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PATRIOTISM ON THE STAGE.

INVASION WHILE YOU WAIT.

(From our London correspondent.)]

The English stage is established on a solid foundation of concrete conservatism. In more enlightened lands the stage is becoming more and more the medium by means of which questions of grave national import are brought before the public in such a way as to command undivided attention. Lessing did much to stimulate the dormant patriotism of his Fatherland through this medium, and in France, of course, the idea has been carried to the usual extremity, so that today it is possible to witness in Paris plays based on every imaginable social and national question. But bearing the inherent conservatism of the English stage in mind, it is impossible to exaggerate the growing intensity of public interest in the burning question of national defence, since by far the most popular play of the moment in the metropolis is not really a play at all, but a picturesque presentation of the dangers to which the proverbial apathy of the Englishman in the street on all matters pertaining to the defence of his hearth and home is leading. In short, "An Englishman's Home," now playing to full houses every night at Wyndham's Theatre, is a lurid parable; sufficiently embroidered to attract the blasé theatre-goer, but a parable none the less. There have been soldier plays in abundance, but this piece is something quite different. The usual martial drama centres around the impossible exploits of a gentleman ranker, who struts about the stage in a red tunic and, at the psychological moment produces from beneath his waistcoat a large Union Jack, which, energetically waved aloft, brings down the house to the strains of "Rule Britannia." In the new Wyndham piece, on the other hand, the British Army is rather held up to ridicule, the ignorance of the auxiliary forces is remorselessly depicted, and the ancient ideal that an Englishman's home is his castle is rudely shattered by the tramp of armed invaders. The play itself is mediocre to a degree; not even such patriotic journals as the Express and the Mail deny this; but the press-or at least such part of it as professes Imperialistic tendencies-unites in eulogising the production as a matter of principle. The author is content to remain in the background under the pseudonym of "A Patriot." There is no pretension to style, effect, or actual drama. The principal characters are Brown, Jones, and Robinson, representatives of the self-satisfied British taxpayer whose little soul shrivels up at the mention of militarism. This type, indeed, appears to have aroused the author's righteous wrath, for he caricatures it with an acrid pen. Mr. Brown fumes impotently over the presence of foreign invaders in his hallway, and at the height of the carnage which is raging all around, he goes out to call a policeman! Meanwhile, the armed legions of the "Empress of the North" (suggestive, is it not?) knock his "castle" to smithereens with high explosive shells, exhibit an inhuman disregard of his domestic regulations, and finally shoot him dead when, goaded into a sudden fit of Berserk rage, he snatches up a rifle and plunges into the fray. The young Cockney "bounder" who regards soldiering as "silly rot" also comes in for a drubbing. He is held up in contrast to the serious young man who looks upon the assumption of arms

as his national duty, and spends his leisure moments in perfecting himself in the use of the r:fle. Towards the end of the piece the stage becomes a scene of appalling carnage; the poorly armed, untrained English volunteers are falling in swathes beneath the well directed fire of the enemy; the crash of shells mingles with the groans of the dying; and then, just when all appears over, the sound of bagpipes is heard, heralding the approach of the British Army, which has arrived on the scene by motor buses! Of course the invaders are defeated, and all's well, no doubt, that ends well; but if you look at the faces of the audience filing out you will see that the lesson, however crudely it has been given, has struck home. "An Englishman's Home" may prove more efficacious than a thousand speeches by Lord Roberts, and if it has the effect of hurrying on compulsory service or genuine army reorganisation, the world will be indebted to its author. For nobody can doubt that the present impotent condition of Britain's military forces is highly prejudicial to the peace of Europe,

THE BALKAN SITUATION.

END OF THE AUSTRIAN BOYCOTT.

Constantinople, February 2. The Grand Vizier has communicated to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador that all difficulties concerning the boycott have been removed, and that, consequently, the steamers of the Austrian Lloyd from Trieste are at liberty to arrive and discharge their cargo at Turkish ports.

