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To say that the fundamental factor in this "war of attrition" is the factor of numbers is a commonplace which everybody professes to accept, but the bearing of which upon the problem of the Western front and upon the general prospects of the war is by no means universally realised. If it were, a great deal more public attention would have been concentrated upon the question of the German losses; and the quite absurd under-estimates which have been put forward—for reasons other than a desire to arrive at the truth—would have been laughed out of court, or more probably would never have seen the light. Only three weeks ago we had the Times Military Correspondent, a gentleman with something of a European reputation to preserve, solemnly, though not very whole-heartedly perhaps, professing to accept the German official figures—and this although only a month earlier he had put forward an estimate of his own which placed the enemy's losses at a figure which was higher by almost a million. We need not enquire into the causes of this remarkable resurrection of dead and disabled Germans. But the irresponsible fashion in which these vitally significant figures are thus dealt with by persons upon whose judgment the public has been accustomed to rely adds a great deal to the importance and interest of the analysis which Mr. Bellon is able to give in the current issue of Land and Water, on the authority of, as he says, "the best source of information in Europe"—the French Higher Command.

We cannot reproduce here the evidence by which Mr. Bellon undertakes to show that the number of the German killed up to the end of 1915, instead of being only 651,000 (as officially stated), must, at any rate, be over a million. But it is quite convincing to anyone

THE scattered offensive movement, which the Germans have been pursuing along the Western front with so much vigour and persistence for the past week or two, has culminated this week in a serious attack to the north and east of Verdun. At the time of writing, all that the available information enables us to conclude is that it is an important affair, possibly almost comparable in scale with the French offensive in Champagne in September. From the French communiqués we learn that the attack covers a front of some 25 miles. From the German we get the claim that 8,000 prisoners were captured in the first rush, and that the line was penetrated to a maximum depth of 12 miles along a six-mile front. Later German statements announce a further advance on the same front. The French in Champagne, it will be remembered, penetrated to a depth of three miles along a front of 20 miles, and captured 20,000 prisoners. On the more important question, however, of how far the Germans may be able to follow up their attack, there are as yet no materials available for comparison. French military opinion is apparently at the moment still inclined to regard this movement as differing not in kind, but only in degree, from the attacks which have immediately preceded it on other parts of the front. It is held that the Germans are anxious to be able to announce some success on the Western front as an offset to the Turkish disaster, but that they cannot hope to effect any serious breach in the French system of defences here or elsewhere. At this stage we are confined to recording this view without comment.
Miscellany

GERMAN POETS AND THE WAR

One of the most interesting and impartial of "neutral observers," ex-Senator Beveridge, not long ago assured the world that a great literary revival was taking place in Germany. When all the facts were known, he said, there would be general amazement at the greatness of the transformation brought about by the war. But many of the facts have come to light and, so far as one can see, they indicate nothing of an unexpected nature—nothing which might not have been prophesied by anyone with a fairly intimate knowledge of Germany and the Germans. Thus it was certain that there would be an enormously increased output of published poems; the Germans are a poetic race, and even in times of peace solemn academic journals devote a good deal of attention to scores of volumes of verse fit only to grace drawing-room tables. There is probably no country where more encouragement is given to the mediocres poet. So when we read, as a German critic lately asserted, that in the first month of the war 50,000 poems per day were written (though not all published) throughout the Empire, and in the first year over 6,000,000, we may stand aghast for a moment, but we are certainly not surprised.

It might also have been foreseen that the Germans would intensify their always abnormal race-consciousness to an extraordinary degree. This was the case in 1813, as it was in 1870; in the crisis of 1914 the same process was repeated. The average German is generally a most broad-minded cosmopolitan in his literary and artistic tastes; but at certain times this generous characteristic is liable, in the great bulk of the people, to give way to an exclusive chauvinism. And this has happened in Germany of to-day. Richard Demel, poet and humanitarian, has assumed a somewhat inauspicious patriotism; so has Gerhart Hauptmann, who was still more distinctively a social prophet. Rebel poets and dramatists, such as Wedekind and Ludwig Thoma, whose biting satire was so frequently directed against convention and authority, have suddenly become docile, sentimental lovers of the Fatherland; and certain Social Democratic artists, headed by the Whitmanian poet, novelist and playwright Arno Holz, have shown themselves capable of the wildest Jingoism. But the event which has caused the greatest satisfaction to all true German patriots is the apparent collapse—with a few important exceptions—of the whole Symbolist and Neo-Romantic movement. In the eyes of the ordinary German Imperialist there was always something essentially "un deutisch" in these schools of poetry; hence the delight which has been manifested at the so-called "conversion" of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke, Ernst Hardt, Franz Werfel, Richard Schaukal, and a dozen others not so well known. Frequently this much-acclaimed "Bekehrung" is nothing more than a general resolve to take life more seriously, implying no change in literary or imaginative ideals. A poet of the Hofmannsthal circle, for example, Rudolf Schröder, wrote some time ago in a private letter from the front:

"My dear friend, let us solemnly promise, that the new time, if we live to see it, shall find us better men and truer, more brotherly, purer.

"The chauvinist reviews—among which even periodicals

like the New Rundschau are now to be reckoned—find it convenient to see in such declarations a sign that the Roman- ticists are returning to the "deutsche Art." The one important poet who has given them absolutely no reason for such a conclusion is Stefan George—and he is at present the most unpopular poet in Germany.

