

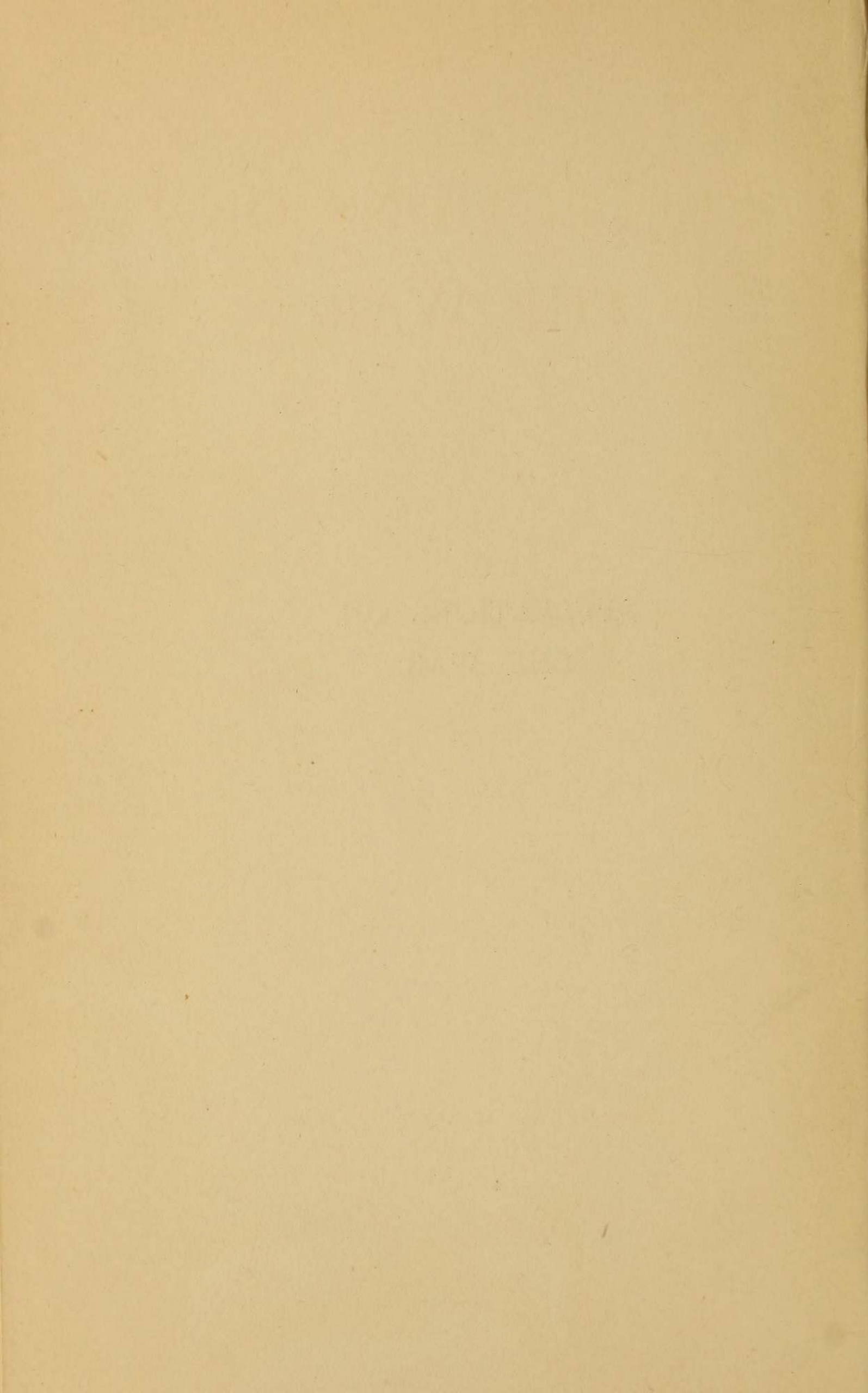


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REFLECTIONS ON  
THE WAR





# REFLECTIONS ON THE WAR

BY

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TO THE MEMORY  
OF MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN WHO  
FELL IN GALLANT FIGHT DEFENDING A JUST  
AND AN HONOURABLE CAUSE ON THE  
SHORES AND SLOPES OF  
GALLIPOLI







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## PREFACE

DURING the past nine months I have delivered lectures on the war in Adelaide and thirty of the country towns in South Australia. The arrangements of a business character were carried out willingly and efficiently by Mr. C. R. Hodge, who acted in co-operation with the local committees of the University Extension movement. Of the courtesy and kindness shown me in the country districts I have very pleasing memories, and I would like to express my thanks to the kind folk who entertained me, and also to those who worked so assiduously in many of the centres to make the lectures a success. Upwards of 10,000 people did me the honour to come and listen to what I had to say, and some of them have expressed the wish that the lectures on *The Chief Responsibility for the War*, *British and German Imperialism*, and *The War and Civilization*, might be published in book form. Though I have said nothing that has not been said many a time, I have decided to comply with their wish. I believe that the war in which Australia and the Empire are engaged is a just and an honourable war; and I would fain put my reasons for thinking so before as many of my fellow-countrymen as may be. But besides that, the publication of these reflections on the war gives me another opportunity of adding to the amount I have already been instrumental in raising for the relief of the stricken Belgians. They have proved themselves to be brave men and women, who love



freedom and honour more than material aggrandisement. Nobly have they fought and suffered, not only for themselves, but also for us. Any profits that may come to me from the sale of this little book shall be devoted, as the proceeds of my lectures were, to the Belgian Relief Fund.

I am grateful to Professor W. Mitchell and Mr. F. W. Eardley for reading through and emending my manuscript.

University of Adelaide,  
South Australia.



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PART I  
THE RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR THE WAR





## CHAPTER I

### THE WHITE BOOKS



HERE are many questions concerning the conduct of this great war upon which experts in finance and the art of war are alone capable of expressing an opinion. But there are others of general and almost universal interest which any man of common sense and average intelligence may answer for himself after a study of the evidence already available. Where lies the chief responsibility for the war? How is it likely to affect us as members of the British Empire? What bearing has it upon the continuity and progress of civilization? These are questions of first-rate importance.

And, fortunately, in dealing with the first of them, evidence of the most valuable kind is available. Great Britain, Germany, Russia, Austria, and France have issued books containing in some cases all, in others a part, of the



correspondence that passed between the different European powers up to the time of the outbreak of hostilities. This is original evidence, and every intelligent man or woman in the world may study it and make up his or her mind concerning the question of responsibility for the war. Members of the British Empire are naturally more directly interested in the British and German publications than any other, and the first thing that makes a deep impression on the mind of the student is the radically different way in which the two great powers have addressed themselves to the world. In the British *White Book* the British government published in full, and without comment, every message that passed between Sir Edward Grey and the continental powers. Not so the German government. They have published an argument defending their own position, and the argument is supplemented by a selection of the correspondence only. Not one of the messages that passed from Germany to Austria concerning the terms of the Austrian ultimatum to Servia has been printed. The British *White Book* is an historical document; the German *White Book* is a lawyer's brief. The one takes the world fully and fearlessly into its confidence; the other suppresses evidence and takes refuge in special pleading. The British government have treated the world at large



as they have been accustomed to treat their own people, through the medium of a free and outspoken press; the German government have treated the world at large as they have been accustomed to treat their own people through an official and censored press.

The methods are quite characteristic, and the difference, so far as it affects the honest seeker after truth, has not been lost upon neutral nations. In its issue for August 23, 1914, the *New York Times* says: "Sir Edward Grey puts all his cards upon the table face upward, and every inquirer into the truth of the negotiations for peace may acquaint himself with every detail of Sir Edward's unremitting efforts to avert the disaster of war. . . . Germany presents a lawyer's brief, a special pleading in which, with such skill as its authors could command, the attempt is made to present her part in the negotiations that preceded war in a light most favourable to herself. Between these two an impartial world will judge".

An impartial world has already come to the conclusion that Germany suppressed the evidence because she could not afford to let the world discover the truth for itself.

But though the suppression of this correspondence between Germany and Austria leaves some gaps in our knowledge, there is evidence available in the publications by the



other governments which helps to fill the gaps, and settle this question of responsibility for the outbreak of the war.

