

DIABOLISM OR PATERNALISM

By Edgcomb Pinchon

I think the Great War has produced as yet only three books worthy of serious consideration; and these are quite little books, scarcely, indeed, more than brochures. Two of them come from the trenches and give the fighting man's point of view, Kreisler's "Four Weeks in the Trenches" and Walter Norman Hall's "Kitchener's Mob." They quietly illumine the trenchman's soul, German and British, like the rocket the deadman's land between these.

The third book is a judgment of the war by a master judge of men and social forces, who also is a craftsman of the word. To write of the war—so as to be read with patience five years hence—demands much. A man must have shouldered freely among German, English and French citizens of all ranks, must have worked with them, gotten of their blood, must have had entry to the secret places where their destinies are shaped for them; and he must have loved them, or, at least, some of them. Then, too, he must understand the economic sub-structure of what he sees, and above all, if he be writing in German he should be a Pole, if in English, he should be an—Irishman!

These qualifications Mr. Frank Harris has; and he has vision and genius besides. A Celt by race, an American by adoption, he was a student in Germany, a comrade among men of letters in France, and for many years the editor of London's premier critical journal, *The Saturday Review*. He has played the foster-father to men like Shaw, Grahame and Wells, and has been intimate with every grade of English society.

If the Celt was born to tell the truth to the Saxon the social reformer who spends too many week-ends in the charming freedom and grace of English country homes is in danger of his soul! Mr. Harris admits as much; but if his vision is Celtic his genius is—discernment. And that is why I think his little book "England or Germany—?" will be one of the few word-products of the war to be read with relish and sympathy by the next generation.

Diabolism or Paternalism—Which?—that is his challenge, the one issue left in the mind at the last page. He does not put it so; his is the artistry of temperate phrase thruout; but I can find no other words to convey his meaning briefly. Perhaps there is more than a trace of Celtic vengeance in his stark judgment of England; yet when he wrote, Sir Roger Casement, Sheehy-Sheffington, Padraic Pearce, James Connolly—that camaraderie of wild ardour—still thrilled Ireland with their dream—!

Both Germany and England, it would seem, are rank hypocrites. Germany, grown a little heady on Nietzschean wine, proclaimed the day of the strong, the dawn of the superman—not without sundry youthful blusterings—the while with her left hand quietly she fed her poor, protected her mothers, pensioned her aged, ensured all her working sons and daughters against the day of sickness, injury or death, shortened the work day, guarded the machine, destroyed the slum and the sweat-shop, and garnished her factories, mills and homes with cleanliness and sunlight; in every city and town gave to her people the noblest of music, art, literature—freely and with conscious pride, gave to apprentice and scion alike a practical and scientific education unequalled in the world. Paying open court to the warrior, she, at heart, and in fact, made a gospel of work and a worship of achievement—spending more per capita for knowledge and beauty and less for swashbuckling than any country in Christendom.*

England, despising work, hating knowledge, worshipping only wealth, plundered the world, trampled her workmen underfoot and ravaged the poor like a wild beast—while chaunting a sort of political Twenty-Third Psalm.

There is the difference—and the issue. The question is: which of these hypocrisies do you prefer?

These two portraits are not bits of special pleading, but inventories of hard facts. If one doubts it let him read, as Mr. Harris suggests, Frederic C. Howe's "Socialized Germany"—surely an impartial and authoritative word, and then Booth's monumental work on London's poor. And let him also, I would add, read Engel's classic, "The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844," and so compare 1844 with 1914. He then will understand why Germany quite honestly regards England as barbarous, backward and decadent. In seventy years, the richest in social progress in the world's history, England has stood still. The ghastly record of 1844 is no whit less ghastly in 1914. Not one law looking to the substantial well being of the working class and the genuine amelioration of poverty stands today on the English statutes. Lloyd George's eleventh hour and fiercely opposed effort to imitate Germany's unemployment insurance resulted only in a half-measure,—an irritating patch on a body covered with sores.

