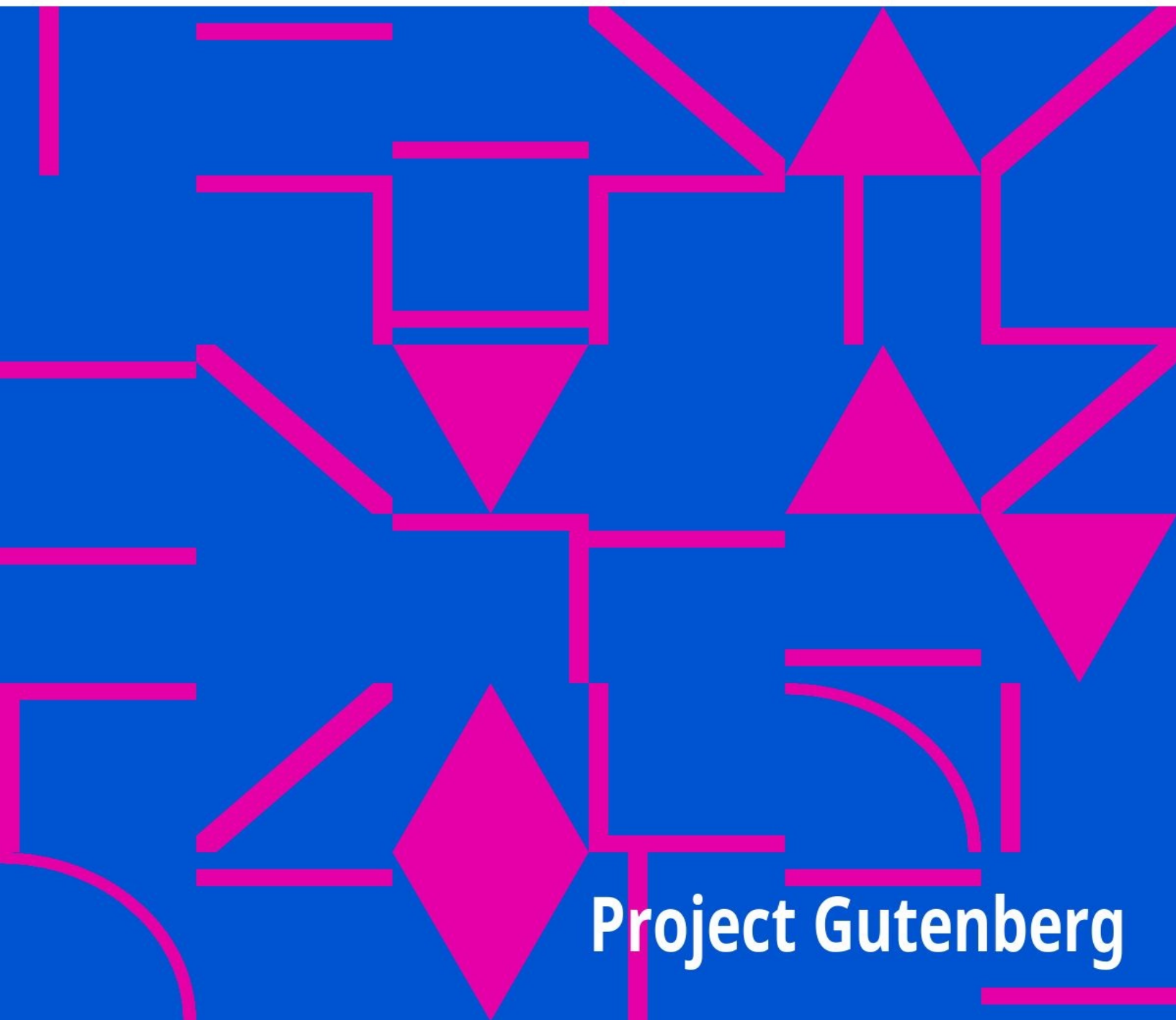


German Problems and Personalities

Charles Sarolea

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German Problems and Personalities

BY

CHARLES SAROLEA



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Charles Sarolea

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GERMAN PROBLEMS AND PERSONALITIES

INTRODUCTION

BY THE
LITERARY EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK "TIMES"

THREE years ago there was one man in Europe who had a political sight so clear that his words then written seem to-day uncanny in their wisdom.^[1]

This man saw the present war; he saw that Belgium would be invaded by Germany; he saw that the Germans hated England with a profound and bitter hate; that German diplomatic blunders had placed that nation in almost complete isolation in the world; that the Triple Alliance was really only a Dual Alliance, popular feeling in Italy becoming increasingly hostile to Austria and to Prussia; that Germans felt their culture to be superior to the civilization of the rest of the world, and themselves to be a superior race, with the right to rule other peoples; that Prussianism and Junkerism and militarism were in complete control of the German soul; that Germany had ambitions for world empire, a recurrence of "the old Napoleonic dream"; that the danger to European peace lay with Germany and not with England; that Germans believed war to be essentially moral and the mainspring of national progress; that the whole German people had become Bismarckian; that the Germans hoped to obtain by a victory over England that shadowless place in the sun toward which they began to leap when they beat France in 1870.

The seer who thus saw is Dr. Charles Sarolea, who recently came to the United States in the interests of his country, one of the most distinguished of Belgian scholars, a friend of King Albert, holder of Belgian decorations and honours from British learned societies, for the last fourteen years Belgian Consul in Edinburgh, and for the last twenty-one years head of the French and Romance Department at the University of Edinburgh. His vision was set out in "The Anglo-German Problem," written in 1912, now published in an authorized American edition, perhaps the most accurate forecast which has been penned of to-day's conflict, and certainly one of the most exact analyses of the German nation made before the world learned, since last August, to know it as it is—as Sarolea, master delineator of a nation's character, drew it. Clear, sane, calm, logical, strong—such is Dr. Sarolea's book, with its "rare perspicacity" and "remarkable sense of political realities," in the words of King Albert's appreciation of the work.

Dr. Sarolea, looking at Germany from the British Isles, where he was writing, perceived that “war is actually unavoidable” unless a spiritual miracle was wrought; that Europe was “drifting slowly but steadily toward an awful catastrophe.” Why? Because Germany was strong, envious, ambitious, conceited, arrogant, unscrupulous, and dissatisfied. It was in Germany that “the pagan gods of the Nibelungen are forging their deadly weapons,” for Germans believe national superiority is due to military superiority. Dr. Sarolea named as a war year this very year^[2] in which we now are when he said:

“Believing, as they do, that to-day they are rich and prosperous mainly because in 1870 they beat the French people, why should they not believe and trust that in 1915 they would become even stronger and richer if they succeeded in beating the English?”

And the conflict, when it comes, will be “a political and religious crusade,” rather than a mere economic war, for the conflict between England and Germany “is the old conflict between liberalism and despotism, between industrialism and militarism, between progress and reaction, between the masses and the classes.”

So many other important points are made in Dr. Sarolea’s closely written book, in which practically every sentence contains a fact, an idea, or a prophecy, that it is not possible in this review to do more than present a few of them in the summary which follows. Though the present tense is used by Dr. Sarolea and the reviewer, it should be constantly remembered that Dr. Sarolea was thinking in 1912, not since August, 1914.

Germany is in “tragic moral isolation.” The moral and intellectual influence of German culture is steadily diminishing. Other nations feel a universal distrust and dislike toward Germany. So great is this antipathy that the Germans imagine there is a malignant conspiracy against them. An upstart nation, suddenly wealthy and powerful, Germany has developed an inordinate self-conceit and self-assertion. The German glories in being a realist. He thinks only of political power and colonial expansion. Might is the supreme test of right. He constantly emphasizes the indelible character of the German race. Germans are suffering from “acute megalomania.” They think the English decadent, the French doomed to premature extinction, the Russians “rotten.” Germany is the “reactionary force in international politics.”

England believes the building of the German Navy is mainly directed against her, though Germany says she is building to protect her colonies and commerce.

Yet it is not reasonably possible so to account for the German fleet.

The greatest danger to England is not invasion of the British Isles, but invasion of Belgium and France. These countries are the “Achilles heel of the British Empire.” The German strategic railways on the Belgian frontiers show that Germany is far more likely to invade Belgium than England, Belgium again becoming the cockpit of Europe.

Germany feels that she has grievances against England; thus her hatred. She thinks England has checked her commercial expansion. But this is not true, for English Free Trade has been one of the most important contributory causes of German prosperity.

Germany thinks England has arrested her colonial expansion; Germany says every other great nation but herself has been permitted to build up a colonial empire; thus she is prevented from attaining her natural growth. But this is not true. England could not have checked her colonial aspirations, because Germany had no colonial aspirations until recently. When Germany did start to seek colonies, she met everywhere conflicting claims of England, but this was because England was already in possession, having begun her colonial policy years before Germany entered the race. Bismarck was largely responsible for Germany's now having so small a colonial territory.

Germany thinks she has another grievance—that England has hemmed her in with a ring of enemies. But Germany is friendless because of her mistakes. Bismarck alienated the Russians for ever in 1878 at the Treaty of Berlin, making a Franco-Russian understanding unavoidable. The Kruger telegram of 1896, the outburst of anti-British feeling during the Boer War, the German naval programme, opened England's eyes to her danger; thus was England forced to seek France and Russia.

The Kaiser is intensely religious, claiming to be “the anointed of the Lord.” Yet he is a materialist, an opportunist, and mainly trusts to brute force. The navy is his creation. He brandishes the sword, saying he loves peace. Napoleon III. used to express his love for peace, yet brought on the most disastrous war of French history; Nicholas II. started as the peacemaker of Europe, yet brought about the bloodiest war in Russian history. “Are the Kaiser's pacific protests as futile, are his sympathies as shallow, as those of a Napoleon or a Nicholas?”

Dr. Sarolea closes his book thus:

“We can only hope that England, which to-day more than any other country—more, even, than republican France—represents the ideals of a pacific and industrial democracy, may never be called upon to assert her supremacy in armed conflict, and to safeguard those ideals against a wanton attack on the part of the most formidable and most systematic military power the world has ever seen.”

FOOTNOTES:

[1] One of the most eminent American theologians, Bishop Brent, wrote in an article on “Speculation and Prophecy”: “In Dr. Sarolea’s volume, ‘The Anglo-German Problem,’ published in 1912, there is a power of precognition so startling that one can understand a sceptic of the twenty-first century raising serious doubts as to whether parts of it were not late interpolation.” Mr. Gilbert Keith Chesterton in his “Crimes of England” applied to the “Anglo-German Problem” the epithet “almost magical.”

[2] 1915.

CHAPTER I

AN AMERICAN PREFACE[3]

I.

THE book of which a new and popular edition is now presented to the American public has very little in common with the thousand and one war publications which are distracting the attention of a bewildered and satiated reader. It was not compiled in feverish haste since the war began. It was written years before the war, and represents the outcome of two decades of study and travel in Germany.

The volume was first published in 1912 to dispel the false sense of security which was blinding European opinion to the imminent perils ahead, to warn Britain of the appalling catastrophe towards which all nations were drifting, and to give an accurate estimate of the forces which were making for war. I attempted to prove that Germany and not Britain or France or Russia was the storm-centre of international politics. I attempted to prove that the differences between Germany and Britain were not due to substantial grievances, but that those grievances were purely imaginary; that such catch-phrases as taking Germany's place in the sun were entirely misleading, and that both the grievances and the catch-phrases were merely diverting the public mind from the one real issue at stake, the clash and conflict between two irreconcilable political creeds—the Imperialism of Great Britain, granting equal rights to all, based on Free Trade, and aiming at a federation of self-governing communities; and the Imperialism of Germany, based on despotism and antagonism and aiming at the military ascendancy of one Power over subject races.

I further attempted to show how the German people were in the grip of the Prussian military machine, of a reactionary bureaucracy, and of a Prussian feudal Junkerthum; how behind that military machine and that feudal Junkerthum there were even more formidable moral and spiritual forces at work; how the whole German nation were under the spell of a false political creed; how the Universities, the Churches, the Press, were all possessed with the same exclusive nationalism; and how, being misled by its spiritual leaders, the whole nation was honestly and intensely convinced that in the near future the German Empire must challenge the world in order to establish its supremacy over the Continent of Europe.

II.

Habent sua fata libelli! Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic" was refused by the illustrious house of Murray. The now historical "Foundations" of Chamberlain were rejected for twenty years by English publishers, until the translation brought a little fortune to Mr. John Lane. Without in the least suggesting a comparison with those famous works, I only want to point out that the "Anglo-German Problem" has passed through as strange literary vicissitudes. A book written by a sympathetic and devoted student of German literature, and who for twenty years had been working for the diffusion of German culture, was denounced as anti-German. A book inspired from the first page to the last with pacific and democratic ideals was denounced as a militarist and mischievous production. A temperate judicial analysis was dubbed as alarmist and sensational and bracketed with the scaremongerings of the Yellow Press. The radical *Daily News* of London dismissed my volume with a contemptuous notice. The Edinburgh reviewer of the *Scotsman* pompously declared that such a book could do no good.

To-day both the Press and the public have made ample if belated amends for the unjust treatment meted out to the "Anglo-German Problem" on its first appearance. His Majesty King Albert has emphasized the prophetic character of the book, and has paid it the high compliment of recommending it to members of his Government. University statesmen like President Butler, eminent lawyers like Mr. James Beck, illustrious philosophers like Professor Bergson, have testified to its fairness, its moderation, and its political insight. Almost unnoticed on its publication in 1912, the "Anglo-German Problem" is to-day one of the three books on the war most widely read throughout the British Empire, and is being translated into the French, Dutch, and Spanish languages.

III.

Not only have the principles and general conclusions propounded in the "Anglo-German Problem" received signal confirmation from recent events, but the forecasts and anticipations have been verified in every detail. It is the common fate of war books to become very quickly out of date. After four years, there is not one paragraph which has been contradicted by actual fact. Even the chapter on the Baghdad Railway, written in 1906 and published as a separate pamphlet nine years ago, remains substantially correct. One of the leading magnates of Wall Street wrote to me: "Events have not only unfolded themselves

in the way you anticipated, but they have happened for the identical reasons which you indicated.” I pointed out the fatal peril of the Austrian-Serbian differences and of the *Drang nach Osten* policy, and it is those Serbian-Austrian differences which have precipitated the war. I prophesied that the invasion of Belgium and not the invasion of England was the contingency to be dreaded, and Belgium has become the main theatre of military operations. I emphasized that the conflict was one of fundamental moral and political ideals rather than of economic interests, and the war has developed into a religious crusade. I prophesied that the war would be long and cruel, and it has proved the most ruthless war of modern times.

All the forces which I prophesied would make for war have made for war: the reactionary policy of the Junkerthum, the internal troubles, the personality of the Kaiser, the propaganda of the Press and of the Universities. Similarly, the forces which were expected to make for peace, and which I prophesied would *not* make for peace, have failed to work for peace. Few publicists anticipated that the millions of German Social Democrats would behave as timid henchmen of the Prussian Junker, and my friend Vandervelde, leader of the International Social Democracy and now Belgian Minister of State, indignantly repudiated my reflections on his German comrades. Alas! the Gospel according to St. Marx has been as ineffectual as the Gospel according to St. Marc. The Social Democracy which called itself the International (with a capital I) has proved selfishly nationalist, and the masses which had not the courage to fight for their rights under Kaiser Bebel are now slaughtering their French and English brethren, and are meekly enlisted in the legions of Kaiser William.

The “Anglo-German Problem,” written by a writer of Belgian origin who foresaw the catastrophe threatening his native country, will be followed up shortly by another book on the “Reconstruction of Belgium.” Belgium has been not only the champion of European freedom; she has also been the innocent victim of the old order. It is only in the fitness of things that after the war Belgium shall become the keystone of the new International Order. The whole of Europe is ultimately responsible for the Belgian tragedy. The whole of Europe must therefore be interested in and pledged to the restoration of Belgium and to the liberation of the Belgian people, now crushed and bleeding under the heel of the Teutonic invader.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[3\]](#) Preface written for the American Edition of the “Anglo-German Problem,” published by Putnam.

CHAPTER II

MY FORECASTS OF 1906 AND 1912[4]

I.—WE ARE DRIFTING INTO WAR.

“EUROPE is drifting slowly but steadily towards an awful catastrophe, which, if it does happen, will throw back civilization for the coming generation, as the war of 1870 threw back civilization for the generation which followed and which inherited its dire legacy of evil. For the last ten years two great Western Powers and two kindred races have become increasingly estranged, and have been engaging in military preparations which are taxing to the utmost the resources of the people, and are paralyzing social and political reform in both countries. A combination of many causes, moral and political, has bred suspicion and distrust, and the fallacious assumption of conflicting interests has turned suspicion into hatred. Only a year ago England and Germany stood on the brink of war. If, after the *coup* of Agadir, Germany had persisted in her policy, the conflagration would have ensued, the storm would have burst out. The war-cloud has temporarily lifted, but it has not passed away. The danger is as acute as it was, because the causes which produced the recent outburst are still with us, and the malignant passions are gathering strength with each passing day.

This formidable evil is threatening England, but it does not originate in England, and England cannot be held responsible for it. The period of aggressive Imperialism has passed away. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. Rudyard Kipling, in so far as they once represented the old bellicose Imperialism, to-day are exploded forces. The English people were never more peacefully inclined, and Liberals and Tories are united in their desire for a pacific solution of the present difficulties.

It is Germany and not England which is the storm-centre, the volcanic zone, in international politics. From there have come, ever since 1860, the tension and friction, the suspicion and distrust. It is there that the pagan gods of the Nibelungen are forging their deadly weapons.”

II.—THE STRENGTH OF ANTI-BRITISH FEELING IN GERMANY.

“German and English publicists, whilst admitting the existence of a feeling of

hostility, point out the many unmistakable signs of goodwill heralding a better understanding in the future. They point to the frequent exchange of international courtesies, to the periodical visits of Members of Parliament and of representative men of the Churches; they point to the visit of Viscount Haldane; and last, but not least, they point to the many pacific assurances of the German Kaiser. With regard to the utterances of the Kaiser, I can only say that if the Kaiser has made many pacific speeches, his aggressive speeches have been even more numerous. I have no doubt that the Kaiser is perfectly sincere, and I believe him to be animated with the most cordial feelings for this country. If I am asked to explain the contradiction, I can only see one explanation, and it is not one which I am very willing to admit. And the explanation is this: when he is expressing words of peace and goodwill he is speaking in his own private capacity and as the grandson of an English queen. On the contrary, whenever he utters words of ill-will and menace, whenever he waves the flag, when he shows the mailed fist, he is acting as the representative and speaking as the spokesman of a considerable fraction amongst his subjects.

That there has existed in Germany a very widespread feeling of hostility against the English people we have uncontrovertible proof. And the evidence we have on no less an authority than the Kaiser himself. In the famous interview published by the *Daily Telegraph*, William II. emphatically testified to the existence and to the persistence of the feeling which he had systematically attempted to counteract. The admission raised legitimate indignation in Germany. It was ill-advised. It was calculated to intensify the very animosity which it deprecated. But the fact itself, the existence of the animosity, could not be disputed. After all, the Kaiser ought to know the feelings, if not of the majority of his subjects, at least of those ruling classes with whom he comes in contact.”

III.—WAR THE GERMAN IDEAL AND THE GERMAN IDOL.

“Contemporary German philosophy is a ‘war philosophy.’ In France we may find isolated thinkers, like Joseph de Maistre, who are the apostles of war, who maintain that war is a Divine and providential institution, one of the eternal verities. In Germany the paradoxes of de Maistre are the commonplaces of historians and moralists. To an Englishman war is a dwindling force, an anachronism. It may still sometimes be a necessity, a *dura lex*, an *ultima ratio*, but it is always a monstrous calamity. In other words, to an Englishman war is evil, war is *immoral*. On the contrary, to the German war is essentially moral.

Indeed, it is the source of the highest morality, of the most valuable virtues, and without war the human race would speedily degenerate. It is the mainspring of national progress. There are three causes which have ensured the present greatness of the German Empire: moral virtue in the individual, political unity, and economic prosperity. If we were to believe modern theorists, Germany owes all three to the beneficent action of war. Germany is not indebted for its culture to the genius of its writers or artists, but to the iron and blood of its statesmen and warriors. It is the glorious triumvirate of Bismarck, Moltke, and von Roon who have been the master-builders of the Vaterland.

Our main contention is, that as the pacific philosophy of Herder and Kant, of Goethe and Lessing, provides the key to the old Germany described in Madame de Staël's masterpiece, even so the military philosophy of Mommsen and Treitschke, of Bismarck and Nietzsche, gives us the key of modern Prussianized Germany. The whole German people have become Bismarckian, and believe that it is might which creates right. The whole of the younger generation have become Nietzschean in politics, and believe in the will to power—*der Wille zur Macht*. That political philosophy is to-day the living and inspiring ideal which informs German policy. And it is that philosophy which we have to keep constantly in mind if we wish to understand the currents and under-currents of contemporary politics and make a correct forecast of the future; if we wish to distinguish between what is real and unreal in international relations, between the professions of politicians and the aims and aspirations of the people. German statesmen may protest about their love of peace, but the service they render to peace is only lip service. Peace is only a means, war is the goal. We are reminded of Professor Delbrück's assertion that, considering the infinitely complex conditions of modern warfare, many years of peace are necessary to and must be utilized for the preparation of the wars which are to come.

How, then, can we be reassured by any German pacifist protests and demonstrations? How can we believe that German peace is anything more than a precarious truce as long as German statesmen, German thinkers, German teachers and preachers, unanimously tell us that the philosophy of war is the only gospel of salvation? How can a patriotic German, if he is consistent, abstain eventually from waging war when he is firmly convinced that his country owes her political unity, her moral temper, and her Imperial prosperity, whatever she is and whatever she has, mainly to the agency of war? When war has done so much for Germany in the past, will it not do greater things for Germany in the future?

War may be a curse or it may be a blessing. If war is a curse, then the wells of

public opinion have been poisoned in Germany, perhaps for generations to come. If war is a blessing, if the philosophy of war is indeed the gospel of the super-man, sooner or later the German people are bound to put that gospel into practice. They must look forward with anxious and eager desire to the glorious day when once more they are able to fight the heroic battles of Teutonism, when they are able to fulfil the providential destinies of the German super-race, the chosen champions of civilization.”

IV.—WHY GERMANY HAS KEPT THE PEACE.

“Uninfluenced by those ominous signs of the times, English and German optimists still refuse to surrender, still persist in their optimism. They argue that the situation is no doubt serious, but that those outbursts of popular feeling in Germany, violent as they are, have largely been caused by English suspicion and distrust, and that there has been nothing in the German policy to justify that English suspicion and distrust. After all, deeds are more important than words, and by her deeds Germany has proved for forty-two years that she is persistently pacific. Since 1870 Russia has made war against Turkey and against Japan. England has made war against the Transvaal. Italy has waged war against Turkey. France after Fashoda would have declared war against England, and after Tangier would have declared war against Germany, if France had been prepared. Of all the Great Powers, Germany alone for nearly half a century has been determined to keep the peace of the world.

The reply to this objection is very simple. I am not examining here whether a state of affairs which has transformed Europe into an armed camp of six million soldiers, and which absorbs for military expenditure two-thirds of the revenue of European States, can be appropriately called a state of peace. It is certainly not a *pax romana*. It is most certainly not a *pax britannica*. It may be a *pax teutonica* or, rather, a *pax borussica*, but such as it is, ruinous and demoralizing, it is also lamentably precarious and perilously unstable. And if Germany has kept this *pax borussica* for forty-two years, it has not been the fault of the German Government. Rather has it been kept because she has been prevented from declaring war by outside interference; or because she has been able to carry out her policy and to achieve her ambitions without going the length of declaring war; or because a war would have been not only a heinous crime, but a political blunder.

But the real reason why Germany for forty years has kept the peace is because

a war would have been both fatal and futile, injurious and superfluous. It would have been injurious, for it would have arrested the growing trade and the expanding industries of the empire. And, above all, it would have been superfluous, for in time of peace Germany reaped all the advantages which a successful war would have given her. For twenty-five years the German Empire wielded an unchallenged supremacy on the Continent of Europe. For twenty years she directed the course of international events.

But since the opening of the twentieth century Germany has ceased to be paramount; she has ceased to control European policy at her own sweet will, and weaker States have ceased to be given over to her tender mercies. To the Triple Alliance has been opposed the Triple Entente. The balance of power has been re-established. The three 'hereditary enemies'—England, France, and Russia—have joined hands, and have delivered Europe from the incubus of German suzerainty. German diplomacy has strained every effort to break the Triple Entente, in turn wooing and threatening France and Russia, keeping open the Moroccan sore as the Neapolitan *lazzarone* keeps open the wound which ensures his living, and finally challenging the naval supremacy of England, and preparing to become as powerful at sea as she is on the Continent."

V.—THE POLITICAL PREPARATION OF WAR.

"Precisely because the final issue will largely depend on the personality of the soldier, the moral and civic preparation must be at least as important as the technical, and here the Government has an important part to play through the school and through the Press. *Both the school and the Press must both persistently emphasize the meaning and the necessity of war as an indispensable means of policy and of culture*, and must inculcate the duty of personal sacrifice. To achieve that end the Government must have its own popular papers, whose aim it will be to stimulate patriotism, to preach loyalty to the Kaiser, to resist the disintegrating influence of Social Democracy.

But not least important is the political preparation for the war. Statesmanship and diplomacy confine themselves too much to consolidating alliances and entering into new understandings. Nothing could be more dangerous than to rely too much on treaties and alliances. Alliances are not final. *Agreements are only conditional*. They are only binding, *rebus sic stantibus*, as long as conditions remain the same—as long as it is in the interest of the allies to keep them; for nothing can compel a State to act against its own interest, and there is no alliance

or bond in the world which can subsist if it is not based on the mutual advantage of both parties. It is therefore essential that the war shall be fought under such conditions that it shall be in the interest of every ally to be loyal to his engagements; and therefore it is essential for the State so to direct and combine political events as to produce a conjuncture of interests and to provoke the war at the most favourable moment.”

VI.—THE IMAGINARY GERMAN GRIEVANCES.

“England cannot honestly admit the truth and reality of German grievances. England cannot admit that in the past she has ever adopted an attitude of contemptuous superiority towards the German people. Still less can England admit that she has systematically stood in the way of German colonial ambitions. *She cannot admit it, for the simple reason that only a few years ago those German colonial ambitions did not exist.* Almost to the end of his long rule, Bismarck would not have colonies, and he deliberately encouraged France in that policy of African expansion which Germany now objects to. Germany would probably have had a much larger colonial empire if she had chosen to have it. History teaches us that in the development of European colonization there are some nations, like the Spaniards and Portuguese, that have come too early in the field. There are other nations, like England and Russia, that have come in the nick of time. And, finally, there are nations that have come too late. The German people have arrived too late in the race for colonial empire. They may regret it, but surely it would be monstrous to use the fact as a grievance against the people of this country. I may bitterly regret that twenty years ago I had not the money or the energy or the foresight to invest in the development of Argentine, or that I did not buy an estate in Canada, which in those early days I might have got for a hundred pounds, and which to-day would be worth hundreds of thousands. But that is no reason why I should hate the present possessors of landed property in the Far West or in the Far South. That is no reason why I should wish to dispossess them of land which they have legitimately acquired, whether they owe it to their luck or to their pluck, to favourable circumstances or to their initiative and perseverance.”

VII.—THE PACIFIC MEANING OF THE ENTENTE.

“The new grouping of Powers, which has reduced Germany from a position of sole supremacy to a position of equality, is not the result of any artificial

combinations of diplomacy. Still less is it the result of a conspiracy, inspired by English envy and English hatred. It was not initiated by Edward VII. It has survived his death. To assume that England would have been capable of isolating Germany by her own single efforts, and in order to serve her own selfish purposes, is to attribute to England a power which she does not wield. If there has been a conspiracy, France, Italy, Russia, and the United States, inhabited by twenty million citizens who are German by birth or by descent, have all been willing accomplices. The Triple Entente has been a spontaneous revolt of Europe against German aggressiveness and German militarism.

England has not attempted to isolate Germany. She has only herself emerged from her isolation. If she can be accused of having made a grievous mistake in her foreign policy, it is that of having been blind for so long to the perils which threatened European liberty. Since 1870 she has submitted for twenty-five years to German predominance, because she had to oppose the colonial ambitions of France in Africa and the ambitions of Russia in Asia. To-day England has returned to her ancient traditions. She has never suffered for any length of time, and will never suffer as long as she remains a first-class Power, from the exclusive predominance of any one Continental nation. She has ever fought for the maintenance of the balance of power. She defended that balance against Charles V. and Philip II. in the sixteenth century, against Louis XIV. in the seventeenth, against Napoleon, against Nicholas I., and Alexander II. in the nineteenth century. She defends it to-day against William II. But she is no more the enemy of Germany to-day than she was the enemy of France or Russia ten years ago. *And if the equilibrium of Europe were threatened to-morrow by Russia, as it is threatened to-day by Germany, England would become to-morrow the ally of Germany.*

It may be contended, no doubt, that in opposing the supremacy of another empire on land, she is only defending her own supremacy on the sea. But the history of four hundred years convincingly shows that England in defending her own interests has always been fighting the battles of European liberty. And to-day more than ever, when Europe is transformed into an armed camp, when might has become the criterion of right, when all nations are living in perpetual dread of a European conflagration, the strict adherence of England to her old principle of the balance of power remains the best sanction of international law and the surest guarantee of the peace of the world."

VIII.—GERMAN MEGALOMANIA.

“Whatever may be the cause of the state of mind of the Germans, they are certainly suffering just now from acute ‘megalomania.’ The abnormal self-conceit, the inflated national consciousness, express themselves in a thousand ways, some of which are naïve and harmless, whilst others are grossly offensive. They show themselves in a craving for titles and in gaudy and tasteless public buildings;^[5] in the thousand and one statues of Bismarck and William I.; they reveal themselves in the articles of journalists and in the writings of historians; but above all, the German megalomania finds expression in the seven thousand speeches and in the three hundred uniforms of the Kaiser. In examining the influence of William II. we shall come to the conclusion that it is his defects far more than his virtues that have made him the representative hero of the German people. His winged words voice the aspirations of his subjects. Like the Kaiser, every German believes that he is ‘the salt of the earth’—*Wir sind das Salz der Erde*. Like Nietzsche, the modern German believes that the world must be ruled by a super-man, and that he is the super-man. Like Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the German is convinced that he belongs to a super-race, and that the Teuton has been the master-builder of European civilization.”

IX.—GERMAN SELF-ASSERTION.

“The self-assertion of the Germans and the contempt for the foreigner reveal themselves in their political dealings with other nations. German statesmen continue the methods of Bismarck without having his genius. German politicians delight in shaking the mailed fist, in waving the national banner with the Imperial black eagle, the ominous and symbolical bird of prey. Wherever they meet with opposition they at once resort to comminatory messages. Compare the methods of the Emperor William with those of Edward VII. Nothing illustrates better the differences between the characteristics of English and German diplomacy than the dramatic contrast between the bragging, indiscreet, impulsive, explosive manner of the Kaiser and the quiet, courteous manner of the English monarch. Nothing explains better the striking success which has attended English policy and the no less striking failure which has attended German policy. For in international as well as in private relations, intellectual superiority is often as efficient a weapon as an appeal to brute force. And all the might of the German Empire has not saved the German foreign policy from persistent bankruptcy. That bankruptcy is unanimously admitted even in Germany, and partly accounts for the present temper of the nation. The times have changed, and even the weak cannot now be bullied into submission. At the

Algeciras Conference even those small nations whose most obvious interest it was to side with Germany gave their moral support to France.”

X.—GERMANY STANDS FOR REACTION.

“There still remains for us to examine one deeper reason why Germany is distrusted and disliked in Europe. *She is mainly distrusted because she continues to be the reactionary force in international politics.* Outside the sphere of German influence the democratic ideal has triumphed all over the civilized world, after centuries of heroic struggle and tragic catastrophes. But in Germany the old dogma is still supreme. Wherever German power has made itself felt for the last forty years—in Italy and Austria, in Russia and Turkey—it has countenanced reaction and tyranny. In politics Germany is to-day what Austria and Russia were in the days of the Holy Alliance, the power of darkness. Whilst in the provinces of science and art the German people are generally progressive, in politics the German Government is consistently retrogressive. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized and repeated that, more than any other State—more even than Russia—Prussia stands in the way of political advance. It was Prussia that helped to crush the Polish struggle for freedom in 1863; when, a few years ago, English public opinion was protesting against the Armenian massacres, the Kaiser stood loyally by Abdul Hamid and propped his tottering throne; when the Russian Liberals were engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Czardom, the Kaiser gave his moral support to Russian despotism. It is not too much to say that it is the evil influence of Prusso-Germany alone which keeps despotism alive in the modern world.”

XI.—PRUSSIA CONTROLS GERMANY.

“It is difficult to exaggerate the political domination of Germany by Prussia. The practice belies the theory: it is not as German Emperor but as Prussian King that William II. rules the confederation. The larger is merged in the smaller. The poor barren plains of Brandenburg and Pomerania rule over the smiling vineyards and romantic mountains of the south and west. The German people are governed more completely from Berlin and Potsdam than the French were ever governed from Paris and Versailles. And they are governed with an iron hand. In theory, every part of the empire may have a proportional share in the administration of the country; in reality, Prussia has the ultimate political and financial control. Germany pays the taxes; Prussia spends them. Germany

provides the soldiers; Prussia commands them. And the Prussian War Lord and his Junkers in the last resort decide the issues of peace and war.

To realize how complete is the Prussian control we need only consider the fact that in the supreme Federal Parliament—the Bundesrat—for forty-two years the Prussian representatives have always had it their own way. Yet Prussia, according to the Constitution, has only got seventeen delegates out of fifty-two. When the Imperial Constitution was framed it was thought that the Prussian representation was far too small, and the fear was repeatedly expressed that the Prussian vote in the Bundesrat would be overruled. But not once has it happened that the German majority in the Bundesrat has dared to oppose any important measure initiated by the Prussian Government. For all practical purposes, therefore, Prussia is the suzerain power. The German principalities and kingdoms are reduced to political tutelage and subjection.”

XII.—WHY PRUSSIA HAS ENSLAVED GERMANY.

“How shall we explain this startling paradox? How is it, and why is it, that the artistic and exuberant, genial and sentimental German submits to the hard rule of the commonplace, uninteresting, and dour Prussian?

If you ask ninety-nine out of a hundred Germans they will not give you a reply. They know too little of and care too little about politics to be even aware of the fact. They are satisfied with appearances. They do not see the King of Prussia behind the German Kaiser. They are hypnotized by the glittering helmet of the War Lord.

But if you succeed in discovering one in a hundred who understands the relation between Germany and Prussia, and who has thought out the political problem, he will probably give you something like the following reply:

‘I know that there is no love lost between the Germans and the Prussians. I know that in culture and native ability we are as superior to the Prussians as our vine-clad hills are superior in beauty to the sandy wastes of Pomerania. And I know that in politics we play a subordinate part, although we are superior. But I also realize that it is necessary for us to submit. And it is necessary for us to submit, precisely because of our virtues. For those virtues of ours are unpractical. And it is necessary for the Prussians to rule, precisely because of their shortcomings. For those shortcomings are practical. The pure gold of the German temper could never be made into hard coin nor used to advantage. It

could be made to produce splendid works of art, gems and diadems and ornaments, but for practical purposes, in order to forge the weapons of the Nibelungen, the alloy of the baser metal was indispensable. It required the mixture of Prussian sand and Prussian iron to weld us into a nation, to raise us to an empire. It is because we Germans are artists and dreamers and individualists that we could never manage our own affairs, that we have always been “non-political animals.”^[6] On the contrary, it is because the Prussian has no brilliance, no romance, no personality, that he makes a splendid soldier and a model bureaucrat. Two things above all were required to make Germany into a powerful State—a strong army and a well-ordered administration. Prussia has given us both.

‘And let us not forget that Germany more than any other Power required such a strong army and such a strong administration, not only owing to the shortcomings of her national character, but owing to the weakness and danger of her geographical position. Germany is open on every frontier. She has ever been harassed by dangerous enemies. Only a generation ago she was threatened on every side. On the north she had to face the rulers of the sea, who hampered her commercial expansion; on the west she had to face the restless Gaul; on the south she was confronted with the clerical and Jesuitical empire of the Habsburg; on the east with the empire of the Romanovs. From all those enemies Prussia has ultimately saved us. The Hohenzollern dynasty has proved a match for them all.

‘The whole annals of Germany and Prussia are a striking proof of the political weakness of the German and of the strength of the Prussian character. Again and again Germany has witnessed magnificent outbursts of national prosperity. She has seen the might of the Hohenstaufen; she has seen the wealth of the Hansa towns. Again and again she has witnessed the spontaneous generation and blossoming of civic prosperity; she has seen the glory and pride of Nuremberg and Heidelberg, of Cologne and Frankfurt, the art of Dürer and Holbein. But again and again German culture has been nipped in the bud. It has been destroyed by civil war and religious war, by internal anarchy and foreign invasion. The Thirty Years’ War devastated every province of the German Empire, and such was the misery and anarchy that in many parts the people had reverted to savagery and cannibalism.^[7] And hardly had the country recovered from the horrors of the wars of religion, when repeated French invasions laid waste the rich provinces of the Rhine and Palatinate. So completely did German rulers of the eighteenth century betray their duty to the people that some Princes degraded themselves to the point of selling their soldiers to the Hanoverian

Kings in order to fight the battles of England in America.

‘Whilst the German Princes were thus squandering the treasure and life-blood of their subjects, there was growing up in the North a little State which was destined from the most unpromising beginnings for the most glorious future. It is true that the little Prussian State was wretchedly poor; for that very reason the Prussian rulers had to practise strict economy and unrelenting industry. It is true the country was always insecure and constantly threatened by powerful neighbours; for that very reason the people had to submit to a rigid discipline and a strong military organization. It is true the country was depopulated; for that very reason the rulers had to attract foreign settlers by a just, wise, and tolerant government.’

A patriotic German might illustrate in the following simple parable the complex and strange relations between Germany and Prussia:

‘The German people a century ago might be compared to the heirs and owners of an ancient estate. The estate was rich and of romantic beauty. The heirs were clever, adventurous, and universally popular. But although devoted to each other, they could not get on together. Their personality was too strong, and they were always quarrelling. Nor could they turn to advantage their vast resources, and the natural wealth of the estate only served to attract outside marauders. They were so extravagant and so unpractical that they would lay out beautiful parks and build magnificent mansions whilst neglecting to drain the land and to repair the fences. They would spend lavishly on luxuries, but they would grudge food to the cattle and manure to the fields. Thus, with all their splendid possessions, the German heirs were always on the verge of bankruptcy.

