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THE GERMANS

II

WHAT THEY COVET

By C. R. L. FLETCHER

A SEQUEL TO 'THE GERMANS, THEIR EMPIRE  
HOW THEY HAVE MADE IT.'

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By THE SAME AUTHOR

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# THE GERMANS AND WHAT THEY COVET

‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s land, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s sea, nor his forts, nor his ports, nor his shops, nor his ships, nor anything that is his.’

HAVE you not sometimes been struck with the rather tame conclusion of the Ten Commandments, as they appear in our English Bible and Prayer Book? After the prohibition of such things as we all admit to be very terrible sins, murder, adultery, theft, perjury, we are told that we must not ‘covet’, as if that were the last and most heinous sin of all. Surely the word ‘covet’ must have changed its meaning during the last four hundred years; for if not, it is clear that most people are terribly wicked sinners at every hour of their lives. What small schoolboy does not covet the jam rolls in the pastrycook’s window, what nursemaid does not covet the hats displayed by the milliner? My own deeply corrupt nature is illustrated by my life-long covetousness of my neighbour’s flower-garden, or, in my more scarlet-sinful moods, of his trout-stream. Yet I can hardly believe that I shall be ‘brought into judgement’ for what seem to me little more than innocent dreams about rose-trees and three-pound fish.

The fact is that the word *has* changed its meaning. The two instances of covetousness which are branded with infamy in the Old Testament are those of Ahab, who coveted Naboth’s vineyard, and of David, who

coveted Uriah's wife ; each was a piece of detestable tyranny exercised by the strong against the weak, and in David's case it was accompanied by the most dastardly treachery. The commandment ought, if it is to express its full old Hebrew meaning, to run somewhat thus : 'Thou strong man, thou shalt not scheme to take away, forcibly or fraudulently, from thy weaker neighbour anything that is his'.

In my first paper, published a few days ago, I tried to explain what the Germans, and especially the Prussians, who now control Germany, are like ; what their Empire is ; and how it has grown up. My present paper shall be devoted to explaining what they covet, in the older sense of that word ; what they purpose to take, by fraud or force or both, from neighbours whom they believe to be weaker than themselves. But I shall continue to make use of the word 'covet', for it is both short and convenient ; just as I shall continue to speak of our present enemy as 'the Germans', while I am really meaning the Prussian military fanatics who at this moment dominate Germany.

Now these people have set about their breach of the tenth commandment very systematically ; and, in order to clear the way for this process, they have begun by rewriting several of the other commandments, especially the first, second, sixth, and eighth. For the first and second they, by a curious alliance between some of their most learned professors and some of their most distinguished soldiers, now united to preach their new gospel, have substituted something which we might paraphrase thus :—

'Thou shalt have none other God but Force. Thou shalt make several different kinds of graven images of Force, and thou shalt write their names upon

the posts of thy house and on thy gates, and they shall be to thee as frontlets between thine eyes. Thou shalt also make a graven image of the German Man in full armour, and thou shalt bow down to him and worship him, and shalt call him the king of men, the Superman.'

This Superman was the special invention of a philosopher called Nietzsche, who spent his life in railing against the 'superstition', as he called it, of Christianity, and against the virtues of pity, mercy, and love, which are, he said, the most distinctive doctrines of that superstition. You need not remember anything else about Nietzsche, except that he went stark staring mad before he died. But while he was going mad (and it would be only charitable to suppose that he was never very sane), he contrived to bite a great many of his countrymen, and to instil a good deal of his poisonous doctrine into those he bit.

For the sixth commandment the same ingenious combination of philosophers and soldiers has substituted something like this: 'Thou shalt murder all who stand in the way of the triumph of thy New God.'

The 'effete' nations of Europe and America look upon war as something terrible, wicked, to be avoided at any cost but one. To us it is the last remedy of the oppressed and the dishonoured. All aggressive war, all war to obtain more power, territory, or riches, is simply wrong, contrary to Christianity and to elementary morality. But to the new school of Germans, which grew up under the protection of Bismarck and was full of the memories of Frederick the Great, war has become 'a holy thing', 'a handmaid of culture', 'a weapon of Almighty God' (for they still use, as I told you in my last paper, the name of the God of the Old World which

they are trying to destroy), 'a medicine applied by God to heal a sick world', and so on. These phrases are actual quotations from one of their most distinguished professors of history, Treitschke.

For the eighth commandment, which in our version is usually taken to be directed against fraud and cheating, as well as against robbery with violence, they have invented a new one which may perhaps be simply stated in the words 'Thou shalt not stick at fraud'. If you want to see what they mean by this, listen to one of their most distinguished generals, Bernhardt, whose book *Germany and the Next War*, first published in 1911, reached its sixth edition last year, and has probably reached a good many more editions in the last few weeks :—

'As soon as we are ready to fight,' says Bernhardt, 'our statesmen must so shuffle the cards that France shall appear to be the aggressor ; then perhaps Russia may be induced to remain neutral. Neither France, England, nor Russia have any need to attack us in order to defend their own interests ; and, all the time we wait without attacking them, they will prevail over us by diplomatic means, as they did in 1911 and 1912. So what we must do is to take up some political move which, without appearing to be an act of aggression, shall be so injurious to French or English interests that one or other of them will be forced to attack us. Pretexts for this move can easily be found in Africa or in Asia.'

In recasting the tenth commandment, the Germans have simply omitted the word 'not', and substituted 'and' for 'nor' and 'everything' for 'anything'.