Owen Wister in his little book "The Pentecost of Calamity" speaks with intimate charm of the Germany he knew and loved. A broad contentment lay upon the faces of the people. There were flowers everywhere—and music. Even the little children had their children's opera. The father-spirit brooded over everything. None was left to shift for himself and go to the devil. Public utilities were publicly owned, and fine music and good drama were considered quite as much public utilities as the railways and trolley-lines and abattoirs. In 1914, Mr. Wister thinks, a visiting Martian would have had no difficulty in discovering in Germany the most delightful place on the earth. Suddenly his note changes. The father-spirit has sprouted horns. These contented burgers and workmen have ravaged Belgium, sacked Louvain, destroyed Rheims cathedral; and their children recently gathered to revel in "Hansel and Gretchen" now crow delightedly over the sinking of the Lusitania! Of this more presently.

As a boy in England, not so many years ago, I saw a farm-laborer, a well-built fellow, wander one morning into a stable-yard, and faint. The groom was for throwing him out, but the cook interfered and revived him with warm milk. He had not eaten for two days, it appeared, and had been half-starved for weeks. Presently the mistress coming from the house, bade the cook give him a full meal, and then asked him

*In recent years Germany has spent on her army and navy less than France, much less than England, very much less than the United States. For education, social welfare and beauty she has spent in the same time more than the total for the rest of the civilized world.

the usual question, "Why don't you go to the poor-house?" But the fellow only shook his head. The shame of the pauper was too great for him. Two days later I heard that he had fainted again, this time in the market where he had gone in search of an odd job. The police had turned the hose on him, and then had tried to take him to the poor-house, but he had struggled against them so fiercely that they arrested him for assault. In jail he had collapsed. Later he was sentenced to a term of "hard labor" for resisting the law!

That is an incident so typical of England that English people reading it will find no point in it. And that is exactly what I mean by "diabolism." Fighting in exhaustion and hunger, fiercely, to the last strength, against the brutal stigma of the "poor-house," yet one in four of England's workers—die there! England is not only not ashamed of the fact but cannot understand why anyone should be interested in it. Twenty-five per cent of her total population live out their whole lives on the brink of destitution, never a meal or a week's rent ahead. To be concerned with such facts in England is to be in "bad form" and a "bore." Everywhere in the open country estates that would feed a city and employ an army are "preserved" to provide some lordling or brewery magnate with a few autumn days of bird-slaughter. And England is proud of these estates and her fat pheasants. A starving laborer who should creep into one of them and kill a bird for food would be broken on the wheel of England's barbarous law and jailed to "hard labor" as a criminal.

In the rural parts of England it is a lucky peasant who earns \$3 a week; but, at least, he has the sweet air and the song of birds to cheer him. In the cities it is much worse. Here good society finds a certain pleasantly vicious thrill in "slumming" and organizing charity-functions. A London society dame, I remember, once having need of assistance in writing the invitations for one of these functions, advertised for an expert pen-man, offering one shilling a day for the work. The next morning soon after dawn a throng of more than five hundred shabby genteel applicants gathered outside her apartment eagerly awaiting the chance to work nine hours a day for twenty-five cents! That is the city!

The Great War was declared when Watts discovered steam. The trench phase of it is—only a phase, more acute, more spectacular, but hardly more bloody. Steam, coupled with coal and iron and directed by human Greed, created the era of competitive capitalism. The boon of machinery became a curse on a monopolized earth. Without free access to the land and without the means of acquiring the new tools, the workers were forced to bid against each other for employment in the capitalist's mills and factories which sprang up first in England, then in America, then in France, and finally in Germany—Austria, Russia and the lesser countries. Without economic foothold of their own the workers were compelled to accept the wages of mere subsistence and the hours of exhaustion. They thus were unable to buy back a tithe of the commodities they produced; and each country was forced to seek foreign markets for the sale of its surplus.

England's vast deposits of coal and iron, close together and near the seaboard, and her position as the gateway between east and west, gave her the industrial leadership of Europe, and made London, her capital, the world's banker and arbiter. Also, as a maritime empire, controlling one-fifth of the world's surface, and carrying half the world's trade in her bottoms, she found a vast foreign market in her own colonies and dependencies.