The poet who is most widely acclaimed to-day is undoubt- edly Richard Demel. One can scarcely take up any periodical of the ordinary type without finding either a patriotic poem from his pen or some eulogistic reference to him. In the early days of the war, amidst vociferous applause, Demel volunteered to serve in the Landsturm—his age is fifty-one. But although the critics said that this marked the opening of a new creative period, none of the poems he sent back from the front, or of those he wrote before his departure, seem to me as good as the group marked "footnotes" in the collection—"death's hour," "heroic mind," "Not" rhyming with "Tod" and "Held" with "Feld." Possibly it is to this absence of ARN'T's mantle that a great deal of his popularity is due. Arn't, the poet of the glorious days of 1813, still wields an immense influence in Germany. In the eyes of a public inclined to overlook commonplace and a certain prosiness as long as the verse has a good rhythm, and is impeccable in its patriotism, this following of the "echt deutscher" tradition, together with an unembarrassed lyrical gift, may easily make Demel the foremost war-poet of Germany. The best poem of his collection is the "Song to all" (Lied an alle):

One lorry will in its clearness hover
Over the powder and dust and smoke;
For life, oh, not for life,
Are men fighting the battle of life;
Death always comes—
Death divine!

Ernst Lissauer, who, on the whole, stands next to Demel in popularity, is a far less talented poet. A year or two ago he published a volume of war-poems entitled "1913," and in consequence he is now being hailed as a prophet. But he never enjoyed a really wide reputation until one day early in the war, he woke up, like Byron, to find himself famous and his Hymn of Hate against England on every German lip. Recently he seems to have spoken with modesty concerning his achievement, as if in deference to the many protests from neutrals and milder-minded Germans; but the fact cannot be concealed that for a few months the Hassgesang gegen England was heard all over Germany, and that, moreover, several reputable critics praised it as the "Höhepunkt"—of his poetical achievement. They were right. Whatever we may think of the moral sentiments which inspired him, we cannot deny praise to Lissauer for having written a really original patriotic poem, refreshingly free from the worn-out Arn't and Gellert tradition. Apart from this masterpiece, Lissauer has done little. He has written an ode to "Germany's outposts," poor, neglected Heligoland, another verse-attack on the arch-enemy, called England Dreams (England traumt), and a poem entitled "Leaders" (Führer), which invokes Luther, Bach, Kant, Schiller, Beethoven, Goethe, and Bismarck. But all these other poems by Lissauer are weak and lifeless in comparison with the Hymn of Hate.

Many of the best German war-poems have been written by men in the fighting line. Their work often seems deeper and more serious, even more artistically sincere, than the so-called "Scheichischlyrik."—we might say "armchair poetry"—of Demel and the rest. The point of view of most of them is well put by the volunteer poet Bruno Frank in one of his "War-Strophes" (Strophens im Krieg):

"..."
Music

THE MUSICAL CONSTITUTION OF ENGLAND

The question as to whether the English are a musical nation is one so hackneyed that it arises at almost any tea party to which some unfortunate musician has been hidden: and, like many questions haphazardly dropped into the stream of everyday conversation, the questioner is curiously hazy as to the meaning of what he asks, and the answerer probably equally hazy as to the meaning of what he replies. Indeed, hardly anyone who discusses this matter seems to have a clear conception of what really constitutes the musicality of a nation, and truly the more one thinks about it the less does one feel competent to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. Nor is the object of this article to answer that question in the manner a musician might be said, whereas (at any rate, too, must plead guilty to incompetence, the subject being somewhat outside the faculty of musicianship on the one hand, and there being no criterion on the other when all has been said. But what I would attempt to do (and in that attempt some light may be thrown on the subject) is to draw attention to the strange musical constitution of England, a constitution which is as perverse as (to my knowledge) it is unique; and unless, in certain directions at any rate, a change is brought about, the aspirations concerning British music and the part it is to play in England and elsewhere are little likely to be realised.

And, to begin with, I have no hesitation in saying that England is producing at the present time composers whose works will long outlive the death of their physical bodies; and I may mention Delius for one (born in Bradford) and Percy Grainger for another, whose value, by the way, I do not estimate from the works he has composed and published, but from the works he has composed but not published. The public, in fact, only knows of this most British of all composers from what Chesterton would perhaps call his "Tremendous Trifles"; the larger works being hidden away as being too difficult for performance in this country. Now, most people are aware of the large amount of "talk" concerning British music and the younger generation of composers—and yet the musical constitution of Britain is of such a nature that those very composers are compelled to go abroad for the publication and performance of the particular works which exhibit their true value as serious musicians. In other words, those who have attained to celebrity are celebrated solely for their trifles in this country, while abroad they are celebrated solely for their serious works—and this was brought home very particularly before the war when on my travels in Germany and Austria I endeavoured to gain a performance for one of Grainger's small but, to my mind, exquisite fantasies; for my proposal was rejected with the words, "In this country [Austria] the work would not be regarded as serious." My own case (if I may be pardoned for mentioning it) is also illustrative of this fact, in that my songs are practically unknown abroad whereas (at any rate before our conflict with Germany and Austria) what I regard as my serious works were performed to a very considerable extent. As to Delius, his case is only different in so far that he has composed hardly any "trifles" at all; with the result that he has been compelled to wait until with the result that he has been compelled to wait until

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