‘To extricate themselves, they decided to accept the services of a factor and manager. The factor was the Prussian Junker. He was an alien. For he could hardly be called a German. In blood he was more Slav than Teutonic. He was unrefined, unsympathetic, and overbearing. But as a manager he was splendid. He bought up outlying parts to round off the estate. He paid more attention to the necessities than to the luxuries and the amenities of life. He was more careful to surround himself with a strong police force than with poets and minstrels. But he was able to keep out the marauders and the poachers. He was able to protect the property against stronger neighbours and to bully the weaker neighbours into surrendering desirable additions to the estate. In a short time the heirs, formerly universally popular, were cordially hated in the land. But their rents had increased by leaps and bounds, and the German estate had been rounded off and

made into one solid and compact whole.'

Such, German writers would tell us, is the parable of Germany and Prussia. The Germans are the gifted, generous, and spendthrift heirs to an illustrious domain. Prussia is the alien, upstart, unpopular, unsympathetic, bullying factor and manager. But to this bullying factor Germany owes the consolidation and prosperity of the national estate."

XIII.—THE GERMAN REICHSTAG AS A DEBATING CLUB.

"We are apt to forget that, strictly speaking, a Parliamentary government does not exist in Germany, although we constantly speak of a 'German Parliament.' According to the Constitution, the Chancellor is not responsible to Parliament, he is only responsible to the Emperor. There is no Cabinet or delegation of the majority of the Reichstag. There is no party system. There are only party squabbles. I do not know whether Mr. Belloc would approve of the German Constitution, but it certainly enables the Government to soar high above all the parties in the Reichstag. German Liberals may be morally justified in their struggle against political reaction, but technically the Government are acting within their constitutional right. And when, therefore, the Reichstag attempts to control the executive, it is rather the Reichstag which is unconstitutional. On the other hand, when the Emperor asserts his Divine right, it is he who is true to the spirit of the Constitution; he is only giving a religious interpretation and colour to a political prerogative which he undoubtedly possesses. And not only is there no Parliamentary government, but there is not even a desire, except with a small fraction of Radicals, to possess such a government. Prussian publicists again and again tell us that Germany does not want to copy English institutions. The old German monarchic institutions are good enough for Germany. Read the treatise of Treitschke, the great historian and political philosopher of modern Prussia. He systematically attempts to belittle every achievement of the Parliamentary system; and every prominent writer follows in his footsteps. Prussia has not produced a Guizot, a Tocqueville, a Stuart Mill, or a Bryce. Her thinkers are all imbued with the traditions of enlightened despotism. Even the great Mommsen cannot be adduced as an exception. He makes us forget his Liberalism, and only remember his Cæsarism.

The powers of the Reichstag are very limited. It is mainly a machine for voting supplies, but even that financial control is more nominal than real. For under the Constitution the Assembly must needs make provision for the army

and navy, which are outside and above party politics. And having previously fixed the contingent of the Imperial forces, the army and navy estimates must needs follow. In the present tension of international politics, a reduction is out of the question. Theoretically, the Reichstag can indeed oppose an increase, but practically the increase is almost automatic. The Reichstag could only postpone it, and in so doing would have to face unpopularity. Every party vies with its rivals in sacrificing their principles on the altar of patriotism. Whereas the Catholic party in Belgium has for twenty-eight years refused the means of national defence, and has made the Belgian Army into a byword on the plea that barrack life is dangerous to the religious faith of the peasant, the German Catholics have voted with exemplary docility every increase of the army and navy. Only once did they dare to propose a small reduction in the estimates for the expenditure on the war against the Hottentots. But the indignation they raised by their independent attitude, and the doubtful elections of 1907, taught them a practical lesson in patriotic submission which they are not likely soon to forget.

The Reichstag, therefore, is largely a debating club, and its debates are as irresponsible as those of students in a University union, because no speech, however eloquent, carries with it any of the responsibilities of government. The Opposition in England is careful of the language it uses, and more careful of the promises it makes, because it knows that it may be called upon to fulfil its promises and to carry out the policy it advocates. In Germany there is no such possibility. The Opposition is only platonic. It is doomed to impotence."

XIV.—THE SERVILITY OF THE GERMAN UNIVERSITIES AND OF THE CHURCHES.

"It has often happened in other countries when the expression of free opinions has become dangerous or difficult that independent political thought has taken refuge in the Universities. Even in Russia the Universities have been a stronghold of Liberalism. In the Germany of the first half of the nineteenth century many a University professor suffered in the cause of political liberty. In the Germany of to-day the Universities are becoming the main support of reaction. Professors, although they are nominated by the faculties, are appointed by the Government; and here again the Government only appoints 'safe' men. A scholar who has incurred the displeasure of the political authorities must be content to remain a *Privatdozent* all his life. *The much-vaunted independence of the German professors is a thing of the past.* They may be independent scientifically; they are not independent politically. It is not that scholars have not the abstract right to speak out, or that they would be dismissed once they have

been appointed; rather is it that they would not be appointed or promoted. A young scholar with Radical leanings knows that he will not be called to Berlin.

The German Universities still lead political thought; they still wield political influence, and their influence may be even greater to-day than it ever was, but that influence is enlisted almost exclusively on the side of reaction.

And what is true of the Universities is true of the Churches. Of the Roman Catholic Church it is hardly necessary to speak. *Non ragionar di lor, ma guarda e passa*. The history of German Catholicism proves once more that the Church is never more admirable than when she is persecuted. During the Kulturkampf the Catholics stood for political liberty, whereas the so-called National Liberals stood for State centralization and political despotism. To-day, from being persecuted, the Catholic Church has become a persecuting Church. She has entered into an unholy compact with the Prussian Government. She has ceased to be religious, and has become clerical. She has ceased to be universal. She has become narrowly Nationalist. She might have played a glorious part in the new empire. Instead she has resisted every attempt at financial reform. She might have resisted the oppressive policy against the Poles. Instead she has connived at oppression. She might have opposed the orgies of militarism. Instead she has voted every increase in the army and navy. She has bartered her dignity and spiritual independence to secure confessional privileges, and to get her share in the spoils of office.

The Protestant Churches have not had the same power for evil, yet they have fallen even lower than the Catholic Church. They have lost even more completely every vestige of independence. German University theologians may be advanced in higher criticism, but they are opportunists in practical politics. They are very daring when they examine the Divine right of Christ, but they are very timid when they examine the Divine right of the King and Emperor. Protestantism produced one or two prominent progressive leaders; but they have had to leave their Churches. Dr. Naumann has become a layman; Stöcker, when he espoused the cause of the people, was excommunicated, and the Kaiser hurled one of his most violent speeches against his once favourite Court chaplain.”

XV.—THE PAN-GERMAN PLOT.[8]

“For forty years Germany had been seeking an outlet for her teeming population and her expanding industries. Hitherto emigration had seemed to be a

sufficient outlet and a sufficient source of strength. But as Germany was becoming more and more the controlling power of the Continent, she refused to be contented with sending out millions of her sons, who, as mere emigrants to foreign countries, were lost to the Vaterland.^[9] How different would the power of Germany have been, German Imperialists were ever repeating, if the 20,000,000 Teutons who have colonized the United States, or Brazil, or Argentina, and have been absorbed and Americanized and Saxonized, had settled in territories under the Imperial flag!

And thus Pan-Germanists have been looking towards every part of the horizon. They have first looked to the north and the north-west, and they have reflected that the Rhine ought to belong to the Vaterland; that Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Antwerp are the natural German harbours; that Denmark, Holland, and Flemish Belgium are the outposts of Germany for the transit commerce of Europe; and that all these outposts ought to be included either in an economic Zollverein or in a political confederation.^[10]

But Germany wisely realized that those northern ambitions would meet with absolute resistance on the part of other Powers, that she was not yet strong enough to defy that resistance, and that this fulfilment of her aspirations must be postponed until she was prepared to fight for the mastery of the sea. In the meantime, she contented herself with *peacefully* annexing the commerce of the Flemish and Dutch ports, with building up a mercantile and a war navy, with advocating the historical maritime philosophy of Captain Mahan, and with repeating on every occasion the famous note of warning: '*Unsere Zukunft ist auf dem Wasser.*' Biding her time, and following the line of least resistance, Germany for the last twenty years therefore extended steadily towards the south and towards the east. Towards the south she saw two decaying empires, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, which seemed to be a natural prey for her political and commercial ambitions: two conglomerates of hostile races which are waiting for a master. Towards the east she saw one of the most ancient seats of human civilization, a huge and rich territory, which is the one great country, in close proximity to Europe, which is still left unoccupied and undeveloped. On those three empires Germany set her heart, and with the method and determination which always characterize her she set to work. And with an equally characteristic spirit this gigantic scheme of commercial and political absorption of three empires, from the Upper Danube to the Persian Gulf, was being explained away and justified by an all comprehensive watchword: the *Drang nach Osten*. It was only in response to this irresistible call and impulse, this

Drang and pressure, it was only to obey an historical mission, that the Teuton was going to regenerate the crumbling empires of Austria, of Turkey, and of Asia Minor.

In the first place, let us consider for one moment the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. It is now fifty years since, through the Battle of Sadowa, Austria-Hungary was ousted from the German Confederation. The same reasons which impelled Protestant Prussia to drive Catholic Austria from the Germanic Confederation are still in large measure subsisting to-day, and I do not think that the Hohenzollern has any intention of forcing the Habsburg into the Confederation again, merely to obey the behests of the Pan-Germanists. Prussia has no interest whatever in reopening the ancient dualism of North and South, in re-establishing the two poles and antipodes, Berlin and Vienna. *As a matter of fact, ever since 1870 Austria-Hungary has been far more useful to German aims in her present dependent condition than if she were an integral part of the Confederation.* In Continental politics as well as in colonial politics, a disguised protectorate may be infinitely preferable to virtual annexation. The protectorate of Tunis has given far less trouble to France than the colony of Algeria. And for all practical interests and purposes, Austria-Hungary has become a German dependency. She has been drawn into the orbit of the Triple Alliance. She follows the political fortunes of the predominant partner. She almost forms part of the German Zollverein, in that her tariffs are systematically favourable to her northern neighbour. *But above all, Austria-Hungary renders to Germany the inestimable service both of 'civilizing'—that is, of 'Germanizing'—the inferior races, the Slavs, and of keeping them in check. It is a very disagreeable and difficult task, which Germany infinitely prefers to leave to Austria rather than to assume herself.* And it is a task for which, as Professor Lamprecht, the national historian, is compelled to admit, the Austrian German seems far more qualified than the Prussian German. And Germany can thus entirely devote herself to her world ambitions, whilst Austria is entirely absorbed by her racial conflict—for the King of Prussia!

For the last twenty-five years the process of Germanizing has been going on without interruption. A bitter war of races and languages is being waged between the Austrian German and the Magyar, between the Teuton and the Slav. Of the Slav the Austrian Teuton wants to make his political slave. To him 'Slav' and 'slave' are synonymous words; and when we consider that the Slavs are disunited in language and religion, and that they hate each other almost as cordially as they hate the *Niemets*; and when we further consider that behind the ten millions of Austrian Germans there will be sixty-five millions of other Germans to support them, whilst the Catholic Tcheches and Poles can only fall back on the support of abhorred and heretical Russia, there is every reason to fear that the Slav must eventually come under the economic and political control of the Austrian Germans—that is to say, ultimately under the influence of the German Empire.

But it is not only the Slavs of the Austrian Empire that are threatened by German absorption; that absorption has rapidly extended to the Slav States of the Balkan Peninsula. On the south as well as on the north of the Danube, Austria has been used as the 'cat's-paw,' or, to use the more dignified expression of Emperor William, as the 'loyal *Sekundant*' of the Hohenzollern. The occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in defiance of the Treaty of Berlin, was the beginning of that Austrian *Drang nach Osten* policy, the next object of which is the possession of the Gulf of Salonica, and the ultimate object of which is the control of Constantinople."

XVI.—GERMANY CONTROLLING TURKEY.[11]

"The absorption of Turkey is not a distant dream: it is very nearly an accomplished fact. Twenty-five years ago Germany declared she had no political stake in the affairs of Turkey. As recently as the 'seventies, Bismarck proclaimed in the Reichstag that the Eastern Question was not worth the loss of one Pomeranian soldier.

To-day Germany is wellnigh supreme on the Bosphorus. She started by sending military instructors, amongst whom was the famous General Von der Goltz Pasha, and by reorganizing the Turkish Army on the German model. She then sent her travellers, absorbing the commerce of the country. She then sent her engineers, obtaining concessions, building railways, and practically obtaining the control of the so-called 'Oriental' line. Finally, she became the

self-appointed doctor of the 'sick man.' Whenever the illness of recent years came to a crisis—after the Armenian and the Macedonian atrocities, after the Cretan insurrection—Germany stepped in and paralyzed the action of Europe. It was Germany that not only enabled Turkey to crush Greece and to restore her military prestige: it was Germany that enabled her to reap the fruits of victory.

For ten years Lohengrin appeared as the temporal providence, the protector of Abdul Hamid. The Holy Roman Emperor appeared as the saviour of the Commander of the Faithful. A Power which did not have one Mohammedan subject claimed to protect two hundred million Mohammedans. And when, in 1897, Emperor William went on his memorable pilgrimage to Jerusalem, this latter-day pilgrim entered into a solemn compact with a Sovereign still reeking from the blood of 200,000 Christians. The Cross made an unholy alliance with the Crescent.

This alliance, coinciding with the journey to Jerusalem, marked a further step in the forward movement, in the *Drang nach Osten* policy. It was the third and the last stage, and by far the most important one. It was obvious that, on the European side of the Bosphorus, Germany could not make much further progress for some years to come. The times were not ripe. International jealousies might be prematurely roused, all the more so because neither the German Kaiser nor his subjects have the discretion and modesty of success. But on the Asiatic side there extended a vast Asiatic inheritance, to which, as yet, there was no European claimant; to which already, forty years ago, German patriots like Moltke, German economists like Roscher and List, had drawn the attention of the Vaterland—a country with a healthy climate and with infinite resources as yet undeveloped. This was to be in the immediate future the field of German colonization. On his way to Jerusalem the German Emperor pressed once more his devoted friend the Sultan for an extension of German enterprise in Asia Minor. The concession of the railway to Baghdad was granted, and a new and marvellous horizon opened before the Hohenzollern."

XVII.—GERMAN SOCIALISM MAKING FOR REACTION AND WAR.

"And not only is German Socialism not as strong, neither is it as pacifist as is generally supposed. Outsiders take it for granted that in the event of a conflict between France and Germany there would be solidarity between the French and the German artisans. They assume that Socialism is essentially international. And in theory such an assumption is quite legitimate. But many things in

Germany are national which elsewhere are universal. And in Germany Socialism is becoming national, as German political economy is national, as German science is national, as German religion is national. Therefore the political axiom that German Socialists would necessarily come to an understanding with their French and English brethren has been falsified by the event. German Socialists have, no doubt, shown their pacific intentions; they have issued pacific manifestoes and organized pacific processions; they have filed off in their hundreds of thousands in the streets of Berlin to protest against the war party; but when the question of peace or war has been brought to a point in Socialist congresses—when their foreign brethren have moved that in the case of an unjust aggression the German Social Democrats should declare a military strike—German Socialists have refused to assent. The dramatic oratorical duel which took place between the French and the German delegates at the Congress of Stuttgart illustrates the differences between the national temperament of the Frenchman and the German. When called upon to proclaim the military strike, the German Socialists gave as an excuse that such a decision would frighten away from the Social Democrat party hundreds of thousands of middle-class supporters. This excuse is an additional proof of the moral and political weakness of Social Democracy. It illustrates its moral weakness; for the Socialist leaders sacrifice a great principle for the sake of an electoral gain. The leaders know that nationalist feeling runs high in the middle classes; they know that any anti-militarist policy would be unpopular. And they have not the courage as a party to face unpopularity. And the arguments used at Stuttgart also illustrate the political weakness of German Socialism; for they show that the Socialist vote does not possess the cohesion and homogeneity with which it is credited: they show that hundreds of thousands of citizens who record a Socialist vote are not Socialists at all. To vote for Socialism is merely an indirect way of voting against the Government. There is no organized Opposition in Germany. The Socialists are the only party who are “agin the Government.” And all those German citizens who are dissatisfied with conditions as they are choose this indirect and clumsy method of voting for the Socialists in order to express their dissatisfaction with the present Prussian despotism.

It is therefore not true to say that Socialism in Germany is a decisive force working for peace. It would be more true to say that it is a force working for war, simply because it is a force working for reaction. Prussian reaction would not be so strong if it were not for the bugbear of Social Democracy. If Social Democracy attracts a considerable section of the lower middle class, it repels and frightens the bulk of the middle classes as well as of the upper classes. Many

Liberals who would otherwise oppose the Government support it from horror of the red flag, and they strengthen unwillingly the power of reaction. And therefore it would scarcely be a paradox to say that the nearer the approach of the Socialistic reign, the greater would be the danger to international peace. German contemporary history illustrates once more a general law of history, that the dread of a civil war is often a direct cause of a foreign war, and that the ruling classes are driven to seek outside a diversion from internal difficulties. Thus political unrest ushered in the wars of the Revolution and the Empire; thus the internal difficulties of Napoleon III. brought about the Franco-German War; thus the internal upheaval of Russia in our days produced the Russo-Japanese War.

It may be true that power is slipping away from the hands of the Prussian Junkerthum and the bureaucracy, although Prussian reaction is far stronger than most foreign critics realize. But whether it be strong or weak, one thing is certain: a power which has been supreme for two centuries will not surrender without a struggle. The Prussian Junkers may be politically stupid, but they have not lost the fighting spirit, and they will not give way to the 'mob.' Before Prussian reaction capitulates, it will play its last card and seek salvation in a European conflagration."

XVIII.—IS THE KAISER MAKING FOR PEACE OR FOR WAR?

"Is the tremendous power and popularity of the Kaiser exercised in the direction of peace or in the direction of war?

To an Englishman the Kaiser's devotion to military pursuits, his frequent brandishing of the sword, his aggressive policy of naval expansion, seem to be in flagrant contradiction with his no less persistent protests both of his sympathy for England and of his love for peace. We are reminded that Napoleon III. also delighted to express his love for peace—"L'Empire c'est la paix"—yet he brought about the most disastrous war in French history. We are reminded that Nicholas II. of Russia also started his reign as the peacemaker of Europe, the initiator of the Conference of The Hague, yet he brought about the most bloody war in Russian history. Are the Kaiser's pacific protests as futile, are his sympathies as hollow, as those of a Napoleon or a Nicholas?

Unfortunately, if the Kaiser's protests of peace are supported by many of his utterances and sanctioned by the interests of his dynasty, they are contradicted

not only by many other utterances, but, what is more serious, they are contradicted by his personal methods, and, above all, by the whole trend of his general policy.

Very few observers have pointed out one special reason why the personal methods of the Kaiser will prove in the end dangerous to peace—namely, that they have tended to paralyze or destroy the methods of diplomacy.

Little as we may like the personnel of legations and embassies, strongly as we disapprove of the methods by which they are recruited, urgent as is the reform of the Foreign Office, it remains no less true that the function of diplomacy is more vital to-day than it ever was in the past. For it is of the very purpose and *raison d'être* of diplomacy to be conciliatory and pacific. Its object is to achieve by persuasion and negotiation what otherwise must be left to the arbitrament of war. It is a commonplace on the part of Radicals to protest against the practices of occult diplomacy. In so far as that protest is directed against the spirit which animates the members of the diplomatic service, it is fully justified. But in so far as it is directed against the principle of secret negotiation, the protest is absurd. For it is of the very essence of diplomacy that it shall be secret, that it shall be left to experts, that it shall be removed from the heated atmosphere of popular assemblies, and that it shall substitute an appeal to intellect and reason for the appeal to popular emotion and popular prejudice.

For that reason it is deeply to be regretted that the personal interferences of the Kaiser have taken German diplomacy out of the hands of negotiators professionally interested in a peaceful solution of international difficulties, and have indirectly brought diplomacy under the influence of the German 'patriot' and the jingo. An Ambassador need not depend on outside approval; his work is done in quiet and solitude. The Kaiser, on the contrary, conducts his foreign policy in the glaring limelight of publicity; and whenever he has been criticized by experts, his vanity has only too often been tempted to appeal to popular passion and to gain popular applause. For that reason, and entirely apart from his indiscretions, the bare fact that the Kaiser has become his own Foreign Secretary has lessened the chances of peace.

Nor has the whole trend of his domestic policy been less injurious to the cause of peace. In vain does the Kaiser assure us of his pacific intentions: a ruler cannot with impunity glorify for ever the wars of the past, spend most of the resources of his people on the preparations for the wars of the future, encourage the warlike spirit, make the duel compulsory on officers and the *Mensur*

honourable to students, place his chief trust in his Junkers, who live and move and have their being in the game of war, foster the aggressive spirit in the nation, and hold out ambitions which can only be fulfilled by an appeal to arms: a ruler cannot for ever continue to saw the dragon's teeth and only reap harvests of yellow grain and golden grapes."

XIX.—BELGIUM THE ACHILLES HEEL OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

"Personally I am inclined to think that the fear of a German invasion has haunted far too exclusively the imagination of the English people, and has diverted their attention from another danger far more real and far more immediate. With characteristic *naïveté* and insular selfishness, some jingoes imagine that if only the naval armaments of Germany could be stopped, all danger to England would be averted. But surely the greatest danger to England is not the invasion of England: it is the invasion of France and Belgium. For in the case of an invasion of England, even the Germans admit that the probabilities of success would all be against Germany; whilst in the case of an invasion of France, the Germans claim that the probabilities are all in their favour. It is therefore in France and Belgium that the vulnerable point lies, the Achilles heel of the British Empire."

XX.—THE NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM WILL BE VIOLATED.

"It is true that in theory the neutrality of Belgium is guaranteed by international treaties; but when I observe the signs of the times, the ambitions of the German rulers, and when I consider such indications as the recent extension of strategic railways on the Belgian-German frontiers, I do not look forward with any feeling of security to future contingencies in the event of a European war. I am not at all convinced that the scare of a German invasion of England is justified. Indeed, I am inclined to believe the Germans when they assert that in case of war Germany would not be likely to invade Britain. She would be far more likely to invade Belgium, because Belgium has always been the pawn in the great game of European politics, and has often been, and may again become, the battlefield and cockpit of Europe."

XXI.—THE COMING WAR WILL BE A POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CRUSADE.

"If a war between the two countries did break out, it would not be merely an

economic war, like the colonial wars between France and England in the eighteenth century; rather would it partake of the nature of a political and religious crusade, like the French wars of the Revolution and the Empire. *The present conflict between England and Germany is the old conflict between Liberalism and despotism, between industrialism and militarism, between progress and reaction, between the masses and the classes.* The conflict between England and Germany is a conflict, on the one hand, between a nation which believes in political liberty and national autonomy, where the Press is free and where the rulers are responsible to public opinion, and, on the other hand, a nation where public opinion is still muzzled or powerless and where the masses are still under the heel of an absolute government, a reactionary party, a military Junkerthum, and a despotic bureaucracy.

The root of the evil lies in the fact that in Germany the war spirit and the war caste still prevail, and that a military Power like Prussia is the predominant partner in the German Confederation. The mischievous masterpiece of Carlyle on Frederick the Great, and his more mischievous letter to *The Times*, have misled English opinion as to the true character and traditions and aims of the Prussian monarchy. Prussia has been pre-eminently for two hundred years the military and reactionary State of Central Europe, much more so even than Russia. Prussia owes whatever she is, and whatever territory she has, to a systematic policy of cunning and deceit, of violence and conquest. No doubt she has achieved an admirable work of organization at home, and has fulfilled what was perhaps a necessary historic mission, but in her international relations she has been mainly a predatory Power. She has stolen her Eastern provinces from Poland. She is largely responsible for the murder of a great civilized nation. She has wrested Silesia from Austria. She has taken Hanover from its legitimate rulers. She has taken Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, Alsace-Lorraine from France. And to-day the military caste in Prussia trust and hope that a final conflict with England will consummate what previous wars have so successfully accomplished in the past. They are all the more anxious to enter the lists and to run the hazards of war because it becomes more and more difficult to govern a divided Reichstag and a dissatisfied people without uniting them against a foreign enemy, and because they realize that unless they restore their prestige and consolidate their power by a signal victory the days of their predominance are numbered."

XXII.—THE NATURE OF THE COMING WAR.

“The war of to-morrow, therefore, will not be like the war of 1870, a war confined to two belligerent forces: it will be a universal European war. Nor will it be a humane war, subject to the rules of international law and to the decrees of the Hague Tribunal: it will be an inexorable war; or, to use the expression of von Bernhardt, it will be ‘a war to the knife.’ Nor will it be decided in a few weeks, like the war of 1870: it will involve a long and difficult campaign, or rather a succession of campaigns; it will mean to either side political annihilation or supremacy.”

FOOTNOTES:

[4] This chapter is entirely made up of extracts taken from my pamphlet, “The Baghdad Railway,” *published in 1906*, and from my book, “The Anglo-German Problem,” published in 1912.

[5] See an amusing article, “Ornamente,” in the *Zukunft*.

[6] This is again and again admitted even by the most patriotic German writers. (See General von Bernhardt’s last book, “The Coming War”: “Wir sind ein unpolitisches Volk”—“We are a non-political people.”)

[7] See Arvède Barine’s “Madame: Mère du Régent.”

[8] This was written and published in 1906.

[9] To-day the immigration into Germany exceeds the emigration.

[10] In Justus Perthes’s widely scattered “Alldentscher Atlas,” edited by Paul Langhans, and published by the Alldentscher Verband, both Holland and Flemish Belgium are considered and “coloured” as an integral part of the future German Empire.

[11] This was published in 1906.

CHAPTER III

THE CURSE OF THE HOHENZOLLERN

I.—ROYALTIES MADE IN GERMANY.

IT has become a trite and hackneyed claim of the Prussian megalomaniacs that they are an Imperial people, a super-race predestined by Nature and Providence to the domination of the world. It certainly seems a grotesque claim to assert on the part of a people who in their political and social life have shown themselves a pre-eminently *servile* people; who have ever been cringing to their superiors; who never produced one single leader of free men, one Cromwell, one Mirabeau, one Gambetta; who always believed in the virtue of passive obedience; who always submitted to the policeman rather than to a policy; who always obeyed a Prince rather than a principle; who, as recently as the end of the eighteenth century, allowed themselves to be sold like cattle by Hessian princelings; who never rose to defend their sacred rights; who never fought a spirited battle in a righteous civil war; and who have always been ready to fight like slaves at the bidding of a sword-rattling despot.

And yet in one very important respect the Germans may rightly claim that they are actually ruling the European world. German Princes are actually seated on almost every throne of Europe. The French language may still be the language of diplomacy, but the German language, which was still a despised lingo to Frederick the Great, has become the language of European royalties. Germany for two hundred years has done a most thriving and most lucrative export trade in princelings. One Hohenzollern Prince ruling in Roumania for thirty years asserted German influence in that Latin country. Another Hohenzollern Prince ruling in Athens, nicknamed "Tino" by his affectionate relative the Kaiser, for three years stultified the will of his people, who were determined to join the cause of the Allies. Still another German Prince ruling in Sofia, who five years ago was mainly responsible for the horrors of the second Balkan War, compelled the Bulgarian nation to betray the cause of Russia, to whom the Bulgarian people owe their political existence and liberation from the yoke of the Turk.

Even yet public opinion does not realize to what an extent European Princes in the past have been made in Germany. We speak of the Royal House of

Denmark as a Danish House. The Danish House is in real fact the German dynasty of Oldenburg. We speak of the House of Romanov as a Russian dynasty. And it is true that the founder of the dynasty, Michael Romanov, the son of Philarete, Archbishop of Moscow and Patriarch of all the Russias, was a typical Muscovite, and was called to the throne in 1611, in troubled times, by the unanimous voice of the people. But, as all the Czars of Russia for two hundred years only married German Princesses, *without one single exception*, the Russian dynasty had become in fact a German dynasty. So far as mere heredity is concerned, Nicholas II., through the German marriages of all his ancestors, is of German stock to the extent of sixty-three sixty-fourths, and of Russian stock only in the proportion of one sixty-fourth.

II.—THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOHENZOLLERN DYNASTY.

Of all the German dynasties seated on the thrones of Europe, the Hohenzollern stand out, not merely as the most powerful, but also by far the most striking and the most interesting. The Hohenzollern are as unique in the history of royalty as the Rothschilds are unique in the history of finance. The history of other dynasties has been largely a history of Court scandal and intrigue, providing inexhaustible material to the petty gossip of Court chroniclers. We are all familiar with the amorous episodes of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., with the mysteries of the Grand and Petit Trianon and of the Parc aux Cerfs, with Madame de Maintenon and Madame de Montespan, with Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry, that beautiful courtesan who on the scaffold so pathetically asked the executioner: "Mr. Hangman, I beseech you, do spare me." We are all familiar through Thackeray's "History of the Georges" with the *chronique scandaleuse* of the Hanoverian dynasty. No doubt the Hohenzollern also have had their *chronique scandaleuse* and have also attracted the prurient curiosity of memoir writers. The Court of Berlin in the days of the polygamist King, Frederick William II., the successor of Old Fritz, was the most dissolute Court of Europe, as Berlin is to-day the most depraved city on the Continent. But somehow the scandals of the Hohenzollern seem to be irrelevant episodes. Somehow we do not think of the annals of the august House as a history of scandal. We only think of the Hohenzollern as the political necromancers of modern Europe, as the supreme masters of statecraft. The very name of the Hohenzollern recalls to our minds a race of State-builders. Machiavelli selected the House of Borgia to illustrate the principles of the statecraft of the Renaissance. A modern Machiavelli would have to go to

Potsdam to study the philosophy of high politics.

From the beginning the Hohenzollern have been identified with the Prussian State. Louis XIV. said of himself, "*L'état c'est moi*," but Louis XIV. was an exception in modern French history. On the contrary, every Hohenzollern could have applied to himself the words of the Bourbon King.

If we take each individual Hohenzollern, we find the most obvious differences between them. No dynasty more strikingly illustrates that psychological and political peculiarity of royal houses, which may be called the law of opposites, and which has almost the regularity of a universal law according to which each ruler is the living contrast of his predecessor. The successor of the Great Elector, Frederick I. (1688-1713), the first King of Prussia, was an extravagant fop who spent a year's income on the ceremony of coronation. On the contrary, his successor, "Fat William" (1713-1740), the Sergeant-King, was a miser, who on his coronation only spent 2,227 thalers and ninepence, where his father had squandered over six millions, a maniac who collected tall grenadiers as other Kings have collected pictures, who tortured his children, and who wanted to punish with a death sentence a juvenile escapade of the heir to the throne. Frederick the Great (1740-1786), again, was the antithesis of Frederick William I., and loved literature and art as intensely as his father detested them. Frederick William II. (1786-1797), the successor of the great realist and woman-hater, was a polygamist and a mystic. Frederick William III. (1797-1840) was an exemplary husband and a well-meaning, business-like bourgeois. He was succeeded by Frederick William IV. (1840-1861), a romanticist and a dreamer who ended in madness. William I. (1861-1888) was an honest, straightforward, methodical, reasonable, self-controlled soldier. Frederick III. was an idealist, and, like Frederick the Great, a lover of literature and art. William II. has bewildered the world as a versatile and omniscient dilettante, war-lord and peacemaker, Mohammedan and Christian—always a comedian, yet always in earnest. And we all know how the heir to the throne is the reverse of the Kaiser, and how this Crown Prince, with the fancies of a degenerate, has deserved to be called the "Clown Prince."

It is therefore apparent that if we analyze the characteristics of every one of the nine dynasts who have reigned in Prussia since the Great Elector for the last two hundred and fifty years, we do not find one single ruler who resembles his predecessor or his successor. Yet all these Hohenzollerns, whether capable or incapable, whether mad, half-mad, or sane, whether profligate or domesticated, whether extravagant or miserly, have certain common traits. They have all been

inspired with the same dynastic policy. When we consider the individual variations from the family type, there can be here no question of physical heredity, like the lip of the Habsburg or the tainted blood of the Spanish Bourbons. It is a question of political environment, a question of dynastic tradition. Indeed, we must carefully study that Hohenzollern family tradition of politics if we want to grasp the full significance of the word, if we wish to understand how such a dynastic tradition may become a formidable power to European history. Maeterlinck in his "Life of the Bee" has an eloquent and profound chapter on the "Spirit of the Hive." In the domestic and international policy of the Prussian State, in the Hohenzollern dynastic tradition, we discover such a collective spirit, the "Spirit of the Prussian Hive," the evil spirit of war mania and megalomania, the treachery, the brutality, the greed, and, above all, the predatory instinct dignified into the name of *Real Politik*. And Europe will only enjoy permanent peace and security if she succeeds in destroying that Hohenzollern tradition, that sinister spirit which lives in the wasps' and hornets' nest of Berlin, that spirit which has "Potsdamized" Europe, and which has debased the moral currency of European politics.

III.—LANDMARKS IN HOHENZOLLERN HISTORY.

No one would call the political history of Germany an interesting history. It is only the history of free nations or the free play of spiritual forces that is of abiding human interest, and the history of Germany is neither the history of a free people nor the conflict of spiritual forces. That history is so intolerably tedious that even the magic of Treitschke's genius has not been able to relieve its dulness, and that before the war no British or French publisher dared venture on a translation of Treitschke's masterpiece. But if the political history of Germany has all the tedium and monotony of parochialism, on the contrary, the personal history of the Hohenzollern is intensely instructive. One would hesitate to call it romantic. Yet there is an element of romance, the romance of business, the interest which attaches to the rise of a family from the humble obscurity of a petty princeling to the power and prestige of world rulers, the same kind of interest which belongs to the life-story of Mr. Vanderbilt or Mr. Carnegie. What a progress those Hohenzollerns have made from the distant days when they left their little Swabian southern home of Zollern between the Neckar and the Upper Danube, the cradle of their dynasty! *Nomen, omen!* Does not the very sound of the word *Hohenzollern* suggest and inspire high ambitions? And does not the very name of that little village of Zollern, which is apparently derived from *Zoll*,

suggest that all the world was henceforth to pay a Zoll, or toll, to the dynasts of Hohenzollern?

And what a strange succession of incidents! In themselves those incidents may seem insignificant. They left little trace in the chronicles of olden times. Yet those petty incidents have proved decisive events in the annals of modern humanity. We see those events happening from generation to generation without any apparent connection. Yet somehow they all made for the aggrandizement of the family. We see successive Princes acquiring through marriage and inheritance possessions in scattered and remote outposts of the Holy Roman Empire. Yet somehow all those outposts became eventually milestones on the highway to greatness. One ancestor becomes Burgrave of Nuremberg—a considerable promotion! A subsequent Burgrave of Nuremberg lends money to a needy Austrian Emperor, and becomes in 1417 Elector of Brandenburg—a much more considerable promotion! Again, another ancestor inherits at the other extremity of Germany the petty dukedom of Cleves, and that dukedom became the nucleus of Prussian power in the Far West of Germany. Still another ancestor of a collateral branch becomes Grand Master of the religious Order of the Teutonic Knights, and this fact induces Master Martin Luther, who was much more of a realist and a time-server and a trimmer than theologians give him credit for, to advise the Hohenzollern Grand Master to secularize his knights, to confiscate the whole Church property of the Order, and to make himself the overlord of Eastern Prussia.

Thus everything has worked for the aggrandizement of the future Kings of Prussia, everything has brought grist to the mill of Sans-Souci.

IV.—A DYNASTY OF UPSTARTS.

No dynasts in modern times, not even the Bourbons nor the Habsburgs, have been more obsessed with the pride of race. A double avenue of gaudy statues in Berlin has been erected in the Siegesallee, or Alley of Victory, to illustrate the glories of the House. And Carlyle, in his “History of Frederick the Great,” devotes a whole volume—and a very tedious volume—to the medieval ancestors of the dynasty. The present Kaiser believes himself to be the lineal successor, not only of the Hohenstaufen, but of the Cæsars of Ancient Rome. It was in that spirit that he was graciously pleased recently to dedicate a monument to his predecessor, Emperor Trajan! *Traiano Romanorum Imperatori, Wilhelmus Imperator Germanorum!* (To Trajan, Emperor of the Romans, William, Emperor

of the Germans!)

But all that Hohenstaufen-Hohenzollern genealogy is mythical history. The real history of the Hohenzollern is of recent date, and begins in 1640 with the advent of the Great Elector (1640-1688). Compared with the ancient House of Habsburg or of Bourbon, the Hohenzollern may well be called the “parvenus” of royalty. Until the seventeenth century the Electors of Brandenburg were twice vassals—lieges of the Holy Roman Empire and vassals of the Kings of Poland; and when in 1701 the first Hohenzollern King promoted himself to royal rank and ascended the throne, he made ceaseless and humiliating attempts to secure recognition. The old Houses refused to accept his title, and would not acknowledge the upstart royal “brother.”

But the very fact that the Hohenzollern are the “parvenus” of European royalty has spurred them on to more strenuous endeavours and to still higher ambitions. Their sole endeavour was to raise their position: *sich considerable machen*, as the Great Elector said in his quaint pidgin German. They were not born to the royal dignity. They had to make it. They were not accepted as Kings. They had to assert themselves and to impose their claims. The good sword of Frederick the Great asserted his claims with such results that, except Napoleon, no ruler ever since has disputed the right of the Hohenzollern to rank amongst the dynasts of Europe.

V.—PRUSSIA AS AN UPSTART STATE.

Even as the Hohenzollern are an upstart dynasty, so the Prussian State may be called an upstart State. It has not, like France, Great Britain, or Spain, two thousand years of history behind it. Until the end of the Middle Ages Christian civilization was bounded by the Elbe. The Prussian populations were the last in Europe to be converted to Christianity, and recent history has proved only too conclusively that the conversion never struck deep roots. Until the end of the Middle Ages the religious and military Order of the Teutonic Knights had to wage war against the Prussian heathen, and the magnificent ruin of Marienburg, the stately seat of the Teutonic Knights, still testifies to the achievements of the Order. Marienburg is the only historic city of Prussia; Berlin is but a mushroom growth of modern days. Whilst London and Paris go back to the beginning of European history, Berlin only three hundred years ago was a mean village inhabited by Wendish savages.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that Prussia is not a nation, but a State, and that State is an entirely artificial creation. France and Great Britain are the slow and natural growths of many centuries. They have definite geographical boundaries, their people have common traditions, common ideals, common affinities. The Prussian State is made up of a heterogeneous mosaic of provinces, the spoils of successive invasions. What hold together the artificial fabric of the Prussian State are only the dynasty, the bureaucracy, and the Army. The bureaucracy and the Army are to Prussia what the Civil Service and the British Army are to the Indian Empire. Suppress the British Army and the Civil Service, and British rule ceases to exist. Suppress the Hohenzollern dynasty, the Prussian bureaucracy, and the Junker Army, and the Prussian structure crumbles to pieces.

