0/5

GERMANY AND EUROPE

GERMANY AND EUROPE

BY

J. W. ALLEN

Barclay Lecturer in Modern History at Bedford College, University of London

LONDON

G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.

1914

FOREWORD

THIS little book is the result of a serious effort to understand the causes and the issues of a war in which, whatever we may feel about it, every man, woman and child of us is engaged. It materialised, first, in the form of public lectures given at Bedford College, last October.

An honest attempt has been made to state a case for Germany. The effort to do so is a necessary part of any effort to understand what is happening. In this as in all other controversies, a right statement of the adversary's case is the beginning of understanding. Until that is done we have not even put the question and all discussion is irrelevant. If it seems to the author that, at the bar of reason and of justice, Germany has no case, that may be due to his bias or to his general incompetence : it is not due to neglect.

Before all things it is necessary that we should know and feel that our cause is just. I have tried, in this book, to show that it is. That question settled, it is a matter of relatively very small importance to us or to our children how and why, exactly, this war began. It behoves us, now, first of all to do all we can to secure victory for the Allies and secondly to look forward to an end. The breaking of the

German power of offence is now a sheer necessity of the moment ; and to that end we must all combine with all the force we have. But military victory may be worse for the victors than defeat for the vanquished. To do all we can to win is at once hard and simple, and it is not enough. We have also to consider what use we can make of victory, when we have earned it.

If our cause is just, it is just for such and such reasons : and those very reasons must needs define and limit our objects in the war. The justice of our cause is a compelling justice. If we seek our national advantage as against other nations, how are we better than the Germans ?

There is no need to fear that our resolution to conquer will be sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought. The more deeply we consider the issues of this war, the more fixed will be our resolution. We are not fighting merely for our homes, our women and children, for our tradition, our national life and liberty. It is true that we are fighting for all these dearest things. It is true : and in a sense it is enough. It is enough, surely, to make every man of us who is fit for fighting wishful to fight and willing, if need be, to die. It is enough to make rich and poor feel their brotherhood at last. It is enough to fill every one of us with passionate desire to contribute freely to the national defence. And we can all do so. It is not only the enemy abroad that must be fought. So great a struggle as this must needs set up, even here, and has already set up, cruel distress. Even the poorest and weakest of us may do something to help his neighbour.

A German poet has finely expressed the hatred and the patriotism that fill him at this moment.

With but slight verbal alteration we may well take his words for our own :—

"Come, hear the word, repeat the word!
Throughout the Motherland make it heard :—
We will never forego our dream ;
We have all but a single dream ;
We love as one, we strive as one,
We have one love, and one alone :—
England."

In this war we have worse enemies than the Germans. That factiousness of party or of class which denounces and does not try to understand, which hates and is blind, which imputes base motives to every opposition, is not yet dead among us. Brutal exploitation of the weak, mean jealousies and meaner fears, cowardice, hypocrisy, waste, still flourish in our hearts and in our deeds. These are the enemy, no less than the Germans : these are our weakness, and by these we shall fall, if we fall.

But we are fighting for greater things than safety : for things so great that we may well be uplifted. We are fighting for the better Europe that means a better world. We are fighting to destroy an obstacle to progress. We are fighting for those ideals of liberty and justice and love which lie deep in the hearts of all of us, which are the springs of all noble action and the secret of man's everlasting hope.

We fight not for safety only but for the larger life, not for trade but for the breaking down of barriers, not for colonies but for good-will among men, not for hate of the German but for love of humanity, not for material gain but for the things that matter. The heavens are opened, the trumpet is blown, the call has come for every one of us. As we respond, so shall it be with us in the end.

CONTENTS

I

THE THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL MILITARISM

I

THE THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL MILITARISM

If we wish to understand, as far as possible, what is now going on in Europe, it is necessary to arrive at an understanding of what may be conveniently, if not quite accurately, called the German theory of international militarism. It is a theory of the State and of international relations; and underlying it there is, of necessity, a theory of life or, rather, a theory of values. It is the object of this section to present these theories in a summary manner, but as distinctly and as plausibly as possible. The more plausible we can make them seem the nearer we shall be to understanding. It is desirable, but not really necessary, to be just to one's friends: it is far more important to be just to one's enemies.

There has been a great deal of talk in our papers and magazines of late about the German theory of the State, about Treitschke and even about

Nietzsche. But it had best be said at once that we are far from any certainty as to how far the doctrines in question have been a factor in bringing about the present tragic situation. Nothing is more difficult than to estimate the influence of abstract theory upon action. Political theories, as such, are coherently conceived and held by very few persons anywhere. To the great majority of Germans, as to the great majority of Englishmen, Treitschke can be little more than a name.

The broad fact which justifies us in speaking of a German theory of the State may be here broadly stated. We have in our hands a considerable mass of German literature of the last fifty years, in which a fairly definite theory of the State is set forth more or less coherently and consistently; and we have a still greater mass of writings in which the same theory appears to be clearly implicit. We find it or some of it in the writings of philosophers historians, soldiers, politicians, journalists and even poets. It has been expounded from slightly different points of view, and particular writers repudiate certain of its arguments or conclusions. Here an attempt is made to reconcile it with Christianity: there it is frankly anti-Christian. Nevertheless it is, in the main, coherent; it forms an intelligible body of doctrine. Moreover, in its modern form, the theory seems to be distinctly a German product. It is held here and there by English and by French people; but it is not characteristically English or

French, and it is utterly un-Russian. But in Germany it would seem to have exercised and to exercise great influence on the thought, and therefore the action, of great numbers of people. It seems to have profoundly affected the attitude of the most educated class in Germany and, perhaps above all, that of the ruling class in Prussia which, in the main, directs the foreign policy of Germany. It seems clear, indeed, that at the present moment the German Imperial Government represents, consciously or not, a particular theory of inter-State life. One more preliminary remark should, perhaps, be made. Whatever influence the teaching of Nietzsche may have had in promoting the spread of what we call militarist theory in Germany, the theory itself is certainly not Nietzsche's. To the mature Nietzsche all nationalism was contemptible, and German patriotism the worst of all its forms. He found something to admire in Bismarck, but nothing in the German Empire. He was a bad German and, in his own phrase, a good European. He saw in Wagner's German patriotism one sign of the reactionary character of his opera.

But we have not to deal with any question of origins, nor is it, here, a question of the views of particular men. It is a question of a political theory which appears to underlie the action of the German Government.

It is, of course, difficult to state any far-reaching theory in a summary form ; and, involved in any

attempt at compression, is a danger of missing important connections and of getting proportions wrong. Especially difficult is it to state accurately and shortly a theory of values. This modern German theory may be said to start with the conception that energy is the sole measure of value. There is here, at once, a difficulty about words. To use the word "force" might mislead: the word "energy" may also be misleading. By energy is meant not mere moral energy in the narrow sense, but every form of power both of body and mind. The value of a nation, of a State, as of an individual, is conceived as consisting in, and in fact being nothing else than, the total amount of energy it possesses, latent or developed. And, since one must distinguish between forms of energy, it is laid down that the highest form is creative energy; the energy of the thinker, the artist, the reconstructor, the originator. There is no good but power and the highest good is creative power.

By applying this idea to the idea of the State,[1] the State becomes a mechanism for the conservation, organisation, and development of national energy. It should have a national or "racial" basis; and indeed must have if its co-ordination of individual energy is to be completely effective.

The State, then, is that which stands for the highest purpose conceivable: that is, for the development through organisation of more and more energy,

[1] As Nietzsche rightly refused to do.

greater and greater life. Without the State the individual would be almost powerless. It is only by union with it that he can develop such power as he has. By giving him personal security, at the outset, the State gives him his chance. It turns his potential into his actual. But more than this: by co-ordinating and directing individual power, the State can produce results—can actualise an amount of energy indefinitely greater than could otherwise be realised. The individual owes practically all he has and is to the State and his highest duty is self-sacrifice to the State. It is in order that more power may be developed—that there may be more life and greater —that the State imposes on the individual legal restraints and legal burdens. For the sake of that, the State has to regulate the struggle among individuals by legal rules, has to impose military service and taxation and so forth. To resist or even to repine at these burdens is to play the traitor not only to the community but to oneself. It is to take up an absurd position—to deny the value and the purpose of life.

On the other hand, while the State imposes obligations upon all its members, it is itself necessarily free of all obligations except to itself. The sovereignty of the State and its freedom must needs be absolute. It is, as it were, a thing in itself, utterly separate. So far as obligation depends upon positive law it cannot exist between States, for there is no positive law between States. What is

called International Law rests only on agreements between absolute sovereign States, incapable by their very nature of limiting their own freedom. There is no sanction for International Law, save war.

But so far as obligation rests not upon law but upon the nature of things and of values, it cannot exist at all as between States. For every individual the State of which he is a member is the supreme and only efficient instrument for the realisation of values. For the State, therefore, there cannot exist any basis for obligation towards alien States. I must ask the reader to observe that I am not arguing. I am stating a theory or a way of seeing things. In order to give the idea more complete definition it will be well to state it differently.

The driving force of all life, it is asserted, is what Nietzsche called the "will to power." It is not very easy to give a definite sense to the word "power" as used in this wide phrase. On the negative side, "power" would appear to signify the absence of external obstacles and restraints—hence a possibility of unhampered development. On the positive side it would seem to mean control—a position such as to enable one to exploit freely men and things. For such freedom and control, it is said, all living things strive more or less consciously and energetically. But such limiting phrases do not give the whole content of the words "will to power." There is no such thing as a mere will to live. The will to live involves and includes

a notion, however hazy, of value in life. The will to live is a will to live more fully, more freely and largely. It is a will to enlargement of life, a striving after ideal liberty. Such conceptions are vague to most men: but the impulse is universal. The will to power is a secret and constant desire for more life, a striving to realise unformulated ideals.

This striving, it is argued, is the secret of all progress. Originally, progress may be conceived as having depended wholly on the will to power in individuals and on the consequent strife between individuals. It still ultimately depends on that: but no longer wholly and no longer, in the main, directly. With the development of the highly organised modern State, progress has come more and more to depend on the conflict between States. Power is now developed chiefly in and through the State, which is at once the great storehouse of power and the mechanism for its exercise. For power the State exists and the will to power must needs be the will of the State. To this will there is and can be no restriction. No obligation can be conceived as fettering that upon which all progress depends. The State cannot be concerned only with the organisation of power within itself. It is the only efficient instrument of the will to power in every one of its members. By the very nature of things, the State is bound to extend its control and so its power of doing, in every possible direction, as far as possible and by all means.

"He who is not man enough to look this truth in the face," wrote Treitschke, "should not meddle with politics." The highest moral duty of the State is to increase its power. This is its very life. No State that is not already dying will forswear it.

Let us "look this truth in the face" and notice what it means in international relations. It is obvious that it means—just War. It means what Hobbes said, that the natural relation of any two States is a condition of war. Peace is a temporary arrangement: peace is an artificial thing. Or, rather, there is no peace. In "peace" the nations fight each other with tariffs, with trade competition, with "peaceful penetration." Peace is an artificially mitigated form of the everlasting war, which is life.

The modern German prophets of this school, from Treitschke, whose work was done between 1860 and 1896, to General Bernhardi, writing in 1912, accept, cheerfully enough, this conclusion. War is the universal law of nature. The ceaseless struggle among States for power must recurrently produce unmitigated war. Such war is the result of the idealism of States. It is the result of an effort to force a new aspect on things, to force things into accord with some idea, against determined opposition. When one State is fully determined to do this and another State to prevent it, you get what we ordinarily call war.

Not only, therefore, has a State always a right to make war, but it may well be and often will be the positive duty of a State to do so. Pretexts for war are matter of indifference or matter of pure calculation. One is reminded of Nietzsche's famous saying: "Ye say, it is the good cause which halloweth even war? I say unto you: it is the good war which halloweth every cause." But, in truth, there is only one good cause for making war, and that one is all sufficient: the will to power. A Government that shrinks under all circumstances from making war, a Government that refuses to make war except defensively, must either represent conscious weakness or be failing in its duty. For every Government exists as a supreme expression of the will to power.

From these general assertions we pass to another proposition, the truth of which has, indeed, already been implied. In the international struggle, war is the supreme test. It is the absolute and final test of energy—that is of real worth. Victory in war is, in the long run, always the victory of the superior; or, if ever it is not so, the case can only be very exceptional. A single war is not, of course, necessarily a final judgment. A nation may be defeated and may recuperate and conquer at last. But in the long run the people of the greatest moral and intellectual power will be victorious. If you are religiously inclined, you will describe the result as a judgment of God. If not, you will say, with

General von Bernhardi, that the result is "biologically just."

Of all factors in progress the greatest, therefore, is War. It is the decisive factor. It alone gives absolute decisions, from which no appeal is possible. By means of War, the weaker is suppressed or conquered and exploited for the benefit and for the higher purposes of the stronger. This is the very essence of progress. Progress is the increase of the stronger; the dominance of the strong, the enslavement of the natural slave, the extinction of the degenerate, the increase of freedom and power for the superior creature.

It must be fully realised that no German thinker of this school is under the absurd illusion that victory in war depends on anything that can accurately be called "brute force." This illusion is, indeed, one which could hardly exist except among a people that knows nothing of war. There is, one may say, no longer any such thing as "brute force." The mere "brute" has practically no force at all. Such force as he has he does not know how to use; he cannot combine, he cannot direct. Behind the gun is the highly trained man who works it, and behind him is the specialised intelligence and the elaborate organisation that created both it and him. Behind the army is the spirit and power of self-sacrifice, the will to endure. There is no brute force but that of mere numbers.

Though when other things are equal, superior

numbers must win, yet it remains true that mere numbers alone are all but useless in war. In war the moral factor, as Napoleon declared, is most important of all, and next in importance is the intellectual factor. No soldier ever thought otherwise. Organisation, training, intelligence, the will to endure, the will to die, the will to conquer, these are the factors of victory. In the long run victory must rest with the people that has most of these. But that is to say that it must rest with the people of the greatest total energy, with the people greatest in peace as in war, greatest in science, in art, in all creative activities—with the people, that is, whose triumph is a victory for civilisation.

Now, further, it is argued that if all these things are so, it is absurd for the weaker nation to appeal to treaty rights or to so-called international law against the stronger. A treaty is an expression at a single moment of the sovereign wills of two or more States—the High Contracting Parties. Its validity lies solely in the fact that it really represents, at the moment, the wills of the States concerned in relation to its subject. It is a declaration that in the actual circumstances we shall do or refrain from doing certain things. Inevitably, from the very moment of its signature, its validity begins to disappear. All things are changing continuously; all things are becoming different. The time must come when the will expressed in the treaty has no longer any relation to the actual. When that time

comes, the treaty has become—a scrap of paper. The will, that was behind it, has, necessarily, changed with the circumstances. In every promise there must be understood a condition : " So long as circumstances remain thus." It is absurd to construe a treaty to mean a promise to act always in the same way however circumstances alter.

A Government that held itself bound by a treaty after the conditions had passed away under which that treaty represented a real act of will, would be a Government whose action had no relation to the real. It is only the actual that counts.

But, in truth, say the German historians of this school, no State acts or ever has acted in this absurd way. A State that pretends to do so, has, invariably, ulterior purposes to serve. It is as natural that a State which wishes to maintain, in its own interests, the existing balance of power, should appeal to treaties, as that a State which desires, in its own interest, to upset that balance, should disregard them. A people dominated by a sense of right—and all peoples are still more or less thus dominated—seeks always to discover some manner of reconciling its sense of right with its will to power. This is where talk about treaties comes in usefully.

But this is hypocrisy or self-deception ; behind all this talk about treaties, always and everywhere, is the will to power. Moreover the form of hypocrisy that appeals to treaties always denotes conscious weakness and fear. The strong need no hypocrisy. The

attitude of the strong is: " Take from me what is mine if you can ; if you cannot, look out for what you call your own." The hypocrite attitude is : " It would be very wicked of you to take what is mine, because I have a right to it." This is the attitude of weakness. A right to it ! The answer is that you have a right to nothing you cannot defend. What you can take and what you can keep, that you have a right to—and no more. To say otherwise is to defy nature, to deny the law of life and of progress, to blaspheme against life itself. The old saying, " Might is Right," may be somewhat illogical in form, but that it roughly expresses the ultimate truth is expressly declared by Bernhardi and implied, at least, in all the writings of this school, from Treitschke onwards. There is, indeed, on their premises, no logical escape from this conclusion.

