

JAMAICA & THE GREAT WAR

BY

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## DEDICATION

To the Officers, the Non-Commissioned Officers and the Men of the Jamaica Contingent, who by their patriotism, loyalty, courage and their devotion to a high cause have made a new and honourable name for their country, this little book is, with all admiration, dedicated.





# Some of the Best Things in the World

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## FOREWORD

Shortly after the organisation of the movement to send by voluntary effort a contingent of men from Jamaica to take part in the Great War, it occurred to me that there should be some permanent record prepared of the efforts made by Jamaica to show its solidarity with the Mother Country and the rest of the Empire. At the beginning of 1915, therefore, I began to collect material for this work, and announced that the work itself would deal with Jamaica's activities in the first two years of the war.

But I delayed publication for a little while; and so this volume covers the period dating from the last week in July 1914, to the end of the first week of April 1917. In other words, the record is brought down to the passing of the Universal Military Service Law, an event which, in the writer's opinion, marks an important turning point in the history of this country's connection with Great Britain and with the British Empire.

It may be that later on I shall issue another volume, a kind of sequel, written with the intention of showing the probable effect of the war on the spirit of Jamaica and on Jamaica's future. Such a work, however, could not be written until the war was over, and will not be published before 1919 or afterwards.

Other books on Jamaica's connection with the Great War will doubtless be produced in the future by other men. What I claim for mine is that it puts in handy and easily-accessible form some facts and information in regard to what our country has done or has tried to do to aid the Motherland and to uphold its own reputation as "an ancient and loyal colony." We have no reason to be ashamed of those endeavours, or of our actual achievement up to this.

Many of the illustrations in this book have never appeared before. The Governor, General Blackden and other gentlemen, and some of the ladies whose portraits adorn



## FOREWORD

the pages of "Jamaica and the Great War," sat specially for their photographs at the author's request. The picture printed of the Legislative Council, just after it had passed the Universal Military Service Law, April 6, 1917, is the first photograph of that assembly ever taken in Jamaica.

Most of the illustrations I owe to the Cleary Studio. And I wish here to express my gratitude to that Studio for the pains it took to render me all the assistance it could. Mr. Elliot of the Cleary Studio thought nothing of putting his valuable time and services at my disposal whenever asked to do so: but for that I should never have had the picture of the Legislative Council. It is a pleasure to find men so willing to aid as Mr. Cleary and Mr. Elliot have aided me. As for the photographs made by them—those who purchase this book will doubtless be delighted with their excellence.

I must also thank Mr. Brennan for the photograph of Mr. J. H. Allwood. The picture of Mrs. Trefusis was taken by Mr. J. B. Valdes.

THE AUTHOR.

Kingston, May 27, 1917.





## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Appearing below are the names of the firms and business institutions which have co-operated with the author in the production of this book.

The term "co-operated" is used advisedly, as but for the advertisements which the work carries its publication would have been practically impossible. To have put "Jamaica and the Great War" on the local market at, say, six shillings a copy, would have been to confine it to a strictly limited circulation: if it now is offered to the public at one-fourth of that amount, that is because the advertisers of Kingston, understanding the situation, have with their accustomed generosity determined to make the book as cheap as it could be made for the general public.

It is these same advertisers, with other persons, who have made every War Fund in Jamaica a signal success. These businessmen aid, time and again, every public effort put forth which requires financial assistance. In so far as "Jamaica and the Great War" is concerned, they have sought for, and have expected, no acknowledgment of the part they play in its production. But the author would not feel satisfied did he not attach to the work this brief word of appreciation and thanks, along with the names of those who have made the publication possible.

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# Jamaica And The Great War

## CHAPTER I

### ON THE EVE OF WAR

**I**N the long hot days of the tropical summer a wave of inertia sweeps over and settles heavily upon the Island of Jamaica. Gone is the brief winter season, passed is the interlude of verdant spring, that all too fleeting period of rejuvenation when the foliage of the forest is of a tender green, the blue of the skies soft and limpid, when gentle breezes blow caressingly and there is a stirring of the blood, a pleasurable balmy sense of living and of life. Summer has come, and over wide spaces of sunlit country a great deep silence broods. In the city and the towns there is but little movement; the mind feels itself occupied sufficiently with the mere exertion of will required to strive against the influence of the deadening tropical languor; nothing it would seem could startle this half-torpid community into full-blooded life, could awaken it to eager, compelling, absorbing mental activity. But in August, 1914, Jamaica was to receive a shock, the reflex of that which startled the world in those thrilling days that are now so far away. And Jamaica was to throw off its languor and its placid calm as sleep flies from the eyes of the soldier when he hears the cannon's summoning roar.

Supplied daily as the colony is with news from the outer world, it has for years been able to follow the trend and course of European affairs with a fair degree of knowledge and intelligence. The very insignificance of its local problems has forced it to take an interest in those larger questions of English and international politics which concern the peoples and the statesmen of countries which number their inhabitants



by the million and which dispose of vast armies and magnificent fleets. It has sometimes been asserted that the Jamaica youth knows more about English history than of the history of Jamaica, more about the men who have made England famous than of those who in the past have been conspicuous in his own little island. This is true; and if it has deplorable and blameworthy aspects there is something to be advanced in its favour. For this acquaintance with English history has helped to make of the Jamaican a lover of England, one acquainted with her past as well as identified with her present, proud of his connection with a great Empire and devoted to that Empire's cause. It has helped to make of the Jamaican a patriotic British subject; it has caused him to follow the sequence of events with which England is concerned with an interest, sometimes with an anxiety, which no alien, no member of a merely subject people, could ever possibly feel. Thus the Irish crisis which had become so acute in the first part of the year 1914 was followed in Jamaica with passionate eagerness, and the universal hope was that some peaceful solution of that terrible problem might be found. It was instinctively felt that civil war in Ireland would affect the integrity of the Empire, and Jamaicans are above everything imperialistic in their sympathies. It is in their blood. They can never forget that their country was one of the Empire's foundation stones. They proudly remember that in West Indian waters were performed some of the deathless deeds of the British Navy.

It was on Monday, July 27, 1914, that Jamaica first learnt of the possibility of a European war. The news had arrived on the preceding Saturday; but although it was given prominence in the Press, it was not displayed in that startling fashion which the Jamaica newspapers have borrowed from their American contemporaries and by means of which they signal to the public their appreciation of the news they print on that particular day. The telegrams were fairly compre-



hensive. They told of the ultimatum which Serbia had received from Austria, of the demand for an answer from Serbia in forty-eight hours, of Russia's intimation that she could not remain indifferent to the issue of the dispute between the two nations, of Germany's determination that no third Power should interfere in the quarrel that had so suddenly arisen. The conclusion of the whole matter was that Europe was faced with the prospect of a general war. No word was said about England; even France was not mentioned. But there was no man in the colony, with any reading or with any understanding of international political affairs, who did not know that France and Russia were allied. And perhaps a few of these realised that the war that was predicted might be of far greater dimensions, and of more terrible consequences to the European nations, than even the telegrams foretold.

The majority of the people who read these despatches, however, were not much moved by the news which they conveyed. Serbia was the country chiefly concerned, and in no part of the British world had anything but horror been felt at the news of the Austrian heir's assassination. But it seemed incredible that all Europe should be plunged into a devastating conflict because of the murder of one man, even though that man would have been Emperor of Austria-Hungary had he lived. Balkan affairs were not well understood; the situation in that part of Europe was not appreciated as bearing directly upon the problem of maintaining the world's peace. That France should fight to recover her lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, that Germany might fight in order to establish herself as the leading Naval as well as the greatest Military Power of the world: these were comparatively simple propositions and easily grasped. But why should Europe go to war on account of Serbia or of an Austrian Archduke? The question seemed to answer itself with a decided negative; the telegrams were considered interesting from the view-



point of sensationalism but were not looked upon as reliably indicating the rapid approach of a tremendous earth-shaking catastrophe.

And indeed it was difficult for men who had seen Europe at peace for four-and-forty years, to believe that the old order was swiftly and irrevocably changing. The average man reads the future in terms of the past; he does not easily imagine changes of a revolutionary nature; he finds it difficult, if not actually impossible, to believe that things will be much different from what he has always known them to be. Also, one had become accustomed to hearing of "the war clouds lowering over Europe." Nothing terrible had happened in Europe since the Franco-Prussian War, and that had been only a war between two nations, a war that lasted but a few months; it seemed to have taken place so long ago too that it was regarded as an event of a time when diplomacy was almost imbecile in its impotence and when the temper of men was sterner and more eager for war. There had been wars since then. But the Russo-Turkish War was a dim and distant memory and the Balkan Wars were regarded as merely local conflicts between half-civilised peoples. Japan had defeated China, America had defeated Spain, England had beaten the Boers, Japan had conquered the Russian Army and Navy and had won an acknowledged position amongst the Great World Powers. This last was the greatest of these wars, but its theatres were the plains of Manchuria and the Eastern Seas; and though its issue damaged the prestige of Russia, there was none who did not know that it could not seriously and permanently alter the status of Russia in the world. Such wars had happened often, would happen again. But that Europe itself should be the scene of a great struggle between the mightiest of its nations—that was not believed, because it could not easily be conceived.

News of the developing war situation continued to arrive. On July 28 the Jamaica papers announced that Austria and



Serbia were on the verge of actual hostilities. But what was discussed in the island as of more intimate interest were the efforts then being made to prevent a collision in Ireland between Nationalists and Ulstermen, and the editorial columns of the newspapers gave little space to a discussion of the threatening European crisis. Local matters were still being commented upon at length. The leading journal of the colony dealt, on this particular date, with a proposal to bring to Jamaica, early in the next year, a cricket team from England, and also devoted more than a column to a consideration of the merits and demerits of sundry parochial orators. A leaderette placed after these articles spoke briefly of "the peace of Europe again threatened," and concluded with the conventional hope that "wise statesmanship will find a way out of the danger." In a few days all thought of cricket teams and local orators was to be forgotten in the startling realization that the peace of Europe was not merely threatened but had ceased to exist, that Europe had embarked upon what was to be known as the greatest war of all the ages.

It was not until July 31 that the extreme gravity of the situation began forcibly to impress itself on the minds and imaginations of the Jamaica public. There could now be no longer any doubt that war, war in Europe, was approaching with almost lightninglike rapidity; and now it began to dawn upon the colony that Great Britain might be dragged into the struggle, that England, which had been at peace in Europe since the Crimean War, might once again have to send armies to the Continent and to mobilise her fleet to fight a powerful foe. The British Prime Minister had said in the House of Commons that "this is a moment of extreme gravity to the Government." The London *Times* had in the most explicit language announced that England could not stand aside and see France crushed or Belgian territory violated. The efforts of Great Britain were still being directed to the maintenance of peace; but the British fleet had sailed under sealed orders.



What does that mean? it was everywhere asked, but thousands would not whisper even to themselves an answer which could only be a confession of despair. For still it was hoped that the peaceful counsels of England would prevail. Still men strove to believe that, even at the eleventh hour, war would be averted. This they hoped; this they strove to believe; but puckered brows and anxious faces witnessed to the fear and the uneasiness that gripped painfully at their hearts.

This uneasiness and fear found yet more definite expression in speculations as to what effect the participation of England in the approaching conflict might have upon Jamaica. One newspaper pointed out that food prices would inevitably rise, but counselled the people to accept this with patience and even with cheerfulness. It went further: it advised that the general attitude should be one of preparedness to make sacrifices, if necessary, for the cause of the Empire and of England. Thus early in the opening stages of the struggle was sounded the note that was to ring louder and louder throughout Jamaica, that was to be taken up and universally echoed from one part of the island to the other. But this note of warning and exhortation was on the whole considered premature. Even if war was coming, men preferred to believe that the conflict would be localised and that England would play no conspicuous part in it.

On Saturday, August 1, a telegram from New York bearing the date of the previous day announced that Germany had declared war on Russia. There was also another despatch of the same date which minimised the significance of the first statement by pointing out that it lacked official confirmation. It is indicative of the prevailing attitude of mind in the colony that this second telegram was the one that was most readily accepted. Yet it was on the evening of July 31 that the Kaiser, addressing a vast concourse of his subjects, had uttered the memorable words: "A stern hour of tribulation for Germany



has arrived. Envy on all sides compels us to assume a righteous attitude of defence. The sword is forced into our hand." After such an utterance only a miracle could have averted war. The statesmen of Europe knew by then that the struggle was inevitable; the whole world was to know that in another few hours. Sunday intervened, and Monday, a public holiday, dawned in Jamaica. Significant news had come over the wires on Sunday; and in Kingston no doubt was now entertained as to Germany's determination to strike.

In Jamaica, as is customary on a holiday, the people began early on the Monday morning to prepare for the day's festivities. This was more from force of habit than from any inclination to levity; a strong current of unwonted excitement swept the thoughts and feelings of the populace out of their usual channels, and though picnics, excursions and a number of other diversions were supposed to be occupying the general attention, the talk of everyone was of the approaching war. So absorbing was this topic, so powerful the influence it exercised over the mind of every adult, that even an earthquake experienced that day caused but a temporary distraction and alarm. No one could forget the cataclysm of January 14, 1907, which overthrew Kingston and was felt in every part of the country. The slightest subsequent shock would bring back to the memory a vivid realisation of that calamity, the greatest in the experience of all living Jamaicans. On this Monday morning, at about 6.25, the whole island was shaken by an earthquake of a duration and intensity second only to that which had shattered the walls of Jamaica's capital but a few years before, and fears were for the moment entertained that a repetition of that disaster was imminent.

There were three shocks; the northside town of Port Antonio had its public buildings damaged, the public clock in the square at Halfway Tree stopped working; articles of furniture and ornaments were thrown to the floor everywhere; in the parish of St. Andrew several landslides occurred.



Ordinarily, such an awe-inspiring reminder would have displaced every thought save that of danger from earthquakes. But in an hour or two, if not forgotten, this earthquake was relegated to a very subordinate place in the minds of most people; and though there were minor shocks later on in the day, their mental effect was inappreciable. The war, and the part which England might play in the war: that was all that could possibly be dwelt upon now.

And now the newspapers had almost nothing to say but what was connected with the terrible situation that had so rapidly developed in Europe. Conventional optimism had given place to the sober realisation of an awful actuality. It was not so much asked whether England would declare war, as when England would declare war; newspaper offices were thronged by eager enquirers, the offices of the Cable Companies in Kingston were besieged by anxious crowds thirsting for the last item of information which the Government would allow to be made public. For the Government had already assumed control of all telegraph systems, and its censors sat night and day in the telegraph buildings scrutinising every telegram that came from the outer world or was handed in to be despatched to some other country. There were Germans and Austrians in the island, and messages from these could not lightly be transmitted. Great Britain was still officially at peace with Germany and Austria, but the Governor had received his instructions and these were being carried out with scrupulous fidelity. No chances were taken.

In the last week of July a German warship, the *Dresden*, had come into Kingston harbour with President Huerta of Mexico as a refugee on board. It had probably received from Berlin instructions in code by wireless telegraphy, for shortly after news of the critical situation in Europe was received here, the *Dresden* left the harbour. And H.M.S. *Suffolk*, then Admiral Cradock's flagship, had afterwards entered the port and soon after had cleared her decks for action. The atmos-



phere was charged with the electricity of war; the censors were busy, and all day long, and working far into the night, the Governor of the colony, with his secretaries toiled at deciphering code messages flashed from England, and at transmitting replies.

News was coming, but the news that had now begun to come over was scanty, for the line of the Direct West India Cable Company was down. It had been cut, as was subsequently discovered, cut by the *Dresden* which had so quickly departed from British waters on the receipt of its instructions. Thus, just when the country was most anxious for information the means of obtaining it was lessened. Disappointment was keen. It grew to anger. The Government was accused of having established an unnecessarily rigid censorship; many began to entertain unfounded apprehensions, to suggest that the colony was purposely being kept in the dark. Then, on the morning of August 5, Jamaica woke to learn that England had declared war upon Germany, that the expected had happened, that the crisis had hurried to its climax, that the Empire was at war.

The Empire was at war. It was about 2.15 a.m., August 5, that the Governor, Sir William Manning, sent out the thrilling news to every section of the island of Jamaica. The telegraph wires hummed with the momentous tidings; sleepy telegraph clerks were startled into alert wakefulness as the significant message was spelled out by the tapping electrical instruments; on every public building, in the early hours of that sultry summer morning, the statement was displayed. Wireless telegraphy flung it into space with the dawn of day, and ships two hundred miles and more from Jamaica received it and knew that England was at war. Ships passing one another slowed down and signalled the tidings. German cruisers caught it. Over the wide Caribbean and the Southern Atlantic the air was alive and vibrant with messages, with warnings and commands.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST TWO WEEKS

**T**HE expected had happened, the Empire was at war. Nevertheless the actual declaration of war by England came as a shock to thousands: it fell with the force of a blow, disturbing for the moment the usual calm processes of feeling and thought. On the news being known, the streets of the city and the towns became filled with excited people who spoke and argued as if the next four-and-twenty hours would decide the fate of nations, as if they expected great battles to be fought and won even while the German armies were rushing furiously towards the frontiers of Belgium and France. Order prevailed, but it was not the order of placid, every-day life. It was the order which people, accustomed to the social discipline and good behaviour of all established British communities, preserve even under the stress of strong excitement; underlying it was an intense nervousness which, in different conditions, might have developed into panic.

There was a rush on the part of hundreds to secure food at the shops, the opinion being that there might soon be a serious shortage of supplies. Food prices soared immediately, rising in some instances over a hundred per cent. Fearing famine, fearing financial stringency, apprehensive of the unknown, and realizing that war must bring about many changes, the people at once ceased to purchase any but the bare necessities of life, and already there were rumours of an impending financial crisis.

And other rumours also, arising no one knew how, filled the air and contributed to increase the nervous tension. We have said that there were Austrians and Germans in the island. People now remembered or thought that they remembered having heard that some of these had been seen, in the still



hours of the night, prowling about suspiciously. One German was said to have designed to poison the reservoir which supplies Kingston with water. Another was believed to be in the possession of wireless apparatus with which he could send messages to German warships in the Caribbean Sea. German cruisers were also reported seen from different seaports of the island. Where was the *Dresden*? Was not the *Bremen* in these regions? And the *Karlsruhe*—the popular imagination magnified that light cruiser into a great super-dreadnought armed with formidable twelve-inch guns. Jamaica might at any moment be attacked! At any moment shells might be screaming over her capital city, and falling to scatter ruin and destruction and death!

But panic never prevailed; fear was not allowed to attain ascendancy. External agencies helped to reinforce the effect of custom and of social discipline. Admiral Cradock's flagship was in the harbour. There she lay, grey, grim and silent, and suddenly it was noticed that she was in full war attire, with her decks cleared for action—ready, as England's Navy has always been since the days of the great Nelson. Crowds thronged to the waterfront to gaze at the *Suffolk*, and cheer after cheer rang out as hundreds watched admiringly that powerful symbol of the colony's safety and protection.

Cheerful though quite unreliable information was also coming to the island, and this did much to enliven the spirits of the more timorous. As early as August 6th the public journals of Kingston could publish telegrams telling of victories gained by the French troops over the German armies, and also announcing that "the armed forces of the Republic are now on the soil of their formidable foe." It was stated in the Press that "this news, when generally known, created much enthusiasm in the city." It naturally would; men already began to see victory in sight; already, everywhere, the belief was blithely expressed that the war would last but for three months, and the bolder of the war prophets would not



allow a single triumph to the enemy. But though, according to the popular opinion, the war was to be fought and won in an incredibly short space of time, the Government energetically proceeded with its efforts to place the island in a state of adequate defence and to put into operation those ordinances prepared long before for just such a situation as had now so suddenly arisen.

The day after England's declaration of war, martial law was proclaimed in Jamaica. All persons in the colony were directed to take notice and to govern themselves accordingly. It was also announced that the Governor might deport any person deemed an undesirable inhabitant (which power was soon exercised in respect to some well-known business men of German descent), that the Governor might require and use the services of any persons or property in the island for military or naval purposes, and that the Governor might seize and take possession of any food or fuel and sell same again at prices determined upon by a Board appointed by him. This Board for the regulation of food prices was appointed three days later, with one of the ablest men in Jamaica, Mr. H. I. C. Brown, Registrar of the Supreme Court, as its Chairman. It immediately fixed prices on a scale much lower than that which obtained at the moment.

There was one official proclamation especially intended to prevent undue excitement. It was addressed to the Island of Jamaica, and stated that "We do hereby call upon our loving subjects therein to continue peacefully and tranquilly to pursue their usual avocations, carefully abstaining from all actions likely to produce popular excitement, unrest or confusion, and doing their utmost to check, restrain and dissuade all who may be inclined to such action." This was generally understood as coming directly from the King ; necessarily, therefore, its influence was immense. The people of the British West Indies, brought up with a reverence for authority and inspired with a sincere affection for the Throne, may always be relied upon



to yield to any command accepted as proceeding from the Sovereign a public obedience as absolute as human nature is capable of in moments of intense feeling or extraordinary agitation. The experience gained in Jamaica at the time of the great earthquake had taught most persons that from no considerable element of the population was disorder to be expected at a crisis; and during the first two weeks of the war, and ever after, there were visible no precautions of a more than ordinary description for the maintenance of order in the country. "Trust the people" has never been the published motto of any Jamaica Government, but every Government has had to proceed on the assumption that it can and does trust the people. One West Indian administrator, indeed, Sir Charles Bruce, has written that no Governor who knew the West Indies would be apprehensive of political demonstrations in these days; and Sir Alexander Swettenham preferred to deal with the situation created by the earthquake of 1907, with his very inadequate resources, rather than accept the aid of American marines to maintain discipline and order in the ruined city of Kingston.

What Sir William Manning felt in that first week of August no one can know; he may have been anxious; but his anxiety could scarcely have been caused by serious fears of internal disturbances. What he said about the local situation remains on record. An interview which a representative of the *Gleaner* had with him on the 7th of August was printed, with some comments, on the following day. He is described, and the description is accurate, as perfectly calm and self-possessed, looking as though he had not a worry in the world and professing the utmost confidence in the loyalty and patriotism of the people. He spoke hopefully of the island's future trade. He expressed the opinion that there would be an increased demand abroad for many of its products. He expected some financial stringency at first, but believed that in a little while the trade and commerce of the colony would recover



from an inevitable though temporary dislocation and that Jamaica would then find itself "on velvet". It may be that the Governor expressed himself more hopefully than he actually felt at the moment; it is certain that his words had both a calming and stimulating effect upon the country. They calmed those who were thinking darkly of the future; they stimulated the naturally energetic who had been somewhat depressed by the dismal forebodings of pessimistic people. What is certain is that the panicky feeling, very slightly manifested yet unquestionably existing, now began to disappear; and so, when the third week of the war situation dawned, all classes of the people were attending much as usual to their business and the life of Jamaica had almost resumed its wonted routine.

By this time also the Government had practically determined upon the programme to be carried through at once, and had already issued summonses to the Legislative Council to meet at Headquarter House on Thursday, August 13. Orders had been sent to the several Government departments suspending all expenditure upon public works not considered absolutely necessary, the Parochial Boards of the Island were warned to practise the most rigid economy. The Council met on the date prescribed. Every elected member was present, and nearly all the Government members. Under the constitution of Jamaica all the elected members voting together can veto any ordinary proposal of the Executive, while nine elected members voting unanimously can negative any financial measure. But the Governor has the power to declare of paramount importance any measure that he thinks essential to the colony's welfare; when that is done the votes of his official supporters in the House can be recorded against those of the elected members; and as the Government has fifteen members, or a majority of one, it is certain of victory when it exercises this extraordinary power. In the past, there had been times when the Government had deemed it wise to be fully represented in the House. On this occasion, the elected members outnum-



bered the official and nominated members. The Governor had not thought it necessary to take precautions against an adverse vote. He did not believe in the possibility of an adverse vote; he counted upon the people's representatives supporting the Government without hesitation, and their patriotic action showed that he had understood their attitude aright.

But before the formal meeting in the Council Chamber there was a private conference between both sides of the House. This was held in order to give to the legislators whatever explanations they might desire regarding any items of the Government's programme, so that, in open Council, the chief legislative assembly of the island should present an undivided front. When the Council was called to order, therefore, everyone knew what was going to be proposed and accomplished. There was no unnecessary affectation of solemnity. The House presented a businesslike appearance. The Governor, as President of the Council, opened its proceedings, all the members and visitors standing to hear the speech which he read distinctly and with deliberation. We quote the exordium:—

“I have called the Council together to-day to deal with certain urgent business due to the outbreak of hostilities between Great Britain and the German Empire. It is perhaps hardly necessary for me to remark at this juncture upon the momentous questions that are involved. I feel that Jamaica will loyally and patriotically assume her part in maintaining the integrity of our Empire, and will comport herself as gallantly to-day as she has done in the past. History relates that in days gone by this island has resolutely defended her shores and has taken no small share in the wars of the past. That she may not again be called upon to defend her homes I sincerely trust, but I feel that I should be wrong to stifle the fervent spirit of patriotism which has led to the offers of personal service which have poured in, and that I should be wrong to disregard the possibility, however remote, that the island



might once more be compelled to drive an invader from her shores. The Navy of Great Britain is, and must be, our main defence, but we should be prepared to assist our Navy by taking upon ourselves such responsibilities of defence as we can well assume. . . .”

He then outlined his programme of local defence. A force to be known as the Jamaica Reserve Regiment was to be constituted and organized in every parish ; the cost of this force for six months was estimated at £10,000, which the Council would be asked to vote. The Governor next intimated that he expected a decrease of revenue, and a consequent deficit at the end of the then current financial year, nearly eight months away. Having suspended all save purely necessary public works, he calculated upon saving by such retrenchment about £100,000. He had also secured the consent of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to suspend the investment of the island's Sinking Fund for the remainder of the year, which would set free another £30,000 to meet the anticipated deficit. These were his main financial provisions ; he also estimated that he would have, as a surplus from the last year's financial transactions, about £15,000.

He did not leave out of account the possibility of having to afford some relief to persons rendered temporarily indigent through the war and through drought prevailing in some parts of the country. The sum of £5,000 was set aside for this. Then he passed to a brief commentary on a Bill to establish a Censorship throughout the island, and seized the opportunity to pay a compliment to the Jamaica Press. “As soon as I received the news that the war was imminent,” he said, “I called upon the Press to enter into an honourable agreement not to publish the movements of British men-of-war and troops, since such news might be of advantage to an enemy. That honourable agreement has been most scrupulously observed, and it is a pleasure to me to be able to publicly so state ; and I have no hesitation in affirming that I feel that the provisions of this





Brig.-General L. S. BLACKDEN.