Fraud and force ; these be thy gods, O Germany ! And the people bow the head and worship. This creed is expounded to the German boys in their schools, to the

German labourers in their workshops, and to the German soldiers in their barracks, daily and systematically; and it is also proclaimed to the world in lectures, in books, and in speeches delivered all over Germany. Let me, after a study of some few of these evidences, try to explain the essence of this creed and to reduce it, as the arithmetic books say, 'to its lowest terms'. They would run somewhat thus:—

(1) 'The German race is the highest, strongest, and noblest in the world; it is specially called to civilize the lower races such as the Slavs, and to reinvigorate the effete races such as the Latins (in whom of course, besides Frenchmen, they include Italians and Spaniards) and the English. Before these can be civilized and fitted to receive German culture, they must be conquered; the process will be as good for them as it will be for us.'

(2) 'We do not say "Might *is* Right", but we say, *Might gives* right, and even imposes a *duty* of conquest on the mighty person who possesses it.'

(3) 'Besides, or in the process of, conquering these lower and these effete races, we must reclaim into the fold of Germanism the many millions of persons of German descent, of German or half-German speech, who are scattered all over the world. We will begin with the Flemish population of Belgium (a dialect of German is the speech of at least half King Albert's subjects), then go on to the whole of the population of Holland, and about half of that of Switzerland; and we may as well make a big mouthful and pretend (it will be only a pretence, but a necessary and useful one, specially based upon our new eighth Commandment) that the inhabitants of a long narrow strip of Eastern France also are of German descent. Thus, instead of a nation of sixty-five, we shall be a nation of eighty-nine millions. And when all these have been gathered in there will be one fold under one Kaiser.'



Suppose now that we button-hole one of the believers in this creed, and ask him for some necessary explanations :—

‘ Why, my friend, do you not take at once the ten millions of Germans now subject to Kaiser Francis Joseph of Austria ? These are infinitely more suitable sheep for your fold than Flemings, Dutchmen, or Swiss or Eastern Frenchmen.’

‘ Well,’ says Herr von Potztausend-Götterdämmerung, ‘ we do not mention these, at present, of course not ; Francis Joseph is a very old man and . . . ’

‘ Nor do you, I observe, mention the several millions of Germans, whose ancestors wandered out (it is your own word for emigration) and settled in the present Baltic provinces of Russia, who gave Russia, in fact, all those bad German traditions of government which she is only now shaking off ? ’

‘ Well, no,’ he replies, ‘ we do *not* mention these people ; to do so would raise problems for the solution of which even the German Superman is at the moment hardly prepared.’

‘ Nor the twenty millions whom you have “lost” in America ? ’

‘ For America,’ he replies, ‘ we Germans have the very greatest respect and reverence ; she cannot be called an effete nation, though, of course, it is deeply to be regretted that her success (a quality which in itself we adore) has come to her from the arts of peace rather than from the only true art, war ; but at least these twenty millions, if they are to be irrevocably lost (which perhaps they will not always be), have spread the ideals of German culture through that vast and young continent. As for the few millions of us who have emigrated to South America, they are rapidly attaining supremacy



among the effete Latin races there ; and, when the time comes they will act in our vanguard for the occupation of . . . ’

‘ Did you ever hear of the Monroe doctrine, my worthy friend ? A battle royal between your supermen and the Yankees would, I fancy, be a sight for some of your new supergods. But please do not let us look too far ahead. Rather let us go on to the next step in your European world Empire.’

‘ It is well,’ he will reply, ‘ we approach the end ; we shall next hold out the torch of German culture, in the mailed fist of Germany, to your own countrymen. You, too, are of German blood ; the Angles and Saxons came from Germany fifteen hundred years ago and imposed such German culture as they knew on the effete Romanized Celts of Britain, is it not so ? ’

‘ Yes, that is often said ; we used to be taught at school that “ they slew them all so that they left none alive ”, at least no one in Eastern Britain. I always found it difficult to believe ; but, now that I see what you mean by German culture, I begin to think it may really have been true.’

‘ So, then, we shall cause these out-wandered men of ours to return to the fold, together with all that are in your colonies also ; how many millions will that make ? ’

‘ Indeed, sir, you must consult the almanack prepared each year by my countryman, Mr. Whitaker ; I cannot remember the figures, but, at a venture, let us say sixty millions.’

‘ And then will come the turn of the Scandinavian race, the Swedes, the Danes, the Norwegians ; their blood is but little more remote from ours than is your own. Our ancestors worshipped the same war-gods in the primaeval forests. So that is all arranged.’

Here let us say good-bye to Herr Potz ; he and his millions begin to become a bore. What I mean to indicate is that Germany, actually and in the near future *aspires to the dominion of the world and to nothing short of that dominion*. The picture of her aims which I am going to draw may seem so absurd that some of my readers will exclaim at once 'Impossible !'

But, stop ! in the first place, would not most reasonable Englishmen have said ten years, ten months, ten weeks, ago that the scenes that have been enacted during the last few weeks in Belgium were impossible ? In the second place, I am going to quote some of the actual writings of the German war-leaders themselves, and in these you will find both the initial steps in the conquest, and the means by which it is to be carried on, clearly outlined ; you will find some of the spoils actually earmarked and apportioned.

And, in the third place, I am not supposing that this world-conquest is designed to be a matter of a year or two. But what, no doubt, they immediately hope is, first a year of victories so complete that all the now existent resources of the three great allies, France, England, and Russia, will be shattered and, before the end of 1915, Germany will be able to impose her own terms of peace ; then that against the two former she will be able to take such steps that they shall never lift their heads as great powers again. Even then anything like annexation would still be a dream of the future. Germany would call her next steps 'peaceful penetration', 'an open market for German goods' (and for no other goods), and other fine names ; and to this the smaller powers of the rest of Europe would gradually be obliged to give in. There would still remain as 'Powers' in the world, Russia, the United States of America, and Japan,

and each of these might very well cost the most superb of German supermen a very long war. But, if such wars were successful (and we must remember that Germany, if she once smashed England and France, would be mistress of nearly all seas, and that the arm of sea power is long) it is probable that, within fifty years from to-day, all the world would take its orders, both military and commercial, from Berlin.