Into the race against her came the other countries of the world—urged by the same economic necessity. Competition speeded production, and increased production demanded constant increase of markets. The great Powers elbowed each other enviously in every port and mart of the earth; and they armed, armed and armed. Came then the international armament trust to provide them all with the means of destroying each other—capitalism's most perfect flower! Meanwhile the frightful exploitation of the workers had bred revolt among them everywhere... A moment came when the tension of greed for gain, hate for rivals and fear of internal revolt had keyed the competing plutocracies to a pitch of intolerable irritation. A Servian lad assassinates an Austrian duke and duchess. Austria demands revenge. Servia appeals for help to Russia. It is enough. Armageddon is on!

And all the world has been arguing since; "Who started this thing?" The Teutonic races cry "England and Russia," the English, Slav and Latin cry "Germany and Austria." It is a matter of the smallest importance. But it may be well to note that England's two-to-one naval policy could have had but one meaning to a Germany which by sheer brains and thoroughness had wrested away two-thirds of her rival's steel trade and made vast inroads on her South American and Oriental markets. "England must keep her hands free to act," was Sir Edward Grey's reply to the German ambassador's urgent plea for his terms of neutrality. That also should be remembered. As a matter of plain fact England dared not miss the opportunity to unite Europe against her over-matching competitor.

And now to revert to Owen Wister's lament over the moral ruins of his beloved Germany: Belgium, with her forts rebuilt and her army re-organized, in consultation with the British War Office, was already a violated country and a British outpost when Germany struck. Also let us not forget the violated Transvaal and the British "concentration camps." It will help us to keep properly balanced. One-fifth of Louvain was sacked according to the severe military usage, after a German commander and a number of soldiers had been shot by the inhabitants. Again let us remember that this is the usage of war everywhere and not a German peculiarity. In Kitchener's last drive across South Africa not a homestead was left standing. As the columns advanced the artillery followed close on the scouts, and without inquiry or warning, shelled to atoms every smokestack on the horizon.

The Lusitania was a floating British arsenal, and was torpedoed in the war-zone. Her American passengers had been thoroughly forewarned. She went down loaded to the scuppers with shells intended for German bodies. Let us remember, for equipoise, that on that same day, 700 working men and women were killed outright, 14,000 were maimed and injured in these United States by our own industrial diabolism. Who cared? Who protested? And these figures are merely the yearly total of our industrial casualties divided by 365. The United States Department of Health has said that with a little of the father-spirit in our life not one of these would have died or been injured. Go to! We sink a Lusitania twice a day in cold blood—and think nothing of it!

Incidentally, such industrial massacre is unthinkable in Germany, and she regards it elsewhere with fierce disgust.

Ah, but Rheims?—that shrine of the ages! I recall a vision of the old cathedral. It was very beautiful—and an excellent observation post for the French artillery. And I recall another vision. It is a bitter November day; driving rain and a shrill wind make life burdensome. But I am hurrying along the Thames embankment gaily enough, for I have just arrived, a young student from the country, and London is full of promise of adventure. As yet I have seen only Kensington and the delightful West End. But what is that approaching? A procession? On such a day? How strange it looks, without banners or bands! Yes, there is a band—it is composed of tin-whistles! And there are mounted police, squadrons of them, to either side—

Gaunt, chins slumped in breasts, ragged, shambling in leaky boots, the marchers in the strange procession troop by—blasted temples of the Spirit, four deep, two miles long and closely packed. How they shiver and hug their necks with their shoulders as the rain beats up a spray to their knees! And how the snorting limousines try to break thru their ranks at the cross-roads. Milady will be late for the Dansant! One of London's unemployed parades, 30,000 strong!—a common affair, as I later learned. But then it was newly strange and horrible to me. It shook the joy of London out of me on the spot and forever.

To see England as I saw her, clearly and without illusion, is to feel that perhaps this war has a genuine moral issue as well as a deep economic causation; and that the curse of Europe's father-state upon diabolism, "Gott strafe England" is no mere war-spite but bears a hint of large promise for the future.