The contempt and loathing expressed by writers of this school for all forms of what is rather unfortunately and ridiculously called " Pacifism," must be read to be believed. Pacifism is described as either an hypocrisy of the weakling, trying by fraud to save himself from the destruction that is his only " right," or as a sign of disgusting degeneracy. At the very best it is a silly, slavish dream born of low vitality. Most contemptible of all is the pacifism which denounces war on the ground that it does not " pay." Only a nation of shopkeepers, only a nation that valued material comfort more than power and security more than achievement, could honestly

take such a view. If the gains of war could be measured in money, then, indeed, war would not be worth making. But scarcely less contemptible are those who denounce war on the ground of its "inhumanity" or, which is much the same thing, on the ground of the suffering it causes. War is the law of human progress; how, then, can it be inhuman? Suffering is incidental to all conflict and, therefore, to all life. Useless suffering is an evil, like all useless things: but suffering is no evil in itself. A people that revolts against mere suffering, revolts against life itself. A people that condemns war for the suffering it causes, must care more for comfort than for anything else; must see the highest in individual happiness instead of in collective power. Such a people is merely degenerate and far on the road to extinction. At bottom such a view is mere cowardice—the unforgivable sin—the sin Nature never forgives. To the manly people, the valiant people, the really human people, suffering is good or evil, according to the nature of that to which it is incidental. The will to power involves the will to endure, the will to every self-sacrifice and, necessarily, the will to sacrifice others. The will to happiness, the will to peace, that is degeneracy; *that* is inhuman! "Man," says Nietzsche, "does not really pursue happiness: only an Englishman does that!"

War, then, is a sacred and righteous thing and an ennobling thing. "Herein," says Treitschke, "lies

the majesty of war, that the petty individual altogether vanishes in the great thought of the State." War is a nation's supreme self-sacrifice. It is the highest and the noblest expression of that will to power which is the essence of vitality and of all progress. War, it is said and sung, brings out all the finest qualities of human nature. It is a refining fire, separating gold from dross; it is a furnace in which all shams perish. It is the great school of the heroic. "What a perversion of morality," wrote Treitschke, "to seek to abolish heroism from the life of man!" The incidental suffering of war is no more than incidental. "God will see to it," Treitschke declared, "that war always recurs as a drastic purge for mankind."

The religious note, it must be pointed out, constantly recurs in German writers of this school. It may be worth while, also, to point out that there appears to exist in Germany a certain number of people who find in the principles already stated the groundwork, or, perhaps, the content of a new religion—the "religion of valour." There has, it seems, been much symbolical talk about a revival of the religion of Woden. I confess that I know little of this. So far as I can make out, the creed of this new religion might be summarily expressed thus: "There is no God: and Napoleon was his prophet." It can hardly be that we need take this kind of thing seriously.

Considerations of space forbid, in this place, any

fuller statement than has been attempted of the body of doctrine here spoken of as the German theory of militarism. It is no part of my present purpose systematically to criticise these views. But it is necessary to the argument of these papers as a whole that a few suggestions of the nature of criticism should be offered. It is necessary, also, that a counter-view should at least be suggested. This can only here be done in very summary and rather disconnected fashion: and there is danger both of overstatement and of serious omission. Few people can be more painfully conscious than the present writer of the difficulty and danger involved in any attempt to treat these large questions in a summary way. There are elements in this "German" way of seeing things with which the present writer is in strong sympathy. As a whole the theory may be called perverse or even foolish; but certainly it is not ignoble. There is an element of the heroic in it: there is truth even in its morality. I can only, here, speak in my own name. I, too, can think of life as war: but as war against myself primarily, and secondarily against all kinds of evil, dirt, and darkness in the world. War against my neighbour seems to me worse than futile; it seems, essentially, suicidal. But brutality, I think, is better and more hopeful than cowardice: the most perverted idealism is better than the domination of the animal desire for comfort. Self-sacrifice is noble in the worst of causes. War may be better than peace. We are

feeling that now: I hope we are nearly all of us feeling how much better is this war than the peace we might have bought with dishonour. The earthly end of society, as St. Augustine said, is peace: but peace is not to be found in acquiescence in and submission to violence and wrong. The peace we all secretly desire, with desire unqualified, is that which war itself cannot disturb. Absence of war does not give that peace. Refusal to fight at the call of conscience and of duty—cowardice of any sort—destroys that peace.

On the other hand there is much in this German militarist theory that seems to rest upon mere misapprehension, and there is much, also, that looks like mere verbiage.

It may be suggested, first, that to find the root of all human aspiration and endeavour in a mere "will to power" is either nonsense or makes nonsense of life. For power cannot rationally be conceived as a final end. It has no meaning or value apart from some use to be made of it. Personally, I think this is true. The theory is not nonsense, but it makes nonsense of life. But I am aware that this criticism might be regarded as a mere piece of verbal logic. The question raised is far too large for discussion here.

But it is certainly worth while to point out that the theory, so far as it is a theory of international relations, seems to depend on an antiquated conception of the State as something truly organic and separate.

We may fairly call this conception antiquated, not because it is old—which is, rather, a point in its favour—but because, whatever may once have been the case, it no longer corresponds with the actual moral and economic condition of Europe or, therefore, with the needs of the European population. For more than the last hundred years there has been going on, with constantly accelerating rapidity, over all the European world, an actual fusion of interests. The huge influx of power that began in the late eighteenth century has already broken down innumerable barriers and swept away a crowd of small States. Modern Italy, modern Germany itself are but items of this process. Not only international commerce and finance but international science binds, now, the European peoples together in common interests. Increase of knowledge of each other, as well as increase of the common stock of knowledge and of ideas, tends more and more to make our feelings and our interests alike European. The process is far from complete; but it continues. Already we have reached a point where the pursuit by force of merely "national" ends is at once a folly and a treason. We have reached already a point at which all frontiers begin to appear as artificial. So far as they merely define natural local areas of administration and of law, they are natural and even necessary. So far as they are barriers to co-operation they are, already, a nuisance. The common interest of all European peoples is, already, greater for each one

of them than any local and particularist interest. So far from being a thing essentially separate and real the State, on this view, appears as something highly artificial and as possessing no boundaries that are not conventional. The progress of civilisation involves not an increasing severity of conflict between States but, on the contrary, a gradual breaking down of the partly artificial, partly accidental, barriers existing between them. For many centuries the areas of centralised government—the areas of peace—in Europe have been increasing in size. Further progress is bound up with the further extension of peace areas. But, if this view be taken, then the whole German theory of the State, as a theory of inter-State life, collapses at once. It follows, too, that any State which adopts that theory, sets itself as an obstacle in the way of progress.

But to maintain this view one must be prepared to go further. All this German reasoning concerning the State, its will and its life, seems to me to be reasoning in terms of unrealities. Germany or any other "State" consists really of a multitude of individuals, living, roughly speaking, within a defined area, under certain agreed rules, called law, and in a certain formal co-operation. These individuals alone are real beings. They recognise the existence in the community of a corporate and common authority for common purposes. That recognition constitutes what we call the State. The State may be said to be, in fact, the collective life of

those individuals. It concerns but a small part of the life of any one of them. The State is everything and nothing: it is everywhere and nowhere. It is just one form of co-operation or one aspect of co-operation among men. What is called its governmental machinery consists, simply, of a number of individuals in certain legal and formal relations to each other, and to the rest of their fellow-citizens and co-operating in complex ways to common ends. That it must be: it may be more than that, but so far as it is more than that, it would seem to be merely noxious. The State has no will: only the individual has will. The State has no life: it is an aspect of life: only individuals are alive. When we speak of the State as having a prospective existence, when we speak of it as an undying thing, we are speaking of a fact, in metaphor which tends to conceal the fact. For all that we can mean is that our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren will probably be co-operating in much the same forms and for much the same purpose as ourselves. When we speak of self-sacrifice for the State, we are speaking of a real thing; but this must be self-sacrifice for our fellow-citizens and for our children and theirs. It can be for nothing else, unless indeed—which may easily be—the sacrifice is for something greater than the State. If we say "for power the State exists," we are stating and stating wrongly that dangerous thing, a half truth. The State exists for us and for our children and our children's children. The personi-

fication of the State is the most dangerous form of anthropomorphism. It leads to worship of the State; and the State, as a god, is Moloch. The German theory of the State makes of it at once a prison and a barrack: a prison because it seeks to confine the aspirations of men within the narrow and conventional bounds of a single community: a barrack because it represents the highest form of co-operation as co-operation in war. This, indeed, is the final conclusion of that theory; and therein is demonstration of its absurdity. If the highest function of the State be war, the State is self-condemned. The State becomes, after all, not an instrument for power, but an instrument for destruction. What we need, truly, is more and more, wider and wider, co-operation among men. And we are getting it: rather, perhaps, in spite of than because of the State. Does anyone really hope to attain it through war? War may, occasionally, break down a barrier to co-operation. It has done so in the past: we may hope that it is doing so now. But it can be of no other service. Even so, war commonly breaks down barriers at too great cost; at a cost far too great to be measured, even roughly, in money. What war, under modern conditions, immediately and certainly does, is to destroy, as by earthquake, the fruits of the labour of generations. But it is far more destructive than earthquake. It destroys love as well as labour; it breeds hatred and fear; it lessens the power of

mutual understanding between peoples. It has set up more barriers than it has ever cast down.

Again, though it cannot be denied that war may still be a factor in progress—no one, at least, who believes that the defeat of Germany, now, will be a victory for progress, can deny that—yet it may well be asserted that, under modern European conditions, war waged for merely national ends can no longer conduce to progress in any way. It may be suggested further that it is simply untrue that war gives necessarily a just decision—" biologically " or otherwise. If it be biologically just that Belgium should be devastated, the suggestion comes strongly that human progress requires us to put an end to " biological " justice in our dealings with each other. The fact is that the employment of force in the form of organised violence can really do nothing but destroy. It may, sometimes, in the interests of civilisation be necessary to destroy. But to assert that power to destroy gives a right to destroy is to assert an anti-human proposition ; and what is, perhaps, more to the purpose, an absurd one, since it empties the word " right " of all meaning.

As for the suggestion that by abolishing war we should abolish heroism from human life, it is difficult to take it seriously. It is just the sort of assertion one must expect sometimes to get from arm-chair students, who live in a world of ideas and obtain nearly all their knowledge of life from books. Treitschke, evidently, knew practically nothing of the life of coal mines or engineering works or of

hospitals or even slums. Even in his own little domestic and academic circle he must either have been singularly unfortunate or, far more probably, singularly unobservant. Treitschke's own peaceful life, if we may accept the testimony of his pupils, was quite distinctly heroic.

That the views summarily set forth and discussed in this chapter are very widespread in Germany admits of no doubt. How far such views are dominant, how much real influence they have upon German life and action, it is impossible exactly to estimate. But it is certainly true that some form of this militarist theory has been in recent years characteristic of German writing and speech in relation to politics. It is true, also, though possibly not relevant, that, from the Great Elector to Bismarck, no State can show quite so good a record, from this point of view, as Prussia. It is true and certainly relevant that Frederick the Great who was among the ablest and frankest of all exponents of the philosophy of inter-State conflict, is exalted as a national hero and exemplar, not only by German historians, but by the German Government. The organisation of the present German Imperial system and its policy in recent years are alike consonant with the theory. There seems no doubt that the German Government does actually, at this moment, represent and act upon it. It stands, almost confessed, in the recent German White Book.

Yet it is impossible to believe that these views are actually the views of the German people as a whole.

We have, indeed, conclusive reasons for saying positively that they are not. General von Bernhardi wrote his much-canvassed book not for the needed enlightenment of the British public, but as an antidote to what he regarded as the growing desire for peace in Germany.

We know that, now for many years past, there has existed in Germany an increasing protest against the theory and the practice of militarism. This protest has already produced a literature of its own. In German politics it takes the form of what is called Social Democracy. "Social Democracy" does not necessarily involve quite what we call "Socialism" in England. What it does mean is angry and disgusted protest against militarist doctrine and its products. Now, in spite of the detriment which electoral arrangements inflict on this party, the Social Democrats, as a result of the general election of 1913, formed the largest of the rather numerous parties in the German Reichstag. What is more, the second party, in numbers, in the Reichstag of 1913, was the Catholic party, called the Centre. These two parties, the Social Democrats and the Centre, together formed a clear majority in the Reichstag of 1913. These facts are cheering in more ways than one, and they are facts that we must not forget now and must, above all, endeavour to remember later.

II

GERMANY

II

GERMANY

THE immediate cause of the present war was the action taken by the German Imperial Government in certain definite circumstances. Behind that action and behind the response made by the Germans to the appeal of their Government was the mental condition of the German nation. This mental condition seems to have amounted to what may roughly be described as a will to war, and may be regarded as the real cause of the war. But this mental state was not, of course, a simple thing, all of a piece. It might even be argued that it did not really exist at all. It is true that the minds that make up what we call a nation are so various in quality and outlook that to suppose we could include them all in a single generalisation would be merely absurd. Nevertheless the kaleidoscopic maze which this multitude of minds presents, has a certain unity. One may picture it as forming a great web of intertwisted strands of different textures and colours, running criss-cross, in all directions. But the threads form a

more or less distinct pattern. The unity of the pattern is derived from a similarity of environment, of tradition, habit, education, and so on, existing over the whole area occupied by the nation. In the case of Germany, it is a broken pattern. It is broken at one end by the Poles; it is at least confused by Alsace-Lorraine, and moreover, as one goes from north to south, the colour scheme alters. For all that a distinct pattern is very clearly discernible. A multitude of threads can be made out, of different colours and qualities and lengths, but all converging to the same point, to the same issue, and that issue is a will to war. This is the dominant feature of the scheme as a whole. There are, of course, cross threads, that run to a different issue, counter to the main trend. But they are pale and indistinct: they are all but effaced by the dominant and flamboyant colour scheme.

The metaphor must not be pursued too far. The will to war in Germany has been produced by different pressures, operating in slightly different directions. The Germans had or thought they had many reasons for willing war. One group thought of the international situation in one way, and another group in another way. But, with quite remarkable distinctness, the lines converge.

The present chapter attempts to deal with the main features of Germany's international position as it existed before the war; and with German feeling and opinion in regard to that position. It is a formid-

able subject, at once complex and amorphous. In dealing with it one can but attempt to seize main features. Anything like exact definition is impossible.

The German Empire is a federation of twenty-six or perhaps one should rather say of twenty-five States, having a total population of about 65 millions. German unity, on its mechanical side, is mainly military and economic; it is little more. Military and economic union involves centralised direction and management of army and navy, foreign policy, railways, postal system, currency and tariffs. But every one of the German States has its own separate government and distinct constitution—three of them are republican cities—its own law-making body, its own fiscal system and its own educational system. The German Empire, as such, exists primarily for purposes of trade, industry, and war. It is perhaps natural, this being so, that the Imperial Government should be organised in an undemocratic manner. The Reichstag, the parliamentary body representative of the population of the whole Empire, is based on an electoral system which involves gross under-representation of the larger towns. It possesses no initiative in legislation and no control whatever of the Imperial executive except through its power of refusing moneygrants—a power too great to be easily exercised. It is important also, in this connection, that Prussia, by far the largest and therefore the predominant State in the union, is, in respect of its

own particular constitution, the most undemocratic of all the States, with the single and insignificant exception of Mecklenburg. The constitution of Prussia, from a western point of view, is quite astonishingly plutocratic.

These constitutional facts are referred to as helping, at least in some slight degree, to explain the predominance in German politics of a militarist party or group. The Emperor, it may fairly be said, is essentially the head of a military system. Legally, at least, the foreign policy of the German Empire is, at any one moment, entirely controlled by his will, and practically there exists no machinery for checking his activities. This does not necessarily mean that he, personally, really controls the action of his Government. But if he does not, no one knows who does. He is King of Prussia and behind him is the Prussian bureaucracy and the highly militarised Prussian aristocracy. Having regard to the federal constitution alone it would seem that it was not unlikely that the foreign policy of Germany would come to be controlled by militarist opinion.

Thus far we have been dealing with the subject in a merely introductory manner. What falls now to be considered is the European position of Germany.

The country lies, geographically, in a somewhat awkward and uncomfortable position. It has hardly any sort of natural boundaries except on its relatively small sea frontier. On its eastern border there is no sort of natural boundary, geographical or racial.

The Vistula might form a sort of natural frontier on this side; actually it does not form the frontier at all. The eastern frontier provinces of Germany, like the contiguous frontier districts of Russia, are largely Polish; though, it is true, not nearly so largely as many people apparently suppose. On the far south is a long stretch of equally artificial frontier between the South German people of Bavaria and the South German people of Austria, and between south Germany and Switzerland. On the side of Holland the frontier cuts across a Low German population. Along the French frontier the racial line is better though not very well defined; and here Germany has made things practically worse by her annexation of Gallicised Alsace-Lorraine. It is also a point of real importance that if the Rhine be regarded, as it certainly is in Germany, as naturally a German river, then from this point of view, it is unnatural and distressing that the whole lower course of the Rhine and its commercially important mouths, should lie outside Germany.