To begin with, Germany incurred very grave responsibility by rejecting Sir Edward Grey's proposal to submit the differences between Austria and Serbia to the consideration of a conference. That proposal was both *fair* and *practical*. It was fair because in that conference two powers belonging to the Triple Alliance—Germany and Italy—were to be represented, while England and France were to represent the Triple Entente. Russia agreed to stand aside and abide by the decision of the conference. It was therefore a fair proposal. And it was also a practical proposal. It was by means of a conference that the Balkan war, two or three years before, was prevented from becoming a European war; and Sir Edward Grey has stated publicly that it would have been easier to prevent this Austro-Servian dispute developing into a European war than it was to restrict the Balkan conflict. England, France, and Italy agreed to take part in the conference; Germany declined, and gave as her reason that, as it was a quarrel between Austria and Russia, Vienna and St. Petersburg should try to settle it between themselves; and in the event of their agreeing to do so she promised to "press the button



as hard as she could" at Vienna to make Austria more conciliatory about the terms of her note to Serbia. For some time Austria remained inflexible, and the possibility of a European war passed into a probability. Toward the close of July, however, Austria began to realize that Russia was in earnest, and that her obstinacy about the terms of the Servian note was likely to precipitate a European crisis. She then signified her willingness to enter into conversation with the Russian government on the terms of the Austrian note, and on July 31 Sir Edward learnt "with great satisfaction" that discussion between Austria and Russia had been resumed. It was on the morning of that day that Sir Edward appealed to Germany to put forward "any reasonable proposal" for the preservation of European peace, and promised to go to the length of saying that "if Russia and France would not accept it His Majesty's government would have nothing more to do with the consequences." But, instead of making any reasonable proposal, Germany, on that very night at 12 o'clock, sent a very unreasonable ultimatum to Russia demanding that she should demobilize on the Austrian as well as the German frontier, and do so within twelve hours. Even if it were technically possible for any great country to cease all



warlike preparation in so short a time (and that is doubtful), how could Russia be expected to comply with such a peremptory demand when the Austrian forces were in the field, and no limit had been put by Austria to the advance of her troops into Servia?

That day, July 31, was one of the most fateful in the history of mankind. It began with promise of reconciliation between Austria and Russia; it ended with an ultimatum from Germany that put an end to all negotiation, and made a European war inevitable. And Germany had promised to "press the button" at Vienna as hard as she could! Was Germany really determined to force war while outwardly professing to urge Austria in the direction of conciliation? If the correspondence that passed between Germany and Austria had been published in the German *White Book* this question could be answered. But it has not, and so we are obliged to suspend final judgment on the point. But only final judgment; because, in the British *White Book*, there is one communication from Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie which contains a statement made by the Foreign Secretary in Italy which is most damaging to Germany and Austria. It is the message No. 152 in the correspondence, dated August 3, 1914, and must be quoted word for word:



Sir,—On the 1st instant the French ambassador made the following communication:

“In reply to the German government’s intimation of the fact that ultimatums had been presented to France and Russia, and to the question as to what were the intentions of Italy, the Marquis di San Giuliano replied: ‘The war undertaken by Austria, and the consequences which might result, had, in the words of the German ambassador himself, an aggressive object. Both were therefore in conflict with the purely defensive character of the Triple Alliance, and in such circumstances Italy would remain neutral.’”

Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance, and the Marquis di San Giuliano was the Foreign Secretary in the Italian government. The Marquis was therefore in a position to know more than the member of any government outside the Triple Alliance was likely to know about the conduct of Germany and Austria. The indictment offers a simple and reasonable explanation for the suppression of the correspondence from Germany to Austria before the outbreak of the European War, and it also helps us to understand why Germany issued her ultimatum to Russia on the very day on which Vienna and St. Petersburg had resumed conversations on the terms of Austria’s ultimatum to Servia. The evidence is not absolutely conclusive against Germany; but the German authorities cannot complain if, with such evidence before him, the historical student says that he finds it very difficult




to avoid the conclusion that, while making professions of peace, she precipitated war by her unreasonable demands upon an ill-prepared Russia. If this conclusion is in any way unjust to Germany the remedy is in the hands of the German government. All they have to do is to publish the suppressed correspondence.



## CHAPTER II

# THE NEUTRALITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF BELGIUM

UT the question that affects us most nearly is the responsibility for the declaration of war between Great Britain and Germany; and here, happily, there is no want of evidence, and no ground for reasonable doubt. Whether Great Britain would have been forced into war by the decision of France to support Russia is a question that need not detain us. It was the invasion of Belgium by the German army in defiance of treaties to which Britain herself was a signatory, that made the British ultimatum to Germany inevitable. The German government are of the opinion that Great Britain dealt a felon's blow by entering the war; a hymn of hate has been composed, and children in the schools have been instructed to learn it. The British government are of the opinion that they would have betrayed vital national and imperial interests, and covered themselves with everlasting dishonour, if Germany



had been allowed to proceed without challenge; and some of them are inclined to think that, on August 4, 1914, in the conversation of Sir Edward Goschen with the German Imperial Chancellor, Great Britain established the greatest of all her traditions, and showed the civilized world the only way by which international law could be made effective, and the more enduring peace of the world maintained in the future. How great is the difference between the psychological climate of Potsdam and Westminster! How different the sensitiveness of questions of national honour!

The *White Book* shows this clearly enough; but a brief outline of the history of Belgian neutrality and independence is essential to a full appreciation of the magnitude of the moral issue involved. In 1839 the Treaty of London was drawn up between Prussia, England, and France guaranteeing the neutrality and independence of Belgium in the interests of European peace, and Belgium was pledged to defend her neutrality with all her resources. In 1870 Germany became a nation, and then a treaty to the same effect was signed by Germany, England, and France. A treaty is the most solemn engagement by which nations can pledge themselves; but Germany and England were pledged in another way. The great powers of the world met in conference at the



Hague in 1907, and agreed upon a number of resolutions. In the second of these it is set down that "belligerents are forbidden to move across the territory of a neutral power troops or convoys or munitions of war or supplies". England signed, so did Germany. But this does not end the responsibility so far as Germany is concerned. In October, 1910, the present Kaiser made a speech in Belgium in which he promised that the neutrality of the country should never be violated by him. As late as April, 1913, Herr von Jagow, the present German Foreign Secretary, went down to the Reichstag, and made an official pronouncement upon the same matter: "Belgian neutrality," he said, "is defined by international treaties, and these treaties Germany will maintain."

Yet, in the face of all these pledges and promises, confirmed as late as July 31, 1914, by Herr von Bulow, the German minister in Brussels, the German government not only decided to invade France through Belgium, but the German Chancellor failed to understand why Great Britain could place so much importance on "a scrap of paper"! That last conversation between Sir Edward Goschen, the British ambassador in Berlin, and the German Chancellor, shows what a wide, deep gulf there is on questions of national honour



between the opinions of the British and the German governments. Both Great Britain and Germany were pledged up to the hilt to defend the neutrality and independence of Belgium. At the last moment a supreme appeal was made by the King of the Belgians to the King of Great Britain to safeguard the integrity of Belgium. How could Great Britain leave Belgium to her fate without covering herself with eternal dishonour, and endangering the future peace of the world by acquiescing in the monstrous doctrine that might is right? How could she have remained neutral without conceding that strong nations may trample at will upon the weak; that international agreements may be torn up when the time for testing them has arrived; and that the comity of nations must be at the mercy of individual national aggression?

There is no need to deny that it was to Great Britain's material interest to defend the neutrality and independence of Belgium. That is obvious enough. Germany is an ambitious imperial power, and avowedly aggressive. Great Britain stands in the way of the realization of her ambitions; and there is no part of the continent from which such a power could strike so effectively at England as from the coast of Belgium and the north of France. If Germany had ports there, her attacks upon



British ships of war and commerce would be much more formidable than they are now; and raids by aircraft would be more frequent and dangerous. But it was not only or mainly because of these material safeguards that Britain went to war; it was for more important reasons, involving her own honour and the welfare of civilization. When the German Chancellor argued that "for strategical reasons" it was a matter of life and death to advance through Belgium, Sir Edward Goschen replied that it was a matter of life and death for the honour of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. "That solemn compact," continued Sir Edward Goschen, "simply had to be kept, or what confidence could anyone have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future?" The British ambassador spoke as a man of business, as well as a man of honour. What great business would not be imperilled, if the man who held the position of supreme director were known to play tricks with his honour and his plighted word, when the time for testing them came? It is well known that bills of exchange are drawn upon London, and why? Not only because London is the biggest city in the world; but also because business men throughout the



world have confidence in the integrity of the British merchant, and believe that he will do all he can to meet his obligations when the time for discharging them has arrived. Take away that conviction, and it is probable enough that the financial centre of the world will change to some other place. The possibility of carrying on large business transactions in the modern world implies a considerable measure of confidence between man and man.

And the same is true ultimately of nations in their dealings with one another, especially in regard to the solemn obligations of a treaty. In time of stress and danger it is highly important for any nation to be able to attract the support of allies, and her power of attraction will depend to a great extent upon advantages likely to be secured. Germany may make lavish promises, but what confidence can any nation have in her engagements after what she has done in Belgium? Are they not bound to ask: Will she keep her pledge when it is no longer convenient for her to do so? Germany offered the Boers their freedom if they would rebel; but how many of the Boers felt they could trust her after the violation of Belgian neutrality? Italy was offered bribes to remain neutral, but what value was set upon German promises by the Italians?