Mr. WILLIAM WILSON, J.P.



Bill in regard to the Press will be a dead letter, as I look to the Press to loyally carry out its obligations, and by its writings to assist, as it can, in educating the public to maintain that calm spirit which it has up till now inculcated."

The speech was a short one. An important programme had been outlined in a few concise sentences. It concluded with a spirited exhortation to Jamaica which is here transcribed in full:—

"In conclusion I can only ask—and in asking I feel convinced that I shall be supported—that all those in authority, all those to whom the people of this island look for guidance, will calmly go about their business, will set an example of steadfast belief in the strength of our mighty Empire, that neither in the hour of victory we shall be too greatly elated, nor in the hour of misfortune we shall be too greatly disconcerted. If Jamaica enters upon this great crisis in the history of the Empire in this spirit, then we shall but be emulating the example of our ancestors who faced triumph and disaster with an even mind and with an invincible belief in the destiny of our Empire and of our peoples. Jamaica, sure in the loyalty and patriotism of its inhabitants, will present that united front to its enemies that is expected from every part of this mighty Empire. That is our duty and the duty of all who have the privilege of being citizens of the British Empire."

The Governor ceased, resumed his seat, and the routine business of the day began. In a couple of hours every measure placed before the House had been passed through all its stages without comment and without division, and the Council adjourned until it should be summoned to meet the Governor again. All that it was necessary to do immediately to prepare for the exigencies of the situation confronting the country had been done. And the Legislative Council, as well as the country, had shown its desire to support the Executive in every effort it might deem necessary and advisable for the protection of the island and the public good.



## CHAPTER III

### IN AID OF ENGLAND

**I**N the midst of the ferment of feeling engendered by the realization that the Empire was at war and that the present generation of Jamaicans was about to witness the greatest struggle of all times, there swiftly emerged a desire to help, a strong and fervid aspiration that the colony as a whole should do something to express in tangible form its loyalty to the Mother Country and its sympathy with her cause. This desire was spontaneous, originating in the minds of hundreds at one and the same time. It was confined to no single class, it was not the result of Government suggestion. The man in the street felt vaguely that in any war in which England was engaged, and especially in such a war as that into which the world had been precipitated by the statesmen of Austria and Germany, it was the duty of Jamaica to take a definite part. The great planter remembered he was a descendant of Englishmen, and that with England Jamaica stood or fell.

There was precedent for this. Tradition had it that during the Napoleonic Wars the colony had contributed a million pounds to the Imperial Treasury. Historical research had recently shown that the amount actually donated by Jamaica had been greatly exaggerated. It was in 1798 that merchants and planters of the island raised by public subscription about £80,000 to assist England in her struggle against Napoleon; this was the foundation of fact for the million pounds fiction which had always been repeated with pride. But even £80,000 was no contemptible contribution from a country with only some three hundred thousand inhabitants, of whom the free people, white, coloured and black, numbered less than fifty thousand, especially when we remember that the value of the



sovereign was very much more at that time than it is at the present day. That £80,000, in fact, would be equivalent to nearly half a million pounds sterling to-day. It was also incumbent on the colony in those times to make provision for its own defence, and this is estimated to have cost the taxpayers, for several years, an average of not less than £120,000 a year. Who first asserted that it was a million pounds that Jamaica had given is, naturally, not known; but the belief that this amount had been sent as a free gift to the English Government, during the last great war which England had waged to preserve the balance of power in Europe and the liberties of the world, had a powerful though unconscious influence in fixing in the minds of the people the standard of Jamaica's financial obligations to the Empire in this later and greater war.

Then, again, during the South African War, subscriptions had been raised for the widows and orphans of English soldiers. This effort was not confined only to the upper orders of the population; it was general. The middle classes of the people probably contributed the larger part of the money collected, but the working classes also gave. In August, 1914, however, it was felt that, in order that whatever gift Jamaica offered to England should be of a distinctly national character, it should take the form of a vote from General Revenue; hence, some time in the second week of the war, a suggestion to the Governor was privately made by the elected members of the Legislative Council that £100,000 should be voted as Jamaica's contribution to the expenses of the war.

In view of the unsettled commercial and financial condition of the colony, the suggestion was a bold one. A great part of Jamaica's revenue is derived from import and excise duties, while a not inconsiderable portion of it is contributed by the earnings of the Government Railway. And these sources of revenue are most sensitive to fluctuations of trade. It was seen at the start that overseas trade would suffer on



account of the war. All exports to and imports from Germany and Austria had automatically ceased. A drought had recently been afflicting the island; it was not known whether Jamaica would be able to obtain the usual quantity of goods annually imported from England, from the duties on which the Government derived a fair proportion of its revenue. Everyone was aware that there must be a falling off in trade, if only temporarily; but the idea in the minds of the elected members was the floating of a loan in the colony. It was confidently believed that the loan would be gladly subscribed, its object being one that would appeal to the patriotic sentiments of all classes of the people.

The Governor, however, was not inclined to act so quickly. His view was that the first duty of the Government and Legislative Council was to review calmly and carefully the financial position and resources of Jamaica before deciding upon voting money from General Revenue for Imperial purposes. He did not veto the proposition; he expressed sympathy with it. But he counselled a little patience, a delay of a few days, or weeks. As the suggestion of a monetary gift had not been made publicly, there was no public protest against this advice; on the other hand, as nothing was yet being done whereby the colony might give concrete expression to its desire to help, there were many criticisms on the cautiousness of the Government in such a connection. The criticisms were expressed in conversation everywhere. It became more and more obvious that Jamaica would never be content with a policy of caution, even if a policy of precipitancy should cost Jamaica dear.

It is perhaps in the nature of a tropical people to act impulsively, then to relapse into apathy induced by exhaustion of energy and of intellectual interest. It is of course a commonplace of all political experience that popular action is followed by popular reaction; but in the West Indies the periods of reaction are greatly prolonged and there is ample time and opportunity thus afforded to detect mistakes made in moments



of enthusiasm, and loudly to regret them. But in this particular desire that Jamaica should make a present of some sort to the Mother Country, there was more determination than enthusiasm. The general feeling was that the best that could be done would be but small, and this gave birth to a sentiment somewhat resembling shame. The great self-governing colonies were rising to a recognition of their Imperial responsibilities in a manner truly magnificent. Jamaicans knew quite well that their country could not remotely compare, from the viewpoint of population, industries or resources, with Canada or Australia; but this did not render them less desirous of showing a spirit equal to that exhibited by Canada or Australia. They could not do much, and this was a bitter reflection; but to do nothing, or to delay too long in doing anything, was simply not to be thought of. They wanted to do more besides make a money offering to the Mother Country; they suggested that more should be done, as will be told in a following chapter. But to send a gift to England would be an immediate achievement; and the intense though quiet patriotism that prevailed, the impulse to action which everyone experienced, made it imperative that Jamaica should immediately fall in line with the rest of the Empire in demonstrating practically that Imperial unity and that willingness to make sacrifices for the Empire's cause of which nearly every part of the Empire had boasted in times of peace.

It was, then, in obedience to no mere temporary flush of enthusiastic feeling that the people of Jamaica began everywhere to discuss the necessity of the colony's sending to England an earnest of its loyalty. The Governor himself recognised this fully. To the representative of the *Gleaner* newspaper who put before him on August 16 a picture of the popular mind, he replied quite frankly that he knew what the people were thinking, that he was aware of their desire to do what they could for the Empire. But he himself thought that voluntary effort would be most useful at that moment; he



suggested that the women of Jamaica should form local organizations for the purpose of supplying warm woollen clothing to the English soldiers during the coming winter. In the North of France and in Germany the English soldiers would suffer terribly, he said, and they would be grateful for such gifts as he had mentioned. "In this effort every one can help. It gives an opportunity to every woman in the island, from the richest to the poorest, to add her quota to the endeavour being put forth in our Empire for our soldiers. In this way, I think, Jamaica can best help."

This conversation was published on the following day as a definite invitation to the women of Jamaica to begin at once to work for the soldiers of the Empire. It was followed by an appeal to the men for funds to enable this work to be undertaken. This was not exactly what Jamaica had expected; yet if the proposal had been deliberately put forward with a view to testing the sincerity of individual professions of willingness to help, the response that it met with must effectively have silenced all doubts on that point. As a matter of fact, the Governor was perfectly free from any desire to test the genuineness of Jamaica's generosity. What he wished to do was to suggest an effort in which, as he had distinctly stated, the poor as well as the rich could join, an effort also which would make on the country no demand greater than it could reasonably bear at that disturbing time. In such uncertain days it was not easy to say what was the financial situation of anyone; but a scheme requiring work as well as money was not calculated to tax overmuch the resources of any, especially as the work would be done by that half of the population who usually had some leisure and who, therefore, would not be called upon to abandon their ordinary vocations for this purpose. The response to the appeal for funds, however, soon showed that the island was ready to do more, voluntarily, than either the Governor or anyone else had expected it would do or was in a position to do. Sir William Manning's remarks ap-



peared on August 17. On August 22 the *Gleaner* could announce that it had received £1,155, in donations of a hundred guineas each. As usual, the merchants and business corporations and the legal firms of Kingston had set the example of generous giving, and every day after that came large individual contributions from different parts of the island towards "The Jamaica War Relief Fund."

Other efforts of a voluntary nature were immediately planned: thus the Palace Amusement Theatre opened a subscription list and distributed collecting boxes among the several stores of Kingston, while the Syrian and Chinese communities started small funds among themselves for the purpose of making a respectable donation to some larger War Fund. But the most important voluntary effort was inaugurated by the Governor himself, who despatched letters to the different custodes of the parishes, and to other representative men in various parts of the island, asking these to organize committees for the collecting of money. On Sunday, August 23, an announcement was made in many of the churches throughout Jamaica that public meetings would be held to discuss the Governor's suggestion. On the 26th the first meetings were held at Mandeville, Port Antonio and Manchioneal; on the next day there was a similar meeting at Spanish Town; on the day after the people of Morant Bay gathered together to discuss and decide what steps should be taken to promote the success of the effort now definitely set on foot. On the 30th the people of Montego Bay met, and at their first meeting £400 was promised.

Other public meetings followed. They were held all over the country, and not only in the chief towns; they took place wherever there was a fairly large number of persons settled, with a few amongst them possessing the faculty of initiative and leadership. Women as well as men were invited to these gatherings, for it was to the women of Jamaica that the appeal had first been made. All classes responded to the general in-



vitiation, there were speeches from the chief men of the parish or district, the duty of the people to contribute as liberally as they could was placed before the audiences in a plain and practical manner, and committees and sub-committees were appointed to collect contributions everywhere. These committees were composed of women and men, and, as the results showed, they set to work with energy and a laudable desire to do the very best they could. But almost at the very first public gathering it became apparent that the original suggestion of the Governor's was no longer popular, because it was no longer considered practicable. Comparatively few Jamaica women knew anything about the knitting of socks and mufflers, and it was seen that the money that would be collected would lie idle if it were to be utilised only in the purchase of wool for the knitters. Most persons, too, looked forward to so short a war that it was felt that very little warm clothing would be sent to the men at the front before peace was once more restored to Europe. Accordingly it was advocated that the money obtained should be transmitted to England and, as the idea was that the poorest, if willing, should contribute as well as the wealthiest in the land, it was generally agreed that the smallest sum should not be refused from those who wished to give.

And now began a movement the like of which had never been seen in Jamaica before. Any one who reads over the lists of contributors to the War Funds which the *Gleaner* printed daily, will be struck by the large number of very small men who gave their mite for the cause that was England's. Cart drivers, cab drivers, motor-men, conductors, peasant-proprietors, labourers—one and all gave something, however small. A shilling, sixpence, threepence, these sums occur hundreds and hundreds of times in the lists; on the banana properties, on the sugar estates, on the cocoa plantations the collecting card went round, and not in vain. Through its chief officials the United Fruit Company organised a system



whereby all its employees could regularly contribute to the Fund: the result was excellent. There was no coercion applied. There could be no coercion applied. There was little persuasion needed, for to contribute something to the War Funds was now considered a privilege as well as a pleasure, a right as well as a moral obligation. Generosity had now become the highest of duties.

One estate overseer tells a story that is well worth recording here. Some of his labourers came to him one day and expressed the wish that, for a certain time, he would deduct a small amount weekly from their wages as their contribution to the War Relief Fund. "Understand," he said to them, "you are not doing this because you are being begged to do it. If you want to give, it must be of your own free will, and not, either, as charity." Here pride spoke—he admitted it; he did not wish Jamaica labourers to think that English soldiers were in need of help from them. He afterwards confessed that the answer returned was a sufficient rebuke. The men told him that they gave because they desired to give, that they gave because, as British subjects, they had as much right to give as he. And for several weeks after not one man missed contributing the quota of his wages that he had that day agreed should be deducted.

There were now two large Funds in existence: the Jamaica War Fund, collected by the *Gleaner*, and the Central War Fund, directly organized by Sir William Manning. On September 9th, under the auspices of the Governor, a public meeting was held in the Ward Theatre in Kingston, and a committee was appointed to administer the money that would be received. The general plan of distribution to be followed was outlined: most of the money would be donated to the Prince of Wales Fund, in England; a portion would be sent to the committee attending to Belgian relief. The *Gleaner* Company fell in line with this proposal. The money sent to the *Gleaner* was divided into three parts, one half to the Prince of Wales Fund,



a quarter to the British Sailors and Soldiers Association, a quarter to the Belgian Relief Committee. The total of the two Funds amounted to nearly £20,000 by the end of the year 1914.

Other minor Funds, such as that started by the *Gleaner* for sending cigars and cigarettes to soldiers at the front, and that organised by some Jamaica ladies for entertaining at Christmas the sailors of the warships in the harbour, were well supported. But even while the committees for the collection of money to assist the Empire's fighters were being formed, and though it was apparent that the voluntary effort being made would be more successful than anyone had thought that it would be, it became apparent that Jamaica would not be satisfied with private giving only.

Instead of diminishing, the feeling that the colony as a constituent part of the British Empire should present a gift to the Mother Country was growing apace. Letters written to the newspapers advocated a special tax for this purpose. At meetings called to make arrangements for the collection of subscriptions it was urged that Jamaica should assume some small portion of the debt which England would incur as part of the cost of war. At the Montego Bay meeting it was suggested that £200,000 should be the amount of liability assumed by the colony. The Mayor and Council of Kingston passed a resolution recommending that the Government should take steps "to charge the revenues of this island for the purpose of providing a contribution to Great Britain towards the costs of the war." The other Parochial Boards of the island followed this example and adopted a similar resolution; but in the meantime, and before the close of the month of August, the Government had already determined that there should be a gift offered by the colony to the Imperial Government.

The matter had been arranged privately between the Governor and the elected members of the Legislative Council. The member for St. Ann, the Hon. J. H. Allwood, had cir-



cularised his colleagues, and all of these had heartily agreed that there should be some contribution made to the Mother Country by Jamaica. This decision was immediately followed by a letter from the legislators to Sir William Manning, who replied on September 1 that he greatly appreciated the action taken, and that "however small the island's contribution may be, limited by its resources, it will be none the less an acceptable proof of the desire of the people of Jamaica to do what lies in their power to assist at this crisis in our history." On that same day the Governor despatched to the Secretary of State for the Colonies a telegram stating what Jamaica was at that moment prepared to do.

The gift decided upon was a very small one. The financial outlook was still considered too vague and uncertain to warrant indulgence in overflowing generosity. A present of sugar to the value of £50,000 was to be made to the Mother Country, then greatly in need of sugar on account of the sudden stoppage of German and Austrian supplies. The present was promptly accepted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who telegraphed to say that His Majesty's Government heartily appreciated the patriotic and generous offer of the people of Jamaica, and considered that a gift of sugar would be most acceptable. When this was known, some persons suggested a gift of fruit. But fruit and other products of the island were already being freely offered by the peasants and planters of the country, and arrangements were being made to send these presents by each outgoing ship. On September 17 the Legislature met in special session and empowered the Government to purchase sugar for the Imperial Government to the amount of £50,000. Certain taxation remitted some time before was re-imposed on the country to meet this particular charge.

As the system of taxation levied in Jamaica falls upon rich and poor, upon the babe in arms as well as on the wealthiest planter, professional man or merchant, the colony's



gift of sugar was made by everyone in Jamaica: it was a thoroughly representative contribution. Had it stood alone, it might have been supposed that the majority of the people, never very articulate, and having what passes for their views expressed by persons not of their own class, had merely acquiesced in an action transacted in their name. But when we remember that labourers gave gladly to the voluntary funds, and that peasants sent presents of fruit, cocoa, coffee and other things to the Jamaica Agricultural Society to be transmitted to England for the use and comfort of British soldiers and sailors, it is impossible to believe that the island as a whole did not heartily approve of the Legislature's act. And when the month of December came and Sir William Manning published his annual message to the people of Jamaica, he made certain statements which proved that he had had an exceptional opportunity of judging of the feelings of worker and peasant as well as of the sentiments of the merchant and the planter. His remarks deserve to be permanently preserved in any record dealing with Jamaica and the War, and may fittingly conclude this chapter.

"That the people of this island have done much to prove their value and their worth," wrote the Governor, "I can bear full testimony. Their gifts to help those who are struggling for their destiny, and for the destiny of the Empire show the trend of their thoughts, that though they are not able to bear an active part in the defence of their Empire, they are still able to do their share, however small, in lightening the burdens of those who have the greater fortune of taking a more active part. I know of not a few acts of self-sacrifice, acts of thoughtful kindness, and these are but the few out of the many which will never be known."



## CHAPTER IV

### OFFERS OF MILITARY SERVICE

**I**N one of the despatches sent to Jamaica shortly after England's declaration of war, the Secretary of State for the Colonies laid it down that provision for local defence must be a first charge upon the revenues of the colony. Such provision was rightly understood to be exclusive of the maintenance of the Imperial garrison in the island, this being a charge upon the Imperial revenues. The colony was expected to organize a defence force of its own and at its own expense; but even before the message of the Secretary of State had been made public—which was done on August 13—offers of service had been sent to the Governor from all parts of Jamaica, and in the newspapers suggestions as to the organizing of volunteer corps had already begun to appear. And when it was known that a Jamaica Reserve Regiment was to be formed, with members in every parish of the island, there were public meetings called almost everywhere and volunteers came willingly forward in answer to the Government's appeal.

This was quite in accordance with the traditions of Jamaica. Whenever the island had been threatened in the past the people had always shown the greatest willingness to arm in their own defence. More, they had fought in their own defence. However lacking in historical sense the average Jamaican may be, he knows that his forefathers had had to fight for the safety of his country when, in 1694, Admiral DuCasse landed on the north and east coasts of the island, burning, slaying, plundering, and spreading terror throughout Jamaica. It was on the 19th of July that the French landed at Carlisle Bay. They were fifteen hundred strong; to oppose him at that point there were only about two hundred white men and some negroes. It is significant that, even at



this early date in the colony's history when slavery in its most oppressive form existed, the black population was called upon to assist in the general defence. We shall see further on in this chapter that, as time went on, the black population, although still in a state of bondage, was recruited for other than purely defensive military operations.

Subsequently, whenever invasion threatened, Jamaicans invariably showed that they were ready to defend the island, to keep it English against all invaders to the best of their ability. But it was felt and perceived in August 1914 that the old conditions of warfare had been revolutionised, that only if the British fleet were defeated could an enemy secure a foothold in any part of the British West Indies; that though a local defence force was necessary, and might be called upon to repel a raid, yet that the defence of the island, as of the whole Empire, was to be maintained on the battlefields of the European Continent and especially on the sea. If Jamaicans were to take any active part in this war, therefore, they must enlist in the British Armies, then rapidly being formed. This realized, there arose a demand for co-operation with the British Army. And young Jamaicans in the colony, as well as those in England and in Canada, immediately prepared to offer themselves to the military authorities of Jamaica, England and Canada for service in France or in any other theatre of the war.

There were already some Jamaicans in the English Army. Soon their countrymen were to hear of these—amongst the wounded and the dead. Those young men who were studying in English or Canadian universities, or who were working abroad, began to enlist, and their services were willingly accepted. Those in Jamaica who wished to enlist were informed that men were not being recruited in this country. Then began an exodus of these young men, and of young English, Scotch and Irish men in the colony, these proceeding to England or to Canada at their own expense; and this movement,



began as early as August 1914, continued even after no man who wished to serve the Empire was called upon to pay his passage to Canada or England for the purpose of offering himself. Week after week and month after month it was repeatedly recorded that some of the younger men had sailed to join the British Army or the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Positions were given up, savings were devoted to providing for the expenses of the journey. All Jamaica regarded with pride the eagerness and the devotion of these gallant young fellows.

The agitation for the sending of a contingent from Jamaica naturally found its most urgent expression in the public prints. An anonymous letter, written on August 25, and published in the *Gleaner* on the 31st, urged the formation of a contingent for active service. A scheme for recruiting a body of mounted men, three hundred in number, the little force to be entirely supported by the Jamaica Government, was formulated and placed before Sir William Manning by Mr. S. C. Burke. Then came the news that the Home Government had accepted the offer of the Indian Army for active service at the front, and it was generally felt that there was no reason why Indians should be accepted and West Indians refused. Was money the difficulty? Did the Government feel that the finances of the colony were not in a condition to undertake the charge of sending men to the Mother Country? Then, it was urged, a part of the money being subscribed in aid of the soldiers and sailors of the Mother Country might be devoted to transporting the finest aid of all—men to fight the Empire's battles in the Empire's cause. "Perhaps even a special fund might be opened for this purpose," suggested a writer signing himself "Volunteer", in a letter to the Press. But the most important suggestion at that time came from Major A. N. Dixon, then recently elected a member of the Legislative Council. It was the most important because it had the backing of the elected members, and, if any body of men had in-

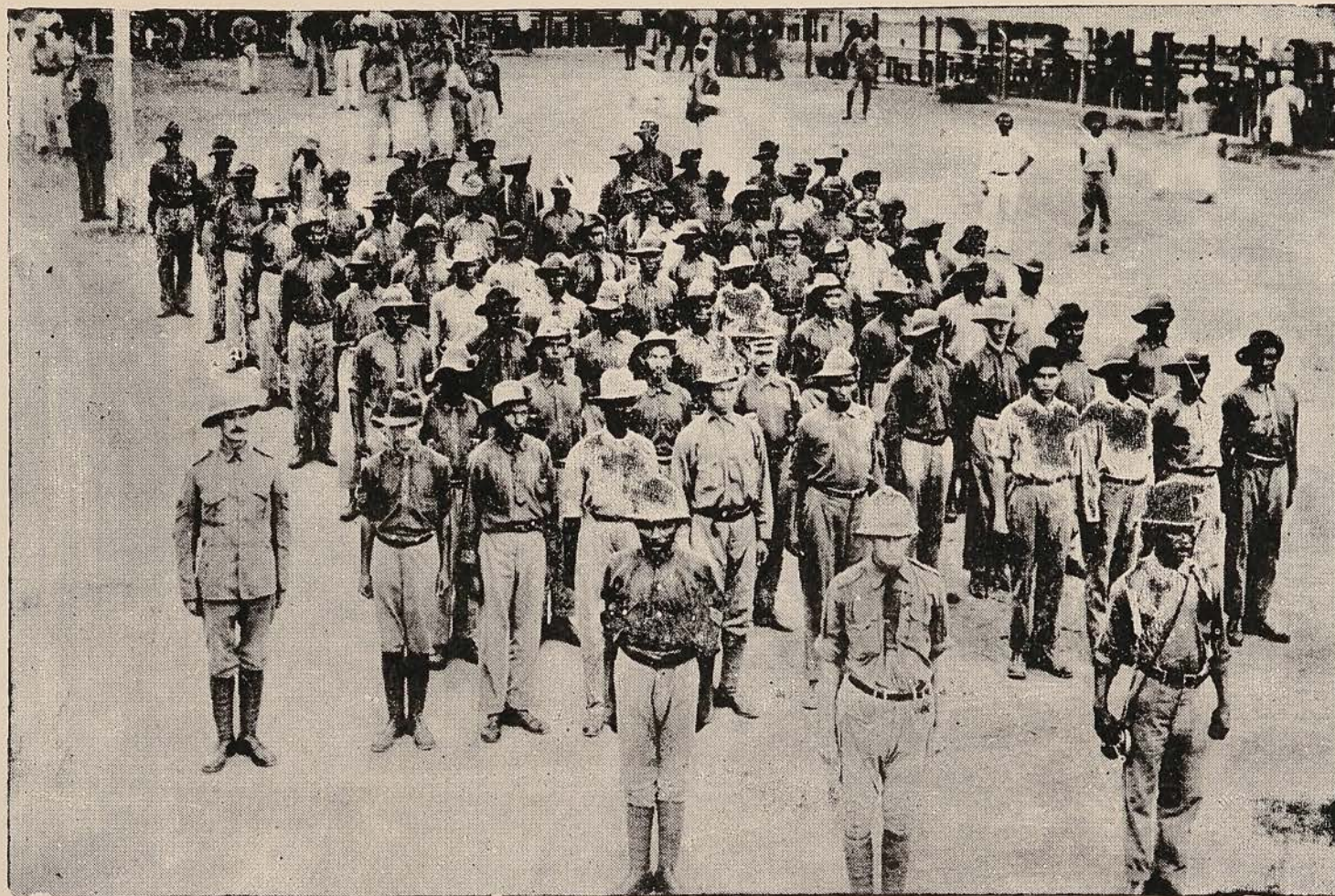


fluence with the Colonial Government, and through the Colonial Government with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, it was undoubtedly the elected members of the Legislative Council.

Major Dixon suggested that a strong Militia should be formed, there being hundreds of discharged West Indian soldiers in the island and in Central America who would willingly return to the colours. Such a force would relieve for active service the West India Regiment then garrisoning the island, and the whole cost of local defence could be undertaken by the colony. Thirty years before it would have been impossible for anyone to advocate that a country like Jamaica should be left with only a Militia composed mainly of persons of African descent, a volunteer organization of all classes of men, and the existing Police Force. Yet the upper classes of Jamaica saw nothing strange in the suggestion made by one of themselves. The old distrust of the people as a whole had silently evaporated in the years that had passed since the generation that had witnessed the Morant Bay Rebellion had given place to a new type of men born in a new order of things. It was felt that the island of Jamaica could consent to the sending away of the regular troops and could with confidence undertake to maintain internal order and to defend itself, if attacked, until the arrival of the only means that could ultimately ensure its safety, a British warship. But though the elected members, at a private conference, decided to support Major Dixon's scheme, the Governor refused to support it. He did not think, he said, that the Imperial authorities would approve of it just then.