Now such a frontier as this is or may be dangerous. It seems to invite aggression by Russia on one side and aggression by France on the other. Equally it invites an attempt by Germany to force its way down the Rhine to the mouth. The facts are sufficient to explain the existence of two feelings which indubitably exist in great strength in Germany; a feeling that the frontier is insecure, and a feeling that the Empire has not yet succeeded in realising its

natural boundaries. Both these feelings tend to produce war.

But more than this has to be considered before we can leave the subject of the German land-frontiers. The population of Germany is 65 millions; that of France does not reach 40 millions. For this reason, among others, the menace assumed to exist from France has never, since 1870, seemed of itself very serious. But France is allied with Russia. The population of the Russian Empire is apparently near 170 millions, and it is a population that is now increasing more steadily than that of any west European country. The prospective increase of that population is indefinitely great. And this is not all. In the Austrian Empire and on the very borders of Germany in Galicia, Bohemia and Moravia, and Hungary, are great numbers of Slavs, and further south in the Balkan peninsula dwell great numbers more. To an excited imagination it might seem that the Slav peoples threaten to bring about first a complete break up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and then the complete ruin of Germany. Excite the imagination a little more and you will have a picture of hordes of barbarians marching on Berlin and a vision of Germany as the bulwark of Europe against these hordes. All this seems to be a mere bogey of uninformed imagination. But it must be remembered that so far as the Germans think of international life as of the nature of war, they are likely to attribute vast aggressive designs to the

Russian Government and even to the Slav peoples as a whole.

In any case it appears to be certain that German imagination has for some time past been increasingly distressed by this vision of a Slav peril. To a very large number of Germans, the enemy is the Slav, the danger is Russia. Fear of Russia has been increasingly powerful for some years, and we may be sure that this fear accounts to a great extent for Germany's attitude at the present moment, if not for the action of the German Government at the recent crisis. It is this that explains the present feeling among the German people—which we need not doubt is to a very large extent genuine—that they are waging a war that was defensive from the beginning. This also goes some way to explain their present fierce anger against England; though that is to a larger extent an explosion of feeling that existed earlier.

Of Germany's sea frontier in Europe I need say but little. It is obviously and undeniably to some extent unsatisfactory from a purely German point of view. Germany has 927 miles of coast line on the Baltic and only 293 miles on the North Sea. The Baltic is very inconveniently placed for trade with any but the Scandinavian countries and with Baltic Russia. It is on the comparatively small frontage on the North Sea, at Hamburg, that the greatest of Germany's commercial ports has grown up; and it is here also, at the mouth of the Elbe,

that her naval power is based. On the other hand the Kiel Canal has greatly bettered Germany's commercial position. In any case the enormous increase of Germany's sea-borne trade since 1870 would appear to indicate that the relative lack of convenient sea-board has not, so far, greatly handicapped Germany's industrial development.

These facts are sufficient to account for an uneasiness, a sense of insecurity and even of danger, which has been widespread in Germany for some time. They would even suggest that the German Government might force war upon Russia, thinking that it was merely making preventive war. They hardly, however, suggest the existence of any party or group actuated by purely aggressive designs. But what precisely do we mean by "aggressive"? It is terribly easy to deceive ourselves with words, not remembering how poorly words express the complexities of reality! A policy of defence turns insensibly to a policy of prevention; and between prevention and aggression the line is fine. Not by consideration of circumstance alone, still less on any technical grounds, can a policy of prevention be distinguished in all cases from an aggressive policy. The distinction between them is one of moral quality. We must remember, too, that a sense of being cramped and cooped up among hostilities, produces of itself a desire to strike, a desire to break out at any cost, to hack our way through. We in England have never in all our history suffered from

just that sense. We don't quite know what it feels like.

In this connection I must point out that, to many Germans, the political geography of the world seems even more unsatisfactory than the political geography of Europe. This feeling is largely due to the increase of population in Germany. In 1871 Germany's population was only a little over 41 millions. With the increase of population, the increase of German trade and industry has apparently not quite kept pace. Germany has been producing more people than she can keep at home. That is to say that there has developed a considerable German emigration.

Owing, partly at least, to lack of suitable German colonies the great mass of German emigrants goes to alien territory—chiefly to the United States. There, inevitably, in course of time, it mixes with the alien population, loses its specifically German character and is lost to the German Empire. Germany's colonies in Africa are large in area and have possibilities of development. But they are admittedly unattractive. German emigrants have never gone there in large numbers, and in the last ten years have gone there less than ever.

From the point of view of the German nationalist, all this is so much dead loss. Colonies, it is declared, Germany must have, in order to build up new centres of specifically German life from the overflow of her population. "In the future," says General Bern-

hardi, " the importance of Germany will depend on two points : firstly, how many millions of men in the world speak German ; secondly, how many of them are politically members of the German Empire." But how are new colonies of suitable character to be obtained if not by conquest from England or France ? Treitschke was one of the first to lay down that Germany must set out to acquire colonies, and that to do so she must develop a great navy. It was not a question, observe, of keeping what she had : it was a question of the insufficiency of what she had. And all over the world it was, above all, England that blocked the way. Hence it is argued by Treitschke and by many writers since his time that war against England is the supreme necessity for and even the supreme duty of Germany.

But, of course, it is not only England that has to be dealt with : there are France and Russia. German writers of the extreme militarist school are well aware that success in a war with England, France and Russia simultaneously would at least be doubtful. Bernhardi lays stress on this fact ; though he thinks that success would not be impossible, and that such a war may have to be undertaken as the only way out. But it should certainly be avoided if possible. An understanding might perhaps be come to with France and Russia which would leave England isolated. Or a war with France and Russia, with England standing out, might lead to a complete crushing of France and force Russia to the conviction

that her future lies in Asia, not in Europe. By that also England would be isolated and the Day would dawn. The possibilities have been openly discussed in Germany in the last few years.

It is along the lines of thought I have indicated that aggressive designs have been developed in Germany. That a considerable body of German opinion has been developed in this sense, the German literature and journalism of the last twenty years leaves no doubt. Germany has had dreams of a great central European State, reaching the Mediterranean at one end and the ports of Holland at the other dominating France and Italy, holding back Russia and stretching a long arm across Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf. Germany has had dreams, also, of a wreck and pillage of the British Empire. How deep these dreams go, what proportion of Germans has ever been visited by them, how far they have influenced the action of the German Government, it is, of course, impossible exactly to say. But that such views are held by many influential persons, and that they have been actively propagated by speech and writing for more than twenty years, of that there is no doubt at all.

Thus far, an attempt has been made to represent Germany's position in the Europe that was before the war, as the Germans see it. But at this point a comment becomes necessary. All this reasoning upon the bare facts of Germany's position seems to be fallacious just as the German theory of the State

is fallacious. It is reasoning in terms of unrealities. Behind all this talk about danger from Russia, the necessity of colonies, the necessity for breaking through a hostile ring and so forth, lies the old false conception of States as real and separate entities. It is the old folly of statesmen and Governments all Europe over. What is this "Russia" that they fear? The word Russia is a convenient name either for a quite artificial geographical area or for what we ineptly call a governmental "machine" or for a great multitude of individuals, living, as we absurdly say, *under* one Government. These people are organised and they are armed; they obey orders from a centre; if they are attacked or feel themselves threatened they will fight; they are animated to some extent by racial sentiment and by prejudice against foreigners. All that, of course, is true. But on a moderate computation, hardly more than one in a million of them has any desire to go trampling over Germany and killing Germans; and none of them desire to be killed by Germans. Between the aggressive will to power of their Government—supposing that any such thing exists—and the actual interests and wills of these millions of people, there is only the faintest correspondence or no correspondence at all. How many of these individuals desire German territory? The question is absurd: the very word "territory" is absurd. A man may own a bit of land under law: no man owns "territory." How many of them desire to own land in Germany?

If they have no such desire, do they desire that their children should own it? There is only one answer possible: they neither desire it for themselves nor for their children. Or, again, how many of them desire to force their "culture" upon other people? Again the question is absurd. Happily for themselves and others they are most of them unconscious of possessing such a thing.

The will to power in the State as such is irrespective or even destructive of the interests of the individuals composing the State. It does not arise from the interests or from the wills of the people: it is a result of thinking of the State as if the State were a person. Germany is in exactly the same case. The Germans do not see it; but it remains the fact. There may be danger to Germany from Russian statesmen; there is none from Russia. There may be danger for Russia from German statesmen: there is none from Germany. What is this danger that may or does exist? What is it that statesmen can do that makes them dangerous? There is only one answer: they can make war! So we make war to prevent war being made. If we do not make it now those others will make it when they are stronger and we weaker. And they will make it, presumably, for the same excellent reason—since there seems to be no other. How long are we to go on turning round and round in this circular cage? There is no need to go on; the cage is not closed. On the contrary, the door is wide open.

These last remarks are, it may be said, to some extent undeniably superfluous. If A really means, or is likely to make, war upon B, then, whether A's reasons for doing so are good, bad or indifferent, B may be held justified in preventive action. But, at least, the danger in which Germany stood, whatever exactly it may have been, cannot have been such as to force her to think of undertaking such vast operations as the establishment of a controlling power from Constantinople to Rotterdam or the abolition of the British Empire. One might certainly be inclined to suppose that no considerable body of Germans can ever really have indulged in such dreams. But we must remember the "will to power" or, rather, the talk about it and the theory that, by nature, States are engaged in a ceaseless conflict for dominion. We must remember, too, that any Government influenced by such notions will infallibly exploit all the vague fears and prejudices of its people in furthering its aggressive designs. Even so, one might suppose that any Government would shrink from the enormous danger and difficulty of aggressive undertakings under modern conditions. The conclusion that Germany's action cannot really to any serious extent have been actuated by aggressive ambitions would perhaps be inevitable but for the undeniable existence in Germany of certain strange illusions and misconceptions. These we must now consider. We have tried to answer the question: How did Germany see the international

position as it was before the war? But even such answer as we have attempted is incomplete. We must now ask the question: How did Germany see herself? As soon as we ask this question we come upon a fact which at first might seem too extraordinary to be credible. We come upon Germany's strange illusions regarding herself. Somehow or other—for our present purpose it does not matter how—the Germans would appear to have convinced themselves of their real, definite, absolute superiority to all other peoples. At all events they have tried very hard by speech and writing, for the last forty years, to convince themselves of this. I must point out that the fact is not so strange as it may seem. Not so very long ago Englishmen believed that they, individually, were worth at least three Frenchmen. Dr. Johnson declared roundly that foreigners were mostly fools. In the past most European peoples have indulged in this illusion of superiority. The Germans in this, as in other ways, are merely behind the times.

Deriving, as I do, my knowledge of these things mainly from German historians, I am greatly struck by the view of European history presented by these writers. Here as elsewhere it was Treitschke "our great national historian," as the Germans conventionally call him, who led the way. But he was followed by a crowd of distinguished successors. Not only Treitschke, but Giesebrecht, Droysen, Haüsser, Chamberlain, even Sybel, all tell the same

tale—the tale of the Germans as God's chosen people. The view of European history that I gather from German writers I will endeavour to state very briefly ; and in so doing I am of course in danger of stating it unfairly.

The view of European history taken by typical German historians I gather to be something very like this. The Roman Empire left all or nearly all the races it had ruled in a state of exhaustion and degeneracy. From this condition they were partially redeemed by the advent of the German peoples. All progress in Europe since the collapse of the Roman Empire, all achievement in art, science, and philosophy, has been the work of the German race, either directly or as a result of Germanic fusion with the conquered and worn out peoples of the Empire. Unfortunately, in the middle ages, Germany herself failed to become politically united. Her gigantic and noble dream of a German Empire of Christendom could not be realised under the conditions existing. The effort to realise it ultimately broke Germany to pieces, politically. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, while the new States the conquering Germans had founded were struggling for mastery of the world, Germany, politically helpless, thrown back upon herself, having first freed herself from the intellectual dominion of Rome, absorbed herself more and more completely in contemplation of the ultimate problems of life and of being. While the rest of half-redeemed Europe was

ignobly struggling for trade and wealth, Germany was wrapped, apart, in philosophic meditation. She was laying afresh the foundations of thought for mankind. From this meditative trance she was aroused by Napoleon, and under that enormous stress Germany at last awoke and arose. Inch by inch in the nineteenth century Germany realised political unity and forged her weapons. Now, at length and again, she stands forth, armed and ready, conscious of her divine mission, God's chosen people, first in arms as in arts, to redeem the world. And she stands alone in a world of degeneration and of barbarism.

If this is caricature I am mistaken. It seems to me that this is the general view of history that was preached—there is no other word for it—by Treitschke with fanatical earnestness and has been taught by the highest authorities in Germany ever since. It is all the more strangely perverse because of the learning that accompanies it.

No detailed criticism can, of course, be attempted here. But a few facts may be referred to, and I will venture a generalisation. My generalisation is rash and is crude—it is almost German in quality. But there is something in it, and it has not been suggested to me by any recent events. German mentality has two conspicuous and remarkable features. On the one hand the German intellect—I am perfectly aware that there is no such thing as the "German intellect!"—the German intellect is

remarkably comprehensive. By that I mean that it has a great power of grasping complicated detail and a great faculty for wide generalisation. On the other hand it is extraordinarily lacking in fineness of perception, in intellectual subtlety; and closely connected with this lack is its almost total lack of humour. These deficiencies are so great as to render German comprehensiveness almost futile. They account for the odd stupidity which marks almost all German work. The German mind is at once powerful and dull.

A few facts may next be referred to. It may be asked to begin with: Where is this ideal Germany we hear about? Who are these ideal Germans? German historians at least must know that the German Empire is not entirely German. I am not thinking of Germany's Poles. But it is a relevant fact that in the tenth century of our era everything east of the Elbe in what is now northern Germany was Slavonic. Berlin stands to-day in territory conquered by the Germans from the Slavs. These "Prussians" in whom Treitschke managed to see the quintessence of the Germanic are, at bottom, either Germanised Slavs or at most the result of a mixture between Slavs and Germans. The real Germans by race, if there are such things, are west of the Elbe, in the Rhineland, or in the south and in Holland and Switzerland. But the ruling and directing force in modern Germany is Prussia. Even the very word "Prussia" is not German.

As to the claim that progress and achievement since the fall of the Roman Empire has been essentially German progress and German achievement, it is simply fantastic. One illustration may be given. German writers have actually claimed that mediæval Gothic art is a product of the genius of Germany. It is barely intelligible that they do not also claim Chinese pottery. There are two countries in west Europe where Gothic art was never understood or, except imitatively, practised. One of these countries is Italy; the other is Germany. It is, I think, demonstrable that mediæval art and philosophy alike were primarily French and Italian, secondarily English and Spanish. Yet we are asked to believe that achievement in these countries was due to Germanic influence in face of the relative and very marked sterility of Germany herself. The facts indeed are obviously suggestive of a theory that the German, as such, is a stupid and sterile barbarian, very slowly and still very incompletely civilised by the influence of Rome and the south; and that his advent in West Europe produced nothing but anarchy and destruction. Such a generalisation would assuredly be far too sweeping: it would be quite in the German manner; it would be false. Yet perhaps there is some truth in it!

It is true that twenty years ago or more, English historians were rather inclined to take a view not far removed from that of Treitschke. The late Professor Freeman is the most conspicuous example

of this bygone tendency. But Freeman—the excuse is a miserable one—believed that the English were Germans. We have been recently reproached, at Berlin, with having played the traitors to our kindred the Germans. I had supposed that the theory that the English is a Germanic race was dead and buried. But, in spite of the German ethnologists themselves, this legend is apparently still current in Germany.

But, indeed, the matter is not worth arguing, and all this historical speculation is more or less beside the question. I think, perhaps, I have yielded to temptation in giving it so much prominence. How any European people living under modern conditions can believe in its own innate superiority to all other European peoples, is a mystery of the imagination hard to understand. Every European people possesses, it may truly be said, national characteristics. But these national characteristics are not peculiar to it and are not really distinct or definite. The closer you look at what is called national character the less distinct does it become. Our idea of it is a mere rough generalisation, based as a rule on very insufficient knowledge. Nothing really exists but the individual and every individual is unique. We speak, habitually, of national character in terms of race. It is no doubt convenient to do so ; but it is certainly misleading. We must remember that race means little more than " national character " plus language. If you take " race " to signify descent

from a single common stock, then at once it becomes doubtful how far any such thing exists and certain that nothing like a pure race exists anywhere in Europe. In the main national character appears to be the result not of a definite race heredity but of a definite environment ; of local law and custom, habit, education and suggestion. It is, I believe, radically impossible that any innate superiority should exist in Europe. And certainly evidence of any German superiority is completely lacking.

Yet it is a fact that belief in this has been assiduously propagated in Germany, and that by many of the very people who ought best to have known its absurdity. It is, apparently, this belief that lies behind all the bombast by which the German Emperor has managed to make himself look like a sort of caricature of the German nation—a *reductio ad absurdum* of Germany.

