

# THE NEW STATESMAN

A Weekly Review of Politics and Literature

Vol. V. No. 113.]

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 1915

[REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O.] [SIXPENCE.  
AS A NEWSPAPER.]

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**T**HE importance of the second fall of Przemyśl depends on circumstances as regards which, at the moment of writing, there is no definite information. The probabilities, however, would seem to point to the fortress having fallen to a direct assault from the north-west; there is nothing to suggest that either of the Austro-German attacks on the neck of the salient enclosing Przemyśl have been successful. If that be so, and if the main Russian forces within the salient had time to make good their withdrawal, the moral effect of the blow will be its most important result. The Russians will have lost the prestige which they gained by the capture of the city in the spring, but their powers of resistance to any further German advance will be increased rather than diminished. If, however, on the other hand, the salient was cut, there is the possibility not only that large Russian forces have been captured, but that the Russian line may be broken at this point with disastrous results. In one sense we may regard the whole of these operations in Galicia with equanimity, since nothing which happens there can alter the central fact of the Allies' ever-increasing superiority over the enemy, both in men and in munitions. But if the operations should be as completely successful for the Germans as they, no doubt, now hope, they might lead to a very considerable prolongation of the war, especially if the attack upon the Dardanelles should be unable to make substantial progress in the near future. The conviction grows that it is to the struggle in the Gallipoli peninsula, rather than to those in France and Galicia and the Trentino, that the attention of the world should for the time being be directed.

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The Zeppelins—we are not quite sure whether it ought

to be plural or singular—have visited London at last. They dropped no fewer than ninety bombs; nevertheless the immense majority of Londoners were not aware of the raid until they read the brief official announcement in the next morning's papers. The damage done was not very great, but it is to be expected that Monday's raid was only the first of a series, and that later on the enemy may come in considerably greater aerial force. The man in the street is inclined to wonder why it is that he does not hear of anything being done to attack and destroy these hostile aircraft. The answer, we are afraid, is that so far we have discovered no more satisfactory means of destroying Zeppelins than of destroying submarines. In both cases the enemy is protected mainly by his elusiveness. Aeroplanes might be an effective weapon if they could be at the right place at the right time, but the Zeppelins fly so high that it is practically impossible to detect their presence until they descend for their attack. Moreover, they always leave themselves plenty of time to get far away before the dawn, and to find a needle in a haystack is child's play beside finding any sort of aircraft in the dark. Sound might help—if the searchers were in soundless machines. Therefore London will probably have to make up its mind to suffer such attacks with resignation and as far as may be in silence. It goes without saying that in any event the military results of such raids will be negligible. They will have no effect upon the war, but by their exacerbation of public opinion in London and throughout the country they may have very considerable and far-reaching results upon the terms of peace when the time for settlement comes.

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Interest in the opening of Parliament on Thursday was almost wholly confined to its spectacular side. There was a certain curiosity as to who would sit where and what they would look like, but the actual

## Current Literature

### BOOKS IN GENERAL

NEWS of enemy *littérateurs* has been scarce since the war began. We have seen the *Hymn of Hate* and the German comic papers; and we have heard of Hauptmann's exchange of the pickaxe and the spade for the battleaxe and the sword. But very little information has come through as to the mass of German writers, as distinguished from journalists and professors. The *Cambridge Magazine*, which has been very interesting during the war, has just reprinted from a Swiss paper an article by Romain Rolland that fills the gap. It appears that by no means every German has been swept off his feet, and that there is a distinct line of cleavage between the old and the young.

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Hauptmann is exhorting his fellows to "mow down the grass which drips with blood"; Wedekind, who has at last, apparently, found in war something which equals in brutality his own plays, is also on the rampage; Arno Holz is "raving deliriously"; "Petzold desires to be in every bullet that enters an enemy's heart, whilst Richard Nordhausen has written an Ode to a Howitzer"! Even the pacifist and humanitarian Dehmel, one of the greatest lyric poets alive and a man who has said that he did not know "to which of ten nationalities he owed his intellect," is writing *Battle Songs and Songs of the Flag*. "At the age of fifty-one he is learning to shoot, and has enlisted against the Russians." But with many of the younger poets things are different. Fritz von Unruh and Rudolf Leonhard went to the front "possessed with the same madness for war." But the former, since the battle of the Aisne, has written *Der Lamm*—"Lamb of God, I have seen Thy look of suffering. Give us peace and rest; lead us back to the heaven of love, and give us back our dead"; and the latter has recanted his early war poems—"that madness has spent itself, and only our strength is left. We shall again win control over ourselves and love one another." Andrea Fram, Ludwig Marck, and Franz Werfel are other poets to whom the war is a nightmare; and Hermann Hesse, deliberately remaining at Berne, has "implored the artists and thinkers of Europe 'to save what little peace' might yet be saved, and not to join with their pens in destroying the future of Europe." He has written a noble invocation to Peace:

All possessed it, but no one prized it. Like a cool spring it refreshed us all. What a sound the word Peace has for us now!  
Distant it sounds, and fearful, and heavy with tears. No one knows or can name the day for which all sigh with such longing. . . .