The elected members took the Governor's refusal quietly; Major Dixon, writing to the Press, stated that there was nothing to be gained by discussing his suggestion any further. "But I hope," he continued, "that it may still be possible for the loyalty and patriotism of Jamaica to show itself in some other suitable act of devotion. For excellent as the gift of sugar is, as far as it goes, it would almost amount to a mockery to offer





MEN OF THE JAMAICA CONTINGENT AT DRILL.



it except as a first instalment and earnest of what we intend to do later on." That Jamaica should send men to the front was still his firm conviction, and he left it to the country to say what it would do. A month after this, on October 16, the *Gleaner* published a long leading article strongly advocating the formation of a West Indian Contingent, with Jamaica taking the lead and inviting the co-operation of the British West Indian Colonies in this movement.

The idea of a West Indian Contingent, then, was propagated very shortly after the war; but soon there came to the West Indies information which made the realisation of the idea impossible at that moment. Before the month of October was ended it was known that the Imperial Government (which probably meant the War Office) had decided that all men in the British West Indies capable of bearing arms should remain in these islands to assist in defensive operations should such become necessary. This was really the reply to the offer of a West Indian Contingent which one of the West Indian Governors must have forwarded to the War Office. The reply was not officially published. It was simply permitted to be known. "Defend your homes," was the advice of the Imperial authorities, and there was nothing more to be said just then. Nothing, that is, by way of argument or rejoinder, but this decision was much discussed in all the colonies, and not least so in Jamaica. The disinclination of the Home Government to have a Contingent from the West Indies was thought in Jamaica to be due to its reluctance to arm black troops against Europeans.

"The British soldier can stand up to anything except the British War Office," says Mr. Bernard Shaw, and during the first months of the war it did seem as if men willing and eager to become soldiers were being deliberately prevented by the regular routine officials of the British War Office. It was only after the war had endured for some months, and it was discovered that our so-called victories existed on paper only, that



reform in the War Office led to better methods of recruiting. The offer of India was not one that could be dealt with merely by permanent officials, or even by the Secretary of State for War himself. It came before Parliament; it was really Parliament, led by Lord Curzon, who accepted that offer which India has so magnificently made good. But the West Indies—who would deal with their timid proposal of a thousand men or so: who save someone who thought it was of no importance? And the moral effect of a refusal was probably not dwelt upon for a single instant. Happily, the disappointment felt in Jamaica, though it gave rise to some ordinary conversational comment, created no bitterness. Jamaicans had offered to serve in the South African War. It had been plainly intimated to them that it would be impossible for the Mother Country to employ coloured troops against the Boers, as the latter were notorious for their fierce race prejudice, and also because, in a land like South Africa, the employment of black troops against white men might have a dangerous after-effect. Jamaicans believed that England was considering, not her own inclinations, but the thoughts and feelings of others by her refusal to accept black men for service in South Africa; the difficulty of her position was admitted. But it was thought strange that against an enemy such as the Germans were reported to be there should be any reluctance to have at the front a body of West Indians, white, mixed-blood and black, who had been born and brought up as British subjects and who could not possibly be classed amongst savages. Was this race prejudice? The newspapers answered the question which they knew was being asked in the one effective way they could. They pointed out that no black or coloured man of military age was refused in England or in Canada by the recruiting agents, and this fact had a salutary effect.

Individuals in Jamaica ignored the suggestion that they should remain and enlist for home defence. They continued to sail for England, and news soon came that they were being



welcomed there. Then public opinion took a swift turn, and it was said and believed that if the local Government would only act with firmness, and urge that a Jamaica Contingent should be accepted, all would be well. There was a deep-rooted disinclination to believe that England would refuse a loyal offer from one of her oldest colonies. This feeling, almost amounting to an instinct, was perfectly sound. England had not refused the offer of the West Indies, though the War Office had done so. But the War Office methods of recruiting were shortly to be subjected to severe criticism, and the day was coming when West Indian troops would be welcomed with acclamation in the mother country.

West Indian troops had never been used on European battlefields in the past, it is true, but this was probably due to two sufficient reasons: first, because all former wars were fought in Europe by comparatively small professional armies; and next, because when England had had to contend with other nations, the war was waged in the West Indies as well as on the plains of Europe and India. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries England was often at war with France and Spain, or with both combined, and in these wars Jamaicans played some part. Thus in 1739 England declared war on Spain, and Admiral Vernon attacked Porto Bello on the Isthmus of Panama. Jamaica was an important naval station in those days, and Vernon naturally came to this island after the capture of the Isthmian seaport. The next year he sailed to bombard Cartagena, and most probably some Jamaicans went with him; the year after that Vernon's fleet was reinforced by another fleet which arrived from England under Sir Chaloner Ogle, with whom an English army also came. Jamaica volunteers accompanied this army to Cartagena. More, a Negro Contingent was specially organized by the Governor, Edward Trelawny, and this contingent formed part of the King's forces that were intended to reduce Cartagena, then considered the strongest city and fortress on the Spanish



Main. The expedition was unsuccessful; a year afterwards more reinforcements arrived from England, and this time it was determined that the city of Panama should be taken. The Governor raised a regiment of soldiers in the island and accompanied them himself: once more the white, black and coloured inhabitants of the island sailed forth to meet and fight the Empire's enemies. This expedition was no more successful than had been the former one. This was due to bad generalship and the generally wretched arrangements made for the comfort and care of the troops.

War was again declared by England against Spain in 1762, and what is described as "a formidable expedition" sailed for Havana; a fleet from Jamaica joined the fleet from England; with the former went a number of Jamaica Negro troops. These had been raised at the special request of the Imperial Government; they were mostly slaves who had been hastily trained to the use of arms. Havana was taken, and was held by the British until peace between England and Spain was concluded. In 1779 an expedition against the Spanish colonies of Central America was again despatched from Jamaica; it was organized by Governor Dalling and with it went Horatio Nelson, afterwards to be celebrated as the hero of Trafalgar. There were some Jamaicans with this force also, and when in 1793, England then being at war with France, a small white contingent sailed from Port Royal and captured the town of Jeremie in Hayti, it was soon reinforced by two hundred Negro soldiers, with the aid of whom St. Nicholas was taken. Our efforts to subdue the Island of Hayti and San Domingo went badly after the initial successes. It is stated that reinforcements from England, to the number of eighteen thousand men, were sent out during the years 1795-1796. Nothing was understood about tropical health conditions in those days, and the lives of soldiers did not seem to be regarded as of much consequence. These English troops died like flies; then an attempt was made to create a large num-



ber of Negro regiments, and slaves from Jamaica were despatched to Hayti for that purpose. The end of that effort to take the Island is well known; here we are only concerned with the briefest possible statement of the activities of Jamaicans in the previous wars of England. Contrary to the opinion that has sometimes been expressed, we must assert that the expeditions in which the people of this country took a fairly considerable though usually an unfortunate part were not considered as trifling by the Imperial Government. They were regarded as of the first importance. Nelson sought in West Indian waters the fleet he defeated at Trafalgar, and to have taken Cartagena and Panama would have been to deal a terrible blow to the overseas power of Spain.

After the defeat of Napoleon and the revolt of the Spanish-American colonies from their mother country, the West Indian waters and the Spanish Main and islands ceased to be the battlefields of the European Powers. For a hundred years the Jamaican was not troubled by war at his very doors; he no longer prepared to leave his native land for service in another country under the British flag, save indeed in so far as he became a soldier in the West India Regiments and was sent to subdue uprisings in the hinterland of British Africa. He became a man of peace, forgetting the days when his fathers had so often been at war. But when the great World War broke out and loyal British subjects were hastening from all parts of the globe to serve under the British colours, he felt that he too must be represented. As we have seen, his first endeavours to that end were baulked. We shall presently see how a subsequent effort was rewarded with success.



## CHAPTER V

### HOPES AND FEARS

**W**HEN the first flush of excitement created by the stirring events of the first three weeks of August 1914 had passed away, there was, as has been already indicated, a subsidence of feeling into something like its customary calm. The routine work of the country and of the individual had to be performed, men had to live as usual, and no excitement or enthusiasm could possibly maintain for long the same exalted level. Nevertheless it was not with the old attitude of mind that the people turned to face the new problems which had suddenly arisen: a new situation had developed and that must needs be dealt with immediately, though many had to act, as it were, in the dark. Nearly half the import trade of Jamaica was done with Great Britain, and now the English firms began urgently to enquire into the financial condition of the colony's business men, while many of them declined to sell except on a basis of cash payments. The public as a whole continued to purchase sparingly, a policy of economy which was maintained until towards the middle of December. Merchants and storekeepers reduced their staffs or reduced the wages of their staffs, and this, coupled with the suspension of much Government and Parochial work, which had given employment to thousands of the labouring classes, produced a new feeling of depression which was increased and deepened by the then prevailing drought.

Since the earthquake of 1907 the seasons had been irregular, and the rainfall had been less on the whole than during the previous seven years. In spite of this, and in spite also of a hurricane in the latter part of 1912, which had occasioned severe loss to the western parishes of the



island, the output of the plantations had maintained a fairly high level. This was due to the extension of cultivation generally and to the spirit of enterprise which planters and peasants alike had shown in the face of all adverse and unsettling circumstances. Jamaica had never entirely abandoned the sugar industry or neglected the production of coffee. To the cultivation of cocoa she had of late years been devoting much attention. Pimento, oranges and dyewoods grew practically wild, and there was the banana, her main article of export. But a large quantity of her coffee and pimento, and some of her rum, had been sold to Germany and Austria previous to the war; and this trade, of course, had now disappeared. It was on fruit, dyewoods and cocoa that she believed she would now have mainly to depend; such sugar as she had would be sold also, and at good prices; but the prevailing opinion was that rum would be a drug on the market. Still, with good seasons, all might be fairly well; unfortunately it was the good seasons that were lacking. The drought that might have been accepted philosophically at any other time, was at that moment contemplated with serious though not with loud misgivings. If it did not break in October the situation might become difficult to cope with, and the island would be threatened with considerable suffering and possibly a financial crisis.

There was another reason for the wave of depression which swept over the colony about this time. In spite of a firm faith in the ultimate triumph of the Allies, intelligent people could not help observing just then that the Germans were pressing on victoriously. The telegrams that came to Jamaica were full of rhetoric and of prophesies of the enemy's speedy defeat: they were gladly believed, but in the meantime the enemy was compelling the Allies to retreat. This fact no amount of reasoning could explain away; it was so evident that the Governor, on the night of August 30, commanded the chief censor to inform the public through the



Press that the information then being received through the ordinary news agencies must be accepted with the greatest reserve, His Excellency's official information tending to show that the German advance and the withdrawal of the Allies' forces had not the significance claimed for them, but rather appeared to be resulting in the exhaustion of the German efforts. Such an assertion would not have been made with any deliberately dishonest intention. It was quite on a par with the general belief prevailing during the first phase of the war. Whatever the enemy did or achieved was regarded as having no permanent significance; he was rapidly becoming exhausted; we should begin to drive him back almost immediately; the duration of the war could only be a matter of months. Nevertheless, that the Germans should be able to make any progress whatever was not considered in the colony as what ought to have happened, and there were not lacking some to shake dismal heads and mutter sad predictions. But a swing of the pendulum of public feeling soon occurred. This was the result of the capture of a German auxiliary cruiser on the high seas, the prize being brought into Kingston Harbour on the morning of September the 11th.

Jamaicans have always had some understanding of what sea power means. An island people are well acquainted with the sea; they realise that if cut off from overseas intercourse they must suffer severely; and there is hardly a literate Jamaican who is not well aware that if the British Navy were once destroyed the whole structure of the Empire must inevitably fall to pieces. So even if the land campaign was not yet going as satisfactorily for the Allies as one could wish, there was always the satisfaction of knowing that on the sea the British Navy was supreme. That supremacy had been directly demonstrated in the Caribbean by the immunity from attack hitherto enjoyed by all the British West Indian Islands. It was now to be further proved by a fact which all the inhabitants of the colony could easily appreciate.



It was historical that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, rich prizes captured by the English had been brought into Kingston Harbour. There had been a time when that spacious plane of gleaming water had been covered with the captive vessels of the nations with which the Empire was then at war. But hardly anyone had hoped to see a prize of war brought into a port of Jamaica once more; and so, when the news of the German cruiser's capture was rumoured about the city on the morning of September 11, and it was further said that the ship was coming here, the report was at first regarded with considerable incredulity. But it grew and it spread: it was the *Karlsruhe* which had been taken, went the story, and taken only after a desperate fight. It was a bigger armoured cruiser still. However, whatever it was, there were thousands upon thousands of people determined to trust only the evidence of their own eyes; and thus, long before the captive and her captor could make their appearance in the offing, the waterfront of Kingston was thronged with an eager expectant crowd.

It was in the afternoon that the *Bethania*, with five hundred German reservists on board, and H.M.S. *Essex* which had captured her, came into view beyond the Palisadoes. Then there was no longer doubt. A storm of enthusiasm burst forth suddenly. The crowds that clustered on every pier, that occupied every available foot of space on every high building in the lower quarter of the city, that thronged the sidewalks and had to be prevented from obstructing the traffic in the streets—these realised with joy and pride that their country was, in a way, taking some part in the war, that German prisoners were coming here, that the seas, free to them as British subjects, were inexorably closed to those who were at war with England. When the two ships had entered the harbour and were steaming parallel to Kingston's waterfront, a man, perched on an outlook upon one of the piers, produced and waved a tattered Union Jack. That was



the signal for a thunder of cheering such as Kingston had seldom heard before. The sailors on the *Essex* made no reply to a greeting which they knew was intended for them, but the band of the warship played and the strains of its music came over the waters and were heard in the intervals of the wild huzzahing, the tumult and the shouting of the people. The prisoners on the captured auxiliary cruiser *Bethania* gathered upon the shoreside of their ship and gazed at the immense multitude in silence. But when they landed they found that not an insulting expression was hurled at them from any of the crowd, and that the authorities had neglected no precaution to protect them from any avoidable inconvenience. They were not paraded as a spectacle. As quickly as possible those of them who were to be conveyed to Up-Park Camp were placed in closed cars and driven away; but for hours after the prisoners had landed the streets of lower Kingston were crowded with thousands of the excited citizens, and each and every one spoke only of the scene they had witnessed that day, while some recalled with pride the old naval traditions of Jamaica and felt that, in the future, the colony might yet again become a station of some importance to that Navy with which it had been so closely and so gloriously connected in the past.

The progress of the war in France and Flanders continued to be followed with the liveliest attention and interest. It was well understood that, with the German retreat from the Marne to the Aisne, Paris was for the present safe, and hopes were entertained that the Germans would be driven back much farther still. Even the sinking of the three British cruisers, the *Cressy*, *Aboukir*, and *Hogue*, by a German submarine, caused but little uneasiness in Jamaica: the loss was not overestimated and it was confidently believed that a similar unfortunate occurrence could easily be avoided in the future. Also, with the telegrams stating that on the Aisne the Germans were fighting "with courage born of des-



pair," and with the local papers bravely prophesying that the enemy had shot his bolt in the West, it was natural that many people should begin to think and speak of the war as already entering on a new and victorious phase.

But on the 9th of October the Germans entered Antwerp. This news was published in Jamaica three days afterwards.

The loss of Antwerp was regarded in the island as a most serious blow. It seemed to impress the imagination of large numbers. It was looked upon as proof that the enemy was far more powerful than he had been thought to be, that he might succeed in reaching Paris at his next venture, might take Calais, and then might make an effort at an invasion of England. For a while something like pessimism was felt and expressed—not in regard to the ultimate issue but in regard to the immediate prospects of the war. And when in the afternoon of November 7 it was announced that on the first of that month Admiral Cradock had fought a German squadron in the Southern Pacific and had been totally defeated, the apprehension and gloom amongst all classes deepened to its darkest.

The details at first received of this engagement were scanty, and there still prevailed notions in regard to modern naval armament which prevented most persons from seeing that South Pacific fight and its issue in their proper perspective. That the German shells had so quickly and so speedily set the British ships on fire, startled those—the vast majority—who had not yet learnt that this was precisely the expected effect of shell fire, and was not at all due to some special invention which the enemy had kept secret, only to employ with deadly effect upon British ships of war. Dejection was plainly visible on the faces of those in Kingston who had heard of the battle on that Saturday afternoon; dejection was everywhere visible in another day or two when the news had spread to all parts of the island. It was said that this was the first time for a hundred years that England had



met a European Power on the sea, ship to ship and gun to gun; and for the English to have been beaten without inflicting any material damage on the foe was a bitter fact to face, a fact which suggested possibilities which no one wanted to acknowledge, even in the secret recesses of his mind.

But further details began to arrive, and the newspapers were able to comment on what had taken place in the Pacific, and to show that the defeat of Rear Admiral Cradock contained nothing of shame, nothing at which the British Empire could need to blush. Cradock had recently been in Jamaica. He had been in command of the ships coming and going in these waters. He had been observed by hundreds: it had been said by some who saw him that, if he should ever meet the enemy, the end of that meeting could only be victory or death. Victory, as the people soon learnt, was out of the question for Cradock off the Coast of Coronel. His ships were outclassed, his guns outranged; he fought two of the finest armoured cruisers in the German Navy; fought for five hours, then sank beneath the waves in the thick darkness of the southern night with his flag still proudly flying, with high courage in his heart, conscious that, though beaten in this battle, he had upheld his country's honour to the last, and had proved himself worthy to be named with those great seamen whose prowess had made England the Mistress of the Seas.

The colony's spirits revived as the truth became known and as its significance became appreciated. The Germans had accomplished no miracle. The destruction of the German Pacific squadron might safely be counted upon. This last was of very practical importance to the least imaginative; since, if Admiral von Spee should come into the Atlantic by way of the Panama Canal, or even by rounding the Horn, it was well within the bounds of probability that he would pass near enough to the island of Jamaica to do some damage with his modern nine-inch guns. In September the *Emden*



had fired on Madras, and von Spee's ships were infinitely more powerful than the *Emden*. But although there was no positive information on the point, it was confidently assumed that the avengers of Cradock would soon be on their way to meet von Spee. On November 17 a telegram, coming originally from Valpariso, and dated on the 13th, was published: it stated that another naval engagement was momentarily expected between German and English naval forces. This, of course, was a mere guess: it was an anticipation of what was considered certain. But when, a few days later, H.M.S. *Princess Royal*, one of the finest superdreadnought battle-cruisers in the British Navy, steamed into the harbour of Kingston and anchored, it was understood in Kingston at least that the days of von Spee's squadron were numbered.

A telegram dated December 2, but given out by the censors only on December 8, announced that a battle between German and British squadrons was imminent in the South Atlantic. On that very day, though no one in Jamaica could know it, the Falkland Islands Battle was fought. The news came late on the following afternoon; special editions of the newspapers were issued in the city and the newsboys ran about the thoroughfares and among the suburbs crying out the joyful tidings of the Germans' utter defeat. Other cheerful intelligence was just then being passed from one part of the country to another. Towards the end of October the drought had broken. Rain in abundant showers was steadily falling everywhere. It had come in good time, it gave promise of continuance. This promise was kept, and thus one cause of anxiety was removed. So when the Christmas holidays came round they were enjoyed with much the usual heartiness; there was, perhaps, a little less spending than usual; otherwise there was no difference. The year 1914 had ended in Jamaica on a cheerful note.

The New Year dawned upon a country wondering what the next twelve months would bring to it, praying for a



speedy end to the terrible struggle then proceeding, but inclined to view the immediate future with hopeful eyes. During the five months just elapsed it had passed through many varied phases of feelings. It had run a whole gamut of intensely contrasted emotions, had risen high on the wings of enthusiasm and been plunged deep into the slough of dismay. But it had all along, and in spite of every uncertainty or present adverse circumstance, struggled to show its traditional loyalty to Throne and Empire. It had wanted to testify in a practical manner its willingness to make sacrifices for the common cause. Its dearest wish, to take part in the actual fighting at the front, had been denied to it, and the disappointment was felt. But at least it had tried to do its duty; and it stood ready to prove at any moment that its offer of men for the King's service had been no idle one.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE FIRST FIVE HUNDRED

**F**OR a while the colony apparently accepted as final the War Office's decision in regard to a West Indian Contingent. For a little while nothing more was said in the Press about the sending of men to take part in the great struggle. But in the meantime letters from Jamaicans who had joined the British Army in the first weeks of war had begun to appear in the local papers; these breathed a high spirit of courage and patriotism, and the perusal of them very naturally served to fire afresh the ardour of young men who envied the good fortune of the few who were already in the Press about the sending of men to take part in the who wished to have their names enrolled as recruits, and who desired to be examined so as to be ready for enlisting at any moment it might be decided to send a contingent from Jamaica. Thus the question of a contingent of some sort soon became again one of the living topics of the day: the problem was, how could any men be sent from Jamaica? The solution of that problem was suggested on April 23, 1915, by Mr. William Wilson, well known as a merchant and business man of Kingston, as an Englishman who had long resided in Jamaica, having made this colony his permanent home. Mr. Wilson's plan was a very simple one, as usually are the plans which immediately attract public attention and approval and which signally succeed. We will give it as it appeared in his own words, in his letter to the *Gleaner*:—

“The Editor. Sir,—There has been, and is, correspondence in your valuable paper in re Jamaicans who are desirous of going to the war, but who are unable to bear the necessary expense. Enquiry at the Military Headquarters proves that £15 will equip and land a man in England. If ninety-nine



other men will subscribe £30 each, I will give an equal amount to send two hundred native-born Jamaicans to the front. Like myself, there must be many men in the island who, though unable to volunteer, would like to feel that they were doing even a little bit to help. I am, etc., William Wilson."

So straightforward and practical a proposal called forth immediately a hearty response from persons who were in a position to aid financially and who had long thought that Jamaica as well as other parts of the British Empire should be represented amongst the fighting forces of the Mother Country. Mr. Wilson's communication appeared on a Friday. On the next day he received three letters warmly commending his proposal. These letters, and a few others which did much to popularise the new contingent idea, may well be transcribed here. Mr. Robert Craig, of Chapelton, wrote: "I have just read your appeal in to-day's *Gleaner*. I feel exactly as you do, so just put me down for £30, and ask me for my cheque when it is required. The Empire needs every man it can muster, a fact which does not seem to be appreciated even at home! but which, I am qualified to know, is clear to many patriotic young fellows here." Messrs. Manton and Hart, of Kingston, said: "We heartily approve of your admirable suggestion for helping the Empire, and hope the idea will grow, and that you will get more than you dream of towards the fund. Please put us down as contributors to the sum of £30." Messrs. Sherlock and Smith, of Kingston, wrote: "We both feel that your idea is a good one, and that everyone in Jamaica that can afford to help the Mother Country in any way just now should do so. You will find Sherlock's cheque for £15, and mine for the same amount." The letter was signed by Mr. J. R. Smith.

It was then announced that subscriptions to the fund could be sent either to the *Gleaner* or to Mr. William Wilson, and during the next week other commendatory letters were published by the *Gleaner*. Mr. F. G. Sharp, of Trout Hall,



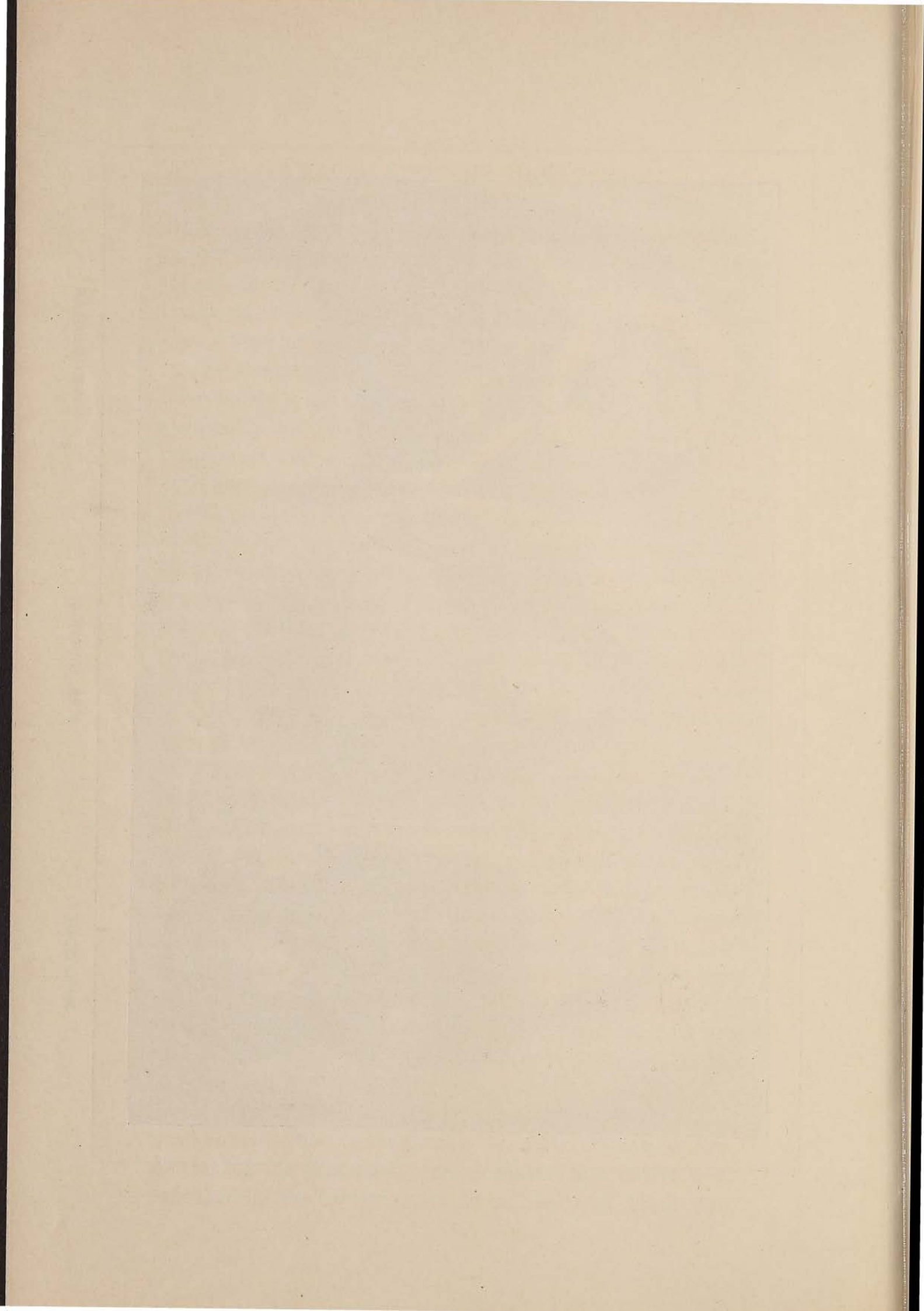


MISS DOUET.