It is because of this danger that the present war is different from any other war in the history of the world, and is, indeed, a Holy War, a war both for the immediate and for the distant future, a war for civilization, a defensive Crusade. The great Napoleon had dreams not unlike some of the dreams of the present ruler of Germany; but I think that, even if he had been victorious to the end of his life, the keen sense of humour possessed by his French subjects would have prevented their realization. The Germans, like Napoleon himself, are deficient in this saving quality of humour, and they will not mind being laughed at as madmen if they can succeed as tyrants.

The German people as a whole have never avowed these intentions; still less has the German Government put them forward as a programme. If you read the debates that take place in the German Parliament (called the *Reichstag*) you will find only occasional mention of them, and German ministers will receive such mention with a polite and deprecatory smile. Nevertheless these intentions have been publicly avowed in newspapers and speeches for the last twenty-three years, and every year they have gained more acceptance in all ranks of the nation. Remember that all great changes, all great reforms, all great wars, have been begun by earnest minorities, whose task has been to convert majorities to their own views.

In 1891 was founded the body which has inaugurated and carried through this change in German public opinion, the famous 'All-German League'. The year before, Bismarck had been dismissed because he was not 'go-ahead' enough for the present Kaiser, then a young man. Some of you may remember the picture in *Punch* called 'Dropping the Pilot'. Pilot Bismarck went home to Pomerania in a shocking temper, which he spent his remaining years in displaying to the world. But his main crime, in the eyes of the young men who stood before the new Rehoboam, had been to consider that 'Germany was satisfied', that she had bitten off, in 1870, as much as she could chew, and ought not to display any more land-hunger at present.

The spirit which founded the League had, however, been active from the very morrow of the victories of 1870; and the present Kaiser had been captured by it long before he came to the throne. The membership of the League was at first small, and was confined to a few extreme men; but with each year of its existence it has grown, until at the present day it is believed to number something like half a million of the 'intellectuals of Germany'. It has four great provincial branches, one in each of the four districts of Germany, and these are divided into two hundred and ten local branches. It has offered annual prizes for the best patriotic works expressive of its own ideas; one of the last of these, 'Germany as a World Power' (1911), is a sumptuous volume, to which some of the most learned men in the country have contributed; it has 850 pages and 5,000 illustrations; it is beautifully bound, and is sold for the ridiculous price of four shillings—barely enough to cover the cost of binding. The League has published besides an 'All-German Catechism', with question and

answer, every line of which expresses the doctrine of aggressive war as the highest duty of German men; and it issues a weekly newspaper *All-German Leaves* (or 'pages') in the same strain. It is governed by an executive directory of six persons, a committee of twenty, and a council of a hundred; among these are found not only leading soldiers, army contractors, and navy contractors, but several newspaper editors and a large number of University professors and teachers. It has founded, encouraged, or affiliated, an enormous number of lesser patriotic leagues, some of them with queer names like 'Odin' (the heathen god of primitive Germany), the 'Hammer League', the 'German-speech League', the 'War League', the 'Colonial League'; it is in close relation with the enormously popular Navy League; and its last triumph has been the ironically named 'League for the Defence of Germany' (1912). Most of these leagues have ladies' branches and juvenile branches, as well as their main society.

But the most important success of all is that the All-German League has now got either the controlling influence over, or the opportunity of freely expressing its opinions in, nearly all the most widely read of the German newspapers. The most go-ahead paper of Germany, *The Future*, edited by Maximilian Harden, though not officially a League paper, is wholly devoted to expounding the ideas of the League. The *Gazette of the Rhineland and Westphalia*, published at Essen, where Mr. Krupp builds the big guns, is entirely in the interest of the League—which is the interest of Mr. Krupp—and is the loudest in the yelping train. The *Daily Look-Round*, the *Cross Gazette* (Roman Catholic), the *Empire's Post* are League papers pure and simple; and each year the most respectable papers such as the

*Cologne Gazette* and the *Munich Latest News* have published more and more of the inflammatory League-stuff.

The League makes a great point of being 'above party', and professes to ignore the many 'parties' in the German Parliament. This is not difficult, for there are many of these parties, and each one has little power of itself; the ordinary German cares very little for 'politics' in the parliamentary sense of the word. His politics (all honour to him for the sentiment) are comprised in the words 'my country's interest before my own opinions or my own ease'; and it is not always his fault if he misconceives the interest of his country. The Government, by which I mean the Kaiser and his ministers, has often professed to look askance on the League and on the League newspapers; it has occasionally published contradictions, in its own chief organs, of some of the sentiments of the League. Even Bismarck more than once rapped the League over the knuckles. *But every time the Government has entered upon anything approaching an open struggle against the League, the League has won;* and the Government has had to beat a hasty, and often an undignified retreat. The person in the Empire who has had to beat retreat most frequently is William II himself. I wrote in my former paper that I was sure that the Kaiser had been forced into this war, which he had not desired; I tell you now that this war has been but one more, and the last, triumph of the League. William II had fostered the spirit when he was young, just as his son, a man of thirty, has been fostering it for the last ten years; but when years and responsibility began to show the Kaiser the rocks ahead of his country, he did not find it easy to repress the spirit he had



fostered. He has liked being called 'William the Peaceful', and he has really wished to deserve the name; but for the last ten years the League has hurled the name at him as one of contempt, and has as good as threatened him with deposition if he does not obey its behests. Take the following extract from Daniel Frymann's book *If I were Kaiser* (1911):—

'The disastrous activity of William II and the failure of his councillors [to cheat or bully the French out of Morocco in the crisis of 1911] have rendered the present form of Government insupportable. The absurd poltroonery of the most highly placed persons, and the complete set-back they have given to German ambition, have at length raised the question whether it is not urgent for us to establish a system of parliamentary government.'