Nature has been niggardly to Prussia. Everything has had to be made with the hands of man. Brandenburg, Pomerania, Western and Eastern Prussia are dreary wastes; Berlin is an oasis of brick and stone amidst a Sahara of sand. The provinces of old Prussia have few industrial resources. The very soil had to be made by intensive agricultural methods. The very population had to be imported. Modern Prussia is neither the gift of Nature nor the outcome of history. It is the triumph of human statecraft. It is the achievement of the "will to power." When that "will to power" relaxes the Prussian State collapses.

VI.—THE PRUSSIAN STATE IS NOT A GERMAN STATE.

The modern Holy German Empire is born of the unholy nuptials of the German people with the Prussian State. But the paradox is that the Prussian State, which claims the right to rule the German States, who themselves assert their right to rule over Europe, cannot even pretend to be German. The contrast between the German and the Prussian has often been pointed out.

The Southern and Western German is still to-day, as he was in the days of Madame de Staël, artistic and poetic, brilliant and imaginative—a lover of song and music. The Prussian remains as he has always been, inartistic, dull, and unromantic. Prussia has not produced one of the great composers who are the pride of the German race; and Berlin, with all its wealth and its two million inhabitants, strikes the foreigner as one of the most commonplace capitals of the civilized world. The Southern and Western German is gay and genial, courteous and expansive; the Prussian is sullen, reserved, and aggressive. The Southern and Western German is sentimental and generous; the Prussian is sour and dour, and only believes in hard fact. The Southern and Western German is an idealist;

the Prussian is a realist and a materialist, a stern rationalist, who always keeps his eye on the main chance. The Southern and Western German is independent almost to the verge of anarchism; he has a strong individuality; his patriotism is municipal and parochial; he is attached to his little city, to its peculiarities and local customs; the Prussian is imitative, docile, and disciplined; his patriotism is not the sentimental love of the native city, but the abstract loyalty to the State. The Southern and Western German is proud of his romantic history, of his ancient culture; the Prussian has no culture to be proud of.

That contrast of temperament between Prussians and Germans corresponds to a difference of race. The Prussians are not really Teutons. They are alien intruders. The Prussians, the Pruzi or Pruteni, are Lithuanians. The population of Brandenburg is Slav. Berlin, Brandenburg, or Brannybor, are Slav-Wendish names. The ruler of the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg, a State which is even more Prussian than Prussia, and which is a strange survival of feudalism, bears until this day the name of "Prince of the Wendes."

Century after century the Burgraves of Brandenburg and Kings of Prussia had to attract colonists to their dreary dominions. The recruiting sergeant went out all over Europe to fill the ranks of the Prussian Army. One-third of Frederick the Great's Army was made up of foreigners. Frederick the Great on his accession found himself at war with the Prince-Bishop of Liège, because that worthy prelate would not allow his subjects to be impressed by the Prussian press-gang. Prussian colonizing agents scoured the neighbouring countries for agricultural labourers, foresters, and artisans. Twenty thousand Bohemians were imported by the Sergeant-King. In the eighteenth century by far the most important element introduced into Prussia was of French origin. The majority of the French Huguenots of the lower classes were attracted to Prussia. The population of Berlin, which was only 6,000, was doubled by the French exodus. The very language spoken at Berlin was a savoury mixture of French and German. *Ein plus machen* meant in the language of the Grand Elector to have a surplus revenue. To express his ideal of kingship, the *Elector* said: *Ich stabilire die souveraineté auf einen rocher von Bronze. Dem Regiment obligat* expressed the obligation of military service. At the accession of Frederick the Great, out of a population of 2,400,000, 600,000 were refugees. It is one of the most impressive instances of historical retribution that modern Prussia should thus have been built up with the assistance of French exiles, and that modern France should have been crushed by the descendants of the French Protestants who were expelled by the bigotry of Louis XIV.

The colonization of Prussia has proceeded until this day. Before the war immigration into Germany was exceeding the emigration. Polish labour continues to migrate to the Eastern provinces. Hence the odious expropriations of Polish land in the district of Posen. The ablest literary and industrial and political talent from all parts of Germany has been attracted for generations to the Prussian capital. Prussian jingoes claim for Prussia the credit of every administrative improvement, of every political achievement of modern Germany. As a matter of fact, the Prussian State has achieved little by itself. Its originality is never to initiate, but skilfully to exploit the creations of others. It is a safe rule to assume that every statesman or leader who has made an original contribution to Prussian history is not of Prussian origin. The greatest philosopher of Prussia, Kant, was a Scotsman. Her greatest statesman, Stein, was a Westphalian. Of the two greatest Prussian Generals, one, Blücher, was a Mecklenburger; the other, Moltke, was a Dane. The national historian of Prussia, Treitschke, is a Saxon of Bohemian descent.

VII.—PRUSSIA AS A MILITARY STATE.

That colony of many heterogeneous populations is above all a military State, a *Kriegstaat*. It was created through war and has been organized for war. In the eighteenth century the whole of Prussia was one vast camp and barracks. The King of Prussia is primarily the *Kriegsherr*, or war-lord. The ruling caste of Junkers is a caste of warriors. The very *schoolmasters in the eighteenth century were nearly all recruited from the invalided non-commissioned officers*. Historians single out Fat William, the Sergeant-King, as the supreme type of the martinet King. But it is not only Fat William, but all the Kings of Prussia who have been martinet Kings and recruiting sergeants. Prussia has made war into an exact science. Prussia has created the “nation in arms.”

Geographical conditions and the ambitions of the Hohenzollern have combined to make war a permanent necessity. Prussia was a “mark” or frontier land, and the margraves or mark-grafs were the earls and protectors of the Mark. The frontiers of Prussia were open on every side. She was surrounded by enemies. George William, the father of the Great Elector, during the Thirty Years’ War tried to maintain neutrality. He soon found out that neutrality did not pay, and his territory was overrun by hostile bands. Pomerania was occupied and retained by the Swedes. Poles, Russians, and Austrians in turn invaded the country. After the Battle of Kunersdorff, in 1761, Prussia was at her last gasp, and Frederick the Great found himself in so desperate a position that he had

resolved on committing suicide. Again, after Jena, Berlin was occupied by the French, and for five years remained under the yoke. Insecurity has been for generations the law of Prussian existence. The Prussian State has known many ups and downs and has passed through many tragic vicissitudes. They managed to turn geographical and military necessities to the advantage of their dynastic ambitions. What was at first commanded by the instinct of self-preservation became afterwards a habit, a tradition, and a systematic policy. They discovered that the best way to maintain an efficient defensive was to transform it into a vigorous offensive. They discovered that the best means of living safely was to live dangerously. They discovered, in the words of Treitschke, that “the one mortal sin for a State was to be weak.”

VIII.—PRUSSIA AS A PREDATORY STATE.

Not only is Prussia a military State, it is also a predatory State. All the great Powers of Europe have been in a sense military States. But to them all war has only been a means to an end, and often a means to higher and unselfish ends. The Spaniards were a military nation, but their wars were crusades against the Moor. The Russians have been a military nation, but their wars were crusades against the Turk or wars for the liberation of the Serbians, the Bulgarians, and the Greeks. The French have been a military nation, but they fought for a chivalrous ideal, for adventure, for humanity. Even Napoleon’s wars of conquest were really wars for the establishment of democracy. The Corsican was the champion and the testamentary executor of the French Revolution.

The peculiarity of the Prussian State is that it has been from the beginning a predatory State. The Hohenzollerns have ever waged war mainly for spoliation and booty. Not once have they waged war for an ideal or for a principle.

The German Kaiser delights to appear in the garb of the medieval knight. He wears three hundred appropriate uniforms. A German wit has said that he wears the uniform of an English Admiral when he visits an aquarium, and that he dons the uniform of an English Field-Marshal when he eats an English plum-pudding. Amongst those three hundred disguises there is none which is more popular in Germany than that of the Modern Lohengrin bestriding the world in glittering armour. The Kaiser lacks the democratic gift of humour, and does not seem to be aware of the incongruity of the Lohengrin masquerade. A Prussian King cannot honestly play the part of a knight in quest of the Holy Grail. Chivalry and Prussianism, the crusading spirit and the predatory spirit, are contradictory

terms.

The most exalted Order of the Prussian dynast is the Order of the Black Eagle. The Hohenzollerns could not have chosen a more fitting emblem than that of the sinister bird of prey. For they have been pre-eminently the men of prey amongst modern dynasts. Every province of their dominions has been stolen from their neighbours. They secularized and stole the Church property of the Teutonic Order. They stole Silesia from Austria. They acquired Posen by murdering a noble nation. They stole Hanover from its lawful rulers. They stole Schleswig-Holstein from the Danes. They wrested Alsace-Lorraine from the French.

Circumstances in modern times seem to have singularly favoured their designs of conquest. To outward appearance they were threatened by powerful enemies, but those enemies looked far more formidable than they appeared. On the Far Western boundary, the feeble ecclesiastical Princes of Cologne, Treves, and Mayence ruled over the smiling fields and vineyards of the Rhine provinces. On every side Germany was broken up into petty principalities. The Holy Roman Empire of Germany, which was neither Holy nor Roman nor German, and which had ceased to be an empire, was only the shadow of a great name. Austria was perpetually distracted by internal and external dangers. Poland was an unruly republic. The very weakness of their neighbours was a temptation to the Hohenzollern.

The one redoubtable enemy to the Hohenzollern dynasty was Russia. But after the disastrous defeat of the Seven Years' War inflicted by Russian arms, Prussia learned to control by deceit and policy a Power which she dared not challenge, and could not hope to overcome, on the battlefield. From the middle of the eighteenth century Prussia concluded a dynastic alliance with the Russian dynasty. The Hohenzollerns liberally provided their Russian brethren with German Princes and Princesses. The Prince of Holstein, who became Tsar Peter III., was the first German Prince of the Romanov dynasty. The little Cinderella Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, the future Catherine the Great, was the first of an uninterrupted line of German Princesses. The Teutonic barons of the Baltic provinces for one hundred and fifty years were able to control the Russian foreign policy. Nesselrode for forty years was the Foreign Minister of the Tsar, although he only spoke German and did not know a word of Russian. Nicholas I. and Alexander II., with unswerving loyalty, supported the interests of their Prussian brother-in-law and nephew.

On two occasions the Russian Tsars actually saved the Hohenzollern from

complete destruction. In 1761, when Russian armies occupied Berlin, an apologetic Tsar begged to be forgiven for daring to vanquish his illustrious cousin. In 1807, at Tilsit, Prussia was only saved from dismemberment through the quixotic intervention of Tsar Alexander I. And the Russian Tsar proved so powerless against Prussian intrigues that, although Alexander I. had concluded a close alliance with Napoleon, the German-Russian Court at St. Petersburg boycotted Napoleon's Ambassador, Savary, and eventually succeeded in breaking the Franco-Russian coalition.

But the Hohenzollerns did not only wage a predatory war for conquest and spoliation. Their methods have been as predatory as their aims. War to them was not merely a policy. It was a business, and often a lucrative business. In the Middle Ages war had been largely a trade. A huge commerce in prisoners was transacted, and an enterprising Italian Condottiere would often recoup himself through the ransom of one single rich prisoner. The Prussians have continued those medieval methods until this day. *Treitschke lays it down in his "Politik" that war must be made to pay, and need not exhaust a Prussian Treasury.*

The poor Belgians to-day are learning to their cost the full meaning of those Prussian predatory methods. The Prussian invaders are extorting millions of money, as well as enormous food-supplies, from a starving people. They are dislocating whatever remains of the internal trade. They are breaking up thousands of miles of Belgian railways, and they are sending them to the Polish theatre of war. But, brutally as the poor Belgians have been treated, one shudders to think of the cruelty and the greed of the Prussian in the new conquered Russian territories, and of the pitiful plight of the Poles and the Lithuanians.

IX.—PRUSSIA AS A FEUDAL STATE.

Prussia in her fiscal and commercial policy may be called a typical modern State. The Hohenzollerns have been compelled to utilize all the resources of commerce and industry, not because they are liberal or progressive, but merely in order to increase the national revenue, in order to provide for an ever-swelling military expenditure. On the contrary, in her political constitution Prussia has remained a medieval and feudal State. She is the Paradise of the Junker. But Prussian Junkerthum is not merely a squirearchy of independent landowners. Mr. Bernard Shaw, in his "Common Sense about the War," in which one ounce of common sense is mixed with three ounces of nonsense, would make us believe that there is little difference between German Junkerthum and British

Junkerthum, and that there is little to choose between the English Junker, Sir Edward Grey, and a Pomeranian squire. Mr. Shaw must have studied Prussian conditions to very little purpose when he makes so ludicrous a comparison. To call such a quiet, silent country gentleman, such a law-abiding Parliamentarian as Sir Edward Grey, to call even him a typical Prussian Junker is a travesty of the facts. A more striking contrast to the complete Junker of Pomerania than the “Complete Angler” of the Foreign Office could not well be imagined. The glorified Prussian Junker is Bismarck. The typical Junker is Prince Blücher. A perfect modern type is that fiery Freiherr von Oldenburg, who advised the Kaiser to send a troop of Uhlans, as in the old Cromwellian days, to clear out the politicians of a disloyal Reichstag.

The Prussian Junkers are the lieges of the war-lord. They are all the more loyal to the throne as they are poor, and therefore dependent on the King for their very subsistence. There are few large estates in Prussia, and they yield but a meagre revenue. The relations of the Junkers to the Hohenzollerns are the relations of William the Conqueror to his companions-in-arms. The Junkers originally held their broad acres, their *Rittergut*, by military tenure. Some of their feudal privileges have gone, but they continue to be the leading political power in the State under the Kaiser’s Majesty. They are the pillars of the throne. They owe military service. To recall the words of the Sergeant-King, they are “*dem Regiment obligat*.” And they are rewarded for their military services by privileges innumerable. They are the controlling influence in the Landtag, which is a representative assembly only in name. They occupy the higher posts in the Civil Service and in the Diplomatic Service. In each district the Landrat is the supreme authority, the electioneering agent of the Government and the representative of the Prussian King.

And the Junker caste have been as selfish, as rapacious, as their Hohenzollern overlords. Nothing could be more sordid than their attitude in the recent campaign for financial reform. They have shifted the burden of taxation upon the weaker shoulders of the peasant and artisan. They have compelled von Bülow to reverse the Liberal Free Trade policy of Caprivi, and to impose heavy corn duties, merely to increase their own rents.

X.—PRUSSIA AS A DESPOTIC STATE.

In a military State like Prussia, which is mainly organized for war, where war is the vital function, not only does the King hold his power by the Divine right of

the sword, but even in times of peace all political power is concentrated into his hands: "*L'état c'est moi!*"

In such a State a Parliamentary Government is an absurdity, and, as a matter of fact, there is no Parliamentary Government, neither in Prussia nor in the Empire. There is no responsible Cabinet. The Chancellor is accountable, not to the majority of the Reichstag, but to the Kaiser. The Germans imagine that because they have the fiction of universal suffrage they possess the most democratic Government in Europe. And an enthusiastic German triumphantly reminded me of the fact at a mass meeting which I recently held in San Francisco on behalf of the Allies. I reminded him that Bismarck himself has given us in his "Memoirs" the Machiavellic reasons which induced him to invent the fiction of universal suffrage. The man of blood and iron tells us that he only adopted universal suffrage as a temporary device to convert the German States to the Prussian policy, and as a means of influencing the people against the federal dynasties.

The Reichstag is essentially different from a British House of Commons. As a political body it is the most contemptible assembly in Europe. It is a mere debating club, a convenient machine to vote the Government taxes. And even the power of voting has been largely taken from it. It has become part of the German constitutional practice that the military estimates must be passed without discussion. It is only considerable increases of the army and navy which have to be submitted to the Reichstag, and those increases are generally voted for a number of years. In 1887 a characteristic episode happened. Bismarck had decided on formidable additions to the army, and he wanted those additions voted and guaranteed for seven years. The military "Septennate Law" frightened even a docile Reichstag, and the Catholic party refused to vote it. Bismarck, who for ten years had fought the Pope, and who had thundered against the interference of a foreign ecclesiastical potentate in temporal matters, now asked the Pope to interfere in favour of the Army Bill. To the discredit of the Papacy, Leo XIII. fell into the trap. Leo XIII. exerted pressure on the Catholic party. But they still were recalcitrant. Bismarck and the Pope proved equally persistent. Finally, at the behest of the Iron Chancellor and with the assistance of the Vicar of Christ, the Reichstag passed that fatal military law, which was the beginning of the colossal European armaments, which were to increase the political tension of Europe until breaking-point, and which was to result in the present catastrophe. Thus is Parliamentary Government carried on in the Empire of the Hohenzollern!

Passive obedience and discipline are the cardinal virtues inculcated by the Hohenzollern. "*Verboten*," "*Nicht raisonniren*," are their watchwords. A Hohenzollern brooks no opposition. "*Wir bleiben doch der Herr und Koenig und thun was wir wollen*," said the Sergeant-King. And two hundred years after, the Kaiser expresses the same imperial sentiments: "*Wer mir nicht gehorcht, den zerschmettere ich*" (Whoever refuses to obey, I shall smash). Bismarck, who created the German Empire, was dismissed like a lackey. Baron von Stein, who reformed the Prussian State, and who stands out as the greatest statesman of his age, was ignominiously dismissed. Ingratitude has always formed part of the Hohenzollern code of royal ethics.

We are told by the apologists of the Hohenzollern that the same discipline, the same obedience to duty, are practised by the rulers themselves. "*Ich Dien*" is the Hohenzollern motto. Of all the servants of the Prussian State, there is none who serves it more loyally, more strenuously, than the King of Prussia. "I am the Commander-in-Chief and the Minister of Finance of the King of Prussia," said the Sergeant-King of himself. How often have the Prussian Kings been held up as shining examples of devotion to duty! Behold how hard a Hohenzollern King has to work for the State! In the same way the business man who rules his staff with a rod of iron might say to his discontented workmen: "See how strenuously I labour for the success of the business!" The workmen would probably answer that the ceaseless toil of the business man is not wholly disinterested, that the millionaire manufacturer is not a philanthropist; and the apologists of the Hohenzollern might be reminded that a King of Prussia in every generation has been wont to work mainly for himself.

XI.—THE HOHENZOLLERN AS THE CHAMPIONS OF PROTESTANTISM.

Treitschke urges as one of the chief claims of the Hohenzollerns that they have been in modern Europe the champions of the Protestant religion and at the same time the apostles of toleration. Is not the Kaiser the supreme head of his Church and the Anointed of the Lord? Does not he still preach edifying sermons to his soldiers and sailors? And does he not at the same time extend his Imperial protection over believers of every creed?

The truth is that the Hohenzollerns have never been the champions of Protestantism, but have astutely and consistently exploited it for their own purposes. They did espouse the Lutheran and Calvinistic faith, but their conversion enabled them to appropriate the vast dominions of the Church, a

spoliation which might have presented some difficulties if they had remained Catholic. We saw that, during the Thirty Years' War, during the supreme crisis of Protestantism, William George, Elector of Brandenburg, remained neutral and allowed the Northern hero, Gustavus Adolphus, and Cardinal Richelieu to champion the cause of the Protestant religion.

Not only did the Hohenzollerns not defend the Protestant religion; they perverted it and debased it by subjecting it to the Prussian State. Such subjection is the negation of Protestantism, as it is the negation of Christianity. Christianity in a political sense has always meant the separation of the spiritual and the temporal powers. It is the essence of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism that it actually does protest. It is of the essence of Nonconformity that it refuses to conform. Prussian Protestantism has ceased to protest, and conforms to whatever is demanded by the State. The Lutheran parson is the obedient servant of the Hohenzollern. "*Cujus regio illius religio*": spiritual allegiance must follow temporal allegiance.

The ultimate outcome of the confusion of spiritual and temporal powers in Prussia has been that Prussia has become the Atheist State, and it is because the Prussian State is an Atheist State and absolutely indifferent to the interests of religion that it has come to practise in its own peculiar way the political virtue of toleration. As the Prussian wars of conquest had brought together many heterogeneous populations professing different religions, toleration became a vital necessity for the State. It is not a virtue of the dynasty, and the Hohenzollerns certainly deserve no credit for it. The Prussian doctrine of toleration has always been of a negative and conditional kind. Prussian Kings have adopted the religious theory of Gibbon. All religions are equally true to the believer. They are equally true to the unbeliever. *They are equally useful to the State.*

All religions have proved equally useful and have been exploited with equal indifference by the Prussian dynasty. The attitude of Frederick the Great to religion is characteristic of the Hohenzollern attitude. Frederick the Great was surrounded by a band of French, Swiss, and Scottish Atheists. His main relaxation from the cares of State was to bandy cynical and obscene jests on Christianity with the Table Round at the private supper-parties of Potsdam. But his royal hatred and contempt for all positive religion did not prevent him from cordially inviting the Jesuits to his dominions because he found them useful pedagogues to teach and conciliate his newly conquered Polish subjects. It is one of the paradoxes of history that the same religious order which had been

suppressed by the Pope and expelled by the Catholic Kings of France and Spain was protected by the Atheist King of Prussia and the Atheist Empress of Russia. According to the same opportunist Hohenzollern tradition, Bismarck in turn fought the Pope, imprisoned Bishops and Cardinals, and then used the influence of the Pope and the hierarchy to further his Machiavellian policy. Even so in more recent times the Kaiser appeared at one and the same time as a devout pilgrim to the Holy Land, as the special friend of Abdul Hamid—Abdul the Damned—and as the self-appointed protector of three hundred million Mohammedans.

XII.—HOW THE GERMAN PEOPLE WERE SUBJECTED TO PRUSSIA.

We have analyzed the principles which ever directed the Prussian State. We have described the characteristics of the Hohenzollern dynasty who created that Prussian State. How is it that the German nation should have surrendered their destinies to a power which is so constitutionally selfish, so inherently evil, which has trampled down all the principles that a modern world holds dear and sacred?

The subjection of Germany to Prussia has been a triumph of Hohenzollern diplomacy and deceit, and has been the outcome of a tragic misunderstanding on the part of a politically uneducated and inexperienced people. The German people were tired of their political impotence, of their miserable dynastic quarrels, of their abject subservience to their parasitic princelings. The German people, broken up in a hundred petty States, had the legitimate and praiseworthy ambition of becoming a united people. German unity had been for generations a cherished dream of German patriots. History had abundantly proved that the Austrian Empire could not assist in the realization of that dream. Then came the opportunity of the Prussian tempter. Prussia offered her mighty sword. Prussia alone had the military power and a strong political organization. The German States yielded to the temptation. They trusted that, in concluding an alliance with Prussia, they would retain their liberties. Indeed, they hoped that once German unity was realized, Germany would assimilate and absorb the Prussian State. Alas! it was the Hohenzollern State which was to annex and subject the German Empire. Little did the Germans know Prussian tenacity. Little did they know the rapacity of the Black Eagle. Still less did they know the black magic of the necromancer Bismarck.

Treitschke reminds us in his “Politik” of an incident which is characteristic of the relation of the German Empire to Prussia. On one occasion even Bismarck,

the Prussian Junker, expressed a misgiving that a particular law would not be acceptable to the Federal States of the Empire. Emperor William contemptibly dismissed the objection. "Why should the Federal States object when they are only the prolongation of Prussia?" Treitschke, the Saxon, accepts the Prussian theory of Emperor William. He tells us proudly that the Federal States have ceased to be independent States—indeed, that they have lost the essential characteristics of a State, that they are only called States by courtesy, that there is only one State in the German Empire, and that all the other Federal communities only continue their precarious existence by virtue and with the consent of the Hohenzollern dynasty.

It is one of the most appalling misunderstandings of history. Like Faust, the German people have sold their soul to Mephistopheles: Bismarck. And they have sold it for power. They are now paying the price. As in the wonderful old ballad of Burger, the Prussian horseman has taken the maiden "Germania" on his saddle. The death's-head hussar has carried her away on his wild career through space until he has brought her to the gates of Hell.

It has thus been the fate of the German nation, as of other European nations, to work and fight for the aggrandizement of the King of Prussia. A section of the people, the Social Democrats and the Liberals, have made fitful and impotent efforts to free themselves from the tyranny of the Hohenzollern. What they have not succeeded in doing, Europe is now doing for them. In the fulness of time, Europe has arisen to crush the Hohenzollern, to kill the "Spirit of the Prussian Hive." The war will result in the enfranchisement of Germany as it will result in the enfranchisement of Poland and Serbia. Did the history of the world ever present so tragic a paradox? Twelve million heroes are fighting the German Government. Millions of the manhood of the civilized world are laying down their lives on all the battlefields of Europe and all the high seas of the world, mainly in order to make the German people free.

XIII.—JUDGMENT ON THE HOHENZOLLERN STATE.

In 1807, after the crushing defeat inflicted by Napoleon on the Prussian armies at Jena, when the Military Monarchy crumbled to pieces in one day like a house of cards, Joseph de Maistre, the most profound and the most prophetic political thinker of his age, wrote the following significant lines from St. Petersburg. To realize the full significance of the judgment, one must remember that Count de Maistre was a fanatic supporter of the old monarchic order. He

hated Napoleon with a bitter hatred, but he hated Prussia more:

“Ever since I have started to reason, I have felt a special aversion for Frederick II., whom a frenzied generation has been in a hurry to proclaim a great man, but who was really no more than a *great Prussian*. Posterity will consider this Prince as one of the greatest enemies of the human species that has ever lived. His monarchy, which had inherited his spirit, had become an argument against Providence. To-day that argument has been converted into a tangible proof of eternal justice. This famous structure built with blood and mud, with debased coin and base libels, has crumbled in the twinkling of an eye.”^[12]

Those words were written exactly one hundred and ten years ago, and the world is once more anxiously looking forward to another Jena which will deal a final blow to the Hohenzollern monarchy. When that catastrophe comes, Europe, enlightened by the awful experiences of the last hundred years, and delivered from the black magic of the political necromancers of Potsdam, will unanimously echo the prophetic judgment pronounced by Joseph de Maistre. For to-day, even more than in 1807, Prussia has become an “argument against Providence.” Even more than in 1807 the Prussia of 1917 “is built with blood and mud.” Even more than in 1807 the chastisement of Prussia is demanded by “eternal justice.” The whole civilized world will breathe more freely when the sinister and diabolical power will be broken for ever and will oppress and degrade humanity no more.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[12\]](#) De Maistre, “Lettres et Opuscules.”

CHAPTER IV

THE GERMAN WAR-TRIUMVIRATE

I.—NIETZSCHE.

THE English reader is now in possession of a complete translation of Nietzsche, in the admirable edition published by T. N. Foulis, and edited by Oscar Levy, of which the eighteenth and concluding volume has just appeared. To the uninitiated I would recommend as an introductory study: (1) Professor Lichtenberger's volume; (2) Ludovici, "Nietzsche" (1s., Constable), with a suggestive preface by Dr. Levy; (3) the very useful summary of Mr. Mügge—an excellent number in an excellent series (Messrs. Jack's "People's Books"); (4) Dr. Barry's chapter in the "Heralds of Revolt," giving the Catholic point of view; (5) Mrs. Förster-Nietzsche, "The Young Nietzsche"; and (6) an essay by the present writer, published as far back as 1897, and which, therefore, may at least claim the distinction of having been one of the first to draw attention in Great Britain to the great German writer. But a searching estimate of Nietzsche in English still remains to be written. And there is only one man that could write it, and that man is Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton. I confidently prophesy that a study of Nietzsche, if he has the courage to undertake it, will be Mr. Chesterton's greatest book. He will find in the German heretic a foe worthy of his steel.

I.

Like the history of most great thinkers, like the history of Kant and Schopenhauer, the biography of Nietzsche is totally barren of incident, and can be disposed of in a few lines. Born in 1844, apparently of noble Polish extraction ("Nizky" in Polish means humble), the son of a clergyman, and the descendant on both sides of a long line of clergymen, the future "Anti-Christ" spent an exemplary, studious, and strenuous youth. After serving his time in the army—he was considered one of the best riders of his regiment—and after a brilliant University career at Bonn and Leipzig, he was appointed, at twenty-four years of age, Professor of Greek in the University of Bale. His academic activity extended over eleven years, and was only interrupted in 1870 by a few months' service in the Ambulance Corps, during the Franco-German War.

His first book, "The Birth of Tragedy," appeared in 1871. Like most of his

books, it was published at his own expense, and, like most of his books, it did not find a public. The three first parts of his masterpiece, "Thus Spake Zarathustra," were such a desperate failure that Nietzsche only ventured to print fifty copies of the fourth and concluding part, and he printed them merely for private circulation amongst his friends, but he only disposed of seven copies!

In 1879 he resigned, owing to ill-health, with a pension of £120. After his retirement he spent a nomadic life wandering from Nice to Venice, and from the Engadine to Sicily, ever in quest of health and sunshine, racked by neuralgia and insomnia, still preaching in the desert, still plunging deeper and deeper into solitude. And as the world refused to listen to him, Nietzsche became more and more convinced of the value of his message. His last book, "Ecce Homo," an autobiography, contains all the premonitory symptoms of the threatening tragedy. It is mainly composed of such headings as the following: "Why I am so Wise," "Why I am so Clever," "Why I write such Excellent Books," and "Why I am a Fatalist."

Alas! fatality was soon to shatter the wise and clever man who wrote those excellent books. In 1889 Nietzsche went mad. For eleven years he lingered on in private institutions and in the house of his old mother at Naumburg. He died in 1900, when his name and fame had radiated over the civilized world, and when the young generation in Germany was hailing him as the herald of a new age. England, as usually happens in the case of Continental thinkers, was the last European country to feel his influence; but in recent years that influence has been rapidly gaining ground, even in England, a fact abundantly proved by the great and startling success of the complete edition of his works.

II.

Most writers on Nietzsche—and they are legion—begin with extolling him as a prophet or abusing him as a lunatic. I submit that before we extol or abuse, our first duty is to understand. And we can no longer evade that duty. We cannot afford any longer to ignore or dismiss the most powerful force in Continental literature, on the vain pretence that the author was mad, as if the greatest French thinker of the eighteenth century, Rousseau, and the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century, Auguste Comte, had not fallen victims to the same disease.

And, on the whole, Nietzsche is not difficult to understand, although there has arisen a host of commentators to obscure his meaning, although Nietzsche

himself delights in expressing himself in the form of cryptic and mystic aphorism, although he continuously contradicts himself. But apart from those difficulties, his message is strikingly simple and his personality is singularly transparent. And his message and his personality are one. He is a convincing illustration of Fichte's dictum, that any great system of philosophy is the outcome, not of the intellect, but of a man's character. Nietzsche is not a metaphysician like Hegel, whom he abhorred. He is not a "logic-grinder," like Mill, whom he despised. He is a moralist, like the French, whom he loved. His culture and learning were French even more than German. He was steeped in Montaigne, to whom he has paid a glowing tribute in "Schopenhauer as Educationalist." He was a careful student of the great French classics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He read and annotated Guyau, with whom he had many points in common. By a curious coincidence, a few years before the advent of Nietzsche, a great French thinker had anticipated every one of Nietzsche's doctrines, and had expressed them in one of the most striking books of the French language. And by an even more curious paradox, whilst every European critic devotes himself to-day to the interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy, they systematically ignore—as Nietzsche himself ignored—the masterpiece of the Frenchman.

III.

Let us, then, first keep in mind that Nietzsche is not a metaphysician or a logician, but he is pre-eminently a moralist. His one aim is to revise our moral values and to establish new values in their place. For Nietzsche does both. There are two poles to his thought. He is an iconoclast, but he is also a hero-worshipper. He is a herald of revolt, but he is also a constructive thinker. Even in his earliest work, "Thoughts out of Season," whilst he destroys the two popular idols of the day, the theologian and the historian, he sets up two new heroes, Schopenhauer and Wagner.

IV.

We have said that Nietzsche's philosophy is strikingly simple. Its whole kernel can be expressed in two words. He is a systematic pagan, and he is an uncompromising aristocrat. As a pagan, he is a consistent enemy of Christianity. As an aristocrat, he is a bitter opponent of democracy. He proclaims that Anti-Christ has appeared in his own person. He hails the advent of the Superman.

First, he is a pagan, a pagan of Greece, or, rather, a pagan of the Renaissance, and, as a pagan, he considers Christianity the real enemy. Christianity denies life; Nietzsche asserts it. Christianity mainly thinks of the future world; Nietzsche has his feet firmly planted on Mother Earth. Christianity glorifies meekness and humility; Nietzsche glorifies pride and self-assertion. Christianity defends the poor and the weak; Nietzsche contends that the strong alone have a right to live. Christianity blesses the peacemakers; Nietzsche extols the warriors. Christianity is the religion of human suffering; Nietzsche is a worshipper of life, and proclaims the joyful science, *die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, the *gaya scienza*.

It is impossible within the limits of a short article to discuss Nietzsche's view of Christianity. We are concerned here not with discussion, but with exposition. At an early opportunity we hope to deal at some length in the columns of *Everyman* with Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity. For the present, let it be sufficient to say that no theologian would be prepared to accept his interpretation of the Christian religion. The everlasting conflict of spirit against sense and brutal force, which is the essence of Christianity, is hardly conducive to passivity. It is, on the contrary, a consistent discipline in modern heroism. There is not much meekness about the Jesuits or the warrior Popes. Nor is there much melancholy about St. Francis of Assisi or St. Theresa. The only smiling countenance in a hospital is the Sister of Mercy. The only active resisters under the despotism of Henry VIII. were Sir Thomas More and a broken octogenarian priest, Cardinal Fisher.

V.

The same fundamental instinct or principle, the same defiant optimism, the same exultation in the pride of life, which makes Nietzsche into an opponent of Christianity, also makes him into an opponent of democracy. The same belief in force, in the will to power, which makes Nietzsche into a pagan, also makes him into an aristocrat. For the political expression of Christianity must needs be democracy. We are democrats because we are Christians, because we believe in the essential dignity of man. On the contrary, the political outcome of paganism must needs be despotism and aristocracy. We believe in despotism and aristocracy because we believe in the natural inequality of man, because we believe in force and pride and self-assertion, in the power of the strong to oppress the weak. Nietzsche is against the oppressed and for the oppressor; for the Superman against humanity. For in Nietzsche's view an aristocracy is the ultimate purpose of life.

But Nietzsche is not an aristocrat, like the ordinary Darwinian. He does not believe in the survival of the fittest, like the typical evolutionist. He does not believe that a survival of the fittest will come about mechanically by the mere play of blind forces. Regression is as natural as progression. No one has pointed this out more convincingly than Huxley in his "Evolution and Ethics." The progress of the race is not natural, but artificial and accidental and precarious. Therefore Nietzsche believes in artificial selection. The Superman is not born, he must be bred. Nietzsche is the spiritual father and forerunner of the Eugenists.

And he is also the spiritual father of the Imperialists and latter-day Militarists. The gospel of the inequality of the individual implies the gospel of the inequality of race. The gospel of Nietzsche has not only been anticipated by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, but by his much more influential German namesake, Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the author whose books the Kaiser liberally distributed amongst his Generals and advisers. The doctrine of force, the belief in the German people as the salt of the earth, the self-gratification of the modern Teuton, can be traced directly to the influence of Zarathustra, and it is significant that the latest German exponent of Imperialism, General von Bernhardi, should have selected an aphorism of Nietzsche as the quintessence of his political philosophy:

"War and courage have achieved more great things than the love of our neighbour. It is not your sympathy, but your bravery, which has hitherto saved the shipwrecked of existence.

"'What is good?' you ask. 'To be braced is good.'" [\[13\]](#)

VI.

Quite apart from any elements of truth contained in Nietzsche's ethics, the first reason for his popularity is, no doubt, the perfection of his form and style. Nietzsche is one of the supreme masters of language, in a literature which counts very few masters of language, and the beauty of his style is transparent even in the disguise of a foreign translation.

The second reason is that Nietzsche, who imagined that he was fighting against the times, was in reality thinking with the times, and he has met with a ready response, in the dominant instincts of the present age, in the aggressive materialism, in the race for wealth and power. The Supermen and the Super-races of to-day only too cordially accept a philosophy which seems to justify

extortion, aggression, and oppression in the name of a supreme moral principle.

The third and most important reason, and the real secret of Nietzsche's influence, is the fine quality of his moral personality. However much we may be repelled by the thinker, we are attracted by the magnetism of the man, by his noble courage, by his splendid integrity, by his love of truth, his hatred of cant. Even though he has himself misunderstood Christianity, he has done a great deal to bring us back to the fundamental ideals of the Christian religion. He has done a great deal to undermine that superficial and "rose-water" view of Christianity current in official and academic Protestant circles. He has done a great deal to convince us that whatever may be the essence of Christianity, it has nothing in common with that silly and pedantic game which, for half a century, has made Eternal Religion depend on the conclusions of "Higher Criticism," and which has made theology and philosophy the handmaidens of archæology and philology.

Nietzsche is a formidable foe of Christianity, but he is a magnanimous foe, who certainly brings us nearer to a comprehension of the inmost meaning of the very doctrines he attacks. And it is quite possible that the Christian champion of the future may incorporate Nietzsche in his apologetics, even as St. Thomas Aquinas incorporated Aristotle, even as Pascal incorporated Montaigne. It was in the fitness of things that Nietzsche should be the descendant of a long line of Protestant ministers. For, indeed, he is the last of the true German Protestants, ever ready to protest and to defy and to challenge. He is the noblest of modern German heretics.

II.—MONTAIGNE AND NIETZSCHE.

I.

There is a continuity and heredity in the transmission of ideas as there is in the transmission of life. Each great thinker has a spiritual posterity, which for centuries perpetuates his doctrine and his moral personality. And there is no keener intellectual enjoyment than to trace back to their original progenitors one of those mighty and original systems which are the milestones in the history of human thought.

It is with such a spiritual transmission that I am concerned in the present paper. I would like to establish the intimate connection which exists between

Montaigne and Nietzsche, between the greatest of French moralists and the greatest of Germans. A vast literature has grown up in recent years round the personality and works of Nietzsche, which would already fill a moderately sized library. It is therefore strange that no critic should have emphasized and explained the close filiation between him and Montaigne. It is all the more strange because Nietzsche himself has acknowledged his debt to the "Essays" with a frankness which leaves no room to doubt.

To anyone who knows how careful Nietzsche was to safeguard his originality, such an acknowledgment is in itself sufficient proof of the immense power which Montaigne wielded over Nietzsche at a decisive and critical period of his intellectual development. But only a systematic comparison could show that we have to do here with something more than a mental stimulus and a quickening of ideas, that Montaigne's "Essays" have provided the foundations of Nietzsche's philosophy, and that the Frenchman may rightly be called, and in a very definite sense, the "spiritual father" of the German.

II.

