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THE BALKAN WAR

Important Results for the Peace Movement Gained Through the International Commission

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO THE CAUSES AND CONDUCT OF THE BALKAN WAR. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

HISTORY written to serve a purpose is at best a difficult task, and may well prove relatively a thankless one. When, however, the purpose is lofty and is frankly avowed, and when the work is that of a group of able and devoted publicists, of various lands and of international repute, the worst of the obstacles are avoided, and the result merits the candid and careful attention of the public. The report of the Commission of Inquiry on the two Balkan wars made to the Directors of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, is history of this kind. Large, but still incomplete, portions of it have been given to the press in America and on the other side of the Atlantic. It now appears in a quarto volume, with maps and appendices, of some 500 pages in English and in French, with a short and clear preface by Dr. Murray Butler, and with a characteristic introduction by the President of the commission, Baron d'Estournelles de Constant. The various chapters, though prepared by specially deputed members of the commission, are unsigned, the commission, after deliberate examination and consultation, assuming collectively the responsibility for the work and for each part of it.

Dr. Butler frankly states that the purpose of the inquiry was to inform public opinion and to make it understand what an international war conducted by modern methods means, or may mean, and thus to attain a step toward the replacement of force by conciliation and justice in the settlement of international differences. Certainly it was a noble purpose, and one that comes strictly within the scope of the Carnegie Foundation. As stated by the Baron de Constant, the broad divisions of the report were quite naturally indicated: The origin of the two wars; the theatre of operations; the actors in the drama; the mixture of nationalities involved; the inevitable violations, or rather the non-existence of international law in the chaos of men and things; the economic and moral results of the two wars; finally possible views of the future.

The commission consists of the Baron de Constant, Prof. Dutton of Columbia, F. W. Hirst, editor of The Economist, England; H. W. Brailsford, journalist, England; J. Godard, Deputy, France; Prof. Schülling, Germany; Prof. Redlich, Vienna, and Paul Milioukov, member of the Duma, Russia. A sub-committee of four members visited the Balkans and spent some five weeks in that region, hearing witnesses, securing documents, conferring with officials and others, seeking loyally to obtain information from all sides. That in this time and by this means complete knowledge could be secured, is not to be assumed. That enough was got to fairly sustain the conclusions of the commission, and to furnish a very valuable presentation of facts of the deepest significance is, in our judgment, established.

It is, in some respects, unfortunate, but it was obviously inevitable, that a large part of the report is taken up with statements of the excesses, the brutalities, committed by the armies and the bands of each of the chief Balkan nationalities. Those were the imperative consequences of the deep passion, racial and religious, aroused in peoples only partly civilized, prone to cruel violence by innate tendency and by the habits of many generations. The account given of them is obviously impartial, and it shows each nationality guilty in pretty much the ratio of its opportunity. As each, while accepting the guilt of the others, denies or qualifies its own, there has arisen a chorus of criticism of the report and much bitter comment on it. It will probably pass. In the meanwhile we in America, at least, may give confident credence to the appalling account of the horrors which prevailed throughout the entire field of conflict. These horrors, it must be remembered, were in direct violation of the rules of war agreed upon at The Hague and subscribed to by each of the Governments parties to the two Balkan wars. The report urges strongly that at the next conference provision be made for international supervision of any future war by means of a joint commission. The work of such a commission would be very difficult, but it would be a step toward giving something like a substantial "sanction" to The Hague decisions, the beginning of an international executive machinery, without which any court must be relatively helpless. It would be an advance toward real international adjudication.