It would have paid Germany better to have gone into France across the frontier between Luxemburg and Switzerland, notwithstanding the mountainous country and the strength of its fortifications. A decent respect for the opinions and feelings of mankind is essential to the welfare of any nation. For these opinions and feelings Germany has shown contempt rather than respect, and already she has suffered for it by forcing Great Britain into the war and alienating the sympathy of neutral nations and especially of the United States. She is likely to suffer a good deal more when the heat of strife has given place to calmer reflection, and men have time to think about the true proportion of things in human life. Already the civilized world has had time to read the correspondence of the different governments, and think about the question of responsibility, and its mind is made up on two important points: that Great Britain and the Allies have secured a moral victory over Germany in regard to the responsibility for the outbreak of this war; and that, if persuasion is to prevail over force as a means of settling disputes between nations in this world, treaties must be respected, and national individualism restrained by a decent respect for international usage, law, and treaty.



## CHAPTER III

# THE MILITARY DYNAMIC IN GERMANY



STUDY of the correspondence will leave little doubt in the mind of any impartial student that the chief responsibility for the European war, as distinct from the quarrel between Austria and Servia, lies with Germany; and the history of the war since August, 1914, shows clearly enough that the public opinion of Germany is behind the government. Nobody who has studied the history of Germany since 1870 will be surprised at this. The Germany of to-day is very different from the Germany of Beethoven, Goethe, Schiller, Kant, and Fichte; and the difference is due, for the most part, to the influence of Prussia in the schools, the universities, and, above all, in the army. An attempt will be made in the chapter on *The War and Civilization* to explain the nature of this influence in the development of the "German spirit"; it is sufficient to point out



here that the most outstanding feature in the history of Germany since 1870 has been the speeding up of the army both in numbers and efficiency in accordance with the "blood and iron" policy of Bismarck, which had been successful in the aggressive wars against Denmark, Austria, and France. The result was that, on the outbreak of the present war, Germany had an army of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million men, well disciplined, and well equipped. She had, too, a system of railways admirably constructed for making the best use of her troops; and the transference of civil into military departments was the work of a few hours. The organizing ability of the Germans is marvellous. Furthermore, since 1899 Germany has built the second strongest navy in the world at a cost of £300,000,000, and powerful societies have been formed to strengthen public opinion in its favour. Here are the outward and visible signs of that worship of force, and the will to conquer, which are the most striking characteristics of the German spirit to-day. The result of it all has been the generation of a military dynamic so powerful that no other force in Germany is able to compete with it.

In modern Germany the belief in force has become an obsession, a form of madness. "The origin of the present conflict," says



Professor Arthur Schuster, F.R.S., "may be found in the worship of material success which has maddened the German nation and plunged Europe into war". Germany is in the grips of a strenuous and strident materialism, and the very branches of learning in which she maintains her pre-eminence are those that make for material strength. That way war was bound to come: it was only a question of time.

And, when the war did break out, the ethics of the war party—the ethics of Prussia—became at once apparent. The German Chancellor went down to the Reichstag with a confession of wrong-doing, trying to justify the invasion of Belgium on the ground of "military necessity". What crime may not be justified on such grounds? The Prussian government had already established a reputation for bad faith. The invasion of Belgium has set a seal upon it. Germany complains, as Bismarck complained long ago, of a want of trust on the part of other European powers. But what right has a nation to complain with the treachery of Frederick the Great, and even of Bismarck himself, written large in the diplomatic history of Prussia? And that Germany has been prussianized in this, as in other ways, became manifest in the invasion of Belgium contrary to treaty, convention,



imperial and ministerial promise. The revelations of the *White Books*, shocking as they are to any people who believe that knowledge and power without conscience are damnable, only prove to the student of German history that the German spirit has at last found expression in the way that was natural and inevitable. People who worship force as consistently and ardently as the Germans have done in the past 50 years need to have level heads, big souls, and a good deal of chastening sorrow if they are to rise in practice and in theory above the conviction that might is right.







PART II

BRITISH AND GERMAN  
IMPERIALISM







CHAPTER IV  
GERMAN IMPERIAL  
AMBITIONS



NOBODY will doubt the bravery and patriotism of the Prussian soldiers; they have proved it in the course of this war as they have proved it in the past. These are the qualities that militarism may be expected to develop, and they are great and valuable qualities. But militarism, when it is not rigorously controlled, has also great defects, and one of them is swagger. Bismarck understood his Prussians thoroughly, and published his opinions on their leading characteristics in his *Reflections and Reminiscences*. "We are a vain nation", he says; "we feel hurt directly we cannot swagger, and much even in regard to our pockets is forgiven and permitted a government which gives us importance abroad". This is notable. Germany has served the world in matters of education, and the world was grateful to Germany. She has made wonderful progress in matters of trade and commerce, and that was a legitimate



way of exercising world-power. But with these achievements she was not satisfied. She wanted to swagger in the world as a ruling power, and dominate the countries of Europe politically and imperially. But for that she had shown no real qualification. She was, in fact, far behind some of the other nations of Europe in political sense and imperial method. She was not allowed to swagger, and she was hurt. She tried the diplomacy of the mailed fist, but it failed; and then, throwing diplomacy to the winds, she drew her mighty sword and challenged the nations of Europe to a struggle for World-power or Downfall.

Germany went to war because, as her leading men and politicians have so often reminded the world, she was determined to have "a better place in the sun". By this they meant that they wanted more territory in temperate regions of the globe, so that Germany's actual dominion might bear some more reasonable relation to her national strength, and her proved capacity for service. Outside Germany proper, Germany has possessions on her borders consisting of Alsace-Lorraine on the West and Poland on the East; and, in accordance with her traditional imperial policy, she has been trying to extend her influence eastwards through the Balkan States and



Turkey to the the Valley of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The great bar to her development in this direction has been Russia, and the strength of the pan-Slavish movement in the East. The failure of Turkey in the Balkan war put an end to any prospects of immediate success in that direction.

But she has also been trying to build up an empire beyond the seas. Here the main trouble arose from the fact that as a nation she is only 45 years old, and, when she came upon the scene in 1870, nearly all the available territory in the world had been taken up by older nations, especially Great Britain. England attained her nationhood in the middle of the thirteenth century, so did France; and in the centuries following they have been building up their empires slowly but surely. Germany had a chance of attaining to national unity 50 years before England and France; but owing to the world-wide ambitions of the Hohenstauffen Emperors on the one hand, and the feudal prejudices of her princes on the other, she lost it. So strong was the feeling of local independence that she did not become a nation till Bismarck welded the principalities together by blood and iron under the lead of Prussia in 1870. If Germany has not as good a place in the sun as she thinks she deserves, then the chief responsi-



bility rests upon the shoulders of the princes who preferred their own limited sovereignty to national unity.

After 1870 there was one legitimate way left for building up an empire beyond the seas, and that was by diplomacy. Bismarck tried this, and was successful. In the eighties of last century Germany secured Togoland, the Kameruns, German South-West Africa, German East Africa, and notwithstanding a vigorous protest from Queensland, a large part of New Guinea. These were considerable acquisitions, including territory amounting in area to about eight times the size of the United Kingdom. Notwithstanding Bismarck's devotion to the policy of blood and iron for the consolidation of Germany, he was a reasonable, cautious diplomatist; and, though he was never enthusiastic about a colonial empire for Germany, he managed to secure nearly everything that she holds beyond the sea. The present Kaiser Wilhelm II has added hardly anything at all, and for very good reasons. He is a vain man, and is hurt when he cannot swagger. He has no international camaraderie. His one idea of impressing other nations has been to shake his mailed fist in their faces. In China, it is true, he succeeded in getting Kiao Chou; in Europe he succeeded only in outraging the



national self-respect of the great European powers, and uniting them solidly against him for purposes of mutual protection. He insulted France in 1905, Russia in 1908, England and France in 1911, in the same way as he insulted Belgium in August, 1914, by presenting them with an alternative: compliance with his demands, or war.

Indiscreet as such a policy was, it became in Germany almost inevitable. Diplomacy is a matter of bargaining, among democratic powers, by reason and arbitration, because such powers rely mainly on persuasion for attaining their ends; and the older nations of Europe have had time to learn that the way of persuasion is the better way. But Germany was not like the other nations of the West. She was very inexperienced, very military, and every year was becoming more military. This it is that explains the peculiar quality of German diplomacy under William II, who has paraded his military power in every diplomatic crisis, and made it his chief argument. It was a diplomacy that showed no respect for the good-will of other nations, and though it might succeed at the moment, it was bound to fail in the end by uniting self-respecting nations against Germany.