At first sight this statement must appear paradoxical, and a first reading of the two writers reveals their differences rather than their resemblances. The one strikes us as essentially the sane; the other, even in his first books, reveals that lack of mental balance which was to terminate in insanity. The one is a genial sceptic; the other is a fanatic dogmatist. To Montaigne life is a comedy; to his disciple life is a tragedy. The one philosophizes with a smile; the other, to use his own expression, philosophizes with a hammer. The one is a Conservative; the other is a herald of revolt. The one is constitutionally moderate and temperate; the other is nearly always extreme and violent in his judgment. The one is a practical man of the world; the other is a poet and a dreamer and a mystic. The one is quaintly pedantic, and his page is often a mosaic of quotations; the other is supremely original. The one is profuse in his professions of loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church; the other calls himself Anti-Christ.

III.

There can be no doubt that if the characteristics which we have just referred to belonged essentially to Montaigne, there would be little affinity between the thought of Nietzsche and that of Montaigne. And it would be impossible to

account for the magnetic attraction which drew Nietzsche to the study of the "Essays," and for the enthusiasm with which they inspired him. But I am convinced that those characteristics are not the essential characteristics. I am convinced that there is another Montaigne who has nothing in common with the Montaigne of convention and tradition. I am convinced that the scepticism, the Conservatism, the irony, the moderation, the affectation of humility, frivolity, pedantry, and innocent candour, are only a mask and disguise which Montaigne has put on to conceal his identity, that they are only so many tricks and dodges to lead the temporal and spiritual powers off the track, and to reassure them as to his orthodoxy. I am convinced that beneath and beyond the Montaigne of convention and tradition there is another much bigger and much deeper Montaigne, whose identity would have staggered his contemporaries, and would have landed him in prison. And it is this unconventional and real Montaigne who is the spiritual father of Nietzsche.

It is obviously impossible, within the limits of a brief paper, to prove this far-reaching statement and to establish the existence of an esoteric and profound meaning in the "Essays." I shall only refer to a passage which is ignored by most commentators, which has been added in the posthumous edition, in which Montaigne himself admits such a double and esoteric meaning, and which seems to me to give the key to the interpretation of the "Essays":

"I know very well that when I hear anyone dwell upon the language of my essays, I had rather a great deal he would say nothing: 'tis not so much to elevate the style as to depress the sense, and so much the more offensively as they do it obliquely; and yet I am much deceived if many other writers deliver more worth noting as to the matter, and, how well or ill soever, if any other writer has sown things much more material, or at all events more downright, upon his paper than myself. To bring the more in, I only muster up the heads; should I annex the sequel I should trebly multiply the volume. And how many stories have I scattered up and down in this book, that I only touch upon, which, should anyone more curiously search into, they would find matter enough to produce infinite essays. Neither those stories nor my quotations always serve simply for example, authority, or ornament; I do not only regard them for the use I make of them; they carry sometimes, besides what I apply them to, the seed of a more rich and a bolder matter, and sometimes, collaterally, a more delicate sound, both to myself, who will say no more about it in this place, and to others who shall be of my humour."

IV.

The real and esoteric Montaigne is, like Nietzsche, a herald of revolt, one of the most revolutionary thinkers of all times. And the Gascon philosopher who philosophizes with a smile is far more dangerous than the Teuton who philosophizes with a hammer. The corrosive acid of his irony is more destructive than the violence of the other. Like Nietzsche, Montaigne transvalues all our moral values. Nothing is absolute; everything is relative. There is no law in morals.

“The laws of conscience, which we pretend to be derived from nature, proceed from custom; everyone having an inward veneration for the opinions and manners approved and received amongst his own people, cannot, without very great reluctance, depart from them, nor apply himself to them without applause.”

There is no absolute law in politics. And one form of government is as good as another.

“Such people as have been bred up to liberty, and subject to no other dominion but the authority of their own will, look upon all other forms of government as monstrous and contrary to nature. Those who are inured to monarchy do the same; and what opportunity soever fortune presents them with to change, even then, when with the greatest difficulties they have disengaged themselves from one master, that was troublesome and grievous to them, they presently run, with the same difficulties, to create another; being unable to take into hatred subjection itself.”

There is no law in religion. There is no justification in patriotism. The choice of religion is not a matter of conscience or of reason, but of custom and climate. We are Christians by the same title as we are Perigordins or Germans.

V.

If to destroy all human principles and illusions is to be a sceptic, Montaigne is the greatest sceptic that ever existed. But Montaigne's scepticism is only a means to an end. On the ruin of all philosophies and religions Montaigne, like Nietzsche, has built up a dogmatism of his own. The foundation of that dogmatism in both is an unbounded faith in life and in nature. Like Nietzsche, Montaigne is an optimist. At the very outset of the “Essays” he proclaims the joy of life. He preaches the *gaya scienza*, the *fröhliche Wissenschaft*. All our

sufferings are due to our departing from the teachings of Nature. The chapter on cannibalism, from which Shakespeare has borrowed a famous passage in "The Tempest," and which has probably suggested the character of Caliban, must be taken in literal sense. The savage who lives in primitive simplicity comes nearer to Montaigne's ideal of perfection than the philosopher and the saint.

VI.

And this brings us to the fundamental analogy between Nietzsche and Montaigne. Like the German, the Frenchman is a pure pagan. Here, again, we must not be misled by the innumerable professions of faith, generally added in later editions and not included in the edition of 1580. Montaigne is uncompromisingly hostile to Christianity. His Catholicism must be understood as the Catholicism of Auguste Comte, defined by Huxley—namely, Catholicism minus Christianity. He glorifies suicide. He abhors the self-suppression of asceticism; he derides chastity, humility, mortification—every virtue which we are accustomed to associate with the Christian faith. He glorifies self-assertion and the pride of life. Not once does he express even the most remote sympathy for the heroes of the Christian Church, for the saints and martyrs. On the other hand, again and again he indulges in lyrical raptures for the achievements of the great men of Greece and Rome. He is an intellectual aristocrat. His ideal policy is the policy of the Spartans—"almost miraculous in its perfection." His ideal man is the pagan hero—the superman of antiquity—Alcibiades, Epaminondas, Alexander, Julius Cæsar.

III.—TREITSCHKE^[14] AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRUSSIANISM.

There is a most baneful delusion which has misled the Allies from the beginning of the war, and which is still being acted on after three years of a desperate struggle—namely, that we are mainly fighting a sinister political dynasty and a formidable political machine constructed with all the diabolical ingenuity and armed with all the resources of the destructive genius of man. If, indeed, we had only been confronted by the Kaiser and his paladins, or only threatened by his military machine, the war would long ago have been ended—if not by the Allies, then by the German people themselves. Millions of people, however loyal, do not allow themselves to be slaughtered for a dynast, even though that dynast claims to be a Superman, even though he be called Prince of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen or Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, even though he be

called Prince Henry XXI. of Reuss of the younger branch or Prince Henry LXXXVIII. of Reuss of the older branch. Whole nations do not indefinitely submit to being the slaves of a machine, however diabolical and however perfect. The truth is that behind the German princes and princelings and Junkers there is the resolve of a united people. Behind the Prussian machine there is the driving power of tremendous spiritual and moral forces, of an inflexible purpose, of a compelling idealism, of a mystical creed accepted with more than Mohammedan fanaticism. It is that national purpose, it is those spiritual forces, which explain the unconquerable pride of the German people, as evil and as lofty as the pride of Satan in "Paradise Lost." It is these which explain their devotion and self-sacrifice, it is these which explain the Teutonic legions marching to their doom singing their hymns of love as well as their hymns of hatred. It is these which explain the two million volunteers which in August, 1914, went to swell the huge German conscript armies. It is the obsession of that mystical German creed which explains the epic achievements of the German offensive and the even more astounding achievements of the German defensive. We may continue to denounce the crimes of Germany and the atrocities of the German soldiery—and I have personally denounced them until my readers must have got sick of my denunciations. But there is nothing particularly mysterious in crimes and atrocities, and crimes and atrocities alone do not help to explain the German soul. Crimes and atrocities do not make us understand how even to-day the German hosts are still able to challenge a whole world in arms.

Let us, then, take in the vital fact that after three years those German spiritual forces, those perverted German ideals, remain the most formidable obstacle in our path. We may continue to destroy the German armies by the slow process of attrition, and we may continue to sacrifice the flower of our youth until the process is completed. We may trust to our superiority in money-power and in man-power, but unless we also break the moral power of German ideals, unless we exorcise the spell which possesses the German mind, unless we triumph in the spiritual contest as well as in the battle of tanks and howitzers, unless we overthrow the idols which successive generations of great teachers and preachers have imposed on a susceptible, receptive, and docile people, there will be no early settlement, nor, however long belated, can there ever be a lasting peace.

The foregoing remarks may justify the following attempt to interpret and to make intelligible, even to the most inattentive reader, the creed of one of the most powerful of those teachers and preachers who have taken such mysterious and uncanny possession of the soul of the German nation. Before 1914 none

except a few initiated had ever heard of Treitschke. Since 1914 he has become a household name and a name of evil import. But to the immense majority of readers that name, however familiar and ominous, remains an empty name. *Nomen flatus vocis*. And even those to whom the name conveys something more definite do not trouble about its meaning. With that strange disbelief in the power of ideas which is one of our lamentable weaknesses, and which even the war has not been able to cure, even yet we have not brought ourselves to take seriously those terrible theories which have burnt themselves into the Teutonic imagination. And so indifferent have we remained to doctrines so far-reaching and so deadly that the recent publication of an excellent English translation of Treitschke's "German History," one of the masterpieces of historical literature, has had to be suspended for the incredible reason that there was no British public to read it.

On approaching the study of Treitschke's works, we are at once impressed by the inexorable logic of his political and moral creed. There is, perhaps, no other instance of a system so splendidly consistent in its principles. We are told that the great French naturalist, Cuvier, was able to reconstruct the whole anatomy of an animal merely through examining the structure of a tooth or the fragment of a bone. Applying to the German historian the method which Cuvier applied to the antediluvian mastodon, we can reduce the whole complex political philosophy of Treitschke from a few fundamental principles which he follows with a single mind, and which the Prussian State has applied with an equally relentless consistency both in its internal and in its foreign policy.

It is this magnificent consistency, this confident dogmatism, which gives us the secret of the enormous influence of Treitschke on his countrymen, as it explains the hypnotism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau on a previous generation. I do not think it would be easy to overestimate the extent of that influence. It is true that in one sense Treitschke's political philosophy only expresses the Prussian policy, and that he did not create it. But when a political ideal is expounded with such clarity and such force, when it is propagated with such enthusiasm, when it takes such exclusive hold of the mind, it becomes a hundred times more efficient and more dangerous; it acquires the compelling force and inspires the fanaticism of religion. Those readers who will follow Treitschke's close reasoning to the end will probably agree with me that the political creed of which he has been the apostle and prophet is substantially the same creed which has plunged Europe into the present world war, and that, more than any one thinker, much more certainly than Nietzsche, Treitschke must be held responsible for the catastrophe.

I have confined myself to expounding the doctrines of Treitschke. I have not attempted to refute them. It is not my object to denounce: there is always a sufficient number of publicists ever ready to undertake the task of denunciation. I am only trying to understand. Nor have I dwelt on any side-issues. I have restricted myself to those simple and fundamental axioms which have directed the policy of Prussia. Almost invariably in human history it is only the simple, sweeping dogmas which obtain universal acceptance.

I.—TREITSCHKE AS THE REPRESENTATIVE PRUSSIAN.

There exist in the realm of fiction certain literary types which are an equal joy to the creative artist and to the student of human nature. There are certain malignant diseases which are an inspiration to the pathologist. And there are criminal cases which are a revelation to the lawyer: test cases which lead up to new discoveries and illustrate fundamental principles. What those classical types of Balzac or Dostoievski are to the critic, what those diseases and criminal cases are to the surgeon and the lawyer, the writings of Treitschke are to the student of history and politics; they throw a new and vivid light on the dark and hidden depths of the Prussian mind. They reveal like no other German writings the meaning of German policy, the spirit which inspires it. They explain what without them would have remained unexplained. He is much more than the historian of the Prussian State, he is the champion of its ideals. Much better than Bismarck, or the Kaiser, or than the "Clown Prince," he makes clear to us the aims and the aspirations of the Hohenzollern monarchy and of the German nation.

In the history of literature and thought it is given to but very few writers thus to become the spokesmen of a whole people. To achieve such importance a writer must possess many qualifications. He must possess a strong and dominating character. He must be a great literary artist. He must be a clear, a bold, and an independent thinker. The following pages will show in how eminent a degree Treitschke possessed all those qualities and how unreservedly they were placed at the service of the Prussian cause.

II.—TREITSCHKE'S PERSONALITY.

The first quality which challenges attention is the commanding strength of his personality. He combines the most contradictory gifts: the temperament of the

artist, the imagination of the poet, the inspiring faith of the idealist, the practical sense of the realist, and the enthusiasm of the apostle. He always impresses you with that magnetic sense of power into which Carlyle impresses his readers. Like Carlyle, he is a firm believer in the heroic, and he has himself the temper of a hero. Three of his volumes of essays bear the significant title, “*Deutsche Kämpfe*” (“German Battles”). All through his career Treitschke has been fighting his patriotic battles. Obsessed by his ideals, he always has the courage of his convictions, and is always ready to suffer for them. In his early youth he had a painful quarrel with his father, a Saxon General and a loyal servant of the Saxon dynasty, because the son would not refrain from his attacks on Saxon “particularism” and would not abstain from championing the Prussian cause. Treitschke never evades a difficulty. He is never swayed by outside influences. He never dreads contradiction. When facts do not tally with his favourite theories, he brushes them away. And he never accepts any compromise. He is all made of one piece. He has the hardness of granite. He has never been afraid of unpopularity. He has always been a loyal friend and an equally staunch hater.

III.—TREITSCHKE AS A WRITER.

“*Le style est l’homme.*” Never was Buffon’s dictum more strikingly verified, and never did any literary style reveal so completely the personality of the man. Treitschke’s style is imperious and aggressive. It has the ring of the General who gives the word of command. His sentences are not involved, as German sentences generally are. They are pregnant and concise. Treitschke often reminds one of a writer whom of all others he most cordially detests. Like Heine, Treitschke is incisive, epigrammatic. His phrase has always muscle and nerve: it has warmth and fervour. Treitschke has not the gift of humour. A German seldom possesses that redeeming gift. But he wields the weapon of trenchant irony with terrible force, and he adds the poet’s power of vision and the true historian’s sense of reality and sense of individuality. He has Macaulay’s gift of orderly narrative. He is equally masterly in describing a battle scene, a meeting of diplomatists, a revolutionary movement. His picture of the Congress of Vienna is unsurpassed in historical literature. Like Saint-Simon, he can sum up a character in a few lines. German historians are seldom skilful portrait-painters. Treitschke forms an exception. His portraits of Talleyrand, of Metternich, of Tsar Alexander I., of Leopold I., King of the Belgians, are masterpieces of the literary craft.

IV.—TREITSCHKE AS A CLEAR AND ORIGINAL THINKER.

But all those artistic gifts would not have given him his commanding influence in the world of practical politics if he had not added the gifts of clear thinking and luminous exposition, which are so very rare in Germany. Treitschke is essentially an honest and systematic thinker. As Professor of History in the University of Berlin, he was accustomed to make intricate and abstract subjects interesting and intelligible to vast audiences of students. We are never left in any doubt as to his inner meaning. He always goes straight to the point. There are no equivocations or mental reservations. He has the brevity but none of the ambiguity of the lawgiver. There are no gaps in his reasoning. He moves from one point to another in orderly sequence. Our intellectual and artistic joy in following the severe and simple outline of his political system is only marred by the thought of the appalling practical consequences of those doctrines.

And not only is he a clear thinker. He is also an original and independent thinker. He has not the professional taint of the German pedant. He has the German professor's minute knowledge of concrete facts, and his doctrinaire love of abstract principles, but he is not a mere scholar and teacher. He always remains the man of the world, and he brings to the consideration of historical problems the practical experience which he gained as a journalist and as a member of the Reichstag. He does not apply any conventional standards to his judgments of men and events. He looks at everything from his own angle. There is a delightful freshness about everything he writes. He believes that the first duty of an historian is to be partial. He always follows a bias, but it is his own bias. In his German history he has not been content with digging up thousands of new facts from the recesses of German records; he gives his own interpretation to the facts. He has no respect for established fame, for existing theories. He delights in shocking his readers. In his "Götzendämmerung," or "Twilight of the Gods," Nietzsche has shown us how to "philosophize with a hammer." Treitschke has written history with a hammer, and all his writings are strewn with the fragments of broken idols and shattered reputations.

V.—THE PRUSSIAN STATE THE CENTRE OF TREITSCHKE'S LITERARY ACTIVITIES.

All Treitschke's activities have centred round one subject: the history and policy of the Prussian State. All his loyalties are given to one cause, the supremacy of the German Empire led by the Prussian State. He has been a voluminous writer, and he has written on the most varied subjects. But all those

subjects have only been taken up with the one object of elucidating Prussian problems and directing Prussian policy. His studies on Federalism, on the United Netherlands—by far the most suggestive survey of Dutch history which has so far been attempted—are intended to solve the problem of the relation of Prussia to the Federal States of the German Empire. His study on Cavour and Italian unity was undertaken as an introduction to the study of German unity. His admirable monograph on that strange and unique military theocracy of the Teutonic order was an essay on the early history of Prussia. His volume on Bonapartism was a study of the chief political opponent of Prussian supremacy. Briefly, all his volumes of essays have been preparatory to his life-work, the history of Germany, and the history of Germany itself is always kept subordinate to the history of the Prussian State.

VI.—TREITSCHKE'S TREATISE ON POLITICS.

It is much to be regretted that the British public should have been first introduced to Treitschke's "History of Germany." The "History of Germany" is, no doubt, the most important and the most monumental, but it is by no means the most interesting nor the most significant of Treitschke's writings. German history could never be as arresting to a Continental student as British or French history. It is not mixed up with universal events. It is too parochial. It does not evoke human sympathy. With all the magic of Treitschke's art, we feel that we are following, not the great highway, but one of the by-ways of history. We cannot get absorbed in the petty quarrels of the princelings of the German Federation. Of the five volumes of Treitschke's "German History," the only part which is of general interest is the first volume, dealing with the rise of Prussia, the reign of Frederick the Great and his successors, the Napoleonic wars, and the Congress of Vienna.

As often happens, it is mainly through his minor writings that Treitschke will live—through his "Cavour," his "United Netherlands," his "Bonapartism," and his Biographical Essays. But to the philosophical student by far the most important of Treitschke's writings are his two volumes on the Science of Politics, which are, without exception, the most fascinating and the most suggestive political treatise published in this generation. Political treatises are proverbially dull and out of touch with reality. Treitschke's treatise is a solitary exception. To him politics are not, like mathematics, an abstract or a deductive science. We cannot build an ideal political structure in the air. The political thinker must be more modest in his ambitions. He cannot adduce first principles.

All politics must be *Realpolitik*. All politics must be based on concrete historical facts—*i.e.*, circumscribed in time and space. Indeed, strictly considered, political philosophy is only applied history. That is why political treatises are so disappointing. The philosopher is content to generalize, and does not know the facts. On the other hand, the historian who knows the facts has not the capacity of generalization. Politics must be mainly empirical. The political thinker does not reason forward from the past to the present, but backwards from the present to the past. He studies the present results of the mature experience of many ages, and then explains the distant past in the light of the present.

VII.—PRUSSIA THE SOLE STANDARD OF POLITICAL VALUES.

Not only has Prussian history been the centre of all Treitschke's activities; it also supplies him with the sole standard of all political values, the sole test of the truth of all political theories. With superb logic he deduces all his political system from the vicissitudes of the Brandenburg State. His sympathies and antipathies, his affinities and repulsions, are Prussian. Prussia and the German Empire have monopolized all human virtues. His only enemies are the enemies of the Prussian State (see paragraphs [VIII.](#) and [IX.](#) of this Essay).

Prussia is a national State, exclusive, self-sufficient, self-contained. Therefore, the national State is the supreme and final political reality (see paragraph [XI.](#)).

All the theories which challenge or threaten this conception of the national State are dismissed by Treitschke as damnable heresies: the heresy of individualism (see paragraph [XII.](#)), the heresy of internationalism (see paragraph [XIII.](#)), and the heresy of imperialism (paragraph [XIV.](#)).

The one aim of the Prussian State has been the extension of Prussian power. Therefore the will to power must be the fundamental dogma of the State (paragraph [XV.](#)).

Prussia has always subordinated political ethics to national aggrandizement; therefore Treitschke holds with Machiavelli that in politics the end justifies the means (paragraph [XVI.](#)).

Prussia has only expanded through war. War has been the national industry of the Prussian people. Therefore war is considered by Treitschke as the vital principle of national life (paragraph [XVII.](#)).

Prussia has been the family estate of the Hohenzollern dynasty; therefore the monarchy must be considered as the ideal form of government (paragraph XVIII.).

The Prussian military aristocracy of Junkers have been the mainstay of the Prussian State; therefore an aristocratic government is a corollary of the monarchic form of government, and the French democratic theory of government is the arch-heresy (paragraphs XIX. and XX.).

Prussia has been the leading Protestant State; therefore Roman Catholicism must be held to be inconsistent with the prosperity of any modern polity (paragraph XXI.).

Prussia, from a small straggling territory, has grown to be one of the leading Powers of Europe by the gradual absorption of all the surrounding small States; therefore only great Powers have a right to exist (paragraph XXII.); therefore small States are a monstrosity (paragraph XXIII.).

VIII.—TREITSCHKE'S POLITICAL PAGANISM.

There is no counterpart in modern history to the development of the Prussian State, no political structure so entirely self-contained and self-sufficient, which has so continuously pursued its own selfish ends. For an exact analogy it is necessary to revert to ancient history; therefore Treitschke's sympathies go to the ancient State much more than to the modern State. In his religion he is a devout Lutheran. But in his political conceptions he is entirely pagan. To him the politics of Aristotle remain the fountain of all political wisdom. The modern man in order to understand the majesty of the State must free himself of a whole mass of acquired notions. In quiet and peaceful times the average man may pursue his private avocations and hardly give a thought to the State. It was different in antiquity. The ancient city State was everything, and was felt to be everything, so that the citizen could not conceive himself as apart from the State. That is why they had a much stronger and healthier political sense, an instinctive comprehension for, and a passionate devotion to, the State. The moderns have ceased to live and move in the State. They are divided and distracted by their social and economic interests. Only the modern Prussian feels for Prussia as the Roman and the Spartan felt for their native countries. To the Prussian alone, as to the Roman and the Spartan, the devotion to the State is glorified into a religion, the religion of patriotism.

IX.—TREITSCHKE'S ANTIPATHIES AND HATREDS.

Even as his sympathies, so are Treitschke's antipathies determined by his Prussian preconceptions. Whatever is alien to Prussian ideals is odious to Treitschke. Whoever has opposed the growth of the Prussian State or threatened its future becomes a personal enemy. And, as every State has had to oppose the predatory policy of Prussia, and is threatened by its ambitions, as, to use Treitschke's own words, "Prussia was the best hated of all the German States from the first days of her independent history," the antipathies of the Prussian historian are almost universal. And what a fierce hater he is; what unlimited power of vituperation; what intensity of bitter feeling! He hates Talleyrand, Lord Palmerston, King Leopold of Belgium, with a personal animosity. He hates Britain and France. He hates Austria and the small German Principalities. He hates Belgium and Holland; and, above all, he loathes and despises the Jews.

X.—TREITSCHKE'S HATRED OF THE JEWS.

No nation inspires Treitschke with a more instinctive repulsion than the Jews. He may be called the father of scientific and pedantic anti-Semitism. In other nations anti-Semitism was only an instinctive and irrational popular feeling. In Treitschke anti-Semitism becomes a systematic doctrine. It becomes part of a political creed. Treitschke hates the Jews because they are unwarlike, because they are absorbed in material interests, because they are Atheists. He abhors the Gospel according to Saint Marx. He denounces the cynicism of Heine. He dreads the influence of the Jewish Press. But, above all, he hates the Jews because they are denationalized, because they have no stake in the prosperity and greatness of the national State. The Jews are wanderers without a settled existence, without allegiance and loyalty except to their own race. The dual political life which the Jews are leading as members of the Jewish nation and as parasites of other national States to which they have temporarily migrated is a permanent menace to a healthy national German life. Everywhere the Jews are revolutionists, anarchists, Atheists. All the leaders of the German Social Democracy—Lassalle, Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Bernstein—are Hebrews. It is the imperative duty of all Prussian patriots to guard the people against the Jewish danger, against Jewish journalism, Jewish finance, Jewish materialism, Jewish socialism, and Jewish internationalism.

XI.—THE THEORY OF THE NATIONAL STATE.

Let us revert to the starting-point of Treitschke's politics, which is the theory of the national State. Only in the national State can the individual realize the higher moral and political life. The State is not part of a larger whole. It is in itself a self-contained whole. It is not a means to an end; it is an end in itself. It is not a relative conception; it is an absolute. The French people may fight for humanity. A St. Louis may be inspired with the crusading spirit. Treitschke has no sympathy for such quixotism. The national State must be selfish. To be unselfish is the mortal sin of politics. Humanity, sentimentalism, have no place in politics. Frederick William IV., the one sentimental King in the whole history of the Hohenzollern Dynasty, once rendered an unselfish service to his neighbours. A Prussian army saved the Saxon monarchy from revolution and then withdrew. Treitschke has no words strong enough to condemn this solitary instance of a disinterested Prussian policy.

The national State is alone invested with the attributes of sovereignty. There is nothing above it. National rights must be final. The national State may for the time being limit its absolute sovereignty by international agreements, but any such agreements are only conditional and temporary—*rebus sic stantibus*. No national State can make international agreements which are binding for the future. The time must always come when the scrap of paper has to be torn asunder. It is true that the national State is indirectly playing its part in the moral education of humanity, but it will best serve humanity by only thinking of itself.

XII.—THE HERESY OF INDIVIDUALISM.

There are many heresies which threaten the orthodox religion of the national State. The first and the most dangerous is the heresy of individualism. A school of modern theorists, William von Humboldt and John Stuart Mill, have asserted the rights of the individual apart from and above the rights of the State. They reserve for the individual a sphere where the State may not encroach. According to Mill, the political life is only a part and the minor part of his social activities. His higher activities are spent in the service of the Church, in the service of Art and Science.

Treitschke has fought this heresy of individualism in all his writings. The interest of the individual cannot be opposed to the interest of the State. The individual can only realize himself, he can only realize the higher life, in and through the State. It is the State which sets free the spiritual forces of the individual by securing for him security, prosperity, and economic independence.

XIII.—THE HERESY OF INTERNATIONALISM.

The second deadly heresy which threatens the dogma of the national State is the heresy of internationalism. It takes the form either of the black internationalism of the Catholic Church or the red internationalism of Social Democracy. Treitschke has fought Roman Catholicism and its champions, the Jesuits, with relentless hate. Through all his writings there sounds the watchword of Voltaire, the spiritual adviser of Frederick the Great, “Écrasez l’infâme,” and the battle-cry of Gambetta, “Le clericalisme, voilà l’ennemi.” Nor is he less bitter against the Socialists. Bismarck and the Kaiser opposed the encroachments of the Social Democracy in a succession of anti-Socialist repressive measures. Treitschke may have disapproved of some of the *Sozialisten Gesetze* because they defeated their purpose. But he shares the Kaiser’s hatred against those irreconcilable enemies of Prussian greatness. The Social Democratic theories of the Jews—Lassalle, Marx, and Bernstein—are one of the most deadly poisons that imperil the constitution of the German body politic.

Events have shown how little even Treitschke realized the strength of the Prussian State and the fanaticism of German nationalism. We know how little his dread of the black International of Catholicism and the red International of Socialism has been justified by the servile attitude of all the Opposition parties, and how, when the crisis came, both Catholics and Socialists proved as Prussian as the Junkers of Pomerania.

XIV.—THE HERESY OF IMPERIALISM.

If it be true that the citizen can only realize himself through the national State, if the whole course of human history is essentially a conflict of national States, and if the rich variety of civilization is made up of the rivalry of those national States, it logically follows that the expansion of any national State into a world empire must necessarily be baneful. The State must, no doubt, expand, but there is a limit to that expansion. The State must not incorporate any alien races which it cannot assimilate. When the State is unable to absorb heterogeneous elements and grows into a world empire, it becomes a danger both to itself and to humanity.

Civilization has been threatened in the past by such monstrous conglomerates of heterogeneous nations. It has been threatened by the Spanish tyranny of Charles V. and the French tyranny of Louis XIV. and Napoleon. It is still

threatened to-day by a similar danger. Two national States, Great Britain and Russia, have again grown into world empires. If their ambitions were to succeed, if the greater part of the civilized world were to become either Anglo-Saxon or Russian, there would be an end to the diversity and the liberty of modern civilization. Only the good sword of Prussia and Germany can save humanity from that Anglo-Saxon and Slav peril.

XV.—THE DOGMA OF THE “WILL TO POWER.”

But the fact that there is danger in the unlimited expansion of the national State ought not to prevent us from recognizing that irresistible tendency to expansion. The “will to power” is the essence of the State. “The State is power” (*Der Staat ist Macht*) must ever be the first axiom of political science. Muddled political thinkers, who confuse the spiritual with the temporal activities of man, may hold that the end of the State is social justice, or the diffusion of light, or the propagation of religion, or the advancement of humanity. But the cause of justice, the spread of education, will best be furthered if the State is strong. Only the strong can be just, partial, and enlightened. The sole criterion of political values is strength. It is the supreme merit of Machiavelli that he has been the first to emphasize this cardinal truth. The mortal sin of a State is to be weak. Only the strong man, only a Bismarck, a Richelieu, a Cavour, is a true statesman.

And that strength of the State which is its chief attribute must not be dispersed; that political power must neither be divided nor alienated. Many writers on politics still echo the absurd theory of Montesquieu on the division of the executive, legislative, and the judiciary. Treitschke, following Rousseau, lays down the axiom that the power of the State is indivisible and inalienable.

XVI.—THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS.

If the one virtue of the State is to be strong and to assert its strength, it follows that the ethics of the State cannot be the ethics of the individual. The ruler of the State is not the head of a monastery or the president of an academy of fine arts. The end must justify the means, and any means may be employed which will add to the strength of the State. It is the glory of Frederick the Great that he has always had the moral courage of brushing away conventions and scruples to achieve his object, and that he has always had the political insight and wisdom of adjusting the means to the end.

XVII.—WAR AS THE VITAL PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL LIFE.

Prussia is not, like France, the result of a thousand years of natural growth. It has no definite natural boundaries. The Prussian State is an artificial creation. It has grown and expanded through conquest. It is the Order of the Teutonic Knights, it is the warrior dynasty of the Hohenzollern, who have built up Prussian power. That purely military growth of the Prussian State is made by Treitschke into a universal rule of all political growth. According to him war always was and will remain the master-builder of national life. Other thinkers, like Joseph de Maistre, have glorified war in the name of theology. Treitschke extols it in the name of politics. War not only makes a State: it makes the citizen. The heroic virtues are warlike virtues; they are the outcome of military institutions. It is not war but peace which is the evil. Woe to the nation which allows itself to be deceived by the sentiment and cowardice of pacifists.

XVIII.—THE MONARCHY AS THE IDEAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

War is the essential activity of the State. But in order to be strong in war, unity and concentration are essential; they are the conditions of victory. That unity may, no doubt, be achieved under any form of government. It may be achieved under a republic, as it was during the wars of the French Revolution. It may be achieved under an aristocracy, as in the case of Great Britain, which is a monarchy only in name, which, in reality, is a Parliamentary oligarchy, and which is always waging some guerilla in some outlying post of empire. But the fact remains that unity can be best achieved under a monarchic form of government, which concentrates all powers into the hands of the responsible monarch. That is why monarchy is the best form of government.

XIX.—THE ARISTOCRACY AS THE MAINSTAY OF THE MONARCHIC STATE.

A loyal military aristocracy like the Junkers is the mainstay of a national monarchy. An aristocratic constitution of the State is in conformity with the nature of things. Not only all military activities but all social and economic life depends on the distinction of classes, on the existence of different grades corresponding to a difference in natural endowment, in social service. The equality of man not only is an unattainable ideal, it is also an undesirable and a mischievous ideal. Suppress inequality and distinctions and honours and you suppress the main stimulus of human endeavour; you suppress that rich

differentiation of social life, that generous rivalry, that noble ambition, which are the conditions of all intensive human activity.

XX.—THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY DOGMA OF EQUALITY.

The greatest danger, therefore, to the monarchic and aristocratic constitution of the State arises from the insidious advance of the French revolutionary dogma of equality. The spirit of envy is undermining the social hierarchy in every country. That mean spirit of democratic envy is as old as the democratic institution itself. Ostracism in the nobler elements of the community is as characteristic of the Greek democracy as of the French. All democracies have resented that Aristides should be called the "Just." So far it is only the Prussian State which has escaped from the poisonous doctrine of Rousseau. But even in Prussia the progress of the Gospel according to Saint Marx is a disquieting symptom. To defend the prerogatives of the Junkers against the assaults of the Social Democracy must therefore be one of the main political concerns of a patriotic Prussian.

XXI.—THE PLEA FOR PROTESTANTISM.

It may be said that Protestantism is so closely identified with modern German history that it may almost be considered as the Germanic form of Christianity. Certainly Prussia is an essentially Protestant State. From the beginning it has grown from the secularization of Church property, when a Hohenzollern Grand Master, following the advice of Luther, took the bold step of confiscating the demesnes of the Teutonic Order. But it is not only Prussia that has grown and prospered through Protestantism. The Protestant form of Christianity in whatever form is essential to the very existence of the modern State. For no State can exist unless the spiritual power be subordinated to the temporal power. The Protestant Church must needs accept that subordination because Protestantism must necessarily result in a diversity of rival and powerless sects, and therefore, if it be true that Protestantism is necessary for the State, the State is even more necessary to Protestantism. The old dictum, *Cujus regio, illius religio*, holds good of Prussia. The spiritual allegiance follows the temporal allegiance. The State alone can secure for those different Churches that peace and toleration without which religious war becomes a chronic evil. Toleration and the peaceful coexistence of many Churches under the protection of the State have been for centuries the boast and glory of the Prussian State.

Catholicism does not accept that necessary subordination. The German State of the Middle Ages, the Holy Roman Empire of the Hohenstaufen, perished because of the conflict with the Papacy. The modern Teutonic State, the Holy German Empire of the Habsburg, has equally perished through clericalism. Catholicism is an international power, and the State must be national. Catholicism is encroaching and threatening the national State, and the State must remain independent and supreme; therefore Catholicism, ultramontanism, clericalism, are absolutely incompatible with the modern State.

XXII.—THE NECESSITY OF GREAT POWERS.

Inasmuch as power is the main attribute of the State, it follows that only those States which are sufficiently strong in population, in territory, and in financial resources, have a right to exist. There is a definite limit below which a State cannot fulfil its mission nor defend its existence. We must not be deceived by the example of such States as Athens, Venice, Holland, and Florence, which, although apparently small in territory, yet played an important part in political history. Those States were only small in outward appearance; in reality they were either the centres of a vast political system, like Athens and Florence, or the centres of a vast colonial empire, like Venice and Holland. Moreover, in modern times, the whole relations and proportions of States have undergone a fundamental change. Everything is on a larger scale, and there is an almost general tendency in modern times for all national States to expand and to absorb into themselves the smaller neighbouring States. It may almost be said that modern history is made up mainly of the conflicts between five or six leading States. Contemporary Europe had resulted in the unstable equilibrium of the five dominant Powers of Britain, Russia, Austria, France, and Germany. Europe has almost consolidated into a pentarchy.

XXIII.—THE ANOMALY OF THE SMALL STATE.

If it be true that the national State almost inevitably must develop into a great Power, conversely it is no less true that small States are an anomaly. Treitschke never ceased to rail at the monstrosity of petty States, at what he calls, with supreme contempt, the "*Kleinstaaterei*." Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, are not really States. They are only artificial and temporary structures. Holland will one day be merged into the German Empire and recover its pristine glory.

The smallness of the State produces a corresponding meanness of spirit, a narrowness of outlook. Small States are entirely absorbed by their petty economic interests and party dissensions. They only exist as the parasites of the larger States, who ensure their prosperity and security and bear all the brunt of maintaining law and order in Europe.

But worse even than the small States is the neutral State. A neutral State in political life is as much a monstrosity as a neutral sexless animal in the natural world. A State like Belgium is only the parasite of the larger neighbouring States. Treitschke never mentions Belgium without an outburst of contempt. The country of Memlinck and van Eyck, of Rubens and van Dyck, the country whose people in the present war have borne the first onslaught of all the Teutonic hosts, are never mentioned by Treitschke except with a sneer.

In no other part of his political system does Treitschke show more sublime disregard of all those political facts which do not fit in with his theories. No other part more conclusively proves how the tyrannical dogma of Prussian nationalism can blind even a profound and clear-sighted thinker to the most vital historical realities. It must be apparent *a priori* to any student of politics that the life of small communities must gain in concentration and intensity what it loses in scope and extent. And it must be obvious that small States have played a much more conspicuous part than the most powerful empires. The city of Dante, Machiavelli, Michael Angelo, has done more for culture than all the might and majesty of the Hohenzollern. Humanity is indebted to one small State—Palestine—for its religion. To another small State—Greece—humanity owes the beginning of all art and the foundations of politics. To other small States—Holland and Scotland—modern Europe is indebted for its political freedom. And are not the German people themselves indebted for the glories of their literature to the contemptible cities of Jena and Weimar?

XXIV.

We have explained the main tenets of the Treitschkean creed. Even after this exhaustive analysis it will be difficult for an English reader to understand how such a system, if we divest it of its rhetoric, of its fervid and impassioned style, and of a wealth of historical illustration, which has been able to ransack every country and every age, could ever have inspired a policy and could have hypnotized so completely a highly intelligent and gifted race.

Our incomprehension is partly due to that strange disbelief in the power of ideas to which we already referred, which remains such a marked trait of the British people, even as it was a marked trait of the Roman people, and which is perhaps characteristic of all nations who are pre-eminent in action, in colonization and empire-building. This disbelief partly explains why we have revealed such strange impotence in fighting our spiritual battles. Our Churches have remained silent and inarticulate. Our statesmen have seldom risen above sentimental platitudes. No trumpet voice has vindicated our ideas to the world. Our writers, with a few notable exceptions, such as Mr. Gilbert Chesterton and Mr. Wells, have seldom risen above trite truisms. This war has not even produced a masterpiece such as Burke's "Thoughts on the French Revolution."

But our incomprehension is due even more to our ignorance of the strange and devious workings of the German mind. Even to-day few authors understand the reasons which render the German people so responsive and so docile to the most extravagant doctrines and systems. The British are a political people; and a political people only accepts theories in so far as they can be verified, interpreted, and corrected by experience, only in so far as they can be tested by the fire of discussion. The German people, as even Prince von Bülow is compelled to admit, have remained an essentially unpolitical people. They still are under the yoke of countless princelings. There still exist sovereign potentates of Lippe and Waldeck, of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen and Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt. The Germans have acquired none of the habits and traditions of free government. But, most important of all, their religion has acted in the same direction as their politics. They are described by Treitschke as the typical Protestant nation; but the misfortune of German Protestantism has been that it has never "protested." Through the fusion and confusion of Church and State the Germans have sold their spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage. Their spiritual life has been almost entirely divorced from action. It has been centred in the intellect and in the emotions. It has moved in a world of abstraction and dreams.

