by a bomb, and so on. The "retreat," on investigation, resolved itself into a single move, as part of its general scheme of things, to another part of the front ; the heroically killed medico, into a wounded motor mechanic. Part of the unit, however, did have the bad luck to be near an ammunition depôt that was the object of pressing attentions from German aeronauts. But during the last few days the weather has been unfavourable for flying, and there have been no bombs. The wind is in the east, and only the heavy thud-thud of the big guns comes up against it. . . .

My last day at Lutsk was one of pure beauty, such a day of clear sunshine as may be at English Christmastide. The infamous mud dried, and under the pale blue sky a covey of German aeroplanes came skimming from far away. It is the

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prettiest game to watch the puffs of white smoke, with a barely seen sparkle, burst apparently of their own accord and stay like flecks of down in the still heights of the air, as the gunners vainly try to touch the gnat-like visitor, poised aloft in perfect composure, with shrapnel. And now and again the sharp rap of the field-guns is thrown into relief by the heavier boom as a bomb is dropped and exploded. In the evening calm two of them came again, but still higher, and only to observe, disdain- ing the few shells sent, by way of form, to warn them not to come too low. As dark fell they vanished, and the magic of the night redeemed Lutsk of some- thing of its squalor. The moon, climbing the sky in the majesty of fullness, seemed to spread a veil of silence on the double stream of carts and lorries at their ceaseless task of bearing supplies to the fight- ing men, and the hurried, coughing motors that are the armies' messengers.

XVI

THE GALICIAN VIEW

THE name Galicia exerts an extraordinary fascination here. It is that part of the war where the Russian troops have shown some of their finest qualities; its soil is consecrated to Russia by a hundred bloody victories and defeats; and to its south-western end, a strip perhaps half as big as that occupied by the Germans in Belgium, with the two principal towns of Tarnopol and Buchach, the Russians hung on, catlike, through all the fury of last autumn, and are now consolidated and in strong force, a perpetual menace to the Austrian flank. But Galicia spells yet more than the claim of spilt blood and strategic preparation. There hangs about it the flavour of high romance and the thrill of the fight for the mountains, to which the popularity in England of pictures from the Carpathians bore witness. And every Russian felt that the soil of Galicia was not so much conquered as reclaimed. Save for Austrian officials and Jews in the towns, the population was wholly Slav, and fifty per cent. Ruthenian, and the Ruthenians in blood and

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language are of the stoutest Russian stock, and by religion are closely allied. To them the coming of Russia meant liberation from the yoke of the foreigner who persecuted their language, prohibited their poems and their alphabet. The possession of Pushkin's poems was evidence to an Austrian court of criminal conspiracy. Russia therefore holds to Galicia as to a part of herself—a little sister long lost, now found and clinging to her skirts. She will not be let go again, that is sure.

The night in the train from Kiev was prolific of reflection. Thus, that a tip-up seat in the corridor may be a pearl of much price, but that after 1 a.m. the floor becomes preferable to a position where you have to shift your knees to let the guard by, because if you are on the floor he will step over you somehow. Then, that more luggage than a sponge is unnecessary when even this article cannot be used for the crush. Also, that though the day may have seemed warm, for those who want to sleep on boards a padded coat has its uses. Morning found us still in Russia with a long motor drive to the base of the —th army, an eyrie fortified by the Turks centuries ago on cliffs round which the river winds like a maze, and there in front the road pierced into Galicia like a white sword. Galicia, despite its woods and rivers, is not a pretty country, but consists mainly of bleak, rolling uplands with stretches

here and there of black and fertile soil. This road, at dawn next day, proved a weariness to the flesh, so much so that for some ten versts all traffic had deserted it for an extemporised track in the fields alongside. Beyond this again, it became excellent, a testimony to the well-known Austrian care in roads, though the snow was not melted off the low hills before the surface, and all things on it were white with dust. So we came to the line beyond which the Russians could never be forced back.

They are far in advance of this line now, but you could trace it with horrible regularity through the length of the land. Behind are decent towns, snug villages, smiling farms : in front, gaunt ruins, amid which churches and chimney stacks and strangely spared houses rear their heads, mute witnesses to the thoroughness of the destruction. Low dark lines begin to show on the hillside, a complete network of trenches should the invader miraculously penetrate again. These are very good trenches, meant of course for temporary work and not for residence as in France, the firing trenches invariably covered in with a roof of woodwork and sods, that from the front makes the trench almost invisible. And now, in addition to the ceaseless motley train of the army's supply, we begin to pass lines of white-hooded carts with big red crosses on the hoods. They are the ambulances, taking the recently

wounded to the base ; their two-wheeled design is said to be the easiest over rough ground. All is quiet for the moment on this part of the line—this pathetic caravan, on its fifty-mile journey, is the result of the day's work of the snipers and mines and the deadly trench-mortar, whose activities are ceaseless.

It is a dull, chill day, with heavy mists blanketing the horizon and a bitter wind off the Carpathians. Less than usual is going on. At our destination, five miles or so behind the fire-trench, the enemy's morning aeroplanes have not been seen. Everything suggestive of transport, especially the hospital variety, is cunningly concealed with pine branches—our friend the Hun having lately manifested a particular attention to the Red Cross. Even the bread waggon of the Great Britain to Poland and Galicia Fund's feeding point (my immediate object here), where 2,000 hungry souls get daily sustenance, is decorated with frivolous looking greenery. In the afternoon three Taubes are up, but only scouting, and they drop no bombs. The thud-thud of heavy guns punctuates the distance.

Galicia of to-day is a very different place from that of last year. Then the spirit of adventure was uppermost. We went gaily along, never doubting of our speedy success and thinking little of defence. The summer campaign against Cracow was on

everyone's lips. Advance parties were through the mountains and pricked across the plains of Hungary. It was then that the storm burst. Now that we have weathered it, the atmosphere has changed. We know better what we are up against, and no longer despise the blue-coated Austrians. Every step taken forward now is accompanied by comprehensive trench digging in the rear, to guard against the unlikely possibility of retreat. The factories at Kiev are turning out their thousands of shells and hundreds of boots every day. Troops appear to be innumerable, the officers fresh and lively. The armies of the southern front have now a leader whom they trust, General Brusilov. Maybe before the summer is over more of Galicia will have been reclaimed.

SECTION IV
SOUTH AND NORTH

XVII

THE REFUGEES AT KIEV ¹

WHEN Maxim Gorki wrote his famous play, *The Lower Depths*, there was a pool of human misery as yet unplumbed in our modern experience, a depth below even that of the doss-house, with its bestial jealousy and drunken orgy, which had he known, he would have rewritten his play in different surroundings. But then it did not exist ; it was not dreamed of as barely possible, and only in this year of grace has it come fully into being. It is a world apart from anything known before, from anything that exists beside it. Its inhabitants are of one class, one type, one character, and they have but one name. They are the Refugees. It is impossible to be with them and not be stirred to the depth of your soul. On the faces of all is the same expression, a look of mingled hopelessness and bewilderment : how have they come, why have they come,

¹ *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1916.

whither are they going, what will they do? None of these things they know, and, indeed, they hardly care, for they have reached the point of complete apathy. Once they were farmers, herdsmen, carpenters, bricklayers, washerwomen, clerks, students, priests—now they are flotsam on the tide of war, carried aimlessly, helplessly, broken perhaps upon the rocks, perhaps whirled suddenly into some backwater where breath and a handhold are possible. They have nothing, and wherever they are their abode is the same: it is the Limit. Can they ever escape from this hell? They hardly believe it.

To the noble city of Kiev, the mother of Russia, proudly seated on the wooded crests that overhang the Dnieper, fair as the garden of the Lord, buried almost beneath a screen of giant poplar, birch, and chestnut, from which the cupolas of a hundred churches spring glittering to meet the southern sky, to Kiev, fragrant with rose and jasmine, come the refugees. With the first pressure of the renewed German offensive in Galicia, stragglers began to arrive from Tarnow, over three hundred miles away; and as the enemy advanced the whole countryside fled before him, seeking to escape death and outrage, or the horrid fate for men of serviceable age of being forced at the bayonet point to fight against their Russian brothers. For by blood and speech these Ruthenian peasants are one with the Little

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Russians of the Ukraine, and in religion, belonging as they do to the United Greek Church, are not widely separated from them. In everything they tend towards Russian culture, and, strengthened in their resolve by the Austrian prohibition of the Russian alphabet, they had long since fixed their hopes on Russia as saviour and as friend. When the war began many were forced unwillingly into the Austrian ranks, many more were imprisoned as friends of the Muscovite—"Moscali" they were called—and many tasted death against a wall or at the end of a rope as the Austrians retreated. Faint echoes come through of the fate meted out to such as have now stayed. To take but one instance: in a village not far from Sanoc twelve Russian girls were hanged. And why? Because the day that the Russian Emperor drove through they, poor mites, had sung a song of welcome. What wonder, when such things are done, that all who could escaped beforehand? While yet the Russian line was beyond Lemberg the greater number stayed within the Galician border, huddled together like field-mice in the corner of corn that has not now yet been reaped. Fifty thousand a day were fed in Lwow, and yet children lay and died in the streets; in the one little village of Jagelnitze 22,000 were fed in nine days. But when our Allies, grandly fighting, fell back further, the Galicians could stay no more:

they turned and poured into southern Russia, a wailing multitude. Not perhaps since the settlement of Europe after the great movement known as the Wandering of the Peoples has there been in our hemisphere so frightful an upheaval of social life as has marked the track of the Teutonic armies in Poland and Galicia during the war. And now, as the degree of civilisation is higher so much more profound is the depth of suffering.

This last exodus is the most tragic of all, and the case of these refugees the most pitiable. Perhaps they started with some little property; if so they have been forced to sell or abandon it on the way. No one knows yet how many there are or will be: at first 50,000 was the figure given, then eighty, now it is supposed that there must be over 100,000. The Zemstvo organisations, the town authorities, a special committee at Kiev appointed to deal with the problem, catch them on the way, divert them into villages, prepare schoolhouses for them, try to prevent their flocking into and overcrowding the towns, sift them, label them, but still they come.

At first Kiev was unprepared. The refugees lay in the streets and fainted from hunger. Then they were got into monastery buildings, into the rooms of the academy, into private houses and places of business, and when I came a week ago¹ there was not

¹ In the first week in July.

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much evidence of them to the casual passer-by. In many of the refuges there is at all events some show of ordered life, though the only furniture of the dormitories consists of the pallet beds. But suddenly comes one that beggars description. . . .

It is a big two-storied building, a kind of merchants' Exchange, standing in front of a sandy square, with two immense halls and numerous large adjacent rooms. In a small space cut off by a paling from the square, the entrance to which is guarded by a policeman, is a swaying crowd, very filthy, very ragged, and quite undisturbed by the stench that rises from the neighbouring extemporised latrines. We push through, up an outer iron staircase into the main room, to find ourselves in the midst of hundreds of refugees, intermingled with yet others, prisoners brought from Galicia on charge of espionage. Over a thousand people must be in the building. They lie on the floor in every stage of misery and weakness; there is not a stick of furniture in the place, nothing but the refugees and their frowsy rags. Yes, it is the Limit. Many are crying, silently. They come round us, not obtrusively, but in a piteous, friendless way, as if hardly daring to believe that anyone can take interest in them. They began to talk, for among the visitors is one from their own land, a bluff, genial, bearded figure, who knows every village and

every family in the country. "Where's your mother?" "Dead."—"Father?" "Captured."—"Who is this girl?" "An orphan."—Here is another, one of seven sisters; she knows where five are, or thinks she does, the sixth has disappeared. There are over sixty little children in the room, most lying quietly, and not even crying, but one scampers ceaselessly about crowing and stamping, with a broad grin and dancing brown eyes. He cannot be above three years. He was found in Lwow, but beyond that no one knows anything about him. For his fun and sweetness they call him "Jolly Willy." In one corner a young woman, with a face like Michael Angelo's Delphic Sibyl, is trying to suckle her baby. Twice she tries to give it milk, but she cannot. There is none to give. She is too weak. Hard by is another couple. The mother looks healthy, but the child of three weeks, born out of time on the road, lies open-mouthed with eyes staring. It has the face of a very old man, sharp and puckered.

Then they all begin to tell us. They are hungry. Some have not eaten for days. None have had enough to keep them above the point of constant suffering. Most literally they are starving. Fortunately the representatives of a British relief organisation who are in Kiev are on the spot and the situation is taken in hand. Three hundred pounds

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of bread are procured, tea, and as much milk as the neighbourhood can provide, a sausage-maker's shop is bought out, a big boiler found and set going, meal tickets written and distributed, and before long the refugees are having their first real dinner since who knows how long. It was late before the workers got to bed that night.

The next day showed how valuable one simple meal may be. Already the look of sharp misery on their faces was less, their eyes less tormented. The bread of yesterday had done more than give them fresh blood, it gave them hope: they have begun again to believe in life. By midday an old kitchen had been cleared out, and in the big coppers some ninety gallons of "kasha" and pork bubbled merrily for the first dinner. The general look of the place had not yet changed much, but the work had begun. An English engineer, a neat, hardy Yorkshireman, himself escaped from death on the Galician oilfields with his wife and child of sixteen months, came forward to help the British Committee, and is now rebuilding the stove and fitting a third copper; another committee has been found to tend the prisoners; the Grand Duchess Tatiana's committee has promised a doctor and medical supervision, and with the engineer will improve the imperfect sanitation, a daily source of danger. Best of all, a bath has been bought and forty children

already washed. Of course they cried, but afterwards——! The change wrought in them can nohow be so well described as by the simple fact that they shrank from putting on again their dirty clothes. The feeling of cleanliness was pleasant to them, their skins had been miraculously white and soft, and instinct told them, what one may be sure none else had ever done, that a sweet, clean little body should not be covered up with linen brown with grime. But much time must pass before enough linen can be obtained for these and the other thousand men, women, and children all in the same need.

What is tragic in the situation is that these hundreds whose sufferings have begun to be relieved make but a small fraction of the total number, and what is happening at Kiev is surely repeating itself in every town to which the Galician refugees come.

XVIII

WINTER IN PETROGRAD, 1915-1916

WINTER in Russia has often been described by British novelists, and it is said that to this day honest people exist in England who believe, on the strength of such statements, that wolf-hunting by the banks of the Neva is one of the amusements of the nobility in Petrograd. But, if one may judge from personal experience, the Russian winter has not been described very accurately. For it is an extraordinary thing and worthy of attention from the curious. I oncê spent the winter in America, a winter that was said to be the hardest there had been for sixty years. From December to March the thermometer went down to below zero on an average four times a week, and at Christmas in the country we had a temperature of 10 degrees below zero (Fahrenheit). This, by all accounts, is as severe in the Eastern States as the 20 or 30 or even 40° below zero that you may find in the drier climate of the Middle West or of Canada.

Now, Russians talk so much about the heat in summer, and their heat is so much less severe than

the American variety, that it was perhaps pardonable to think that their tales of the cold, too, were probably exaggerated. But in this case it is their moderation that is exaggerated. Snow and hard frost one expected, but this . . . ! Certainly no one ever gave me any real idea of what the Russian winter was like. It must be that the cold in Russia has a peculiar quality that makes it far colder than elsewhere. I found that 15° of frost (Réaumur), which is nearly 7° below zero Fahrenheit, was not nearly so cold at Karungi, less than ten miles from the Arctic Circle, as 12° at Petrograd. Twenty degrees of frost in the capital, which is 13° below zero Fahrenheit, is almost incredibly cold. It would be cold in America too ; but there the breath does not freeze men's whiskers solid, nor are the flanks of your cabhorse sheathed in icicles, nor is it a matter of urgency to wrap your head in furs—in fact, in America there are many people who never wear fur caps at all. In frozen Russia before you have been fifteen minutes in the air your greatcoat collar is white with your breath, to be without fur or a padded cap on your head is to risk violent neuralgia, and to go with your ears uncovered to court frostbite. A "shuba," or heavy coat, padded with cotton-wool, or with wool and fur combined, is a first necessity of comfortable life, and almost every man, woman, and child has one. If not they wear, like

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the cabdrivers, about six coats, one above the other. Mark, too, that an ordinary fur coat, such as serves in America or Germany, where the winter can be hard enough, is almost useless in Russia, since the fur, without an interlining of wool, does not keep out the knife-like cold. On the other hand, a Russian "shuba" could hardly be worn anywhere else, as it would be far too heavy and hot. The great majority of people wear fur caps as well, or, if not, put on specially-made ear protectors lined with fur or wool, turn-up collars six inches deep, or wind a "bashlik," the military detachable hood, round their heads. The army recruits—for whom a sufficient supply of "papahi," the high military lambs-wool hats, is probably not forthcoming—have their heads tied up in black cloth under their caps as they exercise in the streets.

Russians of the peasant class, immensely hardy as they are, respect the cold and take great precautions against it. The "dvorniki" (concierges), who doze at their posts in the streets even during the early sharp frost, give up their rest when the winter becomes severe, and wander about the streets in front of the gateways to which they belong, buried under gigantic coats of thick sheep's wool, their legs thrust into high felt boots, or join little groups, with cabmen and policemen, round blazing fires of wood at the street corners. In England on a frosty day

one runs about from sheer *joie de vivre* and physical frivolity. In Russia, even without being told, one soon realises that it is a matter of importance to keep the circulation going. You may see staid passers-by break into a sudden run or begin violently to beat themselves; or a cabman leap from his perch and, gathering his voluminous skirts in one hand, while he still holds the reins in the other, run alongside his sleigh with huge leaps. If hands or feet get really cold, he knows the trouble he will have to get them warm again. In this the quadruped has the best of it; he seems wholly impervious to the cold, and will cheerfully drink at midnight from a trough on which an inch of ice has to be broken to get at the water. Sentinels are so carefully buried in the immensity of their sheepskin coats that at a yard's distance you would hardly take them for human.

Another surprise of the Russian winter that awaits the ingenuous foreigner is the temperature of the houses. When, despite the efforts of countless cleaners, six inches of snow lie in the street, and every scrap of brasswork on the trams is swathed in flannel to save unguarded fingers from the touch of the naked metal, one would expect interiors to be kept almost uncomfortably hot. But the big stoves that warm Russian rooms, however well stoked, cannot battle triumphantly with the fierce bite of

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the air, and the temperature of the rooms seldom rises above 61–63° Fahrenheit. Windows have to be hermetically sealed with putty, leaving only the “*vasistas*” to open, or the whole room will remain icy cold. During the last two days, when the glass has been down in the morning to 22° below zero on the streets and 35·5° below zero on the banks of the Neva, the air in my room, despite a stove kept baking hot, has never managed to be warmer than 60°. Against such cold nothing but heating by a central furnace can be really effective. Even the trains heated by steam-pipes are by no means very warm. Motor-cars are not numerous in the streets ; apart from the cold, the snow, churned by the runners for the sleighs wherever the traffic is dense into thick, soft powder, makes driving unpleasant. The bonnets of the motors have hoods of thick cloth, or sometimes coarse fur ; even so, leave the car standing in the open for an hour and you risk frost in the pipes and a cracked cylinder.

Thus it is in the capital when winter holds Russia in its grip. Imagine, then, what it must be at the front. In the Minsk region and to the south the climate is much milder ; spurts of frost and snow are succeeded by rain, and the worst enemy is the damp. But further north, round Dvinsk, where the climate approaches that of Petrograd, the suffering must be terrible. Active fighting must

indeed be difficult when to stand still for ten minutes is to have the feet chilled and the senses numbed, and for the German, who is not inured from childhood to such experiences, one would think barely possible. Here in Petrograd the sun, a rose of fire, breaks through the mist of the horses' freezing breath and the spray of snow thrown up from their hoofs ; far away down the long street gleams palely the golden spire of the Admiralty. Winter, the master magician, spreads a pall of beauty over fur and fustian, palace and hovel alike ; but his smile is relentless and his touch upon the head or the heart of man spells death.

SECTION V
REVOLUTION

XIX

RASPUTIN ¹

ON December 17/30, 1916, the evening edition of the *Stock Exchange Gazette* contained a headline in type larger than the message of the General Staff or the news of the rising of the Duma. The words of this headline were "Death of Gregory Rasputin." The brief paragraph, to which it referred, was inserted at the foot of the page, also in headline type. It ran: "This morning at 6 o'clock, at one of the aristocratic mansions in the centre of the capital, after a party, Gregory Rasputin suddenly passed away." Within an hour of the publication of the paper the entire edition was either confiscated by the police or else recalled from the office, and the streets were filled with people rushing from one newsboy to another looking in vain for a stray copy that might have escaped notice. Nevertheless, the tale spread like wildfire. Friends rang

¹ *The New Europe*, February 1, 1917.

up on the telephone to congratulate one another on the news, and in the evening the Imperial Theatre had the appearance of an Easter Festival; members of the audience shook hands indiscriminately, demanded that the orchestra should strike up the national hymn, and forgot the play in their concentration on the all-engrossing news.

For people living in England it is hard to realise the importance of the announcement of Rasputin's death. Those who are accustomed to the spectacle of liberty in the British Empire, in America, in France, and Italy, and of the strongly ordered political régime of Germany, and who have seen France rise renescent from the overthrow of the retrograde elements that attempted in the Dreyfus case to stifle civic conscience and process of law, can hardly believe that in the twentieth century, in one of the chief European States, the powers of darkness stalk unashamed and are openly known as such. "The dark power," in the Russian idiom, is no new thing. It has existed and sometimes ruled for a hundred years, since Alexander I came notably under its influence, and the term has been used to designate the secret and usually semi-religious advisers of the crown who have sprung up, flourished and gone their way. There have been many; the most recent and the strongest of them was Rasputin. He so much monopolised attention that an article

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on the dark power in a leading Petrograd daily not two weeks before this staggering event began by saying that the expression had come to be the known synonym for one particular person.

