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KEYNOTES OF THE CENTURIES IN RELATION TO THE GREAT WAR.

BY BERNARD C. STEINER, PH.D., BALTIMORE, MD.

NOTHING is more fascinating nor more dangerous than to attempt to explain historic events by referring them to a formula. One is so apt to find the formula applicable to facts, because he fits the facts to the formula; to discover proof of his *a priori* theories; to see the working of general laws which he wishes to prove, forgetting or overlooking facts which disprove those laws, or, at any rate, seriously modify them. When one reads a book such as Flint's history of the Philosophy of History, he is impressed with the insufficient grounds upon which men build up such philosophies. The perusal of the pages of that book is like a walk through a graveyard filled with tombstones, each bearing the inscription, *Hic jacet,* for the philosophies laboriously worked out by learned men have been interred deep in the oblivion of forgotten things, until now one can hardly read the inscriptions for the moss which covers them.

Yet there is a value in grouping the main facts of an epoch together and considering what are the general principles they illustrate and what trend of human thoughts, what direction of human progress, they show. Often we find that, in a rough and ready way, a term will sum up the events of an era, and that, in some degree, the Procrustean bed of a century may serve as the frame in which to fit the record of some

great movement of men. Thus the fourth century before the Christian era may well be summed up in the rise of Macedon and the Hellenization of the East through the conquest of Alexander, and the first century of the Christian era may receive like summation in the consolidation of the Roman empire and the rise of the Christian church. There are only a few times in the world's history, like the present, when we see all things rocking to their fall, when old things are visibly passing away and the parturient world, with cries like a woman in travail, struggles to bring new life into existence. Nevertheless, though the changes may usually be slow, they are sure and, like the slow changes of man's life, we may roughly group together a certain number of years, as those of the childhood, the adolescence, maturity, or senescence of an idea. In the last thousand years, we find that it is possible to group the most important events of the various centuries together, so as to give each century a keynote. If a single keynote be too narrow to fit the multiform activity of a century, two or three, at any rate, will suffice, and will give us a reasonable explanation of the major events of the period.

From the welter of conflicting interests and of struggling tribes which had lasted for centuries, Charlemagne and Egbert brought the beginnings of order and the conception of central rule into western Europe in the ninth century, which conception was never lost; for, from that time, the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdom of England always existed as entities, appealing to the hearts and minds of men. The tenth century saw the permanent establishment of important European countries as they have remained in large measure until to-day, and the lands of England, Scotland, France, and Germany find the beginnings of their present organization in that century. Alfred and his able descendants, Edward, Athelstan,

and Edgar in England, Hugh Capet in France, Henry the Fowler and his son Otto in Germany, left so strong an imprint on the countries they ruled that these lands have remained powers, with existence continuous from the times of these rulers to the present day.

The keynote of the eleventh century is the rise of papal power. Hildebrand lifted the office, which he bore under the title of Gregory VII., to an unprecedented height, and his spiritual sway was strengthened by William the Norman's conquest of England. In the quarrel over the investitures he measured swords with feudalism and showed unexpected strength. He might die, it is true, in exile at Salerno, but he had made Henry IV. come to Canossa and kneel in the snow there. The Christianization of Scandinavia brought new countries under the influence of the Pope, and the weakening of the Eastern Empire made him appear larger, as the ecclesiastical head of that part of Christendom which was increasingly important.

The twelfth century is that of the crusades, in their inception a generous movement to save the holy places of Christianity from infidel rulers, which had as incidental results the bringing men of different countries to fight side by side for a common object and the widening of the horizon of Europe, through the travel of the crusaders to the East and their return with Oriental products.

The thirteenth century is that time of the critical struggle between Church and State, of Guelf and Ghibelline, of Innocent III. and Frederick II. After the fall of the Hohenstaufens and the advent of the Great Interregnum, it seemed as if the State had definitely lost, and the rise of the orders of Franciscan and Dominican friars seemed to give the Church an irresistible support. Yet at the close of the period, Boniface VIII. failed to maintain his claims for the papal su-

premacy, and his successor even abandoned Rome as his residence.

