(January 6, 1915.)

Russia and the War

By Samuel N. Harper.*

At a special luncheon of the Club, held on the 6th January, Professor Harper said:

Mr. President and Members of the Canadian Club,—I wish first to thank Mr. Locke for the personal word which he has said in introducing me; and I want also to thank the officers and members of the Canadian Club for the honor of this invitation to speak before you to-day. My justification for presuming to address you is that I have spent the major portion of the last ten years in studying certain aspects of a subject which I wish to present to you and which I hope is of particular interest to you just now: the subject of Russia, of Russia and the War.

We in the United States are asked to observe in this struggle strict neutrality. I interpret this injunction in the sense that it does not impose on the individual not to have sympathies and express them. (Hear, hear.) And in my particular case I believe I am justified, because of peculiar circumstances, when given a chance,—and I always seize every chance given me,—to put before those interested the Russian side of the present controversy. The other sides have been stated by their champions and by their opponents, but the Russian side has been merely hinted at from time to time, and there is very much on the Russian side which should be laid before not only the American public but before you.

There is the excuse for a certain amount of legitimate propaganda. Russia is misunderstood. There is a great amount of prejudice current with regard to Russia; and particularly I would point out the attitude toward Russia which I have found in England. The other day I was very much taken back when at a lecture which I was giving the Chairman introduced me as speaking on that "half-civilized Russia." One has heard a great deal on "Slav barbarism" in these last months. Another expression which is rather current is that

* Professor Samuel N. Harper is a son of former President Harper of Chicago University, and is now Assistant Professor of Russian in that University. He spent several years as a student in Russian Universities.

of the "unnatural alliance," referring to the alliance between Russia, a backward country we must admit, and the democratic countries of England and France. This last point is of particular interest to you, and I wish to go into the setting, if not the history, of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, which has contributed in a certain measure to the situation we have to-day.

I would like to give another word of a personal character. For three years I lived in England, where I was associated with the School of Russian Study, started under the energetic management of Professor Bernard Pares, who is now the representative of the British Press Bureau in Russia. Prof. Pares saw this ignorance in England of Russian affairs, and he thought that there was a possibility here for University work in the direction of spreading a more serious knowledge of things Russian in the English public. The work developed, and he invited me to join him in it. For three years I was with this School of Russian Study, and was one of the editors of the "Russian Review," which aimed to spread a more accurate knowledge of Russian politics, history and thought in the English-reading public. My excuse for mentioning this is that in connection with the work in Liverpool I had to study the relationships between Russia and England, in the development of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. With these few words of introduction I wish to plunge into my subject. I can state only generalities, and these but briefly; but I take for granted that you have more knowledge than we have in my own country of recent foreign affairs and politics.

One of the most important things in connection with Russian history is the fact of Russian expansion. This has brought Russia into close relationship with England on the one hand and with Germany on the other. Russia has had this greed for land; but I think we can partially accept that interpretation which Peter the Great put upon this land greed, when he said, "It is not land we want, it is water." (Hear, hear.) They wanted markets for development as an industrial country, but what they wanted more was an open sea. Until the 21st of this month the port of Archangel will be open, but then it will be closed by heavy ice floes, and Russia will be cut off, her only line of communication with the western world being by Finland, which is used only by the more venturesome travelers. This line is not open even to magazines, the more serious Russian periodicals, or books. The port of Archangel was used in earliest times, but was abandoned; now they are obliged to come back to it. This indicates that there are insufficient openings for the country.

Russia has looked, now here, now there, for access to the open sea, and always has come back to the natural opening at Constantinople. From the Russian piont of view it has always been England that blocked her effort to get to the open sea. In the Crimean War it was England, with others, that blocked her. One of the reasons for the Turkish War of 1877 was to secure to the other Slavic States their independence—for their independence meant keeping that road open; and again England blocked the way.