Rasputin was by origin a peasant in the government of Tobolsk in Siberia. Thence, after a youth of varied experience, including conviction for horse stealing, he set out on a voyage of discovery through the monasteries of Russia, even going as far afield as Smyrna and Constantinople. On his return he settled at a monastery in his native government, and here first gave proof of the gifts that were later to earn him celebrity, fortune, and death. But it was not until 1903 that Bishop Theophanes, Rector of the Petrograd Clerical Academy, travelling in Siberia, had his attention drawn to Rasputin, then thirty-four years of age. He in turn interested a well-known lady, the Countess Ignatiev, who had Rasputin brought to Petrograd and introduced him to society and the court, where his qualities were soon appreciated by those on the steps of the throne. Like the bishop and the countess, who afterwards became her protégé's bitter enemy, these probably made one mistake: they doubtless thought that they could use his cleverness and strength, and discard him when they wanted. His strength and cleverness were not overrated; but he stuck like a limpet. For twelve years Rasputin's finger was in

innumerable court intrigues ; for six or seven he was one of the most important figures in the State ; for the last two he has been a danger to the arms of the Allies. In the course of this career he amassed a large fortune, and by the end of it had the appointment of the chief positions in the government in his hands.

It is not to be supposed that so large and so sustained a success could have attended the man unless he had been possessed of real native ability, perhaps the more effective because it did not show upon the surface. But he had two special gifts that marked him from the common adventurer. There are in Siberia families with hereditary powers that for want of a better word may be called magnetic, comparable to those of Red Indian or Zulu "medicine men," giving ascendancy over man and beast. From such a family Rasputin probably sprang. It is in any case certain that he obtained remarkable credence with the Emperor and the Empress owing to his influence on the health of the son to whom they are both devoted. The heir-apparent suffered from the rare complaint characterised by extreme difficulty in stopping the flow of blood from a wound however minute. Thus there are cases of persons having bled to death on having a tooth extracted by dentists ignorant of their idiosyncrasy. A touch from Rasputin's hand could arrest the effusion of

the Tsarevich's blood, and may have saved his life. Partly through this and partly by direct action Rasputin moreover had a salutary effect upon the Empress' own health, that began to be observable about the time, some years ago, when his influence rapidly increased, no doubt as the result. He alone was able to draw her from the dangerous fits of melancholia that kept her nervously confined to a dark room for weeks at a time. While these advantages strengthened his hold and repelled all attempts to oust him, his other gift enabled him to extend his orbit and surround himself with an atmosphere highly favourable to the corrupt practices in which he revelled.

It is generally known that Russian religious mysticism contains a strong element of eroticism. Traces and occasional outbursts of this are not unknown in the West ; in the East it has been common from the earliest history, and Russia has still many Eastern traits. Rasputin was a poor attempt at a mystic ; but his amorous exploits rivalled those of Casanova, and he may be reckoned a true example of what Havelock Ellis terms a sexual athlete. Thus supplying religious deficiencies by a peasant's cunning and his own peculiar force, he erected himself into a cult strongly resembling on certain sides the Bacchanalian orgies and other rites as practised among the ancient Greek colonies of Asia Minor.

In his own town he had kept a mystic harem of twelve young ladies, and celebrated Sabbat-like feasts with them. He at least could not be held a fool according to the saying of Martin Luther :

Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib, Gesang,
Bleibt ein Narr sein Leben dang !

for he was fond of music, danced for hours at a stretch, could drink a guardsman under the table, and gave the cavalcade of women who passed through his arms indelible impressions. A touching scene was witnessed not many months ago at the departure station for Tsarskoe Selo, where a handsome lady of princely rank, whose cousins have a great house in England, pursued Rasputin with cries of " Adieu, chéri ! " and he the while " Keep her away ! Bring the young one there forward ! Send the old thing back ! Come here, pretty ! "

Given these facts and the thorough suppression of healthy public criticism by the censorship and the police, it was inevitable that report should link the Empress' name with Rasputin's in the most intimate sense ; but it should be said that some well-placed observers do not believe such rumours to be supported by fact.¹ On this point the evidence of a distinguished diplomatist until recently resident

¹ These rumours, accepted as truth by an immense number of people, have been the subject of innumerable lewd broadsheets and caricatures since the revolution.—J. P., July, 1917.

in Petrograd may be quoted. This gentleman's influence was invoked in a case during the war where Rasputin was believed to have meddled. He said at once : " S'il y a du Rasputin dedans, il n'y a rien à faire. A l'heure actuelle, cet animal est plus fort que jamais. Il dispose de tout. Le plus triste de la chose est que physiquement, je suis persuadé, l'impératrice n'y est pour rien. Je la connais depuis longtemps. Elle avait une éducation on ne peut plus triste. Son père était un hystérique et un vaurien qui passait son temps à boire, à jouer, et avec les femmes ; son frère, le Grand-duc actuel, est un scélérat. Sa mère était une sainte, oui, une sainte. En venant en Russie l'impératrice est devenue plus orthodoxe que les orthodoxes et plus bigote que tous les évêques, et sa sœur, la Grande Duchesse Serge, est encore plus bigote qu'elle. C'est une nature hystérique et le lieu qui la tient à Rasputin est son amour pour son fils. Elle le croit son sauveur. Une fois Kokostsov (le premier ministre) insista qu'on renvoyât Rasputin. On le renvoya. Le Tsarevitch tomba et faillit d'en mourir. On envoya immédiatement pour rappeler Rasputin, et Kokostsov tomba. Oui, je connais Rasputin. C'est un homme ni beau, ni laid, pas très signifiant, qui vous ne regarde jamais dans le blanc des yeux ; les siens sont furtifs, il vous fuient tout le temps. Oui, si vous voulez, Marie Antoinette

et la cour du 18^e siècle. Mais quelle différence ! Alors, c'étaient les marquis, les fêtes du Trianon ; maintenant les fêtes sont dans le bain, c'est de la boue—le petit Trianon à la russe ! ” To do him justice Rasputin was no hypocrite. He made no pretence to decent conduct and would as soon that his debauches were in full view of the public as in the privacy of a palace. In the winter of 1915 he was at Moscow and at Yar's (the smartest Muscovite restaurant) behaved himself in a way so unmentionable that a procès-verbal by the police officer on duty was inevitable. The result would have been unexpected in any other country but Russia. The officer who made the procès-verbal, the prefect of the police to whom it was sent, and the prefect of the city were all within a short time dismissed from their posts.

Down almost to the end of his life Rasputin was one of the most accessible of men. Anyone who had liquor to share could enjoy his company. His apartment was open to petitioners. All who came not empty-handed could hope for success. But the substance had to be there. Wine he had for the asking, women, the pick of the court circles ; but of gold he could never have enough, and he piled high the money-bags. Otherwise he lived simply, dressed like the peasant he was, washed no more than a peasant, preserved the racy, sly wit of a

peasant's talk. In this there was probably the consciousness that the more that remained in him of Russian soil, the better would be his position as a Russian peasant seer at the half-German court. He seemed in a sense to apologise for the foreign tone of the rulers by his unimpeachably native presence. He was almost wholly illiterate. His telegrams to the Emperor, marked with a special cross to show their authenticity, were delivered straight to the chief of the telegraph service. His ungrammatical scrawls, signed with the same cross, were well known to ministers and had irresistible authority. Officially he held the office of lighter of the sacred lamps in the palace, but although he was addressed as Father Gregory he was never in religious orders. Yet more than his actual person was deemed to be sacred. The doctor attending the heir-apparent once discovered in his patient's bed, pressed close to the little fretful body, a dirty peasant's shirt. To his indignant question the Emperor, blushing, answered that he had himself placed the garment there. The doctor understood and was silent. The Imperial daughters have also worn Father Gregory's shirt as a fetish. "It is not," said one of Russia's old race of fighting men, whose name became famous in the Turkish war, "it is not that the fellow is a wizard, but that our Imperial family have the superstitions of peasants."

It goes without saying that Rasputin's position was constantly challenged, and a considerable part of his time was doubtless spent in warding off attacks. He was alive to the slightest breath of adverse opinion and prompt to prevent expression of it. A twelvemonth ago two articles appeared in a Petrograd paper reflecting on his position. The proprietor of the paper was sent for by the chief of police, who said : " You want to upset the empire. Well, they say the winter is very pleasant in Turkestan. We can easily send you there ; as for your paper, we will suppress it." A highly-placed friend of the proprietor, learning of this, rushed to the Prime Minister, and to other important personages, and was able to get these drastic measures stopped. But he was told that if such a thing happened again there would be no warning and no mercy. A somewhat similar incident took place a few months later. A well-known Russian author had written a play in which the action turned on the influence exerted on a woman by a peasant storyteller, who was shown on the stage surrounded by his devotees ; and this scene, together with the rest, was passed by the censor. The first night was eagerly awaited and the house sold out in advance. Three days before the date fixed for production the censor telephoned to the manager of the theatre that he had been warned against the play, as containing an

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allusion to a living person, and that it might be prohibited. The manager invited the censor to the dress rehearsal to see the play in its final form, ready for the public, and the censor assured him that if he were satisfied that no resemblance were intended, no objection would be made. The day of production arrived, the Press was primed for a successful send-off, the manager was informed by the censor that there was no objection and that the play could proceed, when almost simultaneously a telephone message came from the Prefecture that an order had been signed forbidding it. The censor was telephoned to, but knew nothing. The assistant of the Prefect of Petrograd was telephoned to, but knew nothing. The prohibition, it was said, came from the Minister of the Interior, and a rumour began to go round that Rasputin was aimed at in the play. The manager instantly went to the Minister's residence and was cordially received. But the Minister knew nothing, had not heard of the play, and was unaware of the author's existence. Next day the author and his friends felt confident that the prohibition would be removed. The author saw the Assistant Minister of the Interior, who said that if the author would omit the scene above referred to, his work could be promised a licence. This the author refused, but said he would completely change the passage. Several other persons saw Ministers and persons

prominent in the government. What was remarkable was that everyone professed not to know whence the prohibition had come, and the Minister of the Interior who had promised to find out and telephone to the manager did not telephone. Next morning, therefore, the manager determined to go with a friend to see Rasputin, through the good offices of a third who knew him. They presented themselves at noon. An Imperial motor-car was in the courtyard. A Sister of Mercy, who opened the door, at first said that they could not be received, as an emissary of the Empress was with Rasputin. After some persuasion, however, they were admitted and shown into the dining-room. The whole flat was very plain and bare. In the dining-room the only furniture consisted of chairs round the wall for petitioners, and the room was in fact full of them, mostly richly dressed Jewish women. On one wall was a large signed photograph of the Emperor; opposite was a signed portrait of the Empress and one of Rasputin himself. The manager and his friend were shown into another room. The further door opened and Rasputin came in. He was a man of middle height, with very long dark hair and a fullish beard. He wore a fine embroidered blue silk blouse, trousers, and slippers. The manager said: "Are you Father Gregory?" Rasputin went up to him at once and said in a serious, simple,

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rather sad way, "Why did you do it? It was very wrong of you. You wanted to do me harm. No, it was very wrong of you." He used, as always, even in speaking to the Empress, the familiar "thou." The manager explained that he had not the slightest idea of attacking him, and had no notion that a single word used could be thought to have reference to him; he begged Rasputin to allow the production, saying that after so much expense and so many expectations the prohibition was a most serious matter to him. Rasputin answered: "You will find better plays. Forget about it. Forget it altogether." The manager asked whether if the scene objected to were completely changed, Rasputin would not intercede in his favour. On this Father Gregory said: "I'll speak to Maklakov (former Minister of the Interior). No, I'll speak to Biletsky (the Assistant Minister of the Interior) about it. Ring me up on the telephone and we will talk more—here is my number—say 'the gentleman with the play'; yes, you shall be 'the—gentleman with the play.'"

The interview was short. On the whole, Rasputin made a pleasant impression on the manager, far more so than he had expected, because he had gone much prejudiced against the quasi-prophet. Rasputin was, he said, very simple, like a peasant priest: his face was not bad, nor his eyes, but they had a

hunted, tormented look in them, the look of a suffering man. The predominant thought in Rasputin's mind was, he believed, fear of losing his position ; this was what made the question of the play serious for him. That he was deeply offended was obvious, and he said almost in so many words that he had heard of the matter and had personally had the production stopped (as it was afterwards learned, by having one of the court officials telephone to the Prefect of Petrograd). He asked, with some surprise : " When was the play licensed by the censor?" The manager replied : " Two months ago." " Oh, then I understand," Rasputin said with a little laugh, " it was my enemies who did it," implying that at that date he was out of favour and had since surmounted a crisis. It was impossible, said the manager, not to understand his position, and evident that a play to which attention was prominently drawn, where he was, however slightly, reflected on was fraught with danger not only to his position, but to his life, and even to the lives of others besides. He left with the impression that, whatever changes were made, Rasputin would never allow the production of the play to take place.

Politics in Russia are always so much a matter of court intrigue that Rasputin's attention could not have failed to be turned to this fascinating sport. Possessed of infinite relations among the higher

clergy, he soon gained great ascendancy over lay politicians also. Count Witte, that tower of German and reactionary influence, constantly consulted him ; he overthrew Kotostsov, was on intimate terms with Maklakov and Goremykin, was hand and glove with Stürmer, and installed Protopopov in his present powerful position. Officials who resented his interference or refused his recommendations were punished by the loss of their positions. One honest man kicked him downstairs ; he was himself ejected on the morrow by methods as forcible, if more polite. Rasputin became a trusted agent of the Empress in matters reaching beyond the palace walls, and this was so widely recognised that open lament was made at the beginning of the war to Princess T., who happened to be in Austria, that Rasputin had by ill-fortune not been at court during the crisis : if he had been, it was said, Russia would never have declared war. Rasputin himself made the same boast : “ Ah, if I had been with him, Nick would never have gone to war. But since it happened, I said to him, you must command our army, Nick ! Go on to the front ! And so I sent him there.” This was simultaneous with the Grand Duke Nicholas’ being superseded in the chief command, and though it may be that Rasputin took too much credit to himself, the Grand Duke was his open enemy, and, it is said, threatened to hang him

should he venture into the sphere of military rule. Father Gregory became the close friend of General Suhomlinov and of Rubinstein, the Jewish millionaire banker, who was arrested by orders from General Headquarters after Sozonov had been ejected from the Government by the pro-German party. It was therefore only fitting that Rasputin should at a rout at his own apartment make the announcement that both of them were to be liberated; and liberated shortly afterwards they both were. A little while before Rasputin's death, a general well known for work on the defences of the empire refused to receive one of his messengers; as was only natural, the general was removed from his important post.

With the meeting of the Duma in November the universal indignation growing against Rasputin found expression in words. Perhaps he was not a worse man than many, but he represented an intolerable system, and was its most active and scandalous agent. The tempest first broke against Stürmer and with such overwhelming force that to support him was out of the question; and Stürmer was raised to the more tranquil spheres of an elevated court post. It then turned on Pitirim, Metropolitan of Petrograd, Raev, Oberprocurator of the Holy Synod, and Protopopov, of the Ministry of the Interior, all three reputed creatures of Rasputin,

but the first surprise in which the Government was caught by the Stürmer revelations had blown itself out, and they have so far¹ weathered the storm. But at the back of all minds was Rasputin. His name was not allowed to be mentioned in the Duma or in the Press, but one audacious deputy, a strong Conservative, delivered a fiery speech ending with an adjuration to the Duma and the Council of the Empire to go in a loyal mass to their Emperor and beg him to dismiss Rasputin. As the name was almost the last word of the speech, there was no stopping the speaker, though the end was cut out of the Press reports. The clerical deputies are known of all members of the Duma to be the most conservative; yet it was a priest who followed Purishkevich and denounced Rasputin as the shame of the Orthodox Church. There was no question of parties. For the first time in its history, the Duma—no longer, be it remembered, of the ardent complexion that characterised the 1st and 2nd Dumas, but a Duma elected under the law of June 3rd—was united to combat the danger that treachery within the realm, working through the despicable but open agency of an illiterate and immoral charlatan, would compass the ruin of Russia and achieve the success of Germany. When the Duma, the Council of the Empire, the association of the Noblesse passed

¹ In January, 1917.

resolutions demanding a responsible ministry, everyone knew that the dark power wielded by Rasputin was one of the widest gulfs that had to be crossed before reaching the desired goal. Nevertheless, when a tactful representative from the Duma placed the evidence of the nation's desire before his sovereign, he was answered to the effect, "I cannot understand why people should meddle with the private affairs of my family." Rasputin generally met new acquaintances with the question, "Are you a journalist? I'm afraid of journalists." But on this occasion he went to the office of a newspaper, and said that he had made ministers and would go on making ministers let his enemies write what they pleased.

After December 6th, the Emperor's name-day, when the expected reception of the two Chambers did not take place, and instead of a reassuring manifesto to the nation was issued only a laudatory rescript to the Metropolitan, Pitirim, it became generally recognised that words could do no more. "Everything has been said," people told one another, and the words were reproduced by the correspondent of *The Times*: "It now remains to act." Princess Vasilchikov, wife of a member of the Council of the Empire and former Minister of Agriculture, wrote to the Empress, a personal friend, and begged her to send away Rasputin. It was Princess Vasilchikov who was sent away from

Petrograd, accompanied by her husband, and then received countless visits from members of both Chambers and an address signed by nearly two hundred ladies representing the Russian aristocracy. The Grand Duchess Victoria approached her cousin personally, and was banished to her estate on the Bessarabian frontier. The Emperor's brother, it is said, moved by his wife's relations, clever middle-class Moscow people, sought an interview with Nicholas II on the same errand, only to meet with a sharp rebuff. Prince Trubetskoy said from his place in the Council of the Empire that Russia was ruled by a false prophet and a woman suffering from hysteria. An assassin was hired by the Union of the Russian people, a society commonly known as the Black Hundred, and under the special protection of the police, to kill Miliukov, who had denounced Stürmer, but was overcome by patriotic feelings and warned him instead.

Before the 10th of December it began to be said that Rasputin would be killed, and that if this warning did not suffice the turn of others would come. One night the report indeed went round that the deed had been done. To be threatened, even assaulted, was no new thing to Father Gregory. In 1913 he was stabbed by a woman and nearly killed. A rival in religion, Eliodore, former Prior of the Tsaritsin Monastery, once had him trapped

with the object of rendering him impotent. And in 1915 Hvostov, Minister of the Interior, whom Rasputin had himself raised to his post but without getting sufficient guarantees as to his obedience, arranged with a high police official to have him assassinated, but was given away by the Assistant Minister and dismissed. Hvostov still enjoys much influence, and this event is quite calmly referred to in the papers. This time, however, the matter appeared more serious, for Rasputin shut himself up at home and only received visitors after a close scrutiny by agents of the secret police stationed in the hall, sometimes capriciously refusing even persons of high rank. Elaborate precautions were taken to conceal his traces. An official in a public office, having business with Rasputin, telephoned to him one evening. No answer. He telephoned at intervals all the evening. No answer. Next morning the police came to this official's residence and removed the telephone.

Late in the night of December 16th a very rich and fashionable young nobleman connected by marriage with the Imperial family rang up Rasputin on the telephone and invited him to a supper-party at his house. Rasputin, after some demur, consented, but stipulated that his host should come to fetch him, and come by the back way so that even the porter might not know he had gone out. The

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young man arrived in a motor-car ; Rasputin himself opened the door and went away with him. On reaching their destination, they entered together, followed by the chauffeur, who was in fact a member of the Duma, unknown to Rasputin. Rasputin found himself in presence not of a party, but of these two and a certain Grand Duke. The number of versions of what took place is bewildering, but these are believed to be the substantial facts. No women were in the place, no wine was opened, there was no friendly talk, no lots were drawn. Lots had been drawn before among a much larger number of those determined to put Father Gregory out of the way. The three men informed Rasputin that he had to die, and he was handed a revolver with which to shoot himself. He took the pistol, but instead of committing suicide, fired point-blank at the Grand Duke. The latter ducked, the bullet passing over his head, and the three shot Rasputin down. The body was placed in the motor-car and driven to a deserted spot on one of the islands in the Neva, where it had a stone tied round the ankles and was dropped over a bridge into the river through a hole in the ice. Traces of blood were found on the snow in the morning, and one golosh had stuck on the lower woodwork of the bridge. No detection, however, was required to investigate the affair, since there was no attempt at concealment, and the first step

taken by the authors of the deed was to inform the police and telephone to the paper that published the news. Throughout the following day search was made for the body, but it was not found until the morning of the 19th. The stone tied round the ankles had apparently dropped off, or not been heavy enough to sink the body, which had floated up and caught under the ice. The arms were frozen stiff over the head in the position in which they had been tied to lower the body over the bridge.

After the curt announcement of Rasputin's death, a veil was dropped before the eyes of the public, and for nearly a day it was doubtful whether the news was true. Some thought that Rasputin had disappeared for safety's sake ; others that the report was a suspicious mystification. But on the 19th guarded references in the papers made the main fact clear. On the 20th the veil was suddenly lifted, and for three days the Press revelled in accounts of the event, and in luridly picturesque details of Rasputin's career. Then the veil was dropped again, and a circular from the Ministry of the Interior forbade even the most distant reference to the subject. More was written in those three days on the occasion of Rasputin's death than on that of Leo Tolstoy's. And rightly ; for the removal of this ulcerous patch from the life of Russia is an event of historic im-

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portance. Scarcely one person has been found to reprobate or deplore the deed, or to suppose that it was other than the work of justice and patriotism. Great joy fills the souls of men by reason of it. On the day following the announcement a subscription-list was opened for a war-relief charity in Moscow in the name of one of the slayers and headed with a donation of 25,000 roubles. Scarcely one person even questions the political expediency of the deed. Motives other than political were there too, for among Rasputin's latest feats was a monstrous outrage done upon a relative of two of the men who met him on that night. But the presence of the representative of the people showed clearly that in the minds of all was a deep national impulse to free Russia from an abomination that has stunk in the nostrils of every honest man. There was no touch of revolution or of radicalism. Rasputin was killed by Monarchists, by men of high station, by men whose desire is to see Russia great, in the most ordinary and worldly sense of that word. To such a pass has Russia come that such men, in their desire to drain the Russian State of the foul corruption that paralyses every effort to win the war, have but one court of appeal—murder. If ever assassination can be held just, then assuredly the killing of Rasputin was a deed of light. He did nothing good upon earth: the wickedness he wrought was immense.

He was cut off at the height of his power. Protopov's appointment, the struggle with the representatives of the nation, must be laid to his charge. In private affairs his hand was busy with simony, with the protection of grafters, with the manufacture of unjust and illegal divorce. One of the last acts he is credited with is the stifling of the prosecution of Manasevich-Manuilov, Stürmer's secretary, who openly confessed to taking German bribes, on which account Makarov, the Minister of Justice, has since resigned.