In the fourteenth century, the rise of the towns furnishes the keynote. The City States of Italy are the most important of these, but, in the communes in France, the boroughs in England, the cities of the Hanseatic League in Germany, is also seen the development of commerce and municipal institutions. The towns' freedom was not destined to last, and the fifteenth century was an era of consolidation of power, of the collapse of feudalism, and of enlightenment through the renaissance of learning. The great schism in the papacy ended, and the Popes returned to Rome from their Babylonish captivity at Avignon. The Wars of the Roses ended in the triumph of the Tudors. The Moors lost all their power in a Spain united under one head. The failure of the English in the French Hundred Years' War and the destruction of the power of Charles the Bold of Burgundy made Louis XI. ruler in fact of France.

The Renaissance, a period of intellectual discovery, led to the period of physical and spiritual discovery of the sixteenth century. Old world maps had to be torn up, and new ones on Mercator's projection succeeded the earlier ones of the flat earth surrounded by the ocean. One continent after another, like a new planet, "swam into the ken" of men. Religious discovery was no less important. Martin Luther nailed his theses to the door at Wittenberg, and Ignatius Loyola established the order of Jesus. The Protestants, including Anglicans, Calvinists, and Lutherans, reformed Christian faith and practice, and broke away from any connection with the Church of Rome. The Council of Trent reformed the Roman Catholic Church from within, and the two divisions of Western Christianity stood forth irreconcilable. The seventeenth

century is marked by a struggle to colonize the new world, which had been discovered in the previous century, by the beginnings of international law under Grotius, and by the establishment of the permanent international relations of independent States under the peace of Westphalia, after which time diplomatic representatives were maintained continuously by each member of the family of nations at the courts of each other. It was recognized that the differences between the forms of Christianity could not be composed, but as yet the attempt was to secure unity of religion in each country, and men struggled for the principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio,* — that the religion of each state should be observed by all its inhabitants.

With the beginning of the eighteenth century, we find the struggle for the balance of power on land and the control of the ocean, together with the coming of the benevolent despot, who should cause his people to prosper because he willed it so. Peter the Great was a characteristic example of such a ruler, while Louis XIV., striving to aggrandize France, met the opposition of other states who fought for the balance of power.

Out of the crash of the French Revolution came the two political keynotes of the nineteenth century. It was a great century, filled with scientific discovery and invention in the field of practical arts; but, in the political world, its keynotes were nationality and liberalism. Napoleon, the last of the benevolent despots, failed to crush the incipient national spirit of Spain, and, during the century, Bismarck with his associates gave Germany, what Cavour and his associates gave Italy, a national unity, which found lesser examples in the freeing of Greeks, Serbians, Roumanians, and Bulgarians from the Turk. To liberalism, the child of the American and

the French Revolution, the century owed it that constitutional governments sprang up everywhere, more or less democratic in character, and following more or less closely the government of England and the United States. Toward the close of the century, another idea began to grow in the hearts of men, and it is so developing that the keynote of the twentieth century is "the international mind." We think in terms of the whole world, and the whole world, for the first time in all history, has become one political system. The undiscovered lands have disappeared, the savage peoples have been parceled out among the European countries for exportation or civilization; the unoccupied territories have been colonized; the marvelous improvements in means of communication, on land, on water, and in the air, have brought men together. The United States was the first country out of Europe admitted to full international equality with European countries, but it and the Latin American Republics, which subsequently secured such recognition, were parts of Christendom. With the negotiation of treaties with Japan, however, which placed that country on a footing of equality with those in "the family of nations," a non-Christian, Asiatic nation came into the same privileges as the nations of Europe. The Hague Conferences, the spread of foreign missions, the increased number of treaties of arbitration which have been negotiated, the attempt to create permanent courts to decide matters of international dispute, — all show that internationality is the keynote of the age. Men are coming to realize that a nation must heed not only the insistent call to claim its rights, but also the imperious call to do its duty to other peoples. The mills of the gods grind slowly, and a ruler or a nation may adopt a wicked course and be successful for a time, if this course coincide with the keynotes of the period. Charles II.

