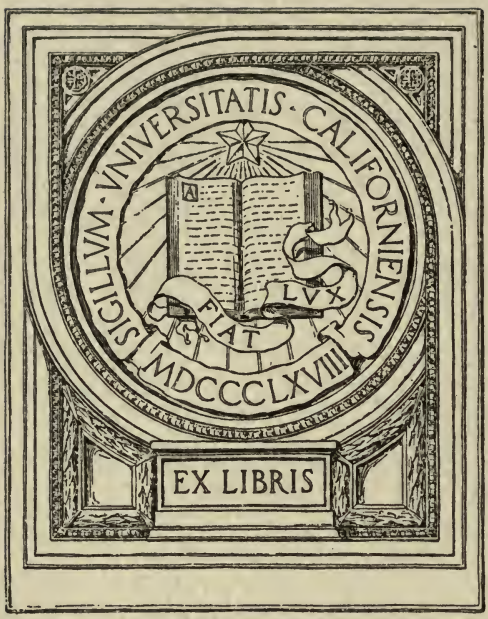
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BRITAIN'S DEADLY PERIL

GERMAN SPIES IN ENGLAND

An Exposure : By William Le Queux

(60th THOUSAND) 1/- Net

What Great Men Think

THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON says :—

"Your new book deserves the serious attention of the authorities, as it vividly depicts a very grave national peril."

THE EARL OF HALSBURY says :—

"The public has not yet appreciated the extent to which Germany has expended money and pains in spying. Your book will help to make it known."

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH says :—

"Your book is most instructive. The national democratic movement aroused by the war should be employed to expiate all hostile aliens, from the highest to the lowest."

VISCOUNT GALWAY says :—

"Your book is most interesting. I sincerely hope it will cause more attention to be paid to the danger to England from German spies."

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD says :—

"I am glad attention is being so prominently drawn to this most important subject."

LORD LEITH OF FYVIE says :—

"Your book is most serviceable. The Emperor William's speech shows how treacherously brutal is his madness for world power, and it opens the eyes of all Americans who are inclined to admire the Emperor. It shows his intention to run the elections and to boss the United States. I hope you will be able to demonstrate who are the degenerates who are betraying their country by active sympathy and assistance to the enemy."

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THE DAILY TELEGRAPH says :—

"The discovery of the German Spy system has, we believe, been made in time, and Mr. Le Queux must take his share in the credit of the discovery. His self-sacrificing energy is vindicated to the world. The stories which he tells will come as an alarming revelation to the public."

THE GLOBE says :—

"The audacity of some German agents in England, as revealed by Mr. Le Queux, is only equalled by their enterprise. Mr. Le Queux emphasises the point that it is those rich Germans of the Schulenberg type, for whom some one in our Government or administration seems to have so unwholesome a tenderness, who are the most dangerous. There are many astonishing statements in this most amazing book."

THE PALL MALL GAZETTE says :—

"Mr. Le Queux has devoted special attention to German Spies, and his book will be read with much interest."

THE EVENING STANDARD says :—

"Mr. Le Queux has here written on Spies and spying, as sensational a book as any of his romances. Indeed, it may be questioned whether Mr. Le Queux would have gone the length of introducing into a fictional plot so extraordinary a chapter as that in which he reports one of the Kaiser's speeches."

THE SCOTSMAN says :—

"Mr. Le Queux gives a résumé of espionage methods. He goes over the recent Spy convictions, and describes a considerable number of other cases, unpunished, which have come under his own observation. He has certainly laboured hard to impress the danger of the German system of spying on the mind of the British public, and gives several instances of the ease with which communication with Germany can still be carried out."

BRITAIN'S DEADLY PERIL

Are we Told the Truth?

BY

WILLIAM LE QUEUX

AUTHOR OF "GERMAN SPIES IN ENGLAND"

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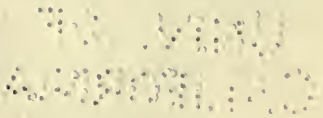

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FOREWORD

THE UNKNOWN TO-MORROW

THE following pages—written partly as a sequel to my book "German Spies in England," which has met with such wide popular favour—are, I desire to assure the reader, inspired solely by a stern spirit of patriotism.

This is not a book of "scaremongerings," but of plain, hard, indisputable facts.

It is a demand for the truth to be told, and a warning that, by the present policy of secrecy and shuffle, a distinct feeling of distrust has been aroused, and is growing more and more apparent. No sane man will, of course, ask for any facts concerning the country's resources or its intentions, or indeed any information upon a single point which, in the remotest way, could be of any advantage to the barbaric hordes who are ready to sweep upon us.

But what the British people to-day demand is a sound and definite pronouncement which will take them, to a certain extent, into the confidence of the Government—as apart from the War Office, against which no single word of criticism should be raised—and at the same time deal effectively with certain matters which, being little short of public scandals, have irritated and inflamed public opinion at an hour when every man in our Empire should

put forth his whole strength for his God, his King, and his country.

Germany is facing the present situation with a sound, businesslike policy, without any vacillation, or any attempt to shift responsibility from one Department of the State to another. Are we doing the same ?

What rule or method can be discerned, for example, in a system which allows news to appear in the papers in Scotland which is suppressed in the newspapers in England ? Why, indeed, should one paper in England be permitted to print facts, and another, published half a mile away, be debarred from printing the self-same words ?

The public—who, since August 4th last, are no longer school-children under the Head-Mastership of the Prime-Minister-for-the-Time-Being—are now wondering what all this curious censorship means, and for what reason such an unreliable institution—an institution not without its own scandals, and employing a thousand persons of varying ideas and warped notions—should have been established. They can quite understand the urgent necessity of preventing a horde of war correspondents, at the front, sending home all sorts of details regarding our movements and intentions, but they cannot understand why a Government offer of £100 reward, published on placards all over Scotland for information regarding secret bases of petrol, should be forbidden to be even mentioned in England.

They cannot understand why the Admiralty should issue a notice warning the public that German spies, posing as British officers, are visiting Government factories while at the same time the Under-Secretary for War declares that all enemy aliens are known, and are constantly under police

surveillance. They cannot understand either why, in face of the great imports of foodstuffs, and the patriotic movement on the part of Canada and our Overseas Dominions concerning our wheat supply, prices should have been allowed to increase so alarmingly, and unscrupulous merchants should be permitted to exploit the poor as they have done. They are mystified by the shifty shuttlecock policy which is being pursued towards the question of enemy aliens, and the marked disinclination of the authorities to make even the most superficial inquiry regarding cases of suspected espionage, notwithstanding the fact that German spies have actually been recognised among us by refugees from Antwerp and other Belgian cities.

The truth, which cannot be disguised, is that by the Government's present policy, and the amusing vagaries of its Press Censorship, the public are daily growing more and more apathetic concerning the war. While, on the one hand, we see recruiting appeals in all the clever guises of smart modern advertising, yet on the other, by the action of the authorities themselves, the man-in-the-street is being soothed into the belief that all goes well, and that, in consequence, no more men are needed and nobody need worry further.

We are told by many newspapers that Germany is at the end of her tether: that food supplies are fast giving out, that she has lost millions of men, that her people are frantic, that a "Stop the War" party has already arisen in Berlin, and that the offensive on the eastern frontier is broken. At home, the authorities would have us believe that there is no possibility of invasion, that German submarines are "pirates"—poor consolation indeed—that all alien enemies are really a deserving

hardworking class of dear good people, and that there is no spy-peril. A year ago the British public would, perhaps, have believed all this. To-day they refuse to do so. Why they do not, I have here attempted to set out; I have tried to reveal something of the perils which beset our nation, and to urge the reader to pause and reflect for himself. Every word I have written in this book, though I have been fearless and unsparing in my criticism, has been written with an honest and patriotic intention, for I feel that it is my duty, as an Englishman, in these days of national peril to take up my pen —without political bias—solely for the public good.

I ask the reader to inquire for himself, to ascertain how cleverly Germany has hoodwinked us, and to fix the blame upon those who wilfully, and for political reasons, closed their eyes to the truth. I would ask the reader to remember the formation in Germany—under the guidance of the Kaiser—of the Society for the Promotion of Better Relations between Germany and England, and how the Kaiser appointed, as president, a certain Herr von Holleben. I would further ask the reader to remember my modest effort to dispel the pretty illusion placed before the British public by exposing, in *The Daily Telegraph*, in March 1912, the fact that this very Herr von Holleben, posing as a champion of peace, was actually the secret emissary sent by the Kaiser to the United States in 1910, with orders to make an anti-English press propaganda in that country! And a week after my exposure the Emperor was compelled to dismiss him from his post.

Too long has dust been thrown in our eyes, both abroad and at home.

Let every Briton fighting for his country, and

working for his country's good, remember that even though there be a political truce to-day, yet the Day of Awakening must dawn sooner or later. On that day, with the conscience of the country fully stirred, the harmless—but to-day powerless—voter will have something bitter and poignant to say when he pays the bill. He will then recollect some hard facts, and ask himself many plain questions. He will put to himself calmly the problem whether the present German hatred of England is not mainly due to the weak shuffling sentimentalism and opportunism of Germanophils in high places. And he will then search out Britain's betrayers, and place them in the pillory.

Assuredly, when the time comes, all these things —and many more—will be remembered. And the dawn of the Unknown To-morrow will, I feel assured, bring with it many astounding and drastic changes.

WILLIAM LE QUEUX.

DEVONSHIRE CLUB, S.W
April 1915.

BRITAIN'S DEADLY PERIL

CHAPTER I

THE PERIL OF "MUDDLING THROUGH"

HAS Britain, in the course of her long history, ever been prepared for a great war? I do not believe she has; she certainly was not ready last August, when the Kaiser launched his thunderbolt upon the world.

Perhaps, paradoxical as it may seem, this perpetual unreadiness may be, in a sense, part of Britain's strength.

We are a people slow of speech, and slow to anger. It takes much—very much—to rouse the British nation to put forth its full strength. "Beware of the wrath of the man slow to anger" is a useful working maxim, and it may be that the difficulty of arousing England is, in some degree, a measure of her terrible power once she is awakened.

Twice or thrice, at least, within living memory we have been caught all unready when a great crisis burst upon us—in the Crimea, in South Africa, and now in the greatest world-conflict ever seen. Hitherto, thanks to the amazing genius for improvisation which is characteristic of our race, we have "muddled through" somehow, often sorely

smitten, sorely checked, but roused by reverses to further and greater efforts.

The bulldog tenacity that has ever been our salvation has been aroused in time, and we have passed successfully through ordeals which might have broken the spirit and crushed the resistance of nations whose mental and physical fibre was less high and less enduring.

We have "muddled through" in the past: shall we "muddle through" again? It is the merest truism—patent to all the world—that when Germany declared war, we were quite unready for a contest. For years the nation had turned a deaf ear to all warnings. The noble efforts of the late Lord Roberts, who gave the last years of his illustrious life—despite disappointments, and the rebuffs of people in high places who ought to have known—nay, who did know—that his words were literally true, passed unheeded.

Lord Roberts, the greatest soldier of the Victorian era, a man wise in war, and of the most transcendent sincerity, was snubbed and almost insulted, inside and outside the House of Commons, by a parcel of upstarts who, in knowledge and experience of the world and of the subject, were not fit to black his boots. "An alarmist and scaremonger" was perhaps the least offensive name that these worthies could find for him: and it was plainly hinted that he was an old man in his dotage. Lulled into an unshakable complacency by the smooth assurances of placeholders in comfortable jobs, the nation remained serenely asleep, and never was a country less ready for the storm that burst upon us last August. I had, in my writings—"The Invasion of England" and other works—also endeavoured to awaken the public; but if they would not listen to

"Bobs," it was hardly surprising that they jeered at me.

I am speaking of the nation as a whole. To their eternal honour let it be said that there were nevertheless some who, for years, had foreseen the danger, and had done what lay in their power to meet it. Foremost among these we must place Mr. Winston Churchill, and the group of brilliant officers who are now the chiefs of the British Army on the Continent. To them, at least, I hope history will do full justice. It was no mere coincidence that just before the outbreak of war our great fleet—the mightiest Armada that the world has ever seen—was assembled at Spithead, ready, to the last shell and the last man, for any eventuality.

It was no mere coincidence that the magnificent First Division at Aldershot, trained to the minute by men who knew their business, were engaged when war broke out in singularly appropriate "mobilisation exercises." All honour to the men who foresaw the world-peril, and did their utmost to make our pitiably insufficient forces ready, as far as fitness and organisation could make them ready, for the great Day when their courage and endurance were to be so severely tested.

But when all this is said and admitted, it is clear that our safety, in the early days of the war, hung by a hair. Afloat, of course, we were more than a match for anything Germany could do, and our Fleet has locked our enemy in with a strangling grip that we hope is slowly choking out her industrial and commercial life. Ashore, however, our position was perilous in the extreme. Men's hair whitened visibly during those awful days when the tiny British Army, fighting heroically every step of the way against overwhelming odds, was driven ever

back and back until, on the banks of the Marne, it suddenly turned at bay and, by sheer matchless valour, hurled the legions of the Kaiser back to ruin and defeat. The retreat was stayed, the enemy was checked and driven back, but the margin by which disaster was averted and turned into triumph was so narrow that nothing but the most superb heroism on the part of our gallant lads could have saved the situation. We had neglected all warnings, and we narrowly escaped paying an appalling price in the destruction of the flower of the British Army. With insufficient forces, we had again " muddled through " by the dogged valour of the British private.

To-day we are engaged in " muddling through " on a scale unexampled in our history. The Government have taken power to raise the British Army to a total of three million men. In our leisurely way we have begun to make new armies in the face of an enemy who for fifty years has been training every man to arms, in the face of an enemy who for ten or fifteen years at least has been steadily, openly, and avowedly preparing for the Day when he could venture, with some prospect of success, to challenge the sea supremacy by which we live, and move, and have our being, and lay our great Empire in the dust.

We neglected all warnings ; we calmly ignored our enemy's avowed intentions ; we closed our eyes and jeered at all those who told the truth ; we deliberately, and of choice, elected to wait until war was upon us to begin our usual process of " muddling through." Truly we are an amazing people ! Yet we should remember that the days when one Englishman was better than ten foreigners have passed for ever.

Naturally, our preference for waiting till the battle opened before we began to train for the fight led us into some of the most amazing muddles that even our military history can boast of. When the tocsin of war rang out, our young men poured to the colours from every town and village in the country. Everybody but the War Office expected it. The natural result followed: recruiting offices were simply "snowed under" with men, and for weeks we saw the most amazing chaos. The flood of men could neither be equipped nor housed, nor trained, and confusion reigned supreme. We had an endless series of scandals at camps, into which I do not propose to enter: probably, with all the goodwill in the world, they were unavoidable. Still the flood of men poured in. The War Office grew desperate. It was, clearly, beyond the capacity of the organisation to handle the mass of recruits, and then the War Office committed perhaps its greatest blunder. Unable to accept more men, it raised the physical standard for recruits. No one seems to have conceived the idea that it would have been better to take the names of the men and call them up as they were needed. Naturally the public seized upon the idea that enough men had been obtained, and there was an instant slump in recruiting which, despite the most strenuous of advertising campaigns—carried out on the methods of a vendor of patent medicines—has, unfortunately, not yet been overcome.

Following, came a period of unexampled chaos at the training-centres. Badly lodged, badly fed, clothed in ragged odds and ends of "uniforms," without rifles or bayonets, it is simply a marvel that the men stuck to their duty, and it is surely a glowing testimony to their genuine patriotism. I do not

wish to rake up old scandals, and I am not going to indulge in carping criticism of the authorities because they were not able to handle matters with absolute smoothness when, each week, they were getting very nearly a year's normal supply of recruits. Confusion and chaos were bound to be, and I think the men—on the whole—realised the difficulties, and made the best of a very trying situation. But they were Britons! My object is simply to show how serious was our peril through our unpreparedness. If our enemy, in that time of preparation, could have struck a blow directly at us, we must, inevitably, have gone under in utter ruin. Happily, our star was in the ascendant. The magnificent heroism of Belgium, the noble recovery of the French nation after their first disastrous surprise, the unexampled valour of our Army, and the silent pressure of the Navy, saved us from the peril that encompassed us. Once again we had "muddled through" perhaps the worst part of our task.

No one can yet say that we are safe. This war is very far indeed from being won, for there is yet much to do, and many grave perils still threaten us. It is, perhaps, small consolation to know that most of the perils we brought upon ourselves by our persistent and foolish refusal to face plain and obvious facts: by our toleration of so-called statesmen who, fascinated by the Kaiser's glib talk, came very near to betraying England by their refusal to tell the country the truth, or even, without telling the country, to make adequate preparations to meet a danger which had been foreseen by every Chancellory in Europe for years past. It can never be said that we were not warned, plainly and unmistakably. The report of the amazing speech

of the Kaiser, which I have recorded elsewhere, I placed in the hands of the British Secret Service as early as 1908, and the fact that it had been delivered was soon abundantly verified by confidential inquiries in official circles in Berlin. Yet, with the knowledge of that speech before them, Ministers could still be found to assure us that Germany was our firm and devoted friend!

The Kaiser, in the course of the secret speech in question, openly outlined his policy and said:

"Our plans have been most carefully laid and prepared by our General Staff. Preparations have been made to convey at a word a German army of invasion of a strength able to cope with any and all the troops that Great Britain can muster against us. It is too early yet to fix the exact date when the blow shall be struck, but I will say this: that we shall strike as soon as I have a sufficiently large fleet of Zeppelins at my disposal. I have given orders for the hurried construction of more airships of the improved Zeppelin type, and when these are ready we shall destroy England's North Sea, Channel, and Atlantic fleets, after which nothing on earth can prevent the landing of our army on British soil and its triumphal march to London.

"You will desire to know how the outbreak of hostilities will be brought about. I can assure you on this point. Certainly we shall not have to go far to find a just cause for war. My army of spies, scattered over Great Britain and France, as it is over North and South America, as well as all the other parts of the world where German interests may come to a clash with a foreign Power, will take good care of that. I have issued already some time since secret orders that will at the proper moment accomplish what we desire.

"I shall not rest and be satisfied until all the countries and territories that once were German, or

where greater numbers of my former subjects now live, have become a part of the great mother country, acknowledging me as their supreme lord in war and peace. Even now I rule supreme in the United States, where almost one-half of the population is either of German birth or of German descent, and where three million German voters do my bidding at the Presidential elections. No American Administration could remain in power against the will of the German voters, who . . . control the destinies of the vast Republic beyond the sea.

"I have secured a strong foothold for Germany in the Near East, and when the Turkish 'pilaf' pie will be partitioned, Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine—in short, the overland route to India—will become our property. But to obtain this we must first crush England and France."

And, in the face of those words, we still went on money-grubbing and pleasure-seeking!

If ever the British Empire, following other great Empires of the past, plunges downward to rack and ruin, we may rest assured that the reason will be our reliance on our ancient and stereotyped policy of "muddling through."

I am glad to think that in the conduct of the present campaign we have been spared those scandals of the baser type which, in the past, have been such an unsavoury feature of almost every great war in which we have been engaged. Minor instances of fraud and peculation, of supplying doubtful food, etc., have no doubt occurred. Human nature being what it is, it could hardly be expected that we could raise, train, equip, and supply an army numbered by millions without some unscrupulous and unpatriotic individuals seizing the opportunity to line their pockets by unlawful means.

We hear occasional stories of huts unfit for human habitation, of food in camp hardly fit for human consumption. On the whole, however, it is cordially agreed—and it is only fair to say—that there has been an entire absence of the shocking scandals of the type which revolted the nation during the Crimean campaign. Much has been said about the War Office arrangement with Mr. Meyer for the purchase of timber. But the main allegation, even in this case, is that the War Office made an exceedingly bad and foolish bargain, and Mr. Meyer an exceedingly good one. Indeed it is not even suggested that the transaction involved anything in the nature of fraud. It seems rather to be a plea that the purely commercial side of war would be infinitely better conducted by committees of able business men than by permanent officials of the War Office, who are, after all, not very commercial.

Undoubtedly this is true. We should be spared a good deal of the muddling and waste involved in our wars if, on the outbreak of hostilities, the War Office promptly asked the leading business men of the community to form committees and take over and manage for the benefit of the nation the purely commercial branches of the work. Yet I suppose, under our system of government, such an obvious common-sense procedure as this could hardly be hoped for. We continue to leave vast commercial undertakings in the hands of the men who are not bred in business, with the result that money is wasted by millions, and so are lucky if we are not swindled on a gigantic scale by the unscrupulous contractors. It is usually in an army's food and clothing that scandals of this nature are revealed, and it is only just to the War Office to say that in

this campaign, for once, food has been good and clothing fair.

Most of our muddling, so far, has been of a nature tending to prolong the duration of the war. Our persistent policy of unreadiness has simply meant that for four, five, or six long months we have not been ready to take the field with the forces imperatively necessary if the Germans are to be hurled, neck and crop, out of Belgium and France across the Rhine, and their country finally occupied and subjugated.

Already another new and graver peril is threatening us—the peril of a premature and inconclusive peace. Already the voice of the pacifist—that strangely constituted being to whom the person of the enemy is always sacred—is being heard in the land. We heard it in the Boer War from the writers and speakers paid by Germany. Already the plea is going up that Germany must not be " crushed "—that Germany, who has made Belgium a howling wilderness, who has massacred men, women, and even little children, in sheer cold-blooded lust, shall be treated with the mild consideration we extend to a brave and honourable opponent. Sure it is, therefore, that if Britain retires from this war with her avowed purpose unfulfilled, we shall have been guilty of muddling compared with which the worst we have ever done in the past will be the merest triviality.

If this war has proved one thing more clearly than another, it has proved that the German is utterly and absolutely unfit to exercise power, that he is restrained by no moral consideration from perpetuating the most shocking abominations in pursuit of his aims, that the most sacred obligations are as dust in the balance when they conflict with

his supposed interests. It has proved too, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that England is the real object of Germany's foaming hate. We are the enemy! France and Russia are merely incidental foes. It is England that stands between Germany and the realisation of her insane dream of world dominion, and unless Great Britain to-day completes, with British thoroughness, the task to which she has set her hand, this generation, and the generations that are to come, will never be freed from the blighting shadow of Teutonic megalomania. It is quite conceivable that a peace which would be satisfactory to Russia and France would be profoundly unsatisfactory to us. Happily, the Allies are solemnly bound to make peace jointly or not at all, and I trust there will be no wavering on this point. For us there is but one line of safety: the Germanic power for mischief must be finally and irretrievably broken before Britain consents to sheathe the sword.

Against the prosecution of the war to its final and crushing end, the bleating pacifists are already beginning to raise their puny voices. I am not going to give these gentlemen the free advertisement that their hearts delight in by mentioning them by name: it is not my desire to assist, in the slightest degree, their pestilential activity. They form one of those insignificant minorities who are inherently and essentially unpatriotic. Their own country is invariably wrong, and other countries are invariably right. To-day they are bleating, in the few unimportant journals willing to publish their extraordinary views, that Germany ought to be spared the vengeance called for by her shameful neglect of all the laws of God and man.

Is there a reader of these lines who will heed them? Surely not.

Burke said it was impossible to draw up an indictment against a nation: Germany has given him the lie. Our pro-German apologists and pacifists are fond of laying the blame of every German atrocity, upon the shoulders of that mysterious individual—the "Prussian militarist." I reply—and my words are borne out by official evidence published in my recent book "German Atrocities"—that the most shameful and brutal deeds of the German Army, which, be it remembered, is the German people in arms, are cordially approved by the mass of that degenerate nation. The appalling record of German crime in Belgium, the entire policy of "frightfulness" by land and sea, the murder of women and children at Scarborough, the sack of Aerschot and of Louvain, the massacre of seven hundred men, women, and children in Dinant, the piratical exploits of the German submarines, are all hailed throughout Germany with shrieks of hysterical glee. And why? Because it is recognised that, in the long run and in the ultimate aim, they are a part and parcel of a policy which has for its end the destruction of our own beloved Empire. Hatred of Britain—the one foe—has been, for years, the mainspring that has driven the German machine. The Germans do not hate the French, they do not hate the Russians, they do not even hate the "beastly Belgians," whose country they have laid waste with fire and sword. The half-crazed Lissauer shrieks aloud that Germans "have but one hate, and one alone—England," and the mass of the German people applaud him to the echo.

Very well, let us accept, as we do accept, the situation. Are we going to neglect the plainest and most obvious warning ever given to a nation,

and permit ourselves to muddle into a peace that would be no peace, but merely a truce in which Germany would bend her every energy to the preparation of another bitter war of revenge?

Here lies one of the gravest perils by which our country is to-day faced, and it is a peril immensely exaggerated by the foolish peace-talk in which a section of malevolent busybodies are already indulging. It is as certain as the rising of to-morrow's sun that, when this war is over, Germany would, if the power were left within her, embark at once on a new campaign of revenge. We have seen how, for forty-five long years, the French have cherished in their hearts the hope of recovering the fair provinces wrested from them in the war of 1870–1871. And the French, be it remembered, are not a nation capable of nourishing a long-continued national hatred. Generous, proud, and intensely patriotic they are; malicious and revengeful they emphatically are not. As patriotic in their own way as the French, the Germans have shown themselves capable of a paroxysm of national hatred to which history offers no parallel.

They have realised, with a sure instinct, that Britain, and Britain alone, has stood in the way of the realisation of their grandiose scheme of world-dominion, and it is certain that for long years to come, possibly for centuries, they will, if we give them the opportunity, plot our downfall and overthrow us. Are we to muddle the business of making peace as we muddled the preparations for war? If we do we shall, assuredly, deserve the worst fate that can be reserved for a nation which deliberately shuts its eyes to the logic of plain and demonstrable fact.

Germany can never be adequately punished for

the crimes against God and man which she has committed in Belgium and France. The ancient law of "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is the only one under which adequate punishment could be meted out, and whatever happens we know that the soldiers of the Allies will never be guilty of the unspeakable calendar of pillage and arson and murder which has made the very name of "German" a byword throughout civilisation throughout all the ages that are to come. However thoroughly she is humbled to the dust, Germany will never taste the unspeakable horror that she has brought upon the helpless and unoffending victims of her fury and lust in Belgium and in parts of France. It may be that if they fall into our hands we should hang, as they deserve to be hanged, the official instigators of atrocities whose complicity could be clearly proved—though we, to-day, give valets to the Huns at Donington Hall. We cannot lay the cities of Germany in ruin, and massacre the civilian population on the approved German plan. What we can do, and ought to do, is to make sure that, at whatever cost of blood and treasure to us, Germany is deprived of any further capacity to menace the peace of the world. It is the plain and obvious duty of the Allies to see that the hateful and purely German doctrine that might is the only right shall, once and for all, be swept from the earth. It is for us to make good the noble words of Mr. Asquith—that Britain will prosecute the war to the finish. It is for us to see that there shall be no "muddling through" when the treaty of peace is finally signed in Berlin.