That Rasputin was the result of his environment is evident; but he was personally the cause of much, and circles of corruption radiated from him that widened and deepened all that is evil in Russian social life. According to some of their best representatives, a notable deterioration has taken place in the last four years even in the Bench and the Bar. While Rasputin lived law can hardly be said to have existed in Russia; at the least, no law could be believed to have a definite and unalterable force.

Germany loses in Rasputin a good friend, England a dangerous enemy, and Russia one of her greatest blackguards.

What results the assassination will have cannot yet be gauged. The lapse of a week has shown but little weakening in the phalanx of the Rasputin party. They talk of fresh repression, of muzzling

the Press more closely, of stopping those chosen by the people with a yet stouter gag. With the death of Gregory Rasputin the nation has taken one step towards victory. It remains to be seen whether it can go on and achieve it.

XX

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

THE SOCIETY OF THE YEAR 1914

WHEN the war was yet young and all Russia was thrilled with the ideal of defending the Slav nations of the south from Austria's claws, a society was formed in Petrograd by some persons of strongly national views, in the sense that they wished the nation to learn to act for itself and not always to be the lapdog of autocracy. It was called the Society of the Year 1914, and its aims were to struggle against German influence and for the regeneration of Russia. To quarrel officially with such objects was at that stage impossible, but it is noteworthy that during the last weeks before the revolution the Prefect of Petrograd forbade the use on a poster of the second part of the Society's programme, although it had been originally licensed and the Society had received the congratulations of the Grand Duke Nicolas when Commander-in-Chief.

From small beginnings the Society gradually grew in importance, and as the court and the Government became more pro-German and reactionary, persons

of all shades of political opinion found under its wide ensign a platform on which they could work jointly for the salvation of their country. The Society contained old revolutionaries, many of the spirits of 1905, Radicals, Constitutional Democrats, and Socialists, side by side with strong Nationalists like Purishkevich and with elements that before the war had been classed as even more opposed to popular progress. With a yearly subscription of three roubles it made a strong appeal to soldiers and to the more intellectual workmen, and by the autumn of 1916 claimed a membership of over 10,000, which for Russia, uneducated as it was in politics, was unexampled.

General Suhomlinov, now in the fortress of Peter of Paul under a charge of high treason,¹ had forbidden soldiers to join it; but the prohibition was disregarded and large numbers of both officers and men enrolled themselves as members. Strongly supported by the *Novoe Vremya* and the *Veчерnee Vremya* (the *New* and the *Evening Times*), which from being convinced Government papers had swung round into sharp opposition, the Society became during last winter a centre of political agitation where soldiers, workmen, peasants, and upper-class malcontents met to attack in their various forms the pernicious tendencies of the

¹ Since convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for life.

party in power. It started a "black book," and electrified Russian society by voting, at a meeting at which over 800 were present, the inscription in it of Protopopov, the almost all-powerful Home Minister.

The influence of the Society can be measured by the fact that even then Protopopov, who had been bitterly attacked by the Society for his Stockholm negotiations with German agents, did not dare to have it shut up. But it was kept under strict observation, and the police lounged about in the neighbourhood of the Society's rooms, while spies were sent into the meetings. The Society stretched out its hand to Allies : M. Patouillet, the director of the Institut Français,¹ was a member of the Committee, as was also Mme. Lydia Yavorska, well known in England as a strongly democratic Russian patriot and advocate of women's rights. One of those who killed the infamous Rasputin was a member of the Society, which put forward as the main planks in its political platform (1) the introduction of strict Parliamentary government and the elimination of irresponsible forces at the court ; (2) the appointment of a responsible Ministry ; (3) the removal from all positions in the State of pro-Germans and persons of German extraction. The last demand,

¹ A local body not to be confounded with the Institut de France.

which openly aimed at the Empress, was so bold that had the revolution not taken place the Society must undoubtedly have come to an untimely end. The part that it played in fomenting the popular movement was beyond doubt considerable.

The shooting in the streets of Petrograd had scarcely slackened when the Committee, some members of which had been in the ranks of the revolutionary troops, met to consider the changed position. On the one hand was a tendency to take the Society over, stock, lock, and barrel, to the newly formed Council of Workmen's Deputies, to drop the struggle with German influence and to turn wholly to internal problems; on the other a strong reluctance to abandon the old motto and thus to play into the hands of pro-Germans who were known to be active among the workmen. The latter party was energetically beaten up by Mme. Yavorska and M. M. Gedenström, formerly Russian Consul-General at Melbourne, who had succeeded in winning many of the soldiers and better-class workmen that frequent the Society to see the necessity of a real victory over German militarism if Europe is to be freed from the menace of another war.

Recently a crowded meeting at the Town Hall, under the chairmanship of the prominent revolutionary Pankratov, just released from the Schlüsselburg fortress, voted the adjournment *sine die* of a

Socialist programme wholly omitting the question of the war, and reaffirmed the old motto of struggle against German influence. The Society, like almost everyone in Russia, is definitely republican and democratic, as it has always been.

XXI

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION ¹

“During the last days disorders have taken place in Petrograd, followed by force and assaults on the lives of soldiers and members of the police.

“I forbid every kind of assembly in the streets.

“I warn the population of Petrograd that commands have been issued and repeated to the troops to use their arms and not to stop short of anything in order to assure tranquillity in the capital.”

HABALOV, Lieutenant-General Commanding the Forces
in the Petrograd Military Area, February 25, 1917.

THE above proclamation was posted in the streets of Petrograd on the morning of February 26th—March 11th. Its effects were quickly seen. Before evening there was some three hundred dead, killed in the square opposite the Nicolas Station by machine-gun fire, and over a hundred more along the Nevsky Prospect. At night the streets, that had been unusually full of sightseers, were deserted, the Nevsky was guarded by troops from end to end, and a searchlight installed in the Admiralty illumined its waste and menacing length. The Government appeared to be securely in posses-

¹ *The Nineteenth Century and After*, May, 1917.

sion. On the following morning a proclamation was posted from General Habalov that if all the workmen did not resume work by the morning of March 13th they would be arrested and sent into the ranks. He received an answer no less prompt than startling. In less than twenty-four hours from the signing of his second threat General Habalov was a prisoner and almost the whole of Petrograd in the hands of the populace and revolutionary soldiery.

In the midst of the most gigantic war one of the most momentous of known revolutions has been accomplished in the space of exactly seven days. Nevertheless, it began not as a revolution to change the form of government, but as a movement directed against the particular Government that was in power because the Government had become suspicious to all thinking and patriotic men. The first appeals made preserved the Emperor's authority, and the people showed no wish to change it; but events moved rapidly beyond this point. The immediate causes of the revolution are the reaction that has only gained in severity since the assassination of Rasputin, provocation by agents in the service of the Home Minister and probably bought by German money, and shortage of bread. It is the last that, acting on the exasperation produced by the two former, has brought about the explosion. An intimate connexion links the three causes to-

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gether, and all three are closely connected with the conduct of the war.

From an early stage in the war there has existed a strong pro-German element in the Russian Government, and much criminal negligence and actual treachery in high places. The mass of the nation, the huge unlettered peasant population, were inspired by vague feelings of patriotism, while among the small educated class all the progressive spirits looked to victory over the Germans as a priceless chance for the nation to raise itself towards self-consciousness and freedom. The first revelation of highly protected treachery was the plot of Colonel Myasoyedov, an intimate friend of the Minister of War, which gave the Germans the key to Lithuania. This was followed by the staggering news that the Minister himself, General Suhomlinov, under the exalted ægis of the Imperial Inspector of Artillery, had failed to provide more than a fraction of the shells required by the Army. From that moment the nation wholly lost confidence in the Government, which proceeded to justify its distrust in the most thorough manner by a reversion to an almost daily increasing reaction. "From Goremykin onwards," said a conservatively minded Muscovite lawyer, "every change of Prime Minister has been for the worse."

The last straws on the back of Russian society

were the events that attended the appointment as Home Minister of Protopopov, known to have held communication with enemy agents in Sweden, and the complete gag that he was allowed to put upon the Press. At the same time the other members of the gang, who, like Protopopov, owed their offices to the debauched charlatan and favourite of the Empress, Gregory Rasputin, were given a free hand to perpetuate numerous private and public crimes. In every rank of society it was freely said that the nation and the army were sold by the Empress's minions, and that she aimed at obtaining a regency to replace an Emperor whose weakness, garrulousness, and drunkenness had become a by-word. Should she succeed in this, it was thought certain that by fomenting disorder at home and obstructing the conduct of the war she would gain her desired object and force upon Russia a separate peace which, while ruining for ever the hopes of progress, might save her native country, Germany, and would delight the ranks of reactionary bureaucrats. The policy pursued by the Empress was in the highest degree alarming to the circle of Grand Dukes, who almost unanimously protested against the banishment without trial of the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich for his share in the murder of Rasputin in December, 1916. Many of their number, apart from this, not once, but often, represented to the Emperor

that subservience to his wife must end in disaster. When these protests were disregarded it became generally believed that a court revolution would take place and Nicolas the Second be dethroned in favour of his brother or his uncle. No one foresaw the immediate likelihood of a large popular movement, which, however, many thought to be inevitable after the war.

The first bread riot in Petrograd took place on the 8th of March. Its synchronisation with the Emperor's departure for General Headquarters—for he was nominally Commander-in-Chief—was probably not due to chance, but was the sign of the deep causes at work; Protopopov's agents, on the one hand, provoking disorder, and on the other German money being spent with the same object among the Social Democrats, in whose ranks in Russia the claims of internationalism often call forth a readier response than those of patriotism. The rioting was so far confined to the Viborg side, the chief workmen's quarter of Petrograd, but in the centre the tramway service had already become irregular. On the 9th the rioters stopped the trams across the river, terrorising the drivers and throwing parts of the mechanism away, so that the service grew still more intermittent. Visits were paid to all the factories and the hands called out in a sympathetic strike against the sudden food shortage. On this

day too a prefect of police (an official ranking above the district colonels of police and next to the prefect of the city) who threatened the crowd was killed. Strong Cossack squadrons patrolled Petrograd, and there was a collision on the Nevsky, in which the Cossacks used their whips, but they told the crowd they would not shoot so long as they only asked for bread. Alarmed at the attitude of the Cossacks, the authorities on the 10th brought troops of the line into the streets to support the police, posted machine-guns on the Nevsky, and stopped traffic across it at many points. Protopopov, approached by one who endeavoured to convince him of the madness of his methods, only answered: "Do you know how splendidly machine-guns work from the roof?" When the Duma met in February Protopopov had received the Emperor's special thanks for having kept order, which was effected by planting machine-guns to command all approaches to the Duma. As it soon turned out, he had now had the roofs at every important street corner garrisoned by police with machine-guns, and it is said that he promised a rise in pay of fifteen roubles a month and a present of fifty roubles to every man for his part in the bloody work that was expected. To Protopopov's disposition of the machine-guns the success of the revolution is due. Had they been properly posted in the streets at strategic points and a sound scheme

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of co-operation arranged among the police and the gendarmes, some 50,000 in strength, they could have swept every living thing from the streets : placed in dormer windows and behind parapets, the mitrail-leuses were extremely difficult to train on their objective, and the police forces scattered throughout the city in innumerable small detachments were not in a position to support one another.

On the same day the first serious bloodshed took place, the police opening fire on a peaceful crowd opposite the Nicolas Station and inflicting some fifty casualties. Sunday, March 11th, began nervously. There were soldiers everywhere in the streets, and strong bodies held in reserve in courtyards. By now the trams had all stopped, and it was hardly possible to find a car. No newspapers appeared. About 3.30 p.m. the troops began to clear the streets round the Nevsky at the bayonet point, and soon afterwards the police turned their machine-guns on to a crowd at the same place as the day before, but with more deadly effect, a Caucasian officer who was near by estimating the number of dead at 300. At the same time heavy firing took place further down the Nevsky, and opposite the Kazan Cathedral several score more people were killed. The crowd here retaliated with pistol shots, another prefect and a colonel of police, besides policemen and various innocent passers-by, being killed. It was significant that

soldiers were seen among the crowd firing on the police, and a number of men and some fourteen officers of different detachments were arrested for refusing to support the police with arms. On the same afternoon a drunken officer of the Volynsky Regiment, named Lashkevich, ordered his men to fire on the crowd. They refused, but Lashkevich forced one of the soldiers to obey. His shot killed a woman. Thereupon the men returned to barracks and spent the night in great agitation. In the morning of Monday, March 12th, a detachment of gendarmes arrived to arrest the refractory soldiers. On this the battalion rose, overpowered the gendarmes, killed Lashkevich and some other officers, and at 8 a.m. left their barracks and rushed through the streets cheering. They were quickly joined by the Litovtsky and Preobrajensky Regiments, and in the course of the day by two or three others. First they marched to the artillery depôt close by, then to the arsenal across the river, both of which they seized, burning the Courts of Justice on the way. The general in command of the artillery depôt and several other persons were killed in the course of this. Beyond the district in which this occurred the event was not yet known.

At eleven o'clock the present writer, in company with a naval officer, drove in a motor-car through the lines of the revolutionary troops and of the

Government troops called out to meet them, unaware that anything more than rioting had taken place. The revolutionaries were in fair order, and the two sides watched one another curiously, without any hostile action.

When, soon after fighting began, it became apparent that no troops in Petrograd could be relied on by the Government, in the early afternoon the police began to fire on the soldiers, and among the troops adhesion to the revolutionary ranks became general. In order to avoid recognition many officers in the revolted regiments dressed like privates. There were by now no police on the streets, and crowds from across the river profited by the revolutionary troops having overpowered the bridge guards to come into the centre and help to spread the spirit of revolution. Among their first objectives were the prisons where political prisoners were kept. These were released, but with them ordinary criminals also, to the number of some 15,000, and some of the prisons were burnt. Attention was next turned to the police stations, which were sacked, and the huge bonfires made by their contents, furniture and papers, lasted for more than a day and a night. The main police archives too were seized and burned and in the evening the contents of the prefecture itself, which had been the scene of much fighting, suffered the same fate. English readers must re-

member that the police of Petrograd were scarcely in any sense an instrument for preserving order, but were almost solely agents of political repression. By night the revolutionaries were in possession of the whole city, except the Winter Palace, the Admiralty, and the telegraph and telephone stations, the latter of which worked fairly well all through the day.

The guard regiments in Petrograd going over to the revolutionaries, these now numbered between thirty and forty thousand, and the only fear expressed was as to the attitude of the two divisions stationed at Tsarskoe Selo and of the troops at Moscow. Those who wished ill to the movement confidently expected that the tables would soon be turned and with crushing effect. Had these troops gone against the people, the revolutionaries, their discipline completely relaxed and many having given their rifles away to the crowd, must have succumbed. When the immense excitement is considered, and the fact that, after years of reaction and months of the sternest repression of whatever kind of public expression, all authority was suddenly removed from the troops and populace alike, it must be thought wonderful that so little disorder occurred. There was no general looting, well-dressed ladies who ventured out or dodged the fighting to get to their homes were not molested, and though officers were

stopped and their arms taken from them, they were not for the most part ill-used.

As early as Saturday, March 10th, Rodzianko, the President of the Duma, had sent a telegram to the Emperor begging him to take measures to avert disaster and to allay feeling. On the 11th he telegraphed again that the Government was paralysed, that shooting was going on, that all public services were disorganised, and urged him to entrust the formation of a new government to someone enjoying the confidence of the country. On the morning of the 12th he telegraphed : " Position growing worse. Imperative take immediate measures, since tomorrow will be already too late. The last hour has struck when the fate of the nation and of the dynasty will be decided." To these telegrams only one answer was received. On the morning of the 12th a decree was forwarded to Rodzianko from Prince Golitzin, the Premier, dated two days before from General Headquarters, and proroguing the Duma "to a date not later than April, 1917, dependent on extraordinary circumstances." It was clear that Nicolas the Second and his advisers were bent on crushing the popular will, and believed that this could be done. Faced by a desperate position, Rodzianko rose to the greatness of his task with a promptitude for which the Allies should be for ever grateful to him. He assumed a responsibility which,

had the revolution failed, would undoubtedly have cost him his head, and disregarding the prorogation summoned a meeting of the Duma. The members of all parties but the Right met at 2.30 and proceeded to elect a Temporary or Executive Committee for the establishment of order in Petrograd, which assumed and during the next three days kept control of the government. Rodzianko had already telegraphed to the generals commanding the various fronts, and had received answers from General Brusilov, on the south-western, and from General Russky, on the northern front, that were at least not hostile. From General Ewert, the lowest of the three in character and talent, he received no answer ; and General Ewert has since resigned his command. At 1 o'clock p.m. Prince Golitzin informed Rodzianko by telephone that he had resigned office, and was followed by almost all the other members of the Cabinet except Protopopov, who had vanished. The revolutionaries searched and pillaged the houses of ministers, the last-named only escaping a few minutes before their arrival. Before evening the president of the Council of the Empire, and former Minister of Justice, a man notorious for having debased justice and corrupted the courts, was arrested, and the beginnings of a national government already existed in Russia.

Throughout the day of March 13th fighting in

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Petrograd was general and heavy. The telephone was early captured and communication cut for the rest of the day. Every street corner became a trap for machine-gun and rifle fire from the police, ensconced in the upper part of the houses and shot at in their turn by parties of soldiers and civilians sheltering in doorways below. Soldiers in motor-lorries or armoured cars dashed to points where the fighting was fiercest, and in many places a furious battle raged all day. It was not until the afternoon of Wednesday, March 14th, the Winter Palace having been evacuated and the Admiralty captured on the evening of the 13th, that this gradually died out as the effect of an order from the Duma Committee that the owner and head-porter of any house from which firing took place would be held responsible. These head-porters, or *dvorniki*, were responsible to the police for the identity of every inmate in their houses, and one of their chief businesses was in fact spying for the police. It was clear that the latter could not now have mounted guns upon the roofs without their knowledge, and the prompt result of the proclamation proved its wisdom. Evening before this, when in the course of the 13th and the morning of the 14th it became known that the troops at Tsarskoe Selo, Pavlovsk, Oranienbaum and Cronstadt had joined the people, and later that the garrison of Moscow too had thrown in his lot

with the revolution, feeling had become quieter. The autocracy was left without serious defence, except in the unlikely event of the soldiers at the front declaring in its favour. Desultory but heavy outbursts of firing continued in Petrograd till Thursday night, March 15th, when a detachment of 500 provincial police suddenly arrived, overpowered the station guard, and marched through the city until dispersed by armoured motors. So recently as March 20th one or possibly more motor-cars ornamented with black flags have been dashing along the streets loosing off occasional belts of machine-gun cartridges at the passers, killing or wounding many. But such piratical efforts are futile. Since March 14th the red flag flies everywhere in the capital.

It is at present impossible to arrive at an exact figure of the numbers killed in and after the fighting, but it is certain that the agreeable statements made as to the bloodlessness are much exaggerated. The lowest estimate puts the number of dead at over 2000 ; higher estimates at as much as 10,000, while the number of wounded must also be considerable. The truth probably lies between four and five thousand killed. In the two days before the revolution broke out, some five hundred were killed in the centre of the city ; during the three days of fighting many more, and this takes no account of the casual-

ties beyond the river on the Petrograd and Viborg sides. Many officers were murdered by their men in the Baltic fleet as well as in the army. Many policemen captured redhanded were made prisoners and taken to the Duma ; but very many more were shot on the spot and their bodies flung into the canals. In the provinces the revolution was of a paper character, being mostly executed in the telegraph offices. Normal life was scarcely interrupted for more than one day in Moscow, and even less in other cities. It is none the less believed that not a few policemen and officers were disposed of in various parts, victims it may be in many cases of private revenge.

Warned by the fate of others, ministers and lesser servants of the old régime hastened to give themselves up to the Duma or were hunted out of hiding. Among the first was Stürmer, at whose residence a chest of coined money was discovered. Nor was he the only one to provide in hard coin against a rainy day, for at the house of Count Fredericks, the Minister of the Court and one of the chief props of the German system there, were discovered two boxes packed with gold. His house, full of objects of value, and probably also of highly interesting correspondence, was burnt to the ground. The wine cellar in the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna's palace, valued at half a million roubles, was destroyed for fear that

the mob would sack the house. Kshesinska, the leading dancer of the Imperial Ballet and a former mistress of the Emperor, inspired by similar motives, took warning betimes and fled to Finland. The Hôtel Militaire, *ci-devant* the Astoria, from which it was said that officers fired on the revolutionaries, had been attacked and captured on the 13th; its lower floors were gutted and several officers and civilians killed or wounded. The majority of the officers in Petrograd were quick to realise that the old order had passed away, and among the many processions of soldiers and employees who marched to the Duma to signify their adherence, none was more pleasing than that of a great number of officers, many colonels and even generals among them, who on the 14th, after a meeting at the Army and Navy Club, went to the place themselves at the orders of the Duma Committee. On the same day the Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovich, a man indeed of no political significance but much opposed to the Empress, signified to the Duma that he would wholeheartedly support the new regime with all the strength of the Navy Guards. Protopopov, who had spent the intervening two days since his disappearance in wandering about the streets, seeking refuge with his friends and being refused by all, had given himself up late the night before, and with his arrest the last shadow of the old government

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vanished. On the 14th the Duma Committee appointed Commissioners to take charge of the various ministries and other public offices, and telegraphed the news to all the towns of Russia that it had temporarily undertaken the direction of affairs, and a municipal militia was established in the capital with its head office at the Town Hall.