It did fail, and the only way left for Germany to secure "a better place in the sun"



was by conquest; and that Germany had made up her mind for this there can be no reasonable doubt. The correspondence in the *White Book* proves that she intended to strip France of her colonies, and expected Great Britain to stand aside while she did so! But, besides this, the teaching in German universities and schools for the past thirty years has been preparing the national mind for something very ambitious in the way of expansion; and the character of this teaching may fairly be judged by reference to the book, *Germany and the Next War*, written by General von Bernhardi. No doubt there was a large section of the people in Germany who would have repudiated many of the doctrines of Bernhardi concerning the ultimate source of national greatness; but in his views on German imperial expansion he voiced the opinions certainly of the army, and, in all probability, of the great majority of the German people. Bernhardi was an influential teacher in Berlin, a disciple of Treitschke, and a friend of the Kaiser. Events since August, 1914, have shown that he knew very little about the British Empire; but they have also shown that he knew thoroughly well the mind of the German army, and that he was qualified to speak concerning both their aims and their methods.



And a study of his book leaves no doubt concerning the imperial ambitions of Germany. It is set down in the clearest language that there is one alternative before her: World-dominion or Downfall; and that the way by which she must get what she wants is war. For her might is right, and because that doctrine is true of the struggle for existence in the animal world, it must also be accepted as true in the world of rational beings! The one thing Germany is determined to have is world-power; the only way left to get it is by conquest. One chapter discusses the "Rights of War", another the "Duty of War". With the correspondence of European governments before us, and the conduct of the German army in Belgium, who will say that the views expressed in this book are not the views of the German government and the German army?

To men and women who have breathed the atmosphere of Christian idealism, and lived under free political institutions, these assertions seem so unreasonable, so unfair, so material, so brutal, that they are driven to ask how can these things be among a people so enlightened as the Germans?

Perhaps the chief reason is that Germany has been suffering for some time from an attack of megalomania, or "swelled head".



This is a disease to which the nature of the Prussian is peculiarly susceptible, as the extract from Bismarck's *Reflections* at the beginning of the chapter indicates. But there are other reasons why Germans as a whole have become infected by it. Considering her age Germany has done remarkably well. She became a nation as a result of a series of successful wars against Denmark, Austria, and France. Since then she has made her way in commerce so successfully that one wonders why she thought it necessary to go to war at all, if world-wide power were the only thing needed. In branches of technical science that make for material strength she probably leads the world, if not in invention at least in application. In organizing ability she has proved herself both in peace and war: her civil service is the best in the world, and her transport service in war is marvellous. Her individual citizens have not the initiative or enterprise of the French or the English, but they are plodding, and they are thorough. Her pre-eminence in music, literature, and philosophy has not been maintained in recent years; but undoubtedly Germany is a great nation, and under wise direction has great capacity for world service.



## CHAPTER V

# THE QUALITY OF GERMAN IMPERIALISM



LET all these things stand to Germany's credit. The question still remains: Do they prove that the German government are justified in setting out on a career of conquest, which is to end in European hegemony, and world-wide dominion?

*No, they do not,* and here lies the source of nearly all the mischief. It is one thing to exert world-wide influence through learning and commerce as Germany has undoubtedly done, quite another thing to impose upon Europe and the world a belated form of despotism, which strikes at the very foundations of democratic government, and is incompatible with the growth and maintenance of national independence outside Germany. In all the progressive nations of the Western world, political institutions are rooted in public opinion, or the will of the people. Government is not only for the people, it is also by



the people; and constitutional contrivances have been developed in the last two centuries to make public opinion effective. This is achieved mainly in two ways: by making the executive dependent upon, and responsible to, the people; and by keeping the military subordinate to the civil power. In Germany neither of these has been attained. There they have the Reichstag, which is a representative assembly, but it does not control the executive. The responsible ministers who actually administer are appointed by, and responsible to, the Kaiser; and the Kaiser's authority rests, not upon public opinion, but upon the army and navy, over which he has unlimited authority, and which he can set in motion by a stroke of his pen. Even in legislation the Reichstag is, in practice, subordinated to the Bundesrath or Federal Council, which consists of the delegates of the sovereigns of the different states of the empire, holds its meetings in secret in Berlin, and, with the consent of the Emperor, has power to dissolve the Reichstag. Supreme over all is the war-lord who claims to be God's vicegerent.

Under a constitution such as this there is far less opportunity for developing political aptitude among the people than in any of the Western democracies. And German imperial-



ism takes its character from German politics.

It is true that in matters of learning Germany has led the world, and in some branches still leads; but it is also true that in political sense and imperial method she is far behind the progressive nations of the world. The preposterous character of Germany's imperial ambitions cannot be fully understood unless this is realized. Having done well in war, commerce, and learning, she thinks it her duty to seize the territory of older nations and impose her will upon them! She admits that this will involve suffering; but she believes that it will be good for the world in the end. For the German people are a superior people; it is their mission under God's viceroy, the Kaiser, to reform a decadent age by the spread of German *Kultur*; and in order to do this effectively Germany must impose her rule upon Europe first, and the world next. *Deutschland über Alles*, that is her motto!

Germany could have influenced the world powerfully by her learning and her commerce without going to war, and that would have given her a place in the sun in the sense in which she already had it—the best sense; but that was not enough; it did not satisfy her national vanity. She must dominate a great part of the world and



impose her *Kultur* upon it. Having failed to do this by legitimate means, she let slip the dogs of war, and plunged civilization into the most awful catastrophe since the world began. This is the way in which Germany's megalomania has misled her. Her claims would be preposterous even if she were as pre-eminent for culture as she was in the days of Goethe, Kant, Beethoven, and Schiller. For the *Kultur* that makes for material aggrandisement she is far more distinguished than she was 50 years ago; but in the culture that makes for sweetness and light, and the advancement of the world morally and spiritually, she has gone back. For the past 30 years she has worshipped physical and material power, and she has got it. Her pre-eminence in learning is now precisely of that kind that makes for material power: money, big guns, explosives, control over the powers of nature generally.

All this high-flown talk in Germany about the spread of *Kultur* misleads nobody outside the Fatherland. Culture in the best sense—the love of what is true and beautiful for its own sake—flourishes as well, if not better, in small states than in great ones; and it restrains and subdues the passion for self-aggrandisement and domination instead of encouraging or justifying it. The imperial question has



nothing to do with culture at all, for there are no frontiers in learning. The only pertinent question is this: Has Germany been so successful in her colonial and imperial history that she can claim even an abstract justification for seizing the territory of other nations who have had imperial experience extending in some cases over many centuries?

No! Compared with other nations Germany has not been successful in colonization. Some measure of success she may claim in matters of detail; but, in matters of vital and far-reaching importance, she has failed both in method and results.

Beyond the seas Germany has territories with an area eight times the size of the United Kingdom, where she has been brought into contact with primitive races. If German imperialism is likely to succeed with any people, it is among races just emerging from barbarism, who understand force, and have had no experience in rule by persuasion. How has Germany been getting on in Togoland, German South-West Africa, East Africa, and New Guinea? In some respects well. She has a good system of wireless stations, she is efficient in matters of hygiene, and she is thorough in matters of education in the colonies as at home. She has, moreover, done something for the natives in raising them



in the scale of civilization, though her methods have been characterized by a severity which would not be tolerated by the British government. In all these matters let Germany have the credit which she deserves; it still remains true that, even in her empire beyond the seas, she has failed in the greatest matters. She has failed to attract to her overseas colonies any considerable number of settlers, even of German extraction. On this point statistics are absolutely conclusive. In recent years millions of Germans have left Germany for the United States of America, and hundreds of thousands have settled in the British colonies. How many Germans have gone to the German colonies beyond the sea, and settled there? At the outside calculation only 24,000, including the smaller possessions and Kiao Chou. It would be superfluous to offer any lengthy comments on these figures. They show, beyond all doubt, that when Germans leave their own country they avoid German colonies. One reason for this is that the German colonies are mostly in the tropics, and the climate is disagreeable; but that is not the only reason. When Germans leave Germany, they do so because they want to get away from military domination and swagger, and to breathe the atmosphere of a country that is governed by free institutions.



In such countries they make good settlers, and they are content to make their homes there. In German colonies they would find the military as much in the ascendant as at home, and the swagger of the military officer even more objectionable. In Togoland, the Kameruns, German South-West Africa, German East Africa, and New Guinea there are 17,000 Germans, and of these 2,500 are soldiers, and 700 are policemen! And, as soon as a stripling puts an officer's uniform on his back, he swaggers it over all others in the colony, even though some of them may be men of industrial efficiency, who have done twenty times as much as he for the benefit of the colony. It is too early yet to pass final judgment upon German overseas colonization; but it is fair, even now, to say that it does not impress even German emigrants favourably.