And thus both their politics and their religion have made them a prey to visionaries and sentimentalists, to unscrupulous journalists like Harden and Reventlow, to unbalanced poets like Nietzsche, to political professors, and to fanatic doctrinaires. Of those academic politicians and fanatic doctrinaires, Treitschke has probably been the most dangerous and the most illustrious representative. He will ever remain a memorable example of the power for evil which may be wielded by a noble and passionate temperament untrained in and unrestrained by the realities of political life, who sees the State from the altitude

of the professional tripod. The war will have helped to break the spell of the political professor, but the spell will continue to act until all the spiritual forces of Germany, until the Press and the Universities and the Churches, are emancipated from the intrusion of the State, until the German democracy reveals both the spirit and conquers the power to achieve its own salvation.

IV.—GENERAL VON BERNHARDI.[\[15\]](#)

As a rule the deliberate military policy of a nation remains the secret of diplomacy and the afterthought of statecraft. As for the military feeling and the military spirit, so far as they exist amongst the people, they generally remain subconscious, unreasoned, and instinctive. It is therefore a piece of rare good fortune to the student of contemporary history when the designs of statesmen are carefully thought out and revealed by one who has authority to speak, and when the instinct of the masses is explained and made explicit by one who has the gift of lucid statement, of philosophical interpretation, and psychological insight. It is precisely those qualities and characteristics that give importance and significance to the recent book of General von Bernhardi on "Germany and the Coming War." The author is a distinguished representative of that Prussian Junkerthum which forms the mainstay of the military party and which rules the German Empire. He therefore speaks from the inside. And his previous works have earned him a high reputation as an exponent of the science of war, and have worthily maintained the traditions of Clausewitz and von der Goltz. Nor are these the only qualifications of the author. General von Bernhardi's new book possesses other qualities which entitle him to a respectful hearing. He writes with absolute candour and sincerity; his tone is unexceptionable; he is earnest and dignified; he is moderate and temperate; he is judicial rather than controversial. Although the author believes, of course, that Germany stands in the forefront of civilization and has a monopoly of the highest culture, yet his book is singularly free from the one great blemish which defaces most German books on international politics—namely, systematic depreciation of the foreigner. Von Bernhardi does not assume that France is played out or that England is effete. He is too well read in military history not to realize that to belittle the strength or malign the character of an enemy is one of the most fruitful causes of disaster.

Altogether we could not have a better guide to the study of the present international situation from the purely German point of view, nor could we find another book which gives us more undisguisedly the "mentality," the prejudices and prejudgments and opinions of the ruling classes. And it is a characteristically German trait that no less than one-third of the work should be given to the philosophy and ethics of the subject. General von Bernhardi surveys the field from the vantage-ground of first principles, and his book is a convincing proof of a truth which we have expressed elsewhere that in Prussia war is not looked upon as an accident, but as a law of nature; and not only as a law of nature, but as the law of man, or if not as the law of man, certainly as the law of the

“German superman.” It is not enough to say that war has been the national industry of Prussia. It forms an essential part of the philosophy of life, the *Weltanschauung* of every patriotic Prussian. Bernhardt believes in the morality, one might almost say in the sanctity, of war. To him war is not a necessary evil, but, on the contrary, the source of every moral good. To him it is pacifism which is an immoral doctrine, because it is the doctrine of the materialist, who believes that enjoyment is the chief end of life. It is the militarist who is the true idealist because he assumes that humanity can only achieve its mission through struggle and strife, through sacrifice and heroism. It is true that Bernhardt ignores the greatest of Prussian philosophers, whose immortal plea in favour of perpetual peace is dismissed as the work of his dotage. But if he dismisses Kant, he adduces instead a formidable array of thinkers and poets in support of his militarist thesis; Schiller and Goethe, Hegel and Heraclitus, in turn are summoned as authorities. Even the Gospels are distorted to convey a militarist meaning, for the author quotes them to remind us that it is the warlike and not the meek that shall inherit the earth. But Bernhardt’s chief authorities are the historian of the super-race, the Anglophobe Treitschke, and the philosopher of the superman, Nietzsche. Nine out of ten quotations are taken from the political treatises of the famous Berlin professor, and the whole spirit of Bernhardt’s book is summed up in the motto borrowed from Zarathustra and inscribed on the front page of the volume:

“War and courage have achieved more great things than the love of our neighbour. It is not your sympathy, but your bravery, which has hitherto saved the shipwrecked of existence.

“‘What is good?’ you ask. To be brave is good.”^[16]

It is no less characteristic of contemporary German political philosophy that from beginning to end Bernhardt maintains consciously, deliberately, a purely national attitude, and that he does not even attempt to rise to a higher and wider point of view. Indeed, the main issue and cardinal problem, the relation of nationality to humanity, the conflict between the duties we owe to the one and the duties we owe to the other, is contemptuously relegated to a footnote (p. 19). To Bernhardt a nation is not a means to an end, a necessary organ of universal humanity, and therefore subordinate to humanity. A nation is an end in itself. It is the ultimate reality. And the preservation and the increase of the power of the State is the ultimate criterion of all right. “My country, right or wrong,” is the General’s whole system of moral philosophy. Yet, curiously enough, Bernhardt speaks of Germany as the apostle, not only of a national culture, but of universal

culture, as the champion of civilization, and he indulges in the usual platitudes on this fertile subject. And he does not even realize that in so doing he is guilty of a glaring contradiction; he does not realize that once he adopts this standpoint of universal culture, he introduces an argument and assumes a position which are above and outside nationalism. For either the German nation is self-sufficient, and all culture is centred in and absorbed in Germany, in which case Prussian nationalism would be historically and philosophically justified; or culture is something higher and more comprehensive and less exclusive, in which case national aims must be estimated and appraised with reference to a higher aim, and a national policy must be judged according as it furthers or runs counter to the universal ideals of humanity.

General von Bernhardi starts his survey of the international situation with the axiom that Germany imperatively wants new markets for her industry and new territory for her sixty-five millions of people. In so doing, he only reiterates the usual assumption of German political writers. And he also resembles the majority of his fellow-publicists in this respect, that he does not tell us what exactly are the territories that Germany covets, or how they are to be obtained, or how the possession of tropical or subtropical colonies can solve the problem of her population. But he differs from his predecessors in that he clearly realizes and expresses, without ambiguity or equivocation, that the assertion of her claims must involve the establishment of German supremacy, and he admits that those claims are incompatible with the antiquated doctrine of the balance of power. And von Bernhardi also clearly realizes that, as other nations will refuse to accept German supremacy and to surrender those fertile territories which Germany needs, German expansion can only be achieved as the result of a conflict—briefly, that war is unavoidable and inevitable.

FOOTNOTES:

[13] Nietzsche's "Thus Spake Zarathustra," First Part, 10th Speech.

[14] Treitschke, "History of Germany," Vols. I. and II. (Jarrold.) Treitschke, "Politics," with Introduction by A. J. Balfour: 2 vols, (Constable, London.)

[15] These pages were published in 1912.

[16] Nietzsche's "Thus Spake Zarathustra," First Part, 10th Speech.

CHAPTER V

FREDERICK THE GREAT: THE FATHER OF PRUSSIAN MILITARISM

I.

AMONGST the many discoveries brought about by the war of the nations, an educated British public has suddenly discovered the unsuspected existence of Heinrich von Treitschke. And not only have we discovered the national Prussian historian—we have also unwittingly discovered Prussian history. We have certainly had revealed to us for the first time its secret and hidden meaning. We are only just beginning to realize that for nearly two hundred years it is Prussia, and not Russia, which has been the evil influence in European politics. Prussia has not been a natural political growth. She has been an artificial creation of statesmen. She has been pre-eminently the predatory State. She has never taken the sword to defend a disinterested idea. The ravisher of Silesia, of Schleswig-Holstein, of Alsace-Lorraine, the murderer of Poland, she has never expanded except at the expense of her neighbours. She has corrupted the German soul; she has been the mainstay of reaction and militarism in Central Europe. She has been the bond of that freemasonry of despotism, of that Triple Alliance of the three empires which subsisted until the fall of Bismarck, which has been for generations the nightmare of European Liberals.

II.

In attempting to reread modern history in the light of that new interpretation of Prussian history, we are naturally driven to ask ourselves who is primarily responsible for that sinister influence which Prussia has exercised for the last two centuries. To the unprejudiced student there can be no doubt that the one man primarily responsible is Frederick the Great, the master-builder of Prussian militarism and Prussian statecraft. He it is who has been poisoning the wells; he it is who first conceived of the State as a barracks; he it is who has “Potsdamized” the Continent and transformed Europe into a military camp. Strangely enough, all civilized nations to-day have proclaimed Prussia accursed. Yet we continue to hero-worship the man who made Prussia what she is. A halo still surrounds the Mephistophelian figure which incarnates the Hohenzollern

spirit. A legend has gathered round the philosopher of Sans Souci. A combination of circumstances has caused writers almost unanimously to extol his merits and to ignore his crimes. British historians naturally favour the ally of the Seven Years' War. Russian and Austrian writers are indulgent to the accomplice of the partition of Poland. Anti-clerical writers glorify the Atheist. Military writers extol the soldier. Political writers extol the statesman. But the most adequate explanation of the Frederician legend is the circumstance that public opinion has been systematically mobilized in favour of Frederick the Great by the great French leaders of the eighteenth century, the dispensers of European fame.

It was not for nothing that Frederick the Great for forty years courted the good graces of Voltaire d'Alembert. He knew full well that Voltaire would prove to him a most admirable publicity agent. And never was publicity agent secured at a lower cost. Those literary influences have continued to our own day to perpetuate the legend of Frederick. Nearly a hundred years after Rossbach Frederick had the strange good fortune to captivate the wayward genius of Carlyle. It is difficult to understand how Carlyle, who all through life hesitated between the Christian Puritanism of John Knox and the Olympian paganism of Goethe, could have been fascinated by the Potsdam cynic. We can only seek for an explanation in the deeply rooted anti-French and pro-German prejudices of Carlyle. Frederick was the arch-enemy of France, and that fact was sufficient to attract the sympathies of Teufelsdröckh. It is Carlyle's Gallophobia which has inspired one of the most mischievous masterpieces of English literature.

III.

The conspiracy of European historians has thus attached greatness to the very name of the third Hohenzollern King. Great the Hohenzollern King certainly was, but his greatness is that of a Condottiere of the Italian Renaissance, of a Catharine de' Medici. It is the greatness of a personality who is endowed, no doubt, with magnificent gifts, but who has prostituted all those gifts to the baser usages.

It is passing strange how every writer remains silent about the ugly and repellent side of Frederick. The son of a mad father, he was subjected to a terrorism which would have predestined a less strong nature to the lunatic asylum. The terrorism only hardened Frederick into an incurable cynic. It only killed in him every finer feeling. His upbringing must almost inevitably have

brought out all the darker sides of human nature.

The first twenty years of his life were one uninterrupted schooling in hypocrisy, brutality, and depravity. A debauchee in his youth, a sodomite in later life, a hater of women and a despiser of men, a bully to his subordinates, a monster of ingratitude, revelling in filth so continuously in his written and spoken words that even a loyal Academy of Berlin has found it impossible to publish his unexpurgated correspondence, he appears an anachronism in a modern Europe leavened by two thousand years of Christianity. Ever scheming, ever plotting, ever seeking whom he might devour, deceiving even his intimate advisers, he has debased the currency of international morality. As a man Frederick has been compared with Napoleon. The comparison is an insult to the Corsican. Napoleon was human, he was capable of strong affections, of profound attachment and gratitude. But neither friendship nor love had any place in Frederick's scheme of the universe.

IV.

To-day we are holding the poor Prussian professor mainly accountable for the greatest and latest crime of Prussian militarism. But those dogmatic professors are only the abject disciples of the Hohenzollern King. There is not one aphorism which is not to be found in the thirty volumes of Frederick's writings. He has perfected the theory of the military State, and he has acted consistently on the theory. It is highly significant that his very first public act, almost never mentioned by his biographers, was his spoliation of the Prince-Bishop of Liège (an historical precedent tragically suggestive at the present day). The Prince-Bishop of Liège had committed the heinous crime of resisting the impressment of his subjects kidnapped by the recruiting sergeants of the Prussian King. On the strength of that theory, Frederick attacked the defenceless daughter of the Austrian Emperor who had saved his life at Custrin. On the strength of that theory he betrayed every one of his allies. On the strength of that theory he committed his most odious crime—he murdered the Polish nation.

V.

We are told that Frederick the Great was an incomparable political virtuoso. We are told that he showed heroic fortitude in disaster, after Kollin and Kunersdorff. But so did Cæsar Borgia after the sudden death of Alexander VI.

We are told that he was tolerant of all creeds. But that was only because he disbelieved all creeds, and he believed, with Gibbon, that “all creeds are equally useful to the statesman.” We are reminded that he was an amazing economist, husbanding and developing the national finances. But his finances were only the sinews of war. We are told that he protected literature and art, but, like religion, he found literature an instrument useful for his political designs. We are reminded that he was himself the servant of the State. But in serving the State he only served his own interests, because the State was incarnated in himself, and in husbanding his resources he was only acting like a miser who is adding to his hoard. We are finally told that as the result of his life-work Frederick succeeded in creating the most marvellous military machine of modern times. We forget that, as is the way with most military machines, the Prussian machine ten years after Frederick’s death had become a pitiful wreck in the hands of his immediate successor, and that it required the genius of Bismarck to manufacture another Prussian military machine to be used once more for the enslavement of Europe.

CHAPTER VI

THE APOTHEOSIS OF GOETHE

No less than three books on Goethe have been issued in the course of the last few months, and the fact is sufficient evidence that the cult of the Olympian Jupiter of Weimar, which was first inaugurated eighty years ago by Carlyle, is in no danger of dying out in England. Professor Hume Brown has given us a penetrating and judicious study of Goethe's youth, such as one had a right to expect from the eminent Scottish historian.^[17] Mr. Joseph McCabe has given us a comprehensive survey of Goethe's life, and an objective and critical appreciation of his personality.^[18] Both are in profound sympathy with their subject, but neither is a blind hero-worshipper. In Mr. McCabe's life we are not only introduced to the scientist who is ever in quest of new worlds to conquer, we are also made acquainted with the pagan epicure ever engaged in amorous experiments! We are not only introduced to the sublime poet and prophet, we are also introduced to the incurable egotist, who could only find time to visit his old mother once every ten years, whilst, as boon companion of a petty German Prince, he always found time for his pleasures. We are not only admitted to contemplate the pomp and majesty of his world-wide fame, we are also admitted to the sordid circumstances of Goethe's "home." And our awe and reverence are turned into pity. We pity the miserable husband of a drunken and epileptic wife rescued from the gutter; we pity even more the unhappy father of a degraded son, who inherited all the vices of one parent without inheriting the genius of the other.

I.

The first quality which strikes us in Goethe, and which dazzled his contemporaries, and continues to dazzle posterity, is his universality. He appears to us as one of the most receptive, one of the most encyclopædic intellects of modern times. A scientist and a biologist, a pioneer of the theory of evolution, a physicist and originator of a new theory of colour, a man of affairs, a man of the world and a courtier, a philosopher, a lyrical poet, a tragic, comic, satiric, epic, and didactic poet, a novelist and an historian, he has attempted every form of literature, he has touched upon every chord of the human soul.

It is true that, in considering this universality of Goethe, it behoves us to make

some qualifications. His human sympathies are by no means as universal as his intellectual sympathies. He has no love for the common people. He has the aloofness of the aristocrat. He has a Nietzschean contempt for the herd. He takes little interest in the religious aspirations of mankind or in the struggles of human freedom. The French Revolution remains to him a sealed book, and his history of the campaign in France is almost ludicrously disappointing.

With regard to what has been called his “intellectual universality,” the elements which compose it cannot be reduced to unity and harmony. It would be difficult to co-ordinate them into a higher synthesis, for that *universality* is at the same time *diversity* and *mutability*. Goethe is essentially changeable and elusive. In his works we find combined the antipodes of human thought. There is little in common between the poet of Goetz von Berlichingen and Werther on the one hand and the poet of Tasso and Iphigenia on the other hand. The intellect of Goethe is like a crystal with a thousand facets reflecting all the colours of the rainbow.

And it may well be asked, therefore, whether this encyclopædic diversity can aptly be called universality. Universality must ultimately result in unity and harmony, and it is impossible to assert that Goethe’s mind ever achieved unity and harmony, that it was ever controlled by one dominant thought.

At any rate, whether a defect or a quality, there can be no doubt that this encyclopædic diversity has turned to the great advantage of his glory. It is precisely because Goethe is an elusive Proteus that all doctrines may equally claim him. Romanticists turn with predilection to the creator of Werther or the first “Faust.” Classicists admire the plastic beauty of Tasso and Iphigenia. The cosmopolitan sees in Goethe the *Weltbürger*, the citizen of the world, the incarnation of *die Weltweisheit*. The patriot acclaims in him the poet who has sung the myths and legends dear to the German race. The sensuous and voluptuous libertine is enchanted by the eroticism of the “Roman Elegies.” The domesticated reader is drawn by that chaste idyll, Herman and Dorothea. The Spinozist and Pantheist are attracted by the general tendencies of his philosophy. The Christian is at liberty to interpret “Faust” in a sense which is favourable to his religion. The Liberal politician can point to the author of Goetz and Egmont. The Conservative and Reactionary can claim all the works of Goethe’s maturity, when the poet had become the perfect courtier.

II.

There is a second quality which Goethe possesses in a supreme degree, and by which he is distinguished from his contemporaries—namely, mental sanity and serenity. Most of his fellow-poets reveal some morbid characteristics, are afflicted with some *Weltschmerz*, with some internal spiritual malady. They live in an atmosphere of strife and discord. The marvellous vitality of Goethe has escaped from the contagion. Like his fellow-poets, he passed through the crisis of the *Sturm und Drang*. But it seems as if he had only known it in order to give to his experiences a final artistic expression. He communicated the “Wertherian malady” to a whole generation, but he himself emerged triumphant and unscathed. The hurricane which wrecked so many powerful intellects spared his own. After the Italian journey he never ceased by example and precept to recommend harmony and balance, and he became so completely the perfect type of intellectual and artistic sanity that the world has forgotten the Bohemian days of Frankfurt and Leipzig, the merry days of Weimar, the repulsive vulgarity of his drunken mistress and wife, the degradation of his son, and has agreed only to contemplate the Olympian majesty of Weimar. Whether the repose and sanity of Goethe were unmixed virtues, or whether they were partly the result of indifference, of impassivity or selfishness, is another question. Certain it is that there is no other trait in Goethe’s personality which has done more to raise him in the esteem of posterity. He has proved to the world that internal discord and distraction and morbid exaltation are not the necessary appanage of genius, and that, on the contrary, the most powerful genius is also the most sane, the most balanced, the most self-possessed, the most harmonious.

III.

Without going here into the purely formal and artistic qualities of Goethe’s works, there is one fact which, perhaps more than any other, impressed itself on the imagination of the world, and that is the realization of his own personality, the achievement of his own destiny. Of all his poems, the rarest and most perfect is the poem of his life. Hitherto no such life had ever been allotted to a favourite of the Muses. He seemed to have received a bountiful abundance of all the gifts of the fairies—superb health, comfort, and wealth, the love of an adoring mother and sister, the loyalty of illustrious friends, the favour of Princes, the homage of women, and the admiration of men. To him was opened every province of human activity. He exhausted every form of enjoyment. His life until the end was like the unfolding of a glorious version of a happy dream. At eighty years of age he remained the one surviving giant of the golden age of German literature.

In his lifetime he was considered by Europe, as well as by Germany, as the most glorious exemplar of his race, and the city of his adoption had become a pilgrimage attracting worshippers from all parts of Europe. Death was merciful to him. The last act of his life was as beautiful as the others. It was not preceded by the gradual dissolution of his physical and intellectual strength; rather was it like the burning out of a flame. He passed away in an apotheosis, and the last words uttered by the dying poet, “*Mehr Licht, mehr Licht*” (More light, more light), have become for all future generations the final expression of his philosophy and the symbol of his personality.

FOOTNOTES:

[17] “The Youth of Goethe.” By P. Hume Brown. 8s. net (Murray.)

[18] “Goethe, the Man and his Character.” By Joseph McCabe. 15s. net. (Eveleigh Nash.)

CHAPTER VII

THE SERVICE OF THE CITY IN GERMANY[19]

I.

ALL English students interested in Germany owe a deep debt of gratitude to the unremitting labours of Mr. William Harbutt Dawson in the fields of Teutonic scholarship. He is one of a gallant band of some half-dozen publicists who, amidst universal neglect, have done their utmost to popularize amongst us a knowledge of German life and German people. Mr. Dawson's last book is certain to take rank as a political classic. It is a lucid exposition of "Municipal Life and Government in Germany" (Longmans and Co., 12s. 6d. net). City administration and city regulations are a subject which no literary art can make very exciting, but, difficult and forbidding though it be, it is a subject which yields in importance and interest to no other. There is certainly no other subject which will reveal to us more of the secrets of German greatness.

II.

For the greatness of Germany is not to be explained by her unwieldy army, her red-tape bureaucracy, her impotent Reichstag, her effete Churches. Her army, Parliament, and Churches are symptoms of weakness and not of strength. The true greatness of Germany is largely due to a factor ignored by most writers, ignored even by Mr. Dawson in all his previous works—namely, the excellence of German municipal institutions, the intensity of her civic life. We have been too much accustomed to think of Germany only as a despotic empire. She might be far more fittingly described as a country of free institutions, a federation of autonomous cities. We fondly imagine that ours is the only country where self-government prevails. Readers who might still entertain this prejudice will carry away from Mr. Dawson's book the novel political lesson that Germany, much more than Great Britain, deserves to be called a self-governing nation, and that, at least in her civic government, which, after all, affects 70 per cent. of her population, Germany enjoys a measure of political liberty which is absolutely unknown in our own country.

III.

The tradition of municipal freedom in Germany is as old as German culture. It still lingers in the haunting charm of the German cities to-day. The Holy Roman Empire possessed only the trappings and the shadow of power; the reality belonged to the burghers of the towns. The *Städtewesen* gives its original character to the German Middle Ages. The Hansa towns and the Hanseatic League recall some of the most stirring memories of German history. The League still survives in the three independent republics of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck. The dominant fact that German medieval civilization was a civilization of free cities is driven home to the most superficial tourist. In every corner of the German Empire, in north and south, on the banks of the Rhine and the Elbe, in Rothenburg and Marienburg, in Frankfurt and Freiburg, the thousand monuments of the past prove to us the all-important truth that in Germany, as in Italy and in Flanders, it is the service of the city which has made for national greatness.

IV.

War and anarchy put an end to municipal prosperity. Protestantism brought with it the confusion of spiritual and temporal power, which brought with it the despotism of the Princes, which meant the suppression of civic liberty. The Thirty Years' War completed the ruin of the cities. The end of the seventeenth century put in the place of city governance the tyranny of a hundred petty Princes. Everywhere we see the ancient town halls crumbling into ruin, and we see arising pretentious palaces built on the model of the Palace of Versailles. Germany had to go through the bitter humiliation of Jena before she realized the necessity of reverting to her glorious civic traditions. The statesmanship of Stein (see Seeley's "Life and Times of Stein") understood that such return was the prime condition of a German political renaissance. By his memorable Municipal Law of 1808 Stein restored civic liberty. He made local self-government the corner-stone of German internal policy. The ordinance of Stein remains to this day the organic law and Great Charter of the German city. It has stood the test of one hundred years of change, and even the iron despotism of the Hohenzollern has not been able to challenge it. In every other political institution Germany is lamentably behind. Only in her municipal life is she in advance of most European countries.

V.

As we hinted at the outset, the municipality has far greater powers in Germany than in Great Britain. It is true that the police authority is under the control of the central power, that education inspection is under the control of the Church, which is another kind of spiritual police. It is true that the City Fathers are debarred from mixing with party politics. But within those limitations, and in the province of economics and social welfare, municipal powers are almost unrestricted. It is thus that German towns have been the pioneers in school hygiene. Every German child is under the supervision of the school dentist and the school oculist. It is thus that German cities have established their public pawnshops, and have saved the poor man from the clutches of the moneylender. It is thus that they have initiated gratuitous legal advice for the indigent. They have even established municipal beerhouses and *Rathhauskeller*. In one word, they have launched out in a hundred forms of civic enterprise.

VI.

One of the most striking fields of municipal enterprise is the policy of Land Purchase. The people were encouraged to enter on this policy by the evils of private land speculation, and by the shocking housing conditions in some of the big cities, and especially in Berlin, where the curse of the barrack system still prevails.

Nearly every German city is an important landowner, owning on an average 50 per cent. of the municipal area.

“While the powers of English urban districts in relation to land ownership are severely restricted by law, German towns are free to buy real estate on any scale whatever, without permission of any kind, unless, indeed, the contracting of a special loan should be necessary, in which event the assent of the City Commissary is necessary. This assent, however, entails no local inquiry corresponding to the inquiries of the Local Government Board, simply because the German States have no Local Government Board, and no use for them; the proceeding is almost a formality, intended to remind the communes that the State, though devolved upon them their wide powers of self-government, likes still to be consulted now and then, and it is arranged expeditiously through the post. For, strange as it may sound to English ears, the Governments of Germany, without exception, far from wishing to hamper the towns in their land investments, have often urged the towns to buy as much land as possible and not to sell” (Dawson, p. 123).

“Within the present year the little town of Kalbe, on the Saale, expended just £14 a head on its 12,000 inhabitants in buying for £468,000 a large estate for the purpose of creating a number of smallholdings and labourers’ allotments. During the period 1880 to 1908 Breslau expended over one million and a half pounds in the purchase of land within the communal area. Berlin has an estate more than three times greater than its administrative area. In 1910 alone seventy-three of the large towns of Germany bought land to the aggregate extent of 9,584 acres and to the aggregate value of over four million pounds sterling. Charlottenburg now owns 2,500 acres of land as yet not built upon, with a value of over a million and a quarter pounds, and the value of all its real estate is about four and a half million pounds sterling. In 1886 Freiburg, in Baden, owned nearly 11,000 acres of land with a value of £925,000. In 1909 its estate was only 2,000 acres larger, but its value was then £2,300,000.”

“Since 1891 Ulm, under the rule of a mayor convinced of the wisdom of a progressive land policy and strong enough to carry it out, has bought some 1,280 acres of land at different times for £316,000, while it has sold 420 acres for £406,000, showing a cash profit of £900,000, apart from the addition of 860 acres to the town estate. As a result of Ulm’s land policy, its assets increased between 1891 and 1909 from £583,500 to £1,990,000, an increase of £1,407,000, equal to £25 a head of the population. Another result is that of the larger towns of Würtemberg only one has a lower taxation than Ulm. It is solely owing to its successful land policy that this enterprising town, without imposing heavy burdens on the general body of ratepayers, has been able to undertake a programme of social reforms which has created for it an honourable reputation throughout Germany.”

VII.

In quite a different direction, in the encouragement of Art and Literature, the German municipality plays a leading part.

“The budgets of most large and many small German towns contain an item, greater or less according to local circumstances, which is intended to cover ‘provision for the intellectual life of the town.’ This item is independent of expenditure on schools, and, if analyzed, will be found often to include the maintenance of or subsidies to municipal theatres, bands, and orchestras, as well as grants to dramatic and musical societies of a miscellaneous order. In this provision the theatre takes an altogether dominant position, and the fact is

significant as reflecting the great importance which in Germany is attributed to the drama as an educational and elevating influence in the life of the community. It may be that the practice of subsidizing the theatre is not altogether independent of the fact that the repertory theatre is universal in Germany, except in the smallest of provincial towns, with the result that a far more intimate tie exists between the drama and the community than is possible in the case of travelling companies.”

“If the question be asked, Is the higher drama encouraged by the municipal theatre? the answer must be an emphatic affirmative of the high standard of education in Germany. Speaking generally, no theatres in Germany maintain the drama at a higher level than the municipal theatres in the large towns. The lower forms of the drama will find no home here, for public taste looks for the best that the stage can offer, and as the demand is, so is the supply. Many a provincial theatre of this kind presents more Shakespearean plays in a week than the average English theatre outside London presents in a couple of years. A glance at the repertory of any of the municipal theatres which have been named is enough to convince one that an elevated aim is steadily kept in view. For example, in a recent year the two Mannheim municipal theatres presented 161 separate works, including 93 dramas, 62 operas and operettas, and 6 ballets, and of these works 442 repetitions were given in the aggregate, making for the year 604 performances, a number of which were at popular prices. The dramas given included fifteen by Schiller, ten by Shakespeare, three by Goethe, three by Lessing, five by Molière, four by Hans Sachs, four by Sheridan, eleven by Grillparzer, two each by Kleist and Hebbel, and several by Ibsen, while the operas included three by Beethoven, three by Cherubini, six by Mozart, three by Weber, and several by Wagner. Could an English provincial theatre—could all English provincial theatres together—show a record equal to this? That plays of this kind are given is proof that the German public looks to the municipal theatre for the cultivation of the highest possible standard of dramatic taste and achievement.”

VIII.

The German city has managed to combine efficiency with freedom. She has managed to establish a strong executive and yet to safeguard the will of the people. In France the Mayor is appointed by the State, and he is the tool of the Ministry. In Great Britain the City Fathers are honorary and unpaid. In Germany they are salaried servants, and yet elected by the people. In Great Britain

magistrates are temporary, ephemeral figure-heads. They are not even allowed time to serve their apprenticeship. They remain in office one, two, or at most three years, receive a knighthood in the larger provincial towns, and retire into private life. In Germany the Burgomaster and Aldermen are permanent servants, at first elected for twelve years, and on re-election appointed for life. Their whole life is identified with the interests of the city.

There lies the originality of German civic government, and there lies the secret of municipal efficiency. The German Mayor and council are experts. City government is becoming so technical a science that there are now schools of civic administration established in several parts of the German Empire. The city administrator is not a grocer or a draper temporarily raised to office, nor are they only town clerks and officials. They have both the confidence of the people and the responsibility of power, and they are given time to achieve results, to follow up a systematic policy.

IX.

The whole secret of German municipal government is told by Mr. Dawson in a footnote of his book:

“The chief Mayor of Duisburg is about to seek well-earned rest after thirty-four years of work. When in 1880 he took over the direction of the town’s affairs, Duisburg had 34,000 inhabitants. To-day Duisburg, with the amalgamated Ruhrort and Meiderich, has a population of 244,000. This remarkable development is specially due to the far-sighted municipal policy pursued by the chief Mayor, who made it his endeavour to attract new industries to the State for the creation of the docks—as the result of which Duisburg is the largest inland port in the world—and the incorporation of Ruhrort and Meiderich in 1905.”

This footnote illustrating the history of Duisburg might serve equally well as an illustration for the history of other German towns. On reading that footnote I could not help thinking of a famous English statesman whose recent death has closed a stirring chapter of British history. German and Austrian municipalities give the widest scope for political genius and attract the ablest men. If the same conditions had prevailed in this country, Mr. Chamberlain would have been content to identify himself with the prosperity of his adopted city, as the Mayor of Duisburg identified himself with the greatness of Duisburg; as Lueger

identified himself with the greatness of Vienna. And if Birmingham had given full scope to the genius of Mr. Chamberlain, how different would have been the life-story of the late statesman, and how different would be the England in which we are living to-day!

FOOTNOTES:

[\[19\]](#) Written in 1913.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEGLECT OF GERMAN

THERE are many urgent reforms needed in our national education; those who are best qualified to speak could make many a startling revelation if they only dared to speak out. And there is ample evidence that almost every part of our educational machinery requires the most thorough overhauling. In the words of Bacon, “Instauratio facienda ab imis fundamentis.” But I doubt whether there does exist any more glaring proof of the present inefficiency of our Secondary Schools and Universities than their scandalous attitude towards the study of the German language and literature.

The plain and unvarnished truth is that at the beginning of this, the twentieth century, when Germany is the supreme political and commercial Power on the Continent of Europe, the study of German is steadily going back in the United Kingdom. In some parts it is actually dying out. In many important Secondary Schools it is being discontinued. Even in the Scottish Universities, which pride themselves on being more modern and more progressive than the English Universities, there does not exist one single Chair of German. In Oxford a Chair of German was only established through the munificence of a patriotic German merchant.

And even when there are teachers there are very few students. In one of the greatest British Universities, with a constituency of 3,500 students, there has been, for the last ten years, an average of five to six men students. And the reluctance of young men to study German is perfectly intelligible. The study of German does not pay. It brings neither material rewards nor official recognition. All the prizes, all the scholarships and fellowships, go to other subjects, and mainly to the classics. Let any reader of *Everyman* stand up and say that I am exaggerating; I would only be too delighted to discover that I am wrong.

Such being the attitude of those who are primarily responsible for our national education, can we wonder at the attitude of the general public? Can we expect it to take any more interest in German culture than the educational authorities? Let those who have any doubt or illusion on the subject make inquiries at booksellers', at circulating libraries and public libraries, at London clubs. I have tried to make such an investigation, and all those institutions have the same sorry tale to tell. It is impossible to get an outstanding book which appears in

Germany, for it does not pay the publisher to stock such a book. At Mudie's, for every hundred French books there may be two German books. At the Royal Societies Club, with a membership of several thousands, every one of whom belongs to some learned society, you may get the *Revue de Deux Mondes*, or the *Temps*, or the *Figaro*, but you cannot get a German paper. For the last twenty years I have not once seen a copy of the *Zukunft*, or the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, or the *Kölnische Zeitung*, at an English private house, at an English club, at an English bookseller's, at an English library.

A few months ago the most popular and most enterprising daily paper of the kingdom published some articles on the German elections, which were justly rousing a great deal of attention in this country. I was very much impressed by the cleverness of those articles, but my admiration knew no bounds when the author confessed that he was writing without knowing a word of German, and that when attending political meetings he had to make out the meaning of the language by the gestures and facial expression of the orators. Have we not here, my classical friends, an exhilarating instance of the results of your monopoly? *Ab uno disce omnes.*

We are constantly being told that "knowledge is power," and that the knowledge of a foreign language means not only intellectual power, but commercial and political power. Yet those in authority do not budge an inch to get possession of such power. We are constantly warned by political pessimists that Germany is making gigantic strides, and that we ought to keep a vigilant outlook. Yet we do nothing to obtain first-hand information of the resources of a nation of sixty-five millions, who is certainly a formidable commercial rival, and who to-morrow may meet us in deadly encounter.^[20] On the other hand, we are told with equal persistence by political optimists that we ought to be on the most friendly terms with a great kindred people from whom nothing separates us except regrettable ignorance and superficial misunderstandings. Yet, in order to dispel that ignorance and to remove those misunderstandings, we do not make the first necessary step—namely, to learn the language of the people whom we are said to misunderstand.

It is true that Members of Parliament and journalists are ready enough to proceed to Germany on a mission of goodwill, and to be entertained at banquets and international festivities. But how futile must be those friendly demonstrations when we consider that the enormous majority of those Parliamentarians and journalists are unable to read a German newspaper! And how must it strike a citizen of Hamburg or Frankfurt when their English guests

have to reply in English to the toasts of their German hosts! And how must a patriotic German feel when he discovers that not five out of a hundred have taken the trouble to master the noble language of the country whose friendship they are seeking!

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of attending, at the house of a prominent political leader, a representative gathering of politicians, diplomats, and journalists, who were met to consider the best means of promoting Anglo-German friendship. In answer to a speech of mine, an eminent German publicist and editor of an influential monthly review delivered an eloquent address in broken French. To hear a German address in French an audience of Germanophile Englishmen was certainly a ludicrous situation! But the speaker realized that it would be hopeless to use the German language, even to an assembly specially interested in supporting Anglo-German friendship.

How long, my classical friends, are we going to submit to these disastrous results of your monopoly? *Quousque tandem!* How long are we going to stand this scandal of international illiteracy and ignorance, fraught with such ominous peril for the future? How long is this nation going to be hoodwinked by an infinitesimal minority of reactionary dons and obscurantist parsons, determined to force a smattering of Greek down the throats of a reluctant youth? How long is modern culture to be kept back under the vain pretence of maintaining the culture of antiquity, but in reality in response to an ignoble dread of enlightenment and progress, and in order to protect vested interests and to maintain political, intellectual, and religious reaction?

FOOTNOTES:

[\[20\]](#) Written in 1912.

CHAPTER IX

MECKLENBURG, THE PARADISE OF PRUSSIAN JUNKERTHUM

I.

THE tourist who takes the express train between Berlin and Copenhagen, one hour after he has left the Prussian capital reaches a vast plain more than half the size of Belgium, where barren moorlands alternate with smiling fields, where dormant lakes are succeeded by dark pine-forests. Few travellers ever think of breaking their journey on this melancholy plain, the territory of the Grand Dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz. They have not the remotest suspicion that these Grand Duchies of Mecklenburg, which they cross in such listless haste, are, from a political point of view, one of the most fascinating countries of Europe. Mecklenburg has for the students of comparative politics the same sort of interest which an Indian reserve territory, or the Mormon State of Utah, has for the traveller in the United States, or which a cannibal tract in the equatorial Congo forest has for the explorer of Central Africa. For this pleasant land of Mecklenburg-Schwerin is the last survival of a patriarchal and feudal civilization. It is the most perfect type of the paternal Prussian type of government, entirely unspoiled by the Parliamentary institutions of a feeble democratic age.

II.

Here alone of all the North German States the conditions of a past generation continue in their pristine vigour. Although the Grand Duke is the only descendant of Slavonic Princes in the German Empire, and still calls himself "Prince of the Wendes," he is the most Teutonic of dynasts. Although Mecklenburg-Schwerin is independent of Prussia, it is the most Prussian and the most Junkerized of all Federal States.

In degenerate Prussia the Kaiser has actually to submit to the financial control of an unruly Reichstag, and is not even allowed to spend the Imperial revenues as any Emperor by right Divine ought to be logically allowed to do. The Duke of Mecklenburg is far more fortunate than William II. He has no accounts to settle,

he has not even a budget to publish. He collects in paternal fashion the revenues of his Grand Ducal demesnes, and no power has any right to ask any questions. Even the “Almanack of Gotha,” which is generally omniscient in these matters, is silent on the revenues of His Highness. There is a public debt of about one hundred and fifty million marks! The public revenues are the private income of the Grand Duke. The public debt is a private charge on the people.