MRS. BRISCOE.

MISS DOUGLAS.







Clarendon, sent a cheque for £15, and very wisely urged that those who might not be able to afford the sum mentioned by Mr. William Wilson should nevertheless contribute to the fund. Mr. T. N. Aguilar wrote: "Please put me down for a subscription of £30 to the War Contingent Fund. I heartily approve of the scheme, but I think that whether enough money is obtained to send 200 men or not, the number of men we can actually send should go." Mr. Horace Myers said in his letter: "I am in full sympathy with the suggestion to send a first Jamaica Contingent to the front, and would like very much to see it arranged—the sooner the better. I go further and say that every effort should be made to this end. It gives me great pleasure to subscribe the sum of thirty guineas to help along the scheme, which I sincerely trust will materialise." Mr. Leonard deCordova wrote: "Please put me down for £30 towards the Jamaica War Contingent Fund. I entirely approve of it, and wish it every success. I would suggest that some effort should be made to encourage young men willing to enlist to send in their names at once. Many may be waiting to do so. When the names begin to come in, the money, I think, will follow very quickly." Mr. M. M. Alexander addressed his letter to Mr. William Wilson, asking that his name should be put down for £30. "I hope," he concluded, "the list will continue to grow rapidly; it is a matter that should be carried through without delay." This letter appeared on the last day of April; so that, within a week of the publication of Mr. Wilson's suggestion, the idea had received the support of many men whose views would have considerable influence while it had also been strongly taken up and commended by the island's Press. It started under the most auspicious circumstances and was to have a far greater development than its originator could possibly have imagined or hoped.

Confident now of the scheme's success, Mr. Wilson invited Mr. Baggett Gray, Mr. M. deCordova and Mr. Frank Jackson to assist him in the work that was to be done, and



this committee at once set about to appeal for subscriptions, the *Gleaner* being the medium of its communications with the public. A telegram was prepared and despatched through the local military authorities to England, offering a contingent of from one hundred to two hundred men. By the beginning of June the War Contingent Fund stood at over £2,000, and no one could doubt that the sum required for the transportation of 200 men would easily be collected. But in the interval the Press and the public had come to the conclusion that the contingent movement should not merely be a voluntary one; an agitation for a national movement was begun: led by the *Gleaner* it daily grew stronger. It was the direct and logical result of the reply which had been made to Jamaica's offer by the British War Office and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It followed inevitably on Mr. Wilson's practical and patriotic movement.

The reply of the British authorities was received in the last week in May. It was made public on the 28th. The War Contingent Committee's telegram had mentioned recruits up to the number of 200, and special emphasis had been laid on the fact that these recruits would be black, coloured and white men, a mixed body representing the different strata and composition of the island's population. The despatch accepting the offer stated that any number of men the colony might wish to send would be welcomed, which response at once assured Jamaicans that any objection that may at first have been entertained in regard to West Indians of all colours joining the King's Armies in appreciable numbers had now completely disappeared—Jamaica was free to send 10,000 men if she desired to do so.

This put it beyond question that Jamaica's offer had been taken seriously, and many persons perceived quite clearly that a mere 200 men sent by private subscriptions would have more of a sentimental than a practical value, and would be a contribution altogether incommensurate with the size and historic



reputation of a colony like Jamaica. The agitation for a larger contingent was therefore bound to continue and to grow. On the 2nd of June there was a meeting of the St. Thomas Parochial Board. At that meeting the Chairman, Mr. J. H. Williams, moved a resolution in which the Board unanimously expressed the opinion "that a representative contingent of at least 1,000 men and officers, to be maintained at full strength during the war", should be sent to England, the cost being borne by the Government. A special land tax to defray the expenses of this contingent was suggested, the members of the Board individually expressing their willingness to pay this special tax. Other Parochial Boards soon followed this admirable lead, but the War Contingent Committee itself had also perceived that the original scheme must now be modified and considerably expanded.

The committee had now been enlarged. The contingent movement having received the approval of the British authorities, the Governor felt free to associate himself with it. Accordingly, he and General Blackden became members of the new War Contingent Committee, which, as finally constituted, contained these members: His Excellency the Governor, Mr. William Wilson, Mr. Baggett Gray, Mr. Michael de Cordova, Mr. Frank Jackson, General Blackden, Lieut. Otley, Mr. John Tapley, Mr. John Barclay, Mr. Edward Morris, Captain List, Hon. Sydney Couper, Hon. Coke Kerr.

This body met early in June with Mr. William Wilson as Chairman, and it was then decided on the suggestion of the Governor that the contingent should consist of 500 men, with reserves to replace casualties which might from time to time occur through sickness or other causes.

Jamaica having set the example of a practical effort towards contributing a contingent of soldiers to the British Army, the sister colonies of Trinidad, British Guiana and Barbados immediately prepared to follow that example. Sir William Manning had entered into communication with the



Governors of those colonies; these had promptly replied, and it was arranged that there should be a West Indian Battalion of 1,500 men, including those from Jamaica; it was understood, however, that the formation of the Jamaica Contingent should be in no way dependent on the action of the other colonies, and that the despatching of the recruits would take place as early as it was convenient to do so. Young men all over the colony had already been sending in their names to the committee, the district medical officers were now asked to examine these volunteers free of charge, while officers commanding the several local defence corps and gentlemen interesting themselves in obtaining recruits for the contingent were requested to select the best men that could be found and to take care that volunteers should be able to read manuscript and write fairly well.

And now members of the Legislative Council began to express their opinion as to what Jamaica should do. Several were emphatic on the necessity of a national movement; in all parts of the colony it was being asked why the Government hesitated to take the step which Jamaica as a whole so strongly approved. But the Government gave no hint of its intentions. In the third week of June the examination of recruits began at the Camp, men from Kingston, St. Andrew and St. Thomas being the first to be summoned for this ordeal. Then the recruits from other parts of the country were ordered to Kingston.

These men came to the city in batches, and in almost every case their departure from their town or district was made the occasion of a popular demonstration. The leading people of the neighbourhood come out to see them off; they marched to the railway station to the accompaniment of music; they were cheered to the echo as the train thundered out of the station, and in Kingston they were received by members of the War Contingent Committee and conveyed in special cars to Up-Park Camp.



The examination of recruits went steadily on; and subscriptions towards the Contingent Fund continued to come in. The Contingent Committee did not hesitate to ask the public for contributions as small as threepence. The appeal had first been for £3,000. The sum of £5,000 was next asked for. Then the committee boldly placed the figure at £10,000, suggesting that the voluntary effort might be able to do all that was needed. The public responded liberally. But the public meant that Jamaica should send far more than 500 men, and day after day there was something said in this connection.

On June 29 there was a meeting of the War Contingent Committee, and there it was stated that 748 recruits had presented themselves for examination, of whom 442 had been accepted. There were still 155 new applications for enrolment, so it seemed certain that the 500 men wanted would be forthcoming when a transport ship should be obtained. This announcement was pleasurably received, the more so as there had not been wanting pessimists to suggest that Jamaica, in spite of all the talk, would not be able to find 200 willing recruits when the moment came for a final decision on the part of the younger men. This was said quite freely, and only facts could refute the pessimists: now that they stood refuted they at once attacked the suggestion that the colony should send "at least 1,000 men." This was quite out of the question, they said; 500 would be as many as the colony could scrape together. Then the quality of the recruits was pronounced to be miserable, especially by those who had not set eyes upon the men. As a last resort it was confidently asserted that the contingent would never be sent for, that our offer had only been accepted so that our feelings should not be too much hurt, that some good excuse would be found for keeping the men in Jamaica until the war was at an end.

In July the public criticism of the Government's apparent disinclination to make the contingent movement a national one attained its most vigorous expression; from every quarter



came strenuous protests, and some of the expressions used were positively bitter. All the colony's church papers had but one thing to say, and that consisted of a demand for a national contingent. Men occupying leading positions in their respective parishes implored the Governor and Legislative Council not to allow the island to be disgraced at a time when every other part of the British Empire was hastening to make sacrifices for the great Imperial Cause. These gentlemen had all contributed handsomely towards the War Contingent Fund; more than one had each given enough to send away six or eight recruits. It was therefore with no desire to escape their personal obligations that they urged on the Government a national movement. The immediate though indirect reply of the Governor to all these exhortations was the announcement that out of public funds he would provide two weeks' training for the recruits at Up Park Camp, prior to their leaving the island.

This was considered so utterly inadequate a contribution from General Revenue towards the contingent expenses that the *Gleaner* called upon the elected members to take the initiative, hold a meeting among themselves, and represent strongly to the Colony's Executive the desire of the people that something substantial and truly representative of the national capabilities should be attempted and carried through. This paper suggested that the contingent should consist of 5,000 men, and that for this purpose the colony should become responsible for an expenditure of £500,000. It professed a preference for a still larger scheme, namely 10,000 men and a capital expenditure of a million pounds, or £60,000 a year for forty years. But the smaller scheme was the one which it strongly and deliberately advocated; and now that the appeal direct had been made to the elected members, the efforts of many persons in the country were directed towards inducing these legislators to use their influence with the Government in the interest of a national contingent movement.



August came. The agitation continued. The hurricane season was well now advanced; but as in November 1912 Jamaica had been visited by a devastating cyclone, most persons hoped and believed that for some time to come the island would be spared. But on August 12 came warnings from Washington, and on the evening of August 13 masses of black cloud on the northern and eastern horizons, and fierce squalls with sharp stinging showers of rain, foretold only too plainly the inevitable approach of the ancient scourge. In a few hours it had come and gone, but in the interval it had destroyed produce to the value of several hundred thousand pounds, and had damaged roads and railway lines severely. It had found the country fair and flourishing and had left destruction in its wake. The colony had suffered serious loss, and for a moment many must have felt that there could be no more talk of a national contingent movement.

But no one said so. The previous year had been, in spite of drought and war, one of the best industrially and financially that the colony had known for half a century. Its export trade had amounted in value to nearly three million pounds sterling, according to the official computation, and was probably actually more than that. The people had been practising economy too; hence it was felt generally that the restoration of damaged plantations would not be so difficult now as it had proved to be on some previous occasions. It was not long before it was perceived that though the island had suffered loss it was by no means crippled; hence on August 18 the Press was able to state that all the arguments which had been advanced in favour of a national contingent still held good, and that the occurrence of the hurricane was no reason whatever why Jamaica should not do something substantial for the sake of its own honour and for the Imperial Cause.

The Governor called the Legislative Council together on September 21. The financial situation created by the hurricane was put before the members. Hurricane repairs to



public roads and works would cost £57,652; in addition there was an estimated decrease of revenue over the whole year's transactions amounting to £63,218, making a grand total of £120,870. The sums available to the Government to meet this amount were £59,202, leaving the deficit to be met at £61,578. It was expected that the Governor would propose to levy new taxes to cover this anticipated deficit. Instead of that he proposed to finance the colony by overdrafts on the banks until the end of the current financial year. Then came the announcement which the colony had been longing and praying to hear, but which few persons thought could be made in the existing financial circumstances of the country. "It may be held expedient," said His Excellency, "that a loan should be raised to cover the expenditure which may be incurred by sending a contingent of troops to the United Kingdom, and for meeting the cost of the raising and sending of drafts to keep the contingent up to strength; and it would seem proper in the circumstances in which we find ourselves at present, that the burden of these charges should not fall entirely upon this generation, but should be in part left to posterity to bear."

So the decision had come at last, and had, it was generally admitted, been announced in the proper place and to the proper people—the members of the Jamaica Legislature. Perhaps the word decision is rather too strong a one to use just here, for the Governor, though showing that he was himself inclined to make the contingent movement a national affair, put forward his suggestion tentatively, leaving the Council to express its opinion on it. But as only the Governor could propose the expenditure of public money for any purpose whatever, and as the views of the elected members were already well known, it was generally felt that His Excellency's few remarks had settled the country's policy in so far as a limited national contingent movement was concerned.

On the following day some of the elected members took up the question, each one of them giving as his opinion that



the country as a constituent unit should become responsible for the sending of a contingent of troops to the front. On these speeches the Governor commented. He paid to the members of the War Contingent Committee a tribute which they certainly deserved, praising them for the work they had accomplished and the success they had achieved. "The nucleus of the contingent," he said, "had been formed by the committee," and in this view the general public decidedly concurred.

He then proceeded to explain his position. He admitted that he had been very cautious in the matter of the contingent. The Home Authorities had asked him to accept certain liabilities with regard to gratuities and pensions which would have to be paid to the men who might be disabled, and with regard to separation allowances to be paid to relatives whom the men might leave behind. This had been known in July: the Imperial Government had suggested that Jamaica might assume half the responsibility for these charges. It was believed at the time that the Governor had refused to countenance the suggestion; he now stated that he had replied saying that he did not feel he could accept such liabilities without the approval of the Council, but that he felt certain that when the war was over and Jamaica knew what really were the liabilities that must be met, the Island's Legislature would be willing to take them up. He wanted it to be distinctly understood that he had accepted no liability whatever so far as the contingent was concerned. He had left the whole matter to the Council to decide.

On the legislators, then, and especially on the elected members of the Council, was placed the entire responsibility of deciding whether Jamaica should pay out of the public revenue the cost of sending men to the front. What was the object of the Governor in pursuing this course?

The right conclusion most probably is that he would not, as an agent of the Imperial Government, urge the country, or even induce the country, to spend money raised by taxes from



a population mainly of African descent on the sending of men to fight in a war with whose origin the West Indies had had nothing to do. The colony was a poor one, it was sometimes difficult to obtain yearly the money needed for the provision of public necessities. Since the beginning of the war taxes had been increased and expenditure on public utilities curtailed. Harder times might be in store for the colony, and the people who would feel them most would be the poorest: if then Jamaica was to undertake a national contingent movement she must do so of her own initiative; the elected members must declare their views. This, we believe, was the idea in the Governor's mind: in what concerned expenditure for Imperial purposes he would follow, not lead, the country. When, however, the country had once accepted the principle of a national movement, he would feel himself entitled to make offers to the Imperial Authorities in its name. He did not say this, but later on he acted it, as will presently be seen.

That brief September session of the Council formally decreed that Jamaica was to be responsible for all expenses connected with the contingent of 500 men, over and above the amount of money up to then collected by voluntary contributions and somewhat similar means. The colony was to pay for the clothing and transportation of the drafts needed to maintain the contingent at full strength, and it was estimated that some 75 men per month would be required for this purpose. The men were to be paid what the English soldiers of the new armies received, and this pay they would receive from the Imperial Authorities. Jamaica's share was to be confined to the defraying of expenses incurred in recruiting and despatching the men to England, and in giving them a certain amount of elementary military training before they left our shores.

Something more was done that session. As already mentioned, the Imperial Government had suggested that Jamaica might assume half the liability for pensions, gratuities and



separation allowances connected with the contingent. On the motion of Mr. J. H. Allwood the Council agreed that "all charges for separation allowances and disabilities, gratuities and pensions on such scale, and commencing at such period as may be arranged between the Government and the War Office" should be undertaken by the colony. This made Jamaica responsible for the men who should return from the war, and for the dependents they would leave behind them. Thus the Council had done more than the Home Government had suggested should be done, and the wish of Jamaica was that she were in a position to follow the example of Canada and Australia and defray all the costs of her contingent. That, however, was simply out of the question. It was also felt and said throughout the island that the Council should have decided upon a larger contingent. Still, as the reinforcements would amount to 900 in one year, and were to be sent month by month whether there were any casualties to be replaced or not, there was comfort in the reflection that in a year the Jamaica Contingent would number 1,400, whereas the first proposal had mentioned 200 soldiers only.

Then followed a period of waiting. The contingent had been accepted in May, but up to the end of September no transport to take the men away could be procured. Either there was difficulty in procuring a ship in England or there was dilatoriness on the part of the War Office. Doubts again began to be expressed as to whether the contingent would ever go, and the pessimists then had the happiest time of their lives.

In the second week of October the recruits, who up to then had only been examined and enrolled, were called up to enlist. It was then found that only 400 men answered the call. Some, tired of waiting, had already left the island for England. Others had grown lukewarm (these enlisted afterwards.) Recruiting meetings were at once commenced all over the island, and the response of the young men was most satisfactory. Then on Saturday, October 20, the King's appeal



to the Empire for men and yet more men to meet the enemy was received by the Governor and was published on the same afternoon. It had what might almost be called an electrifying effect.

It was eagerly read all over the island. It called upon men of all classes to come forward voluntarily and take part in maintaining against the foe the Empire "which your fathers and mine have built." There were some in Jamaica to hold that this appeal was not intended for Jamaica. Primarily it was not. It was intended for the people of the United Kingdom and Ireland, but it was despatched to every part of the Empire, and in every corner of the British Empire men of pure British descent were to be found. There were others, not of pure British descent, who might rightly regard this appeal as made to them also. Every man with British blood in his veins might claim that his ancestors had helped to build and to defend the British Empire, now grown to so much greatness, and men with no drop of British blood in their veins could equally utter that proud boast. Jamaicans of all classes and colours had not for nothing sailed with Nelson to Nicaragua, accompanied Vernon to Cartagena, or assisted in capturing Havana. The ancestors of the present generation of Jamaicans had fought and toiled and died in foreign lands under the British flag. Hence the King's appeal was accepted generally as a call to his loyal subjects in Jamaica, and Jamaica was prepared to answer to the best of its ability. The first contingent with part of its reinforcements would go shortly; a much larger scheme must now be adopted; and until the war should end the colony must do what it could in the way of recruiting men for active service. That was the settled determination of the people within a few days of the publication of the King's Appeal, and it soon found expression in energetic and successful action.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT

**W**E have seen how the effort to send to the front a contingent of Jamaica recruits was initiated, how Mr. Wilson's eminently practical suggestion was welcomed by the colony and soon transformed into a movement of growing proportions and importance. The success of this movement, however, did not depend upon the activity and the exertions of men alone.

In the history of public events in Jamaica the names of women have not appeared; in the past, women have played a practically negligible part in public life. They have worked along with men in the cultivation of the soil; they have been school-teachers, latterly they have entered offices as stenographers and accountants; and no objection has been taken to this extension of their activities. They have had to contend not so much with opposition and prejudice as with inertia and apathy—an inertia and apathy of their own creation mainly. But the war seemed to stimulate them; from the outbreak of hostilities they began to manifest a patriotic enthusiasm which was as welcome as it was novel; they assisted greatly to collect funds for the assistance of wounded British sailors and soldiers and for the families of these; soon they were to make a new departure, were to initiate an effort which will always be remembered as one of the most successful ever put forward in Jamaica on behalf of the Empire's cause.

Who was "Q. A. T. M. N. S. R., Retired"? That question was asked by many on the morning of June 11, 1915, when these letters appeared as signature to a communication appearing in the correspondence columns of the *Gleaner*. In that communication an earnest appeal was made to the women of Jamaica. "Now," ran the exhortation, "is the time for



women to show what they are made of," and the women of the country were asked to raise their own fund for the purpose of assisting the young men of Jamaica to take "the places of those who have fallen." The writer suggested a committee of influential ladies and offered her services to any committee that might be formed; "Let us get together and show our brave boys what we can do to further their heart's desire," were the closing words of this opportune appeal. The letter was widely read; no one seemed to guess the writer's identity. In these pages alone it is revealed, and permission for that has been obtained. It was Miss Annie Douglas, who had served with credit in South Africa as a Red Cross Nurse, whose words struck a responsive chord in the hearts of the women of Jamaica. It was felt that this unknown writer had urged the right thing, it was everywhere acknowledged that the time had come when our women should make a special effort to aid the contingent movement. On the day after Miss Douglas's letter appeared Mrs. William Wilson sent a cheque for five pounds as the first donation towards the suggested Women's Fund.

A movement of this sort, however, requires a great deal of personal exertion and organization. Miss Douglas had offered her services to any committee that might be formed, but, except perhaps her personal friends and the staff of the *Gleaner* (which must always respect the anonymity of its contributors), no one knew who was "Q. A. T. M. N. S. R." Nor did Miss Douglas make any attempt to form the committee she had suggested; as matron of the Asylum she was a busy woman filling a responsible Government position, and she had not even been sure if she had the right to sign her name to the letter she communicated to the Press. Nevertheless she began at once to work quietly for the cause in which she was so deeply interested. By the 1st of June she had collected the sum of £2 14s towards the Women's Fund. For some days after this the movement seemed to languish; it required vigor



ous personal effort to bring it to success. Though the women of Jamaica were willing enough to do what they could for the contingent, an independent effort on their part was something new to them. They hesitated; waited for a more definite lead. The appeal, we are afraid, in spite of the general interest it aroused, would have gone unheeded through the influence of inertia and hesitation had not an organization been formed to realize its patriotic purpose. The initiative in this connection was taken by three ladies, and when their plan was published to the island the Women's Movement began in earnest and was certain of success.

On June 26 the Women's Fund stood at only £35 18s. On that same day a circular was published in the *Gleaner*. It was addressed to all the women of Jamaica and was accompanied with the outlines of a programme to be followed by all those women in every part of the island who wished to aid in the sending of a contingent to the front. We transcribe the words in full:—

“It is not given to women in this island to nurse the wounded or to take the place of men as motor-car drivers, train or tram conductors, or to perform various other duties now being undertaken by our sisters in Great Britain; but it is given to us to send our sons, brothers, or husbands if necessary, to the front, to share the privilege of fighting for our glorious Empire.

“The principal means to our hands for so doing is to subscribe to the War Contingent Fund whatever little we can, no sum being too small.

“Women may say, ‘Our husbands, our brothers or our parents are subscribing, and what little we subscribe will come from them.’ But all of us women spend a sum, great or small as the case may be, on ourselves. Let us for once forego a portion of this and send to the Fund some part of what we would in normal times spend on ourselves, as our personal contribution.



"The Jamaica Contingent must be a credit to the island. We have no doubt about the men themselves, but we fear that the subscriptions will not be sufficient to send a representative number.

"Never mind what we think the Government should do; never mind what the men are doing; let us do *our* share.

"Think of Belgium, think of Poland, and think of what would happen to our sisters in Great Britain if the Germans ever landed there.

"Regrets at not having done what we could would be useless. Remorse would remain with us until our dying day. Therefore, Women of Jamaica, Do Your Duty."

This circular was signed by Mrs. Sydney Couper, Mrs. Michael de Cordova and Mrs. William Wilson—the names appear in alphabetical order. These three it was who had taken the lead of the women of Jamaica, who had determined to show what women could accomplish if only they would energetically bestir themselves. It was soon seen that though money would now be liberally contributed to the Fund, it was the second part of the Women's Committee's programme that would win enthusiastic popular support; it was the proposed Flag Day, an idea new to Jamaica and of general appeal, that would make the Women's Movement of island-wide significance. The Committee had, in fact, determined to do more than ask for funds. It had resolved to enlist workers all over the country in a patriotic demonstration in which practically all Jamaica could take part. The idea of a Jamaica Flag Day was not original. Rose Day had become a sort of institution in England; Tag Day was well known in Canada; one or two letters had previously appeared in the Jamaica Press suggesting a Tag Day in Jamaica in connection with an effort to raise money for purposes connected with the war. But this time there was a plan, there was a central organization, there were branch committees appointed all over the island to carry out the arrangements made in Kingston; hard





MRS. WILSON.

MRS. deCORDOVA.

MRS. COUPER.



work was entailed by all this, and the work was cheerfully done; time and energy were demanded, and time and energy were given without stint. The women of Jamaica were to show that they could organize and accomplish things quite as well as the men; and it is safe to say that no Flag Day could have been a striking success in Jamaica had not the women had, from first to last, the handling of details.

In this particular instance they not only had the handling of details but were the originators of the programme. The Kingston Women's Fund Committee sent circulars to ladies all over the island asking for co-operation, and in every parish a well-known woman was nominated as head of the local organization. We wish we could mention the names of all the women who took part in this movement. But no one knows them all, and in any event it would be impossible to print them. The women helpers numbered hundreds, they did not expect to be remembered, they did not work for mere notoriety; perhaps they have heard that luminous word of Emerson's—in the press of knights not every brow can wear the laurel. The names of those who were chiefs of parish committees, however, are on record and must be printed here. In Hanover, Mrs. George Sanftleben; in St. Mary, Mrs. Mallet-Pringle; in St. Elizabeth, Mrs. H. W. Griffith; in Trelawny, Mrs. G. S. Ewen; in St. Thomas, Mrs. J. H. Phillips; in Manchester, Mrs. Crum-Ewing; in Portland, Mrs. D. S. Gideon; in Westmoreland, Mrs. Edward Morris; in St. James, Mrs. Coke-Kerr; in St. Catherine, Mrs. Taylor; in St. Ann, Mrs. Daniel Hart; in Clarendon, Mrs. Thomas Abrahams. These ladies were the leading representatives of the Women's Movement in the several parishes of the island; and with them worked a number of others, and all worked enthusiastically for the cause they had at heart.

July 27th was named as Flag Day, and for days before that date the talk of the country was largely of Flag Day. It was at first proposed to make thirty thousand little flags



of the Allied nations; materials, much of which was supplied for nothing or at cost by the Kingston merchants, were sent to the several bodies of women workers who were to make the flags. But soon the requisitioning of materials by the branch committees, and the estimates of the number of flags that would be required in the different districts of the island, warned the Committee in Kingston that more than twice the number of thirty thousand flags would be required. In the meantime the Women's Contingent Fund was growing by means of direct contributions of money. Daily the list of contributors grew; and now the newspapers began to print reports of meetings held here and there and everywhere, each one called for the purpose of promoting the success of the Women's Movement, and every one attended by women alone.

Flag Day dawned a typical West Indian summer's day. It was warm but not humid; and the spirits of no one would be depressed by the heat, enthusiasm rendering that impossible. The metropolis, the towns and the parishes were divided into districts for the selling of flags; each leader had her own band of girl helpers; the ambition of each band was to do more than any other on that day. All the women were asked to wear white dresses with a red-white-and-blue ribbon round waist and hat, and each one also had a distinguishing rosette supplied her. King Street in Kingston was gaily decorated. Festoons of flags swung across the street; all the buildings there and many of those in Harbour Street were bright with flags and bunting; palms and other tropical plants added a touch of freshness to the brilliant scene, and scores of decorated motor cars and carriages, lent for the purpose, conveyed the workers to every part of Kingston and lower St. Andrew. Elsewhere in the island, though necessarily on a smaller scale, similar arrangements were carried out, and everywhere the lively strains of music added to the gaiety and animation of the day. In the city the West India Regiment Band, the Salvation Army Band and the Boy Scouts



Band played at different hours. It was a holiday of holidays; a holiday unrecognised by law but created by the people; an event unique. And what made it so especially was the spectacle of scores and hundreds of girls dressed distinctively and crowding into streets and lanes, villages and hamlets they probably had never seen before, eager, laughing, enthusiastic in intention, indefatigable in endeavour, and selling flags with an ease they themselves could not have anticipated.