Intensely moving and very significant as is the account rendered by the Commission of Inquiry of the terrible and cruel license of all parties to the war, the greatest value must attach to the historical part of the report, which traces the sources of each of the two wars, outlines the various operations and the actual situation, and lays the basis of tentative calculations for the future. The causes of each of the wars have their roots deep in the past. Succinctly stated, they were the gross oppression of the Balkan Provinces by the Turks, the efforts of the several peoples to free themselves from the Turkish yoke, and when, by union, this was achieved, the wretched struggle of each nationality to secure the greatest possible gain for itself. This struggle was made the more bloody and destructive by the determination of each nationality to subjugate, destroy, or drive out the rival nationals from the territory claimed by it. Thus it came about that the first war was vigorously conducted to a splendid success which the second practically threw away. Turkey regained much that she had lost. The loss of life, of resources, of national force, of national assets entailed by the first war heavily increased. Worst of all, the moral force of union for a common and glorious purpose was dissipated, and in its stead were engendered jealousy, suspicion, sullen or savage hatred. A more terrible and destructive turn of the wheel of events cannot be imagined, nor one on its face more senseless, so far as it was determined by the men in whose hands rested the policy of the Governments concerned.

But these men were not solely—far from it—the rulers and statesmen of the four Balkan nations. They included the statesmen and rulers of the great European powers, especially those of Russia, Austria, and—more's the pity—Italy. The Concert of Europe had the power to foster, with great chances of success, the federation of the Balkans on the basis of freedom of commerce and the promotion of industrial development—in brief, of the common welfare. Instead it was torn by jealousy, by envy, by greed for gain, political or commercial, by selfish ambition. Each of the powers named pursued with persistence, sometimes deceitfully, its own advantage, and strove to prevent rather than to secure a peaceful and progressive union of the Balkan nations. And it was only by the incredible patience and sagacity of Sir Edward Grey, in London, and the German Emperor, working gradually more and more intimately, that the Balkan conflict was prevented from involving Europe in a general war.

The report of the Carnegie Commission traces clearly the course of events that have brought about the present deplorable situation, which is eloquently described by the Baron de Constant:

> Never was a lesson clearer, more brutal. United, the long oppressed peoples of the Balkan Peninsula wrought miracles which Europe, powerful but divided, could not even imagine. Masters in a few months of Crete, Salonika, Uskub, Scutari, Adrianople, they almost entered Constantinople. Disunited, they had to pause, to exhaust themselves anew, to recommence and so indefinitely. For, far from being a solution, the second war has proved but the beginning of other wars, of constant war—the worst of all—a war of religion, of reprisals, of races, of people against people, of man with man, of brother with brother. * * * Constantinople becomes more than ever the eternal apple of discord, under the surveillance of the Russians, watched themselves by Germany, Austria-Hungary, Rumania—really by all the powers, friends, allies, or foes. The offspring of the current megalomania—"Greater" Greece, "Greater" Bulgaria, "Greater" Servia—will keep close watch in their turn over the Bosporus. The islands bring into competition Turkey, Asia, Italy, Greece and England, with all

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A SOUTHERN HERO

Mr. Dixon's Romance of Jefferson Davis—Latest Fiction by Hugh Walpole, Baroness von Hutten, and Others

THE VICTIM: A Romance of the Real Jefferson Davis. By Thomas Dixon. D. Appleton & Co.

NEARLY ten years ago, when the publication of "The Clansman" and certain public utterances of its author on the negro question had evoked much adverse comment, Mr. Dixon replied to his critics in an open letter to THE NEW YORK TIMES REVIEW OF BOOKS. In the course of it he thus described his own system of writing:

> I never write a book unless I have something to say, and never say it as long as I can keep from it. When at last I have become so full of a great dramatic idea that I shall die unless it is uttered, that others may know the might of its truth and the glory of its beauty, I write the story—write it simply, sincerely, boldly, passionately.

It is interesting to contrast this with the confession of one of the greatest living masters of prose, Joseph Conrad:

> I have a positive horror of losing even for one moving moment that full possession of myself which is the first condition of good service. I have always suspected in the effort to bring into play the extremities of emotions the debasing touch of insincerity. In order to move others deeply we must deliberately allow ourselves to be carried away beyond the bounds of our normal sensibility—no great sin. But the danger lies in the writer becoming the victim of his own exaggeration, losing the exact notion of sincerity, and in the end coming to despise truth as something too cold, too blunt for his purpose.

