

How Europe Views Wilson and the Election

Pleasant A. Stovall, Our Minister in Switzerland, Replies to Mr. Hughes and Describes Why People Abroad Favor Wilson

By Julian Grande, F. R. G. S.

TO average American citizens Switzerland is merely a country to which people go for a cure or for mountain climbing. They forget, however, that Switzerland is the heart of Europe, and at present the one white spot in a circle of belligerent countries red with blood. From her geographical situation, therefore, the importance of Switzerland in the present war is much greater than that of any other neutral country in Europe, or, for that matter, in the world, except the United States. She is a wedge, in short, keeping the belligerents from falling upon one another tooth and nail. Apart from this, she can render them services, such as the reception of sick and disabled prisoners of war, the repatriation of permanently disabled prisoners of war, civilians, and hostages, and the conveyance of prisoners of war post, including parcels and money—services which no other neutral land is able to perform.

A Minister, therefore, resident in the Swiss capital during the war, and before its outbreak, is in a better position than any other diplomat to follow the trend of European feeling and opinion. Now, Pleasant A. Stovall, American Minister in Switzerland, first came to Berne three years ago. Formerly the American Minister in Switzerland was to be sought anywhere except in his offices in Berne—more probably either in Lucerne or Geneva. The surest place in which to find Mr. Stovall, however, is the American Legation Office in Berne, where he goes for a time even on Sundays. Before

the war the American Legation consisted of two small rooms, and the staff of a single clerk. Now, however, the offices are a hive of industry, consisting of a suite of large rooms, with clerks working busily and typewriters clicking rapidly, while there are even messengers going to and fro between the American Legation and the Swiss Government offices or other legations.

So fully occupied is Mr. Stovall's time that he was unable to see me during office hours, and consequently I visited him at his private house, which is in what is known as the legation quarter of Berne, near the Italian Legation and opposite the British. The pleasant villa in the Kirchenfeldestrasse where Mr. Stovall lives may one day be famous in history as the first residence of an American Minister to Switzerland, all his predecessors having lived in hotels.

What I most wished to learn from Mr. Stovall was his interpretation of the Presidential campaign in America, the more so as he has always been an active representative of President Wilson's foreign policy.

"As Justice Hughes," said Mr. Stovall, "even before putting off his gown of the United States Supreme Court, accused President Wilson of debasing the foreign service for political purposes, it may be interesting to note how far this is true. The Presidential campaign, for the first time in our history, will be largely determined by the foreign policy of the President.

"When the war broke out, two years ago, the Department of State found itself, as Mr. Lansing said, the diplomatic

clearing house of the world, not only in caring for our people-abroad but in looking after the interests of other nations confided to it. That the Department of State was able to meet these extraordinary conditions, is, as Mr. Lansing says, common knowledge.

"And yet President Wilson is arraigned for making his own appointments at the opening of his Administration, thus displacing men of long experience and tried ability. As a matter of fact the men who went abroad to represent the American Government in the Spring and Summer of 1913 did not, as a rule, relieve veterans in the service, but merely supplanted political appointees of President Taft of two or three years' standing. Dr. Henry van Dyke, who was sent to The Hague, took the place of a man who had been in Holland just two years. Dr. van Dyke, the distinguished author, was educated in Berlin and Paris, and was long President of the Holland Society, among the many notable books written by him being a history of Holland. His very name suggests the propriety of his appointment to The Hague.

"James W. Gerard succeeded the Republican Ambassador to Berlin, who had been continued in many posts in Europe by the Steel Trust, which seems to have been the general auditor of the Taft and Roosevelt foreign department. Indeed, the indorsement of Andrew Carnegie was said to have been valuable for a foreign mission then. Will any one contend that the Steel Trust or the Oil Trust or the Harvester Trust is called upon now to underwrite applications to foreign service in the United States? No one will deny

that Justice Gerard has handsomely discharged the difficult and delicate duties at his exacting post. He has maintained himself in a splendid way. And so Mr. Penfield at Vienna, the man who handed an American ultimatum to the proudest Court in Europe after the sinking of the Ancona, has filled a place which required finesse and firmness. He succeeded a man who had never been in a diplomatic position before; and Brand Whitlock, whose name in Europe is a household word, and who, when the rebuilding of Belgium begins, will, dead or alive, have a monument in Brussels, has reflected the greatest credit upon the Administration and his country.

"Another man who made a great reputation abroad is Henry Morgenthau, formerly at Constantinople. He protected French and British interests as well as Russian, guarded the Armenians with fidelity, watched the interests of Jew and gentile, and conducted his embassy upon strict business principles. I could name the two Pages, in London and Rome, who have well represented America in belligerent Europe. Ambassador Walter Hines Page, in London, has every day been confronted with the enforcement of 'neutral rights and neutral duties,' besides caring for prisoners of war in England and Germany. Thomas Nelson Page, in Rome, lawyer and litterateur, is, as every one knows, an ornament to the republic of letters as well as to the world's diplomacy. No one doubts that Rome and London thank President Wilson for giving them the best specimens of the higher life of the New World. William G. Sharp, in Paris, also fresh from

the halls of Congress, arrived in the midst of an extremely difficult period. He was able to explain the details of the new tariff law, and has mastered all the principles of diplomacy in a battling nation. He has been a tower of strength to American interests in the new republic. The 'veteran' whom he replaced had been in the public service a little over two years.

