

AUSTRALIAN CITIES.¹

THE ANGLO-SAXON IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE.



POPULATION flocks into the towns of Australia in a proportion not known anywhere else. Melbourne contains nearly one-half of the people of Victoria, Sydney more than a third of the population of New South Wales. In all the colonies the capital cities grow in like proportion at the expense of the smaller towns and country districts. The increase of urban population is marked enough in Europe and America. That it should find its greatest excess in this new country is a peculiar fact, and one that gives some anxiety to Australians themselves, as the proportion goes on increasing from year to year. Land laws which favored the formation of large estates rather than small holdings were at one time thought to explain this centralization of population, but changes in the law have not checked the tendency. Other causes are apparent. Australia has an exceptionally large mining population, and the successful miner rarely settles upon the field of his labors, but prefers to go to the city to spend his gains. In the pastoral areas the isolation of the great estates makes the education of families and social intercourse difficult, and for this reason the rich squatter is apt to make his station a temporary residence while he fixes his permanent home in the city. The absence of accommodation on the stations for the families of employees is the most conspicuous social want of the country. Either unmarried men are preferred, or, if married, the wives and families often remain behind in town. The contrast again between the activity of city life and the quiet of the country is accentuated here. Life on a remote sheep station is for the workman concentrated monotony, while the cities are particularly full of movement. The prevailing state socialism is filling the larger towns with good things — excellent museums, splendid libraries, free reading-rooms, parks, botanical gardens, manifold places of interest or amusement. These are for the multitude, and the multitude in Australia is unquestionably becoming southern in its taste for excitement and amusements. For the rich are music, the theater, and clubs as

expensive and almost as luxurious as those of Pall Mall or Piccadilly. For the children of all, excellent schools and universities. So rich and poor alike crowd into the towns, which become large without becoming crowded, so wide is the room for expansion, so perfect the appliances of tram, rail, and boat for the suburban residence. Thus the cities have acquired not only an excess of population, but also a social and political dominance which is neither British nor American, and for which only a continental parallel can be found. To an outside observer the resulting condition of things seems artificial and not without grave dangers, but curiously interesting, as illustrating new forms of national growth, possibly incidental to extreme democratic development. The concentration of population has enabled the artisan class to secure unequaled present advantages, but there is justification for the view entertained by many Australians that it will sap the foundations of permanent prosperity unless a check can be found. The gravest problem before Australia is apparently how to get a sufficient agricultural population to stay upon the land. The temper of the country is not favorable to the patient industry of the farm, with its remote results and slow accumulation. Within the last few years the curious phenomenon has occasionally presented itself of a serious dearth of labor in country places, while in the towns masses of unemployed were besieging the government offices with demands for relief works. Sent, sometimes at the government expense, to the rural districts, the "unemployed" soon drift back to the mingled wants and delights of city life.

The cities of Australia have thus come to concentrate in an unusual degree the life of the whole country, and to furnish the key to it. They have, among cities, a type of their own, curiously marked, when we consider that they are largely the growth of fifty years. They are, moreover, interesting, which is not always true of new cities. Melbourne, a mere village when gold was discovered in Victoria, has now more than 400,000 people. It is a city where one feels that men count for more than anything else in the making of a place. Victoria received the cream of the great immigration after 1851, and the splendid and adventurous energy of the gold period still shows itself in the population, with something, it must be added, of its fever

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and restlessness. The superfluous vigor of the people makes itself felt to the remotest corners of Australia and beyond. Victorian capital and energy give the impulse to enterprise and business in Queensland, large parts of New South Wales and South Australia, and is reaching out to West Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand as well. A cooler climate assists the native vigor of the people and gives Melbourne a great advantage over Brisbane, Sydney, or Adelaide. What it finds to do it does with all its might, either for amusement or for serious work. Its race-course in the Flemington suburb has been pronounced by good judges to be the best and most thoroughly equipped in the world. Its tram system is unquestionably the best in existence, surpassing in efficiency that of San Francisco, on which it was modeled. A few years ago defenses had to be provided for its harbor, and now authorities pronounce it the best defended port in the British Empire. Magnificent public and private buildings are fast taking the place of the earlier and more temporary structures. Land has sold for the same price on Collins street as in the heart of London — an exaggerated value, but showing faith in the city's future. The public parks and gardens, the grounds and buildings of the University, the Free Library, the churches, clubs, coffee palaces, and municipal edifices, are all planned or completed on a scale worthy of a great city.