It is not necessary to idealize Germany. One needs only to look with candour at what she has accomplished. "Come they from the four quarters we shall shock them" said the Kaiser on the declaration of war, quoting Germany's favorite dramatist, Shakespeare; and it was not altogether brag. Germany's strength, built up on a godly measure of economic justice and social conscience, has kept a world in arms at bay, and will remain her best argument and vindication. It is the strength of national Care against national gross negligence.

A consideration of France and Russia lies apart from the present discussion. No one doubts now that the real antagonists are England and Germany; the rest of Europe might well make peace to-morrow without breaking the grapple of these. For here lies the main economic cause and moral issue.

It may be well to note, however, that France, cleansed of her hereditary parasite class, achieved a more equitable distribution of the land than any other country in the world, and so saved herself from the worst evils of capitalism. Of England's diabolism she never has been guilty since the Revolution, and of Germany's thoro paternalism she has little need. Her national genius is rather towards the brother-state. Russia has added the evils of modern industrialism to a regime still predominantly feudal, but her unwarlike, speculative and highly spiritual Slavic temperament curiously ameliorates her economic diabolism in a thousand ways. She is the poet and sage, as Germany is the scientist, England the adventurer and France the husbandman, of Europe. From her much of great human good looms in the future.

In the large sense the war is the logical development of competitive capitalism—itsself begotten of universal land-monopoly. And the large prayer and hope will be for world-wide revolution for "access to the land and its resources on equal terms for all"—so removing the war of mart and sword at a blow. But in a more restricted view the war is a death-struggle between diabolism leadered by England and paternalism leadered by Germany; and those who know diabolism, and we, of these States, need not look abroad to see it in fullness, well may pray for the victory of the father-state until the coming of the brother state. Germany fed her people!

So thinks Mr. Harris; and those who find themselves taking England's godly "war for free institutions and the rights of small nations" at its face value, will do well to read him for a corrective.

Still Children Will Starve in California

That 260,000 voters—350,000 if they had all been counted, as we have every reason to believe—were not scared by the screams and thunders of the most outrageous falsehoods hurled at the eleventh hour on the entire electorate by a united press, millions of the most expensive circulars, cards, handbills, placards in every bank warning depositors that Single Tax would jeopardize their accounts and savings, repeated newspaper advertisements declaring that a state of anarchy would at once ensue if the Single Tax amendment passed; that a third of the electorate could not be swayed against the ideal of a Free Earth, speaks well for the Manhood of California. And is it not certain proof of The Great Adventure's contention that the mass can be, is, swayed by its inherent idealism—by a direct appeal to its deeper and higher nature?

One-third of the voters of California stand pledged to reduce land holding to use and occupance. Every elector who voted yes knew what he voted for. The others, alas! did not. They were bewildered. Our answers to the volley of lies never reached them.

One of the few farm journals whose advertising

columns were financially possible refused our copy and check. That was Edwin T. Earl's weekly, the Rural World. This is the ad. that Earl suppressed:

Will the working farmers vote with those whose only use for land is to hold a mortgage on it, or to reap its site value?

Will the land Users vote with the Speculators?

Will farmers continue to Pull Chestnuts Out of the Fire for bankers and brokers?

Will they vote to keep on taxing their houses, furniture, barns, tools, stocks, crops, autos—or to untax these and tax fairly million dollar city lots, idle estates, mines, oil wells, and vast holdings of the Pacific railroads?

They say the Farmer is ignorant and selfish and will always vote for the despoilers of mankind. It is not true. The farmer's learning is different from the city man's, but not less. His heart is in closer touch with his head, and he is less a cynic than the city man. He will vote for a true ideal.

Thousands of farmers are working for Number 5, the land value taxation amendment (Singletax) because they understand it will throw open the unused resources to all on equal terms, break the "cinch" of trusts, stop the waste of human life, its needless suffering in a land of plenty, and bring an order of good will among men.

Could these lines have gone to Every Farmer in