Sofia, February 1. The collective action of the great Powers will take place tomorrow, as some of the representatives have only received their instructions today. The step which all the Powers will take in common has for its object, according to a report that is in circulation, in the first place disarmament on both sides and consequent removal of the frontier difficulty, and then an understanding between Bulgaria and Turkey, to the exclusion of territorial compensation on the part of Bulgaria.

St. Petersburg, February 2. The St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency learns from an authentic source that, as Bulgaria is prepared to pay 82 millions of francs as compensation to Turkey, Russia, to whom Turkey owes a much larger amount, proposes to liquidate that compensation. In that case Bulgaria will raise a loan of not more than 82 millions at moderate interest besides providing a sinking fund; while Russia will ask ne'ther control nor special guarantees. On the other hand Russia offers, as Turkey estimates the damage accruing to her at more than 82 millions of francs, to conclude an agreement with Turkey with a view to the complete satisfaction of her demands by payment of yearly instalments or by capitalising such instalments. The Bulgarian Government has given its consent in principle to the plan thus proposed. No answer has as yet been received from Turkey, but there is reason to hope that on her side also the proposals of Russia will be sympathetically re-

Constantinople, February 1. According to statements made by the Porte, Turkey demands from Bulgaria ten millions of francs at once and twenty-five millions after three or four years. These amounts refer only to the Orient Railway compensation.

ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DRAMA. AN AMAZING STORY.

St. Petersburg, February 2. The excitement caused by the dramatic arrest on Sunday of M. Lopuchin, ex-chief of the St. Petersburg police, shows no signs of abating. The charge against him is now known to be one of high treason, and perhaps the most remarkable feature of the case is the readiness with which M. Lopuchin is furnishing the authorities with highly incr.minat-ing evidence against himself. When the officials entered his dwelling and took him into custody, he at once produced a bunch of keys and actively assisted them in their search through his private cabinets. Recovering from the momentary condition of complete stupefaction at his arrest he became suave and obliging, and presently he extracted from his pocket-book a document which he handed to the chief of the Secret Police, with the words: "Here is a highly interesting document which com-pletely establishes my guilt." While the search was in progress several people called at the house to visit M. Lopuchin, all of whom were detained. Among them was Prince Urossof, former assistant of the Minister of the Interior. M. Lopuchin was subsequently conveyed to gaol, where he is kept in strictly solitary confinement. Shortly afterwards numerous other arrests and domiciliary visits were made, but so far no authentic list of the persons apprehended has appeared. Bureaucratic circles are especially excited over the sensational developments of Sunday.

The primary charge in the indictment against the ex-police chief is that of betraying Azev, whose strange career as a secret agent of the Russian Government reads like the pages of an exciting novel, to the Central Committee of the Russian Revolutionary Party in Paris. M. Lopuchin, it is said, deliberately forwarded to this Committee a series of important documents proving Azev's treachery up to the hilt. At that time Azev was regarded by the Revolutionaries as one of their most active supporters, and their fury at the discovery of his true character was unbounded. He was at once sentenced to death by the Committee, and since then his whereabouts have been unknown. For a long time his guilt was not believed by several prominent members of the Party, including Prince Kropotkin and Burzeff, the most active of them all. Azev was charged before the Committee, but made such a plausible defence that he was acquitted, but later on the suspicions of Burzeff appear to have been aroused. He watched Azev's every movement, and quickly discovered evidence which placed his treachery beyond all doubt; this evidence is said to have been supplied by Lopuchin himself. Not only was Azev engaged in watching the progress of the Revolutionaries in Paris, but he also busied himself in the capacity of political agent of his Government, particularly during the period of the first and second Dumas. When members of the Revolutionary Party left Paris to return to Russia, he secretly notified the Government, with the result that the unsuspecting conspirators were generally arrested at the frontier, much to their amazement. Some ten days ago M. Lopuchin journeyed to Paris, where he had long interviews with the Revolutionary Committee. His motive for thus betraying Azev is

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