Three peace congresses of the nineteenth century

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THREE PEACE CONGRESSES
OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

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CLAIMANTS TO
CONSTANTINOPLE

BY
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PREFACE

THE essays included in this volume were written at the request of the programme committee of the American Historical Association. They were presented at the annual meeting held in Cincinnati during the closing days of 1916. One session was devoted to the "Great Peace Congresses of the Nineteenth Century" — Vienna, Paris, and Berlin — and with these three of the essays deal. Another session was given to the history of "Mediaeval and Modern Constantinople," and the fourth essay discusses the subject from the point of view of the geographical position of the city and the historic claims which successive national states have made upon it.

The fall of 1916 may one day be chiefly remembered as the time when rumors of a coming peace first became something more than disguised expressions of the desire for the end of a terrible tragedy. Any attempt to forecast the terms still seemed futile, because it was certain that these would be defined by the sword or by the last fifty million pounds sterling. There were subjects, however, connected with the peace which the historian
might consider with advantage. It was probable that when peace should come, whether within a few weeks or after many months of waiting, the details of the settlement would have to be worked out in a conference or congress. Quite naturally students of history turned to the records of the Congress of Vienna, the Congress of Paris, and the Congress of Berlin, with questions like these: How have such peace congresses been organized? Who were the outstanding personalities? Were the conclusions the result of real conferences or of secret understandings, or, again, of the skilful manoeuvres of master diplomats?

The aim of the session was not to discuss specific decisions of any one of the three congresses, although the settlements effected by the Congress of Paris, and yet more those made by the Congress of Berlin, are closely related to the events that led to the present war, and although some of the questions raised on these occasions must be answered afresh in the next peace congress. In examining the mode of action of such congresses, the study of the Congress of Vienna is quite as pertinent as the study of its successors. Indeed, the difficulties which confronted the negotiators at Vienna seem altogether akin to those which will probably trouble the new congress, unless peace should be made on the basis of a clear return to the status quo.
PREFACE

ante. In 1814, as now, all the great and several of the minor European powers were involved, and the interests of allied states were in serious conflict. And yet a study of the characteristics of all three congresses will give us a clearer image of the physiognomy of such bodies.

It is to history also that we must turn for the background of the problem of Constantinople, the most important single question to which the war must furnish an answer. This lends special interest to the essay which shows the various forms the answer has taken since the Middle Ages, as the racial tides have ebbed and flowed and as boundary lines have been drawn and obliterated. The more such elements are considered the more baffling the question becomes. This point receives new emphasis from the fact that certain statesmen are now trying to accomplish what their predecessors moved heaven and earth to prevent.

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THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA