

Review

THE WAR.

Red and White is to be congratulated on not having made an appearance between the months of June and December: Before the world empanelled as a court of inquiry into the question of who killed the peace, you, Mr. Editor, should be able to prove an alibi. "Should be able" I say, for I do not wish to foster a too facile hope. The inquiry is going to be a thorough one, if a slow one, and though you may not have been present at the last moment, you may have lent a hand, somewhere in the past, either in your public or private capacity, by speech or silence, to bring the end about. Have you been a red "militarist" or a white "pacifist" or a pink "opportunist"; if you have you shall not escape blame. Nor can I see how you are to escape one or other of the categories. An old temperance poem tells us that, once upon a time, Tom Roper died of protracted converse with alcoholic drinks, and that a coroner's jury of twelve of the most prominent brands heard testimony in the case. I can recall now only the summary of the foreman:

Ha! Ha! laughed old King Alcohol,
Each struck the blow that made him fall;
And all of you that made him toper
My agents were to kill Tom Roper.

It had almost become a proverb among the large class who form their opinions under the guidance of the Press and the public utterances of public men, that the best preservative of peace is complete preparedness for war; and so hard is it to relinquish a dear delusion that we may now read on the Editorial pages that Germany would not have gone to war if she had known how well Britain was prepared, and, in the News columns, that her system of espionage in England was so complete that the commander of the Goeben had possession of the secret code of the Admiralty (which changes almost from week to week and is supposed to be known only to the very inmost circle) and by the use of it was able to beguile the British commander in the

Mediterranean, and escape to Turkish waters. If faith in that dictum is now shattered and faith in the machinery that created it is shaken, there is a hope that more and more men will come to see that you cannot have great preparedness for war without first fostering the war spirit, and that, where you have the spirit and the preparedness you have the sufficient cause of war at any time. The army in barracks or the fleet upon the seas are public institutions, the revolver on the hip is a private one ; but they all foster the same tendency towards short shrift, and they all belong to the hoary savagery of man which sunders us and not to the peace of God which would make us one. Who caused the war ? One may answer that, by the accident of position Austria was nearest to the spark-gap and closed it, and then all the elements, which lean upon each other in a delicate adjustment called the "balance of power" felt the shock, together ; but had there been one non-conductor there had been no shock. But if you go back of this the chain of causes is never-ending, for all the riot of man in all ages against the Laws of God has been mounting unto this issue.

This view of the causes of the war can scarcely lay claim to originality. In fact every publicist who has gone into the question at all has contemplated it, though not all of them have accepted it, in its entirety. It is the burden of the recent Papal Encyclical which offers no less drastic remedy than the extirpation of our present ideals of what is worth while in the lives of nations and of men ; and such a high source of secular thought as the New York Sun, commenting on that document, confesses the impeachment with great frankness, though it cannot see the way open to a change of heart. "A great commerce, wealth, power, colonies, the best armies and navies, the biggest guns, national material preponderance is the aim before and behind the conflict. Patriotism, national defence, all the noble sentimentalities bound up inextricably with the cause of the great nations concerned—the case of Belgium is of course far different—are the honorable and mostly unconscious pretexts of material ends." And then ; "Christian humility is very well for the next world or in an individual preparation for it, but it has

no force against national pride. The natural, if sad, fact is that to covet, to rob, to kill, forbidden to the individual, are the duties, or so regarded, of the collective people They would be bad citizens if they were not bad Christians. The charge of incivism brought by the Romans against the early Christians must have been true, in so far as they were true to the highest Christian ideals."