The economic importance for Russia of Constantinople is very great. I read the other day an article by an Englishman, Lowes Dickinson, in which he intimated that that was not really the reason, that it was not to have the sea open to her commerce, but a route open to her warships, that lay back of Russia's insistence in this matter. In theory the Dardanelles are open to Russian commerce; but take just one instance: in the Turkish-Italian War the Dardanelles were mined for over a month just when Russian exports had to leave, and these could not get out. The industrial activity in the Black Sea basin received a vital blow in the closing of the Dardanelles for six weeks; that was a closing not to Russia's warships but to her commerce.

The attitude of people in England on this question of Russia and Constantinople, I think, can be very well stated in the words I heard used by some one: "In England we have always recognized Russia's need for that opening, but she wanted it so badly that we felt there must be some ulterior motive back of it." (Laughter.)

From talks with men connected with English public circles, and from my reading of English newspapers, I think that the attitude of English public opinion on this question has changed these last two or three years, and that it is not thought now that anything dangerous would result from letting Russia come down through the Dardanelles.

Russian expansion in the Middle East also brought her into touch with England on the question of India. Some saw in any Russian advance in Persia or Central Asia a menace to India. I cannot go into this question. No doubt Russian expansion in this region is very effective. Russia was able to expand, to push in through Turkestan, and out to the east. I think even her severest critics will admit that she had done important work in this district, putting order where there was anarchy.

But on this Middle East question, I believe the most interesting point is that while England was watching Russia very carefully, it was Germany that came in and built that Baghdad-

bahn. Germany's idea was that of an international railway, connecting Constantinople and the Bosphorus with the Persian Gulf, going down through Asia Minor. The English held out against it, because they did not see proper security in the proposals of Germany against the control of this system by the German element in the Company. But the Germans went on with their project; they had secured the concession from Turkey, and through this concession for a commercial enterprise they were gaining considerable political influence in Turkey. In fact, I think it is not too strong to say that German influence was replacing English influence, and that it had become dominant in Constantinople. This was noted. There had been a warning of what this would lead to, but the full force of the Baghdadbahn project was not realized till 1907; and I interpret the coming together of England and Russia as having been an indirect consequence of German development in Asia Minor.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was not an alliance; it was not even a general understanding; it was an agreement between the two countries that on the question of Persia they should make mutual concessions; spheres of influence were divided off, and a neutral zone of territory was left as a kind of buffer. This was an opening for further understanding between the two countries on other points, and it undoubtedly meant the avoiding of friction between the two Governments, between the two countries, where friction was bound to develop because they were bound to meet. The attitude of the English public and of the Russian public was very interesting. One met a great deal of criticism from English Radicals, and some English Liberals, who saw in the agreement a sanction for the strangling of Persia. I cannot go into this question. And a great many thought that it was also a kind of English sanction of Russian methods in government. Sir Edward Grey said that the agreement had nothing to do with internal governmental methods of Russia, but somehow many people thought that it implied a sort of approval of the reactionary policies of the Russian Government.

Russia was in a very difficult situation. Russian Reactionaries opposed the Agreement, because they were afraid that it would have a liberalizing effect on Russia! (Laughter.) The Russian Liberals saw the possibility of its lending itself to a movement against Persian nationality, and they regarded it with truly Liberal principles; but they saw in it a leverage which they could use in internal politics, something that would help Russian Liberalism and the cause of reform in Russia.

A very interesting line was the one which divided the Liberals and the Reactionaries. Russian Reactionaries wished the foreign policy to be pro-German; Russian Liberals wished it to be pro-English. It was a perfectly logical and natural alignment.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement was signed in 1907. At the time it seemed to be an attempt to "pen in" Germany; it failed in this respect, however. In 1910 we have the Potsdam Agreement between Russia and Germany. The terms had to do with the Baghdad Railway. We learn the terms from the official authorities, of both Germany and Russia, to the effect that the two countries had found a basis of agreement on several questions of Asiatic issues in the Middle East, in Persia and Asia Minor. This Potsdam agreement was a victory for the pro-Germans in Russia, who had been working for a breach with England. For some months there had been a tension in the relationships between the two countries. The Potsdam agreement was not a formal breach of any previous agreement—Russia did not contravene the Anglo-Russian Agreement by signing the Potsdam agreement; the Anglo-Russian agreement was simply an understanding on certain points and did not preclude the making of other agreements; but it was a victory for the pro-Germans in Russia.