When the war was forced upon us, the best business brains of this country recognised that one of the surest and speediest means of securing an

efficient guarantee that Germany should not be able to injure us in the future would be a strenuous effort to capture her enormous foreign trade. Modern wars, it must be remembered, are not merely a matter of the clash of arms on the stricken field. The enormous ramifications of commercial undertakings, immeasurably greater to-day than at any time in history, mean that, in the conduct of a great campaign, economic weapons may be even more powerful than the sword of the big battalions. This unquestionable fact has been fully realised by our leading thinkers. Thoughtless people have been heard to say that, if France and Russia wish to conclude peace, England must necessarily join with them because she cannot carry on the war alone. There could be no greater mistake.

Just so long as the British Fleet holds the command of the sea, Germany's foreign trade is in the paralysing grip of an incubus which cannot be shaken off. In the meantime, all the seas of all the world are free to our ships and our commerce, and, though the volume of world-trade is necessarily diminished by the war, there remains open to British manufacturers an enormous field which has been tilled hitherto mainly by German firms.

We may now ask ourselves whether our business men are taking full advantage of this priceless opportunity offered them for building up and consolidating a commercial position which in the future, when the war is ended, will be strong enough to defy even the substantial attacks of their German competitors. I sincerely wish I could see some evidence of it. I wish I could feel that our business men of England were looking ahead, studying methods and markets, and planning the campaigns which, in the days to come, shall reach their full

fruition. But alas! they are not. We heard many empty words, when war broke out, of the war on Germany's trade, but I am very much afraid—and my view is shared by many business acquaintances—that the early enthusiasm of "what we will do" has vanished, and that when the time for decisive action comes we shall be found still relying upon the traditional but fatal policy of "muddling through" which has for so long been typical of British business as well as official methods.

We shall still, I fear, be found clinging to the antiquated and worn-out business principles and stiff conventionalities which, during the past few years, have enabled the German to oust us from markets which for centuries we have been in the habit of regarding as our own peculiar preserves. That, in view of the enormous importance of the commercial warfare of to-day, I believe to be a very real peril.

King George's famous "Wake up, England!" is a cry as necessary to-day as ever. I do not believe Germany will ever be able to pay adequate indemnity for the appalling monetary losses she has brought upon us, and if those losses are to be regained it can only be by the capture of her overseas markets, and the diversion of her overseas profits into British pockets. Shall we seize the opportunity or shall we "muddle through"?

This is not a political book, for I am no politician, and, further, to-day we have no politics—at least of the Radical and Conservative type. "Britain for the Briton" should be our battle-cry. There is one subject, however, which, even though it may appear to touch upon politics, cannot be omitted from our consideration. If the war has taught us many lessons, perhaps the greatest is its splendid

demonstration of the essential solidarity of the British Empire. We all know that the German writers have preached the doctrine that the British Empire was as ramshackle a concern as that of Austria-Hungary; that it must fall to pieces at the first shock of war. To-day the British Empire stands before the world linked together, literally, by a bond of steel. From Canada, from Australia, from India, even—despite a jarring note struck by German money—from South Africa, "the well-forged link rings true." Germany to-day is very literally face to face with the British Empire in arms, with resources in men and money to which her own swaggering Empire are relatively puny, and with, I hope and believe, a stern determination no less strong and enduring than her own. The lesson assuredly will not be lost upon her: shall we make sure that it is not lost upon us?

For some years past there has been a steadily growing opinion—stronger in the Overseas Dominions, perhaps, than here at home—that the British Empire should, in business affairs, be much more of a "family concern" than it is. Either at home, or overseas, our Empire produces practically everything which the complexity of our modern social and industrial system demands. Commerce is the very life-blood of our modern world: is it not time we took up in earnest the question of doing our international business upon terms which should place our own people, for the first time, in a position of definite advantage over the stranger? Is it not time we undertook the task of welding the Empire into a single system linked as closely by business ties as by the ties of flesh and blood and sentiment? That, I believe, will be one of the great questions which this war will leave us for solution.

In the past, Germany's chief weapon against us has been her commercial enterprise and activity. It should now be part of our business to prevent her harming us in the future, and, in the commercial field, the strongest weapon in our armoury has hitherto remained unsheathed. Shall we, in the days that are to come, do our imperial trading on a great family scale—British goods the most favoured in British markets—or shall we here again " muddle through " on a policy which gives the stranger and the enemy alien at least as friendly a welcome as we extend to our own sons?

Perhaps, in the days that are coming, that in itself will be a question upon which the future of the British Empire will depend.

CHAPTER II

THE PERIL OF EXPLOITING THE POOR

No phenomenon of the present serious situation is more remarkable, or of more urgent and vital concern to the nation, than the amazing rise in food prices which we have witnessed during the past six months. At a time when the British Navy dominates the trade routes, when the German mercantile flag has been swept from every ocean highway in the world, when the German "High Seas" fleet lies in shelter of the guns of the Kiel Canal fortifications, we have seen food prices steadily mounting, until to-day the purchasing power of the sovereign has declined to somewhere in the neighbourhood of fifteen shillings, as compared with the period immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities.

Now this is a fact of the very gravest significance, and unless the price of food falls it will inevitably be the precursor of very serious events. Matters are moving so rapidly, at the time I write, that before these lines appear in print they may well be confirmed by the logic of events. Ominous mutterings are already heard, the spectre of labour troubles has raised its ugly head, and, unless some *modus vivendi* be found, it seems more than probable that we shall witness a very serious extension of the strikes which have already begun.

The most important of our domestic commodities are wheat, flour, meat, sugar, and coal. Inquiries made by a Committee of the Cabinet have shown that, as compared with the average prices ruling in the three years before the war, the price of wheat and flour has risen by something like 66 per cent.! Sugar has increased 43 per cent., coal about 60 per cent., imported meat about 19 per cent., and British meat 12 per cent. The rise in prices is falling upon the very poor with a cruelty which can only be viewed with horror. Imagine, for a moment, the plight of the working-class family with an income of thirty shillings a week, and perhaps five or six mouths to feed. Even in normal times their lot is not to be envied: food shortage is almost inevitable. Suddenly they find that for a sovereign they can purchase only fifteen shillings' worth of food. Hunger steps in at once: the pinch of famine is felt acutely, and, thanks to the appalling price to which coal has been forced, it is aggravated by intense suffering from the cold, which ill-nurtured bodies are in no condition to resist.

I am not contending that there is any very abnormal amount of distress throughout the country, taking the working-classes as a whole. Thanks to the withdrawal of the huge numbers of men now serving in the Army, the labour market, for once in a way, finds itself rather under than overstocked, and the ratio of unemployment is undoubtedly lower than it has been for some considerable time. The better-paid artisans, whose wages are decidedly above the average at the present moment, are not suffering severely, even with the high prices now ruling. But they are exasperated, and some of them are making all kinds

of unpatriotic threats, to which I shall allude presently.

The real sufferers, and there are too many of them, are the families of the labouring classes of the lower grades, whose weekly wage is small and whose families, as a rule, are correspondingly numerous. At the best of times these people seldom achieve more than a bare existence: at the present moment they are suffering terribly. Yet all the consolation they get from the Government is the assurance that they ought to be glad they did not live in the days of the Crimean War, and the pious hope that "within a few weeks"—oh! beautifully elastic term!—prices will come down—if we, by forcing the Dardanelles, liberate the grain accumulated in the Black Sea ports. No doubt the best possible arrangements have been made towards that issue, and we all hope for a victorious end, but our immediate business is to investigate the distress among the very poor, and to check the ominous threats of labour troubles which have been freely bandied about and have even been translated into action—or inaction—which has had the effect of delaying some of the country's preparations for carrying on the war.

The average retail prices paid by the working-classes for food in eighty of the principal towns on March 9th and a year ago are compared in the following table issued by the President of the Board of Trade:

	Last Year		Now	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
Bread, per 4 lbs. . . .	0	5½	0	7¾
Butter, per lb.	1	3¾	1	4½
Jam, per lb.	0	5	0	5¾
Cheese, per lb.	0	8¾	0	10¼

	Last Year		Now	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
Bacon (streaky), per lb.	0	11	1	0
Beef, English, per lb.	0	9¾	0	11
Beef, chilled or frozen, per lb.	0	7¼	0	8¾
Mutton, English, per lb.	0	10¼	0	11¼
Mutton, frozen, per lb.	0	6¾	0	8¼
Tea, per lb.	1	6	1	9¼
Sugar, granulated, per lb.	0	2	0	3½

A few more facts. Though the matter was constantly referred to, yet we had been at war for five months before the Government could be prevailed upon to prohibit the exportation of cocoa; with what result? In December, January, and February last our exports of cocoa to neutral countries were 16,575,017 lbs., whilst for the corresponding period for 1913 the exports were but 3,584,003 lbs.! Before the war, Holland was an *exporter* of cocoa to this country; since the war she has been the principal *importer*; and there is a mass of indisputable evidence to show that nearly the whole of our exports of cocoa have found their way to Germany through this channel.

The prohibition is now removed, so we may expect that the old game of supplying the German Army with cocoa from England will begin again!

The German Army must also have tea. Let us see how we have supplied it. During the first fortnight of war, export was restricted and only 60,666 lbs. were sent out of the country, whereas for the corresponding period of the previous year 179,143 lbs. were exported. During the next three months the restrictions were removed, when no less a quantity than 15,808,628 lbs. was sent away—the greater part of it by roundabout channels to Germany—against 1,146,237 lbs. for the corre-

sponding period in 1913. After three months a modified restriction was placed upon the export of tea, but after reckoning the whole sum it is found that *during the time we have been at war we have sent abroad over* 20,000,000 *lbs. of tea,* while in the corresponding period of the previous year we sent only a little over 2,000,000 lbs. !

Now where has it gone ? In August and September last, Germany received from Holland 16,000,000 lbs. whereas in that period of 1913 she only received 1,000,000 lbs. Tea is given as a stimulant to German troops in the field, so we see how the British Government have been tricked into *actually feeding the enemy* !

And again, let us see how the poor are being exploited by the policy of those in high authority. At the outbreak of war the market price of tea was 7½*d.* per lb. As soon as exportation was allowed, the price was raised to the buyer at home to 9*d.* Then when exports were restricted, it fell to 8¼*d.* But as soon as the restrictions on exports were removed altogether, the price rose until, to-day, the very commonest leaf-tea fetches 10*d.* a lb.—a price never equalled, save in the memories of octogenarians.

Who is to blame for this fattening of our enemies at the expense of the poor ? Let the reader put this question seriously to himself.

Generally speaking, of course, prices of all articles are regulated by the ordinary laws of supply and demand ; if the supply falls or the demand increases, prices go up. But there is another factor which sometimes comes into play which is very much in evidence at the present moment—the existence of "rings" of unscrupulous financiers who, with ample resources in cash and organisation, see in every

national crisis a heaven-sent opportunity of increasing their gains at the expense of the suffering millions of the poor. It is quite evident, to my mind, that something of the kind is going on to-day, as it has gone on in every great war in history. The magnates of Mark Lane and the bulls of the Chicago wheat pit care nothing for the miseries of the unknown and unheeded millions whose daily bread may be shortened by their financial jugglings. They are out to make money. It may be true, as Mr. Asquith said, that we cannot control the price of wheat in America. But, at least, it cannot be said that the price of bread to-day is due to shortage of supply. During the last six months of 1914, as compared with the last six months of 1913, there was actually a rise of 112,250 tons in the quantities of wheat, flour, and other grain equivalent imported into this country. Where, then, can be the shortage, and what explanation is there of the prevailing high prices except the fact that large quantities of food are being deliberately held off the market in order that *the price may be artificially enhanced?* This is not the work of the small men, but of the big firms who can buy largely enough, probably in combination, to control and dominate the market.

When the subject was recently debated in the House of Commons the voice of the Labour member was heard unmistakably. Mr. Toothill said bluntly that if it was impossible for the Government to prevent the prices of food being "forced up" unduly, then it remained for Labour members to request employers to meet the situation by an adequate advance in wages. That request has since been made in unmistakable terms. Mr. Clynes was even more emphatic. "Though the Labour party were

as anxious as any to keep trade going in the country," he said, "it was clear to them that the truce in industry could not be continued unless some effective relief were given in regard to the prices under discussion." In other words, the Labour "organisers" will call for strikes—perhaps hold up a large part of our war preparations—unless the employers, most of whom are making no increased profit out of the price of food, are prepared to shoulder the entire burden.

It is quite clear, to my mind, that the prices of food are being forced up by gigantic unpatriotic combines, either in this country or abroad, or both. I do not think that mere shortage of supply is sufficient to account for the extraordinary advances that have taken place. Whether the Government can take steps to defeat the wheat rings, as they did to prevent the cornering of sugar, is a question with which I am not concerned here. My purpose is merely to point out that the constant rise in food prices, brought about by gangs of unscrupulous speculators, is bringing about a condition of affairs fraught with grave peril to our beloved country.

If we turn to coal we find the scandal ten times greater than in the case of flour and meat. It is at least possible that agencies outside our own country may be playing a great part in forcing up the prices of food; they can have no effect upon the price of coal, which we produce ourselves and of which we do not import an ounce. Coal to-day is simply at famine prices. It is impossible to buy the best house coal for less than 38*s*. per ton, while the cheapest is being sold at 34*s*. per ton, and the very poor, who buy from the street-trolleys only inferior coal and in small quantities, are being fleeced

to the extent of 1*s.* 11*d.* or 2*s.* per cwt. This is an exceedingly serious matter, and it is not to be explained, even under present conditions, by the ordinary laws of supply and demand. Why should coal in a village on the banks of the Thames be actually cheaper than the corresponding quality of coal when sold in London ?

There can be only one answer—the London supply is in the hands of the coal " ring " which has compelled all the London coal merchants to come into line. So extensive and powerful is the organisation of this ring, that the small men, unless they followed the lead of the big dealers, would be immediately faced with ruin : they would not only find it difficult to obtain coal at all, but would promptly be undersold —as the Standard Oil Company undersold thousands of small competitors—until they were compelled to put up their shutters.

The big coal men, the men who make the profit—and with their ill-gotten gains will purchase Birthday honours later on—of course blame the war for everything. The railways, they say, cannot handle the coal ; so much labour has been withdrawn for the Army that production has fallen below the demand. But I am assured, on good authority, that coal bought before the war, and delivered to London depots at 16*s.* or 17*s.* per ton, is being retailed to-day at between 36*s.* and 40*s.* per ton. The big dealers know that, cost what it may, the public must have coal, and they are taking advantage of every plausible excuse the war offers them to wring from the public the very highest prices possible. " The right to exploit," in fact, is being pushed to its logical extreme in the face of the country's distress, and the worst sufferers, as usual, are the very poor, who for their pitiful half-hundred-

weights of inferior rubbish pay at a rate which would be ample for the finest coal that could grace the grate of a West-End drawing-room.

Can we shut our eyes to the fact that in this shameful exploiting of the very poor by the unpatriotic lie all the elements of a very serious danger? Let us not forget the noble services the working-classes of Britain are rendering to our beloved country. They have given the best and dearest of their manhood in the cause of the Empire, and it is indeed a pitiful confession of weakness, and an ironic commentary on the grandiose schemes of "social reform" with which they have been tempted of late years, if the Government cannot or will not protect them from the human leeches—the Birthday knights in the making—who suck their ill-gotten gains from those least able to protect themselves.

The Government have promised an inquiry which may, if unusual expedition is shown, make a "demonstration" with the coal-dealers just about the time the warm weather arrives. Prices will then tumble, the Government will solemnly pat itself upon the back for its successful interference, and the coal merchants, having made small or large fortunes as the case may be during the winter, will make a great virtue of reducing their demands to oblige the Government. In the meantime, the poor are being fleeced in the interests of an unscrupulous combine. Is there no peril here to our beloved country? Are we not justified in saying that the machinations of these gangs of unscrupulous capitalists are rapidly tending to produce a condition of affairs which may, at any moment, expose us to a social upheaval which would contain all the germs of an unparalleled disaster?

Let the condition of affairs in certain sections of the labour world speak in answer. I have already quoted the thinly-veiled threat of Mr. Clynes. Others have gone beyond threats and have begun a war against their country on their own account. There is an unmistakable tendency, fostered as usual by agitators of the basest class, towards action which is, in effect, helping the Germans against our brave soldiers and sailors who are enduring hardships of war such as have not been equalled since the days of the Crimea.

HOW WE SUPPLY THE GERMAN ARMY WITH FOOD

EXPORTS OF COCOA TO NEUTRAL COUNTRIES (FOR THE GERMAN MARKET)

Dec. 1, 1913, to Mar. 1, 1914	Dec. 1, 1914, to Mar. 1, 1915
3,584,003 lbs.	**16,575,017** lbs.

EXPORTS OF TEA TO NEUTRAL COUNTRIES (FOR THE GERMAN MARKET)

Dec. 1, 1913, to Mar. 1, 1914	Dec. 1, 1914, to Mar. 1, 1915
1,146,237 lbs.	**15,808,628** lbs.

As I wrote these lines, strikes on a large scale had begun on the Clyde and on the Tyne, two of our most important shipbuilding centres, where great contracts—essential to the success of our arms—are being carried on, and in the London Docks, where most of the food of London's teeming millions is handled. London dockers, to the number of some 25,000, are agitating for a rise in wages; between 5,000 and 6,000 of them have struck work at the Victoria and Albert Dock on the question, forsooth, whether they shall be engaged inside the docks, or outside. In other

words, the expeditious handling of London's sorely needed food is being jeopardised by a ridiculous squabble which one would think half a dozen capable business men could settle in five minutes. But here, as usual, the poorest are the victims of their own class.

In spite of the well-meaning but idiotic young women who have gone about distributing white feathers to men who, in their opinion, ought to have joined the Army, common-sense people will recognise that the skilled workers in many trades are just as truly fighting the battles of their country as if they were serving with the troops in Belgium or France. If every able-bodied man joined the Army to-day the nation would collapse for want of supplies to feed the fighting lines. It is not my purpose here to discuss whether the men or the masters are right in the disputes in the engineering trades. Probably the authorities have not done enough to bring home to the men the knowledge that, in executing Government work, they are in fact helping to fight the country's battles. None the less the men who strike at the present moment delay work which is absolutely essential to the safety of our country. We know from Lord Kitchener's own lips that they have done so.

Our war organisation to-day may be divided into three parts—the Navy fighting on the sea, the Army fighting on land, and the industrial army providing supplies for the other two. It must be brought home to the last named, by every device in our power, that their duties are just as important to our success as the work of their brothers on the storm-swept North Sea, or in the mud and slush and peril of the trenches in Flanders. This war is very largely a war of supplies, and our fighting

must be done not only in the far-flung battle lines, but in the factory and workshop, whose outputs are essential to the far deadlier work which we ask of the men who are heroically facing the shells and bullets of the common enemy.

Now there is no disguising the fact that the industrial army at home contains far too large a percentage of "slackers."

That is the universal testimony of men who know. There are thousands of workmen who will not keep full time, for the simple reason that they are making more money than they really need and are so lazy and unpatriotic that they will not make the extra effort which the necessities of the situation so urgently demand. What we need to-day is, above all things, determined hard work: we do not want to see our fighting forces starved for want of material caused by the shirking of the "slackers" or by unpatriotic disputes and squabbles. To-day we are fighting for our lives. The privates of the industrial army ought to realise that "slacking" or striking is just as much a criminal offence as desertion in the face of the enemy would be in the case of a soldier. It is true, as a recent writer has said, that "those who fight industrially, working long hours in a spirit of high patriotism, may not seem very heroic," but it is none the less the fact that they are fighting: they are doing the work that is essential to our national safety and welfare. Do they—at least do some of them—realise this? The following extract from *Engineering*, the well-known technical journal, shows very clearly that among certain classes of highly paid workers there is a total disregard of our national necessity which is positively appalling. As the result of a series of inquiries *Engineering* says:

"Every reply received indicates that there is slackness in many trades. Be it remembered that high wages can be earned; for relatively unskilled although somewhat arduous work, 30*s*. a day can be earned.

"Time-and-a-quarter to time-and-a-half is paid for Saturday afternoon work, and double time for Sunday work. Men could earn from £7 to £10 per week—and pay no income-tax.

"Men will work on Saturday and Sunday, when they get handsomely paid, but will absent themselves on other days or parts of days.

"The head of a firm, who has shown a splendid example in his work, and is most kindly disposed to all workers, states in his reply to us: 'Our trouble is principally with the ironworkers, especially riveters, who appear to have a definite standard of living, and who regulate their wages accordingly; they seem to aim at making £3 per week: if they can make this in four days, good and well; but if they can make it in three days, better still. . . . The average workingman of to-day does not wish to earn more money, and put by something for a 'rainy day,' but is quite content to live from hand to mouth, so long as he has as easy a time as possible."

What words are strong enough to condemn the action of such men who, safe in their homes from the perils of the serving soldier, and infinitely better paid than the man who daily risks his life in the trenches, are ready deliberately to jeopardise the safety of our Empire by taking advantage of the gravest crisis in our history to levy what is nothing less than industrial blackmail? It cannot be pretended that these men are under-paid: they can earn far more than many members of the professional classes. Just as truly as the coal and wheat "rings" are exploiting the miseries of the very

poor, so these aristocrats of the labour world are playing with the lives of their fellows and the destinies of our Empire. They are helping the enemy just as surely as the German who is fighting in his country's ranks. They are, in short, taking advantage of a national danger to demand rates of pay which, in times of safety and peace, they could not possibly secure.

For years past we have been striving to arrive at some means of settling these unhappy labour disputes which have probably done more harm to British trade than all the German competition of which we have heard so much. In every district machinery has been set up for conciliation and settlement where a settlement is sincerely desired by both parties to a dispute. And if this machinery is not set in motion at the present moment, it is because one party or the other is so blind and self-willed that it would rather jeopardise the Empire than abate a jot of its demands. Could anything be more heart-breaking to the men who are fighting and dying in the trenches ?

Whatever may be the merits of any dispute, there must be no stoppage of War Office or Admiralty work at the present moment, and if any body of men refuse at this juncture to submit their dispute to the properly organised conciliation boards, and to abide by the result, they are traitors in the fullest sense of the world. How serious the crisis is, and how grave a peril it constitutes to our country, may be judged from the fact that the Government found it necessary to appoint a special Committee to inquire into the production in engineering and shipbuilding establishments engaged in Government work. The Committee's view of the case, which I venture to think will be endorsed by

every thinking man, may be judged by the following extract from their report:

> "We are strongly of opinion that, during the present crisis, employers and workmen should under no circumstances allow their differences to result in a stoppage of work.
>
> "Whatever may be the rights of the parties at normal times, and whatever may be the methods considered necessary for the maintenance and enforcement of these rights, we think there can be no justification whatever for a resort to strikes or lockouts under present conditions, when the resulting cessation of work would prevent the production of ships, guns, equipment, stores, or other commodities required by the Government for the purposes of the war."

The Committee went on to recommend that in cases where the parties could not agree, the dispute should be referred to an impartial tribunal, and the Government accordingly appointed a special Committee to deal with any matters that might be brought before it.

I do not think it is possible to exaggerate the seriousness of the danger with which we must be threatened if these unhappy disputes are not brought to a close, and I know of no incident since the war began that has shown us up in so unfavourable a light as compared with our enemy. Whatever we may think of Germany's infamous methods; whatever views we may hold of her monstrous mistakes; whatever our opinion may be as to the final outcome of the war, we must, at least, grant to the Germans the virtue of patriotism. The German Socialists are, it is notorious, as strongly opposed to war as any people on earth. But they have, since the great struggle began, shown themselves willing to sink their personal views when the safety of the Father-

land is threatened in what, to them, is a war of aggression, deliberately undertaken by their enemies. We have heard, since the war began, a great deal of wild and foolish talk about economic distress in Germany. We have been told, simply because the German Government has wisely taken timely precautions to prevent a possible shortage of food, that the German nation is on the verge of starvation. But would Germany, who for seven years prepared for war, overlook the vital question of her food supply? Probably it is true that the industrial depression in Germany, thanks to the destruction by our Navy of her overseas trade, is very much worse than it is in England. But no one has yet suggested that the Krupp workmen are threatening to come out on strike and paralyse the defensive forces if their demands for higher wages are not instantly conceded. It is more than probable that any one who suggested such a course, even if he escaped the heavy hand of the Government, would be speedily suppressed in very rough-and-ready fashion by his own comrades. The Germans, at least, will tolerate no treachery in their midst, and unless the leaders among the English trade unionists can bring their men to a realisation of the wickedness involved in strikes at the present moment, they will assuredly forfeit every vestige of public respect and confidence.

I am not holding a brief either for the masters or the men. Let ample inquiry be made, by all means, into the subject of the dispute. If the masters raise any objection to either the sitting or the finding of the Government Commission, they deserve all the blame that naturally attaches to the strikers. The inquiry should be loyally accepted by both sides, and its findings as loyally respected.

Prima facie, men who can earn the wages mentioned in the extract from *Engineering* which I have already quoted are well off—far better off than their comrades who are doing trench duty in France, and are free from the hourly risk to which the fighting forces are exposed. There may be, however, good and valid reasons why they should be paid even better. If there are, the Government inquiry should find them out. But to stop work now, to hold up the production of the ships, guns, and materials necessary to carry on the war, is criminal, wicked, and unpatriotic in the highest degree. It is setting an evil example only too likely to be followed, and, if it is persisted in, may well be the first step of our beloved nation on the downward road which leads to utter destruction.

Mr. Archibald Hurd, a writer always well informed, has summed up the situation in the *Daily Telegraph* in the following words, which are worth quotation :

> "The recruiting movement has shown that the great industrial classes are not, as a whole, unconscious of the stake for which we are fighting—the institutions which we cherish and our freedom. Probably if the workers at home were reminded of the importance of their labours, they would speedily fall into line—if not, well, the resources of civilisation are not exhausted, and the Government should be able to ensure that not an unnecessary day, or even hour, shall be lost in pressing forward the work of equipping the new Fleet and the new Army which is essential to our salvation. The Government is exercising authority under martial law over Army and Navy; cannot it get efficient control over the industrial army ?
>
> "In France and Germany these powers exist, and

are employed. We are not less committed to the great struggle than France and Germany."