For the people did not wait to be asked to buy flags. They rushed to purchase them. Working men and working women bought flags, often paying more than the minimum price of threepence, and everywhere the vendors were treated with a courtesy which could not have been bettered anywhere. In several of the country districts the flags had given out before the day was over. And yet over sixty thousand had been made.

There was speech-making of course; a certain amount of oratory is never lacking at any Jamaica function. Speeches were delivered everywhere. At two o'clock in the afternoon the Governor motored down to Kingston, to the portico of the Bank of Nova Scotia, where he was met and welcomed by Mrs. Couper, Mrs. de Cordova and Mrs. Wilson, the organisers of the movement. There was a huge crowd assembled, with the Boy Scouts as a guard of honour and the Boy Scouts Band to play the National Anthem. The Governor was the largest individual purchaser of flags that day, but other gentlemen also bought lavishly. Reports of the day's success soon began to pour in from the country parishes, and the newspaper correspondents exhausted their vocabulary of adjectives in an effort to describe the several functions. "Tremendous," "unprecedented," "great," "grand," "wonderful"—these terms did service with astonishing iteration. But the money receipts spoke more eloquently than words of the work which the women had done for the Jamaica Contingent. Flag Day alone brought in more than fifteen hundred pounds. The



Women's Fund collected through the *Gleaner* soon stood at some five hundred pounds. More than two thousand pounds was the result of the Women's Movement, and it was this movement, and this alone, that enabled the Jamaica War Contingent Fund to realise the £10,000 that had eventually been asked for.

The efforts of the women were not confined alone to the raising of money for the contingent. Eery early in 1914 Mrs. A. E. Briscoe of Montpelier had written to the papers advocating a general effort towards supplying with warm clothing some of the soldiers at the front; on October 12, 1915, this lady addressed a letter to the papers urging that woollen socks should be provided by women in Jamaica for the men who were leaving in the Jamaica Contingent. Mrs. Briscoe herself had begun the work, and her letter was a timely reminder of the needs of persons who would be going from a tropical climate to the cold of an English winter. Since then Mrs. Briscoe has continued her admirable work, and she will not cease until not another soldier leaves Jamaica. No woman has been more indefatigable, and many a Jamaican at the front has reason to think of her with gratitude.

It was also felt that women might help in different directions in connection with the contingent movement, and a rather striking departure was initiated by Miss Douglas, assisted by Mrs. Trefusis. Recruiting meetings were being held throughout the colony. At none of these had women yet taken any prominent part. But on Thursday afternoon, October 14, Miss Douglas and Mrs. Trefusis (the wife of the Governor's Private Secretary) held a recruiting meeting at the village of Irish Town in St. Andrew, a woman's recruiting meeting, the very first of the kind of which Jamaica had had experience. The district had been previously canvassed by Rural Constable Nicholas, who was asked to preside at the meeting. Men and women came to hear what the two ladies had to say, and both ladies spoke. The speeches were



not reported; indeed, it was not until the next day that the Press knew what had taken place! Twenty-four recruits were secured; after that the presence of women at recruiting demonstrations was a matter of course, and addresses from women often formed part of the programme. Thus, in the same month, at a recruiting meeting held at Gayle, St. Mary, Mrs. Blackden, Mrs. Bourne, Miss Constance Douet and Miss Douglas all spoke, and Miss Douglas was soon afterwards regarded as one of the most efficient and successful recruiting agents in the island.

Miss Constance Douet was and still is a Red Cross nurse. She was attached to the English Red Cross Corps in Belgium in the early months of the war, and was in Belgium when the Germans were over-running that country. A rumour had gone about Kingston that she had been deliberately wounded by the enemy, but there was no truth in this story, as was soon ascertained. In the latter part of 1915 she returned to her native land and issued an appeal for one hundred pounds to provide a "Jamaica Bed" in a hospital ward in England. Her appeal met with instant and generous response; she soon acknowledged the receipt of three hundred pounds, "a sum," she wrote, "in excess of what I could have anticipated receiving, in view of the many and necessary appeals that have to be made at this time." This was on October the 20th. On November 8, just before leaving Jamaica to resume her duties as a Red Cross Nurse, she published another letter. She had up to then obtained £422, or more than four times as much as she had asked for. She was taking away with her presents of Jamaica cigarettes, preserves, pillows and other comforts for the men in hospital in England. She stated that Mr. Walter Woolliscroft, of George's Plain, Savanna-la-Mar, would represent her in her absence, and she made it clear that she was still appealing for the Jamaica Bed Fund. That Fund, which is associated with her name and with her initial endeavours, amounted to nearly £1,400 in March, 1917.



The Ladies Working Association has all during the war been working at the making of garments for Belgian refugees in England and for English soldiers; this organization devoted itself to an effort which, while Jamaican in a sense, had nothing to do with our contingent. But it was also felt that there should be a body of persons who would undertake systematically to look after the comfort of the Jamaica recruits when these should have reached England and their ultimate destination, Egypt. This feeling resulted in the formation of a Contingent Comforts Committee, with Mrs. Blackden as chairman, Mrs. Bourne as secretary, and Mrs. Trefusis as treasurer. These three were the nucleus of a larger body; they invited each of the island's Parochial Boards to nominate one lady member to represent its parish, and some other public institutions were invited, each, to nominate a lady member also. The organisers of the Comforts Committee at the same time appealed to the public for contributions in money and in goods, and since its formation it has steadily continued in the work to which it set its hands and heart.

All these committees and very many unmentioned independent workers have, in one way and another, done a great deal to identify the women of Jamaica with the Empire's efforts in this war. They undertook tasks which busy men could not have handled, and, in so far as the Contingent Movement was concerned, they introduced from the first the softer sympathetic touch and influence which, impalpable but persuasive, may have so potent an effect in inducing men to harken to the call of duty. In the year 1914, for the first time in the history of Jamaica, a number of women openly and gladly identified themselves with a public and patriotic movement. And they organised so ably, worked so well, and brought to so successful a conclusion the task they had undertaken, that they have made the Jamaica Contingent Movement identified with the women of Jamaica as well as with the men.



## CHAPTER VIII

### HISTORIC DAYS

**T**HE last days of October, 1915, saw Up-Park Camp crowded to its utmost capacity and presenting a scene of unusual activity. A contingent of 550 men, with reinforcements numbering nearly 200, had been ultimately asked for, and the country had responded by sending to the Camp 1,125 men, with the intimation that more were immediately following. It was known that the ship which was to convey these men to England was at last on its way to Jamaica; it was also known that the ship would first call at British Honduras to take up there the first batch of recruits which that colony had determined to send as part of the West Indian contribution to the Empire's fighting forces. Early in November, it was whispered, the Jamaica Contingent would go, and morning and evening the voices of drill sergeants were heard at the Camp roaring out commands to the perspiring and awkward, but keen and enthusiastic, recruits who were being put through some elementary drill exercises so that on their arrival in England they should present an appearance not discreditable to this country.

They were a mixed lot were these recruits; clerks and artisans and labourers, boys who had served behind a counter and boys who had handled a hoe, young men who had sat on stools with the pen as their only instrument of labour, and young men who had wielded a pair of scissors or deftly manipulated an awl. They were of all colours were these recruits, ranging from white to black, including every shade of complexion known in the colour categories of a West Indian community. Every parish of the island was represented by them; a large number had surrendered lucrative positions and had left their plots of land for the shilling a day and the risks and



hardships of a soldier's life in time of war; their general standard of intelligence was high, and the flame of patriotic fervour burnt brightly in their breasts. "Left, right; left, right"—stepping briskly at the drill sergeant's word of command they marched in platoons and companies round and round the drilling ground at Camp, each man alert and eager to learn; and even as one watched them they seemed as if being transformed into more vigorous and stalwart specimens of humanity. They ate soldier's fare and slept in the tents on blankets spread on the floor; they cooked their own meals, learnt to obey and treat with military deference young men who had been their comrades and boon companions a little while before. And one and all waited impatiently for the day when they should sail from Jamaica to take part in the great struggle which was transforming the map of Europe and the world.

Early on the morning of October 31, the "fall in" was sounded at Camp, and the men who were to form the first contingent rapidly mustered and paraded in their several platoons. It was Sunday. All during the previous night the rain had fallen, dreary and insistent, and when dawn came the skies were still grey and sullen, and the drifting clouds through which the sunlight filtered pale and feeble indicated an inclement forenoon. At seven the rain had ceased, and then it was that the men, clothed in khaki and slouch hats, assembled for their march to the Parish Church of Kingston, where the contingent's valedictory service would be held. The commanding officer was Major W. D. Neish. At the head of the companies was the band of the First West India Regiment. At 7.30 the order to march was given, the band struck up, the long lines of men, walking four abreast, moved out of Camp and took their way to Kingston.

Through silent and almost deserted streets they marched, the tramp of their feet and the thrilling notes of the band calling many a newly-awakened man or woman to windows,



doors and fences to see the boys pass by. A fine drizzle fell occasionally. The Sabbath peace brooded over the city, a peace which some more reflective than others may have contrasted with the demonstration of that hour, with the gathering together for a last service in this country of men whose mission was war.

Down the Marescaux Road, by the Race Course, through Duke Street and East Queen Street they marched, and then they came in sight of the Victoria Gardens. Here suddenly the scene was changed. For on the sidewalks and thronging the open spaces of these Gardens were hundreds and thousands of friends and spectators assembled to give a welcome to Jamaica's fighting men, assembled to testify that not the most cheerless weather could dampen the ardour of men and women who were proud to see that Jamaica was at last about to send some of her sons to fight, and if needs be to die, in the service of their King.

The crowd was silent and reverential. Through the northern gate and doors of the church the men filed in, and when all had entered, the band, which had drawn aside to permit the recruits to pass in first, followed in order to add its music to that of the great organ. The building was crowded. The Governor and the General were there; the leading officials of the Government, prominent public men, the civic representatives of Kingston, and clergymen of the Anglican and other religious organizations, all were present. The first hymn struck the note that was to thrill that impressive assemblage that morning; it was sung by hundreds of strong voices to the accompaniment of moving peals of music—

*Fight the good fight with all thy might,*

*Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right.*

Through the open doors and windows of the church the words floated into the thronged surrounding streets and open spaces, and the waiting crowd listened in a solemn silence, their thoughts and feelings in sympathy with those to whom



the exhortation was being addressed, and on whom the benediction of the man most revered in all Jamaica was soon to be pronounced.

The sermon was preached by the rector of the Parish Church, Canon R. J. Ripley; it was an eloquent discourse and at times the preacher, who had himself a son amongst those who sat in the contingent's ranks that morning, moved his listeners to tears. "You go forth as our representatives," he said, "the representatives of the West Indian people, and remember that by your conduct not only in the field but in the camp, for good or for evil, you stamp the character of your race upon the place where you sojourn. We place our honour in your hands. We make you the guardians of our good name. . . . And so we send you forth, my brothers, praying indeed that you may return safely home 'laden with honours', yet believing that no life laid down in the cause of righteousness and of God can be poured out in vain. We shall think of you, we shall pray for you. Your loved ones left behind shall receive the support of our sympathy in their anxieties on your behalf, and be animated by the same spirit of self-sacrifice and earnest purpose which you have manifested in going to fight the enemies of your King. I trust that those who remain behind may be found fighting manfully under the Banner of Christ against the evils which mar the beauties of this fair land. So that when you return, with new experience of life and new ideals, you may find a new spirit among the people of Jamaica—that in your absence there has been a great moral uplifting, and that a chastened people, a nobler, purer race, may welcome you back to homes purified by the discipline of suffering."

But the most solemn moment of that valedictory service came when the aged Archbishop of the West Indies rose to speak his farewell to the troops and to bestow on them his blessing. It was doubtful at first if he would be able to attend the service. Some time before his strength had failed,



he was over seventy, and his sudden collapse was known to all to indicate a speedy end to a long and strenuous and useful life, a life crowded with deeds performed in the interests and for the welfare of Jamaica. For fifty years he had been among the people, and none but knew that he loved them as his own. It was the wish of all that he should be present at this service, that his should be the uplifted hands and his the voice that should bless them, the soldiers of Jamaica; and at that moment, as so often before, he failed not those who wished for his gracious presence and his fatherly aid. In the dim church, amidst a brooding silence broken only by the faint murmur of the falling rain, he slowly approached and ascended the pulpit. The pale drawn face, the snow-white hair and beard, the stooping figure, told those who saw him that this was a man on whom already approaching death had set its mark. He knew it too, knew well that those who would receive his benediction on that memorable morning would never see him on this earth again; it was a parting this, between himself and them, and the pathos of that last farewell appealed to the hearts of those who heard it.

Low but distinct, that far-carrying voice penetrated to every corner of the church.

"I have now, my dear brothers, the privilege and duty of addressing to you a few parting words. You are going forth at the call of your King and country on a great enterprise, and therein you have the sympathy of the whole people of Jamaica, and also our constant prayers. 'Quit you like men: be strong.'

"You have already undertaken to join those great armies of our Empire which are contending for right against might, for liberty against despotism, for peaceful growth and progress of nations against the domination by force of one great nation over the mental and material progress of the rest of mankind. It is a noble cause in which you have enlisted. Go forth with courage to help to win this great conflict; for on



the issues thereof the welfare of mankind for generations depends. I hope indeed that the war may be finished and victory secured by our naval and military forces before the time when your training is sufficiently complete to enable you to join the forces in the field. But it may not be so. The struggle may be prolonged far beyond the time when you take your place in the fighting ranks.

“Go forth courageously and with strong determination by the help and guidance of God to face the duties and dangers that fall to your lot. Think of the great Empire whose beneficent power you will be helping to maintain; think also of Jamaica and the beloved home and friends here that you will be defending: think of the Almighty Father and Friend Who watches over you to help you: of the Divine Saviour Who gave Himself a sacrifice for those He came to save; and of the Divine Spirit Whose constant presence will be a strength to your mind and body as you follow His guidance and lean upon His power.

“And now unto the tender mercy and protection of Almighty God we commend you. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.”

It was over. The blessing had been pronounced, the farewell spoken, the religious consecration of hundreds of young lives to a paramount duty was concluded. The band crashed out the music of the grand old invocatory hymn, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past”, and the congregation sang it; then all thronged into the open air again, and the contingent marched back to Camp. Soon, once more, these men were to pass through the streets of Kingston, and that was to be the last that Jamaica was to see of them for many a day to come.

The preparation for the contingent's departure went on apace. On the morning of November 6 the Governor arrived at Up Park Camp to address the recruits. General Blackden



and his staff were in attendance, the men were drawn up under the command of Major J. G. V. Hart, and it was to a deeply attentive audience that Sir William Manning spoke:—

“Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Men of the Jamaica War Contingent,” he said, “I have come here this morning to take this opportunity of addressing you before your departure for Great Britain and the front. You carry in your hands—and this is a matter of great importance—the prestige of Jamaica. By your conduct on board the troop ship, in camp, and in the field you will win the esteem of the British regiments alongside of which you may be serving.

“I wish now to address a few words more especially to the officers. On the officers of a battalion depends the discipline of their battalion. I ask you then to remember that on your conduct in discipline and in social life, on board ship and in camp or in the field, depends the discipline of your platoon or your company, who will set you up as a model and follow your example. The exceptional advantage of training your men for immediate active service is given to you. The time is short for the men but shorter still for the officers, and every moment should therefore be given to the study of your profession. You have been honoured by being given the privilege of being among those who will march into Berlin. Your conduct in the field will be such, I am confident, as to lead to your being selected to be present when the armies of Great Britain, France, Russia, Servia, Italy and other allied armies march into that capital and there dictate their terms of peace.

“When the war is over Jamaica will welcome you back as heroes, as those who have come forward when the Empire needed them and have done their duty. I trust that I may be privileged to be here to welcome you home.”

A whisper went round the city on Monday, November 8, that the ship which was to convey the contingent to England had arrived with the men from British Honduras; the news flashed to different parts of the island; it was known,



although the newspapers could say nothing, that on Tuesday afternoon the contingent would sail. Thousands thrilled with excitement; never before had there been such an event; never before had Jamaica witnessed the departure of hundreds of her sons to take part in a great European war, to fight side by side with Englishmen, Canadians and the rest for the safety of the Empire and the maintenance of those principles of freedom which British subjects hold in high honour and are prepared to defend with their lives. A thrill of pride sent the blood coursing quickly through the veins of those who understood that a new and splendid page was about to be written in the history of Jamaica; the self-same feeling affected gentle and simple alike, the highest and the lowest: all Jamaicans and all British subjects in the colony just then were as one and experienced identical emotions. From neighbouring country parishes, and even from distant parts of the island reached by train or brought within a day's journey to Kingston by motor car, came scores and hundreds of visitors, intent on assisting at the embarkation of the first contingent. The censors allowed the route by which the men should march to be made public. The hour was known; only the date of sailing was not to be mentioned in any print, and there was no need it should be—such news could never hide.

So on Tuesday morning, from an early hour, the streets of Kingston began to wear an unusually animated appearance, and the electric cars were unwontedly crowded with men and women who were hurrying hours beforehand to secure positions from which they could see the contingent pass on its way to the ship. The day had dawned brilliantly. The long summer's heat was passing; the softer atmosphere of autumn was beginning, like a gentle benediction, to refresh the dwellers in a tropic land where the faintest change from sultriness is hailed with genuine pleasure, and one's spirits respond with a full gladness to the promise of a cooler time. A feeling of joyousness was



in the air as, along the sides of every street through which the contingent would march, the well-attired spectators took their stand for the long waiting which they knew was now before them. They gave no thought to inconvenience; nothing short of a flood of rain could have driven them indoors that day.

In the meantime Up-Park Camp was alive with activity. On the evening before, relatives and friends of the recruits had flocked up to Camp to say a few words of farewell, and many of these had broken down when the final leave-taking came. But the men themselves had put a brave face on the matter, had bidden good-bye with a laugh; and when at 7.30 on Tuesday morning they were drawn up in three sides of a square to await the coming of the General and to listen to his parting speech, there was not a sad face discernible in the uniformed, soldierly ranks.

Soon after the contingent was mustered, Brigadier-General Blackden, accompanied by his Staff-Officer, Major T. B. Nicholson, rode into the Camp. Every man there knew the tall spare figure with the kindly, fatherly face, and every man must have felt that the General had for him that peculiar affection which the best type of officer invariably feels for his men. For over thirty years General Blackden has been connected with the West Indies, and wherever in these islands he has been he has inspired respect and a deep and genuine liking. To simplicity of manners, the result of good breeding and of a straightforward and sincere disposition, he has added an absorbing interest in his work and an intellectual appreciation of the problems of modern warfare. In the welfare of the West Indian people he is known to be deeply interested, and in appealing for recruits for the first contingent he had always reminded his hearers that he expected from the younger Jamaicans, the fighting material of to-day, the same courage, the same devotion to duty that he had known their fathers to show. "A fine soldier and a good man" is the verdict



passed upon him by all—and they are thousands—who have known him; and his character, often finding expression in the words he addresses to the people of Jamaica, is of potent and enduring influence.

He faced the men that morning; the salute was given and returned, and he began his speech:—

“Officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Jamaica War Contingent: I have called you together to bid you farewell, and to assure you that we who are left behind not only envy your good fortune in going to fight for our King and Empire, but will follow your career with deep interest and heartfelt prayers for your welfare and safe return to your Island home.

“When you reach England, you will find yourself part of a large West Indian Contingent, and I want you to show yourselves better men than any of the rest of the West Indian Battalion—better in discipline, in conduct, in attendance to your instructors, in intelligence, in quickness of learning and in general efficiency. I told some of you, last time I spoke to you, of the necessity of close attention when under instruction. I have since seen you at drill on many occasions, and I am pleased to be able to say that your attention has been good, and you have learnt quickly and well, but I have seen an occasional instance of mistakes on parade which could only have resulted from a want of attention on the part of the men concerned. I want you to correct that. I told you, too, to take care that you suffered from no disease, disability, or inefficiency caused by your own act or fault.

“In England you will find many good friends, but you will find some bad ones too. You will be exposed to many temptations, but I want you to resist them, and to continue to act up to the highest standard of conduct and soldierly self-control.

“I want you to set an example, not only to other West Indians, but to all troops among whom you may find yourselves,





MRS. BLACKDEN.

MRS. BOURNE.

MRS. TREFUSIS.



"Officers and N.C.Os. should not be contented with the instruction they receive, but should devote their spare time to reading and study, and should arrange for discussion and debate among themselves for the elucidation of professional problems and difficulties.

"You will find all the work hard sometimes, but I want you to put your backs into it, whatever it is, and do it with a will.

"An occasion comes in time to every member of a disciplined force, when he finds discipline irksome, when tempers are worn thin, when the self-control of both commanders and commanded is sorely tried; but whatever your rank, and however strong your case, never let your temper get the better of your intelligence, but show that your feelings can never overcome your self-control. The object of discipline is to train the will to overcome the natural feelings, till in the final test the power of the will is stronger than the fear of death.

"When you get to the front, I want you still to lead the way, still to set a glorious example to all troops who may be fighting alongside of you—an example of controlled and disciplined courage, of strength, of tireless vigilance on watch, of dogged tenacity in defence and irresistible valour in attack. Some of you may be killed, many will be wounded, but in bidding you farewell I hope that those who fall may fall gloriously, their faces to the foe, and with victory gleaming on their bayonets; and that those who return will come back covered with glory and honour, rejoicing in a fight well fought, and victory nobly won."

No man of sensibility could have heard that speech unmoved—could have been untouched by the manly directness and fine sincerity of it. An English General was asking the untried recruits of Jamaica to set an example to whatever troops they might find themselves among, an example of courage, of strength, of untiring vigilance; he was appealing to all that was highest and finest in the character of a soldier,



was voicing the hope that those who returned might do so covered with glory and honour, "rejoicing in a fight well fought, and victory nobly won." When published on the following day, the speech made a profound impression on Jamaica. Two hours after it was delivered the Gleaner Company had printed a thousand copies of it, and every man of the contingent took one with him, as a present from the *Gleaner*, on his voyage.

The final medical inspection followed the General's speech, and by the time that this was over the hour for the march to Kingston had arrived. At 12.30 precisely the order was given and the battalion began to move out of Camp. Major Neish, a Jamaican and a medical officer, was in command; preceding him rode Lieut. Cowie of the West India Regiment; other officers followed in their respective places. The deep sound of the drums, the blare of brazen instruments and a moving cloud of dust soon warned the waiting multitude in the upper streets of the city that the men were fast approaching.

*We'll proudly point to every one  
Of Britain's soldiers of the King—*

the air of the British soldier's song swelled out triumphantly, to be smothered only by the wild tempestuous cheering that burst from a thousand throats. South by the South Camp Road, then west by North Street, went the battalion. In North Street stands the Roman Catholic Cathedral, and in the contingent's ranks were many who belonged to the Roman Catholic faith. At the Cathedral's gates stood His Lordship Bishop Collins, fully robed, and attended by some of his priests. As each platoon passed by, the Bishop gave his blessing, and the clamour of the multitude, now hurrying along on both sides of the thoroughfare, was hushed for a moment as this impressive ceremony took place.

Lower down in the city, at the Kingston Parish Church, a similar ceremony was performed. The Archbishop of the



West Indies was to have officiated at this public benediction, but his strength would not permit; the rector of the church, the Rev. Canon Ripley, was in his stead, and with him were several clergymen of the Anglican Communion. With the great cross advanced and held aloft, the blessing of the contingent proceeded solemnly as the men filed past. They turned southward into King Street, from the flagstaffs of whose buildings streamed the Union Jack and the flag of the merchant marine of England. The street was a seething mass of people; every balcony was crowded, every sidewalk packed close with a moving throng of shouting spectators. As one watched the spectacle from an elevated viewpoint, one saw, from Victoria Park to Harbour Street, but a dense swaying living wave, a vast sea of heads, and in the midst of these a long line of khaki-clad men, walking four deep, and now and then one could hear the dull throbbing of the drums: all other sound was drowned in the hoarse multitudinous roar of a myriad voices and the heavy trampling of thousands upon thousands of feet.

The destination of the contingent was the Royal Mail Company's wharf. There the *Verdala* was anchored, ready to sail at the hour appointed. When the gates of the wharf were reached, the police kept back the crowd while the men of the contingent struggled into the wharf; literally struggled, for the crowd was now marching shoulder to shoulder with the men, and every man was pressed close to the other. Just within the gates stood the Governor, clad in the service costume of an English General; he watched the men keenly till the last of them had disappeared in the direction of the pier, then disposed himself to wait until the ship should sail. After the contingent surged hundreds and thousands of those who had been able to secure tickets of admission; friends, relatives, well-wishers; Jamaicans, Englishmen, Scotchmen, Canadians and others, representative of every class of the colony's people and of every part and parish of the island.



The men from British Honduras had remained on the *Verdala*; they were now joined by the Jamaicans, and by the small contingent from the Bahamas which had marched with the former to the wharf. Soon the *Verdala* was thronged, not only by those she was to take away, but by the visitors allowed on board. It was said that the ship would leave at some time past two o'clock, but it was some time after four o'clock before the clanging of bells began to warn all strangers that the moment of departure was near.

The Governor, the General and some military officers went on board. The visitors commenced to stream down the gangway. Those men of the contingent who had lingered on the pier with their relatives and friends shook hands for the last time and hurried to the ship. The pier, the spacious wharf, the wharves that stretched along the waterfront of Kingston to the west were thronged; the sea for a wide space around the *Verdala* was dotted with boats and launches filled with sightseers; three bands of music were playing lively airs, and the rays of the westering sun beat hot upon the backs of that vast concourse of people who now had eyes only for the men who clustered on the decks and at the leeward side of the vessel, looking down upon the pier, some shouting gaily, others making an effort to keep their faces calm and undisturbed. "Good-bye; God bless you!"—the words came from many a lip that trembled; from women's lips especially, and some of those who called that blessing were weeping now. They had bravely bidden their men folk go forth to fight in the greatest war of all the ages; with smiling faces they had seen them marching proudly through the city's streets. But at this, the actual moment of departure, the heart would have its way. The pent-up emotions struggled for expression, triumphed, and tears rose to the eyes while the bandsmen played "My Old Kentucky Home," and many wondered if any of those on board that ship would ever see their native land again.



