

WHAT HAPPENED TO EUROPE

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What happened to Europe by Frank A. Vanderlip

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FRANK A. VANDERLIP

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BY
FRANK A. VANDERLIP

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***T**HIS book is dedicated to
my six children, with the
hope that they, and their gener-
ation, will grow up possessed of
an abundant sympathy with
their fellows, and a sufficient
knowledge of economic law, to
enable them to make a liberal
and wise contribution of service
to society.*

PREFACE

THERE was never a more unpremeditated book. We landed in England February 2, 1919, intending to take a hurried glance at financial conditions in London and on the Continent and be back in New York by the first of April. Almost within a few hours, I found that I had known practically nothing of what had happened to Europe. The process of learning proved so fascinating, there was such wealth of opportunity on every hand, that we cancelled sailing engagements on one boat after another while we traveled through France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Holland. At last we sailed homeward, leaving Southampton May 10th, 1919, on the S.S. *Olympic*. Up to the time we waved good-by at the Southampton docks, I had had no remote intention of writing a book about European affairs.

Sitting down in quiet with the strange prospect of five days of leisure after three months of intense activity during which I had visited seven countries and had received impressions from interviews with hundreds of people of importance, representing at

least fifteen countries, for the first time it came over me how much there was to tell about conditions as I had seen them in Europe. I shrank from the prospect of going over the story hastily with various people who might be eager to get, in a word, my impressions of our new world. There was such a rush of observations and, indeed, not a few conclusions which seemed to me important, that the thought of trying to tell the story in the brief snatches of conversation that I might hope to have with men at home who ought to have the full advantage of all the views they can obtain, made the attempt seem hopeless. And so it happened that while I had not once had the idea of trying to write anything for the public at the time when my observations were being made, I reached a sudden determination to attempt to put them into a book. Knowing only too well my poverty in leisure hours after I was once back in New York, and recognizing if the book were written my motto would have to be "Do it now," I started on the task.

From title page to finis, every line was dictated in the five days between Southampton and Halifax. And so it should be taken for what it is — a quick review following an extremely interesting experience in observing a state of affairs so novel that the whole world's history has nothing comparable to offer. In

no sense was the trip planned with the idea of making a formal, exhaustive study of European conditions. Hardly a note was made, as would have been the case had there been in mind the possibility of writing about the experience. I do not write this preface as an apology, for I do not want what follows to be taken so seriously that an apology would be necessary either for what is said or for what is left unsaid. It is rather the sort of a talk I might give to a friend who cared for my impressions and if there were the opportunity to converse at sufficient length.

I am quite aware that a good many Americans have been in Europe during the same period that these observations were made who may not have seen the situation as I saw it. I can perfectly understand how one might have traveled the same rather extensive route that I followed, and have concluded the journey gratified at the normal appearance of life everywhere outside of the war zone. Fields are being plowed, grain is being sowed and there is the same rolling beauty of landscape with the same lovely rivers and picturesque villages that we have seen in former years from train or automobile in France. Switzerland presents the same neat and carefully garnished fields and dooryards in its agricultural regions that has always marked it, and its hills are unchanging. Italy is still the most beautiful place in all the world,