The League, in fact, believed, and perhaps was quite right in believing, that a parliament, freely elected and uncontrolled by a crown, would be more likely to vote Germany into an aggressive war than the Kaiser and his ministers. Early last year the *Gazette of the Rhineland and Westphalia* (February 14, 1913) actually invoked the memories of the popular revolt of the year 1848, and called for a revolution in order to promote the longed-for policy of war. There are in the German Parliament parties calling themselves 'Radicals' and 'Socialists', and the industrial army of Socialism is believed to be better organized in Germany than in any other country in the world; the great Socialist leader used to be called 'King Bebel', and to be contrasted with King William. Bismarck hated these fellows, and really exercised a good deal of absurd tyranny against their leaders; he dissolved two parliaments in the teeth of constitutional law because of their opposition; but,



now, behold, the Socialists have all but unanimously supported a policy which goes beyond anything that Bismarck ever dreamed of.<sup>1</sup>

The great chance for the League to air its now fully matured views seems to have come about 1904-5, when the one power that all Germans dread, Russia, had her hands tied with her Japanese war. From that hour its leaders have never ceased to preach 'Now is the time to attack England or France, or both'; and it must be owned that William the Peaceful's vanity, and his passion for making speeches and journeys, too often got the better of his statesmanship and induced him to play into the hands of the League. He has been the most unstable of kings; now the League have thought they held him, now he has escaped their clutches; and we have just seen how they spoke of him on such occasions. In 1905 they got him to go to Tangier and make one of his most indiscreet and provocative speeches; from that hour till this they have never ceased to cry out 'Morocco!' 'Morocco!' *West Morocco for Germany* is the title of a most popular League pamphlet written by the barrister, Herr Class, the president of the League-directory (1911). There is not a great deal about Morocco in this work, but there is a great deal about 'what we intend to take from France' in France herself; and, during the Moroccan negotiations of 1911, the German Government made

<sup>1</sup> Bismarck's chief difficulties were over the laws for the increase of the German Army; in 1887 there were less than 30 Socialists in the Parliament, but they were unanimous and sufficed to turn the scale against him; in 1893 they numbered 40, and again they triumphed over Bismarck's successor. In 1913 estimates were carried which increased the army in time of peace beyond any dream of Bismarck's fancy; though there were 110 Socialists present, they did not venture to oppose the increase.

Class expunge a passage from this widely-read book, lest it should upset the agreement that was being made. The book was well calculated to do so, for it calmly stated that the Germans coveted a strip of France from Nancy southwards to Toulon and northwards to the mouth of the Somme. But when, to the infinite wrath of the League, the Agreement of 1911 had been made, the author at once restored the passage to the new edition of his work, and no one dared to molest him. Well might the German negotiator say to the French and English on that occasion, 'We don't want war, but public opinion in Germany is "nervous" and may easily get out of hand.' 'Public opinion' was that of the all-victorious League.

But, long before this Moroccan question, the Kaiser's policy in China in 1897 and 1900, in Turkey from 1898, his attitude to England during the Boer War, his Bagdad Railway business—all these were instances of the triumph of the League's policy over the intentions of a ruler, impulsive and vain indeed, but not naturally either such a fool or such a knave as to wish for an aggressive war. In October, 1908, the poor gentleman, in a moment of ill-judged expansiveness, granted an interview to an English representative of the *Daily Telegraph* and spoke warmly about his affection for England and his desire for peace. The forces of the All-Germanists were so great that in the German Parliament there was actually a debate on the Kaiser himself, as if he were a bill or a policy, and he got a most frightful scolding. The Chancellor of this nominally all-powerful sovereign was obliged to announce 'that in the future, both in his private conversations and in his public speeches, His Majesty would impose upon himself the reserve which is indispensable to the continuity of his policy and

the authority of the Crown'. What a humiliation for any king! What a 'climb-down' for the grandson of Victoria the Great! It was wholly a League victory; and please take note that it was immediately followed by a series of much harsher laws against the inhabitants of the three irreconcilable provinces of the Empire, the Alsatians, the Danes in Schleswig, and the Poles in Posen; for it was one of the favourite cries of the League that these peoples should be Germanized by force since they would never become Germans by persuasion.

The activity of the League has not been confined within the frontiers of the Empire itself, and it has, in particular, set before itself the task of keeping the Kaiser's ally, Austria, in the strait paths of Germanism. It has branches and affiliated leagues in every province of Francis Joseph's dominions, all pledged to the one object of all-German propaganda and to the cry of 'down with the Slavs'. When, in 1897, the Austrian Government proposed, through its chancellor, some milder laws for the Slav population of Bohemia (they were to be allowed among other benefits the free use of their mother tongue) up sprang the League in a fury and held indignation meetings all over Germany. Those German statesmen who set (and who did not?) a high value on the Austrian alliance were really alarmed, and took strong measures to suppress some of these meetings. But the League won; the Government of Vienna at least knew when it was beat, if that of Berlin didn't; the chancellor was dismissed, and the laws in favour of the Bohemian tongue were repealed. The unfortunate heir to the Austrian monarchy, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, whose murder was the spark that set all the world on fire, was believed to favour the Slavs, and

the League, considering that his accession might prove a serious thing for some of its views, can hardly have seen his disappearance from the world without some joy. Many people, indeed, have speculated on the possibility that the crime of June 28 may have been planned rather in Berlin than in Belgrade. In *If I were Kaiser*, Frymann had treated Francis Ferdinand to the explicit threat that if, when he came to the throne, he did not maintain the absolute supremacy of the twelve million Germans over the twenty-four million Slavs of his dominions, he could look for no support or alliance from Berlin.