Mr. Conrad is an able psychologist as well as novelist, and in this passage he has diagnosed the case not only of the Thomas Dixons, but of the Marie Corellis, the Hall Caines, and the rest of the multitude who mistake their own opinions—or, it would be more accurate to say, their own tastes and inclinations—for revelation from on high.

In the same letter Mr. Dixon complains that, while his novels are admitted to be powerful, they are at the same time called "thoroughly inartistic," and says quite frankly that to him the critic is "talking in an unknown tongue." In other words, he is unable to see that a book which succeeds in getting an emotion "over" to the reader is not necessarily literature. He forgets—perhaps he would consider it an empty saying—that not to lose possession of one's self "even for one moving moment" is the "first condition of good service."

But whether "The Victim" is or is not literature, Mr. Dixon has done a useful thing in writing it—he has drawn attention to the lamentable lack of a great biography of Jefferson Davis. Of the existing biographies, all except W. E. Dodd's little-known work are merely contemporary eulogies—the stuff of biography, but not the completed thing.

In the present book the President of the Confederacy is pictured as a hero, a saint, and a martyr. Wherever, during the civil war, a scheme miscarried or a General failed in his duty, it was a scheme adopted contrary to Mr. Davis's advice, or a General kept in place by a "Junta" antagonistic to him, while each success was due to his effort and inspiration.

Whether that is good history or not—and there will be at least as many in the South as at the North who will dispute it—it is certainly poor human nature. Mark Twain's homely adjuration to the portrait painter to draw him "with all his warts on" is an excellent thing for any man to remember who is not trying to depict a stained glass window saint or a wax effigy. After reading the story, one falls back on the title as being after all the feature that best describes its hero. Jefferson Davis was undoubtedly a victim; the victim of other men's envy and jealousy to a considerable degree, and also the victim of his own poor judgment. Alfriend claims that he bore the imputation of neglecting to make the battle of Bull Run decisive by pushing on after the demoralized Federals, out of "devoted patriotism

and knightly magnanimity. Any explanation acquitting himself must have thrown the responsibility upon Gens. Johnston and Beauregard, and he preferred rather to suffer an undeserved reproach than to excite distrust of two officers then enjoying the largest degree of popular confidence."

Mr. Dixon follows Alfriend in this truly remarkable explanation of the Confederate President's failure to deal with his incompetent and practically insubordinate Generals as they deserved, and though now and then he deprecates his hero's extra-generosity, his constant demand upon the reader's admiration for him becomes irritating. For though we may pity a victim, and it is not difficult to love him, it is always hard to admire him.

As a romance the tale is sufficiently entertaining. Its plot is improbable enough to be true, and its development affords a picturesque birdseye view of the civil war. Here and there a scene is painted not only vividly but finely, as where the boastful spirit of each section immediately before Bull Run is described:

> The North was marching southward with ropes and handcuffs with which to end in triumph their holiday excursion on July 4. The South was marching to meet them with eager pride, each man afraid the fight would be over before he could reach the front to fire a single shot. And behind each gay regiment of scornful men marched the white, silent figure of Death.

The dialogue generally lacks distinction, and sometimes simply stands up and falls down, as the old saying goes. Early in his career Jefferson Davis is ordered on recruiting duty in a cholera-stricken-district, and goes to say farewell to his sweetheart:

> The good-bye scene that night at the lovers' trysting place, the little tent reception room of the McCreas, was long and tender and solemn.
>
> "Oh, I feel dreadful about this trip, dear," his sweetheart kept repeating with pitiful despair that refused to be comforted.
>
> "You must be brave, my own," he answered with a frown. "A soldier's business is to die. I am a soldier. I go where duty calls—"

and so on, though it is only fair to say that this is one of the worst specimens.