See! the Governor and his suite are leaving the *Verdala*; they are hoisting the gangway; presently the anchor rattles up, and the vessel seems to shudder slightly. A cheer, full-throated, pealing, tremendous, bursts from the men of the First Jamaica Contingent. An answering cheer thunders back, and is echoed and re-echoed from other crowds gathered thick on other piers. Three bands crash out the soldier's song—"We are Soldiers of the King, my Lads," and the *Verdala*, gathering momentum with every moment that passes, draws out into the stream. Thousands of eyes are fixed upon her as she moves, thousands of prayers follow her. A mother shrieks out in an agony of grief. A long shaft of light from the slowly sinking sun cuts across the sea, making a shining lane upon its greyish surface . . . a faint cheer from the ship is wafted shorewards. In the middle distance, against a background of heaving sea and sloping sky, the transport looms up black, then steadily grows smaller. The crowd casts a last long look upon it, a look of long farewell, then slowly and quietly moves towards the gates.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

**T**HE King's Appeal to the Empire in November 1915 had thoroughly roused Jamaica. Those who had pleaded and argued for a considerable contingent, for a National Movement, now felt that their position had become immensely strengthened; there could no longer be any doubt as to the need of men in England, there could no longer be any hesitation as to whether this colony should assume large financial burdens in the Empire's cause.

The Governor himself, though he had previously waited on the colony to move in all matters connected with the sending of recruits to the Imperial Armies, had cabled to London to offer a complete battalion very shortly after the receipt of the Royal Appeal. Inspired by that Appeal, the Hon. J. H. Allwood had addressed a circular letter to his fellow elected members proposing that they should meet in Kingston at an early date to decide on a contingent that should bear a fair proportion to the colony's strength and resources and be a testimony to its desire to be of some effectual assistance to the Mother Country. On the day that "the First Five Hundred" left our shores the Governor made public his offer of a thousand men to England, and announced that that offer had been accepted. It was also published that the elected members had met and had decided on their contingent programme. Hence the papers that contained the report and description of the first sailing of a body of men from Jamaica to form part of the British West Indies Regiment (as the West Indian soldiers were to be called by order of the King), contained also the inspiring and welcome information that the National Contingent Movement adopted by the Legislature in the previous September was now to be extended on a considerable scale,



Led by Mr. Allwood, who drew up and submitted to his colleagues the plan that was accepted, the elected members proposed that the colony should devote the sum of one million pounds sterling towards the expenses of the National Contingent. This amount was to be raised by loan if necessary, and to be repaid in forty years at the rate of sixty thousand pounds a year. It was assumed that this would enable a body totalling ten thousand men to be sent to the front from first to last, the colony undertaking the cost of transportation and the payment of all pensions, gratuities and separation allowances, while the British authorities were to pay the soldiers' wages and to equip and train them.

The First Five Hundred and their reinforcements were to be included in the ten thousand men; in fact, the new programme was but an extension of the effort which the island, acting through private persons and by means of gratuitous contributions, had already put forth and carried through successfully. A telegram to the King, informing him of the elected members' decision, and assuring him of the "intention of Jamaica to respond fully to His Majesty's appeal", was drawn up; and when the elected members met the Governor to lay before him their programme, His Excellency was requested to forward this telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for transmission to the King. As both the Government and the elected representatives of the people had now agreed upon what was to be done, there was no necessity to wait until the Legislative Council should meet before proceeding to enlist the battalion offered by the Governor and accepted by the British War Office. Thus immediately after the sailing of the Five Hundred the call went forth for another thousand men, and a few days afterwards Sir William Manning appointed a Central Recruiting Committee to direct and control recruiting for the National Contingent throughout the island.

The Hon. J. H. W. Park, Director of Public Works, was made President of this Central Recruiting Committee. The



other members were the Hon. H. A. L. Simpson, Hon. Sydney Couper, Messrs. A. H. Jones, William Wilson, D. N. Barr, W. Baggett Gray, M. deCordova and J. Tapley. Lieut. Ottley, then Staff Officer, was named as the Committee's secretary.

In the official circular setting forth the duties of the Central Committee and of the Parochial Committees which were also to be formed, it was stated that the resources of the country should be organized so that a constant flow of recruits for the drafts might be ensured. A Parochial Committee was to be constituted in every parish of the island save Kingston: these committees would decide when recruiting meetings should be held and where they would be most efficacious; they were to be in communication with the Central Committee, which would inform them from time to time of the quota of men required from each of the several parishes, the date when recruits should be despatched to Kingston, "and other details in regard to recruiting." The Chairman of a Parochial Committee would be the *custos* of the parish: if there was no *custos* the elected member of the parish would be the committee's head. As a general rule the committee would consist of the *custos*, the elected member of the parish, the resident magistrate, the Chairman of the Parochial Board, the collector of revenue and the district medical officer, with such other persons as might be deemed desirable from amongst the leading residents of the parish. It was to appoint a secretary. Full instructions as to the process to be followed in enrolling men were given in the Government circular, and in the concluding paragraph it was mentioned that cards would be provided for distribution to those men whose services could not be accepted. These cards were to be a sort of badge of honour for the rejected.

In addition to this circular, the Governor also addressed to each of the *custodes* (or to the elected member where there was no *custos*) the following letter:—

"Sir,—I have the honour to forward to you a circular of



Instructions in connection with the recruiting for the Jamaica Contingent.

"I should be glad if you would take the necessary steps to appoint the members of the Parochial Committee for your parish, and I would ask that you would be guided by the instructions laid down in this circular with regard to the enrolment of recruits.

"I need hardly say that I am sure that you, as President of the Committee, and the members of the Committee, will do all in your power to assist in raising in your parish the number of recruits which may be required from you, and that you will endeavour to obtain a thoroughly serviceable body of men. You will recognize that the duties you and the members of your committee are asked to carry out are in the highest interests of the Empire, and that in performing these duties I know that you will give that willing service which I feel all desire to give, and which, since many are debarred by age or infirmity from actually proceeding to the front, is something that can be done to show that we are taking our part in the defence of our homes and our rights to live as a free people. I have the honour to be, etc., W. H. Manning, Governor."

An extraordinary outburst of recruiting activity followed immediately on the decision of the country that thousands instead of merely hundreds of men were to be sent to the front. The call for a thousand volunteers had been issued in the second week in November. On November 26 there were 1,150 recruits enlisted and stationed at Up Park Camp. News was received on the following day that "The First Five Hundred," with their reinforcements, had safely landed that day at Plymouth. On December 5 a second contingent of men arrived in Kingston from the Bahamas; yet recruiting continued in full swing all over Jamaica, the idea being to select the very best recruits from among those coming in. On Christmas Day the Bahamas volunteers and some men of the Jamaica Contingent sailed for England, and on January 7, 1916, after the



usual valedictory services, the second battalion of the contingent sailed amidst the demonstrations of an enthusiastic crowd.

Another thousand men were called for. In order to promote recruiting and to make it easy for small landowners to enlist, the Governor announced that he was prepared to recommend to the Legislative Council the remission of taxes in respect of all those owning property up to the value of one hundred pounds, "or possibly two hundred pounds." These taxes would be remitted for the year in which these men joined the contingent and during each year of absence in the King's service. The Council subsequently endorsed this offer of the Governor's.

Meanwhile letters from the men who had already left the island began to be received. Some of these were published. One and all they told of the gracious and kindly reception our volunteers had met with in England, and this naturally had a marked effect on recruiting. By the end of January 1916 the third battalion was 1025 strong, and on February 1 the President of the Central Recruiting Committee was able to inform the several Parochial Committees that all the men needed for the new battalion were now obtained and that no more for the present should be sent to Camp.

Other West Indian Colonies had been despatching contingents to England to form part of the British West Indies Regiment. It was admitted throughout the West Indies that it was Jamaica that had taken the initiative in the sending of men, that it was Jamaica's example that had been followed, and that it was on the invitation of Jamaica's Governor that the other Colonies had decided to join in the Contingent Movement. In September the following congratulatory telegrams passed between the West Indian Administrators most closely identified with the Contingent Movement: "Governor of British Guiana, Governor-in-Chief of Windward Islands, and Governor of Trinidad here together send to you our congratu-



lations on accomplishment of your proposal to send West Indian Contingent on active service, and hope that yours and ours will do their duty at the front." Thus telegraphed the Governors of British Guiana, the Windward Islands and Trinidad to the Governor of Jamaica, and Sir William Manning replied to all of them in a message to Sir William Le Hunt of Trinidad: "Please accept yourself and convey to Governor of British Guiana and the Governor-in-Chief of the Windward Islands my thanks for your kind telegram. I have no doubt that the combined West Indian Contingent will do their duty at the front for King and Empire, wherever called upon to serve."

Very soon after the first Jamaica battalion had reached England it was decided by the War Office that the British West Indies Regiment should be trained and should serve in Egypt. Before it left the shores of England, its commanding officer, Colonel Barchard, received from the then Secretary of State for the Colonies a letter which, shortly afterwards, was read throughout the British West Indies with genuine pleasure. Mr. Bonar Law's letter was written on December 8, 1915, and is here transcribed in full:—

"Dear Colonel Barchard,—On the eve of the departure of the British West Indies Regiment to serve abroad, I desire, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, to express to you, and through you to the officers and men of the Regiment, my warmest good wishes for your and their welfare, and success in the tasks that lie before you. I only regret that circumstances prevent me from personally delivering this message to them.

"The British West Indies Regiment represents all the West Indian Colonies, each of which has furnished its contingent. These Colonies have an important place in the struggles of the past; I feel confident that all ranks of the Regiment will remember that they come from a part of the Empire which has witnessed many signal triumphs of British arms; and I am sure that whenever they are called upon they will



show themselves worthy of the great traditions of the uniform they wear. Please assure them that I shall not fail to follow their doings with the greatest sympathy and interest in whatever sphere of the present struggle they may be called upon to play their part.

"I must leave it to you to choose the time and method of giving this Message to the Regiment. I hope you will be able to ensure its reaching all ranks shortly before they sail.

"I wish you all God-speed and a happy return to your homes when the war is over."

Colonel Barchard replied to Mr. Bonar Law, saying, *inter alia*, "I think you may rest assured that the men of the British West Indies Regiment are prepared to play their part in whatever sphere they may be called upon to do so. From what I have seen of these men, I can honestly say that they display a patriotism to their King and Country equal to that shown by any subject of the British Empire." This officer, evidently, had a high confidence in these raw West Indian levies, and it is significant that the men of the Regiment, in writing home, invariably spoke of him in terms of the warmest affection. Colonel Barchard and Colonel Wood Hill endeared themselves to the West Indian lads, and these gave to them the love, respect and admiration which soldiers have for trusted and genuinely sympathetic leaders.

It was not until the 6th of March, 1916, that the third battalion sailed. The transport had been long in coming. There were fears just then of German raiders in the Atlantic. It was rumoured that this battalion would not go direct to England, but no one could speak with any certainty, and, as it subsequently transpired, not even the Governor or the General commanding the local forces was informed of its destination.

The *Verdala* went but a little way from Kingston when she was compelled to return, anchoring at Port Royal. Something had gone wrong with the engines and some repairs were



required. Superstitious people, ever on the lookout for omens, did not like this turning back of the ship, considered it unlucky. In a way it was very unlucky, though not in the superstitious point of view. For this ship with its freight of human beings was to meet with misfortunes which stirred Jamaica to the heart, and had it not been delayed it might have escaped the worst of them.

The Legislative Council met two days after the third battalion had sailed from Kingston, and the Governor, in a very serious speech, delivered with anxiety plainly depicted on his countenance, placed the financial prospects of the coming official year before the country's legislators. As stated in a foregoing chapter, in the September of the previous year he had refrained from imposing additional taxation on the people in spite of the August hurricane and its consequent expected effect on the revenue. He had accepted a probable deficit while expressing the hope that some months of good trade might enable the revenue to keep up with the demands of current expenditure. It was expected that taxation for contingent purposes would be imposed at this first 1916 session of the Council, and there had been an animated discussion in the newspapers as to what form such taxation should take. Those who saw farthest hinted that in addition to taxes for the contingent—that over and above the £60,000 a year for which the Colony's Legislature had pledged its word—there would also be necessity for further imposts for ordinary local purposes. But no one anticipated the Governor's announcement. It came with startling effect. He found himself compelled to ask for extra taxation amounting to £180,000 in the coming financial year; £60,000 of this would be permanent, the rest would be for one year only. It is safe to say he expected some pointed criticism. He expected it would be said that he ought to have foreseen the heavy deficit of the hurricane year, if not the anticipated deficit of the coming year's transactions, and should have taken steps, by earlier



taxation or increased retrenchment, to meet the situation. But nothing like this was said. When the astonishment had passed, it was remembered that the Colony and Legislature had agreed with the policy of waiting to see what the ensuing months would bring forth, and the country clearly realized that it could not go back on its own acceptance of the Governor's previous suggestion. A committee of the elected and the official members set to work immediately to draw up a scheme of special taxation, and though the burden fell heavily upon many members of the Legislative Council, it was accepted with an absence of murmuring, with a sense of the necessity for special effort, which were truly admirable and which reflected greatly to the credit of the House.

Heavy export taxes were levied on sugar, rum, logwood, and some other articles then in great demand abroad. It was fortunate for both Government and country that though the banana industry had suffered severely in the last year's hurricane, the other agricultural resources of the island were in flourishing condition. So with the exports fetching high prices, with profits accruing which could only be regarded as war profits, the export tax could easily be borne. But the mass of the people, the ordinary rank and file of the consumers, did not escape the imposition of additional burdens, and they, while paying increased prices on all imported goods, were earning on the whole no more money than they had earned before the war. What is especially noteworthy is the cheerfulness with which all Jamaica received the news that during the coming twelve months, in spite of the increased taxation of 1914, the great recent rise in the cost of living, and the considerable loss occasioned by the hurricane of August 1915, more taxation was now to be imposed. They understood that they had to bear fresh burdens in times of war. They shouldered those burdens with a splendid spirit and uttered no word of complaint.



## CHAPTER X

### COMPLEMENTARY EFFORTS

**E** NGLAND thrilled with pride when she learnt that from the four quarters of the globe, from strange lands under strange and alien stars, her children were hastening to offer their lives in her service. Prouder yet she felt when Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, New Zealand, the islands of the Pacific, the islands of the Caribbean, rose as one man and pledged themselves to stand with her to the last, to fight with her to the end; rose with a fervour of patriotism, an energy of effort, which proved to the world that the British Empire stood for something dear to the hearts of millions of men of diverse races and of different creeds, which testified to all time that it was love and loyalty, confidence and trust, which was the cement that held together the hundreds of millions over whom floated the Union Jack.

And it seems to us that nothing was more finely symbolical of the spirit of the Empire in those swift and stirring days of the war's outbreak than the action of the Jamaica colonies in foreign lands and of the little dependencies of this island. Some hundreds of miles to the south of Jamaica stretches the mainland of Central America. In two of the republics of that Continent large numbers of Jamaicans live. The Jamaican is a natural traveller; of an adventurous disposition, he loves to fare forth to other lands in the pursuit of excitement, in the search of wealth and of stimulating experiences. Thus he is to be found everywhere, in every country; and in some of the neighbouring tropical countries he has settled in tens of thousands, carrying with him his Protestant religion, his British prejudices, his belief in England, his grumbling criticism of Jamaica and—his enduring



love for Jamaica. For this underlies all his complaints, all his grumbling, all his loudly-expressed dissatisfaction: a true love for Jamaica and England: a great hope for the former, a high unshakable pride and firm faith in the latter. Toiling within sight of the blue and purple sea that surrounds the islets of Bocas del Toro; in the midst of the vast plantations of Costa Rica where the silver river gleams between green banks of the broad-leaved banana; on the heights of Culebra or in some gaudy Central American town, the Jamaican never altogether forgets the land of his fathers or the land of his allegiance. He may have left his native country forever, but there is something in his heart that whispers to him of home. There is something in his blood that tells him that to be a British subject is matter for pride and carries with it a perpetual obligation. So when in the summer of 1914 the news was flashed through the world that England had entered the great European War, Jamaicans in Central America remembered that they were British subjects and prepared to act accordingly. To Jamaica came their voices from over the sea. And their offer was one of service in gifts and in strong men.

No sooner had funds been opened in Jamaica to send warm clothing and other presents to English sailors and soldiers, than the Jamaica people in Panama organised a similar effort through their several friendly societies. This effort was announced in the Colon *Starlet* of September 1, 1914, the plan of the people in Colon and on the Canal Zone being to transmit to Jamaica, through the British Consul, the money they should collect. The Jamaicans in Bocas del Toro determined at the same time that a war fund should be started there. Costa Rica had been hard hit by the sudden outbreak of the war; but the Jamaicans in Costa Rica were also to show before long that they were behind no section of their countrymen in the realisation of their patriotic obligations. And so the Jamaicans in the two Spanish-





HON. J. H. W. PARK.

MR. J. H. ALLWOOD.



American Republics organised war funds and collected money for those funds. They gave entertainments of all kinds: concerts, picnics, Flag Day demonstrations, and all for the purpose of assisting in the war. At one entertainment in Port Limon nearly two hundred pounds was taken for the British Red Cross Society. That surely was something for a little West Indian colony in a Latin-American town.

Even from Spanish Honduras came a small contribution to the Jamaica funds; but better than money, as proof of the spirit animating the people, was what happened when it was published in Panama that the King had accepted Jamaica's offer of a contingent of recruits. The *Panama Star and Herald* of the 9th June, 1915, stated that the publication of this news threw the local West Indian colony into a fever of excitement—particularly the Jamaicans. From Costa Rica also came word that Jamaicans there were willing to return to their home to enlist in the contingent. Many did so; some came, at their own expense, from Panama; they came as individuals, they came in small groups, and sometimes they experienced disappointment in that, owing to their being over the then age-limit (thirty-five), or to some other cause, they could not be enlisted. Bocas del Toro went properly about this matter of enrolling men for the contingent. It first collected a fairly large sum of money, then it got together a body of men who had passed the sort of medical examination approved by the British Army authorities. The British Vice-Consul of that Province helped as much as he legitimately could, but he had to be circumspect. The Germans were strong in Panama, and they would not hesitate to lay a charge against anyone of violating the neutrality laws of a neutral State. Prominent Jamaicans and Englishmen in Panama had also to be careful for the same reason, but the rank and file of the British subjects there cared nothing: what they did was done in the open light of day.

More than one detachment of men came over from



Panama as a result of organised efforts, but the landing of one of these bodies, on Christmas Day of 1915, is especially remembered. Fifty-one recruits constituted this platoon: forty-two from Bocas del Toro and nine from Colon: the Bocas men were under Dr. G. A. G. Johnson, the men from Colon were commanded by Mr. Frederick Lyons. Both these gentlemen, natives of Jamaica domiciled abroad, had worked quietly and zealously for the cause since the beginning of the war, and were to continue to do so. Had they and others, British Consuls and representative Jamaicans and Englishmen in Central America, been definitely aided at this time by the Jamaica Government, there is no doubt that hundreds of men for the Jamaica Contingent would have been recruited. But as recruiting continued, the Germans waxed more vigilant and more indignant, so that a Jamaican writing privately to a newspaper office in Jamaica had to ask that as little as possible should be said about recruiting in Panama for the Jamaica Contingent.

One event shows how British subjects in Central America closely followed the fortunes of the war. On Wednesday evening, the 21st of June, 1916, a memorial service was held in the Wesleyan Chapel at Port Limon, Costa Rica, in honour of Lord Kitchener whose death had recently occurred. The principal address on that occasion was delivered by Mr. William McAdam, the British Consul. We quote the simple words of the newspaper correspondent: "Speaking of the naval battle off the Coast of Jutland, the Consul said he had seen some people carrying long faces because they believed that the British Empire had been worsted in that fight, but as a matter of fact it had been a British victory." He then spoke on Lord Kitchener's life and work, and "at the close of the address the congregation rose and stood during the playing of the Dead March in Saul." A few days later another memorial service was held in the Anglican Church of the same town. Think of it. In Port Limon, as elsewhere



in Central America, Jamaicans felt wounded to the heart at the thought that on the sea England had suffered a reverse, and they grieved at the news of Kitchener's tragic end. They sorrowed in the hour of adversity, they rejoiced in the day of victory; they worked for the Cause, they hoped for the great triumphant issue. In the Day of Armageddon it has not only been those of "the blood" that have held together to keep the pillars of the great house from falling. Those of the spirit have also shown themselves faithful, true, worthy of the best traditions of our Empire, ready always to serve the Motherland. It is a great and striking fact, monumental, and the record of it is written in the blood of many peoples. No other Empire that has ever flourished on this earth has had such a glorious record to show.

The dependencies of Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and Turks Island, also did what they could to assist the Jamaica war funds and the Jamaica Contingent. They gave out of their poverty, and that was a greater thing than if they had given out of their wealth. And now we must pass on to review briefly some efforts made in Jamaica in connection with the war, selecting the more important, but never forgetting that the smallest endeavour made to assist the Mother Country was all praiseworthy, even if the very memory of it be lost, even if nothing was heard of that endeavour after it had been made.

Through Lord Lansdowne, the President of the British Red Cross Society, with which had been amalgamated the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, an appeal for funds to help the Society's work was made to all the British Empire in 1915. In his telegram to Sir William Manning, Lord Lansdowne asked that money should be collected by street and other collections, this money to be devoted to the care of wounded British sailors and soldiers and the troops from British countries overseas. The telegram was published in the Jamaica Press and all and everyone were asked to assist



in the movement to make the Fund a handsome one: under the Governor, the then Mayor of Kingston was placed at the head of the Fund.

A great popular demonstration was at once planned, of which demonstration the selling of badges was to be the principal feature. The day of the demonstration was Trafalgar Day, October 21, 1915, and the plan that had worked so successfully on Flag Day was again adopted. In Kingston there was a meeting in the Ward Theatre, with patriotic songs and speeches, Mrs. William Wilson being in charge of the chorus of girls whose activities did so much to render the function in the city a pleasing success. After that, many concerts and entertainments all over Jamaica in aid of the Red Cross Fund, now formally styled the Governor's Red Cross Fund, testified to the popularity of this particular cause. Another "Day" for the collection of money for the Fund was held on October 19, 1916. Mrs. Wilson was to have taken at the chief public function on this occasion the part she had taken in the previous year; but on September 16, after a short illness, she died, to the loss of the general community and of the many efforts connected with the Contingent and other movements. She had attempted too much, more than her strength warranted. She had travelled with her husband all over the island to be present at innumerable recruiting meetings; for over a year she had had no rest, there had on her part been no cessation of effort. The work told upon her vitality, sapped it, wore it out; even while she was making preparations for the coming Red Cross Day she failed, and it can truly be said of her that she died in the service of her adopted country.

The second "Day" in aid of the Red Cross Funds was a success like the first, and since then the Fund has steadily continued to grow. Up to March 31, 1917, the sum of £8,000 had been transmitted to England by the Governor, and there was still a small amount in hand. It should be put on record



in these pages that one-eighth of the amount just mentioned had been donated by one man, an American owning property in Jamaica, who had taken a deep interest in all efforts made by Jamaica in connection with the war. The name of Mr. J. F. Thompson, of Good Hope in Trelawny, is well known in the colony. He had made many gifts to local charities. He had contributed a thousand dollars to the Jamaica Aeroplane Fund (of which something presently) and another thousand dollars to the Trelawny branch of the Red Cross Fund. After this he sent a cheque for five thousand dollars—over £1,000—to the Governor; and in a subsequent letter, replying to the thanks of the Press, Mr. Thompson wrote that he had never been a neutral in the war, had not considered and could not consider himself a neutral in a war being waged for freedom against the negation of right and freedom. Jamaica highly appreciated this overflowing generosity, so spontaneous, so admirably motivated. It is safe to say that this appreciation will be felt by the Jamaicans of the future as they think of the part which their country played in the great world-struggle in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century.

Another most important movement was that originated and carried through so successfully by Mr. Adolph Levy, who had on previous occasions taken some part in the public affairs of his city. In 1914 Mr. L. A. Rattigan had appealed to the public for funds in aid of the London Overseas Club's effort to supply the British Army with aeroplanes. Mr. Rattigan succeeded in obtaining about £300, then the movement languished and was given up. For some time nothing more was heard of an aeroplane movement in Jamaica, though other colonies were busy supplying air machines to the Army. Mr. Levy then conceived the idea of an Aeroplane Fund on considerable lines. He saw that to make such a movement succeed he must have the active association and assistance of a number of representative men in the colony, that he must interest hundreds of men and women in it, and that he him-



self must be prepared to put forth the maximum of personal effort. He published his appeal in the *Gleaner* on July 27, 1915, on Flag Day, when, it might be thought, most persons would be too busy with the Flag Day demonstrations to pay close attention to the lengthy letter in which he set forth his reasons for making that appeal. But the letter was read. Mr. Levy's reasons were convincing. His suggestion was that one hundred persons in Jamaica should contribute twenty-five pounds each to the Aeroplane Fund (he himself promising fifty pounds), and he at once proceeded to form an Aeroplane Committee which consisted of the following gentlemen: Messrs. T. N. Aguilar, Lewis Ashenheim, H. I. C. Brown, Sydney Cargill, J. F. Milholland, Horace V. Myers, Edward Morris, and J. H. Cargill, who unanimously elected Mr. Levy as Chairman, and Mr. J. H. Cargill as honorary secretary. All these gentlemen were keenly interested in the Fund and anxious to do their utmost to ensure its success: especially should be mentioned the efforts of the Fund's secretary, Mr. J. H. Cargill, who never spared himself.

Mr. Levy had definitely and purposely appealed to the wealthier people of the colony. The results soon began to justify his decision. Contributions began to come in, but the hurricane of August 1915 also came, and for a little while it was doubtful if enough money would be collected to purchase a single aeroplane. But on September 4 the Chairman of the Aeroplane Committee was able to announce that, the hurricane notwithstanding, he had received nearly £700 up to then, and that the Committee had no intention of suspending its efforts. Twenty days later the Fund stood at £1,312. In addition to individual contributions and to donations from the several firms of the island, the Victoria Mutual Building Society and the Jamaica Mutual Life Assurance Company each gave £500, while the *Gleaner* Company and the Jamaica Co-operative Fire Insurance Company each donated £250. These sums, of course, were taken out of the profits of these



businesses, so in the result the smaller men and women of the island did contribute something to the Aeroplane Fund, and contributed in a manner that helped the Fund to do promptly what it had been opened to accomplish.

Money for the first aeroplane—Jamaica No. 1—was telegraphed to England on October 28, 1915. The sum was £2,250.

The Fox Film Company was then in Jamaica making the photo-fantasy, "The Daughter of the Gods." The Director of that Company, Mr. Herbert Brenon, was approached by Mr. Levy and Mr. J. H. Cargill, who asked him to allow his people to assist in the effort to raise money for a second aeroplane. Mr. Brenon highly appreciated the courtesy and kindness which had been so abundantly shown to him and his company in Jamaica: he readily consented to do what he was asked. So on the 4th of November, at the Palace Moving Picture Theatre, lent for the purpose by its management, was held one of the most enjoyable entertainments, and one of the most successful, that Kingstonians ever patronised.