Those are wise and weighty words, and it may be that they point the way to a solution of what may become a very grave problem.

CHAPTER III

THE PERIL OF NOT DOING ENOUGH

THE vast issues raised by the war make it a matter of most imperative necessity that Great Britain and her Allies shall put forward, at the earliest possible moment, the greatest and supremest efforts of which they are capable, in order that the military power of the Austro-German alliance should be definitely and completely crushed for ever.

It must never be forgotten that the prize for which Germany is fighting is the mastership of Europe, the humbling of the power of Great Britain, and the imposition of a definitely Teutonic "Kultur" over the whole of Western civilisation. That the free and liberty-loving British peoples should ever come under the heel of the Prussian Junker spirit involves such a monstrous suppression of national thought and feeling as to be almost unbelievable. Yet, assuredly, that would be our fate and the fate of every nationality in Europe should Germany emerge victorious from this Titanic struggle she has so rashly and presumptuously provoked.

With our very existence as the ruling race at stake it is clear that our own dear country cannot afford to be sparing in her efforts. Whatever the cost; whatever the slaughter; whatever the action of our Allies may be in the future, when the terrific out-

pouring of wealth will have bled Europe white, we, at least, cannot afford to falter. For our own land, the struggle is really, and in very truth, a struggle of life and death.

If we endure and win, civilisation, as we understand it to-day, will be safe; if we lose, then Western civilisation and the British Empire will go down together in the greatest cataclysm in human history. Now are we doing everything in our power to avert the threatening peril? Moreover—and this is of greatest importance—are our Allies persuaded *that we are really making the great efforts the occasion demands*? This gives us to pause.

Let us admit we are not, and we have never pretended to be, a military nation in the sense that France, Russia, and Germany have been military nations. We have been seamen for a thousand years, and the frontiers of England are the salt waves which girdle our coasts. Seeking no territory on the Continent of Europe, and unconcerned in European disputes unless they directly —as in the present instance—threaten our national existence, our armed forces have ever been regarded as purely defensive, yet not aggressive. For our defence we have relied on our naval power; perhaps in days gone by we have assumed, rather too rashly, that we should never be called upon to take part in land-fighting on a continental scale.

Even after the present war had broken out, it was possible for the Parliamentary correspondent of a London Liberal paper to write that certain Liberal Members of the House of Commons were protesting against the sending of British troops to the Continent on the ground that they were too few in number to exercise any influence in a European war! Perish that thought for ever! I

mention this amazing contention merely to show how imperfectly the issues raised by the present conflict were appreciated in the early days of the struggle. To-day we see the establishment of the British Army raised by Parliamentary sanction to 3,000,000 men without a single protest being uttered against a figure which, had it been even hinted at, a year ago would have been received with yells of derision. Yet, in spite of that vast number, I still ask "Are we doing enough?" In other words, looking calmly at the stupendous gravity of the issues involved, is there any further effort we could possibly make to shorten the duration of the war?

For eight months German agents, armed with German gold, have been industriously propagating, in France and in Russia, the theory that those countries were, in fact, pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for England. German agents are everywhere. We were represented as holding the comfortable view that our fleet was doing all that we could reasonably be called upon to undertake; that, secure behind our sea barriers, we were simply carrying on a policy of "business as usual" with the minimum of effort and loss and the maximum of gain through our principal competitors in the world's commerce being temporarily disabled. The object of this manœuvre was plain. Germany hoped to sow the seeds of jealousy and discord, and to thrust a wedge into the solid alliance against her. Now it is, to-day, beyond all question that, to some extent at least, this manœuvre was successful. A certain proportion of people in both France and Russia, perhaps, grew restive. In the best-informed circles it was, of course, fully recognised that Britain, with her small standing Army, could

not, by any possibility, instantly fling huge forces into the field. The less well informed, influenced by the German propaganda, began to think we were too slow. This feeling began to gather strength, and it was not until M. Millerand, the French Minister for War, whom I have known for years, had actually visited England and seen the preparations that were in progress, that French opinion, fully informed by a series of capable articles in the French Press, settled down to the conviction that England was really in earnest. Unquestionably, M. Millerand rendered a most valuable service to the cause of the Allies by his outspoken declarations, and he was fully supported by the responsible leaders of French thought and opinion. The cleverly laid German plot failed, and our Allies to-day realise that we have unsheathed our sword in the deadliest earnest.

In spite of this, however, the thoughtful section of the public have been asking themselves whether, in fact, our military action is not slower than it should have been. Germany, we must remember, started this war with all the tremendous advantage secured by years of steady and patient preparation for a contest she was fully resolved to precipitate as soon as she judged the moment opportune. She lost the first trick in the game, thanks to the splendid heroism of Belgium, the unexpected rapidity of the French and Russian mobilisation, and lastly, the wholly surprising power with which Britain intervened in the fray—the pebble in the cog-wheels of the German machinery.

The end of the first stage, represented, roughly, by the driving of the Germans from the Marne to the Aisne, temporarily exhausted all the combatants, and there followed a long period of comparative

inaction, during which all the parties to the quarrel, like boxers in distress, sparred to gain their "second wind." Now just as Germany was better prepared when the first round opened, so she was, necessarily, more advanced in her preparations for the second stage. Thanks to her scheme of training, there was a very real risk that her vast masses of new levies would be ready before our own—and this has actually proved to be the case.

New troops are to-day being poured on to both the eastern and western fronts at a very rapid pace, probably more rapidly than our own. We know that it was, in great part, their new levies that inflicted the very severe reverse upon the Russians in East Prussia and undid, in a single fortnight, months of steady and patient work by our Allies. It is also probably true that Germany's immense superiority in fully trained fighting men is steadily decreasing, owing partly to the enormous losses she has sustained through her adherence to methods of attack which are hopeless in the teeth of modern weapons. But she is still very much ahead of what any one could have expected after seven months of strenuous war, and we must ask ourselves very seriously whether, by some tremendous national effort, it is not possible to expedite the raising of our forces to the very maximum of which the nation and the Empire are capable. It is not a question of cost: the cost would be as nothing as compared with the havoc wrought by the prolongation of the war. If there is anything more that we can do, we ought, emphatically, to do it. It is our business to see that at no single point in the conduct of the war are we outstripped by any effort the Germans can make.

Now it is a tolerably open secret that we are not

to-day getting the men we shall want before we can bring the war to a conclusion. Why? When our men read of the utter disregard of the spy question, of the glaring untruths told by Ministers in the House of Commons, of how we are providing German barons with valets on prison ships—comfortable liners, by the way—of the letting loose of German prisoners from internment camps, and how German officers have actually been allowed, recently, to depart from Tilbury to Holland to fight against us, is it any wonder that they hesitate to come forward to do their share? Let the reader ask himself. Are all Departments of the Government patriotic? Is it not a fact that the public are daily being misled and bamboozled? Let the reader examine the evidence and then think.

Now, though no figures as to the progress of recruiting have been published for some months, it is practically certain that we are still very far from the three million men we still assuredly require as a minimum before victory, definite and unmistakable, crowns our effort. I have not the slightest doubt that before this struggle ends we shall see practically *the entire male population* of the country called to the colours in some capacity, and unfortunately that is an aspect of the case which is certainly not yet recognised by the democracy as a whole. We have done much, it is true. We have surprised our friends and our enemies alike—perhaps we have even surprised ourselves—by what has been achieved, but on the technical side of the war, under the tremendous driving energy of Lord Kitchener, amazing progress has been made in the provision of equipment, and the latest information I have been able to obtain suggests that before long the early shortage of guns, rifles, uniforms, and other war material

will have been entirely overcome, and that we shall be experiencing a shortage, not of supplies—but alas! of men.

That day cannot be far off, and when it dawns the problem of raising men will assume an urgency of which hitherto we have had no experience. Up to now we have been content to tolerate the somewhat leisurely drift of the young men to the colours for the simple reason that we had not the facilities for training and equipping them. We cannot, and we must not, tolerate any slackness in the future. The wastage of modern war is appallingly beyond the average conception, and when our big new armies take the field, that wastage will rise to stupendous figures. It must be made good without the slightest delay by constant drafts of new, fully trained men, and when that demand rises, as it inevitably will, to a pitch of which we have hitherto had no experience, it will have to be met. Can it be met by the leisurely methods with which we have hitherto been content?

I do not think so for a moment, and I am convinced that our responsible Ministers should at once take the country fully into their confidence and tell us plainly and unmistakably what the man-in-the-street has to expect. I have so profound an admiration for the men who have voluntarily come forward in the hour of their country's need that I hope, with all my heart, their example will be followed—and followed quickly—to the full extent of our nation's needs. But I confess I am not sanguine. The recent strikes in the engineering trade on the Clyde have gone far to convince me that, even now, a very large proportion of our industrial classes do not even to-day realise the real seriousness of the position, for it is incredible that

Britons who understood that we are actually engaged in a struggle for our very existence should seriously jeopardise and delay, through a miserable industrial squabble, the supply of war material upon which the safety of our Empire might depend. The strike on the Clyde was, to me, the most evil symptom of apathy and lack of all patriotic instincts which the war has brought forth; it was, to my mind, proof conclusive that a section at least of our working-classes are entirely dead to the great national impulse by which, in the past, the British people have been so profoundly swayed. Is the Government doing enough to rekindle those impulses? Has it taken the people fully and frankly into its confidence? Above all, has it made it sufficiently clear to the masses that we are not getting the men we need, and that unless those men come forward voluntarily, some method of compulsory selection will become inevitable?

No, it has not!

We come back to the question in which, I am firmly convinced, lies the solution of many of our present difficulties—are we being told the truth about the war? Has the nation had the clear, ringing call to action that, unquestionably, it needs?

No, it has not!

I shall try to show, in the pages of this modest work, that the country has not been given the information to which it is plainly entitled respecting the actual military operations which have been accomplished. It is certainly not too much to say that the country has not been really definitely and clearly informed as to the measure of the effort it will be called upon to make in the future. I am not in the secrets of the War Office, and it is impossible to say what the policy of the Government

will be, or what trump cards they hold, ready to play them when the real crisis comes. But there certainly is an urgent and growing need for very plain speaking. I speak plainly and without fear. We should like to be assured that the recruiting problem, upon the solution of which our final success must depend, is being dealt with on broad, wise, and statesmanlike lines, and that the Government will shrink from no measure which shall ensure our absolute military efficiency. I have no doubt that Lord Kitchener has a very accurate estimate of the total number of men he proposes to put into the field before the great forward movement begins, of the probable total wastage, and of the period for which, on the present basis of recruiting, that wastage can be made good.

The country would welcome some very definite and explicit statement, either from Mr. Asquith or Lord Kitchener, as to the real position, and as to whether the Government has absolute confidence that the requirements of the military authorities can be met under the existing condition of affairs. The time is, indeed, more than ripe for some grave and solemn warning to the people if, as I believe, the effort we have made up to now, great though it has undoubtedly been, has not been sufficient. We to-day need an authoritative declaration on the subject. There is far too strong a tendency, fostered by the undue reticence of the irresponsible Press Bureau and the screeching "victories" of the newspapers, to believe that things are going as well and smoothly as we could wish; and though I would strenuously deprecate an attitude of blank pessimism, the perils which hedge around a fatuous optimism are very great.

My firm conviction, and I think my readers will

share in it, is that the great mass of public opinion is daily growing more and more apathetic towards the war, and truly that is not the mental attitude which will bring us with safety and credit through the tremendous ordeal which lies before us. The Government is not doing enough to drive home the fact that greater and still greater efforts will be required before the spectre of Prussian domination is finally laid to rest: the country at large, befogged by the newspapers, and sullenly angry at being kept in the dark to an extent hitherto unheard of, is in no mood to make the supreme sacrifices upon which final victory must depend. We are, as a result, not exercising our full strength: we are not doing enough, and our full strength will not be exerted until the Government takes the public into its confidence and tells them exactly what it requires and what it intends to have. That it would gain, rather than lose, by doing so, I have not the slightest doubt, while the gain to the world through the throwing into the scale of the solid weight of a fully aroused Britain would be simply incalculable.

While writing this, came the extraordinarily belated news of the decision of the Government to declare a strict blockade of the German coasts. It has been a matter of supreme bewilderment to every student of the war why this decision was not taken long before. Why should we have failed for so long to use the very strongest weapon which our indisputed control of the sea has placed in our hands, is one of those things which "no fellah can understand." We have been foolish enough to allow food, cotton, and certain other articles of "conditional contraband" free access to Germany, and it is beyond question that in so doing we have enormously prolonged the war. And all this, be it

remembered, at a time when Germany *was violating every law of God and man*! Assume a reversal of the prevailing conditions: would Germany have been so foolishly indulgent towards us? Would she have treated us with more consideration than she showed towards the starving population of Paris in 1871? The very fact of our long inaction in this respect adds enormously to the strong suspicion that in other directions we are not doing as much as we should. Lord Fisher is credited with the saying, "The essence of war is violence: moderation in war is imbecility. Hit first, hit hard, hit everywhere."

I think it is safe to say that in more than one direction we have displayed an imbecility of moderation which has tended to encourage the Germans in the supreme folly of imagining that they are at liberty to play fast and loose with the opinion of the civilised world. Our treatment of German spies and enemy aliens in our midst is a classic example of our contemptuous tolerance of easily removable perils, just as much as is our incredible folly in neglecting to make the fullest use of our magnificent naval resources. Thanks to our tolerance, the Germans have been freely importing food and cotton, with probably an enormous quantity of copper smuggled through in the same ships. We have paid in the blood and lives of our gallant soldiers, husbands, brothers, lovers, while the Germans have laughed at us—and not without justice—as a nation of silly dolts and imbeciles. Yet we have tardily decided upon "retaliatory measures" which we were perfectly entitled to take the instant war was declared, only under the pressure of Germany's campaign of murder and piracy at sea! Are we doing enough in other directions?

Equally belated, and equally calculated to give

the impression that we have been too slow in using our strength, is the attack upon the Dardanelles. It has long been a mystery why, in view of the tremendous results involved in such a blow at Germany's deluded ally, this attack was not made earlier. We do not know, and the Government do not enlighten us. But the delay has helped to send the price of bread to famine prices through blocking up the Russian wheat in the Black Sea ports; it has given the Turks and the Germans time to enormously strengthen the defences, and has prevented us from sending to our Russian friends that support in munitions of war of which they undoubtedly stood in need. There may, of course, have been good reasons for the delay, but if they exist, they have baffled the investigation of the most competent military and naval critics. It must never be forgotten that the reopening of the Dardanelles and the fall of Constantinople must exercise a far more potent influence on the progress of the war than, say, the relief of Antwerp—another example of singularly belated effort! It must, in fact, transform the whole position of the war and react with fatal effect through Turkey upon her Allies. Yet the war had been in progress for seven months before a serious attempt was made at what, directly Turkey joined in the war, must have been one of the primary objects of the Allies. What added price, I wonder, shall we be compelled to pay for that inexplicable delay, not merely in the increased cost of the necessaries of life at home and the expenses of the war abroad, but in the lives of our fighting men? For it must not be forgotten that a decisive blow at Turkey would do much to shorten the duration of the war. It would be a serious blow at Germany, and would be more than likely to precipitate the

entrance into the struggle, on the side of the Allies, of Italy and the wavering Balkan States. In hard cash, the war is costing us nearly a million and a half a day. We have to pay it, sooner or later. The loss of life is more serious than the loss of wealth, and there is no doubt that both must be curtailed by any successful operation against the Turks.

The Army has, beyond question, lost thousands of recruits of the very best class owing to the parsimony displayed in the matter of making provision for the dependents of men who join the fighting forces. The scale originally proposed, it will be remembered, produced an outburst of indignation, and it was very soon amended in the right direction, but when all is said and done it operates with amazing injustice. One of the most striking features of the war has been the splendid patriotism shown by men who, in social rank, are decidedly above the average standard of recruits.

Many comparatively rich men have joined the Army as privates, and the roll descends in the social scale until we come down to the day labourer. We draw no distinction between the loyalty and devotion of any of our new soldiers, but it cannot be denied that the working of the system of separate allowances is exceedingly unfair to the men of the middle classes.

Financially, the family of the working-man is frequently better off through the absence of the husband and father at the front than it has ever been before—sometimes very much better off indeed. I am not complaining of that. But when we ascend a little in the scale we find a glaring inequality. The man earning, say, £250 a year, and having a wife and one child, finds, too often, that the price he has to pay for patriotism is to leave his family

dependent upon the Government allowance of 17*s.* 6*d.* per week. Is it a matter for wonder that so many have hesitated to join? Can we praise too highly the patriotism of those who, even under such circumstances, have answered the call of duty?

The truth is that the whole system of separation allowances, framed to meet the necessity of recruits of the ordinary standard, is inelastic and unsuitable to a campaign which calls, or should call, the entire nation to arms. It is throwing a great strain on a man's loyalty to ask him to condemn his wife and family to what, in their circumstances, amounts to semi-starvation, in order that he may serve his country, particularly when he sees around him thousands of the young and healthy at theatres and picture palaces, free from any domestic ties, who persistently shut their eyes to their country's need, and whom nothing short of some measure of compulsion would bring into the ranks. I am not going to suggest that every man who joins the Army should be paid the salary he could earn in civil life, but I think we are *not doing nearly enough* for thousands of well-bred and gently nurtured women who have given up husbands and brothers in the sacred cause of freedom.

And now I come to perhaps the saddest feature of the war—the case of the men who will return to England maimed and disabled in their country's cause. That, for them, is supreme glory, though many of them would have infinitely preferred giving their lives for their country. They will come back to us in thousands, the maimed, the halt, and the blind: pitiful wrecks of glorious manhood, with no hope before them but to drag out the rest of their years in comparative or absolute helplessness. Their health and their strength

will have gone; there will be no places for them in the world where men in full health and strength fight the battle of life in the fields of commerce and industry. *Are we doing enough*—have we, indeed, begun to do anything—for these poor victims of war's fury, much more to be pitied than the gallant men who sleep for ever where they fell on the battlefields of France and Belgium?

Too often in the past it has been the shame and the reproach of Britain that she cast aside, like worn-out garments, the men who have spent their health and strength in her cause. Have we not heard of Crimean veterans dying in our workhouses? With all my heart I hope that, after the war, we shall never again be open to that reproach and shame. We must see that never again shall a great and wealthy Empire disgrace itself by condemning its crippled heroes to the undying bitterness of the workhouse during life, and the ignominy of a pauper's grave after death. Cost what it may, the future of the unhappy men "broke in our wars" must be the nation's peculiar care. I do not suggest—they themselves would not desire it—that all our wounded should become State pensioners *en masse* and live out their lives in idleness. The men who helped to fling back the Kaiser's barbaric hordes in the terrible struggle at Ypres are not the men who will seek for mere charity, even when it takes the form of a deserved reward for their heroic deeds.

Speaking broadly, the State will have the responsibility of caring for two classes of wounded men—those who are condemned to utter and lifelong disablement and those who, less seriously crippled, are yet unable to obtain employment in ordinary commercial or industrial life. As to the former

class, the duty of the State is clear: they must be suitably maintained for the rest of their lives at the State's charges. With regard to the second class, I do most sincerely hope that they will not be thrown into the world with a small wounds pension and left to sink or swim as fortune and their scattered abilities may dictate. It is for us to remember that these men have given their health and strength that we might live in safety and peace, and we shall be covering ourselves with infamy if we fail to make proper provision for them.

As I have already said, they do not want charity. They want work, and I venture to here make an earnest appeal to the public to take up the cause of these men with all its generous heart. First and foremost, such of them as are capable should be given absolute preference in Government and municipal offices, where there are thousands of posts that can be filled even by men who are partially disabled. Every employer of labour should make it his special duty to find positions for as many of these men as possible: there are many places in business houses that can be quite adequately filled by men of less than ordinary physical efficiency. Most of all, however, I hope the Government will, without delay, take up the great task of finding a way of setting these men to useful work of some kind. In the past much has been done in this direction by the various private agencies which interest themselves in the care of discharged soldiers. A war of such magnitude as the present, however, must bring in its wake a demand for work and organisation on a scale far beyond private effort; and if the disabled soldier is to be adequately cared for, only the resources of the State can be equal to the need.

Are we doing enough, I ask again, for the gallant men who have served us so well? There are those who fear that, comparatively speaking, the war has only just begun. However this may be, the tale of casualties and disablement rises day by day at a terrible pace, and there is a growing need to set on foot an organisation which, when the time comes, shall be ready to grapple at once with what will perhaps be the most terrible legacy the war can leave us.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIL OF THE CENSORSHIP

War brings into discussion many subjects upon which men differ widely in their opinions, and the present war is no exception to the general rule.

Amateur and expert alike argue on a thousand disputed points of tactics, of strategy, and of policy: it has always been so: probably it will be so for ever. But the censorship imposed by the Government, on the outbreak of war, has achieved a record.

It has earned the unanimous and unsparing condemnation of everybody. Men who have agreed on no other point shake hands upon this. For sheer, blundering ineptitude, for blind inability to appreciate the mind and temper of our countrymen, in its utter ignorance of the psychological characteristics of the nation and of the Empire, to say nothing of the rest of the world, the methods of the censorship, surely, approach very closely the limits of human capacity for failure.

When I say "the censorship" I mean, of course, the system, speaking in the broadest sense. It matters nothing whether the chief censor, for the moment, be, by the circumstance of the day, Mr. F. E. Smith or Sir Stanley Buckmaster. Both, I make no doubt, have done their difficult work to the best of their ability, and have been loyally

followed, to the best of their several abilities, by their colleagues. The faults and failures of the censorship have their roots elsewhere.

Now to avoid, at the outset, any possibility of misunderstanding, I want to make it absolutely clear that in all the numerous criticisms that have been levelled at the censorship, objection has been taken not to the *fact* that news is censored, but to the *methods* employed and to the extent to which the suppression of news has been carried.

I believe that no single newspaper in the British Isles has objected to the censorship, as such. I am quite sure that the public would very definitely condemn any demand that the censorship should be abolished. Much as we all desire to learn the full story of the war, it is obvious that to permit the indiscriminate publication of any and every story sent over the wires, would be to make the enemy a present of much information of almost priceless value. Early and accurate information is of supreme importance in war time, and certainly no Englishman worthy of the name would desire that the slightest advantage should be offered to our country's enemies by the premature publication of news which, on every military consideration, ought to be kept secret.

This is, unquestionably, the attitude of the great daily newspapers in London and the provinces, which have been the worst sufferers by the censor's eccentricities. They realise, quite clearly, the vital and imperative necessity for the suppression of information which would be of value to the enemy, and, as a matter of fact, the editors of the principal journals exercise themselves a private censorship which is quite rigid, and far more intelligently applied than the veto of the official bureau. It would surprise a good many people to learn of the vast amount

of information which, by one channel or another, reaches the offices of the great dailies long before the Press Bureau gives a sign that it has even heard of the matters in question. The great retreat from Mons is an excellent instance. It was known perfectly well, at the time, that the entire British Expeditionary Force was in a position of the gravest peril, and it is, perhaps, not too much to say that had the public possessed the same knowledge there would have been a degree of depression which would have made the " black week " of the South African War gay and cheerful by comparison, even if there had not been something very nearly approaching an actual panic.

But the secret was well and loyally kept within the walls of the newspaper offices, as I, personally, think it should have been: I do not blame the military authorities in the least for holding back the fact that the position was one of extreme gravity. Bad news comes soon enough in every war, and it would be senseless folly to create alarm by telling people of dangers which, as in this case, may in the end be averted. The public quarrel with the censorship rests on other, and totally different, grounds.

That a strict censorship should be exercised over military news which might prove of value to the enemy will be cheerfully admitted by every one. We all know, despite official assurances to the contrary, that German spies are still active in our midst, and, even now, there is—or at any rate until quite recently there was—little or no difficulty in sending information from this country to Germany. No one will cavil at any restrictions necessary to prevent the enemy anticipating our plans and movements, and if the censorship had not gone beyond this, no one would have had any reason to complain.

What may perhaps be called the classic instance of the perils of premature publication occurred during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. In those days there was no censorship, and France, in consequence, received a lesson so terrible that it is never likely to be forgotten. It is more than likely, indeed, that it is directly responsible for the merciless severity of the French censorship to-day.

A French journal published the news that MacMahon had changed the direction in which his army was marching. The news was telegraphed to England and published in the papers here. It at once came to the attention of one of the officials of the German Embassy in London, who, realising its importance, promptly cabled it to Germany. For Moltke the news was simply priceless, and the altered dispositions he promptly made resulted in MacMahon and his entire force capitulating at Metz. Truly a terrible price to pay for the single indiscretion of a French newspaper!

It is not to be denied that to some extent certain of the "smarter" of the British newspapers are responsible for the severity of the censorship in force to-day. In effect, the censorship of news in this country dates from the last war in South Africa. Some of the English journals, in their desire to secure "picture-stories," forgot that the war correspondent has very great responsibilities quite apart from the mere purveying of news.

The result was the birth of a war correspondent of an entirely new type. The older men—the friends of my youth, Forbes, Burleigh, Howard Russell, and the like—had seen and studied war in many phases: they knew war, and distinguished with a sure instinct the news that was permissible as well as interesting, from the news that was interesting but

not permissible. Their work, because of their knowledge, showed discipline and restraint, and it can be said, broadly, that they wrote nothing which would advantage the enemy in the slightest degree.

In the war in South Africa we saw a tremendous change. Many of the men sent out were simply able word-spinners, supremely innocent of military knowledge, knowing absolutely nothing of military operations, unable to judge whether a bit of news would be of value to the enemy or not. Their business was to get "word-pictures"—and they got them. In doing so they sealed the doom of the war correspondent. The feeble and inefficient censorship established at Cape Town, for want of intelligent guidance, did little or nothing to protect the Army, and the result was that valuable information, published in London, was promptly telegraphed to the Boer leaders by way of Lourenço Marques. Many skilfully planned British movements, in consequence, went hopelessly to pieces, and by the time war was over, Lord Roberts and military men generally were fully agreed that, when the next war came, it would be absolutely necessary to establish a censorship of a very drastic nature.

We see that censorship in operation to-day, but far transcending its proper function. It was established—or it should have been established—for the sole purpose of preventing the publication of news likely to be of value to the enemy. Had it stopped there, no one could have complained.

