

BOHEMIA'S DREAM OF CENTURIES NOW A REALITY

The Hour Has Struck for the Czecho-Slovaks and a Great Nation Has Come to Its Own, Thanks to Stupidity of Huns.

By E. F. PRANTNER.

"He lives whose life is fed with dreams, is warmed by Love's unquenched beams, and guided by the hope that gleams far, far ahead!"

THE hour of the Czecho-Slovaks has struck. Freedom and liberty for Bohemia are breaking through the ages' long, gray dawn, as the early morning sun, strengthening the hopes and warming the hearts of the people in these lands. The dreams of centuries are now being realized.

This little group, now as a founding among nations, has gained an enviable position in the estimation of the world through its achievements in this war. How are these heretofore unbelievable successes attained? Is the question most frequently propounded, invariably speculated on but seldom satisfactorily answered.

It is everywhere conceded that the Czechs are possessed of that stage of education and public opinion in which these people can be conscious of a national governmental responsibility. A nation is a belief, a faith, a devotion to fundamental things. It is the belief in their just cause, it is faith in those principles of humanity so earnestly urged by Hus, Comenius and Czech scholars of subsequent periods, and it is devotion to their struggle that closely knit these people as a nation under their ancient standard of white and red.

The Czechs are people of profound ideas, which they have always nourished, are soundly patriotic and of high culture, which was acquired through their own endeavors in spite of Austro-Hungarian official efforts to stifle their development and impede their progress. While the autocratic government attempted to inoculate them with the principles of the Nietzsche and Treitschke schools, the Czechs remained loyal and true to those fundamental truths so ably advocated by Hus, Comenius and other scholars of Bohemia.

The ruling classes of Austria-Hungary for centuries have ceased to "Kultur" the Czechs. The catchwords of this century have been, as tersely expressed by Woltman, "Teutons are the aristocracy of humanity. Whoever has the characteristics of the Teuton race is superior." The Czechs have had the sad and bitter experience of understanding the effect and meaning of "Teutonic superiority," and as a result have persistently and consistently resisted its influence, preferring their own culture, thereby remaining outside of the sphere and realm of "Teutonic aristocracy."

At the zenith of their fifteenth century glory the Czechs numbered about five million souls. By the middle of the seventeenth century they were reduced to the mere handful, less than eight hundred thousand, through the application of a process then called "Germanization," now better known as "Kultur." In numbers the nation was reduced to absolute negligible, and in force to almost total impotence, but it was not destroyed. Its language survived, therefore, left in a comatose state. Subsequently it was revived with a greater flame of noble national spirit, with a renewed culture and as a united people.

The history of Bohemia is one long and continuous story of constant wars between the Slav and the Teuton. Some of the conflicts were waged because of religious differences, while others were carried on as linguistic wars. The object of all the struggles was the same—the extermination of the Austrian Slav. The struggles were unending, with the application of the "Germanization" process was constant.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the Czechs, under the leadership of Palacky, reacquired a culture which in some respects approximated their medieval splendor. This, also, is the period of the reawakening of the Czech people. The nation sprang out of our with wonderful vigor from its long and enforced idleness. The culture of the French and English scholars was the medium, which with proper and constant nourishment, served as a vehicle for the rehabilitation of the Czechs. This new culture flourished until, just before the war, it was far superior to the cultures of the other peoples of the Dual Monarchy.

The constant grind of the Czechs between the nether and upper stones was bound to create a national feeling, generate a national spirit and a unified people. Thus the results produced were absolutely contrary to German plans and expectations. To-day these endeavors stand with a nation imbued with its freedom, which determination is spurred by rejuvenated national feeling, while a united people demands justice from the ruling classes of Austria-Hungary. The resentful people are seeking an opportunity to avenge the wrongs committed against themselves, against their forebears. Is it any wonder that they battle with such bitterness, tinged with much enthusiasm, against the German and Magyar hordes, their persistent oppressors? The Bohemian lands and people are the brightest jewel in the crown of Austria-Hungary, but they are also its Nemesis. They are one of the moving spirits in the dismemberment of the empire of the House of Hapsburg and in the undoing of militaristic Germany.

The meaning of German propaganda aimed to disrupt a nation or a people is now, thoroughly appreciated by all the world. The Russian, Bohemian is but the most recent, interesting and noteworthy example. For ages the Czechs and the Slovaks as well, have been subjected to a systematic vile and calumnious worldwide propaganda conducted by German and Magyar publicists. Its only purpose was to discredit, in the eyes of the world, everything Bohemian or bearing the earmarks of the Czechs. While the world listened to their nefarious preachings, and believed them, a person of Czech birth was forced to bow his head because of the situation created and so earnestly desired by the autocrats.