I hope I have not lingered too long over this portion of my subject, but I wanted to show you both where the centre of the war-propaganda lies, and how completely those monarchs to whom peaceful peoples like the English and Americans attribute enormous power, may really be at the mercy of an organization controlled by a handful of bankers, merchants, ship-builders, gun-makers, professors and soldiers. The League has breathed the ideal of aggressive war into Germany, and has triumphed over the written constitution which vested the highest power of the land in William the Peaceful. Whether that spirit prove victorious or defeated in the present war, it is difficult to suppose that Kaiser-rule will be again tolerated by Germans.

And now I want to return to and develop, at a little greater length, my first theme, 'What they covet.'

Let us ask ourselves first which of the three great allies France, England, or Russia does Germany hate most, at which is the propaganda of that All-German League first directed? I have not the slightest doubt that it is England. Treitschke's whole animus was directed against England to the day of his death; and

Treitschke did more to form *educated* opinion in Germany than any one. To Max Harden, the able editor of *The Future*, England plays Carthage to Germany's Rome, 'and Carthage must be blotted from the map.'

It is true that Germany hates France as well ; and it is also true that in her hatred for each of these countries you will find two separate well-springs which I will call respectively 'petty jealousy' and 'grand jealousy'. Germany's 'petty jealousy' of France is based upon the events of the past and the present ; her 'petty jealousy' of England is based on the events of the present and the forecast of the future. She repents bitterly that she did not in 1870 erase France from the list of nations, that she did not impose tenfold the war-indemnity and twofold the sacrifice of territory that she actually imposed on her conquered enemy. She can never forgive that enemy for her marvellously quick recovery from that disaster ; she can never forgive her the fact that, even in defeat, Paris remained the intellectual and fashionable capital of the world. Germany cannot forgive Frenchmen their wit, their good manners, their much longer history as a civilized nation, and the infinitely greater consideration it procures them.

The corresponding 'petty jealousy' of England is based on matters that go somewhat deeper ; what Germany cannot forgive us is our political success in spite of our apparent indifference to success ; they stare and gasp at our party strife, at our calm acceptance of shocks, political, financial, economical, which would upset them altogether. They think a country must be rotten to the core which can tolerate one-tenth of the freedom that we tolerate and display the nonchalant temper that we display through it all. Then again, though the All-German

League may, in its passionate moods, occasionally play with the idea of popular government, it is quite obvious that a really free government of a great country by its own people, is the very last thing that would form a good or permanent basis for the ideals of the League. A country so governed is not likely to be ready for aggression or to desire aggression; alas, we see, from our own case to-day, that, though such a country is ready enough to prepare for defence *when* the aggression has come, it is only too fatally unready for defence *in case* an aggression may come. Such an attitude of our 'too free' country the Germans despise; but of the spirit that can, even now, rise superior to this grave mistake they are profoundly jealous. And if they are jealous of our present success, how infinitely more jealous are they when they set themselves to forecast the future.

Here their 'petty' begins to merge itself in their 'grand' jealousy of England. We block the way. Our oldest oversea settlements were made when Prussia was a little state with barely a window even to the Baltic; but from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George V, our colonial Empire has been growing. More grievous still is it that our colonies don't seem inclined to break off from us; the more freedom we allow them the closer they cling. It has been a fixed idea of more than one European rival of ours that we have always 'grievously oppressed' our great dependency India; and lots of stupid (but few really disloyal) Indians have quite recently been making absurd speeches, and have even played with 'bombs made in Germany'. 'India therefore,' think the Germans, '*must* be ripe for rebellion.' They will be considerably astonished when the Indian troops display their valour and their marvellous



horsemanship in front of the German lines, as they will within a very few weeks. Need I pursue this subject any longer? There is our empire of colonies and dependencies, knit together by the almost invisible line of a few grey hulls and a few tracks of smoke across the pathless seas; the heart of it all is a little island in the North Sea. That island blocks the way to the expansion of Germany. More horrible still, it does not appear to block the way to the expansion of France, or of Russia, or of any other power that will live at peace with us, and not lay down a new set of commandments in the place of the old set. Most horrible of all is the fact that Germany, when she does, by sheer bullying and persistence, get a few thousand acres of tropical swamp out of England or France, seems to be quite incapable of colonizing them with her own or any other subjects. The Germans have not the temper of the colonist, nor the genius for colonial expansion. They are ready enough, 'far too ready', says the Kaiser, 'to emigrate to other people's colonies, and to thrive beyond measure in lands wherein others have done the pioneer work and the spade work, but they will not do it for themselves. They cannot assimilate—witness the Danes and Poles and Alsatians—conquered races; but they can very readily be assimilated to the races of those foreign countries in which they settle. When it comes to races with skins of a different colour from their own they are even more hopelessly at sea.

Yet when we come back to the question of 'What do they covet?' you may be very sure that the British colonies are what they covet before everything else. Let us for a moment consider that point in more detail. If Germany dictates to the three great allies a 'Peace of London', she will demand from us three primary cessions: (1)



our colonies ; (2) our fleet (of course there won't be much of it left if she ever gets here) ; (3) an enormous sum in hard cash, which she will call a ' war indemnity '.

She would then probably go on to stipulate that for the future we should ' make our policy conform to German views ', and would, in order to secure this end, maintain a German garrison in our island. She would not starve our population, and she would do all she could to keep our industries alive—for her own benefit. Probably each of our great industrial, shipping, or mercantile businesses would be obliged to ' conform its policy ' to that laid down by a German ' Director of British Industries '. This would be the first act of the drama. The next would be some sort of federal incorporation of Britain in the New German Empire. Our king, supposing they left us one, would have a seat in the German Federal Council, and would be like one of the comic-opera German kings who are now vassals of Berlin (Saxony, Wurtemberg, Bavaria). It would be a humorous situation for us, would it not ? I know a green island beyond St. George's Channel, as rich in humour as it is in gallant men, that would give our new masters a good deal of trouble before it accepted such a situation. Indeed, I rather fancy that, if such a dreadful state of things ever did come to pass, it would be from Ireland that the first dawn of deliverance would come.