I contend that in point of fact it has, throughout the war, operated not merely to prevent the enemy getting news which it was highly desirable should be kept from him, but to suppress news which the British public—the most patriotic and level-headed public in all the world—has every right to demand.

We are not a nation of board-school children or hysterical girls. Over and over again the British public has shown that it can bear bad news with fortitude, just as it can keep its head in victory. Those of us who still remember the terrible "black week" in South Africa, with its full story of the horror of defeat at Colenso, Magersfontein, and Stormberg, remember how the only effect of the disaster was the ominous deepening of the grim British determination to "see it through": the tightening of the lips and the hardening of the jaws that meant unshakable resolve; the silent, dour, British grip on the real essentials of the situation that, once and for all, settled the fate of Kruger's ambitions.

Are Britons to-day so changed from the Britons of 1899 that they cannot bear the truth; that they cannot face disaster; that they are indeed the degenerates they have been labelled by boastful Germans? Perish the thought! Britain is not decadent; she is to-day as strong and virile as of old and her sons are proving it daily on the plains of Flanders, as they proved it when they fought the Kaiser's hordes to a standstill on the banks of the Marne during the "black week" of last autumn. Why then *should* the public be treated as puling infants spoon-fed on tiny scraps of good news when it is happily available, and left in the bliss of ignorance when things are not going quite so well?

From November 20th, 1914, up to February 17th, 1915—a period of three months of intense anxiety and strain—not one single word of news from the Commander-in-Chief of the greatest Army Britain has ever put into the field was vouchsafed to the British public. For that, of course, it is impossible to blame Sir John French. But the bare fact is

sufficient condemnation of the entirely unjustifiable methods of secrecy with which we are waging a war on which the whole future of our beloved nation and Empire depends. The public was left to imagine that the war had reached something approaching a "deadlock." The ever-mounting tale of casualties showed that, in very truth, there had been, in that silent period of three months, fighting on a scale to which this country has been a stranger for a century.

Will any one outside the Government contend that this absurd secrecy can be justified, either by military necessity or by a well-meant but, as I think, hopelessly mistaken regard for the feelings of the public ?

We are not Germans that it should be necessary to lull us into a lethargic sleep with stories of imaginary victories, or to refrain from harrowing our souls when, as must happen in all wars, things occasionally go wrong.

We want the truth, and we are entitled to have it !

I do not say that we have been deliberately told that which is not true. I believe the authorities can be acquitted of any deliberate falsification of news. But I do say, without hesitation, that much news was kept back which the country was entitled to know, and which could have been made public without the slightest prejudice to our military position. At the same time, publication has been permitted of wholly baseless stories, such as that of the great fight at La Bassée, to which I will allude later, which the authorities must have known to be unfounded.

It is not for us to criticise the policy of our gallant Allies, the French. We must leave it to them to decide how much or how little they will reveal to

their own people. I contend, with all my heart, that the British public should not have been fobbed off with the studiously—guarded French official report, with its meaningless—so far as the general public is concerned—daily recital of the capture or loss of a trench here and there, or with the chatty disquisitions of our amiable "Eye-Witness" at the British Headquarters, who manages to convey the minimum of real information in the maximum of words. It is highly interesting, I admit, to learn of that heroic soldier who brained four Germans "on his own" with a shovel; it is very interesting to read of the "nut" making his happy and elaborate war-time toilet in the open air; and we are glad to hear all about German prisoners lamenting the lack of food. But these things, and countless others of which "Eye-Witness" has told us, are not the root of the matter. We want the true story of the campaign, and the plain fact is that we do not get it, and no one pretends that we get it.

Cheerful confidence is an excellent thing in war, as well as in all other human undertakings. Blind optimism is a foolhardy absurdity; blank pessimism is about as dangerous a frame of mind as can be conceived. I am not quite sure, in my own mind, whether the methods of the censorship are best calculated to promote dangerous optimism, or the reverse, but I am perfectly certain that they are not calculated to evoke that calm courage and iron resolve, in the face of known perils, which is the best augury of victory in the long run. Probably they produce a result varying according to the temperament of the individual. One day you meet a man in the club who assures you that everything is going well and that we have the Germans "in our pocket." That is the foolishness of optimism,

produced by the story of success and the suppression of disagreeable truths.

Twenty-four hours later you meet a gloomy individual who assures you we are no nearer beating the Germans than we were three months ago. That is the depths of pessimism. Both frames of mind are derived from the "official news" which the Government thinks fit to issue.

Here and there, if you are lucky, you meet the man who realises that we are up against the biggest job the Empire has ever tackled, and that, if we are to win through, the country must be plainly told the facts and plainly warned that it is necessary to make the most strenuous exertions of which we are capable. That is the man who forms his opinions not from the practically worthless official news, but from independent study of the whole gigantic problem. And that is the only frame of mind which will enable us to win this war. It is a frame of mind which the official news vouchsafed to us is not, in the least degree, calculated to produce.

In the prosecution of a war of such magnitude as the present unhappy conflict the public feeling of a truly democratic country such as ours is of supreme importance. It is, in fact, the most valuable asset of the military authorities, and it is a condition precedent for success that the nation shall be frankly told the truth, so far as it can be told without damage to our military interests.

Mr. Bonar Law, in the House of Commons, put the case in a nutshell when he said that—

> "He had felt, from the beginning of the war, that as much information was not being given as might be given without damage to national interests. Nothing could be worse for the country than to do what the Japanese did—conceal disasters until the end of

the war. He did not say that there had been any concealment, but the one thing necessary was to let the people of this and other countries feel that our official news was true, and could be relied upon. He wondered whether the House realised what a tremendous event the battle of Ypres, in November, was. The British losses there, he thought, were bigger than any battle in which purely English troops were engaged. It was a terrible fight, against overwhelming odds, out of which British troops came with tremendous honour. All the account they had had was Sir John French's despatch. Surely the country could have more than that. Whoever was in charge, when weighing the possible damage which might be brought about by the giving of news, should also bear in mind the great necessity for keeping people in this country as well informed as possible."

That, I venture to think, is a perfectly fair and legitimate criticism. The battle of Ypres was fought in November. Mr. Law was speaking in February. Who can say what the country would have gained in recruiting, in strength of determination, in everything that goes to make up the *morale* so necessary for the vigorous conduct of a great campaign, had it been given, at once, an adequate description of the "terrible fight against overwhelming odds" out of which the British Thomas Atkins came with so much honour ?

The military critics of our newspapers have, perhaps, been one of the greatest failures of the entire campaign. One of them, on the day before Namur fell, assured us that the place could hold out for three months. Another asserted that the Russians would be in Berlin by September 10th. Another, just before the Germans drove the Russians for the second time out of East Prussia, declared that Russia's campaign was virtually ended ! Besides,

all the so-called "histories" of the war published have been utter failures. Personally, I do not think the nation is greatly perturbed, at the present moment, about the conduct of the actual military operations. No one is a politician to-day, and there is every desire, happily, to support the Government in any measure necessary to bring the war to a conclusion. We have not the materials, even if it were desirable, to criticise the conduct or write the history of the war, and we have no wish to do so. But we desire to learn, and we have the *right* to learn, the facts.

It has always been an unhappy characteristic of the military mind that it has been quite unable, perhaps unwilling, to appreciate the mentality of the mere civilian who only has to pay the bill, and look as pleasant as possible under the ordeal. And I suspect, very strongly, that it is just this feeling which lies at the root of a good deal of what we have had to endure under the censorship. In its essence, the censorship is a military precaution, perfectly proper and praiseworthy, but only if applied according to the real needs of the situation. Quite properly the military mind is impatient of the intrusion of the civilian in purely military affairs, and I have no doubt whatever that that fact explains the gratifying presence—in defiance of our long usage and to the annoyance of a certain type of politician—of Lord Kitchener at the War Office to-day. But military domination of the war situation, however admirable from the military point of view, has failed to take into sufficient account the purely civilian interest in the progress of the war and the extent to which the military arm must rely upon the civilian in carrying the war to a successful conclusion.

Our military organisation, rightly or wrongly, is based upon the voluntary system. We cannot, under present conditions, obtain, as the conscriptionist countries do, the recruits we require merely by calling to the Colours, with a stroke of the pen, men who are liable for service. We have to request, to persuade, to advertise, and to lead men to see their duty and to do it. To enable us to do this satisfactorily, public opinion must be kept well informed, must be stimulated by a knowledge of the real situation. When war broke out, and volunteers were called for, a tremendous wave of enthusiasm swept over the country. The recruiting organisation broke down, and, as I have pointed out, the Government found themselves with more men on their hands than they could possibly train or equip at the moment. Instead of taking men's names, telling them the exact facts, and sending them home to wait till they could be called for, the War Office *raised the physical standard for recruits*, and this dealt a blow at popular enthusiasm from which it has never recovered. Recruiting dropped to an alarming degree, and, so recently as February, Mr. Tennant, in the House of Commons, despite the efforts that had been made in the meantime, was forced to drop a pretty strong hint that "a little more energy" was advisable.

Now the connection between the manner in which the recruiting question was handled, and the general methods adopted by the censorship, is a good deal closer than might be imagined at first sight. Both show the same utter failure on the part of the military authorities to appreciate the psychology of the civilian. Psychology, the science of the public opinion of the nation, must, in any democratic country, play a very large part in the successful

conduct of a great war ; and in sympathetic understanding of the temper of the masses, our military authorities, alike in regard to the censorship and recruiting question, have been entirely outclassed by the autocratic officials of Germany. I do not advocate German methods. The gospel of hate and lies—which has kept German people at fever-heat—would fail entirely here. We need no "Hymns of Hate" or lying bulletins to induce Britons to do their duty if the needs of the situation are thoroughly brought home to them.

But we have to face this disquieting fact, that, whatever the methods employed, the German people to-day are far more enthusiastic and determined in their prosecution of the war than we are.

That is a plain and unmistakable truth. I do not believe the great mass of the British public realises, even to-day, vitally and urgently, the immense gravity of the situation, and for that I blame the narrow and pedantic views that have kept the country in comparative ignorance of the real facts of the situation.

We have been at war for eight months and we have not yet got the men we require. Recruits have come forward in large numbers, it is true, and are still coming forward. But there is a very distinct lack of that splendid and enduring enthusiasm which a true realisation of the facts would inevitably evoke. Priceless opportunities for stimulating that enthusiasm have been, all along, lost by the persistent refusal to allow the full story of British heroism and devotion to be told.

We can take the battle of Ypres as a single outstanding example. The full story of that great fight would have done more for recruiting in a week than all the displayed advertisements and elaborate pla-

cards with which our walls are so profusely adorned could achieve in a month!

Sir John French's despatch, as a military record, bears the hall-mark of military genius, but it is idle to pretend that it is a literary document calculated to stir the blood and fire the imagination of our countrymen. Admirable in its firm restraint from the military point of view, it takes no account of the civilian imagination. That is not Sir John French's business. He is a great soldier, and it is no reproach to him that his despatch is not exactly what is required by the urgency of the situation. Moreover, it came too late to exercise its full effect. Had the story of Ypres been given to the public promptly, and in the form in which it would have been cast by a graphic writer who understood the subject with which he was dealing and the public for whom he was writing, we should probably have been better off to-day by thousands and thousands of the much-needed recruits. The failure to take advantage of such a glorious opportunity for the stimulation of enthusiasm by purely legitimate means, convicts our censorship authorities of a total failure to appreciate the mentality of the public whose supposed interests they serve.

And as with successes, so with failures. It is the peculiar characteristic of the British people that either a great victory or a great disaster has the immediate result of nerving them to fuller efforts. We saw that in South Africa: it has been seen a hundred times in our long history. Let us turn for a moment to the affair at Givenchy on December 20th. Sir John French's despatch makes it clear that the repulse of the Indian Division on that occasion was a very serious matter, so serious, in fact, that it required the full effort of the entire First

Division, under Sir Douglas Haig, to restore the position. Yet, at the time, the British public was very far from fully informed of what had happened: much of our information, indeed, was derived from German sources; and these sources being naturally suspect, the magnitude of the operations was never realised.

There may have been excellent military reasons for concealing, for the moment, the real position, though I strongly suspect that the Germans were quite as well informed about it as we were. But there could be no possible reason for concealing the fact from the public for a couple of months, and thus losing another opportunity of powerfully stimulating our national patriotism and determination.

CHAPTER V

THE PERIL OF THE PRESS BUREAU

It is one of the curses of our Parliamentary system that every piece of criticism is immediately ascribed to either party or personal motives, and politicians whose conduct or methods are impugned, for whatever reason, promptly assume, and try to make others believe, that their opponents are actuated by the usual party or personal methods.

At the present moment, happily, we have, for the first time within our memory, no politics ; the nation stands as one man in its resolve to make an end of the Teutonic aggression against the peace of the world. In the recent discussion in the House of Commons, however, Sir Stanley Buckmaster, head of the Press Bureau, upon whom has fallen the rather ruffled and uncomfortable mantle discarded by Mr. F. E. Smith, seems to have interpreted the very unanimous criticism of the censorship as a personal attack upon himself. As a brilliant lawyer, of course he had no difficulty in making a brilliant reply to a fallacy originated entirely in his own brain.

In very truth the personality of Sir Stanley Buckmaster concerns us not at all. He is a loyal Englishman. He does not originate the news which the Press Bureau deals out with such belated parsimony. No one blames him for the fact that the nation is kept so completely in the dark on the subject of the war. If it were possible for Sir Stanley Buckmaster,

personally, to censor every piece of news submitted to the Press Bureau, there would, I venture to think, be a speedy end to the system—or want of system—which permits an item of intelligence to be published in Edinburgh or Liverpool, but not in London; and that the speeches of Cabinet Ministers, reported in our papers verbatim, would be allowed free passage to the United States or to the Colonies. I wish here to do the head of the Press Bureau the justice to say that he is an Englishman who knows his own mind, and has the courage of his own convictions. Yet that does not alter the fact that the Press censorship as a system has worked unevenly, with very little apparent method, and with an amazing disregard of the best foreign and colonial opinion which, all along, it has been our interest to keep fully informed of the British side of the case.

When the subject was last before the House of Commons, some very caustic things were said. Mr. Joseph King, the Radical member for North Somerset, moved, and Sir William Byles, the Radical member for North Salford, seconded, the following rather terse motion:

> "That the action of the Press Bureau in restricting the freedom of the Press, and in withholding information about the war, has been actuated by no clear principle and has been calculated to cause suspicion and discontent."

Now it will be noted that there is, in the first place, no possibility of attributing this motion to political hostility. Both the mover and the seconder are supporters of the Government, not merely at the present moment, as of course all Englishmen are, but in the ordinary course of nightly political warfare. Mr. King did not mince matters. He roundly charged the Press Bureau with exercising inequality,

particularly in denying the publication in London of news permitted to be published in the provinces and on the Continent. He pressed, too, for the issue of an official statement two or three times a week. This, of course, has since been granted, and it is a very decided improvement. Mr. Joynson-Hicks, from the Conservative benches, very truly emphasised the fact that the people of this country want the truth, even if it meant bad news, and added that they also wanted to hear about the heroism of our troops and the valorous deeds of any individual regiments.

Sir Stanley Buckmaster, in reply, denied somewhat vehemently that he had ever withheld, for five minutes, any information he had about the war, and asserted that nothing had ever been issued from his office that was not literally and absolutely true.

Now, as I have said, Sir Stanley Buckmaster's hide-bound department does not originate news, and cannot be held responsible for either the fullness or the accuracy of the official statements. When Sir Stanley Buckmaster tells us that he has *never delayed* news I accept his word without demur. But when he says nothing has been issued from his department which is not "literally and absolutely true," then I ask him what he means by "literally and absolutely true"? If he means that the news which his department has issued has contained no actual misstatements on a point of fact, I believe his claim to be fully justified. If he means, on the other hand, that the Press Bureau, or those behind it, have told the nation the whole truth, he makes an assertion which the nation with its gritted teeth to-day will decline, and with very good reason, to accept. To quote Mr. Bonar Law's words again: "from the beginning of the war as much informa-

tion has not been given as might have been given without damage to national interests." To such full information as may be given without damage to national interests the nation is entitled, and no amount of official sophistry and hair-splitting can alter that plain and demonstrable fact.

Mr. King, in the resolution I have quoted, charged the head of the Bureau with exercising inequality as between different newspapers. Now this amounts to a charge of deliberate unfairness which it is very difficult indeed to accept. The House of Commons, in fact, did not accept it. None the less, the fact remains that not once or twice, but over and over again, news has been allowed publication in one paper and refused in another, not merely as between London and the provinces, but as between London newspapers which are, necessarily, keen rivals. In support of this assertion I will quote one of the strongest supporters of the Government among the London newspapers—the *Daily Chronicle*. There will be no question of political partisanship about this.

After quoting the views of the *Times* and two Liberal papers—the *Star* and the *Westminster Gazette*—the *Daily Chronicle* said :

"The methods of the Censor are, certainly, a little difficult to understand. There reached this office yesterday afternoon, from our correspondent at South Shields, a long story of the sinking of vessels in the North Sea. It was submitted to us by the Censor, who made a number of excisions in it. The telegram was returned to us with the following note by our representative at the Press Bureau :

"'The Censor particularly requests that South Shields be not mentioned, though we can state "from our East Coast correspondent."'

"In the meantime the evening newspapers appeared with accounts of some occurrences in which

most of the deletions made by the Censor in the *Daily Chronicle* report *were given*! The Censor made the following remarks and excisions in the 'copy' submitted to him by the *Daily Chronicle* representative at the Press Bureau:

Excisions in "Daily Chronicle" Report	Where the Forbidden Passages appeared
"Please do not mention that this came from South Shields." (Note by the Censor.)	Shields occurred in the reports in the *Star* (three times), *Evening News* (once), *Pall Mall Gazette* (three times), *Globe* (three times), *Evening Standard* (three times), *Westminster Gazette* (once).
"Within twenty miles of the mouth of Shields harbour"—(passage eliminated).	*Star* report stated: "The trawler was sunk thirty miles E.N.E. of the Tyne."
"Landed a cargo of fish at Grimsby." ("At Grimsby" was eliminated.)	This identical phrase, or its effect, appeared in the *Star*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Globe*, *Evening Standard*, *Westminster Gazette*.
"Landed by North Shields fishing steamer." ("North Shields" eliminated.)	The North Shields trawler was mentioned by the *Star*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Globe*, *Evening Standard*.
"Bound for Blyth." ("Blyth" eliminated.)	This phrase appeared in the *Star*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Globe*, and *Evening Standard*.

From the *Daily Chronicle* Special Correspondent.

Paris, August 27th.

The Ministry of War issued this afternoon the following note: "In the region between ——" (here the Censor has cut out a short passage) "our troops continue to progress."

A Central News telegram from Paris ran as follows (passed by Cable Censor):

Paris, Thursday

The following official communiqué is issued to the Press at 2.15 this afternoon: "In the region between the Vosges and Nancy our troops continue to progress."

> "Thus we were free to mention the offending passage on the authority of the Central News Agency, but not on that of 'our own correspondent'! What can be more ridiculous than this?"

The importance of the last portion of the *Daily Chronicle* article lies in the fact that we have here a clear case of mutilation of the French *official* despatch, which the French papers even were free to publish!

The *Daily Chronicle* also mentioned another case in which its special correspondent in Paris sent a long despatch giving, on the authority of M. Clemenceau, a statement published in Paris, that the 15th Army Corps gave way in a moment of panic. The Censor refused permission to publish it, but another journal published a quotation under the heading: "French Soldiers who wavered: Officers and Men punished by Death."

I ought, in fairness, to say, in passing, that the instances quoted above took place before Sir Stanley Buckmaster assumed control of the Press Bureau, and that no responsibility attaches to him in respect of any of them.

Now, bad as has been the effect of the censorship on public opinion at home, it has been even worse abroad, and particularly in the United States, where the German propaganda had full play, while the British case was sternly withheld. The American Press has not hesitated to say that our censors were incompetent and discriminated unfairly between one paper and another. This was untrue in the sense in which it was meant, but it was certainly unfortunate, to put it mildly, that the news of the declaration of war was allowed to be issued by one New York journal, and withheld for seven hours from the Associated Press, which represents 9,000

American and Canadian newspapers. It was, perhaps, still more unfortunate that even the speeches of Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey on the subject of the declaration of war should have been similarly delayed. Why? Telegraphic reports of these speeches were held up for *four days* by the censors at cable offices and were then "censored" before they were despatched. I ask, could mischievous and bungling stupidity go farther than this?

Here is another case. In one of his speeches, Mr. Asquith, on a Friday night in Dublin, announced that the Indian troops were, that day, landing at Marseilles. The speech, and the statement, were reported next day in the London newspapers. *After* the publication of this, the Press Bureau forbade any mention of the *landing* of the Indian troops!

In the House of Commons, on September 10th, Mr. Sherwell exposed another instance of the ridiculous vagaries of the unequal censorship. In the *Daily Chronicle*, he said, there was published a brilliant article by Mr. Philip Gibbs—who was with me during the first Balkan campaign—describing the actual operations of Sir John French's army up to the last few days. That article was published without comment and without criticism in the *Daily Chronicle*, yet the cable censor refused to allow it to be sent to the *New York Times*. Again why?

It is, or should be, the function of the Press Bureau not merely to supply the public with accurate news, but to make sure that false or misleading reports are promptly suppressed. The reason for this is obvious. We do not wish to be depressed by unfounded stories of disaster, nor do we wish to experience the inevitable reaction which follows when we learn that we have been deluded by false news of a great victory. Whatever may be the

raison d'être of the Press Bureau, it is assuredly not maintained for the purpose of assisting in the circulation of utterly futile fiction about the progress of the campaign.

Again: *Are we told the truth?*

Early in January a report—passed of course by the Censor—appeared in practically every newspaper in the country, and probably in thousands of papers in all parts of the British Empire, announcing the capture by the British troops of a very important German position at La Bassée. The engagement was described as a brilliant one, in which the enemy lost heavily; circumstantial details were added, and on the face of it the news bore every indication of being based on trustworthy reports from the fighting line. It is true that it was not official, but the circumstances made it so important that, inasmuch as it had been passed by the Censor, it was naturally assumed by every newspaper editor to be accurate. A few days later every one was amazed to learn, from official sources, that there was not a word of truth in the whole story! Yet the Censor had actually passed it for publication. And so the public pay their halfpennies to be gulled!

I say, without hesitation, that this incident casts the very gravest reflection on the discretion and efficiency of the whole censorship. To permit the publication of an utterly baseless story of this nature, is simply to assist in hoaxing the public and the crying of false news. We await the next hoax. We may have it to-morrow. Who knows? The Censors in the matter are on the threshold of a dilemma. If the story in question were true, it ought to have been published on official authority without delay: as it was untrue, its publication should have on no account been permitted.

Consider the circumstances. Sir John French, on November 20th, stated that throughout the battle of Ypres-Armentières, the position at La Bassée had defied all efforts at capture, and naturally the most intense anxiety had been felt for news of a definite success in this region. Yet the public, after hearing, by official sanction, the news of a success which would clearly have resulted in the Germans being driven pell-mell out of La Bassée, were calmly told, a few days later, that the entire story was a lie. To my mind, and I think the reader will agree with me, we could have no stronger illustration of the utter futilities and farcical eccentricities of the censorship as it to-day exists. Are we told the truth about the war? No, I declare—*We are not*!

I will go a step farther. The suppression of news by the censorship is bad enough, but what are we to think of a deliberate attempt to stifle perfectly legitimate criticisms of Ministers and their methods?

As those who read these pages are aware, I have taken a prominent part in the effort to bring home to the public the dire peril to which we are exposed through the presence in our midst of hordes of uncontrolled enemy aliens. I deal with this subject elsewhere, and I should not mention it here except that it is connected in a very special way with an attempt on the part of the Press Bureau to stifle public discussion on a matter of the gravest importance.

The *Globe* newspaper has, with commendable patriotism, devoted much attention to the question of the presence of alien spies in our midst, and, on many occasions, its correspondence and editorial columns have contained valuable information and

comments. On September 10th last the *Globe* published the following letter:

"PRESS BUREAU,
"40, CHARING CROSS.
"*September 7th*, 1914.

"DEAR SIR,

"Mr. F. E. Smith desires me to draw your attention to a letter headed 'A German's Outburst,' which appeared in your issue of the 2nd instant, and a facsimile of which appeared in your issue of the 4th instant. This letter has received the notice of the Home Secretary, who expresses the view that 'the articles and letters in the *Globe* are causing something in the nature of a panic in the matter of spies' and desires that they should be suppressed at once. In view of this expression of opinion by the Home Secretary, Mr. Smith has no doubt that you will refrain, in the future, from publishing articles or letters of a similar description.

"Yours very truly,
"HAROLD SMITH, *Secretary*."

Very properly, the *Globe* pointed out that, in this matter, "nothing less is at stake than the liberty of the Press to defend the public interest and criticise the administrative acts of a Minister of the Crown." The unwarrantable attempt of the Home Secretary, through the Press Bureau, to suppress criticism of this nature, to stop the mouths of those who insisted on warning the public of a peril which he has, all along, blindly refused to see, raises a constitutional issue of the very gravest kind. The *Globe* promptly asked the Press Bureau under what authority it claimed the "power to suppress the free expression of opinion in the English press on subjects wholly unconnected with military or naval movements." Mr. Harold Smith's reply was the amazing assertion

that such powers were conferred by the Defence of the Realm Acts. He wrote:

"PRESS BUREAU,
"40, CHARING CROSS.
"*September 8th*, 1914.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am instructed by Mr. F. E. Smith to acknowledge your letter of to-day's date. On Mr. Smith's direction, I wrote you a letter, which, on re-reading, you will perceive was intended to convey to you the opinion of the Home Office, rather than an expressed intention of censorship in this Bureau. You will, of course, use your own discretion in the matter, but Mr. Smith thinks that a consideration of the terms of the Defence of the Realm Acts (Nos. 1 and 2), and the regulations made thereunder, will satisfy you that the Secretary of State is not without the legal powers necessary to make his desire for supervision effective.

"Yours faithfully,
"HAROLD SMITH, *Secretary*."

This reads very much like a threat to try the editor of the *Globe* by court-martial for the heinous offence of suggesting that Mr. McKenna's handling of the spy-peril was not exactly what was required by the exigencies of the public safety. I must say that when I read the correspondence I was inclined to tremble for my own head! So far, however, it is still safe upon my shoulders. I, as a patriotic Englishman who has dared to speak his mind, have no intention of desisting—even at the risk of being court-martialled—from the efforts I have continued for so long to arouse my countrymen to a realisation of the dangers to which we are exposed by the obstinate refusal of the Government to face facts.

