

## TOPICS OF THE DAY.

THE RUHR SITUATION: THE FRENCH CASE: GERMANY RESPONSIBLE:  
HISTORY OF BARRINGTON: UNIVERSITY OF HALIFAX: ADAM  
SMITH.

THE impotency of it all is what strikes one most forcibly with regard to the unceasing stream of talk about France's occupation of the Ruhr. The three great Powers concerned have no common ground of understanding or agreement. The rest of the world, with the exception of Belgium, which is in large measure the mere puppet of France, is not directly interested or is standing aloof. Great Britain's immediate interest is mainly economic, and only prospectively political. With France and Germany the issue is exclusively politico-military, involving the future of each. It is merely the continuation of their centuries-old struggle with each other for supremacy.

The matter at stake is control of the Rhine valley. With Germany as at present constituted in possession of that valley, and France as now organized excluded from it, only time would stand between Germany and the fulfilment of her historic policy, or between France and the sealing of her national doom. Had Germany succeeded in the Great War, France would have been stripped to the bone. This was the openly avowed intention of the Germans. Only the intervention of Great Britain, Italy and the United States prevented its execution. Nothing but a continuing guarantee from those Powers, or of some one or more of them sufficiently strong for the purpose, could provide even temporarily for the security of France. If even foreigners are aware of this, as they must be, how must so obvious a fact affect the hearts and minds of the French? At Versailles the French aim and desire was to end the war in the good old way which, after all, would appear to be still the only satisfactory way of ending violence, that is, by effectively lessening the strength of the defeated aggressor. They proposed the annexation of the western bank of the Rhine, with fortified outposts on its eastern bank, which would have enabled them to dominate both river and valley and so to protect themselves in future against the Germans. Their proposition was negatived by both Great Britain and the United States—by Great Britain because she foresaw in it a menacingly strengthened France, by the United States because in President Wilson's eyes it conflicted with his visions of universal good-will and perpetual peace.

To compensate France for what she was forced to renounce, they offered her a joint guarantee of protection, secured by treaty, against future German attack. The United States promptly repudiated the undertaking of its representative at Versailles. Great Britain, in consequence, withdrew from the compact. France was left without security for the future, and with only an unsecured claim against Germany for actual damages inflicted on her during the war. Ten of the richest and most populous of France's Departments had been shattered and laid waste by the Germans. Her greatest industries had been ruined, whole countrysides depopulated, and cities razed to the ground. An intolerable burden of debt had been heaped upon her. Germany, on the other hand, had gone out of the war almost intact. No invader had set foot on her soil. Her people had lost nothing but the time of their soldiers. Her indebtedness was entirely internal, and has already been repudiated by the simple means of currency inflation. She retains all of her former industrial equipment, and stands ready to resume her march of prosperity and triumph. If she could repudiate or defeat the French claims to indemnity, there would be nothing to prevent her becoming as strong as ever positively and stronger than ever relatively within a score of years or less; and then, once again, woe to France.

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**T**HIS was the situation as the French saw it three years after the war, when Germany, more prosperous than ever outwardly, and spending much more extravagantly than ever at home, had made but small effort to redeem the obligations imposed on and accepted by her at Versailles. She was subsidizing the ex-Kaiser and his family with untold millions; she was multiplying her civil list indefinitely, at exorbitant wages, that she might appear to have as little as possible left over wherewith to meet foreign claims for reparations; she was systematically degrading her currency for the same purpose. She had ruined France's coal mines during the war; she was in effect refusing, in fact deliberately neglecting to supply the French with the quantity of coal stipulated for their pressing needs. She was not even defraying the expenses of the armies of occupation under the Treaty. Instead of paying any considerable part of the reparations agreed upon, she was constantly whining that she could not pay, and insolently demanding reductions without any guarantee that she would ever pay even the ridiculously reduced sums mentioned by her.

What was France to do in such circumstances? Great Britain

warmly sympathized with her; but neither nations nor individuals can live, much less prosper, on sympathy alone. Great Britain neither loved nor trusted Germany much more cordially than did France. But Britain had no immediate or early cause to fear Germany, while France had. Great Britain wanted a restored Germany wherewith to trade profitably. There was nothing that France feared so much, and had such good cause to fear, as a restored Germany, against renewed aggression from whom she was entirely without protection. What possible ground for further co-operation between Great Britain and France was there in such a situation? France naturally decided to act alone. There is no reasonable room for doubt as to her motives. She is not and has not been seeking reparations, but security, security for herself regardless of others. This may seem selfish, but when have nations been unselfish? When has one nation ever had greater cause to fear another than France has with regard to Germany?