Curiously English in all external forms of life, Melbourne is often described as American in the pushing business energy which characterizes its people. It is American with a clear note of difference. There is a strenuousness like that of Chicago or San Francisco, but it can relax itself. In the American taking a holiday we mark an undercurrent of restlessness, as if he were oppressed with the thought of losing time; an Australian gives himself up to the enjoyment, and feels that he has gained a day. In holiday-making Melbourne is neither English nor American, but Italian. Still more is this true of Sydney. Energetic Melbourne looks upon its rival city as inert, and climatic influence gives some color of truth to the criticism. Sydney has the disadvantage of being some hundreds of miles nearer the tropics, and where the contiguity of the sea results in relaxing moistness of atmosphere rather than coolness. But if Sydney suffers something from its latitude, in other respects its advantage of geographical position insures it a place among the great cities of the future. Its harbor is the best in the southern seas, and one of the two or three best in the world. The immediate neighborhood of large coal measures increases indefinitely its naval and commercial importance.

With trade from America, New Zealand, the Pacific islands, and the China seas, as well as England, tending to center here, it is the Australasian counterpart of San Francisco, which it already surpasses in size. Of the beauty of Port Jackson, the wonderful bay on the shores of which Sydney is built, much has been said and written in what might seem terms of exaggeration. Yet one may fairly doubt if ever traveler felt any sense of disappointment as, sailing in from the Pacific through the narrow channel which separates the harbor heads, he sees its picturesque outlines unfold before him. It is one of the sights of the world. The magnificence of the general prospect is more than matched by the beauty and variety of detail. So complicated is the maze of winding waters and narrow, prolonged bays that one is not surprised to learn that the water line of the harbor within the heads is measured by many hundreds of miles. Low hills and numerous islands, with woods sloping down to shining bits of sandy beach, everywhere form the background for the quiet waters of the bay, and complete a scene of beauty which might satisfy the most critical taste. Wealth and art assist nature. Graceful yachts float over the waters, and beautiful villas are scattered around the various coves and bays. I doubt if any public pleasure grounds in the world contain so many attractions as do the Park and Botanic Gardens bordering on the bay. Inclosing one large arm of the harbor, facing another, and looking out upon the waters where navies can float at ease, their position is unrivaled. The climate favors the growth of sub-tropical vegetation, as well as that of the temperate zones, and great skill has been shown in making the most of such an opportunity for effective landscape gardening and interesting botanical experiments. A good beginning has been made in embellishing the gardens with statuary, to which exposure in the open air is as little harmful here as in Greece or Italy. The grounds are large enough to furnish ample room for the thousands who flock to them on Sundays and holidays.

Beautiful public gardens are not confined to Sydney, but form a striking feature of Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Ballarat, and every considerable Australian town. They enter into the life of the people both for pleasure and for instruction. The services of highly skilled botanists are secured to give them scientific interest. Experiments in acclimatization are constantly carried on, and have a wide range from the advantages of climate. Several have attached to them zoölogical collections of considerable interest. At Ballarat private generosity has added a beautiful collection of Italian marbles. The brilliancy and profusion of the semi-

tropical flowers, and the ease with which large numbers of tree ferns are reared in light structures of lattice work, make possible effects in gardening which are very striking to northern eyes.

The free way in which money is thus spent on what is simply beautiful, the pride taken in these gardens by all classes, and the evident sense of proprietorship with which the humblest workingman enjoys them as public property maintained for the pleasure of all, seemed to me among the most interesting and satisfactory developments of an extremely democratic condition of society. One fancied that he could already detect in the masses a refinement of taste and softening of manner such as contact with art appears to have given to the Italian and the Greek, and which intimacy with nature in its most beautiful forms might be expected to produce here.

In Australia the thought constantly recurs that if ever the esthetic side of the Anglo-Saxon is to receive full development it will be in these southern seas.

Another parallel with ancient life no traveler can help observing in this new land.