The privilege of the Press to criticise Ministers

was boldly asserted by the *Globe*, which, in a leading article, said :

> " That correspondence . . . raises issues directly affecting the independence of the Press and its right to frank and unfettered criticism. At the time when we are receiving from our ever-increasing circle of readers many gratifying tributes to the sanity of our views, and the informing character of our columns, we are accused of publishing matter calculated to induce panic, and we have been called upon to suppress at once the articles and letters directing attention to the dangers arising from the lax methods of the Home Secretary in dealing with the alien enemy in our midst."

After referring to a statement made by Mr. McKenna in the House of Commons the previous day as likely " to do something to allay public anxiety " on the subject, the *Globe* proceeded :

> " We are content with the knowledge that the attitude of the *Globe* has done something to convince the Government of the widespread feeling that the danger from the alien enemy we harbour is real, and the fear justified. Here we should be content to leave the question for the present, but for the attitude of the Home Secretary in seeking to prevent comment and criticism on his administrative acts, coupled with the veiled suggestion from the Press Bureau of power possessed under an Emergency Act. This attempt at pressure is made through a department set up for quite other and legitimate purposes. . . . If a Government Department, under cover of an Order in Council made for a wholly different purpose, is to shield itself from an exposure of its inefficiency, a dangerous precedent is set up, dangerous alike to the community and the Press."

We have to bear in mind, in this connection, that the Press Bureau had just been reorganised. Mr. F. E. Smith had resigned, on leaving for the front, and *the Home Secretary was the Minister responsible to Parliament for its conduct.* At his request the Press Bureau endeavoured to prevent the *Globe* continuing to criticise his action, or rather inaction. Well indeed might the *Globe* say: "We must reserve to ourselves the right, at all times, to give expression to views on Ministerial policy and even to dare to criticise the action of the Home Secretary." And I venture to say that, but for the jealousy inherent among British newspapers, the *Globe* would have had the unanimous support of every metropolitan and provincial journal, every single one of which was vitally affected by the Home Secretary's preposterous claim.

The claim of the country for fuller information has been expressed in many ways, and by many people, and it has been admitted by no less a personage than Mr. Asquith himself. In the House of Commons early in September Mr. Asquith said the Government felt "that the public is entitled to prompt and authentic information of what has happened at the front, and they are making arrangements which they hope will be more adequate."

That was months ago, and, up to the present, very few signs of the "prompt and authentic information" have been perceptible.

Even more significant is the following passage from the latest despatches of Sir John French, which covered the period from November 20th to the beginning of February:

> "I regard it as most unfortunate that circumstances have prevented any account of many splendid

instances of courage and endurance, in the face of almost unparalleled hardship and fatigue of war, coming regularly to the knowledge of the public."

Now I do not want to read into Sir John French's words a meaning that he did not intend to convey, but this passage certainly strikes me, as it has struck many others, as a very definite plea for the presence at the front of duly accredited and responsible war correspondents.

And why not ? News could be still censored so that no information of value could reach the enemy. We should not be prejudiced one iota, but, on the other hand, should get prompt and trustworthy news, written by skilled journalists in a fashion that would make an irresistible appeal to the manhood of Britain. And we should be far nearer than we are to-day to learning "the truth about the war."

It has been urged, on behalf of the Press Bureau, that of late matters have been very much improved. My journalistic friends tell me that so far as the actual working is concerned this is a fact. There has undoubtedly been less of the haphazard methods which were characteristic of the early days. But there is still too much of what the *Times* very properly calls the "throttling" of permissible news, and, in spite of the fact that two despatches a week are now published from Sir John French, we are still in the dark as to the *real* story of the great campaign. Neither our successes nor our failures are adequately described. We are still not told "the truth about the war."

And I cannot help saying that the deficiencies of the official information are not made up by the tactics of certain sections of the Press. There is too much of a tendency to magnify the good and minimise

the bad. There are too many "Great Victories" to be altogether convincing. As the *Morning Post* put it:

> "There seems to be a large section of the public which takes its news as an old charwoman takes her penn'orth of gin, 'for comfort.' And some of our contemporaries seem to cater for this little weakness. Every day there is a 'great advance' or a 'brilliant victory,' and if a corporal's guard is captured or surrenders we have a flaming announcement on all the posters."

It is very true. From the fiercest critics of the Press Bureau's methods we do not to-day get "the truth about the war," even so far as they know it. Even the *Daily News* has been moved to raise a protest against the present state of affairs, and as recently as March 15th declared that the mind of authority "is being fed on selected facts that convey a wholly false impression of things."

CHAPTER VI

THE PERIL OF THE ENEMY ALIEN

"*Every enemy alien is known, and is now under constant police surveillance.*"—Mr. Tennant, Under-Secretary for War, in the House of Commons, March 3rd.

One of the gravest perils with which the country is still faced is that of the enemy alien.

Notwithstanding all that has been written and said upon this most serious question, Ministers are still content to pursue a shuttlecock policy, in which there is very little satisfaction for any intelligent patriot.

Each time the subject is brought up in the House of Commons there is an apparent intention of the Government to wilfully throw dust into the eyes of the public, and prevent the whole mystery of the official protection afforded to our enemies being sifted to the bottom. A disgraceful illustration of this was given on March 3rd, when Mr. Joynson-Hicks moved :

"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the whole administration of the Acts and Regulations concerning aliens and suspected persons should be centred in the hands of one Minister, who should be responsible to the House."

The debate which followed was illuminating. Sir Henry Dalziel, who is strongly in favour of a Central Board to deal with spies among us—a suggestion I made in my recent book "German Spies in England," as a satisfactory solution of the problem—said, in the course of a splendid speech, that the Government knew that, at the present moment, there was a settled spy-system, and there was no use denying it. As the *Daily Telegraph* on the following day pointed out, that there is such a system is almost as natural an assumption as that the enemy possesses an army service organisation or a Press censorship. I have already pointed out, in various books I have written, that systematic espionage is, and has been for many years, a most cherished part of German war administration, developed with characteristic thoroughness. The question is whether that department of the enemy's activity has, or has not, been stamped out as regards this country; and it would be idle to pretend that there is any public confidence that it has been stamped out.

There is an absence of vigour and an absence of system about the dealing with this source of danger, and I maintain that the national safety requires the taking of this matter more seriously, and the placing of it upon a satisfactory footing. The Government admitted that, on March 3rd, *seven hundred male enemy aliens* were living in the East Coast prohibited area, and we know that arrangements for their control are so futile as to leave, quite unmolested, some individuals whose known connections expose them to the highest degree of suspicion. Of one such notorious case, Mr. Bonar Law—who cannot, surely, be accused of spy-mania—declared that he would as soon have allowed a German army to land as allow the person in question to be at large in this

country. How the arrangement has worked in another particular case was exposed in some detail by Mr. Butcher. The lady concerned is closely related to more than one of those in power in Germany. Her case was reported to the War Office. The War Office called upon the General Officer commanding in the Northern District to take action. He requested the police to make inquiries, and the Chief Constable of the East Riding subsequently reported, "strongly recommending" the removal of the lady from the prohibited area. The General accepted this advice, and an order was made for her removal on January 25th. It was never executed; and on February 7th it was withdrawn.

Such is one illustration of the utter hopelessness of the present state of affairs. And yet, in face of it, Mr. Tennant, Under-Secretary for War, actually rose and made the definite assertion *that every enemy alien was known and constantly watched*!

Could any greater and more glaring official untruth be told?

Is every enemy alien known, I ask? Let us examine a case in point, one in which I have made personal investigation, and to the truth of which a dozen officers of His Majesty's service, and also civilians, are ready to testify.

Investigations recently made in certain German quarters in London, notably in the obscure foreign restaurants in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road, where men—many of them recently released from internment-camps—and women meet nightly and toast to the Day of Britain's destruction, revealed to me a startling fact. Here, posing as an Italian and a neutral, I learnt facts regarding the movements of German aircraft long before they were known either to our own authorities or to

the Press. For several weeks this fact, I confess, caused me considerable thought. Some secret means of communication must, I realised, exist between the enemy's camp and London, perhaps by wireless, perhaps by the new German-laid cable, the shore-end of which is at Bacton, in Norfolk, and which, eighteen months ago, in company with the German telegraph-engineers, I assisted to test as it was laid across the North Sea to Nordeney. In the archives of the Intelligence Department of the War Office will be found my report, together with a copy of the first message transmitted by the new cable from Norfolk to Germany, a telegram from one of the Kaiser's sons who happened to be in Scotland at the time, and addressed to the Emperor, which read: "Hurrah for a strong navy!"—significant indeed in the light of recent events!

I was wondering if, by any secret means, this cable could be in operation when, on the afternoon of February 23rd, an officer of the Naval Armoured Car Squadron called upon me and invited me to assist in hunting spies in Surrey. The suggestion sounded exciting. Signals had been seen for a month or so past, flashed from a certain house high upon the Surrey hills. Would I assist in locating them, and prosecuting a full inquiry?

Within half an hour I was in a car speeding towards the point where mystery brooded, and which we did not reach till after dark. A gentleman living three miles across the valley, whose house commanded full view of the house under suspicion —a large one with extensive grounds—at once placed a room at our disposal, wherein we sat and watched. In the whole of these investigations I was assisted by an officer who was an expert in

signalling and wireless, a signaller of the service, two other officers equally expert in reading the Morse code, while I myself have qualified both in Morse and wireless, and hold the Postmaster-General's licence.

On the previous evening an all-night vigil had been kept, and messages had been read, but I only here record my own experiences of this exciting spy-hunt. On reaching our point of vantage I learned that suspicion had first been aroused by a mysterious and intense white light being shown from a window in the country mansion in question, which was situated upon so strategic a point that it could be seen very many miles in the direction of London. And there, sure enough, was the one brilliant light—at all other windows of the house the blinds being drawn—shining like a beacon all over the country. It had shone first at 6.30 p.m. that night, and, as I watched, it showed till 6.48, when it disappeared. After three minutes it was shown till 7.30 exactly, when suddenly it signalled in Morse the code-letters " S. M." repeated twice, and then disappeared till 9 o'clock, when again the same signal was made. The light remained full on for ten minutes, and was then suddenly switched off.

This was certainly remarkable. The officers with me—all experts in signalling—were unanimous as to the two letters, and also to their repetition. These signals, I learned, had been seen times without number, but until the smart young officer who had called upon me had noticed them, no action had been taken.

Having established that mysterious signalling was really in progress, I set forth upon further investigation. Taking my own signalling-appara-

tus, a very strong electric lamp with accumulators and powerful reflectors, which would show for fifteen miles or more, I got into the car with my companions—who were eager to assist—and, having consulted ordnance-maps and compass, we went to a spot high-up in an exposed position, where I anticipated the answering light from the mansion might be seen.

We found ourselves in a private park, upon a spot which, by day, commands an immense stretch of country, and from which it is said that upon a clear day the Sussex coast can be seen. Here we erected our signalling-apparatus and waited in patience. The night proved bitterly cold, and as the hours crept slowly by, the sleet began to cut our faces. Yet all our eyes were fixed upon that mysterious house which had previously signalled.

For hours we waited in vain until, of a sudden, quite unexpectedly from the direction of London, we saw another intense white light shining from out the darkness. For a full half-hour it remained there, a beacon like the other. Then suddenly it began winking, and this was the code-message it sent :

"S. H. I. S. (pause) H. 5. (pause) S. H. I. S. F. (pause with the light full on for two minutes). I. S. I. E. (pause) E. S. T. (light out)."

Turning my signal-lamp in its direction, I repeated the first portion of the mysterious message, and then, pretending not to understand, asked for a repetition. At once this was given, and, with my companions, I received it perfectly clearly !

Sorely tempted as I was to signal further, I

refrained for fear of arousing suspicion, and, actuated by patriotic motives, we agreed at once to prosecute our inquiry further, and then leave it to "the proper authorities" to deal with the matter.

Through the whole of that night—an intensely cold one—we remained on watch upon one of the highest points in Surrey, a spot which I do not here indicate for obvious reasons—and not until the grey dawn at last appeared did we relinquish our watchfulness.

All next day, assisted by the same young officer who had first noticed the unusual lights, I spent in making confidential inquiry regarding the mysterious house and elicited several interesting facts, one being that the family, who were absent from the house showing the lights, employed a servant who, though undoubtedly German—for, by a ruse, I succeeded in obtaining the address of this person's family in Germany—was posing as Swiss. That a brisk correspondence had been kept up with persons in Germany was proved in rather a curious way, and by long and diligent inquiry many other highly interesting facts were elicited. With my young officer friend and a gentleman who rendered us every assistance, placing his house and his car at our disposal, we crept cautiously up to the house in the early hours one morning, narrowly escaping savage dogs, while one adventure of my own was to break through a boundary fence, only to find myself in somebody's chicken-run!

That night was truly one of adventure. Nevertheless, it established many things—one being that in the room whence the signals emanated was a three-branch electrolier with unusually strong bulbs, while behind it, set over the mantelshelf, was a

mirror, or glazed picture, to act as a reflector in the direction of London. The signals were, no doubt, made by working the electric-light switch.

The following night saw us out again, for already reports received had established a line of signals from a spot on the Kent coast to London and farther north, other watchers being set in order to compare notes with us. Again we watched the beacon-light on the mysterious house. We saw those mysterious letters "S. M."—evidently of significance—winked out in Morse, and together we watched the answering signals. All the evening the light remained full on until at 1.30 a.m. we once more watched "S. M." being sent, while soon after 2 a.m. the light went out.

In the fourteen exciting days and nights which followed, I motored many hundreds of miles over Surrey, Sussex, and Kent, instituting inquiries and making a number of amazing discoveries, not the least astounding of which was that, only one hour prior to the reception of that message on the first evening of our vigil—"H. 5"—five German aeroplanes had actually set out from the Belgian coast towards England! That secret information was being sent from the Kent coast to London was now proved, not only at one point, but at several, where I have since waited and watched, and, showing signals in the same code, have been at once answered and repeated. And every night, until the hour of writing, this same signalling from the coast to London is in progress, and has been watched by responsible officers of His Majesty's Service.

After the first nights of vigilance, I had satisfied myself that messages in code were being sent, so I reported—as a matter of urgency—to the Intelligence Department of the War Office—that

department of which Mr. McKenna, on March 3rd, declared, "There is no more efficient department of the State." The result was only what the public might expect. Though this exposure was vouched for by experts in signalling, men wearing His Majesty's uniform, all the notice taken of it has been

War Office,
Whitehall,
S.W.
27th February 1915.

The Director of Military Operations presents his compliments to Mr. W. Le Queux *, and begs to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of* his *letter of the* 25th inst. *which is receiving attention.*

a mere *printed acknowledgment*—reproduced above—that my report had been received, while to my repeated appeals that proper inquiry be made I have not even received a reply!

But further. While engaged in watching in another part of Surrey on the night of March 3rd, certain officers of the Armoured Car Squadron, who were keeping vigil upon the house of mystery, saw

some green and white rockets being discharged from the top of the hill. Their suspicions aroused, they searched and presently found, not far from the house in question, a powerful motor-car of German make containing three men. The latter when challenged gave no satisfactory account of themselves, therefore the officers held up the car while one of them telephoned to the Admiralty for instructions. The reply received was " that they had no right to detain the car ! " But, even in face of this official policy of do-nothing, they took off the car's powerful searchlight, which was on a swivel, and sent it to the Admiralty for identification.

This plain straightforward statement of what is nightly in progress can be substantiated by dozens of persons, and surely, in face of the observations taken by service men themselves—the names of whom I will readily place at the disposal of the Government—it is little short of a public scandal that no attempt has been made to inquire into the matter or to seize the line of spies simultaneously. It really seems plain that to-day the enemy alien may work his evil will anywhere as a spy. On the other hand, it is a most heinous offence for anybody to ride a cycle without a back-lamp !

It will be remembered that in Norfolk it has been found, by Mr. Holcombe Ingleby, M.P. for King's Lynn, that the Zeppelin raid on the East Coast was directed by a mysterious motor-car with a searchlight. Therefore the apathy of the Admiralty in not ordering full inquiry into the case in question will strike the reader as extraordinary.

This is the sort of proceeding that gives force to the contention of those supporting the motion of Mr. Joynson-Hicks in the House of Commons, that the whole matter of spies ought to be placed in the

hands of a special authority devoted to it alone, and responsible to Parliament. As things stand, the country is certainly in agreement with Mr. Bonar Law in believing that the Government "have not sufficiently realised the seriousness of this danger, and have not taken every step to make it as small as possible." Most people will agree with Mr. John S. Scrimgeour, who, commenting upon the shuffling of the Government, said:

> "Let the Press cease from blaming the strikers. Also let 'the men in power' cease from their censuring, for very shame. Can I, or any man in the street, believe that we are 'fighting for our lives' while the enemy lives contentedly among us? Read the debate, and take as samples mentioned therein—'Brother of the Governor of Liége,' 'German Financial Houses,' and 'Baron von Bissing.' Don't make scapegoats of these working-men, or even of the non-enlisting ones, while such is the case. Neither they, nor any one else in his senses, can believe in the seriousness of this 'life struggle' while the above state of things continues. It is laughable—or deadly."

The Intelligence Department of the War Office—that Department so belauded by Mr. McKenna—certainly did not display an excess of zeal in the case of signalling in Surrey, for, to my two letters begging that inquiry be made as a matter of urgency, I was not even vouchsafed the courtesy of a reply. Yet I was not surprised, for in a case at the end of January in which two supposed Belgian refugees, after living in one of our biggest seaports and making many inquiries there, being about to escape to Antwerp, I warned that same Department and urged that they should be questioned before leaving London. I gave every detail, even to the particular

boat by which they were leaving for Flushing. No notice, however, was taken of my report, and not until *three days after they had left for the enemy's camp* did I receive the usual *printed acknowledgment* that my report had been received ! "

That night-signalling has long been in progress in the South of England is shown by the following. Written by a well-known gentleman, it reached me while engaged in my investigations in Surrey. He says :

> " The following facts have been brought to my notice, and may be of interest to you. In the first week of October six soldiers were out on patrol duty around Folkestone looking for spies—always on night-duty.
>
> " One night they saw Morse signalling going on on a hill along the sea outside Folkestone. The signalling was in code. They divided into two parties of three, and proceeded to surround the place. On approaching, a shot was heard, and a bullet went through the black oilskin coat of one man (they were all wearing these over their khaki). They went on and discovered two Germans with a strong acetylene lamp, one of them having a revolver with six chambers, and one discharged, also ten spare rounds of ammunition.
>
> " They secured them and took them to the police station, but all that happened was that they were shut up in a concentration camp ! This story was told me by one of the six who were on duty, and assisted at the capture."

To me, there is profound mystery in the present disinclination of the Intelligence Department of the War Office to institute inquiry. As a voluntary worker in that department under its splendid chief, Col. G. W. M. Macdonogh—now, alas ! transferred

elsewhere—my modest reports furnished from many places, at home and abroad, always received immediate attention and a private letter of thanks written in the Chief's own hand.

On the outbreak of war, however, red-tape instantly showed itself, and I received a letter informing me that I must, in future, address myself to the Director of Military Operations—the department which is supposed to deal with spies.

I trust that the reader will accept my words when I say that I am not criticising Lord Kitchener's very able administration. If I felt confident that he, and he alone, was responsible for the surveillance of enemy aliens in our midst, then I would instantly lay down my pen upon the subject. But while the present grave peril continues, and while the Government continue in their endeavour to bewilder and mislead us by placing the onus first upon the police, then, in turn, upon the Home Office—which, it must be remembered, made an official statement early in the war and assured us that there were no spies—then upon the War Office, then upon the Admiralty War Staff, while they, in turn, shift the responsibility on to the shoulders of the local police-constable in uniform, then I will continue to raise my voice in protest, and urge upon the public to claim their right to know the truth.

This enemy alien question is one of Britain's deadliest perils, and yet, by reason of some mysterious influence in high quarters, Ministers are straining every muscle to still delude and mislead the public. These very men who are audacious enough to tell us that there are no German spies in Great Britain are the same who, by that secret report of the Kaiser's speech and his intention

to make war upon us which I furnished to the British Secret Service in 1908,[1] knew the truth, yet nevertheless adopted a policy that was deliberately intended to close the eyes of the British public and lull it to sleep, so that, in August, our beloved nation nearly met with complete disaster.

But the British public to-day are no longer children, nor are they in the mood to be trifled with and treated as such. The speeches made by Mr. McKenna in the House of Commons on March 3rd have revealed to us that the policy towards aliens is one of untruth and sham. The debate has aroused an uneasiness in the country which will only be restored with the greatest difficulty. To be deliberately told that the Intelligence Department of the War Office is cognisant of every enemy alien—in face of what I have just related—is to ask the public to believe a fiction. And, surely, fiction is not what we want to-day. We want hard fact—substantiated fact. We are not playing at war—as so many people seem to think because of the splendid patriotism of the sons of Britain—but we are fighting with all our force in defence of our homes and our loved ones, who, if weak-kneed counsels prevail, will most assuredly be butchered to make the Kaiser a German holiday.

That public opinion is highly angered in consequence of the refusal of the Government to admit the danger of spies, and face the problem in a proper spirit of sturdy patriotism, is shown by the great mass of correspondence which has reached me in consequence of my exposures in "German Spies in England." The letters I have received from all classes, ranging from peers to working-men, testify

[1] For a full report of this astounding speech see "German Spies in England," by William Le Queux, 1915.

to an astounding state of affairs, and if the reader could but see some of this flood of correspondence which has overwhelmed me, he would realise the widespread fear of the peril of enemy aliens, and the public distrust of the apathy of the Government towards it.

Surely this is not surprising, even if judged only by my own personal experiences.

HOW THE PUBLIC ARE DELUDED!

The "Times," February 17th

The Secretary of the Admiralty makes the following announcement:

Information has been received that two persons, posing as an officer and sergeant, and dressed in khaki, are going about the country attempting to visit military works, etc.

They were last seen in the Midlands on the 6th instant, when they effected an entry into the works of a firm who are doing engineer's work for the Admiralty. They made certain inquiries as to the presence or otherwise of anti-aircraft guns, which makes it probable that they are foreign agents in disguise.

All contractors engaged on work for H.M. Navy are hereby notified with a view to the apprehension of these individuals, and are advised that no persons should be admitted to their works unless notice has been received beforehand of their coming.

The "Times," March 4th

Mr. Tennant, Under-Secretary for War, during the debate in the House of Commons upon the question of enemy aliens, raised by Mr. Joynson-Hicks, said he could give the House the assurance that every single enemy alien was *known*, and was *at the present moment* under constant police surveillance. He wished to inform the House and the country that they had at the War Office a branch which included the censorship and other services all directed to the one end of safeguarding the country from the operations of undesirable persons. It would not be right to speak publicly of the activities of that branch, but it was doing most admirable service, and he repudiated with all earnestness the suggestion that the department did not take this matter of espionage with the utmost seriousness.

Let us further examine the facts. Mr. McKenna, in a speech made in the House of Commons on November 26th on the subject, said: "The moment the War Office has decided upon the policy, the Home Office places at the disposal of the War Office the whole of its machinery." On March 3rd the Home Secretary repeated that statement, and declared, in a retort made to Mr. Joynson-Hicks, that he was not shirking responsibility, as *he had never had*

any! Now, if this be true, why did Mr. McKenna make the communiqué to the Press soon after the outbreak of war, assuring us that there were no spies in England, and that all the enemy aliens were such dear good people? I commented upon it in the *Daily Telegraph* on the following day, and over my own name apologised to the public for my past offence of daring to mention that such gentry had ever existed among us. If Lord Kitchener were actually responsible, then one may ask why had the Home Secretary felt himself called upon to tell the public that pretty fairy-tale?

Now with regard to the danger of illicit wireless. Early in January 1914—seven months before the outbreak of war—being interested in wireless myself, and president of a Wireless Association, my suspicions were aroused regarding certain persons, some of them connected with an amateur club in the neighbourhood of Hatton Garden. Having thoroughly investigated the matter, and also having been able to inspect some of the apparatus used by these persons, I made, on February 17th, 1914, a report upon the whole matter to the Director of Military Intelligence, pointing out the ease with which undesirable persons might use wireless. The Director was absent on leave, and no action was taken in the matter.

A month later I went to the Wireless Department of the General Post Office, who had granted me my own licence, and was received there with every courtesy and thanked for my report, which was regarded with such seriousness that it was forwarded at once to the Admiralty, who have wireless under their control. In due course the Admiralty gave it over to the police to make inquiries, and the whole matter was, I suppose—as is usual in such cases—

dealt with and reported upon by a constable in uniform.

Here let me record something further.

In February last I called at New Scotland Yard in order to endeavour to get the police to make inquiry into two highly suspicious cases, one of a person at Winchester, and the other concerning signal-lights seen north-east of London in the Metropolitan District. I had interviews with certain officials of the Special Department, and also with one of the Assistant Commissioners, and after much prevarication I gathered—not without surprise—that no action could be taken *without the consent of the Home Office!* How this latter fact can be in accordance with the Home Secretary's statement in the House of Commons I confess I fail to see.

But I warn the Government that the alien peril—now that so many civil persons have been released from the internment camps—is a serious and growing one. The responsibility should, surely, not be placed upon, or implied to rest upon, Lord Kitchener, who is so nobly performing a gigantic task. If the public believed that he was really responsible, then they, and myself, would at once maintain silence. The British public believes in Lord Kitchener, and, as one man, will follow him to the end. But it certainly will not believe or tolerate this see-saw policy of false assurances and delusion, and the attempt to stifle criticism—notably the case of the *Globe*—of which the Home Office have been guilty. There is a rising feeling of wrath, as well as a belief that the peril from within with which the country is faced—the peril of the thousands of enemy aliens in our midst—most of whom are not under control—together with the whole army of spies ready and daily awaiting, in impatience, the signal to strike

simultaneously—is wilfully disregarded. Even the police themselves—no finer body of men than whom exists anywhere in the world—openly express disgust at the appalling neglect of the mysterious so-called "authorities" to deal with the question with a firm and strong hand.

Naturally, the reader asks why is not inquiry made into cases of real suspicion reported by responsible members of the community. I have before me letters among others from peers, clergymen, solicitors, justices of the peace, members of city councils, a well-known shipowner, a Government contractor, Members of Parliament, baronets, etc., all giving me cases of grave suspicion of spies, and all deploring that no inquiry is made, application to the police being fruitless, and asking my advice as to what quarter they should report them.