Now, I want to take up the question of German influence in Russia, which meant both economic and political influence. It is in the first place simply the question of the more developed country industrially, Germany getting the market of the less developed industrially, and still predominantly agricultural country, Russia. But the political influence of Germany is said to have been a dominant influence in Russian internal politics. Germany has always taken a great deal of interest in Russian development, following it and studying it with a great deal of care, for commercial relations, to develop her markets; and not until recently, to quote an Oxford professor, has she "discovered Russian barbarism, of which she is talking now so much." (Hear, hear.)

German influences are very strong in Russia, and have showed themselves particularly in the relationships between the heads of the two dynasties. There are naturally close relations between the two Emperors because of their kinship and their neighborliness, and there is no doubt—though this is a thing that cannot be proved, as historians like to prove things—that when the Sovereigns met, as they have done very frequently during these last two or three years, one of the matters discussed would be their internal problems, and that

each would receive advice from the other. The advice given from Berlin was always in the direction of having a less liberal form of government and blocking possible liberal movements.

The Potsdam Agreement was a triumph for the pro-Germans, but friction in connection with Bosnia and Herzegovina qualified this triumph. Then there arose friction over the Balkan War. But more particularly there was the friction that developed this last year over the negotiation for the renewal of a commercial treaty. Russia had had to bear under this treaty for ten years; in 1904 it was renewed for the first time, and to quote the general statement, which I think covers the point, it was the price which Russia had to pay to Germany for her neutrality during the Russo-Japanese War. The proposals from the two sides were to be in by the 31st of last month. There was friction because both the industrial and the agrarian interests in Russia had to get their own Government to support their demands, and to stand out for a proper protection of these interests. It was not a question of one party trying to get special terms of protection at the expense of the other party. Both had to stand out for Russian rights. I think that showed to those of us who were watching the extent of German political influence in Russia.

Another point of controversy between Russia and Germany: General Von Saunders, a German military man, was appointed to train the Turkish army. Russia protested against so prominent a military man being sent; but the Germans said it was not a question of politics but one of expediency. "If the German military reputation is to be at stake," they said, "we must put in a man who is capable." Russia protested, but her protest was set aside; this caused considerable discontent and resentment. In diplomatic affairs Russia suffered defeat after defeat. Russia seemed to count for little in international affairs, and this produced a feeling of resentment and humiliation.

On this same point, I have had several letters from Russia since the outbreak of the war. One struck me as particularly interesting; it spoke of "the sigh of relief in Liberal circles when the bombardment of telegrams from Berlin to the Emperor ceased."

Certain conditions appeared to make it inevitable that Russia would get discouraged in the struggle, and that at an early stage there was a possibility that Russia and Germany would settle their scores. Such a suggestion seemed to me a possibility, perhaps. That, however, was before I became convinced of the new spirit in Russia. (Applause.) Because of that new spirit, I believe, the Russo-English relations are bound to develop, and in a form more acceptable, and in a way that will help this new spirit in Russia. (Hear, hear.)

On this new spirit I can just touch. Conditions prior to the war were very discouraging. I left Russia in April, and there was then talk of revolution. Germany believed this talk, and helped to spread it. Many Liberals believed it. I think we all lost the sense of perspective and looked only at the mass of detail, the evidences of discontent here and there and everywhere. There was one thing that could bring all Russia together. But it is not sentiment only that accounts for this Pan-Slavic idea in Russia. It is, as I have pointed out, a community of interest: for Servia keeps the way open for Russia to the south. Not merely is it fellow interest in the Servians as fellow-Slavs, but it is economic interest as well that operates. The Pan Slavic interest of Russia is spoken of as a thing that one should fear,—the expansion of Russia. Pan-Slavism has been taken in this sense, as developing in the governmental mind, and was a source of anxiety; but this was a policy foreign to the Russian genius and interests. It was inacceptable to Poland, and was inacceptable to Servia. There is another Pan-Slavism, the real Pan-Slavism, becoming more and more articulate. While not yet acceptable to Bulgaria, this new Pan-Slavism is acceptable to Poland, and must be acceptable to the others also. When one hears this talk of Pan-Slav danger, they think of Pan-Slavism as the old conditions made it; they do not realize the new Pan-Slavic idea. And the Liberals and Radicals, who represent this other Pan-Slavism, expected to see a Russian revolution, if there were not this foreign complication. Then they saw in this break with Germany a hopeful sign for the realization of their hopes. The "sigh of relief" mentioned above came when they saw this. One prominent man, a Liberal, said, "The German Government has never had a quarrel with the Russian Government, but always with Russian Liberalism."