Not being content with discrediting the Czechs, they divided the Slavs, of which family the Czechs are members, against themselves. In this way they arrayed one member of the Slavic family against another. An illustrative instance is that of the Poles, who voted with the German minority in the Austro-Hungarian Reichstag against the interests of the Czechs.

German propaganda did not stop there, it attempted to stir Czech hatred and distrust of the Germans and the Hungarians as a result of their past dealings with the Czechs. Through intricate, craftiness, treacherousness and consciousness the Germans created for the Czechs an unhappy and unfortunate situation, which they had to master and clear up to the world public at the outbreak of the present world upheaval. Through herculean efforts the Czechs set

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BRITISH CAVALRY CROSSING A TEMPORARY BRIDGE. BRITISH OFFICIAL PHOTO.

BLOWING UP AN AMMUNITION DUMP. BRITISH OFFICIAL PHOTO.



HUN GUNS CAPTURED BY THE BRITISH. BRITISH OFFICIAL PHOTO.



REMARKABLE PHOTOGRAPH OF BRITISH IN ACTION. OFFICIAL FROM BRITISH PICTORIAL SERVICE.



BRITISH CAVALRY MOVING FORWARD TO ATTACK. BRITISH OFFICIAL PHOTO.

The Rulers Believed They Could Continue to Trample on the Patriotism and Self-Respect of a Noble Race.

mation of military value, relative to the status of the Hun forces, to the commander of the allied army—in whose midst they seek shelter, refuge and asylum. Possibly in a military sense the Czechs are insignificant; nevertheless, by their course they exact an enormous toll from the ranks of the "missionaries of human progress." They are compelled, under existing circumstances, to avail themselves of the best weapons at their disposal in order to attain their goal, and they act in no wise different than the Teutons would act if similarly situated.

The Czecho-Slovaks are one of the most sorely tried nations among the Allies. Their fighting men at all times without a foot of national soil to stand on, they are deserted invariably, but who before deserting were driven, between German and Magyar soldiers, on pillaging expeditions through trackless wildernesses, only catching their breath in prison camps of France, Italy or Russia; then reforming under foreign but friendly leaders to fight for their just cause and the Allied cause of humanity.

True, the Czechs have been victorious, as their culture, literature, arts and daily life attest. They have been traveling an unending road in a barren "desert" of oppression and injustice, invariably headed for the ever-present but always illusive and far-distant mirage—freedom and liberty for Bohemia. After many disappointments they have reached the outer edges of an oasis where the waters from the spring of freedom and liberty are gaily bubbling, and here the Czechs hope to moisten their scorched lips and parched throats.

The injustices and oppressions of the Czechs have been directed against the individual as well as against the nation. The bitter school of practical experience, under the harsh tutelage of German and Magyar despots, has taught the Czechs that Bohemia's freedom and liberty may depend on the act of one person. Every one of them being imbued with that spirit, he has trained and nerved himself for the supreme moment, that moment when the sacrifice of his all, or if need be of himself, shall materialize Bohemia's ambitions. They realize that they cannot act as a body, but that they may act as individuals. Each Czech acts for himself in such a way that the particular act he performs and daringly consummates will bring nothing but joy and happiness to Bohemia and her people. Even though each individual acts for himself yet through inherent individual purpose, so it appears on the surface, the Czechs are acting in concert to accomplish a unified and well defined purpose. In substance, the unendurable oppressions and injustices have made every Czech a "traitor," if such a thing is possible, to the sitting, incompetent and arrogant houses of Hapsburg and its cluster of leechlike satellites, and each seeks to avenge the wrongs committed not only against himself, but to avenge the wrongs committed against his kinsmen and his nation.

The Czechs, in their uniforms of sky blue, bravely and willingly sacrifice themselves for their compatriots, for their nation, for their principles and the humane cause of the Allies. They make these offerings voluntarily, knowing that by so doing they will bring happiness to their own people and to the other peoples of this world as well. To the Czechs, their whole strength and all their causes as just, there is no such word as not even by human cunning or juggling dexterity; they will succeed. Freedom for the world, freedom for Bohemia, liberty for the Czecho-Slovaks will be the reward of these brave men for the aid they have rendered to humanity.

WESTERN ART FOR THE EAST

Japan, which for years has been the happy hunting ground for European collectors of art treasures and curios, is, it would seem, about to take its revenge by acquiring works of art from the West, especially pictures by British and French artists. The art correspondent of the London Times writes:—"A few weeks ago a Japanese gentleman, a shipbuilder, speaking perfect English, paid visits to nearly all the Bond street picture dealers and made extensive purchases. He was entirely uninfluenced by the big names of famous artists or by what other people collected. The color scheme of a picture was his only guide and if it appealed to him he at once bought the picture without haggling about the price. His only concern was that a particular work was a good and shapely artistic example of the artist. From inquiries in various quarters there is every reason to believe that his selections have been extremely happy ones, which will bear the test of severe scrutiny. In this matter the dealers have acted honorably and wisely in only placing before the new collector the best pictures at their disposal. They were thus obviously acting not only in their own interest, but also in that of their client; for, having embarked on picture collecting on an extensive scale, it is practically certain that the new collector will in the near future pay other visits of a business nature.