Within a few hours of the appointment of the Executive Committee of the Duma, a Council of Workmen's Deputies was organised also at the Duma, composed of labour representatives, some soldiers, and a few stray sympathetic politicians. They divided the city into districts, to each of which a Commissioner was appointed, and representatives were invited to be sent from the factories and from every company. The object of the Commissioners was "the establishment of the popular power in the districts of Petrograd." "We call upon the population of the capital," their proclamation ran, "to gather round the Council, to organise local district committees, and to take into their hands the direction of all local affairs." By the 14th of March the Council was consolidated and enlarged into the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, and was making a bold bid to get the power over the army into its hands. Order No. 1 posted throughout Petrograd on the 15th of March or-

dained that in all their political concerns the military were subject to the Council, that committees were to be elected by every battalion or company to supervise the internal administration of the regiments, that all arms were to be under control of the committees and in no circumstances to be returned to officers as the Duma Committee had authorised, and that the orders of the Military Commission set up by the latter were only to be obeyed when they did not contradict the orders and resolutions of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. On the 13th discipline was non-existent. Many of the soldiers had given up their arms to the crowd and were drifting listlessly about the streets watching the progress of the fight and in difficulties for food. On the 14th, though the food difficulty had increased, their behaviour was better; they paraded in companies, though still many without arms, and preserved some outward orderliness. The adherence too of the officers on this day had its effect, and soldiers even began to salute again. But with the publication of the Council's Order an immediate deterioration became noticeable. The semblance of order preserved the day before vanished and was replaced by a sullen and occasionally a threatening attitude. There were no longer signs of respect for the officers, and the men went about asking for

food and collecting money to support soldiers' tea-houses that had taken the place of many cafés. Small squads went round searching private apartments for arms, without, or refusing to show, the authority they should have had from the Duma : a fact greatly to the advantage of criminals, who dressed themselves up as soldiers and carried off valuables from citizens who dared not resist. It was known that a strong party for the immediate conclusion of peace existed among the workmen, and the gloomiest anticipations, freely entertained, were intensified by reports of the enemy having broken the Russian lines near Dvinsk. A counter-report, as it turned out equally untrue, that came late in the evening, of a Russian advance in the same district to some extent restored spirits, but the situation remained one of great tension.

From the very first day of the revolution, a news-sheet was issued with the imprint of the " Committee of Petrograd Journalists " and distributed gratis in the streets. This had to compete with the fuller sheet of the Workmen's Council, which though sold at five kopeks enjoyed greater facilities for distribution, and it was not until Sunday the 18th that the publishers could arrange with the compositors to allow the regular papers to come out. The Council further forbade cabs, which began to be seen again on the streets on the 17th of March, to ply for hire

after 7 p.m. ; but they have had difficulty in enforcing this rule. Over the tramways, however, the Council had complete control ; the wires, cut by bullets, were repaired by the 20th, but no trams ran in the evening till some days later. The theatres too are sought to be brought under the workmen's heel : the Council flatly refused leave to any to open until the burial of certain victims of the fight in the cause of freedom, whom they proposed to inter in the great square opposite the Winter Palace.

By dint of much tact and forbearance on the part of the Duma Committee and of the new government announced by it on the 15th of March with Prince Lvov, the President of the Union of Zemstvos, as prime minister, an open breach with the Council has hitherto been avoided. Frequent reports indeed are spread of the harmony reigning between the two bodies. But the mischief done in the first two days by the Council has spread very wide, and may prove irreparable. While many of the troops have returned to their duty, and fair discipline is kept, and work goes forward, the peace party among the Socialists have not relaxed their efforts, and have succeeded in affecting some at least of the soldiers at the front. General Alexeiev, nominally Chief of Staff and virtually Commander-in-Chief, has been called to task in the workmen's organ for issuing orders that unauthorised bands calling themselves deputies

be prevented from disarming the railway gendarmes, which if allowed would give them control over the stations and the line. General Radko Dmitriev has found it necessary in two proclamations to remind his troops that in the face of the enemy discipline must be preserved and that until new regulations are properly issued the old ones must remain in force. General Russky is said to have protested against the presence of Socialist deputies who hold meetings among the soldiers. On the 23rd of March the papers contained separate appeals to the army and the nation from A. I. Guchkov, the new Minister of War, and from the whole Cabinet ; and a third signed by Guchkov and General Alexeiev. All three are couched in the most urgent terms and call upon citizens to do their duty at the front and at the rear, workmen and soldiers alike. They inform the nation that a tremendous effort of the enemy is to be expected, that Petrograd is threatened by pressing danger, and that should the Germans be victorious their victory will be gained not only over the Russian State but over the newly won freedom of the Russian nation. They passionately beg the soldiers to trust and follow their officers, who shared danger and hunger, and freely laid down their lives with their brothers. Guchkov's appeal ends : "The hour of trial approaches." In yet another appeal on the 24th the Minister of War wrote :

“The enemy threatens the capital. . . . The danger is great.” Nevertheless obstinate rumours circulate that soldiers are leaving the Front, and that the officers are helpless to control them. The extreme Socialists make no secret of their desire. Their programme is “Down with the war at any cost, in any circumstances.” In the third number of *Truth* (*Pravda*), the Moscow organ of this party, it is declared : “We hate every kind of despotism. We hate the despotism of William and of Briand, of Lloyd George and Ferdinand, just as we hate the despotism of the Romanovs.” In the fifth number (March 22nd), a leading article calls upon the soldiers in the trenches to raise the red flag, sing the International, refuse to attack, and fraternise “widely and systematically” with the soldiers on the other side. This party flatters or professes to flatter itself that if fighting is stopped on the Russian side there will be a revolution in Germany and the Emperor and the bourgeois régime will be overthrown. True, they are opposed by other sections of the Socialists, but unfortunately under the present condition their quarrels are almost as pernicious as if all were united against the war. In spite of recent appeals by the Council of Workmen’s Deputies, few of the factories in Petrograd had resumed work on the 21st of March, and the men may go out again at any moment.

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March was the month when Paul the First was murdered. In March, Alexander the Second was slain. And on the 1st of March, Nicolas the Second set out for his last journey as Emperor from General Headquarters, with the object of reaching Tsarskoe Selo. It is said that Rodzianko's second and third telegrams were never delivered to him, and that General Voyekov, one of his most intimate advisers and a successful tool of the Empress, otherwise chiefly known by having made a fortune out of an inferior mineral water, only told him of the revolt in Petrograd when forced to do so by General Pavel, who said that if Voyekov refused he would burst into the Emperor's room by force. Voyekov thereupon told the Emperor that students and revolutionaries had worked up the young conscripts to terrorise the Duma, but that the loyal regiments from Tsarskoe would easily put the movement down. The Emperor set out in one train with General Voyekov and Pavel and Admiral Nivel, who appears to have been fuddled with drink the whole time, the suite following in another. Near the junction for Pskov, revolutionaries managed to damage the engine of the second train, which could proceed no further, and General Pavel insisted on telling the Emperor the whole truth, that Tsarskoe and Moscow equally with Petrograd had abandoned his cause, that a telegram had been received not to allow the

train nearer to Petrograd, and that the Emperor's position was hopeless. An attempt was then made to return and to go to the front, but the line had been blocked behind the last train and it had to be abandoned. One thing only remained, to proceed to Pskov, General Russky's headquarters, and there to wait events. Thither on the 15th of March A. I. Guchkov and V. V. Shulgin proceeded from Petrograd with the Duma Committee's commission to negotiate with the Emperor. They arrived at ten o'clock in the evening, and immediately had an interview with the Emperor in his train, at which were also present General Russky, Count Fredericks, and another General, who took notes, probably Voyekov. The once all-powerful autocrat, who was in the uniform of a Caucasian regiment, listened to an exposition of the state of affairs by Guchkov, who led up to the conclusion that he must abdicate in favour of his son, the Grand Duke Alexis, and nominate as regent his brother the Grand Duke Michael. When Guchkov came to this point, General Russky bent towards Shulgin and said "That has already been decided." The Emperor replied to Guchkov as follows: "I reflected all yesterday and to-day, and I have decided to abdicate from the throne. Until three o'clock to-day I was ready to abdicate in favour of my son. But then I understood that I was incapable of separating from

my son." Then, after a little pause : " I hope you understand that." He continued : " Therefore I have decided to abdicate in favour of my brother." The deputies asked to consider this proposition, which was unexpected, in private, but after a short colloquy announced that they accepted it. They then presented a prepared form of abdication to the Emperor, who affixed his signature in pencil. The whole proceedings were simple, quiet, and evidently not unfriendly.

The next day, however, when the matter was laid before the Grand Duke Michael, the latter politely but firmly refused to accept the crown, except in the event of its being offered to him by a Constituent Assembly elected by the nation by universal, direct, and secret ballot. In this the Grand Duke (who passed some time in England and rented Lord Lytton's house at Knebworth) showed more political judgment than the new government had shown in attempting to keep his nephew Alexis on the throne. Events had already moved beyond the point where the workmen or the educated progressives or the soldiers in Petrograd would consent to see a Romanov on the throne. Even the Grand Duke Nicolas, summoned from the Caucasus to take up again the chief command by the Duma Committee with the nominal authority, in one of his last acts, of Nicolas the Second, has been compelled by the

trend of events to lay it down. The nation has suffered too much from a dynasty which with but few exceptions has proved itself either cruel or effete, or both ; which during the last forty years has expended every effort in repressing the smallest tendency towards westernisation ; and which has finally played foolishly or knavishly into the hands of the foe. It is unlikely in the extreme that a Romanov will ever again wear the crown. Unless the Germans take Petrograd and impose their own terms of peace it is unlikely that anyone will wear a crown in Russia. The new government is displaying enough ability to justify the belief that if it had a fair chance it would find its way towards a stable and democratic republic. It is the misfortune, not only of Russia, but of her Allies, that the chances are not fair. Ministers have to take up the reins where they were dropped in blood and dirt and treachery by Nicolas the Second's government. They have to fight the Germans in a war already made difficult by the wickedness of their predecessors, and seriously handicapped by the necessity of provisioning the population after transport has been allowed to wind itself into a complete tangle. But when they have also to make head against malicious want of patriotism and ceaseless efforts to crab the war on the part of Socialist agitators, the tools or dupes of German intrigue, and against the

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wrong-headed eagerness of other perhaps honest workmen to snatch at a class advantage without thought for their country, their task may well seem desperate. They may yet achieve it. They are able and devoted. They have backing among the saner workmen, that has grown in the last few days ; they have officers with them ; much, if not all, of the soldiery would shrink with horror from defeat at the hands of the Germans. But the soldiers are ignorant, and the magic of their discipline has been broken. The issue is on the knees of the gods.

Should the disaster that the Government and the generals warn us against occur, and should Russia lie again under the burden of a Romanov, set up by the conqueror, we may be sure that his reign would not be long. The Russian people has raised its head too high ; it could never sink again into the slavish courses from which the revolution tore it ; it will always remember how in the teeth of everything that tyranny could devise it flung off the shackles and established order within itself. And English people must remember this too, that the worst case will not be worse than what would have come without this revolution. No one who has not worked for the war in Russia for the last two years can perhaps quite realise how increasingly difficult work had become during the last part of

that period : how every channel has been clogged, how every enthusiasm has been killed, how stagnation has spread over every activity. Precisely when and how it would have happened cannot yet be seen, though history may learn it, but the writer has not a doubt that the former Government would have succeeded in selling Russia and the Allies to the Germans, and would have left a Russia miserable, ashamed, semi-Asiatic, and economically ruined instead of the great and splendid democratic nation that she has now won the chance to become. Yet should she barter away her new freedom for a mirage, the way will be long and may be still more dreadful to retrieve it.

After his abdication the Emperor was allowed to return to General Headquarters. But on the 20th of March four deputies were despatched by orders of the new government to arrest and bring him to Tsarskoe Selo. The motive for this is said to have been that leave having been given him to telegraph to his wife, but only in plain words, he nevertheless despatched a cipher telegram to her. Whatever the reason, the arrest was effected without any opposition on the 21st of March, and at 11.35 p.m. Nicolas the Second arrived at Tsarskoe, where he and his wife and family remain under strict supervision. Happily the unfortunate suggestion that the Imperial family be sent to England has been dropped before

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the serious trouble that would undoubtedly have come of it has arisen.

Meanwhile the government, appointed by the Executive Committee of the Duma, remains both in fact and in name temporary. On the 19th of March it announced that in due time a Convention would be summoned to decide the future constitution of the Russian State. In view of the large number of men at the Front, it is hard to see, even in the best case, how this can be before the end of the war. Whatever form of government the Convention elects, the people's representatives are sure to insist upon a redistribution of the land and maybe upon the confiscation of monastic property, which lies heaped in millions without the slightest return by way of spiritual or educational participation in the nation's life. But these are problems for the future. With the announcement of the Constituent Assembly and the arrest of the Emperor, the Russian revolution has come to the end of its first phase. The air that Russians breathe is free. All that an Englishman and a lover of their country can do is to wish them God-speed in a task that cannot but be troubled, and to show by his sympathy that in the main, in spite of excesses and crimes wrought by the ignorant and the exasperated, in spite of the dreadful possibility that Germany working through her secret friends and agents may paralyse and

disrupt the power of Russia's forces, nevertheless he feels that, in so far as the inner life of Russia is concerned, right has triumphed and the curtain been drawn upon the long drama of brutal despotism, unsweetened by any grace of chivalry or touch of ideal.

[The reader is requested to observe, as to matters of opinion, that the hopes and fears of well-informed Russians are recorded as they stood on the 24th of March, 1917.]

XXII

THE DUMA OF THE REVOLUTION

A MAN set down in the precincts of the Duma, or more accurately of the State Duma, of Russia, for every city has its own town duma, or municipal council, without knowing what had happened, would undoubtedly think he had gone mad. In the broad street outside, in the semi-circular garden fronting the palace, on the steps that go up to the central door, is a palpitating, swaying crowd of soldiers and civilians, so thick that movement through it is at best crablike, and sometimes wholly impossible. And lined up in the midst stand regiments or ships' crews or cadet corps bedecked with red ribbons and with red banners of every size. On the banners are such inscriptions as "Long live the Democratic Republic!" "Solidarity between sailors and officers!" "The land and the people's will!" "Long live Social Democracy!" The regiments are waiting their turn to go into the Duma and add their tribute of welcome to the Temporary Government and the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. Inside the building

itself, all day long, in the great hall that Prince Potemkin reserved to dance the polonaise in, the regiments and the deputations succeed one another, packed in a breathless mass, while from a stand set up in the centre Parliamentary or Socialist orators hoarsely dilate on the duties of revolutionaries. It is an easy audience to speak to, for whenever the speaker is at a loss he has only to cry "Long live" —whatever he may fancy: "the army, the people, the revolution! Hurrah!" and the band will play the "Marseillaise" twice through and the crowd cheer for three minutes. Twenty or thirty thousand people a day, when the sightseers are counted, must proceed to the Duma and listen and cheer. On one day, for instance, a cadet corps, the Navy Guards battalion, the First Reserve battalion, the house porters and Suisses of Petrograd, and a woman's suffrage procession were received. The work of the committees of the Duma and of the Temporary Government has to go on round and in the midst of this, messengers from one department to another sometimes getting hopelessly wedged in the throng.

It would be easy to laugh at the fervour and simplicity that carries these multitudinous processions through the melting snows of Petrograd to the Palais de la Tauride, and to find fault with a Government that allows such conditions for its work. But it must be remembered that the Russian people

is packing into weeks the political education that Westerns, happier in having long since accomplished their big revolutions, suck in through long years. To visit the Duma and to hear an authorised political speech are experiences unique in the lives of most Russians, and are made the more desirable by the memory of the machine-guns placed at the opening of the present Duma by the late régime to shoot those who attempted to gain them. A month ago Russia had no civic sense, no political aspirations that could be given a definite name, now almost everyone is a republican, and is ready to argue the question whether the Constituent Assembly should be held in Petrograd or Moscow. Moscow is of course for Moscow, as "the heart of Russia" and the centre of the Zemstvos; but Petrograd will hardly let the chance out of its own hands. It was Petrograd that made the revolution and bravely knocked the feet of clay from under the brazen idol; Moscow did nothing but acquiesce with enthusiasm. The Petrograd workmen, who know that without them nothing would have happened, resent the attempt to cold-shoulder them, and the Council of their deputies has uncommon influence with the Government.

From the point of view of an Ally as well as from that of many patriotic Russians, it is sad to notice how scant are the references to the war in the

speeches made to the processing troops at the Duma. True there are not openly hostile remarks about it—or were not in my presence,—but one might listen to many orators without knowing that there was war in the land. They occupy themselves with demanding the overthrow of all monarchs, the redistribution of the land, strict measures to prevent the old powers from ever again rearing their heads. In small groups, however, Socialist students and their followers among the soldiers argue that there has been enough fighting, and though they admit that the war may be continued in self-defence will not of hear waging it longer in the hope of acquisitions, and express fine confidence that the German Socialists in the trenches will grasp the right hand of friendship held out to them from across the No Man's Land. How far this agitation takes effect is most difficult to gauge. It has less success in Moscow than in Petrograd, and in Cronstadt the soldiers have confiscated the local edition and offices of *Pravda* (*Truth*)—that is, its chief organ, in which Petrograd is systematically and symbolically printed “Petersburg”; but the capital is by far the most important. The Russian soldier is easily puzzled, and if he loses his bearings may not quickly find them again. One has already committed suicide because he did not know where his duty lay or what to think.

Two minor effects of the revolution may be noted. Just as the late Emperor has become plain "Nicolas Romanov," and is now addressed by the soldiers as Mr. Colonel (his military rank), so the Grand Dukes have become, without any legislation but in universal accentation, "the late" Grand Duke So-and-so. The other is even more natural. There is a saying in Russian: "The *dvorniki* (house porters) make the spring." It is their business to clean the pavement and street in front of their houses from the melting snow. Now, the police, once the paymasters and bullies of this army of spies on the dwellers they were supposed to serve, are non-existent. This spring, therefore, the *dvorniki* have no one to make them work, and the streets of Petrograd are filthy.

As I write the sound of singing from a marching regiment comes through the double window, marching to the Duma to greet the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies and the Temporary Government.

The following articles are included in this volume because they were true at the time they were written and are of importance as the record of an observer on the spot, although the rapid development of events has caused them to be no longer true in all respects. The article on the Polish

question, with such changes as the change of régime makes necessary, gives a considered opinion based upon general principles which still hold good—as the developments in Finland and Ukraine have shown.

SECTION VI
AFTER THE REVOLUTION

XXIII

THE DANGER IN RUSSIA

NOTHING could better illustrate the dangerous tendency visible in Russian thought since the revolution and becoming daily stronger than an article by the well-known novelist Mereshkovsky, published on April 5th. Taking as his text the manifesto issued on March 27th, 1917, by the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies to "the Peoples of the whole World," Mereshkovsky echoes with enthusiasm its words: "We have freed not only ourselves but the whole world also." At last, he cries, we have the truth about the war in the workmen's appeal to the German proletariat to aid them in stopping this "terrible war, that is dishonouring to all humanity." To all humanity, Mereshkovsky repeats: "not only to our enemies, but to us, and to our Allies. Not one side alone is guilty—both sides are guilty." When, he argues, two boys are fighting, and both say "Please, the

other fellow began it," we inquire not who is right, but who insists on continuing the fight—implying that this is the one in the wrong. "William attacked Nicolas, or Nicolas attacked William : isn't it all the same ? " So it is all the same to Mereshkovsky, that Serbia, a sister Slav nation, was unjustly attacked and her independence sought to be destroyed, all the same that Belgium was violated and ruined by her sworn defender. All the same that the population of Poland, of Belgium, of Northern France are sent by the German slave-drivers to work the fields and mines in an enemy land. All the same, whether justice or injustice exists upon the earth, all the same whether military despotism stretches its iron hand from Bremen to Bagdad and shuts out Russia for ever from the West. Never, Mereshkovsky says, have people lied so much as in the last three years. So the enthusiasm that moved the Russian people to take arms for Serbia's freedom was a lie ; it was a lie when they shouted themselves hoarse at Britain's championing of Belgium ; it was for a lie that the thousands of volunteers went gladly to battle, and that who knows how many hundred thousand brave Russians have been sent to death. Everything before the revolution and except the revolution was a lie. " In the Council of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies beats a profound heart—in.

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the Temporary Government is strengthened the lofty reason of the people . . . let them speak, not separately, but the Council together with the Government, their word concerning the war and peace. Let the united revolution pronounce a united word."

The tendency revealed in this is doubly dangerous, dangerous to all the Allies including Russia, and, particularly, dangerous to Russia alone. To the Allies, because the spread of such ideas will disorganise all resistance to the foe and paralyse the efforts of Russians loyal to their undertakings; to Russia because if the Germans take Petrograd, beside the crippling blow to her heritage and her industry, she risks everything that the revolution would seem to have gained, and the loss for generations of a way out to the warm seas. And when Mereshkovsky writes so, who has been for years on the literary committee of the Imperial Theatre, that stronghold of intellectual flunkeyism, it is certain that very many others think like him. This way the tide flows and they swim with it, though before they never made a gesture against the then existing fashion. They take their cue from the Council of Workmen's Deputies, and while openly professing, like Mereshkovsky, to oppose "peace at any price," ignore the results of the doctrine that he also maintains :

“in one hand the rifle, the other stretched out in brotherhood.” The enemy is at the gates, he has just scored a considerable success on the Russian Western Front, the fleet is in a state of acute disorganisation—yet the Socialist doctrinaires enunciate the theory of a “compromise” peace “without annexations or indemnities” and pretend to trust that in such conditions the Russian soldier, whose illiterate mind is incapable of grasping more than the simplest idea, will fight well against a foe already in possession of some of the best Russian provinces, when moreover he is further urged to go and take the land at once lest the golden moment pass and the bourgeois rob him of his heritage.

It is impossible now to analyse all the forces that are driving the Russian ship perilously close to the rocks, but one influence, regrettable enough, is noticeably at work. Tseretelli, a member of the second Duma exiled to Siberia, who has now returned and passes for a moderate Socialist, said, in an interview published on April 4th, that the duty of the Council of Workmen’s Deputies was to see that the Temporary Government preserved a sufficiently revolutionary character and to “correct” its transactions. In other words, the Government, whose able and patriotic members represent a large proportion of the intelligent opinion of Russia, is unable to take one step without

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the approval of the Council, which represents only the workmen, a minute proportion of the nation, and some of the soldiers, of whom something like 80 per cent cannot read or write. In face of this it is needless to dwell on the incongruity of the pretensions fostered by the Petrograd "intellectuals," largely of non-Russian extraction, to a special mission of Russia to the world; but it seems clear that one motive in the itching for a peace compromise is anxiety on the part of the Social Democratic leaders lest, if the war were vigorously conducted and pushed to a successful conclusion, much of their influence should pass into the hands of the "bourgeoisie" whose representatives, with the exception of Kerensky, the Minister of Justice, compose the Temporary Government. This might particularly be the case, should the latter be free from Social Democratic control when the time comes for the Constituent Assembly to meet. The same motive can be detected in the inscriptions carried on some of the more recent banners in the processions of troops to do obeisance to the new régime at the Duma. The legend "War to a Democratic Victory," has appeared during the last week. It resembles the protestations of *Pravda* (*Truth*), the organ of the advanced Social Democrats, that they are not opposed to war in defence of the rights of the masses, but only to "imperialist"

wars, like the present, that advantage none but the bourgeoisie. If it means anything, it means that the soldiers who exhibit it desire to turn their arms not against the Germans but against the propertied classes, a result to be facilitated by the hoped for fraternisation with the Socialists among the enemy.