\* \* \*

The younger literary reviews are making a similar stand. The most amusing, if not the most admirable, feat was performed by *Blätter für die Kunst* (it is dominated by Stefan George, the "precious" poet, whose detachment is that of a Gautier), which "published at the end of last year a volume of poems of 156 pages, which did not contain a single line referring to the war." *Der Aktion* of Berlin "scoffs mercilessly at the ridiculous bards of German chauvinism, at Heinrich Vierordt, the author of a *Hymn of Hate*, at the criminal poets who stir up hatred with their false stories, and at Professor Haeckel." It continues to reproduce French pictures and articles, and in October it devoted a whole issue to Charles Péguy, the French Socialist poet, who was killed early in the war. *Die Weissen Blätter*, which is more important, is equally unmuzzled, and attacks the "journalists, who profit by the public feeling of the day, and under cover of high-sounding words of patriotism do not fight the enemy, but spit upon him"; and the Munich *Forum* (which is edited by Wilhelm Herzog) spends most of

its time attacking the jingoes who insult and wish to despoil other nations. Herzog was especially violent against Haeckel and the other professors who signed the notorious manifesto, and ridicules the "new spirit" that the war is alleged to have produced:

Where is it to be found? In the Hochschulen? Have we not read that incredibly clumsy appeal of the 99 professors? Have we not appreciated the statements of that centenarian mummy Lasson? When I was studying philosophy as an undergraduate at the University of Berlin, the theatre in which he lectured was a place of amusement for us—nothing more. And to-day people take him seriously! English, French and Italian papers print his senile babblings against Holland as typical of the Stimmung of the German intellectuals. The wrong that these privy councillors and professors have done us with their Aufklärungsarbeit can hardly be measured. They have isolated themselves from humanity by their inability to realise the feelings of others.

Several young German writers have died at the front. Among them was Ernst Stadler, who was translating Verlaine in the trenches when he died.

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It is worth while giving these facts further publicity. They show once more that even the most elaborate system of Bonapartist education and censorship cannot reduce everybody to complete docility or compel every mind to welcome delusions. "The essential thing," as M. Rolland says, "is to show that even in Germany there are certain finer minds who are fighting against the spirit which we hate—the spirit of grasping imperialism and inhuman pride, of military caste and the megalomania of pedants." They are a small and at present ineffective minority; and their existence does not diminish the need of defeating their rulers; but their struggle for liberty, humanity, and decency is worthy of sympathy from their fellows abroad.

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I notice that Messrs. Constable have just brought out a new edition (6s. net) of Mr. Havelock Ellis's *Affirmations*, which was first published seventeen years ago. There are few things which get out of date more quickly than the average literary essay. For one thing, wit which is not based on hard thinking is largely a matter of fashion, and rapidly stales; for another, many critics are engaged in a perpetual chase after the topical, and their choice of subjects is not determined by any genuine personal bias or capacity for explaining. How few of the endless criticisms of the nineteenth century are still reprinted and read! Personally I think that Mr. Ellis's book is likelier than most to find a permanent public. His essays are on Nietzsche, St. Francis and others, Casanova, Zola, and Huysmans. The book is, he says, "a statement of affirmations which must stand independently of the fashions or the passions of the passing day"; and I think it will so stand, for he wrote penetratingly and without cant about things that interested him intensely. The essay on Nietzsche was, if I am not mistaken, almost the first, if not the very first, attempt of the kind in English. I find on re-reading it that it is as fresh and adequate as ever, and that it supplies the clues to a comprehension of Nietzsche better than any of the endless explanations which have appeared since. In his new preface the author comments mildly on recent grotesque attempts to represent Nietzsche as the tutelary deity of Wilhelm II. and Count Zeppelin. "Human imbecility is a sacred and mysterious sea which no plummet has ever sounded." "When the Prussian organ of Junkerdom acclaimed Nietzsche as a champion his sarcasm at once flashed forth; but he could not have foreseen how the same ineptitude would one day flow forth in a torrent." One of the few things which burned steadily amid the eccentric pyrotechnics of Nietzsche's thought was his profound contempt for modern German "Kultur."

SOLOMON EAGLE.