Whatever its foundations, this assiduous self-worship of Germany has been a very real factor in bringing about the present monstrous condition of Europe. Many Germans—to put it mildly—incredible as it seems, appear really to believe that the salvation of the world lies in the spread, by force if necessary, of something they call " German culture." The German word Kultur does not signify " culture " in the narrow and almost academic sense in which that word is most commonly used among us. The nearest English equivalent would be the word civilisation, though that word is perhaps too large.

In truth, it is impossible to give any very precise meaning to the word Kultur. It is one of these radically vague and large-sounding words which make up so much of the texture of German thought. But however difficult it may be to define this word "Kultur," that difficulty is as nothing to the difficulty of attaching any meaning to the phrase "German Kultur." What culture has Germany which other European peoples have not? What is the specific element in German civilisation which the rest of the world needs so sorely that Rheims Cathedral must be battered and smashed in order that we may get it? It is a big price to pay: even the Germans, one would suppose, unless what they have to give us is something utterly different from that which we have, must see that it is a big price. Personally, I am not aware that up to the present Germany has given us anything to equal in value a single one of the great statues on the west front of Rheims. One needs an answer to this question. And, so far as I know, there is only one possible answer to this question as to what Germany has to give us and it is this: A new religion, the religion "of valour," the religion of Woden or of Napoleon or of Zarathustra.

It was on the basis of this astonishing illusion of German superiority that Treitschke was able to persuade himself and others that German conquest was for the good of humanity and to square his insensate patriotism with his Christianity.

Fortified by this illusion Germans are apparently able to see in the crushing of France, the devastation of Belgium, the conquest of Holland, the break up and ruin of the British Empire, an advance of civilisation.

Along with this belief in German superiority goes, of course, a correspondingly low estimate of non-German peoples. The Germans do not think themselves demi-gods or supermen ; but they think of other peoples as barbarians or degenerates.

They are aware, indeed, that Russia is a big and formidable thing. They are all the more afraid of it because they are characteristically incapable, at present, of understanding Russian thought. They feel, it seems to me, that in Russia there is something mysteriously and immitigably hostile. But they console themselves by telling each other, with great emphasis, that Russia is radically barbarous and semi-Asiatic—too barbarous and rudimentary to be a very serious danger at present, though certainly a danger of the future. But Russia's proper future, they say, lies in Asia ; and this Russia must and can be made to understand. This illusion or ignorance seems to be a result of their whole habit of mind.

To Treitschke the French people was utterly decadent, radically frivolous, immoral and incapable. This view affords an extreme illustration of German dullness of perception, though it may have been partly due to sheer ignorance. Later German writers have shown a disposition to take a different

view. They speak of France as a gallant little nation, with a real culture of its own—somewhat decayed—striving to maintain a great tradition but doomed to failure if only for lack of weight. But there seems to be a consensus of German opinion to the effect that France does not count for much. She has a great past but no future. She is more or less worn out and enfeebled ; in any case, inferior.

But ever since Treitschke, ever since 1870, the Germans, judging not only from their literature but also from the action of their Government, have been increasingly preoccupied by the thought of England. It had best be pointed out here that the German navy, as a first-class fighting force, is a quite recent creation. It was not till 1889 that any serious attention was given by the German Government to the development of striking power at sea. It was not till 1897 that the determination to develop a great navy was definitely adopted. The German navy as a serious factor in war is a creation of the last sixteen or seventeen years. The year 1897 may, perhaps, be taken as marking the date at which German policy began to be consciously and definitely directed against England.

There is abundant evidence to show that in the minds of a large and highly influential and latterly increasing body of Germans, the British Empire is the greatest of all obstacles to German advance. The Germans have long feared us. Much of the hatred of us in Germany is, probably, reducible to

mere fear. It is certain that a very large number of Germans expected us to strike at Germany soon after she began to develop a great navy. Acting on their own principles we should have done so. To many it seemed inexplicable that we did not. But our failure to do so was widely interpreted as a sign of degeneracy. The idea of the weakness and degeneracy of England seems to have been spreading and strengthening in Germany for the last twenty years. Hatred of and equally contempt for England is one of the most prominent and characteristic features of writings of the German nationalist and militarist school, from Treitschke onwards. In Treitschke himself, hatred of England seems to have amounted to mania. For twenty years and more German writers have been declaring with astonishing frankness the will to destroy England and discussing in the naïf German manner, how the thing is to be done. England's cowardice, ignobleness, meanness, stupidity, treachery, and brutality would appear to have become an article of faith with the majority of patriotic Germans. By a constantly increasing number of writers and speakers England has been denounced with a violence and a candour that are very refreshing. England, it is said, is Carthage ; Germany is Rome. Napoleon was right : England's sea power is an obstacle and a menace to European civilisation. England is unworthy of her Empire : to break it up will be an act of justice and a deliverance of the oppressed. She has alternately exploited

and truckled to her white colonies. She has outraged India and Egypt. She has never seen in her Empire anything but a means of making money. All over the world sprawls this Colossus ; but its feet are of clay. England's position is maintained only by cunning, by bluff, by money, and by the forces of inertia. She defends herself with money and with intrigue. She has no army and is too degenerate to produce one. She hires mercenaries and black men and the weaker nations of Europe to fight her battles. She grudges money even for her navy. And a great fear has fallen upon her. Her will to peace is part hypocrisy and all cowardice. She crouches behind her fleet trembling over her money bags. Her old mastery of the sea is gone already, now that all the Powers have fleets. She knows too that the importance of such sea power as she still has, has been minimised by railways. Everywhere her Empire totters. India is on the edge of revolt. Her great colonies are practically free and only await the opportune moment to cast off her hated yoke for ever. Even her boasted wealth is largely unreal. Her wealth consists largely in debt : and debt can be repudiated. She levies interest on all the world : but behind this there are only scraps of paper. When the great shock comes they will be torn up. England contributes nothing to the world's art or to the world's thought. She is a gigantic incubus and a gigantic fraud. She is a dead-weight upon civilisation. Europe has no use for her. " A thing

that is wholly a sham," wrote Treitschke of England, "cannot, in this world of ours, endure for ever. It may endure for a while, but its doom is certain. There is no room for it in a world governed by valour and the will to power."

This appears to be the sort of stuff with which the youth of Germany has been crammed for the last twenty years. The vision of ourselves as our enemies see us is always sufficiently just to give us cause for serious reflection. We must not boast of the untruth of these hard sayings. It is up to us now to demonstrate that they are not true.

Not the least astonishing feature of the Europe that was before the war, was the blank indifference of the British people to all this open menace. But the British people does not read German and did not know. The few Englishmen who did know spoke to frankly incredulous ears. It all seemed so absurd! The English politician was either far too much absorbed in his little party game to see anything; or far too anxious about momentary electoral results to speak out honestly if he knew. Nothing perhaps has latterly contributed more to the spread in Germany of the opinion of England's radical cowardice and degeneracy, than this stupid or sublime indifference of ours. English talk about reduction of armaments, "naval holidays"—as though war were a game!—and so on, served only, of course, to strengthen this German view of England. To make such proposals to the German Imperial

Government, would seem, indeed, to have been either incredibly foolish or—incredibly wise. Probably no one on the Continent understood what we really meant—if we meant anything but party politics—except some of those strange, "barbaric" Russians.

Ever since 1870 Germany has been organizing herself more and more completely for military action. The full extent and thoroughness of her preparations are only now beginning to be visible. Partly as a mere result of this great and continuous effort to specialise herself for war, the direction of German foreign policy has fallen more and more completely into the hands of a militarist party or group. In the next chapter an attempt is made to deal with the diplomatic and other events which immediately led to the war. But it may be said at once that to find the cause of the war in these events would be to take an extremely superficial view of the question. The real fact may be broadly stated. The existence in Europe of a great State specialized for military purposes and directed by people dominated by such views as have been here set forth, this is the immediate cause of the war. To this result many things have, of course, contributed. The conception of the State as an individual embodiment of the "will to power"; the belief that this will to power in the Government represents the highest interests of the individuals composing the State; the sense of the somewhat

cramped and distinctly insecure geographical position of Germany ; the belief in the immitigable hostility of Russia and of France and the treacherous ill-will of England ; the fear of the Slav ; the conviction of German superiority; the belief in Russian barbarism, French weakness and English degeneracy ; all these to some extent inconsistent things have combined to produce in Germany and in the German Government what can only be described as a will to war. The counter-movement, the will to peace, in Germany—those pale, indistinct threads in the great web of the German mind—has been weak and incoherent. And that for three different reasons. In the first place, but least important of all, the voting power of the Social Democratic party does not correspond to its real numerical strength. In the second place the German Social Democrat shares to some extent the illusions and the fears of his countrymen. He is afraid of Russia, or he is afflicted with a sense of German superiority. In the third place, his protest has to the majority of Germans seemed disloyal and anti-national and associated with ideas of social revolution. For all these reasons the protest against militarism in Germany has been ineffective and partially unreal ; and it has done little to prevent the determination of the national mind towards war.

" No one in West Europe," a French officer said to me, soon after war had begun, " believes any longer in war except the Germans. That is the cause

of the war." With a few qualifications I think that he was right. Whatever exact interpretation we put upon the diplomacy of 1914—whatever were the exact thoughts of Dr. Bethmann-Hollweg or Herr von Jagow during those last days of July—it remains, I think, not doubtful that Germany and Germany alone—not Austria—has brought about the war. Germany has prepared for it, Germany has meant it, partly unconsciously, these twenty years. It could not have been avoided by us or by any one. Germany has willed it and was bound to get it, and has got it—though not quite in the form her Government desired. The existence of the Germany that, for the sake of brevity, we may call the Germany of Treitschke and the Kaiser, is the cause of this great conflict between a will to power that is national, and a will to peace that is European.

III

THE COMING OF THE WAR

III

THE COMING OF THE WAR

THE events and the diplomacy that immediately led to the war form a subject very simple as compared with that dealt with in the last paper. Yet, even here, there are serious difficulties. We have not available sufficient material to enable us to judge accurately and with certainty of the meaning of the diplomacy of July last. A certain number of documents bearing on the question have been published by the English, German, Russian and Belgian Governments. But the record is very incomplete. Above all we have no positive knowledge on two points of obviously great importance. We do not know what instructions were given by the German Government to its Ambassador at Vienna or what instructions were given by the Austrian Government to its Ambassador at Petersburg. There does not appear in the German White Book a single despatch of any kind from Berlin to the German Ambassador at Vienna. Only two telegrams from that Ambassador to Berlin are included ; and both are insignifi-

cant. We cannot help attaching some significance to these omissions: and yet it is impossible to draw any quite positive inferences from them.

It is worth while to refer to another and an essential difficulty. When we ask what were the precise views and intentions of the German Government during those last days of July, we are asking a question, the difficulty of which is somewhat obscured by its form. The German Government is not a person, neither is it impersonal. Our question would seem to concern primarily three men: the Emperor himself, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, the Chancellor, and Herr von Jagow, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. This is the fact so far as we know; but, in truth, our question probably concerns even primarily others also. It is, apparently, a question of what exactly was in the minds of these men during those days and of why they spoke and acted as they did. Put in this way, the difficulty of the question is obvious. What we do know is that these men were compelled to act quickly, almost from hour to hour, under great pressure and an enormous weight of responsibility. It may well be that their motives were not too clear to themselves. We may wonder whether Herr von Jagow himself could give us clear-cut reasons for his action or whether the German Chancellor himself could account for that last astonishing outburst of his on August 4th.

It is, of course, possible and even probable that

the German Government was acting throughout on a scheme preconcerted with Austria and based on definite calculations. This view is ably and vigorously maintained by Dr. E. J. Dillon in a little volume entitled " A Scrap of Paper," which is well worthy of attentive study. It may even be fearlessly asserted that this view of the matter in some degree represents the truth. Even so there is much that remains ambiguous.

In any case it is probable that the men " in power " in Germany acted almost automatically. Their action must have been determined partly by earlier thought and calculation concerning the general situation in Europe, partly by tradition and sentiment, partly by a fixed way of looking at things, of which they themselves might very possibly be unable to give any clear account. Of one thing we may be sure. There is no way of discovering exactly what was in their minds from their mere words and deeds at the crisis. If they willed war it was because, perhaps unconsciously, they had willed it for years.

At the outset we may take two things almost for granted. It is superfluous to attempt any demonstration of the fact that neither the English people nor the English Government desired war in any form. Altogether apart from the diplomatic record, which is conclusive on this point as far as it goes, we English people know that. The fact that there are still a few Englishmen who consider that it was needless for England to enter the war, and that our

Government has made a mistake in doing so, is itself an illustration of the reluctance with which we faced the facts.

But it is equally obvious that France did not desire war; not even a war fought in alliance with Russia and England. To suppose that the French people saw in the Austro-Servian crisis an opportunity for forcing war upon Germany and recovering Alsace-Lorraine, would be to mistake totally the spirit of France. It is possible that a few Frenchmen may have thought like that: it is certain that they were far too few to count. On Tuesday, August 4th, and through the night and morning of August 5th, I happened to be travelling across the French mobilization. No one who had the luck to do that can doubt that the French people saw the war as, in the main, a simple struggle for existence. One other thing, however, the French saw or felt. At all the stations of our route, women, dry-eyed, were clapping their men on the shoulders and saying with fierce energy: "Il faut en finir! Il faut en finir cette fois!" France was rising in a passion of resentment against Germany's will to war. But it is not worth while to labour the point. No one actually accuses France of having done anything at the crisis to bring about the war. All that France has done is to refuse to stand by and allow Russia to be defeated and herself deprived of her only assured ally in Europe and left isolated in face of Germany.

It is hardly necessary even to refer to the theory recently put forward that the war is the result of some sort of conspiracy between England, France, and Russia. Conclusive proof that this is not so is to be found in the relative unpreparedness for war of all three. Of our own unpreparedness for such a war as this it is needless to speak. It was not merely relative, it was all but complete. But France was also unprepared, not only relatively to the scale of German preparations, but absolutely. It has become quite clear that, when war broke out, France was short of many things absolutely required for the equipment of her armies. She was short of boots and of uniforms; she was even, it appears, short of guns. It may be noted, further, that this theory of conspiracy is not the official theory of the German White Book.

Before attempting any analysis of the diplomatic and other events that issued in the war, it is necessary to be clear as to the position, in certain respects, of Austria-Hungary. This State is an extraordinary complex of incongruous peoples. A very high proportion of its population is Slavonic. In the Austrian Empire proper the Slav peoples are in a large majority—of about fifteen to about eleven millions. In Hungary more than half the population is classed as Magyar; but most of the rest is Slavonic. One must not, of course, fall into the error of supposing that the Slavs of Austria-Hungary form one people, one natural nation. They form an immense muddle

of quite distinct Slavonic peoples with I should not like to say how many mutually unintelligible languages. But the important fact for our immediate purpose is that all along the southern frontier of Austria-Hungary up to the borders of Transylvania, the immense majority of the population is Slavonic. More practically important still is the fact that in Bosnia and Dalmatia the mass of the population consists of Serbs, that is people of the same race and language as the people we call Servians. Moreover, in southern Hungary the people are either Serbs or Croats; and the Croats are very near the Serbs, and use almost the same language. In Transylvania a large proportion of the population is Rumanian; and this fact may yet bring the kingdom of Rumania into the war. The dislike of Austrian and Magyar rule among the Serbs of southern Hungary, Bosnia and Dalmatia has made the development of a strong Servian kingdom actually dangerous to that rule. The Servians naturally desire to create a greater Servia to include all the Serbs. To the Austrian Government the existence of Servia is a danger, and a danger all the greater because of the natural tendency of Servia to ally itself with the great Slav State, Russia. In the last few years Austria-Hungary has felt herself threatened not only on her eastern but on her southern frontier. It became all-important in the view of the Austro-Hungarian Government to obtain as much control as possible in the Balkans

and to arrest the development of Servia. This was made very clear during the recent struggle in the Balkans.

Bearing these facts in mind we may proceed to a consideration of the events and diplomacy of June and July. On June 28th last, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was murdered at Serajevo, the administrative capital of Bosnia. He was murdered as a result of a Serb—possibly of a Servian—but certainly of a Serb conspiracy. The Austro-Hungarian Government thereupon appointed a commission to inquire into the circumstances of the event. That commission appears to have sent in its report on July 9th. Its findings were that the murder had been planned in Belgrade, the Servian capital, that Servian officials had supplied the murderous gang with arms and bombs, and that Servian officials had arranged for the transport of the gang across the frontier into Bosnia. The findings were published, but not the evidence on which they were based. It has been suggested that the failure to publish this evidence is suspicious; it may also be suggested that the publication of the evidence might have thrown light upon the conditions previously prevailing on the Austrian side of the frontier, and that the Austrian Government could not be expected to wash its dirty linen in public. This, of course, is the merest conjecture; but an assertion that the findings were not justified by the evidence would be equally conjectural.