There is no need for reservation, however, in criticizing the attempts of the Germans to govern enlightened races that aspire to self-government, and feel the stirrings of nationality within them. How has Germany been getting on with Poland and Alsace-Lorraine? In both places she has pursued a policy of repression, and set herself to crush out all in-born national aspirations. In both places the people are forbidden to speak their own language, and in both attempts have been made to settle



Germans on the land. In Alsace-Lorraine there is a large population of Germans now; but in Poland the policy of land settlement has failed, notwithstanding the expenditure of 17 million pounds and the passing of an Expropriation Act through the Prussian Diet. The best test of success in the government of civilized people is the measure of spontaneous loyalty elicited by the central imperial authority. Germany has failed to arouse it either among the Poles or the non-German people in Alsace-Lorraine; and failed so egregiously that, as a ruling power, she is more cordially disliked by the Poles than either Austria or Russia. The Poles still cherish their national aspiration, and they know, after a century of experience, that national aspirations and German imperialism are utterly incompatible.



## CHAPTER VI

### A STUDY IN CONTRAST

**H**ERE lies the essential difference between British and German imperialism. Great Britain has made her mistakes as an imperial power, and the greatest of all was made in trying to force the old colonial policy on America. But it is nevertheless true that, when she has erred, it has generally been on the side of generosity, rather than severity, in her dealings with civilized and uncivilized races alike. In the wave of loyalty which has swept from one end of her empire to the other in this great crisis she has her reward. It may be that in some cases there is impatience of British rule: it would be strange in so vast an empire if there were not; but, when it comes to a choice between British imperialism and German imperialism, the empire shows its mind without hesitation in word and deed.

And this has been one of the most bitter disappointments for Germany since the



beginning of the war. To her the British Empire was a loose agglomeration of states which would fall to pieces on the first shock of war. Ireland was on the brink of civil war. In India a holy war would shake British authority in the East to its foundations, and news of the preparation for it helped to fill the columns of the German press for months after the war began! Elaborate preparations were made for the invasion of South Africa in the belief that the Boers would strike a blow for independence when the first opportunity came. As for the other Dominions, they were not worth considering from a military point of view, and, besides, their desire for independence of Great Britain would make them troublesome rather than helpful. Such was the German forecast before the outbreak of the war.

But what are the facts? The Irish question was dropped for the time being, and large numbers of volunteers enlisted from both sides to defend the United Kingdom against the European menace. India rose almost as one man in defence of the Empire. In the early days of September 70,000 troops were on their way to fight in Europe. Every one of the 700 native princes offered personal services and the resources of their states for the war. From the utmost confines of India, from



Beluchistan, Chitral, Kashmir, and Thibet came offers of assistance; and even the wild and warlike Waziris offered to maintain peace and order on their borders, if it were found necessary or desirable to remove the government troops!

The self-governing Dominions did not wait for any appeal from the British government. As soon as they realized the gravity of the situation they gave practical demonstration of their determination to support Great Britain with all their resources. In South Africa there was some trouble; but, despite that, South Africa affords the best example in any of the Dominions of the wisdom of British imperial policy. Thirteen years before we had been at war with the Boers, and it was a long and bitter war. Notwithstanding that, as soon as the insurrection began, General Botha took the field, and General Smuts directed affairs from headquarters. They succeeded not only in putting down rebellion in the territory of the Union, but also in the conquest of German South-West Africa, which now belongs to the British Empire. Could any finer or more striking tribute have been paid to the quality of British imperialism?

And why all these ludicrous miscalculations on the part of German theorists? Simply because they do not understand. In the



development of a sense of political freedom Germany is far behind the western democracies of the world. She has no idea how strong the passion for freedom is in the British Dominions, and how far their loyalty to the British Empire is due to that. It is quite true that in times of peace the bonds of British imperialism press as lightly as air; but that is precisely the reason why they are likely to prove as strong as steel in times of war. Germany has failed because she has tried to crush national aspiration. Great Britain has succeeded because wherever a people have proved their ability to govern themselves, and even before they have been able to pay their own way, she has encouraged national aspiration. The last word in German imperialism is domination, the last word in British imperialism is freedom. India knows this, the self-governing Dominions know it, the world knows it.

Nor need we go any further than our own state and Commonwealth to find proof of it. The colony of South Australia was founded in 1836. Twenty years later the citizens were granted responsible as well as representative government: they not only had a democratic franchise, they had control over their ministers through Parliament as well, which the German people in their own country have



not attained to yet. And when the different states of Australia were ready to federate, and begin their history as a nation, the Prince of Wales was sent to inaugurate the Commonwealth. Taught by the loyalty of the Canadians after 1867, the British government had come to realize that nationality and British imperialism were not incompatible. This is the new imperialism which was making its way in the world, when, of a sudden, it was challenged by the crude military imperialism of Germany.

The difference between the two empires is so great that they constitute a study in contrast. Germany's object is to *germanize* Europe and eventually the world, as she has tried to germanize Poland. To this end she has subordinated the Poles politically; forbidden the use of their own language in public, and in the schools; and even tried by the Expropriation Act introduced into the Prussian Diet by a royal speech in 1907 to oust the Poles and plant Germans on their lands. It is not only the subjugation, but also the assimilation of Poland that is deliberately aimed at. This is indeed the only kind of imperialism that is to be expected of an autocratic government whose power is based upon unlimited control over the army and the navy. German imperialism affords no oppor-



tunity for the development of the peculiar quality that distinguishes one nation from another. The struggle for supremacy so dominates political and imperial thought that the idea of a comity of nations or an association of free commonwealths has hardly any place in it at all. Prince von Bülow in his book on *Imperial Germany* makes this quite clear. "It is a law of life and development in history", he says, "that where two national civilizations meet they fight for ascendancy. In the struggle between nationalities one nation is the hammer and the other the anvil; one is the victor and the other the vanquished". Here is the thought that determines the bias of German imperialism. The aim is not unity, but uniformity; not freedom, but domination.

British imperialism aims at no such thing; its corner stone is self-government, and national imperialism is its highest and best expression. Each one of the self-governing Dominions is travelling along the road to nationhood, and no obstacle is placed in the way. Australians are no longer Englishmen beyond the seas; they are loyal subjects of his Majesty, but they are Australians. Over them waves their own flag, but above that is the Union Jack, and both can wave together. So it is in Canada, South Africa, and New



Zealand. Great Britain does not aim at anglicizing any of them. She so governs and superintends that each part is allowed to go on developing the quality that is peculiar to its own national life. And even South Africa knows this. When the trouble broke out there last year General Smuts wrote a letter to one of the malcontents in which he pointed out that, though the Boers were a conquered people in 1902, they were now free to work out their own national ideals under the British flag.

Can there be any reasonable doubt concerning the relative merits of these two systems, either in respect of quality or results? German imperialism is anti-national in its character; it shows no sufficient respect for the essential differences by which the various nationalities in the world are distinguished. It may attain to some measure of success among people just emerging from a state of barbarism, who know no other rule than the rule of force; but among civilized people, and especially among people who have been trained under responsible government, and are conscious of national aspirations, it is bound to fail. Germany has no more chance of germanizing Europe than a forester has of turning larches, beeches, pines, and oaks into gum trees. Only a nation that is suffering from a violent attack of



megalomania, and a profound ignorance of human nature beyond her borders, would have entertained any such ambition. Germany does know a good deal about the forces of nature that make for material strength; but of the forces of human nature that make for spontaneous loyalty she knows very little. In scientific knowledge she may be pre-eminent, but in moral insight she is sadly deficient.

In fighting for such an imperial ideal, Germany is fighting against one of the strongest forces in human nature. She is trying to impose an authority from without in defiance of the natural process of development from within. The only way by which she could succeed in germanizing Europe is by exterminating all other European nations, and leaving only Germans; and, even then, nature would beat her in 100 years. For, when the Germans had spread over Europe, they would, under the influence of local interests and climatic difference, split up into nationalities again. That matter is settled by nature, not by Germany. Germany wants uniformity under despotic authority. Nature wants unity in variety. That is why British imperialism is so superior to the German. As Captain Mahan has so well said: "Of colonization, as of all other growths, it is true that it is more healthy when it is most natural.



Therefore colonies that spring from the felt wants and natural impulses of a whole people will have the most solid foundations; and subsequent growth will be the surest when they are least trammelled from home if the people have the genius for independent action. . . . . If elaborate system and supervision, careful adaption of means to ends, diligent nursing could avail for colonial growth, the genius of England has less of this systematizing faculty than the genius of France; but England, not France, has been the great colonizer of the world. Successful colonization, with its consequent effects upon commerce and sea-power, depends essentially upon national character; because colonies grow best when they grow of themselves, naturally. The character of the colonist, not the care of the home government, is the principle of the colony's growth." If this is true in comparing French and British colonization, how much more might be written of the contrast between British and German imperialism: between an imperialism that seeks to germanize the world, and an imperialism that is based upon self-government, and encourages national development.