In degenerate Prussia even the Emperor-Rex has to divide some of his authority with a meddlesome assembly, and has to delegate it to an obedient but ridiculous bureaucracy. In the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg the ruler governs his subjects in the good old patriarchal way. It is true, in the troubled days of 1848 an unwise predecessor granted something like a paper constitution, but that scrap of parchment happily became a dead-letter twelve months after it had been granted. It is also true that there still subsists some faint image of representative government in the two estates of the Grand Duchy, dating as far back as 1755, but those venerable estates of the Grand Duchy are only composed of and only represent the *Ritterschaft*—*i.e.*, six hundred and ninety noblemen; and the *Landschaft*—*i.e.*, fifty municipalities. Neither the peasants in the country nor the artisans in the towns are ever troubled to give their advice on matters concerning the common weal. And as, in order that a Bill may become the law of the Grand Duchy, the consent of the two estates is required, nothing unpleasant is ever likely to happen, and the old order, represented by the six hundred and ninety overlords, continues undisturbed.

In degenerate Prussia even the Junkers have to submit to the presence of petty landowners of lowly birth, or even to peasants of servile origin. Do not historians remind us that even Frederick the Great had to surrender to the claims of the Miller of Sans Souci. In Mecklenburg-Schwerin there is no Miller of Sans Souci to worry the Grand Duke. *For no peasant owns one single acre of land.* One-half of the territory of the Grand Duchy is owned by a few hundred lords of the manor, and the other half realizes the Socialist ideal of the suppression of private property and of the transfer of all private ownership to the State. Six thousand square miles are the absolute property of the State—that is to say, of the Grand Duke. For never was absolute ruler more truly entitled than the Grand Duke to appropriate the words of Louis XIV.: “L’état c’est moi.”

In this paradise of Prussian Junkerthum one might reasonably have expected the monarch and the lords of the manor to enjoy as complete happiness as is ever allotted to mortal man. And the peasants and artisans could equally be expected to share in the universal contentment. Are not the Grand Duke and his knights as

closely interested in the welfare of their tenants as a shepherd in the welfare of his flock? But even in a patriarchal Grand Dukedom the spirit of modern unrest seems to have penetrated. If German statisticians may be trusted, the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy do even seem to have preferred the risks and uncertainties of living in a distant and unpaternal American Government to the peace and quiet and security of the Mecklenburg plains. The ungrateful subjects of the Grand Duke have done what the Kaiser once advised his own disloyal subjects to do; they have shaken the dust of the Fatherland off their feet; they have emigrated in such large numbers to the United States of America that this paradise of Prussian Junkerthum, with its 700,000 inhabitants, is to-day the most thinly populated part of the German Empire, and contains fewer industries than any other part.

After all, to a military empire soldiers are more necessary than peasants and artisans. Already in 1815 Mecklenburg could claim the glory of having produced the greatest Junker soldier of the age, bluff and rough Prince Blücher, the victor of Waterloo. The achievements of the Grand Ducal regiments have fully proved that Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz have in the present war remained true to the glories of their military past and have remained worthy of their feudal present, and the august head of the Grand Ducal dynasty is just now doing most efficient work in the Balkan States as the super-Ambassador of his Imperial cousin.

CHAPTER X

THE GERMAN RACE HERESY AND THE WAR

I.

IT is the purpose of the following article to single out one aspect of the war which has been strangely neglected. It is our purpose to emphasize the influence which the obsession of one particular idea, the German race theory, has exercised over the German mind and the part which it has played in bringing about the war of the nations. False ideas have been the dragon's teeth from which have risen the legions of five continents. Amongst those false ideas the most deadly, the most fatal, has been the German heresy of race, the theory of race inequality and race antagonism. It is in the name of that race heresy, in the name of Germanism and Pan-Germanism, of Slavism and Pan-Slavism, of Saxonism and Pan-Saxonism, the war is being waged.

We read the following passage in a recent book by Sven Hedin, the official chronicler of the German armies:

“Here is a (German) reservist. What a tremendous figure! What can Latins, Slavs, Celts, Japs, Negroes, Hindus, Ghurkas, Turcos, and whatever they are called, do against such strapping giants of the true Germanic type? His features are superbly noble, and he seems pleased with his day's work. He does not regret that he has offered his life for Germany's just cause.”

In this odious passage we have in a few lines the whole history and the whole philosophy of the tragedy. We have the spirit with which the Germans have waged the war, we have the motive for which they have waged it, and we have the ultimate purpose which they hope to achieve—namely, to force upon a subjected Europe the rule of the super-race of Treitschke and the *bionda bestia* of Nietzsche.

In former times, in the so-called “Dark Age,” nations would fight for the human, rational, but impracticable principle of orthodoxy. To-day we are fighting for the inhuman, for the equally impracticable and immoral principle of race antagonism. Germans fight because through their veins courses the red blood of the Teutons of Tacitus. They are fighting because they are convinced that they have the Might and the Right and the Duty of crushing the French and

the Russians, because through French veins courses the tainted blood of the Gauls of Cæsar, and because through the veins of the Slavs courses the white fluid of the slave and the yellow fluid of the Tatar.

II.

It is one of the commonplaces of the economic school that the economic motive is the main factor which makes for peace or war, that material interests only count, and that ideas do not matter. It is one of the shallow illusions of the pseudo-rationalist school that the age of religious wars is passed for ever. As a matter of fact, this war is as much a religious war as any crusade that was ever waged. The only difference between the religious war of to-day and the religious wars of yesterday is that in the past dogmas were promulgated by priests and saints in the name of Theology. The dogmas of to-day are promulgated in the name of Science by the high-priests of Universities and Academies. A few mystical Greek words, such as *homousios* and *homoiousios*, were the watchwords of the crusades of old. A few equally mystical Greek words, *brachycephalic* and *dolichocephalic*, are the watchwords of the crusades of to-day.

III.

It may seem the idle conceit of a dreamer out of touch with reality to assert that it is principles which mainly matter and that it is the ideal which is the ultimate reality. It may seem a ludicrous exaggeration to assert that a mere abstract scientific theory, apparently so innocuous as is the German race theory, could be held responsible for so titanic a catastrophe. Surely there seems to be here no relation and no proportion between cause and effect. Yet it does not take a prolonged effort of profound thinking to understand the portentous political significance of the German race heresy. It is not difficult to understand that according as we believe that history is mainly a conflict of ideals or according as we believe that history is mainly a conflict of material interests, or a conflict of races, we shall consistently either believe in peace or in war as the normal condition of humanity. Conflicts of ideas ought rationally to make for peace. Conflicts of material interests will frequently, although not necessarily, make for war. Conflicts of races must inevitably and always make for war.

If you believe in the materialistic theory that human history is mainly made up

of the inevitable antagonism between Aryan and Semite, between Slav and Teuton, between Celt and Anglo-Saxon, then you must also believe that war is the permanent and beneficial factor in human history. For the conflicts of races for supremacy can only be solved through war.

On the other hand, if you believe in the idealistic theory that human history is mainly a conflict of spiritual and moral and political ideals, then peace is the ultimate factor. For human experience and human reason equally teach us that a conflict of spiritual ideals cannot be solved by violence. They can only be solved by discussion and argument, by persuasion and conversion, by the spread of education, by clear thinking and strenuous working, by the diffusion of sweetness and light. Both reason and wisdom teach us that truth and faith are like love—they cannot be imposed by force.

IV.

Underlying the theory of race there is a first assumption that there is such a thing as a distinct racial type; that there are definite breeds of men, Aryans and Semites, Celts and Teutons, just as there are definite breeds of dogs and pigeons; that human breeds are evolved by similar selective processes; that those distinct racial types are the main factor in the history of nations; that those types are endowed with specific anatomical and physiological characteristics, and that those physiological characteristics carry with them equally definite moral, intellectual, and political qualities.

And there is a second assumption which is the corollary of the first. Not only is there a separation of races, there is also an inequality of races. “*L’Inégalité des Races humaines*” is the title of the epoch-making book of Count de Gobineau. The “Separation of Race” is a biological and objective fact. But to that biological fact we must add a moral and subjective distinction. Some races are noble, others are ignoble. Some races are born to rule, other races are born to obey, to be “hewers of wood and drawers of water.” The Slav is born a slave to be controlled by the Germans. The Serbian is born a serf to be controlled by the Austrians. The Bohemian is an outcast. The Pole is a drunkard. The Celt is a weakling. The Anglo-Saxon is a mercenary. The Russian is a Tatar and a brute.

V.

The German race theory is propped up by a formidable array of so-called

scientific proofs. All the auxiliary disciplines of biology, botany and zoology, physiology and anatomy, are enlisted in the service of anthropology and ethnology. The question as to whether a particular nation is a *Kultur Volk* or whether it is only a rabble of slaves depends entirely on whether the facies is square or oval, brachycephalic or oligocephalic. It depends entirely—to use the pedantic jargon of the anthropologist—on the “cephalic index” of the race.

The historical sciences are called in to support the conclusions of ethnology. It is especially philology which is the most efficient instrument demonstrating the existence and the superiority of a distinct race. Just as anatomy reveals to us the structure of the cranium, so philology reveals to us the structure of the mind. The philologist reveals the genealogies of words even as the anthropologist studies the genealogies of races.

In the burning controversies which for the last generation have divided the Tchech and Magyar and Croatian and Roumanian races of the Austrian Empire, it is the philologists who have acted as umpires. In Vienna philologists like von Jagic have all the authority and prestige of statesmen. Similarly, in the Balkan States, Serbians and Bulgarians, Roumanians and Greeks, find conclusive evidence of their respective rights in the dialects of the Macedonian populations. Such and such a province must be allotted to the Serbians, and not to the Bulgarians, because such and such a dialect has more affinity to the Serbian than to the Bulgarian language. Similarly, in the Latin elements of their dictionary, Roumanian patriots find convincing evidence of their Latin ancestry, and finally prove that they are the lineal descendants of the Dacian legions of Emperor Trajan.^[21]

VI.

Those scientific arguments, biological and philological, may satisfy the biologists and the philologists; they certainly satisfy nobody else. All those pseudo-scientific facts belong to the realm of fiction. Serious thinkers have ceased to prattle about the application of biology to ethics since Huxley delivered his Romanes lecture on “Evolution and Ethics.” The encroachments of scientific materialism have failed as signally in the political sciences as they have failed in ethics.

It is futile to compare the processes which evolve races of man with the processes which evolve breeds of animals. It is true that in the lower stages of

humanity the word “race” has a definite meaning. It may be contended that there is a wide gulf between the races at the extreme end of the human scale, a gulf which even the enthusiastic devotion of missionary effort does not seem able to bridge. There is such a thing as the “blackness” of the nigger and the “yellowness” of the Chinese and the Japanese, although the Japanese have proved themselves capable of assimilating Western civilization, and although the black race has produced the greatest poet of Russia, Pouchkine, and one of the greatest novelists of France, Alexandre Dumas. But it is an all-important fact that as civilization advances the word “race” entirely changes its meaning. Evolution entirely modifies its processes. Biological factors steadily decrease in importance. Moral and political and intellectual factors as steadily increase in importance.

Isolation and selection are the main conditions required to produce a definite breed of cattle. On the other hand, if we want to produce a highly civilized type, it is not isolation which is the main condition, but crossing and blending, mixture and intercourse. As we rise in the scale of humanity there are no fixed types. All types are equally plastic. There are no pure types. All types are equally mixed.

Even if we take the Jewish race, which seems to show extraordinary fixity and stability of type, there is not one dominant Jewish type; there are fully fifty different Jewish types. There is hardly any resemblance between the Jew of Tiflis and the Jew of Tangier, between democratic Ashkenazim and the aristocratic Sephardim. Race is not a cause, but an effect. It is not biology which explains politics, it is politics which dominate biology. It is not the physical which explains the moral, it is the moral which produces the physical. It is not the racial type which produces a racial belief and a racial community, it is the religion which produces the race. It is not the Hindu caste which produces the religion, it is religion which produces the caste. Similarly, it is the religious and political conditions which have kept the Jew apart, and which have preserved the characteristics of the race. Even so, religion and persecution have kept the characteristics of the Armenians or the Parsees and the Greek colonies in the Levant.

VII.

A highly gifted race is invariably the outcome of complex elements, of many cross-currents. Invariably it is the outcome of moral, spiritual, and political factors. It is the outcome of unity of language, of unity of religion, of community

of traditions and institutions. It is mainly religion which keeps apart the French and the Anglo-Saxon races in Canada, and which divides the Celt from the Ulsterman in Ireland. Let the religious boundary break down, and the Irish Celt will blend with the Ulster Scot, the French Canadian will mix with the Anglo-Saxon. The race heresy in its modern form is the sinister shadow projected by the biological materialism of the early Darwinians. It is the same materialistic conception which has triumphed in German Marxism and in the economic interpretation of history. It is the same conception which has triumphed in the *Realpolitik* and *Weltpolitik*, and the elimination of the moral factor from the activities of high policy. The tyranny of the race dogma permeates the majority of the German historians and publicists from the early nineteenth century. We find it in Mommsen's "History of Rome." It has found a striking expression in his famous chapter on the Celts, which is only a veiled attack against the French, who are assumed to be the lineal descendants of the Gauls. The same dogma is the dominant idea of Treitschke's "History." We find it in the *bionda bestia* of Nietzsche. We find it in the "Foundations of the Nineteenth Century" of Houston Stewart Chamberlain. We find it in the works of Count de Gobineau, who, after working unnoticed in his own country, has been heralded as the apostle of Pan-Germanism in the Vaterland. The race heresy has been the *leitmotiv* of all political controversies in the Empire. We find it equally in the anti-Semitic, in the anti-Russian, in the anti-French propaganda. It has culminated in the triple dogma of the superman, of the super-race, and of the super-State, and this triple dogma of the German *Realpolitik* has worked for the enslavement of Europe as inevitably as the triple dogma of the French Revolution—*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*—was bound to lead to the liberation of Europe.

VIII.

For the philosophy of race, with all the liberal demonstrations of its votaries, is essentially and inevitably the philosophy of reaction and the philosophy of militarism, if it is carried to its logical conclusion. And, unfortunately, in Germany it has been carried to its logical conclusion. In Britain and France thinkers have advocated the same deadly theories. The same deadly poison of pseudo-science has infected the body politic. But Darwin and Huxley always saved themselves by inconsistency from the ruthless application of their doctrines. The common sense of the community has shrunk from extreme logic. In a country of free discussion and of free institutions doctrines are counteracted by other influences. Theories are tested by life. In an autocratic country theories

are supreme. The undiluted theories of Rousseau and Robespierre were supreme under the Reign of Terror; the theories of Katkov and the extreme Pan-Slavists were supreme in Russia under the reign of Alexander III. Under a government like Prussia, where all the spiritual forces are mobilized, where Universities, Churches, and newspapers are subject to the State, there is nothing to counteract the doctrinaire spirit. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the heresy of race should have become a fixed idea, a monomania, in the German Empire. In Great Britain the theories of the apostate Englishman Chamberlain could not have struck deep root, notwithstanding all the enthusiastic praise which Mr. Bernard Shaw has given to the "Foundations." In France the theories of Count de Gobineau passed unnoticed. In Germany "Gobineau Societies" have been established in order to propagate the gospel of the French diplomat. In Germany one hundred thousand copies of the "Foundations" of Chamberlain, with their ponderous twelve hundred pages compact with facts and arguments, have been sold, have poisoned countless brains, and have wielded enormous political influence.

IX.

The first inevitable outcome of the German race heresy has been to stimulate the belief in the supremacy of the Teuton and to transform the natural conceit of patriotism into an odious megalomania. Once the Germans assumed in accordance with the race dogma that some European races are born to rule and others to obey, it was inevitable that they should draw the further inference that they of all races were the dominant race. It is true that the belief of the Calvinist in religious predestination may lead to a pessimistic as well as to an optimistic conclusion. The believer in predestination may assume that he is predestined to eternal damnation as easily as he assumes that he is predestined to eternal salvation. But the pseudo-scientific mind and the materialistic mind is not so easily addicted to humility and pessimism. The slave morality of the Christian may lead to meekness and charity and to all the negative virtues of a degenerate Christianity. The master morality of the Anti-Christ Nietzsche must lead to the ruthless assertion of power. The belief in race predestination can therefore only result in megalomania, and in Germany it has certainly resulted in the most acute, the most insane, inflation of nationalism and imperialism recorded in modern history. Of that megalomania the Kaiser has been, in innumerable speeches, the eloquent and insolent spokesman.

X.

Even as race heresy must result in racial megalomania, it must result in political reaction and in the government of caste. The principle which is true of the nation as a whole is as true of every section of that nation. And the pride of race in a nation is substantially the same thing as the pride of birth in a class. If amongst the races of man there is one particular breed, the Teuton, which constitutes the born aristocracy of humanity, so amongst those Teutons there is one special caste which is the born aristocracy of Teutonism. It is the rooted belief in the race theory which has maintained the rule of Junkerthum. On the race theory an exclusive aristocratic government recruited and maintained by artificial selection is the only logical and sensible government, and democracy is bound to be considered as a principle of decay. The Kings of Prussia select their rulers on the same principle on which King Frederick William selected his regiment of six-foot grenadiers from the military caste.

That is why we find in Prussia the most exclusive aristocratic government in the world. As a sop to Southern German opinion, Bismarck was compelled to grant universal suffrage for the Reichstag, but in the Prussian Parliament, or “Landtag,” Bismarck, the Junker of blood and iron, retained the good old principle of aristocratic government. Under the three-class voting system of the Landtag, one voter constituting by himself the first class may have as much political power as the twenty thousand electors constituting the third class. That is also why the Prussian Junker retains by right of birth a monopoly in the higher ranks of the Army, of the Diplomatic and Civil Service. The Junker is born to greatness even as the princely families of Germany have been born to a monopoly of all the thrones of Europe.

XI.

As the race theory must inevitably lead to megalomania and reaction, so it must inevitably lead to militarism. As it is incompatible with democracy, so it is incompatible with peace. As we pointed out at the beginning of this analysis, if it be indeed true that there are some races which are born to rule, it is their duty to assert their will to power over inferior races. If “the true Teutonic type”—to use the words of Sven Hedin—be indeed superior to the Celt, to the Anglo-Saxon, to the Slav, and to the Latin, he is morally bound to assert that superiority. The Teuton will not only achieve the victory, he will deserve it. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht* (World history is world judgment). History is not a conflict

between abstractions, between truth and error, between higher and lower principles, between conflicting ideals; it is, above all, the tragic conflict between higher and lower races. War is necessary and war is beneficial. War is not only the instrument, it is also the criterion, of progress. “Might is Right” ceases to be an immoral principle. “Might is Right” is the ultimate formula of the most sublime morality, for Might is but the Right of the strong to establish the rule of the noble over the ignoble elements of humanity.

FOOTNOTES:

[21] The Roumanian language is a composite language like English. Even as the English vocabulary is mainly a blend of Anglo-Saxon and Franco-Norman, so the Roumanian language is a blend of Latin and Slavonic words. Many years ago the British and Foreign Bible Society published a Roumanian Bible from which the majority of the Slavonic words had been eliminated. I pointed out in *Everyman* that this Roumanian translation was not Roumanian at all. The authorities of the Bible Society indignantly protested and asked me to withdraw. I refused to withdraw. The British and Foreign Bible Society investigated the question, deferring to my criticisms, and prepared and published a new revised version of their Roumanian Bible in which the Slavonic words largely composing the religious vocabulary of Roumania have been restored.

CHAPTER XI

A SLUMP IN GERMAN THEOLOGY

I.

IN the universal readjustment—or, to use the favourite expression of Nietzsche, in the “transvaluation”—of political and spiritual values which must follow the war, we may confidently expect a general slump in all German values. There will be a slump in German education and in German erudition, in German music and in German watering-places. There will be a slump in that “exclusive morality” for which Lord Haldane could not find an equivalent in the English language, and for which, in his famous Montreal address, he could only find an equivalent in the German word *Sittlichkeit*. But, most important of all, there will be a lamentable slump in the most highly prized of all German values—German theology.

Germany may still retain a monopoly of toys; Germany may still continue to supply Princes to the vacant thrones of Europe; but it is eminently probable that God Almighty will cease to be made in the Vaterland.

II.

No one who has not been brought up in a Scottish Presbyterian University atmosphere realizes the mystical prestige hitherto enjoyed by German theology. The education of a Scottish divine was thought incomplete, a graduate in divinity, however brilliant and devout, could not get an important charge, if he had not received the hallmark and consecration of a German theological faculty. And what was true of German Universities was equally true of German theological books. Publishers like Messrs. Clark, of Edinburgh, and Messrs. Williams and Norgate, of London, made considerable fortunes merely from their translations of German works of divinity.

The prejudice in favour of German Universities and against French Universities goes back to the early days of the Reformation. Already in “Hamlet” we find the serious young man going to Wittenberg and the frivolous young man going to Paris in quest of worldly amusement. That pro-German and anti-French prejudice has continued until our own day. In vain have I for twenty

years attempted in the Universities of Scotland to send our graduates to French Universities. In vain did I contend that one single year spent in the Sorbonne provided greater intellectual stimulus than a whole decade spent in a German University. The old Puritan feeling against France proved too strong. Until the year 1914 the stream of our students continued to be directed to Göttingen and Heidelberg, to Bonn and Berlin. Even in our distant colonies, even in Toronto, I found that the majority of teachers were “made in Germany,” whilst of American Universities it is hardly too much to say that many of them had actually become German institutions.

III.

The prejudice which sent Scottish and English ministers of the Gospel to complete their preparation in Germany was all the more extraordinary because Positive Christianity had almost vanished from the theological faculties of Protestant Germany. Even as Holy Russia has remained on the whole the most Christian nation in Europe, Protestant Prussia was certainly the least Christian. It was aptly said by Huxley of the philosophy of Comte, that Comtism was Catholicism minus Christianity. We might say in the same way of German theology, that it was philosophy and metaphysics and philology minus Christianity. Seventy-five years ago David Frederick Strauss, who would be forgotten but for the pamphlet of Nietzsche, wrote a ponderous treatise of a thousand pages, translated by George Eliot, to prove that Christ was a myth. At the end of his life he strenuously attempted in his “Old and New Faith” to find a substitute for Christian theology. German Protestantism travelled the road he indicated. The German people have ceased to believe in Christianity; but they have come to believe in the self-styled Anti-Christ Nietzsche. They have ceased to believe in God; but they still believe in His self-appointed vicegerent, the Kaiser. They have ceased to believe in Providence; but they still believe in a Providential German nation. They have ceased to believe in the Holy Trinity; but they believe all the more fanatically in the New Trinity of the Superman, the Super-race and the Super-State. And it is this new fanatical belief which has brought about the war of the nations.

IV.

The prejudice of our Protestant Churches in favour of German Theological Faculties proceeded on the assumption that German Protestantism was identical

with Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Surely that strange assumption does little credit to the spiritual insight of our divines. German Protestantism has absolutely nothing in common with Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. For whatever may have been adduced against British and American Nonconformity, it must be admitted that at least Anglo-Saxon Nonconformity was generally what it professed to be. Anglo-Saxon Nonconformity actually did refuse to conform, Anglo-Saxon Protestantism did actually protest. The separation between Church and State was a fundamental principle of Anglo-Saxon policy, and that separation was no ideal platonic theory. Nonconformists gave up their emoluments, they again and again risked their lives in defence of their principles. In defence of their principles tens of thousands migrated to distant climes.

For that very reason Anglo-Saxon Nonconformity has rendered inestimable service to political liberty. German Protestantism has never rendered a single service to political liberty, for the simple reason that its political practice has been consistently the reverse. So far from Lutheran Protestantism being based on the separation of Church and State, it was based on the confusion of spiritual and temporal power. That confusion began with the very earliest days of Lutheranism. Lutherans are inclined to depreciate the personality and activity of John Huss, the great Slav reformer, because, judged from worldly standards, John Huss seems to have been a failure. As a matter of fact, the Slav reformer was the ideal spiritual hero. The Teutonic reformer was in many ways a time-server. To Luther must be traced the principle that spiritual allegiance must follow temporal allegiance, that the subjects must follow the creed of their Prince. That belief was expressed in the Protestant motto, *Cujus regio illius religio*, and that motto even to this day accounts for the bewildering religious geography of the German Empire.

That servile attitude of the Protestant Church to the German State has survived to this generation; whereas the Roman Catholic Church made a brave stand against Bismarck in the *Kulturkampf*, the Lutheran Church has remained a docile State Church. This Erastianism is illustrated by no one more signally than by the Pontifex Maximus of Prussian Protestantism, His Excellency Wirklicher Geheimrath Adolf von Harnack. Harnack has earned world-wide fame as a bold interpreter of the Scriptures, but he has refused to countenance those ministers who were discharged merely because they acted on his teachings. In his exegesis, Harnack has been the most uncompromising of critics. In his religious politics, he has been the most tame of courtiers, the most pliable of diplomats. He has taken infinite liberties with the Sacred Texts. He has never taken any

liberties with the sacred majesty of the Kaiser.

V.

The confusion of temporal and spiritual power in German Protestantism brought about two great evils—servility in politics and indifference in religion. But it also seemed to bring one great compensating advantage—namely, complete toleration of other creeds. People do not fight for a creed to which they have become indifferent. Frederick the Great gave equal hospitality to the free-thinking Voltaire and to the Jesuits who had been expelled from most Catholic countries.

That compensating advantage of religious toleration seemed to further the higher intellectual life of the Universities, and in one sense it did. But it must not be forgotten that neither religious toleration nor the higher intellectual life ever extended to the province of politics. The freedom of the Prussian Universities was always limited by the necessities of the State and the accidents of politics. With regard to religion and political thought, the Prussian State always acted on the principle implied in the cynical epigram of Gibbon: “All religions are equally true to the believer. They are equally false to the unbeliever, and *they are equally useful to the statesman.*” For three hundred years the Prussian statesmen have attempted to utilize the Christian religion, and Prussian Christian divines have in fact proved the most serviceable of tools. Unfortunately, in the process religion has disappeared from Prussian soil, and with the liberating influence of the Christian religion has vanished political liberty.

CHAPTER XII

THE GERMAN ENIGMA[22]

I.

THE present investigation into Franco-German relations conducted on behalf of the *Figaro* is the work of one of the ablest publicists of modern France. It is the work of a good European who wishes to put an end to the senseless competition in armaments, and to the international distrust and nervousness which are the main causes of such armaments. The book is also the work of a good Frenchman who realizes that no settlement can be durable which does not safeguard the sacred rights of the conquered peoples of Alsace-Lorraine, who are the first victims of outraged justice. There lies the originality of the book. It reveals the new direction which public opinion and political thought are taking in contemporary France. The whole question of the relations between France and Germany is lifted to a higher plane. We hear no more of the humiliation of France, of her pride and dignity, of rancour and revenge. We hear less of the balance of military force. The main question which is raised is a question of moral principle and of international right.

II.

The work of Monsieur Bourdon is not only a good book; it is also a brave deed. Too long has it been the fashion for French publicists to entrench themselves behind Gambetta's phrase: "N'en parler jamais, y penser toujours!" Silence may have been the best policy on the morrow of the catastrophe of 1870, when one single indiscretion might have set Europe aflame. But after forty-four years, and under entirely altered conditions, an ostrich policy of reticence, a cowardly policy of mental reservation, cannot be the best means of bringing about a settlement.

Monsieur Bourdon has therefore chosen the bolder course, which happens also to be the wiser course. He has broken down the barrier of fear and distrust. He has taken the first step. He has gone to Germany in a spirit of frankness and conciliation. He has tried to get at her thoughts and afterthoughts. He has cross-examined the German people, and he has cross-examined them with consummate tact and skill. An unofficial ambassador of peace, he has revealed

all the qualities of a diplomat, and he has added qualities which the diplomat does not often possess—outspokenness and uprightness, a loyal regard for truth, and that moral preoccupation and that delicate sense of international honour which are generally alien to the official diplomatic mind.

III.

And the result of this searching inquiry is most satisfactory. Quite apart from the value of the opinions expressed, and of the author's own opinion, the inquiry in itself is an historical document of prime importance. Here we have before us at first hand the public opinion of Germany. Nor is it the irresponsible opinion of anonymous scribblers, or the opinion of party politicians; it is the deliberate, reasoned opinion of some of the most distinguished German readers in thought and action. Statesmen and diplomats, captains of industry and army captains, editors and financiers, all the professions except the Church (a significant omission!), are represented in this survey of German opinion. After reading M. Bourdon's book, no politician will henceforth be allowed to plead as an excuse that he does not know what official and unofficial Germany thinks, and what she feels on the vital questions of foreign policy.

IV.

And perhaps the readers may carry away the impression that Germany feels more than she thinks; that she is carried away by prejudice, by currents and cross-currents of emotion, rather than led by general principles and clear and sober thinking. I had asked one of the most eminent British publicists living to write an introduction to the English translation of M. Bourdon's book which is to be published next month by Messrs. Dent. But my friend answered that he would willingly have written such an introduction if he could have agreed with the ideas of the French writer. Unfortunately, he did not see his way to agree with Monsieur Bourdon. No purpose, he argued, could be served by cross-examining German opinion, for there was no German opinion. In vain did Monsieur Bourdon claim to tell us what Germany thinks; the Germans were not educated to think politically. And there was the rub. There was no organized public opinion, and even if there were, it could only express itself, it could not press its demands upon a despotic Government.

V.

I do not here examine how much truth there may be in my friend's contention. But one fact must certainly strike the readers of M. Bourdon's book. The present position is as ominous as it is bewildering and unintelligible.

Monsieur Bourdon has proved once more the tremendous power of German militarism. German militarism seems to be bred in the bone of the Prussians, and has been inoculated into the German people. The army is the most popular service in the country. It provides an honourable career to tens of thousands of young men of the middle classes and of the aristocracy. At the same time, Monsieur Bourdon points out that from the German point of view it is one thing to be militarist, and another to be warlike and bellicose. The Germans hold that the most confirmed militarist may be a convinced pacifist. The father of Frederick the Great, the greatest militarist of the Hohenzollern Dynasty, the Sergeant-King, was so attached to his army that he never employed it in active warfare, he never allowed it to fight a single battle, for fear of losing or spoiling so perfect an instrument.

But even granting this paradoxical thesis of the pacifism of German militarists, the situation remains sufficiently contradictory and distracting to the ordinary mind. Every representative German consulted by Monsieur Bourdon proclaims that Germany is pacific, that she wishes for peace, and that she needs peace for her industrial and commercial expansion. Yet we see her making gigantic preparations for a possible war. With a restless endeavour, and at tremendous cost, we see her developing her warlike resources. Every representative German insists on making platonic professions. Yet we do not hear of a single statesman daring to take the necessary step or to make the necessary sacrifices. No one seems to understand that peace demands sacrifices quite as heroic as war. No Bismarck of peace seems to be strong enough to-day to put an end to the senseless waste of national resources and misdirected energies.

VI.

The "German Enigma" of Monsieur Bourdon is mainly an objective, impartial, and impersonal study, and the author has been careful not to obtrude his own private views. It is only in the last chapter that he attempts to draw the lesson and point out the conclusion of his own inquiry. And his conclusion is an eloquent though restrained plea for a Franco-German *rapprochement*, and in favour of the only policy which will bring about that reconciliation. France, he

argues, does not want a revision of the Treaty of Frankfurt. She does not want compensation or revenge. French history contains a sufficiently brilliant roll of glorious military achievements that the French people may afford to forget the reverses and humiliations of 1870. A French statesman, on the eve of the Treaty of Frankfurt, made the rhetorical statement that France would never surrender one stone of her fortresses nor one inch of her territory. Animated by a very different spirit, modern French statesmen do not claim back to-day one inch of lost territory. All that the French people demand is that the claims of justice shall be heard, that Alsace-Lorraine shall cease to groan under the heel of an arbitrary despot, that Alsace-Lorraine shall be governed according to her own laws, that the Alsatians shall be treated as a free people, and not as conquered subjects.

VII.

And that one sole possibly solution is also the only simple solution. That solution would involve no sacrifice of pride or dignity to either nation. France would not make any surrender to Germany, and Germany would not make any concession to France. Both would surrender to the demands of international justice.

And the solution of the autonomy of Alsace-Lorraine would be in the interests of all parties concerned, as well as of European civilization. France and Germany would be delivered from a nightmare which for forty-four years has paralyzed their activities. One hundred and ten millions of the two most progressive nations of the Continent would cease to oppose each other in every quarter of the globe.

Alsace-Lorraine would cease to be the festering wound on the open frontier of the two countries, but would once more discharge her historical function of being the connecting link between Latin and Teutonic peoples.

And the whole of Europe would be delivered from the crushing burden of military expenditure. Hundreds of millions at present wasted on armaments would be devoted to productive purposes. Commerce and industry would receive an impetus which in one generation would renew the face of Europe. Reaction would collapse with the disappearance of military predominance, and European Governments could devote themselves whole-heartedly to the anxious problems clamouring for a solution, and to the momentous tasks of popular education and social reform which are waiting to be accomplished.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[22\]](#) Georges Bourdon, “L’Enigme Allemande,” Librairie Plon, Paris.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TRAGIC ISOLATION OF GERMANY: AN INTERVIEW WITH A CONTINENTAL STATESMAN

A FEW months ago^[23] it was my good fortune to discuss the international situation with Monsieur Emile Ollivier, the veteran statesman, the Napoleonic Prime Minister with the light heart whose name will ever be identified, and identified unjustly, with a disastrous war. A few days ago it was again my privilege to discuss the European situation with another Continental statesman whose name will for ever be identified with the cause of peace. I am not at liberty to disclose the identity of the illustrious speaker. Suffice it to say that he is a statesman whose every word compels attention all over the world and imposes respect, a man of infinite wit, of penetrating intellect, and whose commanding personality has on more than one occasion directed the course of world politics, and has helped to save Europe from an impending catastrophe. For more than an hour the speaker discussed with me, if an almost uninterrupted monologue may be called a discussion, the anxious problems of modern Germany. Without reticence or afterthought, he gave me the benefit of his mature wisdom and of a lifelong experience.

I.

You ask me to give you the key of the international situation. That key is in Germany, or rather in Berlin. For Prussia controls Germany, and will more and more control it in the future.

The Germans are nervous and uneasy, and that is why they ceaselessly increase their armaments. They are nervous because the whole European situation has been radically changed, to their detriment. The whole balance of power has been upset by the results of the Balkan War. They are nervous because they are tragically isolated. Germany has no friends, no allies, and has therefore to defend herself on two, or rather on three, fronts. She has to defend herself at once against France, against Russia, and against England.

It is true that the Triple Alliance still subsists. But it subsists only in name. For

Germany can count neither on Italy nor on Austria. She cannot count on Italy. For Italy is a hopeless coquette, and she transfers her erratic affections wherever her interest leads her. Nor can Germany count on Austria. No longer can Austria be called the “loyal secundant.” For Austria has ceased to be controlled by her Teutonic population. She is at the mercy of the Slavs, both inside and outside of her empire. She is abandoned by Roumania, who is seeking the support of Russia. She is detested by the Serbians, who have the best organized army in the Balkans. It would have been the vital interest of Austria to win over Serbia, and it would have been so easy to win her over. An equitable treaty of commerce, the concession of a port on the Adriatic, and Serbia would have become the ally of Austria. Serbia was prepared to forget the shameful policy hitherto pursued by Austria. All that was required was some give-and-take, some fairness.

II.

But that sense of fairness, of international equity, is exactly what both Prussia and Austria are so lamentably deficient in. The Austrians, like the Prussians, may be individually most pleasant. Politically and collectively they are consistently disagreeable. They never seem to understand the first principle of diplomacy—namely, that no treaty can be of any permanent value which is only advantageous to one side.

And then there is the utter tactlessness of the Germans. It is partly explainable by their belief in force. When you believe in force you do not trouble to persuade or conciliate. It is also partly explainable by the absence in Prussia of an old tradition of refinement and culture. As Bismarck once said cynically and frankly to Thiers: “Mon cher ami! Nous autres Prussiens, nous sommes encore des barbares” (We Prussians, we are still barbarians).

The Prussian, therefore, in diplomacy is a blunderer and a bully. He has the art of making himself unpleasant. And he seems to enjoy doing so. It is significant that the Germans are the only people who have coined a special word to express the pleasure felt by inflicting pain. The curious and expressive German word *Schadenfreude* cannot be translated into any other language.

III.

And that is why in politics the Germans fail to make friends. They are feared by all nations. They are respected by some. They are loved by none.

And they fail to make friends at home quite as lamentably as abroad. They fail to win over the nations living under their own German laws. They are making such inconceivable blunders as the expropriation of the Poles and the colonization scheme of Posen. It is a striking fact that with the single possible exception of the Galicians—who fear Russia even more than they detest Austria—there is not a single non-German-speaking people either in the German Empire or in the Austrian Empire who has accepted the rule of the Teuton. Alsatian and Dane, Pole and Tchech, Croatian and Roumanian—all the subject races are equally disaffected. They may disagree in everything, but they agree in their opposition to Teutonic rule.

What a tragedy this German world empire of the twentieth century! Once Germany was made up of little cities and great Universities. To-day she is made up of big cities and impotent Universities. Where are the spiritual and artistic glories of the past? The moral and intellectual influence of Germany has reached its lowest ebb.

IV.

It is this striking isolation of Germany which compels her to arm. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that this very isolation is making for peace. Nobody either in Europe or Germany wants war. Neither the Emperor nor his Ministers want war. War is too great a risk. It is too much of a gamble. In warfare it is always the unexpected that happens. War may be the national industry of Prussia. But it is the most *speculative* of all industries.

At the same time, whilst we are all wishing for peace, we must ever be on our guard. With the militarist tendencies of a bureaucratic and despotic State, with the economic pressure of an increasing population, one is always at the mercy of an incident. Twenty-five years ago the Schnaebeler incident brought Europe to the verge of war. Similar frontier incidents in this age of aeroplanes can happen any day. They did happen yesterday. They did not lead to serious consequences. They might lead to fatal consequences to-morrow. They might be magnified by a sensational Press and by bellicose partisans such as the Pan-Germanists. The Pan-Germanists may be only a small minority to-day, but they are noisy, and they are just the kind of people ever looking out for just such “unpleasant incidents.”

Yes, let us be on our guard! Let us not trust to a false sense of security, and let

us not put our trust in politics and politicians. Politics are so petty, and politicians so impotent. How many so-called statesmen are there to-day who have the courage of their convictions, and who would not be carried away by the impulses and emotions of the moment?

V.

Such were the weighty words of the European statesman. They were uttered without animus and without passion. They were uttered with the serene detachment of the philosopher and of the experienced man of the world. And they express the deliberate opinions of a confirmed pacifist. And they express the substantial truth.

It would be well if our German friends would ponder and meditate those sober and sobering utterances. It would be well if they would try and give their own explanation of their tragic isolation and of their universal political unpopularity. It would be well if they in turn would ask themselves why political Germany is left without a friend in the wide world? As Maximilian Harden once said: “Uns lebt kein Freund auf der weiten Welt.” Might not the result of such sobering reflections be to induce the Germans to turn over a new leaf? Might it not help to precipitate the downfall of a medieval military bureaucracy? And might it not help to falsify the ominous prophecy of our European statesman that Prussia will more and more control the politics of the German Empire?

