

vegetables—occasionally a scrap of meat. Here they can sit near a stove until three o'clock, when the kitchen closes, and they go home to bed in order to keep warm. Incidentally, it can be very cold in Vienna. I know I shivered all day long.

Only a week before I arrived, a professor of international reputation died of starvation, pure and simple.

The reason for the distress is two-fold. The general rise in the prices of necessaries is enormous and is increasing every week, and private practice has disappeared.

To illustrate the first factor, it is necessary to remember that a krone, which was worth about a shilling before the war now represents a tenth of a penny. *But it is still a shilling for a Viennese.* So if he gets his hair cut it costs him £5 (100 kronen), and to travel a short distance in a tram costs 5s. A cup of alleged coffee with condensed milk and two pieces of bread and margarine costs £4, and a piece of cooked veal, potatoes and cheese £12, and so on. The salary of the average professor is now about 2,000 kronen (£100) a month, and the majority of professional men and women are getting much less than that. Those who have retired on small pensions have nearly all died.

The workmen are in better case, because they are mostly employed by the State, which has—probably wisely—kept them on an inflated salary list though there is little for them to do, rather than allow them to starve or go Bolshevik. They pay their salaries by printing more notes!

The disappearance of private practice is largely due to the policy of the Allies at the peace of St. Germain in making portions of Austria into independent states. Bohemia has become Czechoslovakia, Hungary is independent, and Italy has got a large slice of the Tyrol.

Formerly Vienna was a centre for all these, and the Viennese doctors, lawyers, engineers, and so on acted as consultants for the people outside. Now they do not come. This, incidentally, is a singularly idiotic policy, because in science, art and commerce Vienna was a centre of light and learning, and the States that have been separated consist mainly of peoples of a lower grade of intellect and culture.

Commercially, also, the partition is unsound, because the raw materials are now in the surrounding states and the factories in Vienna; together these made for a successful Austria; now they are useless by themselves. In consequence, Vienna has to buy sugar, for instance, from Java, and coal from America and Australia, though there is plenty of both in Czechoslovakia 50 miles away!

How any collection of statesmen can have imagined that the attempt to make nations by cutting up maps with a pair of scissors could be a contribution to economic peace and progress seems incomprehensible.

The result of this political game is that the Allies are in the position of the man who has cut his nose off to spite his own face. Obviously, it is not to our advantage to see the mechanism of

Europe piled on the scrap heap because an essential part has lost a cog wheel, and Vienna is the cog-wheel of Central Europe, not only in art and science, but in trade also. If Vienna were to go under, the one remaining barrier between civilised Europe and the raw barbarian immorality of the adjoining East would be broken down, and that—to put it on the lowest ground—would pay nobody.

It is therefore to be hoped that the Commission which is soon to sit on the question of readjusting the economic barriers between Austria and her former components will undo the folly of the peace of St. Germain, and that the movement towards extending credits to Austria for which wise financiers have now appealed to our Government will not be sacrificed to political opportunism.

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

### "BOURGOYNE OF GOYNE."\*

"The Bourgoynes of Goyne had held their lands for many hundred years. Like many another family they had been crippled by their loyalty in the Civil War. The great change came after the '45, when, on his return from exile in France ten years later, the head of the family found that the plate and jewels had disappeared and that his sister, the only one who knew where they had been hidden, had died suddenly in his absence without confiding her secret to anyone." Worst of all, with the silver had disappeared the great two-handled golden loving-cup which had been known for centuries as "The Luck of the Bourgoynes."

The discovery of the hidden treasure furnishes a dramatic incident towards the close of the story.

The present head of the family, Ronald, lived with his sister Muriel on his impoverished estate. When the story opens, he is a good deal attracted by a beautiful adventuress who, by clever intrigue, had launched herself into Society. It was owing to her wealth that she had been given as a dinner partner to Ronald out of the rather select party that had been invited; his hostess, Lady Marchmont, was determined he should marry money and retrieve the family fortunes. Before the close of the evening, Ronald had invited his fair partner to be his guest during the coming summer at Goyne.

"For a moment there was no answer. Melisande was trying to keep out of her eyes the exultation that she knew must be shining there. She had come that evening with the definite intention of securing the invitation which had come sooner than even she had dared to hope."

Muriel, more shrewd than her brother, scented trouble from the first.

There is somewhat of a complication of love affairs in this story. Ronald is really in love with

\* By Christine Campbell Thomson. John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd., 83-91, Great Titchfield Street, W. 1.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)