of England died in his bed, secure on his throne, because he knew how to take that tide which leads on to fortune. The shrewdness and perfidy of Louis XI. of France greatly aggrandized the power of his crown. "Men crown the knave" though they "scourge the tool that did his will"; but Schelling is right that the history of the world is the judgment of the world (*Weltgeschichte ist Weltgerichte*). The judgments of mankind in future generations may usually be trusted; and though we may "rough hew" our ends, history, in the long run, shows itself as the "way of God in the world," and Divinity finally shapes these ends aright. "Earth bears no balsam for mistakes," however. To contemporary judgment, which often feels, in its short sight, that "nothing succeeds like success," wrongful conduct of man, or State, may be palliated; but to that cynical judgment, an error is worse than a crime, and no error is more fatal than to fail to realize that another keynote in history has been struck, that one is struggling for a cause already lost, that one is an anachronism. The same course of conduct which might have been successful in one epoch will lead to failure in another. A few instances will suffice. St. Louis IX. of France was a strong ruler and a man of exalted piety; but he failed, when he became an anachronism and tried to carry on crusades as they had been carried on in the age preceding him. Charles XII. of Sweden was a great general; but, failing to realize contemporary conditions, he merely

> **"Left a name at which the world grew pale,**
> **To point a moral and adorn a tale."**

Napoleon was the last and the greatest of the benevolent despots, and the Code he gave France is his enduring monument; but, failing to realize the growing power of nationality,

his "vaulting ambition overleapt itself," and he died a prisoner in St. Helena.

How does this survey lead us to prognosticate the result of the present great war? We find the German Emperor leading his people with their demand that they must have a larger "place in the sun," with their desire to impose "Kultur" on the world, with their exaggeration of the principle of nationality in their struggle to put "*Deutschland über Alles.*" These things led them to stand most stiffly against those proposals of The Hague Conferences tending toward greater internationality. They have made themselves an anachronism and are trying to keep back the tide of progress, as did King Canute's courtiers the tides of the North Sea. With themselves they have allied two semi-dependent States which have a position even more anachronistic than that of Germany: Austria Hungary, the last power remaining composed of several States, based on the outworn, mediæval principle of allegiance to a personal sovereign; and Turkey, a country which has learned to carry herself towards the Armenians no otherwise than the Assyrians and Babylonians did toward their subject peoples twenty-five hundred years ago. Opposed to this congeries of anachronisms, albeit they use modern scientific inventions to urge their antiquated cause, we find the most remarkable alliance which the world has yet seen. The so-called *Quadruple Entente* stands for the principle of internationality. The powers are banded together under a remarkable agreement, which is understood to have been drafted by Sir Edward Grey, to the effect that: "the British, French, and Russian governments mutually agree not to conclude peace separately during the present war. The three governments agree that, when terms of peace come

to be discussed, no one of the Allies will demand conditions of peace, without previous agreement of each of the other Allies." To this agreement it is understood Italy and Japan have given consent. Not only are they bound together, but they are knit together in many other ways. We have just seen the creation of an Anglo-French loan, in which, for the first time in the world's history, there has been created a joint obligation of two separate, independent, strong nations. It is reputably reported that the allied countries have agreed not to bid against each other in the purchase of munitions of war. In the field, and on the sea, the armies and navies of the allies work with marvelous unity and absence of friction and selfishness. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera" ran the old song, implying that he fought against the forces of nature, and so necessarily failed. In similar way, must a nation fail which struggles against the oncoming rush of progress. The conservative may long for what he calls the good old times and, passionately trying to retain or restore them, may check their passing for a while; but, in the long run, the dead past must be left behind to bury its dead, and one must yield to the sweep of the current which carries all before it to new places. The complexity of modern life and the increasing and speedy intercourse between countries necessarily increase the need for peaceful relations between nations. The present gigantic conflict is the attempt of nationality to overthrow internationality and, like all attempts to restore an anachronism, is certainly destined to fail, while the principle of internationality is as certainly destined to lead the nations into still closer relations, until, like the States of the American Union, all the countries of the world may walk together in the ways of peace and quietness.