All these reports, and many more, I will willingly place at the service of a proper authority, appointed with powers to effectively deal with the matter. At present, however, after my own experience as an illustration of the sheer hopelessness of the situation, the reader will not wonder that I am unable to give advice.

Could Germany's unscrupulous methods go farther than the scandal exposed in America, in the late days of February, of how Captain Boy-Ed, Naval Attaché of the German Embassy at Washington, and the Kaiser's spy-master in the United States, endeavoured to induce the man Stegler to cross to England and spy on behalf of Germany? In this, Germany is unmasked. Captain Boy-Ed was looked upon as one of the ablest German naval officers. He is tall and broad-shouldered, speaks English fluently, and in order to Americanise his appearance has shaved off his "Prince Henry"

whiskers which German naval officers traditionally affect. When he took up his duties at Washington he was a man of about forty-five, and ranked in the German navy as lieutenant-commander. But his career of usefulness as Naval Attaché, with an office in the shipping quarters of New York, has been irretrievably impaired by the charges of Stegler, whose wife produced many letters in proof of the allegation that the attaché was the mainspring of a conspiracy to secure English-speaking spies for service to be rendered by German submarines and other German warships on the British side of the Atlantic.

The plot, exposed in every paper in the United States, was a low and cunning one, and quite in keeping with the methods of the men of "Kultur." Mrs. Stegler, a courageous little woman from Georgia, saw how her husband—an export clerk in New York—was being drawn into the German net as a spy, and she stimulated her husband to give the whole game away. To the United States police, Stegler, at his wife's suggestion, was perfectly frank and open. He exposed the whole dastardly plot. He stated that Captain Boy-Ed engineered the spy-plot that cost Lody his life, and declared that in his dealings with the attaché the matter of going to England as a spy progressed to a point where the money that was to be paid to his wife for her support while he was in England was discussed. Captain Boy-Ed, Stegler went on to say, agreed to pay Mrs. Stegler £30 a month while he was in England, and furthermore agreed that if the British discovered his mission and he met the fate of Lody, Mrs. Stegler was to receive £30 a month from the German Government as long as she lived!

Stegler said he told his wife of the agreement to pay to her the amount named, and that she asked him what guarantee he could give that the money would be paid as promised. At that time Mrs. Stegler did not know the perilous nature of the mission that her husband had consented to undertake. When Stegler reported fully to his American wife, and she got from him the entire story of his proposed trip to England, she, like a brave woman, determined to foil the conspiracy. Captain Boy-Ed was not convincing regarding the payment to her for the services of her husband as a spy by the German Government for life, and she told her husband that the German Government would probably treat Captain Bod-Ed's promise to pay as a "mere scrap of paper." Having been urged to study the recent history of Belgium, Stegler confessed that he had his doubts. Finally he resolved to reveal the existence of a plot to supply German spies from New York.

Could any facts be more illuminating than these? Surely no man in Great Britain, after reading this, can further doubt the existence of German-American spies among us.

There is not, I think, a single reader of these pages who will not agree with the words of that very able and well-informed writer who veils his identity in the *Referee* under the *nom-de-plume* of "Vanoc." On March 14th he wrote:

> "This is no question of Party. I am not going to break the Party truce. In the interests of the British Empire, however, I ask that a list of all the men of German stock or of Hebrew-German stock who have received distinctions, honours, titles, appointments, contracts, or sinecures, both inside or outside the House of Commons, House of Lords, and Privy Coun-

cil, shall be prepared, printed, and circulated. Also a list of Frenchmen, Russians, and Colonials so honoured. It is also necessary for a clear understanding of the spy-question that the public should know whether it is a fact that favoured German individuals have contributed large sums to political Party funds on both sides, and whether the tenderness that is shown Teutons or Hebrew-Teutons decorated or rewarded with contracts, favours, or distinctions is due to the obvious fact that if dangerous spies were not allowed their freedom Party government would be exposed, discredited, and abolished."

This is surely a demand which will be heartily supported by every one who has the welfare of his country at heart. Too long have we been misled by the bogus patriotism of supposed "naturalised" Germans, who, in so many cases, have purchased honours with money filched from the poor. "Vanoc" in his indictment goes on to say:

"The facts are incredible. I know of one case of a German actually employed on Secret Service at the War Office. This German is the son of the agent of a vast German enterprise engaged in making munitions and guns for the destruction of the sons, brothers, and lovers of the very Englishwomen who are now engaged most wisely and energetically in waking the country to a sense of the spy-peril that lurks in our midst. The British public does not understand a decimal point of a tithe of the significance of the spy-peril. Nonsense is talked about spies. Energy is concentrated on the little spies, who don't count. Much German money is wasted on unintelligent spies. The British officers to whom is entrusted the duty of spy-taking, if they are outside the political influence which is poisonous to our national life, are probably the best in the world. The big spies are still potent in control of our national life."

Are we not, indeed, coddling the Hun?

Even the pampering of German officers at Donington Hall pales into insignificance when we recollect that, upon Dr. Macnamara's admission, £86,000 a month, or £1,000,000 per year, is being paid for the hire of ships in which to intern German prisoners, and this is at a time when the scarcity of shipping is sending up the cost of every necessity! The Hague Convention, of course, forbids the use of gaols for prisoners of war, yet have we not many nice comfortable workhouses, industrial schools, and such-like institutions which could be utilised? We all know how vilely the Germans are treating our officers and men who are their prisoners, even depriving them of sufficient rations, and forbidding tobacco, fruit, or tinned vegetables. With this in view, the country are asking, and not without reason, why we should treat those in our hands as welcome guests. Certainly our attitude has produced disgust in the Dominions.

How Germany must be laughing at us! How the enemy aliens in certain quarters of London are jeering at us, openly, and toasting to the Day of our Downfall, I have already described. How the spies among us—unknown in spite of Mr. Tennant's amazing assertion—must be laughing in their sleeves and chuckling over the panic and disaster for which they are waiting from day to day in the hope of achieving. The signal—the appearance of Zeppelins over London—has not yet been given. Whether it will ever be given we know not. All we know is that an unscrupulous enemy, whose influence is widespread over our land, working insidiously and in secret, has prepared for us a blow from within our gates which, when it comes, will stagger even Mr. McKenna himself.

With the example of how spies, in a hundred guises, have been found in Belgium, in France, in Russia, in Egypt, and even in gallant little Serbia, can any sane man believe that there are none to-day in Great Britain? No. The public know it, and the Government know it, but the latter are endeavouring to hoodwink those who demand action in the House of Commons, just as they endeavour to mystify the members of the public who present reports of suspicious cases.

The question is: *Are we here told the Truth?*

I leave it to the reader of the foregoing pages to form his own conclusions, and to say whether he is satisfied to be further deluded and mystified without raising his voice in protest for the truth to be told, and the spy-peril to be dealt with by those fully capable of doing so, instead of adopting methods which are daily playing into Germany's hands and preparing us upon the altar of our own destruction.

I have here written the truth, and I leave it to the British public themselves to judge me, and to judge those who, failing in their duty at this grave crisis of our national history, are courting a disaster worse than that which overtook poor stricken Belgium.

CHAPTER VII

THE PERIL OF DELUDING THE PUBLIC

As showing the trend of public opinion regarding the spy-peril, I may perhaps be permitted to here give a few examples taken haphazard from the huge mass of correspondence with which I have been daily flooded since the publication of my exposure on that subject.

Many of my correspondents have, no doubt, made discoveries of serious cases of espionage. Yet, as spies are nobody's business, the authorities, in the majority of cases, have not even troubled to inquire into the allegations made by responsible persons. I freely admit that many wild reports have been written and circulated by hysterical persons who believe that every twinkling light they see is the flashing of signals, and that spies lurk in houses in every quiet and lonely spot. It is so very easy to become affected with spy-mania, especially when one recollects that every German abroad is patriotic, and his first object is to become a secret agent of the Fatherland. In this connection I have no more trust in the so-called "naturalised" German than in the full-blooded and openly avowed Prussian. Once a man is born a German he is always a German, and in taking out naturalisation papers he is only deliberately cheating the country which grants them, because, according to the Imperial law of his own

land, he cannot change his own nationality. So let us, once and for all, dismiss for ever the hollow farce of naturalisation, for its very act is one of fraud, and only attempted with some ulterior motive.

As regards "unnaturalised" Germans the inquirer may perhaps be permitted to ask why Baron von Ow-Wachendorf, a lieutenant in the Yellow Uhlans of Stuttgart, just under thirty years of age, was permitted to practise running in Hyde Park so as to fit himself for his military duties, and why was he on March 1st allowed to leave Tilbury for Holland to fight against us? Again, has not Mr. Ronald McNeill put rather a delicate problem before the Under-Secretary for War in asking, in the House, whether Count Ergon von Bassewitz and his brother, Count Adalbert von Bassewitz, were brought to England as prisoners of war; whether either was formerly on the Staff of the Germany Embassy in London, and well known in London Society; whether one, and which, of the two brothers was recently set at liberty, and is now at large in London; whether he was released on any and what conditions; and for what reason this German officer, possessing exceptional opportunities for obtaining information likely to be useful to the enemy, is allowed freedom in England at the present time.

The man-in-the-street who has, in the past, laughed at the very idea of spies—and quite justly, because he has been so cleverly misled and bamboozled by official assurances—has now begun to see that they do exist. He has read of a hundred cases abroad where spies have formed a vanguard of the invading German armies, and how no fewer than fifty-seven German spies were arrested and *convicted* in Switzerland during the month of August, therefore

he cannot disguise from himself that the same dastardly vanguard is already here among us. Then he at once asks, and very naturally too, why do the authorities officially protect them? What pro-German influence in high quarters can be at work to connive at our undoing? It is that which is to-day undermining public confidence. Compare our own methods with those of methodical matter-of-fact Germany? Are we methodical; are we thorough? The man-in-the-street who daily reads his newspaper—if he pauses or reflects—sees quite plainly that instead of facing the alien peril, those in authority prefer to allow us to sit upon the edge of the volcano, and have, indeed, already actually prepared public opinion to accept a disclaimer of responsibility if disaster happens. The whole situation is truly appalling. Little wonder is it that, because I should have dared to lay bare the canker in Britain's heart, I should be written to by despairing hundreds who have lost all confidence in certain of our rulers.

Some of these letters the reader may find of interest.

From one, written by a well-known gentleman living in Devonshire, I take the following, which arouses a new reflection. He says:

> "I may be wrong, but one important point seems to have been overlooked, viz. the daily publication of somewhat cryptic messages and advertisements appearing in the Personal Columns of the British Press. For instance:
>
> "'M.—Darling. Meet as arranged. Letter perfect. Should I also write? To "the Day, and Kismet."—Vilpar.'
>
> "Such a message may be, as doubtless it is, perfectly innocent; but what is to prevent spies in our

midst utilising this method of communicating information to the enemy. The leading British newspapers are received in Germany, and even the enclosed pseudo-medical advertisement may be the message of a traitor. It seems to me that the advertisement columns of our Press constitute the safest medium for the transmission of information.

"Pray do not think I am suggesting that the British Press would willingly lend their papers to such an infernal use, but unless they are exercising the strictest precautions the loophole is there. I am somewhat impressed by the number of refugees to be found in these parts—Ilfracombe, Combe Martin, Lynton, etc., coast towns and villages of perhaps minor strategic importance, but situated on the Bristol Channel and facing important towns like Swansea, Cardiff, etc. I notice particularly that their daily walks abroad are usually taken along the coastal roads. I've never met them inland. Apologising for the length of this letter and trusting that your splendid efforts will in due time receive their well-deserved reward."

Here my correspondent has certainly touched upon a point which should be investigated. We know that secret information is daily sent from Great Britain to Berlin, and we also know some of the many methods adopted.

Indeed, I have before me, as I write, a spy's letter sent from Watford to Amsterdam, to be collected by a German agent and reforwarded to Berlin. It is written upon a column of a London daily newspaper, various letters of which are ticked in red ink in several ways, some being underlined, some crossed, some dotted underneath—a very ingenious code indeed—but one which has, happily, been decoded by an expert. This newspaper, after the message had been written upon it, had been placed in a news-

paper-wrapper and addressed to an English name in Amsterdam. This is but one of the methods. Another is the use of invisible ink with which spies

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HAVE ADOPTED MR. LE QUEUX'S SUGGESTION

"German Spies in England," by William Le Queux. Published February 17th, 1915.

The first step to stop the activity of spies should be the absolute closing of the sea routes from these shores to all persons, excepting those who are vouched for by the British Foreign Office. Assume that the spy is here; how are we to prevent him getting out?

By closing the sea routes to all who could not produce to our Foreign Office absolutely satisfactory guarantees of their *bona fides*. The ordinary passport system is not sufficient; the Foreign Office should demand, and see that it gets, not only a photograph, but a very clear explanation of the business of every person who seeks to travel from England to the Continent, backed by unimpeachable references from responsible British individuals, banks, or firms.

In every single case of application for a passport it should be personal, and the most stringent inquiries should be made. I see no other means of putting an end to a danger which, whatever the official apologists may say, is still acute, and shows no signs of diminishing.

Under the best of conditions some leakage may take place. But our business is to see, by every means we can adopt, that the leakage is reduced to the smallest possible proportions.

"Daily Mail," March 11th, 1915

Holiday-makers or business men who wish to travel to Holland now find that their preliminary arrangements include much more than the purchase of a rail and steamship ticket.

New regulations, which came into force on Monday, necessitate not only a passport, but a special permit to travel from the Home Office. Application for this permit must be made in person three clear days before sailing. Passport, photograph, and certificate of registration must be produced and the names and addresses of two British subjects furnished as references.

The Home Office erected a special building for this department, which was opened on Thursday last, the first day on which application could be made. Before lunch over 250 applications had been received. By four o'clock, the official hour for closing, nearly 500 persons had been attended to, and the crowd was even then so great that the doors had to be closed to prevent any more entering. Intending travellers included British, French, and Dutch business men, but quite a large number of Belgian refugees attended for permits to return to their country. The Tilbury route was the only one open to them. Not all the applications were granted. It is necessary to furnish reasonable and satisfactory evidence as to the object of the journey, and some of the applicants were unable to do this.

write their messages upon the pages of newspapers and magazines. A third is, no doubt, the publication of cryptic advertisements, as suggested by my correspondent.

Of other means of communication, namely, night-

signalling—of which I have given my own personal experience in the previous chapter—my correspondents send me many examples.

The same code-signal as a prefix—the letters "S. M."—are being seen at points as far distant as Herne Bay and Alnwick, on both the Yorkshire and Fifeshire coasts, above Sidmouth and at Ilfracombe. Dozens of reports of night-signalling lie before me—not mere statements of fancied lights, but facts vouched for by three and four reliable witnesses. Yet, in face of it all, the authorities pooh-pooh it, and in some counties we have been treated to the ludicrous spectacle of the civil and military authorities falling at loggerheads over it!

Belgian refugees writing to me have, in more than one instance, reported highly interesting facts. In one case an ex-detective of the Antwerp police, now a refugee in England, has identified a well-known German spy who was in Antwerp before the Germans entered there, and who came to England in the guise of a refugee! This individual is now in an important town in Essex, while my informant is living in the same town. Surely such a case is one for searching inquiry, and the more so because the suspect poses as an engineer, and is in the employ of a firm of engineers who do not suspect the truth. But before whom is my friend, the Belgian ex-detective, to place his information?

True, he might perhaps lay the information before the Chief Constable of the County of Essex, but in his letter to me he asks, and quite naturally, is it worth while? If the Intelligence Department of the War Office—that Department so belauded in the House of Commons by Mr. McKenna on March 3rd—refuses to investigate the case of signalling in Surrey, cited in the last chapter, and vouched for by

the officers themselves, then what hope is there that they would listen to the report of a mere refugee—even though he be an ex-detective ?

As I turn over report after report before me I see another which seems highly suspicious. A hard-up German doctor—his name, his address, and many facts are given—living at a Kent coast town, where he was a panel doctor, suddenly, on the outbreak of war, removes to another Kent coast town not far from Dover, takes a large house with grounds high up overlooking the sea, and retires from practice. My informant says he has written to the Home Office about it, but as usual no notice has been taken of his letter.

Another correspondent, a well-known shipowner, writing me from one of our seaports in the north, asks why the German ex-consul should be allowed to remain in that city and do shipping business ostensibly with Rotterdam ? By being allowed his freedom he can obtain full information as to what is in progress at this very important Scotch port, and, knowing as we do that every German consul is bound to send secret information to Berlin at stated intervals, it requires but little stretch of one's imagination to think what happens. But the matter has already been reported to the police and found to be, as elsewhere, nobody's business. Phew ! One perspires to think of it !

Take another example—that of a German hotel-keeper who, living on the coast north of the Firth of Forth, was proved to have tapped the coast-guard telephone, and yet he was allowed to go free !

A lady, well known in London society, writes to me requesting me to assist her, and says : "I have been working for five months to get a very suspicious case looked into, and all the satisfaction I get

is that ' the party is being watched.' I *know* to what extent this same person has been working against my country and I should much appreciate an interview with you. I could tell you very much that would be of great benefit to the country, but it of course falls on deaf ears—officially."

Another correspondent asks why Germans, naturalised or unnaturalised, are allowed to live in the vicinity of Herne Bay when none are allowed either at Westgate or Margate. In this connection it is curious that it is from Herne Bay the mysterious night-signals already described first appear, and are then transmitted to various parts of the country.

In another letter the grave danger of allowing foreign servants to be employed at various hotels at Plymouth is pointed out, and it is asked whether certain houses in that city are not hot-beds of German intrigue. Now with regard to this aspect of affairs Mr. McKenna, answering Mr. Fell in Parliament on March 10th, said he had no power to impose conditions on the employment of waiters, British or alien, and so the suggested notice outside hotels employing aliens was not accepted.

From Tunbridge Wells two serious cases of suspicion are reported, and near Tenterden, in Kent, there undoubtedly lives one of our "friends" the night-signallers, while in a certain village in Sussex the husband of the sub-postmistress is a German, whose father, a tradesman in a neighbouring town, I hear, often freely ventilates his patriotism to his Fatherland.

That the "pirate" submarines are receiving petrol in secret is an undoubted fact. At Swansea recently a vessel bound for Havre was found to have taken on board as part of her stores 400 gallons of petrol. She was not a motor-boat, and the

Customs authorities were very properly suspicious, but the captain insisted that the petrol was wanted as stores, and that there were no means by which we could prevent that petrol going. Where did it go to ? There were boats no doubt in the neighbourhood which wanted petrol. *They were enemy submarines* !

Of isolated reports of espionage, and of the work of Germany's secret agents, dozens lie before me, many of which certainly call for strictest investigation. But who will do this work if the " authorities " so steadily refuse, in order to bamboozle the public, to perform their duty ?

Some of these reports are accompanied by maps and plans. One is from a well-known solicitor, who is trustee for an estate in Essex where, adjoining, several men a month or so ago purchased a small holding consisting of a homestead and a single acre of land. They asserted that they had come from Canada, and having dug up the single acre in question for the purpose of growing potatoes, as they say, they are now living together, their movements being highly suspicious. On more than one occasion mysterious explosions have been heard within the house—which is a lonely one, and a long way from any other habitation.

The wife of a well-known Scotch Earl who has been diligent in making various inquiries into suspicious cases in Scotland, and has endeavoured to stir up the authorities to confirm the result of her observations, has written to me in despair. She has done her best, alas ! without avail.

And again, in yet another case, the widow of an English Earl, whose name is as a household word, has written to me reporting various matters which have come to her notice and deploring that no heed

has been taken of her statements by the supine "powers-that-be."

Beside this pile of grave reports upon my table, I have opened a big file of reports of cases of espionage which reached me during the year 1909. In the light of events to-day they are, indeed, astounding.

Here is one, the name and address of my correspondent I do not here print, but it is at the disposal of the authorities. He says:

"Staying recently at North Queensferry I made the acquaintance of a young German, who was there, he informed me, for quiet and health reasons. He was a man of rather taciturn and what I put down to eccentric disposition, for he spoke very little, and, from the time he went away in the morning early, he never put in an appearance until dusk. One day, as was my wont, I was sitting in the front garden when I noticed a fair-sized red morocco notebook lying on the grass. I picked it up, and on my opening it up, what was my surprise and amazement to find that it was full to overflowing with sketches and multitudinous information regarding the Firth of Forth. All the small bays, buoys, etc., together with depth of water at the various harbour entrances at high and low tide, were admirably set out. I also found, neatly folded up, a letter addressed to my friend which had contained an enclosure of money from the German Government. I hesitated no longer, for I sent notebook, etc., to the authorities at London. Three days after I had sent the letter off, a stranger called to see my friend the German. They both left together, and I have never heard any more about it since. The German's trunk still lies at North Queensferry awaiting its owner's return."

The following reached me on March 11th:

"I note what you mention regarding Weybourne

in Norfolk, and would trespass on your time to relate an occurrence which took place about the autumn of 1908, when I was living at Overstrand. I had walked over to Weybourne and was about to return by train when two men, dressed more or less as tramps, entered the station to take their tickets; they were followed by a tall, handsome man, unmistakably a German officer, who spoke to them, looked at their tickets and walked straight up the platform. The men sat down on a bench to wait for the train, and I took a seat near them with a view to overhearing their conversation. It appeared to be in German dialect and little intelligible. The officer, meanwhile, who had reached the end of the platform, turned round and, quickening his steps, came and placed himself directly in front of us: the men at once were silent, and the officer remained where he was, casting many scowls in my direction. On the following day I met him, on this occasion alone, on the pathway leading from the 'Garden of Sleep' to Overstrand. He recognised me at once, scowled once again, and passed on to the Overstrand Hotel. I mentioned the subject to a gentleman resident in Overstrand, who asked me to write an account of the matter to be placed before the War Office, but I believe that my friend forgot to forward the paper. A retired officer in Cromer informed me that the German officer in question was well known as the head of the German spies in the neighbourhood. Some questions happened to be asked in the House of Commons that very week as to the existence of spies in Norfolk. The Home Secretary, the present Lord Gladstone, I think, replied to these in the manner which might be expected of him.

"From the first I recognised the fact that the men were spies. I imagined that they had been surveying, at Weybourne, but in the light of recent events I think a *gun emplacement* or a *petrol store* may have been their 'objective.' The two men were rather

undersized, badly dressed, and more or less covered with mud, probably mechanics. One I remember had extraordinary teeth, about the size of the thickness of one's little finger. The officer, as I have said, was a fine man, broad and well-proportioned, from thirty to forty years of age. Oddly enough I thought that I recognised him recently on a cinematograph film depicting the staff of the German Emperor. I left the neighbourhood not long after, otherwise I should certainly have made further investigations, convinced as I was of the shady nature of these individuals. The officer, I am sure, recognised that I was a detective."

Another report is from a steward on a liner, who writes :

"At the Queen's Hotel, at Leith, one day I overheard these words from a man speaking in German. 'What's this ! Your Highness's servants—when did they come North ? ' Now one of these I have met several times. I have travelled with him from Antwerp, and I was in his company between Leith and London. He was of a cheerful disposition, and played the violin well, but would not allow any one to go into his cabin, not even the steward ! One day, while he was playing to the passengers on the promenade deck, and the sailors were washing down the poop deck, I had to go into his berth to shut his port-hole; to my surprise I found that he had been working out the draft of a plan, and was marking in the coast defence stations, and all the information he had obtained from the ship's officers and passengers. There were also various other drawings of the Forth and other bridges, and plans of the sea coast from the Firth of Forth to Yarmouth, while in his box were all kinds of mathematical instruments, together with some envelopes addressed to Count von X. [the name is given] of Bremen. He told me that he was going to London for a year's engagement

at a music hall, yet, strangely enough, two weeks later I found this same German on the Carron Company's steamer *Avon* bound for Grangemouth. For some time I lost all trace of him, but last October I met the same German at the new Dock at Kirkcaldy, posing as a photographer. At that time the name on his bag was H. Shindler. We had a drink together, but, on my asking why he had changed his profession, he laughed mysteriously, and admitted that he had made a long tour of England and Wales, taking many interesting pictures. Each time I met him he had considerably altered his appearance, and the last I saw of him was when I saw him into the train on his way to Dunfermline."

Yet another I pick out at haphazard. It is from an actor whose name is well known, and is, as are all the others, at the disposal of any official inquirers. He writes to me:

"I was engaged to play in the 'panto' of 'Sinbad the Sailor.' We were to rehearse and play a week at the 'Prince's Theatre,' Llandudno. I was in the habit of visiting a certain barber's shop, and was always attended to by a German assistant. He seemed a man of about forty years of age, and his name was K—— [the actual name is given]. On the first Saturday of my sojourn in the place I called at the shop, along with another member of our company. When about to leave, my 'pal' and myself were rather startled by the 'attendant' inviting the two of us to come for a drive on the following day, Sunday. Naturally we accepted the invitation, at the same time thinking it rather strange that a man earning say 30*s.* a week could afford such a luxury as a drive. At noon, next day, my friend and I turned up at the rendezvous, and sure enough our friend was there with a *landau* and pair. This was certainly doing the 'big thing,' but more was to follow.

"We drove to Conway, stabled there, and then went for a stroll round the picturesque old castle. Our friend then proposed that we adjourn for something to eat, so, as our appetites were a bit keen by this time, we went to the 'White Hart Hotel.' Here another surprise awaited us, for dinner was all set and ready. And what a dinner! My 'pal' and I had visions of a huge bill, but on our friend squaring the amount we sat in open-mouthed surprise.

"By this time we were anxious to know a little about our 'host,' but not until he had had a few brandy-and-sodas did he tell us much. He then said he had some estates in Germany, and ultimately confessed (in strict confidence) that he held an important Government appointment. After a few hours in Conway we drove back to Llandudno, and as our friend of the 'soap and brush' was in a hilarious mood, nothing would do but that we drive to his rooms. And what rooms! Fit for a prince! We had a splendid supper followed by wine and cigars. He then proceeded to show my friend and me a great number of photographs (all taken by himself, he explained) of all the coast mountains and roads for many miles around Llandudno. It was not till we mentioned the affair to some gentlemen in Llandudno that we were informed that our barber friend was, in all probability, a spy in the pay of the German Government!"