Of course, long before any such peace could be dictated, Germany would have become mistress of the ports of Belgium, Holland, and Northern France ; it is probable that one of the main reasons impelling her to the shameless violation of Belgium, with which she began this war, was a desire to get hold of Antwerp and Ostend as bases of attack upon England. The three Scandinavian

kingdoms would, no doubt, make a long and gallant resistance before they too suffered an incorporation into the New Empire ; but, with the sea power in German hands, such resistance would, in the end, be vain. Holland might very probably be the last power to be absorbed, not because she would oppose a more effective resistance, but because her own ' Low-German ' blood might be trusted to be won over to the All-German idea the more easily the less coercion was applied.

' The World,' says Paul Rohrbach (in his book, *The German Idea in the World*), ' has no longer need of little nationalities. If they are to give full effect to their ideas of culture, and to gather up the results of their scientific discoveries, they must fall into line with the world-power of Germany ; they need a broad basis for their civilization to develop on.' This, of course, applies to the Flemings, Dutch, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, and Swiss. As for the military use of Belgium and Holland, Herr Frymann whom I have already quoted told us plainly, three years before the attack on Belgium, that this attack would lay the first plank in the German bridge to England and France,

' for we cannot tolerate on our north-west frontier those little States which give no guarantee against their violation by England and France ; so, when we decide on war, we shall summon them to join us or be treated as enemies '.

Holland, indeed, has been far too slow to realize her own danger. The penetration of Germany into Switzerland, however extensive and indeed enormous (she controls very largely the Swiss railways, and a great proportion of the chief industrial concerns in Switzerland are run by Germans), has been hitherto peaceful ; how long would it have continued to be so ?

These little powers, however, are as mere rocks in the ocean of German covetousness. After England it is from France that Germany covets the most ; after ourselves France is the only Western power towards whom she feels the nobler passion of the ' grand jealousy '. The French fleet, and the very rich French colonies of Algiers and Morocco—these are no doubt important objects of German desires. But more than these it is the rich land of eastern France, an extension of Alsace and Lorraine to north and south and west, that Germany is after. So far as I can make out from the All-Germanist writings—but they vary in the degrees of their desires—the new German frontier would start from the city of Nancy in the centre, and one straight line would run north to the English Channel at the mouth of the river Somme, and another south to the Mediterranean at the mouth of the Rhône. This would give the Germans five more ports of first-class importance, Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne on the northern, and Marseilles and the great French dockyard and arsenal of Toulon on the southern sea. It would give them all the rich ironworks of the district of Lille, which are to the German soldiers a point of prime importance, because their own iron mines are within measurable distance of giving out, and it is believed that Mr. Krupp will within the next twenty years actually be obliged to go to other countries to get the iron of which to build his guns. It would give them the great fortresses of Lille, Maubeuge, Verdun, Toul, and Belfort, which (no doubt by an unforgivable oversight) Bismarck omitted to annex in 1870. To these cessions they would no doubt add another enormous war-indemnity and ' bleed France white '. There would be no need for them to annex the rest of her territory ; western France at least has no drop of German blood

in her, and she would be quite sufficiently erased from the list of Great Powers. Nor would Germany wish to add to her world-tasks that of keeping down the city of Paris. As a precaution she might perhaps stipulate that France should reduce her army to one-tenth of its present size.

But, you will say, the Germans have already completely failed to Germanize the Alsatians, and almost wholly failed with the Lorrainers; will they not also fail with this new and much larger strip of French territory? Ah, there they have a much better plan, or two alternative plans, to set in motion. The first is that of our friend Frymann, and he expresses it thus:—

‘We shall exact from France the cession of so much territory that we can be for the future in security. *This territory will be evacuated by all its French inhabitants.*’ (He admits that this sounds horrible.) ‘But it is necessary to speak of the subject publicly in order that our enemies may learn that such an extreme idea does find apologists in Germany, . . . and when we reflect upon the peculiar situation of the German people, shut and barred in, in the centre of Europe and exposed to the danger of having its population simply stifled unless it can get air, we must agree that we may be forced to demand the evacuation of the territory which will be ceded to us by our enemies, both on our western and our eastern frontier’ (i. e. in Polish lands which Russia will cede, as well as French lands).

German ‘colonists’ are then to be imported into these territories; they will be fruitful and multiply therein. You see the model which the All-Germanists set before themselves? It is that of the old Assyrian and Babylonian kings of the Bible who moved whole populations before them. They, indeed, left deserts behind them; but the German will soon make this French

desert blossom with the rose of German culture, and ring with the forging of German guns.

For many of the All-Germanists, however, this idea has seemed too horrible, and a second alternative has been proposed. I will select as a good example of this plan what K. F. Wolff wrote in *All-German Leaves*, the official organ of the league, in the September of last year. Let us not clear the men out, is his argument, but simply deny them all political rights, and all civic rights, for ever :—

‘There are two kinds of races, master-races and inferior-races.’ (An old Greek would of course have spoken honestly of slave-races, but our learned German philologist is too mealy-mouthed to do this.) ‘Political rights belong to the master-race alone, and can only be won by war. This is a Scientific Law, a law of Biology. The rights of *men* may be, and ought to be, allowed to the inferior-race, and these include individual liberty, the right to work, and the right to express opinions ; but all other rights belong only to the master-race. The master-race should be rich in men ; only the races which are so are properly master-races. It is *unjust* that a rapidly increasing master-race should be struggling for room behind its own frontier while a declining inferior-race can stretch its limbs at ease on the other side of that frontier. The inferior-race will not be educated in the schools of the master-race nor will any schools be established for it, nor will its language be employed in public.’