Thousands of badges with little aeroplanes stamped on them had been imported to be sold throughout the island. A few of these were put up for auction at the aeroplane entertainment by Mr. Brenon and Miss Kellerman, who greatly assisted in making the entertainment a success. The highest price paid for one of the badges was £100. To the audience also a number of these badges were sold by the lady members of the Fox Film Company at half-a-crown apiece. Including the sale of these mementoes, the entertainment realised more than £700.

There was subsequently an aeroplane badge day in the several parishes, which brought in hundreds of pounds. Early in 1916 another aeroplane was purchased, and after that nearly £500 was sent to the Overseas Club to assist in buying a third machine. Then the fund was closed; but later on the chairman of the Aeroplane Committee received another



telegram from the Overseas Club asking that the assistance of Jamaica should be continued: this resulted in the re-opening of the Fund, and it was decided to keep it open until the end of the war should be well within sight.

Jamaica had been deeply stirred by the story of Belgium's suffering, and it has already been set down that Jamaica did something to succour the people of that unhappy country. The colony had also heard something about the misery of Poland; but Poland was far away, was but a name to those born and brought up in Jamaica, hence the first appeal made on behalf of the suffering Jews of Poland met with but an ordinary response. That appeal, too, had been specifically made to members of the Jewish persuasion in Jamaica. Christians and others contributed to the Fund opened here at the suggestion of Hon. Leopold de Rothschild, but the imperative nature of the need was not then understood. Mr. H. V. Myers was chairman of the Polish Jewish Fund, Mr. Altamont DaCosta was secretary; but at first the collecting of money devolved on Mr. DaCosta almost entirely. This gentleman collected about £270, which he transmitted to England; but the Committee in London despatched another telegram to him asking that more should be done, and mentioning the "unparalleled tragedy and awful suffering" which rendered further efforts imperative. Mr. DaCosta was leaving the island just then: he published Mr. de Rothschild's telegram and handed over the Fund to the chairman, Mr. Horace Myers. The latter perceived that if money to any appreciable amount was immediately to be collected, there must be a definite and direct appeal, not only to the Jews of Jamaica, but to all other Jamaicans as well, an appeal made without distinction of religion and in the name of the common humanity of all.

It was the first time that such a call from the Jews had ever been made to both Jews and Christians in Jamaica. The aid of the Press was invoked; day after day the misery of



Poland was put before the people of Jamaica, and day by day both Jews and Christians gave what they could in aid of their suffering brethren in Poland—for those who suffered in the cause of the Allies were the brethren of all whose fate was bound up with the victory or the defeat of the Allies. Mr. Myers hoped for a thousand pounds at least. He soon knew that his hopes would be more than realised. An entertainment at the Movies Theatre, organised by Mrs. Cecil deCordova, who was assisted by Jews and Christians, brought in nearly £200. The Fund reached a thousand pounds, two thousand pounds; on March 31, 1917, it stood at £3,000, inclusive of the amount collected by Mr. DaCosta. It had been opened when a number of other appeals were being made to the country, and after a large amount of money had already been collected by voluntary effort. But the call to Jamaica had been ably made by the chairman of the Polish Jewish Fund, and the need of the people in Poland had been forcibly presented to the consciousness of all Jamaica. So Jamaica rallied to make this effort a successful one, and received from the Polish Jewish Committee of London a sincere expression of its gratitude.

A Fund to assist other Funds is the alternative name to the War Stamp League which was organised by Mr. Lewis Ashenheim shortly after his return home from the United States, whither he had gone on a visit of some months. When in America, Mr. Ashenheim had seen at work a scheme for collecting money in small amounts from the multitude, and it occurred to him that this scheme could be applied with success in this colony. The idea was to sell a special kind of stamp, with the face value of one half-penny, which stamp might be put on letters, papers and other mail matter, in addition, of course, to the regular postage. Permission was obtained from the Governor for the selling of these stamps at all the island's post offices; merchants and others were asked to purchase quantities of the War League Stamps for



use on their letters. The community was invited to become members of the War Stamp League, and many hundreds at once agreed to do so. All that was necessary to become a member of the League was a promise to use the War League Stamp.

The League started in December, 1915. In March 1916, the Government increased the cost of posting letters in Jamaica from a penny to three half-pence, and this naturally affected the sale of War League stamps. Nevertheless the League was able in March of the same year to hand over cheques of £100 each to the Governor's Red Cross Fund, the Jamaica Aeroplane Fund and the Fund for the Relief of the Polish Jews. Similar distributions were made in June of the same year; only, instead of the Aeroplane Fund benefiting by the second cheque of £100, the amount was handed over to the *Gleaner's* Contingent Sufferers' Fund with the consent of the Jamaica Aeroplane Committee. Up to March 31, 1917, nearly £900 had been received by the chairman of the War Stamp League. The aim of this particular effort was manifold. It was to assist the three Funds mentioned above that the League was formed. It was also to give the very poorest an opportunity of associating themselves with the efforts being made to supply aeroplanes to the British Army, to succour wounded British soldiers and sailors, and to help the unhappy sufferers of Poland. By purchasing a single stamp for one half-penny the humblest man or woman, boy or girl, would have done something to assist some deserving causes. And thousands of these men and women, boys and girls, did add their mites to the money that went to swell the larger Funds.

Another effort made in Jamaica to assist the victims of the war was that initiated by Mr. E. A. Issa on behalf of the suffering Syrians. There is a small Syrian colony in Jamaica, most of whose members are subjects of the Turk. But the Jamaica Government did not deem it necessary to place



these aliens under any restraint, though, technically, they came into the category of enemy aliens. None would more heartily rejoice over the downfall of the Turk than the Syrian, who has had to endure such bitter persecution at his hands; since the outbreak of the war, also, the people of Syria have undergone unimaginable hardship, and this has moved their fellow-countrymen the world over to do something in their assistance. Mr. Issa is himself a British subject and now a citizen of Jamaica. But he felt with the people amongst whom he was born, and he issued an appeal to the Syrians in Jamaica for their unhappy brothers in Syria. He formed a committee, opened a fund, and collected by personal effort a good part of the £500 he was able to send to New York up to March 1917, to be transmitted by the Syrian Committee in New York to Syria. Many Jamaicans and Englishmen contributed to this Fund, which remains in existence. The Syrians in Jamaica have never failed to respond to the calls made in Jamaica for financial assistance for causes connected with the war, and when Mr. Issa reminded them that Syria was also suffering, they realized that to give to the Syrian Relief Fund was a paramount duty, and they fulfilled it.

Of the successful effort made by the Archbishop of the West Indies in company with General Blackden, to have a recreation room erected for the use and entertaining of the contingent men, there need be only a brief mention. Mr. L. M. Pietersz, Belgian Consul in Jamaica, came late upon the scene with a plea on behalf of the Belgian orphans, but to the Fund opened by him for the little ones of Belgium, Jamaica had something to give, even though the amount was under £200. The Rev. J. F. Gartshore, the Rev. P. B. Richardson, appealing respectively for money to present our departing soldiers with New Testaments and Prayer Books, found that the country had something for these purposes; while Mr. J. E. Owen has been able to collect nearly £300 for the Blue Cross Fund, the fund devoted to aiding horses wounded at the sev-



eral battlefronts. Mr. Hugh Clarke of Westmoreland has been doing excellent work collecting money to provide some comforts for the British prisoners in Germany. Up to the end of March, 1917, his fund had reached £300, though it was almost the last to be started in Jamaica in connection with the war. The Self Help Home of Montego Bay, St. James, has assisted nearly every cause and every fund opened here in connection with the war, which is not surprising, seeing that St. James is admittedly in the forefront of all patriotic movements.

In speaking of complementary efforts connected with the war we have necessarily confined ourselves to those about which frequent mention has been made in the public prints of the colony. There are others which, as the Governor said in a speech quoted in the first part of this book, will never be known, and these are the more numerous. But there are one or two of which some individuals know, and about which, because of their unquestionable though silent influence, the people of Jamaica ought also to know something. There can be no doubt that when Mr. T. R. MacMillan determined early in 1915 to send his chief assistant to the war, he set an example that had excellent results. He himself was above the military age, his sons were mere children. But his principal assistant, a young man of great service to him in his work, was just the sort of recruit for which England was just then calling; and this young man Mr. MacMillan fully equipped and sent to the Mother Country, where he joined the Royal Flying Corps as a private, and rose to be an instructor and a sergeant-major in the Corps in less than eighteen months, being now and then entrusted with duties of considerable responsibility and importance. In sending him Mr. MacMillan made a personal sacrifice: he deprived himself of his most promising and trusted helper. And as this idea of private personal effort gained ground, there were others to follow to some extent the example so finely set,



Indeed, even from 1914 the sending of young men to England by private subscription had been taking place, thanks to the efforts of Mr. John Barclay, Mr. E. Astley Smith, Mr. W. G. Eggins, Mr. C. E. Johnston, Mr. William Morrison and others. These men worked very quietly, worked for the most part as if a cloak should be thrown over their deeds. We cannot agree with this continued obscuring of acts of which there is every reason to be proud, in regard to which there is nothing of which one can be ashamed. Many a man is animated by the feeling that he should avoid "advertisement" when working for public, impersonal ends, and that feeling reflects to his credit. But there comes a time, and it comes often, and in Jamaica it comes very often, when publicity means success. And when the success is not of a personal nature, when the end to be served is finely philanthropic or nobly patriotic, then concealment, the sensitive shrinking from the public eye, is not to be commended, is indeed to be condemned. For the sight of men working attracts more workers, is a stimulus to emulation, and without emulation most of us would drift into the backwaters of a hopeless, purposeless passivity. Not a few of the young men who left Jamaica before the sailing of the First Five Hundred were assisted in so doing by the gentlemen whose names we have set down above, assisted out of special private funds collected by them, and to which some of them were most generous contributors. To their aid came the United Fruit Company which, neutral business organization though it was at that time, yet considered it a duty to do everything it could to enable men from Jamaica to place their services at the disposal of their Sovereign and of the British Empire. Worthy of remembrance, too, is the refusal of Messrs. F. L. Myers & Son to accept one penny of remuneration for bringing in their fleet of sailing vessels all the men that the Bahamas sent to form part of the Jamaica Contingent.

Thus one and all, some publicly and some secretly, each in



his own way, have tried to do something for the several causes which have all been connected with the one great Cause. And thus a record and precedent of public patriotic service has been established, by which it is impossible that this country should not benefit in the years of reconstruction and of endeavour yet to come.



## CHAPTER XI

### AN INTERREGNUM

**A**FTER the departure of the third battalion of the contingent in March, 1916, recruiting re-commenced. It proceeded steadily until early in April, when a rumour went round the city of Kingston that serious misfortune had overtaken the men who had sailed in the previous month. Canadian papers coming into Jamaica gave the first authentic information about this misfortune: the *Verdala* had encountered a blizzard on her way to Halifax, all the recruits, unaccustomed to an almost arctic climate, had become demoralised, and a large number of them had been cruelly frostbitten.

Outspoken criticism against those responsible for sending peasants of a tropical country to Canada at such a bitter time of the year was soon heard everywhere. The Governor gave out a statement which, though expressed in studiously moderate language, was sufficiently distressing to read. Over a hundred of the men had been frostbitten. The whole battalion had arrived at Halifax in a distressed and demoralised condition. Some of the men were immediately taken to hospital there; others were sent to Bermuda; it was soon known that a few of the sufferers would lose one or two limbs, that others would lose toes, and that it would be many weeks before the rest of the battalion would be able to proceed to England. Subsequently it transpired that the men had been sent from Jamaica without warm socks (which had not arrived from England).

The Governor stated that he himself had not known that the *Verdala*, which sailed from Kingston under sealed orders, was going to Halifax; General Blackden spoke of that voyage as a stupid blunder. It was apparent that the local authorities were not to blame, there was no known person



on whom the indignation of the public could vent itself. Public feeling therefore took the practical form of doing something immediately to assist the sufferers, instead of spending itself in aimless recrimination.

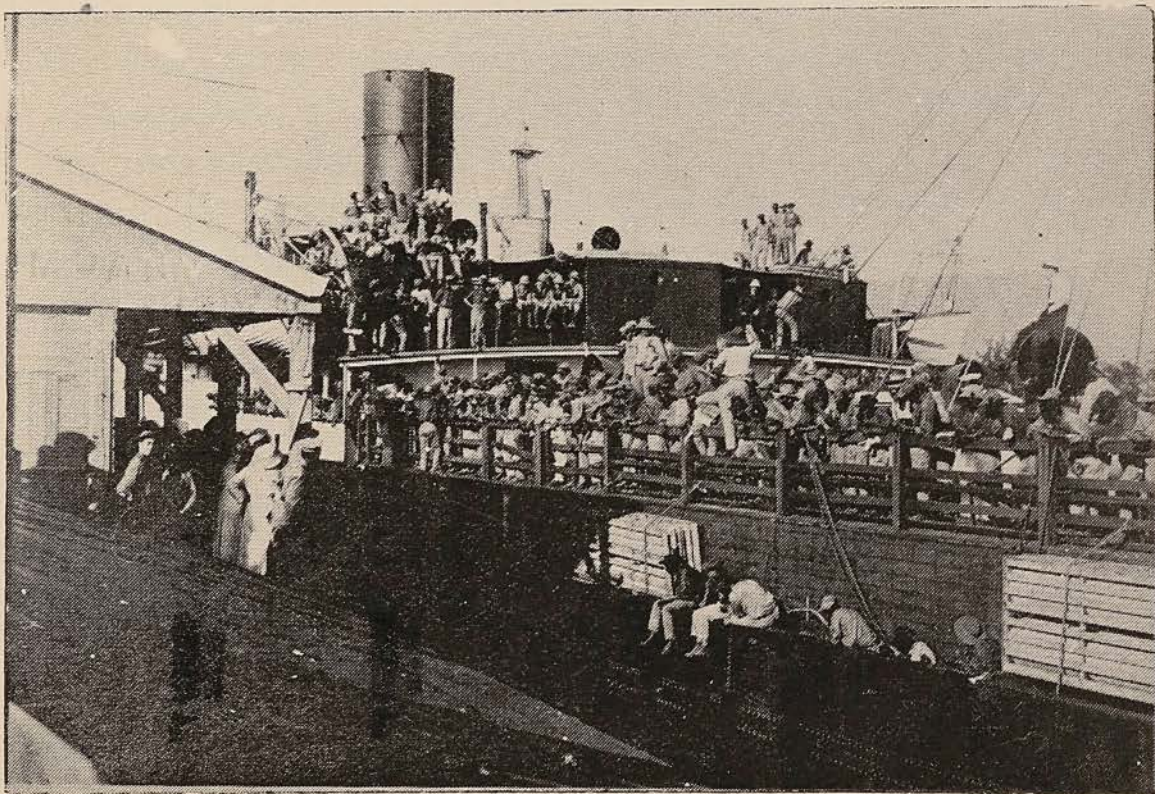
A few days after receiving news of the *Verdala's* arrival at Halifax with the stricken men, the *Gleaner* opened a fund to provide with artificial limbs those who would undergo amputations, and to send to all the men some comforts as an earnest of Jamaica's sympathy. The fund grew steadily; Mrs. Blackden assisted it with a Moonlight Fete which brought in nearly £200; two sums, each of £100, were telegraphed to Halifax and Bermuda to purchase little presents and dainties for the stricken recruits, the Governor acting as the medium of transmission. In the meantime the people of Halifax and Bermuda were doing everything in their power to render easier the lot of the frostbitten men. The kindness of the Canadians especially appealed to the hearts of all Jamaicans. Some of the amputated men were to be sent back to Jamaica; the majority were to remain in Canada for a time. The Canadian Government offered to teach them useful crafts and trades such as disabled Canadian soldiers were being taught. The Governor accepted this offer, after receiving permission from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to do so; and in December, 1916, the discharged Jamaica soldiers still in Canada (over twenty men) were fitted with artificial limbs, the occasion being made a special function of sympathy at which many Canadians assisted.

In that same month of December, 1916, ten men who had lost one or both feet and had been sent back to Jamaica were given their artificial limbs. The *Gleaner's* Contingent Sufferers Fund was to have paid for these limbs, and an expert had been brought out from America to fit them to the men. But the Imperial authorities, even if they acted slowly, had no intention of leaving disabled contingent men to thank private charity for succour. Word came to Jamaica





CONTINGENT MEN MARCHING TO EMBARK.



TRANSPORT "VERDALLA" ON THE EVE OF SAILING.



that the limbs would be paid for by the military authorities; and this enabled what was left of the Contingent Sufferers Fund to be devoted to assisting Jamaica recruits who had been discharged in England or Egypt as unfit for military service but who had been adjudged as not entitled to pensions. Of this class of men, and of the discharged soldiers generally, more will be said later on. As for the rest of the frostbitten recruits in Canada, these returned to the island in February, 1917.

Many persons believed that owing to this misfortune the Contingent Movement in Jamaica had come to a sudden and tragic end; that the thought of what their fellows had suffered on the voyage to Halifax, the knowledge that many of the sufferers would lose one or both feet, and legs in some instances, would effectually determine the Jamaica peasant to remain in his island home. There were others, however, who held that recruits would still continue to answer the country's call, that the Jamaican would consider the misfortune which had overtaken the third battalion as but part of the risks of war. These were the men who had an instinctive understanding of the psychology of the average Jamaican, and they were right.

It was thought that some months would elapse before a transport would call at Jamaica for the fourth battalion. The *Verdala*, which was not steam-heated, was of course condemned as a transport after her last ill-fated voyage; and not before the men at Bermuda had arrived in England would a ship come to Jamaica for another batch of men. It was feared that the practical suspension of recruiting which this necessitated would have a dampening effect on recruiting in Jamaica. Nevertheless, when the military authorities decided that they could take some men at Camp, it was found that recruits were still coming in, that the pessimistic forebodings of those who had seen the end of the Contingent Movement in Jamaica were entirely without foundation.



The fourth battalion of the Jamaica Contingent was ready in July. What remained of the third battalion (the larger part) had already sailed from Bermuda and had landed at Plymouth on the 7th of June. But the fourth battalion was also to meet with its own misfortunes. After the valedictory services on the 12th of July it was discovered that measles had broken out among the men. This made it out of the question that they should leave Jamaica just then. As a matter of fact it was not until September, 1916, that they could be sent away.

In the interval Jamaica had been stirred to the depths by news, arriving late on Friday afternoon, June 1916, of the Battle of Jutland. The German official report came first. It was followed by statements from the British Admiralty which were, apparently, a confession of defeat. It was understood from the first that the greater part of the British fleet was intact, that the enemy had not remained to fight the great battleships under the personal command of Admiral Jellicoe; yet the halting opinions and beliefs expressed by the British Admiralty in regard to the losses sustained by the enemy, coupled with the candid admission of our own losses and the boastful claims of the Germans, plunged the whole country into anxiety and grief. Four days later came the sad intelligence of Lord Kitchener's death. A more correct and therefore more cheering view of the Battle of Jutland was beginning to gain ground everywhere when Kitchener's fate was announced. He had stood for so much to the British mind, had symbolised so impressively the strength, reserve and resolution of the British nation, that his sudden taking off, the tragedy of his swift end amidst the raging waters of the North Sea and within sight of the Scottish shore, sent a pang through all Jamaica as well as through every other part of the British Empire. It was realised, however, that the great organiser had done his work, had laid the foundations and built up the superstructure of the vast and magnificent



army which England had determined to put into the war. And soon it was known that the Russians were moving again, that a mighty offensive movement was beginning in the East. The wave of depression rolled away swiftly. And when in July the British advance began upon the Somme, when it was known in Jamaica that the long-projected offensive had been launched with conspicuous daring and notable success, the enthusiasm and confidence of the country rose to unprecedented heights.

More men from the Bahamas arrived on August 15, and on the evening of that same day a hurricane swept over Jamaica. More than a hundred years had elapsed since the island had been visited by hurricanes in two successive years. It happened also that the fruit which had been spared in the blow of the previous year, and that which had been planted in the interval, had for some time been rotting on the trees on account of scarcity of shipping facilities. But in June and July strong representations on the subject had been made by the Government and the local Chamber of Commerce to the Colonial Office, and hope was confidently entertained that some shipping would shortly be placed at the disposal of the Jamaica banana exporters who had no contracts with the United Fruit Company. These hopes were justified. Ships to carry a certain quantity of Jamaica fruit to England and the United States were actually on the way to Jamaica when the hurricane swept down on the plantations and cultivations of the countryside and in less than an hour had laid them in ruins.

The destruction in 1916 was greater than that in 1915. Practically all the bananas were destroyed, and much of the cocoa and coconuts on the trees. Other crops were damaged, but sugar escaped almost entirely. With a sort of stoical optimism, the newspapers calculated that with the money that had been made in the first part of the year, and with that which the next crop of sugar would bring, the island would be



able to win through the next twelve months or so, with diminished spending capacity perhaps, but without acute suffering. As, despite the depression in the fruit trade, the export trade as a whole had been astonishingly large, there was sound basis for this view. Still, the effect of this last hurricane was depressing, and the smaller banana growers might have given way to despair had not the Governor announced that loans to assist in the re-establishment of cultivations up to a certain size would be proposed by the Government at the next meeting of the Legislative Council.

Towards the end of the following month the Council met. Eventually it passed a resolution empowering the Government to lend to the banana growers, through the Agricultural Loan Banks, the sum of £50,000 in varying amounts up to £200. It also—and this specially concerns us here—discussed contingent questions, but without any attempt at being exhaustive or of going too deeply into those questions.

Men of the Jamaica Contingent, invalided in Egypt, England or Halifax had been returning. On September 19 as many as 340 had arrived from Egypt, and it was being rumoured that hundreds more were coming home. Reports had begun to circulate as to the general unfitness of the majority of the men recruited in Jamaica; those who had disapproved of the Contingent Movement exclaimed in triumph at this apparent justification of their original foresight and wisdom.

Questions put to the Government elicited fairly reassuring replies from the General commanding the local forces. The men they had been recruiting, he said, were of the same type as that which constituted the West India Regiment, and with good training and leadership they ought to make efficient soldiers. As to those invalided home, three of every four of them were men who had passed through trying experiences on the unfortunate voyage to Halifax, and had become weakened or demoralised in consequence. The General added that the few recruits who were now coming into Camp were very



good men, and he expressed the hope that future battalions would give ample satisfaction.

But although the Council discussed contingent matters, it was evident that much of the old enthusiasm felt in regard to the contingent had evaporated. It was generally believed that the movement was not a great success, and the feeling was gaining ground that little use would be found for the men whom Jamaica would send. At that same session of the Legislature, however, the representative of St. Andrew's parish, the Hon. E. F. H. Cox, asked leave to introduce a bill instituting universal military service in Jamaica for men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one. The Governor would not allow the Bill to be introduced, and many of the elected members were unfeignedly pleased with this. The Bill was considered unnecessary; it was thought that it would arouse deep and determined opposition on the part of a people who viewed suspiciously anything that seemed like a curtailment of that personal freedom which they had enjoyed since the blessed day of Emancipation, August 1, 1838. Employers of labour, too, could not regard with favour a proposal that might seriously dislocate the labour market; but the dominating factor in the opposition then existing to compulsory military service was undoubtedly the belief that the Mother Country had no particular need of Jamaica soldiers. As it had been said so frequently and with such certainty that "we must win," and as the war had now lasted some two years, the prevailing opinion was that the Allies would shortly be victorious, and that any particular exertion on the part of a small and distant colony like Jamaica, in the way of raising men for service by a compulsory military law, was entirely uncalled for. So the Council rose early in October, 1916, convinced that it had heard the first and last about compulsory service. Only the Press insisted that six months hence the colony might be taking a very different and altogether more serious view of the matter.



The return of disabled and discharged contingent men to the country in unexpectedly large numbers had now brought forcibly to the notice of the authorities the dismal fact that no arrangements whatever had been made for dealing with such cases. Discharged from Up-Park Camp, most of the men found themselves without work and apparently without prospects of any kind. Many of them were to receive pensions, but the Pension Authorities in England were slow; those not entitled to pensions, but nevertheless suffering from some form or other of bodily weakness brought about by hardship or strain, did not know to what to turn their hands. Happily there was still about £450 remaining to the credit of the *Gleaner's* Contingent Sufferers Fund, and at the suggestion of the President of the Central Recruiting Committee and General Blackden this amount was placed at the disposal of the Central Recruiting Committee for the temporary assistance of persons not entitled to pensions. It was also arranged by the Government that all returned contingent men who could work should be employed by the Jamaica Railway and the Public Works Department, while private employers were also requested to assist the Government in getting the men back into employment as soon as possible. As for those who had lost their toes or even legs through frost-bite, all of whom were entitled to pensions for periods ranging from six months to their whole lifetime, it was provided that they should be taught trades and handicrafts, the exercise of which would render them independent of eleemosynary aid. With this end in view the Government's Technical School in Kingston organised regular classes at once, and disabled men were invited to attend these regularly while in receipt of pensions. The pensions list soon after arrived from England, so that by the time recruiting again commenced formally, December 1, 1916, a practical and fairly comprehensive programme for dealing with cases of disabled and returning contingent men in manageable numbers had been drawn up and



put into actual operation.

In spite of all the war talk in Jamaica and the war news received daily by the colony, the fact that we had suffered nothing save high prices through the war had naturally the effect of steadying and even deadening the imaginations of the people. It is obvious, too, that the mind adapts itself to almost any situation, so that, after a while, what would create consternation or at least astonishment at one time hardly gives rise to surprise at another. Consequently when, in November 1916, the Government ordered the darkening of all lights in the city that could be seen from the sea, and subsequently extended that order to all the coast towns of the island, there was but a brief speculation as to the reason of the precaution. That this was a war measure everybody knew, that it might be very necessary was generally conceded. But no alarm was felt or expressed; the order was obeyed and the people waited to see if any escaped German cruiser or adventurous submarine would venture to fire on the island. The time when a panic was possible had long since passed. Even the actual shelling of Jamaica's capital would be accompanied by no frantic demonstrations of fear on the population's part.