In this welter of cloudy ambitions and half-sincere illusions General Alexeiev and A. J. Guchkov have to reorganise the national defences. That the Russians, with their easily excitable emotions, can feel the appeal of right views on the war is proved by the success of a young actress, Miss Galli-Yanovska, who ten days since electrified a workmen's audience by her vivid claim for Russia's duty to fight to the end. "There is no freedom," she cried, "in treason, and they are calling you to betray your brothers' graves, to betray our Allies whose trust is placed in the Russian people and in them alone. The old power has fallen, and in the face of the whole world stands the free Russian people. Let no one dare to say : Russia could not fulfil her promises, the free Russian people befouled its freedom with treachery to the general weal. Comrades, let that not be !" Practically the whole of the Press is for achieving the oft-repeated aims of Russia in a definite victory. But the influence of the Press is at a discount as being "bourgeois,"

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and though there is no censorship the papers are prevented from publishing unpleasant facts by the workmen's despotism. It would be foolish not to realise that the forces against the common cause are strong. Not only those touched on above, but there still exists the profound want of willingness and desire to escape responsibility that characterises many public officials, who, all but a few of the chiefs, remain in the posts they occupied before the revolution. There still exists the ingrained laziness of the Russian character, and an English engineer calculates that in the Government factory he supervises there will in the course of the next fortnight be thirty-six working hours. Officers who threw themselves whole-heartedly into the revolutionary movement are discouraged at the attitude adopted towards themselves and their fellows, and there have been several cases of suicide. On the news of the American declaration of war, one young officer said bitterly : "The Allies now consist of three republics, seven monarchies, and one anarchy." The Russian revolution, which in the given circumstances was inevitable, and has put an end to one of the most monstrous systems of misgovernment and oppression in history, has come six months too soon, probably for the Allies, but almost certainly for Russia.

XXIV

SOLDIERS AND WORKMEN

(APRIL, 1917)

THE questions of the hour remain the relation of the workmen to their work and of the soldiers to the workmen ; and on both a great deal of doubt exists. Reports of the workmen's refusal, active or passive, to resume work for the supply of the army having reached the latter, many of the troops are incensed against those who, having earned "fancy" wages in the factories, now seem prepared to starve the soldiers of shells. Deputations have come from the front to affirm the resolution of the troops to fight to the death, and to call on the workmen to support them. *We* made the revolution, they say. Plain hints have already been given that if the workmen do not respond to the call of duty, they may apprehend the most serious consequences. A party of the Petrograd Guards marched to the Patilov works and said : " We have come with our rifles at the easy, and in a friendly spirit, but if you don't work for us, we shall come back with our rifles at the ready, and in a different

spirit ! ” I talked two days ago with a deputy from a Cossack regiment, an intelligent non-commissioned officer, whose eyes blazed with fury at the thought that the army might be stabbed in the back. Yesterday a deputy arrived from the — Guards, stationed in Galicia, with the message that they will fight on to victory and will treat as traitors any workmen who do not back them up to the best of their power. What maddens soldiers at the front is the idea that while they spend days and nights in the trenches and risk their lives for 75 kopeks a month, there are workmen who refuse to work even eight hours a day without bargaining for a rise in their already high wages.

These warnings have inspired the Council of Workmen's Deputies to feverish efforts to content and convince the soldiers in Petrograd and to offer to Russia a spectacle of complete solidarity between the workmen and the soldiers. In this they have largely succeeded, but the solidarity, which may be more propitious in other cities, has been gained in Petrograd rather in the direction of the extreme Social Democratic views than of those held at all events on the south-western front. There, discipline is reported steady, the men rely on their officers, agitators have been bested, and the fighting spirit is high. This is easy to understand ; for the armies of General Brusilov have beaten the enemy

and, fighting to reclaim the soil of their Galician brothers, believe they can beat him again. Desertions there were ; but they have now been made good again. Nearer to the influence of the capital the military spirit would seem progressively to languish ; the accusation would doubtless be unjust in many cases, but the greater ease of communication, following on the already shaken confidence of officers and men, under the persistent treachery of the old régime, has enabled anti-military propaganda to attain greater success.

In the capital itself this propaganda reaches its height. Here, too, many of the troops would not be satisfied at its success, but it can be pushed far without fear of consequences. I was present yesterday at the Duma, when two ladies were distributing patriotic pamphlets to the soldiers. A week ago the same pamphlets had been distributed without objection. Now the ladies were surrounded by an angry crowd of soldiers, sailors, and workmen, many of whom tore the pamphlets to pieces, accusing the ladies of being spies, police agents, and capitalists, threatened them with denunciation to the Council, and even with personal violence. An ugly scene was only averted by the fact that the ladies, both practised orators, behaved with great courage and restraint, and that one of them was widely known as a woman of advanced democratic opinions.

The wife of a sergeant who had herself come to Petrograd as a deputy from the non-commissioned officers of a regiment at Smolensk, said to this lady : " They don't want the truth. You can't tell the truth here." The fiercest among the men were the sailors. As a rule, they are too well trained to say openly that they are against the war, but denounce the supposed aggressive policy of the Government, the capitalist interests in which England and Germany are alleged to have begun the war, and acclaim internationalism ; but now, worked up, they spoke freely, and one shouted amid general approval : " We've had enough of the war ! Enough blood has been spilt ! We know what our skins are worth ! "

Public pronouncements by the Council of Workmen's Deputies, more or less favourable to the prosecution of the war, must be read with the knowledge that these undercurrents exist and receive every encouragement, and that the Socialist group have attained great skill in minimising the truth. Thus the official figures of the casualties of the revolution are arrived at by neglecting those that fell in the cause of the old régime and the murdered officers, who are not considered " victims." Helsingfors and Cronstadt are officially reported in peace and security : from private information I learn that the spirit at the former remains bad, while at the latter an emissary sent by the Government to release the

imprisoned officers was refused, with the argument of a loaded machine-gun. Officially the Council supports the Temporary Government, but by its supporters and members attacks have been made on Guchkov, Miliukov, and Rodzianko, while there was even a question of arresting the Labour Minister of Justice, Kerensky, for having allowed General Ivanov, who made a half-hearted attempt to help the ex-Emperor during his journey to Petrograd, personal freedom while the charges against him are investigated. Purishkevich, who has worked like a lion for the needs of the army throughout the war and freed Russia from Rasputin, is accused of being a traitor. In a fine letter published yesterday, he rejects the accusation on to those who, in league with Germans within and without the realm, seek to reduce Russia to the Muscovite principality of the sixteenth century. While the factories are officially reported to have made an unexampled output of shells during some days of the past week, a correspondent writes on April 12th in *Pravda* (*Truth*), the extreme Socialist organ, that the workmen cannot work even half-time "since there is nothing to do at the benches—there is no fuel," throwing the blame for this on the Government and the "bourgeoisie."

The proportion of the extreme Social Democrats on the Council is estimated at about 20 per cent.

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In a resolution on the war they voted (April 10th) that "the Russian revolutionary democracy ought to appeal to the peoples of all the warring countries to rise against their oppressors, guilty of the fratricidal war. . . . It is necessary to carry on further work for the construction of international ties with the object of stopping the war. . . . It is necessary to compel the Russian Temporary Government not only to renounce all militarist plans, but immediately to formulate the will of the peoples of Russia, i.e. to propose to all the combatants peace without annexation, indemnities, with the right of the peoples to self-government." *Pravda*, commenting on the situation in its issue of April 13th, remarked: "The undertakings of the deposed Tsar and of his Government, which up to the present are entirely unknown to the people, cannot be considered as unquestionably binding on the democracy." On the same day a leader in the official organ of the Council declares: "We are willing to hold out the hand of brotherhood to the peoples of Germany and Austria if they compel their Governments to renounce militarism. . . . We are ready to support with armed strength the popular masses of England, France, and Italy, if they compel their Governments to renounce militarism and, nevertheless, are compelled to defend themselves from Germany. But we will emphatically protest against the prolongation of the war in the

interests of capital, under whatever national flag it is hidden." When the innuendo of this passage is examined, and the power of an energetic 20 per cent minority is borne in mind, the difference between the whole Council and its extreme left wing would not seem to be great.

XXV

THOUGHTS ON THE POLISH QUESTION¹

THE Polish question has once more burst upon the attention of a staggered and distracted Europe. It would, perhaps, be truer to say that, like an ammunition depôt, near which an acquaintance of mine was stationed, which, touched by an Austrian bomb, continued cracker-wise to explode in bits all day, the Polish question has been actively bursting ever since the beginning of the war, and has now given a particularly violent explosion which will certainly not be the last, and probably will not prove to be the most violent. At the present moment the Moscow and Kiev papers, which reach Rovno at irregular intervals, are full of the German proclamation of a quasi-independent kingdom of Poland, and contain interviews with any Pole within reach of their correspondents who may have something to say on the subject. In its main lines the situation created by the latest German move is clear enough. Mr. Lednicki, president of the Moscow Polish Committee and one of the most

¹ *The New Europe*, December 7, 1916.

widely respected of the Polish leaders in Russia, formerly a member of the Duma, remarks briefly that it is difficult to say anything about the proclamation, except that it appears to be dictated by military motives and that it will create a most unpleasant situation for the upholders in Poland of the Russian "orientation," those, that is, who have looked to Russia as the direction from which the hopes of their country are most likely to receive the beginnings of fulfilment. But Mr. Szebeko, member of the Council of the Empire, goes further and lays the responsibility for the present situation, and for the fratricidal war that may develop from it between Poles in the Russian army and Poles from Russian Poland taken to serve in the German army, on the Russian Government and on the present Premier. He states as a fact that Mr. Sazonov resigned because of his dissatisfaction with Mr. Stürmer's policy upon the Polish question, and that after trying in vain to get an Act accepted that would have contented the Polish leaders and cleared the atmosphere, laden as it has been with storm clouds throughout the year, he left the Government. Other reasons, too, may have been at work, and the actual occasion of Mr. Sazonov's resignation is understood to have been different, but what Mr. Szebeko now says was freely said at the time and is probably true. The

only remedy, Mr. Szebeko thinks, for the dangerous situation that has been allowed to arise would be the publication, on behalf of Russia and her Allies, with pointed emphasis on the latter, of a clear statement as to the proposed constitution of the future Polish state.

One of those interviewed on this vital question says that, although everyone has been talking of something of the sort for a long time, the German act took him entirely by surprise. As usual there has been plenty of talk on our side—and the Germans have acted. What they have done now has doubtless, as the authorities quoted above point out, a double motive ; firstly, they want to create some show of legality before pressing Poles from Russian Poland into their army ; secondly, they have to create a buffer of sympathy with themselves or antipathy against the Russians wherewith to hold up the pressure from the east towards the close of the war. But if the actual step taken by the enemy and the moment of it was unforeseen, the situation has clearly been developing in this direction for a considerable time past. As early as the beginning of summer the Polish leaders were much exercised by the news received of the political progress made by the Germans in Poland, and feared that when the Russian arms were victoriously carried back across the Vistula they would cease to

be regarded as those of liberators by people of not sufficiently advanced political training to appreciate the underlying reasons for the privileges granted them by their German governors. Not long since a paper was read at a political club at Petrograd on the Polish question, when a Pole present put a damper on the subsequent discussion by remarking that since the proclamation of the Grand Duke Nicolas nothing had been done, and that the Polish question was at the moment being settled in Poland. In fact, the Germans have gone a long way towards satisfying the agitations of Poles as far as the internal life of the country goes. There is a Polish University in Warsaw, there are Polish courts and Polish schools, the Polish language and Polish customs are everywhere encouraged, and in Warsaw there have been elaborate Polish national demonstrations under the direct patronage of the German Governor, Von Beseler. In this benign atmosphere the German tyranny and persecution of everything Polish in Posen may well fall into oblivion. True, the matter of the Polish legions in Austria does not seem to have been handled with conspicuous success, but, as was found in the Russian Army when something of the same sort was attempted, this is an experiment fraught with difficulty.

Now it may well be that a mistake was made in

not, within a reasonable time after the Grand Duke's proclamation, and during the palmy days of the war on the Bzura and the Rawka, publishing the intentions of the Russian Government on the future of Poland. Because this was not done, however, it does not follow that the motives for not doing it were altogether pernicious. Many Russians, believers in the sincerity of the proclamation and eager that Poland should have real autonomy, thought that while active military operations were going on it was not opportune to enter upon a detailed consideration of the legal steps that should define and assure it; and to have done so would undoubtedly have been to distract the attention of statesmen and administrators from the sole object which should have engrossed them—the prosecution of the war. Any attempt to put into motion an autonomous administration with the front fifty miles west of Warsaw would probably, when the cumbersome movements and infinite tentacles of the Russian bureaucratic machine are considered, have had an even more disintegrating effect. The flood of ink now let loose is a measure of what might have been expected had contrary counsels prevailed.

It may be objected that what the Germans have done could have been done on the side of the Allies. There is, however, this difference in the situation, that in setting up a new kingdom of Poland, the

Germans are dealing with foreign land of which they are in occupation. We learn that German public opinion is not wholly favourable to the manner and policy of the proclamation. But the German Government can afford to disregard German opinion about Russian Poland just as it can disregard the dissatisfaction of Poles as expressed by the Rector of the University of Warsaw at the disappointingly partial scope of the measures promised to be put in force. If it were a question of Posen, or Silesia, the German Government could not maintain so comfortable an attitude. The Russian situation, on the other hand, is much what would be that of Germany were she called upon to set up autonomy in Posen : with the best will in the world Russia must tread warily, and has a long and thorny path before her. Not even with this considerable advantage have the German statesmen found their task easy. It is evident that there have been many abortive attempts to find a wider basis for their policy, and they have only succeeded in maintaining a scheme by strictly confining it to Russian Poland. They have, in fact, partially solved their problem by excluding from it all the refractory elements.

On the side of Russia and her Allies such a simple method is inadmissible. Now or later they will have to find a formula covering the whole

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question of Poland ; and to leave out of present consideration many hard questions that will call for answer, there is one which, after insistently presenting itself time and again for inspection, now resolutely refuses to be put back into the box. This is the fundamental question of geographic delimitation. "There is no real Poland," says Mr. Lednicki, "without Galicia, Silesia, and Posen." In this he is supported by Mr. Szebeko, who will probably, he himself says, be entrusted with the task of presenting the Polish view to the Russian Government, as well, indeed, as by every other prominent leader of Polish public opinion. And Mr. Szebeko demands for this problem the attention and co-operation of the Allies.

In maps of Poland as it was, the territory claimed forms roughly a square from north-east of Vitebsk to west of Danzig, and embraces Breslau and Cracow on the west, Mogilov and Kiev on the east, Lvov and Tarnopol on the south. The reintegration in a new kingdom of Poland of the eastern strip with Vitebsk, Mogilov and Kiev, belongs evidently to the realm of dreams and need not be considered ; the rest is of serious moment. When the military strength of Germany has been blasted away and the map of Europe is carved anew, the future of Silesia and Posen must be one for the general council of the Allied Powers, and it will be for them to consider

whether by cutting away from Germany the whole of Silesia, containing, as it does, a large proportion of Germans, they will be paving the way towards a stable peace or will thereby rather create a new Alsatian problem in the East of Europe. Posnania, more definitely Polish, the cradle, it is called, of Polish civilisation more hardly treated, and not Germanised by the brutal thoroughness of the Expropriation Laws and their like, may present less trouble. The question of Danzig, however, is sure to give rise to difficulty if insisted upon by the Poles, and so far back as the spring of 1915 aroused spirited reproach from some leaders of the Polish National Democratic Party against the part they declared to be played by Great Britain in blocking the approach of Poland to the sea. "No Pole," repeats Mr. Lednicki in a separate article, "will be satisfied by a Polish State that does not take in Galicia, Silesia, and the principality of Posen, a Polish State without Danzig, without the mouth of the Vistula, without a way out to the sea." But far more urgent at the present moment than Danzig is the problem of Galicia's future, and at the same time it is one less within the competence of the Western Allies.

Polish writers and politicians claim Galicia as part of Poland. They have never made a secret of this. No Russian I have ever met admits their

claim. The Polish claim is founded upon their historical possession before it fell into the seething pot of the Austrian Empire, and upon the preponderance of Poles among the town population. The Russian view has for its justification that still earlier in history the land was Russian before ever it became Polish, and that the bulk of the peasantry is Ruthenian, that is, Russian at one remove. The figures of the population taken from a recent Polish guidebook are—40 per cent. Polish, 40 per cent. Ruthenian, and 20 per cent. Jewish, and it needs only a very slight acquaintance with Galicia to see that the town and the rural population belong in the main to different nationalities. Therefore, if the principle of nationality were to be applied, it would be hard to say to which of its neighbours Galicia should be attached, save that it can never again be attached to Hungary, from which it is separated by mountains of rock and national hatred. The Ruthenians, who were the advance guard of the Little Russians, pushed up against the Carpathian Mountains, are, in fact, as much Russian as their brothers who stayed within the boundaries of Volynia and Podolia. They speak the same language, they wear the same clothes, they have the same high, broad foreheads and little tip-tilted noses ; they are the same peasants, tillers of the same rich, black soil. By religion they belong to the

Uniate Greek Church, but now many of them have become Orthodox, like a colony of Ruthenians who emigrated not many years since to Canada, to the indignation of the local Roman Catholic authorities. They belong so much to the land of Galicia and the land to them, that, in ordinary parlance, they are often simply called "Galicians," a term which would never be applied without qualification to the Poles or Jews of that country.

Among the Ruthenians are not only peasants, but also a substantial educated class. In Galicia they are divided politically. The majority are the so-called Ukrainophils, supported by Austria-Hungary, who cherished the vain hope of a separate Little Russian state being set up under the auspices of the Emperor Francis Joseph, and even carried on their propaganda in the Russian Ukraine itself. The Russophile minority, as is only natural, have always turned towards Russia as to their true mother-country, and kept alive the spirit of Russia among their people. Their attitude was held a danger to the State; the Russian alphabet was forbidden, all Russian tendencies persecuted, those found in possession of Pushkin's poems were sent to prison by the active Austrian police. Therefore, when, in the autumn of 1914, General Brusilov and Radko Dimitriev drove the Austrians through Lvov and to the outer hills of the Carpathians, their

troops were hailed by thousands of Ruthenians as saviours and as brothers. Every Russian who set his foot upon Galician ground felt that he was helping to reclaim a part—a very little part, but yet a part—of Russia's soul from the hated domination of the Teuton. The compact of welcome and brotherly friendship then made has since been sealed by suffering. Hardly a clod of Galician earth is there that has not been hallowed by the shedding of Russian blood. And though the suffering of the Galician people has been great, through it still shines the hope of a future life of peace under the sheltering arm of their great mother Russia. They had much that Russia cannot give them: good administration, beautiful roads, agricultural colleges, pretty things in the towns from Vienna, neat books from America; but their souls sighed for the spirit of Russia and without it will not be at rest.

The same must be said of the big Ruthenian fragment in Hungary. The persecution of these Ruthenians is very brutal, and the Magyars have been aided by Rome. They have been allowed to introduce the Magyar language in the Ruthene Uniate Church and to expel its Slavonic liturgy.

Here, then, is a point of acute difficulty in a pronouncement by the Russian Government on the Polish question. The Ruthenians welcomed

the Russian arms, suffered for them, died in thousands for their movement of loyalty towards Russia. The Poles and Jews of Galicia were not inspired by the same feelings. Among the Poles the more far-sighted political leaders indeed accepted and welcomed the Russian conquest as the only means by which they could hope that Galician Poland might be rejoined to the greater part of their country; but the rank and file of the bourgeois population were too comfortable under Austrian rule to desire any change. Their province enjoyed practical autonomy, and within it they ruled the roost. Without displaying actual hostility towards the Russians, it was nevertheless clear that their sympathies were not with the conquerors. Nor must it be forgotten that the Russians were conquerors, and have been busy all this summer again driving back the Austrians. They won Galicia by the sword. A very typically Russian administration was set up in Lvov. The Emperor himself made a special tour through the province, and gave a diamond-mounted sword to the Grand Duke Nicolas in memory of his conquest. When the day of settlement comes, these things will not, and perhaps ought not, to be forgotten. Possibly some rational partition of Galicia can be devised, leaving the west and Cracow, Polish beyond all question, to the nation of which it is the ancient capital, and

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giving the east and south to Russia. But prophecy is useless. I am merely concerned here to point to the existence of a grave difficulty. The Poles say they will not be satisfied with anything short of Galicia. The Russians believe that Poland has no right to Galicia, and feel it to be a part of Russia. It is significant that, in the course of a lengthy interview, Mr. V. A. Maklakov, one of the chief Russian progressive politicians (not to be confused with his brother, a former reactionary Minister of the Interior) while emphasising the past faults of Russian policy towards the Poles and the necessity that Poland should be an autonomous State, makes no reference at all to Galicia. In view of these facts it would not seem easy for a Russian proclamation on the future constitution of Poland to satisfy the hopes or assuage the fears of the chief contending parties.