Since the days of Greece and her Olympic and Isthmian games there certainly has been nothing to match the devotion of the Australians to athletic sports. Football has been for the last two or three years the favorite amusement, but almost equal attention is given to cricket and rowing. Cricket teams are sent to England every year, and have, even in that chosen home of the sport, more than held their own against all comers. In rowing, too, England has had to resign her old supremacy, and now for many years has been content to watch the contests of Australians and Canadians for the championship of the oar. But it is not the success of a few specialists which marks the athleticism of Australia. The heart of the people is in it far more than in England, infinitely more than in America. The great cities empty themselves on holidays to watch the matches that are always going on. The eager rush of the crowd to the grounds as the trains or trams arrive is a curious sight. At a football match which I saw near Melbourne twenty-five thousand people were packed around the arena, and I was told that at the same time crowds of several thousands would be watching the game at various grounds in other parts of the suburbs. But the interest, or rather passion, of the crowd seemed to me more significant than the numbers. Every man, woman, and child among that twenty-five thousand people watched the match for hours with complete absorption and with manifest knowledge of the intricacies of the game. The instant spontaneous applause which greeted successful play, the storm of groans for fail-

ure, were alike graduated with nice reference to the merits or demerits of the players. A friend told me that a mile away his accustomed ear could easily judge of the progress of the game as this measured *fremitus* announced touch, or point, or goal.

This popularity of games involving severe exertion and strict physical training shared in by the many, and not left to professionals, is showing distinct results in the splendid physique of the young men. It may well be a corrective for the enervating influences of an easy climate and a comparatively luxurious life, no slight consideration in such a land as Australia. There are corresponding dangers. Thoughtful men, and particularly business men, complain of a want of earnestness in the younger generation. It is asserted that they refuse to take life seriously. A leading bank manager of wide experience told me that he found it best to get the majority of his employees from England or Scotland. On such a point it is perhaps too soon to generalize or judge. A more distinct danger appears in a growth of the coarser spirit of the arena. During a single week I saw several announcements of matches at which the umpires or the winners had to leave the grounds under the protection of the police to preserve them from excited mobs, and the public journals directed attention to the fact. Previously nothing had struck me more than the wonderful good nature, not to say light-heartedness, of Australian crowds. The passion of the south may slumber beneath its love of pleasure and excitement. Public opinion is at present strong enough to crush out anything of this kind, but the tendency is not to be overlooked. The passion for sport is not confined to athletics. Racing is extremely popular, and no town of any size is without its race-course and annual or semi-annual meetings. Already Australians aspire to win the Derby, and have sent horses to compete on English courses. Cup Day at Melbourne is universally looked upon as the great event of the Australian year, and has almost taken the place of a national holiday. Visitors flock from every part of the continent to attend it, and there are sometimes 150,000 people upon the grounds. It is doubtful if so well dressed, respectable, and orderly a multitude could be seen elsewhere gathered for such a purpose as in Australia. It seemed to me that a much smaller portion of society than in Great Britain or America looked upon such amusement as harmful. Yet though its evils are minimized by this respectability, it unquestionably ministers, as elsewhere, to the gambling spirit, which needs no cherishing here. In connection with this another scene also has left a strong impression on my mind. It was at a large race meeting. Sitting among

a group of ladies and gentlemen, apparently of the most cultured class, we watched a large field of horses go off. Every glass followed the exciting struggle. Half way round the course a jockey tumbled into the midst of the *mêlée* of horses which swept over him like a whirlwind. "One is off," a lady near me calmly said. The glasses followed the race; the horses swept in, the one with an empty saddle conspicuous; the cheers for the winner filled the air; but not another glance was cast towards the fallen jockey, nor was the slightest further remark made about him by man or woman of the party. He lay on the course as if dead till some one came to carry him away. Next morning I observed in the papers that his case was thought to be concussion of the brain and the chance of his recovery doubtful. An excellent hospital is provided for accidents by the racing club, and provision made for disabled jockeys, who of course accept the chances of their calling, yet the absence of any expression of human sympathy among the holiday makers struck me as having about it a slight flavor of the amphitheater.

Perhaps a more just explanation may be found in the habits of the people, which make of them fearless and splendid riders, and therefore thoughtless of dangers and chances which are daily faced. The English taste for riding and the English love for a good horse prevail everywhere. Men live in the saddle from morning to night on the great stations, or when driving their herds of cattle over the thousand miles which separate Queensland pastures from the southern markets. If ever Australia has to put cavalry into the field she will have a large population of the best riders in the world to draw upon.