They have been fierce foes throughout recorded history. Caesar described the Germans whom he encountered on the left bank of the Rhine, two thousand years ago, as invaders. Almost from that day to this a struggle has gone on intermittently for the control of the Rhine valley. For hundreds of years the French and Germans have fought over it with varying fortunes. Each side has always known well, and still knows, that not the river Rhine but the valley is the natural boundary between them. Under the Versailles Treaty the French are now virtually in possession of all the left bank of the Rhine. They have strong outposts on the right bank. They have seized the Ruhr valley with its enormous coal and industrial resources on that bank, because they need and want it as a permanent foothold there with a view to the ultimate domination of the whole Rhine valley and full control of the river. It is safe to predict that nothing will induce them to relax their grip but the definite break-up of the German Empire, and the re-segregation of its component State elements. They think they are in sight of the final realization of their age-long national dream. They are now the easily predominant military Power of Europe. No nation is sufficiently friendly towards or interested in Germany to challenge them in arms there. They will work their will, probably amid continued talk and remonstrance, but they will work it, none making them really afraid. It is by no means impossible that their doing so may be the best possible thing in the interests of future world-peace. Germany intact and once more strong would be a continuing menace. With Germany dismembered or reduced to impotence, whence would war be likely to come and

to what end? France might strengthen herself economically in dominating the Rhine. She could not but weaken herself militarily for generations to come. On the whole, it is to be hoped that the end, whatever it is to be, may come quickly. Nothing could be worse than the present uncertainty. Germany apparently neither can nor will do anything rational or effective. Only Great Britain and the United States, in complete and definite co-operation, could check France. The United States is evidently determined not to move. Great Britain is torn amidst feelings of mistrust or unallayed hostility towards Germany, of sympathy or friendship for France, and of helpless annoyance over her own economic misfortunes.

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**T**HERE would appear to be little doubt that, while there is loud denunciation of France in certain quarters, the great majority of Old Countrymen sympathize with her in her Ruhr proceedings. The unmistakable reluctance of successive Premiers to cross her path, or interfere directly with her in any way, clearly indicates this, even apart from the outspokenness of a large and weighty section of the public press. Denunciations of French proceedings are based mainly on economic considerations. It is assumed that Great Britain is suffering severely by the interruption of her German trade, which the invasion is alleged to be causing. The assumption may well be questioned. It is worth remembering that a comparatively insignificant proportion of Great Britain's trade was actually with Germany even before the war, and that she was able to dispense with the whole of it, without difficulty, during the war. The pleas which are now being made on behalf of Germany, for trade reasons, were put forward for Russia only a short time ago. It is greatly to be doubted if Britain would profit from trade with either Germany or Russia at the cost which would be involved for her in the economic restoration of either country at her expense. Trade which is got to be only through unsecured loans had better not be sought.

The assertion that the reparations problem as urged by France is the principal cause of the unsettlement of world-trade is doubtful. Neither the United States nor Canada is heavily injured because of it. Both are prosperous in spite of it. There are many elements in the drift of Europe towards economic chaos other than the Ruhr complications. The internal affairs of Germany, particularly with regard to her currency, have much more to do with the general economic situation than the occupation of the Ruhr by France. Germany's internal situation

was well nigh hopeless before the invasion. Her Reichsbank notes in circulation had increased from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  billion marks, when the war began, to 1208 billion marks at the end of 1922 before the Ruhr seizure. What had that seizure properly to do with the further, almost incredible, increase of her paper money from the end of 1922 to the 30th of June 1923, from 1280 billion marks to 17,291 billion marks? Germany, not France, has been upsetting Europe economically. When the war ended, 40 marks would purchase a pound sterling. It takes three or four millions of them to purchase a pound at present. A high British economic authority, who has made intimate enquiries, expresses the deliberate opinion that the reparations question is due not to Germany's incapacity to pay, but to lack of good will on her part. Lacking the will to pay, she has designedly produced all the appearances of national poverty. If Germany should succeed in her scheme to avoid the payment of reparations, she would almost immediately be in a better financial and industrial position than before the war. She would be able to outdistance not only economically but militarily her more heavily burdened national rivals. Thus she would have won the war in losing it, and would speedily dominate Europe without necessarily striking a warlike blow. Is it to be expected that France should stand by and see this come to pass, without raising a hand to prevent it, while well aware, as she is, of what it would involve for her? To an interested onlooker it appears even more vital to check Germany now than when she was on the direct march to Paris, and thence to London and New York, taking in Canada by the way.