PART III

THE WAR AND CIVILIZATION







## CHAPTER VII

# THE POLICY OF FRIGHTFUL- NESS



**I**N his message to the governments and people of his self-governing Dominions at the beginning of the war, the King stated, in words chosen, no doubt, after the most careful deliberation, that the peoples of his whole empire, at home and overseas, had "moved with one mind and purpose to confront and overthrow an unparalleled attack upon the continuity of civilization and the peace of mankind". Apart from devotion to the free spirit of British institutions, there is probably nothing that accounts more for the extraordinary rally of the empire than the conviction that this is the language not of exaggeration, but of truth. It does not mean that Germany set out on this war of conquest with the deliberate intention of overturning civilization; but it does mean that, if by any mischance Germany were to win, the con-



tinuity of civilization would be broken, and the foundations of international peace imperilled.

The prussianization of Germany has not been simply a military process; it has been educational too. During the past thirty or forty years some of the most influential writers and teachers in Berlin have been inculcating ideas and principles which have prepared the national mind for the work of Prussian militarists, and given to German *Kultur* the peculiar quality whereby it may be distinguished from culture as it is understood in other enlightened countries.

Of these ideas or principles two have sunk deeply into the political and military mind of Germany, and they have already been applied in ways that have startled and shocked the civilized world. The one is expounded and elaborated with amazing candour by General von Bernhardi in his book *Germany and the Next War*, viz., that the law of natural selection which prevails in the animal world, and is technically known as the struggle for existence, governs human development also; the other more particularly developed by Treitschke, that in the external society of man there is no authority higher than the state. The second is little more than a corollary of the first in its application to



national life; and unfortunately, though Germany is the only enlightened nation that would have ventured to apply the law of natural selection with such brutal directness at this stage of the world's history, the Germans have no monopoly of teachers who out-Darwin Darwin by insisting on the application of biological law to the evolution of human life.

No doubt that theory does explain much in the life of primitive man; but it is utterly misleading to say that it has governed human development since the beginning of the Christian era; and to teach that it is a law that should and must dominate the lives of men, even in war, is tantamount to a denial of the essential differences between animal life and human life, and especially of the distinguishing qualities of man as an ethical and spiritual being.

If such a doctrine is to go unchallenged in its application to human evolution, then assuredly might is right, as Bernhardt says; assuredly, too, the soldier must crush every feeling of humanity, and mercy and pity will count for nothing more than they have counted in Belgium; success will go to the strongest, the swiftest, and the most cunning, without any regard to the restraints of honour and morality; and small states like Belgium



and Holland will have no more right to independent national existence than is conceded them by the forbearance of a strong and overbearing neighbour. It is high time that students of history followed the lead of Huxley, and raised their voices in clear and unmistakable tones against the inculcation of theories that give support to such monstrous ideas as these.

For Huxley, though he is rightly called the armour-bearer of Charles Darwin, did protest against the application of this law to human development in the most emphatic way. In his *Romanes Lecture* at Oxford in 1893 he repudiated the idea that "because on the whole animals and plants have advanced in perfection of organization by means of the struggle for existence and the consequent survival of the fittest, therefore men in society, men as ethical beings, must look to the same process to help them toward perfection". On the contrary, he affirmed that "Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and a substitution for it of another which may be called the ethical process".

Precisely, that is what civilization means and has meant especially in the last 1900 years, and that is why Great Britain has been forced into this struggle. Behind the teaching of Treitschke and Bernhardi lies the con-



viction that "war gives a biologically just decision", even though it begin in dishonour and be waged in defiance of the rules of the game. Behind the decision of the British government on August 4 lies the conviction that an ethical, not a brutal, process must dominate international as well as civic life; that force must be used not to trample upon but to uphold the honourable engagements and usages of civilized peoples in their dealings with one another. This it is which makes the present war a great landmark in the world's history. It is nothing less than a struggle to prevent a relapse into barbarous methods of settling disputes, and to preserve those principles, usages, and conventions which are bound up with the continuity of civilization. If Great Britain and the Allies win in this war, then the idea that an ethical process should be substituted for the brutal process of war in the evolution of human affairs will receive a sanction far more authoritative than it has ever had before, and it is possible enough that no nation will ever dare to do again what Germany has done in Belgium.

But it will be a very different matter if Germany should prevail; for, undoubtedly, the German authorities have waged war on land and sea in a way that shows they are out of harmony with the spirit of the age in which



we live. Yet they are convinced that their way is the right way; and in this attitude of mind lurks great danger to civilization, for it has been a sinister, immoral, and brutal way.

Most governments, even of the more advanced democracies, realize their responsibilities in regard to defensive warfare; and some of them were prepared to act upon the conviction that under exceptional circumstances, in which invasion was to be expected, aggressive warfare might be the only chance of defending successfully. But the idea of making elaborate preparations extending over many years for a war of conquest was so alien to the spirit of our times that responsible statesmen in France and England, drawn together as they were by dread of it, were caught ill-prepared, and have been taken at a disadvantage.

Even more shocking to many people than this cold-blooded preparation for world conquest have been the methods by which the military and naval authorities have carried on the war. They have revived practices that are incompatible with the usage of civilized peoples, and destructive of any true confidence between nation and nation. The abuse of espionage is one of them. Nobody objects to an intelligence or even a secret service department. Every government wants to know how it stands with respect to other



governments, and especially those from which danger is to be apprehended. But the Germans have practised espionage in a way that is inconsistent with any ideas of national fair play. The history of the war in Belgium proves this; and the charge is made, not only by writers of the belligerent nations, but also by neutral authors, such as Mr. Powell, who have written of what they saw in Flanders. Many of the Germans, who had lived in Belgium for years, made fortunes there, and had honours conferred upon them, acted as spies for the German army after the invasion. This is dirty work, and it is not the sort of thing that is likely to inspire the governments of different countries with confidence in the loyalty of their German settlers. It will probably force many of them to find out, after this war is over, how far the existence of the *Delbrück Act* is compatible with the loyalty of settlers of German birth to the country of their adoption. Treachery is a difficult thing to deal with in times of war, and the results of it may be terrible. The Russian retreat from the Carpathians may find its true explanation in the treacherous destruction of munition factories in St. Petersburg.

But even the abuses of espionage have not shocked the feeling of the civilized world so



much as the atrocities committed by Germany in Belgium and on the Atlantic in pursuance of the policy of frightfulness. In Belgium hostages have been taken and held responsible for the conduct of whole towns and cities; women, children, and old men have been slaughtered in droves, sometimes without so much as an inquiry, because of sniping, or the acts of individuals stung to madness by the destruction of their homes, or the violation of those they loved; children have been roped together as screens for the German soldiery, and women made to stand all night on a bridge, exposed to the rigours of the climate, for the same purpose. Across the water, unfortified towns such as Scarborough and Whitby have been bombarded; the Falaba was sunk, and some of the passengers fired upon as they were trying to escape; the Lusitania was torpedoed, and 100 neutral Americans sent to their doom with hundreds of British civilians.

All this is contrary to convention, and some legally minded people talk as though it were the violation of convention that made it a crime. Not at all. Such outrages would have been crimes against civilization even if the Hague Conferences had never been held. It is impossible in a war of this magnitude to shield civilians altogether; but these are not



accidents; they are the results of a policy deliberately adopted and pursued in order to terrorize Belgium, and the world at large, into submission. Prussians have long been of the opinion that peace-loving nations were decadent, and that the imminence of danger or of death would unnerve them, and throw them into panic. Hence these cowardly barbarities, which force the mind back over centuries to find a parallel in severity. The tendency of civilized peoples in the past three hundred years has been to formulate rules of the game in such a way that civilians, and especially women, children, and old men, should be kept out of this dreadful business as much as possible. The German military and naval authorities have dragged them back into it again, and they have done it deliberately. After the publication of Lord Bryce's report there can no longer be any reasonable doubt about this. That is their crime against civilization.

And that is the chief reason why opinion in the great neutral countries of the world has gone so decidedly against Germany. The people of the United States are anxious to keep out of the war if possible; but 80 per cent. of them are heart and soul with the Allies, because they know that respect for the opinions and prejudices of civilization is part



of the great cause for which they are fighting. President Wilson's protests came as a surprise to the missionaries of *Kultur*, and were bitterly resented. "War is war," they persisted, and so, no doubt, it is; but there is a human as well as a brutal way of conducting warfare. In the relentless struggle in the animal world there are no rules of the game, and the German idea of war resembles that struggle to a degree that few enlightened people thought possible in this stage of the world's history. But it is just those rules of the game that constitute the difference between fair play and foul play, between civilized warfare and barbarous slaughter; and this is what the people of the United States have been trying to impress upon the German mind.