So the language will die out, and the inferior-race will decline still further. Probably in its despair it will occasionally rise against the master-race ; let it do so ; but, when it does, shoot it down without mercy (his words are ‘it is necessary to use the most violent means to suppress such insurrection, and not to encumber the prisons afterwards’).

'Thus,' says this amiable Mr. Wolff (who makes, you see, no pretence of concealing himself in sheep's clothing) 'the conquerors can best work for the annihilation of the conquered, and break for ever with the prejudice which would claim for a beaten race any right to maintain its nationality or its native tongue. The conqueror will stand up for his privilege, he will commit no injustice, he will show himself chivalrous, he will not compel any of the conquered to associate with him, or to fight in his army' [let us be thankful for that Wolfish mercy] 'well knowing that this last duty belongs only to the master-race. To make war and conquests is noble, to mock or ill-treat the vanquished is ignoble and unbecoming to a high-spirited race which feels itself called to the dominion of the world.'

Pretty drastic, isn't it? And so now we English and French know what to expect from German culture, chivalry, and nobleness.

I am told, though I have not seen it, that there is, or was quite recently, to be seen in Paris a caricature by a famous Alsatian artist called M. Zislin. Somewhere about the date of the Russo-Japanese War, William II, who had a real fear of an invasion of Europe by a Japanese and Chinese army, and was fond of talking about the 'Yellow Peril' (i. e. the danger of an attack by these 'yellow' races on the white European races), commissioned his own court-painter, called Knackfuss, to paint him an allegorical picture representing the several nations of Europe grouped upon a large rock, looking eastward into a yellow dawn out of which the myriad legions of these dangerous races were advancing. Well, M. Zislin improved on this spirited German idea, and drew a sketch of the several nations of Europe and America, with France, England, and Russia as their leaders, watching from the same rock a bright *red* dawn out of



which the legions of the All-German peril were advancing. Parody is an easy form of humour, but they say the Kaiser did not see the fun of it.

Again I must recall myself and my readers to the thread of my argument. We have seen what the victorious Germans mean to do to us Western nations when we are beaten to our knees ; there remains the extremely serious question, what do they intend to do with Russia in similar circumstances. It is a very curious, and even an ominous, fact that here we have nothing to guide us. Beyond truculent, but always vague, denunciations of the Slavs as an inferior race, and a few hearty promises to make a desert (fit for subsequent colonization by German culture) of their own Polish provinces and of so much of the present Russian Poland as they can grab, I can find nothing in the speeches or writings of the All-German Leaguers to indicate how they propose to solve the problem of dealing with a beaten Russia. The reason is, I think, fairly clear. Russia is the only state of which Germany stood in real dread on August 1, 1914. Her already vast population of 170,000,000 is believed to be increasing annually by 2,000,000 which is exactly double the normal rate of increase of the 65,000,000 of Germans themselves. Her army is increasing in arithmetical progression proportionate to this increase of population. Her last nine years are believed to have been a period not only of amazing prosperity and economic advance, but also of moral and spiritual awakening, which has come without the loss of one jot or tittle of her older sources of strength. By these ' older sources ' I mean her almost universal grip of the idea of the eternal union between religion and patriotism, which stood her in such good stead in the dark days of Napoleon's invasion in 1812.



In a vague way she has long regarded herself as the champion and head of the weaker Slav peoples and nations ; but till quite recently this feeling has been hindered by the oppressive action of her own Government towards its Polish subjects. Quite suddenly, as it were, the scales have dropped from her eyes, and any Russian Tsar or minister who now attempted to oppress any other Slav nationality would get short shrift from the Russian people. All this is part of the moral awakening of ' Holy Mother Russia '.

What, then, could a victorious Germany do to such a power ? Russia has few manufacturing centres which could be ' ruined ' out of hand by a German army. She has already a considerable gold reserve (I mean, accumulated hard cash) but hardly enough to tempt a Germany satiated, as we have been supposing our victorious supermen to be, with a couple of thousand millions sterling from both France and England. Her fleet is respectable but barely more than respectable. The Germans would probably take that ; they might give Finland to Sweden and perhaps take Riga and some other Baltic ports for themselves ; they might just possibly take the whole Baltic coast. No doubt Germany's new ' natural ally ', Turkey (what a charming natural ally for the apostles of culture to possess !), might be bolstered up to occupy some of the Black Sea coasts. But would any of this *ruin* Mother Russia ? I doubt it profoundly. She would but retreat to her snows and her Asia, to her vast mineral wealth in the Ural mountains, to her millions of acres of waving corn-fields in Siberia. In these unmolested and unmolestable fastnesses she could afford to wait and recreate her patient strength till the ' New Empire ' of Germany began to crumble from its own superfluity of naughtiness.

This is, as I say, all mere guess-work ; but it is not to be supposed that the Germans, who move through historical time with the map of the immediate future (a map 'made in Germany') in the hands of their staff-officers, have *no* plan for the solution of the problem. And if you ask me to hazard a guess concerning the way in which they hope to solve it, I will only put two such guesses before you : (1) they probably expect, in some way or other, to reassert their old ascendancy over the Tsar himself, when they have beaten him ; they will 'make him make peace', and will promise him German support to secure his throne against the very certain anger of his people. Or else ; (2) they suppose that a Russia, cut off from the Baltic and the Black Sea, and thereby from all European trade and all incentive to self-development, will lazily relapse into its mediaeval condition of half-barbarous isolation. Well, I don't know which is the more absurd or the more childish expectation ; and, if either of these guesses is anywhere near the truth, as representing the German forecast, it only shows that the German leaders are as blind and stupid as they are wicked.