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LIFE was too arduous in the early days of Nova Scotia's settlement for the careful keeping of records or the writing of annals. In consequence, a great deal of valuable historical material has been lost. On the beginnings of a community much of its future depends. To understand the present, one needs to know the past. Hence the gratitude we owe to local historians who, while there is yet a good deal to be learned and recorded, are delving into the past and publishing their findings for our enlightenment. A most interesting history of Barrington—his native township—has just come from the pen of Rev. Edwin Crowell, M.A., D.D., at present of Yarmouth, N. S. Dr. Crowell was especially well equipped, in all respects, for the task which he undertook. He is the descendant of a number of the first settlers of Barrington. His parents, grandparents, great grandparents and great great grandparents were all residents of the township in which his own

youth was passed. He knows every foot of the ground, and is intimately acquainted with all the people. He is filially affectionate as well as profoundly sympathetic towards his subject. He had the advantage of the earlier labours and collections of an indefatigable local antiquarian, the late Arnold Doane. From a scholastic and literary point of view, Dr. Crowell was particularly fitted for his work, and that in a manner highly gratifying as well as complimentary to Dalhousie, from which he graduated with high honours, and as one of the earliest winners of the Governor-General's gold medal, in 1880. He was one of the first, if not the very first of Dalhousie's Baptist graduates. He has proved his appreciation of his *alma mater* by sending his sons to her classes. So far was he from being turned aside from the faith of his forefathers by his education at Dalhousie, that he kept the ministry of the Baptist Church constantly before him during his college course, and entered upon it without delay after graduation. So well did he serve his Church that Acadia University some years ago bestowed upon him its honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Thus equipped and endowed, Dr. Crowell has given us a book worthy of himself and of his subject. His literary style is admirable; his matter, highly interesting—even to one who knows not Barrington; his arrangement of material, excellent; his diligence in research and care in statement, unflagging. The biographical section of the book, which is wonderfully complete, will naturally appeal to every Barringtonian, at home or abroad, and to most Shelburne county people as well. Its broadly historical part cannot but deeply interest all who desire accurate information concerning the past of Nova Scotia. There is new and most valuable material in this book with reference to the French settlements in Barrington, the earliest of all in Canada, and the French traders who preceded them and left their names along the southern coast as enduring monuments. There is a heretofore practically unknown account of the deportation of those primitive Acadians from their Barrington homes in 1756, the year after the deportations from the Annapolis Valley. An outstanding feature of Dr. Crowell's work is in the true perspective which it furnishes, and the importance which it justly assigns to the New England settlers of this Province. It is to them, far beyond the United Empire Loyalists, that Nova Scotia is indebted for its earlier development. They were the genuine pioneers and openers-up of western Nova Scotia. Where they settled, they fixed themselves not only to stay but to work, to improve their surroundings, and upbuild the country. They neither depended on nor sought Government assistance in their early

struggles. They tolerated no such things as cowardicé or failure. Dr. Crowell is one of many of their descendants among us to furnish living evidence of their worth as men and women, and their value to their adopted land. He is to be warmly thanked, as well as highly complimented, for his splendid contribution to the history of Nova Scotia and of Canada.

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AN almost forgotten chapter in the history of Nova Scotia, one which might have been productive of highly valuable results, was written less than half a century ago. The formal record stands on the Provincial statute-book. Yet it is probable that scarcely one among ten thousand present-day Nova Scotians is aware of the fact. It was the institution of the University of Halifax, in 1877. This university still exists, for one reason among others, because a number of highly distinguished Canadians are its graduates, and no Legislature since its foundation has had the temerity to interfere with their rights. The institution suffered suspended animation, not death, through the withdrawal of its public grants. Its story, in brief, is this.