The policy of frightfulness has been modified to some extent, but not out of any real respect for the usages of civilization. Rather it is due to the realization that, in dealing with the nations of the West, it does not pay as well as the German war-lords thought it would, and also because so many German submarines are lying helpless wrecks on the bottom of the sea. It is not the continuity of civilization, or the substitution of an ethical process for the brutal process of war, that troubles Germany. She is out to win, and has made it clear from the beginning of the war that no



respect for the opinions and prejudices of mankind will prevent her from using any means that will enable her to snatch a victory. It is with her a question of what policy pays best in the attempt to "hack her way through". The views of Bernhardi on war are the views of the war-lords of Germany. To them, as to him, might is right. What Bernhardi has preached in his book the war-lords have applied in their warfare on land and sea. It is the application of biological law in defiance of the rules of the game and of the moral force of civilization.



## CHAPTER VIII

### NATIONAL INDIVIDUALISM V. INTERNATIONAL LAW



OR is there any hope for a better state of things in the teaching of Treitschke concerning the final authority of the state. It is an idea that follows almost inevitably from the application of biological law to human life. Just as the comity of nations is naturally associated with arbitration and international law; so national individualism is associated with and implies war, and in the end a *bellum omnium contra omnes*. But such an individualism would mean a relapse into barbarism, and, to prevent this, civilized peoples have made use of law, convention, and organization inside and outside the state.

Most people were of the opinion before the beginning of this war that international law, and the well established usages of civilization, to say nothing of conscience, were tribunals before which the conduct of any one state, however powerful, would be judged.



Not so the German military and political authorities, and not so a majority of the German people. In the whole range of Treitschke's political thought there is probably no one idea more forcefully and persistently advocated than the almightiness of the state. What it meant for him and for his disciples was that in the visible organization of man there is no authority higher than the state, and for that reason "a state cannot bind its will for the future in relation to another state. The state has no higher judge above it, and therefore will conclude all treaties with mental reservation."

The influence of such teaching as this on the treaty-violation that brought Great Britain into this war will be apparent at once. It is quite characteristic of Germany that, while claiming so much for nationality in her own interests, she has shown so little regard for the independence of Belgium. What Treitschke and the German political and military hierarchy really meant was that there is no higher authority in the external society of man than Germany. Nationality is a reality, one of the most stubborn realities of our time, as Germany is now learning to her cost; but, so long as human beings are dispersed in many nations, and recognize the supremacy of moral over physical force, national authority can



never be final or supreme. National authority has a place, and a very important place, in the world to-day; but it may not usurp so high an authority as the law of nations, and the conscience of mankind. As well might a citizen argue that he has a right to put his own individual interests, or the interests of his profession, class, or union above the claims of the state. That means anarchy.

In pushing the authority of a single state to such an unwarrantable extent Germany has deliberately set herself in opposition to the development of international authority on which the maintenance of an enduring peace, and the formal progress of civilization so much depend. The issue involved here is one of very great importance. It is nothing less than this: Are we ever to have such a thing as international law or not? Certainly, if the German idea of the almightiness of the state is to prevail, we shall not. But in the last 400 years history has been turning out the raw material of international law, and Germany's reactionary protest only means that the finished product was so near completion that war, Prussia's chief industry, and the source of so much of her own material power, would soon be under its control.

The movement toward the attainment of some definitely constituted international au-



thority in Europe that would gradually supersede war was begun by Wolsey in the reign of Henry VIII, when he launched the idea of the balance of power. By this means a comity of nations was arranged to repel the aggression of any one state that was strong enough to imperil the peace of Europe. There is no doubt that it worked well, and, because of her "splendid isolation", particularly well for England. It meant very often that she with her well defined sea-girt frontiers held the balance of power; and anybody who has read Bernhardt's book can see that this is the reason why Germany is determined to put an end to it by insisting upon the almightiness of the state. That it has made for the peace of Europe, and for the continuity of civilization, does not matter to Germany. She has made up her mind to dominate Europe, and, if the comity of nations and the balance of power stand in her way, they must go, and especially if England, the great world-power, derives more advantage from them than she.

And so, too, must international convention, arbitration, and law, for they belong to the comity of nations, and, during the nineteenth century, were winning authority not only in Europe but also in the world at large. It was a development which all the democratic



nations of the world favoured, and even some of the more military nations like Russia and Japan. To all nations with any genuine pacific inclinations, and any real regard for the progress of civilization, it was bound to commend itself. England and France settled their differences about Egypt, Central Africa, and the Newfoundland fisheries by arbitration; by the same method England and the United States settled their disputes about the Canadian boundary and Behring Straits. So well established had this method of settling disputes become that, by the end of the century, responsible statesmen in different countries of the world had begun to discuss the possibility of the erection of an international court of arbitration. This court was to consist of representatives of the nations of the world, and its business was to be the settlement of international disputes by reason instead of war. President Roosevelt, when in office, tried to prepare the way for it, and he is working for it still. There is probably nothing more characteristic of the administration of Sir Edward Grey than the work he has done to prepare the mind of Europe for such a tribunal—a tribunal which shall have the power to say to any aggressive country: Show us your ultimatum; if we believe that your demands are just we will support them;



if not, and you still persist in war, it is also war against the nations here represented.

This is one of the great issues involved in the war. This is what England the champion of the comity of nations is fighting for, and what Germany the champion of national individualism is fighting against. The issue is so tremendous that it involves nothing less than a choice between the continuity of civilization and a return to the crudest form of despotism. It is a struggle between the methods that make for the rule of reason and persuasion, and methods that make for the rule of force.

And what has the progress of civilization consisted in, if not in the gradual substitution of reason for force in the settlement of individual and national disputes? Individual liberty within the state is rendered possible because individual aggression is restrained by law. In like manner national freedom can only be secured by making international brigands amenable to international law. What security will Belgium or any other small state ever have against a mighty power like Germany, if there is to be no external authority in the society of men higher than the state? Germany has shown that she has no sufficient regard for the settled opinions and feelings of civilization, and Germany is a mighty power.



There lies the danger, and, if the continuity of civilization is to be safeguarded some external authority must be established with sufficient power to make international law as effective in the relations between nation and nation, as ordinary law is in the relations between man and man. Germany is trying to do essentially the same thing in the world at large as the feudal brigand of the Middle Ages with his powerful following did within the state. She must be brought under control in the same way as he—by law.

That is what England is fighting for, and if ever such a desirable object is to be attained, it will have to be won by fighting; it will not come by talking and protesting. America has done something to expose the inhumanity of Germany's conduct by her official notes, and her splendid efforts to relieve the sufferings of the Belgians. But it is well for America, and for civilization, that there are other nations in the world prepared to support their protests by armed force. America is humanitarian in her sympathies, and her ideals of government are higher than those of Germany; but she has overlooked the fact that idealism must be supported by force, if it is to be effective at this stage of the world's history. Germany by her strength and preparedness has taught us that; so has America



by her unpreparedness and want of military efficiency.

When a nation of 100,000,000 people after hearing that its neutral subjects are sent to their doom in the waves of the Atlantic tells the world through its chief executive officer that there is such a thing as being too proud to fight only one reflection is possible, viz., that America does not fight because she is not prepared to put her protests into effect. And no further evidence is needed to prove that, if ever an international court of arbitration is established, it must differ in one all-important essential from the Hague tribunal: it must be backed by military and naval force sufficient to make its decisions effective against the defiance of any one power, however strong that power may be. The world is not done with force yet, and never will be till the millennium is reached. The frail man need not fear the strong now-a-days in a court of law, provided he can convince a judge and jury that his cause is just. That is because there is a force behind the law which is stronger than the force that any one aggressive individual can command. We have become so habituated to the rule of law that there is little need in a civilized country to parade the force behind it; but it is there, or at least it should be there, if the state hopes to avert



anarchy, and to survive. And so it must be in regard to this international court of arbitration. Some people talk as though the establishment of such a court would make armies and navies superfluous. No justification can be found in history for any such optimism. Reason is better than force, but force is more ultimate than reason, and where there is not force enough to maintain the law, unscrupulous men will seize the opportunity to defy it. So will unscrupulous nations, where there is not force enough to restrain international brigandage.

Germany has used her mighty power to crash through treaty-obligation and promise. That is a barbarous use of force, and the only way to prevent its recurrence is to have a power greater than Germany's which will be used to uphold treaty-obligation and promise. That is the only practical way to make international law effective; and that is why Great Britain has thrown in her lot with France and Russia in this war; and, if ever anything like an enduring peace among the nations of the world is to be attained, that is the only way to get it. Nobody had a right to complain of Germany having a strong military force, for it is the duty of every nation to prepare to defend itself, and Germany is in a difficult position geographically. But her



ambitions were not limited to defensive precautions. She had designs on the colonies of France, as the *White Book* shows; and all that speeding up of the army and navy is inexplicable except on the assumption that she had made up her mind for world-power, by conquest, and was willing to risk downfall in the event of failure.