Here is another, from a correspondent at Glasgow:

"Down by the shipping, along the Clydeside, are many barbers' shops, etc., owned by foreigners, and in one of these I think I have spotted an individual whose movements and behaviour entitle me to regard him as a spy. The party in question is a German of middle age, a man of remarkably refined appearance—in fact, not the class of man that one would ordinarily associate with a barber's shop. One has but to engage him in conversation to dis-

cover that he is no stupid foreigner, but a man very much up to date as regards our methods and things happening in this country. Our language, too, he speaks like a native, and, were it not for his markedly Teutonic features, he might pass for one of ourselves.

"What excited my suspicions first regarding this personage was the fact that he was continually quizzing and putting to me questions regarding my employment of a decidedly delicate nature, and conversing freely on subjects about which I thought few people knew anything. I also noticed, when in his shop, that he was most lavish in his remarks to customers, especially to young engineers and draughtsmen who came to him from the neighbouring shipbuilding yards, leading them on to talk about matters concerning the Navy and shipbuilding; their work in the various engineering shops and drawing offices; and the time likely to be taken to complete this or that gunboat, etc. Indeed, with some of these young engineers and draughtsmen I have not failed to notice that he is particularly 'chummy,' and I also know, for a fact, that on several occasions he has been 'up town' with them, visiting music halls and theatres, and that they have spent many evenings together. On these occasions no doubt, under the influence of liquor, many confidences will have been exchanged, and many 'secrets' regarding work and methods indiscreetly revealed.

"But so much for the above. On surmise alone my conclusions regarding this man might have been entirely wrong, but for the fact that I, one evening, met with a former employee of his, also a German, in another barber's shop in the city. This youngster, evidently nursing a grievance against his late employer for something or other, was quick to unburden himself to me regarding him, and gave me the following particulars. He said that his late master was not what he appeared to be, and that his barbering was all a blind to cover something else; in fact

(and this he hinted pretty broadly) that his presence over here in this country was for no good. He further said that he was still a member of the German Army (although in appearance he looks to be long past military service), and that regularly money was sent to him from Berlin; that he was an agent for the bringing in to this country of crowds of young Germans, male and female, who came over here to learn our language and study our methods; that his shop was the rendezvous for certain members of his own nationality, who met there periodically at night for some secret purpose which he had never been able to fathom; that he was often away from the shop for weeks at a time, no one knew where, the business in his absence then being looked after by a brother. In addition to the above, I may say that the walls of his shop are positively crowded with pictures of such celebrities as Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, General French, etc., etc., the face of the Kaiser being a noticeable absentee, doubtless on purpose. He likes you, too, to believe in his affection for this country, which he openly parades, although I am told that in private he sneers at us, at our soldiers and people. From the above, I think I have established my case against this wily Teuton, who, while masquerading as a barber, is yet all the time here for a totally different purpose, *i.e.* to spy upon us."

How a German secret agent altered a British military message is told by another of my correspondents, who says:

"The time of the incident was during the visit of the Kaiser to the Earl of Lonsdale at Lowther Castle. I was employed at an hotel in Keswick, and my duties were to look after a billiard-room. Among my customers was a foreign gentleman, who was always rather inquisitive if any military matter

was under discussion, and our many chats brought us on very friendly terms. Well, about the last week of the Emperor's visit, the Earl of Lonsdale arranged a drive for the Emperor and the house-party for the purpose of letting them see the English Lake District. The route lay via Patterdale, Windermere, Thirlmere, then on to Keswick, from there by train to Penrith, and again drive the three or four miles back to Lowther Castle.

"It must be remembered that, the Emperor's visit being a private one, military displays would be out of place, but on the day of the above-mentioned drive a telegram was received from the officer in command of the Penrith Volunteers asking if permission could be granted for the volunteers to mount a guard of honour at the station on the arrival of the Emperor's train at Penrith. Now, as I was going up home to the 'Forge' I met my father coming to Keswick, and as he seemed out of wind, I undertook to take his message, which was the reply to the above 'wire.' The text of the answer only contained two words, which were to the point: Certainly not,' and signed by the commanding officer at headquarters. When I got within half a mile of Keswick I was overtaken by my foreign acquaintance, who was on a bicycle, and on his asking me why I was hurrying, I told him I had a rather urgent 'wire' to send. He kindly undertook to have it despatched, as he was passing the Post Office, and I unsuspectingly consented. On the arrival of the royal train at Penrith you may judge the surprise and disgust of the officers, some of whom had in private travelled in the royal train, to see the volunteers lining the station approach! Inquiries were made—the post office authorities produced the telegram, as handed in, with the word 'not' carefully erased, making the message mean the opposite. I never from that day saw my foreign friend again, but many times have wondered was it one of the Kaiser's wishes to see if his agents could

play a trick on the volunteers for his own eyes to see!"

Here is a curious story of a German commercial spy, the writer of which gives me his *bona fides*. He writes:

"In a glucose factory where I worked, the head of the firm had a bookkeeper who went wrong. If that bookkeeper had never gone wrong, we should never have known of the German who worked hard in England for a whole year for nothing. One day the head—I'll call him Mr. Brown for short—received a letter from a young German saying that he would like to represent the glucose manufacturer among the merchants of this country, whose trade, he said, he could secure. He said he would be willing to postpone the consideration of salary pending the result of his services. Well, Brown turned the German over to the bookkeeper, who found that the German had splendid credentials from his own country. So Brown told the bookkeeper to engage the German, and pay him £40 a month to start. At the end of six months the German's service had proved so satisfactory that Brown told his bookkeeper to pay the German £50 a month till further notice; and three months later the salary was again raised by Brown to £60. Along about the time the German's year was up, he suddenly disappeared. That is, he failed one morning to put in an appearance at the office at the usual time. Brown noticed that morning that his bookkeeper, who was also cashier, was extremely absent-minded and looked altogether unhappy. 'What's the matter with you?' said Brown, addressing the bookkeeper. 'This is the matter,' was the reply, and thereupon the bookkeeping cashier laid before his employer a cheque for hundreds of pounds. It was made payable to the order of the absent German, and was signed with

the personal signature of the bookkeeper. 'What's this mean?' asked Brown. 'It means,' said the wild-eyed bookkeeper, 'that I have never paid that German his salary—not one penny in all the time he has been here. He never asked for money, always had plenty, so I pocketed from month to month the money due to him. But it's killing me. I didn't need to do it. I just couldn't resist the temptation. I had money of my own, and knew I could pay him any time. Yesterday when you said that I must again raise his salary I realised for the first time the enormity of the thing I was doing. I resolved to tell the German the whole story this morning, and give him his money in full. This is the cheque for the money I have stolen from him. I have money in the bank to meet it. I want him to have it, I don't care what follows.' Brown, gazing spellbound at his clerk, said: 'But I don't understand. Did the German never ask for his salary?' 'No,' replied the bookkeeper. 'He always had money; he seemed only to want the situation—to be connected with this house; he has some mysterious influence over the German trade in this country.' A weather-beaten man in a sea-jacket an hour or two later unceremoniously shuffled into the office. He handed Brown a note, who read it aloud: 'I am aboard ship by this time,' the letter said, 'bound for my country. Receive my sincere regrets at the abrupt termination of our pleasant relations. Through connection with your firm, I have found out the secret of glucose-making, and am going back to impart it to the firm which I belong to in Germany. You owe me nothing."

These few cases I print here because I think it but right to show that both before the war, and since, the public have not been so utterly blinded to the truth as the authorities had hoped.

Many of the other cases before me are of such a character that I do not propose to reveal them

to the public, still hoping against hope that proper inquiry may be instituted by a reliable Board formed to deal with the whole matter. And, for obvious reasons, premature mention of them might defeat the ends of justice by warning the spies that their " game " is known.

I here maintain that there is a peril—a very grave and imminent peril—in attempting to further delude the public, and, by so doing, further influence public opinion.

The seed of distrust in the Government has, alas ! been sown in the public mind, and each day, as the alien question is evaded, it takes a firmer and firmer root.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PERIL OF INVASION

THERE are few questions upon which experts differ more profoundly than that of a possible invasion of this country by Germans.

Here, in England, opinion may be roughly divided into two schools. It is understood generally that the naval authorities assert that the position of our Fleet is such that even a raid by say ten thousand men, resolved to do us the greatest possible damage and cause the maximum of alarm even if the penalty be annihilation, is out of the question. On the other hand, the military authorities hold the view—a view expressed to me by the late Lord Roberts—that it would be quite possible for the Germans to land a force in Great Britain which would do an enormous amount of damage, physically and morally, before it was finally rounded up and destroyed by the overwhelming numbers of troops we could fling against it.

What we think of the matter, however, is of less importance than what the enemy thinks, and it is beyond question that, at any rate until quite recently, the German War Staff regarded the invasion of England as perfectly practicable, and had made elaborate plans for carrying out their project.

When writing my forecast "The Invasion of England," in 1905, I received the greatest advice and kind assistance from the late Lord Roberts, who spent many hours with me, and who personally revised and elaborated the German plan of campaign which I had supposed. Without his assistance the book would never have been written. I am aware of the strong views he held on the subject, and how indefatigable he was in endeavouring to bring the grave peril of invasion home to an apathetic nation. Poor "Bobs"! The public laughed at him and said: "Yes, of course. He is getting so old!"

Old! When I came home from the last Balkan War I brought him some souvenirs from the battlefields of Macedonia, and he sent me a telegram to meet him at 8 a.m. at a quiet West End hotel—where he was in the habit of staying. I arrived at that hour and he grasped my hand, welcomed me back from many months of a winter campaign with the Servian headquarters staff, and, erect and smiling, said: "Now, let's talk. I've already done my correspondence and had my breakfast. I was up at half-past five,"—when I had been snoring!

Roberts was a soldier of the old school. He knew our national weakness, and he knew our stubborn stone-wall resistance. After the outbreak of war he told me that he would deplore racing, football, and cricket—our national sports—while we were at death-grips with Germany, because, as he put it, if we race and play games, the people will not take this world-war seriously. Then he turned in his chair in my room, and, looking me straight in the face, said: "What did I tell you, Le Queux, when you were forecasting 'The Invasion'—that

the British nation will not be awakened by us—but only by a war upon them. They are at last awakened. I will never seek to recall the past, but my duty is to do my best for my King and my Country."

And so he died—cut off at a moment when he was claiming old friendship of those from India whom he knew so well. The night before he left England to go upon the journey to the front which proved fatal, he wrote me a letter—which I still preserve—deploring the atrocities which the Germans had committed in Belgium.

Ever since the war broke out we have heard of great concentration of troops, and ships intended to carry them, at Wilhelmshaven and Cuxhaven, a strong indication that something in the nature of a raid was in contemplation. It is quite possible that opinion, both in Germany and in this country, has been very profoundly modified by the fate which befell the last baby-killing expedition launched against our eastern coasts, which came to grief through the vigilance of Admiral Beatty. The terrible mauling sustained by the German squadron, the loss of the *Blucher* and the battering of the *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger*, may have done a good deal to drive home into the German mind the conviction that in the face of an unbeaten—and to Germany unbeatable—battle-fleet, the invasion of England would be, at the very best, an undertaking of the most hazardous nature which would be foredoomed to failure and in which the penalty would be annihilation.

Perhaps, however, the enemy are only waiting. We know from German writings that the plans for the invasion of England have usually postulated that our Fleet shall be, for the time being, absent

from the point of danger, probably out of home waters altogether, and that the attack would be sprung upon us as a surprise. We do not know, and we do not seek to know, the exact position of the British Fleet, but we can be perfectly certain that, with the invention of wireless, the moment at which the Germans might have sprung a surprise upon us has gone for ever. There is good reason for believing that the Germans intended to strike at us without any formal declaration of war, and I have been informed, on good authority, that before war broke out, certain dispositions had actually been made which were brought to naught only by a singularly bold and daring manœuvre on the part of our naval authorities. No doubt, in the course of time, this incident, with many others of a similar nature, will be made public. I can only say at present that when the startling truth becomes known, further evidence will be forthcoming that Germany deliberately planned the war, and was ready to strike long before war was declared.

People who say that an invasion of our shores is impossible usually do so with the reservation, expressed or implied, that the effort would be unsuccessful—that is, that it could not succeed so far as to compel Britain to make peace. But, even if the Germans believe this as firmly as we do, it by no means follows that they may not make the attempt.

It is a part of the Germans' theory and practice to seek, by every possible means, to create a panic, to do the utmost moral and material damage by the most inhuman and revolting means, and it is more than likely that they would hold the loss of even fifty or sixty thousand men as cheap indeed, if, before they were destroyed, they could, if only

for a few days, vent German wrath and hatred on British towns and on British people.

To say they could not do this would be exceedingly foolish. Few people would be daring enough to say that it would be impossible for the Germans, aided undoubtedly by spies on shore, to land suddenly in the neighbourhood of one of the big East Coast towns a force strong enough to overpower, for the moment, the local defences, and establish itself—if only for a few days—in a position where it could lay waste with fire and sword a very considerable section of country. And we must never forget that, if ever the Germans get the chance, their atrocious treatment of the British population will be a thousand times worse than anything they have done in France and Belgium. That fact ought to sink deeply into the public mind. A German Expedition into this country would be undertaken with the one definite object of striking terror and producing a panic which would force our Government to sue for peace. To secure that end, the Germans would spare neither young nor old—every man, woman, and child within their power would be slaughtered without mercy, and without regard for age or sex. We have heard something, though not all, of the infamies perpetrated by German troops upon the helpless Belgians even before the world had realised how much Belgium had done to foil their plans. And we must not overlook the fact that certain German officers—enjoying the services of valets and other luxuries at Donington Hall, fitted up by us at a cost of £13,000—were those who ordered the wholesale massacre of women and children. We relieve the poor Belgian refugees, and caress their murderers.

If the flood-gates of German hatred were opened

upon us, what measure would the enemy mete out to us who, as they now bitterly realise, have stood between the Kaiser and his megalomaniac dreams ? I do not think we need be in any doubt as to what the German answer to that question would be !

Recent events have made it vividly apparent that the Germans have already reached a pitch of desperation in which they are willing to try any and every scheme which, at whatever cost to themselves, offered a prospect of injuring their enemies. They feel the steel net slowly, but very surely, tightening around them ; like caged wild beasts they are flinging themselves frantically at the bars, now here, now there, in mad paroxysms of rage. Their wonderful military machine, if it has not absolutely broken down, is at any rate badly out of gear, though there is a huge strength still left in it. Their vaunted fleet skulks behind fortifications, and whenever it ventures to poke its head outside is hit promptly and hit hard. Their boasted Zeppelins, which were to lay ever so many " eggs " on London, have certainly, up to the time of writing, failed utterly.

We frequently hear the man-in-the-street jeer at the Zeppelin peril, and declare that it is only a " bogey " raised to frighten us. To a certain extent I think it is, but the fact that Zeppelins have not yet appeared over London is, surely, no reason why they should not come and commit havoc and cause panic as the vanguard of the raid which may be intended upon us. There is much in our apathy which is more than foolish—it is criminal. Had the country, ten years ago, listened to the warnings of Lord Roberts and others, instead of being immersed in their own pleasure-seeking and money-grubbing, we should have had no war. The public, who are happily to-day filled with a spirit of patriotism

because they have learnt wisdom by experience, now realise their error. They see how utterly foolish they were to jeer at my warnings in the *Daily Mail*; and by singing in the music halls "Are we Down-'earted—No!" they have gallantly admitted it—as every Britisher admits where he is wrong—and have come forward to stem the tide of barbarians who threaten us.

As one who has done all that mortal man can do to try to bring home to his country a sense of its own danger, and who, by the insidious action of "those in power," narrowly escaped financial ruin for *daring* to be a patriot, I cast the past aside and rejoice in the fine spirit of the younger generation of men, actuated by the fact that they are still Britons.

But, after this war, there will be men—men whose names are to-day as household words—who must be indicted before the nation for leading us into the trap which Germany so cunningly prepared for us. Those are men who knew, by the Kaiser's declaration in 1908, what was intended, and while posing as British statesmen—save the mark!—lied to the public, and told them that Germany was our best friend, and that war would never be declared—"not in our time."

There will be a day, ere long, when the pro-German section of what Britons foolishly call their "rulers"—certain members of that administration who are now struggling to atone for their past follies in being misled by the cunning of the enemy—will be arraigned and swept out of the public ken, as they deserve to be. The blood of a million mothers of sons in Great Britain boils at thoughts of the ghastly truth, and the wholesale sacrifice of their dear ones, because the diplomacy of Great Britain, with all

its tinsel, its paraphernalia of attachés, secretaries (first, second, and third), its entertainments, its fine " residences," its whisperings and jugglings, and its " conversations," was quite incapable of thwarting the German plot.

By our own short-sightedness we have been led into this conflict, in which the very lives of our dear ones and ourselves are at stake. Yet, to-day, we in England have not fully realised that we are at war. Illustrated papers publish fashion numbers, and the butterflies of the fair sex rush to adorn themselves in the latest *mode* from Paris—the capital of a threatened nation ! Stroll at any hour in any street in London, or any of our big cities. Does anything remind the thoughtful man that we are at war ? No. Our theatres, music halls, and picture palaces are full. Our restaurants are crowded, our night-clubs drive a thriving trade—and nobody cares for to-morrow.

Why ? Read the daily newspapers, and learn the lesson of how the public are being daily deluded by false assertions that all is well, and that we have great Imperial Germany—the country which has, for twenty years, plotted against us—in the hollow of our hand.

The public are not told the real truth, and there lies the grave scandal which must be apparent to every person in the country. But, I ask, will the malevolent influence which is protecting the alien enemy among us, and refusing to allow inquiry into spying, *ever permit the truth to be told* ?

Let the reader pause, and think.

Despite the cast-iron censorship, and the most docile Press the world has ever seen, the German people must, on the other hand, to-day be suspecting the truth. Germans may be braggarts, but they

are not fools, and it is safe to say that the hysterical spasms of hatred of Great Britain—by which the entire nation seems to be convulsed—have their origin in an ever-growing conviction of failure and a very accurate perception of where that failure lies.

In this frame of mind they may venture on anything, and it is for this reason that I believe they may yet, in spite of all that has happened, attempt a desperate raid on these shores.

What are we doing to meet that peril ?

CHAPTER IX

THE PERIL OF APATHY

THERE is an apathy towards any peril of invasion that is astounding.

Of our military measures, pure and simple, I shall say nothing except that it is the bounden duty of every Briton to place implicit reliance upon Lord Kitchener and the military authorities and, if necessary, to assist them by every means in his power. We can do no good by criticising measures of the true meaning of which we know nothing.

There are some other points, however, on which silence would be culpable, and one of these is the amazing lack of any clear instructions as to the duties of the civil population in the event of a German attack.

Now it is perfectly obvious that one of the first things necessary in the face of a German landing would be to get the civilian population safely beyond the zones threatened by the invaders. It is simply unthinkable that men, women, and children shall be left to the tender mercies of the German hordes. Yet, so far as I am able to ascertain, no steps have yet been taken to warn inhabitants at threatened points what they shall do. They have been *advised*, it is true, to continue in their customary avocations and to remain quietly at home. Does any sane human being, remembering the treatment of Belgian

civilians who just did this, expect that such advice will be followed ? We can take it for granted that it will not, and I contend that in all districts along the East Coast, where, it is practically certain, any attempt at landing must be made, the inhabitants should at once be told, in the clearest and most emphatic manner, just what is required of them, and the best and quickest way to get out of harm's way, leaving as little behind them as possible to be of any use to the invaders, and leaving a clear field of operations for our own troops.

A century ago, when the peril of a French invasion overshadowed the land, the most careful arrangements were made for removing the people from the threatened areas, and the destruction of food and fodder. Is there any reason why such arrangements should not be taken in hand to-day, and the people made thoroughly familiar with all the conditions necessary for carrying out a swift and systematic evacuation ?

I am aware, of course, that already certain instructions have been issued to Lord-lieutenants of the various counties in what may be called the zone of possible invasion. But I contend that the public at large should be told plainly what is expected of them. It is not enough to say that when the moment of danger comes they should blindly obey the local policeman. In the event of a withdrawal from any part of the coast-line becoming necessary, it ought not to be possible that the inhabitants should be taken by surprise ; their course ought to be mapped out for them quite clearly, and in advance, so that all will know just what they have to do to get away with the minimum of delay and without impeding the movements of our defensive forces. Whatever we may say or do, the appearance off the

British coast of a raiding German force would be the signal for a rush inland, and there is every reason to take steps for ensuring that that rush shall be orderly and controlled, and in no sense a blind and panic flight which would be alike unnecessary and disastrous. It may well be, and it is to be hoped, that the danger will never come. That does not absolve us from the necessity of being ready to meet it. War is an affair of surprises, and Germany has sprung many surprises upon the world since last August.

The refusal of the War Office authorities to extend any sympathetic consideration towards the new Civilian Corps, which are striving, despite official discouragement, to fit themselves for the duty of home defence in case the necessity should arise, is another instance of the lack of imagination and insight which has shown itself in so many ways during our conduct of the campaign. These Corps now number well over a million men. All that the Army Council has done for them is to extend to such of them as became affiliated to the Central Volunteer Training Association the favour of official "recognition" which will entitle them to rank as combatants in the event of invasion. Even that recognition is coupled with a condition that has given the gravest offence and which threatens, indeed, to go far towards paralysing the movement altogether.

It is in the highest degree important, as will readily be admitted, that these Corps should not interfere with recruiting for the Regular Army. That the Volunteers themselves fully recognise. But to secure this non-interference the Government have made it a condition of recognition that any man under military age joining a Corps shall sign

a declaration that he will enlist in the Regular Army when called upon unless he can show some good and sufficient reason why he should not do so.

Here we have the cause of all the trouble. The Army Council, in spite of all entreaties, obstinately refuses to state what constitutes a good and sufficient reason for non-enlistment. One such reason, it is admitted, is work on Government contracts. But it is impossible for us to shut our eyes to the fact that there are many thousands of men of military age and good physique who, however much they may desire to do their duty, are fully absolved by family or business reasons from the duty of joining the Regular Army. Many of them have dependents whom it is simply impossible for them to leave to the blank poverty of the official separation allowance; many of them are in businesses which would go to rack and ruin in their absence; many of them are engaged on work which is quite as important to the country as anything they could do in the field, even though they may not be in Government employ. To withdraw every able-bodied man from his employment would simply mean that industry would be brought to a standstill, and as this country must, to some extent, act as general provider for the Allies, it is, plainly, our duty to keep business going as well as to fight.

Rightly or wrongly, this particular provision is looked upon as an attempt to introduce a veiled form of compulsion. It has been pointed out that there is no power to compel men to enlist, even if they have signed such a declaration as is required. But the men, very properly, say that Britain has gone to war in defence of her plighted word, and that they are not prepared to give their word and then break it.

What is the result? Many thousands of capable

men, fully excused by their own consciences from the duty of joining the Regular Army, find that, unless they are prepared to take up a false and wholly untenable position, they are *not even allowed to train* for the defence of their country in such a grave crisis that all other considerations but the safety of the Empire must go by the board. I am not writing of the slackers who want to "swank about in uniform" at home when they ought to be doing their duty in the trenches. I refer to the very large body of genuinely patriotic men who, honestly and sincerely, feel that, whatever their personal wishes may be, their duty at the moment is to "keep things going" at home. For men over military age the Volunteer Corps offer an opportunity of getting ready to strike a blow for England's sake should the time ever come when every man who can shoulder a rifle must take his place in the ranks. And it certainly argues an amazing want of sympathy and foresight that, for the lack of a few words of intelligible definition, a splendid body of men should lose the only chance offered them of getting a measure of military education which in time to come may be of priceless value.

No one complains that the Army Council does not immediately rush to arm and equip the Volunteers. Undoubtedly, there is still much to be done in the way of equipping the regular troops and accumulating the vast reserves that will be required when the great forward move begins. Much could be done even now, however, to encourage the Volunteers to persevere with their training. It should not be beyond the power of the military authorities, in the very near future, to arm and equip such of the Corps as have attained a reasonable measure of

efficiency in simple military movements, and in shooting with the miniature rifle. At the same time some clear definition ought to be forthcoming of what, in the opinion of the Army Council, constitutes a valid reason, in the case of a man of military age, for not joining the regular forces. It is certain that when the time comes for the Allies to take a strong offensive we shall be sending enormous numbers of trained men out of the country, and, the wastage of war being what it is, huge drafts will be constantly required to keep the fighting units up to full strength. In the meantime large numbers of Territorials in this country are chained to the irksome—though very necessary—duty of guarding railways, bridges, and other important points liable to be attacked. There seems to be no good reason why a great deal, if not the whole, of this work should not be undertaken by Volunteers. This would free great numbers of Territorials for more profitable forms of training and would, undoubtedly, enable us to send far more men out of the country if the necessity should arise.

If the Volunteers were regarded by those in authority with the proper sympathy which their patriotism deserves, it would be seen that they provide, in effect, a class of troops closely corresponding to the German Landsturm, which is already taking its part in the war. It is important to remember that, up to the present time, we have enlisted none but picked men, every one of whom has had to pass a strict medical and physical examination. We have left untouched, in fact, our real reserves. Those reserves, apparently scorned by the official authorities, are capable, if they receive adequate encouragement, of providing an immense addition to our fighting forces.

No one pretends, of course, that the entire body of Volunteers whom we see drilling and route-marching day by day are capable of the exertions involved in a strenuous campaign. But a very large percentage of them are quite capable of being made fit to serve in a home-defence army, and it is a feeble and shortsighted policy to give them the official cold shoulder and nip their enthusiasm in the bud. At the present moment they cost nothing, and they are doing good and useful work. Is it expecting too much to suggest that their work should be encouraged with something a little more stimulating than a scarlet arm-band and a form of "recognition" which, upon close analysis, will be found to mean very little indeed?

There has been too strong a tendency in the past to praise, in immoderate terms, German methods and German efficiency. But, undoubtedly, there are certain things which we can learn from the enemy, and one of them is the speed and energy with which the Germans, at the present moment, are turning to their advantage popular enthusiasm of exactly the same nature as that which has produced the Volunteer movement here. It is a popular misconception that in a conscriptionist country every man, without distinction, is swept into the ranks for his allotted term. This is by no means the case. There are many reasons for exemption, and a very large proportion of the German people, when war broke out, had never done any military duty.