As if expressly to point a finger of warning for those who believe in easy solutions, the same papers bring the strange news that the police have searched the rooms of Mr. Grabski, President of the Central Citizens' Committee (of the Government of the Kingdom of Poland) at Petrograd, and have seized his documents. The fact that such an incident should have taken place shows the bitterness of the Polish situation. The Poles feel themselves to be one people, whether under Russia, Germany, or Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, they are expected in

Russia to be loyal against their brothers among the enemy ; in Austria and Germany they are bound to fight against the Slav. During the terrible days of the great retreat, the loyalty of the Russian Poles was terribly tested, the more because each step backward taken by the Russian Army raised the hopes of the Austrian Poles that the liberation of their country might come from their side. A vain hope, indeed, as anyone who had considered the history of Austria might have known. From Germany, with her rod of iron, no one was rash enough to look for a liberating movement. Alone in Russia could hope be placed, and Russia had spoken through the Grand Duke Nicolas the word of freedom which had set Russia and all the world aflame. The Poles undoubtedly hoped for an earlier fulfilment of their national longing, and perhaps, without thinking of the practical difficulties, were deeply disappointed that nothing was done to put the Grand Duke's promise of freedom into practice. And this disappointment must have been the greater because it was exasperated by the repeated raising of expectation that immediate measures would be taken. In the last days before the evacuation of Warsaw, Mr. Goremykin, then Prime Minister, gave an assurance that a fundamental law expressing the promised autonomy was being worked out and would be published. No such law was published, and on other

occasions hope was raised only to be equally disappointed. What makes the Polish position one of exceptional difficulty and gives to many utterances of the Polish leaders a tinge of bitterness, even of despair, is not the length of time that hope has been deferred, or the internal difficulties that confront them, but the fear that influences exist which if they gained the upper hand would annul the Grand Duke's proclamation, or at best end in such a whittling away of it that only a dead and fruitless stick would remain in place of the splendid young tree that imagination foresaw. It is this fear that makes the Poles now lay special emphasis on the connection of all the Allies with the Polish problem. It is impossible not to sympathise deeply with them. It is needless to repeat that the British public joins in their expectation of the fulfilment of the Grand Duke's words. It is elementary statesmanship that without a settlement of the Polish problem no peace can prevail in Europe after the war. It is essential that the Poles should believe that it will be honestly and well settled. But it is useless to disguise that the problem is a hard one, and that the settlement cannot be such as will fully satisfy everyone. This is of the essence of political settlements under given circumstances, a truism that is in danger of being forgotten, at all events on this side of the world.

“PEACE WITHOUT ANNEXATIONS OR
INDEMNITIES ”

A LETTER FROM PETROGRAD IN JUNE¹

“YOU know—we all know—that the country is on the verge of ruin, that our army hardly exists, that it could not possibly advance, that the immediate future of Russia is black: well, you must realise that the present situation is ten times worse than the worst that you imagine, and then the picture will not be black enough.” These words were spoken by a Russian officer, of between thirty and forty years, by rank a Captain in one of the technical services, a Knight of St. George, who has been at the Front for two and a half years, at a small gathering of representatives of various public Societies on the 29th of May, 1917, and at the time there was much to justify them. In fact, from the first week after the revolution the situation became almost steadily worse. True, Russia has looked civil war in the face, and the parties responsible for bringing her there did not like the sight. The four regiments which turned in the 3rd of May to

¹ *The Nineteenth Century and After.* Nov., 1917.

threaten the Government, and those which turned out later to defend it, were fortunately persuaded to go home before the collision occurred that might have been fatal. Save for a few shots next day, half a dozen killed, and a few dozen trampled on, no harm was done. The guilty drew back, but only to continue underground the policy that they did not venture openly to champion. Excessive attention has been paid to the leader of the "Bolsheviks" or Maximalists among the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, Lenin. His return to Russia through Germany was a theatrical demonstration of the Teutonism in Socialist circles in Petrograd and his influence is considerable; but had it been met by sincerity among those who profess to stand apart from his platform, he would not have accomplished much. What has done most harm has been the unexpressed support given to the Lenin agitation by the acts of those who pose as his opponents, and it is principally owing to this that, after a temporary or superficial improvement, the discipline of the army suffered a terrible decline. One section indeed among the Socialists, remaining staunch to its patriotism, has unwaveringly held aloft the banner of rectitude: this is the party of Plehanov, among which also the famous revolutionaries, Vera Zasulich and Deutsch, may be counted. For this Plehanov is openly assailed as a

bourgeois and an imperialist in company with Emile Vandervelde, Gustave Hervé and Will Thorne. “Capitalist,” “imperialist” and “bourgeois” have indeed, as the words are now used, ceased to have any real meaning and have become mere terms of abuse. Against the Plehanov party, whose admirably edited paper *Unity* (Edinstvo) does daily battle for the cause of Russia and her allies, are ranged the Leninites, various other factions of the Socialist party, Maxim Gorky and his friends, and the chief influence of the Council of Workmen’s and Soldiers’ Deputies in their official organ, the *News* of the Council. That this is not the ostensible policy of the Council does not alter the fact.

From the moment of its inception the managers of the Council pursued the line of destroying all confidence in the Liberal leaders of the nation by whom its social forces were organised for the purpose of combating the Germans within and without the realm, who attacked and overthrew Stürmer and Sukhomlinov, and without whose ardent and patriotic work during the days of the revolution Russia would have been split by the internecine feuds of different parties struggling for power. The Council, child of that Council which organised the great general strike of 1905, was not, it must be noted, in any sense a constitutionally

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elected body. In 1905 it was a revolutionary group, and in 1917 it made its appearance in the same guise. But there was this difference. In 1905 action could only be taken by revolutionary means : when the Council was now re-born the Duma had already taken control of the situation, and it was not against the autocracy but against the influence of the Duma that the Council directed its revolutionary aims. The excuse offered that the Fourth Duma, elected on a restricted and partial franchise, did not truly represent Russia, is too flimsy to bear inspection ; for the Duma, by determined opposition to the Court and by its efforts in the prosecution of the War, had long proved its devotion to the popular cause. Every thinking patriot could see that the authority of the Duma required to be strengthened, not weakened, and its life lengthened ; that under the influence of the revolution it must inevitably go forward under a more democratic banner ; and that at the worst but a few months' delay would bring the Constituent Assembly and a new franchise. In these circumstances, the Workmen's Council set to work to make effective action by the Duma impossible ; Steklov (whose real name is Nahamkis), Skobelev, and others, in their innumerable speeches to the masses of soldiers who thronged to the Duma, bent all their energies to arouse in their hearers a sense that only the revolu-

tion was of importance, that only the soldiers and the workmen had achieved it, and that everyone else was a bourgeois or a capitalist pursuing the most vulgarly selfish aims. Rodzianko was thus spitefully assailed ; but it is needless to give a list of names. The tendency was general and persistent. The soldiers, in whom the sense of discipline, shaken by the furious events in the streets, was almost completely uprooted by the Council's Order No. 1, were a blank page for its leaders to write on, and were naturally incapable of distinguishing between a despotic body like the Council, self-elected in the beginning, or elected by an infinitesimal fraction of the people, and afterwards collecting round itself the authority of other committees taught that they had no one else to whom to turn, and an assembly of true representatives of the nation. The Temporary Government chosen by the Duma was to work exclusively "under the control" of the Council, and to have power only "so far as and no further than" it deserved the confidence of revolutionary Russia, of which the test was to be applied by the Council. Nobody knowing these facts and not determined to be deceived could expect that the Government would be able satisfactorily to fulfil its first duty towards the nation, that is, to govern. When the Petrograd Council obtained from a general assembly of all the Councils of Workmen's and

Soldiers' Deputies throughout Russia a commission to represent them until the meeting of the Constituent Assembly and to keep watch over the Government, it was only the outward ratification of an already existing state of affairs. Observers at a distance who, remembering the former importance of Moscow and the immense proportion of peasants to the total of the nation, believe that Petrograd has not the decisive voice in Russia are mistaken. Moscow has sunk to the position of a large provincial town, where the first question is "What do they think in Petrograd?" In so far as anyone wields power in Russia, the power is in the hands of the Petrograd Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies.

The two points of vital importance for the Government were inevitably the War and, depending from it, foreign policy. The two men in the Government best known as political leaders of ability and experience, as resolute patriots, were Guchkov, the Minister of War, and Miliukov at the Foreign Office. On them, therefore, the attack of the enemies of the Government was concentrated. Guchkov's position was made difficult from the first, and in spite of concessions on his part rapidly became impossible. When he went to inspect the Western Front, the Commander-in-Chief, General Gourko, found it necessary to recommend him to

the soldiers as having fought against England in the Boer War; for this proved his democratic principles. When he went to the South-Western Front, he shook hands at the Staff at Kiev with all the soldiers, but only bowed to the Generals, and pursued a similar policy in visiting the chief military hospital. But no outward obeisance could avail. Guchkov, himself an ex-hussar, who has seen service in four campaigns, who has given fully of his strength and energy to the army during the present War, and understands the organization of war, was not the man for the Council. Every step he took was supervised, his orders questioned or ignored, his authority set at nought, and on the 14th of May he resigned, giving his reasons with complete frankness. It was inevitable that Miliukov should follow him. The two belong to different parties and were political opponents before the War; but now they both belonged to the party that aimed at efficiency. The same charge lay against Miliukov as against Guchkov: he wished to win the War. He refused to attempt to juggle the Allies into a situation where doing lip service to the cause of the War they risked bartering away for the fiction of Russia's support the reality of what they were fighting for. For this was, if not the object of the Council, at all events the logical effect of its policy.

The first stage of the revolution came to an end

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when the ex-Emperor was confined to Tsarskoe Selo. The second was accomplished when the formula "Peace without annexations or indemnities" broke up the Government and drove it, by forcing on it the choice between open anarchy and a coalition, still more completely under the power of the Council, which refused openly to accept power and responsibility.

Great efforts have been made both by the Allies and by patriotic Russians to interpret the formula as to renouncing annexations in the sense in which Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine, and indemnities in the sense of the German indemnity levied on France after the war of 1870. But this is not the meaning of the Workmen's Council. A leading article in the official *News* of the Council on the 27th of May quotes the following phrase from an English paper :

"Public opinion in Russia, so far as it is expressed in the views of the revolutionary leaders, is entirely inclined towards the same understanding of the objects of the War on which the Western Allies take up their position."

The *News* continues :

"You deceive yourselves, gentlemen ! Or rather, you vainly try to deceive your peoples concerning the real policy of the Russian revolution. The Russian revolution will not sacrifice one soldier to

help you to set right ‘historical injustices’ accomplished against you. And what about the historical injustices accomplished by you? Your force used on Ireland, India, Egypt, the numberless peoples inhabiting every continent.”

Let the “Allies” [inverted commas in the article] clearly understand :

“No seizure of lands, no indemnification. If after this it [the Temporary Government] decides on an advance, it will be in the firm belief that the Governments of the nations ‘allied’ with us stand on the same platform.”

This was followed on the 29th of May by a leading article entitled “Without Annexations,” in which “the direct sense” of the word is explained as “the seizure by force of territory in the present—and only in the present!—War.” The article continues :

“We want peace. We want it as quickly as possible. . . . ‘Annexation’ means the forcible seizure of territory which was on the day of the declaration of war in the power of another State. ‘Without annexations’ means not one drop of the people’s blood for such seizure! This is clear and definite. Only he will not understand it, who wishes not to understand.”

On the following day the first leading article in the *News* of the Council declared :

“An impression may be created as though an

offensive [on the part of the army] were the principal task of the new Temporary Government and the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies. . . . But such an impression is a profound error. It is entirely untrue that we are organising an offensive at the Front."

Further :

"The revolutionary army cannot take the offensive, if every soldier in its ranks is not firmly convinced that his exploits and sacrifices really serve the cause of freedom and of the revolution and not the enrichment of the robbers of international capital. For an offensive to be possible on our Front, an active foreign policy is imperative, which should set aside all possibility of error as to the aims and character of the present War."

"Peace without annexations or indemnities" was not a Russian invention. It came to Russia from the West and in the mouths of Scheidemann and his fellow-Socialists of Teuton breed meant the policy lately endorsed by *Vorwärts*, that Germany would never give up Alsace-Lorraine, or Austria Bosnia-Herzegovina ; and doubtless that Belgium and Serbia should not receive compensation for the wrong done them unless as part of a new bargain the price of which should be their acceptance of Hohenzollern-Hapsburg tutelage. In the mouths of the Petrograd Council it means, as their own declarations show, precisely the same. Their idea of "the aims and character of the present War" was

further clearly expressed in the front page editorial of the *News* on the 9th of May, an article which deserves particular attention. “The Struggle for Peace” it is headed.

“Three years of a war criminally contrived by international robbers have filled to overflowing the cup of popular patience. How much blood, how much woe, how many tears? Strength does not suffice longer to bear this outrage on humanity. And if at moments the burden of blood and tears threaten to crush us, who are far from the Front, what must it be to those soldiers who live from day to day waiting on the whistle of bullets in the cold, in the damp, in the dirt, far from everything that is sweet and dear? Is it surprising that at times nerves cannot hold out, and that they want to throw everything to the devil and run home, without looking back, to their own corner? Is it surprising that a spirit thus spreads ready to take shape in the cry: Peace at any price? Separate peace, or not separate peace, but at once, to-day!”

Is it surprising, it can only be echoed, that within a week from this Guchkov resigned?

The Council is against war to a victorious conclusion; it is therefore for peace without victory, that is, for a peace which will not be a defeat for Germany. But the ideas of the Council do not stop short here. They aim at no less than a complete subversion of the existing order in the nations

allied to Russia, and their propagators regard themselves as torch-bearers to the whole world.

“ We will not [says a pronouncement of the Council’s International Department on the 2nd of June concerning English affairs] make illusions for ourselves : the democratic flood mounts, but it has not yet reached the primary stage of its growth. Weeks and months will probably elapse before the flood can really overflow the strongholds of reaction and turn England to freedom within and peace without.”

England is warned betimes. A glance at the position of Kerensky, the new Minister of War, shows how deeply the Council is committed to its policy.

When the Black Sea Fleet passed a resolution that “ The watchword ‘ Peace for the whole world ’ is in the first place actively threatened by German militarism, therefore we must exert all our strength together with the peoples allied to us for the struggle against it,” the Council’s organ editorially commented (June 6) :

“ But it is also true that this watchword is no less threatened by the militarism of the governing classes in the countries allied to us. Revolutionary democratic Russia will betray itself into self-deception and become a powerful weapon in the hands of the ‘ allied ’ imperialists if it forgets this. We are bound to support our brothers, the workmen and peasants, in allied countries. And only when our

joint friendly force succeeds in compelling the allied Governments to renounce great imperialist aims, only then will it be possible to attain in full measure the ‘ exertion of all our strength,’ if the German people then continues to remain in complete subjection to its imperialist Government and Germany does not wish to conclude peace.

“ Really fruitful results [says another leader in the same issue] can only be given by another conference—a conference in which every group that comes to it will from the very beginning feel itself one of the detachments of the international army of labour, collected to undertake a common business with common forces.”

In other words, before the British nation feels and acts as if it were animated by the same aims as its enemies, the Council will give no countenance to the prosecution of the War ; and no amount of resolutions and protestations against a separate peace, by which the Council tries to save its face before the world, can minimise the force of its teaching in the minds of the ignorant Russian soldiery.

Kerensky is ¹ Assistant President of the Council. He is a much-loved man, widely respected at the Bar for modesty and high ideals. He is responsible to the Council. As War Minister his most decisive act so far has been an order on the 25th of May concerning preparations for a general offensive.

¹ That is, was in June.

“ Standing where we are,” he wrote, “ we can never drive out the foe. Forwards, for freedom for the land and the will of the people ! ” Such is the antagonism to the idea underlying this order, that it was actually never printed in the *News* of the Council and was only distantly referred to in the hostile leader of May 30, quoted above. And if this is the attitude of the Council in its official capacity towards the War and the Allies, it can easily be understood that individual members and supporters go much further. Chernov, one of the Socialists in the Coalition formed after Miliukov’s resignation, spoke so openly against an offensive at a meeting of the Peasants’ Assembly, that the other members of the Government asked for an explanation, which, being furnished, was to the effect that his speech had not been correctly reported, but that in any case he spoke as a civilian. Skobelev, another Socialist Minister, publicly states that his standpoint is that of Robert Grimm, who teaches that any Socialist defending his country is a traitor to himself. Examples could easily be multiplied. It is sufficient to say that the Russian army and people were industriously taught during the space of three months by the leaders of the Council that the War was manufactured by capitalists—but chiefly by those in France and England—and must be stopped as soon as possible without reference to the acts

that led up to and began it on the part of Germany, to her violation of international rights during it, or to the European hegemony to achieve which is her aim in it. Even Kerensky so far adopts this view that in a speech to the sailors at Helsingfors he declared that Russia does not wish to be “a State like England or Germany.” In order to gain credence the Socialist leaders constantly profess that the revolution is in danger of being crushed by a reactionary party. “Around Miliukov,” wrote the *News* of the Council on the 25th of May, “there is already going forward the organization of all the counter-revolutionary forces of the Imperialist bourgeoisie.” In the same number of the *News* a violent attack was printed on Purishkevich, to whose words and deeds the possibility of the revolution was in no small degree due, entitled “Counter-Revolutionary Agitation in the Army,” and falling on an open letter, in which Purishkevich exposed the Leninites, as an incitement to pogroms and “a public scandal to which it is time to put an end.” The fact is that there has been and is no counter-revolutionary party and that no one even dimly fosters the hope of restoring the old régime. But a reactionary movement was necessary to excuse the continued agitation of the Council itself, and a reaction was therefore invented.

The divisions of opinion since the revolution have

had the result of bringing into prominence antagonism to the Western Allies or partiality to Germany that lay relatively dormant before. Although indeed his attitude towards the War was well known among Russians, Maxim Gorky was placed in the spring of 1916 on the committee of the Anglo-Russian Society. The revolution gave him an opportunity to show his true colours, and his paper *Novaya Jizn* (New Life), of which the publication commenced on the 3rd of May, is notable for the persistency of its attacks and insinuations against England and France, or as they are called "the Anglo-French Coalition." In the fourth number Gorky himself wrote that the War was "a bloody nightmare," "the suicide of Europe"; "let us tell the bitter truth—we are all guilty of this crime, all and every one"; and in articles and parables Gorky has done everything in his power to prove the uselessness and wickedness of the War, and that it should be stopped. The same tendency is pursued almost every day in leading articles and by the principal contributors to the paper. One remarks that the question of compensating Belgium, Serbia, and Poland is conjoined by the English and the French with the question of the guilt of the War. "But in view of the difficulty and the sterility of deciding the question in such a form," the writer proposes that an international loan should be

raised for the purpose, to which those who have most profited by the War should most contribute. In another, attack is made on the supposed decline of freedom in England. "Cabinet autocracy," we read, "is turning so-called parliamentary government into the worst of tyrannies. . . . This downfall of English political liberty has been manifested in the most appalling fashion during the shameful War which our patriotic defenders shamelessly continue to give out to the uninstructed masses as a struggle 'for freedom and culture.'" Or again, an article "On Loyalty, Victory, and the Offensive" leads up to the conclusion that "an offensive without the Allies first assenting to the new peace platform would be a victory for Miliukov and a sacrifice of the interests of the country to the bourgeoisie policy of aggression." Or again, Gorky sympathetically prints a long letter to himself from the Bulgarian Ambassador at Berlin, known from of old as a strenuous pro-German agent, proposing an immediate armistice between Russia and Germany upon the terms that the forces of both nations should remain where they are, until such time as the Constituent Assembly in Russia decides as to the prolongation or otherwise of the War. As a final example may be taken the editorial comment on the 3rd of June on Ribot's speech, which is denounced as "a resolute refusal to adopt the peace

platform put forward by the Temporary Government under the immediate pressure of revolutionary democracy. . . . The word is with our Temporary Government. From our side also the question must be put no less clearly and resolutely. If peace cannot be attained with the assistance of M. Ribot, it must be attained against his will." And to enforce this, Gorky's paper is taking a prominent part in the agitation against Kerensky for having suggested the idea of an offensive.

Nor was Gorky, whose chief commercial interests are in Germany, the only member of the committee of the Anglo-Russian Society known to hold anti-war opinions, and this body's want of success in winning any measure of support among average otherwise uninterested Russians may have been partly due not only to its official godfathering, always suspicious in Russia, but also to the fact that side by side with genuine patriots some of its movers were drawn from a well-known literary circle in which the influence of Teutonic studies is profound and of long standing. Mereshkovsky, the novelist, also chose an early moment to cry that the War was the shame of human kind, that all alike were guilty of its outbreak, that the fine phrases used of it by the Allies were lies, and that those who insisted now on continuing it are the chief culprits. In such circles the fashionable catchwords have been

“the revolution will conquer the War” and “England must learn that the revolution is far more important than the War.” It will be wise if England scrutinises with some care Russian literary prophets who may arrive to boom the revolution, for behind the smile of friendship may lurk thoughts of enmity and treason.

To turn from such elevated spheres to the Leninites is to plunge into the abyss of prejudice, hatred, and crime. On the 30th of May *Pravda* (Truth) despairingly shrieks: “The English and the French bankers have through their agents—Sir Buchanan, Albert Thomas, Vandervelde and Co.—attained their end.” People have begun to talk in Russia of an offensive. It is (May 29).

“the clearly formulated powerful will of the proletariat and army of Russia to propose a general peace to all the warring Powers on the basis of the self-government of nations. Only he can be an ally of revolutionary Russia who wants this peace and refuses, in deed and not in word, to make use of the revolutionary army of Russia for the aims of imperialism.”

But this is not to be construed merely in the sense of the Council’s pronouncements. *Pravda* yearns for the liberation of Alsace-Lorraine, though not its return to France; but further also of Armenia (from Russia), Egypt, India, Ireland (from

England), Finland, Turkestan, Persia, the Ukraine (from Russia), Bosnia, Serbia, Poland, etc. Let all the troops be withdrawn from these countries and the political millennium will ensue. But in the meantime "peace without annexation," i.e. in this War, will do. Only the way to get it is not by the negotiations of Asquith, Ribot, Bethmann-Hollweg, Scheidemann, and Thomas, the lackeys of capitalistic grab, but by a world-wide proletarian revolution, starting with an "ultimatum" to the Allies. Though first of all detesting England, it is only fair to say that the rage of Lenin's party is directed against all ordered government. *Pravda* has been a steadily bitter opponent of the first Temporary Government, of the present Coalition Ministry, and demands that the Council should formally take all the power into its hands. Yet the probability is that should it do so *Pravda* would not cease to fume. Its trend is towards anarchy in every form. The Leninites were the first to seize private property in Petrograd, installing themselves in the beautiful house of Kshesinska, the dancer, from which it is alleged that 227,000 roubles' worth of furs have since disappeared. This was an example eagerly followed, and bands of anarchists have on several occasions seized and rifled private houses. It was the Leninites who formed the "Red Guard" of armed workmen responsible to their party alone.

They cry openly "Down with the War! Down with the bourgeoisie!" On the banners of the last contingent to arrive through Germany was inscribed "Long live Germany!" and members of the Council welcomed the new stalwarts, "Not one kopek for the new loan!" Nothing, in fact, that could make Russia strong or efficient. A meeting which collected 30,000 roubles for the defence of Adler, the Austrian Socialist, resolved that

"the English, German, and French capitalists, and ex-Socialists who have gone over to their side, are our foes, our class enemies. . . . Down with the 'mutual amnesty' of the Socialists who have fled over to the side of the bourgeoisie! Long live the best representatives of the Third International . . . who sit not in ministerial chairs, but in the convict prisons of Germany, Austria, England; Sweden."