The point is not, in any case, of any real importance. On July 23rd the Austro-Hungarian Government addressed a Note to Servia. This Note brought against the Servian Government a series of accusations of the most serious character. It asserted broadly and in general terms, that for the last four or five years the Servian Government, through its officials, had deliberately taken part in a political agitation designed "to separate from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy territories belonging thereto."[1] It asserted that the Servian Press had been engaged in fostering hatred and contempt of the monarchy and in inciting racial feeling against it and that the State schools of Servia were engaged in a similar propaganda. It asserted that there existed in Servia a number of societies, the avowed aim of which was to bring about the political union of the Serbs of Austria-Hungary with the kingdom of Servia. In the subsequent criticisms officially appended to the Servian Government's answer to this Note, it was added that many officials and most of the teachers in the State schools of Servia belonged to such societies.

We must distinguish clearly between the findings of the commission in connection with the murder and the general charges brought against the Servian Government and people. Too much, I think, has been made of the former; the latter are undeniably far more serious. The participation of Servian

[1] Text of the Austrian Note of July 23rd.

officials in the murder conspiracy is, if a fact, only an illustration of the general conditions asserted to exist. In any case the general attitude of Servia and its Government is a far more serious matter than the specific facts concerning the murder of the Archduke. This murder merely brought about a crisis in the unsatisfactory relations of Austria-Hungary and Servia.

It must be admitted to be probable that the charges made against Servia contain at least a substantial basis of truth. It does not follow from this that the Servians are to be blamed. Austria-Hungary is in a false position. Its southern frontier is radically unnatural, and the desire of the Bosnians and Hungarian Serbs to unite with Servia is the measure of the latter's justification.

Little is really known in West Europe of the actual conditions prevailing on that frontier. But whatever the facts may be it cannot be denied that the danger of such a propaganda as is asserted in the Austro-Hungarian Note to exist, on a frontier such as that of Bosnia, is very great from an Austrian point of view. We are bound also to admit that Austria received great provocation; and this was admitted at the time in English newspapers.

Under the circumstances the Austro-Hungarian Note of July 23rd assumed the form of an ultimatum. An affirmative answer to a series of specific demands was asked for within 48 hours. The demands were such that compliance involved, at the least, extreme

humiliation. On July 24th Sir Edward Grey told the Austrian Ambassador in London that he had never seen one State address to another "a document of so formidable a character."[1]

It is in fact very unlikely that the Austrian Government expected Servia to comply with all the demands of the Note. "Its integral acceptance by Servia," writes Sir M. de Bunsen in the important despatch in which, on September 1st, he recapitulated events at Vienna, "was neither expected nor desired, and when on the following afternoon it was at first rumoured in Vienna that it had been unconditionally accepted, there was a moment of keen disappointment." He tells us, further, that as soon as it was known later in the evening that the Servian reply had been rejected . . . Vienna burst into a frenzy of delight.[2]

It is almost certain that the Note was framed with the object of bringing about war. The Servian reply was received on July 25th, and was rejected. Having read carefully this Servian reply, along with the criticisms of the Austrian Government upon it, I must say that, assuming the substantial truth of the Austrian assertions concerning Servian policy and action, it seems to me that Austria-Hungary was right in regarding the reply as elusive and unsatisfactory. Nothing else, indeed, could have been

[1] Correspondence. No. 5.

[2] He had written to the same effect on July 27th. See Correspondence No. 41. See also Correspondence No. 20 and No. 40.

expected; and most certainly the Servian reply afforded a basis for further negotiation. Austria, however, refused to negotiate further and, on July 28th, declared war upon Servia.

It is important to have a clear view of how this thing began. From this point it seems to me possible to proceed to a demonstration of the substantial truth of one or other of three alternative propositions. Between these alternatives there is, in effect, no very great difference: and in a measure all three may be true.

It is obvious that the danger of Russian intervention on behalf of Servia must have been clear from the first. Equally clear was it that Russian intervention would involve a great European war unless Austria agreed to compromise. So soon as the murder of the Archduke was known every Foreign Office in Europe must have been aware of the danger. When the Austrian ultimatum was presented the danger was already great: when Austria declared war it was a question whether the peace of the world could possibly be saved.

Sir Edward Grey spoke guardedly of that danger to the German Ambassador in London as early as July 20th.[1] He spoke of it openly and gravely to the Austrian Ambassador on July 23rd.[2] All I want here to insist on is the obvious fact that the Austro-Hungarian Government cannot have been unaware of the danger. Equally certain is it that

[1] Correspondence, No. 1. [2] *Ibid.*, No. 3.

it would not have ventured on the action it took on July 23rd without previous consultation with the German Government. But we know positively that it did not do so. "The Imperial and Royal Government" (of Austria-Hungary), says the German White Book, "apprised Germany of its views and asked for our opinion. With all our heart we were able to agree with our ally's estimate of the situation and to assure him that any action considered necessary to end the movement in Servia directed against the conservation of the monarchy, would meet with our approval. We were perfectly aware that a possible warlike attitude of Austria-Hungary against Servia might bring Russia into the field and that it might therefore involve us in war, in accordance with our duty as allies. We could not, however, vital interests of Austria-Hungary being at stake, advise our ally to take a yielding attitude not compatible with his dignity nor deny him our assistance in these trying days. We could do this all the less as our own interests were menaced through the continued Serb agitation."

This passage, though it gives no dates, refers to the period before the presentation of the Austro-Hungarian note to Servia and makes it clear that Austria-Hungary assured herself of German support before presenting that Note. It matters not at all whether the exact terms of the Note were known beforehand to the German Government or whether, as it asserts, they were not. Equally does this

passage make it quite clear that the possibility of a European war was being considered both at Vienna and at Berlin. We may, however, fairly conjecture at this point, that the Austro-Hungarian Government believed that in face of Germany's support Russia would not venture to intervene otherwise than diplomatically. It could, in that case, safely proceed to force war upon Servia.

Could it reasonably have been expected that Russia would not act ? On the nature of the answer given to this question a good deal depends. If it is true that Russia had no sort of right to intervene, no right to say a word about what was to happen to Servia, then the case for Germany is greatly strengthened. Can this view be taken ? Of a war between Austria-Hungary and Servia alone, there could only have been one military result. The enormous weight of the Austrian forces must inevitably in time have destroyed all power of resistance. The more desperately Servia fought the more complete would have been her depopulation and ruin. But Russia was not merely asked to stand aside while the little Slav kingdom was crushed and ruined. The indirect and political results of such a war would have been far-reaching. Throughout the region of the Balkans the fear of the Germanic powers would have been established. The mere fact that Russia had stood aside would have been taken as proof of Russia's weakness. The grip of Austria-Hungary on the Serbs of Hungary and Bosnia, Slovaks and Czechs,

would have been tightened. Every Slav people outside Russia would have felt itself abandoned. It is probable that Rumania would have become practically if not formally a member of the Triple Alliance. Bulgaria almost as much as Servia would have been compelled to cringe to the Germans. Germany and Austria, in alliance with the Turks, would have dominated the Balkans. And at home the Russian Government would have had to face widespread indignation at its desertion of the Slav cause. All this being so, the offer of Austria-Hungary to undertake not herself to annex Servian territory after the war was really irrelevant. The annexation of territory from a ruined Servia would have been in any case only a detail in the total result and perhaps not a very important detail. It is to be noted, moreover, that Austria did not offer to bind herself not to give Servian territory to Bulgaria or to the Turks.

Under all the circumstances nothing short of a belief that Russia was quite unready for war can account for an expectation, either at Berlin or at Vienna, that Russia would not act. But there is ground for believing that, alike at Berlin and at Vienna, it was thought that the military and financial condition of Russia was such that she would not dare to make war in any case. All the evidence we have points clearly to the conclusion that Austria, at least, did believe that Germany's threatened support would suffice to keep Russia quiet. On

July 26th the German Ambassador at Vienna expressed to Sir M. De Bunsen his confidence that Russia would not take serious action.[1] There can be no doubt that he had been expressing the same confidence to the Austrian ministers.

The view officially put forward by the German Government is to the effect that Russia's interference between Austria and Servia was wholly unjustified and aggressive in character. It is suggested that Russia intended from the beginning to bring about a war. It is difficult to believe that this latter suggestion is even sincere. It is, of course, totally inconsistent with any theory of Russia's complete unreadiness for war. Not only do the facts not support the view that Russia desired a war : they do not even suggest it. Had Russia stood aside and allowed Servia to be crushed, there would have been no European war, at this time. That is certainly true, except upon wholly conjectural suppositions. But only in that sense did Russia's action bring about the war.

The German White Book was apparently composed in order to prove that upon Russia alone falls the responsibility for the war. This is the view that was taken by the Emperor in his telegram to the Czar of July 30th. But the White Book proves at most no more than this : that had Russia stood aside there would have been no general war. The German Government assumes that Russia ought

[1] Correspondence, No. 32.

to have stood aside and goes on superfluously to prove that Russia did not. It complains of Russia's mobilization. But unless Russia meant to stand aside, what else could she have done? Unless we accept the German assumption concerning the duty of Russia to allow Servia to be crushed, the White Book proves, if it proves anything, that it was the action of Austria-Hungary that caused the war. Even that proposition appears to be radically false.

No grounds can be discovered in the incomplete diplomatic record for a belief that Russia desired to bring about a war. The Russian Government seems to have made its position clear from the first. It could not allow Servia to be crushed: on the other hand if Austria-Hungary would accept a compromise negotiated on the basis of the Servian reply to the Austrian Note and leaving Servian freedom unimpaired, Russia was ready to acquiesce in any arrangements for bringing about such a compromise.

These two points, Russia's fixed determination not to allow Servia to be ruined and her willingness to accept any reasonable compromise of the immediate difficulty, Russian diplomacy was engaged in alternately emphasising from the beginning to the end. If Russia really desired to bring about a war, she would seem to have been badly over-finessing, and was playing a game so deep and indirect that nothing would have been easier for Germany than to defeat it, had she wished to do so.

On July 25th, M. Sazonof, the Russian Foreign

Minister, telegraphed to his chargé d'affaires at Vienna, asking for an extension of the time allowed for the Servian reply, in view of "the incalculable consequences equally disastrous for all the Powers," which might result from Austria-Hungary's action.[1] On the same day, M. Sazonof told our Ambassador at Petersburg, that "if Servia should appeal to the Powers, Russia would be quite ready to stand aside, and leave the question in the hands of England, France, Germany and Italy."[2] On the 27th, the Russian Ambassador at Vienna gave the Austrian Foreign Office clearly to understand that Russia "was not prepared to give way again," as she had done in 1909.[3] On the 28th, Sir G. Buchanan was able, after conversation with M. Sazonof, to tell the German Ambassador at Petersburg that Russia was thoroughly in earnest: and on the same day Russia's Ambassador at Vienna declared that Russia would willingly acquiesce in the conference in London proposed by Sir Edward Grey. But the German Government acted in a manner that could only be explained on one of two suppositions. It continued to obstruct all proposals for conference or compromise. Either the German Government positively desired a war or it believed that Russia was merely bluffing. Meanwhile Austria was refusing to hear of mediation, and even refusing to negotiate directly with Russia. On either supposition as to the meaning of this conduct, there was only one thing for Russia to do.

[1] Correspondence, No. 13. [2] *Ibid.*, No. 17. [3] *Ibid.*, No. 56.

On the 29th, the Russian Government ordered a partial mobilisation of its forces. "Had not Russia by mobilising shown that she was in earnest," wrote Sir G. Buchanan in his despatch of that date, "Austria would have traded on Russia's desire for peace, and would have believed that she could go to any lengths."[1] It is, indeed, obvious that Russia could have done nothing else, unless she had been ready to leave Servia to her fate. But on that very day the Russian Foreign Minister was declaring his willingness to accept mediation by the four Powers in any form. "He did not care," he said, "what form such conversations took."

Even after this, and indeed up to the very last moment, the Russian Government was endeavouring to secure a compromise. On July 30th, Russia declared her willingness to stop all military preparations if Austria would declare her readiness "to eliminate from her ultimatum points which violate principle of sovereignty of Servia."[2] This offer was renewed on July 31st, in a slightly different form, it being then laid down that Austria must agree to allow the Powers to consider the question of the satisfaction due from Servia.

But already German reservists were in motion and Germany had begun to mass troops along the French frontier. It had become quite clear that the German Government would do nothing to save the situation. Consequently, on July 31st, the Russian

[1] Correspondence, No. 78. [2] *Ibid.*, No. 97.

Government ordered a general mobilisation. "This decision was taken," wrote Sir G. Buchanan, "in consequence of report from Russian Ambassador in Vienna to the effect that Austria is determined not to yield to intervention of Powers, and that she is moving troops against Russia as well as against Servia. Russia has also reason to believe that Germany is making active military preparations and she cannot afford to let her get a start."[1]

For the moment the story need not be continued further. Other incidents of those last two days suggest that, at the last moment, not only was Russia's hand forced but that of Austria-Hungary also.

It appears to be established beyond reasonable doubt that, except upon an assumption that Russia had no right to interfere in any way between Austria and Servia, responsibility for bringing about the war rests solely upon one or other or both of the two Germanic Powers. It might seem to be almost superfluous, from our present point of view, to attempt to divide responsibility fairly between Germany and Austria. This, however, is assuredly not the case.

We may start, quite safely, with the assertion that Austria-Hungary would never have ventured upon a war with Russia unsupported by Germany. In other words, if at any time up to July 31st, the German Government had diplomatically whispered

[1] Correspondence, No. 113.

to Austria something equivalent to: "It won't work. Russia is really going to call the bluff. You must climb down," the Austrian Government, however reluctantly, would assuredly have taken the advice. Everyone would have helped to make the climbing down process as easy as possible. It appears to be absolutely certain that the German Government could have prevented a European war had it chosen to do so. I remember that when, in France, I got the news that Austria had declared war upon Servia, my first thought was: "There will be no European war unless the German Government wants one." And I did not think that Germany would be willing to take the risk.

But I suppose this was everyone's first thought. As M. Sazonof wrote on that very day: "There is no doubt that the key of the situation is to be found at Berlin."[1]

It appears, then, that Germany's refusal to give the necessary advice to Austria brought about a war which, certainly, no one outside Germany wanted. But to say this is not the same as saying that Germany's action was criminal. Why did Germany refuse?

Diplomatically Germany's attitude up to July 31st was both clear and consistent. It is quite fairly stated in the German White Book. From the commencement of the trouble she took the view that Austria's contention that she was seriously

[1] Correspondence, No. 54.

threatened by Servia was no more than the exact truth: that, therefore, Austria was justified in taking any action she thought necessary for her security: that if Austria judged that Servia must be broken by war, neither Russia nor any other Power had any standing in the matter or right to intervene. As for Germany, she must support the just claims of her ally and resist all such interference, If Russia pushed intervention to the point of war, Russia alone would be responsible. Germany was willing to advise moderation in a general way; but Austria must judge for herself. Germany was willing to mediate between Austria and Russia, but only in the sense that she was willing to join with other Powers in putting pressure upon Russia. There must be no pressure put upon Austria. It is unnecessary to refer to the published correspondence to show that this was Germany's position throughout: because the German White Book fully admits as much.

This hopelessly impracticable attitude led, as we now see, inevitably to war. But the mere fact that it did so does not, of course, of itself imply that the German Government desired this result. Germany knew that she was taking a risk. She may or may not have hoped that her attitude would frighten Russia into quiescence. It may well be supposed that if the establishment of Austro-German predominance in the Balkans could be achieved without war, Germany would have preferred that it should

be so. All that is so far proved is that Germany was willing to accept a European war and one in which England obviously might join, rather than compel Austria to abandon her designs against Servia.

What possible justification is there for such an attitude on the part of Germany? We may put it thus. Austria-Hungary, having delivered her ultimatum to Servia, could not possibly retreat and compromise at the bidding of Russia without a fatal loss of prestige. The fear of Russia admitted by such a retreat would have redoubled the hopes of all the Pan-Slavists of Eastern Europe. Agitations among the Serbs of Hungary and Bosnia would have been stimulated. The anti-Austrian propaganda would have been carried on by the Servian Government more vigorously than ever, whatever might be the exact terms of the compromise. Throughout the Balkan peninsula Russian prestige would have risen. Exactly as Russia could not afford to allow Servia to be ruined, so, for precisely similar reasons, Austria could not afford to retreat before Russia. Germany, therefore, by refusing to support Austria would not merely have abandoned the dream of Germanic predominance in the Balkans, but would have convinced Austria of the uselessness of a German alliance. By so doing Germany would have been left isolated in Europe against hostile France, England, and Russia.

This statement of the case is probably substantially correct as far as it goes, except upon two points.