The concentration of population in the cities doubtless accentuates tendencies to which I have referred. Other far more significant results are to be noted.

Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Brisbane have each one or two daily journals of which any city in the world might be proud, and which in matter and manner compare favorably with anything that appears in England or America. With one or two striking exceptions the tone of the press is remarkably high. Columns of European and American news are received every day by cable, and the best Australian dailies seem to me to combine English excellence and weight of leader-writing with the energy in collecting information which characterizes the American press. The encyclopedic weeklies of forty or fifty pages issued by the leading city papers for country circulation are marvelous compilations touching on every human interest under the sun.

But the excellence of the city journalism

stifles that of the smaller places and increases indefinitely the political and social supremacy of the towns.

Again one remarks how distinctive a feature club life has come to be in Australian cities. Apparently transplanted at first as a part of English social habits, the circumstances of the country have favored the growth of clubs to an extent unusual in a new country. The wealthy squatters who come in from their stations wish to enjoy and are willing to pay for the better things of civilization. The city merchant who lives far out in the suburbs requires some place in town where he can meet business men or entertain his friends. A social and gregarious habit supplements these practical needs. The more expensive clubs are supported by entrance fees and subscriptions on the scale of the best in London or New York. Professional men of simpler taste congregate in others. All are thrown open with wonderful hospitality to the stranger who brings sufficient introductions, and as the clubs have arrangements for residence, it is possible to pass through the country without going to a hotel, and under conditions extremely favorable for easy intercourse with the people most worth meeting. The gregarious habit to which I have referred, or the coöperative spirit which prevails, makes this taste for club life extend downward, and clubs exist for almost every grade of society. Where they are not found for workingmen, the trade halls furnish a substitute. All this tends to focus public opinion in the cities and give them greater dominance. I cannot but think that we may find here a partial explanation of the tendency of things in Australia towards state socialism, to which I have referred.

Compared with anything known in Great Britain, the United States, or Canada, a great deal is left in Australia to the initiative of the Government, and to central administration. The control of the telegraph system is considered as much a function of the Government as the direction of the post-offices. If later English example has been copied in this particular, the same cannot be said of the state ownership of railways, now practically universal throughout the colonies. It is an idea to which the mind of the country has become entirely habituated. The evils of having a large railway patronage exercised, and large sums of public money spent by a government which depends upon the popular vote, have been encountered here as elsewhere, but they have been met or mitigated by putting the railways under the control of commissions, composed partly of experts, and set free as far as possible from political pressure. The very considerable public debts of the colonies have been chiefly incurred in

railway construction, and the people look with satisfaction upon the assets which the country has to show for its borrowings, in the form of substantial railway lines, the increase in value of which will be for the public benefit.

Not only the maintenance of systems of public schools, but also the establishment of universities, is in the same way left largely to the state. On all sides, indeed, there seems to be a growing inclination to pledge the credit and employ the resources of the community for enterprises and objects which we have been accustomed to leave to the initiative of the individual citizen. The state is expected to take the lead in paths of progress. Not seldom it is asked to furnish employment to those who want it. Such an outcome of pure democratic growth is certainly one which differs much from what we see in all other English-speaking communities, where the prevailing tendency is to limit the functions of government, while enlarging the field of effort and stimulating the activity of the individual. The widening of the responsibilities of the state is necessarily accompanied by a centralization in administration which it is difficult to look upon as healthy. The local support and control of the common school, the municipal control of highroad, by-road, and like matters in country districts, the progressive devolution of responsibilities upon the district, the parish, the county, the state, or the province,—common alike to the systems of the United States and Canada, and becoming now the rule in England as well,—seem fitted to give a better political training to the individual citizen, and to insure greater prudence in public expenditure, than where all eyes are turned towards the central government for both money and management, for initiation and completion. English and American democracy appear to me to magnify the individual at the expense of the state; the tendency of Australian democracy is certainly to reverse the process.

It is clear that we have not exhausted the phenomena in the growth of popular power. The Australian experiment is being carried out under constitutions framed by the British Parliament and largely governed by British precedent, facts which illustrate the wonderful elasticity of the English political system under new conditions. Nevertheless it is a new and crucial experiment for English people to make, and the end is by no means in sight. Thinkers and public men in the colonies did not seem to me free from anxiety about the paths they are treading, or entirely confident about results, but the forces which are at work make it tolerably clear that in Australia, if anywhere, further attempts will be made to solve the larger problems of state socialism.