Several days ago I was running over a quotation from Maximilian Harden, written in 1911, and in his direct, frank style he said: "We must not wait till the Russian Liberals, who never can be our friends, have regained their strength."

The war brought an outburst of patriotism in Russia; all party differences were dropped, party hatreds vanished,—the session of the Duma showed this beyond all question of doubt. I hear from private letters that the two leaders of Russian nationalism, who were responsible for the anti-Finnish, anti-Polish, anti-Jew policies, are now active in the Red Cross

work at Warsaw, working for the relief of suffering in the Jewish and Polish districts! (Applause.)

This is in harmony with the appeal to the Poles, and the promises to them. This was not purely a war question. The Duma had provided for it, but it was blocked in February by this small nationalist group; but now they have put it through as a war measure, signed by the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaivitch. The attitude of the Poles is very significant. There was a bitter hatred of the Russian Governmental policy, but the Poles have long realized that the anti-Polish policy of the Russian Government was not entirely its own, but was impressed upon it by Berlin, ever since the two powers shared in the partitions of Poland, to keep down Polish nationality. That explains how the Poles believe really in the new spirit of the Russian Government and of Russia.

Another indication of this new spirit makes this appeal to the Poles most significant. The Grand Duke, who signed it, has always been a military man, but he here commits himself on a question of politics, and by taking this attitude on the question of giving the Poles their rights, he gives his weight to the Liberal cause.

The vodka monopoly is another indication of this new spirit. It again is not purely a war measure, though it came as a war measure. The Liberals have been urging for years that the Government take effective measures against drink in Russia. In February of last year their efforts came to a point and the Emperor in a ukase deprecated a policy whereby the welfare of the Treasury has been dependent upon the intemperance of the people. The Government received $350,000,000 in revenue every year from the vodka monopoly. As a temporary war measure the vodka shops were closed. The champions of temperance came out with articles in the Russian newspapers, saying, "We must have this continued; it will cost the Government $50,000,000 to keep the vodka shops closed. But see what the country is going to get in return for that comparatively small loss of revenue." The decision to keep the vodka shops closed must be interpreted as listening to this public demand, which was again indicative of a new spirit. Some say this is simply a passing mood, but it has lasted five months, and gives no indication of dying out. In any case, it is bound to leave its traces. (Applause.)

There is nothing dangerously Chauvinistic about this new movement. The militant spirit is absolutely foreign to the spirit of Russia. Many of us kept insisting that this anti-Polish and anti-Jew policy was not permanent. We saw indications of its breaking here and there, and we knew it

must be transient. Russia is giving indication of her intention to clean up house. To summarize, let me read from this letter which I have from an Englishman living in Russia, the correspondent for an English newspaper, Harold Williams:

"Of course you must come on. This is just the place where you ought to be now. . . . . There are lots of things you won't understand later if you don't come now. You wouldn't know Russia. Everyone is cheerful and full of life. Suicides have stopped, and life has grown worth living now that it is worth dying for." (Applause.) This is very significant coming from an Englishman living there, who is fully imbued with the Russian Liberal spirit. "Parties have got mixed up, Rights and Lefts have been thrown into a kind of cauldron and I haven't the least idea what is to become of it all. At Warsaw I talked several times with Purishkevich." He was a man who did as much as anybody against the Polish and Jewish interests. "He is a ripping Red Cross worker, and has buried the hatchet with all his enemies. He's a flaming patriot."

