Stars and Stripes on Many English Homes

What the "American Invasion of Britain" Has Done in the Way of Making the Two Nations Friendlier than Ever Before

By FRANK DILNOT

A MErica has conquered England in a more effective sense than she can ever conquer Germany, for while her great armies will play a large part in the military defeat of the enemy, her spirit and her personality have secured the respect and admiration, and are daily gaining more and more of the affection, of the people in the old country. It is inevitable that for generations to come America will have a hold on the feelings of British men and women, outwardly unemotional, but of all peoples the most tenacious in kindly regard or active dislike.

One of the incidentals of the war is the fact that great masses of American troops pass through England or are temporarily stationed there. Thus the towns and villages and countryside places have had two great experiences, reacting on each other, the first being the inspiring and exhilarating knowledge that America had come into the war with her vast forces on behalf of civilization; the second, personal contact with the American soldiers, with all the homely knowledge of them that is bound to arise from a friendly curiosity. These two influences have had and are still having enormous effect. The English are not demonstrative. There is little or no ringing of bells or waving of flags to signal various battle successes.

There has been an instinctive avoidance of arrogance or jibilation at public meetings. But nevertheless on one occasion this year, namely, on July 4, the British people let themselves go. A distinguished French journalist recently arrived in this country, who has spent some years in London, tells me he has seen no enthusiasm during the war comparable with that he witnessed in London on that day. "At the meeting in Central Hall there were fervid scenes which deeply impressed all foreigners who know how the Britishers have to be intensely stirred before they demonstrate at all. No one could have been in the streets or at that meeting without realizing how the heart of Britain was moved. I am a Frenchman and was able, therefore, to form an impartial judgment. It was impossible not to feel the deep sincerity of these people of all classes, people who as a rule cover up their feelings. It was wonderful."

An English officer in France wrote to me a month ago with great frankness: "I was a little doubtful what the Americans were going to be like. One has heard a great deal about American bluff and bluster, and, to tell the truth, I was rather nervous, and wondered whether I should like them or not. I have now met several bunches of them. Latterly three young officers have been living with us. It has been a delight to meet them, (of course it is the officers I have been at close quarters with.) They are as modest as they are keen. They are fine fellows personally—gentlemen all. We think no end of them."

A young English gunner who has been fighting two years in France and Flanders wrote me about the same time: "Last week we came in touch with some of the American boys, the first we have seen. They are a fine, upstanding lot of chaps, and we are on chummy terms with several of them. What we like specially is that they have no bounce. There is ginger in them. They are taller and thinner than our crowd. They naturally have a good deal to pick up, but those I have met are both quick and clever. We like them because they are nice fellows."

London is not a city which beflag.

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