Looking at Australian life from some angles one is disposed to think that overflowing activity and energy are its main characteristics. There is another side to this. A traveler sees many things which prove that the warm climate and the easy conditions of living are great temptations to idleness and shiftlessness. There are not the natural compulsions to work which are found under sterner skies. The conditions which have produced the Neapolitan lazzaroni and the lazy Southern negro exist in parts of Australia, and even in the most virile race have their effect. For nine months out of twelve in much of the country sleeping in the open air is possible and pleasant. A canvas tent or a roof of bark furnishes a habitable dwelling throughout the year. Food is cheap and plentiful. The country is therefore the paradise of tramps as well as of the workingman. Under the name of the "swagger" or "sundowner" the tramp, as he moves from station to station in remote districts in supposed search for work, is a recognized element of society, who looks upon himself as having certain rights upon which he is disposed to insist, and he certainly has his claims allowed as in few other countries in the world.

The squatter or station owner who refuses a meal and a bed to the "swagger" may reckon with considerable certainty upon a retributive conflagration of his stacks or outbuildings. But the stimulus of such an anxiety is not needed to make the prosperous Australian considerate for social failures. Success and failure are alike questions of luck. The broken-down wanderer who asks for a sixpence or a night's lodging may be one who has just missed the opportunity of being a millionaire. He is to be pitied rather than blamed. At any rate he must not be allowed to suffer. Even his feelings must be considered. There are no work-houses in Australia. The state establishments which fill their place are called "benevolent asylums." The softening of the name is matched by the comparative respectability of the inmates. One of these institutions near Sydney contained eight hundred men when I saw it. Well fed and well clothed, enjoying their pipes in the pleasant sunshine, it was difficult to look upon many of them as objects of public charity. In England or America a large proportion of them would, I feel sure, be expected to carry on for themselves the struggle for existence. In Sydney itself a similar establishment also holds eight hundred women. Cottages were being built in order that married couples might live together and not be driven even by pauperism to the pain of separation.

These sixteen hundred accepted social failures already accumulated in one corner of so

young a community present a problem which arrests the attention.

The swarms of people who sleep every night in the park at Sydney, apparently as their only home, give additional proof that favorable conditions are not all that is necessary to make men thrifty and self-reliant. The man who goes to the wall in the old country because he is weak is apt to succumb at once to the seductions of the sunny climate and the lenient philanthropy which he finds in Australia, and become a burden on the community. He takes an easier view of the situation, moreover, and is sometimes not unwilling frankly to formulate his new conception of life. "I like to keep a straight back," was the explanation proffered to a friend of mine by an able-bodied beggar who objected to work. A New Englander, a Canadian, or an Englishman may come away from luxuriating in the sunny influences of the best Australian season without losing respect for his own more rigorous or even unpleasant climate. The east wind, the cold drenching rain, the northern blast, drive men back on home-life, on work, on more rigid views of their relations to things. After all, the environment which makes a people most effective is the best. Great will be the glory of the Australian if he retains in the south that inherited energy which was bred in the north and which has made his country what it is.

A man born to fortune who overcomes the temptations of wealth deserves as much credit and is as truly a self-made man as one who surmounts the obstacles of poverty. The same is true of nations. "Australia's danger lies in the temptations of fullness," was the remark of a clear-headed clerical friend of mine, who has studied the country carefully from a moral point of view. An English statesman has described the Australian colonies politically as "the spoiled children of the Empire," rather perhaps in view of their relations with one another than with the motherland. "We are drunk with freedom," one of their own public men said to me:

Another pointed out that political leaders had to make allowance in the conduct of affairs for an impulsiveness of movement in public opinion different from anything he had observed in other English-speaking countries. Whatever measure of truth there may be in such judgments — and there is some — still any one who studies Australia will be struck with the generous directions in which this impulsiveness and untrammelled freedom assert themselves. An outburst of political sympathy sent the troops of New South Wales to assist England in the Soudan, and the example would have been followed by other colonies had the