But these two points are by far the most important of the whole. In the first place, the argument involves an assumption that Austria actually desired to push her demands even to the point of a European war. For such an assumption there seems to be no ground whatever. Having regard to what Austria-Hungary would stand to lose and what she would stand to win in such a conflict, it is most improbable that she desired anything of the kind. But, secondly, even if we accept this assumption, it is clear that a refusal by Germany to support Austria in probable suicide could not have involved the destruction of the Austro-German alliance. It would have remained true that the interests of both Powers bind them to assist each other against any attack by Russia. The solid basis of the defensive alliance would have remained unaffected. It is very difficult to believe that the German Government did not appreciate this very obvious fact. It is possibly true that for offensive purposes the alliance would have become useless. But the admission of such purposes would spoil the whole case for Germany.

Still, however one may criticise this view of the situation, it remains a possible view. It is possible that it accounts for the action of the German Government. It appears to be substantially adopted in the German White Book. We have arrived at one possible theory of the action of Germany at the crisis. It is perhaps as good an excuse as can be made for that action.

What sort of an excuse is it ? Only for a moment can it seem other than abominable. Germany stands condemned on her own showing, by her own official "justification." If, indeed, Germany could show that her mere safety required her to support Austria against Servia even to the point of a European war, then we could hold her justified. But this, plainly, is not the fact. She was threatened by no one : for a long time past she herself has done all the threatening. The German Government must have been fully aware of what the consequences of her obstinate support of Austria might be. If this theory of the action of the German Government be accepted, then it was to aid Austria to maintain her false position on her southern frontier, to compel the Serbs to submit to German domination, to establish some vague thing called German predominance in the Balkans, it was for these really miserable results that Germany willed, incidentally, the devastation of Belgium and the ruin of France and all the waste and horror of this war. She sacrificed the peace of Europe for petty fears and pettier jealousies and all things that matter for results unreal or worthless. If it was so, Germany has shown herself incapable of taking that European point of view which alone is permissible in a Great Power of to-day. She has shown herself blind to the new Europe, blind to the modern movement and the modern hope. Her action is a challenge to progress as that is understood everywhere except in Germany.

But there is an alternative theory of the action of the German Government : an alternative suggested by what happened in the last days of the crisis. The despatch of Sir M. de Bunsen to Sir Edward Grey, dated September 1st and published as a White Paper (Col. 7596) and in the *Times* of September 17th, suggests this alternative in the strongest manner. In that despatch we are told that on July 30th, the day after Russia had shown the seriousness of her intentions by commencing a partial mobilisation, the Austrian Foreign Minister gave his consent to a renewal of those " conversations " at Petersburg which had ceased some days earlier. " From now onwards," we read, " the tension between Russia and Germany was much greater than that between Russia and Austria. As between the latter an arrangement seemed almost in sight, and on the 1st August I was informed by M. Schebeko that Count Szápáry had at last conceded the main point at issue by announcing to M. Sazonof that Austria would consent to submit to mediation the points in the note to Servia which seemed incompatible with the maintenance of Servian independence. M. Sazonof, M. Schebeko added, had accepted this proposal on condition that Austria would refrain from the actual invasion of Servia. Austria, in fact, had finally yielded—and M. Schebeko repeatedly told me that he was prepared to accept any reasonable compromise."

And it was at this moment, when the Austrian

Government, realising at last the seriousness of Russia's intentions, was on the point of arranging a compromise that would have saved Europe from war, that Germany issued, on July 31st, her ultimatum to Russia and to France. On August 1st Germany declared war upon Russia. " A few days' delay," says Sir M. de Bunsen, " might in all probability have saved Europe from one of the greatest calamities in history"

The facts are incompletely recorded ; but some confirmation of Sir M. de Bunsen's statements is to be found in the correspondence published by our own Government and in the Russian Yellow Book. If this be really what happened, then most of the special pleading of the German White Book is, at best, irrelevant. Germany did not, in this case, accept war in order to uphold the prestige and the power of her ally. Germany, in fact, forced the war as much upon Austria as upon Russia. But before we can believe that this really happened, some sort of rational explanation must be found for such action. Such an explanation is easily found.

For years past, Germany has been persuading herself that in one form or another this war was inevitable. Sooner or later Russia and France had to be fought and, more probably than not, both together. The German Government may well have argued that it was better now than later. If the war came now, there was at least a chance that

England would stand out and perhaps a chance that Italy would join her nominal allies. But England's understanding with France was growing closer, and Italy seemed to be drifting away from the Triple Alliance. Ten years hence these chances might well have vanished. Moreover, both Russia and France were reorganising and strengthening their military systems. Russia had everything to gain by waiting. In the case of France, military reorganisation had hardly begun. The unreadiness of France was notorious. On the other hand, France has now, in her African possessions, a recruiting ground for a great native army, not yet in existence, but which would, assuredly, one day exist. Better now, therefore, while yet England does not see her way and is embarrassed in Ireland, while yet Italy stands within the Triple Alliance, while yet France has no great native army! So the word went forth from Berlin at the very moment when Austria, left to herself, would have made peace.

If this be really what happened, it may still be argued that Germany only started a preventive war. The only possible justification for such action is Germany's conviction that the war must come. On this view, the basis of Germany's action was the conviction that, sooner or later, she would be attacked by Russia. For the moment Russia might well be content to wait, but only because she stood to gain by waiting. For that very reason Germany could not afford to wait at all. So Germany began

a war of self-defence against the aggressive designs of Russia.

It is conceivable that the German Government saw and judged the situation in this way. It is difficult to believe that it did. There is no definite ground for attributing such aggressive designs to Russia. The very last thing Russia wants is territory ; and most certainly she does not want territory inhabited by Germans. She has more Germans than she likes already. One may suppose that the German Ministers would attribute to Russia their own point of view in international politics. One may suppose that they would assume that Russia would act as they would act in her place. The assumption is false : but even on that assumption, why should they have believed in Russian designs against Germany ? They must at least have been aware that they were acting on pure speculation. The waste, the misery of this war that they were provoking, were certainties. All the rest was guesswork.

But there is another consideration. If the German Government's main motive was fear of Russia, is it really possible that it thought its safest course was to bring on war at once ? The German Government knew that, if war came now, France would certainly support Russia while England at least might do so. But if Russia developed an aggressive policy on the German frontier, would France support that policy ? It is at least doubtful. It is certain that England

would not. Germany should have known that if ever this Slav peril she dreams of materialised, she would not lack support in western Europe. Is it really possible that the German Government considered the risk of the present war less serious than the risk of waiting ?

But if not, what was the German Government thinking of ? There is, roughly speaking, only one possible answer ; and with that we reach a third theory of the action of Germany. She was thinking, vaguely perhaps, of great advantages to be gained by this war. She was thinking of a great stride towards the North Sea and perhaps towards the Mediterranean ; of forcing on Russia a conviction that her alliance with France is useless to her ; of a final prostration of France ; of squaring, at last, the account with England. Above all she must have been thinking of her own superiority. But for her consciousness of that, she could not have taken the risk.

No one has a right to say positively that this was so. No one can know what the exact truth is. Any or all of the three theories advanced in this paper may be true. But whether Germany acted primarily in the interests of Austria and of Germanic predominance in the Balkans ; or whether she acted under the impression that, in face of the growing Russian menace, it was safest to have war now ; or whether she acted under the influence of vast and more or less vague aggressive aspirations ; in any

case we must come back to the conclusion stated in the last chapter. Germany alone made this war. Germany herself, constituted, organised, and governed as she is, is the cause of the war. If the war was indeed inevitable, what made it so? It is Germany, with its antiquated ideas, its stupidly brutal Government, its blindness to what must now constitute political progress for Europe, that has forced Europe to arm, and to keep arming ever since 1870. It is Germany that divided Europe into hostile camps. The war is the logical issue of a situation Germany created. All Europe is reaping now what Germany has sown.

We have been considering the immediate causation of the war among the Great Powers of the Continent, and it has not been necessary to speak of England's action. To do so would have been merely irrelevant. It is evident on the face of the diplomatic record that neither by word nor deed did the English Government do anything to bring about the war. It is evident that it did its utmost to prevent the disaster. The charge, lately made, that England could have prevented the war had she wished to do so, can only mean one of two things. It may mean that the English Government could have prevented war by declaring decisively, before the fatal steps were taken, in favour of Russia. That assertion—it is hardly a "charge," unless of miscalculation—is dealt with in the following chapter. Or it may mean that England might have held back

Russia or coerced France. It refers, presumably, to that wonderful proposal of the German Government that England should guarantee, " with all its forces," the neutrality of France in a war between Germany and Russia. Another proposal made by Germany may or may not be properly described as " infamous " ; this one was certainly sheer impudence. Had we accepted it, then, if France had defied us, we should have been at war with France and compelled to use " all our forces " to help Germany to crush her. If France had submitted to our threat, then, Russia repulsed, France would have been left isolated and filled with the justest hatred of England. It is probable that an agreement between Germany and France against us would have followed as a matter of course ; and we should have deserved all we got and more also. German contempt of England and German stupidity could hardly have been displayed more naïvely than in that proposal.

But England's part in the war and in the peace to come is the subject of what follows.

IV

ENGLAND

IV

ENGLAND

THREE questions are considered in this chapter: why our country entered the war; what we are now, or perhaps, rather, what we should be fighting for, and what we should try to do at the end of the war. These three questions are inseparable.

The action taken by the German Government on August 1st necessarily involved Russia, Austria, and France in war. It did not necessarily involve England. That the German Government was anxious that England should remain neutral goes almost without saying. It was on July 29th that it made its now famous bid for our neutrality. On condition that we remained neutral it offered to bind itself to make no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France in Europe, reserving a right to annex French colonies. It offered, further, to bind itself to annex no part of Belgium, unless Belgium "sided against Germany." It did not offer to respect Belgian neutrality. What Germany really asked us was to allow her to do as she pleased

with France, so long as she did not occupy permanently any part of the French coast line on the Channel, and to allow her to do as she pleased with Belgium so long as she did not permanently occupy Antwerp or any portion of the Belgian coast. That is, really, what it amounted to. But this offer is not quoted in order to comment upon it. It is quoted only as proving the desire of the German Government for our neutrality. That, further, the German Government hoped for England's neutrality up to the very last moment seems to be proved by the Chancellor's outburst of disappointment and anger, recorded in Sir E. Goschen's final despatch. It is difficult to believe that he was acting or to see any purpose he could have had in doing so.

It is quite clear that if England is in any way immediately responsible for the war, it is because it might conceivably have prevented war by declaring absolute solidarity with Russia at some stage of the negotiations. As early as July 24th, M. Sazonof was pressing for a declaration in this sense.[1] On July 25th he declared that "if we took our stand firmly with France and Russia there would be no war." On its being pointed out to him that we might play more forcibly the part of a mediator if we refrained from any compromising declaration, he replied "that unfortunately Germany was convinced that she could count upon our neutrality."[2]

[1] Correspondence, No. 6. [2] *Ibid.*, No. 17.

On July 30th the French President told our Ambassador at Paris that he was convinced that peace between the Powers was in the hands of Great Britain. " If His Majesty's Government announced that England would come to the aid of France in the event of a conflict between France and Germany as a result of the present differences between Austria and Servia, there would be no war, for Germany would at once modify her attitude." [1]

On the other hand, we have Sir Edward Grey's opinion. " I believe it to be quite untrue," he wrote, on July 31st, " that our attitude has been a decisive factor in situation. German Government do not expect our neutrality."

Still it is, of course, possible, on the evidence, that M. Sazonof was right, that the German Government " counted " on our neutrality and that had we, before July 31st, declared an intention to support France and Russia, Germany would not have risked war. But, evidently, it is also possible that such a declaration might have roused a storm of anger in Germany and actually destroyed the last faint chance of peace.

On the whole, I think it more probable that Sir E. Grey was right and M. Sazonof mistaken. It is true that the outburst of anger and hate in Germany after our declaration of war tends to show that the German people expected us to remain neutral. But hope must have been the principal ingredient in

[1] Correspondence, No. 99.

that expectation. And it is difficult to believe that the German Government expected it. It *hoped* for it, no doubt; it must have hoped for it. But certainly if it expected our neutrality, it was in spite of plain warnings. On July 29th Sir E. Grey gave the German Ambassador the first clear intimation of what would probably happen. "The issue might be so great," he said, "that it would involve all European interests."[1] The language was guarded; but a diplomat ought to have understood and must have understood. The tone of the answer made on the following day to Germany's bid for our neutrality involved a still graver warning, and it was emphasised on the same day in conversation with the German Ambassador.[2] On July 31st, Sir E. Grey told the German Ambassador in so many words that "if France and Germany became involved in war, we should be drawn into it."[3] As an expression of opinion, at least, from the Englishman best entitled to speak, nothing could have been clearer than this. Finally, when on August 1st, when it was not perhaps even yet too late, the German Ambassador asked whether "if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality we would engage to remain neutral," Sir E. Grey replied that he could make no such promise.[4]

Even if an early declaration of England's solidarity with Russia and France would have prevented

[1] Correspondence, No 89.
[2] *Ibid.*, No. 101.
[3] *Ibid.*, No. 119 and No. 111.
[4] *Ibid.*, No. 120.

the war, I still think that Sir E. Grey took the better course. A peace obtained by such means could not have lasted long and would not have been worth having. German hatred of England would have been increased. We should have been left facing the old evil situation in an aggravated form. Competition in armaments would have at once become fiercer than ever and have continued to its unavoidable issue.

The attitude of the English Government remained the same throughout the diplomatic crisis. From the commencement England officially took the view that it had neither reason nor right to interfere in a mere quarrel between Austria and Servia. But from the moment of the issue of the Austrian Note to Servia, Russia became interested. Into the merits of the Russian claim to interfere the English Government refused to enter. The point it insisted on was that, for whatever reasons, Russia was serious, and that if Austria persisted, a European war would follow. The supreme interest of all parties to the dispute, as of England herself, was the avoidance of such a war. England intervened solely to prevent that disaster. Broadly speaking, the English contention was that whatever might be Austria's exact grievances or Russia's precise interests in the matter, all such relatively petty considerations must be subordinated to the common interest of Europe. The key of the position being manifestly at Berlin, the efforts of the English Govern-

ment were mainly directed to obtaining the co-operation of Germany in enforcing a compromise as between Russia and Austria. Russia desired nothing else. France and Italy supported England. But Germany refused her co-operation. She refused, apparently, either because a blow to Austrian prestige under the circumstances seemed to her a more terrible thing than European war, or because, judging war with Russia inevitable in the long run, she preferred to have it now.

But from England's point of view we may put it thus. Germany was asked to recognise by practical action that she had a greater interest in the maintenance of peace than in any particular solution of the Servian question. She was asked practically to recognise that for every European State the interests common to all are more important than any interests specifically its own. At the very most she was asked to sacrifice something to the interests of Europe at large. She refused.

To the European point of view the English Government adhered with a rigid and perhaps even meticulous exactness to the last. Sir E. Grey obstinately refused the declaration in their favour on the specific points pleaded for by France and Russia. It was not for England to take sides in a dispute about the Austrian frontier, or, if you like to put it that way, in a dispute between Germans and Slavs. It would have been inconsistent with England's whole position to have done so. England's point

was that all such squabbles should be laid aside, all differences on such points compromised, rather than that war should be inflicted on Europe. It was not for England to place herself in either of the two camps into which Europe was miserably and absurdly divided. It was necessary to refuse guarantees to Russia and France lest by giving them we made war more probable. It was necessary to abstain from even the appearance of evil.

This assertion of the solidarity of Europe was far more worth making than a declaration of solidarity with France and Russia, even if such a declaration would have saved Europe from war for a moment. I think that Sir E. Grey represented the thought of England at her best. It is only through a sense of European solidarity that war can really be prevented.

On August 1st Germany declared war upon Russia and war with France necessarily began practically on that same day. But a delay of three days preceded England's declaration. It might perhaps have been considered that an immediate declaration of war by England would be inconsistent with our previous attitude. England, it might have been argued, had refused to take sides in the diplomatic struggle : what reason had she for taking sides now ? Such a view of the situation would, it seems to me, have been quite erroneous. England had on August 2nd the same reasons for declaring war as she has now for waging war. Germany had refused to

join with England, France and Italy in taking action to save the peace of Europe by a compromise. Germany had set her own particularist interests above those of Europe and deliberately brought about war. I am inclined to think that it would have been best if England had declared war on that ground alone. Since the war began, our leading public men, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Lloyd George, have declared that Germany has committed a crime against Europe and against humanity; that we are fighting in the cause of civilisation and progress against German militarism. This, I think, is true; but it would have been as true on August 2nd as on August 4th. I am inclined to regret that we did not take this position at once. I am inclined to regret that, before the definitive violation of Belgian neutrality, we did not say to Germany: "You could have prevented this war and you refused. You set your private interests above those of civilisation. You refused to recognise the real solidarity of Europe. England has stood for Europe in diplomacy: now she must stand for Europe in war."