We loved the glorious Germany of the past. Let the Germany of to-morrow make herself again as cordially liked as she is feared to-day. But let her understand that no nation will allow herself to be bullied into sympathy. Sympathy must be spontaneous. In the words of one of her greatest thinkers: “Die Liebe ist wie der Glaube, man kann sie nicht erzwingen” (Love is like Faith. You cannot secure it by force).

FOOTNOTES:

[23] Written in the spring of 1914.

CHAPTER XIV

RUSSIA AND GERMANY

I.

THE complicated and contradictory relations between Russia and Germany can be summed up very briefly. On the one hand, there existed before the war the closest intercourse between the Russian and the German Courts, and that close intercourse extended to the army, to the bureaucracy, to the Universities, to the industrial and commercial classes. On the other hand, the Russian and the German people are mutually repelled. There is a temperamental antagonism between the two nations, between the dour disciplined Prussian and the easygoing disciplined Russian. In the province of ideas, of art and literature, French influence is dominant amongst the intellectual and in the upper classes, but as literature counts for very little, and as trade and industry, as the bureaucracy and the Court, count for a very great deal, and as all these social and political forces hitherto were almost entirely controlled by the Germans, it may be said that before the war German influence was supreme in the Russian Empire.

II.

Until Peter the Great, the Romanov Family was a national dynasty. It had remained national from sheer necessity, as no European Court would have cared to intermarry with Tatar and Barbarian Princes. Even at the end of Peter the Great's reign the prestige of Russia had scarcely asserted itself in the politics of the West. Peter the Great expressed a keen desire to pay a visit to the Court of Louis XIV. He was politely given to understand that his visit would not be acceptable, even as a poor relation will be told that his visit is not welcome to a kinsman in exalted position. After the death of Louis, the Tsar again asked to be received at Versailles. This time his overtures were accepted, but even at the Court of the Regent his visit caused the greatest embarrassment to the masters of ceremonies. The situation was a tragi-comic one. French etiquette could not decide whether the Tatar Prince was to receive the honours which belong of right only to the ruler of a civilized people.

For the first time in modern Russian history, Peter the Great's daughter, Anne,

married a German Prince in 1725. With that year begins that close dynastic alliance with the German Courts which has lasted until our own day. Germany has been carrying on a most thriving export trade of Princes and Princesses with almost every European monarchy—an export trade of which she is reaping the enormous political advantages in the present crisis. But in Russia alone she has obtained a monopoly of this royal export trade. *All the Russian Tsars have married German Princesses.* For one hundred and fifty years the rule suffered no exception until Alexander II. married a daughter of the Danish Dynasty, which itself is in reality the German Dynasty of Oldenburg.

I need not emphasize the supreme importance of those close family relations between the Courts of Russia and Germany, *and especially between the Courts of Russia and Prussia.* It is the peculiarity of an autocratic government that the smallest causes are productive of the greatest consequences, and amongst those smaller causes none are likely to produce more far-reaching results than the personal likes and dislikes of the ruler and his family. In the Empire of the Tsars the sympathies of the ruler and of the Imperial family for a hundred and fifty years have generally been German. Women have no less influence in Russia than in other countries, and as every Russian Princess has, for a hundred and fifty years, been German in origin, German by training, German by pride of birth, German by prejudice, the Teutonic influences have necessarily been supreme in the Russian Court. Nor must we forget that every German Princess coming to Petrograd would bring with her a numerous suite of ladies-in-waiting and Court officials, so that the German Court colony was automatically increasing. Indeed, it is no mere chance that the capital, the military harbour, and the chief Imperial residences should all have German names—Kronstadt, Oranienbaum, Schluessenburg, Petersburg, and Peterhof. Peterhof has been the Russian Potsdam. Petersburg has been the outpost of Germany in the Russian Empire, the *feste Burg* of Prussia until the eve of the war.

III.

From what has been said, it is obvious that the national Romanov Dynasty, founded in 1613 by Michael Romanov, Patriarch of all the Russias, ceased to be a Romanov Dynasty at the death of Empress Elizabeth in 1761. With Peter III. it is a German Dynasty which ascends the throne. Peter III., son of a Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, is a Romanov in the proportion of one-half; Paul, son of a Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, in the proportion of one-fourth; Alexander I. and Nicholas I., sons of a Princess of Württemberg, in the proportion of one-eighth;

Alexander II., son of a Princess of Hohenzollern, to the extent of one-sixteenth; Alexander III., son of a Grand Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt, to the extent of one thirty-second; and the late ruler, Nicholas II., who married a Princess of the House of Oldenburg, to the extent of one sixty-fourth. One sixty-fourth of the blood of the late Tsar is Russian Romanov blood. In the proportion of sixty-three sixty-fourths it is the blood of Holstein, of Anhalt, of Oldenburg, of Hesse, of Würtemberg, of Hohenzollern, which flows through the veins of the late Emperor of all the Russias.

IV.

The history of Russia proves only too conclusively that again and again the national interests of Russia have been sacrificed to the German dynastic influences. At the end of the Seven Years' War, Frederick the Great was at his last gasp. Prussia was on the verge of ruin. *The Russian Army had entered Berlin*; the power of the new military monarchy had been totally broken at Kunersdorf. The death of Elizabeth and the accession of her mad nephew, Peter III., retrieved a desperate situation. For the mad nephew was a German Prince, a Duke of Holstein, and a passionate admirer of Frederick the Great. Peter III. was murdered in 1762. He only reigned a few months, but he reigned sufficiently long to save Prussia from destruction and to surrender all the advantages secured by Russian triumphs and dearly paid for by Russian blood.

V.

There is no more fantastic fairy-tale and there is no more fascinating drama than the life-story of Catherine the Great, which recently has been so brilliantly told by Mr. Francis Gribble. A Cinderella amongst German royalties, a pauper Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, Catherine became the mightiest potentate of her age. Although the nominee of Frederick the Great, she pursued consistently a national Russian policy. And she had good reasons for doing so. For no throne was less secure than the throne of the Romanovs. She had had to remove her husband by murder for fear of being removed herself. She continued to be surrounded by a rabble of unscrupulous adventurers and intriguers. Her only safety lay in becoming a patriotic Russian, and in seeking the support of Russian sentiment and Russian opinion. Whilst Frederick the Great surrounded himself with French advisers, and contemptuously refused even to speak the German language; whilst he declared to the German scholar who presented him with a copy of the

“Nibelungen Lied” that this national German epic was not worth a pipe of tobacco, Catherine the Great systematically encouraged Russian literature. Whilst Frederick the Great remained the consistent Atheist on the throne, Catherine the Great professed the utmost zeal for Russian Orthodoxy. All through her reign she avoided as far as possible a conflict with Frederick and his successor. She divided with them the spoils of Poland, or, as Frederick the Great put it in his edifying theological language, she partook of the Eucharistic body of the Polish kingdom in unholy communion with Prussia and Austria. But Catherine saw to it that Russia secured the greater part of the spoils.

VI.

There is a curious and uncanny similarity between the character and the reign of Peter III. and the character and reign of his son, Paul I. Both reigns were brief, yet both reigns had an incalculable influence on European affairs. Both rulers sacrificed national interests to dynastic interests. Both rulers were insane, and both rulers engaged in insane enterprises. Both father and son were murdered with the complicity or connivance of their own family. The Russian armies, on the advent of Peter III., had secured and achieved a dramatic victory over Prussia, but the admiration of Peter III. for Frederick the Great prevented the Russians from reaping the fruits of victory. Suvoroff crossed the Alps and achieved an equally sensational victory over France, but Paul I. was prevented from taking advantage of his victories by his admiration for Napoleon.

VII.

The reign of Alexander I. once more strikingly illustrates the enormous part which subterranean German influences have played in the foreign policy of Russia. After the costly victories of Eylau and Friedland, Napoleon I. had concluded with Alexander I. the Peace of Tilsit. The treaty was fatal to Europe, for it divided the Continent practically between the Russian and French Empires. But it was highly advantageous to Russia, and enormously added to Russian power and Russian prestige.

It was certainly in Russia's interest to maintain the Alliance. It was broken largely through one of those small dynastic incidents which are of such vast importance under an absolute despotism. One of Napoleon's main objects was to establish a Napoleonic Dynasty and to be adopted by marriage into one of the

ruling families of Europe. The Corsican parvenu passionately desired a matrimonial alliance with the House of Romanov, and repeatedly applied for the hand of one of Alexander's sisters; the dowager Tsarina, Alexander's mother, a daughter of the King of Würtemberg, as persistently refused. She had all the pride of birth of a German Princess, and all the hatred of a reactionary against the armed soldier of the Revolution. Foiled at the Court of Petersburg, Napoleon was more successful at the Court of Vienna. A few months after Napoleon's last overtures had been rejected by Russia, the Habsburgs, who, after the Bourbons, were the most august, the most ancient dynasty of Europe, eagerly accepted what the Romanovs had refused. The war of 1812 with Russia was the result of that pro-German policy of the Russian Court.

VIII.

During the reigns of Nicholas I. and Alexander II. the German-Austrian influence reached its zenith at the Court of Petersburg. Nicholas I. was the brother-in-law of the Prussian Hohenzollern. An able and an honest man in his private relations, he was in his political capacity a Prussian martinet, as even Treitschke is compelled to admit, and he organized his Empire on the strictest Frederician principles. The Court, the Army, and the bureaucracy were Prussianized as they had never been before. A German bureaucrat, Nesselrode, who could not even speak the Russian language, for forty years controlled as Foreign Minister the policy of the Russian Empire. Even as his grandfather, Peter III., even as his brother, Alexander I., had saved Prussia from destruction, so Nicholas I. saved Austria from a similar fate. Francis Joseph had ascended a throne shaken to its foundations. Hungary was in open rebellion. The young Austrian Emperor appealed to Russia for help. Nicholas I. sent an army to quell the revolution, and established his cousin on the Hungarian throne. It is unnecessary to add that Francis Joseph was as loyal and as grateful to Russia as Frederick the Great had been!

Alexander I. had refused to accept Napoleon I. as a brother-in-law. Even so did Nicholas I. refuse to recognize Napoleon III. as Emperor of the French. It was a gratuitous insult inspired by Prussia; it was opposed to Russian interests, and it was one of the main causes of the Crimean War.

IX.

Under Alexander II. the alliance of the three reactionary empires of Central Europe was welded even more firmly than under his predecessor. Bismarck, during his tenure of the Prussian Embassy at Petersburg, was the chosen favourite of the Russian Court, and if he had chosen could have become a Minister of the Tsar. An understanding with Russia became the chief dogma of his political creed, and it remained so until the end. It was Bismarck's adherence to the Russian-Prussian Alliance which was one of the causes of his dismissal.

Alexander II. did nothing to guard against the German peril. He might have been the umpire of Central Europe, as Alexander I. had been fifty years before. He demanded no compensation for the enormous accession of power and territory which Germany had received through the victorious wars of 1863, 1866, and 1870. He insisted on no guarantees. When, after Sedan, Thiers came to St. Petersburg to obtain the intervention of the Russian Empire, he was dismissed with empty words. One year after Thiers's fruitless journey, Emperor William paid an official visit to his nephew Alexander II., and the Tsar once more proclaimed the indissoluble solidarity of Russia with Germany. Until the end of his reign the German-Austrian-Russian Alliance, the famous dynastic Alliance of the Three Emperors, remained the keystone of European policy and the mainstay of Russian reaction.

X.

The influence of Germany at the Russian Court was strengthened by the influence of Germany on the Russian bureaucracy. An agricultural community without a middle class, Russia has had to recruit her Civil Services almost entirely from the outside and mainly from Germany, and more especially from the German Baltic provinces of Esthonia, Livonia, and Courland. Teutonic barons from those Baltic provinces have filled the higher ranks of the Diplomatic Service and of the Civil Service for a hundred and fifty years. The Russian Tsars found the German barons far more serviceable tools than the Russian boiars. In a previous age one Emperor after another had been removed by a rebellious aristocracy. The highest nobles in the land had been implicated in the Decabrist conspiracy at the end of Alexander I.'s reign. Even under Alexander II. there were always a few members of the nobility to be found as accomplices in the revolutionary plots. But there never was one single German from the Baltic provinces implicated in a conspiracy against reaction. It is easy to understand, therefore, why a Russian autocrat should have preferred the services of the German Baltic barons. The Russian nobleman is casual, lavish, a bad economist,

easygoing, generous, and he is corrupt because easygoing and generous. He is also much more independent. The Junker is punctual, precise, disciplined, generally poor, always ambitious. He is also tolerably honest. He is the ideal bureaucrat.

XI.

German influence has been no less dominant in the Russian academies and in scientific institutions. The Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg was organized on the pattern of the Academy of Berlin. It was an official institution with high privileges, and it remained consistently German. Until recently its proceedings were published in the German language, and German scientists were invariably preferred rather than Russian scientists. Mendelieff, one of the most creative scientific minds of his generation, was a member of every European academy except the Academy of Petersburg.

The Germans have been an even greater power in the Russian Universities. They took full advantage of the prestige which German science had acquired in Europe, and they largely filled the ranks of the liberal professions. German doctors, German veterinary surgeons, German *Feldschers*, German foresters, German engineers, were to be found in every part of the Empire. A casual reading of the Post Office directories of Moscow, or Petersburg, or Kiev, provides a most instructive commentary on the extent of the German domination.

XII.

Securely entrenched in the Russian Court, in the Army, in the bureaucracy, in the Universities, in the Diplomatic Service, the Germans secured a no less commanding influence in trade and industry. As we have already pointed out, Russia, until recent years, had remained an agricultural country without a middle class. The trade remained almost entirely in foreign hands. Already in the Middle Ages Russian cities, like Novgorod, were affiliated to the German Hanseatic League. In the sixteenth century adventurous English explorers and traders, whose exploits are amongst the most thrilling of Hakluyt's voyages, tried to oust their German competitors, but they utterly failed. The Russians themselves are excellent traders, and the merchant guilds of Moscow have been for centuries a powerful commercial organization. Even to-day you will meet in

Moscow unassuming Russian merchants leading the simplest of lives and possessed of enormous wealth. But the Russian merchant is generally conservative, un-enterprising, a bad linguist, and servilely attached to ancient usages. He is scarcely a match for the foreigner. In recent years British and Belgian traders as well as Jews and Armenians have shared in the enormous trade of the Russian Empire, *but the Germans have secured the lion's share.*

And what is true of Russian trade is equally true of Russian industry. The liberal economic policy of Witte has created in one generation powerful industrial centres in Central Russia, and especially in Poland. Here, again, the Germans have benefited more than all their competitors together. Lodz, the "Manchester of Russian Poland," has ceased to be either Polish or Russian, and has become a German manufacturing town. Caprivi, Bismarck's successor, negotiated with the Russian Government a treaty of commerce which gave enormous advantages to German industry, and if the German Government had continued to show the wisdom of Bismarck and Caprivi, Germany would certainly have profited more than any other country by the commercial expansion of the Russian Empire.

XIII.

It might have been expected that a German influence so absolutely supreme in every sphere of society, in every walk of life, should have extended to the lower classes. But the common people were never affected by German methods and remained untainted by the German spirit. To the Russian moujik, the German remained the *Niemets*, the mute, the alien enemy. The Russian peasant, with his simple ways and his child-like faith, a mystic and an idealist, has an instinctive antipathy to the modern Prussian, who is an implacable realist, selfish, calculating, and aggressive. The persistence with which the Russian people have resisted and escaped Prussian influence is not the least convincing proof of the soundness of the Slav character.

XIV.

We have seen German influence supreme in the province of the practical, the tangible, the useful. It is all the more remarkable that it should be insignificant in the sphere of the ideal and of the beautiful. In Art and Literature the influence of Germany has been purely superficial, although the beautiful Russian language

has often been spoiled by the influence of a cumbrous German syntax. With the exception of Nietzsche, no German writer has left his mark on Russian literature. The literary influence of Great Britain has been much more extensive, and has grown enormously during the last generation. But it is the literature of France which has been the dominant factor in the literary life of modern Russia. The fascination of French culture has been as old as Russian culture. Catherine II. was the friend of Diderot and Voltaire, and herself translated French masterpieces into Russian. The French language has been the language of diplomacy and society. Readers of "War and Peace" will remember how the noblemen of the Petersburg salons denounced the French usurper in the language of Voltaire.

XV.

We have sufficiently proved that Germany has been a formidable factor in the whole past history of the Russian Empire. We may hope that after the war German influence will be a thing of the past. After the war it is not German political ideas and German institutions, but French and British ideas and institutions which will mould the destinies of the Russian Empire. The elective affinities between the Russian democracy and the French and British democracies will assert themselves and will eliminate the mischievous and reactionary influence of Germany.

We have seen how entirely German power has been artificial and imposed from above, how it has been the outcome of the dynastic connection. *But in the meantime the German influence supreme before the war still subsists and still constitutes a danger which it would be extremely unwise and unstatesmanlike to ignore or to under-rate.* We must therefore guard ourselves, so that when the day of settlement comes the subtle and subterranean German forces shall not make themselves felt, and that the Teutonic Monarchies shall be frustrated in their supreme effort to retain a power which has been so fatal to the liberties of Europe and to the free development of the Russian people.

CHAPTER XV

THE PEACEMAKER OF GERMANY: PRINCE BERNHARD VON BÜLOW

I.

IN the year of grace 1878, after the great Turkish-Russian war, a young and unknown Prussian diplomat of twenty-nine years of age called Bernhard von Bülow found himself, as assistant to his father, the Foreign Secretary of the German Empire, suddenly summoned to co-operate in the making of a new Europe. In the same year, on the same arena, an equally unknown young Scotch politician called Arthur James Balfour, born in the same year, 1849, also found himself, as assistant to his uncle, Lord Salisbury, Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, unexpectedly chosen to play the identical part of an international peacemaker. And now, after a lapse of thirty-eight years, the two erstwhile Secretaries of the Congress of Berlin, to-day the only surviving statesmen of that momentous crisis, Prince von Bülow and Mr. Arthur James Balfour, are about to meet in another European Congress, and be called upon once more to recast the map of the world. But this time the Scotsman and the German will meet no more as Allies working out a common policy. They will meet as the leading champions of hostile and irreconcilable world policies, united only in a joint endeavour to undo the evil work of Bismarck and Beaconsfield which claimed to bring to Europe "peace with honour," and which ultimately brought Europe nothing but war with dishonour.

II.

Prince von Bülow's whole career has been one steady and rapid ascent to high office and exalted honour. Before his fall he had earned the well-deserved nickname of "Bernhard the Lucky." He seemed to have found in his cradle all the gifts of the fairies. His most striking characteristic is an amazing and totally un-German versatility and resourcefulness. As a soldier he volunteered in the Franco-German War, and retired from service as a Prussian Lieutenant. As a diplomat he has occupied responsible positions in every capital of Europe except London, and the exception, by the way, is probably the reason why he has always been less familiar with the English mind than with the Continental mind.

An unrivalled Parliamentary tactician as well as a persuasive Parliamentary orator, he managed with even more than the skill of Mr. Asquith or Mr. Balfour the most unmanageable representative assembly of the Continent, and for twelve years he played off one against the other the ten or more parties of the Reichstag. As Fourth Chancellor of the New German Empire he has been associated with all the leading measures of the “new course,” and he succeeded for ten years in retaining the confidence and affectionate regard of the most fickle and most despotic of masters. A man of the world and a patron of learning and art, he has enlisted all the graces and amenities of social life in the service of his ambition.

III.

Like most of the men who have built up the Prussian power; like Stein, who came from Nassau; like Moltke, who came from Denmark; like Treitschke, who came from Saxony, Prince von Bülow is not a Prussian. Like Blücher, his family originates from the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg, that strange paradise of a medieval and feudal Junkerthum. But, like most of the naturalized servants of the Hohenzollern, von Bülow proved even more Prussian than any native of Pomerania or Brandenburg. The son of one of Bismarck’s trusted lieutenants, he always remained a loyal pupil of the Iron Chancellor. It is significant that the first visit which Bülow paid on his accession to power was a visit to the fallen statesman. He was brought up on Bismarckian traditions and ideals. He is not a creative genius like the hermit of Friedrichsruhe. He has been accused of being a trimmer, but he was a trimmer like the great Lord Burleigh, always keeping in mind the final goal to be reached. He had to work with different materials and under conditions entirely different from those which prevailed under Bismarck. He had to embark on a *Weltpolitik*, whereas Bismarck was content with a Continental policy. He had to initiate the colonial and naval policy of William, while Bismarck systematically kept clear of colonial ventures. But as far as circumstances permitted, the “new course” of Bülow was but the continuation of the old course of Bismarck. Like Bismarck, he fought the Socialists. Like Bismarck, he in turn fought and conciliated the Clericals. Like Bismarck, he enforced in Poland the inexorable policy of expropriation and appropriation. Like Bismarck, he remained true to the Austrian alliance. Like Bismarck, he tried to work in close co-operation with Russia, and tried to build up again the reactionary alliance of the three Central Empires. And in these many difficult tasks, which had become much more difficult even than in the ’seventies or ’eighties, Bülow was as little hampered as his predecessor by any moral

principles or scruples. He proved even more Machiavellian than his predecessor, adhering as steadfastly to the same implacable realism.

IV.

But, if Prince von Bülow has revealed the same aims and is imbued with the same political philosophy as Bismarck, he has tried to attain his end by very different means. He has none of the cynical sincerity of his master. Bismarck carried into diplomacy the directness and brutality of the soldier. Bülow introduced into politics the tortuous practices of Italy. He reminds one of Cavour much more than of the master-builder of German unity. Whilst Bismarck won his spurs in the embassies of Germany and Russia, Bülow received his main training as Ambassador in Latin countries. He served for five years in Paris. In Bucharest he imbibed the Byzantine influences of the East. He spent six years in the Eternal City, which for three thousand years has been the centre of statecraft, and which even to-day remains the best training-school of diplomacy. His marriage with an Italian Princess is another indication of the natural affinities of his temperament, and an additional proof that he constitutionally preferred the subtle methods of Rome to the more brutal methods of Brandenburg. Bismarck was always using threats which he had no intention of carrying out. Bülow is equally fond of using promises which he is as little disposed to fulfil. Bismarck was always showing the mailed fist. Bülow prefers to show the velvet glove. Bismarck wielded the sword of the berserker. Bülow prefers the rapier of the fencer. Bismarck was stern, irascible, uncontrolled, titanic, and his whole career was one long and hard struggle against bitter enemies. Bülow was ever amiable, courteous, smiling, suave, patient, elusive. He managed equally to conciliate the Kaiser and Bismarck, Herr Harden and the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, the Catholics and the Jews, the industrials and the agrarians. When the hour of disfavour came, Bismarck retired with his mastiffs among the pine-woods of Lauenburg, nursing his rancour and revenge. Bülow retired with quiet and graceful dignity among the statues and the flowers of the Villa Malta.

V.

In no other aspect of his versatile career did Prince von Bülow show more resourcefulness than in his skilful handling of the Press. He was the first German statesman who knew how to discipline and to exploit public opinion in the interests of Imperial policy. It is true that already Bismarck had made frequent

use of the Press as an instrument of government, as is abundantly shown by his close association with Lothar Bucher, with his famulus Moritz Busch, and with Maximilian Harden. But Bismarck, whilst using the journalists, profoundly despised them, with the result that "Bismarck's Reptile Press" became a byword in Europe. Under Bülow's régime the humble pressman rose to influence and affluence and basked in Ministerial favour. With the assistance of Mr. Hammann, Prince von Bülow made the Berlin Press Bureau a sinister power in Europe as well as in Germany; for the Chancellor was as anxious to conciliate the foreign journalist as the German. M. Huret sang his praises in the *Figaro*. Even the arch-Germanophobe Monsieur André Tardieu was coaxed into writing a whole volume of panegyric on the irresistible Chancellor. Before the caprice of his Imperial master sent him into premature retirement, Bülow had succeeded in marshalling all the intellectual forces of the German Empire. Whilst Bismarck had frittered away his energies quarrelling with von Virchow, with Windhorst, and with the professors of the National Liberal party, Bülow had managed to make the shining luminaries of the Universities, the Harnacks, the Schmollers, and the Dernburgs, into the most enthusiastic advocates of his policy.

VI.

There are few more bewildering subjects to the student of politics than the many concatenations of events which brought about the present world catastrophe. If that fateful interview had not been published in the *Daily Telegraph*, there would have been no political hurricane in Germany. If there had been no hurricane, Prince von Bülow would not have fallen from power. If Prince von Bülow had not fallen from power, there would probably have been no world war. It is certain that Bülow's retirement from office in 1909 was a disaster to the German Empire. It is equally certain that his return to office in 1914 and his peace mission to Italy was an ominous danger to Europe. And it is also certain that he will be even more dangerous to Europe in the eventful days to come when he will be called back to office, and be once more the leader and spokesman of German policy. In the future Congress which will liquidate the world war Bülow will be the greatest asset of the enemy. In the Congress of Berlin Bismarck, towering like a giant, dictated his policy to subservient Europe. The day of German hegemony is past, and no German plenipotentiary will be able again to impose his will by the same methods. But the resources of diplomacy will be all the more necessary to the German Empire in the future settlement, and of the art of diplomacy Bülow is perhaps the greatest master that

the world has seen since the days of Talleyrand. It is highly doubtful whether there is any statesman amongst the Allies who possesses to the same extent those special characteristics which will win victory in the international arena. If high moral ideals and perfect political integrity were the qualities most valuable to the diplomatist, Viscount Grey and Mr. Balfour would be more than a match for Prince von Bülow; but if an intimate knowledge of the European chess-board and of the psychology of European politics, if infinite wit, if nimbleness and ingenuity, are the qualities which are likely to decide the issue, Prince von Bülow will prove indeed a formidable opponent. It is almost inevitable that the European Powers shall enter the future Congress with different aims and with divergent policies. And one needs be no prophet to predict that it will be Bülow's object to play off one Power against another; even as for twenty years he played off one party against another in the Reichstag, so he will play off Serbia against Italy, and Italy against France, and Russia against England. In those unavoidable conflicting interests of the belligerent Powers Bülow will seek his opportunity. It will be for the Allies to foresee and to forestall the danger. Let the Allies enter the Congress with a clearly defined and settled policy. Let them compose their differences before they meet their opponents. Then, but only then, will there be no scope for the uncanny virtuosity of Prince von Bülow. Only on those terms will Viscount Grey and Jules Cambon and Sazonov defeat the manœuvres of the Italianized Prussian Machiavelli and frustrate the hopes of "Bernhard the Lucky."

CHAPTER XVI

THE SILENCE OF HERR VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG

I.

HERR VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG is to-day the most tragic figure amongst the statesmen of Europe. For three years he has borne a crushing burden, a burden which even Bismarck, the man of blood, was unable to bear in the piping days of peace; a burden from which the Iron Chancellor had to seek periodical liberation amidst the heather and the pine-forests of his native Brandenburg. As Prime Minister of Prussia, as Chancellor of the German Empire, as Foreign Secretary of the Teutonic Alliance, he has to keep a firm grip of all the threads, both of internal and of external policy. Distracted between Catholics and Protestants, between agrarians and industrials, between Germany and Austria, he has been made responsible for all the blunders of his subordinates. A rich man, and the scion of an historic house, he has led the life of a galley-slave; an honest man, he has been doomed to perpetual prevarication; a humane man, he has had to condone every atrocity; an independent man, he must cringe before his master; a peaceful man, he must submit to the continuation of insensate slaughter; a highly gifted intellectual, he has had to pursue a policy of insane stupidity. Twenty-five years ago a professor of the University of Munich, Dr. Quidde, compared the Kaiser to Caligula. The analogy between William and Caligula or Nero points to another analogy, that between Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg and Seneca, the ill-fated counsellor of the Cæsars. Read in the *Annals* of Tacitus the speech of Seneca to Nero, and you will perhaps understand the position of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg in the Imperial Palace of Potsdam.

II.

The internal political crisis in Germany, which started at the beginning of last autumn, has come to a head because the Chancellor will not speak out. There was a time when political crises in Germany were due, not to the silence of the German rulers, but to their utterances and indiscretions. In recent months the Kaiser, the man of the three hundred uniforms and of the three thousand speeches, has committed no such indiscretions as marked his reign from his

ascent to the throne; he has been almost as reticent as his unhappy father, who did not speak because he had cancer in the throat. And now the silver-tongued von Bethmann-Hollweg has also discovered the political virtue of silence. The people have been loudly clamouring for a few words of comfort, but above the thunder of the distant guns we only hear the scribblers of a servile Press, who are beating the air with their croakings.

III.

Why this ominous, obstinate, sphinx-like silence of the Chancellor, more pregnant with meaning than the most eloquent speeches? It would be so easy for so resourceful a man to utter a few oracular sentences, a few ambiguous phrases, a few patriotic trumpet-calls. Was not the last great speech which he delivered in the Reichstag covered with frantic applause? But the days are past for ambiguous utterances, however patriotic, however oracular. The Chancellor knows that any clear, outspoken utterance on the peace aims of the German Government would seal the doom of the Government; he knows that any statement of terms would reveal the glaring discrepancy between those terms and the solemn promises so often made to the German people. The people still passionately believe in the promises and assurance of an early and final victory. Only such a belief is still sustaining the drooping spirits of the nation, only such an assurance enables them to submit to the starvation of their women and children, to their tragic isolation in a hostile world, to the appalling sacrifices on the battlefield.

IV.

And now the conspiracy of lies and the conspiracy of silence is about to be exposed. The inexorable truth must be proclaimed. The German present is dark, but the future is desperate. The U-boat campaign has failed, the hope of a separate peace with Russia has vanished, the menace of America is drawing near. Greater exertions and more appalling sacrifices are needed, and yet all the motives for further sacrifices have vanished. The rulers were fighting for conquest and plunder. But it is now obvious that there can be no conquest nor plunder. The German people were misled into the belief that they were struggling in self-defence against the "Slav peril," but since the Ides of March in Petrograd the Russian bugbear has disappeared. They were misled into the belief that they were struggling for liberty. But the Germans are now the only people

still deprived of political liberty. Even the much-despised Slav has ceased to be a slave. The only slaves in Europe to-day are the subjects of the Hohenzollern.

V.

This German war has been described as a tragedy of Prussian craft and graft, and the Teuton rulers have been denounced rightly for their cruelty and brutality. But posterity would be more inclined to see in this war a tragedy of German virtue. For the virtues of the German have been more terrible than his vices. For this catastrophe has been possible, not because the German people are so wicked, but because they have been so good, because they have practised too well the “three” theological virtues of blind faith, passive obedience, and inexhaustible patience; because they have been so pathetically loyal to their misrulers; because they have shown the sentimentality of a woman and the credulity of a child. The German Michel has been the political Peter Pan of Europe, the boy that won’t grow up. He has been the boy that has been let loose and has lit the match to the powder magazine. He has been the incurable romanticist who has continued to believe in fairy-tales in a world of stern realities. And now this child-like faith in fairy-tales has been dispelled by disaster. The vision of a holy German Empire, of the pomp and circumstance of war, its glory and glamour, is shattered. The spell is broken. The German Michel is awakening from his dreams. Walhalla is shaken to its foundation. Tor is ready with his hammer. Revolution is knocking at the door!

CHAPTER XVII

THE COMING REVOLUTION IN GERMANY

I.

BOTH French and British publicists have remained strangely silent and reticent on the problem and prospects of a revolution in Germany. It may be that they are afraid to conjure up the ghost of political rebellion, lest that ghost might cause havoc in other countries than Germany. It may also be that they are unwilling to tackle a very complex and delicate question. Yet the more we consider the problem, the more central, the more vital it will appear. German policy, German diplomacy, German strategy, are now entirely dominated by the dread of a social upheaval. Measures which might seem to be dictated solely by military considerations are in reality imposed by the necessity of deceiving and distracting public opinion and of striking the popular imagination.

And this obsession of an impending revolution is fully justified. To the outside view the war may seem above all a conflict of nations, involving a reconstruction of the map of Europe, raising international issues and resulting in a new international order. But in reality the conflict is concerned with national and internal issues, and it must result in a new national order. If this war has not been fought in vain, if we are to achieve the objects for which we entered it, if we are ultimately to crush German militarism, which is only a vague and confusing synonym for German reaction, then it inexorably follows that the war must end in a German revolution. The road to peace must indeed pass through Berlin, but that Berlin will have ceased to be the Berlin of the Junkers—it must be the insurrectionary Berlin of 1848. Just as there can be no real war of attrition in the struggle between Germany and Europe, so there can be no war of attrition in the struggle between the German people and despotism. As there could be no compromise or surrender of principles before, there can be no compromise and no surrender after. On the conclusion of peace, it must come to a final trial of strength between the rulers and their subjects, between the masses and the classes. The issues must be fought out in a decisive battle. Even though we achieve a crushing military victory, militarism would not be crushed if the Hohenzollern were still able to command the allegiance of a still patient and passive German people: just as Napoleonic militarism was not crushed at Waterloo and revived in 1849, because Napoleon still retained the allegiance of

the French people. It is inconceivable that the German reactionaries will abdicate of their own free will. It is equally inconceivable that the reaction will develop slowly and gradually into a free democratic government, as von Bethmann-Hollweg would make us believe in the historic speech of February 27. No doubt this war has hastened on the day of retribution. And the pathos of the war lies in this, that it has been a vicarious sacrifice, and that millions of Frenchmen and Britons have died to prepare the liberation of a nation of slaves. *But ultimately it is the German people themselves who must work out their own salvation.* They will have to turn against their oppressors some of that combativeness, of that fanaticism, of that idealism, which hitherto they have only directed against their European brethren.

II.

I stated at the outset that publicists have maintained a conspiracy of silence on the coming German revolution, because they were afraid to conjure up a sinister spectre, and because they are repelled by a difficult and delicate subject. But there may be another and a more plausible reason for their silence—namely, that most people simply cannot believe in the very possibility of a German revolution. And if you press them to state their definite reasons for such a belief, you will probably find that all the arguments given can ultimately be brought under the four following headings:

1. Militarism and reaction are too deeply rooted in Germany. The reactionary forces are far too strong to leave any chance to a successful revolution.

2. A revolution is impossible under modern conditions of warfare. A few machine-guns, a few crack regiments of the Kaiser's bodyguard, would at once drench the rebellion in rivers of blood.

3. The Social Democrats, the so-called "revolutionary party," have themselves repudiated revolutionary methods.

4. The German temperament has not the initiative, the resilience, which are the prime conditions of a successful revolution. The whole German historical tradition is against any revolutionary solution, and any radical reform must be imposed from outside.

Let us carefully and dispassionately examine each of those arguments.

III.

In the first place we are told that Prussian reaction is too strong, and that for the German people to attack the Hohenzollern stronghold would be as hopeless as for a madman or a prisoner to break down the walls of his prison or cell. The prisoner would only break his head, and the madman would only get himself put into a "strait-waistcoat." The German rebel is confronted by the impregnable structure of a solid and efficient Government, a Government based on the prestige of the past, and surrounded by the glamour of triumphant victories achieved in great national wars.

The argument might have been valid after 1863 and 1870, when the Catholics fought the battle of Liberalism and when the Social Democrats fought the battle of democracy against Bismarck. But the argument ceases to be valid to-day. For this is not a national war for the Germans. When the conspiracy of lies and the conspiracy of silence come to an end, when the diplomatic intrigues, when the pan-Germanic plot, are revealed in their naked and hideous horror, it will be clear, even to the blindest and dullest German mind, that this war was waged neither in defence of national existence nor in defence of national interests. It began primarily as a war against Russia, who for a hundred and fifty years was the close ally of Prussia. It began as a war against the Russian people, who were by far the best customers for German industries. It developed into a war against England, who, like Russia, was for one hundred and fifty years the ally of Germany, who fought on many a battlefield with the Germans, who never on any single battlefield fought against Germany.

Neither can this war be described as a national war for the German people, nor has it resulted in a German victory. Here, also, when the conspiracy of silence is broken, the net result of the war will prove to be universal ruin, bankruptcy, millions of cripples walking the streets of every German city, the loss of the goodwill of the world. "Tout est perdu sauf l'honneur," said the French King after the disaster of Pavia. "Everything is lost, even honour," will be the verdict of the German people after the war.

In so far, therefore, as Prussian reaction was hitherto based on the glamour of victory, that glamour is dispelled. The Hohenzollerns were supposed to be the unsurpassed practitioners of *Realpolitik*. They have only proved reckless and romantic visionaries. The Prussian Government was supposed to be a marvellously efficient instrument. Its efficiency has mainly shown itself in wanton destruction. The Prussian Government was supposed to be the perfect

type of a stable government. Its work of five hundred years has been destroyed in three years. The Germans had sold their birthright to the Hohenzollern for a mess of pottage. They have lost their birthright, but they have not secured the pottage. The German people had entered into tacit contract. The rulers have broken the contract. The German people were ready to surrender their personal liberty for the advantages which the contract gave them. They preferred the security of despotism to the risks of liberty. But the German people have discovered that the security was illusory, that the advantages were negative, and that the risks of despotism are infinitely greater than the perils of liberty.

IV.

But, even granting that the prestige and glamour of the Hohenzollern Monarchy are dispelled, we shall be told that it does not necessarily follow that a revolution would have any chances of success. For it may still be objected that a revolution is impossible under modern conditions of warfare, that under those conditions all the advantages are with the Government and are not with the people, that it has become very much easier to-day than in a previous generation to stamp out a rebellion, and that the risks are very much greater.

I believe that argument to be entirely fallacious. I do not believe that the chances are with the Government. I believe that they are all the other way. Modern conditions are more favourable to the prospects of a popular rising than they were, say, in 1789, in 1848, or in 1871. In olden days armies did not side with the people. They were non-national. They were professional. They were made up of mercenaries. The Swiss mercenaries allowed themselves to be massacred in defence of the monarchy. The Hessian mercenaries allowed themselves to be massacred in the service of the Hanoverian Kings. Nor had the people any military training. To-day the armies are national armies. They are the people themselves. They have received a military training. They have imbibed the military spirit. If only the people can be gained over to the revolution, three-fourths of the battle is won.

In this connection it is essential that we should clearly understand the fundamental differences between a foreign war and a civil war. A foreign war is a trial of strength between one nation in arms and another nation in arms. A rebellion is a trial of strength between a nation and a Government. In a foreign war the armies will always be on the side of the Government. In a revolution the armies may or may not side with the people. They will side with the people if the

people are determined to fight.