British Government encouraged the idea. The step was illogical and perhaps foolish under the present constitution of the Empire, but thoroughly characteristic. It might or might not now be repeated under like conditions, but in a war which Australian opinion fully indorsed all the resources of the country would be given with equal enthusiasm to the support of the Empire. An outburst of industrial sympathy last year sent many thousands of pounds of Australian money to the support of the strikers in the London docks, and was largely instrumental in winning the victory for industry in that battle of labor against capital. It is a deeply interesting fact, also, that the wealth and thought of Australia largely supported the trades councils which organized this assistance, apparently proving that, even where the combination of the working classes is most effective for the assertion of their views, the general sympathy of the country, and even of capitalists, may follow the lead of the workingman.

Australia lacks in her history the moral motive of the fathers of New England, or the patriotic motive of the loyalist founders of British Canada. She has known little of the severe national discipline by which other people have fought out a way to freedom. As in the Western and Pacific States of America, the dominant tone of life has been given by an overmastering spirit of energy and enterprise and by effort after material success. Moral strenuousness can scarcely be looked for as a characteristic of the popular mind, and circumstances are not favorable to its development. Neither religious restriction nor political tyranny has existed to stimulate the severe virtues. The people have never been called upon for any great effort of national self-sacrifice. Still there is abundant motive force in the life of the people, abundant stimulus to effort after social ideals. Nowhere does one find a larger public spirit, nowhere a finer enthusiasm pervading all classes for building up a worthy state and assimilating whatever is best from the outer world. The organized supremacy of the workingman in one way strengthens the social structure. The obedience to the will of the majority which is enforced by the trades unions ends in prevailing and ready obedience to law as the will of the whole social body. On the other hand, the instant pressure which can be brought upon a ministry under the system of responsible government which Australia has inherited from Great Britain offers great temptations for so closely organized a laboring class to exercise its powers for the interest of the moment, and equally tempts rulers to conciliate that class even in defiance of their better judgment.

An increasing tendency to pledge unduly the credit of the state to secure abundant employment and an artificial prosperity appears to be the risk which Australia incurs from the great and growing influence of a town democracy. The splendid resources of the country have hitherto proved sufficient for all the strain put upon them, but thoughtful Australians recognize that they have immediately before them a limit which cannot safely be passed, where

the courage of statesmen and the moderation of the people will alike be put to the test.

The larger ideals and balanced policy of a united Australia will be a great advantage in facing this problem, and for the rest we may feel sure that our people have under their new conditions in the great continent of the south retained that "saving common sense" which has carried our race through many a crisis of social and political change.

George R. Parkin.

MOONLIGHT.

(PICTURE BY CHILDE HASSAM.)

THE salutation of the moonlit air,
 Night's dewy breath, the fragrance of the brine,
 The waste of moving waters everywhere,
 The whispering of waves,—a hush divine,—
 Leagues of soft murmuring dusk to the sea's rim,
 The infinite, illimitable sky,
 Wherein the great orb of the moon on high
 In stillness down the quiet deeps doth swim:
 Behold the awful beauty of the night,
 The solemn tenderness, the peace profound,
 The mystery,—God's glory in the light
 And darkness both,—his voice in every sound!
 Be silent and behold where hand in hand
 Great Nature and great Art together stand!

Celia Thaxter.

AUX INVALIDES.

WHAT dead king ever knew sepulchral gloom
 Lordlier than he in this last haughty home,
 Below the Invalides' huge golden dome,
 Twelve marble Victories ranging round his tomb?
 Here from mosaics of laurel-pictured floor
 We throng to mark his monolith high loom;
 Here sculpture lauds for us his deeds and state;
 Here lie his brothers—kings, too, since they bore
 His name. As though to have breathed here were to be
 By some reflected force of greatness great,
 The insensate air itself seems charged with immortality!

And yet these proud memorial grandeurs, wed
 With reverence for the regal dust they hide,
 Are in their glory and pomp like petrified
 Tears that by widow and orphan have been shed.
 These porphyries and chalcedonies are cold
 As once was his ambition; overhead,
 St. Louis, offering Christ the martial blade,
 Stares mockery; still in mockery we behold
 On arch or spandrel saints of earlier times; . . .
 Till now the twelve great marble Victories fade,
 And in their stead tower twelve great ghosts of war's colossal crimes!