But we know what difficulties hamper an English Minister. We know that Sir E. Grey was rightly anxious that, if possible and so far as possible, the English people should have no doubt of the justice of our action. And we must remember the awfulness of the responsibility that rested upon him and upon his colleagues. Only the most hopelessly factious

of professional politicians is likely to forget it. I do not know whether our Ministers actually hesitated ; I do know that any men in such a position must be excused for hesitation. That they should have desired for themselves as well as for the satisfaction of the English people clear legal ground for action is only what was to be expected.

Germany proceeded to give us such ground by her violation of Belgian neutrality. This neutrality exists under a treaty of 1839, formally confirmed by the German Government in 1870 and never since repudiated till now. To put the question that then arose as a question of "honour," or at least as a question merely of our own honour, is to put it inadequately. It was a question of European credit and of international law. The common interests of Europe imperatively demand adherence to international treaties. To allow that a State may, in pursuit of private ends, suddenly renounce a treaty to which it was a party with neutrals, at the very moment when that treaty becomes operative, would be definitively to abandon the assertion of European solidarity and to accept the German view of international relations. International law, through which the solidarity of Europe finds expression, must depend on strict observance of treaties. Already we have reached a position in which the deliberate and unprovoked breach of treaties is a crime against Europe.

The assertion that we should have connived at a

violation of Belgian neutrality by the French appears to be both gratuitous and irrelevant. It is gratuitous because there is no kind of evidence that it is true. It is irrelevant for two reasons. In the first place it is irrelevant because it appears to assume that the violation of Belgian neutrality is our only ground for entering the war. That is only true in the most technical and strictly diplomatic sense. The contention ignores, in fact, all but one detail of the situation ; all but one detail of the many considerations that justify our action.

But it is irrelevant, also, because it appears that there was no real question of France doing anything of the kind. Far from having any advantage to gain by doing so, it would have been mere folly in France to extend her lines in such a manner against Germany's superior numbers. The very reasons that made an advance through Belgium desirable from the German point of view, forbade France to attempt it. Our ministers cannot, really, have ever had occasion to consider what they would do in so unlikely an event. Had France been in a position to invade Germany by way of Belgium, the whole international position would have been entirely different from what it actually was. Talk about what we should have done had France invaded Belgium lacks any meaning. It is, in fact, nonsense.

We had failed on August 2nd to declare war upon Germany in the name of Europe, and as a consequence of that failure, our position would have

been difficult had Germany refrained from invading Belgium. It is impossible, of course, to say for certain what would have happened in that case. We should in any case have forbidden Germany to undertake any operations on the French coast. That prohibition the German Government was prepared, for the moment, to accept. We might have remained, throughout the war, in that position of semi-neutrality. But even so, our neutrality would have been based simply upon a calculation that, under such circumstances, France would be able to hold her fortified frontier against Germany at least long enough to enable Russia to bring her weight to bear. We should have given France only that amount of assistance we considered that she absolutely needed; and we should have been able to do so without war, because the German Government was anxious to avoid war with us. In acting thus we should have taken a serious risk both for ourselves and for France.

As a matter of fact it was extremely improbable that Germany would respect the neutrality of Belgium. It was only just possible that fear of England's intervention might induce Germany to refrain. But the exigencies of the military situation were such that nothing short of the most positive undertaking on England's part could have induced Germany to do so. Such an undertaking our Government had refused to give. To have given it would have been to bind ourselves to assist France

in no way but by protecting her coast, whatever might happen on the Franco-German frontier. It is worth while to consider the military reasons for Germany's action in Belgium.

In a war between Germany and Austria on the one side and Russian and France on the other, Germany's best, if not her only, chance of success obviously lies in breaking the French power of resistance before the huge weight of Russia is brought to bear. If this is to be done it is a matter of a few months at most. Now the frontier between France and Germany from Verdun to Belfort is one almost continuous line of fortification on the French side, broken only by a narrow and difficult gap between Epinal and Toul, and a still narrower and also difficult bit of country north of Verdun. But it is not the mere strength of this fortified line of defence that the German Government had to consider. The chance of rapidly breaking down the resistance of France depended necessarily on the extent to which Germany could make its superior numbers, and its superior readiness, tell against the French in the first stage of the war. Now the length of the line of the Franco-German frontier is not nearly great enough for the full deployment of the German armies. It is impossible to get more than a certain number of men into an actual fighting line of a certain length. Deployment only on the line Verdun–Belfort would have given the Germans no great advantage of numbers at the front, and

therefore little or no chance of outflanking and encircling movements. In order to make its numbers tell quickly, Germany had to deploy its armies on a line extending from near Belfort through Luxemburg into Belgium.

We have no means of knowing how far our statesmen counted on the German invasion of Belgium. We do not know whether they deliberately waited till the cup of Germany's iniquity should be full. They may have done so. They may have felt certain that Germany would commit this subsidiary crime. A subsidiary crime only, it was; but a definite crime that every one could apprehend as such. Was it hypocrisy to wait for an act that we reckoned on Germany committing and then make that act a ground for declaring war? It may be admitted that it was not quite logical dealing. But it must also be admitted that the act in question was good, legal, logical ground for the declaration. Our ministers waited for something to happen which would place Germany visibly and undeniably in the wrong. Germany being in the wrong already and in a false position, that something was, in fact, certain to happen. It might have been the invasion of Belgium or it might have been something else. But it was highly important that in the mind of our people at large there should be no doubt of the justice of our action. Moreover, we are not governed despotically. It was not for our ministers to make war unless and until they were quite sure they stood

on ground that would be understood and accepted by the British people as a whole. It may fairly be argued that they had no moral right to make war merely on their own private judgment. It must be remembered also, that our Government had explicitly refused to promise neutrality even in the event of Belgium not being invaded. Under all these circumstances the charge of hypocrisy seems very unsubstantial.

We are, of course, fighting for Belgium. The violation of Belgium's neutrality involved, on the Germans' own showing and even if we acquit them of useless atrocities, all that has followed, the destruction of her towns and villages, and the driving out of her population wholesale. We could not save her; that we never had a chance of doing. But we can restore her if we will. We must right the great wrong as far as possible.

But we are fighting as much for France as for Belgium, and with as good reason. So soon, at least, as the German movement across Belgium began, we were bound to do so. It is not a question of technical commitments to France. Undoubtedly the conferences of the last two years with the French Government concerning the strategy of a common defence against Germany aroused in France a great hope that in no case should we leave her to be crushed under the weight of the Germans. But the only question concerning these conferences is whether they should not have been begun, not two, but fifteen

years ago. Sir E. Grey, in the correspondence that preceded the war, was at pains to point out that we were under no pledge; and the fact that we were not was admitted by the French Government. Had we stood out there would have been resentment in France, but no one could have asserted that we had broken a pledge.

We could not allow France to be crushed. In the first place, for our own security we could not. To have allowed Russia to be beaten back and the fighting power of France to be broken for generations, would have left us isolated in face of that Germany which for twenty years has been proclaiming its aggressive designs and its hatred of England. I put this consideration first, but to my own mind it is the least of the reasons we had for action. Even in isolation, we might well face Germany and conquer. We had a perfect right to take that great risk if we chose. But to have allowed France—the most gallant and generous, the most intelligent, I am almost inclined to say the most human, of peoples, to be ruined in a war forced upon her and brought on by Germany, that would not have been an imprudence, that would have been a crime against humanity.

If Germany in our view had acted unjustly and criminally, what right could we possibly have to stand aside and let France take the consequences? There was no question of the ruin of Russia: it is happily altogether beyond Germany's power to ruin

Russia. Nor do I say that France would necessarily have been ruined. All that the French need to beat the Germans is equality in numbers: and Russia's armies might have given equality to the French in the west in time to stay the ruin. But there would have been a risk that France would be devastated and wrecked even as Belgium has been. Had we stood aside and seen that done, our Empire would have deserved to perish. I do not doubt that it would, in fact, have perished.

Of all objections to the action of our Government in entering the struggle, the strangest is the contention that we ought not to be allied to Russia. So far as that contention does not spring from the ingrained factiousness of sectional politicians, it would appear to be derived from sheer ignorance. The ideas of a great number of English people about Russia appear to be based on a very insufficient knowledge of the Russia of fifty years ago, or, at best, of the Russia that was before the Japanese War. Of the great change that has come since then, people here seem to be, in general, completely ignorant. Unfortunately there is no space here in which to write at length about Russia. But a few observations must be made. They may seem strange to many: I can only say that I believe them to be true.

Russia has suffered a great deal and in many ways in the past, and indeed, ever since Peter the Great's time, from the Germanisation of its central governing

bureaucracy. The Russianising policy of Nicholas I. —which was perhaps the real beginning of the revolution that followed the war with Japan—was ill-conceived, unintelligently directed and very partial in its results. The Russian Government continued to be controlled by a bureaucracy working from a western point of view, and highly Germanised. In spirit and method it remained un-Russian. With brutal stupidity it endeavoured to "Russianise" Poles and Finns ; and it grossly ill-treated the Jews. Its brutal seizure of Port Arthur brought about a crisis. Revolution followed the Japanese War—a revolution still going on, but already far more profound and far-reaching in effect than is yet generally realised. It involved a transformation of the quality of government in Russia. Most of the men in power in Russia to-day represent in one way or another that many-sided revolution ; even though the Government is not yet fully purged of the old gang. At this moment it is not so much against Germany as against Germanism that Russia is fighting : against Germanism not only in Europe, but in herself. For Russia this war is a war of liberation—a war to set free the great soul of Russia. It is a religious war : a war against irreligion or false religion. It seems to me that all just war is that.

It is made a ground of complaint and suspicion, that government in Russia is not democratically constituted. The answer is that the Russian Government is being steadily Russianised and that that is

the very best thing that can happen both for Russia and for Europe. It is said that we are merely supporting one despotism against another. Such talk is only excusable on the ground of blank ignorance. The notion that our Western "democratic" institutions are equally suited for all peoples at all times implies a lack of imagination and an amount of ignorance that would disgrace a pupil teacher. How far such institutions could practically be worked in Russia is doubtful: it is certain that they could not have the meaning or the quality they have here. It is probable that Russia is on the eve of great political experiments which, whatever their exact outcome, will leave our western constitution-mongers very far behind the times.

If by "democracy" we mean merely a form of government, it is quite ludicrous to denounce Russia because our particular arrangements do not or may not suit her. If, on the other hand, democracy means something vastly deeper and more important than forms of government, if it means a spirit, a point of view, and a quality informing the life and thought of a people, then the least I can say is that while I see a great deal of democracy in Russia, I do not see much of it in England. One might, indeed, go much further and say that while, in that sense, England is the least democratic of all European countries, and the most completely under the dominion of the superstitions of "class" and "rank," Russia is probably the most democratic of all.

In any case all this talk about the Russian Government is really off the point in regard both to the present issue and to the future. It is the Russian people that counts; and only the people counts in the long run. The Russian people is spoken of as "barbarous." The word sadly needs definition. The notion seems to be based upon the lack of scholastic education among the vast Russian peasantry. It is a curious test of value, this scholastic test. But in any case the great educational movement now existing in Russia ought to allay the fears of the schoolmasters. The educated class in Russia is relatively very small. It is, of course, very small everywhere: it is even much smaller in Russia than elsewhere. Yet what great things the Russians have done already! In music, the one art in which the Germans, with the help of the Jews, have ever achieved anything consummate, the sceptre has, within the last few years, passed to Russia. Russian literature still suffers from a lack of models, from lack of a native tradition of its own, which issues in a lack of form. It is one sign of its enormous vitality that it has resolutely refused all Western models. It has developed, already, a power that one would seek for vainly elsewhere in Europe. And no contemporary literature is so national: no other reflects so vividly the profound soul of a people. In art, in the proper and wide sense, I do not think it is doubtful that the Russians are at present by far the most creative people on earth. In science Russian achievement

is already remarkable: especially, I understand, in chemistry.

Most striking and most relevant to the present issues, is the profound antagonism between the tendencies of Russian thought and the thought that, at present, dominates Germany and even, unhappily, in some degree all west Europe. From Russian literature, even though known only in translation, as from the books and conversations of men who have lived in the country, one can but derive a clear impression that Russia's will to peace is far more fixed and deeply rooted than that of France or England. If a new religion is to come to Europe from any quarter, I am inclined to venture a prophecy that it is from Russia that it will come. If and when it comes it will certainly be utterly unlike the religion of Woden. I am glad of many things in connection with this war; but of nothing am I more glad than that we stand with Russia. Fine as France is, the future is not with France. The future lies with us—if we will—and with the Russians.

Certain theories have been advanced as to our entry into the war, to which only the barest reference seems needful. I quote from the *New Statesman*[1]: "Some," we read, "maintain that we have gone to war because the powers that be in this country wished to side-track social reform, some that it is a war of militarist aggression promoted by a desire

[1] *New Statesman*, October 24th, 1914.

in certain influential quarters to deprive Germany of her colonies and her trade, others that we are fighting without any real reason, simply and solely to please the diplomatists and the armament manufacturers with whom they are in league." I have not, myself, been lucky enough to come across any serious attempt to maintain any one of these three quite different theories. In the absence of any conceivable evidence upon which they can be based, it would be idle to speculate upon the strange illusions which may have given rise to them. They would seem, however, to imply an extraordinary ignorance of the actual nature of international relations and a point of view not only not European but not even national: a point of view evolved from some kind of superstition about "class" or from some sectional fanaticism.

For what then are we at war? The issues are very large. In the first place we are, actually, fighting for ourselves, for security, for our own homes, and for our liberty. Whatever else we are doing we are certainly, now, doing this: and for this reason only I put this consideration first. If Germany were as victorious as she still dreams of being, this country would be invaded and our fate, if we were then beaten, would roughly be that of Belgium, but certainly worse. There is no need to lay any stress upon this theoretical possibility. But we can be conquered only by invasion on the grand scale. If Germany fought Russia to a standstill and forced

her to a peace, crushed France and took possession of the whole coast line from Emden to Havre, we could still keep up the struggle as we did against Napoleon and in conditions closely analogous to those of 1806. We should then be the last hope of west Europe. We should have to treble or quadruple our fleet and train every man in our islands for war. Under such conditions the war might last ten or fifteen years. And under such conditions we still ought to win. In all the world's wars sea power has won in the end. Carthage was only ruined when Rome ruled on the sea.

In the second place we are fighting for the security and freedom of Belgium and of France. France is as great and as valuable to civilisation as we are and her security should be almost as much to us as our own. Of Russia I do not speak. The existence of a free Russia is not staked on this war. But indirectly we are fighting also for the freedom and security of all the smaller European States: for the right of peoples to live in their own way on however small a scale.

But the issues of this war are far larger than is even implied in these assertions. The common interest of all European peoples is greater for each one of them than any local, particularist interest. What we are fighting for is, I think, the establishment of a European order corresponding to the actual fusion of interests that has taken place. We are fighting for the idea of Europe against Germany's

idea of the State. We desire a more European Europe. It is clear already that progress lies along this road. We must not expect too much. But we should aim just as high as we can see.

We are fighting to destroy or rather to help to destroy a power for evil in Europe. I will quote an ancient writer whose words seem to me curiously appropriate to the situation : " We fight not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the ruler of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Germany has refused or been unable to recognise that progress is not bound up with international conflict but with the breakdown of barriers. She has claimed the right to pursue her own private and particular ends in utter disregard of the interests of Europe and by every means. Germany stands at this moment for the will to power among States, and therefore for ceaseless and devastating conflict between States. We stand for the idea of Europe. We must try to turn the Germans into good Europeans.

We have to establish, just as far as possible, for all European States, security against the recurrence of the monstrous and absurd state of things now prevailing. We have to try to make the Concert of Great Powers a real thing. We must try to establish justice and even a form of police for all Europe if it can possibly be done. We must take up that idea of international law which has been

slowly developing for three centuries, revise it and extend it and establish it so that any State that breaks the law hereafter shall be outlaw, and treated as such. Our highest hope should be the laying of foundations for a Federation of Europe.

Now before we can hope to do anything of all this we have to do three things. First of all we have to destroy as completely as possible the prestige of the existing German Imperial Government. That can only be done by war: by the smashing of the great military machine that Government represents.

Secondly, we have to destroy, for the Germans themselves, the illusion of their superiority. This would seem to be, perhaps, a more difficult task than the other. A people that has actually built Berlin, and yet believes itself capable of building something finer than Rheims Cathedral, would seem to be almost hopeless. But at least we must try to demonstrate that in a military sense it is wholly beyond the power of Germany to dominate Europe. That also can only be done by war.

Finally, we have to assert in the strongest possible manner that the use of force by a Great Power to assert particularist aims is no longer tolerable in Europe, and that Europe will not tolerate such conduct. We must make Germany feel that if it ventures on such conduct again, Europe will destroy it utterly and can do so. That, also, can only be done through war.