There is little in "The Victim" to fan the flame of smoldering sectional antagonisms, and there is much which is calculated to interpret the North and the South as they were fifty years ago to each other. It may be regretted that Mr. Dixon has seen fit to revive in an aggravated form the charges of hypocrisy and brutality on the part of Gen. Nelson A. Miles toward Jefferson Davis while the latter was a prisoner at Fortress Monroe. It seems hardly possible, as Gen. Miles has pointed out, even if testimony to the contrary were lacking, that a man of nearly sixty, had he been subjected for two years to the tortures claimed, and reduced to such a state of extreme weakness that it was dangerous for him even to sink into deep slumber, should have lived, in reasonably good health, for twenty-four years after his release. This is one of several points raised in Mr. Dixon's book which show the need for a thoroughly impartial study of the man and his time, which shall at the same time not be merely a student's monograph. Whether Jefferson Davis was or was not of truly heroic stature, he occupied the centre of perhaps the vastest and most crowded stage of tragedy the world has ever seen, and if to the most of us he is a misunderstood and shadowy figure, it is only because American literature has not yet produced a man big enough to paint him upon his background of blood and flame without undue exaggeration or belittling.

MR. WALPOLE'S DUCHESS

THE DUCHESS OF WREXE. By Hugh Walpole. New York: George H. Doran Company. $1.40 net.

READERS of Mr. Walpole's earlier books, particularly his "Prelude to Adventure" and "Fortitude," will take up his latest novel with the feeling that here will be something unusual. Possibly not what might be called a successful book, but certainly one with an emotion, with an imagination behind it, the work of a man immensely moved by his theme, a man to whom certain things in life appeal strongly; a book, therefore, that cannot but grip the attention, as what is intensely sincere must always grip, must to some degree compel.

Mr. Walpole in "The Duchess of Wrexe," as in those earlier books, has not quite done it. Has not produced, that is to say, absolutely what he wants to produce. But the effort is so nearly successful what he has done, though it significance now being produced by English or American writers.

The period of this story is the end of the Victorian age, the time of the Boer war, the passing of the old order, and the birth of the new, of our own time. The place is London, with a country house or two, and the persons are England's old aristocracy, with a few besides.

In the first chapter the Duchess, in whom is incarnate the very heart and bone of the old age, is placed before us; not directly, but by means of her portrait, a portrait that represents her, not as she is, but as she has made people think her to be. "She must be that," as Arkwright exclaims, dominated by this portrait, as every one has been dominated by the idea of the Duchess, for sixty years and more.

Her family, the Beaminster family, was at the very top of it all. Her eldest son, the Duke, had been content simply to be a Duke. Her second son had been twice Prime Minister. But it didn't matter whether or not a Beaminster did anything. They were. And above all was the old Duchess, who considered them all fools, who used and hated them all, and who inspired them and every one else with terror.

That is where the Duchess's power lay, in the fear she inspired. She inspired it by crushing the truth and reality out of herself, and out of every one with whom she engaged. She stood for the age, an age of suppressed emotions, false values, unreal triumphs and complacences, an age that never faced real things, an age that gave England men like Lord Crewner—

> a thin, handsome man of any age at all over forty and under sixty. He was polished and brushed and scrubbed to such an extent that he looked like an advertisement of some fine old English firm that produced, at great cost and with wonderful completeness, Fine Old English Gentlemen. He believed in not thinking about things very much, because thinking let in Radicals and diseases and the poor, and made one uncomfortable.

The Duchess, in fact, stood for tradition as against actualities, the Proper Thing rather than truth, appearances always and forever. As Rachel cries, "She just sits still and takes people in."

Rachel is half Beaminster and half rebel, Russian, free. But the love of comfort, the fear of facing her real self brings her, for a time at least, into the enemy's camp. She hates her grandmother, the Duchess, and she sees through her, yet she marries the man the Duchess has chosen, perceiving when too late that she walked into a trap.

She mingles in London society, looks about her at a reception in her grandmother's house, goes up to this grandmother, where she sits in the room she has not left for thirty years, and from which she rules; and then, in the carriage, she suddenly laughs.

> All those people, moving so solemnly, with such self-importance about that room. The Duke, Lord Richard, Aunt Adela, Norris, the footman.
>
> Over them all that fierce, commanding portrait. And upstairs, that old sick woman. * * * And beyond, away from that room, a war that that old woman and those self-important people saw only as a means of increasing their own self-importance.