Nor are these sentiments confined to neutrals; they are as frankly set forth in the great English periodicals. Amid a thousand portents that shake us, it is a good omen of that more chastened state of thought to which we trust the heart-searching of the present time may lead, to find a publication of the status of the Hibbert Journal open its columns to such words as these: "I do not think we can claim that, while other nations were entangling one another's ways through the conflict of low aims and the clash of their material ambitions, doing and suffering wrong, our own nation stood aloof in the 'splendid isolation' of innocence. On the contrary, it has taken all the nations of Europe in the past to make the war inevitable, and it will take them all in the future to make it impossible." . . . "If, therefore, in attempting to find the cause of the present war we are driven to turn the light of inquiry mainly upon another people, it is not because our own hands are spotless. It was not by converting the heathen that we acquired their lands, nor for the sake of 'the ends of civilization' that we drove the savages out of their hunting-grounds. We may say, with much truth, that our conquests followed our trade, and that what we now possess has come 'in the way of business' We have been as ruthless, and we have been as ready to plead 'the rights of a higher civilization over a lower', as the German people are today. At the very best we are only just emerging from that materiastic imperialism which, fortunately for the world, had not a Hohenzollern Emperor for its main exponent. What right have we, it may be asked, to condemn the German nation? What they have done is to reduce our ways to a theory, in disregard of ordinary views of morals, and to seek to apply it in their thorough way to ourselves'. The writer Sir Henry Jones answers his own question by saying "our right, such as it is, springs from the fact that we are emerging."

I hail it as a good omen that such things may be said in the heart of England without creating hysteria. The more that temper prevails the greater are the prospects that, when this war is through another will not begin. But if the spirit of hate be given free course till the world in arms is saturated with it there can be no peace though there should be pause. Given that the enemy is utterly crushed and that the hammer and the anvil meet at Berlin, at Vienna, at Constantinople? Well, the hammer and the anvil are not supposed to meet.

But, if we heed the warnings of those who, by position and interest, have some right to speak, we cannot count upon a speedy meeting. Typical of such warnings is the following taken from the English Review: "The allied armies are fighting the most powerful enemy that ever took the field of battle, a nation trained for war, who have thought out the present contest to the most minute details, a people who will go down fighting. Against the military organization and spirit of Germany all idea of a speedy victory must be put aside.....Ink-pot jibes at the Germans won't help anybody. We are fighting the most scientifically equipped army ever seen in war, an army which has prepared for this attack on Europe for ten years unremittingly. We are fighting the largest and most redoubtable foe in all history, and every Englishman ought to know it." The writer of these weighty words, Mr. Austin Harrison, is well known to the English public. He has no doubt of the ultimate success of the allied forces, and he sees no hope of an end to the war till there is an end of the German Empire. But he does not expect the end to come soon, he does not expect it to come by commercial starvation, for he knows that when a nation of sixty-eight millions, not to speak of Austria, is fighting for its existence it will be able to dispense with many things which, in happier times, were thought essential. If the war cannot be ended till the last German "goes down fighting", even were we assured it would end then, it were difficult to set a term to its duration. But—and here we enter the freer atmosphere of prophecy—I do not believe the war will be so protracted, and I trust to the

temper of the British public, of which I have cited some evidence, and to the wisdom of British statesmen, to find a better solution.

For, to speak from no higher motive, delay is not without its dangers. Not all the elements being drawn into this struggle are absolutely calculable ; and, while we have reason to be proud of the spirit manifested by British subjects of remote colonies and of other races, it would be folly to overlook the immemorial cleavage between East and West, or the possible effect, upon the minds of those to whom the strength of Germany was unknown, of seeing the prestige of Brithin challenged and her power baffled and delayed. Even while I write comes the word that German cruisers have bombarded three small undefended towns on the North Sea coast of England and escaped unhurt. The affair will probably have no worse material effect upon the movement of the war than to turn the bathers of Hartlepool into recruits. But it is precisely the kind of incident calculated to impress minds that waver and are swayed by signs and omens. For the present, time seems to favor us ; but time is a monster that devours its own fruit, and mere secular prudence makes us desire a speedy peace.

It is the duty of every man who feels the responsibility which civilization puts upon us to do what in him lies to check or assuage the passions that are mounting up to blind us. The bare facts in the case are lurid enough without the fictions. It is enough that Germany has violated the independence of Belgium and inflicted all the horrors of war on that unhappy country: surely that wrong makes sufficient appeal to the courage and the pity of the men who have enlisted to right it, without the addition of a violated convention. The first German prisoner they take can tell them that the Hague Convention, though signed by Germany was never ratified by France or Britain and was therefore, by its own provision, void, when these were among the belligerents. Candor and humanity of speech at home will not shake the fortitude of the men at the front, nor alienate the peoples who are bewildered spectators of this struggle ; and they will prepare ourselves to use the ultimate victory more wisely and more humanely than is the wont of nations.