Germany has in fact gone the way of nearly all individuals and nations who have pursued material ambitions with success, at the expense of such qualities as make for sweetness and light, and a reasonable respect for the feelings of others. The culture of Goethe and Beethoven and Kant gives place to the *Kultur* of Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Wilhelm II, and in religion the worship of valour takes the place of the worship of Christ. The harvest has come, and she is reaping to-day what she has sown with so much care in the past. The crop is not only tares. In physical and material strength Germany is prodigiously powerful, and the patriotism of her citizens must command the admiration of all fair-minded men. If the inculcation of the almightiness of the state has made Germany an Ishmaelite among the greater and more civilized nations of the world, it has also taught the German people themselves to sacrifice everything for what



they conceive to be the good of Germany. It would appear that masses of men in macedonian phalanxes are willing to go to almost certain death for the Fatherland.

Pity it is that the Fatherland is not engaged in a nobler cause, and that so many lives should be sacrificed for material ambitions, and impossible ideals! For no consideration of the energy and self-sacrifice of the German soldiers can alter the fact that Germany is playing the part of an international brigand, and that, in the conduct of the war on land and sea, she has already established traditions so dishonourable and brutal that no amount of heroism can atone for them. What is the better class of German likely to think 50 years hence as he looks back over the past, and sees the Kaiser trampling on the word of his countrymen, pledged solemnly in treaty, and reaffirmed by convention and ministerial promise? What is he likely to think as he reflects on the condition of Belgium and its people, dragged into this war for no other reason than that they preferred their political freedom to material advantage, and fidelity to the word that they, too, had pledged in the treaties that guaranteed them their neutrality and independence? And what, again, is he likely to think of the conduct of the German naval authorities who, after sustaining reverses,



abandon legitimate warfare on the sea to attack passenger boats, and even hospital ships?

Germany is no doubt relying on the success of her arms to minimize the effects of these outrages on the decencies of civilized warfare; and if, by any mischance, she were to come out of this war successful, much will be forgiven her by those who have never really risen above the conviction that might is right. And there are many such folk in the world, though they are not as numerous as Germany thinks. The heart of the world is after all soundly moral. Civilized people believe in world-right far more than in world-might; and, though arrogance may be endured for a time through the weakness or fear of its victims, it breeds lasting feelings of resentment in the heart of man.

From the very commencement of this war the German army leaders threw to the winds such high considerations as honour, humanity, and fair play. They made it clear to the world that they were going to act up to the convictions of Treitschke, that they were a law unto themselves, that the soldier must crush every feeling of humanity, and that success must be attained by any means, fair or foul, just as it is attained in the struggle for existence in the animal world. If it had become clear to



Germany that the policy of frightfulness was an undoubted success, there is every reason to believe that she would have stopped at no atrocity. She will not be restrained by any considerations of humanity. The only way to restrain her is to show that frightfulness does not pay. And this can only be done if the decent opinion and prejudices of civilization are effectively organized against her. What the world wants is an international court of arbitration powerful enough by reason of the force it can command to keep national individualism within due bounds; and, if we do not get it in the near future, then, in one very important respect, this war will have been fought in vain.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE NEED OF THE HOUR



THE German people are wonderfully well organized for purposes of war. This is only to be expected, for Germany has been prussianized in the last 50 years, and Prussia's chief industry has for long been war. It is only now that the nations of Europe, and the world at large, are beginning to realize the full extent of Germany's material and physical resources, and many economists have yet to learn that a nation that is determined to live on its own labour, and produce what it wants within its own confines, is not beaten even if it should lose all its money and all its outside trade. The people who cannot do without money in this world are those who are dependent on others for supplying their wants; and this is true of nations as well as individuals. Those who do their own work can get along with very simple finance. Germany's oceanic trade has ceased, and all



her ships, except a few in the Baltic, are shut up in German ports, or interned elsewhere. If there is any commodity Germany cannot produce which is indispensable for the manufacture of weapons and explosives, she will suffer, provided she cannot find a substitute; and it will become increasingly difficult for her to supply the needs of her vast armies on all fronts, especially as our submarines are now sinking her ships in the Baltic Sea. But if Germany can produce what she wants within her own territory, then you may destroy her commerce, and shatter her financial credit in the outside world, but she will still go on fighting, and may still go on as long as she has men to fight with. There has been far too much talk about crushing Germany by reducing her to a condition of financial bankruptcy. It is true that you may force a nation to alter its economic system by crippling its trade and finance; but if it can live of its own, and is willing and able to do all its work independent of the outside world, you will only beat it by capturing or destroying its armies.

When it comes to a struggle such as the one in which we are now engaged, the ordinary maxims of political economy do not apply, and it is just as well to face this fact and all that it means at once. One thing it



means is this, that if Great Britain is dependent upon the outside world for many of her commodities, and Germany is self-sufficing, then, despite all that British gold can do, and despite all that the British fleet can do, Germany will hold out until the last British sovereign is spent, provided she has men enough left to fight with. Money is, after after all, only a universal means of exchange; behind that are the real sources of wealth: the labour, material, industrial leaders, and the will to conquer. Germany has the labour, the leaders, and the will to conquer. If she has also the cotton, and the copper, or suitable substitutes, then the issue of the struggle will depend upon the number and efficiency of the men that either side can put into the field and keep there.

It is precisely for this reason that the advent of Bulgaria on the side of the central powers has made the position a much more serious one for the Allies. The sudden accession of a force of 300,000 men at a critical stage of the war is of enormous importance. For, although there are great reserves of men in the British Empire and Russia to draw upon, it is impossible to equip them at once and make them efficient fighters, and much mischief may be done before the Allies have time to cope with the additional forces



at the disposal of the enemy. If Greece and Roumania could make up their minds to come in on the side of the Allies Bulgaria's decision might speedily turn out to be a blessing in disguise. But they are probably thinking as hard about the Russian retreat as Bulgaria has done, and, until the prestige lost there and in the Dardanelles has been recovered, it is not likely that they will care to declare themselves openly against Germany. The instinct of self-preservation is strong, and so is the influence of German dynastic sympathies. But the present inconvenient situation would not have arisen if the military forces of Russia and Great Britain had been organized in anything like the same thorough-going way as those of Germany. It is easy to be wise after the event, and see this now, and it is unfair to indulge in wholesale recriminations. Victory has not come as soon as the Allies thought it would, and there are many reasons why. Great Britain is a naval, not a military, power, and Russia was not prepared for war; very few people knew that Germany was as strong as she is; still fewer believed that it would be necessary for Great Britain and Russia to draw upon their reserves to the utmost limit in order to defeat the Central Powers; the fighting strength of Turkey was altogether under-



rated, because of her failure in the Balkan war; and too much reliance was placed upon the strength of the Panslavist movement in Austria-Hungary and the Balkan states.

But the gravity of the situation is sufficiently apparent now; and, if Germany and Austria should achieve any further successes, the prestige of the Allies will so far be impaired that wavering states will be inclined to range themselves on the side where they think safety lies. At present the issue is hanging in the balance, though the reserve of strength is far greater on the side of the Allies than on that of the Central Powers. Great Britain has right on her side, and strength in reserve. Germany entered the war with a confession of wrong-doing, but her strength was organized with marvellous efficiency from the beginning. One thing, and one only, now stands between the Allies and success: the want of a thorough-going and effective organization of all their resources. If Germany is to be conquered, if right is to prevail over might, then the government of Great Britain must organize the forces of the United Kingdom and the Empire far more effectively than they have done hitherto, and they must do it speedily. Never had nation a greater or nobler cause for taking up arms; freedom, honour, the



integrity of the Empire, the continuity of civilization are at stake. Time after time we have been told this by our leaders, and there is every reason to believe that it is true. Much has been done by Great Britain and the Empire—far more than most people thought would be necessary at the outbreak of the war. The British navy has fully maintained the traditions of the past, and the imperial armies have done bravely in Africa, Flanders, and the Dardanelles; but more men are needed, and the question of the hour is: How are they to be raised, organized, and equipped efficiently and speedily? This is not the place to conduct an inquiry into the relative merits of voluntary and compulsory service. The question of the adoption of the one or the other is a political question, and will be decided on grounds of expediency. The only people qualified to express an authoritative opinion are the cabinet ministers in the governments of the United Kingdom and the Dominions. With them lies the responsibility, and their responsibility is great! If the authority of international law is to be vindicated; if the peace of Europe and the world is to be established on more enduring foundations, then forces stronger than those of the Central Powers must be raised, organized, and equipped without



delay. Will the democratic governments of the empire rise to the greatness of the occasion? If not, then once more in the history of the world, democracy, the highest form of human government, will have proved itself unequal to the demands made upon it in the hour of danger. Germany will emerge from the struggle unbeaten, and there will be military discipline enough for a hundred years to come.

*THE END*



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