There's a doctor, Christopher, who looks forward to the peace and greater gentleness and new freedom:

> Instead of this old house, the anger at all freedom of thought, the jealousy of all enterprise, the slander and malice, an age of universal brotherhood.

And there is the cynic, Brun, waiting for the smash, caring for no one, delighting in change, admiring the Duchess as the last great lady of England, watching the new generation with interest, a commentator only, amused at whatever comes or passes.

The trouble with the book is that it is too complicated. It loses itself in a bewildering way, the issues are not clear, it is too crowded. Nevertheless it hasn't a page that isn't delightful. Mr. Walpole has a felicitous style, he sees everything, be it but a London street, a room, a hill-top view, a man or woman or dog, with his own eyes, and translates it to us in his own way. His fault is that he has too much to tell; there are several stories in this book, as there were in "Fortitude." It is a good fault, and a rare one. The time will come when he will know better just what to choose of all he has to give, when he will eliminate more without losing anything essential.

Aside from the philosophy in this story of the Rising City, as the subtitle names it, there is a keen interest to the picture of Rachel's marriage, and the tragedy through which she found herself. There is another love-story, too, and there are many characters, each one thoroughly alive, which make it difficult to get at the writer's meaning. There is no excuse for so excessive a carelessness.

A PRIMA DONNA

MARIA. By Bettina Von Hutten. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

WIDESPREAD and profound is the conviction among novelists that a woman who essays to sing or to act must have her heart broken before she can do anything worth while in either art. It shares their faith and affection equally with that other fundamental of high-strung fiction that a woman can never be quite sure her lover really loves her until he is cruel to her. It would be an interesting excursion into realism if some novelist preparing to write a story absolutely true to life would first conduct a questionaire among famous singers as to their valvular states when they made their first great successes. If the result should not fit in with his story scheme he could at least answer his critics triumphantly, "But it is true!" And there, surely, is an attractive opening for some adventurous soul among up-to-date novelists to write a story about the heart-shattering tragedies by means of which some angel-voiced Caruso of his imagination would mount to the masculine heights of song. That would be something absolutely new in fiction.

Baroness Von Hutton's new romance, which she has conscientiously tried to make a realistic novel, has a lovely, somewhat mid-Victorian heroine who possesses a fine voice and a good technique—she has taken lessons of Jean de Reszke—but who is likely to be a failure as a singer because her heart is intact. Then, providentially, she meets a prince of the blood royal, a cousin of the king, who has been traveling about in democratic style without the needful tuppence for his bus fare. The heroine's brother has come to his aid and then, without the faintest idea who he is, has invited him to dinner.

Of course, there is love at first sight, violent and overwhelming, on both sides. But presently, when she learns who he is, there begin to be ups and downs and sudden face abouts in their relations that ingeniously complicate the story and keep the reader wondering whether marriage is going to become possible for them and what Maria will do when, on the very eve of their wedding day, he is made King of a microscopic Balkan State. Whether she does finally go to live in the old house behind his castle at Ipnis, with its subterranean passage, and so cures her heartbreak, or whether she profits by that broken organ to become a famous prima donna, the reader can find out by going on to the end of the book.

The story is better in construction in some of its characterization and in its manner of telling than have been most of the author's previous novels. Maria's father, old William Drello, with his noble head, to whose promise of ability he had never been able to live up and his personality that had won him such friendship among the famous of earth that after they died he was able to make his living by selling their letters, is so well done that he stands out more alive and real than any one else in the book. He is much more interesting than either the heroine or her royal lover.

ANOTHER MINERVY-ANN

MIRANDY. By Dorothy Dix. With illustrations by E. W. Kemble. Hearst's International Library Company.

THIS remark from Sir Conan Doyle comes forcibly to mind as we read Dorothy Dix's altogether delightful "Mirandy":

> We talk so much about art that we tend to forget what this art was ever invented for. It was to amuse mankind—to help the sick and the dull and the weary.

