WORLDS OF FORECAST FOR 1887.

The war-rumours are solidifying and it cannot be denied that there is great probability of the year seeing the long-expected war which will embrace all the nations of Europe. There have within the last few days been stories of alliance between Germany and Russia. This seems at first sight highly improbable, considering the strong race animosity between the Slav and the Teuton, and also the difficulties which dealing with Austria would offer to both the great reactionary states; because Austria, if not used as the tool of Germany against Russia, would probably in the case of a successful expedition of the two nations, have to submit to the doom of partition to the advantage of the Central European Power.

One thing may be noted in reference to this rumour about Russia, that it points the fact that there are two developments of the European struggle possible—the one springing from the forward impulse of Russian aggression in the East, the other from Bismarkian or German bourgeois aggression in the West.

As regards the effects of such an alliance on the popular movement. At first sight it would seem to be the most disastrous event that could cross the path of progress, meaning little less than crushing the various and often-disappointed aspirations of the nineteenth century with the weight of a new influx of the post-feudal abstraction which has survived into our epoch; but on the other hand it may be hoped that it will stir up a fresh force of resistance from all the elements which tend towards liberty, and that the struggle would develop in the proletariat a more definite consciousness of what real liberty means, so that the onrush of a mere reactionary current might be met with the rising flood of revolution, and the attempt, even if partially and temporarily successful, might inflict a mortal wound on the Bourgeois World.

In the other contingency of war beginning in the West, it is a matter of course that Germany, with what allies she can muster, would fall upon France. As was said in last week's issue, in that case Germany would probably hope for England as an ally; but obviously the best method for Germany to gain that advantage by would be to involve this country in a quarrel with Russia, which might possibly, although not necessarily, develop into direct hostility with France. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, for Socialists to watch the situation carefully and closely so as to avoid any possibility of their being dragged into a false position by the recrudescence of jingoism which is quite certain to be one result of even the advancing shadow of a European war.

It ought not been forgotten that for some time past there has been a steady attempt on the part of the bourgeois press to embitter public feeling in this country against France. If Germany attacks France, she will attack not as the enemy who is plotting a war for the regaining of Alsace and Lorraine, but as the dangerous home of revolution—a country whose proletariat may at any moment unite actively with their brethren in this country—which is the real danger to the monstrous abstraction bound together in slavery for the time so successfully by the ceaseless care and energy of the Prince of blood and iron.

Our readers must not think in mentioning these matters we are merely smiting the air. It is true that a rumour published one day in the papers is discredited the next; but then as often as not it is reasserted on the day after that, and certainly the general tone of the news everywhere, joined to what Socialists must know of the economical necessities of the European states, betokens the coming of the great war, in spite of the fact that our English press has little time for the consideration of European affairs in face of the eagerness with which the public fall on tidings of the wretched intrigues and petty squabbles, party and personal, of the Tory, Unionist, and Gladstonian factions.

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