The final object of military operations is psycho-

logical. They aim at producing a state of mind in the adversary. They aim at making him feel that it would be better to accept the terms we offer than to continue the struggle. This is the whole object of military operations. In this case we have much against us. We have an antiquated theory of international relations which enables our adversaries to see as just that which is unjust ; we have the German conviction that Germany has been attacked in a brutal and unprovoked manner ; we have the German conviction of German superiority ; we have German belief in armies and violence as a means of attaining true ends. All this has to be broken down by force.

The same thing may be put in another way. As soon as victory dawns for them, as soon as the entry of the Russian armies into Silesia marks the beginning of the end, the Allies would do well to begin to consider upon what terms they can make peace. Upon those terms in their broad sense—not necessarily in all points of detail—it will be necessary to insist absolutely. This is not an issue that can be compromised. A compromise would be fatal to all our highest hopes. Anything like a drawn battle would mean a new battle within no long time. We cannot tell to what point we shall have to carry our military operations before Germany feels beaten. It is only clear that Germany must be made to feel beaten and that our terms must be accepted. We must listen to no would-be mediators.

We must decide on what we must have and get it. I am afraid that no good peace can be made except at Berlin.

This may sound terrible, and it is terrible. But there is another aspect of this matter upon which I must insist. We are fighting for liberty and for justice ; and if we are not just to Germany and do not respect Germany's liberty, we shall falsify our whole attitude and gain nothing worth having. This seems to me a truism. But I go further. We must compel Germany to accept our terms ; but in our terms we cannot, consistently with our European aims, be too generous. I believe that, however hard it may be to be generous, it is literally impossible to be too generous !

There are obvious objections to considering at present the nature of the peace that, sooner or later, we hope to make. But I think that though there are real difficulties in doing so, there is no real objection. The objection that in doing so we are counting chickens before they hatch is not real. Even if the chickens never hatch, our thinking will not be lost. It will help us to see our way better through whatever may come. It seems to me that we ought all of us to be considering this matter.

A difficulty, however, there is. It is impossible to foresee exactly what conditions will prevail when the time comes for peace. Until Germany feels completely beaten that time will not have come ; so much we can say, but no more. It is not as though

we stood alone. We cannot tell exactly what demands will be made or what questions raised. We only know that to fail to act with our Allies in the making of peace as in the war, would be fatal to our hopes of a better Europe.

This being so it is useless to consider details, and it is difficult to see our way at all. But a little way we can see. Whatever form the peace takes it must, if it is to be of any permanent value, be based on principles broadly applicable to all Europe. A peace based merely on the imaginary particularist interests of the victorious Great Powers, however successfully those interests were harmonised for the moment, would introduce a condition of things no better than before. We must take a European point of view, we must consider the interests of Europe, including Germany, and we must maintain that point of view as completely and as logically as possible. We have, I am inclined to think, a great opportunity.

It is radically important that in whatever arrangements we make, we should be guided neither by fear nor by desire for revenge. Perhaps the worst feature of war is that it breeds injustice ; it breeds hate and desire of vengeance. It is not for us to think of punishment. It is for us, if we really stand for peace and goodwill among men, to seek to mitigate in all ways that punishment which men bring on themselves.

We want to be assured that this thing shall not

happen again. The mere defeat of Germany, if it be complete, will go some way to assure us of that.

But we want, if it be possible to get it, assurance that nothing like this shall ever happen in Europe again. We may, perhaps, to some extent effect this by merely mechanical arrangements. An effort should be made to form a code of revised, defined, extended International Law and get it recognised formally by every State in Europe. Whether it will be possible to set up in connection with this any form of International Tribunal, I do not know. It would be well if it could be done. If France, Russia, and England continue to act together as a League of Peace, it seems to me that it might be done. Into that league, if the new Germany will enter, she should, of course, be welcomed. If such arrangements could be made definite they would have considerable value. But we must not hope too much from such arrangements, even if made.

Mr. Winston Churchill has spoken of a peace that shall re-arrange the map of Europe on national—I suppose that means racial—lines, and shall give real guarantees to all the weaker States against their stronger neighbours. For such a peace we should, indeed, all work and hope. The principle of the arrangement of the political map of Europe on racial lines is an absolutely sound one, as far as it goes. But if we adopt it we must act upon it honestly and logically. And in the way of our doing so there are or may be grave difficulties.

There has been already a good deal of what seems to me mischievous talk about a dismemberment or even a breaking up of Germany. I have heard people say—I suppose we have all heard people say : "We must break the German Empire in pieces. We must destroy the Federation, set up all the German States as independent, and forbid any common arrangements among them." This, even if it were feasible, would be gross injustice and oppression and would be a blow to the interests of Europe in many ways. It is not in the interests of Europe that any people should feel oppressed and unjustly treated or that any people desiring union should be kept apart by force. Such arrangements would be inconsistent with our whole attitude in this war, and in the long run they would be far worse than futile. It is not in the interests of Europe that any nation should be broken up or in any way diminished or handicapped artificially. I hope to see Germany after this war arise from her temporary ruin not less but greater than before. I hope, most of all, to see a great German Republic which might well include German Austria. But that is a matter for the Germans, not for the Allies. We have no right to dictate to the Germans how they shall govern themselves ; and in the long run we cannot possibly do it.

For, after all, the Germans are a great people ; a great people misled, with perverted ideals and an antiquated system of government. But all that is

superficial; all that is a phase that will pass. We need them, though they think they do not need us. When they have got rid of their vain imagination of superiority, they will take their place as our equals.

Certain consequences that follow from the adoption of the racial principle as a basis of peace must here be pointed out. I read the other day a proposal that the whole of the Cologne district up to the Rhine should be taken by France. On what principle can that be done? If we adopt the racial principle all that feels itself German must remain Germany. But it is not on the western frontier that difficulties of this nature are likely to be serious. When we come to apply our principle to those eastern provinces of Germany that we call Polish, serious difficulties may arise. If these districts were really Polish there would be no difficulty. But, apparently, they are only very partially Polish. According to the census of 1900 only 14 per cent. of the population of East Prussia was then Polish. The province of East Prussia has been under German rule for longer than the other provinces of the eastern frontier. In West Prussia there were 34 per cent. of Poles. Only in Posen and in one district of Silesia were the Poles in a majority. In Posen they formed 60 per cent. of the population. In all these provinces the Poles have increased proportionately since 1900. But it would seem that of all these eastern provinces, only Posen can be claimed by Russia on the ground that its population is Slavonic.

It appears, further, that the application of the racial principle involves the consultation and the consent of the peoples primarily concerned. The racial character of a population may be a very dubious and indefinite thing. It would surely be absurd to say that a population which wishes to remain German must go under French or under Russian government because it or a majority of it speaks French or speaks some Slavonic language. On the supposition, for the sake of the argument, that Alsace-Lorraine, for instance, wishes to remain in union with Germany, I do not see what good claim France could have to re-annex that population. In that hypothetical case, so far as the claim of France is not merely based on unreciprocated affection, it would seem to be based on that particularist will to power and expansion which is the great barrier to further political progress in Europe. On the other hand, if the people of Alsace-Lorraine are desirous of uniting themselves with France, then Germany has no right to hold them. It is for the people of Alsace-Lorraine to decide. And all this of course applies equally to East and West Prussia, to Posen, to Schleswig, to Galicia and Bosnia, to every district which there is talk of detaching from Germany or from Austria.

It may not be practically possible to apply these principles in all cases. I do say that if it could be done it would involve a great step forward. It would be a practical assertion of the real unity of

European interests. It would be as emphatic and practical a denial as is possible of the German theory of the State and of the theory that power gives right. What power gives is not right but duty. But it may well be that France will insist on taking Alsace-Lorraine, that Russia will insist on including West Prussia and Galicia in her new Poland, without direct reference to the wishes of the populations concerned. It would not, in that case, be in our power to prevent their doing so; and the attempt to prevent it by force would be sheer madness. But we ought to do all we can in this direction.

I am not in the least assuming that either France or Russia will desire to do injustice. It is easier for us than for them to take a detached view of these questions. Yet in spite of that fact, I think it not improbable that France and Russia will show a capacity for taking the European point of view greater than our own. The great hope is that we shall all agree. But I am considering, now, only what our own share in the work should be. If we can see our duty to Europe we shall know how to act.

I pass, now, to a matter which seems to me of the first importance practically. One great European reform there is which seems to me both practicable and desirable. As a result of this war new or partially new small States may be formed in Europe. At least, we shall have, apparently, an enlarged Servia and a new Poland, subordinate to Russia,

but, I hope, in a large measure self-governing. Not only such newly formed States, but all the existing small States of Europe, should be neutralised by agreement among the great Powers, secured from attack from any quarter by the most explicit provisions of International Law, and at the same time their freedom should be restricted in certain ways. No such neutralised and guaranteed State should be allowed to institute commercial protection and set up tariff walls against its neighbours. Free trade should be imposed upon them in return for the guarantees given. Their neighbour's goods and shipping should have the freedom of their commercial ports in the sense in which English ports are free now. I do not see that any injustice would hereby be done. Commercially every one of these small States would actually gain by the change. Moreover, if the guarantees given them were worth anything, the Great Powers would have a right to ask something in return. I would not compel any small State to accept this position ; but I would give it no guarantees if it did not.

I must point out that such arrangements would do much to mitigate for Germany the effect of any loss of territory she may have to suffer. If Germany is to lose a portion of her Baltic coastline, her trade should not at least be restricted by any new tariff wall, and her access, say to Dantzig, should be as free as before the war. Similarly, if Austria-Hungary must lose control of Bosnia, she should

not, nevertheless, be deprived of her commercial outlets in that region. Increased freedom for Germany in the ports of Holland would of itself go far to compensate her for territorial losses in the East. Such arrangements as these would not only be good for trade all round—which is a matter of very minor importance—but would go far to secure the existence of the small States, would reduce the possible grounds for dispute among the Great Powers, and would involve a real step forward in the direction of European unity. I would, if it were possible, go much further. The abolition of all tariff walls throughout Europe would probably be the greatest step at present conceivable in the direction of European federation. But we must not suppose that that is yet possible.

I turn, now, to the question of armaments. We hear people talking of imposing compulsory restrictions upon Germany in respect of her army and navy. Germany, it is being said, is not to be allowed to maintain a navy at all, and is to be allowed only a restricted army. Such arrangements would express either vengefulness or fear. On either ground they are inadmissible. They would not be just arrangements. I believe that they would be completely futile; but I do not care to argue that question. Some sort of case might be made out for such arrangements if we were dealing only with the Germans now living, with our living enemy. But it is important to realise and to remember that when

we come to make peace we shall be arranging for generations unborn.

An all-round reduction of armaments in accordance with a definite and agreed European scheme may be possible after this war. It is not, I think, a matter of the first importance. Such an arrangement could hardly, if at all, reduce the chances of actual war. But it would involve a great relief, and it would be valuable as one more proclamation of the falsity of the theory of international conflict in Europe. We ought to work for it. But any restriction imposed upon the armaments of Germany must be merely part of a general scheme if it is to have any value. We do not want a peace based on the helplessness of one nation. Such a peace could only be temporary. We want a peace based upon common understanding.

One thing there is, in this connection, which might and should be done. The manufacture of guns, armour plate, ships of war and so forth, by private firms for sale and profit, should be absolutely forbidden by international agreement. The making of such things should become a monopoly of Governments. A certain relief would assuredly result from the change ; though here also we must beware of exaggerated hopes of positive result.

Now, finally, we must consider those terms of the great treaty that is coming which will directly concern ourselves. First of all, I will say this : that if I could choose I would not deprive Germany

of a single one of her colonies. But already we see how war breeds mischief of itself. Already we have a position in which it would be hardly possible with justice to refuse to allow South Africa to take German South West Africa, if she really wishes to do so, or to refuse to allow Australia to keep the Bismarck Archipelago or German New Guinea. Such transfers are not, of course, of the same nature as transfers of territory in Europe. No radical injustice is necessarily involved. We may at least hope that the native populations of these regions will actually benefit by the change: at all events they should not lose by it. It is not here so much a question of justice as of generosity. And at least, except where we are bound to our great colonies—I should prefer to call them our natural allies—we can be as generous as we please. We should restore every German colony that we can possibly restore.

But far more important than the question of colonies is the really terrible question of indemnities in money. This is perhaps the most formidable of all the rocks ahead. It is not necessary to discuss the difficult question of the way an indemnity works. But it may be pointed out that there is reason for thinking that it injures those who pay more than it benefits those who receive. This, however, is not the question. A Germany loaded with the payment of enormous indemnities would be a Germany embittered and miserable. We do not want more bitterness and misery than we must

needs have. Germany's punishment will be terrible in any case. Concerning the standpoint of our Allies in this matter, it is perhaps best to say nothing. I am only quite clear on one point. Belgium's bill to Germany must be paid. It will be a big bill: but it must be paid not only for the sake of Belgium, but for the sake of Europe, including Germany. I will say no more about the Continental aspect of the question: but of ourselves I can say what I think.

The cost of the war to us will be great. The temptation to take a heavy indemnity will be correspondingly great. We did not bring this war about—why should our people pay for Germany's waste of the world's goods? Because that is what it comes to. Why should we spare Germany at our own expense?

Well! one answer is that it must in any case, and whatever we do, to a great extent be so. Europe is already too nearly united for it to be possible for us to cast the whole expense of this war upon Germany. Before the war, Germany was our best customer; and the loss of that custom is, economically, the most serious feature of this war for us. The more we load Germany with indemnities the less quickly that trade will revive. We shall be taking our indemnity and paying for it in loss of trade.

If we can meet the whole cost, without imposing a breaking burden on our own people, we had best do it. I do not know how much we can bear: but

certainly we shall be able to bear much more than Germany when this war is over. It is all, of course, a question of degree, when you come to details. The least we can do is to make sure that no German, hereafter, shall be able to say that we made a profit on the war. That is the least and it is not, therefore, enough : it is not all that we can do for Europe and for Germany. We talk of making sacrifices for Europe : let us see to it that we do ! There is no sacrifice in doing what you are forced to do, however much it may cost : sacrifice is voluntary. We talk of sacrifice ; but we also talk of gain—of gain in colonies and trade and by indemnity. It is inconsistent : it will not work : it will not pay. You cannot serve God and Mammon. I will remind you of another old saying, often true : The greater the loss, the greater the gain. It is doing right that pays ; nothing else pays, in any sense, in the long run. It is only false valuations that prevent our seeing that really obvious fact.

Are we, then, to gain nothing by all our efforts ? My answer is that if we help to bring into being a better Europe, if we help on the civilising process, if we help to make war impossible in Europe, our gain, even our material and commercial gain, will be enormous. Increased security, with its sequel in reduction of armaments and increased international credit, the breaking down of even a few tariff walls, will mean, eventually, an enormous gain in all those unimportant things that are measured in

money. Not only shall we have gained a security for ourselves indefinitely greater than our old fancied security that was before the war. By giving security to all other European peoples, by helping forward the movement towards a real European understanding, we shall have gained literally all that it is possible to gain by war. And the greatest gain will be for the soul of our own people.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E.
AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK

FROM MESSRS. BELL'S LIST.

WILLIAM PITT AND THE GREAT WAR. By J. HOLLAND ROSE, Litt.D. New and Cheaper Reissue. Demy 8vo. with Photogravure Plates, 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

"It is a page of history which cannot be made too prominent in its true colours, because its issues, *mutatis mutandis*, are just as vital and significant to-day as at the end of the eighteenth century."

Pall Mall Gazette.

THE WAR OF STEEL AND GOLD. By H. N. BRAILSFORD, Author of 'The Broom of the War God.' Crown 8vo. 5*s.* net.

"This book is, within its range, the most complete study of our recent foreign policy that we have seen. . . . . Mr. Brailsford begins the second and instructive part of his book by pointing out that Mr. Norman Angell, to whose work he pays some well-deserved compliment, does not touch the real evil of our time, which is not war, but armed peace."—*Manchester Guardian.*

EUROPE SINCE 1815. By CHARLES D. HAZEN. New and Cheaper Reissue. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

"Professor Hazen's book is a veritable store of sound political wisdom for the student of history, and at the same time is written in a lively style, full of the actual thoughts and words of great historical personages. . . . . It cannot be too highly recommended for anyone who wishes seriously to study Europe in the nineteenth century."—*Journal of Education.*

WATERLOO: THE DOWNFALL OF THE FIRST NAPOLEON: a History of the Campaign of 1815. By GEORGE HOOPER, Author of 'Wellington,' etc. With Maps and Plans. 1*s.* net.

WAR AND WOMEN: From Experience in the Balkans and Elsewhere. By Mrs. ST. CLAIR STOBART, Founder of the Women's Convoy Corps. With a Preface by VISCOUNT ESHER, G.C.B. With 32 Illustrations. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

"The book places the War Office and the British Red Cross upon their defence; for obviously when the present system is condemned by such authorities as Lord Esher and Mrs. Stobart, some justification is required by those who support it."—*Standard.*

"A vivid picture of modern war conditions."—*Evening Standard*