No, the real loss to Russia of a wholesale defeat of the three great allies in this present war would be that, for some time to come, she would lose her recently acquired proud position of champion of the Slav races ; and these (large populations but little 'powers') would be left sticking between the Devil of Germany, the deep sea of Austria, and the half-stranded shark of Turkey. I cannot see what the most victorious Germany you can imagine would do with all these peoples—I even forget half their names—for they are an ugly lot to tackle. To remove them wholesale, to drive out Serbs, Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians, Wallachians,

Albanians, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, Roumanians, &c., would be a task beyond the powers of William the Peaceful or Nebuchadnezzar the King. To reconcile them would be impossible; they have had some thirteen centuries of experience of the gentle art of being 'agin the Government' whatever form that government may have taken. To civilize them would seem to be an even more impossible task, and especially impossible if conducted by German men on German methods. Perhaps, then, Germany's best solution of the Balkan and Polish problems, after the destruction of Russia as a European power, would be found in encouraging these peoples to devour one another in the fashion of the Kilkenny cats. Those animals, you may remember, ate each other up all but the tips of their tails.

I have but one more point to which I wish to call your attention. I have tried to show you what the Germans have been coveting for the last ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years. It remains for us to consider why they have decided to put their covetousness to the test of experiment in 1914. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that they have had a good many reasons for striking now. A good many things may have been opening the eyes of this syndicate of wickedness to the knowledge that they have been building on a volcano, or at least on mined ground. First, they have probably not been feeling very happy about their machine-made army; there comes a point in the building of a great machine when your wheels get *too* large, your gear too intricate, and the machine is apt, as they say of a helmless ship, 'to take charge of itself'. The vaster the machine, the more dangerous any side-slip may be.

Secondly, the men that run the machine may not be fulfilling all the expectation of their owners. No doubt

you know that in the earlier phase of the recent Balkan War the Turks got well beaten by the 'inferior races' of the Balkan Peninsula—by the Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Greeks—and only got a little of their own back when these jolly fellows began to squabble over the spoil. Now the beaten Turkish army had been quite recently 're-made in Germany', that is to say, it was trained by German officers on German methods, and was armed with Mr. Krupp's latest brand of German guns. Even if we suppose (as no doubt we fairly may) that Mr. Krupp cheated the poor Turks and didn't waste his best guns on them, the failure of the Turkish army was not a pleasant subject for Germans to reflect upon. And they were at least determined to prove, on another and better field, that failure was not a necessary result of their system.

Thirdly, in 1914 they could still count on one ally, Austria. Who could tell that they might be able to count on her in 1915? The old emperor's death, even if it were to happen in peace time, would in all probability split the Austro-Hungarian monarchy into several fragments. No other ally for Germany was possible; for Italy, though for thirty-two years a member of their 'Triple Alliance', was manifestly not to be trusted to act against France and England. If Italy does strike, she is far more likely to strike for us than against us. They, the Germans, have felt that every year that has passed has but added to the burden of fear and hatred with which the other powers of Europe, great and small, have regarded them; so there was no use in waiting any longer.

Fourthly, and far more important than all the above reasons, we have the fact that the enormous increase of the mineral, agricultural, and manufacturing output of

Germany herself has, instead of leading to greater contentment and prosperity inside, actually been leading in the reverse direction, towards an economic and financial crisis. There are not nearly enough markets or outlets for this newly accumulated wealth. It is manipulated by financiers for their private ends, and these have speculated with it beyond the bounds of prudence. Much of German capital is locked up in hazardous enterprises both inside and outside Europe. Credit was not actually impaired in the early months of 1914, but it was in danger of being impaired; creditors were becoming 'nervous'; and a 'sensitive' condition of credit is a very dangerous condition. The last loans of the German Government were not at all readily subscribed: the expenses of the army had frightened all who were willing to lend, and the expenditure on public works and on experiments in 'state socialism' frightened them even more. Moreover, the increase of population has, during the last ten or more years, led to a necessary importation of corn and meat on a very large scale, and this to feed a country whose fleet emphatically does *not* command the seas of the world. The agricultural interest has cried out against this importation, and the Government had to conciliate it by imposing a high tariff on such imports—result, the prices of food have gone up, and there has been a quarrel between the country producer and the town consumer of food. On the other hand, for want of a market, the prices of manufactured articles have actually gone down. The manufacturers have not dared to stop the output of their goods for fear of angry workmen and strikes; and they are hard put to it to pay wages. This, above all things, is at the bottom of the cry for more colonies, and for larger markets abroad. And the trade that has

been hit hardest of all by this want of markets is just the iron trade, whose fluctuations affect, not only the provinces of the Rhine and Westphalia, but the province of Silesia as well, in fact the naturally richest provinces of the Empire.

But the governing classes, the Prussian noblemen, the great financiers, the great shipmasters, and the great manufacturers know perfectly well that anything like an economic or commercial crisis, anything like a general collapse of credit, nay, anything like what English financiers call a 'panic', would bring them toppling to the ground. France could survive a good many panics, though she would squeal very loudly when they came. In England city men used to say there was 'one panic every nine years'; 'I say, Jim,' says one street boy to another in one of the early pictures in *Punch*, 'vots a panic?' 'Blow'd if I know,' replies the other, 'but there's vun to be seen in the City' (1841). So we take our panics calmly. Germany cannot afford to do so. Indeed, she cannot afford to take anything calmly, and she does not try.

There remains, then, for the German—loose and absolved from the older form of the Ten Commandments—but one resource, War. His own goods (credit, capital, finance, or whatever you like to call them) may fail him. But his fist is mailed; his machine is ready; his neighbour is weak. His new God calls upon him, and he strides forth—into Belgium—the Armed Superman.

C. R. L. F.

OXFORD, *Sept.* 12, 1914.



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