

PAX ECONOMICA

A timely and stimulating pamphlet, under the above title, comes to us from the pen of a Belgian manufacturer, of Charleroi, Mons. Henri Lambert. Presented in perfect English and published by John C. Rankin Company, New York, it is accessible to our intellectuals, and is well worth more than a passing glance.

For the issues raised by Mons. Lambert are grave ones. They are, indeed, old issues that will not give us rest, until we have solved them.

The Protectionist policy of the majority of the great nations is charged as being the active, sufficient cause of the present world disaster. "The establishment of artificial economic frontiers, is an attack, the author says, "against natural international order and law.....The international judicial edifice will crack and crumble, if not built on the true, concrete foundation of unified economic interests of peoples living under the regime of the natural international law of freedom of exchange."

The "monstrous stupidity of the international situation" is painted with painful distinctness. "The storm" he says, "is one that never should have burst; it could have been, and ought to have been prevented." In this he does not allude to artifices and devices of diplomacy as capable of holding back and effectually dispersing the storm; for "there is nothing more morally infamous than international policy and its tool, diplomacy."

"Suppose, on the contrary, that the utility and justice of international division of labor and exchange became recognized, and free international co-operation practiced: the exterior politics of States would immediately become as simple, as easy, as stable and as moral as the most healthy relations between individuals can be, while international lying and knavery would be rendered useless and diplomacy lose its *raison d'etre*."

His argument may be condensed in the statement that the only natural and just relation between States is that of free exchange; any other relation being unnatural and un-

just, with discord and war as the inevitable outcome. No attempt is made to mass statistics and facts of history in support of the argument. The appeal is made to pure reason and the moral sense. "Peace lacks and awaits its natural moral foundation."

Mons. Lambert offers in outline a Treaty of Peace, which he believes would find acceptance with the belligerents, and at the same time range strong, irresistible economic forces to ensure the permanence of that peace. An open letter to President Wilson and a Message to the Society of Friends and other Christians present interesting variants of the powerful arguments with which the work is filled.

In presenting an economic solution for international antagonisms and their final outcome, War, Mons. Lambert, who is an economist, does not ignore the economic disorders in the internal organism of all nations. He indeed recognizes that "we cannot conceive of true civilization as a product of poverty," and refers to "our terrific future social disturbances." But he considers that "it is the international problem that is urgent."

It seems to us that his argument would have lost none of its force by the inclusion of the internal economic problem which, in the final analysis, is at the bottom of the present universal unrest. Bernard Shaw rightly asserted that even more tragic than the shell-shattered villages in the north of France were the villages that had escaped all ravage of war.

In our international and humanitarian schemes, do we not too often resemble those philosophic Greeks of old, who spun their projects of a perfect human society, all the while strangely impervious to the prospect of the chain-gangs of slaves working in the fields before them?

Justice, to which appeal has been made, is one and indivisible. In any settlement of this Day of Judgment, is she to be denied to the nations in their hearths and homes? Will she be satisfied with any concessions to international trade, while fundamental wrong in the internal economy of the nations blights the life of the masses and deforms our whole social edifice?

Russia has already shown us that this war has brought up for solution other and deeper problems than international trade, important though that be. Living in justice and harmony at home, each nation will easier observe just and forbearing conduct toward her neighbors.