The question of college union in Nova Scotia was up in a more acute form in 1875 than it has ever been since. Quite inadequate provision had been made at Confederation for the revenues of this Province. More than half its total income at that time had to be devoted to education alone. Each of the denominational colleges, including Mount Allison in New Brunswick, was in receipt of a considerable annual grant. It became manifest that this could not be continued. The Government of the day was afraid to withdraw the grants without some plausible excuse. The colleges refused to amalgamate. A suggestion was understood to have come from Dalhousie that an examining institution, on the London University model, should be established, and that it alone should receive Provincial support. The expectation was that the degrees of the new university would prove so much more desirable than those of the colleges that those institutions would be gradually extinguished for lack of students, and that Dalhousie would acquire a monopoly of teaching. Grants to the colleges, including Dalhousie, were withdrawn. The University of Halifax was endowed for examination purposes alone. It turned out, however, that an overwhelming majority of candidates for the university's degrees were graduates and undergraduates of Dalhousie. Scarcely any applicants came from the other colleges. Had the authorities of the day at Dalhousie been more patient or more far-sighted, they

would ultimately have reaped their reward, as in the parallel cases of the London University and the Canadian Universities of Toronto and Manitoba. The problem of college consolidation in Nova Scotia might thus have been solved long ago. But Dalhousie could not—at all events did not—wait. When the finances of the Province became still more restricted after 1880, the grant to the University of Halifax, at the suggestion—it was whispered—of Dalhousie, was withdrawn. As that was its sole means of support, it ceased to operate, although not to exist. No degree-conferring institution in Nova Scotia has ever been more signally complimented by the success of its graduates than the University of Halifax. The present Superintendent of Education, for example, although a distinguished graduate in Arts of Dalhousie, was one of the first to qualify for the university's Science degree. Its graduates in Law have, without exception, distinguished themselves in various walks of life. Its Chancellor was the late Rev. Dr. George W. Hill; its Registrar, F. C. Sumichrast, afterwards for years a professor at Harvard. The most competent scholars and learned professional men of Nova Scotia were members of its Senate and Examining Boards. When one thinks of the University of Halifax and its wrecked possibilities, one is painfully reminded of the American poet's exclamation,

Of all sad words of tongue or pen  
The saddest are these—"it might have been."

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TWO hundred years ago, last June, Adam Smith was born. That, remarks Sir William Ashley in the *London Observer*, is an arresting reflection, for his *Wealth of Nations* has had vastly greater influence on the economic thinking of the western world, and therefore on the material fortunes of mankind and all that is bound up with them, than has any other piece of writing. He it was who, in the most practical sense, created that orthodox English political economy which has determined or modified the policy of every civilized people. It has become fashionable, of late, with shallow thinkers and economic smatterers, to sneer at Adam Smith. Similar minds venture to think slightly of great poets of the past, or even contemptuously of the Bible. They may be disregarded. The reputation of one who exercised so much influence, not only in his own day but on succeeding generations, is secure against such petty assaults. And yet it is true that Smith's theories were not strictly original with him. It is equally true that they are in need



of substantial revision, in the light of modern experience and knowledge. In the same sense, it is true that the Darwinian theory did not originate exclusively in the mind of the man whose name it bears. The ideas which it formulates had been "in the air" for a generation. Tennyson had distinctly adumbrated them in his poetry. But it remained for Charles Darwin to formulate and give scientific consistency to them. A similar task fell to Adam Smith in the field of political economy. He systematized the current knowledge and thought of his time.

For eleven years of his younger life, Smith had been Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. The Moral Philosophy of those days was markedly individualistic. Smith's economic ideas were, no doubt, deeply coloured by the moral views which he accepted and taught, and so they became fundamental in his system. The welfare of society was to be brought about by individuals following their "natural" feelings, and—in particular—the feeling of self-interest. Hence his doctrine of *laissez-faire*, now treated with contumely by many politicians who are far from being economists, although it still contains much of practical as well as theoretic truth. At the age of 40, in 1763, Smith resigned his professorship to become tutor and take charge of a young Scottish duke on his Continental travels. He spent considerable time in Paris, where he came into intimate contact with that distinguished group of French writers who are asserted by some to have been the real founders of the science of Political Economy, although afterwards eclipsed by the brilliant Scottish formulator of that science in *The Wealth of Nations*. It was not until 1776, thirteen years later, after long secluded thought and study, that the book was published. It received immediately the welcome which it merited. From that day to this, it has profoundly influenced the minds of men and the policies of nations. Much of what was new and striking in it then is commonplace now; but what great ideas do not, in time, become "staled by usance"? Economic developments due to mechanical inventions, and the combinations of capital which followed, were not of course—because they could not be—foreseen by Smith. They, with the political changes ensuing, have materially modified the application of certain of his doctrines, but they have by no means subverted most of the principles laid down by him. On the contrary, they have served to strengthen and confirm many of his ideas and most of his information.

W. E. M.