The resignation of Mr. Asquith as Prime Minister of England was announced in Jamaica on December 7, 1916; this warned all intelligent students of English political affairs that a grave crisis had arisen in England, directly connected of course with the conduct of the war. The advent of Mr. Lloyd George to supreme power in the Mother Country was generally hailed with delight; it was felt that the paralysing policy of "wait and see" was now definitely at an end. Then came the German offer of a peace conference based on an acceptance of Germany's claim of victory; this, followed by President Wilson's proposal to all the belligerents that they should definitely state their terms of peace, was regarded as indicating a new and highly important development of events in connection with the Great War. The year was ending in a



murmur of peace talk, and yet there were almost none in Jamaica who believed that peace would shortly be the result of these overtures and suggestions. It was impossible for the Allies to acknowledge a German victory. Therefore the categorical refusal of the Allies to agree to a conference with the Central Powers, and their explicit statement of their peace terms in answer to President Wilson's question—peace terms which postulated the defeat of the Central Powers—were regarded as a matter of course by Jamaica. Nothing else had been expected.

President Wilson followed up his request for a statement of the several belligerents' peace proposals with a speech to the American Senate, delivered January 22, 1917, which aroused a good deal of antagonism everywhere. In that speech he enunciated his now famous opinion that a peace to be permanent must be a "peace without victory." In British countries, where the speedy triumph of the Allies was almost universally regarded as inevitable, such a doctrine as this was looked upon as inimical to the Allied interests; it was not perceived at that time that the President foresaw that America might be drawn into the war against the Central Powers, and desired beforehand to make the moral and idealistic attitude of his country quite clear to the civilised world. The world better understood that the President was not seeking to save the Central Powers from impending defeat when Germany suddenly announced, on January 31, that she intended to resume the unrestricted submarine warfare against which the United States had successfully protested some time before. This was a distinct challenge to the United States, whose merchant ships would be treated as enemies if they should be found in the "barred zone" illegally established by the Germans around the coasts of England, Italy and France. President Wilson's answer was the immediate severing of diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany. Then, with a gasp as it were, the world realised that America and



the Central Powers were facing one another with angry, hostile eyes, and that in a few weeks at the most America must take her stand by the Allies in the war against the ruthless enemies of all humanised and law-respecting civilised societies.

The recruiting for the fifth battalion of the Jamaica Contingent had proceeded leisurely all through December. After the Christmas holidays, however, the men began to enrol themselves freely. Some time before this the bar against illiterate men had been withdrawn; good health and the attainment of the military standard of physical efficiency were all that was now required; in addition also to the ordinary recruiting methods, the President of the Central Recruiting Committee had instituted a new process which proved eminently successful. Men already recruited were sent to their respective districts to recruit their friends and relatives on the understanding that they were to receive half-a-crown—on emergency the amount could be increased to four shillings—for every man accepted by the authorities. Fife and drum bands with officers of the Jamaica Reserve Regiment were also despatched to different places in the country, and these never failed to attract a good number of recruits. So that by the middle of February, 1917, over 1500 men had enlisted—a battalion and a half instead of one battalion, the fifth and a part of the sixth battalion of the contingent. And this in spite of the emigration to Cuba then in full swing, an emigration which had begun in the latter part of the previous year owing to Cuba's call for able-bodied labourers to whom the tempting wages of eight and ten shillings a day were offered by cane planters anxious to make the most of the high sugar prices then obtaining.

The fifth battalion was ready; the sixth was in rapid process of formation. In spite of the disastrous voyage to Halifax, the long intervals of tedious waiting, the feeling that our men would not be in time to do appreciable work in any



important theatre of the war, in spite too of a considerable emigration, the call for recruits had been answered splendidly. No one thought of compulsory military service any more, even the meaning of the unrestricted submarine warfare was not well understood by the vast majority of thinking people in the island. It was believed that either the Germans were merely "bluffing" or that they could do no worse with their submarines than they had done before. The *Gleaner* insisted that this was a woefully mistaken view to take of the new situation. And the country was soon to learn that the most terrible period of the war had arrived at last, and that Jamaica must put forth greater efforts to help in the war than she had done before.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE FINAL APPEAL

“**I** HAVE received from time to time reports concerning the services of the Jamaica units of the British West Indies Regiment, and these reports have been of a very satisfactory nature. The services of the soldiers sent from Jamaica have been very highly spoken of, and their steady conduct under severe artillery fire has been much commended.”

The scene is the hall of Jamaica's Legislative Council, the date March 6, 1917, and the words are being read slowly and distinctly by the President of the Council in a crowded auditorium. The members of the Council, the officers of the Army and Navy who attend in full dress the opening of the colony's Legislature, the spectators who throng the hall, the lobby, and the wide verandah fronting the hall, are now all standing, silent and attentive, as the President reads the address in which is set forth the Government's financial and legislative programme for the coming financial year. It is nearly six months since the Council last met, and then its mood was one of depression, its secret view of the Contingent Movement one of apology and depreciation. It seemed to the Council then that Jamaica had tried to help the Empire with men and had failed to do so to any appreciable purpose; yet even while this opinion was possessing the minds of many in the country, word was coming from Egypt and from France which contained a rebuke for those who had doubted and despaired. Men from Jamaica had been attacked in Egypt by bombs from enemy aeroplanes, and they had behaved as calmly and as coolly as well-seasoned troops. Men from Jamaica, trained in Egypt, had been rushed to France at the beginning and during the progress of the Battle of the Somme, and hun-



dreds of these had been put to feed the giant guns with shells. The enemy's shells had fallen among and around them, slaying some and wounding others, but the soldiers born and brought up in Jamaica had not flinched for a moment, had thrown themselves heart and soul into the dangerous work, had literally stood by their guns in spite of every menace, in the teeth of all possible danger, until officers of forces from the great self-governing British colonies had exclaimed in admiration at their courage and resolution, saying that if they had not seen this conduct they would not have believed coloured soldiers to be capable of it. The country, as it were, breathed a deep sigh of relief when it learnt that its sons were winning a good name for themselves. And now the Governor of Jamaica, in his capacity of President of the Legislative Council, was giving formal and official information regarding the behaviour of our troops, who had all received the commendation of the High Command for their discipline, their bravery, their steadiness under conditions calculated to test and try the resolution of any race of men.

The legislators had not expected to hear much about the Jamaica Contingent this session. It was known that the Governor had received from the Imperial authorities a proposal that Jamaica, instead of providing for the transportation, pensions, gratuities and separation allowances of the contingent men, should agree to take up a million pounds of the English war debt, leaving all charges in connection with the contingent to be defrayed by the English Government. Thus the amount of war debt for which Jamaica would be responsible would be exactly the sum already voted for contingent purposes; and it was understood that the arrangement proposed by England would probably suit the contingent men and their families much better than any that the colony could make. The elected members had therefore decided to accept the proposition that had come from England; and most of them were of opinion that in so far as future bat-



talions were concerned, these would be recruited as required and the Council would have nothing more to do with the contingent until, perhaps, the war was over, when the problem of dealing with men returning would have to be faced by the Government and Legislature. So the Council and spectators listened with complacency to the words of the President which set forth the appreciation of the Army authorities for the work which the Jamaica soldiers had done at the front, for the spirit they had displayed. "This intelligence," said the President, "will be greatly appreciated by the island generally, and especially by those who have given so much time and energy to the recruitment of the contingents." It was thought at the moment that this was all he had to say in connection with the Jamaica Contingent. It was, of a truth, but the prelude to an announcement which had on that assembly almost the effect of an electric shock. Without exaggeration, that announcement may be said to have marked a turning point in the colony's history, the inauguration of a new phase of its connection with the Mother Country and with the rest of the British Empire.

"I am able to announce that the Army Council desires to raise as many battalions as possible in Jamaica to reinforce those battalions now serving at the front, and that His Majesty's Government relies upon the patriotism of the people of Jamaica to ensure that this call for men for the service of the Empire in these critical days shall be fully met. I have had no hesitation in replying that the call will be fully met, relying as I do upon the patriotism of the people, and upon the services of those who have already done so much in the cause of recruiting."

That was it—from England had now come a special and direct appeal to her colony of Jamaica for men and yet more men, for all the men she could give to aid at a critical juncture in the great effort to break the enemy's strength. Nearly two years before, the War Office had sent to say that it would wel-



come as many soldiers as Jamaica would recruit, but that message was an answer to an offer from the country. Subsequently had been published the King's Appeal to his Empire, and that special appeal had been rightly interpreted by Jamaicans as addressed to them as to every other people of the King's dominions. But this last request—it was to Jamaica directly, it was particularly and personally a call to the patriotism of the colony, and that call had been answered in Jamaica's name by Jamaica's Governor, who now told the Council that he relied upon the patriotism of the people to make his assurance good. The rest of his speech was heard with but perfunctory attention. It was felt at once that the matter of supreme importance was the appeal for as many battalions as possible, and it was immediately perceived that the special and paramount effort which must now be made would entail a departure from the customary process of obtaining men. Therefore no one was surprised when the member for the parish of Kingston, the Hon. H. A. L. Simpson, rose and gave notice that at the next meeting of the Council he would introduce a resolution asking that universal military service should be instituted in this colony. He had been preceded by Mr. Cox, who also gave notice that he would ask leave to introduce the Compulsory Service Bill he had brought forward at the previous session. These announcements were dramatic gestures, yet sober and serious as became the question and the occasion. The result of the effort to institute universal military service would establish beyond dispute the determination of Jamaica to respond to the best of its ability and in all sincerity to England's final appeal.

On the very next day Mr. Simpson's resolution was brought forward, it being generally admitted that a Universal Service Bill should be introduced, not by a private member, but by the Government. It set forth that the Governor be asked to introduce at the present session a Bill providing that every male British subject ordinarily resident in the island,



and between eighteen and forty-one years of age, should be liable to be called out for military service in the island or beyond its limits for the period of the war. The mover of the resolution made a few commendatory and explanatory remarks, and the member who seconded the resolution was also one of the elected representatives of the people. It was soon apparent that the Government and most of the elected members were in favour of universal military service, but it also became certain that some opposition was developing and that the suggested Bill would not be accepted unanimously by the House. Three elected members struck the note of dissent, the members for St. Catherine, Westmoreland and Manchester. Later on they were joined by the member for Clarendon. These gentlemen were not sure of the attitude of the people; or rather, were persuaded that Jamaica as a whole would bitterly resent compulsion. Besides, they felt that a Bill of this sort, in the face of the fact that no call on the country for men had been made without being answered to the full and in overflowing measure, was a reflection on the willingness of the people to serve the Empire at a time of storm and stress. There was no division when the vote on the resolution of the member for Kingston was taken. The spirit of the House was hostile to opposition, and for the moment the oppositionists were awed into silence. But discussion was free, the newspapers' columns were open to all to express their views on the proposed Universal Military Service Law, and soon there began a controversy in the Press which, though brief, was one of the most sustained and animated that had been conducted in Jamaica for very many years.

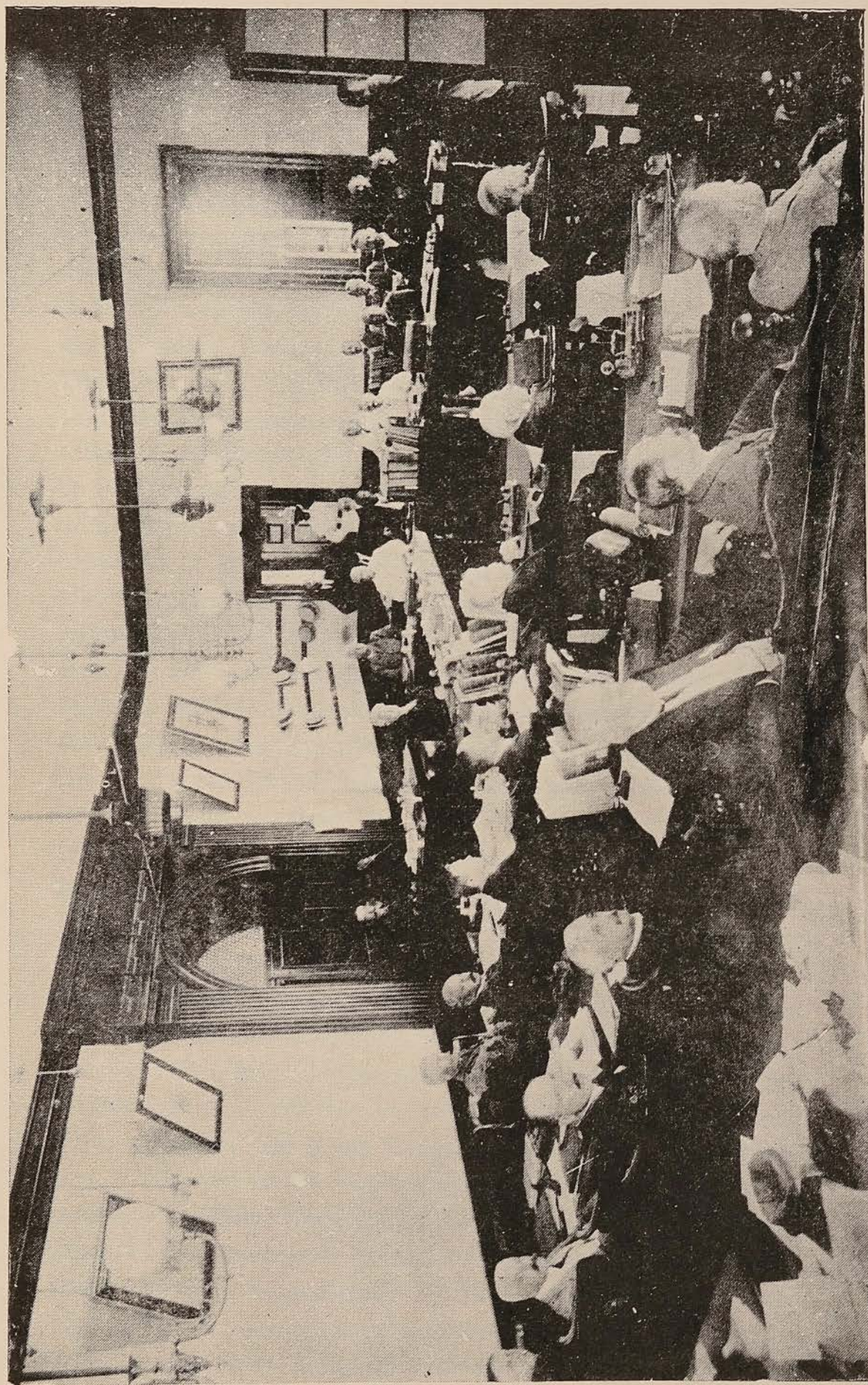
Freedom of speech, liberty to express what one feels on public questions, is regarded in British countries as a safety valve as well as a popular right. But in time of war that liberty is somewhat curtailed in view of the harm it may cause by exciting the people's minds and by giving encouragement to the enemy. In Jamaica, however, no effort has been made



by the Government to interfere with the Press except in so far as news relating to the war and to military matters is concerned. All such news must first be submitted to the Press Censor. As for comment on local legislation affecting the war, or on the conduct of the military authorities and the local Government, that has been free and untrammelled, the sense of responsibility of the Press having been a sufficient guide to an institution which has never been accused of an anti-patriotic attitude. The fact is that no intelligent Government would think of seeking to curtail freedom of discussion in Jamaica, especially when the medium of such discussion are the pages of reputable papers; and, of course, in regard to a matter affecting the rights and liberties of thousands of individuals, free British subjects who had previously shown themselves ready and willing to serve their King and country, there could be no question of preventing criticism.

It was generally understood and publicly proclaimed that the fate of the Bill to be introduced was largely in the hands of the people's representatives. It was not one of the matters that could be declared of "paramount importance" and carried by a majority of official votes. It is certain that had the majority of elected members been averse to the measure, it would have been dropped by the Government. It is certain that if the Press as a whole had strongly opposed it, the Bill would never have been introduced. Jamaica is a British colony, but it is neither self-governing like Canada, or directly represented in the Imperial Parliament as Martinique or Guadeloupe is represented in the French Chamber of Deputies. It is not an integral part of the Mother Country, although a constituent part of the British Empire. In time of war, therefore, it would be something like tyranny for a Government to impose on such a colony a universal military service law against the feelings of the people; but the elected element of the Legislature could propose such a measure, speaking in the name of the people. And the attitude of the Press could





THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AFTER PASSING THE MILITARY SERVICE BILL.



legitimately be taken as giving an indication of the fundamental feeling of the country.

The discussion in the Press showed clearly that the objectors to universal military service could be divided into two parties. One, the smaller, objected on purely selfish grounds; it feared compulsion for itself or its friends, and to save a few it would gladly have wrecked the suggested measure. The other party took the view that was obsessing the minds of the four legislators opposing the Bill. The idea was that a Bill of this sort was a reflection on Jamaica's loyalty, a slur on her reputation, an imputation that she would only supply an additional number of men under compulsion. This was an objection of sentiment and worthy of all respect. The men who fought against compulsion as a reflection on Jamaica's willingness to do its best for the Empire, were patriotically anxious for their country's good name; there were others, however, who, in view of the institution of universal military service in England and New Zealand—to say nothing of other democratic and fiercely patriotic nations like France and Italy—were unable to agree that a universal military service law in Jamaica could mean anything more than the formal regularization of Jamaica's efforts in the war, and a proper provision in time against any falling off in the number of recruits when these should on any particular occasion be immediately required. Amongst the thinking and reading portion of the population, these men were distinctly in the majority, although they were not as vehemently vocal as were the opposing minority. As for the mass of the people, they knew quite well what was going forward, but were, as a matter of fact, indifferent to the result. They had been coming forward willingly. Some fifteen thousand Jamaicans had up to then offered their services to the military authorities, and of these the majority were naturally of the working classes. These classes had no objection to military service abroad, were indeed very anxious to go on military service. Consequently



they felt and could feel no opposition to the Bill. Whether it passed or not, would not particularly affect them. As to the Press, only one organ of influence was in opposition, and even that one—a provincial paper—was not opposed to the principle of the Bill, but thought that the Bill was not necessary then. The other papers strongly supported universal military service, which they could hardly have ventured to do had they thought that the country was in the main and at heart against it.

The Press is nowhere always a sure guide to popular opinion, but the Press of Jamaica is obliged to endeavour to discover, not so much what is being said by the public, as the feeling of the public. From what was said about the Compulsion Bill, it was evident enough that the principle was not thought to be unjust, but the contrary. Therefore if once the necessity of the measure could be made apparent, all opposition might steadily die away. The necessity of the measure was soon established by the General commanding the local forces, who, on March 22, in a straightforward, manly and truthful speech, set forth to the Council and the country the situation which England had to face, and the dire need that now existed for the utmost effort on her part. When the General sat down, it was felt by most of those who heard him, and by all of those who understood the mind and temper of Jamaica, that the country would accept the Bill because the country would now realize the necessity of making every reasonable arrangement to provide against even a temporary failure of recruits for the Jamaica Contingent.

General Blackden spoke more plainly of the situation of England than anyone had ever done in the colony before. If the unrestricted submarine warfare of the enemy should succeed, he said gravely, England would be starved, and already she was suffering the gravest inconvenience. She must strive to win a decision on the Western front this year; she was striving to do this; and for this every man who could be found



for military service was required. There were now some two thousand West Indians at the front, and twenty thousand men from the West Indies might make all the difference in some of the operations this summer. Voluntary service had always failed everywhere in the later stages of a prolonged war: it had failed in America, it had failed in Europe; yet the Bill before the House would not be put into operation until everything that could be done by voluntary methods had been fully tried: that was the pledge of the Governor and the Government's intention. But it was when the speaker alluded to the race between England and starvation—for starvation was still a possibility—that his appeal went farthest to the hearts of his hearers, to the heart of Jamaica. Then indeed it was felt that no man must hang back who could strike a blow to defeat the enemy's purpose. After that speech, in spite of the continued opposition (now really reduced to verbal protests) on the part of the opposing element in the House, it was admitted throughout Jamaica that the Bill must be accepted; and from thenceforward those in favour of it were more loudly heard in the Press.

The men who had opposed, openly or in opinion, belonged to no one section of the community. Opposition was not the outcome of colour or class or race. On the whole it was an opposition of principle, and therefore sincere; on the other hand there were some who once had looked askance at any suggestion of compulsory service because of the effect that that would have upon the labour situation, but who now, knowing that men were really needed by the Army at the front, resolutely stifled selfish impulses and worked for and supported the Bill. It is to the credit of the employers of Jamaica that, though they stood to suffer something by the extraordinary call now made upon the country, they would not oppose universal military service. It is to the credit of all Jamaica that, whether it was money in the form of taxation or of voluntary contributions, or men as volunteers or as con-



scripts, the people agreed to do willingly what was asked of them. They have faltered at no stage in the long-drawn-out conflict. They have nobly upheld their asserted willingness to do all that lay in their power for the Empire's cause.

The Universal Military Service Bill was drawn up by a committee representing both sides of the House and introduced by the Attorney General, the Hon. Ernest St. John Branch, who fought for it with a warmth and vigour which showed that the measure was dear to his heart. The Bill was introduced on March 22; it came up for second reading on the 30th of the same month; it passed its third reading on April 4, 1917: Ayes 21; Noes 4. Nearly a month had elapsed since the announcement that a request had been made by England for more men, and now Jamaica had followed the example of New Zealand and stood as the second colony of the British Empire to accept the principle of universal military service. In the meantime the Governor had obtained from the English authorities the right to allow special pensions and separation allowances based on the previous financial standing of the men who had enlisted or should be drafted into the contingent. There was a flat rate of pensions and separation allowances for all and sundry, the special rate would be for those who would suffer privation if granted allowances or pensions that might be bountiful for persons of a previously inferior financial position. The Council also agreed that if the English special rates were not always sufficient to meet the exigencies of particular cases, having regard to our particular local conditions, the country would assume the responsibility of seeing that those cases were fairly and decently dealt with. More could not be done by any Government and Legislature; the fear of pauperism that may have haunted the minds of many, thus serving as a stimulus to opposition to compulsory service, was frankly faced by Government and Council, and the needs that would arise were foreseen and provided for.

The Hon. J. H. W. Park was responsible for recruiting,



which was to be voluntary for as long as possible; he was also placed in charge of the arrangements for the registration of all men of military age in the country, which was to be immediate. He was to put in operation the compulsory powers of the Law, when it had received the assent of the King and when the application of its powers had, by special proclamation of the Governor, been declared necessary for the filling of the battalions to be sent to one or other of the distant theatres of the war. Thus within one month a great departure had been made by the Council and the country, and Jamaica had turned a new page in her history. She had said, but had never boasted, what she was prepared to do. She had done more than she had ever contemplated and she now had the proud satisfaction of knowing that her sons, instead of remaining in their native country to defend their own homes, had been called by England to distant France and Egypt to aid the whole Empire in fighting for and upholding the cause which was both the Empire's and hers. She had fought for the right to serve. In the end the appeal had come to her for men for service; she had answered that appeal with all her heart and so had swept into a new place in the eyes and the recognition of all the British world. In her own estimation she had risen, and that perhaps was best of all. For self-respect is a priceless possession, and a feeling of moral responsibility fulfilled is one of the most precious heirlooms that the existing generation can hand on to its successors.

And now as we close this brief and rapid survey of Jamaica's connection with the Great War, the war that is changing the world and leading us to a new epoch of which even the outstanding features cannot yet be plainly perceived, our concluding words may legitimately be words of self-gratulation. We are taking some part in the struggle; we should have taken a much larger part before if the ships had come more quickly for the soldiers we had to send. With the pass-



ing of a Universal Military Service Law, however, we have placed the manhood of the country at the Empire's disposal, and thus have done the most and the best that we can do. Our men are not recruited merely as labour battalions, as some have said, but as soldiers simply, as the Governor of the colony and the General commanding the local forces have formally and officially announced. Some of these Jamaican lads have been fighting in Mesopotamia; at any moment those in Egypt may be called upon to move against the enemy, or to man the frontline trenches. And those in France—if the war lasts long enough—they too will charge over the parapet and meet the foe hand to hand; and this they will do with the same courage, the same indifference to danger, that they have shown while the German shells have been screaming over their heads and bursting in their ranks. They are being trained for such service, and while their training proceeds they are also assisting their English comrades in the feeding of the giant guns. Even if they did no more than this throughout the progress of the war, they would have done something: Jamaica will not be less proud of them if it learns that they were always amongst the millions who never came to actual grips with the enemy in the trenches. "They also serve who only stand and wait." And our men are not merely waiting but are acting, are doing bravely and well the tasks to which they are set . . . and that is a soldier's duty. Scores and hundreds of Jamaicans have been in the firing line as members of the several English and Canadian battalions which they have joined. Many will never return to their native land; for them the "cease firing" has sounded for ever. They, and the men of the Jamaica Contingent, have each and all in their several ways served their King, their Empire, and the little country which bred them, have written a new page in her history, and have made for her a name.

How much longer the war will last no one can tell. To



some it appears that now, after nearly three years of slaughter and ruin, awful inhumanity and far-flaming heroism, it is nearing its end. That end may come suddenly; but whether it come in 1917 or later, 1917 will be known in future as the war's most critical and terrible year. It will also be known as one of the wonderful years of the twentieth century—the most wonderful perhaps. For in the first half of it we have seen Russia overthrow her autocracy and become a democratic nation, and we have seen America abandon her traditional isolation and make common cause with England and France in their struggle for the principles of freedom and democracy. Surely it is good to have lived to witness these stupendous events, events fraught with so much significance for the future. And surely it is good for the people of this country to know that Jamaica has played a not unworthy part in the great drama in which all the world's mightiest nations are the leading actors, and of which the stage are all the continents and the oceans of the world.

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NOTE.—This work was already completed, and was passing through the press, when large numbers of Jamaicans began to arrive from Panama. The answer of these men to the appeal made to them by their country has already, up to the time of writing, surpassed the most sanguine expectations, and it is now known that still larger numbers are preparing to enlist in the Jamaica Contingent. Unfortunately, only this brief word of welcome and appreciation can be included in this work, and to insert it the press had to be stopped. Let us seize this opportunity to express, though so inadequately, our high admiration of the patriotism of the Jamaicans domiciled in Panama, and mention a few of the men who have organized funds and called their fellow-subjects to the colours. The British Minister in Central America, Sir Claude Mallett, Mr. J. S. Murray, British Consul in Colon, and Mr. W. H. Pontoon, British Vice-Consul in Bocas-del-Toro, have thrown themselves, heart and soul, into the effort to obtain recruits for the Jamaica Contingent. And with equal enthusiasm and patriotism have these other gentlemen worked in the same cause:—Mr. P. B. Wynter of Bocas, Messrs. Adrian and Eric Barham, of Panama; Messrs. N. C. Rowe, and J. S. Salmon, of Colon; Dr. F. B. Lowe, of Panama; Mr. Edgar C. Mais, of Bocas; and, though named last, decidedly not least, Mr. A. Williams, Chairman of the Friendly Societies War Contingent Committee of Bocas-del-Toro.



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