"The pictures bought are mostly of modern British artists—many of them French. The Japanese shipbuilder visited the studios of several prominent artists—namely one who has done a conspicuous quantity of excellent art work in connection with the war—and in one case he is reported to have purchased nearly all the pictures and drawings hung on the walls. Some of the stories concerned with the sale of the great merchants in the Midlands who found themselves almost suddenly rich fifty equal suddenness developed into picture collectors. On all sides, however, there is a chorus of praise of the Japanese shipbuilder as an excellent natural fair for a fine picture, and of his prompt, businesslike decisions.

"The same gentleman has also made extensive purchases in Paris and Italy. The pictures that they have been paid for 'on the nail' have been stored in Japan, and sent to be displayed on the walls of one or other of the well-to-do houses in Japan. When they are sent to the West, the owner has himself returned within the space of a very few weeks probably more pictures than any other man in modern times."

BOTH GOING IT BLIND. "How do you know you are not married? He—If it comes to that, how do I know I am not marrying me to reform me?"

The Tirpitz Battery Captured

The famous Tirpitz Battery near Ostend has been captured, says the London Daily Mail. It was known in the summer of 1918 that the Germans had mounted some bluish guns in a place at the back of Mariakerke (or Ostend Extension, as it is also called), marked on the map as Hamilton Farm. It was not until British monitors began to bombard Ostend docks in September that the same year that the battery, "at Ostend," what it did on that occasion was couched in solemn plain language.

It proved that it could fire over 20,000 yards with ease and accuracy; and a shell which fortunately failed to explode further established the fact that we were dealing with a 28-centimetre (11-inch) naval gun—rather than a 24-centimetre (9.5-inch) gun. The Tirpitz revealed its capacity to reach 20,000 yards with equal ease and accuracy. Another day he reached us at 20,000 yards, and finally—a perfect triumph of the Tirpitz gun—his "double bracketed" monitor at 20,000 yards, splashing her from end to end. But you may naturally ask—monitors have big guns, too—why could not they give him

the world right by preaching truths from every housetop and in a comparatively short time they convinced it of the justness and righteousness of their cause. Where at that time one person knew that the Czechs stood now hundreds are aware of it.

Nevertheless, in Bohemia's night, when other peoples heeded the just and noble stand of the Germans, the Czechs did not swoon to yield—they always defied the autocrats; they were active every waking moment, preparing the day for the time when they would be able to take the field, side-by-side with the civilized nations against the Hun.

It is singular that in all the achieved successes the Czechs follow no leader who stands out boldly. In Serbia the information imparted by the Czech soldiers who deserted the Austro-Hungarian Army enabled the Czechs to defeat the Hun legions. In Italy, the Czech deserters from the Germanic armies helped the Italians to trifle trifles and gain a decisive victory over the Teutonic hordes by advising the Italian command of the Austro-Hungarian positions and strength.

By a lightning stroke the Czechs have hastened the end of German domination over Russia. By use of terms of the "Brest-Litovsk Treaty" Russia was reduced to a mere tool in the hands of the Germans. No one ever doubted this, but if that fact requires proof supplied this proof, which demonstrates unmistakably and most eloquently German duplicity. The gravest mistake made by the

German agents was the refusal to grant safe passage to the Czecho-Slovak troops from their Russian camps to Vladivostok. The Bolsheviks desired to oblige their German masters, and subsequently attempted to stop the Czecho-Slovak en route. The result was that the troops took matters into their hands and forced their way through the Bolshevik lines and eliminated wherever they went the venomous German influence.

Nowhere do the Czechs desert in accordance with preconceived plans, though the desertions from the Teutonic armies are wholesale. Invariably the desertion is individual; they do not flock to any individual leader's standard. Thus it is evident that the individual's purpose is the common purpose of all.

To all outward appearances the Czechs are a leaderless body, which is true in one sense, the military, but a masterful power unites them through some mysterious, intangible, indescribable means for the attainment of a common objective. Though lacking a military genius on the other hand they are under astute political leadership. Within Bohemia Deputy Kramarz most ably directs the movement, while in distant lands Professor Maazky pilots the "baby" ship of state over dangerous shoals. The deep harmony for the attainment of the same end is the result of the attachment of the same Austria-Hungarian authorities became aware of it. Deputy Kramarz would quickly feel the heavy hand of the ruling autocrats.