It was the Leninites who shot into the unarmed crowd on the 4th of May, killing several soldiers. They organise innumerable small meetings at street corners, especially on Sundays, where are exposed the criminal aims of England and the harmlessness of Germany. The Leninite agitators often gain new converts, but at the very least succeed in absorbing endless attention and in wasting endless time. Whoever has seen the serried ranks they send to influence meetings, their faces of cruelty, spite, fanaticism, and venality, has seen a row of portraits

that might stand for members of the League before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. On the Council they are in a minority of 20–25 per cent., but on the executive committee of the Council they have a strength of not less than 30 per cent. They have great influence in the Baltic Fleet. Kerensky, once the idol of all the Socialists, is attacked as an oppressor of Finland, and as a false servant of the revolution for having even thought of an offensive. The declaration of the rights of soldiers issued by him on going to the War Office, so wide-reaching that, as Kerensky himself informed the Council on the 5th of June, “many of the higher command” would have resigned on account of it but for his order forbidding resignation, is actually represented as a disfranchisement of the soldiers. This propaganda has undoubtedly been enhanced by the work of numerous paid agents of the enemy, many probably already resident in Russia, but reinforced by others who swarmed across the unguarded frontier on the first days of the revolution. The general picture is given by the report of Admiral Kolchak, the gallant Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleet, published in the papers on the 27th of May, but written somewhat earlier. The position on the Front, he wrote, presents one general characteristic: after thirty-two months of war the army is weary, and the interest in the War and the

national duties imposed by it has declined, until the army is in a condition of absolute decomposition. There are detachments which still preserve discipline, but the greater part of the army offers the spectacle of a rabble of armed men, completely innocuous to the foe. Many detachments have renounced their military duties. In others there are absolutely no officers, and the whole of the command is merged in the rank and file, who take the direction upon themselves. The worst of all is the Baltic Fleet. Here discipline is non-existent. The relations between the officers and the crews are characterised by misunderstanding and mistrust. There is no connection between different units of the squadrons. In fine, considered as an armed force, the Baltic Fleet does not exist. If it met the German Fleet in a serious action, there could be but one issue. The operations in March on the French and English Front, continues Admiral Kolchak, saved the Russian army from immediate disaster. If it does not now come to its senses, nothing can save it. But the Admiral concludes that nothing will effect this, save a German advance, which would force the soldiers to fight and with the first Russian victory would give back the army its former strength.

It must not be thought that this is the report of a bitter or unsuccessful man. On the contrary,

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Admiral Kolchak enjoys in a peculiar degree the confidence of his men. It is the proud boast of the Black Sea Fleet that they have not had one case of desertion, and their Admiral has a few days since triumphantly resisted an attempt on the part of the Sebastopol Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies to destroy his authority. Orders given by him were refused to be obeyed, and the Commandant of the Port who tried to have them carried out was arrested. Admiral Kolchak promptly resigned. The sailors of the fleet, aghast at this, had the Commandant released, the malcontents suppressed, the orders carried out, and persuaded the Admiral to resume the command. Following his report the Black Sea Fleet sent a deputation¹ to Moscow and Petrograd with the message to the country that they would do their duty to the end: they trusted their officers, and every part of the fleet would instantly execute orders without question. Though yielding to none in their enthusiasm for the revolutionary ideals of freedom and justice, they coupled

¹ Under the leadership of Able-Seaman Batkin, now famous as an orator and a patriot. Batkin is a Jew. I only mention this to counter the suggestion sometimes made that the Russian Jews as a whole are against the war. Steklov-Nahamkis, a Jew who is despised for having three times changed his religion for political or social profit, has done great harm. Batkin, also a Jew, has done great good. Both have followers among their own race as well as among other Russian races, and on these great questions the Jews are perhaps not more united than the rest.

them with love of their country, and denouncing desertion and fraternisation with the enemy as treason, boldly announced their watchword “To attack is the best defence.” They were themselves attacked as partisans of Miliukov and as counter-revolutionaries, as not being genuine sailors, and the Baltic Fleet at Helsingfors retorted that they would do better to trust not their officers but the revolutionary sailors and soldiers.

On the 2nd of June were published the resolutions passed at a meeting of the First Detachment (Equipage) of the Baltic Fleet, in contrast to its more patriotic sister, the Second Detachment, prominent for its work in popularising the Liberty Loan and its support of loyal demonstrations; they demanded the formal transfer of all power to the Workmen’s, Soldiers’, and Peasants’ Deputies; the convention of a military congress of all forces at Cronstadt; the dismissal of General Alexeiev; the confiscation of State, Imperial, monastic, and privately owned land with all live and dead stock; the confiscation of all “bourgeois” printing offices and stocks of paper for the benefit of the revolutionary parties, to carry on a class war; the formal confiscation of Kshesinska’s house for the benefit of the Leninites; and the arrest of all persons “preaching the War to a victorious conclusion.” Four days earlier, Cronstadt, which ever since the

revolution has been virtually beyond the reach of the shadowy power of the Government, declared definitely that it did not recognise the Temporary Government, would only conduct business with the Council, and dismissed the Government's Commissioner, who had indeed been a negligible quantity from the first; and the triangular negotiations between the Council, the Government, and Cronstadt, with a view to "elucidating the situation," are still going on.

Apart from the general downfall of discipline and growth of insubordination, the disintegration of the army has been manifested in two ways: by desertion and by fraternisation with the enemy. It has been asserted over and over again that both have been stopped, only to be admitted later that they were continuing, and it seems certain that until a very recent date the proportions of neither had seriously diminished; perhaps they have even increased. At Kiev at the end of April it was estimated that there were between six and seven hundred thousand deserters from the South-Western Front, and as many as two millions taking all the Fronts together. Then, after repeated statements that the evil had been checked, on the 28th of May the Assistant Minister of War, Yakubovich, informed the delegates from the Front: "The Government by itself is impotent to struggle

with desertion. The putting down of this evil symptom depends entirely upon you. Desertion is weakening the Front.” The deserters not only weaken the Front, but exasperate the difficulties of transport, choking the trains and stations, preventing railway officials from carrying out their duties, and there have been serious street fights with bands of deserters in Kiev and other towns. At the same meeting of the delegates from the Front, the representative of the Russian army in France remarked “that the Generals at the Front were leading the Minister of War, Kerensky, into a mistake. ‘In no circumstances must we now undertake an offensive. By an offensive we should play into the hands of the French and English imperialists.’ . . . The speaker’s pronouncement was greeted by noisy applause,” although some dissent also was heard.

Fraternisation with the enemy, advocated from the first days of the revolution by the extreme Social Democrats and never abandoned by them, although it has since been frowned upon and officially denounced by the Council, has despite all the efforts of the saner and more patriotic soldiers attained astounding proportions. On the 22nd of May an informant of *Edinstvo*, Plehanov’s paper, wrote as follows :

“Fraternisation is a fact known to all. All the

committees—army, divisional, regimental, company—have expressed their most resolute censure of it. ‘We consider fraternisation treachery to our country,’ say the resolutions of all their meetings. They even go to the length of threatening to shoot on those who leave the trenches. This is in the committees.

“In fact things are quite different: fraternisation goes on and no one can hinder it. Only the artillery attempts to offer opposition, and has on this account drawn upon itself the fierce hatred of the infantry. Our advanced observers are always threatened with the bayonet. One observer with difficulty saved his life: they wanted to do for him because he had killed a German coming towards us. Two infantrymen were once among the Germans. In the evening they came back, naturally, drunk. During the night an Alsatian came over to us and told us what the two had done. They had given away all the company dispositions and pointed out where the machine-guns were. ‘Why don’t you attack us?’ they said to the Germans. ‘You could take us with your bare hands.’ The regimental committee arrested the pair. Soldiers came up from the trenches and told the committee that if they were not set free they would shoot the whole committee. In the companies they say: ‘We won’t fight, we’re tired. . . . The capitalists began the War, the War’s only useful to the capitalists, I’m not a capitalist, so I won’t fight.’

“Pacifism has gone to such a point that in one

battalion they said : ‘ We’ll pay the Germans a fifty milliard rouble indemnity, we’ll work for them all our lives, but we won’t fight, and we’ll get our own back on the artillery. . . . ’

“ The committee, I repeat, is one thing ; the company another. . . . Members of the committees are generally men of understanding, old soldiers, wounded ; they go beside themselves showing the necessity of the War for freedom’s sake, the harm of fraternisation, the necessity of discipline, etc., but they only reach one result—that of arousing a hostile attitude to themselves. Among us soldiers and officers in the artillery there is but one thought : at the end of the third year of war are we to finish ingloriously on a Prussian bayonet ? There is no army. Only one thought keeps us up ; why have not the regiments so far left the trenches and gone home, as they had every possibility of doing ? ”

Cases are in fact reported of officers having been murdered because they wished to punish fraternisers ; but this is hardly to be wondered at when General Gourko was taken to task in the *News* of the Council for his “ iron discipline ” because he supported a divisional General who attempted to prevent a soldier from wearing a fancy device of red ribbons on parade.

At the Council meeting on the 6th of June Kerensky said :

“ I have been asked why the Russian power does

not take measures against fraternisation. But we thought: let the army learn by experience what fraternisation is. It has cost us the loss of several batteries and of many valuable lives, but it has been a real lesson."

One regiment, Kerensky admitted, had actually concluded a form of peace with the Germans, and he did not attempt to affirm that fraternisation had really been stopped; when he was lately at Dvinsk, he begged General Danitov "immediately to take measures to stop this shameful state of things"; but since his speech to the Council news is received that a thousand men have been sent back to Dvinsk from the trenches poisoned by the Germans in the spirits they were given.

At the same time, drunkenness has reached such proportions in the army that it is classed as nearly as dangerous as desertion. The men make a decoction of wood-alcohol which has dreadful results. It is now not uncommon to see drunken soldiers in Petrograd; at the Front, to judge from an urgent order and appeal made by the Minister of War on the 25th of May, drunkenness is much worse; and at Cronstadt huge drunken crowds go roystering through the streets. Even worse almost as a symptom of the decline in morale than desertion or fraternisation, is the news published on the 7th of June in an order of the day by General Gourko that on one

sector of the Western Front the Russian soldiers have for two months been bartering away bread, sugar and soap to the Germans for cigars, watches and trinkets. This dreadful fact proves, says the order, "to what a point may go the disorganisation of the army at the Front, when every soldier considers himself at liberty on his own risk and conscience to enter into private agreement and negotiation with the enemy."

On the higher command the results of the general disorganisation have been grievous. General Kornilov, a fine Cossack leader, was forced by disobedience to his orders to give up the command of the Petrograd military area. General Russky resigned the command of the Northern Front, ostensibly and perhaps truly, from ill-health. General Lechitsky, one of the organisers of the victories of 1916, has resigned. General Evert, an unsympathetic personality and an unsuccessful General in attack, but a good disciplinarian, left for political reasons. Lastly, on the 8th of June, General Gourko was deprived with insult of the command of the Western Front for having said that in view of the licence accorded to the troops he could not be responsible for what took place. Worst of all, General Alexeiev has been hounded out of the chief command. In a speech to the officers he spoke of the policy of "peace without annexations or indem-

nities " as Utopian. Thereafter, although Kerensky said at Dvinsk that " in the free Russian army every opinion may be freely expressed " (reported in *Edinstvo*, June 8), General Alexeiev was a marked man. That he was an accomplished strategist, trusted by all ranks, a democrat by origin and conviction, that the army has not suffered defeat since he took the virtual command, that the absence of a military party to stand by the Emperor in the first moment of the revolution was largely due to his influence, could not save him for Russia. In a leader in the *News* of the Council on the 24th of May, sneeringly entitled " The Loquacious General," a rancorous stream of reprimand was poured on him, echoed with slightly greater decorum in Gorky's paper, and hardly surpassed in the organs of the Socialist advanced wing. The demand for General Alexeiev's removal was not to be withstood. When, in obedience to it, he resigned, Kerensky announced the fact at the Council meeting of June 4 in the following way: " About what Commander-in-Chief am I asked? Formerly General Alexeiev was Commander-in-Chief: now it is General Brusilov." The *News* of the Council characteristically comments:

" The democracy has once more received proof that its representatives in the Temporary Government watch over its interests and do not permit

their infringement. The army has once more received proof that discipline is a duty of the General in no less degree than it is that of the soldier."

The brilliant qualities of the new Commander-in-Chief are known to all ; it will be interesting to see how his belief in the offensive consorts with the Council's management.

In the first days of the revolution the enormous German concentration on the Dvinsk Front made for the belief that a great stroke would be made at Petrograd with its loot, its naval bases, its 80 per cent. of Russia's war factories, and many were they who expected the worst. But there were none who foresaw that the Russian army, shaken as it was, would sink to so low a level that the enemy could completely neglect it. Yet this is what has happened. The Germans treat their Eastern Front as a rest-cure for divisions battered to pieces on the West, and have flung all their fresh troops against the fighting Allies. An attack would save Russia, for the sterling qualities of the Russian soldier would be stung into renewed activity. But the Germans, who saw where their real chance lay before anybody else, will be too clever to make this mistake so long as the inaction of the Russian army is of importance to them. At present they can afford to despise it. Let no one think that among these facts so much as

one is unknown to them. Their information from Russia is earlier and fuller than that which reaches the latter's allies, and is not confined to public news such as is dealt with in this paper. Well indeed might the Staff Committee of the Caucasian Rifle Division write : "The army has fallen into a dreadful condition ; if complete disorganisation has not set in, at least it is very near." There are still many firm and warlike units in the army, and bands of volunteers have been formed to whom it is hoped that an opportunity to attack will be given. The attitude, too, of the Cossacks would not appear from the latest indications to be quite palatable to the Council. Nevertheless, educated soldiers, among them some who led the revolution, are often in a state bordering on despair. One, an extraordinarily brave man, who fought as a volunteer in the French artillery for the first nine months of the War and since as an infantryman and an automobilist on the Russian Front, lately went back to the Front as a deputy from his detachment in Petrograd. He returned, almost echoing Kerensky's words spoken a month ago : "I wish I had died in battle sooner than have seen what is going on now." Both naval and military officers are constantly asking if it is not possible for them to enter the British, French or American Services. They believe that their comrades murdered at Cronstadt, Helsingfors and

Revel were killed in accordance with lists drawn up by German agents. German money raised in America is believed to be at work in Cronstadt now. Save among the educated, those among the soldiers who take the matter to heart are few. A portion of the Kiev garrison has joined in the demand of various units in the Baltic Fleet that “Bloody Nicolas” (as we say “Bloody Mary”) should be sent to Cronstadt to join the officers kept there in the foulest imprisonment since the revolution, without trial or even accusation, despite the efforts of the Government to have them released; and the plutocrats who roll about in motor-cars of the Union of Zemstvos (in other words, the hard-worked officials of that admirable institution) should be sent into the trenches. An order published on the 9th of June directs the re-formation of four regiments at the Front that have refused *en masse* to obey orders. At Kazan, out of a draft of a thousand men for the Front, only three hundred made their appearance at roll-call.

As to the effect on the country, the Russian Press speaks freely of anarchy. If this were quite accurate there would be little occasion to say more. But things have not really gone to the point of anarchy, though they have gone near the line. The country has not completely lost its cohesion. The main facts are as follows. On the 2nd of June, A. J.

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Konavalov, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, resigned, giving as his reason :

“ that he is unable to remain at his post in view of his complete disagreement with the industrial policy which is now sought to be put in motion under the pressure of the Council of Workmen’s and Soldiers’ Deputies . . . [and] when the whole industrial system is going to ruin.”

He views “ sceptically the form of social-State control and the method of regulating production proposed by the Minister of Labour [Skobelev].” In the actual conditions of Russia, he concludes, such democratic experiments must result in enterprises being given over to less experienced control and disorganization will inevitably increase. Skobelev’s suggestion, as is well known, was to confiscate all the capital in the banks and for the workmen, or failing them, the State, to take over the whole of the profits of industrial enterprises. That these heroic measures will be carried out in their entirety is improbable, but it is known that a measure involving the sequestration of a considerable percentage of private capital in banks is being worked out, while the impossibility of resisting the demands of employees goes a good way towards attaining the latter result, even without, as sometimes happens, the employees simply taking possession of whole establishments.

In every industrial centre in Russia, few as these are in comparison with the Western world, the same process is going on. The workmen demand 50, 100, or 150 per cent. to be added to their former high wages, and shorter hours ; and if they do not get them, strike. Acute crises have already been caused in almost every important industry and worse convulsions are momentarily expected. To take a few examples : in Moscow, Petrograd, and at the Schlüsselburg mills there have been many cases of works seized by the hands. At Moscow in one mill of over five thousand looms all the managers and engineers have been driven away and the factory is running in charge of an under-foreman. In Petrograd all the office employees at over two hundred factories demanded a six-hour day and a minimum wage of 150 roubles a month ; and their demands have been acceded to, although in reality they will only do five or perhaps four hours' work. Street repairers in Petrograd now receive 150 roubles a month ; so do men at the doors of the savings bank, and these refuse to do anything but to stand and ostensibly keep watch. The waiters and hotel servants at Moscow, Kiev, and Sebastopol have struck, thereby inconveniencing thousands of persons engaged in war work. The peat-diggers on the Volga demand 1000 roubles a month, the barge labourers 75 roubles a day. In eighteen metal

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factories in the Donets district, with a joint capital of 195 million roubles and a declared dividend last year of 18 million roubles, the workmen have demanded an increase in wages amounting, according to Professor Sirinov, to 240 million roubles. If conditions demanded by the workmen are not agreed to, they appeal to the Government, which has no alternative—even if it wished—but to try to persuade the owners to agree, whatever it may cost them, in order that the economic life of the country may somehow be carried on. But that this can be for long in the present conditions is thought dubious. At the same time the workmen do not show any special degree of confidence in the Government; when Nekrasov, the Minister of Ways of Communication, went to Moscow to settle a railway dispute, the men, offended by something that he said, threatened “We won’t let him go from Moscow till he has taken his words back.”

The railways themselves are in a deplorable condition. From the 28th of April to the 28th of May 25 per cent. less work was done than in that month of last year. From the beginning of the year to the 28th of May 44,000 waggons, or 732,500 tons of coal, less than in the same period of 1916 were transported. The chief reason of this, says an official report, is the anarchy existing on the railways. On the slightest occasion all sorts of local unions and

committees interfere with the working of the lines and produce chaos. A further cause of trouble is the interference by soldiers with the railway servants, who have in districts so far removed from one another as Pskov, Kiev, and the Caucasian Railway, begged for protection from the armed force used upon them. Trains are compelled or forbidden to be run, or are run out of time or in wrong directions, with the result that accidents have taken place and the line is blocked for hours. The transport of provisions, wood, and raw materials is gravely curtailed. Moreover, the railway servants receive wages far inferior to those obtaining in factories, these being more or less decent only in the workshops, and a general railway strike at Petrograd or Moscow has only narrowly been averted.

Nor is the spirit of unrest confined to factories and transport. In every part of the country agrarian disorders take place. Without heed to the instructions of the Government that land must not be touched till a general settlement by the Constituent Assembly, the peasants, inspired by Socialist agitators from the towns, often take possession of the soil at once. Thus on the borders of the Petrograd Government the peasants have left to each owner of two thousand acres thirty acres and three cows, which they say is all one man can manage, and are only with difficulty and not always restrained

from burning the landlords' houses. Elsewhere, particularly in the Governments of Minsk and Mogilov, fires both of houses and woods have been common. Such agrarian "expropriation" or destruction on a large scale is general. Only where peasants already own the soil, as is largely the case in the Kazan Government, such Communistic ideas find little favour, and students from the University of Kazan sent to propagate them have been roughly handled, and some even killed by irate peasant proprietors.

In the towns also disorder is frequent. On the 23rd of May the Minister of Commerce and Industry appealed to the Prime Minister for help, being himself in receipt of numerous appeals from places all over the country where self-appointed Executive Committees, Committees of Social Safety, Committees of Popular Power were taking the government into their own hands. The Minister has no means, he says, of combating such destructive symptoms, and it is to be feared that those at the command of the Prime Minister are not much more substantial. Events of this description in the district of Schlüsselburg, only a few miles from Petrograd, were magnified into reports of "the Schlüsselburg Republic." The militia that has taken the place of the police is often unsatisfactory. Crimes of violence are not unusual in Petrograd, and

in Kiev the chief of the militia pathetically urged his men to do their duty, especially in view of one of them having robbed a member of the local Workmen's Council whom he held up with a revolver. Lynching, a sure sign of incompetence of the police, is making its appearance in various towns. The tale of disorder and violence runs from the confines of Poland to Serbia, and at Tsaritsin on the Volga the garrison calmly levied a contribution of a million and a half roubles on the town to increase their pay. To top all, in Petrograd on the 31st of May an elaborate procession of anarchists took place in the principal streets, adorned with black flags and the motto "Down with the militia!"

A peasant was talking on one of the Volga steamboats, whose time-table and course are now changed at the caprice of soldiers going on them. "We must get rid of this bourgeoisie. Down with the doctor! And with the schoolmaster! We must have our own people." "That's right," said another; "our committee made a resolution. Far too many bourgeoisie at the hospital. Three doctors, two trained nurses, and a midwife to boot! And what for? Look at the expense! So they decided to leave one doctor, and he's a good enough fellow, at the hospital; let him make his powders for himself, and his wife can help him." Then, turning to the reporter of this scene, "Yes, and you—anyone can

see that you're from the bourgeoisie, Mister. We don't want your annexations ! The landlords have got ground enough." "Let them go themselves and sit in the trenches ! The bourgeoisie shove us all on, and they sit in their gardens and play music !" "England, that's where the capitalists are. They want to pay for all sorts of annexations with our blood."