Travellers who have recently returned from Germany report that the Volunteer movement there has made gigantic strides. Men have come forward in thousands, and the Government, with German energy and foresight, has pounced upon

this splendid volume of material and is rapidly licking it into shape. I don't believe, for one moment, the highly coloured stories which represent Germany as being short of rifles, ammunition, and other munitions of war: she has, apparently, more than sufficient to arm her forces in the field and to permit her *to arm her volunteers as well.*

Whether I am right or wrong, the German Government is taking full advantage of the patriotic spirit of its subjects, and there does not appear to be any good reason why our Government should not take a leaf out of the enemy's book. If they would do so and help the Volunteer movement by sympathy and encouragement, and the assurance that more would be done at the earliest possible moment, we should be in a better condition to meet an invasion than we are to-day, in that we should have an enormous reserve of strength for use in case of emergency. No doubt the military authorities, after the most careful study of the subject, feel convinced that our safety is assured: my point is, that in a matter of such gravity it is impossible to have too great a margin of safety. It is no use blinking the fact that, despite the efforts we have made, and are making, the time may come when the entire manhood of the United Kingdom must be called upon to take part in a deadly struggle for national existence. Trustworthy reports state that the Germans are actually arming something over four million fresh troops—some of them have already been in action—and if this estimate prove well founded, it is quite clear that the crisis of the world-war is yet to come. I do not think any one will deny that when it does come we shall need every man we can get.

Closely allied with the subject of invasion are

the German methods of "frightfulness" by means of their submarines and aircraft. Of the latter, it would seem, we are justified in speaking with absolute contempt. Three attempts at air raids on our shores have been made, and though, unhappily, some innocent lives were lost through the enemy's indiscriminate bomb-dropping, the military effect up to the day I pen these lines has been absolutely nil, except to assist us in bringing more recruits to the colours. Several of the vast, unwieldy Zeppelins, of which the Germans boasted so loudly, have been lost either through gunfire or in gales, while we have official authority for saying that our own air-service is so incomparably superior to that of the enemy that the German aviators, like the baby-killers of Scarborough, seek safety in retreat directly they are confronted by the British fliers. No doubt the German airmen have their value as scouts and observers, but it is abundantly clear that, as a striking unit, they are hopelessly outclassed. They have done nothing to compare with the daring raids on Friedrichshafen and Düsseldorf, to say nothing of the magnificent and devastating attack by the British and French airmen on Zeebrugge, Ostend, and Antwerp.

The submarine menace stands on another and very different footing, for the simple reason that luck, pure and simple, enters very largely into the operations of the underwater craft. It is quite conceivable that, favoured by fortune and with a conveniently hidden base of supplies—one of which, a petrol-base, I indicated to the authorities on March 15th—either afloat or ashore, submarines might do an enormous amount of damage on our trade routes.

A few dramatic successes may, of course, pro-

duce a scare and send insurance and freight rates soaring. Moreover, the submarine is exceedingly difficult to attack: it presents a very tiny mark to gunfire, and when it sights a hostile ship capable of attacking it, it can always seek safety by submerging. But, when all is said and done, the number of German submarines, given all the good fortune they could wish, is quite inadequate seriously to threaten the main body of either our commerce or our Navy.

We are told, and quite properly, nothing of the methods which the Admiralty are adopting to deal with German pirates. But it will not have escaped the public attention that the submarines have scored no great success against British warships since the *Hawke* was sunk in the Channel. I think we may fairly conclude, therefore, that our Admiralty have succeeded in devising new means of defence against the new means of attack. We know that at the time of writing two enemy submarines have been sunk by the Navy, and it seems fairly certain that another was rammed and destroyed in the Channel by the steamer *Thordis*. Whatever, therefore, may be our views on the general subject of the war, it seems clear that we can safely treat the submarine menace as the product of the superheated Teutonic imagination.

We know of, and can guard against, the risks we run of any armed attack from Germany. But there is another peril which will face us when the war is over—a renewal of the commercial invasion which we have seen in progress on a gigantic scale for years past.

We know how the British market has, for years, been flooded with shoddy German imitations of British goods to the grave detriment of our home

trade. We know, too, how the German worker, over here "to learn the language," has wormed himself into the confidence of the foolish English employer, and has abused that confidence by keeping his real principals—those in Germany—fully posted with every scrap of commercial information which might help them to capture British trade. We know, though we do not know the full story, that hundreds of "British" companies have been, in fact, owned, organised, and controlled solely by Germans. We know that for years German spies and agents, ostensibly engaged in business here, have plotted our downfall.

Are we going to permit, when the war is over, a repetition of all this?

I confess I look upon this matter with the gravest uneasiness. It is all very well to say that after the war Germans will be exceedingly unpopular in every civilised community. That fact is not likely to keep out the German, who is anything but thin-skinned. And, I regret to say, there are only too many British employers who are likely to succumb to the temptation to make use of cheap German labour, regardless of the fact that they will thus be actively helping their country's enemies.

Germans to-day are carrying on business in this country with a freedom which would startle the public, if it were known. I will mention two instances which have come to my knowledge lately. The first is the case of a company with an English name manufacturing certain electric fittings. Up to the time the war broke out, every detail of this company's business was regularly transmitted once a week to Germany: copies of every invoice, every bill, every letter, were sent over. Though the concern was registered as an "English" company,

the proprietorship and control were purely and wholly German. That concern is carrying on business to-day, and in the city of London, protected, no doubt, by its British registration. And the manager is an Englishman who, before the war, explained very fully to my informant the entire system on which the business was conducted.

The second case is similar, with the exception that the manager is a German, at least in name and origin, who speaks perfect English, and is still, or was very recently, conducting the business. In this case, as in the first, every detail of the business was, before war broke out, regularly reported to the head office of the firm in Germany. I wonder whether English firms are being permitted to carry on business in Berlin to-day!

Whether we shall go on after the war in the old haphazard style of rule-of-thumb rests solely with public opinion. And if public opinion will tolerate the employment of German waiters in our hotels in time of war, I see very little likelihood of any effort to stay the German invasion which will, assuredly, follow the declaration of peace. Then we shall see again the unscrupulous campaign of commercial and military espionage which has cost us dear in the past, and may cost us still more in the future. Our foolish tolerance of the alien peril will be used to facilitate the war of revenge for which our enemy will at once begin to prepare.

CHAPTER X

THE PERIL OF STIFLING THE TRUTH

IGNORANCE of the real truth about the war—an ignorance purposely imposed upon us by official red-tape—is, I am convinced, the gravest peril by which our beloved country is faced at the present moment.

I say it is the gravest peril for the simple reason that it is the root-peril from which spring all the rest. And this ignorance springs not from official apathy, or from the public wilfully shutting its eyes to disagreeable truths. It is born of the deliberate suppression of unpleasant facts, of the deliberate and ridiculous exaggeration of minor successes. In a word, it is the result of the public having been fooled and bamboozled under the specious plea of safeguarding our military interests. Are we children to believe such official fairy-tales ? The country is not being told the truth about the war. I don't say, and I do not believe, that it is being fed with false news of bogus victories. But untruths can as easily be conveyed by suppression as by assertion, and no one who has studied the war with any degree of attention can escape the impression that the news presented to us day by day takes on, under official manipulation, a colour very much more favourable than is warranted by the actual facts.

Day after day the Press Bureau, of course under official inspiration from higher sources, issues statements in which the good news is unduly emphasised and the bad unduly slurred over. Day by day a large section of the Press helps on, with every ingenious device of big type and sensational headlines, the official hoodwinking of the public. Many pay their nimble halfpennies to be gulled. A naval engagement in which our immensely superior forces crush the weaker squadron of the enemy is blazoned forth as a "magnificent victory" for our fighting men, when, in sober truth, the chief credit lies with the silent and utterly forgotten strategist behind the scenes, whose cool brain worked out the eternal problem of bringing adequate force to bear at exactly the right time and in just exactly the right place.

I say no word to depreciate the heroism of our gallant bluejackets. They would fight as coolly when they were going to inevitable death—Cradock's men did in the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth*—as if they were in such overwhelming superiority that the business of destroying the enemy was little more dangerous than the ordinary battle-practice. My whole point is that by the skilful manipulation of facts a wholly false impression is conveyed. There is, in truth, nothing "magnificent" about beating a hopelessly inferior foe, and our sailors would be the last to claim to be heroes under such conditions. It is, of course, the business of our naval authorities to be ready whenever a German squadron shows itself, to hit at once with such crushing superiority of gunfire that there will be no need to hit again at the same object. That can only be achieved by sound strategy, for which we are entitled to claim and give the credit that is due. When our Navy has won a decisive success against great odds we

may be justified in talking of a "magnificent" victory. To talk of any naval success of the present war as a "magnificent victory" is simply to becloud the real, essential, vital facts, and to assist in deceiving a public which is being studiously kept in the dark.

By every means possible, short of downright lying of the German type, the public is being lulled into a false and dangerous belief that all is well—a blind optimism calculated to produce only the worst possible results, a state of mental and physical apathy which has already gone far to rob it of the energy and determination and driving force which are absolutely necessary if we are to emerge in safety from the greatest crisis that has faced our country in its thousand years of stormy history.

As an example of what the public are told concerning the enemy, a good illustration is afforded by a well-known Sunday paper dated March 7th. Here we find, among other headings in big type, the following: "Stake of Life and Death!" "Germany's Frantic Appeal for Greater Efforts!" "Russia's Hammer Blow." "German Offensive from East Prussia Ruined: Losses 250,000 in a Month." "German Plans Foiled: Enemy's 3,000,000 Losses." "On Reduced Rations: German Troops Getting Less to Eat." "Germany Cut Off from the Seas." "Germans Cut in Two: 15,000 Prisoners and 'Rich Booty' Taken." "Killed to Last Man: Appalling Austrian Losses." "The Verge of Famine: Bread Doles cut down again in Germany: Frantic Efforts to Stave Off Starvation."

And yet, in the centre of the paper, next to the leader, we find a huge advertisement headed "The Man to be Pitied," calling for recruits, appealing to their patriotism, and urging them to "Enlist

To-day." Surely it is the reader who is to be pitied!

Again, we have wilfully neglected the formation of a healthy public opinion in neutral countries. While Germany has, by every underhand means in her power, by wireless lies, and by bribery of certain newspapers in America and in Italy, created an opinion hostile to the Allies, we have been content to sit by and allow the disgraceful plot against us to proceed.

We have, all of us, read the screeches of the pro-German press in the United States, and in Italy the scandal of how Germany has bribed certain journals has already been publicly exposed. The Italians have not been told the truth by us, as they should have been. In Italy the greater section of the public are in favour of Great Britain and are ready to take arms against the hated Tedesco, yet on the other hand we have to face the insidious work of Germany's secret service and the lure of German gold in a country where, unfortunately, few men, from contadino to deputy, are above suspicion. We must not close our eyes to the truth that in neutral countries Germany is working steadily with all her underhand machinery of diplomacy, of the purchase of newspapers, of bribery and corruption and the suborning of men in high places. To what end? To secure the downfall of Great Britain!

I have myself been present at a private view of an amazing cinema film prepared at the Kaiser's orders and sent to be exhibited in neutral countries for the purpose of influencing opinion in favour of Germany. The pictures have been taken in the fighting zone, both in Belgium and in East Prussia. So cleverly have they been stage-managed that I here confess, as I sat gazing at them, I actually began to wonder

whether the stories told of German barbarities were, after all, true! Pictures were shown of a group of British prisoners laughing and smoking, though in the hands of their captors; of the kind German soldiery distributing soup, bread, etc., to the populace in a Belgian village; of soldiers helping the Belgian peasantry re-arrange their homes; of a German soldier giving some centimes to a little Belgian child; of great crowds in Berlin singing German national songs in chorus; of the marvellous organisation of the German army; of thousands upon thousands of troops being reviewed by the Kaiser, who himself approaches you with a salute and a kindly smile. It was a film that must, when shown in any neutral country—as it is being shown to-day all over the world—create a good impression regarding Germany, while people will naturally ask themselves why has not England made a similar attempt, in order to counteract such an insidious and clever illusion in the public mind.

Such a mischievous propaganda as that being pursued by Germany in all neutral countries we cannot to-day afford to overlook. Our enemy's intention is first to prepare public opinion, and then to produce dissatisfaction among the Allies by sowing discord. And yet from the eyes of the British nation the scales have not yet fallen! In our apathy in this direction I foresee great risk.

With these facts in view it certainly behoves us to stir ourselves into activity by endeavouring, ere it becomes too late, to combat Germany's growing prestige among other nations in the world, a prestige which is being kept up by a marvellous campaign of barefaced chicanery and fraud.

The dangerous delusion is prevalent in Great Britain that we are past the crisis, that everything

is going well and smoothly, perhaps even that the war will soon be over. In some quarters, even in some official quarters, people to-day are talking glibly of peace by the end of July, not openly, of course, but in the places where men congregate and exchange news "under the rose." The general public, taking its cue from the only authorities it understands or has to rely upon, the daily papers, naturally responds, with the eager desire of the human mind to believe what it wishes to be true. Hence there has grown up a comfortable sense of security, from which we shall assuredly experience a very rude awakening.

For, let there be no mistake about it, the war is very far from ended; indeed, despite our losses, we might almost say it has hardly yet begun. For eight months we have been "getting ready to begin." To-day we see Germany in possession of practically the whole of Belgium and a large strip of Northern France. With the exception of a small patch of Alsace, she preserves her own territory absolutely intact. Her fortified lines extend from the coast of Belgium to the border of Switzerland, and behind that seemingly impenetrable barrier she is gathering fresh hosts of men ready for a desperate defence when the moment comes, as come it must, for the launching of the Allies' attack. On her Eastern frontiers she has at least held back the Russian attack, she has freed East Prussia, and not a single soldier is to-day on German soil. I ask any one who may be inclined to undue optimism whether the situation is not one to call imperatively for the greatest effort of which the British nation and the British Empire are capable?

We are assured by the official inspirers of optimism that time is on the side of the Allies, and is working

steadily against the Germans. In a sense, of course, this is true, but it is not the whole truth. I place not the slightest reliance upon the stories industriously circulated from German sources of Germany being short of food; all the evidence we can get from neutrals who have just returned from Germany condemns them *in toto*. The Germans are a methodical and far-seeing people, and no doubt they are very rightly looking ahead and prudently conserving their resources. But that there is any real scarcity of either food or munitions of war there is not a trace of reliable evidence, and those journals, one of which I have quoted, which delight to represent our enemy as being in a state of semi-starvation are doing a very bad service to our country. The Germans can unquestionably hold out for a very considerable time yet, and we are simply living in a fool's paradise if we try to persuade ourselves to the contrary. If it were true that Germany is really short of food, that our blockade was absolutely effective, and that no further supplies could reach the enemy until the next harvest, it might be true to say that time was on the side of the Allies. But supposing, as I believe, that the tales of food shortage have been deliberately spread by the Germans themselves with the very definite object of working upon the sympathies of the United States, what position are we in? Here, in truth, we come down to a position of the very deepest gravity. It is a position which affects the whole conduct and conclusion of the war, and which cannot fail to exercise the most vital influence over our future.

Speaking at the Lord Mayor's banquet last November, Mr. Asquith said:

"We shall never sheathe the sword, which we have not lightly drawn, until Belgium recovers in

full measure all, and more than all, she has sacrificed ; until France is adequately secure against the menace of aggression ; until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed on an unassailable foundation ; and until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed."

Those noble words, in which the great soul of Britain is expressed in half a dozen lines, should be driven into the heart and brain of the Empire. For they are, indeed, a great and eloquent call to Britain to be up and doing. Four months later, Mr. Asquith repeated them in the House of Commons, adding :

" I hear sometimes whispers—they are hardly more than whispers—of possible terms of peace. Peace is the greatest of all blessings, but this is not the time to talk of peace. Those who do so, however excellent their intentions, are, in my judgment, the victims, I will not say of a wanton but a grievous self-delusion. The time to talk of peace is when the great purposes for which we and our Allies embarked upon this long and stormy voyage are within sight of accomplishment."

Every thinking man must realise the truth and force of what the Premier said. The question inevitably follows—are we acting with such swiftness and decision that we shall be in a position, before the opportunity has passed, to make those words good ?

There is a steadily growing volume of opinion among men who are in a position to form a cool judgment that, partly for financial and partly for physical reasons, a second winter campaign cannot possibly be undertaken by any of the combatants

engaged in the present struggle. If that view be well founded, it follows that peace on some terms or other will be concluded by October or November at the latest. We, more than any other nation, depend upon the issue of this war to make our existence, as a people and an Empire, safe for a hundred years to come. Have we so energetically pushed on the preparations that, by the time winter is upon us again, we shall, with the help of our gallant Allies, have dealt Germany such a series of crushing blows as to compel her to accept a peace which shall be satisfactory to us ?

There, I believe, we have the question which it is vital for us to answer. If the answer is in the negative, I say, without hesitation, that time fights not with the Allies but with Germany. If, as many people think, this war must end somehow before the next winter, we must, by that time, either have crushed out the vicious system of Prussian militarism, or we must resign ourselves to a patched-up peace, which would be but a truce to prepare for a more terrible struggle to come. Despite our most heroic resolves, it is doubtful whether, under modern conditions of warfare, the money can be found for a very prolonged campaign.

I do not forget, of course, that the Allies have undertaken not to conclude a separate peace, and I have not the least doubt that the bargain will be loyally kept. But we cannot lose sight of the possibility that peace may come through the inability of the combatants to continue the war, which it is calculated will by the autumn have cost nine thousand millions of money. And we can take it for granted that the task of subduing a Germany driven to desperation, standing on the defensive, and fighting with the blind savagery of a cornered rat, is

going to be a long and troublesome business. We are assured that the Allies can stand the financial strain better than Germany. Possibly; but the point is that no one knows just how much strain Germany can stand before she breaks, and in war it is only common prudence to prepare for the worst that can befall. This is precisely what we, most emphatically, are *not* doing to-day. Thanks to the reasons I have given—the chief of which is the unwarrantable official secrecy and the wholly unjustifiable "cooking" of the news—the British public is *not yet fully aroused to the deadly peril* in which the nation and the Empire stand.

The British people are, as they ever have been, slow of thought and slower of action. They need much rousing. And in the present war it is most emphatically true that the right way of rousing them has not been used. Smooth stories never yet fired British blood. Let an Englishman think things are going even tolerably well, and he is loth to disturb himself to make them go still better. But tell him a story of disaster, show him how his comrades fall and die in great fights against great odds: bring it home to his slow-working mind that he really has his back to the wall, and you fan at once into bright flame the smouldering pride of race and caste that has done, and will yet do, some of the greatest deeds that have rung in history. Is there, we may well ask, another race in the world that would have wrested such glory from the disaster at Mons? And the lads who fought the Germans to a standstill in the great retreat did so because the very deadliness of the peril that confronted them called out all that is greatest and noblest and most enduring in our national character.

Is there no lesson our authorities at home can

learn from that deathless story ?' Are they so blind to all the plainest teachings of history that they fail to realise that the British people cannot be depressed and frightened into panic by bad news, though, such is our insular self-confidence, we can be only too easily lulled into optimism by good news ? If the autocrats who spoon-feed the public with carefully selected titbits truly understood the mental characteristics of their own countrymen, they would surely realise that the best, indeed the only, way to arouse the British race throughout the world to a sense of the real magnitude of the task that lies before them is to tell them the simple truth. We want no more of the glossing over of unpleasant facts which seems to be one of the main objects of the press censorship. We want the real truth, not merely because we are, naturally, hungry for news, but because the real truth alone is capable of stimulating Englishmen and Welshmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen, the world over to take off their coats, turn up their sleeves, and seriously devote their energies to giving the German bully a sound and effective thrashing.

CHAPTER XI

FACTS TO REMEMBER

We have heard a good deal about "Business as usual": it would be well if we heard a little more of the companion saw—"Do it now." For if this campaign, for good or ill, is to finish before the snows of next winter come, the need for an instant redoubling of our energies is pressing beyond words.

In his gallant defence of the Press Bureau against overwhelming odds—few people share his admiration for that most unhappy institution—Sir Stanley Buckmaster denied that information was ever "kept back." So far as I know no one has ever suggested that the Press Bureau had anything to say about the circulation of official news: its unhappily directed energies seem to operate in other directions. But that it is keeping back news of the very gravest kind admits of no shadow of doubt. The official reports have assured us of late, with irritating frequency, that there is "nothin' doin'." Now and again we hear of a trench being heroically captured. But we hear very little of the reverse side of the picture, upon which the casualty lists, a month or six weeks later, throw such a lurid light.

Time and again lately we have read in the casualty lists of battalions losing anything from two hundred to four hundred men in killed or wounded or "missing," which means, in effect, prisoners. Even the

Guards, our very finest regiments, have lost heavily in this last disagreeable fashion: other regiments have lost even more heavily. Now British soldiers do not surrender readily, and we can take it for granted that when a large number of our men are made prisoners it is not without very heavy fighting. One single daily paper recently contained the names of very nearly two thousand officers and men killed, or wounded, or missing, on certain dates in January. Where, why, or how these men were lost we do not know, and we are told absolutely nothing. The real fact is that the news is carefully concealed under a tiny paragraph which announces that a line of trenches which had been lost have been brilliantly recaptured. We are glad, of course, to learn of the success, but would it not be well for the nation to learn of the failure? Can it be supposed for an instant that the Germans do not know? Is it giving away military information of value to the enemy to publish here in Great Britain news with which they are already perfectly well acquainted? Is it not rather that in their anxiety to say smooth things the authorities deliberately suppress the news of reverses, and tell us only the story of our triumph?

The most injurious suppression of news by the Government has made its effect felt in practically every single department of our public life which has the remotest connection with the prosecution of the war.

Take recruiting as an example. Recruiting is mainly stimulated, such is the curious temper of our people, either by a great victory or a great disaster. Failing one or other of these, the flow of men sinks to what we regard as "normal proportions," which means in effect that the public is

lukewarm on the subject. It is perfectly well known that a specially heroic deed of a particular regiment will bring to that regiment a flood of recruits, as was the case after the gallant exploit of the London Scottish had been published to the world. And what is true of the regiment, is true of the Army. Yet with all their enthusiastic advertising for recruits, the military authorities have neglected the quickest and easiest way of filling the ranks : instead of telling our people in bold stirring words of the heroic deeds of our individual regiments, they have, except in a few instances, fought the war with a degree of anonymity which may be creditable to their modesty, but does no tribute to their intelligence.

Turn the shield to the darker side : every reverse has stimulated patriotism and brought more men to the colours. What, I wonder, was the value of the Scarborough raid as compared with the recruiting posters ? The sense of insult bit deep, as it always does in the English mind. The Kaiser's own particular insult—his jibing reference to "General French's contemptible little Army"—probably did more to rouse the fighting blood of our men than all the German attacks. The splendid story of the retreat from Mons flushed our hearts to pride, and men poured to the colours. Is there no lesson here for the wiseacres of Whitehall ? Does the knowledge that Englishmen may be led, but cannot be driven, convey nothing to them ? Are they unaware that the Englishman is the worst servant in the world if he is not trusted, but the very best if full confidence is extended to him ? Can they not see that their foolish policy of suppressing ugly facts is, day by day, breeding greater distrust and apathy ?

I confess to feeling very strongly on the Clyde strikes, which, for a wretched industrial dispute—probably engineered by German secret agents—held up war material of which we stood in the gravest need. I cannot understand how Scotsmen, belonging to a nation which has proved its glorious valour on a hundred hard-fought fields, could have ceased work when they were assured that their claims would be investigated by an impartial tribunal. The bare idea, to me, is as shocking as it must be to most people. And I can only hope and believe that the action the men took is mainly attributable to the simple fact that they did not understand the real gravity of the position; that they did not appreciate the desperate character of our need, and that they utterly failed to realise that to cease work at such a time was as truly desertion in the face of the enemy as if they had been soldiers on duty in the trenches. I confess I would rather think this than put the cause down to laziness, or lack of patriotism, or drink. But if this, indeed, be the real cause—a lack of knowledge of the essential facts of the situation—whom have we to thank? Those, surely, who have cozened a great people with fair words; those, surely, who have spoken as though our enemy were in desperate straits, that all goes well, and that the war will soon be over.

With regard to the alien peril, it is a source of great gratification to me that His Majesty's Government have adopted my suggestion of closing the routes to Holland to all who cannot furnish to the Foreign Office guarantees of their *bona fides*. In my book, "German Spies in England," I suggested this course, and in addition, that the intending traveller should apply personally for a permit, that he

should furnish a photograph of himself, his passport, his certificate of registration, if an alien, and two references from responsible British individuals stating the reason for the journey and the nature of the business to be transacted. Within a fortnight of the publication of my suggestion the Government adopted it, and have established a special department at the Home Office for the purpose of interviewing all intending to leave England for Holland. The regulations are now most stringent. And, surely, not before they were required.

Thus one step has been taken to reduce the enemy alien peril. But more remains to be done. If we wish to end it, once and for all, we should follow the example of our Allies, the Russians, who were well aware of the network of spies spread over their land. In Russia every German, whether naturalised or not, has been interned, every German woman and child has been sent out of the country, and all property belonging to German companies, or individuals, has been confiscated for ever by the Government.

One result of this confiscation is that factories in first-class condition can now be purchased from the Russian Government for what the bricks are worth. In addition, there is a fine upon all persons heard speaking German in public. In the opinion of Russians, Germany was, as in England, a kind of octopus, and now they have the opportunity they have thrown it off for ever. Why should we still pursue the policy of the kid-glove and allow the peril to daily increase when the Government could, by a stroke of the pen, end it for ever, as Russia has done ?

Now there is one remedy, and only one, for the national apathy. The truth must be told, and

with all earnestness I beg of my readers, each as opportunity offers, to do all in his power to stimulate public opinion in the right direction until the demand for the truth becomes so universal, and so insistent, that no Government in this country can afford to ignore it. Many Members of Parliament have appealed in vain ; the great newspapers have fought unweariedly for the cause of honesty and common sense. The real remedy lies in the hands of the people. Democracy may not bring us unmixed blessings, but it does, at least, mean that, in the long run, the will of the people must rule. If the people insist on the truth, the truth must be told, and in so insisting the people of England, I firmly believe, will be doing a great work for themselves, for our Empire, and for the cause of civilisation.

They will be working for the one thing necessary above all others to hearten the strong, to strengthen the weak, to resolve the hesitation of the doubters, to nerve Britons as a whole for a stupendous effort which shall bring nearer, by many months, the final obliteration of the greatest menace which has ever confronted civilisation—the infamous doctrine that might is right, that faith and honour are but scraps of paper, that necessity knows no law but the law of self-interest, that the plighted word of a great nation can be heedlessly broken, and that the moral reprobation of humanity counts for nothing against material success.

THE END

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