Very "sick, dull and weary" must be the reader whom it does not lure into forgetfulness of his troubles, and to whom it does not administer the frequently repeated tonic of a hearty laugh. Never since Mr. Harris's inimitable "Minervy-Ann" has there been such a fascinating lady of color as "Sis Mirandy"; but whereas Minervy-Ann is the illuminating interpreter of "a day that is dead," Mirandy brings shrewd and searching philosophy to bear upon the problems of modern life: "Revising the Ten Commandments," "Women's Clubs," "Why Men Don't Marry," "Women Popping the Question," "Worrying," "Why Woman Can't Vote," "Matrimony," "Creeds," "Being Good," &c. In the dialect of her race she dis- chunks of solid wisdom wrapped up in the fun. The philosopher of Archey Road himself does not go more directly to the heart of things than does the old washerwoman with her keen and humorous outlook upon life. Over and over, in the midst of our laughter, do we exclaim "Rem acu tetigisti!" We commend to maidens her solution—and we believe it is the true one—of the much-discussed problem, "Why men don't marry." Equally clear and pungent is she upon all matrimonial experiences, upon "the woman question" in its various phases, upon the rewards of self-sacrifice, and upon sundry theological topics. "The Advantages of Invalidism" should be published and distributed as a tract among a certain type of sufferers from "dis new-fangled ailment dat dey calls de nervous prosperity":

> Hit lets you in for doin' all dat you wants to do, an' lets you out of doin' all de things dat you don't want to do. All dat you got to do is to call yo' temper nerves, an' you can say whut you likes to folks, an' instid of battin' you over de head lak you deserves, dey has got to sympathize wid you, an' take hit becaze you say you're sick.

But it is dangerous to "put in one's thumb and pull out a plum," so full of tempting plums is every chapter. Many books of greater pretension are far less richly freighted with wisdom, while as for enjoyment pure and simple, few will be found to furnish as much.

The illustrations are clever and characteristic, though why the artist should at times portray Mirandy with her self-confessed figure of a feather-bed, and again present her with as straight a front as the girls at whom her ike was given to casting sheep's eyes, is a puzzle.

For "the sick, the dull, and the weary" we prescribe "Mirandy," and not less for happy souls on the lookout for a good laugh, and for the many who would be the better for having a brisk breeze of common-sense blow the cobwebs from minds bemused by too much modernity.

A TWOFOLD ROMANCE

LOUIS NORBERT. By Vernon Lee. John Lane Company. $1.25 net.

IT is perhaps somewhat indefinite to say that this new novel by Vernon Lee possesses a great deal of that rare quality, charm, and yet it is this charm which makes it so particularly worth while, revivifying the long-past seventeenth century romance as well as making alive its companion of the twentieth. For the book is correctly sub-titled "A Twofold Romance"; there is the tale of the mysterious, almost forgotten Louis Norbert and the crowned poetess Artemisia, and that of the modern young Archaeologist and the adorable Lady Venetia. It is the interest which that fascinating lady takes in Louis Norbert de Caritan, whose portrait hangs in the Ghost's Room at Arthington, the ancient home of her family, which excites the Archaeologist to search in dusty archives for information about the handsome young man who died in Pisa in the year 1684, aged twenty-five. On her side the Lady Venetia institutes a search through the old family papers, and between them they build up, bit by bit, an enchanting tale of love and deceit and historical mystery, a tale unfolded partly in their letters, partly in those of the ill-fated Louis himself.

In the skillful hands of Vernon Lee this comparatively new way of manipulating a historical romance proves a most successful one. There is no rattling of tinfoil armor in these pages, nor is any sense of effort or dry-as-dust research conveyed to the reader. The movement and color and feeling of actuality which underlie all the romance of the story seem indeed to be easily and spontaneously produced, thanks to a style at once simple, graceful, and flexible. It is all far-off and long ago, but one is conscious of being surrounded by

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The Road to London

By David Skaats Foster

Third Printing

"Whoever wants a first-class novel, packed full of adventure, sparkling with humor, alive with romance, will enjoy 'The Road to London,' by David Skaats Foster."—Buffalo Evening News.

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