I have seen an article in a Russian newspaper, written by one of the leaders of the Russian Constitutional-Democratic party, Prince Trubetskoy, which says:

"Without question the most important thing that has happened during these great historic days is the spiritual revolution through which we have passed. For the first time after many years, we have seen a united Russia, a whole Russia.

"In 1877, during the Turkish War, our state of mind was in many respects similar to what we have now. Then also all differences were forgotten: all were united in one thought, in one outburst. When one reflects on our national unity, these great moments are what one always remembers, when the national unity became palpable, visible. And one always wishes to believe that it is precisely in this passing moment that our genuine national force has revealed itself. . . . All these years we have seen parties in hostile conflict one with the other; we have seen classes and racial groups: but *Russia* we have not seen, we did not know where were her will, her thought, her feeling.

"The contrast of what we have now with what we had before has revealed the one great secret of our national life. For the second time in my memory, Russia finds her spiritual unity in a war of Liberation. . . .

"This trait of the Russian character is often explained as our 'groundless idealism,' our 'impractical dreaming,' or even 'cosmopolitanism'—the absence of a 'healthy national feeling,' and the Germans are held up to us as examples.

"Now, that this model, from which our Nationalistic programme slavishly copied, has been so thoroughly discredited, it is not hard to answer these charges. That which seemed to many impractical idealism and fanciful dreaming is in fact the healthy consciousness of the Russian national interest, which is closely bound up with a just and human attitude toward other peoples. Fortunately for Russia the liberation of other peoples, especially Slav peoples, is the condition not only of her spiritual but also of material integrity. The unity and integrity of Russia, and the liberation of fellow Slav peoples, those are the two slogans in the name of which the war is being fought. . . .

"Good neighborly relations between Russia on the one hand, and Austria and Germany on the other, have existed and have been maintained at the expense of Slavdom, especially at the expense of Poland. It was the participation in the partitions of Poland that supported this harmony; a common struggle against a Slav people, kindred of ours, was the source of the close relationship. And this relationship brought advantages to Germany and Austria, but not to Russia. It weakened Russia, because it prevented her from coming forward as the liberator of the Slav world.

"Now, when this role has been assigned to Russia by the force of circumstances, we see new and manifest evidences of the unity of interests which brings together the Slav peoples formerly hostile to each other. On the one hand Russia will not forget that the Poles, who have been considered the enemies of Russia's interests of State, fell at Kalish and Chenstochova, the first sacrifices for these interests. . . .

"The super-national, super-party spirit of the present war, this is what constitutes the strength of Russia, of the Slavs, and of their allies. We shall not weaken ourselves by any narrow party declarations, or race enmities. We shall remember that devotion to this spirit is our principal superiority over our enemies. To triumph we must first of all preserve this spirit, which is uniting peoples under our flag."

One of the leading authorities on Russian history, Professor Vinogradoff, who refused to write on Russia these last years, because he saw what he considered the real Russia unable to press its demands home, is now writing on what Russia really stands for. I urge you to read that little book, "The Psychology of a Nation," which has appeared in the Oxford Pamphlets. Let me read from an article by Professor Vinogradoff in the "Yale Review" for January, 1915:

He explains that the war has forced people in Russia not only to forget strife and differences, but to reconsider their positions as parties, and reflect on the problem of reconstruction, but in the mood created by the war:

"There are certain peculiar conditions of Russia's coming of age in public life . . the walls of Jericho will not fall at one blast of the trumpets . . but apart from details, I firmly believe that the transformation is approaching. . . . I am sure of one thing:—the people of Russia, and more especially the educated classes, the Intelligentsia, *will revive* in the atmosphere of the great reform movement, and may yet astonish the world in peace as in war. The educated Russian . . . . may be too impulsive, lacking in discipline, inexperienced in politics, but he has one quality which will save him and his country: he is longing to serve a great idea, and to merge his insignificant self in a common cause. He is by nature a crusader. Let us wish success to his crusade." (Long and hearty applause.)