What will happen ? is the question on all lips. The answer most commonly given, not only in private, but even publicly now in the Press, is that a Dictator will arise, restore order with a strong hand, lead the army to glory, and Russia to prosperity. At present there seems no obvious candidate for the post, but should one be found the aspect of the scene might change for the good, even quicker than it has changed for the bad. If the mass of the Cossacks, five million warlike soldiers, are really becoming discontented, as it would seem that at least some are, the issue may lie in their hands. But whoever the Dictator might be he would be hailed as a saviour by almost all thinking men in Russia, and would find strong support among the officers and the very large class of invalided soldiers, who feel bitterly that their wounds may be in vain, as well as the Knights of St. George, a large body bound together by strong ties of honour and gallantry. There could be no

question of again setting up the old régime. That is gone for ever. Not only is the revolution an established fact, but it saved Russia from otherwise inevitable ruin and shame. It opened the gates of Eastern Europe to the roaring wind of liberty. No sane Englishman can wish it had not been. But the peculiar circumstances in which it took place have engendered new dangers. Russians are now looking on while the foundations of their liberty and prosperity are threatened with destruction by a band of extremists, and wrath at the spectacle gathers force. There would be no greater mistake than to suppose that educated Russians do not realise their position. With them it is not a question: "Will Russia fulfil her engagements to the Allies?" They say without mincing the matter: "Russia has betrayed the Allies. We shall never be able to hold up our heads again. All Europe will scorn us." It must be our part to prove them wrong in this. Russia and her Allies are suffering from one and the same cause. What we are going through now is not the result of some baseness inherent in the Russian nation, but a legacy from a despotism that betrayed its country and its friends, whose very shadow corrupted all it touched. It stank of bloodshed and cruelty. How should there be understanding of the causes of the War, when to educate the people was treated as a crime?

How should there be honour among the lower classes in the cities which the Government debased and used as instruments of debasement by every means in its power? We too have our responsibility for this. Our want of interest in the growth of reaction in Russia, the easy ear lent by our Press to the pretences of autocracy, our deafness to the warnings and complaints of the best representatives of Russia among us, our slavish attempt to identify a great nation with its despicable rulers, the mistake of giving to the democracy of Britain a narrow and snobbish representation; these are all points that have weighed in the balance against us, and should give us pause were we tempted to pass a hasty judgment.

The ultimate outcome for Russia is secure. The nation will yet rise to the height of its destiny. No country so rich, with a peasantry of such native intelligence and an educated class so talented, could suffer permanent arrest. Russia is like a blind man to whom sight has suddenly been given. He cannot distinguish colours, he cannot judge distance. He must learn by stumbling and fumbling. But much time is needed before Russia can make progress in the development of her material and mental gifts, and time during the War is her enemy. Germany is organised, she is not; Germany is united, Russia a prey to dissension and intrigues.

Germany acts; Russia talks. Yet when full allowance is made for this, it would be wrong to despair. The patriots, their eyes fixed with ardour and gratitude on the example of their Western Allies, cheered by the encouragement of the American Republic, are not yet at the end of their resources. Russia is a land of wonders, and the wonder of re-born patriotism may be nearer than any can know, ready to spring to life within her and blossom in a day into a rare and deathless flower.

THE DOG DAYS, 1917

THE Socialists have sown the wind ; Russia is reaping the whirlwind. The observations made in the paper entitled *Peace without Annexations or Contributions* are proved only too just by the events of the three months since it was written. The Russian army, under the teaching of the Socialist agents of Germany, has surrendered all its conquests and immense booty to the enemy ; the Ukrainian separatist movement, cherished by Austria, has taken strides towards fulfilment ; and the economic situation in Russia is such that the words "on the brink of ruin" have become a commonplace.

On Sunday, July 1, the Leninites, or Maximalists, after having got a patriotic demonstration by the Knights of St. George and the Women Volunteers on the previous Sunday prohibited by the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, held a great parade in Petrograd. It was announced that arms were not to be carried ; it was not a demonstration, but "a review of the political forces" of the party. The parade was attended by enormous numbers

and would have been a triumph for its organisers, had not the news come next day of the simultaneous offensive made by the Russian army on the south-western front in the direction of Stanislavov and Galich. The Leninites, despite their attempts to ignore an event that was delighting patriotic Russians, were deeply depressed. It was clear that for the moment they were nonplussed. The streets of Petrograd were filled with scowling soldiers, whispering evilly at street corners, while orderly citizens dared openly to rejoice. Their joy, however, was short lived. It soon was reported that the advance, carried out under the eloquent inspiration of Kerensky, had been made by the Czech-Slovak troops, recruited last year from among the Slav prisoners taken from the Austrians, by special bodies of volunteers, largely composed of officers, and by the cavalry; the infantry, it was said, had taken but little part in the movement, and the loss of life among the officers was enormous. General Brusilov, then Commander-in-Chief, has since stated that he agreed to the offensive because, whatever its result, he believed it would clear the desperately obscure situation on the front. It was indeed obvious either that a wave of military spirit, engendered by the Russian success, would spread throughout the army, or that a reaction of unknown proportions would follow.

Almost exactly a fortnight later the traitors played their trump card in Petrograd. Before dawn on July 16 the First Machine Gun Regiment took possession of the streets, and on the following day several thousand sailors from Cronstadt made an armed descent on the capital, being joined by other disaffected portions of the garrison and the extreme Socialist workmen. Had they been efficiently led and followed a well-laid plan, they might have completely upset the Government, and brought Russia to almost instant ruin. The revolt in Petrograd synchronised with a Cabinet crisis, itself ultimately due to the same causes, and with the disaster at Tarnopol; but in arms the Leninites proved cowardly and incompetent, and within an ace of success allowed themselves to be suppressed without serious difficulty, thus having put into the hands of their opponents the weapon without which the latter had been condemned to inactivity. Their treason was patent, and subsequent investigation, that could not now be prevented, established it beyond doubt. The terrorisation of Petrograd dispelled the mists that clouded the eyes of many believers in a "coalition" ministry, part of which was responsible to the Council with its policy of "peace without annexations or indemnities," and its avowed intention to set up the rule of the "proletariat" over the "capitalist" and the "bourgeois."

The timorousness of the Government, faced by ruffians in armoured cars in the streets, was not however reassuring. The Minister of Justice, to whom the *Novoe Vremya*, of which the offices were seized by the Leninites on July 17, appealed for protection, expected any minute to be arrested or even killed. He had no news of the rest of the Government. He had had warning beforehand of the outbreak, and had put the military authorities on their guard, and proposed to Prince Lvov to call a Cabinet meeting on the 17th to take measures to meet the situation, but the Prime Minister had replied that to leave home was to risk death every minute.¹ Even when action was taken, the Cossacks were at first allowed to go against the Leninites without proper supports and suffered unnecessary loss. Nevertheless, with the aid of the Cossacks and the "Junkers," the Cadets, that is, of the officers' military training college, order was re-established and some losses inflicted on the Cronstadt contingent, the only part of the rebels who showed any fight on meeting with serious opposition. And here it may be noted that to the Cossacks and the cadets exclusively is due the relative salvation of Russia. Not only in the capital but at the front the Cossacks have done the work of the

¹ *Vechernee Vremya*, Moscow, July 18th, by telephone from Petrograd.

nation. They have stemmed the rout, covered the retreat; when murderers and mutineers have had to be arrested, when disloyal regiments have had to be broken up, it is the Cossacks who have been called upon to do it. The cadets too have been un-sparing of their service, like all members of the brotherhood of officers in the Russian army. They have remained on guard at Government offices and the residences of ministers for days at a time; they were employed to search and break up the nests of Leninites, to put down the disorders at Nijny-Novgorod, where several of them were killed, to keep order at Kazan after the huge conflagration at the riverside powder factories, "in view of the hopelessness of the soldiers," among whose ranks, the Petrograd Telegraph Agency reports, "the fire at the factory caused malicious joy." While the attitude of the cadets is accepted as natural, that of the Cossacks has aroused joyful surprise. Once a weapon of the reactionary government, citizens were astonished to find them now as apt a tool in the hands of a Government become liberal and as stern in repressing revolutionaries against the new state as against the old. The explanation is that they have implanted in them a strong sense of discipline, and are better educated than the mass of Russian peasants. The Don territory is reputed the best farmed district of Russia, and it is note-

worthy that nearly all the Cossacks can read. By their restraint and steadiness, their inflexible loyalty, and the sense they have shown of the necessity for moderate counsels in allying themselves to the party of National Freedom (Miliukov's party)¹ for the purposes of the Constituent assembly. The Cossacks have proved themselves worthy to be free citizens of a free state, which without their services it is certain that Russia could not hope to become.

It was hardly known that the Leninites had been defeated in Petrograd before news came which showed that at the front their success had gone beyond expectation. On July 19, in face of a demonstration by the enemy, the 11th Army, which covered Tarnopol, broke up and dissolved into a fleeing mob. It is needless here to dwell upon the details of a rout which saw as incidents the sack by Russian soldiers of Tarnopol and Kaluszczy, and was described by General Kornilov, then in chief command on the south-western front and fresh from his own victorious onset there, in these memorable words: "On fields, that cannot even be called fields of battle, complete horror rules, and shame, and ignominy, such as the Russian army has never known since the first moment of its existence." In

¹ Formerly known as the Constitutional Democrats or Cadets, from K.D., the initial letters of the words Konstitutsionnaya Demokratiya.

the famous telegram sent on July 20 to Kerensky, in his newly-assumed office of Prime Minister, and to the Commander-in-Chief, General Kornilov demanded the instant re-establishment of the penalty of death for desertion and refusal to obey orders at the front, as "the only means of saving the army and using it for its real object—the defence of country and freedom," failing which he would immediately lay down his command.

When the Russian Sixth Grenadier Division left their positions and fled, no one was more surprised than the Germans. They were not planning a serious attack, and only took their cue from the suicidal flight of their enemy. That these events may be seen in their proper light, it must be insisted that the catastrophe at Tarnopol was due not to an offensive of the Germans, but to an offensive of the Russians themselves further south. That is to say, it was the answer of the traitor's party to the Russian success at Stanislavov. How that was considered by the Socialists may be seen from an article on July 10 in the *Social Democrat*, the Moscow organ of the Social Democratic Labour Party. "Indeed," says the writer, "our offensive at the present moment, when there are no facts to show its necessity, when the army is weakened by not knowing why it has been fighting for three years, constitutes a conscienceless prolongation of

the war, and in the final reckoning is a service to those same capitalistic forces that long to stifle the Russian revolution in the press of imperialism, as being the joyous harbinger of world-wide peace. . . . Not by an offensive can we proceed to the long-wished-for peace, but by opening negotiations for peace *and an immediate armistice on all fronts.*" It is such teaching as this that has rotted the heart of the once great Russian army. Following the publication of Order No. 1 of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies,¹ swarms of agitators were despatched to the front by the various Socialist parties and spread its poison far and wide. Officers were abused, distrusted, insulted, sometimes ill-treated and murdered; obedience was replaced by meetings. A verb "to meeting" was coined, and before orders were executed they were examined by "meeting strategists" at sittings that might run into two days. Small wonder that even when the soldiers' meeting voted to carry out the commands issued, the troops sometimes arrived too late on the scene of action. "At these meetings," said General Alexeiev at the Moscow Congress on August 27, "the great, healthy soul of the Russian soldier fell asleep or died. . . . The Army passed into the hands of the new power capable of fulfilling its duty and, side by side with the Allies, of leading long-

¹ See above: The Russian Revolution.

suffering Russia to an early end of the war. . . . It was turned into a sort of general camp of agitators. . . . With such an army to wage war, to dream of victory is impossible. In many detachments the greater part of the cavalry, the Cossacks, the artillery, and the engineers have preserved their military spirit and discipline. They have preserved their soul ; but, gentlemen, our infantry, with comparatively small exceptions, is up to the present non-existent. Then what are we to do ? Must we acknowledge ourselves vanquished and bow our heads before the proud, persistent foe ? Never ! ” At these words of the fine old soldier the whole audience sprang to its feet with wild applause, with the significant and shameful exception of the Socialist phalanx. If support be needed for General Alexeiev’s testimony, we may find it in a resolution, passed on July 25 under the immediate influence of the Tarnopol disgrace, at a joint meeting of the committee of the soldiers’ section of the Council with representatives of the regimental and battalion committees of the Petrograd garrison, that the “ deplorable events at the front are the result not only of the criminal agitation of the Maximalist and other irresponsible groups, but of the unenlightenment and want of organisation among the soldiery.” In themselves the latter defects were comparatively harmless : as the ground for the seed sown by

traitors their fertility was deadly. Nor must it be thought that the poison is eliminated from the army. General Alexeiev quoted a recent case where in one regiment ordered to attack there went forward 28 officers—over half of the whole—20 non-commissioned officers—one-sixteenth of their total number—and 2 soldiers— $\frac{1}{11\frac{1}{20}}$ th part of the regiment. In another instance on the western front, out of a whole division four hundred men advanced. On the northern front fraternisation, by the evidence of a resolution of the committee of the 12th Army, was going on at least till the middle of August. On the Roumanian front on August 27 two regiments, not attacked by the enemy, fled from the trenches and broke up. On the same day, speaking at Moscow, General Kornilov, now Commander-in-Chief of the whole army, named four colonels and three other officers, all murdered or seriously injured by their men in the course of the preceding fortnight. And there are many cases of officers and even of the heroic Women Volunteers being shot from behind by traitors. "The enemy," writes the war correspondent of the *Russkoe Slovo*, "now beats us in aviation owing to the want of machines consequent on the demoralisation of the factories; but the weaponless army of 1915 never showed such an example of cowardliness and such a triumph of the spirit of self-preservation."

No one publicly advocates immediate or separate peace. Kerensky at Moscow has solemnly cursed anyone who should do so. The Leninites are for the time weakened and their leaders dispersed. The death penalty, abolished by Kerensky and replaced by what he fondly hoped would be a sufficient substitute—a promise that deserters should be disfranchised and their names published—has been re-enacted and is in force at the front since July 27, and the Government has promised to satisfy General Kornilov's other demands for restoring discipline in the army. Nevertheless the situation remains obscure, the outlook lowering with storm-clouds. What is needed, a phrase repeated *ad nauseam*, is not words but deeds, and it is deeds, not words, that must be scrutinised. That a separate peace is rejected is well. But it is not enough. Even Lenin himself never publicly advocated an immediate cessation of the war for Russia alone. What his party did was to do everything to make its continuance impossible. And the question now confronting Russia is : are steps being taken to make its continuance possible ? General Kaledin, speaking at Moscow in the name of the Cossacks, demanded the abolition of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies with its branches throughout the country ; but the Council is strong and well entrenched. Its attention is devoted to defending

“ the conquests of the revolution ” and to spreading the belief that a counter-revolution is imminent ; and it is possible that a movement to upset the present state may be provoked by the Council’s policy. It will indeed be a marvel if there should be no attempt in that direction.¹ Three instances will suffice to make plain the character of the Council’s activities. On September 1 it passed a resolution protesting against the re-establishment of the death penalty at the front and demanding its abolition once more.² On August 2 it invited an Austrian prisoner of war, Otto Bauer, to one of its meetings, where he was welcomed by the Socialist members of the Government. A short time earlier it obtained the dismissal of General Polovtsev from the command of the Petrograd military area in consequence of his having raided the Leninite nests after the revolt, and had Steklov, who was arrested by his orders, liberated and the search at his flat stopped. This action of the military authorities was described by Maxim Gorky’s newspaper as “ the sack of the

¹ The day after I wrote this, the papers brought news to Ekaterinodar, where I was, of the discovery of a plot against the Government, followed by the arrest of the Grand Dukes Michael Alexandrovich and Dmitri Pavlovich.

² It is a curious comment on this that in June the sailors of Cronstadt, which was fast becoming the prey of criminals, illegally but openly and in orderly fashion executed several armed robbers ; since when life and property there have been respected.

party organisations," and although exposed by Vladimir Burtsev, who formerly brought the terrorist police-spy Azev to book, as an enemy of Russia in company with Lenin and his fellows, Gorky daily continues his campaign of venom and evil. It is not to be supposed that the foe within the gates will lightly desist, and his ramifications are wide. As a case in point, it may be noted that when the female agent Kolontai, Lenin's right hand, infamous for her championing of the German prisoners in Russia while she lied about the treatment of the Russians in Germany, returned to Petrograd, she stayed in the house of a well-known poetess of Jewish extraction, Shchepkina-Kupernika, who when the war was fashionable made a great hit with a lament over the fate of the lace-makers of Mechlin. The pro-German literary cliques of Petrograd, though now hiding their Maximalist tendencies, will not easily veer round again to the patriotic point. Well may Plehanov, the true Russian Socialist, ask whether the silence of the "internationalists" in response to the call to unity, results from "a complete absence of the understanding, or simply treason."

Even within the Government it is not clear that unsound views lack support. It may pass for a blunder that Tereshchenko, on becoming Foreign Minister, admitted to Russia Robert Grimm,

whom Miliukov had refused because he knew him for a German agent, only to be compelled to eject him after a month's fruitful agitation, on documentary evidence of that fact being furnished ; but it is to be remarked that Tereshchenko and Nekrasov hotly protested against the publication, as being not sufficiently considered, of the facts concerning Lenin's treason, while the Socialist ministers supported them on the theory that the Maximalists were "ideologues, representatives of one of the tendencies of social democracy and ought to enjoy free play in bringing their ideas to life." It was the same two ministers who at Kiev concluded with the representatives of the Ukrainian separatists a pact that was beyond the scope of their authority. These were among the grounds for the resignation of Prince Lvov and his fellow ministers. The general reason, however, underlying it was the appreciation of the fact that, in his words, the Council, to whom the Socialist ministers were responsible, was "incapable of guiding Russian democracy upon the lines of statecraft as understood by the Russian nation in its entirety." The coalition, on which Prince Lvov's second ministry was founded, was in fact no true coalition, seeing that one powerful party to it, that of the Council, had never any intention of coalescing but merely used the arrangement for its own purposes. As regards the Council,

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Kerensky may be in a more independent position than his predecessor, and the impassioned eloquence that at the front earned him the nickname of "talker-in-chief" is a powerful weapon; yet, despite the patriotic ideals that find a growing expression in his speeches, his dismissal of General Brusilov from the post of Commander-in-Chief, and the imprisonment for more than a month without charge of General Gurko, must raise a doubt as to the sureness of the present Prime Minister's touch in dealing with the situation. The abolition of the death penalty was his; his the publication of the "Declaration of the Soldier's Rights"; he was vice-president of the Council when Order No. 1 was issued; and these were the three chief instruments that reduced the army from its former height to its present depth. Less brilliant in the public eye than Kerensky, but possessed of special influence with the Socialists, is Chernov, the Minister of Agriculture. To Russia's Allies it matters little whether or no Chernov was concerned in the "expropriations" of 1905; it matters little even that he remained minister for two months without having taken the oath of allegiance to the nation; but it matters much to them if he belonged to an extreme pacifist section of the Socialists, if during the war he conducted an anti-war newspaper in Switzerland, and if through his agency Ukrainophil agitation was

carried on among the Russian prisoners of war in Germany. These allegations are made against Chernov, and are so far unanswered ; and so long as they are unanswered Chernov's presence in the ministry bodes ill for the virile conduct of the war and for the support by the Council of an honest war policy.

One present at the Moscow congress records the terrible impression made on him, when in the midst of General Kornilov's unvarnished relation of facts so tragic that his hearers could have howled like dogs at the feet of a dead master, he suddenly saw on the faces, in the eyes of the Socialist section of the audience, not one mark of emotion or sympathy. The Germans may find that they have gained less than they thought by opening up the breach made by the deserters of Tarnopol : they have seized two hundred million pounds of sugar, millions of bushels of corn, whole warehouses of meat, trains loaded with stores of all kinds, railway engines, artillery, shells—the tale is endless ; yet though they retook Galicia in a week, they are hardly over the border into Russia now. Against an advance of the enemy on real Russian soil, we may yet believe, the Russian soldier will fight.¹ But far deadlier than her weapons in the field is Germany's gift to Russia of class-warfare, which is enfeebling the

¹ This was written before the fall of Riga.

Government, mutilating production, paralysing distribution, and assuring the impotence of a nearly ruined transport system. Petrograd, Moscow, the Volga districts, even Kiev are already threatened with hunger : a state of things due partly to the lack of coal and defects in rolling-stock for carriage, partly to the unwillingness of the peasants to sell food-stuffs, unless they can obtain in exchange not depreciated paper money, but the tea, clothes, boots, sugar, household implements that they require.

These cannot be had, or had in sufficient quantities, because of the disorganisation of the factories, the laziness and exorbitant demands of the workmen, and the lack of fuel ; and this last again is due to the same causes among the coal-miners and to the railway breakdown. Up to the present these dire causes are working tighter and tighter in an inexorable ring on the life of the country. Nor may their influence on the war be indirect only. To-day, September 2, is printed a telegram from the Minister of Industry to the Harkov Supply Committee, supplicating the latter to get bread to the armies of the south-western front : the stores of flour, he says, have entirely given out, and a small reserve of biscuit is all that remains. Unless within two days a large consignment of flour is delivered, the army will begin to experience " the

horrors of hunger." And almost at the same moment a similar appeal has reached Ekaterinodar from the Caucasian front, coupled with the warning that if the army hungers no exhortations to discipline will hold it. Then it will become, in the words of the spokesman for the officers at Moscow, "an expensive armed mob, and a danger in the highest degree to the State."

This is the position at the beginning of autumn, and, due allowance made for the excitability of the authors of such appeals and for the necessity they perhaps are under of laying the colour thick on their canvas, is serious enough. What then must be expected in mid-winter? The Government has resumed the extraordinary powers of arrest, deportation, confiscation of disloyal newspapers, etc., indispensable to any Government in time of war. It now has to use them in the right direction, to free itself from unpatriotic influences, and effectively to gather all the loyal forces of Russia in an effort to swing the country into its stride again. Should it fail to do so, and should no other overmastering influence intervene, then Russia may in sober earnest be face to face with the catastrophe spoken and written of these several months past—a catastrophe the like of which has not been seen in the history of modern nations. Shortly after the revolution, a cartoon in an English paper showed Russia as a

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peasant bitten by a mad dog named "Autocracy," with the legend :

"The man recovered from the bite,
The dog it was that died."

The picture represented the situation pithily but not accurately. The revolution, of which the creative idea was beyond doubt the patriotic desire of all classes for victory over German militarism and the central rallying point the Duma, was seized by a small group of parties, well-drilled and well-supplied, and turned against the interests of the nation to the advantage of a class within the State and of the foe without. The dog in the cartoon should have been labelled "German Social Democracy." It is unfortunately too early to say whether or no the legend also must be amended.

August 20-September 2, 1917.

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