The problem of revolution, therefore, is not primarily one of military force, but of moral and political force. The people will dispose of the necessary military strength if they dispose of the necessary moral and political strength. In normal times the people are generally unconscious of their moral and political strength, even as they are unconscious of their military strength. But in times of revolution, with their political consciousness awakened by their grievances and their sufferings, with a quickened sense of political realities, the attitude of the people to their rulers undergoes a radical change. They suddenly discover that they are the source of all power. Once that revelation has come to them, and once the subjects refuse to support their rulers and are determined to resist them, the whole fabric of government collapses like a house of cards. There lies the reason for the fundamental differences between the slow development of foreign warfare and the sudden and catastrophic termination of civil war. The Bastille fell as if by magic and as by a flourish of trumpets, like the walls of Jericho. The Revolution of 1848 overthrew in twenty-four hours the strongest French Government of modern times. And there, also, lies the reason why, in a civil war, the greatest possible results are achieved with the minimum of sacrifice. To attain the aims of a foreign war may require the sacrifice of millions of lives. The aims of a civil war have often been obtained by the sacrifice of a few hundred.

All revolutions have the same beginnings. The German Revolution of 1848 started in the same way as the French Revolution of 1848. The insurrection of the people of Berlin very nearly succeeded in 1848 in establishing a German democracy. The proudest of the Prussian Kings, the most intoxicated with the dreams or delusions of absolute power, was humbled to the dust. In an agony of terror, bareheaded, Frederick William IV. of Hohenzollern had to salute the funeral procession of the heroes of liberty, and the King's army had to withdraw from Berlin, and Prince William, the future Emperor, had to escape to England.

And the rising of the German people to-day will have a much better chance than in 1848. If it be indeed true that a few machine-guns may decide the issue, it will be by no means difficult for the insurgent people to secure possession of those machine-guns. If it be true that a military training is essential to success, millions of Germans have received that training. Let only the merest fraction of the people raise the standard of rebellion, and let the spirit of rebellion be rife, and that spirit will spread like wild-fire, and the Hohenzollern Monarchy after this war will be brought to the ground like a decaying tree in a November gale.

V.

We shall be told that if a revolution were such an easy task, it is inconceivable that the German people should not have risen before; and it is perfectly true that, since the bloody days of 1848, there has been no serious riot, not to mention any rebellion, in the German Monarchy. But the reason for this passive acquiescence in and for this servile surrender to despotism is due to the German revolutionaries themselves. One of the secrets of recent German history is that the revolutionists themselves have repudiated revolutionary methods. It is the Social Democrats who deserted the cause of democracy. In France Socialists were pacifists abroad and aggressive at home. In Germany the Socialists were pacifists at home and aggressive abroad.

That is why, as I anticipated in my “Anglo-German Problem” (1912), the German Socialists are ultimately responsible for the war, even more than the Junkers. The Junkers and the Government knew that they had no reason to dread a renewal of 1848. They felt that they had a perfectly free hand. They knew the temper of the Social Democrats and the meaning of the Marxian creed. For it was an essential part of the Gospel according to St. Marx that the revolution, if it ever came, would come peacefully, inevitably, with the people raising their little finger, through the mere automatic pressure of economic concentration. Capitalism itself, so the Socialists said, was working for the triumph of Socialism. Once the process of concentration of production was complete, once all the capital was gathered in a few hands, the German revolution would come of itself, and Kaiser Bebel and Kaiser Liebknecht would simply substitute themselves for Kaiser William as the rulers of an absolute collectivist State.

That attitude of passive acquiescence, that sordid materialistic creed, explains the ignominious collapse of the Social Democrats at the outbreak of the war. It explains the paradoxical fact that to-day von Bethmann-Hollweg in his tragic isolation is only supported by Scheidemann and the Socialist majority. The failure is not due to any lack of numbers. For the Social Democrats had millions of devoted followers. The failure is not due to lack of organization, for the Social Democrats were the most admirably organized party known to modern history. It was not due to lack of discipline, for the Social Democrats were subjected to an iron discipline. The failure is entirely due to a lack of spirit, and the lack of spirit itself is entirely due to the sinister and dreary Marxian creed. Between Marxian Socialism and Prussianism there is no opposition of principles. Indeed, one might almost say that the present war socialism, with its bread rations, its

organization of industry, its suppression of every individual liberty, its hundred thousand regulations, is the nearest approach to the ideal of the Marxist.

But as the result of the war, that Gospel according to St. Marx is totally and finally discredited. It is now admitted that the Socialists have been mere voting machines and doctrinaire opportunists. It is admitted that no democracy can be built with such ignoble material. It is admitted that, relinquishing the servile and materialistic Socialism of Marx, we must revert to the heroic conception of the British, French, and Italian Revolutions. It is admitted that the salvation of a people cannot be attained by the mere mumbling of catchwords and the waving of red flags; that it cannot be attained by the mere proclamation of an iron law of wages; that it can only be achieved by the display of an iron courage and by miracles of heroism and self-sacrifice.

VI.

But again granting that the German Socialist creed is partly responsible for the failure of German Democracy, it will be objected that this creed is a typically German creed. Granting that the spirit of heroism and sacrifice is an essential condition of any successful revolution, it will be objected that it is precisely this heroism which is lacking in the German temperament and in the German race. In a famous passage of his "Governance of England," Chancellor Fortescue, who wrote about the time of the Wars of the Roses, comparing the large number of crimes of violence and burglary in England with the small number of such crimes in France and Scotland, concluded that neither the French nor the Scotch had the courage and spirit to be burglars.

"It is not pouerte that kepith Ffrenchmen ffro rysinge, but it is cowardisse and lakke off hartes and corage, wich no Ffrenchman hath like vnto a Englysh man. It hath been offten tymes sene in Englande, that iij or iiij, theves ffor pouerte haue sett apon vj or vij trewe men, and robbed hem all. But it hath not bene sene in Ffraunce, that vj. or vij. theves haue be hardy to robbe iij. or iiij. trewe men. Wherefore it is right selde that Ffrenchmen be hanged ffor robbery and manslaughter, then there be hanged in Ffraunce ffor such maner of crime in vij yeres. There is no man hanged in Scotlande in vij yere to gedur ffor robbery. And yet thai ben often tymes hanged ffor larceny, and stelynge off good in the absence off the owner thereoff. But ther hartes serue hem not to take a manys gode, while he is present, and woll defende it; wich maner off takynge is callid robbery. But the Englysh man is off another corage. Ffor yff he be pouere, and

see another man havyng rychesse, wich may be taken ffrom hym be myght, he will not spare to do so, but yff that pouere man be right trewe. Wherefore it is not pouerte, but it is lakke off harte and cowardisse, that kepith the Ffrenchmen ffrom rysynge.”

That “lack of spirit” which Lord Chancellor Fortescue so quaintly and so unjustly denounces in the French and Scottish temperaments, may it not be more justly attributed to the German temperament? Are not the Germans constitutionally incapable of accomplishing a revolution? They lack the red corpuscles in their veins. They have no phosphorus or mercury in their composition. They have no élan, no resilience or vitality. They are strong, but only when they act gregariously, not when they act as free and irresponsible individuals. They can fight, but only when they are driven, and only in a quarrel which is not their own. They fight to-day against the English as the slaves of the Kaiser even as they fought for the English as the mercenaries of the Landgrave of Hesse.

I submit that all those generalizations are essentially shallow. It is not true that the creed of Social Democracy is an essentially German creed. As a matter of fact, the founders of German Socialism, and some of their chief leaders, are Jews. Lasalle and Marx were Jews. Bernstein and Adler are Jews. It is not true that the Germans are constitutionally incapable of heroism. As a matter of fact, no people has ever fought more heroically than the millions of blinded and misguided wretches who challenged a world in arms, and went to their doom singing religious hymns and patriotic songs. And it is not true that there is some mysterious fatality in temperament or race. The race theory is a Prussian theory, and it is a sinister theory, the prolific mother of many political and moral heresies. National temperament changes with circumstances, and the German temperament has often changed in the course of history. If the Germans may be described to-day as a nation of practical materialists, at one time they were described as a nation of dreamers. If the German Government may be described to-day as a despotic State, at one time it was described as a Government of free cities.

The truth is that national character has little to do with race. It is the result of political institutions and religious beliefs. And it is the political institutions and religious beliefs of modern Germany which largely explain the failure of Democracy.

We have already pointed out the baneful influence of the Socialist creed. But

there is another creed which has exercised an even more baneful influence. If we attempt to trace, farther back in history, the main source of German character, we are driven to the conclusion that it is Lutheranism which is responsible for the perversion of the German soul, that it is Lutheranism that is the *fons et origo malorum*. Before the war all our ideas about religion and philosophy in Germany were made up of unmeaning formulas. And I make the confident forecast that all those ideas will have to be transvalued in the light of the present catastrophe.

If I were asked to sum up the achievements of Lutheranism, I would say that it has accomplished two things equally fatal to Germany and Europe.

On the one hand it has broken up the spiritual unity of Medieval Christendom and the political unity of the Holy German Empire into two thousand four hundred petty principalities. It has set up a tribal religion and the pagan idolatry of the State; and, on the other hand, it has broken up the human soul into two water-tight compartments.

Or to express the Lutheran achievement in terms of freedom and despotism, it has, in the first place, killed political liberty by surrendering all ecclesiastical power to the Prince, or to the State incarnated in the Prince. It has brought about the fusion and confusion of spiritual and temporal powers. It has decreed that the religion of the ruler shall determine the religion of the subject. *Cujus regio illius religio*. From the beginning his own ecclesiastical policy compelled Luther to sanction the bigamy of the Landgrave Philip of Hesse. In the most violent of his tracts he denounced a miserable German peasantry, and he called upon the nobility to massacre those peasants who had only too faithfully obeyed the provocations of the reformer.

And, in the second place, Lutheranism has killed spiritual liberty by creating an inner world of emotions and of dreams and an outer world of social and political activities without any relation to the inner world. It has divorced speculation and action, theory and practice. The German is like the symbolical eagle of the Habsburg. He has two heads, and both look in an opposite direction.

I would say that the poison of Lutheranism has been acting like that mysterious Indian poison called “curare,” which I used to inject in my distant student days when I had to dissect frogs in the Zoological Laboratory at Liège. The “curare” does not kill the nerves, for the frog still suffers under the dissecting knife. Nor does it kill the muscles, for the muscles still react if you stimulate them. But the poison cuts the connection between the nerves and the muscles. The nerves can no more transmit their orders to the muscles. Even so Lutheranism has not killed the thinking power of the German people. On the contrary, it has given it a morbid stimulus, as speculation is no more hampered by reality. Nor has it paralyzed their external activities, but it has prevented any connection between the two. It has prevented the thinking from influencing the acting. It justifies the recent damning statement of Prince von Bülow, who ought to be a competent judge, that the Germans have remained an essentially unpolitical people.

At the outbreak of the Reformation there took place in Wittenberg, the Mecca of Lutheranism, a memorable and ominous meeting to which few textbooks take the trouble to allude, and which has had more far-reaching consequences than any meeting known to history. It was the meeting between Dr. Martinus Luther and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Albrecht of Hohenzollern. Luther advised the Grand Master to secularize his Order, to confiscate its immense territories, and to proclaim himself Duke of Prussia. Under such auspices arose the Prussian State. Under such auspices, at the instigation of the “Champion of Liberty,” was established the most tyrannical despotism of modern times. Under such auspices was consummated the unholy alliance between a “reformed” Germany and a twice “reformed” Hohenzollern Monarchy.

This unholy alliance has been shattered by the war. And with the alliance will vanish the Lutheran creed, with all the evil works that proceeded therefrom.

For four hundred years the German people have followed their preachers, and have been led by them to the abyss, even as in the famous ballad of Burger the German maiden Lenore has fallen under the spell of a corpse and has been driven to the gates of hell.

For four hundred years the German people have been in the grip of their despots. They will be under the spell no more.

For four hundred years the German masses have practised the three theological virtues of Faith, Patience, and Obedience. The long-suffering, docile,

and servile Teutons are now ready to surrender to the original sin of rebellion. They are now ready to revert to the methods followed by the peasants massacred by the orders of Luther.

For four hundred years their temporal and spiritual rulers have manufactured a nation of slaves. The war has manufactured a nation of revolutionists. What seemed an inexhaustible inheritance of loyalty and devotion has been wantonly squandered. The Hohenzollern Monarchy has been born in spoliation, baptized in blood, and welded together by iron. Blood and iron are now destroying it. The German armies have been the terror of the world. The day is drawing near when those same German armies will become a terror to their tyrants, and will call them to account for the slaughter of twenty nations.

CHAPTER XVIII

VIA PACIS

WHATEVER excellent reasons we may have for doubting the sincerity of the German peace overtures, and whatever grounds we may have for criticizing the unfortunate wording of the American Notes, it must be conceded that President Wilson has rendered a conspicuous service to the Allies by compelling them to face the formidable difficulties of the problem of peace. Henceforth it will be impossible for our rulers to shirk those difficulties. They will have to give us something more tangible than mere vague and solemn abstractions, than mere rhetorical phrases and catchwords: they will have to depend on the support of public opinion. The peace settlement will have to be made by the nations themselves, and not by a few diplomats. It will have to be made in the full light of day and not in the secret and murky and musty atmosphere of chancellories.

As a basis for any discussion on the peace settlement we would lay down the following propositions:

1. We must take good care to retain a firm hold of fundamental principles, and we must remain loyal to the conditions which have been proclaimed from the beginning by the statesmen of the Allies, and which are summed up in the primary aims, the “crushing of Prussian militarism and the liberation of small nationalities.”

2. We must see to it that none of the secret agreements which may have been entered into by the diplomats of the Allies shall be allowed to conflict with those fundamental principles.

3. We must realize that those principles are not particular principles applicable only to Germany and Austria. They are universal principles, applicable to all the Powers. “Prussian militarism” must be crushed everywhere, in Great Britain as well as in Germany, in Finland as well as in Alsace-Lorraine, in Italy as well as in Austria. Nationalities must be liberated everywhere, the Ruthenians as well as the Poles, the Jews as well as the Croatsians.

4. We must realize the concrete and deeper meaning of the vague and somewhat confusing phraseology contained in the words “to crush Prussian militarism.” To “crush Prussian militarism” does not mean only to crush the German armies. It cannot mean to crush 100,000,000 German and Austrian

people. It does not mean the repression of the legitimate expansion of the Teutonic nations. To “crush Prussian militarism” means to do away with a sinister political system. It means exorcising an evil spirit. And we must clearly understand that, in order to exorcise that evil spirit, we must have the co-operation of the German people themselves. We must help them to achieve their own salvation. We must take in the paradoxical and tragic fact that the awful sacrifice of twenty nations has been mainly a vicarious sacrifice, and that millions of our soldiers have died for the good of the enemy as well as for the good of Europe—that they have died to make Germany and Austria free.

5. We must realize that this war is a holy war and not a punitive expedition, much less a predatory war. Vengeance must be left to Almighty God. The punishment of the criminals must be left to the people themselves.

6. Peace, if it is to be real, and if it is to be permanent, cannot be achieved by any vindictive policy. From the moment they enter the peace congress the belligerents cease to be belligerents, and become allies in a sacred cause—the reconstruction of the world. From the moment the Central Powers are admitted to cross the threshold of the Temple of Peace they are readmitted to the community of nations, and they are admitted on equal terms.

7. A permanent peace excludes the very idea of any future economic war. We must prevent the Central Powers from entering into any offensive or defensive economic alliance. We must repudiate the sinister delusion of a “Mittel Europa” which is haunting the diseased brains of the Pan-Germanists. On the other hand, we must repudiate any offensive or defensive economic alliance between the Allied Powers. The terms of peace must be engraved on clean white marble.

8. If a permanent peace is to be attained we must remove the deeper causes which brought about the catastrophe. The Central Powers are immediately and directly responsible for the greatest crime of history, and they will bear the penalty for generations to come. They planned the war and forced it on Europe. But the megalomania of the Teutons has only been one of the contributory causes. The war could never have taken place but for the universally prevailing and universally accepted immorality of European foreign policy, which is writ large in Morocco and Persia, in China and Asia Minor.

9. The principle of nationality, however legitimate in the case of oppressed nationalities, is not a sufficient foundation for the new European order. The principle of nationality, which in the case of small nations leads to the

vindication of freedom, on the contrary, in the case of great Powers, leads to an aggressive imperialism. The international principle must therefore take the place of the national principle. Federalism and solidarity must take the place of tribal rivalry and national isolation.

10. Any permanent peace settlement must involve the unreserved acceptance of a new political philosophy and the practice of a new political system. No peace is possible through the old methods of a balance of power, of alliances and counter-alliances, of assurance and reassurance treaties. Any balance of power is unstable and precarious and can only be maintained by a competition of armaments. The distinction between offensive and defensive alliances is essentially unreal. Under the old dispensation a defensive alliance became offensive as soon as it felt strong enough to assume the offensive. It is the system of alliances which led to armaments, and not the armaments which were responsible for the alliances. It is therefore futile to speak of disarmament as long as we do not repudiate the traditional European principle of the “balance of power.”

11. It also follows as a corollary that no peace is possible merely through a readjustment of boundaries, through compensations and annexations of territories. We might recast the whole map of Europe, we might dismember the German Empire, we might dismember the Austrian Empire, we might dismember the Turkish Empire, and yet entirely fail to achieve the objects for which we entered the war. On the other hand, we might achieve those objects without shifting one single milestone of the political boundaries of Europe.

12. We must clearly realize that the issue of peace and war is not a military issue, but a political issue, and that the political issue itself is a moral issue. It is not a *Machtfrage*, but a *Rechtfrage*. It is not a question to be settled by diplomats of the old school; it can only be solved by constructive and democratic statesmanship.

13. To say that “we must crush Prussian militarism” is only a vague and unsatisfactory way of stating that we must establish democratic government. Militarism is not a matter of foreign policy, but of domestic policy. Militarism is but the *ultima ratio* of reaction, and all nations are allies against the one common enemy, reactionary government.

14. It is therefore futile to say that the future congress must not interfere in the internal government of any belligerent Power. If any European Power after this

war were still to be ruled by a reactionary government based on brute force and oppression, that government would still have to maintain a large army in order to keep down the liberties of its people, and such an army would sooner or later be used against the foreign enemy in the name of imperial national aspirations, in the name of a higher civilizing mission.

15. Therefore, the one problem before the European Congress is to establish government in Europe on a constitutional and democratic basis, and to grant a *Magna Carta* to all nations, great and small. The establishment of such a government, and not any annexations or compensations, would alone guarantee a permanent peace.

16. All civilized nations must be equally interested in the maintenance of peace and in the establishment of the new international order. Therefore, all neutral nations, including the United States of America, must join the congress as signatories and guarantors of the peace settlement.

17. The new democratic charter shall be placed under the guardianship of a Supreme Constitutional Court. Such a Court would not be a secret diplomatic Sanhedrin, but a democratic Tribunal. Such a Court would be essentially different from the Hague Tribunals of the past, and the democracies of the world would be directly interested in enforcing its decrees.

18. There is one immediate sanction to the constitutional settlement just outlined—namely, the Sovereign Will of the people of Europe. Revolution is knocking at the door. Unless a constitutional charter be granted, unless democratic government be firmly established in Europe, it will be wrested from their rulers by the nations themselves. All the signs of the times confirm us in the conviction that the only alternative to the establishment of democratic government for all the nations participating in the congress is universal civil war. The peacemakers of to-morrow have it in their power not only to crush “Prussian militarism,” but to prevent an appalling upheaval which would shake human society to its foundations.

APPENDIX

THE PRIVATE MORALITY OF THE PRUSSIAN KINGS

FREDERICK WILLIAM II.: THE HOHENZOLLERN POLYGAMIST

BY ALBERT SOREL

IT is generally assumed, even by those writers who are most strongly opposed to the sinister policy of the Hohenzollerns, that at least their domestic relations present an edifying contrast with the private immorality of the other Royal Houses of Europe. The world has been made familiar with the Court scandals of the Habsburgs, the Bourbons, and the Georges, and has heard little of the Hohenzollern Dynasty. But that is merely because the “amours” and the family squabbles of the Hohenzollerns are so much less picturesque and so much less interesting than those of a Henry IV. or of a Louis XIV., and because they have been hidden under a thick cloud of hypocrisy. The most brilliant of French historians, Monsieur Albert Sorel, has torn the veil from this hypocrisy and has laid bare the sordid story of Frederick William II.

As an illustration of the manner in which the official historians of Prussia have narrated the history of the dynasty, it is instructive to compare the following character-sketch of the successor of Frederick the Great with the idealist portrait of Treitschke (“Germany History,” vol. i.), who would make us believe that Frederick William II. was a paragon of all the private virtues.

I.

Frederick the Great’s base tolerance produced dissolvent effects. Not proceeding from respect of religious beliefs, it engendered contempt for them. As, apart from the curb of religion, the new society of Prussia had no tradition of social morals to rely upon, corruption entered in and consumed it. The King’s scepticism took possession of his subjects, who translated it into deeds. It was good “form”; everyone in Berlin took it up and conducted himself accordingly. The leaven of licence and sensuality which mars all the literature of the century fermented without let or hindrance in those coarse souls. An immature

civilization had overstimulated imaginations and senses without abating the brutality of the primitive passions. In Prussia people lacked the delicate taste, the genteel habits, the light wit, which in France qualified the depravity of the age. A heavy dissoluteness was paraded in Prussia. Officials, the gentry, women, all fed their minds on d'Holbach and La Mettrie, taking their doctrines seriously and applying them to the very letter.

Add to this that in the newly built Prussian capital society, utterly artificial as it was, an improvised amalgam of incongruous elements, was predisposed, so to speak, to dissoluteness. Berlin swarmed with army men who had no family life and whose whole day was not occupied with military duties. Men of letters, adventurers of the pen and of the sword, attracted by Frederick's reputation and reduced to intrigue and all sorts of expedients for a living; a nobility, very poor, very proud, very exclusive, weighed down by royal discipline and thoroughly bored; a bourgeoisie enlightened, enriched, but relegated to a place of its own; between these groups, separated one from the other by etiquette or prejudice, a sort of demi-monde where they met, chatted and enjoyed themselves at their ease, the foyer of "French ideas," the hub of affairs and intrigues—Jewish society, the richest and most elegant in Berlin. With the marvellous pliancy of their race the Jews had assimilated the new civilization and took their revenge from the political exclusion of which they were the victims by bringing together in their salons all the intellectual men in Berlin, all the attractive women, all desirous of liberty and freed from prejudice. Such was Berlin in the days of Frederick.

II.

One of the finest cities in Europe, wrote Forster in 1779; but the Berliners! Sociability and refined taste, he found, degenerated in them into sensuality, into libertinage (he might almost say voracity), freedom of wit and love of shining in shameless licence and unrestrained debauch of thought. The women in general were abandoned. An English diplomat, Sir John Harris, afterwards Lord Malmesbury, had the same impression: Berlin was a town where, if *fortis* might be translated by "honourable," you could say that there was not a *vir fortis nec femina casta*.

If you consider that outside Jewish homes money was scarce, and that temptations are all the stronger the less means you have of satisfying them, you can see why in many minds disorder of ideas and corruption of morals opened a

new wound, the most dangerous, in sooth, and the most repugnant in nations—venality. Mirabeau, in his “Secret History,” indelibly recorded all the vices of *ce noble tripot*, Berlin. On this head his famous pamphlet is a picture in violent colours, but true nevertheless. Cynicism there seems merely local colour. “‘Rottenness before Ripeness’—I am very much afraid that must be the motto of Prussian power.... What cannot money do in a house so poor?”

III.

It required Frederick’s hand of iron to set in motion these complicated springs, to regulate the unwieldy machine, keep together these elements collected with no little ingenuity and ready to go to pieces. But that hand was weighty and hard. There were signs, in the upper classes at all events—the only classes then taken into account—of a sort of muffled revolt against this implacable disciple. Besides, the Prussians entertained queer illusions as to the future. Frederick had deceived his subjects just as he had deceived himself regarding the durability of his work. They did not understand to what an extent their power was the personal power of their King. Proud to the point of infatuation of the rôle he had made them play, they imagined it was their own doing, and that Frederick’s soul would survive in them. They expected from a new reign the same glory abroad, the same security at home, the same relative prosperity, with a yoke less rough and a discipline less severe, not understanding that the very roughness of the yoke and the severity of the discipline were conditions necessary to the duration of the work. The mercantile protective system, which had built up industry; the administration of taxes, which poured money into the State coffers; the economy, which immobilized this money in the treasury, hampered and irritated all who wished to work and trade, all who reflected on the natural conditions of commerce and industry; but it was these things alone that enabled the poorest Government in Europe to be better armed than the richest, and to keep in the van. In a word, people wanted the spring to relax, and failed to see that to slacken the spring meant annihilating the State.

IV.

To reform Frederick’s monarchy would have required no less genius than it took to create it. Reform, however, was indispensable, since Frederick alone was capable of holding up the composite edifice he had built. Hence a threatening and wellnigh inevitable catastrophe. “All will go on almost of its own accord, so

long as foreign affairs are quiet and unbroken,” wrote Mirabeau after Frederick’s death. “But at the first gunshot or at the first stormy situation the whole of this little scaffolding of mediocrity will topple to the ground. How all these underling Ministers would crumple up! How everyone, from the distracted chief to the convict-gang, would shout for a pilot! Who would that pilot be?”

V.

Frederick’s nephew, who was called upon to succeed him, was not made for so great a rôle. In every respect he offered a complete contrast to the Prince whose weighty heritage he took up. Frederick in person was infirm and sober; all his prestige lay in the gaze of his great eyes, which, as Mirabeau put it, “at the will of his heroic soul, carried fascination or terror.” Frederick William II. was a *bel homme*, highly sanguine, very robust, fond of violent exercise and coarse pleasures. “The build and strength of a Royal Guardsman,” wrote the French Minister d’Esterno, who had no liking for him. “An enormous machine of flesh,” said an Austrian diplomat who saw him at Pillnitz in 1791. “The true type of a King,” according to Metternich, who was presented to him in 1792 at Coblenz, at the time of the German crusade against France and the Revolution. “His stature,” he added, “was gigantic, and his corpulence in keeping. In every company he stood a head higher than the surrounding crowd. His manners were noble and engaging.” He expressed himself with a certain effort, in little abrupt phrases. There was nothing in him to recall the implacable and sovereign irony of Frederick.

“His look,” said one apologist, “does not betoken a man of genius, but German candour shines on his brow.” Strange candour, scarcely recognizable if you take the word in its common and proper sense. It must be taken, as was then the practice in Germany, through translations of Rousseau, in the equivocal and refined acceptance which reconciled innocence with indecency, virtue with every disorder of the imagination and the heart. Ecstatic and sensual, devout and licentious, a prey to violent appetites, tormented by scruples, superstitious and debauched, believing in ghosts, with a tendency towards cabal, Frederick William had a taste for ethics and a feeling for religion. He spoke of them with respect, with awe, with emotion. In his case it was a natural penchant and at the same time a pose, the attitude of every heir-presumptive towards the crowned head, a way of winning admiration and captivating by force of contrast.

VI.

He and those around him might be gulled by this “German candour.” Not so Frederick. In his Memoirs he draws his nephew as he was in 1765, at the age of twenty-one, at the time of his first marriage with Elizabeth of Brunswick: “The young husband, without any morals, given over to a life of debauchery, was daily guilty of infidelity to his wife. The Princess, who was in the flower of her beauty, was shocked at the slight regard shown for her charms. Soon she plunged into excesses almost as bad as her husband’s.” In 1769 they were divorced. Frederick William married a Princess of Darmstadt. The second marriage was no happier than the first. The Princess did not retaliate, though she did not lack incentives to do so. The Prince lapsed back into his dissolute habits. Apart from many passing fancies, he had a recognized mistress-in-chief. This person, who managed always to retain the favour, if not the love, of Frederick William, was the daughter of a humble musician. She married the Prince’s *valet de chambre*, became Madame Rietz, and was afterwards made Countess of Lichtenau. Frederick William by the first marriage had had a daughter, Princess Frederica, who was brought up by the Queen, the discarded, not to say repudiated, wife of Frederick the Great. The father, when visiting the girl, fell in love with one of her maids-of-honour. Her name was Mademoiselle de Voss, and she came of a good house, being cousin to one of the King’s Ministers, M. de Finckenstein, and sister of a President of the Chamber. “This beauty, who to my mind is very ugly,” wrote Mirabeau, “is a mixture of prudery and cynicism, of affectation and ingenuousness; she has a natural wit of a kind, some schooling, manias rather than desires, a *gaucherie* which she strives to cover by an appearance of *naïveté*.... All her charm lies in her complexion, and even that I find wan rather than white; a very beautiful neck. It was this mixture of unique licence, they say, which she combined with the airs of innocent ignorance and vestal severity, that captivated the Prince.”

VII.

Frederick William was one of those complex libertines who find in clever resistance a whet to their passion and a solace to their scruples. The siege of Mademoiselle de Voss lasted nearly two years. The outs and ins of this strange romance were the common talk of the Court. It had not yet reached its *dénouement* when Frederick the Great’s death stopped its course for several weeks. King from August 17, 1786, onwards, Frederick William seemed to forget everything but affairs of State. But Mirabeau affirms, after September 8, “the fervour of the novice began to abate.” Mademoiselle de Voss, he added, was

on the point of yielding. The King, to make her comfortable, had set up an establishment for his daughter Frederica; Mademoiselle de Voss did the honours. The year passed, however, without the vestal's surrendering. She loved the King, but the honour of the family still weighed more with her than love. She set rigorous conditions to her capitulation: a left-handed marriage, the written consent of the Queen, and the removal of the titular mistress, Madame Rietz. On this last point the King was inflexible; he gave in on the other two. The Queen gave her consent, with the stipulation that there should be no real divorce or public separation; she kept her title of Queen and her position as lawful wife. The rest, it appears, was of no great interest to her. It only remained to conclude the marriage, but, under the circumstances, that was a delicate and ticklish business.

By hook or by crook a precedent had to be found: the Prussian Consistory proved amenable, and authorized the marriage. The marriage was celebrated in July, 1787, in the Chapel Royal of Charlottenburg. Mademoiselle de Voss took the title of Countess of Ingenheim. Her happiness was short-lived. She died in the month of March, 1789. "All Berlin is in mourning," wrote M. d'Esterno. "The Countess of Ingenheim is cruelly regretted by the people, the royal family, and even the Queen, much less for the person of the said Countess as because of the increase of credit which her death will bring to Dame Rietz, the old habitual mistress, who is said to be very avaricious and a great intriguer."

VIII.

The literature of the day shed tears over the royal bereavement, celebrated the "virtues" of this susceptible monarch, and contrasted with the withering scepticism of Voltaire and the criminal frivolity of the French the tender abandon with which Frederick William gave himself up to "nature's sweetest inclination." "Women-haters," wrote Baron de Trenck, "have been the scourges of humanity. The King of Prussia has a great soul, full of sensibility; in love he is capable of a tender attachment: he knows the value of his mistress. Supposing he gives her a million, the money is divided among the members of the household who are citizens. He will not rob an honest man of the spouse who constitutes his happiness, he will not sacrifice Rome for Cleopatra. He wants to please all by himself. For twenty months he courted Mademoiselle de Voss, he married her, he was faithful to her, he wept over her ashes. Every citizen wise enough to know human weaknesses must wish that if he made a fresh choice it would fall on an object as worthy of his heart. So let him enjoy a happiness which belongs to the

simple peasant as it does to kings.” This hypocritical twaddle, this licentious casuistry, was “very good style” in Germany then, and was highly appreciated.

IX.

The distraction which Trenck desired for the afflicted soul of the King was not long in presenting itself. In 1790, on the anniversary of the Countess of Ingenheim’s death, Mademoiselle Dœnhof was presented at Court. Everyone there was busy consoling Frederick William. A claimant had even been put forward in the person of a young lady called Viereck, a friend of Mademoiselle de Voss, who had taken the latter’s place with Princess Frederica. Unhappily for Mademoiselle Viereck’s friends, she was dark and in no way recalled the dear departed. Mademoiselle Dœnhof, on the other hand, was, according to the French Minister, “so perfectly fair that, while pretty in artificial light, in daylight she was as yellow as a lemon.” With the same charms as Mademoiselle de Voss, she had the same jumble of pietism and virtue. It was once more a case of marrying. The King saw no difficulty in the way. “I am separated from the Queen,” he wrote to Mademoiselle Dœnhof; “Madame d’Ingenheim has left me a widower; I offer you my heart and hand.” He made no concealment of it, openly declaring that he had grounds for repudiating the Queen, but he refrained from taking action upon them in order to maintain the dignity of the throne.

The Consistory did not require to deliberate a second time; precedents had been established, and they were followed. The marriage took place on April 10, 1790, and it was the Court preacher, Zœllner, who consecrated it, as he had consecrated that with Mademoiselle de Voss. The Queen gave the bride girandoles of diamonds. The Queen-Dowager received her, and everyone at Court made a fuss of her. All the same, she was no more successful than Mademoiselle de Voss in getting rid of Madame Rietz. This favourite, who had been given 70,000 crowns to take her departure, remained, took an officer as her lover, and even got the King to promote him.

X.

And so, in 1790, the King of Prussia, Mademoiselle de Voss’s widower, had three wives living: the Princess of Brunswick, who was repudiated; the Princess of Darmstadt, who, although divorced, still kept the rank of Queen; and Mademoiselle Dœnhof, morganatic wife. This third wife, wrote one diplomat,

will not be the last, for “those the King longs for will also want to be married.” The Prince in any case was always ready. Polygamy, in his eyes, was a prerogative of royalty. As the result of a Court intrigue in 1792 he had himself separated from Mademoiselle Dœnhof, crowning by this divorce the strange series of his conjugal evolutions. Then he offered his heart and hand to a lady called Bethmann, a banker’s daughter whom he had known at Frankfurt, and found very much to his liking. This young person, in the words of Lord Malmesbury, was “all sentiment and all fire”; but she had principles and discretion. She had misgivings about the character of the marriage and the constancy of the bridegroom. She refused, thus sparing the Berlin casuists the trouble of a deliberation still more ticklish than before. I know not whether these accommodating theologians, reared in the school of Voltaire and Frederick, took these simultaneous marriages very seriously or not; abroad they afforded subject for ridicule, and Catherine the Great, who herself did not feel bound to observe so many formalities, was highly amused at them; “that big lout of a Gu”—such was her name for Frederick William in her letters to Grimm—“that big lout has just married a third wife; the libertine never has enough legitimate wives; for a conscientious libertine, commend me to him.”

XI.

Frederick William loved women. Women, however, did not govern him. But if he escaped the influence of mistresses, he fell under the influence of favourites, and the people were none the better off. Badly brought up, kept apart from State affairs by his uncle, distrusting others because he was very distrustful of himself, he knew nothing of the art of government, and dallied with vague reform projects. The Ministers whom Frederick left behind, although very second-rate, made him ill at ease. He was afraid of being considered under their thumb; besides, these Ministers represented ideas and a system which he affected to condemn. “The King will be led just because he is afraid of being so,” wrote Mirabeau. The fear of being governed by his Ministers delivered him into the hands of underlings, who promptly gained a mastery over him by humbling themselves before him, reassuring his suspicious pride, flattering his passions—above all, exploiting the shortcomings of his mind. Frederick William desired the good of the State; he had a hazy but quite keen idea of the necessity of counteracting the excesses of Frederick’s Government; but his intentions rambled, and his reform fancies, more mystical than political, proceeded not so much from the idea of the interests of the State as from the influence of a secret

doctrine with which he was imbued. The statesman in him was but an adept in magic; for Ministers he took mere charlatans. Skilled conjurers replaced at Potsdam Frederick's "judicious Ministers."

XII.

Of all these mystical adventurers, the one whose influence was perhaps the most baneful for the Prussian State was Wöllner, a pure intriguer. Son of a country pastor, he worked his way into the household of General d'Itzenplitz; after wheedling the mother, he ended by marrying the daughter. Frederick, who was anything but indulgent to mis-alliances, had him clapped into prison in Berlin. The hatred of Wöllner for the Philosopher-King dated from that day. At that time he was a rationalist and a disciple of Wolf; he became a Freemason. But already in high society in Germany the wind no longer set in the direction of pure Deism. Wöllner, always a perfect sceptic, changed his convictions. Considering himself as fitted as any other for the apparition business and the mystery industry, he decided to turn "honest broker" between the powers of this world and those of the next, basing his credit with the former on that which he claimed with the latter. He joined the Rosicrucians, and soon became one of the leading lights of the Order.

Thus he knew the man who was to counterbalance his favour at the Court of Berlin and one day share with him Frederick's Government, the Saxon Bischoffswerder. The son of a small noble, an officer of fortune, come like so many others to seek service in Prussia, he had wormed his way into the favour of the Prince-Royal, and had quickly taken him in.

XIII.

Mistresses and favourites, Rosicrucians and valets, theosophists and *femmes galantes*, on the whole got on very well together and agreed surprisingly. It was but a step from the laboratory of the Rosicrucians to the boudoir of Madame Rietz, and these mystic personages cleared it without a scrap of shame. They formed a close alliance with the *valet de chambre* and his wife, the *maîtresse d'habitude*, who throughout all the matrimonial pranks of the King managed to preserve her credit by artifices analogous to those which at Versailles had so long maintained that of Madame de Pompadour.

Around them swarmed a crowd of subordinate intriguers, the "clique," as they

were called in Berlin, ready for all sorts of jobs behind the scenes at Court, in the Army, in politics, in diplomacy—above all, in finance. Needy and greedy, they had a firmly established reputation in Europe for venality. “I maintain,” declared Mirabeau, “that with a thousand louis you could, if need be, know perfectly all the secrets of the Berlin Cabinet.... So the Emperor has a faithful record of every step of the King, day by day, and could know everything he planned, if he planned anything.” These were the methods, as Custine affirmed in 1792, that every diplomatist in the world employed; all the Ministers who resided in Berlin used them with more success and more generally than elsewhere.

XIV.

Such was the strange band of adventurers who pounced on the monarchy and the treasury of Frederick the Great. Their course of action, very complex and very powerful, was well designed to captivate a fantastic and voluptuous bigot. However, they would never have gained more than an antechamber or alcove influence, they would never have risen to political influence, had they not known how to pervert the noblest inclinations of the King, whilst flattering the lowest. Mediocre and secondary as was his place in the line of the Hohenzollerns, Frederick William was not devoid of all royal qualities. He was brave, he was kind-hearted, or rather he was a man of “sensibility”; he desired the public weal; he had suffered, like the nation, from the pitiless régime of Frederick; like the whole nation, he wanted to reform the State by lightening the yoke. He believed himself inspired from on high, “illumined,” and called by Providence to restore the morals and faith of a country which, he was told, and he himself believed, was perishing through the scepticism of men’s minds and the looseness of men’s morals.

How could he combine such tendencies with such tastes, such aspirations with such passions, such beliefs with such debauchery? It was just therein that he showed himself a weak character and a mystic; that was why he joined theurgic sects instead of submitting to the Church; why he believed in visions more than in the Gospel, listened to a ventriloquist mimicking the voice of Frederick instead of listening to the voices of the Ministers, the great King’s disciples; that is why he distrusted wise, thoughtful, experienced people and surrendered himself to charlatans and favourites.

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