"As an observer of public events has well said, we have got away from dollar-diplomacy in Europe, in Mexico, and in South America, and if the American service is not as sumptuously staged as before, our foreign representatives are respected abroad by their colleagues and the Governments to which they are accredited. They are fresh from the American people. That is something. American dignity and American rights have not been sacrificed, while American sentiment has been renewed and invigorated in our legations abroad. As Robert Lansing declared in an admirable speech to the Amherst Alumni some time ago, successful diplomacy requires today individual initiative and sound judgment. It is the man of force, of originality, of personality, who becomes distinguished in diplomatic service. On men of that character the success of an Administration's foreign policy depends. They must be men who comprehend these policies, who are in hearty sympathy with them, and who are enthusiastic and tireless in carrying them out. When it comes to the principal posts abroad Mr. Lansing, who has had long experience in the State Department, expresses himself as opposed to tying the hands of the President in making his appointment.

"A man should not stay abroad too long or lose his Americanism. He should represent the policies of the President and not be sheltered by a civil service which too often is the refuge of mediocrity. President Wilson has carried out his own preferences and expressed his own principles in his foreign appointments, and, as Mr. Lansing says, 'the emphatic opinion of some of our former Ministers is rather amusing, when one considers that they never would have been appointed under a civil service rule. The President should be free to change his agents where he will. They should be his friends and in full harmony with the ideas and aspirations of his Administration, men who have a personal interest in carrying out the President's will.'

"And that is the answer to the indictment of Justice Hughes that President Wilson has framed his foreign policy and shaped his foreign establishment for political purposes," said Mr. Stovall. "I repeat that I have been thus explicit in explaining the President's foreign appointments as I understand them because the American campaign for the Presidency for the first time in our history is going to be fought out on the lines of this foreign policy.

"The foreign policy of President Wilson has been the wonder, and has now become the admiration, of the Old World. Nothing like it has been known in Europe. It is entirely outside of the experience of European diplomacy and, when the first evidences of 'the soft answer which turneth away wrath' were disclosed from Washington it was the old story of the new evangel which seemed 'to the Greeks foolishness.' So long had the old policy of 'iron which sharpeneth iron' been in force, that it was difficult for the Chancelleries in Europe to understand the new diplomacy, as it is impossible for some people at home to grasp it now. Over here they declared that the United States would lose prestige; that the code of the White House, which was misunderstood, would make for weakness. The countries at war were in no mood to talk of notes or protests. They had already come to blows and could not approve of the retort courteous. The belligerents were irritated and even neutrals were mystified. What could it all mean? The Allies and the Central Powers both alleged that the President of the United States was getting ready to join their enemies, and all the smaller peaceful States were kept guessing by turns.

"But gradually the self-possession of President Wilson began to tell. The submarine power called off its submarines, and gracefully gave up the point. The neutrals whose shipping had been threatened saw a new light and the world found itself. Without the commission of a single cruiser or the mobilization of a

single regiment the quiet, purposeful policy of the unruffled official in the White House seemed to gain an influence of which the men of blood and iron never dreamed. In some way the troubled waters were stilled. It was the first time the world ever realized that dignity and composure had a place in a world's war. Instead of issuing blue books and red books and gray books to show that the other side was at fault, the President of the United States sent out white missives couched in amiable but determined words. Behind these communications there was no rattling of the sword and no lining up of the clans.

"What Mr. Page in his interview in THE TIMES a few weeks ago said is true. Those who most fiercely criticized the President were the expatriated Americans in Europe 'residing temporarily' on both sides. In case of real war they were easy with their safety appliances of dual citizenship. They were what Benjamin H. Hill of Georgia once described as 'invincible in peace and invisible in war.' One by one these people have lapsed into silence as the wisdom and power of the President's policy were unfolded until the only discordant notes now are from the men in America who are sounding their criticisms and beating their tom-toms for politics only. This is Presidential year and they are obliged to have their fling. They hope also to have their reward.

"I do not know, I am sure, what effect the letters of acceptance and bills of exceptions are having at home. They are framed purely for domestic consumption. But in the world at large, where men are crouching beneath the rain of shells and working day and night in the offices of the State, these diatribes excite the wonder and disgust of thinking men. Can it be possible, they ask, that a great people like that in America will refuse to hold up the hands of such a man as Woodrow Wilson? He has already convinced the nations of the world of his wisdom and forbearance—the wisdom which wins and the forbearance which conquers. He has every country on his side except his own, showing that the professor and the peacemaker, like the prophet, is not without honor save in his own country and his own house."

"Do you anticipate," Mr. Stovall was asked, "that this campaign will have any



Mr. Stovall's Residence in Berne, Switzerland.

vice about returning home. Others want to know how they can stay away and still hold American citizenship and claim American protection. Until all this contention about Progressives and Stand-patters and what-not cropped out, I never dreamed of any real division at home. Those who watch the troubled events abroad and grieve over an embattled world, or who learn to love the Americans giving their time and money to relieve distress in Europe, those who have watched the policy of President Wilson and read with pride his quiet, masterful utterances, are puzzled when they hear the sound of this schism in America. It is something so foreign to the feeling in Europe, where the President of the United States, with his policy of honorable peace, has been making his

way over troubled seas and scarred trenches, and planting slowly but forcefully the standards of the new gospel. 'I tell you when this war is over, and it must wind up some day, the diplomacy which will win will not be that of Viscount Grey or of Prince von Bülow, but the new and compelling, the revealing statesmanship of Woodrow Wilson.'

"Whatever the result in November, and whatever the effect of his policy upon his immediate political fortune—'what does this matter?' he exclaimed, at the New York Press-Club—the man whose patient policy has been written above the range of shells and the flight of Zeppelins is the President of the United States who, if not too proud to fight, is at least too strong to bluster and too big to play politics at home."



Hon. Pleasant A. Stovall.

effect upon the people, the voters, of the United States?"

"How can I tell? For three years I have been at my post in Europe and for two years I have been at my desk in the legation every day, Sundays included. I have met Americans of every shade of opinion and condition. Some are just from home and others have no idea of going home. It has never occurred to me to ask these people their politics. They are just Americans. Some ask ad-